

## ABSTRACT

### **Church Planting, Humanitarian Services, and Christian Holiness in Central India:**

#### **A Study of the Life and Mission of Ernest and Phebe Ward**

Shivraj Kumar Mahendra

This research celebrates the life and ministry of the pioneers of Free Methodism in India who have not found any significant mention in the mission conversations of our time. Working within the framework of biography as missiology it narrates the life, ministries, and the thoughts of Ernest and Phebe Ward. The research is structured under the following five themes or lenses: (1) biographical, (2) evangelistic (3) humanitarian/holistic (4) interreligious, and (5) holiness.

The biographical lens shows how an ordinary couple from humble backgrounds were transformed into extraordinary instruments of the gospel. Born and raised in Illinois, the Wards were products of the holiness revival and camp meetings of the Free Methodist Church (FMC). Ernest F. Ward (1853-1937) and Phebe E. Ward (1850-1910) received their missionary calling in 1880. The second lens historically looks at the evangelistic and church planting endeavors of the Wards. It briefly highlights the establishment of mission stations in places now spread in at least four states of India. Ward's understanding of the gospel, their Mission methods, the story of their village outreaches, and evangelistic vision of the FMC also form the contents of this chapter. The third lens shows that evangelism and social action went hand in hand in the ministry of the Wards. During this dominantly philanthropic episode in their ministry, the Wards worked in association with different missions such as the Pentecost Bands. However, they did not cease to be Free Methodists. In fact, in spite of some critical organizational issues and challenges, they

contributed significantly to India's nation building through famine relief, orphan care, education, and medical work, etc. The fourth lens explores the Wards' understanding of religion, interreligious encounter with people of other faiths, and their approaches and responses to religious themes and issues. Finally, looking through the lens of holiness, it is argued that the theme of Christian holiness emerges as the dominant theological theme in the thought and mission practice of Ernest and Phebe Ward. From their personal experience of conversion to the proclamation of the gospel to the nations, and from humanitarian services to the interreligious encounters, the Wards were influenced, invigorated, and driven by the perception, experience, and pursuance of holiness.

Ernest and Phebe Ward did not have the privilege of any formal seminary training, but they were lifelong students of the Bible, Christianity, languages, and cultures. The life and mission of the Wards was characterized by sacrificial service, Scriptural holiness, and godly humility. For missiological reflections we can glean a fivefold (undocumented) missiology – (1) activistic, (2) holistic, (3) orientalist, (4) dialogical, and (5) holiness – from their “missions at sunrise.” As a pioneering study of the lesser-known missionaries, this research fulfills a major gap in the history of Christianity and missions in general and the history of Free Methodist Church in particular. It draws insights from mission endeavors of the Wards and hopes to inform the ongoing historical and missiological reflections in Christian studies. In addition, it underlines a clarion call to holistic mission in the pattern of the Wards in our own times.

**Church Planting, Humanitarian Services, and Christian Holiness in Central India:**

**A Study of the Life and Mission of Ernest and Phebe Ward**

A Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of  
Asbury Theological Seminary  
Wilmore, Kentucky

In Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Philosophy

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July 2020

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## KEY EVENTS IN THE LIFE OF ERNEST WARD (1853-1937)

<i>Date</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Event</i>
April 25,	1853	Ernest Fremont Ward born in Geneva, IL
	1871	Conversion
October 4,	1880	Married Phebe Elizabeth Cox (1850-1910)
October 6,	1880	Ordained in the Free Methodist Church
January 16,	1881	Arrived in India as the first Free Methodist missionary (Independent)
	1881	Founded Burhanpur Faith Mission
February 22,	1883	Ethel Ellen Ward (first daughter) born in Burhanpur
February 5,	1886	Louisa Ranf (FMC) joins the Wards in India
	1887	Founded Pilgrim Faith Mission, Achalpur Adopted Theodosia Ward
July 9,	1890	Bessie Helen Ward (Second daughter) born in Chikalda <i>The Sketch of the Korkus</i> published
	1892	Organized the First Free Methodist gathering in Bombay Association with the Pentecost Bands First Furlough to the USA
July 10,	1893	Mary Louise Ward (Third daughter) born in Los Angeles, CA
	1894	Back to India: Mission to Chhattisgarh
	1895	Founded Chhattisgarh Pilgrim Mission
	1896	Bastar (Chhattisgarh) Tour
	1897	Merged with the Pentecost Bands
	1898	Dispute with the Bands and Second Furlough to the USA
December	1899	Back to Rajnandgoan, Chhattisgarh
	1901	Ministry in Khairagarh, Chhattisgarh
	1902	Ministry in Parts of Maharashtra (Daund) and Gujarat (Sanjan)
	1904	Joined the Free Methodist Church Mission: Ministry in Wani (Maharashtra)
	1906	Ministry in Darwha I

	1908	<i>Echoes From Bharatkhand</i> published
April	1910	Third Furlough to the USA
September 1,	1910	Phebe Elizabeth Ward died in Seattle, WA
	1912	Ministry in Umri (Maharashtra)
Jan 17,	1914	Married Elizabeth Ireland Tucker
		Adopted Thomas Ward
	1915	Ministry in Yavatmal I
September 3,	1915	Elizabeth Tucker Ward died in Yavatmal
	1916	Ministry in Wani II
	1919	Ministry in Yavatmal II
March	1920	Fourth Furlough to the USA
Aug 23,	1921	Mary Louise Ward (Vore) died in Michigan
	1921	Ministry in Darwha II
	1923	<i>Memory Links</i> published
April 23,	1927	Retired from active missionary work in India
November 3,	1937	Died at Harmon, Los Angeles, CA
	1951	<i>Ordered Steps or the Wards of India</i> published by Ethel Ward

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

ATS	Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, KY
CP	Central Provinces, British India
FMC	The Free Methodist Church
IHA	India Holiness Association
MEC	Methodist Episcopal Church
MMHC	Marston Memorial Historical Center and Archives
MSS	Manuscripts
UBS	Union Biblical Seminary, Pune
UVA	The University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA
WFMS	Women's Foreign Missionary Society
YCLT	Yavatmal College for Leadership Training

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My dream, desire, and prayer of pursuing doctoral studies in the USA would have not become a reality without the help, encouragement, and support of some very special individuals and institutions whom God brought in my life. I am immensely thankful to my mentor, Dr. Timothy Tennent, and his wife, Mrs. Julie Tennent, for their love, guidance, encouragement, prayers, and support. They believed in me and invested in my life beyond my own imagination and expectation. I owe them a lot for their 20 plus years of friendship and partnership in mission.

Grateful acknowledgement is also due to Dr. Lalsangkima Pachuau, Dean of Advanced Research Programs at Asbury, who convinced my employers to release me for PhD studies and served as my academic advisor throughout the study; to Dr. Sam Kim, my Reader; to Dr. George Chavanikamannil, founder of New Theological College, for releasing me from my responsibilities and becoming a channel of blessing; and particularly to the McPhee, Miller, O'Neal, Elcan, Smith, Blakely, Wilkins, Yardy, Redeker, Diddle, Metcalf, Post, DeGough, Karr, Moulton, Weber, Schwind, and Mathews-Younes families for their various contributions during our life, study, and ministry in the USA.

I also want to thank the staffs of archives and libraries of Asbury Theological Seminary, University of Virginia, Marston Memorial Historical Center of the Free Methodist Church, The British Library, and the Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center. Thanks especially to Grace Yoder, Cathy Robling, and Teri Arp. Note of thanks is also

extended to the staffs of the ESJ School of World Mission and Evangelism and the Advanced Research Programs.

The following grants and scholarships were crucial for my study at Asbury: The Trustees International Scholarship, The Johnson International Scholarship, The Good News for India Scholarship, The E. Stanley Jones Trust Scholarship, and The Connie Sunda Scholarship of the Community Service Center of Wilmore-Highbridge. A sincere thanks to everyone in these organizations.

Special words of appreciation are due to Anita, my beloved life-partner, and to Smriti, my loving daughter, who cheered me up on every lap of my academic marathon with their dedicated care and sincere prayers. I am also thankful to all my family and friends, whose names are too many to mention here, for their prayers, best wishes, and encouragements.

Above all, I praise God for blessing me with His grace, mercy, and wisdom, and enabling me through His Holy Spirit to accomplish this great milestone of my life. All glory to the Lord Jesus Christ, my Lord and my Savior.

## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

All Christians are not called to preach or be foreign missionaries, but they are to be light in the world wherever they are.

– Ernest Ward<sup>1</sup>

The Lord allows me to profit by past experiences and I have no other thought but that this heavenly Quest which has been enthroned on the seat of my will has come to stay. He is my teacher, my guide, just as Jesus said He should be.

– Phebe Ward<sup>2</sup>

#### 1. Envisioning the Research

From the early days after my conversion to Christ, I have been increasingly fascinated by missionary biographies. More than any other books, I have loved reading the biographies of Christian missionaries.<sup>3</sup> It was during my Master's research on Christianity in the north Indian state of Uttarakhand,<sup>4</sup> that I had first become aware of the need to write biographies, especially of the lesser-known missionaries and prominent indigenous Christians. The sapling of this awareness became a full-grown tree during my recent struggles toward formulating a research proposal for my doctoral dissertation. After a brief drifting from the shades of this tree and experiencing a mild burnout under

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<sup>1</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to his mother, Ellichpur; Aug 17, 1881. The Papers of Ernest Ward, Ernest F. Ward Collection, Asbury Theological Seminary Archives, Wilmore KY (hereafter, Ward Collection ATS).

<sup>2</sup> Phebe Ward, Letter to Gilbert and Earl, Wun, Berar, Sep 8, 1905, 1-2. Ward Collection ATS

<sup>3</sup> The biographies of Bartholomeus Ziegenbalg, William Carey, David Livingstone, E. Stanley Jones, Hudson Taylor, Amy Carmichael, Pandita Ramabai, Sadhu Sundar Singh, and Mother Teresa, among others have brought great inspirations to me in my Christian Journey.

<sup>4</sup> This research was published as *A Christian History of Uttarakhand, Vol. I: Origins and Identities*, Second edition (Fishers for Christ, 2017). Among other themes, it includes very brief biographical notes on native Christians and prominent missionaries in the region during the period of study in focus.

the heat of a plethora of writings on a well-known missionary,<sup>5</sup> I have been guided back to my original desire of exploring the lives and legacy of the unsung missionary heroes.<sup>6</sup> One such unheard-of missionary couple in the history of Christian missions are the Rev. Ernest and Mrs. Phebe Ward.<sup>7</sup>

Rev. Ernest Fremont Ward (1853-1937) and his wife Phebe Elizabeth Ward (1850-1910) were forerunners of the good news of Jesus Christ to several people groups of central India in the late nineteenth century. They were the first Free Methodists to embark on a foreign mission. The Wards had initially used their personal resources to support their travel and living expenses and launched a faith-mission in 1880. The Free Methodist Church in America, founded in 1860, was in its young adult years at this time and had not formed a Foreign Mission Board or agency.<sup>8</sup> The Wards trusted in the Lord

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<sup>5</sup> I initially wanted to study the mission theology of E. Stanley Jones (1884-1973) the Episcopal Methodist Missionary to India. Although the study could not be carried on due to unavoidable reasons, Jones did bless me immensely through his writings. I have read almost everything he has published including other scholars' works on him. Another blessing was to connect with his granddaughter, Anne Mathews-Younes, the President of the E. Stanley Jones Foundation. The story of my journey with Jones itself will make a book. Jones also inspired me to write a daily devotional in Hindi, currently in press. I hope my labor of two full years – database, papers, notes – on Jones which at present rests in files and folders will see the light of the day in some way.

<sup>6</sup> This desire was repeatedly impressed upon me on several occasions. Two notable occasions are my visits to two cemeteries: first in Champawat (Uttarakhand, India) 2010, and second in Smallwood (Westminster, Maryland) 2016.

<sup>7</sup> It was Dr. Robert Danielson, my supervisor at the First Fruits Press, who, in 2015, first introduced me to the availability of archival materials on Ernest and Phebe Ward at Asbury Theological Seminary Archives. One year later, in December 2016, standing at a cemetery in Smallwood (Westminster), MD, my mentor, Dr. Timothy Tennent, showed me the promising possibility of writing the life stories of lesser known missionary saints. Dr. Tennent pointed to his wife Mrs. Julie Tennent's great aunt Eva Logue's grave. Miss. Logue served as a missionary in South India during 1933-1971. There is no work describing her life. For her only available brief memoir, see, Eva K. Logue, *Pilgrims of an Indian Path* (No publisher, c.1972, 48 pages. Copy obtained from Smallwood United Methodist Church, Smallwood, MD). There are many others, both missionaries and natives, whose stories need to be told. My interest in biographical research has been increasing ever since.

<sup>8</sup> By 1879, Rev. B. T. Roberts, the founding General Superintendent of the Free Methodist Church, was still giving an apologia for a new denomination. See, Benjamin T. Roberts, *Why Another Sect: Containing a Review of Articles by Bishop Simpson and Others on the Free Methodist Church* (Rochester, NY: "The Earnest Christian" Publishing House, 1879).

for their resources and provisions. They pioneered the work of the gospel by opening several mission stations in the Central Provinces in British India. These stations are now spread in four different states of India, namely, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, and Maharashtra.<sup>9</sup> While in India, they started the Burhanpur Faith Mission, the Pilgrim Faith Mission, and the Chhattisgarh Pilgrim Mission, among other missions.

Phebe Ward served in India for nearly thirty years. She left for her heavenly abode in 1910 while on a furlough to the USA due to illness. Ernest Ward returned to India and continued the ministry until 1927, completing nearly half of a century of faithful ministry. As a couple committed to the gospel, the Wards were vigorously engaged in ministries of evangelism, church planting, and social services. They faced hardships and suffered illness laboring in unfavorable conditions but remained faithful to their call to evangelism, philanthropy, and holiness. They labored largely in villages and towns. In addition to pioneering various ministries, they served as hosts to not only the Free Methodist missionaries, but also to missionaries of other denominations who came to them for guidance and fellowship. They were instrumental in spreading Wesleyan holiness in central India in collaboration with different Christian denominations. The renowned Union Biblical Seminary in Pune was started as a small Free Methodist vernacular Bible school in Yavatmal. The Christian Hospital in Umri still bears witness to the legacy of the Free Methodist mission. Both Yavatmal and Umri mission stations were developed by the Wards and their colleagues.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> The names of the major mission stations (churches) are, Burhanpur (in Madhya Pradesh), Achalpur (then Ellichpur), Yavatmal, Darwha, Wani (then Wun), Umri (all in Maharashtra), Rajnandgaon, Lohara, Khairagarh (in Chhattisgarh) and Sanjan (Gujrat). They reached out to over 80 villages and cities, on average, every year from their base stations.

<sup>10</sup> Though the present seminary and hospital were founded by latter Free Methodist missionaries, the foundations of these ministries were laid by the Wards. It was a great joy to meet Rev. David Yardy, the

As I began my pilgrimage into the Ward research, I asked a prominent Free Methodist pastor in the USA, “Does the name Ernest Ward sound familiar to you?” He said, “I have never heard that name!” Although it is not a representative statement, such response is not uncommon. Not only within Free Methodism in the USA but also among other denominations both in India and the USA, the Wards remain virtually unknown. In fact, I personally never knew about even the Free Methodist Church as a denomination until I came to the USA. It is no surprise that the Wards remain almost unknown in their own denomination. Their contributions to missions and missional legacy of a lifetime remains unheard of. Such legacies should never get buried in the pages of history or remain a hidden secret.<sup>11</sup>

It is no secret that most of the studies Christian history and missions focus primarily on prominent figures such as denominational bishops, movement leaders, and missiologists. There is a tendency among both established as well as emerging scholars to gravitate toward the more well-known figures. The reasons may be obvious: the popularity of the person in focus, his or her association with a well-known movement, and the availability of resources. Such reasons suggest a preferential posture on the part of the scholars who have taken the “high” perspective to accomplish their specific agenda. As a result, missionaries who did not produce any significant missiological monograph, or did not become a global leader or had not associated with famous figures (in politics or religion) or movements of their times, have become victims of this

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son of the founder of Umri Christian hospital, first on February 26, 2018 and then on several occasions. He and his beloved wife Sherrill hosted us during our research trip to the Marston Memorial Historical Center in Indianapolis. He introduced me to valuable resources as well as Free Methodist friends significant for my research. I am grateful for his friendship and constant encouragements toward this research.

<sup>11</sup> I am using the term “secret” here to emphasize the need to reveal a labor of lifetime and to present a missionary model for the new generation of missionaries and church planters.

negligence in mission scholarship. Such missionaries might have had their own reasons to remain unknown. It is possible that they were limited by their call or their circumstances in such a way that their contributions could not get enough attention.

Ernest Ward belongs to that category of missionaries whose contributions must be seen from a different perspective – the “bottom up” or subaltern perspective.<sup>12</sup> The subaltern or Dalit perspective truly serves the methodical purpose of this study as it represents my own experience and the experience of the region of Ward’s mission endeavors. Ward described Bastar area (my birthplace in southern Chhattisgarh) as the darkest place of India. Even 25 years ago this statement was true in my own experience. It would have certainly been even more the case during the ministry of the Wards in 1896. Ernest Ward walked in this dark region and though he wanted to start a mission station, he could not. However, I believe his prayers never stopped for Bastar’s salvation and maybe I am one of the answers of his prayers, though born a century later.

As a market-place preacher, gospel tract distributor, biblical literature-seller, church planter, mission compound builder, and a committed social worker, Ward represents a different group of Kingdom-laborers. He was a missionary of the frontier, a missionary of dirt and dust. He was called to lay the foundations, to plant, and to let others water what he had planted, and to move on. He and his wife identify with and represent many Gospel workers who work at the grassroot level and remain unknown.

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<sup>12</sup> I am using the term “subaltern” (lit., “lower in rank”) in line with the “Dalit” (lit., crushed, broken, or exploited) experience and identification. The Wards increasingly identified themselves with the indigenous people, the tribal, Dalits, and other lower castes, such as fishermen. Unlike the British officers or some elite missionaries, they did not keep themselves in positions of privilege or power. The terms subaltern and Dalit aptly describe their status.

## **2. Statement of the Problem**

As one of the pioneers in the central Indian mission fields, the Wards invested their lives in mastering local languages, building mission stations, and engaging in various Christian ministries. However, their life and ministry, their thoughts and mission strategies, interaction with non-Christians, sermons and messages, their theological emphasis, and their contribution and impact, all remain buried in their letters, mission reports, and diaries. To date there is no scholarly biography of Ernest and Phebe Ward. To my knowledge, there is not even a single research paper written on any aspect of their life or work. The lack of any research on the Wards remains a challenge for the study of history of Christianity and missions in central India during late nineteenth and early twentieth century. A study of their lives and missions will bring an important and ignored history to exposure, highlight its significance, and shed light on various ways of participating in God's mission in our own times.

## **3. Research Questions**

As the first historical-missiological study of the lives and missions of Ernest and Phebe Ward, the first Free Methodist missionaries in foreign missions in general and India in particular, this research explores the following five representative questions – biographical, evangelistic, humanitarian, interreligious, and major emphasis in their mission practice and thought (holiness) – and additional sub-questions attached to each category. These questions will be used as themes or lenses through which we shall explore their missionary legacy.



### ***3.1 The Biographical Questions***

Biographies are integral to the study of history of Christianity, Christian missions, missiology, and Christian theology. In fact, the entire mission of God is about Individuals and their stories in relation to God's mission in the world. God has been at work in history to save and reconcile the people through his chosen and called out individuals and nations. The Wards were one such called out ones. Who were Ernest and Phebe Ward? What were their family backgrounds? What were their Christians experiences and how did they receive their call to foreign missions? In what specific ways did they contribute to Christian missions during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Central India? Why is their legacy important for today? This research focuses on answering these and related questions.

### ***3.2 The Evangelistic Questions***

Ernest and Phebe Ward were pioneering evangelistic and church-planting missionaries in select remote and rural areas of central India. Although the phenomenon of globalization appears to show that villages are marching toward cities, and this is partially true, but the villages have not ceased to be villages.<sup>13</sup> Thus, the missional significance of rural mission remains intact. Also, the urgency of urban church planting has not (and possibly cannot) completely replaced the need for rural church planting, especially in the developing nations like India. It is in this context that the Wards' mission endeavors become a relevant study for scholars of church history and missions. Furthermore, what was their understanding of evangelism and how did it relate with that

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<sup>13</sup> On globalization and Christianity, see, Craig Ott and Harold Netland, eds., *Globalizing Theology: Belief and Practice in the Era of World Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006).

of the Free Methodist Church? What were the experiences and approaches of Wards to rural and semi-urban missions and what can we learn from them? How did they undertake their evangelistic and church planting activities in central India and what were its impacts?

### ***3.3 The Humanitarian Questions***

In the history of Christian missions, evangelism has often been accompanied by humanitarian services. Central India suffered severe famine during the Chhattisgarh mission of the Wards. It called for global assistance to save India's perishing millions. Almost every mission agency was involved in the famine relief work. American agencies were at the top of the list. As American missionaries, did the Wards engage in any philanthropic activities or did they exclusively focus on preaching of the gospel without any social works? How did the philanthropic endeavors become a significant part of the evangelistic ministry of Ernest and Phebe Ward? What were the humanitarian services that the Wards carried out in India? How did these and other related works impact their missions? What other ministries, such as educational or medical, did they carry out within the frameworks of humanitarian services? Can their missions be called a holistic mission?

### ***3.4 The Interreligious Questions***

The context of missions in India has always been highly diverse. One of the great Indian diversities is its religious plurality. *Jatis* or people groups adhering to Tribal religions, Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, and others constitute the villages and cities of India. The Wards worked simultaneously among these peoples of various faiths and ideologies. What was their self-understanding as Christians in a

religiously plural culture? How did they understand Christianity in relation to other religions and vice versa? Did they have a theology of religions? How did they respond to religious issues and challenges of their missional context? How did their interreligious or dialogical encounters contribute to their mission activities and goals?

### ***3.5 The Central Emphasis Questions***

All missionaries generally represent a vision for mission and their call is driven by a specific focus in all that they do. Their messages and their works demonstrate their focus or central emphasis. For example, some missionaries focus on evangelistic outreach among the high caste people, or proclamation of the love of Christ, or Christian holiness. Can we unearth any such dominant emphasis in the life and missions of the Wards? What was the most important message they frequently preached and taught? What kind of lifestyle, worldview, or biblical theme remained a driving force in their ministry? How did that emphasis impact the way they did missions? What implications does it have for ongoing missions of the Church today?

In addition to the above leading questions, several associated significant questions are to be explored within the scope of this research. These sub-questions include: (1) Did the Wards ever work with other agencies besides the Free Methodist Church? What was the nature and significance of their interdenominational ministerial experience? (2) Are there any prominent indigenous Christians whose conversion to Christ could be seen as the result the labors of the Wards? What classes of people did the Wards attempt to witness and serve? (3) What specific regions did the Wards choose for their work? What are some of their notable contributions to language works? And so on.

## 4. Review of Literature

Availability of sources is crucial to all research works. Unfortunately, it is difficult to locate useful resources on the lesser known missionaries such as the Wards. Most of their stories are either briefly mentioned in mission reports or personal letters. While a good number of these materials have survived in some archives, the number of materials damaged or lost is lamentably large. I remain thankful for the availability and access of Ward resources in various libraries and archives that have enabled me to undertake this project with the confidence to be able to shed ample light on their lives and missionary endeavors. Two types of literature are available on the Wards.<sup>14</sup>

### 4.1 Primary Sources

The primary sources can be categorized into two: unpublished and published materials. The unpublished sources include (1) hundreds of letters written by the Wards to each other, to family members, and to the church officials, (2) manuscripts of literary pieces, such as short articles, plays, and compositions, (3) dozens of diaries which contain daily accounts of life and mission, (4) diaries containing general as well as biblical triads and language works, and (5) several scrapbooks and journals containing pieces of background information, clippings of published materials, news cuttings, copies of important letters, and brief manuscripts, etc.

The second type of primary materials are the publications of the Wards themselves. There are four works in this category. First, *A Brief Sketch of the Korkus*

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<sup>14</sup> I have the complete list of everything available at the B. L. Fisher Library and Archives at Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, KY; the Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library at the University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA; The Marston Memorial Historical Center and Archives at the Free Methodist World Ministries Center, Indianapolis, IN; the Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center, Springfield, MO; and the British Library, London, UK. I am thankful to their staff for making these valuable resources accessible to me to carry out my research and writing on the Wards.

(1891) by Ernest Ward.<sup>15</sup> Second, *Echoes from Bharatkhand* (1908)<sup>16</sup> by Ernest and Phebe Ward. Third, *Memory Links* (1923) by Ernest Ward.<sup>17</sup> Fourth and last, *Ordered Steps, or, The Wards of India* (1951)<sup>18</sup> by Ethel Ward.

Most of their letters and correspondences, mission reports and appeals, and articles and reflections were also published in *The Free Methodist*, *The Missionary Tidings*, *The Vanguard*, and other periodicals.<sup>19</sup> Here we shall briefly review the four major publications.

**4.1.1 A Brief Sketch of the Korkus (1891).** Ernest Ward's sketch of the Korku people of central India is a primer for evangelism and development of the Korku grammar. This booklet provides an excellent summary of the life, belief, and practices of the Korku

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<sup>15</sup> Ernest F. Ward, *A Brief Sketch of the Korkus, A Hill Tribe of Central India; Together with Grammatical Notes and a Vocabulary of their Language*. Part First; Pilgrim Faith Mission, Ellichpur, 1890. (Bombay: Printed at the Fort Printing Press, 1891). I have obtained a copy of this book from the British Library, London, UK. The story of Ward's Korku "trophy of grace" will be told in Chapter 5.

<sup>16</sup> Ernest F. Ward and Phebe E. Ward, *Echoes from Bharatkhand* (Chicago: Free Methodist Publishing House, 1908).

<sup>17</sup> Ernest F. Ward, *Memory Links of Our Own Chickabiddie or Reminiscences of Mary Louise Vore* (Chicago: Free Methodist Publishing House, 1923).

<sup>18</sup> Ethel E. Ward, *Ordered Steps, or, The Wards of India: A Biography of the Lives of Ernest Fremont Ward and Phebe Elizabeth Cox Ward, Missionaries to India, 1880-1927* (Winona Lake, IN: Light and Life Press, 1951). Ethel's another major publication includes, *World Treasure Trails, Volume II: India* (Winona Lake, IN: Woman's Missionary Society, Free Methodist Church, 1938). This book is a collection of short stories for children. It does not make a significant reference for the present research.

<sup>19</sup> *The Free Methodist* was the official magazine of the Free Methodist Church; *The Missionary Tidings* was the official monthly of the WFMSFMC (Woman's Foreign Missionary Society of the Free Methodist Church) and *The Vanguard* was the official periodical of the Vanguard Mission, founded by Charles Sherman and his daughter Bessie Sherman, friends of Ernest and Phebe Ward, at St. Louis, MO in 1880. For a history of the mission work of the Vanguard Mission, see, Albert E. Ashton and Bessie Sherman Ashton, *From Famine to Famine: An Account of Famine Experience and Mission Work in India* (St. Louis, MO: Vanguard Missionary Association, 1908).

My literature review does not include numerous brief reports or report booklets and pamphlets. It only highlights the contents of the published books.

people. It is a pioneering contribution to Korku linguistics. We shall briefly assess the impact of this work in Chapter 5 of this research.

**4.1.2 *Echoes from Bharatkhand (1908)*.** Co-authored by Ernest and Phebe Ward, *Echoes from Bharatkhand*, is a fine summary of the mission experiences of the Wards in central India during the first twenty-five years of their ministry. The first six chapters introduce the Hindu people, highlight their life and characteristics, make brief comparisons between Indians and Americans, point out linguistic challenges, and explain the caste system and practice of untouchability. Also, the issue of idolatry, pantheism, fate, and asceticism within Hinduism have been briefly discussed. The author laments over these teachings and practices of Hinduism and shows the urgency of presenting the good news of Jesus Christ to the Hindus. Chapter 7 focuses on the Muslim faith and practices as seen in central India with an illustration of a trip to Mecca. The chapter contains brief comparison between Hindus and Muslims and informs the reader on evangelism and conversion among them. In chapter 8 we are presented a detailed narrative of the life and conversion of a Muslim woman, Jewarbee, whom the Wards fondly call a trophy of God's grace from their ministry in Chhattisgarh. Chapters 9 and 10 describe the mission endeavors of the Wards in various places and among different people groups. Here we read about the opposition to mission work, struggles, and challenges, joys and fruits, and methods of missions adapted by the Wards. Chapters 11 and 12 paint the picture of a poverty-stricken land of India, famine relief works by the missionaries, and their orphanage ministry among the famine orphans of Chhattisgarh and Maharashtra. Chapters 13 and 14 introduce the mission fields in general. Geographical conditions, flora and fauna, agriculture, peoples and tribes, and fairs and festivals, are some of the key

themes discussed here. Chapter 15 is a case study of a select mission district called Wun (now Wani, a city in the Yavatmal district). Based on the 1901 census data, this chapter highlights demographics, condition of women, status of literacy, etc., and calls for greater interest in evangelization efforts. The concluding chapter primarily underlines the need for more missionaries and closes with an appeal to Christians in America to contribute towards India's redemption.

**4.1.3 *Memory Links* (1923).** The next book, *Memory Links* is a memorial volume celebrating the life of Ernest Ward's youngest daughter Mary Louise, who died at the age of 28. Edited by Ernest Ward, this book contains a brief biography of Louise, her select letters, literary productions, and obituaries. An important work included in this small book is Louise's write up on Indian women. It sheds lights condition of women with special reference to their education.<sup>20</sup> However, this booklet does not deal with any aspect of the life and ministry of the Wards.

**4.1.4 *Ordered Steps...* (1951).** The last but most important among the above two books is *Ordered Steps*. This is the only biography of the Wards. Written by their eldest daughter Ethel, this book is a chronological story of the life and ministry of Ernest and Phebe Ward. Ethel has made great use of personal experiences of living with her parents, personal correspondences, and diaries for her data in writing this beautiful biography. She also borrows significantly from *Echoes from Bharatkhand* and scantily refers to the *Memory Links*. The book is a powerful and emotional portrayal of the ventures and struggles of a great missionary couple. It is inspiring and genuine in its presentation.

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<sup>20</sup> This book is not to be confused with a periodical by the same name published by the Free Methodist missionaries in India. The occasional periodical "Letter Links" contained mission reports of the activities of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society of the Free Methodist Church in the Indian mission field.

However, the book leaves a wide-open space for exploring the historical, critical, theoretical, theological, and missiological aspects of the mission and thoughts of the Wards.

#### **4.2 Secondary Sources**

The secondary sources on the Wards can also be divided into two categories: Introductory (resources that point to the Wards) and general (resources that provide additional or corresponding data).

The introductory materials are very brief. They serve as indicators or short memos of the life and works of the Wards. Let me point out some of them. First, in 2015, *The Asbury Journal* first announced the availability of important archival materials on Ernest and Phebe Ward at the Asbury Theological Seminary Archives. It reads, “The Ernest F. Ward Collection contains diaries, letters, scrapbooks, and notebooks collected by various members of the family. It is a treasure trove of material revealing early holiness missions to India.”<sup>21</sup> Hidden in these collections are the narratives of mission, thoughts and practices, waiting for study and interpretation. Second, a one-page article, *Going Out*,

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<sup>21</sup> “From the Archives: Ernest F. Ward: The First Free Methodist Foreign Missionary,” *The Asbury Journal*, 70/1, 2015:178.

The Ward Family Collection Papers available in the Asbury Seminary archives belongs to the Marston Memorial Historical Center. The initial collection was arranged and microfilmed at Asbury Theological Seminary and a finding aid was prepared in 1989. Initially there were only four boxes but as I began my research, additional 16 boxes were brought in 2018 from the Center by Grace Yoder, the archivist at Asbury, for my use. Grace thinks that the first four boxes might have been purchased by the Seminary, but she is not sure (See, Grace Yoder, email correspondence, April 7, 2020). The other boxes she borrowed from the Center for my use and then to digitize them. The digitization of remaining files is still in progress. According to Cathy Robling, the Director of MMHC, the Ward materials are the property of MMHC and are currently loaned to Asbury Archives. The center hopes to house them back soon. (See, Cathy Robling, email correspondence, April 7, 2020). The Center’s archive is still in the making and when I went there for my research in November 2019, I was given the Bishop’s meeting room for study. Asbury seminary has a strong Free Methodist connection. Several faculty, staff, and student represent the FMC. All three of the current Bishops of the FMC-USA (elected 2019) are Asbury graduates. The Seminary’s First Fruits Press has republished all the Free Methodist publications in recent years. During 2015-16, I had the privilege to work in the Press and design and publish several important Free Methodist books.



written in 2012 by Sherrill Yardy, sums-up the life and ministry of the Wards in India. Yardy concludes that what made Ward “a great missionary and lover of souls is captured in the many volumes of his notebooks and diaries. Languages, medicine, statistics, nature and his unique hobby of collecting triads (groups of three found in Bible study and literature) found expression in their pages.”<sup>22</sup> A study of Ward’s notes, reports, bazaar sermons, etc., appear to be promising resources and tools to construct his understanding of mission. Finally, there are general historical monographs of the Free Methodist Church, namely, *Missions and Missionaries of the Free Methodist Church*, *Venture: The Frontiers of Free Methodism*,<sup>23</sup> and *The Challenge in Central India*<sup>24</sup> that contain short notes on Ernest and Phebe Ward. In less than three-pages each, these books summarize their call and ministry in India highlighting their significance as first foreign missionaries of the denomination.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Sherrill Yardy, “Going Out: Ernest and Phebe Ward.” Published in 2012, this article is available on the Free Methodist Church USA’s website, <http://fmcusa.org/fmwm/files/2012/08/23.pdf> (Accessed on February 9, 2018). I first met Sherrill Yardy on April 3, 2018 in Wilmore and then on several other occasions elsewhere. Enjoyed her hospitality and conversations in Indianapolis in November 2019.

<sup>23</sup> See, B. Winget, *Missions and Missionaries of the Free Methodist Church* (Wilmore, Kentucky: First Fruits Press, 2016. Originally published by the Free Methodist Church Publishing House, 1911), 47-49; and, Byron S. Lamson, *Venture: The Frontiers of Free Methodism* (Wilmore, Kentucky: First Fruits Press, 2016. Originally published by the Light and Life Press, 1960), 69-72.

<sup>24</sup> Rolland N. Davis, ed., *The Challenge in Central India* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Women's Missionary Society, Free Methodist Church, 1954).

<sup>25</sup> Other books which make passing mention of E. F. Ward and Phebe Ward as the first Free Methodist Missionaries include John M’Geary’s *The Free Methodist Church: A Brief Outline History of its Origin and Development* (Chicago: W. B. Rose, Publisher, 1908), Leslie Marston’s, *From Age to Age: A Living Witness* (Winona Lake, Indiana: Light and Life Press, 1960), two very short paragraphs on page 453, and, Atul Aghamkar and Wishwas Padole’s *Christian Missions in Maharashtra: Retrospect and Prospect* (Bangalore: TETRAWPOI, 2010), just one sentence on page 89.

It must be noted that M’Geary and Marston’s works are a general history of the denomination (FMC). Similarly, Aghamkar and Padole have written a general history of Christian missions in Maharashtra focusing largely on the endeavors of American Marathi Mission and other agencies.

Two more sources that deserve to be mentioned here are from India and by Indian writers. First, Subhash Patil's *History of The Free Methodist Church in India, 1881-1989*.<sup>26</sup> This book is a very brief history of one hundred and eight years of Free Methodism in India. Like other denominational works by the FMC-USA authors, it highlights the Wards' pioneering work in less than three pages. Second, Sanjay Makasare's *The Contemporary Mission Involvement of the Free Methodist Church of India*.<sup>27</sup> This unpublished Master of Theology in Missiology thesis is a useful source on the status of the Free Methodist Church in contemporary India. The purpose of the thesis is to "analyze the contemporary mission strategies and methods in the light of the founders [sic] vision of the Free Methodist Church."<sup>28</sup> This work too, like other denominational works, makes very brief references to the pioneering endeavors of the Wards. Thus, among all the secondary literature, published or unpublished, there is not even a full chapter published on the Wards. Most other denominational sources also remain introductory pointers at their best.

General secondary sources include various books and articles from other denominations, missions, and government sources that do not directly deal with the Wards but provide insights into their backgrounds and mission contexts, among other things. Famine reports and studies, census data, history of revivals, histories of partnering

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<sup>26</sup> Subhash Patil, *History of The Free Methodist Church in India, 1881-1989* (Yavatmal: The Literature Committee, India Free Methodist Conference, 1989).

<sup>27</sup> Sanjay Luis Makasare, *The Contemporary Mission Involvement of the Free Methodist Church of India in the Light of the Free Methodist Founding Vision*. Unpublished M.Th. Thesis. Union Biblical Seminary, Pune, 2008.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 7-8.

mission agencies, books addressing issues in mission, etc., will be some of the important general literature for the purpose of this research.

## **5. Scope and Delimitations**

This research is designed to be a biographical study. It attempts to do biography as missiology. It aims to present a historical sketch and thematic account of the life, mission endeavors, thoughts and legacy of Ernest and Phebe Ward in the light of their letters, missionary reports, and publications. The focus of this study, based on the availability of resources, therefore, is fivefold: (1) biography proper, (2) study of evangelistic and church planting endeavors, (3) study of humanitarian services, (4) study of interreligious encounters, and (5) explore the dominant theme (holiness) in the mission and message of the Wards. It will also draw brief reflections from each of the above themes and conclude with a final summary of findings and analysis. As this will be the first major research on the Wards, I would let the sources, facts and figures speak for themselves and shape and reshape the contents of this study. More than anyone, the Wards will be narrating their experience and thoughts directly for themselves.

This research will not explore the themes that do not have enough data or do not significantly contribute to the discussions of this study, such as, his collection of triads.<sup>29</sup> Also, the themes that need more fuller treatment than the scope of this study can undertake, such as lives and works of their Indian converts and colleagues or American missionary colleagues. Further, this study will not focus on the life and mission of Ethel

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<sup>29</sup> Triads are a collection of single sentenced quotes on various topics, ideas, and Bible verses that show a threefold expression of thought. Ward did not elaborate or comment on them. Thus, they remain mere collections and thus do not contribute to his thoughts or mission practice. He did plan on publishing them but never made it. If published, they would have served somewhat as a prototype of Bible thesaurus or concordance.

Ward, the oldest daughter of Ernest and Phebe, who was a lifelong Free Methodist missionary to India in her own right. Ethel's contributions to Christianity in India deserves a full study which is beyond the scope of this research. Similarly, the stories of their other children or grandchildren, especially Daniel Ward, the first Indian Bishop of the Free Methodist Church in India, must be another project.

## **6. Source, Method, and Theory**

This study will utilize the primary sources, such as diaries, letters, and scrapbooks available at the Asbury Theological Seminary Archives, the Marston Memorial Historical Center and Archives of the Free Methodist Church, the University of Virginia Library, and the British Library. It will also make use of relevant and accessible secondary sources, such as histories, correspondences, reports and denominational publications, and general resources available in the USA, India, and the United Kingdom.

As a missionary biography and study of Christian mission in central India, this study will utilize historical and missiological methods of narrating and interpreting the data. It will work with a thematic framework within the structure of chronological developments. Historically, I will trace the life of Ernest and Phebe Ward from their early years in Illinois to their missionary call to India. I will go on to construct their biography of the Indian years under a thematic framework.<sup>30</sup> Thus, in addition to describing their mission endeavors, I will also attempt to explore their understanding and reflections on evangelism and church planting, approach to other religions, etc. This thematic approach

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<sup>30</sup> In his exhaustive biography of the Methodist Bishop J. Waskom Pickett, Art McPhee has followed a thematic narrative structured in chronological developments. His research reads like a curious and engaging novel. I will be using a similar structure but without the tone or length of a novel. For McPhee's book, see, Arthur G. McPhee, *The Road to Delhi: J. Waskom Pickett and Mission in the Twilight of the Raj and Dawn of Nationhood* (Lexington, KY: Emeth Press, 2012), 650 pages.

is being applied as a tool to pay special attention on the missiological implications of the ministries of the Wards.

I am aware that “The writing of biographies is often about finding narrative threads and continuities that bind different events and periods in a life together in a coherent way.”<sup>31</sup> In my research, in addition to finding and connecting threads to events and periods, I hope to point out their thoughts and approaches and interpret them for their missiological implications. Thus, this will be an attempt toward working with the theoretical framework of biography as missiology. Biography as missiology may be defined as the study of missionary lives with special reference to their character and practices drawing lessons for missiological reflections in the context of cross-cultural missions.

On biography as missiology, mission historian Ruth Tucker makes an important point, “the lives themselves and how those lives are lived in mission is the most essential aspect of biography as missiology.”<sup>32</sup> This exactly is the theoretical and methodological angle of my research. Do the lives of Ernest and Phebe Ward represent such lives? Can their lives be seen as lived or activist missiology? This is the task of this research to explore.

Methodologically, a Christian biography may be written with different focuses such as, biography as mission history (Eddy 1945; Tucker 1983; Anderson 1994, 1999), mission history as biography (Shaw 2017), biography as theology (McClendon 1974;

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<sup>31</sup> See, “Constructing the Subject,” Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for the History and Theory of Biography (Porzellangasse 4/1/17) at <http://gtb.lbg.ac.at/en/4/5> (Accessed on Feb. 10, 2018).

<sup>32</sup> Ruth A. Tucker, “Biography as Missiology: Mining the Lives of Missionaries for Cross-Cultural Effectiveness,” *Missiology* 27, No. 4 (October 1999): 430. See, also, G. R. Hunsberger, “Biography as Missiology: The Case of Lesslie Newbigin,” *Missiology*, 27, No. 4 (October 1999): 523-531.

Tennent 2000), and biography as sacred biography (Heffernan 1988).<sup>33</sup> It may also be written by blending these approaches. I believe biography as missiology, and vice versa, is that approach which successfully blends all the above focuses. Therefore, my research holds the thesis that missionary biography, as an integral element in missiological study, can inform and enrich missiological reflections. Thus, unlike Tucker and Eddy's works, which are pure biographies, mine ventures into biography with thematic missiological reflections.

## 7. Contributions

This historical and biographical study of the life and mission of Ernest and Phebe Ward will make an important contribution to the study of missionary endeavors in colonial central India during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. At least three specific contributions may be highlighted: First, this will be the first ever historical survey and missiological reflection of the missionary lives and works of the Wards. Within the frameworks of biography as missiology, it will explore, for the first time, the nature and significance of their methods, themes, and impacts.

Second, this research will fill an important gap in the history of Christianity in general and the history of the Free Methodist Church in particular. A recent study of the mission involvement of the Free Methodist Church in India shows that the vision of the

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<sup>33</sup> See, Sherwood Eddy, *Pathfinders of the World Missionary Crusade* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1945), Ruth A. Tucker, *From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya: A Biographical History of Christian Missions*, Second edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), Gerald H. Anderson, et. al., eds., *Mission Legacies: Biographical Studies of Leaders of the Modern Missionary Movement* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1994) and *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans, 1999), Ian J. Shaw, *Christianity: The Biography: 2000 Years of Global History* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2017), James W. McClendon, Jr., *Biography as Theology: How Life Stories Can Remake Today's Theology* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1974), Timothy C. Tennent, *Building Christianity on Indian Foundations: The Legacy of Brahmabandhav Upadhyay* (Delhi: ISPCK, 2000), and Thomas J. Heffernan, *Sacred Biography: Saints and Their Biographers in the Middle Ages* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

founders is being forgotten by the new generation of membership and leadership in the Indian Free Methodist Church as they are “not fully aware.”<sup>34</sup> Interestingly, a similar situation was realized in the Free Methodist Church USA during the 1960s. An increasing lack of “the early evangelistic drive, the sense of mission,” etc. were strongly felt.<sup>35</sup> Such conclusions have serious implication for the life and mission of the Church, both now and in the future. While the situation may not be the same for Free Methodism worldwide, the issue (although specific to India) is noteworthy. Therefore, it calls for an urgent study and reflection of the vision and mission of the founders. My work is a timely response to such a call and a gentle reminder of the story of the founder of Free Methodism in India.

Finally, a major contribution of this study must be seen in the celebration of the legacy of a lesser-known missionary couple. Contrary to the popular approach (or common tendency) in biographical research, which tend to focus largely on famous missionaries only, this research will contribute a counter-tendency approach. This approach, therefore, works with a bottom-up point of view and hopes to be a useful resource of missiological reflection for aspiring missionaries, mission historians, and missiologists.<sup>36</sup> In other words, it proposes a subaltern missiology that highlights the lived or activist missiology of missionaries, in this case, the Wards, who are not missiologists but missionaries. A useful paradigm that explains this position is found in

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<sup>34</sup> See, Sanjay Luis Makasare, *The Contemporary Mission Involvement of the Free Methodist Church of India in the Light of the Free Methodist Founding Vision* (Unpublished M.Th. Thesis. Union Biblical Seminary, Pune, 2008), 77.

It must be noted that all the three current Bishops of the Free Methodist Church of the USA are Asbury graduates and great leaders after the hearts of founders of Free Methodism. To be sure, the FMC USA continues to follow in the footsteps of the Founders as much as possible.

<sup>35</sup> Byron S. Lamson, *Venture! The Frontiers of Free Methodism* (Winona Lake, IN: Light and Life Press, 1960), 135.

<sup>36</sup> I hope this research will inspire similar researches on lesser known missionaries.

the expression “missions at sunrise – missiology at sunset.”<sup>37</sup> This concept of missiological reflection refers to two things: actual mission work carried out by missionaries, and reflections on mission work by missiologists, respectively. Timothy Tennent suggests, “Missiology happens *after* the missionary advance: missions happens at “sunrise,” missiology at “sunset” .... Missions is activistic, missiology is more reflective.”<sup>38</sup> Looking back at the lives of the Wards can mean looking at the “missions at sunrise,” mission work carried out at by them, and not their missiology, as they could not devote sufficient time and resource to develop missiological reflections on their methods and approaches. Overall, this research will show that the missions of the Wards was more activistic than reflective and remain significant for discerning the trends of their time. It will become clear that Ernest and Phebe chiefly belong to the “sunrise,” and this is a descriptive study of their journey.

## **8. Chapter Highlights**

This research has five main chapters bracketed by this introductory first chapter and a concluding final chapter. Chapter 2 aims to present a biographical study of Ernest and Phebe Ward. Narrating their birth, new birth, family, and call to mission in India, this chapter points out their legacy as the pioneer missionaries of the Free Methodist Church.

Chapter 3 will explore the launching of the Wards into the Indian mission fields, their evangelistic and church planting activities, highlight their means and strategies, and

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<sup>37</sup> I am thankful to Dr Tennent for pointing this paradigm to me. See, Timothy C. Tennent, *Invitation to World Missions: A Trinitarian Missiology for the Twenty-First Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2010), 496. Tennent has borrowed his idea from the phrase “Mission at Daybreak” from the editors of *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* (Vol 23, No. 3, July 1999:1) who credit its usage to Andrew F. Walls.

<sup>38</sup> Timothy C. Tennent, *Invitation to World Missions: A Trinitarian Missiology for the Twenty-First Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2010), 496.



labors and fruits, in the witness of the gospel of Jesus Christ. This chapter will show, for the first time in history, how Ernest Ward was instrumental in the conversion of Narayan Vaman Tilak, the famous Christian poet of Maharashtra.

Chapter 4 outlines the Wards' works among the famine sufferers, orphanage, educational, medical, and other charitable works. The chapter also reflects on the denominational and organization conflicts they experienced and concludes with a brief note on the philanthropic vision of the Free Methodist Church. The chapter will show how the Wards remained faithful and humble ministers of the gospel in spite of the challenges they faced during their crucial and holistic mission endeavors.

Chapter 5 will explore some of the interreligious encounters of the Wards. It will begin by outlining their understanding of religion and Christian self-perception and go on to give a summary of their interaction with the tribal religion. Further, encounters with Hinduism its various forms and interaction with Indian Islam constitute the key themes of this chapter. Brief stories of significant tribal and Muslim converts will also be told. The chapter closes by looking at the Wards' approaches and responses to non-Christian religions in their mission fields.

Exploring the holiness roots of the Wards, Chapter 6 attempts to highlight that the concept of Christian holiness was the dominant theme in their lives and ministries. This chapter seeks to argue that from their conversion to missionary call, and from evangelism to interreligious encounters, all their engagements were inspired and focused on this significant theme. In the process, Ward's experience, writings, and sermons on holiness will be examined to shed light on the theme of holiness. In addition, Ward's contribution

to the holiness movement, with special reference to the India Holiness Association, will be explored.

The final and concluding chapter of this research will do three things: first, present a summary of findings; second, highlight missiological implications; third and final, point out significant impacts and offer an overall concluding remark.

## **9. A Note on Language**

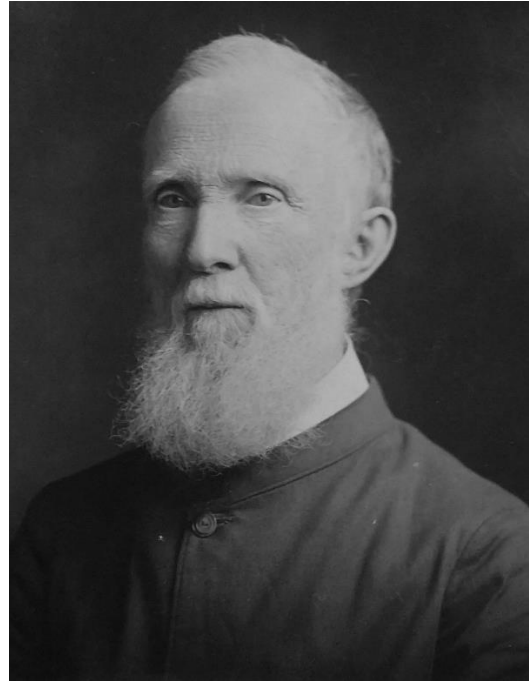
This research is presented in what may be called a simple yet mixed English. It attempts to make my north Indian English serve in its best capacity to the demand of an American English. I believe I will always do better in Hindi. This is because English is my fifth language and I am still working on it. The challenge of language continues even in the USA. Here too, Kentucky English is not the same as Yankee English, and so on. However, it has been a real adventure to explore and engage with old as well as new English, from Wards' eighteenth and nineteenth century English to the English of our own times. I hope you have the same experience in reading this research.

The use of Hindi, Chhattisgarhi, or Marathi is retained only when the original source contains it. Where both Hindi and English sources are available, such as the testimonies or sermons, I have quoted from the English version. A glossary of Indian terms is provided at the end (See, Appendix 2).

The names of places are used interchangeably. For example, Yavatmal was spelled Yeotmal during Wards' time. I have attempted to use all the current spelling, such as Pune, as much as possible in my description. However, I have kept the actual spellings, such as Poona, in the direct quotations.



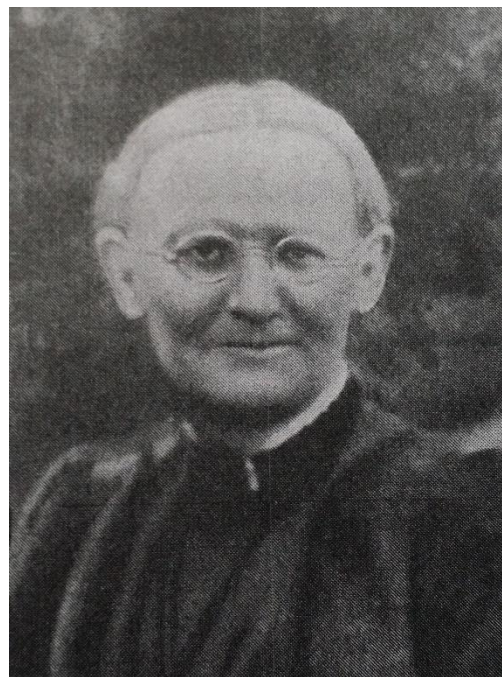
*Image 1. Ernest Ward, 1880*



*Image 2. Ernest Ward, 1921*



*Image 3. Phebe Cox, 1878*



*Image 4. Phebe Ward, 1910*



*Image 5. Phebe with her parents, 1862*



*Image 6. Daughters of Ernest and Phebe Ward. L-R: Louise, Bessie, and Ethel, c.1910*

## Chapter 2

### THE LIVES AND LEGACY OF ERNEST AND PHEBE WARD

If I know my own heart, I have one ambition paramount to all others: To so accurately exhibit Jesus Christ in my life and conversation as to *stimulate seekers, promote revivals, and hasten the millennium.*

– Ernest F. Ward<sup>1</sup>

I suppose I'll have to get religion sometime before I die, and I'm going to get this happy kind if I do.

– Phebe E. Cox (Ward)<sup>2</sup>

#### 1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present a short biography of Ernest and Phebe Ward. A biographical exploration of the life of a missionary is a sacred endeavor. It is not only about studying the lives of the saints of God, but also about exploring what God has done in and through them. Sometimes these saints are found among the ordinary people who respond to God's missionary call. Christ often calls common people for His uncommon mission. The Holy Spirit often transforms those called ones into powerful witnesses. God often uses ordinary lives to carry out His extraordinary mission. One such lives was that of the Wards. Ernest and Phebe Ward were an ordinary couple with an extraordinary calling. This chapter narrates the story of their lives – birth and upbringing, family and society, religion and conversion, vocation and aspirations, and the call to

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<sup>1</sup> Ernest F. Ward, *General Triads E*, No. 10696-97 (n.d.). Emphasis original. The Ernest F. Ward Collection, Asbury Theological Seminary Archives, Wilmore, Kentucky (hereafter, Ward Collection ATS).

<sup>2</sup> Phebe E. Cox to her family c.1874. See, Ethel Ward, *Phebe* (unpublished manuscript, n.d., probably written during 1910, 1937, and 1950. Portions of this manuscripts appear in biographical chapter on Phebe in the *Ordered Steps*), 23. Ward Collection ATS.

Christian mission. The chapter also mourns their death, but not without the promise to explore their contributions to missions in the chapters to follow. As a historical account of the lives of missionaries in focus, this chapter focuses primarily on the human element, the journey of the Wards within the framework of the mission of God. However, it does not neglect the religious or spiritual element, the guidance of the Lord in their mission endeavors. It also does not ignore their place within the holiness movement which was instrumental in their conversion and call to missions. Thus, it highlights the significance of a couple's life and commitment to spread the Gospel and Scriptural holiness among the people of India. This is the story of Ernest and Phebe Ward, missionaries to central India.

## **2. The Life of Ernest Fremont Ward**

### ***2.1 Long Overdue in Heaven***

The Psalmist says, "Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his faithful servants." (Ps. 116:15 NIV). The midnight of November 3, 1937 witnessed one such precious death in Los Angeles, CA. The Rev. Ernest F. Ward, the 84-year-old retired missionary of the Free Methodist Church, had entered his eternal rest. Not long before the death of this precious servant of God, someone had remarked concerning him saying that this elderly gentleman was "long overdue in heaven."<sup>3</sup>

Ernest Ward's funeral service was conducted by the Rev. W. B. Olmstead, Ernest's long-time friend. William B. Olmstead (1862-1941) had served as a pastor in the Ohio and Michigan Conferences, as the editor of the Sunday School literature, and in the

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<sup>3</sup> Ethel E. Ward, *Ordered Steps or the Wards of India* (Winona Lake, IN: Light and Life Press, 1951), 185. (Hereafter, *Ordered Steps*).

office of Missionary Secretary of the Free Methodist Church for several years. After his retirement in 1933 he was pastoring the church in Los Angeles.<sup>4</sup> Rev. Olmstead preached from Daniel 12:3, “And they that are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.”<sup>5</sup> This verse truly described and summed up the life of the man of God being laid to his eternal peace. Ernest Ward had indeed led many orphans, men and women, sons and daughters of India, to salvation and righteousness in Christ. He was a light of Christ who shined for India’s salvation. He was not only aware of the need of gospel light in India but had also responded with all his life to meet that need. He was aware of the dark and had decided to shine the light.

There is a dark dense mass of over *one million* of our Indian brothers living mostly in hamlets in the eastern part of Central Provinces and north of the Bustar state among whom *no mission work has ever been done*. They embrace Hindi, Gondi, Koi and Oriya speaking people besides many other tribes. This is an intensely needy field and God has been laying it especially upon our hearts. The natives are docile, but exceedingly superstitious, ignorant and heathenish. A tribe in this part of India until quite recently offered human beings in sacrifice to their gods....In the good mercy of God we hope to lead out a band of Holy Ghost baptized, well-tried workers to this part of India and plant the standard of our King among these long-neglected tribes.<sup>6</sup>

Having lived the life of a faithful witness to the light of Christ, Ernest Ward had moved on to the presence of the eternal light itself. He had joined his Lord and Master in

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<sup>4</sup> See, E. E. Smith, “Obituary of Rev. William B. Olmstead,” *The Free Methodist*, October 31, 1941: 5.

<sup>5</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all scripture quotations in this study are taken from the King James Version (KJV) as that was the popular version used by the Wards, their colleagues, and other Christians and missionaries of their times.

<sup>6</sup> Ernest Ward, “Darkest India! Shall be Redeemed,” *The Vanguard* (from the clipping, Cf. *Scrapbook One*, 161. Emphasis original. Ward Collection ATS. Throughout this dissertation the terms “heathen, heathenism, or heathenish” are taken from the main sources. The Wards and their generation used this language. I would use the term “non-Christians” to describe them.

the great company of pilgrims, as he used to call his fellow Christians. His body lies buried in the family plot of the Evergreen Cemetery in Los Angeles, CA.

Ernest Ward had retired in 1927 after nearly half a century of active missionary works in India. *The Indian Witness* published the following brief account of his work just before his retirement,

The Christians of Burhanpur city greatly rejoiced in having as their guest for two days last week, the Rev. E. F. Ward of the Free Methodist Church of Darhwa. In 1881 Mr. Ward came with his wife to Burhanpur, the first missionaries to work in this place. In a native house in the town, their eldest daughter Miss. Ethel Ward, now a missionary in Darhwa was born. In 1882 he moved into the bungalow he had built and which is now occupied by a missionary of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church. After nearly half a century of missionary service Mr. Ward turns his face home-ward next month not expecting to return to this land of his adoption. These last days in India are crowded full of service for the King. Very unassuming, very gentle, and with face aglow with the radiance of Heaven itself, this "Grand Old Man" challenges us to deeper consecration, worthier living, nobler thoughts and incessant labour for the coming of the Kingdom of our God.<sup>7</sup>

India was the first foreign mission field of the Free Methodist Church with Ernest Ward and his wife Phebe Ward as the pioneers.<sup>8</sup> After his retirement he had settled at Los Angeles (See Image 12). Many of his family members and friends had already moved to Los Angeles in the previous years from Illinois. The reason for this westward move was better opportunities and new ventures. Ernest's second daughter Bessie lived there and served as a nurse. In fact, she attended to Ernest Ward in his retirement years. Ernest

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<sup>7</sup> E. E. R. [Ethel E. Ruggles], "The Christians of Burhanpur," *The Indian Witness*, March 30, 1927: 201 (9). Miss Ruggles was a missionary of the Episcopal Methodist Church at Khandwa, Central Provinces, during the publication of this writeup. Title mine. *The Indian Witness* has this paragraph under its regular column titled "Of Personal Interest."

<sup>8</sup> Leslie R. Marston, *From Age to Age A Living Witness: A Historical Interpretation of Free Methodism's First Century* (Winona Lake, IN: Light and Life Press, 1960), 453. See also, Rolland N. Davis, ed., *The Challenge in Central India* by Members of the Free Methodist Mission and Church, Yeotmal, M.P., India (Winona Lake, IN: Light and Life Press, 1954), 45.



Ward remained active in ministry until his health gave in. He spoke regularly at the Hermon Free Methodist Church and attended the Free Methodist Camp Meetings. In addition, he participated in the annual conventions of the World's Fundamentalist Association, National Association of Holiness at Peniel Mission, among others. About his post-retirement ministry involvements, Ward writes to his oldest daughter Ethel, "I call on people now and then in the neighborhood, give out papers and tracts, and sometimes pray when they allow me to."<sup>9</sup> Thus, Ward had continued to serve as an independent evangelist and spiritual witness to the people in his neighborhood. This passion for witness was an extension of his years of mission work in India. He was an untiring soldier of the good news. He was always looking for ways to contact people and talk to them about Jesus Christ his Lord and Master.

In nearly half a century of missionary work in India, Ward had taken only five furloughs. During each of these furloughs to the USA, he would take time, in addition to preaching in churches, to search for Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, and other people from India who had moved to the USA. He will make every attempt to visit and pray for them or at least give them some gospel tracts. Whenever Ward visited the USA, he would be constantly "hunting up Hindus."<sup>10</sup> He would search for them and share about Jesus in Hindustani. He would give them tracts. Tract distribution was a huge passion of Ward.

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<sup>9</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to Ethel Ward, 557 Redfield Ave, Los Angeles, Nov 2, 1928. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>10</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to Ethel Ward, 557 Redfield Ave., Los Angeles, California, May 2, 1921. Ward Collection ATS. Ernest Ward's *Scrapbook, No. 11*, c.1881-1904, 295 has a clipping of the news title "Eighteen Hindus Arrive in Seattle: Men State that Condition of Their Countrymen in Vancouver is Pitiful." Ward dates this 1907. It seems to me that Ward was conscious of Hindus going to America and was committed to reach them out with gospel. No doubt during his furloughs he would make sure to hunt for Hindus and Muslims from India.

Wherever he went, he had tracts and talks to share. This he did to lead people to seek holiness and help them enter the Kingdom of God. Saving souls was his prayer and passion. Even in his physical weakness, he continued to remain active acknowledging the grace of God. He wrote,

I only pray that my probation may be lengthened out that I may help pray souls into the Kingdom of God and help stimulate souls to seek holiness. Scarcely a day passes by but I improve the opportunity of distributing good papers and praying in different homes. I gave out over a hundred last week altho [sic] a good deal of time I have to drag myself around on account of the weakness of my legs. If God didn't help me I couldn't do a thing.<sup>11</sup>

He was truly gifted in evangelism. Who was this man of God? Let us begin with his birth and family.

## ***2.2 Birth and Family***

Ernest Fremont Ward (See Images 1 and 2) was born on Monday, April 25, 1853 in the small town of Elgin in Kane County, Illinois.<sup>12</sup> His parents, Pindar and Emily Ward, had seven children. Ernest was the second child and first boy in the family. Ernest had one older sister, four younger sisters, and a younger brother.<sup>13</sup> Ernest's mother Emily was a homemaker. She was a prayerful woman. Emily Jeanette Wilbur was born on

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<sup>11</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to Ethel Ward, 573 Kendall Ave, Los Angeles, Aug 7, 1930. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>12</sup> For Kane County, see, <http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/685.html> and Historical Encyclopedia of Illinois and History of Kane County, 1904.

<sup>13</sup> Names of the seven children of Pindar and Emily are (in order of birth): Eudora Julia Ward-Davidson (Oct 17, 1851 – Aug 24, 1926), Ernest Fremont Ward, Charles Summer Ward (b. February 1, 1860), Clara Mable Ward-Small (October 18, 1863 – Oct 18, 1908), Louie Beatrice Ward (b. January 30, 1865 – date of demise unknown), Bessie Helen Ward (October 22, 1868 – Aug 17, 1889), and Mary Constance Ward-Klages (b. Oct 31, 1871).

December 24, 1831<sup>14</sup> in Portland, New York. Emily was the third and youngest child of John and Mary (Brown) Wilbur of Portland, NY.<sup>15</sup>

Pindar, Ernest's father, worked at the County Clerk's office in Geneva, Ill. until he moved to California. Pindar Field Ward was born on July 4, 1826 in Palmer, Massachusetts. Pindar's parents, Calvin and Abigail Ward, were among the earliest immigrants of Kane County, who came to Illinois from Massachusetts in 1835 and located in the Town of St. Charles. They had ten children and the one best known throughout the vicinity was Pindar Ward.<sup>16</sup> From the age of 12, Pindar was active in real life work experiences such as assisting in trade and business. He worked at the local store run by Mr. B. W. Raymond at Elgin.<sup>17</sup> Pindar went on to work with Paul R. Wright, the Circuit Clerk and Recorder at Geneva. Later he also served in that capacity for four years and moved on to California.<sup>18</sup> Kane County people spoke highly of Pindar's friendly character, "A noteworthy feature of ... wide acquaintanceship of Mr. Ward was that, without exception, those who came to know him at all regarded him as a friend, and what with many would have been a simple acquaintance, ripened with nearly all of them into a warm and lasting friendship."<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> According to one source the date is Dec. 28, 1835. See, Lora Altine Woodbury Underhill, *The Descendants of Edward Small of New England and the Allied Families with Tracings of English Ancestry* (Cambridge, MA: The University Press, 1910), 296. I have the PDF file of the book in my digital library.

<sup>15</sup> John Wilbur was born in Rhode Island (May 4, 1791) and died in Elgin, Ill. (May 4, 1847). Emily's siblings included Julia Hayes (1827-1914) and Geo D. Wilbur (1829-1898). Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>16</sup> *The Golden Anniversary of Mr. and Mrs. P. F. Ward*, unknown author, n.d., typed script, p. 1. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

Pindar's friendly personality gained him compliments in his business dealings as well. On his commercial skills it was noted, "Those who followed Mr. Ward's business career through the many years of his large and numerous activities in Kane County well know how thoroughly, from first to last, he deserved the high compliment..."<sup>20</sup> Even after relocating to California, Pindar was dearly loved and missed by the people in his home county. His relocation was considered a personal loss for many. It is said, "no man ever left this vicinity with more friends, and friends too who felt a sense of personal loss in his going away, than did Mr. [Pindar] Ward."<sup>21</sup>

Pindar Ward married Emily Wilbur on January 19, 1851.<sup>22</sup> After establishing the family and business, and a fruitful life of over 25 years in the region, they moved to Los Angeles. Ethel Ward recollects that her grandparents lived at 818 Sunset Blvd, then known as Bellevue Avenue.<sup>23</sup> It was the desire to explore greater opportunities promised by emerging megacities that attracted the Ward family to the West. Many other business folks were also moving West under the influence or pressure of the time. Pindar and Emily were blessed with several grand-children and great grand-children. Emily departed this world on January 9, 1905.<sup>24</sup> Pindar followed her after four years, entering his eternal rest on June 1, 1909. Both are buried in the Evergreen Cemetery in Los Angeles, CA.

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>22</sup> See, record of marriages in Kane County, at: <http://genealogytrails.com/ill/kane/marriages.html> (Accessed Feb 18, 2019, 10:55am).

<sup>23</sup> Ethel Ward, *Yesterday Today* (Unpublished story, 1937-38, Typed manuscript. Written from 573 Kendall Ave, Los Angeles, CA), 1. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>24</sup> Ernest's genealogy table has the year 1904, but the note about his mom's last letter has 1905. The later must be correct.

Ernest's grandparents, Calvin and Abigail, came from reputed backgrounds.

Abigail Morse (aka, Nabbie or Nabby) was born in 1785. She was a relative of Samuel Morse, portrait painter and inventor of the single wire telegraph.<sup>25</sup> Nabby married Calvin on April 19, 1806. Calvin and Nabby had ten children.<sup>26</sup> She died on April 8, 1868 at St. Charles, Ill.

Calvin Ward was one of the pioneer settlers and founders of the village of Charleston (now the City of St. Charles, Ill).<sup>27</sup> Born in 1784 at Palmer, Mass., he had moved to Illinois in 1835 and settled on the banks of the Fox River, about 36 miles from Chicago. Calvin died on July 30, 1869, less than a year after his wife's demise. Ernest was only a teenager when he lost his beloved grandparents. It is told that Calvin Ward had the qualities of a New England Puritan. Puritans were like the followers of John Calvin.<sup>28</sup> Calvin Ward was a religious as well as "a strong anti-slavery man."<sup>29</sup> Ernest writes that his grandfather "used to help runaway slaves across the line. In this feeling and ministry his wife fully shared."<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> For Samuel Morse, see, Mary Bellis, "Biography of Samuel F.B. Morse, Inventor of the Telegraph" *ThoughtCo*, Feb.11, 2020, [thoughtco.com/biography-of-samuel-morse-1992165](http://thoughtco.com/biography-of-samuel-morse-1992165)

<sup>26</sup> The names of the children are, Graves Ward (1807-1869), Clarissa Ward (1808-1908), Prudence Ward [Freson] (1812-1902), Maria Caldwell (1814-1878), Abigail Ward (1818-1880), Urijah Franklin Ward (1820-1895), Lorenzo Ward (1822-1890), Brandish Calvin Ward (1824-1920), Pindar Field Ward (1826-1909), and Sampson Villard Ward (1828-1848). Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>27</sup> According to Genealogy Trails, Calvin Ward was, "Three of the most active and enterprising men who have contributed to the progress of the town and county." See, <http://genealogytrails.com/ill/kane/stcharles.html>. The other two men being Solomon Dunham and Mark W. Fletcher. This source also mentions Mr. Rice Fay as one of the first settlers in the area (1834).

<sup>28</sup> For Puritans, see, "Puritans of Massachusetts: Theocracy or Democracy?" *Bill of Rights in Action*, Vol. 29 No. 1, Fall 2013:1. Published by Constitutional Rights Foundation.

<sup>29</sup> Ernest Ward, *Genealogical Table of Ward Family*, typed entry, p. 2, n.d. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

Politically, the Ward family tended to be staunch republican. Also, several people in the Ward family had ensured patriotic participation. In Ernest Ward's genealogy,<sup>31</sup> there are at least six people who had served in the Civil War. He talks about his great grandfather Urijah Ward as one of the "Minute men" during 1775. Urijah was born to Obadiah and Elizabeth in 1746 at Union, Connecticut. The Military Records of Massachusetts show that Urijah served over eight months in the War of Revolution and came out with the rank of Lieutenant. Urijah Ward married Prudence Wood Clark on November 8, 1764." Ernest's great grandmother Prudence died on December 15, 1815. Urijah and Prudence were the parents of Calvin Ward. Calvin had inherited spiritual, patriotic as well as pioneering spirit from his parents. The family stood for freedom and equality of all people and were thus opposed to slavery. Ernest Ward makes the following comments with special reference to his family's patriotism and abolitionism:

Whatever fault may be justly charged to the Ward family in general, I think as a rule it will be conceded that they were not wanting in patriotism. One of the descendants of the original William Ward, but another line, was Artemus Ward a Major General in the War of Revolution. To my own knowledge at least four of my cousins served in the Civil War. My father, and I think most of my uncles and aunts, were outspoken abolitionists.<sup>32</sup>

Talking about his family's involvement in Civil War, Ernest fondly recounts his excitement following Abraham Lincoln's election as the President of the USA. He notes:

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<sup>31</sup> Ernest Ward traces his genealogy to William Ward of Yorkshire, England who had immigrated to America and settled in Sudbury, Massachusetts in 1639. William Ward (d. 1680) and his wife Elizabeth Ward (d. 1700) were the parents of Obadiah Ward (1632-1758). Obadiah and Mary were the parents of William Ward [II] (1670-1746). William [II] was born in Sudbury and later moved with his parents to Union, Mass. William's son William Ward, Jr. (b. 1691) lived in Marlboro, Ashford and Union. He was the father of Obadiah (b. Feb. 24, 1715), the father of Urijah, the great grandfather of Ernest Ward. See, *Genealogical Table of Ward Family*. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>32</sup> Ernest Ward, *Genealogical Table of Ward Family*, typed entry, p. 1, n.d. Ward Collection ATS.

