



CHURCH HISTORY ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

# CHAI Newsletter

March 2016

Vol. 2 No. 1

**An ecumenical  
body of church  
historians founded  
in 1935**

## CONTENTS

**Delhi Triennial  
Preparations** 02

**Birthday Greetings  
to Cardinal Toppo** 03

**Southern India Branch  
Triennial, Pondichery** 04

**Brief Report of the  
Bangalore Workshop** 09

**Roll of Honour -  
16th Triennial** 13

**BOT Meets** 16

**From the  
Editor's Desk** 17

**Easter Message of Mar  
Aprem Metropolitan** 18

**Report of A Get-Together -  
Arthur Jeyakumar** 19

**Office  
Bearers** 26

**Essay: Christian Missions in NE  
India - Dr. D. R. Syiemlieh** 27

**Flashback: Goa  
Triennial 2005** 42

**Happy Easter 2016** 49

**INDEPENDENCE DAY**  
*Greetings*



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**Dr. Jetti A. Oliver**  
National President, CHAI

## **CHAI 17th Triennial at the National Capital Territory Preparations under way at DELHI**

### **A Note on the 17th CHAI Triennial Working Group Meeting at DELHI**

On Saturday the 21st March 2015 a local working group meeting was organised at the New Delhi YMCA by the CHAI president for the 17th CHAI Triennial to be held in DELHI. The group consisted of Fr. Dr. Leo Fernando, President of the North Indian Branch, Dr. David Reid Syiemlieh, senior CHAI leader and currently member of the Union Public Service Commission, Rev. Fr. Suresh Kumar, CNI Sansad Marg church, Mr. Paul Raj Kumar, Salvation Army, and Mr. K. Sareen, member Interfaith Support Team. The Working Group took stock of the possible venues for the Conference having accommodation facilities within their neighbourhoods. The Group decided to meet again during the next visit of the National President to Delhi. The Working Group was confident of finding a suitable place for the New Delhi Triennial befitting the self-supporting Conferences held at Hyderabad and Ranchi.

- Paul Raj Kumar, Working Group Liaison.

**Fr. Dr. Leo Fernando**



CHAI Office Bearers  
Wish Cardinal Toppo A

# HAPPY BIRTHDAY



Birthday wishes to Cardinal Telesphore Placidus Toppo, Archbishop of Ranchi, at the Ranchi Cardinal House. Dr. Oliver A. Jetti, CHAI president and other national and regional office bearers visited the Cardinal during a preparatory conference preceding the Ranchi Triennial.

# Southern India Branch Triennial, Pondichery, 9<sup>th</sup> 10<sup>th</sup> April- 16

## THE CHURCH HISTORY ASSOCIATION OF INDIA (CHAI)

Office: Dharmaram College, Bangalore- 560029

Dr. Jetti A. Oliver  
National President

Prof. George Oomen  
General Secretary

Bishop Dr. Christy Furtado  
President, S. India Branch

Dr. Charles Dias Ex. M.P  
Secretary & Treasurer, S. Indian Branch

### South India History Conference

February 12, 2016

Dear friends,

CHAI Southern India sBranch has planned to hold a South India History Conference at Pondicherry on **9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> April 2016**. The theme of the Conference is '**Christianity and Social Reformation in South India**'.

The venue proposed is: **St. Xavier's Pastoral & Communication Centre**  
Netaji Nagar, Upplam, Pondicherry

Those members who intend to present papers may send the abstract of their papers (limited to 500 words) to the undersigned before 19<sup>th</sup> March 2016 to the e-mail [fcharlesdias@gmail.com](mailto:fcharlesdias@gmail.com) and the completed papers have to reach before 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2016.

The participants are requested to send the enclosed proforma filled to the undersigned before **19<sup>th</sup> March 2016**, along with a Registration fee of Rs.500/- (Rs.200/- for students). Fee can be paid on arrival also.

To reach Pondicherry it is advisable to reach Chennai and catch either train or bus. Distance from Chennai to Pondicherry is about 160 K.Ms and take about 3 hours and 30 minutes to reach. From Pondicherry Rly. station to Pastoral Centre autorikshaw fare is about Rs.40/ (1 KM) and from bus stand the fare is Rs.60/- (2 to 3 KMs).

You are requested to make use of this opportunity and join us in the historic city of Pondicherry. We are planning a local tour along with the Conference to visit the historic monuments of Pondicherry if enough participants are there. For more information to know about Pondicherry please contact.

Rev. Dr. Manova J., Pastor - Arcot Lutheran Church (ALC)  
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Meeting of the CHAI S. India branch is also scheduled along with the History Conference, on 10<sup>th</sup> April 2016 at 2P.M.

**Dr. Charles Dias**  
Secretary, Southern India branch

Address for communication: Dr. Charles Dias Ex. M.P., Tinaar Dale, Major Road, Vyttila, Cochin-682019 Mob Ph: 09447209942;  
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THE CHURCH HISTORY ASSOCIATION OF INDIA (CHAI)  
Southern India Branch  
South India History Conference –9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> April 2016 – Pondicherry

**Registration Form**

The theme of the Conference '**Christianity and Social Reformation in South India**'.

Proforma to be filled and send to Secretary/Conference Coordinator

.....  
Name & address

With Tel/Mobile number/e-mail ID

.....  
Profession; Institution attached with

.....  
Whether presenting paper ?

If yes, title of the paper

.....  
Reaching Pondicherry on

.....  
Leaving Pondicherry on

Date:

Name & Signature



**Recently in Pondicherry**

on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2015 CHAI President Dr.Jetti A Oliver receives from Archbishop Most.Rev.Dr.Antony Anandarayar a copy of the 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Volume of the Archdiocese of Pondichery and Cuddalore. Dr.Charles Dias, Secretary & Treasurer, CHAI South India Branch and Rev.Dr.Manova, Pastor of Arcot Lutheran Church also are in the picture

# Welcome to Pondichery- A place of Cathedrals, Beaches, and a fading French colonial ambience.



This photo of the Pondichery Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception was taken in 1860 possibly by French photographer Charles Moyne.

New Photo of Cathedral



Sacred Heart Basilica Pudussery





Gandhi Statue

Osho Ashram





Members of the German Brass Band whose performance was a great hit at the CHAI Ranchi Triennial



The German Brass Band at the Ranchi Triennial



H. E. Cardinal Toppo with CHAI President Dr. Jetti A. Oliver at the Ranchi Triennial



Participants at the Workshop led by Dr Bernard D'Sami :

Dr Jetti A Oliver, Dr Joan Dias, Dr George Oommen, Dr Francis Thonippara, Dr Leonard Fernando, Bishop Christopher Furtado, Dr M.O. John, Dr V.V. Thomas, Dr Charles Dias, Dr Gladson Jathanna, Dr John Akkidas, Dr J.P. Ashirvadam, Prof Naidu, Prof George Menachery, Dr M D David

## A BRIEF REPORT

This is a brief report of the Exexutive Committee Workshop that was held at Dharmaram College, Bangalore on Thursday, **5th March, 2015**.

**Dr. Bernard Sami of Loyola College, Chennai**, was invited to conduct the Workshop.

Dr. Sami focused primarily on Methodology from the **Subaltern Perspective** as well as Others or **Mixed Methodology** within the domain of Church History. He emphasized that method driven research combines theory and empirical work through analysis and interpretation. It involves restructuring and openness; new thinking and new tools; re-reading and re-visiting sources; deconstructing and reconstructing- in short - methodology tends to become more mobile, elastic, and letting the sources speak.

As regards Sources, Dr. Sami affirmed that, besides examining ecclesiastical documents, identifica-

tion of secular or alternate sources like folktales, folk songs, oral sources, art, archaeology, architecture, PhD, M.Phil dissertations, biographies etc, are necessary to establish authenticity and accuracy; and this will provide a balanced interpretation of the study. Similarly, Indian and Regional histories cannot be written without reference to Church documents.

For Compilation, Dr. Sami stated that one could begin with a broad general framework, later it can be brought down to thematic chronological perspectives. Most important, the compilation should be readable and achievable.



**Dr. Joan Dias**  
*CHAI Vice-President*

## CHAI Kerala Chapter Formed

During the course of the CHAI workshop held at the DVK Research Center Bangalore ably led by Dr. D. Sami of the Chennai Loyola College conducted for CHAI office-bearers and CHAI writers of the History of Christianity in India Project participants from Kerala got together to form a Kerala Chapter of the Church History Association of India under the guidance of National President Dr. Jetty A. Oliver and other national leaders and reputed scholars. For a long time the feeling was there that in spite of the presence and availability of a large number of Church History scholars in Kerala there was no forum, especially no ecumenical forum, where they could come together for study, research, and

exchange of thoughts and findings. This feeling was also expressed by the scholars who participated in the Dr. Mathias Mundadan National Seminar conducted at JEEVASS Alwaye.

The following office-bearers were elected for the Kerala Chapter of CHAI: Prof. George Menachery [kunjethy@gmail.com](mailto:kunjethy@gmail.com) (President), Dr. Varghese Perayil [varghesepera@yahoo.co.in](mailto:varghesepera@yahoo.co.in) (Vice-President), and Dr. Charles Dias [charlsdias@gmail.com](mailto:charlsdias@gmail.com) (Secretary cum Treasurer). Those members of CHAI and others interested in the activities of the Chapter and wish to register may contact the Secretary.



Sri A.C. Jose, former M.P. and Speaker of Kerala legislative Assembly speaks at the discussion “*State of Christianity in India Today*” conducted under the auspices of CHAI Kerala Chapter on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2015 at St. Albert’s College, Ernakulam. Adv. Laly Vincent, Dr. Jetty A. Oliver (CHAI National President), Dr. J. Alexander I.A.S. (former Minister, Karnataka), Prof. Chev. George Menachery, Adv. Antony Ambat and Dr. Charles Dias (former M.P.) are also in the picture.

[Obituary.: Sri A. C. Jose, Member of the 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, and 13<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha and former speaker of the Kerala Legislative Assembly and youngest Mayor of Kochi died after a cardiac arrest on 23<sup>rd</sup> Jan., 2016. Former Union Minister A. C. George was his elder brother. He is survived by wife Leelamma Jose (Retd. Professor of the Maharaja’a College) and four children. RIP]



## THE CHURCH HISTORY ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

### CHAI Kerala Chapter Seminar

Theme: '*Sources for the Writing of Malabar Church History*'

27<sup>th</sup> June 2015 The Seminar Hall, St. Albert's College, Ernakulam.

The seminar was inaugurated by Dr. Oliver A. Jetti, CHAI National President. Prof. George Menachery, Chairman, and Dr. Charles Dias, Secretary of the Kerala Chapter of CHAI were the chief organizers of the seminar supported by an able committee of local scholars and prominent citizens under the leadership of Dr. Charles Dias, Ex. M. P.

The following were the papers presented and discussed in detail at the seminar:

- 1) *Historical Sources of Malabar Church 1<sup>st</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> Centuries* – Prof. Chev. George Menachery
- 2) *Church Historiography* – Prof. Dr. N. Ashok Kumar
- 3) *Some Un-tapped Sources of Malabar Church History* – Dr. Michael Tharakan
- 4) *Sources on Malabar Church History – An Overview* – Rev. Dr. George Kurikkoor.

- 5) *Propaganda Fide and the Carmelites* – Rev. Dr. Francis Pereparambil
- 6) *Unexamined, Under examined and Adversely Examined Aspects of Malabar Church History* – Prof. Abraham Arackal
- 7) *19th century Carmelite Mission : Historical Sources.* Sr. Dr. Sucey Kinattungal
- 8) *Sources on Roman Intervention on Malabar Church* – Msgr. George Veliparambil
- 9) *Architectural Sources of Church History: A Study of Indigenous and Post-Portuguese Churches in Kerala* – Ms. Rose Scaria
- 10) *Megaliths in Malabar and the Ancient Jews and St Thomas, who came in search of these Lost Tribes of Israel* - Abraham Benhur.
- 11) *Interpretation of Past Events in their Proper Perspective.* – Antony Kureekkal
- 12) *Niranam Grandhavari & Chronicle of Mar Simon Dionysius* - The counter documents of the Western writings. - Dr M. Kurian Thomas
- 13) *'Certain Misinterpretations Thrust upon Christians'* – Jeen Michael
- 14) *Christian Architecture in India: A Phenomenal Reading.* - Fr. Kleetus Kathirparambil
- 15) *Documentação para História das Missões do Padroado Português do Oriente ,Índia* of Antonio da Silva Rego – An Important Source of padroado History. – Dr. Charles Dias



St. Albert's College, Venue of the Seminar

**Pictures from the CHAI Kerala Chapter Seminar, Ernakulam.  
"Sources in Writing Malabar Church History"**

The seminar was inaugurated by Dr. Oliver A. Jetti, CHAI National President. Prof. George Menachery, Chapter President presided over the function. The seminar was organized by an able committee of local scholars and prominent citizens under the leadership of Chapter Secretary Dr. Charles Dias, Ex.M.P.



