CHRISTIANITY
IN THE INDIAN CRUCIBLE

Christianity in the Indian Crucible

by

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FOREWORD

INDIA is important—very. She is the key to the whole of non-communist Asia. For whichever way India goes the whole of non-Communist Asia goes. India has risen to leadership in Asia in a very remarkable way. Hundreds of millions will follow her lead.

I do not know of any man in East or West who is better qualified to interpret present-day India to the West than the author of this book, Dr. Eddy Asirvatham. By training and by opportunity he has had a unique privilege of being an interpreter between East and West. He is well trained, and a careful student of political and religious ideas and trends in both East and West. And he approaches these matters in the right spirit—an open mind, careful scholarship and understanding sympathy.

No one could be a better interpreter of Christianity in India for he sees it in its total setting.

I have known the author through many years and have the deepest respect for his character and ability and his spirit. I commend this book to those who want to understand one of the most important spots of the world—India, and one of the most important things in India—the Christian movement.

E. STANLEY JONES

INTRODUCTION

In the title of this significant book Dr. Eddy Asirvatham reveals the critical and the potentially constructive situation in which Christianity finds itself in contemporary India. As a tiny minority group in an ancient and vast civilization the Christian Church finds itself in a veritable crucible. The encounter of Christianity with Indian Culture is handled in a stimulating and brilliant manner by a man who is a thoroughgoing authority in his field.

As a native Indian Christian Dr. Asirvatham is able to look at India through the eyes of an Indian National and through the eyes of a Christian who transcends both the major religious point of view and the nationalism inherent in independence. As a man trained in the West he is able to bring the rich resources of the latter's political, economic, and social sciences and of Christian theology to bear on the problems of the new India. He, therefore, has an amazing objectivity in viewing his native country. This Western training also gives him living contact with the forms of Western communication so that he can interpret both the West and the East to each group with freshness.

As a Professor for many years of Political Science in Indian universities Dr. Asirvatham brings to this task an empirical and practical knowledge of the social struggles leading up to the new India. As a teacher of World Religions, Missions, and Christian International Relations in Boston University School of Theology, he brings to this task seven years of continuous analysis of the secular American mind and the Christian perspectives in the United States. In this period of time he has travelled widely and has lectured in innumerable institutions interpreting India and America to each country in the context of Christian theology and ethics. No one could be better prepared to undertake what this book has to say. In thus commending Dr. Asirvatham

I mean also to be commending this book for serious consideration because it reflects the many-sidedness of his experience. The book is a marvellous blending of theology and sociology, of theoretical competence and empirical relevance. He speaks frankly and fearlessly about the strengths and weaknesses of Christianity in India and points the directions in which Christianity must go if she is to be a responsible and fruitful force in the future life of that great land.

WALTER G. MUELDER
Dean and Professor of Social Ethics
Boston University School of Theology

PREFACE

ORIGINALLY delivered in the form of lectures to students preparing for the Christian ministry in Boston University, Boston, Massachussetts, this book has grown into its present dimensions of over two hundred pages. Because of the limitations of space imposed upon the size of the book by the publishers, there has not been the opportunity to elaborate and elucidate several of the statements made, some of which are undoubtedly controversial. Besides its use in the class-room, the subject-matter of the book was presented to a great many church and secular groups in the United States, during the years when the author was a professor in Boston University.

In its discussion the writer felt that while Americans have a genuine interest in helping people everywhere, their knowledge of the complexities of the problems of present-day missions in India is not always accurate or up-to-date. Many in the churches, when it comes to missions, seek to do business in the mid-twentieth century with nineteenth century ideas and methods. The book is written in the hope that it may, to a small extent at least, fill the gap indicated. Though written primarily for the Christian people in the United States, it is hoped that a wider circle of readers in the United States, India and elsewhere, may find some value in the book and in the questions which it raises and seeks to answer.

The author has had the advantage of working in the secular Universities of India for many years (with an interval of seven years in a Christian institution in the United States), and of being in daily contact with non-Christian people and non-Christian thinking. This has enabled him to notice certain things which may escape the attention of those exclusively engaged in church work. He is deeply conscious of the vital message which Christianity has to offer to India

and to people everywhere; and he is anxious that a good case for Christianity and Christian missions must not be spoilt by bad arguments. Although the book was written in the United States with the help of the materials available there, it has been brought up-to-date on the author's return to India in 1953.

In the writing of the book, the author has been greatly helped by his colleagues in Boston University. Special thanks are due to the late Dr. Edgar Brightman and to Professors Richard Cameron, John Copp, Harold DeWolf, Paul Johnson, and Walter Muelder. Thanks are also due to the Rev. Swami Akhilananda of the Ramakrishna Mission in Boston, who took much trouble in helping the writer to see the Hindu interpretation of things, which is not always clear to one who, though of Hindu ancestry and deeply committed to Indian culture, has been brought up in a Christian climate.

The late Mrs. Katherine Gates of Hartford Seminary Foundation and Miss Angelina Gale of Naperville, Illinois, helped in the early stages of the book; and to them the author owes a word of thanks. So also to Dr. J. K. Mathews and Dr. M. T. Titus, former missionaries of the Methodist Church in India.

A very special tribute is due to Mrs. Irene Koch of Chicago, Illinois, who read and re-read every word of the book, made many valuable suggestions, and typed the entire MS. Without her valuable and unstinting help this book would never have seen the light of day. Thanks are also due to Dr. P. D. Devanandan of the National Council of the Indian Y.M.C.A. for the most helpful suggestions he made in re-arranging the book and in avoiding repetitions; and to Rev. H. A. Popley and Rev. Donald Smith for correcting the proof.

The author is under a deep debt of gratitude to Dr. E. Stanley Jones, a foremost world Christian of the twentieth century, for the foreword written by him; and also

to Dr. Walter G. Muelder, Dean, Boston University School of Theology, for his words of commendation.

For all the shortcomings of the book the author alone is responsible. The book expresses his personal point of view, and does not commit any church, organization or institution to the subject-matter of the book or to its underlying assumptions.

Nagpur, India. EDDY ASIRVATHAM

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CHAPTER I

THE INDIAN SCENE

THE sub-continent of India attained its complete political freedom from British rule on August 15, 1947. This day will go down in the history of India as a day of great consequence not only to the people of India but to the Orient, which is emboldened to become complete master within its own household. That Indian freedom was attained largely by non-violent methods is an outstanding tribute both to Great Britain and to India.

At the close of World War II it would have been possible for Britain to discover excuses for continuing its domination over India, even as other nations with empires have done, and continue to do in Asia. Instead, in the wisdom of some of its parliamentary leaders, Britain chose boldly and courageously to release India from its Empire. The statesmanlike manner in which Lord Mountbatten, the last of British Governors-General in India, dealt with the explosive situation so changed the Indian atmosphere that the responsible leaders of India, who had spent years behind prison walls in the struggle for freedom, voluntarily decided that the new sovereign republic of India should remain closely associated with Great Britain as an integral part of the Commonwealth of Nations. No more striking example can be found in current history of the truth: *Trust begets trust.*

To Mahatma Gandhi, without whose rare self-sacrifice, vision, courage, and spiritual strength India might still be a subject nation, a debt of Indian gratitude will exist for time indefinite. Prior to 1919 when Gandhi first entered the political sphere, India had tried at intervals the violent method of bloodshed and revolution but it had failed. Gandhi, with his deep understanding of the British, his unswerving faith in non-violence, and his willingness to pay the price of his own blood if necessary, dramatically changed the

situation. India will remember Gandhi as the father of Indian nationalism, the founder of a politically free India and the liberator of the Indian spirit. More than anyone else in modern times Gandhi gave to his countrymen a sense of national self-respect such as they had not possessed for generations. He added immeasurably to the moral stature of countless Indians. In the purity of his life and in the general scope of his influence in his own country and abroad, the only other Indian with whom he can be properly compared is Gautama Buddha.

It cannot be said that the majority of the people of India possess the faith in non-violence and in "soul-force" as did Gandhi. The communal riots of 1946–50 showed clearly how far short of the ideal they fell. Nevertheless, because of Indian culture and its ethnic character, the theory of non-violence makes an instantaneous appeal to many Indians. Certainly they have witnessed in their own current history the practical demonstration of the power of love, of self-suffering, and of mutual trust in the resolution of conflicts among peoples and nations.

Although the attainment of Indian political freedom through non-violence was hailed throughout the world as an epoch-making event, rejoicing was tempered by the division of India into two separate, sovereign states. Certain Moslem leaders had from time to time advocated a separate state, but it never assumed the character of a mass movement until a few years before independence. Mr. Mohammed Ali Jinnah, the acknowledged leader of the Moslems and a prominent worker in the Indian National Congress in his earlier days, discountenanced for a long period the idea of complete separation. For years he was content with a demand for autonomous existence. But the Muslim League, which was growing from strength to strength, partly because of the intransigent attitude of certain groups, was able in 1940 to adopt separate state existence as the avowed goal of Moslem India. From thereon events moved with tremendous rapidity. The Muslim League had co-operated

with the Indian National Congress for a few months in running the Government of India under the leadership of Lord Wavell in 1946. But this partnership was short-lived. Communal passions were roused by interested individuals and groups and the result was communal riots of an unprecedented character.

By now men like Mahatma Gandhi, V. J. Patel and Jawaharlal Nehru, who had stood for the unity of India, felt that partition was the only way out and agreement was reached in that direction. A border commission was hastily set up to divide the Punjab and Bengal, where the communal problem was at its worst because of the nearly equal numerical strength of Moslems and Hindus in these areas. A rough and ready division was brought about, and the two sides accepted it as the only practicable and quick solution of a most difficult problem.

But this set in motion communal riots and the wholesale slaughter of people which no one had dreamt of even in his wildest moments. More than a million people lost their lives. Trains carrying refugees were stopped on the border and people belonging to one community were butchered to death by those of another. Panic reigned everywhere. Some five to six million people migrated from Pakistan to India and a similar number moved in the opposite direction.

At the time it looked as though the newly-found political freedom of the two countries was going to be short-lived. But thanks to the sagacity and enthusiasm with which leaders of the two countries tackled the problem, the question has now been set at rest. New towns were built and allotted to those who wished to become settlers. Some were able to set up the kinds of work to which they were accustomed before partition, such as peddling and petty trade. The Sikhs who suffered most by being forced to flee from the Punjab are still restless and some of them agitate for an autonomous state for themselves in the Punjab (India). Certain Hindu communal groups too remain disgruntled, their goal being " India for the Hindus."

Even after the partition roughly along religious lines, there are still about 11 million non-Moslems in Pakistan out of a total of 76 millions, and 40 million Moslems in India out of a total population of 362 millions. Religious and political differences do not mean that the people of India and Pakistan belong to two different races or two totally different cultures. They are flesh of the same flesh and bone of the same bone. Even in the Punjab where one may expect to find the pure descendants of Moslem conquerors from abroad, according to G. T. Garratt, only 15 per cent. of the Moslems can claim non-Indian descent. The Bengali Moslem has considerably more in common with the Bengali Hindu than he has with the Punjabi or Madrasi Moslem.

Places of special significance to Moslems such as the Jumma Masjid (Great Mosque) at Delhi, the Kutb Minar (Victory Tower) a few miles outside Delhi, and the Taj Mahal at Agra, are not in Pakistan but in India ! Likewise places of great historic interest to India such as Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa (names of towns which date Indian history back to 3250 B.C.) as well as places of Hindu and Sikh pilgrimage are in Pakistan and not in India. Prayers for Hindu temples in the Punjab are uttered daily in Cape Comorin which lies at the southernmost tip of India. Cries of *Islam in danger*, or *Jihad* ('holy war'), uttered in Lahore find their reverberations even outside Pakistan.

The outstanding issues between India and Pakistan today are the final disposal of Kashmir by means of a fair plebiscite, the sharing of the waters of the Indus River and its tributaries, and evacuee property. Of these the first is the most difficult and most likely to flare up again into war if wiser counsels do not come to prevail in time. Ever since the war started in Kashmir, the Indian contention has been that Pakistan was the aggressor and invader in what was legally and technically Indian territory. Pakistan denied it repeatedly, but finally had to agree to it when the United Nations mediator Dixon brought certain facts to light. Under U.N. pressure India has agreed to the presence of a

certain number of Pakistani troops in Kashmir, but the exact proportion between Indian and Pakistani troops has not yet been agreed upon. Meanwhile the cease-fire line is generally adhered to by both sides. The Constituent Assembly of Kashmir has finalized its accession to India, but Jawaharlal Nehru still stands by his promise for a plebiscite.

Concerning the problem of evacuee property, the Indian contention is that for every rupee's worth of worldly goods which the Moslem refugees claim to have left in India, Hindu and Sikh refugees have left nine in Pakistan. The question of the fair sharing of the waters of the Indus has been receiving the serious attention of the International Bank, working in collaboration with the Governments of India and Pakistan.

At the time of the emergence of Indian independence evil prophets foretold the break-up of India into several warring units, with Indian Princes serving as the spearhead of such disruption. Fortunately nothing of the kind has happened. Under the astute and dynamic leadership of Sardar V. J. Patel, the number of Indian States was reduced from 562 to about 20. Several were merged into the nearby States formerly administered directly by the British. Others were amalgamated. Many of the Princes now receive either pensions or comfortable personal allowances and the more important ones are the Rajpramukhs (or Presidents) of their States or combinations of States.

Communal groups which threatened to break up the unity of the country, as well as Communist groups, have been kept at bay. But they are still influential and raise their heads from time to time.

India set up a Constituent Assembly even before she became independent. It worked hard for three years and produced a brand-new democratic constitution, which combines several features of the American and British constitutions. Fundamental rights and directive principles of State policy are some novel features of the Constitution. The Government of the country is federal and it is so framed as to prevent

constitutional breakdown in any of its parts. Also, in an emergency the federal constitution, without any constitutional amendment, can function as a unitary constitution.

India is still a part of the Commonwealth of Nations. During one of his visits to England Mr. Nehru was able to prevail upon Mr. Attlee, the then British Prime Minister, to let India stay as a Republic within the Commonwealth. This having been conceded, cordial relations have come to prevail between India and the United Kingdom, although the two do not see eye to eye on certain colonial and related questions. The trade between the two countries has been at a high level.

In the years immediately after independence, the monsoons having failed consecutively for several years, acute food shortage and near-famine conditions came to prevail in many parts of the country. Rationing of food grains meant the tightening of the belt of millions of people. India had to spend her meager resources for the purchase of food grains from abroad. In one year alone she imported four million tons. As a result of the wise measures adopted by the Government and of better monsoons, the food situation has considerably improved and India is not obliged to import large quantities of food any more.

The Five Year Plan of India, involving an outlay of $3.8 billion, is now in its third year of operation. It is a very ambitious plan, aiming at an all-round development of Indian economic, educational, and social conditions. Work has been started on several multi-purpose river valley schemes and the work is nearing completion on some of them. This will mean more of irrigation canals, rural electricity, and the like. A Government-owned fertilizer plant has been operating for some time. A contract has been signed with a German company for setting up a Government-owned steel factory, which will supplement the existing private owned steel factories. Much attention is being directed to the expansion and improvement of railway and bus travel. The Indian Government has its own airways flying within

the country and abroad. Legislation has been passed by several State Governments abolishing the extreme forms of landlordism. The *Bhoodan Yagna Movement* initiated by Vinoba Bhave has brought in more than three million acres of land, gifted freely by the more well-to-do for the benefit of the poor. It is done on a voluntary and community basis. The Community Projects and National Extension Service are doing much to change the face of rural India. Much attention is being given to the improvement of the livestock of the country. Cottage industries are receiving new encouragement. The country is rich in educational schemes of one kind or another. A good many technological colleges and scientific research institutes have been established. Basic education has taken root in several parts of India and 'learning by doing' is the order of the day. Training schools and colleges are being set up for the training of basic school teachers. The newly-established Santiniketan University has a definite rural basis. Sevagram, the place where Gandhi labored and carried on his experiments in his latter years, may have a rural university of its own before long. A University Grants Commission has been appointed to co-ordinate the work of the Universities and to see that each of them receives its legitimate share of Government money to carry on an effective piece of work. High School education is in the process of transformation.

There is a certain amount of confusion concerning the medium of instruction. Some Universities have adopted Hindi, the national language, as their medium at the undergraduate level. Some want to make the regional language the primary medium. The place of English hangs in the balance. The proceedings conducted in several of the State Parliaments are in the local or regional language.

While there is a general sentiment against the English language, the more important dailies are still published in English. Western influence in dress, tastes and fashions, strangely enough, is on the increase. The average Indian is still under the hypnotic spell of the West. Every year

hundreds of students go abroad for higher and technical education. Many of them are disgruntled when they come back, for there are not enough jobs for them.

The Indian Civil Service, which used to be described as the 'steel frame' of Indian administration under British rule, has been replaced by the Indian Administrative and Indian Foreign Services. Recruitment to them is made in India itself. The salary scales have been brought down. The general level of administration, in spite of occasional lapses, is still high. Indian ambassadors and consuls have been appointed to various capitals, and some of them have rendered excellent service. They have served as first-rate listening posts and have been shrewd judges of international developments and repercussions in various capitals. India has an efficient and patriotic defense force. The Indian Army rendered an excellent account of itself as the Custodian Force in Korea and won tributes from leaders on both sides except from President Syngman Rhee.

India has come into her own in the sphere of foreign policy. From a position of obscurity she has risen to a place of world prominence within a space of seven years. The weight of her influence has been felt on the floor of the United Nations. India has consistently championed the cause of the underdog in the various colonial countries in Asia, Africa and South America. She has managed so far to keep out of the power conflict by refusing to align herself with one or the other of the two blocs of power. Her position is one of independence, but not of neutrality. Her hope is to build a 'peace area' in Asia. She has shown her independence, much to the annoyance of the U.S.A., on such issues as the Japanese Peace Treaty, the Korean War, and the recognition of New China.

While most of the above-mentioned facts are on the credit side of the ledger, there are facts to be recorded on the debit side as well. The Indian National Congress which had the goodwill and respect of most Indians has declined badly. Nepotism and corruption have crept into its ranks,

and the self-sacrifice of the past has been replaced by rank selfishness. Jawaharlal Nehru is still the idol of the country. Wherever he goes he draws thousands of people. His domestic policy has several critics, but his foreign policy is endorsed by nearly everyone except the Communists and similar professional trouble-makers.

There is a resurgence of communal parties in several parts of the country. They make far more noise than their numerical strength warrants. As things stand at present, it looks as though their baneful influence will spread rather than decline in the next few years. The objects which they seek to realize are narrow, reactionary, and obscurantist.

The leftist parties are not yet strong enough to form an alternative Government. The Praja Socialist Party led by men like Jayaprakash Narayan and Lohia has not yet got a large following. The Communists are better organized and know what they are after and seem to know how to get it. If India cannot solve the outstanding social and economic problems within the next few critical years, it is possible that Communism will take over.

Aggressive linguism is on the increase. The new State of Andhra was brought into existence after one of the Andhra leaders had starved himself to death. It looked for a while as though the Andhras were killing a fly with a sledge-hammer. Since attaining their separate state they have been wrangling among themselves. The Government has set up a States Reorganisation Commission. The hope is that it will recommend measures for the prompt prevention of those fissiparous tendencies which will make Indian freedom a mockery.

There is a resurgence of Hinduism everywhere. Some aspects of this resurgence provide cause for concern and even for alarm.

American influence is much in evidence everywhere. American economic and technical aid has been coming in steadily, although it is too early to say whether it has all been used wisely or whether it is going to make much difference

in the social and economic reconstruction of India. Some of it at least is ill-suited to Indian conditions.

India and Pakistan are destined to remain independent, sovereign States, in spite of the occasional propaganda to the effect that each of them hopes to swallow the other in time. With Mr. Mohammed Ali as the Prime Minister of Pakistan and his conciliatory attitude, it was fully hoped that the outstanding issues between the two countries would soon be solved satisfactorily. Such hope, however, has now been dashed to the ground by the military alliance between the U.S.A. and Pakistan. Although India has repeatedly requested a 'No War' or 'Non-aggression' pact with Pakistan, successive Prime Ministers of Pakistan have turned it down or suggested such riders to it as to make it nugatory. President Eisenhower has assured India that the arms aid extended to Pakistan is not to be used against India in Kashmir or elsewhere and that if Pakistan uses the aid for purposes of aggression, he would be the first one to thwart such an effort. While Indians do not doubt the motives of Mr. Eisenhower, his assurance carries no conviction to Indians. They rightly ask the question what America has done during the last seven years concerning Pakistani aggression in Kashmir. Mr. Mohammed Ali has lately let the cat out of the bag when he said that the arms aid from the U.S.A. would make the Kashmiri issue more easy of settlement. Mr. Bokhari, the Pakistan representative at the United Nations, has said in an indirect way that the enemy against whom Pakistan wants to arm herself is neither Russia nor China, which is the American hope, but India.

The American undertaking to arm Pakistan as part of her defense program to contain communism has greatly upset India. She feels that the 'cold war' has been brought to her very doors, that her hope of creating a 'peace area' in Asia has received a setback, and that Asia is drawn against its will into the two-power conflict.

In spite of this present discouraging situation, it may be hoped that wiser counsels will come to prevail. Whether

out of deference to the fears of India and certain other Asian countries, America will play down her arms assistance program or not remains to be seen. It is to be hoped, however, that India and Pakistan will realize in time the mutual advantage of settling the Kashmir issue peacefully and of living together as good neighbors. Far-sighted people in both India and Pakistan are cognizant of the fact that in a world dominated by power politics and conflicting ideologies, their only chance of survival lies in rising above pettifogging and mutual fault-finding and in giving their full attention and energy to the well-being of their hitherto silent masses. If they fail in this, the drastic cure of communalism or religious separatism may prove to be communism, a remedy infinitely more virulent than the disease.

CHAPTER II

CHRISTIANITY IN NEW INDIA

SINCE the freedom of India first emerged, the interest of Christians in India and abroad has been engaged in the evolving status of Christianity in a free India. Will free India discriminate against Christianity and Christian missions? Will there be restrictions on the direct preaching of the Gospel? Conversely, will Christian missions modify their Western orientation and adapt themselves to the culture and changing social institutions of India? Or, will Christianity remain a foreign ideology, as some Indians now consider it, and in time pass away as having no relevance to the Indian scene?

Answers to these questions have been emerging gradually during the past seven years of Indian freedom, but the situation is still far from clear. Mahatma Gandhi, whose respect for Jesus Christ was unquestioned and who considered himself a humble follower of his teachings, especially in regard to non-violence and vicarious suffering, was extremely critical of Christians and of Christian missions. At one time he said: "If you call me a Christian, I shall consider it an insult. But if you will call me Christlike, I shall consider it the greatest compliment you can pay me." No honest Christian would want to dispute the sting contained in the criticism of Christians, but would at the same time hold that Christianity is to be judged more by the claims that Jesus Christ made for himself and the standards that he set, and less by the lives of Christian people. On more than one occasion Gandhi said that a free India would welcome foreign missionaries as doctors, nurses, educators and social workers, but not as evangelists. "If I had power and could legislate," Gandhi said, "I should stop all proselytising."[1]

[1] Clifford Manshardt, *The Mahatma and the Missionary* (Chicago Henry Regnery Company, 1949), p. 69.

Many Hindus think that truth in a religion will, of itself, without benefit of lavish expenditure of money and propaganda, draw people to it. To a person nurtured in Hinduism, the religions of the world are but different roads leading to the same goal; hence, mass proselytizing for the "one and only religion" is not only incomprehensible to him: it is without moral justification.

The equality of all religions was a passionate conviction with Gandhi. He wrote: "Every nation's religion is as good as any other. Certainly, India's religions are adequate for the people. We need no converting spiritually."[2] Even those most friendly to Gandhi's point of view have been at a loss to know what he meant by saying that every religion was as good as another. A careful study of his writings makes it clear that all that he meant was that any religion was as vital and as significant to its followers as any other religion was to its followers. One may readily agree with Gandhi that all religions have both elements of truth and falseness in them. But that does not make them equal. The degree of truth and error is not the same.

Some of the other national leaders at the time of Indian independence were more friendly disposed towards Christian Missions and gave assurance of one kind or another concerning the future of Christian work in India. In an interview which he gave to a group of Christian missionaries on the eve of Indian independence, Mr. Nehru said:

> "It stands to reason that any faith whose roots are strong and healthy should spread; and to interfere with that right to spread seems to me to be a blow at the roots themselves. In a country with so many creeds as India, we must learn to be tolerant. For the sake of harmony we shall have to respect the religious convictions of all, irrespective of numbers and influence. Unless a given faith proves a menace to public order, or its teachers attempt to thrust

[2] Clifford Manshardt, *The Mahatma and the Missionary* (Chicago Henry Regnery Company, 1949), p. 20.

it down the unwilling throats of men of other persuasions, there can be no justification for measures which deprive any community of its rights."[3]

Later on, in a more cautious mood, Mr. Nehru declared: "We will welcome anyone who throws himself into India and makes India his home." In an interview which he gave to Dr. E. Stanley Jones, Mr. V. J. Patel who had not been known to be pro-Christian or pro-missionary, but who underwent a change of heart after seeing the timely and magnificent humanitarian work rendered by Christian agencies to the afflicted people at the time of the communal riots (1946–47), was reported to have said: "Let them (missionaries) go on as they have been going on—let them serve the suffering with their hospitals and dispensaries, educate the poor and give selfless service to the people. They can even carry on their propaganda in a peaceful manner. But let them not use mass conversion for political ends." Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the veteran Moslem leader and a member of the central cabinet in New Delhi from its inception, was the most enthusiastic among those interviewed by Dr. Jones. "Do not talk about being tolerated (as foreign missionaries). You will be welcomed." The only objection, he pointed out, was to mass conversion.[4]

If disappointment is to be avoided, care should be taken not to read too much into the above flattering statements.

Religious Freedom Guaranteed by the Indian Constitution

When the Indian Constitution was on the anvil between 1946 and 1949, the Constituent Assembly discussed threadbare the question of freedom of conscience and freedom to propagate religion. Several Hindu members, who wanted to stop Christian and Moslem missionary activity, were willing to concede to everyone in the country the freedom to profess and practise their own religion as well as to preach

[3] *The Guardian*, Kilpauk, Madras, 1947.
[4] *Ibid.*

it to members of their own faith, but not the freedom to propagate it. But after much discussion, as a result of the wise handling of the situation by such men as Mr. V. J. Patel and Dr. H. C. Mookerjee, Christian Vice-President of the Constituent Assembly (and now the Governor of Bengal), the Assembly resolved to concede the right to propagate religion.

The greatest gain to Christian missions and to Christian enterprise as a whole is found in Article 25 of the Constitution which reads:

> "Subject to public order, morality and health and to the other provisions of this Part, *all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practise and propagate religion.*" (author's italics.)

This means that India has resolved to become a secular democratic State, conferring religious freedom and freedom of conscience on all citizens. If Article 25 is carried out in the spirit in which it was conceived, it will come to be regarded as the Magna Carta of the Christian missionary enterprise in India. The indications, however, are that there will exist a gulf between theory and practice. Even in an advanced democratic state such as the United States, what the law confers, administration may withhold, as witness the treatment of minorities, especially of Negroes. In India the disparity is likely to be even more clearly marked. A law will not, *ipso facto*, change the thinking of a people, nor will it immediately, in the villages and remote areas, change a social institution that has developed through past centuries. Dr. R. B. Manikam, until recently Secretary of the National Christian Council of India, said:

> "Constitutional guarantee is one thing, but to enjoy that religious freedom in daily life in our towns and villages is quite another..... One of the chief difficulties is in the realm of religious conversion. The moment you begin to propagate your religion, you will run up against difficulties."[5]

[5] Interview published in *The Hindu*, Madras, 1948.

The Christian missionary and the Indian Christian would be unrealistic if they did not expect pin-pricks from time to time, and even gross discrimination.

Attack upon Christianity and Christian Missions is nothing new. Hinduism, as it came into close contact with Christianity and the West, has reacted differently at different times. In the early part of the nineteenth century there came into being such a reform movement as the Brahmo Samaj. Along with kindred movements such as the Prarthana Samaj, the Brahmo Samaj attacked caste and idol worship and sought to build up a liberal Hindu community which would serve as a bridge between Hinduism and Christianity. It believed in corporate worship and had a profound reverence for Jesus Christ. But the Samaj has been declining for many years now.

If the Brahmo Samaj was a reform movement friendly to Christianity, the Arya Samaj, which originated in the Punjab in 1875 and has become firmly rooted in North India is, in some ways, a reactionary movement, openly hostile to Christianity. For several years now Arya Samaj missionaries have attacked Christian missions and have been responsible for some reconversion of Christians to Hinduism. In some cases, it was reported that undue pressure was used in effecting the change.

On the eve of Indian freedom, the State of Travancore (now part of Travancore-Cochin) adopted stringent measures affecting Christians, who constitute about 30 per cent. of the population of the State. Restrictions were placed on the building of places of worship and the creating or using of cemeteries and crematoria. Limitations were placed on the freedom of school boards of private schools (including mission and church schools) to select teachers and manage their finances. Fortunately, as the result of a change in administration, many of the restrictions were considerably eased.

In the summer of 1947, the Government of Madras adopted certain rules relating to religious instruction given in schools and colleges under private management. To

some of the rules no reasonable person could raise an objection, *e.g.*, religious instruction given should not attack other faiths. One of the other rules, however, was capable of administrative abuse. It read " staffs, pupils, and buildings of any school or college shall not be used for proselytization." In the peculiar circumstances prevalent in India, or for that matter, in any other land, it is not easy to say where ' conversion ' ends and ' proselytism ' begins.

The Government of Bombay placed similar restrictions on the award of grants-in-aid to missionary hospitals for the purchase of appliances and equipment. Two of the conditions laid down were:

(1) No proselytizing should be carried on among the patients and staff of the hospital through compulsory attendance at prayers, Bible classes, *conversations*, (author's italics) and distribution of tracts and gospels.

(2) Appointments to administrative ranks on the hospital staff should be open to all Christians, and non-Christians, and recruitments to the hospital staff should be from among all communities by public advertisement.

A few months after the attainment of political freedom, the Government of Madhya Pradesh (formerly known as the Central Provinces) required everyone contemplating change of religion to give notice of it to the local Magistrate; thereafter, a police investigation would be made into the circumstances pertaining to the conversion. Permission to change one's faith would be given only after the magistrate was convinced of the *bona fides* of the person contemplating conversion. Regulations were made also against the conversion of minors even when the parents were changing their religious faith. Thanks to the intervention of Mr. V. J. Patel for the most part, these restrictions were rescinded. But what was rescinded may be re-imposed again.

Until recently what discrimination and minor irritations prevailed were confined to a few of the States. But now it

would appear that the attitude of even the Union Government is undergoing change. This was evident in some of the answers given by the Home Minister of the Government of India on the floor of the Indian Parliament in 1953 to questions asked by members concerning missionary activities. Even without stopping to discover whether the charges made against certain missionaries were true or not, strictures were passed against foreign missions in general as indulging in "anti-Indian activities." It was even said by more than one that India should by law stop foreigners doing evangelistic work in the country and that the freedom to propagate religion guaranteed by the Indian Constitution was not meant to be applied to foreigners.

The attitude of the Government of India towards Christian missions and missionaries has been oscillating between liberality and stringent, if not humiliating, restrictions. During the months of September and October 1952, the number of *visas* for missionaries was temporarily suspended. But later on the Government of India reverted to its former liberal policy. At present writing (1954) it looks as though further restrictions were in the offing.

The oscillation of the Government of India is dependent partly upon international developments and partly upon the rise and fall in the strength of Hindu communal parties. The Government and people of India naturally resent the American attitude in the Far East. This situation has been made worse by the American arms aid program to Pakistan. There is deep resentment also against the treatment of Indians in South Africa. Some experienced observers think that the next few years will witness increasing antagonism to foreign missions, especially to those of American origin.

Formerly the Government was chary of giving *visas* to evangelistic missionaries, but now it seems that other types of missionaries also might experience difficulty. No missionary may be allowed to come for work with labour groups or for purely student community work. *Visas* are given on a yearly basis. Difficulties are placed in the way

of transferring missionaries from one place to another and from one type of work to another.

Police enquiries have been set up to enquire into the alleged political and other non-religious activities of missionaries, thus creating a wrong impression on the public mind. Some missionaries in border areas were asked to leave their stations without any satisfactory reason being given. When some were sent away from the country the church or mission concerned was not given an opportunity to make its representation.

Christian institutions and Indian Christians, too, have been experiencing difficulties in some of the States. Grants-in-aid have not always been awarded on the basis of merit or need. In one of the States a few Christian educational institutions have been asked to discontinue services for reasons other than educational. The same State has stopped educational aid which it has been giving to rural Christians of backward origin since 1934. Another State government says that it can give State aid only to Hindu scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Some State governments question the right of Christian institutions to appoint members of their own staff.

People of tribal origin in Assam are required to observe the Genna festival whether they still follow their ancestral faith or have become converts to other faiths. This requirement, among other things, means fifty to eighty days of enforced idleness in a year.

There has been considerable propaganda in the press in some parts of the country against all Christians; and some extreme Hindu communal organizations have been inciting Hindus against Christians. Some of the industrial magnates who control the English press have been agitating in some of their cheaper dailies for suitable amendment to the Constitution so as to make India a theocratic state, with the President of the Union becoming the Defender of the Faith (Hinduism). Normal Christian activities are at times interpreted as tending to create local disorder and a breach

of peace. In a few isolated places Christians have been forcibly reconverted to Hinduism. From the floor of one of the State legislatures the leading question was asked whether foreign missionaries were not acting as espionage agents. Non-governmental committees representing militant communal groups have been set up to watch the activities of Christians, including missionaries.

In the administration of Christian institutions, non-Christian public opinion and government were a while ago demanding the representation of non-Christians on governing bodies so long as the institutions received government grants-in-aid, but nothing came of it. So far, no objection has been raised to having Christians at the head of Christian colleges. In the case of Christian high schools, there is a growing demand, particularly on the part of the teaching staff, that the headmastership, or principalship, be determined by seniority and efficiency rather than by religious affiliation. Concerning the Vellore Christian Medical College, a Union Christian College, the government declared that f an enlarged grant-in-aid is made—and very few educational institutions can manage without it—recruitment both to the teaching staff and to the student body should be thrown open to all and that the government should have a place in the selection. The college took the bull by the horns and declined the enhanced grant. Similar demands have been made in the case of some other Christian colleges also.

Restrictions of a more stringent kind than are in operation today are likely to be placed on religious instruction given in Christian schools. The "conscience clause" has been in operation for a number of years in many provinces, now called States. According to it, no pupil may be given instruction in a religion other than his own, especially if it happens to be the Christian religion, if his parent or guardian at the beginning of the academic year states in writing that he does not want such instruction given. Today the law is being made more strict; if religious instruction is to be given at all to a pupil, the request for it must be made in

writing by the parent or guardian. In other words, the pupil must contract *in*, rather than contract *out*, as was done formerly. Some Christian educational institutions seek to circumvent this obstacle by including in the application form a question as to whether or not religious instruction for the pupil is desired, thus bringing to bear an indirect pressure for positive declaration for Christian instruction on parents who approach Christian schools for secular rather than religious training. Many parents and guardians answer the question affirmatively, and sometimes insincerely, believing that the chances of admission will be enhanced thereby !

It should not surprise anyone if in the near future some of the State governments should enact legislation requiring schools of large enrolment to employ Hindu teachers to teach Hinduism to Hindu pupils, Moslem teachers to teach Islam to Moslem pupils, and Christian teachers to teach Christianity to Christian pupils. Another possibility is the enactment of " released time " from schools such as that obtaining in some parts of the United States, when pupils may go to their respective places of worship, there to be instructed in the tenets of their faith by their own religious teachers.

" HINDUIZING " OF INDIAN CULTURE

Already subtle attempts are being made to " Hinduize " Indian culture. The Hindu reverence for the cow is being enforced by some municipal councils even on non-Hindus by the banning of cow slaughter[6] for food purposes. When important state functions are being celebrated, prayers with definite Hindu associations are chanted and coconuts broken. It is becoming more and more common for Hindu government officials, in an official or semi-official capacity, to attend Hindu religious functions, and thereby give encouragement to certain aspects of Hindu life which may not be in keeping with the secular nature of the Indian State. Many Indian

[6] Although Hindus hold the cow in greater reverence than the bull, the popular term, cow slaughter, includes bull slaughter.

stamps are being produced, some of which depict Hindu deities. The Home Minister of a provincial government has been known to reprimand a Christian Superintendent of Police for allowing his subordinates to eat with their shoes on, an objectionable practice to orthodox Hindus.

None of these practices is of serious consequence. Nevertheless, the cumulative effect of such restrictions and of others to come may be to give a distinctly Hindu bias to Indian thought and institutions. Enlightened Indian Christians will not object to Hindu practices *per se*. They will go to the utmost limit in endeavoring to understand and appreciate all that is best in their environment. Yet they are certain to draw the line when there is an open, or veiled, violation of fundamental personal rights in a democratic society. In a matter like cow slaughter, it is better to rely upon the good sense of meat-eaters to impose a self-denying ordinance to refrain from eating beef rather than to make it a matter of legal prohibition. "Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend."[7]

There are many elements in Hindu culture of which Indian Christians and non-Christians can be rightly proud; as, for instance, the passionate search of the Hindu for religious truth and reality, profound reverence for life, the ideal of non-attachment or detached interest in life, the family socialism underlying the joint family system, and the willingness to sacrifice all for the knowledge and joy of God. On the other hand, there are elements which need to be carefully scrutinized and perhaps abandoned.

On all sides there are ample signs of Hindu resurgence. Men who formerly did not much care for *pujas* and idol worship are now resorting to them more and more. Whether the primary motive behind it is religious or political or something else, one does not need to bother to enquire. The fact is that after many long years of a lack of official patronage,

[7] I Cor. 8 : 13.

Hinduism has come into its own and many a Hindu who was formerly indifferent to the claims of institutional and ceremonial religion now finds in Hindu resurgence a partial satisfaction of his national soul.

No one who is both a Christian and an Indian patriot need object to Hindu resurgence so long as it takes the form of reform, revival, renaissance or even revolt.[8] But when resurgence takes the form of bending backwards to the extent of becoming a reactionary movement, justifying everything in the past including caste, idol worship, and extreme forms of cow reverence, one has a right to feel concerned.

The Christian has no right to object to any custom, practice or belief merely because it is Hindu, Moslem or Sikh. He must prove all things and hold fast to that which is good. His preference must be for Indian tradition and genius, the only justifiable departure being in the pursuit of higher thinking, greater spirituality, and larger social values. The immature person imitates; the mature person assimilates and re-creates.

The Situation by no Means Desperate

A narration of various forms of restriction and the "Hinduizing" of Indian culture should not make one believe that the situation is by any means desperate, or beyond control. While vocal Hindu extremists may run down Christians and Christian missionaries, a large bulk of Hindus are free from intolerance. Bigotry and fanaticism have never been a part of Hinduism. When it comes to intellectual tolerance, no other religion in the world equals the Hindu religion. Thoughtful Hindus everywhere warmly appreciate the compassionate approach of the Christian church in India. It is widely recognized that Christian missions mark a new day in human relations. They offer to all those who need it the right hand of fellowship in a spirit of utter selflessness, deep compassion, and an all-inclusive love.

[8] An analysis I owe to Dr. P. D. Devanandan.

No check is placed on the activities of the Muslim League in India, although it was largely instrumental in bringing about the partition of India. Moslems carry on their religious worship and pursue their daily avocations, without any let or hindrance. Right in the heart of some cities, surrounded by Hindu traders and shop-keepers, Moslems are allowed to build mosques.

Fair treatment is generally meted out to all minorities, including Christians, in admission to public services. There is a written, or in some cases, unwritten law in many areas to restrict representation in public services to the numerical strength of a religious community in the State or nation as a whole. This restriction adversely affects Indian Christians in particular, who are better qualified than almost any other group except Brahmins, for educational, medical, nursing, and social welfare services. Yet in the defense services, as well as in the All-India Broadcasting Department, Indian Christians are well represented. Fearing discrimination of one kind or another, when India became free, some Anglo-Indians, *i.e.*, those of mixed origin, migrated to other lands. But Indian Christians have had no such intention. They are fully children of the soil and are determined to live in the country of their birth and to give it the fullest measure of service of which they are capable.

How to Improve the Situation

Indian Christian Responsibility

If Indian Christians were wise they would try to make their religion as intrinsic a part of India as possible. They would try to manage their affairs with the minimum possible outside assistance. Hindus often wonder why Christians should depend on outside agencies for financial aid, direction and leadership or why they should not evolve their own theology, and their own ecclesiastical forms and institutions. The argument that the Indian Christian is a part of a world-wide movement, of an ecumenical Christianity, does not very much impress the Hindu. He rightly asks the question,

why do you not assimilate your own culture and the traditions of your people before you think in terms of ecumenical Christianity? Many Hindus still entertain a suspicion that Indian Christians are foreign in their outlook, tastes, and social behavior. Some of them even feel that Indian Christians may easily become "fifth columnists" when the country is attacked by some Western nation.

It is obvious to any clear-sighted person that Christians must identify themselves with the people of the country, except where such identification is contrary to the claims of Christ. During the days of the national struggle, the political record of Indian Christians showed marked moral weakness. Few Indian Christians put their vaunted ideals of service and self-sacrifice into operation when the testing time came between 1921 and 1945. While a scattering of high-spirited ones joined the Gandhian movement and suffered imprisonment and privation, a great many elected to sit on the fence and watch, often excusing themselves by saying that they were economically poor and could not, therefore, indulge in such luxuries as non-violent resistance, boycott of foreign goods, and the picketing of foreign cloth shops—weapons used by Gandhi and his followers in the national struggle against Britain.

Although Indian Christians did not become narrowly communalistic like the Moslems or like sections of the depressed classes, their attitude towards communalism, particularly that of their leaders, was often one of opportunism. In theory they supported joint electorates, in which voting was done regardless of religion, but in practice they were not averse to taking advantage of separate, or communal, electorates when such advantages were offered. In the United Provinces (now called Uttar Pradesh) and in the Punjab, Christians were somewhat more communalistic than in South India, frequently making common cause with reactionary Moslems and selfish depressed class leaders. Their argument was that since the other minorities were benefiting themselves by a program of separatism, they, too, had to do the same

if they were to survive. In the local freedom movement in Travancore, however, the Syrian Christians, the oldest Christian community in India, played a leading role. Their superior educational and economic condition was one of the principal causes of this difference in attitude.