It would be impossible for me to forget the excitement of those days when Abraham Lincoln was elected President. I was only in my eighth year but it seems but yesterday when I followed my father and other patriots about while they illuminated the public buildings with tallow candles in commemoration of that event. That was when coal oil had got fairly into use, and electric lights were not dreamed of. But it was a mighty patriotic shine, and one I shall never forget.<sup>33</sup>

Ernest was so fond of Lincoln that he tried to establish some connection with his family, even if it was through the log cabin. Ernest's genealogical notebook contains two pictures of log cabins. One is a grayscale image of Abraham Lincoln's birth home in Kentucky.<sup>34</sup> The other picture is a color painting showing a similar log house on a roadside near the woods. Under this picture Ernest notes, "Like this log house my grandfather lived in at first settlement in Charleston, Ills. 1835, Fox River Valley."<sup>35</sup> To be sure the likeness was not just of the log cabin of Abraham Lincoln but also of the spirit of abolitionism and patriotism that the Ward family shared with Lincoln. It will not be out of place to say that young Ernest inherited a good portion of Lincolnian passion for equality and justice from his family.

### ***2.3 Education and Vocation***

Ernest grew up in Geneva, a neighboring town about 12 miles south of Elgin, where his parents had relocated sometimes after his birth. Known as "Ernie" in his childhood, Ernest was his grandmother's favorite. Ernest was a "book worm" from his early days. One night he fell asleep while reading and knocked over the lamp,

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> It is a tiny log house now preserved as a national monument. I have personally visited this place with my family and amazed at the humble beginning of Lincoln.

<sup>35</sup> Ernest Ward, *Genealogical Table of Ward Family*, manuscript, p. 16, n.d. Ward Collection ATS.

endangering his life on house fire. Thanks to the caring grandmother who saved him just in time.<sup>36</sup> Ethel recollects her father's childhood:

He enjoyed roaming with his father in the beautiful Illinois woods, and listening to the crickets chirp, the birds sing, the frogs croak and the squirrels chatter. He took great delight in collecting geological specimens, stuffed birds, insects, old coins, stamps and autographs of noted men. Making scrap books ... was another of his hobbies. Books on zoology, botany, geology, astronomy were so fascinating to him that he read them out of school hours as a pastime.<sup>37</sup>

Ernest had received a Diploma for Penmanship in 1866. After attending public school in Geneva, he went to Chicago for college education. In Chicago, he studied business, law and commerce. He was a member of the Bryan Stratton Business Colleges (aka Commerce College). Ernest graduated from the Commerce College on May 5, 1870.<sup>38</sup> The following year Ernest also earned a Certificate of School Teaching dated Oct 23, 1871.<sup>39</sup>

A job was waiting for him at his familiar workplace, the abstract office. Thus, Ernest was employed at the Kane County Court house in Geneva. This is the same courthouse where his father was already working. Pindar Ward was the Circuit Clerk and Recorder. Ernest initially worked as an assistant. He worked here until responding to his missionary call.

At the courthouse, one of his classmates, August Drams, was one of his colleagues. Ernest writes that he met August Drams in 1920 in Los Angeles after 40 long

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<sup>36</sup> *Ordered Steps*, 19.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>38</sup> A copy of his diploma may be found in the Papers of Ernest Ward Collection at Asbury Theological Seminary Archives (Ward Papers ATS). See also, Ernest Ward, *Diary 367* (n.d.), 259-260. This diary contains a list of all his certificates, diplomas and important documents.

<sup>39</sup> Ernest Ward, *Diary 367* (n.d.), 259-260. Ward Collection ATS.



years. Drums had become a chaplain at California State Penitentiary in Frisco, CA.<sup>40</sup> Another classmate, Edmund Wilson had become a Professor of Biology at Columbia University, NY.<sup>41</sup> Ward recalls, “E.W. and I studied in the same public school in Geneva, Ill. 1868-9. But he was 5 or 6 yrs [sic] older than me.”<sup>42</sup> Ernest kept track of most of his classmates.<sup>43</sup> He undoubtedly prayed for their salvation even as he did for his family members.

As a boy, Ernest was his grandma’s favorite. She loved his singing. Ernest was spiritually inclined and intellectually curious. He took active part in youth activities, especially literary ones. He was an active member of the Cicero Debating Club of Geneva. Ernest has the following to inform us about this club,

It was a boy’s club and there were about 20 of us in it. I used to keep the minutes and there were 40 to 50 questions we debated over reported. When we returned to America in 1892, I tore it all up together with a lot of my old diaries, letters etc. The club went out of sight about the year 1872 and so have most of the “boys.” Some of them have died... such is life.<sup>44</sup>

The task of keeping minutes puts Ernest in the office of the secretary, if not President, of the club. He loved books. He was a curious student all his life. Surely the foundations were laid from early childhood itself. He loved the Bible, the hymn book,

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<sup>40</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to Ethel Ward, 557 Redfield Avenue, Los Ang., Cal., Nov 3, 1920. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>41</sup> On Edmund Wilson, see, <https://embryo.asu.edu/pages/edmund-beecher-wilson-1856-1939>.

<sup>42</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to Ethel Ward, 2127 Maple Ave, Evanston, Ills., July 11, 1927. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>43</sup> He writes, “I have the addresses of others of my schoolmates but shall not be able, I fear, to hunt them all up. One of them and his wife (both my schoolmates) who is a wealthy printer and engraver in Chicago is now on a tour around the world and may be traveling thro’ [sic] India about now. 2 others went to Hawaian [sic] Islands married half-castes and are immensely wealthy – but I fear *not in grace*.” (Ernest Ward, Letter to Ethel Ward, 557 Redfield Ave., Los Angeles, California, Feb 25, 1921). Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>44</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to Ethel Ward, No. 20, Wun, Nov 27, 1905. Ward Collection ATS.

and the Sunday school study books. He loved his Sunday School classes in the church. One of his Sunday School teachers was Mr. Beebe of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Geneva. Ernest happened to meet Beebe's son in 1921 and was glad to refresh the memories from over fifty years. He writes, "I just called on Dr. Curtis M. Beebe downtown. His father Geo. Beebe was my S.S. teacher in Geneva Ills. 50 years ago and I had not seen either of them in about that space of time. He belongs to the M.E.Ch. [Methodist Episcopal Church] and was wonderfully glad to see me as we went to the same school in our youth."<sup>45</sup>

In God's wonderful plan, the future pioneer overseas missionary of the Free Methodist Church was being raised in the Methodist Episcopal Church. How did Ernest move from Methodism to Free Methodism? We explore next.

#### ***2.4 The Church in Geneva, Illinois***

The Methodist Episcopal Church in Geneva was Ernest's mother church. This and other Methodist churches in the Fox River Valley (Elgin, St. Charles, Aurora) as well as Galena, Peoria, Plainfield and Chicago, owe their origins to the ministry of Jesse Walker (1766-1835). Walker was the pioneer circuit rider (from 1806) and presiding elder of northern Illinois from 1823 until his retirement in 1834. He had also worked in Tennessee and Kentucky prior to being commissioned to Illinois.<sup>46</sup> Ernest was a member of the

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<sup>45</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to Ethel Ward, 557 Redfield Ave., Los Angeles, California, Feb 25, 1921. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>46</sup> See, J. Gordon Melton, *Log Cabins to Steeples: The Complete Story of the Uni Methodist Way in Illinois, Including All Constituent Elements of the United Methodist Church* (Chicago, IL: Commissions on Archives and History, Northern, Central, and Southern Illinois Conferences, 1974), 30-31. For early Methodism in Geneva area during Ernest's upbringing, see, Almer Pennewell, *The Methodist Movement in Northern Illinois* (Sycamore, 1942), 15-73.

Methodist Episcopal Church Sunday School, Geneva, (membership certificate dated Jan 16, 1876 and held life membership with the American Bible Society (certificate dated May 29, 1878)).<sup>47</sup>

In addition to the Methodist Episcopal Church, other older churches in Geneva include the First Congregational Church - United Church of Christ (1849), Geneva Lutheran Church (1853) and St. Peter Catholic Church (1891). Just 2.3 miles north of Geneva, in the city of St. Charles, there was also a Free Methodist Church (1860) among other denominations, viz., Roman Catholic, Lutheran, etc. It was this Free Methodist Church at St. Charles that would be hosting a Camp Meeting in 1876 where Ernest will have a whole new direction added to his life and future.

Although Ernest grew up in the Methodist church, his personal spiritual quest for a genuine experience of Wesleyan holiness would soon transform not only his religious life but also his affiliation with the church. This transformation was kindled through a significant experience of conversion.

## ***2.5 Conversion and Spiritual Life***

Ernest's spiritual journey, prior to his missionary journey, can be divided into three successive stages. First, his conversion experience of November of 1871. Second, his quest for the "more perfect way" from March of 1873. Third, the joining the Free Methodist Church in July of 1879. Each phase was dedicated to growing closer to Christ

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<sup>47</sup> Ernest Ward, *Diary 367* (n.d.), 259-260. Ward Collection ATS. This diary contains a list of all his certificates, diplomas and important documents.

in his grace, receiving the blessings of entire sanctification, holiness and love. Ernest narrates his conversion experience as follows:

On the 14<sup>th</sup> day of November 1871, God sent a dispatch from heaven to assure me that my sins were blotted out in the blood of his Son, and my soul was filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Praise God and the Lamb forever. At the time of my conversion I had but little idea of the true nature of sanctification or holiness; in fact, I do not remember of hearing anything said about holiness as a special work at this time, in the way it was taught by John Wesley and the early Methodists.<sup>48</sup>

Ernest was converted in the meetings of Rev. R. S. Cantine, a Methodist Episcopal minister from Los Angeles. Rev. Cantine is another lesser known minister who was used by God in the conversion of Ward. Who has ever heard of him? Christian history is filled with examples of how God has used unknown or lesser known ministers to bring great future missionaries to faith. Other examples include, William Holland, instrumental in John Wesley's conversion at Aldersgate. Almost the entire world knows John Wesley, but who knows William Holland? It was Holland who was reading Martin Luther's preface to the Romans and Wesley heard it and his heart was at once "strangely warmed."<sup>49</sup> Similarly, the famous Billy Graham was converted at the meeting of a Baptist preacher Mordecai Ham. We have all heard about Graham but who knows Ham?<sup>50</sup> Ward stands in this line of lesser known preachers who have been instrumental in touching

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<sup>48</sup> Ernest F. Ward, "Experience," *The Free Methodist*, Oct 8, 1879: 2 (Written from Geneva, Ill., Sep. 24, 1879). See *Scrapbook 1877*, 20-21. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>49</sup> This happened on May 24, 1738. See, John Wesley, *The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.: Enlarged from Original Mss., with Notes from Unpublished Diaries, Annotations, and Illustrations*, Standard Edition, Vol. 1 edited by Nehemiah Curnock (London: Robert Culley, 1909), 475-76. For a recent biography of Wesley, see, Kenneth J. Collins, *A Real Christian: The Life of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000).

<sup>50</sup> See, Billy Graham, *Just As I Am: The Autobiography of Billy Graham* (HarperSanFrancisco/Zondervan, 1997), 21-22, 25-31

great lives. Who would have thought that Ward will preach to someone in a train in India and he will be the famous N. V. Tilak?<sup>51</sup>

Wallace Gladwin, another lesser known missionary to India, writes, “In L.A. I met the spiritual father of E. F. Ward. The pastor of the First M.E. Church, Brother Cantine, says that Ernest was converted in his meetings in Illinois. How I wish the great M.E. church would set on fire and send out to India a thousand such men as the Wards...”<sup>52</sup> Remembering his conversion experience and the way God had guided him over the years after that, Ernest could always feel joyful and amazed at God’s love in his life. He writes, “When I look back over the way in which God has led me these years, my heart leaps with joy and gladness. Blessed be his eternal name.”<sup>53</sup> With the experience of forgiveness of sins, the Holy Spirit gave him the desire to go deeper into the experience of holiness or sanctification. But the theme of holiness was not much a subject of the sermons preached in Ernest’s home church. From his childhood to his conversion, it seems he had never heard a teaching or sermon on holiness. He recounts,

The first sermon on the subject I remember of hearing, was preached by Rev. A. H. Miller, of the M. E. Church, March 16, 1873. This led me to inquire into the “more perfect way,” and having seen a copy of the *Advocate of Christian Holiness*, I subscribed for, and diligently read this journal for three years. This convinced me beyond a reasonable doubt that the blessing of entire sanctification is the privilege and duty of every believing child of God, to be entered into and enjoyed by faith now.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> For Tilak’s story, see next chapter.

<sup>52</sup> Wallace J. Gladwin, “India Pleading in California,” *The Free Methodist*, March 19, 1890: 187.

<sup>53</sup> Ernest F. Ward, “Experience,” *The Free Methodist*, Oct 8, 1879: 2.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

The *Advocate of Christian Holiness* was published by the National Camp Meeting Association for the promotion of holiness during 1870-1881.<sup>55</sup> This bulletin proved to be a timely resource for Ernest Ward's spiritual nourishment. However, he was not satisfied with just the reading and knowing. He really longed to meet and fellowship with people who had this experience and the joy that followed. Unfortunately, there was no one in his own church and he had to look beyond. On this, he writes:

But as none of the members of the church that I was connected with claimed to enjoy the blessing, or at least said nothing about it, I came to the conclusion that it was but another name for a state of grace I would attain to in time. I did not strive very earnestly to enter into this "promised land" of perfect love, yet I longed for complete redemption from inbred sin, and many times was strongly tempted to throw up my profession and leave the church; but blessed be God in his restraining grace. Many a hard-fought battle have I had with the "old man of sin," and it was seldom that he ever got the mastery over me. I attended the means of grace, and was always active in the work of the church I belonged to. But oh, the struggles within! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? was the cry of my soul.<sup>56</sup>

The cry of Ward's soul for a complete redemption as well as his heart's desire to enter the "promised land of perfect love" was to be satisfied in the fellowship of the people called Free Methodists. The Free Methodist Church was his "another name for a state of grace" which he was to attain in time.

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<sup>55</sup> For National Camp Meeting Association, see, [http://www.seeking4truth.com/national\\_camp\\_meeting\\_associatio.htm](http://www.seeking4truth.com/national_camp_meeting_associatio.htm) (Accessed Feb 19, 2019 4 pm). For Holiness Movements, See, Charles E. Jones, *Perfectionist Persuasion: The Holiness Movement and American Methodism, 1867-1936* (Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1974). See also, William Kostlevy, ed., *Historical Dictionary of the Holiness Movement* (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2001).

<sup>56</sup> Ernest F. Ward, "Experience," *The Free Methodist*, Oct 8, 1879: 2.

He attended a Free Methodist camp in 1876 for the first time. It was a whole new experience and the kind he had been longing for over the years. This is how he describes the Camp Meeting experience in his own words:

I attended the last service of a Free Methodist camp meeting at St. Charles in June 1876 and heard the doctrine of holiness preached in plainness and with power. When the invitation was given, I was the first at the altar seeking this blessing, and first on my feet to testify that “the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin.”<sup>57</sup>

Ernest’s experience of conversion constituted a real assurance of forgiveness of sins. Ernest enjoyed his new experience and fellowship for a while but soon doubts and confusions dominated. His church tradition demanded that he keep his experience low and not talk about it. But he personally wanted to witness and share. Also, the subject of holiness was not popular, and he thought of himself as too young, and rightly so, to talk about it especially among the people who did not long for it. After at least two years of tug of war with indifferent tendencies towards Christian holiness prevalent in his tradition, he finally re-claimed his promised land of desired spiritual experience. He was no longer able to keep quiet about his new experience. He again attended the St. Charles Free Methodist Camp meeting in 1878. This was a decisive meeting in several ways – spiritually, ecclesiastically, missionally – with a huge impact in his life.

Spiritually, Ernest exclaimed, “But blessed be God’s eternal name, I was again led out of this wilderness into the ‘promised land of perfect love.’ Glory to God in the highest!”<sup>58</sup> From the following year, he joyfully confessed that God had kept the

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

“sanctifying fire constantly burning” in his soul.<sup>59</sup> It is important to note that the camp meetings were part of the holiness revival meetings which taught sanctification and Christian perfection. Ernest was nurtured in this holiness tradition proclaiming Scriptural holiness throughout his life.

Ecclesiastically, Ernest could not remain a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church. His primary reason for leaving was the Church’s “want of sympathy for the holiness movement” and “direct opposition among the clergy and laity ... towards the doctrine and profession of entire holiness.”<sup>60</sup> He officially joined the Free Methodist Church on July 14, 1879 and remained a Free Methodist all his life.

Missionally, his vision for life was transformed at the camp meeting. The camp meeting of 1880 was the culmination of his missionary vision. He could no longer continue in his secular profession. He now wanted to serve God as a missionary. The camp meeting brought him in touch with missionaries, mission stories, mission needs and challenges from across the globe. The camp meeting experiences opened a whole new world to Ernest – a world waiting for the good news of Jesus Christ.<sup>61</sup> Ernest was already reading mission reports and preparing himself for the task ahead.

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Ernest not only attended the Camp Meetings but also ministered in them. He preached at Silver Lake Camp Meeting of 1880 on the theme of Daily Cross-Bearing. Other themes and colleagues included: God as Sun and Shield, C. M. Howe; Spiritual Elevation, C. H. Rawson; Salvation Inquiry, C. B. Ebey; Salvation Accompaniments, C. W. Frink; Purity of Character, J. J. Haviland; Holiness a necessity, E. C. Best; Privileges of being baptized with the Holy Ghost, J. D. Marsh; Jesus the Way, Truth and Life, F. W. Kent; Heart Circumcision, Danger of neglecting the Great Salvation (both themes by) W. F. Manley, etc. See, Silver Lake Camp Meeting 1880, *Scrapbook 1877*, 35-36. Ward Collection ATS.



Exactly one year after joining the Free Methodists, Ernest received his License of Local Preacher from the Illinois Conference of the Free Methodist Church (License dated, Aug 28, 1880). His ordination and Elder's Certificate are dated Oct 10, 1880.<sup>62</sup> This date also marks his announcement of his missionary call to India.

## ***2.6 The Call to Mission***

Ernest's call to mission was significantly inspired by the works of his friend Albert Norton. Albert Benjamin Norton (1847-1923) and his wife Mary Elizabeth Kelly Norton (1845-1911) were missionaries to the hill tribes in central India.<sup>63</sup> Albert was born in Genesee County, New York. He was raised in the Methodist Episcopal Church but had gone to India as an Independent missionary. He married Mary Elizabeth Kelly of Ohio in 1874 in Bombay, India. Their legacy, the Boys and Girls Christian Home (BGCH) in Chandur Bazar, Maharashtra, continues to be a blessing for countless children.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Ernest Ward, *Diary 367* (n.d.), 259-260. Ward Collection ATS. This diary contains a list of all his certificates, diplomas, and important documents.

<sup>63</sup> On their lives, see, Hubert Cooper, Ruth Norton, and Charles Norton Shepard, *The Triumph of Faith: The Lives of Albert Benjamin Norton (1847-1923) and Mary Elizabeth Kelly Norton (1845-1911) Second Edition* (C. N. Shepard: 2017). See also, Darrin J. Rodgers, "Albert Norton, Pioneer Pentecostal Missionary to India: Preaching Must be Accompanied by Good Works," Originally published on AG News, 21 February 2019, see, <https://ifphc.wordpress.com/2019/02/21/albert-norton-pioneer-pentecostal-missionary-to-india-preaching-must-be-accompanied-by-good-works-2/> (Accessed Feb 26, 2019). Although this article presents Norton as a Pentecostal missionary, Norton was originally a Methodist Episcopal minister who had gone to India as an Independent missionary. I am grateful to Charles Shepard, Norton's great-grandson, for providing me a copy of *The Triumph of Faith*. For a recent study on Norton in relation to Ramabai and the Wards, see, Robert A. Danielson, "Albert B. Norton and the Mukti Revival: From Faith Missions to Pentecostal Advocate" *Pneuma*, 42 (2020): 5-24.

<sup>64</sup> See, Christian Boys and Girls Home, <http://bgchm.org/our-history/> (Accessed June 2018). The Home was originally founded in Dhond near Pune and was later relocated to Chandur Bazar, northern Maharashtra.

Ernest read Norton's *Narrative of a "Work of Faith."*<sup>65</sup> It narrates the mission work of Norton during his first five years in central India. It also presents him as one of the early missionaries arriving at Ellichpoor (now Achalpur) in April 1874. He had begun work in Bhusawal a year ago, in July 1873. Norton's object was "the conversion of the heathen" (p. 1), and "to be a witness for Jesus" (p. 9). He describes all the difficulties of the mission work and God's grace and provision for the work among the Korkus (a tribal people in central India). The report, challenges of India, and Norton's inspiring call for missionaries greatly appealed to Ernest. Ernest was in regular correspondence with Norton since during the Camp Meeting days. Norton was not only an inspiration but also a friend and supporter of the Wards in India. On Norton's demise, Ward wrote, "My old friend Albert Norton (with whom I was off and on associated in mission work among the Hill-tribes in the Eighties) passed away at Dhond India Dec 31/23. He was ... one of the most generous hearted men I ever met."<sup>66</sup> Remembering the days of small beginnings of ministry in India and reflecting on the roots of their missionary calling, Ernest's wife Phebe noted, "From my vows on the Silver Lake Camp Ground, ... to Ernest's vows and consecration to become a missionary, ... I can still go farther back to Bro. Norton's earnest prayers for workers for Central India. It was his appeal that first stirred me. Bro. Norton is enshrined in our hearts, I tell you. How we love him!"<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> The full title of the booklet reads, *Narrative of a "Work of Faith" (1 Thes. 1.3) in Ellichpoor District, India: Being reports of the Ellichpoor Mission from 1873 to 1877, and a Call to Prayer for Laborers for India, Africa, and China.* Ward Collection ATS.

Although Norton's appeal included the need for missionaries in Africa and China in addition to India, what attracted Ward to India must have been Albert's personal focus on and presence in India.

<sup>66</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to his sister Louie Ward, Darwha, Moti Bagh, Yeotmal Dist, Feb 16, 1924. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>67</sup> Phebe Ward, Letter to Gilbert Cox, Burhanpur, CP [Central Provinces], Nov 14, 1882, 6-7. Ward Collection ATS.

The Free Methodist Camp Meeting of 1880 at Silver Lake was a decisive point in the life of Ernest Ward. It had not only ignited his passion for holiness but also boosted his missionary spirit. He had become convinced of his sanctification and call to mission work in India. Inspired by Norton and empowered by Free Methodism, Ernest was all set for the adventure of a lifetime. Among the Free Methodists, Ernest found not only the new fellowship of his desire but also a special friend and companion. That special friend was none other than Phebe Elizabeth Cox, to whose story we now turn.

### **3. The Life of Phebe Elizabeth Cox**

The life of Phebe Elizabeth Cox-Ward is a fascinating story of transformation of a lay Christian woman into a courageous foreign missionary. From worldly pleasures to godly pursuits, Phebe's journey is truly exemplary. She responded to God's call in her life with a great sense of honor, urgency, and optimism. She was the co-founder of the Burhanpur Faith Mission, Pilgrim Faith Mission, and several other missions with Ernest Ward. She was the first woman foreign missionary of the Free Methodist Church.

#### ***3.1 Birth and Family***

Phebe Elizabeth Cox (See Images 3 and 4) was born on October 7, 1850 in Canandaigua, Ontario County, New York.<sup>68</sup> She grew up in the small town of Cary,

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<sup>68</sup> Some other sources show the birth year to be 1851 as well as 1852. On Phebe's birth city, Canandaigua, see, Charles F. Milliken, *A History of Ontario County, New York and Its People, Volume 1* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1911).

McHenry County, Illinois.<sup>69</sup> Also known as Sibbie and Libbie<sup>70</sup> during her teenage years, Phebe was the youngest child and the only girl among the four children of Carman and Sarah Cox. Phebe's three siblings were her older brothers, Harvey, Gilbert and Frank. Phebe was the sweetheart of everyone in the family, especially her brothers.

All three of Phebe's brothers had fought in the Civil War during 1861-1865.

Oldest, James "Harvey" Cox (March 9, 1841-Jan 3, 1926) was born in New York and died in Crystal Lake, Ill. He served in the military in 1861. Harvey fought from the Union side as a private in the 100<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Illinois infantry.<sup>71</sup> He was married to Mary Wilcox in 1864. May had a special role in the Christian witness to the family. Harvey and Mary had three children. The second brother, Charles "Gilbert" Cox (Sep 8, 1843-May 24, 1930) was born in New York and died in Los Angeles, CA. He served in the military during 1861 and 1864. Charles fought from the Union side as a private in the 36<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Illinois infantry.<sup>72</sup> He was married three times and had seven children. His first wife, Mary Margaret O'Ceeny Dunn (1844-1871), converted at a revival meeting at Cary, was the second Christian witness in the family. Charles Gilbert worked as a farmer

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<sup>69</sup> On McHenry County, See, <http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/800.html> and *History of McHenry County, Illinois, 1885*. (PDF file available). See also, *Historical Encyclopedia of Illinois and History of McHenry County, Vol 2, 1915*. (PDF file available). For more on the history of Illinois, visit, [http://livinghistoryofillinois.com/history\\_of\\_illinois\\_counties.html](http://livinghistoryofillinois.com/history_of_illinois_counties.html)

<sup>70</sup> I have come across one source that uses this name (Libby) for Phebe. See, Arleta Richardson, *A Heart for God in India* (Winona Lake, IN: Light and Life Press, 1988). Richardson begin by calling Phebe as Libby. Phebe herself never signed any letter or note by either of these names.

<sup>71</sup> The Civil War Soldiers, <https://www.nps.gov/civilwar/search-soldiers.htm#sort=score+desc&q=Harvey+Cox> and <https://www.nps.gov/civilwar/search-soldiers-detail.htm?soldierId=4AB02B91-DC7A-DF11-BF36-B8AC6F5D926A> (Accessed April 26, 2019 11 am). See also, U.S. Civil War Draft Registrations Records, 1863-1865.

<sup>72</sup> The Civil War Soldiers, <https://www.nps.gov/civilwar/search-soldiers-detail.htm?soldierId=68B62B91-DC7A-DF11-BF36-B8AC6F5D926A>, (Accessed April 26, 2019 11:10 am). See also, Databases of Illinois Veterans (<https://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/archives/databases/home.html>). See also, U.S. Civil War Soldier Records and Profiles, 1863-1865.

and retired as a Free Methodist minister.<sup>73</sup> Phebe's third brother, Franklin "Frank" Cox (Apr 3, 1848-Jan 28, 1920) was born in New York, lived in Illinois, and died in Los Angeles, CA. Frank was married three times and had two children. Frank was a soldier in the Civil War, worked as a farmer, and retired as a business manager.<sup>74</sup>

Phebe's father, Carman Carpenter Cox (June 20, 1819 – Jan 22, 1881), like most other settlers in Cary, Illinois, was a farmer and cattle farmer. He was a hardworking and visionary man. It was his vision to live in a better place with better opportunities that brought him to Illinois all the way from rural New York. It was a journey of hope and adventure carried out with a strong will to accomplish. Carman Cox was born in New York and moved to Cary, Ill., sometimes in 1856-1857. His father, Moses Webb Cox (1792-1835) and mother, Phebe Cobb-Cox (1797-1884) were residents of Orange County, New York, with roots from Goshen, New York.

Carman Cox married Sarah Gray on October 7, 1838. Sarah Gray-Cox (May 3, 1820 – Jan 22, 1874) was born in Slate Hill, Orange County, New York. She was a home maker.<sup>75</sup> Sarah was the daughter of Andrew and Phebe (Cary) Gray. Andrew Gray had fought in the war of 1812. Phebe Cary was a relative of Archibald Cary, Speaker of the

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<sup>73</sup> See, *Twelfth Census of the United States, Schedule I, Population*. This source locates him in Harlan, Page, Iowa in 1900 and shows his occupation as minister. On his military service, see, The Civil War Soldiers (<https://www.nps.gov/civilwar/search-soldiers-detail.htm?soldierId=4DB32B91-DC7A-DF11-BF36-B8AC6F5D926A>) (Accessed April 26, 2019 11:10 am).

<sup>74</sup> On his military service, see, The Civil War Soldiers, (<https://www.nps.gov/civilwar/search-soldiers-detail.htm?soldierId=9DB72B91-DC7A-DF11-BF36-B8AC6F5D926A>) (Accessed April 26, 2019 11:15 am). See also, U.S. Civil War Soldier Records and Profiles, 1861-1865.

<sup>75</sup> Date of births noted from Phebe's journal page titled "Births" (undated manuscript). Dates of demise are calculated from Phebe's journal entry dated January 22, 1901, *P.E.W. Journal, Jan 1901-Dec 1904*. Phebe wrote: "20 years ago today father died and mother died 27 years ago today." Phebe notes that her mother, Sarah Cox, died at the age of 53 years 8 months and 19 days. See, Phebe Ward, Letter to Gilbert Cox, Raj Nandgaon, Sept 8, 1896. This letter says Gilbert was 53. Ward Collection ATS.

Senate of Virginia (1776-1786).<sup>76</sup> Carman and Sarah lived in log cabins. They were neither religiously inclined nor materially prosperous, but they were a happy family (See Image 5). Their children assisted them in the farm and in the household works. The boys worked with their father, after school hours, on the farm plowing, planting, gardening, milking, and butchering. Along with agricultural works, they also raised both cattle and hogs for market.<sup>77</sup> Phebe was an asset to her mother in domestic activities. Phebe also learned how to grow potatoes and onions, which would later become a significant story in her heart for missions. However, she was more inclined to books than anything else.

### ***3.2 Education and Vocation***

Phebe's schooling started at the age of six. She attended the elementary school at Munshawville, near Cary, Ill.<sup>78</sup> She was a bright student and went on to win the state championship in spelling competition, the Spelling Bee of her time.<sup>79</sup> Phebe loved the books so much that it was hard to keep away from books even while doing her chores, such as washing dishes. She was so fond of reading that again and again her mother would find her with story book propped up in front of her on a shelf while trying to wash dishes.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> On Archibald Cary (1721-1787), see, [https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Cary\\_Archibald\\_1721-1787#start\\_entry](https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Cary_Archibald_1721-1787#start_entry) (Accessed on March 14, 2019). It is difficult to establish the exact relationship due to the lack of connecting data. It may, however, be assumed that (inferring from the dates) Archibald Cary may have been the great-grandfather of Phebe Cary, the grandmother of Phebe Ward.

<sup>77</sup> *Phebe*, 8. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>78</sup> This city does not exist today. The development and urbanization that swept across Chicago during the late nineteenth century was responsible for the disappearance of several small settlements in the region.

<sup>79</sup> *Phebe*, 14. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

Great students make great teachers. This was so true of Phebe. Her oldest daughter Ethel records that Phebe was “a born teacher” who loved her profession and her students.<sup>81</sup> Prior to her conversion, Phebe had taught for over a decade. She had received the teacher’s license from the education department. The certificate read,

The undersigned having examined Phebe E. Cox in Orthography, Reading in English, Penmanship, Arithmetic, English Grammar, Modern Geography and the History of the United States, and being satisfied that she is of good moral character, here by certifies that her qualifications in all the above branches are such as to entitle her to this Certificate.

Signed by A. J. Kingman  
County Superintendent of Schools<sup>82</sup>

Phebe had successfully passed her teacher’s exam at the age of 17. She started teaching at “Turkey Hollow,”<sup>83</sup> near Cary station, visiting and teaching students in their homes, a practice known as “boarding around.” Her monthly salary was 8 dollars.<sup>84</sup>

Phebe also taught Sunday school kids in her church. Her gifts of teaching were to become a great blessing for India’s many underprivileged children. Phebe was a joyous, creative and fun-loving teacher. Her students loved her dearly. In addition to being a farm girl, expert in household works and teaching, Phebe seems to have been a good dancer as

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<sup>81</sup> *Ordered Steps*, 16.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid*. The original certificate seems to be lost. However, Ethel had the opportunity to see it and copy it for her biographical project.

<sup>83</sup> *Phebe*, 17. Ward Collection ATS. Turkey Hallow (only 1.4 miles from Cary) is now called “The Hallow” and it is a recreation and wildlife conservation area. See, <http://www.mccdistrict.org/rccms/the-hollows/> (Accessed March 2019).

<sup>84</sup> Equivalent to \$245 today.

well as a good skater.<sup>85</sup> Above all, she was God's chosen instrument for the salvation of many, beginning with her own mother.

### ***3.3 Religion and New Birth***

From the available sources it appears that the Cox family was not religiously inclined. The attitudes toward Christian faith was diverse within the family. While Mr. Cox was neither in favor nor against, Mrs. Cox was almost completely against religion and spirituality. There were no church goings, devotions or prayers of any kind in the family. Remembering one occasion, Ethel writes that after Phebe's brothers returned from the war, "The whole family were together again after an absence of over two years, and they were thankful indeed. But not being pious nor ever having family prayer in their home, they neglected to thank God for His goodness in sparing the lives of all three boys."<sup>86</sup> Ethel is certainly echoing Phebe's recollection on this matter.

Phebe's mother was reported to be against "religion."<sup>87</sup> In fact, Mother Cox thought it was a "disgrace" to be religious. When she heard that all her daughters-in-law have "got religion," she said, "But I am sure Sibbie [Phebe] has more sense and won't disgrace the family by getting religion too. She wants fun in her young life."<sup>88</sup> Mother Cox's attitude toward religion might have been a representation of the attitude of her context. Cary village was sometimes called "Hell's Half Acre."<sup>89</sup> This was because many people living there were notorious or wicked. Also, at that time Cary had no churches.

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<sup>85</sup> *Phebe*, 15-16. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>87</sup> Christian spirituality was commonly referred as "religion" during those days.

<sup>88</sup> *Phebe*, 22. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.



However, there was a large bright roofed building locally known as the “Temple.” This “temple” was led by a spiritualist, and seances were held which seem to have attracted much attention of the people.<sup>90</sup>

Sarah Cox was seen attending that temple occasionally. Yet, she would not want to be identified with any religious or spiritual sort of gathering. Mother Cox would declare in defense of her attending this temple, “We are not hunting a new religion, but it’s fun to see other folks get fooled and see the seances perform.”<sup>91</sup> Apparently, Sarah was far from any serious interest in religious activities. In fact, she found it a place to find jokes. Ethel notes, “When rumors of an old fashioned [Free] Methodist revival meeting being held in Hell’s Half Acre reached the ears of Mother Cox, she treated it as a jest and said, “Let’s go. Anything new will add to my standard stock of jokes.”<sup>92</sup>

Did the Cox family have any Christian background at all? Yes, they did. Both Carman and Sarah were baptized in their youth. However, it seems that “they both rested securely in that fact [baptism] for all the religion they would ever need in this world or the one to come.”<sup>93</sup> Religion seemed to have practically no significant place in the Cox family. But the situation changed with the arrival of a new member in the family, Mary Wilcox.

It was Phebe’s sisters-in-law, Mary Wilcox (Harvey’s first wife), who became instrumental in bringing “religion” to the Cox family. God used her to lead the Cox

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 21-22.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

family toward a new experience of the Christian faith. Mary Wilcox was born on July 2, 1841 to David and Cynthia Wilcox in New York. She grew up in Nunda, Ill., not far from Cary (5.5 miles north to be exact). Mary and Harvey were married on June 2, 1864 at Nunda (now Crystal Lake), Illinois. Mary was a joyous young woman who enjoyed the things of God. She became a Christian (“Got religion”) in 1871 and was “sanctified wholly” in 1882. She was a member of the Crystal Lake Free Methodist Church. She was a happy Christian actively attending worship and camp meetings. She invited everyone in the family to go attend the camp meetings. Unfortunately, Mary died on February 23, 1886.<sup>94</sup> The funeral service was conducted by Elder C. B. Ebey of Aurora, Ill. Rev. Ebey preached from Col. 3:1-4.<sup>95</sup> She is buried in the Prairie Grove Cemetery. Though she lived a short life, her witness was key to the conversion of her husband Harvey, brothers-in-law, and the precious sister-in-law, Phebe.

Phebe became eagerly conscious of religion initially during two occasions. First, “when she saw the happy faces of her sisters-in-laws as well as her brothers who had experienced religion...” At this point, Phebe noticed that the religion her sister-in-law had introduced in the family was “a happy kind.” Even her brothers were loving it! She reflected, “They seem to enjoy life even more than I do at my dances and card parties.” She made a secret vow in her heart, “I suppose I’ll have to get religion sometime before I die, and I’m going to get this happy kind if I do.”<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> See, two paper cuttings, one titled “Obituary” and the other “Sister Mary E. Cox Departed” in *Scrapbook 1877*, 4-5. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> *Ordered Steps*, 14. Cf. *Phebe*, 23. Ward Collection ATS.

The other occasion was during her mother's illness. While caring for Mother Cox, Phebe contemplated, "What if she would die.... I wonder if she is ready. I've never heard her pray in my life. I can't pray myself."<sup>97</sup> The need of prayer became urgent, and the search for answers to some of life's deepest questions began to concern her mind. Phebe soon started praying and reading the Bible. Prayer meetings, and revival meetings also became her top priorities.

Not long after her decision to get religion, Phebe attended a Wednesday night meeting in the church in 1875. The minister was preaching on the words of Jesus, "Follow me." That night Phebe had a life-transforming experience. Along with the minister's voice, she heard the voice of Christ. Ethel narrates, "a Higher Voice spoke into her very soul, the voice of Christ the Master who bid her, 'Follow me.'<sup>98</sup> The "Voice of Jesus had gripped her heart, she felt His pardon for all the past and she was ready from that hour to sing,

Farewell, my sinful pleasures  
Farewell, my comrades all,  
Farewell, my earthly treasures  
I go at Jesus' call.<sup>99</sup>

The next morning, she told her mother, with much courage, "Mother, forgive me for disobeying you so many times and breaking your heart.... Yes, mother, I've got religion and it's a happy kind. I have more solid joy and peace than I have ever known

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<sup>97</sup> *Phebe*, 23. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

before.”<sup>100</sup> The inward peace of Christ had also impacted Phebe’s outward appearance. She had become a new person. She quit dressing stylishly and took off all her jewelry. She stopped going to dance and card parties. The greatest change, however, was seen in her home. She began to take up her daily cross in conducting family prayers. She introduced prayers at meals.<sup>101</sup> Following the meals, she would go on to spend time in personal Bible study and prayers. About her conversion, Phebe’s wrote down the following brief memoir in 1905,

Forty-one years ago, I was converted under the labors of C. S. Gitchell, a Free Methodist preacher. Thirty-two years ago I was reclaimed under the labors of D. P. Baker and wife, Free Methodists, the latter of whom I claim as my spiritual mother, and today I sing out of a Free Methodist song book with Spirit-filled ... lungs – which is true – for I belong to God and the church. My experience is,

“I’m pressing on the upward way,  
New heights I’m gaining everyday,  
Still praying as I onward bound,  
Lord, plant my feet on higher ground.”<sup>102</sup>

Phebe had received her very first New Testament from her beloved brother Frank. Frank had returned from War with an amazing story of how he was saved from a bullet. Presenting his New Testament to Phebe, he said, “This book is what saved my life... a bullet hit me, but it struck this, so it didn’t go through. If it had, I would not be here now.”<sup>103</sup> Several stories of soldiers being saved by their Bibles or New Testaments were

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Phebe Ward, “Mrs. Phebe E. Ward” *The Free Methodist*, November 7, 1905: (11) 715.

<sup>103</sup> *Phebe*, 12-13. Ward Collection ATS.

common during the Civil War.<sup>104</sup> Surely, this was a precious gift for Phebe who was deeply seeking the happiness and grace in the fellowship of God.

Phebe's consistent Christian life, despite her mother's occasional ridicule and taunts, proved to be a strong witness to her mother. Mother Cox accepted Jesus in her heart. Unfortunately, she was taken ill shortly after that and died within a couple of days. On her death bed, Phebe's mother made her apologies to all ministers and church people she had ridiculed. She was glad for Phebe to have prayed for her.<sup>105</sup> At her request Phebe sang the following hymn,

O come, angel band, come, and around me stand,  
O bear me away on your snowy wings  
To my immortal home  
O bear me away on your snowy wings  
To my immortal home.<sup>106</sup>

Phebe said, "I never sang a note until after I was converted."<sup>107</sup> The Lord surely puts a new song in the mouth of His followers. Phebe became a passionate follower and witness of Jesus in her family and church community. She was not only a regular attendee at the Wednesday night meetings but also an active member of her local Church. In fact, she started ministering as a Sunday School teacher for children at the church.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> See, R. Lee Hadden, "Bibles and Bullets," *Armchair General: Interactive History Magazine*, Nov. 6, 2003. Link, <http://armchairgeneral.com/bibles-and-bullets.htm> (Accessed Mar. 28, 2019, 6 pm). See also, "Civil War Pocket Bibles," at <https://relicrecord.com/blog/civil-war-pocket-bibles/>

<sup>105</sup> *Phebe*, 24, Ward Collection ATS. Cf. *Ordered Steps*, 15.

<sup>106</sup> On this hymn, see, [https://hymnary.org/text/my\\_latest\\_sun\\_is\\_sinking\\_fast](https://hymnary.org/text/my_latest_sun_is_sinking_fast) (Accessed Mar 26, 2019, 10:36 AM).

<sup>107</sup> *Phebe*, 25. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>108</sup> *Ordered Steps*, 15-16.

She was already a schoolteacher and now her gift of teaching was a blessing to the church as well.

In addition, Phebe also had a heart for charity and mission. The summer following her conversion, she came to learn about the need for money of an outreach ministry in Chicago. She decided to contribute to the ministry's cause by doing some gardening during her summer vacation. Her father happily gave her about one fourth of an acre of their farm. Phebe decided to raise onions. She worked hard in the field and her labor was fruitful. Her brother Frank sold the onions and got \$100.00 for Phebe. She gave it all to the mission in Chicago, later known as the "Olive Branch Mission."<sup>109</sup>

Growing as a new convert, Phebe was actively involved in the pursuit of the "religion of the happy kind." She was singing in the church choir, leading worship, teaching Sunday school, and attending prayer meetings.<sup>110</sup> In addition to Sunday worship and Wednesday prayer meetings, she regularly attended the camp meetings held in Cary and its neighborhood.

The history of camp meetings may be traced as early as 1850s, to the evangelistic and revival meetings of Dr. John Wesley Redfield (1810-1863), of the Methodist Episcopal Church. He was the co-founder of Free Methodism with Rev. Benjamin T. Roberts (1823-1893).<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 17-18. On the Olive Branch Mission (OBM), see, <https://www.obmission.org/about1-c60c>. OBM was primarily supported by the Free Methodist Church. See also, OBM's history timeline, [https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/d7240f\\_f3308e6b48a06f1b26fb201504e41f49.pdf](https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/d7240f_f3308e6b48a06f1b26fb201504e41f49.pdf), and its first bulletin, [https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/d7240f\\_9f0b8f1ff6c6005119747c237bf43643.pdf](https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/d7240f_9f0b8f1ff6c6005119747c237bf43643.pdf) (Accessed Mar 26, 2019, 11:40 am).

<sup>110</sup> *Phebe*, 25-26. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>111</sup> See, Joseph Goodwin Terrill, *The Life of John Wesley Redfield, M.D.* (Chicago: Free Methodist Publishing House, 1889, 1912), Kindle edition 2012. See also, Howard A. Snyder, *Populist Saints: B. T.*

The Free Methodist Camp meetings were powerful revival meetings organized once or twice a year for spiritual renewal. Spirit filled worship and life challenging holiness sermons defined the nature of these meetings. In one such camp meeting Phebe was to meet Ernest Ward.

### ***3.4 Meeting with Ernest***

Phebe and Ernest met each other for the first time at the St. Charles Camp Meeting in 1878.<sup>112</sup> Phebe saw Ernest as the young man with a “heavenly smile.”<sup>113</sup> Ernest reached out to Phebe initially as a “sister in the Lord.” Some people are drawn to each other naturally. Ernest and Phebe were such young adults. The camp meeting had not only brought them closer to Christ, but also to each other. To Ernest and Phebe, this camp meeting marked the beginning of a great friendship that would soon result in a relationship and a life-long partnership.

At St. Charles, Ernest talked with Phebe about missions. He also gave her tracts about mission work in India which he had received from Albert Norton. Norton, who had worked in central India as an independent missionary for several years by now, was back in the USA for health reasons, and was looking for young people to go to India to continue the mission work.<sup>114</sup> At this time Phebe had no idea about foreign missions.

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*and Ellen Roberts and the First Free Methodists* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2006), esp., Chapter 10.

<sup>112</sup> For a history of this camp meeting, see, Joseph Goodwin Terrill, *The St. Charles Camp-meeting, Embodying its History and Several Sermons by Leading Ministers, with some Practical Suggestions concerning Camp-meeting Management* (Chicago, T.B. Arnold, 1883).

<sup>113</sup> *Phebe*, 26 Ward Collection ATS. Cf. *Ordered Steps*, 23.

<sup>114</sup> *Phebe*, 26. Ward Collection ATS.

### ***3.5 The Missionary Calling***

The Silver Lake Camp meeting of Summer 1880 marked Phebe's second and most decisive meeting with Ernest. Meanwhile, they had had some correspondence with each other. At Silver Lake, in addition to spiritual renewal, Phebe also received her personal missionary call. Ethel Ward quotes an eyewitness, "When an invitation was given for special dedication to God's service, Phebe walked down the aisle and knelt at the altar. Soon the glory of the Lord seemed to come upon her, and she began walking back and forth repeating the prophetic words, 'India, India, India.'"<sup>115</sup>

That night (Aug 30, 1880), Phebe wrote in her diary a note of thanks to God, "O God, I thank Thee for this night's experience... The conviction came upon me that I must continue marching till it took me clear to India."<sup>116</sup> A similar conviction had already gripped the heart and mind of Ernest. That night also witnessed Ernest as a young preacher on the stage. He had already started talking about missions to Phebe.

### ***3.6 The Marriage***

Soon after the St. Charles Camp Meeting, correspondence increased between Phebe and Ernest (See Image 7). Ernest wrote to Phebe:

You remember I told you about my friend Albert Norton who gave me those booklets on India. He has just written me that he believes it's God's will [that] I go to India as a missionary. Then he adds, 'Take Phebe Cox with you to India as a life companion. As Jesus sent out His disciples two by two, so today He sends them out in couples.' The Word says, 'One shall chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight,' [cf. Deut. 32:30] so by merging our steps our usefulness

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>116</sup> *Ordered Steps*, 25.



will be increased tenfold. God bless you. This agrees with my conviction too, and I believe we can trust God to give us the means to support us.<sup>117</sup>

Though it may sound like the marriage plan was strictly for mission purpose, the couple genuinely loved each other. Their relationship was already in the making from the first camp meeting in 1878. Their wedding was a beautiful culmination of their love for one another with the love and commitment to God's mission. Phebe and Ernest's decision to get married and venture into foreign mission in India had the blessings of everyone – ministers, missionaries, church, friends and family. They got married on October 4, 1880 at Cary, Ill.<sup>118</sup> The marriage was solemnized by Rev. C. B. Ebey, a prominent minister of the Free Methodist Church.<sup>119</sup> Laying his hands on the heads of the newly married couple, he prayed, "O God, we dedicate these two young lives to Thee and Thy cause this day. May they be set apart as truly as Paul and Barnabas were to the work whereunto Thou hast called them. Go with them on their long journey to India and their long journey through life."<sup>120</sup> The wedding was blessed by the presence of over forty near and dear ones.

### ***3.7 Phebe's Last Furlough***

Ernest and Phebe had left for India exactly six weeks after their wedding. Together they engaged in various mission work for three adventurous decades.

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 25. Cf. *Phebe*, 29. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>118</sup> The introductory note by Asbury Seminary Archive's Ward Family Collection gives the wedding date as October 11, which is incorrect. The correct date per the marriage certificate is October 4, 1880.

<sup>119</sup> For a brief life and obituaries of Rev. C. B. Ebey, see, *The Free Methodist*, Chicago, July 21, and September 1, 1908.

<sup>120</sup> *Phebe*, 29. Ward Collection ATS.

Meanwhile they had taken only two furloughs (1892 and 1898) together. Their third furlough became Phebe's last journey on the earth. After the joyous participation in Ethel's graduation at Seattle (See Image 11) in June 1910, Phebe's health began to decline rapidly. She was already fighting illness when they had started from India in April. Ill health had always been a concern for this hard-working couple.

Health had been a constant challenge. Eight years before her demise (1902), Phebe was already thinking of returning to USA primarily for health reasons. Her health kept failing and children's education was also becoming a concern. Ernest wrote to Phebe,

You ought not to leave India without a deep settled conviction that your work here is done, not necessarily for life but for the time being. If you cannot settle this then it is probable God wants you here longer, and if He does, it is not his plan for you to go to America for your health's sake alone. I quite agree with you in the value you put upon a school training and school advantages for the children and I think it is not likely they will enjoy those advantages in India. But if God wants you to work for him among the natives a while longer *all that* must be sacrificed for the good of the souls.... I am glad you were anointed and trust you are healed, and I pray that you may follow the Lord wholly like Joshua and Caleb...<sup>121</sup>

They both did follow the Lord, always walking in His grace, investing their all for His glory. On the Silver Jubilee of their wedding (1905), Phebe wrote to Ernest:

In youth's glad springtime, a quarter century seems a long stretch of years, but to us looking back upon our married life of just that number, it seems almost as yesterday, since first we pledged our natural vows and we were wed. I look again upon another view and marvel at the change that God hath wrought. Another quarter century is dawning. Blest transition! The furnace work seems done. The

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<sup>121</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to Phebe Ward, Dhond, Apr 2, 1902. Ward Collection ATS. 'Anointed' is spelled 'annointed' in the original.

way so narrow grown that two can scarcely walk... Upon this road we now can travel hand in hand with God.<sup>122</sup>

The road of mission work was certainly narrow, often making one realize that he/she may have done nothing significant at all. Nearly eight years before her death, Phebe had noted in her journal, “I am impressed with the thought this morning that my life is drawing to a close. I have done so little for Jesus!”<sup>123</sup> Toward the peak of her missionary career, Phebe reflected,

I am not sorry that God allowed us the great joy of being faith missionaries for twenty-three years and seven months, nor would I minify the valuable lessons that came to us by living by faith in God for our temporal needs. I left my father’s home in Illinois twenty-five years ago in November, a very novice in divine things. I only knew God said, “Go to the heathen.”<sup>124</sup>

Phebe entered her eternal rest on September 1, 1910. Ethel reports that the following hymn was the last one on Phebe’s lips on her final night:

Here I’ll raise my Ebenezer  
Hither by Thy help I’ve come,  
And I hope by Thy good pleasure  
Safely to arrive at home.<sup>125</sup>

Rev. C. E. McReynolds of the Seattle Free Methodist Church preached the funeral sermon from Matthew 25:21 which reads, “His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of

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<sup>122</sup> Phebe Ward, “Written for Ernest the anniversary of our (silver) wedding day” October 4, 1905, The last three pages in *P.E.W. Journal, Jan 1901-Dec 1904*. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>123</sup> Phebe Ward, Wed., Jan 1, 1902, *P.E.W. Journal, Jan 1901-Dec 1904*. Wrote from Dhond, staying with the Nortons. As mentioned earlier, the Nortons had a boy’s orphanage in Dhond. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>124</sup> Phebe Ward, “Mrs. Phebe E. Ward” *The Free Methodist*, November 7, 1905: (11) 715.

<sup>125</sup> Ethel E. Ward, *Ordered Steps*, 132. For the hymns, see, “Come Thou Fount of...” [https://hymnary.org/text/come\\_thou\\_fount\\_of\\_every\\_blessing](https://hymnary.org/text/come_thou_fount_of_every_blessing) (Accessed Mar 30, 2019, 3:30pm).

many things. Come and share your master's happiness!" Phebe was certainly a good and faithful servant of Jesus. Phebe is buried at the Mt. Pleasant Cemetery in Seattle, WA. The words from R. H. Baynes' poetry, based on Timothy 4:7, is engraved on a large tombstone.

Her work was done; and like a warrior olden,  
The hard fight o'er, she laid her armor down,  
And passed, all silent, through the portal golden,  
Where gleams the victor's crown.<sup>126</sup>

#### **4. The Children of Ernest and Phebe Ward**

##### ***4.1 Biological Children***

Ernest and Phebe had three daughters – Ethel, Bessie, and Louisa (See Image 6). Ethel Ellen Ward was born in Burhanpur, Central Provinces (Madhya Pradesh) on February 22, 1883. She was born in a indigenous house very close to the stone that reads "Mumtaj died here."<sup>127</sup> Ernest Ward imagines that the house might have the invisible inscription, "Ethel Ellen born here."<sup>128</sup> Ethel studied at Seattle Seminary (1905-1910) and Greenville College (1918-1920). She served in India as a full time Free Methodist Missionary throughout her life. On Ethel's missionary calling, Ernest wrote,

We rejoice to hear that you are beginning to feel for a lost world. These are truly missionary stirrings kindled by the Holy Ghost. How thankful you ought to be that your mind was ever turned from the narrow channel of a selfish, fashionable world, to the ocean of God's love. Well my precious child you see your calling.

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<sup>126</sup> R. H. Baynes, "Her Work Was Done," (n.d.), as quoted in *Ordered Steps*, 134.

<sup>127</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to Ethel Ward, Evanston, Ills., Aug 29, 1927. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

Oh let nothing in the universe turn you aside to seek and to save the lost, and to build them up in holiness. Let this be your aim – your *passion* forever more.<sup>129</sup>

Following in the footsteps of her missionary parents, Ethel became a lifelong missionary in India. She never married. She authored *Ordered Steps*, the biography of her parents. Ethel died in Los Angeles on April 21, 1971. Hundreds of letter and mission reports show that she was a great companion to her father until his retirement and a champion of children ministry in the works of the Free Methodist Church in India.<sup>130</sup>

Bessie Helen Ward was born on July 9, 1890 in Chikalda (Chikhaldhara), Central Provinces (Madhya Pradesh). Bessie was named after Ernest's sister who had died in 1889. Bessie Helen studied in Seattle Seminary (1907 - c.1911) and worked as matron for girls at the Laird School during 1930s.<sup>131</sup> She died in Los Angeles on September 13, 1972.

The youngest of the Ward children, Mary Louisa Ward, was born in Los Angeles, CA, on July 10, 1893. This was during the first furlough of the Wards. She was named after a missionary colleague of the Wards, Louisa Ranf, who had died in a house fire in India. Mary Louisa studied at the Seattle Seminary (1907 - c.1911). She worked as a schoolteacher in Priest River, Idaho.<sup>132</sup> Mary Louisa got married to her schoolmate Hugh Allen Vore (b.1895) on June 16, 1920. Unfortunately, to the great sorrow of all her loved

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<sup>129</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to Ethel Ward, Raj Nandgaon, Oct 27, 1896. Emphasis original. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>130</sup> Her complete story is beyond the scope of present study as her life and contribution to Christian ministry among children deserves a full-length exploration.

<sup>131</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to Ethel Ward, 573 Kendall Ave, Los Angeles, Jan 18, 1930. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>132</sup> Louise Ward, Letter to Ethel Ward, Trepue Ranch, Priest River, Idaho, Sep 15, 1914. Ward Collection ATS.

ones, she died the following year on August 23, 1921 due to ill health. Ernest could not attend her funeral and was heartbroken. Mary Louisa was planning to join in the mission work in India. Her last words to her father were, “May God bless you, dear father, and give you a safe and prosperous voyage back to your beloved India, and may the time soon come when Hugh and I may follow.”<sup>133</sup> Ernest would commemorate her loving memory by publishing *Memory Links* in 1923.

All three of the Ward girls (See Image 8) had the privilege to be personally mentored by Rev. Alexander Beers (1862-1921), the founder and president of Seattle Seminary.<sup>134</sup> Mrs. Adelaide Beers, wife of Rev. Beers, remembers:

The responsibility of caring for young people in one of our Christians schools is very grave. It is a burden that is never lifted from the time the students arrive in the fall until they return to their own homes in June. But when Rev. and Mrs. E. F. Ward wrote to Mr. Beers from India asking him to assume the care of their two youngest daughters, Bessie and Louise, to look after their physical and spiritual welfare during school days and vacation days, summer and winter, until they finished the grammar grades and completed their high school work, it seemed almost more than he dare attempt. The older sister, Ethel, was already in the institution and would faithfully do her part in caring for the younger girls. After prayerful consideration, Mr. and Mrs. Beers wrote to Rev. and Mrs. Ward to send the girls to America and they would do the best they could in caring for them, with the help of the Lord. In the process of time, they came – two darling girls just fresh from their mother’s arms, fourteen and twelve years of age. They were soon greatly beloved by all.

Mrs. Beers was glad to note that “From the first, Bessie and Louise filled a large place in our musical department, being especially gifted in music. They pursued their

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<sup>133</sup> *Ordered Steps*, 160.

<sup>134</sup> Seattle Seminary was renamed Seattle Pacific College in 1912. Founded in 1891, the College has now grown into Seattle Pacific University. See, Carl Howland, *The Story of Our Church: Free Methodism, Some facts and some Reasons, Revised Edition* (Winona Lake, IN: The Free Methodist Publishing House, 1951), 105. See also, Leslie R. Marston, *From Age to Age A Living Witness: A Historical Interpretation of Free Methodism’s First Century* (Winona Lake, IN: Light and Life Press, 1960), 527-530.

studies faithfully and grew to be young ladies who brought great pleasure to the faculty and friends.”<sup>135</sup> The girls made their parents, families, and godparents proud.

#### **4.2 Adopted Children**

Ernest and Phebe had two adopted daughters, Theodosia and Grace. Theodosia Ward was adopted from Achalpur (Ellichpur) in 1887.<sup>136</sup> Born in 1886, Theodosia was given to the Wards by her mother. Theodosia studied at the Poona Anglo-Indian Girls School.<sup>137</sup> Ward proudly writes, “Among her achievements ... was the memorizing more scripture than any other girl in Western India. For this she received honorable mention in the *Bombay Guardian*.<sup>138</sup> After completing her studies at Poona (now Pune), Theodosia worked with the American Presbyterian Mission, in Lodhiana [sic] in Punjab.<sup>139</sup> She went on to work with Dr. Ida Scudder at “the British Wesleyan Hospital, Tiruvallore” [sic], South India.<sup>140</sup> Theodosia Ward George was a well-trained nurse and had a medical practitioner’s diploma. She was married to a Christian in government service.<sup>141</sup>

The second adopted daughter was Grace Ward. After her marriage she was known as Grace Ward Robinson. Grace was one of the famine orphans from Chhattisgarh adopted in 1897. She studied at Jabalpur Girls School and became a teacher in the

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<sup>135</sup> Adelaide Lionne Beers, *The Romance of a Consecrated Life: A Biography of Alexander Beers* (Chicago, IL: The Free Methodist Publishing House, 1922), 187-188.

<sup>136</sup> Ernest F. Ward and Phebe E. Ward, *Pilgrim Faith Mission: Second Quadrennial Report, 1885-1888* (Bombay: Bombay Guardian Printing Works, c.1889), 62. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>137</sup> Ernest Ward, “Namesakes of Our Pioneer India Missionary,” *The Missionary Tidings*, November 1920:5. Birth name unknown. She was named “Theodosia” by Papa Ward (Ernest Ward).

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid. Now, Ludhiana.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid. Now, the Christian Medical College, Vellore.

<sup>141</sup> Ernest Ward, “Namesakes of Our Pioneer India Missionary,” *The Missionary Tidings*, November 1920:5.

Pentecostal Band Missions.<sup>142</sup> Ernest gives the following account about Grace, “Her Hindu name was Gwalin, meaning ‘milkmaid.’ ... I had the pleasure not only of baptizing her with other converts in Nandgaon State, but also, of officiating at her marriage. Her husband is a first-class printer.”<sup>143</sup>

Ernest and Phebe also had a godson by the name Job Ward. A notable “trophy of grace,”<sup>144</sup> Job had become a follower of Christ through the ministry of the Wards. They did not adopt him, but he took their last name in their honor. Job was a Mohammedan weaver and his Muslim name was Shekh Juman.<sup>145</sup> According to Ward, “he was one of the few in his caste who were able to read. Through the reading of tracts and scripture portions bought from us, he got [the] light and conviction.”<sup>146</sup> Job was baptized by the Methodist Episcopal missionary who succeeded the Wards in Burhanpur. Ward was delighted to learn that Job studied at “the Bareilly Theological Seminary and became a pastor.”<sup>147</sup>

## **5. Ernest Ward’s Second Marriage**

Three years after Phebe’s demise, Ernest married Elizabeth Tucker, his missionary colleague of over a decade. Elizabeth Tucker Ward was born in Lawrence County, Missouri on August 28, 1850. Her maiden name was Elizabeth Ireland. She was married to Mr. W. H. Tucker of Brooks, Iowa. After the death of her husband (c.1890s)

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<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> The Wards generally mentioned their converts by this special title.

<sup>145</sup> Ernest Ward, “Namesakes of Our Pioneer India Missionary” *The Missionary Tidings*, Nov. 1920:6.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.



she had come in contact with the Pentecost Bands and subsequently joined the Free Methodist Church.<sup>148</sup> At the Free Methodist Camp meeting at Newton, Iowa, in 1892 she received a missionary call. She had served as a matron of the “Reaper’s Home” in Virginia in 1893 and knew the Ward family since then.<sup>149</sup> She went to India as a missionary in 1897. This was the time of the great famine. She joined Ernest and Phebe with other Bands missionaries in the famine relief and orphan work at Raj Nandgaon, Chhattisgarh.

Ernest and Elizabeth (See Image 10) got married on January 17, 1914.<sup>150</sup> In April they went up to Landor, Mussoorie in the foothills of the Himalayas for a retreat.<sup>151</sup> Unfortunately, Elizabeth became seriously ill. She was diagnosed with cancer and never recovered. She passed away the following year on September 3, 1915.<sup>152</sup> A missionary colleague and friend, Effie Cowherd, fondly noted in her obituary, “[Elizabeth] endeared herself to all, winning the love and respect of missionaries and indigenous alike. Her prayers, efforts and influence were a stimulus and an inspiration to the work of God for

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<sup>148</sup> See, Effie G. Cowherd, “Elizabeth Tucker Ward,” *The Free Methodist*, October 26, 1915: 686 (14). A clipping of this obituary is also found in Ernest Ward’s *Diary of 1915*. Ernest Fremont Ward Family Papers, the Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, VA (Hereafter, Ward Papers UVA).

The Pentecost Bands, founded by Vivian Dake with the blessings from B. T. Roberts, was initially an evangelistic organization within the Free Methodist Church. Later it became an independent missionary organization. Ernest and Phebe were associated with this group for about five years. Details of the Bands’ activities in India are preserved in the Journal of the Pentecostal Bands in India (3 Journals/Volumes). See, microfilm at Asbury Archives. We explore the relationship of the Wards with the Bands in Chapter 4: Humanitarian Services.

<sup>149</sup> *Ordered Steps*, 144.

<sup>150</sup> See, *Ordered Steps*, 144. At this time Ernest and Ethel were serving in the Yavatmal mission field.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, 150.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, 152.

years. Multitudes will rise up and call her blessed.”<sup>153</sup> Elizabeth’s funeral was held at the Mission Church in Yavatmal.

Ernest and Elizabeth had an adopted son, Tommy (Thomas). Thomas Ward (1913-1972) was a Muslim orphan from Raj Nandgaon (Chhattisgarh) whom Elizabeth had brought with her to the Yavatmal Orphanage.<sup>154</sup> Thomas Ward became the father of the first Indian Bishop of the Free Methodist Church in India, Rev. Daniel T. Ward.<sup>155</sup> Daniel Ward is a graduate of Union Biblical Seminary (UBS) and Fuller Theological Seminary. Before assuming the office of the Bishop of the FMC in India, Daniel Ward served as the Registrar of Yavatmal College for Leadership Training (YCLT), taught New Testament and Mission at Theological Education Through Extension (TEE), and assisted in UBS’s extension studies, among others.<sup>156</sup>

## **6. The Legacy of the Wards**

Helen Root, a fellow missionary of the Wards, beautifully summed up the Wards’ legacy in the following words,

The first Free Methodist Missionary in India was Rev. Ernest F. Ward who, with his wife, went out ... on faith lines long before the Board undertook a permanent work; later he became one of its valued missionaries. The story of his pioneer labors, his rescue of hundreds of starving children in famine times, his building of homes and schools and refuges all financed through believing prayer, his opening of work repeatedly in “regions beyond,” then turning it over to some responsible Mission [agency] while he went on the pioneer’s lonely way, his mastery of seven

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<sup>153</sup> Effie G. Cowherd, “Elizabeth Tucker Ward,” *The Free Methodist*, October 26, 1915: 686 (14).

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>155</sup> Subhash Patil, *History of the Free Methodist Church in India, 1881-1989* (Yavatmal: The Literature Committee, India Free Methodist Conference, 1989), 97, 101.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*

Indian languages, his baptism of scores of converts – the full tale of his long, self-denying, self-forgetting life cannot be told here.<sup>157</sup>

Albert Norton, a friend and colleague of Wards and a pioneering missionary in his own right, called Ernest Ward “the [Francis] Asbury of the Free Methodist Mission in India.”<sup>158</sup> Ernest was a very humble man of God did not want such credits or honors to become public.<sup>159</sup> His life was a testimony to his humility, hard work, and simplicity characterized with godliness.

A regular attendee at the Chapel of the Los Angeles Pacific College, where Ernest never missed a revival meeting after his retirement, wrote the following,

Rev. Ward will never grow old! He has that spirit of youthfulness which physical discrepancies can never harm. With his youthfulness he has developed an intense love for young people....There is often incompatibility between youth and age, but here is one old man that all young people love....It is one thing to be a Christian and another to be so much a living example of Christ that everyone will catch the power of a “Christo-matic” life that exists in the Jesus Way of living....Courage linked with complete faith in God had built a life that had not only gripped central India, but today challenges all those whom it touches....Youthful in spirit, eternally ambitious, he has met no limit in the development of his capacity of going out to greater conquests for God.<sup>160</sup>

Such inspiring witness can only be asserted by the lives lived in total surrender to God and empowered by the Holy Spirit. Both Ernest and Phebe represent an influential Christian witness from their Christ-like character and their sacrificial missionary

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<sup>157</sup> Helen I. Root, *The Alabaster Box: The Life Story of Grace E. Barnes* (Chicago, Ill.: Woman’s Missionary Society of the Free Methodist Church, 1929), 57. The Board refers to the Missions Board of the Free Methodist Church.

<sup>158</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to Ethel Ward, Ubmri [Umri], May 1, 1912. This letter is written on the colorful letterhead of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Soul Winners Association, Atlanta, GA.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid. My research, for the first time, narrates the life and works of the Wards, a timely tribute to a long overdue credit of this amazing missionary couple.

<sup>160</sup> Joe R. Faley, “An Appreciation,” *The Missionary Tidings*, October, 1931: 196.

ventures. Phebe Ward's Christian character and personality is well summed up in the following brief account by her fellow Free Methodist missionary,

I found her [Phebe Ward] to be a devoted and practical Christian. She seemed to be a Martha and a Mary combined.... all her life she considered that not only her money, but her time and strength belonged to the Lord....I appreciated her motherly attitude and advice....Not only was Sister Ward practical, efficient and willing to serve in any way, but she was prayerful, spiritual and devoted to her Lord. I have enjoyed sweet fellowship with her in prayer, and have been strengthened and encouraged by her testimonies....The influence of her life still remains as a sweet fragrance to her family, to the church, to many missionaries, and to a great number of Indians to whom she ministered, for whom she prayed and by whom she was loved.<sup>161</sup>

A fuller view of the legacy of the Wards cannot be gained only from the stories of their individual influential personality and character. Their legacy and missiological significance must be seen through several lenses. They were pioneers in a foreign land working as faith missionaries, evangelist and church planters, humanitarian workers, mission station builders, interreligious dialogue partners, and promoters of Christian holiness. Wards were a product of the nineteenth century holiness movement that expressed itself in great fervor for Christian piety, social charity, and global mission and evangelism.<sup>162</sup> As a representative of the Free Methodist Church, a holiness and reform

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<sup>161</sup> Jessie L. Casberg, "Missionary Character Sketches: Mrs. Phoebe Ward," *The Missionary Tidings*, April 1950: 127, 131.

<sup>162</sup> See, Melvin E. Dieter, *The Holiness Revival of the Nineteenth Century*, second edition (Lanham, MD and London: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1996), William C. Kostlevy, ed., *Historical Dictionary of the Holiness Movement* (Lanham, MD and London: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2001), and Brian Black, *The Holiness Heritage: Tracing the History of the Holiness Movement* (Salem, OH: Allegheny Publications, 2003).

movement that emerged from the Episcopal Methodism, their story offers inspiring insights into life and mission of the time.<sup>163</sup>

By the time of her death, Phebe had co-founded and co-managed all the mission stations they had pioneered as a couple. She had cared for hundreds of orphans and widows and touched their lives with the love of Christ. She was also an integral instrument of various revivals in Central India. By the time of his retirement, Ernest had preached in thousands of villages and baptized hundreds of converts. The fruits of their labors continue to bear witness in and through the existing ministries, both churches and institutions, as we shall explore in this study. They were indeed an ordinary couple with an extraordinary calling, vision, and mission.

