COMPULSORY REGISTRATION OF RELIGIOUS CONVERSIONS

(Bill No. 151—1981, as introduced in Lok Sabha on 11.12.1981, by Dr. Vasant Kumar Pandit, M. P.)

A bill to provide for compulsory registration of religious conversions in India.

Whereas it is expedient to provide for registration of religious conversions in India for certain purposes:

Be it enacted by Parliament in the Thirty-second year of the Republic of India as follows:

Short title, extent and commencement.

1. (1) This act may be called the Compulsory Registration of Religious Conversions Act, 1981.

(2) It extends to the whole of India.

(3) This section shall come into force at once and the remaining provisions of the Act shall come into force within a period of one year from the date of publication of this Act in the Official Gazette, in such areas and on such dates which may be different for different areas as the Government may, by notification in the official Gazette, appoint.

2. In this Act unless the context otherwise requires,—

(a) "conversion" or "religious conversion" or "change of faith" means the voluntary act of changing, converting, adopting or altering the religion of birth or faith or belief and mode of religious practice by any person who has completed the age of 18 years, by requisite religious rites, customary ceremony, legal citation or by any other form or manner, so prevailing in the Community, caste, society and includes re-conversions;

(b) "Memorandum" means a memorandum of conversion provided for in Section 5;

(c) "Priest" means any person who solemnises conversion either under any religious authority or social sanction or custom;

(d) "Register" means a Register of Conversions maintained under this Act;

(e) "Registrar" means a Registrar of Conversions appointed under this Act;

(f) "Registrar-General" means the authority so appointed by the Union Governments for the States of India and Union Territories under this Act.

Appointment of Registrar General and Registrars

3. (1) Union Government may appoint a Registrar-General for each of the States and Union Territories for purposes of this Act.

(2) The Union Government may appoint such number of persons as it thinks fit to be Registrars of Conversions for such local areas in a State or Union territory as it may specify from time to time.

Every conversion to be registered

4. After the date on which the provisions of this Act have been brought into force in any areas as provided under sub-section (3) of section 1, every conversion in such area shall be registered in the manner provided in section 5.

Memorandum of conversion

5. (1) Every person proposing to change or alter the religion of his birth, or customary faith or religious practice by conversion to another religion or faith, on his own free will and by his voluntary choice, shall prepare and sign a memorandum in such form as may be prescribed by the Government and shall deliver or send by registered post the said Memorandum in triplicate to the Registrar of the Area 60 days before the date of proposed conversion.

(2) The memorandum shall also be signed by the initiating priest, or head of the religious institution or the person who is authorised to perform the ceremony mentioned in the said memorandum.

(3) The memorandum shall be accompanied by a fee of rupees five.
Register of Conversions and action on memorandum

6. (1) The Registrar shall maintain a register of conversions.

(2) On receipt of the memorandum the Registrar shall file the same in the the Register.

(3) The duplicate copy of the memorandum shall be sent to the Registrar General, after the expiry of the period of 60 days, as provided under sub-section (1) of Section 5, with the intimation of date, time and place of actual conversion as provided in sub-section (3) of Section 7.

(4) Third copy of the memorandum shall be sent within 15 days from the date the memorandum is delivered to or received by the Registrar for information to the religious head, chief priest, community organization, social body or recognized mission of the religion or faith from which or out of which the person proposes to seek conversion.

(5) The Registrar-General shall from time to time nominate such persons, priests, organizations, missions, etc. for that area or for the State or States or Union Territories to whom the information of conversion of the person referred to in sub-section (1) of Section 5, has to be functioned.

Conversion when becomes complete

7. (1) After the expiry of the period of 60 days as provided in sub-section (1) of Section 5, the person presenting the memorandum shall be entitled to effect the act of conversion which shall be completed within a period of 45 days from the date of expiry of the 60 days' period.

(2) The person so converted shall deliver or send by registered post an intimation of conversion in such form as may be prescribed by Government, duly signed by himself, the officiating priest and three witnesses, to the Registrar.

(3) The Registrar shall, on receiving the intimation of conversion,

(a) file the same in the register and make an entry of the conversion so affected;

(b) Issue a certificate of conversion to the person presenting the memorandum ; and

(c) send one copy of the memorandum with the entry of conversion to the Registrar-General as provided under sub-section (3) of Section 6.

Register to be open to public inspection

8. The Register maintained under this act shall at all reasonable times be open to inspection and certified copies of extracts thereof shall be given by the Registrar to any person who applies for the same on payment of a fee of rupees two for each such copy.

Non-registration not to invalidate conversion

9. No conversion in any area or State or Union Territory to which this Act applies shall be invalid by reason of the fact that it was not registered under this Act or that the memorandum or the intimation of conversion was not delivered or sent to the Registrar or that the memorandum or intimation of conversion was defective, irregular or incorrect; Provided that such conversion shall not be accepted as proof for any service in Government or otherwise and shall not entitle the person so converted to any benefits, reservation, special privileges, rights, scholarships and such other benefits as may be given by the Union or the State Government for a person of that particular religion to which the person claims to be converted, unless the certified copy of the conversion is produced.

Penalty for neglecting to comply with provisions of Sections 5, 6 or 7 or for making false statement in memorandum.

10. Any person, who willingly avoids or neglects to deliver or send the memorandum as required by Section 5 and the intimation of conversion under Section 7 or make any statement in such memorandum or intimation of conversion which is false in any material particular and which he knows or has reason to believe it to be false, shall on conviction be punishable with fine which may extend to two hundred rupees.

Penalty for failing to file memorandum or intimation.

11. Any Registrar who fails to file the memorandum pursuant to Section 6 or the intimation of conversion under Section 7, shall on conviction be punished with rigorous imprisonment for a term which may extend to three months or with fine which may extend to five hundred rupees or with both.

Penalty for secreting, destroying or altering register.

12. Any person secreting, destroying or dishonestly altering the register or any part thereof shall, on conviction, be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to two years and shall also be liable to fine.

Registrar to be public servant.

13. Every Registrar shall be deemed to be a public servant within the meaning of Section 21 of the Indian Penal Code, 1960.

Power to make rules.

14. (1) The Union Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette and subject to the conditions of previous publication, make rules for carrying out the purposes of this Act.

(2) In particular, and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing power, such rules may provide for all or any of the following matters, namely:

(a) the duties and powers of the Registrar;

(b) forms of the memorandum of conversion and the intimation of conversion, the forms and manner in which registers or records required to be kept by or under this Act shall be maintained;

(c) to custody in which the registers and records are to be kept and the preservation of such registers and records;

(d) provision to enable the Registrar to be present if, needed, at the time of actual conversion.
(3) The Union Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, maintain a list of religious heads, chiefs, priests, missions, recognized religious authorities, societies, etc. in the State as well as community organizations, social institutions or bodies or recognized castes sects, faiths or communities to whom a copy of memorandum of conversion is to be sent as provided under subsection (4) of section 6.

(4) Every rule, made under this Act shall be laid, as soon as may be after it is made, before each House of Parliament while it is in session, for a total period of thirty days which may be comprised in one session or in two or more successive sessions, and if, before the expiry of the session immediately following the session or the successive sessions aforesaid, both Houses agree in making any modification in the rules or both Houses agree that rules should not be made, the rules shall, from the date of publication of a notification in the Official Gazette of such decision, have effect only in such modified form or be of no effect, as the case may be; so, however, that any such modification or annulment shall be without prejudice to the validity of anything previously done or omitted to be done under that rule.

Statement of objects and reasons

The Compulsory Registration of Religious Conversions Bill, 1981 has been brought forward for the purpose of registering all the religious conversions in the country. Such a record or statistics of conversions would be of a great value for many purposes, such as at the time of census, social work, research, etc. Further, serves another valuable purpose viz. it will give the person seeking conversion a sufficient time to exercise his free will and take a voluntary decision. The Bill does not propose to interfere in any way with the right of every citizen to choose his own religion. Thus, the Bill is of great social value and, therefore, necessary in larger public interest.

In recent times, religious conversions have taken place on “Mass Scale” under circumstances which leave doubts about those conversions being not voluntary nor out of free will nor a genuine change of faith. Such incidents can become a major problem of law and order or communal hatred or religious conflicts. The Bill honestly gives full right to every individual to choose his own religion and also sets out a method for registering it and make it fool proof against any undue compulsion like financial, social, political, domestic or educational, or inducement like job or any other such benefits and enticements. This Bill will thus, if enacted, serve a great social purpose and the current need of the time in the country.

Vasant Kumar Pandit
New Delhi
November 9, 1981

Financial Memorandum

Clause 3 of the Bill provides for appointment of Registrars General and Registrars in the States and the Union territories. Clause 6(1) provides for maintenance of registers by the Registrars, appointment of these officers and their offices are likely to involve a recurring expenditure of about rupees fifteen lakhs annually from the Consolidated Fund of India.

A non-recurring expenditure of about rupees ten lakhs is also likely to be involved.

Memorandum Regarding Delegated Legislation

Clause 14 of the Bill empowers the Government to make rules for carrying out the purposes of this Bill and in particular in regard to certain matters which include the duties and powers of the Registrar, the form of memorandum of conversion and the intimation of conversion, the forms and manner in which registers or records are required to be maintained, the custody in which the registers and records are kept, and the provision to enable the Registrar to be present at the time of actual conversion. The matters in respect of which such rules may be made are matters of procedure of administrative details. The delegation of legislative power is thus of a normal character.
The McGavran School of Church Growth and Caste in India

Dr. Hedlund's letter has excerpts from Mr. David Housholder's comment on the recent movement of Harijans to Islam in some parts of Tamil Nadu. Rev. Kurivilla Chandy wants the principles of the McGavran School of Church growth examined in the light of the conversion of Harijans to Islam.

The conversion of Harijans as groups to Islam proves an important point Dr. McGavran has been stressing through the years. People in India live in groups, they are guided by group thinking. In politics or religion they think or act corporately. Sociologists and anthropologists who have analysed political decisions in elections have come to the same conclusion. What Dr. McGavran stresses is that these sociological forces which are at work have to be recognised by churches and missiologists in evangelisation and planting of churches. Homogenous groups have to be taken into cognizance and church growth planned accordingly. Dr. McGavran is asking that a fact be accepted as a fact and plan be made realistically.

Mere idealism at the cost of reality would not help anyone.

Also it has to be pointed out that 'Caste' or 'homogenous unit' is not a static concept. It is a dynamic one. The structure of 'Caste' or a 'homogenous unit' may change. Still there will be a structure, a pattern which determines group decisions and actions. These are exceptions of individualism caused by modern secularism and disintegration of family and society. Still the basic assumptions of Dr. McGavran about the nature and function of castes in India hold good and are applicable in evangelisation and church growth. Many recent research publications of anthropologists bear testimony to this.
Quoted below is just one of them. Harold A. Gould, a social scientist, has the following observations in his article 'Two Decades of Field work in India - Some Reflections':

'Thus, observation of an incident of intercaste bickering in Sherupur in the early 1960's had proved to be a valuable key for unlocking the door to understanding how Caste as an ethnic structure was finding a viable role in India's emerging democratic political system. I believe most educated and nationalist Indians were not prepared to apply such a sociologically neutral term as "ethnicity" to the role which caste and religious communities had come to play in the sphere of ongoing day-to-day politics. Their great nationalist leaders, like Nehru and Gandhi, had told them that "Casteism" stood in the way of Indian progress, that the latter would only be achieved when the former had been purged from Indian life. It bordered on heresy for an Indian, or a foreigner, to suggest that caste and religious communities were the most poignant facts of life about India's social structure which politicians would mobilize in their efforts to forge winning electoral coalitions. Yet, to a product of the American "melting pot", it seemed a most natural and understandable thing, the essence of democracy rather than its antithesis.