Rev. Msgr. George Veliparambil speaks



Lunch Break



A View of the Audience

## Members felicitated at the RANCHI TRIENNIAL for their *Contributions and Achievements*

**Dr Fr Leonardo Fernando, S.J.** appointed as Principal, Vidyajyoti College of Theology, Delhi --- for a THIRD TERM.

**Dr Merena Behera** formerly of the UTC, Bangalore called to teach Church History at Geneva, Department of World Council of Churches, Bossey.

**Rev Dr Pratap Digal** - awarded his PH.D. on 4th June 2013. Topic: “Konds in Central Orissa: An Ethno-Historical Study.”

**Rev Dr H. Lalrinthanga** ---- awarded D TH. Topic: “Church and State relationships in the Mizo Socio-Political Life from 1952 to 2006.”

**Prof George Menachery** ---- elected Chairman, Post Graduate Dept of Cultural Heritage, Malayalam University, Thirur and reelected Member, Governing Body of the Christian Chair, University of Calicut.

**Rev Fr Dr Arul Doss, S.J.**, Dept of History, St Joseph’s College, Thiruchirappalli, defended his PH.D on “Socio-religious Conditions of Tiruchirappalli Diocese During the Time of its First Four Jesuit Missionary Bishops.”

**Rev. Dr. N.B. Gladstone Robert, D. Th.**, CSI, Trivandrum --- Doctorate awarded by the Serampore University.

**Dr Jeanette Pinto** received the “Rachana Outstanding Woman of the Year Activist” award in recognition of work done in the Pro-life Cause, in Mangalore.

*From the Secretary General’s Report*



*Dr. George Oommen  
Secretary General*

The CHAI President Dr.Jetti Oliver delivering the inaugural address at the symposium on "the life and contribution of Pandita Ramabai" and seen in the picture are Dr.R.John Paul, Board member of Mukti Mission, Puna; Dr.Srinivasa Rao, Asst.Director of State Archives; Dr.John Akkidas, Archaeologist & Secretary, and others



The paper presenters at the Symposium pose with CHAI president

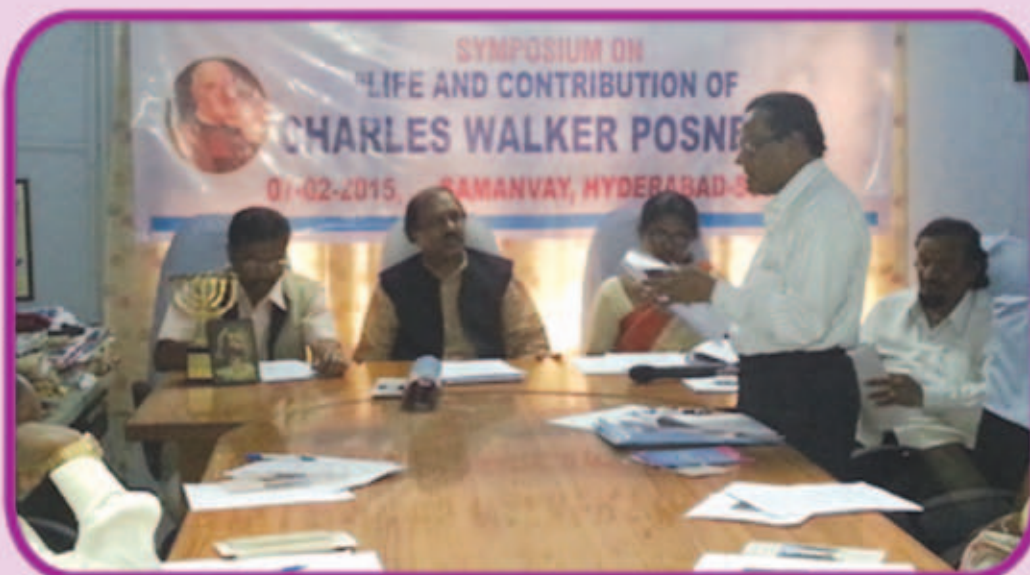


Delivering the Keynote address at the symposium on Life and Contribution of Charles Walker Posnett is Dr.Jetti Oliver, President, CHAI





Presentation of papers  
by: Dr.Uma, professor  
of History of St.Francis  
College Autonomous



Dr.John Akkidas,  
Secretary, CHAT



Dr.Vidyadhari of  
Central Unit and  
Prof.Ramakrishna of  
Osmania University.

**Church History Association of India,  
Board of Trustees Meeting,  
Nov 1, 2014, Ranchi**

**EXTRACTS**

The Church History Association of India (CHAI), Board of Trustees Meeting (BoT), held at Social Development Centre, Dr. Camil Bulcke Path, Ranchi, Jharkhand on November 1, 2014, at 6.30 p.m.

The meeting began with prayer by Fr. Leonard Fernando under the chairmanship of the President Rev. Dr. Jetty A. Oliver.

The following members were present :—

Dr. Jetty A. Oliver, President

Dr. Joan Dias, Vice President

Dr. George Oommen, General Secretary & Northern Branch Secretary

Dr. Fr. Francis Thonippara, CMI, Treasurer

Dr. Manmasih Ekka, Joint Secretary

Dr. Varghese Perayil, Member

Dr. H. Lalrinthanga, Member & Northeastern Branch Secretary

Dr. Leonard Fernando, General Editor of CHAI series

Dr. Jose Kalapura, SJ, Executive Editor of Indian Church History Review (ICHR)

Prof. George Menachery, Editor of CHAI Newsletter

Prof. Agnes de Sa, Western Branch Secretary

The chairperson, on behalf of the house expressed words of appreciation to the All Churches Committee Ranchi

and the officers of the Eastern India Branch of CHAI for successfully hosting the Triennial conference with the active participation of Churches and organizations of Ranchi and of whole of Jharkhand.

The Editorial Board of the CHAI series was reconstituted as follows:

Fr. Leonard Fernando (General Editor)

Fr. Joseph Thekkedath

Dr. O.L.Snaitang

Bishop C L Furtado

Dr. M.O.John

Dr. Joan Dias

Dr. V.V.Thomas

The three office-bearers namely President, General Secretary and Treasurer will be ex.officio members.

The Editorial Board of ICHR was reconstituted with the following members:

Fr. Jose Kalapura (Executive Editor)

Dr. Joan Dias & Fr. Leonard Fernando (Review Editors)

The three office-bearers namely President, General Secretary and Treasurer will be ex.officio members.

The meeting concluded with prayer by Rev Manmasih Ekka.

**George Oommen**  
General Secretary, CHAI

**Jetty A. Oliver**  
President, CHAI

# DVK RESEARCH CENTRE

BOT Meeting, Bangalore, November 2014 at the  
DVK Research Centre

From left to right:

Rev. Dr. Francis Thonippara CMI, Prof. Maria Lazar, Dr. Varghese Perayil,  
Rev. Dr. Leo Fernando s.j., Prof. George Menachery, Dr. Oliver A. Jetti CHAI National  
President, Dr. Joan Dias, Rev. Dr. George Oommen, and Dr. Ekka



## *From the Editor's Desk*

Two forthcoming events must be in the minds of CHAI members. The first is the CHAI Southern India branch Triennial and Church History Conference at Pondichery, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> of April, 2016. The branch secretary's circular calling for papers from scholars, and the registration form are given elsewhere. The second event is the CHAI Triennial at Delhi, 2017. News is trickling down about the preparations for the same. The next issue of the CHAI Newsletter will contain more information on that.

In the meanwhile may I request office bearers both at the national and branch levels to send your editor reports of all the good work that is being done so that that could be shared by all members and be an inspiration for different branches and units.

With Easter Greetings

**Prof. George Menachery,**  
Editor

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*His Beatitude Dr. Mar Aprem*

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## EASTER MESSAGE

**From Metropolitan Mar Aprem** *Former President of CHAI*

**Epistle for the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ 2015**

Our Beloved Brother Prelates, our spiritual sons the respected priests, the honorable Deacons, all the sons and daughters of the Holy Church, the Assyrian Nation and all Christians of the world;

Prayers and Blessings Receive:

"He is not here; for He has Risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay" (Mt. 28:6)

Nearly 2000 years ago, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb of Jesus at the dawn of the first day of the week. There was a thunder and the angel of the Lord descended from Heaven and rolled back the stone, and sat upon it. The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you search for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has risen as he said."

That was the good news for women as well as the disciples and the heart-broken people in Jerusalem who witnessed the agony of our Lord on the Cross of Calvary. The event of resurrection of our Lord was the great source of strength for them and for their future mission endeavors of our Lord in this world. Their search for Jesus and the aftermath is an example and inspiration for all those who believe in and search for the Risen Jesus.

During this Easter season 2015 our Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East is undergoing suffering as we are still in the shock of the sad and sudden demise of our beloved Catholicos-Patriarch the late His Holiness Maran Mar Dinkha IV, the supreme head of the Church of the East and the courageous leader of the Assyrian nation at large. His Holiness had been serving the Church for more than 53 long years as a prelate and completed thirty eight and a half years as the Catholicos-Patriarch; it is a rare record in the history of our Church. His death is mourned by Assyrians and others all around the world. Being a dynamic leader, His Holiness kept excellent personal contacts with ecumenical leaders such as the Pope of Rome, the Syriac Orthodox, Chaldean Catholic

and Syriac Catholic Patriarchs, etc. In late May of 2014, His Holiness visited the Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church, and in October 2014 he visited the Pope of Rome.

Christians are persecuted in many parts of the world today especially in Syria and Iraq where the sons and daughters of the holy Church of the East are also afflicted because of loss of life and displacement of themselves and that of their relatives, friends and belongings due to their faith in Jesus Christ. During this Easter season, let us join together with the power of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to work for this noble cause of restoring our broken community with peace and harmony. Also uphold in prayer the world leaders and those in the leadership of the world community who are able to interfere in this matter to end brutal violence and terrorism, particularly in the Middle East. I request your personal prayers to fulfill the entrusted responsibility to me as the locum tenens of the holy see of the Catholicos-Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East, and for the election and enthronement of the new Catholicos-Patriarch forty days after the demise of the late Patriarch.

May the blessings of the great Feast of the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all, and may the grace of Maran Isho Msheekha, the love of God the Father and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all, forever and ever: Amen.

By Grace,



**Mar Aprem Metropolitan**

Locum Tenens of the Holy See of the Catholicos-Patriarch,  
Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East.  
Given at Morton Grove, Illinois (USA); on the feast of the  
Resurrection 2015.



## A Get-together

While I was on the staff of the Tamilnadu Theological Seminary, Arasaradi, Madurai (1975-2009) I had a number of students in my department (History of Christianity) doing Master of Theology (M.Th.). Quite a few of them hailed from CSI Diocese of Kanyakumari. I used to encourage my M.Th Students to attend CHAI Conferences of both the National and Southern Branch. Many of them still have pleasant memories of such CHAI programmes. I keep in touch with them and share CHAI informations.

On March 12, 2015 my former students who are now Presbyters in CSI, Kanyakumari Diocese arranged a get-together in a Parish Hall at Marthandam and I was privileged to participate in it. It was coordinated mainly by the Rev.S.David Joseph Raj, who is being guided by me in his Doctoral Studies (D.Th). I took the opportunity to share with them the following:

**The Ranchi CHAI Triennial.** I gave a brief report of the said conference and shared its emphasis of writing 'Peoples' History'. I had shared such an idea in one of my earlier get-togethers and so one of the participants the Rev.Christopher Yesumani shared his efforts in bringing out a souvenir of his local congregation with that aim which really gladdened my heart. I encouraged the others to do so, and I was glad to know that a few had already started doing so.