## **7. Conclusion**

This chapter has briefly outlined the lives of Ernest and Phebe Ward with special reference to their family backgrounds, conversion experiences, and the call to mission. We have noted that both Ernest and Phebe came from humble backgrounds, had longing for Christian spirituality defined by sanctification and a passion to spread the good news of Jesus Christ and Scriptural holiness around the world. Inspired by the reports of Albert Norton from India, they both committed their lives for India's salvation. Their missionary calling to India was a lifelong commitment. Phebe died after thirty years of significant missionary work. Ernest returned to India and continued in the work they were already involved, until his retirement from active missionary service. Ernest retired in 1927 and

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<sup>163</sup> By 1909, there were 17 FM missionaries, including the Wards, actively working in India. See, Ernest Ward, *Diary* 367, p. 174. Cf. Subhash Patil, *History of The Free Methodist Church in India, 1881-1989* (Yavatmal: The Literature Committee, India Free Methodist Conference, 1989), 106 (Appendix II).

lived another decade, independently ministering in the streets of Los Angeles. As a couple committed to missions in India, what did the Wards accomplish for God? What did it mean for them to be faith missionaries? What were their methods and approaches to evangelism and church planting? A search for answers to these key questions will be the subject matter of the next chapter.



*Image 8. Ernest and Phebe Ward with daughters Ethel, Bessie, and Louise, 1903*



*Image 9. Phebe and Ernest with Ethel and Bessie, 1893*



*Image 10. Ernest and Elizabeth Tucker, 1914*



*Image 11. The Ward Family, 1910*



*Image 12. The Ward Residence, Hermon, Los Angeles, CA*



## Chapter 3

### EVANGELISM AND CHURCH PLANTING

Beloved, someday this whole world is to be evangelized. God has solemnly declared it in His Word. So, then it's bound to be accomplished and you and I have a part and lot in helping to bring about this glorious consummation. How soon it shall be realized depends upon the fidelity of the church (Heb. 2:14).

- Ernest Ward<sup>1</sup>

These are perilous times in which we are living but such blessed days to my own soul. I never was so ready for Christ's coming as now. God is putting me through a different crucible than ever before, and I believe I shall come out pure gold and yet, not I, but Christ that liveth in me. I am trying to exalt *Christ* in my daily life.

- Phebe E. Ward<sup>2</sup>

#### 1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to carry out a general assessment of the evangelistic and church planting ministries of Ernest and Phebe Ward. From their Ordination and commissioning in the Illinois Conference of the Free Methodist Church (FMC) to the founding of several mission stations in Central India (See Image 14), this chapter traces the history of their evangelistic endeavors. A brief account of each church plant, the story of their prominent Hindu convert, and Ernest Ward's understanding of the gospel also form the contents of this chapter. It will be explored that the Wards strategically worked in both rural and urban areas with special focus on rural evangelism. A brief note on

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<sup>1</sup> Ernest Ward, "Evangelization," *Scrapbook 366*, 78. (Handwritten paragraph with initials). Ernest Fremont Ward Family Papers, the Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, VA (Hereafter, Ward Papers UVA). Title mine.

<sup>2</sup> Phebe Ward, Letter to Gilbert and Ceeny, Burhanpur, November 5, 1881. Emphasis original. Ward Collection ATS.

Ward's understanding of the gospel also forms the contents of this chapter. Further, a note on the evangelistic vision of the FMC and its implication for Wards' missions is also highlighted.

## **2. The Ordination and Launching into the Mission**

Just two days after their wedding, Ernest and Phebe attended the Twenty-first Annual session of the Illinois Conference of the Free Methodist Church.<sup>3</sup> The Conference was held at Freeport, Illinois from October 6-10, 1880. Ernest announced to the Conference that he and Phebe have felt called by God to missionary work in India and that they had decided to obey the call. He requested the Church to pray for them as they began to prepare for their first missionary journey abroad. Their decision and request were welcomed by the Conference officers and a resolution was passed,

Whereas, our dear Brother, E. F. Ward, believing that God has called him to go to India as a missionary; and whereas he and his wife have decided to obey that call, going forth with their lives in their hands and paying their own expenses. Therefore, be it resolved, that we waive the usual recommendation from a Quarterly Conference and receive our brother on trial, that he may go forth under the auspices and with the sanction of this Conference. Also, that he be ordained both Deacon and Elder, that he may be authorized to administer the sacrament, and that a Certificate of the standing of Bro. Ward and his wife be granted to them under the signature of the President and Secretary.

Rev. E. P. Hart, President

Rev. J. G. Terrill, Secretary<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Ernest and Phebe were married on October 4, 1880. The Conference began on Oct. 6.

<sup>4</sup> *Minutes of the Illinois Annual Conference*, October 1880, 28. Cf. *Ordered Steps*, 28. It is important to note that the Free Methodist Church itself was not a "faith mission." It was in fact an emerging church, only 20 years old. Founded in 1860, the FMC at this time did not have a foreign missions Board. When the Church President and Secretary state "paying their own expenses," they imply that the Wards were not officially being funded for their missionary journey or work in India. Since there was no Mission Board, there was no structure or funding for missions. The Mission Board of the FMC was formed in 1885, five years after the Wards had been in India. However, they continued as faith missionaries, receiving occasional support from friends and family. The Wards did not become salaried missionaries of the FMC until 1904. During their independent work, the collection of their support was chiefly regulated through *The*

Exactly five weeks after the Conference, Rev. and Mrs. Ward began their historic missionary journey. On November 15, the Chicago railway station witnessed a memorable farewell. Friends from the church had gathered to see off the new missionary couple. Rev. T. B. Arnold, a prominent leader in the Illinois Conference, described the moment saying, “It was a veritable Pentecost of blessing, bringing tears to the bystanders as they heard the singing, speeches and shouts of the pilgrims who had gathered to say farewell.”<sup>5</sup>

In addition to seeing them off at Chicago, friends also met them in New York Station (Now the Grand Central Station). The cost of a ticket from New York to India was \$250 per person. Phebe had paid for their tickets from her personal savings. They sailed on the steamship Anchoria. They were scheduled to travel via Glasgow, Scotland and London, United Kingdom. Ernest and Phebe had left the USA not knowing when they will ever return. A local paper, *True Republican*, announced their plans,

Ernest F. Ward, of Geneva, son of Pinder F. Ward, Esq., of that place, and Miss Phebe Cox, of Crystal Lake, were married Tuesday evening...In two weeks they leave for England, where they will enter a training school for missionaries for the foreign field. After due preparation they will sail for India, where they will be engaged as missionaries. Mr. Ward was raised in Geneva, and has for years taken a leading part in the enterprises of that place. He is regarded as a young man of unblemished character, and is esteemed highly by a large circle of friends and acquaintances.<sup>6</sup>

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*Free Methodist* under the leadership of T. B. Arnold, the publisher and treasurer in the Illinois Conference. The Wards reported to Mr. Arnold who published everything in *The Free Methodist*. Thus, the financial accountability was to the public, to every reader of the magazine.

<sup>5</sup> *Ordered Steps*, 29.

<sup>6</sup> *True Republican*, October 13, 1880. Ernest’s name is spelled Earnest only in one or two external publications such as this.

Ernest seems to have been well-known, like his father and grandfather, for being a hardworking and pious gentleman. His affiliation with the county Court House and the church must have brought him in contact with many people. His friendly personality must have earned him many friends. He surely appears to be well loved by an extended circle of family and friends.

It is interesting to note that the local paper mentions about Ernest and Phebe Ward's missionary training in London. However, the Wards themselves never mention attending any missionary training school in London or elsewhere. From my best knowledge, I can state that the Wards had not received any formal missionary training. They had not attended any seminary. In fact, they did not even have time to think about it. Even their trip to London was just a layover between New York and Bombay. If there was any training, Ward would have surely mentioned it in his daily account of the stay and travel in London. Thus, if they had any preparation at all, it was their study of Norton's reports, books on India and other unevangelized parts of the world, and their personal training in the experience of holiness, their own study of Scriptures, and the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, since they had no time, between their wedding and departure, to receive any orientation in Illinois, it is possible that they might have received some instruction on missionary methods in London. Whether there were any opportunities for some formal training or not, there certainly were some opportunity to minister. On December 18, 1880, Ernest noted in his journal,

On Sunday I preached to an attentive congregation at the Wesleyan chapel, St. Paul's Road; text 1 Pet 1:16. From observation and enquiry we learn that the Wesleyan body is not the aggressive holiness church she once was. John Wesley, whose noble monument stands in front of City Road Chapel, once said, "We are

raised up to spread Scriptural holiness over these lands.” Oh, that Methodists everywhere might be true to their mission!<sup>7</sup>

According to Ethel, her parents spent some quality time with a missionary family in London, enjoying their hospitality, fellowship, and sight-seeing.<sup>8</sup> It is possible that Ernest and Phebe may have received some practical guidance on mission work from their host family. It is also possible that they may have had opportunities to listen about the general situation in India from other sources. In any case, there was no formal training. If it were there, Ernest would have mentioned it in his journal. All he mentions is, “We have spent the past week very profitably in studying the character of the English people, visiting places of renown in London, attending meetings, etc.”<sup>9</sup> Thus, although they spent 18 days in London, there was no formal missionary training whatsoever during the time. Apparently, the local paper had simply presumed that they will be undergoing missionary training. Nevertheless, they were in the hands of God, ready to be used according to His will. They had trusted God for not only their provision but also for all the training, guidance, and skills they would need to carry out the ministry. They were ready to be trained in the mission field itself. Their biggest preparation was their willingness to obey God in sharing the good news of Jesus. Their journey was a witness to their commitment to the cause of Christian mission.

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<sup>7</sup> Ernest Ward, “Bro. Ward’s Journal of Life in India,” London, Dec. 18, 1880. See, Ernest Ward, *Scrapbook One*, 109. This published journal entry is pasted on the pages of the scrapbook (pp.108-112). The last portion is continued by handwriting on pages 112-113. Details of the publication not available. It must have been published in *The Free Methodist*. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>8</sup> *Ordered Steps*, 32. The name of the host family is unknown.

<sup>9</sup> Ernest Ward, “Bro. Ward’s Journal of Life in India,” London, Dec. 11, 1880. See, Ernest Ward, *Scrapbook One*, 109. Ward Collection ATS.

Ernest and Phebe arrived at Bombay, India on January 16, 1881 (See Image 13). Their vessel anchored at the Prince's Dock in Bombay (now Mumbai) harbor. The port city of Bombay was the headquarters of the Bombay and Sind Presidency, an administrative subdivision of British India. At Bombay, they were received by Lieutenant-Colonel George Wingate Oldham, R.E.,<sup>10</sup> the father of Dr. J. H. Oldham.<sup>11</sup> Colonel Oldham (1840-1923) was on the staff of Royal Engineers. His work in Bombay was to build the railway. After his conversion, he had moved out of his fashionable housing to a simple mission bungalow. Ernest and Phebe stayed at the Oldhams' for about ten days, meeting with missionaries and visiting local mission schools and churches.<sup>12</sup> They greatly appreciated the hospitality of the Oldham family.

From Bombay, Ernest and Phebe left for Ellichpur (now Achalpur). Achalpur, located about 430 miles north-east of Mumbai, was the first mission field of Albert Norton (See Image 18) in 1874. It was for this region that Norton had appealed for missionaries while on furlough. It was for this area that the Wards had responded to the call. Norton later returned and lived not far from Achalpur and became partners in evangelistic mission with the Wards. They together went on regular preaching tours in

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<sup>10</sup> See, H. W. Oldham, *Lt.-Col. G. W. Oldham, R. E.: A Memoir* (London, 1926).

<sup>11</sup> Joseph Houldsworth Oldham (1874-1969) was the organizing secretary of the World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910. A prominent leader in the ecumenical movement, J. H. Oldham worked with the Scottish YMCA and Student Christian Movement. He also contributed to the founding of the World Council of Churches. He was the son-in-law of Sir Andrew H. L. Frazer (1848-1919), the Lt. Governor of Bengal Province during 1903-1908. See, Kathleen Bliss, "J. H. Oldham, 1874-1969: From "Edinburgh 1910" to the World Council of Churches" in Gerald Anderson, et. al., eds., *Mission Legacies: Biographical Studies of Leaders of the Modern Missionary Movement* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1994), 570-580.

<sup>12</sup> Ethel notes that Ernest and Phebe met with the following missionaries, Bowen, Jacobs, Moody, Hume, Gladwin, Osborne, Churchill, and Taylor. See, *Ordered Steps*, 33.

and around Achalpur, on foot or oxcart.<sup>13</sup> At Achalpur, Ernest and Phebe were initially hosted by Rev. and Mrs. J. W. Sibley of the American Marathi Mission. In a letter to his parents, Ernest described the Achalpur region as,

[A] Country covered with small native villages containing from 500 to 1500 inhabitations [sic]. Mud and brick houses. It is mostly a level plain from Ellichpur to Oomrawuttee [now Amravati] but a little rolling in places. Distance to Oomrawuttee 30 miles, to Chikalda 18 miles. There are no farmhouses to be seen. The government owns the land and rents it to the villages in small tracts. The land is divided by mounds of earth at each corner of the tracts. Cotton is the great staple, Oomrawuttee is a very important Cotton market. Wheat, barley, millet, jewari, gram, bajere & other grains are raised. The only palm tree seen here is the date-palm, but the fruit is inferior as is also bananas. They fruit [sic] better on the coast where there is more rain. The soil here is very deep and remarkably prolife but this region is subject to occasional droughts. By irrigation nearly everything may be raised in gardens the year round.<sup>14</sup>

Prior to coming to India, Phebe had come to know about a mission school at Achalpur and had committed herself to come and teach. She was a schoolteacher back home and this appeared to be a great opportunity to continue to use her gift of teaching. Unfortunately, she could not start teaching as soon as she arrived due to her inability to speak the local language. Ernest also faced the same challenge. They both first needed to learn the language of the people. The language spoken in Achalpur area was Hindustani, a mixture of Urdu and Hindi. They soon hired a *munshi* (a language teacher) and began to learn Hindustani. They spent the next six months learning the language. From Achalpur they wrote, “While here and at Chikalda, a neighboring hill station, we spent [the] greater

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<sup>13</sup> Rolland N. Davis, ed., *The Challenge in Central India* (Winona Lake, IN: Light and Life Press, 1954), 45.

As the language learning was in its initial stage, I am sure the Wards at first just accompanied the Nortons, observed their preaching, and participated with distributing the tracts, etc. As they acquired a working knowledge of the language, they must have started independent preaching and sharing.

<sup>14</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to his father and mother, Ellichpur, India; Tuesday, March 1, 1881. Ward Collection ATS. The description is found on the notes to the map he has drawn on the back of the letter.

portion of the year studying the Hindustani language, as well as [the] manners and customs of the people.”<sup>15</sup> While at Achalpur, they also had their first wider exposure of the Indian life and culture. They watched wedding ceremonies, encountered the religious beggars (mendicants), and lives of the people around temples, mosques, and in various shrines. They saw the poor and the rich, the tribes and castes, and the bazaars and pilgrims. They felt the need for evangelistic work in Achalpur. However, this town was not unreached with the Gospel. In fact, glimpses of gospel witness in Achalpur can be traced back to as early as 1838.

Colonel William Ward of the British army writes that he and his wife arrived at Achalpur on March 2, 1838 and after about 16 years moved to Mumbai (then Bombay) in December of 1854.<sup>16</sup> He also writes that Albert Norton went to Achalpur in 1874. During their stay at Achalpur, Col. Ward was engaged in promoting education and the gospel. This is the account of works from Col. Ward:

Sometime after our arrival there we found that although there had been an English school .... the truly Christian officer commanding one of the regiments who had maintained this school and taken a spiritual interest in it, had left, and there was no school at all. We therefore immediately proceeded to take measures for forming a school.... there was a Christian sergeant and his wife who were willing to undertake the charge, keeping the school in their own bungalow. It was from the first a free school open to all children Europeans, East Indians and Natives who were willing to come and to conform to our rules....The Scriptures were to be taught to all and the New Testament was put into the hands of all as a reading book as soon as they were able to read it. All the children were to come clean. No caste marks were allowed on the faces of the Hindus – their faces were to be clean, boys and girls alike. The school was opened and closed with prayer – all who wished might kneel but all who did not were required to shut their books and keep silent..... From first to last no objection was made by the native parents or

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<sup>15</sup> Ernest F. Ward and Phebe E. Ward, *Burhanpur Faith Mission: First Quadrennial Report, 1881-1884* (Chicago: T. B. Arnold, 1885), 14. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>16</sup> Colonel William Ward, *Letter to Miss Frow*, Western Super Mare Eng, 4 Atlantic Terrace W., April 1881, as quoted in Ernest Ward, *Scrapbook, No. 11*, c.1881-1904, 270-282. Ward Collection ATS.



children to the Bible being taught .... all the children were taught the shorter catechism in English and I translated a small catechism (By Rev. John William of Bombay) for the use of schools into Urdu and got it printed in the Roman character by the American Mission Press in Bombay.... We used to have a short service in Hindustani in our own house for servants every Sunday morning and I used to visit the poor house generally every Sunday to speak to the poor people there of the only Saviour of sinners....<sup>17</sup>

Colonel Ward further writes about adopting orphan boys and girls and providing them with education and opportunities, many of whom became Christians and influential different services including Christian works. On hindrance or opposition to the work, he says, “We were often more hindered by officers telling the natives of their regiments not to send their children to the school to be taught the Christian religion, *than by the natives themselves.*”<sup>18</sup>

After Col. Ward, Albert Norton had worked in the area for a while. After Norton had left for the USA, the American Marathi Mission, one of the oldest Christian mission in Western India, had opened a station in Achalpur. Thus, mission work had some continuation and the town did not lack a Christian presence. The ministry of the school and orphanage must have been running during Ernest and Phebe’s arrival. On their initial stay at Achalpur, Ernest recollects,

Ellichpur was once the capital of Berar... We reached Ellichpur Jan. 28, 1881 and stayed with the Sibleys some months on their kind invitation, thro’ [sic] Albert Norton who founded the “Ellichpur Faith Mission” 1874. That was I believe the first missionary effort in Berar since Col. and Mrs. Ward lived at Ellichpur in 1854. Afterwards we came back to E. [Ellichpur] in Mar 1887 and labored there nearly 5 years. While there we received a remittance of 2 pounds from Col. Ward who was still living in Eng. [England] and learned of us thro’ [sic] Col. Oldham. Col. Oldham and lady who were living in Bombay [in] 1881 received us

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. Emphasis original.

hospitably into their home on landing, entertained us, paid our fare up country, and continued to assist us financially for some time after we went to Burhanpur.<sup>19</sup>

Ernest Ward, arriving in 1881, chose not to build on the remains of the previous foundations. For, from the beginning, his aim and commitment were to work among unreached people groups. Thus, after their initial stay and language study, they started looking for a new field.

It may be useful to mention here that, at the time of Wards' arrival in the Central Provinces, some of the major cities such as Bombay, Ahmednagar, and Raipur, had at least one missionary stationed. For example, Achalpur had the Sibleys of the American Marathi Mission. Various Christian missions have been active in select cities of this region since as early as 1813.<sup>20</sup> However, the missions have been limited in resources and personnel to reach everyplace and every people groups. Thus, more missions were always in demand. The Wards came to Central Provinces with a clear vision to primarily reach out to the rural and tribal population of the region.

### **3. Evangelistic and Church Planting Endeavors**

#### ***3.1 Burhanpur Faith Mission (1881)***

Situated at the banks of Taptee River, Burhanpur was the largest city in the Nimar district of Central Provinces. It was founded in 1400 AD by Naseer Khan, the Prince of Khandesh (northwestern Maharashtra). Burhanpur was annexed to the kingdom of Akbar

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<sup>19</sup> Ernest F. Ward, Scrapbook #11, c. 1881-1904, 265-266. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>20</sup> The American Marathi Mission of western India was founded by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) in 1813. This was the first Protestant mission in Western India. The headquarters was at Bombay and later moved to Ahmednagar (1831). Other missions included Disciples of Christ missions in Raipur (1868), Mennonite Missions in Dhamtari (1899), and others.

the Great in 1600. It came under the British rule in 1803. At the time of Wards' arrival, the population of the city was around 30,000 out of which 21,535 were Hindus and 8,466 were Muslims.<sup>21</sup> Although the Hindus were the majority, Ernest noticed that Islam was a more influential religion in Burhanpur. Ward writes, "Mohammedanism has exercised a powerful influence over the Hindoo mind. I have seen a group of Hindoos from the villages bowing down to a Mohammedan peer [sic], or religious teacher with profound reverence."<sup>22</sup> Although the Hindu reverence for a Muslim *pir* may be generally out of a local culture of respect, it will not be the same for a Muslim who will never bow to a Brahmin or at a Hindu temple. Both Hindus and Muslims spoke Hindi. Hindi and Marathi were the main languages in Burhanpur. The other major language spoken was Urdu.<sup>23</sup> The Wards continued their language learning with Urdu. However, the tribal populations in the surrounding hills had their own unique tribal languages such as Bhili and Korku. The tribal people, known as Bheels and Korkus, lived in the hill areas around Burhanpur. The Korkus became Ward's special focus in his initial evangelistic outreach. He noted,

The Bheels in their disposition are the most warlike of the aboriginal tribes. The Korkus on the contrary, are quite docile... Their religion is very simple, the chief objects of worship being the sun and moon; but they have also learned to worship other objects from contact with the Hindoos.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Ernest F. Ward and Phebe E. Ward, *Burhanpur Faith Mission: First Quadrennial Report, 1881-1884* (Chicago: T. B. Arnold, 1885), 9-10. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 12-13.

<sup>23</sup> Urdu uses the Persio-Arabic script whereas Hindi and Marathi use Devanagari script. However, there is a bridge language between Urdu and Hindi, called Hindustani, which can use both scripts. Hindustani, as a mixture of Hindi and Urdu, is more common in Northern India. Hindi speakers may not understand Urdu, but they can manage with Hindustani.

<sup>24</sup> Ernest F. Ward and Phebe E. Ward, *Burhanpur Faith Mission: First Quadrennial Report, 1881-1884* (Chicago: T. B. Arnold, 1885), 13. Ward Collection ATS.

Ward also noted that the low caste Hindus were less rigid in religious practices and closer to tribes in terms of their openness to gospel. He soon concluded that the most promising field for missionary effort were the aboriginal tribes and the low caste Hindoos.<sup>25</sup> But he found that the locals, especially the tribes, were “exceedingly shy of the Europeans,” so in order to identify with them, the Wards adapted local dress code.<sup>26</sup> Ernest writes that he was led to adopt the indigenous turban when he first went among the Korkus. Phebe did the same, putting on a saree. This can be seen as a effective step toward contextualization of missionary lifestyle. Ethel shares the following recollection about her father’s evangelistic works and appearance,

[He got] buried in his work in the jungles of India, tramping from village to village, giving the Gospel to all the people of that remote region. So engrossed was he in his busy toil that he forgot his outward appearance. He ceased to shave and only had a haircut when he thought of it. He even donned the costume of the native people about him, a long saffron colored robe (resembling the Jewish robes of Christ’s day) and a turban about his head.<sup>27</sup>

At Burhanpur, a major need was the construction of a mission center (See Image 21). The Wards had lived in a number of rented homes for several months. Most of these were mud homes with no doors, windows or furnishing. The need for a permanent mission bungalow was urgent. With contributions from family and friends, they were able to purchase seven acres of land for Rs. 500 near the railway station.<sup>28</sup> The groundbreaking took place on January 1, 1883.<sup>29</sup> While the language learning and

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ethel Ward, *Making Faces* (Unpublished story, 1937-38), 1. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>29</sup> Ernest F. Ward and Phebe E. Ward, *Burhanpur Faith Mission: First Quadrennial Report, 1881-1884* (Chicago: T. B. Arnold, 1885), 15. Ward Collection ATS.

construction of the mission bungalow were still in progress, Ernest and Phebe would make sure to spend several hours of their days in ministry. They reached out to children in the streets and ministered to them with songs and Bible stories. Going through the village, they would invite children saying, “*Chalo chalo hum geet gatey hain.*”<sup>30</sup> Ernest recollects,

Here is one of the hymns we used to sing in the Hindi language: *Yisu mujhko karta pyar, Baibal se yahi hai ashkar.* [Jesus loves me this I know for the Bible tells me so] ... At the beginning among the verses we used to teach them were: “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God,” “Thou shall call his name Jesus for he shall save his people from their sins,” “I am the good shepherd, the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.”<sup>31</sup>

After witnessing in bazaars and village streets, Phebe soon started a Sunday school for children at her home. Initially there were about six children, but the number soon grew to over fifty.<sup>32</sup> The children enjoyed learning the songs and teaching. This was the beginning of a great ministry among the children. In addition to children ministry, Phebe was engaged in reaching out to the women in the *zenanas*. Muslim women seldom went out of their private harems or *zenanas*, so they welcomed Phebe for fellowship.<sup>33</sup> Phebe was also well received by most of the Hindu women. Phebe had the opportunity to meet them where they were, share the gospel with them and pray for them.

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<sup>30</sup> “चलो चलो हम गीत गाते हैं” meaning, “Come along, come along, we are going to sing songs.” Ernest Ward, Letter to Ethel Ward, 573 Kendall Ave, Los Angeles, June 5, 1930. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>31</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to Ethel Ward, 573 Kendall Ave, Los Angeles, June 5, 1930. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>32</sup> *Ordered Steps*, 51.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

Neither life nor ministry was easy in Burhanpur. The difficulties of getting a proper accommodation, communicating with locals without misunderstanding, and working amid oppositions, were real challenges. In addition, lack of enough funds added to their trials. However, their faithful persistence was rewarded by God in several ways. Occasional financial supports from family and friends not only helped to sustain them but also to obtain land for a mission bungalow. Thanking the family and friends for their prayers and financial support during this early stage of ministry in Burhanpur, Phebe wrote,

Our mission is undoubtedly being established in the hearts of our people. Not only because it establishes a sound financial basis for the future of the Mission but above all it will be, and is no doubt, a great spiritual blessing to all those who participate in giving. For both these reasons I give praise to our Heavenly Father. All this has grown from such a small beginning. Who would have thought it?<sup>34</sup>

Phebe's reflection above shows the significance of financial accountability they maintained for every support, however small, they received. It also shows that their mission was done in poverty. This had its own positive impact in the minds of the people they witnessed to. Ernest and Phebe prophetically believed in the future of a self-supporting indigenous church led by indigenous Christians.

**3.1.1 *Trophies of Grace.*** Toward the end of 1883, Burhanpur Faith Mission greatly rejoiced in receiving its first convert from Hinduism, Vinayak Trimback. Ernest and Phebe called their converts "trophies of grace."<sup>35</sup> Trimback had seen Ernest preaching and being persecuted in one of the bazaars. He testified, "It touched my heart when I saw

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<sup>34</sup> Phebe Ward, Letter to Gilbert, Burhanpur CP, Nov 14, 1882, 6-7. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Ernest and Phebe Ward, *Echoes from Bharatkhand*, 77.

you Christian people persecuted in the bazaar... When I heard the songs about [the] sufferings of Jesus, I cried very much, but now I am happy. Jesus has made me glad.”<sup>36</sup> Ernest baptized Trimbuck in the Tapti river in the presence of a small group of Christians. Trimbuck became a great coworker in the village outreach.<sup>37</sup>

In 1885, the Wards welcomed their first Muslim convert, Shekh Juman who took the name Job Ward.<sup>38</sup> Soon his wife and children were added to the church and remained faithful followers of Christ. Juman was a weaver who went on to study at the Bareilly Theological Seminary in northern India and became a pastor.

**3.1.2 Matters of Joy.** Other matters of great joy in the Burhanpur mission included two additions to the team. First, the birth of Ernest and Phebe’s first daughter, Ethel Ellen Ward (1883). In one of his letters, Ernest tells Ethel that she was born in a indigenous house very close to the stone that reads “Mumtaj died here.” He imagines the house having an invisible inscription, “Ethel Ellen born here.”<sup>39</sup> Second, the arrival of the first official Free Methodist Missionaries, Mary Louisa Ranf and Julia Zimmerman.<sup>40</sup> Ernest and Phebe had regularly prayed to God and requested the Church for missionaries to come and assist in their growing work. The Mission Board of the FMC was formed on

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<sup>36</sup> *Ordered Steps*, 57.

<sup>37</sup> Rolland Davis, *The Challenges in Central India*, 46. Cf. *Ordered Steps*, 57.

It is beyond the scope of this research to explore the lives and contribution of Ward’s converts and colleagues.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 58. We have already mentioned Shekh Juman as the godson of the Wards in Chapter 2. His story will be further illustrated in Chapter 5.

<sup>39</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to Ethel Ward, Evanston, Ills., Aug 29, 1927. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>40</sup> Ranf and Zimmerman were first official FMC missionaries to India because they were directly sent by the newly formed FMC Missions Board. They were sent to assist Ernest and Phebe Ward who continued to be independent missionaries fully in cooperation with the Board.

June 19, 1885 and it made official missionary appointments to India and Africa.<sup>41</sup> Mary Louisa and Julia joined the Wards on February 5, 1886. The church at Burhanpur was small but vibrant. The Sunday School ministry which started with just six kids had grown to enroll over 634 children by January 1887.<sup>42</sup> The church comprised more than ten adults. Considering the context and duration of the mission, this was quite a success.

### ***3.2 Pilgrim Faith Mission, Ellichpur (1887)***

Although Ernest and Phebe wanted to continue the mission work from Burhanpur, they were open to the needs of other areas and curious to reach out to new places. Thus, while still in Burhanpur, they had made a short mission trip to Raipur in Chhattisgarh (Central Provinces) envisioning the “Chhattisgarh Pilgrim Mission.”<sup>43</sup> They, in fact, worked there for a few months in 1884 and then returned to Burhanpur. Toward the beginning of 1887, however, they received a compelling invitation to come to Achalpur.

The American Marathi Mission was closing its Achalpur station and the Sibleys, who were leading the work over there, and had also hosted the Wards in 1881, invited them to take over the work with a compelling reason, “there is no other missionary here.” Ernest and Phebe felt that it was God’s will for them to come to Achalpur. This was confirmed by the willingness of the Methodist Church (South India Conference) to take

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<sup>41</sup> See, John S. M’Geary, *The Free Methodist Church: A Brief Outline of its History, Origin and Development, Fourth Edition* (Chicago: W. B. Rose, 1917), 167-69; Cf., Leslie R. Marston, *From Age to Age A Living Witness: A Historical Interpretation of Free Methodism’s First Century* (Winona Lake, IN: Light and Life Press, 1960), 452-53.

<sup>42</sup> Ernest F. Ward and Phebe E. Ward, *Pilgrim Faith Mission: Second Quadrennial Report, 1885-1888* (Bombay: Bombay Guardian Printing Works, c.1889), 32. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>43</sup> Ernest Ward, “From Raipur, Central Province, India,” *Free Methodist*, Dec. 5, 1894. (cf. *Scrapbook One*, 118). Ward Collection ATS.



over the mission at Burhanpur by purchasing the mission bungalow.<sup>44</sup> The purchase was made by the Bishop William Taylor.<sup>45</sup> Ernest noted, “After much prayer and serious consideration, we have concluded to remove to this place [Ellichpur].”<sup>46</sup> One of the primary reasons for moving to Achalpur was the close proximity of the hill tribes,<sup>47</sup> the Korkus, for whom Ward had a special burden.

The Wards and team moved to Achalpur in March 1887, bought a bungalow and settled in Paratwada, the Cantonment area of Achalpur.<sup>48</sup> Here the work grew steadily. They now had two Sunday Schools, first for the English children in the mornings, and second one for indigenous in Hindustani conducted in the afternoons. The mission also adopted orphan children. This was the seed of a great harvest of ministry among the orphans in the future. Their first adopted baby girl was named Theodosia Ward.<sup>49</sup> This adoption took place sometime during the Summer of 1887 after Phebe had a miscarriage in April that year.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> *Ordered Steps*, 61. See also, Brenton T. Badley, *Visions and Victories in Hindustan: A Story of the Mission Stations of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Southern Asia*. Diamond Jubilee Edition (Madras: Methodist Publishing House, 1931), 462. Bishop Badley notes, “The bungalow and two acres of land in Burhanpur was purchased from the Free Methodists in 1887.” The MEC merged its Khandwa and Burhanpur stations in 1891.

<sup>45</sup> Wilson T. Hogue, *History of the Free Methodist Church of North America, Vol. II, Second Edition* (Chicago: The Free Methodist Publishing House, 1918, first edition 1915), 260.

<sup>46</sup> Ernest F. Ward and Phebe E. Ward, *Pilgrim Faith Mission: Second Quadrennial Report, 1885-1888* (Bombay: Bombay Guardian Printing Works, c.1889), 33. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> Ernest F. Ward and Phebe E. Ward, *Pilgrim Faith Mission: Second Quadrennial Report, 1885-1888* (Bombay: Bombay Guardian Printing Works, c.1889), 35-36. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.

<sup>50</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to his sister Louie Ward, Chikalda [Chikhaldhara], Berar, May 5, 1887. Ward Collection ATS.

In addition to the regular visits of inquirers, local bazar preaching, village evangelistic outreach, and short trips to cities for missionary meetings, Ernest became increasingly occupied with the ministry among the Korku people. Although he had made occasional attempts to visit the Korkus, at times with Albert Norton, his attempts were revitalized after relocating to Achalpur. Even during Summer break to a nearby hill station (Chikalda) he did not stop his evangelistic tours to the Korku villages. In the Summer of 1887, along with his helper, he visited over thirty villages preaching and distributing gospel tracts.<sup>51</sup>

Much of the Korku outreach and research during summer seasons were conducted from the mountain village of Simbedo (now Semadoh) located 27 miles north-west of Achalpur. The people were friendly and hospitable. Ernest writes,

While there [at Simbedo] I preached to the village people and others gathered to cut timber. I also spent much time gathering information about the Korkus.... One day wife and myself visited the village of Pili five miles from Simbedo. At this place after preaching to the natives, Korkus, Dhimars (fishermen) and Hindu cowherds, they gave us a donation of four annas (a man's wages for a day). Returning to Simbedo some fishermen gave us a fine mess of fish, and a shopper [provided] ... parched grain. Though these gifts were small we thanked our kind Heavenly Father for so inclining the natives to express their appreciation of our mission among them.<sup>52</sup>

Evangelism among the Korkus was the major focus of Achalpur mission. In 1891 Ernest published *A Brief Sketch of the Korkus*, a foundational text for evangelism and

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<sup>51</sup> Ernest F. Ward and Phebe E. Ward, *Pilgrim Faith Mission: Second Quadrennial Report, 1885-1888* (Bombay: Bombay Guardian Printing Works, c.1889), 33-34. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 55-56.

development of Korku grammar.<sup>53</sup> This booklet provides an excellent summary of the life, belief and practices of the Korkus.

The Pilgrim Faith Mission of Achalpur (See Image 22) came to an end toward the end of the 1891. The Korku mission had been a success. By the end of 1888, the mission family comprised of three missionaries, three indigenous Christian workers, and four children.<sup>54</sup> In July 1890 the Wards were blessed with their second daughter Bessie Helen (See Image 9). During the decade, an average of over 3,500 gospel tracts were sold and more than 5,000 leaflets were distributed annually in bazaars, fairs and villages.<sup>55</sup> Ernest humbly reflected

We feel that we have as yet accomplished but little towards the overthrow of Satan and the establishment of Christ's Kingdom in the land. But we hope, pray, and believe, and shall try to work for better things. We ask friends to pray for us and the field. Also pray the Lord of the harvest to send out more laborers into the harvest. Oh that many might be called to herald the gospel in these parts to the multitudes who have not even heard the name of Jesus yet.<sup>56</sup>

At the beginning of 1892, the Wards had completed ten years on the Indian mission field in India and were ready for a furlough. Before leaving, they handed over the Achalpur station to the Jabneel Mission under the Church of England.<sup>57</sup> April 1892 marked their first furlough to America. It also marked the organizing of the first Free

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<sup>53</sup> Ernest F. Ward, *A Brief Sketch of the Korkus, A Hill Tribe of Central India; Together with Grammatical Notes and a Vocabulary of their Language*. Part First; Pilgrim Faith Mission, Ellichpur, 1890. (Bombay: Printed at the Fort Printing Press, 1891). I have obtained a copy of this book from the British Library, London, UK.

The story of Ward's Korku "trophy of grace" will be told in Chapter 5.

<sup>54</sup> Ernest F. Ward and Phebe E. Ward, *Pilgrim Faith Mission: Second Quadrennial Report, 1885-1888* (Bombay: Bombay Guardian Printing Works, c.1889), 59. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to his mother, Ellichpur, July 11, 1891. Ward Collection ATS.

Methodist Class in Bombay. Ernest writes, “I organized the first F.M. Class in Bombay, India. It was composed of 2 Americans and 4 East Indians or Europeans. The latter were converted in our Pentecost Bands revival meetings in 1892. One wealthy Mohammedan who got the truth in those meetings was afterwards baptized and joined the English Wesleyan Church, Bombay.”<sup>58</sup> Ernest calls this the first FMC class in Asia. It was organized on April 22, 1892 in Sakli Road, Pentecost Bands Mission Hall, Byculla, Bombay. The members taken in by Ernest F. Ward, missionary, were Laura Douglas, Bessie Sherman, Albert R. Green, George I. James, George Caston, and Joseph Thompson.<sup>59</sup> This was exactly one week before the Wards left for their furlough.<sup>60</sup> It is not clear whether this society or class was an adult Bible study or a committee.

### ***3.3 Chhattisgarh Pilgrim Mission (1895)***

The Chhattisgarh Pilgrim Mission (See Image 17) of Ernest and Phebe Ward, which commenced in 1895, had its origin in Ernest’s earlier trips to the region between 1884 and 1896. Some of these trips were characterized by short term mission work in Raipur, exploratory trip to Bastar, etc. The mission to Chhattisgarh brought one of the greatest trophies of grace for the Wards, N. V. Tilak.

***3.3.1 Narayan Vaman Tilak’s Story.*** While still stationed at Burhanpur, Ernest had taken a short mission trips to Chhattisgarh. During this time, he had witnessed to Tilak, who would later become the famous Marathi Christian poet, in a train. Sharing the gospel with

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<sup>58</sup> Ernest Ward, “1<sup>st</sup> Free Meth[odist] Class in India,” See, *Scrapbook 363: Rag Bag of India, Facts and Figures*, 82. Ward Collection ATS. Ethel calls it “the first Free Methodist society in India” See, *Ordered Steps*, 69.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 152.

<sup>60</sup> Phebe noted the date of their departure April 28, 1892. Phebe Ward, Letter to Ernest Ward, April 22, 1902. Ward Collection ATS.

Narayan Vaman Tilak (1862-1919) and encouraging him to follow Christ was probably one of the most significant evangelistic accomplishments during this episode. Historians of Christianity in India and biographers of Tilak have not been aware of the fact that it was Ernest Ward who witnessed Christ to the famous Marathi poet (See Image 19). Historian M. D. David thinks that it was, “the missionary whose name is not known.”<sup>61</sup> H. L. Richard, based on vague recollections of Mrs. Tilak, calls him “a European.”<sup>62</sup> Further, J. C. Winslow, quotes Tilak himself who initially did not remember the missionary,

I was travelling in the intermediate class; and, as I was stepping into the compartment, instead of being rebuffed by the only *European gentleman* in the carriage, he made room for me *with a smile*.... We talked a long time. He said, “Young man, God is leading you. Study the Bible and study the life of Jesus, and you will surely be a Christian.”<sup>63</sup>

Most foreigners in India were generally thought to be Europeans those days. Tilak would not give credit to Ernest until after his Baptism. Ernest wrote to Ethel in 1928, “A Marathi Brahmin named Tilak .... After his baptism he gave me credit for being one of the agencies that brought him to Christ.”<sup>64</sup> Both Ernest and Phebe had met Tilak in Raj Nandgaon. At this time, Tilak was serving as the head clerk of the Rajah of Nandgaon State. Phebe writes,

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<sup>61</sup> M. D. David, *Missions: Cross-cultural Encounter and Change in Western India* (Delhi: ISPCK, 2001), 343.

<sup>62</sup> H. L. Richard, *Following Jesus in the Hindu Context: The Intriguing Implications of N. V. Tilak's Life and Thought* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1998), 19.

<sup>63</sup> J. C. Winslow, *Narayan Vaman Tilak: The Christian Poet of Maharashtra* (Calcutta: Association Press, YMCA: 1923), 20. Emphasis mine. Ernest was a young man with “heavenly smile,” cf. Chapter 2.

<sup>64</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to Ethel Ward, 557 Redfield Ave, Los Angeles, Apr 25, 1928. Ward Collection ATS.

He belonged to the highest caste and understood English well, a cultured man, a Hindu poet and a deep thinker. At that time, he was thinking very seriously of becoming a Christian. This meant much for him.

My husband felt led to give him *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*. After reading it he was encouraged to come out boldly for Christ and face the persecution involved. We settled in Raj Nandgaon January 1, 1895. He soon after had leave to go to Bombay and was there baptized [Feb 15, 1895]. For taking this step he was asked to resign from the Rajah's employ or he would be dismissed. He chose the former and went to Ahmednagar, where he has resided since.

I need not write of the tongues of scandal which assailed his character or the persecution that followed on his boldly taking his stand for Jesus. His wife waited four years, hoping he would recant and return to her and their only boy [D. N. Tilak]. It was a season of deep sorrow to his soul. At first, he tried to convert her, but gave that up and left her in God's hands. What he failed in, God succeeded in doing, and three years ago she gave up caste and was baptized. She has since started an orphanage with dependence on God alone for the needed funds. He publishes a Marathi paper [Dnayanodaya].... While he translates for papers and does other literary work for which he is paid, yet his dependence for funds for his paper and orphanage is on God...It is very encouraging to see a native of this land take the stand he does....We are more and more convinced that faith in God is a very necessary requisite for missionaries.”<sup>65</sup>

Phebe's presentation of above details clearly shows their notable acquaintance with Tilak. It is important to note that Ernest had provided him with spiritual resources in terms of books, etc. Narayan V. Tilak's letter to Ethel Ward sheds further light to his Ward's role in his life,

Satara, S.M.C.

My dear sister in Christ:

Yes, I very well remember meeting your father at Raj Nandgaon. I was then studying the Bible, and the way in which he recited the Lord's Prayer first made me to pray in right earnest, and to think deeply over that wonderful prayer. I soon after wrote a poem on it which has been published by the Bombay Tract and

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<sup>65</sup> Phebe Ward, "Have Faith in God," Boys' Christian Home, Dhond, India. c.1902. Cf. *Scrapbook* 486, 103. See also, Phebe Ward, Web. *P.E.W. Journal*, Jan 1901-Dec 1904, Feb 5, 1902 (mentions Tilak's date of Baptism). Ward Collection ATS.

Book Society. I am thankful to God that our acquaintance has renewed and that you are well.

....

Kindly give my loving regards to your father. I return your Birthday Book. My birthday was Feb. 10, 1862.

Sincerely yours,

N. V. Tilak.<sup>66</sup>

The following letter by Ernest Ward which he wrote to D. N. Tilak (N.V. Tilak's son) gives valuable historic data on his meeting with Tilak and his contributions to his spiritual quest and growth. Ward wrote,

Dear Brother:

My daughter has handed me your kind letter ... and through it I am glad to make your acquaintance. I always held your worthy father in high esteem. I did not however have the pleasure of meeting him personally more than two or three times. The first occasion was on Feb. 27, 1894 when he was residing in Raj Nandgaon State, C.P. On that particular day, I had the opportunity of preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ to a large number of 3<sup>rd</sup> class passengers aboard the train while enroute to Raj Nandgaon.... Reaching the said town, I met your father at the bungalow of Mr. Milton, the Police Inspector, where I entered into conversation with him and also prayed. My journal for that day is very brief, but this is what I have written, "Feb. 27, 1894. Met Mr. Tilak, the Rajah's private secretary, a Marathi speaking man (but well up in English). He is an honest seeker of salvation." Subsequently your father removed to the Deccan, I think, where I sent him an illustrated copy of Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," and not long after that I had the joy of hearing that he had openly confessed Christ and had been publicly baptized.... This is all that comes to mind to write to you at this time. The last time I met your father was at Dhond about the year 1902 at the house of my old associate Albert Norton who also since then has passed away.

Grace, mercy and peace to your family and self, especially to your mother, if living.

Most truly yours,

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<sup>66</sup> As quoted in Ernest Ward, *Letter to D. N. Tilak*, Darwha Motibagh, Berar, Jan. 26, 1927. Pasted in Ernest Ward, *Diary 367: India Notebook*, 247-249. Ward Collection ATS.

Ernest Fremont Ward.<sup>67</sup>

D. N. Tilak, who was trying to understand his father's story as told by his mother, was digging into historical records to find the Christian influences in his father's life. He was thankful to learn about the role of Ernest Ward. Here is D. N. Tilak's response to the above letter by Ernest Ward,

Dear Mr. Ward,

Accept my heartfelt thanks for the little but very important information you gave me about my father. That throws a flood of light on certain things my mother tells me. Your letter has made it easy for me to correct certain dates and incidents.

With my best regards

Thank you once more.

I remain yours sincerely

D. N. Tilak.<sup>68</sup>

The above correspondences clearly show that Ernest Ward was instrumental in N. V. Tilak's decision to follow Christ. Ernest recollects properly meeting with Tilak on at least two occasions, first being Feb. 27, 1894 in Raj Nandgaon at the Police Officer's place, and the last time on March 1, 1902 in Dhond.<sup>69</sup> Both Tilak and Ernest's accounts show that they met at Raj Nandgaon. It is certainly possible that the very first meeting

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<sup>67</sup> Ernest Ward, *Letter to D. N. Tilak*, Darwha Motibagh, Berar, Jan. 26, 1927. Pasted in Ernest Ward, *Diary 367: India Notebook*, 247-249. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>68</sup> D. N. Tilak, Letter to Ernest Ward, Trimbak Road, Nasik, Feb 25, 1927. Handwritten on the letterhead of ज्ञानोदय, DNYANODAYA (Rise of Knowledge), See, Ernest Ward, *Diary 367: India Notebook*, 249. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>69</sup> In a letter to Ethel, D. N. Tilak suggest three dates from his father's diary: Sep. 4, [1884?]; Feb. 26, 1894 and March 1, 1902. See, Ethel Ward, Letter to Ernest Ward, Darwha, Motibagh, Berar, July 18, 1929, 2. Ward Collection ATS. It is possible that Ward witnessed to Tilak for the first time in a train to or from Rajnandgaon on Sept 4, 1883/84. This would be the occasion of encountering the "European" "with a smile." It is also possible that they met twice on Feb 26/27, 1894, first in the train and then at Police Officer's place. The two dates (1894, 1902) are duly verified by three authoritative sources: Tilak's son, Ernest, and Ethel.



would have been on a train. In any case, it was Ernest Ward who played a significant role in Tilak's conversion to Christ. The story of Ward's witness to Tilak illustrates the heart of my subaltern missiology: an unknown missionary becoming instrumental in the conversion of a wellknown indigenous Christian.

**3.3.2 Chhattisgarh and Beyond.** After returning from their first furlough, the Wards moved to Chhattisgarh in Central Provinces. Ernest wrote,

We have been here [in Raipur] over two months, and like the locality very much. There is considerable fever here, on account of the extensive rice fields; but there is a vast harvest of human souls to be gathered in. On account of the unoccupied territory in this part of India, where little mission work has been done, we were especially drawn to this region".... [According to] 1891 census [there were] 5,700,000 souls; 2,060 nominal Christians, largely Roman Catholics .... Truly the harvest is great, and the laborers are few.... As we expect to labor inside this territory [Chhattisgarh Division], our mission will be local known as "Chhattisgarh Pilgrim Mission."<sup>70</sup>

Concerning ministry among women in Chhattisgarh, Phebe gives the following optimistic account,

The women are ready to receive us everywhere. The *rani*, or queen, seems to be a superior woman, in advance of any women here. I am told she is interested in female education and has a school that she visits. She lives in seclusion, "*pardah*" as it is called here, which means "veil." She reads Hindi and has begun English. She is young, being only about 20 years old. There is a loud call for woman's work among women here. As a rule, married women are more acceptable among them....I long to see these long neglected women to be reached.....Reaching the women and enlarging their ideas will mean much for the next generation. They are so ignorant and know so little of what goes on in the outer world. Idol worship is the greatest thing in their little world, so they diligently instruct the children in this.

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<sup>70</sup> Ernest Ward, "From Raipur, Central Province, India," *Scrapbook One*, 118. Addressed to the Editor, *Free Methodist*. Dated Dec. 5, 1894. Ward Collection ATS.

Who with faith, courage and a clear call from God, will enlist to set these captive women free? They are hugging their chains, not knowing they are bound, and the needs of the hour demand a move in this direction.<sup>71</sup>

In Chhattisgarh, the Wards worked in four places, Raipur (1894) Raj Nandgaon (1895-1898), Lohara, and Khairagarh (1899-1901). It is important to mention here that by this time Ernest and Phebe worked in association with the Pentecost Bands (1897-1901).<sup>72</sup> Their multiple transfers had several reasons: (1) They wanted to work in the most needy places, (2) They did not want to go back to a mission station once they had handed it over to other missionaries, (3) They were in demand for pioneering works, especially the construction of mission bungalows, and thus they relocated to wherever they were called to help.

The mission work in Chhattisgarh turned out to be chiefly humanitarian as they became increasingly engaged in orphan care and famine relief works. However, humanitarian services did not replace evangelism but went hand in hand. Ernest wrote,

Our earnest prayer to God is that our coming here [Khairagarh] may prove a spiritual blessing to the people and that we shall soon see this moral desert begin to bloom and blossom as the rose. We hope to enlist the prayers and co-operation of all who read this sketch in the evangelization of Khairagarh.<sup>73</sup>

It is important to note that Ernest and Phebe maintained cordial connections with local authorities. In fact, they had a good relationship with the local rajahs. While Phebe

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<sup>71</sup> Phebe Ward, Letter to the Vanguard, Raj Nandgaon, March 12, 1895. Published as "Godly Greeting" in *The Vanguard*. See, Ernest Ward, *Scrapbook One*, 123. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>72</sup> For the Bands, see, Chapters 1 and 4. See also, Charles Edwin Jones, *Perfectionist Persuasion: The Holiness Movement and American Methodism, 1867-1936* (Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, 1974), 66.

<sup>73</sup> Ernest Ward, "Khairagarh," Band No. 4, Khairagarh, C.P. Jan 1, 1901. See, *Scrapbook 393*, 150. Ward Collection ATS.

reached out to the queen and other women, Ernest reached out to the rulers (*rajah*) and their officials. Together they gained their favors for mission work among the people of Chhattisgarh. Ernest writes,

Our hearts are tuned towards the more neglected quarters. Surrounding Raipur district...are several native States governed by rajahs or chiefs. They are nearly all unoccupied mission fields. We have been trying for months through correspondence and personal interviews with Nandgaon, the rajah, to obtain a building spot at the capital, a town of about 6,000 souls, forty-two miles west of Raipur. I am glad to report that we have at last succeeded.<sup>74</sup>

The success had come in the form of the rajah's gift of land to Ward. This is the letter from the rajah,

Dec. 5, 1894

My Dear Mr. Ward,

I am in receipt of your letter of the 28<sup>th</sup> ultimo. I would not take any price from you for the land already given to you for your bungalow. You are at liberty to make the bungalow at any time you please. What I wish you to do is to fence the land given to you, by an enclosure, that there may be no bother about the boundary hereafter, and that the land may be free from all sorts of encroachments. I do not fix any time for the commencement or completion of the bungalow.

Yours sincerely,  
Maha Raja Bali Das  
Feudatory Chief<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Ernest Ward, "From Raipur, Central Province, India," *The Free Methodist*, Dec. 5, 1894. See also, *Scrapbook One*, 118. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>75</sup> The local rajahs or rulers were called feudatory chiefs by the Britishers. Ernest further wrote, "The land referred to and for which I made an application, and had marked, is about one and one-half acres in the best location in the town, a thousand feet from the railway station and twice that distance from the daily bazar. This is a *bona fide* grant from the rajah, which he has given me verbally before witnesses and also by the letter shown above, but I shall endeavor to obtain a deed or some kind of legal paper from him to the Mission Board or ourselves as agents for the Board before commencing to build." Ibid. Emphasis original.

Maha Raja Bali Ram Das (See Image 20) was one of the four rajahs Ernest and Phebe were personally acquainted with. The other three included the rajahs of Kanker, Timarni, and Khairagarh.<sup>76</sup> During his Bastar trip in 1896 (See Image 16), Ernest had met with the rajah of Kanker (Now, north Bastar) and gained his favor. Ernest noted in his diary, "I visited the village of Kanker, where the Rajah lives, in 1896 in company with Bro. L. Huber. The rajah was friendly at *that* time and offered to give me a spot to build a mission house."<sup>77</sup> The purpose of this visit was threefold,

First, to carry the gospel to the aborigines of that locality in the dialect of Hindi spoken by them. Second, to ascertain if the opening of a mission station thereabouts would be feasible and practicable. Third, to find out if a sanitarium, for the hot season, of 4,000 feet elevation was obtainable in that vicinity and accessible by cart-road.<sup>78</sup>

For reasons unknown, Ernest did not go back to Kanker and never started a mission station over there.<sup>79</sup> Most probably, he became well occupied with his responsibilities at Raj Nandgaon (See Image 25), where the ministry was growing in all

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<sup>76</sup> Ernest Ward, *Scrapbook #11*, c.1881-1904, 84. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>77</sup> Ernest Ward, "Tour From Raj Nandgaon to Kolar, Bastar State, in the Country of the Mariya Gonds, Feb. and Mar. 1896." *Diary 377*, 11. Ward Collection ATS.

A printed account of the Bastar trip is dated February 21, 1894 in which Ernest talks about having chicken curry with the rajah of Kanker. See, *Scrapbook One*, 90-91, paper cutting from *The Vanguard*. Ward Collection ATS. It seems that he either took a second trip in 1896 or the printed report has misprinted the year. In any case, Ward did visit Bastar on foot. Watson Huber was a Pentecost Bands missionary and Ward's colleague.

<sup>78</sup> Ernest Ward, "Touring Afoot in Hindustan," *The Free Methodist*, Vol. XXXIV, Number 52, December 28, 1930: 1-2.

<sup>79</sup> However, I believe that he never ceased praying for the salvation of Bastar region, which he rightly described as the darkest of India. He mentions baptizing several Gond people (aboriginal tribes) from that region. (See, Ernest Ward, "Touring Afoot in Hindustan," *The Free Methodist*, Vol. XXXIV, Number 52, December 28, 1930: 1-2). Could it be that among them were some of my forefathers? Could it also be that the Fishermen who shared their fish with Ward in Satpura hills, passed on the gospel to their kinsmen in Bastar? In any case, it was Ernest Ward who first brought the gospel to both fishermen and Adivasis (tribes) of my region. Ward walked through my village near Kanker (north Bastar) in 1896 and I came to faith in Christ in 1996. I believe Ward's prayer for Bastar's salvation has been at work for over one hundred years.

directions. They had built an orphanage at Lohara and a mission station in Khairagarh.<sup>80</sup>

These places in central Chhattisgarh were mostly rural and suited perfectly in Ward's vision. Ward's reason for selecting these unreached rural areas for mission work is summed up in the following account he wrote,

Mission work in India has largely centered about the great cities and towns. This was natural and proper for the first stage of missionary enterprise. But the time has come for a more general advance on the villages, especially those of the remote regions. About ninety percent of the natives of British India live in villages having less than a thousand inhabitants.

The rural classes are more promising for mission work. There is a dark dense mass of over *one million* of our Indian brothers living mostly in hamlets in the eastern part of Central Provinces and north of the Bustar [sic] state among whom *no mission work has ever been done*. They embrace Hindi, Gondi, Koi and Oriya speaking people besides many other tribes. This is an intensely needy field and God has been laying it especially upon our hearts... A tribe in this part of India until quite recently offered human beings in sacrifice to their gods.... In the good mercy of God, we hope to lead out a band of Holy Ghost baptized, well-tried workers to this part of India and plant the standard of our King among these long-neglected tribes.<sup>81</sup>

The entire Chhattisgarh region is characterized by tribal population. And while the gospel was preached in Chhattisgarh's Raipur region as early as 1868,<sup>82</sup> the regions around Khairagarh (north west of Raipur) were still unreached during the Wards ministry. Ward's ministry at Khairagarh, located 25 miles north of Raj Nandgaon, was also blessed with the gift of land from the rajah of Khairagarh. Phebe wrote, "The Rajah

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<sup>80</sup> Lohara is located between south of Raj Nandgaon and north west of Kanker (Bastar).

<sup>81</sup> Ernest Ward, "Darkest India! Shall be Redeemed," clipping from *The Vanguard*, (no details) Cf. *Scrapbook One*, 161. Emphasis original. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>82</sup> For a brief biography of the pioneering missionary among the Satnami people of Chhattisgarh, See, Shivraj K. Mahendra, "Rev. Oscar T. Lohr of Chhattisgarh (1824-1907): The Life, Mission Works, and Legacy of the Apostle to the Satnami People," *Indian Church History Review*, Vol. 51, No. 1, January 2017: 47-59.

has given us the privilege of building near Piparia, about 3 miles from Khairagarh.”<sup>83</sup> The Wards were chief guests on several special occasions organized by the rajah.<sup>84</sup> The ministry at Khairagarh also witnessed the baptism of Bessie and Louisa, daughters of Ernest and Phebe. Both were baptized by Ernest along with 32 other children in December 1900. The mode of baptism was by immersion. Phebe noted in her Diary, “Ernest baptized them all by immersion.”<sup>85</sup> Phebe also writes, “Two years ago last Sept. 8<sup>th</sup>, Jewarbee and 8 children were also baptized.”<sup>86</sup> Jewarbee was a prominent Muslim convert of the Wards, she proved to be a great coworker in their evangelistic as well as orphanage ministries.<sup>87</sup> The orphanage ministry led the Wards as far as Sanjan, Gujarat (1902-1904).<sup>88</sup> During the ministry period of 1881-1905, Ernest had “baptized over 100 natives”<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Phebe Ward, Mar 19, 1901, *P.E.W. Journal, Jan 1901-Dec 1904*. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>84</sup> Phebe Ward, Jan 24, 1901, *P.E.W. Journal, Jan 1901-Dec 1904*. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>85</sup> Phebe E. Ward, Jan 1, 1901, *P.E.W. Journal, Jan 1901-Dec 1904*. Ward Collection ATS. Writing this diary pages while preparing to go to Khairagarh, 24 miles from Raj Nandgaon where they were currently working. Between 1881-1905, Ernest had baptized more than 100 Indians. See, Ernest Ward, Letter to Ethel Ward, no. 1, Yeotmal, July 12, 1905. Ward Collection ATS.

Ernest also baptized by sprinkling and pouring. All the three modes of baptism are accepted in the Free Methodist Church. See, David W. Kendall, et. al., eds., *Free Methodist Church USA: 2015 Book of Discipline* (Indianapolis: The Free Methodist Publishing House, 2016), 171.

<sup>86</sup> Phebe E. Ward, Jan 1, 1901, *P.E.W. Journal, Jan 1901-Dec 1904*. Ward Collection ATS. Phebe lists the names of all the boys and girls who were baptized. The baptism service was conducted after Hindi meetings.

<sup>87</sup> We shall explore Jewarbee’s story in Chapter 4.

<sup>88</sup> Since the focus of the current chapter is evangelistic works, we shall discuss the humanitarian services (orphan and famine relief work, etc.) in the next chapter.

<sup>89</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to Ethel Ward, no. 1, Yeotmal, July 12, 1905. This letter is one of the largest, four pages on legal size. Describes India and particularly Wani to Ethel as a preparation on India. The letter shows Ethel coming to India as a Free Methodist Missionary. The exact number of baptisms between 1881-1905 was 172. See, Ernest Ward, Letter to Ethel Ward, 573 Kendall Ave, Los Angeles, Dec 16, 1929.

While working in parts of Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, and Maharashtra, the Wards had partnered with other missions, such as the Pentecostal Bands, the Vanguard Mission, and briefly with their old friend Albert Norton himself.<sup>90</sup> In terms of their relationship with the Free Methodist Church, they were still independent faith missionaries during this time. They were neither sponsored nor governed by the Mission Board of the FMC. However, even while working in association with other missions, the Wards duly maintained their bonafide membership in the Home church as well as friends in the Illinois Conference of the FMC.

### ***3.4 Free Methodist Church Mission, Vidarbha (1904)***

After about 25 years of independent and associated mission work, the Wards decided to officially come under the management of the Mission Board of the Free Methodist Church. Two factors were significant for this decision. First, both the Pentecostal Bands and the Vanguard Mission, which were originally founded by Free Methodist leaders, had gone on to become independent organizations and had fallen outside the umbrella of the Free Methodist Church.<sup>91</sup> The Wards had bitter-sweet experiences in working in association with them, especially the Bands, and strongly felt it was best to move on. At this point, they also went through a moment of uncertainty and hope. Phebe reflected,

We are in God's hands and He will open doors for us.... I feel now if we had stayed in Burhanpur it would have been the best but I am not sure. We are short

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<sup>90</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to Ethel Ward, 573 Kendall Ave, Los Angeles, July 24, 1930. Ward Collection ATS. The Wards joined the Bands in 1892 and the Vanguard mission in 1902. See Ernest Ward, *Diary* 367, 175-176. More about these organizations in the next chapter.

<sup>91</sup> *Ordered Steps*, 107. It may be also said that they had lost the official favor of the FMC authorities.

sighted at the best. Our Ellichpur work was flourishing too. We have had souls in both places. Well our record is with God...<sup>92</sup>

Second, the Free Methodist missionaries with headquarters in Yavatmal (See Image 15) needed the Wards to come help them in their growing work. The Wards received a compelling invitation: “Come home. We need you.”<sup>93</sup> Ernest and Phebe prayerfully accepted the invitation. Phebe personally felt guided to Wun (present day Wani). She wrote, “Ernest and I had a consultation about our going to the Berars. At first I was a little faithless but at prayers God came and blessed me as I felt I could go anywhere and was much down toward the Wun district.”<sup>94</sup>

During his Achalpur years, Ernest had made several survey trips in search of promising mission stations. Yavatmal was one of the places he would have started the work, but he had finalized on Burhanpur, and gradually moved on to wherever they were needed the most. Later, when the official Free Methodist missionaries wanted to build a mission headquarters, he suggested Yavatmal. The seed of the Free Methodist works in Yavatmal District was sown by Miss Celia J. Ferris.<sup>95</sup> Celia had responded to the appeal made by the Wards for missionaries. She was particularly inspired by the tragic death of Louisa Ranf (1857 – 1890)<sup>96</sup> who was about to go appeal for more missionaries. Celia arrived in April of 1891 and was received by Ernest at Bombay. The Wards and team

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<sup>92</sup> Phebe Ward, Letter to Gilbert & Ceeny, Jeethul Balsar (Near Sanjan), May 29, 1902. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Phebe Ward, Nov 11, 1901, *P.E.W. Journal, Jan 1901-Dec 1904*. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>95</sup> Rolland N. Davis, ed., *The Challenge in Central India* (Winona Lake, IN: Light and Life Press, 1954), 48-50.

<sup>96</sup> For a life of Louisa Ranf, see, Mariet Hardy Freeland, *Missionary Martyrs: Mary Louisa Ranf, Missionary to India* (Chicago: T.B. Arnold, 1892).



hosted her in Achalpur, arranged her language learning, and prepared her for work in Yavatmal region, just before leaving for their first furlough.<sup>97</sup> The Wards were being called to work in Wani, one of the most difficult mission fields in Yavatmal district. In this region they would serve as mission builders in several places such as Darwha, Umri, and Yavatmal, in addition to Wani. All these places are located in Vidarbha (Eastern Maharashtra, consisting Nagpur and Amravati divisions).

At Wani, the Wards worked in two phases. First was during 1904-1906. Their Wani bungalow was spacious but infested with scorpions. For months they killed at least one scorpion daily, nearly 100 inside the bungalow within three months.<sup>98</sup> In addition, there were rats and snakes to deal with.<sup>99</sup> The mission work commenced once again with language learning. So far, they had learned five languages: Hindi, Urdu, Korku, Chhattisgarhi, and Gujarati. Ernest had produced the first Korku grammar, and a Chhattisgarhi dictionary.<sup>100</sup> The challenge at Wani was Marathi, the language spoken at Wani and entire Maharashtra. With the help of a language teacher and a indigenous evangelist, Ward learned the language and simultaneously carried out his village outreach. Much of the preaching tours were done on foot. Distant villages were reached with a rented bullock cart. In addition to regular village evangelism, and weekly bazaar preaching, Ward engaged in organizing special gospel meetings during festive occasions,

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<sup>97</sup> Rolland N. Davis, ed., *The Challenge in Central India* (Winona Lake, IN: Light and Life Press, 1954), 48-50.

<sup>98</sup> Phebe Ward, Web. Jul 24, 1904, *P.E.W. Journal, Jan 1901-Dec 1904*. Ward Collection ATS. Cf. *Ordered Steps*, 108.

<sup>99</sup> *Ordered Steps*, 114.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 109. I found a copy of the Korku grammar at the British Library in London and a copy is now available with me and also at the Asbury Seminary Library. Unfortunately, there is no record of the Chhattisgarhi dictionary. In his language diary, Ward also made charts of vocabularies in multiple languages. These were not published.

such as the Jatra (religious fair). He would invite other missionaries for assistance in preaching, witnessing, singing, and distribution or sale of tracts and gospel portions.<sup>101</sup>

Phebe continued her ministry among women. She faced some opposition in Hindu homes but never stopped witnessing.

The second phase of work in Wani (1916-1918) marked the Father-daughter duo as Ethel had joined Ernest. During the year 1915-16, Ernest preached more than 200 times in not less than 70 villages.<sup>102</sup> In 1918 he preached 343 times in 58 villages, three fairs, and on trains. Also, Ernest sold over 550 gospel booklets and tracts, and baptized 21 individuals during the year. The baptism included 11 infants (by sprinkling), five boys (by immersion), and five adults (two by immersion and two pouring).<sup>103</sup> The Wards rebuilt and redefined the mission work at Wani. Their fruits were witness to God's grace in their labors.

It was a vision to enlarge the work of the FMC in India that led the Wards to pioneer in the next place, Darwha. During Bishop Walter Sellew's visit to India (1905-06), the missionaries unanimously decided that "we should enlarge our borders and occupy more mission stations."<sup>104</sup> The decision was made in the annual meeting presided by Bishop Sellew. It was also voted that the Wards be transferred to Darwha. Located 67

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 113-114. The Wani years also marked the beginning of Ernest's triad collections (Ibid., 108). Triads and sermons will be studied in a separate chapter.

<sup>102</sup> Ernest Ward, *Diary 1915*. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>103</sup> Ernest Ward, *Diary 1918*, 19. Ward Collection ATS. Cf. *Ordered Steps*, 156. Ethel counts 25 baptisms. Ernest counts a total of 202 baptisms since 1883.

<sup>104</sup> *Ordered Steps*, 116.

miles north-west of Wani and 27 miles south-west of Yavatmal, Darwha was thought to be a strategic site.<sup>105</sup> Phebe updated her brother on their appointment procedure,

The Board [FMC] does not change our stations. They appoint our Supt. [superintendent] and Treas. [treasurer] that is all. We [missionaries] recommend them and they appoint them. We have an annual meeting and our stations are given [to] us by ballot. We each one voting for those who we think are best adapted to that station. We have no wire pulling and are all free to tell our convictions. We have been appointed to Darwah on account of our experience in building. I presume we will be sent back to Wun when the mission bungalow is done.<sup>106</sup>

The Wards worked in Darwha in two phases. The first phase (1906-1910) marked the (1) building of the mission bungalow and establishing the ministry, (2) appointment of important committees for ministry, and (3) the publication of *Echoes from Bharatkhand* (1908).<sup>107</sup>

The construction of the mission bungalow began in March 1906. This was the fifth building being constructed by Ernest (See Image 24). As the work began, they lived in tents, baked their own bricks, brought woods from the nearby forests. The construction was a herculean task, delayed by sluggish laborers and threatened by destructive storms. The writing of *Echoes from Bharatkhand* coincided with the construction. Both the bungalow and the book were completed by April 1908.<sup>108</sup>

An important feature of the FMC ministry in 1907 was the formation of following three committees. (1) Committee to Draft Rules for Native Christian Workers. This

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Phebe Ward, Letter to Gilbert and Ceeny, Darwah, Yeotmal Dist, March 18, 1907. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>107</sup> We have already made a brief review of this book in Chapter 1.

<sup>108</sup> *Ordered Steps*, 117-119.

committee was also responsible for arranging a course of study for them. Members included: M. C. Clarks, Ernest Ward, and Effie Southworth.<sup>109</sup> The course of study in question was the prototype for the Marathi Medium Bible College to be opened in the near future. (2) Committee to Take Charge of Building Operations. Members included Ernest and Phebe Ward, M. C. Clarks, and S. D. Casberg.<sup>110</sup> (3) Finance Committee. This had five members: The Wards, Clarks, Chynoweth, Southworth, and Edwards.<sup>111</sup>

Ward's report for the year 1906-1907 records his 118 visits to 25 villages and towns within Darwha *taluk* (county), and 19 visits to nine villages outside of Darwha area. The average attendance was 20 persons. Ernest sold 333 Marathi tracts and 165 scripture portions. Phebe visited 39 homes and conducted 12 Sunday Schools with an average attendance of ten.<sup>112</sup> In the annual meeting of 1908, Ernest was appointed as Superintendent of Darwha station.<sup>113</sup>

This phase of mission work ended with the third furlough and the demise of Phebe Ward during the furlough. The second phase (1921-1927) marked (1) the untiring evangelistic enterprises of Ernest Ward in his old age, (2) the publication of *Memory Links*,<sup>114</sup> and (3) official retirement of Ernest Ward in 1927. Following is the report from 1923,

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<sup>109</sup> Ernest Ward, *Diary 1907* ("Yearbook"). Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid. (July 1, 1907).

<sup>113</sup> Ibid. (June 9, 1908).

<sup>114</sup> Briefly discussed in Chapter 1, Ward's *Memory Links* was published in the same year the *Time Magazine* was launched (March 1923). Published as a weekly news magazine, *Time*'s first issue had Speaker of the House, Joseph Cannon on the cover. It was published by Briton Hadden and Henry Luce.

Several weeks of my time in November were taken up in overseeing the repairs on mission property and the construction... Other things have called me off from time to time. But I [am] glad to report that we have been able to put in much of our usual time in village and bazar evangelistic work.

During the year I have preached 224 times in 76 towns and villages including two religious fairs, and several Railway trains....700 gospels and booklets have been sold besides the free distribution of 500 leaflet tracts.