It is encouraging to find that in the field of politics Indian Christians are progressively adopting a nationalistic point of view, placing national good above communal advantage. Even in the years before the partition of India, when Mohammedan separatism was becoming more and more assertive, and other minorities were following suit, Indian Christians were reputed to be the only group that was not a problem to Indian nationalism. But this at best was only a negative contribution. With the coming of political independence, Christians have voluntarily surrendered the reservation of seats in legislatures in those provinces, or states, where these were conceded. They are now completely willing to throw themselves on the goodwill and generosity of the majority community. Whether the response from the other side will be equally magnanimous remains to be seen. The Christian community in the political field has acted as an open community and is treated as one. The risk the community has taken is in the interest of the community itself and of the country. All that Christians want is that no discrimination be practised against them.

Another source of disaffection between Hindus and Christians in the past arose out of the situation in which many early Christian converts condemned so harshly their old faith and the cultures associated with it that they set in motion a program of Westernization which has often made the Indian Christian a stranger in his own country. The intolerance of many Hindus contributed to the same end. When a man became a Christian, he was, in one way or another, socially ostracized. His only alternative was to move into the hospitable mission compound provided by mission funds and there develop, willingly or unwillingly, a "mission-compound mentality." Many foreign missionar-

ies, nurtured in the belief that their own Western culture was the best in the world, helped to complete the process. Not a few converts, who were orthodox vegetarians before conversion, began to eat meat, even beef. Indian names, beautiful to the ears of the Indian and meaningful to him, were relinquished for Western names. Thus Kamala (lotus) became Camilla; Moti Lal (red pearl), Mott Lyall; Thasan (servant of God), Dawson. Certain hygienic practices of the Hindus were exchanged for those of doubtful value, and a small number of Indian Christian women discarded the graceful *sari* in favor of the short skirts and high-heeled shoes of Western women, which to most Indians appear ridiculous.

More than superficial, these changes threatened to be symptomatic of an internal change. Many Indian Christians were thought to have "thrown out the baby along with the bath water" and to have become strangers to Indian music and folklore, to Indian proverbs, parables, and epics, to Indian religion, sociology, and philosophy.

In recent years a wholesome reversion from these changes has been taking place. Many Christian schools now teach the classical interpretive dance, Indian art, and Indian music. Indian Christians are re-discovering the validity of Indian sanctity of the family, family socialism (engendered by the Hindu joint family system), and decentralized economic and political life. Such Indian Christian leaders as the late K. T. Paul, S. Jesudasan and A. J. Appasamy (now Bishop) and such foreign missionaries as the late J. N. Farquhar and Nicol Macnicol, have done much to develop Christianity in an Indian context. Christians in India are increasingly coming to realize that the understanding and appreciation of other religious faiths and experiences does not mean the surrender, or minimization, of what is unique in one's own religious faith and experience.

One other area where Christians can do much to improve the current situation is to disabuse the minds of Hindus of the commonly held belief that Indian Christians in church

and mission employ are agents of foreign groups. In performing this task it is necessary for Indian Christians to take over more and more direct responsibility for the continuance of the Christian program in India. This should be particularly true with regard to evangelism. Mission property and leadership in the Church should pass more and more into Indian hands.

In spite of Indian Christians doing their utmost to improve the relationship between Christians and non-Christians, there may be serious infringement of the civil and political rights of Indian Christians. Whatever may be their present or future grievances, Indian Christians will be making a mistake if they develop a martyr complex or look constantly to the West for support and sympathy. They will more wisely seek to win the hearts of non-Christian people through a genuine love of their country, disinterested service, and strong, sterling character. They must prove to the hilt that they can be both Indian and Christian a hundred per cent.

Missionary Responsibility

If Indian Christians have a duty to improve the present situation, so have missionaries. Foreign missions have no right to force themselves on India if India does not want them. An influential American Christian journal such as *The Christian Century* believes that on the basis of the principles laid down by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations, a kind of free enterprise should exist in the missionary field.[9] In trying to appreciate this point of view, as opposed to the point of view of the Government of India, one may speculate on the amount of tolerance that would be shown by the United States if the stream of Hindu missionaries to that country became as great as the stream of Christian missionaries to India. Hundreds of American missionaries have labored in India in the past. In 1949, out of a total of 4,170 Protestant missionaries in India, 778

[9] "Missions in Asia's Revolution," an editorial, *The Christian Century*, Vol. LXVII, No. 4, Jan. 25, 1950, p. 102.

were North American missionaries. There are probably many more now. Many are sincerely dedicated to sharing their vital religious experience; but some of them in holier-than-thou attitude, preach a narrow, exclusive doctrine of salvation, and they strive for mass converts from the majority religion of India. To vivify the comparison, the American can conjecture his reaction to a great influx of Hindu missionaries to the United States, bent on weaning Protestants and Catholics from the traditional folds in order to establish a Hindu culture in the United States ! Yet this is the situation of the Christian missionary in India, trying as he does to separate Indians from their ancient religion, and sometimes succeeding in the attempt.

Many enthusiasts among missionaries spoil a good case for Christianity and Christian missions by bad argument, when they assume that all religious truth and vital religious experience are to be found only within Christianity. However, while acknowledging the manifold ways in which God has revealed Himself and His holy purpose for man, it is well to remember that the quality of the revelation made in Jesus is to be found nowhere else in history. Therefore, in presenting Christ and his claims to the world at large, the missionary should seek to combine, in the words of K. Hartenstein, "downright intrepidity and radical humility"[10] —intrepidity as regards the message and humility as regards the messenger. The task of the Christian missionary is to proclaim truth in humility, the truth which he has seen and experienced in Jesus Christ.

Since the close of the War some of the smaller and more extreme Christian sects from the West have come into India in large numbers. Their theology is obscurantist and they rely primarily on emotionalism and harangue in winning converts to their particular sects. Quite frequently their attacks have been levelled against fellow-Christians, who do not agree with their outmoded theology, rather than against

[10] The Madras Series (New York : International Missionary Council, Vol. I, 1939), p. 136.

non-Christians. They have a religious vocabulary and technique all their own, constituting something like a 'party line', which is often associated with the communists in another context. One often wonders what a thoughtful Hindu thinks of their preaching and witnessing, although he may be moved by the earnestness of their preaching and richness of their singing. At one time the Government of India suggested to the National Christian Council of India to act as a screening agent for all the non-Roman Catholic missionaries who come out to India. Apparently nothing much came of it with the result that most non-Christians lump all Christian missions and missionaries together and consider all of them as ante-deluvian in their thinking and aggressive in their methods.

If the preaching of some of the narrow sects leaves the Hindu mildly amused, the presentation of the Gospel by the Barthians strikes him as bordering upon spiritual insolence. As late as 1937, Dr. H. Kraemer, author of *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World*, a book that was regarded as striking the keynote of the International Missionary Conference in Madras in 1938, wrote that Christianity alone contained the revelation of God to man. Other religions, he claimed, were but human efforts at understanding God's will and were not the genuine revelation of God to man. No one who has a profound understanding of God and religion can support the point of view that an all-loving and merciful God confines His revelation to the followers of but one religion. The part of wisdom and of Christian humility, it would seem, would prescribe that the missionary be exceedingly cautious in what he says on matters of such deep inwardness as an exclusive revelation of God, or the only way of salvation. The most he can be prepared to say concerning revelation is that the difference between Christianity and non-Christian faiths is not in regard to the *fact* of revelation but in regard to the *content* of revelation. That is to say, *that* God reveals Himself to men of all climes and faiths is a fact so apparent, as to leave no

grounds, or should leave no grounds, for disagreement. *What* he reveals is variously interpreted by all religions. It is in this latter field that the Christian missionary rightly labors, sowing what he interprets to be the content of God's revelation, *i.e.*, the transformation of man from a natural to a spiritual being through Jesus Christ.

The Hindu does not make exclusive claim either for his religion or for his own personal religious experience. He considers religion as a quest, and he calls himself a seeker after truth. Here is one who behaves not as though he "had already attained" spiritual perfection, or was "already perfect," but as one who tries to "follow after."[11] The two earnest and searching questions which the Hindu asks of the religious-minded man are (1) Have you found God? and (2) If so, can you help me to find Him? Unless the missionary understands and appreciates the nature of the Hindu religious quest, he cannot speak to his needs. He can be effective only in so far as he can say that "what we have known and seen we testify to you."[12] Or that: "We have tasted and have seen that the Lord is good."[13]

A sphere in which Hindus will most welcome a changed attitude on the part of missionaries is the sphere of religious conversion. This means that missionaries must place less and less emphasis on numbers and rely more and more upon the operation of the Holy Spirit in the minds and hearts of those who have been exposed to Jesus Christ and to Christian teaching and living. There are many missionaries who are content to carry on their work of teaching and preaching, of healing and ministering to the manifold needs of man, even if there be no single convert as a result of their work.

Yet a great majority of them would say, and say rightly with Paul: "necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel!"[14] To the Christian, evangelism is at the center of his faith. It is the inner compulsion for witnessing to the essential gospel doctrines of man's

[11] Phil. 3 : 12. [12] John 1 : 3. [13] Psalms 34 : 8.
[14] I Cor. 9 : 16.

sinful state and need of salvation, to reveal God's grace in Christ, to the necessity of spiritual renewal, and to participate in the experience of redemption through faith. If the meaning of evangelism is to be understood aright by the Hindu, care should be taken not to present it in the form "accept Christ or perish." *That They May Have Life* by the Rev. D. T. Niles of Ceylon is excellent inspiring reading for the Christian, but is likely to strike the non-Christian as dogmatic. Mr. Niles describes evangelism as the proclamation of an event and an invitation to an encounter. The proclamation is the proclamation of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ and the encounter is the meeting of the living Christ and of God. Later in the book when Mr. Niles interprets evangelism on the basis of personal experience, he is likely to meet with less opposition from the side of the thoughtful Hindu. He affirms that it is the experience of those who seek a meaning for themselves in and through Jesus Christ that Jesus gives them a sense of forgiveness of sins; he gives them the dynamic to live victoriously in daily life; he gives them inner security, composure of spirit, and power for present service; and he helps them to grow out of the old husk of existence into a new and joyous and purposeful life. The Christian passes on to his brother this great evangel.

So long as the Hindu has an almost instinctive aversion to conversion, proselytism, and evangelism, there is no reason why a missionary should not begin with other interpretations of the missionary's task which are less controversial. In these days when the shrinkage of the world from the point of view of distance is taking place rapidly, Christian missions may be presented as a manifestation of international goodwill. The meaning of the parable of the Good Samaritan is that the world is but a single neighborhood in which any needful human being, wheresoever or whosoever he may be, is, in a very special sense, neighbor to all. It is in the spirit of this parable that Christian missions are charged to remove ignorance and superstition, to promote literacy, to improve economic and social condi-

tions, to minister to the sick, and to free people from every form of tyranny or discrimination. Their charge is not to serve capitalism nor socialism, nor imperialism nor racialism.

Christian missions seek to serve the needs of the whole man. While the spiritual regeneration and moral uplift of human beings everywhere is the primary concern of missions, as true pioneers of " the good life ", they continually seek to explore and discover new avenues of service and usefulness in the social, economic, and political fields in which they find themselves and on which they must exert morally sound influence. They seek to out-think, out-live, out-love, and out-die others by purer thinking, greater sacrificial living, more inclusive and deeper loving, and by more courageous dying.

Non-Christian India has produced many men and women noted for the purity of their lives and saintliness of character. Many of them have had all the advantages of modern education and have left behind the shackles of caste and superstition. Nevertheless, there are millions whose lives are governed by gross ignorance, blind superstition, and countless meaningless customs and inhibitions. To some of these at least, in the absence of adequate facilities provided by government or voluntary agencies, Christian missions seem to offer the only hope of light and life. If a drowning man has a right to catch at a straw, so has the outcaste, or depressed class Hindu, the right to avail himself of the opportunity extended to him for the improvement of his economic, educational, and social conditions, even though his motives are selfish in part.

Even in the case of the well-educated and cultured Hindus represented by " higher " or philosophical Hinduism, Christian missions serve as a foil, stimulating them to discover the less worthy things in their ancestral faith and to endeavor to reach new moral and spiritual heights. Christian missions enable non-Christian faiths to re-vivify and re-vitalize themselves; and this must be regarded as a direct gain to them as well as an indirect gain to Christianity. Should Hinduism

or Islam be disposed to ostracize Christian missions, they should think carefully before taking such a drastic measure, for in so doing they would harm themselves more than they would hurt Christian missions. It is more than likely that the great religions of today would decline morally and spiritually if it were not for the corrective influence of Christianity and Christian missions.

Christian missions may further justify themselves by their attempts at the unification of the world. With Jesus Christ as the evaluator, they may help to bring about a world civilization and a cross-fertilization of world cultures. The purpose of Christian missions is not to support one culture or one civilization to the exclusion of others; it is to evaluate all cultures by the spirit of Jesus Christ. In so doing, Christian missions stimulate each culture to re-vitalize itself and to become an integral part of a universal culture, each culture retaining its local variations.

Even a casual observer of things Indian cannot fail to see the indirect influence of Christian ethics in India. Non-Christian India is increasingly accepting and adapting Christ's standards of life and conduct. There is increasing appreciation for the Christian ideals of personal purity, of honesty and truthfulness, of straightforwardness, of manliness and courage, of complete fidelity in marital relations, and of reverence for human personality. The Christian institution of monogamy is becoming the rule of the day. A place of respect and dignity is being given to the woman, whether married or unmarried, and whether she has children or no children.

In humility, world Christian missions offer to all people the possibility of purposeful and satisfying lives in Jesus Christ through the appropriation of His ever-living presence. Without minimizing the vital religious experience of non-Christians, Christian missionaries can maintain that Jesus Christ, more than any other person, is able to give a full and complete life to those who trust in Him.

Even after missionaries bring about the changes and emphases mentioned above, they may be suspected for political

reasons. As long as India was governed by the British, the common belief concerning missions among non-Christians was that they were the right arm of imperialism. With the coming of independence that belief has declined. But it is likely to be revived now because of the aggressive aspects of American foreign policy, particularly in the East. The slogan "Let Asians fight Asians" will long be remembered by the Oriental and be used against America and missions.

Christian missionaries in India need constantly to remember that they are here as the guests of the country and as guests there are certain unwritten rules which they must obey. If they deliberately take part in controversial politics or undermine the authority or prestige of the lawfully constituted government of the country, as a few were accused of doing among the tribal people of Assam, it is only proper that they should be asked to withdraw from the land. The missionary is entitled to a moral judgment even on political issues, but not to a political judgment on controversial political matters. The only qualifications are that he should be in full possession of the facts of the case and exercise the same kind of objectivity in evaluating the policies of his own country as he exercises in evaluating the policies of the guest country. Missions and mission boards will do well to remind the supporting churches and, through them, their home country at large how easy it is to undermine the missionary work of decades by a single un-Christian policy statement of the State department or a single discriminatory act of the legislature or the extra-legal and scare-mongering activities of super-patriots.

How to Change Non-Christian Attitudes

The situation relating to Christians and missions in India cannot improve unless there is a profound change of heart on the part of non-Christians. This change cannot be brought about by argument or disputation or by the cataloguing of grievances. It can best be brought about by a moral appeal to all that is best in non-Christians.

Like others in their position, in their relation to Christians and missions many non-Christians set up a man of straw and knock him down. They still find it difficult to realize how a person can be both an earnest Christian and a true lover of his country and its ancient culture. The picture which some have of the missionary is that he is a ravenous wolf rummaging the country for the flesh of innocent lambs. They are less than fair to Christian missions when they assume that their only goal is the swelling of the number of Christians. Whatever may be true of the past, it is not true today that the governing consideration of missions is numbers. If non-Christians are to be convinced of it, Christian missions must be completely scrupulous in the methods which they employ in conversion and not lay as much emphasis on mass conversions as before. Dr. E. Stanley Jones writes:

> "There is no doubt in the minds of many that there have been too many hasty mass baptisms which have involved little or no spiritual or moral change. That should be stopped and people taken only when, after a course of instruction for not less than a year, they begin to show the fruits of the Spirit."[15]

As regards the conversion of minors under eighteen, Christian missions and churches should impose a self-denying ordinance upon themselves not to take any minor into the church without the consent of his parents or guardians. This is already the general rule.

In helping to adjust the Hindu attitude towards Christians and missions, appeal may be made to the traditional Hindu spirit of tolerance. The Hindu idea of tolerance is that all religions have both truth and error in them and that different religions are like different rivers which empty themselves into the self-same ocean and lose their identity. All religions are equal, says the Hindu, because all are equal to Hinduism ! But if he is really tolerant, he must allow others

[15] *The National Christian Council Review*, *op. cit.*, Aug. 1947.

to interpret tolerance according to their light. To an enlightened Christian, religions are both like each other and unlike each other and where they differ is as significant and vital as where they resemble each other.

The Hindu is right in thinking that conversions which are actuated by motives other than religious are spurious. But he is wrong in thinking that they should be stopped by legal enactment. The enlightened public opinion of the community, including the enlightened public opinion of the Christian community, is the best means of stopping spurious conversions.

Appeal may also be made to the sense of fair play of the Hindu. If India is to become a genuinely democratic and secular state, as she aspires to become, she must provide an open road to talent. It is true that India has an Indian Christian Governor, an Indian Christian woman Minister, an Indian Christian Judge of the Supreme Court, and three Indian Christian Vice-Chancellors. But six swallows do not make a summer under the vast Indian sky. Many Indian universities and professional colleges, supported by state funds, fail to employ a fair number of Indian Christians on their teaching and administrative staffs even when many are available. The record of local bodies is even worse. In providing educational aid for the backward communities, fairness demands that the factor to be taken into account should be the degree of backwardness of the person or group concerned, and not their religious affiliation. When charges are made against missionaries, especially against those who work in tribal areas, and public enquiries are set up, they should be made up of people who command the respect of one and all, and not of partisans. When proper enquiry is made into the alleged non-religious and "anti-Indian activities" of missionaries, one may find a few misguided enthusiasts among them, but not many scheming politicians seeking to upset the stability of the country.

One final form of appeal is to the patriotic motive. If Pakistan was carved out of India, it was not merely because

of the political machinations of certain Moslem leaders. It was partly because of the frustration brought about by Hindu caste exclusiveness. Caste was to a large extent the progenitor of communalism. Pakistan might have come about even if the majority Hindu community had been completely fair to the minority Moslem community at all times. But caste mentality was undoubtedly a precipitating factor. There are still 40 million Moslems in India who are loyal citizens of India, pursuing their vocations peacefully. There may be some Quislings among them. If the evil is to be nipped in the bud, the majority community should be more than just to the minorities. Disgruntled minorities are a potential danger to any country, especially to a heterogeneous democracy such as India.

It is possible to convince oneself that the Moslems are generally fanatical and bigoted, that they are aggressive, and that they have not yet transcended such a tribal idea as the brotherhood of believers. But what about the Hindu attitude towards Indian Christians? On the whole, they are a poor, law-abiding, and harmless community who do not have any territorial ambition of their own. The Hindu, in the name of patriotism and the good of his country, should ask himself what he stands to gain by alienating the sympathies of such a small non-vocal community. Should the Hindu not try his level best to win Christians for nationalism and Indian culture? When caste, linguism, and provincialism are weakening the country, why add to the list the discontent and sullenness of an intelligent group like the Christians?

Arguments such as these make a spontaneous appeal to patriots of the caliber of Nehru. But there are many others whose sympathies are narrow, and whose horizon is limited. The constant endeavor of Indian Christians and missionaries, in their own interest as well as in the interest of the country at large, should be to encourage and strengthen the intelligent and liberal elements in the population and leadership of the country.

One other aspect of the patriotic appeal has reference to India's place in the world. Indians are rightly proud of the leadership of Nehru in trying to keep India out of the two-power contest and in refusing the proffered military aid of the U.S.A. At the same time Indians are conscious of the fact that India is fast becoming "an international orphan." Pakistan can work up a Pan-Islamic fervor. In all critical situations the U.S.A. can rely upon the so-called Free World and the active or silent support of the Latin American countries. Empire-owning countries often stand together, as they did on most African questions on the floor of the United Nations. India, on the other hand, has no such staunch supporters. Many Asian countries may silently approve Nehru's foreign policy and his fearlessness. But they are militarily so weak that they dare not offend any of the big powers. When such is the case, does India gain anything by causing constant petty annoyances to an inoffensive group such as the foreign missionaries? If she wants to stop further economic aid and technical assistance from countries which have an ulterior motive in view, there may not be much regret in the country. But to drive the missionaries out or make life unbearable for them because of the over-enthusiasm or obscurantism of some is to cut off the nose in order to spite the face.

CHAPTER III

DOES INDIA WANT FOREIGN MISSIONARIES ?

THIS question is frequently asked not only by the critics of missions but also by their friends; by the sending churches as much as by the receiving churches; by foreign missionaries as well as by indigenous Christians. There is no one-word answer, 'Yes' or 'No' to this complicated question. Missionaries are neither welcomed enthusiastically by one and all, nor is their wholesale departure from the country desired by any except by some extremists, such as the communalists who find attack upon missions and Christians a convenient stalking-horse for the realization of their political ends.

Non-Christian criticisms of Christian missions have been fully discussed in the previous chapter. Some of the criticisms are: allegiance of missionaries to the interests of foreign countries; tendency to destroy certain Hindu social customs and to replace them with customs of questionable value, as in the fields of food, dress, and family life; disregard for certain lasting values in Indian culture and tradition; use of proselytizing methods which do not accord with true conversion; neo-orthodox approach to non-Christian religions in which Christianity is presented categorically as the one and only pathway to God; jealous retention of important posts in the hands of foreign missionaries rather than their transfer to the hands of nationals; and disinclination on the part of missionaries to identify themselves with the Indian community.

Having dealt with the non-Christian point of view, attention in this chapter may be directed to the point of view of the Indian Christian and to other closely related internal problems. The outline for the chapter may take the form of:

1. The views of Christian Indians and of local communities.

2. Past policies of missions and missionaries and the need for revision.
3. Type of missionary desired and the types of services for which missionaries are wanted.

What Indian Christians Say

In their attitude towards missionaries from abroad, Indian Christians range from uncritical praise to unqualified condemnation. More of the uncritical kind are naturally found among mission and church employees and first generation Christians than among those outside mission and church employ or among second and third generation Christians. The Managing Committee of the Bombay Indian Christian Association ranges itself unequivocally on the side of the missionaries when it says:

> "The Church of Christ is a universal Church and there can be no place in Christian work for any distinctions on lines of nationality, race or color. We, therefore, emphatically disagree with the ill-conceived cry of 'Foreign Missionaries Quit India!' raised in certain disgruntled and irresponsible quarters."[1]

One chief reason why Indian Christians in general still welcome foreign missionaries is economic. It is an open secret that the Indian Church is not yet out of its swaddling clothes so far as its economic support is concerned. To give an extreme illustration, only Rs. 6,000 of the total income of Rs. 112,500 of the National Christian Council of India, the organization with which nearly all Protestant Churches in India are affiliated, is from Indian sources, nearly half of this Rs. 6,000 being contributed by provincial Christian Councils. The rest comes from mission boards abroad.

In defense of this particular case of apathy of the Indian Churches, it may be said that the National Christian Council falls among many stools because it is only a co-ordinating body and no church feels any individual responsibility for supporting it. However, even in support of their own Churches,

[1] *The Indian Witness*, Vol. 77, No. 1, Lucknow, India, January 2, 1947.

Indian Christians have not been outstanding. The Syrian Churches of Travancore and Cochin are self-supporting and self-governing, but the salaries of their priests are very low. The churches of the Tirunelveli diocese in South India have gone a long way in the direction of self-support. This cannot be said of the Churches of India as a whole. The extenuating factors are the general poverty of Christians, particularly in the villages, and the paucity of Christians in trade and commerce. A fair proportion of Indian Christians work in government services, but they do not feel impelled to contribute generously. Indian Christians in general have not yet begun to realize that the Church and its many institutions are their own.

It would appear that the continuance of heavy foreign subsidies, instead of strengthening the local churches, might mean their continued dependence upon outside help. Hindus and Moslems do not look to foreign aid. The Indian Christian church alone does. On the other hand, the Hindus and Moslems do not have as well-organized, comprehensive, or continuous a program of activities as do Christians, nor in proportion to their numbers do they have the same numbers of schools, colleges, hospitals, and rural centres to support.

Indian church workers in general are in favour of continued subsidies from abroad because it saves them the trouble of cultivating their own local congregations. Without laying down a hard and fast rule, according to which only a self-supporting church may be permitted to become self-governing, it is necessary to encourage the church in India to work in that direction so that privileges and responsibilities may go hand-in-hand. Indian Christians must feel impelled to contribute far more than they now do to the support of their church and to its institutions. Where help cannot be given in the form of money, it may be given in kind or in the form of unpaid voluntary service. The late Bishop Azariah of Dornakal was able to conduct much of the evangelistic work of his diocese through unpaid, voluntary help. Writing on the subject, he said: "The fact that certain

individuals are employed whose profession is to preach the Gospel has the inevitable result of effectually killing any spirit of voluntary evangelism in the Christian community. The church is the responsible body for the evangelization of all within its reach.[2]

Many Indian Christians are eager for the continuance of missions and mission funds from abroad because they provide convenient berths for them in the matter of employment. A frequent criticism of non-Christians is that in the name of maintaining the Christian purpose of an educational institution or a hospital, Indian Christians of second and third-rate ability whose Christianity is not of a shining character are given positions, while non-Christians with better qualifications are either kept out or, if taken, given a stepmotherly treatment. The same critics argue that this kind of alleged discrimination is a form of communalism; and when non-missionary institutions, including government institutions, indulge in discrimination against Christians it is to be interpreted as retaliatory in character. Without supporting this criticism completely, it may be freely admitted that there is enough substratum of truth in it to provide an excuse for discrimination against Christians.

For many years missionaries in India have been subjected to both merited and unmerited criticism by the younger generation of Christians. Sons of certain Indian ministers and catechists so violently reacted to the kind of treatment supposed to have been given to their fathers by some missionary or missionary institution that they vowed never to enter mission or church service. This situation has improved greatly since the Indian Christian has come to understand more clearly the meaning and value of Christianity and the responsibility which Christianity places upon him for its propagation and its manifold applications. It is not unusual today to find the son of a Christian worker wanting to step into his father's shoes.

[2] *The International Missionary Conference*, Vol. III, p. 41, Madras, 1939.

Yet there are certain vital factors which make fraternization and comradeship between foreign missionaries and Indian workers difficult. Missionaries, though in decreasing numbers as Indians assume responsibility, are still in many cases the paymasters. Although in the handling of money they act only as a clearing house, many of them unconsciously come to feel that they are the owners and dispensers of that money. Designated gifts sent to individual missionaries tend to increase their sense of self-importance and the range of their personal patronage. Not having the same opportunity to be generous with the aid of other people's money, the Indian worker develops an attitude either of cringing subordination or of sullen antagonism.

The latter feeling is increased by the wide gap that often exists between the salaries and allowances of the two persons concerned. (The same is true when the paymaster is an Indian !). In India, where salaries are often in strict relation to educational attainments, as judged by the capacity to pass public examinations and the official ranking of the post to which one is appointed, missionary salaries are a source of much confusion. When an Indian graduate of an Indian university is paid one-third to one half of the salary of a man from abroad, although both have the same academic qualifications and are appointed to similar posts, there is natural resentment. The foreign missionary receives a free furnished house and allowances of various kinds, such as household allowance, summer hill residence allowance, children's allowances, medical and furlough allowances; while the Indian worker is left to manage on an inadequate salary or perhaps a salary *plus* a free house in some cases, this partly on the ground that the average Indian Christian in salaried secular employment does not receive much more. Indian Christians who hold such posts as those of a bishop, district superintendent, or president of a college receive comparatively high salaries, but the bulk of those who enter Christian service do not. One consequence of this situation is that

Indian Christians with ability and high academic qualifications do not offer themselves for Christian service.

The foreign missionary in India does not receive a princely salary ! Probably in most cases he has very little to put aside when expenses are defrayed. But in a country in which the average income of a person is $ 50 a year, the salaries and allowances of missionaries appear princely. Missionary salaries are generally based on needs. There is no time scale in operation. Thus a single missionary after thirty years of service may recieve less than a married missionary with children who has just entered the field. Wives of Indian workers usually receive pay for work performed as employees of the church organization, but wives of foreign missionaries do not.

The prevailing feeling among Indian Christians is that missionaries are much better cared for than are Indian workers. The Indian worker at times complains that it costs three or four times as much to bring a missionary with a family to India and to maintain him there as it does to support an Indian with the same or similar qualifications, doing the same or a similar type of work. It may be said here, however, that the mere holding of academic qualifications does not guarantee initiative, leadership, character, and capacity for organization and work. In addition, consideration needs to be given to the health and efficiency of a person coming into a country of drastically different climate and food conditions. Add to this the fact that the missionary movement is not conceived as a financial institution but as a spreading of the word of Jesus Christ by which others may be able to elevate themselves. Obviously, the problems arising in this area will fade away as the Indian Church passes finally into the hands of Indian Christians.

It is argued that a great many missionary candidates could do much better financially if they chose to remain in their own country, and that unless a fairly high remuneration was paid, the source of missionary supply would dry up. This argument has much force, particularly in the case of those

coming from the United States where gainful employment is easily obtainable. As it is, the foreign missionary in India belongs to the top ten per cent among the educated classes. He commands the comforts of those of the successful doctor, the lawyer, or the senior college professor in the well-paid, state-supported college.

All of this is to say that the problem of difference in salary between the foreign missionary and the Indian Christian worker is complex. The only certainty that can be expressed is that genuine partnership becomes difficult, if not impossible, between a highly paid foreign group and a poorly paid local group.

The economic inequality between the two groups is aggravated by other factors. One of these is the social distance between the two. While many missionaries practise a measure of democratic equality, the economic gulf separating them from their co-workers renders genuine social equality and hospitality difficult. The friendship of the missionary frequently tends to take the form of patronage. Brought up to believe that the ideas of sanitation, nutrition, and general living conditions prevalent in his country are the best in the world, which they may be, he finds it difficult to adjust himself to a totally different environment. Therefore, at work and at play and during his long annual holidays on the hills, where he usually carries much work to be done, he tends with some few exceptions, to seek the company of the members of his own race.

The Point of View of the Local Community

The local community made up of Christians and non-Christians in the midst of which missionary work is done is often appreciative of the services rendered. The expression 'missionary zeal' is frequently used by non-Christians as a standard for whole-hearted, disinterested, and persevering service. It is a glowing tribute to missions and missionaries. Yet in a country with such low living standards as India, the relative economic comfort of Christian missionaries

is regarded with considerable suspicion, especially by the Hindu who is accustomed to look upon the religious man as a man of poverty. Self-abnegation is a cardinal virtue to the Hindu "holy man." Yet the educated and well-travelled Hindu is willing to recognize the fact that the laborer is worthy of his hire even in the field of religious service. He also realizes the fact that while the foreign missionary in India lives comfortably when compared with the people of the country taken as a whole, his emoluments are not such as to make him wealthy. In superior government services, in university teaching and administration, and in business, many Indians with qualifications comparable to those of missionaries generally enjoy greater emoluments. Even after making all these admissions, the Hindu almost invariably associates in his own mind the life of a true missionary with a life of complete self-renunciation. When he thinks of a genuine Christian, it is men like St. Francis of Assisi, the self-sacrificing monks and nuns of the Catholic orders, and those of the stamp of Sadhu Sunder Singh, E. Forrester-Paton and R. R. Keithan, who come to his mind. He is not much enamored of the missionary, who spends much time in attending councils and conferences and in filling out reports or who travels by plane in order to sow the seeds of Christianity.

Local communities, both Christian and non-Christian, at times resent the fact that missionary societies are owners of considerable property in India. While a great deal of it has been bought with funds from foreign lands, some of it was received from the government as gifts or bought for nominal sums. For erecting certain buildings such as school, college and hospital, the local public has at times made contributions. Yet when disposal of such property takes place, Christian missions and the boards tend to act independently of Indian counsel, instances being known in which sales were so manipulated as to "make money." The reply made by missionary bodies to this charge is that such money is used for the extension of the Christian program in India

and elsewhere. While this reply is perfectly true, it is well to remember that a free and increasingly critical India will not long allow foreign missions to hold property and control it the way they used to do in the past. Aware of the new situation, many mission bodies are engaged in transferring titles of mission property to the indigenous church and reliable boards of trustees in the country. But the pace is not fast enough.

Christian missions at times hurt the pride of the local non-Christian community. To the outside world, missions give the impression that non-Christian religions and organizations are defunct and are unable to deal adequately with the individual and social problems of life. Tolerance of conversion to Christianity means to the Hindu and to the Moslem a self-admission of the relative bankruptcy of their own faith. Because of this, even those non-Christians who appreciate the humanitarian and philanthropic work of Christian missions do not want these converting and proselytizing activities to succeed.

A real but unfortunate reason for the critical attitude of some non-Christians is the very success of Christian missionary work in many fields. The zeal and devotion with which Christian missionaries have prosecuted their work have roused the jealousy of many non-Christians. This is particularly true in the fields of education, medical relief, rural uplift, social reform, and character-building. Human nature being what it is, such factors as envy and jealousy will need to be reckoned with for a long time to come.

A strange form of complaint which has currently appeared in the daily press is that when a series of Christian social functions, festivals, and religious meetings were held in a town under missionary and Indian Christian sponsorship, the local dignitaries including government officials were not invited, which had not been the usual custom hitherto. Inasmuch as this criticism emanated from a Hindu communal party, one wonders whether the motive behind the complaint was not the unsupported fear that Christians might be plotting

something against Hindus rather than the laudable desire to fraternize with Christians in their community program.

While some of the attacks and suspicions of the local community and of non-Christians in general are not of a serious character, there are others which cannot be set aside lightly. They are in great enough proportion to cause missionaries and their sending boards to re-analyze their motives and to reconsider their aims and methods of missionary endeavor. The time is ripe for a much greater degree of active co-operation with non-Christian religious agencies in the attainment of common goals.

Past Policies of Missions and of Missionaries

When all has been said about the good and bad impressions that missionaries have made on Indian people, the fact remains that India does want and need foreign missionaries. As to the number and type of missionaries required, the determining voice should be that of the Indian church, acting in conjunction with the national leadership of the country planning for a better India. It is in the province of these Indian groups, together with the counsel of foreign missionaries and their boards, to decide when, where, and how foreign personnel can be most effective.

This establishment of responsibility entails a radical change on the part of mission boards in their task of recruitment. The larger denominations maintain candidate secretaries who serve as missionaries for periods of varying length. In a fast-changing world, however, experience under this system grows quickly obsolete. In view of this, responsible bodies in India, composed of foreign missionaries and Indians, should have the final word in the matter of appointment, the home board serving as a liaison body, indicating what candidates are available and what their qualifications are. Responsible nationals may be appointed to mission boards for short periods so that they can give advice on the spot concerning the type of missionaries needed and likely to be valuable in the changing world of today.

Until recently positions of leadership and authority rested with foreign missionaries. Since the Lindsay Commission on Higher Education (1932) made its report, efforts have been made to appoint suitable Indians to the leadership of educational institutions, and much has been accomplished. A number of Indians serve as district superintendents, bishops, and moderators. In the Methodist Episcopal Church 95 per cent. of district superintendents and 50 per cent. of bishops are Indians. In the Church of South India, which came into existence in 1947, however, six out of the fifteen bishops are non-nationals, most of them elected by Indians ! Although there is general agreement that they are all men of excellent caliber, there is force behind the criticism that Christian missions have been slow in transferring authority to Indian hands. They were even slower than was the British government in many cases and thereby lost numbers of talented Indians who should be bearing the burden of the church today. In an ecumenical organization like the Christian church, the distinction between " nationals " and " non nationals " carries no meaning.

Today missions and missionaries are not tenaciously retaining administrative posts or the handling of funds as they once did. There is growing emphasis among some of the larger and older missions to relinquish full responsibility to Indians, particularly in the Methodist Episcopal Church. Indians comprise 95 per cent. of all Methodist "paymasters" for all rural pastors. Methodist pastors in the cities receive their salaries from their local church treasurers who are, almost all, Indians. The conference budgets in all ten conferences are now managed entirely by conference treasurers, all of whom are Indians. The All-India Treasurer in Bombay, an American who represents for India the Board of Missions, acts only on orders issued by conference treasurers. Nor is the responsibility of Indians restricted to the Methodist Church. A number of Christian educational institutions today maintain Indian principals. The present personnel of the National Christian Council is mostly Indian.

RECRUITMENT OF MISSIONARY PERSONNEL

Mission boards, particularly in the United States, must accept the responsibility for having sent out to India as missionaries quite a few men and women of mediocre ability. In the past, geographical distance and unfamiliarity with Indian conditions could be adduced as excuses, but such excuses no longer hold good. The Indian church wants the highest and best that the United States can spare, not second or third-rate people. The fact that a person feels an inner call or urge to go to India as a missionary is not enough. In addition to the inner call, he should possess a well-trained mind and a high professional skill as doctor, engineer, teacher, preacher, or agriculturist. He should understand the culture of the people to whom he goes.

For staffing schools and colleges, there is no special need for foreign missionaries, except in such fields as theology, science, technology, medicine, public health, nursing, nutrition, and agriculture, in all of which fields India is deficient today. No purpose is served in sending a man from Europe, the United States, or Australia, to run a dormitory for students. In these days of specialization, requirements are for men and women who are top people in their respective professions and who can fill a need which for the time being cannot be filled by Indians. Mission boards should disabuse their minds of the idea that any man or woman with a willingness to serve is good enough for service abroad. Mission boards would do well to consider sending out experts for short terms of five years or fewer. The old plan of sending a missionary for a span of forty to fifty years, with periodic furloughs, may still be necessary. However, in these days when new knowledge and new techniques are put on the market daily, a good case can be developed for the injection of fresh blood in the form of short-term men and women—not globe-trotters—who do not feel called upon to devote their entire lives to missionary work. In saying this, it is not suggested that there is any less need today than formerly

for the consecrated living of genuinely Christian lives by Christians, Indian or Western, among non-Christians.

EDUCATING THE SENDING CHURCHES

Mission boards have the special responsibility of educating the rank and file of church members at home concerning the changed conditions in India and elsewhere, and the new type of missionary needed today. At present, there exist two schools of thought that do harm to the missionary enterprise. One thinks of the mission field as it was two or three generations ago and it has failed to revise its ideas. It assumes that anyone whose interest in religious matters leads him to teach a Sunday School class is fit material for missionary work among the "heathen." The other school assumes that the churches abroad now maintain their own indigenous leadership and finances and that the time is now ripe for the winding up of foreign missions.

Another area in which mission boards need to educate churches at home is that of missionary giving. While a pauper mentality must not be permitted to develop, the Indian church carries a tremendous task which it cannot execute single-handedly. Christian people at home should be trained to give for missionary work as a whole rather than to individual missionaries or for particular projects. It is very likely that the Indian church of tomorrow will insist that gifts be not earmarked. This will make it possible for the Indian church to finance such things as the excellent work of a man like the Rev. R. R. Keithan, who refuses to be a missionary of the stereotyped kind but insists on the freedom to experiment, particularly in the fields of inter-religious fellowship and student and village reconstruction service, thus imposing upon himself and his family a much higher degree of sacrifice than most missionaries are willing to make.

Indians have never reached the point of extreme vexation with foreign missionaries, nor have they been reduced to a state of general despair, as was the case in politics.

In 1942 a concerted effort on the part of Indian nationalists went into effect to rid India of British rule and the war cry was: "Quit India!" The British reply was repression and the forthright shooting of some of those who dared to raise the Indian National Congress flag. There has been no such wide-spread agitation against missionaries to quit India.

The concept of ecumenicity is not well understood by the average Christian, East or West. There is a vague belief that Christianity cuts across all barriers of race, nationality, and economic status; but as yet it is largely a concept, devoid of emotional or volitional content. If ecumenicity is to be a living reality, one of the conditions will be the free exchange of missionaries among all parts of the world. The fact that very few Negroes from the United States are sent out as missionaries to the East and that very few Easterners are invited as missionaries to the West places a serious limitation on the idea of ecumenicity.

WHY FOREIGN MISSIONARIES ARE NEEDED IN NEW INDIA

Despite his outspoken criticism of missionaries, the Rev. D. Chellappa, one of the prominent young Indian Christian leaders, clearly sees the need for foreign missionaries on the ground of ecumenicity. He argues that foreign missionaries of the right kind are necessary to prevent the Christian church in India from becoming narrowly nationalistic and conceited. They are "a constant reminder to us of the universalism of Christianity and of the Christian church." For this reason, missionaries are wanted not only from the West but from Africa and from the Far East. "Conversely, Christian missionaries should go from India to an increasingly pagan America, Africa, Asia, and Australia, the last-mentioned country being closed to Indian missionaries because of political and other reasons."[3]

[3] *The Guardian*, Vol. XXIV, No. 44, Madras, October 31, 1946.

A further reason adduced by Mr. Chellappa for the continuance of foreign missionaries is that, as the church learns to become self-supporting, missionaries can act as a stabilizing force. Democracy is yet a tender plant in India. Within the church in several parts of the country there still exist un-Christian caste divisions and schisms. Coming from countries where such divisions and schisms are not so clearly pronounced as in India, the foreign missionary can make a unique contribution to the evolution of Indian democracy. Already missionaries generally succeed in holding the balance among various caste and economic groups within the Christian community and they have sought to weld them into a homogeneous group. They have brought to the scene a wider outlook and a fresher point of view, and in many cases they have introduced new techniques and "know how" in the process of group living.

Missionaries have a valuable contribution to make by the quality of their lives and the probity of their character. Both as individuals and as a group, they have set a high standard of personal morality, financial integrity, and conscientiousness in work, a record that is bound to serve as inspiration to their Indian fellow workers. Whatever be the Indian criticism of missionaries, there is praise for them as a whole—for their integrity of character and honesty of purpose; for their relative freedom from church politics; for their leadership in organization, account-keeping, constitution-making, training in democracy and pioneering in untried fields of service; and for their activism and determination to push on towards the goal.

