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**SELF-SUPPORT IN THE INDIAN CHURCH**

**A Thesis**

**Presented to**

**the Faculty of**

**Asbury Theological Seminary**

**In Partial Fulfillment**

**of the Requirements for the Degree**

**Bachelor of Divinity**

**by**

**Frederick Lawrence Gokavi**

**June 1963**

SELF-SUPPORT IN THE INDIAN CHURCH

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the Faculty of

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

"Why is Christianity the only religion in India that has to be so largely supported from abroad?" "Isn't there something wrong with a religion whose adherents do not care enough about it to support it?" "If Christianity is as wonderful as its people claim, cannot it provide for the support of its own ministers?" "Is salvation so expensive as to be beyond the means of God's children?" These and such like questions are constantly being raised by the people of India today--especially the non-Christians. These questions are legitimate and need to be considered more seriously than ever before.

It looks as if we are the only religious community in India which lives on foreign funds and which looks to the West for subsistence. No other religious community does this; not even the Sikhs--a religious minority like ours. After nearly one hundred and fifty years of modern foreign missionary work and effort, only a small minority in the churches in India have reached a position of financial independence of the Western churches that founded them.

#### I. THE PROBLEM

The question of self-support is more and more occupying the

attention of national leaders in the Indian Church. Dr. Eddy Asirvatham in his article, The Missionary in Present Day India, says:

If the local church is to become strong and vigorous, it needs to be free from the trammels of foreign money as well as of foreign leadership. In order to establish good relations with the majority community as well as to build up a strong indigenous church, it is necessary that foreign money should progressively decrease.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. C. P. Matthew, a Member of Parliament and a member of the India delegation to the General Assembly of the United Nations, says in his paper, Religious Freedom from a Christian Point of View, "It is important for the strength and vitality of the church in India that it should increasingly become self-supporting as well as independent in the management of its own affairs."<sup>2</sup> The Rev. Ralph Korteling in his article, The Role of the Foreign Missionary in India, states, "The Indian Church must be freed from the embarrassment of foreign subsidy. Let us show to the world that our religion is a spiritual thing and not dependent upon the American dollar."<sup>3</sup> In a group discussion on Partnership and Obedience, the group came out with these suggestions: "The Indian Church should support its own pastors and evangelists from its own funds. A sense of stewardship should be instilled in all church members."<sup>4</sup> Bishop R. B. Manikam in his article,

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<sup>1</sup>Blaise Leval (ed.), Revolutions in Missions, (Vellore, India: The Popular Press, 1957), pp. 24-25.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 36. <sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 124. <sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 163.

Some Living Issues Before The Church in India, states rather emphatically:

The time is here when in our churches it is imperative that there should be a greater measure of self-support. We have discussed this matter threadbare so long, but till now we have more or less talked; now we must act . . . At least for the maintenance of the life and work of our churches --for the preaching of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments and for the support of our Ministry, we must not receive any subsidy from abroad.<sup>5</sup>

Bishop David Chellappa states in his article, Towards an Indian Church, "The most vulnerable side of the Church in South India is its fantastic even dangerous dependence on overseas support. The alarming extent of our dependence . . . should cause us sleepless nights."<sup>6</sup>

A host of such statements can be given to show that the predominant thought and line of action is the matter of self-support. It is the main item of talk among both Christians and non-Christians.

## II. IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

There was a time when the West and all that it stood for was appreciated, admired and strangely imitated. That attitude and time is a thing of the past, and the average Indian of today is more than proud of his cultural heritage and has developed an aversion for most

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 213.

<sup>6</sup>D. Chellappa, "Towards an Indian Church," National Christian Council Review, 78:42, February, 1958.

of the things that are Western in nature.

The Asian of the post-war days not only thinks he is the equal of the European, but he believes he represents a superior culture; that fact alone puts all our missionary thinking out of date. He no longer is impressed by the West as he once was, and he despises those of his own fellow-countrymen who have become westernized in their way of life.<sup>7</sup>

The westernized type of Christianity has been impressed upon the eastern culture of the Indian Church. It must shed off its western garb and come to the Indian clothed in an eastern culture in order that he might accept it.

With the coming of India's independence in August 1947, a new sense of pride in the nation and its rich heritage has developed among the people of India along with a sense of aversion to anything that is western or foreign. The foreign evangelist is welcomed in India with a far less degree of acceptance. The rising surge of Nationalism and Communism point toward a future that is not too bright when seen objectively, when the doors of India may be slammed in the face of foreign missionaries. There is no mission field in the world today so desperately in need of a strong indigenous church. The continuance of Christianity depends upon this fact of establishing a strong indigenous church in this vast and mighty land of India. If by any chance the Indian Government should make it obligatory for the foreign missionaries

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<sup>7</sup>G. B. Jackson, "The Evangelistic Task in Ceylon," World Dominion and the World Today, 32:29, January/February, 1954.

to leave the shores of India, then the task of spreading the Gospel of Christ will be left entirely in the hands of the national Christians. If the churches continue to be foreign-supported and mission-centered rather than indigenous, they will probably not only fail to evangelize their own countrymen, but fail in the struggle even to sustain themselves.

The Rev. R. M. Bennett, a missionary in India for nearly thirty years, says in his essay, Some Thoughts On The Church In India Today:

A large portion of the Church is being reconciled to the fact that the non-Indian missionary is becoming an increasingly rare phenomenon, but few are willing to face the fact that financial assistance from the West must also become increasingly small. We give lip service to the idea, but we are unwilling to face the fact that for the very salvation of the Church in India, dependence upon foreign funds must cease . . . Our Church in India can never be spiritually strong, rich or happy as long as it leans today on foreign finances.<sup>8</sup>

However, Prime Minister Nehru said in Parliament on May 13, 1953, "There are no special restrictions upon those coming to India for religious purposes, but upon those whose activities have been considered harmful to India, restrictions have been imposed." A letter from the Government of India Information Services adds: "India like any other country, welcomes foreign missionaries who concentrate on the social welfare of the people, but, like any other country,

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<sup>8</sup>R. M. Bennett, "Some Thoughts on the Church in India Today," National Christian Council Review, 78:271, September, 1958.

we are forced to take some action when we find missionaries engaged in anti-Government activities."<sup>9</sup>

Yet strangely enough we have to face the fact that some missionaries are being refused permission to enter the country to carry on the work of evangelism. Many American candidates are being refused their visas. Older missionaries whose missions have been working in India for some time are generally allowed to return. New missionaries going out as educators, doctors or social workers stand a very good chance of getting into the country. New missionaries going out into the country strictly for evangelistic work, find it extremely difficult to enter the country. Some have gotten in, but quite a few have been turned down. It appears that the Government of India is leaning towards the idea of finding excuses to refuse visas for new missionaries. The Evangelical and Alliance Mission has had visas for India and the Tibetan Frontier work rejected in eighteen cases, four of them returning missionaries.<sup>10</sup>

It is apparent that there is a difference between the propagation of Christianity by Indians, and the freedom of propagation of the Gospel by the foreigner with his so-called "foreign gospel."

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<sup>9</sup>Asoka Dutt, "Research Section," India Information Services, February, 1954.

<sup>10</sup>Kay Smith, "Global Missionary Review," Missionary Digest, 18:10, November, 1953.

The new India is not in form a Hindu State, though there are some who wish to see it so; but it is proud and sensitive to what foreigners within its gates say and do. Even Indians of good-will seem to think that foreigners proclaiming the Christian gospel cannot understand or sympathise with Indian culture.<sup>11</sup>

"Mr. Nehru feels that the policy of staffing missionary work entirely with Indians is especially important."<sup>12</sup> Thus we see that the Government of India feels that the task of propagating the good news of Christ should be placed entirely upon the national Christians. The country is very eager to have missionaries who can give technical assistance, and aid in the economic and social betterment of India. In other words, foreign missionaries are not wanted in the country unless they can contribute something to India which the present day Indians are not able to provide. All these thoughts arise because of the rising spirit of nationalism. The uncertainty of the Government's attitude from month to month is due largely to the pressure put upon it by various groups in Parliament, mainly the communist and other radical parties. Prime Minister Nehru has shown himself on many occasions to be more of a friend than an enemy to Christian mission boards in India. However, the militant orthodox Hindu party called the Mahasabha, is bitterly opposed to all missionaries. This party, composed

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<sup>11</sup>"A Survey of the Year 1953," International Review of Missions, 43:20, January, 1954.

<sup>12</sup>Smith, op. cit., p. 10.

primarily of the Brahmin caste of India, has as its prime purpose the maintenance of Hinduism in all of its forms which are ancient. The members of the Mahasabha party are the religious leaders, the social leaders and often the financial powers of the community, and thus have a great hold on the people. Most of the debating in Parliament is carried on by this party which is determined that the missionary must cease his activities in India. Supporting the orthodox Hindus is the Communist party which always votes with the Mahasabha party on any matters pertaining to Christian missionaries. It is the continual debating of these two parties in Parliament that has forced the Nehru Government to take the attitude that it has taken against the missionaries.<sup>13</sup> The Indian Communists under the guise of nationalism are urging the people to rid themselves of the foreign influence and patronage. All foreigners associated with the Indian churches must be removed in order to withstand the attack of the Communists against the Indian Church. "We must build a national Church which, even if forced underground will be virile and healthy and never become the tool of Communism."<sup>14</sup> The Church run by foreigners, or nationals' salaries subsidized by foreign money are immediate ammunition for

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<sup>13</sup>Letter from Christian and Missionary Alliance Mission, Louis King, January 29, 1954.

<sup>14</sup>Vincent Brushwyler, "Will Communism Defeat Missions," The Evangelical Beacon and Evangelist, 39:4, December, 1953.



the Communist propagandist.

Communism in India is strong, but its strength should not be over-estimated; its power rests on the economic and also the spiritual malaise of large masses of people. In the face of this situation the Christian churches are turning to study and action . . . But the real answer lies in the more effective communication of the Gospel. This may require more adequate means, but its centre must be a strong, self-supporting, united Church witnessing to the Gospel.<sup>15</sup>

### III. DEFINITION OF SELF-SUPPORT

What do we mean then by the term "self-support?" The Rt.

Rev. Manikam, Bishop of Tranquebar says:

Self-support is a word that has been bandied about in Christian literature and thought a great deal. If by self-support is meant the payment of a starvation wage to a pastor, and the keeping of the church in good repairs, it is not to be desired. Even if it means the well-being of a congregation and the adequate support of the minister, it falls short of what is expected of the Church. At best it is only 'selfish' support as it takes care only of its own self and makes no provision for the stronger helping the weaker, or for Evangelism. Only when it includes the latter two, is it desirable self-support.<sup>16</sup>

There are two extreme levels of the definition of the term self-support. On the lowest level it means paying the pastor's salary and the cost of operating the local church. On the highest level it includes not only the local church expenses, but also all the corporate and connectional activities of the church, such as its institutions

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<sup>15</sup>"A Survey of the Year 1953," op. cit., p. 25.

<sup>16</sup>Levai, op. cit., p. 212.

(schools, hospitals, etc.), theological training, buildings, administration, home and foreign missions.

Mission representatives usually give various answers when asked what they mean by self-support, but none of them would say that the scope of the term included the maintenance of the larger institutional work of the church, such as its higher educational and medical activities.

For the present state in India, it seems that the common opinion is that the term self-support must include the full support of the ministry (local), the administrative members of the church (such as bishops) and the evangelistic outreach of the church. In other words it includes all the purely ministerial functions of the church, but should not include the larger institutions such as schools, theological seminaries, hospitals, orphanages and the like.

J. Merle Davis writes, "Of the 55,000 organized churches (Protestant) of the Mission lands, it is probable that not more than 13 or 15 per cent are self-supporting by the simplest definition of the term."<sup>17</sup> According to this lowest classification, the percentage of the rural churches which are self-supporting in India according to the 1961 report was only 17.39%.<sup>18</sup> In direct contrast to this, 95% of the

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<sup>17</sup>J. Merle Davis, New Buildings on Old Foundations (Lebanon, Pennsylvania: Sowers Printing Company, 1945), p. 75.

<sup>18</sup>Editorials: "Conference on Stewardship," National Christian Council Review, 81:88, March, 1961.

churches in Angola, 95% of the Karen churches in Burma, 100% of the churches in the Batak Church of Sumatra and the Pacific Islands of Samoa, Fiji and Tonga, were self-supporting. The figures in India might have increased a little since that time. But still it is a well established fact that India is way back in her efforts to be self-supporting.

## CHAPTER II

### REASONS FOR SELF-SUPPORT

Giving in the plan of self-support is certainly preached in the Indian churches. Indeed it is sometimes preached to a wearisome extent. In most cases, however, the immediate motive supplied is inadequate, unworthy and ineffective. In their zeal and love for self-support, leaders have put forward motives that are far from healthy and good. We not only need a love for executing a certain plan or purpose, but we desperately need a sound mind. This is what Paul says to Timothy: "God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and a sound mind." Nevertheless it seems so strange that many people have a love and power to accomplish something, but the use of a sound mind is absent. We shall look at some of the wrong and right motives for the plan of self-support.

#### I. WRONG MOTIVES FOR SELF-SUPPORT

##### Giving is Encouraged by Appeals to Self-respect

"Is it not a disgrace" says the Mission Treasurer, "that you should still be receiving support from a foreign country? After so many years of existence, and having been brought up in the light of

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<sup>19</sup>II Timothy 1:7.

**Christianity, should you still be dependent on outside help? Have you no shame and self-respect that you should continue to receive help in the form of money from foreigners, and still want to talk and claim the rights of an indigenous church?"**

**Such an appeal to "self" very often produces a rebellious spirit and reaction. Feelings are hurt and there is a cleavage in the friendship. The will to obliterate the accusation and disgrace makes men produce money in a larger manner and measure than they ever did before. In other words, self-support is attained with a wrong spirit of vengeance and challenge. Expenses are reduced, contributions to missionary work are stopped, evangelists are dismissed, fancy sales are held, fairs are organized, lotteries are advertised and every smallest amount of money is accumulated in the church's treasury. Thus they imagine that "self-support" is achieved. And to what purpose is this all being done? To remove the disgrace of being known as recipients of foreign money and help, and to remove the ugly stain of being known as parasites on the foreign churches. When this stage of freedom is reached, relationships do not improve. It is indeed a grand thing to be self-supporting, but this type and motive for self-support are proudly displayed and selfishly enjoyed with a spirit of vengeance. Self-support at any cost, with the motive that the end justifies the means, is far from desirable since it produces a spirit of selfishness and bitter feelings. This is never the spirit of the true**

church that has to be a place where love is born and generated, conducted, convected and radiated to the wider arena of the land of India and the world. "You cannot sow self and reap the Spirit."<sup>20</sup>

### Grants From Missionary Societies Are Reduced

The ordinary lay person thinks within himself and wonders why he should pay because someone else is failing to accomplish his bounden duty and service. He has been so steeped in the privileges of someone else paying for his religion, that he argues for the reduction of the missionaries' high salaries. Instead of making him realize his own responsibility to rise to the occasion and bear the burden of supporting the church, it gives him an opportunity to pick faults with other people and make suggestions that do not involve any efforts of his.

