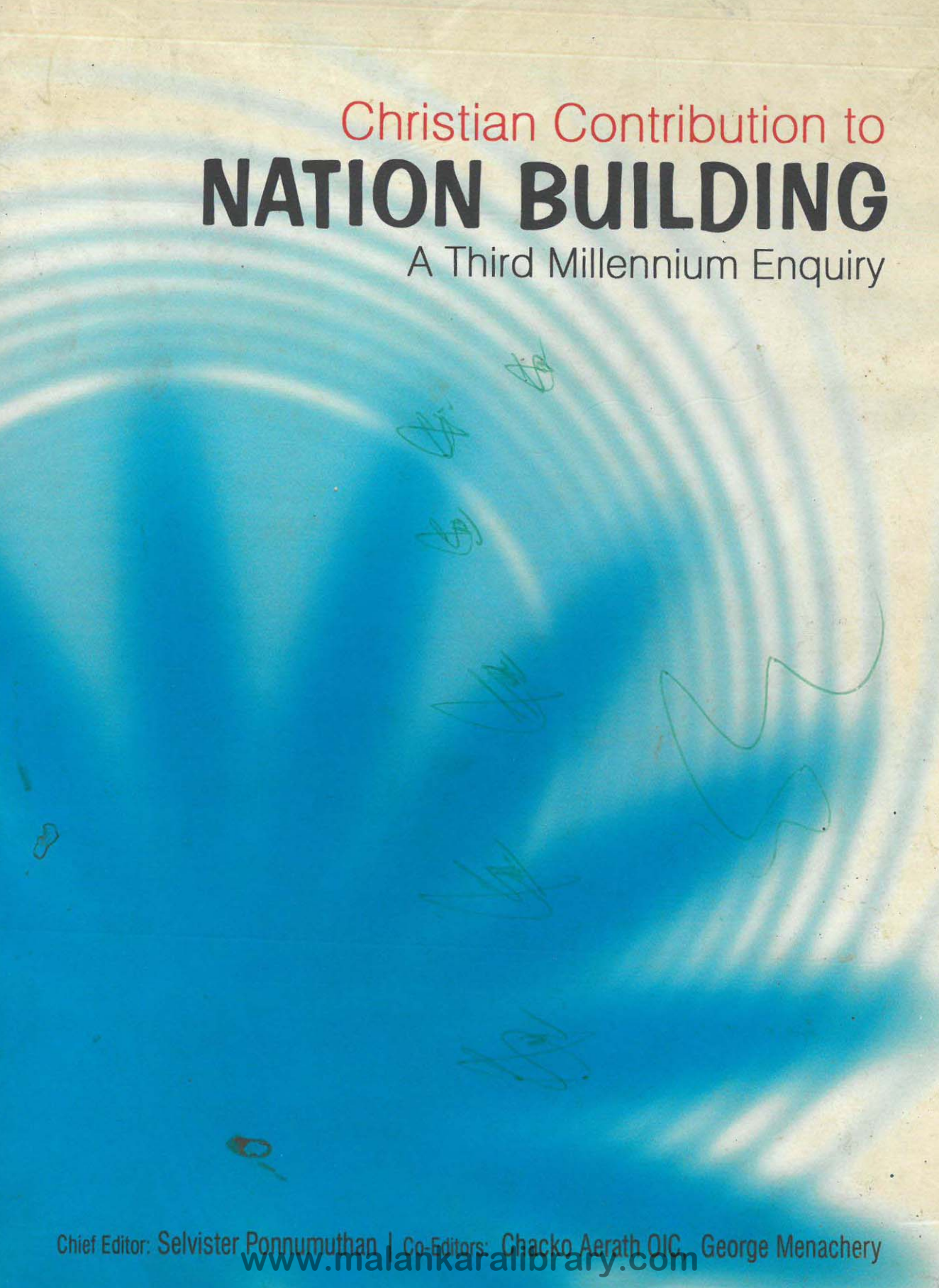
Christian Contribution to

NATION BUILDING

A Third Millennium Enquiry



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FOREWORD

John Thattumkal
Bishop of Cochin, Chairman, Documentary Committee

Christianity, as a way of life, has had its origin in Asia. India became its fertile soil from its very inception. This historical fact manifests its instant growth from Palestine, its place of origin. About two millennia have passed since its implantation here in India. It has now become a huge tree with innumerable branches, a very dense foliage and manifold fruits. There she stands now, giving cool shelter to the whole country. No wonder, she is a big blessing to the entire nation!

The 1950th anniversary of the arrival of St. Thomas on Indian soil was a grand occasion. So was the 450th death anniversary of the great missionary, St. Francis Xavier. His mortal remains interned four and a half centuries ago still remain in Goa, gracing the entire nation! The festive occasion prompted the Christian community to bring in retrospect the eminent figures. No one can help but admire their contributions to the nation. Christianity in India will be eternally indebted to these two giants of faith. The Apostle and the Missionary heroically endured many a trouble, trial, hardship and hazard in bringing the good news about Jesus Christ to India. Theirs has been a unique contribution, an everlasting gift to our mother country. They brought a different outlook and vision of life inspired by the Gospel. Their enigmatic presence has produced great figures of Christian spirit in the social, cultural, political and religious scenario of India. This Christian vision of life is very much alive today in the hearts and minds of millions of all walks of life here.

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Jubilee celebration is an appropriate occasion to portray the true picture of the invaluable contributions the Christian minority has made to nation building. There have been Christians as promoters of justice and prophets of peace. Thousands of Christians ranked among the freedom fighters – a phenomenal force adhering to non-violence! Many from the community have subscribed to the empowerment of women and the oppressed. Whichever way one turns, one can never fail to see nor refute the impact the Christian minority has made on the upliftment of the populace of our Indian society.

India, Our *Mathrubhoomi*

The beauty of India lies in her 'unity in diversity'. The spirituality of communion in the Indian milieu means unity in diversity. It is sign of the presence and working of God. The Catholic Church in India, as elsewhere, is a family in which every member has a specific role. Hence, for a Christian, unity must be the outstanding characteristic in this general diversity. The Church in India is a Church of many colours. The diversity of cultures and ethnic groups is its intrinsic feature. The diversities of Indian panorama is therefore duly represented in the Church. "A deeper understanding of our Christian faith commitment urges us to re-dedicate ourselves to the task of building the nation as a communion of various communities. Each community should have genuine freedom in realizing its legitimate aspirations and, at the same time, should exercise a sense of responsibility in cherishing and fostering other cultures and religions."[1]

India is a nation with over a billion people. Added to this is the evergrowing number of highly educated and English-speaking people in the country. This is quite a unique feature unparalleled in any other part of the world. Our nation has over 150 million graduates. This figure itself is higher than the total population of many developed nations[2]. With her 150 million people for whom English is the *lingua franca*, India is indeed becoming a knowledge centre. The potential of human resources in India has few rivals around the world. As Christians, "We are proud of our nation with its age-long history, ancient civilization and its vast and rich cultural resources. A distinctive mark of its resourcefulness is manifested in our ancient and modern predilection for the culture of pluralism - ethnic, cultural, religious. The struggle of our people for freedom and self-determination was indeed unique in its method and strategy: disavowal of violence and adherence to the power of truth (*sathagraha*), abjuring of hatred towards the oppressors and democratic in spirit. By holding social transformation, economic opportunity and literacy for all as top priority, a strong foundation has been laid for the solidity of the Indian nation. The rich humanism that shaped the vision of our founding fathers/

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mothers, with their advocacy of a healthy secularism, is deeply engraved in our well crafted and balanced Constitution."[3]

Making of Our Nation

A nation exists where the people, though diverse, have a shared sense of identity, consider themselves as being part of a whole to which they feel the need to belong. A nation includes all peoples, irrespective of difference of religion, caste, class, race, ethnicity or language, who share a common territory and history[4].

Becoming a nation is a process in which the struggle for livelihood is recognized as pivotal for the prosperity and welfare of the people. It also enhances the integrity and preservation of its culture. The ceaseless efforts of people to produce sufficient resources for their daily living is central to their identity that is also shaped by their myths, folklore, festivals, history, religious beliefs, symbols, customs, institutions and social structures. The growth of science and technology, as well as progress in industry and modenisation also contribute significantly to the process of nation building.[5]

Nation building entails the task of community building. Community includes all and excludes none. It is the context where the principle of equality is practised and freedom of thought, expression and dissent affirmed. It implies coexisting with and accepting varied cultures and religious traditions, and rejecting social inequality/stratification on the basis of caste, class or religion. A nation is built through peaceful, egalitarian, democratic and participatory practices of self-governance and socio-economic development, with attention to distributive justice. Concerted effort at eradication of illiteracy, poverty and unemployment, the three-fold enemy of any nation's growth, should be the priorities in any planning and execution.

"It is the responsibility of every citizen to contribute towards nation building and space must be provided for every Indian to play his/her part in the process. The process envisages the emergence of a communion of communities that reflects the larger human community. Clearly each community in this communion has a vital role to play in this process."[6]

Christian Contribution

"Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and render to God the things that are God's" (Mk 12:17). This is the Christian response to nation building. It highlights two aspects of a person's commitment: one's duty to God as well as one's obligations to care for the world. A person cannot make a commitment to God neglecting the brethren around him nor

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an engagement to the world without reference to God. To reduce one's commitment to any one of these aspects is to reject the unity of all beings and to destroy communion in creation ordained by God. Further, usurping the power of the State in the name of religion or using religion to serve the political agenda of the State stands in the way of God's reign being established in the world.

Some held condemnation of this world as evil. Some laid emphasis on an other-worldly salvation. These outlooks have resulted in a vision of life too individualistic and overly spiritual. The obvious outcomes were fear of the world and a pessimistic outlook on the goal of earthly life. Such an attitude cannot promote a serious commitment to nation building. But the biblical understanding of salvation is more comprehensive and well balanced. It is concerned with the wholeness of the human person and the well-being of all creations. Salvation as wholeness is realized in this world and finds its final fulfilment beyond the world. It calls for a commitment to transform the world according to God's design for humanity and the world in general.

Nation building, therefore, is the bounden duty of every Christian. This build up obligation emanates from one's faith commitment. Thus the call is divine – to communities of reconciliation, justice and peace.

The Christian community in India has ever been faithful to her vocation. Christian contributions towards shaping a more just and equitable society has always been great. The Christian communities have ever shown special concern for the poor and the oppressed. It is ingrained in the very Christian spirit to show love and compassion to and concern for the stick and the lonely. Christians have ever had concern for the education of children for a better society. The Church has always remained faithful to the rule of law to maintain social order. So has the community retained respect for the nation's Constitution and democratically elected governments.

At the same time, the Church has a prophetic role to play. She cannot remain blind, deaf and dumb when things go wrong. She speaks against injustice, exploitation and oppression. Thus the Church fights against violations of human rights and de-humanising moves of evil, however powerful the perpetrators might be! History has it that her pursuits in these lines have made the Church an object of hatred under many a regime. Consequently, she has had to move through the grinding stone of persecution under many a clime. There is plenty in the annals of history to prove this fact. Nay, regions are still around where the Church is still under such clouds!

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Christianity in India can be and is elated with a sense of fulfilment. Her contributions towards nation building have been substantial. India "shines" today through her high quality educational institutions and health centers. No one can deny this fact. Nor can any one refute the fact of Christian efforts in these fields. So every one is proud of the "shining India." But the Christian communities do not rest on any laurels. The Church is worried about regions in the country still shadowed-where the less fortunate are!

The Church is concerned about that segment in the populace – the poor, the illiterate, the under nourished and the unhealthy[7]. Isn't it a shameful fact that there is a terminology "Below Poverty Line" much in vogue especially in politico-bureaucratic fields? As the present trend continues in the economic field, the business world, the primeval practice "survival of the fittest" is likely to prevail. Of course, globalisation propagates it. Christianity, therefore, is all the more committed to propagating and practicing "survuval of the struggling"!

' "Ask the average Indian what he thinks of the Christians in India. You will get the reply, "peace loving". Dig a little further and you will probably be told that they are a contented lot who don't get easily agitated or involved in public life. You may also hear that they are not particularly ambitious." '[8]

The media image of Christians may be totally different from this public image of Christians. In the visual media, their image is often connected with western culture, mini skirts, drinking and eating meat. "The English language press, be they dailies or journals, are largely supportive, appreciative and sensitive to the Christian community in India... The vernacular press, especially in the north, has been hostile to Christians and Christian issues like conversions."[9] "As Indians who profess faith in Jesus Christ and conscious of our duty as citizens of our beloved country, we have contributed much to nation building by our dedicated service over the years in many aspects of national life. The significant service we have rendered and continue to render in the fields of education, health care and social transformation is recognized by all. But in recent times Christian commitment has been questioned especially when it serves the poor and the marginalized."[10]

Apparently, this siding with the marginalized and the oppressed has been a crucial issue for quite some time. Several reports on wreaking havoc on minority communities have appeared in the media. Incidents of massacre of members of one such community in the rather recent past is still fresh in our minds. How many such resports on insane brutality have we had before and since? How many reports have come out on attacks on churches and Christian institutions? How many religious, priests and nuns, have been brutally butchered hitherto?

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Paradoxically, the basis doctrine of all religions, to the best of my knowledge and belief, is the paternity of God and fraternity of humans. Which religion teaches intolerance? Which religion exhorts its followers to wreak havoc on those not of their faith? Which religion urges its disciples to commit brutal murder of even women?

Still such incidents take place even in these days of enlightenment. One is compelled to think, why? The erstwhile oppressed and the marginalized had been 'dumb draft animals' for long. With literacy through Christian institutions, such began to think, talk and perhaps, demand. But for the enlightenment, things would have remained undisturbed for the vested interests! So? Instil political motivation or fanatic spirit to the right instruments of destruction! How else does one explain the various oppressive measures and Anti-Conversion Bills that some sections have brought out during the recent past? Let us not forget the fact that these are against a tiny minority, the Christian community in India. Would the Christian community have remained at its meager 2.4% position, had conversions been the real issue?

The story is not finished. The final chapter is not written yet. We have travelled a great distance and learned much. The end is not in sight yet. We admit we have made mistakes. But, with God's grace, we plod along to fulfil our mission. This trek is never in isolation. There are all the people of good faith. And we are inspired by those heroic men and women who have gone before us, even sacrificing their lives for faith and for the building up of our nation - India. The vision and faith of St. Thomas and St. Francis Xavier which brought them to India must continue to take flesh in us who cherish the ideals of equality, fraternity, harmony and peace for all.

Go through the pages of the rich history and life of our nation. One will find every chapter and every page delightful and inspiring with the rich heritage that is ours. One may find oneself soliloquizing as I myself did: 'What more can I do for the building of my nation, for the upliftment of all the people of my *mathrubhoomi*?'

We are proud of this holy land of ours. She has given birth to many religions, welcomed others and nurtured many cultures and languages. We are proud of our many sages and prophets of the past. They preached universal love, compassion and respect for others. We are proud of our freedom fighters and national leaders. They are shining examples of total dedication to the cause of our nation. We are proud of Mahatma Gandhi. We are proud of Rabindranath Tagore and of Mother Teresa of Calcutta. Many more such noble minded have contributed to making our country great before the nations of the world!

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Therefore, as Indians and disciples of Jesus Christ, we affirm our commitment to our nation. We have to work in solidarity with all the citizens of our country. The goal should be a just, harmonious society, "where the mind is without fear and the head is held high; where knowledge is free; where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls; ... Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake."[11]

As Chairman of the Documentary Committee let me express my great appreciation and thanks for the commendable task executed by Fr. Selvister Ponnumuthan, chief editor and Fr. Chacko Aerath OIC and Prof. George Menachery, the co-editors and all the members of the advisory Board.

NOTES:

1. *Christian Commitment to Nation Building*. Statement of the Indian Theological Association, 25th Annual Meeting, May 3-7-2002, Bangalore, 1.
2. "Important India" in Indian Currents 25th Jan.2004, 44.
3. *Christian Commitment to Nation Building*, 2.
4. *Christian Commitment to Nation Building*, 4
5. *Christian Commitment to Nation Building*, 4-5.
6. *Christian Commitment to Nation Building*, 6-7. (Nos. 8 & 9).
7. See Ajay Ghosh, "Fooling Around," in *Indian Currents* (8th February, 2004), 1-15.
8. "The Image of Catholics in India" in *Vishal Jagruthi* (December 03-January 2004), 7.
9. "The Image of Catholics in India", 8.
10. *Christian Commitment to Nation Building*, 3-4.
11. Rabindranath Tagore, *Githanjali*, XXXV, London : Macmillan, 1967 (1913).

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INTRODUCTION

Many authors, ancient and contemporary, have characterized India as a land of wonders. An amazing aspect many long to cherish about India's heritage is that, it is a land of varied races, religions and cultures. True to the *upanishadic* maxim, *Adihidhi Devo Bhava* India has, over the past few millennia, welcomed a myriad ethnic groups, a host of religious beliefs and scores of cultural strains. Nations of the world can only envy India in having been the seedbed for most of the religions known to humanity. In the spectrum of religions that adorns India, Christianity stands second to none. India's rulers have, in the past and in the present, candidly acknowledged the track record of Christians' undivided loyalty and service to the nation. It has been considered to be salutary to document, for the sake of posterity, the salient areas of India's wholesome growth where Christianity has given her best, over the centuries.

A few books have come out in the past that deal with this aspect of Christianity in India. *Christian Participation in Nation-Building,* P.D. Devanandan & M. M. Thomas [1960], *Songs of Silence: Christians in Nation Building*, S. Arokiasamy & J. Chathanatt [2000], Chris*tian Commitment of Nation Building,* Anthony Raj Thumma & Alphonse D. Sahayam [2003], *The Christian Community and the National Mainstream*, Louis D'Silva [s.d.] and other works have tried to bring out various aspects of what Christianity was for India in the past. The present work is only a thumbnail account of what the Church has been doing for nation building in various fields.

The context in which this book is published needs mentioning. It was in March 2002, at the Jalandhar meeting that the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI) decided to celebrate the Jubilee of the 1950th year of the coming of St. Thomas, the Apostle of India and the 450th death anniversary of St. Francis Xavier, the Second Apostle of India together at Cochi in November 2002. The Kerala Catholic Bishops' Council (KCBC) was entrusted with the task of organizing the Jubilee celebrations.

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Rt. Rev. Dr. Francis Kallarackal was nominated Chairman of the Jubilee Celebrations Committee with Bishops Thomas Chakiath, Joshua Mar Ignathios, and John Thattumkal as Vice-Chairmen. Various committees were formed to make the Jubilee celebrations meaningful and memorable. As part of the Jubilee Celebrations a Documentary Committee was set up under the chairmanship of Rt. Rev. Dr. John Thattumkal, Bishop of Cochin. The book "Christian Contribution to Nation Building" is the outcome of the decision taken by the Documentary Committee to bring out a memento of the historical event. In order to carry out the task, Dr. Selvister Ponnumuthan was appointed chief editor, and Dr. Chacko Aerath OIC and Prof. George Menachery as co-editors. Dr. Joseph Kariyil, Dr. Chacko Narimattathil, Fr. Devassy Kollamkudiyil SDB, Prof. Abraham Arackal, Prof. Sabu De Mathew, Dr. Placid OIC, Fr. Joseph Panakkezham, Dr. Francis Pereparambil OCD and Dr. Antony Kakkanatt were appointed members of the Advisory Board.

The editorial team identified the different areas and topics to be included in the book and experts were approached to contribute articles. The authors expressed their views freely and hence these views need not necessarily be the views of the editorial team, nor do they necessarily represent the official stand of the Catholic Church on the topic. Each author adopted his own scientific method in acknowledging the references in his article.

We have also included in the volume the scholarly papers presented at the History Seminar held at the Renewal Centre in Cochi, Kerala on 15th and 16th November, 2002 along with the presidential address of Honourable Justice Cyriac Joseph and the Keynote Address of Fr. Paul Puthanangady SDB delivered during the seminar. The speeches of Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, the Honourable President of India and Ivan Cardinal Dias, Archbishop of Bombay, and the Homily of Crescenzio Cardinal Sepe, Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, on 17th November, 2002 have enriched this volume.

The book is divided into four parts. The first part "Church and State Hand in Hand" looks into the Christian influence in shaping the underpinnings of modern India. The second part "Facing the Challenges of the Times", deals with the Church's engagement with the needs of the time, showing how the Church has responded to the various challenges and prospects of the nation during the past centuries. The third part "Towards New Paradigms", explains the way the Church has been an example and model in reaching out to the weak and liberating the poor and the oppressed in the society. The fourth and final part "The Way to be Together", looks ahead to the prospect of the prophetic role of the Church which can help build a society based on the values of peace, justice and harmonious coexistence.

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We gratefully acknowledge the help that we have received from various people in bringing out this book. Rt. Rev. Dr. John Thattumkal, the Chairman of the Documentary Committee has been with us through and through. We experienced his paternal affection and intellectual expertise throughout the work. We are deeply indebted to the authors who contributed their scholarly articles and cooperated with us in making the editorial work easier. We acknowledge the contribution of Bishops Stanley Roman, Varghese Chackalackal, Joshua Mar Ignathios, Thomas Mar Koorilos, Mathew Moolakat and Joseph Perumthottam who scrutinized the book. We thank Prof. C. D. Sebastian, Fr. Stanley Thomas SCJ, Fr. Joseph Van Leevan C.P., Fr. Pius Arattukulam, Dr. James Anaparambil, Dr. Sobhanan, Dr. Henry Austin, Mr. S. Raimon and Sr. Renita CSST for their assistance. Mrs. Deepa Babu, Mr. Arun Kumar and Mr. Ananthan did the DTP work. Bro. Jacob Korackal OCD and his team at the St. Joseph's Press, Trivandrum did the printing work. Fr. Kapistan Lopez designed the cover. Msgr. Joseph Etturuthil, Rector and Fr. Antony Thachara, Procurator of St. Joseph's Pontifical Seminary, played host to the innumerable editorial meetings. Sr. Kochuthresia CTC and other Sisters of Carmelgiri, Fathers and Brothers of Carmelgiri Seminary and Bethany Navajyothy Provincial Ashram, Mr. C.V. Thomas, Mr. V.P. Jose and Mr. Sajeevan did commendable work. Last but not the least, we wholeheartedly acknowledge our indebtedness to all the Bishops of Kerala who put their trust in us to bring out the volume "Christian Contribution to Nation Building", - a fitting tribute to the two apostles of India – St. Thomas and St. Francis Xavier.

Selvister Ponnumuthan (Chief Editor)
Chacko Aerath OIC (Co-Editor)
George Menachery (Co-Editor)

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PART - I

CHURCH AND NATION HAND IN HAND

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1
Collaboration for Nation Building*

Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam

His Grace Most Rev Cyril Mar Baselios, His Eminence Cardinal Joseph Sepe, A.K. Antony, Honourable Chief Minister of Kerala, His Excellency Most Rev. Varkey Cardinal Vithayathil, His Excellency Most Rev. Ivan Cardinal Dias, His Excellency Most Rev. Daniel Acharuparambil, His Grace Rev. Francis Kallarackal, His Excellency Most Rev. Lorenzo Baldisseri and friends.

I am indeed very happy and delighted to be with you this evening, particularly to participate in the celebration of today which marks the concluding ceremony of the celebration of the 1950th anniversary of the arrival of St. Thomas and the 450th death anniversary of St. Francis Xavier. St.Thomas spent his life in telling the good news, giving us glad tidings. St. Thomas is believed to have heralded Christianity into India 1950 years ago which in due course became one of the religions followed by our countrymen. For a nation like that of ours which is rich in diversity, the contributions made by each religion are to be looked at with gratitude and fair will. St. Francis Xavier came to Kerala in 1542 and spent three years working among the fisher people and gaining a type of people for whom he brought with him nothing but his all

---

**From the speech delivered by Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, the Honourable President of India, on the occasion of the concluding meeting of the Jubilee Celebrations of St. Thomas and St. Francis Xavier on 17th November 2002 at Marine Drive, Cochi, Kerala.*

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consuming love for God and for the souls of his fellow men. Kerala has achieved a multi-faced development in all societal phenomena including religion. It has an enviable record of peaceful co-existence with tolerance as the key word in all realms of human activities. Communal harmony and peace have a role all along, it being the sheer anchor of Kerala's social life, and without exaggeration let me say that this has been looked up to with envy by many.

During my stay in Kerala, I have travelled from one end of Kerala to the other. I have a message for my countrymen after visiting and living in Kerala. When I visited Kerala I found that there is no distance from village to village, there is no distance between school and school. In every village we find one school. The unique thing of Kerala is that in schools we have all the communities; Hindus, Muslims, Christians or of any other religion. It is a unique unity of minds. Where do you get unity of minds? You can get unity of minds only through the young people, through young minds. If you ignite the young minds for unity of minds then the nation grows, the nation develops. And fortunately Kerala has set an example and I greet all of you to keep it up.

Now I wonder what I should tell you. If you ask me about my education, I was brought up on an island, Rameswaram. My education started at Schwartz Higher Secondary School. It was established 250 years ago by missionaries. All the subjects were taught in the regional language Tamil. Up to SSLC I studied in Schwartz High School. When I finished my SSLC I landed in St. Joseph's College for a college education. St. Joseph's College is a Jesuit institution. If at all I have a stand for education, my heart goes in gratitude with all my respects to the teachers of Schwartz High School, my teachers of St. Joseph's College who are my role models. I greet all my St. Joseph's college teachers with respect. I greet all my Schwartz High School teachers with respect. I greet the great missionaries who have given me a good education.

Now I want to talk about a universal mind. This is my experience, which I must talk to you. I have worked with Dr. Vikram Sarabhai, who was the pioneer of space programme in Kerala. In the 1960s he was searching for a land so that they can study the electro jet properties of outer space. They searched the whole country. Finally they landed in Kerala and located Thumba, Trivandrum, as the right place to start the space programme. He found 200 acres of land. But how to get the land when the life of hundreds of thousands in houses there survived on fishing? Then there was a church, St. Mary's Church, a Bishop's house and a school in that land. Dr. Vikram Sarabhai approached the bureaucrats and local administrators. They said it was a difficult task. "There is a church, there is a Bishop's house, the people whose livelihood

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is fishing. How can you get the land Dr. Vikram Sarabhai?" Then they suggested to go upstairs. 'The upstair was political system'. He requested the ministers "Kindly give me the land". They said "No, we cannot, you are asking for Bishop's house, you are asking for St. Mary's Church, you are asking for fishing people's livelihood, how can we give? You are asking for a difficult thing". But they suggested that the only person who could help you was Bishop Peter Bernard Pereira. "You can meet the Bishop. You try. Your smile can work." Dr. Vikaram Sarabhai went to the Bishop's house and met Bishop Peter Bernard Pereira. He said: "Father, I need this place, a convenient site for scientific research". Bishop said: "O, you want my land! You want my habitat! Bishop's house! You want my church! You want my children's school! You want my children's livelihood! How can I?". But something worked. Bishop Peter Pereira smiles, Vikram Sarabhai the scientist smiles. The Bishop said: "You can come tomorrow (to the church), tomorrow being Sunday I will discuss the problem".

On Sunday Dr. Vikram Sarabhai, the greatest scientist of cosmic research and space reached the church. At that time Bishop Peter Bernard Pereira was making use of the time in prayer. Dr. Vikram Sarabhai waited. After the prayers the Bishop invited him to the dais, the altar of the church. Dr. Vikram Sarabhai was introduced by the Bishop to the people. The Bishop said, "Here is a man, a great scientist. He says he is doing scientific research". What is science? Science is nothing but reasoning. You reason, when you are looking for research. When scientific research comes, it helps the human beings. Science for human beings is the removal of pain, of misery, of human poverty. Bishop said, "What as a preacher I do, as a Bishop what do I do? I preach. I pray to the Almighty. I ask the Almighty God, O Almighty, you forgive the sins of my people and give them peace". Likewise the scientists pray by reasoning and give the benefit to the humanity. I pray. I give peace to the human souls by fulfilling the spiritual needs. What does it mean? Human beings have a peaceful and a prosperous land when science and spirituality meet. So both of us, a scientist and a spiritualist, finally seek the happiness, the prosperity and the peace of human beings." "So my children", Bishop Pereira continued, "He wants God's abode, the church, he wants my abode, he wants this school, he wants your abode. But he is a nice man. He is a good scientist. He has promised us that he will give you a new church, he will give you a new school, he will give you new houses in a few months time. My children, can you give the God's abode? Can you give the school? Can you give my abode? Can you give the livelihood and your place?" There was a pin drop silence just like what you are holding now. After a minute all the children of God, the citizens, got up and said "Amen". When they said 'Amen', the message was that science has won! Spirituality has won! And the human beings have won! So that is India. That is our nation. That is the spirituality we have.

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Today Bishop Peter Bernard Pereira is not with us, Dr. Vikram Sarabhai is not with us. But these great human beings everyday tell us that there is something beyond, that unites science and spirituality. You graduate science for human welfare. You graduate religion, the spirituality for human welfare. Today the Indian space research organization is throughout the country and the best of rockets needed, the best of satellites needed, the great ambition, the Indian ambition for welfare of the people have been met. So friends, Dr. Vikram Sarabhai is not with us, Bishop Peter Bernard Pereira is not with us. They are like the flowers described in Bhagavad-Gita. "See the flower, how generously it disperses perfume and honey, it gives to all, it gives freely of its love. When the work is done it falls away quietly". Try to be like the flower unassuming. What a beautiful message for all generations of this nation on integration of mind and the universal mind. We have a tradition of experience with the noble, endowed with spirit and the universal mind.

Friends, this is the real message I want to communicate to you. Time has come. Religions and religious leaders have to try to be spiritual leaders. Then you will find a beautiful India, a prosperous India, a secular India, a peaceful India. How noble thoughts can come? I have told you about Bhagavad-Gita. I have told you of a Christian father, Bishop Peter Bernard Periera. How the noble scientific minds could work together? One more incident I want to narrate which tells how a noble thought really shines in the Indian sky. Once when I was leaving for Bangalore, two years back, for a lecture, I asked my friend, "Can you tell me a good address for young people? Can you give me a message based on your experience? Can you give me some message to gladden the heart of the human being?" He gave me the following message. I quote, "When you speak, speak the truth, perform when you promise..." What good acts are better to gladden the heart of human beings? To feed the hungry, help the needy, wipe the sorrow of the sorrowful. All God's creatures are his family. "He is the most beloved of God who tries to do most good to God's creatures". These are the sayings of Prophet Muhammad. My friend who spoke to me is the great grand son of Gnanapaandhan, a Vedic scholar. Such an outlook is possible only in our country and let us remember the words from Rig Veda, "let noble thoughts come to us from every side". In conclusion I would like to say, a statement of St. Augustine which I cherish very much. "Thou has made us for thyself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee".

Now, in conclusion, I wish to say that when a child is empowered by the parents at the various phases of growth the child is transformed into a responsible citizen. When the teacher is empowered with knowledge and experience, a good learned human being with a value

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system takes shape. When an individual or a team is empowered with technology, transformation to higher potential for achievable goals happens. When the leader of any institution empowers his own people, leaders are born. You can change the nation in multiple ways. When the women are empowered a stable society is assured. When the political leaders of the nation empower the people through their visions and policies, the prosperity of the nation is certain. When religion transforms into a spiritual force, people become enlightened citizens with a value system. My greetings to all of you. May God bless you.

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2
The Role of Christians in India's Freedom Struggle

Pala K.M. Mathew

One of the most distinctive characteristics of the majoritarian-friendly political debate in India is a tendency to belittle and downgrade the role played by Christians in India's freedom struggle. Certain sections, with ulterior motives to stigmatize the Christians as anti-nationals and pro-British, propagate the falsehood that Christians were supporting the British imperialists because they too belonged to the Christian fraternity; that the Christians were a group which came over to India and settled here along with the European colonialists; that they have no tradition or history of 2000 years. This malicious propaganda makes it necessary to bring out the truth in its proper perspective.

As regards the freedom struggle, the Indian Christians were an inseparable part of the mainstream fight against the foreign rulers. Those decisive decades of the struggle witnessed the awesome spectacle of Christians plunging headlong into the great struggle[1]. The vigour, sense of sacrifice, patriotism and courage shown by the Christians were proportionately far greater than those of the majority community. This epic role must be written in letters of gold in the annals of India's freedom struggle. In this brief article an attempt has been made to highlight only a segment of the great saga of the freedom struggle.

In the course of the struggle the Christians contributed proportionately and qualitatively equal to that of all others not only in the political fight, but also in all the different national fights, in building up national unity, in enriching the cultural and social life, in finding out an

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identity for the country in the development of democratic, federal and secular values and in the spread of education, etc. Lack of space limits any elaboration on these fruits. The Indian Christians were in the forefront of the fight against colonialism, imperialism, slavery and all kinds of social and economic injustice.[2]

It was Allen Octavian Hume, a Christian, who informally organized the Indian National Congress in 1885. W.C. Banerjee a Bengali Christian was the first president who presided over the founding session of Congress. The Congress presidents - George Yule(1888-89), William Verder Bern(1889-90), P. Anand Charlu(1891-92), W.C. Banerjee (!892-93 second time) and Henry Cotton, were all Christians. Annie Besant, although a theosophist, was very much influenced by Gospel values.

Among the Christians who played a decisive role in the genesis and spread of the freedom struggle, the name of barrister George Joseph (1887-1938) occupies a predominant place. George Joseph and Joseph Baptista[3] of Bombay were the earliest Christians to join the nationalist movement. But George Joseph emerged as one of the senior leaders. By actively participating in Gandhi's non-cooperation movement George Joseph left his legal profession.[4]

In the course of the intense struggle George Joseph was arrested and sentenced to rigorous imprisonment as a political offender. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Purushotam Das Tandon, Mahadev Desai, etc., were confined at the Lucknow District Jail along with George Joseph. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in his autobiography described at length the day to day discussions which he had with George Joseph within the four walls of the prison[5]. His close association with Gandhi was so vivid that George Joseph became the editor of the *Young India*, Gandhiji's weekly.[6]

Another person to be mentioned from the Christian community is K.T. Paul, an ardent nationalist. He motivated the Christians to be active participants in the nationalist movement. He said: "We will do well to realise that there is a terrible danger if we persist in the policy of keeping aloof. Materially, socially, morally, and politically, viewed in fact from every standpoint, our interests are intimately bound up with those of other Indian communities. Will it ever be otherwise? Long after Britain's political mission to India is finished, let us hope five centuries later, for all things earthly must end or change - we shall still be Indians."[7]

Brahmabandhab Upadyaya, although he became a Catholic, remained proud of being a

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Hindu. Through his powerful writings he urged the Christians to fight against the British. He wrote:

> With the spread of English education and culture, India lost her own idea of civilization. Our educated classes think as they have been taught by their Firinghi masters. Our minds have been conquered. We have become slaves. The faith in our own culture and the love for things Indian are gone. India will reach Swaraj the day she will again have faith in herself... What we want is the emancipation of India. Our aim is that India may be free, that the stranger may be driven from our homes, that the continuity of the learning, the civilisation and the system of the *rishis* may be preserved ... Are we afraid of your cannons and guns? Arm brothers, arm! The day of deliverance is near. We have heard the voice and we cannot fail to see the chains of India removed before we die. It is now too late to recede. [8]

Dr. F. X. D'Souza despite his judicial calibre and integrity, did not get promoted to the High Court bench because of his refusal to accept the appointment of Special Judge to try Mahatma Gandhi in the 1921 Civil Disobedience Campaign.[9] With the Salt Satyagraha in1930 many young Christians joined in the Second Civil Disobedience Movement. And the Christians even formed a Nationalist Christian Party to fight for the cause of freedom. Joachin Alva, T.M. Guido and F. M. Pinto were some among them. Joachin Alva and F. M. Pinto violated the salt act and courted arrest. In Tuticorin, Tamil Nadu, a good number of Christians actively involved themselves in the Civil Disobedience Movement.[10]

As a matter of fact the Christians actively participated in the struggles in all the states as they did in British India. But the population of Christians in states except Kerala was negligible. In Kerala their participation was massive and splendid, with its own peculiarities. "The only state in India where Christians, a very small minority, can exert some influence in the public life was Travancore alone" says C. Narayana Pillai the veteran freedom fighter and the author *Thiruvithamcoorinte Swathanthriya Samaram* (Travancore Freedom Struggle).

The Government service remained the prerogative and monopoly of the upper class Hindus. As a result the Christians entered the fields of agriculture, commerce, banking and industry and gradually became generally affluent. They were in the forefront of acquiring education as well as expanding the field of education. They built up schools and colleges. The Christians were the pioneers in printing, publishing papers and periodicals. The solid organization of the Church - parishes and dioceses and the priests - was an additional advantage for them.

It was the 1891 "Malayalee Memorial" which started the real battle for the social and political right of the people in the state. The state government had been appointing only Brahmins from other states for the high offices of the state; the educated people of Kerala fought against the same. Nidhirikkal Manikathanar (a priest), Cyriac Nidhiri and other prominent

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Christians played a leading role in the fight along with C.V Raman Pillai, K.P Kesava Menon, barrister G.V. Pillai and others.[11]

In 1919 a unit of the Indian National Congress started functioning in Trivandrum. During that time Congress units worked in Meenachil and nearby places also. Swadeshabhimani K. Ramakrishna Pillai who came to Pala for Congress activities in the "underground" stayed as the guest of the Lalam (Pala) Church Vicar.

The Vaikom 'Satyagraha' was one of the decisive events in the history of India's freedom struggle.[12] Barrister George Joseph, "Bhajebharatham" Mathunni and Sebastian Poovanthinkal were some of the few prominent Christians who were arrested and jailed along with others. During that period Sree Chithira Thirunal Rama Varma became the Maharaja of Travancore. A Legislature Reform Bill was passed. As a result of the Act, Christians, Muslims and Ezhavas were denied representation in proportion to their respective populations. These communities formed a Joint Political Group (sMyuk\t raW\\`fIy smiti) and submitted a memorandum to the Dewan.[13] The Dewan turned a deaf ear. Therefore, the 'Samithi' decided to boycott the elections. It was known as 'Nivarthana'.[14] The great scholar I.C Chacko was a guiding spirit behind the agitation. N.V. Joseph, T.M. Varghese, Barrister George Joseph and other topmost Christian leaders were also in the forefront of the struggle. A.C. Kuriakose, Joseph Chazhikkatu, Thomas Kayyalakkakom and A.O. Joseph also led the fight vigorously.

Leaders began to realize that due representation in the administration for the various groups and committees would be obtained only by the establishment of a responsible government based on adult franchise. E.V. Krishna Pillai, Kesari Balakrishna Pillai, I.C. Chacko and other prominent leaders pointed out that a political organization for the purpose was most essential. With the help and leadership of V. Kunjuraman, Pattom Thanu Pillai, T.M.Varghese, A.J.John, C.Kesavan, E.John Philipose, K.T.Thomas, P.J.Sebastian, R.V.Thomas, Alexander Parambithara, Kunjan Nadar,[15] Annie Mascarenase and others the Travancore State Congress was organized in February 1938. It is to be noted that Annie Mascarenase, a Christian woman, played a significant role both in the formation of the Travancore State Congress and in the nationalist movement[16] although Christian women's participation was not a new thing.[17]

The Travancore Dewan Sir C.P. Ramaswamy Iyer was quick to realize that disaster was in the air. He soon began to gather all the persons at his command to nip the party in the bud. C.P's well orchestrated propaganda has been that the State Congress was a communal party of the Travancore Christians. His attempt was to create a communal divide between Christians

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and other communities. He was also very adamant in selectively condemning and destroying the Christian institutions with a vengeance. He ruined National Quilon Bank and charge sheeted its directors K.C. Mammen Mappillai, C.P. Mathew and others. They were put behind the bars of central jail. K.C. Eapen (Mammen Mappillai's brother), died in jail. *Malayala Manorama* was banned and confiscated.

Goondas were sent to raid and rob the house of Mrs. Annie Mascarene. Mascarene was put to untold hardships. Akkamma Cherian, Rosamma Cherian, A.J. John, R.V.Thomas, P.J. Sebastian, K.M. Kora, E. John Philipose, P.T. Chacko, Elizabeth Kuruvilla, N.V. Chacko, E. John Kuruvilla, K.J Varkey, V.V Varkey, P.T Punnoose and other Christian leaders were all arrested and jailed during the years 1938-'39. Their properties were confiscated.

One of the major strategies of Sir C.P. Ramaswamy in order to drive the other communities against the Christians was the introduction of a new 'Education Policy'. His plan was to take over all the primary schools in the state. It may be noted that the majority of the primary schools belonged to the Christian community. Therefore, naturally, the Christians opposed this proposal most vehemently. A joint pastoral letter was issued by all the Christian Bishops in the Kerala area. On August 15, 1945, Changanacherry Bishop Mar James Kalassery issued a strongly-worded letter which provoked the Dewan. The Government warned the Bishop that he would be taken to task if he would not withdraw the pastoral letter and apologize. The bishop stood firm. Consequently, protest meetings, *jathas* and demonstrations against the Dewan were organized throughout the state. It spread like wild fire and assumed explosive proportion. The Christian communities fought against the Dewan in a body.

The State Congress and the Communist Party came forward to make the Christian solidarity against the education policy of the Dewan. In fact it was a fight led by the Christians in all aspects and the political parties only capitalised on it. During these years the All Kerala Catholic Congress led by the Congress leaders played a major historical role in the freedom struggle. The great contributions of the topmost Catholic leaders like A.J. John, R.V. Thomas, P.J Sebastian, K. M. Kora, Thariathu Kunjithomman, P.T Chacko, K.M. Chandy, Cherian Kappan, Mathew Maniangadan should be given due importance.

On December 21, 1945, All Kerala Catholic Congress president Thariath Kunjithomman and P.T. Chacko were arrested. A great storm of protest swept across the length and breadth of the State. The fact that hundreds of photographs of these two leaders in art paper were sold all over the state shows how profound the feelings of the agitated people were. One of the most important episodes in the struggle was the mammoth protest meeting at Pala on January

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20, 1946. An unprecedented crowd of about 3 lakhs of people participated in that meeting held at the famous Pala St.Thomas Church *maidan*. Ramachandra Rao, Justice Joseph Thaliath, Thariathu Kunjithomman, P.J Sebastian, R.V. Thomas, K.M. Chandy and others addressed the gathering. P.T. Chacko was in the jail. After this, the Catholic Congress decided to send a pilgrimage to the tomb of St.Thomas in Mylapore, Madras on April 23rd, 1946. Mylapore was the native place of Sir C.P. Ramaswamy. The 'hidden agenda' of the pilgrimage was to stage a protest against C.P. Ramaswamy at his birth-place. The Dewan was shrewd enough to realise the same. Cherian Kappan was the president and K.M. Chandy and Mathachan Kuruvinakunnel were the volunteer captains. In July 1946 K.M. Chandy was arrested.

Shri Baby John, former minister of the State of Kerala, was the leading figure in the violent protest at Thevara against C.P. Ramaswamy's rule, from where C.P had to make a narrow escape. All the fighters in this dramatic struggle were Christians who included Antony Adhikari and T.M Augustine. The public agitation which started in the name of the education bill gathered momentum and gradually grew into a political storm. In the meanwhile, on September 2, 1946 Jawaharlal Nehru became the Prime Minister of an interim government in Delhi. Shortly, a constituent assembly was formed for writing the Constitution of India.

On April 29,1947 the Maharaja of Cochin participated in the United Kerala Conference at Trichur and declared that his state would merge into the Indian Union. All these developments did not open the eyes of Sir C.P. and the Travancore Maharaja. The government used all the weapons of oppression against the people to suppress the widespread agitation. But this only strengthened the nerves of the agitators. At last the youth wing of the Congress and a few senior leaders came to the conclusion that C.P could be stopped only by an armed struggle. C.Kesavan, Kumbalath Sanku Pillai, P.T. Chacko, Ponnara Sreedhar, Mathew Maniangadan, K.M. Chandy, Cherian Kappan, E.John Philipose and others were engaged in organising volunteers for the last round of the struggle. P.T. Chacko offered about a hundred indigenous guns for the same. Later P.T. Chacko, E. John Philipose and K.M. Chandy told T.M. Varghese that arrangements for thousands of sten guns could be made. T.M. Varghese was happy to hear it. The state was fully prepared for a bloody fight. Matters reached a climax where it was impossible for C.P. Ramaswamy to stay on. On July 25th, 1947 the sword of K.C.S. Mony, a Brahmin at the instance of Shri Kumbalath Shankara Pillai made Sir C.P. Ramaswamy flee the state and paved the way for responsible government.

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We have been discussing in detail the history of the freedom struggle in Travancore which was the only state in the country with considerable Christian presence. These Christians were fully immersed in the fight. In Kochi also, the Praja Mandalam led the freedom struggle. There also the few Christians who lived in different villages participated actively as in Travancore. In British Malabar and in other states Christian presence was negligible. But wherever there were Christians, they took part in the struggle as actively as others.

The above mentioned facts show that Christians were second to none in the fight for the liberation of our motherland. In fact, considering that the Christians form only 2% of the Indian population, their contribution and role was proportionately and qualitatively much greater. The observation made by Dr. G. A. Oddie remains a fact and the role of Christians in the freedom struggle has to be valued well if one wants to do justice to history. G. A. Oddie wrote:

> In its early[stages], Indian Christians enthusiastically supported the National Congress and attended its annual meetings. The *Harvest Field,* a well-known missionary journal, first drew attention to 'the presence and influence' of Indian Christians in its account of the Madras meeting of 1887 and, although a claim that of the 700 delegates present '40 were Protestant Christians' was probably an exaggeration, the Indian Christian representation was, nevertheless, quite impressive in view of the smallness of the Christian community. According to the official Congress report, there were in fact 607 registered delegates at the Madras meeting; 35 were Christians and, of these, 7 were Eurasians and 15 were Indian Christians. Indian Christians alone made up 2.5 percent of the total attendance, in spite of the fact that Christians accounted for less than 0.79 percent of the population. R.S.N. Subraminaia, a Christian barrister and Municipal Councillor, proposed the resolution urging the separation of judicial and executive powers in Madras. This resolution was seconded by Kali Charan Banerjie, leader of the Bengali Christian community, eminent scholar, brilliant orator and for many years the most respected and influential Indian Christian in Congress circles. Another prominent Christian, Madhusudan Das, lawyer and subsequently deputy magistrate in Orissa, a man who became well known as a champion of the poor and oppressed, spoke on the need to expand the Legislative Council.[18]

As a conclusion it may be good to recall what Jawaharlal Nehru notes in his autobiography:

> ... we record our grateful *appreciation* of the fact that all major and minor communities and classes in India have joined together in the great struggle and given of their best to the cause, of, particularly the minority communities - the Muslims, Sikhs, Parsis, Christians, and others who, by their valour and loyal devotion to the cause of the common motherland, have helped in building up a united and indissoluble nation, certain of victory, and resolved to achieve and maintain the independence of India, and to use this new freedom to raise the shackles from, and to remove the inequalities among, all the classes of the people of India, and thus also to serve, to larger cause of humanity. And with this splendid and inspiring example of sacrifice and suffering in India's cause before us, we repeat our pledge of independence....[19]

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NOTES:

1. It is to be noted that only with the advent of Gandhiji the freedom movement assumed the stature of a mass movement and the freedom movement which was largely controlled and regulated by the land lords, advocates, engineers and doctors came down to the ranks of the common people.

2. C.F. Andrews said: "I cannot but feel that it should be the most serious blow to Indian Christianity if the impression gained round that Indian Christians were opposed to the National Movement, and were only occupied in the interests of their own community" quoted by T.V. Philip, "Protestant Christianity in India since 1858" in G. Menachery, (ed.), *The St. Thomas Christian Encyclopaedia of India*, v.1, Trichur, 1982, 60. [Isaac Padinjarekuttu, *"Christinaity in Independent India*, in *Jnanadeepa* Vol 1, (1998), 76-92.

3. Joseph Baptista was a Civil Engineer. Through the influence of Bal Gangadhar Tilak Baptista became a staunch supporter of the nationalistic movement. See H.L. D'Penha, "Christians in Public Life & Administration", in Louis D' Silva, Christian Community and the Nation Mainstream, *Poona*, [year is not given], 200-220.

4. Born to C.I. Joseph and Saramma on 5th June 1887 in a middle class Syrian Christian family at Chengannur had a brilliant educational career in India and abroad. After his education in England George Joseph returned to India as Barrister in 1909. His lucrative legal profession was not destined to last long. See Maya Thomas, *Barrister George Joseph*, Calicut, 1987, 10-20. George Joseph plunged himself into the vortex of freedom struggle following the brutal Jallianwallabagh massacre in 1919. It is this tragedy that transformed the very course of the freedom struggle. It paved the way for the emergence of Gandhi as a mass leader. See B. Sobhanan, "Tamil Response to the Amirtsar Tragedy of 1919" in *Punjab University Research Bulletin*, Vol. XV, April 1984, 213-218.

5. Jawaharlal Nehru, *An Autobiography, New Delhi,* 1962 (1932), 90-97.

6. P.K.K. Menon, *The History of Freedom Movement in Kerala*, Vol II, Trivandrum, 1922, 74-88. See also T.P. Sankarankutty Nair, "George Joseph" *Proceedings of the 14th Annual Session of the South Indian History Congress*, Trivandrm, 1995; Collected works of Gandhi, Vol. 23. K. Kamaraj, who represented the younger generation of the Congress workers of that period regarded "George Joseph as his political Guru".

7. G.A. Oddie, "Indian Christians and the National Congress", Indian Church History Review, 2 (1968) 52 quoted from *Young Men of India*, Vol. XX, No. , January 1990, p.4. See also Isaac Padinjarekuttu, "Christianity in Independent India", *Jnanadeepa*, 82.

8. Quoted M.K. Kuriakose, *History of Christianity in India: Source Materials,* Madras Christian Literature Society, p.356; see also Isaac Padinjarekuttu, "Christianity in Independent India", *Jnanadeepa*, vol. 1, no.1, Pune 1998, 83.

9. H.L. D' Penha, "Christians in Public Life & Administration", in Louis D'Silva, *Christian Community and the Nation Mainstream*, *Poona,* s.d., 207-209.

10. J. R. Rodrigues of Tuticorin became the president of the District Congress Committee. During the Civil Disobedience Movement he went even to Cyleon in 1930 to recruit volunteers and to collect funds for the cause. See K. Kalyani Sundari, "The Role of Freedom Fighters of Tuticorin in the Salt Satyagraha Movement" *in South Indian History Congress Proceedings Volume of the Twenty Second Annual Session*, Department of History, University of Kerala, Thiruvanathapuram, 2000, 125-128.

11. For a detailed study about the role of the Christians of Kerala with its socio-political implications see P.K.K. Menon, The History of Freedom Movement in Kerala (1885-1993), Vol II, Trivandrum, 1972.

12. P.K.K. Menon, The History of Freedom Movement in Kerala (1885-1993), Vol II, Trivandrum, 1972, 116-135. Already in the 19th century the British educated Nadars had fought for Sivakashi Temple Entry. See B. Sobhanan, *Temple Entry Movement and the Sivakasi Riots,* Madurai, 1985.

13. See K.K. Kusuman, *The Abstention Movement*, Trivandrum, 1976, 20-50.

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14. The Executive Committee of the Joint Political Congress, *Travancore – The Present Political Problem*, Trivandrum, 1933, 15-30. See also N. V. Joseph, *Nivarthana Prasthanam,* 20-25.

15. D. Daniel, '"Dictator" Kunjan Nadar and Political Movements in Neyyattinkara" in *South Indian History Congress Proceedings Volume of the Twenty Second Annual Session*, Department of History, University of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram, 2000, 70-75.

16. From the very inception of the Travancore State Congress Annie Mascarenas was a member of the Working Committee and the Publicity Committee. In November 1941 she visited Mahatma Gandhi and her stay at Sevagram Wardha enabled her to learn more of the Gandhian principles. Her stay at Sevagram enabled her to associate with other national leaders like Rajendra Prasad, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel, Pattabhi Sitaramair, C. Rajagopalachariar, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, etc. For a detailed study see Joseph Sebastian Thekkedam, "Miss Annie Mascarenas and the Travancore State Congress", *in South Indian History Congress Proceedings Volume of the Twenty Second Annual Session*, Department of History, University of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram, 2000, 167-172.

17. Regarding the participation of Christian women in the nationalist movement G.A. Oddie quoting from the Report of the Indian National Congress (R.I.N.C.)1888, pp. viii-x remarks: "Christian women did not speak in these early sessions of Congress, but nevertheless, made their presence felt at the Bombay meetings of 1888 when women attended Congress for the first time. In an introduction to the official report, the astonished writer drew attention to the fact that 'no less than ten lady delegates graced the assembly'. Among them were Pandita Ramabai, the well known Christian social reformer, and Mesdames Trimbuck and Nikambe, Christian ladies who devoted their time and energy to the cause of both secular and religious education. Oddie makes a comment over the reporter too: "The reporter, probably a Hindu, explained that although Mrs. Trimbuck, like her father, was a Christian, she was a pure Brahmin descent 'and alike physically and mentally' exemplified 'the highest type of Aryan'!". G.A. Oddie, Indian Christians and the National Congress", Indian Church History Review, 2 (1968), 47.

18. G.A. Oddie, "Indian Christians and the National Congress", Indian Church History Review, 2 (1968), 45-54. In the same article the author gives the statistics of the Indian Christian attendance in cities where Congress most frequently met between 1885 to 1910. He observes that the meetings were held in cities such as Allahabad and Nagpur, far removed from the main centres of Christian population. See 52.53 See also George Thomas, "The Christians and the Freedom Movement" in *Indian Christian Directory*, Deepika Publications, 2000, 63-67.

19. Jawaharlal Nehru, *An Autobiography*, New Delhi, 1962 (1932), 616.

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3
Christian Spirit in the Indian Constitution

Sebastian Paul

While caring for the poor, Mother Teresa, in evangelical terms, was preaching the gospel; but in constitutional terms she was helping them to enjoy to the fullest extent possible the fundamental right to life. Right to life as envisaged in Article 21 means the right to live and die in dignity. The concern for the dignity of the individual along with the ennobling principle of justice, which illuminates the entire parchment, is a Christian contribution. Yes, it was a Christian Constitution that we, the people of India, had adopted at the beginning of the Republic.

It was through the development and spread of Christianity that the concept of justice came to pervade all of western thinking. That men, as God's children, are born with certain inalienable rights is a core theme in western political philosophy. The American Declaration of Independence gave epoch-making political importance to this natural law concept when it enumerated as self-evident truths the propositions that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, and that among these are to be found the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. This tenor permeates the Bills of Rights of the American federal and state constitutions.

The fact that the Constitution of India, the precursor of the new Indian renaissance, was drafted in the mid-twentieth century gave an advantage to its makers in so far as they could draw upon a rich fund of human experience, wisdom, heritage and traditions in the area of

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governmental process, starting from Magna Carta to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. One could discern in it the impact of several constitutions, the most important of which is the American Bill of Rights, the counterpart of our fundamental rights. Inspiration has come from the Irish Constitution in the shaping of the Directive Principles of State Policy.

The voyage to human rights jurisprudence had in fact commenced much earlier with determined efforts at reforming the society. The English or Christian influence in this regard is historically evident. Under the evangelical influence of Wilberforce and Charles Grant, Lord William Bentick in 1829 abolished *sutee* (the practice of immolating Hindu widows), forbidden infanticide and child sacrifice, and crushed out of existence the combined ritual of murder and robbery known as *thuggee*. Slavery was abolished some years later. European literature and science were promoted among the natives of India by the government of Bentick, at the instance of Macaulay, with the avowed object of stimulating political and intellectual unity in British India such as India had never known before.

The results of the New Learning were not long in coming, for the year 1857 which saw the outbreak of the Indian Mutiny saw also the establishment of the Universities of Calcutta, Madras and Bombay, formed as examining universities on the model of the London University. English, as a medium of instruction and of official work, not only threw wide open the windows to the West, but it also unbarred the windows to India's past. The men who graduated from the three universities very soon felt the need for Indians to be associated with the government of their own country. This desire found expression in the founding of the Indian National Congress in 1885. That process transformed the face of India; and the mind of India having been instructed in European knowledge demanded, as predicted by Macaulay, English institutions. The proudest day in English history of which Macaulay spoke on 7 March 1835, dawned on 26 January 1950 when the Constitution of India came into force.

The influence of the English constitutional law, theories and practices on the Indian Constitution is quite pervasive. The parliamentary form of government in India closely follows the British model in substance. But democracy, like nationalism, was a concept new to Asia. The benefits which British rule brought the country were considerable and cannot fairly be ignored. It is ironical but true that not until the British era did the consciousness of India and of being Indian grow. In that sense, the concept of India is really a British creation. But Christian presence in India started much earlier than Vasco da Gama, the precursor of European rule, anchoring off the port of Calicut in 1498. Christianity came to India within less than three decades after the death of Christ along with Thomas the Apostle who, according to tradition,

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founded the church in Malabar. However, the Christian impact became indelible during the reign of Britain.

Through English the educated Indian was able to discover the liberal thought enshrined not only in the writings of Burke and Mill but in political documents like Magna Carta and the story of the Long Parliament and to know something of the economic theories of Adam Smith and the utilitarian teachings of Jeremy Bentham. He came to hear of the humanitarianism of Wilberforce and Shaftesbury. He read avidly the works of Shakespeare, Milton and John Bunyan. The marvels of western science and technology unfolded before him, and concepts like democracy, the rule of law and parliamentary government came within his ken. Attracted by the Bible, Ram Mohan Roy, the most prominent of the early Indian reformers, acquired knowledge of Hebrew and Greek in order to comprehend it better. Gandhi had also great reverence for the Bible and was attracted by the Sermon on the Mount. Some of his critics regarded him as a Christianized Hindu.

It was in this background that the Indian Constitution was groomed. Though constituting only less than three per cent of the total population, the Christians were not destined to ignore the Christian principles embedded in the Constitution. They were not passive preachers but aggressive practitioners of those ideals. Serving the poor, deprived and downtrodden segments of the society, the missionaries and social workers are spreading the constitutional principle of equality and dignity. Through countless educational institutions, the Church had empowered the people to make them capable of playing a meaningful role in a participatory democracy. The still unrealized constitutional directive on primary education has more or less become a great Christian ministry. Being pioneers in the field of media and communication, the Christian community is strengthening the foundations of democracy. They not only preach; but also practice what they preach. Though deprived of a due share in power, they make the Constitution a living testament in the light of the teachings of Christ.

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4
Contribution Towards the Emergence of the Conscience of the Nation

S. Arokiasamy

Introduction

The contribution of the Church to nation building is varied. In this article we reflect on how the Church in diverse ways has awakened the social sensitivity of people belonging to different cultures, religions, ethnicity, languages and educated them to concern for others. The image of the Church as being at the service of people, especially the poor is pervasive and strong despite limitations and failures and, of late, prejudicial propaganda of some Hindu fundamentalists against the Church. In this connection I would like to focus on the formation of conscience that is embodied and witnessed by the community of the Church. Formation of conscience is indeed moral formation. The Church has been trying to live as a witness of moral integrity and strength in a world of corruption, violence and organised forms of collective egoism of privileged people and greed of big- money people.

Today the great social questions of justice, human rights, poverty, global inequalities, peace and harmony call for a social mindset and sensitivity on the part of both individual persons and communities. Building a just, participatory and peaceful society belongs to the evangelising mission of the Church (Justice in the World, no.6). Towards this goal, the Church has been fulfilling a great task to promote moral formation, especially formation of conscience for social sensitivity and commitment to the promotion of a just and peaceful society in the

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various commitments of education, development and health care about which there are articles in this volume. In this way the Church has been contributing to the collective conscience of the nation to be sensitive and responsive to the dignity and well being of every person, especially the poor. This is a specifically valuable contribution to nation building.

In this short essay, I propose to reflect on the ethical dimensions of values embodied in the witness and service of the Church for the people of the country. I wish to state that the service of the Gospel in our country includes integrally the promotion of the ethical integrity in the life of the community at large. It has been the consistent commitment of Church organisations and groups and the goal of their services to form citizens who are persons for others. This is the way the Church has been making significant contribution in different areas in the country. This also means that the Church has been making a contribution to the moral conscience of the nation that is sensitive and compassionate to the poor, their rights, their prosperity and finally just, non-discriminated prosperity for all. The Church in India has always affirmed the dignity of every human person, man or woman, young or old and the sacred worth of every human life from conception to death. The centrality of the human person in all human institutions has been the pivotal point of all values for which the Church has been a prophetic voice in the nation (*GS*, 63). It has also been the foundation on which we build our humanity. The Church has been a constant witness to this value before the nation. If the nation has a moral sensitivity and a collective conscience attuned to such a moral vision, the Church in India has made a large contribution in this regard by what she is, by What she does and by what she speaks as a message of the Gospel for the people of the country.

I will reflect on the contribution of the Church towards the Conscience of the nation in the areas of education, health care and human development. There are contributions in this volume on the Church's role in nation building through education and through health care. I will refer to them and bring out not only the value goals and value priorities of the Church in these areas of service but point out their effectiveness in forming the conscience of the nation for justice, peace and the common good.

1. Nation Building and Conscience

In the history of educational service rendered by the Church in India, moral formation has always been integral to all educational initiatives of the Church. Here I do not refer merely to moral education in the curriculum which of late has undergone some progressive changes

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by way of value clarification and human rights education, but I refer to the value goals and priorities embodied in the diverse educational initiatives and institutions by the Church.

India is still a developing country. Education in a developing country must be guided by certain priorities in educational policies in favour of disadvantaged and powerless groups. Among the poor, the literacy rate is still very low. Most of the poor live in rural areas. The situation of the poor in rural areas is further complicated by caste distinctions, and the dalits are in a most disadvantaged and discriminated position. The Catholic Church has made it a point to start schools in rural areas distant from cities and has helped the empowerment of the poor rural masses through education. So too in the areas of tribal population the Church has spread education. The clear case would be that of the Church in Chotanagpur and the Northeast. My point in referring to these initiatives is that education in such areas has been the value priority of the Church and an expression of preferential option for the poor. The social teaching of the Church calls us to live this option. Education is freedom from ignorance and forms of cultural and political slavery. Education is empowerment. It is the promotion of social justice. The Church schools, primary or secondary in rural areas has been an expression of option for the poor. In our schools, the poor, dalits and tribals are treated with dignity. This is a witness to the people of the country that the Church stands for the empowerment of the poor through education and a value-raiser for the public policies of the government and civil society. Such a commitment is a contribution to the conscience of the nation.

1.1 Education and Moral Formation of Students as Persons for Others

While the Church contributes a lot by engaging in various developmental works and promotion of justice and human rights, it stands for the moral responsibility of persons and communities as responsible agents for social transformation. This has contributed and continues to contribute to the formation and awakening of conscience for a social sensitivity and responsiveness to the demands of our relational humanity. The social mission of the Church in our country calls us to work for building and promoting a just and peaceful society.

The policy of our Catholic schools and colleges has always been focused on formation of persons as often stated in their handbooks. While this has been the stated policy of our schools and colleges, the real embodiment of this goal is realised by the teachers and those in administration. This is seen in the pedagogy of communication, the attitude of teachers and administrators towards students from poor backgrounds and discriminated sections of society. The alumni remember and cherish the inspiring personalities among the ranks of their teachers

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and others involved in the administration. This has generated great trust in the parents who send their children to the Catholic schools and colleges in which fundamental values of humanity and character formation are the pillars of educational pedagogy. The poor in the neighbourhood feel confident that their children are welcomed and accepted. Option for the poor has become a common policy of Catholic educational system. This stands out as a witness to the Church's commitment to the poor, the best *apologia* for the Church's commitment to building people.

1.2 Programmes of Social Awareness

Many Church schools have a programme of training students on a regular basis in social awareness, especially helping them to overcome casteist sentiments and prejudices of caste, ethnicity and linguistic prejudices. In the Jesuit high schools in Tamil Nadu, there have been regular programmes during vacation periods to help students overcome caste mindset and promote a sense of human dignity of every person, especially the dalits. The National Student Service programmes (NSS) have been institutionalized for greater effectiveness in our colleges in the South. The students have to put in a number of days in relating to poor villagers for literacy, social awareness and other community-related works all of which contribute to the formation of students as persons for others. In a fast changing globalised world and country, the temptation is to jump into the bandwagon of competition and elitism in our educational institutions. In such a situation, the Catholic educational institutions stand committed to serving the people, especially the poor. Nation building is always building people.

1.3 Education Unto Values

Formation of conscience calls for education unto values. When we want to communicate respect for human dignity of every human being, the powerless ones, our attitudes have to be embodied in our ways and ethos of welcoming, courtesy, hospitality and our respectful commitment to workers' wellbeing to whom we pay just family wages without any show of paternalism; we bear witness to those values that build people and thus contribute to a nation built on justice, respect for dignity of people, peace and harmony. In our schools and colleges, moral education and conscience formation have been given decisive importance. In the autonomous college of Tamil Nadu, there is a department of value education with meaningful projects supported by well-prepared curriculum and textbooks. The Church schools and colleges consider this task as part of the Churche's evangelising mission. In this way students come to develop an attitude sensitive and compassionate to others, especially the powerless

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ones in society. The Church characterises itself by what it is and lives and thus contributes to nation building by building people. If nation building is not building people, what else could it be?

2. Value Perspectives of the Church in the Health Care Ministry

The Church's service in the area of health care has been enormous. In this volume there is an article that deals with this. I focus on the value priorities operative in these services, the witness they bear to the people of the nation. The Catholic Church has been involved in health care services for a long period. Today 22% of health care institutions of the country are run by the Christian community – a remarkable percentage for a minority of 2.3 of the population of the country. The article by Fr Alex Vadakumthala in the volume gives the statistical figures of Catholic health care institutions in the country. What is of importance is the value priorities of these institutions for the service of the people of the country, especially the poor. In an increasingly globalised world, health care is being commercialised- making health care services less and less accessible to the poor. A remarkable thing is that 85% of health care services rendered by the Catholic Church is in the remotest rural areas- an embodiment of the preferential option for the poor and effective witness to the people of the Church's commitment to the service of the neglected and the marginalised. Moreover, rehabilitation centres, mental health care centres, centres for alternative systems of treatment of diseases and non-formal health care initiatives are a further evidence of the Church's commitment to the service of the sick, areas that need special attention in a developing country like ours. In the present scenario of growing commercialisation of medical care, the Church stands committed to the health care service to the poor reminding the country of its own options and value priorities in its health care systems. Dedicated service to the service of the sick, especially the marginalised is an integral part of nation building. Without such a dedicated health care service accessible to people, we cannot build our nation. It also contributes to the collective conscience of the nation to prioritise the country's health care services according to principles of justice and charity.

The Church has some priority areas in health care according to its own preferential option for the poor, namely prevention of HIV/AIDS infection and care for HIV-infected patients, prevention of leprosy and care for leprosy patients and prevention of TB infection and care for TB patients. In Indian society, HIV-infected persons and lepers are kept at a distance and care for them is poor. But the Church in its evangelical commitment to these excluded renders

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a service in compassionate care. This is also a ringing reminder to the country that these patients are our brothers and sisters and that to these patients the country has an obligation of service and compassion.

In our health care institutions, the poor patient is not a number but a person who needs humanised care and compassion in medical treatment. Hence health care is understood in a holistic sense. This approach of holistic care also marks the service of the Church health care institutions, an approach that should characterise all health care institutions of the country.

Another important value that Catholic health care institutions and initiatives stand for and promote is respect for human life from conception to its end as sacred and worthy of care and reverence (*EV*, 2). In a situation, where human life is easily destroyed by hatred and revenge, protection and service of human life in all stages from conception to its natural end has been the consistent and committed stand of the Catholic health care institutions. Pro-life policy of the Catholic hospitals rejecting abortion practice and ethos is a prophetic sign in a country of easy abortion. This is also a contribution to building people and serving life. Such a stand and service is a challenge to the collective conscience of the nation.

3. Blessed Teresa of Kolkata – Challenging Symbol of Love for the Conscience of the Nation

When we reflect on the contribution of the Church to nation building, we have to acknowledge the contribution of Blessed Theresa of Kolkata to the collective conscience of the nation. In the year Mother Theresa of Kolkata is beatified, the whole nation acknowledges her as the symbol of love of the poorest of the poor. Her life of service and that of the missionaries of charity have become an enfleshment of the essence of the Gospel, which Catholic institutions' health care and personnel with varying ways have embodied. Mother Theresa, now blessed Theresa of Kolkata has helped to affirm the infinite dignity of the poorest person as a child of God deserving the loving attention of the whole community. Mother Theresa's life and mission, now nationally and globally acknowledged has regenerated a standard to judge the development of the nation. There is no development of the country without the affirmation of the dignity and sacred worth of every human person, especially the least and the last and promotion of their life and wellbeing. In the task of nation building, service and liberation of the least and the last (antyodaya) will be the decisive value perspective in the collective responsibility of the nation. We can say that the person of Mother Theresa and her charism have put the poor, especially the poorest of the poor at the heart of all work for development

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of the country. In a country of many religions and cultures, service of the poor, especially poorest of the poor as lived by Theresa of Kolkata is the spiritual élan that touches the hearts of all who follow different religions and live in different cultures and creates solidarity of the people of the country around the poor as brothers and sisters. This is a unique contribution to nation building and peace and communal harmony.

4. Prison Ministry

Prisons in the country have been mostly overcrowded, have been badly managed, and they have often strengthened convicted criminals instead of reforming them. Here Church groups and NGOs have been playing a constructive role through their services. Prison system in the country is largely confined to being a punitive system and thinly focused on reformatory education and rehabilitation. The latter is often left to the good will of the DIGs of prisons. About ten years ago when Kiran Bedi took over as DIG of the central prison of Tihar, she invited voluntary groups to help the prisoners towards reform through education and to prepare them for rehabilitation when they leave prison. Like most of the prisons in the country, Tihar Jail meant for 3000 thousand prisoners houses 10,000 prisoners. Such overcrowding leads to unhealthy conditions of high stress situations and even hidden drug habits. Profiting by the invitation of Kiran Bedi, local Church groups of sisters and theology students have been rendering remarkable service through programmes of education and other basic human and spiritual needs of the prisoners. The Prison Ministry of India has been coordinating the ministry in different parts of the country. The Church groups guided by the Gospel of love bring a healing touch to the prisoners by listening and understanding their stress situation, help them to establish contact with their families besides helping them to contact lawyers for free legal aid and work through educational efforts towards reform and rehabilitation. Such a service not only embodies Christ's words " when I was in prison you visited me " (Mt 25: 36) but also puts the imperative of prison reform on the conscience of the nation and humanisation of the prison and penal system of the country.

In this connection, we must mention the free legal aid rendered by a number of Catholic lawyers for detenues, especially for the innocent ones. Indian Prisons are filled with detenues awaiting trial for years serving terms beyond prison term that could be given by conviction. The legal aid service of lawyers to these prisoners is also a valuable contribution to nation building.

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5. Contribution to the Secular Polity of the Country

The Christian community has made a significant contribution when in the Constituent Assembly, the Christian community through Fr Jerome D'Souza renounced separate electorate and expressed trust in the majority community to respect and treat the minority community on a par with all as citizens of the country. That was an important contribution of the Christian community to the secular nature of the Constitution of the Republic. For nation building the secular character and ethos of our polity is essential to shape and forge harmony and peace for all people of the country. The Church remains committed to secularity of the Constitution of the Republic.

Secular character of the Republic is a positive force for peace and communal harmony in a multicultural and multireligious society that India is.

6. Contribution to Peace and Communal Harmony

Another important contribution the Church has made and continues to make is service of peace and harmony between communities in the country and its role in working for healing and reconciliation in times of communal conflicts. After the assassination of Indira Gandhi in Delhi, the Sikh community was devastated. More than 2500 Sikhs, all innocent were massacred. The Archdiocese of Delhi went into action and brought diocesan clergy, religious and lay people together to work for the Sikh refugees in camps to offer relief and other immediately necessary assistance but more importantly to listen to the agonising stories of the victims and be a support and strength in solidarity with them. In this effort other volunteers of different religions and secular organisations formed one team to bring healing to a traumatisd and wounded community. For a peace march through the affected areas of the city, Mother Theresa initiated prayer service. Her presence attracted all people of good will for the peace march. The Church groups together with others conducted interreligious prayer services in which the desecrated religious symbols of Sikhs were used to express reverence for the faith of these people and prayed for healing and forgiveness.

So too in the recent post-Godhra carnage, the local Church groups were the foremost in reaching out to the victims despite highly charged situation and offering solidarity to the victimised people. Up to today the Church groups have been working for justice to the victims, for rehabilitation and for healing, peace and harmony. Nation building demands working for peace and reconciliation. In the collective conscience of the nation, concern for healing and reconciliation is essential in a country that easily falls prey to communal conflicts and violence.

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The Church through her consistent commitment to the promotion of justice and fostering of peace and harmony between communities in the country has been contributing to nation building while strengthening value perspectives in the collective conscience of the people of the country. Working for peace and reconciliation will never cease to be the agenda of the Church. This is an essential dimension of the evangelising mission of the Church.

In conclusion, we can confidently affirm that the Catholic Church in India despite being a tiny minority and with many other limitations remains a dynamic community of moral witness in a fast changing India. What she is and what she does embody a commitment to values of true religion and humanity. If human person is the way of the Church (*R H*), the Church in India in her witness and service of love lives and follows this way. It contributes to the collective conscience of the nation to stand for dignity, and freedom and wellbeing of every human person, especially of the weak and the vulnerable of our society. This is the way of building people and the nation. The Church in her fidelity to the Gospel of Christ will continue to be the leaven of the Kingdom of God for social transformation and the light and the salt for a new India.

Notes

1. Justice in the World, 6.
2. cf. Dr Babu Joseph SVD, (ed), *Tracing the Footsteps of Mother Teresa*, CBCI Centre and Varanasi Diocese, Delhi, 2003.

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5
Harmony and National Integration Through Culture and Development

Sebastian Karotemprel

Introduction

People in general look for peace and harmony. Harmony and national integration are *sine qua non* factor and condition for a multi religious, multi-ethnic and pluri-cultural society such as India. In order to have peace and harmony it is not sufficient to have material development only. It is here that Christianity can make a contribution. The Christian vision of God, universe and man is capable of promoting harmony, integration and development of people. When we look at the situation of India we can see that Christianity has played this role and continues to play a vital role in promoting culture and development of the people of India. In this paper I concentrate *my attention* only on the North East Indian (NEI) context.

1. The Tribal World of NEI

Both numerically and qualitatively, Christianity is an established fact in *Northeast India*. In the course of its 175 year-old presence among the tribal peoples of NEI, Christianity has accompanied them from an isolated and in some ways illiterate and primitive living conditions to modern living conditions. No one will deny that Christianity, for better or worse, has shaped, along with other sociological factors, the lives of the people of NEI, directly and indirectly.

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An evaluation of the role played by Christianity in NEI is, by its very nature, a difficult and complex task. An absolutely neutral and objective evaluation is impossible. Some do it on the basis of ideologically vitiated pre-suppositions. The recently published *Religious Demography of India*[1] is an example of such biased evaluations. The book carries a *Foreword* by L.K. Advani.[2] Following the divisive Hindutva ideology it categorizes, *a priori*, the people of India according to their religious affiliation into Indian Religionists (Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, and the Traditional or Tribal Religionists) and all others as non-Indian Religionists.[3] Muslims and Christians are gratuitously called non-Indian Religionists. Curiously enough, the tribal population of NEI is put among Indian Religionists. All through the book, the authors assume that Christianization of NEI is a grave danger to national unity and integration. The Hindutva ideology of hatred, divisiveness and opposition to Christianization *reeks* from every page of the book. Unfortunately, all this is done by the authors and their promoters, without consulting the tribal people themselves. They write from the ivory tower of pre-conceived ideologies and paradigms. With one contemptuous word "dkhar" (outsider) and its equivalents in most tribal languages, the tribal people dismiss the Hindutva assumption of the book, namely, of categorizing them as *Indian Religionists*.

Secondly, an analysis of the role of Christianity in promoting harmony and integration in NEI can only indicate the dominant trends. It cannot ignore the weaknesses and failures of Christians and their Churches collectively. Christianity is not a purely spiritual movement, but also a human enterprise and a sociological phenomenon. As such, there will always be shadows and lights in such a large canvas as Christianity in NEI. The following analysis, therefore, can only indicate the major thrust of Christianity in NEI, keeping always in mind that something contrary may be said against its overwhelmingly positive role.

2. A Brief Historical Survey of Christianity in NEI

The two major forms of Christianity that have been operative in NEI are the Protestant Christianity and the Catholic Christianity. A brief historical survey of Christianity in NEI will be in order to understand its role in nation-building.

a. Protestant Christianity in NEI

American Baptists and Welsh Presbyterians were the first to introduce Christianity to the tribal peoples of NEI. The Protestant missionary work started around 1830.[4] Protestant Christianity spread rapidly in Mizoram. By 1930, most Mizos belonged to the Baptist or Presbyterian Churches. Similarly, the Baptist Church made headway into Nagaland by the

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middle of the 20th century. A large part of the tribal population of Meghalaya is Protestant. Another area into which Protestant Christianity spread is Manipur, especially among the various hill tribals while the Meitheis of the Imphal plateau, though originally tribal, have been mostly hinduized. During the last 25 years it has spread into Arunachal Pradesh.

b. Catholic Christianity in NEI

Catholic missionaries had several sporadic contacts with NEI from the XVII century onwards. They used Assam as a passageway to Tibet and China. NEI became a *missio sui juris* (an independent mission) only in 1890 when it was entrusted to the Society of the Divine Saviour (SDS), the Salvatorians. Thus, systematic missionary work among the native people of NEI began in 1890.[5] By 1914, the Salvatorians managed to establish the Catholic Church in NEI on very sound foundations. With the expulsion of the German Salvatorians from India by the British government during World War I, the Catholic mission was entrusted to the Jesuit Fathers from 1914 to 1921.

In 1922 Salesians of Don Bosco were entrusted with the "Assam Mission." From 1945 onwards, Indian Salesians joined the ranks of the foreign missionaries. Again, Indian diocesan priests from Kerala started missionary work in NEI in 1954.[6] The Catholic community today stands around 1.3 million.[7]

3. Role of Christianity in Promoting Harmony and Integration

a. Defense of Tribal Identity

Harmony and integration imply peaceful co-existence and mutual adjustments in recognizing the identity of each one. The merit of Christianity in general is that it was quick to recognize the identity of the tribal people, support, defend and promote it by various means, especially by the promotion of tribal languages, cultures and customs.

b. Integration

Christianity has succeeded in bringing people together on inter-tribal and on supra-tribal platforms. The fact of becoming Christians brought them into contact with all the Churches of India and abroad in conferences, in all India associations and international meetings. Such contacts and exposure were an integrating factor between tribal peoples and the larger Indian society. Writing on this topic, Downs says: "As already suggested, not only has Christianity been a vehicle for bringing together different tribes and also the peoples of both hills and

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plains, but it has also been one of the main agencies of positive association between the people of the region and those in other parts of the country."[8] Both within NEI and in the rest of India, Christian and non-Christian tribals have come into religious, social and administrative contacts with the people of India. Although such contacts have had unavoidable limitations, they served as an integrative force.

c. An Added Worldview

A worldview embraces one's vision of the universe, of mankind and of oneself. Our responses to and relationship with the universe and with other human beings are conditioned by our worldview. The horizons of the tribal worldview were mostly limited to one's family, village, clan and tribe. This limited worldview was not shattered by Christianity but enlarged to include the whole family of man and nature.

Not all Christians may have fully assimilated the new worldview supplied by Christianity or made it an operative principle of conduct. But there is no doubt that the process has been set in motion. Through various Church organizations, exchange of personnel, studies abroad and service and leadership functions in India and abroad, exposure to a world different from the tribal world was made possible. Exposure to a new world with its culture or cultures, with its economic systems and structures, its political philosophies and forms of government, its educational and social infrastructure, in general totally different from those of tribal peoples living in isolated geographical and cultural pockets, was bound to alter the worldview of the tribal people. And this could be considered one of the major areas of impact of Christianity on the tribal people.[9]

Christianity has, in fact, been one of the most powerful integrating agencies within and among the tribes, as well as between the peoples of the hills and those of the plains. It has also played a significant role, popular notions to the contrary notwithstanding, in the process of integrating the hill people of NEI with the rest of the country.[10]

d. Literacy and Education

When the Christian missionaries came into NEI about 175 years ago, they found a tribal society that was practically non-literate. Often even before places of worship were built, primary schools were built. Even today in many parts of Arunachal Pradesh, in remote and inaccessible villages in mountains and valleys, the only educational presence is that of the Christian missionary. If literacy rate in NEI stands around 70%, much of the credit for it must go to all the Christian Churches that have made literacy their main goal.

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Education in schools, boarding schools and colleges has brought together thousands of students of tribal and non-tribal origins into close interaction. They have promoted religious harmony and national integration. There is no better way of integration and harmonization of cultures than bringing young minds and hearts to live together, study and play together and strike life-long relationships. Education has helped to introduce the tribal people many new avenues in life and opened the doors to many new possibilities. They acquired the capacity to assert themselves, question powers that would dominate and exploit them.

e. Tribal Languages and Literature

Most tribal languages were only spoken languages without a script, grammars, printed books and literature till the arrival of the Christian missions. Even a non-tribal language such as Assamese was saved from extinction by Christian missionaries: "They provided the Assamese with a modern literature and literary style, both through their own compositions and the publications of the Baptist Mission Press at Sibsagar and by stimulating a literary renaissance."[11]

Speaking of the contribution of the American Baptist Missionaries in Assam, B. K. Barua says: "The missionaries definitely achieved one thing. Up till now Assamese literature was more or less an oral literature confined to the villages and the Ahom court. Now it takes a definitely urban complexion, and at Gawahati, Sibsagar, Nowgong and such other headquarter towns literary circles sprang up."[12]

The process of saving tribal languages from extinction by giving them a script, grammars and building up a body of literature is still continuing in many areas of NEI such as Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram. Once the script and grammar of the language are established the next step is the translation of the Bible or at least the New Testament into the given language.[13] Once a tribal language is established, the growth of literature is assured if the tribe concerned has a sufficient number of people to justify publication of magazines, newspapers, scholastic books, hymn books, books for worship and literary works. The Khasi language is an example of such progress.[14]

Translations and original works in tribal languages continue to grow. One significant example is the projected 80-volume commentary on the Bible by Fr. Sylvanus Sngi Lyngdoh. He has already published 24 volumes during the past 15 years.[15]

f. Transition from Tribal Society to an Integrated Society

One of the major contributions of the Churches in NEI towards national integration during the last 175 years is to have helped the tribal society to move from isolation into an integrated

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part of the mainstream national life. The Churches have been mainly responsible for the more or less smooth transition from "tribal" social organizations towards "modernity".

Today the tribals form part, though not fully, of the national democratic form of government. Their "tribal" economy has absorbed the modern national and international economic structures. The tribal society has more or less come under the purview of the national administrative services. Thus the tribal people form part of the Indian administrative services. They are part of the Indian police forces, the defense establishment, Indian Foreign Service, the Indian legal system, the Indian industrial complex, and the Indian educational system.

It must be admitted that the participation of the tribal population of NEI in national life is slow, is not uniform for all tribal groups and not without resistance to full integration.[16] This is partly due to the neglect of the region in general. On the other hand, there is no doubt that the process of integration has been set in motion.

The Churches in NEI have made some outstanding contribution towards national life, harmony and integration. They have produced a speaker of the Indian parliament,[17] a chief election commissioner,[18] several governors,[19] several ambassadors,[20] a central minister,[21] several vice-chancellors of universities,[22] a chairperson of the Union Public Service Commission.[23] The Churches have also produced outstanding professors in universities such as R. R. Thomas, a Khasi, who occupied the distinguished Chair of Philosophy in Calcutta University. This is an impressive performance by the tribals of NEI by any standards and an example of national integration both for the tribals and the mainstream Indian society.

We may, therefore, conclude that Christianity, by design or by chance, did help the tribal society towards transition to modernity. Downs is not far from the truth when he says: "Whichever way one views it, the fact remains that the Christian faith has served an important social function in the North East, and that this at least in part accounts for the large numbers that embraced the new faith in certain areas."[24]

4. Integration and Harmony Through Development of Persons

a. Empowerment of Women

Christian Churches in NEI have set in motion a vast movement towards the empowerment of women. The education of women and girl-children is a typical area where the Christian Churches have played a key role in introducing the concept, initiating a movement and

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providing the necessary infrastructure, and material and human resources for the empowerment of women.

The education of women and girl-children in Assam was initiated by Christian missionaries.[25] Similarly the education of the Adivasis of the Tea Gardens of Assam was undertaken by missionaries through a large network of primary and secondary schools in most tea gardens of Assam.[26]

The problem of development among the Adivasi women in the Tea Gardens of Assam is another huge agenda for all social workers. Through school and college education, vocational training, *grihini* schools, and self-employment schemes the Churches are a major agent of change among them.[27] Women's education, emancipation and empowerment in the tribal societies may be considered a major contribution towards the development of the tribal societies of NEI. This is acknowledged by the tribals themselves and by historians: "Time and time again both missionaries and indigenous Christians refer to the positive changes in the status of women brought about by Christianity."[28]

Missionaries have recruited women from abroad and from among the tribals to speed up the work of development among women. Speaking of their work, Downs says:

> *These in their turn encouraged the development of women workers among the local Christians - variously called Bible women, women evangelists or women pastors among the Protestants, and indigenous women religious among the Catholics. The indigenous congregation of sisters founded in 1942, Missionary Sisters of Mary Help of Christians, has been the most successful recruiter of local religious.*[29]

b. A Network of Developmental Works

From the very beginning of the Christian mission in NEI, development of peoples was an essential dimension. J. B. Bhattacharjee says: "To be more precise Christianity involves the missionaries in two types of work (i) spiritual and (ii) temporal. These two types of activities are not only interdependent but also inseparable."[30] Development always starts with persons. By helping young people to qualify themselves as doctors, nurses, teachers, social workers, engineers, technicians, etc., the Churches have multiplied the agents of development. Thus Bhattacharjee speaks of every Christian as an agent of social change: "Christianity has made an impact on the people of the North-Eastern region particularly in Nagaland, Mizoram, Manipur and Meghalaya as regards development and change are concerned."[31]

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Apart from the vast network of educational institutions at all levels,[32] hundreds of developmental projects have been initiated by the Churches in NEI. What is said about Don Bosco Technical School is representative of many other areas of development in NEI: "(This) could happen because of the role played by the Don Bosco Technical School which has been over the years imparting new types of skill and those acquiring the skills found good opportunities in the construction and other sectors of the economy and succeeded in having a good footing for advancing economically and educationally"[33]

We need only enumerate some of the developmental projects in NEI established by the Churches. There are several formal and non formal technical schools, agricultural training centres, shelter homes for youth at risk, printing schools, training centres for competitive examinations, teachers, B. Ed. colleges, self-help projects, computer training centres, night schools for drop-outs, employment training centres, leadership training centres, etc.

Thus as a result of Christian presence and efforts, many tribals received vocational, medical and legal education and large numbers of teachers, lawyers, doctors, public servants, writers, modern farmers, landowners, traders, industrial and business pioneers, salaried preachers, and evangelists formed part of the tribal middle class.[34]

c. Healthcare Works

Healthcare is one of the main foundations of any form of development. The concept of modern healthcare was almost non existent in vast areas of NEI till the arrival of the missionaries. True, *country medicine*, now called alternative medicine did play a role in the life of the people, but it was inadequate. In fact, any system of medicine, whether allopathic, homeopathic, ayurvedic or naturopathic, is inadequate for all health problems.

With Christian mission, preventive, curative, surgical healthcare became a powerful movement. Major hospitals such as Khasi Presbyterian Hospital in Shillong, Nazareth Hospital in Shillong, other hospitals in Guwahati, Kohima, Imphal, Chabua, Dibrugarh, Tura, Haflong, etc., and dispensaries in remote villages form part of a large network of healthcare in the whole of NEI.[35] Healthcare also introduced the concept of healing ministry and the training of nurses as a religious vocation and mission. Today the Churches conduct a number of nursing schools in NEI.

The Churches conduct several other humanitarian and health-related works in favour of the mentally retarded, physically handicapped, those impaired in speech and sight, rickets-affected children, dyslexic children and those caught up in drug-addiction.

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The most important and the most comprehensive anthropological museum in NEI is the Don Bosco Centre for Indigenous Cultures, Shillong. Smaller, but significant cultural museums are found in Shillong, Dibrugarh, Dimapur and Imphal.

The Churches in NEI run a number of Bible Colleges, Clergy-Pastor Training Centres, Theological Colleges and Philosophical Colleges for the preparation of high level clergy and pastors. We may mention some of the most important among them such as Jorhat Theological College, Shillong Theological College, Oriens Theological College, Sacred Heart Theological College, etc. They are important centres for the promotion of ecclesiastical and secular culture in the region.

5. Forces of Disintegration: Insurgency, Militancy, Resistance, Separatism

No one can deny that there are negative and debilitating forces at work in NEI. Often vested interests, anti-minority groups within and without the government blame Christianity for them. This is a serious charge and must be answered.

In the first place the accusers must explain the existence of similar forces such as the Naxalite movement in West Bengal and other states, Peoples' War Groups in Andhra Pradesh, Khalistan movement in Punjab, Shiv Sena in Maharashtra, Pro- LTTE movement in Tamil Nadu, etc.

Secondly, separatist movements in NEI take on a fresh significance because of the region's geo-political situation, surrounded as it is by Bhutan, China, Myanmar, and Bangladesh. The geo-political factor, no doubt, has favoured the growth and continuance of insurgency and militancy.

Thirdly, corrupt administrators and politicians at the Centre in collusion with their local counterparts in NEI have siphoned off thousands of crores of developmental resources from developmental works. By the government's own admission, only 15% of developmental money finally reaches the people.[37] All the rest is looted and continues to be looted with immunity because the administrators who have also charge of the control mechanisms which could make individuals, groups and departments of the government accountable are themselves corrupt.

During the last 60 years or so sections of the police force, the income tax department, the judiciary, the auditing agencies, the electoral process, the party systems, the legislative bodies

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and similar agencies have all been vitiated and emasculated to suit and favour the political-administrative-contractual complex in India.

Peoples' patience has a limit. The Soviet system of repression, command economy and military control collapsed under its own historical weight after about 70 years. Either we reform or will see more peoples' war groups! Christianity has nothing to do with it. Obviously, Christians being better educated better informed and better organized than their counterparts elsewhere, we will be in a position to see through the political and economic fraud perpetrated on people better than the illiterate masses of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh, reduced to silence through 3000 years of caste oppression.

To speak of *Christian insurgency* is an insult not only to the intelligence of Christians but of all educated Indians. This has been done recently by Dr. Togadia and Mr. Venkaiah Naidu who have coined this new phrase *Christian insurgency* in NEI.[38]

Successive administrations, the military and irresponsible and too frequent use of the CRPF and other arms of the government have alienated many groups of people such as the tribals, the Kashmiris and the Dalits. Discrimination, intimidation and harassment of innocent civilians have alienated the people and their goodwill. Government-supported Hindu groups and agencies are favoured while tribal Christians are discriminated against. Their freedom of movement is limited or even denied. *Inner line pass* and check points are only a mockery or at best a joke. They are meant to harass the *bona fide* citizens. No wonder, then, that over decades, people become militants and insurgents.[39]

Speaking of the problem of insurgency, Patricia Mukhim, a reputed journalist, says:

> *As a body, it (the Church) was responsible for brokering peace in many conflict-torn areas. The Church has been a pioneer in education and health initiatives in the region. Education is a great eye-opener. The educated person has a liberated mind that can understand and discern injustice when it is perpetrated on an unsuspecting people...The Northeast, too, may be a conflict-torn area because of historical wrongs. This has nothing to do with Christianity.*[40]

6. Weaknesses and Failures

a. Divisions, Hostilities, Rivalries

The role played by the Christian Churches in NEI is not all lights. There have been and there still are serious shadows and dark holes. The first among them is the transference of bitter denominational rivalries and hostilities of Europe and the United States into a historically

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innocent tribal population. The hostilities were more pronounced between the Protestant Churches and the Catholic Church.

One reason for the hostilities is the historical background of the Post-Reformation Churches and the Catholic Church. Inter-Church conflicts from the home countries were transferred to the tribal areas of NEI[41]. Secondly, many Protestant Churches went along tribal lines in Christianization. As a result, inter-tribal rivalries became inter-Church rivalries.

Inter-Church tension was particularly bitter between Catholics and Protestants. Historically, the British policy was "*cujus regio, ejus ecclesia*". That meant an area was given exclusively to a Protestant Church to evangelize. Hence they considered the Catholics as intruders. Thus Horam wrote: "Religion is at the same time both a unifying and dividing factor. The age-old rivals of Christendom, Roman Catholics and Protestants have brought their rivalry into Naga society as well. The schisms which rend the Church affect the harmony in the Naga world."[42]

b. Superficial Christianity

For theological and historical reasons, the preaching and communication of the Christian message by some Churches tended to be superficial. Theologically, Luther's famous dictum *pecca fortiter, crede fortius* (sin as you want, only believe even more forcefully) seems to have been followed if not *ex professo*, at least *de facto* by some Christians. At times, some missionary efforts were directed to numerical strength rather than true conversion of heart. Thus some forms of Christianity that was communicated to the tribal people tended to be shallow and left them in a "liminal" situation, allowing them to swing between "tribalism" in its negative connotation and Christian conduct of life. This has happened also within the same Church with some sections of the converts.

c. All Pervasive Corruption

In a number of States, Christians are holding the reins of government and in control of political parties. One would expect Christian administrators to have a heart for social justice, honesty in administration, social responsibility and accountability to the public. On the contrary, several Christian politicians and administrators have amassed huge amounts of wealth. The criminal nexus of politician-bureaucrat-contractor in looting the tax payers' money, budgetary allotments, developmental money funnelled through various regional bodies, central and state universities[43] and other channels is visible all through NEI, among Christians as any others.

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In some cases, Christian legislators have shown little social and civic sense in introducing reforms in land-holdings, taxation and preventing concentration of wealth in the hands of a few tribals. In a number of States urban land, capital, political power and government machinery are in the hands of a few tribals. Christian principles of social justice do not seem to have an impact upon the social conscience of some of them. As a result, tremendous disparities have been introduced into a relatively egalitarian tribal society. To this extent, Christianity has failed to set in motion social harmony, integration of peoples and their development.

d. Anti-Outsider Phobia

During the last 25 years or so the tribal society in NEI has been in the grip of anti-outsider phobia. All will admit that some degree of protection of tribal economic and cultural interests is necessary to prevent large-scale "invasion" of non tribals into tribal areas, leading to disruptive demographic changes and elimination of tribal cultures. Yet an exaggerated anti-outsider phobia can be damaging to tribal economic and cultural interests. It can lead to the flight of capital, professional expertise and professional services. No society today can avoid being interdependent. Anti-outsider phobia does hinder the process of social harmony, economic development and transition into modernity. In concrete situations, some Christians and Churches have failed to give enlightened leadership in the matter.

7. Conclusion

The role of Christianity in NEI in promoting integration social harmony through development and culture may be discussed and evaluated from two different angles and with two different criteria. We may evaluate it objectively or relatively.

Viewed objectively, no one can deny that, like any other human enterprise, the Christian movement in NEI has lights and shadows. We can admit of some serious black holes too. Even granting the shadows and even using the objective criterion, it cannot be denied that the light outshines the shadows. Darkness cannot overpower the lights. If we could wish away, by some magical power, the entire Christian phenomenon in NEI, what remains of NEI would be a poor caricature of the region.

If a relative and comparative criterion is used, it will be clear that the presence of Christianity has been a strong integrative and developmental force in NEI. Let us use the criterion of religious demography. The Hindu-Muslim divide has grown in the past years especially after the wanton Gujarat programs under BJP government supported by and dependent on RSS

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and VHP extremism. The Hindu-Sikh divide after the 1984 massacre of the Sikhs is still an open wound that needs to be healed.

The millennia-old caste divide within the Indian society, especially the Hindu society, itself is still crying for a solution. The economic divide between the rich and the poor has grown in recent years despite the deceptive facade of "India Shining" campaign at the cost of taxpayers' money. All this means that measured by the relative and comparative socio-economic criterion, the tribal society in NEI is far better integrated than some other societies elsewhere in India.

We may compare the tribal society in NEI with the society in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh or Madhya Pradesh or in large tracts of rural population in other States, using a cultural-educational criterion. Literacy rate in NEI stands around 70% today in stark contrast to the illiteracy level of 60% to 70% in several parts of India. The educational scenario at high school, college and university levels shows relatively faster growth in NEI due to Christian contribution to education at all levels.

Sociologists could use several other criteria to measure the levels of integration, harmony and development achieved by a given society under the impact of various historical forces, such as per capita income, access to education, social mobility, human development parameters (HDP), living standards, habitat, access to medical and healthcare facilities, etc. On any count, the tribal society in NEI will be seen to be better off than several other societies.

Finally, the tribal people themselves must evaluate the contribution of Christianity to NEI and not the vested, communal and divisive groups such as the VHP-RSS combine. Let them visualize a tribal society that retained its pristine social, cultural and economic infrastructure, but sans Christianity. Let them visualize a tribal society that had become a Hindu society with all its attendant caste-system and other social and dietary shackles. The alternatives will be found to be no better than the present Christian demographic reality of NEI

In conclusion, I have no doubt that if history were to draw up a balance sheet of Christianity in NEI today purely as a sociological phenomenon, it will score higher marks than other imaginary but possible social phenomena in the area of social harmony and integration.

NOTES:

1. A.P. Joshi, M.D. Srinivas, J.K. Bajaj, *Religious Demography of India*, Chennai, Centre for Policy Studies Chennai, 2003.
2. Ibidem, see L.K. Advani's "Foreword" pp. xv-xvi.

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3. Cf. Ibidem, p. xviii.
4. Cf. F. S. Downs, "India, Churches of North East India," in *A Dictionary of Asian Christianity*, ed. Scott Sunquist et al. Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 2001, p. 363-65. .Cf. also F. S. Downs, *Christianity in NEI*, Serampore (Calcutta), Serampore College, 1976; F. S. Downs, *History of Christianity in India, Vol. V, Part 5, North East India in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, Bangalore, The Church History Association of India, 1992, pp. 65-89. Hereafter Downs, *History*.
5. Cf. Downs, *History*, p. 92.
6. Cf. S. Karotemprel, *Evangelizing Methods in NEI*, Shillong, 2003, pp. 17-18 (for private circulation only). Hereafter, Karotemprel, *Impact*.
7. Cf. Ibidem, pp. 17-18.
8. Downs, *History*, p. 135.
9. Cf. Karotemprel, *Impact*, p.10.
10. Downs, *History*, p. 131.
11. Downs, *History*, p. 187
12. B. K. Barua, *History of Assamese Literature*, pp. 106-7, Delhi, 1964, pp. 106-107.
13. The latest example is *The New Testament in Maram, Catholic Association*, Maram, 2004.
14. Cf. Downs, *History*, p. 190; "Contributions of the Catholic Church to the Cultures of NEI," *Indian Missiological Review*, 12(1990), p. 180. Cf. also Mrinal Miri, ed., *Linguistic Situation in North East India* (1982), pp. 38-43.
15. So far 24 volumes have been published and run into nearly 12,000 pages.
16. Cf. *The Telegraph*, 17. 2. 2004, p. 1, on the neglect of NEI. The region's history does not figure in national history books.
17. Purno Sangma, a Garo.
18. James Lyngdoh, a Khasi.
19. Ripple Kyndiah (Governor of Mizoram)
20. R.Wallang (Seychells), Rudolf Warjri (Chile), R. Major Khathing (Burma), F. Manners (Indonesia), G. G. Swell (Switzerland).
21. Ripple Kyndiah (Minister for Tribal Welfare).
22. B. Pakhem (NEHU), Milton Sangma, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (NEHU, Tura), Lalthang Thuanaga (Pro-Vice Chancellor, Aizwal).
23. Rose Mathew (UPS, Chairperson, N. Delhi).
24. Downs, *History*, p. 209.
25. Cf. Downs, History, pp. 159-160.
26. Cf. S. Karotemprel and B. Dutta Roy, ed., *Tea Garden Labourers of Northeast India*, Shillong, VIP, p. 364; Walter Fernandes, et al. ed. *Primary Education of Plantation Labourers' Children in Assam: Draft Report*, North Eastern Social Research Centre, Guwahati (no date).
27. Cf. Elizabeth Kaniampady, *Status of Women Working in the Tea Plantations (A Case Study)*, Akansha Publishing House, New Delhi, 2003.
28. F.S. Downs, *History*, p.159.

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29. Downs, *History*, p. 162; Cf. *(I M R)*, 12. (1990).
30. J.B. Bhattacharjee, ed. *Sequences of Development in North East India*, N. Delhi, Omsons Publications, 1989, p. 19. Hereafter, Bhattacharjee, *Sequence.*
31. Ibidem, p.20.
32. Cf. P.N. Dutta Ray, "The Emergence and Role of the Middle Class in the Khasi-Jaintia Hills 1824-1950", in B. Dutta Ray, *The Emergence and Role of Middle Class in North-East India*, New Delhi, Uppal, 1983, p. 132. Hereafter Dutta Ray, *Emergence.*
33. B.B. Dutta, "Emergence and Role of Middle Class in Meghalaya", in Dutta Ray, *Emergence,* p. 174.
34. Cf. P.N. Dutta Ray, in Dutta Ray, *Emergence,* pp. 131-133; H. Bareh, *The History and Culture of the Khasi People*, p. 445.
35. Karotemprel, *Impact,* pp. 20-21.
36. Downs, *History*, pp. 90-93.
37. Cf. K. N. Phukan, "Education, corruption, Waste: Wretched Interactions," in *Man and Society A Journal of North East Studies* , 1(2004), pp. 25-48. Hereafter Phukan, *Man and Society.*
38. Karotemprel, *Evangelizing Methods, p.* 38.
39. Ibidem, p. 39.
40. Patricia Mukhim, "Church and Politics," in *The Telegraph*, Tuesday 28 January 2003, p. 18.
41. Ibidem, p. 128.
42. M. Horam, *Naga Insurgency: The Last Thirty Years*, New Delhi, 1986, p.29. Cf. Downs, *History*, p. 131.
43. Cf. Phukan, in *Man and Society,* pp. 25-48.

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common sharing of conviction, that in India the Christian community has all along remained totally identified with India's basic national and spiritual moorings.

It has been India's noble and cultural tradition that the Indian society has always been positive in welcoming and promoting any new faith or any new knowledge as an essential part of the fundamental process of India's search for truth. Western historians have acknowledged that Indian society has consistently been a tolerant society. But this observation makes only half the truth. The fact is that in India new faiths or new ideas were not merely tolerated but were warmly welcomed and encouraged and even promoted. The basic Indian attitude has always been that truth cannot remain anybody's monopoly. And the Indian society has prudently resisted if any one has ever pretended that they held the monopoly of truth. Search for truth is a genuine character of the Indian tradition and all religious shades have been beneficiaries of this basic and noble Indian tradition and approach.

It may look pleasantly surprising for all of us that in India the Christian minority normally enjoys much more rights and privileges than those enjoyed by the minorities in those countries where any Christian denomination hold a majority. We are constrained to realize this fact when we hear and read pieces of news from the West from where unbelievable stories of intolerance of the Protestant majority's onslaught on Catholic minority in England or Catholic majority's cruelties on the Protestant minority in Ireland are reported by the media.

The story in India is beautifully different. As a religious minority the Christian community in India has always been fortunate in keeping itself an integral part of the Indian main stream and consequently having been able to make its really substantial contribution in building up the nation through centuries. It does not mean that occasional or isolated frictions have not happened in our otherwise secular society. But such instances have to be taken only as exceptions and not as rule. It is true that even today some sections of the Indian society occasionally raise issues of conflicts or frictions owing to their prejudices or bias that are not based on any factual or logical foundations. It seems to be the good fortune of this country that those who subscribe to such attitudes and campaign constitute only a very small segment in the major religious community in India and the well-meaning majority of the majority community in the country remains fully committed to uphold India's great and noble legacy of religious fellowship and communal harmony. It was, in fact, this tradition of the Indian society that helped the Christian community in India to actively involve itself in our nation building activities-economic and social, educational and cultural, besides its marked contributions in sectors of social service and health care.

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In Kerala the Christian presence has always been felt mainly in areas like Politics, Agriculture, Banking, Trade and Commerce. Land has always remained a weakness for the Kerala Christians and they always have demonstrated a special attachment to soil and cultivation. The Lord's command that 'thou shall live by the sweat of your brow' has certainly been obeyed literally by the Christians here all through the centuries. Hard work has been the hallmark of the Christians and they did always prove a thrill of their own in tilling the soil and sowing the seeds and reaping the harvest. On this count, the Christians have also been able to demonstrate an inimitable sense of adventure in going the mountains and forests, fighting the wild animals, resisting the hostile weather and climate and taking to their stride all hardships which we may today find simply unimaginable or unbelievable. Along with their involvement in agriculture, the Christians also developed a taste in Trade, Banking, and Commerce besides their active involvement in Politics and Public Life and in all those fields of their choice they could effortlessly establish their credentials and talent, proving a calibre of their own.

If agriculture had ensured the Christians to live an honest life, their involvement in trade and commerce confronted them with natural challenges testing their commitments to values, marking their integrity and truthfulness in our cosmopolitan social fabric.

It is certainly a matter of honour for the Christians to ever remember that there was a time here when people of other shades of faith believed that a word by a Christian was as good as signing an official stamped paper. The common saying in those days had been that if there is a word by a Christian no other written record was necessary at all. It is equally interesting to note that when the caste system was at its heights, when those so-called upper caste people were living under the apprehension of being made unholy if any of the so-called lower caste one came near them, two options were suggested for becoming clean again-either taking a bath afresh or by being touched by a Nazrani i.e., Christian. This can rightly be taken as a sign and a symbol of how the other sections of the society considered the Christians clean and holy because they held in those days a justifiable faith in the clean habits of their Christian brethren.