Lack of the civic virtues is one of India's social distresses. Even educated people think largely in terms of themselves, their families, their caste, and their community. India must cultivate in her children greater loyalties and a passion for civic virtues, such as consideration for the feelings and conveniences of others, pride in keeping one's city clean, impartiality, and freedom from political partisanship. The missionary, grounded in democracy and creative citizenship,

can make a great contribution here. Speaking from years of experience in missionary and church council deliberations, Mr. Chellappa states that the missionary can teach from personal example such civic virtues as moderation in statement, judicious fairness, a sense of duty, a spirit of detachment and objectivity, willingness to listen to another's point of view, a scientific approach to life, public honesty and integrity, a whole-hearted acceptance and implementation of a decision arrived at constitutionally, and subordination of communal, linguistic, and provincial prejudices to the corporate welfare of the church. Thus, it is clear that in the interests of developing a genuinely ecumenical Christianity, missionaries will always be needed as ambassadors of Christian good-will from one country to another.

Type of Missionary Wanted

The changing fabric of Indian society demands a new type of missionary. Dr. E. Stanley Jones, the best known missionary to India of this day, rightly states that India does not want missionaries who by temperament and outlook are imperialistic or out of tune with Indian national aspirations. However divided and inexperienced the new government may be, according to Dr. Jones, missionaries must be prepared to throw in their lot with it. He further thinks that it will be easier to preach in a free India because until recently Christianity was the religion of foreign rulers. " Christ," he says, " will have a real chance in a free India," provided, of course he is offered in Indian garb and provided also that those who preach his name have the courage to spell it out in their everyday life.

On this same question of the kind of missionaries that India needs, Mr. Chellappa says that first of all they should be dedicated and spirit-filled Christian men and women noted for their goodness. Secondly, they should be persons of education and culture. Thirdly, they should be free from ultra-nationalism. Mr. Chellappa also feels that more unmarried men missionaries are needed inasmuch as they are

more accessible to people than are married ones. Along with a host of other Indian Christian leaders, he advises that positions of responsibility be handed over quickly to Indians, because not to do so would be "an anachronism in a free India."[1]

In regard to the type of work that missionaries should do, Mr. Chellappa thinks that because of the rapid changes taking place in making the regional language the medium of instruction, there is small need for missionaries in elementary and high schools. He rightly condemns the practice of superimposing upon the Indian headmaster of a high school a missionary manager or correspondent. There is need for women missionaries in girls' schools to teach such subjects as home-building, child care, nursing, and dietetics. Well-qualified men missionaries can be of great value in trade schools, technological institutions, and theological seminaries as also in direct evangelistic work. A great many able men and women can be used in medical work, nursing, social service, rural reconstruction, and teacher training.

Considering the immediate needs of India, the type of missionaries needed most are:

Rural community workers with some knowledge of agriculture, co-operatives, and first aid who will be prepared to work with the community projects and national extension service of the government when invited.

Social workers in cities and slum areas and teachers of social workers in schools of social service.

Youth workers and organizers of work camps and youth caravans.

Teachers of teachers. India needs two million teachers in the next twenty years to carry out the nation-wide program of free and compulsory primary education. These teachers must be well-versed in basic school aims and methods.

[1] *The Guardian*, Vol. XXIV, No. 44, Madras, October 31, 1946.

Experts in adult education.
Doctors, nurses, dietitians, and health visitors.
Directors of physical education.
Engineers and builders for the church.
Teachers of mechanics and technicians.
Teachers in theological colleges.
Research students in Comparative Religions and Indian Sociology.
Effective preachers who understand the mind and spirit of Jesus Christ and can inspire people to apply them to both individual and social problems.
Those who understand the issues of communism and are able to counter idea by idea, plan by plan, and program by program: and not idea by emotion, plan by platitude, and program by vision in the sky.
Literary men and women who can both write and help others to write.

What Makes the Good Missionary

A good missionary must have a first-hand experience of God, as revealed in Jesus Christ. It is readily conceded that this is an evolving experience. Yet no one has a moral right to go out as a missionary unless he has had at least a glimmering of this experience. Such experience is necessary not only for the missionary who proposes to go out as an evangelist or as a preacher, but also for every other type of missionary whether as specialist in education, medicine, agriculture, industry, or social work. Occasionally a type of missionary says: "I have been sent out as an engineer. I shall give you the best possible professional service but never ask me to take charge of a prayer meeting or to conduct a religious discussion or to tell people what Christ means to me." Such missionaries do more harm than good.

When a person has genuine inner experience, he can speak with conviction. Without conviction, a missionary may interest people, educate them, raise their social and economic

conditions, and he may even convert them; but he will not be able to lead them to God as revealed by Jesus Christ.

Conviction does not mean dogmatism. It is the antithesis of a vague cosmopolitanism or eclecticism in religion. A man of conviction is one who is rooted in the fundamentals of his faith and is yet receptive to truth from whatsoever quarter it may come. He will be able to say with humility and sincerity: "That....which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, the Word of life....that declare we unto you."[1]

The good missionary will look upon his work primarily in terms of sharing—sharing of religious experience and sharing in work, even with non-Christians. He must have the willingness and capacity to understand, appreciate, and appropriate the virtues and excellences in the cultures and civilizations of others, evaluating them wherever possible by the standards of Jesus Christ.

Sharing in religion does not involve apologizing for one's faith. At any point in the course of his work, the good missionary must be able to explain his faith. At the same time he will avoid the danger of becoming a mere stereotype. When a person keeps his mind and spirit open, he can learn as well as teach. Mutual stimulation, derived from such a dual process, can help to keep one's faith fresh and vital.

In trying to understand the religious experiences and practices of others, the good missionary will resist the temptation to become a collector of curios from other religions and cultures. He will, on the contrary, judge religions and cultures by the best in them. He will cultivate the spirit of receptivity and sympathetic understanding.

The good missionary will identify himself completely with all those who seek to bring about a better world; he remembers the words of Jesus: "He who is not against us is for us."

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[1] I John 1 : 1 and 3.

During the years prior to freedom when Gandhi and Indian nationalists were in the wilderness, Christian missions and workers lost a superb opportunity to befriend India and to co-operate in such desperately needful projects as rural uplift, revival of village industries, abolition of untouchability, and spade-work in the prohibition of liquor. In a free India the Christian missionary must throw himself into the forefront in humanitarian and nation-building activities. As a messenger of Christ, he will not concern himself with credit received. Situations exist in which the Christian missionary, without sacrificing his Christian principles, can whole-heartedly co-operate with non-Christian organizations such as the Ramakrishna Mission and the Servants of India Society and with the Government of India in its Five Year Plan. The prohibition program of the state governments and the contemplated social legislation in many fields offer to the Christian missionary and to the Christian worker wide opportunities for effective co-operation.

More than most others in different kinds of occupations, the missionary is in daily contact with human beings. This means that if he is to do his work well, he must cultivate a genuine interest in people as individuals, recognizing that each person he encounters is a personality distinct in himself. Even as Jesus did, he must individualize people, and not make the mistake of looking at them in the mass. He must rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep. This latter duty most missionaries failed to fulfil during the days of the Indian fight for freedom, some of them having recourse to the extraordinary argument that they were in India as "guests of the British government" and that, therefore, they should do nothing to disturb the equanimity of their host! By and large, the majority of Christian missionaries aligned themselves with the British, some Americans proving more pro-British than the British themselves.

Social awareness and a sensitive conscience are two of the attributes which the vital and effective missionary must possess. In a country like India where poverty, squalor,

and physical suffering are the fabric of the missionary's material, the missionary is liable to fall into one of two pits—callousness and emotionalism. Both are fatal to the effectiveness of his work.

Human beings everywhere respond to sympathy and personal interest in their welfare. This is especially true in India with its long traditions of personal rule. In winning response to his appeal, the missionary must keep alive the spirit of informality. He must at all times be friendly, sociable, and easily approachable. He must at the same time hold aloft high standards and principles and refuse to make compromises in this field. Compromises here are fatal to his own spiritual life and witnessing.

A quality which the Hindu greatly admires in a man of religion is his patience, long-suffering, and equanimity of temper. Patience, sometimes considered a nuisance in the West, is a virtue in the East. The Hindu is prepared patiently to go through millions of lives in accordance with the law of transmigration before he attains oneness with God. His present life is but an infinitesimal segment of his long journey. The Hindu *Sadhu* or holy man is a man of poise, gentleness and infinite patience. The missionary who loses his patience or who becomes agitated by pressure of work or by any of the multitudinous anxieties of his labor shocks the Hindu. He may even cause the Hindu to lose respect for him and for his religion !

In order to develop equanimity of temper, a missionary must be physically sound and emotionally mature. His health must be moderately good to stand up under the rigors of a tropical climate, and his experience, insight and stamina must be such as to stabilize his emotions.

In the last analysis, the success or failure of a missionary's task is to be judged by the extent to which he helps build a strong indigenous church and indigenous Christians who are men of worth. In fulfilling this task, he must play the role of a helper and co-worker and not a master, or pedagogue.

Dr. D. J. Fleming wrote: "We want helpers and co-workers, not bosses; friends and not masters; teachers and learners and not pedagogues laying down the law for us. We want democratic leadership and not autocracy masquerading under benevolence."[6]

Although financially weak, the Indian church is developing an increasing sense of responsibility and an eagerness to manage its own affairs. This means that India does not want the aggressive or domineering type of missionary. For years there has been much talk about devolution of authority in Christian service in India. Much has been accomplished, but more remains to be done. In church and missionary conferences it is often said that missionaries from abroad should be willing to serve under Indian leadership, taking second and third places. This is good sentiment but it is incorrectly expressed. If authority corrupts, it corrupts men of every color. Therefore, to substitute a brown hierarchy for a white is not to solve the problem. If all positions of authority were handed over to Indians, there would still exist a gulf between the ones at the top and the mass of poorly paid and ill-equipped Indian Christian workers. The remedy sought should be in terms of genuine partnership, first as between foreign missionaries and Indian personnel and second as between those in authority and those under authority. Furthermore, it does not seem fair to ask foreign mission boards to send men of quality rather than of mediocrity and then to turn about and expect contentment on the part of these men of quality under the established and permanent leadership of someone else. If they are men of ability and consecration, they are *ipso facto* guides, and therefore leaders. A term like "partnership," assuming the general unwritten preference for Indian men of ability and consecration, is better than the term, "leadership." The late Mr. G. V. Job, a mature Indian Christian thinker, expressed this view when he said that the proper place for a foreign

[6] D. J. Fleming, *Whither Bound in Missions* (New York: Association Press, 1925).

missionary in the Indian church is "neither at the front nor at the back, but somewhere at arm's length. He should not dominate. He should not desert. He should put himself within reach of the church".[7] It will be a good day for the Christian church when both Indian church workers and missionaries from abroad, instead of being unduly concerned about leadership and domination, can together grow in saintliness and service.

The good missionary will encourage the indigenous church to develop along the lines of its own genius, unencumbered by impositions of Western organization, modes of worship, or creeds and rituals.[8] Mr. Job wrote: "Some Indian Christians are experts in such things as the Methodist constitution and can wax eloquent over the sanctity of episcopal ordination and the Lutheran conception of the Eucharist. But it is not through such skill that people can infuse life into the Indian Church."[9]

The task of naturalizing the Indian Church is basically one for the Indian Christian, but the foreign missionary, in his role of observer and adviser, can contribute invaluable co-operation in relating Christian truths and Christian worship to the cultural background of the people, being mindful of the importance of retaining the universal elements in the teachings of Christ and the experience of the Christian church.

India expects every genuine missionary to be a world citizen. To a large extent he must be raceless and nationless even as Jesus was. This condition is requisite if the missionary is to identify himself with the lowly, the humble, and the despised of the earth. Many missionaries who might have been valuable otherwise have vitiated their work by overemphasizing nationalism and patriotism. The good missionary, recognizing that all nations today are a missionary

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[7] P. Chenchiah *et al.*, *Re-Thinking Christianity in India*, a symposium (Madras : The Indian Christian Book Club, 1938).

[8] *See* Chapter VII for Indian Orientation.

[9] P. Chenchiah *et al.*, *op. cit.*

field, sees the beam in his own eye and in the eye of his nation before he seeks to remove the mote from the eye of another person. He seeks to remove evil wherever it is found. He realizes that paganism and heathenism are not confined to a few sections of the earth. The wise missionary will play the part of friend, philosopher, and guide to a people who have only recently attained their political freedom. He will be loyal to his own country, in so far as the policies and conduct of his country accord with his Christian principles and convictions.

CHAPTER IV

INDIAN CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP

THE evangelization and Christianization of India will come about primarily as a result of the initiative and tireless labor of Indian Christians. Notwithstanding the need for both spiritual and educational help from abroad, the point has been reached whence Indian Christians themselves must carry the Christian evangel into the still untouched areas of the life and thought of the Indian people. Indians will more readily respond to the claims of Christ and his Kingdom when they are presented and lived by their own countrymen. Men of the type of Dr. E. Stanley Jones will ever have their appeal, but such men are few. The Indian church must, therefore, depend primarily on Indian Christians for day-to-day witness-bearing, for the spiritual care of believers, and for the upbuilding of a truly Indian church. Considering the humble origin of most Christians in India, 80 per cent. of whom come from the depressed classes or from hill or primitive tribes, and the comparatively short time during which the major portion of Christianity has existed in India, there has developed a remarkable leadership in the past one hundred years.

Pandita Ramabai (1858–1922) was one of these leaders. A pioneer and the greatest Indian Christian of her generation, she was one of the most distinguished social workers that India has known. Ramabai was the child of a Brahmin, a scholar in Hindu culture and Sanskrit, who, with his child-bride of nine years, became a Forest Dweller. Here he schooled his young wife in the ancient religious wisdom of Indian and Hindu Scriptures and also in Sanskrit. He lived plainly, spending his entire earthly possessions on students and pilgrims who came to him in search of spiritual knowledge. In this center of dedication, Ramabai, as well as a sister and a brother, was born and was educated. Driven

from home in the terrible famine of 1875–77, the family wandered in search of work that no one could give and of food, of which little existed, eating meagerly, sleeping under trees and bridges.

After the death of her entire family, and later of her husband, Ramabai, schooled strangely in adversity and wisdom, and impelled by social passion, set herself to the improvement of the pitiable plight of Hindu widows, to the maintenance and teaching of young widows and orphan children, to the building up of a number of schools and institutions, to writing and lecturing against such evils as child marriage. In short, Ramabai laid the foundation for today's progressive social legislation. Scholar, saint, and servant, Ramabai was also a successful administrator, business manager, and linguist. She acquired fluency in seven Indian languages, besides English, translated the Bible into the Marathi language, and enriched the church with a number of beautiful Marathi hymns. It was during an early trip to England that she accepted Christianity, and while her social passion was an outer expression of her undying love and loyalty to the teachings of Christ, she did not relinquish her native culture. A saintly woman, she spurned worldy promotion and material gain. Brahmin pandits conferred on her the title of *Saraswati* (goddess of learning), the only woman of modern times to hold this title. Her notable work for destitute Hindu widows is being carried on by a devoted band of Indian, American, and British women.

Another person who contributed much to the growth of Christianity in India was the **Rev. Narayan Vaman Tilak** (1862–1919), a convert from Hinduism. Tilak was a gifted minister of the word of God and a poet who set in verse, in the form of three or four hundred hymns, great Christian themes as they passed through the prism of an Oriental, and more particularly of a Hindu, mind, giving greater substance to worship. He was a writer, teacher, preacher, and social worker; a daring thinker and outspoken critic of missions; editor of and contributor to

Dnanodaya, a Christian weekly; a public speaker, a sound nationalist, *bhakta* saint and *sanyasi* (ascetic).

The following, written by Tilak, expresses his utter dependence on God and indifference to material goods:—

The Lord my Father-Mother is;
Naught can I lack, since I am His.
Then wherefore should I wealth desire,
Or after empty pomp aspire?
For this world's gold is all alloy,
Its honor but an infant's toy,
Its fame an unsubstantial trance,
Its wisdom only ignorance.
Then, save Thyself, my God and King,
Is nothing left for coveting?
Do Thou this only gift impart
Dwell Thou forever in my heart.
Saith Dasa,[1] Thou Thyself, O Lord,
Art Thy disciple's sole reward.

As a member of God's *Darbar*, the purpose of which was to inaugurate God's advent in glory, Tilak took the following vow composed by himself and asked others of the Order to take the same vow:

Like Thee, O Christ, I will remain poor,
Like Thee I will be the friend of all, the enemy of none,
Like Thee I will ever be ready to be nailed to a cross.
Like Thee I will strive to do fully the Will of God.
Like Thee I will love all mankind.
In the strength of faith I will abide in Thy Presence. Thy world and mine shall be one. I will strive after Thy Likeness.

Of another outstanding Indian, **Sadhu Sundar Singh** (1889–1929), Archbishop Soderblom has written: "In the

[1] Servant.

history of religion Sundar is the first to show the whole world how the Gospel of Jesus Christ is reflected in unchanged purity in an Indian soul."[2] Sundar was a convert from Sikhism, dedicated by his beloved mother, before he became a Christian, to a life of religious service. Of his mother, Sundar said the following: "I believe that every religious man has a religious mother.....Whenever I think of her, I thank God for such a mother. She had a wonderful amount of light. I have been to the best theological college in the world—my mother's bosom. If I do not see my mother in heaven, I shall ask God to send me to hell in order that I may be with her there."[3]

Like Saul of Tarsus he persecuted Christians in his early years. Like Saul again, he had a vision of Jesus and thereafter preached like Paul for the rest of his days, taking to the life of a *sadhu* (holy man or wandering ascetic) and spending a great deal of his time in prayer and mystic contemplation and silence. He renounced everything for the glory of God, owning nothing, helping people in his long and arduous wanderings, preaching the story of Jesus in Indian orientation, possessing such singular gentleness of spirit and inner joy—and even physical resemblance to the pictures of Jesus!—that his effect upon people in India, Europe, and the United States was profound. In 1929, impelled by a longstanding spiritual command to carry his Christian message to the forbidden and forbidding land of Tibet, he made another, and final, journey from which he never returned. He lived and made a significant contribution to Indian mysticism. He loved to be in solitude with God, letting Him speak to him in a still small voice. In his travels abroad he felt an oppression of the soul and longed to be in the Himalayas where he found it easy to commune with nature and with God. His religion was Christ-centred;

[2] C. F. Andrews, *Sadhu Sundar Singh* (London : Hodder and Stoughton, 1934), p. 131.

[3] C. F. Andrews, *Ibid.*, p. 54 and pp. 57-8.

and it expressed itself in simple, direct, unaffected and non-theological terms.

Kanakarayan Tiruselvam Paul (1876–1931) was an outstanding Indian Christian statesman, a born organizer and administrator, a reconciler of the East and West, and an ardent worker for church union in South India, for youth and adult education, and for rural reconstruction. K. T. Paul, passionately devoted to the evangelization of India and desirous of making Christian worship indigenous through the use of Indian music and literature, was co-founder and General Secretary of the National Missionary Society; he was General Secretary of the Indian Y.M.C.A. for many years, expanding its functions and usefulness and organizing units of it during World War I in France, Mesopotamia, Egypt and East Africa as well as in India. It was he who laid the foundation for rural reconstruction by making the Y.M.C.A. significant to rural people and by expanding the Co-operative Credit Societies, both government and mission, to a Co-operative Credit Movement, encompassing rural areas. He was instrumental in the publication of several series of writings on Indian religion and religious literature, such as the *Heritage of India Series* and the *Builders of India Series*. In 1930 he served as a delegate to the Round Table Conference in London and boldly stood for joint electorates in political elections, while other minorities such as the Moslems and the Scheduled Castes (Outcastes) were clamoring for separate communal electorates which sacrificed the oneness and unity of the country for group gains.

Vedanayagam Samuel Azariah (1874–1945), son of a Christian convert, came of the humble stock of toddy tappers (those who tap the palmyra tree for its alcoholic sap). Born after thirteen years of his parents' wedlock, he was significantly named Samuel and was dedicated to the service of Christ. Azariah was a man of God, a fervent evangelist, and a foremost Christian statesman. He served as travelling Secretary of the Y.M.C.A., working among students and stimulating their spiritual lives. He was a founder o

both the Indian Missionary Society and the National Missionary Society, the two best known indigenous missionary societies of India, administered by Indians with Indian funds and Indian personnel. For twenty-five years he labored in the missionary church in Dornakal, where he was consecrated bishop, and which he expanded from a membership of 50,000 to 235,000. At that time, mass evangelism had fallen to low level and it was by Azariah's assigning the major responsibility for it to unpaid, honorary workers and by providing amply for the spiritual nurture, training, and education of village Christians, that he redeemed it. His biographer, J. Z. Hodge, says that he was really "a father in God to Christians of all denominations." He played a vital part in the South India church union efforts and since his death in 1945 the Church of South India has come into being. He was the able and wise president of the National Christian Council of India, Burma, and Ceylon for the last sixteen years of his life. The church, says his biographer, was central in all his thinking and planning. Azariah died in harness. The Dornakal Cathedral, combining Christian, Hindu, and Moslem features of religious architecture, his great accomplishments as an evangelist, and his leadership of the National Christian Council are monuments to his spirit and to his indefatigable efforts.

Bishop Mariat Nainan Abraham (1881–1947) served as administrator of the Mar Thoma Syrian Church (the Reformed Branch of the Syrian Church), having 200,000 Christians under his spiritual guidance. According to his Church's rules for bishops, he lived a celibate life, drawing a salary of one hundred rupees ($ 30 at the then value) a month, a wage of which he never complained. He was the soul of the annual Maraman Evangelistic Convention, attended by 50,000 people, a courageous leader and a man of peace. Around him he built a company of men of high caliber and education who today are carrying forward his work. When he died, Dr. E. Stanley Jones wrote:

> "The brightest spot in the Christian situation in India is the Mar Thoma Syrian Church. And the brightest spot in that church has been Bishop Abraham, the metropolitan. He has been the soul of that very remarkable church.....The greatest Christian of India is gone but he left behind a growing, dynamic church, manned by growing, dynamic men. I know of no greater Christian movement."[1]

Bipin Chandra Sircar (1872–1928), of dynamic personality, was active in more recent years in the Y.M.C.A. Hundreds flocked to hear his fluent and persuasive speaking. The last years of his life he gave to making Christianity, through the use of the *ashram*, native to the soil of India. The lamp which he lit is still shining brightly in many parts of India. As an indirect consequence of his work, several Indian Christian *ashrams* have been set up in that country.

Two other Y.M.C.A. workers of eminence were **Mr. Daniel Swamidoss** and **Dr. Surendra Kumar Datta** (1878–1942). Daniel Swamidoss, of humble origin, posssesed vision and leadership. He gave many years of service to the improvement of the appalling conditions of villagers in rural India. He was a pioneer in the field of rural reconstruction. Surendra Kumar Datta, scholar, writer and administrator, spent much of his life in Y.M.C.A. administrative duties both in India and abroad. Like K. T. Paul, he stood for joint electorates and placed national good above narrow communal advantage. The closing years of his life he gave to the competent administration of Forman Christian College in Lahore, of which he was president at the time of his death.

Bishop Jashwant Rao Chitambar (1879–1940) was the son of a Brahmin convert. Starting life as a middle school teacher in the American Methodist Church in India, he became the first Indian President of Lucknow Christian College, from which he rose to the position of the first Indian

[1] *The Christian Century*, Vol. LXIV, No. 39, September 24, 1947, p. 1146.

bishop of that church. He has left behind him a permanent imprint on every branch of the work of that church. He was an able preacher and interpreter of the Bible, a charming friend and host and a successful administrator.

A. M. Varki belonged to a small band of men who, inspired by the exemplary lives of some of their missionary professors in Madras Christian College, devoted themselves to organizing and operating, on a fellowship basis, a Christian college at Alwaye in Travancore, receiving as remuneration only minimum living allowances. As college president for several years, Varki influenced scores of students by his thoughtful speeches and writing and through his devotion to the Christian cause.

Despite such outstanding leadership, there is a general paucity of able, consecrated, and self-sacrificing leaders in the Indian church. Fewer than 10 per cent. of the Indian clergy today are college-educated. It is the case of the blind leading the blind. Higher academic qualifications and greater dedication, based on conviction, are needed if Indian Christian workers are to play a useful role in the national life of India.

Calculating on the basis of one minister for at least a thousand people, or two hundred families, the Rev. C. W. Ranson[5] states that the four million non-Roman Christians in India require at least four thousand ordained ministers. In 1941 there were only 2,403 ordained nationals of the non-Roman churches.

WHY THIS PAUCITY?

Effective Christian service requires a rare degree of idealism and self-sacrifice. These are virtues that few possess. Nor is a well-educated, consecrated priesthood in the tradition of the religions of India. The average Indian's seeking for God, while more devout and consistent than the seeking of his Western brother, is a personal matter and

[5] C. W. Ranson, *The Christian Minister in India* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1946).

does not, traditionally, lead him to dedicate himself to a ministry of service.

In addition, Indians are not immune to current worldy motives of profit, prestige, popularity, authority, and power, for the expression of which the Christian church does not give wide scope. It is understandable that the people of India, impoverished for past centuries but standing now in the light of national independence and possible economic progress, grasp hungrily for material goods. How far they go and how many of them take the purely materialistic course depends, in part, upon the health of the Indian Christian church.

Conviction and first-hand spiritual experience are lacking in many Indian Christians. Admirable young people do not enter Christian service, because they lack genuine conviction, and this conviction they do not find in Indian congregations, which in parrot-like fashion perform rituals and ceremonies and repeat creeds which they have learned from missionaries, some of whom are their paymasters. Few Indian Christians have taken the trouble to think through Christianity. Fundamentalists, liberals, adherents of neo-orthodoxy—all produce their exact counterparts. Besides, in the amorphous atmosphere produced by Hinduism, it is easy for even Christians to adopt the common belief that all religions are alike and that there is no special need for a person to change the faith of his fathers even if he should find in another religion a more satisfactory way of life.

Unthinking conformity is one of the reasons for the paucity of Indian Christian leadership. It is a disease which, if continued over a period of time, will destroy the church. Where a person is unable or unwilling to explain the faith in him, but depends solely on tradition and dogma for its defense, his witnessing has little or no effect. In such cases, thoughtful non-conformity may be better, and is certainly more honest. But where a thoughtful conformity can be had, it is infinitely better.

Closely related to the lack of clear conviction among Indian Christians is the dearth of challenge in Christian work as it is carried on by missions and churches. In its nature, youth seldom lacks idealism or the spirit of self-sacrifice. The struggle for political freedom from 1921 to 1942 found thousands of young men and women sacrificing everything and courting imprisonment and *lathi* charges (beating by the police with iron-clasped sticks) for a great cause. Many gave up their studies and espoused national service. At the call of Mahatma Gandhi, a considerable number of lawyers abandoned their lucrative practice in British-administered courts, some never returning to their posts. Business men made a bonfire of the foreign cloth which they had imported for sale, thereby reducing themselves to voluntary poverty. Some college and university professors, as well as a good many civil servants drawing excellent salaries, resigned their safe berths for an uncertain future. Women, who are said to be timid, left their homes and, in some cases, even turned their backs on the care and love of their little ones, exposing themselves to ridicule, imprisonment, assault, and police and jail abuses.

If the Christian church in India has not been able to evoke something of this rare heroism and unusual self-sacrifice, may not the cause lie with the church? The cause of national struggle demanded all that a man could give, and it offered national freedom. This was a supreme demand and a supreme reward. It was challenging. The church demands of the individual some sacrifice to the will of God, but it waters down this demand by indulging in abstractions and dogmas of past history, which appear to have little relevance to present-day living, or to the traditions of Indian culture. In the end, the Indian understands only vaguely, and that with misgiving, the essence of the demand. Christianity to him is costless. Consequently, he is not challenged to give himself to church leadership or even to constructive membership.

If the demand of the church is ambiguous and lukewarm, the reward it offers is even less attractive. It is a

tragedy that in many minds, reward is interpreted to mean the comparatively low salary that is offered by missions and churches to Indian Christians to carry on the work of the church. There are Christians who work only for these small comforts and amenities of life, regulating their work and preaching to the particular denomination that hires them, and sometimes changing from one denomination to another, with a corresponding change of doctrine ! The effect of this kind of dissimulation is to turn potential Christians away from the church.

Apart from material rewards, the church again weakens, and sometimes misconstrues, the teachings of Christ, by offering such vague concepts as "salvation through the blood of Christ," a golden throne in the next world, or complete redemption from sin through the mechanical business of sprinkling water on the would-be convert. There is little wonder that youth, thinking in clear terms of idealism and of seeking for the meaning of life—problems that Christ answers boldly and thrillingly—are appalled and left cold by the meager demands of the church.

There are those who do indeed grasp the Christian message, but who do not possess the willingness or the faith to make the sacrifices that are necessary, if and when they throw in their lot with the church. Pastoral committees and church councils are not noted for their liberality in paying ministers and catechists. Salaries for Indian Christians are inadequate, allowing little provision for the education of children, for old age, or for the care of dependents.

It has been said that when conviction is deep and the task challenging, material considerations are of small consequence. This is true in the case of high-souled individuals, but there are many who hear the call of Christian service but are unable to respond to it unless they can receive a salary sufficient to relieve them from gnawing care and perpetual anxiety. There are many of these saints who, with nurture, could become sturdy, construc-

tive leaders. That a man wants a home, a family, and opportunity for some leisure and culture does not mean that he is worldly minded. Much depends on his attitude toward worldly possessions and the nature of the objects on which he spends money. Up to a point, private property may be necessary for the expression of personality. Not all are called upon to be celibates, *sadhus*, or *sannyasis*. Many should marry, rear families, and serve as teachers and preachers in the community.

According to a study made by Mr. Ranson, the salary scale of ministers of self-supporting churches in India before World War II ranged from Rs. 6 to Rs. 120 per month ($ 2 to $ 40, according to the rate of exchange at that time). A majority fell into the Rs. 30 to Rs. 40 class ($ 10 to $ 13). This is considerably lower than the salaries of teachers in Christian schools and colleges in India or of doctors in Christian hospitals.

The problem of salary to church workers (ministers, catechists, and catechist-teachers) is a thorny one. This is largely because it is so complex. Any consideration of it will certainly raise the following related but contradictory facts and principles: (*a*) Salaries are low because the church and the often poverty-stricken congregation cannot afford to pay more; (*b*) a highly-paid ministry would tend to divorce itself from the poor and lowly whom it is supposed to serve; (*c*) a dedicated follower of Jesus abjures material goods and welcomes poverty; (*d*) Christian leadership requires many men and women who can, if provided with adequate support of themselves and their families, develop in their communities the sturdy warp and woof of Christian living; (*e*) the average salary does not provide adequately for the needs of the family, for the education of children, for old age, or for the care of dependents; (*f*) low salaries do not attract educated men and women; (*g*) low salaries do not permit men and women already in church service to improve themselves through attendance at higher institutions of learning

at home or abroad or through attendance at distant conventions and gatherings, where they could broaden their outlook through exhange of ideas and experiences.

An appraisal to draw out of these conflicting factors is that ministers should be paid salaries which will meet reasonably their personal needs in raising and educating a family; which will enable a minister, without debilitating anxiety, to devote his full energies to the needs of his congregation; and which will make it possible for him to continue to improve himself through further study and fellowship with other leaders and with other congregations. Because living conditions and facilities differ from one church to another, salaries could validly be based not on a uniform scale but on the needs of each locality. If the quality of Indian leadership is to improve, substantial progress must be made towards a solution of this complex problem of salaries.

In some minds, the Christian ministry in India lacks prestige. It does not have behind it the scholarship, reputation for leadership of the community, and weight of years which the ministry in the West has. It is seldom that the Christian minister in India is a leader of the total community. One reason for this is his inadequate education, another is the circumscribed area within which he ordinarily works. Theological training and mere ability to preach are not enough. A Christian minister must be a man with a good general education and one who possesses the character and capacity to lead, not only his own congregation, but the entire community of which he is a part. His general education must be much higher than that of the average person in his congregation, if he is to command the respect and attention of the congregation.

Idealistic Indian Christians who are attracted to the ministry often turn away from it because of its hierarchy, (implying gradations in the service), sacerdotalism, ritualism and formalism. These negative attributes are the result of the urge to power on the part of both Indian

and foreign church workers. Unfortunately, the minister is at times treated as a paid servant by the foreign missionary, at other times as a bellboy by his church committee. Indians know with sadness that church leaders, both missionaries and nationals, often support the wrong people for positions of authority and responsibility in the church.

A common complaint in India is that missionaries generally prefer the meek and docile type of less qualified worker to the man who, though less suave, is possessed of positive, independent qualities. The task of the minister is too often the execution of a policy in which he has had little voice, a policy established by a far-off missionary board with which he has had no personal contact. Obviously, the man who is attracted to this sort of mechanical and routine job is an altogether different kind of man from the man who is attracted to the ministry of the gospel. The solution here would seem to lie in convincing foreign mission boards and local congregations that the church and its institutions belong to the people to whom they minister. Until the church does, in truth, become the instrument of the people, and is governed by them, it will not take root.

There are many instances in which foreign missionaries and their boards have seen this light to the extent that considerable responsibility for church affairs has been devolved upon local congregations. Welcome changes are taking place with respect to such an important matter as the title to property once held in the name of a mission with headquarters in New York or London ! Nearly every mission is today actively concerned about transferring titles of all property to the Indian church. This has actually been done by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel and by the Church Missionary Society in Uttar Pradesh, and as far as is known, they are continuing this policy in every other part of India. The Methodist Church also is at work on this tremendous task. Under

the direction and guidance of the National Christian Council, the Presbyterian Mission and other missions connected with the National Christian Council are engaged in property transfers.

Another problem related to the growing church in India is the responsibility for training in democratic principles and procedures. Democracy is relatively new to India. There is a difference between the scope and nature of family or caste loyalty and the scope and nature of democracy in a group composed of many families and many castes. The people of India have had no experience from which to draw, except that of pure nationalism, when it comes to acting in the interests of divergent groups. Accustomed to forms of authoritarianism, church committees tend to create and perpetuate "committee autocracy," giving to the wealthy and influential members in the congregation a greater voice than what is due to them. Church committees at times split and form themselves into opposing factions, one in support of the minister and one against. What is needed is training in democracy among the rank and file of Indian Christians, as well as among foreign missionaries and their boards. In the meantime, needed Indian Christians are turning away from the ministry.

Building Consecrated and Responsible Leadership

Training of Children and Young People

A saying attributed to the Roman Catholics goes: *Give us the child during the first seven years of his life. You can have him the rest of his days.*

A consecrated and responsible ministry or laity does not spring fully formed out of the community. It must grow from seeds sown in the minds and hearts of adults, but more importantly in the minds and hearts of the young. At the third Socialist Christian Conference of young people at Lahore in 1946, this youthful group described the ministry

as an agency paid "to be religious for the rest of us." It continued eloquently:

> "Was it a sign of Christian growth to hire others to pray for us, study the Bible for us, conduct our worship, visit our sick and needy, sponsor our charitable giving, bless our children, marry our youth, bury our dead, rebuke our sin, comfort our sorrow, and usher us into heaven?"[6]

The foundation for service, especially the service of the Church, must be laid in the home and the family, among parents and children. Yet in many Indian Christian homes, largely because of the poor circumstances from which converts have come, parents want their children to go into lines of work where high salary or profit, worldly prestige and status are the governing considerations. Personal sacrifice and passion for service are not greatly emphasised.

In the religious training of youth, the Religious Society of Friends (also known as Friends or Quakers) are outstanding. Their young people are given dignity of personality and responsibility for their acts and judgments. The laboratory of their training is the social scene and their task is service to others. In parts of the United States where racial discrimination is practised, the very young in many Friends homes and in "family institutes" are brought into contact with the young of other races and cultures with whom they play and work. This association is often all that is necessary in order to develop Christian principles, for the young are not taught tolerance and racial equality—they already possess these qualities. Intolerant and race-prejudiced children have been taught intolerance and racial inequality directly or indirectly by adults as individuals and by the community in which they live! In India, Christian families could contribute to conciliation among Hindus, Christians, Moslems, and

[6] *The Indian Witness*, Lucknow, India, 1946.

Sikhs by bringing together the young of all. Together with Christian living, children in the home should be given religious training in terms understandable to them including the stirring stories of Christian saints, martyrs, and great leaders.

Bishop Azariah of Dornakal was, as an infant, dedicated by his parents to Christian service. In his case it worked out well, for his inclinations followed the hopes of his parents and he became a great leader. Such dedication, however, negates the freedom of personality, for it is not in the power of parents so completely to understand their children as to be able to designate at an early age the course they can best follow; nor is it in their province so to dominate the lives of their children. They are responsible, however, for instilling in their children basic moral principles, on which young people can develop sound judgment and responsibility for their decisions and acts. Without deciding vocations for them, parents can do much to kindle and nurture in them a desire to serve in the Christian ministry.

When the child grows to church and school age, a wide and colorful field can open to him if the church is alert. Sunday School classes and Bible study should be interesting and vital in order to improve poor attendance, to hold attention and to arouse interest. There should be discipline in study and learning. Much progress has been made through the use of graded Sunday School lessons. But at the same time there should be an informal atmosphere for the discussion of Biblical events and personalities, in order to create interest and to insure that the pupils understand clearly what they are talking about. It is at this point of *understanding*, rather than of mimicry or memorising, that unthinking conformity and drift toward formalism can be stopped at its source. The teaching of young people is of inestimable importance, for it is in the enthusiastic and well-trained youth that the future of a vigorous church lies. Teaching young

people is the most important field of labor for competent and effective lay leadership. To enable lay workers to do this work effectively, it is necessary to arrange for conferences, short-term schools, and special courses for men and women, during the slack season for villagers and during the holiday period for townsfolk.

But man does not learn by book alone. John Dewey, who revolutionized the American school system and Gandhi who insisted that education, especially at the lower stages, should be imparted through village handicrafts, said that young people learn by doing. The Friends have throughout their history utilized this principle by setting their young people to work in projects ranging from slum clearance to help in freeing the slaves. Today, American Quaker youths from early teen-age to late teen-age co-operate in projects and workshops and institutes of all types, the motivation of all of them being to serve.

These teen-age workshops operate on the lowest possible budget, and they produce something of material and spiritual value, often only from the desire to produce it. This is the type of activity admirably suited to Indian youth who have little with which to work. A Chicago youth group of boys and girls secured an old house of small value and through a series of workshops succeeded in renovating it into a suitable centre in which they now conduct business meetings, meetings for speakers, parties, and other group activities. Like all Quaker centres, this one will serve the community in every possible way. Another workshop cleaned up a slum tenement into which a number of foreign-born families had moved. Another redecorated a child nursery in a working-class community. Another went into a depressed Southern rural Negro area and, securing lumber at a low price in the local area, built a much needed community center. Some projects require only a week-end, some a series of week-ends, some a week or more during vacation, and some the entire vacation. These young people sally forth, clad in work clothes and

with high spirits, governed by the desire to serve. They are learning Christian living by living out Christian principles.

Older young people are recruited for adult projects which take them to any point on the globe. They are not dominated by adults, but are given equal responsibility. These projects, undertaken by the American Friends' Service Committee—the British Friends' Service Committee performs similar work—include such work as the recent setting up of refugee camps for displaced Palestinian Arabs, a work which the Quakers performed at the request of the United Nations. Quakers perform this work without evangelizing in the literal sense of the term and with such a complete absence of self-righteousness or spiritual arrogance, that during the refugee-camp project, one of the Quakers was approached by an Arab who inquired whether or not it was possible for a Mohammedan to become a Quaker !

Quaker youth in the United States are active not only in neighborhood work and workcamps. College youth conduct one major and several minor institutes annually. These institutes are regional and are devoted to the discussion of national and international problems and to problems of interest to their group. Youth caravans are organized to support legislation or proposals on specific social and political problems. Week-end institutes are held at which particular problems are considered, or a retreat is conducted, or a trip is made to Washington, D.C. while Congress is in session, or to the United Nations, or to state bodies, if the group cannot make the trip to the larger centres.[7]

These are educational, humanitarian, and Christian activities that youth understands. They require little of

[7] Of late Quaker work camps have been set up in India too, and they are doing splendid work under British and American guidance. The name of Mr. Horace Alexander of Britain is well known for much-needed, social work of an unobstrusive kind, wherever there was distress. Quakers have also been prominent as reconcilers and healers of wounds caused by group conflicts.

material goods. What is needed is an initial creativeness which will release the fearless and joyful life that Christ inspires man to live. When this creativity starts in the Indian church, the ferment will have begun and a new strength will flow into what is currently a flaccid church life.

In such activity programs for youth as the Indian church could profitably put into operation, a percentage of young people would certainly be of outstanding education and ability. Such youths need scholarships for study in India as well as abroad. The selection of young people for scholarships should not rest on denominational considerations. An Indian Christian once said: "We want people to serve Christ—not the Methodists, the Presbyterians, or the Anglicans!" Some denominations such as the Methodists have done commendable work in awarding scholarships and there has been some effort made to induce American Christian business men to sponsor the business and industrial education of young Indian Christians.

Scholarships need to be given not only for Christian service but also for secular work in medicine, engineering, mechanics, and business. By so doing, not only the general community level can be raised, but a stronger laity can develop, and that in turn can help to build a self-supporting church. Such young people chosen for scholarships should not be bound, on return, to serve the bestowing mission or church. Loyalty cannot be purchased; it must be freely given.

Training of Ministers in new skills

Much has been said of the complex and perplexing problem of inadequate salaries paid to ministers. Add to this the great difference between the high salaries of bishops and heads of educational and professional institutions and the salaries of the rank and file in the ministry. The parish minister upon whose shoulders rests the great weight of church work, finds himself on the lower rungs of the

economic ladder, while the top hierarchy of his own church and missionaries in general occupy the higher rung. Until greater awareness of his situation comes about in the minds of the church and the laity, and until a greater contribution is made to his physical and intellectual welfare, a consecrated and responsible ministry will not come into being.