The real weakness of this argument is apparent when one realizes that it is his bounden buty and responsibility to give as a Christian whether the foreign church provides money for the missionary church or not. The reduction of these grants may well have caused an acute crisis in the church's finances; but the duty of Christian giving has always been there. If that duty were not taught because someone else was supplying all the church's financial needs, there was a

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<sup>20</sup>v. S. Azariah, Christian Giving (London: Lutterworth Press, 1939), p. 45.

serious gap in that church's life and teachings.

Pastor's Salaries Are Being Cut Down, Workers Are Sent Away

The lay person slyly argues that the pastors are paid a little too much and therefore a few rupees less would not hurt him much. If workers are sent away, there is probably another church that is ready to step in with a free offer of a resident worker. New sects are keeping their eyes open for such an opportune moment to establish their work and make full use of the labour that has already been put in.

The argument is false in either case. Even if the church were to receive a huge legacy from some person or institution, it would never for a second release the Christian from his duty to give for the cause of God's church and the extension of His Kingdom. Every person who enjoys the privileges of a Christian has also the responsibilities that go with them. For that matter anyone that has some privileges or opportunities has always some responsibilities automatically connected with them. For the Christian, one of the responsibilities is the divine obligation to give for the church, her life and extension.

Self-support is Condition for Self-government

The missionaries in time past have said that they have the say in any matter related to the finance, since they are the ones who have been responsible in getting the money into the country. They say that as long as the Indian Church does not "foot the bills," that they have no

say in the matter of how the finances ought to be spent. In other words, the missionaries say that since they pay the piper, they have the right to call the tune.

This reasoning seems to be plausible; but pitiless logic can kill all Christian fellowship. It can exterminate all co-operation between the missionary and national. This ends up in the relationship that comes between "controlling benefactors and irritated recipients of charity."<sup>21</sup> The logic of saying that since only so much is given by the local Christians, only so much share in the government of the church can be given, cannot be extended or projected into the spiritual realm. To strike bargains with the recipients through one's gifts is not to love. "Giving may be vitiated for both giver and receiver by an intrusion of an element of condescension. Grants-in-aid may sometimes lead to undue domination or control by the givers."<sup>22</sup>

### Oblation and Fear

Despite the declaration that God's love and forgiveness are not dependent on man's good works, men have often been led to give to the church in order to help assure their salvation. In days gone by land-

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<sup>21</sup>Henry Kraemer, The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World (New York: Harpers, 1903), p. 426.

<sup>22</sup>The Economic Basis of the Church (Volume 5 of The Madras Series, five volumes; New York: International Missionary Council, 1939), p. 210.



owners endowed the Church with their property with the fervent hope and belief that their gifts would help them gain salvation. People to this day in the Protestant faith indicate that they have given to God in order to help pay their debt to God. People in their efforts to be self-supporting have capitalized on this idea and have exploited to the greatest extent the pocket books of the common people. Some have gone about saying that if their Church was self-supporting the members' tickets to heaven would be fully guaranteed and their debt to God would be fully paid. In fact they might be able to accumulate riches and thereby attain a better mansion in heaven. Attached with this matter of oblation is the resultant motive of fear. People have been urged to give to the Church and towards the program of self-support for fear that they might descend into hell for not upholding the Church and her activities through their support of the Church.

"Such a motivation has no place in a Christian philosophy of stewardship: the motive must come from love, a love that casteth out all fear."<sup>23</sup> The Bible says, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works lest any man should boast."<sup>24</sup> The hymn writers have expressed this same idea when they wrote:

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<sup>23</sup>Luther P. Powell, Money and the Church (New York: Association Press, 1962), p. 185.

<sup>24</sup>Ephesians 2:8-9.

Just as I am without one plea;  
But that Thy blood was shed for me;  
And that Thou bid'st me come to Thee,  
O Lamb of God I come.

"Nothing in my hands I bring: Simply to Thy cross I cling."

All these go to show very clearly that no amount of what we give will avail ourselves of the privilege of gaining or working for our own salvation. Giving and supporting a Church out of fear and oblation is therefore a wrong motive. It does not go towards building up our salvation, but it does and should flow out automatically as a result of appropriating God's forgiveness and love, and out of a heart filled with gratitude and love to God. Giving for the cause of one's salvation is like putting the cart before the horse. Giving should be the outward resultant expression of appreciation and gratitude for what God has so wondrously wrought in the life of a sinner saved by grace.

#### Personal profit.

When a man conducts his financial affairs on a Christian basis, he is likely to prosper. And it is possible that many men are prosperous today, because they have run their business as though Christ were a member of the firm. Many men have testimonies to this fact and the Church can rejoice with them. However, when a man is motivated to take Christ as the member of the firm, or has been asked to give to the campaign of self-support in order to become prosperous, Christ is not being glorified; He is being exploited. Therefore to seek personal

gain as a valid Christian motive for giving is far from correct. The businessman who supports the self-supporting campaign of the Church with a view that his business would "boom," is not maintaining the right attitude of giving. This is more an attitude of challenging God's promises and certifying the testimonies of those who have given generously to the cause of Christ and His Church, rather than out of a heart filled with praise and gratitude. This is more an action of putting money in a share-market and hoping that all will turn out well-- i. e., a handsome profit will be the outcome. This is nothing short of gambling. People urge others to tithe on the basis that they will surely receive from the hands of God more than they have given to Him. Some have done this with a purely mercenary idea, and sometimes the result has not been seen as quickly as they thought. Such people then go away from God and the Church, and even blame and curse God for not doing immediately what others had said He would do. They go around telling people that what others have said is false, and try their best to dissuade them from giving their tithe to the Church.

#### Self-preservation.

Some have threatened the people that if they did not support the Church, then Communism would take over and the Church would be obliterated. The Church is considered as a "fighter of Communism," and thus financial support is sought. So the motive to preserve oneself

is given as the motive to finance the self-supporting drive.

It is true that the strongest drive is the drive for self-preservation and it is only common sense to appeal to this drive. Nevertheless the Christian faith declares it can be a drive in the human heart that is stronger than the drive for self-preservation, and this drive comes only through a new birth. <sup>25</sup>

The Lord did not say, "Go and fight Communism." He said, "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel." One of the best ways to preach the Gospel would be to support the Church with our finance, and also raise enough to proclaim this good news to all the people who have not had the privilege of hearing and accepting the full and free salvation that Christ offers to one and all. This is the result of love for Christ and love for others. This fulfills to a certain extent the greatest commandments to love God with all our heart, and our neighbor as ourselves.

## II. RIGHT MOTIVES FOR SELF-SUPPORT

There are many basic and practical reasons for adopting the plan of self-support in the Church in India. These ought to be made clear and plain to all the Christian people in India. A strong emphasis on these reasons will awaken people to realize their share and responsibility in the imperative principle of making the Church in India indigenous.

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<sup>25</sup> Powell, op. cit., p. 194.

Basic Reasons for Self-support Growing Out of the Scripture and Nature of the Christian Life

Because it is the Biblical pattern of the Church. Roland

Allen points out that the Apostle Paul, the first and greatest missionary of the Christian Church, followed three principles in the financial policy of his missionary work.

A. Paul as a missionary, never asked financial help from the people he preached to. He stressed the fact that he worked hard to keep himself from being a burden to his hearers. (I Thessalonians 2:5, 7-9; II Thessalonians 3:7, 8; II Corinthians 11:12; Acts 20:33, 34.) The only exception to this rule was when Paul took up an offering from the Christian converts for the poor saints back at Jerusalem; and he took extra pains to point out that this was an exception. This Pauline policy has been followed by the mission boards throughout the world. The policy is that the missionary is the gift of the foreign church and is not to be a burden on the younger churches.

B. Paul never gave any financial aid to his converts. Every province, every church was financially independent. The Galatians were told to support their own teachers (Galatians 6:6). Every church was instructed to maintain its own poor people and widows. There is not a single instance from the Acts of the Apostles through the Epistles of ANY church depending upon foreign support. The only exception was

this "famine relief" collection which Paul gathered and took from the missionary churches to the mother church. This is parallel to an offering being received in India and sent to the United States of America to help those who suffered from the recent hurricane damage.

C. Paul strictly observed the rule that every church should handle its own funds. He never handled the funds himself, nor is there any record of the minister handling the finance of the church. It was in the hands of the laity, the church people themselves. The whole argument of II Corinthians 11:8-14 and 12:14-18 would be broken down if Paul had ever handled the church's money.

At a glance it is interesting to note that the first Methodist missionary in South India, William Taylor, had a heated dispute with an American Bishop over the first gift that was to be sent to India. It was a gift of \$10,000.00. The Bishop insisted on sending it out, and this resulted in William Taylor leaving India with a very heavy heart for he feared that an important rule had been transgressed and hopelessly violated. One wonders what the Methodist Church in India would be today if that gift of money had not been sent.

It is not tedious to repeat again and again that there is not a single example in the Bible of a foreign-supported church.

Self-support is urged and required by the Scriptures. Jesus said, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and to God the

things that are God's."<sup>26</sup> Man, the created one, is bound to give of his substance to his Creator. God is not only the Creator, but He is the Giver of every good and perfect gift. The Jews were urged to make their offerings on the ground that they were redeemed from the bondage of their oppressors in the land of Egypt. As a sign of their gratitude they were urged to bring into the temple a part of all their substance and the things they enjoyed in the land that God had given them for an inheritance. Bishop Azariah concludes his chapter on the Scriptural reasons for giving by saying, "These then are the fundamental reasons why we should give--God is the Creator and Preserver of all; God is the Giver of all good gifts; God is our Redeemer. We, therefore, owe our all to Him."<sup>27</sup>

"The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof."<sup>28</sup> In India the land is regarded as traditionally belonging to the state, and those who use the land are tenants. The person who owns the land and enjoys its produce has to pay to the state a tax. Ultimately the land and the earth belong to God and therefore it is not unreasonable that a share of the income of the land is rightly due to God. "Every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills. I know all the birds of the air, and all that moves on the field is mine."<sup>29</sup> The psalmist here

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<sup>26</sup>Matthew 22:21.      <sup>27</sup>Azariah, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

<sup>28</sup>Psalms 24:1.      <sup>29</sup>Psalms 50:10-12.

reminds us that all the cattle and fowls belong to the Lord of heaven and earth. That is why the prophets taught that all the first-born of all cattle and fowls ought to be given to God in recognition of this ownership. The psalmist declares in the spirit of acknowledgement, "All that is in the heaven and earth is thine . . . Both riches and honour come from thee . . . All things come of thee and of thine own have we given thee."<sup>30</sup> In other words what we give back to God is what really first belongs to him.

The Bible says, "In him we live and move and have our being."<sup>31</sup> Our dependence upon God is a truth that ought to be universally acknowledged. Jesus Christ's answer to the scribe who asked him which was the greatest commandment is very well known: "You shall love the Lord thy God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength."<sup>32</sup> One concrete way of showing our love to God with all our mind and all our strength, is by consecrating to him what we earn with our mind and strength, and offering to him our earnings. Giving insufficiently, or not giving at all, robs a man of a scripturally ordained proof of the sincerity of his love to Christ. To give very little or nothing at all, is outright disobedience to such scriptural injunctions as Matthew 23:23 and I Corinthians 16:1,2.

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<sup>30</sup>I Chronicles 29:11, 12, 14.      <sup>31</sup>Acts 17:28

<sup>32</sup>Mark 12:30



Experience has shown that unless a person gives when he is poor, he will not give more generously when he is richer. "The economic improvement of the members seems to have little influence upon the size of their gifts to the Church."<sup>33</sup> Proper giving does not come with a better standard of living or educational advantage. Mr. Broadhurst, a very outstanding Christian layman in the United States says, "If a man does not tithe his first dollar, he will never tithe his first million." Because a man is poor he is not relieved of his obligation to give to the church. Many agree that the poor give proportionately more than the well-to-do members.

Self-support is of the very nature of the Church. When Jesus sent out the Twelve, the thrust of his motivation was "Freely ye have received, freely give." Their ministry of love was a ready response of gratitude for what the Lord had done for them. To one who is redeemed and whose experience is genuine, giving is not optional; it is imperative. Salvation has been received freely from God as a gift and an expression of his love and care for a Christian. Now the Christian out of an inner compulsion and allegiance to God gives himself, his time, his talents and his possessions. Giving goes back to the very heart of God when he gave his only begotten Son. Christ gave himself for the redemption of man. He withheld nothing and gave his life on

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<sup>33</sup>The Economic Basis of the Church, op. cit., p. 287.

the cross of Calvary. Thus we see that the very center of the Christian faith is giving. "If any man would come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."<sup>34</sup> The Church for its very on-going depends upon this concept of denying "self" and giving sacrificially for the cause of Christ and the extension of his kingdom.

Self-support is the response to the grace of God for man. God gave because he "so loved the world." There is no greater motive for Christian giving in the form of self-support than to remember the grace of God through Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul wrote of the highest motive for giving to the Corinthian Church when he said, "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich."<sup>35</sup> Consequently, "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give: not grudgingly nor of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver."<sup>36</sup> It is enough to give as a response, and adequate to undergird our stewardship to this grace so freely and lovingly bestowed upon all of God's people. It is enough for those in whom Christ lives triumphantly, as only a true Christian knows the grace of Christ.

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<sup>34</sup>Luke 9:23    <sup>35</sup>II Corinthians 8:9    <sup>36</sup>II Corinthians 9:7

### III. FURTHER PRACTICAL REASONS FOR SELF-SUPPORT

#### Long Continued Help Weakens and Cripples the Church

The Church is crippled by the continuation of this foreign "crutch." It seems unable to walk without it and is thus weakened terribly and cannot develop itself properly. No parent uses this basis for raising their own children. Help is given for the first few years and then the child is gradually pushed out on his own feet until he develops his own strength and is able to walk alone.