**CHAI News Letter.** I shared with them the informations about our CHAI News Letter and provided them with the contact mail addresses. I encouraged them to

get in touch with Chevalier Professor George Menachery in one way or the other, and thus keep themselves informed of CHAI.

**CHAI Southern Branch Conference.** The said gathering was informed of the proposed CHAI Southern Branch Conference in September/October 2015 in Puduchery. I had proposed to them to plan to attend it as well as to present Papers. The participants wished that the dates of the same would be convenient for them, full-time Presbyters in-charge of pastoral responsibilities.

**CHAI Publications.** While many in that gathering had purchased CHAI Multi-Volume History of Christianity in India books when they were students, they were informed of the recent publications including **ICHR**. Though many in that gathering expressed their limitations in becoming members of CHAI yet are planning to be in touch with CHAI and ICHR. The said gathering desired to have such periodical get-togethers.

May such gatherings promote wholesome friendship, fellowship, concern and sharing of academic pursuits.

**Rev.Dr.D.Arthur Jeyakumar**  
Chennai.  
April 28, 2015



The staff of the CHAI Office functioning at Dharmaram College, Bangalore with the National Treasurer Dr. Thonippara



CHAI President Dr. Oliver A. Jeti delivering the presidential address at the launching of the Institute of Harmony and Peace, Delhi. Justice K. G. Balakrishnan, Chairman of NHRC is in the picture.





Dr. Klaus Roebr and Mrs. Helga of the Gossner Mission at the Ranchi Triennial.



Rev. Ulrich, Mr. Eliazer Topno, Bishop Cyril Lakra, Bishop Dang of the GELC and Bishop Bhaske of the CNI are in these CHAI Ranchi pictures.



# The Christian Ethic...

Hundreds of Indians passing through institutions run by missionaries ended up either strengthened in their original faith or sceptical of religion altogether

Janaki Nair

My father only reluctantly carried his father's ashes to Banares, mostly to respect my grandfather's annual pilgrimage there. The reluctance was understandable, since my father's sacred geographies, richly varied, were strongly anchored in the south, beginning with the Panduranga temple he visited daily to annual trips *en famille* to Banawadi Anjaneya in Palani and to Guruvayur as well as to the local Bhagavathi shrines in his ancestral village. As a ritualistic Hindu, he participated as enthusiastically in appeasing the goddess with the spectacular goat sacrifice as he did in daily worship. He had little in common with my mother's scriptural orientation: her daily circumambulations were confined to Tamil, Malayalam, Sanskrit and English texts.

Nevertheless, my parents' generation fostered a long, intimate and nurturing connection with Christianity, particularly for their children. Born in St Philomena's Hospital, Bengaluru, I was saved from "double pneumonia" at the age of two in an oxygen tent at the Zenana Mission hospital. All my schooling was at Bishop Cotton Girls' School, which, with the Boys' school, served a long line of my siblings. I thoroughly enjoyed daily chapel attendance at school, but only because it allowed me to hear the piano and to sing. Two staunchly Catholic Pre-University and Degree institutions saw me through college. As an adult, when I was misdiagnosed in one of Bengaluru's large private hospitals, I took refuge in St. Martha's Hospital. And my sunset years may well be spent in one of the Christian old age homes around Bengaluru.

## Devotion and scepticism

This autobiographical indulgence is a riposte to the anguished hand-wringing of our Home Minister, who sees the threat of Christian conversion in every gesture of compassion. It also counters the poisonous outpourings of assorted members of Hindutva organisations. Given that the most important rites of passage of my life were via Christian missionary institutions, I should have long joined that religion's embrace. Yet, hun-



**UNTIRING EFFORTS:** Missionaries such as William Carey translated books in Indian languages to English. Picture shows professor Sunil Chattopadhyaya looking at the 200-year-old manuscript of a dictionary of 13 different Indian languages by Carey at Serampore College in West Bengal. — PHOTO: ARUNANUSU ROY CHOWDHURY

dreds who similarly passed through the institutions I have named — and they came from a variety of religions — were usually strengthened in their original faith. My friends and siblings have remained devout and unwavering in their religious persuasion; others, like me, after an intimate acquaintance with religion both at home and in the world, have developed a scepticism of it altogether.

I am hard pressed to think of anyone who actually joined the flock.

Did this range of outcomes from prolonged exposure to Christian missionary institutions occur because of or in spite of it? I believe that the answer is both because it helps us to stave off the inevitable response: that I belong to a caste and class that was exempt from of the institutions' proselytising zeal. That In-

dian Christians have contributed to education, health, and social work immensely bears reiteration. But it is also worth remembering that present day Christianity, unlike its 19th century forebears, does not place conversion at the heart of its programme. Or where it does, as in Pentecostal Christianity, its proselytising success is counted among other Christian sects.

Certainly, there are strong historical and geographical roots to this assertion, since south India has been hospitable to many varieties of Christianity for much longer than any other part of the sub-

**Christian missionaries in education, health and social work often gave people the only opportunities to pursue their aspirations of quick upward mobility**

continent. Each southern language owes a great grammatical debt to the systematised efforts of a C.P. Brown (Telugu), a Ferdinand Kittel (Kannada), a Hermann Gundert (Malayalam) or a Constanzo Beschi (Tamil). No doubt the interest of the missionaries was to master alien languages in order to write and distribute their biblical tracts in the lay tongue, but the interest in, and passion for, Indian native languages continued even when the fruit of such labour — in terms of saving souls — was far from certain.

The overwhelming presence of Christian missionaries in the worlds of education, health and social work, combined with the relative absence of government in these spheres, gave people like my parents their only opportunities to pursue their broader aspirations of quick upward mobility for their children.

In spite of all this, we are not Christians. Or have we always been "Christian", if we take this to mean that we have developed the resources for public morality and a spirit of toleration, delinked from religion?

(Janaki Nair is professor, Centre for Historical Studies, JNU)

The Hindu 08.04.15

Congratulations to active CHAI member Dr. Alex Mathew who has been appointed Principal Bishop Abraham Memorial College, Thuruthicad



## Fr. Sebastian Karotempral, SDB passes away

Well known Church Historian Fr. Sebastian Karotempral, SDB, long associated with CHAI activities passed away on July 20 at Shillong. He was 83.

Father Karotempral had authored several books and was a great authority on matters related to the Church, esp. The North Eastern Churches.

***“He has left behind a legacy of theological authenticity, academic***

***rigour and indefatigable labour,”*** said Archbishop of Shillong Diocese, Reverend Dominic Jala..

Sometime Professor of Theology of Mission at the Pontifical Urban University, Rome and member of the International Theological Commission he was a member of the Salesian Guwahati/ Shillong Province. Founder editor of the pioneering Indian Missiological Review now named ***“Mission Today”***, Dr. Karotempral, brother of Bishop Emeritus Gregory Karotempral of Rajkot, also was chiefly instrumental in starting the seven-storey **Don Bosco anthropological museum** in Mawlai. He was a key resource person at CHAI's Shillong Triennial, 2008. May his soul rest in peace.



Ranchi Triennial, a preparatory meeting



Dances from the Cultural Programmes, Ranchi Triennial





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# COLONIALISM and CHRISTIAN MISSIONS in NORTH EAST INDIA

Dr. David R. Syiemlieh

## **Colonialism and Missionaries:**

The connection between colonial administrator and the missionary in North East India have been little understood. It is not possible in this essay to study the details of how these two agencies came to operate in the region and the interplay and interaction between them. The presentation will make an attempt to critique the connection. It is not intended here to do a detailed study of any one mission in any one area of the region and its connection with the administrative machinery. It will make an effort to critically examine the colonial connection with Christian missions and Christianity in the region with emphasis on the official policy towards Christian missions. The discussion will cover a wide span in time between 1822 and 1947.

North East India was brought under British colonial rule in stages through the nineteenth century. Colonial sub-imperialism, the extension of existing European possessions to expand into their environment<sup>1</sup>, started with the annexation in 1822 of the Garo foothills along Mymensing and Goalpara. Then followed the annexation of Assam in March 1826 after the defeat of Burma and the signing of the Treaty of Yandaboo. Soon followed British political control over the Khasis after their defeat in the Anglo-Khasi War of 1829-1833. Cachar was then annexed in 1832 and the Jaintia kingdom lost its independence in 1835. Upper Assam which had been returned to the Purandhar Sinha, the Ahom ruler in 1833 was again taken over in 1838 after he failed to meet British expectations. Annexations continued unabated despite Queen Victoria's assurance in her Proclamation of 1858 that

there would be no further annexation under the new dispensation. What remained for the British to annex and to round off the empire in these parts were the hills of present day Arunachal Pradesh, the Naga and the erstwhile Lushai Hills. By the last quarter of the nineteenth century the Nagas were brought under British rule. Similarly the Lusheis inhabiting what is today Mizoram were brought under colonial rule in the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>2</sup> Within this same period of time the twenty-five Khasi states, Manipur and Tripura were brought under British political control through treaties and subjugation. The hills that today constitute Arunachal Pradesh and a small area inhabited by Naga tribes and referred to as Naga Tribal Area were in principle outside British India.

The districts in the Brahmaputra and Barak valleys were administered as were other Indian districts. The administration of the hill districts was different. They were referred to as backward tracts prior to the Government of India Act 1919. The 1935 Government of India Act changed the nomenclature for the tribal areas. The hills were categorized as either Excluded or Partially Excluded Areas. The Excluded Areas which included the Naga and the Lushai Hills Districts were placed under the executive control of the Assam Governor. The Partially Excluded Area including the Garo, Khasi -Jaintia and the Mikir Hills Districts came under the control of the Governor and subject to ministerial administration, but the Governor had an overriding power when it came to exercising his discretion. No act of the Assam or Indian legislatures could apply to these two hill divisions unless the Governor so directed. He was

empowered to make regulations for the hill districts which had the force of law. The administration of these hills was his 'special responsibility'. With no representatives in the Assam Assembly (other than the Partially Excluded Areas, which sent one legislator each), political activity above their village and local level could only just have existed. This brief note on the administration of the region will explain why the colonial administration in distancing itself from direct administration came under criticism, as will be mentioned, in the manner the hills were administered.<sup>3</sup>

Christianity came into the region before British colonization of India. The history of Christianity in North East India goes back to when Jesuit priests Stephan Cacella and John Cabral first entered the Brahmaputra valley in 1626 intending to go on to Tibet and China. Assam had no attraction for them.<sup>4</sup> Then followed the pastoral visits by Augustinian and Holy Cross priests to the several Indo-Portuguese settlements at Rangamati located on the frontier of Bengal with Assam, Bondashill in Cachar and Mariamnagar in Tripura. Bishop Laynes of Mylapore accompanied by Fr. Barbier called on the Rangamati settlers on the easternmost frontier of the Mughal empire in 1714.<sup>5</sup> F. S. Downs, "Rangamanti: A Christian Community in North-East India during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries," in Milton Sangma and David R Syiemlieh (ed.), *Essays on Christianity in North East India*, Indus Publishing Co., New Delhi, 1994, 39-51; David R Syiemlieh, *They Dared to Hope: the Holy Cross Congregation in India*, The Fathers of the Holy Cross, Bangalore, 1998, pp.1-22. Tripura abuts on Bengal. Augustinian and Holy Cross priests from East Bengal often visited Catholics in the village of Mariamnagar close to Agartala. The earliest visit to the Christians in this native state was that of Fr. Ignatius Gomes in 1683. Several priests ministered to the Christians of Mariamnagar in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and after.<sup>6</sup> These visits were occasional and did not establish in any way the Catholic influence in the region other than their pastoral functions. Catholic priests were operating in the region prior to the East India Company foundations of formal empire. It is to be noted that though the Catholics were the first among the Christian missions to have entered the region they were to be amongst the last to make an involvement in the establishment of their faith. In large part the reason for this delay was the indecision of the church authorities which of its foreign missions should be entrusted the task of the evangelisation of the region.<sup>7</sup> The consequences of this delay and indecision would affect the Catholic position and gave a distinct advantage in to Protestant missions setting up churches in the region.