In a country, the Nation building activities get completed only when changes for the welfare of the people happens in all sectors of human life. It can never be done by the Government alone. But, of course, it is the Government which should create a congenial atmosphere for making this process easy. However, the Government should facilitate a possibility of all religious and social institutions, voluntary organizations, political parties as well as leaders and common people, making themselves active partners of this process. In the

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Indian parlance, this participatory process should be like a 'yagna' which combines a prayerful effort. In India fortunately the Christian population has always cared to remain in the national main stream. In administration as well as in military service this Christian presence is always recognized. The patriotic loyalty of this minority community has also been always above board. Christians have always been on the forefront in preserving and upholding the national pride.

In India's heroic fight for freedom, the Christians have recorded an undeniably substantial share of sacrifice by partaking in the fight led by Mahatma Gandhi against the British through a peaceful and non violent process of struggle. This Christian presence in the freedom struggle was being made felt at the national level as well as at regional and local levels. Even the First President of the Indian National Congress, W.C. Banerjee of blessed memory, was a Christian. If the contributions of leaders of the stature and eminence of Annie Beasant, Nelli Sen Gupta, Sadhu Sunder Singh, Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukerjee, Barrister George Joseph, Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur etc. were at the national level, countless leaders like T.M. Varghese, A.J. John, R.V. Thomas, Annie Mascrene, Acamma Cheriyan, K.M. Korah, E. John Philopose, K.C. Mammen Mappilai, Samuel Aron, Gracy Samuel Aron, C.R. Eyunni, P.T. Chacko, Cherian J. Kappen, Prof. K.M. Chandy, Chevalier L.M. Pailee, Chevalier C.J. Varkey, P.J. Sebastian, etc., were able to establish their credentials as freedom fighters at state and regional levels. Even some of the great church leaders including India's first Cardinal and Archbishop of Bombay, Valerian Gracious, Bangalore Archbishop P. Thomas Pothakkamuri, Bishop James Kalassery, Bishop Sebastian Vayalil, Cardinal Joseph Parekkattil, Fr. Jerome D'souza, etc., have substantially contributed in our nation building activities by actively promoting national and patriotic causes in one way or the other. Though it may not be possible to mention all names, those like India's first woman Surgeon General Dr. Mary Punnen Lukose, first woman High Court Judge Anna Chandy, first woman Chief Engineer P.K. Thressia etc. are also to be remembered besides other eminent Christian personalities like Justice Chevalier Joseph Taliath, Kattakkayam Cherian Mappilla, Sr. Mary Beninja etc. whose names too warrants mention. The serene presence of Mother Teresa in India for more than half a century was another unique feature of the Christian community's identification with the Indian society. Mother Teresa through her prayer and sacrifice emerged as the most respected spiritual personality of our secular India in our contemporary times.

However, it was in the field of education that the Christian community has made its really substantial contribution. Not only in cities and towns but even in very remote rural areas of

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our country the Christian missionaries have gone with the light of knowledge, establishing educational institutions from the primary and pre-primary level to that of higher education. The leadership provided by the Christian community and the credibility preserved by them in the sphere of education remains still to the credit of the Christian community. A major factor of recognition for the Christian involvement is their initiative and contribution in the social and educational upliftment of the Indian society.

As a consequence of this educational revolution, a social revolution also followed quite logically. The age-old social backwardness in rural India was shaken to its foundations which naturally paved the way for an unbelievable social transformation in the Indian society. If the missionaries were welcomed in the beginning in all parts of the country, of late, some resistance was evident from the so-called feudal establishments as they were naturally afraid that the presence and the activities of the missionaries might ultimately lead to some social changes which might badly affect their economic and social vested interests. The fact is that, through education, the Christian missionaries could, to a considerable extent, demolish some of the social inequalities reigning in the Indian society as also some of the illogical concepts and social categorizations as also some wrong social practices. The greatest service the Christian educational institutions have rendered to the Indian society was that it could place the mirror of time against the face of our society, challenging the very social conscience of the country. The Christian educational institutions pushed the Indian society forward not only in mere literacy level but also in the total process of a social revolution.

The Christian presence in Kerala's educational scenario seems much more effective and consequential. If Kerala could stand comfortably in the frontline among the Indian States in the country in education it was mainly owing to the initiatives that Christian community have daringly taken in the educational sector.

One of the striking aspects of the educational reforms caused by the Christian community was popularizing and democratizing the very educational process in our society. Quality and discipline has always remained the hallmarks of Christian educational institutions. The schools and colleges run directly by the Church or through religious congregations of Priests and Sisters constitute the major chunk of educational institutions in India. By providing educational facilities to the poor and the under privileged the Christian educational institutions have proved their social commitment beyond doubt. Shri. K.R. Narayanan, former President of our Republic have substantiated this from his own experience, having acknowledged publicly that it was solely because of the Christian educational institutions that he could find

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possibilities of acquiring education at a time when caste discrimination was the natural face of the then society.

It was the opening up of the doors and windows of knowledge to the poor and the down trodden in the country that made a remarkable social revolution possible. The Christian community affected an educational revolution in the Indian society.

In social service and health care also the Christian contribution cannot be minimized. The exemplary and the excellent service provided by the Christian agencies through hospitals and dispensaries, orphanages and destitute homes have to be recognized. The Christian community has entered the service sector not with any pretension of doing a work of charity but it has an obligation of doing good to one's neighbor as commanded by Lord Jesus. Hence the real activity of the Christian community in the field of education, social service and health care is nothing but an expression of a fundamental obligation of the Christians owing to their faith in Jesus and in those values preached by Him. This is nothing but a Christian witnessing in our society. And it is nothing but the social face of our Christian faith.

However, the Christian community seems to be under some compulsions to answer certain questions before the contemporary Indian Christian community where the new trends and prejudices envisaged by the process of globalization is pushing the Christian institutions to a new style of functioning which may not be in tune with the expected and established Christian vision and Christian values. We cannot remain blind to the allegations, that of late, we are more interested now in catering to the demands and requirements of the 'haves' and the privileged ignoring the pressing requirements of the 'have nots' and the under privileged. If that allegation hold any ground, we cannot run away from our responsibility to make appropriate corrections in the fixing up of our priorities in the functioning of Christian institutions whether schools or colleges, hospitals or old age homes.

As already mentioned the history of India provides us with the beautiful story of the warm encouragement the Christian faith received from the Hindu rulers and our Hindu brethren ever since Apostle St. Thomas was believed to have landed here in 52 A.D. The Apostle was received well and was also permitted to found his church and propagate his faith here. When we are celebrating the 1950th Anniversary of the coming of St. Thomas and the 450th anniversary of that of St. Francis Xavier, it is obligatory on our part to acknowledge that if the church and the faith has remained in India all through the centuries, it was solely because of the fundamental secular sentiments of the majority religion in the country and the graceful way in which they upheld that high tradition and their noble and generous attitude in yester years.

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When there are reports coming from some part of the country about threats thrown at minorities by some religious fanatics, we should not get off our feet, but, we, while protesting against such unpardonable criminal incidents, should also care to realize that almost 99% of the churches we have in India were built on the good will and co-operation of the majority Hindu population. Of course, our secularism is certainly not anyone's concession to us but the very result of the basic and fundamental characteristic of the Indian nation and society. Many compliment our constitution for Indian's secular traits. But the constitution was nothing but a natural culmination of the basic national character and culture of this great country, India.

It is only 52 years since the constitution has been created. What about the 1952 years before the constitution? Often minorities resort to assert about the presence of courts-the High Courts and Supreme Court-to enforce the minority rights in India. What about the rights the minorities enjoyed before the coming of the courts? The best guarantee the minorities have had in India for their faith and their rights have been the sense of secular fairness the Indian Society has zealously and generously preserved all these years. The constitution of India was nothing but a historical, logical and cultural culmination of the great traditions of the Indian society which logically found its expression in legal formulations in the constitution. It is my least intention to run down the legal or the constitutional guarantees given to us for preserving and propagating one's faith but only emphasizing the greater importance of the greatness of our national secular traditions.

If anybody raises a question about the best moment in India's secular history, there need not be much of a debate to answer it. When Mother Teresa passed away in Calcutta a few years ago, the whole world looked witnessed in some sort of an unbelievable sense of surprise the whole of India bowing before the mortal remains of a poor catholic nun who had made herself the right symbol of Christian life and Christian charity. In the history of Christianity spreading over 2000 years, there has never been an occasion when an entire nation paid tributes to a religious nun. And even in those Christian countries where the percentage of Christian population may even touch a 90 plus, so far in the last 2000 years, never has a nun been given the highest national honour or an official state funeral. This is something India alone could lay a claim for we decorated Mother Teresa with Bharat Ratna, the highest national honour while she was alive, and a state funeral with full military honours when the mother passed away. It is this tradition that all minorities too have to uphold, preserve and protect at whatever cost. However, on the other side of this rosy picture we also find shocking unbelievable

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incidents in some parts of our country like the burning of the great missionary Steins who was brutally done away with by antisocial elements or religious fanatics with the apparent backing of some politico-criminal mafia Still I feel that neither our sectarian sentiments nor our petty prejudices nor the hurdles we confront with in some parts of the country in running our schools or Madrasas should provoke us to lose our correct vision and place ourselves knowingly or unknowingly in the danger of helping destabilize our national secular structure. The minorities in India have to realize on their own interest that we, the minorities in India, enjoy in spite of all limitations whatever, much more privileges and prerogatives than what we give to the minorities in those countries where we, the minorities in India, happen to be in a comfortable majority. This realization will certainly help us to be more realistic in recognizing the realities that confront us in our contemporary India.

It is just six years since we celebrated the Golden Jubilee of India becoming a Republic. 50 years may not be that much of a long period in the life of a nation to be decisive to influence the course of history or to pass a judgement on but it certainly constitutes enough a phase to evaluate the course the country has taken in any direction. From time immemorial Truth and Dhrama (Justice) have been well acknowledged as India's watchwords. 'SATHYAMEVA JAYATHE' is India's national slogan and the rules of Dharma have always been enjoying a pre-eminence in the Indian Society. Even the rulers of ancient India were adjudged on the basis of the values they represented. Raja Harishchandra symbolizing Truth and Emperor Ashoka symbolizing Dharma and Emperor Akbar symbolizing religious fellowship. When Mahatma Gandhi emerged the political rallying point in India against the alien rule, he did also bring to the public life of the country a new value consciousness and a new value judgement which Gandhiji clarified as a simple reintroduction and reinterpretation of the age old values in life and society. Gandhiji became the living symbol of the principles of truth and non-violence, justice and sacrifice. This Gandhian reinterpretation of values in public life had tremendous salutary effect upon the Indian society. As a result of it, Gandhian values received a natural acceptance as the measuring rode of moral principles in public life and in the politics of our country. Gandhiji declared in unequivocal terms that "whatever is morally wrong can never be politically right". The very public life in the country had undergone a metamorphosis under the Gandhian impact. Even after 55 years of independence, when the politics and public life has become so devalued, degenerated and decomposed in the eyes of the people, fortunately the tendency still remains as to judge the happenings in the country on the basis of Gandhian value interpretation. People in general lament the shocking decomposition that has happened in

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the public life of the country and wish the situation changed to have a real re-emergence of a value based politics and public life in India.

But the fact of the situation is that ever since the martyrdom of Mahatma Gandhi, the Gandhian value concepts were given a very convenient go by - of course gradually but consistently - even by the professed Gandhists themselves. Now one finds to one's own agony and despair that moral values have become the first casuality in the post-Gandhian era in our country.

The tragedy is that in the years that followed when there was a further decline in the situation, then too the church or the Christian community as such did not do anything to assert its moral presence to push matters to the right track and provide the nation a necessary and proper direction. Presently the national political dispensation has assumed almost the characteristics of the politics of coalition and consequently instability and mutual distrust seems to have come to stay and whenever a change of government is on the cards, political horse-trading gets immediate currency. By retaining ourselves as silent and helpless spectators to this alarming political happenings around, we are, in fact, pleading ourselves guilty of a grave political sin.

It seems a time has come that the church in India as well as the Christian community prove its moral credibility and take a humble yet daring initiative in effecting a purification process of the public life in the country.

While analyzing the socio-political scenario it has to be conceded that the culture of greed has taken over and people indulge in unjustifiable extravagance with huge amounts of unaccounted black money. These filthy rich with the wealth they have accumulated through unlawful and criminal means often very decisively influence the decision making authorities and subvert and corrupt the social and political systems. The major cause for perpetuation of these kind of sordid practices is owing to the general apathy, passivity and the totally indifferent attitude of the society towards the corrupt and corruption. It has to be conceded that for all practical purposes, corruption has become almost a perfect performing art in our contemporary society. It seems most of us have lost the courage to stand against corruption and injustice because dissent and protest often lead to suffering anguish and loss. The fact is that the very credibility of our democratic institutions remain badly shaken, and causes consequently an erosion of the faith of the people in the impartiality and fairness of the entire system of public governance.

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It seems a myth that corruption is confined to that sector of politicians or civil servants alone. The danger is that people have come to consider corruption as part of the existing system itself and something common and at that quite normal, if not legitimate. The image of the person who accepts bribe as the wolf and the man who offers it as the lamb is no more acceptable. The person who gives the graft is also doing it consciously, willfully and often gives it to get what he is not entitled to get, or eligible for, or what will give him immense gain when compared to the loss he may incur, by not offering the graft. Attempts to eradicate corruption often takes note of only one side of it-the receiving end. It is true that if there is no taker there won't be any giver either. But it is equally true that where there are no givers, there can be no takers as well.

It is here that the church and the Christian institutions have a positive role to play. The church has to emphasize that giving a bribe is also as grave a sin as taking a bribe. Moreover, the church and the X'ian community have to teach the people and the society that corruption is not at all part of the system but, a degeneration of the system which has to be fought against with all the force at our command. We must also be prepared to have an examination of conscience whether we too-as individuals or as those managing our institutions resort to the instrumentalities of corruption not only as takers but as givers too in the given Indian situation.

The fact is that corruption has become practically the hallmark of today's administrative culture. The extent and magnitude of corruption in administration is equally unbelievable. Delay and red tapism in the procedures sow the seeds of corruption in offices. The practice is christened as "speed money" and now the presence of "speed money" is felt in almost all public offices and even in some of our Church offices.

The manner of functioning of the fourth estate or the Media is also proving not that much complimentary. The print media as well as the electronic one is considered vulnerable to temptations and pressures. And as a consequence truth becomes the causality. Sometimes it gets suppressed or mutilated, otherwise the false and the fabricated gets circulated. The Christian media too cannot claim absolution from these sins of commissions and omissions.

The Enforcing agencies like the CBI and Enforcement Directorate are also alleged to be functioning as mere agents of the Union Government. Investigations conducted by these agencies and prosecution contemplated are more on the basis of the attitude of the political higher ups. The credibility of the institutions like the CBI and Enforcement Directorate has to be preserved and protected in the interest of our very democratic system.

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What is more painful is the undeniable fact that the Judiciary also seems loosing its high image and public confidence. Shri Palkhiwala once lamented that our courts have declined from the status of cathedrals to those of casinos.

In an interview Justice Shri. J.S. Varma observed that time has come to enact a law to hold judges accountable because when moral sanction doesn't work, legal sanction is required. He also did point out that traditions and conventions are not good enough guarantees for judicial accountability any longer in India.

All these deteriorations demonstrate its culmination in politics. In India, politics is getting fastly professionalised and it has, indeed, become a business and for that a very "lucrative business". Of late, in Indian politics it is the caste, religion, heredity or dynamic connections that count rather than ability and character as determining factors in deciding success.

The most alarming trend in Indian politics is the decline in culture and refinement, well reflected in the behavioural pattern of our parliamentarians. Even the meaning of the very term 'Parliamentary' has undergone a change, thanks to the behaviour of our people's representatives. In olden times the word parliamentary meant that which can be used in any gathering of gentlemen. Now parliamentary means that which can be used only in parliament and not in any gathering of gentlemen! A combination of money power and muscle power has made the Indian political scenario a symbol of a new political culture which represents the very criminalisation of the politics of the country.

Criminalisation of politics involves the competitive use of anti-social forces for the mobilization of party funds, for management of elections and even for recruiting workers at lower levels from among the anti-social elements. It may also mean the misuse of criminal intelligence as a political tool for blackmailing political opponents. Criminalisation of politics also means direct entry of criminals into the political parties and state legislatures and even parliament. It also includes the use of criminal methods and tactics to influence political processes and procedures. When one of our Catholic MPs from Kerala thought of floating a new political outfit, reports revealed that some of his parliamentary partners were those with well-known criminal track record.

The unprincipled adhoc alliances, distortion of the constitution to suit the powers that be, destabilization of institutional structures, all have hampered our political system and consequently have done enough harm to our society and our polity. The inefficiency, the incompetence and the corruption of the Civil Service and the erosion of the high traditions

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and the discipline in the armed forces and the very indifference or otherwise the subservient attitude of the intelligentsia all add to the agony of our Republic.

However, as for the other side of the picture, thank God, we have a constitution, tried for half a century and still holding its ground, and a democracy surviving all these years, banking mainly on the illiterate electorate who prudently exercise their right of franchise in such a way proving their political wisdom; and a secularism which emphasizes the fundamental unity and fellowship of all faiths. These factors stand guarantee to a system of politics and governance which is basically aimed at the betterment of the quality of life of the people.

It is against this background of Indian realities that we have to probe the possibilities of a positive role for the church and the Christians community in the present situation and propose concrete and practical suggestions to make the role of the Christians in the contemporary Indian Society more effective, convincing and beneficial.

1. The Christians should assume a more wider and positive role as leaders of the Society, rising above their present role as mere leaders of the Church and community. In this role, we should try to strengthen the pro secular factors and forces in our society. We should also initiate steps to promote religious fellowship and thus stabilize our national and secular fabric of our Society.

2. In our fight against social evils around, we should provide effective leadership and guidance to the Society. This must be achieved through effectively conscientising the people and inspring them to rally round those causes for which the church also stands committed.

3. In the Service sector, particularly in educational and health areas, the Christian leadership has to raise its credibility further as the doubts raised by the Society at large about the commitment of ours to these two causes provokes enough concern and anxiety.

4. Since India happens to be a land of varied cultures and religions, there must be necessary initiatives on the part of the church and the Christian community to promote better understanding among these religious and cultural denominations. It will be next to being absurd to think that minorities could survive and thrive by resorting to any confrontationist policy followed with the other major religious communities in India or live in an atmosphere of undeclared war by other religious sections. Hence it is for us to apply our wisdom and prudence and provide a healing touch in the relationship with other communities even if any wounds are to be found in the relations in between (the

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various religious denominations). As the apostles of the Prince of Peace and good will, it is for us to act as peacemakers in our society, often marred with suspicion and distrust.

5. We have no other options left but to take note of the alarming growth of the culture of violence in our contemporary society. We have social and personal obligation to take every effort possible to contain this culture of violence and ensure maximum peace and harmony in our multi-denominational and multi-dimensional society.

Also we have to apply our political prudence in admitting the fact that changes have already taken place in the national political scenario with consequent changes in various states and should have the openness to acknowledge the changed realities. I believe that a time has come to assert that we keep our political and electoral options open. Let the Church and the Christian community as such remain above political affiliations but at the same time convincingly committed to those values which are part of our very national culture-Truth, peace and Non-violence, Justice and fellowship of Faiths". What is required from and expected of the Christians at the moment is a daring initiative and effective leadership in purifying the contemporary society of ours from its chronic ailments-corruption, communalism, violence, social injustices and opportunistic politics.

The country and the society logically and justifiably expect the Christians to fill in the vacuum in the moral fabric of our society. Religion has always played a positive role in stabilizing our society. And the contemporary challenges warrant us play a positive role in stabilizing our Indian society when we find ourselves surrounded by those growing forces evidently detrimental to our national unity. Let us identify that role, accept that role and recommit ourselves to that sacred role of nation building-building up our Mother India.

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Remembering the Christian Stars of the Nation*

E.P. Antony

It is indeed a great honour to respond to the precious paper presented by the V.C. Dr. Cyriac Thomas. The march of the Christians from the time of the arrival of St. Thomas to Globalisation, fortified by St. Francis xavier, and Mother Teresa makes the paper a unique one. He gracefully touches the grandeur of the ancient Indian culture and the tolerant Indian society. The projection of the presence of Kerala Christians in politics, agriculture, banking, trade, commerce, etc, adds to the charm of the Professor's presentation technique of the matter.

He proudly parades a galaxy of nation builders from the community including the first of firsts Dr. Mary Punnen Lukose, Anna Chandy, P.K. Thressia and others really inspiring.

Though several books have been written about Christianity in Kerala, hardly any study has been made about the life and achievements of individuals who have made outstanding contributions in various fields. In several cases they were even branded delinquents and discouraged by the Church and the community failed to recognise them.

**A response by the author to the Paper entitled "Contribution of the Church in the Building Up of the Nation" presented by Dr. Cyriac Thomas at the History Seminar organized to commemorate the Jubilee of St. Thomas and St. Francis Xavier at the Renewal Centre, Cochi, Kerala on 16th November 2002.*

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At the national level many of them remain unknown to us as they were known by their surnames Chatterjee, Banerjee, Mukerjee, Swamy, Mudaliar and others.

Nation building normally includes Education, Health, Agriculture, Industry Social Work, Social Services, Defence service etc. In this context is there any other community in India that can compete with us. Is there any other country in the world where the Church has invested so much as in India for Nation Building?

It was late in the history of public life in India that the Catholics entered it. Moreover they were satisfied that under the British rule their interests would be looked after by the government. And they entered this sympathetic consideration by their services in the fields of education, medical relief and care for orphans etc.

The Catholics did not venture into the main stream of political life in the early years. The only leading Catholic laity to join the Indian National Congress was Joseph Baptist of Bombay as the lieutenant of B.G. Tilak in his movement of 'Responsive Co-operation within the Congress.

Niyogi Committee had contemptuously spoken about us. It went back to 1857 to find evidence that missionaries of Chota Nagpur had offered 10,000 armed Kols and a battalion of karens during the Sepoy Mutiny. The committee adds, Nowhere did they find Christians taking part in Nation Building.

But it was displaying their ignorance or proving their prejudice against the Christians.

The first elected President of an Indian Legislature was Chev.L.M.Pylee. In 1972 in the Indian Army there were four Christian Generals, three Major Generals and an equal number of their equivalents in the Navy and Air Force. Major General Noronah of Quilon was the Deputy Chief of the Army Staff and their brother Wing Commander Noronha was one of the highly decorated Pilots of World War II. Admiral Pereira was the Naval Chief. Air Vice Marshal A.V. Pinto was the Director of Operations during the Goa Liberation and this writer was the Asst. Intelligence Officer during the operations at the Air Force Station. I proudly claim to have transitted the 'Sighting Report' of Albuquerque off the coast of Goa following which she was bombed by another Christian Pilot, Flt.Lt. Green and his formation.

Air Vice Marshal Trever Keeler, a Catholic was highly decorated during the war against Pakistan he was a terribly brave dare devil fighter Pilot. A.V.M. Joseph of Trivandrum was the first Director of signals of I.A.F. The list is endless.

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Who on earth can doubt our instinted loyalty, integrity and patriotism leading to incredible contributions towards nation building.

What St. Augustine said of the Christians of the 4th century in reply to a challenge such as that thrown at the Christians of India today is applicable to them also. 'Let those' he said, 'who say that the doctrine of Christ is incompatible with the State's well being give us an army composed of such soldiers as the doctrine of Christ requires them to be; let them give us such masters and servants, such kings (rulers) and judges; such tax payers and tax gatherers as the Christian religion has taught that men should be and then let them dare to say that it is opposed to the State's well-being'.

It is with this conviction and hope that the Christians of India face the future, confident that by their service to the stability, the social integration and the progress and prosperity of free and independent India, they will earn to a greater extent than ever before their right to live and prosper in their native land.

Again Dr. Cyriac's observation about corruption is absolutely true. *But we should not give up hope.* The only remedy for corruption is ETHICAL REMEDY. By proper education and propagation of high ideals like those of Gandhiji, corruption can be removed. Corruption arises out of the inherent weakness of human mind and character. Education acts as a preventive measure and attempts to cure mental maladies by mental medicine.

Why not resume teaching of moral science in High Schools and Colleges? *We are the greatest educators of the country.* Plato's Republic gave first place to education and stated that in an ideal State where people are well educated, there should be no need for laws as education would eradicate the criminal nature of man and CORRUPTION IS A CRIME. As corruption has increased, we the Educators have failed in our mission. Let us reconsider, cogitate and meditate over the issue and save the country from the scourage of corruption.

The Catholic community should encourage more of our people to join the civil service, police, the Armed Forces, etc, where they would be able to prove the merit of the Catholics as incorrupt officers.

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PART - II

FACING THE CHALLENGES OF THE TIMES

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8
Christian Contribution to Education, Language and Literature

George Palackapilly

Introduction

The Church has always recognized the importance of education in her mission. John Paul II, in *Redemptor Hominis,* spoke of the human person as "the primary route that the Church must travel in fulfilling her mission: he is the primary and fundamental way for the Church, the way traced out by Christ himself."[1] Hence the work of educating the human person is an irreplaceable aspect of the Church's mission and the investment of human and material resources in the school becomes a prophetic choice for the Church.

Vatican II says, "Education is, in a very special way, the concern of the Church."[2] This concern is directed not only towards the members of the Church, but also to all people. The document affirms that the Church "will offer its assistance to all peoples for the promotion of a well-balanced perfection of the human personality, for the good of society in this world and for the development of a world more worthy of man."[3] Catholic pedagogical tradition forcefully reaffirms the centrality of the human person in the educational process. Catholic schools must be careful "to safeguard the priority of the person in their educational programme."[4]

Gravissimum Educationis gives a beautiful description of what a school ought to be, when it says: "Among the various organs of education the school is of outstanding importance. In nurturing the intellectual faculties which is its special mission, it develops a capacity for

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sound judgment and introduces the pupils to the cultural heritage bequeathed to them by former generations. It fosters a sense of values and prepares them for professional life. By providing for friendly contacts between pupils of different characters and backgrounds it encourages mutual understanding."[5]

The document further states: "The Catholic school, by opening itself to the progress of the modern world, prepares its pupils to contribute effectively to the welfare of the world of men and to work for the extension of the Kingdom of God so that ... they become the saving leaven in the community."[6]

This Paper is a brief survey of the Church's contribution to education, language and literature in India. After presenting a historical overview of Christianity and Education in India, it examines the role played by Christian Churches in the fields of Technical and Vocational Education, Women's Education, Higher Education, and Indigenous People's education. The final section studies the contribution of Christianity to the languages and literature of India with special reference to North East India, Southern India and Western India.

1. Church and Education in India: Before Independence

Christian missionaries were pioneers in education. We can rightly be proud of the fact that the first formal Christian educational enterprise anywhere outside Europe was the Santa Fe School in Goa, founded in 1540 by the Franciscans. In 1542 it was taken over by St. Francis Xavier and in 1548 it was raised to the status of a college and renamed St. Paul's College. Soon more missionary schools appeared in other parts of India: at Bassein (Vasai) in 1546, in Cochin in 1549, at Punnaicayil in Tamil Nadu in 1567, and in Madurai in 1595. In 1713 a school was started in Pondicherry and in 1731 a School of High Tamil was started at Ellacurichi in Tamil Nadu. It may also be mentioned that a Sanskrit school was opened by the Catholic Church in 1846 at Mannanam, Kerala.

However, it was only during the British rule that education began to spread in a somewhat organized manner in India. After Macaulay's *Minutes* of 1835, which decided in favour of English education as against the oriental system, Christian educational work took a new turn. It led to a great intellectual revolution in India. The English language opened up a world of new knowledge and new ideas to the newly educated classes. The western ideas of liberty, equality and fraternity began to attract the educated youth. The study of English literature and western political thought with its emphasis on the dignity of the individual gave a new sense of direction and purpose for the intelligentsia.

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From 1835 till the end of the century, a considerable number of Christian educational institutions were founded all over India, many of which were affiliated to the first universities started in the country in 1857. Several of these institutions – St. Xavier's College, Kolkata (1835), Madras Christian College (1839), St Joseph's College at Tiruchirapally (1844), St John's College at Agra (1858) – are highly reputed to this day. In fact, till the beginning of the 20th century, Christian institutions played a dominant role in the education of young Indians.

2. Church and Education in India: After Independence

At the time of Independence (1947), the educational system in India was not only quantitatively inadequate, but also characterized by great regional, gender, and caste imbalances. Only 14% of the population were literate and only one out of three children were enrolled in primary schools.[7] It was only after Independence, that the importance of taking education to the masses began to be appreciated.

After Independence, there has been a massive involvement of the Church in education. Though constituting only 1.6% of the population, the Catholic Church in India today runs over 17,000 educational institutions. Of these, some 4000 are High and Higher Secondary Schools, while over 11,000 are Nursery, Primary and Middle Schools. There are also over 1500 professional and technical schools. In the year 2000, Catholic colleges numbered 175, including 2 Engineering colleges and 2 Medical colleges. What is impressive is that 70% of all these schools are in rural areas, serving the poor, especially the dalits, the adivasis and other disadvantaged groups. Only a meagre 15% of Church institutions are in the cities and large towns.

Catholic educational institutions have always been rated very high for the quality of education they impart. They are esteemed not only for their high academic standards, but also for the sound moral and spiritual values they inculcate and the open and secular outlook they foster. Over 90% of the students in these institutions belong to the Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, Sikh, Jain, Parsee and other faiths. In admissions, preference is given not only to Catholics but to the economically and socially disadvantaged sections of society.

3. Church's Involvement in Technical and Vocational Education

To the Church goes the credit for introducing technical and vocational training in the country. Before the 19th century there were no schools for training people in any technical or

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industrial skills. One learned a trade merely by apprenticing oneself to someone who was already skilled in a particular trade. Aware of the limitations of purely academic education, the missionaries constantly looked for opportunities to vocationalize education so as to equip students with the skills necessary for gainful employment. Hence they started schools exclusively for imparting technical training. The first of such technical schools in the country was opened at Alapuzha (Kerala) in 1842, followed by others in Kottayam, Thrissur and many other parts of the country. Today the Catholic Church runs over 1500 technical and vocational training institutions in the country.

When the American Baptist missionaries reached North East India in mid-19th century, they were unanimous in their opinion that industrial training was one of the first needs of the region. One of these missionaries was the Rev. M. C. Mason who keenly felt the need for the establishment of industries and industrial training among the Garos.[8] In 1877 they proposed to open an Industrial Department linked to the already existing school at Goalpara.

When the early Catholic missionaries arrived in the North East in 1890, they too realized that the regional economic underdevelopment called for basic education as well as training in agriculture and various handicrafts. In 1901, the Administrator Apostolic of Assam, formulated a plan for establishing a trade school in Shillong.[9] The Salvatorian Brothers who were experts in carpentry, shoemaking and smithery came to India to instruct the young Khasi boys in these trades.[10]

In 1911, the Government of Assam asked the Catholic Mission to take over the government agricultural farm at Umlyngka. The government also handed over all the buildings and the plantations to the Catholic Mission, on condition that the mission provide the personnel required for the running of the farm, and the profits were to be used for St Anthony's Orphanage at Shillong. The Salvatorian Sisters too made a valuable contribution by opening a school for training girls in various skills.

In 1922 the Salesians of Don Bosco arrived in the North East and restarted the trade school at Shillong which had been closed for some time and it came to be known as Don Bosco Technical School. Today it is the premier technical institution in the region. No other institution in this region has done so much for the technical and vocational training of the youth of the seven North Eastern States as this school, which had its humble beginnings in the printing press started in 1906, in faraway Laitkynsew.[11] A similar school was opened later for the youth of the plains – the Don Bosco Technical School, at Maligaon in Guwahati.

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Today in the North East, besides the Salesians, there are many other religious congregations like the Jesuits, Franciscan Brothers, Montfort Brothers, several Sisters and others who are engaged in professional and vocational training of the tribal youth in many remote areas.

4. Christian Contribution to the Education of Women in India

In the sphere of female education, "Christian missionaries everywhere were the first to break the shackles in which the women were bound, and set them free to know and understand the world."[12] A century ago, the position of Indian woman was pathetic indeed. She was considered an economic liability rather than a welcome boon. The Hindu *Sastras* prevented the education of women and it was regarded "unbecoming of the modesty of sex, and fit only for public dancers".[13]

The Missionaries were the first to promote girls' education in India. The first ever Girls' School in India was opened by the missionaries in 1819 at Kottayam. A year later, another Girls' School was established in Alapuzha. These initiatives gathered great momentum in the years to follow and girls' schools came into being in different parts of Kerala. It is interesting to know that the first ever girls' school by the government was started in 1850, thirty-one years after the missionaries did it.

When the missionaries reached North East India, education of women was practically unknown there, especially in the plains of Assam. The Adivasi women were totally illiterate. Even among the Assamese women, education was totally neglected. The first attempts towards the education of women in North East India were made at the turn of the twentieth century.

Resistance to girls' education in the North East was by no means less than it was in other parts of the country. Dr. Philomath Passah of the North Eastern Hill University mentions how appeals to Naga parents to send their girls to school would in the early days invariably meet with the reply, "You cannot teach our females; they are trained to bear burdens, to bring wood and water, and to make the salt by which we make our subsistence."[14] Today, female literacy level in the North Eastern states compares favourably with that in the rest of India. Moreover, in Mizoram, Meghalaya and Nagaland—the three states where Christians are the majority—it is significantly higher than it is in all the other states of India, except Kerala and Goa.

The beginning of education of women was a major breakthrough in the transformation of society in India. The missionary service to the education of Indian women has long been

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acknowledged by prominent social workers and Hindu leaders. Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddi of Madras, a staunch Freedom Fighter and former Deputy Chairman of the Madras Legislative Council observed:

> I honestly believe that the missionaries have done more for women's education in this country than the government itself. The women of this country has been placed under a deep debt of gratitude to the several missionary agencies for their valuable contribution to the educational uplift of Indian women. Of course at present, India can boast of several other religious bodies such as the Brahmo Samaj, the Ramakrishna Mission and the Arya Samaj, doing work in the field of women's education, but in the past the Christian missionaries were the only agencies in that field. Even at this day, in every province, we find missionary women teachers working hard in a spirit of love and faith, in out-of-the-way villages, where the Hindu and Muslim women dare not penetrate.[15]

The importance attached by Church to women's education has been the one major element that has led to the enlightenment of Indian women of all religions, castes and regions in modern times. In India, Catholic religious women and women-missionaries from other churches, had easier access to local women. They pioneered the education of women and helped raise their status. Already in 1921, Christian women in India were ahead of all other religious communities in literacy.[16] According to the Census report of 1901 literacy rate of women in Kerala was 31 out of 1000 while it was a pathetic 1 out of 1000 in the princely State of Gwalior and 1 out of 1000 in Bombay too. This remarkable situation in Kerala was the result of the pioneering efforts of the Church there.

5. The Church in Higher Education

Collegiate education based on the western pattern was introduced by the Christian missionaries at the Serampore College, West Bengal, in 1818, even before Macaulay's *Minutes* of 1835 decided in favour of British education and the Hardinge Resolution of 1844 prescribed English as a necessary qualification for service under the Government. The Catholic venture into higher education began in 1835 with the founding of St. Xavier's College in Calcutta.[17] At the close of the nineteenth century, India had only 26 Christian colleges. At the time of Independence, in 1947, the number of Christian colleges was 62 out of a total of 450. In 2000 Christian colleges numbered about 250 out of the 11,089 colleges in the country. Of these, Catholic colleges were 175. They catered to a total of 185,200 students, of whom 28% were Catholics. Nearly 50% of the Catholic colleges are for women only, 17% are for men only and 33% are mixed.

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Catholic colleges form an integral part of the Indian system of higher education. They are highly esteemed for their academic excellence, co-curricular activities and the all-round formation they give. The spirit of service has always been a part of the ethos of the Catholic College. In fact, in recent times, we notice in these colleges a new awakening to the demands of social justice and human rights. Admission policies are modified to bring in more of the underprivileged into the college and programmes of social awareness are organized to create in the students greater concern for the poor and exploited.

In India, like in most developing countries, the desire to enrol in higher education is motivated not by a quest for higher knowledge and a wider mental horizon, but by the dire need to obtain a degree to secure a job. This recklessly growing students' enrolment throughout India has led to student indifference and indiscipline, to manipulation of the campus population by unhealthy outside elements, deterioration of values among both students and teachers, and also to a loss of esteem and value of the degree acquired.

It must be stated to the credit of Christian colleges in India, that while looking for ways to avert this crisis, they have held fast to their moorings, to their evangelical roots, in the midst of ethical and spiritual decadence and a watering down of moral and religious values. It is this vision that makes Christian colleges the favourite of thousands of young aspirants, the intelligentsia, the bureaucrats, the politicians, the avant-garde and the elite of India, of all caste and creed. This puts a tremendous pressure on the administration of these institutions to balance these forces with the stated mission of the Christian College to serve the underprivileged and the poor.

In the present situation, the Catholic colleges are faced, more than ever before, with the challenge of providing educational leadership. It is not enough for them to be islands of excellence. But, by inserting themselves into the mainstream, they would require to be agents of educational change, to mprove drastically the quality and flow of the stream.

6. Christian Contribution to the Education of the Indigenous Peoples of India

An area where the Church has made notable contribution is the education of the indigenous people—the Adivasis and tribals—of India. Here we wish to highlight what the Church has achieved in the field of education in two regions where the indigenous people are found in a sizeable numbers – the Chotanagpur area and the North East India.

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6.1. Education in the Chotanagpur Region

When Fr. Constant Lievens and his companions started work in the Chotanagpur area in the second half of the 19th century, they were convinced that every form of development begins with and is based on education. Therefore, together with the preaching of the Gospel they also opened numerous schools in villages and towns in the Chotanagpur area. Following their example, Oscar Severin, who was a great missionary bishop and educationist, insisted on a basic principle that in any new area a school must be built first, and only after that a church could be built.[18] Due to this policy, a fine network of Christian schools came up all over the mission of Chotanagpur. Opening of schools especially in interior villages was instrumental for the progress and rapid social change among the *Adivasis*.

Christian education brought about a change, a transformation in Adivasi societies. The outlook of the Adivasis widened and their behaviour patterns also changed. Through education they acquired a strong sense of their Adivasi identity and selfhood. In their new identity, the Adivasis crossed the social boundary of their own collective Adivasi community, remaining part of it while becoming, at the same time, a part of the larger community of Christians, both tribal and non-tribal, in India and the world at large. This identity has helped them to get adjusted to modern life with its rapid social, economic and political changes.

Some of the missionaries turned out to be great linguists, grammarians and compilers of dictionaries in Adivasi mother tongues. In this missionary tradition, J. B. Hoffmann and A. V. Emelen, two Jesuit scholars, co-authored the *Encyclopaedia Mundarica,* a work of great value. These works are splendid instruments for the preservation and growth of Adivasi languages and culture.

7. Education in North East India

The earliest systematic attempts at formal education in the North Eastern region began with the establishment of various Christian Churches there, from the beginning of the 19th century. In this region evangelization and education have gone hand in hand. Here we find missionaries engaging themselves in the translation of the Bible and writing primers, grammar books and dictionaries with equal zeal.

It is an undeniable fact that the missionaries have successfully spread liberal and progressive education among the numerous tribes of the North East.[19] In this regard, Dr. Philomath Passah of the North Eastern Hill University points out that the Catholic Church, "although late comers to the region, they have achieved greater success in recent years than the Presbyterians and the Baptists because they put emphasis on education at all stages of the growing child."[20]

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In Higher Education too, it was the Church that took the initiative among the tribals of the North East. Institutions like St Edmund's College, St. Anthony's College were among the first centres of higher education among the trials. These institutions have contributed in great measure to the formation of the intelligentsia of the region and paved the way for the establishment of universities in the region.

8. Contribution to the Language and Literature of North East India

A specific field where the contributions of Christians were most decisive was the field of language studies. The first scientific modern dictionaries and grammars and in some cases even the alphabets, scripts, and the very fabric of linguistics of a large number of Indian languages and dialects owe their existence to Christians and especially to the Christian missionary scholars.[21] This is particularly true of North East India where the Church has played a decisive role. There is hardly any difference of opinion on the positive role Christianity played in the growth and development of the languages and literature of the region. The protestant missionaries, as pioneers, shouldered a major share of work in reducing the languages to writing, codifying, regulating and evolving rules of grammar, spelling, etc.[22] In this venture, the trend-setter was Prof. William Carey of the Serampore Baptist Mission, who was a great scholar and linguist. He came to India in 1793 and by 1801 had produced the first book of Bengali prose – his own translation of the New Testament. The Bengalis called Carey the creator of Bengali prose.[23]

In Assam, the American Baptists missionaries made invaluable contribution to the Assamese language and literature. Historians of all hues give credit to them for having helped to preserve the autonomy of the Assamese language.[24] Their monumental work is an Assamese-English dictionary. They wrote the grammar of the Assamese language and collected a fairly good number of Assamese scripts. They wrote historical works, story books, and rendered into Assamese the Indian Penal Code. To crown it all, they published in 1846, the *Orunodoi,* the first Assamese monthly which inspired the younger generation and paved the way for an intellectual awakening.[25]

Among the Khasi people, the dawn of Khasi written literature began with their contact with the Serampore Baptist Mission during Prof. William Carey's time.[26] In 1841, Rev. Thomas Jones, the Presbyterian missionary, prepared the *First Khasi Reader*. Jones is recognized as the founder of Khasi literature and the 'Father of the Khasi Alphabet.'[27] In 1936, the Salesians,

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under the leadership of Bishop S. Ferrando, took the bold step to bring out a mini Encyclopedia about the Khasi people under the title *Ka Jingroi ka Ri Khasi*.

In the Garo Hills, the American Baptist missionaries made significant contribution to the language and literature of the people. They introduced the Roman script and shaped the Garo language. In 1868 Miles Brown wrote and published the first ever Garo Primer and a "Brief Outline of Grammar." From 1879, the first Garo journal, *A'chkni Ripeng* (the Friend of the Garos) began to be published from Tura.

In Nagaland, the first Ao Naga Primer was produced by E. W. Clark in 1877. Among his major contributions to Ao languge and literature are his Ao Naga Dictionary of 977 pages, result of several years of painstaking work. It was printed in 1911. Clark also reduced Ao language to writing.[28]

In the Lushai hills (Mizoram), J. H. Lorrain and S. W. Savidge published a Lushai primer, a grammar, dictionary and translation of some parts of the Bible.[29]

The missionary linguistic studies and their systematization through publication of grammars, dictionaries, however imperfect they might be, formed a solid foundation for literary development and linguistic research.[30] The literary activities of the missionaries had far-reaching results as a unifying element among the various tribes. The Bible and other works gave a linguistic unity to the tribe. One unified medium of communication emerged from the diverse dialects within a tribe. Thus Christian literature contributed to the developing sense of tribal identity.[31] Language and literature have been one of the strongest means towards breaking out of tribal isolationism. It has opened up new vistas of cross-cultural communication and enabled the people to cope with the new social, economic and political situation in which they find themselves.

9. Christian Contribution to Language and Literature in the South

Some of the missionaries who came to the south were great scholars and thinkers, hailing from world-renowned universities. In such scholar-missionaries, the wisdom of the East and the achievements of the West blossomed to the full.[32] In the field of linguistics, literacy, translation and book printing they have made early and original contributions. Missionary scholars like Robert de Nobili, Constantius Joseph Beschi, Bartholomew Ziegenbalg, Robert Caldwell, and others had genuine love for scientific study on intricate and abstruse themes such as the philological analysis of the Dravidian dialects, *Saiva Siddhanta* philosophy, Tamil *Bhakti*, etc.

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They showed keen interest in reading native works on sciences and in exploring the ethical systems of the land. Modern researches have shown that it had been the aims of the early missionaries to (i) to make a thorough study of the Indian languages, (ii) to do research on the Indian religions (iii) to communicate their findings to the world outside.[33]

Missionaries from the West were pioneers in many respects. In the field of anthropological research, linguistics studies, literary criticism and translation, they have done meritorious work both quantitatively and qualitatively.[34] They were the first to introduce modern Tamil prose, "a species of literature which was little esteemed in the country."[35] Till then there were no separate prose works in Tamil. Only after the advent of the Christian missionaries from the West did modern Tamil prose become a distinct branch of literature.[36] Similarly Tamil book printing was yet another major missionary contribution which greatly favoured the diffusion of knowledge and facilitated the formation of reading habit particularly among the common people.[37]

The script reform carried out by Constatius Joseph Beschi (1680-1747), found in his grammar, *Tonnul Vilakkam* deserves special mention. His *Grammatica Latino Tamulica* (A Grammar of High Tamil) was an introduction to Tamil grammar for Westerners. Beschi was a man of remarkable talents in acquiring mastery over Tamil. Of all the foreign missionaries who undertook the study of Tamil, Beschi holds a unique place. His voluminous works, both in prose and poetry, translations and grammar, are held in high esteem. Of his poetical compositions the best known is *Tembavani* (unfading garland) sung in honour of St. Joseph. It is one of the famous Christian epics. Even a cursory reading of *Tembavani* will show that Beschi was a master of *Sen Tamil,* a man of rich and fertile imagination with tremendous erudition and knowledge of other leading works in Tamil, particularly the Saiva, Vaishnava and Jain literature.[38] Beschi was also the first scientific lexicographer of Tamil. He first edited two dictionaries, one Latin-Tamil, another Portuguese-Tamil, and followed them up with one in Tamil called *Saduragaradi*. In *Saduragaradi* Beschi was breaking new ground while at the same time setting the standard for all subsequent lexicographers.

Another great missionary scholar of importance and wide recognition was Bishop Robert Caldwell. His most celebrated work is *A Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian or South Indian Family of Languages* (1856). This was the first attempt at detailed philological analysis of the interrelations of the Dravidian languages.[39] Among other things, Caldwell refuted the claim that the Dravidian languages were derived from Sanskrit. Tamil, according to Caldwell, is "the most highly cultivated *ab intra* of all Dravidian idioms, can dispense with Sanskrit, if

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need be, and not only stand alone, but flourish, without it,"[40] and, on the contrary, "Sanskrit has not disdained to borrow... from its Dravidian neighbours."[41] The thesis of Caldwell encouraged the non-Brahmin scholars who acclaimed the antiquity and sophistication of Tamil language and Tamil culture.

Caldwell, in his Grammar, not only analysed the linguistic affinities of the Dravidian languages, but also formulated certain theories about the origin and nature of Tamil Dravidian culture. His theories on the Dravidian languages gave a rude shock to the dominant position that Sanskrit had long held. These theories also led to the polarity between Brahmins and non-Brahmins, between the 'Northern Sanskrit' and the 'Southern Tamil', thus inaugurating an unpleasant North-South controversy.[42]

Another missionary who has made laudable contribution to Tamil literature and culture is Rev. Dr. G. U. Pope. Commenting on his translation of *Tiruvasakam,* Eugene F. Irschick writes: "Pope greatly enhanced the arguments in favour of the antiquity and sophistication of Tamil culture by placing the *Saiva Siddhanta* religious systems in a high position among world religions."[43] The works of Caldwell and Pope are still considered authoritative in the study of Dravidian culture, history and languages. Their research and hypothesis provided the conceptual base for South Indian historical scholarship which trace its history back to the days of former power and glory. The Dravidian movement remains grateful to the missionaries for recovering the cultural heritage.

Malayalam language and literature benefited greatly from the missionaries. The first Malayalam dictionary is the work of the German missionary John Ernestus Hanxleden (popularly known as Arnold Padiri) who came to Kerala in 1699. The first Malayalam Grammar was produced by Bishop Anjelo Francis of Verapoly in 1712.[44] Hermann Gundert of the Basel Mission was responsible for the *Malayalam-English Nigantu* (1872). Gundert has to his credit nineteen other scholarly works in Malayalam. He was also the one who started the earliest periodicals in Malayalam.

In Karnataka, the early missionaries contributed greatly to the development of Kannada, Konkani and Tulu through the grammars and dictionaries they wrote and also through other works of literature.[45] John Hans of the London Missionary Society was the first European to write a Kannada grammar and dictionary (1810-15). John McKerrel's *A Grammar of Kannada Language*, in fact, became a model for subsequent writers of Kannada grammar. John Garret's outstanding contribution was his translation of the *Bhagavad Gita* into Kannada as well as his

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Euclid's Geometry. Hermann Moegling founded the newspaper *Mangalore Samachara* in 1842.

The first collection of Kannada poems is the memorable work of W. G. Wuerth, printed in 1868, titled *Prakkavya Malike*, a book comparing Christianity with the Veera Saiva religion. Benjamin Louis Rice was perhaps one of the greatest Kannada scholars. He was a historian, archaeologist and Kannada literary commentator and contributed scholarly articles to such journals as Evangelical Magazine, Asiatic Research, Madras Literary Journal and Indian Antiquary. His greatest literary masterpiece was his edition and commentary on the *Karnataka Shabdhanushasana* – the Kannada Grammar in Sanskrit, which he, for the first time, transferred from leaf to paper in 1890. Rev. Ferdinand Kittel wrote noteworthy commentaries on the Bible, the Vedas and the Upanishads.[46]

10. Contribution of Christianity to Language and Literature in Western India

The contribution of Christianity to the language and literature in Western India is by no means insignificant. Two eminent Maharashtra Christian literary figures who made significant contribution to the growth of Marathi literature were Baba Padmanji and Narayan Vaman Tilak. Padamji was the pioneer of Marathi novel and autobiography, while Tilak broke new ground as a poet of nature. No history of Marathi literature can be written without acknowledging their contribution.[47]

In Gujarat, on the literary front, the contribution of the Spanish born Fr. Carlos Valles S.J. is well-acknowledged by all. He has won the highest awards in Gujarati literature and is one of the most read authors in Gujarat. The Gujarati translation of the Bible has been applauded by eminent literary critics as a major contribution to Gujarati literature. There are also Catholic novelists and poets like Ignas Macwan and Joseph Kavi whose contribution is recognized in the literary circles. One of them has also won the Sahitya Academy award.[48]

In the South Canara region, as early as the 19th century, Basel missionaries helped the process of Tulu renaissance. Tulu, which was the dialect of the common man of the South Canara region, did not have a script of its own. The Basel missionaries made use of the Kannada script to produce written literature in Tulu. They also produced works like the Tulu Dictionary, a grammar book and hymn books, thus helping to preserve and promote Tulu culture and language.[49]

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Thomas Stephen, an English Jesuit priest, has made perhaps the most outstanding contribution to Konkani language. His works include a grammar of Konkani, printed in 1640, and the *Christa Purana* and a Christian Catechism. The *Purana* was of epic dimensions and was very popular among the natives.[50] Fr. Angelo Francis Xavier Maffei brought out the Konkani-English Dictionary as well as a Konkani Grammar.

Missionaries made important contributions in the field of archaeology and epigraphy. George Buchler examined the entire archaeological relics and inscriptions of the districts of northern Karnataka and wrote elaborate reports on them. He wrote articles and books on the Karnatic Cave Temples, Buddhist monasteries, etc. He was also a noted scholar in Jainism.[51]

Edward Hultzsch studied and deciphered a number of ancient writings of the time of the Rashrakutas, Chalukyas and of the Vijayanagar period. He also serialized the *Epigraphia Indica*.[52] John F. Fleet did pioneering work in Old Kannada inscriptions and on the dynasties of the Kannada districts of the Bombay Presidency.

Conclusion

The Church's contribution in the field of education has had a direct impact on the social and cultural aspects of Indian society. Education was used to open the horizons of knowledge to all, whereas in Hinduism it was a guarded preserve of a few elite. By providing education to all and sundry irrespective of caste, colour and creed, the missionaries did much for the democratisation of education and creating an awareness of the evils of caste discrimination in Indian society. In so doing, they successfully destroyed the monopoly in education enjoyed for ages by a single privileged caste, namely, the Brahmins.[53] Because of education, it became possible even for the Dalits and the other weaker sections of society to compete with the higher castes on more equal terms, including political participation.[54]

Many Christians and Christian institutions were chiefly instrumental in rediscovering and researching many aspects of Indian culture and propagating these findings within India and abroad, which must be considered one of the most valuable contributions of Christianity to Indian culture and heritage.

Notes:

1 John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis*, Encyclical (1980), n. 14.

2 Vatican II, *Gravissimum educationis*, n.3.

3 *Ibid.*

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4 Congregation for Catholic Education, *Consecrated Persons and their Mission in Schools,* (published on 20 November, 2002)

5 *Ibid,* n. 4.

6 *Ibid,* n. 8.

7 Government of India, Ministry of I & B, *India 1995,* p.79.

8 Milton Sangma, *History of Education in Garo Hills*, p. 87.

9 George Palamattathil, "Christian Contribution to the Development of Technical and Vocational Education in North East India", in J. Puthenpurakal (ed.), *Impact of Christianity on North East India,* Shillong: Vendrame Institute 1996, p. 406.

10 C. Becker, *History of the Catholic Church in North East India,* Shillong: Vendrame Institute, 1990, 268.

11 George Palamattathil, op. cit. p. 408.

12 H. Gray, The Progress of Women" in L.S.S. O'Malley (ed) *Modern India and the West: A Study of the Interaction of their Civilizations,* reprint (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 456.

13 "Minutes of Sir Thomas Muro", Governor of Madras, June 25, 1822", *Parliamentary Papers,* IX (1831-1832), Part I, Appendix 1, 501.

14 Cf. Philomath Passah, "The Contribution of Christianity to Socio-Economic Development of North East India" in J. Puthenpurakal, *Impact of Christianity on North East India,* Shillong: Vendrame Institute, 1996, p. 446.

15 Quoted in H. Gray, "The Progress of Women", op. cit. p. 446

16 Julian Saldanha, "Churches in India: Obstacles and Contributions", in J. Mattam and K. Marak (ed), *Blossoms from the East - Contribution of the Indian Church to World Mission,* St. Pauls, Mumbai 1999, p. 19.

17 Cf. Dr. S.K.Mitra, "Contribution of Christianity to Bengal" in *Indian Christian Directory,* Kottayam: Rashtradeepika, 2000, p. 112.

18 Agapit Tirkey, "Cultural Identities and Education", paper presented at the National Consultation on Indigenous Cultures of India at Mumbai in November 2000.

19 Dr. Archana Barua, "Contribution of Christianity to Language and Literature", in J. Puthenpurakal (ed), *Impact of Christianity in North East India*, Shillong: Vendrame Institute, 1996, p.370.

20 Philomath Passah, op. cit., p. 443

21 George Menacherry, "Cultural Contributions of Indian Church", in *Indian Christian Directory for the New Millennium,* Rashtradeepika, Kottaym 2000, p. 85.

22 George Plathottam, "Contribution of Christianity to Language and Literature", in J. Puthenpurakal (ed.), *Impact of Christianity in North East India*, Shillong: Vendrame Institute, 1996., p.357.

23 Satya Manthan Sanstha, *Some Eminent Missionaries of India*, Varanasi: Satya Mantahn Sanstha, 2001, p. 25.

24 G. Plathottam. *Op. cit.*

25 H. K. Barpujari, *Assam in the Days of the Company*, 1826-1858, Lawyers Book Stall, Gauhati 1963, 270-271.

26 J. S. Shangpliang, in J. Puthenpurakal SDB (ed), *Impact of Christianity on North East India*, Shillong: Vendrame Institute, 1996, p. 365.

27 J. S. Shangpliang. *Ibid.* p. 366.

28 J. Puthenpurakal, *Baptist Mission in Nagaland,* Shillong: Vendrame Institute, 1984, p. 50-53.

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29 George Plathottam. *Op. cit.* p. 347.

30 Lal Dena, *Christian Missions and Colonialism*, Shillong: Vendrame Institute, 1980, 16-17. Quoted by George Plathottam *Op. cit.* p 349.

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32 Dr. Sunder Raj Manickam, "Christian Contribution to Tamil Nadu", in *Indian Christian Directory for the New Millennium,* Rashtradeepika, Kottayam, 2000, p.124.

33 Ibid., p. 125

34 *Ibid,* p. 125

35 T. Srinivasan, "Beschi, the Tamil Scholar and Poet", in *Tamil Culture*, Vol. III (September 1954), p.298.

36 S. Chengalvaraya Pillai, *History of Tamil Prose Literature*, reprint (Conjeevaram: Town Press, 1928), pp. 15-16.

37 S. D. Sargunar, "Foreword" to Mayilai Cini Vencataswami, *Krithuvamum Tamilum,* reprint (Madras: The South Indian Saiva Siddhnta Works Publishing Society, Tinnelvely, 1962).

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42 Eugene F. Irschick, *Politics and Social Conflict in South India: The Non-Brahmin Movement and Tamil Separatism, 1916-1929*, Berkeley, University of California Press. 1969. p. 276

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45 Thomas Anchukandam, "Christian Contribution to Karnataka", in *Indian Christian Directory*, Kottayam: Rashtradeepika, 2000, p.117.

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48 J. Mattam, SJ, "Catholic Church in Gujarat" in Augustine Kanjamala (Ed), *Integral Mission Dynamics*, Intercultural Publications, New Delhi 1995 p. 166

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50 *Ibid.*

51 *Ibid,* p.120

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9
The Catholic Church in the Healthcare of India

Alex Vadakumthala

1. A Unique Contribution in Nation Building

Christians are a tiny minority community in India, just about 2.3 % of the total population. Yet, the contribution of this miniscule community in healthcare sector, besides in other fields like education, social action and so on, has been remarkable and noteworthy. At present the Christian community runs 22% of healthcare institutions in India, which is a unique service in nation building.

The Christian commitment to serve the sick has its mandate from Christ, the Divine Healer. "Jesus called together the Twelve and gave them power and authority over the demons and to cure illnesses. And he sent them to preach the Kingdom of God and restore the sick to health" (Lk 9:1; Mt 10:1). "And, they left and travelled throughout the villages evangelizing and curing everywhere" (Lk 9:6), "and they cast out demons and anointed with oil many of the sick and cured them" (Mk 6:13).

The Catholic Church, from the outset and over the centuries, considered "service to the sick as an integral part of her mission"[1]. All those in the healthcare ministry of the Church share in the mission given by Christ. It is a call to serve with the same love and compassion of Christ. It is a commitment to continue the action of Jesus, who 'came to give life and to give it in abundance' (cf. Jn 10:10).

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The first Christian hospital in India was started by a Jesuit missionary priest, Fr. Henry Henriques, in 1550 in Punnaikayal, in Tirunelveli District of Tamil Nadu[2]. At present the Catholic Church has 764 hospitals, 2575 dispensaries and health centers, 70 rehabilitation centers, 107 mental health centers, 61 centers for alternative systems of cure, 162 non-formal health initiatives and 113 medical training centers which includes 4 medical colleges[3]. Under the Christian Medical Association of India there are 350 health institutions belonging to various other sister churches and denominations[4]. "These health institutions came up out of self-sacrifice, exceptional dedication and above all heavenly providence. It would be wrong if one judges the Church by seeing a handful of hospitals in the major metros. In fact, eighty five percent of the healthcare facilities of the Church are in the remotest villages, where nobody else may go, live and serve. This is the real meaning of the Christian life and mission: to be at the service of the last, the least and the lost"[5].

2. Historical Development of the Concept of Institutional Health Care

In the early history of the Church, one finds the practice of establishment of inns alongside churches to look after the sick, the suffering and the needy. The decrees of the Councils of Carthege (309) and Tours (567) emphatically advocated this. St. Basil, Bishop of Caesarea of Cappadocia, in about 370 founded a complex called "*Basiliades*" to take care of the sick. This can be considered the prototype of health institutions. By the fourth century, there were different types of care institutions in the Church like *xenodoquim* (an inn designed to take care of pilgrims and those in exile), *noxocomium* (hospital for the sick), *orphanotrophium* (to take care of the children separated from their parents), *gerontocomium* (asylum for the elderly), *leprosarium* (for the leprosy patients) and so on[6]. The motive of care and compassion, especially for the poor, was a constituent element in opening and maintaining such institutions. As for example, St. Benedict in his rule book wrote: "The greatest care should be taken in receiving the poor, for, in them Christ is received more particularly than in the rich and powerful" (Chapt. 53). Thus, service to the sick and suffering remained always a major priority and primary activity.

3. Major Milestones in the Healthcare Involvement of the Church in India

3.1 The CBCI Commission for Healthcare Apostolate

Catholic Bishops' Conference of India, realizing the importance to have an improved coordination and the need for a more valuable guidance and inspiration through advocacy,

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healthcare policy and so on, started the CBCI Commission for Healthcare Apostolate in 1989. Explaining about its specific purpose, it was stated, "The Health Commission is to function as the coordinating body of all the Health related organizations in the Church in India. It was also agreed that this Commission should be the forum for discussing the various vital issues of national importance related to health and for planning common action... Health Commission links Catholic Nurses Guild of India, CHAI, Indian Federation of Medical Guild, etc. The aim of the Commission is to inspire and guide all these organizations according to the spirit of the Catholic teaching, practice and tradition"[7]. The Commission also functions as a link between the Pontifical Council for Health Pastoral Care, Rome and the healthcare centers in India, especially for the teachings on moral principles and healthcare concerns.

Ever since its inception, the Health Commission has been very active in the healthcare initiatives. Fulfilling a long cherished dream and often expressed appeal[8], the Commission brought out "Health Policy of the Church in India: Guidelines", in 1992. It beautifully summarized the present situation of the healing ministry, future orientations and process of implementation `to help the total person and the community in attaining and maintaining health'.

Since health education is considered to be the core of a healthy living, the major thrust-areas of involvement of the Health Commission have been towards this end. The book "The Comprehensive School Health Programme: An Overview; Methodology; Suggested Curriculum" was prepared as a `model guide book' which can be adopted by Dioceses, educational institutions, etc. In response to the demands received from some of the educational institutions, the Health Commission brought out, *"Prevention of HIV/AIDS, A Text Book for Schools"* which can be used by health care providers, social workers, etc in our schools and other institutions.

In view of encouraging research of high standard and quality, and the development of programmes of study on subjects of direct interest and relevance to the health and social welfare sectors of our country, a memorandum of understanding was signed between CBCI and Indira Gandhi National Open University on February 29, 2000, establishing 'the CBCI-IGNOU Chair for Health and Social Welfare'. The first programme of study offered by this Chair is on "HIV and Family Education', which was initiated by the end of the year 2001. The next programme on 'Social Work with special emphasis on health' is under preparation.

One of the major objectives in establishing the Health Commission by the CBCI was 'to inspire and guide all the healthcare organizations according to the spirit of the Catholic teaching,

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practice and tradition'. Its journal "Health in Abundance" and the website www.cbcihealth.com are attempts to fulfill this objective. The Commission has been to a large extent successful in fulfilling the important task in networking with Health Associations like CHAI, CNGI, CMAI and Centers like St. John's Academy of Medical Sciences, Bangalore. It is also involved among Care Centers for HIV/AIDS, Institutions for Training and Rehabilitation for Hearing-Impaired and Centers for those affected by Substance Abuse, etc. in view of better coordination in the respective field. It tries to network with different Government Bodies and NGOs like Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, WHO and UNICEF too.

3.2. Major Health Organizations

3.2.1 The Catholic Health Association of India

The Catholic Health Association of India (CHAI) remains the largest healthcare network in the country having 2906 member institutions under its umbrella, ranging from small health centers serving in the remotest villages to large city-hospitals. Way back in 1943 in the pre-independent India, sixteen religious sisters came together at St. Joseph's Hospital, Guntur, Andhra Pradesh, under the leadership of Sr. Mary Glowery. This seminal meeting was the beginning of the Catholic Hospital Association. The motto they adapted was *"United we stand"*. The vision of the Association was "improvement in the standard of health education and the promotion of catholic spiritual and moral principles"[9].

The Association was registered as a Society in 1944. It covered India, Burma, Sri Lanka (and Pakistan after partition till 1956). An in-house bulletin "Catholic Hospital" was regularly published.

The Association experienced a steady growth in its membership, involvement, and vision. The Alma Ata Declaration of WHO in 1975 was *"Health for All by 2000 AD"*. CHAI realized that this was an impossible task and adapted it into *"Health for Many More by Many More"*. At the 50th Annual Convention in 1993 at Secunderabad, the name was changed to The Catholic Health Association of India, from `Hospital Association'. This change reflected a paradigm shift occurring in the Association due to two factors. First of all, more than 70% of its membership are small health care centers, and then, CHAI's renewed vision emphasized on Community based health care promotion in contrast to mainly curative health services[10]. This implies holistic understanding of health, which sees health, not just as the absence of sickness in an individual, but physical, spiritual, social and mental well being of everyone in

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the community. It also hints at healthy socio-economic, political and environmental situation for the total well being of everyone in the community.

Since 1996, CHAI has three new strategies in realizing its objective in building up healthy communities, such as Decentralization, Bottom up approach and Networking with Government and like-minded voluntary organizations[11]. Decentralization was aimed at enabling many more members to participate in the affairs of the organization and to address region-specific issues. Thus efforts were initiated to strengthen Regional Units, formation of Diocesan Units and building up of Regional Resource Teams. Now CHAI has 11 regional units.

3.2.2 Catholic Nurses' Guild of India (CNGI)

"Ever faithful": that is the motto of CNGI. Responding to the expressed desire of Pope Pius XII that Catholic nurses both lay and religious be organized as an Association to fulfill their duties worthy of their calling and profession, the first unit was formed through the efforts of Fr. Narcillo, S.D.B. in 1952 in Chennai. Subsequently similar units were formed in other parts of the country. In 1957, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India requested Fr. James Tong S.J. to prepare a Constitution and Guidelines for the Association. Sr. Ella and many others worked untiringly to spread the Guild in different parts of the country. They also began to publish `The Lotus and the Lamp' at that time as a one sheet quarterly.

The main objectives for the formation of CNGI were "to improve and elevate the nursing profession in its religious, apostolic, ethical, social, cultural, economic and technical aspects; and to provide an agency through which Catholic nurses will be able to speak and act corporately in matters of common interest to their profession"[12]. Evaluating its presence in the health scenario of India, it is noted that, "for us, the CNGI, the past years have been years of growth and full of challenges. CNGI stood for the voiceless, specially in the pro-life activities of the country in schools, sex education and family life education and Natural Family Planning to hundreds of children and parents in the Catholic Schools and Colleges"[13]

3.2.3 Sister-Doctors' Forum of India

Thanks to the unique contribution and commitment of the Religious Sisters, the intervention of the Church in healthcare remains remarkable and noteworthy. Other than thousands of nurses and para-medicals, who are consecrated persons, at present there are almost six hundred Religious Sisters who are Medical Doctors and they are serving in various parts of the country, especially in remote villages. In view of their on-going formation and their mutual support,

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many Sister-doctors felt the need to have an association for themselves. This was expressed also during the evaluation process of the Silver Jubilee celebration of CHAI. Later, in 1993 June, during the National Convention of CHAI in Ernakulam, the Sister-Doctors' Forum of India (SDFI) was created. Dr. Sr. Lillian was the first President of the forum. It had its office in the premises of St. John's Medical College, Bangalore, since most of the Sister-Doctors were its ex-alumni. Recently the office was shifted from St. John's, Bangalore to the Head Quarters of CHAI in Secunderabad. SDFI brings out a News Letter periodically. Other than the Annual General Body Meeting, they also meet in the regional levels.

With the help of Dr. C. M. Francis the former Dean of St. John's Medical College, the Memorandum of the Association and Rules and Regulations of SDFI were prepared. The main aim and objective of the Forum is "to develop and foster solidarity and fellowship among the members through mutual sharing of the vision and experience and exchange of views". It also aims "to strengthen and deepen the religious commitment and spiritual life and to evolve a specific spirituality which will help the members in the healing ministry".

The intervention of Sister-Doctors at the time of crisis situation and emergencies, like the recent floods in Bihar, earthquake and the riot due to communal disharmony in Gujarat etc. was possible also due to the understanding and networking through the Forum. At the regional level, the association coordinates various medical and social interventions like Leprosy programmes, working for those affected with HIVAIDS, conducting School health plan and programmes to empower women and girl children.

3.2.4 Other Major Health Associations

There are some other Associations that are functioning at the national level in the Catholic Church in India, of which some are very active, and some others due to various reasons, are not so active. Some of them are: Indian Federation of Medical Guilds (IFMG), Natural Family Planning Association of India (NFPAI), Deaf Ministry-India, Association of Pastoral Animators and Hospital Chaplains, Catholic Blind Association of India.

At this point we need to make a special mention of the Voluntary Health Association of India (VHAI) which was started by Fr. James Tong, S.J. It was founded in the year 1970 with the vision of 'Making Health a Reality for all the People of India'. Its mission is to assist initiatives in the voluntary sector, with the involvement and participation of people. VHAI's primary objectives also encompass promotion of social justice and human rights related issues

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to the provision and distribution of health services. There are so many religious sisters and Church personnel who are very actively involved in VHAI in different States.

The contributions of some of the Health Organizations of the Sister-Churches are also outstanding and praiseworthy. The Christian Medical Association of India (CMAI), World Vision, Leprosy Mission of India, Emmanuel Hospital Association, etc are some of them.[14]

3. 3. Major Health Institutions

3.3.1 St. John's National Academy of Health Sciences

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of India in response to a felt need of the country established the CBCI Society for Medical Education and decided to open a Medical College and a Teaching Hospital to provide for the relief of suffering, to promote and preserve the health of the community and to give an example of enlightened training in dedicated service, which is characteristic of Christian educational and social welfare institutions."[15] The corner stone of the building was blessed by Pope Paul VI at Bombay during the principal function of the Eucharistic Congress, held on December 3, 1964. Although it had its humble beginning in the year 1963 at St. Mary's Orphanage, which was made available by the Archbishop of Bangalore, five years after its establishment, the College was shifted to its permanent campus on a 145 acres site. Later, on December 8, 1975, St. John's Medical College Hospital was opened. It has now grown into a massive 1100-bed referral hospital. The School of Nursing was started in 1980. And, it was upgraded as the College of Nursing in 1989. In December 1994 all the Institutions were brought under the common name: St. John's National Academy of Health Sciences.

St. John's remains as a unique institution in the country imparting quality care, excellent training in basic and advanced aspects of medicine and health. Apart from conducting the MBBS, General Nursing, B Sc and PC B Sc Nursing and M Sc Nursing Courses, St. John's now conducts practically all the Post Graduate Courses in Pre, Para and Clinical areas, B.Sc Courses in Laboratory Technology and Radio Diagnosis. The Government of India is in the process of granting the institution permission to start Super Specialty Courses in Cardiology, Pediatric Surgery and Plastic Surgery shortly.

St. John's curriculum of Medical Ethics, its bias towards Rural Health Care, its research projects, particularly on nutrition has made the Institution a leader not only in India but in the whole of South East Asia. Today, and as of 1999-2000, St. John's is the only Medical and

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Nursing College accredited by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council, an Autonomous Institution of U.G.C., and, therefore, the Government of India, and that too with the highest grade of excellence: 5-Star.

3.3.2 Father Muller's Charitable Institutions

Father Muller's Charitable Institutions, the huge medical and Hospital complex having 900 beds has grown from a humble beginning. Urged by the love for the poor and for the suffering humanity, Rev. Fr. Augustus Muller S.J., a Missionary from Germany started a small Homeopathy Dispensary in 1880, a Leprosy Hospital and Asylum for the mentally retarded in 1890, and then, a General Hospital in 1895. Father Muller's Charitable Institutions have been following in the footsteps of, and in the example set by Fr. Muller in serving humanity. Under the leadership of able Directors who followed the great founder, Father Muller's Hospital has rendered yeoman service to the sick of South India in general, and of Mangalore and Dakshina Kannada in particular. Many Departments for general health care in modern medicine, keeping in mind the growing needs of the people, have been added through the decades.

Father Muller's Charitable Institutions while growing in leaps and bounds in the area of medicine and medical care, have not lagged behind in the area of medical education. This is evident in starting the School of Nursing in 1959; the Homeopathic Medical College (BHMS Degree and Postgraduate Degree in Homeopathic Materia Medica, Organon & Homeopathic Philosophy and Repertory) in 1985; the College of Nursing in 1987; the Institute of Medical Education and Research in Dermatology (Skin and Venereal Diseases) in 1991, and then, seven other disciplines of Postgraduate Studies (General Medicine, General Surgery, Paediatrics, Obstetrics & Gynaecology, Anaesthesiology, and Psychiatry) in 1991; the Para-medical Courses (B Sc. Psiotherapy, B Sc. Radiology, B.Sc. Medical Laboratory Technology, B Sc. Operation Theatre Technology, B Sc. Anaesthesiology, M Sc. Hospital Administration, and M Sc. Psycho Social Rehabilitation) in 1994, and Medical College (MBBS) in 1999. The Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences, Karnataka, gave permission to conduct research (Ph.D) in Nursing.

The Leprosy Centre, one of the oldest clinics in South India, the Psychiatry Department, with 100 beds, and Alcoholic De-addiction Unit which offers 56 beds are functioning with high efficiency and giving great relief to the affected and their families. In keeping with the motto, "Heal and Comfort", the Hospital as well as all other Units under Father Muller's

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Charitable Institutions pledge themselves continually to bring health care and solace to the suffering humanity.

The Church has three more Medical Colleges in the country: Pushpagiri, run by the Diocese of Tiruvalla, Amala Institute of Medical Sciences, in Trichur, run by the C.M.I, and Jubilee Memorial Hospital, owned by the Archdiocese of Trichur, Kerala.

When we think of the medical colleges in India, two major institutions run by our Sister-Churches, such as Christian Medical College, Vellore and CMC, Ludhiana deserve a special mention here, for their remarkable contribution in medical education, research and care.

3.3.3. FIAMC Bio-Medical Ethics Centre, Mumbai

International Federation of Catholic Medical Associations Bio-Medical Ethics Centre, Mumbai was started in September 1981. During the XIV World Congress of the International Federation of Catholic Medical Associations held in Bombay in January 1978, it was resolved to establish such a Centre. 'Its role is to debate the legitimacy of experimentation and inquiry within the ethic of culture, religion and the modern secular state'. As Father Hönings explains: "The profession, mission and vocation of the health care worker naturally require a solid training and a constant ethical-religious formation in moral questions in general and in questions relating to bio-ethics in particular. In the presence of clinical cases which become ever more complicated and intricate in character because of advances in the realm of biotechnology, all healthcare workers – especially medical doctors – cannot and must not be left alone to be burdened by responsibilities which cannot be borne"[16].

The FIAMC Bio-Medical Ethics Centre's main concern is to provide information and data to the medical profession on matters of ethical content and to facilitate discussions and help reach appropriate conclusions in areas of ethical questions. It tries to interact with society in matters involving healthcare and medical services. Seminars organized by the Centre on themes like Euthanasia versus Life, on traditional clinical death and brain death, Ethics in Medical Education, etc. positively caught the attention of different international medical groups. Some of the publications were even instrumental for the formulation of the legislative prepositions. The Ministry of Health and Family Planning of the Government of India brought out the Trans-plantation of Human Organs Act of 1994 and its Rules of 1995 is an example for this[17]. In short, the contribution of the Centre to the national scene in respect of medical ethics has been substantial.

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4. State-wise Distribution of Catholic Healthcare Institutions

Catholic Health Facilities in India - National Scenario

Sl. No.	Name of the States	Hospital	Dispensary	Rehabilitation Centre	Centre for Mental Health Care	Non Formal Health Facility	Medical Facility for the Disabled	Leproary	Health Care Centre for the Aged	T.B, Terminally ill HIV/ AIDS	Alternative System of Cure	Medical Training	Counselling Centre	Total
1	Andhra Pradesh	93	177	5	6	13	32	28	22	5		10	3	394
2	Andamans	1	8										10	
3	Arunachal Pradesh	2	1						1				4	
4	Assam	10	93			2	1		4	2	1	3	116	
5	Bihar	15	114	4	5	4	1	8	1	3			115	
6	Chattisgarh	16	168	1		1	2	4	6	1	3		203	
7	Delhi	2	10	3			2	1	1	1	3	3		26
8	Goa	9	37	4			5		34		1		2	92
9	Gujarat	10	64			6	4	4	8					96
10	Haryana	2	16		1	5	4	2	2					32
11	Himachal Pradesh		3						1					4
12	Jammu Kashmir	4	13				1							18
13	Jharkhand	22	166	3		5	4	8	12	8	3	4		235
14	Karnataka	53	168	3	4	14	7	15	21	5	4	16	8	318
15	Kerala	257	288	23	65	9	40	9	159	16	29	59	29	983
16	Madhya Pradesh	26	130		6	4		11	8	2		2		190
17	Maharashtra	36	152	8	3	8	12	12	24	4	6	3	6	274
18	Manipur	1	30	2		1						1	1	36
19	Meghalaya	2	67	1		3	1	2	6			1		83
20	Mizoram		15								1			16
21	Nagaland	1	24	1										26
22	Orissa	9	118	1	5	24	8	18	15	2		1		201
23	Pondicherry	9	36		1	2	4	2	10	4				68
24	Punjab	6	27		1	10	2	1		2				49
25	Rajasthan	23	29				5			1		1	1	60
26	Tamil Nadu	100	361	7	7	7	29	13	43		6	5	9	587
27	Tripura		13				2	1						16
28	Sikim		7			2	1		1					11
29	Utaranchal	5	12			8								25
30	Uttar Pradesh	41	121	1	2	4	5	10	17	2		4		207
31	West Bengal	9	114	3	1	30	16	16	20	4	4		1	218
	GRAND TOTAL	**764**	**2575**	**70**	**107**	**162**	**188**	**165**	**416**	**62**	**61**	**113**	**60**	**4743**

5. Some Outstanding Personalities in Healthcare

Thousands are those who have dedicated their lives to the care of the poor and the sick, following the foot-steps of Jesus, the Divine Healer, who "went about doing good" (Acts 10:38).

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Here below are brief sketches on the lives and contributions by some missionaries, particularly in the healthcare field. They left their dear ones, abandoned their homeland and came here with a heart full of compassion and love, and with a strong determination to serve the sick and the suffering.

5.1 Mother Teresa of Calcutta and the Missionaries of Charity

Mother Teresa of Calcutta is more than an icon of care, compassion and love. For millions in India she was a living saint, because of her commitment to the poorest of the poor.[18] The official Church declares her a Blessed on October 19, 2003. Mother Teresa (Agnes Bojaxhiu) was born on August 26, 1910 in Skopje in Northern Macedonia (now Albania)[19]. On September 26, 1928, when she was 18 years old, she left for Ireland to join the novitiate of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary at Loreto Abbey, Dubiln. Two months later, on November 29, 1928, she arrived in Calcutta. She wrote to her aunt: "I observed the life in the streets with strange feelings. Most of the Indians were half naked, their skin and hair glistening in the hot sun. Clearly there was a great poverty among them." After her profession on May 24, 1931, she began to teach at St. Mary's Bengali Medium School, Loreto, Entally, Calcutta.

On September 9, 1946, while on a train to Darjeeling for a retreat, Mother received what she described as 'a call within a call'. She said: "The message was clear: I must leave the convent to help the poor by living among them. This was a command, something to be done, something definite. I knew where I had to be but I did not know how to get there." When she consulted her spiritual father, Fr Van Exem, after going through her notes, he said: "It is the will of God". Later she received permission from Pope Pius XII and vowed her obedience to the Archbishop of Calcutta. With five rupees given by the Archbishop, she rented two rooms in Moti Jhil, one room served as a school and the other as the first home for the sick and the dying destitute. She named the house 'Nirmal Hriday'.

As the workload increased, her prayer and planning was to find sisters who would dedicate their lives to this work. With the permission from the Vatican, on April 11, 1951, the first group of sisters, 12 of them, took their vows. The divine providence worked. The Missionaries of Charity that Mother Teresa started, spread to 125 countries with 602 homes and 3914 sisters to date. Her commitment came to be known all over. In 1979 she received the Nobel Peace Prize and in 1980, she received the Bharat Ratna, the highest Indian award. Millions are those orphans, the dying destitutes, and the poorest of the poor who received medicine, food, shelter and above all, love and acceptance through Mother Teresa and her sisters in India and all over the world.

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5.2 James Stuart Tong, S. J. : A Selfless Servant of God and of the People

James Stuart Tong, S. J.[20], was born on February 4, 1913 in Owensboro, Kentucky, in the United States. After his ordination to priesthood, he was assigned to the Diocese of Patna in 1939. In 1957, Fr. James Tong, S.J. was appointed by the CBCI the Executive Director of CHAI[21]. In connection with this work, he travelled extensively to different states and contacted professionals and experts in the medical discipline. CHAI grew steadily under his stewardship and hundreds of Catholic Hospitals and Dispensaries became regular members of this all India association. For seventeen years Father Tong represented the Catholic Hospital Association at home and abroad. As Asian Secretary for the International Catholic Confederation of Hospitals, he was in contact with sixteen eastern countries outside India.

Fr. Tong rendered yeoman service to CHAI, for its growth and development. In 1970, he felt inspired to form a new association to assist initiatives in voluntary sector, and it began to function as a Coordinating Agency for Health Planning in India (CHAPI), which after four years of existence, in 1974, came to function under the name the Voluntary Health Association of India, which he headed as the Executive Director for ten years.

Desirous of spending his entire life in India, Tong applied for and acquired Indian citizenship in 1958. In 1974 he was appointed Executive Director of the Catholic News Service of India Society, a position that held for over six years. Tong was a member of numerous national and international organisations like the Indian Hospital Association, the Indian Association for the Advancement of Medical Education, the Indian Red Cross Society, the Indian Society for the Rehabilitation of the Handicapped, Communication for Development (COMFORD), International Hospital Federation and Amnesty International. He also assisted in founding the Voluntary Health Association of Indonesia.

For 10 years continuously Tong was the Secretary of the Catholic Nurses Guild of India, which he subsequently handed over to Sister Ella of the Congregation of the Medical Mission Sisters in Bombay. In his arduous duties both in CHAI and VHAI, Tong was ably assisted by Medical Mission Sisters, whose services he enlisted to make these two organisations truly open to all in spirit and character. Names of some of the Sisters who worked with him are well worth mentioning - Sr. Adelaide, Sr. Ann Cummins, Sr. Carol Huss, Sr. Joan Thazhathil and also Sr. Rose of the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth.

Since 1957, Fr. Tong had been rendering remarkable service as the editor of several magazines: "Medical Service", the organ of CHAI, the 'Lotus and the Lamp' for the Catholic

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Nurses Guild of India, "Food for Thought", news bulletin of the Catholic Relief Services, "Hospital Administration" for the Indian Hospital Association and also "Health for the Millions", the house journal of VHAI.

5.3. Sister Mary Glowry: A Solitary Grain of Wheat

"I felt like a solitary grain of wheat that dreams of a golden harvest. I was still the only medical woman among our Sisters"[22]: said Sr. Mary Glowry. But, her dream came true. There was the 'golden harvest' in India through this solitary grain.

Sr. Mary Glowry was born on June 23, 1887 in Western District of Victoria, Australia[23]. She completed her medical degree in 1910. First she worked as a resident doctor at Christ Church Hospital, New Zealand, and then at the Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital in Melbourne. In 1916 she was elected as the president of the Catholic Women's Social Guild in Melbourne. By 1919 she completed her specialization in gynecology, obstetrics and ophthalmology. But, all these years that she worked and studied, constantly she had an inner desire to work in the missions. As a fulfillment of a long cherished dream, on January 21, 1920 she left Melbourne for India, on the ship "Orsova", and reached Madras on February 11, from there she boarded a train to Guntur. She joined the Society of Jesus, Mary and Joseph and began to work at St. Joseph's Hospital, Guntur which began in 1925.

Between 1927 and 1936, Sister Mary cared for 6,37,096 patients at St. Joseph's Hospital. She explained about the medical situation in these words: "There was so much work to be done and so many patients, I could work day and night without stopping'. But her area of operation did not limit to the boundaries of the hospital campus. Inspired by the teaching of Pope Pius XII to `organize the forces of good', and by seeing the contribution of medical associations in different countries, Sr. Mary began to contact the Catholic Hospitals across the country. Finally on July 19, 1943 sixteen Sisters gathered for the first meeting in Guntur, which resulted in the formation of Catholic Hospital Association of India (CHAI). The credit of beginning a great association that is contributing much in the healthcare in our country goes to this revered sister.

Sr. Dr. Mary Glowry was also one of the members of the Catholic Medical College Committee set up to study the possibilities of starting one in India.[24] The other members were Bishop Thomas Pothacamury (Bishop of Guntur: 1940-1943; Archbishop of Bangalore: 1943-1967), Cardinal Valerian Gracias (then Auxiliary Bishop of Bombay),

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Fr. A.F. Wildermuth, S.J, Sr. M. Laetitia, SCMM, Patna, Sr. M. Kinesburge, FMM, Dr. Sr. Alma, SCMM, Rawalpindi, Sr. Elizabeth, SAS, Bezwada (now Vijayawada), Major General J.P. Huban, Surgen-General of the Government of Madras. The Reports of early years of CHAI and Reports of the interventions of Bishop Thomas at the CBCI Standing Committee testify that Sr. Mary had a major role to play in the consultations and the preparatory process for a Catholic Medical College, though she had already been called for the heavenly reward when it was started in 1963 in Bangalore and formally inaugurated on September 29, 1968. Sr. Mary was called to the eternal abode on May 5, 1957, 'after many months of sickness and suffering which she bore with remarkable patience and fortitude'. But, one thing is true: the solitary grain of wheat dreamt of a golden harvest and the dream came true in our mother land.

5.4 Fr. Kavanagh, Fr. Lawrence Hunt and Damien Social Welfare Centre, Dhanbad

In the outskirts of the railway settlement in Dhanbad, leprosy patients who had been cast out of their villages, were living in hovels and were reduced to begging for their livelihood. In the early sixties, Fr. Kavanagh, a Jesuit priest from the Jamshedpur Mission, started the Damien Social Welfare Centre[25] for the patients of Hansen's disease. Few of his parishioners joined him. A zealous doctor, Dr. A.K. Mukherji offered his services for clinical work in 1965. 2,100 cases of leprosy were registered. The programme was supported by the German Leprosy Relief Association (GLRA) and St. Francis Leprosy Guild of England. In 1967, three Samaritan Sisters started working in this area. Few mobile clinics were established to treat 3,300 patients. In 1969 DSWC became a registered body. A hospital building was soon constructed at Govindpur. As a result of trial surveys between 1968 and 1970, the Leprosy Control Project was formally begun with 5 paramedical workers.

Eventually new institutions came up for Leprosy education and control. De Britto House at Gomoh became a residential technical training school for the children of leprosy patients. A rehabilitation and training centre was started in Baramasia to equip patients with skills to earn a livelihood and farms were started at Gomoh, Sindri and Nagar colony. So, the work, which began as a simple feeding programme, and later a food for work project, expanded to the extent that it needed support from others, since Fr. Kanvaagh, had also the pastoral responsibilities. That was how Fr. Lawrence Hunt comes to the picture.

Fr. Lawrence Hunt was born on February 14, 1927 in Baltimore. He joined the Society of Jesus in 1944, and was ordained priest in 1957. He came to India in 1963.

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In 1971 he was appointed the Director of the Damien Social Welfare Centre and the Superior of De Nobili, Dhanbad. There he seemed to have found his vocation within his vocation to priesthood.

Fr. Hunt was responsible for developing DSWC into the massive social service project that is today spread over the entire northern part of the Dhanbad district, from Gomoh to Kumardhubi, and embracing such diverse activities as leprosy hospital, leprosy clinics, hostels for children of leprosy patients, schools for them, training centers for boys and girls, and rehabilitation centers, and above all large programme of Public Education with the logo: "Leprosy is curable".

In 1981 the centre had a 130 bed hospital, two field hospitals, 156 clinics, a leprosy control project for a population of 7 lakhs, and a rehabilitation department. All the institutions together treated 24,000 leprosy patients all over Dhanbad district. In 1988 DSWC was handed over to the Diocese and Fr. Vijay Bhat was appointed its director. Fr. Lawrence Hunt, till he left for the States in 1983, was deeply committed to the cause of those affected by leprosy and thus tried everything possible to offer them a new life of hope.

5. 5 Fr. Peter Fernarndo Di Esposti and Fr Nobert Bucci: Two Doctors, Visionary Capuchins

The people of Shantinagar, a village 35 kms. away from Gonda in Uttar Pradesh, will never forget two Italian missionary doctors, Frs. Peter and Nobert, who lived and tirelessly worked for the people for many long years, till both these priests became sick and weak, and then returned to their land of origin, from where they were eventually called for their heavenly reward.

Fr. Peter Fernarndo Di Esposti, who was born on September 6, 1931 in Carpineta, near Bologna in Italy, became a priest in the Capuchin Order on March 23, 1958. After the ordination he came to Rome and completed his medical degrees. It was a dream-fulfilled when he was granted permission to come to India to work for the poor. He reached Mumbai by ship on November 23, 1961 and came to Lucknow. There he was appointed the Assistant parish-priest at the Cathedral and Vice-principal of St. Francis College. Later, on February 22, 1965, he was posted to a remote and insignificant village, Jhagran Purva, in Gonda District, where there was already another Capuchin priest, Fr. Nobert Bucci, working there since few years. Fr. Nobert, who was born on January 17, 1917 in Gabicce near Catholica in Italy, was a good surgeon, and was an expert in alternate medicines like acupuncture. He was ordained on

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July 29, 1941 and reached in India in December 1947. When he came to this village, Fr. Peter felt that the Lord brought him to the right place, for a great task.

Education was Fr. Peter's first priority. But, people never felt the need of education. Their concern was their daily bread, clothes and shelter. But, being a true visionary he knew that only education will bring about transformation. He began the school under a banyan tree. Mid-day meals attracted the children. Slowly the school was moved into thatched huts. Later, he managed to develop it into a solidly constructed building and a recognized School, known as St. Francis Cabrini School.

Both of them being professionally medical doctors, the attention was also on the healthcare of the villagers. The small clinic gradually grew into a hospital, where people with all kinds of diseases - infectious and non-infectious, trauma and accidental, leprosy, T.B., snake-bite, scorpion-bite, neglected case of pregnant mothers and mal-nourished children – flocked the hospital. Leprosy patients were given special care so that they could go back to their homes with respect and dignity. Fr. Peter took keen personal interest in caring for the infected ulcerated wounds of these patients. A hospice for the leprosy patients was also started. Soon, the quantum of work increased. So, in May 1975 Sisters of the Congregation of Teresian Carmelites (CTC) joined them.

Fr. Peter eventually extended his work and involvement to other parts too. He started Fatima School and Dispensary in Gonda, St. Norbert's School in Bahraich, St. Peter's School in Nanapara. Together with education and healthcare, they concentrated on other developmental work like, low-cost houses for the shelterless, installation of hand-pumps for drinking water, income generation programmes for the villagers and so on. Through the visionary leadership of these missionaries, within few years the whole atmosphere of the village changed, including its name "Jhagran Purva" (place of fight) into Shantinagar (Abode of Peace).

5.6 Fr. Gerard Perazzini, OFM Cap: A Man with a Mission to Empower the People

Fr. Gerard Perazzini was born on January 19, 1919 at Sant-Arcangelo, Italy. He was ordained a priest in the Capuchin Order on June 27, 1943. He came to India on December 20, 1947 and joined the Lucknow Mission of the Capuchin Fathers. He started his missionary work as the Assistant Parish Priest on August 1, 1948 at the St. Joseph's Cathedral, Lucknow. Later, on January 15, 1949, he was appointed the Parish Priest of St. Alphonse's Church (now the Cathedral) in Bareilly, where he started a new School attached to the Parish Church. On March 6, 1954 he was transferred to St. Francis Cabrini Church, Shantinagar in Gonda

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District, where he worked almost 4 years. Later he was transferred to Sacred Heart Church, Sitapur on January 12, 1958. He remained there till his death on May 16, 2003. Today Sitapur tells a unique story of how a single man's dream, commitment and tireless effort can bring about unparallel growth and development in a district.

As soon as Fr Gerard was assigned to Sitapur, he started the Sacred Heart School which eventually he developed into an Inter College. He believed that in a remote area like Sitapur, for the healthcare needs of the people a small dispensary will not be sufficient. So, in 1981 he founded Bishop Conrad Memorial Hospital, Khairabad, and entrusted the hospital to the Holy Cross Sisters of Minzengen, Switzerland. Through the efforts of Fr. Gerard, it has now grown into a 300 bed hospital with several O.P.D specialties. Attached to the Hospital in 1990 he started the B.C.M. Nursing School, and later in 1994 the Elvira Centre for the Handicapped. Fr. Gernard's concern for leprosy patients was so intense that he founded St. Francis' Centre for Leprosy Patients. Khairabad being a leading manufacturing centre for cotton durries, the incidence of tuberculosis was very high in the rural areas due to unhygienic, unsanitary conditions and substandard accommodation in which the rural poor live. Therefore, he encouraged the Holy Cross sisters to undertake rural medical apostolate for the uplift of the masses.

Together with the establishment of healthcare facilities, Fr. Gerard continued his efforts in giving quality education to the youth of Sitapur. In 1998 he founded Sacred Heart Degree College in Naipalapur, which was affiliated to University of Kanpur. In view of providing technical and professional education to the youth, in 2001 he started Sacred Heart Institute of Management and Technology, which offers M.C.A. and M.B.A Courses.

In 1990 he obtained Indian citizenship. Though he was 84 years old when he died, his love and commitment to the people, especially to the poor, kept him ever young and active[26].

Conclusion

The mammoth contribution of the miniscule Christian community in the field of healthcare has some unique and specific characteristics too. As a conclusion to this, let us examine some of them.

Christian Healthcare Involvement and its Unique Characteristics

1. Option for the Poor and Reaching to the un-reached: Statistics reveal that 85 % of the healthcare institutions run by the Church in India are in remote villages. Most of these areas

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are totally or partially deprived of adequate healthcare and other infrastructures and services. "Jesus Christ decidedly sided with the poor. Health institutions administered by personnel who are His disciples must do the same. Today, equipment costs much, some specialized medicines are expensive, doctors' fees are high and the poor are sometimes unable to afford the care that they need. It is here that the Catholic Hospitals' role is seen, where through a system of sound management, the rich subsidize the medical care of the poor. The poor should never turn away from a Catholic hospital because of lack of funds, as no one would turn away from the Lord because he / she was poor. The delicacy with which one treats the poorest, the least educated, would be a good factor to assess the Christian identity of the health care institutions run by the Church. This is true Christian witness."[27]

2. Holistic Outlook on Health: World Health Organization defined health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, instead of the prior conception as merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Pope John Paul II brought our understanding even deeper by explaining health as "...far from being identified with the mere absence of illness, [it] strives to achieve a fuller harmony and healthy balance on the physical, psychological, spiritual and social level. In this perspective, the person himself is called to mobilize all his available energies to fulfill his own vocation and for the good of others."[28] In the age of super specialty the care of the whole person is often forgotten. Whereas in the true Christian understanding, a holistic approach, which includes one's emotional and spiritual care is followed.

3. Respect for Life and Regard for Christian Ethical Principles: Life is to be protected from the moment of conception to the moment of its natural end. Pope John Paul II clearly writes, "...this Gospel of life ... has a profound and persuasive echo in the heart of every person – believer and non-believer – because it marvelously fulfills all the heart's expectations while infinitely surpassing them. Even in the midst of difficulties and uncertainties, every person sincerely open to truth and goodness can, by the light of reason and the hidden action of grace, come to recognize in the natural law written in the heart (cf. Rom 2:14-15) the sacred value of human life from its very beginning until its end, and can affirm the right of every human being to have this primary good respected to the highest degree."[29] Therefore, respect to the sacredness of life should be the primary element of a Catholic healthcare institution. Every medical procedure, care and treatment should be oriented to the betterment of the quality of life of the patient.

Another area is the adherence to the Christian moral principles. "Special attention must also be paid to the treatment of human subjects who undergo research who are especially

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"vulnerable" because of their state of life, as the example of human embryos clearly illustrates. Because of the delicate stage of their development, possible experimentation on them in the light of current technological advances would involve a very high-and therefore ethically unacceptable - risk of causing them irreversible damage and even death."[30]

Health is the core of all human development. It is to be understood in a broader sense to include all aspects of human life: physical, social, mental, and spiritual. Therefore, health would mean adequate food, housing, clean water, clean air, good social milieu, and good social and interpersonal relationships. In short it means the satisfaction of ones basic needs: harmonious relationships with one another, nature and God. Together with the physical and psychological aspects, the spiritual and pastoral areas are to be properly attended to. The history of the Catholic healthcare involvement, which vividly reveals the story of the dedication and commitment of many missionaries, both individually and in and through the many institutions and organizations, is also an attempt to bring the people of this nation to this reality of human development. This attempt is ever continued with ever growing intensity, but rooted in faith and charity in Jesus, the Master.

NOTES:

1 Pope John Paul II, motu pr., *Dolentium Hominum*, p. 2.

2 Cf. Joseph Thekkedath, *History of Christianity in India*, vol. II, TPI, Bangalore, 1982, p. 89

3 Cf. CBCI Commission for Healthcare, Directory of Catholic Health Facilities in India, CBCI Centre, Delhi, 2003. p. 19

4 Cf. Christian Medical Association of India, *Directory of Member Institutions*, 2002, p. 3

5 CBCI Commission for Healthcare, *Care and Compassion*, p. 158

6 Cf. Jose L. Redrado, 'Church and Health in the World', *Dolentium Hominum*, 15 (1990) 67; See also, J.A. Gomez, 'The Care of the Sick in the History of the Church', *Dolentium Hominum* 31 (1996) 45-47; Bishop Bernard Moras, Directory of Catholic Health Facilities in India, CBCI Commission for Health, 2003, p. 3.

7 Report of the CBCI Standing Committee, Delhi, April 27-30, 1993, p.54 & 55. See also, CBCI General Body, Pune 1992, p. 43; Catholic India, vol. XII, no. 3, July 1991.

8 Cf. Report of the CBCI Standing Committee, Shillong, Nov. 8-15, 1989, pp. 6; 40-41;42.

9 Cf. Augustine Veliath, A Golden Harvest- New Horizon: The CHAI Golden Jubilee Evaluation Study, 1993, pp. 6-10.

10 Cf. Memorandum of Association and Rules, Regulation and By-laws of CHAI (as amended on 3 July 1995), esp. pp. 2-3.

11 Cf. CHAI, Annual Report: Oct.1988-Sept. 1999, pp. 8-20.

12 CNGI, The Constitution and Bye-laws, Adopted in Feb. 1961 & amended in Nov. 1990, pp. 3-4.

13 Sr. Anne John, RJM, "CICIAMS in the Third Millennium" in *The Lotus and the Lamp*, Vol. 31, Jan.-March 2000, p.1.

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14 For an address list and details: Cf. CBCI Commission for Health, Directory of Catholic Health Facilities in India, p. 17

15 St. John's Medical College, Prospectus for Admission to Super Speciality etc.2000-2001, p.3; See also, CBCI Society for Medical Education, Memorandum of Association and Rules and Regulations, 1961 especially pp. 1-7.

16 Bonifacio Honings, "The Charter for Health Care Workers: A Synthesis of Hippocratic Ethics and Christian Morality", *Dolentium Hominum* 31(1996)49.

17 FIAMC Bio-Medical Ethics Centre, Is it a Question of Black and White?, 1999, p. 6.

18 Kushwant Singh, the renowned columnist wrote in Hindustan Times: "There is no need of a miracle to prove the sanctity of Mother Teresa. The greatest miracle is that in a pre-dominantly non-Christian country millions of people honor her as a Saint, because of her love for the poorest of the poor".

19 Details taken from, Sunita Kumar, Mother Teresa of Calcutta, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London, 1998.

20 Details are taken from, James Veliath, A Tribute to Fr. James Tong, CHAI, 2002.

21 The appointment letter signed by Archbishop Attipetty reads: "I am happy to state that the Members of the Standing Committee of the C.B.C.I. were pleased with your work, and as a recognition of the services rendered by the Association, they have agreed to have Reverend Father Tong, S.J., as one of the Secretaries under the Director of the Section on Social Action of the C.B.CI to see in particular to the work of your Association": Augustine Veliath, A Golden Harvest- New Horizon: The CHAI Golden Jubilee Evaluation Study, 1993, pp. 6-10, p. 12.

22 Ibid, p. 26. See also, The Golden Harvest, p. 6.

23 Details taken from, Sister M. Adelaide Orem, Out of Nothing, CHAI, New Delhi, 1968.

24 In fact there were two Committees, one set up by CHA and not knowing of the formation of this Committee, another Committee formed by the Standing Committee of the CBCI at their meeting in Bangalore on October 18, 1945. Sr. Mary was member of both the Committees. Both the Committees were later merged: Cf. Reports of the CBCI Standing Committee, Bangalore, August 22-26, 1946, pp. 92-97; and Oct. 19-23, 1948, pp. 102-104)

25 Details taken from, James V. Keogh, S.J., Surprised by Grace, A History of Jamshedpur Province, The Jamshedpur Jesuit Society, 1998, pp. 133-137.

26 Details taken from a Booklet published on the Month's Mind, entitled, "The Beloved Father of Sitapur: Rev. Fr. Gerard Perazzini, OFM. Cap".

27 Archbishop Oswald Gracias, "The Christian Identity in Healthcare" in *Health in Abundance*, Journal by CBCI Commission for Health, May 2003, p. 11.

28 Message of the 8th World Day of the Sick, Feb. 11, 2000

29 Evangelium Vitae, n. 2

30 Pontifical Academy for Life, Concluding Communiqué on the "Ethics of Biomedical Research for a Christian Vision, February 24-26, 2003, p. 9

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10
Missionaries: A Boon to Indian Languages

Jacob Punnoose

"We are from different countries. But we can hear these men in our own languages! We can all understand the great things they are saying about God"

- Acts of the Apostles: Chapter 2:Verse11

The events on the day of the Pentecost signify that mastery over languages was central to the spreading of the Good News. Jesus Christ preached in a small area. Yet, within a few years of the Crucifixion, the church had spread all over the Roman Empire and beyond. Persecution and doctrinal discussions necessitated the written form of communication among leaders of isolated communities living in fear of over-enthusiastic Roman Consuls. This led to the habit of preserving documents. The proof of this is the large volume of early Christian literature that has survived all possible vicissitudes of persecution, war, decay and ignorance.[1]

Learning of new languages facilitated the spread of Christianity; at the same time Christianity contributed significantly to the growth and preservation of many languages and literary works. Armenian language was given a script by the work of early Christians.[2] The rich heritage of Latin was preserved because it remained the lingua franca of Christianity for many centuries. The thoughts of the Greek were transmitted to the moderns through the medieval abbeys. There was no blind prejudice against pagan literature; in fact Fathers of the Church like St. Basil (4th century) actively encouraged absorbing the good from secular or pagan literature[3].

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The friars who reached India from the 16th century onwards continued this tradition. They were quick to learn new languages, write books, standardise scripts and evolve new methods of study. They encouraged the spread of knowledge among all sections of the population. The story of the translation and publication of books by missionaries is also the story of printing, lexicographical and inter-lingual studies in modern India. Because of missionary activity, modern printing techniques came to India much earlier than many countries in the West[4]. They made significant contributions to practically every Indian Language. We may briefly survey their important contributions in various languages.

1. Tamil

The role of Christian missionaries in the revival of Tamil letters is universally acknowledged. Most of the early Europeans landed on the southern and western coast. The missionaries evinced keen interest in learning the new language and in making it intelligible to future missionaries back home. They simplified the script, introduced punctuation, gave an impetus to prose works, wrote the first Tamil treatises on science, introduced the printing press, produced Tamil tracts and books, and set up societies for promoting Tamil writing.[5] In the 17th century the anti-brahmanical writings of the Tamil sect Siththars (or Siddha) School were strong against idolatry and according to some critics their works bear traces of Christian influence.

It has been suggested that A *Tamil Catechism* (Lisbon, c. 1550) is the first known printed book in Tamil (Roman characters).[6] In 1556 Jesuits brought a printing press to Goa for printing Portuguese tracts for the Society. Later a set of 'Malabar' characters was cut. In 1578 the first Tamil book, a translation of Francis Xavier's *Doutrina Christe* by Henrique Henriques[7] appeared in print in Tamil script.[8] His *Tambiran Vanakkam*, a shorter Catechism (1578) and *Kirisittiani Vanakkam*, a larger Catechism (1579) are the earliest books printed in Tamil script still extant. He also produced a Tamil grammar and dictionary.

Roberto de Nobili[9], a Jesuit who reached India in 1605, studied Tamil, Telugu and Sanskrit. He was the first European Sanskrit scholar[10]. He translated into Sanskrit or composed therein many prayers and an abridgement of Christian Doctrine and a life of Our Lady. He was one of the pioneers in the writing of Tamil prose. He enriched Tamil with many words and phrases adapted from Sanskrit. *Nittiya Jivana Callabam* (Dialogue on Eternal Life) and *Kaduvil Nirnayam* (Theodicy), were written to stimulate interest in Christianity[11]. *Attamia Nirnayam* (Science of the Soul)[12], *Mathasampanda Sallapam*[13]*: un mathamanna?* (What is your religion?), *Dushana Dhikaram* (Refutation of Calumnies)[14] and *Gnanopadesa kandam*[15] (large

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catechism or 'Spiritual Teaching') are some of his other works. His principal work in Tamil is his "Larger Catechism", in four books, printed after his death.

The first works in Europe to display Tamil characters was Philippus Baldaeus' *Naauwkeurige beschryvinge van Malabar en Choromadel, der zelver aangrenzende, ryken, en het machtig eyland Ceylon*[16]. No other Tamil character appears to have been in print in Europe until 1716 when Ziegenbalg's *Grammatica Damulica*[17] was published.

