

**A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE CHRISTIAN MISSION  
IN JAMAICA AND KARNATAKA**

**By**

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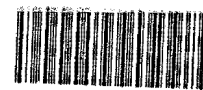
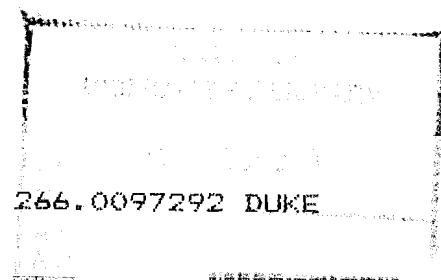
**SEPTEMBER 1999**

Dedicated to  
Dr and Mrs S J Samartha  
*the light in my life*  
and  
Margie, Deepak and Indu  
*fellow pilgrims in my life and mission*

**DECLARATION**

I declare that "**A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE CHRISTIAN MISSION  
IN JAMAICA AND KARNATAKA**" is my own work and that all the sources I have  
used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

September 1999



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## THE PROLEGOMENON

God moves in mysterious ways and also in missiological ways! How my life moved with these two wheels is beyond my comprehension! The quest for this study began in Mangalore when I used to play the "church game" as a child. In the game I was a *Desi* (Indian) pastor and my friend, Danny was a *Paradesi* (foreign) missionary. How this role was reversed, however, is nothing but a miracle. Later, when I encountered obstacles with my studies, I realised that God is faithful and that, having called me (as I believed, like Jeremiah from my mother's womb), He would enable me to see my vocation fulfilled. I stepped out from the then B E M Theological Seminary in Mangalore with a dream to achieve a doctorate someday like my mentor and benefactor, Dr S J Samartha. Though I cannot reach his greatness, I follow in his footsteps, and I cherish the letter he wrote to me from the WCC Geneva: "When we begin our ministry we do not know where we will be called to and how we will finally end up. All that we can do is to be obedient to him and serve him to the utmost." These words proved not only pragmatic but also prophetic! From early childhood I was convinced of my calling to the ministry like Jeremiah, the prophet. Despite my limitations, by God's grace I have been involved in various missions and ministries, gathering their rich legacies, in different parts of the world. Not only have they have provided me with new perspectives, they have also taken me to different parts of the world, giving me a new vision for mission and new dimensions to my commission. I have been lifted from the parochial world-view of Karnataka to world mission and been privileged to study at the School of World Mission, Fuller Theological Seminary, USA and do actual mission work in the United Church in Jamaica, the Church of South India in the Cayman Islands, and the Council for World Mission, London.

I thought of articulating my pilgrimage in mission as research material and also as a dissertation to achieve my dream. So, with my deep involvement in and commitment to the ecumenical movement, the pursuit began at Dharmaram Pontifical Athanaeum of Theology and Philosophy in Bangalore in 1984. At first its scope was confined only to the

State of Karnataka, but before it could be finished, we were rushed to Jamaica to be CSJ missionaries. Thus my childhood game was reversed! But was it God's design? Because it enabled me to see a 'paradigm shift' and 'transforming mission' and a new world-view, it prompted me to compare mission imperatives and the implications of evangelism in Jamaica and Karnataka. Hence a new thesis emerged, which incorporated portions of the former one. Then, when I was struggling to submit this work for acceptance, my efforts proved futile. Again, by God's strange providence, I came into contact with my old friend, Professor Nico Smith of the University of South Africa (Unisa). In 1988 Nico and his wife, Helen, and I shared a mission exposure experience of the International Association for Mission Studies in Basel, Switzerland. That visit was also exciting as I witnessed the mission legacy of the Basel Mission, which had brought the gospel to my ancestors, and later I discovered its connection with Jamaica too! How much I owe to the generous support of my mentor, Dr Smith, who encouraged me to complete this project against all odds. The saga of my life saw a new vision in mission.

All these efforts would have been in vain if I had not received wonderful support and help from many people, to whom I owe my gratitude:

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I hope and pray that the new millenium and this thesis will usher in a new dynamism in world mission and evangelism. So be it!

Hanoch Marma Duke

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(35<sup>th</sup> Year of my Ordination)



## ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS

AICUF	- All India Catholic University Federation
AMEM	- American Methodist Episcopal Mission/Church
AG	- Ad Gentes - Vatican II, Decree on Church Missionary Activities
BEMS	- Basel Evangelical Missionary Society
BEMTS	- Basel Evangelical Mission Seminary
BSI	- The Bible Society of India (Bible Society)
CBCI	- Catholic Bishops' Conference of India
CCE	- Campus Crusade for Christ
CISRS	- Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society
CMC	- Christian Media Centre (Madras)
CMS	- Church Missionary Society (Anglican Church)
CEC	- Catholic Enquiry Centre
CSSM	- Children's Special Service Mission
CNI	- Church of North India
CSI	- Church of South India
CWME	- Commission (Division) for World Mission and Evangelism of the WCC
EFI	- Evangelical Fellowship of India
EMW	- Evangelization of the Modern World (Synod of Bishops 1974)
EN	- Apostolic Exhortation (Evangelis Nuntiandi) of Pope Paul VI
IEHC	- India Every Home Crusade
IVF	- Inter-Varsity Fellowship or Evangelical Union
IMC	- International Missionary Council (Conference)
IAMS	- International Association for Mission Studies
FEBA	- Far East Broadcasting Associates
GS	- Gaudium et Spes - Vatican II, Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World
KCC	- Karnataka Christian Council

- KCD - Karnataka Central Diocese of the CSI
- KND - Karnataka Northern Diocese of the CSI
- KSD - Karnataka Southern Diocese of the CSI
- LMS - London Missionary Society/London Mission Church
- NCCI - National Christian Council of India or National Council of Churches of India
- NA - Nostra Aetate - Vatican II, Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions
- OMS - Oriental Missionary Society - now known as Evangelical Church of India
- PF - Propaganda Fide - The Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith of the Roman Catholic Church
- PAS - Pontifical Aid Societies
- RC - Roman Catholics
- SPCK - Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge
- SPG - Society for the Propagation of the Gospel
- SCMI - Student Christian Movement of India
- SIUC - South India United Church
- SVM - Student Volunteer Movement
- SFMF - Student Foreign Missionary Fellowship
- TWR - Trans World Radio (Vishwavani)
- UBS - United Bible Societies
- UKS - Union Kanarese Seminary
- UTC - United Theological College, Bangalore
- VBS - Vacation Bible School
- WBA - World Biblical Apostolate of the Roman Catholic Church
- WEF - World Evangelical Fellowship
- WSCF - World Student Christian Federation
- WCC - World Council of Churches
- WMMS - Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society (or British Methodists)
- YFC - Youth For Christ
- YMCA - Young Men's Christian Association

**GLOSSARY**

Apostolate	The commission to Christians to go out into the world for continuing the mission and evangelistic activities of Jesus
Church	All those who belong to a particular Church denomination (eg, Church of South India)
church	general term (eg, May the Indian church ...)
Ecumenicals	Those who believe in the unity of the churches (especially the Protestant, Catholic and Orthodox churches)
Evangelicals	Those who hold conservative views on the Bible, theology and practices in Christian life — especially in matters of mission and evangelization, and also who are hesitant to join with the Roman Catholics
Evangelization engagement  in the	The proclamation of the Good News of Jesus directly and in activities by Christians to enable others to know and love Jesus  fellowship of the church in a due process
Indigenous	The Church rooted in Christ, but related to the soil (IMC 1952)
Millennium	The Christian perception of 1000 years, especially referred to in Revelation (20:5-6)
Mission	Mission of God (eg, in God's Mission) or mission organization, in particular conversion and baptism
Non-Christians	Those who are not Christians — people of other faiths
Protestants	All Christians who function independently outside the control of Rome (For the purposes of this thesis, the Orthodox and Anglican Churches are also included under this heading.)
Roman Catholics	All Christians who owe allegiance to the Church of Rome

## **BIBLICAL REFERENCES**

The Biblical references used in this thesis are from

The New International Version. IBS. 1983

The Good News Bible. UBS. 1994

An Inclusive Language Lectionary. NCCC in USA. 1983

## **SUMMARY**

The Christian era has reached the turn of a new millenium. At the advent of the twenty-first century as per the Christian era, the Christian Church has to look anew at its worldwide mission in order to determine its focus for a new century. In this pursuit two different contexts in two continents in which the Christian faith exercised its mission over the past five centuries were chosen for investigation into the modules and paradigms applied by the initiators of this mission in the two contexts.

Chapters 1 and 2 investigate the historical and socioreligious backgrounds of these two contexts in order to arrive at a comparison of the mission exercised in them.

The nineteenth century saw the evolution of different modules in the Christian Mission. Chapter 3 analyses and evaluates the modules applied by the agents of mission in Jamaica and Karnataka.

During the twentieth century a shift in paradigm took place in the Christian Mission. Chapter 4 investigates this shift in paradigm as it presented itself in Jamaica and Karnataka.

Chapter 5 concludes the study and looks into the main issues facing the Christian Mission at the advent of a new millenium. In an effort to answer to these issues, the chapter tries to present a future scenario of the Christian Mission.

## INTRODUCTION

During the past fifty years Christian missions encountered two very significant developments in the two contexts on which this study will be focussing. Firstly the end of colonization and the emergence of independence for India in 1947 and for Jamaica in 1962. Secondly the curtain was coming down on foreign missions, resulting in the formation of indigenous and autonomous churches. It was during these developments that a deep cleavage developed in the churches in both countries between the so-called ecumenicals and evangelicals. This raised a controversy and a dichotomy on the perception of mission and evangelism. While ecumenism widened the missiological definition, evangelicalism narrowed the vision for mission. The confusion became the vital hypothesis for this study.

India's independence provided a transforming scenario of society. On the one hand it gave scope for the emergence of secularism and religious pluralism and on the other hand it made the church to become defensive untidily with the fear of modernism and communism. The renewal and revival of other religions and emerging communalism, added further opposition to the churches. Some provincial governments even introduced legislation against foreign money for missions and conversions to other religions. This put the church even more on the defence to safeguard its existence by withdrawing from direct evangelism. Many churches adopted new methods of mission hoping to fulfil the mission mandate of the church in a different way. At the same time internal strife amongst the churches was raising more and more questions on the legitimacy of the Christian witness. Some churches started to realize the necessity for the unification of churches. Only as a united church, the church could fulfil its mission obligation in a developing new context.

In spite of all the obstacles for Christian missions in an independent India, many para-church agencies from abroad sprang up on the Indian horizon. They started to implement conservative evangelistic strategies of the same mould than the earlier mission-era. While their activities rekindled sympathy and support from conservative Christians, the ecumenical

Christians criticised their methods and started urging for the development of a new theology of mission. Bangalore became the great ecumenical/ evangelical city of the East. Caught up in the cross fire of these two mainstream dynamics in Christianity, we observed with confusion the growing tension and polarization within the churches. While evangelicals believed in the visible extension of the church through Bible based aggressive evangelism and planned the extinction of other religions, the ecumenicals advocated new methods and modules for mission and dialogue with other religions.

Jamaica , where I was sent as a missionary and as a staff tutor at the Institute for Theological and Leadership Development of the United Church in Jamaica, provided a new dimension in mission but also a dilemma on the real meaning of the Christian faith in society. In a country where the majority of the inhabitants are adherents of the Christian faith and growing evangelicalism excited with spirit filled worship, has become a general phenomenon. At the same time in the same society, criminality, violence, sexual and drug abuse are flourishing. This contradiction questions the authenticity of the Christian Gospel as Good News. Was this still the heritage of slavery or was it the failure of the church to be relevant to the socio-economic reality of its context? I came from a country where the overwhelming majority of the population does not belong to the Christian faith and then went over to a country which is so-called overwhelming Christian. It puzzled me to know what the differences were in the mission activities and methods to christianize these two countries. This caused an urge to look in a scientific missiological way at the process of christianization in both countries, comparing the similarities and differences in methods and modules of missions used in both countries and to try to trace in what way societies in both countries were influenced by the christianization of people in the so very different contexts.

Written sources on the Christian mission in both Karnataka as well as Jamaica were plentiful. It was, however, mainly my responsibility for Mission and Development in Jamaica which brought me in close contact with the mission activities of different churches and the way the churches were functioning in society. I spent considerable time in libraries to study the life and mission of the church in Jamaica, held consultations with many leaders of churches and societies and travelled extensively all over Jamaica to gather first hand knowledge of the

ministry of the church. The preliminary quest for this thesis was formulated as a narration of the past history of missions in the two countries and to present a review of the present realities the church is facing in both countries.

Jamaica and Karnataka - both were former British colonies, one in the East and one in the West, thousands of miles apart. Both went through a process of christianization to a certain degree. Today the church has assumed self responsibility for the mission of the church in both countries. The controversy between ecumenicals and evangelicals continue in both countries to the disadvantage of the implementation of the Gospel. The role of the church in the socio-political context, still remains unclear.

Amidst all the confusion among the churches and in the face of all the challenges of a new millennium, the question still remains how the Christian church must fulfill its mission obligation in a faithful way. In this thesis I pose that the nature of Christian mission will remain as an unresolved hypothesis, not only as a paradox but also as a complex activity of faith until the church has developed a better and deeper understanding of its mission in the world. By comparing the development of the Christian mission in two totally different contexts, my intention is to contribute towards this development of a better understanding of this mission. Strangely enough, very few similar comparative studies have been done in order to analyse the mission of the church in different contexts from a scientific missiological perspective. It is my hope that this dissertation may inspire more students to undertake similar studies in future.

In the first chapter of this thesis, a brief look at the history of missions in Jamaica will be given, followed by chapter 2 on the history of missions in Karnataka. While relating the history, an analysis of the societies is at the same time provided. In chapter 3 the development and implementation of different mission modules in Jamaica and Karnataka will be analysed. In chapter 4 an exposition of the transition in the two countries is made and how mission has related to these transitions. In a last chapter (chapter 5), a comparison of the mission of the church in "two different worlds" is made in an attempt to point out in what way the same Gospel bear the same or different fruits in different soils.



## CHAPTER 1

### **Jamaica: an overview**

#### PART I JAMAICA IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

##### 1.1 JAMAICA: THE LAND WE LOVE

Jamaica is a beautiful Caribbean island in the Atlantic Ocean that provides tourists with ultimate pleasure for holidays and honeymoon. Tourists flock to Jamaica for its warm sunshine and white sand all year round and enjoy the best in unspoiled physical natural beauty and Jamaican warmth and peace and tranquillity — or as the Jamaicans say, "cool runnings". (This Jamaican expression inspired the film, "Cool Runnings", which features a Jamaican team who participate in the Winter Olympics in 1994 and 1998 in the bob sleigh event, even though there is never snow in Jamaica. The title song was song by a Jamaican artiste.) The warm friendly greeting, "Welcome to Jamaica", from simple folk adds to the sunshine.

When Columbus discovered this island on 5 May 1494, he was so captivated by its glorious beauty that he called it "the fairest island that my eyes have ever beheld; the mountains and land seem to touch the sky; all full of valleys, plains and fields" (Black 1958:26). So he named it "Santiago", after his country's patron saint. Today it is popularly known among Jamaicans as "Jamaica, the land we love"!

Jamaica is the largest English-speaking island in the British West Indies. It lies 700 miles from Florida, USA and 90 miles south of Cuba. It has a total land area of 4 244 square miles (10 991 sq kms), is 146 miles long, 51 miles wide at its widest point and 22 miles at its narrowest point. Geographically and topographically, it is more or less like Dakshina Kannada, the south Kanara district in Karnataka, India. Jamaica is divided into eleven parishes, created during the colonial era, under the influence of the Anglican Church, and managed by the Parish Council. The Council is headed by the Mayor and Councillors, and the honorary *Custos Rotulorum* represents the

Governor General for all ceremonial functions and purposes. Geographically and numerically, the Dakshina Kannada (South Kanara) is a larger unit than the whole island of Jamaica. Jamaican districts are places where small communities live.

The earliest census figure, dating back to the post-emancipation era, shows that in 1864 Jamaica's population figure was 450,000 (Sherlock 1967:61). After independence in 1962, the population rose to 1,662,798, and in 1994 it stood at 2.3 million, with a gender ratio of 96 males for every 100 females. Recently the Mayor of Kingston, the Honourable Marie Atkinson jokingly said that more or less the same number of Jamaicans live in the United States of America (USA), Canada and the United Kingdom (UK). According to the Jamaica Information Service report, 76.3% of the population is of African origin; Europeans compose about 0.8% and the rest are of Asian and other origin. The population is unevenly distributed over the island and Kingston the capital city, accounts for about half a million people. As a result, some satellite towns sprang up to accommodate the overcrowding from the city.

## 1.2 JAMAICA IN THE CARIBBEAN CONTEXT

The West Indies is an archipelago stretching across 2 500 miles. It faces Central and South America on the west and the Atlantic Ocean, which separates into the Caribbean Sea, lying on the east. It covers some twenty-seven islands and some littoral lands. It is known as (British) "West Indies" or the "Commonwealth Caribbean" by the English and as "Antilles" by the French and the Spanish, who divide them into the Greater and Lesser Antilles. Greater Antilles covers the four larger islands of Cuba, Hispaniola, Puerto Rico and Jamaica. The rest are part of the Lesser Antilles and Dutch-speaking islands. The people, a mixed race of many nations, speak four major languages — English, Spanish, French and Dutch — as well as local languages called *patois* or *creole*. About eighteen million people inhabit these islands. According to Sunshine (1988:45), "West Indies" is a misnomer based on the delusion of Columbus, who thought he had discovered India by sailing west. So, the "West Indians" are the people born in the post-Columbus era; the "Amerindians" are those commonly known as "Red Indians" on the American continents (those who lived there before the arrival of the Europeans), and the "East Indians" are those who came later from the Asian sub-continent of India. About eighteen million people inhabit these islands.