A good deal of the time in village meetings Bro. Thuline has been my right hand man, and most of the time Yeshwant Master has been my left hand to help roll the old chariot along. Of late Benjamin has been giving us a good boost. During the year I have baptized 3 by sprinkling, 2 by pouring, and one by immersion.<sup>115</sup>

Before his final appointment to Darwha, Ernest had also worked for about a decade in Umbri (now Umri) and Yavatmal mission stations respectively. After Phebe's demise in 1910, he returned to India in the following year with his daughter Ethel. They were appointed to Umri mission station of the FMC. At Umri they worked during 1912-1915. The mission work at Umri (38 miles southeast of Yavatmal) was started by Ernest's colleagues, the Casbergs.<sup>116</sup> With the appointment of the Wards, the station's village outreach was revolutionized. Ernest records that he preached 218 time in 50 villages and towns, sold 400 booklets, distributed 200 tracts, and gave away medicine to 182 people from 15 villages.<sup>117</sup> Ethel was in charge of the weekly Sunday School. The medical work at Umri was started as a response to save lives in the aftermath of great drought and famine of 1894 and following years that had brought rampant spread of the disease. This

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<sup>115</sup> Ernest Ward, "Report of E. F. Ward Missionary Stationed at Darwha from July 1, 1922 to July 1, 1923," *Diary 367: India Notebook*, 48-49. Typed pages pasted. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>116</sup> *Ordered Steps*, 137.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 140.

was the seed which has grown on to become the famous Umri Christian Hospital today.<sup>118</sup>

At Yavatmal, Ernest worked in two brief phases, 1915-16 and 1919-1920 respectively. As the mission headquarters, Yavatmal was a significant station (See Image 23). All business meetings, annual meetings, and special revival meetings were held here. All important decisions were deliberated and finalized at Yavatmal. It was also the center for training of local Christian workers, a ministry that was foundational for the future full-fledged Bible Seminary. 1920 marked the 40<sup>th</sup> year of Ward's missionary work in India.<sup>119</sup> At this time, he had started spending greater time mentoring indigenous Christians; however, preaching the gospel remained the love of his life.

By the time of Ernest's retirement in 1927, the Free Methodist Church in India recorded 321 baptisms.<sup>120</sup> Out of these, Ernest had baptized 102 and the rest by his colleagues.<sup>121</sup> This number included those baptized by him in the Yavatmal district alone and only during 1904-1927. His previous baptisms, as noted earlier, were all outside of Yavatmal district (including Chhattisgarh and Gujarat) and numbered 172. Thus, during his entire term Ward baptized at least 274 persons.<sup>122</sup> The following table gives the details of baptisms by Ward during 1881-1927:

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<sup>118</sup> See, a brief history of the Umri Christian Hospital at [uchospital.co.in](http://uchospital.co.in) (accessed July 13, 2019 at 11am).

<sup>119</sup> *Ordered Steps*, 158.

<sup>120</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to Ethel Ward, 573 Kendall Ave, Los Angeles, Dec 16, 1929.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid. The names of places of baptisms are also verified in another letter, Ernest Ward, Letter to Ethel Ward, 573 Kendall Ave, Los Angeles, Feb 8, 1930.

<sup>122</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to Ethel Ward, 573 Kendall Ave, Los Angeles, Dec 16, 1929.

*Table 1*  
*Baptisms*

<i>Place</i>	<i>Number of Baptisms</i>
Khandwa (CP, Madhya Pradesh)	1
Burhanpur (CP, Madhya Pradesh)	2
Ellichpur (CP, Maharashtra)	1
Akola (CP, Maharashtra)	4
Dongargarh (CP, Chhattisgarh)	1
Raj Nandgaon (CP, Chhattisgarh)	99
Leper Village (CP, Chhattisgarh)	27
Dhond (near Pune, Maharashtra)	13
San Jan (Gujarat)	24
Yeotmal	81
Wun	7
Umbri	6
Darwha	8
<i>Total</i>	274

These baptisms were foundational not only for the early church plants but also for the ongoing ministry of the gospel.

#### **4. Ernest Ward's Understanding of the Gospel**

With the above historical outline of his major evangelistic outreaches and church planting activities, we shall now look briefly at Ernest Ward's understanding of the gospel.<sup>123</sup> We see that the preaching of the gospel to all people everywhere was his greatest passion throughout. What was his understanding of the gospel? Ernest defined

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<sup>123</sup> I wish I could title this section as Ward's Theology of Evangelism; but I am unable to do so because he did not write any monograph or series of articles relating to this theme. My gleaning comes primarily from his letters and brief reports.

the gospel in terms of gold. Comparing gospel with gold, he called it (1) the object to be pursued, (2) a means to accomplish an end, (3) an agency to bless humanity, (4) a matter for legislation or regulation, and (5) a matter to be defended or reprehended through the pulpit, platform or press.<sup>124</sup> He also highlighted the clear distinction between the two stating,

The gospel stands for the regenerating purifying civilizing influences.  
The gospel [is the] power of God unto salvation.  
The gospel brings down heaven to earth and brings up earth to heaven ...  
Gold as a symbol of the grass and material  
Gospel as a symbol of the refined and spiritual  
Attachment to gold debasing  
Attachment to gospel elevating.<sup>125</sup>

The fivefold significance of the gospel makes it greater than gold. From the perspective of eternity, Ward sees gold as just a material, a mere piece of metal. He finds no value in it for the spiritual need. Gold will be destroyed like grass. But the gospel has eternal value, bridging heaven and earth.

Ernest used Hindi proverbs to present the gospel truth to his audience. He would begin his gospel sharing with proverbs such as “If you plant a babul tree, how will you eat mangoes?” In other words, “if you sow tares, you cannot cut wheat for harvest.” Then he will go on to elaborate his point,

All kinds of sin committed is compared to seed-sowing, and these sayings remind us of the reaping time at the end of the world. We are all sowing seed of some kind, either good or bad, and the harvest day will surely come. We may be cured now of our sinful habits and traits, provided we apply to the great Physician in time. But it is dangerous to delay. Those who habitually neglect the means of

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<sup>124</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to Ethel Ward, Darwah, Nov. 22, 1908. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.



grace are called “fools” in the Bible. Such ones become so confirmed in their bad dispositions as to make themselves hateful to the wise and good.<sup>126</sup>

Ward’s use of local proverbs illustrates his attitude towards local cultures. It shows that he was more of an orientalist than an Anglicist.<sup>127</sup> This is a significant insight into his missiology which places him in line with the Serampore Trio.<sup>128</sup> The Serampore Trio included William Carey and his colleagues Joshua Marshman and William Ward. Unlike the Anglicist, such as Alexander Duff, the educational missionary who wanted to use English as means of Christianization, the Trio represented the Orientalist strand in Indian missiology that was open to utilize the best in Indian culture for the purpose of evangelization. Ernest Ward belongs to the Orientalist camp. He engaged with the local culture and people with available cultural bridges.

Ernest engaged deeply with local people reflecting on their character. He observed unfaithfulness and lack of accountability among them.<sup>129</sup> He took this situation as an opportunity to bring the gospel message to them with a special emphasis on teaching good character. He wrote,

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<sup>126</sup> Ernest Ward, “A Hindu Mohammedan with his Bear,” *Life and Light*, n.d., See, Ernest Ward, *Scrapbook 363: Rag Bag of India, Facts and Figures*, 149-150. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>127</sup> I am using the term oriental (lit., eastern, or Asian) and orientalist in relation to the works of the Wards to show their openness and acceptance of Indian vernacular language and culture. Although not comparable to the works of great orientalists or Indologists such as Max Muller, the Wards were at the grassroot level of orientalism, translating portions of the Bible into local languages and using indigenous literary forms to communicate the gospel message. For a study on orientalism, see David Kopf, *British Orientalism and the Renaissance: The Dynamics of Indian Modernization, 1778-1835* (Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1969).

<sup>128</sup> On Carey, see, Vishal and Ruth Mangalwadi, *The Legacy of William Carey: A Model for the Transformation of a Culture* (Wheaton, Ill: Crossway Books, 1999). Ernest Ward had visited Carey’s tomb in 1900 and published a brief note in 1917. Ward saw Carey as a “devoted fellow traveler and laborer in the great harvest field of later days.” See, Ernest Ward, “Tomb of William Carey” *The Missionary Tidings*, November 1917: 2.

<sup>129</sup> See, *Echoes from Bharatkhand*, 29-36.

We know that character is everything with God. And a man's character is determined by what he believes. Whatsoever an obedient faith lays hold of and results in character, on the lowest possible plane acceptable to God, must be the Gospel of Christ in some sense. That light, for example which Cornelius walked in, and produced in him character acceptable to God, must evidently have been that Gospel. That it was not the whole Gospel, we know, from the fact that Peter was sent down to him.<sup>130</sup>

In this context, Ernest also highlights the significance of Christian influence through character. He noted that majority of the people were “influenced for God by the disposition and conduct of Christians than by their verbal instruction.” He added, “This does not mean that we are to be slack in our verbal instruction, oh no, that must be kept up, but it must be backed up by our daily life and conversation.”<sup>131</sup> Witnessing through life and conversation was foundational in Ernest's vision of preaching the gospel. He would check on his own family members occasionally,

Do you ever improve your opportunity for giving out tracts, a small tract has sometimes been the means of bringing a soul to Christ? Thank God! Even when opportunities for circulating tracts are not given, we can influence and teach them by our life and conversation. Someone has said “Christians are walking Bibles, else they are libels.” My devout prayer and wish is that my life in the least degree may *never* be a libel on Christianity. It will not if I continue to keep in touch with God and seek to discover his will with all my heart. While we aim to accomplish much good in the way of pulling down the Devil's kingdom and building up the Kingdom of God the crucial test at the end of our career will be how well and accurately by your spirit and life and conversation have you exhibited Jesus Christ.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> Ernest Ward, “Destiny of the Heathen,” Sanjan, Thana Dist. *Scrapbook 486*, p. 115. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>131</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to his sister Louie Ward, Darwha, Moti Bagh, Berar India, Sep 22, 1925. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

To Ernest, gospel work was about pulling down the kingdom of the devil and building up the Kingdom of God. He was saddened at the moral and spiritual darkness prevailing in India. But his hope was in the power of the gospel. He reflected,

The people of India are enveloped in the triple cloud of ignorance, prejudice and unbelief, and only faith, hope and charity of a living Gospel can pierce it thru. Oh what an incubus is on the people. Neither the religion nor the philosophy of India give any hope of a social or individual regeneration in this age. Everything is run in a cast-iron mold and must remain unchangeable.... But thank God, there is hope for India, and a lost world, in the soul-resurrecting, soul-regenerating Gospel of Jesus Christ.<sup>133</sup>

Among the worst of all devastating agencies in this fair land [India] are idolatry, caste and drunkenness.... Krishna ... is said to be the author of the pantheistic philosophy of the Bhagwat Geeta, which cunning Hindu “reformers” sometimes take to America to fool the shallow-minded Yankees. Such is life in this boasted century of progress! The only hope for India and the world is the everlasting gospel of our infinite Christ. God speed it on!<sup>134</sup>

It is important to note that Ernest was not only concerned about the salvation of India but the entire world, including America with special reference to Hindu influences. He was aware of the increasing Hindu infiltration in the USA and that is why when on furloughs, he would hunt for Hindus and preach the gospel to them.

But the preaching of the gospel was not without challenges and obstacles. There were many. One of them was the caste system (*Jati pratha*) prevalent in India.<sup>135</sup> He saw that caste, “by depriving the people of ambition, has left each man content with his position in life... Every occupation, even thieving, is hereditary, and the rules of caste

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<sup>133</sup> Ernest Ward, “Reporting Progress,” Letter to Brother Sherman, Raj Nandgaon, Apr 7, 1897. See, *Scrapbook 393*, 151. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>134</sup> Ernest Ward, “Incidental Experiences in India,” *Scrapbook 363: Rag Bag of India, Facts and Figures* (n.d.), 145-146. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>135</sup> Ernest Ward, “Notes from an Address by E. F. Ward,” prepared by E. H. Tabor, IA, Sep 14, 1899. *Scrapbook 486*, 72. Ward Collection ATS.

ordinarily compel a man to follow the occupation of his forefathers..."<sup>136</sup> However, he saw the "unbelief of the church" as the worst obstacle,

"Are there not serious obstacles to the evangelization of India that justify delay?" I reply, that there *are* obstacles, but *none* which justify delay. The worst obstacle is the *unbelief of the church*. Just now there are several natural reasons why India's redemption should be hastened. British protection, railroads, post offices, schools and the present friendliness of the common people generally, demand special efforts at this time. Above and beyond all these considerations, however, is the last great message of Christ, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature."<sup>137</sup>

Ernest was content, "It is a glorious privilege to be a witness for Jesus and encourage and strengthen one another in the Way."<sup>138</sup> Phebe was passionate to witness Christ through music and songs. She wrote, "As to the organ, I want one real bad... And when we start our Sunday School, I want one to teach the children to sing. We sing native hymns now and the natives are so fond of music. I could draw the children in by scores and as get a chance to talk salvation to them."<sup>139</sup> Helping the indigenous to understand "the way of salvation"<sup>140</sup> was the ultimate desire and passion of the evangelistic vision of the Wards.

## 5. Evangelistic Vision of the Free Methodist Church

Obedience to the Great Commission, the driving conviction behind Ward's evangelistic passion, was very much in line with the evangelistic vision of his Church.

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<sup>136</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>137</sup> Ernest Ward, "Think of India," *Scrapbook 486*, p. 24. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>138</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to his mother, Ellichpur; Aug 17, 1881. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>139</sup> Phebe Ward, Letter to Gilbert, Pachmarhi CP, May 1<sup>st</sup>, 1882: 3. She wanted a custom designed organ which with sustain the dust, heat, cold, and rats of India. Ward Papers at UVA.

<sup>140</sup> Phebe Ward, Oct 13, 1901, *P.E.W. Journal, Jan 1901-Dec 1904*. Ward Collection ATS.

The Free Methodist Church was evangelistic from the very beginning of its formation. Its commitment to world-wide evangelism was expressed in the following words from the founding Bishop of the Church, Rev. B. T. Roberts,

The provisions of the gospel are for all. The “glad-tidings” must be proclaimed to every individual of the human race. God sent the TRUE LIGHT to illuminate and melt every heart....To savage and civilized, bond and free, black and white, the ignorant and learned, is freely offered the great salvation. *But for whose benefit are special efforts to be put forth?* Who must be primarily cared for? Jesus settles this question....the Church must follow in the footsteps of Jesus. She must see to it, that the gospel is preached to the poor.<sup>141</sup>

Free Methodist scholar Howard Snyder argues that by “preaching the gospel to the poor,” Roberts primarily meant evangelism.<sup>142</sup> He further asserts that Roberts understood evangelism as, “more than the winning of converts, central as that was. As a good Methodist and one committed to Wesley’s emphasis on sanctification and discipleship, Roberts understood the gospel to mean salvation from all sin, with inner cleansing and empowerment for Christlike, self-sacrificing service.”<sup>143</sup> FMC Bishop Marston affirms that the FMC’s commitment to evangelism was demonstrated by “its breaking through barriers of prejudice and withstanding the opposition of established religion and worldly-mindedness in both church and society, to carry the gospel far and wide.”<sup>144</sup> He underlines the FMC’s two-fold mission as, “to maintain the Bible standard

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<sup>141</sup> B. T. Roberts, “Free Churches” *Earnest Christian*, 1, No. 1 (Jan 1860), 7-8. Cf. Howard A. Snyder, *Populist Saints*, 549. See also, Marston, *From Age to Age A Living Witness*, 427.

<sup>142</sup> Snyder, *Populist Saints*, 550.

<sup>143</sup> B. T. Roberts, “Free Churches” *Earnest Christian*, 1, No. 1 (Jan 1860), 7-8. Cf. Howard A. Snyder, *Populist Saints*, 550.

<sup>144</sup> Leslie R. Marston, *From Age to Age A Living Witness: A Historical Interpretation of Free Methodism’s First Century* (Winona Lake, IN: Light and Life Press, 1960), 427.

of Christianity, and to preach the gospel to the poor.”<sup>145</sup> Preaching to the poor also had a strong emphasis on the philanthropic works.<sup>146</sup> While the pioneering champion of evangelistic outreach within the USA was Thomas Scott LaDue (1832 – 1888), the pioneer in foreign missions were Ernest and Phebe Ward. Both were from the same Conference.<sup>147</sup>

## 6. Development of Overseas Missions

By 1878, B. T. Roberts, the founder of Free Methodist Church, had published a book titled *Fishers of Men* with the stated purpose to “encourage all whom God calls to enter at once upon the work of saving souls.”<sup>148</sup> This book was designed to be a manual of encouragement and success in mission work for “inexperienced ministers of the gospel.”<sup>149</sup> The book continues to remain a classic on Free Methodist theology of mission and evangelism. It inspired and guided the pioneers in mission both at home (the USA) and abroad (India and beyond).

The development took place in two phases. The first phase may be called the early or local phase. This phase began together with the formation of the denomination itself. Within two years of its formation in 1860, the Free Methodist Church had constituted its first Missionary Society in 1862.<sup>150</sup> The purpose of this society was

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<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

<sup>146</sup> Philanthropic or humanitarian services of the Wards will be discussed in a separate chapter.

<sup>147</sup> For a life of LaDue see, John LaDue, *The Life of Thomas Scott LaDue* (Chicago: Free Methodist Publishing House, 1898). See also, Marston, *From Age to Age A Living Witness*, 430-32.

<sup>148</sup> B. T. Roberts, *Fishers of Men* (Author, 1878. Reprinted by Light and Life Communications, Indianapolis, IN, 1997), 7.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> Byron S. Lamson, *Venture: The Frontiers of Free Methodism* (Vinona Lake, IN: Light and Life Press, 1960), 18-19.

evangelism and extension of the church beyond regions of New York and Illinois. In 1874, the name of society was changed to General Missionary Board and the decision to “make appropriations for the *foreign missions*” was mentioned among the duties of the Board for the first time.<sup>151</sup> This was the time Roberts was reading about the mission endeavors of William Taylor in India, Hudson Taylor in China, and David Livingstone in Africa.<sup>152</sup> However, by 1878 the Board felt its decision to venture in foreign missions to be practically premature as the concerns of personnel, planning, and funding seemed to be more demanding than that of the local missions.<sup>153</sup> Thus, the focus of the Board became limited to mission work within the USA at least until the rekindling of motivation from the story of Ernest Ward’s work in India. However, the first phase remained the dominant phase well until 1914, establishing Free Methodist Conferences in various regions of the USA.

The second phase of the development may be called the global phase. This was inaugurated with the Wards’ volunteering for mission in India in 1880. They were also instrumental in encouraging both the future missionaries and the Board to respond to their call in India. By 1885, two ladies, Louisa Ranf and Julia Zimmerman, were ready for India as the first official missionaries of the FMC. Even at this phase the initiative came from Ernest Ward who requested the Missionary Board to “serve as an advisory

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<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>152</sup> For the study of life and works of William Taylor, see, Douglas D. Tzan, *William Taylor and the Mapping of the Methodist Missionary Tradition: The World His Parish* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2019). For Hudson Taylor, see, Marshall Broomhall, *Hudson Taylor: The Man Who Believed God* (Philadelphia: China Inland Mission, 1929). For David Livingstone, see, John S. Robert, *The Life and Explorations of David Livingstone, L.L.D., Carefully Compiled from Reliable Sources* (London: Adam & Co., 1877).

<sup>153</sup> Byron S. Lamson, *Venture: The Frontiers of Free Methodism* (Vinona Lake, IN: Light and Life Press, 1960), 19.

Board in sending missionary appointees.”<sup>154</sup> 1885 also saw the launching of missions to Africa (Mozambique and South Africa). This was followed by mission to Dominican Republic (1889), Egypt (1899), Japan (1895), China (1904), Mexico (1917), Brazil (1928), and beyond.<sup>155</sup>

The initial overseas missions were characterized by small missionary pairs or groups, mostly husband and wife, like the Wards, who were then joined by another couple or two-three single missionaries. The Mission Board was responsible to raise their support and the missionaries were free to use all the means and strategies at their disposal to effectively carry out their mission.

## **7. Means and Strategies**

Ernest and Phebe were faith missionaries for the first several years of their ministry. This means they did not have any fixed salary or guaranteed regular support for their living or other expenses. They depended solely on God’s provision through friends and family, not knowing when and how much resources they will have in their hands. As faith missionaries, they went through seasons of financial hardships. Sometimes this meant selling off some of their belongings to provide for more basic needs, lest they be reduced to acute poverty. Phebe writes,

As we did not have money to meet our expenses this month I have made up a package of things, which we did not need, from our boxes and took it to Dongargarh, an English station twenty miles from here by rail, and realized over 23 rupees, and was so thankful to God for withholding money as I ever was in

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<sup>154</sup> Ibid., 72.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., 248-265.



receiving it, strange as that may seem. God wants to get me down somewhere near these poor people.<sup>156</sup>

They never wanted others to know of their needs. Living with the minimum they could afford was a great privilege to them. They had a great trust in God for His provisions. Sometimes they received unexpected support locally. Ernest writes,

[S]ome Eurasian Christians came up from Dongargarh to see us ... It was quite a providence that they came for we were out of money ... and they gave us quite a gift. Of course, they did not know our financial state, because we are not in the habit of letting others know. But we feel it is a great privilege to live [in] this way and develop faith in God... We have seen some tight places during the year. But God has delivered us just in time to save running into debt – which we *never do*. Praise the Lord!<sup>157</sup>

Upon receiving a timely support, Ernest would note, “The money found us in a needy time and was a fulfillment of the Divine promise ‘Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you.’”<sup>158</sup> He encouraged Ethel saying God had all the money and can provide for all her needs. He wrote, “[God] can send you the means to pay your expenses. The Lord has lots of money somewhere, if it is hard times, Praise His Holy Name. But He knows it would not be the best thing for our souls and the life of faith for us to have a large surplus on hand. So, He sends it along just as we need.”<sup>159</sup> And there were times when they had quite sufficient funds. Phebe wrote,

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<sup>156</sup> Phebe Ward, *Letter to Ethel Ward*, Raj Nandgaon, July 16, 1895. Published in *The Vanguard* under “Pioneer Missionaries,” See, Ernest Ward, *Scrapbook One*, 132-133. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>157</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to his mother, Raj Nandgaon, C.P., December 9, 1896. Emphasis original. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>158</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to his mother, Raj Nandgaon, C.P., May 14, 1895. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>159</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to Ethel Ward, Raj Nandgaon, Mar 24, 1896. Ward Collection ATS.

We have plenty of money just now. We had 15 rupees stolen from us last month. Quite a loss to us as the thief took our last rupee but *God helped us through*. Did not go in debt and did not lack a meal. Talk about any better way! No better way!! We have all the promises of heaven for our backing. “The willing and obedient shall eat the good of the land.” Hallelujah! I hope to say with latest breath “God has *never* failed me.”<sup>160</sup>

They even received support from the indigenous. Ward was convinced that mission work can receive indigenous support provided the missionaries lived like the indigenous, and not like the *sahibs* (rich foreigners). He noted,

No doubt the friendly disposed natives would assist missionaries more in temporal things but from the fact that the former have to live in bungalows like officers, employ servants, ride in conveyances ... For these reasons they are looked upon by the natives as not only far above want, but even *wealthy*. It scarcely ever enters their minds that help in material things would ever be acceptable to the missionaries. Let the latter however begin to adapt a humbler scale of living, i.e., in the eyes of the natives, and things are changed considerably.

We have received gifts several times in years past from the natives when we were obliged to live a good deal like them or voluntarily chose to.<sup>161</sup>

It seems that Ward encouraged local indigenous contribution for supporting mission work. This clearly reflects the vision of the Three-Self Movement which was widely discussed in the literature of his time.<sup>162</sup> Ward was probably aware of this

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<sup>160</sup> Phebe Ward, Letter to Gilbert Cox, Raj Nandgaon, CP India, Sept 8, 1896: 8. Emphasis original. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>161</sup> Ernest Ward, “Indigenous Help,” *Scrapbook*, No. 11, c.1881-1904: 137. Ward Collection ATS. Emphasis original.

<sup>162</sup> The Three Self Movement was characterized by its three-self principle, viz., self-support, self-government and self-propagation. Coined in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century mission discourses by Henry Venn (Church Missionary Society) and Rufus Anderson (American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions). The “Nevius Method,” named after John Livingstone Nevius (1829-1893), a missionary to China and Korea, developed the three-self principle into a plan for planting indigenous churches. See, John L. Nevius, *The Planting and Development of Missionary Churches*, third edition (New York: Foreign Mission Library, 1899). See also, Henry Venn, Max Warren, ed., *To Apply the Gospel: Selections from the Writings of Henry Venn* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971).

principle and its application in China and Korea and was promoting and applying it in his own mission in India.

Living in poverty was a chosen lifestyle of the Ward family. “Whichever is the cheapest”<sup>163</sup> had been their family motto from the beginning. Their example was so inspiring to the indigenous Christians that the first FM Church in Yavatmal was built solely by the tithes of Indian Christians and missionaries. Ethel noted,

For fifteen years [from 1900 on] our India missionaries and Indian Christians had been saving their tithe and self-denial money to build this new church [inaugurated in Feb 1916] .... Can you guess who the preacher is? Our first missionary to India, Rev. E. F. Ward, preaching the first sermon preached in the new church. His text was 2 Cor. 6:16, “I will dwell in them.”<sup>164</sup>

Ernest and Phebe had built their evangelistic ministries on minimum financial investment and maximum spiritual nourishment. Their strategies were contextual and methods flexible. Several key features may be observed,

*1. Selection of the Mission Field.* Two patterns may be identified in Ward’s selection of their mission fields, (1) unreached, and (2) needy. First, the Wards would define an unreached area where there were no missionaries at work, for example, Burhanpur, where there were no missionaries at work. Second, the needy areas were the ones where other missionaries were already at work but needed additional assistance, for example, Yavatmal, on special occasions as well as for the extension of the initiatives. As

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<sup>163</sup> Lit., “Whichobus everobus isibus thebus cheapestibus,” Ernest Ward, Letter to Ethel Ward, Wun, Nov. 7, 1918. Cf. Ernest Ward, Letter to Ethel Ward, Landour, June 7, 1915. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>164</sup> Ethel Ward, “The First Meeting in Our New Church at Yeotmal,” *Missionary Tidings*, March 1921. See also, Ernest Ward, *Scrapbook 363: Rag Bag of India, Facts and Figures*, 209-210. Ward Collection ATS.

evangelists and apostles engaged in sowing the seed as well as watering the plant, they selected their mission fields with clearly defined criteria.

*2. Preparation in Language and Culture.* Every new mission station demanded mastery of a new language and familiarity of local customs. The Wards invested balanced amount of time in doing both. However, this was done while engaged in evangelistic activities. Ward worked with Hindi, Urdu, Gujarati, Chhattisgarhi, Korku, and Marathi languages.

*3. Building the Mission Base.* Building a mission bungalow which will serve as the mission base was a prime focus of the Wards. As a mission station, the bungalow served, in addition to missionary residence, as a venue for the Sunday school and a place of worship for the emerging church. During his life in India, Ward built at least seven bungalows or homes.

*4. Association with Authorities.* Maintaining friendly relationship with local authorities, such as British officers and Rajahs (local kings and rulers), was an important mission strategy. The Wards pursued such connections, enjoyed mutual hospitality, and benefited in acquiring lands for mission stations in addition to sharing the gospel with them.

*5. Reports and Publications.* The Wards maintained regular correspondence with their home church in Illinois. They also stayed in touch with family and friends in both the USA and India. They wrote weekly letters, occasional updates, and annual reports. These items were published in the denominational and other bulletins, such as *Free Methodist*. Like the social media of today, these publications strengthened their contacts with friends and potential donors.

Overall, their strategies may be summed up as a holistic mission enterprise that included all possible approaches and undertakings that will contribute to the cause of the gospel. It is important to note that although the Wards did not have any published set of methods and were exploratory in all they did, yet a repeating pattern may be clearly observed in their work. The pattern includes going to places where they were needed the most, building of mission bungalows, carrying out evangelistic outreaches, Sunday school and children ministry, zenana and women ministry, language works, and so on. So, what missiological lessons can be learned from their evangelistic endeavors? We shall reflect in the next section.

## **8. A Brief Evaluation and Reflection**

What Roland Allen opined of Apostle Paul can also be supposed of Ernest Ward. Allen wrote, “That St. Paul’s missionary method was not peculiarly St. Paul’s, he was not the only missionary who went about establishing churches in those early days.”<sup>165</sup> Ernest and Phebe were not the only missionaries in central India during their time and their evangelistic methods and approaches were not peculiar to them. In addition to the independent missionaries like Albert Norton, there were denominational missionaries, such as the Church of England, venturing in evangelistic works in different locations.<sup>166</sup> Similarly, there were other apostles, such as Peter and John, besides Paul who were actively engaged in ministry. However, several things made Paul stand out on his own

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<sup>165</sup> Roland Allen, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul’s or Ours?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1962, reprint 2001), 4.

<sup>166</sup> Ernest Ward duly acknowledged the evangelistic works done by missions such as the American Board, Free Church of Scotland, and the Church of England in Mumbai area and concluded, “They have all no doubt worked hard. Still it would seem from appearances that heathenism is about as strong as ever.” Ernest Ward, Ernest Ward, “Notes on India,” *Scrapbook One*, 112-113. Ward Collection ATS.

right. For example, the selection of cities, financial principle, and the focus on purity and discipline. Paul planted churches in strategic cities (such as Rome), he never raised financial support for himself (Acts 20:33-34) and promoted purity and discipline in the life of the church.<sup>167</sup> Similarly, the Wards established mission centers in some of the key cities of the time (such as Burhanpur, Raj Nandgaon), never pleaded for funds for personal needs, and sincerely promoted Christian holiness through their life and practice.<sup>168</sup>

Ernest and Phebe were significantly apostolic in their approaches. They moved from one place to another but only after considerable investment of time and resources in each place so that the church may be sustained. Also, as they moved, they did not shut down the missions but handed them over to the care of other missionaries. Sadly, similar to most other foreign mission agencies, they hardly had any indigenous Christian take over the ministry. This may have been because of at least three reasons. First, there was not enough time to train leaders among their few converts with a call to ministry. Second, indigenous Christians were probably not deemed ready to lead a ministry due to the challenges of resources for supporting themselves. Rural India was also poverty stricken. Converts suffered persecution and loss of social support in their families and communities and were thus dependent on missionary support and leadership. The Wards had themselves faced challenges of resources and personnel for carrying out mission activities and probably did not want to overload their indigenous friends with such burdens. Third, they found ready support and promise of continuity in the hands of

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<sup>167</sup> Roland Allen, *Missionary Methods*, 50, 112, 124.

<sup>168</sup> We shall explore the theme of Christian holiness in Chapter 6.

existing foreign mission agencies. Thus, more than the issue of trust, ability or calling, it seems to be an issue of resources that might have impacted their decision.

Further, it is important to note that the Wards did not promote the supremacy of English language in their work, rather they adopted local languages wholeheartedly. They also did not endorse Western dress code or lifestyle among their colleagues and converts but encouraged an indigenous appearance. In fact, they adopted indigenous dress and food. Overall, they were engaged in a spiritually transforming mission with special concern for unreached people. This is where we see the Wards practicing the Orientalist vision of missionary work. We also see them very much in line with the followers of the Nevius principle, the fruit of which was to be seen but only after decades.

## **9. Conclusion**

This brief survey and assessment of Ward's mission endeavors has been outlined to illustrate the significance of their pioneering role in the Christian mission in central India during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Launched as faith missionaries, Ernest and Phebe were dedicated evangelists and church planters who pioneered mission stations, strengthened existing ministries, and served the cause of the gospel in the neediest places in central India. They partnered with other like-minded missions when needed, always depended on God for all provisions, and moved with the guidance of the Holy Spirit in all their endeavors. They shared the evangelistic vision of the Free Methodist Church and ventured in the historic apostolic missions like Paul. In all their evangelistic endeavors, they represented a key passion of the holiness movement of their time. Their church was primarily composed of children from their Sunday Schools. The church worship included a Bible class, a fellowship for praise, worship, prayer, testimony, and revival preaching.

Church fellowships were comprised largely of missionary families, indigenous Christians, and several orphan children. Gospel for the poor, both in spirit and body, was the evangelistic vision of the Wards. The ministry to the orphans, famine relief work, medicine, and education were an integral part of the evangelistic ministries of the Wards. We shall explore the philanthropic and other related mission work in the next chapter.



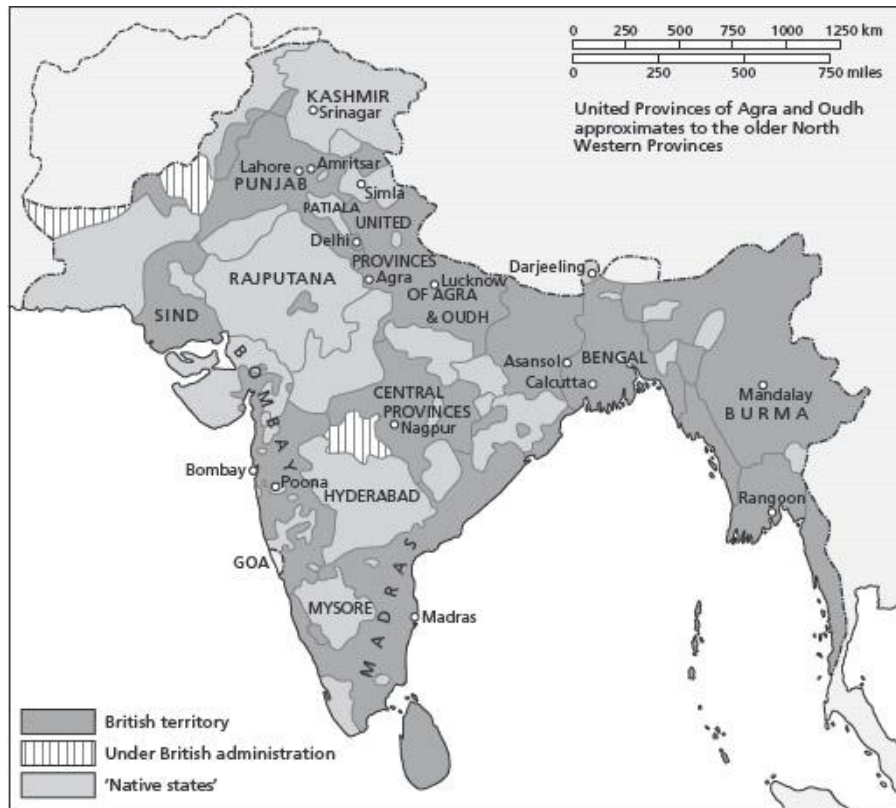


Image 13. India, 1915

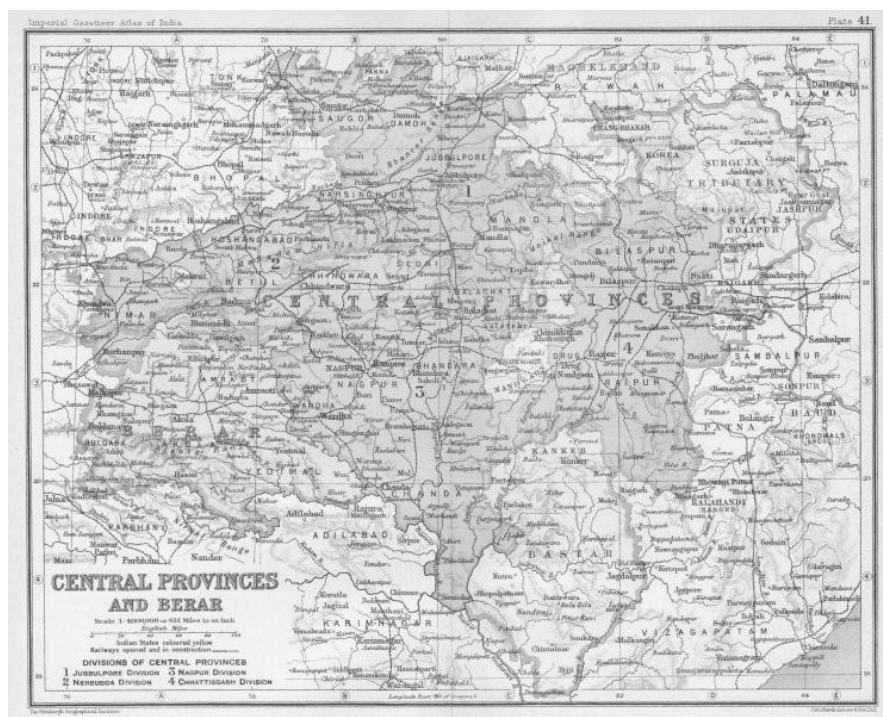


Image 14. Central Provinces and Berar

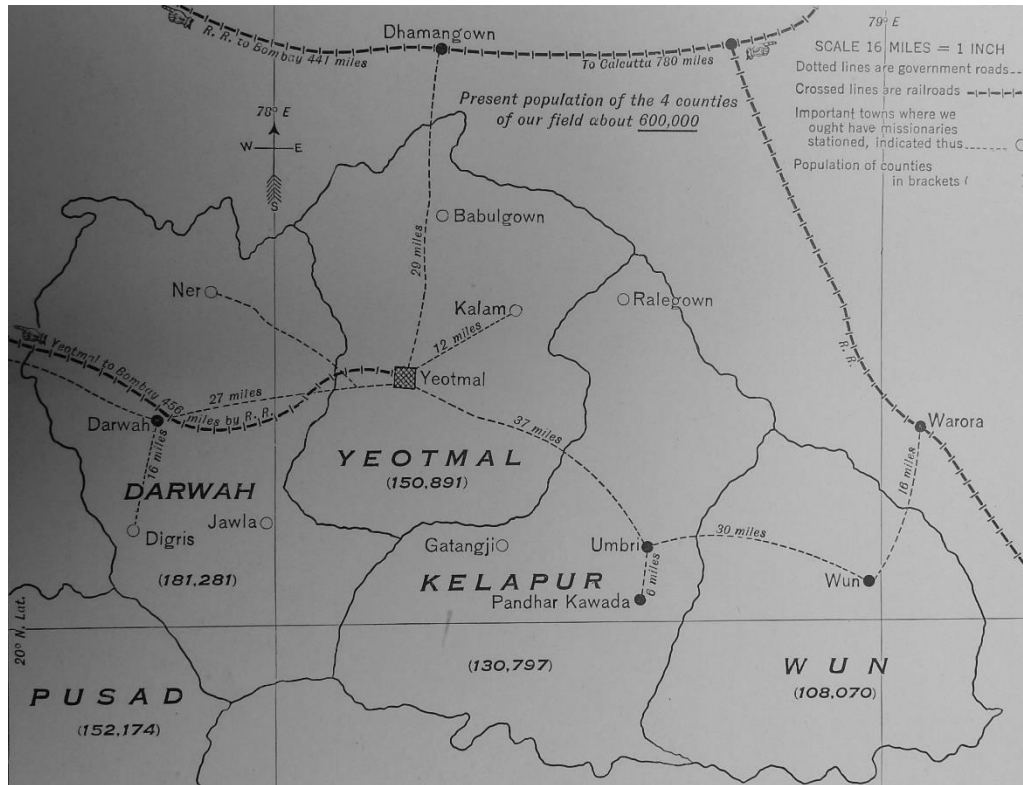


Image 15. Ernest Ward's Mission Fields in Maharashtra (CP and Berar)

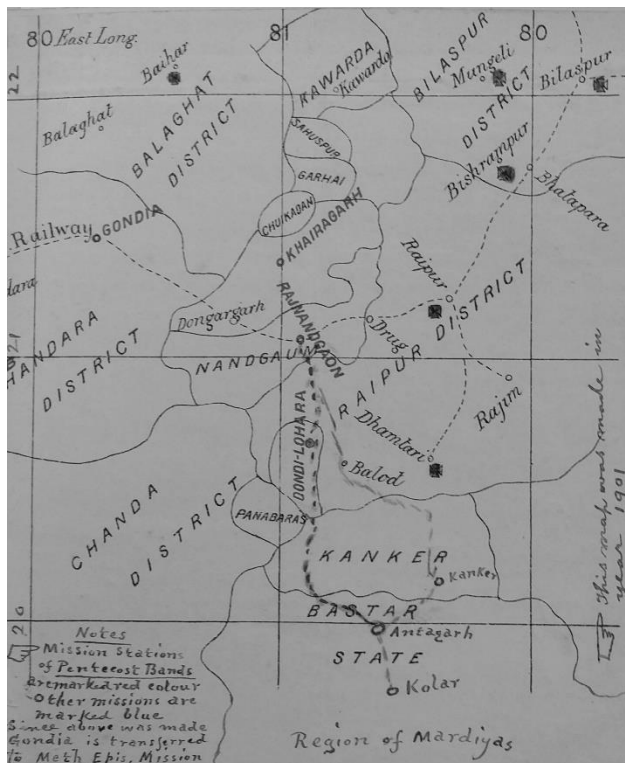


Image 16. Ward's Bastar Tour Routes, 1896

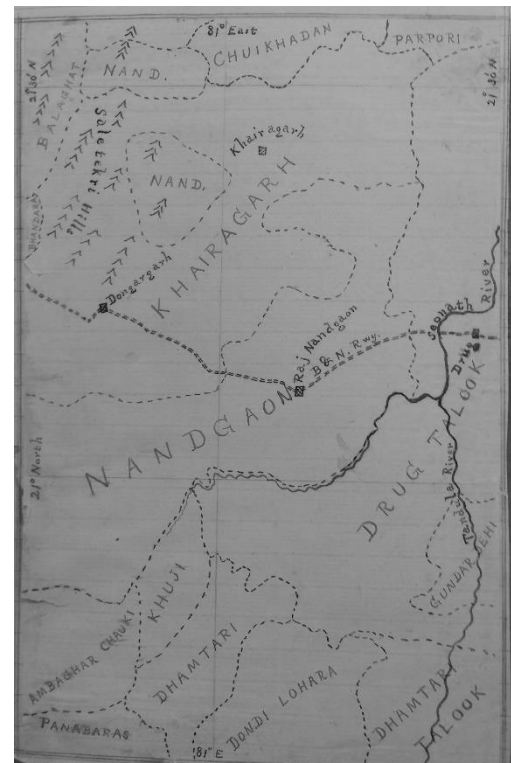
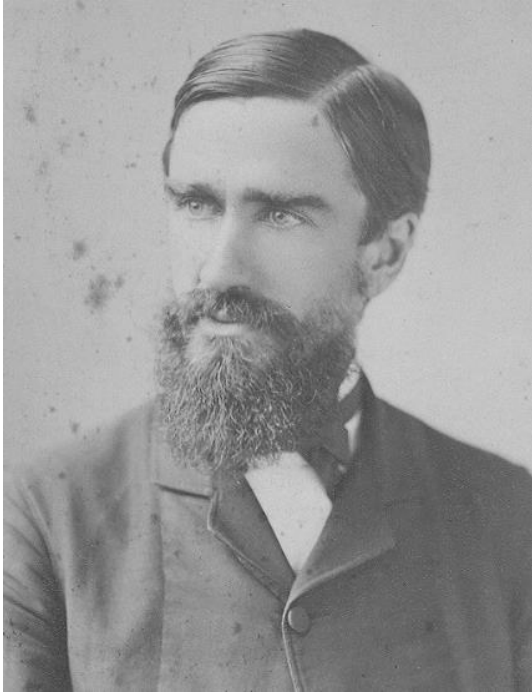


Image 17. Ward's mission fields in Chhattisgarh



*Image 18. Rev. Albert Norton, friend of Ernest Ward*



*Image 19. Narayan Vaman Tilak and family*



*Image 20. Raja Bali Ram Das*

## Chapter 4

### HUMANITARIAN SERVICES AND SOCIAL ACTION

Poor India is passing through a trying ordeal. It is very sad and distressing to see so many people in want of food. But how the darkness and despair of the picture is intensified when we think of their famished souls!

– Ernest Ward<sup>1</sup>

I praise God for the privilege of mothering so many. Perhaps I will not be the mother of nations ever as Sarah. Nearly 664 have been under my care for a longer or shorter period the past year.... many of them have my special care.

– Phebe Ward<sup>2</sup>

#### 1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the humanitarian services or social works and action carried out by Ernest and Phebe Ward. The nineteenth century holiness movement, which the Wards belonged to, was characterized by the social as well as personal ethical endeavors in addition to evangelistic passion.<sup>3</sup> It is believed that, “Personal and social holiness work together in a synergistic and cooperative relationship...Personal growth in holiness combines with outward good works increasing love and good works.”<sup>4</sup> Good works or charity and Gospel to the poor was at the heart of the movement explicit in Wesleyan Methodism, among others. It unmistakably expressed itself in the philanthropic care of the needy. Care for the needy was the heartbeat of the

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<sup>1</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to his mother, Raj Nandgaon, C.P., May 15, 1897. Ernest F. Ward Collection, Asbury Theological Seminary Archives, Wilmore KY (hereafter, Ward Collection ATS).

<sup>2</sup> Phebe Ward, Letter to Gilbert and Ceeny, Raj Nandgaon, CP India, Feb 10, 1898. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>3</sup> Rodney L. Reed, *Holy with Integrity: The Unity of Personal and Social Ethics in the Holiness Movement, 1880-1890* (Salem, OH: Schmull Publishing Company, 2003), 8.

<sup>4</sup> L. Faye Short and Kathryn D. Kiser, *Reclaiming Wesleyan Social Witness: Offering Christ* (Franklin, TN: Providence House Publishers, 2008), 11.



Wards. In their ministry evangelism and social work went hand in hand. This chapter attempts to outline and explore their missionary journey with special focus on humanitarian works. In the course of the chapter, we shall reflect on the following questions: How did the philanthropic endeavors become a significant part of the evangelistic ministry of Ernest and Phebe Ward? What were the humanitarian services that the Wards carried out in India? How did these and other related works impact their missions? In addition, we shall briefly explore the philanthropic vision of the Free Methodist Church and a missiological note containing an evaluation of Ward's approach to humanitarian and other social services.

## **2. Reaching out to the Famine Sufferers**

After Ernest and Phebe returned to India from their first furlough in the USA (1892-1894), they headed to Chhattisgarh, Central Provinces, for ministry. The Chhattisgarh region was severely afflicted with a severe famine by this time. India in general was afflicted by sporadic famines during the last 25 years of the nineteenth century. However, the famines of 1896-1897 and 1899-1901 were reckoned among the most devastating of all famines. This was a huge challenge for the people, the Government, as well as mission organization working in the region.<sup>5</sup> The Wards were face to face with the famine challenge in their mission station.

According to the Report of the Indian Famine Commission, the famine of 1896-97 affected an area of about 225,000 square miles and a population of 62 million people

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<sup>5</sup> During this time other significant missionaries working in northern Chhattisgarh included Rev. Oscar Lohr (Bilaspur area) and his sons. See, Shivraj K. Mahendra, "Rev. Oscar T. Lohr of Chhattisgarh (1824-1907): The Life, Mission Works and Legacy of the Apostle to the Satnami People," *Indian Church History Review*, Vol. 51, No. 1, (January 2017): 47-59.

in British India.<sup>6</sup> Within this range, the severely affected area included 125,000 square miles and 34 million people.<sup>7</sup> One of the main causes of famine in Chhattisgarh region was the failure of the rice crop due to the insufficiency of seasonal rain. The government relief work focused primarily in the areas of severe need – areas with emaciation and high death-rate.<sup>8</sup> Parts of Raipur and Bilaspur districts of Chhattisgarh remained uncared for by the government relief program. It was thought that “for the present the care of the poor could be safely left in the hands of the better to do residents.”<sup>9</sup> However, Ernest Ward noted, “Concerning local help, it is a gloomy fact, that aside from a number of rajahs who followed the example set by the Government, comparatively few natives of wealth gave anything at all commensurate to their ability for famine relief.”<sup>10</sup>

Ernest was appreciative of what the Government was able to do. According to him it was “a wise and systematic distribution on a huge scale. Thousands of distributors were required, and although many of them proved unfaithful to their trust, the Government did its best under the circumstances, and sought so far as possible to secure missionaries as overseers where they were willing to serve.”<sup>11</sup> However, the government

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<sup>6</sup> *Report of the Indian Famine Commission, 1898*, (Shimla: The Government Central Printing Office, 1898, Reprint, New Delhi: Agricole Publishing Academy, 1979), 196. According to another source the areas of acute distress included 270,000 square miles with a population of 50,000,000 and areas of less distress included 33,000 square miles with a population of 13,000,000. See, Resolution of the Government of India in the Department of Revenue and Agriculture, no. 36-240-5, Dec. 30, 1897. See also, T. W. Holderness, *Narrative of the Famine in India in 1896-97* (Parliamentary command paper no. 8812 of 1897), 87.

<sup>7</sup> *Report of the Indian Famine Commission, 1898*, (Shimla: The Government Central Printing Office, 1898, Reprint, New Delhi: Agricole Publishing Academy, 1979), 196.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, 166.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>10</sup> Ernest and Phebe Ward, *Echoes From Bharatkhand* (Chicago, IL: Free Methodist Publishing House, 1908), 121.

<sup>11</sup> Ernest and Phebe Ward, *Echoes From Bharatkhand*, 120.

support was limited in most areas, and Christian missionaries filled a huge gap. In a letter to one of his friends, Ernest wrote,

There are now 3,000,000 famine people fed by the Government. Then there are other relief funds – the principal of which is the Mission House Relief Fund, ... The Districts on each side of ours are each to receive several hundred thousand rupees [from the Government]. But ours not being strictly British territory, *is not to receive any appropriation at all.*<sup>12</sup>

The British Government's support must have been confined or prioritized to their own ruled territories (See, Images 13 and 26). However, Ernest was not alone in pointing to the Government's limited support to or negligence of some needy areas. Both other missionaries as well as secular agencies and individuals shared his view. For example, economic historian Romesh Dutt criticized the British Government for its lack of support for famine relief in general. He wrote,

Amidst signs of progress and prosperity from all parts of the Empire, India alone presented a scene of poverty and distress. A famine, the most intense and the most widely extended yet known, desolated the country in 1897. The most populous portion of the Empire had not shared its prosperity... The famine was not over until 1898. There was a pause in 1899. A fresh famine broke out in 1900 over a larger area... The terrible calamity lasted for three years and millions of men perished.<sup>13</sup>

The areas where the government agencies were only partially or ineffectively involved, the Christian missionaries were able to make a significant impact. Most famine studies focus mainly on economic and political aspects, the contribution of Christian

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<sup>12</sup> Ernest Ward, "Reporting Progress," Letter to Brother Sherman, Raj Nandgaon, Apr 7, 1897. See, *Scrapbook* 393, 152, Ward Collection ATS. Emphasis original.

<sup>13</sup> Romesh C. Dutt, *The Economic History of India, Vol. 2, In the Victorian Age* (First Indian edition with a critical introduction by Prof. D. R. Gadgil, Delhi: Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1960), v. (Originally published in 1904) as quoted in Michelle B. Mcalpin, *Subject to Famine: Food Crisis and Economic Change in Western India, 1860-1920* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983), 3.

missionaries have largely been ignored in such studies.<sup>14</sup> Even when some studies, limited as they are, explore the missionary involvements, the works of Ernest and Phebe Ward or their agencies have not found any mention.<sup>15</sup>

During the severe famine years (1896-1901) Ernest and Phebe worked in three places in Chhattisgarh: Raj Nandgaon, Khairagarh, and Dondi Lohara. In all these places Ernest built or assisted in building the mission centers (bungalows, orphanages, and other homes). Before their first furlough, they had already undertaken evangelistic works in Raipur and Raj Nandgaon. However, though the places were familiar this time, the challenges were new. At first the focus was evangelism, now relief works must find equal attention. After visiting a government relief camp, Phebe wrote, “It was a pitiable sight to see the emaciated bodies that were lying on the ground.”<sup>16</sup> At Raj Nandgaon, Ernest and Phebe found themselves surrounded with the widespread cry of “Die woe!” The famine sufferer children called their mothers “Dai Wo” (Chhaattisgarhi, “O Mother”). But it was also a cry for food, shelter, and comfort. Phebe too was called “Dai Wo,” – a mother who would provide. However, at first “Dai Wo” sounded like “Die Woe” – the woe of death being so real around them. Phebe recounts,

“Dai wo!” “Dai wo!” rang out on the still air of a sultry day in the hot season of 1897. The missionary inside the little native house had just quieted the orphan children and had betaken herself to rest at the noontide hour on the cool surface of the ground, with a gunny bag and straw pillow for bedding. The cry repeated,

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<sup>14</sup> See, for example, B. M. Bhatia, *Famines in India: A Study in Some Aspects of the Economic History of India, 1860-1965* (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1967), H. S. Srivastava, *History of Indian Famines, 1858-1918* (Agra: Sri Ram Mehta & Co., 1968), and Georgina Brewis, “‘Fill Full the Mouth of Famine’: Voluntary Action in Famine Relief in India, 1896-1901” *Modern Asian Studies*, 44, 4 (July 2010): 887-918. These works make passing reference to missionary works during the famines and generally condemn them for efforts toward proselytization.

<sup>15</sup> See, for example, N. Benjamin, “Great Famine of 1896-97: The Missionary Factor” *Indian Church History Review*, Vol. 40, Issue 1, (January-June 2006): 1-30.

<sup>16</sup> Ethel Ward, *Ordered Steps*, 83.



sometimes with a low moan and again louder in its intensity, warns the missionary inside that there is no rest for her until she responds to this call. And what does it mean? Simply, “Oh, Mother!” in the native tongue, but sounding like “die” and “woe” in ours. The sound was most significant, for in those terrible famine days, *death* and *woe* stared the people in the face.<sup>17</sup>

Ernest describes his observation of the famine in the following lines:

They cry to gods of wood and stone,  
Alas! No help is there!  
In heathen gloom and darkness wrapped,  
They sink in dire despair.  
    Alone along the road they lie,  
    With none to watch or care!  
    While vultures grim and jackals fierce  
    Wait to devour them there.  
        Gaunt forms and bony, outstretched hands,  
        Wild eyes with hungry glare,  
        Awhile in hopeless anguish plead,  
        And then – the dead are there.<sup>18</sup>

Ernest wrote to his mother, “Here is a famine all around us in many parts of India ... [people] are dying of starvation... there is considerable distress on account of the partial failure of the rice crop.”<sup>19</sup> He lamented elsewhere, “Alas! these terrible famines not only turned the people into madmen, but into ravening wolves!....The sweep of these mighty famines was not unlike the ravages of destroying armies which bring down men

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<sup>17</sup> Ernest and Phebe Ward, *Echoes From Bharatkhand*, 122. In narrating her mother’s experience, Ethel has used “Dae” instead of “Dai,” See, *Ordered Steps*, 83, 87.

<sup>18</sup> Ernest and Phebe Ward, *Echoes From Bharatkhand*, 118.

<sup>19</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to his mother, Raj Nandgaon, C.P., December 9, 1896, Ward Collection ATS.

and beasts alike to the sod and leave a track of desolation behind.”<sup>20</sup> The conditions of famine sufferers were truly heartbreaking. Phebe describes one of her sad encounters.

Greater and greater distress is stealing upon us... I turned to a woman standing near [a man dead of starvation] who answered me so coldly, “It’s God’s will.” I was so full this time [by seeing so many dead bodies around that] I burst into tears as I said, “You are not worshipping the true God. You have forsaken Him and are worshipping idols, and God is angry with this people.” Her tone changed and she said, “It’s true.”<sup>21</sup>

The Hindu belief in ‘god’s will’ is strongly influenced by the doctrine of karma. Karma holds that suffering in one’s present life is caused by the sins of a previous birth. Thus, in popular Hinduism, the idea of everything is ‘god’s will,’ promotes a sweeping fatalism. This is similar to the Islamic fatalism expressed in the will of Allah (Arabic, “*Insa Allah*”, “God willing”). Suffering is taken for granted by the common Hindus as its religious interpretation by the Brahmins dominates their worldview. As a result, there was almost no effort for improvement of life conditions or philanthropy. It further increased the number of religious mendicants who made begging their livelihood. During the times of famine, more and more people chose begging for their work. Professional begging had become a greater challenge. Ernest writes,

One great difficulty in *promiscuous* distribution of famine relief, is the large number of professional beggars we have to deal with even in prosperous times. Taking our mission field to embrace the two feudatory States of Nandgaon and Khairagarh with a population of 365,500 the census gives 627 blind, deaf and lepers, who must all beg. But aside from these, there are hundreds of people who make begging a trade.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Ernest and Phebe Ward, *Echoes From Bharatkhand*, 116, 119.

<sup>21</sup> Phebe Ward, “Saving the Sufferers,” Letter to Vanguard Friends, Raj Nandgaon, March 11, 1897. See, *Scrapbook* 393, 148, Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>22</sup> Ernest Ward, “Reporting Progress,” Letter to Brother Sherman, Raj Nandgaon, Apr 7, 1897. See, *Scrapbook* 393, 151, Ward Collection ATS. Emphasis original.

Concerning funds and resources for famine relief works, Ernest writes: “We received several thousand dollars for famine relief, mostly from kind friends in America, besides numerous boxes of clothing, etc.”<sup>23</sup> In America, India’s famine crisis was seen as an opportunity to promote “evangelical solidarity through a broad-based humanitarian campaign that could unite American Protestants of different theological persuasions, political sensibilities, social classes, and geographic regions in a shared enterprise.”<sup>24</sup> The New York based Christian weekly, *Christian Herald*, was the key instrument of famine relief campaign across the United States during 1897-1900. Calling every reader to participate in the relief work, it regularly published progress reports of the relief movement, comprehensive list of contributors, and itemized list of donations. With its “proven capacity for fundraising and demonstrated ability to distribute relief through reliable channels” the *Christian Herald* had become America’s leading humanitarian agency.<sup>25</sup>

In India, the chief recipient of the American charity through the *Christian Herald* was an interdenominational committee of several missionary societies under the leadership of Bishop James M. Thoburn of the Methodist Episcopal Church.<sup>26</sup> The committee included representatives of all major Protestant denominations as well as

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<sup>23</sup> Ernest and Phebe Ward, *Echoes from Bharatkhand*, 120.

<sup>24</sup> Heather D. Curtis, *Holy Humanitarians: American Evangelicals and Global Aid* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018), 132.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 140. Other magazines, such as *The Free Methodist*, were equally involved in collecting funds for relief work in India.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 132. For a study of the life and mission of James Thoburn, see, Linda Joyce Gesling, *Gender, Ministry, and Mission: The Lives of James and Isabella Thoburn, Brother and Sister in Methodist Service*. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation (Northwestern University, Evanston, IL, 1996).

smaller Holiness and evangelical movements such as the Salvation Army, Christian and Missionary Alliance, and the Pentecost Bands with whom the Wards were associated at that time. However, Ernest and Phebe's primary support during famine years came largely through the Pentecost Bands headquarters in St. Louis, MO, which published reports and sought contributions through their magazine *The Pentecostal Herald*.<sup>27</sup> In all situations, Ernest and Phebe were thankful for both the provisions and results of their labor during the famine years. Phebe wrote to her brother Gilbert about the faithfulness of God in miraculously meeting all their needs. She looked at the provisions of food and funds as "promises of heaven" being fulfilled in their missionary lives. Phebe also mentions that they never ran into any debt. The Wards maintained detailed records of their resources, whether little or plenty.<sup>28</sup>

The joy of having plenty of resources was further magnified in rejoicing over the salvation of their indigenous coworkers. One of the great causes of rejoicing was the conversion of a Muslim woman named Jewarbee, whom Phebe called a "trophy of grace."<sup>29</sup> We shall now turn to Jewarbee's brief story.

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<sup>27</sup> For select recent issues of this publication see, Pentecostal Publishing House, <https://www.pentecostalpublishing.com/products.aspx?categoryid=292&layout=Grid&sortcolumn=Date&sortdirection=DESC&page=1&pagesize=40>, and Pentecostal Archives <https://pentecostalarchives.org/collections/pentecostalherald/> (both links accessed October 10, 2019).

Another magazine by the same name was published by H. C. Morrison from Louisville, KY, see Asbury Seminary First Fruits Journals, <https://place.asburyseminary.edu/ph/> (accessed October 10, 2019). Thus, the *The Pentecostal Herald* mentioned above is not to be confused with Morrison's magazine. Morrison's Old Methodist Journal was renamed Pentecostal Herald in 1905 and it is today known as *The Herald*.

<sup>28</sup> Phebe Ward, Letter to Gilbert Cox, Raj Nandgaon, CP India, Sept 8, 1896, 8. Emphasis original.

<sup>29</sup> The name Jewarbee is also spelled Jaywerbee and Jewarbi in some accounts. I am using the most commonly used spelling.

## 2.1 Jewarbee's Story

Jewarbee came from a Sunni family. Her husband was a muezzin in a mosque at Raj Nandgaon. After his death in 1896, Jewarbee was left to care for her three children. The famine of 1897 brought a greater challenge of survival in her life. She had heard about the need of a cook in the missionary family and had opted for the job.<sup>30</sup> Upon getting hired, she in fact became a delight to the Ward family. Phebe wrote,

From the first we were impressed with her faithfulness at her work, with her tact in adapting herself to every circumstance and with the ability she had in cooking for such a large number... With the assistance of but one woman to clean the cooking utensils, and help to keep the cook house in order, she cooked for our family of three, and about one hundred native children we had taken in during the famine, and sometimes even more. When she saw the great need of the famine sufferers for cooked food... she offered on her own accord, to cook for 200 more, thus making over 300 people daily... It was characteristic of her to be ready at all times to help us out in difficulties. No whining, no long faces, but ever ready to obey orders with cheerfulness.<sup>31</sup>

Ernest and Phebe used to feel that Jewarbee was “as much a gift from God to help us out at this trying time, as was the money that came from friends to carry on the work.”<sup>32</sup> In the Christian company of the Wards, Jewarbee experienced a great transformation within a few months. She was convinced of her sins (such as stealing) in the past and paid off everyone she had ever cheated or taken things from. She had become a new person even before a public confession of her faith in Christ. She faced great troubles from her relatives and friends but remained committed to her new faith and

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<sup>30</sup> Phebe Ward, “A Trophy of Grace,” in Ernest and Phebe Ward, *Echoes from Bharatkhand*, 77-78. Cf. “Sketch of Jewarbi's Life” *P.E.W. Journal* 1901-1904. Phebe completed writing it on Jan 31, 1901.

<sup>31</sup> Phebe Ward, “A Trophy of Grace,” in Ernest and Phebe Ward, *Echoes from Bharatkhand*, 78-79.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

new life.<sup>33</sup> Ernest, who “loved her like a sister,”<sup>34</sup> had the joy of baptizing her on September 18, 1898. Phebe records, “My husband baptized her with eight other converts, in a pond near the public bazaar... in the presence of many of her acquaintances and some relatives.”<sup>35</sup> During her baptism, Jewarbee testified to the people saying, “I want you to tell all the Mohammedans and Hindus everywhere that I intend to live and die in this faith.”<sup>36</sup>

Jewarbee paid the price of her faith by receiving threats and enmity from her relatives. Her only son turned against her to the point that he came to throw stones at her. However, within two years, she was rewarded for her faithfulness. In God’s grace her daughters had reconciled with her and other relatives began to seek Jewarbee’s prayers when they were sick. Jewarbee once again had access to her relatives. Even her son became a Christian and was baptized at the same place where Jewarbee was baptized.<sup>37</sup> Jewarbee’s story is truly an amazing story of transformation of a Muslim woman into a Christian evangelist and prayer warrior through the ministry of the Wards. Phebe makes these remarks about Jewarbee,

She is now a clear witness to the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus...She excels in exhortation and she is never at a loss for something to say. We have seen her exhorting a crowd of people on her knees with much feeling and tears in her eyes. When called upon, Jaywerbee is ever ready to speak in the bazaars and villages, visit the sick, call on the native women... She has prayed and passed her

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 84-85.

<sup>34</sup> Ethel Ward, *Ordered Steps*, 88.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 85.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 85.

way through severer trials...and she is a living monument to the power of divine grace.<sup>38</sup>

However, such joyful “trophy” were rather scarce, and the Wards faced occasional challenges among their own colleagues. One such challenge related to their position in the Pentecost Bands. The Pentecost Bands was founded by Rev. Vivian A. Dake (1854-1892), a graduate of the Chili Seminary (now Roberts Wesleyan College, Rochester, NY) and a Conference evangelist of the Free Methodist Church. Officially organized in 1885, Bands was a self-supporting evangelistic and church planting movement with a great emphasis on holiness.<sup>39</sup> The Wards were generally associated with the Bands from 1892. They collaborated their missionary personnel and resources together in India while serving the famine affected Raj Nandgaon area in Chhattisgarh. What initially appeared to be a great collaboration for a great cause in a promising mission work soon began to pose a great challenge in leadership and relationship among the missionaries.

## ***2.2 Relationship with the Bands***

The Wards worked in Raj Nandgaon from 1895 to 1898. In 1897, they invited the Pentecost Bands missionaries to join them in Raj Nandgaon.<sup>40</sup> At this point the Bands team was in Nagpur (Maharashtra) looking for an affordable place to live and work. At this time, the Wards were also looking for extra hands and resources for

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 86.

<sup>39</sup> For more on the Bands, See, Howard A. Snyder, *Aspects of Early Free Methodist History* (Dayton, OH: United Theological Seminary, 1994). Under the leadership of C. W. Sherman with the headquarters in St Louis, MO, the Bands published *The Vanguard* and ran a missionary training center.

<sup>40</sup> Names of the Pentecost Band missionaries in Nagpur are Mrs. Elizabeth Tucker, Mr. William McCready, and Rev. and Mrs. Frank Hotle (the Band leader). See, Ethel Ward, *Ordered Steps*, 94.

their mission and both groups united in a joint venture. The Bands gladly accepted the invitation of Ward family and moved to Raj Nandgaon. On becoming one with the Bands, Phebe wrote,

I have only notes of victory to send you today. You will have learned ... of our uniting with the Pentecost Bands. The Bands were in Naghur [sic], and when we united with them, they moved their forces here, bringing 50 children with them, thus augmenting our number to 108... In this union which has brought strength, we had much to praise the Lord for, in his guiding hand. The work is very encouraging. The Spirit of the Lord began to work among the children of the Bands in Nagpur, before they came here, and several were converted.<sup>41</sup>

Within a year, however, roles drastically changed, and the Wards became workers under the leadership of Rev. Frank Hotle, the head of Pentecost Bands in India.<sup>42</sup> The issue with the Bands was complicated. It was a conflict of leadership and control. Frank Hotle felt that Ernest was dominating the mission and was not submissive to his leadership. Hotle was also against the Wards giving their tithes to other missions. Instead of seeing the Wards as experienced colleagues, Hotle saw them as threat to his leadership. Phebe noted the issues in a letter,

Brother and Sister Hotle began to fear ... that things were being taken out of their hands... Hotle wanted me out of the way so they could run things as they pleased and they thought they saw in me a formidable foe... [once] he said “Your power in Raj N[andgaon] is broken” ... He told Sr. Vail I had to be taken to America to get me out of the way. How sad! Instead of utilizing the God given power in me, they would not have it when it ran counter to their opinion. That was the secret of you being taken from Khairagarh. They could not handle you so well there. They

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<sup>41</sup> Phebe Ward, Letter to Philip Bacon, July 27, 1898, published in the tract, *Our Orphan Children in India* (August 1898: 3), Ward Collection ATS. Published by Philip Bacon, *Our Orphan Children in India* was a series of tracts issued monthly in the interest of Homes for Rescued Children and Child Widows in India. These tracts contained letters from the missionaries and others interested in these homes.

<sup>42</sup> On Hotle's life and work, see, Frank C. Hotle, *My Experience and Call with a Brief Summary of Seven Years Labor in Central India*, (Louisville, KY: Pentecostal Publishing House, c.1903). Hotle does not mention the Wards by their name at all. He just makes a passing reference by calling them “a veteran missionary and his wife” (See, Hotle, *My Experience*, 62). Even when he describes the story of Jewarbee, he does not give the credit of witnessing, baptizing, and mentoring to her by the Wards. (Ibid., 76ff.).



probably noticed we gave Rs. 20 tithe money to other missions and that was contrary to their policy. I thank God we are clear of such a spirit and wonder how we remained so long.... I cannot see God in such bigotry as in these and I cannot conscientiously help them...<sup>43</sup>

It is clear from the above citation that one of the main areas of conflict was leadership. Hotle saw Ernest and Phebe, not as colleagues, but as subordinates who must take his instructions as divine commission. He also objected to their tithing to other missions. This adds an economic aspect to the conflict. The Wards were happy to finally part ways with the Bands. Phebe Ward added the following entry in her journal on Oct 7, 1901, her 51<sup>st</sup> birthday:

Ernest objected to some teaching of the Bands in the holiness meeting. His manner displeased the workers [fellow missionaries] and upon holding to his position, he was forbidden to take part in the meetings.... I was much distressed about things as I truly loved the Bands and felt that God was with them. But when Bro. Ward withdrew from the Bands, I felt God wanted me to stand by him. I can see things in the Bands that I knew is *not* of God, such as forcing workers to take convictions from leaders as from God, and there was a relief in my heart when we left Raj Nandgaon. I was much tossed about during the trial, sometimes thinking I could not get through to heaven without the severe dealing of the Bands with me. But when I think of things that have happened in dealing with different workers and the severe and harsh treatment used, I cannot but contract it with the spirit of Jesus and it makes me more sure that this sudden and extraordinary move is from God.<sup>44</sup>

It is interesting to note that Ernest had found objectionable teaching in the Bands at this point. It will be helpful to point out here that one of the reasons Ernest had joined the Bands in the first place was because of his agreement with their doctrinal teachings. Phebe indicates that Ernest withdrew from the church under the influence of Thomas

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<sup>43</sup> Phebe Ward, Letter to Ernest Ward, Jeethul Bulsar, Apr 22, 1902, Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>44</sup> Phebe Ward, Oct 7, 1901, *P.E.W. Journal, Jan 1901-Dec 1904*, Ward Collection ATS. Emphasis original.

Nelson, leader of the Bands after Dake's demise, and associated himself with the Bands as doctrine was "more important than church government..."<sup>45</sup> Since I have not come across any mention of the above objection in Ernest's own documents, and since Phebe does not specify the issue, it will be helpful to look at the general emphasis of the Bands on the issue of holiness.

The founding leaders of the Bands had stressed, "the death route," argues Snyder, "in experiencing entire sanctification."<sup>46</sup> This "death route" emphasized the necessity of "crucifixion" (death to carnal self or total dying to self), among other things, over against "popular holiness" that neglected it.<sup>47</sup> Such teachings were prone to misinterpretations and could certainly get carried to extremes and result in fanaticism.<sup>48</sup> It is likely that Ward noticed such trends getting emphasized in the meetings. He found such teachings objectionable especially keeping the Indian mission field in mind, where "dying to the self" in many ways was already an everyday experience. The leadership pushed it to extremes, for example, in harshly dealing with or disciplining the Bands staff.