American teachers in the elementary grades and in high school often find it necessary to acquire a skill, in addition to teaching, at which they work during week-ends and summers to supplement their inadequate salaries. Unfortunate as is this necessity, it solves an immediate problem until salaries can be raised or the cost of living lowered. Indian ministers and catechist-teachers, possessed of other skills, may be able not only to supplement their incomes, but to teach their skills to others, adult and youth alike. Leaving aside the fact that a minister's work is a full-time job in itself, it is greatly to the advantage of the church, particularly to youth, that the minister be broadly trained in a number of fields. Such training is especially valuable at this time in India when the stress is on multi-purpose vocational education. In many Quaker settlements and camps about the world looms are built and set up for weaving cloth, simple machines are installed for sewing plain garments and for making and repairing shoes, and woodwork shops are built and operated by the boys of the community. Such activities lead to greater physical well-being not only of the community but of the minister.

To an alert, well-trained minister, necessity can introduce creative and constructive activities. It is a challenge. It makes him more than priest, preacher and pastor. It makes him a community and civic leader. If he has the requisite training, the spirit and the quality, the community will follow him. It is at this point that *rapport* between minister and laity can come about, meeting on the common ground of community needs. This *rapport*

is essential, for neither the minister alone nor the laity alone can produce or maintain a healthy church. How, then, can the laity serve? And how can the laity be trained to its responsibilities?

Training of the Laity

It is of primary importance that the laity should be brought to understand that the church is their organization and that a thoroughgoing integration of Christianity with Indian life can come about only after they have fully accepted the responsibilities of the church. In order to bring about this acceptance, however, church officials and ministers must realize that they have a two-fold job on their hands; (1) they must willingly relinquish some of their powers of decision to the congregations, and (2) must inaugurate a religious and social program of many and diverse activities, with the church as a community centre.

As a step towards the education of the laity, professional people in the community such as lawyers and teachers, may be given the opportunity to acquire new skills, especially in the fields of religion, and these new skills they can, in turn, impart to others, particularly to the youth. Teachers, during their summer vacation, can be trained to responsible service in the community.

However peculiar and obscurantist its tenets may be, the Church of the Latter Day Saints or Mormons in the United States has established an enviable record for voluntary service, for efficient church organization, with laymen as leaders in every branch of church activity, for the cultivation of a community sense, and for self-dedication. Little is known of this side of the community life of the Mormons. The Mormon church conducts a full program of training for young and old in a wide variety of fields, in addition to home and church religious training: choral and instrumental music, dramatics, dancing, public speaking, woodwork, sometimes mechanics, and any other occupation for which a number of the community may ask. On the

evening on which these weekly classes are conducted, the entire community turns out, young and old, each going to the class of his choice. The result is that every individual in the community, whether Mormon or not, is enabled to some degree to become an adept at some art or skill. Not a problem arises in the community for the solution of which volunteers are not readily available.

When the economic depression hit the United States in the early thirties, the Mormons were about the only considerable group which did not depend on doles. They organized themselves effectively for the care of the needy. Indian Christian leaders visiting the United States must make it a point to visit Salt Lake City, Utah, the headquarters of the Mormons. The city is divided into wards, and over each ward there is a lay bishop who functions without pay. He can conduct a religious service, and preside acceptably over meetings. But his livelihood is likely to be derived from farming or any other occupation. Once a week during off hours, under his leadership, the Mormons of the ward gather together for some kind of voluntary work which they can render to the community. Women busy themselves in canning fruits and vegetables, in making garments, and the like. Men do similar work. The finished products are all sent to the Mormon store. Those who are old and indigent are given a ticket by the bishop of the ward who knows their conditions intimately. The ticket entitles them to a free supply of goods.

In their meetings Mormon youngsters of ten and twelve years of age are asked without previous notice to offer the opening prayer, and at times a fourteen or fifteen-year-old gives the sermon. Mormons pay their ten-per-cent of income even before they buy food. This is true also of students who work at summer jobs. They are versed equally in the Bible and in the means of livelihood.

Young Mormons do considerable " missionary " work. On " receiving the call " from the church, while still in their teens, they go out to serve and witness to the Gospel

as interpreted by the Mormons, in the United States itself or abroad. They do this work without any pay. Their transporation charges are shared by the church and the community and their family. For hospitality they depend on the kindness of those whom they go out to serve. They preach in the streets, in homes, and in meeting halls, wherever they can get an opening. On the completion of their short term of service they return home for the resumption of their formal education or for secular jobs. They constitute an effective lay ministry.

The Indian church may experiment with the kind of lay ministry discussed above. If youth programs such as the above or such as those that function among Quakers could be attempted and brought into operation, a lay ministry would tend automatically to come about. Mormon bishops and Quaker ministers are laymen who, more through spiritual perception and outstanding abilities rather than professional training, have become church leaders, although a considerable number are highly educated and some are ordained ministers. Indian men and women in secular vocations can be trained to the point where they are able to act as chairmen of clubs, to raise money and materials for church and community projects, to teach skills to youth and adult groups, to superintend youth and adult activities, to make pastoral calls, and even to conduct services.

Something is being done along these lines, but more remains to be done. Already lay members in many churches assume the responsibility for the teaching of Sunday School classes. Only their enthusiasm is not always persistent. Teaching the young, and teaching them effectively, is so vitally important that it may be argued that only the minister should be delegated to this task. The fact, however, is that the minister is but one person, however gifted, and it is generally impossible for him to assume this task. In addition, teaching presents a splendid opportunity for the church to develop the talents of its

laity. Promising members of the congregation, perhaps drawn from the Bible Study Group, can be given further training in the techniques of presenting and orientating religious material to the understanding of children. The secular teacher is the most likely one on whom to call, but the opportunity to widen the scope of training among the group should not be overlooked.

Of late laymen in India have been taking an active part in visitation evangelism. From years of experience in the ways of evangelism, Dr. R. W. Scott[5] of the National Christian Council of India offers certain suggestions for the more effective use of visitation evangelism. Some of them are worth recording. The visitors, according to this writer, should be *enlisted*, not 'invited'. In the present conditions of the country, about 70 per cent of the visitors may be men, "although husbands and wives make very effective teams." At least one team should be of young people. "The visitors should be spiritually vital persons and competent to present attractively the claims of Christ and His Church." They are commissioned at a regular service of the church. They are given training in visitation during the week each evening before they go out in teams of two: two men, a husband and wife, or two young people. When they go out on this work, the teams spend about two hours a week visiting homes. After their work is finished, the minister follows it up, particularly the care of those who want definitely to commit themselves. The aim is to give them spiritual guidance, to offer suggestions about the need and methods of the daily devotional life, and to lead them to active participation in the life and worship of the congregation.

Enlisting of Women to the Service of the Church

India has not yet discovered the vast reservoir of service that is potential in the enthusiasm and devotion

[5] R. W. Scott, editor, *Ways of Evangelism*. National Christian Council of India, 1953, *see* pp. 28–30.

of women. Although traditionally the Indian woman, compared to man, has been given a lower place in society, India has had her women rulers, heroines on the battle-field, poetesses, saints, and *sannyasinis*. At the *Kumbh Mela* and other major Hindu festivals, one comes across well-organized bands of hundreds of women who have taken to the ascetic life. During the days of the Indian freedom movement, women played a conspicuous part. Since then women have taken the lead in social legislation, village uplift and social reconstruction work, and in public life in general. Mrs. Vijayalakshmi Pandit has distinguished herself as Ambassador and as President of the General Assembly of the United Nations. The present Parliamentary Secretary in the Department of External Affairs is a talented woman. Young women are now employed in the Indian Administrative and Foreign Services, in the railway enquiry offices, and in business offices. Many Indian colleges now are co-educational. Women no longer need to be coaxed to go to school or college.

The Indian Christian church, like the country in general, is still lagging behind in its utilization of the zeal and self-sacrificing spirit of women. Whether or not women are more spiritually perceptive than are men is not the point. One has only to observe Western women in their work in the church to know that if it were not for them the Western church would be drastically cut in size and effectiveness. In the American church today sixty to seventy-five per cent of the congregations and a large number of church leaders are women.

Women serve as organists, members of the church choir, Sunday School teachers and superintendents, youth directors, church secretaries, ministers' assistants, and deaconesses. Women's committees in many churches look after the house-keeping functions of the church, *viz.*, care of the church building, kitchen and dining room, interior decoration, and the arrangement of flowers for church

services and weddings. Much of the missionary work of the church is entrusted to women's societies. Women arrange for frequent church lunches, suppers, and banquets: and whatever is saved after expenses are paid goes towards the support of some activity of the church or other. Women make articles of one kind or another practically all through the year; and these are sold in sales arranged for by women's groups. There are sales of needlework, home-cooked foods, antiques, and "white-elephants" (bric-a-brac, *objects d'art*, and such things for which a family finds no use).

In some churches women are treasurers and are in sole charge of the disbursement of church money. Women play an active part in arranging for church picnics and conducting week-end and summer camps. Representative women attend various churches and conferences. Practically every denominational body has its own Women's Missionary Division. This means that women have to bear the brunt in raising the quota assigned to their branch. They also have to provide hospitality and other amenities for missionaries on furlough when they go around doing deputation or cultivation work. Women have their own clubs and study groups under the wings of the church. Neighborhood groups of church women meet regularly in the church building or in each other's homes for lectures, book reviews, and for the serious study of foreign and home missionary work; as well as for a study of such mundane subjects as cooking, dress-making, gardening, and child care. Not all of these club activities are related to the church.

Contrary to what an outsider might think, women who render all this variegated service are not women of leisure or women with considerable means; they are ordinary housewives, teachers, nurses, office girls, saleswomen, and many others who have to work at a remunerative job for about eight hours a day every working day in order to earn a living. It is the spare hours which they

give to the service of the church, and they give them cheerfully.

Indian churchwomen need not suffer from an inferiority complex because of the vastness and effectiveness of the work done by their Western sisters. In spite of the poor social and cultural background from which many of them have come, Indian Christian women have been pioneers as doctors, nurses, social workers, teachers, principals of high schools and presidents of women's colleges. The Indian Missionary Society and the National Missionary Society depend to a large extent upon women for raising their budgets. There are women missionaries of these Societies who are rendering meritorious service, especially in the villages. The names of Miss Sircar of Bethlehem and of Miss Jebamani Taylor of South India are well known as women missionaries. Indian Christian women also play a useful role as Y.W.C.A. and S.C.M. secretaries, as superintendents of girls' hostels, as matrons, and the like. In communities like the Syrian Christian community, which are well educated and where there are no inhibitions against women, women bravely shoulder their responsibility.

Indian women can do even more than they are now doing in the service of the church. They can organize groups to support church activities, set up children's activities, and provide for children's needs, arrange for sewing and home-making projects, teach skills and religious classes, sponsor teen-age groups and activities, operate fairs and festivals, organize and promote humanitarian causes, and participate in church affairs, both religious and organizational.

The Macedonian call to service has come to Indian Christians in recent years. Some have offered themselves for missionary work among Indians working and living in such distant lands as the Fiji Islands, South-east Asia and South and East Africa. In Siam and Hong Kong, Indians labor among Indian Christian groups. The National

Christian Council has received appeals from many foreign areas to set up missions or churches, and failing this, to send ordained Indians to work among peoples. Bishop N. C. Sargant in *The Dispersion of the Tamil Church*, writes stirringly of the extent to which Indian Christians, drawn sometimes from the poorest classes, have contributed to the growth and development of the church in the countries to which they have gone. On the whole, however, Indian Christians have done little in foreign missionary fields, chiefly because the Indian Church is struggling for its own life. It may be that by offering its service, however weak, it will grow in strength thereby.

Indian Christian leadership is developing slowly. The Indian Christian ministry must separate the grain from the chaff; it must grow in strength; it must assume responsibility for the adequate support and proper government of the church. The ministry needs men and women who are strong in faith and skilled in training, and who are able, through service and sacrifice, to enlist the idealism and power of the vast Indian reservoir of men, and particularly of women and of young people.

CHAPTER V

RE-THINKING CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY IN INDIA

SOME years ago the famous English Biblical scholar, Bishop Westcott, wrote that because of the deeply religious and mystical nature of the Indian people the first great commentary on the Gospel of St. John would come from that country. This anticipation has not yet been realized, although a few signs of independent theological thinking are appearing among Indian Christians today. As Professor V. E. Devadutt has pointed out,[1] Christianity in India so far has been in an absorbing stage and has not produced even a decent heresy, but the time is now ripe for self-expression.

If, in making itself intelligible to people of different backgrounds, Christianity in the past took over and adapted the thought-forms of the Greeks, Romans, Germanic peoples, and Europeans in general, it will assimilate today something of Indian thought also. Yet it needs to be remembered that accommodation for the sake of accommodation has no value. Even after Christians have made all possible accommodation to Indian thinking, the Hindu may remain supremely indifferent to the Christian claim, and go on his way very much as before. He may even laugh up his sleeve. Adjustments may be made on the circumference or the periphery of Christianity but never at its core, for its core is Jesus Christ, who, in Christian thinking, constitutes the standard of every culture and of every religious experience.

Certain converts to Christianity in the last century, such as Krishna Pillai and Vedanayaga Sastriar, poured forth in poetry their devotion to God and to Christ. They wrote lyrics which have enriched Indian Christian hymnology, but did not develop a well-worked out Christian theology.

[1] *The Ecumenical Review*. Autumn, 1949. Article entitled *What is an Indigenous Theology ?*, pp. 40–51.

Mr. A. S. Appasamy, another convert from Hinduism, has enriched the mystical side of the Christian religion by his own inner experience and yoga practices. Then, in the first quarter of the present century, Sadhu Sundar Singh, a convert from Sikhism, brought the richness and originality of his nature and of his Indian background to bear upon the interpretation of Christian truths. Unfortunately, in the course of his missionary travels, while still in the prime of life, he disappeared during a preaching mission to Tibet and nothing has been heard of him for over a score of years. While the Christian church is richer for these men and their writings, their contributions have been discontinuous and have remained almost isolated strands within the pattern of the Christian church.

Indian Christianity is an inheritor both of the rich culture of India and of the best in Western Christianity. Therefore, whether Fundamentalism, Liberalism, or Neo-Orthodoxy is best suited to India is not the vital question. The important question is: How can Christian doctrines and Christian experience be re-stated in the light of India, and more especially of Hindu thought and tradition? A wrong step taken in this direction is likely to have much more serious consequences than a wrong step taken in such fields as Christian worship and organization. Therefore, the problem of adjustment and adaptation needs to be attempted with the utmost caution.

In his eagerness to bring together Christianity and Indian culture, the Indian Christian should be on his guard to avoid syncretism. He should take care that Christianity does not become another all-inclusive faith like Hinduism. Hinduism is so inclusive in its scope that there is danger of its becoming all things to all men without the distinctive contribution of its uniqueness. While *comprehensiveness* is the keynote of Hinduism, the keynote of Christianity is *commitment*—commitment of self and of life purposes to the highest and best that one knows, namely Jesus Christ. Because of its all-inclusiveness, Hinduism has failed to make

valid distinctions at times. In its higher, as distinguished from its popular aspects, it has tended to make much more of metaphysical speculation and mystical experiences than of the need for moral and spiritual transformation of every-day life, although some Hindu mystics aver that their mystical experiences do indeed transform life.

The Christian should stand foursquare upon the centrality of the Christian revelation which is to be found in the meaning and implication of the Incarnation, Crucifixion, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Where there are vital differences, say between Hinduism and Christianity, the honest as well as the wise thing to do is to acknowledge these differences and not to gloss over them in the name of all-inclusiveness and tolerance. Tolerance which is born of sympathy, study, and understanding is highly commendable. Tolerance which leads to the obliteration or minimizing of distinctions between essentials and non-essentials is a mistake.

The Christian has no right to use such emotion-rousing words as "superior" and "inferior" in relating himself to people of another faith, though he does have the right to speak of his faith as being "more adequate" or "more satisfying" to him than are all others. In doing this, however, he should combine utter personal humility with absolute fearlessness. He has no right to restrain others from deciding for themselves what is "more adequate" or "more satisfying" so long as they keep open minds and open hearts.

To one who has eyes to see, it is obvious that if there are points of similarity between Hinduism and Christianity, there are also points of dissimilarity, and the cause of truth or fellowship is not served best by trying to fit Christianity into Hinduism or Hinduism into Christianity. Professor P. D. Devanandan, Indian Christian thinker, wrote:

> The task of Christian theology in India is to effect an Indian expression of Christianity and not to work out an Indian Christian expression of Hinduism.

> The task is neither to Christianize Hinduism nor to Hinduise Christianity; it is to render the Christian Gospel intelligible to India, making it relevant to our present needs, emphasizing its particular adequacy to meet our circumstances, speaking God's message to us in the language of India's every-day commerce.[2]

While Indian Christian theology should undoubtedly relate itself to the Indian background, it is a mistake to reject everything which has come from the West. The important question is not whether a given theological proposition comes from the East or West, but whether it is rooted in life and accords with deep Christian experience. Remembering the evils of tradition in Hinduism, the Indian Christian is naturally wary of dogma and tradition. But dogma and tradition which have sprung from life experience can have a chastening, instructive effect. As Dr. Devanandan observes, many of the problems confronting man today are like the problems which confronted the early Fathers of the Christian Church. Therefore, a study of patristic literature, for instance, may serve as an excellent corrective and as a profound inspiration to those who are inclined to frown upon all Christian theology merely because it has come from the West.

The Christian Idea of God

A proper starting point for the study of any religion is its view concerning God, although this is not necessary in the case of Buddhism or Confucianism. Islamic theology, on the other hand, is almost exclusively concerned with God. Mohammed continuously stressed the majesty of God, but lost sight of the dignity of man; so much so that his teaching has come to be described as "divine slavery".

The Hindu idea of God is many-sided. Lower forms of Hinduism are practically synonymous with idol worship and spiritism, sometimes even with fetishism and totemism.

[2] *International Review of Missions.*

But under the influence of higher Hinduism, even the illiterate villager speaks of one God who is the protector and sustainer of the universe. Nevertheless, in these cases, fear of the village deity is a more compelling factor than is the love of a universal Father-God, as revealed by Jesus Christ. The monistic Vedanta type of Hinduism is primarily concerned with a mystic understanding of the nature of the ultimate ground and the relation between the individual self and the Supreme Self. Its emphasis is not so much ethical or social as it is intellectual, psychological, and mystical.

Against such a background, Jesus Christ in a simple and direct way reveals God as the universal Father of all mankind. God as the creator and sustainer of the universe is readily accepted by the Hindu and Moslem alike. Therefore, it is not necessary to labor the obvious. The idea of God as Father is objectionable to the Moslem rather than to the Hindu. The Moslem is so literalistic in his thinking that he balks at the very thought of God as Father. God is to him Majesty personified. He is Power. He is Judge, but never the Father of all mankind. Even if the Moslem can be persuaded to think of God as Father, He is not a universal Father, inasmuch as the Moslem has not yet risen above primitive tribalism. This is the reason why he believes that God has His favorites.

In the Christian view, God is not only a universal Father but also a living person. By this term, it is not meant to make God in man's own image, although Christians in the past, and Moslems even today, have done so. God is a spiritual person, or being, and therefore physical attributes are altogether irrelevant. The philosophically-minded Hindu claims that God is both personal and impersonal and that a grasp of the latter view of God as impersonal marks a higher stage of spiritual development than does the former.[3] According to Radhakrishnan, God's personality is but a

[3] Swami Akhilananda affirms that the dualists of various Hindu schools and qualified monists, like the Ramanuja School, are very similar to the majority of Christians in their conception of God.

mask. The Christian need not balk at the idea of God being both personal and impersonal, if all that is meant by such a conception is that all one knows or experiences of God is but fragmentary. The monistic Hindu, however, goes much farther than this. He holds that the ultimate reality is *nirguna*. He has no qualities whatsoever. He is neither good nor bad, for He is above all such distinctions, which can apply only to the relative state of existence. God is incomprehensible and can be defined, if at all, only by a series of negations. All of this, however stimulating intellectually, does not grip the individual in the same way as the simple revelation of God as a loving universal Father of all mankind. Because of the apparent contradiction involved in the conception of God as both personal and impersonal, the Christian must emphasize the conception of God as wholly personal.

Positively, when the Christian speaks of God as person, he has in mind the highest qualities of character possessed by God and revealed by Jesus Christ. God to the Christian is the highest embodiment of holiness, righteousness, love and forgiveness. Other religions, too, have thought of God in these terms. The force of them, however, is not brought out so fully and pointedly as in the teachings of Jesus Christ, his life and his death. God as revealed by Jesus is morally perfect. In Him there is no blemish at all and no one who is of an impure heart can see Him. "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."[1]

When the Christian speaks of God as the highest embodiment of righteousness, he includes the idea of justice in that conception. This point of view of uniform and universal justice can be of great value to the people of India, who in ordinary life believe that rules and regulations can always have an exception if one has enough influence with the authorities concerned. The Christian teaching on the justice and righteousness of God refuses to countenance

[1] Matt. 5 : 8.

the idea of God overlooking the sins and shortcomings of a favoured few. No moral aberration can be excused by a special dispensation from God.

What may otherwise appear to be the relentlessness of an angry God is modified and softened by the love and forgiveness of God. No one can water down this conception and yet be true to the essence of the teaching of Jesus concerning God. The love of God to the Christian is much deeper and fuller than the mercy and compassion of Allah to which the Koran constantly refers. It is the yearning of God for the sinner, for the restoration of broken relations once man repents of his sins and seeks refuge in God. The highest act of love is forgiveness.

The *bhakti* type of thinking in Hinduism stresses God's grace and forgiveness; to this extent the Christian finds a kindred spirit in the Hindu *bhakta* (a devotee of *bhakti*). *Bhakti* thinkers such as Kabir, Tulsi Das, and Tukaram have poured forth their love and adoration for a personal God in inimitable forms. The Christian church in India can and should make more use of such literature by way of illustrating and strengthening the Christian conception of God, avoiding at the same time the undue emotionalism and other excesses of *bhakti* to which some Hindu thinkers have called attention.

The supreme example of God's love and forgiveness, however, is seen in the Cross of Christ. In and through the Cross He has shown His unqualified condemnation of sin and His yearning for the sinner. God is not willing that even a single sinner shall perish. Like the good shepherd, He is willing to leave the ninety and nine sheep to go in search of the one lost sheep. The forgiveness of God, then, is not an easy affair but something which cost God dearly in the crucifixion and in every manifestation of evil that can grow from human choice.

With this foundation of the Christian understanding concerning the nature of God, the Indian Christian can build bridges between himself and peoples of other faiths.

He can profit by the Hindu conception of religion as a continuous search after God even when found of Him, a conception which is more conducive to religious humility than is the cocksureness of some Christians. Gandhi used to say that he was only a seeker after truth and had only an imperfect experience of God. He once wrote that when he was young he used to say that God was truth, but that in his mature years he felt increasingly that truth was God. The better type of Hindu possesses a religious modesty and humility which are highly commendable. What sometimes makes him react unfavorably towards Christians in general is the dogmatism and Pharisaic self-righteousness of certain Christians. The part of Christian wisdom and prudence is to admit that one knows only in part and prophesies in part. The Christian must always remember that the New Testament teaches humility.

From the Hindu, again, the Christian can welcome the idea of God as Father and Mother, as did the Rev. N. V. Tilak, a Brahmin convert of an earlier day. One sees no intrinsic objection to such an idea, if the term Father suggests God's majesty, righteousness, and care for His children, while the term Mother suggests such tender qualities as mercy, love, forgiveness, and self-effacement. The only danger is that the immature and careless Christian may pass from moral qualities to physical attributes and assign carnality to God, as does much popular Hinduism.

Adoption by Indian Christianity of such Hindu terms for God as *Bhagavan* and *Ishwara* can go some way in establishing points of contact between Christianity and Hinduism. Hindu mystic practices and techniques, if carefully selected, can lead to the same result. While the Christian may not accept the Vedantic idea of the individual soul being absorbed into the Supreme Soul, he can use some of the Hindu spiritual exercises and disciplines in cultivating a state of inner serenity and calm.

With his Moslem neighbor, the Indian Christian may want to affirm an emphasis on the oneness and unity of

God, although for reasons different from those applicable to the Moslem. In a land where polytheism and pantheism are common currency and where the grasp on personality is weak, the emphasis on the oneness and unity of God has its distinct value. It is also valuable in combating outmoded views of the Trinity. Whatever meaning the idea of three persons in One may have had to early Christian theologians, the thought that will be most helpful to the Indian is God manifesting Himself to man in three closely related ways. It is the Tri-unity of God more than Trinity that is likely to appeal to the Indian.

The conception of the transcendence of God, also much stressed by the Moslem, can be of some value to the Christian, so long as he does not sacrifice the accompanying conception of the immanence of God. Even the Koran says that God is nearer to man than his jugular vein, although this is not the characteristic view of God in Islam. Even after expressing all that can be thought of God, there is bound to be a great deal which is beyond human comprehension. In dealing with the transcendence of God, the Indian Christian should avoid two extremes: the Moslem idea of complete separation between God and man so that the two can enjoy no vital fellowship, and the pantheistic tendency of the Hindu to blur the distinction between God and man. For the Hindu the highest form of religion is *oneness* with God, just as for the Christian it is close *fellowship* and *communion* with God. The Christian view differs markedly from Vedantic thought that God and man are the same. According to Christianity, man can become God-like; he can never be God. To identify the individual soul with the Supreme Soul may be convenient metaphysics, but it is not a clarification of religious aspiration.

The Moslem and Hindu idea of the continuous remembrance of God has much to commend it. Both the Hindu and the Moslem, each in his own way, make their religions more than once-a-week observances. Continually to remember God, even as a harsh judge, as the Moslem does, may

have its salutary value in a world which is increasingly giving only lip service to God and religion.

The Uniqueness of Jesus Christ

In whatever direction Indian Christian theology may depart from, or in whatever way it may modify Western theology, it must not give up the uniqueness of Jesus Christ. From the days of Peter, Christians have recognized Jesus Christ as the unique Son of God. To blur this Christian claim by arguing, as do some Hindus, that everyone is a son of God and that every human being is unique in the sense that Jesus was unique, is to do an injustice to an essential truth of God. The idea of *avatar* can no doubt help to interpret and elucidate the Christian conception of incarnation. But it should not be overlooked that there are some vital differences between the two conceptions of Son and of *avatar*. The Hindu *avatar*, says Dr. A. G. Hogg,[5] is a guise (or appearance) in the form of a disguise. It is not a complete self-disclosure of God. Rama is supposed to reveal only half the essence of Vishnu, whereas to the Christian Jesus Christ is a complete and full revelation of the nature of God. That God periodically intervenes in human history, as the Hindu believes, in order to set things right when they go desperately wrong and thereby restore *dharma*, may be a valid conception. But that does not convey the conception of an intervening God, suffering with and on behalf of man, as does the Christian conception of the incarnation and the crucifixion. Moreover, there is nothing of the Christian richness of the nature of God revealed in any of the Hindu *avatars*, some of whom belong to the sub-human order.

In interpreting Jesus Christ to the non-Christian, the Christian must not minimize the full humanity of Jesus Christ any more than his divinity. The Docetic conception,

[5] A. G. Hogg, *The Christian Message to the Hindu* (London : S. C. M Press, 1947).

which holds that Jesus' suffering on the cross was not real, is easy for the philosophically-minded Hindu to accept, but the Christian who knows his Lord must keep away from it. The suffering of Jesus on the cross, his death, and resurrection are realities, and to tamper with them is to tamper with the very basis and foundation of Christianity. Perhaps in no other religion, except in Islam, is its founder so important for faith as in Christianity. If Mohammed is taken away from Islam, there is no Islam. Likewise, if the historic Jesus is taken away from Christianity, there is no Christianity. Yet Jesus Christ is not like Mohammed. While Islam fastens attention upon a closed tomb and a closed revelation, Christianity fastens attention upon an open tomb and a progressive understanding of a progressive revelation.

The historic Jesus is the foundation for the risen Christ. To put it in other words, the living or eternal Christ is a continuation and consummation of the historic Jesus. The Buddhist, especially of the Mahayana school, has grasped the importance of an eternal Buddha. However, this Buddha is so much an intellectual abstraction that he cannot create confidence in his own existence. Gautama Buddha was undoubtedly a historic personage, but his later devotees have, by positing scores of Buddhas, deprived him of his uniqueness and emaciated him as a living and vital personality. It may be true that the Buddha nature is in the bosom of every person, but the placing alongside of him scores of imaginary and lifeless characters is to deprive the historic Buddha of his uniqueness and moral grandeur.

No one has seen the risen Christ with his physical eyes except it be some of the early disciples and the "above five hundred brethren at once".[6] But many have experienced him, for he is an ever-living and ever-active presence. To the devotee, he is a presence which warns him when he is in the wrong, encourages him when he is in the right, and

[6] I Cor. 15 : 6.

strengthens and inspires him for good at all times. To the Christian, the resurrection of Jesus Christ is a guarantee of the reality, continuance, and consummation of personality.

In presenting Jesus Christ to the non-Christian, the temptation is to present him as perfect man and as perfect teacher, or *guru*, and nothing more. Gandhi had no difficulty in acknowledging that Jesus Christ came as close to perfection as is possible and was "a great teacher of humanity".[7] The Moslem is willing to concede that Jesus was a sinless prophet, although he reserves for Mohammed the honor of being the final prophet, or "the seal of the prophets". The Buddhist and the Confucian are ready to accept Jesus as a seer. But to the Christian he is more than teacher, prophet, seer, or perfect man. He is a universal savior and the inspirer of all those who put their trust in him. The problem is how to make this truth acceptable to the non-Christian without giving the impression of being dogmatic and of generalizing what is a personal experience.

Perhaps the wise thing to do is to invite the non-Christian to accept Jesus Christ as a perfect man, a perfect teacher, and a perfect revealer of God, and to hope that as he personally comes in contact with the spirit of the living Christ, he will be led to further truth and to the acknowledgment of Jesus as his Lord and Savior. To demand that this final stage be made the initial one is to put the cart before the horse. The Hindu is not likely to accept some of the exclusive claims made for himself by Jesus as stated in the Fourth Gospel. He may not object to miracles or even to the mystic unity of Jesus Christ with God. But he will object to regarding him as the one and only way to God.

The Hindu may not have much difficulty in accepting the contention of Dr. Godfrey Phillips[8] that Jesus Christ is both the message and the messenger. In this respect Jesus

[7] Clifford Manshardt, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

[8] G. E. Phillips, *The Gospel and the World* (Nashville: Cokesbury Press, 1939).

is unlike all other founders of religions. He not only demands faith in his teachings, but faith in himself. The God revealed by Jesus is so much like him that one can call God Christ-like. Jesus is the concrete picture of God. In the words of a contemporary theologian, the life of Jesus is the autobiography of God. Jesus demands the attention of the world by the quality of life that he lived and the positive and unequivocal nature of his teachings. No one before or since Christ has lived such a perfect life. Though tempted at all points, he was without sin. At no time did he pray for forgiveness for himself. His life was as perfect as it is possible for the enlightened conscience of man to conceive. That cannot be said of Zoroaster, Krishna, Buddha, or Mohammed. The highest form of moral strength and inspiration is found in the Sermon on the Mount. Gandhi derived much of his moral strength and inspiration from it, although he did not say the same thing at all times in evaluating the relative help he received from the Gita and the Gospel. All of this leads to the inevitable conclusion that, until there is a greater incarnation at some future date, the world will be wise to follow the teachings of the Galilean, both for individual regeneration and for the establishment of a sound social order. Jesus Christ, then, is to the believer, whether of the East or of the West, the norm for both conduct and religious thought and experience.

If Jesus Christ is an ever-living presence, so is the Holy Spirit. Hinduism much more readily understands the reality of the Holy Spirit than it does exclusive theories of the nature of Jesus Christ. Born and bred in a mystic atmosphere, the Hindu instinctively is on the search for the establishment of intimate relations with the Unseen. The Unseen is more real to him than the seen. Through long periods of meditation, contemplation, self-absorption, and self-abnegation, he seeks to realize God in a personal and vital way. Since such is the case, it is a pity that Indian Christianity has not given more attention to an understanding

and elucidation of the operation of the Holy Spirit. Mr. P. Chenchiah, an outstanding Indian Christian thinker and writer, says that Christianity in India has suffered from an over-emphasis on the doctrine of salvation and an under-emphasis on the operation of the Holy Spirit.

To the Christian, the Holy Spirit is a reality. At this point, the non-Christian naturally asks the question: "If Christ is a reality and can inspire people, why not Buddha, Confucius, Mohammed, or even Gandhi?" It is more than possible that they can. But none of them was, or claimed to be, more than human. If the moral life of Mohammed was all that the records say it was, it would be difficult to derive the highest possible inspiration from his life, because of the obvious reason that a stream cannot rise higher than its source. It is conceivable that Gandhi, whom many of the present generation in India knew personally, can continue to influence people for a long time to come, and such influence may not be completely different in kind from the influence exerted by Jesus Christ. Yet there is a limit beyond which a *human* being cannot be raised by the ardent devotion of his followers. The extent to which a person can be exalted must bear some resemblance to the height he reached while on earth.

A helpful point of contact between the Hindu and Christian is provided in the Hindu idea and practice of *darshan*, which means the passing of something like spiritual magnetism from one person to another. Many illiterate people flocked to see Gandhi because of the mystic faith that to be merely in his presence and to concentrate their minds upon him and his goodness would have a salutary spiritual effect upon them.

A place where the Christian may be able to help the Hindu is in bringing out the active aspects in the operation of the Holy Spirit. It is this Spirit which guides a person into all truth and burns up all that is less than holy in an individual. It is the spirit which constantly reminds man

that he must be holy, if he is to be a temple of the Holy Spirit. It is also the Spirit of power."

The Hindu way of stating the experience of the Holy Spirit is somewhat different. The Hindu goes to strenuous lengths in his seeking of *samadhi*, or oneness with God. In his search, the *yogi* practices control of the palate and of the five senses and control of the muscles, the breath, the will, and the mind. Although *samadhi* is usually interpreted to mean oneness with God, there are other interpretations. In one type of *samadhi* a man loses consciousness of the world and yet remains conscious of separateness. In another he attains unity. In a third, he goes beyond unity and duality. For hours or days at a time, the Hindu ascetic sits cross-legged on a tiger or deer skin, his eyes focussed on the tip of his nose or on his navel, while he strives through meditation and contemplation to achieve " one pointedness of mind ".

This is not what Brother Lawrence meant when he wrote about the practice of the presence of God.

> ". . . . I walk before God simply, in faith, with humility and with love, and I apply myself diligently to do nothing and think nothing which may displease him . . . . I have no will but that of God, which I endeavor to accomplish in all things, and to which I am so resigned that I would not take up a straw from the ground against His order, or from any other motive than purely that of love to Him. I have quitted all forms of devotion and set prayers but those to which my state obliges me. And I make it my business only to persevere in His holy presence, wherein I keep myself by a simple attention, and a general fond regard to God, which I may call an *actual presence* of God; or, to speak better, an habitual, silent and secret conversation of the soul with God, which often causes me joys

[9] Adapted from *Ways of Evangelism*, Chapter II, by George Sinker (National Christian Council of India, 1953), p. 112.

and raptures inwardly, and sometimes also outwardly, so great that I am forced to use means to moderate them and prevent their appearance to others . . . .

"As for my set hours of prayer, they are only a continuation of the same exercise. Sometimes I consider myself there as a stone before a carver, whereof he is to make a statue; presenting myself thus before God, I desire Him to form His perfect image in my soul, and make me entirely like Himself.

"I cannot imagine how religious persons can live satisfied without the practice of *the presence* of God . . . . We may make an oratory of our heart wherein to retire from time to time to converse with Him in meekness, humility, and love. Everyone is capable of such familiar conversation with God, some more, some less . . . . Accustom yourself, then, by degrees thus to worship Him, to beg His grace, to offer Him your heart from time to time in the midst of your business, even every moment, if you can."[10]

The average Christian may find it difficult to understand within the context of his religion the way in which the Hindu expresses his experience of oneness with God. But undoubtedly, the Christian can find riches in a study of the Hindu practice of prayer, meditation, and contemplation.

Man and the Reality of the Universe

No religion has stressed the sacredness of human personality so consistently and so fully as has Christianity. This explains why nations, in whose development Christianity has played a vital part, have evolved democratic processes and the democratic organisation of society more than have others. The pity is that with the growing tendency to shelve Christian principles in business, government, and international relations,

[10] Brother Lawrence, *The Practice of the Presence of God* (New York : Fleming, H. Revell Company, 1895), pp. 24–34.

the so-called Christian nations are fast exhausting their original spiritual capital, without making any significant addition to it. In the United States one finds glaring examples of first and second-class citizenship in practice, in spite of valiant efforts to consider all men equal. The situation in the Union of South Africa is infinitely worse.

Despite the failures of Christian peoples in many parts of the world, Indian Christians have the unique privilege and great responsibility of helping to realize the dignity of human personality in every walk of life. They must believe to the point of action in the Universal Fatherhood of God and its logical corollary, the Universal Brotherhood of Man. They must show in their lives that God is no respecter of persons and that every human being is of the utmost value to Him. They must make it undeniably apparent that Jesus Christ came into the world for the regeneration of mankind.

If all of this teaching were acted upon as true, Christianity would show that it had a far more stable foundation for the practice of human brotherhood than has any other religion in the world. In actual fact, however, it is found that the Moslem practices his idea of brotherhood in a far more thorough-going fashion than do most Christians. But it is a limited brotherhood, embracing only those of the household of faith. Non-Moslems are virtually excluded from it. This means that Moslem brotherhood is a sort of clannishness, resulting in a double ethic, one towards fellow-Moslems and another towards the rest of the world. A further limitation of the Moslem brotherhood is that it is literally a brotherhood; women are, in practice, excluded from it! A result of such exclusion has been that wherever Islam has gone, it has had a blighting effect upon women and children, although, in many areas under the stress of modern conditions, the situation is now changing. Parsi and Sikh brotherhoods, too, are limited brotherhoods.

An area in which the Christian conception of the sacredness of human personality is markedly noticeable is the relation between men and women. Jesus Christ shows

the family, with its permanent monogamous relations, as a miniature Kingdom of God here on earth. The characteristics of this family are mutual love and confidence and a constant concern for each other's highest well-being, all of these arising out of Christian nurture and Christian worship.

In the non-Christian family one often finds a rare devotion of the wife to the husband and considerable tenderness on the part of the husband for the wife. Yet there is not the same reverence for the personality of the woman as for that of the man. Hence one finds unequal privileges. Children do not look upon the father and the mother in the same manner and do not regard them as a conjoint authority. Christianity, on the other hand, redeems the entire family.

It can truthfully be said that Christianity has done more to change the status of women in India and the East as a whole than any other force. Women in Christianity have become individuals. They have learned to read and write. They have become teachers, nurses, and doctors. Their influence has been quite out of proportion to their numbers as teachers not only in private schools, but in government schools and colleges. Because of the example of Christian women, non-Christians are permitting their daughters to enter various professions.

Concerning the question of human brotherhood, one can derive even less help from the Hindu than from certain other non-Christian religions, for with some exaggeration it may be said, as did Bishop Caldwell, that Hinduism is caste and caste is Hinduism. Even Gandhi, who labored hard to abolish untouchability and succeeded in a large measure, claimed that he was an adherent of caste in its pure form, known as *Varnashrama*.[11] This is a nebulous position to take. What caste was in its pristine purity

[11] The institution of caste in its original form. The literal meaning of *varna* is color.

nobody knows, although many, including Gandhi, have speculated on it. Gandhi implied at times that in the ideal form of caste, a man would move up or down the scale according to his capacity and character. But if fluidity be permissible, why call it caste at all? Will not a concept like "democratic opportunity" be far better? The possible reason why Gandhi clung to the concept of caste was his fear that Hinduism cannot very well give up caste and remain Hinduism. Untouchability is an adjunct of caste; caste is a logical necessity arising out of the doctrine of *karma*—and *karma* is at the core of Hinduism.

In spite of the fact that the new constitution for India has put a legal ban on the practice of untouchability and has provided equal civic and political rights to all citizens, the social handicaps of outcastes, known as *harijans*, or "children of God", have not yet been completely removed. It may be that with growing public enlightenment and improved economic conditions, far greater changes will take place. For the present, however, Hindu society is still largely an aristocratic society with its innumerable divisions and distinctions. Caste is a form of tribalism cutting at the root of a healthy and progressive community. In the past at least it was a progenitor of communalism (religious separatism), giving Moslems their excuse for a separate state existence.

While the Indian Christian should endeavor to remove all meaningless caste distinctions, he should at the same time try to preserve some of the moral controls and social utilities of caste. There can be no doubt that caste hitherto has been something of a system of social insurance for its needy members and has exercised a salutary discipline upon the recalcitrant. It has given to its members a sense of belonging which the church has not yet fully given. Advantages such as these may be preserved in and through the autonomous village governments, which are rapidly being set up, as well as through re-vitalized Christian churches.

In the relation between God and man, the Christian is bound to differ from the Hindu, and here no great adjustment is possible. In Hinduism, as has been indicated, there exists a tendency to blur the distinction between God and man. Arguing from the Vedanta point of view, Swami Vivekananda is said to have remarked: "I am God." This is a point of view which the Christian cannot accept. Man is made in the image of God, so far as his moral potentialities are concerned, but he is also a strange mixture of fire and clay, fluctuating between high spirituality and low passion. As a French philosopher put it: "Man is indeed a God, but he is also a monkey."

When it comes to intimate fellowship with God, the implication of Hindu thought is that such fellowship is possible only for the select few who have gone through long years of self-discipline, meditation, and *tapas*, or physical austerities. The Christian teaching does not say that fellowship with God can be had on easy terms. It does, however, open that companionship to any who, with a willing and contrite heart, appropriates the eternal spirit which was in Christ Jesus. Christianity knows nothing of a distinction between an esoteric and an exoteric circle of disciples. All are admitted to equal membership, and the fellowship that any one enjoys is proportionate to the moral and spiritual progress that he makes. In Islam, except in the case of the mystic Sufis, fellowship with God is only a formality, for "the doctrine of difference" has, for all time, set up a wall of absolute and final separation between God and man.

Nothing can be more exhilarating to a Christian than the thought that God has chosen him, poor and humble though he be, to serve as the channel through which some of His purposes for mankind can be made manifest. This means that man has the capacity to co-operate with God in realizing, in part, the Kingdom of God upon earth. Jesus Christ saves men not only by what he does for them, but also by what he expects and demands of them. He calls men to him,

trusting them and commissioning them to kingdom-building tasks.