The West Indies is a complex multiracial social structure of Amerindians, Europeans, Africans and Asians. It also includes people from the Middle East as well as Polynesians and Melanesians. According to Cuthbert (1986:13), "Caribbean society may be defined as pluralist in recognition of the sharp class divisions that exist, the variety of ethnic and religious groups, the modes of culture and the conflicting social institutions that are common in all Caribbean societies".

Recently, the Central and North American people also have made inroads into the Caribbean society. Smith (1991:10-11) cites its multinational and ethnic peculiar composition, saying

Through the plantation, European hegemony has been established, maintained, and even naively accepted by its victims as inevitable, if not divinely ordained. The European came to make a fortune, and a fortune he did make for land was easily available and cheap labour was provided by slaves imported from Africa, and later, indentured workers from India. In recent times the European domination has been facilitated by tax incentives to overseas investors and the general preference for Europeans' physical features, skills, speech and cultural and economic values.

Miller (1991:66) describes this pluralistic phenomenon as follows:

Caribbean people are among the most modern in the world. They are Indians without caste, Chinese without dynasties, Lebanese without Militias, Africans without tribes, and Europeans without class. They have lost the distinctions that identified and denied them a place in the old world societies from which they originated. Loosened from the shackles of the historic distinctions that have scored and segregated their ancestors within the old world, they have been freed to discover their common humanity.

Each West Indian island has its own social features, a unique self-image and government system and cultural identity. However, every island projects unity and solidarity amidst its diversities. The Jamaican coat of arms declares *Out of many, one people*. It reminds us that the Jamaican nation is composed of people of many nations and races, who have long lived and worked together in harmony and nation-building and are therefore one people.

Although on the surface, racial discrimination is not practised, yet it has been alleged that preference for "light colour" exists at a deeper level. From this has come the popular saying, "If you are white, it is all right; if you are brown, stick around; but if you are black, step back." This has sometimes given room for a resurgence of cultural, sociological and political acrimony, on the one hand, and apathy, on the other. Some 'black' Jamaicans feel they have another homeland in distant Africa. In this century (20th) this colour complex, which surfaced during the period of slavery, manifested as a protest movement and led to the emergence of socio-political remonstrations and colour-biased tribalism.

Despite being a small island, Jamaica has contributed to the world in many ways. Robert (Bob) Marley internationalized Jamaican reggae music, which even found a place in the prestigious Grammy awards. Marcus Garvey, a national hero of Jamaica, championed the cause of black people. In 1914 he formed the Universal Negro Improvement and Conservation Association (UNIA) for this purpose. He started this crusade even before the modern American Civil Rights Movement came into being, and inspired its leaders. Jamaica's track queen, Merlene Ottey, is a favourite world athlete. There are many other prominent sports personalities in the UK, Canada and the USA who have their roots in Jamaica. Likewise, there are also eminent international heroes in many fields, who trace their parentage or heritage to the West Indies. One of these is General Colin Powell, the former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the USA. In his autobiography, *My American Journey*, he generously shares that heritage of his parents and relatives. According to *The Asian Age* (16 October 1995:1), a newspaper published in India and the UK, Powell comes from six generations of Jamaicans and is a direct descendant of the Coote family, a distinguished line of Irish military baronets. Quoting Burke's *Peerage*, the newspaper states further that, while he was Governor of Jamaica, General Sir Eyre Coote (1762-1824) had a child by his black slave girl, Sally, born around 1807, who was Powell's great grandmother. Even in football, Jamaica is the only English-speaking Caribbean country that qualified to enter the 1998 World Cup finals. In the cricket world, too, many Jamaicans are leaders in the sport.

Despite the agony of slavery and poverty, and the ever devastating threat of natural calamities, like hurricanes and earthquakes, Jamaicans are friendly, sociable, and generally regarded as fun-loving people with a lifestyle that combines fun, rum, the sun and sand of a complacent sea, and

the pulsating rhythms of the calypso, soca and reggae. Their love of music and dance is evidenced in the carefree singing and swaying that accompany every occasion and event. This mood is reflected in general Christian services and worship, too, with shouts of "Ya 'Man", "Amen" and "Alleluia" in the midst of sermons and testimonies.

"Reggae splash", a musical extravaganza, and carnival attract great numbers of tourists to Jamaica. Some of the musicians are even famous in faraway countries like Japan. Along with tourism, music is one of the rich industries that contributes tremendously to the Jamaican economy. Many of the musicians are followers of the Rastafarian faith and are faithful and zealous advocates of *Jah*. Recently some of them converted to the Christian faith, which created a stir in the cultural and religious arena.

### **1.3 A POLITICAL PROFILE OF JAMAICA**

Jamaica is a member of the British Commonwealth and the regional body of the Caribbean Islands. It is a member of the United Nations organizations and the Non-Aligned Movement. The British monarchy appoints the Governor General on the advice of the Prime Minister. The government is formed by holding general elections every four years. Three major political parties compete to take control of the government. Interestingly, a Pentecostal pastor, Hero Blair, is the Chairman of one of the parties.

The 1944 Constitution provided for a two-tier House of Representatives, the appointment of ministers, and universal adult suffrage. In 1958 Jamaica became a founding member of the short-lived Federation of the West Indies, from which it seceded in 1961. On 6 August 1962, it became an independent nation, with full dominion status within the British Commonwealth. Jamaicans used to celebrate the first Monday in August as Independence Day. However, the government-appointed Heritage Committee urged that emancipation day, which occurred on 1 August 1834, should not be forgotten in the nation's history — hence the planned observance on fixed dates of both days from 1997. At present there is a move to adopt a new constitution and to make Jamaica a republic with a presidential system of government.

#### 1.4 THE JAMAICAN ECONOMY

The per capita income in Jamaica stands at J\$ 51,787 as current/nominal, and J\$7,222 as constant/real. (The present exchange rate is 1 US\$ = J\$35.00. The Indian Rupee also maintains more or less the same exchange rate.) Jamaica is one of the underdeveloped third world countries, where unequal distribution of wealth can also be seen. But the neighbouring small Cayman Islands, which were also at the same economic level earlier, have now become rich because of off-shore banking. In the 1970s the Jamaican dollar was as strong as the American currency. Hence, as is evident from their easy way of living, it is the Jamaicans who lost opportunities to become rich. They have not exploited the God-given bounty to the fullest. In the eighteenth century the West Indies was regarded as the most important and valuable part of the British Empire. According to Carter, Digby and Murray (1964:1), Britain "invested a capital of 70 million pounds as against only 18 million pounds invested in India and the East Indies". But some feel that the imbalance in economies is not new to the Jamaican social system and take it back to the colonial era. Curtin (1970:110f) says it created "two economies":

The European Jamaica, which controlled the system since colonization, included slavery into its institutions and built a strong fortune for them. But their handling of the Negroes was so bad that it eventually led to emancipation. After emancipation, the "free system" came into being; and from the beginning of apprenticeship, Negroes began to leave the sugar and coffee estates and go into the "mountain" where they could work the land on their own account; paralleling the gradual failure of the plantations, the small settlements increased in number and productivity, and their importance to the whole economy was far greater than their influence on export statistics.

That may be partly true because, in order to control its trade interests, the British Empire introduced the "mercantile system", a type of monopoly. Thus, with the shrewd exploitation of the West Indies, the British Empire controlled the trade and grabbed the wealth at the expense of the poor local people. Added to that, the easiest and cheapest source of labour was found in Africa and Britain became the leading nation in the slave trade business as well. When this business was affected due to emancipation, it was compensated for by recruiting indentured cheap

labour from far-off India. In the same period the Chinese also came and contributed very much to the present-day economy.

Agriculture is the main basis of the country's economy, and covers half of the island and engages about thirty-six percent of the labour force. The soil is so fertile that it produces commercial crops like sugar, bananas, coffee and citrus fruit in abundance, and coconut, cocoa, tobacco, ginger, pimento and other tropical yields as supportive economic products. But, surprisingly, some of the fruit and vegetables and even sugar are imported, thereby draining Jamaica's precious foreign reserve. The banana industry brought prosperity to some Jamaicans. Sugar is considered 'king' or 'white gold' and used especially in the production of Jamaica's famous rum and molasses. Jamaican alcoholic beverage production has an international market. According to the *Daily Gleaner* (August 14, 1994:1 E), "In 1993 the total production was about 100 million liters, which earned US\$ 2.2 billion." At the same time the *Sunday Gleaner* (September 3, 1995:1 A) reported that "Jamaica ranks among the nations that have the highest alcoholic consumption, and alcohol-related medical and psychological illnesses are increasing, accounting for J\$ 215 million in hospital costs." However, there is very little evidence of drunkenness in public places or family lives that are ruined due to alcohol abuse. This is quite in contrast to Karnataka, where it is fairly common, especially among Christians.

But another important crop, *ganja* or *marijuana*, serves as a curse rather than a boon to Jamaica. Abuse of this drug has destroyed the lives of many in Jamaica and abroad. It is said to have been introduced by the East Indians. However, in Karnataka it is not a popular product. The major portion is smuggled abroad and the people are greedy to earn quick money by this illegal way. Under pressure from the USA, it is now a banned commodity, although its annual earnings are estimated at about US\$ 100 billion. Marijuana smuggling has contributed to the rise of crime and violence, which is not only increasing but also destroying the peace. It also bad for the tourism industry although it is said that tourism assists the promotion of this business as not a day goes by without a tourist being arrested for abuse or possession of an illegal substance (drugs).

Tourism is Jamaica's major foreign exchange earner. According to the *Daily Gleaner* (August 14, 1994:

1E), tourism "earned about US\$950 million in 1994 and is expected to cross a billion dollars soon. It also employs about 100,000 persons directly or indirectly." But it has also created disparity. Many of the beautiful beaches have become the property of the hotels and access is denied to the common people. Tourism creates inflation and upsets the living standard. The glossy posters showing high rise luxury hotel buildings hide the reality of the local people's struggle with the high cost of living and accommodation, and the housing shortage. Paradoxically, Jamaica boasts of having every brand of foreign car, but the transport system for the local people is bad and costly, and some of the rural areas are inaccessible. Added to that, the number of road accidents is also frightening.

Columbus was disappointed in his quest for gold in Jamaica. According to the *Sunday Gleaner* (May 7, 1995:2A), Columbus allegedly threw a hoard of gold into the sea during his fourth and final voyage. Some Jews want to find it for they claim that the treasure belonged to their ancestors, whose ship was sunk. Recently a Canadian company showed an interest in digging for gold deposits in Clarendon. But the most important mineral found in Jamaica is bauxite, for aluminum purposes. Jamaica has the largest reserve in the world — estimated at more than five hundred million tons. Four companies are engaged in mining and exporting, which earns precious foreign exchange for the country. It is undoubtedly a highly paid industrial complex and has created an imbalance between agricultural labourers and this minor sector. The rock waste and factory dumping have also damaged the ecological beauty. Though the government gains royalties, these foreign companies siphon their profits.

Jamaicans are known to be enterprising seekers of green(er) pastures all over the world. Migration to the USA, the UK, Canada and other countries still continues. According to the Opposition leader, Edward Seaga (*Sunday Gleaner*, December 24, 1995:2a), "Jamaicans living and working abroad sent home nearly US\$ 600 million to friends and relatives, which is more than the country earns from agriculture and manufacturing any other export commodities. Only the income from bauxite and tourism is greater than these remittances." At the beginning of this century, the USA, Central American countries like Cuba and Panama, and the UK opened their doors to many who felt they wished be part of the American dream to become rich. This privilege improved the family income of many. When the economic depression struck the USA, as well as



the world wars, some returned home with their savings and could live as upper-class people. Today, though the government is enticing more Jamaicans to return home with their savings, fear for their security and peaceful living loom large in the minds of the people.

When the Canadian and American nations saw the value of cultivating sugar cane and bananas, they employed large numbers of contract labourers from Jamaica. The recent introduction of the "free market" system also widened the gap between the rich and the poor and contributed to the wide imbalance in the living standard of the people. Poverty has still to be eliminated, especially in the rural area, yet it is not evident because of the people's carefree living style and open begging is hardly seen anywhere. Despite the obvious disparity between the rich and the poor, the Christian gospel seems to have nothing to do with this question. There is a dearth of a strong social gospel and instead emotional spirituality is seen as the answer to this vacuum. Accordingly, the evangelical churches have mushroomed in the downtown areas and on the outskirts of the cities and in the rural areas among the poor and the downtrodden. As Smith (1993:11) points out, "it gives them solidarity and enables the birds of a feather to roost together". Another tragedy is that the nation's wealth remained more or less in the hands of non-Afro Jamaicans rather than their compatriots.

### **1.5 EDUCATION IN JAMAICA**

In the long colonial history of the Caribbean, the most badly affected system was education. When the first missionaries came to the island, the Roman Catholic friars did not know or learn the language of the native Arawaks or the Caribs. "This obstacle was gradually removed when it became part of the missionary policy to insist that newly arrived friars should know the Indian language before being allowed to work among them" (Osburne & Johnson 1989:7). Later, they started schools at the mission stations. During the slavery period education was non-existent. According to Miller (1991:176), "Education was considered by the planters to be subservient to both slavery and the plantation system. The most enlightened slave owners had allowed some missionaries to teach the rudiments of reading to a few slaves - but this was as far as education went."

Due to pressure from the missionary societies, the government ordered that slaves should be allowed to have some religious education. This angered some of the planters for they believed that a Negro child should be born and die like a slave. They feared that "once a Christian, the slaves could no more be accounted as a slave. Hence they feared the loss of their hold on them as slaves, by making them Christians. They also felt that by creating such a gap, other planters would curse them" (Augier & Gordon 1971:94). Moreover, what worried them the most was that the slaves would learn the contradictions in preaching and practice in the religious system. In 1760, however, the Moravians were allowed to instruct the slaves about Christianity, but they were forbidden to educate them otherwise. Founding of schools had to wait until after emancipation.

Britain made its first grant for primary education in 1831, followed by another grant of 25,000 Sterling two years later. Some sympathetic planters permitted the slave children to read and write, but mostly mulattos benefited. At the same time some of the slave masters had ulterior motives behind such extended concessions. Miller (1991:72) contends that it "was not for enlightenment, but to prepare them to understand service rules in the planter-dominated society. It was also to induce them to become loyal subjects of the colonial empire to which their colony belonged."

After emancipation, requests and support for education came from some wealthy families. The "Mico Charity, which was bequeathed for the children of freed slaves, also served as a teacher training college. Black (1958:213) notes that in 1883 "only 22,000 Negroes out of the quarter million on the island could write. By 1892 elementary education was made free. This boosted literacy and it soon stood at twice what it had been in 1866. However, as only a few schools were established even after emancipation and the subsequent governments also gave low priority to this issue, it did not cross the secondary level."

Sherlock (1967:154) states that "in Jamaica in the 1940's out of every hundred people over the age of ten, twenty three had never been to school, seventy three had been to primary school for a time, and three had some secondary education. The number of those with professional training was fractional."

Jamaica recovered remarkably from this setback and today primary education is offered free. The University of the West Indies was established in 1948 with its main campus in Jamaica and other campuses in Barbados and Trinidad. Today Jamaica has a literacy rate of 87% among women and 77% among men. This trend shows that women play an important role in society and, to use Miller's words, have put the "men at risk". In 1995 the Jamaican government established a University of Technology. However, the education system is not a high priority in the social system. Teachers are not well paid, which resulted in industrial action recently. Many educated and trained teachers leave the profession for other lucrative jobs. The cost of education has become so high that very few can afford to send their children for higher education. Though some grants and loan facilities are available, society and the government have failed to give top priority to the nation's future asset. One of the most prestigious international scholarships of which Jamaicans are recipients is the Rhodes Scholarship. The Reverend Earl Thomas is one of the scholars who studied law in England on this scholarship. He served as the Moderator of the UCJGC twice.

## PART II EVALUATION OF JAMAICAN SOCIETY

### 1.6 THE HISTORICAL HERITAGE

The West Indies history is made up of the sad stories and the heartache of the people in their survival.

This era began in the last decade of the fifteenth century (1491-1500) and coincided with two great events in the history of the world — the Renaissance and the Reformation of the Church. Therefore Neil (1964) calls it the "Age of Discovery" and Latourette (1962) calls the Columbus-da Gama era, the "Age of Reform and Expansion". Colonization then also became the principal agent of evangelization. The explorers who came not only engaged in fighting for the kings of Spain and Portugal, but also for the King of Heaven!

Jamaican history begins with the Arawaks, the original inhabitants of the island. However, some claim that ever since the days of the Ancient Greeks, a legend has circulated, referring to the

Caribbean as the "Hesperides" or "Antillia", which lies in the Atlantic Ocean. According to Sherlock (1967:13), "French and Spanish speaking people more generally speak of the Antilles, giving to the islands a name that medieval map-makers used for a mythical island of Antillia, which they pictured as lying on the western extreme of the Atlantic. Legend claims that seven Catholic Bishops fled with their followers to the island, seeking refuge from the Arabs, who in the eighth century were sweeping across the Iberian peninsula, making converts to Islam by the sword."

Jamaica's recorded history is generally considered to belong to the period between 750 and 1000 AD (Bisnauth 1989:1) although some even date it as far back as the Stone Age (Sherlock 1967:22) and still be others date it to before Christ (Black 1958:9-10). Clarke (1972:57) cites Olson, who exhumed evidence that could establish island-wide civilization that existed between 400 and 1200 AD and estimated that there were about two to three million Amerindians in this region. They are generally known as "Arawaks" or Arawakan-speaking tribes called "Tainos" or "Tainas". Arawakan was the common language of the Caribs and the Tainos.