It may be said that the flag representing the colonial administration and the *Bible* representing one or the other of the Christian missions went almost together into the North East. This happened after the Charter Act of 1813 permitted missionaries to propagate their faith in British

India. The English Baptists were quick to take advantage of this by establishing missions in Gauhati and Cherrapunji in the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Unable to sustain their interest they welcomed the American Baptist Mission whose first missionaries arrived in Assam in 1836. When Alexander Lish of the same English Baptist Mission at Serampore gave up Cherrapunji,<sup>8</sup> the mission work there was left unattended for many years. The Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Foreign Mission (later called Welsh Presbyterian Mission) was established in 1840. Jacob Tomlin, a missionary of the London Missionary Society who had visited these hills, urged the new mission take these hills as their mission field. A generous offer to finance the travel of the first missionary enabled the Mission to take a decision. Their first missionary, Thomas Jones was convinced that were he to become a missionary it would be to India where he would go. His arrival at Cherrapunji in the monsoon of 1841 did not require official permission, as the Khasi Hills were not part of the colonial state, though it was politically subdued as a consequence of the Anglo-Khasi war of 1829-1833.<sup>9</sup>

It is at about this stage of British colonial interest in the region that their administrators encouraged and supported the work of the Christians missionaries. David Scott, Commissioner approached his Government as early as 1819 for its approval to invite missionaries to work among the Garos. He first wrote to the English Baptist mission in Serampore. Failing to get their cooperation he wrote to Bishop Heber at Calcutta. The Bishop's response was encouraging for Scott though nothing took shape. Scott then made another request to Government in April 1825. Governments did not think there would be any difficulty to extend financial assistance to Scott's plan but since religious neutrality was the professed policy of government, he was informed that the missionaries could only be given salaries if they were called schoolmasters!<sup>10</sup> Alexander Mackenzie, *A History of the Relations of the Government with the Hill Tribes of the North-East of Bengal*, Calcutta, 1884, pp. 353-254.

Early in 1827 Scott opened a school for Garo boys in Singimari. On the advice of Bishop Heber, Scott appointed W. B. Hurley as Garo schoolmaster. The Garo school and Christian experiment did not last long for want of teachers. It was wound up two years later. Enthusiasts for mission work however continued to see the need for sending missionaries to the Khasis and Garos. George Swinton the Chief Secretary of Government informed R. Benson the Military Secretary to Lord William Bentinck, the Governor General that "The Bishop talked of taking them in hand and I wish he could send an army of missionaries to preach the gospel to them."<sup>11</sup>

Whereas the Bengal Government supported Scott's plan the Court of Directors did not. It reminded Lord Amherst the Governor-General that the declared policy of the authorities in Britain then was religious neutrality towards its Indian

subjects. "It is well known", the Court of Directors remarked in one of its despatches to India'<sup>12</sup>

that we would not engage in schemes for attempting to propagate Christianity among the natives; it is a matter of surprise to us that an active part in the prosecution of this plan should have been taken by a Member of Government, and neither the plan itself nor the extraordinary mode in which it came to be recommended to your notice should have appeared to you unobjectionable.

Despite this censure, Francis Jenkins, Chief Commissioner supported the beginnings of the American Baptist mission in Upper Assam. Son of a clergyman and with strong evangelical belief, Jenkins' correspondence with the American Baptist missionaries in Burma reveals his personal faith and conviction. In one such letter he wrote that while he was interested in the educational work he certainly would not object if that work resulted in the conversion of the people.<sup>13</sup> Jenkins' enthusiasm for missionary work brought in the American Baptist mission who arrived Sadiya in upper Assam in 1836.

It is striking that the Christian churches spread more comfortably in the hills and plains of the region after the incorporation of these territories into formal empire. Initially the American Baptist Mission came with the intention to enter and work among the Shans of Upper Burma and Yunnan, China. Realising they could not achieve that end they directed their energies working among, first the hill people in what is today the eastern part of Arunachal Pradesh, the several Naga tribes, the Mikirs, among the people around Nowgong where their headquarters were located; and later opening a mission station in Guwahati. Some years later the same mission was in Goalpara, not to proselytize that Bengal province but to use it as an opportunity to enter the Garo hills, which it did in the 1860s. Their entry into Tura followed in the wake of the establishment of British administration among the Garos. By then Omed and Ramke, the Garo combination of uncle and nephew had become missionaries to their own people and established a church at Rajasimla.<sup>14</sup> M.S. Sangma, *History and Culture of the Garos*, Books Today, New Delhi, 1981, pp255-256; Mathew Muttumana, *Christianity in Assam and Interfaith Dialogue*, Ishvanai Kendra, Indore, 1984, pp.54-57.

A similar situation operated in the Naga hills. Reverend Clarke's entry into the Naga Hills came without official support and with a threat to his life. Once in the hills it gave his mission an opportunity to set work among other Naga tribes, the Angamis, the Sema, the Lothas and the Naga inhabited areas of Manipur state.<sup>15</sup>

There was however no general and official support for the initial missionary activity. A chance visit of William Williams of the Welsh Presbyterian mission in the Khasi Hills to Sylhet town in the plains below, will perhaps give one instance of this mission activity. Williams visited Mizo chiefs

incarcerated in jail following their last resistance to British imperialism. He then visited the Lushai hills in 1890. What followed was the Welsh Presbyterian Mission Board agreeing to extend their work to cover the Lushai Hills.<sup>16</sup> Meanwhile J. H. Lorraine and F. W. Savidge of the Arthington Aborigines Mission, had spent several months first trying to get into Tripura. Not discouraged by their failure to enter that native state, they made repeated attempts to enter the Lushai Hills. Their requests were accommodated only after the Lushai Hills were incorporated into the colonial state. On arrival in Fort Aijal in January 1894 they called on the British administrator who told them: "I can't do anything more for you. I have orders not to help you....But you can go anywhere you like."<sup>17</sup> They remained on only to hand over that mission to the Presbyterians three years later. The two friends next moved to the south Lushai hills. Their next missionary endeavour was supported by the Baptist Mission Society.<sup>18</sup>

#### **Comity Arrangement:**

Something needs to be said of what became known as 'comity' agreements. 'Comity' was an informal agreement among the Protestant missions and churches whereby only one mission/church would work in a given area. The comity agreements were administered by regional councils of the respective churches and came into operation sometime in the later part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Missions arrived at the decision not to spread their respective missions in the territory of the other. This arrangement worked well with the missions with only the occasional intrusion of one mission into the 'sphere of influence' of another. Reverend Sydney Endle the Anglican padre was concerned when the American Baptist showed interest to work among the tea garden workers who had migrated to upper Assam from Chota Nagpur. He wrote to Reverend Bronson of the Baptist mission on 1 February 1878:<sup>19</sup> Cited in F. S. Downs, *History of Christianity in India*

vol. V, part 5, *Northeast India in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, op. cit., p. 81.

There are many reasons why a second mission should not be established in the same District, especially while so large a part of India is altogether unprovided with any kind of religious teaching (sic)...., I cannot but think that if you had contemplated opening such a mission, you would have felt bound in courtesy to have apprised me of your intentions. As mentioned earlier the Catholic missions were in disagreement which of their missions would work in Assam. When it was decided that the Salvatorians, a newly founded German mission would commence work in the North East it was to Shillong where they first went as it was the provincial capital and outside the comity restrictions.

The mission activity of the Salvation Army in the Lushai hills in 1922 brought in interdenominational rivalry. After Kawkhuma returned from Bombay following an officer's

training course, the Salvation Army intended to post an European officer in Aizawl. The Presbyterian missionaries objected to the encroachment into their mission field. Meetings in Calcutta with officers of the Salvation Army, and Shillong with Government and letters to the Governor of Assam by the Presbyterian mission influenced Government to take a stand that there should not be two missions operating in the same tribal and which could disturb the peaceful situation.<sup>20</sup> The Government tacitly approved this arrangement. Another test to the comity agreement came up in 1925 on the application of a Catholic priest to visit the Lushai hills. Government carefully handled this situation by giving Fr. Boulay of the Holy Cross mission restricted permission to visit the hills.<sup>21</sup>

The First World War affected the position of the administration and the Christian missions in many ways. It particularly affected the newly arrived Catholic mission in the North East. The correspondence of the German and Austrian missionaries was inspected, they were required to sign a document to the effect that they would not do anything to damage the interest of the British government; those under forty-five years of age were declared prisoners of war and were put under police surveillance. Christopher Becker their Prefect Apostolic writes that as the war progressed the Catholic missions were seriously affected. Communication with Germany was difficult if not possible; funds became scarce; the missionaries were suspected of having wireless sets to communicate with ships in the Indian ocean and that they had an arms depot in order to arm the people against the British. In mid 1915 the German Salvatorians missionaries were transported to Ahmedabad. Becker's appeal to the Governor of Assam brought no assurance for their continued stay. He then approached the Belgian priests in Calcutta. They came to take over the work of the Salvatorian mission but only for some time before the Salesians of Don Bosco arrived in 1921.<sup>22</sup> Very soon the Salesians were able to leave their mark in the Khasi and Jaintia hills, in the Brahmaputra valley, and from the 1930s in the Garo hills.

Other Christians missions in the region were the Lutherans, working chiefly among the tea labourers from Goalpara to upper Assam; the New Zealand Baptists in Tripura; the Australian Baptists in some parts of the lower Brahmaputra valley; the Salvation Army in the Lushai hills; and the Anglican Church in Assam and parts of the Khasi- Jaintia Hills was patronised by the British official establishment. By the year of India's independence all these missions mentioned above had established themselves in some part or larger area of the North East.

By the turn of the nineteenth century each of the mainline missions had carved out 'spheres of influence', as I have somewhere used this term.<sup>23</sup> The Government was unwilling to have more than one mission in any tribal area. Another case for decision came up in 1935 when Holy Cross

missionaries from Chittagong and Dacca applied for permission to visit Aijal. Permission was granted but only to visit the district headquarters and for a brief stay.<sup>24</sup> The Hill Officers Conference of 1937 took a policy decision not to allow more than one mission in any one tribal inhabited area. Consequently Catholic entry into the Garo hills was delayed till the 1930s for just this reason as the Baptist mission was at work there. The comity agreement came to a close shortly before independence. The Congregation of Holy Cross was given permission in December 1946 to set up a mission in Aijal.<sup>25</sup> In the year of India's independence a congregation of Spanish sisters was requested to manage the government hospital at Kohima which was constructed as a gesture of gratitude for the support Nagas had given in the war.<sup>26</sup>

Within a century of organised missionary activity, Christianity had made its impact on the lives of a large population in the region, particularly in the hills other than what is today Arunachal Pradesh. Mission activity picked up momentum towards the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Historians have attributed this growth in part to the effects of two natural occurrences; the 1897 earthquake and the *mautam*, the famine followed by the flowering of the bamboo. Church historians have also explained church growth after the revival movements within the Presbyterian church in the Khasi-Jaintia hills in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and its spread to the Lushai hills.<sup>27</sup> These brought in large numbers to the church.<sup>28</sup> By then Christianity became the preferred agent of 'acculturation'. Though the Hinduism and Islam had already made some advance in the tribal areas among the Bodos, Khasi-Jaintias, Dimasas, Hajong, Mikirs, Miris and other groups, the arrival of Christianity halted the further progress of 'Sanskritisation' and other processes. However, conversion to the new faith brought in a break with their primal religion. It also had its effects on the social and community life of the converts. Some tribes including the Nagas, the Mizos and the Garos had very large numbers professing the Christian faith.<sup>29</sup> There is reason to understand then why the more educated Khasis set up the Seng Khasi in 1899, the intension of which was the preservation of their religion and culture.<sup>30</sup>

#### **Government concerns of Missionary activity:**

Major A. G. McCall, the Superintendent of the Lushai hills admitted in his memoir that it was not known by the administration what instructions were given to missions operating in backward areas by their mission directorates. He was however clear that the administration would not seek to interfere in any doctrinal practice by a mission which was operating with full government sanction unless and until a breach of peace threatened. The same officer was of the opinion that administration should seek to limit the degree of license afforded by missions in any control by the natives of mission enterprises. Acknowledging that administration was unable to meet increased measures of decentralization

thereby gave missions increased functions which could create political problem. He candidly wrote in retirement:<sup>31</sup> When we recall that some missionaries openly claim that it is their privilege and their prerogative to blaze a trail, and for others to meet the resulting situation, the need for some form of limitation on missionary activity among a backward people becomes a very real matter.