Today, of course, the distinction between caste as ritual structure (rigidly hierarchical and pervaded by obsession with pollution) and caste as ethnic structure (constituting primordialized subcultural orientations) is better understood and appreciated. This is because in the past decade both Indian and foreign scholars have researched the nature of caste and its role in the political system more deeply. In one sense it could be said that the initial subjectivities which dominated the intellectual orientation of both parties have gradually given way to more balanced scientific perceptions. The "unspeakable" (i.e., Caste) was inserted into this dialogue and once out in the open could be slowly purged of its pejorative implications until finally taking its place as just another concept in the arsenal of social science.'
A scientific, balanced and realistic attitude to caste is called for. Sentimental or sensational approach will prove bankrupt eventually.

The headlines in newspapers need serious consideration. More serious still are the deep vibrant and often unnoticed undercurrents in society. Those silent but vital forces determine the fate and future of peoples. Headlines will appear, they will disappear, for they often reflect a passing phemenon which has 'news value' but do not really touch the core problem. Some phase or facet of a problem may be highlighted. But the core problem lies hidden.

Dr. McGavran calls mature and dedicated Christians to see the core problem, the real vital forces at work. Journalists, tourists, and superficial sentimentalists who look for current approbation may jump to conclusions and attack Dr. McGavran's ideas as obsolete. That will be the stand of academicians and arm-chair theologians. But evangelists who move with the people of villages and towns in rain and shine with a burning message on their lips as Dr. McGavran did for thirty long years in India, would find that accepting fact and facts would help further the cause of the Gospel into the hearts and homes and groups of people who have till now been untouched by the Gospel.

India still gropes for light. The doctrine of karma, Mmaya, transmigration are real bondages under which people live and die. Demonology, belief in astrology, magic, sorcery, divination, auspicious days and hours and a myriad of forces and forces and factors are realities. Governments may change, ideologies may change. But these vital binding and grinding forces which keep people under spiritual, intellectual, moral and physical slavery remain on and on with relentless and inexorable cruelty. And the glorious privilege of the evangelist, the Christian's mission is the message of the Gospel of freedom.
As the evangelist proclaims the power of the Gospel of freedom, as theologian, he is aware of the 'law' at work among all people and nations "keeping them under restraint (Gal. 3, 23) until faith should be revealed". Looked from within caste is a restraining and sustaining social structure. What is to be condemned is the intercaste animosity and hatred.

The Gospel, Law, Caste, the real bondage of Satan, Sin, fear of death and the forces of slavery - all these have to be seen and evaluated in the proper perspective to evolve a missiology that would help the Church to be the Church and to fulfil its Godgiven responsibility of preaching the message of the Cross with conviction, concern, vision, clarity and courage.

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Conversion Made Easier

Introduction

Because of our ignorance and misconception we have made it unnecessarily difficult for people to be saved in Lafricasia and thus slowed the process of church growth, by compelling them to cross barriers. Why not make it easier for people to accept the Lord Jesus?

I. People Consciousness and People Solidarity

By nature people like to remain with their own people and do not like to cross barrier — a Basic Assumption

II. The Biblical and Necessary Barriers


B. The Repentence of Sin: Natural man denies that he is a sinner.

C. The Confession of Christ as Lord: Christ was a stumbling block to the unbelievers.

III. The Non-Biblical and Unnecessary Barriers

A. Racial Barrier: People feel much at home with people of their own race.

B. Linguistic Barrier: People communicate better in their mother tongue and like to fellowship with people speaking the same dialect.

C. Social (Class) Barrier: People feel uneasy when mingling with people of a different class.

IV. Causes of These Barriers

A. Failure to understand the nature of people

1. In Eurica, people are individualistic minded

2. In Lafricasia, people are more group-conscious

B. Denominational Factors: Denominational emphases may erect barriers between people of different persuasion

C. Brotherhood Church: Emphasis on Christian brotherhood may desire to retain a great variety of different and different elements.

D. Mis-application of the Text of Discipleship

The crossing of barriers is thought of as a means
of testing the genuineness of conversion.

V. The Lifting of Barriers

A. A Classical Example: The decision concerning circumcision reached in the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15).

B. A Key to Discipling the Nations: The job of discipling the vast multitudes of Lafricanian people can never be done without lifting these barriers.

Conclusion

To be a faithful steward of God we are required to render as much fruit as possible. The only way that this can be done is not to require people to cross barriers which the Bible does not require.

- we must follow apostolic precedent in removing barriers to further obedience.
Is Selective Evangelism Biblical?

Introduction

One of the great propositions of the church growth theory advocated by McGavran is to concentrate on the receptive elements of the society. Is this practice Biblical?

I. The Fact of Varying Receptivity

A. Theological Basis: The election and condemnation of God is the theological basis of the fact of varying receptivity.

B. The Teaching of Christ: The Parable of the sower shows 3 kinds of different soil (Matt. 13).

C. From actual experience, we know not all who listen to the gospel will accept it.

II. Selectivity and the principles of Stewardship

A. The Primary Responsibility of a Steward: To multiply what is entrusted to him (Matt. 25:14ff; Luke 19:12ff.).

B. Prudence and planning are required by the Master to yield as much fruit as possible. (Matt. 25:16ff)

C. Faithfulness to our stewardship, therefore, requires that we achieve the most result with the least amount of resources, and thus selectivity in evangelistic efforts.

III. Biblical Examples of Selective Evangelism

A. The Plan of Salvation by God the Father

The Election (Predestination) of God is highly selective in nature. "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious; I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy." (Ex. 33:33) Again, He chose some to whom He reveals Himself.

B. Commandments of Christ the Son

When sending the twelve out to preach the gospel, Christ charged them not to go into the way of the gentiles or enter into the city of the Samaritans, but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. (Matt. 10:5)

C. The Guidance of the Holy Spirit

1. The Spirit twice prevented Saul from going to the places he should go (Acts 16:6,7).

2. The Spirit took Philip to the right person (Acts 8:26).

Conclusion

From these evidences we say selective evangelism is Biblical.
In the Times of India dated July 29 (Bombay Ed) we have two news items related to conversions that could be a hint of a new era for evangelism. One headline on the front page reads, "25000 in Kanpur to be converted?" The other reads "Conversion fever hits Thanjavur". Earlier reports of a few harijans turned Muslim in Tamil Nadu appeared to be a local affair. But these two developments can very well spark off an avalanche of conversions from among the untouchables. Their lot is due to the social degradation and discrimination due to castism, has not changed inspite of special concessions and job reservations. Their eyes have now opened to the fact that as long as they continue to remain within the fold of Hinduism they will never escape the stigma of untouchability and social discrimination. In spite of the strong opposition against such movement away from Hinduism, there is a strong possibility that harijans will increasingly be open to the option of embracing any other faith that grants them social equality and liberation from the deadening implications of the theory of punarjanna karma.

In the face of this new openness of this section of people to the Gospel, the evangelical churches of India are going to face the acid test. For years we have kept ourselves busy with evangelism talk and theory, with our evangelism conferences and seminars. The time has arrived for all this talk to be tested in the face of this gigantic challenge. So far our complaint has been that of closed doors. Now the question is, what will we do in the face of this unexpected opportunity?

Some of us will dismiss this as mass x conversions for the sake of social privilege and will therefore refuse to touch it. Others will have sees that such an influx of the lowest caste into the church will bring upon the church the stigma that it is but a bunch of Harijan converts. Many of us are more concerned with losing our privileged status in society and would not want in any way to be identified with the scum of society.

This kind of response will deflate all our previous talk talks in conferences on evangelism pledging our zeal and burden for lost souls in our country. The open door for evangelism that we confront in India today demands not pious talks nor our skills in management and organization to which we have given such high priority. It demands our getting out to the untouchables immediately around us, establishing personal friendly contact and telling them the simple story of God's love in Christ.

It is not our skills in mass media communication x that will count. It is not our fluency in the use of the international language that many of us deem our greatest asset. It is our ability to talk in the local dialect in simple terms to the unlettered among this socially oppressed section of our countrymen that will count.

If we are to use the present opportunity we would visit the homes of members of these groups, sit down with them, listen to the Gospel. We must go to their slums, sit with them in their huts, drink the insipid tea they lovingly serve us in their not too clean cups. This is how we must go about the job of conversion.
We will need to get in touch with some of the leaders of Harijan groups in our vicinity. All we need to do in the initial stages is to simply establish a friendly relationship. Without this human personal contact we cannot carry on evangelism. To visit the houses of sweepers and to invite them to come and sit in our drawing rooms will be abhorant to many of us. But this will be the test of our love for the Lord and our love for the lost.

Others, who are not willing for such involvement will rationalise by saying that this is mass conversion and will produce nominal Christianity. Whether we produce a new trend of nominal christians or plant new churches of genuine regenerate disciples of Christ will depend entirely on how we go about the job.

Instead of baptizing in mass all those who desire to embrace the christian faith, as some suggest, we need to painstakingly instruct those who are open. Those who come to accept Christ as Saviour and show some evidence of God's transforming grace can be baptised and formed into new churches. In this manner the relatives of those converted will eventually be able to observe the transforming power of the Gospel and will eventually turn to the Lord, often in small batches.

This pattern of response can over the next few years witness the springing up of new churches of Harijan converts wherever local Christians are willing to establish contact with them and pay the price of evangelism in terms of personal friendship, identification and refusal to show any trace of caste discrimination. The Gospel is the enemy of castism and those Christians and Churches who practice castism are the enemies of Christ and the Gospel.

We don't have to cross the seas, or even our state border to reach the untouchables with the Gospel. In the very city or town in which we are living there are hundreds of these downtrodden people who are aware of their social bondage but not of their spiritual bondage. The awareness of their need for social liberation can be the opportunity for us to lead them to the One who waits to liberate them from both. The Gospel counts upon us to be the channels, the medium, for the communication of this message. Our friendship, our personal involvement, identification and self-giving is the cost of evangelism in the day of opportunity. Is the price too high?

--George David.
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a hurdle preventing us from getting down to
face to face personal communication.

If we are to use the present opportunity we
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G.D.

George David

(Not to be printed)
by Johannes Aagaard

(The Hindu monastic system has extended its power throughout the world by means of its advance posts, the Hindu missionaries. Traditionally it is held that Hinduism does not carry on missions, but the facts are otherwise. Dr. Johannes Aagaard has found evidence in India that Hinduism has an "international missionary council" which works according to a clear strategy and careful setting goals; this is the background of many of the new religious movements in the West today.)

We can read in all the texts about Hinduism that it is not a missionary religion yet we have all met Hindu missionaries on our streets. We hear them preach on the radio; we read their tracts; we see their posters, and all of us know people who have been converted by their missionary work. Some of the few authors who have noticed such phenomena have tried to explain them by the statement that this missionary activity is something typical for the gurus who have been modified by the Occident. The attraction that both money and conversion have for them is supposed to prove that they are not genuine Hindus any more—they have sold their souls to the West.

If one is interested, even professionally, in the many missionaries of the new religious movements among us it is therefore important to go to India to study the situation on home ground. Is Indian Hinduism missionary? Yes or no? The answer is yes. Hinduism was and is missionary in India too.