The Church is deprived of spiritual vitality, enthusiasm and the joy of giving. It stifles the spirit of giving and stewardship by assuming the people's responsibility for them, and by doing for them what the people ought to be doing for themselves. To be a Christian means that one has to be a steward--one has to give. This is the responsibility of every Christian regardless of his economic status. No one can give for another man. Foreign subsidy stifles spiritual growth, for no Christian can become a mature Christian without accepting the principles of stewardship in his life. Dr. David Seamands, a marvelous missionary in India, tells of his own experience in the Church of the Methodists:

According to our 1953 figures, there are 18,228 Christian families in the rural areas of our conference. The city and central churches have been excluded. The total giving of these families is Rs. 24,812.00. This comes to an average offering of Rs. 1.37 per year. A recent survey showed that the income of such a family was not less than Rs. 300/- to

Rs. 400/- annually (cash and kind). This makes the average giving of our Christians (rural) around 1/200 or less of their income. This is not even an average of 1.5 naye paise per person per week. This is a staggering commentary on the spiritual weakness of our Church. <sup>37</sup>

Dr. J. T. Seamands, in one of his class lectures, told of a very interesting and illuminating incident of how foreign aid stifles the spirit of giving and stewardship. The Nizam of Hyderabad in the days gone by was in charge of the independent State of Hyderabad. He was rather obstinate and unwise in his dealings with the government of India. In order to tame his spirit of pride and arrogance, the government set up an economic boycott. No money could go into the State of Hyderabad. Even mission funds were cut off. The Christian people rallied responsively to this disastrous event, and provided the necessary salaries of the pastors. They did not want to see their pastors starving. Later on when Hyderabad was captured and the economic boycott was lifted, the mission funds poured into the church. This wave of foreign money for the pastors and the mission workers undercut the spirit of these Christians in their providing for their own shepherds. They felt that the mission would take over and that the responsibility was lifted from off their shoulders. <sup>38</sup>

Such a church cannot be a missionary church, and no church

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<sup>37</sup>Statement by D. A. Seamands, personal interview.

<sup>38</sup>Statement by J. T. Seamands, personal interview.

can really survive in a healthy condition if it is not missionary-minded. The Biblical command to every creature hearing the Gospel is part and parcel of every person within the Christian Church, no matter how rich or how poor they are. The Syrian Church in the southern tip of India, until recent years was stagnant, because it did not witness and become a church with a missionary vision. Where there is no missionary vision the church with its members will rapidly decline, and even perish. Every church that does not have such a vision is committing slow suicide. If they do not evangelize others, they will die out fast. The ultimate goal is not supporting of the "self," but the supporting of others, and the sending out of missionaries. Right now there are millions of rupees tied down in crippled churches, and this money cannot go out to evangelize new areas which have never heard the Gospel or even the name of the Lord Jesus once.

#### To Take Away the Stigma Attached to Christianity

There is a surging tide of nationalism in India and a corresponding hatred of anything foreign or foreign-supported. The educated youth of India are sensitive when her self-respect is challenged. They look with disfavor upon those institutions that are constantly dependent upon foreign aid.

Dependence upon alien money violates elemental principles of self-respect and patriotism, and forfeits the esteem of better class neighbors in an oriental community. The acceptance of the foreign religion in itself condemns the new

group of Christians in the estimate of the patriots, but when the foreign religion is backed with foreign money, insult is added to injury, and the church tends to cut itself off from a majority of the substantial people of the community--the very people who could support it adequately and make it a power in the community.<sup>39</sup>

The neighbor's contempt for the foreign-supported Christian religion is sometimes justifiable. In many cases the foreigner's religion was not so attractive as the money he had to offer, but to get the one he had to accept the other, and become what is commonly known as a "rice Christian." This type of Christian embraces Christianity with a note of insincerity and continues to live in open sin, unknown to the missionary, but very well known to the other neighbors. This naturally brings disgrace to the Christian faith. Even sincere godly Christians who have accepted the Christian faith newly, have a difficult time convincing the neighbors that they became Christians, not because of an uncanny desire to get the benefits of the foreigner's money, but an honest desire to follow Christ. The writer knows of a friend who was enticed with a lot of wealth and the prospects of a good girl as his wife, if he promised to renounce the Christian faith and re-embrace the Hindu religion.

Foreign Money Brings Suspicion From the Non-Christians and the Government

Unfortunately the Christians of the West rose up to meet the

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<sup>39</sup>The Economic Basis of the Church, op. cit., p. 133.

challenge of spreading the Gospel of Christ about the same time the British were ruling in India. The coming of Christianity in its militant aspect coincided very strangely with the domination of the West over India. Naturally the Indian mind thinks that there is some connection between the spreading of the Christian faith and the power of foreign domination. This is disappearing nowadays, but the seed of doubt still continues to linger in the mind of the non-Christian.

The people still continue to hold that every minister, missionary, district superintendent and bishop is a foreign-paid "agent" of the foreign country that supports him. Now with the Indian foreign policy and that of Britain and the United States of America being in such divergent directions, all the workers with foreign-supported funds are looked upon with a note of suspicion by the non-Christian government. The very motive of the work is suspected. The questions asked are, "Why should foreign money be necessary to support the purely 'religious' aspect of missions? Why is foreign money necessary to propagate Christianity if it really is as wonderful as it claims to be? If it is the true religion and offers salvation, should not the Christians in India give enough to support themselves?" The government seems to be saying this. "We do not care how much money you put into schools and hospitals and other social service agencies which benefit everyone of all religions, and uplift the nation as a whole. But we do object to foreign money being used to pay workers and ministers to propagate a

religion with the express purpose of converting people." "The amount of foreign feeling can nearly always be expected in exact proportion to the amount of foreign funds used. The more foreign funds used in the work, the more anti-foreign sentiment you are likely to have."<sup>40</sup> The only way to stop this rather legitimate objection is to achieve self-support at the earliest possible moment.

Because The Subsidized Church Has an Uncertain Life Expectancy

The life of the subsidized Indian Church depends upon the economic power and the missionary zeal of the sending organizations. In other words it depends upon the amount the foreign body sends. It depends on the business conditions in the foreign countries and not upon the spiritual realities here in the native country. The expansion of the work is dependent upon the increase of the funds from abroad. If there is a depression in the foreign country, there is automatically a cut in the number of preachers and pastors in the country. If there is a "business boom" then the work flourishes and abounds to a very great extent. In short the work becomes a purely financial operation and not a spiritual movement. It depends on the financial manipulation of the dollar exchange. If the exchange is high, so are the spirits of the nationals; if it is low, the spirits and work of the nationals are corres-

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<sup>40</sup> Melvin L. Hodges, On the Mission Field (Springfield, Missouri: The Gospel Publishing House, 1953), p. 66.



pondingly low.

Foreign Subsidy Makes For Poor Relationships Between the Missionary and the National

Foreign aid and the administration of it by missionaries, produces a kind of a "beggar mentality" on the part of the national. It is the cause, many times, for the grumbling and dissatisfaction on the part of the nationals. The nationals feel dominated and are afraid to express their opinions for fear that what they say might displease the missionary, and that he may be put down as one of the black sheep in the records of the missionary.

The foreign boards and missionaries often dictate the financial policy of the so-called "Indian Church." This naturally brings about an unnecessary clash between missionary and national, and introduces a constant point of tension between the two. We have to face the fact that there will be no true independence and freedom until the national church is truly economically independent. If it continues to depend upon foreign support, it will be unhealthily dependent and backward.

The basic concern of the non-Christian nations is not so much with the presence of minorities which differ in faith with the prevailing religion, as it is with the challenge to their autonomy represented by groups of nationals which receive financial and cultural backing and the direction of their activities from abroad.<sup>41</sup>

The establishment of a self-supporting church is the only practical

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<sup>41</sup>Davis, op. cit., p. 84.

preparation for a day in which foreign aid may be completely cut off from entering India. If the government should put an end to the inflow of foreign funds, many churches would be left in a very precarious condition with their foundations as it were taken away from under their feet. It might be the same as throwing a person onto quicksand. "The financial policy of many a field today is such that a sudden reversal would tear the church to pieces." <sup>42</sup>

Indian missions have no guarantee that what happened to China could not repeat itself in India. We do not hope that it will ever come to India. But who for a moment thought that this would take place in China in such a terrible way? India in her efforts to be strong should hope for the best and anticipate the worst. The best way to anticipate the worst would be to be self-supporting at this present time.

#### Because Self-support Builds Up A Spirit of Ownership

"A survey made by the United Theological College of Saharanpur, India, shows that only nine per cent of those surveyed considered the church their own." <sup>43</sup> The great majority of the village Christians have little or no consciousness that they belong to a church, and are her vital members. The above study revealed very significantly that

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<sup>42</sup>Henry Rosie Rowland, Native Churches in Foreign Lands (New York: The Methodist Book Concern, 1925), p. 133.

<sup>43</sup>Rajah B. Manikam, The Christian College and the Christian Community (Madras, India: Diocesan Press, 1938), p. 92.

these same Christians made an average contribution to the church, of between 1/240 and 1/480 of their income. <sup>44</sup>

The Mission undertook most of the responsibility of paying the expenses of these people and had made little progress in the achievement of self-support. It is very clearly evident that self-support and the feeling of ownership in a church are very closely related. Melvin Hodges in his book, On the Mission Field, tells of the church he once visited where the congregation had the use of the property for over twenty years. The Mission had furnished everything when the work first began. He visited this church when there was no resident missionary in the district. The congregation instead of coming forward in their desire to repair the church building asked Mr. Hodges to give them the necessary financial help in repairing the building. One can very rightly reason that since these people had the use of this building for over twenty years they should automatically repair it. However, they reasoned that the property belonging to the Mission should be kept in good condition by the Mission since it belonged to them. <sup>45</sup> On the other hand there are many examples where the people have taken the responsibility of keeping the house of God that they have labored with the sweat of their brow to build, very systematically and meticulously. What belongs to a person will automatically involve his action and

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<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 93.    <sup>45</sup>Hodges, op. cit., p. 68.

attitude in preserving carefully what is his. Thus we see that the sense of responsibility and ownership makes a world of difference in the maintenance and work of the Lord.

Self-support is not a policy about which we can sit down and quietly weigh the advantages and disadvantages; it is a thing which demonstrates the reality of the Church's life. It is a thing which shows the depth of faith of its members. It is in accord with the teaching of the Bible. It is an essential part of the life of faith . . . A self-supporting church is the correct expression of the Church's life. An assisted church is an abnormal thing; it is like a sick church. Whatever may be the sacrifice necessary we must do all that we can to forward the true ideal.<sup>46</sup>

Because Foreign Money Brings About A Completely Wrong Relationship Between Pastor and People

"Subsidizing pauperizes."<sup>47</sup> One of the areas is the deteriorating influence it has upon the relationship between the "shepherd" and the "sheep."

At the very center of the scriptural idea of the church is the unique relationship between the pastor and the people to whom he ministers. This is the shepherd-to-sheep relationship. Intrinsic in this relationship are two principles. (a) The shepherd cares for his sheep, even to the extent of laying down his life for the sheep. (b) The sheep will provide for the shepherd.

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<sup>46</sup>The Relation Between the Younger and Older Churches (Vol. 3 of The Jerusalem Meeting of the International Missionary Council, five volumes; Concord: Rumford Press, 1928), p. 14.

<sup>47</sup>Rowland, op. cit., p. 130.

If the shepherd fails to discharge his assignments in the proper way, he proves himself to be a hireling and not a true shepherd. There is indeed a strained and non-interested attitude in the system where the shepherd is not dependent upon the sheep for his support, and the sheep do not provide for the shepherd. It is more than true that all too often, instead of an attitude of love, care and sacrifice on the part of the shepherd for the sheep, there develops the feeling which amounts to statements such as these: "I receive my scale of pay whether I serve you to the best of my capacity or not, or whether you people like me or not. There is a sore lack of trained ministers, and so the Mission will never remove me from this position." Thus there is sufficient room for the spirit of carelessness and indifference and sometimes arrogance on the part of the preachers of the Gospel, to creep in.

The congregation thinks in like manner and says, "What is the earthly use of worrying about the preacher? He gets paid whether we provide for him or not." These thoughts are surely detrimental to the impact this wonderful relationship of the shepherd-to-sheep should have upon the life and growth of the Church of Christ. This is far from a healthy state of affairs. Many a time it has proved heart-rending and disastrous. These attitudes which the sheep have for the shepherd is passed on from father to child and so the church has little room to really expand and make forward strides in the advancement of the

kingdom of the Lord in this land which has vast opportunities and spheres of profitable work and unlimited expansion. A leader of the Methodist Church once said, "Your money is forcing us not to love our people." His English may have been faulty, but his reasoning was not. He further explained that since his support was from abroad, and not from the people he served, that it did not make any difference whether or not he really loved and served the people. Regardless of anything he would get his salary and so it made no difference whether he got along with the people or not. This whole setup destroys the shepherd-to-sheep relationship, and makes the pastor, superintendent, missionary or bishop to be a dictator in his own realm. While there is no doubt that many pastors are true shepherds to their sheep, the system itself is really conducive to making the shepherd a ruler of all he surveys, rather than one who would lay down his life for the sheep. Subsidy offers some very serious temptations when considered from a human point of view.

It affords to pastors a degree of power and security independent of the demands and requirements of the laity, and it relieves the layman of the need and responsibility of paying for the pastoral support. This is one of the principal reasons for the slow process in developing local support in many areas. The greatest obstacle to local support is not economic inability but a lack of conviction regarding its necessity on the part of the ministers themselves. To upset the status quo is never easy, especially when one is a beneficiary to the system. Spiritual apathy and wrong relationships are inevitably bred by the system of foreign subsidy. <sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>J. T. Seamands, "The Indigenous Church" (a Syllabus

Self-support is necessary in the building up of strong native leaders. When a national worker is supported by the local church or churches, he will feel a real responsibility towards them. When the Mission provides his support, he feels more responsible to the Mission than to the people he serves every day. A foreign-paid man is a foreign-controlled man, and hence not acceptable to many nationally-minded congregations. When he gets all his salary from the church he becomes an indigenous worker and "Instead of being a rolling stone is a stone in the building of the church in which he is working."<sup>49</sup> The interdependence is most salutary for both the pastor and the church.

Because Foreign Subsidy Hinders the Effective Preaching of the Gospel

Experience has shown times without number in India that when people know the evangelist is mission-paid, they tend to discount both him and his message. They feel, and even express directly to the preachers, that he is preaching merely because he is being paid by the Mission to do so. Sometimes this accusation is not far from correct. On the other hand there have been those who have been supported by the Mission, and yet have preached the message of Christ because they wanted the people to turn to God for mercy and enter the pearly gates of heaven. This idea, whether right or wrong, continues to predominate

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prepared in Asbury Theological Seminary, 1960), p. 42.

<sup>49</sup>Rowland, op. cit., p. 71.

in the mind of the people and therefore has its effect upon the preacher himself, making him aware of the barrier between him and the people he is seeking so desperately to win.

Lay-evangelism is stifled because the people get the impression that only the paid professional preacher is given the authority to preach and witness to the claims and effects of the glorious Gospel. This does have a very disastrous effect on the life and expansion of the church. The best hope for the good news reaching the length and breadth of India lies in the lay person witnessing wherever he does. He can reach people in a far more effective way than the paid preacher. His testimony carries weight and he also has a technique that he employs which no trained preacher can achieve in the classroom. The effect of lay witnessing can never be minimized in the in-gathering of souls in the land of India where there are so many teeming millions of people who have never heard the name of Christ, leave alone His message of power and redemption from sin and after-effects of sin.