Several officials were witness that Christianity was disturbing the social fabric of the tribal societies. Two Deputy Commissioners of the Naga Hills District in particular were concerned the impact Christianity was having on the Naga tribes. John Hutton in his preface to the second edition of *The Sema Nagas* lamented in the 1930s that the past was being quickly lost to the tribe and that their pagan past was likely to be forgotten in the breach of continuity which conversion to Christianity was bringing about.<sup>32</sup> In another of his monumental monographs *The Angami Nagas* (1921) he showed his aversion towards the missionaries and the government of which he himself was an integral part, for the steady advance their changes had made in the lives of several Naga tribes. He wrote in one of his monumental monographs: "Old beliefs and customs are dying, the old traditions are being forgotten, the number of Christians or quasi Christians is steadily increasing and the spirit of change is invading and pervading every aspect of village life."<sup>33</sup> An American Baptist missionary noted that to the Nagas, a people already guided by their own taboos came Christianity with its own set of taboos. He noted a grave danger that Christianity as presented to these people had come to mean the adoption of another set of do's and don'ts.<sup>34</sup> Thus Naga observance of *genna* to Christian Sunday restrictions was a relatively easy transition.

As Christian missions expanded, administrators placed their concerns on a number of issues which involved the Christian missionaries. They found that Naga boys going to the mission schools had to dress up in the fashion of the Assamese boys with dhoti and shirt! Their girls too had to dress in saris! The district officials were critical of the American Baptist missionaries for making the Naga students dress in this manner. They preferred Nagas wear their own attire in order to preserve their tradition and culture. Eventually and after much correspondence, the missionaries provided Naga students of the mission schools with more comfortable attire, but then again of a different culture. There were also concerns by the Naga Hills administration when Naga converts to Christianity refused to observe certain traditional rites and ceremonies. They could not see why the Christians should refuse to participate in their agricultural festivals, the hauling of village gates, the protection of villages, and sleeping in the *morung*. Naga converts to Christianity it was observed did not follow *genna* observance. In all this the official position was largely in favour of the continuance and participation of all Nagas in

their traditional observances.<sup>35</sup>

The question may be asked why was there so much difference between the colonial administration and the American Baptist mission in the Naga Hills when it came to the mission work. Could this have been so because of the different nationalities involved? Could these issues have been raised in the Naga Hills because two of their administrators (J. H. Hutton and J. P. Mills) were more sensitive than others to the changes Christianity was having on Naga life? These questions are asked because we have not noted administrators elsewhere in the region raising such issues. Elsewhere the missions and the government appeared to have worked in union.

Both missionary and government officials were concerned about the prevalence of what was considered a form of slavery in the Naga and Lushai Hills districts. The anthropologist-government official wrote about its occurrence but could do little. The missionaries were often more in direct touch with the people. Their beliefs and convictions and their contact with the people brought a number of missionaries into the slavery controversy.<sup>36</sup> After the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society published a letter addressed to Montague the Secretary of State for India in July 1913, momentum picked up against the *bawi* practise among the Mizos. A situation was reached when Dr. Peter Fraser purchased the freedom of forty *bawis*. His involvement in questioning the practice embarrassed the Government. It was considered he was exceeding the sanction given to him as preacher and medical practitioner. He was asked to leave the hills or sign an agreement not to interfere in any way whatsoever in Lushai customary disputes and avoid giving expression to Lushai custom. Dr. Fraser preferred to leave the hills and take the matter up with Parliament.<sup>37</sup> Apparently the Government did not want the missions to get too involved in stimulating social change and customs as the district had only recently been bought under British rule.

Whatever were the benefits to the people that the Christian missions brought there were administrators who questioned their activities and impact. John Hutton was critical of the "spread of quasi-European culture," brought about by the Christian missions. He was of the opinion that the pace of change had laid upon the protecting power a heavy obligation to see that the changes which were taking place:

shall be beneficial rather than detrimental and shall benefit the many rather than a few and in particular that whatever the greatly desired education may take, it shall be of real benefit to the people themselves in advancing their moral and material welfare.<sup>38</sup>

The Governor of Assam at the time Hutton wrote this was Andrew G. Clow. He noted that the older generation of officers generally tended to look upon Christianity especially in the form in which it was presented by the American Baptist

missionaries with grave misgivings if not hostility. He too took the position there was much in the tribal culture which was desirable to preserve and that with gradual growth of education there would be increasing change in cultural outlook.<sup>39</sup>

### **Roman Script:**

Christian missions were made an instrument for the colonial state. In like manner it may be argued that the missions too benefited from their interface with the colonial state. The missions' collective efforts at education for instance, were envisaged by British officers as an integral part of the overall policy of civilizing the hill tribes. 'Civilization' to them meant affecting moderation in such customs and habits such as their frequent raids into the plains and head-hunting. The tribes were not easily amenable to the state's rules and regulations (which many tribesmen possibly just could not comprehend). This called for a policy to affect the change. If the government of the land could not do this, by administrative procedures and by coercive measures, it would be left to the missionaries to do so in their own manner. Christian missions championed the cause of providing written scripts for the tribal communities, encouraging the use of Assamese script; pioneering education and ministering to the health of the people of the region. Arriving in their missions at a time when the East India Company was only just beginning to have political control of the Assam valley and later its hill periphery, the Christian missions stepped in, to assist the government authorities to provide these "civilising" effects. Before schools could be established it was thought proper to give a tribe a script for none of the tribes had any written form. William Carey of the Serampore Mission is credited with first translating the *Bible* into the Khasi language using the Bengali script. 500 copies were printed but his efforts had little lasting contribution as the translation was so imperfect it was unintelligible to the Khasis. Alexander Lish of the same mission while he was posted at Cherrapunji translated portions of the *Bible* and is reported to have prepared a Khasi grammar. The medium was Bengali, a language many of the hill people were conversant with as a consequence of centuries of interaction with the Bengalis of Sylhet. Thomas Jones, the first Welsh Calvinist Methodist missionary to the Khasis arrived in Cherrapunji in 1841 without knowledge of any Indian language. He too attempted to give the tribe a written script first with Bengali characters "which proved an insuperable difficulty to his pupils", and in spite of much adverse criticism he then adopted Roman characters for the school primers and other translations.<sup>40</sup> Thomas Jones is today held in high esteem by the Khasis as the father of Khasi literature. Missionaries who came after him further developed the literature.

The early American Baptist missionaries in the Garo hills had one advantage over the Welsh Calvinists in the Khasi – Jaintia hills – they had Indian experience before moving into

the Garo hills in the early 1860s and therefore it was not too difficult for them to converse and write in Bengali characters for the Garo script. They preferred the Bengali characters as better suited for the Garo language and more useful to the tribe who were generally "adverse to the acquisition of their own language and anxious to learn only Bengali and English".<sup>41</sup> The arrival of Reverends Phillips and Mason in Tura, the district headquarters in December 1874 was significant as F.S. Downs has shown. These missionaries brought with them a Remington typewriter, perhaps one of the earliest models and with this machine they began to propagate the use of the Roman script for the Garo language. They first prepared and printed a few primers and found visible signs of interest in reading among the Garos. Experimenting further they realised that twenty-one Roman letters were sufficient to represent every needed sound in the Garo language. Two thousand copies of a primer was printed as a feeler to substitute the Bengali for Roman characters. The American Baptist Mission Conference of 1893 meeting in Tura resolved that the Roman alphabet was best suited for the hill tribes of Assam who did not have their own written language. However it was not till some ten years later that the decision was taken to make this change effective for Garo literature.<sup>42</sup> For details see D.R. Syiemlieh, op. cit. pp.133-134.

The several Naga tribes did not undergo this difficulty. For one thing they had relatively less interaction with the people of the plains to use the Assamese characters for reducing their languages into written form. Baptist missionaries applied the Roman character to the scripts of the larger of the Naga tribes – the Angamis, the Lothas, the Aos and the Semas. They reduced to writing nineteen tribal languages. The Welsh mission success in encouraging the growth of the Khasi language influenced them to give the Mizos and their kindred tribes the Roman script and to significant accomplishment. The Christian missionary also reduced into written form many other tribal languages for the Naga tribes of Manipur, the Mikirs of Assam, while their efforts to give the Bodos of Assam and the larger tribes of Tripura the Roman script has faced a counter move in support of the Devnagiri script.

Missionaries contributed in no small measure to the shaping of tribal and Assamese identities. Were it not for the persistent efforts of American Baptist missionaries the Assamese might have had to accept the use of Bengali script for their language. The missionaries aided by their first convert, Nidhi Farwell developed the language in what has been compared to the influence of the Serampore mission for encouraging the Bengali language. They stimulated the Assamese with a literary renaissance with a modern literature and literary style, both through their own compositions and the publications of the Baptist Mission Press at Sibsagar. Grammars, dictionaries, school text books translations from

Christian texts and reproductions of Assamese literary works including novels were printed in those early years in great flourish. The publication in 1842 of *Orunodoi*, a monthly periodical devoted to science, religion and general information gave the Assamese language a boost. All this prepared the Assamese, led by the Baptist missionaries, to agitate against the government decision to use Bengali in the law courts and schools of Assam. Beginning their stand around 1838 that Assamese was a distinct language with its own literary style the debate strained the relationship between the missionaries and William Robinson, a former missionary of the English Baptist mission who subsequently became Inspector of Schools and who supported the more extensive use of Bengali. By 1853 the debate became public but it would take some more years for the government to order in 1873 that Assamese should be reinstated as the language of the courts and schools in Assam.<sup>43</sup>

#### **Education:**

Another important contribution made by Christianity to the process of acculturation was in providing education. Invariably each mission set up schools soon after they were set up in any area. Lish set up three schools in and around Cherrapunji. Jones continued the work of his precursor. By 1851 when the Welsh Mission had completed ten years of activity in the Khasi hills five schools were in operation though their missionary in the field complained that the Khasis were not enthusiastic receiving education. Whereas much of the expenses for the printing programme of the missions were borne by the individual missions, government encouraged the mission of education by giving occasional financial grants. It is of interest to note that the Welsh Mission was the first religious organization in India to receive a monthly grant of rupees fifty toward the effort of educating the Khasi-Jaintias. We need not go into the details of this development. It would suffice to say that in time the initial opposition of Khasis to learn the three R's turned into a favourable desire the impact of which will be mentioned shortly. Similar was the contribution of the American Baptist Mission in educating the tribes of upper Assam where the mission first pitched tents; then their schools around Nowgong; the Garo hills; in lower Assam; their little known work among the Adivasis; and the more difficult and challenging task of teaching the Naga tribes because of the multiplicity of dialects.<sup>44</sup> The Catholic missions was to be especially important in providing a broader base and a high degree of education. The Salesians of Don Bosco added a new dimension to the cause of educating the youth with a chain of vocational institutions offering a variety of professional courses.<sup>45</sup>

The distinctive feature of education among the hill tribes was the part played in it by Christian missionaries. Missionaries apparently found the hill tribes afforded the most likely field for their labours. As they attached great importance to and had initiated education among the hill tribes

it was convenient for the Government to offer "pecuniary aid and leave the work to them."<sup>46</sup>

However education was not the primary object of missionary activity. Education went hand in hand with their religious work but suffered whenever the priorities of the two interests were raised. The mission schools were often faced with a dearth of qualified teachers and severely affected when the missionaries returned home or went home on furlough.

Some details may be provided to see the advance of education at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and into the early decades of the last century. Education made great strides in the Lushai hills. In 1903-04 there were two schools at Aizawl, one managed by the Government and the other by the Welsh Presbyterian Mission. An official report noted "For a savage tribe who have so recently come under British rule the Lushais show a remarkable opting for civilization."<sup>47</sup> The *Gazetteer* noted that education had not made much progress in the Naga hills where there was but one secondary school and 22 primary schools.<sup>48</sup> The Government however noted with appreciation the efforts of the Welsh Mission in educating the Khasi-Jaintia where there were 348 primary and 8 secondary schools. It recorded that in 1901 the proportion of literate persons in that district was higher than any other district of Assam. The same Report mentions that education was in a very backward condition in the Garo Hills despite the 94 primary schools in the district.<sup>49</sup> We may hazard a note that the Welsh Presbyterian Mission gave more attention to education than the American Baptist Mission.