Additionally, it is also possible that the teaching regarding the manifestation of being filled with the Holy Spirit, on which Ward had some reservations, was being taken to extremes. Ward had noted earlier in his reflection, "while we do not believe in any mere formal noise, yet we believe and teach that when the Spirit comes like a rushing

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<sup>45</sup> Phebe Ward, Letter to Ernest Ward, Jeethul Bulsar, Apr 22, 1902, Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>46</sup> Howard Snyder, *Populist Saints*, 874.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Since the Bands were not like some modern-day Pentecostals, who emphasize speaking in tongues, or seem to be "noisy" etc., the tendencies of fanaticism were seen in their teachings on themes of Social Purity, marital purity, etc. See, Howard A Snyder, *Radical Holiness Evangelism: Vivian Dake and the Pentecost Bands* (Unpublished paper, 1994), 13.

mighty wind as in the day of Pentecost (using this as a figure of the manner of his coming we would not dare to oppose his manifestation).”<sup>49</sup> Clearly, Ward was not in favor of “mere formal noise” in the name of Holy Spirit manifestation. Thus, it is possible that he might have opposed the promotion or emphasis of such practices in the Band meetings.

In any case, adjustment became a huge problem among the missionaries and to pacify the situation the Wards were sent on a furlough. A sad thing in this arrangement was that Ernest and Phebe were made to leave their youngest daughter, who was only five, behind “to save expenses” and “insure” their return to Raj Nandgaon.<sup>50</sup> So from September 1898 to October 1899 the Wards went on their second furlough. Taking it as a blessed opportunity to regain their strength from the exhausting work assisting those influenced by the famine, as well as to see their two older daughters living in the USA, and to promote missionary interest for India, they made the best of their furlough.

Upon their return, they brought four new missionaries, “recruits” in Ernest’s words, with them.<sup>51</sup> At Raj Nandgaon station a warm welcome awaited them with the cheerful greetings from their orphan children, “Salaam, Mamma Jee, Salaam, Papa Jee.”<sup>52</sup> The family was overjoyed to unite with little Mary Louise Ward. And Louise was delighted to meet her two older sisters.

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<sup>49</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to Adams, Burhanpur, Sep. 26, 1884, *Diary 367*, 250-51. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>50</sup> Ethel Ward, *Ordered Steps*, 94-95.

<sup>51</sup> The names of the missionaries are: Mrs. Vail (died of smallpox in 1900), Mr. Carkuff (worked in India for 25 years), Miss. Emma Alcorn (later, Mrs. W. R. McCready) and Miss Sadie Jeffries (later, Mrs. John Klein). See, Ethel Ward, *Ordered Steps*, 97.

<sup>52</sup> “Salaam” (lit., “peace,” is a common word of greeting in central India among the Christians. While Hindus use “namaste” and “ram-ram”, Christians and Muslims have “salaam.” Ernest and Phebe’s orphans lovingly called them “mamma jee” (respected mother) and “papa jee” (respected father). See, Ethel Ward, *Ordered Steps*, 99.

The joy of reuniting as a family was soon lost in the new challenges of life and mission. As independent missionaries, they had complete control of their finances, whether meager or large. This control was lost after joining with the Bands. Several concerns were before them – education of their daughters, provision for the orphans under their care, and spiritual nourishment for them all. On top of all these, the leaders separated the couple appointing them to different stations. At the beginning of a new century, the Wards were back on their knees for God’s guidance.<sup>53</sup> Phebe was appointed to manage the Boys’ Orphanage at Lohara (Now, Daundi Lohara, 22 miles south of Raj Nandgaon). The Lohara station was opened on account of a Cholera outbreak in Raj Nandgaon. Phebe writes that she “brought 100 boys with her but lost 50 of them.”<sup>54</sup> Ernest was kept at Raj Nandgaon to assist in the ongoing work. The Ward family was further separated as Phebe was transferred to Gondia (79 miles north-west of Raj Nandgaon).<sup>55</sup> In January 1901 the series of transfers ended, and they were finally sent to Khairagarh (25 miles north of Raj Nandgaon) where they labored for ten months.<sup>56</sup> During this short period, they built a mission bungalow and carried out evangelistic ministry. They also made a friendship with the Rajah, earned his favor, and secured the land for mission station. Phebe noted, “The Rajah has given us the privilege of building

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<sup>53</sup> Ethel Ward, *Ordered Steps*, 101.

<sup>54</sup> Phebe Ward, Letter to Gilbert & Ceeny, Lohara Dondi, CP India, May 7, 1900, 8, Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>55</sup> Ethel Ward, *Ordered Steps*, 101. While at Gondia, the Ward family had an opportunity to rethink their future possibilities. They were tired with the treatment they were receiving from the Bands missionaries. They had then begun exploring new possibilities. As they were leaving the Bands, they had invitation from Albert Norton who was now managing a Boys’ Home at Dhond, not far from Pandita Ramabai’s Mukti Mission. Phebe visited them both. Ernest visited Norton. New decisions were in the making at the sunset of the century.

<sup>56</sup> Khairagarh (CG) was their last mission in association with the Pentecost Bands. In October 1901 they finally parted ways with the Bands.

near Piparia, about 3 miles from Khairagarh.”<sup>57</sup> A week before they started for Khairagarh, Phebe already knew in her spirit that it will be a blessed experience over there, bringing them joy of ministry. She wrote to her brother,

You will be rejoiced [sic] to hear of our prospects for Khairagarh. I never felt so encouraged for our work as I do these days. I was never more blessed in my own soul and it is so easy to touch God as I go to pray and the fire falls as easily. Ernest too is in a rich place. Ethel too is a real stormer. The other night she prayed through to new victory and walked, run and shouted with hands uplifted....<sup>58</sup>

Amid all the famine relief works, transfers to different mission stations, and continuing evangelistic works, the Ward family was increasingly involved in the orphan care projects. The seed of a children home had already been planted while they were still in Achalpur a decade ago in 1887.<sup>59</sup> During the famine years, the seed became a full-grown tree under whose shades hundreds of orphans (men, women, and children), would find hope, shelter, food, love, and care.

### **3. Building Homes for the Orphans**

Famine relief works soon advanced from just serving the grain to cooked meals and from temporary sheltering of the orphan children to housing them in the mission homes. At the beginning of the famine relief works Ernest and Phebe had not planned to start an orphanage.<sup>60</sup> They were providing food for the hungry and were quite occupied with that. Their resources were also limited for such an endeavor. Phebe writes, “Our

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<sup>57</sup> Phebe Ward, Mar 19, 1901, *P.E.W. Journal, Jan 1901-Dec 1904*, Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>58</sup> Phebe Ward, Letter to Gilbert and Ceeny, Raj Nandgaon, CP India, Dec 6, 1900, Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>59</sup> The Wards adopted Theodosia in Achalpur in 1887. See, Chapter 2.

<sup>60</sup> Ernest and Phebe Ward, *Echoes From Bharatkhand*, 123.

usual Sunday morning meetings where we distribute grain are greatly increasing in numbers to several hundred. We are not planning to open a school or orphanage, but we will have to do something to relieve the starving multitudes about us.”<sup>61</sup> She continues, “My husband declared I was doing all I was able, and the care of orphan children would be too heavy a burden.”<sup>62</sup> However, the Lord enabled them to accomplish what they thought would be too difficult for them. In an earlier draft of her parents’ biography, Ethel noted,

Their means were limited but to the last ounce of strength and wisdom at their command they labored arduously for those about them. They gave out food and grain, they took in orphan children, they nursed the sick and dying, they dug the graves and laid out the corpses (every caste is his own undertaker there). Before Ernest was able to get help, he even carried some of those bony corpses in his own arms to the burial ground and buried them. Wood was too scarce to make coffins, and there were so many deaths... Thus did Ernest and his faithful wife toil day and night among these starving specimens of humanity.<sup>63</sup>

Though gradually, both Ernest and Phebe had come to feel a definite sense of calling for the orphanage ministry. Early in 1897, Phebe writes,

God seems to be moving our hearts to help rescue the perishing in body as well as soul....We have felt God wanted us to rescue the children so we are not giving out promiscuously....I have felt this movement in rescuing famine waifs will be a blessed means of educating the children in the home land – if father and mother would teach their children the beauty of self-denial for these needy dying ones....Most of the money we get is for the famine sufferers....<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Ethel Ward, *Ordered Steps*, 83.

<sup>62</sup> Ernest and Phebe Ward, *Echoes From Bharatkhand*, 123.

<sup>63</sup> Ethel Ward, *Making Faces* (Unpublished story, 1937-38), 3. See also, Phebe Ward, Letter to Gilbert and Ceeny, Raj Nandgaon, CP India, Feb 25, 1897, Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>64</sup> Phebe Ward, Letter to Gilbert and Ceeny, Raj Nandgaon, CP India, Feb 25, 1897, pp. 2, 3, 4, Ward Collection ATS.

The Wards' concern to rescue the perishing in "body as well as soul" does not mean that they subscribed to a gnostic view of body and soul. What they mean is a holistic view of salvation which cares for the whole person. Their prayer and goal were to train the orphans in Christian faith and Christian character. All resources at their disposal were dedicated to that purpose. Ernest frequently asked for prayers in this regard. He wrote, "We hope you will pray especially that we may have great help from God to train these dear little waifs in the way of righteousness and true holiness."<sup>65</sup> Philip Bacon, the publisher of Pentecostal Bands tracts, endorses the above vision of the Wards when he writes he seeks support for the orphan works,

While the papers of this country were freely giving the reports of the terrible famine in India, the public very generously responded with their means, and doubtless many thousand lives were saved thereby. Children were taken by the missionaries as special subjects of God's care, and... have been gathered into the Orphan Homes in that country, and are now being trained for Him. Aid is now very much needed.... The time will come when, as we review the past, it will be a comforting thought if we can truly say, that we have "done what we could."<sup>66</sup>

Much focus of the mission work during the famine years was carried out among the orphans. Amid this great ministry, the Wards had to part ways for good with the Pentecost Bands, as they could no longer work in harmony. However, this did not bar them from continuing the ministry among the orphans in association with other agencies.

### ***3.1 With the Nortons at Daund***

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<sup>65</sup> Ernest Ward, "Children's Home," Letter to Sister Abrams, Raj Nandgaon, Mar 11, 1897. See, *Scrapbook* 393, 151, Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>66</sup> Philip Bacon, *Our Orphan Children in India*, No. 2 (August 1898): 1-2, Ward Collection ATS.

After separating from the Bands, the Wards visited their old friend Albert Norton. Mr. and Mrs. Norton were managing a Boys' Home at Dhond (Daund), near Pune.<sup>67</sup> During this visit, Phebe was able to make a trip to Mukti Mission (only 17 miles from Dhond) founded by Pandita Ramabai. Phebe was accompanied by Bessie, Louise, and Bro. Sherman. March 28, 1902 was Good Friday. They had a wonderful tour of the Mission compound guided by Ramabai herself, had lunch with her, and attended the Good Friday Service.<sup>68</sup> At the end of her trip Phebe remarked, "Everything looked so substantial.... A spirit of reverence pervaded the place. It is a mighty institution indeed."<sup>69</sup>

The visit to the Nortons and to the Mukti Mission very much encouraged the Wards to continue their ministry of caring for the orphans. Ernest wrote, "I would be glad if we had a station in the C.P. somewhere where we could make a refuge for some of them [orphan children from Raj Nandgaon] but *I would never do anything that would be indefensible before God.*"<sup>70</sup> Soon, the Lord opened the doors for them in this line.

### ***3.2 The Ministry in Sanjan, Gujarat***

The Vanguard Mission had an orphanage in Gujrat, and they needed workers. The Wards responded at once. Thus, the orphanage work took the Wards as far as Gujrat in

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<sup>67</sup> Albert Norton's summary of works says that nearly one thousand orphans were cared since 1899. Her fervently prayed for a Christian Home and Colony in 1900. (see, Albert Norton, Letter from Boys Christian Home, Dhond, Poona, October 1922). The home has been relocated to Chunder Bazaar and continues to witness the love of Norton for children. (See, <http://bgchm.org/our-history/> Accessed on September 25, 2019).

<sup>68</sup> Phebe wrote a detailed account of her visit in her diary. A typed version is published in *The Asbury Journal*, 70/1 (2015): 75-76.

<sup>69</sup> Phebe Ward, *Diary 1902*. See also, Ethel Ward, *Ordered Steps*, 104.

<sup>70</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to Phebe Ward, Dhond, Apr 2, 1902, Ward Collection ATS. Emphasis mine.



western India. They worked in a place called Sanjan (a small town south of Gujrat). On the history of Sanjan, Ernest wrote the following to his mother,

The name of this place is a corruption of St. John which was given by the Portuguese probably 300 years ago... The inhabitants of San Jan and surrounding villages are Hindoos, Mohammedans and a few Parsees. The Parsees are said to have first landed in this harbour on fleeing from Persia AD 716. So, this place is a sort of a Plymouth Rock to them. Their most sacred place is 20 miles north where they have some fire temples in which, so they say the fire has been kept burning since 1740.<sup>71</sup>

The orphan work at Sanjan was carried out under the auspices of the Vanguard Mission, an organization similar to Pentecost Bands but under different leadership.<sup>72</sup>

Phebe reflected on working in the lives of children at Sanjan,

The children in this mission ... are like the piece of steel or brass in its native state worth but a trifle at first. The steel or brass that is put in the watch. But let it go through a watch factory from start to finish and it comes out very valuable. The *work* on it had made it valuable and just so we are worth little or nothing until we go through God's watch factory and we will come out worth something because of God's work in and for us. The workers here are co-workers with God in doing this work...<sup>73</sup>

Ethel notes that some of the children at Sanjan, who were from Raj Nandgaon, were delighted to see their Papajee and Mammajee again.<sup>74</sup> It seems that the Bands' Orphanage in Raj Nandgaon (See Image 25) had not been able to continue in the orphan work and sent their children to the care of other mission orphanages such as Sanjan and Daund.

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<sup>71</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to his mother, San Jan, Thana Dist., Aug 7, 1903, Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>72</sup> Phebe Ward, Letter to Gilbert and Ceeny, Teethul Balsar (Tithal, Valsad), May 29, 1902, Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>73</sup> Phebe Ward, Web. Nov 24, 1902, *P.E.W. Journal*, Jan 1901-Dec 1904. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>74</sup> Ethel Ward, *Ordered Steps*, 105.

The Sanjan years lasted roughly two years and the mission came to an end as the field was taken over by the Wesleyan Mission. The Wards were now welcomed by the Free Methodist Mission Board to take care of their new mission station at Wani, Maharashtra in 1904. With this new appointment, their work focus went back to building mission bungalows, evangelism, and church planting. However, both Ernest and his older daughter Ethel were also in charge of boys' orphanages run by the Free Methodist missionaries at Yavatmal. Prior to joining with the FMC team over there, Ernest had already invested much time and energy in orphan care and was well experienced in this work. He had a different vision for this ministry. He was disappointed with the situation at Yavatmal, especially after Ethel had taken a furlough. He was concerned about the way the missionaries were taking care of the orphans. He wrote to Ethel,

As for the Boys Orphanage, I am sorry to say it has so run down... I soon saw after you left, my suggestions were not very welcome. So, I quit practically giving any more advice. However, you might not consider the situation so serious as I do. The boys are idle a good part of the time and do not get neither the employment nor the discipline which they need.... I am not pitying them at all for the financial loss they might sustain, but it seems too bad to have their hopes blasted and have them dote on boys who in all probability, unless great changes and improvements are wrought, will turn out rascals if not criminals.<sup>75</sup>

Ward's concern was genuine. A lack of discipline among the children could really ruin the purpose of the ministry. The purpose was much more than providing food and shelter. On the purpose and function of the orphanage, Ernest wrote,

If the object of the Boys Orphanage is simply to feed and clothe a lot of boys and furnish them a place to while away their time, then I suppose it does not make much difference how often they are allowed vacations to go home and stuff

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<sup>75</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to Ethel Ward, Yeotmal, June 27, c.1915? Ward Collection ATS.

themselves with all kinds of food and get under influences which will rapidly undo all that has been done to help them in forming character.<sup>76</sup>

Ward's vision of an orphanage was much more than physical care. He envisioned a greater purpose in this ministry. Beyond food and cloth, the purpose of the orphanage was to build Christian character. Within the holistic framework of his ministerial vision, Ward saw socio-charitable works as means to spiritual formation. He also highlighted the role of the Holy Spirit in this regard,

[I]f the object is to teach and train them into God-honoring thrifty habits and wake up a conscience that can be moved upon by the Holy Spirit rousing them to seek God. Under such condition I should think it would be wiser to keep them on the compound and employed daily in regular jobs such as they are able to do out of school, play, food, and sleep hours.<sup>77</sup>

Like Ernest, Phebe also saw the ministry of orphanage as no less than the ministry of evangelism. She praised God for the privilege of rescuing hundreds of famine children and caring for them.<sup>78</sup> She was grateful for God's grace that brought the provision of resource and health to carry out this important Christians service.<sup>79</sup> Ernest and Phebe were delighted to see several of their orphans become "carpenters, laundresses, cooks, tailors, teachers, and best of all, catechists and Bible women."<sup>80</sup> Their greatest delight were the gospel workers. Phebe wrote, "And now, notwithstanding all the trouble, toils, tears, burdens and heartaches borne through those weary months, we feel it more than pays, in the prospect and promise for the enlargement of the kingdom of God which these

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<sup>76</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to Ethel Ward, Yeotmal, May 8, 1916, Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>77</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to Ethel Ward, Yeotmal, May 8, 1916, Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>78</sup> Ernest and Phebe Ward, *Echoes from Bharatkhand*, 130.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 131.

recued orphans give.”<sup>81</sup> In the years following, Ernest moved on from orphanage works and increasingly invested his talent and resources in other needs of the mission fields such as educational and medical works, in addition to continuing their primary work of evangelism.

#### **4. Training the Minds: Educational Endeavors**

From the beginning of their ministry Ernest and Phebe worked with a vision to educate children. Their orphanages were primarily boarding schools.<sup>82</sup> In fact, the boarding schools grew out of the orphanages. Phebe was a schoolteacher and her gifts of teaching were utilized all through her mission work in India. Beginning with Sunday School for village children, she had come to manage the schooling of hundreds of orphans in her care. Teaching the children remained a major ministry involvement for the Wards. As early as 1885, Phebe was appealing to children in America to prepare to come as educational missionaries in India. She wrote,

Brother Ward has started a school among the shoemaker caste, and he wants a teacher for them so he can go out in the jungle (away off in the woods) where people never heard about Jesus. I hope some of you who love God will go to school and learn very fast, so when you grow up you will be all ready to come.<sup>83</sup>

Ernest saw illiteracy and ignorance as a prime cause of the suffering and poverty among the Indians. He envisioned restoring India’s fortune by character building through teaching “pure Bible Christianity.” He writes,

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> See, “Schools in Our India Field,” *The Missionary Tidings*, July 1926: 122-123. Cf. “Our Work in India,” *The Missionary Tidings*, September, 1932: 162.

<sup>83</sup> Phebe E. Ward, “Letter from India” *The Free Methodist*, March 25, 1885: 10 (Written on Feb 12, 1885 from Burhanpur).

The natural resources of India are great, but heavy land rent, high interest, numerous festivals, expensive weddings and idolatry, besides their many vices, tend to keep the people poor. Our dark-skinned oriental brothers have long been oppressed by priestcraft, superstition, and ignorance, and it behooves us to lend them a helping hand. Many crave for deliverance, and feel the galling chains of custom, precedence and caste. But nothing will give them vitality and strength to act, but a pure Bible Christianity.<sup>84</sup>

Ernest underlined the significance of converted, educated and spirit filled leaders for nation building. Like the famous educational missionary, Alexander Duff, Ward saw education as a powerful means of Christianization.<sup>85</sup> Ernest declared,

The people of India lack courage. Evils are admitted on every hand, but they are waiting for bold intrepid spirits to push ahead. Such however, with rare exceptions, are not found in the country. They must be imported. We believe that India will yet bring India to Christ, but leaders are wanted now.<sup>86</sup>

While Duff was a strong promoter of English education alone, Ward primarily supported vernacular education. However, Ward also believed that education alone was not enough for the transformation of personality and character. He emphasized the need of conversion to Christ and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. He said,

Education alone will not make leaders. Many of the educated men of India who feel and see the prevailing evils sometimes make fine speeches in public, among the educated few, which cost them nothing; but in private, tamely submit to the iron rule of precedent and caste. We cannot expect them to do otherwise until they are converted.... What is needed in the land of the Veda today is more Holy Ghost and fire-baptized workers. Such alone can inspire the sons of India with courage and faith.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Ernest Ward, "A Plea for the 'Coral Strand,'" *Scrapbook One*, 158, Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>85</sup> Rev. Dr. Alexander Duff (April 25, 1806 – February 12, 1878) was the first foreign missionary of the Church of Scotland. He worked in India as an educational missionary during 1829-1863. For more on Duff, see, William Paton, *Alexander Duff: Pioneer of Missionary Education* (London: Student Christian Movement, 1923). See also, George Smith, *The Life of Alexander Duff* (New York: A. C. Armstrong, 1879).

<sup>86</sup> Ernest Ward, "A Plea for the 'Coral Strand,'" *Scrapbook One*, 158, Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>87</sup> Ernest Ward, "A Plea for the 'Coral Strand,'" *Scrapbook One*, 158, Ward Collection ATS.

At the wake of Indian nationalism and demand for Swaraj (independence) from the British Raj, Phebe was appreciative of the British Government for several things including schools. She wrote,

You have probably heard of the unrest in India. Of course, there are two sides to a story but whether the people of India would be benefited by overthrowing the British Raj is a very doubtful matter. While there may be cases of injustice as the natives claim, yet they enjoy many advantages under the British flag. Good roads were unknown before. Good schools, free hospitals for man and beast, and many other things. Life and property are safe, this is confessed by all classes.<sup>88</sup>

Both Ernest and Phebe acknowledged the efforts of the Government toward the education of the masses. But they were more thankful for their own opportunity to contribute in this direction. With the signs of increase in Christian population in their mission field, they had plans to enlarge the ministry of education. Ernest wrote,

The census of the empire as a whole shows an increase in Christian population of sixty-four per cent in the decade [1911]. To say the least, this indicates the waning of Hinduism, idolatry, caste, and priestcraft. Thank God! We have three primary schools in our field now for Hindu boys and hope to have one at Umbri [Umri] when we get sufficient funds to erect the schoolhouse.<sup>89</sup>

However, the plan to provide education was not limited to the non-Christians. The Wards were equally or even more concerned with educating the new converts and the nominal Christians. Their ultimate vision was a salvation school for training indigenous Christians for Christian ministry. Their Sunday schools, which comprised of both unbelieving and Christian children, unmistakably taught lessons from the Bible for faith

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<sup>88</sup> Phebe Ward, Letter to Gilbert and Ceeny, Darwah, Yeotmal Dist, Aug 27, 1907, Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>89</sup> Ernest Ward, "A Few Optimistic Smiles from India by Rev. E. F. Ward," *Free Methodist*, July 29, (1913). Cf., *Scrapbook 363: Rag Bag of India, Facts and Figures*, 178, Ward Collection ATS.

and character formation. Phebe describes the success of their Sunday school ministry (during Raj Nandgaon years) in the following words,

We have the most interesting Sunday school we ever had in India. Seven boys have learned the Ten Commandments by heart and even some girls, who are so looked down upon, as being too ignorant to learn, are doing well. I had a class of those who have learned some of the commandments, and a girl stood fourth last Sunday. I rejoice so as I look at her. She looks so inferior. Is beaten over the head very often by her brutal father, and naturally very timid. She is lank and coarse looking. But since coming to Sunday school she is brightening up, sometimes her face washed, hair nicely combed and a clean cloth on. This school is having a civilizing effect on the children...<sup>90</sup>

Phebe saw teaching the children and working with nominal Christians in terms of repairing the walls. She wrote to her daughter Bessie,

We are repairing the walls of our house, knocking off the plaster where it is not solid. Yesterday Emma said to Papa – “You are spoiling the wall.” I told her we were doing with the wall what we were doing with people’s superficial experiences, knocking them over so we would have a better foundation to build on. My heart sickens when I see as many nominal Christians and they are not all in the native church either. Oh Bessie we will not belong to that class will we? By prayer and faith (which comes from obedience) we will become more and more like Christ in all things. *Study* 1 Tim 4:12 and carry it out in your life in every particular “in purity.” We are praying for you constantly. Ethel too is praying. Prove yourself worthy follower of your good older sister. She seems to be in gaining spiritually while she is gaining mentally. She is in two schools and so are you. See that you get your lesson well learned in the school of Christ.<sup>91</sup>

Learning in the school of Christ was the top priority of the Wards. They knew the difference between the education of a secular university and a seminary. They had concerns about the negative impacts of secular schools. Ernest thought that “in the worldly schools the students turned out are so often affected and proud. The great

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<sup>90</sup> Phebe Ward, “Daily Doings,” *Letter to Ethel Ward*, Raj Nandgaon, Feb 18, 1896. See also, Ernest Ward, *Scrapbook* 393, 155, Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>91</sup> Phebe Ward, Letter to Bessie Ward, Darwha, c.1906, Ward Collection ATS. Emphasis original.

blessing of a salvation school is that scholars, while building up intellectually, are not likely to turn out proud.”<sup>92</sup> Ernest reckoned education in the category of wealth and fame and questioned its value, “What is wealth or social standing or even ‘education’ independent of the grace of God? They have all been the means of corrupting and destroying souls.”<sup>93</sup> Sometimes Ernest almost felt that higher education was not necessary. He held that, “Many of the holy and shining lights of history, some who rose to great eminence in usefulness, had no school advantages at all in childhood.”<sup>94</sup> It seems Ward may have been referring here to the early education of Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865).

Ernest also felt that “tones of education and big libraries are only a dreg in the market with some people, a big elephant in their hands which they don’t know what to do with... it is better to be a live dog than a dead lion.”<sup>95</sup> However, Ernest was not completely against higher education, he did want to lay extra emphasis on the best use of all knowledge for the glory of God. He counseled his daughter in the following words,

We are so glad you have an ambition to acquire an education, but oh how much more, that you aspire after the deep things of God. “Knowledge puffeth up” (those who have not the grace of God) but “charity buildeth up” (those who have commenced on the right foundation). Only those who have passed from death unto life and are united to the True Vine know how to make the *best* use of knowledge. With so many, it is so much useless lumber. They are over balanced and topples over. Precious child be much in prayer and keep the Spirit and hard study and *good* reading will not hurt you. It will only furnish you with new tools of weapon which you will be able to use for the glory of God. Praise be His Name.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to Ethel Ward, No. 63, Darwah, Oct 30, 1907, Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>93</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to his mother, Raj Nandgaon, C.P., December 9, 1896, Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>94</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to Ethel Ward, Raj Nandgaon, Aug 4, 1896, Ward Collection ATS. I think he is referring to Lincoln, encouraging Ethel in study and work.

<sup>95</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to Ethel Ward, no. 6, Wun, Aug 16, 1905, Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>96</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to Ethel Ward, Raj Nandgaon, May 13, 1897, Ward Collection ATS.



Education to Earnest was not “stuff-u-cation,”<sup>97</sup> or mere acquisition of knowledge. To him it was acquiring skills and being prepared for God’s work. He looked at school education as just a starting point of lifelong learning and a preparation to fulfil God’s call in one’s life. He reminded Ethel,

Remember there are thousands who have graduated from the universities, who are far less fit and ready for their calling than you are (or will be at the end of your Seminary year). Your education will not stop when you leave school and after you get through there, the best thing you will have learned is the stimulus and art of educating yourself. Therefore, consider well and pray much concerning your future.... I have a feeling you ought to get back to India soon if God is calling you here for your life’s work.<sup>98</sup>

During his Yavatmal years, Ernest was greatly occupied with training local Christian preachers and leaders. He describes his teaching experience as follows, “The Bible school here takes considerable [sic] of my time. If it were in English, my daily preparation would be a short matter. But you will understand of course that in Marathi is quite another ‘gosht.’”<sup>99</sup> The Bible School at Yavatmal was started as a Marathi medium evangelism training center of the Free Methodist Church. The school initially received enrolment from the orphans who were brought from Raj Nandgaon, Sanjan, and other places. The ministries of Bible School and Industrial School for Boys began alongside in 1906.<sup>100</sup> Spiritual training of the orphans was a key focus in the ministry of Ernest and

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<sup>97</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to Ethel Ward, Darwah, Feb 9, 1908, Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>98</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to Ethel Ward, Raj Nandgaon, Jan 14, 1910, Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>99</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to Ethel Ward, Yeotmal, Aug 20, 1919. Ward Collection ATS. Ward uses the word “gosht” (Literally, “meat”) here to refer to “favorite food” or “a thing of preference and delight.” It is not to be confused with “ghost.” His usage may also refer to greater effort required in working with Marathi just as meat was not easily or abundantly available.

<sup>100</sup> Byron S. Lamson, *Venture: The Frontiers of Free Methodism*. (Vinona Lake, IN: Light and Life Press, 1960), 254.

Phebe Ward.<sup>101</sup> The roots of Union Biblical Seminary (UBS), founded by the Free Methodist missionary Dr. Frank J. Kline at Yavatmal in 1953, are deeply rooted in the spirit and vision of the Marathi Medium Bible School.<sup>102</sup> The vision of the Marathi Bible School, which started as early as 1906, was later revived in 1917 when a Bible Training School was opened by Grace Barnes, a colleague of Ernest Ward.<sup>103</sup> Ward expressed his idea of missionary training school in the following words,

[A] missionary training school is a place where candidates would have special advantages in an atmosphere of prayer for the study of the Bible and missionary biography. I mean the latter term in its broadest sense, and would put after the Holy Scriptures, “Fox’s Book of Martyrs” at the head of the course. But the training of divinely called agents for the glorious work of the Gospel is a great work and many-sided and we cannot lay down many rules for others. Those who undertake this difficult and responsible task must themselves be divinely called.<sup>104</sup>

One of the most significant developments after the World War II was the increase in number of Free Methodist Bible schools and the ecumenical expansion of some of them. The Union Biblical Seminary in India was one of them. Byron Lamson highlighted the significance and impact,

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<sup>101</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to Frank Cox, Dhond, British India, Apr 17, 1902. Ward Collection ATS. True copy of the letter was sent to Frank.

<sup>102</sup> For the story of Union Biblical Seminary, see, Jey J. Kanagaraj, ed., *Unfailing Vision: The Story of Union Biblical Seminary* (Pune: Union Biblical Seminary, 1999), 5. Another Bible School was opened at Darwha by the name “Indian Seattle Seminary.” Ernest had worked in Darwha in two phases (1906-10 and 1921-1927) and had invested much time in developing these ministries along with his colleagues. On Seminary in Darwha, see, Gertrude Alcorn, “Our Indian Seattle Seminary,” *The Missionary Tidings* (paper clipping in Ward’s diary, n.d.). Alcorn suggest that the seminary got that name after their main sponsors at Seattle, WA. See, Ernest Ward, *Scrapbook* 363. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>103</sup> In 1920 the school was moved to Wani, where R. N. Davis and others tried to help run. However, the school was finally moved back to Yeotmal in 1924. See, Jey J. Kanagaraj, ed., *Unfailing Vision: The Story of Union Biblical Seminary* (Pune: Union Biblical Seminary, 1999), 5. Another Bible School was opened at Darwha by the name “Indian Seattle Seminary.” Ernest had worked in Darwha in two phases (1906-10 and 1921-1927) and had invested much time in developing these ministries along with his colleagues. On Seminary in Darwha, see, Gertrude Alcorn, “Our Indian Seattle Seminary,” *The Missionary Tidings* (paper clipping in Ward’s diary, n.d.). Alcorn suggest that the seminary got that name after their main sponsors at Seattle, WA. See, Ernest Ward, *Scrapbook* 363. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>104</sup> Ernest Ward, “Holiness Unto the Lord,” *Letter to Sister Abrams*, Raj Nandgaon, Sep 9, 1896, See *Scrapbook* 486, 38, Ward Collection ATS.

In India, on our Bible school campus, fifteen evangelical groups are cooperating in the operation of Union Biblical Seminary. The Free Methodist campus has been turned over to the Seminary Board of Governors on a long-term lease. The twelve students of our own Bible school are now included in a student group of one hundred. The unity of this fellowship is grounded in the Bible, prayer and evangelism. The evangelism morale is high. Recently thirteen teams returned from their vacation period evangelism crusades. Graduates have gained entrance into Nepal, where missionaries may not go. They labor as self-supporting missionaries in that difficult field. Asbury Seminary professors Harold Kuhn and Wilbur T. Dayton have each spent a sabbatical leave at Yeotmal. Incidentally, the Free Methodist Church in India has had more conversions and accessions to the church during the last decade than in the preceding seventy years of its history! There are other factors, but the work of the Seminary is certainly partially responsible for this forward move.<sup>105</sup>

In 1981, the Union Biblical Seminary held a Centennial Celebration commemorating 100 years of the Wards' commencement of ministry in Central India. The participants and speakers on the occasion included Rev. D. T. Ward, Ernest's adopted grandson, and Dr. Narendra John, then an assistant professor at UBS and now a Bishop of the Free Methodist Church in India.<sup>106</sup> Loretta P. Root, Ernest's colleague in 1923, summarized the life and labors of Ernest and Phebe Ward in a four-page insert to the Centennial program. In her brief reminiscence, Root underlines the influence of Ernest Ward in two special cases. First, the conversion of N. V. Tilak, and second, the

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<sup>105</sup> Byron S. Lamson, *Venture: The Frontiers of Free Methodism*. (Winona Lake, IN: Light and Life Press, 1960), 212.

The story of Union Biblical Seminary is a remarkable witness to the development of theological education in India. Asbury Theological Seminary's relation with UBS needs to be revitalized through its partnership program. Younger seminaries such as the South Asian Institute for Advanced Christian Studies (SAIACS), Bangalore, and the New Theological College (NTC), Dehradun, have already been blessed by ATS' partnership. Bringing UBS into this global partnership will not only be a wonderful celebration of Asbury's historic connection with this great institution but also a timely tribute to the vision and labors of the Wards and their colleagues.

<sup>106</sup> See, "Centennial Celebration, 1881-1981: Thanksgiving Service, Commemorating 100 Years of Ernest F. Ward's commencing ministry in Central India, 8:30 a.m. on Monday, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1981 at Union Biblical Seminary, Yavatmal, Maharashtra, India." (Hereafter, *Centennial Celebration, 1881-1981*). Pamphlet P568. Marston Memorial Historical Center and Archives, Indianapolis, Indiana. (Hereafter, MMHC Archives).

translation of parts of the Bible into the Korku language with assistance from Ward's Korku Grammar.<sup>107</sup> Root also highlights how Phebe paid for their first mission trip to India from her own funds, and sacrificially ministered to women and children of India.<sup>108</sup>

## **5. Caring for Physical Wellbeing: Medical Works**

Along with the evangelistic, orphanage and educational ministries, the Wards provided primary health care in their mission stations. Ernest Ward was inspired by the works of the famous medical missionary, Dr. Ida Scudder (1870-1960), South India. Ward quoted Scudder, "Even a partial knowledge of medicine is an unparalleled power for a missionary in India. The heart of that man who is freely treated for sickness has been gained by the Christian preacher."<sup>109</sup> Although the Wards were not professional medical missionaries like Scudder, they understood the significance of medical works and its impact for gospel work.

As an itinerant missionary preaching in village after village, Ward used to always carry some medicine with him for himself and for anyone he might meet in need. He recalls, "Arriving home Mar 20, I found I had traveled 240 miles afoot, passed through or near 101 villages, preached in 20 of them, besides *giving medicines to 17 persons* and distributing tracts to some who could read."<sup>110</sup> While Ernest had no problem in using medicines, Phebe was a stronger believer in divine healing. He wrote to Ethel,

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<sup>107</sup> Loretta P. Root, "In the Footsteps of Ernest F. Ward," *Centennial Celebration, 1881-1981*, 1-2.

<sup>108</sup> Loretta P. Root, "Keeping Step: Phebe Ward," *Centennial Celebration, 1881-1981*, 3-4.

<sup>109</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to Ethel Ward, 1142 W. 62 St, Chicago, Ills., Aug 13, 1927, Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>110</sup> Ernest Ward, "Tour From Raj Nandgaon to Kolar, Bastar State, in the Country of the Mariya Gonds, Feb. and Mar. 1896." *Diary 377*, 2, Ward Collection ATS. Emphasis mine.

“Of course you know something about mama’s feelings on divine healing. I do not feel like urging her to take medicine altho [sic] I have spoken once or twice to her about it...”<sup>111</sup> The urgency of medical works was increasingly realized during the famine years which also plagued the land with various diseases. Ernest wrote,

During the great famine of 1900... the care of the sick was especially hard ... cholera ... chicken-pox ... and many others had their victims on our mission compound, and it was a wonder too we did not have bubonic plague, as it was prevalent in the country during that period. Thanks be unto God who kept it away as he saw we had all the evils for the time being we could stand.<sup>112</sup>

Although the Wards were not dealing with plagues, they were very much challenged by various sicknesses. Ernest Ward reported about his own health,

I am glad to report that our gracious God and Father has so kept me another year that I have enjoyed fairly good health and strength. While I have had seen several bad spells with liver and kidney troubles, they were comparatively short and without medicine in answer to prayer I came through all right. Twice I used simple remedies which were available and also recovered.<sup>113</sup>

The Wards related health and healing with faith in Christ and cure of the soul. They used medicines as point of contact to share about Christ, sin and salvation to his audience. In Phebe’s own words,

I am beginning to have a sore eye. The Indian sore eye is very painful...I think the Father is kindly letting me ... have another chance to trust Him. I was sick two weeks ago ... and he healed me...The natives are great on taking medicine and when I speak of my sickness, they always ask about our medicines... Of

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<sup>111</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to Ethel Ward, San Jan, Nov 10, 1903, Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>112</sup> Ernest Ward, “Curry from the Courses of Missionary Life,” Los Angeles, CA, 1911. See, *Scrapbook 363: Rag Bag of India, Facts and Figures*, 17-18, Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>113</sup> Ernest Ward, “Annual Report Jul 1/24 to Jun 30/25” Darwha, Motibagh, India, Jul 1, 1925. Copied in Ernest Ward, *Diary 367: India Notebook*, 50, Ward Collection ATS.

course, we must know about medicine. I then have a chance of telling of my Doctor who cures both soul and body.<sup>114</sup>

Ernest and Phebe missed no opportunity to witness Christ to those seeking physical healing. They presented Christ's death on the cross as an atonement for sin and sickness of humanity. They believed in the impact of medicines, but they also believed in the greater impact of healing in Christ. Phebe further noted,

If we believe that Christ has atoned for our sins and in his death made atonement for our sicknesses, faith for our bodies springs up without an effort. There are some who do not accept this, although they fully believe Christ has the power and can heal if He chooses, and many get help on this line for He is glad to honor faith in Him. But healing in the atonement has a more positive side to it. The devil knows this, and he fights it, but "Faith is the victory that overcomes the world," also the flesh and the devil.<sup>115</sup>

What began as a first-aid medical assistance during the village outreaches and orphanage works had later culminated in rural clinics. By the end of the nineteenth century, the Free Methodist headquarters in Yavatmal received their first medical missionary. Concentrated medical work began in Umri village (near Yavatmal) during the following several years. The Umri Christian Hospital, continues to stand as a powerful witness to the medical services of the Free Methodist church in central India.<sup>116</sup> Ernest and his daughter Ethel lived and worked in Umri village during 1912-1915 and saw the development of the medical works along with the evangelistic and church planting works. Those were really the foundational years for Umri (See Image 28). In

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<sup>114</sup> Phebe Ward, Letter to Gilbert and Earl, Wun, Berar, Sep 8, 1905, Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>115</sup> Phebe Ward, Letter to Gilbert and Earl, Wun, Berar, Sep 8, 1905, Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>116</sup> For an update on medical work at Umri during 1930s, see, Ida Menter, "Retrospect of Medical Work," *The Missionary Tidings*, September 1932: 173. For a brief history of the Umri Christian Hospital, visit, [www.uchospital.co.in/index.php/about-us/history](http://www.uchospital.co.in/index.php/about-us/history) (Accessed October 21, 2019).

1923, when Ernest was leading the work at Darwha, the new hospital at Umri was getting the finishing touches by Samuel Casberg, Ward's colleague and friend. Mrs. Jessie Casberg reported,

The medical work is one of the best agents there is for preparing the way for the Gospel. Do not think that we are neglecting the Gospel to give out medicine...Some [patients who received the Gospel] have been deeply convicted and have returned later alone to inquire and have expressed a desire for salvation....After the hospital is finished we expect to have daily meetings with the patients.<sup>117</sup>

Medical work was also carried out during the Wards' ministry in Darwha. Ernest always went extra mile in caring for the sick. Even when he himself was feeling weak, after fever or other ailment, he would continue the village tours. Mrs. Evangeline Thuline, Ernest's colleague at Darwha, reported,

The dispensary work here is increasing gradually....We are now making daily trips to the surrounding villages, returning the same day. Brother Ward seems to find it difficult to recover his strength again after his attack of fever. He does not complain, even though he and I get a severe jolting everyday as we pass over the rough, rocky, cart tracks that are called roads in this country.<sup>118</sup>

Although the medical work did not grow at Darwha as much as it did at Umri, the missionary initiatives were noteworthy. In all the mission stations of the FMC in India, Ward's leadership remained pioneering and exemplary. With all the engagements in famine relief, orphan care, education, and dispensary work, Ward also remained a chief bearer of the philanthropic vision of the FMC.

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<sup>117</sup> Jessie L. Casberg, "The New India Hospital and Our Medical Work," *The Missionary Tidings*, June 1923: 104-05.

<sup>118</sup> Evangeline C. Thuline, "Dispensary Work at Darwha, India," *The Missionary Tidings*, February 1923: 26.

## 6. Philanthropic Vision of the Free Methodist Church

The Free Methodist Church was a powerful nascent movement full of vision and passion for evangelism as well as philanthropy. This vision had become global, first in the mission endeavors of the Wards, then the Bands and still others, across the nations. The Free Methodist Church, from its inception, was committed to “preach the gospel to the poor.” Founder of the FMC, B. T. Roberts exhorted, “The provisions of the gospel are for all.... *But for whose benefit are special efforts to be put forth?* Who must be primarily cared for? Jesus settles this question.... the Church must follow in the footsteps of Jesus. She must see to it, that the gospel is preached to the poor.”<sup>119</sup> Preaching and evangelism meant more than winning converts. In fact, gospel was taken to mean “salvation from all sin, with inner cleansing and empowerment for Christlike, self-sacrificing service.”<sup>120</sup> This self-sacrificing Christlike service was expressed in the humanitarian undertakings for the needy.

Care for the homeless was integral to FMC’s vision of Christian service to the society. As early as 1862, B. T. Roberts had carried out evangelistic ministry among the men and women in the streets and brothels of Buffalo, New York. His work also included taking care of the converts from among them both spiritually, physically and socially. The Roberts in fact opened their own home for their needy converts. He wrote, “To the young women who became converted we furnish a home in our family, until the way is opened for them to take care of themselves in a respectable manner.”<sup>121</sup> Marston called

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<sup>119</sup> B. T. Roberts, “Free Churches” *Earnest Christian*, 1, No. 1 (Jan 1860): 7-8. See also, Howard A. Snyder, *Populist Saints*, 549 and Marston, *From Age to Age A Living Witness*, 427.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid. Cf. Snyder, *Populist Saints*, 550.

<sup>121</sup> B. T. Roberts, *The Earnest Christian*, Vol. 3 (June 1862): 187.



this the Free Methodist Church's first "Home of Redeeming Love."<sup>122</sup> Several social ministries after the pattern of the Roberts were started by different members of the Free Methodist Church throughout America. For example, Olive Branch Mission (Chicago, 1876), Chicago Industrial Home for Children (Chicago, 1886), and Providence Mission and Rescue Home (Pittsburg, PA 1899).<sup>123</sup> In addition, several "Homes of Redeeming Love" were founded during 1890-1922 in Wichita (Kansas), Omaha (Nebraska), Tulsa, (Oklahoma), Detroit (Michigan), Denver (Colorado) and other places.<sup>124</sup>

In these ministries the role of Free Methodist women leaders was prominent. Howard Snyder sees their "motherly compassion" as one of the key factors in caring for the needy.<sup>125</sup> Snyder also sees the roots of philanthropic works in the "compassion for individual persons in their plight, with a particular concern for winning them to faith in Jesus Christ – not a more general social reform vision."<sup>126</sup> While the vision for social reform may not have found a central motive in the charitable works of the FMC within USA, but in the context of foreign missions, it remained a serious agenda. For example, the Wards faced the challenges of social evil such as the caste system in India and desired to bring a transformation through the gospel. Ernest wrote, "Caste in India not only raises up walls like wealth in other countries, between the classes and the masses, but it kills the milk of human kindness and intensifies the selfishness of the natural heart."<sup>127</sup> He was

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<sup>122</sup> Marston, *From Age to Age A Living Witness*, 446.

<sup>123</sup> Snyder, *Aspects of the Free Methodist Church*, 53.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 53-54.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>127</sup> Ernest Ward, "Caste," *Scrapbook 486*, 71, Ward Collection ATS.

convinced that the “caste superstition” was a hindrance to the spread of the gospel.<sup>128</sup> Thus in his ministry, he preached and taught against the caste system and during the famines appealed to the people to work for saving lives irrespective of the caste differences.

In the Free Methodist vision of ministry, humanitarian services were integral to evangelism. This is precisely the Biblical vision of holistic ministry. The Wards’ engagement in humanitarian services in India were unmistakable application of the philanthropic vision of the Free Methodist Church in obedience to the biblical commission.

## **7. Issue with the Bands and the FMC**

Great ministry opportunities come with great practical challenges. This was true in the experience of the Wards too. While humanitarian services expanded their sphere of missionary influence in the lives of the indigenous, it also burdened them with internal issues and challenges. Denominational affiliation, organized funding, and leadership conflicts were some of the major issues faced by the Wards.

During the first phase of their ministry (1881-1892), the Wards had worked as independent faith missionaries, depending on God for all the needs. Their support came primarily from friends in the Illinois Conference of the Free Methodist Church and family members in California. During their second phase of ministry (1893-1904), still “independent faith missionaries,”<sup>129</sup> they were a growing family with all the orphans and

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<sup>128</sup> Ernest Ward, “Notes from an Address by E. F. Ward,” prepared by E. H. Tabor, Iowa, Sep 14, 1899. *Scrapbook 486*, 72, Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>129</sup> John M’Geary, *The Free Methodist Church: A Brief History of its Origin and Development*. Fourth Edition. (Chicago, IL: W. B. Rose, 1917), 168.

challenges to provide for them. In addition to more regular and increased funding, they needed additional hands to assist them in the Chhattisgarh Pilgrim Mission which was now engaged in famine relief and orphan works based in Raj Nandgaon. Therefore, they invited the Pentecost Bands to join them.<sup>130</sup> This decision proved to be a mistake both personally and denominationally. Beginning in 1892, the Bands had already ended up in a conflict with the Free Methodist Church. Howard Snyder notes three areas of conflict (1) Question of ecclesial authority and autonomy, (2) support for foreign mission work, and (3) the understanding of holiness.<sup>131</sup> The Bands' teaching on holiness was considered a move "toward fanaticism."<sup>132</sup> The attempt of the Illinois Conference to bring the Bands under the Church's government in 1894 failed and in the following year the Bands withdrew from the FMC.<sup>133</sup> Thus, the Bands were neither under the control of the Free Methodist Mission Board nor in sympathy with the FMC churches.

In the same way, the Wards did not have the blessings of their Home Conference (the Illinois Conference of the FMC) to join the Bands.<sup>134</sup> Although joining the Bands

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<sup>130</sup> Although the Bands started as a revival group within the Free Methodist Church, it soon become an independent organization. In the beginning, Dake had the full blessings of the founding Superintendent of the Free Methodist Church, B. T. Roberts himself. Roberts wrote to Dake on July 31, 1885, "Organize your Bands. Push out. Be as aggressive as the Salvation Army, but more holy, more serious, and have no nonsense about it. Let the Holy Spirit take the place of tambourines to draw the people....We must not let the Free Methodist Church become a feeble imitation of the M. E. Church." Ida Dake Parsons, *Kindling Watch-Fires: Being a Brief Sketch of the Life of Rev. Vivian A. Dake* (Chicago, IL: Free Methodist Publishing House, 1915), 36-37. See also, Thomas H. Nelson, *Life and Labors of Rev. Vivian A. Dake, Organizer and Leader of Pentecost Bands* (Chicago, IL: T. B. Arnold, 1894), 80.

<sup>131</sup> Howard A. Snyder, *Aspects of Early Free Methodist History* (Dayton, OH: United Theological Seminary, 1994), 33-38.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>133</sup> The Bands wanted to reunite with the Free Methodist Church in 1950 but the FMC was late in response and the Bands entered in negotiation with the Wesleyan Methodist Church and became a part that denomination in 1958. See, Snyder, *Aspects of Early Free Methodist History*, 42.

<sup>134</sup> Byron S. Lamson, *Ventures: The Frontiers of Free Methodism* (Winona Lake, IN: Light and Life Press, 1960), 77. The Band had gone on to become an independent mission and the Free Methodist Board of Missions stood against such bodies.

had brought increased or stable financial support crucial for their orphanage works and additional human resource, it also brought them under a new leadership, a leadership that undermined their experience and advice. But the reason for joining the Bands was surely more than financial or personnel related. It seems that on the issue of holiness, Ernest inclined to the firebrand or radical version promoted by the Bands mentioned earlier. However, this inclination was soon turned into disappointments as they saw extremes in both teaching as well as leadership styles, which in their view were not acceptable. Thus, there was confusion in their minds as to whether they had made a right choice in siding with the Bands. This reflection came soon after leaving the Bands, with which they had left everything they had built, including the children on whom they had invested their lives. They did hope the best for the children and were glad to meet some of them in the orphanages of Sanjan, Daund, and Yavatmal. Along with Wards, the Ashtons also left the Bands.<sup>135</sup> After leaving the Bands, the Wards ministered with Albert Norton in Daund and briefly at Sanjan and Jeethul Bulsar (Valsad) until they officially came under the Free Methodist Church's Mission Board. Ernest informed his family in the USA,

After leaving the P. Bands last October Phebe and I had invitations to cast in our lot with three other missions. We chose to come here and help in the work at Dhond [Albert Norton's Boys Home]. There are 400 orphan boys and I am at present assisting in their spiritual training. Phebe and the children went to Bulsar on the seacoast [Gujrat] for a change of air [but were involved in ministry everyday].<sup>136</sup>

As they bid farewell to the Bands, both Ernest and Phebe were at peace. Phebe wrote in the following year, "I have seen more than ever what a blessing that God took us

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<sup>135</sup> Phebe Ward, Nov 14, 1901, *P.E.W. Journal, Jan 1901-Dec 1904*, Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>136</sup> Ernest Ward, *Letter to Frank Cox*, Dhond, British India, Apr 17, 1902, Ward Collection ATS.

out of the Bands.”<sup>137</sup> Not only the Wards but other workers such as Bessie Ashton found the leadership of Hotle and his policies to be “fanaticism” and could not work with him.<sup>138</sup>

It is important to note that it was the spirit of cooperation and ecumenism that had enabled the Wards to welcome and join with the Bands missionaries in Chhattisgarh. From the beginning of their India mission, they had worked in cooperation with other missions, including official Free Methodist Church missionaries, in all the stations they had pioneered or assisted in building. Free Methodist leader David Yardy notes,

The first Free Methodist missionary couple, Ernest and Phoebe Ward, went to Central India in 1881, and established several pioneer ministries there. Later as various denominations began work in India the Wards turned their ministries over to these groups. In a similar spirit of cooperation, Ward served as the founding president of the Holiness Association of India.<sup>139</sup>

In a sincere spirit of humility, goodwill, and reconciliation Ernest Ward had already apologized to the Mission Board, as early as 1894, for siding with the Bands. He regretted his decision to overlook the Conference’s advice on the matter of denominational affiliation. Now, he wanted to make things right for everyone. He sincerely wanted to come under the Mission Board. He wrote,

We have had a long season of waiting upon God in prayer and are settling down to permanent conviction concerning our relation to the church, the Board and the Bands. I did wrong while in America in not yielding to the repeated request of the Illinois Conference to come under the Mission Board, and I owe the superintendent and the brethren a humble apology for non-submission in the

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<sup>137</sup> Phebe Ward, Letter to Ernest Ward, Jeethul Bulsar, Apr 22, 1902, Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>138</sup> Phebe Ward, Letter to Ernest Ward, Jeethul Bulsar, Apr 22, 1902, Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>139</sup> David Yardy, “What Should Be Distinctive About a Free Methodist Leader?” Unpublished paper, (Indianapolis, c.2017), 2. (Received by email on March 9, 2018).

We shall look deeply at the India Holiness Association in Chapter 6.

matter. The consistent course for me (if I could not have seen my way clear to submit) was to have withdrawn from the church. But this I was not ready to do. My position since those resolutions were passed has therefore been inconsistent and insubordinate; and my joining the Bands just before leaving the United States only aggravated the matter. My wife, self, with our entire missionary party, feel that God has clearly led us to withdraw from the Bands ... We feel that while Brother Dake was called of God to kindle missionary fire, he made a sad mistake in refusing to put his work under the control of the church. We are deeply pained at the mistakes that have been made and are anxious to repair the injuries sustained as fast as possible.... We intend to and do now take our stand by the Board; and if it sees fit to accept us shall be glad to come under its jurisdiction.<sup>140</sup>

The Wards had become members of the Pentecost Bands during their first furlough to the USA (1892). Back in India, however, they continued as independent missionaries until 1897. Caught in the middle of severe famine, they needed extra hands and resources. This urgency of the mission field called the Wards to get all the help they could from all possible sources. The Bands were readily available for cooperation and support. Thus, in the spirit of ecumenism and cooperation they joined with the Bands during the famine years. Again, though they had begun to reconcile with the FMC mission Board as early as 1894, their official homecoming to the FMC did not take place until 1904. Had the FMC Mission Board accepted the Wards in 1894, they would be spared from the unpleasant and somewhat unnecessary experience with the Bands.

Amid various challenges throughout their ministries, the Wards remained faithful to their calling, humbly acknowledging their limited ability in helping the needy. Ward noted, "But we can only assist a few of them financially and our chief mission is to break

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<sup>140</sup> Ernest Ward, "Missionary Notes" *Free Methodist*, 1894. Other colleagues of Ward who sent petition to the Mission Board of Free Methodist Church uniting with the application of Wards, with desire to remain with them in the mission work among the natives in India, include Lewellyn Huber, Bessie Sherman, and Emma Appling. Ibid. Cf. *Scrapbook One*, 114, Ward Collection ATS.

to them the Bread of Life. Their worst poverty is poverty of God's truth and salvation. If they would forsake their idols and seek God, all of their other troubles would right up."<sup>141</sup> Financial assistance or good works alone seem to be looked upon as having no match for spiritual assistance.

## **8. A Brief Evaluation and Reflection**

Did the Wards face uncertainties and unforeseen challenges in times of greater ministry needs? Yes, they did. Were they responsible for complicating their relationship with mission agencies? It appears to be so. Did they struggle to balance between their focus on evangelism and socio-charitable and other works? They surely did. We may evaluate their challenges and shifts in focus as near failures or errors caused by poor decision or lack of foresight and cooperation. But it must be remembered that in all that they did, they were pioneers and explorers. Their humanitarian contributions were unique as well. In what ways the philanthropic or social ministries of the Wards were unique in comparison to other missionaries of their time? At least three outstanding features may be pointed out. First, Ernest and Phebe's investment in the lives of the famine orphans had an influential impact on a historic event, the Mukti Revival. Some of the orphan girls the Wards had parented in Raj Nandgaon, were brought to the Mukti Mission of Pandita Ramabai. These girls were an integral part of the great revival at Mukti. As we shall see in the chapter on Holiness, these Chhattisgarhi girls were nurtured in the practice of spirit filled worship, one of the characteristics of the revival, by the Wards. Not many missions could claim such unique role in a wonderful movement. Secondly, Phebe reached out to

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<sup>141</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to Ethel Ward, Raj Nandgaon, Apr 2, 1896. Ernest does not finish the letter. He asked Phebe to complete it, so the last page has Phebe's updates.

the local Rani (queen) with the gospel. This was a unique opportunity to witness to the first lady of the region. Not many missions had such opportunities. While most other missionaries could only reach to the zenanas, Phebe was privileged to witness to the women at the palace. Thirdly, the Wards served in the region where no government agency was significantly active in relief work. Only a handful of missionaries had occupied such mission fields. A final uniqueness may be seen in that the Wards were the only Free Methodists/Pentecost Bands, workers in Chhattisgarh. They represented their denomination by ensuring their participation in the cause of service to humanity. The Wards were humble enough to go through the testing times and yet stay put on their call. Thus, they ensured their role in an important factor of their times.

Prominent Professors of World Christianity and History of Mission, such as Timothy Tennent and Dana Robert, duly acknowledge missionary contribution in the area of humanitarian service and social action as an important factor in the missionary movement. Tennent asserts that “Evangelical Christians have a long and distinguished record of establishing schools, hospitals, orphanages, soup kitchens, and so forth.”<sup>142</sup> He shows that they have also been “at the forefront of major structural changes in society, which resulted in ... the abolition of slavery” among other things.<sup>143</sup> Robert perceived these works as “tools that ultimately equipped indigenous people to challenge European empires on their own terms.”<sup>144</sup> Further, the impact of missionary social works are also seen, with special reference to central India, in challenging local attitudes and structures

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<sup>142</sup> Timothy C. Tennent, *Invitation to World Missions: A Trinitarian Missiology for the Twenty-First Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2010), 391.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> Dana L. Robert, *Christian Mission: How Christianity Became a World Religion* (West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 52.



such as *karma* and caste system, bringing about social reforms and upliftment.<sup>145</sup> Ernest Ward was one such agent of impact through evangelism and social action. However, there seems to be a dichotomy in his perception of the relationship between evangelism and social work, at least from the “body-soul” language he uses. How do we understand his position constructively?

Tennent’s analysis of the issue is helpful here. He goes deeper on the understanding of the relationship between evangelism and social action. Using biblical illustrations for missiological implications, he suggests that “*we must recognize the fundamental unity between word and deed,*”<sup>146</sup> “*we must resist the incessant individualism that does not make room for varying gifts and graces within the body of Christ,*”<sup>147</sup> and “*all authentic ministry must be lived out within the context of the missio Dei.*”<sup>148</sup> Tennent argues that “in the Incarnation, God’s word and deed are one,” and that “evangelism and social action are signs of the New Creation, which is being ushered through the *missio Dei*.”<sup>149</sup> Ernest Ward, who stands in the line of exemplary proponents of both evangelical faith and social love,<sup>150</sup> such as John Wesley, could not have been uncertain about the unity of word and deed. In fact, evangelism and social action seem to be duly integrated in his ministry.

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<sup>145</sup> See, Mohan D. David, “Mission, Inter-cultural Encounter and Change in Western India: A Case Study of Local in Relation to Global Church History,” in Roger E. Hedlund and Paul J. Bhakiaraj, eds., *Missiology for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: South Asian Perspective* (Delhi: ISPCK/MIIS, 2004), 245-46.

<sup>146</sup> Tennent, *Invitation to World Missions*, 399. Emphasis original.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid, 403. Emphasis original.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid. 404. Emphasis original.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., 399, 405.

<sup>150</sup> Cf., L. Faye Short and Kathryn D. Kiser, *Reclaiming Wesleyan Social Witness: Offering Christ* (Franklin, TN: Providence House Publishers, 2008), 11 and 181.

## **9. Conclusion**

The initial phase of the Wards' ministry in India (1881-1892) was largely evangelistic, but the second phase (1895-1904) was further characterized by humanitarian services in addition to evangelistic and church planting work. However, both evangelism and social action went hand in hand. Their contribution to famine relief, orphan care, education, and medical works remain exemplary. Also, even though the Wards worked with different mission organizations for short periods in other needy places, they did not abandon their primary affiliation with the Free Methodist Church in the USA. After officially joining the Free Methodist Mission Board, the Wards lived in central Maharashtra promoting the ongoing initiatives of the FMC. Throughout their evangelistic and humanitarian ministries Ernest and Phebe were interacting with people of various faiths and ideologies. India's multireligious context brought them face to face with tribal, Hindu, and Muslim people. How did they approach and witness to these diverse groups of people? What was the nature of their interreligious encounters? We shall explore these and related questions in the next chapter.



*Image 21. The Mission Bungalow at Burhanpur, Ward's first building project. Photo by Ethel Ward*



*Image 22. Ernest Ward during a trip to Achalpur. Photo by Ethel Ward*



*Image 23. Free Methodist Church, Yavatmal*



*Image 24. Darwaha Mission Bungalow. Ward's last building project.*



*Image 25. The Orphanage at Raj Nandgaon, Chhattisgarh*

## Chapter 5

### INTERRELIGIOUS ENCOUNTERS

We know that any religion that makes no provision to cleanse the guilty conscience and purify the soul is not a religion of love.... We look in vain for any regenerating power in the false religions.

– Ernest Ward<sup>1</sup>

It takes grace and perseverance in these days of compromise to be a Christian... We are having a hard fight but with God's help we are sure to conquer – but it may not be at present.

– Phebe Ward<sup>2</sup>

#### 1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the Wards' understanding of religion, interreligious encounter with people of other faiths, and their approaches and responses to religious themes and issues. India is the birthplace of major religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, and Jainism. It has also been a home to numerous tribal and animistic religions. Christianity has existed in India from as early as the first century AD itself.<sup>3</sup> Christian missions throughout the history of Christianity in India have come face

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<sup>1</sup> Ernest Ward, "Preparing the Way," Raj Nandgaon, Dec. 23, 1896. Clipping most probably published in *The Free Methodist*. Ward noted that it was the first year's report. See, Ernest Ward, *Scrapbook* 393, 146. The Papers of Ernest F. Ward, Asbury Theological Seminary Library and Archives (Hereafter, Ward Collection ATS).

<sup>2</sup> Phebe Ward, Letter to Brother Gilbert, Ellichpur, India, Aug 3, 1881. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>3</sup> See, Robert Eric Frykenberg, *Christianity in India: From Beginnings to the Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008 reprint 2009); Stephen Neill, *A History of Christianity in India: The Beginnings to A.D. 1707* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), Cyril Bruce Firth, *An Introduction to Indian Church History* (Madras: Christian Literature Society, 1961); James Hough, *The History of Christianity in India from the Commencement of the Christian Era*, 5 volumes (London: R. B. Sealy and W. Burnside, 1839-60). Hough's last volume was published posthumously by his son.

to face with India's multireligious setting and challenges.<sup>4</sup> The Wards were no exceptions. They found India as "the melting pot of many races, many hues, many tongues, and many cults."<sup>5</sup> Ernest and Phebe lived in direct contact with Hindus, Muslims, Parsees, and aboriginal Tribes throughout their life and ministry in central India (See Image 26). Religious identity distinguished everyone, including the British and the missionaries. Religion played a key role in the lives of the people. What was the Wards' understanding of religion? How did they engage with such diverse groups of people? What was their response to cultural and religious challenges of their missional context? We shall explore below.

## 2. Understanding of Religion

Although born in Christian families, Ernest and Phebe did not claim to have 'religion' until their own personal experiences of conversion or new birth in Christ. They understood religion in terms of genuine Christian spirituality. They called Christianity the religion of the Bible. They understood Christianity as the true religion and generally regarded most other religions as heathenism. Heathenism has been defined as the adherence of a religion that does not worship the God of Judaism or Christianity.<sup>6</sup> The followers of heathenism, or heathens, were generally regarded as uncivilized, unenlightened, and unsaved people.<sup>7</sup> Can Ward's view of Christianity as true religion and

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<sup>4</sup> See, Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (New York: Penguin, 1986).

<sup>5</sup> Ernest F. Ward, "Talk on India," *Diary 367: India Notebook*, 271. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>6</sup> "Heathenism," *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Fifth Edition* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, 2016) at *The Free Dictionary*, [thefreedictionary.com/heathenism](http://thefreedictionary.com/heathenism) (Accessed November 2019). See also, *The Oxford Advanced American Dictionary*, online edition.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. *The Oxford Advanced American Dictionary* defines the term "heathen" as a noun "used by people who have a strong religious belief as a way of referring to a person who has no religion or who believes in a religion that is not one of the world's main religions." See,

other religions as heathenism be seen as his rejection of the general revelation and therefore a disavowal of natural theology? During the nineteenth century there was a huge emphasis on natural theology.<sup>8</sup> Tennent defines natural theology as “an attempt to attain an understanding of God and his relationship to the universe apart from special revelation such as the Scriptures or God’s revelation in Christ.”<sup>9</sup> Traditionally it refers to “our capacity, by nature and, indeed, by virtue of humanity, to have a certain degree of knowledge about God.”<sup>10</sup> Others have argued, within the framework of natural theology, that this knowledge or awareness exists before any special revelation through Christ, the Church, or the Bible.<sup>11</sup> Interestingly, natural theology seems to have paid no significant attention to historical religions of the world, at least in the view of Max Muller, who argues, “Natural Theology differed from what is now called Comparative Theology in that it paid but scant attention to the historical religions of the world, framing its ideal of what natural religion ought to be from the inner consciousness only.”<sup>12</sup> Further, natural theology claimed comparatively more significant role in Catholic theology than Protestant theology.<sup>13</sup> As Ward belonged to a whole different denominational tradition, his views of religion must be understood within that tradition. To be sure, Ward rejected

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oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/us/definition/american\_english/heathen\_1 (Accessed March 2020). See also, *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Fifth Edition* (2016).

<sup>8</sup> For a recent study on natural theology, see, Gerald R. McDermott, *Everyday Glory: The Revelation of God in All of Reality* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018).

<sup>9</sup> Timothy C. Tennent, *Building Christianity on Indian Foundations: The Legacy of Brahmabandhav Upadhyay* (Delhi: ISPCK, 2000), 147.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 153.

<sup>11</sup> Cf., J. Barr, *Biblical Faith and Natural Theology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 1.

<sup>12</sup> Max Muller, *Natural Religion* (London: Longman, Green, and Co., 1889), 53 as quoted in Tennent, *Building Christianity on Indian Foundations*, 151.

<sup>13</sup> Tennent, *Building Christianity on Indian Foundations*, 149.

neither the general revelation nor the underpinnings of natural theology. In fact, Ward believed that Jesus was already preparing the hearts of the people. In this, he is standing in line with the great Patristic tradition that held to the concept of *preparatio evangelica*, (lit., preparation for gospel, or gospel preparation). This concept refers to God's groundwork in the pre-Christian heart of a person preparing him or her to receive and respond to the gospel.<sup>14</sup> Thus, Ward was enthusiastically open to the existing points of contacts in other religions and used them to communicate the gospel, as we shall see later in this chapter.

In Ward's understanding, the religion of the Bible (Christianity) was characterized with joy and happiness placing it in contrast to heathenism. In his view, Christians are identified as saved, enlightened, and delighted people. Ernest Ward opined,

There is something in the religion of the Bible that wins when everything else fails. Praise God. The unsaved naturally look to those that profess religion and when they see Christians happy and rejoicing, they inwardly desire to be saved also. I am living in the Promised Land of perfect love these days and my soul is satisfied.<sup>15</sup>

Ernest laid a strong emphasis on religion as an experience of joy demonstrated through active participation in the means of grace. He also spoke of it as the religion of the born again. True religion brought people in tune with God. He wrote to his sister,

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<sup>14</sup> The phrase *preparatio evangelica* has its origin in the multivolume collection of writings entitled *Preparatio Evangelica* by church historian Eusebius (260-340). Eusebius has used this expression to demonstrate how Hebrew wisdom forms the background for all true wisdom in Greek Philosophy. However, Patristic writers such as Justin Martyr (100-165) and Clement of Alexandria (150-215) have used the same term in retrospect for more significant work. For example, Justin Martyr uses the concept of *logos spermatikos* (lit., "seed of the word") in his *Apology* and Clement has understood Christ as the tutor of all humanity in his *Paedagogus*. For a recent reflection in relation to world religions and missiology see, Tennent, *Christianity at the Religious Roundtable*. 254. Cf. Tennent, *Theology in the Context of World Christianity*, 44, 55, 130, 159, 266.

<sup>15</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to his mother, Ellichpur; Aug 17, 1881. Ward Collection ATS.



Are you enjoying religion these days? I hope you are. Lots of people have religion or say they have, but do not seem to have any enjoyment in it. Oh yes, you will often meet with church members who spend much time in games and parties and entertainments, but take no pleasure in prayer meetings, class meetings or other means of grace. And why should they when they have not been born again. They are not in tune with God, heaven, nor the saints. But even saints do not always demonstrate their feelings and experience by shouts of joy. Sometimes they shed tears. It comes on me sometimes that way, especially when I am praying for others, or am thinking about heaven.<sup>16</sup>

In addition to “joy” as the expression of a true religion, Ward also adds “tears.”

The shedding of tears in prayers for the lost seems to be a key expression of holy sorrow in Ward’s religious experience. Tears of compassion for the unsaved and tears of joy for the hope of heaven above are integral to the spiritual experience of born-again Christians.

Born-again Christians demonstrate their inward conformity to Christ through their character and outer witness. Ernest Ward asserts, “I would not teach that inward conformity was all there is to religion. It is bound to work out. What is in the heart will be daily demonstrated by the outer walk and conduct.”<sup>17</sup> In Ward’s understanding, an inner experience of religion was not sufficient. To him religion must positively transform a person’s character and express itself in good conduct characterized by compassion and joy.

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<sup>16</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to his sister Louie Ward, Darwha, Moti Bagh, Berar India, Sep 22, 1925. Ward Collection ATS. In the opening lines of this letter Ward thanks Louie for providing the genealogy of Calvin Ward, Flint and Wilber families.

<sup>17</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to Mary Ward Klages, Yeotmal, British India, Feb. 1, 1916. Ward Collection ATS.

Ward made a sharp distinction between true and false religion based on the transformation they bring in a person's life. Here is how Ward compares Christianity and other religions,

True repentance towards God and faith in Jesus Christ brings about a speedy change of heart and conduct as well as rest of the soul *in this life*. Most false religions confess right here their weakness and utter inability to secure for their followers' true peace of conscience and fitness for heaven, by prescribing delusive prayers for the dead, and claptrap "poojas" to get them through to a place of bliss at a cheap rate.