The writer has seen the tremendous impact of a lay-witnessing movement and outreach, in many cities and villages in India. The average person values the words of a person who does his daily work in the factory or office more than the words of a paid preacher. People in India are prone to listen more attentively to the words and message of ordinary lay-people who spend their time and energy in their daily work and their spare time in preaching the Gospel in the streets and



market places. The Indian mind is more than curious to listen to what people have to say about God and His love. This curiosity is raised more when they find out that the person preaching is not paid by any mission from outside the country. There is no telling what can happen if all the lay-people in India would witness for the Lord daily in their routine work. The average lay-person in the village is prone to think that one has to be paid to witness and spread the Gospel of Christ. This idea could be completely rooted out if foreign money were not paid to the local preachers.

Because Foreign Subsidy Weakens the Faith of the Spiritual Life of the People

Giving is inherent in the Christian religion. It plays a very definite part in the Christian's worship of God. If he is not taught and encouraged to do this, his spiritual growth will be stunted, and even retarded. There is probably nothing which contributes more to the deepening of the spiritual life of a Christian than sacrifice and faith in the God he serves and adores. Until the church is forced to depend on someone else besides the mission for support, it will never learn the real secret of dependence upon God for sustenance and growth. A church independent of foreign help must turn to God and it is then that prayer becomes a reality and faith is greatly strengthened. Many a time the people look up to the mission as their "god" to supply their needs. So foreign support takes the place of God in supplying the needs

of the converts. The converts are not driven to their knees in faith and expectancy. They take for granted that the mission will supply the necessities of the Church's growth and expansion. When the necessary funds are not brought in, the converts sometimes have a tendency to look upon the mission as not fulfilling her pledge and duty. Their eyes are riveted upon man and the mission instead of God who has promised to supply all their needs according to His riches in glory. At The World Dominion Conference in 1953, an Indian Christian said that in his experience when the village church was cut off from outside support, that it learned to depend on prayer and faith for its needs, and this has changed the whole atmosphere in some places. <sup>50</sup>

Not only is the faith of the church weakened, but the worker's faith in God tends to become drained and even dry. It is spiritually for the pastor to be obliged to trust God for his support. A worker is not likely to develop that rugged and robust character, so necessary to a spiritual ministry, if the mission constantly defends him from the struggle by supplying his needs. The mission-supported worker learns to bring each new financial problem to the missionary. The mission board through the missionary becomes the source of income. When he marries, when a baby is born, when there is illness, he comes to present his need to the missionary. "This cannot but have a withering effect

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<sup>50</sup>M. B. Mhow, "Report of the World Dominion Conference" (India, February 18-19, 1953), p. 5.

upon the worker's moral and spiritual character."<sup>51</sup> Workers who are lacking in the faith and stamina required by the rigors of life of dependence upon God will soon eliminate themselves from the list of workers. Under the system of mission-support, they might continue drawing their salaries for years, and thus constitute an element of spiritual weakness in the church.

Pastors receiving outside help have in many instances grown lazy and remained aloof from the financial problems of their churches. An instance: A pastor who had been receiving foreign assistance was asked to take charge of two small church groups, thereby receiving aid from both churches and attaining a fair degree of independence from foreign funds. This pastor thought over the matter for a while, rather disliked the extra work involved in caring for two churches instead of one, and finally wrote a letter refusing to care for more than one church. From this one instance, which could be multiplied many times, it can be observed that the continued acceptance of foreign assistance kills even evangelistic incentive.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup>Hodges, op. cit., p. 71. <sup>52</sup>Ibid., pp. 71-72.

## CHAPTER III

### OBSTACLES IN ACHIEVING SELF-SUPPORT

"Self-support is the problem that confronts the younger churches."<sup>53</sup> Can the roots of the church penetrate deeply enough into the Indian environment to find adequate nourishment from soil in which it has been planted? If not how much longer is it going to depend upon the West for its support?

The church is an alien institution in oriental life. The community is already absorbed in financing its customary activities. If a place is to be made for the church, it can only be by disturbing the social and economic equilibrium of the community. The great majority of eastern people live very close to the margin of sustenance... It is no easy matter for the people to support the Christian Church, with its usual demand on the time and the financial resources of its members.<sup>54</sup>

#### I. PHYSICAL AND ECONOMIC FACTORS

##### Poverty

Today the average annual per capita income in India is \$75.00 in comparison with \$2,538.00 in the United States.<sup>55</sup> The average

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<sup>53</sup> Merle Davis, The Economic and Social Environment of the Younger Churches (London: Edinburg House Press, 1939), p. 100.

<sup>54</sup> Melvin L. Hodges, On the Mission Field (Springfield, Missouri: The Gospel Publishing House, 1953), p. 71.

<sup>55</sup> Stanley W. Rycroft and Myrtle M. Clemmer, A Factual Study of Asia (New York: The United Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A.,

peasant does not make enough for himself and his family. It is estimated that thirty-nine per cent of the people are well fed, forty-one per cent are poorly nourished and twenty per cent of the population are always hungry. Even though India has improved vastly since the day she attained her independence, she has still to go a very long way before she can truly say that all her people are well taken care of. Many live on the bare necessities of life. Theirs is a hand-to-mouth existence. It is a struggle between life and death for quite a few in the villages and the slum areas in the cities. Even today it is not an uncommon sight to see a person trying to lick the remains of the food of the person who has thrown his leaf into the garbage can. Bishop Pickett's description of India's poverty is:

Through centuries of suffering India's masses have developed a rare capacity for enduring privation. That poverty is one of the real rulers in India is less a figure of speech than a grim fact. Neither Government nor caste, neither religion nor custom rules the daily life of the people in this sub-continent more surely than poverty does.<sup>56</sup>

The Indian Government is trying her best to do all she can to lift the standard of living in India. India's population is increasing at a terrific rate. This population is more than India can cope with. Her population is increasing at the rate of eight million every year.<sup>57</sup> This is indeed

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1963), p. 62.

<sup>56</sup>J. Waskom Pickett, Christian Mass Movements in India (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1933), p. 186.

<sup>57</sup>Stanley Rycroft and Myrtle Clemmer, op. cit., p. 35.

a very serious problem for the country that is trying its best to improve the living standards of the people. It is a great uphill task.

Added to this fact of poverty in India, the great majority of the Christians come from the lowest economic classes.

Most of the Christians come from the poorer classes, and many from the outcastes, the very poorest of all. This has made self-support difficult; partly because the people are so very poor, partly because having always been so poor and accustomed to being ruled over by others, they had not the same desire of independence as the Bataks and the Karens.<sup>58</sup>

"Nowhere in the world is the Christian Church so uniformly poor as it is in India. The majority of Christians come in origin from the lowest strata of Hindu society."<sup>59</sup>

"The poverty of the people in India is proverbial."<sup>60</sup> "Forty millions lie down hungry every night upon the mud floors, who have had only one meal. . . Only forty-seven per cent of the population have work, while fifty-three per cent are dependent."<sup>61</sup> The lack of manufacturers the dependence of people on agriculture, when the monsoons so frequently fail, the over-crowding of population with poor methods of agriculture naturally lead to poverty. The hoarding of wealth instead of

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<sup>58</sup> Asariah, op. cit., p. 38.

<sup>59</sup> Michael Hollis, Paternalism and the Church (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 38.

<sup>60</sup> Eddy Sherwood, Indian Awakening (New York: Missionary Education Movement, 1911), p. 21.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

placing it at interest, the tying up of money in jewels, the prevalence of debt and the tendency to litigation also rob the country of its resources. If to this we add 'the burden of five and a half million mendicants or holy men and beggars, which the religion of the land places as a burden upon the kind-hearted people, we have conditions which are ripe for poverty.'<sup>62</sup>

The problem of church self-support is complicated by the fact that the Western type of church, which has been transplanted by the missionary societies, is a middle-class institution and is dependent for its support upon a strong middle class. This middle-class institution has been planted in an economic and social order in which a middle class, as known in the West, is extremely small or does not even exist.<sup>63</sup>

The converts, most of them coming from the villages, before becoming Christians, were used to a priest supported by a landed hierarchy, begging or by donation of handful of rice, are not prepared to make freewill offerings for the support of a minister.

To a community of hard working peasants barely extracting their subsistence from the soil, the additional support of the minister's family, a family which is not a producer and whose standards of living are higher than his own, appears as a calamity.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup>Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Merle Davis, New Buildings on Old Foundations (Lebanon, Pennsylvania: Sowers Printing Company, 1945), pp. 90-91.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., p. 91.

### Indebtedness

Another factor contributing to the poor economic condition of the Christian native is indebtedness. The Indian peasant is prone to take the line of least resistance in times of financial crises, and negotiate a loan by mortgaging his land or by pledging a part of the next season's harvest. Bishop Pickett's study has indicated that 69.5% of the Indian families are in debt, with an average indebtedness of Rs. 185.00 per family.<sup>65</sup> Another study shows that 81.9% of the Christian families in the Pasrur village are in debt, with an even higher percentage (92.5%) in the Narowal area.<sup>66</sup> The rate of interest is exorbitant, sometimes amounting to fifty per cent, and therefore the villager is not able to keep up with this high rate of interest. He plunges headlong into debt, hoping against hope that some day the "gods" will be gracious enough to get him out of this debt. Once a man falls into debt, the heavy interest charges make it almost impossible for the luckless debtor to free himself from the clutches of the money lender. The money lender encourages the peasant to seek loans on a very easy basis. Custom requires that the son assume his father's debts at the time of his death. So debts are inherited and thus continues a vicious circle. Thus we see that the Indian peasant's burden of debt is one of his

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<sup>65</sup>Pickett, op. cit., p. 98.

<sup>66</sup>Davis, The Economic and Social Environment..., p. 67.



greatest handicaps and curses. "The peasant is caught between the rent collector and the money lender, and between the two has few crumbs of food or comfort." <sup>67</sup>

### Lavish Expenditures

Another very serious obstacle to the attainment of self-support by the rural church is the lavish expenditures upon the social ceremonies and family celebrations. Loans are frequently arranged for unproductive purposes such as elaborate celebrations at a marriage. In India the marriage of a son or daughter is an occasion "upon which all consideration of economy or of cutting the garment of expenditure according to the cloth of income is thrown to the winds." <sup>68</sup> They want to marry their sons and daughters in a manner that will bring "credit" to them. Even if they cannot afford it they feel that they must spend. They have a false confidence that they will be able to repay the debt. They do not want to be exceptions to the general practices adopted by the majority. There is sometimes a competition to see whose marriage ceremony is grander. The cost of the wedding ceremonies amount to more than the entire family earns in one year. The writer knows of a family of three members, who earned Rs. 100/- per month. The son

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<sup>67</sup> The Relation Between the Younger and Older Churches (Vol. 3 of The Jerusalem Meeting of the International Missionary Council, five volumes; (Concord: Rumford Press, 1928), p. 187.

<sup>68</sup> Davis, The Economic and Social Environment... p. 67.

got married and the family spent Rs. 600/- for the wedding. It will doubtless take them a long time before they can shake off this debt. This lavish expenditure on marriages is not only a source of debt to the villager, but also to the "city cousin" as well, who often outdoes him in this evil. This is typically characteristic of the Indian mind whether he is educated or not. When the debtor comes into the possession of funds he begins an orgy of extravagant and harmful spending.

Adoption of the dowry system has spelled ruin to many many families... At Puthupally it is reported that more than fifty per cent of the parishioners have actually sold their holdings to the non-Christian Eshavas of the locality during the last twenty-five years to meet wedding expenses. A community like this can ill-afford to take on the burden of supporting the Church. Very few people can afford to pay one rupee per year to the church.<sup>69</sup>

It is true that the system of the dowry is banned in India, but this system has taken on a different and new color. They call the same evil idea by different names and so the problem is not altogether solved or exterminated.

### Social Pressures

The Indian Christian finds himself a unit in the intricate maze of obligations and loyalties which relate to the village, clan or caste brotherhood, religious beliefs and practices, fears and superstitions, etc. In other words he is the product of his environment. The

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<sup>69</sup>Ibid., p. 61.

"panchayat" or governing boards of the caste groups in a village exercise a rather rigid control of the social and economic life of the members. The Christian convert is faced with decision of breaking with the caste brotherhood, which means not only social ostracism, but loss of whatever financial security he may have; or remaining in the brotherhood and paying his annual dues. His existence as an economic unit is threatened. Hence he remains in the brotherhood and lives under the control of the "panchayat." E. C. Bhattya states:

... We firmly believe that the groups in the villages have both the power and the willingness to give. Indians in general are very charitably minded and they give generously to all religious causes... On an average each family gives to the panchayat about Rs. 5/- annually in contributions, special levies and fines... One of the main reasons why they cannot fulfill their financial obligations in the Church is that there is a leakage of their incomes to causes which are not Christian. It is possible to organize self-supporting churches provided the leakage of income to the caste panchayat is stopped.<sup>70</sup>

### Illiteracy

The widespread illiteracy presents many problems to the establishing of self-support in India. Looking at it from a secular standpoint, we see that a free, compulsory and universal education is the greatest single need of the vast land of India. About 25% of the people have come to be literate among the huge population of India. Most of

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<sup>70</sup>E. C. Bhattya, The Economic Background of the Churches in the United Provinces (New York: International Missionary Council, 1938), pp. 88-89.

the Christians have come from the illiterate classes.

The ability to read and write is of great importance in the economic improvement of the individual. Literacy is more than an asset to the villager in protecting himself against fraud in the keeping of accounts, the signing of bonds and the sale of property. "The amount of fraud practiced today upon the illiterate is great. Literacy opens the door to employment; it leads to better health conditions, both curative and preventive."<sup>71</sup> Many true stories can be related to show the amount of fraud that occurs in different parts of the country. People have signed certain bonds for a loan that they needed very desperately. What had been taken as a loan form, was actually a bill of sale, and therefore people have lost their land ignorantly for 1/20 of its real value. Clerks have sold tickets to illiterate people which were several stations short of the destination for which they pay. The illiterate person is later on penalized by the ticket examiner who finds this innocent person overriding his ticket.

Kellock's study of 613 Bombay Christian households states that those whose monthly income was above Rs. 45/- could all read and write; people earning between Rs. 35/- and Rs. 45/- were 10% literate; those between Rs. 25/- and Rs. 35/-. 13%; between Rs. 15/- and Rs. 25/-. 28%; below Rs. 15/-, 34%; while 40% of unemployed heads of

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<sup>71</sup>E. D. Lucas and Thakur Das, The Rural Church in the Punjab (New York: International Missionary Council, 1939), p. 21.

households were unable to read or write.<sup>72</sup> It is quite true that there can be no improvement in the social and economic life of the Christians until and unless their education is improved.

The greatest calamity is the inability to read the Bible. One of the main reasons for Korea having attained her standard of growth in the self-support program is the fact that the Bible has been read and taught in an emphatic way. People can read and see for themselves that the Bible teaches that Christians are expected to support their own church. The percentage of literacy in Korea is very high compared to India. They are nearly three times as literate as India. The whole Church in Korea is based on a Bible-reading and Bible-centered community. From this springs spiritual power and resources which result in a new and higher outlook on life and gives incentive to giving.