Christianity from its inception has been an activist faith. Jesus Christ went about doing good and his followers are expected to do the same. An unalterable principle of the Christian teaching is that faith without works is dead. " For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."[12]

Jesus Christ invites all who believe in him and his message to active participation in the work of the Kingdom of God, a work which seeks to bring every area of human life into a new relationship of forgiving love and service. This kingdom is not a kingdom of " meat and drink ", but a kingdom of justice and righteousness, of mutual aid and active co-operation. Among other things, it is a kingdom of economic justice, political freedom, physical health, brotherly love, social responsibility, enlightenment of mind and elevation of spirit.

Such being the case, it is regrettable, if not tragic, that some Christian leaders in India, under the influence of ultra-Barthianism, are preaching a defeatist gospel, leaving the responsibility of changing man's environment solely to God. Inevitably, this plays into the hands of fatalistically-minded people in the Orient whose number is legion. What India has lacked for centuries is a gospel of activism. Christianity can supply that lack, without in any way undermining the excellence that India has attained in the realm of meditation, self-discipline, and *tapas* (austerities). Dr. Devadutt is right when he says that Indian Christian theology should hold the balance between the prophetic and the apocalyptic, and between the idealistic and the realistic. This balance can be struck when the Christian humbly realizes that, even after doing his best to carry out the purposes of Christ in the spirit and power of Christ, he is an " unprofitable servant ".[13]

[12] James 2 : 26.
[13] Luke 17 : 10.

It is possible to try to interpret, as Gandhi did, the Kingdom of God in terms of the Hindu idea of *Ramarajya* (reign of Rama, one of the principal incarnations of Vishnu). This conception, however, is too vague to be equated with the Kingdom. Nor does it contain within itself the incentive for action which the Kingdom of God contains. Besides, the inspiring and optimistic philosophy of life rooted in faith in the way of Christ is more conducive to action for the Kingdom than is the enervating and generally pessimistic view of life characteristic of Indian religions. The Christian should engrave in his memory:

> "Christ hath no body on earth now but yours; no hands but yours; no feet but yours; Yours are the eyes through which is to look out Christ's compassion on the world. Yours are the feet with which He is to go about doing good; and yours are the hands with which He is to bless us now."[11]

An incontrovertible fact is that in modern times Western nations have displayed greater passion for social improvement than have Eastern nations, excepting certain Buddhist sects. Whether this contrast is caused by Christianity or by differences in geography, climate, food, racial vigor, or social organization, or by combinations of these elements, would be difficult to determine.

But social service can also be motivated by humanitarian and philanthropic motives and even by ideological considerations, as in a communist state or in a secular society. The likelihood, however, is that such motivation may not give to service the steady optimism and persistence that obedience to Christ and his spirit constantly and consistently generates. A humanitarian is in danger of becoming a tired humanitarian, and nobody is more tiresome to work with than a tired humanitarian! The Christian can face defeat and not grow despondent because he has the assurance that he

[11] Attributed to Saint Theresa of Avila, 1515–1582.

is not fighting alone, but in company with one who defeated defeat and conquered death.

Every historic religion has wrestled with the problem of free will *versus* determinism. Among Christians themselves there is no uniformity of opinion on the question. Yet the prevailing view among them is that free will, within limits, is required by the fundamental principles of Christian faith. Even Calvinistic Christians, while denying free will as it is usually conceived, nevertheless judge themselves and others, and preach and work as if they assumed in man a responsible free will. The Christian should never accept the idea of a God who has the details of life so minutely controlled that man becomes an automaton. The free will of man is a logical corollary of the law of personality. If the greatest good that a man can achieve for himself is full and free development of his personality, then a large measure of free will in which to express his personality must follow, at least outside his participation in routine living common to all. If free will be denied, sin as meaning a deliberate violation of the holy will of a loving God, has no meaning whatsoever.

The Indian Christian must insist on free will and, in accordance with the spirit of his Master, put forth all possible effort to change himself and the total environment in which he is placed. He should bring to his task a sense of urgency which Jesus had when he said: "I must work the works of Him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work".[15]

Because God is the kind of God revealed by Jesus Christ, the Christian can be an optimist. The Christian does not forget that he may have to sweat drops of blood, if the Kingdom of God is to become a reality, but this knowledge does not fill his soul with gloom or sour his temper. He has ever the assurance of Jesus: "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."[16]

[15] John 9 : 4. [16] John 16 : 33.

Such assurance is not easily found in Hinduism or Islam, the two principal religions of India. For many of the misfortunes and calamities of life, the Hindu finds an easy and ready-made explanation in *karma*, and the Moslem in *kismet*. But the Christian must insist that within a world of order God has given man both freedom and responsibility. It is only as man uses reason and understanding and learns to obey God's will that he can become a fitting instrument in God's hands. Tennyson wrote:

> Our wills are ours, we know not how,
> Our wills are ours to make them thine.[17]

While the Christian does not want to take over Hindu fatalism, he must at the same time cultivate the calmness and peace of mind of the Hindu which enables him to face all eventualities serenely. Such serenity the Christian can come to possess by developing an attitude of repose in a God of love and order. The fatalism which seems to be at the very heart of Islam is inimical to the progress of Christianity. It cuts the nerve of moral enthusiasm and spiritual endeavor. Jesus says: "My peace I give unto you." The Christian should cultivate the faith which states that it is better to fail in a cause which will ultimately succeed than to succeed in a cause which will ultimately fail.[18]

Christianity cannot be true to the teachings and spirit of its Master if it does not adhere to the doctrine of personal immortality and to an unshakable faith in the ultimate triumph of good over evil. Assurance of these concepts for the Christian is found in the cross of Christ and the resurrection. Part of the good news which Christianity offers mankind is the hope of personal immortality. Christ does not say, as Mohammed virtually does, that his own followers, and his alone, will enjoy eternal bliss in "gardens of delight". Hinduism offers the monotonous prospect of endless births and rebirths before the individual soul reaches

[17] *In Memoriam*, Introduction, Stanza 4.

[18] Peter Marshall, *Mr. Jones, Meet the Master* (New York: Revell and Company, 1949), p. 19.

moksha. Buddhism, denying the very existence of the soul, offers a vague, perhaps unconscious *nirvana* of cheerless and passionless existence.

Although he cannot spell out the details of future existence, the Christian can look at the grave without fear or dismay. Personal immortality does not mean to him a selfish desire to perpetuate himself. It means the claim of the individual upon God for further opportunity to continue and complete the upward struggle of growth and service which he has begun here and now.

A wise God has hidden from man's view the details of the future life. Yet from the Scriptures, man has the assurance that it will be a complete life, and not a phantom existence, or the existence of a disembodied spirit. It is a life of fellowship with Jesus Christ when "... we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is ".[19] There will be no sin or sorrow. It will be everlasting, a life lived with Christ.

While the Christian has no hesitation in rejecting the Hindu doctrine of transmigration with its belief in thousands, if not millions, of rebirths on earth, he should at the same time avoid popular conceptions of heaven and hell, conceived in crude and materialistic terms. It is patently absurd that a man should enjoy everlasting happiness or suffer everlasting punishment for the balance of good over evil or of evil over good, with which he is respectively credited or debited up to the time of his death. The soul that sins may not perish completely, though it will need to reform and work through the consequences of evil attitudes and misdeeds.

The Christian View of Sin

Indian Christian theology must stress the Christian conception of sin as a deliberate violation of the holy will and love of a righteous God. Sin is a terrible reality and as long as man is a sinner he cannot see God except as

[19] I John 3 : 2.

a judge. God is perfect and, therefore, his children, too, should not cease to strive for perfection, not in power nor in knowledge, but in goodness. "Be ye, therefore, perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect",[20] is not mere rhetoric. The meaning of the Cross of Christ is that while God condemns sin in no uncertain terms, He yearns for the sinner to the extent of imposing the utmost possible suffering upon Himself. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die"[21] is an eternal truth admitting of no compromise.

In dealing with sin, the Indian Christian should, as did Jesus, address himself more to the inner motive than to the outer act. Jesus demands of his followers complete purity of heart. Yet in many so-called Christian nations, no less than in non-Christian lands, outward conformity seems to matter far more than does inner purity. It may be that in the attainment of inner purity, the single-pointedness of mind cultivated by the spiritually advanced Hindu can be of much value. Christian mysticism, which at present is at a low ebb, may be able to receive much from what is valuable in Hindu mysticism.

Unlike most religions, Christianity often takes a light view of ceremonial breaches, although some branches of the Christian church make much of them. According to the teachings of Jesus, what enters a man does not defile him but what comes out of him does. Both Hinduism and Islam place undue emphasis on such comparatively trivial matters as sumptuary regulations, although one must concede that the vegetarianism practised by millions of Hindus is more humane and more in keeping with reverence for life than the killing involved in the meat-eating habits of Christians. Fasts, pilgrimages, set prayers and *mantrams*,[22] religious or communal feasts, and the like, have some value. But what is of much greater consequence is the doing of

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[20] Matt. 5 : 48.

[21] Ezek. 4 : 20.

[22] Truths uttered by ancient Hindu sages, the repetition of which is supposed to have a beneficial effect upon the person repeating them.

justice, the loving of mercy, and walking humbly with God. This fact the Christian church in India should always keep in the forefront.

It would be altogether incorrect to say that either Hinduism or Islam ignores sin. Yet, neither of them views sin in the same serious manner as does Christianity. To the Hindu, and even to the *Saiva Siddhantin*, who, among Hindus, comes closest to the Christian teaching, sin is more a metaphysical and cosmic concept than it is a moral one. Ordinarily, the Hindu does not bring a sense of urgency to bear on the problem of sin, as a Christian is expected to do. Bishop Kulandran said: "The sense of utter urgency in regard to sin and salvation is incompatible with the Hindu atmosphere .... (Therefore) a Saviour's need is not deeply felt, in spite of the out-pourings of the great *bhakta* poets."[23]

No fair-minded person will suggest that Hinduism is amoral. Bishop Kulandran writes: "It (Hinduism) stresses the usual virtues, and there are many good and great men among Hindus who will put Christians to shame .... (But) while Hindu ethics has produced some amazing cases of renunciation, and while it produces many good-natured, obliging, hospitable and kind people, it is radically defective in absolutes."[24]

In the matter of moral character, Christianity can both learn from, and teach Hinduism. Speaking in general terms, it may be said that Hinduism produces an excellence in the realm of the passive and the gentle qualities of character: meekness, forbearance, long-suffering, spontaneous friendliness and hospitality, self-renunciation, simplicity of life and standards, and non-violence. The same excellence, however, is not found in the realm of the active qualities of character such as courage, straightforwardness, public and business honesty, service, and co-operation. It may be that here Christianity can make a real contribution to Hinduism.

[23] *International Review of Missions*, Vol. XXXIII, No. 132, Oct. 1944.
[24] *Ibid.*, p. 398.

The prevailing Hindu idea, that sin is due to spiritual ignorance, is not as satisfactory as the Christian view that sin is due to an unsurrendered, or rebellious, will. In one of his writings, Radhakrishnan speaks of sin as a "handicap". This is hardly the word which the Christian would use to describe sin.

True to the Hindu teaching, Radhakrishnan makes the doctrine of *karma* and transmigration central to his thinking. In support of the reasonableness and justice of *karma*, this learned writer says that it makes God rational, that it is a sound explanation of human inequality, that it takes account of heredity and environment, and that it is a more sound conception than the traditional Christian conception of "an account-keeping God".

While some of these arguments are not without force, *karma* raises more problems than it solves. In strict logic, it leaves little or no room for free choice. If one's present material state is in accordance with one's earlier life, it does not seem possible for one, or for anyone else, to interfere with the smooth working of a just *karmic* law. It means a tyranny of the deed long past recall. Even though *karma* appears to rule out free choice, many Hindus believe that a person can work out the effects of past *karma* and acquire new *karma*. The initiative for reconstruction is not ruled out. This position is not only illogical, it makes even more complicated the task of what turns out to be an "account-keeping God". Under this system, He would be required to maintain for every man four columns of accounts: old debt, new debt, old credit and new credit. As the account proceeded, it would become so complex as to defeat the *karmic* conception that a man's fortune in the present life is an exact index of his merit in the past. It does not answer the question, furthermore, of how an individual acquired his first merit, or his first *karma*. Nor does it offer a shred of empirical evidence. If births and rebirths are to have a moral value, personal identity between this and past lives seems essential; yet one cannot know, despite the

Theosophist claim, what he was in a previous existence, or that he had one. In addition, if births and rebirths are but stages in a person's moral and spiritual development, it seems just and logical that he should begin his new life where he left off his previous one, instead of having to begin anew as a child. In practice, *karma* has meant fatalism and an excuse for inertia and timidity. Finally, as J. B. Pratt, a sympathetic student of Oriental religions, observes, *karma* means "self-righteousness on the part of the high-born, undue servility among the lower castes, and a strange lack of sympathy toward the unfortunate".[25]

Because of the above points of serious difference, Christian theology cannot incorporate the characteristically Hindu doctrine of *karma*. Yet *karma*, in what it suggests, can be a wholesome corrective to the tendency on the part of some Christians to believe that they can be saved even *in* their sins. "Once saved forever saved." *Karma* is rigorous in its demands and makes no exceptions. Christianity balances such a rigor with the reasonable idea that fresh opportunities will be open to every soul until it reaches the end of its journey. In disapproving what he calls "the Christian conception of an account-keeping God" Dr. Radhakrishnan does not take into account the Christian doctrine of divine forgiveness. According to it, man's repentance is reciprocated by God wiping the account clean. In this way the Christian doctrine avoids the determinism of a doctrine of *karma*; and also the rigidity of a God who exacts the last farthing of debt.

As Dr. Hogg suggests, the Indian Christian can invite his Hindu friend to face with him what has been called "the *karma* of humanity",[26] in place of individual *karma*. The Hindu doctrine of transmigration is the elaboration of a half-truth, namely, that a man's deeds have an inescapable influence upon his own life. It overlooks the other half of

[25] J. B. Pratt, *India and Its Faiths*.
[26] A. G. Hogg, *op. cit.*, Chapter V.

the truth, namely, "that there must be a like continuity between the quality of a man's deeds and the quality of their fruits in other people's experience."[27]

If Christianity in India cannot incorporate into itself the Hindu view of sin, neither can it incorporate the Islamic view. Sin is not a violation of the arbitrary will of God. It is a breach of eternal law, which is a moral law applicable to all mankind. Moreover, the saying of a creed, the formal repetition of prayers at stated times, the correct posture in prayer, the habits of fasting, almsgiving, and the making of the pilgrimage to Mecca, all of which are laid down by Islam as conditions of salvation, are not the essence of true religion. At best they are but a help, a means to the great end of communion with God.

Christian ethics which flows from the principle of Christian love has more to commend it than other forms of ethics. Much of ethical value can undoubtedly be obtained from Hindu and Buddhist religious literature, but nothing can surpass the directness, simplicity, and beauty of the Sermon on the Mount. The Christian is to love his brother because God first loved him. Christian love is altruistic and universal. As a distinguished Christian preacher put it, it begins in giving, continues in serving, develops in sacrificing, and culminates in forgiving.

SALVATION

If the purpose of Christianity were but to point to the awful consequences of sin, Christianity would be the most depressing of religions. The unique claim made for Jesus Christ is that he not only convicts man of his sin but shows him a way out of it. This way is the way of the cross and of forgiveness. No claim can be made in spirit or in letter that the cross of Christ has magical or even propitiatory value. The only claim that can legitimately be made is that the acceptance of Jesus Christ through faith and the appropriation of his moral grandeur and beauty of spirit, through

[27] *Op. cit.*, p. 74.

prayer, meditation and unfaltering loyalty to him, can give to the individual believer an inner strength and an inspiration to live a life of victory over sin. Such a claim is in no way fantastic but is in accordance with the known laws of human nature. If, as daily experience shows, man gradually becomes an image of what he constantly thinks and worships, adoration and love of Jesus and faith in him will reproduce in him something of the spirit of Jesus himself. This is the good news of the Christian Gospel.

Man, in one expression of his pride, may say, "I want my deserts and do not want forgiveness". Or, using the words of Radhakrishnan, he may say, "Salvation is to be earned; God cannot thrust it on us". Yet the man who understands the nature of sin, as well as the nature of his own potential goodness, craves forgiveness. When he shows genuine repentance and amendment of character—acts that reflect strength and profound seeking—the erring individual is restored to the love of God. To those who believe in him, Christ offers forgiveness and the power to live victoriously. Forgiveness in Christian thought is the most powerful act of love.

Salvation, as offered by Jesus, says Phillips, is "a present fact" as well as "a future hope". It is a salvation from present sinning as well as a salvation from future transgressing. ".... it saves man from his evil nature; it puts him on his feet with his fetters broken. He becomes a new creature in Jesus Christ."[28]

Bishop Kulandran[29] is right when he says that in presenting Jesus as Savior, Christianity breaks new ground. It offers to man a power which can help to transform his life and make him "a new creature". In spite of this offer, the view of salvation held by many Christians is that it is an insurance against the calamities of a future world. However much the Hindu may want freedom from

[28] G. E. Phillips, *op. cit.*

[29] S. Kulandran, *The Message and Silence of the American Pulpit* (Boston, The Pilgrim Press, 1949).

sin and its consequences, his idea of salvation is that of the soul rejoining, or rather recognizing, its union with the divine soul, having been delivered from *maya* (or illusion, in the sense of cosmic ignorance).

Apropos of this interpretation, Dr. Radhakrishnan, an avowed apologist of a reformed type of Hinduism, says that the only way to *moksha*, or at-one-ment with God, is by the casting away of "man's separate individuality". Dr. Radhakrishnan writes:

> "Until all traces of this separatist tendency are suppressed, union with the Supreme cannot be realized. We are committed to the world of *Samsara*, the endless cycle of lives, until we conquer time and reach perfection. Unless we drop the individual point of view and raise ourselves to the universal we cannot lay hold on the truth. Finite agents cannot achieve infinite perfection, even if they groan and travail to the end of time. The way out is to knock down the sense of the finite. Unless we abandon the standpoint of *samsara* by cutting through the chain and lift ourselves up above sensitivity, above space-time, above individuality, there is no release possible."[30]

It is somewhat difficult to give a precise meaning to these words. If the meaning is that man must give up the individual-phenomenal-I, or the empirical-I, and acknowledge the universal-noumenal-I, or the real self which links itself up with other real selves, and order his conduct accordingly, there can be no possible objection to it. The difficulty, however, is in discovering the source from which the inspiration for such a life is to come. In Christianity, inspiration comes about through loyalty and devotion to Jesus Christ. However much the high ethical note of Buddhism may be admired, its dominant idea that man is his own savior is insufficient. Even Buddhists of later times, not being able

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[30] S. Radhakrishnan, *The Heart of Hindusthan* (Madras, G. A. Natesan), pp. 91-2.

to succeed as self-saviors, have evolved conceptions of Bodhisattvas, Amitaba Buddha, and the like, involving conceptions of salvation through another's merit. Hinduism, at its best, does recognize the place of grace and redemption in religion, but such thinking runs counter to the more dominant thoughts of *karma* and reincarnation.[31]

While Indian Christian theology should adhere to the conviction that Jesus Christ is the supreme savior of mankind, it should refrain from irrational and magical interpretations of such salvation. Thus, for instance, the expression, the blood of Christ, may have an entirely legitimate meaning to those with a Hebrew or even a Western background; but to the Hindu, other than those who accept animal-sacrifice, it is a repulsive idea. The ideas underlying this and other culturally different phrases should be understood and interpreted in a moral and spiritual sense. The Hindu can help a certain type of Christian to rid himself of the conception of "push-button" salvation. In explaining the saviorhood of Christ, the Christian may find it useful to study the Buddhist thought of appropriating the "Buddha nature" by intense concentration on Buddha.

On the subject of salvation, Indian Christian theology will do well to give the closest possible attention to the various ways advocated by the Hindu for the realization of God: the way of *gnana* (mystical knowledge), the way of *karma* (works and rituals), the way of *bhakti* (faith in, and loving devotion to, a personal God), and the way of yoga (contemplation and self-discipline). Of the four ways, the philosophically inclined Hindu tends to place the greatest possible emphasis on the way of *gnana*. From the Christian standpoint, it is doubtful whether "the removal of ignorance"—no doubt in a mystical and spiritual sense—is the

[31] In fairness to Hinduism, it must be added that some Hindus believe that divine incarnations and even great illumined souls can wipe out the *karmas* of individuals. When a *guru*, or teacher, initiates a disciple, he is supposed to assume responsibility for the *karma* of the disciple.

vital condition for salvation. *Yoga*, in the sense of self-discipline, is certainly essential to a new life. But the elaborate technique of such elements as the control of the muscles and the control of breath is not. Salvation is more than the riddance of *avidya* (spiritual ignorance) or the practice of *yoga* exercises. Salvation means sincere repentance and whole-hearted faith in one, who by virtue of his life, teaching, crucifixion, and ever-living presence is able to inspire men to overcome sin and live a triumphant life, even Jesus Christ.

The Indian Christian may learn something of value from the Hindu willingness to go through millions of lives, if necessary, before attaining salvation. Salvation is costly. One cannot purchase it at a bargain counter. It calls for genuine repentance, redress for past wrongs, resoluteness of mind and reconciliation. Fasts, pilgrimages and mortifications of the flesh may be necessary for the attainment of salvation in Hindu thinking, but they are not very necessary for the Protestant Christian. The Christian idea of salvation through faith is not extraneous to certain Hindu and Buddhist schools.

While the Buddhist idea of "self-salvation" may be unacceptable to the Christian, St. Paul recognizes its value when he bids his readers work out their own "salvation with fear and trembling".[32] The Moslem idea of salvation as contained in the "five pillars of faith" is altogether external and mechanical. But it has the advantage of being concrete, practical, and fairly well observed.

The view of salvation which the Christian should present to a non-Christian is not so much salvation from hell-fire in a future state of existence, as salvation from the power of sin in the present existence and the enduing of the individual with a zeal and passion for present service.

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[32] Phil. 2 : 12.

THE CHURCH

The Christian believes that the church is more than an ecclesiastical organization. It is the body, or bride, of Christ. It is a visible counterpart of the invisible Christ. It continues the presence and work of Christ in the world. In its essence it is a spiritual fellowship, an imperfect fellowship no doubt, but a fellowship all the same—a fellowship of the local congregation, of the national Christian community, and of the ecumenical church throughout the world. It is both a visible and an invisible fellowship, including in some sense all those who do the will of God, whether or not they call themselves Christians. It is a community of the redeemed. It is life in fellowship.

In a restricted sense, the church means those who have entered the visible body by means of baptism and acceptance of Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. It is here that the Hindu often hesitates. Like the Christian, he is already organized into a community, although the primary purpose of his organization is to conserve accustomed ways of life, ways which are less than Christian, involving caste, food tabus, and certain disabilities of women. He is not an individualist and he gladly submits to the authority of the family, the caste and the village. Thus he possesses a vivid sense of corporate oneness. Yet, when it comes to personal religion, he becomes an individualist. As Dr. Hogg[33] points out, if the Cross is a stumbling-block to the Jew, the church is an offence and stumbling block to the Hindu, inasmuch as he believes he can, within his own religion, assimilate Christ's teachings without becoming a member of the Church.

While the possibility of such assimilation cannot be disputed, the natural thing for one seeking to live the Christian life is to live it in co-operation with others who are striving towards the same goal. One meaning of the church which the Hindu often overlooks is that it is a

[33] A. G. Hogg, *op. cit.*

fellowship of kindred spirits who warm each other's hearts in holy living. To the sinner turning away from sin, the church offers a welcome haven. Therefore, in the words of Dr. Hogg, " Come, follow me " has for its corollary, " Come, join the church ". By upbringing, the Hindu wishes to remain within the tradition into which he is born, even when he recognizes higher values in a newer tradition. Because of this tendency he may be urged to see at least the psychological value of commitment as evidenced in definite alliance with a company of fellow-seekers and fellow-workers who constitute a worshipping community. Institutions are not mere abstractions. They constitute living relationships that enrich and empower individuals in creative association. This is recognized in political, educational and communal association; it is equally significant in religious fellowship. This the Christian worker can clarify to the tradition-loving Hindu.

The church exists not only for the purpose of strengthening and deepening man's inner life; it is also " the nucleus and nursery "[31] of a transfigured world order. It is the chief means by which man becomes a co-worker with God in such matters as the eradication of social and economic justice, the getting rid of war, and the active promotion of peace and brotherhood. At its best, the church is a miniature Kingdom of God, although at no time is it made up of saints or near-saints. In the language of W. M. Horton, it establishes a historical continuity with the incarnate Lord and is a means of communion with the living Lord.

It is likely that for years to come many Hindus who are deeply influenced by the spirit and teachings of Jesus Christ will decline to become members of the Christian church. If this difficulty is to be surmounted, it is the duty of the Indian Christian to re-think the conception of the church in the light of the Indian background and to remove

[31] A. G. Hogg, *op. cit.*

from it all Western non-essentials which are, or may be, preventing its acceptance. He may want to understand and interpret the church as a fellowship of believers knit together by a common loyalty and devotion to Jesus Christ, devoting their lives to holy living and disinterested service. Christians are intimately related to each other through Jesus Christ and to the outside world through common humanity and selfless service.

One of the reasons given in the past by non-Christians for not joining the church was the difficulty in determining which church they were to join. While denominationalism still constitutes a weakness of the church, in recent years India has made greater progress in the direction of church union than any other country in the world. The Church of South India has brought together into a single organic whole churches with episcopal, presbyterian and congregational backgrounds. It has evolved a simplified episcopal organization of its own and forms of worship which may serve as a model for other church unions. In the case of a good many present-day Christians, denominational differences do not mean much. The younger generation of Christians like to think of themselves as belonging to the Church as such rather than to any particular denominational branch of it. Some in church and mission employ, for obvious reasons, still hold on to their denominational affiliations and make much of their denominational loyalties.

In a rapidly shrinking world in which each country is neighbor to every other country, Indian Christianity cannot proceed in terms of its own growth alone. The mentality of "the frog in the well" is injurious to a church as much as it is to a nation. If the ecumenical church is, in the words of the late Archbishop Temple, "the great fact of our time", Indian Christianity should do all it can to make this emerging world church a living reality. The ecumenical church is a world-wide church, extending in all directions and touching and transforming every aspect of human life, but starting from a *known center*, which is

common loyalty and devotion to Jesus Christ and his eternal spirit.

One of the primary functions of Indian Christianity is to create in its members a vivid sense of a world Christianity and of a world church. This task needs to be performed on a spiritual rather than on an organizational or institutional plane. If Indian Christianity becomes a germane part of world Christianity, there are bound to be times and occasions when it will be prepared to rise above mere claims of nationalism and patriotism. This does not assume a supreme ecclesiastical authority such as the papacy; it means that it will place the claims of an enlightened and sober Christian conscience above everything else. This will also be true with regard to the church of any country whatsoever.

CHAPTER VI

AN INDIGENOUS CHRISTIANITY

CHRISTIANITY has no assured future in India unless and until it becomes naturalized in the country of its adoption. Speaking for Japan, Dr. T. Kagawa said, " We want Jesus Christ to take out his first and second naturalization papers in Japan". If this does not happen, Christianity will remain a foreigner in the Orient.

While many notable changes have taken place in India towards this end of naturalization, it is no exaggeration to say that Christianity is still not completely acclimatized to Indian conditions. In many cases the thoughtful convert to Christianity fails to find a spiritual home in the church or among Christian people. In food, dress, manner of speech, and social customs, many Indian Christians are hybrid. This foreignness is even more clearly marked in the realms of church art, of architecture, of music, and of worship and thought forms.

Part of the responsibility for this is to be traced back to early Christian missionaries from abroad who tended to look upon everything which was not Western, or Western-Christian, as pagan or heathen, and, therefore, unworthy of attention. Today there are many Indian Christian purists who consider it a sacrilege in any way to interfere with the thought and worship forms of Christianity as they or their fathers received them through foreign missionaries. Their argument is that although Christianity in its origin was an Oriental religion, its later development in the Occident is to be regarded as a natural development of the original seed. Many Indian Christians believe that the development of Christianity in India may commendably duplicate that of the West. They are opposed to change in the early Western Christian forms, however irrelevant to India and to modern social conditions those

forms may be. They wish to function in the ecumenical sphere of Christianity even before Christianity has achieved substantial growth in their own country. Besides, they forget that many Christian rituals are after all of pagan and Roman origin.

It should be obvious that very few thoughtful non-Christians in India are likely to seek membership in the church as long as the church continues to function through forms and rituals foreign to Indian tradition. The purists and the supporters of the *status quo* may succeed in deterring change; if they do, they will deter the growth of Christianity in India. A two-fold task lies before the Indian Christian Church: to free itself from the leading strings of the West and yet to remain in the Christian family.

In securing this freedom, it is necessary to distinguish between the center and the periphery of Christianity, for unless such distinction is kept clearly and constantly in view, there is danger of rejecting the essentials of Christianity along with the non-essentials. Attempt was made in the last chapter to outline some of the essentials of Christianity. The periphery is composed of such matters as church art, architecture, music, worship, organization and institutions, and doctrinal formulations. It is here that one finds an almost unlimited field for experimentation and change.

Art and Architecture

Indian Christian art has hardly begun. A few here and there, such as A. D. Thomas, have given their artistic talents to the portrayal of Christ in Indian garb, but they have made only a beginning. In any form of Christian art, the cross is bound to play the central part. To remove it or to subordinate it to any other symbol will mean the profound modification, if not the destruction, of what is central to Christianity. If in the past every people has painted Christ and Christian themes in the light of its

background, the people of India will do likewise. The Bible does not say that Jesus Christ was an Anglo-Saxon. In some of the Roman Catholic churches in Mexico City, Christ is black. The Lord's Supper, the Good Samaritan, the Good Shepherd, and the Prodigal Son can all be portrayed against an Indian setting, so that an inquiring non-Christian need not start with an initial prejudice against Christianity.

Ritualism and symbolism mean a great deal to the Indian. They appeal to the æsthetic side in him and they lift him above the humdrum of everyday life. They help to effect a synthesis between reason and emotion. They serve to elevate him above the present and transitory to the beyond and eternal. They enable him to see God in unexpected places and even in trivial objects. But they also embody serious limitations. They can, and often do, become mere forms lacking in life and vitality. When "circumcision of the flesh" becomes a substitute for "circumcision of the heart," and when forms and ceremonies take the place of love and righteousness, it is time to call a halt. A discriminating Christian would use ritualism and symbolism with great caution, remembering that one of the reasons why Hinduism from time to time has fallen to low moral and spiritual depths has been because of its undue attachment to rites and symbols. The Roman Catholic Church in India, as elsewhere, and certain non-Roman Catholic Churches have often pushed rites and symbols to the center of religion and have relegated to the periphery some of the more important aspects of Christian living.

The Indian Christian can validly incorporate into his church worship such a symbol as the lotus. To the Hindu, the lotus represents the idea of God touching the earth, *i.e.*, the idea of *avatara*, or incarnation. It embodies the idea of man remaining incorruptible in a world of sin and temptation—the Christian concept of "in the world but not of it"—even as the water in which

the lotus flourishes does not wet the blossom. As the lotus plunges to great depth to reach sustenance, so it illustrates the idea of being rooted in God; and finally, the blossom of the lotus pictures the concept of the highest form of goodness emerging from unpromising material, even as the lotus at times grows and blooms in miry places. Such symbols are full of meaning to the Indian.

Architecture is another important field in which Indian Christianity can utilize the best in its surroundings. If the majority of Christians in a given area are of Hindu extraction, their church construction will naturally incorporate the desirable features of Hindu temple architecture. Where those of Moslem extraction predominate, Moslem features will be incorporated. It is possible that, as a reconciler between the two rival communities and cultures, Indian Christianity can combine features of both Hindu and Moslem architecture. Such a combination at its best is found in the cathedral at Dornakal in Hyderabad, built under the inspiring leadership of the late Bishop V. S. Azariah. This cathedral combines the lofty Moslem dome with the exquisitely carved Dravidian stone pillars and courtyards of the South Indian Hindu temples. At the center stands the cross.

At Tirupattur, where for over thirty years an *ashram*[1] and a medical center have been operated by two doctors—an Indian Christian and a Scotsman—the *japalaya*, or house of prayer, is built like a Dravidian Hindu temple with its outer walls enclosing a rectangular space. Within the space is a beautiful garden and a fountain in which worshippers wash hands and feet before entering the house of prayer. The outer wooden door is an exact duplicate of the heavy panelled doors of the Dravidian temple, and the gateway is crowned by a *gopuram*, or carved tower,

[1] A place of spiritual retreat found usually among Hindus, but now utilized also by Christians in India. It provides room for unhurried reflection and companionship.

in brick and mortar. There are no sides, or walls, to the house of prayer. Worshippers move freely in and out as they come for private worship. The atmosphere created by this simple yet dignified Indian architecture is so much in keeping with its environment that Hindus who pass by are inclined to enter and worship, a thing that happens but rarely in a church built like a public hall in the severe Puritan manner or in closed-in Gothic style.

Stained glass pieces, when properly worked into the windows and panels, add much to the beauty and to the worshipful atmosphere of the church. Yet it is folly for the Indian church to indulge in them if the expense involved is so great as to reduce the acts of mercy which every Christian should perform. Christian themes can be portrayed on the walls of churches even as Buddhist artists have done in the renovated temple at Saranath near Banaras.

Whether or not the Indian Christian church should maintain pews has long been a debated question. Oriental custom, until influenced by the West, has been to perform such functions as eating, talking, etc., seated on mats or quilts on the floor. Many Indians prefer to worship on bended knees, or seated on mats on the floor, or prostrated on the floor. Inclination in recent years has swung to the use of chairs at school, at the office, and in church. While the East will continue to resist the Western tendency to make fetishes of uniformity and standardization of form, especially in worship, it will experiment with a variety of forms. Provision can be made for worshippers in whatever position they are most at ease.

WORSHIP

The primary object of a service of worship is to induce in the worshipper a spirit of reverence and of devotion which will enable him to commune with God. If that object is constantly kept in view, abundant experimentaiton may be made in reaching what is best in a given situa-

tion. There is the danger that external forms and ceremonies, once accepted, may become ends in themselves. In a land of religious superstition and idolatry, it is easy to resort to incense burning, to the mechanical bending of the knees at every mention of the word Jesus, and to excessive ceremonialism, all of which may preclude the objective, which is to commune with God.

Dr. R. D. Immanuel,[2] who has made a special study of Hindu worship and Hindu thought forms, says that the cultural bent of the Indian is towards ritualism and symbolism and that the Indian church must take account of this. Symbolism, he says, helps to transcend space and time. It makes worship other-centered. Hindu worship, he observes, exercises the whole self-mind-body, the rhythmic sense and the emotions. It includes the social and personal, the rhythmic and ceremonial, the sensual and the supra-sensual.

Against such a rich and varied background, much of Indian Christian worship seems formal, if not lifeless and wooden. The Indian Christian has not yet learned that rituals and symbols can touch the heart and make it glow, and that they can embody great social values.

In enriching worship, the Indian Christian can make an increasing use of Indian lyrics in preference to the many poor translations of Western hymns which are much in use today. Tamil Churches in South India have broken new ground by using the lyrical compositions of two outstanding converts to Christianity from Hinduism, H. A. Krishna Pillai and Vedanayaga Sastriar. "*Devaram*" (God's garland), composed by the former, and the soul-stirring lyrics composed by the latter, are deservedly popular.

A beginning may be made by using prayers of non-Christians, with such changes as are found necessary for

[2] R. D. Immanuel, *The Influence of Hinduism on Indian Christians* (Jabalpur, India : Leonard Theological College Press, 1950).

Christian worship. Listen to prayers from the *Upanishads*:

> Lead me from the unreal to the real,
> From darkness to light
> And from death to immortality.

And:

> Let us adore the excellent glory of
> the divine Vivifier; may he enlighten
> our understanding.

It is regrettable that a collection of such prayers made by Dr. (now Bishop) A. J. Appasamy some twenty years ago, known as *Temple Bells*, has not yet found its way into Christian worship to any extent. Suitable selections can be taken from the *Upanishads*, *Bhagavad Gita*, *Bhagavata*, *Dhammapada*, and from the epics of India.

The reverential use of silence by the Hindu is another direction along which the Indian church can find benefit. Silence is the shutting out of the world and the refreshing of the spirit in meditation upon God. Quakers, more than any other contemporary Christian group, realize the value of worship in silence, producing as it does steadiness of mind, discipline of the emotions and strength of the spirit. In the midst of his busy life, Mahatma Gandhi for many years strictly observed Monday of each week as a day of silence.

The Hindu is adept in the art of meditation, contemplation, and intense concentration of mind, leading in rare cases to *samadhi*, or God-conscious state, in which a man becomes lost to the world but alive to God. Religious orders among Christians, too, have developed similar practices and techniques. The Indian Christian, notably in his private worship, can make use of such Hindu and Western forms. Mr. A. S. Appasamy used Hindu *yoga* practices in deepening his spiritual life. *Yoga*, however, should be used with caution. As an aid to prayer and concentration of mind, it is invaluable, but *yoga* as meaning

the attempt to merge man with the Godhead is alien to Christian teaching.

Some of the external aids which the Hindu uses for worship are of questionable or limited value; for instance, the washing of the mouth, cleaning of the teeth, bathing of the body, and abstention from food before going to places of public worship. Many Indian Christians, too, refrain from all food and drink before partaking of the Holy Communion. The use of a rosary or a garland of beads may be an aid to "controlled thinking and meditation," but it has been so extensively abused that it is wise not to encourage, or even to countenance, its use.

Characteristically Christian forms of prayer such as intercessory prayer and corporate prayer need not only to be retained but entrenched in Indian Christian worship. These forms of prayer contain the essence of Christian fellowship, *i.e.*, salvation through fellowship with God, which leads inevitably to service to others.

The following indigenous form of worship used by the Theological Society of the Serampore College deserves notice:[3]

1. *Bhajan* with stringed instruments and cymbals (choir only).
2. Periods of silence and meditation.
3. Call to worship.
4. Congregational singing of lyric.[4]
5. An act of confession led by the minister.
6. An act of thanksgiving and dedication.
   Prayer of consecration to be repeated by the congregation, followed by a song by the choir.
7. The Apostle's Creed in song form or recital.
8. Bible reading.

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[3] *The Indian Witness*, Lucknow, India, Vol. 77, No. 15, April 10, 1947.

[4] The singing of lyrics as against hymns to the accompaniment of Indian musical instruments has a soul-stirring effect upon the Indian. Lyrics have more melody and imagery than do hymns.

9. Intercession led by the minister.
10. An act of adoration (sung).
11. The kiss of peace.
12. Closing lyric by the congregation.
13. Benediction.
14. Postlude.

The noteworthy features of this order of worship are:

(1) *Absence of the sermon.*—While a sermon is customary in a Protestant Church service, it may be occasionally omitted, especially on Sundays when the communion is celebrated, and its place may be taken by a rich worship service of praise and thanksgiving in which the entire congregation takes an active part. In India, as elsewhere, the Protestant Church is apt to be too much pulpit-centered and not enough worship-centered.[5]

(2) *Absence of Western hymns.*—It is possible to have adequate translations of Western hymns and to sing them as they are supposed to be sung, but lyrics are more natural to the Indian soul. In addition, sensitive Indian Christians have no respect for hymns of a militant character, such as "Onward, Christian soldiers, marching as to war", or hymns which express a spiritual arrogance such as "Can we, whose souls are lighted with wisdom from on high, can we, to men benighted, the lamp of light deny?"

(3) *The kiss of peace as taken from the worship of the Eastern Church.*—The administration of this means the continuation of "a symbol of perfect concord and peace." The minister extends his right hand of fellowship into the two hands of an elder and he, in turn, extends his right hand to the one next to him, until the entire congregation completes the act. One who refuses to take the "kiss of peace" declares himself to be out of harmony with the others.

[5] If change is found to be desirable in the direction of greater emphasis on worship, care should be taken not to sacrifice the prophetic function associated with the pulpit-centered church in favor of a social reactionism which has often accompanied worship-centered churches.

(4) *The period of silence and meditation.*—Hinduism has built up an intricate technique of meditation. The Christian church has lost much in poise and grace by not studying and utilizing it more. Inasmuch as a vast majority of Indian Christians are not trained in the art of meditation, a beginning may be made by placing in the hands of the congregation one or two simple, printed or written ideas or sentiments which fit into the general tenor of the service, ideas on which the worshippers can meditate. The Indian Christian church of tomorrow can learn much of value in the field of meditation, from both the Hindus and the Society of Friends (Quakers).

(5) Another point of interest in this service is that there is no request for an offering with the usual accompanying exhortation. In keeping with the Hindu practice, a receptacle is placed at the entrance to the church into which the worshippers place their free-will offerings. The simple altar is decorated with flowers, a brass cross, and a picture of the Lord's Supper. The Scripture lesson is read by two people, reading alternate verses.

Similar experiments in naturalizing Christian worship have been tried by men like Dr. A. Ralla Ram, who was, until a few years ago, General Secretary of the Student Christian Movement of India. In a number of experimental services which he conducted in various parts of India, he dressed in the saffron-colored robe of the Hindu *sannyasi* (holy man) and conducted the worship portion of the service seated on the floor of the platform on a raised dais. Yellow flower petals, significant in Hindu worship, were in abundance, and there was Indian music and chanting. In typical Hindu fashion, to avoid the need for announcement, the minister rang a small bell to mark the transition from item to item.

Experiments of this nature have not been warmly received everywhere in India. A writer in the *Indian National Christian Council Review* aptly observed: "The one person more difficult to move than the conservative

missionaryis the conservative Indian Christian." The wise Christian leader will, therefore, take this failing into account and will gradually wean his people away from forms of worship unsuitable to them to forms that are more suitable.

It is not altogether strange that while the West has relinquished certain forms as not being conducive to true worship, younger churches at times cling to outworn Western practices. One such form in some Indian Churches is the barbarous practice of ringing the church bell in a loud and unmusical fashion at the solemn moment when the minister unites the bride and groom in holy wedlock. Also, the long bridal veil, flower girls, and bride's attendants strike an incongruous note in an Indian setting. The wedding ring is a poor and un-Indian substitute for the *thali*, which is an inexpensive flowing necklace worn about the neck of Hindu women. If a Christian touch is desirable, the central piece in the *thali* may take the form of an open Bible with a small cross in the centre.