Hindooism has its "Shradh" ceremonies (in Sanscrit [sic]). Mohammedans chant Noornamaj and read their prayers (in Arabic). Parsee priests bring in the dog and recite their ritual for the dead in Zend. Buddhists burn gold paper to buy their way to heaven. The Jews of the Persian Gulf, it is said, throw money into an urn on the corpse to bribe the devil and secure rest for the soul and body of the departed. While the Roman Catholic, as is well known, have masses said for their friends in purgatory (in Latin). But Bible Christianity is the one great religion that does not pray for the dead. It declares that "*now* is the accepted time," and that "*now* is the day of salvation"...<sup>18</sup>

In the midst of divergent religious faiths and practices, Ward presents Bible Christianity as the great and true religion. Ward's comparative approach to other religions clearly highlights the supremacy of Christ and uniqueness of Christianity among other gods, gurus, and religions. It is interesting to note that he places Roman Catholicism far from biblical Christianity. To him the religion of the Bible, lived in Wesleyan holiness, is *the* Way. He calls his fellow pilgrims to a life devoted in prayer, Bible study, and witness. He enquires of his family and friends, "Are you doing your duty

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<sup>18</sup> Ernest Ward, "A Strong Religion," *Scrapbook* 486, 146. Ward Collection ATS. Emphasis original.

as a Christian at prayer and class meetings?”<sup>19</sup> He declares, “It is a glorious privilege to be a witness for Jesus and encourage and strengthen one another in the Way.”<sup>20</sup>

Ward had a deep sense of this glorious privilege and was thankful for not only being a committed follower of the Way (Bible Christianity) but also for being a missionary, a witness of Christ, in India. He wrote, “I am very thankful that God ever led us to this heathen land. The need of India for Christian missionaries is very great, and they number very few. Thus, in the Berar Province of between two and three million there are not over six missionaries actually at work and there are other even more neglected parts than the Berars [Central Provinces].”<sup>21</sup> Looking at the religious demography of British India for the year 1911, Ward noted with thankfulness, “The census of the empire as a whole shows an increase in Christian population.... To say the least, this indicates the waning of Hinduism, idolatry, caste, and priestcraft. Thank God.”<sup>22</sup>

Priestcraft and idolatry unmistakably defined heathenism. Ward listed them as the greatest evils prevalent in India. His list of seven evils included, (1) Child marriage, (2) Enforced widowhood, (3) Pantheism and fatalism, (4) Idolatry, (5) Priestcraft, (6)

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<sup>19</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to his mother, Ellichpur; Aug 17, 1881. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to his mother, Chikalda, Berar; May 20, 1881. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>22</sup> Ernest Ward, “A Few Optimistic Smiles from India by Rev. E. F. Ward,” *The Free Methodist*, July 29, 1913. Cf., *Scrapbook 363: Rag Bag of India, Facts and Figures*, 178. Ward Collection ATS. See also, E. A. Gait, *Census of India, 1911, Volume 1, Part 1, Report* (Calcutta: Superintendent Government Printing, 1913), 113-134, 141.

The census data shows the increase of 3.4 percent. In the article, however, Ward mentioned an increase of sixty-four percent which is clearly mistaken. Did he happen to pen it down “six to four” percent and the typesetter/printer ended up reading it “sixty-four”? It must be a printing error. The other possibility, which is highly impossible, is that he has added the data of 1891-1901 (30.8) with that of 1901-1911 (34.2) and thus projected, though mistakenly, the total figure as 64 percent.

Illiteracy, and (7) caste system.<sup>23</sup> He defined child marriage and widowhood as the greatest social evils, pantheism and fatalism as the greatest doctrinal and philosophical evils, idolatry as the greatest religious evil, priestcraft and illiteracy as the greatest political evils, and the caste system as the greatest practical evil. He also labeled them as the greatest barriers to Christianity in India.<sup>24</sup>

However, Ward was also aware that all Christians did not represent true Christian religion through their life and manners. In fact, some of them were no different from the heathens and thus a barrier to Christian influence. He gives an example from Dongargarh, Chhattisgarh,

Dongargarh on the Railway is the largest town and has about 5000 inhabitants nearly 200 of whom are Europeans, Eurasians, and Native Christians. They are both Roman Catholics and Protestants who might, if saved from their sins, exercise a powerful influence for good upon the heathen. They are for the most part however as much in the dark practically as the latter, and the lives of some are of such character as to prove a detriment rather than help.<sup>25</sup>

Ernest Ward lamented over the worldly lifestyle of Western Christians which set a bad example for the indigenous Christians. But he was thankful for true converts among the indigenous. He noted, “The world and its fashions largely rule among the European and English-speaking people. As a result, the Native Christian community everywhere largely follow suit. Still we feel most thankful that there are a good number of true

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<sup>23</sup> Ernest Ward, “Answers to Questions Sent by H. P. Beach Pub. of the Missionary Gazeteer (N. York),” *Scrapbook, No. 11, c.1881-1904*, 154-161 (156). Ward was answering these questions from Raj Nandgaon on July 20, 1899. Ward Collection ATS. The term “priestcraft” refers to Bhramanism prevalent in India.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ernest Ward, “Khairagarh,” Band No. 4, Khairagarh, C.P. Jan 1, 1901. See, *Scrapbook* 393, 150. Ward Collection ATS.

converts to the faith to be found.”<sup>26</sup> Ernest prayed for Christians to remain blameless for Jesus. He was convinced that only such Christians can represent true Christianity to India and be helpful in raising followers for Christ. He wrote to the members of Missionary Society, “I trust you each individually will be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. What we are more and more impressed with as we aim to raise up a band of disciples for the Master is that only Christianity of a sturdy style will do for India.”<sup>27</sup> Thus, Ward reached out to both nominal Christians and non-Christians. In the process he realized that it was “hard to get heathenism out of an adult person but, ... easier to reach the children. Pray these children may be early brought into Jesus fold.”<sup>28</sup> Undoubtedly, their children ministries, such as Sunday School and Orphanages, brought greater fruits for the Kingdom of Christ.

From among the fruits of his labors Ernest hoped and prayed to see the rise of indigenous Christian heroes. He wrote, “I am hoping and praying for our India work that God may raise up from among our Christians some heroes like Kawabe, and Sundar Singh, and Duala of Burma [Myanmar] etc. We have got the material there, but I doubt if any of them push out unless the missionaries take the lead. God help us. It makes me cry.”<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to the Ladies of the Missionary Society, Geneva, Ill. Burhanpur, Apr 12, 1882. The letter, written on the way to and from Pachmarhi and during the period of over a week, is copied in Ernest Ward’s *Ellichpur Notebook*, 357-359. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Phebe Ward, Letter to Gilbert and Ceeny, Raj Nandgaon, CP India, Feb 25, 1897. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>29</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to Ethel Ward, 557 Redfield Ave., Los Angeles, California, Apr 5th, 1921. Ward Collection ATS. Kawabe was from the Theological School in Osaka, Japan, whose testimony Ward had heard in Los Angeles the day before writing this letter.

Ernest and Phebe were convinced that a greater missionary force was needed to raise the indigenous heroes of Christian faith amid all other faiths. They also knew it was not easy to be a witnessing Christian in a non-Christian context. It was about carrying the cross. It was about doing the will of God with whatever it may take. Phebe reflected in one of her letters,

[T]he cross still stands for the Christian to take up and carry, and only God-power can enable to do that. This is a cross in *my* religion even in India, and I have more crying to God to do these days than ever before. But while I see a track I will never go back. But go *on* at the risk of my all. It takes grace and perseverance in these days of compromise to be a Christian.... We are having a hard fight but with God's help we are sure to conquer...My prayer was continually "Thy will be done."<sup>30</sup>

Ernest and Phebe deeply desired to do God's will in witnessing Christ effectively, joyfully, and victoriously. They wanted to be a witness of Christ in an uncompromising way. They lamented over the compromised lives of the nominal Christians. They wanted to be faithful to God's will in their lives and mission. Ernest wrote,

Someone has said "Christians are walking Bibles, else they are libels." My devout prayer and wish is that my life in the least degree may *never* be a libel on Christianity. It will not, if I continue to keep in touch with God and seek to discover his will with all my heart. While we aim to accomplish much good in the way of pulling down the Devil's kingdom and building up the Kingdom of God, the crucial test at the end of our career will be how well and accurately by your spirit and life and conversation have you exhibited Jesus Christ.<sup>31</sup>

In the vivacious spirit of nineteenth-century evangelicalism, the Wards were determined to destroy the forces of Devil's kingdom exhibited through heathenism and its

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<sup>30</sup> Phebe Ward, Letter to her brother Gilbert, Ellichpur, India, Aug 3, 1881. Ward Collection ATS. Emphasis original.

<sup>31</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to his sister Louie Ward, Darwha, Moti Bagh, Berar India, Sep 22, 1925. Ward Collection ATS. Emphasis original.

curses. They were committed to build the Kingdom of God over the strongholds of heathenism. Encountering heathenism or non-Christian religions was an integral part of the building of the Kingdom of God. It was about exhibiting Christ accurately to all peoples, including various tribes.

### **3. Encountering Tribal Religion**

The Korkus are an aboriginal tribe of central India. At the time of Ward's Korku mission (1887-1891), their population numbered 114,000.<sup>32</sup> They inhabited the Narmada Division of the Central Provinces (at the border of present southern Madhya Pradesh and northern Maharashtra). Initial gospel preaching among the Korkus was carried out by Albert Norton, the missionary who inspired Ernest and Phebe to come to India. Norton's itinerant evangelistic work among the Korkus had not been as effective as expected. Also, the climate of the region caused him health issues and forced him to go on a furlough for recovery. Aware of these challenges, Ward was convinced that a more regular, stationed, and robust outreach was needed to make a lasting impact. Thus, after his arrival the gospel work among the Korkus got a new momentum. Ernest describes his call for the Korkus in the following words,

One of the reason's for leaving Burhanpur was that we might be in closer proximity to the aboriginal tribes living in the hills to the north of Ellichpur. The country is unhealthy, but I felt, nevertheless, God would have me tour among them and try to do something for their salvation.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Ernest Ward, *The Korkus*, (Ellichpur, July 1890), 2. *The Korkus* is a published booklet, 16 pages. Ward has dedicated it to Dadu and Loka, his first Korku converts. The population data is taken from the census of 1881.

<sup>33</sup> Ernest Ward, "Faith Work in India," *The Vanguard*, c.1892, *Scrapbook One*, 44. Ward Collection ATS.

He further describes the condition of the Korkus as an oppressed people, “The Korkus especially are very destitute. They live largely on jungle produce and often suffer from insufficiency of food. They are withal much given to drinking *mhowa* spirits and are greatly oppressed by the Hindoo money lenders and liquor dealers.”<sup>34</sup> Concerning his work among the Korkus, Ward writes,

I toured off and on among them for several years and picked up enough of their language to be able to talk to them in simple sentences. We had three Korku orphan lads living with us at times. Two of them died and one is yet in the Industrial mission at Akola. I was led in 1891 to publish a small pamphlet giving an account of their manners, customs, and religion. Also, another, containing a vocabulary of their language, grammatical notes, translations of a few passages of Scripture, and a few choruses.<sup>35</sup>

Ernest found the Korkus to be “open to the preaching of the Gospel.”<sup>36</sup> He noted tribes in general as good listeners of the gospel message, “The Gonds, Korkus, Dhers, and other hill people listen well to the preaching of the gospel and seldom make any defense of idolatry.”<sup>37</sup> He describes them as an “honest and truthful” people.<sup>38</sup> Concerning social customs and practices among the Korkus, he gives the following account,

Among the Korkus and Gonds [another aboriginal tribe] the women enjoy more freedom than among the Hindus... The Korkus do not practice infant marriage. A father, before he gives his daughter to wed, demands a large sum of money from the bridegroom. The latter is often unable to meet the demand. In such a case he is allowed, like Jacob, to work it out in service to the bride’s father.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 44. *Mhowa* or *Mahuva* is a local wine in Central India made from the flowers of Mahuva tree.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 44-45.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>37</sup> Ernest Ward, *The Korkus*, (Ellichpur, July 1890), 8. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 4.



They have learned to keep caste from the Hindus, and in deference to the latter, refrain from eating beef. They are not, however, caste people in the strict Hindu sense, though they have a strong clannish feeling and do not sanction, (theoretically) marriage with outsiders.<sup>40</sup>

Ward's observation above is noteworthy because it is historically true that tribes were never a part of the Hindu society but had come under the Hindu influence much later in their history and began to practice caste system, though loosely. This was very similar to the case with the fishermen, whom the Hindus treated as the fourth caste and are now categorized by the government as Other Backward Classes (OBC).<sup>41</sup> While the fishers have been highly Hinduized, the Korkus, though at the verge of Hinduization, still maintain their tribal beliefs. Ward describes the religion of the Korkus as follows,

The religion of the Korkus is comparatively simple. Their chief object of worship are the sun and moon, whom they regard as male and female deities, and also certain stones or heaps of stones which personify beings of a capricious and malevolent nature.

The term for God or "a god" is "Gomaj," which is likewise the name for the sun and moon in their language. But they do not, so far as I have been able to learn, offer regular or special worship to those celestial bodies. Once in a great while, however, in the month of April, a goat or fowl is sacrificed to the sun while face is turned to the east.

As a whole, their particular hopes and fears seem to lie in the direction of the local deities nearer at hand. They build no temples nor fashion images after the manner of the Hindus but daub red paint on certain stones in or about the village and the adjacent forest, and endow them with the names of their divinities...[such as] "Mutiya gomaj," special village god...; "Hardoli gomaj," cholera god; "Mata gomaj," goddess of small pox... In their worship or "puja" the Korkus sacrifice goats, swine and fowls, besides making offerings of coconuts, flour, ghee, and red paint. They have adopted a number of Hindu ceremonies among which is the worship of their ancestors.

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>41</sup> See, Shivraj K. Mahendra, "Good News for the Fishers of Central India: Origin, Identity, and Destiny," *New Life Theological Journal*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (January-June 2014): 75-90. See also, R. V. Russell and R. B. Hira Lal, *The Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India*, Vol. II (London: MacMillan and Company, 1916) and Stephen Fuchs, *At the Bottom of Indian Society: The Harijan and the Low Castes*, (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1981).

They have, however, no priestly caste but instead thereof an elder of each village is chosen who attends to the sacrifices and ceremonies for a small fee.<sup>42</sup>

Ward keenly observed the beliefs and practices of the people and organized his evangelistic visits with a new message. Ward's Korku outreach consisted of touring in the villages, singing of hymns, and preaching the gospel. Those who came to listen to him and showed interest in his message, he instructed them "in the truth of God."<sup>43</sup> While ministering among them, he refused to do anything that would support their "idolatrous festivities."<sup>44</sup> He noted, "At some villages the people demanded of me the gratuity expected from travelers during the week of Holi. Knowing that it would probably be used in idolatrous festivities I steadily refused their demand."<sup>45</sup> Instead of giving any money, Ward would give them the message of life. While preaching to the Korkus, Ward boldly addressed the issues of liquor and idolatry, etc. During the Summer of 1887 Ward narrates traveling,

from place to place, stopping at one or two villages daily to deliver the message of life and salvation to the inhabitants, preached in a large number of villages where, so far as I know, the name of Christ had never been mentioned before. I often laboured to show them the evils of liquor drinking. This is the great curse of the hill people. They all admit it, but are powerless to reform.<sup>46</sup>

He saw two solutions toward liquor reform. First, restraint by the government. However, he realized that the government itself was causing the problem. Thus, Ward criticized the British Government for fostering the sale of liquor among the tribes for the

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<sup>42</sup> Ernest Ward, *The Korkus*, (Ellichpur, July 1890), 5-6. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 8.

sake of revenue.<sup>47</sup> The second solution was transformation of life through the gospel of Christ. He focused on this.

Ward's method in reaching out the Korkus was strategic. He noted, "My method is to visit them in the morning and instruct them, by the simplest language possible, in the way of God. They find it so difficult to grasp spiritual truth, and their rude language is so devoid of terms to express religious thought."<sup>48</sup> As language appeared to be the greatest challenge, Ward focused on reducing the Korku language to writing and to producing a Korku grammar and dictionary. This was probably the greatest achievement of Wards' Korku mission and a historic contribution to tribal linguistics.

### ***3.1 The Korku Language Work***

The Korkus did not have a written language. Thus, communication was the main barrier in engaging with the Korkus. Some of the Korkus were able to interact with their working knowledge of Hindi. Ward initially began to collect Korku vocabulary from every person he was able to get hold of. Thus, the language work was challenging. Sources of data were not expert or authoritative but ordinary, and ambiguity remained a key issue. However, such challenges were overcome by countless vetting and revisions. In the entire process, Ward remained thankful for the ongoing progress he was making,

I have been daily questioning the people as to their language, but only here and there can I find a man who is at all able to inform me... how exceedingly difficult to get at the standard: such a diversity of authorities! And who is to tell which is right? But, thank God, some daylight is now beginning to shine into [the] grammar.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 9.

Elsewhere he noted, “I am still working away at the language... My books are the mouths of the people and my eyes are my ears. Parts of some two hundred verbs have been gathered... Thank God! Thus far I am able to preach a little in the language.”<sup>50</sup> Ward used language work as a strategy to engage with the Korku people. He narrates his experience in the following words,

I toured among the Hill tribes, the Korkus, picked up some of the Korku language from the mouth of the people, from Brother Norton and from other sources. We also took into our Mission Home 3 Korku boys, one of which I baptized... was Loka. With his help gathering material concerning the habits, manners and customs of this aboriginal tribe plus a vocabulary of 1500 words a few grammatical notes, translation of 10 Commandments, Lord’s Prayer, Story of the Prodigal Son, etc., also, some choruses, I published a pamphlet called “Sketch of the Korkus”... I had besides, translation of part of Mudge’s Catechism and passages of Scripture ... plus several hundred miscellaneous sentences in Korku manuscript. This material I turned over to the Korku and Central India Hill Mission when we left that field.”<sup>51</sup>

Rev. John Drake of the Korku and Central India Hill Mission duly acknowledges Ward’s work in the preface of his book,

The Revs. A. Norton and E. F. Ward were...the first to make any serious attempt to acquire the Kurku tongue. They collected helpful vocabularies of Kurku words and set down in MS [manuscript] or printed form, sundry notes and queries on the grammar. The Rev. E. F. Ward’s printed Notes and Vocabulary – especially the latter – have proved a welcome aid in my Kurku studies.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Ernest Ward, “From Brother Ward,” *The Free Methodist*, July 20, 1887: 11 (Published Letter to the editor, written from Simbedo, Berar, May 30, 1887).

What Ernest did over a hundred years ago, seems to be an inevitable mission practice in our own time. The work of Bethany Tennent among the Alagwa people in Tanzania is an inspiring reminder of this trend.

<sup>51</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to Ethel Ward, 573 Kendall Ave, Los Angeles, Aug 10, 1930. Ward Collection ATS. At time of publishing of *A Sketch of the Korkus*, Ward had instructed his mother to mail five copies to Rev. C. B. Ebey and Rev. E. P. Hart among others (Ernest Ward, Letter to his mother, Ellichpur, July 11, 1891).

<sup>52</sup> John Drake, *A Grammar of the Kurku Language* (Calcutta: The Baptist Mission Press, 1903), iv-v.

Commending the works at Achalpur, Bishop Wilson T. Hogue of the Free Methodist Church wrote, “Mr. Ward was privileged to baptize a number of converts from heathenism. Mr. Ward also made a written language for the Korkus.”<sup>53</sup> The Bishop quotes Albert Norton himself, “The Rev. A. Norton says, ‘Had that been all he did, it would have been one man’s work for a life time.’”<sup>54</sup> Ernest Ward calls this an “extravagant credit.”<sup>55</sup> He was such a humble man he does not want to take the credit for his own achievement and contributions. Bishop Hogue had given due credit to him.

Ward’s Korku language work was crucial in building a bridge between communicating the gospel and the Korku culture. In fact, it was the key to encountering Korku beliefs and practices with the message of the gospel.

### ***3.2 The Korku Trophy of Grace***

A notable “trophy of grace,” as the Wards would call their converts, of the evangelistic outreach among the Korkus, was a teenager called Loka. Ward gives the following information about Loka,

Loka was a Korku orphan lad of about twelve years of age, who was picked up in the hills by Mr. Norton. He came to us early in 1888. Having been knocking about since childhood from pillar to post, like many of his race he was well acquainted with the pinchings of hunger. He had so frequently suffered from jungle fever that his spleen was greatly enlarged. Improving much after a time in health, he usually accompanied me in my tours among his own people to whom he often told the story of Life and Salvation in his native tongue.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Wilson T. Hogue, *History of the Free Methodist Church of North America, Vol. II, Second Edition* (Chicago: The Free Methodist Publishing House, 1918, first edition 1915), 260.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to Ethel Ward, 573 Kendall Ave, Los Angeles, Aug 10, 1930. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>56</sup> Ernest Ward, *The Korkus*, (Ellichpur, July 1890), 10. See also, Ernest Ward, “Loka” *Pentecost Herald*, Vol. 6, No. 4, May 15, 1899.

Loka possessed a good working knowledge of Hindi. He was a great help to Ernest Ward in his translations into Korku. By Loka's assistance Ernest was able to render portions of Mudges' catechism, the Ten Commandments, and other key passages of the Bible into the Korku language. Loka also provided him with hundreds of idiomatic sentences of Korku.<sup>57</sup> Loka seems to have made great progress in language learning with Ward. In Ernest Ward's knowledge, he was the "only one of his tribe who was ever able to read and write."<sup>58</sup> Regarding Loka's conversion and new life as a Christian, Ward notes,

The Spirit strove him at times. Some months after coming to us, he became much concerned about his soul and said to Miss. Ranf, "I want to be a Christian and be baptized." ... His baptism took place in a public spot near the bazaar in December 1888. After his conversion Loka seemed to take a deeper interest in mission work, especially among his own people. There was a light and brightness on his face, which comes only from a redeemed soul. He used often to pray for special help in learning to read. He was very affectionate and never lost his temper. A Hindu said of him, "He has altogether no anger in him." We had hoped that he might grow up and become an evangelist to the Korkus, but God ordered otherwise.<sup>59</sup>

To the great loss of the Pilgrim Faith Mission, Loka died of cholera on July 20, 1889, about the age of 14. The missionaries surrounded him in his last moments and sang Korku hymns as he "quietly fell asleep in Jesus."<sup>60</sup> Ward's colleague Louisa Ranf reported the following to the *Free Methodist* about Loka, "He has finished his work, and

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<sup>57</sup> Ernest Ward, *The Korkus*, (Ellichpur, July 1890), 10. Cf., Enoch Mudge, "A Doctrinal Catechism," *Zion's Herald*, 1824. For Mudge's brief biography, see Curtis Dahl, "Three Fathers, Many Sons," *Methodist History* 15, No. 4, (1977): 234-50, and Alfred Mudge, *Memorials: Being a Genealogical, Biographical and Historical Account of the Name of Mudge in America from 1638 to 1868* (Boston: Alfred Mudge & Son, 1868), 367.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

his life was not in vain. He has helped Brother Ward very much with the language of his people.”<sup>61</sup>

In addition to Korkus, Ernest also reached out to other tribes, such as Gonds. He notes, “In one of them [villages] I read the religious lessons of the Gondi 1<sup>st</sup> book, which we had with us, and was glad to find that the Gonds of this region understand it.”<sup>62</sup> By the end of the century and two decades of mission work, Ward had baptized over 200 people. He recollects, “Of the upwards of 200 natives I have baptized in Hindustan, one was a Korku, 5 Mohammedans, 3 Gonds, 6 Pradhans, and the other Native Christians and various caste of Hindus.”<sup>63</sup> Thus, majority of his converts were from Hindu background.

Working among the Korku women, Phebe found them “more independent and easier of access than Hindu and Mohammedan women.”<sup>64</sup> Regarding outreach among women, Ernest reported, “We could not, as a rule, reach the women in our public open air meetings. Very often, however, in our village meetings they would hang around and catch a good deal that was adapted to their comprehension. My wife and sister Ranf used to visit them in their homes.”<sup>65</sup> Singing, prayer, and sharing the story of Jesus in the

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<sup>61</sup> Louisa Ranf, “Death of Loka,” *The Free Methodist*, Sep 4, 1889: 571. (Written on July 24, 1889 from Ellichpur).

<sup>62</sup> Ernest Ward, *The Korkus*, (Ellichpur, July 1890), 9. The Gondi First Book, *Ispuralte Nihna Nimdara* (A Message from God) is a small booklet by Abraham Lind, a friend and colleague of the Wards. It was printed at the Mission Press, Allahabad in 1908. It contains a synopsis of the creation of the world, the Ten Commandments, John 3:16, Acts 16:31, and the Lord’s Prayer in Mardia/Gondi language using Devanagari script. In 1890s Ward must have used an earlier edition of it. See, Ernest Ward, “The Mariyas: An Aboriginal tribe of Bastar State, India,” *Diary* 377 (c.1896-1908). Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>63</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to Ethel Ward, “Hiking in Hindustan,” 557 Redfield Ave, Los Angeles, April 8, 1929. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>64</sup> Phebe Ward, “From Sister Ward,” *The Free Methodist*, June 27, 1888: 11. (Written from Simbado, their Korku outreach tent in Summer). Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>65</sup> Ernest Ward, “Faith Work in India,” *The Vanguard*, clipping in Ernest Ward, *Scrapbook One*, 45. Ward Collection ATS.

language of the people comprised the key activities in these visits. Religious language and vocabulary were an important factor in communicating the gospel.

Ernest Ward saw language and literature as primary tools in reaching out the tribes and engaging with their religious beliefs. Since these tools were absent, he set out to create them. Thus, he focused on building a linguistic bridge between Christianity and tribal people and their religion. While attempting to witness to the tribes the Wards were already witnessing to the Hindus.

#### **4. Encountering Hinduism**

Ernest Ward saw Hindus from a bifocal lens, from two separate yet interconnected points of view. On the one hand, he viewed them as the near relatives of the Western people, and on the other, he looked upon them as fallen heathens of the East. He writes,

The people of Europe and America should take deep interest in the Hindoos, for it has been proved beyond doubt by the study of their ancient language, the Sanscrit [sic] that these dark-skinned folks are our near relations..... I have before me a long list of words showing close relationships. Take one common word for example: Sanscrit “matri,” Greek, “mater,” Latin, “mater,” Gothic, “mutter,” Keltic, “mathair,” English, “mother.” There you have the family chain. Let us then clasp hands on that ground, if on no other. But the people of India have higher claims on us. They are our fellowmen by creation, and we should acknowledge our duty to lend a helping hand in distress, from the standpoint of humanity alone.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Ernest Ward, “Our Mission Field,” *Pentecost Herald*, Vol. 5, No. 18, December 15, 1898: 6. Cf., *Scrapbook* 486, 44. Ward Collection ATS. *Pentecost Herald* (1894-1905) was the official publication of the Pentecost Bands. It was initially published from Uniontown, PA, and then from Indianapolis, IN. *Pentecost Herald* was a holiness and missionary magazine. For a long time, Flora Nelson was the editor.

It was Sir William Jones (28 September 1746 – 27 April 1794), a British Orientalist, jurist and the founder of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, who had first suggested that Sanskrit, Greek, and Latin languages had a common root. It is not impossible that Ward was familiar with Jones’ work. For Jones’ works, see, Anna Marie Jones, ed., *The Works of Sir William Jones in Six Volumes* (London: G.G. and J. Robinson, and R. H. Evans, 1799) and John S. B. Teignmouth, ed., *The Works of Sir William Jones, with the Life of the Author, 13 Volumes* (London: J. Stockdale and J. Walker, 1807). For his biography, see, Garland H.



He also underlines India's significance as a resourceful nation but soon laments over its religiously superstitious condition and calls for a Christian engagement for her salvation. The Wards called British India their land of adoption. They saw India "steadily growing into importance among the nations of the earth...." To them India was blessed with "natural resources and material enough...to make a strong and influential nation."<sup>67</sup> However, they found a serious threat to all these in India's superstition and moral decline, "But, alas, poor India...has been the victim of superstition, priest-craft and misrule, ... In the journey to spiritual, intellectual, and social freedom they have fallen among thieves, and demand our assistance."<sup>68</sup> Ernest Ward found no hope for India's salvation in her own religion and philosophy. He was convinced that only the gospel of Christ was the cure for India's darkness. He argued,

The people of India are enveloped in the triple cloud of ignorance, prejudice and unbelief, and only faith, hope and charity of a living Gospel can pierce it thru. Oh, what an incubus is on the people. Neither the religion nor the philosophy of India gives any hope of a social or individual regeneration in this age. Everything is run in a cast-iron mold and must remain unchangeable... But thank God, there is hope for India, and a lost world, in the soul-resurrecting, soul-regenerating Gospel of Jesus Christ.<sup>69</sup>

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Cannon, *Oriental Jones: A Biography of Sir William Jones, 1746-1794* (Bombay: Asia Pub. House, 1964) and Michael J. Franklin, *Sir William Jones* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1995). For a history of the English language, see, Robert Caliborne, *Our Marvelous Native Tongue: The Life and Times of the English Language* (New York: Times Books, 1983).

<sup>67</sup> Ernest Ward, "Our Mission Field," *Pentecost Herald*, Vol. 5, No. 18, December 15, 1898: 6. Cf., *Scrapbook* 486, 44. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ernest Ward, "Reporting Progress," *Letter to Brother Sherman*, Raj Nandgaon, Apr 7, 1897. See, *Scrapbook* 393, 151. Ward Collection ATS. The word 'incubus' clearly means distress or nightmare in Ward's usage. It does not refer to the mythological male demon or the American rock band of the same name.

To illustrate the unchanging nature of India's traditions, Ernest translates a Hindu thought expressed in a Chhattisgarhi proverb,

As is the house and doorway  
Likewise so is the door,  
    As is the mother who bore the child  
    So is the child she bore;  
As is a piece of indigo  
Blue and blue to the core,  
    Iron never turns to gold  
    Tho [sic] you may work it o'er.  
They offered up mounds of camphor  
And did even the gods implore,  
    But the raven ne'er became a swan  
    Not in this age or before.<sup>70</sup>

#### ***4.1 The Caste System***

The rigidity of Hinduism was explicit in its caste system, asceticism, and idolatry, among other things. Ward dedicated a full chapter to the analysis of caste system in his book *Echoes From Bharatkhand*. He describes the origin and status of caste in the following words,

According to the Hindu Shasters, the Brahmins or priests sprang from the mouth of Brahma, the Kshatriyas, or warriors from his arms, the Vaisyas, or traders, from his thighs, and the Sudras, or servile class, from his feet. Caste is an old institution. Even in Manu's time (the Hindu Moses who wrote perhaps 500 B.C.) there were one hundred different castes. Now castes are enumerated by the thousand. Caste feeling pervades the atmosphere of this land, from shore to shore, and like the virus of the deadly cobra, permeates all the veins and arteries of society.<sup>71</sup>

Ward saw that the caste system, "by depriving the people of ambition, has left each man content with his position in life... Every occupation, even thieving, is

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<sup>70</sup> Ernest Ward, "Reporting Progress," *Letter to Brother Sherman*, Raj Nandgaon, Apr 7, 1897.

<sup>71</sup> Ernest Ward, *Echoes from Bharatkhand*, 37. *Shasters* or *shashtras* refers to scriptures.

hereditary, and the rules of caste ordinarily compel a man to follow the occupation of his forefathers...”<sup>72</sup> Caste prohibited mutual exchange among members of different castes and promoted the practice of untouchability. In fact, Ward saw caste as a hindrance to the national progress. He concluded,

The outcome of caste is not simply a lot of inconvenience to us missionaries or to the natives themselves. This terrible system raises up social barriers between the classes, dries up the milk of human kindness, destroys the brotherhood of man and blocks the moral, social, and intellectual progress of the nation.<sup>73</sup>

Caste practices were not limited among the Hindus, but were widespread among other communities as well, including Muslims, tribes, and nominal Christians. Ward noted, “Even Mohammedans and the aboriginal tribes have been affected by it, and there are not wanting nominal Christians who proudly dote on their high caste origin.”<sup>74</sup> Based on his personal experiences of difficulty in working with people of various castes, Ward pointed out, “Caste in India not only raises up walls like wealth in other countries, between the classes and the masses, but it ... intensifies the selfishness of the natural heart. The common people have come to look upon the rules of caste as almost the chief thing in religion.”<sup>75</sup> He further highlighted that people secretly violated caste rules in private but were unable to do so in public. He saw this situation among most indigenous people, including Muslims, and called the system hypocritical,

The whole system in fact, encourages hypocrisy. We have had wealthy Mohammedans drink water from our hands inside our bungalow, who did not

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p. 43.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., pp. 41-42.

<sup>74</sup> Ernest Ward, *Echoes from Bharatkhand*, 37-38.

<sup>75</sup> Ernest Ward, “Caste,” *Scrapbook 486*, p. 71. Ward Collection ATS.

dare to do so outside. Multitudes of natives admit that the system is wrong, but at the same time are too cowardly to ratify it openly in a practical way.<sup>76</sup>

Ward dealt with caste system by hiring people from various castes and teaching them to work together. Through their exemplary lives Ernest and Phebe impacted the lives of people who worked with them. Initially they faced much difficulty in making people work together in cooperation and did not score much success. However, there were times, such as severe famine years, when caste barriers began to break off naturally in their orphanages. The Wards showed people how to serve each other and rise above caste discrimination and differences. From feeding the hungry to the caring of the sick, and from adopting the orphan to the burial of the dead, the Wards broke every caste rule prevalent at that time. They envisioned a new community of humanity characterized by brotherly love and mutual care. In the Wards' vision of India, there were no high and no low people, no superior or inferior births. But there were some people who wanted to maintain their religious superiority by any means possible, including ascetic practices. What was Ward's response to them? We shall explore next.

#### **4.2 Asceticism**

Within Hinduism, asceticism appeared as a distinct religious pursuit characterized by rigorous practices of self-denial and self-torture. In many places, Ward had observed ascetics or fakirs, such as (1) man lying on spikes, (2) man hanging upside down on a tree, and (3) man with one arm lifted and stiffened with fingernails bizarrely grown, as a sign of their religious vow or quest. He calls these ascetics the "victims of Hinduism."<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Ernest Ward, *Echoes from Bharatkhand*, 40.

<sup>77</sup> Ernest Ward, "Seeking Salvation in the Wrong Way" *Missionary Tidings*, November 1914: 5.

At other occasions he had seen worshipers of Devi (consort of Shiva) dancing about “in a wild manner, supporting a long steel rod drawn through the mouth from cheek to cheek.”<sup>78</sup> He had also seen a “fakir at a religious fair who would sit in meditation for a long time with both legs drawn around the neck.”<sup>79</sup> Ward found these and other expressions of Hindu asceticism as a dreadful delusion. He concluded that such men did not have “the light and blessings of the Gospel.”<sup>80</sup> He wrote that Hindu ascetics in general were,

...under a terrible delusion. Having imbibed a false philosophy, they have started out to seek a delusive salvation from a delusive enemy in a delusive way. How sad! Of course, they are doomed to disappointment... Years have elapsed since the commencement of their strange penances, yet they are no nearer the end they are seeking. Moreover, these poor creatures do not seem to have discovered in the least the cruel spell they are under but are intensely hoping against hope that these performances and penances will go far in cutting down the number of future births and securing re-absorption.<sup>81</sup>

Religiously speaking, asceticism was described as one of the ways to escape the cycle of rebirth. Many Hindus were following this path which Ward openly called deceptive. Ward observed that the majority of these religious mendicants were liars and cheats and had assumed the roles of ascetics for free food, etc. Several shrines had emerged in the places they had died, and they had also become known as saints among the indigenous. Ward noted that “the disposition of the people to eulogize and canonize and deify these ascetics, and to feed them indiscriminately,” was “in the atmosphere of

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<sup>78</sup> Ernest Ward, “From Brother Ward,” *The Free Methodist*, June 13, 1888: 11.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Ernest Ward, “Seeking Salvation in the Wrong Way” *Missionary Tidings*, November 1914: 5.

the country.”<sup>82</sup> He also saw that it was “not strange that such a vast army of liars and cheats and dead-beats assume the ascetic role to ‘fill their stomachs.’”<sup>83</sup>

Ward further informs, “On close inspection of these and similar cases, I have come to the conclusion that the great majority of these self-inflicted sufferings are merely to extort money out of the people.”<sup>84</sup> Only a few, Ward believed, did so with an actual desire of salvation in the Hindu way.

Most of the ascetics were followers of Shiva. Ward called Shiva, “the destroying god of the Hindu triad.”<sup>85</sup> It is important to note that Ward does not use the term “Trinity” to refer to Hindu *trimurti* (Lit., “three god-heads”). He calls them “triad” in his own unique style. The term “triad” is a non-religious term describing a group or set of three persons or things.

Ward argued that the worshippers can be identified with the gods they worshiped, “As is the god, so is the worshipper.”<sup>86</sup> Thus, in Ward’s observation the Hindu ascetics were trying to be like Shiva. He records,

It is said of this god [Shiva] that he himself once lived as a religious mendicant and went about naked with his body smeared with ashes. Sometimes he traveled afoot, and sometimes he rode his sacred bull, an image of which is so often seen in front of Shiva temples. This god is pictured frequently with a frightful countenance, and carrying a trident, a bow, a thunderbolt, and other weapons of war.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Ernest Ward, “From Ellichpur, India,” *The Free Methodist*, Apr 1, 1891: 203 (Written from Ellichpur on Feb 14, 1891).

<sup>85</sup> Ernest Ward, “Seeking Salvation in the Wrong Way” *Missionary Tidings*, November 1914: 6.

<sup>86</sup> Ernest Ward, “Preparing the Way,” Raj Nandgaon, Dec. 23, 1896. This piece was probably published in the *Free Methodist*. Ward noted that it was the first year’s report. See, *Scrapbook* 393, p. 146.

<sup>87</sup> Ernest Ward, “Seeking Salvation in the Wrong Way” *Missionary Tidings*, November 1914: 6.

He saw a similar situation among the worshipers of Kali. Ward described Kali as “the malignant goddess of small-pox,”<sup>88</sup> an angry deity who received annual sacrifices,

Goats and fowls are decapitated, and the blood poured out before the angry deity to appease her; not to obtain deliverance from sin, nor help to lead holy lives, nor even a hope of heaven, but immunity from disease, exemption from harm in Kali’s outbursts of passion, etc., as well as cooperation in revenging injuries. Those bands of cut-throats known as thugs, who used to infest the country from end to end, waylay, murder and rob unsuspecting travelers in former times, were devout worshipers of Kali.<sup>89</sup>

It is important to note that Ward makes a sharp contrast on the reasons for worship. Most Kali worshipers in his observation happened to be murderers and robbers, who were following in the dark path of death and attempting to appease their deity out of fear. Ward described Hinduism as “largely a religion of fear.”<sup>90</sup> But they were also attempting to see points of contact in all that they observed. For example, after watching some elements of Kali pooja, such as the sacrifice of goats, among the Hindus, Phebe remarked, “They recognize the shedding of blood, and all day this thought has been in my mind, ‘Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins.’ If they could know that ‘The blood has been shed, the price had been paid.’”<sup>91</sup> To this, Ernest adds an important clarification,

Phebe has made [a] reference, I see in her letter to the text in Hebrews, “without shedding of blood,” etc. It must not be supposed that the sacrifices or “poojas”

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<sup>88</sup> Ernest Ward, “One of India’s Frightful Objects of Worship,” *Missionary Tidings*, Aug. 1920: 5.

<sup>89</sup> Ernest Ward, “One of India’s Frightful Objects of Worship,” *Missionary Tidings*, Aug. 1920: 5-6.

<sup>90</sup> Ernest Ward, “Preparing the Way,” *Raj Nandgaon*, Dec. 23, 1896.

It is difficult to say if Ward had deeper familiarity with Hindu Philosophy proper, such as Sankara or Ramanuja. It seems that his assessment of Hinduism was largely based on popular Hinduism.

<sup>91</sup> Phebe Ward, “From Sister Ward,” *The Free Methodist*, June 27, 1888: 11.

referred to, have any reference to an atonement for sin. It is not to obtain pardon for past offences that blood is shed in these heathen poojas, or bodily suffering endured, but to so gratify the desire of their gods as to obtain future favors. Sometimes to fulfil a past vow made on the condition of receiving some temporal favor, thank offerings are made. But these are made more from fear of the displeasure of the god than from thankfulness for the blessing received.<sup>92</sup>

Although their tendency at first was to discard everything in Hinduism as elements of heathenism, they seem to slowly discover the themes they could engage and offer Christian response. In the case of the issue of sacrifice mentioned above, they could compare it with the biblical teaching. It is possible that the Wards had a limited understanding of the Wesleyan teaching on prevenient grace, which would allow them to see God at work in Hinduism through general revelation, enabling or preparing them to seek and find Him.<sup>93</sup> Similarly, they did not seem to have engaged with other key concepts within either popular or philosophical Hinduism, such as *avatar*, *leela*, *maya*, or *saguna-nirguna*, to explore the relationship between Christian understanding of God and the Hindu deities.<sup>94</sup>

On the characteristics of Hindu deities, Ward highlighted their quarrelsome nature, “The fabled gods of the Hindu religion fight and quarrel among themselves and with their wives and children and commit crimes the mere mention of which to a

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<sup>92</sup> Ernest Ward, “Chikulda, Berar, May 3, 1888,” *The Free Methodist*, June 27, 1888: 11.

<sup>93</sup> On prevenient grace, see, John Wesley, “On Working Out Our Salvation,” *The Sermons of John Wesley*, Sermon 85, available at, <http://wesley.nnu.edu/john-wesley/the-sermons-of-john-wesley-1872-edition/sermon-85-on-working-out-our-own-salvation/> (Accessed March 2020). See also, Kenneth J. Collins and Jason E. Vickers, eds., *The Sermons of John Wesley: A Collection of the Christian Journey* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2013). On general revelation, see, Gerald R. McDermott, “General Revelation Throughout History,” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 175 no. 698, Apr- Jun 2018: 145-158. See also, Enoch Wan, *General Revelation and Missiology*. Evangelical Theological Society Papers: ETS-4948, 1997, and Bruce Demarest, *General Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982).

<sup>94</sup> For scholarly studies on Hinduism and Christianity, see, John Brockington, *Hinduism and Christianity* (London: The Macmillan Press, 1992) and Roger H. Hooker, *Themes in Hinduism and Christianity: A Comparative Study* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1989).



Christian audience would excite horror and disgust.”<sup>95</sup> Looking through a moral lens, Ward concluded that the gods and goddesses of Hindu pantheon were capricious and immoral and thus incapable of inspiring holiness and love,

There is scarcely a god in all their pantheon that could command respect from the standpoint of morality. Many of them are described as capricious and revengeful. The Hindoos know nothing of a god of love... We know that any religion that makes no provision to cleanse the guilty conscience and purify the soul is not a religion of love... The Hindoos have incarnations of their gods and their desire is gratified. But they too, like the gods they represent, are unholy and immoral.<sup>96</sup>

To the Hindus who would argue with Ward about the many names and forms of God, saying, “What you say is all true – God is one – but he has many names” Ward would reply, “Yes, but what is his moral character? He does not lie, and steal, and covet (like the Hindoo gods). He is Holy and free from sin. He hates it.”<sup>97</sup> Morality defined everything, including gods. Thus, Ward gave his statement on gods and people: “No nation or people can rise higher than the gods they worship.”<sup>98</sup> “We look in vain for any regenerating power in the false religions” he concluded.<sup>99</sup> In Ward’s understanding false religions were not only characterized by immoral gods but also by false worship expressed in the practice of idolatry.

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<sup>95</sup> Ernest Ward, “Notes on India,” *Scrapbook One*, 100. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>96</sup> Ernest Ward, “Preparing the Way,” Raj Nandgaon, Dec. 23, 1896. See also, *Echoes from Bharatkhand*, 50.

<sup>97</sup> Ernest Ward, “From Brother Ward,” *The Free Methodist*, Feb 18, 1891: 10 (Written from Ellichpur on Jan 7, 1891).

<sup>98</sup> Ernest Ward, “Notes on India,” *Scrapbook One*, 100. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>99</sup> Ernest Ward, “Preparing the Way,” Raj Nandgaon, Dec. 23, 1896.

### 4.3 Idolatry

The falsehood of Hinduism was increasingly seen in the prominence of idolatry in its structures. Describing an old cannon in the Yavatmal mission compound, which was turned into an object of worship by the local folks, Ernest Ward comments,

How strange, as well as sad, human beings with so much natural intelligence, as the people of India often exhibit, should bow down to such monstrous, wild and savage things, instead of seeking out the God of heaven! But such, alas, is the deplorable drift even the loftiest race of men when once cut from divine revelation! As for poor, besotted India, perhaps in no other Eastern land is this sad trait so much in evidence. Just paint some hideous object red, and call it a god, and it will not lack worshipers. Nothing but the fire of the Holy Ghost will burn superstition out of their hearts.<sup>100</sup>

Ward lists idolatry among key superstitious practices.<sup>101</sup> He found Hindus worshipping cows, monkeys, snakes, stars, mountains, rivers, and trees.<sup>102</sup> He also saw them worshipping gods made of gold, silver, brass, stone, wood, clay, and cow-dung!<sup>103</sup> To the arguments that defended idolatry, Ward presented the following response,

The refuges and subterfuges of sinners are much the same in India as in the rest of the world. It is very common to argue in support of idolatry that God, being invisible, he has set up the idols, as his agents or viceroys on the earth. To this we reply that God has nothing to do with these abominations, that he has long since forbidden the worship of idols, and that they who worship him must worship him in Spirit and in truth.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Ernest Ward, "A Queer God," *Missionary Tidings*, Sep. 1916: 5-6.

<sup>101</sup> See, Ernest Ward, *Echoes from Bharatkhand*, 48-49.

<sup>102</sup> See, Ernest Ward, *Echoes from Bharatkhand*, 48.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Ernest Ward, "From Brother Ward," *The Free Methodist*, Feb 18, 1891: 10 (Written from Ellichpur on Jan 7, 1891).

In some places people, after listening to Ward's message, become convinced to throw away their idols, but were unable to actually do so. Their inability was rooted in the fear that something bad may happen to them. This fear was exerted by the Brahmins. Ward noted,

At one village where I was preaching the past year the people admitted that it would be just and right to take the village idol and pitch it into the river, but no one was ready to act. One reason why the people continue to fear these idols is the innate feeling that they have some mysterious connection with good and bad luck. No one can tell, however, just how. Then the Brahmin continue yet to exert a deterring influence over the simple-minded villagers and seek to perpetuate idol worship in order to serve their own ends.<sup>105</sup>

It is important to note that the Bhakti movement, which expressed itself in idol worship among other things, originated as an anti-Brahmanical dissent movement placing bhakti (devotional practice) above jnana (the way of knowledge). However, the Brahmins sought to find ways to dominate bhaktism as well. Ward seems to be well aware of this dynamic.

At other occasions, Ward also encountered Hindus who claimed to worship no idols, "Many [Hindus] tell us that they do not worship idols, but we have learned not to believe all that is told to us."<sup>106</sup> He further noted,

There is a good reason to believe, however, that the former fear and reverence for the Hindu gods is decreasing. What holds the heathen mind so strongly is the instinctive bondage to charms, shrines, idols, etc., that are supposed in some way to control good and bad luck. This seemingly inbred superstition will be the last to yield. God speed the day!<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Ernest Ward, "Our India Mission," *The Free Methodist*, Nov. 20, 1889: 747. (Written on Oct 2, 1889 from Ellichpur). This letter also contains global religious demography and Ward's plan to evangelize the world in 100 years.

<sup>107</sup> Ernest Ward, "Our India Mission," *The Free Methodist*, Nov. 20, 1889: 747.

The above observation is quite true to this day. In fact, the superstitions have now been creatively intensified, especially at the wake of recent pandemic.<sup>108</sup> However, the Hindus who do not worship idols may appear to be philosophically oriented.

#### ***4.4 Philosophical Hinduism***

The religion of the Hindus was not limited to idolatry and related superstitious practices of popular Hinduism. With countless sacred literatures and influential philosophical traditions, Hinduism also posed intellectual challenges for Ward's mission. Thus, in addition to their primary encounters with popular Hinduism throughout their ministry, the Wards were also face to face with Hindu scriptures and philosophies. After his exploration of Advaita Vedanta and other Hindu philosophical systems, Ernest concluded that "The essence of philosophical Hinduism, then is not to obtain deliverance from sin, but ostensibly from materiality."<sup>109</sup>

Ward argues that Hindu scriptures tend to "postpone salvation to indefinite ages."<sup>110</sup> He shows that all the rituals, such as holy bath, penance, and pilgrimages, etc.,

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<sup>108</sup> For example, the consumption of cow urine or taking a dip in the liquid cow-dung for protection from diseases such as Covid19, and placing face masks on the idols to keep them healthy, etc., are some of the trending practices promoted by the leaders of Hindu Mahasabha and others.

See, John Irish, "Coronavirus: Hindu group hosts 'cow urine drinking party' to cure illness despite lack of evidence" <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/coronavirus-news-hindu-cow-urine-drinking-party-india-a9402491.html>, Cf. "Hindu Group Offers Cow Urine..." <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-india-cow-urine-pa/hindu-group-offers-cow-urine-in-a-bid-to-ward-off-coronavirus-idUSKBN2110D5>. For Cow-dung bath, see, <https://nypost.com/video/cow-poop-bath-is-yet-another-coronavirus-cure/>, and for Face masks on idols, see, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/varanasi/coronavirus-scare-varanasi-temple-priest-puts-face-masks-on-idols/articleshow/74560602.cms> (all links accessed March 15, 2020).

<sup>109</sup> Ernest Ward, *Echoes from Bharatkhand*, 60. On Advaita Vedanta, see, Eliot Deutsch and Rohit Dalvi, eds., *The Essential Vedanta: A New Source Book of Advaita Vedanta* (Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom, 2004).

<sup>110</sup> Ernest Ward, "A Knife Grinder of India," *Missionary Tidings*, Mar. 1917: 2.

“can only promise a few thousand years of deliverance from an eternity of bondage, so to speak, of the imperative law of fate.”<sup>111</sup> He noted that the Hindus attach great importance to going on pilgrimages. So, as part of his Hindu outreach, he would attend these pilgrimages and annual fairs and preach the gospel to the multitudes gathered in those places.<sup>112</sup> Pilgrimage is a key element of popular Hinduism within the tradition of Bhakti Marga.<sup>113</sup> Bhakti Marga (the way of devotion) is one of the three ways of salvation in Hinduism, the other two being Jnana Marga (way of knowledge) and Karma Marga (way of works), respectively.<sup>114</sup> Ward noted, “There are *three ways* to Mukti, Nirvana (or Salvation) and not *one*.” He called the three ways a “compromise basket of Hinduism,” where “all the sects and schools and cults of India” summersault.<sup>115</sup> He further noted,

Hindoo philosophy has chiefly to do with the “Way of Knowledge.” It teaches that the soul of man is a piece of the self-existent Brahm or “soul of the universe.” By some unexplained convulsion in nature he became detached (in some such way perhaps as rings of smoke are thrown off by a locomotive engine). Now the law of karma comes in and says it is decreed that human souls and animal souls too which are emanations from Brahm, must pass through 84 lakhs of forms or be in “bondage to matter” under that many conditions before the emancipation and reabsorption can take place. The different Ways of Salvation so called are designed to cut it short, but one is not more certain of the ultimate end than the other.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Ernest Ward, “Notes on India,” Pittsburg, PA, Jun 19, 1893. See, *Scrapbook One*, 159. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>113</sup> For a study of pilgrimage in Hinduism, see, Knut A. Jacobsen, *Pilgrimage in the Hindu Tradition: Salvific Space* (New York: Routledge, 2013).

<sup>114</sup> For an introduction to Hinduism, see, Swami Bhaskarananda, *The Essentials of Hinduism: A Comprehensive Overview of the World’s Oldest Religion*. (Seattle: Viveka Press/The Vedanta Society of Western Washington, 2002), and For a study of salvation in Hinduism and Christianity, see, Wilhelm Dilger, *Salvation in Hinduism and Christianity: A Comparison and a Contrast*, translated from German by Luise Oehler (Mangalore: Basel Mission Book and Tract Depository, 1908).

<sup>115</sup> Ernest Ward, “Hindu Philosophy,” *Scrapbook*, No. 11, c.1881-1904, 176-177. Ward Collection ATS. Emphasis original.

<sup>116</sup> Ernest Ward, “Hindu Philosophy,” *Scrapbook*, No. 11, c.1881-1904, 177-178. Ward Collection ATS. For a study on Hindu Philosophy, see, S. Chatterjee and D. Datta, *An Introduction to Indian*

It will be helpful to point out here that philosophical Hinduism and popular Hinduism are not to be understood as two totally separated entities of Hinduism. They significantly overlap with each other in many ways. For example, the great Hindu philosopher Sankara (788-820) went on to build temples of Shiva and Vishnu in Uttarakhand. The temples of Kedarnath and Badrinath are witness to his contribution to a historic tradition of Hindu pilgrimage. Thus, popular Hinduism cannot be seen separated from philosophical Hinduism. Many Hindu philosophers, including Swami Vivekananda, were staunch idol worshippers.

Regarding Hindu philosophy in relation to common Hindus, Ward had the following observation, “the Vedanta Philosophy is such an outrage to the average instinct of man, that the mass of the illiterate common people have not, and cannot fully endorse as yet, its tenets.”<sup>117</sup> Therefore, in engaging with common Hindus, Ward advised that it was usually best, “to disregard philosophical monstrosities, and appeal to the ancient conviction that God *is*, that he sits on his *throne*, that the *decalogue* is His Law, that man is a *responsible* being...”<sup>118</sup> and also added, “...that there is a heaven of rewards and a hell of punishment for the morally good and bad respectively, and finally that something more is necessary to secure pardon than mere sorrow for wrongdoing.”<sup>119</sup> Ward’s

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*Philosophy*. 8<sup>th</sup> Edn. (Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1884), and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan and Charles A. Moore, *A Sourcebook in Indian Philosophy*, 6<sup>th</sup> Edn., (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957).

<sup>117</sup> Ernest Ward, “Hindu Philosophy,” *Scrapbook*, No. 11, c.1881-1904, 182-183.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

outreach to the Hindus was to show this life transforming “something more” in the gospel of Christ.

#### ***4.5 Hinduism and Christianity***

Ward analyses the picture of a Brahmin guru and his young disciple at a shrine, found in a Hindi book. After describing the idol and the brahmin, he comments, “Their religion is full of sad distortions and corruptions of truth, and in some respects is worse than no religion at all.”<sup>120</sup> He points out to several Christian teachings and sacraments such as the doctrine of Trinity and baptism, that may have been corrupted or caricatured in Hinduism,

Notice, for illustration, the trident in chalk on the gooroo’s body. This symbolizes the gods of the Hindu triad, which may be a perversion of the true doctrine of the Trinity. He [the brahmin] wears the sacred cord around his body. This was given to him with great religious rites at twelve years of age, when he was formally initiated into the “twice-born” castes. Here we seem to have a corruption of the Christian rite of baptism, as well as the doctrine of regeneration. Then, too, this gooroo intensely believes in the strange doctrine of transmigration of souls [Samsara], which is another expression although perverted, of the truth that men do not receive their full deserts [rewards] in this life, but shall receive them hereafter.<sup>121</sup>

Although Ward does not elaborate on the points of comparison, he does attempt to show the connection. Historically, the Christian doctrine of Trinity predates the Hindu concept of Trimurti by at least three centuries and at least in theological reflections. A trinitarian benediction (2 Corinthians 13:14) was used as early as 55 AD., and the concept

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<sup>120</sup> Ernest Ward, “A Scene in India,” *Life and Light*, Jun 28, 1914. Cf. Ernest Ward, *Scrapbook 363: Rag Bag of India, Facts and Figures*, 148. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

of Trimurti emerged around 4<sup>th</sup> century AD.<sup>122</sup> However, looking at the age of Hinduism in general (which predates Christianity), it is still doubtful if Hindus patterned or constructed their concepts of Trimurti and Upanayana based on Christian teachings of Trinity and Baptism.<sup>123</sup> In any case, Ward saw the possible connection (or distortion) as points of contact between the two religions and presented the gospel message accordingly.

He utilized every opportunity to present the Christian message to the Hindus. He engaged with everyone he met, from beggars to Brahmins and from sin to salvation,

A beggar remarked, “God has given me so much trouble in this world I therefore hope for mercy in the next.” Upon this I showed the demerit of sin in the sight of God and its fearful penalty. Once an old Brahmin met me in a bazaar and repeating some verses from the Shasters contended for sin in this life, and said salvation was all in the future. I replied that “through Jesus we receive forgiveness for past sins *here*, which like the first nugget of a gold mine is the assurance beforehand that we shall receive great wealth *hereafter*.”<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Encyclopedia Britannica, “Trimurti”, *Encyclopedia Britannica* (Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc.: March 05, 2015), URL: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/trimurti-Hinduism> (accessed on December 21, 2019). While Carpenter (1921) and Gonda (1968) have attempted to show the origin of the *trimurti* in the Vedas, Bailey (2017) has found their suggestions unconvincing. See, Greg Bailey, “Trimurti,” *Oxford Bibliographies* (Available at, [oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780195399318/obo-9780195399318-0056.xml](https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780195399318/obo-9780195399318-0056.xml), accessed on March 16, 2020). See also, Joseph E. Carpenter, *Theism in Medieval India: Lectures Delivered in Essex Hall, London, October-December 1919* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1921) and Jan Gonda, “The Hindu Trinity,” *Anthropos* 63 (1968): 212-226.

Although, the Pashupati seal discovered at Harappa has been identified by Marshall (1931) as having three eyes (thus indicating three faced deity), and therefore suggesting the idea of trimurti. However, prominent scholars such as Srinivasan, Sullivan, and Hiltebeitel have rejected Marshall’s view. See, John Marshall, ed. *Mohenjo-Daro and the Indus Civilization: Being and Official Account of Archaeological Excavations at Mohenjo-Daro Carried Out by the Government of India Between the Years 1922 and 1927* (London: Arthur Probsthain, 1931), Doris Meth Srinivasan, “The So-called Proto-Siva Seal from Mohenjo-Daro: An Iconological Assessment,” *Archives of Asian Art* 29:47-58; Herbert P. Sullivan, “A Re-examination of the Religion of the Indus Civilization,” *History of Religions* 4 (1): 115-125; Alf Hiltebeitel, “The Indus Valley “Proto-Siva” Re-examined Through Reflections on the Goddess, the Buffalo, and the Symbolism of Vahanas,” in Vishwa Aduri and Joydeep Bagchee, eds., *When the Goddess Was a Woman: Mahabharata Ethnographis: Essays by Alf Hiltebeitel*, Vol. 2 (Leiden: Brill, 2011).

<sup>123</sup> To explore these themes is beyond the scope of this research.

<sup>124</sup> Ernest Ward, “From Brother Ward,” *The Free Methodist*, Feb 18, 1891: 10 (Written from Ellichpur on Jan 7, 1891).



Ward's witnessing efforts among the Hindus were not without oppositions and came mostly from the Brahmins. He noted, "We are not molested very much in our work, only some Brahmin boys insult us once in a while."<sup>125</sup> Ward recollects that he was "sometimes treated with mud, sticks, and stones... a shower of cow manure..."<sup>126</sup> He saw that, "The priests, scribes, and Pharisees of Hinduism stand in the way..."<sup>127</sup> But he was delighted to see the common people hear them gladly, and so he remained optimistic even as he witnessed the truth gaining ground and the Holy Spirit working on the Hindu hearts.<sup>128</sup>

Occasionally, the Wards were visited by Hindu priests and scholars. Ernest recollects one such visit and contents of their conversation,

Among other visitors, a Vedantist priest, with several of his scholars, made us a visit recently. He maintained that God was only an idea and without attributes [*nirguna*]. We showed him the folly of such sentiments, and that God had attributes most wonderful, and had maintained himself, through his Son, to the world, and reveals himself inwardly to us by his Spirit.<sup>129</sup>

On responding to Hindu objections on Christian denominations, Ward advised Ethel, "Should an educated native raise the objection that Christianity has many sects, you have only to remind him that it is proverbial that the Mohammedans have 72 sects,

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<sup>125</sup> Phebe Ward, Letter to Sister Kitty, Darwah, Yeotmal Dist, India, May 6<sup>th</sup> 1908, 3-4. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>126</sup> For the complete experience, see, Ernest Ward, "Hitherto – Some of the Casualties of a Lifetime" *Missionary Tidings*, June 1923: 103-104.

<sup>127</sup> Ernest Ward, "From Brother Ward," *The Free Methodist*, March 21, 1905: (11) 187 (Addressed to C. B. Ebey, editor of FM from Yeotmal, Jan 10, 1905).

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Ernest Ward, "From Burhanpur" *The Free Methodist*, November 24, 1886: 11 (Published letter to the editor, October 12, 1886).

while according to last census (1901) there were no less than 2300 main castes of Hindoos, not to speak of sub castes.”<sup>130</sup> In addition, Ward listed the reform groups such as the Arya Samaj, Brahmo Samaj, and Satya Shodhak Samaj, etc., among various sects of Hinduism.<sup>131</sup> In engaging with Hindus, while he suggested to point out to the divisions within Hinduism or to show the folly of their beliefs and practices, he emphasized witnessing to them through holy Christian living. Ward was convinced that the Hindus were a “quick judge of character and motives,” and more were “brought to Christ through the direct influence of holy living than by all other agencies.”<sup>132</sup> Ward also believed that, “the hope of India lies in the native Christians as they understand the native character better than we can ever hope to do.”<sup>133</sup>

The indigenous people thought that the government officials were the representatives of Christianity. And looking at their lives, they saw no superiority in the Christian religion compared with their own. This posed much difficulty to the missionaries who were representing biblical Christianity with their transformed lives. Phebe noted, “You can see perhaps some of the difficulties the missionaries have of presenting a religion to a people, the mass of whom see only the government officials as its representatives; and many of them can truthfully say, ‘We see no superiority in

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<sup>130</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to Ethel Ward, 557 Redfield Ave., Los Angeles, California, Apr 11, 1921.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

<sup>132</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to the Ladies of the Missionary Society, Geneva, Ill. Burhanpur, (On the way to and from Pachmarhi, written during the period of over a week), Apr 12, 1882. The letter is copied in Ernest Ward’s *Ellichpur Notebook*, 348-359. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>133</sup> Phebe Ward, Letter to Gilbert and Ceeny, Burhanpur, Nov 5, 1881. Ward Collection ATS.

Christianity over our own religions.’”<sup>134</sup> To such challenges, Ward responded with a firm message, that “There is no way provided in the Hindoo religion by which to cleanse the heart. The religion of Jesus Christ aims at the heart...”<sup>135</sup> As a Christian, Ward represented the religion of a God of love and a religion of the purity of heart. Ward found these concepts to be missing in both Hinduism and Islam.

## 5. Encountering Islam

Ernest and Phebe founded their first evangelistic mission, the Burhanpur Faith Mission, in 1881 at Burhanpur, Central Provinces. Their first daughter, Ethel, was born in Burhanpur. The first godson of the Wards, Job Ward, a Muslim convert who took their last name, became a Christian at Burhanpur. Burhanpur had an influential Muslim population.<sup>136</sup> Out of the 30,000 inhabitants of the city, nearly 9,000 were Muslims.<sup>137</sup> Nationwide, they represented one-fifth of the population. On the Muslim population, Mohammad, and Islam, Ernest Ward wrote the following,

One-fifth of the inhabitants of British India are followers of the false prophet. Their religion is compound of Arab superstitions, Judaism, corrupt Christianity and Zoroastrianism, to which its founder gave the name of Islam. Like most other man-made systems, it teaches salvation by the merit of works, but is less complicated than Hinduism.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> Phebe Ward, “Letter From India” *The Free Methodist*, Jan. 15, 1890: 43. (Written from Ellichpur, addressed to T. B. Arnold, this letter also contains Phebe’s thoughts on Holy Spirit, Christ, Significance of Writing, etc.).

<sup>135</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to Ethel Ward, Yeotmal, Oct 17, 1905. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>136</sup> Ernest F. Ward and Phebe E. Ward, *Burhanpur Faith Mission: First Quadrennial Report, 1881-1884* (Chicago: T. B. Arnold, 1885), 12-13. See also, Chapter 3: Evangelism and Church Planting.

<sup>137</sup> Ernest F. Ward and Phebe E. Ward, *Burhanpur Faith Mission: First Quadrennial Report, 1881-1884* (Chicago: T. B. Arnold, 1885), 9-12.

<sup>138</sup> Ernest Ward, *Echoes from Bharatkhand*, 64.

Reckoning one of his encounters with a Muslim, Ward noted, “A Mohammedan in giving an epitome of his faith once said to me, ‘Our religion is five cubits wide and thirty cubits long’ by which fanciful dimensions he alluded to their five daily prayers and the thirty days fast...”<sup>139</sup> Ward concluded, “Indian Mohammedans rely mostly on these two conditions, but especially the latter.”<sup>140</sup> Ward also found the Indian Muslims to be staunch Unitarians.<sup>141</sup> He compared them with the Hindus and said they knew nothing of a god of love.<sup>142</sup> He writes,

No loving self-sacrifice for rebels could be expected from the God of the Koran. It is a fact that [the] book speaks of God as being merciful, but it is *leniency*, not true mercy or love that is found therein. The spirit of the Koran is clemency to Moslems, however great their crimes, but bitter persecution to unbelievers.<sup>143</sup>

Ward also found Indian Muslims practicing caste rituals, like the Hindus, in some of their social exchanges, especially with non-Muslims. “Mohammedans of this land keep caste in their relation to outsiders so far as food and drink are concerned, but are free from those complexities of the system which are such an incubus to the Hindus,” he noted.<sup>144</sup> In addition to caste practices, Indian Muslims had added festivals and worship of saints to their religious activities.<sup>145</sup> One of the most important religious activities

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<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> Ernest Ward, *Echoes from Bharatkhand*, 64.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid., 65.

<sup>142</sup> Ernest Ward, “Preparing the Way,” Raj Nandgaon, Dec. 23, 1896. See, Ernest Ward, *Scrapbook* 393, 146. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>143</sup> Ernest Ward, *Echoes from Bharatkhand*, 65. Emphasis original. An earlier draft reads, “It is true that the Koran mentions a God of leniency (to the Mohammedans) but leniency is not love.” (See, Ernest Ward, “Preparing the Way,” Raj Nandgaon, Dec. 23, 1896. See, Ernest Ward, *Scrapbook* 393, 146 Ward Collection ATS).

<sup>144</sup> Ernest Ward, *Echoes from Bharatkhand*, 66.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

among the Muslims is pilgrimage to Mecca. This pilgrimage, known as Hajj, is considered most meritorious good work necessary to ensure a place in Paradise for the Muslim. Ward reflected on the Hajj and Kaba and argued for the presence of heathenism and idolatry in Islam.<sup>146</sup> He pointed out that the Black Stone at Kaba was “a relic of Arab idolatry which Mohammed allowed, to conciliate the people,” and compared it with the grave-worship in India,” calling it as “one of the incongruities of Islam.”<sup>147</sup>

Both common and educated Muslims would occasionally come to Ward for religious dialogues. On one occasion, Ernest records his conversation with a Muslim fakir on the theme of salvation,

At a large bazaar in November a Mohammedan fakir also disrupted with me and contended that we could not know whether we were saved until the resurrection day, but that those who believed in Mohammed would be saved then. I replied that “We who believe in Jesus know already. Thank God!” This somewhat enraged him and stirred him up to try and draw me off into a discussion of the relative merits of the two religions in minor points. I responded, “A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.” He enquired, “What is the bird in hand?” I replied, “Present salvation.”<sup>148</sup>

Another encounter was on the forgiveness of sins. “How can we know that our sins are forgiven now?” asked a Mohammedan. Ernest answered, “By the testimony of the Spirit of God within and the changed life without.”<sup>149</sup> Much of Ernest’s conversations with Muslims took place in Hindustani, a blend of Hindi and Urdu. However, he was also

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<sup>146</sup> Ernest Ward, *Echoes from Bharatkhand*, 67-68.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

<sup>148</sup> Ernest Ward, “From Brother Ward,” *The Free Methodist*, Feb 18, 1891: 10 (Written from Ellichpur on Jan 7, 1891).

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*

visited by learned Muslims who could dialogue with him in English. One such visitor engaged Ernest Ward on the sonship of Jesus,

An educated Mohammedan came in this morning that could talk English and my soul was blessed in trying to tell him or prove to him that Jesus was the Son of God. He said, “he believed Jesus was a good man, etc., but did God have any wife?” How I brought the *Bible* to bear on him and I want the Koran – I can’t meet the Mohammedans without knowing what *their* Bible [sic] have to say.<sup>150</sup>

Ernest Ward emphasized the need to know the Muslim Bible, i.e., the Quran, for engaging in effective conversations with them. To be sure, he is not calling for ascribing any scriptural or spiritual value to the Quran, he just wants to use it as a reference for contact and conversation. He advised Ethel to own personal copies of Quran in Arabic, Urdu and English, and to focus on select references (*sifaras* or *ayats*) that referred to prominent biblical characters such as Jesus and Mary. Ward had a list of 30 such references. He recommended George Sale’s translation, *Al Koran*.<sup>151</sup>

### ***5.1 Mary and Jesus***

From his collection of references Ward takes up the one about Mary and Jesus and attempts to explain the Muslim position to them. He begins by quoting the text, “Remember her who preserved her virginity, and into whom we breathed of our spirit;

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<sup>150</sup> Ernest Ward and Phebe Ward, Letter to Gilbert and Ceeny, Burhanpur, Nov 6 (included in Nov 5, Small additional page), 1881. Emphasis original. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>151</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to Ethel Ward, 557 Redfield Ave, Los Angeles, Aug 13, 1928. (Letter No. 69). Ward Collection ATS. For Sale’s Quran, see, George Sale, *The Koran: Commonly Called the Al Koran of Mohammed*, translated into English from the Original Arabic, with a Sketch of Sale’s life and a Preliminary Discourse (London: William Tegg & Co., 1850). Ernest must have used an earlier version without any additional entries. George Sale (1697-13 Nov. 1736) was a British Orientalist.

ordaining her and her son for a sign unto all creatures.”<sup>152</sup> He comments that in one of the Quran’s he owned in Achalpur,

[T]he word *sign* underlined above was rendered “hidayat aur nur.” Now “hidayat” in Urdu means “*a guide*” and “nur” means “*light*.” No Mohammedan who discovers you know something of contents of the Koran will ever speak disrespectfully of Mary or Jesus. Nowadays thinking Mohammedans find they have to give due respect to Mary and Jesus if they will maintain the *integrity* of the Koran.<sup>153</sup>

While the use of the term “sign” for Mary and Jesus rendered respect for them within Quran, the issue of sonship of Jesus remained critical. On the question of why the Muslims are unable to call Jesus the son of Joseph or the Son of God and Christian disagreement with their position, Ward explained the difficulty,

But while maintaining a high character for Mary they are put to it to explain why Jesus is so often called the Son of Mary in the Koran, and never once the Son of Joseph. As they cannot use the title “Son of God” for Jesus, and be loyal to the teaching of the Koran, they have settled down to this explanation: Jesus was born without a father. This as Christians we concede, if it is meant without the agency of any human father, but they mean without *any* agency at all outside of his mother. This we do not concede, but believe and teach that the Son, who is the Divine Word, took man’s nature in the womb of the Virgin Mary in a *supernatural* manner, and when born was called the Son of God, and “Immanuel” which means “God with us.”<sup>154</sup>

Ward’s undivided focus on the person of Jesus, with special reference to His divinity, further enabled him to reflect critically on the person of Muhammad. He pointed out to the sharp contrast between the two.