Viramaamunivar (1680-1747) is the Tamil name of Father Constancio Beschi[18]. A linguist and a creative poet, he contributed towards the development of the language by reintroducing the *pulli* and the distinction between long and short 'o' and 'e'. He composed a grammar of High Tamil, and was the first to write a grammar of Low Tamil (the common dialect), which still remains the foundation of scientific Tamil philology[19]. He is also the complier of several Tamil dictionaries, among them the quadruple lexicon containing words, synonyms, categories of words, and rhymes; a Tamil-Latin[20] and Latin-Tamil-Portuguese dictionary. He wrote several ascetical books in Tamil for the use of the native catechists. Beschi is, however, best known as a Tamil poet. In a poem of 1100 stanzas, *"Kittêri ammalle saritiram"* he sings the praises of the martyr St. Quiteria. His greatest poetical work is the *"Tembavani"* (The Unfading Garland)[21] (c. 1710). This is divided into thirty-six cantos, containing 3,615 stanzas written in irreproachable Tamil. It is regarded as a Tamil classic and has been the subject of commentaries by scholars. He utilized many Hindu theological concepts as a means of Christian teaching in *Thembavani*. Another work *'paramathma kuruvin kathai'* (the adventures of Guru Paramarta)[22] is a piece of prose fiction, which bubbles over with wit and humour.

In 1706, the Lutheran Bartholomew Ziegenbalg and his colleague Heinrich Plutschau landed in Tranquebar (*Tarangampadi* in Tamil)[23]. Within eight months he had mastered the Tamil language. Ziegenbalg did the very first translation of the Bible into any Indian language in Tamil. Within two years, Ziegenbalg could give a summary of 119 Tamil palm leaf books ranging from the ancient grammar tome *Tolkappiam* to small moral books. In 1708 he translated moral books such as *Ulaganeedhi, Konrai Venthan and Needhi Venba.*[24] Since most of the lexicons in Tamil were in poetic form, Ziegenbalg set about compiling a dictionary, presumably based on *Chudamani Nigandu*. The dictionary listed new meanings for archaic words. Within two years the dictionary had a listing of about 20,000 words from the areas of theology, philosophy, medicine, history and economics. By 1712 it listed 47,000 words. Ziegenbalg's successors, Fabricius (who compiled *A Malabar and English Dictionary*), John Peter Rottler and Winslow continued the work and added hundreds of words to the list. As suggested by

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Ziegenbalg, Tamil studies were introduced in 1711 at what is now known as the Martin Luther University in Halle[25]. There is a manuscript numbering 23 folios in the British Museum Departmental collection[26], which reveals the range of his mastery over the language. In 1711 Ziegenbalg persuaded the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge in London to send a further 'Portuguese' printing press to India and soon afterwards he was able to obtain a set of 'Malabari' letters from Germany.

Another German missionary, Christoph Theodosius Walther (1699-1741) compiled a Tamil-Hebrew dictionary. Among his other works were *Index Geographicus - Europa Pars Orbis Prima, Historia Sacra* (Church history) and *Doctrina temporum Indica*. Jacome Goncalvez (1676-1742), of Goa and Ceylon, has left fifteen books in Tamil. These include *Christiyana Alayam*[27], *Dava Arulveda Puranam*[28], *Suvishesha Viriturai*[29], *Viyakula Pirasangam*[30], *Gnana Unartchy*[31] and *Sugurda Darpanam*[32].

2. Bengali

Christians contributed immensely in the field of Bengali language. Manuel da Assumpsao a Portuguese missionary wrote *Kripar Shastrer Orthobhed*[33], which was printed in 1743 in Lisbon in Roman alphabets. It was a catechism in the question-answer form. He also wrote a 40-page Bengali grammar book and a 529-page Bengali-Portuguese and Portuguese-Bengali dictionary, called *Vocabulario em Idioma Bengulla-e-Portuguez, divided em duas Partes*. Dom Antonio da Rozario, a local Hindu prince converted by the Portuguese, wrote Brahmman-Roman Catholic Sambad, where a Roman Cátholic dialogues with a Hindu Brahmin (priest) and tries to show the superiority of Christianity over Hinduism.

The National Library at Calcutta has some of the earliest printed books in Bengali. *A Grammar of the Bengal Language* by Nathaniel Brassey[34], the earliest printed book in Bengali, was published in 1778. Henry *Forstar's 'A vocabulary in two parts', English and Bangalee'* was published 1799. William Carey's *Dictionary of the Bengali Language* (1815-1825) in which the words are traced to their origin and their various meanings given, William Carrey's *Dialogues* (1801), intended to facilitate the learning of the Bengali language, Ram Ram Basu's *Raja Pratapaditya Charitra*(1801), *Digdarshan* (1818) first Bengali monthly and the first issue of *The Samachar Darpan* (1831), the first Bengali weekly can be seen in the collection.

Baptist missionary William Carey (1761-1834)[35] was a prolific translator, linguist and educationist. The Carey library in Serampore contains a veritable archive of material. He helped develop Bengali typefaces and established Serampore Mission and College besides

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publishing newspapers and periodicals. In 1800 The Serampore Mission was established. His colleagues Dr. John Thomas, William Ward, Felix Carey (his son), John Pearson, and others also made contributions to Bengali literature. He translated and printed the Bible in Bengali. The Serampore Mission distinguished itself by making significant contribution to education[36]. In 1800 printing presses in the Oriental Languages were established and the first printed Bengali prose book *The Gospels of St. Matthew* was published. In 1801 the first printed prose book by a Bengali *Pratapaditya Carita* and the first printed book in colloquial Bengali, Carey's *Kathopakathan* were published. In 1802 *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* were first printed in Bengali. In 1811 the first attempt was made to prepare polyglot vocabularies in 13 languages (It could not be printed as fire consumed major parts of the work in 1812). In 1818 the first periodical in any Indian language *Digdarshan* and the first Newspaper in any Indian language *Samachar Darpan* were published. Translation of Bible in 41 languages (29 by Carey, 6 by his help and 6 by others) was also completed .The volume of work done in Serampore mission for the advancement of oriental languages and Bengali in particular is simply stupendous.

3. Malayalam

The advent of the Portuguese marked an important phase in the history of Kerala as well as its literature. The Christian missionaries who came with the Portuguese established seminaries and schools and learned the indigenous language. In 1563 they established a press at the Seminary in the Kochi area. By 1580 two more were established at Vypeen fort and Kochi. The language they used was simple and easy to understand. Publications like *'Vedasaram'* established a radical change in the writing of prose.

The earliest prose work from the missionaries is supposed to be the translation of the decisions taken at Synod of Diamper held in 1599. Of the verse narratives extant, the most notable is the *Ramban Song* (The *Thomas Parvam*). This exists in many ancient traditions and is believed to have originated from a disciple of St Thomas. It recounts the coming of Thomas to India, his travels and the founding of many churches and ends with his martyrdom at Mylapore in the year 72. Many versions of this work were available during the 16th/17th centuries[37].

Father Arnos came to Kerala in 1699. An accomplished Malayalam scholar, he composed a large number of religious works in this language and a Malayalam - Sanskrit - Portuguese dictionary. He wrote a grammar text and some long poems like *'Chaturantyam Parvam'* and *'Missiha Charithram'*. The Department of Printed Oriental Books and Manuscripts

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(British Museum) has a palm-leaf manuscript containing eight Malayalam poems on Gospel history, Christian doctrine and hagiology. The manuscript consists of 104 folios. The poems are entitled *Maranam kond'ula patt'*, *Vidhi-Vidha*, *Narakam*, *Moksa-lokam*, *Devasukanyaka - carita-gana, Mar Tresiya - punya - striyude caritram, Umma-duhkham* and *Puttan-pana*. The Manuscript is supposed to have been written by Johann Ernst Hanxleden, a Jesuit also known as Johannis Ernasidos[38] or as Arnos Patiri. Father Paulinus was another Jesuit missionary who took keen interest in oriental language and culture. *'Koodasha Pustakam'* and *'Divyajnanam Labhikkannulla Sarali'* are his major works.

One of the first Malayalam publications printed in Europe seems to have been Giovanni Cristofano Amaduzzi's *Alphabetum Grandonico - Malabaricum sive Samscrudonicum*[39] an essay on the *Grantha-Malayalam* alphabets from material supplied by Clemens de Jesu. The book appeared in Rome in 1772 and there is a copy in the British Museum's collection. Clemens, who died in 1782, spent several years in Kerala where he devoted himself to a careful study of the Malayalam language. During a visit to Rome he cut and engraved a set of Malayalam types for the press of the Society of Jesus. Originally published in 1772, *Samkshepa Vedartham* is the first printed book in Malayalam using Malayalam fonts. After printing it in Rome[40] the author, Fr.Clement Pianius, brought copies to Kerala in 1774.

Gnana Muthu Maala (Pearls of Wisdom) is an anonymous MS written on palm leaves (1784). This comprises a series of exhortations for the Christian life written in a style similar to the Biblical Proverbs. A similar palm leaf MS, *Christogita* (Song of Christ)[41] gives the life and work of Christ. *Vedatarkam* (On Doctrinal Disputes) by Kariattil Malpan Joseph (1768) was written to attempt reconciliation between various Keralite communities then in discord. The *Varthamana Pusthakam* by Paramakkal Thoma Kathanar (1788) is an impressive travelogue of a journey to Rome and back running in to 562 pages of lucid prose. This is the first travelogue in any Indian language.

Robert Drummond wrote the first comprehensive grammar of the language. The Bombay University Library is in possession of a Malayalam Grammar, which was printed in Bombay[42] in 1799. The earliest printed book in Malayalam available in the National Library collection[43] dates back to 1791. *Centum Adagia Malabarica* is a Latin translation of Malayalam proverbs. Both the Malayalam original and the Latin translation are printed side by side.

The Protestant churches like London Missionary Society, Church Missionary Society and Basel Mission Society played very important role in introducing a new educational system in Kerala. There were also considerable linguistic and lexicographical efforts. Benjamin Bailey

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(1805-1871) Joseph Peet, Richard Collins and George Mathen (1819-1870) were responsible for many works on the language based on western models. Archdeacon Koshy (1826-1900) is remembered for his numerous works in prose, especially for his work *Pulleli Kunchu* (1882).

The most important of these missionaries was Herman Gundert (1814-1893). He wrote over twenty books in Malayalam, the most important of which are A Malayalam English Dictionary, *Keralappazhama* (Kerala antiquity) and *Pazhamcholmala* (A garland of proverbs)[44]. He edited an anthology of prose and verse for students under the name, *Pathamala*. The first authoritative grammar of Malayalam was also his contribution (1851). This led to the production of a number of grammatical works[45] in Malayalam. Rev. Benjamin Bailey's *Malayalam English Dictionary* (1846) and *English Malayalam Dictionary* (1848) and many grammar books and lexicons were published in this period. *Malayala Bhashayude Vyakaranam* or *Malayazhmayude Vyakaranam*, authored by Fr. George Mathan was among the first grammatical treatises[46] in the language. Father Gerad brought out the first work on rhetoric in Malayalam on the European model under the title *Alankara Sastram* in 1881. There were several similar works by local scholars also. "These works are clear indications of the increasing western influence, which became established by the end of the 19th century. But the general socio-political developments seemed to favour a reorientation towards western models[47]."

Missionaries started the first journals and periodicals in Malayalam. Their contribution to the development of Malayalam prose and the promotion of journalism should be remembered with gratitude[48]. The first Malayalam periodical *Rajyasamacharam*, was published in 1847 as eight cyclostyled sheets from a press at Illikkunnu near Thalassery[49], thanks to Dr. Gundert. It ceased publication at the end of 1850 after forty-two issues. In October 1847 Gundert started *Paschimodayam*. Like its predecessor the *Paschimodayam*, too, was cyclostyled, but it carried articles on geography, history, natural science and even astrology. It had a formal editor in F.Muller. It ceased publication around mid-1851. In central Travancore early in 1848, the first printed magazine in the Malayalam language - the *Jnananikshepam* - hit the newsstands. This eight-page magazine was printed at the C.M.S. Press operating from Kottayam since 1821. Archdeacon Koshy and Reverend George Mathen were behind this. Meanwhile, Journalism took roots in Kerala. Several individuals joined the efforts of missionaries and westerners to start newspapers and journals of varying periodicity.

The press established at Mannanam in 1846 was the first indigenous printing press. The mastermind behind the press was Blessed Chavara. The liturgical books were in Syriac and the available prayer and spiritual books were in Tamil. In 1847 the first prayer book *Jnanapiyusham* was published from Mannanam. The priests and lay people under the

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leadership of Nidhirickal Manikkathanar made combined efforts for starting a newspaper. Accordingly the *Nazrani Deepika* was started from Mannanam in the 19th century.

Christian missionaries tried to develop a modern style in Malayalam prose. They evolved a new style out of the speech of the common populace, and fashioned it as an accepted medium. "Distinct from the princely prose of royal proclamations, and the ornate prose of early manuals, the homely prose that emerged in the new age had its birth only with the deliberate cultivation of it by Christian missionaries. A utilitarian prose of a common standard, which provided the infrastructure for a dynamic literature, could have come only from a source outside the well-entrenched tradition" [50].

4. Other Indian Languages

Jesuit Thomas Stephens[51] was the first to make a scientific study of Canarese. He also learned Hindustani, and in both these languages he published manuals of piety and grammar. "*The Christian Purânna*"(1616), a long poetic work written in traditional form and metre in Marathi and Konkani, shows that he must have acquired a complete mastery of Marâthi, Konkani and Sanskrit. His extant writings include: "*Arte de lingua Canarin*", a grammar of the Konkani language, the first grammar of an Indian tongue by a European, chiefly of bibliographical interest[52] (Rachol, 1640); a Catechism of Christian Doctrine which first appeared under the title, "*Doutrina Christã em lingua Bramana-Canarin, Ordenada a maniera de dialogo para ensinar os meninos, pelo Padre Thomas Estevão, Jesuita, no Collegio de Rachol*" [53] (1622). *Coorg Songs, with Outlines of the Coorg Grammar* by Graeter, A. (Mangalore, 1870), *Grammar of the Karnata Language* by William Carey, (Serampore, 1817), *An Elementary Grammar of the Coorg Language* by Cole, R.A., (Bangalore, 1867) are later contributions made by Europeans to linguistic studies.

Veermamunivar wrote *Gnanabodanmu* (Spiritual Instruction) in Telegu (Nellore 1953). Amongst Tamil and Telegu poets who wrote on Christian themes in this period, are Antony Kutty Annaviar (fl. 1710-1730), a lay colleague of Beschi, who wrote *Aradanai Prasagam* and *Arul Vasagam*, Rajah Saraboji, a protege of Schwartz (fl. 1790), and Mangulgiri Ananda-Kavi (fl. 1790). His *Vedanta-rasayana*, in Telegu, presents the life of Christ and the doctrines of the Christian church for the Hindu convert to Christianity. The missionaries have also contributed to the study of Telugu grammar and lexicography[54]. *The Prosody of the Telugu and Sanskrit Languages explained* by C.P.Brown (Madras, 1827); *A Grammar of the Telugu Language* by C.P.Brown, (Madras, 1857); *A Grammar of the Gentoo Language* by Brown, W. (Masulipatam,

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1817); *A Grammar of the Teloogoo Language, commonly termed the Gentoo, peculiar to the Hindoos inhabiting the North-Eastern provinces of the Indian Peninsula* by Campbell, A.D., (Madras, 1816) ; *Grammar of the Telinga Language*, by William Carey (Serampore, 1814) are worthy of mention when we consider the contributions made by Europeans to Telegu literature.

Henry Martyn[55] translated the New Testament into Hindi and Persian, revised an Arabic translation of the New Testament, and translated the Psalter into Persian and the Prayer Book into Hindi. In 1811 he left India for Persia. Early books by other authors include *A Tulu. English Dictionary* by A. Manner (Mangalore, 1886), *Extensive vocabulary English and Hindoostanee* by John B. Gilchrist (1798), *Hindi-Roman Orthoepigraphical Ultimatum* by John B. Gilchrist (1804), *Baital Pachisi* by Duncan Forbes (1861), *Dictionary of Hindee and English* by J. T. Thompson (1862), and *Yavan Bhasa Ka Vyakaran* by Hooper William (1874). In 1819 the first Hindi periodical *Digdarshan* appeared as a result of the efforts of Serampore mission under the leadership of William Carey. Hermon Mongliv of Basel Mission, published the *Mangalore Samaachara*, which was the first newspaper available in the Kannada language. Even today the English - Kannada dictionary, published by Reverend Kettle[56] , is recognized as important.

Robert Drummond's *Illustrations of Grammatical Parts Guzerattee, Maratta and English languages* (1808), William Carey's *A Grammar of the Mahratta Language* (1805) and *Dictionary of the Maharatta Language* (1810), Vans Kennedy's *A dictionary of Maratta language* (1824), Rev. Amos Sutton's *Introductory Grammar of Oriya language* (1831), Amos Sutton's *An Oriya Dictionary — 3 vols.* (1841-1843), William Carey's *A Grammar of Punjabee Language* (1812), Samuel Starkey's *A Dictionary of English Punjabee* (1849) are examples of how missionary activity has enriched the growth and development of different languages. *'Gondi Words and Phrases'* (JASB, 39, 1, 1870) *'Additional Gondi Vocabulary'*, (JASB, 39, 1, 1870) *'Brief Grammar and Vocabulary of the Gond Language'* (JASB, 1871), *'Gondi Words and Phrases'* (JASB, 39, I, 1870) all by Dawson, J , *A Grammar and Vocabulary of the Gond Language* by Driberg, J.G. (Calcutta, 1849), *Introduction to the Malto Language* by Droese, E. (Agra, 1884), *A Grammar and Progressive Reading Lessons in the Kondh Language, with an English translation* by Frye, J.P. (Cuttack, 1851), *Introduction to the Uraun language* by Flex, O. (Calcutta, 1874) illustrate the range of contributions made by Europeans.

Robert Caldwell is considered to be the first linguist who made a comparative research on Dravidian languages. *"The Comparative Grammar of Dravidian Languages"* [57] was his masterpiece and it was published during the middle of the ninteenth century.

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Conclusion

The Europeans used to claim that their conquests were not merely for riches but the direct outcome of a genuine desire to spread Christianity. This may have been a mere pretence adopted by the worldly-wise royalty and courtiers; but the adoption of this as a justification ensured that pious Friars accompanied every expedition. The rulers and soldiers may have used religion as an excuse for their expansionism but there is nothing to doubt the motivation of the missionary who accompanied them. The individual missionary who volunteered to go to the Orient had to undergo considerable personal sacrifice and a hard life. He derived absolutely no personal benefit in terms of worldly riches or pomp and splendour. Such missionaries genuinely saw colonial expeditions as a great opportunity to preach and take the Gospel to all peoples and principalities.

The nature of their mission required that they know, understand and genuinely care for the local people. Their purpose could not be served by interacting exclusively with the nobility or the royalty. They had to address the common people. Comprehending the importance of local languages, they studied them with genuine interest and concern. The missionaries interacted with the common people in a linguistic style intelligible to the lower classes who had no acquaintance with conventional styles of ornate prose. Their activities extended to every aspect of language and literature – translation, lexicography, linguistic studies, script, grammar, language education, writing of prose, versification, comparative and classical studies, travelogues and journalism. In many of these areas, the missionaries themselves were the pioneers. The enumeration, in the preceding pages, of the various specific contributions amply illustrates the range and extent of their activity and commitment.

The missionaries brought to the local people a sense of pride in their own languages, using the simple style of the commoner as an effective medium for communicating new ideas. By adopting new prose styles and using the printed book as a technological innovation, they silently engineered a revolution in the pace of the spread of knowledge. Knowledge was no longer the exclusive privilege of the rich and highborn. Printing made books cheaper and enabled the taking of literature to the masses. Some scholars, following Harold Innis[58] and Marshall McLuhan, suggest that, all over the world, print, by creating its own mental world has been an agent of change.

Learning a foreign language necessitated words to be indexed, arranged and systematically studied. This spurred the development of lexicography. Since the structure of the language had to be understood and efficiently taught to the newcomer from Europe, textbooks and

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grammar books had to be devised. Naturally this gave rise to interaction among all languages, growth of translation and learning of new literary works and literary techniques. Missionaries opened the treasures of Indian languages and culture to the West and vice versa. Different cultures interacted and the assimilation of new values led to new vistas of growth and development. Simultaneously the missionaries had put in great efforts in improving general literacy and spread of general education. Thus the contributions they made to the local languages were quickly transmitted to a large audience. Growth in literacy caused more and more readership among the local population, which in turn spurred the growth and demand for good literature, addressing itself to the cultural needs and aspirations of the local people. Thus their activities stimulated a general cultural awakening, beyond the confines of the traditionally literate.

The pioneering lead given by the missionaries was carried on by those sections of the community who were able to absorb and assimilate the same into the cultural mainstream. The fusion of various influences contributed positively to the growth of new literature, new styles and new concepts. Thus the contribution of the missionaries during the 16-19th centuries led to the development, modernisation, strengthening and enrichment of all vernacular languages of India. Missionaries were the medium through whom the renascent and rejuvenated spirit of cultural Europe came to face to face with the ancient culture and hoary traditions of India. The interaction was technologically, culturally and ideologically positive and the languages of India were the direct beneficiaries.

NOTES:

1 The books of the New Testament were written in the 1st Cent. Several writings from the 2nd Cent have survived. These include *Seven Epistles* by St Ignatius of Antioch; *Apologies* by Aristides and Quadratus; *Dialogue with Trypho* and *Apologies to Antonius Pius* by St. Justin: *The Refutation and Overthrow of Gnosticism* and *Proof of Apostolic Teaching* by St Irenaeus; *Apologeticus* by Tertullian etc.

2 Shortly after AD256 Christianity was declared the religion of the State in Armenia. By 400 AD, St. Mesrop invented the Armenian alphabet and translated the Bible and Greek writings to the Armenian Language. *Church History: Rev. John Laux: Second Period: Chapter I*

3 St. Basil the Great (329-379) of Cappadocia. One of his *Discourses* is addressed *To our Young Men, How they can derive benefit from the study of Pagan Literature*

4 The Western invention of printing is ascribed to Johann Gutenberg in 1456. William Caxton set up the first printing press in England in 1476. The first printing in India (by Jesuits in Goa) was in 1556; in the North American colonies in 1638; in Canada in 1752; in Australia, 1796.

5 Paranjoti, V. *"Saiva Siddhanta"*, 2nd Ed., London, 1954.p.9

6 Franciscan Joao de Vila de Conde is believed to have assisted in its preparation.

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7 Henriques,Padre Henrique (1520-1600) Portuguese Missionary. Contemporary of St. Francis Xavier. The most widely known work of hagiography of the period is *Flos Sanctorum* in a Tamil version of 668 printed pages by Henriques (c.1586).

8 The use of the term 'Lingua Malabar' caused speculation as to whether the language was Tamil or Malayalam. Seurhammer, has decided in favour of Tamil. George Schurhammer and GW Cottrell: *The First Printing in Indic Characters.* Harvard Library Bulletin, vol.vi.2. P.148

9 Born atTuscany, 1577 and died at Mylapore in 1656. After a short stay at Cochin he was sent in 1606, to Madura.

10 Max Mueller, the German Indologist, describes the learning of de Nobili: A man who could quote from Manu, from the Puranas, nay from the works such as the Apastamba Sutras, which are known even at present only to those few Sanskrit scholars who can read Sanskrit manuscripts, must have been far advanced in the knowledge of the sacred language and the literature of the Brahmins.

11 Reprinted Tamil Literature Society, Tuticorin, 1964 and 1969

12 A philosophical treatise on the human soul. Pondicherry 1899, TLS, 1967.

13 c.1620. Considers the signs of true and false religion. Pondicherry, 1915.

14 C.1641. Reprinted at Tuticorin, TLS, 1964. (Refer Rajamanickam, 1972.)

15 A total of 1620 pages, c.1638-42; Reprinted, Tuticorin, TLS, 1963-1966

16 The British Museum has two editions of it, one in the original Dutch, one in German; both published in Amsterdam in 1672. The book gives three pages of *'Malabarische Letter-Konst'*: i.e. Tamil characters with a peculiar transliteration. To this is added a Tamil version of the *Pater Noster* and the Declaration of Faith with the original text in Latin.

17 The British Museum has four examples of this work. The characters are large and square, quite different from the ones used in Tranquebar. *Grammatica Dumulica* (1716), a book on Tamil grammar (printed in Halle), by Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg (1683-1719), the first German Lutheran missionary sent by the Danish King, was the first major published Indological work.

18 Born in the Venetian Republic, 1680; died at Manapar c. 1746. He became a Jesuit in 1698, and went to the Mandura in 1710. Though primarily a missionary, he is better know as one of the classical writers of Tamil literature. He is the author of *'kotuntamizh ilakkanam'* (a work of tamil grammar), a Tamil-Latin dictionary, *centhamizh ilakkanam* (a grammatical work in Latin), *'Vaaman cariththiram'* (a text book), *'tonnul vilakkam'*; *caturakaraathi,* a tamil lexicon, *'veda vilakkam'* (a prose), *'pethakamaruththal'*, etc.'

19 Beschi, C.G: A grammar of the high dialect of the Tamil language called *centamil*, translated from the original Latin by Benjamin Guy Babington. Thanjavur: Tanjore Maharaja Serfoji's Sarasvati Mahal Library, 1974.

20 The British Museum possesses his Tamil-Latin dictionary; it bears the date 1744. He also wrote *Gnanabodanmu* (Spiritual Instruction) in Telegu (Nellore 1953), and in Tamil, *Vaetha Vilakam* (Explanation of Religion) (Pondicherry, 1936).

21 "It is," says Baumgartner, "the noblest epic poem in honour of St. Joseph written in any literature, East or West. In one of the most difficult languages of southern India Beschi produced a poem which for richness and beauty of language. For elegance of meter, popular treatment, and true poetical conception and execution, is the peer of the native classics"

22 The adventures of Gooroo Paramartan: a tale in the Tamil language: accompanied by a translation and vocabulary, together with an analysis of the first story. By Benjamin Babington. London, J.M. Richardson, 1822; Reprint Cleveland: The Clerk's Press, 1916

23 The Danish East India Company acquired 45 sq km in Thanjavur district - Tranquebar - from the ruler of Thanjavur for an annual rent of Rs.3,111. The King of Denmark, Frederick IV (1699-1730), planned to send missionaries to Tranquebar to spread Christianity.

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24 Dr.Daniel Jeyaraj, Dean, Lutheran Heritage Archives, Chennai, (Frontline: Vol. 15: No. 09: Apr. 25 - May 08, 1998)

25 Heinrich Pitischau (1677-1746) who returned from India and Tamilian named Timothy, were the first Tamil teachers.

26 This bears the title *Verzeichnis der Malabarischen Bucher.* Written in German, it is a catalogue of some 112 Tamil works composed by Ziegenbalg and sent to Denmark in the year 1708. The little manuscript gives an account of a number of Tamil works which have since been lost, and secondly allows interesting glimpses of popular Hinduism and local social life. The British Museum has a few early works by Ziegenbalg, Grundler and Schultze like, for example, the *Novum Jesu Christi Testamentaum ex originali textu in lingum Damulicam versum opera & studio* printed in 1722, the *"Biblica Damilica"* published 1714-1728 and a book of psalms *Liber Psalnorum Davidis Regis-et Prophetae, ex originali textu in linguam damulicam* by Benjamin Schulze bearing the date 1724.

27 (The Christian Treasure House). Octavo MS 1725 - "possibly the oldest prayer book in Tamil now extant". Includes catechism and meditations.

28 (Compendium of Sacred History). The Biblical story in verse interspersed with doctrinal sections. Two volumes, Folio 1725, printed Madras 1886.

29 (Explanation of the Gospel for Sundays) - 'with moral implications'. Quarto 1728, Printed 1848

30 (Sermons of the Passion). Quarto 1730, printed 1844. Still being used in Ceylon

31 (Spiritual Exhortation). Fourteen doctrinal sermons on soul, conversion and human destiny. Written 1734, printed 1844

32 (Mirror of Virtues and their Practice) 'With mystic and polite precepts'. Octavo, 1736. Printed 1914

33 Jerome D'Costa: Author of the book *Bangladeshey Catholic Mondoli* (The Catholic Church in Bangladesh)

34 Halhead, Nathaniel Brassey(1751—1830), English Orientalist and philologist was educated at Harrow. He entered Christ Church, Oxford, where he made the acquaintance of Sir William Jones, the famous Orientalist, who induced him to study Arabic. Accepting a writership in the service of the East India Company, Halhed, at the suggestion of Warren Hastings, by whose orders it had been compiled, translated the Gentoo code from a Persian version of the original Sanskrit. This translation *A Code of Gentoo Laws* was published in 1776. In 1778 he published a Bengali grammar.

35 Carey was instrumental in translating the Bible into Marathi, Hindi, Oriya, Punjabi, Assamese, and Gujarati. Carey learned Telugu and Kannada to bring out the translations of the Bible in these languages. Later on work on Pashto and Khasi were undertaken. Carey was laying the path for the development of these languages as vehicles of education. It is no wonder than that Rabindranath Tagore wrote: "I must acknowledge that whatever has been done towards the revival of the Bengali language and its improvement must be attributed to Dr. Carey and his colleagues. Carey was the pioneer of the revived interest in the vernaculars" (Carey 1923).

36 Sanskrit teaching was made open to all in Serampore School. First introduction of mother tongue as medium of instruction at all stages of education was made in Serampore College. First printed book in Bengali on Science *Vidyaharabali* by Felix Carey was published. Types of different scripts and of different dimensions prepared fully by native technicians Panchanan Karmakar and their associates completed.

37 Printed in *Orientalia Christiana* 32, 1933

38 'In estimating his writing', writes C.M. Agur in his *Church History of Travancore*, 'we have only to add that What Fr. Beschi was to Tamil literature, Fr. J. Ernasidos was to Malayalam '. (C.M. Agur : *Church History of Travancore.* p.1065). He died in1732.

39 Rome, S. Congregatio de Propag. Fide, 1772. The *Alphabetum Grandonico-Malabaricum* focuses on the pronunciation of the Malayalam alphabet. It includes remarks on grammar. There are some short Malayalam sentences of a religious nature such as the Ten Commandments. The preface was written by J.C. Amadutius, an Italian philologist, who supervised the publication of a series of grammars of Oriental languages in Hindustani, Armenian, Syriac, Arabic, Hebrew, Bulgarian etc

40 D C Books published the reprint of this work in 1980

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41 Both printed by Kerala State Archives, Trivandrum, 1966 and 1972

42 Anant Kakba Priolkar : *The Printing Press in India.* p.11

43 Among many, mention may be made of: Robert Drummond's Grammar of the Malabar Language (1799), Dr. Gundert's Malayalam—English dictionary (1872) etc

44 Born in Stuttgart in Germany, Gundert came to India in 1836.

45 Dr. K. Ayyappa Panicker - PRD website, Government of Kerala. Vaikam Patchu Moothathu (1814-1883) published his *Grammar of Malayalam* in 1876. *Kerala Kaumudi* by Kovunni Nedungadi (1831-1889) came out in 1878, followed by the first history of the language by P.Govinda Pillai (1849-1897) in 1881.

46 In fact it was written prior to *Gundertinte Vyakaranam*(1851) which is considered the first grammar book. But for some reason the publication of this book was delayed till 1863. D C Bhashapadana Kendram possesses a rare first print of this book.

47 Dr. K. Ayyappa Panicker - PRD website, Government of Kerala

48 Official website of Public Relations Department, Government of Kerala.

49 The Literary Tradition of Kerala -V.Aravindakshan. Essays on the Cultural Formation of Kerala Ed P J Cherian

50 The Literary Tradition of Kerala - V.Aravindakshan.

51 The Catholic Encyclopaedia: (Also known as Padre Estevao or Estevam or Busten). Born about 1549 at Wiltshire; died in 1619 at Goa. He is the first Englishman in India. He sailed from Lisbon in 1579 and reached Goa. He wrote a series of letters to his father, which held out "the strongest inducements which London merchants had been offered to embark on Indian speculations"; these communications on the mercantile possibilities in the East subsequently led to the formation of the East India Company; One of them (10 November, 1579), is included in Hakluyt's *"Voyages"*. The other (24 October, 1583), written in Latin to his brother in Paris, is preserved in part in the National Library of Brussels, and published by Dr. Gerson da Cunha in the *"Instituto Vasco da Gama", II.* His years were spent mostly among the Brahmin Catholics of Salsette

52 Only two copies of the first edition are known to exist; a second edition was issued in 1857.

53 (Published posthumously in 1622), reprinted by M. Saldanka, Lisbon, 1945.An *editio princeps*, reproduced from authenticated Manuscript copies, was issued in 1907 from the Jesuit Press at Mangalore, India. *"The Christian Purânna"* (Christian stories of Old) consists of 10,962 strophes; divided into two parts treating the Old and the New Testament respectively; it also evinces concerns shared by such reforming Swamis in Maharastra as Ekanatha (1549-1599). Reprinted 1649, 1654, 1907, 1956 and Bombay 1965.

54 Telugu division in the National Library has William Carey's *Grammar of Telugu language* (1814); Brown's *A Vocabulary of Gentoo and English* (1818).

55 Henry Martyn was born in 1781, studied at Cambridge, and became Senior Wrangler. He came to India as a chaplain in 1806. He died at Tokat in 1812. The Armenian Church there buried him, with the honours ordinarily reserved for one of their own bishops.

56 Kittel, F. A Kannada-English Dictionary, Mangalore, 1894

57 A Comparative Grammar of Dravidian Languages, III reprint edition, University of Madras, 1976

58 Harold Innis "The Bias of Communications" "Impact of technologies on societies"

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11
Christian Influence in Art and Architecture of India

George Menachery

1. Intercultural Nature of All Art

What art and architecture is purely indigenous? There is no art or architecture - no sociocultural formations of any significance, anywhere in the world - relating to a nation, a region, a religious or racial or linguistic group - that is fully local or indigenous. The art and architecture of India - secular or religious - is no exception. Thus Church Art and Architecture of India, from the commencement of the Christian presence on these coasts at the dawn of the Christian era, have been to a greater or lesser degree influenced by those of other nations and religions as they in turn have been influenced by India's wealth of artistic and architectural traditions. All the nations and cultures that came into contact with India - the Egyptians, the Phoenicians, the Greeks, the Romans, the Moguls, the Parthians, the Iranians, the Arabs (of Pagan, Jewish, Christian, and Islamic persuasions), and the Europeans of a later date including the Portuguese, the Dutch, the Danes, the French, and the English- have all left their mark on the society and culture of India, as has also been done by the eastern countries and cultures.

1.1 Aspects of Art to be Studied

The topic "Christian Contribution to Art and Architecture in India" is indeed vast and complicated, as most other topics in this volume are. In addition to the necessity of discussing

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the chronological, geographical, and denominational aspects, the styles, varieties, types, and schools as well as the genres, localities, media, approximate dates, materials used, purposes and uses, to name but a few details, of each object, and each group of objects, of art and architecture have to be considered.

1.2 Chronological Divisions

Take for example the chronological divisions. The history of Christianity in India and hence of Christian culture may be said to roughly fall into certain epochs or into various periods: e.g. a) the first few centuries of Indian and Persian influence, b) the Padroado period, follwed by c) the Protestant centuries, and the d) the Propaganda period, e) periods and pockets influenced by personnel from different regions of Europe and America, and, f) the post independence period. The nomenclature employed to describe these periods does not necessarily signify that all the trends appearing in each time-span were only specific to the source/s indicated by the epoch's designation. In general we may treat the story of Christian art and architecture in India by dividing it into:1) the Pre-European period, 2) the 16th to 18th Century developments, and finally 3) the modern period.

1.3 Regions

Among the geographical divisions with special reference to Christian art and architecture must be studied Malabar i.e. Kerala, the Konkan belt and the areas under predominant Portuguese influence ven upto Mumbai and Vasai along with Portuguese pockets elsewhere, locations associated with the Mogul court, Bengal, the French pockets, and the Carnatic with special reference to the Tamil country, and many other areas of Anglo-American influence.

1.4 Genres

Again, consider the genres. While performing arts like song, music and dance, and literary arts like poetry, or the drama or rhetoric do not come under the purview of this article, many genres of fine arts like architecture, sculpture, painting must be discussed. So also objects utilizing or made out of different media or materials like stone (granite, laterite, marble, sandstone), wood, metal and metal alloys (gold, silver, iron, bronze, brass), pigments (wooden panels, murals, frescos, canvasses, cloth paintings, colouring of statues and other wooden objects), ivory, bone, glass, precious stones, shell, plaster, straw, nutshells, leaves, bricks, mud, clay, concrete, ...all claim our attention.

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1.5 Items of Artistic and Architectural Significance

There are a large number of items of artistic and architectural significance in the religious and domestic / civil life of Indian Christians which come under one or more of the divisions and categories adumbrated above. F.i., in the churches there are ever so many types of roofs, ceilings, facades, porticos, verandahs, naves, chancels, altars, altarpieces, statues, candlesticks, pillars, doors, doorways, architraves, pulpits, crosses, cross pedestals, chalices, censers, censer-boats, bells, belfries, books, book-illustrations, and bookmarks, bibles and bible stands, choirs, tabernacles, monstrances, railings, wall paintings, wooden panels, cloth paintings, vestments, beams, rafters, processional umbrellas, canopies, chariots,... and a thousand and one other objects to be considered. And there is a plethora of household utensils and features of domestic and civil architecture also to be considered.

1.6 A Viable Scheme of Study

Of course it would be next to impossible to at least cursorily deal with even a fraction of all this. Hence it may be more practical to make an attempt to discuss the main instances and trends in the chief centres of Christian art and architecture then and now, such as (1) Kerala upto the 17th century, (2) the Mogul court, (3) the Goan circle and pockets of Portuguese influence, (4) other regions, (5) some notable architectural landmarks, (6) some remarkable works of art, (7) the 20th century. However in an article of this size even these topics could not be discussed in any detail.

2 Kerala Upto the 17th Century

The location of the state of Kerala on the western seaboard, at the centre of the international highway of seaborne trade connecting the East and the West, [and the North with the South] made it a meeting point of many worlds, a melting pot of races and creeds, from early times.[1] The Hindu monarchs and chieftains of the Sangam and post-Sangam period ruled over a fertile agricultural tract the peace and safety of which were guaranteed by the Western Ghats on the one side and the Arabian Sea on the other. The land itself was [for long] a secret shared between the sea and the mountain, an illegitimate child of the two natural forces, protected by and provided for by them in a special way.[2] But already we find in the first centuries B.C.E. / C.E. that while the monsoon route connected Muziris (Cranganore) directly across the Arabian Sea with cities in the west (e.g. Alexandria, Aden) the West Coastal route gave its ships ready access to the Indus[3] and to countries to the North and Northwest in Asia and Europe.[4]

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2.1 Foreign Influences

It would appear that the impact of her trans-Arabian-sea visitors was much more pronounced in the case of Kerala than that of her mainland neighbours, during and after the Sangam age. This contact with the countries west has paved the way for considerable influence of the societies and cultures of those lands and their peoples on every phase and aspect of the life of the inhabitants of Kerala. Thus from the arrival of Vasco da Gama in 1498, Portugal, the Netherlands, France, and England have had a great deal of influence on the people of Kerala not only in the matter of material cicumstances of life but also in the field of ideas and ideologies. One of the strongest areas where this influence is manifested is in the field of Kerala art and architecture in general and Christian art and architecture of Kerala in particular.

2.2 Pre - European Period

Christian art and architecture in Kerala in the pre-European periods had developed obtaining nourishment from two sources: one, from the countries in the near-east including perhaps Greece, Rome, Egypt and the other Middle East countries from which ideas and practices were imported by missionaries and traders, and two, from the indigenous forms and techniques of art and architecture that existed in the land.

2.3 Nature of Kerala's Cultural Heritage

By a happy mingling of these two streams already by the arrival of the west in Kerala there was existing here a strong tradition of Christian art and architecture which was notable for its aesthetic as well as pragmatic excellence. The Portuguese, the Dutch, the French and the English and also the missionaries from Germany, Italy, Spain, Belgium &c. brought with them their own art traditions which resulted in adding certain features to the already existing structures and traditions without trying to or succeeding in totally replacing the cultural heritage of the Christians. Hence today one can see a harmonious blending of the East and the West in the Christian art and architecture of Kerala, although examples are not altogether lacking of attempts made to implant certain incongruous elements into Kerala's cultural formations.

2.4 Two-fold Approach

Hence to understand and estimate the quality and quantity of Kerala Christian art and architecture, it may be best first to analyse the nature of such art and architecture

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at the coming of the Portuguese in 1498 and thereafter to study the items introduced by various western administrators and missionaries, along with their varieties and spread.

2.5 Two Pictures

Two pictures are available about the churches and churchbuilding activities of the Christians of Kerala at the beginning and end of the sixteenth century. At one end we have the account given by Joseph the Indian and the letter written by the four bishops in 1504.[5] At the other end of the century we have the documents of the Synod of Diamper in Malayalam as found in many old Kerala churches[6], in Portuguese in the work of Gouvea[7], and in English in the work of Geddes[8].

2.6 Similarity of Hindu and Christian Places of Worship

The tale of how Vasco da Gama went into a Hindu temple in Kerala and mistook it for a church and venerated the idol of *Bhagavathi* (?) mistaking it for an image of the Blessed Virgin Mary would have clearly illustrated the similarity of the Houses of God in Hinduism and Christianity in Kerala had we any assurance that Gama already knew about the shape of *Devalayas* in the land from his many spies and scouts.

2.7 State of Affairs at the Beginning of the 16th Century

The description of the reception given to the bishops at the beginning of the 16th century by the faithful sheds considerable light on the state of the churches, the Christians and their cultural and artistic traditions: "...they were received by the faithful with great joy and they went to meet them with joy, carrying before them the book of the Gospel, the cross, censers, and torches..."[9]. "And they, the bishops, consecrated altars..."[10].

2.8 At the End of the 16th Century

In the Synod of Diamper, 1599, there were represented more than a hundred churches of the St. Thomas Christians. This indicates the existence of a very large number of churches already at the coming of the western powers to India. The description of the visits of Archbishop Dom Menezes to various churches before and after the Synod throws some light on the structures and arrangements of the churches before western elements and types were introduced into Malabar.[11] It may be remembered that the churches and all their belongings were the property

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of the parishioners and each church was built completely from the parish revenues and subscriptions from the local faithful. A student selected from the parish and educated by the parish was the vicar in each parish. It was only after the Synod that westernisation of institutions and structures commenced / gained momentum. The bishops started to have any say whatsoever in the affairs of the parishes only much later, and even today in most Nazraney Churches the parish retains a great deal of autonomy.

Hence, as has already been remarked *to understand and estimate the quality and quantity of Kerala Christian art and architecture it may be best first to analyse the nature of such art and architecture at the coming of the Portuguese in 1498 and thereafter to study the items introduced by various western administrators and missionaries, along with their varieties and spread.*

3. The Three Objects in Front of the Kerala Churches

There were three striking objects of significance in front of the typical Malabar churches, either inside the courtyard or just outside it: (1) the open-air granite (rock) cross which the present writer has christened *Nazraney Sthamba*, (2) *Kodimaram (Dwajasthamba)* or Flag-staff made of Kerala's famed teak wood (e.g. at Parur), and often enclosed in copper hoses or paras (as at Changanassery, Pulinkunnu, or Chambakkulam), or made out of some other timber or other material, and (3) the rock *Deepasthamba* or lampstand. Sthambas or pillars of some type or other are to be found among the Buddhists, Jains, Hindus, etc. in India.Such pillars and structures were part of the Christian heritage of Kerala much before the ascendancy of Vedic Hinduism in these parts , although J.Ferguson does not appear to have known or cared for the rock monumental Sthambas of Kerala .[12]

3.1 Open Air Granite Crosses

The ubiquitous cross of Malabar churches is best represented by the rock crosses, mostly outside the churches. The open-air rock-cross of Malabar is an obelisk, a tall stone column, with four, sometimes decorated, slightly tapering sides. Rome has many obelisks (from Egypt and East, but no originally cross-bearing structures decorating the piazzas and squares); London has one on the banks of the Thames lovingly called Cleopatra's Needle; Paris has one at the place d' la concorde; and even New York has one in the central park. Many memorials like the Washington Memorial are obelisk-shaped. The Asoka Pillar and other such Indian pillars were influenced by the Graeco-Parthians, under Egyptian-Persian influence. The *Nazraney Sthamba* is a direct descendant of the obelisk, and much closer to it than the other Indian

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pillars - in shape, method of constuction and transportaion, method of erection, function, and solar symbolism. "The Roman obelisks, bearing crosses today, have been converted to Christianity, while Kerala's cross-shaped obelisks were born Christian"[13]. The obelus and the double-dagger reference marks in printing may be profitably recalled here. Such obelisk crosses continued to be erected mostly in front of churches even after western ascendancy without much change although a few changes in the motifs on the pedestals etc. could be noticed.[14]

The three-tier gabled indigenous architecture of Kerala churches, which lacked facades until the coming of the Portuguese, immensely gains in richness, symmetry, and beauty because of the open-air rock crosses, some of them more than 30 feet in height including the intricately carved pedestals, and monolithic shafts. No other community in Kerala has such a huge monumental stone structure. The indoor counterparts of these crosses have the earliest carvings in Kerala of the national flower lotus and the national bird peacock. Perhaps even the national animal tiger is first depicted in Kerala art in church sculpture. There was perhaps no rock carving in South India prior to the period of these indoor crosses. The motifs, message, and images on these crosses and their pedestals display a remarkable degree of Indianness and *Malayalee Thanima* or identity. Vedic Hindu Gods and Goddessess like Ganesha, Vishnu, Shiva, Sapthamathas, Jeshta etc. appear in the art of the central Guruvayoor/Palayoor-Quilon part of Chera country only after the 9th-13th centuries, and even in the Salem-Erode section, and the Trivandrum-Cape Comorin section Vedic Hindu deities appear in art only as late as the 9th century A.D.[15]

The base with a socket, the monolithic square and slightly tapering shaft with cylindrical terminals, the horizontal piece forming the arms with a double (hole) socket in the middle, and the capital with a cylindrical bottom end are the four members of the open-air cross. They are so well chiselled and proportionate that when put together the socket and cylinder arrangement enables the cross to stand by itself. However for the bigger crosses, pedestals in the form of sacrificial altars or *Balikallus* are found, often carrying exquisite reliefs of the flora and fauna of the land in addition to scenes from daily life and biblical scenes. The cross which represents the supreme *Bali* (sacrifice) or *'Mahabali'* appearing on the *Balikkallu* or sacrificial altar most appropriately represents the Calvary events and sheds plenty of light on the ideological, historical, cultural and technological bent of mind of the forefathers.Compare with the base of the Obelisk of Theodosius, Constantinople, A.D. 390.

The obelisk is a ray of the sun - here a ray of Christ (of Horus -Xt. the sun-God). This ray helps the lotus near - universally depicted on such crosses to blossom forth representing in a

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typical Indian poetic conceit the grace received by the sin - bound human soul (*pankajam*) from Christ. Lotus representing the sun is found in other early Indian art also.The half dozen interior Pehlavi inscribed crosses, some of them surely of pre- 7th century origin, which were mostly tombstones before they were put up on the altars, have generally the dove (Holy Spirit) depicted on top of the clover or flowertipped equal-armed Greek cross, in addition to the lotus at the bottom. In this three piece (*Thri-kanda*) cross one might, perhaps, with considerable effort read the lotus represented Brahma (Father), the flowery cross (Son), and the dove (Holy Ghost). But the lotus has more universal and more diverse implications in the various eastern creeds.

The arrangement to hold wicks found on the crosses may be related to the necessity to preserve fire, and the effort to make it available to the common people in the dim past, when *Homakundams* were rare in Kerala or beyond the reach of the common folk. It is perhaps in connection with the need to preserve fire that the oil-*Nerchas* and oil *Araas* or chambers of the churches, and the compound-wall rocklamps are to be evaluated. The oil related objects in the churches also indicate the connection of this Christianity with the trade of the land, especially oil-trade. The bell like arrangement on some crosses also are noteworthy. Veneration of the cross, angels, Adam and Eve... and of course the Indian Cross itself are some of the religious carvings on these structures.

3.2 *Dwajasthambas*

In front of the church the third interesting object is the flagstaff, sometimes covered with copper paras. Every festival is announced with the *Kodiyettu* or flag-hoisting, a tradition going back to early Buddhist times at least. All these three objects in the courtyard of the church have a variety of liturgical functions associated with them.

3.3 *Deepasthambas and Deepams*

The square or polygonal shape of the individual pieces in the granite or rock lampstands at Kallooppara, Niranam, Kundra, and Chengannur churches indicate the antiquity of such lampstands in the churches. Unlike in the churches, in the temples the tradition of these lamps continued and thus developed into the present-day round shape of the pieces. In art history generally the simpler forms make their appearance first, and refinements and complications indicate a later date. Even when the tradition of lampstands declined in the churches, many open-air crosses had wickholders incorporated into them, with the advantage that wind and rain did not put off the flames. Church walls still display rows of rock lamps.

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Inside the churches the tradition of bronze lamps continued vigorously, representing a variety of shapes and types, and some lamps having even scores of wickholders, e.g. the *Aayiram Aalila* lamps at Arthat or Angamaly.

3.4 Baptismal Fonts

Crossing the portico or *mukhamandapam* one enters the Haikala or nave beyond the huge doorway with intricately carved doorpanels called *Aanavathils*. Either in the nave or in the little room set aside as baptistry one comes across the rock baptismal font. There are interesting rock baptismal fonts at Edappally, Kanjoor, Mylakkombu, Muthalakkodam, Changanassery, Kothamangalam, Kadamattom etc. The similarity of these baptismal fonts with illustrations of the fonts used for the baptism of Constantine (4thC.) and Clovis (Rheims C.496) is remarkable. All the old baptismal fonts are of granite or very hard laterite. They are all huge in size indicating that baptism by immersion must have been the order of the day. Many of the dozens of old baptismal fonts depicted in the STCEI[15] & the ICHC[16] were probably of a date prior to the decree of the Synod of Diamper which made permanent fonts more or less compulsory. Although most of the old baptismal fonts/ baptistries are found near the west end or middle of the nave on the northern side - Kaduthuruthy(Big), old Edappally, old Kanjoor, Changanassery (Southern side), in many churches, mostly Jacobite/Orthodox they are today found close to the sanctuary e.g. Angamaly (Middle-church), Kallooppara.. They are exquisitely carved with reliefs of the baptism of Christ, Mary feeding the Child, angels, or Indian crosses. There are also wonderful motifs of leaves, the basket pattern, coir pattern, etc. engraved on these stones. By the way the very Malayalam word *Mammodisakkallu* indicates a font made of stone. Another term is *mammodisath-thotti*. The Holy Water Font is called *Annavella Thotti*, also generally of stone.

The Architraves and doorposts in many churches are good examples of south Indian rock-carving. (e.g.old Kayamkulam, Chengannur, Kanjoor). But the rock-baptismal fonts are the real pride of many an old church.[16]

3.5 The Roofing

Another aspect of church architecture that has scarcely been affected by the later types from abroad is the old three tier gabled wooden roofing with the highest roof for the *Madhbaha* or Sanctum Sanctorum and the lowest for the *Mukhamandapam* or portico with the nave or *Hykala* having a roof of middle height. Although the rock crosses, the flagstaffs, the rock lampstands, the baptismal fonts, and the three tiered roofing pattern have not been much

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affected by the western visitors and administrators many of the objects found inside the churches and the very appearance of the inside have undergone many changes after the arrival of the Portuguese and other westerners. Let us look at some of these changes.

3.6 Western Influence in Kerala

There is an interesting description of Kerala churches in the account of Joseph the Indian, c.1500. "The Christians have their churches, which are not different from ours, but inside only a cross will be seen. They have no statues of the saints. The churches are vaulted like ours. On the foundation is seen a big cross just as in our place. [May be the open air cross?] They have not any bells." [17] There is much truth in the statement of George Varghese: "But once these churches came under the jurisdiction of the Portuguese in the sixteenth century, the ornate monumentality of the European churches was introduced into the small temple-like Syrian Christian churches, which even did not have windows in the early past. The baroque and ornate altars with statues and foliages replaced the Chaldeo-Syrian altars, which were in fact only stone-tables with nothing more than candles, Chalice and the Holy Book on them, the bare necessities for observing the Holy Mass. Despite unpleasant frictions with the Portuguese, both in political and ecclesiastical matters, this was the golden era of Church Art in Kerala. They introduced the Romano-Portuguese style, which was assimilated with such artistic and structural finesse by the artists of Kerala, so that it created some of the finest pieces of artistry in the Nazraney school. Later, the British also were equally enthusiastic in introducing their skills and forms into the Church Art of Kerala. Hence, from a conservative perspective, the art in these churches may appear eclectic, with diverse traditions, both western and eastern, superimposed one over the other. The exclusively "Asiatic" symbols like stone lamps, flag masts, stone-crosses, arched entrances etc., untouched by the foreign hands, co-exist with the Renaissance frescoes, and the Baroque Art of Europe in the same church-complex. There is, in fact, an underlying unity behind this apparently confused juxtaposition of images, symbols and monuments; this is due to the fact that as universal archetypes, images and symbols of religions, both in the west and in the east, have many common elements."[18]

Among the additions which took place in Kerala churches with the advent of Europeans might be counted paintings and sculptures on a large scale, imposing altarpieces or reredos; rostra or pulpits, statues of all sizes, types and shapes; plaster mouldings and pictures; huge bells and belfries. Murals and frescoes on a very large scale make their appearance as well as paintings on wood panels and clothe. But the most apparent introduction of the Portuguese

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was the facades they put up between the portico and the nave in order to impart a Christian appearance to the churches.[19]

3.7 Murals

The mural tradition of Kerala is ably represented in the churches of Kerala. Many pictures depicted on the walls of Kerala churches may be older than the well known Mughal and Rajput paintings.[20] Some interesting murals, all of which use only pigments extracted directly from natural objects like leaves, laterite stone, &c., are to be seen in the churches at Angamaly, Akapparambu, Paliekkara, and Cheppad. *Silparatna* esp. its *Chitralakshana* division, the *Sudhalepavidhana* etc. deal in detail with the colours and additional materials and their application in Indian mural painting. It is interesting to note that the early paintings and iconography of Kerala churches strictly adhere to the concepts of Indian sages and craftsmen on these matters. Interesting old-time wooden panels are seen at Piravaom, Kottayam, Changanassery and Ollur churches. The vast interior of the Ollur church has thousands of square feet covered with frescoes.

Today we have a few churches and places of worship in Kerala which adhere more *or less* to one or other of the classical christian architectural styles like the Basilican, Romanesque, Byzantine, Gothic, Baroque, Rococco, etc. but more often than not the churches built in the twentieth century are combinations of various styles, both eastern and western. Elements of Saracenic, Hindu, Jain, and Buddhist origin are also common. And there are a large number of churches which are like any other place of assembly such as a Cinema-house, an international conference centre, or a town-hall, or *Kalyana Mandapam.*

Kerala churches built, restored, or reconstructed after the 16th century have many features in common with such structures elsewhere in India, esp. in Goa and environs, and as such are not treated separately.

4. Portuguese Influence and the Goan Circle

After the arrival of Vasco da Gama and more especially after the commencement of Portuguese ascendancy in India two distinct patterns of Christian art developed, one within the areas of Portuguese influence, mostly along the coasts of the peninsula, and the other at the Mogul (Mughal) Court in the North.

Twelve years after the arrival of da Gama at Calicut in Kerala Alphonso de Albuquerque brought Goa under Portuguese rule in 1510. Thirtytwo years later Francis Xavier arrived in

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Goa in 1542. Christian communities began to grow up in Goa. In the words of Mathew Lederle, S. J. :[21] "It was a characteristic of the Lusitanian period that the newly gained Christian Faith found expression in feasts, customs, songs, dances. In Goa grew up what has become up to now the only complete form of Christian art in India, comprising both the sacred and the profane, encompassing the whole of human life. We speak of the Indo-Portuguese Baroque. This phrase is not to be taken in too literal a meaning. Though being predominantly Baroque, it was not restricted to Baroque nor to Portuguese. Almost any form of European religious art of the 16th to 18th centuries and cultural traditions of various countries left their traces in Goa. The Portuguese were great builders and promoted architecture more than any other form of fine art. The Christian art of Goa reached its climax in church building. [For some illustrations cf. Thomas Encyclopaedia,Vol.1.] These churches were elaborately decorated; they expressed the Baroque ideal of making visible here on earth the heavenly darbar, centred round the Eucharistic presence of Christ among his people."

The composite Indo-Portuguese culture which developed in Goa [and elsewhere in India] over more than 450 years of Portuguese presence in this locality of India's West Coast, is a fascinating but vast subject..with...the shapes which European Baroque, with the Christian art and architecture which came with it, took in the hands of the Indian artisans and craftsmen who had their own repertoire of skills, styles and motifs, developed through millennia of building and carving - the unique, locally developed style of the Hindu temple and its companion lamp-tower..."[22]

4.1 Cochin

Cochin continued to be the Portuguese capital in India until 1530. Western style forts, houses, churches with their spires, and monasteries began to be built in Cochin and Goa. Fort Manuel at Cochin was enlarged and the Mattanchery Palace, now called the Dutch Palace was constructed and gifted to the Maharajah of Cochin for the favours granted. In Cochin even today can be seen many of the churches and convents the Portuguse built - such as the St. Francis church, the first European place of worship in India perhaps, where Vasco da Gama was first buried, although the church itself became afterwards a Dutch church and later an English church and finally came to be under the Church of South India. It is a protected monument today under the Archaeological Survey of India as is also the so-called Dutch Palace not very far from it. In this locality can also be seen the Santa Cruz Cathedral, the palace of the Bishop of Cochin, the St. Bartholomew church, the Dominican church and the St. Paul's church.

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4.2 Goa

Already by 1542 Francis Xavier writes that Goa is a city entirely of Christians, something worth seeing. There is a monastery of friars,... he continues, and a noble cathedral with many canons, and many other churches. City planning and building activity continued apace so much so by the end of the 16th century Goa is compared to Lisbon and is termed the Rome of the East. And Francois Pyrard has this to say: "The buildings of the churches and palaces, both public and private, are very sumptuous and magnificent." The Se Cathedral begun in the middle of the 16th century, some years after the completion of the first church of St. Catherine of Alexandria, and the church of Our Lady of the Rosary are examples of the earliest large-scale building activity in Goa. The latter brings to mind the contemporary need for a church to be also a fort at the same time.

The ecclesiastical furniture of that time was artistically formed altar pieces, pulpits, statues, sepulchres, tombstones, chairs, tables, confessionals. Special attention was given to the sacristies, their ceilings, their walls, their almirahs. [See the illustrations in Vol.II (1973) and I (1982) of the Thomas Encyclopaedia.] Even now a large number of excellent statues both in churches and in homes are still available, done in wood or in ivory, the delight of the tourist and the souvenir collector. These statues betray their European artistic inspiration, but they also show the hand of the local artisans. Some figures have local face expressions. In a large stucco representation in the Margao church, the Virgin is standing on a peacock which may have been influenced by the presentation of Parvati standing on a peacock. Goa had a developed art of painting, first done by Europeans, then taken up by local craftsmen. Often the paintings were on wood, as it was difficult to get a good canvas. Murals too are to be found, as also work in precious metals. The most outstanding piece of craftsmanship done in Goa is the reliquary of St.Francis Xavier executed in Goa in 1936-37. Embroidery too, was encouraged. The Indian contribution to Goan art is more in the decorations than in the church structures, which on the whole, kept the forms of their European origins.Though the employment of Hindu artisans to produce objects of Christian worship was forbidden by ecclesiastical and secular authorities, both Christian and non-Christian artists were employed even by religious orders.[23]

The new Euro-impressed, Indian Baroque made its first appearance in Kerala, where Catholic churches came up on the Indian temple plan [Kerala architectural plan], giving full scope to the native wood-worker to show on a wider scale than he was accustomed to, his carving skills while sculpting church-ordained motifs and themes. These skills were to

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meet, in a dazzling display of gold painted wood carving, the challenges of crafting ceilings, outsized altars, retables and pulpits in numerous churches in Goa and other Portuguese territories on the West Coast.[24]

The tower of the Augustinian monastery, the Jesuit hospital, the Bom Jesus Basilica cloisters and the shrine of the saint, the church of St. Peter, the Santa Monica, Rachol, Pilar are only some of the edifices which must be studied for their architectural features and artistic treasures. And many other churches and public buildings in the various divisions of Goa still proclaim the glory of Golden Goa as sung by Luis de Camoens in his celebrated epic *Os Lusiadas*.[25]

"The Hellenistic inspired Gandhara school of art and the Indo-Persian creations of the Mughal period have been claimed as Indian art. The European-Christian inspired art of Goa, too, has to get its place among the various forms of Indian art."[26] "It is remarkable that Goan art reached its highest development during the 17th century, a period of political decline, and of a growing Hindu dominance of Goan economy. The Christian art of Goa was carried on not by political patronage but by the devotion of the people. (For this section cf.E.R.Hambye, S.J., "Christian Art in Goa-Some Reflections", Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bombay, XIL-XIIL,1966-67, New Series, pp.194-202)."[27]

5. The Mogul Court and Christian Art[28]

The Christian art in Goa grew up within a Christian community reflecting the socio-cultural mood of this community. Something quite different developed in Northern India at the court of Akbar(1556-1605). The Mohammedan empire in the North was different from the various smaller political powers in the South of India. Akbar, open to other religions, invited Jesuit priests to his court. They aimed at gaining influence at the highest cultural and intellectual level. Jesuits stayed at the court from 1550-83,1591,1595-1603. They could even continue their stay when Aurangzeb ascended the throne in 1658.

As there were no large Christian communities in the North there was no need for big churches. The Jesuits made good use of paintings, and especially engravings which were more easily available and transportable. These gifts were appreciated for their artistic qualities and for their religious contents. For example they presented to Akbar a copy of Plantin's Polyglot Bible printed in 1569-72 for Philip II of Spain, illustrated with engravings by Flemish artists of the school of Quentin Matsys.

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Akbar ordered his court painters to copy the new art. They copied, adapted and in some cases created new pictures, a happy blending of Christian content and local forms. Throughout the period there was interest in and preference for religious themes. This continued even when secular pictures reached India through officials of the East India Company and the Dutch embassy. Religious pictures in India at that time referred mainly to mythology or they showed human beings who were not divine. The Gospel scenes appealed as they showed the divine through human forms. They were religious paintings with historical motives. "The Jesuit mission at Agra succeeded not only using art as a very effective missionary medium, but also in founding a new school of painting. This was profoundly influenced by Western techniques and was in a way of Christian art, yet it was also free enough and copious enough to be a genuine and almost a major element in the art-life of its time and place."(J.F. Butler, op.cit., p.66). At present, upto one hundred Christian pictures of the Mughal period are still in existence. Besides paintings, ivory and wood work, statues and panels with Christian themes were produced at that time.

Along with the general decline in creativity during the period preceding British rule in India, Indian Christian art also lost its impetus. Of the works of the later period some have their origin in Pondicherry, Vishakapatnam and other centres of French influence.

5.1 Some Sources for Christian Art in the Mogul Court

Space does not permit the present writer to go deeper. However exhaustive information on this phase of Christian art in India can be obtained from the Sir Edward Maclagan, *The Jesuits and the Great Moguls,* London, 1932. The chapters dealing with the first, second, and third missions to Akbar (II, III, IV), and the fifth chapter dealing with Jahangir, must be read. But more especially chapter XIII entitled *Culture and Language* (pp. 190 - 202) and chapter XV, *The Missions and Mogul Painting* (pp. 222 - 267). The works by Fr. Hosten also has a great fund of information on the present topic.

Attention of the reader is invited to these illustrations in Maclagan's book: *The first Jesuit mission arguing before Akbar* (Narsingh); *The Good Shepherd* (Maskin); *S. Matthew* (Kesho); *The court of Jehangir, including a Jesuit priest*; *Shah Jahan and a courtier, with Christian symbols* (Bichitr); *S. Cecilia* (Nini); *The inn at Bethlehem*; *An Indian artist drawing the Madonna* (Kesho); and *Figures from Durer.*

The interest shown by Akbar and Jehangir in the missionaries and the western paintings was not unmixed. For example see this passage in *Jahangir and the Jesuits,* London, 1930:

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"While he (Jahangir) prized the sacred pictures which the Fathers gave him, not, as they fondly imagined, out of veneration for the subjects represented, but because he had a passion for works of art and curios of all kinds, and especially for pictures, of which he was not only an enthusiastic collector, but a very competent judge."

6. Indian Christian Art in Modern Times

When the third period of Christian influence in India began, its missionary method was pioneered by William Carey in Bengal, stress was laid on literature (the Bible) and education. The fine arts were neglected; compared with the previous period there was less interest in music, drama, feasts and festivals.Church buildings showed often the influence of the country of origin of the respective missionary society. Still, as regards painting there have been more creative attempts during this modern period than ever before. We find two types of paintings: those done by non-Christians and those done by Christians. This corresponds to two efforts at understanding Christ in relation to Indian traditions. Non-Christian painters expressed their search and insights in relation to the person of Christ, Christian Painters interpreted Christ through the means of Indian traditions. Christian painting in India, and especially its modern period is excellently treated by R.W.Taylor, Jesus in Indian Paintings, Madras, CLS, 1975.

7. Contributions of Non-Christians to Indian Christian Art[28]

Members of the modern renaissance movement in India showed great interest in Christ, especially during the early religion based period, above all in the Brahmo Samaja movement of Bengal, and then again in the Gandhian movement. The first modern school of art in India, the Bengal School of Art centred in Shantiniketan, was through the Tagore family closely linked with the Brahmo Samaja movement. Also Gandhiji's influence was felt at Shantiniketan. C.F.Andrews lived there for some time.

Nandalal Bose studied under Abindranath Tagore and exercised great influence in the Bengal School. Of the Christian painters Angaelo da Fonseca and Vinayak S. Masoji studied under both of them. One of the recurring themes of Nandalal Bose's Christian paintings is the cross. Representations of Christ on the cross and his passion, his love of the humble and the low, along with the representation of the incarnation (Christ and his mother Mary) will for many an artist be the medium through which they express their own ideals and struggle, their experiences and insights.Jamini Roy, for several years chose Christ as a main theme for his paintings. He did not belong to the Bengal School, but drew his inspiration from Bengal folk

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art of Western Europe. K.C.S.Paniker 'carried on the spirit of India in a modern form'. Intense in his colours and expressive in his form he was often drawn to Christian themes. R.W.Taylor sees in his Christian paintings a pronounced social dimension and a tendency largely towards the events of the passion.(R.W.Taylor, op.cit., p.78). It was also Paniker who said, and this shows one of the reasons why he was attracted to paint Christ, 'If you scratch Christ there is the carpenter's son, something authentic.'(Taylor, ibid, p.73). P.V.Janakiram specialised in wash and tempera techniques and later in sculpture and reliefs. Christian themes are recurring in his works. The most often portrayed theme is the cross, followed by the theme of the Virgin and the Child. Christian themes with these artists share their place of predominance with many other themes and there are many artists who never painted any explicitly Christian subject, yet the number of those who did is astonishingly great.

8 Christian Artists in Modern Times[30]

During recent times several Christian artists have come forward to express their Christian Faith through the medium and form of Indian art. The comprehensiveness and openness with which this is done is something new. The newness is in this that the artist, not always consciously perhaps, regards the traditional and contemporary forms of Indian art as his own also. He is not an intruder into something not related to him. Still he has to do a pioneering job. Christian paintings now in use in homes and churches are to a large extend 'western' and often than not of an inferior quality. The artist can in a visible way express the ideal of the integration of the Christian community in the country. He can also contribute towards activating an Indian orientation of the Christian communities. The people using religious art in India are not always attuned to modern trends in painting. Indian Christian works of art are more accepted if they are linked up with one of the periods of the past: Ajantha, Mughal, Neo-Bengali. Experience shows that the artists themselves undergo a change. We can recognise the development of an even greater individuality, a more personal note as the years go by. This requires that the individual artist finds encouragement, enlightened sympathetic criticism - and also patronage. Art can only progress if the artists can also live from their art. The purchase of original works for homes and institutions is a very realistic way of promoting art.

8.1 Obstacles the Christian Artists Face in India

The Christian artist in India is confronted by a number of difficulties. The popular, widely accepted bazaar art shows that many are satisfied with cheap, artistically inferior works of art, as their artistic taste remains underdeveloped. It is a widely spread opinion that representations

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related to a 'historic' religion have to show the religious events and persons in a historically true setting, in something like a photographic presentation. But with the exclusion, perhaps, of the shroud of Turin, we have no historically correct representation of Christ. Besides, the art of painting is different from the photographic art. An artist expresses in colour and form what he feels, how he understands. He does this through the media which are congenial to him, the media from his own culture. In Western modern art, Christ is portrayed in many ways; he is seen as the leader of masses, the redeemer, the man of sorrow, the bringer of peace besides all the various other forms Christian Faith or the inspiration of his person suggests. He is depicted in realism, impressionism, expressionism, cubism and many other trends of painting. An Indian artist will look at Christ through Indian eyes and this will give his discovery meaning, form and beauty.

In the Bible, for example, in the childhood narrations of Christ, passages are expressed as '*midrash*'. *Midrash* means 'research'.The sacred writer searched the old scriptures for passages which would interpretatively depict a present reality. That the child was brought to the temple 490 days after the angel's announcement to Zachariah depicts the 490 years mentioned by Daniel and supposedly required till the coming of the Messiah. The child brought to the temple is therefore the Messiah. Should one not speak of a 'cultural *midrash*' also? Searching in the treasures of a given tradition, modern and ancient, the artist takes the 'language' of this tradition to explain his own insights. As there are many traditions in India the Christian artists in India may speak in many ways of the one reality of his Faith.

8.2 Symbols

As the Christian influence in the shaping of Indian traditions is a minor one, the symbols of these traditions will therefore not always adequately express Christian meanings. While Christians in India have a preference for typically Christian symbols (e.g. the cross) or at least neutral symbols (e.g.flame, flower, gesture of offering), they are reluctant to accept symbols with a typical Hindu connotation (e.g.the word OM). Art India, Pune a publishing centre for Indian Christian art, prints pictures with various symbols, the same amount at the same time. It is possible, therefore, to determine the likes and dislikes of the buyers.It has to be kept in mind that most symbols, in the course of centuries, have been given various meanings. Let us take the symbol of the peepal tree. Ancient Indian tradition represents the cosmos in the form of a giant, inverted tree. This tree, a peepal tree, buried its roots in the sky and spreads its branches over the whole earth. It represents creation as a descending order. There have been interpretations which were pantheistic and therefore not acceptable to Christians. There were

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also other interpretations fully agreeable with Christian ideas. This gives the symbol a certain ambivalence. A Christian can see in the inverted peepal tree a representation of creation in a descending order. This can point to Christ, as He, through Him and for Him all things were created, appeared as man and Saviour. The peepal tree reminds then of the first creation and of the new creation brought about by the coming of Christ. (In this sense the peepal tree has been used for a Christmas card by Sr.Veera Pereira.)

Symbols become part of a culture; they stay even when philosophies change; they are then reinterpreted.This holds good also as regards basic concepts, e.g. karma,maya,etc. Symbols may even have been given tantric interpretations with erotic meanings, even shocking erotic meanings. But this does not mean that these symbols are necessarily connected with such meanings. If a symbol is reinterpreted, it is done in the hope that the new meaning can hold its ground, does not lead to syncretism, and strikes a new cord in the depths of one's soul.

8.3 Some Indian Christian Artists

The number of Christian artists who struggled to present their Faith through the medium of Indian culture is considerable. One of the great pioneers is Angelo de Fonseca, a Catholic of Goan origin who grew up in Pune and studied under Abanindranath Tagore and Nandalal Bose. When he left Shantiniketan, Abanindranath gave him the commission, 'Now go out and paint churches.' It was only towards the end of his life (he died in 1968) that the general climate had changed in favour of Indian art. He worked for many years in the inspiring atmosphere of the Anglican Khrista Prem Seva Ashram, Pune. His more than 500 paintings show how he grew in his work, how he left the early Bengal School influence and developed his own style- mainly,harmonious,impressive,with its clear lines and the preference for earthen coloured shades. A. da Fonseca freely shared his wide experience when an altar had to be erected, an ecclesiastical vestment designed, a church built, vessels to be used. He pointed out how much, genuinely good, was available in the small shops of the cities and in the bazaars.

Alfred D.Thomas, an Anglican, from Uttar Pradesh, depicted Christ's life and ministry. His Christ had the ideal male body of classical Indian sculptures,with broad shoulders and narrow waist. His Christ was soft but not feminine. His women had the fully flowered female forms of the classical tradition.

Vinayak S.Masoji, born 1897, at Kolhapur, a member of the United Church of Northern India, studied at Shantiniketan, and became the Director of its Kalabhavan. He painted,

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modelled, worked with leather, wood and in Batik. He wanted to express a message that India could understand. In the Mughal style of painting he found a method suitable to tell stories, in his case to retell biblical events in an Indian setting. A biography is now being prepared and published by friends.

Angela Trinidade, comes from a distinguished artist family of Bombay. She painted Christ's life in the Ajantha style, a wide step away from the Western techniques of her father, often called the 'Rembrandt of the East'. Later she changed and painted in triangular forms. She explains this to be the result of a religious experience she had. Now she wants to express everything in this triangular 'trinitarian' form.

Frank Wesley, a Methodist from Northern India, lives at present, like A.D. Thomas and Angela Trinidade, outside of India. He intends to paint the external rather than the historical Christ, 'to paint Him with Indian feeling'.(c.f.R.W.Taylor, op.cit.p.135). Frank Wesley likes to use symbols. He is a gifted artist,able to use various styles and methods. In this way he conveys an idea more than he reveals himself.

The most popular Christian artist in India at present, (popularity here means demand for her paintings), is Sr. Genevieve, now at Bangalore, a nun of French origin. She likes to give importance to lines and to striking colours. (There are two pictures by her in the Thomas Encyclopaedia II, 1973.) Her figures, often the humble, the meek in the spirit of the Gospels, have an intense quality of Indianness. She painted many scenes of the Lord's life, especially Christmas scenes. She has prepared huge compositions, slides series, film strips, and the Old Testament series of the NBCL Centre, Bangalore. Sr. Genevieve, in more recent years, has raised a voice of warning against the use of Hindu symbols, which she regards, to a large extent, as unsuitable for use in Christian paintings.

Sr. Genevieve's 'disciple', Sr. Claire from Andhra Pradesh, a convert from Hinduism, is a member of the same religious congregation as Sr. Genevieve. Sr. Claire has great talent, her paintings are attractive, simple, and full of feeling. At Nueremberg, Germany, a calendar for 1976 with her pictures was published. She writes about these pictures, 'I love our Mother Mary so much that you will find her on all my pictures.' Recently she has worked with cloth also and for silk-screen printing and painted two sets of stations of the cross.

Jyoti Sahi, Catholic from Bangalore, had some *ashram* experience and has a wide cultural background. He built his home, an artist's *ashram*, in a village near Bangalore. He wrote (19.2.76) about a prospective '*chela*', "I would teach the person what I can, but would expect the person to be fully involved in my work, that would be not only painting, but helping in the

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village, doing things about the house, even gardening at times, helping me to teach others - you know, the sort of 'creativity' events I am increasingly involved in. It would be good if he thought of the possibility of religious art being his profession eventually." Jyoti Sahi combines art with theological reflection. His lectures at the Jnana Deepa Vidyapeetha, Pune are greatly appreciated. For him the symbols of the Hindu tradition are to be creatively interpreted. It can be said about him, that he searches for the Unknown Christ in Hinduism. Missio, Germany, published a beautiful calendar with '*mandalas*' (symbols helpful for meditation) in 1975. This was received as a gift of the Indian Church to a Church in the West, in a spirit of partnership.

Due to shortage of space we can mention only the names of other Christian artists: A. Alphonso, Madras; Sudhir Bairagi, Bengal; Frederick Chellappa; Anthony Doss; F. N. D'Souza; Eustace Fernandes, Bombay; John W. Gonsalves; Taba Jamyang, Mussoorie; Peter Lewis; K.N. Misra, Lucknow; Lemuel Patole, Bombay, (now - 1976 - in the USA); Albert O. Pengal, Bombay; Duckett J. Prim; G. D. Paul Raj; Olympio C. Rodrigues, Bombay; V. M. Sathe; G. R. Singh; Sr. Sylvestra, FMM, Madras; Sr.Theresa, O. Carm., Sitagarha; Marcus Topno (+), Ranchi; Joseph V. Ubale (+), Bombay; W. Vandekerckhove, SJ, Ranchi.

In the field of painting modern Indian Christian art has achieved considerable results. As regards statuary, most of what is produced is on the level of artistically inferior plaster-of-Paris production. The artistic level of the 17th century has not been reached. The more extensive use of wood, metal and ivory for statues would mark a big step forward. The present (1976) mood for function and utility does not include sufficient encouragement for the promotion of embroidery and woodwork.

9. Christian Architecture in the 19th and 20th Centuries

Not much has been said hitherto about 19th and 20th century Christian architecture in India.

Until recently the church was the most important building in any Christian community in India. Today we are still astonished at the remarkable buildings our ancestors raised to the glory of God, which remain for us to admire and perhaps to learn from. The greatest of these were the cathedrals and shrines, scores of them, from Agra to Alleppy, from Bandel to Bombay, from Calcutta to Calicut to Chennai, from Dornakal to Dehra Dun to Delhi...Many of them were gigantic *tours de force* of uncomplicated people of God, who created what they believed to be microcosms of Heaven, or symbols of the mystical body of God's only son, Jesus Christ. Today they still dominate the landscape (like the Goa Catheral), the seascape (like the Mylapore

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Cathedral), the skyline (like the triple towers of the Our Lady of Dolours Minor Basilica of Thrissur), and the city (as in many Diocesan seats). Even when they are small (as at Agra or St. Thomas' Mount of Thiruvithamcode), they still impress with their sacred aura and their lovely architecture. 31

9.1 The Variety, the Abundance, and the Excellence of Churches

As cathedrals and churches and shrines were and are still – and always will be – primarily raised to the glory of God, they warranted the highest constructive and decorative skills obtainable. This alone accounts for the unending variety to be found in the architecture, sculpture, murals and stained glass, and other decoration of the places of worship. No two are alike, although some comparisons can be made. If one had to sum up the place of churches in the story of Christianity in India, as elsewhere, their architecture and visual art are the supreme expression of the Christian civilization and culture, wherever they may be. 32

9.2 Literature and Studies on Indian Christian Architecture

In Europe and the West the different designs and styles and aspects of church and cathedral architecture are the subject of a vast and interesting literature. Unfortunately in India very little has been wrtten on the artistic and architectural treasures of Christianity. One reason for this death of literature on these matters is that even our seminaries did not have courses on Sacred Art or Christian Art, architecture, and culture until very recent times. Perhaps the only seminary where theologians have been systematically and regularly taught Christian Art and architecture for more than two decades has been the St.Joseph's Pontifical seminary, Alwaye. It is a good sign that some other institutions also – not many, to be sure – both in the South and in the North, have followed suit of late. Another reason is that since all the priests are mainly taught only philosophy and theology and some liturgy. other matters of interest to the people of God at large or of relevance to the present day world have been given little importance to both by the teachers and by the taught. Thus art, architecture, media, public relations, information technology and many other relevant fields have been continuously neglected or overlooked by our institutions. That by way of digression.

In India also we have good examples of the different styles of architecture down from the basilican plan, the Romanesque, the Byzantine, the Gothic, the Baroque, the Roccoco, to the ultra modern and pragmatic. True, many of these examples show composite elements, thus making most Churches, hospitals, colleges, and monasteries examples of a mixture of the

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various western and Indian styles of architecture including the Hindu, Saracenic, Jain, Buddhist, and the tribal.

To begin with, the readers' attention may be drawn to the photographs of more than a hundred Christian edifices included by this writer in the Thomas Encyclopaedia(Vol. II,1973, but esp. in Vol. I, 1982). These structures may be taken to represent almost all the styles employed in church building in India during the last two hundred years. A few of the buildings depicted selected at random are:-

Agra	Catholic Cath.
Allahabad	All Saints'
Alleppy	Mt.Carmel Cath.
Alwaye	Pont. Sem. Chapel
Bandel	O. L. of Happy Voyage
Bangalore	St. Peter's Sem.
Bangalore	Dharmaram Coll.
Bangalore	St.Martha'a Hosp.
Bassein Fort	Jesuit Coll. Ch.
Batala	Baring U. C. Coll.
Bombay	Bandra Ch.
Bombay	St. Xavier's Coll.
Bombay	Wilson Coll.
Bombay	Sophia Coll.
Calcutta	St. Paul's Cath.
Calcutta	St. Xavier's Coll.
Chaul	Barbara Tower
Cochin	Ch. Of Fr. Of Assissi
Dalhousie	S. H. Coll.
Daman	O. L. of Remedies
Daman	Cath.
Daman	Rosary Ch.
Dornakal	Cath.
Goa	Bom Jesus (Cloisters)
Goa	Pilar Monastery and Ch.
Goa	Santa Monica
Goa	St. Catherine's Cath.
Goa	Santana Parish Ch.
Harigaon	Ch. Of St. Theresa
Jamshedpur	St. Mary's
Jhansi	Shrine of Judas Thaddeus
Kalimpong	St. Teresa's Ch.
Kaunpur	St. Patrick's
Kaunpur	Christ Ch. Coll.
Kengeri	Monastery Ch.
Kodaikkanal	Union Ch.
Kurseong	St.Mary's Jesuit Coll.

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Kuzhithalai	Ashram
Ludhiana	Hosp.
Ludhiana	Gateway
Madras	Anderson Ch.
Madras	Luz Ch.
Madras	Armenian Ch.
Madras	Madras Christian Coll.
Madras	Loyola Coll. Chapel
Mangalore	St. Aloysius Coll. And Ch.
Mathura	S. H. Ch.
Medak	Cath.
Mysore	St.(Philomena's) Joseph's Cath.
Pune	De Nobili College
Pune	St. Patrick's
Ranchi	St. Xavier's Coll.
Sao Pedro	Ch. Of St. Pet er
Serampore	Ch. Of St. Olav
Thane	Sandor Ch.
Thiruvalla	Syro-Malan. Cath.
Tiruchirappalli	St. Joseph's Coll. Chapel
Tranquebar	Danish Fort
Tranquebar	Lutheran Ch.
Trivandrum	Palayam Ch.
Uraiur	Ch. of O. L. of Good Health
Uraiur	John de Britto Shrine Ch.
Vailankanni	Minor Basilica
Vijayawada	Andhra Loyola Coll. Chapel

Selected photos from STCEI Vol. I only. For more photos see STCEI Vol. II & ICHC I

Glancing at this list and at the photographs themselves would make it clear that any attempt at describing these structures would be indeed, to put it mildly, not easy. However it would be noticed that a large number of these churches and cathedrals follow many features of the Gothic style with a large admixture of the Romanesque. Also some of the structures described earlier in this article are Baroque. Hence, as the co-editors have suggested short descriptions of the main features of these three styles are given below.

9.3 The Baroque

In the second half of the 16th century, the style described as baroque originated in Italy as a reaction against classicism. In architecture and decoration it is a grandiose, richly ornamented, often extravagant style. It had reached its height, spreading throughout Europe by the 17th century. The 18th Century classic revival overthrew it. Rome, France, Germany, Austria have many examples of the baroque which reached extremes in Spain from where it influenced

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South Western Europe, America, and India. The western front of the Murcia Cathedral rebuilt in the 18th century after the flood damage of 1735, and the Santiago (St. James) the Great de Compostela are two of the best known examples of Spanish baroque, the exterior of the latter is almost entirely baroque, in the most exuberant manifestation of this interesting style in Spain. Sacheverell Sitwell called this cathedral 'one of the most splendid fantastic buildings in the world' (1730s). *El Transparente,* the fantastic marble sculpture in baroque at Toledo Cathedral has attracted the highest praise and also criticism. The Spanish love of splendor resulted in altar pieces (reredos, retables or altar screens) being expanded from wall to wall, and from floor to ceiling.[33] Goa and Kerala has innumerable examples of such altar-pieces.

9.4 The Baroque in India

The quaint forms that European Baroque took in Portuguese India are often referred to as Indian Baroque. Manifestations of the Baroque style in architecture and craftsmanship were brought to India by the Portuguese but wrought by Indian craftsmen.[34] As has been remarked by Mulk Raj Anand, "The Spanish and Portuguese Baroque and Rococo were recreated by foreign and Indian craftsmen in the churches in Goa from impulses which began in Italy and traveled through France to Spain and Portugal. Each transfer of a form meant not mere imitation of the original, but elaboration in new configurations of the feelings of the transformer, added to which were the local sense as well as the indigenous materials. " Thus it was that Christian art in Goa emerged as a unique form of expression of the western Portuguese-Baroque, in the lush splendour of the Indo-Portuguese Baroque—all achieved in just more than a century of dynamic development."[35]

In the words of Jose Pereira, these baroque forms of expression were the very ones to endear (themselves) to Asian, particularly Indian, hearts. "Traditional India had been accustomed to treating its buildings as massive sculpture. The Muslims brought a sense of true architecture—the contrast of built and empty spaces, best linked by the arch... while with the baroque came a style capable of greater architectural modulation, charged with exuberance and possessed of the discipline to restrain it."[36]

9.5 Romanesque

The Roman civil basilica or large hall for public meeting became the type for the church. By the 4th century the Christian basilica had acquired its essential characteristics: oblong plan, longitudinal axis, a timber roof either open or concealed by a flat ceiling, and a termination either rectangular or in the form of an apse. From this developed the complex cruciform

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building. The use of the round arch and vaulting, the slenderness of the columns, the basket form of the capitals, arched tracery of the windows are among the characteristics of the Romanesque style prevailing in Europe from the 7th-9th to the 12th centuries.

After the collapse of the Western Roman Empire in the late 5th century, western Europeans began to pick themselves up much sooner than has often been supposed. Places of worship were built or grafted on to older Roman Christian structures, and there emerged what we call the Romanesque style. At first Romanesque followed ancient Roman principles, with the emphasis on proportion, the use of round-headed arches and solid columns. Then architects began to experiment with vaulting. Arches began to spring out of column capitals. These were also applied to the Latin cross forms. Saracenic influence brought the pointed arch, and Romanesque architects also started to use flying buttresses. When all these innovations were put together in one architectural scheme, the Gothic style can be said to have arrived, pioneered in France.[37]

9.6 The Gothic

Gothic cathedrals came up all over Europe from the 12th century to the 16th century. The style has become synonymous with church architecture. Historically Gothic architecture coincides with rise of medieval town and commerce, expansion and consolidation of monarchical power, and development of theological scholasticism. It is not the expression of secularism as once believed but the endeavour to comprehend diversity in all knowledge, experience, and insight within the theological discipline.

Gothic art, work of lay craftsmen, artists and master builders was the art of the cathedral. Building of the Gothic cathedral was the greatest economic effort of the period and absorbed its best talent. Builder, sculptor, glazier, and metal worker all contributed to the Gothic sanctuary.

Each country had its own brand of the Gothic adopting a distinct national nature, but always retaining the broad essentials so superbly demonstrated in the Gothic cathedrals built in the Ile (Island) de France at Laon, Notre-Dame (de Paris), Chartres, Reims, and Amiens. The common characteristics included: pointed arches, cross-ribbed vaults, buttresses and flying buttresses. Aesthetically this system is a series of lofty canopies supported by frail, soaring shafts, with window areas so vast that the walls resemble luminous foils.Structurally this system seems to lay bare the architectural skeleton. The shape of a member does not dictate its function; a bundle of slender shafts, too frail to carry anything may conceal the massive masonry that actually does the supporting. Nevertheless, Gothic art may be called functional.

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It is truly the art of "Thrust and Parry" – the dynamic representation of the interaction of balanced forces that hold the building together. The repetition of basic and decorative forms, qualities of strength and airiness, characterize the Gothic along with stiff vertical lines.

Reims, Amiens cathedrals elaborated the pattern established by the Chartres cathedral. During second radiant phase of French Gothic architects increasingly dared to eliminate wall surfaces for the sake of windows, and to reduce the volume of supports and buttressing arches to the minimum. The transept facades of Notre Dame and Saint-Chapelle in Paris are examples of this style. The final or flamboyant phase of French Gothic shows increasing complexity as at Rouen and Tours. The Gothic was perhaps never fully accepted by the English, Italy accepted it late, outgrew it first.

The Gothic can be summarized, if inadequately, as a style which strove to reach up to Heaven, signified by soaring heights, floating space and a unique combination of stretching and balancing of materials and forms. Walls gave way to buttresses, vertical spaces were filled with stained glass to symbolize the Light of God, 'ever changing as it passes through images of events in the life of Christ and His saints'. [38]

In India we have plenty of examples – good, bad, and indifferent – for the Romanesque and Gothic styles. Often the Gothic is found in combination with various other styles, both European or near eastern and Indian. The chapel of the Pontifical Institute, Alwaye is typical classic Gothic. The largest church in India at Thrissur which today has also the tallest tower is an excellent example for Indian Gothic. Gothic churches are to be found in every region in India and many of them equal if not surpass some of their counterparts elsewhere, if not in size and grandeur, at least in the proper use of some of the essential Gothic elements (*vide* photographs listed.) [39]

Conclusion

A number of other artists and a large number of objects of art and architecture ought to be dealt with in this article. Some areas and locations are almost left out. But it is hoped that a general appreciation of the origin and development of Indian Christian art, its variety, its spread, its influence could be gained from what has been attempted here.

Notes:

1. M. G. S. Narayanan, *Cultural Symbiosis in Kerala,* Trivandrum, 1972, p.1.
2. Id., p. vii.
3. George Menachery in *Kodungallur : City of St. Thomas,* Kodungallur, 1987, p.4, et.sq. of 2000 reprint.

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4. Id. p. 19, n.3 which refers to the many relevant maps in Bjorn Landstorm, *The Quest for India*, Stockholm, 1964 and in the *Atlas* by G.M. in Menachery, George (Ed.), *The St. Thomas Christian Encyclopaedia of India,* Vol. I, esp. those dealing with the Journeys of St. Thomas, Marco Polo, B. Diaz, & St. F. Xavier.

5. We quote from the edition by Schurhammer, Georg, *The Malabar Church and Rome,* Trichinopoly, 1934, the relevant portion of which is reprinted in the *Indian Church History Classics*, Vol. I "The Nazranies", Ed. G. Menachery, Ollur, Jan. 1998, pp.526 - 529.

6. Cf. Scaria Zachariah, *Udayamperur Soonnahadosinte Kaanonaka*l, in Malayalam, 1998.

7. *Jornada*, Lisbon and Coimbra, 1606. A new English translation is being published by the LIREC, Mount St. Thomas, Ernakulam.

8. London, 1694; reprinted in Vol. II of Hough, History of Christianity in India, pp.511 - 683; and a new rendering in Menachery (Ed.), *The Nazranies*, pp. 31 - 112.

9. Schurhammer, op. cit. p.526, col.2 in *The Nazranies.*

10. Id., ibid.

11. Geddes, op. cit., *passim*. Visits to Mangate (Alangad), Cheuree (Chowara), Canhur (Kanjur), Molandurte (Mulanthuruthi), Carturte (Kaduthuruthy), Nagpili (Nagapuzha), Diamper (Udayamperur),Paru (Parur), are quite illuminative in this respect.

12. *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, London, 1876. Quoted by Menachery, George in *Pallikkalakalum Mattum* (Malayalam), Trichur, 1984, p.60.

13. This writer during interviews on Radio Vatican in 1975 and 1978.

14. For these thoughts *vide* G. Menachery, *Pallikalile Kala,* Mathrubhoomi Weekly, March 1978.

15. For details *Pallikkalakalum Mattum* and also paper by Menachery, G., "Social Life and Customs of the St. Thomas Christians in the Pre-Diamper Period," Mt. St. Thomas, June 1999. Printed in *The Life and Nature of the St. Thomas Christian Church in the Pre - Diamper Period*, Ed. Bosco Puthur, Kochi, 2000, pp.188 - 203. Also the writer's papers at the World Syriac Conferences and the Societas Liturgica Congress reproduced in various issues of the *HARP,* Kottayam (Ed. Dr. Jacob Thekkepparampil) and the *St. Thomas Christians Journal.* Rajkot (Ed. Mar Gregory Karotemprel).

16. For hundreds of illustrations dealing with the art and architecture of Kerala Christians see Vol. II of the *STCEI* (alternately the *Thomapedia*) and the *Nazranies*. For a few pictures browse http://www.indianchristianity.com, http://www.archdioceseoftrichur.com, http://www.ollurchurch.com, & c.

17. *India in 1500 A. D.* about Joseph the Indian by A. Vallavanthara, Trivandrum, 1984, chapters 4 and 5.

18. His unpublished paper "Construction of Images in the Art of Early Christian Churches," presented at Trichur and Kottayam which may be seen on the ICHR website. Also see articles by Dr. James Menachery and P.Andrews Athappally in the STCEI, II, Trichur, 1973.

19. From Yule Ed. Cordier, *Travels of Marco Polo* , Vol. II, London, 1926 reproduced in the STCEI, II, pp.12, col. 2 ff.

20. George Menachery, *Malayala Manorama*, Sunday Supplement, April 19, 1987.

21. Unpublished article written by Mathew Lederle (21.2.1976) for the *St. Thomas Christian Encyclopaedia of India* now scheduled to be included in *STCEI* Vol.III.

22. T.P. Issar, *Goa Dourada The Indo-Portuguese Bouquet,* Unesco aided work, Bangalore,1997. This interesting volume has an excellent collection of photographs dealing exhaustively with the art and architecture of the Goan Circle along with many insightful comments.

23. Lederle, op. cit.

24. Issar, op. cit., p.35.

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25. There were constructed in Goa hundreds of churches, chapels, wayside crosses and statues, monasteries, and convents in the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries. For example 25 churches in Ilhas, 25 in Salcete, 7 in Marmugao, 27 in Bardez, and dozens in other locations including Old Goa. Other Portuguese territories also had their own share of churches in these centuries. Cf., f.i., *An Illustrated Guide to Goa*, Furtado,1922 (pp.183 ff.). Also cf. the many other guides, ecclesiastical directories, and publications.
26. Lederle, op. cit.
27. Lederle, op. cit. As this pathbreaking article written in 1976 by. Fr. Lederle for the *St. Thomas Christian Encyclopaedia* could not be included in the 1982 volume by this writer and as it did not see the light of day during the author's lifetime large portions from it are being reproduced here for the first time.
28. Lederle, op. cit.
29. Lederle, op. cit.
30. Lederle, op. cit.
31. Plantagenet Somerset Fry, *Great Cathedrals*, London & c., 1982, Introduction.
32. Id., ibid.
33. Edith Tomory, *Introduction to the History of Fine Arts in India and the West,* Bombay & c., 1968, p.181
34. T.P. Issar, *Goa Dourada*, p.32.
35. 'In Praise of Christian Art in Goa' , *Marg*, 1980, alias Issar,1997.
36. 'Panorama of Indian Baroque', *Golden Goa, Marg*, 1980.
37. See Fry above.
38. Fry, above.
39. As a good deal of the material for this article is taken from the notes and marginal notes made from time to time by the writer for his classes in Christian Art for students of theology 1984–2003 at the Pontifical Institute, Alwaye and other seminaries some acknowledgements may not be cent per cent accurate. This is regretted.

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12
Rediscovering the Grandeur of Indian Philosophy and Culture

John Vattanky

There are many outstanding Christian scholars who contributed substantially to the recovery and development of Indian culture and thought that it is not possible to do justice to all of them. A choice has necessarily to be made. Every one has his own choices according to his own interests and methodology. I have chosen some authors; others would have chosen others; but I hope that my choice is not just arbitrary. We begin with Robert de Nobili.

1. Robert de Nobili (1577-1656)

Robert de Nobili was born into a high aristocratic family at Rome in September 1577. He was given such an education which would eventually have made him a very distinguished figure in Roman ecclesiastical circles. But he chose to join the Society of Jesus in spite of the stiff opposition from his family. He further opted for the Indian Missions again facing the opposition of his family. Robert de Nobili landed in Goa on 20th of May 1605 and was assigned to the Malabar Province of the Society of Jesus, which was founded as vice-province in 1601 and raised to the status of a Province in 1605. De Nobili was duly appointed to Madurai and in fact became the real founder of the Madurai Mission. The methods he used to foster the missionary enterprise involved intense study of the three languages: Sanskrit, Tamil, and Telugu. He became an adept in these languages and composed many works in them. While studying and mastering these languages de Nobili also became an expert in Hindu philosophy and

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religion. He was able to discuss with the Hindu *pandits* in Sanskrit language. It is to his scholarly pursuits in these directions that we now turn our attention. Max Mueller makes the following comment on de Nobili and his knowledge of Indian culture, 'He shut himself up for years, acquiring in secret a knowledge, not only of Tamil and Telugu, but of Sanskrit. When, after a patient study of the language and literature of the Brahmins, he felt himself strong enough to grapple with his antagonists, he showed himself in public, dressed in the proper garb of the Brahmins, wearing their cord and their frontal mark, observing their diet, and submitting even to the complicated rules of caste. He was successful, in spite of the persecutions both of the Brahmins, who were afraid of him, and of his fellow-labourers, who could not understand his policy. His life in India, where he died as an old blind man, is full of interest to the missionary. I can only speak of him here as the *First European Sanskrit scholar* .... the very idea that he came, as he said, to preach a new or a fourth Veda which had been lost, shows how well he knew the strong and weak points of the theological system which he came to conquer. It is surprising that the reports which he sent to Rome, in order to defend himself against the charge of idolatry, and in which he drew a faithful picture of the religion, the customs, and literature of the Brahmins, should not have attracted the attention of scholars .... At a time when the discovery of one Greek Ms. would have been hailed by all the scholars of Europe, the discovery of a complete literature (i.e. Sanskrit by Nobili) was allowed to pass unnoticed."[1]

De Nobili began to study Sanskrit under a Telugu Brahmin Pandit by name Sivadharma. The pandit was amazed at the intelligence and memory of de Nobili. There is no doubt that he mastered Sanskrit for he wrote to his Provincial that he would be prepared to give lectures in theology through the medium of Sanskrit. Further from the account of the Hindu philosophy he gives, it is clear that he had an accurate knowledge of the some of the most abstruse aspects of their philosophy and acquainted with the difficult works of this subject.

Yet for all these, the works which De Nobili composed in Sanskrit seem to be very few. It is usually held that de Nobili wrote three works in Sanskrit: a Life of Our Lady in verse, a Ritual i.e. Hymns and prayers for various occasions and a Sri Kristu Gita. However none of these works have come down to us; they are all presumed to be lost. Similarly the works he wrote in Telugu have also not come down to us.

On the contrary De Nobili composed a number of works in Tamil. Twenty one works are attributed to him; not all have come down to us. The extant works may be divided into two groups: apologetic and doctrinal. We give a short description of these works.

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Apologetic Writings

1. Dushana dhikkaram: As the title indicates the book chiefly refutes the calumnies levelled against Christianity by pagans and it was composed in 1641. Thirteen calumnies are mentioned and refuted. The book also contains salutary instructions to missionaries who would like to work in the mission. **2) Punarjenma akshepam:** This work is intended to refute the doctrine of transmigration held by all schools of Indian thought. The basic argument which de Nobili advances for this purpose is that the soul is the form of the body and so it is impossible for the soul to transmigrate. **3) Attuma nirnayam:** This work discusses the origin, nature and end of the soul. He establishes the immortality of the soul by the classical thomistic arguments: the soul is capable of producing spiritual acts, which do not depend on the body and so it is immortal. **4) Akkiyana nivaranam:** This book is in the form of a dialogue between a guru and a disciple and is intended to remove false ideas about God. He discusses also the attributes of God. **5) Kadavul nirnayam:** This book also deals with God and his nature. de Nobili inculcates prayer and meditation as means of coming to know God. **6) Nitya jivana sallapam:** This book teaches how to find out the true religion revealed by God. **7) Devamathavin sarittiram:** This is a simple life of the blessed virgin Mary. This book in Tamil was meant to make up for the loss of the beautiful book in Sanskrit and in poetry which he wrote. **8) Sesunatar sarittiram:** This is the story of the life of Christ; it is probably a translation of the life of Christ by Ribadineira. **9) Cinna kurrippidam:** This is basically a small catechism dealing with different articles of faith. This work is also translated into Telugu. **10) Gnanopadesam: 26 Sermons:** This book also deals with the doctrines of faith and also the life of our Lord. **11) Gnanopadesam:** This book in five parts is the biggest work of de Nobili and it is also considered his masterpiece. This is basically a catechism in which all the truths of our religion are presented in a very cogent manner. It was translated into Portuguese by Fr. Da Costa and according to him this is the best catechism ever written in the Church of God. 12) de Nobili composed also various poetical works to be sung on various occasions such as the death of a relative and so on.

But for all these scholarly achievements of de Nobili, it should be noted that he was not a scholar who pursued scholarship for its own sake. He used his scholarship to advance the kingdom of God and serve the people with whom he came in contact. In the words of Fr. Sauliere, one of the most reliable scholars on de Nobili, "If the Christians of South India have not been torn away from their own people, if they live the same social life as their Hindu brethren, following the same customs, wearing the same dress, sharing their joys and sorrows,

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their hopes and aspirations; if in a word, no one can with justice point at them the finger of scorn and question their loyalty to the land of their birth, it is largely due to Father Robert de Nobili".[2] Then what exactly is the achievement of de Nobili? Here also let us quote Fr. Sauliere. He writes, "I think that the real achievement of Father Nobili was the introduction of Christianity into the India's hinterland; the rest, Sanskrit scholarship, social and literary adaptations etc. were the means he used. But for him Christianity would have remained confined to the European settlements on the coast, without any chance of penetrating into the interior. While Xavier had travelled along the coasts under the shadow of the Portuguese flag collecting converts by the thousands, Nobili was left at the mercy of the pagans, battling with their prejudices to plant the church among them. His was a slow , painful, and thankless task, but on the stone he gathered so laboriously the Indian church was built."[3]

2. Richard De Smet (1916-1997)

Richard De Smet was born on April 14, 1916 in Belgium. His father was a Fleming while his mother was French speaking, though his own first language was French. Later on after his mother passed away when he was eight, he learned Flemish and spent each school vacation with the family of his father. After his early education he joined the Society of Jesus in 1934. Even in the novitiate De Smet continued to give special attention to Indian thought. He read for instance the works of Pierre Johanns especially on the various schools of Vedanta. In the early years in the Society of Jesus, he also came in contact with Joseph Marechal, S. J. (1878-1944) though Marechal was never a teacher of De Smet. As De Smet began his formal philosophical studies in the Society of Jesus he was struck by the similarities in philosophical approach between the ancient and medieval western thinkers and the vedantic philosophers. In February 1946 De Smet arrived in India and soon he began his four year theological studies in St. Mary's Theological College, Kurseong. It should be noted here that many of his professors had substantial knowledge of Indian thought. De Smet chose as the subject of one of his seminars the relation between the world and the Absolute in êa°kara, a pointer perhaps to the later work that he would be doing. After finishing his theological studies he spent two years in Calcutta studying Sanskrit and Indian Philosophy with the Jesuit indologists like G. Dandoy, R. Antoine and others. Then came the last part of his religious training, what is called in Jesuit terminology his tertianship which lasted for about nine months. During this time he had to make a thirty days retreat in complete silence. Again he was struck by certain parallelisms between Hindu and Christian ascetic principles especially detachment from worldly things. After this purely religious training he began his formal researches for a doctorate in

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Gregorian University, Rome., in view of his future appointment as professor of philosophy in De Nobili College , Pune.

De Smet began his teaching career in Pune in 1954. He spent practically the rest of his life in Pune at De Nobili College. From 1968 onwards he devoted his attention practically to Indian Philosophy only. Along with his teachings De Smet cultivated wide contacts with Hindu intellectuals especially through all India Philosophical Congress. He attended the meetings of this association regularly and his presence in these meetings was widely respected. He carefully built up contacts with Christian ashrams and monks, as well as with Hindu sanycesins and ascetics.

2.1 The Scholarly Contributions of De Smet

De Smet's seminal work was his dissertation on Śaṅkara's theological method. It was never published though many copies of this work were in circulation. It certainly had a wide influence on Śaṅkara studies. Another less scholarly, but very useful and popular work is Religious Hinduism (4th revised edition, Mumbai, St. Pul's Publications, 1997). He also wrote a small volume entitled Philosophical Activity in Pakistan. But his articles on a wide variety of topics form a significant contribution. Bradley. J. Malkovsky in his *New perspectives on Advaita Vedanta, Essays in Commemoration of Professor Richard De Smet, S.J.* (Brill, Leiden. Boston. Koln. 2000) gives a list of 399 articles of De Smet. The same work lists also 76 book reviews written by De Smet. Obviously there is no point in mentioning the titles of all these articles and book reviews. Interested readers can obviously refer to the book mentioned.

However something of the spirit and direction of the articles may be pointed out. De Smet was well acquainted with the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas. And therefore he finds many similarities between the two great thinkers of quite different traditions. Both for instance subordinated reason to revelation, although both appreciated very much the role of reason in grappling with ultimate problems. Both of course consider that ultimate liberation is the goal of life. Though of course the conceptions of this liberation differ in the systems of these different thinkers. And although the terms which they use are different both of them make use of the method of analogy and so there is also remarkable affinity on their concepts of the ultimate reality. But probably the greatest contribution of De Smet to Śaṅkara studies is that the idea of person rightly understood is not incompatible with the idea of *parabrahman*. Similarly he also held that the *parabrahman* can also be considered as creator and therefore the idea of cause is not inapplicable to Brahman. Of course these comparisons and claims need detailed examination and textual support which De Smet adduced in many of his articles.