Many routes have been suggested for their migration to Jamaica. Some claim they came from parts of the northern part of South America-Brazil or from the region of the Amazon River, passing through the mainland of Florida, the Bahamas and Cuba and crossing the Greater Antilles. Others believe they crossed from the Yucatan peninsula via Hispaniola and Puerto Rico. There are none in Jamaica today who claim their ancestry to them though some Arawakan tribes exist in Guyana even to this day. It is also speculated that they came from Venezuela through the Lesser Antilles and sailed in dugout canoes to reach Jamaica. According to Black (1958:10), some claim that, even before the arrival of the Arawaks, some kind of primitive people called Siboneys (not to be confused with the present Sybonys chain of holiday resorts), who lived in the coastal rocky areas. They were overpowered by the Arawaks, who forced them to become their servants.

Another name for the West Indies is the "Caribbean Islands" because of another tribe who were considered cannibals and gave the Arawaks, the Siboneys and the Spanish trouble until the Spanish conquered them. Not much is known about the Arawakan people as they had been wiped out completely in Jamaica and did not leave any form of writing or record behind. Some

information is contained in the diaries and records of the early Spanish visitors, starting with Columbus. An entry in his Journal in 1492 (Augier & Gordon 1971:1) gives the following description:

Very handsome bodies, and very good faces; the hair coarse almost as the hair of a horses's tail and short; the hair they wear over their eyebrows, except for a hank behind that they wear long and never cut. Some of them paint themselves black (and they are of the colour of the Canary Islanders - neither black or white), and some paint themselves white, and others red, and others with what they have. Some paint their faces, others their whole body, others the eyes only, and others only the nose.

According to the record of Dr Chanca, ship's physician on Columbus' second voyage, "they were brutal people and were warriors, waging war against neighbouring islands and with each other. They used arrows as arms and used tortoise shell or fish spines as points" (Augier & Gordon 1971:2). They fished and farmed in organized communities. Their main settlement, called Maima, was on the north coast of Jamaica, where Columbus first landed. They were simple, peaceful, generous by nature and welcomed the foreigners gladly, not suspecting the invaders' wicked motives. According to Black (1958:13), the Arawakans regarded Columbus and his party "as their gods who were returning from exile. For among their prophetic beliefs, they had a notion that one day some strangers, who would be fully clothed and armed with thunder and lightning of heaven, would come into their midst."

The Portuguese told similar legends in India to support their colonizing tactics.

## **1.7 THE HISTORICAL HEARTACHE — THE COLUMBUS SYNDROME**

According to Miller (1991:98), the 'discovery' of the New World by Columbus is known as the Columbus syndrome. Columbus' vision or plan - the "enterprise of the Indies" - of reaching Asia had three main motives: (1) to find a new route to India and China, (2) to spread the Christian faith to distant lands (for which he left a portion of his wealth in his will) and (3) to acquire geographical knowledge and gold, and have adventure. This dream kept Columbus going against

all the odds and through all difficulties.

After seven years of negotiating Columbus succeeded in convincing Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain to back his expedition. Ferdinand and Isabella, both ardent Catholics, also wished to oust the Muslims from the peninsula. In fact, Isabella was prepared to pledge her crown jewels to fund the expedition. This sacrifice was not necessary, however, for Luis de Santangel, a Jew who had converted to Catholicism, agreed to underwrite the expense. According to Black (1958:25), Columbus entered into an agreement with them on cost sharing and at "the crown's expense he was given the command of an expedition, with the mandate to discover and acquire islands and mainland. Among the rewards he demanded were the title of "Admiral", the Vice-Royalty of all the territories discovered and a tenth of all the gold, silver, gems, spices and other merchandise resulting either from the conquest or trade."

On his first voyage Columbus explored various islands of the Bahamas, the north coast of Cuba and part of the north coast of Hispaniola or Haiti, the Arawak name by which it is called today. When the explorers saw the local people with gold trinkets, they were delighted, thinking they were in the mythical *El Dorado*, the golden land, but hardly any gold was found! Columbus was not as cruel as some of the others who commanded the Amerindians to bring them gold dust, and then cut off the hands of those who failed to bring enough. The terrorized natives committed mass suicide rather than face the gold-hungry Spaniards.

On his second voyage, while visiting the same places, Columbus learned about Jamaica from the natives. They knew the island by the name of *Xaymaca*, meaning the "land of wood and water" or perhaps the "land of springs", but told Columbus it was the "island of gold". Columbus landed at Jamaica on 5 May 1494 and named it *Santiago*, the "land of goldmines". However, he was sorely disappointed by the absence of gold there. Because of its glorious beauty, he renamed the island *Santa Gloria*. Columbus saw that the local people were simple and practically defenceless. Seeing the Spaniards' complexion, big boats and armour, the Arawaks received them with honour, gifts and peace offerings the following day. They handed their possessions cheerfully to the gold-hungry invaders for their cheap trinkets, beads and other articles. At first Columbus tried to win the Arawaks' confidence with friendly gestures and an exchange of gifts. Their generosity proved

fatal as the invaders demanded regular supplies of food. When they refused to oblige, Columbus resorted to threats. According to Black (1958:27),

Here also the Indians were unfriendly, but Columbus was determined to land for he needed wood and water and a chance to repair his vessels. So he sent the ship's boat on ahead with crossbowmen who killed and wounded a number of the Indians. The Spaniards also let loose a big dog on shore which chased the terrified Arawaks and bit several of them savagely. Then Columbus landed and took possession of the island in the name of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain.

The myth of reaching India did not die with Columbus. (Although Columbus did not discover America, 14 October is observed as Columbus Day, a public holiday. In Jamaica the day is not observed nor was the 500th anniversary of Columbus' landing observed in 1994.) Until his death, Columbus was convinced that he had found islands off the coast of eastern Asia as he had expected. He expressed his desire to be buried in the land he had discovered therefore his remains were taken from Spain to Hispaniola in 1542 and placed in a vault in the Cathedral of Santo Domingo, where his bones are said to be to this day. According to Garcia (1965:17), when Columbus discovered Cuba, he thought it must be Cathay, the eastern end of the continent of Asia, and wrote, "I believe ... it is the island of Japan." Accordingly, he named its eastern and western points Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end of Europe and Asia! But on exploring it further, he found nothing like what Marco Polo had described. Undaunted, he wrote in 1493, extolling the secure harbours of the land, the beautiful scenery, luxuriant vegetation, fertile plains and native Indians, who were "generous with all they possessed" — which lured other European nations to the West Indies (Lowenthal 1972:13).

Columbus was a man of great achievement, who also committed great atrocities. It is recorded that on his second voyage, Columbus and his crew returned to Spain with five hundred native American slaves. He wrote, "Let us in the name of the Holy Trinity go on sending all the slaves that can be sold", thus sowing the seeds of racism and oppression and laying the foundation for the slave trade. This resulted in the exploitation of the indigenous peoples and the later systematic

annihilation of the ethical-mystical nucleus and the cultures of millions of African slaves. The year 1492 marks the beginning of the decimation of Africa through the slave trade, which became an integral part of colonization or the "five hundred years of indigenous, black popular resistance" (WCC-IRM 1993:19).

On the last leg of his voyage, by a stroke of good fortune, Columbus did find some gold in Haiti or the enterprise might have ended in disillusionment. He would hardly have found anyone to believe in him or finance his subsequent expeditions. As their main thrust was the search for gold, the invaders/captors forced the defenceless local people to mine for gold, which proved a fatal and colossal waste. Within a very short time they had stripped the islands of whatever gold there was. They also forced the natives to work on the farms and ranches, which had been taken from them. The natives started dying from starvation, hard (forced) labour, abuse and the new European diseases, like smallpox, against which they had little resistance. Contrary to their Christian teaching, the *encomenderos* treated the Arawaks inhumanely and even mercilessly butchered those who rebelled against them. Many Arawaks committed suicide by drinking cassava juice rather than endure the cruelty.

By 1611 the Arawaks, who had numbered about 60 000 before the Spanish invasion, had been completely wiped out in Jamaica. As Black (1958:35) puts it, "a terrible blot on the period of Spanish rule in Jamaica (as elsewhere in the West Indies) was the extermination of the boriginal inhabitants - the Arawak Indians. Horrifying accounts of Spanish brutality to these gentle people are given by the historians of the period."

For his discoveries, Columbus was given the royal title of Viceroy of the Indies and appointed governor of Spain in Jamaica. Jamaica (Santa Gloria) became a Spanish colony. Columbus made the place where he first landed his capital and named it *Sevilla Nueva* (New Seville). Today it is known as Discovery Bay. He built a fort and started erecting the first Christian church on the island at St Anne's Bay. The church was never completed, however. Today a simple plaque commemorates the fact. Columbus built his naval base at Montegoa Bay (*El Golfo de Buen Tiempo*) from where he explored other parts of the island. Nine years later, on his fourth journey to the Caribbean, he was forced to spend more than a year in Jamaica in very trying conditions.



His ships were wrecked, he was very sick with arthritis, there was a shortage of food, and many of his crew members deserted and, in fact, mutinied.

After Columbus' death his son, Diego succeeded him and was appointed Governor of the Indies in 1508. The Spanish conquest of the West Indies was complete in 1515. Spanish history in Jamaica is very scant. The Spanish contribution to Jamaica's heritage is either very small or the British destroyed all or most of the evidence of it. Some rivers (eg, Rio Minho, Rio Cobre) and places (eg, Savanna-la-Mar) bear Spanish names and some Spanish architectural structures are still Jamaican landmarks. The Spanish were responsible for introducing several fruit trees and food plants to Jamaica in order to increase their food supply, such as bananas, oranges, grapefruit, sugar, cotton, tobacco and pimento. Their search for gold proved futile and they withdrew to settle on other islands. Later, the Spanish colonial government transferred the capital to the newly built St. Jago de la Vega, a city on the south side of the island, which is known today as Spanish Town. When the British captured Jamaica, they continued to keep Spanish Town as the capital until 1872, but then transferred it to Kingston, which was proclaimed a corporate city by the Royal Charter of King George III in 1802 (Atkins 1996:29). During the Spanish occupation of the islands, Portuguese and Jewish settlers also emigrated from Europe to this new region to exploit their business interests. The Portuguese were expelled though because they failed to live peacefully with the other settlers. The Jewish people settled well and were soon prosperous. Today Jews are still among the influential business people in Jamaica.

Spain's supremacy in the West Indies was challenged by England, France and Holland. So the Caribbean Islands became the battle zone for commercial competition and international naval exercises and the scene was set for their conquest and colonization by various European nations. In 1506 the French attacked the Spanish settlements in the Lesser Antilles and captured their vessels. By 1542 the Dutch began to strike at the region. Finally, by the early seventeenth century, Britain successfully eliminated all other competition. Today the English influence is still very evident in Jamaica.

Jamaica was the first British colony in the American subcontinent. On 10 May 1655 Britain captured Jamaica from Spain with very little bloodshed. In 1661, by proclamation of King Charles

II, a civil government was established with a governor and a council to rule on behalf of the monarchy. The king presented a mace and seal for the island. The official seal designed by the Archbishop of Canterbury is the present coat-of-arms of Jamaica (Black 1958:58). Later, an Assembly was formed, which became a law-making (legislative) body by 1664. By the Treaty of Madrid in 1670, Spain acknowledged England's right to rule Jamaica as well as other West Indian islands already occupied by the British.

Cromwell's grand "Western design" resulted in the British taking over vast territories held by Spain. He issued his famous "Proclamation", encouraging people to settle in Jamaica and describing the grants of land to settlers as well as the rights they would enjoy in respect of fishing and the discovery of mines and quarries. The Proclamation also guaranteed them freedom from customs duties for a period of three years and laid down that all persons born on the island would enjoy the same rights as the English people. Besides English, Irish and Scottish people also immigrated. Some English religious rebels and political convicts took advantage of certain concessions as deportees to escape punishment in their homeland. Soon the immigrants began to exploit the island's wealth and became rich. They demonstrated their power and wealth by building huge mansions, which are still called "great houses". Today there are about 700 such mansions serving as landmarks of the colonial period.

Like the Spanish before them, the British also imported African slaves because they could withstand harsh conditions and work very hard.

## **1.8 THE MAROONS AND THE BUCCANEERS**

### **1.8.1 The Maroons**

When the first Spaniards arrived, they brought with them some African Morisco sailors. It is said that some of these Africans slew several Arawak men for their women. From their union with Arawak women came a mixed generation called *Maroons*. Their union with Carib women produced "black Caribs" (Carter et al 1964:40). According to Robinson (1971:14), "they are a community decidedly Spanish-African, liberally laced with Arawak Indian blood". Lowenthal

(1972:32) calls them the "black country descendants of runaway slaves, who could be considered Africans". They spoke a strange language — a mixture of African dialects, Spanish and a little English. Today though they speak only Jamaican English. Black (1958:85) suggests that the name Maroons might have been derived from the Spanish *cimarron*, meaning wild or untamed, because of their unruly behaviour.

At first they worked as slaves for the Spanish. When the British captured Jamaica in 1655, the Spanish allowed them to flee and they took to the hills, settling in the Cockpit Country in Trelawny and the Blue Mountain areas in St. Thomas. However, they soon became a thorn in the flesh to the British rulers, who fought them for 76 years, costing the British Empire nearly £250,000. Britain passed over forty Acts of Parliament and promised them full freedom and gifts of land, in vain. Cudjoe, the Maroon leader, continually harried the British. Eventually the struggle ended, a treaty was signed and the Maroons were awarded their independence. Those who failed to surrender, were captured and removed to Nova Scotia, Canada, where a Maroon bastion was established. The harsh Canadian winter conditions proved too severe for the Maroons so they went to Africa, where they settled in Sierra Leone in 1800. Today their descendants are still to be found among the people of Freetown in West Africa.

Those who remained in Jamaica settled in five settlements and enjoyed special concessions from the British. But when they were dissatisfied, they tried to incite the African slaves to join them in a general uprising. The government used the army and dogs to subdue the Maroons. The Maroons are known in Jamaican history as the first freedom fighters. They live by their own tradition though most of them are Christians.

### **1.8.2 The Buccaneers**

Around the year 1664, about 700 to 800 pirates settled along the coasts of the islands of Tortuga and Hispaniola. According to Black (1958:60), they were "men of almost every nation but mainly French, English and Dutch runaway bondsmen, castaways, escaped criminals, political and religious refugees, who had sunk all their national rivalries in their sworn opposition to the Spanish". These *Buccaneers*, as they were called, gave the Spanish — and later the British and

Dutch — colonial authorities in the Caribbean great trouble.

The Buccaneers came to Jamaica, which afforded them protection and many advantages, and made their hideouts in inaccessible places in the mountains and near the sea. Port Royal, which became a "city of sin", was their stronghold. They recognized no authority and lived by robbing Dutch and English villagers. They ate wild pigs and cattle and grew a little tobacco, which they bartered for arms, provisions and clothes.

One of their great heroes was Henry Morgan, who became friendly with the British and was named Admiral and Commander-in-Chief. He was also knighted and made Lieutenant Governor of the island by the British in a cunning move to chase the Spanish away. Port Royal was destroyed by an earthquake in 1692 and the remaining part swept away by a tidal wave that followed.

## **1.9 THE LEGACY OF SLAVERY**

Slavery takes first place in the history and evolution of Caribbean society. The West Indians find it difficult to speak calmly about the cruel slave trade, which charted the regions modern history and society. The slave trade was so lucrative that, according to Sherlock (1967:49-50).

Between 1518 and 1865 slavery mushroomed and developed into a vast international business. It resulted in the transportation of fifteen million Africans to the Americas, destroyed anywhere between thirty and forty million (natives), provided Britain with capital for its industrial revolution, spread cotton plantations over the American deep south and sugar cultivation throughout the Caribbean archipelago, depopulated large areas of West Africa, and everywhere degraded human beings to the level of things. The degradation is bitter, and sugar is bitter because it is linked with slave plantations.

Slavery is an ancient savage practice and part of the social and economic structure of the ancient civilizations of China, Persia, Babylon, Egypt, Greece and Rome. Paradoxically, although the slave trade helped the spread of Christianity, it mocked Christian ethics at the same time by its

ugly colonization process. The Arab Muslims, who were forbidden by their religion to make a fellow Muslim a slave in their own land, found an easy way to gain from this business by going all the way to Africa. Christian European nations, who were blessed by the pope to conquer the heathen world in the name of evangelization, follow suit and profaned the Christian faith. Slave transportation was disgraceful not only from a Christian point of view, but also from a sociological world-view. It made it difficult for the Church to regain its credibility beyond Christendom and at the same time ridiculed Christianity as one of the ships used for the slave trade was named *Jesus*.

Slavery was first introduced into the Caribbean by the Spanish, who used native Arawaks for this purpose. During this period Las Casas of Seville became an "apostle and protector of the Indians" and championed the abolition of slavery. His father had accompanied Columbus on his second voyage to the New World. Las Casas was made an *encomendore*, but on seeing the inhumane treatment of this system, gave up his position and undertook the reforming of the Spanish colonial shame. Las Casas presented and argued for the Amerindian cause to the highest powers, undertaking twelve journeys across the ocean to plead their cause with the king of Spain and the pope in the Vatican. He initiated practical projects for the rehabilitation of the dispossessed Indians as an alternative to the oppressive *encomienda* system. Finally, in 1542, he succeeded in getting a new law of the Indies passed by the Spanish monarchy, abolishing the right of the colonies to enslave Amerindians. This curtailed the economic growth of the colonies, however. The missionaries had to struggle to maintain their integrity of evangelistic witness in the midst of the tension of the slave trade system. Colonial greed and the slave trade eliminated the natives and the religious ethos. So Las Casas advised the king to import small numbers of African slaves. When his advice was misused and taken beyond the limits and code of conduct, however, he bitterly regretted it (Carter et al 1964:73).