Government set up the first high school in Shillong in 1878. In 1891 the Welsh mission too established a high school in the provincial capital. That same year the two schools were amalgamated, the Mission retaining the right of nominating the headmaster while the Government bore the cost of maintaining the school.<sup>50</sup> Further progress was made in education in all the hill districts. The Khasi and Jaintia Hills in 1912 had 5 middle schools and 425 primary schools; there was but 1 middle school for the Garos and 110 primary schools; primary school for the Nagas dwindled to 22 in the same year; the Lushai Hills recorded 29 primary schools; 12 primary schools served the Mikirs.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>51</sup> *Quinquennial Review of the Progress of Education in East Bengal and Assam, 1907-1912*, pp. 120-122.

Even after fifty years of education in the province of Assam, it was reported that, "education in the hills is still in a very experimental stage. It has not yet acquired a definite tendency. Its aim is not defined."<sup>52</sup> An Inspector of Schools after visiting the hill districts made mention in his Report for 1909-1910 that: "that the missions have not sufficiently systematized the training arrangements, that there is paucity of school books, that female education requires organization and that the education imparted has become uncontrollably literary in its tendencies and has foolishly divorced itself

from the life of the people.” He noted the necessity of introducing more industrial instruction, as hill people appeared to do well in carpentry and other manual work.<sup>53</sup>

Very early in the development of modern education in the region was the attention given to the education of girls. This in part reflects the position girls had in society. The more prominent schools for girls were at Tura, Shillong, Gauhati, Golaghat, Aizawl and Kohima. Calcutta University in 1902 included the Khasi language in the subjects for the Entrance Examination. Three different Catholic congregations set up degree colleges in Shillong, St. Edmund’s in 1916, St. Anthony’s in 1935 and St. Mary’s in 1937, besides two schools preparing students for the Senior Cambridge School Examination.

Till 1947 therefore education in the hills and to a large measure in the plains too, was a mission activity financially supported by the Government. Missionary control over education gave them a considerable instrument of influence over the lives of the people. Initially the primary objective of the missions was to make good preachers of their brighter converts. Many schools were started to educate the children of the chiefs after their initial opposition changed to appreciation. But the missions in general did not go far enough. Before Independence the Nagas had only one high school started in 1938 and located in Kohima. The Mizos too were restricted in their opportunities for higher education as their district had only one high school started in 1944 and located in the district headquarters at Aizawl. Likewise the Garos had only one high school in Tura.

J. P. Mills the Deputy Commissioner of the Naga Hills District was of the opinion that the control of education by the American Baptist mission in the Naga Hills was so pervasive that: “The animist parent objects ... strongly to his boy being taught only by someone likely to proselytize him.... There is a feeling that Government in the past has not always been neutral when missions were concerned.”<sup>54</sup>

It was also remarked by A. G. McCall, the Superintendent of the Lushai Hills District that the Church in that district had become a centre of power and patronage following the excessive reliance of Government on the church as an agency of education and other social services.<sup>55</sup> Similar would have been the situation in several other hill districts of Assam.

Education has been a powerful agent of social change. It has brought awareness among the tribes that there should be an adjustment between modernity and tradition. Education further brought political consciousness. The Khasi-Jaintias were among the first of the tribes of the region to respond to the changing political and administrative situation and the prospects of their participation in the government provided by the Act of 1935. It is of interest to note that the two representatives of these hills in the Assam Legislature ushered in by the Act were churchmen! <sup>56</sup> Political consciousness among the Garos, the Nagas and the Mizos and other hill

tribes came much later but was very assertive by some tribes at the time of the transfer of power from Britain to India.

#### **Medical Mission:**

Church histories of North East India have not given much attention to the medical missions. This reflects in a way the attitude of the Christian missions towards their medical service which was not looked upon as a primary function of their missionary cause but as an auxiliary in the propagation of the faith. Out of 480 missionaries of the American Baptist Union in 1902 only 27 were physicians of whom only two were in the Assam field. Physicians who went out under the auspices of the Union were first supposed to be missionaries. It was their Board’s aim to make “physical healing entirely subordinate to efforts for soul purification”. <sup>57</sup> The Welsh Mission on the other hand sent out medical missionaries to the Khasi Hills soon after their mission was started and they came out in fairly large numbers.<sup>58</sup>

Invariably all missionaries were given some training in medical sciences before their departure for the mission. The turning point of greater emphasis on this service came at about the time of the Great War with larger numbers of men and women entering the service. For the American Baptist Mission the involvement of their Women’s branch was of significance as their women physicians made a beginning with the opening of a Women’s hospital in Gauhati in 1924. Of the more serious diseases that afflicted the people of the region were leprosy, tuberculosis, malaria, cholera and small pox. Less serious medical problems were –goitre, which was widespread, hookworm, decayed teeth and torn ear lobes! The larger of the mission hospitals were at Shillong, Jowai, Gauhati, Jorhat, which included a T.B. Hospital, Tura which was the first town to have a hospital managed by the missionaries, Kohima was given a hospital by the government in 1946 as a gift for their support in the War but managed initially by Catholic Missionary sisters from Spain; Chabua in upper Assam was provided a hospital by the Anglican Church while the Mizos had health centres at Durtlang and Serkawn. It is of interest to note that Dr. Sidney Rivenburg, a missionary in the Naga hills had worked with Dr. Ronald Ross when he worked out the experiments that led to the discovery of the cause of malaria.<sup>59</sup> The mission hospitals initiated the training of nurses for their own hospitals and dispensaries and later prepared nurses for employment in other health centres and spread the lessons of hygiene and other related subjects. Catholic sisters staffed several Government hospitals in the region for a period of time before other arrangements were made

#### **Conclusion:**

The colonial masters and the missionaries benefited from each other’s presence in the region. Both took support from the other. There were difference between them in approach to the tremendous changes taking place in the lives of the

people one administered and the other ministered. Both agencies were aware they were bringing about changes in the lives of the people.

We may refer to the beginnings of missionary endeavour in the region as the “mission phase” of the history. Starting in the early decades of the nineteenth century it is convenient to use 1947 as the date this phase comes to a close and another is ushered in. Well before independence the Protestant missions had started handing over the management of the mission to Indian members of their churches. The post-colonial phase witnessed a complete transition of the management of the mission which by then had become self-supporting churches. The post-colonial phase also witnessed a phenomenal growth in the number of Christians in the region.<sup>60</sup> There were many reasons for this not the least being the close of the ‘comity system’ that areas in the region given to only one mission in the “mission phase” were opened to other churches to expand into areas hitherto excluded to their activities. Missions were free to move into areas hitherto restricted. Catholic missionary activity was fast to take advantage of this to set up missions in the Naga, Lushai and Garo hills and the hill districts of Manipur. In time these missions registered spectacular growth. Evangelisation in Tripura was slow. There has been little growth in the two valleys other than among the several plains tribes. The Khasi, Jaintia and Garo Hills received more focus with enthusiastic response to church growth. Whereas other foreign missions had by then transferred much of their mission/ church authority to Indian hands, the Catholic mission/ church continued to be in the control of expatriate missionaries. Things were to change though.

We are witnessing in our time a third phase of Church growth and activity. Even allowing the three main line churches growth which is normal, that of the Pentecostal churches is significant, of which there are so few studies. The opening up of Arunachal Pradesh to Christian missions and the response of the people of that state to Christianity, likewise has not been studied in any detail. Despite all the opposition and obstacles to the Church’s endeavour to reach out to the tribes of this State, the people have today welcomed the Christian missions; opposition is guarded but not stiff, with the different missions operating in this frontier State excited about their efforts yet concerned not to go too fast.

This brief account of the work of the different Christian mission in the region is to emphasise that that the beginnings, spread and present position of the Christian churches is not the preserve of any one church but a common and shared tradition.

The post-independence interface between the Christians and their churches and the state indicate both appreciation and criticism. Some may say that this is a much more interesting theme for study given the attention there is on this subject

today. The Indian states’ perception and understanding of Christianity has changed a great deal from the colonial perception, not the least being that Christianity is an Indian religion. The Christian communities despite their small numbers have made significant contribution to Indian life and ethos. Given another opportunity at any other forum I would want to take this theme forward.

## Notes and references

### (Endnotes)

\* *Colonialism and Christian Missions in North East India* --, First Yajashree Roy Memorial Lecture, North East India Studies Programme, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, March 2013.

<sup>1</sup> D. K. Fieldhouse, *Economics and Empire 1830-1914*, Weidenfeld and Nicholas, London, 1976, pp. 80-81; 173-175.

<sup>2</sup> There are numerous histories of British expansion into the region. Among these may be read, Edward Gait, *A History of Assam*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, Calcutta, 1963; H. K. Barpujari, *A Comprehensive History of Assam*,

vols.1-5, Publication Division Government of Assam, Guwahati, 1990-1993, H. K. Barpujari et. Al. ,

*Political History of Assam*, vols. 1-3, Guwahati, 1977-1980.

<sup>3</sup> Read for instance the critique of S.C. Chaube in *Hill Politics in North East India*, Orient BlackSwan, New Delhi, reprinted 2012, pp.38-42-50-54, 59-62.

<sup>4</sup> Referred in Sir Edward Maclargan, *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul*, Burnes, Oates and Washbourne Ltd, London, 1932, p.355. In their attempt to reach China, Cabral and Cacella left Hoogly in 1627, reached Cooch Behar and entered the kingdom of ‘Comberasis’ ( Kamrup) and pushed as far as U-Tsang. When their mass wine ran short, Fr Cabral returned to Hoogly. He returned a second time accompanied by Fr. Emmanuel Dias only to be confined there due to a fratricidal struggle. There they were joined by Cacella. Cacella and Dias made another attempt to reach Tibet by way of Nepal. Dias died in Nepal. Cacella succeeded in reaching Tsaparang where he died of the hardships of the journey. For details of this mission read Lt. Col. C. Eckford Luard assisted by Father H. Heston, *Travels of Frey Sebastian Manrique 1629-1643: a translation of the Itenario De Las Misiones Oriental with Introduction and Notes*, vol. II, pp.391-392.

<sup>6</sup> F. S. Downs, “ Rangamanti: A Christian Community in North-East India during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries,” in Milton Sangma and David R Syiemlieh (ed.), *Essays on Christianity in North East India*, Indus Publishing Co. , New Delhi, 1994, 39-51.

<sup>7</sup> The details of the Catholic mission in Assam is best covered by Christopher Becker, *The Catholic Church in Northeast India 1890-1915*, revised and edited from the original German edition by Sebastian Karotempel, Sacred Heart Theological College, Shillong, 2007, chapters iv-xiv. George

Kottupallil has made mention of this issue of indecision in *History of the Catholic Missions in Bengal 1855-1886*, Shillong, 1998, pp 206-210; and so has David R Syiemlieh in, *They Dared to Hope: The Holy Cross Congregation in India*, op. cit., pp 25-26. For a general reading on Christianity in the region read F. S. Downs, *History of Christianity in India* vol. V, part 5, *Northeast India in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, The Church History Association of India, Bangalore, 1992.

<sup>8</sup> Log on to [Brahmaputra Studies Database](#) for Alexander Lish's, 'A Brief Account of the Khasees', *The Calcutta Christian Observer*, vol. 7, 1838, p.129-143.

<sup>9</sup> F. S. Downs, *History of Christianity in India: North East India in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, op.cit.,; F. S. Downs, *Essays on Christianity in North East India*, op. cit., N. Natarajan, *The Missionaries among the Khasis*, Delhi, 1980; John H Morris, *History of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists' Foreign to the end of the year 1904*, reprinted Indus Publishers, New Delhi, 1996; David R. Syiemlieh, *Survey of Research in History on North-East India 1970-1990*, pp.66-70;

<sup>11</sup> Nottingham University Library, Portland Collection, Bentinck Papers, PWJF2781/XLIV, Swinton to Benson, 22 July 1831. The reference is to Bishop Turner who had succeeded Bishop Heber.

<sup>12</sup> India Office Library and Records, London, Political Despatches from Court of Directors, 2 February 1831, para. 86.