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3. John Vattanky (1931-)

John Vattanky was born in Kerala, India in July 1931. After his early studies he joined the Society of Jesus in 1950. During his usual course of studies in the Society of Jesus he obtained a licentiate in philosophy and another licentiate in Theology. Then he was sent to Oxford to specialize in Indian studies. From the University of Oxford he gained his M.A. in oriental studies. He continued his researches in Indian philosophy in Vienna concluding with a Ph.D. from that University. As professor of Indian Philosophy and Sanskrit at Jnana-deepa Vidyapeeth for many years, he has made fundamental researches in classical Indian Philosophy especially in Nyāya. Reviewing the book of John Vattanky 'Nyāya Philosophy of Language' Richard De Smet wrote; "Since the time Robert de Nobili in the 16th century this is the first time that a Christian has entered so deeply into Nyāya".[4] Yet specialization in Nyāya was not his first choice; at first he thought of entering into Vedanta, but on the advice of some scholars especially Bengalis he decided to do researches in Nyāya.

He was also convinced that a proper understanding of classical Indian philosophy can only come from the study of Nyāya philosophy. It is generally acknowledged by everybody that the post-Gaṅgeśa Indian philosophical thought can hardly be understood without a proper knowledge of *Navyanyāya*. All schools of *Vedānta* since the time of Gaṅgeśa make use of the technique of *Navyanyāya*. In fact later works on *Advaita Vedānta,* Viśiṣṭādvaita [visishtadvaita] and *Dvaita*, grammar and poetics remain closed books to those who have not studied and mastered *Navyanyāya*. Similarly even earlier Indian thought of many schools made use of the methodology and the style of argument of *prācina nyāya*.

But the situation with regard to *Navyanyāya* studies also cannot be viewed with any satisfaction. The basic text of *Navyanyāya*, Gaṅgeśa's *Tattvacintāmaṇi* has indeed been edited with the voluminous commentary of Mathuranātha. But the text itself is so far not edited in such a way that the book could be used for studies. Some parts of *Tattvacintāmaṇi* have been translated, interpreted and studied by scholars like Sen,[5] Ingall,[6] Matilal,[7] Goekoop,[8] Mohanty[9] and Frauwallner.[10] Frauwallner has also done considerable service in the form of his articles on Raghunātha êiromaṇi which drew attention to the corpus of writings which are actually commentaries on *Tattvacintāmaṇi* between the time of Gaṅgeśa and Raghunātha śiromaṇi. But the commentaries of Vasudevasārvabhauma, Pragalbha, Jayadeva and others remain largely to be edited. In fact for a proper evaluation of *Navyanyāya* system, much work still remains to be done. It is in this context that Vattanky's work in *Navyanyāya* is to be understood.

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3.1 The Scholarly Contributions of Vattanky

He has contributed many articles especially on Nyāya in national and international journals. Only his major books are described below:

1. **Gaṅgeśa's Philosophy of God:**[11] What Vattanky has done basically is to bring out a translation, interpretation and study of the *Īśvaravāda* section of *Tattvacintāmaṇi*. It is probably the longest single section of *Tattvacintāmaṇi* so worked out till now. Many of the scholarly reviewers of the work have been unanimous in their appreciative remarks on the work.

The book is divided into three main parts: in the first (pp. 3 to 168) a detailed historical outline of the progress of the Nyāya thought on the question of *Īśvara* up to the time of Gaṅgeśa is given. Obviously continuous reference is made to the arguments advanced by the Buddhists against the Nyāya position. The purpose is to draw a clear picture for the actual course of argument that developed between the *Naiyāyikas* and the Buddhists. In the second section, (pp.169-246) the Sanskrit text of Gaṅgeśa's own *iśvaravāda* together with an English translation is offered. It may be noted here that Gaṅgeśa's *iśvarānumānam* is a part of his *Opus Magnum* called *Tattvacintāmaṇi*. This section *śvaranumāna* itself comes immediately after the section on *anumāna,* inference. In the third section, (pp.249-411) Vattanky gives a detailed commentary of his own on Gaṅgeśa's work. The commentary bases itself on the published commentaries on the work by such authors as Jayadeva, Rucidatta and so on. The unpublished commentary by Pragalbha has also been extensively used.

The main thrust of *Īśvaravāda* of Gaṅgeśa is to establish the existence of God. In fact it may be argued that the intrinsic worth of *Navyanyāya* can be seen at its best in its *Īśvaravāda* section. Here we find two different schools of thought fighting tooth and nail against each other defending their respective positions. Probably all that the human mind can bring forward for or against rationally establishing the existence of God could be found in this treatise. But to appreciate the implication of this statement one should obviously first master the techniques and terms of *Navyanyāya* and grasp the thought pattern that is expressed through the peculiar methodology of the *Navya-Naiyāyikas*. Viewed in this way one sees that the inference that establishes the existence of God as well as the answers to two of the most significant objections to this inference, namely, the reason in the establishing inference has the faults of additional condition and counter reason, are very rich in philosophical implications. Shorn of its technical vocabulary *Nyāya* asserts that on the basis of what is known we can have a knowledge of what is unknown even if that unknown does not belong to the class of what is already known.

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Buddhists of the Dharmak'rti school would deny this position. Arguments and counter-arguments centre around this basic point about the nature of human knowledge and it may be pointed out that the arguments of the *Naiyāyikas* are fairly unassailable.

2. **Nyāya Philosophy of Language**:[12] In the study of the *Navyanyāya, Karikāvalí* with its commentary *Siddāntamuktāvalí* both by Viśvanātha Pañcānana with the commentaries *Dinakarí* and *Rāmarudri* have been extremely important for the last few centuries as advanced introductions to the subject matter. In fact, their importance is only next to that of *Tattvacintāmaṇi* and its standard commentaries. That is why, in the traditional way of studying *Navyanyāya*, a mastery of *Karikāvalí, Muktavalí, Dinakarí and Rāmarudrí* is considered essential. This practice has been followed through out India in the last few centuries. It shows therefore, the intrinsic worth of these works. In fact, any one who carefully and systematically studies these treatises will marvel at the precision and depth which the Naiyāyikas show when they deal with the various problems of Philosophy. And yet no systematic translation and interpretation of these books are available in any modern language.

In this context with a view to make available the richness of thought contained in these works to all those who are interested in Indian Philosophy in general and in *Navyanyāya* in particular, Vattanky decided to translate the whole of *Karikāvalí, Muktāvalí and Dinakarí,* and interpret them in the light of *Rāmarudrí* and *Subodhiní*. This is the volume containing the translation of the *upamāna* and *śabda* sections of *Karikāvalí, Muktāvalí and Dinakarí,* and interpret them in the light of *Rāmarudrí* and *Subodhiní*. This is the volume containing the translation of the *upamāna* and *śabda* sections of *Karikāvalí, Muktāvalí and Dinakarí.* Although this is the first volume to appear,it is actually the fifth volume in the project of translating the whole of *Karikāvalí, Muktāvalí and Dinakarí* and interpreting them with the help especially of *Rāmarudrí* and *Subodhiní*. This is because of the intrinsic worth of the section on *sabda* and also due to practical reasons.

3. **The development of Nyāya Theism**:[13] This volume deals exclusively with the development of Nyāya Theism. Basically it is a revised and enlarged edition of the first part of the book, Gaṅgeśa's Philosophy of God.

4. **A system of Indian Logic**: **Nyāya Theory of Inference**:[14] This work is a translation and interpretation of the anumana section of *Karikāvalí, Muktāvalí and Dinakarí*. The work follows very closely the pattern of the previous book on the philosophy of language.

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NOTES:

1 Collected works II, as quoted in A. Sauliere, *His Star in the East*, Gujarath Sahitya Prakash, 1955, Blurb.

2 A. Sauliere. Op. Cit. p. 457.

3 Ibid. p. 456.

4 Vidyajyoti, *Journal of Theological Reflection*, January 1977, p.57.

5 Sen, Saileswer, *A Study of Mathuranāth's Tattvacintāmaṇi-rahasya,* Wageningen, February, 1924.

6 Ingalls, Daniel Henry Holmes, *Materials for the Study of Navya-Nyāya Logic,* Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1951.

7 Matilal, B.K., *The Navyanyāya Doctrine of Negation,* Cambridge, Massachusetts Harvard University Press, 1968.

8 Goekoop, C., *The Logic of Invariable Concomitance in the Tattvacintāmaṇi,* Gaṅgeśa's *Anumitinirupana and Vyāptivāda with Introduction and Commentary,* Dordrecht, Holland, 1967.

9 Mohanty, J.N., Gaṅgeśa's *Theory of Truth, Containing the Text of* Gaṅgeśa's *Prāmaṇya (jñāpti) vāda, with an English Translation, Explanatory Notes and an Introductory Essay,* Centre for the Advanced Study of Indian Philosophy, Santiniketan, 1966.

10 Frauwallner, E., "Raghunātha Śiromaṇi," *Wiener Zeitschrift fuer die Kunde Sued und Ostasiens,* Vol. X, 1966, p. 86ff, Vol. XIV, 1970, p.161ff.

11 Vattanky, John, Gaṅgeśa's *Philosophy of God: Analysis, Text, Translation and Interpretation of Īśvaravāda Section of Gaṅgeśa's Tattvacintāmaṇi with a Study on the Development of Nyāya Theism.* The Adyar Library and Research Centre, Madras, 1984.

12 Nyāya Philosophy of Language: Analysis, Text, Translation and Interpretation of *Upamana* and *Sabda* sections of *Karikāvalí, Muktāvalí and Dinakarí.* By John Vattanky, S.J. Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications, A Division of Indian Books Centre, 1995, pp.xiv-548.

13 *Development of Nyāya Theism,* Intercultural Publications (P) Ltd., 15A/30, W.E.A., New Delhi, 1993.

14 *A System of Indian Logic: The Nyāya Theory of Inference,* Routledge, London, 2003.

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13
Christians in the Field of Indian Philosophy, Theology and Culture

Francis Arackal

Introduction

To look at the pioneering efforts at discovering the grandeur of Indian philosophy and culture by both the Westerners and the Indian Christians, who share the Christian culture, is quite appropriate.

I have broadly divided this paper into three parts: (1) The description about the contribution of Westerners to Indian philosophy and culture. (2) A brief sketch of Indian Christians who worked in the field of Indian philosophy and culture (3) The third part comprises of the efforts by the great scholars, explaining the Christian philosophy and theology in the light of *Advaita Vedanta* which is, the leading one among the Indian schools of philosophy. In this part, I have grouped the efforts of the Christian philosophers and theologians into three patterns under the reception model, reinterpretation model and rejection model. Lastly, a detailed bibliography is appended for complementing and supplementing this excursus at the end of this paper.

While entering the modern period of history, the fields of Indian philosophy and culture were more developed and enriched by the efforts of Westerners and Indian Christians. They translated the Indian texts into European languages and vice versa made studies and commentaries on these texts and wrote independent works based on Christian literature. There is a really fine galaxy of scholars who discovered the grandeur of Indian philosophy and culture.

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Here an attempt is made to find out the important personalities of both the Indian Christians and Christians abroad and their contributions in these fields. A general assumption is taken for granted in assuming the Westerners sharing the Christian background and basics in religious view points. Hence we can very well say that Christians also have an important role in nation building by rediscovering the grandeur of Indian philosophy and Indian culture.

India had a continuous history of thousands of years having a variety of thoughts of diametrically opposing ideas. Indian philosophy or culture is not of a monolithic structure. It is a mosaic of heterogeneous philosophies and culture which we take under the title Indian philosophy and culture a practical; and general sense. This is a result of incessant probing into the problem of the "why" and "how" the variety of missionary endeavours by the various Christian denominations evolved.[1]

Indian philosophy is multifaceted in nature. It could be apt to call it 'Indian Philosophies'. The Vedic philosophy, the Vedangas viz, siksha, kalpa, vyakarana, nirukta, jyotisa chandas, upavedas, the various philosophical schools both ãstika (sankhya, yoga, nyãya, vaisesika, purvamimamsa, Uttaramimamsa) and nastika (cãravaka, ajivika, Buddhism, and Jainism) all these come under the umbrella of Indian philosophical schools. With modern ages, the hitherto Indian studies by the westerners and missionaries were labelled as the "Indological studies' by the Indologists and Orientalists. In this paper their attempts also have been taken into account in the class of missionary endeavours.

The clear demarcation between the westerners and missionaries in India and the Indian missionaries is a wearsome task to describe. The local Christians who study in the west and later worked in the mother country (India) form another category.

1. Indological Studies by Non-Indians

When in modern times Europeans reached India in great numbers to trade, interest in India and her culture was awakened. These Westerners contributed a great deal to Indology (a detailed bibliography is given in the endnote).

The German missionary H. Roth (1620-1668) seems to have been the first European to write a Sanskrit grammar which, however, was not printed. Two other Catholic missionaries deserve mention in this connection. E. Hanxleden came to Kerala in 1699 and stayed there until his death in 1732. He was instructed in Sanskrit and Malayalam by two Nambudiris. He wrote a Sanskrit grammar, a Malayalam dictionary, and also composed hymns and poems in Malayalam. J. P. Wesdin, who took on the name of

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Fr. Paulinus a Sancto Bartholomaeo (1748-1806), was an Austrian who stayed on the Malabar coast for thirteen years. He wrote two Sanskrit grammars which were printed in Rome in 1804.

Missionaries were also the first to take an interest in Dravidian Languages. B. Ziegenbalg (1682-1719) wrote a Tamil grammar. J. P. Fabricius (1711-1791) compiled a Tamil dictionary. Kannada and Malayalam too owe a standard dictionary to two missionaries. F. Kittel (1832-1903) and H. Gundert (1814-1893) published dictionaries in these languages, which are still in use today. Another missionary, E. Trumpp (1828-1885), worked on Sindhi and Pushto.

1.1 Dictionaries, Grammars and Works of Reference

In order to understand and translate texts, a good dictionary was required. For more than a century, German speaking scholars have used the two so - called St. Petersburg-Dictionaries. Two German Scholars O. Von Boehtlingk and R. Von Roth worked on the big St. Petersburg Dictionary which appeared in 1852-1875. It has recently been translated into English and published in India. It can be superseded only by the "Encyclopaediac Dictionary of Sanskrit on Historical Principles", compiled in Pune. The first part of the third volume, treating *adh* to *adhi* appeared in 1982.

1.2 Vedic Studies

The first European to study the Rigveda was F. Rosen whose early death in 1837 prevented him from publishing a complete Rigveda edition with a Latin translation. It was Max Mueller who published a critical edition of the text in six volumes. Translations were also made by G. Grassmann, A. Ludwig, and K.F. Geldner. H. Oldenberg, R. Pischel and K. F. Geldner who wrote critically on text related problems. The edition and translation of Samaveda by T. Benfey appeared almost simultaneously with that of the Rigveda. A Weber worked on the Yajurveda. An Atharvaveda Samhita edition was the joint effort of R. von Roth and the English scholar W.D. Whitney. L. Von Schroeder edited the Maitrayani Samhita. Among scholars working on Vedic subjects today are W. Rau (Marburg), P. Thieme (Tüebingen), K. Mylius (Leipzig), M. Witzel (Cambridge, Mass), and K. Janert (Köln).

1.3 Middle Indic

C. Lassen was the first to study Prakrit in his Institutiones Linguae Prakriticae, Bonn, 1837. R. Pischel's Grammatik der Prakrit Sprache is still the best survey of literary Prakrit,

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although outdated in parts. It has once been described as "the best Indian grammar available" by W. Printz' writing on Bhasa's Prakrit, Frankfurt, 1921. H. Jacobi's Ausgewachlte Erzaehlungen in Maharashtri (Selected stories in Maharashtri), 1886, reprint 1967, serves as a valuable introduction.

1.4 Modern Languages

Whereas scholars in former times mainly concentrated on Sanskrit, Pali and Prakrit, interest in modern Indian languages has increased in recent days. G. Budruss (Mainz) and M. Thiel-Horstmann (Bonn) specialised in modern Indo-Aryan languages, the former especially of the Hindukush area and in Hindi literature. P. Gaeffke (Philadelphia) and L. Lutze (Heidelberg), both study Hindi and Bengali.

1.5 Epic Studies

M. Winternitz, H. Jacobi and H. Lueders were instrumental in initiating work on the critical edition of the Mahabharata. They contributed to epic studies in a number of publications. In H. Oldenberg's view, termed the Akhyana theory, the epic originated from metric dialogues, examples of which were found in the Brahmanas. Prose parts were added later. Their theory was discussed by L. Alsdorf in a paper "The Akhyana theory reconsidered in "Journal of the Oriental Institute, Baroda", 1964.

1.6 Puranas

The Puranas were the subject of W. Kirfel's research. He came to the conclusion that most Puranas had certain passages in common which belong to the oldest strata of this literature. P. Hacker continued the line of research instigated by W. Kirfel. W. Ruben's "Krishna studies", 1936, 1937, deserves to be mentioned in this context.

1.7 Buddhism and Jainism

Buddhism and Jainism were studied extensively in Germany. Buddhism, in fact, has many followers in Germany. Buddhist texts were translated into German by K. E. Neumann, K. Seidenstuecker, Nyanatiloka (A. Gueth), and W. Geiger. The Dhammapada was translated by several authors German translations are listed by H. Hecker in Der Pali *Kanon, Ein Weseiser*, Hamburg, 1965. From 1904 onwards, Buddhist Sanskrit texts from Central Asia were published by H. Lueders, E. Waldschmidt and the latter's students.

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1.8 Indian Literature

Shakuntala was the first drama to be translated albeit from Sir. W. Jones' English version. Since then, a number of dramas have been critically edited and translated into German. Dramas were discussed by M. Winternitz and H. von Glasenapp in their histories of Indian literature. P. Thieme (Tüebingen) contributed a paper on Indian theatre to Kindermann's Fernoestliches Theater, Stuttgart, 1966. H. Lueders edited fragments of the earliest Indian dramas found in Central Asia and published Das Sariputraprakarana, Ein Dramas des Ashvaghosha, reprinted in "Philologia Indica", 1940.

1.9 Poetry and metrics

J. Nobel studied the Alamkarashastra. H. Jacobi contributed to the study of Indian poetics and aesthetics. O. Boehtlingk wrote on Dandin's poetics. A Weber's *book Ueberdie Metric der Indes*, Berlin 1863, is a comprehensive study of Indian metrics especially of the Vedic period. Today studies on Indian metrics are done by M. Hahn (Bonn)

1.10 Indian Philosophy

P. Deussen, O. Strauss, E. Frauwallner and W. Ruben wrote books on the history of Indian philosophy. R. von Garbe wrote a treatise on Samkhya, J.W. Hauer on Yoga, P. Hacker studied early *Advaita*vada. P. Deussen and G. Thibaut translated the Shankarabhasya. Indian philosophy has been discussed by E. Steinkellner and G. Oberhammer (Wien) : L. Schmithausen (Hamburg); W. Halbfass (Philadelphia); T. Vetter (Leiden); J. F. Sprockhoff (Bochum); F. Zangenberg (Durban) and H. Brueckner (Heidelberg) and A. Wezler (Hamburg).

1.11 Grammar and Lexicography

O. Boehtlingk, O. Franke, B. Liebich, L. F. Kielhorn, W. Rau (Marburg), P. Thieme (Tuebingen) and R. Birwe (Koeln) deserve to be mentioned in connection with studies on Panini and other grammarians. T. Zachariae contributed a treatise on Indian Lexicography to the Encyclopedia of Indo-Aryan Research. C. Vogel published Indian Lexicography in "History of Indian Literature", Wiesbaden, 1979.

1.12 Science and Medicine

J. Jolly's book Medicin, Strassburg 1901, is still the best survey of the theory and practice of Ayurveda. The oldest Sanskrit manuscript of a medical text, the Bower manuscript, was

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found in Central Asia. It was edited by R. Hoernle, who also wrote "Studies in the Medicine of Ancient India", Oxford, 1907 and "Studies in Ancient Indian Medicine" in "Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society",1906-09.

1.13 Dharmashastra and Arthashastra

T. Goldstuecker, a German scholar who was living in London, edited a commentary on the Manavakalpa Sutra. Owing to his knowledge of Indian Law, he was often consulted by the British Government. G. Buehler compiled the "Digest of Hindu Law Cases" together with a dharmashastravid, 1867-69. G. Buehler has contributed the volume. "The Laws of Manu" to the "Sacred Books of the East". J. Jolly also studied Indian Law and wrote in "Encyclopedia of Indo-Aryan Research".

1.14 Epigraphy

F. Kielhorn, G. Buehler, and E. Hultzsch helped elucidate Indian history and chronology by studying inscriptions and publishing them in Epigraphia Indica. G. Buehler's *Indische Palaeographie von 350* a. Chr. bis circa 1360p. Chr., StrassBurg, 1896, is still considered the standard work on this subject. E. Hultzsch, H. Lueders, and L. Alsdorf studied Ashoka inscriptions.

1.15 History, Art and Archaeology

Indian history, art and archaeology have only been researched by German scholars. E. Waldchmidt, H. Hoffmann (Erlangen), H. W. Koehler (Berlin) and G. Budruss (Mainz) have contributed chapters on Indian history to world histories. H. Goetz, M. Njammasch (Berlin), H. Kulke (Kiel) and F. Wilhelm (Muenchen) also wrote on Indian history. J. Luett and D. Rothermund, both taught at Heidelberg's South Asia Institute, had modern Indian history as their field of specialisation.

1.16 Music

R. Simon studied Vedic notations. J. Kuckertz (Berlin) wrote "Form und Melodiebildung der Karnatischen Musik Suedindiens" (Form and Melody in the Carnatic Music of south India), 2 volumes, Wiesbaden, 1970.

1.17 New Trends

A new approach to Indological studies was being attempted in the South Asia Institute in Heidelberg. It was founded in 1962 to promote research on the problems of developing

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countries. This Institute has a department of Indology where Sanskrit and modern Indian languages were taught. Other departments are those of Archaeology, Comparative Agrarian Policy and Rural Sociology, Economics, Ethnology, Geography, Law, Political Sciences, Sociology and an Institute of Tropical Hygiene and Public Health.

There are many other non-Indian Indologists. The most prominent of them are the following: The abbreviations denote their respective nationalities. For further details of western scholars on Indian Philosophy and Culture confer the list of non-Indian Indologists in the appendix No. I.

(A) - American, (D) - Dutch, (E) - English, (F) - French, (G) - German, (I) - Italian

Adelung, F. (G), Anquetil Duperron (F), Aufrecht, T. (G), Ballantyne, J. R. (E), Barthelemy, J., (F), Bartholome,W. (G), Benfey, T. (G), Bergaigne, A.H.J. (F), Bohtlingk, O. (G), Bopp, F(G), Brockhaus, H. (D), Buhler, G.(G), Burnell, A. G. (E), Burnouf, E. (F), Chezy, A. L.,Colebrooke, H.T.(F), Cunningham, A.(E), Fauche, H. (F), Forster, G.(G), Forster, H.P., Foucaux, P.E.(F), Gildemeister,J.(G), Goldstucker,T. (G), Goresio, C.G.(1), Grassmann, H.G. (G), Halhed, A. N.B.(E), Hamilton, A.(E), Hanxleden, J.E. (G), Hastings, W.(E), Haug, M.H.(G), Herder, J.G.(G), Jones, W.(E), Kuhn, F.F.A.(G), Langlois, S.A. (F), Lassen, C. (Norwey), Ludwig, J.G. (G), Max Muller, F.(G), Minaev, I. P. (Russian), Muir, J. (E),Perron, A.D.(F), Peterson, P. (E), Petrov, P.Y. (Russian), Regnier, A. (F), Roer, H.H.E. (G), Rogerius, A. (D), Rosen, A.F. (G),Rost. R. (G), Roth R. (G), Roth, II (G), Ruckert, F.(G), Schlegel, A.W.V.(G), Schlegel, F.(G), Schultz (G), Schultz, T. (G), Senzler, A.F. (Swedish), Simon, A.L. (F), Weber, A. (G), Westergaard, L., Whitney, W.D. (A), Wilkins, C. (E), Williams, M. (E), Wilson, H.H. (E).

2. Indian Christians who worked in Discovering the Grandeur of Indian Philosophy, Theology and Culture

2.1 The Pioneers of Indian Christian Scholarship

The Indian pioneers in this field are many. However, we give the contribution of some prominent scholars in this area. K.M. Banerjee published in 1875 his Arian Witness, the purpose of which was to bring out the striking parallels between the Old Testament (particularly the Book of Genesis) and the Vedas and thus prove that Christianity, far from being a foreign religion, was in fact the fulfillment of original Hinduism. Parani Andi's objective was not different

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from this in publishing his "Are We Not Hindus?" in 1889, A.S. Appasamy Pillai found in the Rig Veda an unmistakable proclamation of the one God 'behind the many' and he was able to point out clear predictions of Christ in the Vedas.

It was exactly this line of thought, which the Bengali Catholic nationalist, Brahmabandhav Upadhyaya adopted at the start of this philosophical-theological thinking. He moved on to lay the foundations for a *Vedanta*- based Christian theology, which such scholars as Johanns and Dandoy developed later. Sadhu Sunder Singh is another prophetic Christian who appeared at the start of the 20th century. This Sadhu, who lived more often in 'heaven' than on 'earth', made a tremendous world-wide appeal as the prophet of an Indian Christian mysticism. Bishop A.J. Appasamy was a versatile scholar and a Churchman, but it was the mysticism of the Sadhu which attracted him, and which he promoted through his scholarly writings.

The 19th century and early 20th century is considered to be the period of Hindu Renaissance and it is to be noted that this phenomenon was very much influenced by the Christian presence in India through the scholarly contribution of Indian Christian philosophers and theologians. It is also to be admitted that the Hindu Renaissance leaders were very much influenced by the humanistic ideologies of Christian literature, for example, in R.M. Roy we find the moral reforming Christ of the West for reforming India. In K.C. Sen we have *Navavidhan* or 'The Church of New Dispensation, i.e., 'reformed Hinduism with Christ as centre. P.C. Mozoomdar pioneered 'Oriental Christ'. Ramakrishna and Vivekananda were aware of purpose of the *avatara* of Christ.

The Christian pioneers of Indigenous Christianity are K.M. Banerjee, Parani Andi, A. S. Appasamy, Nehemiah Goreh, Brahmabandhav Upadhyaya, Sadhu Sunder Singh and A.J. Appasamy. Among the radicals we have M.C. Parekh et.al., who reform the Indian Philosophy in their perspective. Among the Dissident voices or 'Rethinking Groups' we find P. Chenchia and V. Chakkarai.

2.2 Contemporary Spiritual - Philosophical - Theological Encounter

A spiritual- theological consciousness has gradually surfaced in the religious literature that Indian Christian thinkers produced in the last 50 or 60 years. As in the past it was Protestants who took the initiative in launching the contemporary movement. They formed a few societies to promote this kind of studies, particularly emphasizing aspects of religion and society and started publishing one or two journals. A movement, which helped to boost Indian Christian literary effort in our times, was the Ashram Movement. It owes its origin to the Protestant

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initiative, but in the course of time Catholics have associated with it in a big way. Some important names are S. Jesudasan, Murray Rogers and Catholics like Monchanin (Parama Arubi Anandam), Le Saux (Abhishiktananda), Bede Griffiths, Francis Acharya, Sister Vandana and Amalorpavadass. Vatican Council II, especially its documents on evangelisation and relation to non-Christian religions, was a watershed to Catholics to take their place fully in the ongoing discussion on Hindu - Christian meeting. A number of Institutions and Associations took up the task and several publications soon came out.

The contemporary Indian Christian literature reflects various currents and undercurrents, different trends and approaches. Three major trends or approaches stand out. They are spiritual - contemplative, the philosophical - theological and the sociopolitical. The late Swami Abhishiktananda (Fr. Le Saux O.S.B.) was the Acharya of the first of these three trends. Monchanin, Bede Griffiths, Sisters Vandana and Sara Grant, even Amalorpavadass to a large extent, and the Ashram movement as a whole, have contributed immensely to this particular aspect of Indian philosophy and theology. Raymundo Panikker seems to take lead in the second approach, the philosophical -theological approach. Paul Devanandan and "the Christian Institute of the study of the religion and society" (CISRS) founded by him most powerfully support and represent the thrid approach. M.M.Thomas and Sebastian Kappen were powerful prophets of this. The number of Christian thinkers who follow this approach is on the increase.

2.3 Indian Philosophers

The Indian Christian scholars of Indian culture and philosophy are Acharuparambil Daniel, Aleaz K.P., Amaladoss M., Antony O.C.D., Arapura J.G., Barbosa Francis, Bernanrd ofm.Cap., Chethimattam John Britto CMI, Correya Bosco OCD., Cullman, Thomas Dabre, Desmet, Devanandan P.D., Dhavamony M. S.J., Francis A.P., Francis D'za, Gaston CMI, Jacob M.M., Jyothi Sahi, Kanichai Cyriac CMI, Kattackal J., Kulangara Thomas, Kunnappilly John, Mangalath Daniel, Manickam CMI, Mark Sunder Rao, Ninan C.A., Noel Sheth, Panikkar R., Pappali Cyril Bernard OCD., Paulose K.G., Placid OIC, Pulikottil Kuriakose, (Pavaratty) Painadath Sebastian S.J., Solomon E.A.A., Stephen S.J., Subhash Anand, Surjith Singh, Thachil Jose, Tharamangalam Alex, Thomas M.M., Thottakkara Augustine, Thottakara Dan, Ulakamthara Mathew, Valiyaveettil Chacko, etc.

In the following part of our study we look at how the Christians in India viewed *Advaita* Vedanta, the most leading school of Indian Philosophy, in their Christian faith experience.

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3. Scholars who viewed Christian Philosophy and Theology from the *Advaita Vedanta* Perspective

In this part we have grouped some of the eminent Christian philosophers and theologians who have ventured to see the Christian philosophy and theology in the light of the leading Indian philosophical school viz *Advaita Vedanta*. It is to be noted that some Christian philosophers approach *Vedanta*(reception model) and some re-interpret (re-interpretation model) and others reject Vedantic philosophy (rejection model.).

The Christian philosophers and theologians are positive in their approach to *Advaita Vedanta*. For example Brahmabandhav Upadhyaya, Carl Keller , K. Subba Rao, J.G. Arapura , R.V. De Smet and S.J. Samartha. They may be categorised under the reception model as they receive *Advaita Vedantic* thought totally in their endeavour of interpreting Christian faith: In theology of religions they can come under the school of either Pluralistic Inclusivism or Pluralism. Then there is another group of theologians whom we study in the second part, who can be put under the reinterpretation model because they do not receive *Advaita Vedanta* as it is; *Advaita* Vedantic concepts are reinterpreted by these thinkers to make them 'Christian' .P. Johanns, Mark Sunder Rao, Swami Abhishiktananda, Bede Griffiths, Raimundo Panikkar, Sara Grant and Vandana Mathaji may belong to this group. In theology of religion they come under the school of Inclusivism, with the exception of Swami Abhishiktanada and Raimundo Panikkar who have tried to progress from Inclusivism to Pluralism to an extent.

There are certain Indian Christian Theologians for example, P.D. Devanandan and Surjit Singh who are not in favour of *Advaita Vedanta*; they present the gospel of Jesus as an alternative to *Advaita Vedanta* and hence they may be grouped under the rejection model. We take note of them in the third and final part of this work. They represent the Exclusivist school in the theology of religions.

3.1 The Christian Philosophers and Theologians who Receive *Advaita Vedanta*

Under the reception model the contributions of Brahmabandhav Upadhyaya to Indian Christology lie in his explanation of the second person of the Trinity as *Cit*. He interpreted the Son as *Cit* in the context of his interpretation of Trinity as *Sat-cit-anandam*. Upadhyaya would point out that Revelation of God in Jesus Christ is the further clarification of God conceived as *Sat-Cit-Anandam*. Reason can only know that Self-existent Being is necessarily intelligent. Regarding the doctrines of Human Person, sin, fall, grace, atonement and Salvation

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Upadhayaya maintained the traditional Christian position and hence he tried to explain the traditional understanding of the person of Jesus Christ in terms of the *vedantic* understanding of human nature also.

Upadhyaya also interpreted the Christian doctrine of creation in terms of the *Vedantic* concept maya. He pointed out that according to *Advaita Vedanta*, the world originates by *vivarta*, a kind of communication which does not modify the communicator. *Vivarta* implies creation by will causation (sankalpa) After maintaining God as absolutely different from all appearances as in *Advaitic* thinking, Carl Keller ventures to point out the direction of an Indian Christology: Jesus Christ is God's appearance in the midst of appearances. It was K. Subba Rao's conviction that total renunciation alone would qualify us to become the disciples of Jesus. We have to give up 'I' and 'Mine '.

Subba Rao has not only interpreted the meaning of the Life of Jesus from within the *Advaita Vedantic* conviction, but his explanation of the Christian understanding of sin and salvation is also very much *advaitic* in nature. Jesus taught us that we are the temple of God and the kingdom of God is within us; if we are pure in heart we can see God; Jesus preached and practised the truth which is the gist of all philosophies -Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect .'

But our Guru Jesus has to help us in order that we arrive at this realization. In J.G. Arapura's opinion , in raising the question of the foundations of Christian thought, we must raise the question of Ultimate Reality along with the question of Christ. Arapura thinks that the universal transhistorical meaning of Jesus Christ becomes actualisable in the actual universality and transhistoricity of the meaning of Brahman and the particular historical meaning of Brahman becomes actualisable in the actual particularity and historicity of the meaning of Jesus Christ. According to R.V. De Smet, Sankara's conception of the relation between world and Brahman can explain the relation between the human and divine natures in Christ.

In S.J. Samartha's opinion we are called to develop a Christology which is unmistakably Christian and recognisably Indian. Such a Christology should take into account two factors namely acceptance of a sense of Mystery and the rejection of an exclusive attitude. According to the present standpoint of Samartha the unitive vision of *Advaita* is very relevant for an Indian Christology. According to K.P. Aleas, Christian thought in relation to Sankara's *Advaita Vedanta* is a practical demonstration of an Indian dialogical theology, more specifically an Indian dialogical Jesulogy in terms of the perspective of pluralistic Inclusivism for the relational convergence of religions, in this case of Hinduism and Christianity.

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3. 2 The Christian Theologians who Reinterpret *Advaita Vedanta*

Under the reinterpretation model the first Christian thinker we noted was P. Johanns. He wanted to reconcile the different schools of *Vedanta* in Thomism in order to arrive at Christ. Sankara's understanding of God is giving a foundation for this, while the superstructure has to be built by other Vedantins. 'Creatio ex nihilo' is the doctrine which Johanns suggests for the further development of Sankara. In Mark Sunder Rao's view , the Christian doctrine of Trinity and Incarnation throw light on Christian non-dualism, ananyatva. Each of the three the Father , Son and Holy Spirit possesses a perfect 'hypostasis' and yet maintains one common 'ousia'; the *coinherence* in one another being effected by *perichoresis.*

Swami Abhisiktananda has interpreted Jesus Christ as Cit in the context of his interpretation of Trinity as Saccidananda. In the view of Abhisiktananda when the Advaitic Saccidananda is considered in the light of Christian experience of the Trinity, it gives the impression of being essentially monistic and of terminating in unbroken silence. Abhisiktananda explains the Hindu Advatic experience of Saccidananda as follows. A person realizes Being, Sat, as himself/ herself as well as infinitely beyond himself/ herself .

The Claim of Abhisiktananda was that in Jesus Christ we get a different picture. In the relationship between Jesus Christ and God the Father there is the expression of oneness as well as the expression of the distinct face-to-face relation. In Bede Griffiths we notice a continuation of the thought of Abhishiktananda. According to him Sankara teaches the reality of the world as Brahman. According to Raimundo Panikkar, the role of Isvara in *Vedanta* corresponds functionally to the role of Christ in Christian thought. It is precisely this correspondence that provides Indian philosophy with a locus for Christ and Christian theology. Of course it is also true that by the name 'Christ' Panikkar now means more than Jesus of Nazareth, even though Jesus is the manifestation of Christ for the Christian. Sara Grant like De Smet shows that tadatmya relation means the relation between Creation and Brahman is a non-reciprocal dependence relation. According to Vandana Jesus could be conceived as *Cit.*

3.3 The Christian Theologians who Reject *Advaita Vedanta*

In the Rejection Model we noted the view of P.D. Devanandan that the classical Hindu Vedantic theology is incapable of giving an ideological basis for the new anthropology emerging

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in indepentent India and where it is failing to find a solution, the revelation of God in Jesus Christ has got an answer to give. In Surjit Singh's view , the values at stake in *Advaita Vedanta* are of personality , of history and of time. It is confusing to call God personal in *Advaita* system. Also According to *Advaita*, ultimately individuality of a person is lost in the absolute. The Divine - Human relation in Jesus Christ has the Characteristics of involvement, interaction, interpenetration and a new paradigm. Divine Human relation in Jesus shows the capacity of relatibility in the inner structure of God; God is *Saguna*, personal.

Thus it is significant to note that there are many theologians in India who receive *Advaita Vedantic* thought totally in their endeavour of constructing Christian thought. Brahmabandav Upadhyaya interpreted Trinity as *Saccidänanda* as well as creation as *maya*. He conceived the second person of the Trinity as Cit and the person of Jesus Christ in terms of *Vedantic* human nature.

We also saw that there are others who reinterpret *Advaita Vedanta* to make it Christian. P. Johanns wanted to reconcile the different schools of *Vedanta* in *thomism* in order to arrive at Christ. Sankara's understanding of God gives the foundation for this, while the superstructure has to be built by other *Vedantins*. *Creatio ex nihilo* is the doctrine which Johanns suggests for the further improvement of Sankara's thought. Mark Sunder Rao conceive the divine human union in the Incarnation as hypostatic or ontological whereas the fallen humanity is capable of only *unio mystica*, union at the level of the Spirit .

There are some who reject *Advaita Vedanta*, For example, P.D. Devanandan thought that the Hindu *Vedantic* theology cannot give an ideological basis for the new Indian Anthropology; only the revelation of God in Jesus can. Indian Christians are fortunate to be acquainted with *Advaita Vedantic* experience in order that it may enrich their faith-experience. Deeper dimensions of Christian thought on God, humans and creation are manifesting through the aid of Sankara's thought . Deeper meanings of the person and function of Jesus are slowly emerging from within *Advaita Vedanta*.

Appendix - I

The abbreviations adopted in this paper are :-

(A) - American, (D) - Dutch, (E) - English,
(F) - French, (G) - German, (I) - Italian

1. Adelung, F. (G) Versuch einer Literatur der Sanskrit Sprache, 1830.
2. Anquetil Duperron, A.D.(F) (1731-1805) Oupnekhat ou Theologia et philosophia,1801-02.

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3. Aufrecht, T. (G) 1) Calalogus Catalogoram-3 Vols, 1891; (2) Edition of the complete text of the Rgveda, 1861, 1863.

4. Ballantyne, J. R. (E) (1813-64) (1) Samkhya Aphorisms of Kapila, 1852, (English translation); (2) Nyaya-sutra, 2 parts.1850-53; (3) Vaisesika-sutra, 1851; (4) Mahabhasya, 1855; (5) Sahitya-darpana, 1851; (6)Yoga-sutr, 1882; (7) Hindu Philosophy, 1879, 81.

5. Barthelemy, J. (F) (1805-95) Des Vedas, 1854.

6. Bartholome,W.(Austrian) (1748-1806) (1) Systema Brahmanicum, Rome, 1791; (2) Amarasimha sen Dictionari Sama-scrada...cum versione Latine, 1798; (3) Reise nach Ostindien. Besides the above, Bartholome wrote two Sanskrit grammars published in Rome in 1790 and 1804 respectively. These are in Tamil script, and based on the unpublished Sanskrit grammar of J.E. Hanxleden, German Jesuit Father.

7. Benfey. T. (G) (1809-81), (1)German trs. of the Pancatantra, 1859; (2) Handbook des sanskrit sprache,Leipzig, 1852-54; (3)A practical Grammar of Sanskrit Language, London, 1868.

8. Bergaigne, A.H.J. (F) (1888-89) (1) Bhamini-vilasa, 1872; (2) La Religion Vedique d'apres le hymans du Rgveda, 1878-83; (3) Nagananda (French translation), 1879; (4)Sakuntala (French translation), 1884; (5) Les inscriptions Sanskrites du Cambodge, 1882; (6) Manuel Pour etudier la lang Sanskrite, 1884.

9. Bohtlingk, O. (G) and Sanskrit Worterbuch (7 vols.) 1875, R. Roth (G) F., Sanskrit-German Dictionary, generally known as St. Petersburg Lexicon.

10. Bopp, F. (G) (1791-1867) (1) Uber das conjugations system der Sanskrit-sprache in Vergleichung mit jenem der griechischen, lateinischen, persischen und germanischen sprache, 1816; (2) Glossarius Sanscritum, 1830; (3) Vergleichende Grammatik des, 1833-52, Sanskrit, Zen, Gricchischem, Latcin-schen, etc., In 6 parts.

11. Brockhaus, H. (D) (1806-77) (1) Kathasaritsagara (ed.), 1839-66; (2) Prabodha-candrodaya (ed.), 1834-35.

12. Buhler, G. (G) (1837-98) (1) Grundriss der in doarischen philologie und Altertumskunde, 1920; (2) Indische Palaeographie 1869; (3) Detailed Report of a tour in search of Sanskrit MSS in Kashmir, Rajputana and Central India, 1833-52; (4) A Cat. of Sanskrit MSS. from Gujarat, Kutch, Sind and Khandes, 1873; (5) Indische Studien; (6) Aphorisms on the Sacred Laws of the Hindus by Apastamba, 1868-71; (7) Apasumba, Gautama, Vasistha and Baudhayana Dharmasutras (Eng. trs. in 2 parts), 1879-82; (8) On the origin of the Indian Brahmi Alphabet, 1898.

13. Burnell, A. G. (E) (1840-82) (1) The Aindra school of Sanskrit. Grammarians, 1875; (2) The Ordinances of Manu (English translation).; (3) The Law of Partition and Succession from manuscript of Varadaraja's Vyavaharanirnaya; (4) Samavidhana Brahmana (ed.), 1873.

14. Burnouf, E. (F) (1801-52) Le Bhagavata Purana, 3 vols. (Text and French translation up to Skandha ix) 1840, 1844-47.

15. Chezy, A. L. (1773-1832) Fr. trs. of Sakuntala (1830) and Amarusataka (1831).

16. Colebrooke, H.T.(F) (1765-1837) (1) A Digest of Hindu Law on contracts and successions, 1797-98; (2) Miscellaneous Essays, 1872; (3) Grammar of the Sanskrit language, 1805; (4) Hitopadesa, edited with introductory remarks, 1804; (5) Amarakosa, edited with marginal translation, 1808; (6) Sataka-trayam of Bhartrhari, 1804; (7) Samkhya-karika of Isvarakrsna, 1837; (8) Trs. of two treatises on Hindu law of inheritance, 1810.

17. Cunningham, A.(E) (1814-93) Ancient Geography of India, Vol.I., 1871.

18. Fauche, H. (F) (1797-1869) French trs. of Gitagovinda, 1850; Sisupalavadha, 1861.

    Dasakumara carita, Mrcchakatika, Ramayana, 1854-59 and parts of the Mahabharata, 1863.

19. Forster, H.P., An essay on the Principles of Sanskrit Grammar,1810.

20. Forster, G. (G) (1754-94) German translation of William Jones' English translation of Kalidasa's Sakuntala, 1791.

21. Foucaux, P.E.(F) (1811-94) Lalitavistara (Tibetan Version with French translation).

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22. Gildemeister, J. (G) Bibliothecae Sanskritaesive recensus librorum, Sanskritorum, 1847.
23. Goldstucker, T. (G) (1821-72) (1) Panini-his place in Skt.Literature 1851; (2) Prabodha-candrodaya (German translation), 1842; (3) Jaiminiya Nyayamala-vistara, 5 vols., 1872.
24. Goresio, C.G.(1) (1808-91) Ramayana (edited and translated into Italian).
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NOTE

1 Among the Protestant groups the main missionary churches who worked in India are the Baptist Missionary Society (1795); The Church Missionary Society (1813); The American Board of Commissioners (1810). Different Lutheran Churches and Salvation Army (1865) also formed the missionary wings of their churches and sent Missionaries to India.

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14
Paths of Contextualizing Indian Spirituality

Antony Kalliath

Introduction

In Christian nomenclature, it seems that the word 'spirituality' is a misnomer in the configuration of Biblical vision, praxis and experience because it implies always a classicist duality of body and soul, 'this-world' and 'other-world'. Integration of body and soul, text and context, 'New-Heaven' and 'New-Earth', 'Kingdom of God within' and 'Kingdom of God without,' belongs to the root insight of Christian experience. Strictly speaking, the word 'spirituality' would convey a pejorative meaning in the holistic Christian vision.

Undoubtedly 'context' is the inviolable hermeneutical principle of Christian revelation and faith. Incarnation, the word-becoming-flesh (the contextual Word) is the archetypal paradigm of Christian life. The Christian God who initiates the reign of God 'amidst the people' and with the people (Immanuel) is utterly 'local' and 'contextual,' and His/Her message is an empowering relationship of 'caring,' 'forgiving' 'healing' and 'saving.' Christian God is the One who 'stretches out his hand' and 'touches' us and 'heals' us (Mt 8: 3). In the Bible, thus God is utterly 'contextual', and the contextuality of God is realized in and through the categories of life.

Jesus has always communicated his message through the symbols and metaphors of the 'culture of life': bread, wine, water, light, wheat, seed, salt, Good-Shepherd, Good-Samaritan

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so and so forth. Jesus' mission has been to give 'life and life in abundance' (Jn 10:10). Jesus' ministry is people oriented, and is realized in the ambit of human concerns and sufferings of the marginalized. Comprehensively speaking, the Good News is profoundly this 'world' oriented. "God loved the *world* so much that he gave his only Son" (Jn3:16). God loved *this* world with its " joys and hope, the grief and anguish" (*Gaudium et Spes*, 1). The 'world' implies the totality of reality, all cultures, religions, traditions and legacies of people of all times and places. Therefore Christian 'text' is always 'con-text' (life-text). Based on Jesus' vision, 'abundance of life' should seem a better alternative for 'spirituality.'

This Biblical understanding of 'fullness of life' achieves a new translation in the contextualized spirituality among Indian Christians as 'harmony of life.' More than a well-knit theological articulation, 'spirituality of harmony' permeates as a perspective in the cultural, social and political lives of Indian Christians. Here harmony does not imply a compromise or consensus but is rather a pursuit of life in a context of plurality and diversity in search of a functional complementarity. It is more a reconciled diversity and a dialogical co-existence of tolerance and mutual appropriation for a peaceful social and cultural life. What is significant and critical in this spiritual vision is primarily the accomplishment of harmony built upon interfaith fellowship, which protects and promotes primarily a 'culture of life.'

The Church in India has tried to contextualize Christian Dharma through a conscious social cultural integration by appropriating indigenous customs, practices, both at religious and societal practices. At the same time, social concerns and people's issues are very much on the agenda of its apostolate. From an academic point of view, we can perhaps infer three paradigms operative in the contextualization process of Christianity in India: **1.** Spirituality of social harmony; **2.** Spirituality of cultural synthesis, and **3**. Spirituality of peoples' movement.

1. Spirituality of Social Harmony

The legacy of early Christian community seems to nurture a spirituality of social integration and tolerance. The functional dynamic in this spirituality, to put it bluntly, is 'common sense' and 'practical wisdom' evolved from the contemporary socio-cultural situation. For a minuscule community among the Hindus, its survival instinct would have prompted development of a Christian praxis, which upholds social harmony. What is implied in this practical wisdom is a subtle separation between culture and religion both in religious thinking and practice. This separation is intended for an *ortho-praxis* in view of social integration and harmony. In other words, their approach to Indian culture had been more instrumental and sociological than

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theological and philosophical. Naturally the soteriological matrix of Indian theological and philosophical traditions are not appropriated in this exercise even though their religious practices are flatly couched in Hindu customs and rituals. The following discussion is mainly pertained to the pre-16th century era in search of a model of spirituality of social harmony.

1.1. Religious Praxis for Social Harmony

Within the question of separation of culture from religion in the contextualization attempts, early Christian community could not dare to pursue an open policy of Christian inculturation as their counter parts in the West where one could find a blatant separation of culture and philosophy from religion in the praxis of inculturation.[1] First, their hierarchical relationship with Syrian tradition had been an inbuilt constraint against developing an independent theological identity. More importantly, the religious and political milieu of India was radically different from that of Greco-Roman world where there was a decadence of the pagan religion on the one hand and the increasing political assertion of the Christendom. By contrast, Thomas Christians were a minuscule minority in a vibrant religious Sang period (4c) in which Buddhism was sweeping the Indian peninsula. Hence early Christian community found a challenging religious revival context unlike in the Greco-Roman world. To withstand the immense sway of Buddhism on the one hand and to uphold their Syrian ecclesial link Thomas Christians entertained a functional *via media* of separating religion from culture at the theological level while going for a total adaptation of the indigenous social and cultural practices in their religion. Such an agenda might have been evolved by social exigencies rather than a conscious and deliberate theological exercise as in the case of Western Church. Some may see it making a virtue out of necessity. But in the given context, the *sensus fedelium* responded to the socio-cultural challenge to safeguard their faith through a spirituality of social and cultural integration. We can see here a theology primarily emerging from a praxis situation in which the faithful had to respond simultaneously to the cultural claims as well as faith demands. What we find here is a functional religiosity emerging from the context of praxis of faith and the defence of faith in a challenging multi-religious ethos.

The delinking of culture from religion offered the community an inner theological sanction for an *orthopraxis* sensitive to the context while upholding orthodoxy. Fr. Placid Podipara wrote that though Thomas Christians were dependent on the East Syrian liturgical traditions, "they developed an individuality of all their own in the socio-political environment of the country, adapting themselves to, or rather christianizing, their ancient culture in almost all its aspects. This adaptation or Christianization extended itself also to their liturgical and canonical

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rites i.e., to their mode of worship and Church administration." "This individuality was Christian as well as typically Malabarian."[2] The religious vision underlying this Christian praxis is primarily anchored in social harmony and peaceful co-existence.

This practical wisdom worked supremely in the socio-political relationships with the Hindu-Buddhist majority community. Moreover, such an attitude had generated a socio-political ambience in which Hindus found it easy to recognize and accept this small community, and to incorporate it in their societal structure (caste). For example, early Christians in Kerala were called Nazrani Mapilas. Nazrani means Christians, followers of Jesus. Mapila means great son, king's son, and noble.[3] The Copper Plate grants of the Maharajas gave seventy-two privileges to the Thomas Christians.[4]

One could cite numerous well-known living examples of early Christians' socio-political integration into Hindu society. A detailed discussion on this question is beyond the scope of this paper. As tradition reveals, during the time of St. Thomas converts were from upper castes.[5] But the change of faith didn't alienate them from their cultural practices and even certain religious observances. The ceremonies and customs related to birth, baptism, marriage and death were continued in their new religion. Besides, there was almost a complete similarity between Brahmins and early Christians in the matters of costumes, wearing of ornaments, men and women, inheritance laws, feasts, marriage ceremonies.[6] However one should make an observation here that such an approach was taken as a matter of social exigency. Later Church has been a critique of the caste system and is now instrumental in disintegrating caste structures through various social apostolates like education.

The influence of temple architecture on ancient Syrian churches was quite conspicuous. This influence could be on two accounts. Firstly, the traditional Hindu craftsmen who built both churches and temples were basically cosmologists and they conceived places of worship, both Christian and Hindu, as 'sacred space' vitally related to the spiritual world and the ecology of the landscape. Churches and temples as sacred space were not primarily conceived as signs of one community's separate identity but a *holy ground* where all could experience the Divine irrespective of their religions.[7] Moreover, after the pattern of the Hindu temple, the church building is pictured as the body of God, whose head is in the East; the heart is on the right side where the baptismal font is located.

In this context a special mention should be made of the meaning of installing granite crosses in front of the churches. The cross was understood as a lamp of *darsana* (vision), which is a very central Indian concept in the experience of Divine. Imposing granite crosses

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erected before all the ancient churches invoke cosmic significance of the centres of worship. This custom of installing crosses as the integral aspect of Christian architecture was very much in line with the tradition of *stambhas* (pillars) in Hindu, Buddhist and Jainist practice.[8] They signify a sacred space or 'centre' or 'navel of the world.' In the history of religions such centres evoke in human consciousness the experience of 'ascension,' or 'transcendence' to the world of immortality.[9] These Pillars symbolize the *holy ground* of human-divine encounter and meeting places of heaven and earth.

1.2 Religious Consciousness as a Way

The tradition of Thomas Christians is customarily known as *Marthoma-margam* (Way of St. Thomas). The religious consciousness as a *Way* would have encouraged Thomas Christians to borrow Hindu rituals and symbols without anxiety and offer them theological freedom and scope for cultural and social integration.

This apostolic Church grew as an indigenous Church during the 'Sangham' period up to 4th century without much upheavals. When St. Thomas preached the Gospel in India the religious atmosphere was not one of missionary militancy. The vision of the emperor Ashoka who, through the rock edicts, taught all his peoples to respect religions other than their own as dimensions of their own faith. Of course conversion always created social tensions and St. Thomas himself ended as a martyr. However Indian religions like Hinduism and Buddhism never counted other religions as threats because in Indian religiosity religions are always considered as paths or approximations towards the realization of the Real. In this ambience of religious tolerance the new religion was welcomed and incorporated into the caste system of Hinduism. The new religion got a position of middle stratum (*mapilas*) between high castes and the untouchable low-castes. Therefore the new faith did not alienate the faithful from their social and cultural life and customs in contemporary society.[10]

Moreover, unlike the Western Church, which grew up in a mono-cultural context, this primitive Christian community in India had to evolve in a multi religious context. This pluralistic situation had been a compelling compass of organic mutation, exchange and fecundation among various religious symbols and images. One should not forget that, during this nascent period of the church in India, the focus and perspective of contextualization (inculturation) had not been on the definition of the *boundaries* of her identity but rather on pitching her tent in a multicultural society and in enhancing her presence through social harmony and amity. Most probably, this process had been syncretic at the initial stage. But eventually the symbols

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and images borrowed from the local cultures were integrated and inculturated and became the vehicles of Christian faith experience. That is to say, during this period, the phenomenon of contextualization (inculturation) might be an organic and spontaneous process of symbiosis through the sheer demands of coexistence. Besides, in the prevailing cultural ethos of the Sangam period when Hinduism found itself in a fluid situation because of the sway of Buddhism across Indian Subcontinent, orthodox Hindu would not have strictly observed religious nuances of social customs and religious practices. This would have made it even easier for Christians to borrow freely from Hindu symbols and rituals without their philosophical underpinnings.

The legacy of pre-4th century in matters of social harmony and cultural interaction continued without interruption until the Synod of Diamper. No doubt, Thomas Christians struggled to be loyal to their tradition (*vazhipadu*) even though they had to face many hardships in the contemporary social and ecclesial adverse pressures. The Synod of Diamper can be justified for correcting some blunt and naive cultural and social adaptations, like child marriage or prohibition of inter caste marriages, because they were so clearly against the Gospel values.[11]

In the context of early Christians' spirituality, the tradition (*vazhipadu*) of St.Thomas (*Marthomamargam*) has greater critical importance than the East Syrian connection. The logistics of their spirituality of harmony abides in the dynamics of *margam* religiosity, which has an inner spiritual and theological ambience to bring about a mutual tolerance (*sahishnta*) and appropriation of various religious pursuits. Placid Podipara while describing the identity consciousness of early Christians offers an articulate statement: "Hindu in Culture, Christian in Religion, Oriental in Worship."[12] Such a statement is seemingly a mind boggling, one especially for those who are trained in western rational philosophy. The innate interface among culture, religion and worship are waived in this statement and hence it may look unconvincing for a westerner. But those who are nurtured in Indian multicultural religiosity find themselves at home with such an amalgam.

We need to appreciate what the spirituality of *way* in the logic of Indian (Asian) epistemology means. In Christian theology, what is at work is western epistemology, which highlights a dichotomy of subject and object and emphasizes the containment of the object through process of definition, inevitably at the cost of diversity. This follows the logic of Aristotelian non-contradiction. It takes the stance of 'either - or.' Ultimately it leads to the policies of 'conquest,' 'crusades' and 'displacement.' Here 'part' is subservient to the 'whole'.

On the contrary, the Indian pluralistic epistemology is first and foremost holistic. 'Whole' entails the *interdependence* of 'parts' in the Indian experience of reality. It implies that the

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'part' is understood only in its ontological relationship with the totality of the whole. In the Indian experience there is a particular immediacy, and even intimacy, with a whole reality in the comprehension of any part of a whole. One has only to look at the famous invocation to Peace in *Isa Upanishad*: "Plenitude here, plenitude there; from that which is full springs up the full; from the full springs up the full; plenitude is everywhere." One 'sees' *purnam* (plenitude) in every spec and shred of reality. This understanding is not of a discursive thought process; it is primarily an intuition into reality, which helps us to relate the part to the whole and whole to the part in virtue of *dharma* (logos) or *Rta* of reality at a deeper level. "Every particular is let to live, respected, fostered for what it is. No attempt is made to reduce the particular to an abstraction, to ready-made categories of thought. This is the way of Asian pluralism, which is part of its cognitive ethos."[13]

The core dimension of the Asian way is first and foremost the recognition of pluriformity of reality. Pluralism creates a logic of continuum between opposites ("and-and") recognition (tolerance, *sahishnta*) of the 'other'. That is, affirmation of one statement is not the negation of the other. Secondly, Asian insight appreciates the bi-polarity of reality and the simultaneity and complementarity of opposites. Asian consciousness is advaita which is neither dualism nor monism but "coincidence of opposites" (Nicholas of Cusa); it is yin-yang, male-female, positive and negative, active and passive, *purusha* and *prakrti*—middle path.

The insight of margam is middle path in which one intuits a profound harmony of opposites. More than a discursive knowledge Marthomamargam is 'seeing' and 'touching' (Jn 20:25) in which the harmony of reality becomes self-evident in virtue of itself. It does not require any rational justification because it is self-evident in an experience of a profound harmony of reality.

It seems that St Thomas had presented Christianity neither as the fulfilment of other religions nor as a superior religion. What St. Thomas would have preached would be what he had 'seen and touched,' the crucified and glorified Jesus, the Son of God as the common heritage of all human beings. As a sequel to the primary emphasis on experience the Thomas Christian tradition never placed any emphasis on metaphysics, either Greek or Indian. Faith was communicated by way of narrative, celebration, poetry and myth. It was a hermeneutic of faith rather than its rational justification. The same principle applies from the early legends of the Rabban songs of the Veeradiyans, the wandering bards about life; to the preaching and martyrdom of St. Thomas, and the mythological *Acts of Thomas*; down through the writings of Eastern Fathers like Ephrem, Aphrahat and Isaac on Niniveh including even the devotional writings of Blessed Kuriakose Chavara in the nineteenth century.[14]

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The same spirit breaths through Bhakti movement in which Dravidian Hindus, Sufi Muslims and Syrian Christians have found a common language to express their differing faith experiences. That did not lead to religious rancour but to mutual appreciation and social harmony in an experience of a personal God. Thus, the ecclesial missiology of St. Thomas Christians could be explained in terms of a 'permeation model'; the Christian witness was conveyed through inspiration within a peaceful co-existence, social collaboration, and good example. This *Marthomamargam* which nurtures contextualized spirituality also follows the permeation logic of Jesus' symbols of 'leaven,' 'salt,' and 'light.' The same permeation model, which has been put into practice in the ecclesial life of St. Thomas Christians, seems to be a creative paradigm to contextualize Christian dharma in the religiously pluralistic context of India today. However, the theological implications of Christianity as a *margam* are not paid enough attention to in the present ongoing theological conversation among Thomas Christians. May be, the invoking of the *vazhipadu* (tradition) of *marthomamargam* will offer a historical mandate and theological ambience to everybody to feel part of the solution in the present debates relating to identity questions and disputes about liturgy.

2. Spirituality of Cultural Interaction

Engagement with Indian culture in Christian mission has been the third vital context in developing an Indian Christian contextualized spirituality. The various attempts of indigenisation have helped to a great extent to reinterpret Christian Dharma in the matrix of Indian culture. It means a radical communication process of the Gospel through which Christian faith acquires a new appropriation, praxis and experience in terms of the genius of the new culture. It implies a new "interpretation" i.e., a new way of understanding and experiencing the revealed Word. It is also an endeavour to 'dis-cover' the Word already operative in the religious pursuits of other cultures. The Indian Church over the past years, especially after the Second Vatican Council, has tried to indigenise Christian Dharma in various fields and these attempts have silently and surely contributed in developing a contextualized spirituality.

2.1. Endeavours of Cultural Contextualization

Liturgy: Responding to the call of Vatican II[15] for liturgical renewal, the Church in India endeavoured towards the objective of an *Indian Liturgy* and a *Common Rite*[16] holding the possibility of "unity in liturgy with due scope for regional diversity."[17] Experimentation on Indian liturgy was allowed in some centres at two levels "Adaptation at the External Level" and "Adaptation at the Deeper Level".[18]

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To start with, liturgy was translated into the vernaculars in the 1960's itself though this was not without opposition. Then the *12-Point Plan* proposed by All India Liturgical Committee (AILM) was accepted[19] in the external adaptation of worship for optional implementation.[20] Response to this *12 Point-Plan* was mixed; it ranged from enthusiastic welcome to strong criticism and even outright rejection.[21] The serious resentment to this *Plan* was that it led to "Hinduisation" of Christianity.[22] For many the *Plan* was rather a frustrating syncretism than a liberating Indianization.

For a deeper indigenisation, the Liturgical Commission proposed three important suggestions in 1969 for Sacramentals, Feasts and Votive Mass: i. Incorporation of the nuances of Hindu *samskaras* (rituals of initiation)[23] with the Christian Sacraments. ii. Integration of Christian Feasts with Hindu festivals.[24] iii. The use of non-Biblical Scriptures.[25] If these proposals had earnestly been taken by the Bishops it would have engendered radical changes in Christian life. Only the latter two proposals have been partially implemented in training centers. Composing an Indian liturgy with an Indian anaphora still remains unrealized goal,[26] though a partial attempt has been made in the Bharatiya Pooja, which was first experimented in Dharmaram college, Bangalore and it is going on in ashrams like Shantivanam, Trihcy, and the Kurisumala Ashram, Kottayam within the general frame of Latin Rite and Malankara Rite respectively.

Ashrams: One of the most intense attempts towards cultural rooting of Gospel has been the institution of Ashram, the mystico-monastic model in the Indian legacy. The word ashram derives from Sanskrit root *a-srama* which means total pursuit or tireless striving towards perfection. Though late, the ashram ideal caught the imagination of few missionaries who found it as an appropriate model to develop an Indian spirituality.[27] Ashrams have become regarded centres of "authentic incarnational Christian spirituality" and "inter-religious dialogue" hence a "the sacrament of love."[28] Since the 1920's ashrams have been established with a variety of agenda in different parts of the country.[29] The main concerns of Catholic ashrams have been the integration of Hindu and Christian ways of meditation and worship, Indian spirituality (*sannyasa* and *yoga* meditation), indigenous theological formation, interreligious dialogues, indigenisation in the fields of art, dance and music, and belatedly, social justice. The spirituality promoted in an ashram is profoundly Guru oriented. But in Christian ashrams there is only one Guru, Jesus Christ, who graces the ashramites in their various *sadhana* of realization.

Until the present day, there has been a slowly emerging ashram spirituality and theology propagated through ashram literature.[30] Nevertheless both *dalits* and *tribals* feel being alienated

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from the ashram ideal since it comes in the purview of caste religion and it is often critically seen as centers of élite spirituality. And, on the whole, it has to be said that while the movement may have achieved a symbolic importance, its real contribution to Indian spirituality has probably been marginal. It remains to be seen whether ashrams will be a lasting presence.

Christian-*Yoga*: The word "*yoga*" comes from the word "*yuj*" meaning "unite," "integrate." The core of yoga is to bring about interior stillness through the technique of arresting the activities of the mind, which culminates in the discovery of self. The sage is the one who takes refuge in one's self, *atman*, where s/he encounters God, purified of all the imaginative and conceptual raiments, in the nudity of the Absolute.[31] It implies that awakening to self is awakening to God. In brief, yoga meditation leads us to the Immanent God whom one realizes as the ground of being.[32]

While applying the yogic meditation method to Christian contemplation, theological implications about 'experience of God' are to be addressed. According to Christian vision, the person is not lost but empowered and sublimated in union with God according to the Trinitarian exchange of love. In the yogic awakening, moreover, the person attains absolute identity in which there is only One, and 'Many' is only *maya*. It implies a radical difference between 'yogic awakening' and 'Christian Love.'

No doubt, Christian yoga is not a blind imitation of Hindu yoga. Incorporation of yoga into Christian meditation is mainly achieved at the level of disciplining the body and mind through various yogic exercises. Yoga system, especially the *astangayoga* (eight limbs of yoga) of Patanjali is a renowned comprehensive system, which disciplines completely our physical, moral and mental life for the preparation of contemplation. At this level, yoga has today become a basic training in formation houses. It has become customary in religious centres for meditation to start with yoga exercises consisting of physical postures. Yoga is slowly and surely becoming a generally accepted inculturated meditation form in the Church. However a solid theology of yoga which explores the Immanent dimension of the Christian God has yet to be vigorously incorporated into our Christian life.

***Christian Prayer, Bhaktiyoga (devotion)*:** Along the yoga, the way of *bhakti* (devotion) is equally important and popular in India.[33] It is the devotional approach to God.[34] In Christian worship we can find the influence of the *bhakti* tradition in a profound way, especially in music since the Second Vatican Council.[35] *Bhaktiyoga* gave rise to two musical forms, namely, *bhajan* and *kirtan*[36] that are the devotional forms of Hindu temples. Now these forms are very popular and profusely used in Christian prayers throughout India with great success.

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Bhajans are repetitive phrases similar to a *mantra* (code). The Hindu aphorism *mantraksharamai devi* implies that the words of the *bhajan* are the body of God; we become united with God while repeating the *bhajan*.

One of the sub-groups within *bhajan* form is *namajapa*[37] which is the ritual chanting of the names (titles of God) in praise of God. In the past, the *bhaktas* (devotees) spent many years in identifying and ritualizing the names of God; it is an ancient form in the Hindu tradition. Adapting this form we have, for example, *Christusahasranama* (thousand names of Christ).[38]

The *kirtan* is a recitation accompanied by music resembling hymnody. A text which praises God is sung or proclaimed with musical accompaniment.[39] Both these forms generate an inculturated ambience both within and without, and even Hindus devotedly recite Christian *bhajans* in interreligious meeting.

Another vital spectrum of contextualizing Christian Dharma has been art. Unlike the western conception where art is generally understood as imitation of nature the Indian conception of art is *transformation* of nature. Depicting Christian themes through Indian symbols and metaphors is a powerful way of contextualizing Christian spirituality in India. The influence of Christ is quite manifest in the works of many Indian artists, both Christian and non-Christian. As R.W. Taylor observes, "For several decades ending in the 1960s almost every Indian painter of note painted pictures of Jesus."[40] Artists other than Christians, while painting Christian themes, found the Christ motif a powerful means to communicate the values of the desire for justice, compassion, and selfless sacrifice. They found a profound insight in the 'suffering' of Jesus for justice and love; Jesus represented more the oppressed Indians than the oppressing 'Christian' colonialists. The theme of the agony of Christ has been central in many Hindu painters, Jamini Roy, a well renowned Hindu painter emphasized the universality of Jesus' message. The commonality which we find in the works of Hindu painters of Christian themes is the focus on the suffering of Jesus whereas, by contrast, Christian artists who were influenced by the renaissance Bengali School of art depicted Christ as a *sannyasi* or a high caste Indian. For Hindu artists, Jesus' humble origin is something very unique, which distinguishes Christ from Buddha or Krishna.[41]

The paintings of Sr. Genevieve (who passed away in 1995) are very popular because her paintings are brimming with Indian sentiments; the display of decorative lines and the colour symbolism generate waves of devotion. She was quite aware of the power of traditional symbols of Hindu mythology.[42] Sr. Claire has produced a number of Christian pictures which

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radiate joy, simplicity, harmony and lucidity in the Indian frame and ambience. The scenes of singing, dancing, and offering flowers generate profound devotion (*bhakti*).[43]

The works of Jyothi Sahi have aroused critical debate on the content and frame, motive and perspective of Christian art in the indigenous frames. According to Jyothi, Christian art is not the work of an anonymous craftsman. So the function of art should be the evocation of the hidden image of Jesus Christ. He upholds the inevitable role of the Holy Spirit in Christian art and symbolism.[44] In Indian art, all inspired figures are depicted as dancing figures which reveal the presence of the Spirit. For him, the most perfect symbol of the Spirit is Jesus Christ. That is why Jyothi paints images of Jesus in dancing postures which radiate the Spirit within him.[45]

The most significant part of Jyothi's contribution has been his experiment with regard to possible Christian uses of symbolism and especially Hindu symbolism. His main productions along this line have been *mandalas* (spectrum)[46]. To his credit he has drawn paintings full of symbolism taken from classical Hindu iconography. For example "Yogi-Christ", "Nataraja-Christ", "Trimurthi-Christ", Baby Krishna-Buddha-Christ. Nevertheless the general criticism on Jyothi's paintings could be the "sanskritization" of Christian themes and Hinduization of Christ. Moreover, his works are very abstract and are not related to the mass culture. However Jyothi shows interest in folk themes and stories and employs images of mass culture.

3. Spirituality of People's Movement

Christian involvement in peoples' struggles and concerns can be seen as another paradigm of contextualized spirituality in the frame of harmony of life. 'Harmony of life' as a fundamental conception and perspective of life is not a mere 'spiritual' sentiment, or a dream of a future utopia, but a concrete, contextual, spatial experience rooted in right relations predicated by distributive justice. Here spirituality more than a state of being is a continuous Christian *sadhana* of a radical insertion into the social process towards realizing social justice. It is a paschal fidelity to the 'brokenness of humanity, and participation in the power of God's *dhabar* operative in all liberative movements for the establishment of the Reign of God.

Credibility of a contextualized spirituality depends upon how honestly the Church in India demonstrates ownership of India's poor and joins with peoples' struggles and empowers them in their striving for liberation. In the past 'the poor' have been placed in the frame of Christian 'charity' which one performs for one's own 'salvation'! Christianity was propagated in our country as a religion for the salvation of souls. The Christ whom we have presented in

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India has been a gnostic One who takes care of spiritual and personal liberation. In the same vein of thinking, from 19th century onwards we portrayed Christ as Omega of all religious aspirations (fulfillment theology). Afterwards an ashramite Christ of mysticism and contemplation has been propagated by monks and mystics in the late 1960's; later a universal Christ of the inculturationists through the appropriation of religious symbols and idioms acquired theological appeal in the late 1970's. While presenting a Christ of these frameworks what is emphasized is an interior meta-cosmic liberation. The 'poor' have not been a theological coordinate in this transcendental Christology and our Roman centralist ecclesiology which have prevailed within the Christian contextualization.

What is promising and encouraging is the growth of the numerous basic Christian communities in India and Asia, and hence an ecclesiology and spirituality which reflect the growth.[47] They are known under different titles, namely, rural ashrams, dalit ashrams, dialogue centres, tribal ashrams, centres of peoples' movement, conscientization centres so and so forth. They present Christ as the one who shows partiality to the poor, and who participates in their liberative struggles and announces the Good News to them. Consequently, a liberative religiosity, which is rooted in the social and economic struggles of the oppressed masses, is slowly and steadily striking deep roots in these basic communities. The spirituality which we infer in these grass-root communities is fashioned in virtue of a vital link between peoples' liberation struggles and their religiosity. The twin critical constituents which contribute to the spirituality in these basic communities are 'many-religions' and 'many-poor.' Such a spirituality evolves, as FABC puts it, through "a triple dialogue with cultures, with religions and with the poor (FABC 1)."[48]

The spectrum of Indian reality is like an elliptic circle having two centers or poles, *religious-other* and *suffering-other*. A contextualized spirituality in India has to embody 'many-poor' and 'many-religions' simultaneously. That is to say, on the one hand it should be liberative, and on the other hand such a liberative spirituality is to be couched in and inspired by the religiousness of the oppressed mass.

3.1. Spirituality as Participation in People's Movement

In India, mass poverty is immense, the poor are mere pawns on a demonic chessboard of an exploitative economy, criminal and corrupt politics and religious terrorism. The past models of 'charity,' 'development' or 'social work' are not competent to challenge the demonic powers which perpetuate poverty in today's dishonest 'world-order' and globalized economy which

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give a political and cultural mandate to anti-Kingdom values. It is in this context that we have to find the meaning and relevance of the present counter-cultural movements.

As sociologists would say, the present monolithic and oppressive economico-political systems can only be challenged by peoples' participation in the decision process and in the control of the system that governs their lives. This strategy can be pioneered by small groups of people. These are called parallel practices which intend to create a parallel social space within the domains of social life, constantly contesting the existing dominant oppressive values in order finally to replace or reform them with new ones.

Social movements, peoples' movements, popular culture, and everyday resistance are considered as parallel practices in social science. These movements are a non-institutional collective response to an oppressed situation in order to establish a new order of life through a collective mobilization based on an ideology[49]. These various movements outside the main-stream conventional struggles for social justice, eco-justice etc. are collectively known as Subaltern Movements or Peoples' Movement. "Perhaps the only hope in today's India is that forces for social transformation will spring from below ...from enlightened and committed individuals, action groups, new social movements and class organizations...The main or only hope of reshaping India lies in locating power among the people themselves."[50] There are many peoples' movements in India in various fields. One can call them peasant struggles, agrarian rebellions, industrial workers' struggles, tribal unrest, fish workers' resistance, Dalit revolts, student rebellions, women liberation. To name some very vibrant movements: Farmers' Resistance movements, Labours' Resistance Movements, New Social Movements, Dalit Movements, Chipko Movement, Tribal Movement, Fisher-folk Movement. In general we call them as the uprising of the poor and the environmental battles.[51]

What is the significance of these movements in the contextualization of the Gospel? These movements represent the culture of the oppressed masses. "The struggling people have a culture of their own and the struggles are part of that culture. Their many ways of resistance to oppression by dominant classes, castes and cultures form an important strand in their cultural fabric."[52] In the past the Church mistook Brahmanic culture as the culture of India, forfeiting the culture of the 'poor' who constitute the majority in our country. Jesus' praxis of contextualization has been through the mass culture - the culture of the victims, their struggles and suffering. He had a *dalit* birth (Lk 2:7-20). He is anointed to bring Good News to the 'dalits' (Lk.4:18-19 and finally he had a *dalit* death. It is time for the Church in India to make a paradigm shift from elite culture to mass culture if we follow Jesus' pedagogy of contextualization.

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Today, many of these movements like Fisher-Folk Movement, Dalit revolts are pioneered by priests and sisters who work at the grass root level without any 'conversion' intent. They are simply with these suffering poor because of their faith in the Gospel. A perceptive mind can infer that "behind every movement for liberation of the oppressed in India is some Christian instigator."[53] Here it is not the Gospel that is inculturated but faith which is the concrete response to the challenge of the Gospel in life and action. This faith is not a body of doctrines but *Christian life* lived out through the struggles and sufferings of the poor. The contextualized spirituality here is the very real *Christian-life-with-the-people*, a bodied existence in the thick of struggles for liberation after the model of the Biblical God who pitches his/her tent in the midst of marginalized.

If the contextualization of Christian life is the faith response to the concerns of society it is sufficient unto itself and it is justified in virtue of itself. Symbols of salt (Mt. 5:13) and light (Mt 5:14) signify the praxis of spirituality of peoples' movement. The praxis of 'salt' and 'light' is an invocation of the resources of the oppressed to help them to become the instruments of liberation through a pedagogy of permeation. Salt doesn't live up to its vocation if its presence is made felt. The light becomes darkness if it blares on the faces! Whenever the Church makes itself overpoweringly present (projects, buildings, ostentatious ceremonies, massive institutions etc) it fails to live up to its calling to be the salt and light. These symbols which Jesus has himself given us should be the dynamic of the spirituality of contextualization by the 'little flock' in India.

3.2 Journeying with the *Religious 'Other'*

Religiousness is the comprehensive ambience of human experience in India. Cultural and political archetypes are drawn from religious myths and stories in our country. Hence religion is inherently a theological coordinate of political and cultural consciousness. Journeying with the 'religious-other' will need to be the concomitant dimension of any liberative spirituality in the Indian context.

Often our inculturation theology relegated the "prophetico-political resources" of other religions to a side issue. If interreligious dialogue as the spectrum of deeper contextualization does not explore the liberative message of all religions, this exercise becomes a betrayal of religions. *Redemptoris Missio* says that dialogue should help us to "build a society which is just and fraternal (no.57); hence it is a part of the Church's evangelizing mission" (no. 55).

Since the core of Indian culture is religious there will not be social revolutions unless the liberative potentials of religiosity of the masses are explored and applied. The *Bhakti* movement

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and freedom movement steered by Gandhi are clear examples of the liberative dimension of Indian religiosity.[54] A liberation theology in India cannot be exclusively Christian or Buddhist or Hindu, for the Sacred Scriptures have so often been used to sustain class - caste discrimination. Therefore an interreligious approach is the only true alternative. Adherents of different religious traditions have to search together the prophetic resources of their respective Scriptures and a networking is an imperative for sustained liberative struggles. "Dialogue is not authentic unless it leads to reinterpretation or rejection of all oppressive aspects of the religious heritage of both partners."[55] Therefore in a liberative dialogue the "hermeneutical priority of the oppressed" has to be the focus.[56] As Wilfred Felix observes, "Any liberating dialogue has to settle score with the religious experience of the marginalized... Liberating dialogue is possible only among the victims in the various religious traditions of India..... The victims themselves are the active subjects of liberating dialogue."[57] Such dialogue primarily takes place today in 'base human communities' in which Christians and Hindus and Muslim collaborate in the praxis of liberation. That way they can build up a new understanding and mutual approval ever more deeply and engagingly. What we find here is a liberative spirituality in the dialogue of religions.

Throughout India, there are now numerous interreligious fellowships who have a liberative vision and action plans, and these have silently become forums of contextualization based on prophetic traditions of religions. These fellowships are differently called: Action Groups, Liberation Groups, Grass-root Communities, Counter-Cultural Communities, Basic Gandhian Communities.[58] These base communities of 'commoners,' through the Gandhian vision, show a veritable "way of bringing interreligious and inter-ideological dialogue down from arm chair experts to people at the grass roots."[59] As with the Basic Gandhian Communities there are a number of grass-root groups pioneered by priests, nuns and lay person throughout India.[60]

Grass-root communities are an opportunity for a living, real, concrete human community brought together in the perspective of God's Kingdom. They are symbolized in the very 'foundational' act of the church according to tradition. There the Spirit may not speak one uniform 'sacred' language or a liturgical text, but speaks the innumerable dialects of the people! In the past (today as well) Christian witness has been circumscribed by a kind of 'ghetto mentality of the organization.' Now a paradigm shift in Christian witness is taking place from the 'ecclesiocentric mission' to 'the marketplace of the struggle of the peoples.' The Unity of the churches represented by the enormous diversity of the grass-root communities is neither cultural nor linguistic nor jurisdictional one (*dictio unius juris*), but of the Spirit whom we should not grieve by not trusting.[61] In these basic communities which are on the periphery

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of the official church, authentically 'local' churches and valid theologies of liberation are conceived as twins in the same womb of praxis[62] offering a peoples' context for a liberative spirituality.

11. Chavara Margam

Before concluding, if a mention is not made on the legacy of Blessed Chavara Kuriakose Elias who offers a way of liberative spirituality it will be a grave omission. Blessed Chavara is largely known as the founder of an indigenous religious congregation, Carmelites of Mary Immaculate (1855).[63] Unlike the contemporary understanding of religious life as a seclusion from the world, he unfolded a new vision and praxis of sannyasa as a sadhana of social involvement for empowering the sidelined in the society. Radicality of social engagement means to perceive and interpret the peoples' concerns from their structural flaws. For example, he knew that the only way to help the illiterate to climb up the ladder of societal structure was through literacy, and hence he popularized the idea that there should be a school along with the church. In Kerala, schools are known as *pallikuudams,* (houses of the church)! With a revolutionary insight he started schools for *pulayas* (outcastes) when only the high-caste people had the right to study. Moreover, founding a Sanskrit school at Mannanam and teaching lower caste students along with Brahmin students in the schools implied a radical liberation of the non-caste people from the caste structures because only Brahmins were allowed to study the sacred language of Sanskrit and, secondly, such a social mingling prompted staunch opposition in Kerala which was infamous for the practice of untouchability.

Moreover, Chavara's social action was not an application of boardroom decisions unilaterally. He made it a point that the whole community participated in it through some popular practices. For example, he knew that the poor *pulaya* children could not afford their education. Hence he introduced *uchakanji* (midday meal) in schools so that students were attracted to the schools. Education through food! At the same time he wanted the whole Christian community to participate in this programme. For that, he popularized the custom of *pidiyari* (a handful of rice was set apart for the poor every day before cooking in all Christian families, and they were collected in the week ends by the parish church for the poor children studying in the schools).What we find in the *Chavara-margam* is a spirituality which promotes a radical social change with peoples' participation. Thus Bl. Chavara has given *sannyasa* a new translation in terms of engagement in social concerns.

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Conclusion

The above discussion has been an attempt to decipher the functional paradigms of a contextualized spirituality in the life of the faithful in India. The overarching ambience of spirituality is seen as harmony of life which is realized through three patterns of social harmony, cultural synthesis and peoples' movement. Here harmony is not conceived in terms of a conceptual system of philosophy of life. Rather, it is more on a functional basis, that is to say a Christian articulation of life needs to be more in terms of discretion, commonsense, pragmatism and realism; a spirituality worked out spontaneously through a functional co-existence of understanding, discretion and tolerance. What is emphasized in this vision of harmony is generating a social, cultural and political ambience in which complementarity is upheld in the social and political life of the people. It implies a positive non-attention to the contradictions and disparities of religious philosophies by living a 'spirituality of the world' which upholds a sociology of multiculturality and a dialogue of religions. To phrase it in different words, it is a spirituality of life on a day today basis and a fellowship of people in the sundry events of life - a spirituality of 'space' and 'praxis.' Spirituality is more a Way than a Law. It is a spirituality of human fellowship which simultaneously accepts and oversights cultural and religious differences in a functional coexistence to promote life. When so stated, some may find it as an 'invented spirituality' or 'making a spirituality out of necessity' or a 'spirituality by default.' Maybe true! But at the same time the given socio-cultural exigencies have a valid hermeneutical role in fashioning the spirituality of a community. Above all, a contextualized spirituality is more a frame of mind and a perspective for interpreting the given reality than a meta system dictating norms from above. Here the exigent situation is the critical hermeneutical principle for fashioning a spirituality. In the case of Indian Christians, being a minority in a multicultural society, context has been critical in fashioning a spirituality of harmony of life. In such a spiritual vision contextualization (inculturation) is more an 'empowerment' or 'transformation' through socio-cultural interaction than 'embodiment' of Gospel in new cultural idioms. Empowerment means a new synthesis and interpretation in an inter faith and inter-cultural context in which a 'win-win' relationship is promoted. Everybody needs everybody; there are no losers in the 'abundance of life.' Here 'empowerment' doesn't imply any privileged or normative cultural expression of the Gospel. Rather it is conceived in the complementarity of cultures or dialogue of cultures.

Such a complementarity exists on account of the fact that all cultures, religions, and pursuits are permeated by the presence of God's universal salvific will. Hence every culture has the resource to empower the other in the cultural interaction and no culture is better than

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the other in embodying the Gospel. Normativity or superiority of a culture is a misnomer in relation to the Gospel. Of course Jewish culture has an incidental priority owing to an historical imperative. However, it doesn't imply an absolute imperative or priority in the mystery of contextualization of the Word. Hence inculturation has to be increasingly envisioned in the frame of the dialogue of cultures being sensitive to the present ethos of pluralism and media culture. The above discussed three paradigms of contextualized spirituality, which nurture 'harmony of life' in virtue of 'abundance of life' seem to constitute a competent and functional praxis of Christian life in the present multicultural ethos.

NOTES:

1 See, Aloysius Pieris S.J., *An Asian Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1988), chapters 4 &5.

2 Placid J. Podipara, *The Thomas Christians* (Bombay: St. Paul Publications, 1970), 79.

3 *Ibid.*, 85.

4 *Kerala Society Papers*, II, series 8 appendix note (Trivandrum:1930), 31. See, A. Cherukarakunnel, "Indianization among the St. Thomas Christians of Kerala," *Jeevadhara* vol.1, no. 4(1971): 368-369.

5 Journal of Asiatic Society, vol. 1. 172.

6 Podipara, *The Thomas Christians*, 79-85; A. Cherukarakunnel, "Indianization... ":362ff; Leslie Brown, *The Indian Christians of St. Thomas, An Account of the Ancient Syrian Church of Malabar* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 167-209.

7 See Jyothi Sahi, *Holy Ground*, A New Approach to the Mission of the Church in India (Auckland: Pace, 1998), 23-25

8 Menachery, "Thomas Christian Architecture," *The St. Thomas Christian Encyclopedia of India*, 2:139; Sebastian Elavathingal, *Inculturation and Christian Art* (Rome: Urbaniana University Press, 1990),202.

9 See, Eliade, Patterns in Comparative Religions (London:Sheed and Ward, 1958), 298-300.

10 See A.M.Mundadan, CMI, *History of Christianity in India*, Vol.I (Bangalore: TPI, 1984), 21-64

11 *Synodo Diocesano*, Act III, Decr. 13; Act IV, Sec. 1. Decr. 6,9, 10; Act VIII, Decr. 32; Act IX.

12 Placid J. Podipara, C.M.I., (Placidus, T.O.C.D.), "Hindu in Culture, Christian in Religion, Oriental in Worship,"Ostkirchliche Studien 8(1959):89-104. Reprinted in Placid Podipara, *The Malabar Christians* (Alleppey: 1972?)

13 Felix Wilfred, "Asian Theological Epistemology and its Implications for Inter-Religious Dialogue," *Partners, FABC* 2(Dec.1998):8-9

14 John B. Chettimattam, "The Missionary Approach of St. Thomas Christians," paper presented at ' Theologians' Workshop on Models of Evangelization' on the Occasion of the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of Christ Hall (Trivandrum: Dec. 11-13, 1996), 37.

15 *Sacrosanctum concilium*, #37, #40) ; *Ad Gentes*, # AG9

16 *First All-India Liturgical Meeting* (AILM) (Feb.1968).

17 AILM (Jan.1969).

18 Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI) ,Plenary assembly in 1972.

19 The C.B.C.I. in March 1969 permitted this proposal with the consent of *Consilium*

20 Squatting; "*anjali hasta*" and "*panchanga praṇam*"(forms of reverence); "*arati*" as a form of welcome or

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worship; use of a shawl, tray, *samai* (oil lamps), a simple incense bowl with handle; touching objects to one's forehead instead of kissing them. Julian *Saldanha, Inculturation* (Mumbai: St.Pauls, 1997), 61

21 Ibid., 61-62.

22 See Amalorpavadass, *Gospel and Culture* (Bangalore: NBCLC,1978), ch.4.

23 *Nishamana* (Taking an infant into the open air), *Namakarana* (giving the child a name), *Annaprasana* (giving the child solid food), *Upanayana* (initiation). Adoption of Hindu ceremonies for marriage. Saldanha, *Inculturation*, 63.

24 See Swami Shilananda sj, *A Rainbow of Feasts, An Inter-Religious Appreciation* (Bombay: Better Yourself Books, 1994. See, Saldanha, *Inculturation* 63.

25 See, "Statement of Research Seminar on non-Biblical Scriptures," *Word and Worship*, vol.8, no.2(1975): 159-19.

26 See A. Pieris, "The Indian Mass Controversy," *Worship* 43(1969):219-223.

27 See, Antony Kalliath, "Ashram Ideal, A Comprehensive Model of Evangelization in Indian Context," *Ishavani Documentation and Mission Digest*, vol.16, no.2 (May-Aug.1998):203-207

28 *Declaration of the All India National Seminar on Church in India (*1969): II,3.

29 The main ashrams: Christukulam (1921),Tiruppathur; Christa Prema Seva Ashram (1927), Pune; Sat Tal Ashram (1930)Nainital; Saccidananda Ashram (1950) near Tiruchi; Kurishmala Ashram (1955) Vagamon. Some new ashrams: Sameeksha, Kaladi; Anjaliashram, Mysore, Jeevandhara, Rishikesh. See also Vandana Mataji, *Gurus, Ashrams and Christians* (Madras: CLS, 1980), 67-104 and 108-110.

30 At present there are two ashramites fellowships among Catholics and Protestants; the Protestant ashram fellowship was started in 1951 and the Catholic *ashram Aikhyam* in 1978.

31 Abishiktananda, The Eyes of Light (Denville, N.J.: Dimension Books, 1983),174

32 See, Antony Kalliath, *The Word in the Cave* (New Delhi: Intercultural Publications, 1996), 277-297 according to the experience of Abhishiktananda.

33 The Alvars of *Vaishnavism* and *Saivism* of S. India, Tulsidas, Kabir of North India are main proponents of *bhakti* tradition in India, See R. Panikar, *Myth, Faith, and Hermeneutics* (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), 278-89.

34 *bhakti* (root: *bhaj*) entomologically denotes "dependence". In *bhaktimarga* or *bhaktiyoga* the Real is conceived as *Purushottama* (the Supreme Person) and Love.

35 Catholic Bishops' Conference of India in 1967 recommended the adaptation of music for the liturgy in vernacular. (*Post Vatican II Liturgical Renewal in India* (1963-1968), 86-7.

36 See Stephen Frederick Duncan, *Christian Bhajans* (an unpublished dissertation presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School Memphis State University for the Degree Doctor of Musical Arts, 1991. Now it is kept in NBCLC Bangalore), ch. 4. "Indian Prayer Forms: *Bhajan* and *Kirtan*," 24-36.

37 *namah* = deferential salutation; *japa* = adoration by way of repetition of formulae. *Namajapa* is chanted in consonance with the breathing rhythm (*pranayama*). Stephen Frederick Duncan, *Christian Bhajans*, 33.

38 See, I. C. Chacko, *Kristu Sahasra Namam*, Thousand Names of Christ (Bangalore: Dharmaram College, 1985); Anjaly Ashram, *Namajapa: Invocation of the Nameless by Many Names* (Mysore).

39 *Kirtans* are composed through combinations of numerous *talas* and *ragas* to invoke the required devotional emotion like joy, dedication, repentance so on and so forth.

40 W. Taylor, *Jesus in Indian Paintings* (Madras: CLS, 1975), 56.

41 Lederle, *Christian Painting in India Through the Centuries* (Anand: Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, 1987), 70. Elavathingal, *Inculturation and Indian Art*

42 See, Fr. Varghese Nediakalayil SVD, "Painting for the Lord," The Examiner (October, 1995):16.

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43 See, Antony Kolenchery, *Art in Culture, Meditating with the Paintings of Sr. Claire, SMMI* (Bangalore: Indian Institute of Spiritiuality, 1996). See also Lederle, *Christian Painting in India*, 76, Taylor, *Jesus in Indian Paintings*, 160.

44 Jyothi Sahi, "Indian Symbols of the Holy Spirit," *Jeevadhara* 45(1978):243.

45 See, Jyothi Sahi, *Stepping Stones: Reflections on the Theology of Indian Christian Culture* (Bangalore: ATC, 1986), 96, 125,163, 166.

46 "153 Fishes"; "Good Samaritan"; "Trinity"; "Burning Bush"; "Six Stone Water Jars"; "Christ as Dancer in the Tree of Life" See *Stepping Stones*.

47 See, Selvister Ponnumuthan, *The Spirituality of Basic Ecclesial Communities in the socio-Religious Context of Trivandrum/Kerala, India* (Roma: Universita Gregorian, 1996)

48 The Theological Advisory Commission of the FABC, *Asian Christian Perspectives on Harmony* FABC Papers 75 (Hong Kong: 1996), 54.

49 See J. Desrochers, *Social Movements: Towards a Perspective* (Bangalore: Centre for Social Action, 1991); G.Shah, "The Human Rights Movement in Indian: A Critical Overview," *Social Action* 40(1990): 2ff.

50 Rajni Kothari, *In Search of Human Governance* (Delhi: Ajanta Publishers, 1998), 49 -53.

51 Antony Kalliath, "A Call to Liberative Praxis of the Gospel, Inculturation in India," *Ishvani Documentation and Mission Digest*, vol 20, no.3(Sep.-Dec., 2002): 371.

52 Samuel Rayan, "Inculturation and Peoples' Struggles," *Indian Missiological Review* 19(1997):40.

53 Roger E. Hedlund, "Indian Christians of Indigenous Origin and Their Solidarity with Original Groups," in *Religion and Politics from Subaltern Perspective*, ed. Thomas Kadankavil (Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 1999), 26.

54 Xavier Irudayaraj, ed. *Liberation and Dialogue* (Bangalore: Claretian Publications, 1989), 120.

55 Samuel Rayan, "Spirituality for Inter-Faith Social Action," in Xavier Irudayaraj, ed. *Liberation and Dialogue* (Bangalore: Claretian Publications, 1989), 70.

56 Paul F. Knitter, *One Earth and Many Religions* (New York: Orbis Books, 1996), 163.

57 Wilfred Felix, "Liberating Dialogue in India," The German translation in *Befreiender Dialog-Befreite Gesellschaft: Politische Theologie und Begegnung der Religionen in Indien und Europa*. Ed. Sybille Frish-Oppermann (Loccum: Evangelische Akademie, 1994), 37.

58 Antony Kalliath, "A Call to Liberative Praxis of the Gospel, Inculturation in India," 374.

59 N. Palerasu, "Gandhian Grass-root Communities," 1991. Non-published project description formulated in October, 1991. Quoted in Knitter, 171.

60 See, Joseph Prasad Pinto o.f.m Cap., *Inculturation through Basic Communities, An Indian Perspective* (Bangalore: ATC, 1985), 223-226.

61 R. Panikkar, "The Dream of an Indian Ecclesiology," in Gerwin van Leeuwen, ed., *Searching for an Indian Ecclesiology* (Bangalore: ATC, 1984), 50.

62 Aloysius Pieris, A Theology of Liberation in Asian Churches?, 18.

63 See, Joseph Kanjiramattathil C.M.I., *The Pastoral Vision of Kuriakose Elias Chavara* (Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 1986).

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15
Christian Contribution in Anthropological Studies

S.M. Michael

Introduction

Anthropology is a modern discipline. Most textbooks and encyclopaedias will point out that it came of age in the late ninteenth and early twentieth centuries. Prior to this, knowledge of the customs, religions and traditions of peoples and exotic tribes was mostly provided by travellers, missionaries, administrators and philosophers. Hence, when we study the Christian contribution to Anthropological Studies in India we need to keep in mind that any information with regard to Indian Culture and its people by Christian missionaries could be included in this subject. Hence, in this article we will review some salient aspects and outstanding works of some Christian missionaries to the understanding of Indian people and their culture.

1. Contributions to Ecological Anthropology

Anthropology occupies a place of distinction among social sciences largely due to its historical, holistic and comparative approach to culture. They have been studying the relationship between geographical factors and the variety of cultures found in the world. The Greeks are considered to be the first to make a systematic study of geography. Artistotle and prior to him Herodotus, traced what they held to be the superior physical and intellectual ability of the Greeks to climatic and geographical factors. Study of the flora and founa of a habitat of a people is considered as Ecological Anthropology. Even much before this term

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came into existence, scholars have been studying the habitat of people to understand their culture.

Christian missionaries in India were the poineers in providing information about the ecological set up of Indian sub-continent. For example, Fr. Antonio de Monserratte (1566-1600), must be credited with the honour of being the first person since Ptolemy to make a map of India. Fr. Joseph Tieffenthaller (1710-1785) was the first geographer to draw up a fairly accurate map of the Ganges. His greatest work, *Historical Geographical Description of India*, contains accurate accounts of Indian birds, trees, plants and flowers that he studied during the twenty-nine years of his tour throughout the country and also of the result of the astronomical and geographical observations which he made during these wanderings. The Jaipur astromical laboratory still stands as a memorial to his work.

2. Contributions to Linguistic Anthropology

Fr. G acome Fenicio (1558-1632) wrote *Livro da Seita dos Indo Orientais*, the first account of Hindu religion and customs ever written in a European language. About this work, Professor Charpentier makes the following observation: "It betrays that scholarly spirit which is not always to be found even in later centuries".

Most scholarlship on the Dravidian movement trace its ideological origins to the pioneering philological work of Reverend Robert Caldwell (1814-1891). In his work entitled *A Comparative Grammar of Dravidian or South Indian Family of Languages*, Caldwell not only coined the "Dravidian" to describe the languages and the people of South India, but also constructed, with the aid of the modern sciences of philology, archaeology and history, a new genealogy for the Dravidian languages, culture and people. This genealogy was marked by its independence from and opposition to an Aryan/Brahmin language, culture and people. Caldwell's work provided a significant 'scientific' bulwark against the extremely one-sided Aryan/Sanskritic portrayal of Inida at that time; and most importantly, it provided the rising class of non-Brahmin socio-cultural and intellectual hegemony in South India.

This socio-political dimension of Indian history and culture could be traced to the other pioneering works of Christian missionaries. Fr.Robert de Nobili S.J. (1577-1656) was the first European Sanskrit scholar. Max Mueller, the erudite German Indologist, describes the learning of de Nobili in the following words, "A man who could quote from Manu, from the Puranas, nay from the works such as the Apastamba Sutras, which are known even at present only to those few Sanskrit scholars who can read Sanskrit manuscripts, must have been far advanced in the knowledge of the sacred language and the literature of the Brahmins".

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De Nobili was also one of the pioneers in the writing of Tamil prose. He enriched Tamil with many words and phrases adapted from Sanskrit. His works include *Athuma Nirunayam* (The Science of the Soul), *Gnana Upathesa Kandam* (A kind of Summa Theologica) in four volumes, and *Thushana Thikkaram* (Refutation of Calumnies). In all twenty-one books, besides numerous other writings are the fruit of his scholarly endeavours. These had a great influence on the educated classes of India.

Fr. Constantius Beschi S.J. (1680-1747) will hold a conspicuous place in Tamil linguistics. He composed three Tamil grammars and three dictionaries, Tamil-Latin, Tamil-Portuguese and Tamil-Tamil. His Magnum Opus, the *Thembavani* (The Unfading Garland), is considered by experts to this day to be one of the best Tamil works ever written. The Fifth World Tamil Congress held at Madurai in January, 1981, rightly praised and honoured Beschi by erecting his statue in the city along with others who have contributed to Tamil Linguistics.

Beschi was the great pioneer who showed the way to other distinguished scholars like Dr. Caldwell who wrote for the first time a comparative grammar of the Dravidian languages, and Dr. G.U. Pope who has equally immortalised his name by his translations into English of famous works like *Tirukural*, *Tiruvasagam* and *Naladiyar*. This was followed by a series of dictionary-makers like Dr. Gundert who compiled the Malayalam dictionary, Maffei who compiled the Konkani dictionary and Rebeiro who compiled the Konkani-Portuguese dictionary, all of which still hold the field as best of their kind.

All the above works of Christian missionaries paved the way for the socio-political movements in modern India. Kailasapathy, commenting on Caldwell's pivotal role in the Dravidian movement, noted, "Phrases such as 'pure words', 'religion of the Brahmins', 'native Tamilians', and 'freedom from Sanskrit', set in motion a train of ideas and movements whose repercussions and consequences went beyond the field of philology. Many socio-political and cultural movements among the Tamils during the last hundred years have without doubt been influenced ... by the statements of Caldwell".

Camille Bulcke S.J. (1909-1982) in his love for Indian culture, developed a taste for Hindi and was determined to master the language. He is a specialist in Rama story. Besides his learned doctoral thesis, his notable scientific publications are *Nil Panchi*, *Rama Katha aur Tulsidas*, and *English-Hindi Dictionary* which is his most widely known and much used book. Bulcke became an authority on Hindi language. His excellence in the literary field was officially acknowledged as early as 1950 when the Governor of Bihar nominated him, with thirty other

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scholars, a founder member of the Bihar Sahitya Academy. In 1974, Bulcke was awarded the Padma Bhushan by the President of India for his outstanding services to Hindi language.

Carlos Valles S.J. is a gem among Gujarati linguists. His famous contributions are: *Gandhji ane Navi Peddhi* and *Jivan Darshan*. Both of them won government prizes.

3. Contribution to Ancient Indian Culture

Fr. Henry Heras S.J. (1888-1955) is a great pioneer who devoted his entire life doing research on Ancient Indian Culture. He dug and delved deep into Indian history to display to the world the glorious tradition and culture of India. In 1926, Heras established the Indian Historical Research Institute at St.Xavier's College, Bombay. The Institute was later renamed the Heras Institute of Indian History and Culture. It is a pioneer institution in the field of historical investigation in India, and the ambition of its founder was to train scholars and produce a school of Ancient Indian Culture Historians. By the time of his death in 1955, Heras had seen over three hundred students from all over India doing post-graduate and doctoral research. Many of his students were prominently placed with historical and archaeological study centres throughout India. His students include noted historians and archaeologists like M.G. Dikshit, G.M. Moraes, B.A. Saletore and H.D. Sankalia. Heras himself had written thirteen books and over two hundred scholarly articles. Heras was one of the founders of the Indian History Congress. He gained international fame among Indologists for his interpretation of the inscriptions on the Indus Valley seals, and made a great contribution to our knowledge of the Indus Valley Civilization. He promoted that synthesis of the cultures of East and West through which, as many great minds have thought, human civilization can attain its best. In 1981, the Government of India honoured Fr. Heras with a commemorative postage stamp for his outstanding contribution to historical science and archaeology.

Among the several others who have done their studies on Ancient Indian Culture, we need to mention Fr. Stephen Fuchs SVD. Fr. Fuchs came out with new information with regard to the understanding of Indian culture. Normally, the main concern of Indologists was to analyse the early texts on the various aspects of Indian life. They believed that such texts could enlighten one about the daily lives of the people and they considered this a useful method of obtaining knowledge of India. Many Christian missionaries studied Sanskrit to be acquainted with relevant source material in order to compile information on Indian culture. According to Fr. Fuchs if we want to understand India we need to place India in the cultural and religious range of Asia. It is because, since the earliest prehistory, India is embedded in the cultural and religious range of Asia. Fr. Stephen Fuchs in his two books examined the

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cutural historical links of India with Inner Asia. In his book "*At the Bottom of Indian Society: The Harijans and other Low Castes*" (1981) he traces the origin of caste and untouchability back to the pre-Indian past of the Dravidians, and the Aryans who probably have brought their hierarchical social structure along with them from the steppes of Inner Asia.

In his second book, Fr. Stephen Fuchs studied "*The Vedic Horse Sacrifice: In its Culture-Historical Relations*" (1996). This book traces the migration of the Aryans and their language. This work also summarizes his theoretical understanding of the contribution of Inner Asia to the Cultural-Historical Development of India. He gives meticulous details of the horse sacrifice and its parallels. This masterpiece sums up much of his anthropological knowledge. To understand the pluralism of India, such works are very important. "In the sub-continent called 'India' so many races and cultures have been superimposed in layers; one above the other have interpenetrated each other and so intricately intermingled that we shall never fully be able to disentangle their original and basic constituents" (Fuchs, 1996:5). He feels that at present we have an incomplete knowledge of the Indian religions and this in part is due to the fact that the attention of scholars have been focused almost exclusively on Indo-Aryan religions. "Indologists also ignored the fact that India was inhabited by peoples and races long before the Indo-Aryan peoples and races, lived, and still live, on this subcontinent along with the Indo-Aryans" (Fuchs, 1996:6).

According to Fr. Fuchs, the nature of some elements in hinduism as caste and various types of sacrifices may be better understood, if we have some knowledge of the historical cultural links of India with Asia in pre-historic times. Fuchs' scientific work can be used to support the view that much in Indian culture has come from outside. Some politicians and communal minded people want to convince the public that Indian culture is by and large a local and intrinsic phenomenon and has originated independently on Indian soil and not essentially indebted to cultural traditions outside India. He brings to light two important facts in his book on the "Vedic Horse Sacrifice in its Culture-Historical Relations" (1996) and "At the Bottom of Indian Society : The Harijans and Other Low Castes" (1981). He shows us that as far as caste and religion is concerned we have been heavily influenced from outside.

4. Contributions to Ethnography and Tribal Anthropology

In the history of the growth of anthropology, ethnography has played a tremendous role. At the early stage of the growth of anthropology in India and elsewhere, ethnographic work by the scholars played an important role. Christian missionaries have played a very vital role

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in the growth of the ethnographic literature in Indian anthropology. They have provided insights into the tribal poetry, myth and imagination.

The missionaries made a significant contribution to the development of tribal languages and dialects by the compilation of grammars and dictionaries. A few examples should suffice. A scientific basis for the study of modern Assamese was laid with the publication of an Assamese grammar by Rev. W. Robinson and an Assamese dictionary by Mrs. O.T. Cutter. Thomas Jones can rightly be called the father of Khasi literature because he gave a script to a hitherto unwritten language and wrote books in the same. Similarly, Rev. Michael Balavine gave a script to Lalung, a dialect spoken in Assam and Meghalaya, and published the first Lalung dictionary.

Among the dialects of Chotanagpur, notable scholarly attainments are the English-Kharia dictionary by H.Floor S.J., and V.Gheisens S.J., the Kharia-English Dictionary by G.Druart S.J., and the Oraon-English dictionary by A. Grignard S.J.