Serious are the limitations imposed by illiteracy upon personal liberty, justice and economic advancement; illiteracy equally cripples a man for mental and spiritual progress, including an adequate understanding of life, himself, the world in which he lives and his relation to it and to his fellow-men.<sup>73</sup>

Education is the most powerful lever in effecting the uplift of the people.

### Disease and Ill-health

"Another handicap in the earning capacity of the Indian

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<sup>72</sup>J. Kellock, The Social and Economic Environment of the Christian Population of Bombay City (New York: International Missionary Council, 1939), p. 50.

<sup>73</sup>Davis, The Economic and Social Environment..., p. 101.

Christian community is the state of chronic ill-health and low vitality to which such large numbers of the population are subject."<sup>74</sup> Many millions of deaths result from preventable diseases every year. The life expectancy at birth is 42 years.<sup>75</sup>

Hookworm, dysentery, malaria and a host of other intestinal parasites cause a serious drain upon the energy required for efficient workers. The superintendent of a large leper asylum in India reports that ill-health is one of the chief sources of economic weakness in the Christian community.<sup>76</sup> India is one of the most diseased countries in the world. The rural Christian suffers particularly from malnutrition. He makes for this lack of food by extra sleep. He is physically unable to turn out the same amount of work the average rural Westerner turns out. This naturally cuts down his earning power and consequently his part in supporting the church.

The climate is also another contributing factor in the two other Indian problems of disease and famine. One of the most recent famines resulted from the floods in some parts of India, and a devastating drought in others which affected the whole of India's "rice bowl." The failure of a single monsoon causes drought, the ruin of crops and terrible distress to millions of people. "Few lands have suffered so much

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<sup>74</sup>Ibid., p. 89. <sup>75</sup>Rycroft and Clemmer, loc. cit.

<sup>76</sup>Davi., The Economic and Social Environment..., p. 90.

from famine."<sup>77</sup> William Stanton in his book, The Awakening of India, describes the effect of famine in these words:

The rains have totally failed and there is no harvest ... These oft recurring famines are awful visitations. And worst of all, they disorganize all lines of mission work. Schools are broken up; congregations are scattered; self-support rendered impossible. All thought and effort on the part of people centers in the one great struggle to exist.<sup>78</sup>

There are about one and a half million people who are blind, at least a million lepers and over a million people who die every year from malaria. Thus the many diseases in the land of India cause a lack of initiative in the people.

A physical or psychological factor enters the picture as a detriment... It is a lack of initiative which permeates the life of the people... Perhaps this is a medical problem as much as any, since malaria, dysentery and the hookworm sap most of their strength. The problem of securing sufficient food is the main incentive to do any work.<sup>79</sup>

The problem this lack of initiative presents in the building of a self-supporting church is self-evident. The Government of India is launching out many drives to combat the ravages of these diseases. Yet she has to go a long way before something very substantial is accomplished.

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<sup>77</sup> Deaville F. Walker, India and Her Peoples (London: Edinburg House Press, 1930), p. 47.

<sup>78</sup> William Stanton, The Awakening of India (New York: Missionary Education Movement, 1943), p. 60.

<sup>79</sup> Charles Louis Kau, "Evangelism of the Village Church of Western Bengal" (Bachelor of Divinity Thesis presented to Northern Baptist Seminary, 1952), p. 27.

The villagers in India have to be educated to understand that they have to take injections and other medicines to combat these diseases. The writer has seen and heard of many villagers who run away from medical authorities when they see them enter the village. Children run helter-skelter when they see a van with a red cross on it. It will be a great accomplishment for India when she can truly say that she has been able to control the numerous diseases that have plagued her from time immemorial.

### Persecution of Christians

Christians have difficulty supporting themselves and the church because of the persecution of the non-Christians. This is especially noticeable in cases of single conversions where becoming a Christian may mean complete ostracism, economic disaster or death. The writer knows of many individuals who have been persecuted for taking a stand for Christ. The single convert was driven away from home at the risk of his own life and left without any means of support from home or friends. They have been left at the mercy of Christians who in turn are not very rich themselves. They do not get back their old jobs since they have been forced out of the town they first worked in. It is such a Herculean job trying to get the new convert another new job. Unemployment is a monstrous problem in India. The convert takes a rather long time in getting another job. When he does get



a job, he is busily engaged in paying back the money he borrowed from the people who helped him out during the acute crisis. This does not leave him much to live comfortably.

The convert from the mass-movement areas is not usually restricted from carrying on his original occupation or retaining his property after becoming a Christian. However, in indirect ways the converts are persecuted and the means of earning their livelihood is considerably reduced. St. John's College in Agra reports the following forms of persecution:

- a. Refusal to permit the use of drinking wells.
- b. Obstacles placed in the way of securing sites for wells.
- c. More subtle ways of making trouble like throwing a dead dog into the well.
- d. Refusal to give loans when needed.
- e. Dispossession of dwelling places and lands, and sometimes the threat of recovering outstanding debts.
- f. Instituting false suits and sometimes actual physical violence.<sup>80</sup>

## II. MENTAL ATTITUDE FACTORS

### Mentality of Dependence

"There is another hindrance just as great, if not greater than the economic condition of the converts. Indian Christians do not feel an obligation to support the work of Christianity in their country."<sup>81</sup> This

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<sup>80</sup> Rajah B. Manikam, The Christian College and The Christian Community (Madras, India: Diocesan Press, 1938), p. 58.

<sup>81</sup> Letter from Christian and Missionary Alliance, Louis L.

is partly due to the poor policies adopted by mission boards in the past, and partly due to the background from which the converts have come. Since mission boards through the years have hired national pastors and evangelists, paying them with foreign funds, and have built churches and have supported the pastors and congregations of the various churches, the nationals have not learned the obligation and responsibility to support the Lord's work. At first in many fields the missionaries were so glad to get the converts that they did not dare mention the subject of giving, for fear of frightening their hard-won converts. The nationals too followed this policy, even in some cases urging the Indians to become Christians to save money since they would no longer have to give to their idols.<sup>82</sup> The depressed classes of India, out of which most of the Christian converts have come, have through the economic and social requirements of caste, been schooled for centuries in the habit of receiving rather than giving. Their livelihood depends upon gifts of their caste superiors and the concept of making freewill offerings is one completely foreign to them.<sup>83</sup> Typical of their attitude is an incident at Hingaghat, in the central part of India, where a group of

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King, January 29, 1956.

<sup>82</sup>Henry Rosie Rowland, Native Churches in Foreign Lands (New York: The Methodist Book Concern, 1925), p. 139.

<sup>83</sup>The Economic Basis of the Church (Volume 5 of The Madras Series, five volumes; New York: International Missionary Council, 1939), pp. 148-149.

seventy depressed class Christians asked immediately after baptism, "What is the mission going to do to help us?"<sup>84</sup>

The average Indian Christian living in dire poverty cannot understand why he should be asked to support his preacher or teacher, when there is plenty of money in America. He inevitably thinks that such a request is due to the hardness of heart of the missionary.<sup>85</sup>

Bishop Pickett approached this problem by examining the points of view of the missionary, the Indian pastor and the Indian convert, which lead to difficulties of the self-support plan. He discovered that the missionary, depressed by the poverty and misery of the people, comes to doubt whether it is right to insist that the people should support their own church; the Indian pastor, if formerly mission-supported, doubts whether he can get sufficient funds to meet his standard of living should his congregation become self-supporting. He dreads humiliation at the hands of the converts themselves, and hesitates to cast his lot completely with so backward a group. The convert has always avoided responsibility and obligations as far as possible. He looks upon the church as possessing fabulous resources, and has somewhat the Hindu idea that the mission acquires "virtue" by the exercise of such charity.<sup>86</sup> The mentality of dependence comes with the majority

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<sup>84</sup>Ibid., p. 150.   <sup>85</sup>Stanton, op. cit., p. 151.

<sup>86</sup>Pickett, op. cit., pp. 213-219.

of Christians who have come out of the depressed classes. These depressed class Christians think of themselves as naturally dependent upon others. God made them, they think, to depend and lean on others; if it were not so He would have created them in some other caste.<sup>87</sup>

This dependent attitude does much harm to the cause and plan of self-support. We have to face frankly the fact that a thousand years of utter dependence, poverty and humiliation have taken out of the people called Christians, much of the thing called "self-respect." In many instances the outcastes have survived simply because they have been able to bow and humiliate themselves before their caste neighbors. This attitude is very difficult to change. It is not so much a hostile mind as it is a mind which thinks that it has been a "nobody" for so long that it does not have the faith in its own ability, to be a "somebody." "You are my father and mother" is always a phrase or chorus that precedes some fresh request for money. There is not that natural, inborn and independent pride that is exhibited in some other people, like the Bataks in Sumatra who refused to have any foreign help in the advancement of their church. The Indian Christian has to accept rather squarely the fact that he has not achieved this attitude of independence, self-respect and self-achievement. Even the Christians who have attained very high positions in the ladder of life do not possess this much needed goal and

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<sup>87</sup> Davis, The Economic and Social Environment..., p. 48.

attitude in life.

### Mentality of Indifference

To add to this dependence on others, is the wrong attitude that there is an easy way, so why take the hard way of trying to raise money for the life and expansion of the Indian Church. One of the Methodist leaders said, "As long as Mr. Seamands is doing such a fine job on his typewriter, why should we worry about self-support?"<sup>88</sup> Many people seem to think that things will work out all right when the time comes for foreign money to be completely stopped from coming into India. They think that they would begin to worry about self-support when American money stops coming into India. Such people do not realize that self-support is the self-respecting, Biblical and right thing to achieve before any accident of history forces them to attain self-support.

### Mentality of Procrastination

There is a false notion that people must be raised in their economic standard before they can give. In other words they want to put it off for a few more years and in the meantime enjoy the benefits of the foreign money. Many mission boards have felt that the people should be given some more time in order to raise themselves in their financial

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<sup>88</sup>Statement by D. A. Seamands, personal interview.

status.

This false notion, based on the Western sympathies of missionaries and not on the New Testament pattern of the Church, has probably done us more harm than any other single notion we have. For experience after experience has proved that the rich man does not proportionately increase his giving, unless he has first learned to give when he was poor.<sup>89</sup>

It seems that poor people are far better in their giving than those who are better off in the financial realm. They are willing to give of their time and money, when properly presented, than the richer city person. Dr. David Seamands tells of a certain group of villagers who were poor. There were fifteen families who gave around Rs. 100/- each, at great sacrifice, to build themselves a church. One of their group had gone to the city and got a very high-paying government job. He pledged Rs. 50/- but got down to paying, and that after much nagging, only Rs. 10/-.<sup>90</sup>

Thus we see that there are many persons in high positions who proportionately give far less than some of the poor villagers. This principle holds good and true not only for individuals, but also entire areas as well. Merle Davis illustrates this very well with reference to the Karen Christians in Burma.

The record of the per capita giving of the Karen Christians shows that the size of the contribution does not depend on the income of the members. In 1927, in the comparatively prosperous field of Bassein, the average gift per member was

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<sup>89</sup>Ibid.      <sup>90</sup>Ibid.

\$1.37, while in the backward district of Shwegyin, where the soil was poor and the struggle for existence more severe, the gifts averaged \$3.94 per capita.<sup>91</sup>

So the idea of procrastination of self-support is not very healthy when we wait for the poor people to become rich. If a person does not learn to give to the church generously when he earns Rs. 50/-, he will never learn to give proportionably more even when he earns Rs. 500/-.

### III. RELIGIOUS FACTORS

#### Gifts To Non-Christian Priests.

There is still a strong tendency among recent converts, to cling to old Hindu and Muslim practices. Christians still contribute rice or wheat at the regular calls of the Muslim Pir or holy man in the northern parts of India.

Security in the Muslim community, where the Pir is the most powerful member, frequently outweighs the Christian's sense of loyalty to the support of their pastor. There are cases in the Sialkot district where Christians admit that they are giving more to the upkeep of the Muslim religious leader than to the support of the churches where they are members.<sup>92</sup>

Thus so much self-support strength of the Christian people goes to the support of this unwholesome class of people. Dr. David Seamands tells of a place where this was stopped and the villagers were able to

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<sup>91</sup>Merle Davis, New Buildings on Old Foundations (Lebanon, Pennsylvania: Sowers Printing Company, 1945), p. 161.

<sup>92</sup>Lucas and Das, op. cit., p. 65.

attain self-support within the first year.<sup>93</sup>

### Lack of Training in Support

The Indians as a whole are unaccustomed to supporting their religious leaders. The Brahmin priest usually works in the offices or elsewhere and performs their priestly functions as a sideline. It is true that there are hundreds of thousand of "fakirs" or "holy men" who do not engage in business, but they are ascetics practicing self-mortification to achieve personal merit, and therefore rely on the generosity of the people in sharing their rice with them as they beg in public places. Therefore, it is a little out of the way for the people to support a pastor who does not beg or do any other work besides preaching.

### Idea of Other-worldliness

The role of other-worldliness and poverty is attached traditionally to the fakir or priest. A priest who lives in comparative comfort as a member of a community and receives a monthly salary larger than the income of the average man in the village is a contradiction in terms and violates the instincts of the Asiatic society.<sup>94</sup>

The unwise expenditure of foreign money results in a native clergy accustomed to a standard of living a little above the average member of the congregation. Young men who have received training in mission schools return to their people with an entirely different outlook in life.

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<sup>93</sup> Statement by D. A. Seamands, personal interview.

<sup>94</sup> The Economic Basis of the Church, op. cit., p. 141.



They have grown accustomed to better sanitation, more respectable living quarters and more elaborate food. They are often unwilling to return to their former low standard of living. The writer knows of many such seminary students back where he studied, who have demanded a higher standard of living after finishing their seminary training. Even a congregation willing to give sacrificially has great difficulty in supporting the pastor at the level to which he was accustomed when under the mission.

The fact is that ten untouchables in India can support a pastor at their own level, but many pastors and evangelists, even spiritual men, have become quite mercenary in their attitude toward the whole matter, because they have been so effectively spoiled by the high standards of living provided for them in the past with foreign funds.<sup>95</sup>

### Lack of Tithing

Another factor is the failure to accept the tithe as God's minimum standard of giving for both rich and poor. Malachi does not present the view that God does not ask for the tithe; it is not giving up something that actually belongs to us. It is merely restoring to God that which is rightfully His, and to fail to do this is to rob Him of His rightful share. The acceptance of this teaching is frightfully absent. The average family in the village does not tithe, but gives about 1/200 of his income to the church. This is a true picture of their real

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<sup>95</sup>Letter from The India Mission: Elrow Larowe, Secretary-Treasurer, February 9, 1956.

poverty-of Spirit.