Colonial powers wanted the strongest, cheapest and most easily obtainable source of labour to work in the New World and Africa became the target for developing this trade. When the Portuguese became one of the leaders in the slave trade, they also used African countries for their lucrative trade. At the same time it should be noted that Africans also sold themselves to this fate. According to Carter (1964:25), the increasing demand for slaves for the West Indies and the

Spanish Main also increased slavery amongst African tribes because the "chiefs coveted the European goods which the traders offered them, but they could obtain them only in return for slaves. As a result, tribal wars were waged with the sole object of capturing slaves. Petty offenses were punished by reducing the offenders to slavery and native slave dealers kidnapped children."

Therefore, it is not only the colonizers who should repent of their past mistakes, but also the Africans or Asians, who brought such misfortune upon themselves through their own disunity.

The slaves brought to Jamaica belonged to different tribal or national groups in Africa, mostly from the east and central regions. According to Curtin (1970:24), fairly large numbers of *Mandingo* from the region between Niger and Gambia were brought as well as "*Pawpaws*" from Dahomey, and a few from the Congo and Angola. By far the most slaves belonged to the *Kramanti* or "*Cormoantyn*" -- *Ashanti-Fanti* people of the Gold Coast (Ghana) and the *Ibo* of the Niger delta. (For this reason, the Jamaican Government invited the President of Ghana to be the chief guest at the first official Emancipation Day and Independence Day celebrations in 1997.) The market price for slaves varied according to the region from which they came. In the eighteenth century between £20 and £50 could be paid for a slave.

During transportation the slaves were treated inhumanely. They were chained and huddled together on the lower decks and badly beaten. Because of the inhumane methods and conditions of transportation, in many of the shipments not more than fifty percent of the slaves lived to work on the estates. On docking in the ports, the slaves were paraded for sale and bargained for. They were dispersed to various parishes and plantations. The planters were reluctant to bring members of the same tribe or one type of people to their estates for fear they might unite and revolt. Their solidarity was broken as they were dispersed to various estates. On the estates, instead of African names, they were given European names, usually ones connected with the plantations or the owners. As a result, they gradually began to forget their roots and their own culture disappeared under the overpowering European influence. In time they forgot their own native dialects and in their place developed pidgin language. The slaves worked day and night throughout the year for almost nothing in return; enjoyed very little comfort and facilities, and faced torture and punishment as part of the daily routine. McNeill (1911:17) states that they "had no relationships, no homes, no rights, no privileges. They were simply beasts of burden, being entered on the estate

books as property, alongside of cattle and mules; and like them, they were battered, sold, hired out, fed and worked according to the needs or whims of their masters."

The workforce on the estates included people of all ages and even children and women were not spared. According to Carter et al (1964:31), the workforce was "divided into three sets of gangs. The "great gang" consisted of men and women for hard labour under an older slave, known as a "driver". The second gang was made up of younger and pregnant or older women for lighter work. A third "small gang" was the "pinkey gang", under the care of an old woman, who weeded the gardens and looked after sheep and pigs." The slave trade went on without any real challenge. A much sought after prize in this enterprise was the *Asiento* or Contract. It was conferred by King Charles in 1517 and granted the monopoly or sole right to supply slaves to the New World. The Portuguese, Dutch, French and English merchants vied for this right (Black 1958:104-105). Africans were moved into the Caribbean year after year in steadily increasing numbers. Though statistical records vary, it is generally estimated that from the time of Columbus to 1807 about 3.5 million African people were shipped from West Africa to the British West Indies. Bisnauth (1989:81) states that between 1651 and 1830 "the English, French and Dutch brought more than 4.5 million Africans to the Caribbean". According to Sunshine (1988:12), "between 1651 and 1805 the English brought about 1,900,000; the French from 1664 to 1830, about 1,650,000; and the Dutch about 900,000 slaves during the same period". However, Sherlock (1967:51) maintains that "by 1700 there were 70,000 slaves in the French West Indies, as against 20,000 whites in the British West Indies" while Hewitt (1994:10) points out that "the African slave population grew (in Jamaica) from 11,500 in 1658 to about 291,000 in 1795; and Jamaica being the largest British ruled island in the Caribbean, it also developed as the main plantation economy". Black (1958:117) estimates that "by 1800 the number of Negro slaves in Jamaica was frighteningly quite high, with about 300,000 slaves to 72,737 white settlers. Subsequently, it increased to 610,000." Carter (1964:30) states that "in Jamaica, there were more Negroes than in all the rest of the British islands together. So efforts were made to maintain checks and balances."

The importation of slaves was also designed as part of the triangular route for the slave trade. Here Jamaica served as a transshipment centre for incoming slaves to the Americas. Merchant ships from Britain carried merchandise to Africa and in exchange for slaves. From Africa they

took the slaves to the Caribbean islands and sold them at considerable profit. On their return journey from the Caribbean they carried sugar and other tropical produce for which there was a great demand and market in Europe (Augier & Gordon 1971:49). The dawn of the nineteenth century opened the door for steady all round development of Jamaica. Sugar and liquor became the leading export items. Under the Crown Colony system, the island saw many improvements and reforms as well. The opportunity to export more commercial products from the island brought a new period of prosperity but also created an imbalance in the society. By the early eighteenth century, Africans greatly outnumbered Europeans in the British and French West Indies and efforts were made to regulate the slave trade, but these failed. The Jamaican Assembly passed bills to restrict the importation, but without success. The plantocracy controlled the affairs of the colony for nearly 150 years. The Negroes could not vote or hold office. This and their harsh treatment were conducive to rebellions or the black liberation movement, which saw a turning point in Jamaican history.

During the rebellions or attempted uprisings some plantations were burnt and slave masters killed. Three-Finger Jack, who became a legendary hero of the freedom fighters, Nanny, a woman worker, and Sam Sharpe were among the leaders of this movement, which began with the famous Morant Bay Rebellion in 1865, under the leadership of George William Gordon. He was a son of a slave woman and her white master. Gordon inherited power and possessions and was also a committed churchman. He was a member of Scot's Presbyterian Kirk, and later switched to the North Street Congregational Church; but then founded his own church. One of his associates, Deacon Paul Bogle, supported him in organizing a riot. Both became martyrs for the cause of freedom, and today are honoured as national heroes and featured on Jamaican currency.

In all these situations, the role of the Church cannot be overlooked. The arrival of the non-conformist missionaries marked the beginning of a new era in the quest for the freedom of the slaves. Though white slave masters dominated the social order and tried to control the established churches and prohibited them from interfering in this business, missionaries like William Knibb from the Baptist mission identified with the hopes and struggles of the black people. While the planters viewed their work with hostility; the political rulers ensured that the many restrictions they imposed would hinder the missionaries' strategies.



The American War of Independence saw the dawn of a new era of freedom in the Caribbean. The Jamaican white-dominated assembly indirectly supported the American freedom struggle in the hope that they could see a new freedom for themselves, but not the Negroes' right to live freely. But, strangely enough, it was the French support for this cause, with their revolutionary slogan, "Liberty, equality and fraternity", that echoed in the West Indies and inspired the people to take up this challenge. This resulted in more uprisings, which made the plantocracy nervous. Added to that phenomenon, the troubles with the Maroons and Buccaneers increased. Then natural calamities like hurricanes and earthquakes also weakened the nation's prosperity.

At the same time, there were "friends of the slaves" in the United Kingdom, like William Wilberforce. They were called humanitarians or saints. Wilberforce was considered a saint or he was instrumental in the abolition of slavery in the West Indies. He argued for the ban on non-British missionary activities to be lifted. He was influenced by the Wesley brothers to strive for the social upliftment of the people. A number of fellow Christians joined them and came to be known as the Clapham Sect. This group led Great Britain to abolish the slave trade and eventually to abolish slavery altogether. In 1787, they introduced a law of amelioration or improvement to the conditions of the slaves. According to Johnson (1989:94), they argued "there should not be fresh recruits from Africa; the planters would have to adopt humane treatment in order to give shorter hours for working, better housing, less brutality, better food, the encouragement of marriage, and above all Christianity, would all lead to a progressive amelioration of the slaves to the point where gradually and without disruption slavery would shade over to freedom."

Wilberforce and his friend, Prime Minister William Pitt, were the crusaders of the anti-slavery fight. They were influenced by John Newton, an English clergyman, and former captain of a slave ship who, after his conversion, attracted crowded congregations at a London church. Pitt died in January 1806 after securing an order in Parliament, prohibiting the importation of slaves into the newly acquired colonies. But Wilberforce and Granville Sharpe did not stop until they steered the Abolition Bill triumphantly in 1807. According to Carter et al (1964:57-58), the Bill, which came into force on 1 January 1808, "declared 'all manner of dealing and trading' in slaves in Africa or in their transport to any other place to be 'utterly abolished, prohibited and unlawful', and that any British subject acting to the contrary would be fined 100 Sterling, for every slave so

purchased, sold or transported. Any British ship engaged in the trade would be seized... After 1811 a British subject engaged in slave trading was liable to transportation. In 1824 slave trading became a crime punishable by death." But, it dragged its feet slowly. The slave trade had been abolished as far as Britain and her colonies were concerned, but slavery remained. It was hoped that the Bill would bring about freedom or emancipation, as it was called, in gradual stages for complete freedom, which was the final aim of the abolitionists. So again Wilberforce and his friends started a fresh campaign on behalf of the slaves. They submitted a petition with nearly 1.5 million signatures to the British Parliament. They formed an anti-slavery society, and finally the bill was passed granting emancipation. Wilberforce died just four days before this great day, but with the satisfaction of having accomplished his life's goal and task. On his death bed he cried, "Thank God, that I should live to witness this day." Though many of these champions of emancipation are remembered with gratitude, no visible monuments were erected in their memory in Jamaica. Since 1998 Emancipation Day has been observed officially.

On 1 August 1834 slavery came to an end in the Caribbean. The British government granted £15 million sterling to the planters as compensation, of which Jamaica received £6.15 million (Black 1958:163). The white planters were upset and the National Assembly was strongly opposed to the move. Finally, however, in spite of the protest, the Ennoblement Act was passed. Jamaica was the first colonial legislature to incorporate the abolition law.

As the day of emancipation drew near, there was fear and general apprehension about rebellion, violence and bloodshed. Many thought the slaves would take advantage and attack their masters. So the government posted police and military forces and, in addition, declared July 31 a holiday. About 310,000 black and coloured people in Jamaica gained their freedom that day and, contrary to people's fears, there was no irregularity or drunkenness. The Church had prepared the people well for the day, which passed peacefully. At the old Congregational church (now UCJCI) at Daveyton in Manchester the church bell rang the whole night. At dawn the slaves buried chains, the symbols of slavery, and planted a willow tree, which is called the tree of liberty. According to Carter (1964:94),

On the memorable day, Thursday, 31st July 1834, the workers returned from the fields

with the knowledge that the next morning they would no longer be slaves. Their simple evening meal was eaten hurriedly. Then some climbed the hilltops to watch for the dawn - the dawn of freedom. But thousands dressed in their Sunday best, hastened to their churches and chapels, which had been decked with flowers, green boughs and graceful palm branches... On the great night they sang hymn after hymn with great emotion. Midnight drew near; the congregation bowed in prayer, while ministers stood, watch in hand, till the last minute ticked away, and they could give the message, "You are free."

Emancipation from slavery was called the "moonlight of freedom" and many honoured the Queen with a toast and danced and sang: "God bless the noble Queen Victoria, who set Jamaica free. August morning came. This is the year of jubilee. Queen Victoria gave me freedom, Jubilee." Emancipation changed the whole basis of social organization in the Caribbean radically and dramatically. The next ten years were a critical period. Lowenthal (1972:61) states that while "for most of the people, emancipation remained partial and incomplete", the "freed slaves remained in the economic bondage of political subservience and social limbo". At the same time, many freed slaves wanted to move away from the plantations where they had been employed, live independently and own their own land. But as land was costly, they adopted co-operative methods by pooling their meagre resources and bought lands for joint holding and farming. Missionaries also helped them by purchasing land, opening schools, which were used as church buildings for religious activities, and building housing colonies, called "free villages", for freed slaves. William Knibb, a Baptist, was one of the pioneers of these settlements. Nearly two hundred villages were established with a total area of 100,000 acres of land. It is said that some of the villages were named after Wilberforce, Clarkson and others in remembrance of their contribution to the freedom cause. About 19,000 families benefited from this scheme (Carter et al 1964:114). Later, these mission colonies came forward in support of mission and church work and the establishment of schools.

Emancipation also marked a turning point in the people's life style. Parents wanted their freed children to live in the towns rather than work on the estates, to be better educated and to be able to earn a good livelihood. Charitable trusts like Micro Charities were established for the educational support of slave children.

Though slavery was officially abolished, some of the planters nevertheless held on to their power over the slaves. They introduced an apprenticeship system whereby they held on to the slavery system indirectly, and used it as part of their compensation. The misuse of the term "apprenticeship", which commonly indicates learning a trade under supervision, was a violation of justice. But the plantocracy feared that they would be ruined by giving the slaves freedom and allowing them to live in a free society. This system gave them bargaining power and was described as "barbarous treatment" (Black 1958:170). Although under this system the estate owners paid the workers, there was widespread dissatisfaction over the poor wages and the long working hours. Anyone who went against the plantocracy was punished. According to Johnson (1989:116), in the biography of James Phillippo, a Baptist minister who opposed such treatment, in "the year 1836 (the first year of apprenticeship), about 25,000 punishments were adjudged in various parts of the island. And in the first eight months of the second year 27,000 more were recorded. During the two short years 60,000 apprentices reached in the aggregate one quarter of a million lashes and 50,000 other punishments by the tread wheel, the chain gang and other modes of legalized torture." So, Knibb, who earned the name "friend of the Negro", and others forced Parliament to appoint a select committee of the House of Commons. Finally, on 1 August 1838 full freedom came to Jamaica amidst peace and joyous thanksgiving. From 1865, the new Jamaica began to take shape as a Crown Colony. Thereafter developmental work began to bring new prosperity to the people. Between 1880 and 1930 many people went to the UK, the USA and other Central American countries in search of greener pastures.

The twentieth century saw the spirit of nationalism emerging with a demand for full political freedom. From 1938 to 1953 important changes took place, which finally led to the birth of a new self- government system. During this time, Jamaica saw a new political messiah, Marcus Mosiah Garvey, Jamaica's greatest national hero. Although, according to Black (1958:232-233), "nothing much came of his schemes, Garvey, himself a strong and colourful personality, acquired a powerful hold on the imagination of the mass of the people and did much to create unity among Negroes and give them a pride in their race. Later political leaders were to profit from the lessons of Garvey's career." He internationalized the black cause by taking this movement to the UK and the USA with the help of his UNIA. Sherlock (1973:268) states that Garvey "destroyed the *quasi-backra* concept and undertook the work of building black confidence, black self-respect, a

knowledge of black history and a regard for Africa's place in human history". Garvey's efforts saw the black people exercising the vote for the first time in 1944. Following him, two national heroes, Alexander Bustamante and his cousin, Norman Manley, emerged and launched labour movement. They also founded the Jamaica Labour Party and the People's National Party, respectively, which gave greater voice to the labour force. Although at first the English-speaking islands formed the West Indies Federation in 1958, it did not last long. On 6 August 1962 Jamaica became an independent nation under the British. Bustamante's becoming the first Prime Minister on an electoral basis, completed the process of emancipation.

### **1.10 JAMAICAN CULTURAL TRAITS**

Due to the influence of the various people who came there, Jamaica developed a mixed culture. But, in spite of the multiracial situation, Jamaica is saved from the linguistic chauvinism or becoming a "tower of Babel" under which India suffers. Whenever a European nation came into power, it not only introduced its own national language but also erased its enemies' languages. As Britain was the last empire to establish its supremacy, only English has remained as the people's language for the last three hundred years. The Africans and the Asians who did not come from a single region or language group were so dispersed that they lost touch with their languages and were forced to learn their masters' language. Slowly the immigrants developed a coded language to communicate among themselves without their masters' knowledge. So, Patois or Creole developed as a needed language among the common people. When the Indians came, they tried to retain their language, Hindi, but slowly it also evaporated completely. Only the Chinese have tried to maintain their cultural identity and language in their own circles to this day. Smith (1991:45) describes this process as follows:

The British Caribbean culture is one form of Creole culture. The Creole complex has its historical base in slavery, the plantation system and colonialism. Its composition mirrors its racial mixture also. European and African elements predominate in fairly standard combinations and relationship with the arrival of Chinese and East Indians.

It became a multi-racial ethnic society with variable degrees of acculturation and assimilation

in all aspects. However, most of them still speak about their 'African, Indian, Chinese' or 'Syrian' heritage rather than the Jamaican soil in which they are at present rooted.

Today Patois has won a place in the Jamaican cultural arena. Though it may look a little different from English, it is basically rooted in it, with some multiracial influence and a colourful as well as rhythmic intensity. A sprinkling of European words as well as African intonation and Indian syllables are recognizable in it. It is even ridiculed as "broken" or "Scottish" English.

Can a heart's language become an agent of cultural revival? With the introduction of Reggae music, Patois has gained an identity and a place in the anthology of Jamaican culture. The message is an ideology of social change.

"Reggae has roots in African heritage. It glorifies *Jah* and the Rastafarianism and of course Haile Selassie. The themes ... are rooted in their despair of dispossession, and in their African Diaspora" (Cooper 1993:121).

Bob Marley and other musicians, poets like Louise Bennett, and the comedian, Oliver Samuels internationalized Reggae's style and it became popularized in pantomime and cultural theatre. Reggae festivals are organized annually and attract many tourists.

Therefore, Patois enthusiasts demand recognition on the basis of cultural and ancestral connections.