Snow and reindeer on Indian Christmas cards bespeak their own incongruity. Sunday School illustrations and kindergarten pictures should depict Indian scenes familiar to young people.

The funeral service, as it has been received from the Western church, is so dignified and solemn as to preclude important change. Inasmuch as the Christian faith lies in the tenet that death opens the door to fulfillment, there is no justification for the weeping and wailing in which some Hindus indulge. Nor is there reason for a feast on the tenth, or some subsequent day, to mark the end of mourning. From the Hindus, the Indian church may well adopt the practice of cremation. A thickly populated country like India can ill afford space for numerous and expensive cemeteries. Nowhere is there justification for elaborate and expensive funerals which are in vogue in the West.

In building its worship program, the Indian church must provide opportunity for the expression of the awe

and mystery of religion so characteristic of Hinduism. There is much of mysticism in Christianity, although some Christians, mostly Protestants, tend to secularize Christianity into a form of human idealism.

Mysticism is not mysteriousness. It has to do with a certain level of man's spiritual life, on which supra-rational and supra-conscious factors become more significant than rational and conscious factors. The Moslem conception of the transcendence of God may, from the Christian standpoint, appear to be one-sided, yet transcendence is a necessary truth to balance the conception of the immanence of God. The Christian cannot ignore the transcendence and majesty of God without doing violence to the totality of man's religious experience.

Like the better type of Hindu, the Christian must stress serenity in his religious life. But serenity must be balanced by the peculiarly Christian virtue of sanctity. Serenity is a manifestation of inner security. Sanctity takes the individual away from himself to others. "For their sakes I sanctify myself."[6]

Music

Music is perhaps the field in which indigenous expression is most natural. Much has been done in this field, but more remains to be done if Christian worship is not to be an offense and a stumbling block to the cultured non-Christian. The kind of music to which the Indian is treated in a great many churches and Christian schools is neither Western nor Eastern. It is not even music. Only the exceptional non-Christian is moved by Western music, even when it is well performed. Perhaps music is the last field in which the world will learn to speak a universal language, for it is the purest and most subjective of all human expressions.

While Western church music stresses harmony and part-singing, Indian music leans heavily in favor of melody

[6] John 17 : 19.

and *talas*, or time measures. In the words of Swami Yogananda: "Indian music is a subjective, spiritual, and individualistic art, aiming not at symphonic brilliance but at personal harmony with the Over-soul."[7] The foundation of Indian music, says the same writer, is in the *ragas*, or fixed melodic scales, and "each of the basic *ragas* is assigned to a certain hour of the day and season of the year." Thus the *raga* for morning is not the same as the *raga* for midday; and the *raga* for twilight is not the same as the *raga* for midnight. *Ragas* also vary according to the season of the year.

Such being the complicated nature of Indian music, the Christian church should make a thorough study of it and adapt it to its use. It is altogether short-sighted and puerile to argue that merely because much of this music is associated with many gods and goddesses and with idol worship, it is therefore taboo in Christian worship.

Mr. E. W. Lall, who devoted years of study to the adaptation of Indian music to Christian service, distinguishes three types of Indian music: folk music, popular music, and classical music. The first of these is the music of the villages and the chief means of keeping alive ancient Indian culture. The second is the music of present-day villager and townsman made popular through the theater and the cinema. The classical music is a scientifically perfected system which very few Indians have taken the trouble to master. Folk music and classical music offer a mine out of which much gold can be drawn for enriching Christian worship in India.

Music is such a natural and spontaneous expression of the Indian soul that even Moslems, whose religion forbids the use of music, have taken to propagating their religion through a special type of religious lyric. What the Moslems have done Indian Christians need to do if

[7] Swami Yogananda, *Autobiography of a Yogi* (New York: The Philosophical Library), p. 163.

Christianity is to become completely adapted to Indian conditions. Mr. Lall is right when he says that evangelism through music has a greater future than has evangelism through current forms, such as bazar and street-corner preaching, distribution of free Christian literature, and formal Scripture teaching in Christian schools and colleges.

In the experience of Mr. P. D. Subhamani, men and women who can sing lyrics from memory get the best results in Christian evangelism. "It is not the beauty of the voice but the zeal and sincerity behind it that go farthest in producing results..... 'Say it in song,' is needed more in our country than elsewhere, since for ages the Hindu and Muslim devotees have been listening with rapt attention *not* to the reading *but* to the singing of their sacred scriptures."[8]

A unique form of evangelism popular in South India is known as the *kalakshepam*. It is a "one-man show," which consists in telling a story or presenting a theme from the Bible in the form of songs, verses, and humorous anecdotes. It is usually held in the open air, late in the evening after the village people have finished their work and their meal and are in a mood for relaxation. It lasts four or five hours, sometimes till the small hours of the morning. Men, women and children squat on the floor and listen to it with rapt attention if the singer-story-teller is tolerably good. Stories such as the call of Matthew, the tax collector, Elijah on Mt. Carmel, the Rich Young Ruler, the Great Supper, and Dives and Lazarus, easily lend themselves to presentation through *kalakshepam*. "A good *kalakshepam*," says Mr. Subhamani, "like a really good sermon is a work of art."[9]

Drama and the Dance

There was a time in medieval Europe when the Church made abundant use of the stage by presenting morality

[8] Ways of Evangelism, *op. cit.*, pp. 91-92.
[9] *Ibid.*, p. 92.

plays. Great Christian themes and stories were dramatized to the satisfaction and enlightenment of the masses, but when in course of time the church and state separated, complete secularization of the stage ensued. Through centuries drama has kept alive Indian culture. Ancient stories from the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* are still being enacted in Indian villages.

The Indian Christian church, however, and especially the Protestant, has neglected to make an effective use of religious drama. Early missionaries to India came with their minds prejudiced against drama and the dance in religious worship. Their initial prejudice was intensified when they witnessed the grotesque devil dances and the unseemly funeral dances in which some castes continue to indulge. Dancing before shrines and idols, added to the fact that the dancers were temple prostitutes, combined to discredit Indian dancing in the minds of Christians.

Rabindranath Tagore performed an inestimable service in redeeming the dance and the drama from the level to which they had fallen. Through persistence against strenuous opposition, Tagore set in motion a movement that is in the process of making the dance an æsthetic vehicle, through which many Indian boys and girls have already been trained to express the artistry and beauty of their souls. In the Indian Christian church, Tagore's argument that man is not intellect alone but is compounded also of feelings and emotions, and that man must be given opportunity to express his whole self, has borne fruit. At present, the classical Indian interpretive dance is taught in many Christian schools. In drama, as one example, the life of Jesus, written by a Hindu and enacted by Hindu players, drew record crowds for a period of weeks. *The Bratacharya Movement*, organized by another Bengali, combines physical drill with rhythmic dance, thus improving not only the bodies of the young but their appreciation of the beautiful. Small and sporadic as these beginnings are, considering the vast population of India, they are indicative of

a new creativeness in Indian Christian teaching and worship.

Festivals, Pilgrimages and Religious Processions

To an outsider, the life of the Hindu appears dull, drab, and monotonous. To one who understands the religious quest of the Hindu, a quest for which no price is too high, it is obvious that feasts, festivals, fasts, pilgrimages and religious processions not only break the monotony of life, but give to the devou. an inner joy and satisfaction.

Feasts are of both social and religious nature. At some time or other, every Hindu family, as a family, journeys to some place of worship, often many miles from home. They go for an outing and recreation, but what is of greater importance, they go for worship in a temple of local repute or for *darshan* (literally view) of some saintly person who is greatly admired and respected. Preparations for pilgrimages are made long in advance. People walk endless miles with the eager expectation of finding God and of having their sins forgiven, or for the purpose of fulfilling vows which they have taken. These pilgrimages are usually undertaken in the company of others motivated similarly. They serve not only to promote fellowship and mutual understanding but also to strengthen the bonds of religion.

The Roman Catholic Church, through its fairs, festivals and religious pilgrimages, has succeeded in holding together its members and in creating in them strong bonds of unity and mutual sympathy. The Protestant Churches sponsor occasional fellowship meals and a few fairs.

There are some Christian *melas* held yearly. One such is the *Madhugat Mela* which is held yearly on an island in the river near Bitalpur (M.P.). Christians of all missions in the area meet for a three or four-day meeting, for inspiration, teacher training, and lectures. The same area has a women's meeting held every second or third year, with the different co-operating missions taking

turns in being the hosts. Then there are the yearly conventions of some of the churches of the Protestant denominations. Through these meetings the Christians of the Bilaspur District in M.P. are creating the feeling of community.

Melas or *jatras* of this kind are so few among Indian Christians that the sense of community has hardly begun to develop. A careful study and adaptation of the Hindu use of festivals and pilgrimages may help to remedy the situation. A purely rational religion which pays no attention to the social needs of men is in danger of atrophy. A well-organized church can serve the purpose of providing, or being, a community for the Christian. As Dr. Immanuel points out,[10] the church can give to the individual social anchorage, perceptible higher values, and protection from injustice, as well as serve as guide and refuge in times of personal affliction and distress.

To the Hindu, fasting is as important as feasting. The modern Protestant world has all but lost the meaning of fasting, as an agency for inner purification. The devout Hindu undertakes periodic fasts in the interest of his body as well as of the spirit. In the life of Mahatma Gandhi, fasting played a vital part. It was his claim that every one of his fasts was dictated to him by God. It enabled him to purify himself, to steady his life of the spirit, as well as dramatically to direct the attention of the world to the evil against which he was fasting. Jesus Christ fasted and recommended fasting to his disciples, particularly preceding the undertaking of difficult tasks.

Hindu festivals provide endless opportunities for the adaptation of Christianity to Indian forms and institutions. There can be no possible objection to village Christians celebrating such seasonal festivals as those of sowing and harvesting. In some rural communities, village Christians bring their seed-grains to the church to be blessed by the

[10] R. D. Immanuel, *op. cit.*

minister before being sown. The harvest festival is celebrated in many areas by both rural and urban Christians.

The Hindu festival of *Deepavali*, or the festival of lights, can be put to Christian use. Instead of its merely marking the end of the monsoon season, or the conquest of good over evil, it can be made to symbolize the triumph of the light of knowledge over the darkness of ignorance. Christmas may be celebrated in the way in which the Hindu celebrates *Deepavali*. Deepavali is also a festival in which Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth, is worshipped for prosperity in the coming year. It is considered auspicious to gamble on this day. This latter feature, naturally, cannot be adopted by the Indian church.

The Hindu ceremony of *Shraddha* which is the death anniversary of a parent, can be adapted to Christian use. *Shraddha* is an annual ceremony during which prayers are said and ritual performed for the liberation and spiritual nourishment of departed relatives. At the time of the initiation of a Hindu monk, the Hindu performs his own *shraddha*, or funeral rites, and those of his ancestors. His former personality supposedly dies at the time of initiation. Without subscribing to the characteristically Hindu ideas of life after death, the Christian can take over the *shraddha* ceremony and fittingly transform it into a memorial for the dead, thus illustrating the Christian concept of life and immortality.

The *Rakshabandhan* ceremony is an annual Hindu ceremony celebrating brother-sister love. Early on that day, the brother visits his sister who ties a cord about his wrist, symbolic of their mutual affection. In turn, the brother assures the sister of his protection and help at all times. It is regrettable that Indian Christians do not observe this significant ceremony.

Another ceremony worthy of adaptation is the peace-pot ceremony. In this one, relatives, leaving the home of other relatives with whom they have been visiting, carry a pot to the outside of the village where they break it, thus

symbolizing the termination of any possible grievances or ill-feeling that might have arisen during the visit. There are many other non-Christian festivals which could be refined, purified of principles contrary to the Christian spirit, and transformed into means of Christian worship.

Festivals to the Hindu mean clean clothes, scoured pots and pans, merriment and laughter, distribution of sweet-meats to children, visiting in the homes of friends and relatives, and suspension of all secular work. To such important and well-established Christian festivals as Christmas and Easter, the Indian Christian may add festivals of his own, such as the Family Festival, equivalent to Mother's Day for Americans, and Witness Day when Christians as individuals and groups bear testimony to their faith.

THE *Ashram*[11]

An ancient religious institution of India, known as the *ashram*, is certain to play an important part in making Christianity indigenous to this land. It is not an institution in the ordinary sense of the term. It is an organism, rather than an organization, and it is admirably suited to the religious conditions of India. The *ashram* is loosely organized around a *guru*, or spiritual teacher, who has reached the third stage of life according to the Hindu idea of a good life, which is the stage of the forest-dweller.[12]

In setting up an *ashram*, the *guru* frees himself from earthly cares and devotes himself to prayer, meditation,

[11] Good accounts of the *ashram* are found in: "Ashrams: Past and Present." A Symposium (Kilpauk, Madras: The Indian Christian Book Club, 1941); in R. D. Immanuel, *op. cit.*; and in an article by P. O. Philip in *International Review of Missions*, July 1946.

[12] The first stage is that of student, when a man prepares himself for his life work; the second that of house-holder, when he marries and raises a family. Following this, he may enter the third stage, that of forest-dweller, his wife accompanying him if she chooses, in preparation for the fourth and final stage which is that of the ascetic. As an ascetic, he renounces everything, including wife and children.

study, instruction, and spiritual discipline. Disciples gather around him and live together a more or less communal life. While the *guru* is the center of the *ashram*, he does not exercise the authority of an abbot or of the head of a monastery. He is an older brother instructing the younger ones in spiritual exercises and discipline.

In contrast to a monastery, the *ashram* is non-authoritarian. No rigid discipline is maintained. While a few who constitute the core of the *ashram* may impose rigid rules upon themselves, the rest are more or less free to follow their inclinations within the general framework of the *ashram*. Prevailing informality makes it possible for enquirers and those buffeted by the world to come and stay as long as they choose. Ample scope is provided for unhurried prayer and reflection and for the deepening of the spiritual life. No set forms are prescribed. Each member of the *ashram* contributes to its maintenance through some form of manual labor. Life is very simple. *Ahimsa*, or non-injury, implying love and friendliness to all, is a cardinal principle of the *ashram*. With it goes *asanga*, or non-attachment to material things, to binding secular relationships, and to desire for the fruits of labor. Thirst for material goods and gratification of sense-impulses are left behind.

The *ashram* is a co-operative colony in every sense of the term. Members are linked together by a common desire to discover truth. All *ashrams* are not of a spiritual or religious nature. There have been, and still are, *ashrams* for secular and scientific purposes. Some of the ancient *ashrams* of India developed free thinking and even agnosticism.

The *ashram* is non-sectarian and un-denominational. It does not prescribe credal or denominational tests. Every seeker after truth is welcome. The common goal is God-realization and realization of oneness with one's fellowmen. Special emphasis is laid on a life of silence and

meditation. The ashram is free from all traces of traditionalism, ritualism, or sacerdotalism. There is no priesthood, no hierarchy, but only laymen. The *ashram* at its best is a spiritual power-house, a laboratory of spiritual experimentation. Each member is encouraged to seek God in his own way. All are knit together by ties of spiritual kinship. Such ties enable members to reach a high degree of integration. In order not to live entirely for themselves, members render service to the neighboring community.

The *ashrams* of ancient India were forest *ashrams*, which can trace their history back at least twenty-five hundred years. It is more than likely that the great Hindu epics, the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, were written in *ashrams*. They did not all follow the same pattern. While much attention was given to prayer and contemplation, many of the *ashrams* devoted themselves to practical work.

With the ascendency of Buddhism, *ashrams* were gradually replaced by monasteries, although they never disappeared completely. It is only in modern times, however, that *ashrams* have been revived on a large scale and adapted to the changing conditions and needs of the day. *Santiniketan* (abode of peace), established by Rabindranath Tagore, in 1901 a few miles away from Calcutta, is an educational and cultural *ashram*, now being developed into a university. It seeks " to re-capture some of the elements of Indian culture which are fast disappearing under conditions of modern civilization " and to fuse them with elements of value in a world culture. Gandhi's *ashrams* at Sabarmati and at Wardha have been *ashrams* of social and political action, emphasizing *ahimsa*, or non-injury, in thought, word, and deed. Plain and simple living, continence and poverty, with service to the rural masses, especially through a revival of village industries, are the governing passion. The usual vows taken are the vow of continence, of truth, of *ahimsa*, of the control of

the palate, and vegetarianism, of non-stealing, and the vow of fearlessness. Aurobindo Ghose's *ashram* at Pondicherry is of a different type altogether. It is an *ashram* for religious mystics and for those seeking the meaning of reality largely from the speculative standpoint.

During the past thirty years, through the impetus given by Sadhu Sundar Singh, who lived the life of a *sannyasi*, *ashrams* among Indian Christians have come into vogue. They are an indigenous expression of Christianity and are, in some ways, an answer to the non-Christian charge that Christianity in India is a foreign religion. There are *ashrams* for unmarried men, for unmarried women, and for both married men and women.

For long years, there has been a feeling on the part of many that the work in the church was becoming highly organized and mechanized and that there was not enough of fellowship and equality among Christian workers. Also, racial and economic differences were permitted to arise, which, in the church defeat the growth of love in its initial stage. The *ashram* movement began as a corrective and continues to grow.

Though essentially a place of prayer and worship, the Christian *ashram* is not an asylum for recluses. Refuting the idea that the *ashram* may become isolated from common life, Mr. A. C. Chakraverti, himself the founder of a Christian *ashram* says: "In an *ashram* we live the full life, the whole life or nothing at all."[13]

Some *ashrams* are non-denominational, while some are interdenominational. According to Mr. S. Selvaratnam, the founder of a Christian *ashram* in Ceylon, the *ashram*, though not a handmaid of the church in a narrow sense, has no existence outside the context of the church. In many ways it is the vanguard of Christianity, moving into areas of life and places which are ordinarily closed to the

[13] Ecumenical Studies, *Evangelism in India* (Information Bulletin published by the Secretariat for Evangelism of the World Council of Churches —Geneva, Oct. 1952).

church. Renunciation is the key principle, as against the "professionalism" of the church. In the words used by *the Ecumenical Studies on Evangelism in India:* "The Christian desire to participate in a life of renunciation touches the Hindu at a place of real understanding. The *ashram* offers more than a service to the community; it is service in a medium that is natural to the Hindu religious life."[14] In the circumstances prevailing in India, the *ashram* may well become the spearhead of an unpaid lay ministry, suited to Indian conditions and appealing to Indian sentiments. Dr. P. D. Devanandan, quoted in the *Ecumenical Studies*, says "our system of the paid ministry gives the non-Christian to think that our zeal is largely founded on the material benefits which go with our profession of faith. We need to prove to our non-Christian friends that the work of the Church and the spread of the faith literally do not pay."[15]

Among foreign missionaries, Dr. E. Stanley Jones has done much to popularize the *ashram* ideal. His *ashram*, however, is not a year-round institution and there is no *guru* constantly living with his *sishyas* (disciples). It is primarily a spiritual retreat for Christian workers, with a sprinkling of non-Christians, the emphasis being on study, discussion, prayer, and meditation, physical labor, and brotherly living. Limited *ahimsa*, simplicity of life and standards, and racial equality are practised. It is located in a peaceful and quiet place in the interior of a range of hills.

The best illustration of an Indian Christian *ashram* is the *Christu-kula* (the family of Christ) *Ashram* at Tirupattur in South India. Like the ancient *ashrams* of India, it is multi-purpose in character. It is not only a place of worship and spiritual search, but a medical, rural reconstruction, educational, and evangelistic center. The

[14] Ecumenical Studies, *Evangelism in India* (Information Bulletin published by the Secretariat for Evangelism of the World Council of Churches —Geneva, Oct. 1952).

[15] C. D. Monahan, "The Christian Church and Indigenous Culture", *International Review of Missions*, Vol. XXXIV, No. 136.

doctors in charge of it are skilled, deeply spiritual-minded men. They work and worship side by side, the community centering around the *japalaya*, or house of prayer. Dr. Jesudasan, the 'elder brother' as he is popularly called, who has a flair for Tamil music, has compiled a book of prayers and a book of lyrics suited to the needs of the *ashram*. Some members observe *sashtanga* (prostration) when they pray. Nearly all habitually wear *khaddar* (coarse white homespun cloth woven by the villagers). The diet is vegetarian. The two doctors, together with a third who has recently joined the inner circle, keep in close touch with the church and with Christian youth movements, and they frequently travel among, and speak to, Christian people. The *ashram* is not sponsored by, nor affiliated with, any denomination.

Workers remain in the *ashram* for one to five years or more. Some are qualified doctors. Students with an ardent desire to serve come for summer vacation and work for board and lodging. No appeal is made for funds. The only appeal is for voluntary workers, the method by which nearly all work is done. What makes *ashrams* of this kind unique is the quality of life lived by their members.

Although the *ashram* illuminates some of the weaknesses of the church, it is not meant to supplant the church. As Dr. Immanuel observes, while the church has regulative value, the *ashram* has creative value. The two happily supplement each other. In the nature of the *ashram*, its informality and its unmistakably spiritual character make a greater appeal to the religious-minded Hindu than does the well-organized church with its face so often turned toward the West.

If the *ashram* is not meant to replace the church, neither is it meant to replace the Christian ministry. It can well contribute to the work of theological schools in its power to deepen the spiritual lives of students, as well as to give them a passion for devoted service, especially

in rural areas where the majority of people live. A danger lies in solitariness, stoicism, and asceticism. But since brotherly concern and social service are active tenets of most *ashrams*, it is not likely that other-worldliness will become an end in itself.

Social and Religious Customs

For some years now a group of missionaries and Indian Christians, under the leadership of Dr. A.T. Fishman working in the Andhra area, have been studying the Christian use of certain Indian social and religious customs. A set of their findings has been published by the Rev. C. D. Monahan.[15] It is worthwhile to study these findings in trying to discover how best to transform a non-Christian cultural background into a background that is basically Christian.

It is obvious that customs which are essential to the followers of Jesus Christ and for the edification of the church must be adopted. One such custom is monogamy, based on the Christian ideal of the family. As a whole, India is gradually adopting monogamy, partly because of economic reasons, and more because of the striking object-lesson furnished by the Christian family. The late Mr. K. Natarajan, a well-known Hindu liberal and social reformer and editor of one of the best Indian weeklies (which has ceased publication), rated monogamy as one of the distinctive contributions of Christian thought to Hinduism. In Christian thought, any form of family life which falls short of monogamy stands condemned. Polygamy, polyandry, transient marriage relations, and free love are all a deliberate violation of the sacredness of human personality. In these systems people are treated as chattels and not as children of God who have a Divine destiny to fulfil.

Customs which are un-Christian must be given up: such customs as idol worship, the placation of evil spirits, caste, the color bar, child marriage, and the degradation

of widows. The Christian needs to remember that in this list, idol worship, caste, and the color bar will require wise and alert handling, for they have many insidious ways of reasserting themselves.

The Committee referred to above was right in suggesting that from the first there must be clear, explicit, and positive teaching on caste. At the time of baptism, or enrolment, the person concerned should solemnly promise to regard all human beings as brothers and to mingle with them freely in service and in worship. There should be no restrictions of caste in church administration. It is regrettable that even today, on several church bodies, Indian Christians in sections of the country vote according to their caste origin. Some castes try to monopolize all church positions and keep others out. At times they even stand in the way of converts being taken into the church, lest it should affect their voting strength.

Ministers and evangelists should be assigned to congregations, irrespective of their caste origin. Full membership in the church should entail free inter-dining. Intermarriage for the time being may be left to individual conscience, after pointing out the truth that it is in accordance with the spirit of Christianity.

After conversion, the shrine room or family altar in the Hindu home can be transformed into a prayer room. The use of oil lamps and flowers in worship may be retained. The drums can play a rhythmic beat. On the vexing question of whether or not a Christian may be present at the social functions of friends or relatives at which idolatrous ceremonies are performed, a person may ask himself the following questions:—

(*a*) What will be the effect of my participation upon my character?

(*b*) What effect will it have upon other Christians?

(*c*) Will it interfere with my true witness to non-Christians?

Customs which may have a non-Christian religious implication may be adopted by Christians if they have hygienic or other such values. Daily bathing which is enjoined by Hindu religious practices is a good hygienic custom and must, therefore, be retained. In a country like India where epidemics prevail throughout the year, there is much to commend in the practice of bathing and washing one's clothes before entering one's home on return from a funeral. The same is true of the custom of bathing after receiving the services of a barber.

Customs which are socially destructive should be surrendered or altered. In pursuance of this principle there should be no hesitation in condemning unscientific and superstitious treatment of diseases, such as the applying of cow dung or charcoal to wounds and the appeasement of *Mariamma* (the goddess of small-pox) during epidemics: uncle-niece marriage and the marriage of first cousins; carrion-eating which still exists among some classes.

Customs which are neither un-Christian nor socially destructive, may be left to individual choice for either adoption or rejection. Examples of this principle are vegetarianism, cremation, modes of worship and ritual, postures in prayer and styles of dress. Christianity will be more acceptable to sensitive Hindus and Jainas if Christians in India will adopt vegetarianism, although it must be noted that meat-eating is on the increase among those who have been traditionally vegetarians. In the matter of dress, Christians may well adopt the style of the locality in which they live, the basic guides being neatness, inexpensiveness, suitability to climate and the extent to which personal apparel promotes social approval and fellowship. In all these matters the criterion to be established is not whether a practice is Eastern or Western, but whether or not it accords with the principles of Christianity and of mental, emotional and physical health.

There should be no hesitation in surrendering customs which are neither essential to Christianity nor socially

destructive, but which tend to restrict the expression of the Gospel or limit the Christian fellowship. One such example is a predominantly Hindu style of worship for a congregation made up largely of Moslem converts or *vice versa.*

Finally, there are certain customs which are indigenous to the country, the practice of which establishes a *rapport* between Hindus and Christians: (1) the acceptance and giving of food, money, and gifts, with the right hand instead of the left; (2) the washing of hands and the rinsing of the mouth before and after meals; (3) the leaving of one's sandals at the entrance of the house when visiting Hindu friends; (4) complete abstinence from intoxicants; (5) simplicity of life and standards; (6) the keeping of divorces to the lowest possible number, permitting them only in cases of infidelity, cruelty, incurable mental or such contagious diseases as leprosy; (7) retention of the valuable features of *biradari*, or communal brotherhood through such means as occasional fellowship meals; and (8) the use of inexpensive medicines and herbs of proven value.

Indigenous Church, Not the Same as Exclusivi.

Christianity, in the local and in the particular, must embody the universal. Because of its ecumenicity the Christian church will bring to its task a spirit of humility and teachableness that will enable it to be receptive to things of value from many cultures.

The Indian church, for example, can enrich itself by paying careful attention to what the church is doing elsewhere. From the American church in particular, it can learn the importance of zeal and enthusiasm for a common cause. Many in India do not realize that much of the support for the church in the West comes from ordinary people with moderate incomes who give liberally of their time, money, and energy in the service of the church. Some American churches have been built by the hands

of its congregation, going up floor by floor as money was collected for them, and sometimes being used long before they were completed. Voluntary help plays a very significant part in church building, maintenance, and in the operation of its many activities.

The businesslike and smooth way in which the work of the church is conducted in the United States evokes the admiration of the outsider. While instances of poor trusteeship and indifference do exist, the performance of the average church in the eliciting of local enthusiasm is highly commendable.

There is no parallel in the Indian church to the multifarious activities which the average church in the United States carries on as it seeks to minister not only to the moral and spiritual needs of the community, but to its social and educational needs as well. Many churches conduct well-organized recreational activities for young people; they interest themselves in meeting some of the physical and social needs of the community, sponsor lectures, forums, discussion groups and workshops on a wide variety of subjects.

Nor are all churches interested in serving their people alone. Many scan a wider horizon. For long they have interested themselves in missionary work at home and abroad; and in organizing drives for clothes, food, and medicines to be sent to needy people in the remotest corners of the earth. The Christian church of India can learn from its counterpart practical lessons in the organization of missionary work, hospital work, neighborhood visitation, Red Cross work, blood-bank drives, and the collection of clothes and food for the needy—indeed, the entire field of applied Christianity and human idealism.

Turning to the more critical side, the Indian church needs to remember that efficient organization of the church, if not balanced by spiritual qualities, may spell its undoing. While concerted action requires organization, beyond a certain point organization may prove injurious to the

development of the inner qualities of the Christian. The Western church revels in conferences, commissions, and committees; one wonders whether or not the time and energy spent on them may not be altogether out of proportion to the good that they accomplish. Wisdom may and often does emerge from collective thinking and sharing of ideas and experiences. Yet organization may bring in its trail such evils as electioneering and an unseemly contest for power and prestige and may give to the church a sense of doing something that it is not in fact doing. It is obvious that new ideas and new methods are not made to order; yet the impatient West at times gives the impression of such a possibility.

The Indian church must refuse to magnify the institution of the church, as the West often does, and keep steadily in view the vast gulf which separates practice from the theory that the church is "the body of Christ." Membership in the church is important to the life of the Christian, but it is not indispensable. At best, the church is an imperfect instrument for the glorification of the Lord of life. This being so, the Indian Christian can understand Hindus who are sympathetic towards Christianity but who refrain from becoming members of the church. Some among both Oriental Christians and non-Christians believe that Christianity is over-organized. Forms, techniques, and skills appear more important than "the fruits of the spirit." Even among Protestants, who generally do not glorify the church as an organization, there has been a tendency to lay greater stress on the building of a church than on the building of a community. The non-Christian regards community building as of greater importance than church building.

The Indian church must refuse to glorify denominationalism. Whatever be the meaning of denominational differences to Western Christians, whose forefathers fought for them, they have little or no meaning to Eastern Christians. Christian people can honestly differ on forms of

worship, on church administration, and on the number and value of sacraments, so long as they do not indulge in mutual recrimination and name-calling. What really matters in the Christian life is the extent to which an individual Christian or church bears the marks of Jesus. The Indian church might well adopt the motto of the church in China: *We agree to differ but resolve to love and unite to serve.*

In order to avoid the pitfalls into which some Western churches have fallen, the Indian Church must guard against excessive ceremonialism, sacerdotalism, and ecclesiasticism. Many educated Hindus today have lost faith in religion because of the excessive ceremonialism and priestcraft which govern ordinary Hinduism in daily practice. Rituals and ceremonies can, however, be of much value to the individual if they stimulate him to higher levels of moral and spiritual living and create in him a keener sense of his social responsibility.

When formalism becomes dominant, the thoughtful few rebel against it and some of these may turn to secularism and some to mere humanitarianism as substitutes for the religious spirit. If Christianity becomes simply an ethical society or a world-wide social organization carrying out something of a universalized "technical assistance program," it may still do much good. But it will not be Christianity. The Indian church must learn to avoid sacerdotalism and ceremonialism on the one hand and a humanistic idealism on the other. At all times it must remain loyal to the positive prophetic character of Christianity.

An area in which Indian Christianity must have the courage to stand firm against a portion of the Western churches is that of abhorrence of racial discrimination not only in the secular field but, indeed, within the precincts of the churches themselves. It must boldly declare in season and out of season that racial discrimination and Christian professions cannot be woven into one cloth.

In the field of imperialist exploitation and war, the church of India must stand boldly for the Christian virtues of brotherhood, freedom, peace and justice. The continued support of Western churches to old and new forms of imperialism make them rightly suspect in the eyes of non-Christians—and should, in the eyes of Christians! Even those non-Christians who concede the greater moral and spiritual adequacy of Christianity are found to be critical of the church and, particularly of its missionary purpose, so long as it countenances imperialistic exploitation, power politics and war. The Indian church should not, like its Western counterpart, satisfy itself with mending bones after they have been broken; it should prevent the breaking of bones in the first place by working assiduously for peace, brotherhood and justice, and by fighting a resolute warfare against national selfishness, power politics, the war mentality, and the economic exploitation of backward peoples.

CHAPTER VII

INDIGENOUS EVANGELISM

INDIGENOUS theology and indigenous forms and institutions of Christianity are incomplete without indigenous evangelism. Evangelism is "a renewed community of witness."[1] It is the ministry of fellowship and reconciliation. It is sharing with others the good news of Jesus Christ. In the apt words of the Rev. D. T. Niles:

> "Evangelism is witness. It is one beggar telling another beggar where to get food. The Christian does not offer out of his bounty. He is simply a guest at his Master's table and, as evangelist, he calls others, too..... It is not his knowledge of God that he shares; it is to God Himself that he points."[2]

The churches of India, as is generally true of churches everywhere else, were born in evangelism. The history of the Christian church shows that no church can be truly vital and vitalizing until it has a deep missionary purpose. Until recent years, the ancient Syrian Church of Travancore was virtually a moribund church because it was self-centered and little concerned about evangelism. But with its new passion for missionary activity today, stimulated by the Church Missionary Society which has been working in its midst for some years, it has come back to life and is going on from strength to strength. It is becoming a blessing both to itself and to others. The nature of Christian experience is such that the more one spontaneously shares it with others, the richer and fuller it becomes to oneself.

It is a welcome sign of the times that among many Christians in India there is a renewal of interest in the

[1] Bishop George Sinker.

[2] D. T. Niles, *That They May Have Life* (New York: Harper and Brothers), p. 96.

evangelistic task of the church. It is coming to be realized increasingly that evangelism is the very life of the church. A new use is being made of old evangelistic methods. The Christian home and the Christian family are coming to be placed at the very center of evangelism. Cells of concerned groups are being established here and there for the promotion of evangelism. Church camps, conventions, and *melas* are being increasingly used for evangelistic purposes. Rural service village camps center their manifold activities in evangelism. The *Ashram*, which at one time appeared to be non-evangelistic, is giving its own kind of emphasis to personal evangelism through its *Sadhus* and *Sannyasis*. Instrumental and vocal music is being used more and more in the cause of evangelism. Leaflets, newspapers, posters and projected pictures are increasingly used in the promotion of evangelism. Special emphasis is being laid on the means of mass communication. In short, the tempo of the church is undergoing a rapid change in the evangelistic direction.

Evangelism is no longer looked upon as the work of the paid person. It is regarded as the task of the rank and file of the church. The laity are beginning to realize that without corporate witness, there can be no true evangelism. The term "rice Christians" is fast losing its meaning. More and more Christians and non-Christians are beginning to see that "work for the church and the spread of the faith literally do not pay."[3]

While evangelism may be perfectly relevant to many Christians, it is not so relevant to non-Christians. Gandhi brought Jesus close to thousands of Hindus, but he cast his influence away from conversion. He never tired of describing himself as not only a Hindu but a Christian, a Moslem, a Jew, a Sikh, a Parsi, a Jain, or a man of any other religion. The impression which he sought to create was that he was able to absorb all that was commendable

[3] P. D. Devanandan, quoted in *Ecumenical Studies*, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

in every religion and sub-religion and that there was no need for conversion from one faith to another. For years in his public evening prayer meetings, it was his practice, despite current high tension between Hindus and Moslems, to read from all the great Scriptures of the world, including the Koran. Such a catholic attitude, which was strictly in keeping with his Hindu heritage, is decidedly one of the reasons why very few thoughtful, high-minded Hindus are disposed to become Christians. They ask: "why change from Hinduism to Christianity if Hinduism can produce a man of Gandhi's moral and spiritual stature?" In truth, Christianity has not at present a man of Gandhi's stature. Hindus further ask: "cannot Gandhi, a contemporary, be more of an inspiring force than Jesus Christ who lived two thousand years ago and around whom all kinds of complicated theological beliefs and creeds have been built up?" Dr. P. D. Devanandan observes that many thoughtful Hindus believe that essential Christianity is not incompatible with essential Hinduism.[4]

To the Christian evangelist, Hindu comprehensiveness is a real problem. It is his duty to show respectfully to the Hindu that religions are not like each other at every point; nor do they have the same inspirational value. They do not always seek and find the same things. In reaching the Hindu, the Christian must enable him to make sound distinctions between doctrine and doctrine, and experience and experience.

Many non-Christians ask the question why Indian Christians should at all be interested in evangelism, if it does not pay them, either materially or spiritually. They further ask whether it would not be sufficient for Indian Christians to remain as Christians within the broad bosom of Hinduism. This does not seem possible because Jesus wants his followers to commit themselves to him completely and without any reserve. Jesus also claims a

[4] Quoted by *Ecumenical Studies*, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

special relationship to God, which is denied to other human beings. He regards himself as a unique Son of God. Thus Evangelist John reports him to have said: "I and the Father are one.... He who hath seen me hath seen the Father."[5] "No man cometh unto the Father except by me."[6] If such a claim is true and is not to be regarded as mere self-deception, the world has to adjust itself and its thinking to Jesus Christ, who becomes Lord and Savior to all those who put their trust in him. Christianity demands not a mere understanding of Jesus Christ and of his relationship to God, but a confession of him as Lord and Master.

Empirically, evangelism is nothing more or less than following Christ, for following Christ is not a thing in isolation, but a dynamic social process that carries over into lives surrounding the follower, touching them with spiritual renovation. Evangelism is something which the earnest Christian, consciously or unconsciously, urges upon both the nominal Christian and the non-Christian. The earnest Christian believes that no one who has heard of Jesus and has wished to be true to himself can escape Christ and his living spirit. He may put off the encounter, but sooner or later he must face him because he is inescapable. When a person truly and sincerely meets the living Christ, he is led to a confession of his sins and shortcomings and to the seeking of a superior power which can strengthen, sustain, and uphold him in all that he does in becoming himself a child of God.

To all of this reasoning and experience, the non-Christian often does, and has a right to demur. He may argue that in the unique claims made by Jesus Christ for himself he may have been mistaken or that words were assigned to him which were not really spoken by him. He may further argue that Christians make too much of the energizing power of Jesus Christ, which is incapable of

[5] John 10 : 30 ; 14 : 19. [6] John 14 : 6.

objective proof. To honest doubts such as these, the Christian has no answer to give except to ask the questioner to give a fair trial to Jesus Christ and his claims in comparison with other religious teachers and their claims. He may further ask the enquirer to see for himself whether allegiance to Christ has not made some difference at least in the lives of his followers.

It is quite possible, especially in India, for a person to be a follower of Jesus Christ without openly confessing him to be Lord and Savior through baptism and church membership. In Christian colleges one occasionally comes across young men and women who come under this category. But as more than one has discovered, very few such people find it possible to stand up under difficulties. The strain is too much for any one individual to bear. Being a secret Christian may be better than not being a Christian at all. Yet the individual pursuing the lonely path denies himself the stimulus which can come to him from close association with those who have definitely committed themselves to Christ through confession and baptism. He also forgets the duty of witness when he looks upon the religious life primarily as something between himself and his Maker. The Christian life in one of its important phases means co-operative living. It is co-operative search and co-operative discovery.

Discussion has often centered on the question whether the term 'evangelistic' can be applied to the permeating of non-Christian life and conduct with Christian ideas and ideals. While opinion on the question is bound to be divided, permeation has a definite part to play in any program of evangelism, even though it is not the final goal. Permeation and mass-modification are only half-way houses, but valuable half-way houses all the same. Sooner or later they should lead to definite acceptance. The all-round development of human personality is best possible through allegiance to Christ, to his teaching and to his ever-abiding Spirit.

Does evangelism include the improvement and purification of non-Christian religions from within? Is it evangelism to make the Hindu and Moslem discover or re-discover the best in their own faiths and live up to it? Bishop W. W. Cash writes: "It is not evangelism to make bad Hindus into good Hindus, nor is it evangelism to permeate the Hindu system with a Christian ethic."[7] This seems too harsh a statement. If being "a good Hindu" means the acceptance of various superstitious practices and meaningless rites or the acceptance of points of view and ways of living which are contrary to the Christian way, the task of evangelism is not to make a bad Hindu into a good Hindu. On the other hand, if it means a continuous search after God, the cultivation of the spirit of *ahimsa* (non-injury or non-violence) and *asanga* (non-possession), of self-discipline, meditation and intense concentration, and of loving devotion to a personal God, all of which are contained in Hinduism, one fails to see why it should be regarded as so very different from the Christian life or from the purposes of Christian evangelism. At least part of the evangelistic function of the church is fulfilled if the church can infuse in both Christians and non-Christians a holy passion for inner purity and for a life of service, a keen regard for the dignity of human personality and equality of opportunity, and an undying zeal for social righteousness. If there are those who, having developed these virtues apart from Jesus, are unwilling to commit themselves to him, the part of Christian grace is to leave them to God's wisdom. It is not the function of the evangelist to decide who belongs to the Kingdom of God and who does not. Evangelism does not mean the counting of heads or the excluding of anyone from God's love.

Evangelism means conversion—both individual and group conversion. The most genuine, substantial, and powerful

[7] W. W. Cash, *The Missionary Church* (London: Christian Missionary Society), p. 232.

type of evangelism is the winning of individuals one by one. This was Jesus' method. He presented his message to each individual personally and he was patient to await the kindling of the fire of his message in each heart. To Nicodemus he said, " Ye must be born again."[8] He exhorted the rich young ruler to sell all he had and give to the poor and then to follow him. To the scribe who wanted to follow him whithersoever he went, Jesus pointed out the hardness of the path which he was treading: " The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests: but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head."[9] To the sick woman who followed him and said, " If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole,"[10] he said " Daughter.....thy faith hath made thee whole."[11]

It is a theological truism to say that the only form of conversion which Christians know takes place in the individual, and not in the group or mass. Conversion is the inner change which occurs when an individual accepts Jesus Christ as his Lord and Master and stands ready to hew away from his life those beliefs and acts that are irrelevant or contradictory to Jesus' teachings. Neither the group nor any other person can do this for the individual. The individual person must do his own changing, his own growing. With special reference to the Hindu, the Rev. R. C. Das says: " The Hindu does not jump into a new position, he grows into it."[12] Genuine conversion must take place in the individual mind and heart; if it does not take place there, it does not take place at all. Meeting with God is always personal.

In India where family ties are strong and where the head of the family usually makes decisions on behalf of the entire household, family conversion is common. This situation has its advantages and its disadvantages. It is

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[8] John 3 : 7. [9] Matt. 9 : 20.
[10] Matt. 9 : 21. [11] Matt. 9 : 22.
[12] Quoted in *Ecumenical Studies, op. cit.*, p. 43.

not in the nature of conversion nor in the nature of man himself that any head of a family should take upon himself the responsibility of making a spiritual or moral decision for the individual members of his family. He can, however, create the atmosphere and background in which his family can live and think and be influenced in Christian ways of life. Adult members of the family and young people who have reached the legal age of maturity should be given the responsibility of choice; indeed, expression of the spiritual and creative powers of the adult women of the family should be given greater scope. If the parents have been conscientious and understanding in the training of their children, young people will usually follow them, for young people are the products of the intellectual and spiritual nurture of their parents as well as of their bodies.