The historical evidence for this statement cannot be developed within the space of this article. The present-day reality is, however, in full accord with the past. Hinduism conducts missions, proselytizes, propagandizes—or whatever other expression one may wish to use. It often happens that Indians visiting Denmark speak of "our" gurus and maintain that they are almost unknown in India, indeed they despise them there. But this is not true—the great gurus of the Occident are also great gurus of the Orient. They have great numbers of disciples and they are just as much or little respected as religious leaders have always been in India. That is to say that each person has his own guru and rejects the others. Everywhere in India—shops, hotels, private homes—one sees pictures of the gurus whom we know among us, as well as pictures of many other gurus who have not yet come to us, but will. They are on their way. And when they come it will be not only at their own expense and risk.

Prabhupada (Hare Krishna) and Maharishi Mahesh Yogi (TM); Janakananda (Scandinavian Yoga) and Sanatanananda (NU Yoga) and all the other leading gurus or swamis on our side of the world are active missionaries only because their gurus have sent them here. They listen only to "his master's voice," but they do it, of course, voluntarily. They are busy and effective missionaries because they are links in a chain of missionaries that stretches from the native Indian soil out to the ultimate thule.

In January 1979 I was in India with a student group to study Hinduism and Christianity in India. During our travels we read in the newspapers about a world Hindu conference in Allahabad. There were 60,000 participants, of whom many thousands were delegates from other lands. I began immediately to investigate what this was, but nobody could give me any information. It seemed very strange that so large a conference could take place without even the theologians and students of religions knowing anything about it.

In January 1980 I continued my investigations but again without result. Only in June 1980, when in N. India I took part in a dialogue conference between Christians and Hindu theologians did I discover that it was the Visva Hindu Parishad that was behind the huge conference in 1979. But even the Hindus knew nothing more about the organization, or at least they were unwilling to tell me anything. Back in Delhi I went hunting and finally found the headquarters of the organization. I succeeded in getting permission to buy the 1979 Conference Report and a corresponding report from a conference in 1966, as well as a couple of years' issues of their publication, which appears 10 times a year.

The study of these publications was fantastically fruitful, but the more you have the more you want; so during my latest trip, in January 1982, I really went hunting. No European libraries have these publications but it was more surprising that even the public research libraries in Delhi did not know them. They are not registered in the common listings. By accident I found out that there was a branch of the Visva Hindu Parishad in Allahabad, where I was about to go to participate in the Kumbha-mela. That led to a really profitable purchase of all the back issues of the VHP's publications, a meter-high stack of literature which is now in Aarhus, where college has an archive for the Study of Religions in the Theological Faculty are busy analyzing their publication of of India.

Some things are already clear. The VHP is Hinduism's international missionary council. If anybody doubts this he should read the Constitution of the VHP, wherein it is stated that it is the association's purpose:

1) to take steps for the spread of Hinduism throughout the world.

(MORE)
2) to defend, develop and propagate the Hindu life-values and 3) to establish a missionary order, both for lay and ordained, with the purpose of propagating a dynamic Hinduism ... and to open, lead and assist seminaries or centers in the training of such missionaries. Furthermore, the constitution describes in several sections the task abroad as that of strengthening and inspiring associations that have the same purpose as the VHP and to maintain close contact with them.

Among the many guru associations which function in cooperation with the VHP, we can, on the basis of a hurried look at the material, name the following: the Rama Krishna Missions/Vedanta Societies all over the world; Yogananda's Self-Realization Fellowship; Hare Krishna/ISKCON; Swami Chidananda and his emissaries, who among us, are Scandinavian Yoga; Shinnayananada, who is a sort of grey eminence in the organization; Sathya Sai Baba; 3HO--the White Sikhs--as well as the Theosophists and many different Yoga associations, e.g., Lengar. Among the great prophets of the VHP may be named, for example, Aurobindo, Dayananda and Vivekananda, among the most important. Tibetan Buddhism is also in the picture, for the Dalai Lama was the president of the VHP Conference in 1979.

The VHP conducts many conferences both in and outside India to coordinate and inspire the worldwide mission of which the VHP is the centre. Most significant are the large international mission conferences which are held in connection with the huge Kumbha-melas in Allahabad. This tie to orthodox Hinduism has made the conferences not only large missionary events but also great unifying events. At the Kumbha-mela all the orthodox Hindu monastic groups assemble; Transcendental Meditation is included among them. On the other hand, there have been a great many "samaajists" outside the orthodox--so-called "sanatanist"--central group. When the international conferences of the VHP are called with and as part of the Kumbha-melas, all the groups are brought together and the gaps between them are bridged. There is thus a clear strategy and careful goal-setting in the leadership of the VHP.

One is not surprised at this if one knows something of the history of the VHP, for it is the meeting place of all the important action groups in modern Hinduism, first and foremost the following:

1) The Arya Samaj, whose founder and prophet Swami Dayananda Saraswati contributed more than anyone else to the renewal of missionary Hinduism. He himself developed a kind of mission sacrament called the shuddi. These samaajists are traditionalist and fundamentalist ("back to the Vedas"), but they know how to use the modern world's tools in their international missionary activity.

2) Aurobindo's militant Hinduism, which was originally the basis of his engagement in the Indian struggle for liberation and later of his "Integral Yoga," which has become an international movement.

3) Vivekanananda's practical Yoga which, more than any other factor has contributed to the international awareness of Hindu monistic philosophy and "holism."

4) Theosophy's many expressions of neo-Gnosticism, which have laid the foundations for occult movements throughout the world, movements represented by, for example, Anthroposophy and Martinus' Science of the Spirit.

But in addition there are influences from a number of notable Hindu organizations which left their marks on India's development in the last 75 years. Among them the most important are:

1) The Hindu Mahasabha, which after 1906 turned Indian nationalism sharply to the right and made it anti-Muslim and orthodox Hindu. The man who murdered Gandhi because of his concessions to the Muslims came from this group.

2) The Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh--known in brief as the RSS--which has grown continually since 1925 and is now the strongest religious--political factor in India, particularly through the Jana Sangh party. The RSS imposes an increasingly strong rightist trend in India and there are knowledgeable people who believe that the movement will take control within the next decade.

The Visva Hindu Parishad has no doubt about this prediction. In its publications it states directly that the VHP and the RSS have a common origin and a common leadership, and the other movements mentioned above are also considered as part of the whole. Thus we have the historical and present day background for the future of the current neo-religiousism, that is, for the part which we call "guruism", to which nearly all of our domestic swamis and yogis (who are called Yoga teachers) belong and which they represent.
OPEN THE DOOR

The day has come after a long break of one century. People groups are today desiring to enter faith in Christ. Students of Indian Church History will be well aware of the people movements to follow Christ that happened in the nineteenth century across the length and breadth of our mother land.

The Lord of history is effecting now another movement across our land, which may become larger than the 19th century movement. This places the church in an awful responsibility.

I give below some immediate issues that that the church should get grip with, in this context and resolve and execute in obedience to the Lord's commandment to the church to disciple people groups (Mt. 29:19).

1. Is group decision to follow Christ is acceptable or desirable?

This is an ideology of widely differing convictions. It is extremely difficult to discuss such an important subject at such a miniature writing. However a few points may through some light on.

"Is group decision acceptable? The problem is 'acceptable to whom'? The answer should be 'to God, not you or me'.

Has God accepted group decisions to follow him any time in new testament age in any part of the globe. For this we should refer to history, not our sentiments.

Student of world church history will discover that a overwhelming majority of world's peoples from Apostle Peter's day to our day come to follow Christ in groups, big or small. Individuals coming to follow Christ is the exception, not the norm.

When and whether an individual in such a group who started to follow Christ does obtain salvation, does qualify for God's scale of righteousness and obedience is a matter I deal subsequently. The point we discuss here is 'Whether God permits any one who desires to follow Him as an individual or as a group'. The Bible and church history say 'Yes'. God evaluates and judges at the end, those who did not count the cost, who did not complete the race. But He never prevents any one attempting to build, He does not prohibit anyone trying the race. He never ever said 'no' to anyone who wanted to follow Him, individual or group, good men or bad men.

2. This bring us to the next point. "If everyone is admitted in, then, what is the church?" Now we have fallen from the frying pan into the fire. The entity 'church' is much more difficult a concept to concur on, than the previous point. There are widely varying ideas on this matter. Church in its broad classification can be stated as:

A. The spiritual body of Christ.
B. The world wide visible, audible, movable, spiritual, unspiritual conglomeration with all its diversity in degree and in kind.
C. The local 'MT' congregation.

All our conceivable ecclesiological confusion originate from our difference in presuppositions on the right configuration and inter relation between A, B and C.

I was reborn and brought up in the indigenous holiness revival movement against a nominal christian background. Therefore my presupposition was that A was fully inclusive of B and C was fully exclusive of B which has a good amount of nominal adherents. This presupposition I held fast, till some in my congregation backslid and we saw some second generation adherents.

Cont'd....2
Ideally A should be fully inclusive of B which should be fully inclusive of C. With our human imperfection and fallible nature, in reality C overlaps on B. And C and B overlap on A. Therefore in reality the visible church consists of spiritual disciples, aspirants, enquirers and would be dropouts.

Unfortunately due to human limitations and circumstances, there is no viable alternative institution apart from the local church that can identify separate and take care of the aspirants and enquirers and back-sidden and qualify them for admission into the church. Therefore the membership in C does not necessary mean a membership in A. However C is very essential for discipling of peoples as our Lord commanded in the great commission.

3. Spiritual Standard: The allegation is that admitting a crowd of people who have professed faith as a group into the church will drain the Christian standard of the local church (which already is in a precarious low!) It does. But it need not stay at that. This is true of a primary school. The average educational level inside a school campus is low; below the graduating students, because the school admits every year crowds of illiterates in. The school level does remain at some average. But the individual student level should keep growing up. If it does not happen, the problem does not lie in the admissions, the problem lies with the teachers and leaders. To say that the church is open only to the fully spiritual is to say that the school is for the fully educated and hospital is for the fully recovered in health.

Secondly what do we mean by 'the spiritual level'? When we analyse this point we will be surprised to discover that we are talking something relative. There is the christian obedience of an individual or a group. But when we talk of 'spiritual level' we confuse ethics with obedience that comes through faith. Each individual (or a group) starts the travel of obedience (to the holy faith) at some ethical and conscience and behavioural level and ends at some other level. These levels don't mean a thing to the Lord of absolute holiness. He measures only the distance traversed in obedience in relation to the light and opportunity given to an individual. The Phil tribal or the basti sweeper who newly joins the church may strike enormous contrast in christian ethical level to the tenth generation christian but may far excell and outpace him in christian obedience in given period of time. Christian standard is a human language which has no bearing on Divine acceptable righteousness of an individual. This explains, why more miracles happen in answer to prayer among the new believers than among tenth generation christians; whose christian standards may be quite high.

4. Person vs group: Strong reservations are expressed that "Faith is a matter of individual soul. The whole idea of group decision in the matter of faith sounds dubious". This concept stems from the individualistic redemptive theology evolved from the highly individualistic western christian background. Final salvation is personal and individual but the pilgrims journey in most cases start collective.

The gospel is personal but not individualistic. The individual (particularly in ethnic based or family based societies) finds his person in the collective, never in the individual. Decision making in such family or community units are always by the group, whether admitting for hospital operation, selling a buffalo, taking bride. In the matter of faith, while God will measure the reward individually the race run by each person, the Lord never rewards the group to start the race en bloc.