<sup>13</sup> F. S. Downs, *History of Christianity in India*, vol. V, part 5, *Northeast India in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, op. cit., pp. 38-39. In his reference to conversion, Jenkins was making allusion to the tribals in upper Assam. Also read J. Puthenpurakal, *Baptist Missions in Nagaland*, Shillong, 1994.

<sup>15</sup> Mathew Muttumana, op. cit., pp.62-67; J Puthenpurakal, *Baptist Mission in Nagaland*, Vendrame Missiological Institute, Shillong, 1984; J Puthenpurakal, 'Evangelization among the Nagaland Tribes',

*The Catholic Church in Northeast India 1890-1990*, Vendrame Institute, Shillong, 1993, pp.216-225.

<sup>16</sup> C. L Hminga *The Life and Witness of the Churches in Mizoram*, Baptist Church of Mizoram, Serkawn, 1987, pp. 45. For other histories of the growth of Christian missions in the region read; D. R. Syiemlieh, *They Dared to Hope: The Holy Cross Congregation in India*, op. cit.; J.V.Hluna, *Church and Political Upheaval in Mizoram: A Study of the Impact of the Political Development in Mizoram*, Aizawl, 1985; J. Puthenpurakal (ed.), *Impact of Christianity on North East India*, Sacred Heart Theological College, Shillong, 1996.

<sup>17</sup> C. L. Hminga *The Life and Witness of the Churches in Mizoram*, Baptist Church of Mizoram, Serkawn, 1987, pp. 47-48.

<sup>18</sup> Lalsangkima Pachuau, 'Robert Arthington Jr and the Arthington Aborigine Mission', *Indian Church History Review*, December 1994, pp.105-126.

<sup>20</sup> Lal Dena, *Christian Missions and Colonialism: a Study of Missionary Movement in North East India with Particular Reference to Manipur and Lushai Hills 1894-1947*, Vendrame Institute, Shillong, 1988, pp.65-68.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., pp.69-70; David R Syiemlieh, *They Dared to Hope*, op. cit., pp. 27-31. The concern of the Presbyterian mission in the Lushai hills is pointed out in C. L Hminga, *The Life and Witness of the Churches in Mizoram*, Baptist Church of Mizoram, Serkawn, 1987, pp.158-159.

<sup>22</sup> Refer to Christopher Becker, *The Catholic Church in Northeast India 1890-1915*, op. cit., Chapter XIV, pp.401-442.

<sup>23</sup> David R Syiemlieh, 'The Beginning of the Catholic Church among the Mizos', *Proceedings of the North East India History Association*, Thirteenth session, Shillong, 1993, p.273.

<sup>24</sup> David R Syiemlieh, *They Dared To Hope*, pp.41-46.

<sup>25</sup> The Archives of the Holy Cross Congregation in Rome has an interesting note that the opening of the Lushai hills was decided on the playfield of St. Edmund' School Shillong! This could have been the result of a meeting between the Governor of Assam and Fr. Bianchi, Secretary to the Bishop of Assam in late 1946. They were noticed to have been in close conversation sometime during that event. Soon after Government issued orders on 18 December permitting two Holy Cross missionaries to reside in the Lushai hills. David R Syiemlieh, *They Dared to Hope: The Holy Cross Congregation in India*, pp.56-57.

<sup>26</sup> David R Syiemlieh, *A Short History of the Catholic Church in Nagaland*, Shillong 1990, p. 39; O. Paviotti, *The Works of His Hands, The Story of the Archdiocese of Shillong- Guwahati 1934-1984*, Archbishop's House, Shillong, 1987, pp.102-103.

<sup>27</sup> After sixty years of mission among the Khasi there were 2147 members of the church. This member doubled within a year of the 1897 earthquake, J H Morris op. cit., p.187-188. The revival story among the Mizos is told in some detail in Lalsawma, *Revivals: The Mizo Way*, Aizawl, 1994.

<sup>28</sup> C. L. Hminga informs that the North Lushai Hills registered an increase in the number of Christians from 57 to 6134 in the decade 1904-1914. During the same period the number of Christians in the South Lushai Hills rose to 2647. By the time of the second revival the numbers crossed 14000 in the North and 3400 in the South.

*The Life and Witness of the Churches in Mizoram*, Serkawn, 1987, pp.81,91,123. So zealous were a sections of Mizos with the revival that the local administration had to intervene and advise revivalists of a Mizo village to go back to their fields that had been neglected. Robert N. Reid, *Years of Change in Bengal and Assam*, London, 1966, p.112. Also

read Sajal Nag, "God's Strange Means": Missionaries, Calamity and Philanthropy among the Lushais', T. B. Subba et. al., (eds.), *Christianity and Change in Northeast India*, Concept Publication Co., New Delhi, 2009, pp. 285-304.

<sup>29</sup> The Census of 1901 registered 35,969 Christians in the North East, F.S. Downs *The History of Christianity in North-East India*, op. cit., p. 77.

<sup>30</sup> Fearing that Khasi were being affected by changes, including the spread of Christianity Jeebon Roy and others started the Seng Khasi in November 1899. The object of Seng Khasi was to foster brotherhood among the Khasis who retained their socio-cultural and religious heritage, to encourage sports, dances and festivals, the advancement of education and the preservation of Khasi religion.

<sup>31</sup> Major A. G. McCall, *Lushai Chrysais*, Firma KLM Pvt. Ltd., Aizawl, reprinted 1977, pp. 212-214.

<sup>32</sup> John H. Hutton, *The Sema Nagas*, reprinted, Bombay, 1969, p. ix.

<sup>33</sup> John H. Hutton, *The Angami Nagas*, reprinted, Bombay, 1969, p. vii.

<sup>34</sup> W.C. Smith, *The Ao Naga Tribe of Assam*, London, 1925, gives a whole chapter in his conclusion on the effects of Christianity on the tribe.

<sup>35</sup> I Wati Imchen, "Relations between the Baptist Mission and Government in the Naga Hills 1872-1947,"

*Proceedings of the North East India History Association*, 24<sup>th</sup> session, Guwahati, October 2003, pp. 308-321.

<sup>36</sup> J. P. Mills, *The Ao Nagas*, op. cit., pp. 210-211; J. P. Mills, *The Lhota Nagas*, op. cit., p. 111; J. H. Hutton, *The Angami Nagas*, op. cit., pp. 154-155.

<sup>37</sup> Accounts of Dr. Fraser's involvement in the bawi controversy are mentioned in Major A. G. McCall, *Lushai Chryslis*, op. cit., pp. 121-131 and J. Merion Lloyd, *History of the Church in Mizoram: Harvest in the Hills*, Synod Publication House, Aizawl, 1991, 152-157. Sajal Nag's recent article, 'Rescuing Imagined Slaves: Colonial State, Missionary and Slave Debate in North East India (1908-1920)', *Indian Historical Review*, Vol. 39, Number 1, June 2012, pp. 57-71, has added to our understanding of the Government's attitude to the churches and social issues.

<sup>38</sup> J.H. Hutton, 'Problems of Reconstruction in the Assam Hills', Presidential Address 1945, *The Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, p. 4.

<sup>39</sup> Andrew G. Clow, *The Future of the Assam Tribal People*, Shillong, 1945, pp. 23-24; David R. Syiemlieh (ed.), *On the Edge of Empire: Four British Plans for North East India 1941-1947*, Sage India, New Delhi, 2014, pp. 178-179.

<sup>40</sup> D.R. Syiemlieh, *British Administration in Meghalaya: Policy and Pattern*, N Delhi, pp. 103-104 citing John Hughes Morris, op. cit. 80-81.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 133 citing, National Archives of India, Foreign Political Proceedings, October 1873, No. 123.

<sup>43</sup> Refer F.S. Down's article with illustrative documents, "Missionaries and the Language Controversy in Assam", for the Gauhati University Journal [1981]. This has been included in Frederick S. Downs, *Essays on Christianity in North-East India*, edited by Milton S. Sangma and D.R. Syiemlieh, Shillong, 1994, pp. 81-141. Also read Jayeeta Sharma, 'Missionaries and Print Culture in Nineteenth Century Assam: The Orunodoai Periodical of the American Baptist Mission', in Robert Eric Frykenberg (ed.), *Christians and Missionaries in India: Cross Cultural Communication since 1500*, Routledge Curzon, London, 2003, pp. 256-273.

<sup>44</sup> M. S. Sangma, *The History and Culture of the Garos*, op. cit., pp. 225-258; F. S. Downs, *Essays on Christianity in North-East India*, op. cit., p. 195; David R. Syiemlieh, *British Administration in Meghalaya*, op. cit., pp. 102-106, 133-134.

<sup>45</sup> O. Paviotti, *The Works of his Hands, The Story of the Archdiocese of Shillong*, op. cit., J. Puthenpurakal (ed.), *Impact of Christianity on North East India*, Sacred Heart Theological College, Shillong, 1996, pp. 406-409.

<sup>46</sup> *Report on the Progress of Education in East Bengal and Assam 1901-1907*, Vol. I, Shillong 1907, p. 108.

<sup>47</sup> B. C. Allen, *Gazetteer of Bengal and North East India*, reprinted Mittal Publishers, New Delhi, 2001, p. 466.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 479.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 510.

<sup>50</sup> John H. Morris, *The Story of Our Foreign Mission*, Liverpool, p. 39. This is in a shorter history of Morris' earlier book. He takes the history upto 1930.

<sup>52</sup> *Report on the Progress of Education in East Bengal and Assam 1901-1907*, pp. 108-109.

<sup>53</sup> *General Report on Public Instruction Eastern Bengal and Assam 1909-1910*, p. 31.

<sup>54</sup> *Progress of Education in Assam 1927-1932, Quinquennial Report*, 1933, p. 54.

<sup>55</sup> S. Chaube, *Hill Politics in North-East India*, Orient Longman, Delhi, 1973, p. 57.

<sup>56</sup> They were Revd. J.J.M. Nichols-Roy, the founder of the Church of God and Revd. L. Gatphoh of the Church of England.

<sup>57</sup> American Baptist Historical Society, Valley Forge, "Wither Medical Missions".

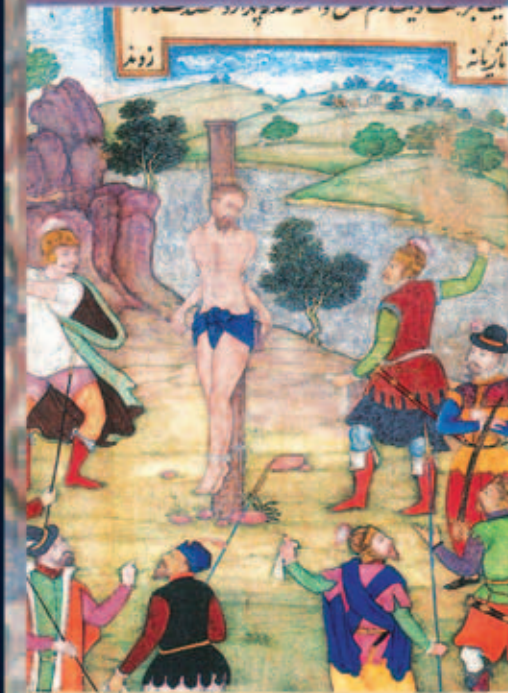
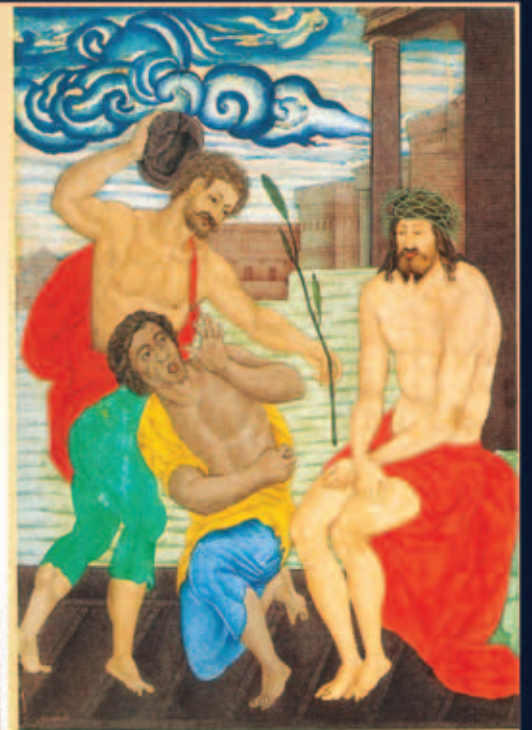
<sup>58</sup> D. Ben Rees (ed.), *Vehicles of Grace and Hope: Welsh Missionaries in India 1800-1970*, William Carey Library, 2002, pp. 129-136.