### Lack of Spiritual Life

A real lack of spiritual life among the Christians of India is a great factor against attaining self-support. Many of them are "nam ke wasthe" (name-sake) and not "kam ke wasthe" (work-sake) Christians. They have changed religion, but too often their religion has not changed them. Dr. J. T. Seamands tells a humorous story which depicts the sad state of the present day Christians in India. He was once riding a train along with a companion, who claimed to be a Christian. He asked him whether he was a born-again Christian. "Oh yes," he explained, "You see my grandfather was a Hindu and was converted and baptized. Then my father being his son became a "born Christian"; and thus I being a son of my father am now a "born-again" Christian."<sup>96</sup> The Christian Church being spiritually destitute, it is no wonder why the Christians are such poor givers. These people have not first of all given themselves to the Lord in repentance and full surrender. Paul says in II Corinthians 8:1-9, "The churches in Macedonia, for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of liberality on their part. For they gave according to their means...and beyond their means, of their own free-will, begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of

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<sup>96</sup>J. T. Seamands, A Sermon Heard in India.

the saints... (because) first they gave themselves to the Lord, and to us by the will of God. "

#### IV. FOREIGN MONEY FACTOR

Christian work in India, started by the missionaries, has been developed and maintained on a scale commensurate with the financial resources of the Western Church.<sup>97</sup> When mission boards and Indian Christian leaders attempt to make the work self-supporting, they are faced with the grim fact that the Indian Christians do not have the financial resources to maintain many of the elaborate institutions and churches built by the West. It has been truly and rightly said: "The Indian can afford to be a Hindu or Muslim; he needs foreign help to be a Christian."<sup>98</sup> The financial strength of the "home churches" was not only great enough to send hundreds of missionaries abroad, but it also enabled them to live in countries of low economic levels on a scale of living approximating that of their own homeland. This economic power has also built churches, schools, colleges, hospitals, social settlements and other types of religious institutions totaling hundreds of millions of dollars in value. "It has launched a scale of expenditure that

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<sup>97</sup> The Relation Between the Younger and Older Churches (Vol. 3 of The Jerusalem Meeting of the International Missionary Council, five volumes; Concord: Rumford Press, 1928), p. 156.

<sup>98</sup> Statement by D. A. Seamands, personal interview.

is above the supporting power of the people."<sup>99</sup> An example of this is seen in the Serampore report which refers to a church which has a bell worth Rs. 1800/- hanging on the top (purchased by foreign money and installed by the mission) while the pastor below, supported by the local congregation was paid only Rs. 4/- per month.<sup>100</sup>

The unwise use of foreign funds was all done in the spirit of love and sympathy for the Indian people. But again we have to apply the principle of the important combination of love and a sound mind. The one should not exceed the other, or be reduced. They need to be in the right proportion. This is a God-given gift, and so more of this combination should be the substance of many of our prayers and ambitions in dealing with the problems of the church and its growth.

## V. THE GREATEST FACTOR

The greatest obstacle of all can be stated in these words: "You do not want self-support." When one very frankly and squarely faces the matter of self-support being attained, we shall come to see that the majority of the people, both ministers and laity, do not really want a self-supporting church. Some have caught the vision, and others claim to have caught the vision (although inwardly they affirm that it

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<sup>99</sup> Davis, The Economic and Social Environment..., p. 2.

<sup>100</sup> Manikam, op. cit., p. 32.

can never be attained), but most of the Christian people do not want this idea of self-support to take place in India. There is a two-fold reason for the lack of desire for it.

### A Lack of Faith

Both ministers and members simply lack the faith to take the step of trusting God and themselves. They would rather have the safety and security of the steady inflow of the foreign funds, with all of its ill-effects and evils, rather than to risk themselves to themselves. The laymen lack the faith in God, and the ministers lack faith in their people to look after them properly. God has promised in His Word that He will supply all our needs according to His riches in glory.<sup>101</sup> The Christians are rather afraid to take a leap of faith into the arms of God and take Him at His Word. God has not and never will go against any of His promises. People have a theoretical and practical knowledge of this; yet they are unwilling to accept His promise and prove once again that He will surely accomplish what He has said. Instead of faith transcending reason, their rationalization and lack of trust gets the upper hand and makes them afraid to accept the challenge of the program of self-support with the never failing promise and hand of God accompanying and assisting them. If the Christians would do their part faithfully and conscientiously, then God would automatically fulfill His part of

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<sup>101</sup>Matthew 6:33.

seeing the church attain her effort in the useful and progressive plan of self-support.

### A Lack of Love

On the part of the laity it is purely a lack of love for God, and also the preacher who is the representative of God. They care more for a better education, better clothes, showy weddings, or an occasional movie show than for God and His Church.

On the part of the ministry, it is a lack of love for the people which is substituted by an extra love for "self." The pastor does not like to relinquish the power and the sense of control and authority which the foreign support gives him. The source of salary is not from the people and so this gives him a measure of independence from his people. If they provide for his support then they would have some kind of a control over him. The pastor is not willing to submit to this controlling force of the people. This is true of the other higher ministries of the church. Self-support means some degree of self-government. Dr. David Seamands tells of a village church dedication incident. Thirteen families had given Rs. 100/- each for the building of the church. The American visitor who dedicated the church was wandering around the village taking some pictures of various spots of the village. He stopped in front of a "typical" house to take a picture when an old man came running up to him and told him not to take a picture of that house, since

they had not contributed anything to the building of the church. This old "ignorant" villager had caught the idea that self-support and self-government go hand in hand.<sup>102</sup> It is because the pastors know and fear this real fact that they are not in favor of self-support.

The shepherds really need the faith to trust their sheep, to serve them and to love them so much that they will be willing to lay down their lives for the benefit of the sheep. The sheep need the vision to see that such a shepherd is worthy of their love, faith and support. Above all they both need to trust God more and more, and express their love for Him by supporting the church with their time, talent and tithes, coupled with sacrifice and willingness to do their part in bringing about the wonderful principle of self-support that is so very necessary for the growth of their own lives, the life of the church, and the lives of others.

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<sup>102</sup> Statement by D. A. Seamands, personal interview.

## CHAPTER IV

### STEPS TOWARD ATTAINING SELF-SUPPORT

#### Is It Possible?

Inherently the possibility of self-support lies in people. In spite of the various handicaps the Indian Church faces, self-support is not an impossibility, as has been proven by the few self-supporting bodies now flourishing in India. For example, The Christian Missionary and Alliance Mission is self-supporting. This vision was caught by a national who came out with the proposal that twenty per cent be cut every year from the foreign board. He went around telling and convicting people to give and sacrifice for the church and the Lord. It was very successful. If this can happen in one place it can happen in many other places as well--even to the extent of sweeping over the Christian churches in India.

From a survey made from among forty-six missions consisting of 1,800,000 Christians and representing 350,000 families, it was found that 17.39% were a 100% self-supporting, 37% were 50% to 80% self-supporting, 13% were between 10% and 43% self-supporting and the rest were below 10% self-supporting.<sup>103</sup> If it was possible for

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<sup>103</sup> Editorials: "Conference on Stewardship," National Christian Council Review, 81:88, March, 1961.



these 17.39% to be self-supporting, cannot we assume that it is not an impossibility for the rest of the other churches to be self-supporting? Some feel that it can never be accomplished. This is limiting God and the miracles that He can work in the midst of His people, even in India. There are other churches in different lands that have become self-supporting, lands that are not too different from India, with reference to the various problems that India faces, and therefore we can assume that India can attain this plan of self-support and be a dynamic church in the land that so desperately needs to hear and know the saving message of the Lord Jesus Christ.

However, we have to accept the fact that this is not an easy accomplishment. It needs very careful steps in bringing to pass this much needed plan and progress of self-support in India.

### Actual Steps

Everyone must believe in it and want it. It is not so much that self-support is the goal; it is not. Self-support is not an end in itself, and if people go at it in that way they shall surely defeat their own purpose. It should be emphasized that it is the fruit of real stewardship and that no one can be a true Christian without being a steward.

Dr. David Seamands tells of a meeting of all the important members of the Methodist Church, held at a cost of Rs. 14,000/-. They met for ten days and brought out a report that hardly even

mentioned a word about self-support. It was called a historic meeting, but Dr. Seamands felt that it was a "prehistoric" meeting in that it utterly failed to read the signs of the times and put first things first for the church in India.<sup>104</sup>

Mr. Jiwandas in his article on Self-Support says, "I have stated above that we are not concerned much about self-support generally. A copy of an official Journal of an Annual Conference lies before me, and as I read the district reports, I find very little on self-support."<sup>105</sup> The Rev. G. M. Massey says:

It is quite right to say that our church people (both ministers and laymen) have not taken the matter of self-support seriously. Sometimes we talk one thing in our committees and pass resolutions, but forget those things immediately after we come out of the meetings, and try later to undo the things we have already passed. This kind of mentality is increasing in matters of importance relating to church work. This spirit might bring a crash someday in the Church work... The resolution "on going self-support in ten years" has been a sort of dead letter on the pages of the Central Conference Journal and very little attention has been paid to implement the resolution.<sup>106</sup>

Thus the first step is to infuse into the bloodstream of all the Christian people in India the belief in and the desire for self-support. They should see the urgency and desperate need of self-support in

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<sup>104</sup> Statement by D. A. Seamands, personal interview.

<sup>105</sup> B. Jiwandas, "Self-Support," The Indian Witness, 89:182, June, 1959.

<sup>106</sup> G. M. Massey, "Self-Support," The Indian Witness, 89:196, June, 1959.

India, not because the Government is putting pressure on the church, or any other reason like that, but because a living Christian is a giving Christian; and unless the members start giving of their time, talent and treasure soon, the church will face a spiritual disaster. It is not a spiritual luxury, it is an absolute necessity for the church in India. There has to be the strong conviction of the various reasons attributed to self-support, being achieved. All the Christians in India must be made to realize that self-support is the Biblical pattern of the church; that it is urged and required by the Holy Scriptures; that it is of the very nature of the church; that it is the response of the grace of God to man; that it builds up a spirit of ownership and responsibility. They should also be made to realize that foreign subsidy weakens and cripples the church; that it does not remove the stigma attached to Christianity; that it brings suspicion from non-Christians and the Government; that it gives the church in India an uncertain life expectancy; that it makes for poor relations between missionary and national; that it brings about a completely wrong relationship between pastor and his people; that it weakens their faith and spiritual life, and that it hinders the effective preaching of the gospel. The conviction should be so strong that the plan of self-support will be carried out with an iron determination, no matter what the difficulties encountered may be. A conviction is a strong belief that finds its expression in action. Where there is a will there is a way.

Churches should be so organized that the members and not the pastors have responsibility of its finances. The common complaint heard over and over again from the laity is, "The pastor only visits us to take up the collection." So far pastors have been fighting against odds in trying to get the church members to pay their church dues and also trying to get them to raise their giving to the church. The sight of the pastor, many a time, brings a feeling of avoiding him since the people know that they ought to pay their dues to him. Many times they are rather embarrassed at his presence since they do not have the money to pay towards the church. Finance is automatically attached to the pastor's presence. He always seems to raise the topic of finance both from the pulpit and on his visits to their homes.

In order to avoid this and also to maintain a stronger tie between the pastor and member, a strong finance committee should be selected. They ought to be trustworthy people and conscientious in their responsibility assigned to them. They should be people who take active part in the affairs and growth of the church. They should also be members who give of their time, talent and treasure to the church. In other words they should be the best members of the church who should be given the responsible task of visiting every family of the church and facing them squarely and diplomatically with their responsibility for the financial expenditures of the church. This sort of an arrangement would work wonders. It would then be a matter of the

lay-people challenging one another without any selfish motive in mind. If the pastor were to do this the people would say that he is doing this for his own benefit. The lay-people have a definite knack for challenging people to give more to the church and their pastor. When this takes place the pastor need rarely mention finances from the pulpit or in his visits to their homes.

The laity should be given full responsibility, even on the village level. The writer has tried this procedure in the church he last pastored in India. The church was dependent on the mother church for the expenses connected with the regular services held every Sunday. It became financially independent when a few enthusiastic lay-people challenged the other members to make the church self-supporting. They are now busily engaged in finding out ways and means of building a nice church of their own.

This method could be employed in every church and the immediate result may be tested and proved to be beneficial. In India the witness of the lay person in the open-air meetings has a tremendous effect upon the mind of the other lay people. This is even better than what the paid pastor could do. Somehow they are more attracted to a person like them, talking about God and His Word, than to a professionally paid preacher. This same principle and approach holds good even in the realm of financial affairs.

Churches should use forms, plans, methods, etc., suited to the Indian mind. There are many methods of receiving offerings which seem more suited to the Indian mind, than others which have been imported from the West. The system of paying differs with the church in the village and the church in the city. The people working in the city receive a monthly or weekly salary, and so they could pay their dues to God monthly or weekly in cash. The village Christian receives not a regular income. It comes twice or thrice a year during the harvest festivals or heavy particular seasons of building, etc. Thus harvest festivals, pots of blessing, the daily "handful of rice" offering, the giving to God of the first day's wages, the first-born of the cattle, etc., the Sunday eggs, the Lord's acre plan are ways and means of contributing to the church. All these appeal to the Indian mind and are effective ways of combining worship with practical everyday experiences, so that all of life itself becomes a way of worshipping God.

A. The Lord's acre plan. This is suited to the rural areas. Cash offerings are not suited to the rural culture or economy. This method furnishes a training in stewardship. It provides a good spiritual exercise, working with and for the Lord on a dedicated piece of ground. Under this plan the church member at the beginning of the year makes a pledge to raise a certain animal or cultivate a crop on a certain piece of land, and to dedicate the amount realized from the animal or land to the Lord. The children also should be encouraged to

participate in this project.

B. Small scale industry. The practice of small industries in the home by family members during their spare time should be more and more encouraged. People tend to spend their spare time in mere prattle or gossip, or they indulge in other activities that make them spend their money unwisely. The idle man's mind is the devil's workshop, and so it would be best for the villagers to do something substantial for the church. A definite amount of labour either in time or quantity should be pledged by a member in advance, in the same way in which a cash pledge is made.<sup>107</sup>

C. Encourage them to give their farm produce. Many of the rural churches have done so, and have been able to raise some of their support.

In the new cathedral at Dornakal, India, we witnessed an offering in kind at the close of the two-day festival of the Dornakal diocese. An auction sale of chickens, vegetables and other produce was held at which the cash equivalent of the value of the contribution was realized.<sup>108</sup>

The children should be encouraged more to raise a few chickens or livestock and then present them as their part in the offering to the Lord's church. The children should never be neglected in the financial campaign of the church. In the urban situation, they can be encouraged

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<sup>107</sup> Merle Davis, The Economic and Social Environment of the Younger Churches (London: Edinburg House Press, 1939), pp. 108-109.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., p. 110.

to sell Christmas cards from which a fairly good commission can be obtained. This could be given as their donation to the church. They could also remake old used cards and sell them saying that they are old used Christmas cards. Many people in India buy such cards. All it costs the children is labor and time. They could very easily contribute this; and thus implant in their minds the principle of giving part of their time, talent and money to the Lord. If this principle is driven home into the hearts of the children, then the future church in India is being based on a very sound principle and foundation which will make the church indigenous in its principle of self-support. Young people should be encouraged to put up some dramas and recitals, and a nominal fee for admission could be charged. The net profit could be given to the support of the church. This could be used in both the village and the city.