The most outstanding work of scholarship relating to the world of tribals was the *Encyclopaedia Mundarica* by the Jesuit J.B. Hoffmann. Hoffmann has contributed a lot to Tribal Anthropology by his most spactacular achievement of fifteen-volume Encyclopaedia on the Mundas. Rated highly by philologists and anthropologists, this work is an exhaustive record of the culture and civilization of the Mundas.

Fr. Fuchs' works on tribal anthropology and ethnography especially in his scholarly works of "The Aboriginal Tribes of India", "The Gond and Bhumias of Eastern Mandla", and "The Korkus of the Vindhya Hills" point out that the aboriginal tribes in India in most cases are survivals from the later pre-historic population groups entering India from various directions and from various regions of Asia. They also belonged to different races, so Fuchs points out that tribals have their own independent origins and history, which set them apart from present day Hindus. The earliest inhabitants in India were probably the Negritoes (Fuchs, 1982:27). The next would be the Proto-Australoids. It seems that the majority of the Central and South Indian tribes belong to this type, although they may speak different languages. There have been many racial mixtures with later settlers in India. Mongoloid races have been settled in the sub-Himalayan regions, in Assam and along the eastern frontiers and Burma.

The book *Aboriginal Tribes of India* by Fr. Fuchs SVD gives a comprehensive account of the aboriginal tribes of India, which up to that time had not been attempted by anyone. *The Gond and Bhumia of Eastern Mandla* explains the culture of Gonds. The term 'Gond' refers

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to a culturally divergent group of tribes of Central India. The Gonds reside mainly in Madhya Pradesh and here too they are found in the hilly forest area of Central Madhya Pradesh and in the estern and southern part of the Satpura plateau, which are highly inaccessible. The area of Bastar is in the interior and is filled with forests, which are inaccessible to the outside world. It is densely populated with Gonds.

By these ethnographic works we come to know that the tribals in India have their own specific identity, though most of them are getting absorped to Hinduism today.

The Korkus of the Vindhya Hills is another ethnographic work of Fr. Fuchs. The Korkus live predominantly in the hilly areas of the Vindhya Hills but are also found in Central India in Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. They are considered a branch of the Munda tribal group. Fr. Fuchs lived in the villages with Muwasi Korkus for a considerable period of time when he studied them. He records the rich material culture of the Korkus.

Through these ethnographies and tribal studies the Christian missionaries had undertaken lots of pain in recording information in minute details with regard to the social and cultural life of the tribals and thus they have collected and preserved knowledge about tribal life to their posterity. This information on tribal ethnography is very relevant for the development of tribals in India. They provide fascinating insights into the lives of tribals and deepen our understanding of them.

Fuchs has also contributed to the study and analysis of the social change among tribals, as can be seen from his magnificent works *Rebellious Prophets: A Study of Messianic Movments in Indian Religions* (1965) and *Godmen on the War Path: A Study of Messianic Movements in India* (1992) which are studies on tribal Messianic movements. In these books he advised the Government how to deal with frustration, anger and discontent in some tribal communities. In order to really help such marginalized and oppressed groups, it is important to know well their mental outlook and cultural background in order to meet them with understanding and respect.

5. Contributions to Dalit Anthropology

In India, Dalits are known by different names e.g. Dasa, Dasyu, Asura, Nisada, Raksa, Panchama, Achuna and Chandala. They are also called exterior castes, depressed classes, scheduled castes, Harijans and Untouchables. Each name has a history. Two prominent names are used for them in the North-West. They are called Bhangi and in Central India they are called Mahars. In Telegu they are called 'Mala' and in Malayalam they are called 'Pulayan'. In Tamil they are 'Pariyan'.

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Although there are various sporadic and sketchy remarks found in various Census Reports, District Gazetteers etc. on the various customs, ethnic divisions etc. of the scheduled castes in India anthropologists do not seem to have taken great interest in the study of untouchables (Dalits). Detailed monograhic works are very few.

One of the earliest to give his views on the untouchables was the French missionary Abbe Dubois. These untouchables, the 'Pariahs' had it firmly entrenched in their minds that they were born to serve the high castes. An untouchable never even considered that his position could change. He would not even dream that all men are equal. The Hindu caste system existed and the untouchables lived outside this system. Abbe Dubois did a study of the villages of India in the period 1772 and 1823. He presented the untouchable as an outcaste.

Only a good understanding of Dalit history will make it possible to know their past identity. The majority of Dalits are steeped in poverty and have lost their self-esteem and a sense of dignity; very few are educated but education and economic upliftment are not enough for them to regain their dignity. These are people for whom history is very important. These are the people who need to know their past which alone will reveal to them that once they were also fuller human beings, enjoying all the benefits of a normal human being which includes land, property, human dignity, natural resources, human freedom etc.

Many Christian missionary scholars have analysed the Dalit cuture through their monographs. For example, Fr. Stephen Fuchs has done poineering works in Dalit Anthropology. His monographs "*The Children of Hari: A Study of the Nimar Balahis in Central Provinces of India*" and "*At the Bottom of Indian Society: The Harijan and Other Low Castes*" and the various articles on the Dalit castes bear testimony to his great concern for these marginalized groups. The "Children of Hari: A Study of the Nimar Balahis in the Central Provinces of India" is a monograph that he published in 1950 and a systematic analysis of the Balahi. "At the Bottom of Indian Society: The Harijan and Other Low Castes" (1981) is a monograph and a comprehensive encyclopaedia of information on all the Dalit groups in India. No such comprehensive work is done so far.

These monographs on Dalits point out a serious disadvantage to the Harijans namely the lack of unity among them. If they had been united they would have been able to demand forcefully a better deal from the government. They point out that the Dalits are continuously fighting with one another for a higher rank and a better position in society. The Scheduled Castes in every region in India have a hierarchy which forbade the taking of food or water from someone. Even sub-groups have their own sense of superiority. Thus, as Fr. Fuchs says,

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"There is no caste in India so low that it does not find another one that in its own eyes still inferior" (Fuchs, 1981:207). The lowest man in order to retain a shred of his self-respect desires to look down on some other human being and at least pretend that the other man is still a little lower. And since he clings desperately to this superiority, whether real or only pretended he may be even more intolerant towards other castes than the high castes would be.

Fuchs also sounded the alarm with regard to exploitation and oppression of Dalits in Indian society. Dalits, he warned, had for centuries been systematically deprived of their human rights. It seems urgent that they be given their due and rightful place in Indian society, otherwise one day, they might wake up like the legendary sleeping giant and upset the apple-cart, but then it would be too late to remedy the situation.

Fr. S.M. Michael SVD from the Institute of Indian Cuture and Fr. Jose K S.J. from the Indian Social Institute have also contributed publications on Dalits and their problems in contemporary India.

Today the condition of the Dalit has shown some improvement, economically and socially. Their literacy rate has gone up from 10.2 per cent in 1961 to 37.41 in 1991. The poverty among Dalits has declined from 58.07 in 1983-1984 to 50 per cent in 1987-1988.

6. Contribution Towards Research Centres in Anthropology

Anthropology and sociology were taught in just six universities in India in the year 1950. Bombay was the only place for post-graduate research in Sociology. Fr.Stephen Fuchs SVD was a professor of sociology at St.Xavier's College, Mumbai, and it was here that he founded the Department of Anthropology, which exists till today. It is the only college in Mumbai where a full-fledged Anthropology courses offered at the B.A. level.

In the year 1950 Fr. Stephen Fuchs founded an anthropological research centre in Mumbai. The purpose was to promote anthropological knowledge of the people of India. This centre was given the name Institute of Indian Culture (IIC) in 1967. Today, the Institue of Indian Culture is continuing the anthropological research initiated by Fr. Fuchs. Since 1997 the Institute of Indian Culture has been recognized as a Post-Graduate Research Centre for M.A. and Ph.D. in the fields of Anthropology and Sociology by the University of Mumbai. Now, the Institute of Indian Culture has been enlarged with new library building, a conference hall and seminar rooms. The library is open to students and scholars who are doing advanced studies in the fields of cultural anthropology, sociology and Indian culture.

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Similar centres have been opened by several Local Churches in different parts of India. The Christian contribution towards anthropological studies continue in these research centres.

7. Conclusion

Anthropological knowledge of India reveals that many and varied people have contributed to the shaping of Indian culture and its civilization. To understand this complex culture, Anthropology is of great help. While much information is available about the upper castes of India and their contribution to Indian civilization, there is scanty information on the contributions of tribals and other marginalized communities of India and their share in the shaping of Indian civilization. The history of the lower strata of Indian society cannot be traced exactly and here only Historical Anthropology, which includes the popular beliefs, legends, myths, tales, short history of the locality or region, etc., of the folk people, can help us know the unrecorded past. Here the Christian missionaries in India have played a tremendous role in unearthing the contributions of different cultural groups to the shaping of Indian civilization. This is a great contribution. Today, this scholarly endeavour continues both within the Church and in the several secular research centres.

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16
Service to the Nation Through Communication Media

Jacob Srampickal

The Christians, though a minority (2.3%) in India, have contributed highly meritorious services in the area of education, health care, and social awareness among the rural poor. However, their contribution in other fields, especially in the field of communication and media is comparatively smaller. However small it be, it is worth documenting this contribution, as they are ever more aware of the potentialities and possibilities in this field, and are seriously venturing into it. It is true that a lot of the media services of the Church were in the area of print medium primarily serving the purpose of faith education and evangelisation. In this article I like to look at those areas of media activities, which are not necessarily inward looking, but are attempts to reach out to the whole of India irrespective of caste and creed. I would like to critically examine how the Kingdom values of love, justice, peace, forgiveness etc, are being projected through the various Communications endeavours. Being a minority community, many Christians believe that their primary role is to project themselves and assert their role in India through the available media. This only goes to earn a strong sectarian branding on them. However, there are excellent examples of media services among the Christians, which need to be lauded.

1. The Context

The media, as often believed, need not be understood as something modern; in fact, it existed from time immemorial. Earlier it was undeveloped; gradually growing from the

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non-verbal simple gestures, noises, sounds, frowns, pictures etc, to the oral, to the visual and reaching today to the most advanced forms of mediated communications. The mass media are made most attractive through the technological phenomenon developed with the advancements in empirical and applied sciences. The word 'mass' has connotations of great numbers (masses) and also a lack of identity, as the masses are anonymous entities. Yes the mass media messages go to vast numbers simultaneously, separated by time and space and unknown to each other. The media can also present messages in exact and precise, crisp and sharp, appealing and attractive manner. These messages can come across as very persuasive and convincing.

The print medium monopolised the area of mass media for over 400 years until the modern mass media like radio, cinema and TV made their entry during the last century of the second millennium. Due to the fast developments in the information and communication technologies (ICTs), new forms appeared and advanced within a shorter period and today we have reached the age of convergence, the Internet and the World Wide Web (WWW).

In Church circles, there was a time when modern media was denounced as more of an evil than good and hence controlled and censored. The Church looked at the media as a trouble-shooter, bringing additional 'voices' and 'opinions' to the faithful, who were used to one voice, the voice of the hierarchical Church. From the days of Protestantism, when Martin Luther printed out the edicts against the Church, the Church has maintained vigil over the media and considered it a dangerous liaison. The Church leaders also saw red signals, because the media peddled a lot of pornography, nudity, individualism and glamour. So they saw staying out of it as the best option, and advised the faithful to do the same.

Prior to Vatican II (1963-65), this school of thought prevailed far and wide in the Catholic Church. Documents like *Inter Mirifica* (Vatican II) and *Communio et Progressio* (1971) heralded a change in this attitude and they underlined the importance of media usage. *Inter Mirifica* commented: "It would be shameful if by their inactivity Catholics allowed the Word of God to be silenced or obstructed by the technical difficulties which these media present and by their admittedly enormous cost" (*IM*,17). Later in 1975, in the document *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, Pope Paul VI said very emphatically that 'the Church would find herself guilty, if she did not utilize every opportunity provided by the modern means of communications to proclaim the Word of God' (*EN*, 45). So the attitude changed to 'use at any cost'. Today, at least in her documents the Church has moved from this stage, to the next stage of competing with the secular media by running parallel structures and to a new outlook of collaboration and presence in the secular media, being 'leaven' there.

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However, the sad fact is that in India a good number of Church leaders, either because of their ignorance or because of their pre-Vatican stand, take little interest in understanding the power of the media. Very few realize that "the media are becoming so independent of public policies, so immune to public needs, so scornful of governmental regulations, and so dependent on profit that they have become one of the most powerful concerns on the face of the earth. In many ways they have become more powerful than the very governments in which they operate for they hold a unique combination of both political and economic power"[1]. As a result, the area of communications and the media in the Church has not become central, but remains mostly a peripheral activity of certain people, who differ from place to place in their understanding of Church's mission of communication.

In spite of all this, there have been people in the Church who from time to time, contributed to the secular media with a prophetic vision and charismatic zeal.

2. Languages, Grammar, Printing

The Church has contributed much to the development of languages in India. As educators and academics, developing local languages, dictionaries, arithmetic and other grammar books was one of the major activities of the missionaries. This is much evident in Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Goa, Karnataka and the North East. Establishing printing presses was seen more as part of their educational plan of universal literacy for the rural masses. The missionaries saw these as part of social reforms to build up the real India, which is more in villages than in cities. It is to be mentioned that the first printing press in India was established by the jesuits in 1556 in Goa. The contribution of Rev. William Carey (1761-1834) in West Bengal with the founding of the Serampore College in Calcutta is remarkable and is much lauded by the nation. In the same way Herman Gundert and Ernest Hanxleden (Arnos Padiri) were pioneers in Kerala who popularised Sanskrit and Malayalam grammar, dictionary and poetry. In Maharashtra, Pandita Ramabai, Narain Vaman Tilak, Baba Padmanji and others have enriched Christian thinking through their devotional and scholarly works on Christianity. In Gujarat, Dhanjibai Fakirabai developed a syncretic Christian theology making Christianity popular through his writings. In Tamil Nadu, Beschi's *Tembavani* is remembered as a classic piece of poetry. Robert De Nobili, another Jesuit, considered the first European Sanskrit Scholar mastered Tamil and Sanskrit and translated the Vedas and other Hindu scriptures. The contribution of several Indian Brahmins who accepted Christianity needs to be recounted, too. Later Camille Bulke in Ranchi championed the cause of the Hindi language by writing one of the most popular dictionaries.

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3. Folkloric Performances

In areas like folklore, music and dance, the Kerala Christians have contributed popular forms like *Chavittunatakam* and *Margamkali*. *Chavittunatakam*, was evolved in the 17th and 18th centuries as a Christian alternative to Hindu *Kathakali* with a view to presenting Biblical themes to Christian audiences. The foreign missionaries had their share of initiative in working out the details of this form and hence *Chavittunatakam* resembles the European opera in several aspects. The chief characteristic of *Chavittunatakam is* that the actors stamp their feet on the wooden stage to the accompaniment of songs and drums, while telling vividly a story that captures the audience. It was sarcastically called *Tattupolippan* after the loud and unpleasant noise so produced by the actors. The actors in *Chavittunatakam*, unlike in *Kathakali*, speak and sing[2].

Among the other Christian performing arts, *Margamkali* deserves special mention. It is a group dance developed by the Syrian Christians of Kerala. The word *'Margam'* means path, way, religion or creed. The real source of inspiration for *Margamkali* was *Kalaripayattu and Thiruvathirakali* which were very popular in Kerala at the time the Christian community developed this form. The content of this art form was Christian religious ideas and the form of the art was directly inspired by the indigenous culture. The dancers play in a circle around a lighted oil lamp singing songs. There are no accompanying instruments. The leader of the troupe or tutor known as *'Asan'* leads the song and the group repeats the same, while dancing to the tune. The language used in the songs of *Margamkali* reveals its relation with old Tamil. *Margamkali* is being revived today, thanks to the cultural festivals promoted by the state[3].

Other less popular forms like *Vattakali* and *Parisamuttukali* were not much affected by foreign influence and were very much Indian in form and spirit and these survive to this present day. Similarly, the several tribal dances of Jharkhand, Orissa, MP and the North-East have found new resonance and awakening in recent years when the missionaries began to use these for catechetical and liturgical purposes. These are also means of promoting cultural assertion and human dignity among these marginalized people.

4. The Print Medium

Although several printing presses were founded by the missionaries in different parts of India, print as a medium to influence public opinion took roots among Christians in India towards the end of the 19th century with the founding of *Deepika*, a secular daily run by the Carmelite Missionaries (CMIs) from Kerala. One of the major contributions from the Christians

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in the field of media definitely is *Malayala Manorama*, a newspaper that has the widest circulation in India itself. One might argue that from a state which is almost fully literate, these are not big achievements, though in the face of stiff competition from several quarters including political and religious bigwigs floating their own mouthpieces, these are indeed success stories in the Indian media. Although *Deepika* hasn't achieved the distinction of *Malayala Manorma* in circulation, one needs to acknowledge the pioneering spirit of the CMIs to launch a daily newspaper, almost 120 years back! Following the example of *Deepika*, several other attempts were made and failed, and now *Janavahini* in Karanataka is trying to hold on among the dailies, but often too much of Church news seems to be smothering it in its infancy.

Bible, or *biblos*—the book, was the first printed book in the world. In India as elsewhere in the world, the Bible Societies have revolutionised the concept of book printing and made Bible an easily available book in various languages. Several non-Christians have got their free copy of the Bible through the services of the Bible Society.

4.1 Book Publishing

Publishing books has always been considered a major intellectual pursuit in the country. Noble thoughts lead to noble actions, they believed. Christian education has always encouraged the reading habit in order to boost a person's all round development. Several popular Christian publishing houses like Current Books, DC Books, S.H. League, St. Paul Publishers, Pauline Publishing, Indian Current Publications, Gujarat Sahitya Prakashan, Deepika Book House, Indian Social Institute, Satprakashan, Claretian Publications and many more, have contributed to a healthy reading culture in the country. Their books on values, culture, patriotism and social sciences have contributed much to build up modern India. These have also contributed to the publication of works by several Christian writers.

4.2 Writers

Print, being the first mass media to develop and with so much of printing and publishing possible, it was not surprising that many Christians took to professional writing. Eminent editors like Pothan Joseph, Mammen Mappilai, K.M. Mathew, Frank and Dom Moraes, T.J.S George, John Dayal, A.J. Philip and cartoonists like Abu Abraham, Mario Miranda and others of their tribe, have held on to their tasks with Christian commitment, even in trying times. There are hundreds of Christian writers who have contributed to nation building through their intelligent writings, holding the torch of Christian and human values high. Fr. Carlos Valles, a Spanish missionary is honoured as one of the finest contemporary writers in the Gujarati

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language. R.H. Lesser of Udaipur too is a well-known missionary, whose writings have enriched many popular magazines. Many others can be added to the list, which I do not attempt to exhaust, but I cannot but mention writers like Fr. Tony D'Mello who gave new psychological insights, Sadhu Ittyavirah who specializes in spiritual nuggets for all, Fr. Sebastian Kappen who made the relationship between Marxism and Christianity clear to the Indians, Dr. Felix Podimattom who traverses the field of sexual morality, and stalwarts like B.G.Verghese, K.E. Eapen, J Vilanilam, T.K.Thomas, Kewal Kumar and others who made a mark in media training, and many others. Several others like Muttathu Varkey, Parappurath, E.J. Kanam, Chempil John, C.L.Jose, Robin Shaw Pushp have held sway over reader's minds by their interpretation of Christian values through their fictional writings. The number of Christians committed to nation building through the print media is on the increase. The books brought out by P.D. Mathew and M.P. Raju on legal issues and minority rights are good examples to service to the nation.

4.3 Magazines and Periodicals

In the area of magazines and periodicals the Church has only too many. There are some good contributions from various Christian sectors in this regard. *Teenager,* (for teenagers), *Social Action* (Social activists), *Legal News and Views, People's Reporter, Ora* etc for social awareness building are worth mentioning. *Indian Currents,* projected as a national secular weekly, is a recent major attempt at projecting a Christian point of view on issues that affect the nation.

Besides these, there are a large number of weeklies, monthlies and local papers run by the Christians but these are directed mainly to a Christian audience. However, recent publications from various charismatic groups seem to attract readership among a lot of non-Christians.

4.4 Cartoonists/Architects

Mario Miranda (Goa) and te late Abu Abraham, Ajit Ninan, Yesudasan (all Kereala) have carved a niche for themselves in the area of political cartooning in the country. Charles Correa (Goa), a celebrated name in architecture has been able to bring in a strong Christian element in his patters.

5. Electronic Media

Following *Inter Mirifica* (Vat II) a landmark document of the Catholic Church on communication and the media, at the All India Seminar on Church in India Today (Bangalore,

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1969) it was clearly expressed that the Church should take to communication media with seriousness of purpose. But since it was seen as an opportunity to proclaim the Word of God, regional and diocesan media service centres were set up and these took to catechising or audiovisual faith representations. If such efforts were more culturally rooted and symbolically rich, these would have added to nation building in a bigger way. Coming to the mainstream communications, Christians as a minority stood a bit puzzled confronted by the 'big mad bad world of the mass media' where crass commercialism abounds and human and family values are trampled underfoot every day, wondering what the Churches can really do. And that remained a stumbling block. Things changed gradually when more creative and enterprising people with clearer understanding and professional training entered the field. It still is the major challenge for the Church to get more and more laity trained systematically to contribute professionally to the mainstream media, to be the 'leaven' in the large dough of the media world.

6. Some Major Contributors

6.1 Kalabhavan

Fr. Abel CMI was a bright star shining with the light of clear vision and foresight and was probably the first in India to venture into the area of cultural media and liturgical music in a major way. Gradually with a fine blending of the rich cultural arts of Kerala and the electronic technologies, his *Kalabhavan* (founded in 1969) made inroads into Kerala's popular media, both in the cultural as well as in the cinema field with several of his artists scaling heights in the media industry.

6.2 Xavier Institute of Communications Arts

(XICA, Mumbai)

Taking a bird's eye view of the various media centres now in India, one instantly stops at Xavier Institute of Communication Arts (XICA), conceived in the late Sixties by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI) and established in 1970, to train Church personnel in the media. By the time the concerned Bishops became aware of the relevance of media training in the country, the centre flourished in the hands of the Bombay Jesuits and continued to make worthy contributions to the country, as it trains would-be television and film producers for the industry today. There are hardly any media fields in the country where XIC alumni haven't set their foot. However, XICA's contributions are similar to the services rendered by our top academic institutions, benefiting mostly the elite in means and intelligence.

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6.3 Chitrabani

The services of *Chitrabani* (Calcutta) are uniquely different from most others. Founded in 1971 by Fr. Gaston Roberge, a French Canadian Jesuit film scholar, the centre initiated a new variety of Diploma Studies enhancing personal initiatives, where the students could create their own syllabus and work under personal tutelage. Added to this are the several professional media services aimed at the media savvy Calcuttans, in photography, slides production, sound recording, etc. Fr. Roberge's scholarly classes on cinema and his even more scholarly books on films made him a much-talked about film theoretician in the country. As the Educational Media Research Centre opened its doors to *Chitrabani* through St. Xavier's College, they became a regular and probably the most creative contributors to the Countrywide Classroom of the UGC that continues even today. However, these programmes aimed at college education could have made greater impact in higher education, if these were more diligently and carefully channelled to its audience by the UGC authorities.

In South India Kalai Kaviri (Trichy), Sandesha (Mangalore), Santhome (Chennai) and Chetana (Trichur), Amruthvani (Secunderabad) grew up to be media centres capable of interacting with the local cultural and media institutions through their top level infrastructures and contacts with the secular media at large.

6. 4 Musicians

In the Christian dominated states several musicians have contributed much to the state and some have even adorned national colours. K.J. Jesudas from Kerala is probably the best known contributor. Remo Fernandes from Goa, Vijay Benedict from UP, K.J. Joy, Jolly Abraham from Kerala and several others have done meritorious service in this regard. There are numerous musicians from Christian dominated sates like Kerala, Goa, the North East etc working as part of the music team for films made in Chennai, Mumbai,Calcutta, etc. It is almost impossible to enumerate them.

7. Contributions in the Various Media

7.1 Films

In the area of films, the many social films made by Christians as part of their commercial concern rather than about Christ and Christianity may be mentioned. However, more important is to mention about the film analysis and appreciation classes initiated by priests like Besse, Errazquin, Ugarte, Da Gama, Roberge, De Rozario, Lane-smith, Srampickal and others in

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the various parts of the country. Lane-smith has even served on the National Film Censor Board, acted in a few films and serials and spoken on the Church's stand on films at various fora. Roberge has contributed some of the finest books on film analysis in the country. The five- day seminar organized to commemorate the centenary of cinema, at Mumbai's National Film Development Corporation, with support from over 30 film personalities in 1996, by Jacob Srampickal and his team stood out as a major event.

Among the films, are the Hyderabad based Amruthavani-collaborated T. S. Vijaychander's *Karunamayudu* on the life of Jesus, which has been dubbed into several languages. Recently, Canara Communications (Mangalore) helped in the making of a dance drama based film on Jesus titled *Bhuvanajyothi*. A remarkable achievement is Mathia, a first feature film in Kokbarok dialect, by the Salesians of the Dimapur province, to highlight rural superstitions. The film "*Johny*", on Don Bosco's early life made by the Bangalore Province of the Salesians too did well in evoking youthful ideals in the youngsters, and it even won a couple of State awards. Given the state of affairs in the film world, where cut-throat competition and market economy reign supreme, Christians wanting to flaunt values through films, no doubt, will find the going hard but not impossible. The success of reaching Christian values to the public lies in producing commercially viable, but value-based films. Efforts of film-makers like Kunchacko and his brother Appachan (Jnaanasundari, Bhaaraya, Inapraavukal), M.O. Joseph (Adimakal, Aranaazhika Neram), Hari Pothan and A. Vincent (Thulabharam, Aswmedham), Sibi Malayali (Thaniyavarthanam, Kireedom, Sadayam), K.G. George (Ulkadal, Swapnadanam) need to be commended in this regard, in Kerala. Even the films (Agraharathil Kazhuthai, Kariyaachante Kroorakrithyangal, etc) of a maverick genius like John Abraham have contributed much to make Christian thinking understood among the intelligentsia and common viewers of Kerala. John Shanakaramangalam, a filmmaker has also been the director of the National Film and Television Institute of India, (FTII) Pune.

7.2 Radio

Several Christian groups like Good News Broadcasting Society, Far Eastern Broadcasting Association, Christian Arts and Communications have taken to radio broadcasting in a major way for several years. Other centres in Tamil Nadu, – Santhome (Chennai), Kalai Kaviri (Trichy) and Tuticorin Communications Centre (Tuticorin), and Amruthvani (Secunderabad)— contribute to regular weekly programmes on Sri Lanka Radio. These and other North Indian centres like Satprakashan (Indore), Ravi Bharati (Patna) Chitrabani (Kolkatta) and AV centre (Imphal) are producing regular programmes in Hindi, Bengali, Urdu and Chin (Burmese-

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Indian) respectively for Radio-Veritas Manila, the Catholic Radio Station of Asia. Unlike the Radio Vatican programmes, which are also promoted in India, the letters from the viewers of Radio *Veritas* programmes indicate that there are large numbers of listeners from people of other religions for these programmes especially from the rural areas. The topics dealt with in these are social, awareness-building, general education, health and hygiene, legal aid, environmental education, *dalit* issues, media education etc.

The Christians have shown remarkable proficiency in the production of audiocassettes and CDs. While most of these are for internal use, they have done quite a bit to popularise Hindustani and Carnatic music. Audiocassettes for social awareness building and education too are profusely produced by Christian NGOs.

7.3 Television

In television, Amruthavani (Hyderabad) has collaborated with T. S. Vijaychander to produce *Dayasagar*, which has been on the National Network (DD-I) for quite some time. A similar attempt earlier by *Navodaya* in Kerala was prematurely aborted. Both these productions lacked in professionalism and marketing strategy. Several centres have produced programmes for DD and other channels during festivals like Christmas and Easter at the request of various channels. These programmes are often poorly conceived and fail to utilize the opportunity to project Christianity as a religion of compassion and service to the poorest. Often it is an attempt to display talents and more often these peddle western culture, attitudes and values. However, in the area of video production a number of centres, especially Ahmedabad's Jesuit-run *Gurjarvani*, and the Mumbai-based Salesian centre *Tejprasarini* have produced good value-based educational videos that have been marketed quite widely in the country.

7.3.1 Jeevan TV

The Kerala Church's attempt at promoting *Jeevan TV,* with the support of the Christian community, is a commendable attempt. With more programmes in languages other than Malayalam, the channel can be an alternative to those 'bored' of routine channels. *Jeevan TV* will definitely need more professionalism in the years to come. The success of the channel will depend very much on how it will keep clear of all ecclesiastical controls and forge ahead as an alternative channel based on values that families look forward to. In a country where most channels depend on serials, films and film-based programmes for providing TV entertainment, *Jeevan TV* could surely attempt to show the way to genuine TV programming and TV culture. The success will definitely depend on the support the Christians in Kerala give to it motivated by their pastors.

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7.4 Cultural Media

Guru Gyanprakash or Fr Proksch SVD was a pioneer in the field of using Indian music and dance in presenting the Word of God. His disciples Frs. Francis Barboza and Charles Vaz continued the tradition and enriched the art forms. Earlier, other missionaries like Frs. Edmond, Antoine SJ, Srs. Lucia, Eugenia and others have contributed much to Indian music and dance. In the field of painting Jyoti Sahi has carved a niche for himself in Indian philosophical paintings. Angelo Da Fonseca, Srs. Genevive and Solange also number among others who contributed much in this field. The success of these persons along with *Kalabhavan* artists, inspired several media centres to take on to various cultural and folk forms all over India in order to proclaim the Word of God and to communicate human values for the betterment of society, while in the process, promoting these cultural forms as well. In fact, anyone working in the media should be quite well versed in the various cultural expressions of the people. The interest in Brahminical arts like *Bharatanatyam, Kathak,* etc. have enabled centres like Kalai Kaviri (Trichy), Gyan Ashram (Mumbai), Sangeet Abhinay Academy (Mumbai), Sandesha (Mangalore), Utkal Vani (Balasore), and Nav Sadhana (Varanasi) to contribute much to the development of these art forms. Kalai Kaviri, Sandesha and Nav Sadhana have made it possible to procure a recognised university degree in these art forms.

Some Christian groups have taken to professional theatre. In fact, in Kerala and Tamil Nadu some of the Christian-led drama troupes have attained popularity through sheer professionalism and high aesthetic qualities. These are all initiatives, which make Christians merge into the main stream national life.

Although the Church's efforts were primarily geared to using media in proclaiming the Word of God, gradually some genuine artists and connoisseurs among them contributed to the growth of the cultural traditions, while using the various cultural media to help people become better human beings. These are the ones who understood in depth the mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God.

7.4.1 Traditional and Alternative Media

It is in areas like using the media for the empowerment and education of the poorest and the marginalized that the Church's concern and vision is most clearly reflected. The traditional ways of communications of culture are not only more or less distinctive technical means but they are also part of a lifestyle and world view of a culture. They are related to the deep-rooted values of a group of people[4]. The use of story-telling, puppetry, street plays, awareness songs, rallies, etc help build the confidence of the marginalized people. When mass media is

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made use of for group building and conscientistaion, it is called alternate media as well. Several Christians turned cultural activists in the villages of UP, Bihar, MP, Tamil Nadu and Andhra have made use of these village-based traditional forms and plays to create social awareness and thus empower the rural masses steeped in illiteracy, superstitions and poverty. The emphasis on alternative and group media in spite of the availability of the mass media is a calculated move on the part of alternative thinkers in the Church. Media centres like Sathangai (Madurai), Ravi Bharati (Patna), and Viswajyoti (Varanasi) have contributed much to create social awareness among the rural poor.

Development communication is aimed at the development of the people through conscientisation and education ultimately leading to an egalitarian society. The NGOs floated by the Church have shown interest in this and have helped the marginalized to magnify their voices. The bi-annual New Delhi Video Forum, initiated by Jacob Srampickal with support from NISCORT was able to bring together a number of socially committed video makers who through their medium strived to highlight the plight of the less-privileged in this country.

The presence of the Church in disaster prone and famine-stricken areas, among the dalits, the refugees and other marginalized sectors is a valuable witness than the financial assistance given to these.

7.4.2 Media Education

A major achievement in the area of communications in the Church is her growing interest in Media Education (ME). ME is an attempt at making the media consumers critically conscious of the nature, functions, processes, and control of media and to respond to these in a creative manner so that they are not made use of by the media for its own ends, but geared to human development through right information and entertainment. Realizing that the media are creating a new world order, with its own sets of values, many media personnel in the Church have taken to ME[5]. It is actually a reworking of the earlier film appreciation courses in the context of television becoming popular. Through ME, people are made aware of the impact of the different media on them. It also analyses the way media functions in our society, affecting our belief system, values and life in general.

The values, the mass media subtly cherish and propagate, are at times diametrically opposed to the time tested societal values. Glorifying violence and sex, belittling marital commitments, stereotyping women as sex objects, projecting material well-being as the goal of human life, increasing consumerism, portraying western models as superior to indigenous forms, making universal models of media stars, creating a hunger for clothes, cosmetics and

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junk food, peddling pornography on the net, everything negative is highlighted. According to Paulo Passolni, Italian filmmaker, the hidden dictatorship of the modern media is more powerful than the political dictatorship of Hitler because it is less obvious, hidden in the machineries of modern large-scale industry[6]. Marshal McLuhann, the philosopher of the modern media said, "The consumers do not realize that the media programmes are like the juicy bones that the burglar throws to the watchdog to keep it busy while he goes in to burgle the house."[7] ME enables the consumers to make the best use of the media for the betterment of their lives. It is a matter of pride that the movement began with the Church, but it is a pity that it has not spread far and wide even in the Church circles, although the Church owns and runs many educational institutions. It is a positive sign to note that emulating the Church media practitioners, ME has been popularised in some places by Non-Christian NGO-groups. The Christian academic community has yet to awaken to this dire need of the times, if at all they should be proud of themselves as educators in this mediated age.

7.5 Public Relations, a Major Need

Taking inspiration from the several Public Relations (PR) workshops at the Asian and National level, there is a growing awareness among Church personnel that relating with the public at large is crucial to develop a healthy image for the Church in India. This has become a major media concern now, specially because of the false propaganda launched by the Hindu fundamentalist groups against the Church. The interest in PR arose as a crisis management issue, but it is growing up to the level of presenting the real face of Christianity and the Church to the nation. The founding of a national Public Relations Office under the CBCI in 1999 has enabled the public, especially the media, to have access to facts about the Church without much delay. The PR consciousness has added to the quality of the Church's interaction with the media and with the public. No wonder it has also helped in some kind of soul searching since PR basically is projecting what we are. Yes, 'medium is the message' and the challenge for the Church is to become what she really is and what she wants to be projected as – a community of loving, caring, sharing, contemplating people, deeply committed to the nation and its development.

The launching of national awards in media, the organizing of national seminars on current media issues, launching of websites by several institutes and dioceses are all attempts at making small but significant contribution to the nation through media.

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7.6 Websites

The Church has also promoted Internet communication through several websites, e-zines and other services for the public. Internet is the newest means for Christians engaged in nation building to spread news, ideas, get support, conscientise people and net work with other organisations. But there remains a long way to go and we need to come out of our shells. The numerous websites that provide information on church-based institutions have also helped to reduce the digital divide created by ICTs. Institutions like the Indian Social Institute, Xavier Labour Relations Institute, National Institute of Social Communications, Research and Training, etc are worth mentioning in this area.

7.7 Niscort

One of the major achievements of CBCI in recent year is the initiative to set up a National Institute of Social Communications, Research and Training (NISCORT) in Delhi. In fact, the founding of the National Institute of Social Communications, Research and Training (NISCORT) by the Catholic Church in 1997, at the suggestion of Frs. Jacob Srampickal and Jude Botelho, who were the then office bearers of Unda/OCIC India - the national media association - in order to train talented, faith-filled and committed laity to enter the secular media, is indeed a major step. Professional media training with an alternative thrust, a much needed thing today, could have been developed for all, but poor management and lack of vision have let it down considerably.

8. Some Suggestions for a Better Contribution through the Media

8.1 Become Aware of Our Handicaps

Media work in the Church has been growing through two major handicaps. Initially most of those who were prepared to work in the media field — clergy and religious, were trained abroad. Coming back many felt a bit out of place with no up-to-date equipment, and worse, lack of any sound knowledge of the media scene and media people in the country. Several of these trained persons ended up as failures and some even quit the priesthood, religious life, lending media work a bad name. Secondly, from the early seventies emphasis was laid on developing diocesan and regional centres, which almost ran parallel production units with the secular media, but in a very inward-looking, amateur style, making hardly any significant national contribution. Even several talented Christians buried their talents in these centres.

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8.2 Decision-makers in the Church Should Recognise the Power of the Media

Even today a large number of Bishops and Major Superiors are not sufficiently aware of the power and potential of the media. Some are scared because they have a false understanding that communication service has to do with expensive and sophisticated technology. There are also those who think that these are unnecessary and they can manage without media. It is true the media are in the hands of the powerful: the business lobbies and politicians. Money, glamour, glitz and glory are the order of the day in the media world. But the media are not bad in themselves. If the Church is serious about her mission, she needs to forge an alternative kind of media usage in the country. And this is possible only by being right in the field.

8.3 Capture Opportunities

If the *World Communications Day,* initiated from 1967, is celebrated every year meaningfully in every parish a lot of ignorance about the media could have been cleared up. In spite of regular appeals being made every year to communicate to the people regarding the celebration of the day, even today most parish priests have hardly heard about such a celebration in the Church.

Many still believe in using the media merely for evangelisation and proclamation. This needs to change. It is more important as "*Redemptoris Missio*" says, to be able to evangelise the media culture, "since the very evangelisation of modern culture depends to a great extent on the influence of the media, it is not enough to use the media, simply to spread the Christian message and the Church's authentic teaching. It is also necessary to integrate that message into the 'new culture' created by modern communications" (*RM,* 37). One needs to realize that when Christians with deep commitment to Christ get into the media, they can surely evangelise the world through the media. Again helping people critically understand the media through Media Education is becoming an evangeliser today. Although from 1971, the documents have urged that priests and religious be taught the power and potential of the media, hardly anything has been done in a systematic way in this regard in our seminaries and formation houses except in a few exceptional cases. In the context of the formation of the religious sisters, the situation is appalling. This is mainly because those in charge of formation of both seminarians and sisters have hardly any understanding of what the media is all about.

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8.4 Need to Change the Church's Attitude of Superiority

The Church in Asia, although living in a pluralistic society as a minority presence, has consciously and unconsciously projected an attitude of superiority and it is projected in our communications. We need to develop an attitude of openness, willingness to learn from others and the capacity to work with others with self- respect.

8.5 Collaboration or Parallel Structures?

Several of our media centres have nothing to do with the secular media structures outside our campus. These are run as parallel structures. The media persons themselves are trained abroad and have little knowledge of the ways of the media in the country and have hardly any contacts to be happy about. So they do their own thing where they themselves feel all important. What is worse, even in the same city, if there are three or four centres of the Christians, they all do independent work, without any net-working or worse still, at times even competing with each other. As a result, there is a waste of resources both at the financial and personnel level while tremendous potential is wasted and non-professionalism creeps in as well. Above all, it gives a counter witness to the public.

8.6 Priorities in Planning and Distribution of Finances

One of the suggestions made by the participants of the All India Seminar (1969) was that the National Office/centres also determine the priorities in allocating available funds for media work. The funds that are available are either determined by the donor agencies of by the SIGNIS national office. A recent survey by the national secretariat of SIGNIS found that in the last twenty-five years over 60% of the finances for media development were dumped in one state -Tamil Nadu. SIGNIS is somehow compelled to cater to the needs of the member institutions rather than the overall needs of the Church in a planned manner. It was also suggested that the dioceses and the national Church give right priority to the media apostolate. In most of the dioceses this item does not appear in their budget at all and even if it does, it has the least priority.

The participants of the All India Seminar also had the foresight to pool a central fund for media at the national level and recommended a collection on the World Communications Day of which 50% is to be utilized by the diocese and 50% to feed the central fund.

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Conclusion

Aetatis Novae brought in the concept of Pastoral Communication in a major way, demanding that Bishops take up social communications as part and parcel of the pastoral plan in every diocese. Although in earlier years the media was mostly used as a tool to proclaim the Christian message, today after *Aetatis Novae*, a clear mandate has come about in the Church with regard to media. Media has been made central to the Church and not a private pastime of any single priest. The document stresses, "We therefore strongly recommend that dioceses and Episcopal conferences or assemblies include a communications component in every pastoral plan." (*AE*, 21)[8]. This has helped clarify certain thrusts that can help the communication work of the Church contribute much to the nation:. The major thrusts to make a national contribution are:

Providing professional training to the laity so that they can enter the secular media and evangelise the media.

Media Education is to be seen as a major task to be implemented in every sphere of the activity of the Church. If the aim of education is to make persons fully alive, with all their faculties well developed, an educator simply cannot ignore the subtle ways of the media. Any systematic study of the communications and media needs to undertake media research in a calculated manner.

Use the media to project the right image of the Church in a pro-active manner. The Church has for many years suffered much due to poor Public Relations. As a result our co-nationals are still ignorant of our characteristics as Christians. For this it was emphasized clearly that every parish, diocese and Christian institution should endeavour to make its goals, values and vision clear to the public. In the North Indian context, every action of the missionary is interpreted as an attempt at conversion to Christianity. Even major humanitarian services rendered by the Church-related organizations are interpreted as an attempt to proselyte the people affected by famine, cyclone or earthquake.

The Church media personnel need to realize that they need not always run parallel media structures along the lines of the secular media. In the secular media itself there are at least 15% of excellent productions that highlight values and propagate human rights issues. It is the primary duty of the media persons to discover and promote these. As Harvey Cox suggests, a Christian thus needs to become a "kingdom-spotter" in the secular world[9]. Or as Cardinal Martini observes, the media is like the hem of the garment of Jesus, dusty and dirty (read worldly) but can carry a healing power if utilized for the good of humanity.[10]

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One needs to realize that the media are giving shape to a new generation. If we want to communicate with them, we need to learn the language of the media, the language of advertising, of the serials, films, soap operas and sitcoms, for it is through these forms that today's generation is educated. And finally, these are the days of the modern communication technologies and convergence. Computers and satellites have brought in a communication revolution, which the Church cannot ignore. This communication revolution is giving certain specific traits to their users. As a media practitioner recently put it, 'Everyone is busy in capturing as much cyberspace as possible where as the Church is still looking for physical space to build its institutions'! Can the Church in India afford to ignore the reality that surround her and lose opportunities for bringing the Kingdom of God in the hearts of human beings as desired by her Lord and Master?

Inter Mirifica, the *Vatican* II document said: "It would be shameful if by their inactivity Catholics allowed the Word of God to be silenced or obstructed by the technical difficulties which these media present and, by their admittedly enormous cost. For this reason the Council reminds them that they have the obligation to sustain and assist Catholic newspapers, Periodicals, Film Projects, Radio and Television Stations, and programmes.(no.23)" With such strong injunctions, the Church in India should leave no stone unturned in its effort to spread the Word of God, in a way that is relevant and understood by the people. Media efforts have only begun, much more can be done. Much more can be done if the official Church encourages talented persons to persist in this area, come what may.

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17
A Better Tomorrow: The Youth Animation

Joe Arimpoor

1. The Future of Youth

A United Nations study spells out this forecast in no uncertain terms: "There is a growing sense of unity among young people, a feeling of world solidarity and a sense of common responsibility to achieve peace. Youth of the world is feeling a universal identity. This is a new kind of population, more resilient and adaptable than their elders, ready for change and open to new ideas. Youth of the world will soon predominate in world affairs". In the words of Martin Buber, "Youth are a megaphone of today's society, crying out against the injustices which most of us endure in silence." It is most important to treat youth as potential, not a liability and thus counteract the tendency to deal with them as if they were a dependent or a problematic group.

2. Youth – A Significant Segment of Society

Every society has to deal with the task of bringing up its children and transform them into adults. The survival and growth of a society depends very much on the quality of this process. From the discovery of childhood and its importance in the process of growth, society has moved on to recognize and treat adolescence as a distinct stage of development. In adolescence, the coincidence of extended education and early sexual maturation, gave rise to new psychological theories that specify adolescence as a different stage in the span of one's life.

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Just as the industrial society achieved the discovery and recognition of adolescence, so a post-independent stage of youth is beginning to be made available by post-industrial society. Two overriding facts that one has to keep in mind in discussing youth and development in India are: the predominance of young population in the demographic composition, and the existence of more than fifty percent of youth below the poverty line.

3. Indian Youth Scenario

In India, nearly eighty percent of the population lives in rural areas and the majority below subsistence level. Large sections of the rural youth do not have the benefit of any educational facilities and where they do, the curricula do not provide them with the relevant practical skills and knowledge for effective participation in rural and agricultural development. One of the most serious problems facing rural youth in India today is the lack of productive employment opportunities. The percentage of unemployed youth is alarmingly high. In rural areas many people suffer from more discriminatory practices on the basis of caste, religion or sex than in urbanized or industrialized regions.

4. Youth and Education Today

For decades criticisms have been leveled against the educational system, calling it irrelevant, not life-oriented, not job-oriented, etc. A number of commissions have presented their reports. Finally a new educational policy has been formulated. While attempts have been made to make the educational system more holistic, "There is one type of education for the rich and another for the poor. This is a scandal to the culture of the land. Education itself serves as a cultural opium that prevents peoples' attempts to confront the system." –Malcom Adiseshya-

Education should guide people through life's problems. But education itself has become a problem. It has become a source of enslavement to ideologies and the culture of the dominant community. The entire educational system seems to be oriented to meet the needs of the one-third of the population, to dish out the little from the poor to add to the luxury of the rich, to create consumeristic "needs" for the people and to disseminate the ideas of the rich. Today it is not enough to reform certain aspects of the educational system. We have to create an alternative system appropriate to the needs of the poor.

Although considerable efforts have been made in raising educational levels in India, a large percentage of the youth still remains illiterate. The influence of caste is all - pervasive in

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our society. It plays a vital role in educational opportunities and employment availability. In fact it colors the very birth, marriage and death of individuals.

5. Church's Contribution to the Development of the Youth in India

The Catholic Church had realized early in history that it is her responsibility to bring up her children in their faith and transform them into honest citizens and good Catholics. And it is only natural that these efforts got organized first in Kerala where Christianity was planted first in India. These efforts of the church got more and more organized and received its visibility in the last century.

5.1 Catholic Youth Movements of Kerala

With the socio economic development in Kerala and the spread of education the level of awareness and involvement of the people was also high. Many movements and associations had started in Kerala. They were political, social, cultural and religious in nature. Most of them were very local and were short lived. However some of them spread beyond parochial boundaries and lasted longer. Among them three movements stand out: The Kerala Catholic Students' League (KCSL), The All India Catholic University Federation (AICUF), and the Kerala Catholic Youth Movement (KCYM).

5.2 The Kerala Catholic Students League (KCSL)

The Kerala Catholic Students League known as KCSL is an organization for the Catholic students of Kerala. It has existed under various titles and forms from 1917 onwards. From Conference to League, and from students to youth, and then again to students, it had changed its name. It is open to all Catholic students of the high school classes. The League focused on three main objectives:

- To cultivate mutual acquaintance and fellowship
- To promote a vigorous Catholic spirit
- To promote social action among the Catholics in Malabar in collaboration with the clergy

The weekly study circle was the strategy to keep the league vibrant, active and growing. It created an atmosphere of reflection after action, and planning before the action. The annual sessions provided a platform to share ideas, to deepen the relationships, and to strengthen their commitments. The seminal concept of the movement started here. It was in the early

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seventies that the members took an active part in politics. Together with this the clarion call of the Second Vatican Council "aggiornomento" gave impetus to this movement. The movement developed fast with the guidelines drawn up at the conference in 1972. The focus of the movement was Christian formation of the members and the social transformation of the society.

5.3 The All India Catholic University Federation (AICUF)

It is to be noted that both the Kerala Catholic Students' League and the All India Catholic University Federation originated at St. Joseph's College, Trichinopoly. While the membership of the KCSL is restricted to high school students, the membership of the AICUF is restricted to the university students.

The origin of the present AICUF may be traced back to the Malabar Catholic Students' Conference of 1915. However, officially the origin of the AICUF is considered to be in 1924 with Fr. Carty, S.J. as its founder (Introduction to the constitution of the AICUF). (It is to be noted that in some reports Fr. Froehly, S.J., the rector of St.Joseph's College, Trichinapoly is recognized as the founder of the guild, as it was known then).

5.3.1 The objectives of the Guild were:

(a) To facilitate a truly Christian interaction among Catholic young men

(b) To create and promote among them, by means of the study club, a wider interest in the study of their religion and of the social questions so largely connected with it

(c) To help the members in the study and in the application of Catholic principles to the social problems by the publication of a monthly organ.

Biblical inspiration and the Evangelical reading of the reality coupled with the social awareness and the consequent involvement of youth in the process of social transformation formed the thrust of this movement.

In 1937, the university students' section of the Catholic Young Men's Federation of South India was affiliated to the Pax Romana an international movement from Switzerland. Thus the outlook of the movement widened: The Christian regeneration of the world by mobilizing the intelligentsia of every country to contribute their share to the building up of the Kingdom of God. This movement of the university students was recognized in 1949 as the All India Catholic University Federation (AICUF) and was officially recognized by the Catholic Bishops Conference of India.

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From the focus on Christian formation the movement took on to personality development. In the 1970s the thrust was on "aggiornomento", where Christian leaders were trained to read the "signs of the times" and respond. To enhance the capacity of the youth leaders to read the signs of the times, scientific analysis of society in India was introduced. This exercise revealed the wide gap that existed between the haves and the have-nots. The youth were gripped with the reality of injustice and exploitation. The scandalous discrimination based on caste, poverty and illiteracy made the movement take the side of the poor and the exploited. The AICUF has continued to be the champion of the liberation of the oppressed. They have ushered in a new spirituality, namely the spirituality of justice.

5.4 Youth Movements in Kerala: New Beginings

The Catholic Church in Kerala has been making efforts to organize the youth from the beginning of this century. The student youth got organized through the educational institutions. Parishes made some sporadic, parochial efforts to catechize their youth and offer opportunities for their development. From these emerged two movements: The All Kerala Catholic Congress (AKCC) and The Cherupushpa Mission League (CML). They rose to the stature of national movements and made substantial contributions to the church and the society.

The All Kerala Catholic Congress (AKCC) was not limited only to the youth. Its origin goes back to 1905. However, it provided an opportunity for the youth to come together and discuss current problems of the church. The youth got organized and demanded their political rights. They fought against certain discriminations and got eight Christians elected to the assembly in 1933. Later a youth wing of AKCC was started. This Catholic youth organization (CYO) was started in a few dioceses.

5.5 The Cherupushpa Mission League (CML)

The Cherupushpa Mission League (CML) was not a youth movement in the strict sense. It is a pious association, including all category of people. The youth of Kerala benefited from its service particularly for the spiritual formation and vocational discernment. This League had its origin in 1947 at Bharananganam. The main objectives of this movement were to inculcate in its members a missionary association and the spirit of service. By 1975 the League had 1713 units with 500,000 members.

5.6 The Kerala Catholic Youth Movement

The socio-political and religious situation of Kerala and the multiplicity of Catholic Youth Movements gave rise to the national organization of youth. The "Yuva Sakti" (youth power)

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of Palai diocese, "Yuva Deepti" (Light of youth) of Changanachery diocese, Catholic Youth Federation of Ernakulam archdiocese, Catholic Union of Trichur, Cnanaya Catholic League of Kottayam and CYO of Kothamangalam provided the base to launch the Kerala Catholic Youth Movement (KCYM).

The Catholic Church in India took progressive steps in 1972 to institute a special commission for youth in the Catholic Bishops Conference of India (CBCI). Since then all the dioceses got organized with the Catholic youth movement.

The International Year of Youth – 1985 gave a spurt to Youth Ministry in the Church in India. One of the significant activities that was started in this year was the Triennial National Level Youth Conventions. This mega event gathers youth from all over India with the prime objective of national integration, which is the real need in the country today. The second objective of this venture is the formation of youth through the preparation, participation, and the interaction among the youth from the different parts and cultures of the country.

The field of Youth Ministry in India may be reviewed received from different angles: the situation of the youth in the country, the various youth movements particularly the church related ones, the programmes and services for the development of the youth, the training and formation of youth ministers, organization of ministry at the local, regional and national levels, research studies and finally the involvement and the policy formation at the national level.

5.7 The YCS/ YSM Movement

The YCS/ YSM Movement was started to facilitate the formation of the students through action. It is a student centered movement. Right from the time the movement was initiated in Europe in 1930 it was aimed at leadership formation among high school students with the understanding, however, that the formation was to be through reflection –action –reflection. The Indian movement too has the same objectives.

At the Second National Council of the movement held in 1972 it was decided that the movement will remain "dynamic presence in history" responding to the real challenging of the time, but at the same time a movement of Integral formation which would consider "involvement" and "action" as an expression of religious faith.

5.8 Don Bosco Youth Movement

Don Bosco Youth Movement came to India in 1906 in Tanjore, India. It was started by St. John Bosco who founded a religious congregation of fathers and brothers, and another of

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sisters to work for boys and girls, specially the poor. In addition to the educational institutions through which they reached out to the students, they organized youth in groups in youth centers, parishes and in the open settings. The young are offered a youth spirituality to enhance their spiritual life. The whole approach to youth ministry is based on a system known as the preventive system which is based on the three pillars of reason, religion and loving kindness. The educative pastoral project for the young consists of four dimensions: (1) Education and Culture (2) Evangelization and Catechetics (3) Group Experience and Movement (4) Vocational Orientation and Discernment.

The Triennial National Meeting of the DBYM leaders and the BOSCOREES conducted for the Don Bosco scouts at the national level every three years are the main mega events of the movement. The preparation and participation of the young at the regional levels for these events give them their identity and opportunity to meet and interact with youth from the different parts of the country. Thus these events promote national integration.

5.9 Training and Courses - Youth Ministry

One of the significant contributions of the movement is the formation and training of youth ministers across the country. From the first short-term seminars and national seminar for the youth ministers conducted in Bangalore in 1973-74, seminars and training programmes were conducted across the country. Youth ministry became part of priestly formation. The credit goes to this movement for the full fledged training programme for the youth ministers at the masters level. Sacred Heart College, Tirupattur in Tamilnadu started the Masters Degree in Social Work with specialization in Youth Welfare, and Licenciate programme in Youth Work and Catechetics at Vishwa Deep, Kristu Jyothi College, Bangalore. Both these institutions belong to the Don Bosco Youth Movement.

5.10 Research and Development in Youth Ministry

One more milestone was reached in the life of youth ministry in India with the starting of Bosco Institute of Research and Development for Youth in 1996 in Hyderabad. An approach of research and development in youth ministry was a break through.

Conclusion

There has been progressive development in Youth Ministry and approaches to the Youth. The welcome shifts emerged from Animation Services aimed at the welfare of youth to building up of Youth Groups and Movements. The research and scientific temper in Youth Ministry has

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picked up in the recent past. It is to be acknowledged that this has begun with those involved in Youth Ministry.

What is required for the future in the area of Youth Ministry is policies and advocacy. Only with such steps can the many years of experiences and reflections on Youth Ministry consolidate to better results. The data from researches will guide the vision to be embedded in the policies that should follow.

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18
Consecrated Women at the service of the Nation

Dolores Rego

"The Consecrated life, deeply rooted in the example and teaching of Christ the Lord, is a gift of the father to the Church through the Holy Spirit." These opening words of the Apostolic Constitution "Vita Consecrata" (1996) indicates the important place of religious life in the Church, for the world.[1]

Perhaps today, more than ever, Jesus' invitation to cast out into the deep appears as a response to the human drama which is the victim of hate and death. The Holy Spirit is always active in history and can draw from human dramas a discernment of the events which is open to the mystery of mercy and peace among peoples. The Spirit, in fact, from the very troubled nature of the nations calls forth in many the dream of a different world already present among us. John Paul II assures young people of this when he exhorts them to be "sentinels of the dawn."[2] Look at our Christmas celebrations with Christmas trees, Christmas cards and uncalled for extravagance! We do not stop and think to reflect on the relevance or rather irrelevance of such celebrations. With the glamour of market oriented Christmas celebrations, where does the message of Peace and Joy, of forgiveness and love to the people of goodwill, to the simple and humble folk heard? Are we not (Priests & Sisters) in fore front of such meaningless rituals and celebrations and extravagance? I wish we really discovered and invented ways of giving the message of Jesus to Indians. Of course, for that all of us would have to live the Gospel in a radical way and it is not at all easy. The role of the consecrated people (man

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and women) in the Indian culture is to be prophets and pioneers rooted in Christ and the Indian culture. Religious (consecrated women) are a witness to the charity of Christ in a secular world. We can say that consecrated women carry this message with then wherever they go.

Particularly in the Indian culture, it would mean that the Consecrated be:

Persons living in constant God-experience

- having a simple life-style
- visible to the people by living among them,
- identifying oneself with them
- being happy to live among the poor and marginalized as Jesus was
- extending God's tenderness to all
- Drawing all to the Father through Jesus

Consecrated people have played a great role in the Indian culture because they have

- identified themselves with the culture of the people they work with
- written books etc which have provoked thought in these issues
- purified the negative aspects like trying to eradicate superstitious practices

Education and healing have reached the remotest area.

In our time consecrated life is seen in new perspectives. It may have lost something of the sublime dignity with which it was surrounded in the past when virginity was praised as a higher state of life, above the realm of the body and the bondage to procreation, at times with a somewhat negative view of the human body, of sexuality and love. The modern approach to life is holistic: we are aware of the wholeness of human life which is inserted into the cycles of nature. We do not "have" a body, rather we are body, belonging to this world, responsible for it, but reaching out beyond the realm of nature, towards the ultimate destiny of human life in the mystery of divine love.[3]

1. The Consecrated Life: A Gift to the Church

It's universal presence and the evangelical nature of its witness are clear evidence-if any were needed – that the consecrated life is not something isolated and marginal, but a reality which affects the whole Church. The bishops at the Synod frequently re-affirmed this *"de re nostra agitur"*, "this is something which concerns us all". In effect, *the consecrated life is at the very heart of the Church* as a decisive element for her mission, since it "manifests the inner nature of the Christian calling" and the striving of the whole Church as Bride towards union

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with her one Spouse. At the Synod it was stated on several occasions that the consecrated life has not only proved a help and support for the Church in the past, but is also a precious and necessary gift for the present and future of the People of God, since it is an intimate part of her life, her holiness and her mission.[4]

Thus it can be said that consecrated persons are "in mission" by virtue of their very consecration, to which they bear witness in accordance with the ideal of their Institute. When the founding charism provides for pastoral activities, it is obvious that the witness of life and the witness of works of the apostolate and human development are equally necessary: both mirror Christ who is at one and the same time consecrated to the glory of the Father and sent into the world for the salvation of His brothers and sisters.[5]

Religious women have broken the tradition of serving within the four walls of their institutions. This break has been a difficult one but the beginning has been made. It forebodes greater enterprises in mission. Today we have instances of religious women thrown into jail because of false accusations on conversions, e.g. Sr. Bridhi of M.P. was 8 days in jail. There she mobilized her companions in jail, for prayer, forgiveness and service. We have examples of consecrated women who have been martyred for the faith, for service and to safeguard their virginity. Consecrated women have over the centuries, taken a secondary place in Church matters but have surpassed all in fidelity to service and mission.

2. The Presence of Consecrated Women is felt in the Remote Areas of Our Country

India lives in her villages. 85% of her people are rural folk. They are more simple, stable and receptive to the message of the Gospel. In the villages, beliefs and traditions once established continue for generations. It is essential and effective therefore to open more communities in rural areas and encourage more consecrated women to go out to the villages, to meet people in their surroundings than wait for them to come to the institutional set-up. Adapting an Indian than Western style of being among them and conversing in their language help them feel at home in the presence of the Consecrated and to relate to them as people of God.

Consecrated women religious have always been in the forefront, be it in the educational field, or the medical field or in the work of social action or rural uplift In the various regions of our country they are seen working with and for the poor and the marginalized, the downtrodden and the outcasts of society. Their presence is seen among the illiterate and the handicapped

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bringing the light of hope in their lives. A good number of our religious are involved in direct evangelization, formal and non-formal education as well as preventive and curative health activities. This work is carried out mainly in remote areas of our country with a view to the holistic growth of the people especially of women, girls and children –the marginalized. They combine healing ministry with social action spreading awareness and Christian principles of human dignity and equality. Many religious work with Dalit groups giving them the awareness of their dignity and the need for asserting their rights. They do not stop with giving awareness but stand by them giving them support in their struggles.

There are several new initiatives being taken up by the religious in their various apostolates empowering the sub-altern groups. Women are organized and sub-groups of dalits like dhobis, cobblers and also tribals and unorganized agricultural laborers are given support in their struggles in society. This is being done according to the teachings of Christ and according to the mind of the Church. They have realized that the role of religious is to be busy with God than with God's works. Since the consecrated are not mere social workers but pointers to the Father like Jesus, they strive to have education in prayer as the keynote of all their planning. Religious women try to forge unity among the sub-groups. When they become strong and are convinced of the need for political action, the religious take up the larger issues of land rights and other resources. In this process they do face a lot of opposition from the government, intimidation by the police and the actual arrests, imprisonment etc. all because of empowering the dalits. At times when the Church authorities ask the religious to withdraw from these involvements they continue to support the people knowing full well that it was for these very people Jesus came, lived and died.

3. Collaboration with the Laity

Religious in India collaborate with the laity – in new way of being Church in the socio-cultural context of our times. Current issues, women's issues, happenings are the new initiatives that they are taking. Child labour, ecological problems are taken care of (Orissa).

There are several religious in Rajasthan who are involved in the building of Human Communities based on Gospel values. They help in looking after the street children, rehabilitation of the handicapped –the mentally and physically retarded. They run homes for the deaf and dumb, the blind and the leprosy patients. In the rural areas they conduct awareness programmes for the women regarding their empowerment. They conduct various activities through the modern methods of mass media and encourage journalism among the youth.

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In the Delhi region, working for the option for the poor and the marginalized is an area of concern. In Andhra Pradesh a very systematic programme is being carried out at all levels for the welfare of the slum dwellers by the Brothers of St. Gabriel in collaboration with another two Congregations. Rag pickers and street children are being taken care of and are given training in skills by the Salesians of Hyderabad and Vijayawada. Mission among the tribals in Khammam diocese is established by the Jesuits in collaboration with two other Congregations.

There are a few Congregations who are fully engaged in the service of the mentally retarded, the destitute, the handicapped and the aged. The CRI extends its full support and co-operation to these activities.

In Tamil Nadu according to the details available in 175 schools 21,944 students are given education on human rights. This seems to be a good beginning indeed. While the enthusiasm generated among the Heads of Schools, members of the religious communities, those actually involved in the teaching of human rights and the response among the student community is tremendous. "In an increasingly secularizing world, Human Rights groups, have evolved as a new community of believers, with its own martyrs, disciples and saints.... The Human Rights Community comprising of all kinds of people is emerging as a sign of the Kingdom of God with the dream of a new heaven and a new earth, where all tears shall be wiped out."(Fr. Arul SJ)

In Bihar Inter-religious harmony and dialogue groups have ben very active on the diocesan level. We have made remarkable progress in attacking the problems concerning the violations of Human Rights by the joint effort of all the Christian denominations. They have formed an Organizing Committee comprising of the religious, the clergy, the laity and the bishops in most of the dioceses to solve the Human Rights Violations problem and it is very active and effective.

In Mumbai the sisters collaborate with the Archdiocese through their involvement at the Archdiocesan Women's Desk, Pastoral Council, Peace & Justice Commission, Women's issues, Formation, rallying together for common causes when the need arises.

In Madhya Pradesh special meetings were called to show our solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Orissa at the brutal murder of Fr. Aruldas. The religious work in close collaboration with the Church authorities in asserting their human rights and conduct awareness programmes in the rural areas. During the unfortunate incident at Jhabhua when the sisters were attacked the MPCRI visited the place of the incident and gave all moral support to the victims. They met the Chief Minister and expressed their anxiety to work in the remote areas of the state due

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to threat and cruel attacks on Christians. CRI members came forward to help the victims through counseling and guidance.

In the Kerala Region, debts of the employees were written off and litigations were discontinued. Marriage assistance to deserving girls is given by many communities. As part of the renewed efforts to re-evangelize the catholic communities, house visits and Basic Family units are used effectively to share the Gospel message.

In West Bengal special attention and effort is made to bring up the marginalized students to the required standard. Literacy programmes for stone cutters, small savings schemes and self-help groups have been organized to promote ecology and the practical ways of applying it has been given Personnel is being trained in the use of Mass media. Care of street children and their rehabilitation has been taken up. Much had been done for the relief of the flood victims in collaboration with NGOs and other organizations.

In the North East Region, there is a congenial atmosphere among the religious and the clergy. This has helped very much in facilitating the varied activities in which the religious are involved. The religious go into the inaccessible areas of the region to give the message of Christ in spite of the disturbing conditions. They help in the strengthening of the faith among the people working in the tea gardens and the border areas of the country.

In the state of Karnataka there are 6 cells formed to building up Inter-religious harmony and understanding, promote a participative Church towards evangelization and work towards inculturation of the Church and religious life. The cells are:

- Justice & Peace Cell Women's issues	- Women's Development Cell
- Inter-religious Harmony & Dialogue	- Inter-Religious Dialogue Cell
- Option for the Poor & Marginalized	- Justice & Peace Cell
- Human Rights	- Justice & Peace Cell
- Integrity of Creation	- Justice & Peace Cell (Ecology & Environment)
- Child Labour	- Justice & Peace Cell.

The Church in this third millennium is going through a special phase of her life. The Apostolic Letter *Ecclesia in Asia* states: The Synod Fathers were most concerned that the Church should be a participatory Church in which no one feels excluded and they judged the wider participation of women in the life and mission of the Church in Asia to be an especially pressing need. (E.A.45)

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4. CRI Contribution to the Pastoral Life of the Church

We religious are called upon to get involved in the Parish. Though *Lumen Gentium* 44 clearly states that Religious State, constituted by the profession of the evangelical counsels, does not belong to the hierarchical structure of the Church and that its function is distinguished from the clerical function, yet religious are called to assist in the pastoral project of the diocese in various ways. We need to be clear, however, that the diocesan pastoral project which is the primary task of the hierarchical order is not the primary task of the religious. We have already indicated the rich involvement, region by region, of the CRI in the life of the Church. Here we note some more general points:

- SCC groups provide a great scope for Religious to exercise their involvement with the people. Through their involvement they share the struggles, sufferings, joys and hopes of the people. They let the riches of their charism overflow as a gift of the evangelizing spirit. They lead the people to share the Word of God through Lumco and other methods. This provides them with a valuable opportunity to encounter their brothers and sisters in the local Church.
- The sick and the aged seem to be the special concern of women religious. Sisters go from house to house, from bed to bed in the hospitals, not only distributing communion but also attending to the spiritual and physical needs of the sick and the aged and thus sustain their faith and bring joy and hope to their sinking spirits.
- In many Parishes the Youth are kept alive and close to the Church by religious, who organize interesting and challenging activities for them, encourage them to use their talents for the building up of the Parish liturgical life.
- The care of the young children of the Parish is always delegated to the women religious who prepare them for the reception of the sacraments, take care of them during liturgical services, conduct Sunday catechism classes. While women religious recognize the importance of this service to children, they wonder at times if priests feel it below their dignity to teach catechism Surely this is a symbolic but very important ministry of the Pastor.
- When it comes to fostering popular devotions in the Parish, the parish priest seems to depend solely on the women religious who sometimes are the only ones to attend these devotions in large number in order to encourage the parishioners to attend the same.

Sisters are ever ready and feel happy to each catechism or be communion ministers. Aren't there more ministries of this type that can be offered to the women religious? Could the CBCI give guidelines for the uniform practice involving women religious in the area of Liturgy? This will be a positive move towards a more participatory model of the Church.

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5. Some Proposals

If the Church gives formal recognition to the involvement of religious, their activities will receive a new coherent ecclesial horizon, besides providing an incentive to participate more actively in the Church's life and mission.

Growth in maturity is much needed both on the part of the priests and women religious. Learning the art of communication especially under stress, skills in team work, delegating responsibility, being accountable to each other etc. can help us work together in peace and harmony and be shining witnesses to the people we serve.

Our numbers are increasing. You can see them in the CRI Directory 2002. The total number of sisters is 83,824 active and 834 contemplative. Religious Priests total about 10,529 with a further 6258 in formation for priesthood. There are 4117 Religious Brothers in the CRI. This brings us to a total of 1,05,562 members. To this you could add 6806 Novices and 16,499 Candidates. God has indeed blessed our country with plentiful vocations to the religious life.

We can journey together, joining hands, as we face the challenges that confront us in the emerging context of globalization and liberalization, and work collaboratively to empower the powerless in and through our ministries and lead our people close to the Lord.

Notes:

1. Conference of Religious India, *Religious Life in a New Era* – P. 18
2. John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Novo Miillennio Ineunte*, 6th January 2001, 9
3. Conference of Religious India, *Religious Life in a New Era*, P. 29
4. *Vita Consecrata* – Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, 5-6, Footnotes 2,3,4.
5. *Lumen Gentium*, 46, Reports of the CRI Units

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PART - III

TOWARDS NEW PARADIGMS

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19
New Paradigms in Social Action: Issues and Perspectives

Prakash Louis

1. Social Action: The Beginning

The Indian sub-continent over the years has achieved major milestones in the economic sphere, political arena and social order. There is a sense of well being among the people in general. Some of the socio-economic indicators also bear witness to the fact that India has achieved substantial growth. The Indian economists see a sign of hope amidst some constraints. 'Inspite of industrial slow down and pessimism, the economy is growing at over 5 per cent per year. Inflation is under reasonable control. Many new initiatives are under way for the infrastructure sector. The incidence of hunger, as felt subjectively at least, is dramatically reduced'.[1]

The United Nations Development Programme also recognises the spectacular progress made by the Indian industry. 'In India the industry generated 330 billion rupees in 1999, 15 times the level in 1990. India shows why public policy is important. By providing education for information technology-India's English language technical colleges turn out more than 73,000 graduates a year – and investing in infrastructure the government has ensured India's place in new economy. These efforts will deliver long-term benefits for human development and equitable economic growth'.[2] Thus, even the international organisations take note of the fact that India has made major break through in its economic sector.

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A careful socio-historical examination of the Indian society on the one hand records the phenomenal progress made by the Indian polity and society, on the other hand it also points to various deep-seated contradictions which this country and society are confronted with. These colour the democraticisation of the country, reconstruction of rural milieu and provide fodder for unrest and conflict. For instance, land reform was one of the major promises made by the ruling class during the freedom struggle to rope in the downtrodden in the freedom struggle. After India became a free country, land reform was introduced. But over fifty years of implementation of land reform policies tell the tale of determined political will not to alter the unequal social order. It is also significant to note that the process of land reform was carried on further and many more acts were formulated. An analysis of these acts shows that, on the one hand, there is no dearth of legislations and, on the other hand, these measures did not lead to any real structural change.

It is an established fact that deprivation, discrimination, inequality, exploitation and injustice have been part of societies world over. While these dehumanizing aspects of social life continue to stifle human existence, there is also the undaunting spirit to rise above the shackles. Voluntary action, social work, development activities and social action have been some of the major ways in which these debilitating aspects of society are being done away with. In a country like India, community development, people's participation and rural reconstruction, etc, are the integral part of nation building. The term 'social work' connotes a set of programmes with the objective of helping individuals or groups. It is presumed that the social worker or the agency concerned is equipped with the necessary training and skills in handling such situations. The help, moreover, is rendered through established methods and techniques of casework, group work, or community organisations, as needed in each individual case.[3]

2. The Indian Social Reality

A careful examination of the Indian social reality highlights the fact that Indian society and polity are confronted with progress in many fields and lagging behind in many other realms. Table 1 unravels this fact that even in general indicators like literacy and education, a vast segment of the population has not made much progress. For example, the female literacy rate has just crossed the half way mark. But in terms of agricultural labourers it is the women and the Scheduled Castes who constitute the major workforce. Even among the casual labourers it is the women who lag behind.

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Table 1 : Indian Social Reality – A Profile

Sl. No.	Area	
1	Population	1,027,015,247
2	Literacy	65.38%
3	Male	75.85%
4	Female	54.16%
5	Female/Male Ratio	933
6	Life Expectancy at Birth (1992 - 59) years	
7	Infant Mortality Rate (per 1,000 live births)	79
8	6-14 years out of school children	7.54 crore
9	Dropout by primary school	48%
10	Child labour working 12 hours a day on an average	7.0 to 8.0 crore
11	Cultivators	38.72%
12	Agricultural Labourers	26.095
13	Female Agricultural Labourers	44.24%
14	Scheduled Caste Agricultural Labourers	49.04%
15	Workforce – Casual labourers – Total [1993-94]	32.0%
16	- Male	29.6%
17	- Female	37.0%
18	Household with drinking water	77%
19	Household with electricity connections	53%
20	Below Poverty Line	36%
21	Proportion of villages with medical facilities	14.0%

Source: Census Reports 1991, 2001; Jean Dreze and Amartya Sen. India: Economic Development and Social Opportunity. Oxford University Press: Delhi, 1995

With regard to economic indicators at the national level, the situation is still deplorable. There are indications that there is a steady decline in the number of persons below poverty line. But once again the decline is very slow and one constantly hears of starvation deaths in many parts of Orissa, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh. The issue that those who are involved in social action are confronted with today is not just the decline in the below poverty ratio but the fact that while the godowns are full of grain over one third of the population goes to bed empty stomach. For the economists the below poverty line indicator could be a matter of calculations but for social workers it is a social, political and moral issue.

Moving from these indicators, if one analyses the overall assessment of economic development, the situation is appalling. Those who are for economic reform introduced with the New Economic Policy 1991 argue that the situation has improved clearly all around and has not worsened in any sense. They present the following facts to support their argument:

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1. The pace of reduction in poverty has accelerated or at least continued as before; 2. Literacy rate has continued to improve at the same rate; 3. Life expectancy at birth has risen faster; 4. Real wage rate of agricultural workers has grown at a faster rate than in the 1980s; 5. Employment in organized manufacturing industries increased by three and a half times as much as in the 1980s; 6. The growth rate of industrial output accelerated; 7. Agricultural income grew at a slower pace than that in the 1980s and output decelerated even more. In spite of this a massive stock of food grains has been built up.[4]

But the reality is different. 'Apart from the steady inflationary trend, it would be noted that over the past three years, i.e. from 1994-95 onwards, the prices of food articles have increased at a significantly higher rate than the "all commodities' index of prices. As per the 1991 census, out of a total workforce of 286 million persons, 111 million were cultivators and 75 million were landless agricultural labourers. This means, about 256 million of work force of India are net buyers of food; and the type of inflation in food prices that has occurred since 1994-95, despite favourable monsoons, has affected large segments of the population adversely.[5] It is these social facts that provide space for the emergence of voluntary action leading to social work.

3. Social Action: The Issues

Over the years the issues of social action have been sharpened. There has been a serious attempt to replace economic development with human development, top to down approach with bottoms up approach, political participation with people's participation, bureaucratic development with community development.

The issues of development itself have been brought under scrutiny. Michael P. Todaro defines development as both a physical reality and a state of mind in which society has, through some combination of social, economic and institutional process, secured the means for obtaining a better life. Development in all societies must have three objectives 1) To increase the availability and widen the distribution of basic life-sustaining goods such as food, shelter, health and protection; 2) To raise levels of living including, in addition to higher incomes, the provisions of more jobs, better education and greater attention to cultural and humanistic values, all of which will serve not only to enhance material well-being but also to generate greater attention to cultural and humanistic values, all of which well serve not only to enhance material well-being but also to generate greater individual and national self-esteem; 3) to expand the range of economic and social choices available to individual and nations by

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freeing them from servitude and dependence not only in relation to other people and nation-states but also to the forces of ignorance and human misery.[6]

Today development is also seen from the perspective of rights of the citizens of a country. The Human Development Report argues that 'Human development is incomplete without human freedom. The most systematic codification of freedoms includes the right to life, liberty and security of person, equality before law, freedom of assembly, freedom of thought, religion and opinion, the right to work, the free choice of jobs, the right to an adequate standard of living – including adequate food, clothing, housing, education, the right to participate in community life and so on'.[7] The basic struggle of the common masses for food, shelter and clothing provided scope for the social work to emerge as a major force in India.

As stated above, the existing socio-political and economic structures of rural society provided a ripe background to various individuals and organisations to engage themselves in welfare activities, which in the course of time became social action. Many welfare schemes effected after the independence have not produced the expected results. Disillusioned with the present economic growth model of development and the vote bank-orientedness of political parties, thousands of young men and women fled to the rural areas in the 1960s and early 70s to form the so-called action groups. It was hoped that the involvement of committed urban middle class youth in the life of the rural poor would lead to rural transformation.[8] These action groups or what came to be known as 'grass-root organizations', carried on various types of developmental and conscientizing activities to redress the grievances of the poor section and to organize them to fight for their rights.

In his perceptive analysis about action groups and social transformation, D.N.Dhanagare states that, the emergence of a large number of action groups who have been trying to educate, conscientize and mobilize different sections, particularly the oppressed poor, is one of the important developments in India since 1960. He further says that this phenomenon of action groups has been so for missing in Indian sociology. Action groups can be defined as groups working at the micro level, in a localized setting for and with the poor, marginalized and oppressed sections of the society – whether rural or urban. Such groups operate mostly outside the institutional framework of both the government and the established political parties but are not necessarily indifferent to them.[9] With the emergence of action groups, social movements became a reality. These movements directly impacted upon social change.

In course of time, social action was directed towards social change. Some of the areas that received serious attention from those engaged in social action were: helping others to

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improve their performance, ensuring development of the people, learning about the reality of life in the community, stimulating people to critically appraise their condition, assisting people to form democratic organizations, creating a shared vision and empowering the weaker sections of the society. Thus, at the national level nation building became the most dominant issue at the local level. It is rural reconstruction through community participation which became the central issue of social action.

3.1 Social Action: The Perspectives

One can identify a progressive movement in the very perception of social action. Usually, three inter-connected phases of growth in the perspective of social work is recognized.[10] Works of charity or social service was a response to the needs of those people in helpless situations, to bring immediate relief to the problems they face. Even though the immediate needs of these people were taken care of through such services, there is no change in the way they live as they continue to be dependent on others and on the existing oppressive or unjust structures. The beneficiaries continued to remain helpless and dependent on the benefactors. In this type of involvement, no serious attempt is made to analyze the existing situation and the root causes of the problems affecting the people. Hence, the activities remain confined to relief measures.

At the second stage, developmental work was seen as a response to the people in a helpless situation due to the lack of resources for a better living condition. Through developmental works individuals and groups are assisted, especially in the areas of both formal and non-formal education, health, housing, drinking water, irrigation and agriculture. Once the people are thus helped to improve their resources, they were supposed to become independent, as far as resources are concerned. But the structures that create the misappropriation of the resources are untouched, while individuals and groups develop themselves within the existing structures, without looking at these structures critically. Here too, as in the social service model, there is no analysis of the root causes. As a result, while some individuals and groups may benefit, the system of exploitation continues and even intensifies.

Thirdly, social action is considered as the direct involvement in the struggle of the oppressed and the marginalized for structural changes. By changing the structures, the attitudes, the relationships and the ways of life of both the oppressors and the oppressed a process of social change is introduced. Thus, social action is an action to eliminate the unequal social stratification. It is political action because it leads to the struggle for, and the participation in, power through self-determination and self-governance. It is cultural action because it works

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towards putting an end to the dominating culture and establishing equal opportunities to all for self-expression. It is economic action because it ensures that the resources are not controlled by a few but shared by all.

Fourthly, human rights approach is being emphasized now. Human right is basically the right to be human. Now known as 'rights approach'.

Thus it could be stated that there is a progressive understanding of social work and social action, and based on that change social intervention itself came under review. In the past issues like poverty and misery, illiteracy and ignorance, homelessness and resourcelessness were seen as problems that needed to be alleviated. These problems were also seen in isolation and efforts were made to respond at that level. In course of time it dawned on those who were involved in voluntary action that the issues affecting common masses are not individual in nature but institutional and that they are structural. "The older view of social welfare operates on the assumption that problems are created by individuals with moral defects who require moral uplift... Today we tend to see that social problems are structural, that is, they result from defects in institutional arrangements. Consequently reform of the society rather than reform of the individual tends to be emphasized."[11]

Continuing in the same vein one can also identify the stress in social action than social work. From this point of view, social action can be defined as collective action to mitigate or solve social problems. It takes place in the context of a community and comprises any one or a combination of the following: a) a process which educates, organizes and initiates action, in a definite geographical area with a view to accelerate the process of social change; b) any action regarding beliefs, values and attitudes which will bring about cultural change in the family, community and society; c) any struggle against exploitative forces by those who are exploited, resulting in a better bargaining power and emancipation from exploitation'.[12]

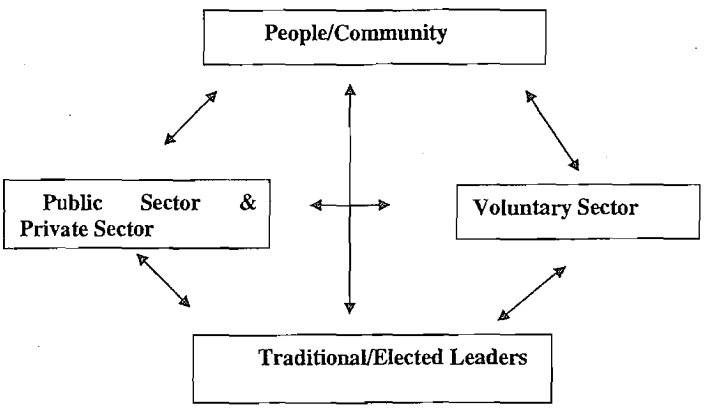
With the changes in the basic issues and perspectives of social action, the strategies to be undertaken in social action also were developed. The search for social alternatives in the context of developing an order based on social justice and equality has led to more extensive use of what may be termed as social action strategies. Social action groups are emerging to initiate movements against poverty and discrimination, to influence policies, to lobby for a new legislation, or to advocate a reform and so on. Social action has been described as a method concerned with mass solution of the mass problems. It aims, among other things, at changing social policy, norms, institutions, and social relations, which are at the source of injustice and malfunctioning.[13]

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At this juncture it is appropriate to examine the various agents involved in community development. One of the most important strategies engaged by the social action groups is community participation. The diagram presented below spells out the various agents involved in community development and the interface that takes place between them.

Diagram 1

Agents Involved in Community Development[14]



A careful reading of the above-presented diagram reiterates the social fact that greater sense of cooperation and interaction is called for between the various agents of rural reconstruction or community development. The voluntary sector in a special way is called upon today to ensure this interface between different agents. In this scheme of things there are traditional leaders as well as government officials or elected representatives of the community. Given the nature of the work as well as the mindset that has developed between these two segments, voluntary action groups become mediators between them. Since, members of the voluntary sector are better place in terms of wider contact, broader understanding of the issues due to their moments, not involved in local politics, they can ensure the regular and appropriate interaction between the traditional or community leadership and elected leadership.

Being the catalyst or the initiator of development process, the voluntary action groups can create a shared vision among the various actors in development discourse. They can also ensure the systematic progress of the participation, because they do not get involved in local politics. Also, they can enhance greater participation and performance of everyone

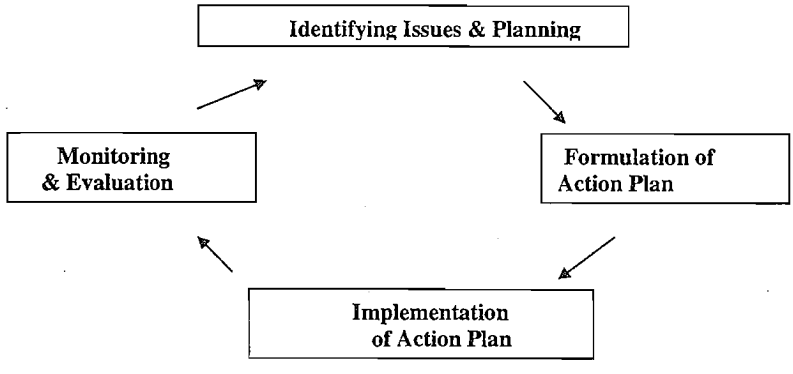
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by calling to attention the common cause that is involved in the development process. Voluntary action groups as well as individuals can resolve internal contradictions since for them community development is the priority. Thus, they also play an intermediary role. In this way, members of voluntary action groups can empower the marginalised communities.

This calls for a brief note about the processes that is involved in community development. The diagram presented below illustrates the fact that any appropriate and people-oriented development can be successful and advantageous only if people's participation and community development is seen as a cyclical process.

Diagram 2

Cycle of Participation and Development



However an equally important fact is that there should be some agents who would ensure that this process begins and continues. It is an accepted fact that government agents are deployed to take care of this work. But in collaboration with them there is the need of the voluntary action groups who would provide certain continuity for development. It is often argued that individual volunteers and groups have the suitable aptitude, vision and commitment.

4. Christian Community and Social Action

Social involvement of the Christian community has been highly praised both by the ruling class as well as the common masses in India. While it is the health and educational activities, which have been taken note of in most instances, the wide variety of development intervention and social action often goes unnoticed. Historically speaking, the inspiration

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for social involvement comes from the Gospel message which calls for altruistic mode of operation, especially in favour of the poor, the orphans and the widows. In course of time, these social categories got sharpened and focused and the common denominator 'poor' became the central focus of committed action for welfare and betterment.

The Social Teachings of the Church provided the ideological basis for social ministry of the Church. Especially from 1891 issues like nature and destiny of persons and family, dignity and life of workers became cause of concern in the church teachings. In the 1930s the cause of the workers and the poor came to occupy the centre stage of Christian community's teachings and activities. But in 1970s onwards the question of right to private property, right of the workers to join associations and unions, right of the family to be paid just wages, duty of the citizens etc, duty of the governments to common good became the mainline of argument of the church documents.

Even a cursory glance at the volume and spread of social work undertaken by the church personnel highlights the fact that lots of good work is being done. Table 2 underscores the manpower and infrastructure invested by the Catholic Church alone in the educational, health and social work. The most significant point to be noted is that though the catholic population constitutes only 1.51 per cent of the Indian population, they in a given year educate 50 lakh students. This is a major contribution by the Christian community.

Table 2. Infrastructure of Catholic Church

Area	Presence	Area	Presence
Indian population	100 crore	Parishes	6,277
Catholic population	1.48crore	Mission stations	17,467
% of Population	1.51%	Religious Congregations	250
Arch dioceses	23	Tech. & training schools	1,514
Dioceses	116	Hostels & boarding houses	1,765
Diocesan priests	8,621	Orphanages	1,085
Religious priests	14,353	Creates	228
Brothers	1,972	Hospitals	704
Sisters	76,150	Dispensaries	1,792
Seminarians	6,372	Leprosaria & Rehabilitation centres	213
Institute of theology	7	Home for the aged	455

Source: The Catholic Directory of India, 1998.

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Another pertinent fact that needs to be stressed is that the Church has been working for the well being of the downtrodden masses irrespective of caste, creed or community. But in the recent past it has made specific commitment to the oppressed groups of the society. This was necessitated by the social teachings of the Church. For example in the encyclical 'On Social Concerns' promulgated in 1987, Pope John Paul II reiterated his earlier stand that the Church has the evangelical duty to stand by the poor; solidarity with the dispossessed. During the 1970 Manila conference, the Asian Bishops stated that 'we are proud to be part of the toiling masses, we acknowledged our failures and we resolve to be 'the Church of the Poor'.[15] The social doctrine of the Church emerged due to the interplay between the religious belief and the social conditions. In the process the Christian faith inspired the believers for social commitment and our commitment on the other hand raised questions about our religious beliefs. Thus, over the years the role of the Church itself has undergone massive change. In the present context, the role of the Church is called to read the signs of the time, read the word of God, collaborate with others in building the kingdom of justice, peace, fellowship and harmony.[16]

Finally, it needs to be stated here that a proper and appropriate attitude, knowledge and commitment does not come from the skies. But these are nurtured by the members of voluntary action groups by getting involved in the lives and the struggles of the marginalised communities and by learning from the reality of their lives. Those who engage themselves in voluntary actions, also learn to critically evaluate the existing social situation by engaging in a thorough scrutiny of the situation for the understanding of the people. Since, ensuring changes in the unequal situation is the objective of the voluntary action groups, they enhance the aspirations and the commitment of the downtrodden masses for social change. Voluntary action or social action has changed over the years from relief and welfare to development to people's movement. It is this progressive movement of social action, which sharpen the issues, and perspectives of social action in the future.

***Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, It remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.* John 12/24.**

Notes:

1. K. S. Parikh. *India Development Report 1999-2000*. Oxford University Press, 1999, p 1.
2. *Human Development Report 2001*, UNDP, Oxford University Press, 2001, p 37
3. *Encyclopaedia of Social Work in India*. Volume 3. Publications Divisions, Ministry of Welfare, Government of India, 1987, p 142.

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4. Kirit S. Parikh and R. Radhakrishna (ed). *India Development Report 2002*. Oxford University Press: New Delhi, p 8.

5. *Alternative Economic Survey 1996-97*. Delhi Science Forum: New Delhi, p 1.

6. Michael P. Todaro. *Economic Development in the Third World*. Longman Group Limited, London, 1985.

7. *Human Development Report 1991*, UNDP, Oxford University Press, 1991.

8. Walter Fernandes 'ed.', *Social Activists and People's Movements*. Indian Social Institute, New Delhi, 1985, p 1.

9. D.N.Dhanagare. *Themes and Perspectives in Indian Sociology*. Rawat: Jaipur, 1993.

10. For more discussion refer to JESA Evaluaton Report, New Delhi, 1999, p 12.

11. John M. Romanyshine. *Social Welfare-Charity to Justice*. Random House Inc., New York, 1971, p 36

12. George Joseph. *Social Action Groups and their Activities*. Centre for Social Action: Bangalore, 1998, p 74.

13. P.K. Gandhi. (ed). *Social Action Through Law: Partnership for Social Justice*. Concept Publishing Company: New Delhi, 1985, p 11.

14. This scheme was worked out by the author in collaboration with other participants in an International Seminar on Decentralisation for Community Development, Organised by Asian Productive Organisation, on 23rd – 31st March 2001 at Colombo, Sri Lanka.

15. Social Teachings of the Asian Bishops. As quoted in John Desrochers. The Social Teachings of the Church. Bangalore, 1982, p 379

16. Prakash Louis. "Fr. A.T. Thomas' Mission and Martyrdom: A Theological Reflection for our Times". *Vidyayoti*. October 2000, p 758.

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Empowering the Oppressed in Society

L. Stanislaus

In the Indian context, one can speak of the poor and the oppressed or of poverty, but in a specific way, the Dalits and Tribals are the core of the poor. The Caste hierarchy has kept the Dalits as outcastes or the fifth grade people, and the Tribals are equally kept aloof from the mainstream society. The Church encounters these people and in this encounter, she sees how the divine can be transmitted to them. Her vocation has promoted her not to accept the realities of these people as a *status quo*, but to find ways to liberate them from poverty and oppression. The Church has given its energy and power to uplift, motivate and liberate them to find equality, justice and fraternity. This article presents the situation of the oppressed and then shows how the Church worked with them and further points out the challenges that lie before her.

1. The Situation of the Marginalized

The Dalits are called outcastes, *chandalas*, and *avarnas*. They are known as 'non-people.' They are segregated from others because they pollute others. The problems of Dalits are a fallout of the vested economic and political interests of those forcing their way to the top of the hierarchy. These interests are sought to be strengthened and sustained by the religious, philosophical and cultural notions of castes. Because of the interaction of the above factors, a socio-cultural tradition emerges with a unique system of oppression and exploitation. Today, it is the ideology of caste together with the nexus of socio-cultural,

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religious economic and political factors, that marginalize the Dalits more and more to the periphery. Their problem is enormous. The physical and psychic violence which Dalits face daily in India are frightening. Their enslavement by their fellow human beings is simply because of their accidental birth into families outside the pale of the caste-graded society. Their lowest grade is an intricate, all pervasive, and incredibly tenacious structure of institutionalized inequality.

Dalits consist of 16.5 per cent of the Indian population. They are mostly landless agricultural labourers who are reduced to the state of resourcelessness, powerlessness and voicelessness. They are economically very poor, politically weak and socially treated as outcastes. Historically, Dalit Christians share common roots with Dalits in general, and even after becoming Christians, still they face discrimination, and their social, economic and political situation is no better than the other Dalits. Dalit Christians suffer manifold discrimination: (i) discrimination by the Government; (ii) by the caste Hindus; (iii) by the caste Christian community; (iv) by the clergy and religious communities; (v) by fellow Hindu Dalits; and (vi) by the subgroups of Dalit Christians themselves.

The Tribals consist of 8.08 percent of the total Indian population with 98 per cent of them living in rural areas. The representation of the Tribals in India are as follows: *proto australoids*: Munda, Santal, Oraon, Ho, Gonds, Khond; *Mongoloids*: Nagas, Kasis; and the *Negrito* groups of Andaman and the Kandars of Kerala. The majority of the Tribals are found in Central India, which has 80 per cent of the Indian Tribals. North India has 12 per cent of the Tribals and the Southern part of India 8 per cent. The criteria for categorizing them as animist, with distinct physical features, distinct language, simple technology, distinct social and political organization, specific geographical isolation, being outside the mainstream civilization, etc., are now no more valid or do not apply any more to these people. They are now called 'indigenous people.' But for the Shangh Parivar they are *vanavasis*, taking away the important credential of being original inhabitants of this land. They are aggressively displaced around for 'development', for 'industry', and for 'dams', The schemers chase them out of where they had been for centuries, or violently force their way into their traditional habitat. Their land is taken away and only 22 per cent of them are educated. They are poor and deprived of all development in their areas.

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Table 1. A Profile of Dalits/Tribals[1]

Sl. No.	Area	Dalits – Representation	Tribals – Representation
1.	Population	16.48	8.08
2.	Literacy	37.82	29.60
3.	Male	49.91	40.65
4.	Female	13.76	18.19
5.	Dropout by High School	79.88	86.72
6.	Central Government Jobs		
	I. Class	10.14	2.29
	II. Class	12.67	2.68
	III. Class	16.15	5.69
	IV. Class	21.26	6.48
7.	Public Sector Unit A Grade	8.41	—
8.	Cultivators	25.44	54.50
9.	Agricultural Labourers	49.04	32.69
10.	Agricultural & Allied Activities	76.22	87.00
11.	Female Agricultural Labourers	68.00	44.28
12.	Household –water, electricity, toilet facilities	6.62	3.23
13.	Priesthood	0	Traditional
14.	Prime Minister of India	0	0
15.	Chief Justice	0	0
16.	Party Leadership	10	10
17.	In Teaching Profession	9.49	7.03
18.	Below Poverty Line	56.00	54.00
19.	Manuel Scavenging	100	0
20.	Discriminated Against	100	100

The other marginalized are the persons who are pushed out of the mainstream society. The bonded labourers, the fisherfolk, the migrants and the slum form a humanity who are considered as unwanted or useless or fifth rate humanity. T.K. John says, "Deprived of resources, uprooted from their socio-cultural and economic roots, there begins the silent exodus of the 'losers' to big cities. It is this unnumbered, de-valued, 'losers' in the game that was justifiably termed *human garbage*. The slums of our cities, symbol of an unfair game, are the resorts of most of these disinherited, dispossessed and ' pushed out' people of India. These slums are, hence, explicit symbols of 'injustice'. 'Human Issues' point to this and similar tragedies of varying intensity and callousness in other areas of life in society."[2]

2. The Way of Jesus

The Word who revealed God through creation and through the prophets, now becomes a human person, 'the Son' to reveal the inmost secrets of the life of God to humans as a

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human. The Incarnation is the visible concrete presentation of the activity of the Word. Now we can "see and touch his glory." God has sent his only Son so that all those who believe in him may have life. His central message was the Reign of God (Mt 1:15). He is the revelation of the 'Good news of the Kingdom' and in him God's love is manifested which reaches everyone in the world and the whole cosmos.

The way of Jesus in mission can be spelt out by looking at the life of Jesus as narrated in the New Testament. He begins his public life with the manifesto enlisted in the gospel of Luke (4:16-21). Jesus opts for the poor, the oppressed and the marginalized of his day and struggles with them for freedom, fellowship and justice against those who oppress, namely Herod, the High Priest, the Pharisees and the whole structure of the oppressive system.

Jesus consistently denounced accumulation of wealth in a few hands, resulting in the rich/poor divide, and thus causing social disintegration. Jesus told the people stories of how amassed and unshared wealth erodes the head and heart, and diminishes and depersonalises people (Lk 12:13-21; 16:19-31). He persuades people to give up greed, make amends to injustice, and share resources with the poor. And when they do it, he invites them to appreciate the human wholeness that has come to them (Lk 19:1-10). Jesus is concerned about people's hunger. He turned down his disciples' advice to let friends assume responsibility for meeting the situation: "you yourselves give them something to eat" (Mk 6:37). Jesus made the Sabbath law to yield to the needs of hungry people (Mk 12:1-8).

His heart was filled with compassion for the crowds who were troubled and helpless like sheep without a shepherd. So he taught them and healed them. They brought to him all the afflicted, the possessed, the epileptics and paralytics. He made the blind see, the lame walk, the deaf hear, the lepers cleansed, and the dead rise (Mt 4:23-24). Jesus' choice of the fisher-folks, labourers and tax collectors to form a major part of his close friends and bearers of his message is an important aspect of his solidarity with people in struggle (Mk 1:14-20; Lk 5:1-11, 27-31; Jn 21:1-14). He is with the toiling masses in their sufferings and struggles, in their crosses and their uprisings. Jesus carried his liberating, life-giving struggle into the religious sphere as well. He challenged the leaders who had marginalized them on the basis of their purity laws, food directives, ablution rules, tithe demands and the complicated sacrificial and ritual prescriptions (Lev 1-7, 11-15, 22-14).

Jesus' radicalism in re-interpreting traditions and laws brought him into conflict with priest, leaders and others in authority. The opposition was growing stronger and those in power became increasingly hostile to Jesus, and dragged him to the gates of death. They found fault

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with his behaviour and his friends in matters of Sabbath observance, eating habits, fasts and free human contacts (Mt 2: 15-28; 7-5; 9:9-17; 12:1-8; 15:1-9; Lk 5:27-39; 6:1-5; 7:39-47; 13:10-17). Jesus refutes their charges and does not retrace his steps. Finally, "Jesus went up to Jerusalem, was betrayed, taken, tried, falsely accused, slapped, handed over to the Romans, mocked and humiliated, flogged, condemned, nailed to a tree and killed."[3] The real liberation has come through his resurrection. He lives and is ever present with the people and the cosmos.

3. The Way of the Church

The *Second Vatican Council* saw the Church itself as essentially missionary and saw its roots in the creative action of the Trinity. The Church is born of mission and for mission. This is the reason why the Church is said to be missionary by her very nature (AD 2). Her existence flows from mission and it leads her into mission. She has to preach Jesus as Lord and to devote all her energies and demonstrate by the quality of her life, the establishment of the Kingdom of God here and now. The Church is the sacrament that is symbol and servant of the Reign of God (RM 20). She must witness to the Reign as a community that embodies and lives its values. She must also actively involve itself with the people, especially with the poor, and be at the service of people building the Reign of God. She has to be both light and salt (Mt 5:13-16). Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Asia* says, missionaries witness powerfully to the Gospel through life of prayer, earnest search for God, zealous service, exemplary conduct and life of communion (EA 43, 44).

The CBCI's Pastoral letter in 2000 says, "As we celebrate *Yesu Krist Jeyanti* we reaffirm our faith in the risen Christ who overcame the powers of evil and injustice. In deep solidarity with all our brothers and sisters in this country we commit ourselves to join to their struggle for the transformation of society. We believe that the Spirit of Christ has been operating in this nation in a variety of ways. We join with all people of good will in a spirit of collaboration in response to the call of the Spirit."[4] The Church is the community of Jesus' disciples who are called together by his word and animated by his spirit to continue his mission and carry it out in all the nations and among all the peoples of the world. In Asia, evangelization is described as three-fold dialogue with the poor, the rich cultures and the great religions of Asia.

Understanding the situation of Indian context, Indian Theological Association (2000) says, "We also recognize the fact that India is a multi-religious and pluri-cultural country. Such diversity is its divinely bestowed blessing and grace. The Church's mission in this context calls for it to be a true dialogical community. It has, first of all, to accept and foster diversity within

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itself, rooted, of course, in the one faith in Christ, and to avoid at all levels any tendency to become a monlithic and monocultural institution. It has also to foster dialogue with other religions, ideologies and movements cherishing, safeguarding, promoting and assimilating the wealth of truth and grace to be found in them."[5] It also says in the conclusion, "Our strength is forgiveness; our commitment is to truth, human dignity and freedom for all. We make our own the manifesto that Jesus proclaimed at Nazareth: 'To bring good news to the poor...to proclaim release to the captives...to let the oppressed go free...(Lk 4:18).' "[6]

As followers of Jesus, walking in his footsteps, the Church faces the realities of the Dalits and Tribals in India. Hence, CBCI's Statement in 2002 rightly says, "The Dalits and Tribal are politically exploited, educationally most backward, and socially discriminated against. The Church should be in solidarity with the poor and make a preferential option for them. In the situation of appalling poverty of the vast majority of the people in India, the Church has to become not just a Church for the poor but the Church of the poor. This would mean, being with the poor in their daily experience of poverty and oppression, and being with them in their efforts to liberate themselves for a fuller human life. To realize this objective, the Church should join other people of good will and work towards the dismantling of structures like caste and class that cause and perpetuate poverty and oppression."[7] This is the constant challenge to the Church in a faster changing world due to globalization, materialism and consumerism.

4. The Church and the Dalits

The history of the Church among the Dalits in the recent past has proved how difficult it is to empower the oppressed. Although the missionaries had commitment and zeal to work with them, the different factors surrounding the Dalits were obstacles for the missionaries to remove the discrimination. Still, most of them tried earnestly to liberate them from the oppressors.

4.1 Denouncing Caste in Society

Realising the condition of Dalits, the missionaries have constantly denounced the caste discrimination in society. Fr.Faustino Costi and Alexander Camisa were pioneers in working with Dalits in South Canara. Fr.Costi was disparagingly referred to by the people as the *Mansere Guru* or the Priest of the Pariah. Bishop Paul Perini in that area was eloquent against discrimination of Dalits, he was awarded the *Kaizer-Hind* medal on 1st January, 1918 from the then government. Besides, educational books and literature denouncing social evils also helped to break down caste barriers. The more important among these books were the *Jati Vicharane*

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by Dr.Moegling and journals like *Satyadeepika, Sabhapatra,* and *Christa de Hetavadi*. It was in fact the Christian missionaries who taught the people that we worship God mainly through service to humanity without caste or class distinctions and not just through rituals and customs.

The following are the some of the examples of the missionaries in Tamilnadu who opposed the caste system.[8]

- At the Synod of Pondicherry of 1844 the priests and the Bishops tried to abolish the caste distinctions, but they were accused of supporting the Dalits.
- Bishop de Marion de Brisillac, as a protest against the caste division in the Catholic community, resigned his Episcopal See of Coimbatore.
- Jesuits along with the victims of caste riots at Kalugumali in 1895 and Sivakasi in 1898 demanded equal rights for the low castes and the Dalits.
- The Jesuits began a crusade against caste domination in the Holy Family Church at Vadakkankulam in 1912.
- The aged Bishop Barthe of Tiruchchirappalli stipulated that he would allow himself to be buried in the Cathedral, only if distinctions of castes had been abolished. Later, the discrimination was not practised inside the Church.

Some of the missionaries who fought the cause of the Dalit Christians are the following.[9]

- Alexander Martin and Castanier fought a continuous war with the caste chief of Tuticorin to establish equal rights for all in the Church.

- J.B. Trincal always stood by the voiceless workers. When the Dalits Christians were persecuted by the *zamindar* (Landlord), he stood by them and supported them in their struggle.

- The Dalit Christians had to do forced labour, work on Sundays and services like pulling the temple car. Many times the supervisors ill-treated them, deprived them of their full wages; the Dalits' land was deliberately taken away under the pretext of lawful acquisition. In all these predicaments the people sought the Jesuit missionaries who came to their rescue and protected them.

- The Parish Priest of Paraltchi in Madurai built a chapel for the use of the Chakkilliyars in the face of severe opposition from the caste people.

- During the Kalugumali caste riots of 1895 and the Sivakasi riots of 1896, the missionaries stood by the persecuted Dalits. The Adi Dravidar Association that fought against domination of caste people was fully supported by the Jesuits.

In Gujarat, due to influence of the Church the Vankar community asserted their identity and challenged the higher castes. The awareness of their oppression gave energy to fight against discrimination in society. The missionaries fought against caste discrimination in Madhya

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Pradesh, Bihar and Andhra Pradesh. Their social life with the Dalits was not accepted kindly by others, but the purity-pollution division was not followed by the missionaries and openly challenged the systematic structural oppression.

4.2 Socio-Economic Development

In north India, liberating people from bonded chains, and all forms of oppression has always been a main goal of the various organizations of the Church. In order to coordinate such attempts, a Center for Northern Regional Social Development had been formed. The Church's development schemes consist not only of providing food, clothing and shelter to the needy, but also helping people towards an integral development.