<sup>59</sup> Narola Rivenburg, *The Star of the Naga Hills: Letters from Sidney and Hattie Rivenburg: Pioneer Missionaries in Assam 1883-1923*, Philadelphia, 1941, p. 90.

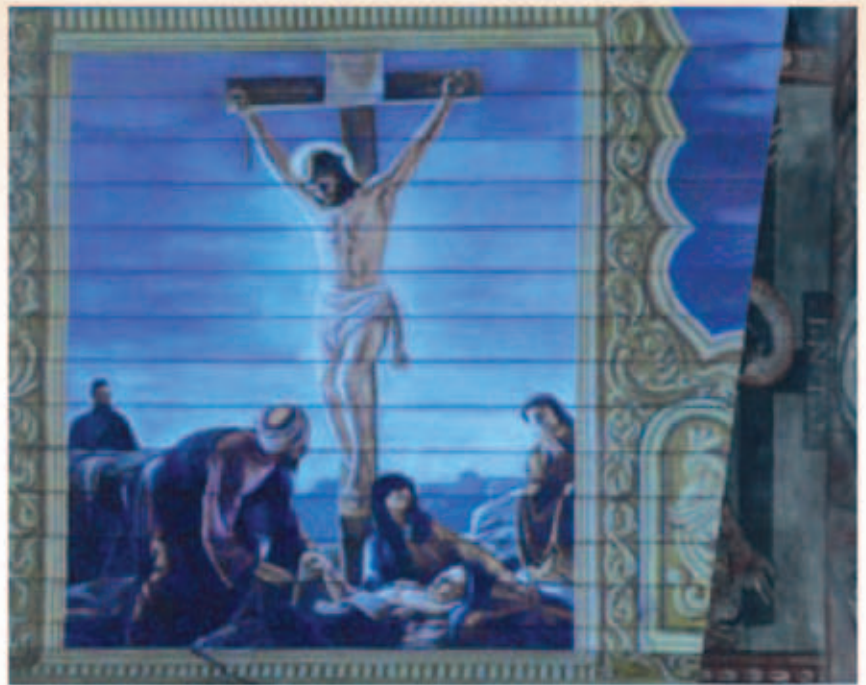
<sup>60</sup> For an update on Christianity in the region read F. S. Downs, 'Christian Conversion Movements in North East India,' Rowena Robinson and Sathianathan Clarke, *Religious Conversion in India: Modes, Motivations, and Meanings*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2003, pp. 381-400.

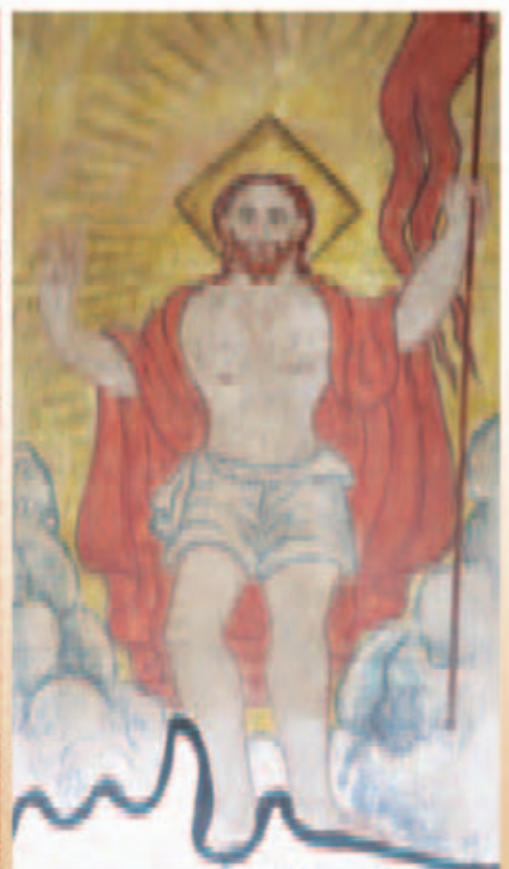
# The Mega Week in Medieval Indian Art





Here's a collection of art works depicting events of the Holy Week from Indian Art of the 14<sup>th</sup> to the ca.17<sup>th</sup> Centuries. They include murals, painted wood reliefs, painted and plain ivory carvings, metal work, wooden board paintings, miniatures... from Kerala, Goa, the Mughal Court, and Tamil Nadu. - Ed.







## GOA TRIENNIAL 2005

**As Remembered today and  
Reported (August 2015)  
by a participant :**

The 13th Triennial National General Conference of CHAI was held at the Pius X Pastoral Centre, Old Goa with the theme "Indian Society & Culture; An Encounter with Christianity." The conference was organized by CHAI Western India Branch (Mumbai) and inaugurated by the Archbishop of Goa Dr. Fillip Neri followed by a fascinating cultural programme. The participants from Mumbai were Dr. M.D. David, Dr. Kranti Farias, Ms Agnes De Sa, Dr. Jennette Pinto, Dr. Joan Dias and Gerald K. Misquitta. CHAI delegates from all over India had participated and a number of highly research oriented papers were presented. The papers on " The Baobab Tree", "The Pilgrimage Feasts," and "The Plague of 1896 -1902" together with a photographic exhibition all by Gerald K. Misquitta added to the local colour . After the Conference the delegates were entertained at a dinner hosted by the Portuguese Consulate in Panjim. The delegates visited the Bom Jesu Church, The Se Cathedral and the Goa Museum, Pilar Seminary and the Pilar Museum set up by Fr. Cosme. The Mini-Cruise on the Mandovi River replete with songs and dances by locals (in which many delegates participated) was an unforgettable event where the delegates were able to experience original Goan Culture. [Pl. see appended some of the photographs taken on the occasion.: 1. Pius X Pastoral Centre, 2. Delegates, 3. Portuguese Consulate, 4. Mandovi River Cruise, 5. Western Branch members with Archbishop Dr. Fillip Neri, 5. Inaugural Address by Dr. Fillip Neri]

***Gerald K. Misquitta***

**The Venue : Pius X Pastoral Centre, Old Goa**





◀ Inaugural Address by  
Dr. Phillip Neri

Organising Committee Members from the  
CHAI Western India Branch with  
Archbishop Dr. Phillip Neri





## 13th Triennial Conference of CHAI

Old Goa Oct. 2005

### Theme:

**“Indian Society and Culture: An Encounter with Christianity”**

Inaugurated by H.G. The Patriarch of the East and Archbishop of Goa and Daman

**Filip Neri Ferrao**

### At the conference the following were elected officials of CHAI:

#### **President**

Dr. Mrs. Kranthi Farias Bombay

#### **Vice-Presidents**

Dr. Jos Kalappura Patna Bihar

Prof. George Menachery Ollur Thrissur Kerala

#### **Secretary General**

Mr. N. Surya Rao Allahabad

#### **Treasurer**

Fr. Sebastian Edathikavil c.m.i. B'lore

#### **Executive Committee Members**

Rev. D.J. Jeremiah Hyderabad AP

Rev. S. K. Nanda Ganjam Odissa

#### **ICHR**

**Dr. Leonard Fernando s.j.**

to continue in charge of the association's journal

*Indian Church History Review*

*History of Christianity in India*

**Rev. Dr. A. M. Mundadan c.m.i.**

to continue in charge of the History of Christianity in India project

The conference proceedings were ably guided by Dr. Arthur Jeyakumar (Madurai - Immediate Past President 1999-2005)

The conference was hosted by the Western Branch of CHAI and excellently organised by its president Dr. M.D. David, ably supported by its secretary Mrs. Agnes de Sa and companions.

### PAPERS PRESENTED

The following papers were presented at the 2005 conference:

**Dr. Roger Hedlund**

(read by Jessica Richard): *Society and Culture and the Encounter with Christianity in Serampore*

**Dr. O. L. Snaitang:**

*Nineteenth Century Encounter with Indian Society*

**Dr. Ms. Joan Dias:**

*Communicative Encounters of Some Women Leaders in the Transformation of Society during the 19th & 20th Centuries*

**Dr. Mrs. N.M. Khandpear:**

*Impact of Christianity on Socio-Economic life of Konkani*

**Prof. Ms. Jennifer Rodrigues:**

*Socio-Cultural Background of Goan Catholic Christians in Mumbai*

**Dr. Charles Dias:**

*Contribution of the Portuguese in the Development of the Church in Kerala*

**Dr. Arthur Jeyakumar:**

*Group Conversion Movements to Christianity in the Indian Sub-Continent*

**Dr. Mrs. Jeanette Pinto:**

*Women Missionaries and the Warlis*

**Prof. George Menachery:**

*Aspects of the Idea of "Clean and Unclean" Among the Brahmins, the Jews, and the St. Thomas Christians of Kerala*

**Mr. Gerald Misquitta:**

*East Indian Christians and their Socio-Cultural Background*

**Fr. Cosme Jose Costa:**

*Unique Goan Culture - An Encounter with Christianity*

The papers by Dr. Kranthi Farias and Dr. Bernard Sami gave much food for thought. Papers by Bishop Dr. S. Jebanesan, Dr. Thomas Edmund, and Dr. N. Benjamin were not presented on account of their absence.

### **Excursions, Walking Tours, and Entertainments**

The Western Branch had done it great! The cruise on board the *Santa Monica* was unforgettable what with the special welcome offered to CHAI delegates, the scintillating music, and the charming dances. The Goan folk music Manddeea Magi led by Mrs. M. H. Martires was indeed exhilarating. The compering by Ms. Jeanette was peerless.

The Dinner hosted at the Fundacao Oriente by its director after the tour of Panjim will always remain in the memory of the participants. The presence of dignitaries there including the Secretary of the Patriarch will be remembered by many. The visits to the many places of interest in Goa including churches, seminaries, and beaches under the leadership of Fr. Aubrey of Heras, Fr. Cosme of Pilar and Msgr. Correa of Bassein, were enlightening as well as edifying.

**Reported by NEWSDIGEST,  
www.indianchristianity.com (2005)  
and accessed 10th August 2015**



Photos from The Goa Triennial 2005



Delegates at The 13th CHAI Triennial, Goa, 2005



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Photograph

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General Secretary

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# The Indian Church History Review

## Contents

Vol. XLIX, Nos. 1 & 2, June-Dec 2015

<b>Editorial</b>	<b>Dr. Jose Kalapura, SJ</b>	<b>03</b>
<b>Dr. Fr. Francis Minj, SJ</b>	<b>Indigenization of Christianity among the Adivasis of Chotanagpur: A Historical Appraisal</b>	<b>07</b>
<b>Albert M. Chawang</b>	<b>Christian Mission and Social Transformation in Nagaland</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Denis Lepcha</b>	<b>Development of the Lepchas of Darjeeling Hills: Role of the Missionaries</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>Dr. Jhakmak Neeraj Ekka</b>	<b>Two Perspectives of the History of the Establishment of the Gossner Church in Chotanagpur: A Historical Investigation</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>Dr. Jose Kalapura, SJ</b>	<b>Indo-Christian Art: Archaeological and Architectural Evidence</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>Onenkala</b>	<b>The Jesuit Perception of Later Mughals, Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb, (1627-1707 AD)</b>	<b>85</b>
<b>Prof N. Benjamin</b>	<b>Criminal Tribes, Colonial Government and Missionaries in Bombay Province</b>	<b>97</b>
<b>Book Review Articles:</b>		
<b>Jose Kalapura</b>	<b>Anand Amaladass &amp; Ines G. Županov (eds), Intercultural Encounter and the Jesuit Mission in South Asia (16<sup>th</sup>- 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries)</b>	<b>109</b>
<b>Prof. H. K. Singh</b>	<b>Jose Kalapura (ed), Christian Missions in Bihar and Jharkhand till 1947: A Study by P. C. Horo</b>	<b>121</b>

- Rev. Dr. Jose Kalappura  
*Editor*





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*Happy Easter 2016*

He is Indeed Risen

*Kerala Mural, ca. 17<sup>th</sup> Century*