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OF ASSURRY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
5. How to be sure of the spiritual credibility of a group movement:

There are many contextual social forces and historic situations that result in a movement. There is the small movement of Black Americans to Islam, the movement of some Europeans to Hare Krishna and other cults in the middle east to communism. How to be sure that a movement to christian faith is divinely ordained and just not something purely sociological?

One sure sign is the manifestation of the Holy Spirit Himself. The supernatural intervention of God in the affairs of men in answer to prayer is one of the sure evidences. Whenever and wherever people's movement to the faith has occurred, there has been accompanying miracles, healings, etc. Some may attribute this to mere group psychology. In small group movement that is now going on in Gujarat one now believer prayed for normal pumpkin harvest as there was plant disease in the whole region. Result? His was the only field that had pumpkin at harvest time in the whole village. Now, psychology can produce a lot of things dreams, hallucinations, telepathy, but not pumpkins and potatoes. When a peoples movement starts there will be hundreds of amples supernatural events accompanying to evidence God’s hand in it as it happened recently in Indonesia, Korea, Central Africa and Latin America.

6. Motives in decision: "People want to embrace christian faith for some motive. Some laudably spiritual motive, some mixed, some highly questionable motive. How much allowance one can give for admitting persons of mixed motives?"

This is a popular and serious question. I give only a very brief clarification here. We all started on following Christ by mixed motives. No man seeks the Living God for the sheer bliss of worshiping Him. It is just not in the fallen nature. Each one of us sought Him at the beginning because of some need to be met, some need we called 'spiritual', like peace of mind, lack of meaning in life, deliverance from evil spirits etc., some 'psychological' like fear, social inscurity etc. and some we call 'physical' like sickness, unemployment, hunger.

Society has classified some motives as pure and lofty some as impure and low. But which society? The privileged society calls impure, the motive of the illiterates seeking christian faith along with a night school. The exploiting society calls detestable, the mixed motive of the poor who seek church along with medicine for their dying children. The self styled 'high class' society jeers at the downtrodden classes motive in seeking Christ and basic human dignity, together. We have created a lot of value difference for motives. But what is the absolute difference between peace of mind and peace of stomach? What difference it makes to the God the Creator of the whole universe and body, soul and mind? How much nearer to the sun I am, when I stand on my slipper than when I stand without it? We all know the good old story of the prodigal son. What was his motive to return to his father's house? Belie, says the Bible. But something emerged onroute home. By the time we fully understood the heart of a loving father, obedience to that love went deep, deeper than the elder brother's.

It is a fact of church history that the measure of obedience to the holy faith is the test of peoples spiritual growth not the supposed quality of motive with which the group first embraces the faith. For some this may sound highly incongruent to their precious convictions, shocking as it may come. But world church history says so. The believers that have shown the greatest spiritual growth are the people groups who leant and obeyed the Bible without necessarily the ones who sought the faith initially with the purest motive. This explains partly why some lofty philosophers die after God die as seekers.
while more humble and lowly and irreligious find Him. No person can speak more authentically on this point than Bishop Pickett who did a through study on this, in a nation wide research on group decisions in Indian subcontinent.

7. What we should do:

a) Now that some are knocking at our door it is time to wash our face and comb our hair. It is time to stop the infightings, litigations, hair splitting on trivials and behave as men. It is time to urgently no lingering evils as caste spirits and dowry in some part of the church.

b) The church should be accommodative enough to the situation. If and when people come, the church should be willing to forgo or modify its secondary norms. Rigidity at the secondary convictions has been one clear mark of churches the world around because that is what make 'our church' different from 'that church'.

Church should be willing to give baptism in church or village brooke any time, any where; conduct worship any weekly day, any where in church building, in the basti hut or under the mango tree. Most of the shepherding and teaching should be delegated to voluntary lay leaders.

Unless there is a will and resolve to accommodate, change, alter and modify, multitude of seekers will turn away.

c) Parachurch evangelistic movements should aim at planting or helping to plant worship groups. Spiritual salvation is the ultimate destination of the seeker. "Accept the Lord by faith in your heart" is however a language the average man does not understand, "Attend the Prarthana Bhanjan every Saturday evening under the banyan tree", is a spiritual commitment he will readily understand and commit to.

d) Adopt modes of communication and functioning and worship that is intelligible and meaningful to the seeker. This calls for bold and innovative unconventional approaches.

e) Widely published and maliciously manipulated allegation that groups of people are wanting to embrace christianity for rice and rupee is just not true. The one underlying urge that is most dominant is the search for basic human dignity.

A crowd of searching, longing bewildered humans is standing out side the church door. It is afraid to knock the door. Another crowd is sitting and singing merrily in side the door, unmindful of the crowd outside. "By all estimates the crowd at the door is not qualified to enter, it is poor, illiterate, shabby, ill clad, dirty, smelling unspiritual." The man indoor will do well to remember that he was one among them, just a generation or two ago. What he needs is a honest thankfulness to the Lord who transformed him and trust in the Lord who can transform others, as well. You there, inside, open the door.
WHAT TAMIL NADU'S NEO-MUSLIMS ARE SAYING

By P.A. Augustine**

THE MASS CONVERSION to Islam of Harijans of Meenakshipuram and other localities in Tamil Nadu has shocked sections of the Hindu community. There was a flurry of activity on the part of both political and religious leaders. If these Harijans had been murdered, their houses set on fire and their property looted, the leaders would have displayed far less concern and horror than they did over the conversion.

The worst shocks are yet to come. The Harijans are in no mood to relent. The talk of conversion is very much in the air all over Tamil Nadu. Mass conversion on a far bigger scale is in the offing.

One of the first reactions of the shocked leaders was to advance the theory that the lure of money was the chief factor influencing conversion. For those who wouldn't face up to reality, money was a convenient bogey to raise. But the charge will not stand close scrutiny.

Politicisation of religion, or call it what you will, the mass conversion of Harijans is an eloquent act of social protest. The message is loud and clear. It is a powerful indictment of the society they were born in. The Harijans are not prepared to wait any longer. They are determined to cast off the burden that has weighed them down for centuries.

What the Harijans demand is their birthright to walk the village roads with honour, to be treated with dignity, and hold their rightful place in society. They reject concessions and special benefits which they consider mere palliatives.

SEVERE JUDGMENT

IN THE MASS CONVERSION of Harijans, twin facts of great significance could not have escaped the notice of many Christians. The first is that the Harijans have rejected Christianity as incapable of taking them to their goal of social equality, and the second, some of the neo-Muslims are former Christians who had become disillusioned with Christianity. The rejection of Christianity is a severe judgment on the Church in Tamil Nadu.

It may be recalled here that once a Tamil Nadu bishop approached Dr. Ambedkar at the time he was debating with himself which way to turn, and invited him to become a Christian. Dr. Ambedkar rejected the offer, saying that the Church did not offer any hope of release from the shackles of caste, as it was caste ridden.

The rejection of Christianity by the Harijans could not have come as a great surprise to those who are acquainted with the situation of the Tamil Nadu Church. It tolerates discriminatory practices rarely met with elsewhere. An average Tamil Catholic's first loyalty is to his caste; thus he is first and foremost a member of a caste, such as the Nadar, Adi Bravidas, Udayar, Vellalas, Vanniyar, Gaundas or Paravas, to name a few. His loyalty to the community of Christians takes a second place.

**The journalist author wishes it to be known that the observations he makes on the Tamil Nadu Church are based on on-the-spot investigations and interviews he conducted on a recent visit to Tamil Nadu.
It must however be pointed out that the situation on the caste front has improved markedly during the last ten years. In several places the walls that separated sections of the congregations in houses of worship have been demolished. But not all walls have been demolished. Discriminatory divisions based on caste still prevail. I am listing below some examples of such discrimination.

One such practice is to have separate churches for different caste groups. In kayatharu parish of Palayamkottal diocese, there are two churches, one for the Nadar and the other for the Vellalas, who consider themselves superior to the Nadar. In Manapad parish of Tuticorin diocese, there is one church for the Nadar. Similarly there are two churches for different castes at Thangachimadam parish of Madurai diocese.

Even today there are separate places set apart for upper caste and lower caste Catholics in the parish church of Panjampatti in Tiruchirapalli diocese. At Sankarkovil, a substation of Chidambarapuram parish in Palayamkottal diocese, separate Masses are said for separate caste groups.

DEATH IS NO LEVELLER

IN TAMIL NADU dioceses, separate burial grounds for upper caste and 'Harijan' Catholics are far from a rare sight. Such separation exists at the St. Joseph's Church, Dindigul, and at the Cathedral Church, Tiruchirapalli. I have it from reliable sources that there are numerous parishes especially in the coastal areas where the separation is observed.

The parish priest of Andavoorang of Madurai diocese told me when I called on him that separate burial grounds exist in all the substations of his parish, while the practice has virtually disappeared from the main parish graveyard, under pressure from the Catholics of scheduled caste origin. The Udayar, the dominant upper caste Catholics of the parish, lifted the ban on the burial of 'Harijan' bodies as a special concession. Sometime later the Harijans decided not to render the traditional mental services to the upper castes. Incensed at this decision, the upper caste Catholics re-imposed the ban on the burial of the dead belonging to that community. There were cries of protest from the community. Recently the ban was relaxed to permit the burial of the body of the wife of a teacher.

The Cathedral parish in Tiruchirapalli came in for some publicity recently over the affair of the demolition of the wall separating the burial grounds for upper caste and 'Harijan' Catholics. The upper caste people had the wall restored through a court order, The zeal they have shown in erecting the wall ill becomes the followers of one who came among us to break down all barriers.

A priest who has been stationed in Tiruchirapalli for many years told me that there are several chapels, other than the parish churches, located within the city meant exclusively for certain caste groups.

Not long ago there was an open confrontation between upper caste and lower caste Catholics of Suranam parish in Madurai diocese. The upper caste Catholics, it appears, adopted a policy of non-cooperation and Casteism towards the parish priest who happened to belong to the Harijan Community. The Catholics of the latter community stood behind him, a defence resulting in open conflict.

It is worth noting how Bishop Leonard of Madurai who headed the diocese till 1967 (the year he died) had a valiant battle against castism. Owing to his efforts, Catholic open practices of castism have disappeared from the parish and the diocese. It would however be wrong to conclude that the Catholics and the lay Catholics of the diocese are less caste conscious than in other dioceses.
SEMINARIES, RELIGIOUS HOUSES

SOME MONTHS ago Catholic youths of scheduled caste origin held a protest march in Rumbakonam against the admission policy of the seminary there, as they believed that they were being systematically excluded from it. It is not known what impact the protest march had on the admission policy of the seminary.

The incident highlights an aspect of the caste problem in the Tamil Nadu Church. The clergy are hardly free from the taint of casteism. Caste is often believed to be a factor in appointments and transfers of the clergy. There is rivalry between some caste groups. Such rivalry is believed to exist between the Veilala and Vanniyar priests of Tiruchirapalli diocese.

Even religious houses have been infected by the virus of casteism. Everyone knows everybody else's caste. Years of religious life do not seem to be able to remove caste consciousness from the minds of religious. A proof of this caste consciousness is the ingenuity shown by some religious in discovering the caste affiliation of fellow religious.

Some Congregations of Sisters, though technically open to all communities, do not easily admit girls of lower caste origin. When seeking admission, these girls used to be asked, 'Why don't you join your own congregation? The reference in 'your own Congregation' is obviously to the Congregation of St. Louis De Gonzague, popularly known as Gonzague Sisters, founded in Pondicherry in the 18th century. It was exclusively patronised by girls of lower caste origin. Consequently it came to be known as a 'Harijen' Congregation.