Recently, some even went so far as to say that it should replace English and be the official language of Jamaica. In order to patronize it publicly, Patois advocates recommend that the language be taught in school and some even suggest that the Bible be translated into that dialect. Some are trying to communicate the gospel in this medium and style in the rural areas and urban areas. So, the Bible Society of the West Indies has started a project to produce Scripture passages in Patois on audiocassette as a common language project. In support, the General Secretary of the National Association of the Teachers of English Language, Courtney Stewart, cited the following reason from a letter (dated 10-6-1995) from the Association:

Jamaican Creole (Patois) is a perfectly autonomous and wholly viable language system. The increased acceptance of spoken Creole as a medium of expression and communication is apparent from growing popularity of Dub poetry, D J and local music among Jamaicans from all levels of society and especially among the young. Even the radio announcers, government officials and other persons of influence and standing are a part of the process of validating Creole by using it in the public.

But educated people disapprove of the use of Patois in public and Lowenthal (1972:128) states that "even some who habitually speak Patois at home, still publicly deny that they can understand it, or use it in jest or mockery".

Jamaica's first settlers, the Arawaks, had their own language style and cultural system, but it was not in written form. Spanish missionaries took trouble to learn about them and wrote down brief accounts of their customs, beliefs and practices. The Arawaks were a pleasure-loving people who enjoyed dancing and singing, smoking and playing their ball game, called *batos*. According to Black (1958:19), the word "tobacco" comes from the name for the pipes used by the Arawaks; the plant itself was called *cohiba*, which was cultivated on a large scale. According to *Collins English Dictionary* (1991:1618), the word "tobacco" is of sixteenth century origin from the Spanish *tabaco*, perhaps from Taino: leaves rolled for smoking, assumed by the Spaniards to be the name of the plant. The Arawaks wore very little clothing and used cotton to weave their hammocks. Black (1958:15) says the original name was *hamac* and the Amerindians used this cradle for pleasure and resting. Hammocks were unknown to Europeans before they found them in the West Indies. They were small eaters and cultivated cassava and yams, caught fish and drank a good deal of liquor, especially on social occasions. The Carib life style appears to be similar to that of the Arawaks. The Caribs believed that the souls of brave warriors went to heaven — the beautiful islands — where Arawak slaves served them. The souls of cowards went to the desert beyond a high mountain where they became the servants of the Arawak masters.

Due to the legacy of slavery, most Jamaican folk songs reflect the agony of slavery and are not merely songs for entertainment and revelry but reflect social and spiritual values with significant connotations. The lyrics articulated their lifestyles at home and of their society, the scenario of the

market-places or complaints against the sordid conditions in the fields where they were engaged in hard labour. As the slaves were forbidden to talk while working, folk songs were used to sing about their plight. Hoyte (1985:16) states that in their folk songs "they speak of struggle, faith and survival; they reflect on identity and destiny; they wrestle with their ultimate concerns, life and death, hope and despair, joy and sorrow. They express their understanding of God and salvation."

And when they anticipated emancipation, they composed new songs, which projected hope for life and also demonstrated God's power of liberation. So these folk songs not only portray material and social dimensions, but also bear testimonies of faith. Hoyte (1985:16) asserts that in "depth it has spiritual agony or reflects a quest for the existence of God. In some of the folk songs there is some kind of psychological and spiritual gem which is realized whenever the song is sung, and in the life of the whole community. There is born from that seed a new energy and life force, which causes a renewal in the life of the whole."

This spirit is also demonstrated in classical Jamaican dance forms. However, with the introduction of dance hall and later carnival culture, modern dancing has taken a different turn and projects sexual overtones. Therefore, in some churches there are mixed reactions when dance is used during worship as part of the liturgy and liturgical renewal. While some appreciate liturgical renewal as cultural expression, others frown upon it. Father Ho Long, a Roman Catholic priest, and the UCJCI adapted some dance forms to project liturgical expression and to communicate the gospel message meaningfully.

### **1.11 RELIGION IN JAMAICA**

The Caribbean society is a pluralistic society. It is a multiracial, multicultural society with people from many nations bringing with them their heritage and culture. Religion in Jamaica has been influenced by many cultures. Therefore Jamaica stands out not only as a replica of foreign civilization but also as a nation that has been Christianized and evangelized. To an outsider, especially from a non-Christian or secular background, Jamaica appears to be a Christian nation (though many question this assumption) or at least a religious nation. At the same time, because the Christian faith bears a European cultural stamp, it has generally been branded "missionary



Christianity" (Smith 1991:1).

### 1.11.1 The Arawakan influence

When the European invaders saw the Arawaks, they thought of them as heathens, people without any God or religion, despised them as idolaters, and called them barbarians and pagans. These offensive and hurtful attitudes of the self-righteous Christian invaders cannot be accepted unquestioningly, however. According to Osborne (1994:11), they were godly and religious people because with "no influence of Christianity or Judaism, they had a primitive belief in a Supreme Being, who was invisible, dwelt in the heavens, was not addressed in supplication by the Indians, and had no practical influence in their lives. This Supreme Being was further acknowledged as 'Aiomun Kondi' (Dweller in the Height) and 'Ifilece W'acinaci' (Great Our Father), as well as 'W'amurrecti Kwonci' (our Maker)."

Bisnauth (1989: 2ff) adds further insights into their faith, stating that the "gods and goddesses were represented in images (*Zemis*) of toads, reptiles and distorted human faces. They also had medicine men (*Cacique*) or priests called *Piaman* or *Bohitos*. The sway of their priests and medicine men was powerful on the community, who acted like their guardians and preserved social, religious and medicinal knowledge in certain old songs. They built temples (*Cues*) in honor of their gods at each village. The *Bohitas* used exorcism and trance magic to interpret the action of the deities, as well as to bring messages or commands from the gods." They wore clay images of the *Zemis*. According to Osburne and Johnson (1989:3), "Arawak culture was intimately bound up with the religion of *Zemism*; so that it pervaded every facet of Arawak life. *Zemism* was a form of ancestor worship wherein the deceased ancestor became the object of adoration. And if it was a *Cacique* that died, he became the object of worship of the whole tribe."

Central and South Amerindians had a common god, who was known by many different names. They believed in the existence of one supreme, invisible, immortal and omnipotent creator, whom they called *Jochuna*. Like *Nohochacyum* of the *Locandons*, *Jochuna* was also regarded as gentle, kind and benevolent by the Arawaks. He was also the creator of the earth. The Guyanese Arawaks called him *Wamurreti-Kwonci* (our maker). They had other gods, who represented good and evil.

The evil one was identified as *Kanaima* and the spirit of the dead was called *Opita*. They believed in heaven and angels and their abode was called *Coyaba*. *Guabancex* was the god of storms, wind and water, together with *Hurakan*, the god of tornadoes — like the Quiche Mayas of Central America or Quetzalcoatl of Mexican and Gucumatz of Guatemalan mythology. In the Caribbean a tornado is a destructive force most feared and also called a hurricane hence the name *Hurakan*.

### 1.11.2 The African influence

The African slaves brought to the Caribbean brought with them their deities and magical formulas. This very much reflected their faith in ancestral gods. They believed in spirits and imagined that the spirits lived in trees and rivers as well as in some animals. In Jamaica these spirits are called *duppies*. But the planters separated families and disintegrated the tribal unity as well as their religious practices. Bisnauth (1983:83) maintains that, given "the massive difficulties which the practice of African religion faced in the Caribbean, it must surely be one of the most remarkable things in the region's history that so many aspects of that religion survived." But the slaves practised their faith clandestinely. The plantocracy were afraid of and opposed to African religious practices because of their evil power. So they encouraged the churches to undertake the Christianization process. In 1760 the British officially banned the practice of *obeah* and it was punishable by death.

The Spanish made it a rule that within a year of their arrival on the plantations, slaves had to be taught the Catholic religion and baptized. The British, however, hardly encouraged religious instruction or baptism of their slaves. Under the Spanish, Saturdays and festival (feast) days were holidays to do marketing so that on Sundays the slaves could go to church. But the British forced the slaves to work even on Sundays. Perhaps because of this, today, on half the Jamaican men are found in church on Sunday.

### 1.11.3 The Christian influence

The Christian influence in this part of the world began with the arrival of Columbus on his expedition to the Caribbean. Columbus, whose first name was Christopher, which means "Christ-

bearer", was also profoundly Christian in his philosophy to bear witness to Christ. However, he has been commended or accused as the one who carried Christianity across the Atlantic to the heathen west as colonizer (Garcia 1965:13). When Columbus landed in the New World and saw the aborigines with their native faith with all their colourful decorations meant to please their gods, he felt he had another mission to accomplish. He even claimed that it was God's plan to spread the gospel to the rest of the world so God had enabled him to discover this New World. Thereafter, according to Black (1958:42), the Church "played an important part in the life of the times. There is still a Red Church and a White Church Street in Spanish town, both named for Spanish chapels, as well as Monk Street — a reminder of the dark-robed, sandalled figures which were once familiar features of the old town."

For all practical purposes, the Europeans' discovery of the New World was the extension of their boundaries. By strange coincidence, this also happened between the Renaissance and the Reformation and served as damage control in Europe. The Pope wanted not only to save the Church from recession but also, according to Lefever (1958:7), as the Vicar of Christ "claimed to be the head of the universal church by the will of God. Popes began openly to claim to be superiors of the emperors. The pope, they maintained, is the representative on earth of the God whose servant the emperor is. To disobey the pope is to disobey God and to forfeit one's right to rule."

Thereafter, wherever the crown claimed its footstool, the cross was planted and the colonial flag raised on top of the church building. Massive emigration started from Europe to the new country. The heroic discovery of the new world no doubt provided the scope for implanting the church there. In the name of Christ, the power of the Church was consolidated. Bisnauth (1989:12) states that as "explorers, discoverers, 'Conquistadores' and traders sought to open up the region for economic exploitation, missionaries and priests sought to introduce what they considered to be the blessings of European civilization to the indigenous people and to incorporate them into the fold of Catholicism - the religion of the '*republica Christiana*'" (own emphasis added).

Spanish missions were first established in the West Indies and Mexico. The Spanish and the Portuguese gradually conquered the American continent. As a result, Roman Catholicism was

established as the official religion in the whole region. Today there are three Roman Catholic dioceses in Jamaica. The early Church authorities always clashed with the ruling governors on various issues hence they did not extend mutual co-operation in their affairs. Consequently, the Church did not benefit from any favours even though they were under the *Patronato* or patronage of the state, who was bound by papal Bull to bear all the expenses of the mission work (Kane 1978:58).

The church was allowed considerable power, especially in the matter of internal organization. In civil matters, the great distance between the colonies and the conquerors reduced the government's power, especially in ecclesiastical authority. Churchmen also held key posts in the State. The bishops became advisors to the kings and exerted considerable influence on colonial policy. In 1524 Peter Martyr, an abbot of Jamaica, was one of the members of the *Consejo Supremo* (Garcia 1965:63). The merchants and the knights of the Spanish ruling class became wealthy, with the right to rule under the Spanish monarchy. When the natives refused to work for them under any condition, the Pope issued orders for the introduction of the *Encomienda* system in 1503, by which they were bound to work whether they liked it or not. This also led to slavery, and the Church blessed that practice. According to Williams (1994:10), the Pope believed that "being as they are hardened in the habits of idolatry and cannibalism, it is good that I should issue this decree ... I hereby give license and permission to capture them ... paying us the share that belongs to us and selling them and utilizing their services without incurring any penalty thereby. Because if the Christians bring them to the island and make use of their services, they will be more easily converted and attracted to our holy faith."

This opened a floodgate for large-scale evangelization and Christianization. Thompson (1995:86) reports that "in 1529 Franciscan friars were reporting 8,000 to 14,000 baptisms a day in some areas of the New World". The Pope sent wise and upright God-fearing and virtuous men, who would be capable of instructing the indigenous peoples in good morals and the Christian faith. Christians began to sing, "Jesus shall reign wherever the sun does his successive journeys run." They knew that the sun never sets in the colonial and Christian empire as well. No doubt the missionaries were very courageous and had vision, but they were also cruel and arrogant. They wanted to spread the gospel at any cost. They tried to extend their authority for glory and profit,

and gain numbers of adherents to their faith. They were violent and vicious people. In order to advance the cause of Christ, they undertook some devilish works.

Under the *Patronato (Padroado Real)* system, the Pope appointed both the Portuguese and Spanish rulers as patrons of the Church in the New World they had discovered. Thereby all mission expenses were borne by the state as the monarchs were made responsible for the patronage of the missions. As a result, the King of Spain was the head of the Church in Jamaica and the Pope could not communicate directly with the colonial clergy. All papal Bulls and briefs had to receive the royal stamp of approval. All tithes for supporting the clergy and spreading the faith went to the King. He paid the clergy and selected the missionaries, and his permission had to be sought for ecclesiastics to go to or come from the Indies. All appointments to Sees and benefices lay with him. By the end of the sixteenth century, royal control of the Church was consolidated (Garcia 1965:62-63).

In their pursuit of empire building, again the Spanish were blessed by a Papal order in 1499, which obligated the natives to the *Repartimiento-Encomienda* system. Thereby the pope not only 'commended' Indians to Spanish conquerors, *Conquistadores*, but also in 1503 made the slave masters the patrons, *Encomenderos* or commissioners of the faith. Bisnauth (1989:16) points out that "by this system the Spanish Crown gave or commended Indians to Spanish conquistadors and gentlemen with the understanding that these encomenderos would have the right to exact labour or tribute from the Indians. In return for this favour, the encomenderos were to provide religious instruction for their Indians and to offer them protection."

Thus the Amerindians were not only subjected to the Spanish monarchy, they were also Christianized. It cannot be ruled out that most of the helpless people were converted to Christianity because of this imposition rather than from a conviction of faith. In return for the right to extract labour or tribute from the Amerindians, colonizers offered them Christian instruction as well as protection. The Catholic sovereigns also felt that the Christianizing of the natives constituted a valid apostleship and should thus be done under the authority and patronage of the Prince of Apostles, the Pope. Pleased with this gesture, the Pope issued five more papal Bulls, granting the crown extensive control over both the land and the Church. This was some

kind of an ennoblement power by which the crown and the Church appropriated the New World without any hesitation. Guillermo Cook (in IRM- WCC 1993:93) cites one instrument that the colonizers used to twist the natives' arms:

I (the Conquistador) ask and require of you (chieftains of tribe) that you recognize the church as sovereign over the entire universe, in her name the Supreme Pontiff called the Pope, and the king and queen .... as your superior lords ... based upon the aforementioned donation, to consent and permit the priests to preach to you. If you do this, you do well (it is your obligation and duty) and their Royal Highnesses and I will receive you with all love and charity. But, if you do not do this, with the help of God I will enter powerfully against you and will war against you everywhere and in every way that I can. And I will subjugate you to obedience to the church and their Royal Highnesses. I will take you, your women and children, will enslave you and as such will sell you... and I will take your belongings and will do unto you all the harm and evil that is in my power to do.

Whether or not Indians accepted this requirement or understood its contents, they were brutalized in the name of religion. They could not survive the harsh treatment of the Conquistadors. Many villages were destroyed and local people fled to the bushes even before the manifesto was read. Thousands of Amerindians were brought to the Christian faith either by force or inducement. Many resented the idea of the new religion since it was closely associated with the heavy work forced on them. According to Bisnauth (1989:13), Martin Fernandez de Enciso, a Conquistador, even sought religious sanction for such action: "God had appropriated the Indies to the Spaniards in much the same way that he had given the promised land to the Jews. In their conquest of Canaan by force of arms, the Israelites slew many Canaanites and enslaved others; and all this was done by the will of God because, like the Canaanites, the natives were also idolaters." Though some accepted baptism to receive gifts, many committed suicide, refusing to accept a foreign religion and fearing the infliction of the violence and brutality. Bisnauth (1989:29) maintains that many Indians "resented having been practically forced to become Christians. They bathed themselves several times to repudiate their earlier Christian baptism. Many remained animists at heart while they went through the motions demanded by the ritual and ceremonies of Catholicism. Most of them were able to accommodate the beliefs and practices of the new religion by

understanding them in terms of their native beliefs." Many natives were killed while they were being evangelized and many tribes, like the Tainos, were reduced to a small minority and lost their identity and their indigenous religion and customs with this Christianization process. As Richard (in IRM-WCC 1993:87) points out,

According to modern studies , the total indigenous population south of the Rio Grande in 1492 (today Latin America and the Caribbean) was around 100 million inhabitants. Consequently, it is terrifying to understand that by 1570 only 10 to 12 million indigenous people remained. This was, undoubtedly, the largest genocide in the history of humanity.

What did colonization gain? First, the Spanish and Arawak, two opposite cultures, met face to face in Jamaica. This helped the Christian faith to take root in that part of the world and introduced European Christianity. So, when thoroughly analysed, the colonial system shows it was political domination, economic exploitation, social fragmentation and cultural disorientation (Watty 1981: 17). Secondly, it saturated the "hat and boot culture at the expense of the indigenous life style of living with feathers and hides". Furthermore, a synchronistic religion developed, combining native faith with Christian faith in which Roman Catholic accommodation theory helped. Thereby while Christianity projected Jesus as the Supreme Being, the local people identified *Jocahuna*, son of *Wamurreti-Kwonci*, as Jesus and *Atabei*, an Arawak goddess, as the Virgin Mary.

After the defeat of the Spanish power, the Roman Catholic influence receded and the British Anglicans and the Protestants gained supremacy. During the great revival of the 1860s, the Christian faith came out rooted in African cultural dressing and its indigenous religious beliefs, but was practised incognito during the colonial period. Today, in spite of its mixture, it is favourably accepted and appreciated in the guise of indigenization and culture.