The women can also help in the support of the church by selling foodstuffs that they make at a rather reasonable price. They could put by a handful of rice every time a meal is cooked. This does not seem like anything too much. Yet the little drops of water make the mighty ocean. So this rice kept aside over the week will amount to one pound of rice per week. This, when amassed over a year, is worth quite a sum of money. It would amount to more than what some people give to the church over a year.

In short all the members of the church, young and old, rich



and poor should put their shoulders to the wheel and do their faithful part in the upkeep and on-going of the church of Christ in India. This should not be something forced, but should be done willingly and with a cheerful heart and attitude.

All non-Christian ways of raising money like lotteries, raffles, etc. --things which make people give in exchange for a little excitement or enjoyment--should be abandoned. Giving should be set to a level of spontaneity and voluntariness. Compulsory deductions from the salaries of workers in the church should be stopped. The result will never be regretted. Vows conditional on God granting some request--for restoration to health of a child, for success in an examination, for the child being a son, etc.--are fairly common and account for a good many of the gifts of Indian Christians. This concept is definitely non-Christian. The people should be reorientated in their attitude to giving to the church. They can instead offer thank-offerings for mercies received from the hand of God. They should learn to give not because they want to receive, but because they have received from God.

Worship in family groups on all domestic occasions like baptisms, engagements, births of children, etc., should be encouraged. Family visits to temples for worship and for making thank-offerings are common. Such things should be encouraged in the Christian Church and should become a part of the regular worship of the congregation.

People should also be strongly encouraged to bring their

first-fruits--their first eggs, first pluckings from the garden, first day's wages in kind--to the church and be offered to God as solemnly as the offering in cash. The people should know how their offerings are being used. An annual statement of the people's contributions and how they have been disbursed creates confidence, increases interest and helps further sacrificial giving.

The Christians should be taught simplicity of living, economy and self-control. The evils like drink, extravagant marriage expenses, etc., should be attacked on the basis of the truth of the Gospel. This will help the Christians save a lot of money which could be used very profitably for their families, themselves and the church.

D. Less expensive church organization. The achievement of self-support has a lot to do with the type of church organization. The majority of the present type church organizations are cases of David in Saul's armor. The Indian Church is overloaded with specialists, committees and a highly paid "superstructure" which are a carry-over of the Western Church. "With the question of church self-support is also associated the question of making our church administrative machinery more simple and less expensive."<sup>109</sup> The Western Church has so much surplus that it can afford these "luxuries." In order to develop financial independence in the local congregation, the

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<sup>109</sup>A. J. Shaw, "Editorial," The Indian Witness, 89:233, July, 1959.

required carrying load of the church should be adjusted to the supporting power of the community. Many communities are unable to support elaborate Western type church organizations and buildings, but are perfectly capable of supporting a work carried on at about the same economic level of the community. Kenneth Taylor suggests that the large property interests be sold and the native church meet in homes until such time as they feel the need of building a church of their own. He adds that "it would seem wasteful to abandon one building only to later build another, possibly not as expensive, but it is well worth the price to thus bring about a courageous indigenous church."<sup>110</sup>

The principle recommended by the Jerusalem Council should be kept in mind: "The younger churches should be developed on a scale, in regard to salaries, cost of church buildings and other expenses corresponding to the economic life of the people."<sup>111</sup> Younger churches do not have a great inheritance accumulated over many generations. Bible colleges, publishing houses, seminaries and other institutions which help congregations in the West are endowed. The younger churches in foreign lands do not have this heritage. With reference to the carry-over from the West in organizational affairs, certain

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<sup>110</sup>Kenneth Taylor, "Success Factors in Missions" (Unpublished Master's thesis, The Northern Baptist Seminary, 1944), p. 102.

<sup>111</sup>The Relation Between the Older and Younger Churches, (Vol. 3 of The Jerusalem Meeting of the International Missionary Council, five volumes; Concord: Rumford Press, 1928), p. 110.

things must be said especially to the Methodist Church work in India.

The office of District Superintendent should be made honorary. The districts should be made smaller and the number of district superintendents be increased. Pastors of central churches should be asked to supervise over four or five rural churches in addition to their own duties, and in co-operation with the Central Church. The abolition of the paid office of district superintendent will remove another weakness from the church, namely, the undue ambition of the workers to become district superintendents overnight.<sup>112</sup>

This will result in the net saving of one salary, servant allowance and traveling allowances. The bungalows in which the district superintendents now stay would fetch a good rent. Similarly the Bishop's salaries should be greatly reduced and made commensurate with the paying capacity of the Indian Church.

The spiritual needs of the people and the financial abilities of the Indian people should be kept in proper balance. The Indian Church should be carefully and prayerfully organized so that it will become a real "power for evangelization," and not a burden to the foreign mission boards. It should be made responsible for evangelistic work. Some missions have let the "self-supporting" churches support their own work, while the mission carried on the evangelistic program of the church.

The Church Missionary Society and other missions found that such a policy narrowed the outlook of the churches. They should feel

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<sup>112</sup>D. P. Titus, "Self-Support of the Ministry," The Indian Witness, 39:235, July, 1959.

directly responsible for saving their own country, and this feeling will not develop if the evangelistic work is left to the foreigners.<sup>113</sup>

Churches should have a thoroughly planned use of the lay-preacher. "Lay leadership provides a useful method of lightening the financial load which the church must carry."<sup>114</sup> The idea of having one pastor for every congregation is ideal. But this is not possible at the present stage in India. To introduce a new enterprise, whose support is an added load upon the closely balanced budgets of the rural community is disastrous. The rapid growth of the Christian community in various fields through mass movements and the wide scattering of Christians through the countryside are further factors which compel the rural church to find a plan of administration and ministry that will meet the needs of the rural congregation with a minimum of expense.

The tragedy with the Indian Church is that they have encouraged the idea so much that the service to the church must be a paid service, that they have curbed spontaneous service on the part of the laity. This has to be rooted out, and the service of the unpaid worker in the church encouraged and emphasized. There are, in India, many lay-people who

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<sup>113</sup>Henry Rosie Rowland, Native Churches in Foreign Lands (New York: The Methodist Book Concern, 1925), p. 145.

<sup>114</sup>The Economic Basis of the Church (Volume 5 of The Madras Series, five volumes; New York: International Missionary Council, 1939), p. 159.

would be willing to be unpaid lay-preachers if they were urged a little and the proper training made available to them. Going out from the Central Churches and the village circuit-centers, there should be a "Sunday-Bicycle-Brigade." Every nearby village should have its own Sunday service led by a lay-preacher, trained for his job and under the direction of an ordained minister. These various little congregations should be encouraged to support the church to the best of their capacity. This would help cover the ordained preacher's salary and the other salaries connected with the organization of the church. Ralph Felton says:

We must make full use of lay-preachers. They will make possible for the trained pastor in the Orient to have a circuit of from five to ten churches. This would increase the pastor's salary...and would allow each pastor to push his work out into the nearby villages. If the Church in the East would use the plan of unpaid lay-preachers, the un-churched areas would soon be evangelized.<sup>115</sup>

This system has been successful among the Bataks in Sumatra and churches in Korea. This method should be strongly employed in the various churches in India.

The outstanding churches in Asia are those which make widest use of their lay-members, and in this way multiply the services of their paid workers and extend the influence of Christianity in the neighborhood. The many thousands of lay men and women who are voluntarily bearing the burden of their churches form a broad and firm base for the Church structure which will offset the withdrawal of foreign workers and funds.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>115</sup>Ralph Felton, The Rural Church in the Far East (New York: International Missionary Council, 1938), pp. 110, 114, 127.

<sup>116</sup>The Economic Basis of the Church, op. cit., p. 523.

The self-supporting Central Churches must assume support of their weaker neighbors. Too often the Central self-supporting city churches are a problem; they ought to be a power. It was William Taylor's dream that the city churches would gradually assume the missionary responsibilities for the surrounding villages. There is New Testament grounds for this plan. "The cities in Asia are the reservoirs of leadership and economic power on which the church must draw if the vast rural areas are to be evangelized through the efforts of the younger churches."<sup>117</sup>

The detachment of the urban church from the life of the neighborhood is one of its greatest weaknesses. "A group of Christians absorbed in its own problems is likely to become self-centered and to develop spiritual atrophy."<sup>118</sup>

The economic standards of the people in the city churches is definitely higher than the rural Christians. These city-church Christians should be approached in the right spirit and given a share in the responsibility involved. They would indeed respond to help support their weaker neighbors. They should be taken out occasionally to the rural areas. The key rural Christians should also be allowed to preach and also represent their difficulties before the city Christians. A stronger, deeper and more genuine interest should be created between

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid., p. 483.      <sup>118</sup> Ibid., p. 511.

them.

There should be a systematic concerted teaching on stewardship throughout the church. Perhaps this is the greatest weakness of the churches in India. What is most needed is an all-out, well planned campaign to stress the stewardship of the whole of life. India needs literature on it--pamphlets, sermons, discussions, etc. The training of the Indian national in stewardship is of the greatest value in the achievement of self-support. From the very beginning the Indian should be taught his duty in giving to God. The recommendation of the Jerusalem Council is noteworthy: "All new local churches as far as possible be started on a self-supporting basis."<sup>119</sup> Once the converts have acquired the habit of receiving aid from the mission, they are very slow to take over the complete support of the church. They come to expect this mission to provide for them, and the sudden withdrawal of foreign funds sometimes proves disastrous to the church. Thus to place the church on a self-supporting basis from the very beginning eliminates many more problems than it produces. However, there are many churches in India which are already established in the habit of receiving help from the mission and these are especially in need of instruction as to their responsibility and obligation in giving. An effective method

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<sup>119</sup>The Relation Between the Older and Younger Churches, op. cit., p. 160.



for teaching stewardship is stated by Herbert E. Blair in his paper,

"Christian Stewardship in Korea."

It is clear that the perennial emphasis upon Bible study has had more to do with proper giving in the Korean Church than all our efforts toward systematic contribution. The fundamental conviction as to stewardship responsibilities was already deeply implanted in the hearts of the great masses of believers before we even began promoting the stewardship principle as the basis of systematic giving.<sup>120</sup>

William Stanton, missionary to the Telegus in India, emphasizes self-support as a means and not an end in itself, stating that it is a poor thing to preach to the people. They cannot understand why the rich Americans should insist that they should support their own pastor, and the preaching of self-support arouses no response in their hearts. A better way is to teach the people to tithe.

When you tell the Telegu Christian that he should give to the support of the preacher, he does not see why he should do so. But when you tell him that God is the Giver of all... that of that which God gives to us the tenth belongs to God and He asks to give that tenth to Him--when you sit down quietly by the side of these humble Telegu Christians and tell them these things about God... their heart is touched with a deep emotion... and they respond at once and say, "Yes, it is true." I have yet to meet the Telegu Christian who would not respond to this appeal.<sup>121</sup>

Mr. Stanton adds that this is the method he has used successfully for forty years on the field saying, "We have said very little about self-

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<sup>120</sup> Herbert E. Blair, "Christian Stewardship in Korea," (unpublished paper), p. 5.

<sup>121</sup> William Stanton, The Awakening of India (New York: Missionary Education Movement, 1943), p. 141.

support, but we have preached everlastingly on the Christian's obligation to give to God."<sup>122</sup> The doctrine of Christian Stewardship should be taught freely to the poorest as well as to the richest. The duty rather than the privilege of giving out of their living, if necessary, should be inculcated. Bishop Chellappa in his article on Christian Giving, says:

There is an over-emphasis on the financial aspect of evangelism. The emphasis needs to be shifted over from self-support to service. Churches which regard self-support as their be-all and end-all, are seldom able to achieve even this limited goal. They are mere money-raising machines sapped of spiritual power, indifferent to charity, to social service and to evangelism... Giving instead of being a means of grace breeds faction, jealousy and pride.<sup>123</sup>

It may be utterly discouraging to attempt to bring an old foreign-subsidy nurtured mission work over to self-support direct. But a revival in Bible study, faith and evangelism together with proper cultivation of stewardship systematic giving, ought to be helpful in the most hopeless cases. "Stewardship promotion on the basis of world evangelism may be able to accomplish self-support best, in some cases, as a by-product."<sup>124</sup>

A. What is Christian Stewardship? "It is the Christian

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<sup>122</sup>Ibid., p. 142.

<sup>123</sup>David Chellappa, "Christian Giving," The Indian Witness, 89:105, April, 1959.

<sup>124</sup>The Economic Basis of the Church, op. cit., p. 240.

interpretation of life, and is concerned with the Christian use of all the resources committed to man. It involves a Christian use of our time, talent and tithe."<sup>125</sup> The Biblical basis is the honest and faithful handling of God's gifts as suggested in the twelfth and sixteenth chapters of Luke's Gospel. All our possessions belong to God and we can only use them in ways that will express our loyalty to the Giver. It has elements of revival in it and its promotion will enhance one's spiritual life and undergird the Christian life for proper self-support.

Much can be said about the Christian use of time and talent. We are more concerned here with the Christian use of possessions. People are willing to talk of time and talents, but are not so willingly prepared to talk about the tithe (possessions), since it involves their pocketbooks. Money is a very touchy subject; nevertheless it is a very important subject. "When a man is giving money he is giving part of himself."<sup>126</sup> John Wesley's dead earnestness regarding the use of money is a test to see if all Christians are going straight to the goal of Christian stewardship. "Make all you can, save all you can, do all the good you can, in all the ways you can, . . . at all times you can, with all the zeal you can, as long as you can." Henry B. Trimble says, "Money

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<sup>125</sup>G. Sundaram, "Self-Support," The Indian Witness, 89:331, October, 1959.

<sup>126</sup>Luther P. Powell, Money and the Church (New York: Association Press, 1962), p. 231.

as a form of power is so intimately related to the possessor that one cannot consistently give money without giving self, nor can one give self without giving money."<sup>127</sup> Man's attitude to money is the acid test of the quality of his personality. When we give our money to God we give it as a token of giving to Him what represents our personality. In this sense the stewardship of our possessions, especially money, becomes the real relevant test of our consecration to God.

B. Tithing. This is one of the most controversial financial issues in the church today. This controversy rages among the individual denominations as well as between and among them. On the one hand there are those who uphold tithing as an integral part of the Christian life, believing it is required of every Christian. At the other extreme there are those who reject tithing as a Christian practice along with circumcision, foot washing and the observance of the dietary laws. Between these two extremes there are many variations of interpretations and opinions.

1. Objections to tithing. Many argue that tithing is not a New Testament teaching. They say that Jesus never tithed. They say that they belong to the days of Grace and therefore are not bound to the Old Testament law.