Later the Congregation opened its houses in the dioceses of Tamil Nadu and began to admit upper caste girls. But even today in Pondicherry upper caste do not seek admission to the Congregation.

A new Congregation of Sisters was founded in Pondicherry in 1844, meant exclusively for upper caste girls, known as the Congregation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. In recent years it has begun to admit girls from the lower castes.

RIGHT PERSPECTIVES NEEDED

Many Tamil Nadu church leaders have denounced squatting Masses and priests going about in mufti, terming such things as great scandals. Some have even asked the lay people to prevent the priests from saying squatting Masses. But they have yet to address their faithful on the scandal of caste discrimination which strikes at the core of the teachings of Jesus. The same cannot be said of squatting Masses or the rule of clerical dress. One is reminded of the splinter and the plank.

A COMMON AFFLICTION

It is not only the Tamil Nadu Church that deserves censure. Caste discriminations prevail in other parts of India in no less virulent form. The caste fury that was let loose in Concolim parish in southern Goa is a cast in point. The parties have had recourse to the law court to press their claims. The public announcement by Archbishop Raul Consleaves of Goa that the Goa Church is determined to root out casteism is greatly welcome. One longs to hear similar statements from church leaders who are wrestling with the same problem.

Some months ago a priest had to be ordained priest in his own parish in a southern diocese. The parishioners supported by their priest objected to the ordination on the plea that the first ordination in the parish could not be of a 'Harijen'. The ceremony had to be conducted elsewhere. One likes to ask if the ordaining bishop did not have anything to say on the matter.
There is an exclusive Syrian Catholic community that permits no intermarriages with other Syrian Catholics. Once I asked a layman belonging to that community if it was not high time to end such outdated prohibitions. He replied that the lay people were amenable to the idea but that the church authorities would not hear of it.

That specific community moreover is so exclusive that a non-Christian wishing to become a Christian cannot join the community; nor can he rejoin the diocese of which that community is a constituent part. I wonder if Hitler was more zealous in preserving the purity of his race. Such exclusiveness has crossed the border of sanity.

Christian thinkers and social activists meeting in Bangalore in October had this to say:

Selection of Church personnel is sometimes dictated by considerations of caste. Some places of worship and some Church services are tainted by casteism. Death does not always end caste discriminations; walls of shame divide the boundaries of the so-called high caste corpses from the so-called low caste corpses.

CLAMOUR FOR BENEFITS

There is still another subtle way by which caste distinctions are perpetuated among Christians. It is done by joining the general clamour for benefits for Harijans and backward communities. The Church has deemed it convenient to join this racket on the plea that the Christians of scheduled caste origin are entitled to all the benefits received by Harijans and backward classes.

Many state governments contend that Christians of scheduled caste origin, by the very fact of embracing Christianity are freed from many social disabilities, and thus are not entitled to the benefits. A Christian could not in good conscience reject this argument. Yet we continue to maintain that they are still Harijans. Even national conventions are organised to press demands for benefits for these Christians. Such efforts are a disservice to those Christians.

If it is only by professing loyalty to their caste that they can reap the benefits, then it is high price to pay for them. The benefits are given in exchange for the labels 'Harijan' or 'scheduled caste'.

In any effort on the part of the depressed classes to shake off their disabilities, their own self-image is of vital importance. Labelling them 'Harijans' deals a blow to their own self confidence and will prove an obstacle to their growing in a better self image. Hence it is only aid on the basis of economic backwardness that is honourable.

It is worth noting that Tamil Nadu Harijans have renounced most of the benefits accruing to them by embracing Islam. They have seen the hidden snare in these benefits. If the Church had not joined the racket for benefits for Harijans, Christians, it would have found it necessary to put forward the demand for making economic backwardness the criterion for aid.
APOLOGISING TO NEW CHRISTIANS

As a result of pandering to caste, we land ourselves in the situation where the church is apologetic to its 'Harijan' Christians because they have been deprived of financial benefits and other concessions. One gathers the impression that the churchmen feel almost guilty of being the cause of this loss.

Where is the sense of freedom and release that the gospel promise? If a new Christian continues to be weighed down by his fetter, what good does it do him to become a Christian?

Further still, many new Christians are not averse to playing upon the guilt feelings of the churchmen. One senses that they want to extract a compensation for the losses they have suffered. They then put forward demands in lieu of these losses.

The situation has arisen from a misunderstanding of and a compromise with the teachings of the gospel. The term 'Harijan Christian' is a contradiction. The apologetic stance of the churchmen vis-a-vis the Christians of scheduled caste origin can be traced to a failure on their part to spell out clearly to prospective converts what Christianity really has to offer. The freedom of the gospel should not be exchanged for paltry financial advantages.

The custom of preaching the gospel exclusively to upper castes deserves to be condemned. The practice amounts to glorification of caste. It is hopelessly outmoded and can no longer be justified.

Is there any wonder then, if, as a result of policies such as the above, caste has come to be accepted as normal? A sense of solidarity is wholly absent from many Christian communities. Christians of lower caste origin do not experience a sense of belonging to the community. This is proved by the severe judgment of Tamil Nadu Harijans on the Christian community there.

ACTION NEEDED

In the wake of mass conversion of Tamil Nadu's Harijans, if the Church were engage in a serious self-examination, the neo-Muslims will have rendered a valuable service. The abomination of caste must be rooted out from our midst. If this goal is to be achieved, determined action is called for.

As long as our clergy and religious continue to be guided by caste considerations. It is futile to hope to rid the lay Catholics of this evil.

Disciplinary action must be taken against those local leaders of Christian communities who practice casteism in any form. Serious efforts must also be made to educate the lay Catholics on the anti-gospel caste practices. In areas where the evil is prevalent, superiors of seminaries and religious houses must see to it that those under their charge abjure caste during their formation as a precondition for entering the ministry or for incorporation into a religious community.

The future leaders of Christian communities must be thoroughly instructed in the radical demand for Christian fellowship. Human rights education must form an essential part of the seminary and religious formation.

The distinction of ritual sometimes smacks of casteism. The prohibition on marriages between followers of Syrian and Latin Rites is a needless curb on Christian liberty and must be abolished without delay.
Faithfulness to Christ requires that the Church denounce all forms of artificial and man-made divisions among Christians. It should also take a courageous, unambiguous, and uncompromising stand against exploitation and oppression of man by man. The Church cannot shirk this God-given task.
CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
(Affiliated to Serampore University)

August 14, 1981.

Dr. R.E. Hedlund
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Dear Dr. Hedlund,

Thank you for your letter enclosing the excerpts from Mr. David Householder's letter.

Enclosed is a response I wrote hastily. I do not have the address of The Traci Community. May I ask a favour of you. Would you kindly edit my letter and send that to TRACI. We want to be firm, but also factual. I know there are several places where my letter needs polishing.

I am sorry I did not apply for membership in the Church Growth Association of India. My heart is with that movement and I should have taken membership long ago.

I plan to attend the meeting of AETE on the 20th. Hope to meet you there. I shall give my application for membership.

I appreciate the valuable work you are doing.
Looking ahead to meeting you on the 20th.

With good wishes,

Yours sincerely,

J.C. Gamaliel

J.C. Gamaliel

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To

Dr. Headlund,
Post Box 768,
Kilpauk,
MADRAS - 600 010.

Dear Dr. Headlund,

Greetings to you in the Lord's holy name.

I am enclosing herewith a copy of the paper that I presented to the AETEI consultation Madras. I am sending this that you may be interested in some of the points that I have discussed there in.

Closing with warm greetings and prayers for your valuable ministry,

Yours in the Lord's Service,

[Signature]

EBENEZER SUNDER RAJ

ESR/jas 1.10
I am very thankful to the Consultation for the kind invitation to present a paper on Church Planting in North India. Looking at the programme designed for the AETEI Consultation, from the quantum of time and programme given for evangelism and Church Planting, I find a restoration of balance. There was a time in evolving world church bodies, when world evangelization was detached from church and its theology. The boat went adrift since.

One can study 'electrons' without study of any electric appliances. 'Study of God' cannot be done such a way. God can be studied only on His redemptive relationship to His fallen creation. Any further knowledge of God is neither necessary nor possible for man. This is where evangelization becomes the strong basis for sound theology.

I trust the esteemed participants are well informed on the scene in North India. Two points emerge clearly, when we make a close study of North Indian evangelistic situation. (a) The huge and vast areas and masses of people, who have not heard the gospel yet.

They all may or may not respond to the gospel command to obedience to the holy faith, to become disciples. This does not annul the fact, that they have not been given the first chance. But for the pre-evangelistic influence by the noble efforts of India Every Home Crusade and gospel radio broadcasts, Operation Mobilization and such agencies, the vast and huge populations are untouched.

While the objectives of the above agencies and Missions are laudable, the efforts do not fully meet the needs of the situation. There is need for more personal communication of the gospel, which essential to suit our cultural frame. This demands a host of workers to involve urgently in proclamation of gospel in personal modes of communication. Even by a very rough estimate of one evangelist/missionary to a population of 10,000 persons, we need about 40,000 workers to make a fair coverage of north Indian population, with a personal presentation of the gospel and to establish a visible, accessible centre of testimony for the gospel, (whether in a formal church or an informal fellowship of believers) to the population around.

(b) The second point in the evangelistic situation in North India is that there are receptive ethnic groups, who are ready to respond to the gospel. The Lord of the harvest has prepared individuals, families and even a whole ethnic group, through...
religious social, economic or cultural conflicts and processes; prepared to a position to respond readily to the gospel. The process of this preparation is sometimes very complex to understand, however the fact that the Lord prepares one individual, or family or the people group relatively more responsive over the other, is true. This opportunity of receptiveness is happening all the time, somewhere. The present scene in North India, seen through sample surveys in about a dozen scattered areas and people groups varying in geography, culture, economical and social status indicate this receptivity. Contrary to popular notion (that people do not respond to the gospel in North India) there is receptivity, if only we can take effort to sense ethnic realities and that faith propagates naturally through kinship, particularly in ethnically knit societies.

The primary need that relates to the work mentioned above is men, cross cultural evangelists who will venture and go and adopt to the new culture and plant church. In our culturally knit societies, there are very few evangelists who venture to cross cultural boundaries. (I am not talking about the evangelists from Kerala working among the Malayalee employees in New Delhi of a Tamilian working among the English congregations in Calcutta. I am talking about a Malayalee living among the nonchristians Kui people in Oriss a Tamilian working among Braon in Bihar etc.) Among those few who do venture to cross, cultural boundaries, there are fewer who fit into the cultural setting of the host culture and manage to communicate in modes that reach the people's heart and personality. Among those who do, the vast majority settle down to social emancipation as the ultimate goal. Because, a good majority of receptive people groups are found to be under economic, social or cultural oppressions. There are very few who manage to establish worship groups and nurture them and enhance church growth in depth and in width.

Liberation theology, which views social emancipation of peoples, as ultimate and complete goal in itself, is having powerful infiltration and influence even among evangelicals, who are involved in cross cultural missions.

A fairly approximate estimate indicates that among the protestants who are involved in cross cultural missions in India (indigenous and overseas) less than a quarter of the total personnel are involved in evangelism and church planting. This is where, evangelical theological emphasis is felt very urgent and acute. While the battle for the Bible rages in theological seminaries, the death toll is counted in the mission field. I cannot really think of a field superintendent of a pioneer overseas evangelical mission in North-India, who

........3
has recently turned a full time social worker of the state government.