#### **1.11.4 The Asian influence**

The post-emancipation period saw another mainstream flow to the Caribbean from the Asian subcontinent. The East Indians brought Hinduism and Islam and practised their faith without any

problems. Some historians, anthropologists and others maintain that Indo-amaicans did not really succeed in maintaining an autonomous cultural presence. Shephard (1993:15) reports that the Masinghs, for example, recorded that "Indian culture never got a sound foothold in Jamaica" while Erlich noted that the rural Indians of Jamaica "appear to be assimilated into the general lower class of the island". Shephard (1993:150) notes that later, "Indian settlers though had strong religious traditions, yet became targets of Euro-Christianity through the proselytizing activities of their missionaries." However, that was not the case. In fact, at first the Presbyterian Mission provided pastoral care to the Indians by recruiting Hindi-speaking ministers. Then in 1930 they realized that the younger generation were not only ignorant of their ancestral culture, but had also forgotten their languages. When the old generation, who were well versed in religious tenets, died and because the ancestral land was far off, the exodus to the Christian faith could not be stopped, and the Indians submerged with the Jamaican life style and majority religion for their own survival. Thus a new cultural and religious integration took place in Jamaica. The East Indians found the Christian faith more attractive and their children liked it. Most Indo- Jamaicans proudly claim that they are Christians first and their Indian heritage comes second.

Today, even though Hindus are in the minority in Jamaica, like any ethnic minority, they enjoy religious freedom to follow their ancestral customs. Recently afresh stream of Indians, who came for business and professional interests, tried to maintain their faith and stir up the old feelings. *Ananda marga, Yoga, Sri Satyhya Baba* and other neo-religious movements revived some of the dying spirit and some die-hards started showing solidarity with the ancestral faith. Thus a multireligious picture emerged in Jamaica. The Caribbean Conference of Churches appealed for exclusive language, that divided people by calling them "believers" and "non-believers", to be avoided (Mularain in CJT 1989:8).

#### **1.11.5 The neo-religious influence**

Jamaica is proud to hold the world record for the greatest number of churches (7 per square mile). Almost every mountain and district has a biblical name and practically all the Christian feasts are observed as official holy days and holidays. Church growth in Jamaica occurred in two stages: the Great Revival Movement in 1860 and the mushrooming of different Christian denominations in



the twentieth century.

At the beginning of colonialism the official churches — Roman Catholics and Anglicans — introduced Christianity to the island. Later, concern for the evangelization of the slaves led several European Protestant Missions to enter the religious life of the people. According to Gerloff (1992:139f), the Great Revival Movement saw "a revival of Christianity but of the African force-vitale, to be interpreted as a forcible amalgamation of Christianity with the African ethos, or a kind of syncretistic process".

The twentieth century saw an unprecedented mushrooming of different Christian denominations in Jamaica and the entry of the Sabbatarian and Pentecostal groups from the American subcontinent. These groups found an ideal breeding ground in the Caribbean. Some of the Pentecostals claim Trinitarian doctrines and others are purely Christocentric, stressing only Jesus. Broos (1997:12) maintains that Pentecostalism "is important for Jamaica as a vehicle for American influence in the region... as the dominant power." Other reasons are also given. For example, many Christians who fell away from the established churches because of their disciplinary standard, found forgiveness for their personal sin and spiritual and physical healing (of afflictions which they feared were caused by sin) through baptism by immersion, laying on of hands, and prayer. Some cultist groups, like the Mormons and the Jehovah Witnesses, also came to Jamaica.

## PART III CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Jamaica's history has affected at least three areas of life: the family, religion and the Christian Church.

### 1.12 PERSPECTIVES AND PERCEPTIONS

#### 1.12.1 The family structure

According to Augier and Gordon (1971:183), at the time of emancipation the Jamaican assembly was given the mandate to abolish Sunday markets, admit slave evidence, sanction marriage,

abolish taxes on manumission, prevent the separation of families, regulate punishments and establish savings banks.

As the above directive shows, two major issues were given top priority during that period: family life and slavery. Jamaica, if not the whole Caribbean, is regarded as a people who follow the matriarchal system. "The weakness of the father's role in the family relationship is traced historically to slavery and the plantation system" (Miller 1991:70). This phenomenon led to many studies, Edith Clarke's (1972) monumental work, entitled *My mother who fathered me*. In her study, Messiah (Miller 1991:63) states that "33% of all the households in the Caribbean Commonwealth are headed by women; and in Jamaica it is 33.8%". In Jamaican society, grandmothers earned a great respect for their role. They became a shield and refuge for their grandchildren, especially those born out of wedlock, when the mothers went in search of a livelihood. Therefore Gerloff (1992:175) says "it is the mothers and grandmothers who 'father' the children and look after the extended family". Bisnauth (1991:98) goes on to explain their other role:

The nanny's (grandmother's) contribution to the preservation of African religious ideas and practices cannot be underestimated in the Caribbean; particularly since she sometimes functioned as 'akomfo' and 'suman kwafo' as well. She preserved and transmitted these religious ideas.

This matriarchal trend has been reversed today. Claudette Brown of UWI personally feels that "the increased violence in the Jamaican society today is because the mothers neglect their children when they go out in search of livelihood".

Miller (1991:68-70) classifies about fifteen types of family patterns in Jamaican society, including common law and visiting relationships. The concubine (or Sweetheart) system in the Caribbean has generally been attributed to the slave system. Most of the slave masters lived in concubinage with their slave mistresses and even practised polygamy. Later, they encouraged the slaves to follow this system, mainly to augment the supply of slaves to work on their plantations. Therefore, slave masters treated church marriage regulations as an interference with their right of (human)

property. According to Clarke (1972:21),

It is a fact that the planters, in opposing legal marriage for the slaves, were primarily concerned with the likely effect of this on their right of free disposition of their slaves. However, by so doing, they also were indicating that legal marriage was the prerogative of the white person and associated only with the caste structure. Their monogamy, however, almost invariably had concubinage as its concomitant.

Therefore many conclude that the "marriage relationship unfortunately proved unsuccessful in Jamaica" (Broos 1997:30). But the Statistical Institute of Jamaica reports that there is a high marriage rate (18,708 in 1996) even though the divorce rate is also rising (7.4% per 100 marriages in 1996). Police records show more domestic violence, leading to increased murder rates.

Can slavery be blamed or used as an excuse for perpetuating this life style today? In 1945 the then Governor-General's wife tried to arrange mass weddings to regularize this system - an attempt that failed and was never repeated. Today even many educated women would like to mother a child outside of marriage. It is generally estimated that between 70% and 80% of births in this nation appear to be "illegitimate". The Status of Children Act, 1976 prohibited the use of the term "illegitimate" thereby removing this stigma. Thus children born in whatever type of union were legitimized. Provision was also made for children born of this kind of union to receive maintenance and have equal status with other children if their patriarchy is lawfully established. Family courts were set up for this purpose. Today the law recognizes common law unions and makes it possible for common law wives to inherit their husbands' property.

In 1828 an Act was passed to regularize the marriages of slaves, solemnized only by ministers of the Churches of England and Scotland (Osburne & Johnson 1989:70). The Presbyterians can take the credit for normalizing this system. Only after emancipation were Negro marriages put on a legal footing, but it did not produce the desired results. So Cuthbert (1986:14) quotes Richard Barret's article, "Marriage and Ministry in the Caribbean", in which he noted that marriage "in the West Indian situation differs from the European pattern. It has been attributed to the marriage system which prevailed in England during the colonial period, where the institution of marriage

until 1600 AD was a casual affair." This led some to question why the concubinage system could not be legalized in Jamaica. Panton (1992:8f) even ascribes this phenomenon to their "African heritage — Ashanti and Akan tribal marriage systems" and hence calls for tolerance, which has been much debated.

This is a paradox or question of morality in mission theology and raises the matter of the Church's response to this issue. The Church had to struggle to maintain its moral and religious codes as many church members, especially women, could not receive the sacraments or participate actively in church (community) life because of this way of living. Some of the churches are sympathetic to common law relationships as well as the concubinage system. Gerloff (1992:175) and Smith (1993:21) found that the younger (or newer) churches welcome these people. According to Broos (1997:12), religion had become "an integral part of Jamaica's color-class stratification. The practice of the black lower classes was typified by middle-class observers as both superstitious and immoral — superstitious for its healing lore and immoral for its enthusiasm and lack of marriage rite.

It was to this milieu of the early twentieth century that Pentecostalism was introduced. Black lower-class Jamaicans could, through Pentecostalism, credential themselves to perform the marriage rite. At the same time American powerful revivalism legitimized enthusiasm and spirit possession as well."

Another consequence of this life style was the demand for adult baptism, which became fashionable and many thought would "wash away all sins". Even the old Reformed churches were victims of this dilemma. The same churches also faced another problem: not only did many unwed mothers bring their children for baptism, but in many cases they were alone. The churches satisfied themselves by saying that the children who came into the world were not illegitimate and therefore should not be denied the sacrament of baptism, but their parents should be treated (not punished) for their "illegitimate" relationship. In Jamaica Christian ministers from an orthodox or traditional background (could) find it strange to baptise children born outside a marriage relationship. Children born out of wedlock carry their father's name while this is denied to the mothers, even though some of them stayed in that relationship the whole life.

Many women died heartbroken because of this kind of abuse by men. Some died grieving for not being allowed active participation in or membership of the church and to receive the sacraments because they were regarded as "living in sin". The, too, many sincere and honest women stay away from Holy Communion (the Eucharist) because of this. This, in turn, raises the question of what should be regarded as "sin" and salvation from what. What should the ethical and moral issues in society be that should be governed by Christian principles as Christian ethics and sacramental grace are at stake here. This is where cultural analysis should take place, keeping in mind how Jesus dealt with this issue and his concern for sinners.

Many blame womenfolk for submitting themselves to this kind of life style. But during the slavery period skilled female slaves were used as cooks, washerwomen and nurses in the urban areas. After emancipation many black and coloured women opened guesthouses, especially to meet the needs of tourists, but still maintained a high level of morality in the public places. As Sheena Bua (CJT 1993:16) points out,

Despite the racial and sexual discrimination against free black and coloured women, and their lack of education and training, their contribution to the economy of Jamaica was not insignificant. Their participation in the catering and service industries was important enough to guarantee some of them the patronage of the government. Their skill and kindness as nurses earned them acclaim from locals and travellers. They were more than the mistresses of white men. They were Jamaica's early hard working matriarchs.

Even though the men carry the stigma of "illegitimacy" openly, they have not seriously tried to abolish the system and change their life style. The teenage pregnancy rate in the Caribbean is also quite high and the introduction of dance hall entertainment and recent carnival shows have aggravated the situation. Condoms are distributed freely during carnival and TV programmes regularly show explicit and sordid sex scenes. The number of Aids victims and the divorce rate are increasing, and prostitution, although not seen publicly, is claimed to be one of the main tourist attractions.

Today women are playing important roles in society, but more important representation of women could still be seen in government and other public affairs. In recognition of women's leadership the Church forward has ordained women ministers. The UCJGC elected a woman Moderator, Dr Adlyn White, who was reelected to the post when the UCJCI was formed.

### **1.12.2 Religious fiasco**

The Reverend JM Davis, who was sent by IMC to conduct a survey in the 1940s, concluded that "Jamaica was the most over-churched country in the world". As a result of the involvement of so many missions in Jamaica's colonial history, it gives the impression of being a Christian island if not a religious society. How did this happen? Was it through colonization or evangelization? Or is it just the extension of churches through penetration by the various denominations? Today Jamaica has more than one hundred denominations.

When the Church entered the Medieval Ages, it was the beginning of a new period in the history of the world. While the Church wanted money to display its glories in the form of cathedrals and monuments, it also needed reinforcement. The political powers saw the New World as an extension of their dominion while for mission, it became a channel of church extension. Although more often evangelization took place with genuine concern, at times overzealous Christians also used the sword to win souls. History records that not only Christians but others also became martyrs in the name of mission. Thus conversion gave way to conquest and discovery led to possession. As Neil (1964:450) so aptly puts it, whether "we like it or not, it is a historic fact that the great expansion of Christianity has coincided in time with the world-wide and explosive expansion of Europe that followed on the Renaissance; that a whole variety of compromising relationships have existed between missionaries and government; and that in the main Christianity has been carried forward on the way of western prestige and power".

It is no exaggeration to say that, for better or worse, the world has seen a transformation because of the gospel. The Renaissance contributed to the civilization of the world in many respects. It is true that during that time, the Church opposed scientists and inventors on some issues, who then became submissive to the church against their consciences. But soon the Church used them to

its own advantage. The Europeans brought their advanced knowledge, skills and varied cultural practices to the unknown world and gave it a new culture and a new religion — the Christian faith.

In time they erected fine churches, which were replicas of the cathedrals in their own countries and other parts of Europe. Europeans immigrated and their unions with the local people gave rise to a new generation. Wherever the colonizers settled, they introduced drastic change. How did this European invasion affect West Indies cultural and social life? According to Lowenthal (1972:5),

In terms of culture the West Indies are also Old World appendages. No other ex-colonies are so convinced they are British or French or cling more keenly to their European heritage. Local loyalties or pan-Caribbean feelings notwithstanding, Englishness, Frenchness and even Dutchness and Americanness permeate all aspects of West Indian life.

They brought new crops and animals to the New World. Cocoa palm, sugar cane, bananas, breadfruit, pigs and domestic fowls were all brought to the West Indies after the arrival of Columbus. These changes affected the old life style radically. While they were sometimes a helpful contribution, they also became harmful. For example, it is said that when the natives saw the riders on horseback for the first time, it was a frightening experience for them because they thought they were seeing monsters — half man and half beast! In almost every respect the invaders subjugated indigenous peoples. The old civilization of the Arawaks and Caribbs disappeared and gave way to a new institution of slavery and import of European culture. In the process of imposing themselves, the Europeans did not hesitate to employ radical methods; for they believed it was necessary for "building inner and outer correlation between Western culture and Christianity and therefore claimed for themselves the task of 'spiritual conquest' or *Conquista Espiritual*. Thus they also became the most militant advocates of European culture" (IAMS 1995: 18).

The colonizers undoubtedly had great courage and vision, but they were also arrogant and cruel,

especially the Spanish. They came with a burning religious fanaticism. They wanted to spread the Gospel for the glory of God and king at any price. Not only did they want to extend the territories of their domain for glory and profit, they also wanted to increase the number of converts to their faith. Though they did not use the whip of the slave masters as punishment; they used the Cross as the symbol of salvation. In order to advance the cause of the Church, they planned and perpetrated some of the most evil acts that contradict the Christian ethos and faith. The cross became a symbol of colonial power and glory and not the sign of the oppressed.

What did the discoveries and evangelization gain? Did the people of the New World need evangelization? Did evangelization bring civilization?

Recently people demanded an apology from the colonizers for their past atrocities and even the former colonial powers have acknowledged the atrocities they perpetrated. No doubt they have bow down in shame for the atrocities committed in the name of Christ and religion. Evil actions of the past are hard to erase. The cries of the voiceless victims oppressed during slavery may have to be heard now. This calls for sober reflection, repentance and confession to erase the bitter legacy of imperialism and colonialism.

Sometimes the churches are accused of supporting slavery or of being silent witnesses to the violation of human dignity. However, it should not be overlooked that during the slavery era, some of the religious leaders vehemently opposed its practice. They protested against the cruel treatment meted out to the slaves on the estates. The non-conformist missions, the Wesley brothers, the Quakers, the Moravians and the Presbyterians all influenced the leaders of the anti-slavery movement. From its inception, the London Missionary Society opposed slavery on religious and moral grounds. The churches from all the above denominations had already taken root in Jamaica during the colonial regime. There is not much evidence to show that the Protestant churches used any type of force, inducement or coercion in the conversion of people to the Christian faith in Jamaica. It spread like a ripple, influencing or attracting others with qualitative service and mission. In Jamaica, the missions preserved genuine Christianity and avoided people becoming a mass movement product or "rice Christians".



At the same time, these missionized nations would acknowledge what the gospel of Jesus has done for them. We cannot simply repudiate the Good News people received because of some unfortunate events. In India, the gospel was Good News to the Dalits but bad news to the Brahmins, who were exploiting them. Columbus and da Gama were wrong about many things, but not in wanting more people to know about Jesus. Missionaries might have adopted so many ugly tactics so that the native people might forsake their tribal religions or cultural practices and become Christians. However, the chief motivation of mission theology at that time was not wrong.

As in India, the British government was hostile to missionary activities in Jamaica. Osburne and Johnston (1989:89) state, that "most of the persecution arose from social rather than religious concern. For theological position was not important to the persecutors. Their hostility arose out of their concern for the social structure of the island." At the same time, unlike in India, the African people, who were alienated from their own tribe and religious faith, had no option other than to embrace the Christian faith. Not only was it the faith of their masters but, in addition, they were in the minority, being alienated from their own country, whereas in India other religions and their adherents held on to their beliefs and were not converted to Christianity.

### **1.12.3 The acknowledged Christ in the Caribbean**

By the beginning of the twentieth century the cross of Christ had become the universal symbol of Christianity, the popular religion of Jamaica, which overwhelmed other minority religions like a mighty tide. By and large, Jesus is adored, his praise is echoed in every nook and cranny and his message is proclaimed. Although his name is invoked at official (government) and social functions, Christianity is accepted not as the religion of the conquerors but as the birthright of every Jamaican. People have no problem with or fear about acknowledging Jesus openly as he is not an "unknown God". To put things in perspective, however, the Jamaican churches reflect not only the colonial system, but also political domination, sociological degradation, economic exploitation and cultural imposition. According to Smith (1991:10), this includes "the dominance of the culture of the plantation; external political and economic control; the enduring spiritual and psychological consequences of slavery and indentureship; transitoriness, missionary Christianity".

Westernization and denominationalism of the Christian faith is the feature of Christianity in Jamaica. The churches still project an English or American style of worship and way of life. As Smith (1984:53) puts it, "today we feel like the slave; tomorrow we identify with the slave master. One day we want to go back to 'Mother' Britain or to 'Uncle Sam'. The next day it is to 'Father' Africa that we want to be sent." The gospel is accused of being the force that divided the small island and also as being Eurocentric and American-centric:

God is a European God, and the theology is Western theology. Liturgy, forms of ministry, architecture, ethos, church government and church law are all foreign importation, and by and large the people love to have it so (Watty: 1981:20).