There is in the New Testament no direct statement that Jesus

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<sup>127</sup> Henry B. Trimble, The Christian Method and Motive in Stewardship (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1929), p. 155.

paid tithes, but since He tells us that He came not to destroy the Law but to fulfill it, and since He took part in the temple feasts and kept the Passover, and not only paid the temple tax but told people to render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's, there can be no doubt but that He paid tithes like every devout Jew. If He had not done so, the Pharisees would surely have accused Him of neglect. No man who himself did not pay tithes could have spoken in the way Jesus spoke to the Pharisees in Matthew 23:23, and not have been challenged. His teaching went beyond the tithe. We may add that the New Testament people have an infinitely greater motive for giving (because of the unspeakable gift of Christ) than the men who lived under the Mosaic law. The Old Testament standard was "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth," but Jesus' standard in the New Testament was to love one's enemies. Thus the standard set in the New Testament is far higher than the Old. This standard is applicable to the realm of financial affairs. "The New Testament Christian is not under commandments and regulations, but under the moral compelling rule of love. It reiterates the principle of freewill offerings, as man's response to God's wonderful love in Jesus Christ."<sup>128</sup> Among the disciples at Antioch, every man gave "according to his ability."<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>128</sup>V. S. Azariah, Christian Giving (London: Lutterworth Press, 1939), p. 84.

<sup>129</sup>Acts 11:29

Christians at Corinth were urged each to set apart Sunday after Sunday, "as he may prosper."<sup>130</sup> The churches at Macedonia were commended because they gave "according to their means" and "beyond their means."<sup>131</sup> The Pharisee gave a tenth of his income; Zacchaeus gave one-half of all he possessed;<sup>132</sup> the widow and Barnabas gave their all.<sup>133</sup>

2. **Benefits of tithing.** Dr. A. Cook tells of the benefits that accompany tithing:

- a) It removes the element of uncertainty from giving.
- b) It leads men to conform their expenditure to their giving.
- c) It fosters devotion to the cause of Christ.
- d) It begins in a very definite forward step of consecration, and leads on to greater consecration.
- e) It would solve the problem of the financial needs of the church.<sup>134</sup>

3. **Surprises of tithing.** Charles E. Cowman says that the person who tithes will have six genuine surprises:

- a) Surprise at the amount of money he has for the Lord's work.
- b) At the deepening of his own spiritual life.
- c) At the ease in meeting his own obligations with the nine-tenths with God's blessing.
- d) At the ease in going on from one-tenth to larger giving.
- e) At the preparation this gives to be a faithful and wise

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<sup>130</sup> I Corinthians 16:12.

<sup>131</sup> II Corinthians 8:3. <sup>132</sup> Luke 19:8.

<sup>133</sup> Luke 21:4 and Acts 4:37.

<sup>134</sup> George W. Brown (ed.), Gems of Thought on Tithing (New York: Eaton and Mains, 1911), p. 88.

steward over the nine-tenths that remain.

f) At himself in not adopting the Biblical plan sooner. <sup>135</sup>

4. If Christians tithe! An article written in 1962 says that the latest statistics show that 47% of pastor's salaries are raised in India. The Methodist Church is halfway to the goal of self-support of its pastors. <sup>136</sup>

The editor of The Indian Witness, says in his editorial:

We believe that if every member is a tithing member in our church, and gives all his tithe to the church treasury, we shall then feel no necessity for any assistance from the Western churches. On the other hand the churches in India will be able to send missionaries to the neighboring countries. Don't we therefore need a real great emphasis on tithing in our churches? <sup>137</sup>

The Rev. Paul Wagner in his article, On Beginning to Give, says:

If 10,000 Methodists tithe Rs. 10/- a month, all pastors' salaries would not only be paid, but increased. If 20,000 Methodists gave Rs. 5/- per month, we would reach the same goal. If 100,000 Methodists (less than 1/5 of the total number of members reported in 1960 statistics) gave only Rs. 1/- per month, we could reach the same goal. Rs. 1/- per month is less than the full tithe of our poorest Christian. Many Methodists do give, and some sacrificially; many Methodists have not begun to give. <sup>138</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Lettie B. Cowman, Charles E. Cowman (Los Angeles, California: The Oriental Missionary Society, 1928), p. 245.

<sup>136</sup> Paul Wagner, "Steps in Christian Stewardship," The Indian Witness, 92:214, July, 1962.

<sup>137</sup> Editorial: "Church Support," The Indian Witness, 91:43, February, 1961.

<sup>138</sup> Paul Wagner, "On Beginning to Give," The Indian Witness, 92:235, July, 1962.

The Christians will learn to give if there is a strong redoubled emphasis upon the teaching of the Bible and the standards set by God for man. Bishop Sundaram tells of an interesting and illustrative story of a lady born and raised as a member of the Methodist Church. She gave Rs. 2/- per month, and according to the standards of that town and church, it was quite respectable. This lady later on joined another denomination and was found to be paying Rs. 25/- per month. Later when questioned, she replied, "When I paid Rs. 2/- per month you were quite satisfied. You never told me how much I should pay. In the new church which I have joined, I am taught that I must pay my tithe, and I am glad to do it."<sup>139</sup> This story illustrates the importance of teaching the Biblical truths, principles and standards for a true Christian's life.

5. The following outline may be used as a skeleton of a message or study on tithing:

a) There is no question of the distinct and unequivocal command that God's children should tithe their incomes: Leviticus 27:30-33; Deuteronomy 14:22; II Chronicles 31:4-6; Malachi 3:7-12; Hebrews 7:5-8; Matthew 23:23.

b) Where are we commanded to bring the tithe? Deuteronomy 12:12-13; Nehemiah 10:35; II Chronicles 31:11-12; Malachi 3:10:

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<sup>139</sup>G. Sundaram, op. cit., 39:332.



"...storehouse, ...meat in mine house..."

c) Did Christ command tithing? Luke 11:42, "These ought ye to have done." Luke 12:15, "Take heed, beware of covetousness." Matthew 5:17-18, "Not to destroy, but fulfill the Law." Matthew 5:30, "Righteousness exceed."

d) Did Paul? I Corinthians 16:12; II Corinthians 8:9; Hebrews 6:20-7:8.

e) Promises to the obedient: Proverbs 3:9-10; Malachi 3:10-12; II Chronicles 31:10; Luke 6:38.

f) Curses to the disobedient: Malachi 3:8-9; Proverbs 11:24; Luke 12:19-21; Haggai 3:1-6; Proverbs 11:24-25; I Timothy 6:9; James 5:1-3; Amos 4:9.

g) The result of tithing. The man who tithes becomes a doubly consecrated Christian: Malachi 3:16-18; Hebrews 13:5-6; I Peter 1:18-19; I John 3:16-18; Mark 10:29-30.

Under the results of tithing, a host of living examples may be given of the people who have proved that tithing brings peace and satisfaction and prosperity.

The principle of tithing should be inculcated in the minds of the children in their Sunday Schools and homes. This will help the church a great deal as the years pass by. The Seventh Day Adventists educate their children and youth in the philosophy and practice of giving to the church and missions. Sabbath schools for a whole quarter

or more are devoted to the subject of stewardship. "Thus by the time the child has passed through the Sabbath School, he has been thoroughly imbued with the importance of foreign missions."<sup>140</sup> This is a very important aspect in the achievement of self-support in the Indian churches. What has been impressed upon the mind and heart of the child as a matter of duty invariably is put into practice when he grows older. It will be far easier to give to God what belongs to Him, if he is taught the principle right from his childhood. The Sunday Schools in our churches should capitalize on this principle and deal with the children in a far more effective way. This should be unceasingly emphasized since the Indian churches tend to neglect the capacities and potentialities of the children. This ought not so to be.

C. An illustration of the Stewardship Campaign. The Rev. T. Essebaggers, Chairman of the Bhilai Community Church tells in his article on Stewardship Education of how the following questions were answered through the stewardship campaign and education in Chattisgarh and the Orissa Church Council of the United Church of North India. Can stewardship be made an interesting part of the congregation's program? Will the people accept the idea that there is a giving potential sufficient to make the church self-supporting? He says that it took ten years, but the pastors saw that stewardship could be taught

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<sup>140</sup>J. Merle Davis, New Buildings on Old Foundations, (Lebanon, Pennsylvania: Sowers Printing Company, 1945), p. 200.

and so they gave co-operation.

1. **Visual presentation.** Visual aids played an important part. A poster was put up flashing the message that Rs. 72,000/- was being burned up yearly as a "beedi sacrifice." With an estimated average of one smoker in each of the two thousand families of the church council, and each smoker spending an average of Rs. 3/- per month, the total expenditure per year was Rs. 72,000/-. The church's annual budget was only Rs. 30,000/-. If so much can be spent on tobacco, it cannot be said that the giving potential is insufficient to raise the budget. This poster proved in a very convincing way that the church was not poor, and could make itself self-supporting.

Charts giving facts and figures were presented visually. An "IF-chart" was posted, telling how if two thousand families tithed, the budget would be more than met. Ten posters with a Bible verse and information relevant to it were given and posted every Sunday during the service for ten weeks. Then ten positive Biblical stewardship teachings were given. Bible classes on stewardship were held and relevant literature was freely distributed. Thus all information about the church's condition and needs, its potential strength and God's expectation of His people were given. People were told of other places where tithing and other such methods were successful in making the church self-supporting.

2. **Practical steps.** Pledge cards were printed in attractive

colors with a picture of Christ on the cross with the words, "I gave My life for thee: what hast thou given for Me?" These cards were made for the needs of the local church, home missions and foreign missions.

The members were asked to stay at home on the first Sunday in the Advent season, when everyone is reminded of God's greatest gift of His Son. A carefully chosen and select group of men and women went out after a season of prayer, from house to house and family to family, canvassing for the pledges. The pledge cards were patiently explained to the illiterate members, and were filled out for them and attested with their thumb impression. The worshipper got an heightened worship experience when he saw his offering being presented at the altar with prayer and blessing.

Rev. Essebaggers goes on to add that "every-member canvasses" will be successful, both in city and village, if the pastor and people co-operate, if adequate preparation is made and if the program is undergirded with prayer.

3. Keeping incentive alive. The people were helped to see that they would receive joy and pleasure in helping support home and foreign missions. Facts and figures of the amount they raised were shared with them and they were taken into the confidence of the plans of the church. Misuse of church funds were taken care of, and systems were adopted to prevent it. Another incentive to give was due to

the fact of foreign support and grants being steadily reduced.

4. Result. The people rallied and gave. There was an increase ranging between 2% and 89%. They raised Rs. 1,230/- for missionaries to Africa, Rs. 898/- for home missions, plus two other sums of money over Rs. 600/- for other causes. They gave more for others and had more for themselves. This showed and proved their spiritual vitality.<sup>141</sup>

This example is an excellent illustration of a well-planned and well-executed program in the field of stewardship. Programs like this may be adopted and adjusted to the individual churches and this the principle of stewardship can be taught and realized in a very substantial way.

The greatest need of all: A spiritual revival among the Christians. The secret of the Macedonian church's liberality should be noted. It was not their wealth, for the Scripture specifically states that they had "extreme poverty." It was not because they were enjoying easy times, for again it speaks of their "severe test of affliction." The secret is in the words, "but first they gave themselves to the Lord."

When the Christian people really give themselves to God and

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<sup>141</sup>T. Essebaggers, "Stewardship Education," National Christian Council Review, 72:210-215, September, 1959.

consecrate all their possessions to Him, we shall have not only self-support, but also "others-support" as an immediate result. The whole program of self-support must be undergirded with a real spiritual foundation. If it becomes a part of a spiritual revival, it will have every chance of succeeding. The whole problem must be primarily approached from the spiritual standpoint. Paul Wagner in his article on Steps in Christian Stewardship, says:

Christian stewardship begins with conversion. Without conversion or a new birth in Jesus Christ, there can be no Christian stewardship. Has it ever occurred to us that the lack of Christian stewardship in our church today is due to lack of calling people to accept new life in Christ?<sup>142</sup>

"Self-support will come naturally with the rising tide of spiritual life."<sup>143</sup> There can be no true or lasting vitality in the church apart from the experience of God's saving grace through His Son Jesus Christ.

Where this is absent, no amount of exhortation to give exponents for economic strengthening or devices for saving funds, can inspire a church or a Christian to sacrificial giving of self or substance. "Where this experience is present, the weakest church or member is impelled from within to do the utmost... and the key to self-support is

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<sup>142</sup>Paul Wagner, "Steps in Christian Stewardship," The Indian Witness, 91:305, September, 1961.

<sup>143</sup>The Relation Between the Younger and Older Churches, op. cit., p. 168.

attained."<sup>144</sup>

The Word of God is the source of inner life, available to every church, for which nothing else, like economic or social research or stimulus of money, can be substituted. The nationals and missionaries should possess this inner fire and kindle the flame of revival in the hearts of the Christians in India. When once the heart is touched by the grace of God, the strings of the purse are loosed, and the people will give generously for the cause of the church and others who do not know the saving grace of Christ.

The moment one receives eternal life through Christ, he is obliged to tell others of Christ's love. "If you have it you would want others to have it; if you care not whether others have it, you can be quite certain that you do not have it yourself."<sup>145</sup> When once people taste of Christ's grace and love, they will want others to know of it and experience it as well. They will want to see that nothing obstructs their desire. They will give of their time, talent and treasure. In reaching others the church will become more than self-supporting. It will pulsate with life, vigour and enthusiasm; for the Indian Church will want to reach every people and part of the vast land of India, and even beyond the shores of India.

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<sup>144</sup> Davis, New Buildings..., op. cit., pp. 288-289.

<sup>145</sup> Powell, op. cit., p. 229.

May the Lord be pleased to grant a great revival in India--  
especially the Indian Church. This will take care of most of the prob-  
lems of the church and especially the problem of self-support in India.



## CONCLUSION

Thousands of years ago, God stood before Moses, and in the midst of seeming dryness and barren desert, He commanded him to strike the rock with his staff. An impossible command; but as soon as Moses obeyed, cool, clear satisfying water gushed out and the people's thirst was quenched. <sup>146</sup>

God through Joshua commanded the people to shout, and the walls of Jericho came tumbling down when they obeyed the voice of God. <sup>147</sup>

Jesus stood by the pool and told a man who had been lying paralysed for thirty-eight years, "Arise, take up your bed, and walk." <sup>148</sup> Another impossible command, but yet the man received strength as he obeyed and walked away on his feet.

Today the same God of the "impossibilities" stands before the Church in India and says, "Arise, stand on your own feet, and walk." As the Christians obey and give themselves completely into His hands, they shall receive the strength to do it.

Got any rivers you think are uncrossable?  
Got any mountains you can't tunnel through?  
God specializes in things thought impossible;  
He does the things others cannot do.

When the Christians do their part in supporting the church

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<sup>146</sup>Exodus 17:5-7. <sup>147</sup>Joshua 6:20. <sup>148</sup>John 5:8.

with their all, God will do His part. He will move in mysterious ways His wonders to perform, as the Christians in India conscientiously and prayerfully do their part in supporting the church and making it expand to the four corners of India and to the world.

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