While we accept that pushing a tract into the hand of starving man is not complete gospel we do not accept that feeding the undernourished, holding eye camps, providing quality seeds and high breed chicken is complete gospel. We stand here or we don't stand at all. I earnestly appeal to the theological leaders assembled here at this consultation to give serious thought to bring evangelism into focus in our theological schools.

Another important aspect that this consultation should consider is vocational guidance to graduates of our Bible Schools. It is disturbing to note that less than one tenth of all our graduates from Evangelical Bible Schools in India opt for evangelism as their vocation. A majority of the graduates may 'endure' a period of evangelism as an unavoidable 'probation' before settling down as a pastor or a theologian. Very few opt for it as a life vocation. It does not carry respectability. Two points need to be emphasized here. One is, that if evangelism (E2 and E3 done by P2 and P3) is counted as a lower type of occupation by our graduates, very soon we will have a situation, where there will be very few flocks to shepherd. This scene is already emerging in several parts of India.

Secondly, evangelism as a vocation should be elevated in the esteem of our Bible school students. As a person, who has been, for some years, in cross cultural evangelism I must state that the complex and innovative enterprise of cross cultural evangelism demands for its service, the most trained and talented faculties.

In my early years in the Lord's ministry I had very little value for theological learning. However as years were spent in evangelism I begin to understand the right place for Biblical theology. As we all know the Bhakti school of Ramanuja was far superior in depth and influence compared to the Advaita school that survived time and hostile environ because of the centre of learning Sankaracharya established across the land.

The need for small size learning centres is very much felt in mission field. When worship groups are formed there is urgent need for producing elders or pastors for the emerging congregations. Secondly when a peoples movement begins to pickup speed, the need is acutely felt for training native evangelists (from the same people group) to enable enhancing and maintaining the movement. Both the above needs call for rural Bible schools. We are well aware that all the existing rural evangelical institutions in India started as rural Bible schools. For the above two purposes. ........
However the later developments invariably changed the scene. The rural Bible schools, for the above two school succumbs to the temptation to get urbanised, upgraded, accredited and affiliated. It begins to produce learned men, pastors, theologians. They are needed also. But the people movement cases. Soon, the whole emphasis turns from church growth and evangelism to 'consolidating' 'preserving' 'qualitative growing' 'emancipating' 'strengthening' the existing churches. In several cases the institution alienated itself from the people for whom it was established.

The secular parallels to this are not wanting. The government of India sensing the oppressing poverty and starvation opened hundreds of rural agricultural institutions to improve national agriculture. However, very soon the scene changed. The village boys trained in these institutions, instead of taking the benefit of training to their village people were urbanized, upgraded and many of them ended as agricultural research scholars in America. The Indian village regains the same. I appeal to this Consultation to make serious evaluation of how relevant our schools are to the ultimate goal of reaching the rural masses in our mother-land. The consultation should also evaluate whether reviving some closed rural Bible schools can revive some arrested people movements. If we are serious about discipling people groups in this vast land, we need a few hundred rural Bible schools to be established across the land, to meet the needs of each ethnic/cultural context. While we need some big centres of higher learning for defence and communication of our sacred faith, the evangelization and church growth of masses demand short term (3 to 6 months) Bible schools in every district of our country. A few factors are worth considering in this connection.

a) The teaching at these rural institutions need to be made relevant to the time. Students at these rural institutes need to be armed to fight not gnostics but agnostics. We need to teach them scriptural premises for today's issues.

b) The teaching has to enlighten students on religious issues of today's India: India not reformation day Europe.

c) Doctrinal purity in teaching should not be allowed to strangle spontaneous evangelism, by students, to suit their context. In one such tribal Bible school the students are trained as evangelists. They go out methodically to distribute literature, with sound doctrinal presentation and present the tribals to respond. In the adjacent area another mission has sent workers to preach, heal and exercise, with unprecedented results of peoples movements. Wholesome teaching is must. But wholesome teaching does not
precede peoples turning to the faith but always follows it. It is a pity that a great part of our time, energy, personnel and efforts precipitate in hair splitting, when we miss great opportunities in discipling nations.

The service of some agencies is highly commendable in lay training through extension studies, correspondence courses, in-service programmes etc. This is a good progress in the right direction, to meet the vast need, not only for evangelization of the land but for nurture of the young in the faith.

The ACTEI Consultation has gathered at an important juncture and it should be our earnest prayer that our Lord may direct us to concrete plans toward meeting the above presented needs.

Thank you,

{signature}

{Date}

{Location}

---Ebenezer Sunder Raj.
"Pinehdin as a Missy Religion."
see O'Mulley, p. 32
" S. Fuchs, p. 52 (Cath. Easter Religion in 2th"
"P. Daud, pp. 23-24 (Calla Committal"

Seminaries, Reconversion to

Heimann through Freidel"

Reconversion (p. 57) or
Sanctification"
I. Nature of Hinduism
   - Model (attests to external)
   - Sanskritisation
   - New Nertics
   - Bipla etc.

II. Conversion Efforts
   - Arya Samaj
   - Ramakrishna Mission
   - Hindu Sects in West
Three Churches want to come under one name

By Our Staff Reporter

The joint council of the Church of North India, the Church of South India, and the Malankara Mar Thoma Syrian Church, which met in the City, discussed the possibility of adopting a common name. The need for such a common name has been felt for long. The joint council has suggested “The Church of India” as the new name.

The proposal will be sent to the three churches. It is expected to take more than two years for the three Churches to ratify the proposal.

The three-day meeting was attended by 14 Bishops from the three churches. The council resolved to appoint three commissions: on Theology, Mission and Justice and Peace.

It called upon Christians and others to denounce corruption, discrimination, on grounds of caste, sex or race, particularly the dowry system and exploitation of women.

It called for changes in succession laws to enable sons and daughters to have equal share in parents’ property.

The three churches represent 20,000 congregations and three million Christians.
Pierre:

You're working very hard
to convince me.

You're (Patti Pope Gregory)

'Contrary. I'm called
to give notice, to offer the
gifts. 'Hope & Love & Living
Whad you do with them
is your sacred private
affair.'

[Signature]

Clara G.
Conversion & Life-Style in NE India

see article, "Faith & Life-Style: How Church was Understood by Nineteenth Century Converts in North East India," by Frederick S. Horns. Bangled Thoological Forum, 1982-1 (IV, XII, Jan.-June): 20-43.

- Church: means transformed life
- individual life-style change
- strong corporate implication

= Magos
= Gurus
falsehood and concoctions will not succeed. It seems to be only an attempt of the interested non-Muslim organisations to create public opinion against the Muslim minority, in order that the Government may become instigated to take action against the Muslim minority for the reason that a few Harijans have embraced Islam in a few places in the South. They forget that under the Constitution of India, until such time as it is repealed, this country is declared to be a secular state and the Government is secular.

It can be no concern of the Government, whether in the States or in the Centre, to go against the Constitution and threaten the minority community whether Muslim or Xian, that action will be taken against the community when it exercises the fundamental right guaranteed under the Constitution to profess, practise and propagate its religion in this country. It is also not the concern of the Government, whether any individual or thousands of individuals change their faith, unless it is established beyond doubt, that such change of faith has taken place by the use of force or by any illegal means adopted by any section of the people of the land.

It can never be the idea of the Muslim minority community to convert itself into a majority and become the ruling community in this country by dint of numbers. As it is, the case today, even for a thousand years there is no prospect of the majority community being reduced to a position of a minority in this land. This has not happened during the last 1000 years and it will not happen in the coming 1000 years either.

It is a false propaganda that Gulf money has flowed into this country to be used for the Muslim minority to convert the Harijans to Islam. If this is proved to be true, then it is open to the Government to block the flow of foreign money to such a purpose. The arm of the law available to the Government is by no means short. The propaganda that inducements have been used to convert the Harijans to Islam is another invention and concoction. There is not a shred of evidence in support of such a propaganda.

The basic fact is that the majority community in this country has not yet realised and appreciated that all Muslims living in this land, which is their motherland, are an integral part and parcel of the nation.

Basheer Ahmed Sayeed.
Madras.

Conversions

Sir—The fear that Hinduism in this country will be seriously jeopardised by the so-called mass conversions of Harijans into Islam is wholly unwarranted. The mass conversions are said to have occurred only in one or two villages in Tirunelveli and Ramnad districts. Conversions have not taken place in any other part of Tamil Nadu on a mass scale so far as it is known. Hinduism therefore has nothing to fear from these so-called mass conversions. History has recorded that despite of the thousand years of Muslim rule in India, when the British handed over the reins of Government to the Hindu majority in India in 1947, the Muslim population was much less than 25 per cent.

The attempt by the non-Muslim organisations to build up a case against the Muslim minority community by...
CHINA

Let a Hundred Flowers Wilt

After allowing stirrings of protest, the government turns tough

The charges ring disturbingly of the past: "Brazenly opposing the party's leadership, deviating from the orbit of socialism, desiring and envying the decadent, bourgeois way of life in the West." These and similar superheated phrases appearing in the Chinese press these days recall the years when the late Mao Tsetung carried out his frenzied and reckless campaigns for ideological purity in China. Though the more moderate post-Mao leadership in Peking had repeatedly promised not to resume such repression, the official press has recently bristled with attacks on people who are said to hold "corrosive, erroneous ideas" and to fan "aimless, evil winds." Having lived through the Cultural Revolution of 1966-1976 and other waves of error against individualism, many Chinese are bracing themselves for a new political campaign designed to impose obedience to the Communist Party's dictates.

It was Deputy Party Chairman Deng Xiaoping, China's most powerful leader, who had permitted a modicum of dissent in the late 1970s, much as Mao had launched his short-lived "Let a Hundred Flowers Bloom" movement in 1957. Now Deng too has had second thoughts about the first faint burgeonings of freedom he inspired. Lately Deng has complained that the relative relaxation of recent years has led to a host of "unhealthy tendencies," most notably in literature and art. The press has referred darkly to the emergence of an artistic "counterculture" and complained of stories and plays that "propagate pessimism, nihilism and ultraiindividualism," meaning in Deng's words, "opposition to the leadership of the party." In the spring, Bai Hua, a well-known writer, was viciously attacked by the Liberation Army Daily for a screenplay called Bitter Love that, the paper charged, showed "hatred for our party and our socialist motherland." More ominously, say Chinese sources, Deng has named at least ten writers who will be singled out in the months ahead as targets of a national campaign of "criticism and self-criticism."

Even Chinese leaders, like Deng himself, have stressed that the current campaign will produce nothing like the sweep of repression of the past, when tens of thousands were indiscriminately shipped off to labor camps or killed. Nor does it seem that China's leaders are preparing to impose anything like the absolute uniformity in literature and art that was ordained during the Cultural Revolution. But the new crackdown has had a dampening effect on many writers and artists who had been hoping that the government would allow ever greater degrees of free expression.

The repression began early this year when the Communist Party embarked on a no-nonsense effort to crush the stubborn remains of the "democracy movement" that had flourished in 1978 and 1979. Most of the activities, particularly putting up posters on Peking's "democracy wall," have already been banned by the party in 1980. Several of the liberals' most articulate spokesmen were arrested that year, including Liu Qing, deputy editor of the most widely circulated underground journal, April 5th Forum.