Christian impact on the Bettiah Christians, for instance in East India, has been significant in four areas: education, occupation, social and ethnic identity. Due to the Church's influence, by the 1990s, Bettiah Christians had moved out of carpentry, blacksmith, carting, etc., a vast majority (80%) of them being in blue and white-collar jobs, particularly teaching (34%).

The majority of the Christians in East India are Chamers and Dusadhs. Due to their hard work among them, there was a positive change in the realms of social, religious, spiritual, cultural and economic life. In practice, the Mission sponsored the education of the Dalit children, which, in turn, facilitated alternative avenues with more remunerative and higher status employment.

The Co-operative Credit Society (*Udhar Sangh*) for instance, took the place of *mahajani* (money-lending a system through which Dalits were exploited) and change of occupation through education greatly displaced *Janeiro* (semi-bonded labour-patronage system). The alternative to *grihasthi-pauni* (patron-client relationship in caste based service) was to enable the converts through formal higher education and religious indoctrination, to liberate themselves from the caste-based, traditional occupations (*pauni* services).

Catholic Relief Service is an international relief and development agency, which is functioning in India as an officially recognized American Voluntary Agency since 1951 when the Indo-US Agreement was first signed. The agricultural commodities, medicines, medical equipment and other items for relief and development of the poor and needy in the country were sent by them. The food imports utilized mainly for the following programmes: (a) Mother and Child Health Programmes, (b) School Feeding Programmes, (c) Other Child Feeding, (d) Individual Health Cases, and (e) Food for Work Programe. The developmental projects aimed at increasing food production in the country, providing employment to unemployed persons

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through income generating activities, vocational training to enhance skills for employment, promotion of community health particularly with emphasis on preventive health care, improvement of storage facilities to minimize loss of food through pests, etc. The qualitative and quantitative magnitude of the aid received by thousands of social service oriented projects and programmes through the Catholic Church in collaboration with the Indo-German Social Service Society (IGSSS) and the West German Catholics' Campaign against Hunger and Disease in the World.

The following are some of the examples in Tamilnadu where socio-economic help was rendered to the Dalits.[10]

- The Annals of the New Madurai Mission contain heroic examples of Jesuit giants fighting fearlessly in defence of the poor.
- Dennis Cruchen laboured day and night to improve the social and spiritual conditions of the Shanars in Sathankulam.
- The Jesuit scholastics of Shembaganur organized the Chakkilliyars of Kodaikanal in order to improve their socio-economic conditions.
- Leveil is called the "Messiah of Maravanad" for his social service among Kallar caste people.
- Boyle worked among the Kadayars, for whom he founded the 'Kadayar Registered Society' as protest against the Rameswaram Co-operatives refusing to cater to the need of the Kadayars.
- Bossan used to collect children abandoned by unwed mothers from the streets and brought them up.
- The Kallar caste people of Ramnad, Madurai, Tiruchchirappalli and Thanjavur were quite backward, so Jesuits founded a 'Kallar Mission' for the upliftment of them.

The economic deprivation is not only a problem of bread and butter, but is also much more a fundamental one. What is at stake is their identity as the children of God. The struggle for the Dalits should form an integral part of the evangelizing mission of the Church.

4.3 Education

Realizing the relevance of education in the socio-economic context of the people, the Church is gradually making a break-through in the matter of education. The Church has started various *balvadies*, elementary schools and high schools especially in poor areas.

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The literacy rate of Dalits is now 40 per cent. If the Church had not involved in this area, their condition would have been still worse. The Catholic Church has taken education ministry as one of the priorities and the total number of the institutions in India are given below:

Table 2. Educational Institutions[11]

K.G. and Nursery Schools	3,785
Primary Schools	7,319
Secondary Schools	3,765
Colleges	240
Technical and Training Schools	1,514
Hostels and Boarding Houses	1,765
Orphanages	1,085
Creches	228

The mission work in Maharashtra was mainly through primary schools in the remote villages for low castes and girls. In these schools the Mahars, Mangs and the low castes learned the first lessons of human equality and justice. Jyotirao Phule as a student of the Scottish Mission School in Pune learned about the equality of all human beings as children of one God and launched the first non-Brahmin movement against caste practice in India. The ruler of Kolhapur abolished caste practices in his territory under Christian influence.

Under the impact of the Gospel, the Dalits were getting respect in South India. Harvey Perkins speaks of this experience as "peopling the no people". The Christian missionaries were pioneers also in creating a new *genre*, namely Dalit literature, long before the recent writing on the Dalits and appearance of the subaltern studies. This mission of the Church calls for collaboration with Christians of other Churches, people of other faith and all people of good will.

Bhagwandas, a lawyer of Supreme Court says, "the missionaries not only made the Harijans aware of their miserable conditions but also made them bold and self confident, and in some cases very religious Christian missionaries devoted much time, money and labour to uplift this most down-trodden people and many teachers, lawyers, doctors, nurses and religious leaders came from these new Christians."[12]

Certainly every diocese pays special attention to the education of Dalits. It has become a policy, and urgent need of the hour. Some people think that education apostolate is to convert people, a fitting reply made by a lady, Luxmi Kant Maitra in the Constituent Assembly is that "Every year the Christian community spends crores of rupees for education, medicines and

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for social services. If it were to spend the same money for converting people, the population of the Christians would have been ten times more numerous than what it is today."[13]

4.4 Church Responds

Although caste discrimination has been a problem in the Catholic Church for centuries, the CBCI did not say anything about it till the late sixties. For the first time the *All India Seminar* 1969, discussed the problem of caste within the Church and in society.[14] Then, in the meetings of CBCI, 1970 and 1974, it showed its concern for the Dalits.

The National Convention on the Plight of Christians of Scheduled Caste Origin was held at Bangalore in June 1978 and this was organized by National Council of Churches of India (NCCI) and Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI). The CBCI had set up a Commission for Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe and Backward Classes in 1986. All India Christian People's Forum is another organization with many denominations and all Christian NGOs, this Forum is spearheading for equal rights for Christians since 1990.

The CBCI Statement on Caste says, "We state categorically that caste, with its consequent effects of discrimination and 'caste mentality,' has no place in Christianity. It is, in fact, a denial of Christianity because it is inhuman."[15] It says again, "The issue of caste and its consequent evil effects is not a peripheral one for the Church or, indeed, for society at large. Delay in facing it or sometimes even a refusal to do so is more than a question of human rights. It is a betrayal of the Christian vocation."[16]

The Church reaffirmed her commitment to the Dalits saying, "As we celebrate *Yesu Krist Jayanti* 2000, we solemnly pledge to work towards the dismantling of the discriminatory caste structure and prejudice in all its forms."[17] Thus, the Church commits to liberate the Dalits from caste oppression and she rightly recalls Pope John Paul's words, "To those who are searching today for a new and authentic theory and praxis of liberation, the Church offers not only her social doctrine and, in general, her teaching about the human person redeemed in Christ, but also her concrete commitment and material assistance in the struggle against marginalization and suffering" (CA 26).

The Dalits who had been the hereditary slaves under the landlords were oppressed and persecuted. The missionaries came forward to fight for justice and human rights on behalf of these disadvantaged groups. The new awakening, hunger for better life, desire for freedom from the humiliation of the high castes, etc., are instilled by the missionaries.

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5. The Church and the Tribals

5.1 The Social and Economic Upliftment of the Tribals

Concern for the poor and the downtrodden is not just a phenomenon of the Church in India, but it is part of the mission of the Church. C.Lievens, SJ, the Belgian, studied the agrarian laws and boldly helped the Adivasis to get redress in the court. He studied the rights of Mundas and Oraons and learnt the illegal practices of the landlords, forced labour, unlawful practices of police, etc. He explained the laws of the land, their duties and obligations and organized them to fight injustice in a legal way. Through sound legal help and advice to the Adivasis, they won many of their cases in court.[18]

J.B. Hoffmann studied the *khuntkatti* and *buinhari* rights (ancestral land rights) of the Tribals. Using his thorough knowledge of the language of Mundas, political and economic organization of the Tribals, Hoffmann supported the struggle for the restoration of their ancient rights and privileges based on their ancient customs. Hoffman, was instrumental in drafting the Chotanagpur Tenancy Act (1908). This Act was helpful to safeguard the right of the Adivasis over their land. He also started the Catholic Co-operative Credit Society (1909) and the Co-operative Stores (1913), which was a welcome initiative for the upliftment of the Adivasis in their economic life.

The Lutheran Church approved a scheme known as Agricultural Service and Marketing Association in 1967, which initially included the Lutheran villages of the Ranchi district. At the village level, paddy-magazine, popularly known as 'grain-gola' and the Credit Bank was found among the villagers. People contributed to this grain-gola and hence, a loan or help was given to villagers from this paddy magazine. *Sangat* meaning a 'society' or 'an organization' was said to be another type of co-operative organization found in the Christian villages of Chotanagpur. Catholic missionaries opened a Labour Bureau at Ranchi, it was known as Council for Christian Vocational Guidance and Employment. They would organize the people, and arrange for them employment. Missionaries were also responsible for opening Vocational Training Centers at several villages, which went a long way in shaping the economic life of the people. Besides improving economic life of the people, missionaries also concentrated on the improvement of agricultural system, which make the main source of their livelihood. With the help of the Agriculture Department of the Government, people got better seeds and came to know better the various agricultural methods.

Mission work in Chotanagpur can be summarized in the following words. "While conversion was sought as a strategy for socio-economic uplift and liberation from fear of

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spirits, certain purposive action geared to Christian religious education along with providing facility for formal education, alternative employment, financial support through institutional means and so on, did entail significant upward mobility of the Christian tribals."[19] Though substantial socio-economic changes have taken place because of christianization "they have retained their indigenous values of gender equality, dignity of women, consensual procedures in community actions, apparel, language, cuisine, traditional customs, indigenous festivals, etc."[20]

The Church's contribution to Northeast people in social development is remarkable. More organized social development programmes were undertaken by the agencies like Caritas, Catholic Relief Service, Bosco Reach Out (Guwahati) and ANMA (Dimapur). These organizations help the poor in rural areas, besides these large scale organizations, individual mission centers have embarked upon welfare works like grain co-operatives, land-redeeming schemes, housing schemes, farm improvement projects, primary health care, etc. During the last decade, projects directed towards community building and leadership training have been more commonly undertaken.

The Salesian Mission Centers have been examples of vocational training, agricultural activities, farms, poultry and cattle rearing. These centers are ushering economic revolution with the help of the Government and other voluntary organizations. The St.Joseph's Agricultural Center at Umran near Shillong has been established to provide training for the young people in modern agriculture.[21]

5.2 Education

Education, especially of the masses in urban and in rural areas, has been one of the most important agents for bringing about social change. Educational institutes help the tribal people's immediate access of ways at coping with a fast developing world. Christians take care of the 33 per cent health services in India. The Church has started education institutions in the Tribal areas and their level of literacy has come up. The recent attacks on Christians in the tribal areas tend to curtail this growth as well as intimidate Christian missionaries, so that they will not continue to serve them through education. The Church mainly opened orphanages and hostels for the Tribals and Dalits (see above the Table 2).

The missionaries, such as L.Bodson, J.B.Hoffmann, L.Van Hoeck, O. Sevrin and others did much in the field of education in Chotanagpur area. At present, the Archdiocese of Ranchi alone has 363 primary schools, 159 middle schools, 88 high schools, 4 colleges and another

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6 institutions offering higher education. More than 35 religious congregations are involved in this apostolate. If the Tribals go to Delhi, Calcutta and other Indian cities in search of better prospects and facilities, it is largely owing to the education they have received from the Catholic institutions.[22]

Christianity has persistently enjoined Tribals to fulfil their duties, to be honest, hardworking and self-critical. It had inculcated a sense of discipline in students and a spirit of patriotism in the people. Christianity exercises this conscientious task together with the framework Tribals' *panchayat* system.

5.3 Health Care

Next to education, the greatest contribution that the Church makes to the region is perhaps in the field of health. The Church has brought to the Northeast the concept of health care, both personal and community, based on personal hygiene and clean living habits, in contrast to the harmful superstitious practices that were in existence.

In Northeast India, "the Church happened to be the lone pioneer to first develop the modern systems of Health Care."[23] The Church run health centers are effective in rural areas to take care of the sick. Much more than the medical institutions, the awareness that was created and is being created among people on health issues is very important. Most of the time, in rural areas, the Church-run health center is more approachable for effective medical intervention than other centers. Today, the health care centers should function taking into account of the economy, occupation and life style of the people.

Table 3. Health Care Centers[24]

Hospitals	704
Dispensaries and Health Centers	1,792
Leprosaria	111
Rehabilitation Centers	102
Homes for Aged, Destitudes and Handicapped	455

Polish missionary Marianus Zalazek, SVD has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize of 2002 for his outstanding work among leprosy patients at Puri in Orissa. When he established Karunalaya Leprosy Care Center in 1975 on the donated land, just a few leprosy patients moved in initially. Slowly numbers began to grow and at present more than thousand stay over there. The colony also maintains its own kitchen garden and chicken farm. He has built two Hindu temples in the colony and has given them shelter and hope in their lives.[25]

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5.4 Contribution to the Literature

Among many others Elwin Verrier and Stephen Fuchs, SVD contributed to the nation in particular and the intellectual world in general ethnographic works on the Tribals of India. For Elwin, anthropology was indeed philanthropology. He was offered the Directorship of the Anthropological Survey of India, but did not take it up because he preferred to live among the Tribals. In 1961, he was awarded the *Padma Bhushan*. Fuchs has more than a hundred published papers and articles to his credit. Fascinated by the peoples and cultures in India, Fuchs has done extensive fieldwork among the Gonds, Bhumias, Baigas, Bhils, Bhilalas, and Korkus of Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. He has also studied the Chamars of Varanasi and Ballia district in the Uttara Pradesh.[26]

Stanislaus Wald, SVD translated the Bible in Hindi. Many missionaries became grammarians, and copilers of dictionaries in Adivasi mother tongues. J.B. Hoffmann outlined the grammar of the Munda language and it was published in 1903 at Government Press as *Munda Grammar*. He translated Schuster's *Bible History* and German Grammar into Mundari and added continuously to his Mundari dictionary, which was published as *Encyclopaedia Mundarica* in 15 volumes.[27] The missionaries published the scholarly work of *English-Kharia Dictionary*, *Kharia-English Dictionary*, and *Oraon-English Dictionary.*

A scientific basis for the study of modern Assamese was laid with the publication of *Assamese Grammar* by W.Robinson and *Assamese Dictionary* by Ms. O.T.Cutter. Thomas Jones can rightly be called the father of Khasi literature because he gave a script to a hitherto unwritten language and wrote books in the same. Similarly, M.Balavine published the first *Lalung Dictionary*. Missionaries took interest in the medium of instruction at the primary level and in the publication of textbooks in Assamese.[28]

The Salesian contribution in social communication includes development of regional languages, publication of books, periodicals, audio-visuals, etc. M. Balawan SDB who was the first to produce readers in Karbi and the Tiwas languages in Northeast India. O.Paviotti SDB's *Assamese Grammar* is commendable. G. Costa, A.Buccier and E. Bars who have made substantial contributions to the Garo language. The Tympei Theatrical Club in Shillong is inspired by the theatrical tradition of the Don Bosco institutions. It is one of the more recognized theatrical clubs of Northeast India.[29]

5.5 Contribution of the Church

The evangelization movement meant "proclaiming the liberation of the *Adivasis* from various forms of injustice in the region. Thus, one can say that the Gospel was placed at the

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very heart of *Adivasi* life and culture. The Church met the deepest, concrete, felt need of the *Adivasis* and brought hope for a better social, cultural, economic, political and religious life for them."[30] Changes are seen in their moral life according to Christian values, abstention from alcoholic beverages and opium, upkeep of a clean environment, and their positive attitude to the multi-cultural groups in the region.[31]

The major contribution of Christianity to the people of Northeast India, according to Archbishop Thomas Menamparampil, is that it acted as a stimulus, an inner urge, providing them with a new dynamism from within, setting them on a path to transformation and change. It led to self-awareness and made the people conscious of their own collective identity. Christian message led to the flowering of personalities and cultures in Northeast India. The high level of literacy, the low level of infant mortality, improved status of women, the increased desire for ongoing education, health care, efforts to expose oneself to change, etc. are signs of integral growth.

The dedicated services of the Christian churches in the field of education and production of literature, the literacy rate in the Northeast is commendable given the difficult terrain of the region (Arunachal Pradesh - 54.7%, Assam - 64.3%, Manipur - 68.9%, Meghalaya - 63.3%, Mizoram - 88.5%, Nagaland - 67.1%, and Tripura - 73.7%).[32] Continuing the emphasis on education, the CBCI says, "resources of the Church should be made available for the educational empowerment of the Dalits and Tribals. Training and educational opportunities for jobs and leadership will be offered to the Dalits and the Tribals."[33]

Modern education and the awareness of the rights of duties in the country led the Christians and the people of other faith to form Chotanagpur Unnati Samaj (1915) and Adivasi Mahasabha (1938). These organizations were instrumental for the formation of the Jharkhand Party in 1950. Its prominent leaders were mostly Christians. This party was instrumental in creation of Jharkhand State. Although many political leaders may not be at the national level, many regional leaders have come up, and the work ethic is present among the Tribals to work without corruption and dishonesty.

The Northeast, which has been described as a 'museum of cultures', has been an easy victim of exploitation. The Christians in the tea gardens, all of whom were immigrants from Chotanagpur, were treated like slave workers with no right to attend religious functions. Due to constant effort of upliftment and education, now there are lawyers, doctors, government ministers and civil servants, have emerged from among them, and this has helped to project better image of the community. Dr.A.Aiyappan, Professor of Anthropology at Utkal University

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said at the Sixth Tribal Conference that the missionaries have given the tribesmen a sense of security which is a basic pre-condition to any progress.

Dr.D.R.Mankekar sums up the unique contribution of the Church to the country and Northeast India in these words: "India as a whole should be grateful to early Christian missionaries for helping these Tribals to make a big leap forward from primitive life to modernity and thus taking off from the overweighed shoulders of independent India that gigantic task and preparing them to take their due place in India Polity."[34]

Patricia Mukhim, Member of State Planning Board, Government of Meghalaya, affirms that "the history of the Christian movement in the Northeast can only be understood as an integral part of a larger process of political, social, economic, cultural and religious change."[35] She says, "Government policies, are directed only at physical integration of the population with the rest of the country. But no effort is made for an emotional and psychological integration which is urgently required."[36]

Indian historian K.M. Panikkar says, "The work of the missionaries among the aboriginal tribes may be said to have created a tradition of social service which modern India has inherited. If the Indian Constitution included special provisions for the welfare of the tribal communities and Adivasis and if the Center and the States are making concerted efforts to bring them up to the general level of India, much of the credit must be given to missionaries."[37] Dr.Venkatta Rao. Professor of Gahuhati University described the Christian contribution to tribal upliftment and welfare in a nutshell, "The Christian missionaries helped the Tribals to proceed from savagery to modernity and thereby took off a heavy load from the shoulders of the government of India."[38]

Adivasis believed in the power of the spirits. They believed the spirits would help them if the latter received their sacrifices duly; but being neglected they could also do harm. Christian teaching spoke of good and bad spirits and this influenced them to understand the good spirits and to a large extent kept them away from witches, witch doctors, exorcists and sorcerers. Christianity brought about a great deal of education, which eradicated the fear of evil spirits and witchcraft from the Adivasi societies.[39] Christianity has put en end to harmful rituals, the orgies of drunkenness and sexual debauch, which accompanied harvest and hunting festivals.

K.N. Shahay summarizes the activities of the Church among Tribals as follows: "Christian Missionaries have done exemplary social service to the backward tribal communities by educating them through schools, training them in vocational centers, finding suitable jobs for them, opening orphanages, hospitals, dispensaries, introducing various types of Co-operative Societies, paddy-

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magazines, banks, inspiring them to start mutual-aid societies, suggesting to them improved methods in agriculture, reorganizing some of their indigenous institutions like village Council, eliminating their social vices, and finding solutions to their numerous problems, etc." [40]

The Church has made important contributions towards the development of a new India in the northeast region. The various groups which inhabit this area have been transformed during the past era and as they are in the new millennium, they can go forward with courage and security because of the foundation that has been laid by numerous agents, of which the Catholic Church certainly has contributed a very large share.

6. Challenges to the Church

1. The Church must play still a greater role in building the nation, whose one fourth of the population is poor and marginalized and their concerns of life should be the life of the Church. Their citizenship, dignity and rights should be protected. Here, a greater emphasis should be on how these people become part of the nation and how they become an anchor in building the nation. Patriotism should not only be believed, but openly practiced. Building the nation in the light of values of the Kingdom is our mission. "Hence Christians cannot shy away from the thorny issue of diverse identities and nationalism and they should give unambiguous support to any political, legal or social measures in favour of the oppressed, marginalized and other subaltern groups, including all religious minorities whose freedom is to be defended."[41]

2. Today, many talk of Hindutva and the ministers in the Central Government talk of "Hindutva, a noble cause." The ideology is segmented as hard and soft Hindutva. This is a dangerous move and it is done to confuse the people. The RSS definition of a nation is not acceptable. The idea of cultural nationalism has a narrow understanding and many prominent leaders of political parties adhere to this framework. Hence, an ordinary person is confused with these jargons which come across everyday. The struggle between Brahminical forces under the disguise of Cultural (Hindu) nationalism on the one hand, and the dream for an egalitarian, pluralistic and democratic Indian State and society on the other, will determine the direction and destiny of the poor and the marginalized. Hence, the Church's option with the poor should counter continuously the different guise of Hindutva and its ideology.

3. The Christian community must enter into the space of civil society where they meet, interact, debate, form opinions, etc. The Christian community must participate in the public discussion on contentious issues, and should benefit from the opportunities provided by civil society to make clear its moves and actions. Taking the bull by its horns is well spelt by Wilfred in the following way: "The type of Christianity that is conscious of the social and political implications of the Gospel and is committed to the transformation of society, to the emancipation of the lowest, transcending particular loyalties, and is in continuous dialogue with the civil society on all such issues, will be also the one which can effectively challenge the Hindutva."[42]

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4. The believing community in the recent past is grappling with the realistic concept that liberative mission is a political act. Forming leaders and paving the way into the political realm of the society will help the Dalits and Tribals of how they can be in the decision making process. Dalits and Tribals need power, but to use it as a defence so that power is not to rule over others but how the dominant castes and non-Tribals will not misuse their power. This 'Dalit/Tribal power' should be at the service of the poor and the marginalized. How to empower the Dalits/Tribals? The Church has to get involved in this process.

5. The Church is for all the people. Her mission is to reach out to all without any distinction. Empowering the poor calls for praxis towards establishing a just society. Her involvement is crucial and her role has to be prophetic. The Forum of Religious for Justice and Peace says, "institutionalized violence often goes unnoticed whereas resistance to violence of the poor is condemned. The church is not averse to mobilizing people to demonstrate when church rights are infringed. But it closes its eyes against the poor being mobilized to fight injustice in society. At bottom, the concern of the church for its institutions, property and privileges makes it a silent spectator, an unprotesting witness to the violation of human rights by those in power."[43] The challenge of the Church is to be proactive and interactive in society. The silence and the neutral position of the Church in personal and structural violence is betrayal of Jesus.

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21
The Influence of Christianity in the Transformation of the Indian Society*

Thomas Dabre

Introduction

That the Christian community whose origins in India go back to the very first century of the Christian era should have impacted the Indian society all throughout its history is self-evident. Christianity has influenced all the strata and cultural configurations of the vast Indian society. In particular it has also left an indelible mark on the predominantly Hindu society. Especially since the 19th century some elements of the Christian message and values have in a significant way penetrated the Indian society. However, the ultimate judgement as regards the influence of Christianity has to be in accordance with the specific nature of Christianity. In this perspective it appears that the Christian influence on the Indian society is mainly of a humanistic and secular character.

The Church is essentially a community of salvation proffered to all mankind in Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Second Person of the Holy trinity. An assessment in this light clearly indicates that the Indian acceptance of the characteristic Christian values is selective and hence reductive. Such a selective and reductionist approach cannot but challenge a faith-community with a mission of eternal salvation in Jesus Christ. A reflection on the general influence of Christianity on the transformation process in the Indian society would

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certainly awaken the Church to the tasks and challenges that lie ahead as we stand at this historic moment on the threshold of the third millennium observing the 1950th anniversary of the arrival of St. Thomas and the 450th anniversary of the death of St. Francis Xavier to India.

1. Christian Social Services

All over the country, there are thousands of medical establishments, educational institutions and charitable associations serving millions and millions of people, particularly the poor, the handicapped and the needy irrespective of gender, race, colour, religion, culture, etc.

In a country of the size of 1 billion people, the presence of the Catholic Community of 1,49,08,000, which is about 1.5 %, would appear to be hardly noteworthy to exert a significant influence. However, by itself, the Catholic population is quite sizeable given the fact that countries like Israel, Switzerland, East Timor, etc. have much lower population. The community, which has 8,621 Priests; 14,353 Religious Priests; 1,972 Religious Brothers; 76,150 Nuns; 6,310 Seminarians and 154 Bishops is by itself in a position to make a significant impact on the Indian Society. The Catholic Church runs 3,785 K.G. & Nursery Schools; 7,319 Primary Schools; 3,765 Secondary Schools, 240 Colleges and Social Welfare Units like 1,514 Technical & Training Schools; 1,765 Hostels & Boarding Houses; 1085 Orphanages; 228 Crèches; 704 Hospitals; 1,792 Dispensaries & Health Centres; 111 Leprosaria; 102 Rehabilitation Centres and 455 Homes for Aged/Destitute & Handicapped.[1] Movements for solidarity, environment, social reforms, rights of tribals, dalits, women networking with similar groups, inter-religious dialogue etc. are also growing in different parts of the Church. Through such educational and social activities, Christian values are spread and the quality of life of our tradition-bound society living in economic, social, cultural backwardness is improved.

A striking measure of secularism in the sense of the spirit of initiative, enterprise, involvement, activism, industrial development, strengthening of democracy, education of masses and re-examination of Hinduism's beliefs and practices has been largely due to the Indian exposure to the West and Western thinkers, interaction with Christians, particularly missionaries and education in the Church-run institutions. All this has also helped to end superstitious practices among people.

An ever growing number of Indians of all cultures and religions seek education in Church-run institutions. This is not only on account of the medium of instruction which is English but also because of such Christian values as honesty, application, prayerfulness, faith in God, peace, discipline, dedication, integrity, service, etc. The educational institutions have been

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instrumental in spreading Christian influence on Indian students. There have been opportunities for Indian students to be familiar with the Christian faith, Jesus Christ, the Bible and the Church, etc. Many Indians honour the picture of Christ in their homes and institutions. The Catholic Inquiry Centres in different parts of India have also been successful in some small measure in making Christ known to thousands of Indians in different parts of the country. Indeed, Indian life has been to an extent, transformed by Christianity through its insistence on democracy, respect for human person, monogamy, family ethics, morality, justice, social work, through charitable institutions, participation in mass-media, devotion and dedication of the Christians working in civil services and other work places.

In the south, young girls of the *nadar* caste were not allowed to cover their breasts. If a nadar girl walked past a nadar Brahmin or a nambudri Brahmin covering her breasts, it was considered a punishable religious offense. Missionaries opened schools and imparted education to girls. This resulted in the abolition of the degrading practice though male chauvinists opposed such reforms. The Christian missionaries gave women in India their sense of worth, and human dignity and equality.[2]

Apart from making a yeoman contribution to the wellbeing of the people the Church's welfare work has inspired Indians to launch similar activities which are now seen in different parts of the country. Setting up such charitable, educational and social institutions was not an essential feature of Hinduism in its history. Indian religions have tended to be individualistic. Christianity is a religion of love of the neighbour. This has influenced Indian society and promoted a sense of social cause, of service among the people.

Inspired by the Bible Pandita Ramabai (1858-1922) embraced Christianity. She founded an institute called Mukti Mission for the welfare of women especially the abandoned ones. The work of the institution has inspired activities for the liberation of women in Maharashtra since the nineteenth century.

In the present times, Mother Teresa and her work are greatly appreciated all over the country. All the civil authorities have recognized and acclaimed her work. Mother Teresa has succeeded in putting across the human and humanizing face of the church committed to the service of the downtrodden, the poor, the lowly, the distressed and the suffering – indeed the least of society. Mother Teresa has in some way became a symbol to many religious men and women, priests and the faithful working selflessly and in a hidden way, serving all in need. Mother's life and that of many others' life of service and dedication have inspired some to imitate them in their own way.

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2. Freedom Struggle

The contribution of the Christian community, to the century - long freedom struggle, it is said, was not up to the mark. It is also true though, that whatever contribution Christians did make to the freedom movement has also not been sufficiently recognized in this country. There were, however, charismatic persons like Kaka Baptista, Aloysius Soares, Brahmabandab Upadhyay and some others who promoted the nationalist movement through their writings, speeches and activities. A few Christian leaders and thinkers did take a clear stand in favour of the nationalist movement for independence from the colonial rulers:

> We will do well to realise that there is a terrible danger if we persist in the policy of keeping aloof. Materially, socially, morally, and politically, viewed in fact from every standpoint, our interests are intimately bound up with those of other Indian communities. Will it ever be otherwise? Long after Britain's political mission to India is finished, let us hope five centuries later, for all things earthly must end or change - we shall still be Indians [3]

Again,

> What greater opportunity can arise than the crisis of today?... To be born at this hour in India and to have the opportunity to take a share in the shaping of our national destinies at perhaps the most critical point of its history, if that is not an opportunity, what is? It would not only be a lamentable misapprehension of the spirit of Christ but also a grievous neglect of a great God-given opportunity, if it is not realized that Indian Christians have a tremendous duty in regard to the secular crisis in India [4]

The contribution, however, of the Christians towards the framing of the national constitution was very noteworthy. Men like H.C. Mukherji, Fr. Jerome D'souza and other Christian members of the Constituent Assembly rejected the offer of separate electorates and reservations of seats from which minorities like Christians would benefit. This they did to promote national integration, communal harmony, cooperation among communities and the spirit of democracy in our country. They also demanded by way of fundamental rights guarantees and safeguards for religious freedom and the right to practise and propagate religion. This would also include the freedom of individuals to convert to the faith of their choice. These are all basic human rights and to promote them is the duty of the nation-state. Insertion of these guarantees also helped to firm up the national fabric and to ensure the creation of a society based on the values of freedom, justice and human dignity. The advocates of the Hindutva ideology would do well to ponder on these words of Fr. Jerome D'Souza:

> If the Fundamental Rights, including as they do minority rights, are assured in an absolutely indubitable manner, no kind of political safeguards will be necessary for us and we shall not

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> demand them, as long as, I say, this part of the Constitution is enforced without any kind of "encroachment" or misinterpretation ... As far as the small Christian Community is concerned, we have gone a great way in giving up those political safeguards and we are prepared to go further and give up the reservations which have been made in certain provinces. And if we do so, it is because we know that in the spirit in which these fundamental rights have been guaranteed, there is for us an assurance of safety and a confidence which does not need to be propped up or further affirmed by political safeguards and privileges[5]

And again Fr. Jerome states:

> My main concern was with the safeguarding of fundamental rights and minority rights: right to profess, practise and propagate religion, to all the citizens freedom of education, freedom of association etc. ... When these fundamental rights were made justiciable, that is when any violation of them by individuals or governments, could be challenged in a court of law, the Christians felt that the safeguard of preserving minority rights by reserving special seats for them in the Legislatures on the basis of their population, was no longer necessary and that in the interests of national integration it was best to merge with and become part of the general electorate.[6]

In the context of attempts to rewrite the Indian Constitution and to saffronize socio-political institutions the wisdom and relevance of these words can hardly be exaggerated.

3. Some Prominent Thinkers, Reformers and Philosophers

I now wish to dwell on some prominent Indian thinkers, reformers, and philosophers who were influenced by Christianity.

3.1 Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1772-1833)

Raja Ram Mohan Roy was greatly influenced by the moral teachings of Jesus Christ described in the gospels particularly the insistence on the love of neighbour. He drew much inspiration from the ethical values of the gospels in his movement for social reforms in India. He admitted that the message in a unique manner promotes morality in society. In his "The Precepts of Jesus, the Guide to Peace and Happiness", Calcutta 1820 he published the ethical teaching of Jesus. Of Christianity he wrote "the consequence of long and uninterrupted researches into religious truth has been that I have found the doctrines of Christ more conducive to moral principles and more adapted for the use of rational beings than any other which have come to my knowledge." He affirmed "No other religion can produce anything that may stand in competition with the precepts of Jesus, much less can pretend to be a superior to them." Raja Ram Mohan Roy opposed *sati* (the burning of a widow), idolatry, polytheism, child-marriage and other inhuman idolatrous practices. However, he was selective in his

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readings of the gospels. He rejected miracles and the absolute divine claims of Jesus Christ.

3.2 Keshab Chandra Sen (1838-1884)

Keshab Chandra Sen emphasized the Asian origin, character and appearance of Jesus Christ as is done in Ecclesia in Asia. The people of Asia will heartily welcome the Asian Jesus as the fulfillment of their aspirations. The Hindu expectations and ideals are all realized in Jesus' unity with God and humanity. The concept of the Trinity coincides with the Hindu concept of *sat* (being), *chit* (consciousness), *ananda* (bliss). He criticized Christian converts from Hinduism for slavishly adopting European ways and for giving up Indian traditions, customs and culture. He highlighted Jesus' forgiving nature and self-effacement. In a moving utterance he states, my Jesus is a sparkling jewel in my necklace. I have attained inexpressible beauty and bliss. I have been melted by the powerful love of Jesus. Jesus is fully divine and fully one with the Father because he was empty of all selfishness and egoism. Jesus atoned for the sins of mankind and showed the way of union with God. Sen showed a remarkable familiarity with the tenets of the Christian faith and greatly appreciated the doctrine on the trinity, Jesus and the Church. He announced the foundation of the Indian Church with the rites of baptism and Eucharist. Of course, all this he did remaining truly and fully a Vedic, Indian Hindu.[7] The divinity of Christ was not eternal and ontological but the divine fullness occupying the void left in his being following total self-emptying. His interpretation of the Holy Trinity was modalistic in that he regarded the Son and the Spirit as manifestations of the divinity devoid of any personal differentiations. He did not appreciate organized Christianity. Ultimately he is syncretistic and relativistic because he kept to the basic framework of Hinduism and was for the unity of all religions. Still I would suggest that the theologians in India would do well to rediscover the contribution of Sen towards an Indian presentation of Christology.

3.3 Bankim Chandra Chatterjee ((1838-1894)

Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, who composed the second national anthem 'Vande Mataram' took many western values. He believed that man is ideally the perfect image of God. He called for purification of Hinduism through reason. While taking humanistic values from Christianity, he rejected supernatural revelations and dogmas. According to him, Krishna embodies fullness of mankind. All human potentialities are found through expressions and realizations in Krishna and thus he is the perfect image of what man aspires to become. We can reach at the Christian roots of such an affirmation.

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3.4 Jyotiba Phule (1827-1890)

Jyotiba Phule is hailed as a great social reformer of the 19th century Maharashtra. He sought to purify Hinduism by promoting monotheism and opposed idolatry, polytheism and caste-system and gender discrimination. In 1855, Jyotiba wrote a drama, which contrasted the exploitation of illiterate Shudras by a crafty Brahmin with the work of a Christian preacher, who teaches them the truth and leads them on to the right path. He worked for the welfare of women and the *dalits*. He founded an institution called *Satyashodhak* to inspire struggle for the liberation of the people from religious and social slavery. It is admitted by Phule himself and Maharashtrian writers that Christ-inspired God-centred humanism and Christian preachers' dedicated life and style of working had a great influence on his mind. "... from Christian teacher I realized the rights of mankind.[8]

3.5 Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920)

Bal Gangadhar Tilak, the champion of Hindu consciousness, admired Christ's spirit of selfless service, which he saw concretized in the members of the Society of Jesus who had many schools and colleges in India. Inspired by the Jesuits, Tilak helped organize the Deccan Education Society, whose members pledged themselves to accept the Jesuit ideal and to conduct their institutions in the selfless spirit of the missionaries.

Faced with a move to relax the original rule, Tilak affirmed. "We are proud to call ourselves Indian Jesuits. I only wonder how in the face of these facts we can still call ourselves Indian Jesuits." It was this controversy that eventually led to Tilak resigning from the Deccan Education Society in 1890.

3.6 Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902)

Swami Vivekananda insisted on social service. He took elements of Christianity. Influenced by Christianity he insisted on the practice of charity and love. Though an exponent of *Neo Vedanta,* the content of his preaching is ethical humanism rather than religious metaphysics unlike what we find in the commentaries on the Vedanta. He concentrated more on social service and active life in society than on the Absolute and its nature as was done by Shankaracharya, Ramanuja and other *bhashyakaras* (commentators). Vivekananda was familiar with the biblical texts but he interpreted them in his own way in line with the Vedanta frame-work.

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Vivekananda is vehement in rejecting the Christian idea of man as a sinner in need of grace. Vedanta admits *avidya* and 'error' but not sin suggesting a corruption of nature or violation of man's relation to God. The greatest error is to call a man a weak and miserable sinner. Every time a person thinks in this mistaken manner, he rivets one more link in the chain of *avidya*, that binds him, adds one more layer to the 'self-hypnotism' that lies heavy over his mind.[9]

3.6.1 Advaitic Interpretation of Jesus Christ

The Swami pictures the spirituality of Jesus as *Advaitic*, as the realization of his identity with the Brahman, and explains away the dualism in his teachings about a Personal God as a concession to the necessity of dealing with the uneducated masses and his disciples at their level thus proving the Swami's three stages of growth in spirituality. There are three ways of perceiving God.

All these three stages are taught by the Great Teacher in the New Testament. Note the Common Prayer he taught : 'Our Father which art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name,' and so on; a simple prayer, a child's prayer, mark you, it is the 'Common Prayer' because it is intended for the uneducated masses. To a higher circle, those who had advanced a little more, he gave a more elevated teaching. 'I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.' Do you remember that ? And then, when the Jews asked him who he was, he declared that he and his Father were one; and the Jews thought that was blasphemy. What did he mean by that ? That has been also told by your old prophets : 'Ye are gods and all of you are children of the Most High.' Mark the same three stages; you will find that it is easier for you to begin with the first and end with the last.

Thus through Dvaita and Visisadvaita Jesus leads men to his own realization of *Advaita*.[10]

Jesus had our nature; he became the Christ; so can we, and so, must we. Christ and Buddha were the names of a state to be attained. Jesus and Gautama were the persons to manifest it.

The disciple thinks that the Lord can manifest Himself only once. There lies the whole mistake. God manifests Himself to you in man. But throughout Nature, what happens once must have happened before, and must happen in future. There is nothing in Nature, which is not bound by law and that means that and that whatever happens once, must go on and must have been going on. Let us therefore find God not only in Jesus of Nazareth but in all the great Ones that have preceded him, in all that came after him, and all that are yet to come.

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Our worship is unbounded and free. They are all manifestations of the same Infinite God.[11]

In this approach, the historicity of Jesus and the personality are accidents, and should be held as the non-essential part of the Gospel of Christ. Speaking of Jesus Christ, he once said : We are not here to discuss how much of the New Testament is true; we are not here to discuss how much of that life (of Jesus) is historical. It does not matter at all whether the New Testament was written within five hundred years of his birth; nor does it matter even how much of that life is true. But there is something behind it, something we want to imitate.[12]

Jesus renounced everything, most specially his ego-consciousness, so that 'to be unselfish, perfectly selfless, is salvation itself, for the man within dies, and God alone remains'. The pure in heart sees God, because 'it is only necessary to clear away the dust and the dirt, and then the Spirit shines immediately'. Giving up all to the poor and turning the other cheek and other principles of the Sermon on the Mount declare the ideal of renunciation, of unselfishness, of selflessness.[13]

3.7 Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar (1891-1956)

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar inscribed the values of equality, democracy, human dignity and freedom in the Constitution. He campaigned against untouchability. In his vision of a liberated human society, he was influenced by Christianity. He was familiar with the Bible and compared himself to Moses. Indeed he did contemplate becoming a Christian but he was disillusioned by the spectacle of casteism practiced in the Church and thus was dissuaded from becoming a Christian.

3.8 Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948)

Mahatma Gandhi was familiar with the contents of the New Testament. He was influenced by the Sermon on the Mount and the image of Jesus on the Cross in his doctrine of non-violence and his work for the downtrodden and disposition of attitude of forgiveness." The New Testament gave me comfort and boundless joy supposing I was deprived of the Gita and forgot all its contents, but had a copy of the Sermon on the Mount, I should derive the same joy from it as I do from the *Gita.*"[14] . Gandhi readily admitted that he liked Christ. He regarded Christ as perfect man, king of those practising *satyagraha* (insisting on truth). However his dislike of Christians was overreaction to the obvious failings and limitations of Christians which did not take into account the immense good the Christians have been doing all over the world including India. In defense of the move in Tamil Nadu to ban conversions words of

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Gandhi are quoted. Gandhi's position on the matter was ambivalent. While he justified individual conversions on the basis of free choice he opposed organized activity for conversions. Gandhi was a typical Indian relativist and was not able to understand the Christian claims for the unicity of Jesus Christ as Son of God and Saviour of the world. Gandhi saw religion in terms of national, cultural and geographical conditions and features.

3.9 Radhakrishnan

Radhakrishnan gives an ideal picture of organic society in which the system of caste "is a democracy so far as spiritual values are concerned, for it recognizes that every soul has in it something transcendent and incapable of gradations, and it places all beings on a common level regardless of distinctions of rank and status, and insists that every individual must be afforded the opportunity to manifest the unique in him." This is not how the caste system is understood and practised in India. This re-interpretation of caste by means of a strong injection of unacknowledged Christian principles is typical of Radhakrishnan and many other modern reformers.[15]

Modern interpretations tend to give Yoga a more positive outlook. Radhakrishnan describes it as leading towards the highest fulfillment of man's religious aspirations[16]: "The Yoga discipline is nothing more than the purification of the body, mind, soul and preparing them for the beatific vision. With faith and concentration, we can even rid ourselves of our ills. The normal limits of the human vision are not the limits of the universe. If we have faith in the soul, then the supernatural is also part of the natural.[17]".

In his explanation of the four stages of life, Radhakrishnan justifies the withdrawal from social and worldly pursuits *(vanaprastha* and *sanyasa)* as follows: "The stature of man is not to be reduced to the requirements of society. Man is much more than the custodian of its culture or protector of his country or producer of its wealth, i.e., much more than a Brahmin, *a ksatriya or a Vaisya*. His social efficiency is not the measure of his spiritual manhood. The soul, which is our spiritual life, contains our infinity within it. What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"[18].

He interprets all religious mysticism in terms of universal religion.. He speaks of the super natural, beatific vision etc. He uses Christian terminology to justify Vedanta. Radhakrishnan was educated in protestant institutions in Tirupatti, Vellore and Madras. He affirmed the common essence of all religions. Radhakrishnan did take Christian terminology and categories but this he did to justify Vedanta and thus, he proved to be syncretistic in his thinking.

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3.10 Devanandan

Devanandan notes that generally in the Neo-Vedanta there is a shift from speculation about the nature of the Absolute to a new understanding about the nature of man. The determinative doctrine in the evaluation of the Hindu outlook on life is no longer derived from its classical theology, but is being built upon a new anthropology. This anthropology is perhaps still in the making.

He says that Radhakrishnan has no difficulty in accepting the wealth of meaning-content that modern western thinkers put in such terms as personality and community and sees no difficulties in reconciling them with the basic affirmations of Vedanta. What is more, he (Radhakrishnan) would go further and maintain that these modern concepts are in fact derived from the Vedanta view of life".

The stumbling block (to success in this aim) continues to be the supreme difficulty of putting meaning-content into the term 'personal' as applied to God and His relationship with man, especially in view of the 'new' significance given in contemporary Hindu society to the concept of the human 'person' in relation to other persons. The other difficulty arises when the point is made that beyond all the activism, openly admitted as theologically valid, there is the 'actionlessness' of mystic *advaitam* (non-duality) of the finite self and the Infinite Self, still upheld as the one desirable end of all religious pilgrimage. Finally, whatever the 'emphasis' (or the de-emphasis), adherence to the Vedanta view of Reality makes almost impossible belief in a doctrine of creation, especially such as would do justice to the reality of God's purposive work in world-life as directed towards an End and to the 'creative' activity of the human person as capable of co-operating with (or retarding) the fulfillment of the Divine purpose in creation. So far Hindu renaiscence has given no proof of its awareness of these theological issues.[19]

3.11 Baba Amte

Baba Amte has devoted all his life to the welfare of leprosy patients. His work for the destitute and the downtrodden has won him national and international acclaim. He has written of his admiration for Jesus Christ from whom he has received inspiration for his commitment to the suffering and the lowly. He, *in particular, derived strength and inspiration from the Crucified Lord in his work for lepers.* "When I come across a leprosy patient, foul smelling, ulcerous, I can see the imprint of His kiss on his forehead. That is all I see, just His lips, His Kiss.[20]

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"Whenever a physician removes pain, and eyes afflicted with blindness get a glimpse of the sun, when people lost in remote dark regions find barefoot helpers, when ray of light shining through the torn thatch of a hut lights up the mystery of the universe, when a mouthful of bread quells the scorching fire of hunger and a touch of mercy transcends all boundaries of notions and religions, when non-violence challenges power and wealth and mercy overcomes the cruelty of the torturer, it is there that I discover the presence of Christ's spirit." [21]

"Whenever Christianity is in conflict with Churchianity, I squarely stand on the side of Christianity, because it is on this side that I have seen Jesus, who lends a helping hand to humanity, conquering forts." I recognized in the palms of Gandhiji's hands the wounds caused by the nails of the Cross, and on the breast of Christ the marks of a pistol's bullets. At the end of the chapter entitled *Karunecha Kalam* he thus addresses Jesus Christ crucified: "The Cross on which you spent your last breath has become to me not a sign that your service has come to an end, I see in it [rather] the sum of all that gives value to our life. To me it is not a symbol of violence wrought on you, to me it has become the voice of compassion."

Everyone should attempt to walk in the shadow of Christ's cross. That means you are in the company of that life which scuttled itself to save others. I haven't the arrogance to say that I can carry the mighty load of His cross, but I do try to walk in its shadow. [22]

4. Humanistic Values vis-a-vis Christian Vision and Hinduism

The values of democracy, equality of human solidarity, peace, justice and individual initiative shape society, but refuse to be totally shaped by it like a material object. Influenced by Christian values, Indian reformers worked for the end of the cruel burning of widows, the inhuman imposition of perpetual widowhood and iniquitous practice of untouchability. All these ideas ultimately emanate from biblical anthropology. Man is made in the image and likeness of God. He is called upon to subdue the earth and to work for the progress and development of the world. As can be seen easily, such an anthropology is incompatible with the law of Karma, the caste system and the cycle of rebirth. The law of Karma determines man's lot, condition, status, position and caste in society. There is no scope for freedom in the operation of the law of Karma.

True, the Indian thinkers were also influenced by the philosophical- scientific positivism, modernized subjectivism, protestant liberalism and unitarianism. Many of the ideas of these Western liberal and rationalist thinkers had their roots in Christianity, though they had deviated from Christian orthodoxy. Christian elements in them were adopted by Indian intellectuals.

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The Indian reformers imitated the ways of Christianity not to Christianize the Hindu society but to purify and revitalize Hinduism. What has to be realized is that such a world affirming humanism is difficult to reconcile with Hindu orthodoxy and tradition.

In spite of the doctrine of *Karma* (the law of action) and and *samsaras* (cycle of rebirth) that support the caste system and untouchability Indians have accepted Christianity's humanistic values of the dignity of human person, equality of persons and genders. The Hindus do not have the concept of the Church. Their idea of salvation and spirituality tends to be individualistic rather than communitarian. To them *Moksha* is release from existence in space-time conditions through realization of the soul's identification with the Absolute (*aham brahmasmi, tattvamasi*). The characteristic Hindu practice of yogic exercises is SELF-centred and not oriented to the other i.e. man and the world. The Christian idea of salvation through charity and service implies a different theological paradigm than that of Hinduism. The Hindus mightcritically examine the relationship between the basic Hindu philosophical and theological framework and these humanistic and egalitarian values adopted directly or indirectly from Christianity.

Many of these Christian ideas and values were embraced by Indians without properly integrating them into the Hindu vision of life. These adoptions were made in a syncretistic manner.

Even most of the poor and illiterate populations of India along the corridors of time, have not embraced Christianity. This is not because of any enlightened theological reasoning but just because Indian Society tends to be tradition-bound, relativistic and syncretistic.

This would demand that the Hindus and the Christians engage in a continuous process of dialogue so that the Hindus can be made to see that authentic humanism and commitment to the progress of the world and the preservation of the eco-system are more in harmony with the essential Christian vision of God, man and the universe than the tenets of Hinduism. This is the task before the Church to be carried out in all humility through dialogue and inculturation witness and commitment.

5. Indian Prejudice

The mission of Jesus Christ is to impart the fullness of life to humanity. The historical life of Jesus Christ as narrated in the Gospels was total commitment to the well-being of man. So the mission of the Church is also to be the same. St. Irenaeus has taught us, "Man fully alive is the Glory of God". Unfortunately, this is not how the Indians perceive the mission of the Church. They are inclined to think that the Church comes to supplant, abrogate, upset and

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destroy the Indian religions and cultures. So the Church personnel along with the faithful must seek to correct the widespread perception, misconception and prejudices by presenting the mission of the Church as one that comes to preserve, enrich and fulfil all that is good, noble and profound in Indian cultures and religions.

The rise of communalism and increase in atrocities against the Church and the bills to ban conversions to Christianity instigated by some fundamentalistic and *Hindutva* outfits indicate that there is a resistance to the Church's activities based on the Gospel message. Apart from perceiving the Church's universal evangelical mission as a threat to its religions and cultures there are selfish political, economic and social motives behind the opposition to the Church. This means that the Church needs to do a lot more to win the trust and confidence of the people through inter-religious dialogue, inculturation, dialogue of life, sincere practice of the faith and commitment to social justice and progress.

6. Our Failings

We have to understand the Indian traditions, beliefs, practices and rituals and mind-set to present our doctrine, practices and rituals to them. One of the reasons for not achieving the desired results of the Church's missionary enterprise in India, is our lack of due appreciation for the local culture. For it is necessary in human interaction, particularly when the concern is to ensure acceptance of the religious message that communication be meaningful. In the future, the Church in India should assiduously seek to promote meaningful communication of the Christian message and the Church doctrine to the Indian people, which entails that inculturation, inter-religious dialogue and human emancipation and development be launched in all earnestness. Of course, whatever efforts have been made with regard to inculturation and inter religious dialogue have mostly been confined to Vedantic Brahmanical Hindus. The *dalits*, tribals and women have not been duly addressed in the process of inculturation and inter religious dialogue. The Church must ensure respect for promotion of diversity and variety in the cultures of India. It is indeed indispensable that our lay people be taught, educated, equipped and animated to witness to the Christian faith in accordance with the vision of Vatican II.

Of course, the influence of the Church would indeed have been greater on the Indian masses and leaders and thinkers if all in the Church were to practise Christian doctrine and its values fully. Mahatma Gandhi said, "Be the change you wish to see in the world." Many Hindus sharply react to the evangelical fervour of missionaries saying, " You be saved yourself

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first in order to save the world." Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was disillusioned by caste rivalries among the Catholics of the South he visited.

7. The Issue of Conversion : A Baffling Charge

Time and time again some Indians level the charge of force, allurement, enticement and deception against the Church in relation to conversions. There has not been a single case of force, deception or allurement in conversions. Nobody has been punished or imprisoned for such activities by the civil law. The II Vatican Council has stated clearly that religion is a matter of freedom and that there is no place for force or compulsion in the matters of faith (*DH*,3) How is it that the Church that has been in existence in our country since the times of St. Thomas, Apostle of India, and which grew in numbers and in territories since the times of St. Francis Xavier, can be attacked with such a charge which has no foundation in reality.

To be a Christian means to take up one's cross and follow the Lord. Jesus says: "Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and ssiters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple... none of you can become my disciples if you do not give up all your possessions" (Luke 14:25-33). How is it possible to have forced unethical conversions ? Also the Church's teaching including the one on sexual ethics. How is it then possible to have forced conversions?

At Mass, where non-Christians are present, it is customary to announce in public that non-Christians should refrain from receiving Holy Communion. If the Church wanted any means of conversion, the Church could have exploited this opportunity somehow to take them into her fold by giving them Holy Communion indiscriminately. All this goes to show that we are not yet known for what we are, what we believe and what we stand for in all its totality in a country where undoubtedly there has been a noteworthy Christian influence Of course, Christianity will always be a stumbling block and a sign of contradiction. As the Church has been opposed and persecuted in other parts of the world she will have her share of the cross in India too.

7.1 Conversions to Hinduism

It is a common knowledge that though here in India, the Hindus tend to oppose conversions to Christianity and other religions they welcome new members into their religion. Much publicity is given to Indian citizens and foreigners who embrace Hinduism. Many Hindus have set up

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centres for the spread of Hinduism in western countries. Traditionally, Hinduism had generally not been engaged in conversion activities. This new found missionary zeal is a reaction to the characteristic missionary enterprise of the Church. The Church has affirmed the right and freedom of human beings to adopt and follow the religion of their choice. So in principle it is tenable on the part of the Hindus to welcome those wishing to embrace it. What is strange is that some of them object to the Hindus being converted to Christianity. It is also strange that they who believe in the equality of all religions (*sarvadharmasamabhav*) and take legitimate pride in the traditional tolerance towards different religions (*sahishnuta)* conduct rites of purification (*shuddhikaran)* in the case of conversions to Hinduism.

7.2 Influence on Christianity

While it is true that there has been Christian influence on Indian society in various spheres, it is also true to say that there has been Indian influence on Christianity. The practice of casteism, certain taboos in regard to dietary practices such as abstention from beef, pork, women's participation in funeral procession, attitude towards widows, a hint of the law of Karma are to be seen among some Christians in India. Living in a predominantly non-Christian milieu such an influence is understandable. Still, it is more a hang over from the age-old religion of the ancestors than a matter of conviction.

In recent times, of course, there have been tendencies among Christian thinkers and people active in public life to be relativistic in faith matters. Some do think in terms of '*Sarvodharma Samabhava.*' Equality of all religions is a sort of a dogma among Indians of other religions which has had influence on some of the Christian community living as it does in a predominantly Hindu milieu.

The process of inculturation promoted, especially, since the Second Vatican Council indicates a proactive assimilation of Indian values, riches and resources on the part of the Church. In the past centuries, men like Fr. Robert De Nobili, Fr. Britto, Fr. Besky, Fr. C. Bulcke, other grammarians and lexicographers had absorbed values of Hinduism and Indian society. However, now inculturation is not left to the initiative of individuals but adopted as a method of evangelization in the Church. Growing number of Indian theologians are enthusiastic about inter-religious dialogue and inculturation which received official recognition from the Catholic Church in the Second Vatican Council. Much work still needs to be done to do full justice to the priorities of the post-conciliar Church. The theologians need to be supported and encouraged in this important service to the mission of the Church. However, these intellectuals

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and writers would do well keep in mind that not a few feel unease and concern about positions taken in connection with Jesus Christ, the Church, the Kingdom of God in the context of multiplicity of cultures and religions.

8. Tasks Ahead

The Church is called upon to proclaim the truth of Christ in all its fullness. Pope John Paul II says, "The Church's faith in Jesus is a gift received and a gift to be shared; it is the greatest gift which the Church can offer to Asia. Sharing the truth of Jesus Christ with others is the solemn duty of all who have received the gift of faith." (EA, 10) The full truth of Jesus Christ enshrined in the Church's Christological doctrine is yet to be understood and appreciated by the Indians.

The faith in Jesus Christ *per se* does not imply sectarianism or proselytism, cultural hegemony or any sense of superiority over others. " ... the Church proclaims the good news with loving respect and esteem for her listeners. Proclamation which respects the rights of consciences does not violate freedom, since faith always demands a free response on the part of the individual." (EA, 20). The ontological notions involved, which must always be presupposed and expressed in presenting Jesus, can be complemented by more relational, historical and even cosmic perspectives (EA, 20). The Church, the Synod Fathers, must be open to the new and surprising ways in which the face of Jesus might be presented in Asia." (EA, 20). The Church appreciates the difficulties of the people with regard to the corpus of the Christological teaching. The Holy Father suggests that relational, historical and cosmic perspectives, be employed in the Christology for India.

The Synod recommended that subsequent catechesis should follow "an evocative pedagogy, using stories, parables and symbols so characteristic of Asian methodology in teaching" (EA, 20). This ties well with the demand of theologians like Brahmabandab Upadhyay already in the 19th century along with non-Christian Indian thinkers for an Indian presentation of Jesus Christ rather than European. The ministry of Jesus himself shows clearly the value of personal contact, which requires the evangelizer to take the situation of the listener to heart, so as to offer a proclamation adapted to the listener's level of maturity, and in an appropriate form and language.

The Pope himself suggests examples of relational, historical and cosmic perspectives. In this perspective, the Synod Fathers stressed many times the need to evangelize in a way that appeals to the sensibilities of Asian people, and they suggested images of Jesus which would

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be intelligible to Asian minds and culture and, at the same time, faithful to Sacred Scripture and Tradition. Among them were "Jesus Christ as the Teacher of Wisdom, the Healer, the Liberator, the Spiritual Guide, the Enlightened One, the Compassionate Friend of the Poor, the Good Samaritan, the Good Shepherd, the Obedient One". Jesus could be presented as the Incarnate Wisdom of God whose grace brings to fruition the "seeds" of divine Wisdom already present in the lives, religions and peoples of Asia. In the midst of so much suffering among Asian peoples, he might best be proclaimed as the Saviour "who can provide meaning to those undergoing unexplainable pain and suffering" (EA, 20). The celebrated words of Vatican II are relevant here. "The Word of God, through whom all things were made, was made flesh so that as a perfect man he could save all men and sum up all things in himself. The Lord is the goal of human history, the focal point of the desires of history and civilization, the centre of mankind, the joy of all hearts, and the fulfillment of all aspirations" (GS, 45).

Communalism, fanaticism, fundamentalism are raising their ugly head in recent times. One of the main causes of this phenomenon is lack of forgiveness. Forgiveness is of the essence in Christianity. Forgiveness of God and forgiveness of man for fellow-man. The forgiveness of Mrs. Gladys Steins, after her husband and children were burnt alive while they were asleep at night, has been greatly appreciated all over the county. Indeed Jesus' message of forgiveness has been admired. However, looking at the situation in different parts of the country, we can justifiably say that though the message of forgiveness has been appreciated by the Indians, it has not been readily practiced, at least, not in a significantly visible manner in public sphere. Through her conduct and preaching the Church in present situation would do well to promote Jesus' message of forgiveness.

We need to work systematically on the proposal of Pope John Paul II for a more relational, historical, and cosmic Christology. I think Christological research and reflection have now to go in this direction. Ontological Christology based on the Councils of Nicea and Chalcedon is a permanent treasure of the Catholic Church. There is no question of sidelining it in favour of an appealing Christology. Still, we can review our presentation of Christology in India over the years in the light of the suggestions made by the Pope. I would submit, there is much scope for improvement and progress in this area.

The faith which the Church offers as a gift to her Asian sons and daughters cannot be confined within the limits of understanding and expression of any single human culture, for it transcends these limits and indeed challenges all cultures to rise to new heights of understanding and expression (EA, 20). For two thousand years the Church has been closely associated with

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Graeco-Roman-European culture. This does not mean that the transcendent, universal faith cannot be expressed in other cultures and in our case, in the Indian cultures. Indeed Indian religiosity and cultures will be greatly enriched by Christianity.

Christology in India needs have an Indian countenance and this can be done through appropriate Indian categories (EA, 21). Through inculturation the Church, for her part, becomes a more intelligible sign of what she is, and a more effective instrument of mission. This engagement with cultures has always been part of the Church's pilgrimage through history. But it has a special urgency today in the multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-cultural situation of Asia, where Christianity is still too often seen as foreign (EA, 21). An inculturated Christology will become more acceptable to India be cause it will be more intelligible.

In the task of inculturated theology, theologians have to be encouraged, (EA, 22). There is no need *a priori* to regard Indian cultures as being at variance with Christianity. We can view Indian cultures with the perspective of complementarity and harmony (EA, 6).

The Church's mission needs to be presented as one that preserves, ennobles and fulfills all that is good in India's religion, culture and environment as the II Vatican Council noted. (NA, 2).

On the relations between Christians and Jews Cardinal Josef Ratzinger states, that though Christians should not force their faith upon the Jews they should try to live their life together with the Jewish people in such a way that it no longer stands in opposition to them ... but facilitates their own approach to it."(Josef Ratzinger, God and the World: Believing and Living In our Time " (Ignatius Press)[23]. Such should also be our approach to the religions in India, i.e., positive and harmonious; not negative and threatening.

Fulfillment of a culture, a service to the community also means correcting what is harmful and evil and so the mission of the Church in India also demands that we humbly and patiently bring to the notice of the Indian people what is not good in their cultures and communities, though not in any self-righteous or presumptuous way. One reason for the opposition to the Church personnel is precisely our work for the lowly, the marginalized, the exploited. Demand for justice and action against injustice is going to upset the powers that be and vested interests.

The role of priests in such a mission is of key importance. They are the official representatives of the Church and so the seminary training must be carried out in the spirit of such a positive approach in the mission of the Church towards Indian religion and cultures.

No individual, no nation, no culture is impervious to the appeal of Jesus who speaks from the very heart of the human condition. " (*EA,* 14). It is his life that speaks, his humanity,

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his fidelity to the truth, his all-embracing love. Furthermore, his death on the Cross speaks - that is to say the inscrutable depth of his suffering and abandonment". Contemplating Jesus in his human nature, the peoples of Asia find their deepest questions answered, their hopes fulfilled, their dignity uplifted and their despair conquered. Jesus is the Good News for the men and women of every time and place in their search for the meaning of existence and for the truth of their own humanity. There is, therefore, no need to resign helplessly to the fact, in certain quarters, of resistance to Christian faith. Of course, such a philosophical theological dialogue need not be argumentative and cantankerous. We can discuss our specific Christological-theological categories with humility and respect but also with hope, confidence and courage (*EA*, 21 & 22).

Ecclesia In Asia makes us realize that the Church's Christological doctrine is not inconsequential. It is part of the fulfilling mystery of Jesus Christ. The doctrine is the expression of what Jesus in his person and being is. As such He is life-giver. The doctrine too should be presented and understood as such. Pope John Paul II suggests that images, relational, historical and cosmic perspectives be used in our presentation of Jesus Christ in Asia. Jesus is to be presented as one who comes to fulfill all the good values, elements, customs, traditions and aspirations of the Indian people and to preserve it all. Unfortunately, the Indians do not perceive it that way. They are inclined to think that Christianity comes as a threat to and destroyer of Indian religions and cultures. Of course for the acceptance of the doctrine witness of life and commitment will also be essential along with inculturation, inter-religious dialogue, initiatives of service, development, progress and peace as is indicated in Ecclesia in Asia.

The truth of Christianity is meant for all. All human beings can transcend their present stance and respond positively to the truth it seeks to share. "Revelation therefore introduces into our history a universal and ultimate truth which stirs the human mind to ceaseless effort; indeed, it impels reason continually to extend the range of its knowledge until it senses that it has done all in its power, leaving no stone unturned" (*Fides et Ratio*, 14).

People can know the truth of revelation if they are inspired and persuaded to look beyond themselves and to follow the path of truth. "Christian Revelation is the true lodestar of men and women as they strive to make their way amid the pressures of an immanentist habit of mind and the constrictions of a technocratic logic. It is the ultimate possibility offered by God for the human being to know in all its fullness the seminal plan of love, which began with creation. To those wishing to know the truth, if they can look beyond themselves and their

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own concerns, there is given the possibility of taking full and harmonious possession of their lives, precisely by following the path of truth" (*Fides et Ratio*, 15).

Inter-religious dialogue and inculturation in India would mean that the Church enrich herself with elements drawn from Indian heritage. However, the Indian traditions should also not be closed in upon themselves in a self-satisfied manner. These should also be ready to be enriched by the treasure of truth the Church seeks to share.

"In India particularly, it is the duty of Christians now to draw from this rich heritage the elements compatible with their faith, in order to enrich Christian thought. Care will need to be taken lest, contrary to the very nature of the human spirit, the legitimate defense of the uniqueness and originality of Indian thought be confused with the idea that a particular cultural tradition should remain in its difference and affirm itself by opposing other traditions" (*Fides et Ratio*, 72). Thus, there is no need to posit Indian religions and cultures against Christianity.

Conclusion

The consciousness and the individual and social conduct of the Hindus have been closely shaped by their religion. Hinduism has undoubtedly inculcated noble spiritual and moral and humane qualities in its adherents. It has given rise to many deeply spiritual and ascetical persons. Some of the Hindu schools of philosophy and sects of bhakti (devotion) attained awesome heights of speculation and depths of sentiments. However, a certain acosmism, fatalism, iniquitous caste system and gender discrimination have also been the fall-out of the Hindu faith. A comparatively miniscule Christian community is responsible for bringing about a transformation in such a religious and social milieu. This certainly is a commendable contribution to the nation building. Our country with its vast multitudes and multiple cultures will attain yet greater transformation and human welfare and fuller life if it is persuaded to appreciate Christianity's message and values in their integrity and totality. A selective and reductionist Christology can only catch a glimpse of the fullness of life destined by the Almighty for all humanity. The Church in India has much to thank and praise God for the influence she has had on our beloved country since the arrival of St. Thomas and St. Francis Xavier. However to do full justice to her divine mission the Church has to engage in a more comprehensive theological discourse in India difficult as it may be. Though the Indian interpretation of the New Testament and of the works, life and person of Jesus Christ generally tends to be selective and reductionist it can with courage and vision be taken as a starting point. We can strive to build a comprehensive Christology on it appealing, meaningful and acceptable to the Indian people along the lines herein suggested.

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22
Towards a Culture of Inter-Religious Dialogue in India*

Sebastian Painadath

On your behalf I thank Bishop Thomas Dabre for presenting this well-studied, well-documented paper, on Christian Influence in the Transformation of Indian Society. Among the several points of Christian influence mentioned by him let me highlight three, which seem to be important and which invite a discussion:

1. Christian presence has helped our people in India to awaken the realisation that religion should essentially have a social dimension. Quoting Irenaeus Bishop Dabre said: The human person fully alive is the Glory of God (17). Hence "total commitment to the integral well-being of the human" (17) is the central concern of a truly religious person. This is effectively communicated through the hundreds of institutions of social commitment well as through the critique of the social evils and exploitative systems of Indian society.

2. Christianity has promoted the positive values of secular humanism and the principles of democracy in India. In the framing of the Indian Constitution there has been a considerable Christian influence with the result that we now live in a secular, social, democratic republic in which the freedom of religion is accepted as a fundamental right of every citizen.

3. Bishop Thomas Dabre has given a detailed account of the way Christian world-view has influenced the *leaders of the Indian Renaissance* of the last 150 years. They had a formative

*A response by the author to the Paper "The Influence of Christianity in the Transformation of Indian Society" presented by Bishop Thomas Dabre at the History Seminar on 16th November, 2002 at Renewal Centre, Cochi, Kerala.

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role in shaping the destiny of our people by developing a positive outlook on life with due respect for the dignity of every human person.

Bishop Thomas Dabre has made several significant observations on the Christian presence in India. Let me mention four of them making some reflections in view of further exploration.

1. At the beginning of the paper he says: "The ultimate judgement as regards the influence of Christianity has to be in accordance with the specific nature of Christianity. In this perspective it appears that the Christian influence on Indian society is mainly of a humanistic and secular character". (2) Here the question could be asked: can *the specific nature of Christianity*, the essential message of Jesus, be understood and presented mainly in terms of humanistic and secular character? Why is it that Christianity influences the Indian mind mainly along the humanistic and secular lines and not so much in the spiritual realm? How come that the Christian's faith in Jesus Christ apparently did not have an in-depth influence on forming the spiritual experience and transforming the ethical values of the people of India? Has there been a significant Christian contribution in the areas of Indian philosophy, Indian spirituality, Indian art and literature and on the organisational set up of Indian society?

2. In the middle of the paper it is said: "Hindus can be made to see that authentic humanism and commitment to the progress of the world and the preservation of the eco-system are more in harmony with the essential Christian vision of God, man and the universe than the tenets of Hinduism" (16). And this vision is described thus "Man is made in the image and likeness of God. He is called upon to subdue the earth and to work for the progress and development of the world" (p. 15). I am afraid in this attitude of *subduing* the earth, much acclaimed by the traditionally Christian countries of the West as the basic principle of development, is salutary for India, or for the future of humanity at all. A re-reading of the Bible in terms of eco-sensitivity is a need of the times and the Vedic world-view of India can contribute much to this. According to the Vedas and the Upanishads-an in the tribal sensitivy as well-earth is the extended form of the human body, the womb of life and the abode of the Divine.

3. In the paper there is a repeated remark over "the Hindu resistance to Christian faith." Should we not here make a distinction. The Hindus spontaneously welcome Jesus, but not so Christianity. The Gospels resonate well with the Indian religious psyche, but not so the theology of the Church. Mahatma Gandhi is reported to have said: I venerate Christ, but I do no want to become a Christian. Vivekananda told the Americans: I am proud to be a disciple of Jesus, but I am not a Christian. Is there not a difference between being a *disciple of Jesus* and being member of an established religion like Christianity" To keep this in mind is vital if we want to share our Christ experience in a credible way in the multi-religious context of India. In the contemporary heated discussion on conversion this has a theological significance.

4. Bishop Thomas Dabre has rightly pointed out that Christian Churches have not been sensitive enough to the cultural ethos and religious symbols of India. In India people are

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"inclined to think that the Church comes to supplant, abrogate, upset and destroy the Indian religions and cultures" (17) The problem is that Christianity is falsely identified with the western culture. To a great extend the symbols and rituals, structures and values of the Church are still remnants of the colonial past. The second Vatican Council and the Asian Bishops Synod, as well as the Holy Father in repeated exhortations, have asked for an effective and comprehensive process of inculturation embracing theology, spirituality, liturgy and ecclesial structures. We need to ask ourselves: what is it that blocks us to be fully Indian Christians, and not just Christians in India?

Bishop Dabre has made a beautiful observation in the light of the Asian Bishops Synod: "We can view Indian culture with the perspective of complementarity and harmony" (23). To explain this he quotes Pope John Paul II's words from Fides et ratio: "In India particularly, it is the duty of Christians now to draw from this rich heritage the elements compatible with their faith, in order to enrich Christian thought" (nr. 72, p.25). What does this concretely mean? This demands: we Christians have to discover the spiritually enriching elements of the Indian heritage. For this we need to develop a genuinely dialogical attitude to our Hindu sisters and brothers. We must realise that with them we are co-pilgrims, co-seekers, "accompanying one another towards the goal God has set for us" (John Paul II, Assisi, 27.10.86).

In view of this culture of let me share with you some reflections on an in-depth interaction between Christian faith and Hindu experience:

There are two great wombs of the World Religions: Palestine and India. Ancient greater Palestine with its Semitic culture gave birth to Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The Indian sub-continent with its tribal-dravidian-Vedic culture gave birth to Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism. These are the two hemispheres of World Religions and let us look at the dominant features on each side.

The semitic religions are characterised by their prophetic dynamism, while the Indian religions have a specifically mystical world-view.

In the semitic religions God is addressed primarily as the personal God, Creator of the universe and transcendent Lord of history. In the Indian religions the Divine is experienced basically as ineffable mystery (Brahman), the immanent power of grace and life (siva-sakti) of the universe.

Hence the prophetic religions of the West uphold the value of listening to the Word of God and obeying the Will of God. The mystical religions of the East emphasise the inner entry into the silence of the heart and union with the Divine Spirit (Atman).

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The prophets proclaim social justice and concern for the poor as the decisive values of religion; they insist that religious life has inevitable consequences for social transformation. The mystics speak of harmony with nature and compassion for all living beings as basic values of spiritual experience; they concentrate on the transformation of consciousness in the life of the individual.

The semitic religions are anthropocentric in approach and they speak of the divine revelation in the events of history. The Indian religions are cosmocentric in perspectives and they describe the unfolding of the divine light from within the cave of the heart.

Consequently the semitic religions have a great social sensitivity: respect for the human person and responsibility towards society. The Indian religions have a great eco-sensitivity: respect for nature and compassion towards all living beings.

The Western religions promote theology with conceptual clarity and normative formulations. The Eastern religions pursue theosophy with intuitive insights and relentless search.

In Judaism, Christianity and Islam there is great scope for social mobility but a lot of restrictions in spiritual exploration. In Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism there is infinite scope for spiritual exploration, but a lot of restrictions in social life.

Consequently there is a tendency in the semitic religions to raise exclusivist claims and put up sacred structures. In the Indian religions the tendency is towards elitism and casteism.

One could mention many more points of contrast between the two spiritual hemispheres. However all these should not be taken merely as contrasting features. In fact these are complementary factors of an integrated spiritual evolution. At a deeper level they lead to (what Bishop Dabre called) complementarity and harmony (23). There is no religion which is exclusively prophetic or mystical. In reality every prophet is a mystic and every mystic is a prophet. Christianity does have deep mystical streams in its heritage, and Hinduism does have strong prophetic elements in its traditions. However the major Scriptures and spiritual heritage show that the prophetic dynamism is dominant in Christianity and the mystical experience is the characteristic of Hinduism.

In a spiritual encounter between Hinduism and Christianity at a depth level, the alert the prophetic dynamics of religion.

The Christian realises that the divine reality is an unfathomable mystery, that "God lives in unapproachable light" (1 Tim 6:16), that *the breadth and the length, the height and the*

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depth of the mystery of Christ can never be fully grasped by the Church; with the great theologian Augustine one will say: if you claim to know God, it is not God whom you know! *(si comprehendisti non est Deus)*.

And the Hindu in encounter with the Christian faith understands the social consequences of religious life. He realises the demands of the Vedic axiom: the one who cooks food for only for oneself eats sin (Rig Veda, 10.117); he grasps the relevance of the Gita teaching: only works done in a spirit of ego-less service leads to integration (*yajnaya acharatah karma samagram pravileeyate*, 4:23).

There is therefore a tremendous scope for an ongoing spiritual dialogue between Christianity and Hinduism in the present contest of India.

Oppenness to the other does not mean giving up the base of one's faith or losing one's religious identity. The deeper one is rooted in one's faith the wider one can branch off towards the others, like a tree. It is through the *thou* that *I* become truly *I*; in encounter with the Hindu heritage the Christian is enabled to discover the deeper dimensions of the mystery of Christ. In encounter with the Christian faith the Hindu is enabled to reread his sacred Scriptures.

All this is not just a wishful thinking. Quite a lot of research is now being done on the landscape of religions in India. Increasingly Christian theologians are doing a serious study of the Indian Scriptures and Hindu sages are exploring Christian sources. Just to mention one example: A Vedantic understanding of Christ on the one side and a social interpreation of the Bhagavad Gita on the other side are concrete fruits of this inter-religious encounter. We have come so far that Hindus and Christians pray together, study the Scriptures together and exchange their spiritual experiences. This is the promise of a future culture of dialogue in India. This is the effective antidote to religious fundamentalism that unfortunately poisons the minds of certain circles of Hindus and Christians.

From the Hindu side, at least from the time of Vivekananda, there is a growing openness to Christian Scriptures and spiritual traditions, biblical values and the perspectives of the Kingdom of God proclaimed by Jesus. From the Christian side a lot of genuine dialogue initiatives are taking place from the time of II Vatican Council. Pope Paul VI declared during the Council: *dialogue is the new way of being the Church today*. Pope John Paul II addressing Hindu friends in Madras in 1986 said: "When we open ourselves in dialogue to the other, we open ourselves to God. Thus though inter-religious dialogue we make God present in our midst".

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Dialogical openness to followers of other religions is a sacred responsibility. When we listen to someone of another religion we listen to God speaking to us through that person. Hence we need to have a genuine respect for the diverse ways in which the divine Spirit is working in the hearts of human seekers, through religions and cultures. I close with an ancient Vedic prayer:

Mitrasya chakshusha sameeskhamahe

May we look at one another with the eyes of a friend.

The two-fold streams of spirituality:	
The Prophetic Stream	**The Mystical Stream**
Inter-personal encounter with God	Transpersonal experience of the Divine
Listening to the Word of God	Sinking into the Silence of the Divine
Love-surrender-	Wisdom-transparency
Social justice: concern	Harmony with all: compassion
Person – Community	Individual-Totality
Transformation of society	Transformation of consciousness
Anthropocentric	Cosmocentric
Social sensitivity	Eco-sensitivity
Revelation in history	Enlightment in the individual
Theology-conceptual precision	Theosophy-intuitive perception
Social mobility	Social restrictions
Spiritual restrictions	Spiritual exploration
Authority structures	Caste structures
Exclusive claims	Inclusive approach
Semitic religions	Indian religions
(Christianity)	(Hinduism)

Through a creative process of dialogue between the two streams the mystical dimension is awakened in the semitic religions and the prophetic dynamism is activated in the mystical religions.

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23
Towards the Empowerment of Women in India

Virginia Saldanha

Introduction

With the emergence of the great law-giver Manu, the respect that women enjoyed during the Vedic period began to deteriorate.[1] Discrimination against women progressively became deeply entrenched in Indian Society. Even today, women continue to be economically dependent, politically powerless, excluded from religious leadership, victims of various forms of violence, voiceless, used and abused at the whim of men for pleasure and economic gain. However, the influence of the teachings of Christ for the liberation of humankind has had a significant impact on Indian society, thanks to the arrival of Christian missionaries who brought in the seeds of this message, beginning with the early centuries of the last millenium.

Though the Church itself is a strongly patriarchal institution, the message of Christ has accorded to women their dignity as human persons. Thanks to the work of the Spirit ever present in the Church, constantly moving to make "all things new", many men, being open to the Spirit, have helped women find a voice and a platform to make their voice heard.

Since the 19th century, Christian educational institutions for women run by the numerous Religious women's congregations have sown the seeds of Women's emancipation and empowerment. Women educated in these institutions have made their mark in contributing to raise the status of women in India. Many women leaders who have made their mark in Indian politics & civil society have been educated in convent schools and colleges in the

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country. Significant among these are Dr. Kiran Bedi, Ms. Violet Alva and her daughter-in-law Ms. Margaret Alva, Adv. Norma Alvares, Vasundhara Scindia, etc.

In India, the earliest outstanding example of the influence of Christianity towards the emancipation of women was Pandita Ramabai a convert to Christianity. Born a Hindu Brahmin, her father contributed towards her empowerment as a woman. Her deep dissatisfaction with her own religion led her to read the Gospels and Christ's liberative action in favour of women. She broke the barrier of caste by her marriage to a lawyer who was a Sudra and bravely enlarged her horizon despite motherhood. Moved by the plight of child widows she opened Sharada Sadan in Pune to educate them. She opened Krupa Sadan for those who had given up prostitution. [2]

1. Contribution of Christian Women Religious

1.1 To Education

The advent of the Christian Women Religious in India in the 19th century is a landmark in the history of women's empowerment in the country. Their charisms lay mainly in the service of women through the establishment of orphanages (especially for girls), educational institutions, imparting of skills like tailoring, embroidery, teacher-training, etc. The 'all girl' schools provided a certain security which was required by parents with conservative attitudes who feared for the safety of their daughters. These all–girl educational institutions extensively encouraged women's education, and extended women's sphere beyond the home. They helped women to take up careers, though traditional, were path breaking, for the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Though the percentage of all-girl institutions has dropped from 10.3% in 1947-48 to 8.14% in 1980-81[3], the enrolment of girls in relation to boys in educational institutions increased from 33% in 1950-51 to 57% in 1980-81.[4] This is indicative of a positive trend in attitudes towards female education as well as the openness of parents to send girls to co-ed institutions. This trend set in during the last quarter of the twentieth century. This openness on the part of parents and trust reposed in girls is indicative of the growing awareness towards building their self-confidence and consequent empowerment.

1.2 In the Field of Social-Work

Among other efforts of Indian Religious women towards the empowerment of women are the numerous homes and shelters for girls. An example is a home in Bangalore run by the Religious of the Good Shepherd who are basically committed to the empowerment of women

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in India since 1854. This is a home for girls and women who are victims of illegal pregnancies and are rejected by their parents or partners. The girls are helped to pick up the threads of their life and get back on their own feet. They are offered social, economic and even political alternatives and supported with a legal and educational system to deal with various forms of violence. Vocational and skill training enables the women and girls to earn a living with dignity. The siters are also involved in the formation of women's groups at the community level which helps women to tackle their problems and educates them in gender sensitivity, health issues and non-formal literacy. The work of the sisters is focused on Devadasis, Dalits and Tribal women in the rural and urban set up.[5]

Another example of work for the uplift of women is The Daughters of the Cross who started their first home in Byculla in 1863 which was shifted to Bandra in 1864[6], to care of the destitute women and children. Also brought to this home were young girls rescued from the Black Slave Trade at the time. Significant among their institutions for women is St. Catherine's home in Mumbai, which today provides residential care and education to over 300 children (majority of whom are girls). These children are brought up in an atmosphere of love and are given an all round development. Quite a few of the girls brought up by the sisters now have good jobs and have moved out to live independently in hostels. The sisters have taken on the role of providing a 'family' for the abandoned girl-children and have helped the girls to get married and have families of their own. This has been an invaluable service against the backdrop of the terrible bias against the girl children in India. A shelter for 'unwed mothers' provides assistance to these young women during pregnancy and delivery and gives general training in motherhood. A team comprising of a Social Worker, a Counsellor and a Psychologist helps with the rehabilitation and integral development of these women who are otherwise ostracised by family and society. The sisters have been updating their outreach to women with the changing times. Today they have a project for children with HIV +ve committed to their care by dying parents. After the arbitrary action of the Government to rehabilitate sex workers in February 1996 and the experience of having hundreds of these women 'dumped' in three Religious Institutions in Mumbai, St. Catherine's Home started Karunakur, a centre for the rehabilitation of sex workers in 1999. This centre is an oasis for sex workers who are so accustomed to being tossed on the stormy seas of social ostracism, bias, and uncharitable attitudes of society in general. The home restores self-esteem and dignity to the victims of trafficking and sexual abuse. Networking with NGOs, Karunakur helps to integrate girls into the mainstream society.[7]

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In the field of training in Social Work the religious sisters have been in the forefront in India. I cite the example of The Daughters of the Heart of Mary who have done pioneering work through their colleges of social work started in Mumbai and Mangalore. The Nirmala Niketan College of Social Work started in 1970 in Mumbai, has trained numerous young women as social workers and started a number of issue-based NGOs like Prerna, a centre for children of sex workers in Khamatipura (the 'red light' area of Mumbai), Sakhya, the anti-dowry cell, SETU for domestic workers, etc. The social workers trained by the Social Work training institutions, the majority of whom are women, are much in demand for their practical training in community work among women. This training not only empowers the women trained as para Social Workers, but has also multiplied the outreach for the empowerment of women in India.

Many congregations are dedicated to the service of women working as domestic workers in the urban areas. They support the struggle of the domestic workers for just wages and better conditions of work. The majority of domestic workers are women coming from the tribal areas and the socially and economically weak sections of society. Sr. Jeanne Devos ICM, has been instrumental in starting a nation-wide House-workers movement that coordinates the work done in various cities to empower domestic workers. In Mumbai the Bombay Houseworkers Solidarity has been actively networking with other secular organizations, in the drawing up of a Bill for Domestic Workers. They have been lobbying to get the Bill into the local legislature as well as into Parliament. The movement has succeeded in bringing about some changes in attitudes towards domestic workers (who being women, are generally a highly exploited and oppressed group). The movement has also helped restore the dignity of the women employed in domestic work.

The Religious of Mary Immaculate who are present in many cities of India cater to the needs of numerous girls and women who migrate to the large cities in search of work by providing initial accommodation, orientation and guardianship to the girls. They keep in touch with the girls whom they place for work and give them opportunities for learning. The sisters network with other organizations involved with the struggles of domestic workers for justice in their conditions and wages for work. The girls who pass through their hands are confident and able to hold their own in their place of work.

The Sisters of Immaculate Heart of Mary (ICMs) have started a Centre for Women's Studies in Dindigul, T.N. to promote women's empowerment. Women's Studies in Society,

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Religion and Theology creates awareness, provides tools for analysis and helps critical reflection which in turn helps women to become free from 'patriarchal' social conditioning, believing in their capacity to create a just human order, and working as liberated, sensitive leaders.[8]

The contribution of Religious women to the empowerment of women has been significant especially among the less privileged in rural, tribal and urban areas. Numerous Religious women work in the remotest areas with the tribal and the poorest women. The formation of co-operative credit societies or self-help groups (SHG) for women has been an important tool of women's empowerment. The creation of Mahila Mandals for awareness and action has proved very fruitful. Many women in slum areas have come forward to assert themselves and take control of their lives. Sisters have been particularly effective in empowering dalit women to improve their status and to stand up for their human rights. The many attacks on religious sisters is a backlash of their work of empowerment in the rural areas. The murder of Sr. Rani Maria in Madhya Pradesh is one such example. The Bishop of Indore said, "Sr. Rani Maria died as a martyr shedding her blood for the emancipation of women and for the uplift of the poor and the oppressed and the exploited people. She will remain immortal in the hearts of thousands of poor people in the area."[9]

Sisters from different congregations have been working to empower women working in the Fishery Sector along the coast. The struggle of women in this sector like most poor women is a struggle within a struggle, being women and being poor. Religious sisters have been working with the fisher women who are mainly employed in the marketing of the fish. These women are further struggling against the patriarchal attitudes in their families. Sisters also work with the workers of the prawn peeling and processing units along the coast. I am aware of how the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary in Vashi have succeeded in gaining the confidence of the employers and have gained access to these girls in what used to be a 'labour camp'. They have been able to obtain the release of girls who want to leave the job and return home. They are continuing to struggle to obtain better working conditions for these women workers.

2. Contribution of Religious Men to Women's Empowerment in India

Before Vatican II, only men who entered the seminary in the Church had the opportunity to study theology and Holy Scriptures. Quite a few of these men were enlightened by the liberative message of Jesus and became sensitive to the plight of women especially in the

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poorer sections of society. These men were inspired to start religious congregations or women's groups/organizations in the Church. Some examples are the former Salesian Bishop L.R. Morrow of Krishnagar diocese who started the Sisters of Mary Immaculate and Fr. Angeletto s.j. who provided the vision for the Catholic Council of Women in India and worked to promote the organization.

While women religious of different congregations of foreign origin were active in different parts of India, they were restrictive in the admission of candidates to their congregations. Only the elite could meet the demands for dowry and education standards for admission. Monsignor R.F.C Mascarenhas a man of vision, founded the Congregation of the Sisters of the Little Flower of Bethany in July 1921,[10] to enable women, who could not meet the standards of foreign congregations, to have an opportunity to serve people as religious sisters. The constitution of the congregation lays stress on the educational apostolate which is directed towards the poor and the marginalized, especially women, through formal and informal education, since at the time of its beginning, the educational institutions in Mangalore catered only to the upper classes of society.

3. Contribution of Christian Women Through Secular/Lay Organizations

Though formal academic education did provide a certain degree of empowerment to women, culturally they continue to remain socially devalued and subject to men. The thrust to women's empowerment came in through the secular women's movement which was galvanized in India with the coming together of women's organizations and lawyers from all over the country over the famous Mathura Rape Case in 1972. Individual Christian women joined secular women's organizations throughout India and got involved in the struggle for women's emancipation in India. Advocate Flavia Agnes is an example of a woman empowered by the women's movement in India. Having been helped by women, she in turn has become an untiring activist and women's lawyer in Mumbai.

The emergence of the "Secular Institutes" for Women has provided a new way of consecrated living to women who sought to serve society outside the confines of institutionalised religious life. Empowered by the documents of the Second Vatican Council – The Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People and The Church in the Modern World, *Secular Institutes have broken new ground in offering to women an opportunity to develop their individual charism in a free and nurturing atmosphere*[11], unhindered by clerical dominance.

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Kerala Streevedi Convenor, Mercy Alexander, got involved with the agitation of women vendors against money lenders and merchants at an early age of 19. Later as the fish workers' movement grew in Kerala, Mercy became one of the main mobilisers of the Kerala Swatantra Matsya Federation. As the convenor of the Kerala Streevedi, she is agitating against the impact of the new market economy on women.[12]

Bailancho Saad is a Women's Collective in Goa, comprising of a number of Catholic women who have taken up various issues affecting women. Bailancho Manch is a Women's Forum working in Mapusa, Goa striving for equality and justice for women. Many Catholic women are part of this forum working on issues affecting women in Goa like violence, tourism, prostitution, mega projects, water, etc.

The Emergency was instrumental in making P.L.T. Girija, a Roman Catholic woman from Kerala, conscious of the strengths and ills of society. She gathered together women who regularly discussed issues affecting women in Indian society. The group formed itself into Pennurimai Iyakkam (P.I. or Women's Rights Movement) in 1978. The organization encourages women to form local P.I. units where women come to talk about their problems. They organise statewide rallies, signature campaigns and create awareness on various issues.[13]

In 1982 a workshop on women's status was held in Madras for professional women with feminist orientation. Shakunthala Balaraman played a key role in it. The networking among women and women's organizations that followed led to the formation of the Tamil Nadu Joint Action Council for Women (JACW). Among the objectives are the upholding and protection of the status and dignity of women; the promotion of the rights, equality and welfare of women through legislation; to make representation to the government or other authorities to redress grievances of women.[14]

The Young Women's Christian Association of India is over a hundred years old and forms part of the movement of Christian women worldwide. Their network of services throughout India has provided opportunities for women's empowerment to a certain degree. Their hostels situated in the different metropolitan cities of India, have helped many women from the smaller towns to come to the cities to take up employment or higher studies. The hostels provide security to travelling women executives as well. Their activities include vocational training for women as well as community organization in slum areas of cities. They now focus on addressing the issue of Violence to Women through various awareness programmes and services offered by members in different towns and cities.

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The CCWI (Council of Catholic Women of India) was started in 1965 in Bombay. The CCWI has 57 units in the different dioceses of India and has been active in welfare work and vocational training for women. Their triennial meetings bring together women from all over the country in a spirit of sisterhood and solidarity to discuss issues pertaining to women in the Catholic Church and the country, having as their motto "In Service of the Church and Country". The organization has greatly contributed to the empowerment of women in Jharkhand, Chattisgarh, Bihar, M.P, and North Eastern parts of the country through the establishment of Mahila Sanghs. The formation of Mahila Sanghas has served to build up women's self-confidence and solidarity. The women discuss their problems in these Sanghas and help each other to find a solution. The women have learnt self-employment skills which have helped to create some degree of economic independence for them. Many national level women leaders have emerged from these areas.[15] The fact that they travel to different parts of India for National meetings of the CCWI is indicative of their growing independence and confidence. Today the CCWI Executive Committee has four tribal women as members. These women are assertive and articulate in their participation at meetings at the National level.

The Women's Institute for New Awakening (WINA) started in 1982 is a study and action group of women for the education of women in awareness raising. Their reflections in theology and on women's status in Church and society are expressed in several books authored or co-edited by its members. These books have become an important resource for women's awareness. They have conducted consultations of women development workers, educational programmes for groups of girls/women and workshops on feminist theology among their activities.[16] Notable among its members is Jessie Tellis Nayak.

Jessie worked for the Indian Social Institute, New Delhi. She struggled to establish a Programme for Women's Development (PWD) in 1976 in the ISI, Delhi which today is functioning effectively in conducting training programmes and seminars on current issues and legal aspects affecting women. Jessie concentrated her efforts in providing training, consultancy and publication of material on women. She organized workshops and meetings on women's issues and courses for women development workers which included income generating schemes for women, understanding women's issues and teacher training for the 'grihini programme'. She initiated a full time one year training course to prepare new grihini teachers at the Holy Cross Vocational Training Institute at Hazaribagh, Bihar. This attracted trainees from all over India. She experimented with animating local women to organize 'Mahila Sanghas".[17]

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Satyashodak is a women's reflection group based in Mumbai which came together after the National Consultation on Woman in Society and Church in India in 1984. They form a resource group that helps in conducting awareness programmes at all levels in the Church and society. The members of this group work in different spheres of action in favour of women. Some members of the group were involved in the struggle for the reformation of the Christian Personal Laws to make them gender just.

The Hope and Life Movement for Widows started in 1982 has grown to a large movement for the empowerment of widows. It has helped the more traditional women in the Church to overcome the negative attitudes society has towards widows. Women have been encouraged to live a normal life even after the death of their husbands, and not the living death expected by society. Every year thousands of widows gather on International Widows Day and give testimony about how this movement has liberated them from the oppressive attitudes of society towards them. One very visible example of their liberation is that now these women are no longer identifiable as widows wearing the traditional mourning dress walking around with sad faces. A better understanding of Life hereafter through the eyes of the Christian faith has helped them look at life in a more positive way and given them much joy in living and serving.

4. Empowerment of Women through Official Church Organizations

The Commission for Women of the Catholic Bishops Conference of India (CBCI) was started first as a Women's Desk in the Commission of Laity, in 1992, and later was raised to the status of an independent Commission for Women. In the concluding statement of the CBCI in Pune, January 1992 the bishops said, "Discrimination against women seems to be embedded in the structure of our society .... Violence (physical, sexual, psychological) that is practised against women is the result of inhuman .... attitudes. With a sense of sorrow we must admit that women feel discriminated (against) even in the Church."[18] Among the chief aims of the Commission for Women is the empowerment of women and social transformation for justice to women and all weak sections of society. Through the network of Regional and Diocesan Women's Commissions, training programmes are held to reach every woman in the Church who in turn are encouraged to move out into the larger society in India for creating awareness, taking up women's issues, and in general work towards social transformation. Catholic women are encouraged to network with secular women's organizations for programmes of awareness and action. The newsletter of the Commission

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is an important link for providing information and awareness to women at all levels in the Church and society.

The Commission prepares resource material for use at the grass roots to create awareness of social attitudes that oppress women. There is a steady increase in awareness taking place and women are becoming aware of their dignity and status.

Through the celebration of special days for women like Women's Day, Day of the Girl Child and Day against Violence to Women, the Commission has helped to spread awareness on these issues widely throughout the country. The celebration of the Day of the Girl Child since 1997 was a pioneering effort by the CBCI Commission of Women to bring the attention of society to the plight of the girl child in the country where the very birth of the girl child is looked down upon as a burden or even a curse. Modern technology has ironically helped in the elimination of girls from the population in India. Today the celebration of the Day of the Girl Child on September 8, commemorated as the birthday of Mary, the first ever liberated woman, has spread to every part of the country to raise the awareness. The government only woke up to this reality after the statistics of the 2001revealed the dismal male/female ratio in the country, and began to push for awareness on the importance of the girl child.

The active participation of women in the BCC movement started in the Church in the last quarter of the 20th century has offered them an opportunity to women to grow as leaders. Basic Human Communities (BHC) evolved from BCCs. The BHC takes up social issues in the neighbourhood and have women from all religious affiliations participating as leaders. *These groups emerged with self-determination, dignity and responsibility. They have empowered women to exert pressure on the government in getting their basic needs as well as to question atrocities against women.*[19] A very good example is a parish in Mumbai which first started the experiment with the BHCs. Women from the slum area in the Jeri Meri parish came together to solve many of their local issues like cleanliness, water shortage, non-receipt of proper rationing quotas, etc. These women were helped by sister animators from the local parish to form women's groups who came together regularly to discuss issues affecting their lives and that of their families. They are now empowered to approach the different government/ municipal authorities to get their rights as citizens.

Caritas India has worked over the years for promoting the empowerment of women through various programmes focusing on the socio-economic and politico-cultural aspects. 90% of Caritas India's projects are focusing on women empowerment making them partners in the field. The various components of the programmes are capacity building activities,

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gender sensitization, non-formal education, Self-Help Group formation for economic empowerment, income generation programmes, and training on legal awareness and human rights. The programmes have encouraged women to stand for election to the Panchayat, which indicates the political empowerment of women at the grassroots.[20] The main focus of Caritas projects is women in rural areas where self-employment programmes, water management programmes, and capacity building have helped empower the poor women.

In 1969 a few conscientious Churchwomen ushered in the (ecumenical) Church Women's Movement, which was officially constituted as the All India Council of Christian Women (AICCW) in 1971. The AICCW is recognized as the Women's wing of the National Council of Churches (NCCI). It aims to be a medium of united expression of opinion of Christian women on different issues – religious, civil, political, economic and social and to bring Christian women of the country together in fellowship to be enriched by each other's experience among other objectives.[21]

Conclusion

Though formal education has contributed to the improvement of women's status in India, it empowers women only to some degree. I say 'some degree' only, because today despite formal education, women are not aware of their rights and much less how to obtain these rights. We find girls getting married soon after passing out of secondary or high school at an age that is below the legal age for marriage rendering their marriage invalid. A fact that they are not even mindful of. They are unaware of the laws that protect women, or of the help that is available for women in situations of violence and exploitation. On the other hand non formal education of women has been more effective in the present day in the process of women's empowerment. I have observed that women from Mahila Mandals (women groups) who have had no formal education are much more atriculate about their rights than women from the middle class who have received formal education. The Church has been very active in the area of non-formal education of women through organizing women in Mahila Mandals both in the urban and rural areas. In these Mahila Mandals, women are educated about their rights as well as how to obtain these rights. They are also made aware of the discriminations against women in society and are motivated to change social attitudes.

I have to admit that this short article cannot do complete justice to the influence of Christianity towards the empowerment of Women in India. The examples used are limited to women's congregations who responded to my request for information. There are numerous local organizations of Christians working all over the country for social justice, who have

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women's empowerment as an integral part of their thrust and vision. During our Yesu Krist Jayanti celebrations, the Church received numerous accolades from politicians and leaders across the country for their work of upliftment of the poor, of whom the majority are women. Inspite of the present wave of persecutions especially of those serving the marginalized, the Spirit of Christ present in the Gospels will continue to inspire persons in the Church to struggle for the empowerment of women and the poor.

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24
Collaboration With Grassroot Communities

Selvister Ponnumuthan

Introduction

The prosperity of any country depends on the overall development[1] of its people. A closer look at the political scenario of post-Independent India will show that the national planning was aimed at the overall development of the people. The First Five-Year Plan outlined its basic approach also as development.[2] Social justice, the primary objective of the Indian constitution, the urge to economic and social change, the eradication of poverty are so close to the term development.

A general trend towards the development of the people was based on the two methodologies, namely Gandhian "bottom-up approach" and the "top-down approach" of Nehru.[3] Both methodologies or philosophies aimed at the welfare of the Indian society or the achievement of 'swaraj' with social justice.[4] The visions of *grama swaraj* and promotion of village co-operatives and community development programmes had really helped the *people* of India to focus their attention on the vast majority of the people in India and thus making India a self-reliant state.

However, the socio-economic scenario of India's masses was under the predicament of remaining poor. Jean Drèze & Amartya Sen opine that "as India enters the twenty-first century, the lives of a majority of its citizens continue to be blighted by endemic poverty, under-nutrition, ill health, educational deprivation, environmental degradation and wide-ranging social

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inequalities."[5] Despite the fact that India ranks among the ten fastest growing economies in the world, the UN Human Development Report puts India no. 128 among 174 countries.[6] The economists are also forced to speak about the existence of the "scandalous phenomenon of mounting food stocks against the background of widespread hunger."[7] This is despite India's well founded *democratic*[8] and *legal systems*. That is to say, the infrastructure provided in India is insufficient to eradicate the present system of corruption.[9] Day by day the gap between the rich and the poor is becoming unbearably greater. Even when the people wanted to change the governments through the democratic processes the outcome has not been laudable. This is because the "democratic practice may indeed be thoroughly undermined by social inequalities, even when democratic institutions are all in place. For instance, even if elections are technically free and fair, their effective fairness may be compromised by the role of money and influence in the electoral process. This also applies to the legal system, which is often far from impartial among different classes (even in the absence of any corruption), because only richer people can afford better lawyers."[10] It was noted in mid-1984, that about 125,000 cases were pending before the Supreme Court and 1.5 million before the High Courts and over 15 million before Lower Courts in the country.[11] In these *democratic political games* the poor become poorer and *the rich* richer. Even the much acclaimed Panchayath Raj, begun in 1959 on the recommendation of the Balvantray Mehta Committee, could only "safeguard the interests of the socially powerful."[12] Hence a paradigm shift or an alternative becomes indispensable.

1. The Need for an Alternative

It is in the above mentioned context that the people were forced to think about other alternatives which might provide an opportunity for the people not only to formulate ideas and visions for their own development but also to execute or to implement their own decisions for the welfare of the society at micro-macro level. The grassroots communities are working as alternatives in society on a micro level aiming at macro level. They can be generally called grassroot movements or people's movements or social movements. It includes voluntary organizations, neigbourhood network communities, basic human communities, basic communities, self-help groups, women's movements, etc. Voluntary organizations were highly considered to be a ray of hope for the cause of social mobilization."[13] According to Shashi Ranjan Pandey the failures and successes of these grassroots attempts are important for creating people's movements, social transformations, and basic political awareness.

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Although it is difficult to give the exact number of voluntary organizations we can approximately say that there are more than 15000 such organizations, with many more thousands of Self-Help Groups, functioning in India.[14] In fact these grassroots or social movements are responding to the needs of the voiceless who represent the rural sector of the country comprising six lakh villages and 70% of the population.[15]

2. Filling the Vacuum

According to John Desroches the social movements fill a vacuum focusing the country's attention on the neglected needs and problems of the people, especially of the most marginalized and oppressed. They express and foster a search for alternatives practically in all sectors of life namely politics, economics, culture, religion, environment, science, technology, ecology, life-style, etc. They mainly and increasingly demand the *implementation of the Indian Constitution*, which they interpret more and more in terms of rights, and *the correction of distributive* imbalances in wealth and income, status and prestige as well as power and privilege. The development must be by and for the people, and especially for the poor and the women by themselves.[16] Moreover in these alternatives participation will be assured in every sphere. There will be better participation not only in the benefits of development programme but also participation in the formulation of plans, implementation and in monitoring and evaluation of programmes and projects.[17] According to the E.J. Blakely and Ted K. Bradshaw locally based economic development and employment generation is more likely to be successful if initiated at the community and local level than elsewhere.[18]

3. The Response of the Church

Although the Church stands for the Kingdom realties its *raison d'être* is total development of man. The very mission of Jesus was the total liberation of man (Lk 4:18-21). St. Iraneus had already said: "the glory of God is the man fully alive". Such an orientation is seen in the social teachings of the Church especially from *Rerum Novarum* up to *Centesimus Annus*. It is to be noted that terms like development, human liberation, justice, etc., have become common vocabularies in the social teachings of various Popes of the 20th century.[19]

3.1 From Welfare to Sustainable Development: A Paradigm Shift

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of India has been giving greater importance to social welfare programme. A close look at the social thrust of the Church will show that it has not only followed the general pattern of the government policies on development but also

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collaborated with the governmental activities as partakers of nation building. In fact the Church in India was aware of the plight of the poor in India and has been trying to respond creatively. From the very inception of CBCI (Catholic Bishops' Conference of India) in 1944 it had a section on "Catholic Action" which became a "Justice and Peace Committee" in 1968. In 1970 we find the creation of "Commission for Labour." In 1972 a new thrust was developed when the "Justice and Peace Committee" was given responsibility also for Social Action and was thus constituted into the "Commission for Development, Justice and Peace".[20] What we notice in the approaches of the Church is that despite its spiritual mission like the salvation of man, and the proclamation of the kingdom of God, it is committed to building up the nation. In this process we find a paradigm shift from welfare measures to sustainable development. In the General Meeting of 1971 held in Bombay the bishops affirmed:

> The Church in India is deeply concerned about the deep rooted causes of poverty and unemployment in our own land. Because we are firmly convinced of the fundamental Christian truth, that 'Every Man is my Brother', we also hope that we can respond to the times which reveal themselves so eloquently in the cries *for justice and liberation* from fetters of an exploitative society that *by its social structures* perpetuate the enslavement of millions. The Church is very much with the prevailing movement in India to do away with the root-causes of poverty through its concern and active participation in programmes geared to this causes."[21]

3.2 Church for Participatory Method in the Social Transformation

The most significant approach of the Church towards human development in the Indian context is that it is able to read the signs of the time and work for the welfare of the nation. And its collaboration with the grassroot movements has been proved to be a new meaningful venture. The Conference of Catholic Bishops of India in its Calcutta Conference in 2001 opined: "In the Indian multicultural context, there is a need to network with all people of goodwill in promoting and nurturing small human/ neighbourhood communities that usher in a society based on love. justice, peace and harmony". And the Bishops are of the opinion that the Small Christian Communities, while preserving their ecclesial identity, are called to play a vital role in promoting this process.[22]

Moreover the church is becoming a corrective force in society. That is why the Church, despite its diminutive number of less than 3% in the Indian sub-continent, captures the credibility of millions of people around the nation who are one way or other neglected. In fact even

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when the democratically elected governments fail the Church takes a leap in the social scenario of the nation. The uniqueness [specificity] of the Church in this process is that she not only works for the welfare of the people but also empowers the people and collaborate with them in the building up of the nation.