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<sup>152</sup> *The Koran*, 21:91 (Al-Anbya) Cf. 66:12 (At-Tahrim). Underlining by Ernest Ward, quoted from Sale’s *The Koran*.

<sup>153</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to Ethel Ward, 557 Redfield Ave, Los Angeles, Aug 13, 1928. (Letter No. 69). Ward Collection ATS. Emphasis original.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

## 5.2 Jesus and Mohammad

In conversation with the Muslims, Ward emphasized the divinity and uniqueness of Christ as the Son of God. He also compared the persons of Jesus and Mohammad and argued that the *real* sinless prophet of Islam was not Mohammad but Jesus. He noted, “The Koran of Mahammed has nothing but praise for Jesus, but, of course, denies his divinity. All the other prophets had some fault or other, even Mohammed himself.”<sup>155</sup> The Quran mentions at one point that Mohammad is asked by Allah to seek forgiveness for his sins. Ward pointed out,

God spoke to Mohammed these words: “ask pardon for thy sin.”<sup>156</sup> This proves that the prophet needed forgiveness and was a sinner like other men. There are many places in the Koran where the acts of the various prophets are mentioned, and which prove that they were sinners like other men. The only exception is Jesus Christ. Not a word against his moral character is found. This is so striking an exception that a tract has been written “The Sinless Prophet of Islam” which does not mean *Mohammad* at all but *Jesus Christ*.<sup>157</sup>

Christ’s moral supremacy remained Ward’s favorite theme in interacting with people of other faiths. He noted that while Hindus, Muslims and others believed in God, they all rejected Christ: “... there are millions of Mohammedans and Jews and Deists

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<sup>155</sup> Ernest Ward, “From Brother Ward” *The Free Methodist*, October 6, 1886: 11 (Published letter to the editor, Burhanpur, Aug 23, 1886).

<sup>156</sup> See, *The Noble Quran*, 47:19 (Sura Muhammad). Cf. 48:2 (Sura Al-Fath) and 33:37 (Sura Al-Ahzab). *The Noble Quran* (Sahih International) Online version at Quran.com

<sup>157</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to Ethel Ward, 557 Redfield Ave, Los Angeles, (Not dated, prob. Aug 20, No. 70), 1928. Ward Collection ATS. Further instructions on facing Mohammedans is contained in letter No. 72 (Sep 4, 1928). For an online tract on the topic, see “The Sinless Prophet of Islam” *Christ in Islam* (Link: [study-islam.org/Christ-islam/7-sinless-prophet-islam](http://study-islam.org/Christ-islam/7-sinless-prophet-islam)) Accessed on 25 November 2019.



who have... firm belief in Almighty God, but are staunch Christ-rejecters and haters...<sup>158</sup>

Thus the mission work among these people was no easy task. Ward reflected,

Mission work among Moslems is usually considered quite difficult. In India it is by far the most promising of all lands. Many thousands of Moslems have been baptized thus far in different parts of the empire. Of the natives I have myself baptized, three were converts from the faith.<sup>159</sup>

### ***5.3 The Muslim Trophies of Grace***

Despite all the doctrinal and cultural challenges, the work among Muslims did not go completely fruitless. By 1908, Ernest Ward had baptized at least three Muslim converts. We have already mentioned the remarkable conversion of the Muslim widow, Jewarbee, in the previous chapter.<sup>160</sup> However, even before Jewarbee and her son's conversion in Raj Nandgaon (1897-98), Ernest and Phebe were instrumental in the conversion of Job Ward in Burhanpur (1881-86). Phebe recollected, "He was a poor Mohammedan weaver. Was quite a reader and would sometimes buy expensive books... like Nicodemus, would come at night to talk them over."<sup>161</sup> She also talks about how he wanted to be baptized and how he was separated from his wife for a while because of the opposition from family due to his new faith.<sup>162</sup> Ernest gives the following account,

His Mohammedan name was Shek Juman, and he was one of the few in his caste who were able to read. Through the reading of tracts and scripture portions bought from us, he got light and conviction. Eventually, after we left that field, he was

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<sup>158</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to his sister Louie Ward, Darwha, Moti Bagh, Yeotmal Dist, Feb 16, 1924. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>159</sup> Ernest Ward, *Echoes from Bharatkhand*, 76.

<sup>160</sup> See, Chapter 4: Humanitarian Services. Her complete story is narrated by Phebe in *Echoes from Bharatkhand*.

<sup>161</sup> Phebe Ward, "Letter from India," *The Free Methodist*, August 1, 1905:490 (10). Written on June 15, 1905 from Yeotmal.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

baptized by the Methodist Episcopal missionary who succeeded us, and took the name of Job Ward. I also learned that he took a course at the Bareilly Theological Seminary and became a pastor.<sup>163</sup>

Ernest Ward also mentions the conversion of a wealthy Muslim during his ministry in Bombay in 1892. He was a fruit of the Pentecost Band revival meetings “who got the truth in those meetings was afterwards baptized and joined the English Wesleyan Church, Bombay.”<sup>164</sup>

In addition to his ministry in India, Ernest was actively witnessing to both Hindus and Muslims in the USA, during his furloughs as well as during his retirement. Here is a brief account of one of his outreaches in 1920 at Brawley, California,

I searched about and have found several Hindus and Mohammedans. They told me there were three or four hundred [of them] in this vicinity. But more are living in the town all on ranches. They seem to be doing well financially but are degenerating... Of course, they all understand my Hindustani all right as they are mostly from the Panjaub. I am trying to get them to come to the church....<sup>165</sup>

At another place he spoke with them in Hindustani and was glad that they did not object to his sharing of the gospel as they would sometimes do in India. He would also pray for them before leaving.<sup>166</sup> Ward prayerfully searched for non-Christians in California, every time he was there, so that he may bring them to the church. He was always looking for people so that he may share the gospel of Christ with them.

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<sup>163</sup> Ernest Ward, “Namesakes of Our Pioneer India Missionary” *Missionary Tidings*, Nov. 1920:6.

<sup>164</sup> Ernest Ward, “1<sup>st</sup> Free Meth. Class in India,” See, *Scrapbook 363: Rag Bag of India, Facts and Figures*, p. 82. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>165</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to Ethel Ward, Brawley, Calif., Dec. 3, 1920. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid.

## 6. A Note on Approaches and Responses

Ernest and Phebe's interreligious encounters were increasingly characterized with combinations of approaches including, but not limited to, open condemnation of heathen elements such as idolatry and caste, as well as appreciation of positive points of contacts such as Islam's respect for Mary and Jesus. They believed that true missionaries consciously and creatively balanced their criticism and appraisal of non-Christian religious and cultural beliefs and practices. Ernest opined, "True missionaries seek to discover and commend all that is good and condemn only that which is positively wrong."<sup>167</sup>

The Wards saw evangelism and witness among the indigenous as a warfare against sin and its results that had engulfed them. Ernest remarked, "Preaching to the heathen is one continuous round of attacks on the strongholds of sin and error, and it is only here and there that our shots seem to make any impression. Nevertheless, we must never give up for in the end we are bound to win."<sup>168</sup> Thus, they remained optimistic amid all challenges with the confidence that the victory belonged to them.

Mission among non-Christians was also seen as a battle between darkness and light, between untruth and truth. Comparing the unbelievers in Christian contexts with that of non-Christian contexts Ward makes the following point,

In pleading with the unsaved in Christian lands we usually have a broad base of acknowledged facts to stand upon. Not so in heathen countries. Here our base is contracted. Comparatively few have any just conception of God, man, or the universe. Notwithstanding, if the heathen would walk in the light that they have

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<sup>167</sup> Ernest Ward, *Echoes from Bharatkhand*, 27.

<sup>168</sup> Ernest Ward, "From Brother Ward," *The Free Methodist*, Feb 18, 1891: 10 (Written from Ellichpur on Jan 7, 1891).

they would soon be brought into the light of saving truth. But herein lies the great guilt of man: “Light is come to the world and men love darkness rather than light.”<sup>169</sup>

Thus, the challenge was to reflect the light of Christ. Therefore, their most effective approach was a humble demonstration of Christlike character through a life of holiness, love, and service. They lived and walked among the indigenous with the good news of salvation, comfort, and hope. Through the gospel light they exposed what was dark and called people to follow the light. They showed how the light was at work in their own lives – transforming them into servants of humanity. Their love and hospitality for the rejected, exploited, and orphaned, was the fruit of the gospel light. In sharp contrast with exploiting structures, such as the caste system of Hinduism, the Wards presented the alternative of a community of mutual love, respect and equality. Thus, in the case of many of their converts, such as Jewarbee and Job, it was their life-style evangelism or being the light of Christ that had made a convincing impact.

The Wards showed boldness in calling the Hindus and Muslims as heathens and people living in the dark. To the question, “What phase of native ethics or religion is most helpful as a starting point for Christian teaching?” Ward replied, “Natural law on the conscience or the light that is in every man’s heart where it is unobscured by false religion and philosophy.”<sup>170</sup> He believed that God was already at work in human hearts through Jesus Christ. He said, “I believe Jesus of Nazareth is gaining ground in the hearts

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<sup>169</sup> Ibid.

<sup>170</sup> Ernest Ward, “Answers to Questions Sent by H. P. Beach Pub. of the Missionary Gazeteer (N. York),” *Scrapbook, No. 11*, c.1881-1904, pp. 154-161 (Quote from p. 157). Ward Collection ATS. Ward was answering these questions from Raj Nandgaon on July 20, 1899.

of the heathen Hindoos, Mohammedans and Jews...”<sup>171</sup> He was also convinced that it was the Holy Spirit who made the truth effective not his eloquence or expertise. He noted,

One day ... a man asked if our preaching had any effect on the people. We replied that God’s Holy Spirit will make the truth effective, and while some religions have been propagated by the sword, our duty is only to present God’s Word of salvation and invite men to voluntarily receive it.<sup>172</sup>

The Wards saw their role and approach as that of a messenger. Their duty was to share the gospel message through word and deed. And in all their efforts, they continued to appeal to other Christians to join in the mission of redemption of the whole world, saying,

The climax appeal, however, comes down from the heights of Calvary, to the Christians of our times, to bestir themselves for the sake of the price paid for India’s and the world’s redemption, and speedily carry the gospel to the darkest corner of heathenism.<sup>173</sup>

From the viewpoint of theology of religions, the Wards clearly maintained an exclusivist stance.<sup>174</sup> They were firm believers in the uniqueness and supremacy of Jesus Christ and proclaimed salvation in Him alone. They held the religion of the Bible as the best Way amid all other ways and approached all other faiths from that specific standpoint.

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<sup>171</sup> Ernest Ward, “From Brother Ward” *The Free Methodist*, October 6, 1886: 11 (Published letter to the editor, Burhanpur, Aug 23, 1886).

<sup>172</sup> Ernest Ward, “From Burhanpur” *The Free Methodist*, November 24, 1886: 11 (Published letter to the editor, October 12, 1886).

<sup>173</sup> Ernest Ward, “Our Mission Field,” *Pentecost Herald*, Vol. 5, No. 18, December 15, 1898: 6. Cf., *Scrapbook* 486, 44. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>174</sup> For the latest proposal of an evangelical theology of religions, see, Timothy Tennent, “Christian Encounter with Other Religions: Toward an Evangelical Theology of Religions,” in Craig Ott, Stephen Strauss, and Timothy Tennent, *Encountering Theology of Mission: Biblical Foundations, Historical Developments, and Contemporary Issues* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010).

## 7. A Brief Evaluation and Reflection

Although Ernest initially maintained a strong exclusivist position while engaging with other religions, condemning and discarding their beliefs and practices in general; he can be seen gradually noticing the points of contact and thus leaning toward a more robust view of general revelation and prevenient grace. However, he maintained an uncompromising position on the supremacy of his biblical faith. He saw the response to sin as one of the biggest factors distinguishing Christianity from other religions. He argued,

The God of the Bible cannot tolerate sin. In this respect Christianity is the most intolerant of all religions. If you follow Mohamet [sic] or Krishna or Buddha or Jo Smith or Russell or Mrs. Eddy or the Pope, you won't have to forsake *all* sin. No *clean* sweep will ever be *urged* upon you under *those* flags. But if you undertake to follow Christ, and lay your hopes of reaching the 3<sup>rd</sup> heaven and hearing his "well done," depend upon it you'll have to break with *all* your sins and bad habits.<sup>175</sup>

Ward's eschatological Christology expressed above calls for a completely sin-free walk of life. According to him there will be neither hope of heaven nor the appreciation of Christ without forsaking all sin in this life. In relation to the issue of sin, Christianity being the most intolerant of all religions is a unique claim. Ward seems to emphasize the idea of God's prevenient grace and forgiveness for sinners. God loves sinners and transforms them into new creations to be a witness of Christ in the grace of God. It is true that man-made religions are not free from human errors, such as legalism. But Ward himself would fall under that flag at times. For example, he did not baptize Shekh Juman

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<sup>175</sup> Ernest Ward, *Sin and Religions*, handwritten paragraph with initials, *Scrapbook 366*, 40. Ward Papers at UVA. Title mine. Emphasis original (underlined in the manuscript).

(Job Ward) of Burhanpur because he wanted to be baptized in secret.<sup>176</sup> Underlining the “witness” emphasis in the practice of baptism, Ward always baptized his converts in public. Today such stand may be presumed legalistic, unsensitive, or uncreative especially keeping in mind demands of missions in the creative-access contexts.<sup>177</sup>

## 8. Conclusion

As representatives of the religion of the Bible, Ernest and Phebe endeavored to witness Christ to people of all faiths. To the Korkus, whom they found worshipping the creation and various elements therein, they pointed the Creator himself. To the Hindus, whom they saw lost in darkness, such as idolatry, they presented with Christ the living God. To the Muslims, whom they saw following a false prophet, they presented Christ, the Sinless Prophet. To everyone, they presented the gospel of new life in Christ. A driving force in reaching out to the people of other faiths was to present them with *the* religion (or Biblical Christianity), witness to them with a message of holiness, and to inspire them for a life transformed by the power of a Holy God. Ernest and Phebe’s life and message were firmly founded on Christian holiness. They lived a life of purity and sacrificial service and called the people in their care and contact to follow them, even as they followed Christ. Their gatherings and meetings were increasingly characterized by

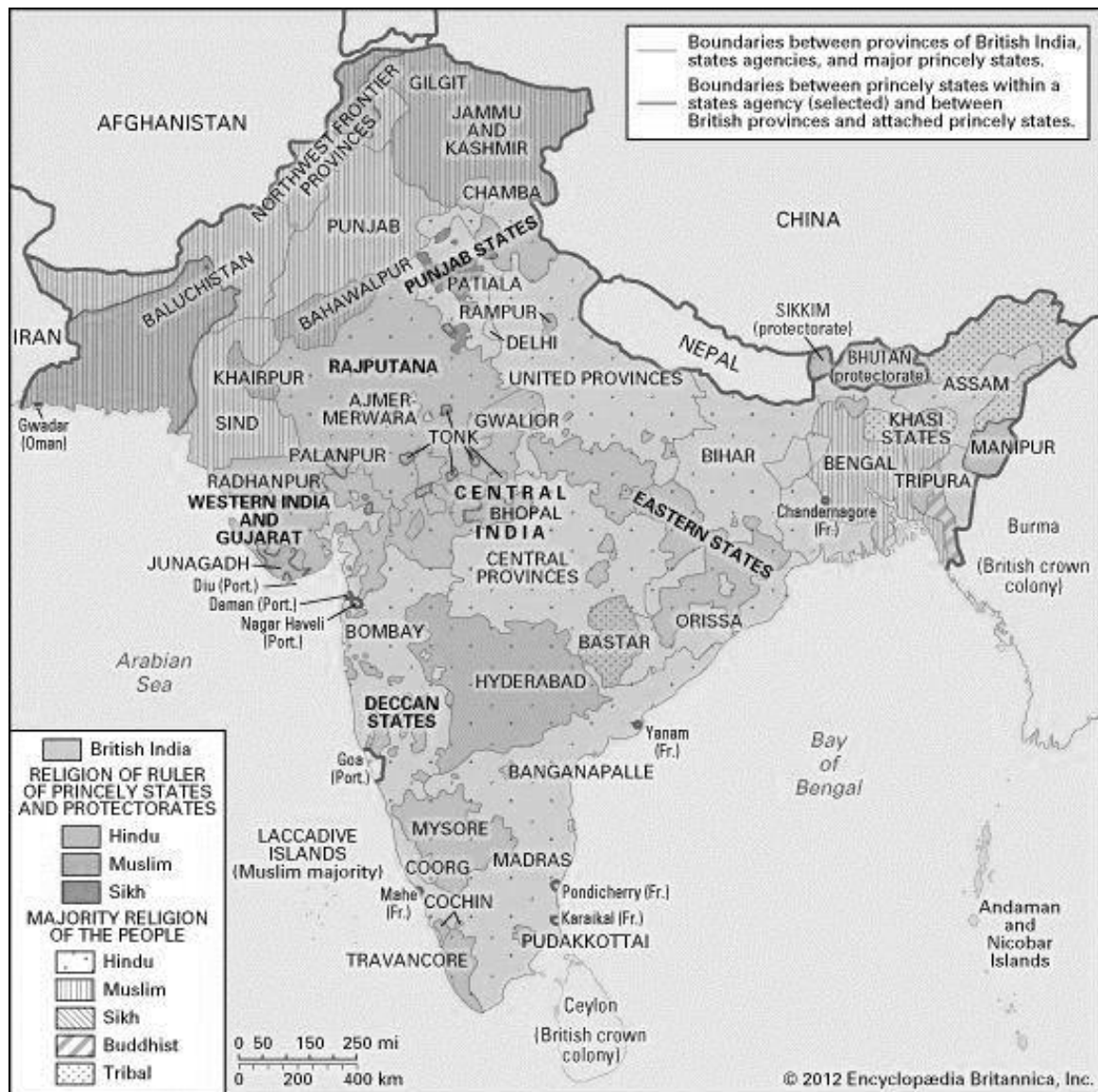
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<sup>176</sup> Phebe Ward, “Letter from India,” *The Free Methodist*, August 1, 1905:490 (10). Written on June 15, 1905 from Yavatmal.

<sup>177</sup> On baptism, see, Everett Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church: History, Theology, and Liturgy in the First Five Centuries* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2009), Thomas Schreiner and Shawn Wright, eds., *Believer’s Baptism: Sign of the New Covenant in Christ* (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2006), and, Thomas J. Nettles, et. al., *Understanding Four Views on Baptism* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007). See also, Phil Parshall, “Contextualized Baptism for Muslim Converts,” *Missiology: An International Review*, Vol. VII, No. 4, October 1979: 501-515.

revival and holiness themes. Christian holiness was a dominant theme in Wards' teaching and preaching. We shall explore the Wards' understanding of Christian holiness and related themes in the next chapter.





*Image 26. Religious Map of British India, c.1910. Photo courtesy: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc. (2012)*

## Chapter 6

### CHRISTIAN HOLINESS

There can be no permanent happiness without holiness. Holiness and happiness are eternally wedded together. Our happiness and usefulness do not so depend so much on *where* we are, as *what* we are. Every babe in Christ desires holiness. He who fights holiness is devoid of justifying grace.

- Ernest Ward<sup>1</sup>

I believe God has a great work for me and the devil don't [sic] want me to bear the straight testimony before these missionaries and he knows it will be worse for his kingdom if they get the blessing of holiness, but I do testify to all God does for me and the heaven is working.

- Phebe Ward<sup>2</sup>

#### 1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to highlight the emphasis on Christian holiness in the writings and sermons of Ernest and Phebe Ward. The Wards were nurtured in the Christian perfectionist (aka, holiness) impulse of the mid-nineteenth century. The nineteenth century holiness movement was characterized by two distinct ethical emphases: social and personal.<sup>3</sup> The social ethics, also understood as a progressive or radical ethics, expressed itself in the advocacy of abolition of slavery, women's rights, and temperance. It also strove toward the welfare of children, the care for the sick, the poor, and the outreach to the imprisoned. The personal ethics, rigorous in nature,

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<sup>1</sup> Ernest Ward, "Thoughts on Holiness," *Pentecost Herald*, Vol. 3, No. 1, April 1, 1896: 2. (Clipping also found on Ernest Ward, *Scrapbook One*, 182. Ward Collection ATS).

<sup>2</sup> Phebe Ward, Letter to Brother [Gilbert] and Sister [Sister-in-Law], Chickalda, India, May 24, 1881. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>3</sup> Rodney L. Reed, *Holy with Integrity: The Unity of Personal and Social Ethics in the Holiness Movement, 1880-1890* (Salem, OH: Schmull Publishing Company, 2003), 8. For a study of social activism in the holiness movement, see, Timothy L. Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1957) and Donald W. Dayton, *Discovering an Evangelical Heritage* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976).

demonstrated its influence in condemnation of popular amusements such as theatre, circus, card-playing, dancing, and wearing of jewelry, etc.<sup>4</sup> Holiness was seen as the solution for the ills in the society and clarion calls were made to seek entire sanctification. Holiness Associations were formed by various church denominations and revival Camp Meetings were organized nationwide to promote these virtues.<sup>5</sup> Methodist historian Francis Conable underlined “promotion of the work of entire holiness” as a leading objective of the camp meetings.<sup>6</sup> The movement also had significant impact on missions and missionaries of the time, and evangelism and social work were carried out with a strong emphasis on holiness for both the self and the society. In the previous chapter, we have looked at the practice of social ethics aspect of Wards’ holiness impulse expressed in the humanitarian services. In the present chapter we shall outline the centrality of holiness in their teaching and practice.

## 2. Seeking Christian Holiness

This section will explore Ward’s personal experience, general understanding, and primary teachings on holiness.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid. See, Hiram Mattison, *Popular Amusements: An Appeal to Methodists in Regard to the Evils of Card-Playing, Billiards, Dancing, Theatre-Going, etc.* (New York: Carlton & Porter, 1867). See also, Hannah Whitall Smith, *A Christian’s Secret to a Happy Life*, (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell, 1883) and Phoebe Palmer, *The Way of Holiness, with Notes by the Way* (New York: Piercy & Reed, 1843).

<sup>5</sup> See, Brian Black, *The Holiness Heritage: Tracing the History of the Holiness Movement* (Salem, OH: Allegheny Publications, 2003), Melvin E. Dieter, *The Holiness Revival of the Nineteenth Century*, second edition (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1996), and William C. Kostlevy, ed., *Historical Dictionary of the Holiness Movement* (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, 2001). See also, Paul M. Bassett and William M. Greathouse, *Exploring Christian Holiness, Volume 2: The Historical Development* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1985).

<sup>6</sup> Francis W. Conable, *History of the Genesee Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1810-1872* (New York: Nelson and Phillips, 1876), 620.

## 2.1 Holiness and Conversion

Ernest and Phebe placed their experience and understanding of holiness mainly in two contexts. First, in the context of their own conversion experiences. Second, in the context of sin, or inbred sin as they called it, and its influences. They saw holiness as the perfect way of being Christian. From Ernest's account of his conversion we read the following,

At the time of my conversion I had but little idea of the true nature of sanctification or holiness; in fact, I do not remember of hearing anything said about holiness as a special work at this time, in the way it was taught by John Wesley and the early Methodists. The first sermon on the subject I remember of hearing, was preached by Rev. A. H. Miller, of the M. E. Church, March 16, 1873. This led me to inquire into the "more perfect way" ...<sup>7</sup>

As an important part of this inquiry Ernest devoted his next three years in diligent reading of the journal *Advocate of Christian Holiness*.<sup>8</sup> From the study of articles, teachings, and testimonies in this journal Ernest become convinced that entire sanctification was God's blessing for all believers. He noted that the "blessing of entire sanctification is the privilege and duty of every believing child of God, to be entered into and enjoyed by faith now."<sup>9</sup> He initially thought of holiness as a "state of grace" that he will attain and as the "'promised land' of perfect love" which he would enter in time.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Ernest F. Ward, "Experience" *The Free Methodist*, October 8, 1879: 2. (Written from Geneva, Ill., Sep. 24, 1879). See also, *Scrapbook 1877*, 20-21. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>8</sup> *The Advocate of Christian Holiness*, later known as *Christian Witness*, was the official journal of the Christian Holiness Partnership (originally, the National Camp Meeting Association for the Promotion of Holiness, 1867). See, Kenneth O. Brown, *Inskip, McDonald, Fowler: "Wholly and forever Thine": Early leadership in the National Camp Meeting Association for the Promotion of Holiness* (Hazleton, PA: Holiness Archives, 1999), 6.

<sup>9</sup> Ernest F. Ward, "Experience" *The Free Methodist*, October 8, 1879: 2. (Written from Geneva, Ill., Sep. 24, 1879). See also, *Scrapbook 1877*, 20-21. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

The longing for holiness was in fact longing for deliverance from sin and its impacts. Ernest testified, “I longed for complete redemption from inbred sin... Many a hard fought battle have I had with the ‘old man of sin’... Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? was the cry of my soul.”<sup>11</sup> In June 1876, he attended the Free Methodist camp meeting at St. Charles, Ill. It was here that he heard the doctrine of holiness preached in simplicity and with authority, experienced the blessing of holiness, and testified that “the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin.”<sup>12</sup> However, he went through a brief period of uncertainty in regard to the practice and preaching of holiness. He describes his journey in his short testimony, *Experience*, in the following words,

For some time I enjoyed this experience, and testified to it on all occasions; but the enemy suggested that such a “loud” profession might injure the cause of Christ, and that it would do just as well to “live” it, and not say so much about it, as the subject was very unpopular, and unpleasant to most professors of religion; besides, I was young in experiences, and might be mistaken, and ought to abide by the judgement of the older ones. So, I yielded to the tempter, and lost the blessing, and the long, long seasons of clouds and darkness that entered into my experience I will not attempt to describe.<sup>13</sup>

Growing in the experience of holiness seemed to be a struggle with doubts. The enemy, the devil, constantly created confusion and doubt about it to make the pursuant quit. However, Ward did not completely lose it, instead he was enabled to hold on to it.

But blessed be God’s eternal name, I was again led out of this wilderness into the “promised land of perfect love.” Glory to God in the highest! This was at the St. Charles camp meeting of 1878. With the exception of several short periods of doubt and darkness, I have been clear in this blessing ever since. Since June 28,

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<sup>11</sup> Ernest F. Ward, “Experience” *The Free Methodist*, October 8, 1879: 2. (Written from Geneva, Ill., Sep. 24, 1879). See also, *Scrapbook 1877*, 20-21. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

1879, God has kept the sanctifying fire constantly burning in my soul. Praise God from whom all blessings flow.<sup>14</sup>

This experience of gaining and regaining the blessing of holiness and the rekindling of sanctifying fire was so powerful that it led Ernest to become a member of the holiness movement for life. Soon after the above experience he left his old church and identified himself with the Free Methodist Church which was at the forefront of this movement. In the Free Methodist Church, he not only found the prominence of the doctrine and profession of holiness but also an encouraging atmosphere to grow in its practice and proclamation.<sup>15</sup>

## ***2.2 Holiness in “The Soul’s Garden”***

In addition to his testimony, *Experience*, Ernest published two short articles on the theme of holiness. The first, *The Soul’s Garden*, which appeared in the *Free Methodist*, gives a highlight of his initial understanding of the subject. On the condition of the human soul and the question of how justification is accomplished, Ward writes,

The human soul may be likened to a garden in which grow...briars of envy, thistles of pride, thorns of covetousness, and weeds of anger, fear, impatience and fretfulness. By true repentance, grounded on a hatred of the fruits of unrighteousness, with faith in the only begotten Son of God, justification is accomplished, and regeneration wrought out in the soul. By this work the luxurious vegetation in the garden is cut down and the seed of righteousness implanted, although the roots of sin remain in the heart.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ernest Ward, “The Soul’s Garden,” *The Free Methodist*, July 16, 1879: 2.

This may be seen as one of the central arguments in Ward's understanding of Christian holiness and its achievement. Repentance from sin and faith in Christ are highlighted as requirements for achieving justification and regeneration. Ward's emphasis on accomplishment of righteousness through faith in the Son of God is a noteworthy reminder of Martin Luther's Reformation theology of "alien righteousness" – the righteousness of the believer in the righteousness of Christ.<sup>17</sup> Christian righteousness is indeed borrowed or bestowed from that of Christ's righteousness. Ward's position is also a striking pointer to the New Perspective thinking of scholars such as Sanders, Dunn, and Wright. These biblical scholars look at apostle Paul's attitude on law and grace and advocate, among other things, that justification is a process.<sup>18</sup> However, the New Perspective thinkers do not hold in general that human beings have a sin nature due to the original sin.<sup>19</sup> This is where Ward can be seen more in line with and pointing to a Wesleyan tradition. Therefore, Ward must neither to be taken as only representing the Lutheran thought or significantly pointing to the New Perspective thinking. In fact,

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<sup>17</sup> Martin Luther, "Two Kinds of Righteousness," in *Luther's Works*, Vol. 31, 297-299. For an online free access version, visit: [mcm.edu/~eppleyd/luther.html](http://mcm.edu/~eppleyd/luther.html) (Accessed March 21, 2020). See also, Theodore G. Tappert and Jaroslav Pelican, eds., *Luther's Works*, 55 Vols (Minneapolis: Fortress Press and Concordia Publishing House, 1986).

<sup>18</sup> For a critique of the New Perspective (NP), see, Robert L. Thomas, "Hermeneutics of the New Perspective on Paul" *The Master's Seminary Journal*, 29/1 (Spring 2018): 21-43. For an introductory analysis of the NP, see, Justin Taylor, "What is the New Perspective on Paul? How Should It Be Assessed?" at *TheGospelCoalition.org* (Accessed March 20, 2020). For a detailed analysis, see, Stephen Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New on Paul: The "Lutheran" Paul and His Critics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004). For the major works of leading scholars in focus, see, E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), and, N. T. Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said: Was Paul of Tarsus the Real Founder of Christianity?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), and other works.

<sup>19</sup> Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 114-15. Cf. Wright, "The Letter to the Romans," *The New Interpreters' Bible*, Vol. 10 (Nashville: Abingdon, 2002), 527-29.

Ward's understanding of sin, grace and justification must be understood within the Wesleyan holiness tradition in general and Free Methodism in particular.

Ernest Ward argued that the roots of sin are not fully destroyed at conversion and that holiness is not achieved at conversion. Instead, it is dealt with in the process of sanctification which begins at conversion. He noted, "Many [Christians] suppose the most complete work of grace is accomplished at conversion, and that with thorough cultivation of the graces of the Spirit, we develop into holiness. Alas! how many there are in the church wedded to this unscriptural theory of development."<sup>20</sup> He underlined the futility of human efforts toward getting rid of the fruits of sins and hindrances to holiness. He also emphasized the direct role of God in uprooting and destroying the sin and its roots in human hearts.

[S]ome will say, "can we not cut down these hindrances to growth?" We answer, Yes; and much weary, toilsome effort is put forth by many honest people to raise fruit on such ground by this surface work of lopping off the tops while the roots remain; but it must ever be unreasonable to expect large returns from soil in that condition. The work of regeneration, while perfect in itself, does not undertake to clean out completely in this garden of the soul these "roots of bitterness," but this is done in the work of sanctification. God by his plow of truth extirpates all the remains of inbred sin in the soul; main and tap roots are pulled out, their life destroyed, and the soul enriched with "perfect love that casteth out fear."<sup>21</sup>

Thus, Ward acknowledged that while the work of regeneration (conversion) is perfect in itself, it is not capable of getting rid of the sin nature and the roots of bitterness in the heart. He asserts that cleansing of the heart from the roots of sin is accomplished at in the process of sanctification or holiness. He further declares that holiness is not

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<sup>20</sup> Ernest Ward, "The Soul's Garden," *The Free Methodist*, July 16, 1879: 2.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.



attained by human efforts but by the grace and work of God. He also points out that freedom from sin and attainment of holiness totally redefines the believer's identity and status for both the present and the future. He writes,

“Being now made free from sin (inbred), and become servants of God, ye have your fruit unto holiness and the end everlasting life.” And being made “partakers of his holiness,” we follow it, and are able in this life “to see (apprehend) God.” “Because as he is, so are we in this world.” Thus, we receive the “spirit of holiness,” and are made partakers of God's nature, which fits us up to dwell in God both here and hereafter.<sup>22</sup>

The receiving of the spirit of holiness had both missiological as well as eschatological implications for Ward. Partaking in God's holiness not only qualified Christians to remain in Christ in this world but also in the life beyond.

### **2.3 The Basics of Holiness**

The second article, *Holiness*, is a concise biblical study on the theme.<sup>23</sup> While *The Soul's Garden* mentioned above deals with holiness in relation to conversion and human efforts at attaining it, and so on, this article goes wider in its scope and reflection. Ward begins *Holiness* with a brief note on the meaning and definition of holiness, outlines some of the key reasons to be holy, and goes on to answer the question “how to attain holiness?” and other related questions. He sees “holy” (Hebrew, *Kadesh*) to mean “morally pure,” “separate from sin,” [and] “undefiled” in relation to God.<sup>24</sup> Looking at

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid. Quotes in original.

<sup>23</sup> Ernest Ward, *Holiness*, typed manuscript, (October 1925), 3 pages, 1, *Scrapbook 366*, 164-67. (Hereafter, Ernest Ward, *Holiness*) Ward Family Papers, Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA (Hereafter, Ward Papers UVA). All scripture quotations from the King James Version. This tract was written at the request of India Holiness Association and was to be translated into vernacular languages, such as Marathi (See, *Scrapbook 366*, 167). The manuscript includes a few edits and insertions of additional words in pen and pencil. I am quoting from the combined final text.

<sup>24</sup> Ernest Ward, *Holiness*, 1.

the biblical usage of the term, he defines holiness as the most unique attribute and supreme glory of God Almighty. He writes,

Holiness is [the] most unique and the most wonderful of all the divine attributes. We read in the Bible about the “Holy One,” “Holy God,” “Holy Father,” “Holy Son,” “Holy Spirit,” “Holy Ghost,” and, also... of “holy angels,” “holy nation,” “holy men,” “holy women,” etc. The seraphim before the throne perpetually declare “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts! The whole earth is full of his glory” (Isa. 6:3). But not in earth alone, the psalmist says, “His glory is above the heavens” (Ps. 113:4), and in Exodus the question is asked, “Who is like Thee, (Jehovah), glorious in holiness” (Ex. 15:11). Of Jesus Christ who is the incarnation of God, it is recorded that he was “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners and made higher than the heavens.” [Unattributed citation]. The chief glory of the Almighty God is his attribute of holiness; and his greatest desire is that others may become like him.<sup>25</sup>

Based on the above premise of holiness as the divine attribute, Ward emphasizes the mandate for Christ’s follower to be holy. He reflects on 1 Peter 1:16,

For this reason, we find in 1 Pet. 1:16 this solemn command, “Be ye holy, for I am holy” ... Observe that the injunction is to be holy; not merely to do some holy work, but to BE holy. For a sick man to be ordered to do a well-man’s job is one thing; but to BE ordered to be a well-man is quite another. Men do not usually object to such command as “be honest,” “be patient,” “be wise,” but they kick at the command to be holy. Why? Because it demands entire separation from sin. Men love sin and they do not want to be separated from that which they love. However, God says, “Abhor that which is evil, cleave to that which is good.” (Rom. 12:9). “Put off the old man” and “put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph 4:22-24).<sup>26</sup>

Why should a person put on this “new man,” or God’s holiness and righteousness? Why should people be holy? He gives three main reasons for being holy:

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

(1) Because we ought to obey God, (2) Because we seek to be useful for God, and (3) Because we desire to be happy.<sup>27</sup> He explains the first reason in the following words,

Next to the word “God,” the word “ought” is perhaps the heaviest word in our language. Ought means “we owe.” We owe it to God to obey him, as he is our Creator, Preserver, Redeemer, [and] Friend. Man was made in the image of God, and was once perfectly holy and undefiled. But alas, in an evil hour, he revolted against Divine authority and restraints and thought to make himself free and independent. Instead of that he became a bond-slave of hell, and entailed upon his race sorrow, sin, suffering, disease and death. But Jehovah, thank God, bought us back at [an] immense cost, to the end we might be restored to the divine favor, the divine love, and the divine life.<sup>28</sup>

Here, Ward sees the reason to be holy with a strong motive to obey God and reconcile to him. Desiring holiness is desiring freedom from the bondage of sin and its negative impacts and restoration in the image and dignity of God.

Under the second reason for being holy, Ward calls for a loving self-surrender to God. According to him, a person surrendered to God hates sin, loves and serves God and his people. Ward writes,

In very gratitude to God we should turn again and yield our all to him. We ought once and forever to renounce the three great enemies of God, the world, the flesh, and the devil. We ought to hate sin with a perfect hatred. We ought to denounce it for all time, and flee from it as we would from a viper. We ought, in fact, to be holy, and be holy now... To be holy means to be supremely helpful... Sin is a clog in the soul to the revolving wheels of love... He who has the experience of holiness is free from this impediment, and perfect love has full play in his heart and life.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

Reflecting on the experience of the early church, Ward argues that “Pentecostal baptism” or the baptism of the Holy Spirit wonderfully rekindles, “missionary zeal, benevolence, and self-sacrifice” in the hearts of the seekers of holiness and empowers them to be useful servants of the Church.<sup>30</sup> He calls this experience of holiness as the “second grace.”<sup>31</sup>

Ward’s third and final reason for being holy is to attain true happiness. Ward sees holiness of heart as the key to heavenly happiness and peace. He declares,

Finally, he who would be truly happy, must seek for a holy heart. Holiness and true happiness have been forever wedded together by the Eternal God, and neither men nor devils can separate them... The Bible says “the joy of the Lord is your strength,” and in perfect love there is divine joy and peace and consolation. God’s home on high is filled with joy and praises, and there is neither sorrow nor crying, nor pain nor dying in heaven above. Why is this? Because up yonder there is no sin. No breath of evil ever enters that glorious place; nor anything that defileth or maketh a lie. To enjoy the bliss of heaven we must be holy.<sup>32</sup>

Heavenly happiness is attained by holiness. Holiness is the distinctive qualification to see God who dwells in heaven. Thus, Ward’s greatest reason, to pursue holiness is to be able to see God face to face. He emphasizes that “Holiness is the state of having a pure heart, free from original sin, and being filled with perfect love which casteth out fear. It is an experience we all should seek for with intense desire.”<sup>33</sup> He suggest that the experience of holiness “is not simply a luxury to be enjoyed” by choice,

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 2. Here the term Pentecostal does not refer to the Pentecost Bands or Pentecostal denomination. It simply refers to the experience of Pentecost in the Book of Acts.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

but that “It is an absolute necessity; for it is plainly declared in the Word of God that: without holiness no man shall see the Lord” (Heb. 12:14).<sup>34</sup>

**2.3.1 The Steps to Holiness.** On the question of how one may obtain holiness, Ward opines that neither “suffering in purgatory, nor doing penance, nor bathing in so-called holy rivers, nor any good works which we might perform, make us holy. Only God’s Holy Spirit by virtue of the blood of Christ, if granted to us, can make us holy.”<sup>35</sup> Holiness is thus a work of the Holy Spirit of God. It is divine gift not earned by human works of righteousness.

Ernest Ward outlines two steps toward receiving or attaining the gift of holiness. First, *Repentance and striving for grace of God*. Ernest explains this step in the following words,

The condemned and guilty sinner on true repentance and saving faith in Jesus Christ receives the pardon of all his actual sins, obtains new life from above, is made a child of God, and becomes what the Bible calls, “a new creature.” We read in Titus 3:5 about “the washing of regeneration.” These words do not relate to water baptism but teach that the saved man, at the time he is regenerated, is also washed from all guilts and accumulated depravity, and restored to the innocence of childhood. It is then at that time he obtains the inward witness of the Spirit which Adam lost in the fall. Saved people are indeed called “saints” in Scripture. This means “holy ones,” and the reason they are so called is because their life and conversation is in harmony with holiness. They resist temptation, bear their daily crosses, follow their Master, and strive to bring the highest possible attainments in grace.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

The way to attain holiness is seen as a journey which begins with confession of sins and repentance, faith in Christ and His forgiveness, acceptance in the family of God, becoming a new creation, receiving the Holy Spirit, attaining sainthood, resisting temptations, bearing the cross, following Jesus, and growing in grace.

The second step to obtain holiness, according to Ward, is about *walking in the light*. He writes,

[E]ven infants are born with an inherited principle of sin in their hearts which in the Scriptures is variously termed “the flesh,” “root of bitterness,” “our old man,” “the carnal mind,” etc. The hatefulness of this evil within is not discovered and abhorred by the “natural man,” nor even by the mere nominal Christian. The justified believer, he who is actually running the heavenly race, becomes after a time painfully aware of this impediment to his progress, and desires ... to obtain complete deliverance from. Are his hopes to be realized in this world? Yes, thank God, they are, if he walks in the light and definitely seeks for such deliverance.<sup>37</sup>

Ward places the idea of walking in the light as a way to obtain holiness in the context of awareness of the principle of sin in the human hearts. A Christian in his journey into holiness soon comes to the realization that sin is a major obstacle to his or her progress. The principle of sin is inherited at birth and remains active even in saved individuals. Therefore, a constant seeking of deliverance from this principle (sin, flesh) is a necessity. Ward calls this constant seeking as walking in the light. Walking in the light further includes, “habitual surrender to all the will of God; implicit obedience to all His commands; entire consecration to Him of all we own and are; and faithful use of all the means of grace.”<sup>38</sup> Ward believed that these features of walking in the light were also

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 3.

essential in bringing “the longing hungry seeker on to believing ground.”<sup>39</sup> Walking in the light was a sign of growing in grace – grace of entire sanctification at the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. It included the experience of cleansing of sins and filling of perfect love by the Holy Spirit as in the Day of Pentecost. This experience was the “paramount feature” of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit for all believers, then and now, that Ward “most steadfastly” believed and taught.<sup>40</sup>

Ward’s concept of walking in the light, or constant seeking, seems to suggest holiness to be a progressive or gradual experience rather than instant. We may be able to shed some extra light on this in light of John Wesley’s teaching on sanctification. Wesley taught both gradual and instantaneous sanctification. He wrote, “From the time of our being born again the gradual work of sanctification takes place...As we are more and more dead to sin, we are more and more alive unto God.”<sup>41</sup> Thus Wesley saw Christian perfection or holiness as growing in grace. He also saw holiness in terms of justification (or initial sanctification) as an instantaneous experience. He suggested,

[W]e may be saved from all sin before death. The substance then is settled; but, as to the circumstance, is the change gradual or instantaneous? It is both the one and the other. From the moment we are justified, there may be a gradual sanctification, a growing in grace, a daily advance in the knowledge and love of God.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> *The Works of John Wesley*, authorized edition published by the Wesleyan Conference, London, 1872 (14 vols.), Vol. VI, 46, as quoted in Leo George Cox, *John Wesley’s Concept of Perfection* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1968), 89.

<sup>42</sup> *The Works of John Wesley*, Vol. VIII, 328, as quoted in Cox, *John Wesley’s Concept of Perfection*, 96.

Wesley clearly had a balanced view on gradual and instantaneous nature of the attainment of holiness. Ward's concept of walking in the light must be understood, therefore, from Wesley's point of view and taken to be an emphasis on the gradual experience of holiness.

**2.3.2 *The Pursuit of Holiness.*** Regarding the pursuit of holiness, Ernest Ward's appeal was not just to know about it but to seek and experience it. His appeal for holiness was for all, including family members. Once he wrote to his sister,

Recently I sent you one of my tracts to read. It is also being translated into Marathi. The theme is Holiness. Of course, you must have read literature on this subject but what I urge is have you sought and found the experience. I need not emphasize the importance of it. The apostle tells us that "without Holiness no one shall see the Lord." [Heb. 12:14]. Besides Jesus told his disciples to wait for the promise of the Father, when they tarried in an upper room ... the Holy Ghost came suddenly and filled them all. This is an all absorbing theme and truly saved people come sooner or later to discern their need of this second work of grace and the necessity of seeking it with all the heart. I beseech you to obtain Holiness books ... from Methodist sources ... especially John Wesley's...<sup>43</sup>

Although Ward was highly Wesleyan in his approach to the subject of holiness, he did not give exclusive credit to the Wesleyans for teaching and practicing the doctrine. He wrote, "The experience of holiness as taught by Wesley [1703-1791] and his associates was no monopoly of theirs."<sup>44</sup> He noted that other prominent Christians such as Samuel Rutherford (1600-1661) the hymn writer, George Fox (1624-1691) the Quaker, Edward Payson (1783-1827) the Congregationalist, Charles Finney (1792-1875) the Presbyterian, David Marks (1805-1845) the Free Will Baptist, and Dr. Levy (Edgar

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<sup>43</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to his sister Louie Ward, Darwha, Moti Bagh, Yeotmal Dist, Oct 2, 1924. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>44</sup> Ernest Ward, *No Monopoly*, handwritten paragraph with initials, *Scrapbook 366*, 10. Ward Papers UVA. Of course, it was in the Wesleyan movement that the doctrine of holiness (or Christian perfection) found its most visible popularity.



Mortimer Levy, 1822-1906) the Regular Baptist, and many others “taught it, enjoyed it, and lived it.”<sup>45</sup>

### **3. Holiness and Associated Themes**

In this section we shall highlight Ward’s theology of holiness with special reference to the concepts of sin, the Holy Spirit, conversion, salvation, and Jesus Christ.

#### ***3.1 Holiness and Sin***

Ward always talked about holiness in contrast with sin. Regarding the origin of sin, Ward primarily refers to the fall of humanity. He laments over Adam and Eve’s disobedience, “Man was made in the image of God...But alas, in an evil hour, he revolted against Divine authority...and thought to make himself free...Instead of that he became a bond-slave of hell, and entailed upon his race sorrow, sin, suffering, disease and death.”<sup>46</sup> Ward also talks about the origin of sin in terms of perversion of natural or lawful human tendencies. He writes,

Sin sometimes originates in a seemingly lawful manner. It is in truth very commonly a perversion of that which is lawful and right. Drunkenness and gluttony are perversions of natural appetite for food and drink. Adultery is the perversion of a lawful desire. Pride is a perversion of self-respect. Anger is a perversion of righteous indignation. Covetousness is a perversion of economy and frugality. Frivolity or lightness is a perversion of cheerfulness. Asceticism [is] a perversion of self-denial. Self-indulgence [is] a perversion of Christian liberty. Hence Satan often appears as an Angel of light not to induce the child of God to commit sin per se but to draw him into that which seems lawful and right but whose extremity is darkness and death.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid. Intentionally or unintentionally, Ward does not include Phoebe Palmer (1807-1874), Hannah Whitall Smith (1832-1911) or other contemporary voices of holiness in this list. His list is certainly historical and interdenominational.

<sup>46</sup> Ernest Ward, *Holiness*, 1.

<sup>47</sup> Ernest Ward, *Sin*, handwritten paragraph with initials, *Scrapbook 366*, 137. Ward Papers UVA.

He goes on to elaborate on the nature and impact of sin. In a brief article, *Thoughts on Sin*, he opines, “Sin is a bad trade. The work is bad, the trend is bad, the wages are bad. [It was] The devil [who] first introduced the human race to the sin business. Got man apprenticed to the trade...It is astonishing now how much like devils men can act at times.”<sup>48</sup> Ward looks at sin in terms of the corruption of nature, distancing from original righteousness, and as a defect. He thinks that a human being is “not only a sinner by actual transgression, he is a sinner by *nature* as well.”<sup>49</sup> He writes,

This defect [sin] in man is known by many names in Scripture. It is distinguished as “the stony heart,” “the carnal mind,” “the body of death,” “our old man,” “the old leaven,” “root of bitterness,” “body of sin,” etc. What is meant in general by these terms is the inward principle in man which tends downward towards hell. It is proper to speak of sin in man as we speak of a tree having both invisible roots and visible fruit... Look at that blacklist of sins called, “works of the flesh,” in Galatians 5. That catalogue is given to apprise us of our sinful possibilities until we get the inward cleansing, and to warn us to be on our guard.<sup>50</sup>

On the effects of sin, Ward notes that “Sin is likened to a disease in Scripture (See, Isa. 1:5, 6).”<sup>51</sup> Behind all the suffering and troubles of humanity – physical, mental, or spiritual – lies the effects of sin. He further notes, “the misery, sorrow, and trouble; all the heartaches, wretchedness, and despair; all the wars, woes, poverty, and crime; all the

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<sup>48</sup> Ernest Ward, “Thoughts on Sin,” *Scrapbook 366*, 44. Ward Papers UVA. Emphasis original. This manuscript is written on the journal itself. Unpublished article. Not dated. (Hereafter, Ernest Ward, “Thoughts on Sin”).

<sup>49</sup> Ernest Ward, “Thoughts on Sin,” *Scrapbook 366*, 44. Ward Papers UVA. Emphasis original.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

sickness, agony, and pain this world has ever seen or known were due to sin.”<sup>52</sup> Ward mentions an interesting conversation where some people gave excuses in defense of sin,

We sometimes hear people say, “oh we must have a little sin to keep us humble,” “we must have pride enough to be decent,” etc. There are lots of excuses for sin, but my friends, they won’t pass with God. Is it pride that marks man decent? Does sin make men humble? What devil’s logic is this? Did not *pride* cast Lucifer down from heaven? Do proud people escape hell? The Bible says, “Pride goeth before *destruction* and a haughty spirit before a *fall*.” And finally, if they don’t get rid of their pride, they’ll fall into hell.<sup>53</sup>

Ward concluded the article by highlighting the impact of sin as a hindrance to heaven and a gateway to hell, “Whoever has the faintest hope of getting to heaven must take his stand vs. sin as Gideon’s father did against Baal, and stop pleading for it, otherwise their fate will be far more terrible than the Baal pleaders in the olden time.”<sup>54</sup>

Having reflected on sin as the cause of all misery and the path to hell, Ward is also aware of the remedy for it. The remedy is found not in human efforts but in the grace of Christ. On overcoming sin, he writes, “Some try to subdue sin by human grit. They turn over a new leaf. They form resolutions. They sign a pledge. Some count [to] ten when angry before they speak...” Over against human attempts that are prone to fail, Ward emphasizes the divine provision that “Jesus Christ can take that evil heart away that wants to sin and give you a new one. He can not only remove the desire, but he can take out even the principle of sin so that we shall not even feel the uprising within.”<sup>55</sup> Ernest

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 47.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 47-48. Emphasis original.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 48.

<sup>55</sup> Ernest Ward, *Grit vs Grace*, typed paragraph with handwritten initials, *Scrapbook 366*, p. 62. Ward Papers UVA.

further underlines that deliverance from sin comes through the experience of sanctification which is available for all believers in Christ. He is thankful for the work of Christ and encourages fellow Christians saying,

But thank God, there is deliverance from this inbred foe [sin]. Believers need not remain all their lives under bondage to this enemy. There is help laid upon one who is able to deliver us out of the hand of all our enemies. Praise God! Jesus Christ can so destroy the devil's capital in a man's soul that there will be nothing left for him to work with. But he who would be made holy must seek for it earnestly and definitely. This is not a chance work; no one ever stumbles into the experience of holiness.<sup>56</sup>

If sin and its impacts must be destroyed, holiness must be deliberately sought. A believer does not attain holiness by accident. Ward further highlights two interconnected aspects of the experience of holiness – the negative and the positive. He sees the destruction or “cleansing out of inbred sin” as the negative aspect of the experience of holiness, and “the infilling of perfect love” as positive.<sup>57</sup> Based on Exodus 32 (The Golden Calf episode) Ward illustrates the negative aspect, “The hatred of the ‘old man,’ and the determination of the real seeker of holiness to have the ‘body of sin destroyed,’ is well represented by the attitude of Moses...”<sup>58</sup> Ward sees the destruction of the idolaters by the swords of the Levites as a symbol of “the coming down of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost,” and “through the instrumentality of the sword of the Spirit, putting an end to [the] carnal self in the hearts of the disciples, as well as convicting and converting 3,000 souls.”<sup>59</sup> Also, based on Exodus 40:1, Ward illustrates the positive aspect of the

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<sup>56</sup> Ernest Ward, “Thoughts on Holiness,” *Pentecost Herald*, Vol. 3, No. 1, April 1, 1896: 2.

<sup>57</sup> Ernest Ward, “Tabernacle of the Mount, No. 1,” *The Free Methodist*, February 3, 1914: 70 (6).

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

experience of holiness. He sees God's act of "taking possession of the tabernacle" in the form of "a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle" as a symbol of "being filled with the [Holy] Spirit, whose chief attribute is love."<sup>60</sup>

### ***3.2 Holiness and the Holy Spirit***

The experience of being filled with the Holy Spirit immediately follows the destruction of sin in Ward's theology of holiness. It further marks the bestowing of God's perfect love. An earnest prayer for holiness is the key to both the experiences. Even if the prayer is not directly intended for the gift of holiness, it must be a prayer for freedom from sin,

A seeker might not pray literally for the "blessing of holiness," but it must be a prayer that comprehends the removal of inbred sin from the heart and the being filled with divine love. Words are nothing [not important]. If a soul only comprehends its need and groans it out in the Spirit, the prayer will be answered whatever the language. This comprehension of the soul's need is not merely intellectual. It is conviction wrought in the heart by the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost is the best teacher at the altar.<sup>61</sup>

However, for the Holy Spirit to effectively enable the believer in prayer for the removal of sin, the seeker must surrender his or her heart fully and confidently to God. The process of sanctification may be a humbling and painful experience, but it will result in fearless faith and perfect love. Thus,

...there must be a complete abandonment [surrender] of the soul to God. This involves the will, and he who would be healed of the cancer of sin must submit to the surgeon's knife. There is, however, no danger of malpractice, for our Great

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Ernest Ward, "Thoughts on Holiness," *Pentecost Herald*, Vol. 3, No. 1, April 1, 1896: 2.

Physician understands every case completely...If then, a truly justified believer, under divine conviction for holiness, will hold himself to the humiliating and crucifying process involved in the seeking as the Holy Ghost directs, there will certainly come deliverance to the soul. In this work the Spirit will eventually direct to the promises; faith will also spring up. Mighty faith, like a strong arm, will reach out and lay hold of God's immutable word. Sin will be destroyed, and the soul will be filled with that perfect love which casteth out fear.<sup>62</sup>

Deliverance of the soul from sin and its impacts and justification by the Holy Spirit adds strength to the faith of the believers, fills them with perfect love, and leads them into victorious Christian living. The lack of the blessing of holiness is seen as one of the reasons for spiritual weakness in the Christian life. Ward asserts,

One reason why so many professing Christians do not have a victorious life is because they are not seeking after holiness. "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled." [Mathew 5:6]. This teaches that people may be happy ever before they get filled. How much *more* then when they do get filled....filled with God, i.e., baptized with the Holy Ghost.... Do not fear to be filled with the Holy Ghost for the Holy Ghost is God....great peace and blessing will come to your heart, and perfect love which casteth out fear.<sup>63</sup>

Ward's frequent mention of "perfect love" that expels all fear (1 John 4:18) as the result of holiness is a remarkable reminder of the restoration of humanity's creation in the image of God. For "God is love" (1 John 4:8) and love is the "chief attribute" of the Holy Spirit.<sup>64</sup> Ward would occasionally ask, "Are you *now* clearly in the enjoyment of the experience of Perfect Love? If not, put away *all unbelief* and pray through."<sup>65</sup> The perfect love that emerged from the blessing of holiness was expressed in happiness. Ward noted,

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<sup>62</sup> Ernest Ward, "Thoughts on Holiness," *Pentecost Herald*, Vol. 3, No. 1, April 1, 1896: 2.

<sup>63</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to his sister Louie Ward, Darwah, Yeotmal Dist., April 6, 1909. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>64</sup> Ernest Ward, "Tabernacle of the Mount, No. 1," 2.

<sup>65</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to Ethel Ward, Evanston, Ills., Aug 30, 1927. The question mark is missing in the letter. Emphasis original.

“There can be no permanent happiness without holiness. Holiness and happiness are eternally wedded together. Our happiness and usefulness do not so depend so much on *where* we are, as *what* we are.”<sup>66</sup> The identity of a converted, saved and happy person is marked by holiness in the influence of the Holy Spirit.

### ***3.3 The Holy Spirit and Conversion***

Ward taught the doctrine of the “direct influence of the Holy Spirit in conversion.”<sup>67</sup> He held that “in conversion the sinner has a radical change of heart; “old things are passed away; all things are become new” [2 Corinthians 5:17b].<sup>68</sup> Regarding the particular role of the Holy Spirit in conversion, Ward taught,

[T]he Holy Spirit testifies to the heart of the believer that he is born of God. And that He guides his children not by the Bible alone, but by the Bible and the Holy Ghost. We teach nevertheless that there never is any conflict between them... after conversion a believer should be wholly sanctified in order to be able to fulfill the perfect will of God, and to be fit for heaven, and that every believer who seeks for it may obtain the baptism of the Holy Ghost.<sup>69</sup>

The baptism of the Holy Spirit ensured the believer’s entire sanctification and readiness to obey the will of God. As to the manifestation of being filled with the Holy Spirit, Ward had some reservations. He did not “believe in any mere formal noise,” but held and taught that “the Spirit comes like a rushing mighty wind as in the day of

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<sup>66</sup> Ernest Ward, “Thoughts on Holiness,” *Pentecost Herald*, Vol. 3, No. 1, April 1, 1896: 2. Emphasis original.

<sup>67</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to Adams, Burhanpur, Sep. 26, 1884, *Diary 367*, p. 250. (The letter is copied in the diary). Morton D. Adams was a Disciples of Christ missionary to India. For his brief biography, see, *They Went to India: Biographies of the Disciples of Christ* (Indianapolis, IN: Missionary Education Department, The United Christian Missionary Society, 1948), 14-15.

<sup>68</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to Adams, Burhanpur, Sep. 26, 1884, *Diary 367*, 250-51. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 251.

Pentecost...”<sup>70</sup> The “mere formal noise” can be seen as modern day shouting or speaking aloud in tongues observed in some of the Pentecostal fellowships. While Ernest was not completely against it, he did not wholeheartedly promote it either. This is a common characteristic of the Free Methodist Churches, especially in my experience in the USA. They believe in the Holy Spirit, but they suppress any noise in the name of the Holy Spirit. In this way, we may call them silent or subdued Pentecostals.

In addition to a controlled expression of the manifestation of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, such as the noises of speaking in tongues, Ward suggested that “all fully enlightened believers should lay aside adornings [sic] such as gold and pearls and costly array especially in heathen land.”<sup>71</sup> By the “influence of the Holy Spirit,” Ward meant the personality and guidance of the Holy Spirit that will enable the believers with a strong desire for holy living. This new life will not go after worldly adornment of the body but long for the fulness of salvation.

### ***3.4 Holiness and Salvation***

Ward saw the longing for holiness in a believer as a sure sign of his or her salvation. He wrote, “Every babe in Christ desires holiness...Those who have been truly born of the Spirit and are growing in grace naturally desire heart purity.”<sup>72</sup> Those who disliked or rejected holiness in any way, Ward considered them unsaved, unconverted, and deceived. He wrote,

[C]hurch members who sneer at Holiness and hate to hear preaching on the subject... are not clearly and definitely saved, that is to say, converted. If they

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 251-52.

<sup>72</sup> Ernest Ward, “Thoughts on Holiness,” *Pentecost Herald*, Vol. 3, No. 1, April 1, 1896: 2.



were, they would welcome Holiness truth and long to have the experience when they come to understand that it was their privilege and right.<sup>73</sup>

He who fights holiness is devoid of justifying grace. Deceived professors of religion, hypocrites and backsliders often fight holiness, but not saved souls.<sup>74</sup>

The experience of holiness and justification were also inseparable in Ward's thought. Ward understood justification in terms of forgiveness of sins. He emphasized that those who were "clear in the knowledge of sins forgiven or as the Bible says *justified*," will "not despise this important theme but will long to have the experience and hunger and thirst after it." However, if someone was "not clear in the experience of justification" it would likely be "distasteful and unpleasant" as a theme of inquiry or experience.<sup>75</sup>

### ***3.5 Holiness and Jesus Christ***

Ward connects the holiness themes of joy and justification with the need of renouncing the sin and having deeper faith in Jesus Christ who cleanses the seeker from all sins. Ward calls the believers to "renounce all sin and yield... [as] a willing servant to Jesus Christ." He asserts that Jesus "must be taken as your King before you can know him as your Saviour."<sup>76</sup> From his personal testimony, he highlights the role of Jesus, "My testimony today is clear in both justifying and sanctifying grace and I just now realize in my heart that the blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, cleanses me from all sin. All

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<sup>73</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to his sister Louie Ward, Darwha, Moti Bagh, Yeotmal Dist, Oct 2, 1924. This letter is signed as "Ernie," Ernest's family name. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>74</sup> Ernest Ward, "Thoughts on Holiness," *Pentecost Herald*, Vol. 3, No. 1, April 1, 1896: 2.

<sup>75</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to his sister Louie Ward, Darwha, Moti Bagh, Yeotmal Dist, Oct 2, 1924. This letter is signed as "Ernie," Ernest's family name. Emphasis original. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>76</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to his sister Louie Ward, Burhanpur, Central Provinces, Nov. 26, 1885. Ward Collection ATS.

praise and glory to our King!”<sup>77</sup> Ward shares about his experience of forgiveness of sins and subsequent blessing of happiness and peace at the feet of Jesus,

I am very happy because Jesus Christ has taken away my load of sin and given me salvation. My sins were many and the remembrance of them gave me much pain. My load of sin was so heavy I could not even sleep. For many years I had no true peace. At last I went to Jesus and fell at his feet. I cried unto him with all my heart and soul and praise the Lord! he didn't turn me away; but heard my prayer and gave me rest.<sup>78</sup>

The experience of peace and joy are hindered by the impact of sin. Ward underlines sin as the cause of eternal pain and death, as the sickness of soul that can only be cured by Jesus who is the soul's physician. Commenting on Romans 6:23 he appeals his audience,

It is written in God's word that "the wages of sin is death but the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." [Romans 6:23] Which of these do you wish to receive: ...everlasting joy or eternal pain? Which do you think is the best? I have no doubt you will all say (eternal) joy. Why should we choose pain? Well, remember before you can have true joy you must be separated from your sins. Sin is the sickness of your soul. Many people do not see their maladies. But when the light of God shines on them then they see. The Lord Jesus is the soul's physician and the great Guru of the world. He can remove your malady and take off your load of sorrow. Brothers, hear his sweet words "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." [Matthew 11:28] But remember that today is the day of salvation and *your* opportunity to obtain deliverance from Sin. "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call upon him while he is near" [Isaiah 55:6].<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Ernest Ward, "My Testimony," *The Missionary Tidings*, June 1931. This is probably the last published material of Ernest Ward. This testimony, written on Feb 23, 1931 from Los Angeles, CA, is a shorter version of his testimony published in *The Free Methodist* in 1879.

<sup>78</sup> Ernest Ward, "Testimony," *Hindi Preaching Notes (Diary 374)*, 6. Ward Collection ATS. The transliterated Hindi version is on the right, 7. Ward uses the Marathi word "sakshi."

<sup>79</sup> Ernest Ward, "Bazar Talk," *Hindi Preaching Notes (Diary 374)*, 18, 20. The Hindi transliteration is on the right, 19, 21. Ward Collection ATS.

The call to repent from sin, follow Jesus as true guru and Lord, and lead a life of holiness was a recurring theme in Ward's preaching ministry.

#### **4. Preaching Holiness**

Like his writings, Ward's sermons also focus greatly on the theme of holiness. These sermons appeal for a life of holiness. The believer's journey to holiness and heaven are to begin with repentance from sin and faith in Christ. The sinfulness of humanity, sin's consequences, and salvation in Christ also remain the dominant themes of Ward's holiness sermons. In his sermons we find two specific calls – the call to repentance and the call to perfection.

##### ***4.1 The Call to Repentance***

The call to repent from sin is probably the most common theme in Ward's preaching and talks. In one of his Bazaar Talks<sup>80</sup> Ernest Ward proclaims,

My dear friends, we are here again to witness for the true Guru [Jesus Christ]. Pay attention and hear our word. God loves you and desires to save you from (your) sins. But you will have to forsake your sins and repent. What have you gained my friends by sinning? Only a vile heart, a darkened conscience, a bad name! This is all you have gained. Are you not ready to forsake your sins? Do you not know that in the way of the vile and wicked there's not a vestige of true peace? The Bible says "The wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt" [Isa. 57:20]. Then do you not know also that no one can go to heaven with his sins. Therefore, stop and think my friends *what* you must do to be saved.<sup>81</sup>

He also points out the punishment for sin and its remedy in Jesus Christ.

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<sup>80</sup> Ernest titled several of his sermons and sermon outlines as Bazaar Talks. They are found in Diary 374 and contain both English and Hindi versions of his talks in facing pages.

<sup>81</sup> Ernest Ward, "Bazar Talk," *Hindi Preaching Notes (Diary 374)*, pp. 12, 14. Emphasis original. Ward Collection ATS.

The proper punishment for sin is hell fire, and if you once fall into hell you will never escape. Therefore, some person must suffer in your stead that you may obtain salvation. Jesus Christ, the true incarnation, has done this for you. He is the only begotten Son of God, and he died for your sake.<sup>82</sup> On the third day he rose again from the dead and went bodily up to heaven. Now God gives this command to all people everywhere. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved” [Acts 16:31]. O my friends, know this of a truth that there is no other atonement for your sins save the blood of Jesus Christ. Are you not ready then, today, to forsake all false remedies and take refuge in Him alone?<sup>83</sup>

The call to repentance was preached with the announcement of God’s love and His desire to save people. Ward’s presentation of Jesus as the true guru and the true incarnation is strategically relevant to his Hindu context. Ward ministered among people who looked up to their gurus (including fakirs or religious mendicants) for religious guidance and blessings. However, Ward found that these gurus lacked the character of a religious leader and was disappointed at the characters of their gods or the incarnations of their gods.<sup>84</sup> It is in this context that Ward presented Jesus as the only way to salvation. The uniqueness of salvation in Jesus Christ is further highlighted by pointing to His shedding of blood on the cross for the atonement for sins.

#### ***4.2 The Call to Perfection***

The terms “perfection” and “holiness” have been used interchangeably in Ward’s talks and writings. He noted that both the word “perfect” and the word “holy” are abounding in the Bible in close connection.<sup>85</sup> In his sermon titled “Christian Perfection,”

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>84</sup> See, Chapter 5, Interreligious Encounters.

<sup>85</sup> Ernest Ward, “Christian Perfection,” *The Free Methodist*, March 1925. Emphasis original. This short article is based on the sermon Ernest preached at the Holiness Convention. For the manuscript of the

Ward reflects on the challenge and significance of perfection (holiness) in relation to Christian discipleship, among other things. Commenting on the injunction “As God is perfect, so you should also be perfect” (Cf., Matt 5:48) he suggests that this phrase “does not enjoin Divine perfection, angelic perfection, nor even Adamic perfection, but it does demand Christian perfection, and that means perfection in love.”<sup>86</sup> It is not very clear how “Divine perfection” and “Christian perfection” are viewed to be different. Did Ward mean Christian perfection to be greater than divine perfection? How did he define and distinguish the two? Probably he wanted to suggest that no one can be perfect in loving like God. Or, he meant to say that divine perfection, as a general religious abstract ideal, is less significant than Christian perfection, which is incarnated and expressed in love. In any case, Ward understood Christian perfection (holiness) in terms of perfection in love. Early in his testimony he called the state of holiness as the “promised land of perfect love.”<sup>87</sup> Ward’s call to perfection may be seen as a call to love like Christ, to embody practical and sacrificial agape love. This is a high call with a high standard. He reflects on the biblical demand to be perfect and comments,

A high standard is lifted up in our text [Matt 5:48], and indeed, all through the Word of God there are lots of things enjoined to do, to be, and to suffer. But the experience of perfect love is absolutely essential to enable us to come up to the mark. In fact, without it, it is practically impossible.<sup>88</sup>

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sermon, see, Ernest Ward, “Sermon EFW at the Holiness Convention Yeotmal, Oct 16, 1924” *Scrapbook* 366, 212-215. It was written at Darwah, Berar. The printed article is pasted on pages 260-261 of *Scrapbook* 366. Ward Papers UVA. The word “holy” appears 546 times and “perfect” 123 times in the KJV. The NIV has 551 and 42 times respectively.

<sup>86</sup> Ernest Ward, “Christian Perfection,” *The Free Methodist*, March 1925.

<sup>87</sup> Ernest F. Ward, “Experience” *The Free Methodist*, October 8, 1879: 2. (Written from Geneva, Ill., Sep. 24, 1879). See also, *Scrapbook* 1877, 20-21.

<sup>88</sup> Ernest Ward, “Christian Perfection,” *The Free Methodist*, March 1925.

The challenge of Christian perfection is a demand to maintain a high standard of experience in the perfect love. The challenge comes with perils of failure caused by the attacks of the enemy of our soul. However, Ward presents Christian perfection as the armor of protection against such attacks. He makes the following point from Achilles's story,

One failure sometimes results in terrible disaster.... There is a Greek legend that Achilles, when a child, was dipped all over by his mother in the river Lethe. This made him invulnerable, so it was said, to the shafts of the enemy. One small spot in his heel, however, where his mother seized him, was not touched by the river. His adversary, finding it out, shot him there, and caused his death. In like manner if you have a weak spot, your great adversary, the devil, is on the search for it and, finding it out, will be sure to attack you there. Christian perfection will fortify you against the enemy, if you have the experience in your heart.<sup>89</sup>

Ward sees Christian perfection and holiness as an armor of protection against destructive attacks of sin and devil. Sin is seen as a weak spot in a Christian, prone to cause him or her to succumb to failure. Ward argues,

Inbred sin is a weak spot. Your besetting sin is a weak spot. The powers of darkness will concentrate there to effect your overthrow. Worse than that, inbred sin is like a hidden foe within the fort who opens the gate to the enemy without. If that is your condition, by God's help, discover, confess out, and let Him set you free. "Whom the Son maketh free is free indeed."