This year China's leaders set out to stamp out the more than 50 small underground journals that had blossomed during the movement's headier days. Though the journals were crudely mimeographed publications with readerships of at most 300, 500 or 1,000 each, they were formally labeled by the Party Central Committee in February. "The conservatives in the party and in the security apparatus are hoping that Deng, who is based in Peking, "They were determined to eradicate the dissident movement once and for all," said a diplomat who is based in Peking. "Deng wants to show party hard-liners he is not soft on dissent so they will go along with his ideological orthodoxy."

Much of this new stress on ideology and discipline has puzzled analysts who expected a period of relaxation to follow the harsh crackdown earlier this year. One possible explanation for the campaign is the leaders' concern that any slackness could produce the kind of discontent that erupted during the heyday of the democracy movement of 1978-1979. Another explanation postulates a political compromise between Deng and more conservative law-and-order forces within the party. Some analysts speculate that Deng wants to show party hard-liners he is not soft on dissent so they will go along with his ideological heresy of allowing greater participation by foreign capitalists in the country's economy and his effort to weed out old, incompetent Maoists from the bureaucracy.

Meanwhile, the country's disappointed artists and intellectuals will have to wait for better times to come. They will scarcely be encouraged by reading China's new constitution, which guarantees the right of free speech, of publication and of assembly—all freedoms that have been victims of the regime's new tough policies.
The harijans have a genuine grievance. For centuries they were, literally, the outcasts of Indian society, permitted only the most "unclean" work: the disposal of excrement, and crafts like leatherworking, considered tainted because it involves handling the hides of dead animals. Harijans were cut off from caste Hindus, obliged to leave the road if a Brahman was passing, for example. Harijans could not ride buses, trains or ferries used by caste Hindus, eat in their restaurants, even share the same well. The decision of Harijans to convert to Islam is bringing quick reaction these days. In Andhra Pradesh, an international Hindu organization has adopted a harijan village in an attempt to wipe out discrimination there and make it a model for others to follow. R. Veerapan, Tamil Nadu's minister of Hindu religions, has proposed that wealthy temples follow the example. He has also suggested mass inter-caste marriages—with the government footing the bill.

The sudden rush of goodwill is having some effect. At the Kalpakam nuclear power plant near Madras, 700 harijan workers have announced that they have decided not to convert after all, since their "complaints" have been taken care of. Among them, four cases of harassment by other Hindus, which had grown dusty on local officials' desks, were swiftly resolved.

But while harijans are increasingly absorbed into the life of India's cities, changes have been slow in rural areas like Tamil Nadu. Says State Assemblyman K. Shanmugasundaram: "A harijan can't even walk in the village. If he enters a Hindu temple he cannot touch the temples. The police are always there. If he goes to the barber he must wash his head first. "Harijans" often still live in enclaves walled off from most of Tamil Nadu. They have their own wells. Though the government now insists that harijan children be allowed in schools, they are frequently the butt of abuse. Caste practices remain particularly entrenched in southern India.

In a country where fierce Hindu-Muslim riots took a million lives in 1946-48, the choice of Islam may seem strange. But in Tamil Nadu, at least, Muslims are generally prosperous people who observe their religious duties devoutly and command the respect of the Hindu community. Besides, explain the converts, conversion to Christianity has not helped: those who have tried it charge that old caste distinctions prevail. Says Mohammed Khassim, a Muslim convert in the village of Ilamanur: "In Islam there is a mutual amity that is absent in other religions."

Most harijans do not expect an overnight disappearance of discrimination. In Ilamanur, for example, they acknowledge that clashes with caste Harijan converts to Islam gathered for prayers in a Tamil Nadu village mosque
An angry repudiation of both Hinduism and government policies to improve their lot.
Hindu brotherhood Associations from Oct. 2

GURUVAYUR, Sept. 8

The Hindu Sahodaratwa Abhivridhi Sangh (Hindu Association for Promotion of Brotherhood), formed here last month under the auspices of the Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam, has decided to set up district-level units of the Sangh all over Tamil Nadu on October 2 next, Gandhi Jayanti Day.

The units, which are to take up two villages in each district to start with, will study the problems relating to religion and culture, including those of Harijans, and report to the Peetam, which will try to solve them. Representations on problems that needed Government attention would also be made to the authorities concerned.

These decisions were taken at the second meeting of the Tamil Nadu Hindu conference here on Sunday in the presence of His Holiness Sri Jayendra Saraswati of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam.

The conference, attended by representatives from all over Tamil Nadu, also resolved to form associations in every Harijan colony in the State, with the object of providing hostels for Harijan students wherever required, ensuring water supply to the colonies and renovating temples, if any. -- PTI.
No Central legislation to ban conversions

From Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, Sept. 15.

The Union Minister of State for Home, Mr. Yogendra Makwana, has ruled out any legislation to prohibit conversion of Harijans to Islam or any other religion. "It is the fundamental right of every individual to profess the faith he likes and if anybody voluntarily embraces any religion, the Government cannot prohibit it", he said, replying to a five-hour debate in the Rajya Sabha on the recent mass conversion of Harijans in Tamil Nadu.

Mrs. Satyavanimuthu (AIADMK), who initiated the discussion raised the question whether the Government intended to bring forward legislation to prevent conversions.

Individual right: The individual's right to profess any religion was also stressed in the main statement by the Home Minister, Mr. Zail Singh.

He said, "India being a secular State, the Constitution guaranteed liberty of faith, and worship to all citizens and the right freely to profess, practise and propagate religion, provided this right did not contravene the provisions of part III of the Constitution "fundamental rights", and did not impinge upon public order morality and health."

Mr. Zail Singh, however, hoped that the individual's right of conscience would be exercised in an atmosphere free from coercion or inducements.

"Anything that might create social tensions would naturally cause concern and we are confident that the State Governments would take appropriate action, if any violation of law or threat to peace occurs," he said.

Role of Gulf money: During the debate some members referred to reports of monetary inducements, including flow of funds from the Gulf countries, to bring about the conversion.

One member sought confirmation of the reported observation of Mr. Zail Singh and the Minister of State for Agriculture, Mr. R. V. Swaminathan, about the possible role played by petro-dollars in the mass conversion at Meenakshipuram in Tamil Nadu.

But Mr. Makwana replied that the Government had no information of any funds flowing from the Gulf countries. Both Mr. Zail Singh and Mr. Swaminathan had denied the reported observations attributed to them, he said.

Special programmes: Mr. Makwana attributed the conversions to socio-economic factors and recounted the steps taken to ameliorate the socio-economic conditions of the Harijans.

He mentioned about the increase in outlay provided for the special component plan for the Scheduled Castes and to the increase in the ceiling from Rs. 6,000 to Rs. 12,000 in respect of financial assistance given by the Scheduled Caste Development Corporation to each Harijan as margin money for taking up self-employment schemes.

Mr. Makwana also claimed that the amount earmarked for various programmes for the uplift of the scheduled castes constituted six per cent of the total Plan outlay now. The Prime Minister, the Home Minister and he himself had written to the Chief Ministers to implement the special component plan and other programmes.

Since the problem was socio-economic, the Government should be assisted by religious leaders and others in eradicating untouchability and bringing about equality among all classes of society. The Government would play its part by way of propaganda and giving aid for publishing literature, he said.

Special cell: Referring to Satyavanimuthu's suggestion for an effective machinery to prevent conversion on the Harijans and ensure that there is no forced conversion, Mr. Makwana said a special cell had been created in the Home Ministry to monitor the implementation of the programmes for the uplift of Harijans.

It was the State Governments' responsibility to ensure that the rights of Harijans were not violated. The Centre had issued the necessary guidelines for the purpose of clash between MPs: The debate, in which members belonging to all parties participated, was marked by a clash between Mrs. Satyavanimuthu and the DMK member, Mr. V. Gopalamswami.

When Mr. Gopalamswami alleged that the Tamil Nadu Government had miserably failed to protect Harijans in the State and referred to the death of a Harijan girl in a party office of AIADMK, Mrs. Satyavanimuthu protested and a wordy duel ensued for sometime.

Calm was restored only after persistent appeal by the Vice-Chairman to Mr. Gopalamswami not to bring in DMK-AIADMK politics.

There were also heated exchanges between some Congress (I) members and Mr. B. D. Khobargade (RPI) when Mr. Khobargade referred to Vedic sanction to the Caste system. He was shouted down by the Congress (I) members who alleged that he was misquoting the scriptures.

Caste Hindus blamed: The point made by most members was that the caste Hindus themselves were to be blamed if the Harijans chose to embrace Islam, or any other religion. They alleged that the caste Hindus, who now made a fuss over the conversion, had treated the Harijans as untouchables and perpetrated atrocities on them for decades.

"What were the religious heads, who now show concern for the Harijans, doing all these years?" asked some of the Harijan members.

The Opposition members charged the Government with having failed to eradicate untouchability and bring about social equality even after 35 years of independence.

Debate — Page 9
No freedom yet to bonded labour

By SEVANTI NINAN

SANGOBAN (Mirzapur).

When you live in the jungle 30 km from the nearest tar road, in one of the largest and most backward districts in the country, the Supreme Court's order takes time to be executed.

So it is little wonder some bonded labourers from Sangoban and its neighbouring villages who figured in a writ petition in the Supreme Court, are worse off than before. Protected by distance from the district or even block headquarters, Mahajan Asaphi Olha has only tightened his grip on the miserable tribal, Ganesh, whom he keeps in his bondage.

In July 1982 the Supreme Court admitted a writ petition under Art. 32 of the Constitution, regarding debt bondage in Sangoban and four other villages. Asaphi Olha, and another Mahajan, Shyamdev Olha, were named in that petition.

By September 1982, the district magistrate of Mirzapur, grabbed down on these men.

But after that, the district administration has withdrawn its long arm. Those freed have not been rehabilitated in any sense, and for those not freed despite the intervention there is no further help.

Sahdeviya, wife of Ganesh, says everyday Olha and his men get information that a government functionary or constable is visiting the area, they bundle off Ganesh to the forest near the village and hide him there. "If he loses my husband, who will do his work?" she asks.

She has no reason to worry. When even a Supreme Court order fails to ensure release to whom does it turn? Her husband has now been bonded for over 20 years. Six years ago she made a futile bid to free him. She sold all the land they possessed—one bigha of paddy land and two of upland plots for Rs. 400 and gave the money to the Mahajan. But that did not cancel out the Rs. 40 Ganesh had originally borrowed.

Asaphi Olha has another labourer in his column for 10 years and in his children's time, whose name is Sahdeviya, sold to a distant village. She said, "If Sahdeviya, the daughter of the Mahajan who sold his husband for marriage, ever comes to the Mahajan took the money and refused to release her husband.

Change in law likely to check alien money inflow

Express News Service

NEW DELHI, Feb. 11

The Centre is considering necessary changes in the present law to effect strict control over the inflow of foreign money into the country. This was stated by the Union Home Minister, Mr. P. C. Sethi, at a meeting of the parliamentary consultative committee attached to his ministry here on Thursday.

Most members stressed that the foreign money coming into the nation for all purposes should either come through the government or be totally banned, as it was creating problems and havoc in public life.

The Minister of State for Home,

Mr. P. Venkatasubbiah, said the proposal for convening an early meeting of the Chief Ministers to consider the Mandal Commission's report was still under the consideration of the Government. He informed the committee that the exact date for the Chief Ministers' meeting had not been fixed yet.

The Minister told Mr. Dhanak Lal Mandal and Mr. Jaipal Singh Kanshiram that the report had raised important and complex issues, which had wide and deep implications for the country as a whole. The criteria suggested for determining the social and educational backwardness needed to be carefully considered in consultation with the State Governments.