3.3 Diocesan Social Service Centres: Agents of Development

The social service sectors of the Catholic dioceses in India give a vivid picture of the Church's collaboration with the grassroots movements. The Jubilee Souvenir of Caritas India: Kerala Region, 1962-2002 sheds light on the Church's involvement in the secular society in view of building up the nation.[23] For example the diocese of Neyyattinkara, although it has a history of only seven years, works with 2,054 self-help groups and nearly 30,810 persons are its beneficiaries.[24] The Internal Evaluation of Adivaram Integrated Rural Development Programme (AIRDP), the Diocese of Thamarassery (Northern Kerala), executed by Dr. E.J. Thomas and his team shows how through the social services, a catholic diocese is involved in the integral development of the people without any prejudice to religious barriers.[25] The Shreyas Social Service Centre, diocese of Bathery, through its association with various self help groups including Tribal Men SHGs, targets 40,000 families as beneficiaries.[26]

A glance at the work carried out by the Vincent De Paul Society will show that the beneficiaries of the society exceeds more than a million.[27] The two hundred and seventy social organisations and centres in Karnataka[28] give also a picture of the collaboration of Christians with grassroots communities in building up of the nations. According to Raymond Ambroise the Andhra Pradesh Social Service Society works in over 2,000 villages with Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and all those marginalized in the society numbering over 110.000 members.[29] Jesuino Almedida in his paper on "Social Awareness Programmes of the Church in Delhi, Haryana and Punjab" describes elaborately the role of the local churches in North India through their social service sectors working for the development of the people in close collaboration with various NGOs and various government departments.[30]

4. The women Cell of the Church

It is also noted that above all the development of a nation depends very much on the role of women. The saying 'if you teach a child you are educating an individual but if you teach a woman you are educating the whole family' is fully correct in the context of India. According to H.C. Pokhriyal "for socio-economic transformation in an underdeveloped economy like

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India, the human resources are the vital input. Specially their ability to work and work with efficiently [efficiencies] are the crucial factors in the development process. As the most crucial input for socio-economic transformation, women, who constitute nearly half of the total population have a greater role to play."[31] In this regard the Catholic Church, through the consecrated women, does a laudable service. The consecrated women, apart from their spiritual commitments, concentrate their work in a particular place and they engage themselves in empowering the people of that particular locus. We notice this trend from the very beginning of the women religious in India. What prompted Fr. Savinien Dupuis, a French Missionary, to begin the first woman religious Congregation (FIH) in Pondicherry in 1844 was also the pitiable condition of women.[32] A close look at the social involvement of the women religious testifies that most of them were forced 'to leap into the darkness and uncertainties'. They left behind all the safety and security of established houses, to work for the poor, identifying themselves with the cultures and life-style of the 'anavim' by living among them, and realizing their needs and aspirations.[33]

4.1 The Church in Action: A Random Survey[34]

To the question what prompted the Congregation of Apostolic Carmel to get involved involve in the grassroots communities Sr. Vincent, the Superior General remarks that when their sisters were living in rural areas and visiting the village and the families, they realized that the poor people especially the Dalits and the women suffered a lot of injustice from the landlords and the upper caste people. Moreover women suffered discrimination in different ways and most of them were illiterate. So, they realized the importance of coming together of people as unions and associations and the building up of people's movements. The sisters gave them the needed power for their voices to be heard."[35]

4.1.1 The Southern Sector

The sisters of the Missionaries of Mary Mediatix, consider social work as the apostolic activity. Along with the normal charitable services, they collaborate with the C.M.E.Y. (Chief Ministers Employment Scheme for Youth) giving ample training for the youth. They conduct different training programmes for the SHGs in order to strengthen them and ultimately the civil society. According to Sr. Beena MMM nearly 90,000 persons in Andhra Pradesh have benefited through the active involvement of her team in the society.[36] The Missionary Sisters of Mary Help of Christians realised that the empowerment of women is possible only through the association with the BALAVIKASA one of the nine best NGO's of India which has the

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motto "Help the people to help themselves". Although this organization is run by the Diocese of Warangal in Andhra Pradesh it works in all over the state and more than two lakhs of women are the beneficiaries. The Missionary Sisters of Mary Help of Christians are actively involved with the BALAVIKASA and organises various programmes like: Mahila education, Mahila Insurance, Tree plantation, Kitchen garden, Solidarity day celebration, Vana mahotsavam, Savings, etc.[37] In Kerala most of the women religious collaborate with the grassroot movements. To give an example the sisters of the Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament (SABS) in Kerala began to collaborate with the grassroots movements as part of their mission and they have even adopted 15 villages in different districts of Kerala for the all round development of the people.[38]

The directory of the Servite Sisters (Tamil Nadu) emphasise the aspect of active involvement in 'movements of human rights, women liberation and environment.'[39] In the state of Karnataka the SCCG sisters, prompted by the vision of the Foundress of the Congregation, associate with 480 SHGs for the benefit of nearly 6,000 women. They give more attention to women because they realise that women are the marginalized in the society and they believe that if women are helped the families are helped and through the families society is helped.[40] Already in 1983, the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary (Bangalore Province) in its Provincial Chapter decided to identify themselves with the poor. As a result of this decision they began to join in the struggles of the people for justice, human development and liberation by a process of conscientisation. The empowerment of women which is one of the main concerns of the Congregation is being realized through participation in various Government schemes.[41]

4.1.2. Western Region

According to Sr. Maria Nimmy, the Anand Sadan Society is an N.G.O. working for tribal welfare from 1964 in Gujarath. It was working through the Mahila mandals. It is noted that in the year 2000 the Government itself had asked the Anand Sadan Society to form SHGs in collaboration with the local Governments and Banks. According to Sr. Nimmy the following are the impact of these SHGs functioning under Anand Sadan Society: women have been freed from the clutches of the money lenders and have learnt to save from daily income; coming together once a month to discuss their monthly savings has empowered and motivated them to work for the common good; the leaders are able to conduct monthly meetings, make savings, deposit and withdraw the money when needed; The revolving fund and the bank loans have been a great help for agricultural purpose; some of our Mahila mandal leaders are able to act as resource persons and they impart their knowledge to others; from time to time

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orientation and follow up programmes have helped the members of the group to live a better qualitative life.[42] The Salesian Missionaries of Mary Immaculate consider that the SHGs are a means by which the poor are enabled to live with human dignity. Hence where ever they work they begin SHGs.[43]

4.1.3 A Glance at Central and North India

The Missionary Congregation of the Daughters of St. Thomas through their active participation in their social ministry with the 162 SHGs cover 90 villages in Madhya Pradesh and see that 3000 people are benefited.[44] According Sr. Juliet, a member of the Nagpur Province of the Sisters of the Cross of Chavanod, more than a lakh are benefiting through their social involvement in Maharastra. The congregation aims at the "integral development of persons for the transformation of society and to build together Communities of freedom, justice and fellowship and to restore human dignity of the oppressed and the marginalized through a process of empowerment and thus build a healthy society". Regarding the effect of their social commitment Sr. Juliet says: "The beneficiaries are the socio-economically backward people, especially the women children & youth of 140 tribal villages of Amravati, Akola and Vasai districts of Maharashtra state, Surguja district of Chattisgarth and Najafgarth in Delhi. The approximate population to be benefited by these centres is over one lakh. Achievement of this target is possible because the Social and Health centres already have the minimum infra-structural facilities and have established contact in the villages." She adds, "A decade since our focus shifted to tribal communities who are the victims of society several programs have been carried out to uplift these communities from the economic and social backwardness. Participatory approach has been the key strategy adopted for all the developmental activities and we find them very effective and lead to sustainability. Our thrust is to organize people into appropriate groups of Mahila Mandals, Yuvak mandals, Farmers Association and Kisshori groups with the aim of getting them to act as Facilitators and Pressure groups which will result in the improvement of the functions of the existing institutions, environmental sanitation, growth in their own health social, economic and educational development and thus [enable them to] join the mainstream of the society."[45]

The Catechist Sisters of Mary Immaculate Help of Christians were founded in 1948 in Krishna Nagar, work for the overall development of the people. At present they are spread out in 400 villages of Nadia and Murshidaad Districts and through 1514 SHGs empower more than 27,100 women. According to Sr. Florette Thanikal the women gain social, cultural, political and spiritual empowerment by coming together without distinction of caste and creed.

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They encourage and support each other resolve conflicts, promote health and education, provide leadership, actively participate in village Panchayath meetings and are involved in decision-making.[46]

The Mission Sisters of Ajmer, founded to eradicate poverty and empower women in rural areas, are closely associated with 350 SHGs in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Goa and Mumbai.[47] The Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary takes as its special task "to help where no one is helping." It recognises the pressing social needs quickly and fully to produce, effective, creative and practical helps. At present the congregation is closely associated with 330 SHGs extending its activities in the areas of non-formal education throughout U.P., Uttaranchal and Hariyana. Through their involvement in the society the people get an identity of their own. As a result the village women could even participate in the gram panchayat meetings organised by that Institute of Social Sciences in Delhi and the women could fight for their rights in the society.[48]

Around thirty-two sisters of the Congregation of Teresian Carmelites in Bihar and Jharkand states devote their life among the people where women are considered a burden to their families and the literacy among them is 2 to 5%. The people feel that the girl child of the family does not belong to them and they should be married off at a tender age of 8 to 9. The widows are accused of witchcraft and are considered responsible for any disease or death in the village. Sometimes they are even killed for this reason.[49]

The Medical Mission Sisters concentrate their work in Bihar, Jharkand. According to Sr. Marie Asha Tobin in Bihar the women groups form local and state level networks. They will be linked with the National Association of Women's Organization. A close analysis will show that the sisters are closely associated with the government. In Jarkhand the MMS collaborate with the Chotanagpur Adivasi Seva Samiti(CASS). In the Kasiadhi village of Hazaribagh through CASS all the social and political issues affecting the Adivasis are addressed in collaboration with the net work of local and national organizations.[50] The very *expressions* used by the Congregation testify to its commitment to the Nation Building.[51] It is to be also mentioned that congregation was actively participating in the fishermen's agitation in Kerala during the 80's.[52] The Congregation of the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception which began to work in Ramnagar Block of West Champaran District, Bihar, in 1986 are actively involved in the social outreach and empowerment programmes in 15 villages. The impact of the service of the sisters will be understood only if we know the social situation of the people over there. The literacy rate among male is 18% and female is only 2%. The pitiable condition is

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that the poor are still unaware of the existing facilities, which Government provides through Primary Health centres.[53]

The Sisters of Mercy of the Holy Cross (SCSC) in their Vision Mission Statements reiterated their option as "commitment to the empowerment of the poorer sections of society". According to Sr. Rosily the congregation is aware of the actual situation of India. She says: "Living in a pluralistic society we want further networking and collaboration with like-minded persons, groups and Governments."[54] In Hazaribag, Jharkhand, at least one lakh people have benefited through the social involvement of the sisters especially through the SHGs under the guidance of Holy Cross Social Service Centre (HCSSC). It is because of the effectiveness of their work that the well renowned agencies like NABAD, Bihar State Women Development Corporation, UNICEF, DRDA-Hararibag are with them. Sr. Rosily claims that by 2003 –March 1160 SHGs have been linked with different commercial and Rural Banks and availed Rs. 3.5 crore credit mainly for productive work. The liberative thrust of the HCSSC can also be seen in their active participation in the women demonstration rally against atrocities to women.[55] The Franciscan Sisters of Dillingen work in 60 villages for women empowerment through Mahila mandal and SHGs in Chattisgarh. According to Sr. Tesia Ollukaran through the empowerment programme the women are enlightened in the areas of self-awareness, literacy, house keeping, budgeting, income generating, etc.[56]

4.1.4 Painful but Radical Decisions: From the North-East

The Missionary Sisters of Mary Help of Christians whose work is more concentrated in the Shillong City and Ri Bhoi District in Meghalaya made a paradigm shift in their VI General Chapter (12-27 January 2000). They decided to work for the integral and sustainable development especially of women and children in the villages. It was not an easy decision. The importance of such a decision is to be understood in the context of the multiple ethnic groups such as Bho, War, Pnar, Maram, Lyngngam and Garos in the villages. The sisters in collaboration with *Bosco Reach Out*, a popular Organization working in Meghalaya and Assam, the development of the wing of the Salesians of Don Bosco of Guwahati Province, empower the women. According to Sr. Teresa Joseph even though women's status seems to be fairly high in the society, yet they hardly have any voice in the decision making process especially at village and state levels. Hence she writes: "Our staff are consciously creating awareness among the people, building up leadership skills and making them participate in the development of the society. In Ri Bhoi district, as a result of the efforts made by the *Bosco Reach Out*, women are being inducted in the decision making, in village councils, which was not practised

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in the past." She adds, "There is a gradual change in the status of women after the regular awareness programs on gender sensitivity and seminars on women's issue."[57] The Daughters of Mary Help of Christians extend their service in Assam, Arunchal Pradesh, Nagaland and Manipur in collaboration with grassroot communities.[58]

The above mentioned are only sample testimonies of women religious who have left everything for the sake of the Kingdom of God. They really understand the value of the kingdom of God amidst the people [*The Kingdom of God is in your midst*]. We have selected all these because the activities of the most of the Sisters are not known on a national level. The dynamics of the activities is that though all these Sisters work on a micro level the effect of the micro level service reaches to the macro level – the nation at large. The notes about the work of Sisters should be understood in the context of the service rendered in the field of Education and Health Care – Hospitals and social service sector. [59]

5. Passage from Micro to Macro

It is a fact that when a NGO starts functioning it need not have a holistic vision about the nation or the nation building. At the same time we can also see NGOs of different nature. The Neighbourhood Community Network (NCN) of Kannyakumari is a typical example, which systematically works with a macro vision. M. J. Edwin, the protagonist of NCN says: "In Kanyakuamari the entire district is being organised into neighbourhood governance communities and their networks in a joint secular effort. It has already 5245 such grassroots parliaments all federated into 2002 village parliaments, 125 panchayath parliaments, 9 block parliaments and a district parliament."[60] The NCN even aims at the formation of 12,000 parliaments in the district so that the whole district will be in the hand of the people. The vision behind such an attempt is that the poor, if they are given a voice, would demand their right to the fullness of life and this would not be in the interests of the rich. Normally what happens is that the decision making bodies are so big that often they are only "talking forums". The effect is that the voice of the poor will not be heard in big "talking forums."[61] Hence, the NCN visualises the parliaments at grassroots level through which people can have scope for a democracy that functions on a day-to-day basis.

The net result of such a vision is that governance will be always under the control of the people, especially the poor and the poor will be able to participate, monitor, control and programme everything according to their needs. M. J. Edwin would call such communities as Basic Human Communities.[62] It is also to be noted that such a vision is gaining wider acceptance in the context

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of Globalisation. The emergence of World Social Forum which has as its motto "Another World is Possible" is to be understood in this perspective. The Christians' presence in the World Social Forum is also very conspicuous. And it is to be added that the Christians associate with these movements not to convert people but to see the people live with a human dignity.

The social involvement of activists like Fr. Thomas Kocherry[63] and Sr. Stella Balthazar,[64] Joseph Valiayamangalam[65] have lot of impact from the micro perspective. The late Mother Theresa and the missionaries who were working in India did wonderful services only for the building up of the Indian Nation. Another point to be recorded is that the Church in India through its various training centres provides ample opportunities to the people of different walks of life to be self reliant and co-operative for the building up of the nation. The training programmes have regional and national perspectives. But ultimately, everything is for the building up of the nation. The Loyola Extension Services, Trivandrum, PCO[66] in Trivandrum, Indian Social Institutes in Bangalore and New Delhi, the Rajagiri College of Social Sciences, Kalamassery, Cochin, Rothas Education and Associated Programme, Bihar[67] (REAP), etc., are only a few among them.

Conclusion

The Church in India has been fully involved in the development of the nation. In the past the Church had a different approach towards the development of the people. The food for work programme and other charitable works were considered to be the best means to alleviate poverty. In the course of time the Church by reading the signs of the time began to shift its paradigm from the charity centred approach to the developmental approach through a participatory methodology. The reason to shift its methodology is due to its understanding of the ground realities of the people especially the dalits, women and the poor section of the society. The collaboration with the grassroot movements is the *sine qua non* factor of this new understanding of the ground reality. In this collaboration one can easily notice that although the Church personnel work at a micro level the effects reach both micro and macro levels. The Church dynamics will also show that one can be seriously involved as the micro level only when one can have macro vision about the nation and humanity at large. And in the case of the Church since it has a micro-macro vision it can work as a catalyst to other grassroots movements whether they are secular or religious even at an International level like that of World Social Forum.

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NOTES:

1 Shashi Ranjan Pandey elaborately treats the origin and development of the word "development" based on the studies of Rahnema, Majid, "Development Is Like A Tree" in *Ideas and Actions*, No. 119, 1977/7:3-4; Spellman, J.W., *Development Through Indigenous Resources*, Madras: Indian Cultural Development Center, 1983. See Shashi Ranjan Pandey, *Community Action For Social Justice: Grassroots Organizations in India*, Delhi: SAGE Publication, 1991, 31-44

2 "The urge to economic and social change under present conditions comes from the fact of poverty and inequalities in income, wealth and opportunity. The elimination of poverty cannot obviously be achieved merely by redistributing existing wealth. Nor can a programme aiming only at raising production remove existing inequalities. Only a simultaneous advance along both these lines can create conditions in which the community can put forth its best efforts for promoting development" *First Five Year Plan*, 8 quoted by P.D. Shrimali, "Development and Poverty Alleviation" in R.T. Tewari & A. Joshi, *Development and Change in India*, Delhi: Ashish Publishing House, 1988, 209. See also S. Subramanian (ed.) *Indias's Development Experience: Selected Writings of S. Guhan*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003, 16-19.

3 Shashi Ranjan Pandey, 43-44. See also Attar Chand, *Nehru's Vision of Nation Building*, New Delhi: Indus Publishing Company, 1989.

4 Attar Chand, 122-126.

5 Jean Drèze & Amartya Sen, *India: Development and Participation*, Oxford University Press, 2002, vi

6 Walter Fernandez, "India's Socio-economic Situation" in Paul Puthanagady (ed), *Yesu Kristu Jayanti 2000 Towards A New Society*, Bangalore, 2001, 199-227

7 Jean Drèze & Amartya Sen, 336.

8 Jean Drèze & Amartya Sen, elaborately treat the positive aspects of India's democratic set up against even some of the developed countries. They draw attention to the limitations of democracy as practised in India too. Regarding the legal system despite its positive aspects they say that "in practice, however, its functioning is, in many ways, at variance with democratic ideals. For one thing, the legal system is virtually paralysed by a backlog of millions of 'pending cases' – about 30 million according to one estimate". See Jean Drèze & Amartya Sen, 347-379.

9 According to S. Guhan India has acquired the unenviable reputation of being among the most corrupt countries in the world. See S. Guhan and Samuel Paul (eds), *Corruption in India; Agenda for Action*, New Delhi: Vision Books, 1997, 9-28, 305-8. See also S. Subramanian (ed.), *India's Development Experience: Selected Writings of S. Guhan*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002(2001), 245-263; Samuel Paul, "Corruption: Agenda for Action" in *Integral Liberation*, (October 2003), 194-204.

10 Jean Drèze & Amartya Sen, 353.

11 George Joseph & John Desrochers, *Development, Human Rights and Action Groups*, Bangalore: CSA Publications, 1985, 99-100.

12 Shashi Ranjan Pandey, 37

13 Shashi Ranjan Pandey, 9

14 Shashi Ranjan Pandey, 46. It is noted that in 1982 the Home Ministry spoke of about 5000 organizations receiving funds from abroad under the 1976 Act. See George Joseph & John Desrochers, *Development. Human Rights and Action Groups*, Bangalore: Centre for Social Action, 1985. In 1988 there were 12,000 groups registered with the Home Ministry under the Foreign Contribution Act. See Shashi Ranjan Pandey, 46.

15 Indian Express, October 16, 2003 [Kalam calls for development of Rural Areas], 12 cochin edition. Kalapana Sharma, "Something is Changing" in *The Hindu Magazine*, (Sunday, November 2, 2003), 3.

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16 John Desrochers, 1985, 99-100. See also Shashi Ranjan Pandey, 23-31; P. Arokiadoss, "The Church and People's Movements" in *The Church in India In Search of A New Identity*, eds. By Kurien Kunnumpuram, Errol D' Lima & Jacob Parapally, Bangalore: NBCLC, 1997, 272-287.

17 G. Parthasarathy, "Rural Development: Growing Relevance of Macro Issues" in C.T. Kurien, E.R. Prahhakar & S. Gopal, (eds) *Economy & Development*, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1991, 205-210.

18 E.J. Blakely and Ted K. Bradshaw, *Planning Economic Development: Theory and Practice*, New Delhi: Vistaar Publications, 2003, 25.

19 For a detailed study see John Desroches, *The Social Teachings of the Church*, Bangalore, 1992 (1982).

20 Samuel Rayan, "Christian Response to the Challenge of Poverty in India" in J. Muricken, (ed.). *Poverty In India: Challenges and Responses*, Bangalore: A Xavier Board Publication, 1988, 119-258.

21 Samuel Rayan, 122, cited from the Report of 1971 General Meeting in Bombay, 42.

22 CCBI, Statement of the Calcutta Conference in 2001 quoted by M.J. Edwin, Basic Human Communities", in *Vaiharai*, Vol.7 (March 2002).

23 *Caritas India: Ruby Jubilee Souvenir 1962-2002*, 65-96. P. M. Philip says: Caritas India swings into action immediately to respond with compassion and human concern to alleviate the sufferings of the victimised and traumatised millions in the events of natural disasters or man made disasters. Our major operation are signs of collaborations with Central and State Governments along with our local partners and other NGOs in building solidarity and rehabilitating the displaced and distressed people specially the marginailized and vulnerable sections of society. P.M. Philip, "Caritas India: Four Decades of Service to the Nation" in *Caritas India: Ruby Jubilee Souvenir 1962-2002*, 18-22

24 Neyyattinkara Integral Development Society Report dated 17.10.2003

25 The Internal Evaluation of Adivaram Integrated Rural Development Programme (AIRDP), the Diocese of Thamarassery (Northern Kerala), Internal Evaluation Report executed by Dr. E.J. Thomas.

26 Caritas India: Ruby Jubilee Souvenir 1962-2002, 66.

27 Society of St. Vincent De Paul National Council of India: Annual Report 2002-2003.

28 Toji Sebastian & Philip Noronha (ed), *Directory of Social Organisations and Centres in* Karnataka, KRCR-JPC Publications, Bangalore, 2002. See also John Desrochers (ed), *Action Plan for the Poor and Marginilised*, Bangalore: KRCR-JPC Publications, 2003

29 Yvon Ambrose and John P. Britto, *Methods of Non-Formal Education*, APSSS Publications, 2002, iv.

30 A paper presented at FOIM at Mount Abu on 15th August 2002 by Jesuino Almeida, Social Awareness Programmes of the Church in Delhi, Haryana and Punjab."

31 H.C. Pokhriyal, "Economic Development: The Dismal Picture of Women's Contribution" in R.K. Sinha, D.K. Das & A.K. Sinha (eds) *Development Paradigms: Indian Development Experiences*, New Delhi: Deep & Deep Publication, 1992, 174-192 . According to H.C. Pokhriyal "for the higher socio-economic status of women a higher level of female work force participation is an essential condition". 177.

32 Unpublished article of Sr. Renora FIH on "The Missionary Thrust of the First Indigenous Women Congregation in India", 2002.

33 Report about the Social Activities of CMC Carmelodaya Provincial House by Sr. Lilly Grace on 29-9-2003. Sr. Lilly Grace writes: "At present, even though Carmelodya Province is engaged in the apostolic field of education, it is not far behind in the field of Social Work. We have taken up social activities like village developmental programmes, conscientisation of health and hygiene, providing education for less fortunate ones in the society, care of mentally retarded children, rehabilitation of physically handicapped girls, home for the poor elderly women and free cutting and tailoring classes for the poor girls, etc. More than families of

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25 villages in Andhra Pradesh and 9 villages of Maharashtra are the beneficiaries of our service here". See also Daniela, 'The Role of Women Religious in the Transformation of the Social Order" in *The Living Word* (November-December 2001), 358-373.

34 The random survey is based on the response to the questions regarding the social involvement of the women religious in India. The enquiry was done through the e-mail and the addresses are taken from the CRI Directory 2003. The reports are sent to me by the major superiors or the sisters in charge of social work. The pertinent questions to be responded are (1) In which state your social work is mainly concentrated; (2) How many sisters are involved in the social work?; (3) What promoted your Congregation to involve itself with the grassroot communities; and (4) An approximate number of beneficiaries through your involvement. We have limited the random survey to the women religious only as often their services are not known outside their locality. Although a sectional presentation is given in some cases there will be over lapping of regions. This is because of the nature of the work carried out by the same congregation in different regions.

35 Report about the Social Activities of Apostolic Carmel by Sr. Vincent on 29.8.2003. The Sisters of the Apostolic Carmel work mainly in Jharkand, Orissa, Assam, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Andamans and Nicobar Islands and partly in Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Goa. It is also noted that the Congregation has organized SHGs f the disabled in 200 villages.

36 Reports dated October 24th and 3rd November 2003, by Sr. Susan Joseph Thundianplackal M.M.M, on the Social Work of the Congregation

37 Report about the Social Activities of Missionary Sisters of Mary Help of Christians dated 10.11,2003 by Sr. Mary Mathew. There are twenty sisters of the Society of Jesus Mary Joseph, Hyderabad Province, working very actively in Andhra Pradesh and they collaborate with not only NGO's but also with G.O.s. What prompted them to enter into the social field were the poor who were "enveloped by the poverty" because they were in the clutches of money lenders. According to Sr. Baptista through their social involvement the women are being empowered and in the families the women have a say and they have an equal footing with their husbands. See Report of Society of Jesus Mary Joseph by Sr. Baptista on 19.9.2003.

38 Report about the Social Activities of SABS by Sr. Carmel Tresa on 17th September. The empowerment of women, Promotion of SHGs, Development of Human Resources, Promotion of Human resources, Promotion of saving habits are some of the objectives of their social service section.

39 The Directory, Servite Sisters, 61-63.

40 According to the Report of the Social Activities of the Sisters of Charity of Sts Bartolomea Capitano & Vincenza Gerosa by Sr. Apoline Monis on 13.10.2003 they are associating with 480 SHGs. See also report by Irene Fernandes on 22.9.2003.

41 It is also noted that most of the SHGs are responsibly and successfully moving from dependency to self-reliance. See Report about the Social Activities of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary by Sr. Florine Lobo on 23.9.2003.

42 Report about the Social Activities of Canosian Daughters of Charity by Sr. Maria Nimmy on 9.9. 2003.

43 Report about the Social Activities of Salesian Missionaries of Mary Immaculate by Sr. Joel on 12.9.2003. at present they are working in Maharastra, Gujarath, North East Meghalaya, Assam and Manipur.

44 Report about the Social Activities of Daughters of St. Thomas by Sr. Deepti on 30.10.03.

45 Report about the Social Activities of the Sisters of the Cross of Chavanod, Pune Province, by Sr. Juliet on 15.10.2003.

46 Report about the Social Activities of the Catechist Sisters of Mary Immaculate Help of Christians by Sr. Florelle Thanikal on 22.10.2003.

47 Report about the Social Activities of the Mission Sisters of Ajmer by Sr. Michelle on 10.10.03.

48 Report about the Social Activities of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary by Sr. M. Mariette on 1.10.2003.

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49 Report about the Social Activities of the Congregation of Teresian Carmelites by Sr. Suchita on 1.10. 2003.

50 Report about the Social Activities of Medical Mission Sisters by Sr. Marie Asha Tobin on 7.10.2003.

51 The main expressions of mission of Medical Mission Sisters of South India are worth mentioning. Sr. Moncy Varikattu writes about the main expression of mission in the Province are: (1) Integrated development / empowerment of deprived and marginalized groups/sections of the society like Dalits and tribals with special emphasis on women and children (2) Peoples movement – among fish-workers and women groups; (3) holistic health/healing using alternate methods of treatment; (4) Prevention and care of HIV/AID, other communicable diseases like Malaria, T.B.; (5) Care of cancer patients and giving training for the care of patients with Alzeimer's; (6) Alcohol/ drug de-addiction, mental health, counselling, advocacy, etc.; (7) Involvement through hospital. See Report about the Social Activities of Medical Mission Sisters by Sr. Moncy Varikattu on 15.9.2003.

52 Selvister Ponnumuthan, *The Spirituality of Basic Ecclesial Communities in the Socio-Religious Context of Trivandrum, Kerala, India*, Rome 1996, 163-169; Mathew Aerthayil, *Fishworkers' Movement in Kerala(1977-1994: The Role fo non-Party Political Organisations in Social Transformation in India*, New Delhi: Indian Social Institute, 2000.

53 Report about the Social Activities of Congregation of the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception by Sr. George CIC on 14.9.2003.

54 Report about the Social Activities of Sisters of Mercy of the Holy Cross by Sr. Rosily on 25.9.2003.

55 The HCSSC was instrumental in bringing justice to the women who are victimised at Barkatha Block – Sudan Village in Hazaribag District. It was so laudable that even the Government appreciate the work of HCSSC. Report about the Social Activities of Sisters of Mercy of the Holy Cross by Sr. Rosily on 25.9.2003.

56 Report about the Social Activities of Franciscan Sisters of Dillingen by Sr. Tesia Ollukaran on 6.10.2003.

57 Report about the Social Activities of Missionary Sisters of Mary Help of Christians by Sr. Teresa Joseph on 26.10.03. The sisters of the Missionaries of Christ Jesus entered into the area of social work seeing the situation of the land less minority communities of Meghalaya. See Report of the Congregation of the Missionaries of Christ Jesus by Sr. V. Fernandez on 15th September 2003.

58 At least 4000 to 5000 women became the beneficiaries of the social involvement of the Congregation. See Report of Daughters of Mary Help of Christians by Sr. Alphonsa on 11.9.2003.

59 See the articles of Dr. Alex Vadakkumthala, Dr. George Palackapilly and Dr. Prakash Louis in the present volume itself.

60 M.J. Edwin, "Basic Human Communities" in *Vaiharai* (March 2002), 25-34

61 "The poor, if they are given a voice, would demand their right to the fullness of life and this would not be in the interests of the rich. The poor are somehow to be prevented from having their say. How to do this? The answer is simple: Make the talking-forums big. Thus come[sic] about big parliamentary constituencies where the poor have no voice except as a token vote in every five years or so. Thus the big 'voices' get elected and then on it is a game of the big. The Government of the big, by the big and for the big; of the rich, by the rich and for the rich. The poor will continue to be poor as long as the talking-forums - the parliaments - are controlled by the rich. It is not the basic needs of the poor like food, clothing, shelter, etc., that would occupy the minds of such rich people. Such are distant issues for the rich. As long as such rich voices continue to have their exclusive say as ensured by the bigness of these parliaments, the poor cannot hope for a better deal. All they would get may just be a lip service and the grounds under their feet will continue to be eroded. How to beat this plot and make the poor have their say and thus have their way? The answer is, again, simple: make the talking-forums small. This means that we have, instead of big parliamentary constituencies, parliaments that are small enough that small people find them handleable – parliaments at grassroots. And Basic Human Communities are just that". M.J. Edwin, "Basic Human Communities" in *Vaiharai* (March 2002), 25-34.

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62 M.J. Edwin, 28-29.

63 Thomas Kocherry, a catholic priest, is a member of the Sub Committee on Fisheries Policy, Government of Kerala and National co-ordinator of the National Alliance of People's Movements.

64 Sr. Stella Balthazar is closely associated with the thousands of Self Help Groups in India and Association of Indian Women's Studies and consultant to Caritas Switzerland. She believes that the true development of society rests on the development, empowerment and partnership of women and men in a relationship of inclusiveness and mutuality.

65 Joe Valiyamangalam is a Catholic priest working in Gujarat. He is closely associated with the Movement of Secular Democracy in Ahmedabad.

66 The PCO which played a vital role in the Fishermen's agitation was started by the Diocese of Trivandrum. See Nalini Nayak, *A Struggle within the struggle,* Trivandrum, 1992.

67 A paper read at FOIM meeting at Mount Abu on 15th August 2002 by Joseph Velamkunnel On "Antyodaya: An Experiment in The Empowerment of Musahars (The Musahars are one of the lowest scheduled castes who constitute 18.81% of the total population of Rohotas District in Bihar).

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PART - IV

THE WAY TO BE TOGETHER

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25
Origin and Growth of Christianity in India: Early Period (52-1599)*

Benedict Vadakkekara

Christianity in India presents itself today as a rich mosaic of geniuses, cultures and lifeways that providentially made their way into the country in disparate historical moments and which in the course of time came to be pieced together to give shape to a witnessing and serving community networked the length and breadth of the nation. Without getting down to specifics and remaining quite within the parameters of a symposial essay, this paper aims at profiling in the historical framework the origin and growth of Christianity in India as a germinally native fellowship of believers engraining the social fabric of their land. This in point of fact means bringing into focus the primitive Christian community in India and delineating its life till 1599, when the Synod of Diamper that virtually inaugurated a new phase in the history of Indian Christianity. From its inception the Church in India has had the consciousness of being part of the Universal Church and of remaining in vital unity and communion with it, notwithstanding the diverse physical circumstances of the time militating against its concrete expression. It is precisely as an integral part of the Universal Church that Indian Christianity originated and it

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is in the context of this fellowship that its identity and mission get further articulated. However variegated its composition be, the Catholic Church in India today makes up a single Community of faith, obedience and service[1].

1. Spread of Christianity "to the ends of the earth"

Since its inception the Church has had the deep conviction that Jesus had entrusted it with an express task in relation to the whole world: "Go out to the whole world and proclaim the Good News to all creation" (Mk 16,16). Down through the centuries the awareness of being entrusted with this global charge has radically determined the Church's mode of being and functioning. That it is uniquely in possession of the Good News addressed to the whole humankind has impelled the Church to be open to the wide world and to take the initiative in being present to every human person wherever he or she is found. "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and covers it; instead he puts it on a lampstand, where it gives light to everyone in the house" (Mtt 5,14-15). The first disciples' profound awareness that it is incumbent upon them to relate themselves with the whole world received further impetus and exigence, as they perceived the geopolitical significance of their physical whereabouts.

The explicit mandate of the Master to the disciples to associate themselves with their fellow-humans the world over had an added significance for them that they were not to be delegates of a country or a people but were to be "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world" (Mtt 5,13f); they had received the mission from Jesus to be his "witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, even to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1,8) and to work for the realisation of his kingdom which "does not come from this world" (Jn 18,36). Accordingly they moved outwards to other parts of their then known world and reached as far as the periphery. Paul and Barnabas deemed that it was providential that their preaching had been rejected in Palestine as they could direct their steps *to the ends of the earth*. By and large the Church leadership genuinely believed that they were effectively carrying through their commission, even though they did not precisely monitor the particulars of the trail-blazing evangelisation enterprise in the world or seek to identify all the protagonists of the event. 1Pet 5,9 already spoke of "our brothers scattered throughout the world". Paul tells the Colossians "This Gospel, already present among you, is bearing fruit and growing throughout the world" (Col 1,6), and asks them to "Keep in mind the Gospel you have heard, which has been preached to every creature under heaven" (Col 1,23). Thus one finds on the one hand the specific command of Jesus to his disciples to preach the Gospel to the whole world and on the

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other the consciousness of the same disciples that they were faithfully doing their Master's bidding.

Thus the early Christians were persuaded that Jesus had instructed them to preach the Message of salvation the world over and that they were striving to be faithful to him in carrying through his command. Despite the practical limits of communication, the internal tensions and the growing pains, the early Church was aware that it was a fellowship of believers that transcends every national, ethnic, cultural and linguistic border and barrier. Right from the start the Church has painstakingly cultivated and jealously safeguarded its identity as a cosmopolitan fellowship. While on the local level the figure of the bishop emerged as the rallying point for the faithful, the individual bishops recognised the need to be in fellowship with their nearby colleagues, and the Bishop of Rome stood out as the ultimate point of reference as regards both discipline and orthodoxy. "It is indeed a curious quirk of history that western Rome was destined to begin to exert the determinative influence on a religion which had its cradle in the Orient, so as to give it that form in which it was to achieve worldwide recognition"[2]. The consciousness of being founded by the greatest apostles in the capital of the world, gave the Church of Rome leverage to exert its influence eastward.

2. Indian Christians in the eyes of their Overseas Co-religionists

According to early Christians, the Gospel had already found its way also to India, a land that formed an integral part of the world then known to them. The *Acta Thomae*, in all likelihood committed to writing in the first half of the third century AD, is recognised as the earliest written expression of the widely held view in the ancient Church that the Gospel had been announced also in India[3].

India, as one of the twelve parts into which the world was apportioned by lot among the apostles for being evangelised, was certainly more an approximate geographical region than a specific country, given the vagueness surrounding the level of topographical information about distant lands like India that the ancient Mediterranean peoples possessed. The further specification of the region as *India Ulterior* and *India Citerior* goes to corroborate this. Evidently the intention of the early Church was to point out that the Gospel had been proclaimed by the apostles in the whole world including India. Consequently the *Acts of Thomas* allots a twelfth part of the then known world to Apostle Thomas for the work of evangelisation. This territorial assignment entrusted to Apostle Thomas finds a corresponding echo in the whole Church down through the centuries. It is reiterated by a series of ecclesiastical writers, representing a

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universal consensus. Thus we have a long list of early Christian writers who speak of Apostle Thomas as having sown the Gospel seed in India or in the region that unmistakably embraced India as well. These attestations are to be seen more as spokespersons of the then currently participated tradition of the various Christian communities than as the fruit of independent historical researches. Therefore even though one may not always find geographical precision in their references to India, these authors had no other term to take recourse to other than "India" if they wished to indicate the real India.

That this participated conviction about the apostolate of St. Thomas in India had no rival in any other Church too is significant, granted that the Apostle was known to all the Churches and, moreover, a day of cultic commemoration had been instituted in honour of the apostles early enough. Thus India's identity as a land evangelised by Apostle Thomas found its own place in the ecclesial consciousness as well as on the ecclesiastical map. This communal conviction did not remain in the abstract but got externalised in the several reports of visit by Christians from other lands to their counterparts in India. The particulars surrounding these fraternal contacts that materialised in that misty past were subsequently to form a set pattern for accounts of future visits, thus bestowing considerable weight to those ancient ones, however few and far between they might have been. In his *Ecclesiastical History* Eusebius refers to a missionary travel to India by Apostle Bartholomew. Even though it is expressly stated that when in India he did win over some disciples for Christ, one is inclined to think of his visit as a passing one, inasmuch as no allusion to his other activities or to his death in India is forthcoming. What further distinguishes this Indian mission of Apostle Bartholomew from that of his colleague Thomas, is the lack of a community in India that professedly goes back to his preaching ministry.

While narrating the evangelisation activities of the second-century scholar Pantenus, Eusebius speaks of a visit of his made to India. Pantenus is reported to have come across there a group of believers who had accepted Christ consequent upon Bartholomew's preaching. Moreover, Bartholomew was supposed to have left behind with his Indian Christians a copy of the Gospel of Matthew in Hebrew characters. Pantenus' missionary tour to India finds confirmation in his disciple Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Hippolytus, Eusebius of Caesarea, and Jerome. After an analysis of the various sources, Dr Ilaria Ramelli concludes in her recent study:

> Therefore as habitual contacts between Egypt and India, especially southern, are amply documented, I believe that all things considered in a similar context it should appear probable a mission taken off from Alexandria and directed for India with the scope of preaching orthodoxy

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to the Indian peoples: Pantenus was in fact sent by Bishop Demetrius precisely because of his culture, wisdom, as attested by Eusebius and Jerome.[4]

The Church of Edessa was speaking loudly of the contacts it had with India when it openly acknowledged that the relics of Apostle Thomas in its safekeeping, had been brought there from that land. This official avowal of the Edessan Church gets corroborated in the Acts of Thomas which expressly says that the bones were not in the original tomb in India since they had been secretly taken away by one of the brethren[5]. Another reference to the inter-ecclesial exchange between the Indian and the other ecclesial communities is the report that the Council of Nicea (325) had delegated one of the Conciliar fathers, Bishop John, to promulgate the decrees of the Council in India. Similarly the still enduring component in the unwritten bimillenary history of the Indian Christians pointing to the arrival of Thomas of Cana from (Persia) into their midst as harbinger of inter-ecclesial fellowship, is a living testimony to the communication between the Malabar Church and its other sister Churches. The accounts of the visit of Cosmas Indicopleustes, the arrival the saintly missionaries Sapor and Prot, the legates of King Alfred, globe-trotting merchants like Marco Polo, missionaries as John of Montecorvino, Jordano Catalani of Severac, John of Marignolli, Odoric of Pordenone, and finally to crown it all, the landing of Vasco de Gama "in search of spices and Christians" are the documented indications of the interest of the various Christian communities in the life and wellbeing of their brethren in India. The actualisation of the initiatives on the part of these Christians to express their fellowship with their Indian brethren is, in other words, the concrete manifestation of the universal ecclesial fellowship of which the Indian Christians formed an integral part[6].

3. Indian Church vis-à-vis other Churches

The Indian Christians were not passive spectators to the comings and goings of the personnel from other ecclesial fellowships into their midst even in the early centuries of the Christian era. On their part they too cultivated a deep-rooted persuasion that theirs was a community that was at par with the other communities and that they all belonged to the same communion, notwithstanding the fact they were spatially distant from the main Christian strongholds in other parts of the world. Their consciousness of being a brotherhood that goes back to one of the twelve apostles rendered them ever eager to be in close touch with the communities established by the other apostles. From as early as the second century onwards there have been instances of delegation of Christians from India being sent to their overseas brethren. In the same way they used to extend a warm welcome to fellow-believers from

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abroad. St. Jerome specifies a detail that reveals this characteristic mind-set of theirs and which remained constant down through the ensuing centuries. Jerome says that Bishop Demetrius of Alexandria had sent the philosopher-missionary Pantenus to India "as requested by the legates of that people", that is, the Indian Christians had sent a delegation to Alexandria and its bishop responded to them by despatching his eminent scholar Pantenus to India[7].

For the sake of convenience, hereafter this paper will be using the appellative Malabar Christians in order to refer to the ancient Indian Christianity in India that remained confined to the traditional region of Malabar and which also got merged into fellowship with the Catholic communities which began springing up all over the land since the sixteenth century[8]. The only internal division that these Christians of Malabar had manifested, and still does, is the existence among them of a minority group called the *Southists*, who proudly trace their origin to a colony of immigrants headed by Thomas of Cana. The members of this group, besides practising endogamy as a means of preserving their ethnic purity, pride themselves on declaring that they are the lineal descendants of those Persian immigrants who landed on the Malabar coast in 345 AD. Their being a kinship group notwithstanding, the *Southists* participate fully in the Church life of the native Catholics, and voice their belief that their forefathers had reached India in order to tide the indigenous Christians over some contretemps. Thus both on the social as well as on the religious levels the Malabar Christianity presented itself as a single compact body. The one incident which eventually led to the first breach in the Malabar Church was the public and ceremonious declaration of Disobedience by the vast majority of the members against their Latin Archbishop in 1653 and which unfortunately was to have unforeseen repercussions to which even today we are spectators.

A curious aspect of this communion of the Malabar Christians with their brethren of other ecclesial traditions was its spontaneous openness. The profound certitude that they had inherited the true faith in Jesus Christ from none other than St. Thomas, one of the Lord's apostles, had given the Christians of Malabar a sure-footedness in living through the various vicissitudes of their history as well as in being conscious of their parity of status in relation to the incoming brethren of differing ecclesial observances. The period between the thirteenth and the sixteenth centuries was to bear witness to a series of encounters between the Malabar Church and the members of the Latin Church. It was on their own initiative and with the manifestation of great joy that their representatives went to Cranganore to pay homage to Vasco de Gama. Going by what Joseph the Indian told his interlocutors in Europe at the start of the sixteenth century and the devotion shown by him to Pope Alexander VI, one surmises that the Malabar Christians believed themselves to be in communion with the Church of

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Rome as well. Despite all this, the spirit of peaceful coexistence that prevailed between them and the Portuguese colonialists till the middle of the sixteenth century soon gave way to strains and stresses, culminating in the Synod of Diamper in 1599.

According to Archbishop Menezes the principal "objects" of the Synod of Diamper were the restoration of "the perfect union of this church with the whole church catholic", "the destruction of the heresies and errors which have been sown therein by several heretics and schismatics", and "the yielding of obedience to the supreme Bishop of Rome ... from whom you have for some time separated"[9]. Hence one sees the Synod's third Session, Decree seven insisting unequivocally on the obligation to be in obedience to the Bishop of Rome, the visible head of Catholic fellowship:

> The Synod is with great sorrow sensible of that heresy, and perverse error, sown by the schismatics in this diocese, to the great prejudice of souls; which is, That there was one law of St. Thomas, and another of St. Peter, which made two different and distinct churches, and both immediately from Christ; and that the one had nothing to do with the other, neither did the prelate of the one owe any obedience to the prelate of the other; and that they who had followed the law of St. Peter, had endeavoured to destroy the law of St. Thomas, for which they have been punished by him; all which is a manifest error, schism, and heresy, there being but one law to all Christians, which is that which was given and declared by Jesus Christ the Son of God, and preached by the Holy Apostles all over the world, as one faith, one baptism, there being but one Lord of all, and one catholic and apostolic church, of which our Lord Christ, God and man, who founded it, is the only spouse; and one only universal pastor, to whom all other prelates owe obedience, the Pope and Bishop of Rome, successor in the chair of St. Peter, the prince of the Apostles; to whom our Lord Jesus Christ bequeathed that supreme authority, and by him to his successors; which catholic doctrine is necessary to eternal life: wherefore the Synod doth command all parish priests, and preachers, to treat often of this matter, by reason of the great need there is of having this bishopric well instructed therein[10].

4. Communion with East Syriac Church

Rooted in the firm conviction of being an apostolic foundation, the Christians of Malabar displayed a remarkable degree of resilience and they looked forward to cultivating fellowship with other believers. Christians of diverse traditions would cross their path in their bimillenary history but it would be with the East Syriac Church that they would enter into a long relationship. While one has to respect the veil drawn by history, in the light of the subsequent events one is able to delineate the primordial state of the Malabar Church. First of all, being a community remote from its co-religionists, the Malabar Church was blessed with a predisposed openness

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to overseas Christians. The nature of relationship that came into being between the Indian Christians and those of the East Syriac Church clearly shows that their first encounter did not yield any bad blood but that it was characterised by cordiality and fellow-feeling.

The Malabar Church regarded it as a great privilege to have received its faith from Apostle Thomas. It was only to be expected that in the sixteenth century the Portuguese clergy in India would not be excessively edified to see their Indian co-religionists' blind veneration for East Syriac and would with amusement remark that the latter would not believe anything unless couched in Syriac. However, Syriac never became a spoken language for them. The sanctimoniousness they attached to the Syriac language was so very total that even the everyday prayers of the faithful were in Syriac. The accent placed on following the beaten track and on being faithful to the communal observances was without a doubt, achieved at the expense of internalisation and intelligisation. The Synod of Diamper was critical on their warped approach of theirs towards piety and religious practices: "Whereas the greatest part of the people of this bishopric are not instructed in the doctrine, and they that are, know only the Paternoster, and Ave Maria in the Syrian tongue, which they do not understand ..."[11].

The creation of institutional ties with the East Syriac Church did not conduce to the effecting of any tangible alteration in the everyday life of the Indian Christians. Even though ecclesiastically they were constituted into the Metropolitanate of All-India the role of the bishop was limited to the consecration of churches, blessing of oils and ordaining of clerics. The Christians continued to live within their own local fellowships and to be identified with them. The earliest account of such internal groupings goes back to the tradition of the creation of seven communities by Apostle Thomas. The Malabar Christians used to keep on distinguishing themselves as being hereditarily linked with one or the other of these seven primordial groupings. In the final analysis the entire community, wherever the members struck root, appeared to be locally sprung up brotherhoods and they functioned with relative autonomy.

Apart from serving as the head of the community as regards the issues that the whole community faced, the Archdeacon too dealt with the various kinglets in whose petty kingdoms the Christians lived. Unlike in most other ancient Christian fellowships, in the Malabar Church the Metropolitan in fact was a veritable latecomer on the scene and always appeared as such. His was a ministry that seemed more as a super-imposed role within an already functioning fellowship than as something towards which the ecclesial and communal life gravitated. Therefore the fact that the Metropolitan of All-India had little to do in the temporal and in many areas of ecclesiastical administration becomes intelligible.

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The Synod of Diamper declared this situation in Malabar anomalous because it went against the kind of ecclesial fellowship that existed in the rest of the Christendom. "... so all the faithful inhabitants in every parish are subject to their rector or vicar, that administer the sacraments to them, and are the particular pastors and curates of their souls, through whom they are subject to their bishop, and through the bishop to the pope, and through the pope to Christ; which order has been at all times preserved in the church all over the world, and for want thereof, this church is so confused and disorderly as it is". Therefore "The Synod doth declare, that the division of parishes, and the laying of people to them, has at all times belonged to the prelate"[12].

If monasticism and evangelisation had been the hallmark of the East Syriac Church, these two failed utterly to impact on the native Church of Malabar. The Malabar Church had evolved to become a closed community, to which the missionary thrust was quite alien. The rich monastic tradition of the East Syriac Church and the fact that the Metropolitan himself was of the monastic provenance, did not prove particularly telling in Malabar. Instead the custom of the sexagenarians to withdraw from all responsibilities and gradually enter once and for all into a life of reclusive simplicity appears to have been current both among the clergy and the laity, as was the wont among their Hindu fellow-countrymen.

5. Entry of Indian Catholic Church into Limelight

At the dawn of the sixteenth century, with the arrival of the Portuguese Missionaries, the Malabar Christians appeared on the scene as a proud community, though evidencing signs that it had known better days. Their past was still very much engraved on their communal memory. This is the picture that their delegation gave during its encounter with Vasco de Gama on 19 November 1502 at Cranganore. Theirs had become for all practical purposes an inaccessible community, though there were stray instances of individuals from the upper echelons of the society joining their ranks. Like their Hindu compatriots they too remained ever vigilant to abide by the rules of touch and pollution. As a warrior class they were adequately equipped to enforce their social privileges and other rights. Theirs became a policy of withdrawal into a fortress for the defence of which they would not hesitate even to take up arms. If they remained socially distinct from the other communities of Malabar, internally they were a conservative, disciplined and egalitarian grouping. They used to address one another with familial designations like elder brother, elder sister, uncle, aunt, grandfather, grandmother etc. Among them there prevailed no social sanctions against commensality and connubality, with the sole exception of the endogamous grouping called the Southists.

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The aspect of not evidencing one's caste vestige by the members of the Malabar Church is of utmost significance when viewed from the historical angle. Despite all declarations to the contrary, it is a home truth that in India even years after embracing a religious body that professedly is egalitarian, one's original caste label does not easily get peeled off. And they brought along with them their own expertise in several professions, thereby enabling the community to be relatively mobile as regards occupation. Later on as the caste system tended to divide the Malabar society into watertight compartments, the native Christians of Malabar too got set into a caste-pattern of their own, and it was the question of time before they also found their place in the pecking order of Malabar. They flattered themselves that they had secured their rightful perch of the social ladder.

Unfortunately in this process they wittingly or otherwise compromised on their Christian identity. The high social status and the accruing privileges had made the Malabar Christians fall victim to complacency about fulfilling their obligation to disseminate the Good News. Their initial fervour in welcoming one and all into their fellowship just got evaporated. If formerly the Malabar Christians had made no exception in accepting new members, they now appeared more like a self-propagating community, jealously clinging to their socially distinguishing privileges. Though internally the Malabar Christians do not constitute a caste-ridden community, history has shown that they were second to none in upholding and perpetuating caste system. They became blind to the ingrained evils of their society, thus depriving the Gospel yeast of its leavening strength.

The Synod of Diamper attempted to undo this unchristian usance but the exercise was to stick out like a sore thumb. The Synod already spoke of "conversions that are begun in some parts by the most revered Metropolitan" and did "very much recommend it to the vicars of churches, and other priests to labour much in the conversion of Infidels". However the dogged reluctance of these Malabar Christians to welcome members of other castes into their midst brought about an ugly situation. The isolated cases of new communities that now got formed were constituted into separate parishes under their own pastors and little was possible done by way of integrating the newly-become Christians into the parishes of the Malabar Church, with the lamentable consequence of creating a parallel wing among the Malabar Catholics. The two, even where they lived in close proximity, remained socially distinct. The caste background of the new members of the Catholic Church failed to scale off, and they continued to be at the receiving end of various forms of discrimination against them.

Though the example of the European missionaries served the Malabar Christians as an eye-opener, in the ultimate analysis the Synod of Damper also had to take into account their

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sensibilities when drawing up the synodal decisions.

> Though it would much rejoice the Synod to see the superstitious and absurd customs of the heathen Malavars of the better sort not mixing the lower, and of having no communication or correspondence with those that have but have touched any of them, totally abolished among the Christians of this bishopric; yet forasmuch as the Christians thereof, by reason of their being subject to infidel princes, whom they are forced to obey in all things, wherein the faith is no ways concerned; and that Christians, if they should but touch those of the baser rank, could not after that, according to the laws, have any trade or communication with the better sort of people, and so would not able to live among them; for which reason the Synod doth declare, That the custom of not touching any of the baser sort, being observed only in compliance with the heathens, and looked upon as a superstitious heathen vanity, and not voluntarily observed, is no superstition, nor for the above-mentioned reasons any matter of scruple, and that Christians can in all places thus lawfully observe it, where there are *Naires* or any of the better sort, or where it is likely they may be, or may come to hear of it.

The Synod's decisions intended to reform the Malabar Church, served in the long run to revitalise the Malabar Church and equipped it to boldly step onto the national stage. Religious life was an area that got substantially enriched and consequently acquired a new radicalism and direction, thanks to the example of the personnel of the Latin Church. These foundations, both indigenously born as well as implants of European religious movements, were all grounded on the time-honoured practices of the Latin ecclesiastical tradition. It was only a matter of time before these Malabar religious would on their part prove themselves to be in the frontline of the Catholic Church's latter-day evangelisation enterprises. These religious communities also became vehicular for the input of some of the tried and tested spiritual traditions of the Latin Church into the Malabar Church. The daily celebration of the Holy Mass, exercises of piety like the rosary, the Way of the Cross, benedictions, novenas, devotion to the saints etc easily found their way to the faithful. As far as the missionaries were concerned they had come across a virgin soil in Malabar and they did not have to supplant the prevalent popular pieties in order to implant theirs. Thus the Catholic Church in India that began making its presence felt in the various parts of the country especially after the seventeenth century is today constituted of three distinct ecclesial traditions, however they all have in common several elements of popular devotion.

The entry of the European missionaries into the life of the Malabar Church occasioned the use of the vernacular in their prayer. Taking one thing with another it was only to be expected that the popular religious traditions of the Latin Church now rendered into the native tongue of the faithful would create a favourable impression. As far as these Malabar

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Christians were concerned, praying in an intelligent language must have been altogether a new experience since they had till then been accustomed to making their supplications and invocations in an alien language of Syriac. The great pains the missionaries took in translating the prayer formulations into Malayalam were in fact the first attempts in Malabar at what one would term today as liturgical inculturation. The centralisation of priestly training too had its role to play in imparting more effectively an all-round and uniform training to the candidates.

It needs also to be said that innumerable members of the Malabar Church have crossed across from their ecclesial enclaves to join with the missionaries of the Latin Church in spreading the Gospel into other parts of India. From as early as 1525 there have been instances of the Portuguese clergy recruiting candidates from the Christian families of Malabar for ministering to the communities of the Latin rite they were establishing in Malabar and beyond. Most of the priests who passed out of the St James Seminary, opened in Cranganore in 1540/1 by the Franciscan Observant Friar Vicente de Lagos, used to be incorporated into the nascent Latin Diocese of Cochin. They were to become the trail-blazers of a still flourishing army of Malabar Christians who contribute to the missionary activities in India under the aegis of the Latin Church. If the ancient Christianity of Malabar may be faulted for having been a lamp "under a tub" inasmuch as it was wanting in its zeal to share the Gospel light with others, it deserves to be commended for keeping the light burning throughout the centuries and for joining forces with the missionaries of the Latin Church in making present the Gospel the length and breadth of their country.

Today in retrospect one cannot blink the fact that the spread of Catholicism outside Malabar began and was carried on under the active patronage of the missionaries from Europe. Even in instances where the sowing of the Gospel seed took place autonomously of the western powers, the factual distinction of the preacher from the westerner was not immediately perceivable to the natives. It often happened that the same missionary also ministered to the foreign soldiers, traders and settlers. As it was beyond the average Indian to make any distinction between the denominational and national differences among the Europeans in India, he tended to associate everything Christian in India with the rooting of the colonial rule. The fact of the matter is that it was under the patronage of what is today known as the Congregation for Evangelisation of Peoples that thousands of missionaries of various nationalities sweated blood in India in order to lay the foundation of our Catholic Church. The superiors of the various religious Orders of both men and women left no stone unturned in providing personnel and means for their Mission fields. Perhaps if the Malabar Christians had been permitted as

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well as to join their European brethren right from the start, today's detractors would not have been able to label the Catholic Church as a vestige of colonialism.

6. A Closing Overview

The present joint celebration of the nineteen-hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the landing of Apostle Thomas on the Malabar coast and the fourth centenary of the death of St Francis Xavier is eloquent in many ways precisely because these two apostles of India are representative of the identity of the Indian Catholic Church. The location of their resting places, one on the eastern and the other on the western shore of India, goes to signify that the whole of the country, from east to west and from north to south, is enclasped within their protecting hands. It is immaterial whether today these tombs carry their mortal remains or not. What the many missionaries from Europe have done was to continue constructing on one and the same edifice the foundation of which had been laid by Apostle Thomas and later reinforced and enlarged by St Francis Xavier. It is from this historical standpoint that the ecclesiastical authorities have been seeing the ecclesial reality in India. On 4 December 1964 Pope Paul VI during the course of his pastoral visit to Bombay succinctly contexualised the evangelisation work in India:

> Already we are aware of the long and glorious history of the Church in India, evangelised by the Apostle St Thomas, who sanctified its soil by his preaching and is acclaimed Apostle of India, and also evangelised, according to tradition, by St Bartholomew. We recall the fruitful apostolate of St Francis Xavier, and of many other priests and religious who spread the Good News of the Gospel, and who today continue to show men the way to eternal happiness[13].

The latest reiteration of this perspectival presentation was the one by Crescenzio Cardinal Sepe, the Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples, on 27 September 2002 in his address to the Central Committee of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences at the Pastoral Centre of Samphran-Bangkok in Thailand[14]. When the territorial restrictions now in force on the Syro-Malabar and Syro-Malankara Churches will be lifted the whole Catholic Church in India will be able to proclaim in one voice its privileged heritage that Providence had reserved for India, "a land of ancient culture, the cradle of great religions, the home of a nation that has sought God with relentless desire, in deep meditation and silence, and in hymns of fervent prayer"[15]. It will then be possible for the Indian Catholics to shout from the housetops that their principal identity is their one heritage of Catholic faith that these two apostles brought to India. St Thomas and St Francis Xavier are not the patrons of one particular rite or people but of the whole Catholic Communion of India, as in their lifetime

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each in his own way had been assigned the role of being the spokesperson of the truth that there is "One Lord, one faith, one Baptism. One God, the Father of all, who is above all and works through all and is in all" (Eph 4,5).

The future of the Church in India lies in keeping up the spirit of St. Thomas and St. Francis Xavier, as the mission of the Church is to make present to the world the one who "is the peace between us, and has made the two into one and broken down the barrier which used to keep them apart" (Eph 2,14) by being visible to the world as "part of a building that has the apostles and prophets for its foundations, and Christ Jesus himself for its main cornerstone.

As every structure is aligned on him, all grow into one holy temple in the Lord" (Eph 2,20f). The Church in India which is richly variegated in authentic ecclesial traditions, a reality jointly represented by St Thomas the Apostle and St Francis Xavier, is in a privileged position to adequately respond to the genius of India. The land has the innate capacity to discover and foster unity in diversity. If today physical distance has been overcome and it no longer thwarts human fellowship, it is man's mental block that poses a threat to the establishment of universal brotherhood. The Lord's commission to "go out to the whole world and proclaim the Good News to all creation" (Mtt 16,16) will get translated into action only when the underlying forces of caste prejudice and aversion will be uprooted from the human heart and every man and woman will find a welcoming home in the Community of Jesus' disciples. Pope John Paul II invites the Catholic Church in India to courageously offer one and all its hand of brotherliness and equality: "The dialogue that you are called to is one of courteous respect, meekness and trust, from which all rivalry and polemics are excluded. It is a dialogue that springs from faith and is conducted in humble love"[16].

NOTES:

1 For a handy historical account of the three Indian Churches of the Catholic communion, namely, the Syro-Malabar Church, the Latin Church and the Syro-Malankara Church, see Paul Pallath, *The Catholic Church in India*, Roma 2003.

2 W. Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in earliest Christianity*, Philadelphia 1979, 240.

3 As a written work the *Acta Thomae* had a key role to play in associating with India the ministry and the death of Apostle Thomas. But in the course of time doctrinal interpolations threw discredit on this apocryphal, and at the same time there were also attempts to redeem it from its ill-starred state. The sixth-seventh century collection *Historiae apostolicae* of Abdias dedicates Book IX to recounting the activities of Apostle Thomas in India. The author takes pains to explain the whys and the wherefores of his composition: "I remember having read some time back a book in which his travel [of Apostle Thomas] and the deeds accomplished by him in India are dealt with; since its reliability is suspected and is not accepted by some, I will recall from this book that which has been ascertained, leaving aside the pointless things, for making something pleasing to the

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readers and strengthening the Church". See *Apocrifi del Nuovo Testamento*, a cura di L. Moraldi, II: *Atti degli Apostoli*, Torino 1994, 653. The Italian translation of Book IX entitled *Notizie sulle opere compiute del beato Tomaso in India* is found on p. 653-679. See also P.-H Poirier, *Les Actes de Thomas et le Manichéisme*, in *Apocrypha* 9 (1998) 263-289.

4 I. Ramelli, *La missione di Manteno e il "Matteo aramaico" recato secondo la tradizione da Bartolomeo*, in C. Dognini - I. Ramelli, *Gli apostoli in India nella Patristica e nella letteratura sanscrita* (La zattera, 5), Milano 2001, 50.

5 J. Teixidor, *L'apôtre d'près la littérature syriaque*, in *Apocrypha* 1 (1990) 276f.

6 The memory of the apostolate of St Thomas in India had remained so green in the minds of Christians everywhere that the missionaries who reached the Americas on the trail of Columbus were on the look out for the Christians of St Thomas there. Since the European voyagers were genuinely convinced that they had "discovered" India when they set foot on American soil, they naturally looked around for the "Indian Christians" evangelised by the Apostle Thomas. In 1552 the missionary Emmanuel Nobrega wrote from Brazil about the vestiges of the Apostle's labours he had come across there. These missionaries had assured themselves of the genuineness of their find to such an extent that some of them even identified the Aztec deity Quetzalcoatl with Apostle Thomas. Furthermore, the proponents of the use of violence for subjugating the "Indians" labelled "the native people as apostate Christians, who could therefore be enslaved". See Arnulf Camps, *Studies in Asian Mission History, 1956-1998* (Studies in Christian Mission, 25), Leiden 2000, 16.

7 I. Ramelli, *Il cristianesimo in India dall'età costantiniana al V secolo*, in C. Dognini - I. Ramelli, *Gli apostoli in India nella Patristica e nella letteratura sanscrita*, 119: The connection that the Indian Christians initially had with the Church of Alexandria was later to be overshadowed by their relationship with the Syriac Church. This latter ecclesial link would leave its indelible stamp on the Christians of India.

8 Formerly Christian fellowships of various proportions were based on several strategic points the length and the breadth of the Indian Subcontinent; as none of them has inhered into any of the extant Christian communities in India they do not fall within the focus of this study. In other words the present Christianity in India, with the exception of the Malabar Church, does not go back to any of those anciently existing Christian communities. See Abraham Mattam, *The Indian Church of St Thomas Christians and her missionary enterprises before the sixteenth century*, Kottayam 1985, for a survey of these ancient Christian fellowships. James Kurikilamkatt, *The Apostle Thomas at Taxila: Historical investigation of the mission of Thomas to North India with special reference to the Acts of Thomas* (Excerpta ex dissertatione ad Doctoratum in Facultate Historiae Ecclesiasticae Pontificiae Universitatis Gregorianae), Romae 2002, makes out a strong case for the existence in the past of a Christian fellowship in North India, which had as its founding father St Thomas the Apostle.

9 *The Acts and Decrees of the Synod of Diamper*, 75: Session I, Decree 1.

10 *The Acts and Decrees of the Synod of Diamper. 1599*, ed. Scaria Zacharia, Edamattam 1994, 93: Session 3, Decree 7.

11 *Acts and Decrees of the Synod of Diamper*, 190: Session VIII, Decree 180.

12 *Acts and Decrees of the Synod of Diamper*, 180f: Session VIII, Decree 1-2.

13 *Interreligious Dialogue. The Official Teaching of the Catholic Church (1963-1995)*, ed. F. Gioia, Boston 1997, 127.

14 C. Sepe, *L'Asia deve evangelizzare l'Asia*, in *L'Osservatore Romano* (28 September 2002), 7.

15 Paul VI, *To the Representatives of the various Religions of India* (Bombay, 3 December 1964), in *Interreligious Dialogue. The Official Teaching of the Catholic Church (1963-1995)*, 125.

16 John Paul II, *To the Bishops of India* (New Delhi, 1 February 1986), in *Interreligious Dialogue. The Official Teaching of the Catholic Church (1963-1995)*, 312f.

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26
A Community Comes of Age*

Mathias Mundadan

The paper of Fr. Benedict "Origin and Growth of the Catholic Church in India" is an insightful analysis of the history of the Catholic Church in India from the early centuries to the 17th century. The beginning of the analysis is the tradition of the apostolate of St. Thomas in India and the end is the impact of Western Christianity in India, of which St. Francis Xavier is the guiding light. The insights the speaker provides and the emphases he makes are impressive. I may pick up a few and comment on them, trying to complement the paper from my own understanding of history of the related period.

The underlying thrust of the paper, if I understand correctly, is that the Church in India, the Catholic Church in India for that matter, has been a native fellowship, fully ingrained into the social fabric of the land, in vital unity and communion with the universal Church. The Catholics in India though belong to three *sui juris* Churches form one united body.

One of the very important emphases the speaker makes is that the picture (and, of course, the reality) the Indian Christian community projected was one of a united body, deriving elements from all the different local communities in Kerala, and also elements, which came from outside. Once there was at least on the Coromandel Coast (Chozhamandalam, East Coast of South India or Tamilnadu) a flourishing community, going back, accordingly to

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**A response by the author to the paper presented by Dr. Benedict Vadakkekara at the History Seminar conducted on the occasion of the Jubilee Celebrations of St. Thomas and St. Francis Xavier on 16th November 2002 at the Renewal Centre, Cochi, Kerala.*

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tradition, to the time of St. Thomas the Apostle. This community later migrated to the Kerala Coast and largely merged with the Christians there. This united community remained one without any ethnic or caste differences. It is perhaps the arrival of one or two colonies of Persian Christians, which introduced in Christian Kerala some ethnical difference, the Northists and the Southists. Yet these new comers also formed one united body with those who were here already, and shared the common appellation, 'St. Thomas Christians' (*Marthoma Kristianikal*).[1] The community comprising the two groups looked with great esteem and affection upon Knai Thommen (or Thomas of Cana), who gave it good leadership and helped to boost their social status.

His another emphasis is more impresive: the keenness the Indian Christians showed in cordially welcoming fellow Christians who came from other Churches, Eastern as well as Western. There are references—maybe too few and far between—to delegations of Indian Christians to Christian communities in other countries, e.g. the alleged delegation to Egypt in the second century (cf. Mundadan 2001:65,60). There are more instances of visits to India of foreign Christians who were cordially and with a fraternal sensitivity received by the Indian counterparts (cf. ibid: 116ff.). These contacts point to the consciousness of their communion and solidarity with the universal Church. Relations with the East-Syrian Church of Persia were established on a more stable basis (cf. ibid: 89ff.). Instances of contact with the West deserve special attention. The Franciscan missionary John of Monte Corvino who on his way to China stayed in India at the close of the 13th century for over a year, probably administered baptism to a few St. Thomas Christian children (and also perhaps adults). The reception accorded to Bishop John of Marignolli, the Papal Legate by the Indian Christians was exceptionally significant (cf. ibid: 120ff.). They had no difficulty in respecting the customs and practices of other Christians, though different from theirs. Just take the example of the use of images in churches. The Indian Christians had not the habit of keeping in the church "images or engraved outlines of profiles and faces". They believed that St. Thomas had prohibited them. Obviously it was something inherited from the iconoclastic tradition of some West Asian Churches. They were astonished to hear that the Portuguese/the Latin Church had images in the churches. But they did not consider the Latin usage abhorrent; on the contrary they slowly adopted that custom (cf. Mundadan 1570: 158f.). They were open to such different practices. That finally led to the acceptance and integration of image veneration – a practice quite congenial to religious India.

As regards the decrees of the Synod of Diamper the words used are too sharp to be taken at their face value. Those who drafted it gave a rather radical and extreme interpretation of

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the views of the Indian Christians regarding the identity and autonomy of individual/particular Churches. The whole question must be analysed in the particular context, in which it was discussed. On the one hand Archbishop Meneses and his Portuguese associates were out to detect 'errors' even where perhaps none existed. On the other hand, in the tension-filled atmosphere that preceded the Synod, some leaders of the community including the archdeacon, anxious as they were about the autonomy and identity of their Church, might have criticized in scathing terms the Portuguese action in general and the interference of Archbishop Meneses in particular.

Only twenty years before the celebration of the 'Synod' a Jesuit priest, Francisco Dionysio, who had known the Christians rather intimately, had written:

They regard the Pope as the Vicar of Christ our Redeemer, on earth, and their

Patriarch as subject to the Pope from whom his powers are communicated to him (Silva-Rego 1958: 399).

Although we do not acknowledge this statement as representing a conscious acceptance of the primacy of the Roman Bishop as it is understood in the Catholic Church today, there is no doubt that they showed positive regard to the Petrine office and the Pope's position, and believed in the universal communion of all Christians. Besides, as already pointed out, the Indian Christians, as far as history can trace, had all along been welcoming Christian visitors whether from the East or West as brothers in Christ and treating them as such (cf. Mundadan 1998: 40-42).

It was with an air of euphoria that the Christians in India welcomed their fellow Christians from Europe, the Portuguese. A delegation went to meet Pedro Alvares Cabral, the captain of the second Portuguese expedition to India (1500) and two leaders of the Indian Christians went to Europe in the company of Cabral and one of them, 'Joseph the Indian' had wide-ranging contacts, with King Manuel I of Portugal, with Pope Alexander VI, the Venetian interviewers or 'journalists', so we call them, and so on. When Vasco da Gama arrived at Cochin (A. D. 1502) on his second voyage, a delegation of the St. Thomas Christians went to meet him. They presented him a 'rod of justice' and swore allegiance to the Portuguese king and sought Portuguese protection. The admiral received them very kindly and promised all help and protection. Historians variously interpret the significance of this event. One thing is certain that with this very cordial and intimate relations were established between the Indian Christians and the newcomers. The following year Afonso de Albuquerque's visit to Quilon further strengthened this relation (cf. Mundadan 1967: 52ff.). This euphoria and enthusiasm

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were adversely affected with the appearance on the scene of missionaries like Penteado who concentrated on the differences, which they ignorantly or even out of a sense of superiority called errors, aberrations or superstitions.

The rigid attitude of the missionaries got forceful articulation in several decrees of the Synod of Diamper, especially in the whole approach of the Synod based on a misunderstanding of what the Indian Christians called 'The Law of Thomas'. It was at a time when the head of the Chaldean Church was in definite union with Rome Menesis enumerated the "objects" of the Synod of Diamper, one of which was "the yielding of obedience to the supreme Bishop of Rome...from whom you have for some time separated".

Consequent to the legislation of the Synod of Diamper the Western hierarchical structure was introduced among the Indian Christians together with the change over to the Padroado type of jurisdiction. One of the specific results of this change over was the maintenance of the clergy by the Portugal rulers. The Synod made a clean sweep of the age-old system of semi-autonomous local communities in order to place the whole community directly under the Metropolitan. It had repercussions on the indigenous identity of these Christians. However it must be observed that the community did not change that way immediately. The old *Yogam* spirit survived many of the attempts at westernisation of the structure, well into the 18th and even the 19th century. The well-known Angamaly conventions of 1770s and 1780s are illustrations that it did survive. The agitations of the Church for autonomy in the second half of the 19th century are also indicative of the same (cf. Mundadan 2001T: 62ff.). Possibly it is the regime of the Indian prelates and the recent legislations, which may ultimately lead to the complete cessation or annihilation of the spirit (cf. Mundadan 200, chs. 2-4).

Perhaps one aspect of the Christian life in India before the impact of Western Christians deserves some more elaboration: how far the Christians were fully ingrained into the social and cultural fabric of their land.

In spite of many handicaps to their development into a fully Indian Christian Church, the St. Thomas Christians continued to enjoy a measure of autonomy both civil under the local rulers, and ecclesiastical under the East-Syrian bishops. The titles of the Indian Metropolitan, such as 'the Gate of All India', 'Head of India' are indicative of the quasi-autonomy of the Church. So too the titles and powers of the 'Archdeacon of all India'. Since the metropolitan was a foreigner and quite a stranger to the local affairs, it was the archdeacon, the national leader of the community (the *Jathikku Karthavian*) who was practically in charge of the government of the community both in its civil and ecclesiastical aspects. `The archdeacon discharged his duties

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with the help of a characteristically indigenous institution, the *Yogam* or the Assembly of priests and lay people both at the local level and at the level of the whole community.

The ancient Christians of Kerala very early in their existence developed a lifestyle. This lifestyle in Church matters reflected to some extent the pattern of the Persian Christians. In the socio-cultural realm it was not different from that of their Hindu neighbours. In the social set-up of Kerala they emerged as the peers of the higher classes, especially the Nayars. The long experience they had acquired of the Hindu way of life and the good neighbourly relations they maintained with Hindu brethren enabled them to build up a more positive approach towards Hinduism and Hindu practices. Their integration to the social-cultural milieu of Kerala was most satisfying. How far this integration reflected in their spiritual life, worship, Christian thinking, Church structure, etc. is problematic. The *Yogam* or Church Assembly at the local as well as at the general level and the position of the Archdeacon, who appears always to have been the national leader of the community, were unique features of the Kerala society (cf. Mundadan 2003: 16 ff.).

Kerala was from very early times of the Christian era an ethnic museum consisting of a mosaic of natives and foreigners. Commercial interests attracted people of various creeds, races and nations to its coast. As a result a cultural symbiosis came to prevail in the state already before the arrival of the Portuguese. Hindus, Jains, Buddhists, Christians, Jews and later Muslims, both Indian and foreign lived in harmony. In this multi-coloured fabric of the Kerala society Christians received Hindu names, practiced rituals of worship like the use of the native *nilavilukku* (lamp), built temple-like churches and accepted social customs like the wearing of *tali* (bridal medal) by the bride. The Muslims also constructed temple-like mosques, adopted matriliny in certain areas, and cultivated a new dialect of Arab-Malayalam with its own folk-literature (cf. Narayanan 1972: vii, ix, 6).

It was in this symbiotic social-cultural context the bulk of the ancient Indian Christians lived and grew. A student of history of St. Thomas Christians wonders at the spontaneity, with which the community adjusted itself to its milieu at least as far as their social life was concerned. The natural impulse led to the acceptance of certain practices and customs, a few of which perhaps tended to be prevarications of genuine Christian life, and the Synod of Diamper (1599) had some justification in correcting them. But the Synod went a step further and in a way stifled this spirit of spontaneity itself so much so that it may be said that from the end of the sixteenth century the community gradually affected process of adaptation. It would make an interesting study to trace the history of the community from the point of view of its adaptation,

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analysing the elements, which constituted the adaptation. In the decrees of the Synod of Diamper (cf. Scaria Zacharia: 1994 E & M), there are a number of prohibitions and restrictions. It means Christians were practicing most of them. They are indication of the cultural integration of the St. Thomas Christians to the socio-cultural context of Kerala.

The Synod decreed provisions for changes in ceremonies related to childbirth, rice giving, and purification of women after childbirth, etc. (III, 12; III, 13; IV, 8; IX, l, 2,13). The education of the children probably consisted of two stages: one before the child attained eight years of age, and the other after that till the twenty-fifth year. During the first stage possibly both boys and girls received some very elementary education. Perhaps that was the end for girls. The boys went further. All the boys began their training in reading and writing, in the art of fencing in a *kalari* (school) under a *panicar* (master/fence master), either Hindu or Christian, from eight years of age and continued till they reached twenty-five (cf. Gouvea: 1606: 62). The Christians in India had not developed an exclusive attitude. So the Hindu and Christian children got their training under the same teacher whether he was a Hindu or a Christian. This produced a healthy social interaction between the Hindus and Christians in the day-to-day life.

Muslims, Christians and Jews who had foreign connections, carried on trade and commerce, which native Hindus shunned. So too agricultural activities seem to have rested with the Christians. They were soldiers like their peers the *Nayars* (cf. ibid.). While men were thus occupied in commerce, agriculture and warfare, the women stayed at home according to the customs of the noble castes and did the household work (cf. Mundadan 2001: 154 ff.).

The social and socio-ecclesiastical life, which the St. Thomas Christians had been leading before the arrival of the Portuguese, reflect a unique Christian vision of this community. As Antony Mookenthottam states (1978:24) their identification with their socio-cultural milieu was very through. This oneness with their socio-cultural milieu implies an implicit, lived integral approach, an awareness that Christ in becoming man assumed everything human and redeemed all social and cultural values. Their long encounter with the Hindus helped them to develop a Christian vision of other faiths. This communal harmony and spirit of tolerance should be considered as a typical Indian contribution to the Christian vision.

It would take centuries before the Europeans acquire a life-experience of other religions, before a theology of the religions of the world would emerge which would give due respect to the positive elements in those religions and their providential salvific role for millions of people. But the Indian Christians had been living for centuries in positive encounter with the high caste Hindus and had developed a theological vision of the Hindu religion—a vision more

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positive and liberal. Today in the light of modern theological approaches to world religions one must admit that the vision of the Indian Christians was a more enlightened one than that of their European contemporaries.

Even the worship of the community, which in general followed the East-Syrian pattern, seems to have had certain local accommodations. It is possible that in some places rice cakes and palm wine were used in the Eucharist, instead of the normal practice of using wheat loafs and grape wine. In connection with the sacred rites of baptism, matrimony, burying the dead, etc. there were a number of ceremonies derived from Indian local social practices common to Hindus and Christians (cf. Mundadan 2001: 199 ff).

The institutions of *Palli-Yogam*, a Church Assembly, in which clergy as well as lay representatives participated and which was presided over by the 'Archdeacon of All India' had also great relevance to the Kerala social context. The Archdeacon was a local priestly dignitary whose local designation was *Jathikku Karthavian* ('Prince and Head of the Christian Community'). It is believed that the Christians formed a 'Republic' under the sovereignty of the local rajas or rulers. All major questions of administration of the Church had to be decided in the *Yogam*, both at the local and general levels. This institution was similar to the assemblies, which administered temple properties. In the *Sangam* and the post-*Sangam* period they were known as *manrams* (cf. ibid: 147, 161.)

All this point to an identity and an autonomous status of the Christian community of Kerala, marked as it is by a Christian vision of its own, the vision of a well-integrated community into the Kerala social and cultural context. If this vision is not written down in elaborate works, it is clearly reflected in the life and tradition of Kerala Christians. As seen above, when the Jesuit missionary, Roberto de Nobili, and his collaborators introduced a way of Christian life well adapted to the Indian socio-cultural sentiments, they pointed to the life of the St. Thomas Christians as a model and as justification for their own novel method of preaching and practicing the Gospel of Jesus (cf. Mookenthottam, 1978: 189)

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[1] Fr. Penteado reported in the second decade of the 16th century: "As regards their national customs, their will is corrupted by their priests who say that just as there were twelve Apostles; even they founded twelve customs, each different from the others". Again he says: "The Christians of St. Thomas do not care for communication with the Portuguese, not because they are not happy that they are Christians as we are, but because we are among them as the English and the Germans are among them" (Silva-Rego 1950: 550).

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27
The Role of the Church in Contemporary India*

Paul Puthanangady

The identity of a living organism is determined by its relationship to the others. The discovery of this identity is something that is continually taking place. In this sense we can say that to live is to relate. Where life is present in its highest form, it manifests itself in intense relationship. This is what we see in God, in the Holy Trinity where the very life is constituted by the relationship of the Three Divine Persons. The Church, which is called to reflect the life of the Trinity in the world, has to be a community of relationship. The Church is constituted by relationship among its members; the Church appears in the world for the first time as a community of love. The Church becomes operative in the world through her mission, which consists in building up relationships among the members of the human community through her ministry of reconciliation. The Church arrives at her fullness of being when this community enters into full relationship with the whole creation, that is, the appearance of the new earth and new heaven. This is the contribution of Vatican II to ecclesiology: the Church is a community of relationship. In fact Pope John XXIII, while defining the goal of the Council said: "She opens the fountain of her life-giving doctrine which allows men, enlightened by the light of Christ, to understand well what they really are, what their lofty dignity and their purpose are,

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and finally, through her children, she spreads everywhere the fullness of Christian charity, than which nothing is more effective in eradicating the seeds of discord, nothing more efficacious in promoting concord, just peace, and brotherly unity of all."[1]

During the Council, a totally new document, in line with the above-mentioned goal of the Council, was conceived and formulated: The Pastoral Constitution - The Church in the Modern World' (Gaudium et Spes). This document redefined the identity of the Church in terms of her relationship with the world. "The joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the men of our times, especially of those who are poor or afflicted in any way, are the joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as well. Nothing that is genuinely human fails to find an echo in their hearts. For theirs is a community composed of men who, united in Christ and guided by the Holy Spirit, press onwards towards the kingdom of the Father and are bearers of a message of salvation intended for all men. That is why Christians cherish a feeling of deep solidarity with the human race and history."[2]

Today, after having experienced the grace of the Great Jubilee, which, to some extent was the culmination of the movement, which began with Vatican II, the Church is invited by the Spirit to live this new identity in terms of a renewed commitment to her mission in the world. That is why Pope John Paul II considers the celebration of the Jubilee "as a providential opportunity during which the Church, thirty five years after Second Vatican Council would examine how far she had renewed herself, in order to be able to take up the evangelizing mission with fresh enthusiasm."[3]

The Church in India today, therefore, is called to express her identity as an evangelizing community. The events that we celebrate these days, the Jubilee of our Apostles, on whom our Church is founded, spurs us on to a rediscovery of our identity in terms of an evangelizing community. The events that are taking place in our country, be they political, religious, social or economical, are inviting us to the same task; they are the signs of the times that challenge us to a new awakening. The Spirit of Jesus is reminding us today, through all these indications, that we are a Church only in the measure in which we are an evangelizing community. All our plans and projects for Church renewal, be they doctrinal, liturgical, organizational or liberative, should be characterized by and oriented towards the activization of this one identifying mark of the Church, namely, that of a community sent out by the Lord in mission to evangelize the world. This is very clearly expressed by John Paul II as he proposes the programme of pastoral action at the beginning of the third millennium. Every Church should draw up a pastoral plan "which will enable the proclamation of Christ to reach people, mould communities, and have

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a deep incisive influence in bringing Gospel values to bear in society and culture...What awaits us therefore is an exciting work of pastoral revitalization – a work involving all of us."[4] It is in the light of these considerations that I intend to delineate the role of the Church in contemporary India.

1. Some Basic Principles of Evangelization

1.1 The Whole Christian Community is Entrusted with the Mission of Evangelization

By virtue of the sacrament of baptism one enters the Kingdom of God, that is, one experiences the love that God has for humankind. The response to this love is to accept God as our Father, which in its turn necessarily leads to the recognition of others as children of God and expresses this recognition in a concrete, experiential manner in our relationship towards others. This is what we call evangelization: communicate the love with which God has loved us by translating it into human love. Every Christian can and must become an evangelizer in this way. The celebration of the sacraments and other activities in which the Christians are involved by virtue of their Baptism should be seen as a means by which the evangelizing dimension of our Christian life is activated. The life that is lived after the celebration of the sacraments will have to be a life that translates this experience into day-to-day human relationship. This is the meaning of being a leaven in the society: charged by the love with which God has loved us we transform the society in which we live. The whole Christian community becomes an evangelizing community .

1.2 The Goal of Evangelization is the Removal of Bad News

The Gospel is the good news of God, which is directed towards the removal of bad news in the human community. Jesus came into the world as the one sent by the Father to remove the sins of the world.. He is not primarily sent to establish a new religion. The bad news is all that prevents human beings from experiencing the love of God in this world in the first instance, and in the world to come in the fullness of time. This mission challenges us to eradicate sin as it exists in its incarnate form, in structures of injustice, selfishness, oppression, inequality and exploitation. The end result of evangelization is the establishment of the Kingdom of God, that is, the rule of God's love in all human structures and situations. The Christian community exists in order to fulfill this mission. If this dimension is missing in our Christian communities we will be reduced to a mere religion and thus the true meaning of the Gospel will be

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misinterpreted and misunderstood. Our proclamations of Christ without this social and human dimension will not be evangelization, but mere proselytization. Evidently, the transformation of the world through the Gospel will be effected only when the Gospel changes the hearts of those agents of evil in the world, namely, the human persons who through their selfishness transform the creation into instruments of oppression and injustice. The proclamation of the Gospel is, therefore, oriented to the change of hearts of men and women for it is through them that God continues his creative work of love in this world. That is why Pope Paul VI says:" For the Church it is not a question of preaching the Gospel in ever new geographic areas or to ever greater number of people, but also of affecting and as it were upsetting through the power of the Gospel mankind's criteria of judgment."[5] This in its turn will result in the creation of communities of reconciliation, that is, communities from which all types of discrimination has been banished. The communities that are evangelized are those in which everyone looks at the other as God looks at each one of us: "In the look of Christ man remembers who he is, and in that he recognizes his own dignity, discovers himself as a subject worthy of being loved."[6]

1.3 Evangelization Calls for Incarnation

Jesus begins his evangelizing mission with baptism in Jordan, an act by which he identified himself with those to whom he was sent. Jesus told his disciples that the Holy Spirit will remind them of all that they have to say or do. This means that the Lord is going to speak to us in the first place from the context into which we have been sent. We must first listen to his voice coming from the midst of the people. For this we must be immersed in her life-situation. Only after that we must open the Bible as Jesus did in Nazareth, when he proclaimed his missionary manifesto. Here we come to the issue of inculturation as an integral part of our evangelizing mission. Besides, the Kingdom of God, which is going to emerge as a result of our evangelization, is the world of our concrete involvement, transformed by the power of the Gospel. That is why the Apostolic Exhortation Ecclesia in Asia says "Evangelization and inculturation are naturally and intimately related to each other."[7] The evangelizer should take seriously the religious, cultural, social and economic realities of the people. These are all means by which God is speaking from within the human community. A positive approach in their regard is required, even though this does not mean that we agree with the principles and ideologies according to which they operate.

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1.4. Evangelization is an Act of Communication

The whole plan of salvation begins with an act of communication on the part of God. Communication, before being the imparting of information, is an act of relationship. God took the initiative to relate Himself to humankind. By sending Jesus into he world God relates Himself personally to human beings. The mission of the church is to continue this act of relationship. The first act of the evangelizer, therefore, is to relate himself to those to whom he has been sent. The Holy Spirit who is at the centre of all communication in God is the primary agent in evangelization, which is an act of communication on the part of God to the human community. The role of the Holy Spirit in evangelization is to keep alive this communication. The result of this communication is communion, which is the ultimate goal of evangelization: that they may be one as we are one (John 17, 22). This demands the conversion and change of attitude in those who proclaim the Gospel. The language of evangelization will be the language of love; the attitude of those who evangelize is one of unconditional openness to those to whom they are sent. In communication, there is mutual listening, before speaking. God's communication with human beings, the act of creation, the first act of evangelization, is an act of communication in silence, filled with love. "Creation is God's free communication of love, a communication which, out of nothing, brings everything into being. There is nothing created that is not filled with the ceaseless exchange of love that marks the innermost life of the Trinity, filled, that is, with the Holy Spirit: "the Spirit of the Lord has filled the world" (Wis. 1,7). The presence of the Spirit in creation generates order, harmony and interdependence in all that exists."[8]

1.5. Evangelization is Proclamation of Christ

The person of Jesus is the Gospel. The evangelizer is sent to proclaim this person even before communicating his teaching. We do not evangelize merely by imparting the Gospel values to the people. That is why John Paul II says: "There can be no true evangelization without the explicit proclamation of Jesus Christ as Lord."[9] What does this mean? We bring the living Christ (that is the meaning of Jesus Christ the Lord, the risen Lord) to people when we go and relate to people after having had a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. This means that we cannot evangelize, that is, communicate Christ to others, unless we have met Christ, experienced him as a living person and entered into personal communion with him. The only qualification and competence of the evangelizer is that he or she has met the risen Lord. This is very clearly seen in the lives of all great evangelizers and missionaries.

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2. Paradigm Shifts in the Mission and Life of the Church

The Church has continued to live and fulfill her mission from the time that she came into existence. We have different images of the Church and of her mission in the course of history. In the early period she translated her faith into love and manifested herself as a community of love and sharing. Her mission consisted in proclaiming Jesus as the one who conquered death with all its allies, which made human life meaningless and inhuman. Her proclamation announced the inauguration of the Kingdom of God, a new world order, opposed to the existing world orders, of which the Roman empire was the model. The martyrs who play an important role as the witnesses of the Gospel in this period are those who challenged the anti-kingdom values embodied in their society, especially in the Roman imperial system.

With the advent of the Constantinian period, we notice a change in the image and mission of the Church. She acquires an institutional identity both in her life and in her mission. Her faith is now translated into doctrine. Her life and worship acquires organizational, juridical and ritual forms. Her mission of evangelization is oriented towards the growth in the membership of the institutional Church. The goal of her mission is still the Kingdom of God, but understood as the participation in the life of God in this life and in the life to come: in this life it gives the converted persons the grace of God and in the next life, this grace will be transformed into glory. As a result the concern for building a community of love and sharing in this world recedes to the background and the image of a community living the supernatural life comes into the foreground. Christianity appears as a religion and as such, being the true religion, which was established by the teachings of Jesus and authenticated by his death and resurrection, opposes all the other religions as false and hence to be rejected in favour of the membership in the Church. It is this image and mission of the Church, which were brought to Americas, Asia and Africa during the colonial period. While in the Americas it resulted in the creation of the Christendom modeled on that of Europe; In Asia the result of evangelization, to a great extent, was visible only in those areas where the founding of the Church was possible. The presence of Christian communities in Asia, Africa and Americas today bears witness to this. While this manner of being Church was a success in Europe and Americas and to some extent in Africa, we have to admit that its success in Asia was very relative.

With Vatican II, there is a definite paradigm shift taking place in the image of the life and mission of the Church. While reaffirming the core of evangelization as the proclamation of Jesus Christ as the Good News of the Father to humanity, its goal and methodology have undergone a change. In the first place, the Church's identity is redefined, as we have seen

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above, in terms of her relationship with the world; her ultimate goal is to establish communion among all human beings; the methodology she has to adopt in accomplishing this is through dialogue. Hence we may say: "as the sacrament of the Kingdom of God, which is salvation, and of the unity of humankind, the Church has to enter into rapport with all peoples through dialogue."[10] In her missionary approach, the conquest approach is replaced by the communion approach. This is very beautifully expressed by Fr. Amalorpavadass in these words: "Evangelization is an interpretative or prophetic sharing by a group of Christians of their double experience of the world and the Word, of context and text with the whole community of the people in the mutual interplay of listening and speaking, receiving and giving, while journeying with the human community in the same stream of life within a process of all round sharing."[11] This is confirmed by the official documents of the Church. John Paul II in his Apostolic Exhortation Ecclesia in Asia states: "Using the theology of communion, the Second Vatican Council could describe the Church as the pilgrim people of God to whom all peoples are in some way related...The Synod therefore renewed the commitment of the Church in Asia to the task of improving both ecumenical relations and interreligious dialogue, recognizing that building unity, working for reconciliation, forging bonds of solidarity, promoting dialogue among religions and cultures, eradicating prejudices and engendering trust among peoples are all essential to the Church's evangelizing mission on the continent."[12] All these indicate the need of a new paradigm for the life and mission of the Church, not only in Asia, but all over the world because the situation is very much the same everywhere, living as we are in a global village today.

3. The Church in India Today, an Evaluation

3.1 Christianity in India: A Critical Reflection on the Historical Reality

Our first evangelization took place during the apostolic period. The Christian communities that came into existence as a result of this apostolic venture soon became religious groups like any other religious group that existed in India at that time. They do not show the missionary thrust, which was characteristic of all the first Christian communities. They were inculturated; but their inculturation only gave them an Indian appearance; the main purpose of inculturation, which is to fulfill a mission towards the world, was not fully present in those communities. The second evangelization of India was that which was initiated during the colonial period with St. Francis Xavier and companions. It consisted mainly in changing the religion of those who accepted the Gospel. They rejected Hinduism and entered the Church as an institution. The missionary activity was oriented toward the expansion of the Church. This is reflected in her

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life-style and mission. Their Christian identity was very much linked to the characteristics of the Church as a religious institution, with many elements that were borrowed from the West. At the same time the Christians retained social customs such as caste system, which belonged to the Hindu society, although they are incompatible with Christianity. Sufficient importance was not given to the conversion and transformation of the social system and human relationship, which was to be effected through the power of the Gospel, as in the case of the early Church. As a consequence there came up Christian communities that have no sense of mission. This Church remained a minority and suffered from a minority complex. She tended to become ritualistic and legalistic because the signs by which many Christians manifested their belongingness to the Church consisted mainly in the observances of rituals and moral obligations. They expressed their faith more through the correct doctrinal formulations than through their life of love and sharing. The power of the Word to transform the world was not very evident in the fulfillment of her mission; her institutions are, by and large, service centers conducted with honesty and efficiency without any specific Gospel characteristic.

3.2 The Present State of the Church in India

Apparently the Church in India is a flourishing institution. The Christian community lives in the midst of the rest of humanity with the consciousness of being a minority institution. This community sees the militant religious groups as threat to their institution. The sense of mission is almost non-existent in the ordinary Christian. Where there is possibility of getting more members into the Church, the missionary spirit seems to be alive; but where such possibilities are not present, there is very little missionary thrust even in those who have dedicated themselves to the work of evangelization.

As an institution the Church has shown great vitality: there is a remarkable growth in the vocations to priesthood and religious life. Indigenous theology and spirituality are being fostered. There is a consciousness of the need of inculturation, especially in the liturgy. There is a sincere search for God experience and spiritual growth in many sections of the people of God. The many charismatic groups that exist all around the country manifest this. However, we have to recognize in all honesty that the witnessing power of the Christian community is not very strong. The existence of discriminatory caste system in the Christian communities themselves shows that the true Christian spirit of the Gospel is not alive in such communities. The unequal distribution of the religious in the country is another sign of the institutional mentality that is dominant even in those who have committed themselves radically to the mission of Christ.

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4. The Church in India Today: An Effort to Rediscover Her Role

We have seen that the Church that emerges from Vatican II has mission as its basic characteristic. It is a community of mission because she came into existence in this world in the fulfillment of her missionary mandate given by the Lord. The mission of the Church rests on two poles: the experience of the Lord who sends and the experience of the world to which she is sent. The mission originates from the Lord, but the agenda of the mission is given by the world. Hence in determining the authenticity of the mission of the Church, it is necessary to take into account the response that she ought to give to the present situation of India with its need for evangelization. In other words, the Church must discover the signs of the time; she must become aware of the bad news or the sinful situation that exists in our land, because her mission consists in bringing the Good News by removing the bad news; like Jesus she has been sent to take away the sins of the world; she needs to identify the bad news to which the Good News of Jesus Christ, the Gospel, is an answer. Unlike in the past, when evangelization was directed primarily towards the change of religion, today she has to become aware that her mission is primarily directed towards the removal of evil that disfigures the image of God in the human person and distorts the world that was created to be the sign of God's love for mankind. The Church in India must rediscover her mission of evangelization along these lines. Only then will the Gospel become the Good News for our people, instead of being a threat to their culture and religious traditions. Undoubtedly such an approach will necessarily bring the Church into conflict with the powers of this world that are interested in maintaining the sinful situations. It is in confronting such powers that the authentic worth of the Gospel will become manifest. Let us look at some of these issues that challenge the Church, as the carrier of Good News of Jesus Christ.

4.1 Communalism and Religious Fundamentalism

Religion is such an integral part of our culture and way of life that some one has said: 'To any part of the world you can go as a tourist, but to India one must go as a pilgrim if they want to understand the full reality of this country' And yet we know and we have seen in recent years, how this very religiosity has degenerated into communal violence and religious fundamentalism. This negative aspect of India's religiosity challenges the Christian community which posseses a religiosity based on the Fatherhood of God. Our answer to this problem should consist in proclaiming both in word and deed the truth that every human being is a child of God. This is the Good News of Jesus: the Son of God becomes visible as the Son of

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Man, that is, a brother to other human beings. We should foster this discovery in the human communities around us, by inviting people to convert to one another and thus show the true meaning of conversion to true God. India needs this type of evangelization more than an evangelization that leads to change of religion. We need to project Jesus as a perfect human being, manifesting the image of God. This is the Divine image that India needs. If our brothers and sisters accept Jesus as their Lord and Master because of this, then they may also join the Christian community through Baptism. That we leave to their free choice. But, it must be made very clear that to accept the Gospel and to become a follower of Jesus, it is necessary to turn to the neighbour in an unconditional acceptance of his or her humanity. This is the conversion of which we Christians speak. This is the Gospel that our country needs. This is the evangelization that we should take up. This is the only answer to the evil of communalism and religious fundamentalism.

4.2 Social and Cultural Discrimination

The whole Hindu society is built upon caste system. When this system becomes activated in social life, we witness a style of life that is impregnated with discrimination, which degrades the dignity of the human beings. In spite of constitutional guarantees and legal enactments, this social evil is rampant everywhere, at times even leading to violence and economic injustice. Unfortunately it is very strongly present even in some of our Christian communities. Added to this, we notice in our country discriminations based on ethnicity, linguistic differences etc., which further fragments and divides the human community. As Christians we know that this is not the image, which God gave to the human community when he willed to create it. Jesus came to proclaim the basic equality of all children of God. This is his Gospel. We must face the challenges that this evil of social discrimination offers us by rediscovering the Gospel message as a call to build up a community of love and service, a community of reconciliation and mutual acceptance, a community built upon communication and relationships. Jesus made it very clear that no true relationship can be established with God by a community that approves and lives in a state of discrimination. The identity of a person consists not only in the affirmation of one's individuality, but also in the ability to relate oneself to the other. This is the true meaning of Baptism in the name of the Holy Trinity. The Christians through Baptism commit themselves to reflect the image of the Trinity wherein the infinite differences in the Divine Persons is lived in such a perfect communion that there is only one God. Here the one is not the result of the elimination of many, but of communion among the many. We need to preach this Gospel of communion and reconciliation in India, more than a Gospel that merely asks for the change of one's religion.

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4.3 Terrorism and Violent Militancy

We are fully aware of widespread existence of terrorism and violent militancy both in the world and in our own country. The solutions to this problem, proposed by politicians and heads of nations today are inadequate to face it successfully. The real issue that underlies this phenomenon is the unjust economic and social foundations on which our modern society is built. God has created no one superior to the other. We are all complementary to each other. It is necessary to discover this basic complementarity in order to build up a society of lasting peace and prosperity. A society that establishes its excellence through competition is doomed to be a society of conflict and war. The Gospel of Jesus is capable of building up a society free from terrorism by upholding the uniqueness and originality of every human person. We need to spread this Gospel especially in our country, which in spite of its high spirit of religiosity does not always respect the dignity of individual persons and the value of human life which reflects the image of God.

4.4 Corruption in Public Life

One of the evils that severely affect in a negative way the body politic today is the rampant corrupt practices of those in power. The Gospels express in unambiguous terms that authority is service and not selfish domination. At times, the Christian community fosters this situation indirectly, by its silent acceptance of such practices in order to remain in the good books of those in authority for the sake of maintaining their institutions. We need to challenge such sinful situations if we are committed to the Gospel and its demands. Even though we are a minority, the stand that we take by opposing corruption on all levels will surely have an evangelizing effect on the society.

4.5 Unjust Economic Order and Inhuman Poverty

In spite of the great progress which science and technology has made in modern times, we have to admit the sad plight of the poor and the oppressed who still form the majority of the human community as well as a major section of our own country. There is no doubt that poverty is the creation of human selfishness. We may say that it is the sacrament of the sinfulness of humanity. It is the negation of the true God because it takes away the sign of his love from the material things of this world. Jesus came to preach the Good News to the poor, primarily to the materially poor. The Church, which is sent by Jesus Christ, should take up the cause of the poor and the oppressed as the priority area of her evangelization. She has to show the goodness of a loving God to all human beings in a tangible manner. Our evangelizing mission should, therefore, be primarily oriented towards the elimination of material poverty

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from our society. In fact that is what we see in the early Church: "There was no one among them in need" (Acts 4, 34).

4.6 Religious Pluralism

Although it is out of place here to deal with religious pluralism, when we are enumerating the evils in society that the Gospel has to face, I intend to say a word on this topic because for some Christians, religions are still an obstacle to the Gospel, especially in the Indian context of today, when Christianity is opposed by some sections of the Hindu society for its evangelizing activity. In the first place, it must be made very clear that the Church has officially adopted a positive approach to accept all the other religions.[13] But at the same time the Church has affirmed that she is committed to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all peoples, even to people of other faiths. In doing this it must be kept in mind that it should always be Good News to them and not the cause of destruction of anything that is authentically valuable in them. This would require a changed approach to religion in our mission of evangelization. We need to replace a conquest approach, which at times characterized our missionary method with a communion approach. We need to adopt dialogue as a fundamental requirement in our approach to people of other religions. Our main objective is not the change of anybody's religion, but to remove in them anything that is incompatible with the relationship between God and human beings, established in the person of Jesus Christ, who we believe is a perfect model of religiosity. Hence, without excluding other religions from our sphere of evangelization, we should adopt an approach that is respectful and in keeping with the dignity of a religious person in whom the Spirit of God has been operative.

5. The Church in India Today – An Attempt to Redefine its Image

We have tried to describe the challenges, which the evangelizing mission of the Church in India has to face. Since it is mission that conditions the life of the Church, and mission consists in relating ourselves to all in the Spirit of Christ, the new image of the Church in India should have certain characteristics, which highlight her relationship with the human community of this country. It is in this way that the Church becomes genuinely Indian. We shall try to describe this image by highlighting some of its important aspects.

5.1 She Must be a Community that can Communicate with People of Other Faith

The identity and orthodoxy of the Christian community was very much conditioned by her faith in Christ expressed in correct doctrinal formulas. In fact, whenever, any one wanted

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to join the Church, care was taken to ensure that he or she was correctly instructed in the faith. No doubt, this is a very important element of our Christian identity; but if the Church is a community in a state of mission, it is necessary that the ability to communicate with people be also an essential constituent element of this identity. Communication is different from instruction; the latter can be imparted without any change on the part of the subject, while the former requires that the subject be ready to communicate with all; it requires a conversion of heart and change of attitude in the subject. It is necessary that the Christians have a positive approach to all that is different in other people, including the religious diversity.

The Christian religiosity, our ecclesial being, will have to be expressed in terms not only of doctrinal integrity, but also as a capacity to relate to all. In this sense, we may say that for us Christians, in a context of multi-religiosity, to be religious means to be inter-religious. This does not mean that we make adjustments in our religious convictions or faith formulations, but it surely does mean that Christian faith will not stand as an obstacle to enter into communication with people of other faiths. We will not be a religious ghetto, but a leaven that is present everywhere with our specificity, contributing towards the building up of the Kingdom. Our communication with people of other faiths may not always make them join our Christian community, but it will always build up the Kingdom of God. In this way, not only our way of fulfilling our mission, but also our very way of being, will be dialogical. Instead of a ghetto-image, we will have a leaven-image. "As the sacrament of the unity of all mankind, the Church cannot but enter into dialogue with all peoples, in every time and place. Responding to the mission she has received, she ventures forth to meet the peoples of the world, conscious of her being a 'little leaven' within the vast throng of humanity (cf. Lk, 12, 32), but also of being leaven in the dough of the world (cf. Mt.13, 33)."[14] The manner of being leaven is not to be understood as a hidden presence that acts subtly to overturn and destroy the religious and cultural values of the peoples, but a presence in loving communion: "The Church must continue to strive to preserve and foster at all levels this spirit of encounter and co-operation between religions. Communion and dialogue are two essential aspects of the Church's mission, which have their infinitely transcendent examples in the mystery of the Trinity, from whom all mission comes and to whom it must be directed."[15]

5.2 She Must Translate Her Faith into Love

The first Christian community manifested its faith in Christ not so much through its doctrinal formulations as by its being a community of love and sharing. Perhaps we, in India, have not sufficiently manifested to our brothers and sisters of other faiths and ideologies this specific

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Christian image. We present Christ as a religious founder and Christianity as a religion. As a consequence we are either tolerated or persecuted as another religion, depending on the attitude of the majority religions. Our impact on the rest as a religion is not very impressive. We need to project a new image, which is the classical image of the Church: a community of love and sharing. We should make it clear to ourselves and to others that this is our identity. As a consequence, our main mission towards others is to love them as God in Christ loves them, unconditionally, unselfishly, irrespective of their religious, cultural, social or economic status. When we do this we shall manifest that communion which is at the core of Christian economy of salvation. The theological foundation for this communion is very clearly expressed in the Apostolic Exhortation Ecclesia *in Asia* in these words: "The Church's first purpose then is to be the sacrament of the inner union of the human person with God, and because people's communion with one another is rooted in that union with God, the Church is also the sacrament of the unity of the human race."[16]

5.3 Replacement of 'Conquest Approach' with 'Relational Approach'

The Christian mission was very much understood in terms of a conquest and conversion from other religions to Christianity. This has made it difficult for the Church in India to give herself an Indian identity, an essential requirement for the fulfillment of her mission of evangelization. We need to develop a lifestyle that enables us to relate ourselves to the people of other religions. This will require in the first place the conversion of the evangelizers. They will have to undergo a change in an effort to relate to those to whom they are sent. As a result of trying to relate to the others, there may take place also a change in the life, mentality and intellectual categories of others. But this change has only one goal, namely to build up a community of love: the Kingdom of God. This means that we have to replace our 'conquest approach' with ' a relational approach' in our mission of evangelization.