Jesus Christ, by virtue of His precious blood, and through the operation of the Holy Ghost, can purge out that plague of your heart and fill you with perfect love which casteth out fear. Praise His holy name!<sup>90</sup>

Ward's call to Christian perfection not only invites Christians to seek God's help through Christ, but also warns them to be careful from the counterfeits of holiness. This

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

warning is particularly addressed to the nominal Christians who dislike the idea of holiness. He writes, “Some [people] who profess to be Christians greatly dislike the sound of the words *holiness*, *perfection*, [and] *sanctification*. But if they were right in their hearts, they would not....”<sup>91</sup> He goes on to say,

We don’t deny that there are some counterfeits in holiness. So there are in justification. Every valuable thing is liable to be counterfeited. There are many counterfeits of gold, silver, and pearls in evidence, but did you ever see any of stone, mud or charcoal? God’s Word says, “Mark the perfect man and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace.” [Psalms 37:37]. No true disciple will ever plead for sin. He will not urge that “a *little* sin is needed to keep us humble.” On the contrary, he is ambitious to be as good as it is possible to be in this life.<sup>92</sup>

The desire to be good, the strength to reject sin and its impact, and the longing to be filled with the Holy Spirit are seen as the vital marks of a true disciple of Christ. A true disciple will never compromise with any aspect of sin and will never settle for a nominal Christian life. Instead, the believer or true disciple will seek perfection. This perfection, from Matt. 5:48, means two things to Ward: (1) “emancipation from inherited depravity” and (2) “being filled with the Spirit.”<sup>93</sup> Ward explains that both experiences are concurrent and assures that they are attained by prayer, “If you have not as yet obtained this experience, go in for it with all your heart, whatever the sacrifice involved. The answer to your prayer may be delayed a little to test your faith and consecration, but if you hold yourself to the seeking, it will surely come.”<sup>94</sup> Ward concludes this sermon on

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<sup>91</sup> Ernest Ward, “Christian Perfection,” *The Free Methodist*, March 1925. Emphasis original. Ward Papers UVA.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

Christian Perfection, recognizing the delay in getting the answer of prayer, with this example and personal testimony,

Abraham Lincoln signed the Proclamation January 1, 1863, emancipating three million slaves, but some time elapsed before every slave got the news. I sought the experience of holiness at a camp meeting many years ago, but it was not until the meeting closed....that the Spirit fell [on me] and I got the witness in my heart. He surely came, bless God! And I have the witness now. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).<sup>95</sup>

It seems that Ward understood emancipation from sin in terms of emancipation from slavery. The news may arrive late to some, but the news is there. So is the good news of the gift of Christian perfection. The Wards could witness about it through both personal piety and charity.

## **5. Practicing Holiness**

The practice of Christian holiness in the life and ministry of Wards was expressed both in their personal piety and revival meetings. Ernest and Phebe saw themselves as pilgrims on the earth journeying toward heaven. They thought the same of the fellow missionaries. They were convinced that they cannot see or help others see God without holiness. They saw themselves as agents of Wesleyan holiness. On the way to India, during their very first missionary journey, Ernest's very first sermon in London was on holiness. He noted in his journal, "On Sunday, I preached to an attentive congregation at

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid.



the Wesleyan chapel, St. Paul's Road; [From the] text 1 Pet 1:16.”<sup>96</sup> On the condition of the Wesleyan church and Wesley's vision of holiness, he commented,

From observation and enquiry, we learn that the Wesleyan body is not the aggressive holiness church she once was. John Wesley, whose noble monument stands in front of City Road chapel, once said, “We are raised up to spread Scriptural holiness over these lands.” Oh, that Methodists everywhere might be true to their mission!<sup>97</sup>

Ernest and Phebe saw the spreading of Scriptural holiness as their mission. Thus, their ministries in India were characterized by the holiness emphasis in all they did. The revival meetings they organized or participated brought them together to seek and experience the gift of holiness. These meetings were both for missionaries as well as for the indigenous Christians. A key characteristic of holiness meetings was seeking the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

### ***5.1 Baptism of the Holy Spirit***

From the very beginning of their ministry in India, Ernest and Phebe remained conscious of their need for the blessing of holiness and empowering of the Holy Spirit. Living in Achalpur (Ellichpur) with the Sibleys, they devoted themselves to prayer for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. In May 1881, Phebe gives the following account,

There were 5 of us here, Bro. and Sister Sibley, Sister Sisson, Ernest and I. May 9<sup>th</sup> we began to pray for the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. We would meet at dusk and pray definitely for that one thing. Well, God knew we had to get some rubbish out of the way first before he could fill us so we began to examine ourselves and found we were lacking, though I think Ernest was ready for it – he always has his pitcher right side up ready to catch the rain from heaven but I was

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<sup>96</sup> Ernest Ward, “Bro. Ward's Journal of Life in India” London, Dec 18, 1880. Ernest Ward, *Scrapbook One*, 109. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

sadly lacking – and so we kept going down, down until it seemed there would be nothing left for me. I don't know exactly how the others felt about it. I have had some strange experiences since leaving home and had doubted away the blessing of Holiness. On the evening of May 21, the promise of heaven and hell seemed to meet and each wanted victory in my soul. I never had such a fight with the devil as then – and after a struggle of some hours God spoke peace to my soul and the devil left me and angels came and ministered unto me. I feel constrained to tell you this for I wish to magnify the grace of God. He can bring us through places no matter how difficult. Everyday thus far the devil comes but “we are not ignorant of his devices.” I say this in all humility. I believe God has a great work for me and the devil don't [sic] want me to bear the straight testimony before these missionaries and he knows it will be worse for his Kingdom if they get the blessing of holiness, but I do testify to all God does for me and the heaven is working.<sup>98</sup>

The Wards saw the Baptism of the Holy Spirit as an essential experience into holiness. They taught that this experience must be sought urgently without postponing. Ernest wrote,

It does not pay to postpone seeking that blessing. There is always a danger of a person being diverted into something *below it* if they lose sight of the quintessence of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost....it is exhibited in a more concrete form in the life and conversation of Jesus Christ himself. This is the mainline to urge upon seekers of the Baptism. To be inwardly purged of all unlikeness to the pattern and to be inwardly filled with all His likeness. That covers the ground of the 2<sup>nd</sup> work of grace. But what confessions to make and to whom, what promises to plead and how to pray, the seeker himself must learn at the foot of the cross. Only those who are clear in the experience can be of much use to seekers of the same.<sup>99</sup>

Seeking the blessing of holiness that came through the anointing of the Holy Spirit remained an unwavering practice in the spiritual lives of the Wards. It expressed their total confidence in God's strength for their mission work. It also showed that their

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<sup>98</sup> Phebe Ward, Letter to Brother and Sister, Chickalda, India, May 24, 1881, 1-2. Ward Collection ATS. Most of Phebe's letters were addressed to Gilbert and Frank, her brothers. The sister in this letter refers to her sister-in-law.

<sup>99</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to Ethel Ward, Evanston, Ills., Aug 30, 1927. Ward Collection ATS.

ministry was an ongoing spiritual warfare. Phebe saw the significance of holiness and filling with the Holy Spirit as her armor in the context of ministry as a battle. She wrote to her brother,

I tell you Gilbert we don't keep our armor bright unless we are fighting. And the Lord has put me in such a place that if I don't shoot every time my Commander orders "Fire," I lose ground. Its first "Take the Cross" and then "Hallelujah." I never was placed where I am now, but I sing "We'll end this warfare down by the river." Ernest usually goes ahead, and I bring up the rear and once in a while the Lord gives me a sling stone and I throw that. The Lord is teaching me this lesson. His soldiers should be on the aggressive, never wait for the devil to start the battle. He is stirred here, and we are praying the Lord to cash him out. We don't try to defend ourselves. We leave that with the Lord, but we do try to defend the faith...<sup>100</sup>

During these early days in mission, Phebe was reading *Bunyan's Complete Works* that her brother Gilbert had presented to her. Upon reading *Pilgrims Progress*, she wrote, "My soul is greatly blessed in reading it and I am as thankful to God and you that I have it. You can have no idea what treasures books are to us here. Shut out as we are from companionship with saved souls we turn to our books and feed while reading them."<sup>101</sup> Phebe was also benefiting from the *Fox' Book of Martyrs*. She had read enough from this book "to stir my soul to be faithful to the trust given me and one thing is to spread scriptural holiness."<sup>102</sup> Phebe and Ernest's commitment to spread Scriptural holiness was also demonstrated in the many holiness meetings that they conducted.

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<sup>100</sup> Phebe Ward, Letter to Brother Gilbert, Ellichpur, India, Aug 3, 1881, p. 2. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Phebe Ward, Letter to Brother Gilbert, Ellichpur, India, Aug 3, 1881, 2. Ward Collection ATS. This last but most important sentence may soon be lost as the page is deteriorating. I hope it is preserved. I am thankful to have read and noted it.

## 5.2 *The Holiness and Revival Meetings*

The holiness meetings in India reminded Ernest and Phebe of their camp meeting experiences in America. Phebe describes one such holiness revival meeting and its characteristics in the following account,

We have such a blessed lot of pilgrims. The meetings held between Christmas and New Year were very profitable. God gave a very heart-searching time all through our ranks and missionaries and native Christians went down before God and were resurrected to newness of life. It reminded me of camp meetings in America. I am convinced that God can work among the natives just as He does among us. The same groanings under conviction, the same glorious deliverances and the same shine on the face. It was in Jewarbi's case at Raj Nandgaon [1897]. It has been here [Yavatmal, 1905], but I never saw it anywhere else in India. The tide rose higher all the week. Soul seeking and getting delivered from actual guilt and then from the desire to sin. Oh this is a glorious clean way! I take it anew with fresh courage and zeal. I have not felt such touches of divinity for years as came to my soul in this meeting and light was never clearer and never walked in more gladly. Life is such a joy!<sup>103</sup>

The above weeklong meeting came to its finale on the New Year's Day 1905.

Phebe called it the "crowning meeting," as it was marked by the experiences like the Day of Pentecost.

The crowning meeting was Sun[day] morn[ing] Jan. 1<sup>st</sup> [1905]. A native teacher who had been professing holiness all the year (and was much blessed a year ago) had been seeking during the week. During love feast, got up and made a clear breast of everything, got down before the altar and prayed through to forgiveness. It was a melting time. When the victory came, some were shouting, some weeping, some going [a]round shaking hands, some falling on each other's necks and kissing among the brethren. Oh, it was one of the days of the Son of Man!<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Phebe Ward, Letter to Gilbert & Family, Yeotmal, Berar, Jan 6, 1905. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

The famous revival at Pandita Ramabai's Mukti Mission (June 1905) was a significant historic event. Interestingly, several similar (although smaller) revivals had already been taking place in that region and beyond.<sup>105</sup> One example is the revival of Yavatmal mentioned above which preceded the revival at Mukti by five months. Also, Ernest and Phebe have been visiting Mukti at least since 1902 and actively participating in some of their meetings. In 1905, Phebe was at Mukti again. She witnessed the famous revival. In fact, she was actively involved in that historic revival.<sup>106</sup> Phebe wrote,

The revival has struck Mukti. Some are praying all the time...I got a chance to testify twice...The evening meeting exceeded the anything I ever saw in the way of demonstrations. I shall never forget the shakings. Literally the children shaking for hours. The English workers are in hearty sympathy with the revival. Prayed with Miss Cole until 12:30 who was asking a clean heart. God helped her.<sup>107</sup>

It is important to note that Ernest and Phebe were conducting holiness and revival meetings from the very beginning of their ministry in India (1881) and the Mukti Mission (founded in 1883) housed some of the girls from Ward's orphanages in Chhattisgarh (1897-1901). These girls were mentored by the Wards in the experience of holiness and revival meetings. Thus, the Wards definitely had a share, however small or unrecognized it may be, in the culmination of the revival at Mukti Mission.

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<sup>105</sup> See, Helen S. Dyer, *Revival in India: Years of the Right Hand of the Most High* (London: Morgan and Scott, 1907). This is an excellent source on the brief history of revivals all across India.

<sup>106</sup> The revival at Mukti may be seen in line with the historic Great Awakenings (1730-40s, Jonathan Edwards; 1820s-50s, Charles Finney; 1906, Azusa Street Revival; and 1904-05, the Welsh Revival, etc.). For a brief history of revivals see, Wesley L. Duewel, *Revival Fire* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995).

<sup>107</sup> Phebe Ward, *P. E. Ward, Wun Berar, Diary 1905*, October 26, 1905, Ward Collection ATS.

The continuation of revival meetings under the India Holiness Association owes much to the labors of the Wards. The annual revival meetings were important occasions to spiritually refuel for the ongoing as well as future ministry. Phebe noted,

You can understand how we can look out over the coming year with renewed faith and holy love – pledging anew fidelity to God and His cause. We need touches of this kind in this land of spiritual blight and famine. Everything looks small as compared with heavenly interests. We have a holy consecrated band, who are plain in dress and home furnishings....I go back to Wun with a set determination to be true to God and souls. True to the trust the church put in us.<sup>108</sup>

Modest clothing and simple dwelling were marks of the pilgrims (holiness missionaries). Phebe was sorry to learn that her Conference back home had to warn its members against “needless adornments on the person or in the home.”<sup>109</sup> She reckoned that it was not so in 1874 when she had joined the Free Methodist Church. She testified, “today I am more in love with the royal way of the cross than I was then....I am glad we are back in into the folds [FMC] again. I have real soul freedom right here where others may feel there might be straps put on us.”<sup>110</sup> Phebe enjoyed the freedom in the Spirit amid organizational rules and busy ministry schedules.

Another revival meeting that took place on the evening of October 16, 1905, featured young girls experiencing a special touch of the Holy Spirit. The meeting was marked with indigenous Christians experience powerful time of prayer, anointing, and testimonies. Ernest Ward described the event in the following words,

[W]hen we got down to pray the Spirit of God fell on the people and such a time, for about 2 hours, I never saw in India. There was no chance for sermon after that.

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<sup>108</sup> Phebe Ward, Letter to Gilbert & Family, Yeotmal, Berar, Jan 6, 1905. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

Deshir who has been seeking holiness for some time came out clear and ran over and testified with a loud voice to what God had done for her. Aiti testified sitting down with shouts of praise. She prays most wonderfully for the others who are seeking has such a sweet face but such a heavy voice. Two girls fell over under the power of God. One was Simi the girl I took to Nagpur. But she got up after a while and gave such a testimony full of scripture and all in the Spirit. Among other things she said, "I do not belong to this world, I'm a pilgrim in the earth." .... One girl said, "I am God's flower" and got greatly blessed repeating it over. Malin Bai, who was I believe the first girl in this revival to get the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, gave her sweet testimony.<sup>111</sup>

Ward urged the seekers of holiness to follow the pattern of Christ. Jesus was the central role model for spirit filled ministry. He further encouraged fellow believers to draw at the foot of the cross for the gift of the Holy Spirit. Ward's theology and practice of holiness were conclusively Christ-centered.

### ***5.3 Prayer for Revival***

Prayer for revival was an intermittent act of worship in the life of the Wards. Prayer was the key to both their personal experience of holiness and vision for the salvation of others. In times of prayer, they would confess their weakness and failures and ask for God's intervention. The experience of holiness could be lost in the fight for godliness. Therefore, regaining and retaining the anointing of the Holy Spirit who enabled a holy living was the central theme of their prayers. In deep humility they would confess their struggles and pray for God's grace. Phebe once testified,

I had lost the experience of holiness and God is more pleased to have us drop everything until we are where we ought to be in experience. It means real fighting to keep true to God. We have no sham battle in fighting with our wily foe. God has graciously delivered me, and I mean to be true to God and profit by every lesson I have learned. It means constant watchfulness and great prayerfulness to "keep yourselves in the love of God." Daily self-denial and daily cross bearing

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<sup>111</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to Ethel Ward, Yeotmal, Oct 17, 1905. Ward Collection ATS.

and thereafter our hearts are cleansed, it is a daily dying. I am like a child, but I am learning. Sitting at Jesus' feet.<sup>112</sup>

Sitting at the feet of Jesus in prayer initiated an empowering and refueling experience. Prayer played a crucial role in the promotion of holiness. It was both an influential act of witness to others as well as mediation to God. One of Ernest's prayers for revival reads as follows,

O God, revive thy work. Bring to light the hidden things of darkness. Unmask hypocrisy. Expose false hopes. Shake sandy foundations. Search out those who are hiding behind a refuge of lies. Make the ungodly to tremble. Make the wicked to cry out for mercy. Wake up the indifferent, the careless, the unconcerned. Arouse those who are sleeping on the brink of hell. Stir up those who are asleep in Zion to attend to the salvation of their neighbors. Send out thy light and power to those who sit in darkness. Reveal depravity wherever it may be lurking. Root out the bitter weeds that spoil the crop. May the Spirit come upon us in convincing, in convicting, in converting power.<sup>113</sup>

Ward not only earnestly prayed for revival, holiness, and salvation but he also actively engaged in doing everything to provide a context and a platform to practice and experience the joy of holiness. One such platform was the Holiness Association.

## **6. The India Holiness Association (IHA)**

The practice of holiness that was demonstrated in revival meetings found an organized expression under the auspices of the India Holiness Association. What began as an occasional fasting-prayer meeting among the missionaries had soon become a regular feature of their ministry. Ernest and Phebe not only initiated holiness meetings in

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<sup>112</sup> Phebe Ward, Letter to Gilbert Cox, Raj Nandgaon, CP India, Sept 8, 1896. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>113</sup> Ernest Ward, *Prayer*, handwritten paragraph with initials, *Scrapbook 366*, p. 136. Ward Papers UVA.



their own ministry centers but also assisted other missionaries to organize holiness and revival meetings in their respective mission centers. Thus, although based in central India, they were also promoting holiness, as the opportunities came, in both north and south of the country.

### **6.1 A Brief History of IHA**

In Western India, Ernest appreciated Pastor S. P. Jacobs of the Grant Road Methodist Church, Mumbai, for his Bible studies on holiness.<sup>114</sup> Commending his efforts in this line he wrote that Jacobs “makes the theme [of holiness] prominent in all his preaching and seems bent on keeping it before the people – Thank God!”<sup>115</sup> In the south, Ernest and Phebe assisted in the holiness meetings in Secunderabad (Andhra Pradesh) in 1885. He reported to the *Free Methodist*, “We have been helping in a few meetings for the promotion of holiness...At present the association [holiness association] has fourteen members, four of whom are of the South India Conference [of the Methodist Church].”<sup>116</sup> Ward was concerned about the lack of enthusiasm among some of the members. He noted, “It is no injustice to say that a majority of members of said conference are not in sympathy with that kind of radical holiness that passes with the pilgrims.”<sup>117</sup> But he remained thankful for leaders such as Brother S. P. Jacobs, who had Ward-like passion

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<sup>114</sup> Ernest Ward, “Notes on India,” *Scrapbook One*, 112-113. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Ernest Ward, “From Brother Ward,” *The Free Methodist*, January 6, 1886: 11. (Written from Burhanpur, November 19, 1885). The letter also talks about Ernest suffering with pleurisy, excitement for the coming missionaries, and his assurance for them to begin the work at once with the help of interpretation, etc. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>117</sup> Ernest Ward, “From Brother Ward,” *The Free Methodist*, January 6, 1886: 11.

for holiness and its promotion. He was happy that they had “good meetings” in Secunderabad even in the midst of “some opposition.”<sup>118</sup>

In the same report, Ernest mentions Jacobs as the president of the Holiness Association (which was in the making at that time) during the year 1885. However, the official interdenominational India Holiness Association was not formally inaugurated until 1910. The business meetings toward this significant ecumenical association might have begun as early as 1887, under the joint leadership of Ward and Jacobs.<sup>119</sup> From *The More Excellent Way*, the official publication of the India Holiness Association, we learn that Rev. Ernest Ward was the founding President of the India Holiness Association in 1910.<sup>120</sup> This is an important and due recognition of Ward’s contribution to Christian holiness in central India (See Image 27).

For the first twelve years (1910-1922) the Association organized its annual conventions at Raj Nandgaon, Chhattisgarh.<sup>121</sup> The 1923 Convention was held in Pune and thereafter Yavatmal became the preferred location.<sup>122</sup> Prescott Beals, a missionary who was active in the Association, tells of the selection of Yavatmal, “For many years the India Holiness Association has been hosted by the Free Methodist Church in Yeotmal

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<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Ernest Ward, “Ellichpoor, Berar, India” *The Free Methodist*, April 20, 1887: 11 (Letter to the editor, published in the Missions section).

<sup>120</sup> E. A. Seamands, “Holiness Association History,” *The More Excellent Way*, May-June 1950: 4.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

.... Being a central locality, it has been convenient for delegates coming from all parts of the country.”<sup>123</sup>

## **6.2 The Vision**

What was the India Holiness Association all about? What were its aims and objectives? The IHA was an interdenominational fellowship of Christians with a passion to experience and spread Scriptural holiness in their life and ministries. The vision for the Association is meticulously expressed in the following words,

The India Holiness Association is an interdenominational fellowship of believers, whose object is to encourage and propagate the doctrine and experience of entire sanctification in heart and life. In the teaching of the doctrine of entire sanctification as the second work of grace, it is the endeavor of this Association to emphasize the fact of the instantaneous cleansing of inward sin and the infilling of perfect love as the paramount work wrought in the heart when the baptism of the Holy Spirit is received. It is realized that no one denomination or segment of the Christian Church has the monopoly on the doctrine of Scriptural Holiness, but this great truth is the heritage and possession of the Church Universal. The Holiness Association merely seeks to restore the teaching to its rightful place in Christian doctrine and character.<sup>124</sup>

The above vision, drafted in the 1940s, emphatically expresses holiness heartbeats of Ernest Ward himself under whose leadership the India Holiness Association became an interdenominational movement. Here too, Ward represents the missiologist of “mission at sunrise” as he was more involved in the ground works than reflections on the growth, belief, and practices of the movement.

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<sup>123</sup> Prescott Beals, “Introduction: The India Holiness Association,” *The More Excellent Way: A Digest of Christian Holiness*, Theodore and Esther Williams, eds., (Bombay: GLS Press/India Holiness Association, 1986), ix.

<sup>124</sup> “The India Holiness Association” *The More Excellent Way*, January-February 1948: 5.

### 6.3 The Denominations

The following table<sup>125</sup> shows some of the major denominations represented in the India Holiness Association:

*Table 2*  
*Denominations in the IHA*

<i>Presidents</i>	<i>Term/Year</i>	<i>Denomination</i>	<i>Place</i>
Rev. Ernest F. Ward	1910	Free Methodist	Raj Nandgaon
Rev. S. C. Lawson	1911	Methodist	Raj Nandgaon
Rev. L. S. Tracy	1912-18	Nazarene	Raj Nandgaon
Rev. F. B. Whistler	1919	Pentecost Band	Raj Nandgaon
Rev. C. B. Harvey	1920-24	Wesleyan (USA)	Raj Nandgaon <sup>126</sup>
Rev. R. G. Coddling	1925	Nazarene	Yeotmal
Rev. D. W. Zook	1926	Hepzibah Faith Mission	Yeotmal
Rev. M. M. Coffin	1927-28	American Friends	Yeotmal

What started as a fellowship of three or four individuals, the Association had grown to 120 members and by the time Ward retired in 1927, there were seven denominations represented in addition to the Free Methodist Church. Other leaders of the Association during 1929 to 1950 included Methodist missionary Rev. E. A. Seamands (President, 1934-40, 1945-50), Friends USA missionary Rev. E. L. Cattel (1941),

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<sup>125</sup> See, E. A. Seamands, "Holiness Association History," *The More Excellent Way*, May-June 1950: 4.

<sup>126</sup> Except 1923. In that year the Convention was held in Pune. From 1924 it continued at Yavatmal.

Nazarene Rev. P. L. Beals (1942) and Rev. E. A. Erny (1943-44) of the Oriental Missionary Society.<sup>127</sup>

#### **6.4 Holiness Publications**

Ward was engaged in promoting Christian holiness not only through revival meetings but also through publications. One of the earliest holiness magazines published by the Association was called *Raj Marg* (Lit., the King's Highway). It was a Marathi journal published from Mumbai. In fact, this was the only publication on holiness during the 1890s in India. He reported to the editor of *The Free Methodist*,

At the business meeting of our India Holiness Association, although but three of us were present, we decided to continue the publication of the *Raj Marg* (*King's Highway*) in Mahrattée [sic]. This is the only vernacular paper to my knowledge published in India especially devoted to holiness. As yet the subscriptions do not pay for its publication. Friends of holiness having any of the Lord's money and desiring to help the enterprise along may remit donations to Sumant Vishnu, Publisher, 2 Tanks, Bombay.<sup>128</sup>

In spite of the challenges of funds the publication of *Raj Marg* was carried on. In addition to this, Ward published holiness tracts and assisted other writers with editing, proof-reading, and reviewing of similar works. He mentions completing the manuscript of his own Holiness Manual on Aug 10, 1925 and sending it to Bro. A. J. Garrison for

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<sup>127</sup> See, E. A. Seamands, "Holiness Association History," *The More Excellent Way*, May-June 1950: 4.

Dr. Tennent recalls that Dr. Seamands was the mentor and overseer of Ms. Eva Logue, Mrs. Tennent's aunt and missionary to India. Our talk about biographical projects on unknown missionaries took place at Eva's grave in Smallwood/Westminster, Maryland. (Mentor feedback, April 6, 2020).

<sup>128</sup> Ernest Ward, "Ellichpoor, Berar India," *The Free Methodist*, April 20, 1887: 11.

printing.<sup>129</sup> This was first written in English then translated into Marathi. Ward had reviewed the Marathi translation of Watson's *A Holiness Manual*<sup>130</sup> and noted,

The translator [R. A. Joshi] is evidently a xian [sic], has studied theology and knows better how to put our holiness terminology into Marathi. That is so far as it can be rendered smoothly and intelligently in that lang[guage]. I think the book will help some of our xians [sic]. It contains mainly of a short comment on all the verses bearing on the doctrines of justification and sanctification. The whole of each text being given with chap[ter] and verse of the Bible. It includes explanation of those texts which are used by our opponents in fighting holiness. Still whenever and wherever it is published in India the proof sheets should be well read otherwise on account of the technical words indistinctly written it is likely to teach nonsense.<sup>131</sup>

Apparently, Ward was disappointed with the plethora of technical words used in the above book and found it less useful for his context. As noted earlier, Ward belonged to the Orientalist camp of missionaries and was increasingly concerned about grassroots impacts of mission work. He was not against technical works, if they were produced and distributed for mission contexts, such as missionary training centers, that would benefit from them. He did think that such works were helpful for some Christians but not for all. As a missionary of the sunrise, he probably had the usefulness of such materials for the new believers or non-Christian audience in his mind. He was a field missionary and wanted resources that will appeal to the needs of his fields. He did not appreciate literal translations and technical jargons. Thus, instead of that technical book he suggested the

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<sup>129</sup> Ernest Ward, Darwha Motibag, *Diary 1925*.

<sup>130</sup> George D. Watson, *A Holiness Manual* (Newport, KY: Watson, 1882), 144 pp.

<sup>131</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to Ethel Ward, No. 10, Los Angeles, Oct 26, 1920. This letter is written on two different types of paper: pages one and two (marked by orange color pencil) are on a dark brown feeble paper (dated Oct 23), page 3 begins with Oct 23 as the first word (on a thick white paper, about half size of the last page, dual colored due to water or sun) and the 4<sup>th</sup> page is Legal sized which has the Marathi words written in Devnagri.

distribution of tracts written in simple common languages by Rev. L. S. Tracy and himself. He wrote,

If Bro. Tracy's splendid tract on Holiness and mine shorter one were printed so as to be ready for circulation it wld [sic] greatly help. There are quite a number of moral and mental philosophy terms in Watson's book and if I am any judge Joshi's trans[lation] is a little too literal.<sup>132</sup>

Ward does appreciate Joshi's use of the word नवीन जन्म (Lit., "new birth")...for 'regeneration,' and wished that the Marathi speaking Church might use it more and replace the word पुनर्जन्म and its variants commonly in use in different translations such as Authorized (or the King James) Version (पुन्हा जन्म), Revised Version (नवा जन्म), and Pandita Ramabai's translation of the Bible (वरुण जन्म).<sup>133</sup> All through his ministry and even after his retirement Ward kept suggesting that "more of those Marathi Holiness tracts be given out to Marathi preachers and Christians." He was confident that this will prove to be a great spiritual blessing to the local Christian community.<sup>134</sup>

There is no information on how long the publication of *Raj Marg* continued. We do know that *The More Excellent Way* became the official journal of the India Holiness Association sometime around Ward's retirement. Ward regularly published his brief reports and short articles on holiness and other themes in *The Free Methodist*, *The Vanguard*, *The Missionary Tidings*, among others.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to Ethel Ward, No. 10, Los Ang., Oct 26, 1920. Use of Hindi original. All Hindi/Marathi terms are equivalent variants of "New Birth."

<sup>134</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to Ethel Ward, 557 Redfield Ave, Los Angeles, Apr 3, 1928.

<sup>135</sup> *The Free Methodist*, the official magazine of the Free Methodist Church, is now being published as *Light and Life* from the Free Methodist headquarters at Indianapolis, IN. *The Vanguard*, the official periodical of the Vanguard Mission, is no longer in print. According to Robert Danielson, an imprint of the Vanguard was also published from Bombay, India. However, no copies have been preserved.

## 6.5 Holiness Forever

Ward's retirement from active ministry in India and settlement back in the USA did not stop him from his efforts for the cause of holiness. He continued to encourage the holiness missionaries in India through his many letters. In September 1930, he sent the following greetings and prayers through Ethel,

Give my love and salutations to all our beloved missionaries, the Native Xians [sic], ... all the holiness missionaries you meet, and all in attendance at the Holiness Convention. The Triune benediction of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost be experienced and realized at every service. *Amen*. No dry meetings. Let there be none. If all unite in coming up to the help of the Lord against the mighty, the Convention will so turn out. Praise God! A holiness atmosphere will make the meetings worthwhile. Such an atmosphere makes "heaven come down our souls to greet while glory crowns the mercy seat."<sup>136</sup>

Ward's Trinitarian prayer for revival is remarkable. He prayed for spirit-filled meetings. He prayed that the attendees be united in the power of Jesus to fight against the mighty enemy who plagued the lives of people with sin and ungodliness. He asserted that without the atmosphere of holiness the Convention will be dry meeting. He prayed for heavenly experience in the revival meetings.

Ward also continued to actively participate in local holiness meetings in Los Angeles, CA. He attended several meetings and conventions as long as he was physically able. During the Summer of 1930 he attended the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of World's

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Ethel Ward briefly worked at the Vanguard headquarters in St. Louise, MO. Ernest and Phebe took care of the Vanguard Orphanage at Sanjan, Gujarat, during their ministry in that state. *The Missionary Tidings*, the official monthly of the WFMSFMC (Woman's Foreign Missionary Society of the Free Methodist Church), contains much of the Wards' later notes and reports. All these publications were holiness and missionary bulletins.

<sup>136</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to Ethel Ward, 573 Kendall Ave, Los Angeles, Sep 15, 1930. Emphasis original. Ward Collection ATS.



Fundamentalist Association and Concert of National Association of the Promotion of Holiness at Peniel Mission. He also attended the Camp Meetings of the Free Methodist Church and preached regularly at Hermon Free Methodist Church. Rev. R. H. Warren, the pastor at Hermon, took him around in his car.<sup>137</sup> Holiness remained his forever passion to the end of his life. From evangelism to orphan care and everything the Wards did for the Kingdom of God was to train men, women, children and everyone “in the way of righteousness and true holiness.”<sup>138</sup> His desire for a prolonged probation, as he calls an extended life, was expressed in the following prayer: “I only pray that my probation may be lengthened out that I may help pray souls into the Kingdom of God and help stimulate souls to seek holiness.”<sup>139</sup> Unquestionably, his Indian friends called him a holy man. We read in *Making Faces*,

“Sahib,” his Indian friends would say whenever they saw him, “sing us one of your songs and preach to us. We always like to hear you.” Then turning to a stranger who may not have happened to know him, the Indian would invariably add, “he is a very holy man.”<sup>140</sup>

Ward’s active involvement in the cause of Christian holiness and people’s recognition of him as a holy man are notable themes in his holiness missiology. These

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<sup>137</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to Ethel Ward, 573 Kendall Ave, Los Angeles, No. 175, c.1930. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>138</sup> Ernest Ward, “Children’s Home,” *Letter to Sister Abrams*, Raj Nandgaon, Mar 11, 1897. See, *Scrapbook* 393, p. 151. Minnie F. Abrams (1859-1912) went to India as a missionary of the Woman’s Foreign Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church (WFMS) in 1887. The following year she left WFMS and joined Pandita Ramabai at Mukti Mission. She was a friend of the Wards and an eyewitness of the Mukti Revival of 1905.

<sup>139</sup> Ernest Ward, Letter to Ethel Ward, 573 Kendall Ave, Los Angeles, Aug 7, 1930. Ward Collection ATS.

<sup>140</sup> Ethel Ward, *Making Faces* (Unpublished story, 1937-38), 3. Ward Collection ATS.

trends place him significantly within company of holiness missionaries both from among other denominations as well as his own.

## 7. Holiness and the Free Methodist Church

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, Wards were the product of the nineteenth century holiness movement. One embodiment of this powerful movement was the Free Methodist holiness camp meetings. Within Free Methodism, they were nurtured in the Christian perfectionist/holiness teachings and practices of the Wesleyan holiness tradition. Their primary sources on the subject came from denominational publications such as the *Earnest Christian* and *The Free Methodist*. Rev. B. T. Roberts, the founding General Superintendent of the Free Methodist Church, began the publication of the *Earnest Christian* in January 1860 as a monthly magazine.<sup>141</sup> Although not the official publication of the denomination this magazine had a wide impact with its holiness teachings.<sup>142</sup> The official magazine *The Free Methodist* was published weekly from 1868 and continues till today under the new name *Light and Life Magazine*, as a monthly publication.

*The Free Methodist* had, for over a century, a regular column on Holiness under which both the seekers and scholars of the theme frequently published theological articles, Biblical lessons and reflections, and testimonies. The Free Methodist Church has

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<sup>141</sup> It was published until Roberts' death in 1893. See, Howard Snyder, *Populist Saints*, 539.

<sup>142</sup> A collection of B. T. Roberts' editorials in the *Earnest Christian* is published by his son as *Holiness Teachings*. See, Benson H. Roberts, *Holiness Teachings: Compiled from the Editorial Writings of the Late Rev. Benjamin T. Roberts* (North Chili, NY: "Earnest Christian" Publishing House, 1893).

been seen as “the literal heirs of the New England Puritans”<sup>143</sup> and noted for asceticism, deep commitment to education, instrument-free worship, holiness teachings, and passion for evangelism and mission. It is an active member of Christian Holiness Partnership (CHP)<sup>144</sup> promoting Wesleyan vision of holiness in all its endeavors. According to Timothy Tennent,

A Wesleyan vision of holiness does not fall into the trap of over-optimism, which fails to take seriously the full force of both personal and corporate rebellion against God. However, it also avoids the trap of over-pessimism, which can only rehearse the bad news and cannot see the New Creation already breaking into the world in faith, life, experience, and witness of the church of Jesus Christ. We have a vision for the power of transforming righteousness in the world.<sup>145</sup>

Ernest and Phebe explicitly shared the spirit of this vision in their lives and ministries in central India. They not only took seriously humanity’s rebellion against God instigated by inbred sin and its impacts as hindrance to holiness, but also saw its remedy in the sacrificial self-surrender to Jesus Christ to be transformed into a New Creation, holy and sanctified, by the power of the Holy Spirit.

## **8. A Brief Evaluation and Reflection**

What has holiness to do with the mission of God in the world? Everything. God is holy and missional, and He desires all people to be holy. In fact, God commands his worshippers to be holy (Lev. 11:44, 1 Pet. 1:16). Within the biblical vision of ministry

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<sup>143</sup> David L. McKenna, “Free Methodist Church of North America (FMC),” *Dictionary of the Holiness Movement*, William C. Kostlevy, ed. (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2001), 107-109.

<sup>144</sup> See, Kenneth O. Brown, “Christian Holiness Partnership (CHP),” *Dictionary of the Holiness Movement*, William C. Kostlevy, ed. (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2001), 48-50 and David L. McKenna, “Free Methodist Church of North America (FMC),” *Dictionary of the Holiness Movement*, William C. Kostlevy, ed. (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2001), 108.

<sup>145</sup> Timothy C. Tennent, *The Call to Holiness: Pursuing the Heart of God for the Love of the World* (Franklin, TN: Seedbed Publishing, 2014), 94.

and future, holiness has strong missional as well as eschatological implications (Rev. 15:4). God’s call to humanity to reconcile with Him in holiness and to be a witness of this experience to others is the heartbeat of the entire Bible. All forms of ungodliness and suffering that cause separation between God and people are due to the impact of sin. Sin is the absence of holiness. Good news Jesus Christ is about holiness – about being transformed in the holy *imago Dei* and witnessing others for the same. Mission exists to foster salvation through sanctification. At the heart of Christian mission is the compassionate heart of a Holy God who is on a mission to transform the ungodly, distorted, and falsified persons into a godly, true, and reconciled children of God. Mission is about sanctification. Sanctification of false notions about God, ourselves, our neighbors, and the world. “You must be holy,” is a missional command to the whole world. Holiness as the chief attribute (image) of the missional God, therefore, is at the heart of *missio Dei*. Andy Johnson in his masterpiece, *Holiness and the Missio Dei*, argues, “that for both Israel and the Church, to be sanctified is to be graciously taken up into, and set apart for witness to, and active participation in, the saving, reconciling, life-giving purpose of the missional God.”<sup>146</sup> Tennent asserts that in the mission of God, God’s holiness is “gloriously unleashed into the world.”<sup>147</sup> Tennent goes on to call this unleashed or “mobile” holiness as “missional holiness.”<sup>148</sup> In defining missional holiness, Tennent beautifully echoes the Wesleyan vision of making scriptural holiness global,

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<sup>146</sup> Andy Johnson, *Holiness and the Missio Dei* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2016), xvi. Andy Johnson is Professor of New Testament at Nazarene Theological Seminary in Kansas City, MO.

<sup>147</sup> Timothy C. Tennent, *The Call to Holiness: Pursuing the Heart of God for the Love of the World* (Franklin, TN: Seedbed Publishing, 2014), 92.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

It is a holiness that extends to the ends of the earth, encompassing all peoples and nations. This is what finally moves us out from the long night of self-imposed exile and into God's full purposes in the world. The witness of the Spirit that begins by confirming faith in our personal lives becomes the power of the Spirit to produce fruit and to transform the world. This is missional holiness: the Holy Spirit empowering believers for witness, service, evangelism, and church planting.<sup>149</sup>

Although Ernest and Phebe did not publish any book length systematic theology of the doctrine of holiness or a missiological reflection on the practice of holiness, they lived out its missional mandate. They practiced, preached, and taught missional holiness in the guidance of the Holy Spirit as a witness to God's reconciling mission. The centrality and emphasis on holiness in their missions was totally in tune with the heart of the missional God of the Bible.

## **9. Conclusion**

This chapter has outlined and reflected upon the central theme of Ward's missionary vision and practice – holiness. Everything they did had a direct (or even indirect) bearing on this key theme of Christian spirituality. Ernest and Phebe were spiritually born, raised, and maturing in the nineteenth century holiness movement and remained its enthusiastic advocates all their lives. As missionaries among people of other faiths, they exemplified a life of Christian holiness both in their personal and social ethical and missional endeavors. The holiness they practiced, taught and promoted was biblical, spirit-filled and missional. Their contribution, however small it may seem to be, to spreading Scriptural holiness in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries Central India remains exemplary.

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<sup>149</sup> Ibid.



*Image 27. India Holiness Association, Holiness Convention, 1911*



*Image 28. Ernest Ward and Ethel Ward with missionary colleagues at Umri, Maharashtra. c.1927*

## CONCLUSION

### 1. Introduction

Although the chronicle of the life and legacy of Ernest F. Ward and Phebe E. Ward has remained a lesser known saga, it is undeniably a vital piece in the mosaic of the history of Christianity and Christian missions. For the purpose of this dissertation, I have utilized five select lenses to outline, explore, and reflect upon their missionary legacies. These lenses are the leading themes that, in my humble assessment, best represent the Wards' vision, passion, struggles, and achievements in Christian mission. Through the lenses of biography, evangelism, philanthropy, interreligious encounters, and Christian holiness, this research has attempted to narrate the story of the Wards for the first time. The purpose of this concluding chapter is threefold: (1) to present a summary of findings, (2) to highlight missiological implications, and (3) to reckon significant impacts and offer an overall closing statement.

### 2. Summary of Findings

In Chapter 1, I have outlined the agenda of this research envisioning a thematic study of the life and mission of the Wards. I have argued that regardless of their pioneering and significant contributions to the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Christian missionary movement in central India, the Wards remain unknown, unresearched, and unacknowledged. The chapter has successfully established the stipulation, necessity, and significance of the research on the Wards. The names of the Wards remain unknown or their visions are being forgotten by select pockets even within the Free Methodist Church, be it in the USA or India. My research is a timely study

celebrating their lives and legacy. As an initial response to this necessity, a biographical chapter was set forth.

Working within the framework of a biographical lens in Chapter 2, I have presented an historical account of the lives of Ernest and Phebe Ward. I have briefly narrated the stories of their families, backgrounds, birth and upbringing, new birth or conversion, church affiliations, education and influence, vocation, call to mission, marriage, children, and their missionary legacy. This chapter demonstrated that the lives of lesser known missionaries, such as the Wards, are no less significant in the Kingdom of God. God is transforming lives and calling them to be his missionaries. The chapter also showed how an ordinary couple of humble backgrounds are transformed into extraordinary instruments of the gospel with the call and commissioning of God to accomplish his mission on earth. As a product of the nineteenth century holiness movement in the USA, the Wards were destined to be pioneering evangelists.

In Chapter 3 I have presented a brief survey and assessment of the evangelistic and church planting ministries of Ernest and Phebe Ward. From their Ordination and commissioning in Illinois to the arrival and founding of several mission stations in Central India, this chapter traces the history of their evangelistic and church planting endeavors. It outlined a brief account of each mission station and church they built and major outreaches they carried out. In an attempt to construct the theology of evangelism of Ernest Ward, this chapter highlighted his understanding of the gospel. This is further seen in the light of the evangelistic vision of the Free Methodist Church and it argues that the Wards fully shared in this vision and labored towards its fulfilment in their mission endeavors. For the most part, they worked as faith missionaries, without any salary or



fixed regular support. The Wards saw God's faithfulness in both provisions as well as fruits, or the "trophies of grace," as they called their converts. A major finding of this chapter was the story of conversion of the famous Marathi Christian poet Narayan Vaman Tilak. This research has demonstrated, for the first time, that it was Ernest Ward who was instrumental in the conversion of Tilak. To be sure, all studies on Tilak until now have failed to show or acknowledge Ernest Ward's pivotal role in Tilak's conversion to Christ. The Wards mission methods, even in partial comparison, align with that of apostle Paul and remind us of the significance of apostolic ministry.

The next major finding is that evangelism and social action went hand in hand in the ministry of Ernest and Phebe Ward. I have argued and illustrated this in Chapter 4, which shows that the care for the needy was the heartbeat of the Wards. This chapter has also shown that the philanthropic endeavors gradually became a significant part of the evangelistic ministry of Ernest and Phebe Ward and even in this they were building on to the philanthropic vision of the Free Methodist Church. Also, it is argued that even though the Wards worked with different mission organizations, such as the Pentecost Bands, for short periods in other needy places, they did not abandon their primary affiliation with the Free Methodist Church. It was brought to my attention that the Wards were allegedly fired by the Free Methodist Church for joining the Bands. My research shows that that assumption is incorrect. The Wards were, while working with the Bands, still independent and worked in full harmony with all denominations they were associated with. Also, their breaking from the Bands was not because of their relationship with the Free Methodist Mission Board, but rather an internal leadership issue within the Bands. Amidst all challenges, however, the Wards contributed to nation building in India

through sacrificial services in famine relief, orphan care, education for boys and girls, indigenous Christian's Bible training, and medical work. The seeds of their ministries have now grown into real trees of Church Conferences and Institutions such as the three Free Methodist Church Conferences in India,<sup>1</sup> the Union Biblical Seminary, and the Umri Christian Hospital. My work has shown for the first time that behind these great institutions lay the vision and labors of Ernest and Phebe Wards and their colleagues. I argue that theirs was truly an holistic mission.

In Chapter 5 I have explored the Wards' understanding of religion, interreligious encounter with people of other faiths, and their approaches and responses to religious themes and issues. I have argued that Ernest and Phebe lived in direct contact with Hindus, Muslims, Parsees, and aboriginal Tribes throughout their life and ministry in central India and were engaged in interreligious encounters and exchanges. As representatives of the religion of the Bible, as they called Christianity, Ernest and Phebe endeavored to witness Christ to people of all faiths. In the process, they were able to impact the lives of their listeners and associates through their lived faith. The conversions of Shekh Juman in Burhanpur and Jewarbee in Raj Nandgaon are powerful examples of this impact. The chapter further shows that Ernest's approach to other religions may be seen, in terms of theology of religions, as an exclusivist approach. It is true that Ernest initially viewed other religions as pure heathenism and tended to disregard them for having no value for character and happiness. However, he also went on to notice useful points of contact within the cultures, practices, and religious texts of those faiths that he

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<sup>1</sup> The names of the India General conferences are: Agape (Bishop John Golapalli), Alpha (Bishop Narendra John) and Immanuel (Bishop Joab Lohara). See, *Free Methodist Church USA Yearbook 2018* (Indianapolis, IN: Free Methodist Communications, Free Methodist World Ministries Center, October 2018), 692.

could recommend utilizing for the purpose of interreligious dialogue. As a result, he was able to gain converts from among all faiths in his contacts.

Christian holiness is the main subject, and thus the title, of my final chapter. Looking through the lens of holiness, I have argued that the theme of Christian holiness emerges as the dominant theological theme in the thought and mission practice of Ernest and Phebe Ward. From their personal experience of conversion and sanctification to the proclamation of the gospel to the nations, and from holistic missions to the interreligious encounters, the Wards were influenced, invigorated and driven by the perception, experience, and pursuance of Christian holiness. I have demonstrated that as the products of the Christian holiness impulse of the mid-nineteenth century, the Wards were enthusiastic advocates of this teaching in everything they endeavored in the Indian mission field. The holiness movement had distinct social and personal ethical emphases that expressed itself in social action as well as personal piety. The Wards exemplified both emphases in and through their life and ministries. They saw holiness as the solution for the ills in society and called to seek faith in Christ for attainment of entire sanctification or Christian holiness. The chapter also demonstrated that the Wards were faithfully committed to spread Scriptural holiness as voiced within the Wesleyan tradition through their witness. They carried out holiness revival meetings and were significantly connected with the famous revival at the Mukti Mission. This chapter has narrated the history of the India Holiness Association and showed that Ernest Ward was its founding President. Christian holiness is a vital theme of missiological reflection as the God of mission is a holy God.

### 3. Missiological Implications

Although the focus of this section is to present missiological reflections on the missionary endeavors and approaches of the Wards, it will not be out of place to begin with a comment on their person and character. In fact, biography as missiology cannot and should not proceed to reflect on the work without first reflecting on the person of the missionaries.

Ernest and Phebe's personal strengths were vividly noticeable in their spiritual foundation, pioneering missionary vision, dependency on the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the Word of God, and a life of persistent prayers. Ernest had the clarity of vision, zeal of a pioneer, and commitment of a hardworking man. He was self-taught and informed enough to interact with issues and concerns of his time. Though the Wards did not have any formal seminary education or missionary training, they were self-taught through lifelong learning while remaining active in the mission fields. Their primary sources of knowledge included *The Holy Bible*, *the Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, *The Pilgrims Progress*, Catechisms, *The Free Methodist*, *The Vanguard*, *The Indian Witness*, and other books and periodicals. They used denominational and contemporary sources, newspapers, and census data, etc., to reflect contextually on the issues facing missions in their times. Ernest had acquired working knowledge of Greek and Hebrew and to that list he added Hindi, Urdu, Korku, Marathi, Chhattisgarhi, and Gujrati. The Wards were not prolific writers of monographs or papers, but they wrote countless reports and letters. Ernest was credited to be "one of the most consistent and prolific reporters" of *The Free Methodist*.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Byron S. Lamson, *Venture! The Frontiers of Free Methodism* (Winona Lake: Light and Life Press, 1960), 71.

They published three books and planned to undertake publications of collection of the triads, etc.<sup>3</sup> Ernest had also started writing a history of the early church but did not get to publish it.<sup>4</sup> However, much of their time was consumed in field works rather than literary activities.

Phebe was a prayer warrior, supporting wife, and loving mother. Her motherhood extended to hundreds of orphans. They were together a symbol of simplicity, servanthood, and humility. They both continued to witness to their family members, and not just the ones outside in the unreached world, all their lives. Some of their weaknesses included, lack of a formal biblical or missionary training, and overly simplistic, and thereby vulnerable, leadership style. It may be said that their personal lives characterize a missiology in weakness and humility. These, among other things reflected in their missionary approaches.

Several aspects of the Wards' missionary methods and practices that point out significant themes, nature, and trends of their (undocumented) missiology may be gleaned from their overall missional vision and activities. These themes emerge as distinct lenses that provide us with a bird's eye view on their missional understanding and practices. Here is an attempt to underline those themes:

**3.1 Activistic Missiology:** Activistic missiology may be defined as lived or practiced missiology. This refers to the idea of “missions at sunrise.” This view looks at missions as activistic, practiced or practical enterprise contrary to the idea of mission as

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<sup>3</sup> *The Sketch of the Korkus* (1891) was written by Ernest with help from Loka. *Echoes from Bharatkhand* (1908) was co-authored by Ernest and Phebe. *Memory Links* (1921) was compiled and edited by Ernest and Ethel.

<sup>4</sup> The manuscript of Ward's church history, “A Narrative,” is available at the Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library of the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, VA. (Ward Papers UVA). Title mine.

prescriptive or reflective which is the nature of missiology. Missions (activities) takes place at sunrise and missiology (reflection on those activities) at sunset. The Wards were largely doing missions at sunrise than missiology at sunset. Activistic missiology is a key characteristic of pioneer missionaries. Additional themes that inform or characterize activistic missiology include, “faith missionary,” “grass root missionary,” and “Going Where Needed” missionary.

Ernest and Phebe were faith missionaries, this was one of the key features in the call of the Wards. Faith missionaries, unlike career missionaries, go out in obedience to the Great Commission without the promise of any regular support or salary, health insurance, or guarantee of funds from any Church or mission organization. Faith missionaries rely completely on God for all provisions needed for mission work, including their own expenses. Their support, though irregular, insufficient, and uncertain, does come from God’s chosen instruments, friends and family. While the trend of faith missions continues in our own times, there is also an increase in the concept of career (or salaried) missions. While there is nothing wrong with salaried or funded missions, the issues of dependency or over dependency on funding agencies has its own challenges.<sup>5</sup> But the story of the Wards reminds us of the significance of faith missions even in crucial times and remains a challenging call for all aspiring missionaries today. Do we have the courage to be faith missionaries? Are we willing to trust God for all our missional needs?

The Wards were grassroots missionaries, carrying out evangelistic tours to villages, bazaars (marketplaces), streets, trains, and the hills. Although they were

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<sup>5</sup> On the issue of funds in relation to missions, see, Jonathan J. Bonk, *Missions and Money: Affluence as a Western Missionary Problem* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1991, 2004). See also, Mary T. Lederleitner, *Cross-Cultural Partnerships: Navigating the Complexities of Money and Mission* (Downers Grove: IVP Books, 2010).

primarily the missionaries of “dust and dirt,” they lived in strategic locations to reach both rural and urban populations. Ernest and Phebe were significantly apostolic in their approaches. I have pointed out in Chapter 1 that the Wards’ evangelistic ministry may be compared to that of apostle Paul. Like Paul, they established mission centers in some of the key cities of the time (such as, Raj Nandgaon), never pleading for funds for their personal needs, and sincerely promoting the cause of Scriptural holiness (Like the apostle Peter) in their ministry.

Although they moved from one place to another, staying not more than seven years in one place, they did so without closing the existing mission. They actually handed it over to a willing missionary organization that would continue the work. The Wards moved to where they were needed the most. This is another key aspect of Ward’s activistic missiology. The approach of “Going Where Needed” shows a remarkable readiness and adaptability to the demands and challenges of new places, including engaging with new language and culture. The gospel spreads and churches grow when Christians and missionaries move. Unfortunately, the Wards had not raised local Christians to be able to take over the ministries in the places they moved out from. For valid reasons, such as the lack of resource, they could not entrust the young converts, who were depended on the missionaries for both spiritual and socio-economic mobility and growth.

**3.2 Holistic Missiology:** Holistic has to do with the whole person – mind, soul, and body. It cares and witnesses for the head, the heart and the hand. To borrow the motto of the Salvation Army, it is about soup, soap, and salvation. Evangelism and social action were wedded together in the mission practice of Ernest and Phebe Ward. This

points to their missionary theology of caring for the poor. Over against the prevalent apathy promoted by a fatalistic worldview, such as *karma* or *will of gods*, of the local culture, Wards served the needy with the love and care founded in biblical Christianity. Representing the social aspect of nineteenth century holiness movement, they carried out orphan care and famine relief works in central India. Their works also touched upon the areas of education, health care, and training of indigenous Christians for ministry.

Although they faced unforeseen challenges, they remained faithful to their calling. They had issues with leaderships and disagreements on *modus operandi* among other things. We may evaluate their challenges and shifts in focus as near failures or errors caused by poor decision or lack of foresight and cooperation. But it must be remembered that in all that they did, they were pioneers and explorers. Sometimes the “body-soul” language that Ward uses in his letters and reports might suggest a dichotomy and challenge us in gaining a proper understanding of his position on evangelism (spiritual care) and social work (physical care). But we must look at the historic language of his time and see that it was normal to use such language without creating any dichotomy as may be perceived. In fact, we must look at their works as a whole, and not just some words, to truly appreciate the holistic nature of their mission practice. To be sure, Ernest Ward who stands in the line of exemplary proponents of both evangelical faith and social love, such as John Wesley, could not have been uncertain about the unity of word and deed. Another characteristic of the Wards holistic missiology was their attempt to follow the Three-Self method (or the Nevius Method). They were faith missionaries and wanted their local churches to grow as independent, self-sufficient churches and fellowships. Many of their programs for children, such as vocational schools, where they taught them



carpentry and so on, were geared toward making the individuals and thereby their communities, self-supporting. The Wards knew that only a self-supporting church can be a self-governing and self-propagating community. It must be noted though that both Ernest and Phebe did not quote from theoretical resources or make any reflection based on any mission methods. What I am highlighting in terms of theories and methods comes from the observation of their practices as these indicate the nature and impact of those methods prevalent in their times.

The holistic nature of their ministry, and therefore their (unwritten) holistic missiology, is probably one of the most significant features of their mission. They did everything under their capacity to serve humanity for the glory of God. From sharing the good news of salvation to feeding the hungry, from building mission stations to constructing homes for the orphans, from language works to reports and books, and from education to health care, they truly ventured in holistic missions. While specialized missions have their own value, holistic missions will always be more rewarding as well as challenging. Holistic mission – caring for the entire person – remains most true to biblical as well as historic form of Christian ministry.<sup>6</sup> Although limited by our own talents and qualifications, like the Wards themselves, can we aspire to be a part of God’s holistic mission enterprise? Will we be willing to obey, even if it would mean leaving our comfort zones and suffering with Christ in humility to serve everyone by all possible means?

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<sup>6</sup> Examples of specialized missions include, World Vision International (particular focus on social work), and Wyclif Bible Translators (Bible translation as the main mission). Examples of holistic missions include, the Salvation Army (“soap, soup, salvation”). Many churches and missions are now holistic in their vision and outreach. To be sure, they all contribute in their own specific ways to the church’s global mission.

**3.3 Dialogical Missiology:** Interreligious encounters and dialogue appears to be another dominant trend in Ernest Ward's undocumented missiology. Although he did not record any or all his conversations, his letters and report show that he was engaged in interreligious dialogues people of various faiths on various religious themes and issues. Unlike E. Stanley Jones (1884-1973), who wrote everything and published widely his experiences and findings in interreligious encounters, Ward was limited in both production and distribution of the results of such talks. There truly are serious implications of being a rural grassroot missionary and a missionary statesman on global platforms. Both have their own values in the Kingdom of God. It can be safely stated that Ernest was carrying out a prototype of Jonesian roundtables. In his excellent book, *Christ at the Roundtable*,<sup>7</sup> Jones brings some of the most pressing issues in religion and mission to a serious self-examination. Within the context of interreligious dialogue, he calls for an honest confession of one's own religious experience. He invites everyone to the roundtable, including Christ himself. I wish Ward had the time and resource to bring something like that from his own experiences and encounters. If at all Ward had documented everything, it would have certainly become a valuable source.

However, we must remember that while Jones was a missiologist of the sunset, Ward was of the sunrise. In relating with other faiths, Ward maintained an uncompromising position on the supremacy of his biblical faith. He saw the response to sin as one of the biggest factors distinguishing Christianity from other religions. He criticized non-Christian religions for human errors, such as legalism. However, Ward

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<sup>7</sup> E. Stanley Jones, *Christ at the Roundtable* (Nashville/New York: Abingdon 1928, revised edition, Potomac, MD: The E. Stanley Jones Foundation, 2019).

himself would fall under that flag at times by being legalistic in his own ministry of baptism, for example. Although he baptized by all three modes – immersion, sprinkling, and pouring – he did not baptize anyone in secret.

Furthermore, quite similar to his contemporary missionary A. G. Hogg, Ward saw the difference between faith (experienced Christianity) and faiths (speculations of other religions) and analyzed the value of religions in his own way exploring and questioning their impact in the lives of their adherents. Like Hogg, although in very less academic articulation, he argued for the supremacy of Christian revelation among all others.

**3.4 Orientalist Missiology:** The two camps of missionary approach prevalent during the Wards time were Orientalist and Anglicist. The Orientalist approaches represented chiefly by the Serampore Trio (Carey, Marshman, and Ward) increasingly used local language and cultural elements to contextualize the gospel message.<sup>8</sup> Although they also fought against inhuman cultural practices, they did not completely discard everything in Indian culture. In fact, they redeemed the redeemable. For example, Carey revolutionized the status of Bangla (Bengali) language from its defamed identity as the language of the demons to the classic language of Indian renaissance. The Trio did not promote supremacy of English. Ward naturally belonged to the Orientalist camp as he also did not promote the sovereignty of English in his work. In fact, they adopted local languages wholeheartedly. Ward worked with vernaculars such as Chhattisgarhi and Korku and created grammars and dictionaries. Though they were no linguists, they made pioneering contribution to linguistics through their Korku and other language works.

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<sup>8</sup> On the life and missions of Carey, see, S. Pearce Carey, *William Carey: "The Father of Modern Missions"* (London: The Wakeman Trust, 1923. Revised, 1934, Reprint 2009). See also, John Clark Marshman, *Life and Times of Carey, Marshman, and Ward: Embracing the History of Serampore Mission, 2 Vols.* (London: Longman, 1859).

Unfortunately, much of his works did not survive and we are not left with significant resources to explore all his linguistic contributions. Ward was also engaged in translation, although in a very small scale, to produce resources in the language of the context. Translation remains a significant aspect of mission enterprise even today. I have personally been involved in theological translation into Hindi, the national language of India, and understand the significance of such works for mission in our own times as well as future.

The Wards also did not endorse Western dress code or lifestyle among their colleagues and converts but encouraged an indigenous appearance and adaptation. In fact, they adopted indigenous dress and food. These, among other things, show the Wards practicing the Orientalist vision of missionary work, which tended to encourage intercultural interaction and contextualization, etc. Over against such indigenizing practices stood the Anglicist approach, represented generally by missionaries such as Alexander Duff, which tended to anglicize everything promoting the supremacy of English language and culture and calling for rejection or replacement of everything Indian or heathen, especially through education.

**3.5 Holiness Missiology:** Can the theological emphasis of holiness missionaries, such as the Wards, be termed as holiness missiology? I think so. I have argued that within the biblical vision of Christian ministry, the doctrine of holiness has strong missional as well as eschatological implications. God's call to humanity to reconcile with Him in holiness and to be a witness of this experience to others is the heartbeat of the entire Bible. At the heart of Christian mission is the compassionate heart of a Holy God who is on a mission to transform the ungodly, distorted, and falsified persons into a godly, true,

and reconciled children of God. Mission, therefore, is about sanctification. The Wards were holiness missionaries. And although they did not publish any book length systematic theology of the doctrine of holiness or a missiological reflection on the practice of holiness, they lived out its missional mandate. They practiced, preached, and taught missional holiness in the guidance of the Holy Spirit as a witness to God's reconciling mission. The centrality and emphasis on holiness in their missions was totally in tune with the heart of the missional God of the Bible and in tune with the historic Wesleyan holiness tradition.

The historic and missiological significance of Ward's holiness missiology may also be observed for its Trinitarian outlook. I am using the "Trinitarian" vocabulary to show how Ward embodies two distinct emphases of the holiness traditions. On the one hand, he represents the Wesleyan holiness doctrine as practiced within Methodism in general and Free Methodism in particular. In this way he stands in line with great leaders of the movements, John Wesley, Phoebe Palmer, B. T. Roberts, Hannah Smith, and others. A special focus on entire sanctification, Christocentrism, and emphasis on the concept of "work of grace" may be clearly observed in this tradition. On the other hand, Ward also appears to point to the Reformed holiness tradition expressed in Keswick spirituality. The Keswick movement began in London in 1875 for the promotion of holiness.<sup>9</sup> The Keswick tradition may be defined as a non-perfectionist or moderate pursuit of holiness movement that propagates the concept of "Baptism of the Holy Spirit" and stands very pneumatocentric in its emphasis. Great Christian leaders such as D. L.

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<sup>9</sup> See, Charles W. Price and Ian M. Randall, *Transforming Keswick* (Carlisle, Cumbria: OM Publishing, 2000).

Moody, Charles Finney, A. J. Gordon, A. B. Simpson, Andrew Murray, and others belong to the Keswick camp. The history and theology of the modern Pentecostal movements (or Pentecostalism) are deeply rooted in both Wesleyan and Keswick movements. According to Tennent,

The twin roles of the Holy Spirit as an agent of holiness and the one who empowers for witness is seen in the Methodist and the Keswick roots of Pentecostalism. Wesley emphasized the role of the Spirit as the sanctifier. In contrast, Keswick pneumatology emphasized that the Holy Spirit empowers the believers for witness, service, and evangelism.<sup>10</sup>

The life and mission of Ward with special emphasis on holiness missiology shows a unique blend of the two traditions and thus his missiology can be seen as a trinitarian holiness missiology characterized by a balanced emphasis on all – perfectionism, non-perfectionism, Christology, pneumatology, and holistic witness.

#### **4. Significant Impacts**

Ernest and Phebe's life, mission, and thoughts made significant impact on both individuals and institutions. Some of the prominent individuals who bear witness to the Wards impact in their lives include, (1) Ethel Ward, their older daughter who went on to be a missionary in India; (2) Samuel Casberg, Ward's colleague who followed in his footsteps of building mission bungalows; (3) John Drake, the missionary who based his Korku Grammar on the works of Ernest Ward; (4) several missionaries of the FMC to India, such as Ranf, Ferries, McMurray, Appling, Taylor, and others; and (5) many converts of the Wards who went on to become influential Christians, such as Tilak, and of indigenous co-workers, such as Daulat Rao, Man Singh, and many Bible Woman, such as Jewarbee, whose detailed stories are beyond the scope of the present study. The Wards

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<sup>10</sup> Tennent, *Invitation to World Missions*, 414n.

invested in the lives of countless individuals as mentors, role models, and visionary servant-leaders.

Speaking in terms of the impact on institutions and organizations, several most visible areas may be highlighted: (1) church ministry, (2) seminary education, (3) secular and vocational education, and (4) philanthropic services, and (5) medical services. The founding and growth of the Free Methodist Church and its various ministries in India owes a lot to the vision and labors of Ernest and Phebe Ward and their many colleagues. Select indigenous churches of central India, although now affiliated with the Methodist or CNI churches or still other denominations, have their historic roots in the evangelistic ministries of Ernest and Phebe Ward.<sup>11</sup> Also, the roots of prominent institutions such as the Union Biblical Seminary and Umri Christian Hospital, has been successfully traced back to the educational and medical initiatives of the Wards and their colleagues. The socio-charitable, humanitarian, and childcare ministries, among others, continue to be an integral part of the mission practice of the Free Methodist Church in India (and around the world). These activities are carried out in close connection with the church and its affiliated bodies. The witness of the Free Methodist mission as a whole has been so exemplary that several independent ministries and indigenous denominations have enthusiastically become members of the Free Methodist Conferences in India.<sup>12</sup> Emerging independent churches continue to seek affiliation with the FMC. Behind the

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<sup>11</sup> For example, City Methodist Church, Burhanpur, MP; Wesleyan Methodist Church, Rajnandgaon, CG; Free Methodist Church, Yavatmal, MH, etc. CNI = Church of North India.

<sup>12</sup> For example, Agape Fellowship Churches, Immanuel Fellowship Churches, Maharashtra Village Ministries, etc.

influential life and witness of the mission remains the foundation stones of a vibrant vision, contextual methods, and spiritual emphasis, laid by the pioneers.

The life and mission of the pioneers was characterized by an influential spirit of humility and sacrifice. They were truly Christlike in all their walk. They literally walked in the dirt and dust on rural India carrying the good news of Jesus Christ. They identified with the locals in their physical poverty and struggles. They did not count their American citizenship as a thing of privilege or superiority. Though they associated with rajahs and officials, they did not boast of any of these. They did not opt for positions of power or leadership but served everyone in humility and obedience. They lived as incarnational missionaries. They also lived as agents of transforming cultures. They sincerely labored to eliminate both spiritual and physical poverty and fought for the cause of social and gender equality. They condemned the practices of idolatry and caste system but approached the adherents of other faiths in the spirit of harmony. The only thing they held high was their faith in Christ.

If the Wards wanted, they would have founded their own organization and named the ministries and churches after their own names. However, they chose to do everything for the Church, for the Lord Jesus Christ, and for the Kingdom of God, without being concerned about who gets the credit. They gave away all the mission properties at their disposal to the Free Methodist Mission Board and remained humble employees in the Kingdom. Is it possible to be Christian witnesses without boasting about our nationality, qualification, and denominational or institutional affiliations? Can we practice incarnational humility in Christian missions today? The lives of the Wards invite us to take up these challenges.



## **5. Concluding Statement**

I began this research by selecting five specific lenses to explore, narrate, and reflect on the life, mission, and thoughts of Ernest and Phebe Ward. I had no idea of what or how much I will discover and learn from their journey. Doing their biography as missiology has been a really challenging and rewarding experience. There was no GPS. I had to find my way through the uncharted territories on my own. But the Lord of the Wards has been my Lord and Guide. The Holy Spirit has led me to the themes and events that must find space in this study. I am thankful to finish this marathon or adventure. As I have come to the sunset of my own journey in this research, I have gleaned some significant lessons and inspirations. These gleanings have in fact created five additional lenses that reveal, inform, and represent a fivefold missiology of Ernest Ward (See Image 29) as mentioned above, viz., activist, holistic, dialogical, orientalist, and holiness. Ward was indeed an activist missionary engaged in holistic mission with a bold emphasis on Christian holiness.

Though the Wards were no missiologists in the professional sense of the term, they did have an undocumented lived missiology, a missiology that was expressed in their witnessing life in the bazaars, villages, streets, trains, dirt, dust, and the hills. They were no historians, but they made history by engaging in historic mission endeavors. They were no theologians, but they thought theologically through their preaching and teaching. Their story is a treasury of missionary commitment, explorations, labors, sufferings, as well as “trophy of grace.” They were an ordinary couple from a humble background but an extraordinary witness of the gospel in the hands of a powerful missionary God.

I have a final word to say. This is my testimony to the impact of this research in my life. In fact, this is the proof of continuous impact of the witness of the Wards. The Lord Jesus Christ has used the story of Ernest and Phebe Ward to inspire and enable me to return to India. I had come to the USA from the experience of burnout in mission work. As a family we had earnestly prayed for a better place and future. The Lord answered our prayers and brought us to renew and rejuvenate us. He gave us wonderful seven years of rest, restoration, and fruitfulness. If not for the example of the Wards, we would have stayed here. Praise God for the legacy of the Wards. I am humbled and grateful to know them and to share their story.



*Image 29. Ernest Ward at his residence in Harmon,  
Los Angeles, 1930*

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **Suggestion for Further Research**

1. A deeper and extensive research is needed to explore Ernest Ward's relationship with the larger holiness movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. With my primary focus on biography as missiology, I have not been able to widen my scope of investigating additional historical and theological themes such as the holiness movement in the USA. A study of Ward in relation to other holiness missionaries, leaders, and writers would make a useful study.
2. The life and mission of Ethel Ward, Ernest and Phebe's oldest daughter deserves a full biographical and missiological research. It has been beyond the scope of this research to include her experience and contributions to missions in India. Ethel initially worked with her parents and went on to become a full-time missionary on her own right. She was a gifted writer who developed Sunday school materials for children, among other things.
3. Ernest and Phebe worked in close cooperation with other missionaries from both the Free Methodist Church and other denominations. A promising study can be carried out on the dynamics of interpersonal relationship and leadership in missional context of India and the USA with special reference to Ward and his missionary colleagues. In addition, Ward's witness, mentorship, and relationship with his converts and Indian colleagues will also make an important study. Further, the story of his adopted children, especially Thomas Ward, whose son Daniel Ward, became the first Indian Bishop of the Free Methodist Church in India, needs a thorough study.

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **Glossary of Indian Terms**

Divan: secretary

Gosht: meat

Guru/Gooroo: teacher, guide

Hidayat: guide, teaching

Jati: caste

Mahowa/Mahuva: *Mahuva longifolia*, an Indian tropical tree largely found in central India. Its flowers are used to make country liquor, food and medicinal products.

Malik: lord, owner

Nur: light

Pir: A Muslim healer

Raja/Rajah: king, ruler

Rani: queen

Sahib: sir

Sakshi: testimony

Shaster/Shashtra: Religious text, scripture

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