He said the report had been referred to the States and Union Territories for their comments. On receipt of their comments, the Centre would further consider this report for formulating its own views and the Mandal Commission's various recommendations, including the criteria of backwardness and the difference between the States' lists of backward classes and the lists given in the commission's report.
The Arts

The Malgudi tapestry

R.K. Narayan was the first writer in English to be conferred the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1961. It was a fitting recognition of the fact that Mr. Narayan showed that an Indian creative writer could use English as freely as any other Indian language. His work has nothing exotic about it—the profile of the middle class of the small town of Malgudi portrayed in his novel is addressed particularly to the Indian reader. Narayan makes no effort to parade the "mystical Orient" for the benefit of the Western erance. Even if many things unfamil- iar to the Western reader appear in the novels, they are invariably things with which the Indian is well acquainted, whether it is the caste system, arranged marriages, horse races or the ubiquitous astrologer. He has spent almost all his life in India, his first long sabbatical in a foreign country was in 1956. He has visited the United States at the invitation of the Rockefeller Foundation. He later spent some time in a U.S. university as a resident writer.

Krishnawami Narayan was born in Madras on October 10, 1920. He had his early schooling there, but moved to Mysoore city when his father was appointed as the principal of the Maharaja's High School there. He was a student of the Mysore's College, Mysoore, and graduated from the University of Mysoore in 1939. For some time, he worked as the Mysore correspondent of the Madras newspaper "The Hindu." An interesting irony, as the paper was a supporter of the anti-Brahmin Justice Party. He began his writing career with short stories, which appeared in THE HINDU. But finding publishers for his novels was not easy. With great humour, he recounts his initial troubles in his first novel "Swami and Friends." The book was published in 1941.

He has written a large number of short stories, most of which first appeared in THE HINDU. For a number of years, starting from 1939, he regularly wrote for THE ASTROLOGER'S HORoscope, and his stories have been collected in his first novel "Swami and Friends," which was published in 1941. He has contributed to "The English Teacher," the English language paper, since 1937, and his collection of short stories, "The English Teacher," was published in 1941. The novel "Swami and Friends," written in 1937 and first published in 1941.

The English Teacher (1945) is the most significant of Narayan's works. It is the story of a man losing his wife and money. Mr. Rau, a poor teacher, is trying to gain a position at the university. He has been working there for years but cannot get a permanent position. Mr. Rau then finds a job in a small town near the university, where he meets a rich woman named Rosalind. He falls in love with her and marries her. But the marriage is not successful, and Mr. Rau's life goes from bad to worse. Mr. Rau's novel "The English Teacher" was published in 1945, and it has been translated into many languages. The novel has been adapted into a film, and it is considered one of the best works of Narayan's.

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Shyamala Narayan

Emerald Route: a travelogue which gives the tourist a delightful introduction to the living. The novel, "Swami and Friends," was published in 1941.

The Malgudi tapestry has been a long and arduous journey for Narayan. It is a direct pictorial of Mysore in 1937 and 1938, with its people and places. His first novel, "Swami and Friends," was published in 1941. Since then, he has written a number of short stories, most of which first appeared in THE HINDU. For a number of years, starting from 1939, he regularly wrote for THE ASTROLOGER'S HORoscope, and his stories have been collected in his first novel "Swami and Friends," which was published in 1941. He has contributed to "The English Teacher," the English language paper, since 1937, and his collection of short stories, "The English Teacher," was published in 1941. The novel "Swami and Friends," written in 1937 and first published in 1941.

The villager recalls the story of Rau being offered a job as a school teacher in the remote village of Malgudi. Rau is eager to take the job, but his wife is hesitant. She reminds him of the hard work and poverty of the villagers. Finally, Rau agrees to take the job. Rau and his wife soon arrive in Malgudi. Rau is impressed by the simplicity and warmth of the villagers. He quickly becomes friends with them, and his wife finds a job as a teacher in the village school. Rau's life changes for the better, and he becomes a respected member of the community. Narayan's novel, "Swami and Friends," is a poignant and beautifully written tale about the simple joys of life in a small Indian town. It is a novel that celebrates the human spirit and the power of love to overcome adversity. Narayan's novel, "Swami and Friends," is a poignant and beautifully written tale about the simple joys of life in a small Indian town. It is a novel that celebrates the human spirit and the power of love to overcome adversity.
NCEP: people's help is needed for afforestation

Express News Service

NEW DELHI, Feb. 11

The National Committee on Environmental Planning (NCEP) has recommended that about 90 million hectares of bare land must be placed under vegetation by 2000 A.D. to avert an ecological disaster.

The committee, which met here on Thursday, also suggested a ban on export of wood-based forest products.

The committee met to consider the report of a sub-committee on forest policy. This report, which was submitted in September last year, was sent back by the Ministry of Agriculture for the environmental committee's recommendations for the new forest policy that is under consideration.

Mr. B. B. Vohra, chairman of the NCEP, said the committee made several other recommendations. It was felt that there was no option but to seek the people's help to carry out the afforestation project.

The committee recommended that genetic wealth must be conserved by doubling the area under parks and sanctuaries shifting cultivation must be controlled, uncontrolled grazing must be checked and rotational grazing introduced and the research base must be strengthened.

The committee felt that the present state of denudation and deforestation was most alarming. Of the 75 million hectares of forest land shown on paper, only 35 million hectares have good tree cover. At least 40 million hectares of farm land is now useless, and adding about 10 million hectares of grazed pastures, a total of 90 million hectares is bare. This is about one-third of the total land area of the country.

Although there are no exact figures of the rate of destruction of forests, the committee felt that was at least one million hectares annually. According to the plan, afforestation is less than 0.5 million hectares annually, leaving a gap of 0.5 million every year.

If the target of afforestation of 90 million hectares by 2000 A.D. is to be met, then planting has to be stepped up to at least five million hectares a year as against 0.5 million hectares now.

The recommendations of the NCEP will now go to the Ministry of Agriculture to be incorporated in the new forest policy. The policy will have to be approved by the Union Cabinet.
‘Our mythology should be rewritten’

Pramila Dandavate, 54, is a Member of Parliament and an activist in the women’s movement. She has introduced a number of Bills in Parliament such as the Dowry Prohibition Act (Amendment) Bill and the Registration of Marriages Act. In a recent interview, she spoke at length on the status of women in this country and the Bills are necessary. Some excerpts.

Pramila Dandavate: "In our culture, if a man marries his wife off before her 15th birthday, he gets a tax deduction. If he marries her for some reason, he is protected, but for a woman to do such a thing is a crime.

The laws exist but they are not followed. Women, because their husband is well educated and powerful, and probably his ego was also inflated, they feel they can get away with it. So, in one sense, we have to change the status quo of women in our country."

The Indian Constitution guarantees women equal rights and opportunities, but in reality, many women feel that they are forced to marry at a young age.

Lavender describes little girls who are forced to marry, because their husband told them that she was pregnant, and probably his ego was also inflated. She feels that there should be a law to stop this phenomenon. Lavender, in fact, has partnered with a number of women, not just in India, but across the globe, to empower women and promote gender equality.

Lavender explains that in many cultures, a woman’s worth is determined by her ability to produce children. This is especially true in rural areas, where access to education and healthcare is limited.

Lavender feels that if these girls were given access to education and healthcare, they would choose to marry at a later age and have fewer children. In addition, she believes that these girls should be given access to better job opportunities.

Lavender has been working with women in India for over 30 years and has seen the impact of education on women’s lives. She feels that education is the key to unlocking the potential of women and creating a more just and equitable society.

Lavender is a strong advocate for women’s rights and has been involved in many campaigns to promote gender equality. She feels that women should be given the opportunity to choose their own lives, free from societal pressures and expectations.

Why the South rejected Mrs. Gandhi

The rejection of Mrs. Gandhi as leader may portend more things— even a basic change in the Constitution to cope with the new emerging federalism.

There are vast grounds which could be filled in the Constitution to cater to the needs of the people. There is, for instance, a need for a large number of seats in the Lok Sabha to be reserved for women. There is also a need for a separate ministry for women’s affairs to be set up in the government. Such a ministry will act as a focal point for all issues related to women’s rights and empowerment.

It is also crucial to look at the issue of dowry which is a major problem in India. The government should take strong measures to combat this issue and reduce the number of dowry-related cases.

Mrs. Gandhi’s government had made a number of efforts to address the issue of dowry, but the problem persists. It is time for the government to take more stringent measures to ensure that women are not subjected to this practice.

Another area where Mrs. Gandhi’s government failed was in the area of education. The government had promised to increase the number of girls in schools, but the results were disappointing. Mrs. Gandhi’s government needs to take urgent action to improve the education system and provide equal opportunities to all children, regardless of gender.

The rejection of Mrs. Gandhi as leader may also indicate a shift in the political landscape. The South may be looking for a leader who can address the needs of the people and provide a strong voice for their rights.

In conclusion, the rejection of Mrs. Gandhi as leader may portend more things— even a basic change in the Constitution to cope with the new emerging federalism. India is a diverse country with many different needs and demands. A leader who can address these needs and provide a strong voice for the people is needed now more than ever. The South may be looking for such a leader and the rejection of Mrs. Gandhi may be a sign that the time is ripe for a change.
The diplomat's diplomat

Falka Farokh, a well-known craftsman, is at work on his potter's wheel in his Hyderabad pottery workshop.

The stereotype of an Arab woman is that of a person behind a veil, with no voice of her own. A one-woman rebuttal of this misconception is Falka Farokh, a career diplomat from Tanzania.

Falka Farokh was born in 1951 in Paris. She is the daughter of a Muslim father and a Christian mother. Her parents were very young when they got married, and Falka was their only child. Her father, a painter, died when she was very young, and her mother, a teacher, raised her on her own.

Falka Farokh was one of the most beautiful women in Tanzania. She was a model, and had a successful career in fashion and beauty. She was also a talented athlete, and represented her country in various sports.

Falka Farokh was a very strong and independent woman. She never married, and never had children. She dedicated her life to her family and her career.

In 1970, Falka Farokh decided to become a career diplomat. She joined the Tanzanian Foreign Service, and was sent to London to study diplomacy. She was one of the first women to join the Tanzanian Foreign Service, and she quickly rose through the ranks.

Falka Farokh was a very successful diplomat. She was a strong and independent woman, and she never allowed her gender to interfere with her work. She was respected by her colleagues, and she was always very successful in her assignments.

In 1980, Falka Farokh was sent to the United Nations in New York. She was a very successful diplomat, and she was respected by all the other diplomats. She was always very successful in her assignments, and she never allowed her gender to interfere with her work.

In 1990, Falka Farokh was appointed as the ambassador of Tanzania to England. She was a very successful diplomat, and she was respected by all the other diplomats. She was always very successful in her assignments, and she never allowed her gender to interfere with her work.

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In 2000, Falka Farokh was appointed as the ambassador of Tanzania to the United States. She was a very successful diplomat, and she was respected by all the other diplomats. She was always very successful in her assignments, and she never allowed her gender to interfere with her work.

Falka Farokh was a very successful diplomat, and she was respected by all the other diplomats. She was always very successful in her assignments, and she never allowed her gender to interfere with her work.

In 2010, Falka Farokh was appointed as the ambassador of Tanzania to the European Union. She was a very successful diplomat, and she was respected by all the other diplomats. She was always very successful in her assignments, and she never allowed her gender to interfere with her work.

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