5.4 She Must be a Community that is Fully Integrated into the Culture of the People

God's communication with human beings was not conducted in an abstract manner. He entered into the life and culture of the people so fully that He truly became one with them except in sin (Heb. 2,17; 4,15.) The Church, being the sacrament of Christ, has to be fully inserted into the life of the people to whom she is sent in mission. She has to share their life in every way except in sin. "The Kingdom of God which is proclaimed by the Gospel is put into

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practice by men who are imbued with their own particular culture, and in the building up of the Kingdom it is inevitable that some elements of these human cultures must be introduced."[17] The Christian communities of India still need to have an Indian face. This is evident from the fact that Christianity is considered by many of our brothers and sisters as a foreign religion. While maintaining our fidelity in communion with the universal Church, it is necessary that we express our Christian identity in India as a community that is fully inserted into the culture and ethos of this country. Just as Jesus was born in Palestine as a Jew by the power of the Holy Spirit, the Church must be born in India as an Indian community by the power of the same Holy Spirit. "It is good to remember at this point what was said repeatedly during the Synod: that the Holy Spirit is the prime agent of the inculturation of the Christian faith in Asia."[18] The third millennium is going to be the time of the Epiphany, the manifestation of Jesus Christ and his community with a genuine Indian countenance and with a life that fully shares in the ethos of the people of India.

5.5 A Dialogical Image in Her Relationship with Other Religions

For various reasons, the relationship of the Church to other religions has been one of confrontation and even opposition. The people of other faiths were even called at times infidels, i.e. those who do not have faith in true God. Their religions needed to be replaced with Christianity. This was the image, which, by and large, was projected, in the first and second millennium. We may say that this image was proved to be inadequate because it has isolated the Christian community from the rest and reduced it to a minority religion. There is an urgent need to reproject the image of the Indian Church in the light of Vatican II which has officially declared that the other religions "reflect a ray of that truth which enlightens all men."[19] The Christians are asked to "acknowledge, preserve and encourage the spiritual and moral truths found among non-Christians."[20] The Church recognizes that there are seeds of the Word, which lie hidden in these religions.[21] The Church has to adopt a dialogical approach to other religions. Inter-religious dialogue is not a new tactic for evangelization, but a new expression of it. "It is a part of the Church's evangelizing mission, an expression of the mission ad Gentes".[22] "It is an essential part of the Church's mission because it has its origin in the Father's loving dialogue of salvation with humanity through the Son in the power of the Holy Spirit.... The dialogue which the Church proposes is grounded in the logic of the Incarnation."[23] This dialogue on the part of the Church extends to all people "on the basis of religious yearnings found in every human heart."[24] The source of these yearnings is the Spirit who is present in a

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mysterious manner in these religions. Therefore both the Church and the other religions have a common foundation for dialogue because of the presence of the same Spirit in both... The Synod was therefore right to see the Spirit of God as the prime agent of the Church's dialogue with all peoples, cultures and religions."[25] The style of this dialogue is described in the Apostolic Exhortation in these words: "Inter-religious relations are best developed in a context of openness to other believers, a willingness to listen and the desire to respect and understand others in their differences. For all this, love of others is indispensable. This should result in collaboration, harmony and mutual enrichment."[26] At the same time it should be kept in mind that dialogue should in no way sacrifice, not even diminish her faith in Christ and "lessen the duty and resolve to proclaim without failing Jesus Christ who is the way and the truth and the life."[27] Only a dialogue, which is founded on genuine Christian authenticity of life and mission as well as on love, respect and acceptance of the people of other faiths, can serve as enrichment to both. Hence any type of compromise or false irenism must be avoided because they harm the very cause of dialogue itself.

5.6 Church in India, A Community Committed to the Poor

The Gospel is the Good News that proclaims that God loves all and that all are His children. The early Church translated this Gospel by creating communities of sharing. It is necessary to show the relevance of Christian God experience for India, a country of great religiosity, by building up communities of love and sharing, communities where there is no one in need (Acts 4, 34). This is a unique contribution that the Church can give to India.

5.7 She must be a Community Marked with a Simple Life-Style

Living in the midst of a people subject to abject poverty and preaching to them the message of liberation, the Church must become a credible witness by identifying herself with the poor and the oppressed. This will call for a simple life-style on her part. The Church's mission is based on her communion with those to whom she is sent. She has to enter into communion with the poor. "Solidarity with the poor becomes more credible if Christians themselves live simply, following the example of Jesus...The Synod Fathers called on Asian Catholics to adopt a life-style consonant with the teachings of the Gospel, so that they may better serve the Church's mission and so that the Church herself may become a Church of the poor and for the poor."[28]

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5.8 She must be a Community Capable of Communicating God-Experience to Others

India is a continent where spirituality plays a big role in shaping the lives of the people. A contemplative attitude to reality is very much appreciated and practiced by them. There have been various expressions of contemplative life existing in this country from time immemorial. India understands God and His relationship with human beings not so much through intellectual categories as through a contemplative experience. The Church has *to be* as well as *appear* as a contemplative community if she has to communicate with India and become credible in her mission. "In Asia, home to great religions, where individuals and entire peoples are thirsting for the divine, the Church is called to be a praying Church, deeply spiritual even as she engages in immediate human and social concern. All Christians need a true missionary spirituality of prayer and contemplation."

5.9 The Church in India must be a Community that is Committed to the Mission of Evangelization

It must be a community of disciples of Jesus Christ, evangelized in such a way that it is uncompromisingly committed to proclaim the Gospel to all the peoples. It has to be a community that acts as a leaven in the midst of the rest of the human community, continually trying to enter into relationship of love and understanding with all peoples with their diversity of religions, cultures and socio-economic realities, in full solidarity with the poor and the oppressed, joining them in their quest for lasting peace and joy and becoming for them a beacon of hope.

We should spare no efforts to make such a Church become a reality in every parish, thus involving every single Christian in this mission of evangelization. Every parish will then have a new shape. Far from being a ghetto with a minority complex in the midst of a vast human community belonging to other religions and ideologies, it will become a community that continually associates itself with all the peoples in building up the Kingdom of God. "Built in the hearts of the people, it is a Church that faithfully and lovingly witnesses to the Risen Lord and reaches out to people of other faiths and persuasions in a spirit of dialogue of life towards the integral liberation. Its evangelizing objective is the Kingdom of God, that is the translation of the love of God into structures of human love.[30] To be realistic, we can never think of an India that will become Catholic in the near future. This should not prevent us from fulfilling our mission of evangelization. The preaching of the Gospel will have different effects on different groups of people and their acceptance of the Gospel will vary. The community that

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is created as a result of our evangelization will, therefore, be one in which all these various forms of acceptance of the Gospel should find a place. But all of them will belong to the Kingdom.[31]

Every member of the Church will be a witness to the Gospel. Every Christian becomes a missionary because "the experience of faith and the gifts of the Holy Spirit become the basis of all missionary work, in towns or villages, in schools or hospitals, among the handicapped, migrants or tribal peoples, or in the pursuit of justice and human rights. Every situation is an opportunity for Christians to show forth the power which the truth of Christ has become in their lives."[32] Every vocation in the Church has to be exercised as a missionary vocation. The priests, the religious, the laity, the family, the youth etc should fulfill their role in the Church with this missionary dynamism as their moving power. They should all be primarily proclaimers of Christ with their lives and activities.[33] All the activities of the Church, be they strictly sacramental or be they involvement in the secular world as well as all the associations in the parishes, should have the missionary thrust. In this way, the Church will exist everywhere as a community of mission. We can say, therefore, where there is mission, there is Church; but where there is no sense of mission, even if we have very efficient institutions and well organized activities, there is no Church. "The peoples of Asia need Jesus Christ and his Gospel. Asia is thirsting for the living water that Jesus alone can give. The Disciples of Christ in Asia must therefore be unstinting in their efforts to fulfill the mission they have received from the Lord. Trusting in the Lord who will not fail those whom he has called, the Church in Asia (India) joyfully makes her pilgrimage into the third millennium. Her only joy is that which come from sharing with the multitude of India's people the immense gift, which she herself has received – the love of Jesus the Saviour. Her only ambition is to continue his mission of service and love, so that all Asians (Indians) may have life and have it abundantly.[34]

6. The Structures of the Renewed Church in India

This image of the Church will necessarily call for new structures by which she becomes visible to the world. In fact the structures of the Church evolved in the course of time underwent changes as the self-understanding of the Church evolved. Today we need to express the image of the Church through structures that will emphasize the renewed sense of mission, which the Church considers as the basis on which her identity rests.

Our present parish structures do not project this missionary dimension of the Church; they reflect rather the image of a religious institution. We need to find an alternative structure, which will enable the Church to project this new image. This is what we call SMALL CHRISTIAN

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COMMUNITIES. Only in such a community can we find verified the originality of the Christian community described in the Acts of the Apostles: they were of one mind and one heart; there was no one among them in need. This community living deeply its Christ experience gets involved in the neighborhood with its sense of mission. These communities will be the living cells of the parish and will have a double movement in the articulation of their life and mission. In the first place they will contribute towards the constitution of the parish as a community of communities, living cells that transform the parish from a mere organization into an organism, full of vitality, charged with the power of the Gospel. They will be fully evangelized communities, true communities of faith that together constitute the parish into a living Church.

The second movement of these communities will be towards the world, which is the immediate neighborhood. They will become leaven in the wider human community. They will build up the Kingdom of God in the neighborhood enlisting all the Kingdom forces that are already operating there and communicating to them the power of the Gospel, which is capable of transforming the world around it. This ultimately will result in the formation of SMALL HUMAN COMMUNITIES, thus seeking together with all peoples the realization of the hope that is enshrined in the heart of every human being. This is the Kingdom of God envisaged by Jesus as a result of the proclamation of the Gospel. The small Christian communities will be witnessing communities. They will make the parish become a community of evangelizing communities. This evangelizing activity through communication and dialogue with the neighborhood should not make the small Catholic community loose its vitality and identity; it cannot dilute any of its faith commitments in the process of becoming genuine human communities; it will have to be fully anchored to its own specific expressions of faith and worship, above all to its Eucharistic experience by which this community constantly encounters Jesus, the Gospel, which it experiences, in the breaking of the bread. It is this Jesus that it proclaims in the neighborhood through its openness to all the realities around. Thus the small Christian communities will manifest the Church as a leaven that transforms both the parish community and the world around it. Its faith experience, far from making it become a ghetto, makes it become a powerful force penetrating and permeating all the realities, both within the parish community and outside the parish community.

7. New Criteria in the Formulation of the Ministries in the Church

The change of image and the consequent change in the structures by which the image becomes functional will call for a change in the criteria which determines the style of functioning of the Church at all levels. We shall try to formulate them briefly.

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7.1 From a Religious Ministry to a Gospel Ministry

In the early Church we read that through the ministry of the Church the Gospel was spreading everywhere; in the middle ages, this gave place to the spread of the Christian religion. As a consequence the ministry of the Church became more institutional and cultic. With Vatican II, the Church's ministry is presented as the proclamation of the Good News to the world. Accordingly we need to reformulate the manner of fulfilling the mission in a new way: from a mere cultic ministry to a ministry of proclamation in all our pastoral activities, be they liturgical, social, catechetical or lucrative: from a religious ministry to a Gospel ministry.

7.2 From 'Institution' to 'Community'

The Acts of the Apostles present the ministry of the Church as building a community of human relationship. In the middle ages, this gave place to the Church as an institution that confers spiritual benefits; charity gave place to grace. With Vatican II, the Church is called to be in dialogue with the world. This changed understanding of the ministry will make the Church more and more concerned with the building up of communities of relationships, than with the conducting of efficient institutions.

7.3 From 'Instruction' to 'Communication'

The early Church was a community in a state of communication. St. John clearly states that his mission was to communicate his experience of Christ (1 John 1,1). In the middle ages, the Church appears more as possessor of truths than as a community of experience. As a result, her ministry was to instruct people in truth. With Vatican II, the Church is presented as a human community within the wider human community sharing their experiences (G.S.1). This will make the Church appear as a community that is trying to enter into communion with others than that of an institution engaged in instructing people in doctrines.

7.4 From 'Ecclesiastical Community' to 'Ecclesial Community'

In the early period, we find the Church as a community, that is, a gathering of the believers in particular places. This is changed in the middle ages, when the Church is seen more as a universal community with its centralized juridical and administrative set-up. With Vatican II, we have once again the identity of the Church as a local community involved in the lives of the people living in the neighborhood. This will make the Church become more inculturated in her life and action.

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7.5 From 'Faith' to 'Hope'

In the apostolic preaching, proclamation of Christ was oriented to the building up of the Kingdom, which was understood as the transformed world. In the Middle Ages, instead of the proclamation of Christ, we have the proclamation of the truths about Christ, which made one belong to the Church and through the Church to attain eternal salvation. With Vatican II we see the Church once again in the world sharing the aspirations of humanity. She finds herself in communion with the world in the common hope and struggle.

Conclusion

The Church in India must become more an animating centre, than a dominating centre. Her presence should be all pervading and all permeating. She needs to build up structures by which this presence can become real in every parish. The Church has to become a presence that transforms and creates communion among people. This will be a new manifestation of the power of the Gospel, different from what happened in the first and second millennium. The Lord offers us a new model for the fulfillment of this mission of evangelization: she is none other than Mother Theresa, who preached the Gospel through her acts of love. She was present in love in her field of mission. In doing this she acted like her patron saint St. Theresa of Lisieux who became the patroness of the missions by being present in the heart of the Church through her love. In these two missionary models of modern times, we have a beautiful combination of contemplation and action. They tell us that we can be missionaries everywhere and anywhere provided we can be present to the world in love. In order that this may truly happen, it is necessary that we surrender ourselves fully to the Holy Spirit and allow him to guide us in every sphere of our life and activities. Truly, we may say that the Church in India will have to become a Spirit-filled and Spirit-led community.

Notes:

1 John XXIII, Convocation Address of Vatican II

2 GS n.1

3 Novo Millenio Ineuente n.2

4 *NMI* n. 29.

5 Evangelii Nuntiandi 19

6 ROCCO Buttiglione, *The Truth about Man in the Light of Reconciliation and Penance*, in *Conversion and Reconciliation and Reconciliation*, p. 47

7 Ecclesia in Asia no. 21.

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8 Ecclesia in Asia no. 15.

9 Ecclesia in Asia no. 19

10 Kurian Kunnumnpuram, "Vatican II and the Mission of the Church in India," in Kurian Kunnumpouram and Lorenzo Fernando, (Ed.) *Quest for an Indian Church*, pg. 39, Pune 1993

11 D.S. Amalorpavadass, *Vision, Thrust and Policy of Evangelization*, Bangalore 1985 p. 8

12 Ecclesia in Asia, no.24

13 Nostra Aetate, no.1-2

14. Ecclesia in Asia, n. 29

15. Ecclesia in Asia, n. 31.

16. Ecclesia in Asia, n.24

17. *Evangelii Nuntiandi* n. 29

18. Ecclesia in Asia, n. 21

19. *Nostra Aetate,* n. 2

20. *Nostra Aetate, n.2.*

21. *Ad Gentes,* n. 11.

22. Ecclesia in Asia, n. 31.

23. Ecclesia in Asia, n. 29

24. Ecclesia in Asia, n. 29.

25. Ecclesia in Asia, no. 15

26. Ecclesia in Asia, n. 31.

27. Ecclesia in Asia, n. 31

28. Ecclesia in Asia, n. 34

29. Ecclesia in Asia, n. 23

30. FABC V, Bandung, 8.1

31. Paul Puthenangady SDB, *A New Way of Being Church*, Kristu Jyoti College, Bangalore, India, pg. 14.

32. Ecclesia in Asia, 42

33. Ecclesia in Asia, 45-47.

34 . Ecclesia in Asia, 50.

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28
Church and State in Harmony*

Ivan Cardinal Dias

Your Excellency Mr. President of the Republic of India, Your Emnence Cardinal Sepe, Papal Envoy to this celebration, Most Rev. Cardinals and Bishops, Mr. Chief Minister, Rev. Fathers, Sisters and dearfriends.

Today is indeed a day that the Lord has made. We have with us here on the dais the first citizen of our beloved nation, and on behalf of the whole Catholic Church in India I want to greet him most cordially.

Although in India we have separation of Church and State, today we have the Church and State together, and that is indeed a cause for great jubilation. The celebrations that we have just had before the Lord and which we are now continuing in this public meeting, call for rejoicing by both, Church and State. We are celebrating 1950 years of the arrival of St. Thomas the Apostle on these shores and 450 years since St. Francis Xavier died at the gates of China. Ever since the seed of the Christian faith was first sown here by St. Thomas, and then by St. Francis Xavier, who did it not only in India but also right up till Japan and the shores of China, the Christian faith has been spreading slowly and steadily everywhere.

We can ask ourselves: what is the Christian faith that we are trying to spread? It is the sweet perfume of Jesus Christ, who went about doing good. It may not be visible to all, nor

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**From the speech delivered by Ivan Cardinal Dias at the concluding meeting of the Jubilee Celebrations of St. Thomas and St. Francis Xavier at Marine Drive, Cochi, Kerala on 17th November 2002.*

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even be appreciated by some. But yet, the sweet perfume of the love of Jesus goes on spreading slowly all over the country. Mother Teresa of Calcutta is a wonderful example. All throughout the history of Christianity, many people of other faiths have been wondering and asking themselves: who are these Christians? I think millions of Indians are asking that same question today. In the second century, a certain person described to a pagan inquirer what he was noticing in Christians. He said Christians are a very special group of people. They are God-fearing and law-abiding. They feel at home in every land, and yet no land is their home, because their homeland is in heaven. They are the leaven of the society around them and they spread peace, joy and love everywhere. They take care of the poor, the weak and the homeless. They do good to others, and yet they are often persecuted. But the more they are hated, the more they love and do good to those who hate and persecute them. (This is a quotation from the Letter to Diognetus).

After 20 centuries we Christians here in India can say the same thing: that we are trying to express our faith by spreading the good perfume of Jesus Christ, who went about doing good. In our country, the Christians have taken an option for the poor and the marginalized, and want to be the defence of the defenceless and the voice of the voiceless. At the present moment, they are just 2.3% in this large Asian sub-continent of over a billion people, and yet they cater to 20% of all the primary education in the country, 10% of the literacy and rural healthcare programmes, 25% of the institutions caring for the orphans and widows, and 30% of the homes for lepers, the mentally challenged and the physically disabled. Furthermore, I would like to underline the fact that the majority of those who are benefiting from these services are not Christians, and that they are all attended to irrespective of their caste or creed or social or political affiliation.

Today is a good occasion to assure you, Mr. President, on behalf of the whole Christian community in India, and in a particular way of the Catholics of the country, that we shall be second to none as far as the love of our Motherland is concerned, as far as the loyalty to its secular ideals is concerned, as far as the effort we shall make for communal harmony is concerned, and as far as our pride of being law-abiding citizens is concerned. I am glad to do this before you, Mr. President, as you are the supreme guarantor of the human rights and secular ideals of our beloved Bharat Mata.God bless you, Mr. President. Jai Hind!

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29
Church of a Nation or A National Church ?

Mar Varkey Cardinal Vithayathil

We are living in a period of history when centripetal force seems to overplay to the effect that communities become communal, religion becomes fundamentalist and churches become nationalistic. The old medieval dictum cuius regio ejus religio seems to reappear in recycled language. Each language is claimed to be lingua Dei and hence other languages are branded as mundane with no admission into the world of divine talk.

It is emperor Theodosius who decreed Christianity as the state religion of Rome (379-395). As Christian religion became official, freedom of religion as we understand it today did not exist. Such a monopolar view was considered right because freedom was thought to be the right to choose the true way. And Christian religion was the only true religion. Freedom to choose something false is no freedom and hence the state cannot permit it.

It is to the great merit of the Second Vatican Council that the sacred sphere of human conscience was established and the declaration of the right of religious freedom was decreed. "Freedom of this kind means that all men should be immune from coercion on the part of individuals, social groups and every human power so that, within due limit, nobody is forced to act against his convictions in religious matters in private or in public, alone or in associations with others" (*Dignitatis Humanae*,2). Did the council declare that every individual can freely choose between truth and falsehood? The question is not very simple. Perhaps the question can be framed in a different way. Can an individual or group impose by force on an individual

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or group something which the imposer believes to be the truth? Here we are not speaking of persuasion but of coercion. Can anybody have freedom to violate another's conscience, thus denying his freedom?

Here we are touching upon the relation of truth and freedom. Suffice to note that truth and freedom are inextricably bound together. Any attempt to save one alone will kill the other.

Truth can never exist on earth without freedom. Freedom will not be freedom without truth. True freedom is freedom for truth. We know that all that glitters is not gold. But gold is glittering. In this world of light and shadows, of empty and true appearances we are in an existential dubio where the only anchoring point is one's own conscience related to the other.

Instead of persuasive processes when ideologies or churches attempt coercive methods through aligning with state power, there arises problems both of truth and freedom. The concept of national church is such. A religion or a church defined within the boundaries of a race, caste, nation or culture is of an ideological nature and hence oppressive in character. A religion which confines itself within the boundaries of a particular race or nation assumes indirectly that it has no relevance outside the border of that race or country. A religion by its very nature is a view of man, God and the universe. Can there be a view of man or God which has no bearing outside the boundaries of a nation or of a race? Does such a religion consider man as man abstracted from his racial and national character? Is there a universal substratum essential to man irrespective of his topographical conditions?.

Any religion which defines itself within ethnic boundaries directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously denies a universal human nature. If Hindu religion is defined within India only, Hindu religion has no role outside India and a Hindu as he crosses the country can no more be a Hindu. Conversely in India one cannot become a Christian because change of religion will be seen as betrayal of nationality and hence to be regarded as an alien. As there cannot be another religion in India so there cannot be a Hindu outside India. This is henotheism; every country has its god. These gods cannot communicate. Because communication is exchange, opening the borders to the extent that one god may change into the habits of another or take the soul of the other. A nation or ethnic group which does not allow free flow of values, thoughts and aspirations will be a society with iron walls. This society perpetuates thought-crime - to use Orwellian terminology. Thought has become crime. Every country or culture has its own uniqueness but should not "be confused with the idea that a particular cultural tradition should remain closed in its difference and affirm itself by opposing other traditions" (Fides et Ratio, 72).

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Hence modern states try to maintain a healthy secularism. A modern state is not theocratic but democratic. This does not mean that it is against religion, but that it honours the individual's freedom to practise, profess and propagate the religion of his or her choice within the limits of public order. A democratic secular nation is conceived as a rich mosaic of all hues and shapes. As the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of India wrote:

"The essence of secularism in India can be best depicted if a relief map of India is made in mosaic, where the aforesaid one billion people are 'small' pieces of marble that go into the making of a map. Each person whatever his/her language, caste, religion is, his/her individual identity, which has to be preserved, so that when pieced together it goes to form a depiction with the different geographical features of India" (T.M.A Pai Foundation & Others versus State of Karnataka and Others, 2002).

The question of a national church has to be seen not only from the point of view of the universality of human spirit but also from the true ecclesiological attribute of universality. The Council taught: "The one People of God is accordingly present in all the nations of the earth, since its citizens who are taken from all nations, are of a kingdom whose nature is not earthly but heavenly" (LG 13). It further said, "The character of universality which adorns the People of God is a gift from the Lord himself whereby the catholic ceaselessly and efficaciously seeks for the return of all humanity and all its goods under Christ, the head in the unity of his spirit" (LG. 13).

In the use of the term 'national Church', national can mean either as an ethnic cultural reality or as a particular state. When state and church are de jure separate, national church will refer to ethnic factor or culture. The church is essentially national when de facto she is confined to state, ethnic and culture identity. This in the final analysis leads to an ecclesiological heresy. "The church which lives in time is by its nature missionary" (A G 2). Any Church which in principle excludes anybody on the basis of race, culture or state cannot be called a church of Christ. Cardinal Walter Kasper wrote: "A Church cannot exclude the possibility of an individual conversion and cannot reject those who, out of sincere conviction, wish to join it. That would contradict the universal mission of the church" ("The Rome - Moscow Conflict," *Inside Vatican*, October 2002, p.21).

This is not to say that the church should exist in a country as utopian – as a drop of water in a lotus leaf, completely detached from the culture and tradition. The church "fosters and takes to herself, in so far as they are good, the abilities, the resources and customs of people" (LG.13) "Whatever good is found sown in the minds and hearts of men or in the rites and

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customs of people, these not only are preserved from destruction, but are purified, raised, and protected for the glory of God (*LG,* 14) The holy, catholic and apostolic Church is one not as a unicultural monolith, but is constituted "in and from particular churches" (LG. 23). Particular churches are not national churches, but churches inculturated into a people or a nation. However a particular church is and cannot be constrained to a defined canonical territory as is apparently claimed by the Russian Orthodox Church. Cardinal Kasper writes: "The notion of canonical territory is in fact, foreign to the Catholic Church. True, the Catholic Church is organized territorially However, the Catholic Church is a universal church, entrusted with a universal mission based upon the world of the Risen Lord: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations" (Mt 28:9). But that has nothing to do with a division of the world into canonical territories" (Ibid., p.18).

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30
Jesus of Asia and Jesus for Asia

Cyril Mar Baselios

Introduction

Asia is the blessed bosom for many sages with provoking force for renewal of the inner life with consequence in the outer sphere. Also "Asia is the cradle of the world's major religions," reminds Pope John Paul II in his *Church in Asia* (no.6). Jesus was the greatest gift to the whole world through Asia. Jesus was born in Bethlehem, the city of David, as good news of great joy which would come to all the people (Lk 2,10-11). Jesus was born in a particular place but with a universal mission.

Jesus fulfilled his universal mission by addressing himself to the religious, cultural, political and socio-economic realities of Palestine of his time. He fulfilled his mission with a definite vision and programme, but not as an officially recognized functionary. Being Galilean and Palestinian, the personality and mission of Jesus are especially related to Asia. His mission for the whole world was revealed, given and enacted first amidst the Asian realities, especially of age-old deep religious and cultural plurality, political diversity, and socio-economic situation (*EA*, 1). Going into details of these realities is beyond the limits of this article.

It is against the background of my own commitment to Jesus Christ that I make a short reflection on "Jesus of Asia; Jesus for Asia." Accordingly in this paper first I reflect on Jesus'Asianness drawing special attention to the mystery he is and then proceed to expose some samples for his interaction in the above mentioned Asian realities, as based on the Gospel accounts.

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1 Jesus of Asia

Evidently "Jesus of Asia" means primarily that Jesus is Asian by birth and his whole life and ministry, including his belonging to a particular people and a particular land (*EA*, 5-9). "Jesus of Asia" necessarily means Jesus of history in his theandric existence enclosed in the Christian knowledge that Jesus is God-become-man.

"Because Jesus was born, lived, died and rose from the dead in the Holy Land, that small portion of Western Asia became a land of promise and hope for all mankind. Jesus knew and loved this land. He made his own the history, the sufferings and the hopes of its people. He loved its people and embraced their Jewish traditions and heritage." "Behold Christ comes to us as an Asiatic in race."[1] In short, Jesus is Asian by his entire human characteristics and capacities, especially in terms of his moral, spiritual and cultural realms.

> The Church in Asia sings the praises of the "God of salvation" (Ps 68:20) for choosing to initiate his saving plan on Asian soil, through men and women of that content. It was in fact in Asia that God revealed and fulfilled his saving purpose from the beginning...Exulting in the goodness of the continent's peoples, cultures, and religious vitality, and conscious at the same time of the unique gift of faith which she has received for the good of all, the Church in Asia cannot cease to proclaim: "Give thanks to the Lord for he is good for his love endures for ever" (Ps 118:1), (*EA*.1)

2 Jesus for Asia in Terms of His Identity

The quest for Jesus' Asianness becomes all the more vibrant as we approach the question *who is Jesus for Asia* than questions regarding his human origin and service, which are evidently Asian. The quest for *Jesus for Asia* cannot ignore the quest for "A credible Jesus."[2]

2.1 Jesus: Mystery of Constant and Perennial Presence

How to recognize Jesus the Asian, who brought a very special dimension to freedom and liberation to the peoples of Asia? This is a problem of voluminous gravity. Its volume still expands because "... when we attempt to portray Jesus in Asian terminology, we are still following the Western mold. All attempts that are made to present Jesus in Asian terminology still follow the exegetical model that is followed in Western Universities."[3] They speak of Jesus' "vision of alternative reality," and its anticonventional view of nature, its scope, its realization of God's "domain," (God's rule / kingdom) and its subversion of everyday "default reality" etc.etc.[4] Beyond the above-drawn Jesus portrait, his mystery aspect is necessary in the Asian religious context. Notions of 'sacred' and 'mystery' are specific to life in Asian view of life.[5]

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The mystery of Jesus is deepest around his title 'Christ," which has become his second name. Jesus mystery is the mystery of Christ. Christianity cannot but speak of Jesus as "Christ" simply because the unanimous NT witness to him is consciously christological. The whole of Christian preaching has its source and centre in the messiahship of Jesus which God has confirmed in Jesus' glorification. "In a formal way the Church's consciousness of the special nature of its origins in a historically unique event is here bound into a confession" that Jesus is the Christ.[6]

Mystery and meaning are related in religious life, and so in religious language. Calling Jesus, *Christ,* Christianity gives expression to their faith that in Jesus the meaning of Mystery is revealed as God's all embracing love (self-giving) and doing God's will at all cost as the way for reunion with him (salvation). Jesus was anointed and appointed to fulfill the Father's will (Mk 1,10-11;Lk3,20-21 and parr). Fulfilling the Father's will was Jesus' mission ("...not my will, but thy will be done"). Mystery was operative in Jesus. Jesus, the mystery, is placed as the centre and way of reunion with God. Calling Jesus "Christ" the first Christians made Christology reflection on the mystery operative in Jesus. Thereby they challenged their neighbours to see Jesus also as the mystery of human life.

2.2 Jesus: Wisdom Incarnate

Related with Jesus mystery is Jesus Wisdom (Col 1,15-29). Wisdom is another category of universal connectedness and relationship.[7] Wisdom theology is of cosmic relation. A good number of texts in the NT relate Jesus and Wisdom. These texts are scattered throughout the NT. They appear in the Gospels, Pauline letters and a Pastoral letter (Lk 2,11;7,35;11,49;Mtt 11,19;Jn1,1-18;Phil 2,6-11;1Cor 1,22-24.30-31;Col 1,15-20;Eph 2,14-16;1Tim 3,16;Heb 1,3-4;1Pet 3,18-22). Many of these texts plainly identify / assimilalte Jesus and Divine Wisdom, as the Divine Wisdom Incarnate. Here we may note that the first Christians described the mystery of Christ also as the "life," "light," "truth," "way," "love" etc. in his relation to God and man.

3 Jesus for Asia: As against a Few Realities

3.1 Religious Plurality

That Jesus a Jew did favours to many non-Jews (called Gentiles by Jews) is well known to the Gospel readers of all ranks and levels and accepted by them. My point here is that Jesus did favours to *them because he counted them among God's children / children who were*

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pure in heart (Mk 7.14-23) to whom gospel must be preached (Mk 13,10). Let us take two stories from the Gospel of Mark, generally recognized as the first written Jesus story.

First, the story of the Syro-phoenician woman (7,24-30): Mk has set this story as the first of the Gentile section stories (Mk 7,24-8,9). The story begins with the report of Jesus entering a house in the region of Tyre and Sidon (vs 24-25). Tyre and Sidon was a Gentile region – impure by Jewish religious standards. The house he entered there must be a Gentile house. Otherwise how dare a Gentile woman enter it to fall at Jesus' feet and make her request? How could Jesus a Jew enter a 'Gentile' region and a Gentile house unless he considered them belonging to the pure children of God? It must be noted that this story immediately follows Jesus' concluding words on true purity, the subject of his controversy with Pharisees and some scribes from Jerusalem (Mk 7). These opponents of Jesus though counting themselves children of God on racial basis had missed that dignity on the basis of purity of heart. "And *from there he arose and went away* to the region of Tyre and Sidon. ..." (Mk 7,24-25 RSVCE, 1966) (emphasis added).

The second story from Mk is the second bread miracle (8,1-10). This is parallel to the first bread miracle (6,30-44). Many Markan scholars are of the right view that whereas the first was performed for a Jewish crowd in a Jewish region, the second was for a non-Jewish (Gentile) crowd in their region. Both were performed in deserts (6,31.36;8,4) and analogous to the miracle of manna in the desert for Jewish community liberated from Egypt. Jesus miraculously fed both crowds in the desert because he had compassion on them (6,34;8,2). On both feeding miracles the bread for multiplication was taken from the disciples (6,37-41;8,5-6). On both occasions Jesus did the same actions with the bread. On both occasions the crowds were fed to their satisfaction and there were pieces of bread and fish left over. Jews of Jesus' time were traditionally holding fast to an exclusive inheritance of the original bread (feeding) miracle in the (Sinai) desert. But Jesus performing bread (feeding) miracles analogous to it both for Jewish and Gentile crowds in their respective regions revealed God's mystery of equal inclusion of both crowds in the messianic feast.

3.2 Exclusion of Religious Fundamentalism

Jesus consistently taught the importance and the need of the relation between God and man and between men through Him. He condemned religious fundamentalism. He did not support any sort of rigid ritualism. "Fundamentalism may be defined as a fanatically and exclusively sticking on to one religious tradition, one ideology, one culture, one value system and so on."[8] Intolerance and rejection of the worth, if not equality, of other religions co-ride

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religious fundamentalism. From fundamentalism one may easily step to terrorism, because religious fundamentalism can easily legitimize its repressive activities simply in the name of God.[9] Religion is most vulnerable to fundamentalism and terrorism. Religious fundamentalism for political gains has become a constant dreadful threat to the peace of Asia. "We ... see its Zionist and Arabic version in Jerusalem, its Islamic version in Afghanistan and Kashmir, and its Hindu version in India...Extremists and fundamentalists have only helped to promote a clash and conflict, not a confluence of religion."[10] Palestine of Jesus' time did feel the operation of religious and political fundamentalism, and probably political terrorism too.[11] The Jewish religious authority entertained religious fundamentalism. Rejecting it Jesus entertained relationship with the Jewish socio-religious outcasts such as lepers, tax collectors, and sinners, etc., and also with the religious outsiders as Gentiles. In the whole NT Jesus Christ appears a name that destroys religious barriers and unites all. Here we may recall Mark's report of Jesus' missionary trips between "(this) side" (Jewish) and "the other side" (Gentile) of the Sea of Galilee. All evangelists report Jesus' repudiation of his disciples' fundamentalist attitudes (Mt 26,51-56; Mk 8,31-33; 9,38-41; Lk 4,31-37; 9,49-56; 22,3-6,49-53; Jn 18, 11).

3.3 Asian Political Realities

While advocating no particular political ruling system, Jesus at the very outset made it clear that his Kingdom was not of / from this world (Mtt 4,8-11 and par), though also in the world. And he reiterated the same in the end (Jn 18,36-38; and his death on the cross). He obeyed the political system of government to the extent that it served God's plan for him and humanity. "Give back (*apodidomi*) to Caesar what is due and give back to God what is due to him" is his principle of relation with political government. However, according to Jesus, the question of giving back to the political government what is due to it also is an occasion to recall the payer's duty to give back to God what is due to him, namely to worship God (Mk 12,12-17). No threats from the ruling political power could deter him from fulfilling his mission (Lk 13,31-33). Jesus indicts as destructive the highly clever political power engaged in moving him away from his mission fulfilled by his death and resurrection (Jesus called Herod 'fox' = a destructive power ?). The story of the healing of the Geresene demoniac illustrates that Jesus wants human beings be restored to human dignity and wholeness of life by being liberated from demonic power, foreign or national political despotic power, domination in the name of religion and from worshipping humans as gods (pseudo-religion). A complex of all these factors had demented the man of the story of the Geresene demoniac. They put him in the region of the unholy ("he was living in tombs") and pushed him in "destructive isolation."

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Jesus transferred him "to nurturing human community"[12] and to relation with the true God. Jesus did not argue for what could be described in Vandana Shiva's phrase "monoculture of mind." His goal was *to grant all human beings, that they, being delivered from the hand of their enemies, might serve God without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of their life* (adjusting Lk 1,73-75 RSVCE, 1966).

3.3.1 Marginalization

Marginalized people are the weaker section or a more disadvantageously placed group of population discriminated purposely and set aside unjustly at the periphery. In Palestine of Jesus' time there were arrays of groups of human beings marginalized on the basis of profession, poverty, sickness, morality, race etc. Empowering them was his professed programme as Christ (Lk 4,18). Jesus took their side. He was their friend. He spared no time to bring them up. Together with many sinners and publicans he sat at table in the house of public sinners which no pious Jew would dare (Mk 2,15-17 and parr). For him it was not a piece of social worker's show. It was the manifestation of the nature of God's rule he preached. He challenged hosts of dinners to invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, and sojourners and beggars beyond racial considerations – all marginalized – simply because they cannot repay in kind (Lk 14,15-23). He argued for the satisfaction of those impoverished by the society, because that was his God's plan for them through him. He empowered the lame to walk carrying one's own luggage (2,1-12 and parr). He empowered the bent up to stand aright with heads high in the community and worship God (Lk 13,10-17).

During Jesus' time marginalization of women was still more subtly perpetrated, particularly in his own community. Even today the situation is not much different in Asia or the world over. Even in unrequired and unwanted areas gender inequality is taken for granted even in the so-called civilized society. Jesus empowered women. Jesus the teacher considered women seriously, with equal status to men in his gospel. Often he taught the secrets of the kingdom of his proclamation in parallel his-stories and her- stories. At a time when no Jewish rabbi would dare even look at a woman nor a Jewish woman look at a rabbi, Jesus constantly took along with him a considerable number of women disciples, parallel to the group of the twelve men disciples, who dared to follow him from Galilee to Jerusalem (Lk 8,1-3;23,49). He empowered them to follow him as his close disciples. It was so revolutionary an act that any one of his times (of our times too) could imagine.

There is no reason to surmise that he kept those women disciples away from the room of his Last Supper. Opposing Jewish lawyers' argument for easily permissible divorce against

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"what has been *commanded*" Jesus challenged the Jewish male community to protect the right of the women flock (Mk 10,1-10 and parr). Contrary to the traditional view about woman as the cause of sin Jesus pointed out man himself as the cause of his before woman (Mtt 5,27-30). By birth Jesus was a member of the community whose every devout male member was trained to thank God every morning for not creating him as a woman or animal! Jesus trained women to thank God for creating them women (cfr Lk 1,43.46-56;11,27-28). He empowered woman even in front of tomb asking her: "Woman, why are you crying?" (Jn 20,15). In the tomb itself they were the first to be appointed to proclaim the good news of Jesus' resurrection also to his men disciples. They are empowered to work as the messengers of new life. They are symbols of the new dawn. Jesus the Christ, the one born and anointed by the Holy Spirit, sent the Holy Spirit both on the Lord's menservants and maidservants (Act 2,17-18). Jesus worked for empowering women individually and collectively as equally as men to be the receivers and workers of the gospel of the rule of God he proclaimed.

3.3.2 Globalization

Much has been written and discussed on all the four interrelated crises mentioned here. These are rampant in Asia. Whatever the dreamt goal of globalisation, what masqerades at present under that title is detrimental to Asia and the developing and third world countries in general. Well, one may ask: "What has Jesus to do with globalisation?" Nothing directly with it. Taken even in the limited sense of economic process globalisation has implications on all forms and aspects of life. As it stands, globalisaton has taken the form of globalising explosive consumerism for the unbridled profit of the giant multinationals, and graver and faster impoverishment of the weaker nations and people. Poverty increases in width and depth. The poor are marginalized and disempowered. Ecological destruction fatal to biodiversity is another result of globalising consumerism.

3.3.3 Ecological Problem

Let us start with Jesus' eco-friendliness. He loved and nurtured and liked to be nurtured by flora and fauna and by the whole ecosystem. He fulfilled his ministry with the co-operation of eco-system and it reacted to his power. Jordan, the main river of his land, played a decisive role for his immediate preparation for ministry (Mk 1,9-11 and parr). It is there that he was ordained (anointed) for his ministry. It is there that he first heard and responded to his vocation for mission. It is there that for the first time his divine sonship, messiahship and servanthood were revealed to him and to the public. The Sea of Galilee played a significant role in the fulfillment of his mission. The most importantly, it functioned as the bridge for Jesus to unite

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between Jewish and Gentile regions. The earth and sky, mountains, terrains, valleys, gardens, trees, plants, desert, wild and tamed animals — all had their role in the fulfillment of his mission. The eco-system interacted with the mystery of his death (Mk 15,33 and parr). In his final garden prayer Jesus is greatly distressed and troubled so much so that his sweats became like great drops of blood falling down upon the ground (Mk 14,33;Lk 22,44). Will the combined atrocity perpetrated by eco-pirates and eco-destroyers leave a garden for Jesus to pray, "But Father, not my will, but your will be done"? Jesus' ministry is aimed at restoration of the original peaceful order of the cosmos (Mk 1,9-11;Rom 8,19-21;1Cor 10,4;2Cor 5,10;Phil 1,15;Col 1,15-27 etc.).

3.3.4 Consumerism

Jesus draws a picturesque portrait of a typical consumerist in the rich man of the parable of the *Rich man and poor Lazarus* (Lk 16,19-31). The rich man was clothed in purple and fine (Egyptian: foreign) linen and feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, full of sores, who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table; moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. But the rich man did not care. He did not listen to the wisdom of God or of prophets. Gratification of his luxury was his sole goal and criterion of relation with others. Jesus after his resurrection also (Lk 16,30-31) continues to warn against consumerism and its protagonists also in the parable of the Rich Fool (Lk 12,13-21).

3.3.5 Poverty

Finally, Jesus addresses the poor and the rich and the problem of poverty amidst richness – starvation amidst affluence. Jesus was born and brought up in a community that traditionally believed in the blessedness of the rich and the woe of the poor. But Jesus proclaimed woe to the rich and blessedness to the poor. Becoming truly poor and taking the side of the poor in his public ministry he empowered the poor. He challenged the poor and the rich not to make money their optimum treasure, their ultimate value, so as to live trusting on it, but to live trusting in God. This is the only proper solution in today's world facing unspeakable problems created by the unsatiable quench for money and power through glorifying market economy. Jesus challenged the rich to become 'blessed' by making good use of their wealth which consists in using it to make friends for heaven. Practically it is to share one's possessions with the needy. Its radical form is to sell one's possessions and distribute to the poor and follow Jesus. Ordinary forms are free loaning and forgiving financial debts. To put briefly, Jesus taught the ways to liberate money (wealth) from its enslaving, diabolic and derogatory use. Jesus shared his possessions with the poor. He fulfilled his sharing of all that he has by sharing himself for others solely for love of God and others.

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Conclusion

In Jesus the Asian we find a real solution for today's Asia and world: Jesus Christ who totally gave himself to God and to others for love for them. Jesus is the divine wisdom given through Asia for the whole world. The mystery of Jesus (Christ) contains also man's victory over his own sinful selfishness, the root cause of all the complex problems of the world yesterday and today. The victory that Jesus has won for humanity could be realized by its total submission to God's power and plan. Jesus, the Asian, is the sign of *the* true victory God and man unitedly achieved over the chaotic world of man's creation against the world of harmony of God's creation. Jesus Christ is the incarnation of the divine wisdom (Word) engaged in the creation, sustenance and reconciliation of the world with itself and with God. He is a unique solution to the problems of the world. Oh my Asia, specially blessed by Jesus the Asian!

Notes:

1. Kesab Chandra Sern, quoted by Joseph Mattam (from Thankasamy [1972:40]), "Indian Atempts Towards A Solution tot he Problem pof Conversion" in Joseph Mattam – Seabstian Kim (eds), *Mission and Conversion: A Reprisal.* FOIM IV (St Pauls, 1996) 113-114.
2. Robert W. Funk, *A Credible Jesus*, Santa Rosa: CA, Polebridge, 2002.
3. Malcom Ranjith's Response reported in *Pontifical Mission Societies.* Mission Animation Programme for Bishops (Holiday Home, Caritas –Goa Novemebr 18-22, 2002 [No place and year of publication), 11.
4. R. W. Funk, *A Credible Jesus*, 16.
5. Malcon Ranjith's Response (See no. 3 above) 12
6. K. H. Regestorf, "Christos", *The New International Dictionary of the New Testament Theology,* Vol. 2, 334-343.
7. .Jacob Kavunkal, "Mission and Mission Trends Today", in Joseph Mattam – Sebastian Kim (eds), *Mission Trends Today*, FOIM V, St. Pauls, 1997, 77-97.
8. A. Mariaselvam, "Biblical Interpretation for India Today", *Bible Bhasyam* XXVIII/3 9 September 2002) 505-520.
9. A. Mariaselvam, "Biblical Interpretation for India Today",507
10. A. Mariaselvam, "Biblical Interpretation for India Today",507 quoted from James Kottoor, "Liberate Religion from Hijackers" *IC* 4(November 2001) 3.
11. R.A.Horsely – S. S. Hanson, *Bandits, Prophets and Messiah: Popular Movements at the Time of Jesus*, San Francisco, 1985
12. Robert G. Karris, "The Gospel According to Luke" *in The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, Bangalore: TPI, 1999, 675-721.

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31
Christians: Prophets of Peace

Oswald Gracias

The greatest need of the world today is peace understood in its real sense. Numerous conventions are held all over the globe on a variety of issues : against gender injustice, for proper tariffs and taxes, against racial discrimination, for nuclear non-proliferation, in favour of cooperation for economic development and so on. A deeper study of all these will reveal that the common final result that all seek to achieve is peace, a true lasting peace, a peace based on the 'tranquillity of order' as St. Augustine described it in the fifth century.

The world situation displays so many conflicting situations: macro and micro. One look at the headlines in the newspapers will convince all of the widespread violence and lack of peace everywhere. After the two devastating world wars, it appeared that nations had resolved that mankind had had enough of war and that all were convinced that war was no solution to any problem. Nevertheless the second part of the last century saw the death of more than thirty million people due to war. The last ten years witnessed more than one hundred armed conflicts. Without going into the morality of such situations, at a time when it seemed that the world conscience had outlawed war, we have been witnesses to the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, as also the continuing armed conflict in the Middle East.

Apart from the international scene, there is lack of peace on yet another level and nature. This struck the world forcefully with the events of September 11th 2001, the day which totally changed the world. Terrorism has now become a factor to be reckoned with at the international level, the national level, and also at the local level: the horrific incident in Bali, the continuous

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acts of terror in Iraq and the problems in the Philippines. We in India have had more than our share of terror: the continuing cross-border terrorism in Kashmir, the recent bomb blasts in Mumbai, the attempt on the life of the Chief Minister of Andhra and the list could go on. Earlier, the greatest son of India died to an assassin's bullet. Our country has lost a Prime Minister and several Ministers, (both Central and State), to bursts of violence; a past and a probable future Prime Minister was cut down brutally in the prime of life by a new form of violence: the suicide bomber.

At yet another level, India has periodically faced communal tension in many places. Looking at old statistics, one would be startled at the alarming regularity with which every now and then a violent skirmish breaks out between people of two communities, be they of two different religions, castes, languages, states, or of a different ethnic origin. Intolerance seems to have become almost respectable. In the midst of all this, who can deny that what the world most needs is peace: an atmosphere in which every child of God can live and grow and contribute to society, employing his God-given talents to the full. Saint Augustine's 'tranquillity of order', is not to be understood as the mere absence of war, but a true world or State order where everybody has a rightful place: an order enjoying stability and based on justice.

The Popes through the ages have striven for peace. The contribution of each of the Popes of our recent times towards peace is unique: Pope Pius XII strove hard for peace during the Second World War; Pope Paul VI's cry to the world at the United Nations' Headquarters in New York " No more war, war never again" strongly resounds in the ears of mankind, even thirty years later. Pope John XXIII shortly before his death published an Encyclical on peace "Pacem in Terris". His theme was that peace on earth for which men of every age have most eagerly yearned, can be truly established only if the order laid down by God is carefully observed.

With his intuitive brilliance Pope John XIII singled out four essential elements of peace: truth, justice, love and freedom: truth in a society where everyone understands and accepts his rights and duties; justice when the rights and duties of each individual are not only understood, but made available to each one; love which is the motivating brotherly and sisterly spirit that has to be the foundation of this peace and freedom, the atmosphere where this peace is a result not of an imposition from outside, but of a conscious free decision.

Pope Paul VI added a new dimension to this description of peace when he conceived of peace as development, a theme most relevant today, especially in developing countries. In an age when the gap between the haves and have nots is widening, not only on the individual level but also on the macro level, his efforts towards making this understanding of peace a reality, become more relevant than ever.

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Pope John Paul II has added yet another element to the meaning of peace in his World Day of Peace 1996 message - the element of forgiveness. If each one wants to have his own pound of flesh, and all past wrongs have to be avenged before one begins to talk about peace, peace will never become a reality. At a deeper level, justice needs forgiveness. For as the Pope proclaimed in the 2002 World Day of Peace message "There can be no peace without justice, no justice without forgiveness". Forgiving and forgetting the past hurts, mankind must race towards the goal of a true and lasting peace. In our frail human situation, this may never be fully achieved, but it is the target we must aim at and strive for. Pope John Paul II's personal efforts towards peace are widely known and need no listing. He has ceaselessly spoken for peace, argued for peace, worked for peace and prayed for peace. His most recent passionate call for peace before the Iraq war received very wide acclaim. His intervention at this time also prevented the Iraq war from becoming a war resulting in a bitter, long lasting feud between two religions.

There is perhaps another element that we can add, so that peace has a firm foundation: a deep faith in God. It is this faith in God that enables one to overcome the pessimism that might engulf those who strive to work for peace. With the same faith in God one is able to see the real meaning of truth, justice, love and freedom, and it is with this same faith in God that one is able to love all of mankind as one's brothers and sisters, part of one huge family and thus be able to sincerely forgive and start afresh, a factor which seems to be an indispensable requirement for the building of peace.

Going through the Scriptures, one can find very many references to peace both in the Old and New Testaments. In the Old Testament, 'Shalom' the word used for peace is very much stressed. In general, it seems to signify perfection, a state where nothing is lacking. In many passages it refers to friendly relationships whether between nations or between people. However, peace in the Old Testament remained mainly at the external level.

In the New Testament, peace is always spoken of in relationship to Jesus. At His birth, the Angels proclaimed "Peace to all men of good will". When He triumphantly marched into Jerusalem, the crowds shouted chants of peace. Jesus is the Prince of Peace, He is peace itself, the reconciliation of God with man and of men with each other. The Gospel He preached brought love to the world and if truly understood and practised the Gospel is the definitive solution of all the world's ills. He promised peace to His disciples "Peace I give to you, my peace I leave to you". All the elements of peace can be derived from the Gospel: truth, justice, love, freedom, forgiveness and deep faith in God.

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Peace between people rests on a true understanding of the inviolability of human rights. Every individual is created in the image of God and hence there is no room for injustice, exploitation, oppression, discrimination and hatred. There could never be true peace in the world unless these elements that militate against peace are removed. Society has become more and more aware of the need for this. We are well aware of the rights of workers and we know that any exploitation of them leads to an unjust society. Similarly we are aware of the radical equality between men and women, and that any second-class treatment to women militates against true and lasting peace. We are more aware of the rights of children, the specially beloved of God, and we know that any denial of their right to a healthy growth is sowing seeds for a future conflict. The world is even more aware of the need for all men and women to be treated equally, without any distinction of class or caste and that any denial of this will result in the creation of situations that will ultimately end in violence, even if only as a last resort. We are more aware that no human being can be treated as disadvantaged just because of an accident of birth and any denial of this will result in a frustration that will explode at some time or another. The world is also more aware today of the necessity of harmony with nature and the moral obligation all men and women have to preserve natural resources for future generations and that overlooking this will result in triggering off a force that is ultimately self-destructive of humankind.

The Church essentially exists to continue the mission of Jesus, to be the Sacrament of salvation to the world, to bring peace and reconciliation on all men. She exists to spread the Kingdom of God where truth, peace, justice and freedom reign, when every man and woman is treated as a son and daughter of God and enjoys this God-given dignity.

If Christ came to bring peace, it is the duty of Christians as His followers to bring peace. This is not an accident in Christianity, but the essence of the discipleship of Jesus. Just as Christ's reconciling and peace-giving role was essential to His mission, so too, is it part of the mandate of every Christian. Peace, when truly understood and worked for, does not mean compromise or acquiescence in the presence of injustice, or the acceptance of evil. Lasting peace is the tranquillity of order based on truth, justice, love and freedom.

Mother Teresa was a prophet of peace, because she sought to right wrongs and to remove suffering from the hearts and souls of the disadvantaged. The Church has recently beatified her, and proclaimed her holy, but she was already canonized in the hearts of millions of Indians - Christians and non-Christians, because she brought true peace to the suffering, disconsolate, the lonely and the poorest of the poor. All her work of compassion as she loudly

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proclaimed time and time again, was rooted in her deep love for Jesus, in response to His invitation and call, and in imitation of His example.

Prophets in every age proclaimed the message from God. The Church is always called to raise a prophetic voice in different times and ages and to answer different needs. At one time she was called to defend the rights of workers and speak for them. More recently her call was to ardently defend the rights of the individual, particularly against totalitarian regimes that wanted to absorb the individual into the State. In a world torn by violence and hatred and in a society tearing at the seams while rushing headlong into a meaningless quest for material prosperity, the Church speaks for moral values and the necessity of the transcendental in the lives of men and women so as to inject a meaning into human existence. In a world that is restless, impatient and finds no meaning in life, every Christian is thus called to spend himself in a continuous quest for peace which will transform the world into the society that God always meant it to be – one loving human family.

In the Indian context, Christians are called to urge for peace specifically in two different areas of operation:

a) working for the socio-economic development of people, for the raising of educational standards and the level of health care – all this is working for peace and the removal of obstacles for a tranquility of order;

b) working for peace seen as the fruit of a harmonious relationship between peoples of different religions. Our understanding of dialogue based on a respect for all faiths can be a substantial contribution for the silencing of insane voices calling for communal disunity. Be it a dialogue of life, of social action, of theological reflection or of religious experience – all these can gradually remove all seeds of disharmony.

Every Christian is called to make this world a better place to live in, where peace exists, reigns and triumphs. Removing all the causes that militate against peace, every man and woman who is a true disciple of the Lord Jesus, must become in his thinking as in his personal attitude and in action, an active worker in the vineyard of the world, labouring for a true and lasting peace.

May every Christian be faithful to the mission committed to him/her and dedicatedly work for it. For every Christian is called, by virtue of baptism, to be a 'Prophet of Peace'.

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Christians: Promoters of Justice*

Cyriac Joseph

I am happy and proud to preside over the inaugural session of the National Seminar on the History of the Catholic Church in India organised in connection with the Jubilee of St. Thomas and St. Francis Xavier. I am grateful to the Organisors for this honour. I should candidly admit that history is not my field of interest and that I am not an expert in the history of the Catholic Church. But, I will certainly claim that I am second to none in the matter of love for the Church and commitment to Jesus. My presence on this stage can only symbolise the realisation and recognition that it is not enough to have experts in History and Theology, but there should also be ordinary people with love for the church and commitment to Jesus. Without people like me, the Historians and Theologians may be rendered jobless and may become under-employed, if not unemployed. With such a humble sense of relevance and utility for the occasion, I shall participate in this function. However, I am not in any way suggesting that experts don't have love for the Church or commitment to Jesus. They do have. But, their expertise often eclipses or overshadows such love and commitment and sometimes prevents them from manifesting the love and commitment in practical life. May God help them and bless them.

The combined celebration of the Jubilees of St. Thomas and St. Francis Xavier, who are the sources of two distinct traditions of the Church in India, is significant and unique and it

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**The Presidential Address of Justice Cyriac Joseph at the History Seminar on 15th November 2002 conducted on the occasion of the Jubilee Celebrations of St. Thomas and St. Francis Xavier at the Renewal Centre, Cochi, Kerala.*

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could be considered as an important milestone in the History of the Catholic Church in India. In an era of divisions, frictions, conflicts, intolerance and non-co-operation, both within the Church and outside, the decision of all sections in the Catholic Church to come together and jointly celebrate the Jubilees of St. Thomas and St. Francis Xavier is a welcome sign and a hope for the future. We are all fortunate to witness this glorious moment in the History of the Church in India.

It is also important that the organisers thought it appropriate to conduct a History Seminar in connection with the Celebration. History is the study of human past. Some historians study the past simply to understand better how people of other times acted and thought. Others seek to draw lessons from those actions and thoughts as a guide for the decisions and policies of today. However, the historians may disagree about the lessons of history, and so, there could be many interpretations of the past. I hope that this Seminar will help the Church in India to draw the right and the useful lessons from the past and that those lessons will serve as a guide for the decisions and policies of the Church today. I pray that this exercise may result in better understanding and co-operation and bring more unity among the Christians. Let the Historians search for common grounds rather than points of difference. Let them identify the areas of co-operation rather than reasons for separation. Let them preach unity without destroying the identity of individual communities and particular Churches.

Being believers in the resurrection of Jesus and followers of the Risen Christ, we cannot lose hope or remain disappointed by the divisions or the differences of opinion in the Church or the scandals of various types. These things may be in our tradition. I remember that one of the 12 disciples personally chosen by Jesus himself, ditched him and handed over him to the enemies. Still the remaining 11 stood together, filled up the vacancy caused by the departure of Judas, preached the gospels and spread the Church. So, let us not be disheartened by the conduct of those who have ditched the Church or left the Church. We must continue and complete the work started by St. Thomas and strengthened by St. Francis Xavier. In the Acts of the Apostles (15, 36-40), we read that Paul and Barnabas could not agree on a silly question of taking John Mark with them. Paul opposed the suggestion of Barnabas to take John called Mark on the ground that John had deserted them in Pamphylia and had refused to share in their work. "After a violent quarrel" Paul and Barnabas parted company and Barnabas sailed off with John Mark to Cyprus and Paul chose Silas to accompany him. In today's Church also, we may come across characters resembling Paul, Barnabas, John Mark and Silas in similar situations. Let us not forget that even after the violent quarrel, both Paul and Barnabas proceeded with their companions to continue their work of preaching the gospel and did not

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give up their mission to witness Christ. Hence, we should not lose heart due to small or silly bickerings in the Church. We should learn to get over them and try to proceed with our mission to witness Christ in different walks of life.

This Jubilee clelebration will give an opportunity to the people of India to realise that Christianity in India is older than the Christianities in Europe or America. It will highlight the fact that Christians are as much Indian as members of any other religion or community in India. It will help to remove the misconception in the minds of some people that Christianity is a foreign religion and Christians in India are foreigners. It will underline the truth that Christians in India are the descendants of people who were born and brought up in this country centuries ago and who breathed the same air and drank the same water and were buried in the same soil. Though Christians, they also are the children of *Bharat Matha*. They are entitled to live here, to die here and to be buried here. So long as India remains India and the Constitution of India prevails, Christians will live here with pride, die here with dignity and will be buried here with honour. This celebration will also provide an opportunity for every one to remember and to remind the services rendered by Christian Churches and their institutions in the fields of education, health care, housing, alleviation of poverty, fight against social injustice, empowerment of socially backward and oppressed classes and creation of socio political awareness. More than anything else, this Jubilee celebration should provide an opportunity to us, the Christians in India, to have a sincere introspection and an honest review of our role in the society. Aberrations or distortions or mistakes, if any, in our attitude or activities should be corrected and the right priorities should be fixed to respond to the needs and requirements of the times. At this historical moment, we shall rededicate ourselves for the service of the nation and for witnessing Jesus Christ in a pluralistic society.

India is a secular State. Secularism as commonly understood is a concept or attitude independent of, if not against, God or religion and its influence. It aims at weaning away man, society and the country from the influence of Faith in God and Religion. It contains elements of materialism and sometimes atheism also. But the concept of secularism conceived by the framers of the Constitution of India and manifested in the various provisions of the Constitution is different. Indian secularism is a unique concept which recognises and respects religions and religious values. The secularism in India is neither anti-God nor anti-religion. Indian secularism is not against God or religion. On the contrary, it respects and encourages religion. It is a concept which does not discriminate between different religions and which extends equal treatment to all religions. It is a concept identical to the concept of "Sarva Dharma Sam Bhava" preached by Mahatma Gandhi. Secularism in the context of our constitution means

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an attitude of live and help live. This perfectly conforms to the Christian principles and ideals. Therefore, the Christians in India have a duty and obligation to promote and protect the values of secularism as conceived in the Constitution of India.

The history of the Catholic Church in India is a part of the history of India. Every Indian including Christians can be proud of this great country, its history of religious tolerance and peaceful co-existence, its tradition of cultural pluralism and its contribution to morality and spirituality. We should be proud of our achievements in winning freedom through non-violence, a new creed and technique contributed to the world. We should be proud of our great Constitution which protects even the poorest and the weakest persons irrespective of their caste, creed, or religion. The members of the minority communities in India should be grateful to the majority community of Hindus, who accepted and assimilated other cultures and ideas, who tolerated other religions and respected their places of worship, and who graciously provided for religious freedom and protection to the minority rights in the Constitution. Compare it with the treatment meted out to religious minorities in countries around us. We would applaud the attitude of the Hindu community in India and thank them for what they have done for centuries.

In the Gospel of Mathew, (Ch.5, verses 6 and 10) we read "Happy those who hunger and thirst for what is right; they shall be satisfied... Happy those who are persecuted in the cause of right; Theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven". The Christians are called upon to promote and protect justice. When there is injustice there will be tension and conflict. Therefore, it is necessary that the decisions of the Church at various levels should be just decisions. It is un-Christian to take unjust decision even if you have the authority or the majority to do so. Let our decisions and actions be tested with the touch stone of Justice.

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A Call to be Together*

Cardinal Crescenzio Sepe

My dear Brothers and Sisters,

It is with great joy that I am here in Ernakulam, in this beautiful State of Kerala, for the Jubilee celebrations of the two great Apostles of India, St Thomas and St Francis Xavier. As Special Envoy of His Holiness, Pope John Paul II, I assure you of the keen interest the Holy Father takes in this celebration and of his prayers and solidarity, for the Christian community, and for the whole Indian nation, at this milestone in its history.

India is the land of ancient cultures and traditions, with its innate spiritual insight and moral wisdom. It was here that several of the world's great Religions were born, and where many others were accepted and integrated. Unity in diversity has always been its hallmark, as the different traditions strove to live side by side in a spirit of complementarity and harmony.

1. The Apostle St. Thomas' Arrival in India

The Catholic Church in India traces its origin to the preaching of St Thomas the Apostle, who, according to tradition, came to India in 52 A.D., nearly 2000 years ago, and who was martyred in Mylapore, where his tomb is venerated ever since.

**The Homily of Crescenzio Cardinal Sepe given at the Eucharistic Celebration to commemorate the Jubilee of St. Thomas and St. Francis Xavier on 17th November 2002 at Mrine Drive, Cochi, Kerala.*

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The personality of this great figure, with his own characteristic traits, emerges in the Gospel of St John (Jn 11,16; 14,5; 20,24-29). Together with the other Apostles, he formed an intimate community with Jesus of Nazareth and shared all the joys and trials that accompanied him as he moved around the countryside to preach his message of love and unity. Thomas was an impulsive type of man, zealous in reaching out to others, not afraid to ask questions and seek clarifications when required, who battled with his own resistance and doubts surrounding the extraordinary events of Christ's death and resurrection in Jerusalem. He is the one who, touching Jesus' wounds after the resurrection, had all his doubts disappear and his faith moved to a new level. He simply believed, exclaiming from the depths of his heart: "my Lord and my God". It finally came home to him the full import of what had happened: Jesus Christ had risen from the dead, thus overcoming suffering and death and offering new hope for all humanity. A new era had begun.

Thomas understood his own mission as that of sharing this experience, as in the words of Jesus, "go out to the whole world and proclaim the Good news to all creation", that is, to proclaim the message and reality of God's unconditional love to all peoples, regardless of creed or colour, nationality or race. Each of the Apostles set out on the mission assigned them by the Lord: "you will be my witnesses, not only in Jerusalem, but throughout Judea and Samaria, and indeed to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1,8). What was the particular destination of Thomas, and how did he arrive?

2. East Syrian Liturgical Tradition, Example of Inculturation

There is no answer to these questions in the New Testament books, but other holy documents and traditions clearly allude to Thomas' preaching and dying in India, and to the burial of his mortal remains in Mylapore (Chennai).

According to tradition, St Thomas worked for 20 years in Kerala, spreading the Good News, establishing different communities. The St Thomas Christians faithfully preserved the Gospel message throughout the centuries, fully integrating the faith into the local culture. Because of their inculturation, the Christians of St Thomas were not considered as followers of a foreign Religion; after all, Jesus was an Asian. They were fully Christians in faith and Indian in culture. Thus Christianity was a beautiful and precious stone in the enchanting mosaic of Kerala Society.

The unbroken presence and belief of the St Thomas Christians through two millennia gives witness to the missionary work of this great Apostle. These Christians, with their East

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Syrian Liturgical tradition, ensured that the message of the Gospel was kept alive and that the memory of the Apostle Thomas would live on to inspire successive generations. Early records of travellers finding isolated Christian communities in India go back as far as 345, nearly a century before St Patrick began the evangelization of Ireland, in North-Western Europe.

We give thanks to the St Thomas Christians for their fidelity to Christ and to his beloved Apostle, Thomas. Through trials and tribulations of all kinds, they remained firm, giving witness to God's love, which was poured out for his people. Nobody can ignore the substantial contribution that the Church of St Thomas has given, and continues to give, to the evangelization of India and beyond her boundaries. They have proved themselves true sons and daughters of St Thomas, who brought the Gospel message to their forefathers, nearly 2000 years ago.

The Portuguese were the first Europeans to discover the sea route to India when Vasco da Gama landed in Calicut in 1498. Two years later, on 24 December 1500, Portuguese ships visited Kochi, just across the bay from where we are celebrating this Eucharist.

3. St. Francis Xavier's Arrival, his love for St. Thomas

Thus the door was open for St Francis Xavier, one of the first companions of St Ignatius, Founder of the Society of Jesus - the Jesuits - who arrived a few decades later. He set sail for the East, his heart burning with the desire to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with people of distant lands. He reached Goa on 6 May 1542 but soon headed further south, where he worked unceasingly to bring the Good News to the people, learning the local language, making endless journeys, and never caring for his own health or comfort. After journeys to Thiruvithamcore (Travancore) and other places along the West Coast, he moved east to Mylapore. There, at the grave of the Apostle Thomas, he spent several months in prayer. As a sign of his great devotion to the Apostle he had, already in 1542, introduced the saint's name in the confessional formula of the Mass. It was after the prayerful days spent at the tomb, enlightened and refreshed by that experience, that Francis set out for his mission in the Far East. Many letters he wrote at that time show his great interest in and concern for the St Thomas Christians and their bishop, Mar Jacob.

4. Death of St. Francis, 3 December 1552 at Sancian

Never having realized his ultimate dream of preaching the Gospel in China, Francis died on 3 December 1552 at Sancian (Shangquan), an island off the Guangdong Coast of China.

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His body, however, was brought back to Goa where, to this day, it is revered in the church of Bom Jesus. Francis Xavier is acknowledged by people of all walks of life as a great saint. He was a courageous person, seeking always the will of God. He could deal equally with the high and the low people of society, though his preference was for the poor, the lowly, the suffering and the weak. In his instructions to his companions at work along the Fishery Coast and in Travancore, he urged them to be present to "the heart of the masses" that they encountered in the villages they visited.

"Visit those who are sick", he said, "strive to make yourselves loved by these people, for then your work will be much more effective". Xavier saw the importance of making himself one with people, of being inculturated. He and his companions spoke to the people in the simple language of the slaves, the merchants, the settlers and the servants. He respected the social customs of the Indians with regard to food, dress and other areas of life, thereby showing his resolve to have Christianity understood from within.

In a few short years, Francis achieved a lot for the Church in India. He set the tone and pace for successive generations of Christians, who would follow the same spirit of selfless service to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ in all parts of the country. The later history of the Church in India is a glorious story of heroic men and women who gave their lives for the love of God and for the people of India.

5. Mother Teresa of Calcutta lived the Gospel of Love

Both St Thomas the Apostle and St Francis Xavier have played a very special role in India's story. At different points of its history, this land of ancient cultures and deep religious values opened its heart to these two Apostles from distant lands. These two figures were the instruments chosen by God to preach the Kingdom of God, to teach the people in India about the love of God and the love of neighbour. Francis' fresh approach was built on the solid foundations of a Church that had its roots from apostolic times. Both preached the same Gospel of love, which was readily received by the people and which, in later generations, found particular expression in the care of the sick, the handicapped and the abandoned. Mother Teresa of Calcutta, known to all, is just one telling example of this type of evangelization, which has been acknowledged and admired throughout the world. India has honoured her with the highest recognition by conferring on her the "Bharata Rantnam".

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6. Dedication of Oriental and Latin Churches

There are thousands of dedicated priests, religious and lay people, in both the Oriental and the Latin Church traditions, who sacrifice their lives to help uplift the poor, the downtrodden and the sick. The thousands of schools, hospitals, dispensaries, centres for leprosy patients, homes for the handicapped and aged, run by the Church all over India proclaim every day this Gospel of love.

The Church in Kerala, in particular, has in its turn sent thousands of missionaries to share the Good News beyond its own territorial limits, both in India and beyond. Vocations to priestly and religious life are a cause of admiration for the entire Catholic Church. This is no doubt due to the strong sense of family values and traditions prevailing in the Kerala Church. The Catholic faith is well preserved and transmitted to the young generations through the faith education imparted in the families, as well as in faith formation groups managed by committed lay people and religious.

This land, which received Thomas and Francis, and which produced many other great saints, faces into the third Millennium with gratitude for the past and with hope for the future. Every age has its particular emphasis and focus, and the occasion of this Jubilee can help all to tune into the universal concerns of the Church, as she embarks on the journey into the Third Millennium. At the end of the Great Jubilee 2000, the Holy Father said that the great challenge is to make the Church the home and school of communion. We must gratefully acknowledge this gift of communion that India has been trying to foster down through the centuries and we must focus more on ways and means of fostering and strengthening a sense of communion both within the Church and with people of all traditions and religions.

7. Greater Sense of Communion will Foster Evangelization

While numerically a small minority in a vast population, just like the little mustard seed in the parable of Jesus, the Catholic Church in India is nevertheless an inspiring and compelling sign of the Kingdom of God, championing the cause of all, especially the poor and the marginalized. Its credibility will be all the greater, to the extent that the communion among all Catholics is enhanced and finds greater expression. We thank God for the richness of both the Oriental and Occidental traditions in the Church here, and unite our prayer with the Priestly Prayer of Jesus, "that all may be one" (Jn 17,21). Solidarity and collaboration between the different Churches (cf. *Ecclesia in Asia*, n. 26), and the "dialogue of life and

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heart" with other religions (cf. *Ecclesia in Asia*, n. 31) must be essential elements of this spirit of communion.

The faith that you have received through the two giants, St Thomas and St Francis, has to be read and lived anew, keeping of course intact its original meaning, and sharing vividly the Christ-experience they lived so admirably, so that the present generation comes to know Christ more deeply, as Thomas and Francis did, so that they too can say with the same conviction "my Lord and my God".

Invoking the Holy Spirit on all here present, and the protection of the Virgin Mary, Mother of God and Queen of India, the Holy Father cordially imparts his Apostolic Blessing as a pledge of communion in the Risen Lord

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CONTRIBUTORS

1. **Abdul Kalam A.P.J.,** born on 15th October 1931 at Rameswaram in Tamil Nadu to Jainulabdeen and Ashiamma, Dr. Avul Pakir Jainulabdeen Abdul Kalam, studied at the Schwartz High School, Ramanathapuram and the St. Joseph's College, Trichinipoly before specialising in Aeronautical Engineering at the Madras Institute of Technology. Dr. Kalam made significant contributions as Project Director to develop India's first indigenous Satellite Launch Vehicle (SLV-III) which successfully injected the Rohini satellite in the near earth orbit in July 1980 and made India an exclusive member of Space Club. He was responsible for the evolution of ISRO's launch vehicle programme, particularly the PSLV configuration. After working for two decades in ISRO he assumed the office of Chief Executive of the IGMDP. He was responsible for the development and operationalisation of AGNI and PRITHVI Missiles. From 1992 to1999 he was the Scientific Adviser to Defence Minister and Secretary, Department of Defence Research & Development when strategic missile systems were weaponised and, after Pokhran-II nuclear tests, India became a nuclear weapon State. Self-reliance in defence systems was his thrust which resulted in projects like those for Light Combat Aircraft. As Chairman of TIFAC and as an eminent scientist, he led the country with 500 experts to the Technology Vision 2020.

Dr. Kalam also served as the Principal Scientific Advisor to the Government of India, in the rank of Cabinet Minister and, as Chairman of the Cabinet committee he piloted the India Millennium Mission 2020. Dr. Kalam took up academic pursuit as Professor, Technology & Societal Transformation at Anna University, Chennai from November 2001 and was involved in teaching and research tasks. Above all, he took up a mission to ignite the young minds for national development by meeting high school students across the country. In his literary pursuit, four of Dr. Kalam's books - *Wings of Fire, India 2020 - A Vision for the New Millennium, My Journey* and *Ignited Minds - Unleashing the power within India* have become household names in India and among the Indian nationals abroad. These books have been translated into many Indian languages. Dr. Kalam is one of the most distinguished scientists of India with the unique honour of having received honorary doctorates from 30 universities and institutions. He has been awarded the coveted civilian awards - Padma Bhushan (1981) and Padma Vibhushan (1990) and the highest civilian award Bharat Ratna (1997). There are many other awards to his credit and he is Fellow of many professional bodies. Dr. Kalam became the 11th President of India on 25th July 2002. His focus is on transforming India into a developed nation by 2020.

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2. **Aerath Chacko,** co-editor of this volume, is a member of the Order of the Imitation of Christ(Bethany Ashram). Having been ordained in 1986, he was involved in the formation field. He was sent by the Congregation for higher studies and he finished his doctorate in Moral Theology from Academia Alfonsiana, Rome in 1995. After his return he was appointed Rector of the Bethany Scholasticate, Pune and Director of Bethany Vedavijnana Peeth, Pune. He worked as Professor and Head of the Department of Pastoral and Moral Theology in Jnana Deepa Vidyapeeth, Pune, till he was elected Provincial of the new Province of the Congregation in 2000. He is the visiting Professor in the Malankara Major Seminary, Trivandrum and other Faculties in the country.

3. **Antony E.P.**, a Second World War Royal Indian Air Force veteran, with 3000 hours of operational aircraft flying to his credit, has a Masters Degree in History and Political Science, and a B. Ed. Degree. He obtained a Doctorate in History and Political Science from the University of Kerala. He has Diplomas in Journalism - from the Bharathiya Vidya Bhavan- and in U. N.and International Understanding from Geneva. He taught at the St. Vincent's High School, Poona and the St. Paul's College, Kalamassery where he was the Head of the Department of Social Sciences till 1975, when he was appointed a Member of the Kerala Public Service Commission where he served for a term of six years. From 1984 to 1987, he helped set up North Eastern Resource Centre for the Church in Nagaland. During the period he visited 3000 Naga families to make an in-depth study of their development in various aspects: socio-economic, political, religious, etc. The Royal Asiatic Society and the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland elected him a Fellow, for his contribution to the study of the Nagas. He was Executive Member, Bonded Liberation Front of India (1994), Member of the Citizens' Commission on Bonded and Child Labour (1955) along with the former President of India, Gyani Zail Singh, the former Prime Minister V.P. Singh, and Swamy Agnivesh. He was Appointed One-man Commission in 1955 by the Honourable Supreme Court of India to enquire into the existence of bonded labour in Kerala, was founder General Secretary of the Catholic Association (Archdiocese of Verapoly), founder General Secretary of the Kerala Latin Catholic Association (1972-75), founder General Secretary of the Backward Classes Federation of Kerala, chairman of the Education Commission of the Catholic Union of India, chairman of the Vigilance Commission of the Catholic Union of India, vice-president of the Catholic Union of India and member of the National Advisory Council, CBCI. He has authored books in History and Political Science and at present works as the Secretary of the Kerala History Congress.

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4. **Arackal Francis** is a senior Lecturer in Vedanta in the Department of Sanskrit, Sri Sankaracharya University, Kalady. He has authored a book titled "Convergence". Some of his research articles have been published in philosophical journals in India and abroad.

5. **Arimpoor Joe**, is a Don Bosco priest involved in youth ministry for the past thirty years. As a young priest he was appointed Director of Don Bosco Youth Centre, Perambur, Madras in 1974. In 1974 he brought the marriage encounter to Madras. He did his Masters in Social Work at Loyola College, Madras. In 1979, he started the Post Graduate department of Social Work at Sacred Heart College, Tirupattur, T. N. He was the founder Director of Bosco Institute of Social Work (BISW), Tirupattur. He introduced the specialization in Youth Welfare in the BISW. In 1998 this specialization was started in Social Work, at Tirupattur, the only place where such a specialization is available in India today. He proceeded with his higher studies in the U.S. doing MS in Clinical Social Work and Ph.D. in Sociology and continued with another Ph. D. work in Social Work on 'Policy, Planning and Administration" at the Columbia University in New York.

His book *Indian Youth in Perspective*, was based on the study of 5000 youth and his book *Street Children of Madras* was based on another extensive survey. A third book is *A Manual for Family Counsellors*. In 1996, he started another youth training and animation centre, Bosco Institute of Research and Development for Youth (BIRDY), Hyderabad, a Professional Training Cum Research Centre, reaching out to the youth and the Youth Workers, Educators, Leaders and Management Personnel in the caring profession, carrying out its mission of Liberation among the youth especially the marginalized. BIRDY has ten reach out Don Bosco Nava Jeevan (DBNJ) Centres for the street children and child labourers in the 10 district headquarters of Andhra Pradesh and with its Challenging motto: DARE AND SOAR carries out its mission for the youth, with special focus on the Integration of Mastery and Mystery, reaching out to the religious on the one hand and the corporate sector on the other.

6. **Arokiasamy S.,** born in 1937, joined the Jesuits in 1957, and was ordained priest in 1971. He obtained Licentiate in Philosophy and Theology in India, M.Sc. in Botany from the University of Madras, and a Ph.D. in Moral Theology from Universita Gregoriana, Rome (1977). His Doctoral Dissertation on *Dharma, Hindu and Christian, According to Roberto de Nobili* was published in Studia Missionalia Series, Gregoriana in Rome. Serving as professor of Moral Theology in the Faculty of Vidyajyoti College of Theology since 1978, he has been president of that faculty for two terms. He is Director of Post-Graduate Studies in the same Faculty. Has been editor of Vidyajyoti Journal of Theological Reflection for the last twenty

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years. He is at present President of the Association of Moral Theologians of India after serving as Secretary of the CBCI Doctrinal Commission for nine years. He presented position papers at the two General Assemblies of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences which have been published as FABC Papers. He has also been a member of the Office for Theological Concerns (OTC) of FABC.

7. **Crescenzio Cardinal Sepe**, born in Carinari (Caserta) on 2nd June 1943, studied at the Seminary of Aversa and at the Pontifical Regional Seminary of Salerno. He went to the Pontifical Roman Seminary for his theological studies. He was ordained priest on 12th March 1967 for the diocese of Aversa. In 1972 he had entered the Diplomatic Service of the Holy See with a three year assignment in Brazil. On 2nd April 1992 he was appointed Titular Archbishop of Grado and Secretary of the Congregation for the Clergy by John Paul II, who conferred Episcopal ordination on him on 26th April 1992. In 1997 he was appointed Secretary General of the Committee of the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000. On 9th April 2001 he was appointed Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples.

8. **Cyriac Joseph**, Acting Chief Justice of Kerala, had served the Government of Kerala as Government Pleader and Advocate General before being sworn in as permanent judge of the High Court of Kerala in 1994. Thereafter, he served as Judge of the High Court of Delhi for seven years before once again being sworn in as Judge of the High Court of Kerala in 2001. Born Jan. 28, 1941 to Retd. D.F.O. Joseph K. Kurien and Annamma Joseph of Karakkattu House, Kaipuzha in the Kottayam District, Justice Cyriac Joseph had his schooling in Kaipuzha before proceeding to colleges at Palai and Changanachery for higher education. After obtaining the degree of B. Sc., he studied law at the Law College, Trivandrum and was awarded the degree of B. L. by the University of Kerala, enrolling him as an advocate in 1968. As a student, he had won a number of esteemed intercollegiate prizes in public speaking, debating, and essay writing both in English and Malayalam. He was the National Vice President of the AICUF (1961-68), National General Secretary of the Newman Association of India (1972-80), Asian Representative on the executive committee of Pax Romana (1973-75), President of the KCSL (1976-88), Secretary of the National Advisory Council of the CBCI (1982-85), General Secretary of the Knanaya Catholic Congress (1970-74), and Founder – Director of the Knanaya Catholic Youth League (1969-80). He has visited a dozen countries in Asia, Africa, Europe, and America connected with the many official positions he held, e.g. at the committee meeting of ICMICA (Fribourg), Taize (as animator), Newman Association of Great Britain at London as guest speaker, Asian Regional Conference of Pax Romana at Singapore

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as organizer, Inter Federal Assembly of ICMICA at Mexico City as Indian Delegate, and as Chief Guest at the National Conventions of North American Knanaya Youth (Chicago, 1995) and North American Knanaya Catholics (Chicago, 1996).

9. **Cyriac Thomas,** born on 24th October 1943 at Palai as the son of Advocate Shri R.V. Thomas (Veteran Freedom Fighter, first Municipal Chairman of Palai, MLA and former Speaker of The Travancore Assembly and Member of the Indian Constituent Assembly). Dr. Cyriac Thomas had his schooling at St. Joseph's High School, Trivandrum and St. Thomas H.S. Palai and degree and post-graduate studies in the St.Thomas' College, Palai. He took his Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Kerala under the V.C. - Dr. V.K. Sukumaran Nair. He joined the Department of Politics, St. Thomas' College, Palai as Lecturer in 1967. Although selected to the IPS and Central Services (1967), he continued in the teaching career for 31 years becoming the Professor and Head of the Research and Post-Graduate Department of Political Science there and serving in that capacity for nine years, when he was appointed the Pro-Vice-Chancellor, University of Kerala in 1998. He was actively associated with the Congress upto 1972 and had also the distinction of being the youngest Member of the AICC while Shri. S.Nijalingappa was its President. Since then, he had quit party politics and associated himself with Gandhian work and academic pursuits.

Cyriac Thomas was the Founder President of the Gandhi Centre, Palai, First State General Secretary of the Kerala Prohibition Council (1977-'81) (*Madhya Nirodhana Samithi*), State General Secretary of the *Navabharatha Vedi* (1981-'90). President of the Kerala College Teachers' Forum, General Secretary of the Kerala Researchers' Council, Secretary General of the Religious Fellowship Foundation, Convener of the Joint Christian Council for Temperance (1981 – '86), consulting Member of the Education Commission of the Kerala Catholic Bishops' Conference, and the National General Secretary of the Indian Political Science Association. Presently he serves as the National Vice-President of the Indian Political Science Association, and Member Secretary, Inter University Consultative Council, Kerala. Having been the Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the University of Kerala (1998-2000) now he is the Vice-Chancellor of the Mahatma Gandhi University. He received the first Berchmans' Award (1998) for the best college teacher in Kerala instituted by the St. Berchmans' College, Changanacherry. He had also served in many academic bodies in the Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam including the office of Chairman of the Post-graduate Board of Studies and Board of Examinations in Political Science. Author of several books and articles, in English and Malayalam, Dr. Cyriac Thomas is also considered an acknowledged speaker in both languages. Married to Smt. Anu Kottoor of Udayamperoor (who teaches in a convent School at Palai) Dr. Cyriac Thomas is blessed with two daughters – Seena and Smitha.

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10. **Cyril Mar Baselios**, (Archbishop) born on August 16, 1935, the Metrapolitan Head of the Malankara Catholic Church, entered the "Order of the Imitation of Christ" (O.I.C.) in 1951 and was ordained a priest in 1960. He received his licentiate in Philosophy and Theology from the Pontifical Athenaeum in Pune, and doctorate in Canon Law from the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome and became professor of Dogmatic Theology at St. Thomas Apostolic Seminary in Kottayam and at the Pontifical Institute of Theology and Philosophy in Alwaye. Cyril Mar Baselios became the Bishop of Bathery in 1978 and was appointed in 1995 to the Metropolitan See of Trivandrum. In 1996 he was elected Chairman of the Kerala Catholic Bishops' Conference, and in 1998 President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (C.B.C.I.). He is a permanent member of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches. Widely travelled, he has a number of books and papers to his credit. Elected CBCI vice-president once again, nowadays he is extensively engaged in ecumenical and inter-religious dialogues.

11. **Dabre Thomas** (Bishop) was born at Bhuigaon in 1945 and after priestly studies at Pius X, Bombay and the Papal Athenaeum, Pune was ordained priest 1971. Appointed Professor of theology at the Papal Athenaeum, Pune he continued in the post after returning from his higher studies in the U.S. and Canada. Appointed Auxiliary Bishop of Bombay on 2nd April 1990, he was appointed Bishop of Vasai in 1998. His doctoral thesis was on *The God Experience of Sant Tukaram - A Study in Religious Symbolism*. He has a large number of books, articles, speeches, and papers to his credit dealing with such diverse topics as "Mysticism in Maharashtra - The Vision of Non-communal Society", "Sufism and Communal Harmony," "Sasar-Maher. Antithesis in the Abhnagas of Tukaram - from Alienation to Fulfillment," "Tukaram - Saint for the common man," " Religious and Ethical Foundations of Family and Social Life in Christianity," "The Trinity : A Single Absolute Subject or a Community of Subjects?," " Christian Influence in the Transformation of Indian Society," "Experience divine healing and mercy in the Sacrament of Penance". In 1998, he had been appointed Secretary General of the CBCI. Bishop Thomas Dabre has attended a number of internatioinal conferences at Jerusalem, Moscow, Rome, Bolivia, Seoul , and Bonn.

12. **Dolores Rego** is a member of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary (FMM). She has been the National Secretary for the Conference of Religious India for the last 8 years, animating and co-ordinating the work of the Religious of India. She is also the Executive Secretary of AMOR (Asia-Oceania Meeting of Religious).

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13. **Ivan Cardinal Dias** was born in Bandra, Bombay, on April 14, 1936. After his schooling and seminary formation in the city, he was ordained priest in 1958 after which he continued his studies in the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy, Rome. He took his doctorate from the Pontifical Lateran University, Rome in canon law. He entered the Holy See's diplomatic service in 1964 and was posted to the Nordic countries, Indonesia, Madagascar, La Réunion, the Comorros, Mauritius and headed the section for many communist countries and countries in Africa in the Secretariat of State. He was appointed titular Archbishop of Rusubisir and Apostolic Pro-Nuncio in Ghana, Togo and Benin, and received episcopal ordination in 1982. He later served as Apostolic Nuncio in Korea and Albania and was later transferred to Bombay as Archbishop of Bombay and in 2001 was created cardinal. At present he is a member of various pontifical congregations, commissions and councils such as e.g. the Commission for the Doctrine of the Faith, Divine Worship and Sacraments, the Congregation for Catholic Education, the Council for Culture, the Commission for the Cultural Heritage of the Church , the Council of Cardinals for the Study of Organizational and Economic Problems of the Holy See. While in Albania, he received the Gold Medal of the Order of Mother Teresa.

14. **Kalliath Antony**, a member of the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate, is professor in Systematic Theology, Missiology and Religions at Samanvaya Theological College, Bhopal and Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram, Bangalore.

15. **Karotemprel Sebastian** is a Professor of systematic theology in Shillong, has been Professor of Missiology at the Pontifical Urban University, Senior Mission Scholar at the Overseas Ministries Study Centre, Member of the International Theological Commission and the author of a number of books on Missiology, Mission History, and Theology, and founder-editor of Indian Missiological Review

16. **Menachery George** co-editor of this volume, is the Chief-editor of the multi-volume *St. Thomas Christian Encyclopaedia of India* and the *Indian Church History Classics*. Born April 2, 1938 he gave up the job as Head of the Department of Post-Graduate Teaching to concentrate on research and publication. His books on Muziris (Kodungallur) (1987) and the Malayalam book *Pallikkalakalum Mattum* (1984) have been much discussed. Visiting Professor of Christian Art at the Pontifical Institute, Alwaye from 1984 he is connected with many institutions and organisations interested in the study of history and culture. He was executive member of the Kerala HistoryAssociation (1975-90), Kerala Government Advisory Board of Archaeology (1975-82), University Senate, University Statutory Finance Committee, Kerala Sahitya Academy, founder president of the Kerala Historical Research Society...National vice-

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president of the Newman Association of India (Bombay) (1964-72), founder director of the Institute for Lay Leadership Training (from 1967), founder director and curator of theChristian Cultural Museum (from 1980), member of the (Arch)diocesan Pastoral Council (from 1978), president of Kalasadan (1984-1992)... He has to his credit a large number of publications, research papers, articles, radio talks and TV programmes, and websites. His research activities and lectures have taken him to more than 22 countries in 4 continents. He actively participates in setting up / organising museums, workshops, seminars, - connected with Indian Christian studies. While not travelling in connection with one of these projects he is to be found at the ancestral family seat at Ollur, browsing in his huge collection of rare books and artefacts or pottering around the orchard. Detective stories and *Parippu Vada* are his major weaknesses.

17. **Michael S.M.**, a member of the Society of the Divine Word, teaches Cultural Anthropology in the University of Mumbai and is the Programme Director of the Institute of Indian Culture. He has learned Anthropology from the internationally reputed Anthropologist Dr. Stephen Fuchs SVD. He has been closely associated with Fr. Stephen Fuchs at the Institute of Indian Culture for over twenty five years.

18. **Mundadan Mathias, A.**, a member of the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate, born in 1923, took a licentiate in Theology from De Nobili College, Poona (1954) and a Doctor's Degree in Church History from Gregorian University, Rome (1960). He was formerly the Rector of Dharmaram College and the first president of Dharmaram Pontifical Institute of Theology and Philosophy (Now Dharamram Vidykshethram). He is the General Editor of the multi-volume CHAI History of Christianity in India and Church History Review. He was the Chairman of the South Indian Branch of Church History Association of India for several years. *The Arrival of the Portuguese in India and St. Thomas Christians* (1967); *Sixteenth Century Traditions of St. Thomas Christians* (1970); *History of Christianity in India* (Vol.1) (1984); *Indian Christians in Search For Identity and Struggle For Autonomy* (1984); *Paths of Indian Theology* (1998) are some of his contributions.

19. **Oswald Gracious**, (Archbishop) born on December 24, 1944 at Mahim in Mumbai as the second child of Gervis and Aduzinda Gracis, was ordained a priest for the Archdiocese of Mumbai on December 20, 1970. Soon after ordination he was appointed diocesan Chancellor and Secretary in Jamshedpur Diocese for five years. After obtaining a doctorate in Canon Law from the Urban University, Rome, and a diploma in Jurisprudence from the Gregorian University, Rome, he worked in the Archdiocese as Chancellor, Judge of the Metropolitan Tribunal, Secretary to Archbishop and Judicial Vicar. Among many important

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positions held he was : President, Canon Law Society of India; Consultor, CBCI Doctrinal Committee; Consultor, Pontifical Council for the Interpretation of Legislative Texts, Rome. After his Episcopal Ordination as Auxiliary Bishop of Mumbai in 1997 he was elected Chairman, CBCI Commission for Canon Law and other Legislative Texts; and Secretary General, CBCI for four years. The Jubilee Year of the Lord 2000 brought special grace to Bp. Oswald when elevated as the Archbishop to the See of Agra. At present he is the chairman of the CBCI Commission for Social Communications.

20. **Painadath Sebastian** is a Jesuit of the Kerala Province. He is the Director of Sameeksha, Centre for Indian Spirituality, Kerala. He is involved in the promotion of inter-religious dialogue and Indian Christian Spirituality. He regularly offers courses on these themes in India and Europe. His publications include *Dynamics of Prayer* (Banaglore, 1981), *Yesu Vyaktiyum Saktiyum* (Kottayam, 1994) and several articles in English, German, and Malayalam.

21. **Palackapilly George,** is a priest of the Society of the Salesians of Don Bosco. He was Principal of Sacred Heart College (Autonomous),Tirupattur, Tamil Nadu, affiliated to the University of Madras. He has taught at the University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana and is a Visiting Professor at the University of St.Thomas, St. Paul, MN, U.S.A. An experienced educationist and administrator, Fr.George was honoured by the Government of Tamil Nadu with the Dr. Radhakrishnan Award for the Best Principal of the Year 1989-90. In 1993 he received AIACHE'S All India Teacher of the Year Award. He is the author of *"Economics of Higher Education in Tamil Nadu"* and *"Challenge of Education in India"* and co-author of "Religion and Economics-A Worldview". He has also edited five books on the Contribution of the Church in India to Education and Culture. Presently, he is Secretary, Commission for Education and Culture, CBCI, New Delhi and a Consultor of the Pontifical Council for Culture. He holds a Ph.D in Economics.

22. **Pala K.M. Mathew**, author of 20 books in Malayalam, was an active member of the freedom struggle. He was the Travancore State Congress Organiser and AICC Vichar Vibhag Convenor. He was Kerala Khadiboard Vice-Chairman and Chairman of the Agro Industries Corporation. He was a member of the Indian Parliament and member of the Syndicate of the Jawahrlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

23 **Ponnumuthan Selvister,** chief editor of this volume and dean of theology, Pontifical Institute, Alwaye, hails from the diocese of Neyyattinkara. He was ordained in 1981 and rendered his service as parish priest and prefect of St. Vincent's Seminary, Trivandrum

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till 1991. Then he was sent for higher studies and he obtained his doctorate from the Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome in 1996 for the dissertation *The Spirituality of Basic Ecclesial Communities in the Socio-Religious Context of Trivandrum, Kerala, India* which was published under the series Tesi Gregoriana, Serie Spiritualità – ISBN 88-7652-721-4. In 1996 he joined the staff of St. Joseph's Pontifical Seminary, Mangalapuzha. From 1998 to 2000 he was the Vice-Rector of St. Joseph's Pontifical Seminary, Carmelgiri, Alwaye. He is the founder director of Carmelgiri Seminary Missiology Forum and a member of ITA, FOIM and IACM. He teaches Systematic Theology and Missiology in the Pontifical Institute, Alwaye and is a visiting Lecturer of Pope John Paul II Institute on Studies on Marriage and Family, CANA, Changanssery, Kerala. He is the chief-editor of *the Living Word* and Executive editor of *Indian Journal of Family Studies*. He has published the book "*Adistana Kraistava Sabha: Prathysayude Theeram*" in Malayalam.

24. **Prakash Louis** is presently the Executive Director of the Indian Social Institute New Delhi. He had done his doctoral studies on the Radical Agrarian Movements in Central Bihar from A.N.Sinha Institute of Social Studies. He contributes regularly to journals like Economic and Political Weekly, Mainstream, Social Change, Vikalp and Seminar. He contributes regularly to national dailies Hindustan, Jansatta and Rashtriya Sahara. He has authored the following books: *Jharkhand Rajya: Kiskeleye, Kyon aur Kaise?* on the formation of New Jharkhand State; *The Emerging Hindutva Force: The Ascent of the Hindu Nationalism*. Two of his major publications are '*People Power: The Naxalite Movement in Central Bihar*', and '*Political Sociology of Dalit Assertion*'. He has edited the following books: *Extraordinary Laws in India*: A Reader for Understanding Legislations Endangering Civil Liberties; Policy Documents of the Government of India: A Reader for Understanding Policies that Determine the Lives of Millions of Citizens. He has also undertaken studies on the social condition of the marginalised sections of society in India. He engages in strategy formation, capacity building exercise, impact assessment studies etc. He has participated in the following International Conferences: (1) Participated in the World Conference Against Racism (WACR) held in Durban, South Africa, 27-31, 2001 as a member of the National Campaign for Dalit Human Rights from India and raised the issue of caste discrimination to be included in the agenda of WCAR; (2) Attended the Initial Meeting of the Conference on "Role of Human Rights Research Centres in Asia-Pacific" held at Manila, Philippines, April 2002, organized by Hurights Osaka, Japan; (3) Participated in the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26-30 August, 2002 as a member of the International Delegation of Jesuits.

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25. **Punnoose Jacob IPS**, (Additional Director General of Police, Kerala) is a senior Member of the Kerala Cadre of the Indian Police Service. For nearly 30 years, he has held different important official positions like ADGP in the Kerala Human Rights Commission; IGP North Zone; IGP South Zone; IGP (Headquarters); IGP (Intelligence); DIG Northern Range; Commissioner of Police, Calicut; Commissioner of Police, Trivandrum, Superintendent of Police, Palakkad; AIG, Police Headquarters; DIG, BSF, Gujarat etc. Adjudged the Best Officer of the 1975 Batch of the IPS, he was awarded the Prime Minister's Baton by the President of India in 1976. He was also awarded the Police Medal for Meritorious Service by the President of India in 1996. Born in 1952, he studied at Ranny, Trivandrum and Cochin and has a post graduatedegree in Physics. In addition to professional studies having a bearing on improvement of policing, Sri Jacob Punnoose has kept up sustained interest in human rights, history, literature and matters of general interest. He is married to Ms Rebecca Thomas, Senior Lecturer in Providence Women's College, Calicut.

26. **Puthenangady Paul,** born on 26th April 1934 at Alwaye in Kerala, India, is a member of the Salesians of Don Bosco (SDB). Ordained on 9th February 1964 at Turin, he has a Doctorate in Theology with specialization in Liturgy (PhD), from the Pontifical Athenaeum of St. Anslem in Rome. He is Professor of Theology and Liturgy at the Salesian Theologate, Kristu Jyoti Collge, Bangalore. He was Direcor of National Biblical, Catechetical and Liturgical Centre (NBCLC), Bangalore for 9 years and Director of Visvadeep Catechetical Institute for one year and was also the Rector of Kristu Jyoti Colge, Salesian Theologate, for 5 years. He was the Executive Secretary of the National Committee for Yesu Krist Jayanti 2000. He is now the executive secretary of the Inter-Ritual Committee of the CBCI for textbooks in Seminaries and Secretary of the Follow-up Committee of YKJ 2000. He is also the Executive Secretary of the Asian Liturgical Forum. At present, he is the Rector and Director of Visvadeep, a Centre for Faith Education and Youth Ministry. He authored four books, namely, *On the New Order of the Mass*, *Initiation to Christian Worship*, *A New Way of Being Church*, *Chosen for the World*, and has edited several books and has written more than 200 articles for Indian and International journals.

27. **Saldanha Virginia** is a widow with three married children and three grandchildren. She is the Executive Secretary of the FABC Office of Laity. She has been working as the Executive Secretary of the CBCI Commission for Women. As a grass roots women activist from the Archdiocese of Bombay, she has worked with women in domestic work and with *mahila mandals* in Mumbai.

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28. **Sebastian Paul** is a Member of the Indian Parliament. He was an MLA for three years. He has authored many books. He is a well known Media Analyser and Journalist. He has a doctorate in Constitutional Law.

29. **Srampickal Jacob** holds a doctorate in Development Communications from the University of Leeds, Northern England (1986-90). He has also done special studies in films from FTII, Pune. He has been the President of the National Association for Media in India and Asia for Catholics and has authored a number of books on the media. He has been a jury member at various international film festivals. He was the Co-founder and Principal at NISCORT, (National Institute of Social Communications, Research and Training) of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI). At present he is a Lecturer at the Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome.

30. **Stanislaus L.,** a member of the Society of the Divine Word, has done his doctorate in Missiology from the Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome. Other than contributing many articles to different journals, he has published a book titled, 'The Liberative Mission of the Church Among Dalit Christians". He is at present Director of Ishvani Kendra, Pune. He offers courses and seminars in Missiology, Dalit Theology and related subjects in various theological institutes. He is the representative of the Asia/Oceania Zone, for the newly formed International Association of Catholic Missiologists (IACMS).

31. **Thattumkal John** (Bishop) was born on June 23, 1950, in the Allapuzha District of Kerala. In 1968 he was sent for philosophical studies in Urbaniana University, where he obtained a Master's Degree in Philosophy in the year 1971 and a Bachelor's Degree in Theology in the year 1974. From 1974 to 1979 he did his Doctorate in Canon Law and Civil Law (JUD) in the Lateran University in Rome. His doctoral dissertation was on "Caste and the Catholic Church in India - a Historico-Juridical study on the Nature of the Caste System and its Implications on the Catholic Church in India." The Lateran University published the thesis under the same title in the year 1993. He worked as chancellor and procurator of the Diocese of Cochin and visiting professor of Canon Law at the Pontifical Institute, Alwaye, Kerala where he continues as a professor today. He is the author of the book "The Diocese of Cochin 1557-1985" and used to contribute articles in journals both in Malayalam and English. From 1988 to 1992 he served as Vice-Rector of the Propaganda College in Vatican City and from 1989 to 1992 he taught in the Faculty of Canon Law of the Urbaniana University, Rome. Since June 25, 2000 he is the Bishop of Cochin. From 1987 he is a member of the Cottolengo Priest's Society, having its head office in Turin, Italy. He is also a member of the Commission

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for Canon Law and other Legislatitve Texts of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India and Chairman of the Labour Commission of Kerala Catholic Bishops' Council. He is also a member of the Commission of the St. Joseph's Pontifical Seminary, Carmelgiri, Alwaye. He worked as the Chairman of the "Documentary Committee" of the "CBCI-KCBC National Celebration of the Jubilee of St. Thomas and St. Francis Xavier" held at Cochi in the year 2002. It is under his guidance and responsibility that this book "Christian Contribution to Nation Building" took its shape.

32. **Vadakkekara Benedict** is a member of the Kerala St Joseph Province of the Capuchin Order. After securing a doctorate in Ecclesiastical History from the Gregorian University, Rome, he taught Church history (1987-90) at St Francis Theological College (Kottayam, Kerala) and was the chief editor of the Malayalam monthly Assisi. Since 1990, he is a resident staff member of the Capuchin Historical Institute in Rome and teaches at the Pontifical Athenaeum Antonianum.

33. **Vadakumthala Alex,** born on June 13, 1959, hails from the Archdiocese of Verapoly. He was ordained on 19th December 1959 and did his pastoral ministries in various parishes of the Archdiocese and went for higher studies in Rome and obtained his Doctorate in Canon Law from the Pontifical Urban University and Diploma in Juris-Prudence from the Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome. He was the director of Cochin Arts and Communication (1994-97) and Lecturer of Canon Law and Medical Ethics (1997-1999) at the Pontifical Institute, Alwaye. At present he is the Secretary of the Commission for Health Care, CBCI, New Delhi and Co-ordiantor of Pastoral Care in Health for Asia. He is also a Judge in the Tribunal of the Archdiocese of Delhi (www.cbcihealth.com).

34. **Varkey Cardinal Vithayathil**, Major-Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar, was born to devout catholic parents Justice Joseph Vithayathil and Thresis Manadan on May 29, 1927, at Paravoor, near Cochin, India. After his studies at Trivandrum and Trichinopoly, he joined the Redemptorist order and was ordained priest in June 1954. After obtaining his doctorate in canon law from the Pontifical University "S. Tommaso d'Aquino" (Angelicum Athenaeum) in Rome (1959) [Thesis: Origen and development of the Syro-Malabar hierarchy], he returned to India to pursue advanced studies in Indian philosophy and took the Master's Degree in philosophy. Well known as a retreat preacher, he taught at the Redemptorist Major Seminary, Bangalore for a quarter of a century and was Provincial Superior of his congregation for India and Sri Lanka (1978-84), National President of the CRI, and Apostolic Administrator of the Asirvanam Benedictine Monastery (from 1990 to 1996). In 1996 he was named an archbishop and made apostolic administrator of the Syro-Malabar Major Archiepiscopal Church and of

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the Archdiocese of Ernakulam-Angamaly. Four years later, he was installed as the major archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church. He was appointed member of the Pontifical Council for Legislative Texts (2000) and is a member of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches. He was nominated to the College of Cardinals in 2001. In October 2002 he was appointed by the Holy Father a member of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. He has also served as a vice president of the Indian bishops' conference(CBCI). At present he is the president of the Kerala Catholic Bishops' Council (KCBC).

35. **Vattanky John** was born on 3rd July 1931 in Kerala. After initial education in his hometown, he joined the Society of Jesus in 1950. After gaining a Licentiate in Philosophy and another in Theology, he proceeded to specialise in Classical Indian Philosophy. First he took a M.A. in Oriental Studies from the University of Oxford. Afterwards he took his Ph.D. from the University of Vienna specialising in *Nvyanyaya.* His important publications are *'Gangesa's Philosohy of God' 'Nyaya Philsophy of Language'* and *'An Indian System of Logic'*. He has also written a number of articles in national and international journals. He has been Professor of Classical Indian Philosophy and Sanskrit at Jnaadeepa Vidyapeeth,Pune. Now he is director of the Advanced Centre of Indian Studies at De Nobili College, Pune.

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