In the case of minor children, family conversion to a new faith is commendable, and the children should be given Christian training in the home and in the church. But they should also be given respect for their maturing judgment, and if, on attaining legal age, they wish to return to their former faith, parents should recognize their right to do so. It is significant that after years of experience as an evangelist, the Rev. D. A. McGavran claims that the Christian faith spreads best along family lines.

In spite of such claims, the fact must be faced that many Hindus frown on Christian conversion. Some Hindu leaders insist that although Hindu parents as individuals may become Christians, their children should be brought up as Hindus which was the original faith of the parents. This seems an unwarranted interference with the rights of the family, calculated to break up family ties and normal family living.

A special situation, related to family conversion, exists in the Christian training of non-Christian children in many Christian schools. This training, given with special permission from parents, is sound and constructive. No

effort on the part of the school, however, is made to reach the parents through the children. Since the change of faith in India is frequently made through the family unit, and since the child-parent relationship is intimate and direct, it would seem that a splendid opportunity for evangelising is being overlooked here. Some Christian workers are aware of this neglected opportunity. One of these workers, Bishop F. Whittaker, says: "A sustained effort must be made to reach the group through the individual, and the individual through the group."[13]

No form of conversion has aroused more opposition in India than has group or mass conversion. It is more than likely that free India will devise every possible means of preventing mass conversion. Some of the restrictions, however, are bound to be mere paper restrictions, incapable of being legally enforced. Nevertheless, they will serve the purpose of frightening the timid among the Christian workers and enquirers.

Bishop J. W. Pickett,[14] who has been the most outstanding advocate of mass conversion in recent years, has drawn up a number of favorable arguments for it, and also a number of dangers attending it. Because his arguments are based on authentic Indian thinking and conditions, they are given herewith, with the author's comments in parentheses:—

1. Mass conversions are the most natural way of approach to Christ for many Indian people, since group action is more common among Indians than is individual action. (While this is generally true, the danger is that since the decision is made largely by the elders of the group, the many are likely to remain silent, having but a vague knowledge of the meaning and implications of the momentous decision taken on their behalf.)

[13] *International Missionary Conference*, Madras Series, Vol. III, 1939.
[14] *Ibid.*, pp. 58-80.

2. Mass conversions protect people from social dislocation. Individual conversion often leads to economic loss and mental anguish; it deprives the individual of valuable restraint from wrong-doing and support for right-doing. (There is much truth in this argument. Caste ties in many villages are strong. Caste gives to the individual a sense of belonging; it acts as an effective social insurance; it exercises a strict social discipline. A solitary convert in a village is a lonesome person. This lonesomeness becomes sharper still when he moves into the anonymous life of a large city where he may go entirely adrift.)

3. Mass conversions reduce the danger of Westernization. Single converts tend to abandon the patterns and customs of Indian culture and assume those aspects of Western culture that are superficial and of doubtful value, thus becoming cultural mongrels. (The truth of the matter is that there is no uniform trend here. Whether or not an individual or group becomes unduly Westernized depends to a large extent on the degree of enlightenment and self-respect of the person or persons concerned and on the nature of the Christian community into which converts are received.)

4. Mass conversions are an aid to the conversion of others. The influence of a single convert is limited, whereas a converted group that maintains its social integration and goes on to build a Christian community commands the interest and admiration of outside observers. (In truth, others have been drawn to Christ and to the church when they have seen some of the marvellous changes which have taken place in the lives of mass movement converts. Even upper caste people have been attracted to Christianity by the changed lives of outcaste Christians. But the multiplicity of such changes can easily be exaggerated, and they should not be used as an argument for bringing

into the Christian fold large masses of uncomprehending, uninterested and unconvinced people.)

Bishop Pickett lists the following dangers attendant upon mass conversions: (*a*) the possible neglect of personal religion; (*b*) the retention of caste exclusiveness and certain undesirable caste customs, even after becoming Christians, and (*c*) the arrest or retardation of mass movements after the desire to be recognized as Christians has been satisfied.

In order to provide spiritual nurture for mass movement converts, Bishop Pickett recommends the holding of a daily worship service wherever possible. In worship, he recommends a liberal use of liturgy and symbolism, as well as of Indian vocal and instrumental music; a larger use of dramatics for instruction and for the expression of religious feeling; a more general observance of Christmas, Easter, and other special days of the church calendar. No discussion of mass conversion can be complete without mention of Bishop Azariah of Dornakal and his outstanding success in this field, a success he achieved through indefatigable labor with converts before and after conversion.

It is an open secret that many in India, especially among the backward classes, seek admission to Christianity in order to improve their social and economic conditions. In recognizing this legitimate striving, it is incumbent upon the church to set free the powers of initiative within these converts and to aid them along the way to physical betterment and independence, although not to the extent of interfering with one of the primary purposes of the church, *i.e.*, evangelizing. In the general run of things, a man whose hunger is satisfied prays better than a hungry one.

The Christian *ashram* with its intimate and informal atmosphere, provides a superb setting for spiritual examination and worship. One such *ashram* is the Banaras City Mission which carries on personal evangelism in an unobtrusive manner. It provides opportunity for the earnest

seeker, and the Hindu pilgrim in particular, to study Christ and appropriate his spirit without submitting him to any of the modern methods of pressuring an individual into a particular set of theological beliefs or mode of ritual conduct. The objectives established by the All-for-Christ Movement are: (1) Every Christian a praying Christian; (2) Every Christian a serving Christian; and (3) Every Christian a witnessing Christian. The National Missionary Society which has similar objectives depends to an increasing extent upon teams of consecrated volunteer workers going out to the villages to serve people in their needs and tell them the fascinating story of Jesus.

Evangelism in the past has been conducted directly or indirectly through Christian schools, hospitals, and social service centers of various kinds. As pointed out earlier,[15] the scope for this type of evangelism is in the process of being restricted by the State. These restrictions, however, need not dishearten Christian workers. A good Christian teacher, doctor, nurse, or other professional can win people to Christ by his profound sense of vocation, by the high quality of his life, and by his genuine interest in, and care for, his fellowmen. "Work really becomes witness when it is performed in the spirit of obedience to the Master."[16]

As India grows more literate, the printed page will offer unlimited scope for evangelism. Carefully conceived and well-written booklets on inexpensive paper concerning Christian themes and life stories of outstanding Christians can be of great value. The short story, the novel, and poetry can be broadcast among the people, contributing to both the cultural and the spiritual lives of the people. There is need for a Christian apologetic addressed to educated Hindus and Moslems, also for books on Christian conceptions of God, man, sin, immortality, the Incarnation, the Atonement, non-violence, and social righteousness.

[15] Chapter II.

[16] *Ecumenical Studies, op. cit.*, p. 43.

This is a special need, for educated Hindus and Moslems tend to consider Christianity as a religion of the low castes, as indeed it has been for the most part. Ways need to be discovered whereby Moslems can be encouraged to outgrow literalism, fanaticism, and communalism. The Moslem zeal would greatly strengthen the Christian Church. The Henry Martyn School of Islamic Studies has undertaken the training of special personnel for work among Moslems and has brought out scholarly works on Islamic theology.

The number of Indian Christians trained to write incisively and persuasively is infinitesimally small. Indian Christian bodies need to make efforts in teaching Indians to write as well as to read. A start has been made in this direction by the Theological Committee of the National Christian Council. Subsidies are given to talented Christian writers to produce works on Christianity and the church applicable to Indian conditions. A Journal of Indian Theology, edited by scholarly Indian Christians, has recently come into existence.

Authors of Christian literature, who deal with the truths of other religions, need to be scrupulously fair and objective. Christianity cannot be built upon a mere destructive criticism of other religions. Nor can extravagant and bombastic claims be made for Christianity, for the people of the East, whose relations with the so-called Christian West have not been markedly happy, would be distrustful of this. Evangelism will make little or no headway among educated Hindus unless and until Christian thought appeals to the Hindu mind. The Brahmin, the intellectual aristocrat of India, says: "You Christians may have a religion of love but we Hindus have a religion of reason." What India needs is a combination of *agape* (love) and *eros* (reason). At times, Christian missions have bought newspaper space in which they have presented some Christian truth, or experience, or write-up containing religious cliches. This sort of thing does not appeal to the Indian temperament.

All types of audio-visual aids offer vast opportunities for evangelism. The cinema, radio, television, the ballet, and the drama—all are excellent agencies for enlightenment. The National Christian Council, recognizing the importance of these media, has set up a part-time secretary for their promotion. Libraries are being built up of films, film strips, and slides. As yet, full advantage has not been taken because of the shortage of personnel and money, and of available Indian Christian talent for training as singers, and as actors and actresses for stage and film, portraying Christian themes. In all that he does, the evangelist must constantly remember that instruments, programs, and techniques such as audio-visual aid, are to be kept inconspicuous. They are a means to an end, and not an end in themselves. High-pressure methods will not produce lasting results.

To stimulate church life, "gospel teams" can be organized, made up of those who have had genuine religious experience and whose daily lives are eloquent testimony to such experience. Special teams can be organized to visit Christian schools and colleges for recruitment to Christian service, and to work among Christian students in secular and non-Christian institutions, and among Protestant students in Roman Catholic institutions.

Wherever possible, unpaid, voluntary evangelism should take the place of paid evangelism. Whatever methods of evangelism are used, it is necessary that evangelism be church-related. Christian groups will be cutting the ground from under their own feet if they develop any type of evangelism apart from the church. A church-related and church-centered evangelism should pay special attention to regular worship, to prayer and praise, to the systematic study of the Bible, to Christian instruction and service, and to the preparation of individual Christians for the reception of the Holy Spirit.

If evangelism is to succeed in India, it must be completely adapted to Indian conditions. The thoughtful Hindu will not be drawn to Christianity by the blowing

of trumpets and the fanfare methods of certain Christian groups working in India. Self-giving fellowship is the most effective method of evangelism. The Rev. R. C. Das is right when he says that the personal method of friendly contact is about the only way of touching non-Christians. However valid group conversions may be, they must be taken up with great caution, partly because of the determined opposition of the Hindu to them and partly because of the possibility of people embracing the Christian faith for reasons other than spiritual and religious.

Evangelism can have no appeal to India if the evangelist assumes that it is only the non-Christian people who are to be evangelized. There are many nominal Christians and pagans in the Christian church itself, even in the countries which send out missions. Therefore, the evangelist must address himself as much to these people as to those who are outside the confines of the Christian church. It is not only the personal lives of unconcerned people which are a problem to the evangelist. His further problem is to find a Christian solution to the problems of social and economic injustice, racial discrimination, war and aggression, which are found in every part of the present-day world.

Evangelism is the task of the whole church. Tertullian said appropriately "one believer must produce another," or, as a recent writer puts it: "to be a Christian is to be a missionary."

CHAPTER VIII

DIMENSIONAL PIONEERING IN CHRISTIAN SERVICE

"DIMENSIONAL PIONEERING" is the expression used by Dr. W. M. Horton to describe "the attempt to convert every dimension of human living.....to obedience unto the will of God revealed in Christ."[1] Such pioneering has been one of the primary justifications for Christian missions everywhere in the past. With the spread of the modern conception of "social service" and the welfare state in non-Christian lands, opportunities for dimensional pioneering by Christian agencies are becoming restricted, but by no means eliminated. In a country like India where social and economic conditions are still far from satisfactory, Christian agencies have the challenging responsibility of initiating and directing much needed reforms.

Many of the civic, economic, social, and educational activities which formerly used to be associated with missions and churches are rapidly passing into other hands. Yet for a long time to come Christian agencies will continue *to initiate, to supplement, and to co-operate* in all fields of social well-being. Their function will never be to compete or work at cross purposes with other agencies, striving in the same fields of human progress. If the Christian church is to justify itself in the present-day world, it must at least be two or three steps in advance of other organizations doing similar work. It must initiate new methods and new programs and infuse new enthusiasm. The Christian is a tireless worker because he has hitched his waggon to a star.

POLITICAL PIONEERING

There is not much that the church can do directly in the political field. But to what it can do indirectly there

[1] *Christian World Missions*, edited by W. Anderson (Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1946), p. 177.

is practically no limit. Good citizenship is one of the crying needs of India. The church can do much in training people as good citizens. Instead of waiting until they grow up, by which time their habits, dispositions, and attitudes become fixed, it should start with children at home, church, and school. If the Christian Home Movement becomes all that it should be, it can become a powerful agent in the evolution of the good citizen. Church schools, young people's organizations, youth camps and conferences can all become excellent training grounds for citizenship.

Christian schools and the dormitories attached to some of them furnish a splendid opportunity for training youth in honesty, truthfulness, manliness, courage, and co-operation. If the best way of learning is by doing, grown-up children at school may be taught to organize themselves into parties and conduct campaigns and be encouraged to vote for the best candidate. India today has enfranchised 175 million people. If these millions are to vote intelligently, they need practical lessons in voting and the conducting of a political campaign free from mutual recriminations and abuses. Young people need to be taught that parties are not factions and that a sound party system in politics should be based on rival principles, policies, and methods and not personalities or the passing issues of the moment. Youth must be taught to realize that it is unsportsmanlike to hit a man below the belt, that one should take political defeat manfully and that one's enthusiasm for a public cause must be as great after the election as before. Civic qualities, such as regard for public property, consideration for the feelings and conveniences of others, and uprightness in public life must be instilled in the minds of youth when they are still impressionable.

Children and young people in Christian schools may be helped to operate their own bank, post office, and co-operative store, either by themselves or under the general

direction of their teachers. They can be given training in conducting mock sessions of a *panchayat* (village government), a municipal council, the legislative assembly of the state, the national parliament, and the General Assembly or Security Council of the United Nations.

Since all of this training calls for long periods of time spent with youth, it is imperative that where possible and necessary young people away from home should be encouraged to live in dormitories under proper supervision. As governmental and other agencies increasingly take over the responsibility for education, the Christian church may well spend its resources on running excellent dormitories in all large-size towns and cities, where the foundations for a sound and lasting character may be laid.

One of the responsibilities of Christian agencies is to inculcate in the young and old respect for uniform law, uniformly administered. In Indian tradition, the law is often for the poor man and the man without status. It need not apply to the man with influence and social prestige. A general indifference to law enforcement prevails. Indians do not readily co-operate in the apprehension of criminals. The police are regarded with fear or indifference, sometimes with hostility. Subjection to a foreign power did not nurture genuine respect for authority, although it did foster respect for justice. People obeyed because they had to, and not because of the consciousness that the government represented them and that it was they themselves in a different capacity. During the struggle for independence, political leaders did much to nullify the regard people had for law, and today the Indian government has a harder task in teaching respect for law.

Christians can take the lead in cultivating respect for law, especially those from democratic countries where the people have achieved a certain respect for civil rights and where certain checks restrain authority from committing violence to citizens. With the coming of freedom the police is afraid to act with independence and courage,

since the lawless elements in the population seek to put all kinds of pressure upon the police through the press and their representatives in the legislature, some of whom want to have the reputation of being defenders of the public, even when the public may be in the wrong.

Respect for law is but one side of the coin; the other side is respect of the law for citizens. One cannot exist without the other. The complement of respect for law is civil liberty. At this time when the government of India has placed serious limitations on the freedom of the press and when state governments have occasionally suspended *habeas corpus*, the Christian church can well take the initiative in protecting civil rights. They can do this through church papers and periodicals, through the secular press, through recognized Christian bodies such as the National Christian Council, and through city and national groups. It is obvious that this task belongs to Indian Christian leaders rather than to missionaries from abroad.

The Constitution of India provides a long list of fundamental rights for every citizen in the country. It also lays down certain directive principles to regulate state policy in securing social, economic, and political justice. Fundamental rights need to be carefully nursed and watched so that any infringement of them may be brought to the notice of the authorities concerned for speedy redress. The fundamental rights of India further presuppose a basis in such vital principles as the sacredness of human personality, fraternity, equality, and justice, all of which are essentially Christian in nature. This means that a vast field is opened up to Christian agencies, in providing the intellectual and moral background for the correct apprehension of the meaning of rights and in creating the willingness to put them into operation. Fundamental rights, in other words, require a Christian atmosphere for their successful growth and fulfilment. What is true of fundamental rights is also true of the directive principles.

In 1950 the Government of India adopted *Jana-ganamana* as the National Anthem of India. People have learned to stand up respectfully and listen to the anthem as it is sung by one or more persons. It is desirable that the whole audience take part in the singing of the anthem. This does not come naturally to most Indians, as corporate singing is still somewhat foreign to Indian traditions. Christians, who for generations have been accustomed to congregational singing, can take the lead in this matter. Indian political leaders are keen that the national anthem should be sung in unison.

One of the banes of Indian politics is communalism. During the days immediately preceding and succeeding Indian independence, nationalism rose to lofty heights. The Indian National Congress became the emblem of national unity, self-sacrifice and devotion to the country. But the Congress is now fast deteriorating. It is being challenged by socialists, communists and communalists. While the socialists have a good chance of forming an alternative government in the not too distant future, as they have done in Travancore-Cochin, they are divided among several splinter groups, each following its favorite leader and its favorite policy. In the meantime religious reactionary groups such as the *Hindu Mahasabha* and *Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh* are trying to make India a Hindu State as a counter-balance to a Moslem Pakistan. A clear Christian duty is to help people to rise above caste politics and clan politics to national politics, and thence to international. In a good democracy issues must be discussed and judged on their merits; and not by the way in which they may affect the interest of family, friends, caste or community. India has to march a long way before this democratic conception of the national good is instinctively accepted by the rank and file of the country as a desirable goal.

Indian Christians no longer vote in separate electorates, but vote as members of a joint, territorial electorate.

Here they have a great opportunity for exercising their vote intelligently and responsibly for the good of the country. Where they form a considerable, compact minority, they can, by concerted action, influence elections for good. The danger, however, is that when the election fever is at its height Indian Christians may throw their noble principles overboard and make common cause with ordinary politicians, whose governing consideration is expediency.

When Indian Christians are in a position of authority or influence, they can exercise absolute impartiality between caste and caste, and community and community in such matters as appointments, promotions, award of scholarships or stipends, and the like. As a general rule, Christian public officials have the confidence of the people as a whole. There is a general feeling that they can be relied upon to do what is fair and just to everyone concerned.

Political life in India, perhaps even more than in some countries where democracy is well established, is subject to the evils of bribery, corruption and nepotism. This situation is a great challenge to Christian pioneering. A Christian with clean hands and a pure heart in public life is worth scores of insipid sermons. The common tendency in India is to throw the blame upon someone else, instead of taking the responsibility upon oneself. If bribes are accepted, it is because they are offered. The Christian has the opportunity of lighting a candle in order to dispel the darkness, instead of cursing the dark all the time. He should, in the words of Mahatma Gandhi, "spiritualize politics". Politics calls for a rare idealism which only a spirit-filled and dedicated life can give; and that has its roots in a living and vital religion.

The creation and maintenance of sound public opinion is an urgent necessity in every democracy. What often passes for public opinion is the skilful presentation of one side of a case by the government or by some interested group or other. The better class of newspapers in India

generally maintain a high standard for the correct reporting of news, but they do not always take the lead in creating sound public opinion. Well-conducted and, if necessary, well-subsidized Christian daily papers and periodicals can fill this gap. They can help people to have a correct understanding of the rights and duties of citizenship, and of the momentous issues facing the country. They can suggest solutions for the problems of the nation and of the world as a whole.

When nationalism is properly directed and harnessed to a worthy end, it can be a great force for good. It can stimulate the best in man and induce him to sacrifice himself to the utmost for the good of a common whole. Unfortunately, the kind of nationalism which is rampant in the world today is narrow, selfish, and often militant. " My country, right or wrong " is still the order of the day in many lands, including Christian lands. The motto of a good Christian should be " My country, if right to keep her right; and if wrong, to make her right." Anything short of that ideal is sub-Christian, if not, un-Christian.

Nationalism has both its widening and narrowing influence in the realms of economics, politics, and culture. It is natural for a nascent nationalism like that of India to favour the narrowing aspects of nationalism more than the broadening elements. The Christian thing to do is, when and where necessary, to subordinate the national interest to the claims of humanity as a whole.

A true Christian can and should be a good nationalist, but a better internationalist. If the prefix " inter " contains the key to the solution of many present-day problems, the Christian should progressively learn to think and act internationally. He can help to lay the foundations for international order and justice. He can help to popularize the work of the United Nations, of its various councils and commissions, and of the specialized agencies attached to it. He can also point out the defects and weaknesses

which have come to light in the organization and operation of various international bodies.

No problem today offers a greater challenge to Christianity than does war. Christian peoples are taught that Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, lived and enjoined a life of love and vicarious suffering. Yet "Christian" nations in the present-day world are among the greatest perpetrators of the war system. The church has endowed them with a romantic interest in peace; it has failed to give them the faith and strength to apply the principles of peace to their individual or national lives. Most Christians consider non-violence unpractical, despite its success under the direction of Gandhi, who was not a Christian by name but who applied Christian principles to his life and to his nation's struggle for freedom.

It is encouraging to find that increasing numbers of Christian people in the West are coming to realize that war is morally indefensible, economically inexpedient, politically suicidal, and altogether contrary to the spirit of Jesus Christ. Yet millions of people are not prepared to give up war altogether and adopt a Christian pacifism as their avowed goal, because of their fear that if they did not protect themselves against aggressors, the latter would have the upper hand. The line of thinking which many of them adopt is: "If you want peace, be prepared for war!" Especially since the close of World War I, Western nations have been moving more and more in the direction of collective security, which is considered to be the panacea for international conflicts. Unfortunately this hope has not come true. Collective security in such cases as the Italo-Abyssinian War of 1935–36 turned out to be collective insecurity! Under the present UN system, collective security has really meant the dividing of the world into two opposing camps alternating between cold and tepid war. An international police force taking the place of national armaments has not yet come into being. All that has been proposed is an international police force

supplementing and buttressing national armaments. Since this is not acceptable to one group of nations, the other group headed by the U.S.A. is busying itself with the setting up of military pacts and alliances all over the world.

In this discouraging situation it is exhilarating to find that there are groups of religious pacifists and conscientious objectors to war in most Christian lands. In the U.S.A. itself, which seems highly militant, there is a growing band of conscientious objectors to war who are prepared to go to jail and sacrifice themselves without reserve for the vindication of a great principle. In the U.S.A. and several other European countries, thoughtful Christians are re-examining the Christian position on war. Books have been written on such subjects as the *New Testament Basis for Pacifism*. In the face of much opposition and even vilification, American Quakers have enthusiastically witnessed for peace. In their Institutes of International Relations, one-day conferences, seminars, and work camps, they have consistently held up the ideal of Christian pacificism. Wherever opportunity was given to them they sent out teams of friendship and goodwill to war-torn areas to bring relief in distress and to restore conditions of peace.

The church in India hitherto has not shown very much interest in the problem of peace. Indian Christians as a whole are not strongly pacifist. They are guided by supporting churches in the West and by certain missionaries. The pioneering suggested for the Indian church is to explore and discover non-violent ways of settling international disputes, even as Quakers seek to do in Christian lands. It may prove to be its duty to recapture the spirit of Gandhi's non-violence and make it available to Hindus and non-Hindus alike.

If the Indian church can do this type of pioneering, it will be in keeping with the best traditions of India and the West. From the days of Buddha and Asoka, India has had a tradition of non-violence rooted in non-attachment. Gandhi gave it a strength and vitality that no

single individual of the modern world has been able to give. While the tradition of non-violence is permanent in India, there have been numerous back-sliders. Even among Gandhi's followers, there are a great majority who, with the attainment of freedom, believe that India must protect her soil by armed force. India has an army of about 400,000 men, a small air force and a negligible navy. Groups like the Sikhs, Marathas, and the Rajputs are known for their martial qualities. Yet there is something within most Indians which reacts favorably to the call of non-violence. Even Nehru, who is not a pure pacifist, has repeatedly said that he will not resort to armed force except in the case of invasion of Indian territory. It may be that this position is better than entering into military pacts and alliances and the feverish arming of nations against a real or imaginary enemy. But from the Christian point of view it is not good enough. It is easy for a Christian and an Indian to say that he will not take part in a possible conflict between the U.S.A. and Russia. But the test question is, what attitude will he take in the event of an Indo-Pakistan war over Kashmir?

The Indian church can undoubtedly give its support to such minimum use of force as was used by the Indian Custodian Force in Korea in dealing with prisoners of war. From that point on, the Indian church may proceed to explore the possibility of creating an International Peace Force. It may also study for itself the implications of the teachings of Jesus on non-violence and non-resistance. At present the Indian church is not vitally interested in these issues.

Economic Pioneering

Ever since India became free, she has been a beehive of economic activity. Even before independence there was produced an economic plan known as the Bombay Plan. But nothing much came of it. The first few years after independence, India had to strain her meager resources

for the rehabilitation of the several millions of refugees from Pakistan. This problem was tackled manfully and with expedition. At present writing, the refugees from Western Pakistan have all found or been given adequate housing facilities. Most of them are engaged in gainful occupations. Housing facilities for those from Eastern Pakistan have not been completed.

On the heels of the problem of refugees came acute food shortage and near-famine conditions brought about by the continuous failure of the monsoon in some parts of India and by floods in some other parts. India spent several millions of dollars in buying food grains from abroad. A strict system of food rationing was put into operation. Today she is out of the woods.

In 1952 there went into operation an ambitious plan known as the Five Year Plan for the economic regeneration of the country. The major emphasis of this plan is on the improvement of agriculture and the expansion of irrigation facilities and electric power. Until recently only 6% of the waters of the rivers of India was being utilized for irrigation purposes. This meant that only 49 million acres out of 424 million acres of cultivated land were under irrigation. The first priority of the Five Year Plan is given to several multi-purpose river valley schemes. When the work on the major schemes is completed by 1957, it is expected that 8·4 million acres will be brought under irrigation for the first time. One of the most important schemes is the Damodar Valley Scheme in Bihar and North Bengal. The purpose of these schemes is to provide a steady and continuous supply of water for irrigation purposes, provide electricity for the rural areas, control floods, prevent soil erosion, promote reforestation, improve facilities for river transport, and promote fish culture.

Reclamation of waste land and land improvement are going on side by side with the work on the river valley schemes. With the help of a ten million-dollar loan from the World Bank and from the U.S.A. in the form

of specially made ploughs, a particularly tenacious kind of grass called *kans* which grows 12 to 14 inches deep, is being uprooted. Jungle land, too, is being cleared for cultivation purposes.

The landlord system (Zamindari) is being slowly eliminated. Land has been made available to tenant farmers on terms they can meet. In the summer of 1952 the government of Uttar Pradesh bought 60 million acres from wealthy landlords and sold it to 12 to 13 million peasants at a price which was equal to ten times the peasants' erstwhile annual rental. In some instances, experiments with collective farming have been made in North India among the refugees from Pakistan. The results are not encouraging because of the strong individualistic tendencies of the Indian peasant.

Under the inspiring leadership of Vinoba Bhave, a devout follower of Gandhi, the Bhoodan Yagna (land-gift) Movement, which began as an accident, has gone on from strength to strength. From the many areas which Bhave visited, he has been able to secure nearly 3 million acres of land from the more well-to-do for distribution among the poor peasants. The goal set by Bhave is 50 million acres by the end of 1957.

The grow-more-food campaign of the Government of India has borne some fruit. Special attention is being paid to the improvement of the cattle of the country. Although India has 150 million cattle, which constitute one-fourth of the world's cattle population, the average consumption of milk and milk products is only 5·45 ounces a day. The scheme on which India is working aims at the supply of 60,000 breeding bulls to the villages of India in the next ten years. During the same period 30 million trees are to be planted for the protection and development of forests, which will provide employment for nearly a million people. Special attention is being paid to the improvement of fisheries and fish-curing methods. The canning of fish has not yet begun on any appreciable scale.

The *per capita* consumption of fish is about 3·4 pounds per year.

Much improvement has taken place through the 55 Community Projects working in the country. Inspired by the success of the Etawah Experiment in the U.P., under the guidance of a well-known Point 4 American administrator, Horace Holmes, the Sarvodaya Scheme in Bombay, and the Firka Development Program in Madras, 55 pilot projects have been launched in selected areas in various parts of India. Each of these projects covers about 300 villages with a total population of 200,000 and a cultivated area of 150,000 acres. When work on these projects is completed in another three years some 12 million people scattered over 160,000 villages will have been reached and will have received a variety of benefits. American help in the form of trained personnel and equipment has been conspicuous in these community projects.

The most salutary feature of these projects is the amount of self-help which they have evoked from the villagers. Villagers have been giving their services free of charge for the building of new and old roads, for the construction of tanks, tank bunds and wells, for the provision of adequate drainage facilities, for the building of schools and hospitals and for the reclamation of land. It is a great day in India when people learn to help themselves through co-operative efforts, instead of depending upon the government to hand out benefits to them.

The Five Year Plan aims not only at the improvement of agricultural, but also at the improvement of the industrial conditions. The industrial program of the country is divided into a public and private sector. Much improvement has taken place in the public sector. Transportation and communication facilities are increasing rapidly. In 1948 India placed orders in the United States, Canada, Great Britain, and France for 390 locomotives. Now India has begun producing her own locomotives and railway coaches. Fifty-four locomotives and a large number

of coaches were made at Chittaranjan in 1953. The Hindustan Shipyard has built ten ships; two more are on hand at present. Contract has been entered into with a German firm for increased steel production, raising the total output from a little over one million tons a year to two million tons. A road development program is under way. In co-operation with American and British firms, motor car assembly plants have been set up. Automobile plants are under construction. Bicycles are being manufactured. The first India-built aircraft was tested on May 1, 1948. A huge government-owned fertilizer factory has begun to function at Sindri. It is equipped to produce a thousand tons of ammonium sulphate a day and is the largest of its kind in Asia.

In the private sector too improvements are noticeable. The textile industry is well developed. Cotton goods are exported to Asian neighbors. Enough sugar is produced to make the country independent of import. Attention is being paid to the increased production of jute, steel ingots, coal, cement, salt, chemicals, and engineering goods.

Special emphasis is being placed upon the improvement of village industries, such as hand-spinning and hand-weaving, the manufacture of gur (unrefined sugar), paper-making, leather-curing, tanning, rope-making, basket-weaving, pottery, oil-extracting from seeds, mat-weaving, carpet-weaving, dyeing, and tailoring. In some areas experiments are being conducted in poultry-raising and bee-keeping. If simple remedies can be found for the treatment of poultry diseases, and if more attention is paid to improved breeds of fowls, poultry breeding can yield a substantial income to villagers. Christians of former outcaste origin who raise pigs can be trained to raise them under sanitary conditions.

The economic system on which India is working assiduously today is a mixed economy, which will preserve the initiative and enterprise characteristic of the capitalistic system and yet serve the needs of the community. State

action at many levels is indispensable in a just society. India can variously experiment with private enterprise, private enterprise combined with state enterprise, state ownership and state control, and state control without state ownership. In any system, India should give an important place to cottage industries, or handicrafts, and the middle man should be eliminated as far as possible. Her ideal might well be an old Roman ideal: private property small, common property large. "Planned production for community consumption," a phrase used by the Webbs, is a sounder ideal than the chaos which often attends the private enterprise system, especially as regards distribution. The Estates Duty Act which went into force in October 1953, is "a milestone on the road to social democracy."[2] It is "a social leveller and a source of revenue."[3] It imposes a duty on "the capital value of property changing hands on the death of a person, subject to an exemption limit."[4]

The above survey of the momentous economic changes taking place in India points to a vast area for Christian pioneering. In the nature of the case, Christian agencies cannot duplicate the services undertaken by the state. But they can concentrate on certain pilot projects and make them an object lesson for others to emulate. This is particularly true in the realm of village reconstruction, where Christian missions have always been pioneers. Wherever they have influence, Christian agencies can help to eradicate the poverty of the rural masses by helping to remove faulty systems of land ownership, small uneconomical holdings, primitive methods of farming, greed of the money-lender, and conditions producing poor health, malnutrition, general inertia, and wasteful marriage and funeral expenses. On the positive side, Christian agencies can help to popularize methods of soil analysis, improvement of seeds,

[2] *India in* 1953, *A Collection of Articles*, January 1954, p. 2 (Caxton Press, New Delhi).

[3] *Ibid.* [4] *Ibid.*

prevention of erosion through contour-ploughing, planting of trees as windbreaks, making of compost, rotation of crops, provision of improved fodder, and the use of silage. Popular education can be conducted for the consolidation of holdings and for the elimination of locusts, rodents, peacocks, and monkeys which cause much damage to crops. India still feeds thousands of cattle which provide neither food, milk nor labor. Christian agencies can also give their backing to the Japanese method of intensive rice cultivation, which is being tried in several rice-producing areas.

What Christian agencies can do to help agriculture in India is best illustrated by the Allahabad Agricultural Institute, founded by Dr. Sam Higginbottom. It conducts practical demonstrations in the improvement of dairy stock, partly by artificial insemination, the proper feeding of cattle, prevention of soil erosion, careful selection of seeds, and the raising of quickly maturing and profitable fruit trees, such as the papayas and guava. Recently the Ford Foundation granted $ 940,000 to this Institute for the expansion of its work. India needs many more such experimental farms.

The community projects with which the country is studded offer a splendid scope for the co-operation of Christian agencies. Christian schools may be used as rural reconstruction centres. These centres may undertake adult education, especially through audio-visual aids, first-aid, clinical service and training in handicrafts.

Here and there in India are Christian settlements which are Indian villages occupied almost wholly by Christians. Such settlements can be made into laboratories of social and economic experimentation. Their level of education and enlightenment is generally higher than that of their surroundings, but they have not demonstrated greater intelligence in co-operative efforts. Under proper stimulus, supervision and organization, a Christian settlement could farm co-operatively, abolish uneconomic holdings, adopt

scientific methods of agriculture, use machinery, fertilizers and composts, operate multi-purpose co-operative societies, conduct evening schools for adults and open health centers.

Under the capable leadership of Dr. E. C. Bhatty, a secretary of the National Christian Council, a ten-year program has been prepared aiming at the improvement of the economic condition of Christians, particularly of village Christians, with a view to raising their standard of living and enabling their churches to become self-supporting. The program provides for the improvement of economic measures as well as for the fostering of home and village crafts. It also provides facilities for training in finance, marketing and leadership. The plan does not suggest additions to the existing number of Christian agricultural and industrial schools, but it does indicate that such institutions as are now in operation should be strengthened, and some of them developed into regional institutions. There is a proposal, for instance, to strengthen the Allahabad Agricultural Institute as the central institution for teaching, extension, and research at the college level.

Dr. and Mrs. W. H. Wiser, who have devoted years of service to the villages of North India, have launched an interdenominational and non-institutional village service. The object of this service is to provide teacher-guides for villages for a period of three to five years and to induce villagers thereafter to assume responsibility. They are given practical training and guidance, but they are expected to act on their own initiative. When sufficient resourcefulness has been developed, the teacher-guide moves on to another village. Such work has been done in the recent past with great success under the leadership of Dr. D. Spencer Hatch. If the villager can be induced to shed his traditional inertia and pathetic contentment with things as they are, more than half the battle for his improvement will have been won.

The organization of co-operative societies is a service which Christian agencies can well perform. According

to ancient custom, farmers sometimes help each other in ploughing and harvesting. It remains for Christian groups to extend this principle of mutual aid to its logical conclusion and to give it proper institutional form. Co-operative societies have functioned in India for nearly fifty years, but they have not always enjoyed the confidence of the people, inasmuch as they were sponsored by a foreign government, which in the minds of many was suspect. Despite many cases of default, there are well over 100,000 credit societies in India. City workers urgently need consumers' co-operatives, which will enable them to buy in bulk and reduce the profit of the middleman. Villagers require multi-purpose societies enabling them to buy and sell co-operatively. Farm machinery, poultry, dairy farms, and vegetable and fruit gardens can be owned and managed on a co-operative basis. Each village can have its own breeding bulls, provision stores for stocking seeds, and co-operative marketing organizations. In some sections, the Y.M.C.A. and other Christian groups help the villager to secure a fair price for eggs, vegetables, fruits, and grains, and for his hand-made articles. More of this kind of work is needed. India, and particularly village youth, would profit greatly from the adaptation of American 4-H Clubs to Indian conditions.

Work camps, gaining so much popularity among American youth, constitute another method of stimulating villagers to improve their way of living. A great many Indian high school and college youths are willing to serve the villages during the long summer vacation. What they lack is encouragement, direction and supervision. Christian agencies can take the initiative in mobilizing youth for work camps to clean villages, construct sanitary latrines, build model huts, renovate irrigation tanks, construct model cattle sheds and dig manure pits. Villagers need to be encouraged to co-operate and to desire to continue the good work when the caravan moves on.

While Christian groups have much to their credit in the matter of rural reconstruction, the same cannot be said with regard to labor welfare. Organized industry today accounts for 2·6 million laborers. This does not take into account the thousands employed in plantations, mines, railways, dockyards, posts and telegraphs, tramways, motor transport, and the like. Except for the Y.M.C.A. which occasionally has interested itself in labor welfare, Christian missions have barely scratched the surface.

Revolutionary industrial changes present a challenge and opportunity which no Christian agency can ignore. Increasing industrialization has brought into the cities thousands of single men who live under the most deplorable conditions. Some of the forward-looking mill owners have set up in the outskirts of cities model homes for laborers, where families are able to live under conditions conducive to health and morality. In some instances, the laborer is able to buy his own house. Where the laboring people live in compact labor colonies, they are provided with schools, dispensaries and recreation centers. But a great many laborers are without any of these benefits. Many of them take to drink and gambling. Indebtedness and the neglect of family are the usual concomitants.

Labor is becoming well organized and is increasingly able to defend its rights. But there are rival trade organizations functioning among them and sapping their energy. Some trade unions are under the open or secret domination of communist groups and cause concern for the future. Laborers increasingly have recourse to strikes, go-slow methods, sabotage, and the like. All of this offers a challenge to wise Christian leadership and organization.

Most families, drawn from villages, are not noted for cleanliness nor for civic responsibility. Some of them fall an easy prey to the crafty money-lender and the local store-keeper. Not all of them realize the importance of education for their children nor the need for moral and

social training. Children roam the streets without guidance. Commercialized vice in cities is appalling.

The Y.M.C.A. and similar organizations have done valuable pioneering in tackling unhealthy living conditions, but what remains to be done is immense. In factory towns and industrial colonies, there is urgent need for *creches*, nursery schools, primary schools, evening schools for adults, well-stocked reading rooms and libraries, facilities for indoor and outdoor games and sports, community centers for entertainment and enlightenment and community projects. The need for medical care is prodigious.

Christian agencies can do much in creating an alert public opinion on labor questions. India from the first has enthusiastically supported the International Labor Organization and has ratified most of its conventions. Many of her own labor laws, however, have not been enforced in spirit or in letter. Employers not infrequently circumvent the law by employing children, by denying to women workers maternity and other benefits. Factory inspectors are not always alert or honest. Wages and working conditions fall far below Western standards. Christian agencies, and particularly Indian Christians, can do much to study the rights of labor, to work towards the enforcement of existing legislation, to foster new legislation, and to stimulate an apathetic public to social responsibility and action.

Indian businessmen generally have not yet cultivated a high sense of business morality or a laudable idea of community service. Having had poor training in their younger days with little or no sense of responsibility for the welfare of their employees or for the general public, their primary interest is to make money and save it. Weights and measures are at times falsified. Shoddy goods are permitted to be sold as genuine. Sand is mixed with food grains. Profiteering, black marketing, bribery of government officials, evasion of corporation taxes—these are not considered immoral. Contracts are broken with impunity.

While Western businessmen, through the pressure of trade unions, have done much for the comfort and happiness of their employees, Indian businessmen generally feel no such obligation. Foundations like the Carnegie, Ford and Rockefeller are rare, although a few Indian businessmen are now founding or endowing technical schools, colleges, and hospitals.

All of this challenges Christian agencies. It would be a striking object lesson to non-Christian businessmen if Christian employers could serve as ideal employers regarding wages, hours of work, conditions of labor, housing and provision for leisure and recreation.

Social Pioneering

It is perhaps no exaggeration to say that no country suffers as much from self-inflicted social evils as does India. Yet significant changes are taking place, in spite of vested interests and orthodoxy trying to hold back progress.

The Constitution of India reads (Article 17):

> "Untouchability" is abolished and its practice in any form is forbidden. The enforcement of any disability arising out of "untouchability" shall be an offence punishable in accordance with law."[5]

From 1938, Hindu temples, which had been the citadels of orthodoxy, have been increasingly thrown open to outcastes, or *Harijans* (children of God, as named by Gandhi). In the state of Madras where caste has reigned more severely than in other parts of the country, *Harijans* are now given the right of equal access to restaurants, hotels, places of public entertainment, shops, laundries, barber shops, and burial and cremation grounds. A recently enacted law specifically provides for action against shopkeepers who refuse to sell to *Harijans* or who discriminate in any other way against them.

[5] Article 17, *The Constitution of India*, Government of India Press, New Delhi, 1949.

Innumerable violations of Article 17 and enactments under it occur in the villages where live 80% of the people. But the *Harijan* has finally achieved legal status, a powerful start towards social status. In the Union cabinet at Delhi two out of the fifteen members are of Harijan origin. Every legislature and almost every executive branch of the government includes *Harijan* representation. Children of outcastes (described in government papers as Scheduled Castes) are provided with special educational facilities through such means as fee concessions and scholarships. No educational authority may exclude a child because of his outcaste status. Increasing numbers of "outcastes" or Scheduled Castes work side by side with "caste" people in factories.

What the *Harijan* wants immediately is equality of opportunity in the economic and educational fields. When this equality is achieved, much of the ground for "untouchability" will have been removed, because the occupations of "untouchables" have hitherto been limited to such "dirty" jobs as scavenging, crude methods of skinning dead animals and curing leather, the last of which is not only "dirty" but involves the use of acids which at times eat into the flesh of leather workers. The freeing of "untouchables" by law alone will not eliminate "dirty" occupations. These jobs will still need to be performed, but the methods of performing them may be so revolutionized through reorganization and mechanization that they carry no social stigma. Additional progress here may be made if both private and public bodies in India will use legal pressure and enlightened public opinion to encourage people to adopt more sanitary personal habits, which can go a long way in obviating "dirty" occupations.