Therefore, we see more of the "hat and boot Christianity" in Jamaica. Proof of such a situation is that there is no place for American Negro spiritualists in Jamaican worship, which embodies the agonies and struggles of the slaves of the USA. Instead, American evangelical emotional choruses have replaced them. The (European influenced) churches ignored some of the cultural practices for justifiable reasons. First, the theological perspective of the time was wrong. Secondly, the missionaries feared that cultural adaptation or assimilation might create a new syncretistic faith that would contaminate the Christian faith rather than preserve its purity and unity. Therefore, the missionaries wanted to safeguard the young Christians and preserve the Christian doctrine from mixing with the ancestral practices. Today more confusion is added to that phenomenon. The people are plagued by inner contradictions and an inferiority complex.

Though recently there was a move to identify faith with African culture and roots, it seems that Africa was substituted for Europe more on the basis of colour than on substance. Some consider it absurd to bring in cultural adaptation from the old primitive practices to the modern generations. But some accept them as a fashionable change because of their heritage rather than one which is helpful for faith. Others copy American show business to capture the emotions of the people. Wright (1981:19) agonizes over this situation and describes it as the "theology of imposition":

It is in the Caribbean that you will hear Moravians talking about Jan Hus (*sic*) as though he was burnt at the stake last night. It is in the Caribbean that you will hear Methodists

talking about the conversion of John Wesley as though Aldersgate Street is around the corner, and they were there that night. You will see Anglicans celebrating the Eucharist as though Newman, Koble and Pusey had them especially in mind when they inaugurated Anglo-Catholic revival. You will hear Catholics speaking as though Pius IX took care to canvass their opinion especially before he enunciated the dogma of papal infallibility.

It is generally charged that the Caribbean church is influenced more by "missionary" theology than indigenous theology. Williams (1994:10&18-19) charges that "in Christianizing the Caribbean, the missionary church from the outset had motives that were not Christian". Therefore, he feels a new dimension is needed:

In the case of indigenization of theology in the Caribbean, the adaptation is in support of Caribbean self-authentication, self-awareness, self-development, self-actualization, and self-determination... The process includes a critique and transformation of the colonizers' theology, which by its very presence in the region has been a foreign imposition on the Caribbean. A large portion of that foreign imposition is a result of the colonizers' use of the colonizing culture as a vehicle for its transportation.

Therefore the churches should examine and deal with the problems, taking into account the hearts and not the minds of the people with emotional, philosophical or theological trends. How then should the gospel be presented? Will this be effected only by adopting a new theological approach or new evangelical strategy? While the theologically established churches are shrinking today, the younger churches like the Pentecostals are increasing and becoming popular. They show the American influence and have made the Christian faith reflect the style of *Kumina* and other indigenous religions of Jamaica, but with a new hybrid ethos in their worship, hence they have become palatable and widely accepted. According to Broos (1997:12), "the Pentecostal practice in Jamaica has become Jamaican practice rather than a mere hegemony derived from a foreign source". This shows that theological or sociological interpretation of faith will not satisfy the soul's spiritual longing. As a result, the growth of the Church in Jamaica has taken a new turn over the last century — after the great revival of 1860. This is contrary to those who hold the world-view that growth happens on the basis of "homogeneous unit principles" (McGavaran 1980:223-243).

Jamaica is an exemplar of successful evangelization. With the penetration of the neo-American churches in the twentieth century, evangelization has reached the untouched areas. It reflects a grassroots rather than a mass movement. But this new wave led to the fragmentation of the Christian churches — some beyond recognition. Morrish (1982) listed one hundred and twenty different denominational churches in Jamaica but many claim that there are, in fact, between two hundred and four hundred today. This trend is seen today in the Cayman Islands, where only established churches like the Anglicans and the UCJCI existed earlier.

When analyzing the "success" of religion, Christianity presents a dilemma within a Jamaican religious and cultural frame. For example, although sexuality is considered normal in Jamaican society, Christianity did not give opportunities like the Indian *Gurus* who attracted large numbers of "hippies" from the West, through their transcendental meditation and sex-oriented teachings, which played a great role. Then, churches like the Adventists, who are less responsive to cultural adaptation, also show how church growth can take place successfully in spite of the absence of "Spirit-filled worship". Because the neo-religious churches sustain themselves as "saints on earth" and present a particular Christian persona articulated through a discourse that is part of a Jamaican milieu, they surged forward and captured half the Jamaican population while other established churches remained behind.

In recent times some "black power" advocates and the Rastas ridiculed Jesus as a "foreign God" in a European frame and not an eternal contemporary. However, these black advocates failed to recognize that the first non-Jewish convert was a black African from Ethiopia where Rastas sentiment touches. They also forgot that the great theologians of the early church were from Asia and Africa. At the same time, to the overwhelming majority, Jesus is acknowledged as the Lord and part and parcel of their lives. Jamaica is still a European colony in spite of its geographical conditions.

Although theology created a disoriented life of the churches, people are nevertheless united as one nation and have no communal madness like India. Even though the colonial and modern missionary movement followed the same trend, there is unity and solidarity in the matter of convergence in nation-building among people of all denominations. The denominational tag is

considered "religious" in Jamaica. Different loyalties pull the churches in different directions along denominational lines. Denominationalism is so welded into the people's psyche that even husband and wife, united in their home, or people united in an office or workplace, go their separate ways on Sunday morning to their own sectarian churches.

Secondly, the growth of the neo-denominational churches also shows how the adaptation or assimilation theory worked in creating more indigenous churches, though it did not prove successful earlier. Perhaps proximity to USA made Jamaica a happy hunting ground for many religious groups to take root, and the psyche of the people served as fertile ground for this phenomenon. In India and elsewhere, the American dollar lured many self-styled evangelists to promote or act like agents of mission. Jamaica does not project that kind of image in spite of its denominational multiplicity. The churches are not waiting for foreign aid. Though these new church pastors have generally been accused of being "sheep stealers", they justify their action by saying that while the established church shepherds slept, they brought back the lost sheep that were hungry and wandering.

In spite of the confusion created by the number of churches, the Christian faith is still popular and Jesus Christ is the acknowledged Lord of the masses. In the industrialized world, secularism and materialism have eroded religious beliefs and the churches are becoming empty. In Jamaica, on the contrary, Sundays and Christian festivals are observed as holy days and holidays by the people.

Almost every public function begins with prayer. Most national events normally begin with a church service. The service takes place not in an Anglican parish church, but in different churches, and is attended by the dignitaries and government officials from various church affiliations. Fasting, praying and crusades are common features on every church calendar. In the common places, like the post office and police stations, many of the staff begin their weekly or daily affairs with prayers. Though some hardly go to church in their life time, they like to have a Christian burial.

Jamaican churches send missionaries to other countries, even to the industrialized world. In Jamaica, solidarity among Christians is unparalleled. Despite the absence of comity relationship, the churches coexist peacefully with one another. Though those who hold ecumenical or

evangelical theologies or movements do not mix in matters of faith, they do nevertheless coexist. Under the British Empire, Roman Catholics almost reached the point of extinction at the hands of the Anglican Church. Today, they have joined hands with other churches to foster the ecumenical movement, which was very evident on the occasion of Pope John Paul II's visit in 1993.

In the final analysis, over the centuries the Christian Church has grown on this island because it was a natural movement, and not because of the missionary zeal and spirit of the churches. The small size and population of the island also contributed to making the church a powerful agent in the society. One thing is evident, namely that although the Christian Church, and particularly the Anglican Church, enjoyed royal patronage, it did not misuse its opportunities to proselytize hopeless and helpless people. In the first place, the Church of England was a hierarchical church and non-confirmed churches were the religion of the lower classes. Secondly, the church in the colonies was an ornamental object and not a mission field for the established Church. Thirdly, it won the people not through any inducement or favouritism as very few of the strategies of modalities and sodalities were employed. Being a single entity facilitated Christianity's spread throughout the island. Unlike the Indian churches, few social projects operate here with foreign support. The church ministers are highly respected, some serve as Justices of the Peace, and they have the people's respect as leaders of the community.

Jamaicans have to overcome one weakness. They always look back to the time of slavery or Africa because of their colour complex. We cannot put the clock back by saying the whole present system is the heritage of slavery. Not only is there a wide gap between the two periods, but today there is a new generation and a mixed culture. Moreover, the present generation is educated and modern. The gospel has to be communicated afresh with renewed and rejuvenating power to penetrate every heart and home.

Economically, Jamaica could be a rich country with all its natural beauty and bounty. It has rich natural resources to sustain its people and earn precious foreign exchange. There is a saying that in Jamaica people need not go to bed with an empty stomach because they can have at least one fruit or vegetable which grows naturally in their own backyard. Unlike the Indian situation, the

population growth is also under control. But it seems as if people are not exploring the God-given opportunities or potentialities to grow more. As a result they import not only daily necessities like fruit and vegetables, but even sugar, which was once prized as their richest commodity because it was the island's only export. In the present free market economy prices constantly rise and economic evils and disparity are also increasing alarmingly. According to the Statistical Institute's *Economic and Social Survey*, 1994, the rate of inflation in Jamaica was 26.7%. Therefore Jamaica needs a strong social gospel that reflects the prophetic message of the past and can create greater awareness of the country's economic wealth and God-given ecological bounty to improve its economic and spiritual standards. According to Smith (1991:47),

The Church must therefore, as a matter of duty, insist that nothing is done to contribute to the pollution of air and water, and that the land is so utilized that it continues to produce the means by which our bodies are sustained. This is why as Christians we have to be concerned about the zoning of land for agriculture, housing, the setting of industrial complexes, and recreation. This is why those who are aware of the implications of being Christian do not consider it undue interference in the affairs of the nation to act in accordance with the needs of the people and, in the language of the Church, in accordance with the will of God for humankind.

Finally, what is the social gospel that Jamaica can proclaim to rich and poor alike today? A visitor to the island cannot fail to see the mansions on the hilltops and the number of luxury cars on the islands as well as the shanties and ghettos in downtown and poor rural areas. Today the wealth is not the hereditary legacy of the slave masters but the creation of the new society and the new economic order. At the same time, the gap between the rich and the poor is widening, the economic imbalance is affecting the country's social security and atmosphere and morality, and the daily violence is alarming. Therefore Jamaica needs not only crusades but also campaigns against some of the social systems that go against Christian principles. It cannot always blame slavery and colonization for its ills. It also needs liberation and redemption from the past. For that purpose, it needs to listen not only to the old prophets, like Micah, Amos and John the Baptist, but also to the prophetic voices of Williams, Watty, Smith and others. Unlike Karnataka with its Christian minority, Jamaica needs to articulate its mission, a responsible commitment to Christian

life and values, and a fresh spirit of conscientization as Christians. When the Gospel message has that transforming power over this small population, creates an ideal society and has a lasting impact, it could serve as a new dimension in mission. If there is a paradigm shift in that direction, there is hope for Jamaica.



## CHAPTER 2

### **Karnataka: an overview**

#### PART I KARNATAKA IN THE WORLD SETTING

##### **2.1 KARNATAKA: THE LAND SO BEAUTIFUL**

Nestling between the Eastern and Western Ghats mountain range of India and sloping towards the Arabian Sea is Karnataka, one of the twenty-five states of the Indian union. Karnataka was formerly known as Mysore, the domain of the princely rulers. It is a land endowed with immense scenic beauty and natural resources. The fertile table-land, rain-drenched fields, dense jungles as well as the majestic hills, water-falls, the springs and streams that form the mighty rivers, as well as the sun-kissed seashores provide a varied and enchanting landscape with a salubrious ecology. No wonder that a great poet of Karnataka described this land as *Chehuva Kannada Nadu* - Karnataka, the land so beautiful.

##### **2.2 GEOGRAPHY AND TOPOGRAPHY**

Karnataka is situated in the western part of the Deccan Peninsula, which is a plateau. The word "Deccan" is derived from the old Sanskrit *Dakshin* or *Dakshinapatha*, meaning southern land of India. It stretches between 11.5° and 19° north latitude and 74° to 78° east longitude and is about 197,113 sq km (74,004 sq miles). For administrative purposes, the Karnataka State is divided into twenty districts, which are subdivided into *Panchyats*.

Karnataka is also described as the golden land of India because of its gold mines. The world's deepest gold mine is situated at Kolar Gold Fields, 100 km from Bangalore. The gold mine at Hutti in the Raichur district is said to be one of the oldest metal mines in the world, dating back even to the pre-Ashokan period.

Karnataka occupies 5.85% of the total area of India and accounts for 5.51% of the country's total

population. According to the census commissioner's report, the state occupies 8th place in terms of population and area. About 76% live in rural areas, and 71% are engaged in agricultural and allied activities, which generate 49% of the state's income. The 1991 census was 37,043,451 out of India's total population of 850 million.

Karnataka is surrounded by Maharashtra in the north, Goa in the north-west, Tamilnadu on the south-east and Andhra in the north-east and has a common border with Kerala in the south. The state, with its "precious gift of indulgent nature," can be divided into four regions. The first is the coastal region, which consists of the North and South Kanara districts, known as *Uttara* and *Dakshina Kannada* today and formerly as *Tuluvarajya*. This region served as the gateway for international travel and commerce for centuries. It stretches about 320 km from north to south and is about 48 to 65 km in East to West at various points between the Arabian Sea and the Western Ghats. This region has more or less the same topography as Jamaica. The second is the *Malenadu*, which is a hilly belt serving as the backbone of the state. It rises from 610 to 915 metres above sea level and at one point reaches a height of 1830 metres, about 3000 feet. Many rivers have their source in this mountain range. The region produces rich commercial crops like tea, coffee and cardamom; quality timber like ebony, teak and sandalwood, and is home to peacock and wild animals like elephants. Baba Budan, an Arab saint, is believed to have brought coffee seedlings from Arabia to these hills around AD 1600. Today coffee export earns more than one billion rupees. Recently it was discovered that this region has rich deposits of iron ore. The third is the northern plateau, known as the Deccan Plains. It has scanty rainfall and is known to be a famine-prone area. Many believe that Karnataka derived its name from the black soil of this area (*Karu* means black, and *Nadu* means land). It is also called Kannada Nadu or Karnatak. However, there are many interpretations of the name and some believe it is more cultural than geographical. For instance, there is an Indian musical instrument called a *carnatic*, which is found throughout south India. The central region provides abundant natural resources. Its fertile soil is ideal for cultivating commercial crops like rice and sugar cane, and mulberry trees for the silk industry, which is famous in Karnataka.

Bangalore, the capital city of Karnataka, was founded in 1537 by a local chieftain named Kempe Gowda. It has a population of 8 million people today, claiming sixth place among the highly

populated urban complexes in India. Between 1981 and 1991 the population grew from 2.2 million to 6 million. Because of its wonderful climate, it used to be a pensioners' paradise but now industrialization has turned it into an electronic city. There are about 135 multinational companies, which changed it into a mega city and made it an important city in India. Its phenomenal urbanization has meant a population explosion of 618% between 1901 and 1981, and a growth in area from 70 sq km in 1941 to 366 sq km in 1981 — and it is still growing by leaps and bounds. These developments resulted in an acute housing shortage, a lack of adequate civic amenities and a rising crime rate —all leading to urban decay. It created an ugly and pathetic picture with thousands living in hundreds of slums and serves as an apology for this "garden city of India".

This unprecedented growth has led to another major problem. Many ethnic and linguistic groups have settled in the city and Bangalore has become a real cosmopolitan city. However, the state government made Kannada the official state language and pushed the national language, Hindi, into second place and the international language, English, into third place. As a result, linguistic chauvinism took root with its "sons of the soil" theory. The local people sought preference for Kannadigas in job opportunities.

This problem also affected church life. Continuous immigration brought large numbers of Christians from all over the country, particularly Tamil Christians, to Bangalore and Kolar Gold Field. According to George (1976:25), the number of Tamil Christians increased from 53,096 in 1941 to 109,884 in 1971. It created tension between the Christians on the basis of language and added denominational divisions to its weakness. Appavoo (1965:31) points out that "[m]igration had and still has a tremendous effect on the Christian church in Bangalore and it raises a number of problems for the church, such as serious splits, secularism and sectarianism. With the pressure of household duties, family worship becomes neglected. The children grow up in an almost secular environment both in the neighbourhood as well in school. Perhaps the greatest danger is that the church may not be fully aware of this."

### **2.3 KARNATAKA'S HISTORICAL COMMERCIAL LINKS WITH THE WESTERN WORLD**

The mythological history of Karnataka can be traced to the famous epics of Ramayana and Mahabharata. The Ramayana refers to Hampi (the capital of the famous Vijayanagara kingdom) as the ancient capital of *Bali* and *Sugreeva*, the monkey kings, who helped Rama to liberate his captive wife, Sita, from Sri Lanka. The fourteenth century has been described as the "golden age" of Karnataka. The famous Vijayanagara Empire that flourished then opened its door to the influence of Western nations. A Portuguese embassy was opened in Vijayanagara. Christianity might have found its foot here during that time. After 400 years the Muslim Sultans of the Deccan destroyed the Vijayanagar Empire. Today the capital city is called *Halu Hampi* ("Ruined City").

The Muslim rulers under the Moguls and Deccan Sultans seized the opportunity to spread the Islamic faith in Karnataka. The Muslims took another advantage. At that time, under the Wodeyar dynasty, who were also strong patrons of Hinduism, the Mysore kingdom was emerging as the central power in south India. One of the Mysore generals, Hyder Ali, who was a Muslim, overthrew the Wodeyar king. Later his son, Tippu Sultan had to fight bitter wars with the British, who were beginning to conquer India. That also made him an enemy of the Christian faith. He was killed in 1799 at the hands of the Duke of Wellington.