Caste intermarriage is not an immediate problem. More important is enabling people to become intermarriageable by giving them equal social, economic and educational opportunities. This is gradually coming about in educated circles. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, an educated

Harijan, and a former Law Minister of the Government of India, married a Brahmin woman and new India took it in its stride. But such marriages are few. Effective steps are being taken to encourage marriage among sub-castes. This is a social reform which is both urgent and feasible. Recently the government adopted a bill validating marriages between persons of different subdivisions within the same caste.

The field for Christian agencies for breaking down caste is limitless. They could initiate an organization similar to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and seek to improve the condition of *Harijans* through publicity of their constitutional rights, through legal machinery for the redress of grievances, and through actual court cases. They could fight discrimination in employment, in the use of village wells, in access to temples and in admittance to educational institutions.

Christian communities in North India have practically eliminated caste from their social life, but not those in South India. In some extreme cases in South India, caste distinctions are observed even at the Lord's Table, those of high caste origin being served before those of low caste and outcaste origin ! In some sections, Christians of a particular caste origin attempt to bar from positions of authority and remuneration all those outside their group. Christians of outcaste origin are, in some areas, banding themselves together and are using political methods to secure their rights. Christian agencies through the pulpit and all church organizations, should wage a relentless struggle against caste. Christian women can do even more to remove caste feelings and prejudices in their own families than can men.

While caste distinctions are declining, class differences are beginning to assert themselves. Snobbishness and aloofness are not infrequently practised by those in authority. Of late Nehru has been very critical of the expensive

social functions and of the conspicuous waste indulged in by the well-to-do as well as by those holding high government positions. Indian Christians, rich and poor, should fraternize at worship, at Christian *melas* (religious fairs), and at other such functions. One of the sad features of Indian life is the amount of adulation which government officials, religious heads, and *sadhus* expect and receive from the people.

On account of a variety of long-standing social customs and religious beliefs, the position of women in India has been proverbially low. But even here remarkable changes are taking place. The Child Marriage Restraint Act penalizes marriage of girls under 14 and boys under 18. Enacted in 1928, it is not vigorously enforced. Breaches of this law are required to be brought by a third party to the attention of the court. The penalty is usually a fine, or a fine and imprisonment imposed not only on those responsible for the marriage but on those conducting the ceremony. The marriage is not nullified. However, even those who are not directly concerned with the marriage, are still in varying degrees shackled to custom and are reluctant to constitute themselves into complaining third parties. Here, Christian dimensional pioneering can take the form of educating people on the harmful effects of early marriage, such as lowered vitality and impaired health on those contracting it as well as on the progeny. Marriage of the immature is fast disappearing among educated Hindus.

The Christian church refuses to recognize non-monogamous marriages, except in rare cases in which a non-Christian villager with more than one wife wishes his family to enter the church as a single household. The church should give powerful support to the Hindu Code Bill, now before the Indian Parliament, a bill which enjoins monogamy on Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, and Sikhs. Divorce, which may be an unfortunate necessity, is included in the new bill, the grounds for which are adultery, cruelty,

and insanity. Informal separation, now permitted to Hindus, will hereafter be legalized by registration with the village authority. The bill aims at giving women equal inheritance rights. Opposition to the bill comes more from Hindu men than women.

The prohibition of widow remarriage is still a serious problem among Hindus. It would not be half as serious were it not for the marriage of the immature, which is still the general rule among the uneducated and backward. As long ago as 1856 a law was enacted permitting Hindu widows to remarry, but it has remained dormant because of the strong Hindu sentiment against it. In addition, legal impediments relating to property and inheritance stand in the way of widow remarriage; unless these are removed no improvement can be expected.

Young girls need to be protected against marriage to old men, a custom which prevails among certain castes. Likewise, change is needed in the custom of some subcastes, requiring mature women to be given in marriage to young boys, the uncles of the boys being virtually the husbands of these women.

Besides polygamy and polyandry—the latter much less common than the former—early marriage, and marriage of those disparate in age, the pernicious system of temple prostitution thrives among Hindus in sections of India. The state of Madras has introduced a bill for the abolition of the *Devadasi* (temple prostitution) system. In urging support for the bill, the preamble says:—

> "The public conscience has been effectively aroused against the continuance of this institution and there has also been a great awakening among the members of the community themselves, many of whom are making every possible effort to eradicate the practice."

The institution of the dowry alongside of huge marriage expenses is widely prevalent among both Christian and non-Christian Indians. It spells financial ruin to many

parents. Girls have committed suicide in order to save their parents. The dowry should be abolished by law and steps are being taken in that direction. If it is not abolished outright, the law should require it to be used by the bride and groom, and not by the father of the groom as is usually the case. Or, it may be considered trust property of the bride, to be used at her discretion when she comes of age. Or, part of it may be surrendered as tax or contribution to some charitable trust or organization.

One of the serious social and economic problems of India is the rate at which India is increasing her population, four millions a year. Considering the meager food resources of the land, this rapid increase may eventually mean national suicide by famine. Birth control is a thorny problem. In desperation, Nehru once proposed compulsory sterilization in certain extreme cases. Gandhi regarded birth control by the use of contraceptives as violence against human personality. Except for the begetting of children, he advised continence, and he taught that any other form of birth control would be undesirable and increase sex immorality.

Neither Hinduism nor Islam regards birth control as a sin. The Five Year Plan gives special attention to this problem. Government hospitals and health centers are asked to give "advice on methods of family planning for persons who require such advice." Government agencies are putting the rhythm method to the test. According to a publication of the National Christian Council, which quotes from replies to one of its questionnaires, great care and sympathy is to be exercised in teaching methods of birth control. Men must learn self-control. "A woman is not simply something to be used but a personality to be cherished."[6] The Hindu opposes

[6] *The Life and Work of Women in the Church in India and Pakistan*, edited by Mrs. L. W Bryce, 1953.

reform in marriage customs because he fears undue independence of women, frequent divorce, and break-up of the Hindu family. Some of these fears are ill-founded.

Improvements in the home and family open up another great field for Christian pioneering. In the non-Christian home there is often a rare devotion of the wife to the husband and considerable tenderness on the part of the husband to the wife. Some of the qualities of Indian women which have been cherished through the ages are humble service, self-effacing love, forbearance, womanly reserve and dignity. In contrast with the Christian home, the non-Christian home does not show the same respect for the personality of the woman as for that of the man. Hence arise unequal standards of personal privilege and of sex morality. Children respect fathers more than mothers. Boys who domineer over their sisters are often pampered by their mothers and grandmothers. The family does not sit down together to a meal or discuss family problems in a democratic way, nor play games together. There is little comradeship between parents and children. Worship is not a family affair, except when it takes the form of the punctilious performance of rites not always intelligible, and there is little or no systematic training in moral or social duties. In many families the girl-baby is not so welcome as the boy baby. While Western girls attend school, participate in sports, and enjoy free social intercourse and economic employment, Hindu girls are often mothers by 16 or earlier, and grandmothers by 30 or 35.

The ideal Christian family, which does not fully exist anywhere, presents a virtually opposite picture. Ideally, the Christian home is a miniature Kingdom of God. This means among other things that the wife or mother is respected as a personality in her own right. She enjoys the love, trust and confidence of her husband and children, all of whom work together as respected individuals and as a group for the happiness and welfare of the whole.

Children regard the mother and father with equal respect; indeed, children regard their mothers with marked respect, inasmuch as it is the mother who generally handles the income, operates the home, does the buying, cooks for the family, clothes them, helps the children with their school homework, and gives them moral training.

The Christian home must and frequently does, give far more attention to family worship and the training of children than do non-Christian homes. Parents, whether Christian or non-Christian, should instil in their children a reverence for God, appreciation of the great value of life, and care of the body, as a temple of God. Some of the virtues that need to be stressed in India today are: (1) broadmindedness and catholicity of outlook; (2) consideration for others; (3) unfaltering loyalty to truth; (4) passion for individual and social improvement; (5) active co-operation and loving service,; (6) courage and moral stamina; and (7) honesty. For the inculcation of these virtues, no substitute has been discovered for family prayers and worship, the use of devotional literature and personal example.

The Christian home should teach young people the laws of health and personal hygiene, first-aid, the setting up of a model home, budgeting, home science and cottage industries. Since most Christians in India are poor, it is wise to train children to cut the coat according to the cloth. Their training should be in terms of resources which they will be likely to command, and not in terms of costly or imported furnishings. A Christian home should be neat and tidy.

In the treatment of domestic servants, the middle class Christian home which can afford servants should set an example to the rest of the country. Servants in India are proverbially ill-treated. Long-hours of work, meager wages, and slum quarters, are their lot. Fraternizing or sitting down to a meal with them is rare. The Christian home must have a real concern for the comfort,

convenience, health and welfare of those who minister to its needs. The Christian home can demonstrate the dignity of labour by giving their servants a day off once a week, during which time the family cares for itself, and by training the members of the family to perform some of the duties of the home at all times. Gandhi did manual work himself, sometimes in the lowest of occupations: and he demanded the same of his followers.

The Christian home can be an object lesson to the rest of the country by voluntarily limiting the size of the family in solving the present problem of over-population. The Christian male generally marries between 20 and 30 years of age, is monogamous, and welcomes girl and boy babies equally, at least as of equal value in the sight of God. He is well fitted to limit the size of the family, thereby giving the children he has the best possible chance for education and self-development. There is no justification for the great percentage of Indian women becoming mothers by the age of 16, and having, as is common, 10 and 12 pregnancies. The Christian home can also make clear by inter-marriage the undesirability of close inbreeding, a very common custom in India.

Public health is one of the great social concerns in India. Among the major countries of the world, including Egypt, which is India's nearest neighbor in this respect, India has the poorest expectancy of life. In 1941 the longevity was 26·91 for males and 26·56 for females. In 1951 there was a marked improvement, when the expectancy for males reached 32·45 years, and that for females 31·66 years. Much of the mortality in India is due to preventable diseases such as cholera, malaria, typhoid, pneumonia, small-pox, tuberculosis, and various digestive troubles. Considerable anti-malarial work has been conducted, but the results have not been proportionate to the efforts. Nearly two and a half million people suffer from tuberculosis. With the aid of the WHO a program of B.C.G. vaccination was launched in 1948 with good results.

B.C.G. vaccine is now being prepared in India itself. There is need to vaccinate a hundred million people to render them immune to this terrible disease. Rural health is still deplorable. To induce medical practitioners to go to rural areas, government is now offering them subsidies. Mobile dispensaries are becoming popular. Village co-operatives are being encouraged to provide medical relief to their members. The Christian Medical College at Vellore was recently given by government a non-recurring grant of Rs. 100,000 for upgrading its thoracic surgery department. With the collaboration of the UNICEF and WHO, the government is building a factory at Poona to manufacture penicillin, and another at Delhi to produce DDT.

Christian agencies can set up pilot projects in public health and sanitation. In the absence of modern toilets bore-hole latrines should be installed. Until local government installs a sewage system, which will take a long time, the Christian family can lead the way by devising its own hygienic disposal of sewage. It can keep its own yard clean and begin to show concern for the cleanliness of the surrounding community, taking the lead in cleaning up debris in the streets, filling community mud holes, and training villagers to realize that filth and trash lying about attract disease-carrying flies, mosquitoes and rodents. Since the water supply in the villages is not yet protected, cleanliness can be demonstrated to be very important. Clean-up campaigns, with the help of school boys and girls after school hours and during vacations, can be organized even by one Christian family in a community.

Child care, pre- and post-natal care of the mother and baby, medical and nursing service, care of eyes, ears, nose, and teeth, nutrition—all these open up avenues for Christian dimensional pioneering. Missions can supplement government efforts to set up hospitals. Christian Medical Colleges, like the Vellore Medical College, are steps in the right direction. Dispensaries on wheels

conducted by the hospital attached to Vellore and by other Christian hospitals are a boon to the villagers. While the state governments have established maternity and child-welfare centres, these centres are woefully understaffed. Christian agencies can help to relieve this situation by training scores of midwives, health visitors, nurses and rural doctors. In addition they can train every rural teacher and preacher to administer first-aid, dispense simple remedies, vaccinate, and inoculate. Service of this kind is one of the lines along which some of the state governments are planning their social education program for youth.

The new science of psychiatry opens up a vast field for Christian pioneering. Christian hospitals can take the initiative in treating the whole person and not simply his disease. It is not only the body but also the mind and spirit which need to be attended. The disease of the broken-hearted could often be diagnosed only by the religious worker and psychiatrist. The Nur Manzil Clinic in Lucknow which has grown out of the work of Dr. E. Stanley Jones gives intensive treatment to patients suffering from mental and nervous conditions. Christian doctors can help patients to adopt a right attitude to illness. Cautious experiments may be tried in faith healing and spiritual healing. The work of the doctor and nurse may be followed up by that of the pastor and evangelist.

Despite the increasing measure of education, myriad food taboos persist. Endeavor to change the food habits of people is one of the most difficult of human tasks. More people can be roused to violent action by interfering with their food habits than by wounding their self-respect ! Unhealthy diets and poor food habits partially explain the unsatisfactory health of India. Poverty, which makes a rice diet imperative, precludes for a great majority any degree of experimentation with a more diversified diet. People in India need to eat more leafy vegetables, raw vegetables, fresh fruits, *pulses* (lentils), and sprouted grains.

Handpounded rice may replace highly polished mill rice. Substitutes for rice may be wheat, *ragi* and millet. *Jaggery* (unrefined sugar made from palm juice) may be used in place of refined cane sugar; buttermilk and drinks made from seeds may be used in place of tea and coffee, which are gaining in popularity. Steam-cooking should replace frying.

Recreation and leisure open up another vast field for Christian pioneering. Christians can and should give their whole-hearted support to the enforcement of prohibition which is in force in several parts of India. Prohibition has been accompanied by heavy inroads on the public exchequer and by an increase in corruption and crime. It has also meant the loss of employment to many thousands. On the credit side, it is found that where prohibition is in operation more money is spent on food, clothes, and education. Women and children are happier, cleaner and healthier. Indebtedness and village feuds are diminishing. The Christian church should study past experiments in legal prohibition and try to discover wherein they failed.

The film industry is one of the biggest industries in the country and is reputed to be the second largest film industry in the world. It employs about 100,000 people. Early pictures dealt with mythological themes and had abundance of classical dramas. Then came a period when social themes were popular. Today it is the musical comedy with no plot or characterization, which seems to draw crowds to the box-office. The film industry needs considerable improvement from the point of view of sustained story as well as of good taste and edification. Christian agencies can extend their pioneering into the field of games and sports. While many Western games such as hockey, football, cricket, tennis and badminton, are deservedly popular, more needs to be done for the popularization of such indigenous games as *kabaddi*, which is a game of endurance. Special attention must also be paid to Indian art—dance, drama, music and theater.

The voluntary services of Indian Christian women can fill a whole volume. *The Life and Work of Women in the Church in India and Pakistan*, referred to above, lists the following services rendered by them: Sunday school work; visiting in homes and in hospitals; work among youth groups; work in women's organizations such as the Mothers' Union; leading meetings for women in the villages; arranging retreats; caring for the sick and visiting them, serving in times of illness, social work and uplift work in the villages; Bible women's work, helping the Bible women, selling Scriptures, witnessing; holding Bible classes in schools, adult literacy and reading classes; care of the church, cleaning it, etc; collecting money for various church projects; mending for the hospital, sewing; taking care of the children of the congregation during service; conducting services in hospital wards; teaching in the daily Bible schools; holding office in women's organizations; leadership in women's missionary societies; evangelistic and advisory work; home nursing and home management; and temperance.

Christian women who took the initiative in public life and social service are not so much in the forefront as before. Non-Christian women taking the lead from them are now outstripping them. Accounting for this fact, the National Christian Council, in the publication mentioned above, quotes a Christian worker: "Hindu women leaders are mostly from the upper strata of society and have burst into freedom, brushing aside all restrictions of accumulated custom at once—religious and social. They have a natural confidence of position but are apt to be secularistic and humanitarian"[7] rather than religious. It may be that at this point the Christian homes of India can do some amount of valuable pioneering in relation to their non-Christian sisters.

[7] *The Life and Work of Women in the Church in India and Pakistan*, edited by Mrs. L. W. Bryce, 1953, p. 90.

EDUCATIONAL PIONEERING

For over a century, ever since their inception, Christian missions have been pioneers in India in every type of education. They have pioneered in primary education, rural education, vocational and trade education, girls' education, and college education. Even today, in spite of the great progress made by other bodies, Christian women's colleges are among the best in the whole country. Some of the Christian colleges for men, with the weight and solid service of many years behind them, are among the greatest nation-building institutions of India. Not a few of the greatest leaders of the country are products of these institutions. In the training of teachers of all grades, Christian missions have pioneered from the beginning.

Also, in certain fields of education which were neglected by governmental and non-Christian agencies, Christian missions have been pioneers. Such are schools for the training of midwives and nurses and special schools for the training of the handicapped, like the blind, the deaf-mutes and children of lepers. Humble but earnest Bible women have gone from door to door seeking young girls and women living behind the *purdah* (in seclusion) and helping them to read and write. Educational institutions have been established for the care of dependent widows and fallen women. Orphanages have been set up for the care and training of children with no homes and for unwanted children, often born out of wedlock. Even the worst critics of missions cannot fail to appreciate this self-sacrificial and conspicuous service rendered by missions in the education and training of the handicapped and unfortunate.

In the field of education in general, Christian missions are no longer pioneers. Local bodies and provincial governments for some years now have been interesting themselves in primary education. In the field of higher education, some of the government-run colleges, both of

the liberal arts and of professional types, are the best in the country. Private agencies too, several of them supported by non-Christian religious bodies, have been forging ahead. Therefore, it is not true to say that if Christian missions should withdraw from India tomorrow, the educational system of the country would fall to pieces.

There is a thirst for education in the country at every level; and those who were apathetic towards it at one time are now most enthusiastic. The percentage of literacy has jumped from about 13% to a little over 20% since the attainment of freedom. Some parts of India like Travancore-Cochin have a much higher percentage of literacy. People are more willing to pay for the privilege of education. Many realize that education is not only an important means to employment, but is indispensable for the attainment of general enlightenment and culture.

The policy of the present national government of India is (1) provision of free, compulsory basic education for all children of school-going age; (2) social education, including the training of illiterate adults in literacy, hygiene, farming, village crafts, and corporate living and citizenship; (3) improvement and expansion of technical education; and (4) reorganization and improvement of university education.

Inasmuch as the government at different levels is fast moving into various spheres of education, Christian institutions no longer have an open field before them. But they can still supplement and co-operate; and what is more, they can initiate types and methods of education which are still novel or which many are afraid to try, although they may be convinced of their soundness.

Basic education, associated with the name of Mahatma Gandhi and formerly known as the Wardha Scheme of Education, has come to stay. It advocates the sound educational principle of learning through doing. As a recent writer says: " It is the most important single devel-

opment in the history of modern Indian education."[8] Unlike the arid and soulless education of recent times in India, it is craft-centered, pupil-centered, and village-centered. All education, especially in the earlier stages, known as junior basic, when the child is between six and eleven, is to center in some basic craft, chosen with regard to the capacity of the children and the needs of the locality, *e.g.*, spinning and weaving, cardboard and woodwork, metal, paper, and leatherwork, plastics, kitchen gardening and agriculture. Geography, history, elementary science, arithmetic, spelling, writing and the like are to be taught through the medium of the craft chosen."[9]

Villagers, according to basic education, play an important role in the setting up and conducting of the school. This means that education which has been a provincial responsibility hitherto would need to be still further decentralized. Such decentralization is not practicable until definite sources of income are assigned to villages, in the form of land revenue, and until an efficient system of village government with effective safeguards is devised and put into operation. For the present, taking into account the precarious economic conditions of the villages, the Government of India has decided to share the proportion of expenditure on basic education between Central and State governments on a 30 : 70 ratio.

The system of basic education has now been introduced in several parts of India and centers are being set up for the training of basic school teachers. Plans have been made for the elimination of child illiteracy within sixteen years. Madras, Bombay, Uttar Pradesh, and Bihar have enacted legislation making basic education free and compulsory between the ages of 6 and 11. The actual

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[8] *The New Era in Home and School*, Vol. 30, No. 7, July-August 1949, p. 135.

[9] *See* Article by K. S. Saiyuddin, *The Year Book of Education*, 1949. *See* also "The Educational Problems of India," by Tara Chand, *Asiatic Review*, April 1950.

implementation, however, will depend on the teachers and money available. Before long other states are expected to follow suit, and the age of compulsory education will be gradually raised to 14.

The Junior Basic school lays the foundation, and eventually all children, except those attending private schools, are expected to go to it. The medium of instruction in it is the regional language, of which there are about fifteen in the country. In areas where the regional language and national language (Hindi) coincide, the medium is Hindi. No English is taught at this stage. Education in this early period is practical and not bookish. It is meant to be a source of joy, and not mere drudgery. It is in accordance with Gandhi's goal which he said was "fellowship with the world". Instruction in the craft is not to be given mechanically, but with its why and wherefore, and its social and scientific implications must be brought out clearly. All subjects taught are to be integrally related to the selected craft and to the child's physical and social environment. The child is to be taught to use his hands and eyes, to develop manual skill, and to cultivate proper mental attitudes, in addition to learning to read, write, and calculate. This type of education is expected to be an insurance against future unemployment. Village boys will be taught gardening, sowing, manuring, the rotating of crops, decoration of the house, and improved feeding of cattle; also carpentry and the manufacture of spinning wheels, spindles, and shuttles. Village girls will be taught sewing, weaving, and the carding of cotton.

Divergence in studies takes place at the end of the Junior Basic school at the age of eleven. Those who intend to finish their studies at fourteen go to the Senior Basic, or lower secondary school, where the training continues to be practical, but grows more specialized. Opportunity is provided for the study of agriculture, industries or commerce. Three years of instruction is given in the national language of the country along with instruction in other subjects given

in the provincial language. The training given during these years is unified enough for a person to take up a vocation at fourteen. If he wishes to go on with technical studies, he can attend a technical high school and later a technical college or university specializing in his fields of interest. The same principle will apply to the study of agriculture, industries and commerce.

The system of basic education outlined here offers a vast field for Christian enterprise. Christians from the beginning have been intensely interested in children and have had a high regard for their potentialities. Their religion bids them emulate children in their simplicity, directness, childlike trust and fearlessness. This means that, other things being equal, a truly Christian man or woman can be a better friend and teacher of children than almost anyone else. It is no wonder then that Christian agencies have from the first occupied themselves with nursery, kindergarten and primary education. Pioneering in nursery and kindergarten training still lies with them.

The Christian teacher can make a wise choice of the craft or crafts through which education is to be imparted. At the same time, because of his willingness to bring himself to the level of the child, he is in an excellent position to correct and limit the shortcomings of a rigorous kind of basic education by the use of the play method. In the church school and at home the Christian teacher and parent are accustomed to listen to the child and respect the expression of his feelings and emotions. The Christian teacher has the further advantage that he has a genuine regard for all kinds of manual labor. He would not hesitate, if need arose, to use laundry work, shoemaking, pottery and the like, as crafts through which basic education in a given area is to be imparted. An additional advantage enjoyed by the Christian is that in a deep sense he is a world citizen; and, as such, he can see the possible narrowing effects of a too-mechanically conceived Indian basic education and seek to remedy them.

With these advantages, it seems clear that the Christian church can make a wholesome contribution to the successful operation of basic education. One of the immediate needs of the hour is for an army of basic school teachers. If the church and individual Christians would realize the great opportunity presented to them, they would lose no time in seizing it.

Linked with basic education in the planning of the Government of India is adult education, known as social education. Experience shows that educating children alone is not enough. There are at present one hundred million illiterates in India between the ages of 15 and 45. Realizing the importance of literacy to democracy, leaders have made several attempts in the recent past to promote adult literacy. Volunteers were recruited from colleges and universities for this work, but the experiment was not satisfactory. Enthusiasm has been sporadic. Volunteer service has risen and fallen with the ebb and flow of national patriotism. Adults have not been vitally interested in learning the three R's nor in the way the three R's have been taught to young children.

Because of adult resistance, emphasis shifted from "adult literacy" to "adult education", including education in health and hygiene, in communal harmony, in recreational activities, in simple craft-work and in civics. It was found that adults are far more interested in matters pertaining to their own surroundings and occupations and in having a general knowledge of world events than in the laborious learning of the three R's. Adult education needs to be functional, for gaining immediate and concrete results.

Shifting again, "adult education" is being enlarged to "social education". With the school building becoming the center of community activities after school hours and until late in the evenings, the wide program, directed to young and old, high caste and low, rich and poor, provides promotion of literacy, improved ways of living, rights and duties of citizenship, health and sanitation, social reform,

agriculture and gardening, fruit cultivation, local crafts, drama, music and folk dance. Thus economic development and general education will be combined with cultural and recreational activities. When such a program comes into being, the revitalization of village life is bound to take place.

No Christian agency can ask for a greater scope for its pioneering activities. The program sketched here calls for thousands of devoted teachers and village guides, with missionary zeal and passion. Besides a shortage of teachers, there is a scarcity of audio-visual aid. The government is not able to afford enough radio receiving sets, film projectors and servicing. Electricity is frequently unavailable in the villages, and transportation is a problem. Considering these difficulties, government has prepared alternative outlines of social education, some with and some wihtout audio-visual aids. What Christian groups can do is to supplement the efforts of government in securing the necessary number of basic school teachers and adequate audio-visual aids, as well as in providing transportation and local methods of generating electricity for carrying on the program of social education.

Technical and vocational education is another vast field in which Christian agencies will be called upon to labor even more than in the past. The aim is not to produce highly paid engineers or master journeymen, but to train men at every level of work from the bottom up. Cochin in South India trains young men as fitters, carpenters, welders, engine drivers and linesmen. Hyderabad trains tailors, wood-carvers, dress-makers and crochet workers. Kashmir gives instruction in carpentry, drawing and painting, weaving and dyeing, embroidery work and calico printing. Mysore specializes in training in ceramics; Travancore in weaving, carpentry, mat-making, drawing and painting. Mining education is given in Bengal as well as training in radio mechanics. Madras undertakes training in land reclamation and agricultural improvement. Training in cottage and small-scale industries is undertaken by schools in Bombay.

Long before the British Government or Indian national leaders thought in such terms, Christian schools took the lead in rural reconstruction and vocational education. This was specially true of American missions and mission schools. For a long time, a great many Christian boarding schools have operated farms as integral parts of the school, on which boys are taught to sow, plant and reap, as well as study the rudiments of scientific agriculture. The Moga School (Christian) in the East Punjab has become a model for the whole of India. It is a rural community middle school, related to the people and their environment. In addition, it trains teachers for village schools. Agriculture is the chief interest. The subsidiary industries taught are basket-weaving, rope-making, tailoring and blacksmithing. Self-help is a prominent feature of the school life.

Parallel to agricultural schools, Christian missions have developed a chain of about 150 trade and industrial schools in towns and cities. These schools are mostly for boys. Training is given in carpentry, masonry, repair of machinery, paper-making, handloom weaving, printing, shoe-making and the like. Graduates of these schools have generally been successful in their occupations, although they have had to face competition from older workers. There is a vast and crying need for the training of mechanics, plumbers, printers, road builders, electricians and teachers of handicrafts and cottage industries.

In the sphere of university education Christian agencies cannot do much directly but they can make their own colleges model institutions of higher learning. University education in India today is antiquated. It is divorced from Indian life and culture. " It promotes neither independence of thought nor of character."[10] Today there are 28 universities in India, educating over 300,000 students. Affiliated to the universities there are 470 colleges for general education, and 280 colleges for professional and special education.

[10] Tara Chand in *Asiatic Review*, April 1950, *op. cit.*

Of late the Government of India has established a chain of National Laboratories in various fields of science and technology. There are 4,717,000 secondary school students from whom the universities draw their numbers.

Some time ago certain Christian leaders were thinking in terms of a Christian University for India. Such a university may solve some problems, but it will raise a number of new ones such as the isolation of Indian Christian youth from the life and culture of the rest of their countrymen at a formative period in their lives. Therefore, there is no present enthusiasm for a Christian university, although the idea may be revived later, if university education in India becomes narrowly nationalistic and a plaything of politicians. If, under such circumstances, a Christian university is allowed to function, it should be prepared to operate without any government grant and without any degrees recognized by the government.

For the present Christian colleges can do no better than implement some of the recommendations contained in the University Commission Report of 1949.[11] Under changing educational conditions in India, Christian institutions can do much service for the country by building more hostels or halls of residence and strengthening the existing ones. With proper supervision and consecrated leadership these hostels can become a leaven of expanding influence. In such halls or dormitories there should be ample opportunity for the cultivation of a community sense, for the inculcation of the ideals and techniques of social service, and for the development of sound, all-round character. There should further be provision for tutorial classes, for effective daily worship, for a good library and reading room facilities, and for outdoor and indoor games and sports. Promotion of corporate life should be a top priority of these halls. They should do all that they can in removing narrow caste, communal, linguistic and provincial exclusiveness, as well as in promoting the

[11] *The Report of the University Education Commission*, December 1948, August 1949, Vol. I (Simla : Government of India Press, 1949).

free mingling of faculty and students in various activities. The general rule should be central dining rooms for all students, which at the same time respect the food habits of individuals.

Christian colleges can pay special attention to extra-curricular activities. There are many colleges today whose only interest is to enable students to pass their examinations. Physical education is still sadly neglected. Interest in student activities is not sustained throughout the year. Some colleges even indulge in the pernicious shift system, which enables one group of students, mostly employed, to attend classes from 7 to 9–30 A.M.; and the others to come for the rest of the day.

In view of the fact that Christian colleges still draw upon Western countries for a small percentage of their personnel, it is profitable for them to teach subjects in which the foreign personnel are better prepared than Indian graduates, such as journalism, business administration, co-operation and study of the English language. There may even be courses of study in such mundane matters as hotel and restaurant management and advertizing. Schools of public relations are still unknown in India. There is more room for art and cultural education.

Clinical psychology and counselling service provide a virgin field where Christian agencies can operate. Students require wise counselling in such matters as friendship, marriage, sex, employment and choice of career. Laboratories with up-to-date methods need to be established, and intelligence and aptitude tests need to be written, adapted to Indian conditions and couched in language understandable by Indian young people. Christian colleges can take the initiative in arranging for refresher courses and summer schools for the benefit of primary and high school teachers and the general public. In the realm of adult education they may experiment with "people's colleges", similar to those found in the Scandinavian countries. Experiments may also be tried in the establishment of junior colleges or

general colleges, which will have a well-rounded system of their own and not be merely the first stage of university education.

So long as English continues to be an important subject of study in colleges and universities, foreign missionary personnel can make a distinct contribution to the teaching of it. On the importance of a study of English, India is of a divided mind. The University Commission states: "English is the only means of preventing our isolation from the world". To prevent such isolation, the Commission recommends: "No student should be allowed to take a degree who does not acquire the ability to read with facility and understanding works of English authors." In spite of this recommendation, some Indian universities are fast replacing English by Hindi, even before suitable text-books have been written and scientific nomenclature has been adopted. Whatever line Christian colleges may follow with regard to English, care should be taken to avoid a split consciousness, known as the "Babu mind" which was a concomitant of Western English education. It was the outlook of a person who was neither Eastern nor Western. Nehru, despite his robust nationalism, confesses to being such a person.

Christian schools and colleges can take the initiative in introducing a work-study program, under which students could alternate theoretical study with practical employment. Such a plan functions at Antioch College, Yellow Springs, Ohio, where both men and women students spend half their time at college and half in practical economic occupations, in alternate five-week shifts. These students work in a wide variety of callings in the main stream of American society, the positions being chosen because of their educational value to the particular student.

It is ironical that in India, where college graduates are so few and where such vast need exists for trained citizens, unemployment among the educated is rife. About 20% of college graduates are unemployed. Of those employed, 50%

work at inadequate or unsuitable employment. One reason for this is that a majority of students crowd into arts courses. Too many others train for government employment because of its greater security, more adequate salary, and higher social prestige. Christian institutions can do some amount of pioneering through proper conselling, in diverting students to various forms of employment. They may further do some valuable research in a study of present and future work opportunities in the country, and may themselves provide work opportunities for students when they are with them.

The education of girls and women still affords a vast field for Christian pioneering. Of the 17 million pupils in Indian schools only about one-fourth are girls. The last two decades, however, have witnessed greater female attendance in schools and colleges. In several cities and in some states primary education is compulsory for both boys and girls and co-education is not uncommon here or in the colleges, and it is not unknown in the middle and high schools. Co-education is a new phenomenon in Indian society. It will grow only very gradually and then, with grave misgivings on the part of those who hold to past traditions. Co-education calls for wise handling.

An overwhelming majority of girls will marry and rear families. Hence, the educational emphasis for them will fall on such subjects as home economics, child care, maternity welfare, nursing, dietetics and the like. For training in these subjects Christian institutions are generally well fitted. With India's growing need for teachers, more women will go into teaching. Already out of the 400,000 teachers in India today, 60,000 are women. Christian institutions can do more in the training of women teachers. There is an increasing need for women doctors, nurses, health visitors, midwives, welfare workers and physical directors. Increasing numbers can be used as secretaries in offices. Village welfare work can utilize thousands of earnest women workers.

There is a special place for schools for girls of the type of *Vidyodaya* in Madras, which aims at giving girls the best that the East and West have to offer, combining the practical and utilitarian with the cultural and æsthetic. In addition to the usual subjects, this school emphasizes physical education, art, music, classical Indian dancing, crafts and domestic science. It aims at training good home makers and worthy citizens, who are physically fit, mentally alert, morally well-balanced, socially sensitive and keenly alive to the opportunities for service and sacrifice.

Moral and religious education, even in a secular state, which India aspires to be, offers great scope for Christian pioneering. According to the Constitution of India, no one can be required to participate in religious instruction or ritualistic worship against his wish or the wish of his parents. Yet no one in India desires that secular education should be a godless education. The University Commission aptly says: "To be secular is not to be religiously illiterate. It is to be deeply spiritual and not narrowly religious." India is the meeting place of the religions of the world and as such she must respect all religions. Gandhi, who believed and practised religious tolerance, wrote:

> "Tolerance does not mean indifference toward one's own faith, but a more intelligent and purer love for it. Tolerance gives us spiritual insight, which is as far from fanaticism as the north pole is from the south. True knowledge of religion breaks down the barrier between faith and faith. Cultivation of tolerance for other faiths will impart to us a truer understanding of our own."[12]

The purpose of religious education in school or college is not to effect religious conversion in the narrow sense of the term. It is to influence character by affecting habits, dispositions and attitudes. Higher education in India has

[12] Clifford Manshardt, *The Mahatma and the Missionary*, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

at times produced in its students a sense of fair play and justice, regard for truth, broadmindedness and a proper weighing and balancing of values. In too many cases, however, education has produced selfish, anti-social persons, bent upon securing as much for themselves as possible at the expense of others. Education must stress the importance of moral values; and this emphasis can be made only by teachers with a religious disposition and high moral character.

Christian institutions already have made a good adjustment to changing conditions necessitated by the demands of a secular state. No one is obligated to attend a course on religion or on the Christian Scriptures. Several colleges, however, encourage students to select one or more courses out of a large variety, such as the Evolution of Religious Beliefs and Practices, a Comparative Study of Ethics, Social Ideals, the Family, etc. Courses based specifically on the Christian Scriptures are designed for Christian students. Christian institutions are coming to realize that instead of teaching religion to *all*, religion should be taught to *individuals*.

By way of pioneering, Christian institutions can set themselves to the task of composing simple prayers and worship services, free from sectarianism and indoctrination, which can be used in the school as a whole. They can teach young people the effective use of silence in worship. They can select passages from various Scriptures and devotional literature and biographies of the saints of all religions.

It is not conceivable that any one in India, whether he is a Hindu, Moslem, Jain, Sikh, Parsi or Christian, will object to the use of the following prayers:

> " Lord Thou art Splendor, endow me with splendor;
> Thou art Force, give me force;
> Thou art Strength, make me strong;
> Thou art Energy, make me energetic;
> Thou art Indignation (against evil), infuse such indignation in me;
> Thou art Forbearance, make me forbearing."
>
> —*The Yajur Veda.*

" I am a mess of sin;
Thou art all purity,
Yet Thou dost take me as I am
And bear my load for me."

—*Tukaram.*

" Praise be to God, Lord of the worlds !
The compassionate, the merciful !
King on the day of reckoning !
Thee only do we worship, to Thee do we cry for help,
Guide Thou us on the straight path,
The path of those to whom Thou hast been gracious;
With whom Thou art not angry, and who go not astray."

—*The Koran.*

" God be merciful to me a sinner."

—*The Bible.*

No religious group can possibly object to any of the following moral injunctions:

" Renounce the world. Take it back as a gift from God. Never covet it."

—*The Upanishads.*

" Let a man overcome anger by love, let him overcome evil by good;
Let him overcome the greedy by liberality; the liar by truth."

—*Dhammapada.*

" Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you."

—*Jesus Christ.*

" Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

—*St. Paul.*

If progressive Christian schools can maintain their worship and religious instruction, free from any trace of sectarianism and proselytism, it is conceivable that the government would move to adopt them in all public schools. Some of the restrictions now placed on religious teaching in schools were born of fear and suspicion. When such fear and suspicion are allayed, it is more than likely that restrictions will be removed. A genuine way by which Christians and Christian schools can help to dispel the suspicions of non-Christians is to make a thorough and sympathetic study of their religious and devotional literature and make it available to them. The kind of religious neutrality which India requires is not an armed neutrality but an open, intelligent and tolerant one, which calls for an appreciation and appropriation of all that is good, true, beautiful and noble in all religions.

As the recognized channels of education become increasingly closed to Christian groups, they should explore and discover new forms of education where they can be most useful. One of these is the education of the handicapped and unfortunate. As indicated earlier, some work is being done for the blind, the deaf-mute, the disabled, the feeble-minded and the insane. More should be undertaken in the near future. As things stand at present, the government has its hands full with many plans for the reconstruction of India. Therefore, unless private agencies such as the Christian groups come to its aid, much urgent work is bound to remain undone.

The harvest for the Christian evangel in Indian schools and colleges is plenteous, but the laborers with wisdom, insight and devotion are few. If the Indian Church were keenly alive to the new situation in India, it would discover in education the broadest avenue to reach the minds and hearts of the Indian people.

GLOSSARY

1. *ahimsa* .. non-injury or harmlessness.
2. *avidya* .. ignorance.
3. *asanga* .. detached interest or non-attachment.
4. *ashram* .. place for unhurried thought and reflection, for study in fellowship with others.
5. *Rakshabandhan* .. brother-sister ceremony.
6. *avatar* or *avatara* Incarnation: God's descent.
7. *Bhagavata* .. blessed; adorable: divine.
8. *Bhagavad-Gita* .. The Lord's song, often compared to the Sermon on the Mount.
9. *bhajan* .. musical recital of a religious nature.
10. *bhakti* .. devotion.
11. *biradari* .. brotherhood.
12. *brahmacharya* .. celibacy.
13. *Christu-kula* .. an ashram in South India.
14. *darbar* .. court.
15. *dasa* .. slave.
16. *Deepavali* .. Festival of lights, a Hindu festival.
17. *devadasi* .. dancing girl attached to a temple, a courtesan.
18. *dhammapada* .. path of duty; Buddhist Scripture.
19. *dharma* .. duty; law; custom.
20. *darashana* or *darshan* adoration; perception; a view of one with a great spirit or soul, which is supposed to confer great spiritual gifts on the viewer.
21. *gnana* knowledge; wisdom; consciousness.
22. *gotra* exogamous social group usually named after some eponymous saint—members of the same Gotra do not intermarry.
23. *grahasta* householder.
24. *gur* unrefined sugar made of palm juice.
25. *Harijana* or *Harijans* people of God, name used for former outcastes.
26. *Ishwara* Creator.
27. *jihad* holy war as used by Moslems.

	karma	action, works, including rituals and ceremonies.
29.	*kismet*	fate.
30.	*khaddar*	handspun cloth.
31.	*lathi*	iron-clasped bamboo stick, frequently used by Indian Police.
32.	*lingam*	phallic symbol representing the worship of Siva.
33.	*Mahabharata*	An account of the battle of Indraprastha between the Pandus and Kurus in the form of a famous epic.
34.	*mahasabha*	great assembly; political organization of orthodox Hindus.
35.	*mantra*	sacred text; Vedic hymns; incantation.
36.	*marga*	way.
37.	*Mariamma*	Goddess who presides over small-pox in South India.
38.	*maya*	illusion; phenomena; relative unreality.
39.	*mela*	fair; periodical gathering for the sale of goods and entertainment, often in connection with religious festivals.
40.	*moksha* ..	salvation: final emancipation from transmigration.
41.	*nirvana* ..	the absolute, unagitated calm, absolute liberation.
42.	*panchatantra* ..	ancient Hindu stories.
43.	*panchayat* ..	council of five persons; village council.
44.	*puranas* ..	commentaries on the Vedas, sacred books of the later period of the Hindus.
45.	*purdah* ..	the veil.
46.	*raja marga* ..	salvation through a life of intense self-discipline.
47.	*Ramarajya* ..	Kingdom of Rama; ideal kingdom.
48.	*Ramayana* ..	epic of Rama: book depicting the struggle between Rama and Ravana.
49.	*Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh*	National self-help society, representing orthodox Hindus in national politics.
50.	rupee ..	standard silver currency of India, now worth 21 cents.
51.		an ascetic in the Hindu religious order.

52. *sannyasi* — one who has renounced the world; one who is at peace.
53. *Santiniketan* — abode of peace (a school started by Tagore).
54. *sashtanga* — prostration before God or before the altar.
55. *samadhi* — absolute calm; a supra-conscious state where a person is lost to the world but finds himself in God.
56. *shakti* — power.
57. *shishya* — disciple.
58. *shraddha* — funeral rite and feast.
59. *tapas* — concentration; penance (mortification), austerities.
60. *upanayana* — initiation— second birth ceremony.
61. *Upanishads* — Hindu philosophical treatises, part of the Vedas.
62. *vanaprasth* — Third stage in man's life according to Hindu social philosophy.
63. *varnashrama* — caste system (literally division of society based on occupation and status of life).
64. *yoga* — union; effort; systematic abstraction.
65. *yogi* — one who has attained knowledge by concentration.
66. *zenana* — seclusion of women.

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