Karnataka is blessed with many natural and rich agrarian and industrial products to boost its economy. The epoch-making discovery of monsoon winds by Hippalus in AD 45 furthered the business contact between East and West. In the first century of the Christian era, it is recorded that the merchants traded in spices from Malabar and Kanara ports to the Middle East through the Arabian Sea. Silva (1957:13) records that maritime routes "carried the business traffic from the West Coast of India as far as the Red Sea and from thence the caravans took it through Palestine to distant places. The goods loaded at the head of the Persian Gulf also passed through Palestine to other places."

Thus, Jerusalem became an important centre from which trade routes radiated throughout the

world. "Not less than one hundred ships sailed annually from Egypt to India and trade was vigorous between India and the Roman Empire" (Hares 1975:206). Historical records indicate that ambassadors from India visited the Emperors Augustus, Claudius and Julius. The hundreds of gold coins of these emperors unearthed at the Canara Coast and in other parts of Karnataka are evidence of this (D'Souza 1983:12). In 1891, Benjamin Rice also discovered 163 Roman coins, which belonged to the period BC 21 to AD 51 (Muthanna 1977:33). The first century historian, Periplus, stated, "Egyptians exported woolens and linen clothes and wine to India and received in return spices, gems, silk, pepper, ivory, cotton and tortoise shell" (Schoff 1912:203f). Shatavahanah kings developed trade connections between the Egyptians, Sumerians and Phoenicians and operated through Kuntaladesa's Kalyan and Banavasi ports. Kalyan played an important role later on.

Huein-Tse-Sang and Marco Polo followed the silk routes in their world travel. Perhaps they passed through Karnataka, India for the silk industry has been a thriving business in old Mysore since antiquity. These world travellers referred to a certain kingdom of Ely near Mangali, which was a busy port during that time, from where they visited some Buddhist monasteries (Waugh 1984:167). Mangali might have been Mangalore, an important port in western India, which is also the capital city of South Kanara. It has been called various names throughout history. Pinto's article in the local newspaper, *Navabharat* (Jan 1, 1987:1) is worth quoting at length:

Glimpses from the past bring us to the origin of the name Mangalore. Since time immemorial, Mangalore did have a significant identity throughout the world. It is referred to, as "Nitris" (may be a corrupt form for the river "Nethravathi") in the work of Pliny AD 23-79, the Roman historian. He describes the sea-routes from the mouth of the Nile to Nitris. Klodios Ptolemaios of Alexandria in the second century AD mentions that "Nitra" was the southern-most port of the pirate coast of India. Again, Periplus (AD 250) mentions Leuke which is said to be Mangalore. Cosmos Indicopleustas in his Christian Topographica calls it "Mangaruth" while Mamulanar, a Tamil poet from Madurai (3rd century AD), names it "Mangalapura". Ibn Batuta, the Islamic prophet and globetrotter, refers to it as "Manjarum". Fr Paulinus of St Bartholomew in his book, "India Oriental Christiana", describes it as "Mangalapura" - which means the city of felicity. The

colloquial Tulu name is "Kudala", meaning "confluence of rivers" - maybe because of the geographical picture of it. At the same time Tippu Sultan called it "Korial" (Port Royal), and even today the descendants of Christians who returned after their imprisonment by Tippu Sultan, lived in a settlement called "Kodiyal", which is part of the city, where the Roman Catholic Bishop resides.

Later, during the Portuguese era, Mangalore also catered to their needs as a halting station. Thereafter, the Vijayangar Empire, Ikkeri Nayaks and then Hyder and Tippu developed it as an important commercial and trade centre. Tippu built a strong naval base with an arsenal and fortified it, and even sent emissaries to Constantinople and Paris. The British, with their trade interests, were quick to recognize the prospects of this place. They had to fight bitterly with Tippu to capture it. The credit for its present industrial growth should go to the Swiss and German missionaries of the Basel Mission in the 19th century. Today the new Mangalore port once again hums with the export business. Karnataka also boasts pearl and fishery industries and breeds horses and mules. Sandalwood, Muskati rice, cardamom, granite stone, ivory goods and textiles bring large amounts of foreign exchange, and boost the tourism industry.

It is generally believed that the Portuguese introduced Christianity into India. But it goes back to an earlier period when Marco Polo visited India in 1293 and refers in his travelogue to the Christians (perhaps Nestorians) and Jews whom he met in India. It is believed that the first Jews came to India in the time of King Solomon. Legend has it that he enjoyed peacock's tongue as a delicacy, which was said to be imported for him from Karnataka. Others hold that in the second century or after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD, when some of the Jews fled from Jerusalem and came to Cranganore on the Kerala coast. The Jewish Synagogue in Cochin proudly claims this heritage. Raghavan (1978:36) asserts that Christians followed them and found a safe haven in India. Hosten (1936:234) claims to "find traces of Christianity before the Portuguese from Sind to Kanara which formerly linked up through Calicut with Christian settlements of Malabar and Mylapore of Coromandel." This is an interesting inference.

## 2.4 THE ANTIQUITY OF TULUNADU

The focus will now shift from Karnataka's history to the antiquity of Tulunadu because Tulunadu is a major focus of this thesis.

The two coastal districts of western Karnataka are called North and South Kanara, historically known as Tulunadu. The name Kanara (also spelt Canara) was first used by the Portuguese for no obvious reason and then continued by the British (*SK Gazetteer* 1973:1). In South Kanara, a local dialect called '*Tulu*' is used which also claims historical roots. Saletore (1936:9) states that "in the Sangam period literature which is known as *Silappadikaram*, Tulunadu was mentioned as a separate province which existed in the early centuries of the Christian era".

This portion of the land also claims a mythological connection to *Parasuram Sristi*. According to legend, Parasuram, one of the sons of Shiva, after avenging his mother's death, stood on the western Ghats and threw his axe over the Arabian Sea. The water receded and provided the land—the western belt of India, which includes the present-day Kerala state, which also claims this legend. Ram established his Brahminical clans in this region thereby opening the way for the introduction of high caste people in this region. Silva (1975:1) states that "Tulu Brahmin chronicles agree on ascribing the creation of Malabar, South Kanara (Tuluva) and North Kanara (Haiva) to Parasurama, who invested fishermen with Brahminical thread and converted them to Brahmins." Quoting the ancient *Keralopathi*, which deals with the history of Kerala, he goes on to say, "Tulunadu was extended from Gokarna in the north Kanara district to Perumpula in Kerala, and was under the reign of one of its famous kings of the first century, Tulumbhan Perumal." Sturrock (1894:54) adds that "Kerala (present), Chera (Tamil Nadu) and Tulunadu formed the western Dravidian kingdoms mentioned in the edicts of Emperor Ashoka". Another research scholar of Karnataka, Gururaja Bhat (1963:20), supports this view, saying that "Tulu, Kupa, Kerala and Musika are four divisions of the Tulunadu or Malenadu". Based on Tamil ethnology, the poet laureate of Karnataka, Manjeshwar Govinda Pai (1947:7), states that the "Tulu country (Nagaras) were mostly fishermen like Tamil fishermen". This inference can be connected with K A Subrahmanyam's observation when he quotes O M Thomas (1970:2) and says, "St. Thomas, one of the chief disciples of Jesus Christ, first brought Christianity to the

Malayalam speaking area at a time when the language spoken was Tamil." In the final analysis, they all point out the unity of the southern states as one entity, which might also have had a religious and cultural influence in this region. This complicated linkage is relevant to the discussion on Christianity in the region.

There were maritime connections between Tulunadu/Kanara and the people of Egypt, Babylon and Palestine. Ptolemy and Pliny provide accounts of the vast maritime trade between Karnataka and the western countries. Pepper, sandalwood and spices were exported from the ancient harbours Malpe, Bacre, Bhatkal, Banavasi, Natre (Mangalore) and Honnavar on the west coast (Muthanna 1977:33). In support of this, some claim that the original Dravidian words in Kannada and Tulu can be traced to Hebrew, Greek and Latin. Furthermore, some assume that the phrase "Malpi, where great ships took shelter" in the Greek drama, *Oxyrhyncus*, is possibly a reference to the present-day Malpe in the South Kanara district. Attempts have even been made to trace the words resembling the Dravidian language, Kannada, in the drama. Given the export of spices, the myrrh brought by the wise men from the East (Mt 2:1-12) and the perfume made from the rare plant, nard, and used by the woman at Bethany (Mk 14:3-9) could perhaps have come from far off Karnataka, India (Barclay:326, and Supplement P).

The Shatavahanas, who ruled Karnataka, were also called *Kuntala Satkarnis*. Udyavara, a small coastal town near Udipi, was their capital. Therefore this region was called Kuntaladesa'. Govinda Pai (1947:31), who believes in Greek connections, adds a story: "A Greek princess after surviving a shipwreck took shelter under one of the Shatavahana ruler's Someshwara temples at Udyavara." Saletore (1936: 54 & 58) provides another angle:

Foreign geographers are more informative than the Sangam authors concerning the important kingdoms and parts in Tulunadu in the early centuries AD. We may venture to suggest here that if the evidence of the Greek Kannada words in (drama) *Oxyrhyncus* discovered so far back in 1899 in Egypt were accepted, we should have further proof of the importance of Tuluva in the history of India. It has been rightly maintained that the Barce to which Pliny AD 23-79) refers was no other than Basruru or Barcelore of the medieval times. Ptolemy also speaks of a town called "Maganur" in the midst of a river



mouth, which may be Mangalore.

During that time, foreigners, especially Greeks, Parthians and Romans, who were called *yuvanas*, began to invade the Deccan. One of the Shatavhana kings, Gauthami Puthra Satkarni, fought with them. It is interesting that in the folklore of Tulunadu, the Western invaders are referred to as *Bhutas*. In fact, this name is identified with evil spirits, and Kalkutti, one of the dreaded demons of Tulu legend, has been identified as an Arab or Yuvana.

Finally, even in the fifteenth century there was reference to the Aravidu kings of Vijayanagar who were connected by marriage with a Tuluva dynasty (Heras 1927: XIV FN). However, Abishankar, the editor of the *Karnataka Gazetteer*, does not agree with this connection. But, the eastern and western connections and the fact that the Tuluva region comprised portions of the present southern states of India may confirm these possibilities. Hence, from the point of view of history and Christianity, some unsolved links may be unravelled. It may provide fascinating anecdotes about the beginning of the Christian presence in this region, which might go back to the beginning of the Apostolic era.

## PART II SOCIETY AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF KARNATAKA

### 2.5 THE SOCIAL SETUP

Ethnically, the original inhabitants of Karnataka were known as *Dravidians*. They are identified as people of Mediterranean origin and some say they were *Brachycephalic (broad headed) Negroids* from Africa. When the *Aryan* invaders, who came to India from Central Asia, moved south, there was a mingling of the races. Karnataka provides a blend of all these civilizations and races.

India is home to many religious movements. Table 2.1 below gives an overview of the distribution in India and Karnataka, according to the 1991 census.

**Table 2.1 Distribution of various communities in India and Karnataka  
(in millions and percentage)**

<b>Communities in India</b>	<b>As a percentage of total population (in millions)</b>	<b>In Karnataka (in millions)</b>	<b>As percentage of Karnataka population</b>	
Hindus	550	82.6	31.9	86.4
Muslims	75.5	11.3	4.10	10.6
Christians	16.10	2.4	0.76	2.1
Jains	3.20	0.4	0.29	0.7
Others	20	3.0	0.45	1.2

A survey conducted by World Vision International (1980:3) analysed the population of Karnataka as follows: Hindus, comprising 86.45% of the total population, belong to an estimated 250 castes, in which scheduled castes form 15.9% of the population. Some 53 scheduled tribes make up 0.91%. Scheduled castes and tribes are further divided into ethno-linguistic groups and are distributed throughout the state in various districts. Isolated tribal groups include a branch of *Gondas* and *Guligas* and the *Siddhis*. The *Siddhis* include Muslims and syncretistic Christians as well as Hindus. Many tribal groups, however, are to be regarded as animists. Other groups include the *Lingayats* or *Saivaites* (20%), *Okkaligas* or *Vokkaligas* (13% - agriculturists by profession) and *Kurubas* (7% - shepherds by profession), *Bedars* (5% - hunters) and Brahmins (4%) and the rest are of other small castes.

Though Christians are in the minority, they have carved a place for themselves in the development of the society through their many pioneer roles. It is remembered as a "missionary contribution" and well recognized in many fields in the life of the nation. According to Sumithra (1980:75f),

In Karnataka the Christian population could be placed at about eight hundred thousand, which constitute around 4% of the Christian population of about 18.5 million in the country... Most of the Christians in Karnataka belong to three districts in the state

which fall at the top development index. They are Bangalore, Dakshina Kannada and Mysore... It can be said without any hesitation that the Christian population has contributed to the development of these districts for a long time.

The above statement from one of the government's top planning department officials shows another dimension. It establishes the role played by the Christian missions down through the centuries.

### **The caste problem**

One of the significant features of Indian society is the caste structure, which divides and dehumanizes the society more than religious denominationalism. It is generally estimated that in India about 20 to 25% of the population belongs to the lower social echelon —normally considered "untouchable". Mahatma Gandhi called them *Harijans* (children of God) and tried to place them in the highest ranks of Indian society. Today the Christians from this stock call themselves *Dalits*, meaning broken or downtrodden, which really describes the extent of oppression they face (Prabhakar 1988:1). The government considers them the "scheduled caste" or "backward class". For centuries they were the victims of social discrimination, stigmatized and treated as *pariahs* (dogs).

Owing to centuries of social discrimination and inhumane treatment, many of the low caste people embraced the Christian faith during the missionary era. This led to the so-called "mass movements" in India where whole villages or community after community embraced Christianity. Pickett (1938:302) states that it is estimated that "one half of the Roman Catholics in India are descendants of the mass movement converts, and no less than 80% of the Protestants are the products of this movement" and adds that "in Kannada-speaking areas one correspondence (sic) estimates that Harijan Christians number 65 to 80%". In a memorandum to the government of Karnataka, the Archdiocese of Bangalore pointed out that 40% of the membership of the Roman Catholic Church is constituted of people of scheduled caste origin and 30% from backward tribes and castes.

Some accuse the Christian mission in India of being aimed at the conversion of the poor, the downtrodden and especially the low caste. But if that were the case, the Christians would not have been a minority today. Actually, what little has been achieved is because of the liberation from the oppression and the suffering these people experienced from the high caste people. However, when the high caste people saw Christianity open its doors to these outcasts, they tried to prevent the people from converting. In the beginning, the Church was also reluctant to accept them for fear that in "the mass-movement areas the converts lacked spiritual growth" (Hoefler 1979:29f).

Christians have been categorized as a "forward community" by the government in spite of the fact that they were the economically weaker members of society. This has created a serious economic imbalance and social problem for the followers of the Christian faith. Not alone have they had to suffer the age-old stigma of caste discrimination but, being in the minority, they also have to compete and struggle with the majority groups to gain access to education and job opportunities as well as a place in the social structure. The Christian Church, in particular the Roman Catholic Church, launched a nationwide protest to redress this situation. Though many governments promised to do so, no one has come forward so far to address the wrong done to the Christian community. Deve Gowda, the former Prime Minister, who had special sympathy for the Christians, wanted to table a Bill in Parliament, but was thrown out before then. Because of this situation, some Christians returned to their old faith. Once they had performed the rite of *shudi* (purification), Hinduism gladly accepted them.

## 2.6 THE KANNADA LANGUAGE

*Prakrit* was the earliest language used in this region during the Ashokan era and was followed by the Sanskrit language. By AD 674 Kannada was introduced and flourished along with Sanskrit, gaining superiority because of its script, which was used for inscriptions. The Kannada people subsequently disintegrated as the land was attacked by neighbouring enemies on all sides. Finally, with the fall of Tippu Sultan in 1799, the state was merged with the four southern regions of India. In 1901, according to the *Imperial Gazetteer*, 10,365,047 people spoke Kannada. In 1955, after the reorganization of the state, this number rose to 23,547,081 (Hooper 1963:95).

Though the state reorganization created some parochialism, it did at the same time lead to unification of the region and also enabled Kannadigas to return to their native land from all over India. For example, the researcher's mother tongue is Kannada, but when he was born in Magalore, it was part of the state of Madras as the South Kanara district was under Madras presidency until the state reorganization. Today, Kannada is the official state language. In 1987, a Kannada University was established in Hampi, the capital of the old Vijayanagara empire.

Kannada, which is also known in anglicized form as Kanarese, belongs to the Dravidian language family and there are over sixty dialects derived from Kannada root. Some old native languages, like Tulu, Konkani and Kodava, claim to have their own script. However, all of them use only Kannada script for writing as it has its own script.

The missionary contribution to the growth and development of languages in India, particularly Kannada, was phenomenal. According to Dr RS Mugoli, the "grand old man" of Kannada (Huilgol 1966:1), "Even though the missionaries came as religious propagandists, yet their contribution to Kannada literature cannot be forgotten." Paradoxically, the foundation for presenting Kannada literature in printed form was laid in Goa, the neighbouring Portuguese colony, in the 17th century: "Fr Thomas Stephen learnt Kannada and Konkani (the state language of Goa) so perfectly that he was able to write in both the languages and published his writings at Goa while he was working at St Ignatius College from 1616 to 1668" (Huilgol 1966:4). At the beginning of the 18th century Henry Martin reported to the Calcutta Bible Society that there were 20,000 Kannada Christians in that area, and at the request of the Archbishop of Goa, William Carey was prepared to undertake the translation of the Bible into Kannada (Hooper 1963:96). When he learned that Rev John Hands of the London Missionary Society was already engaged in that task, however, Carey did not continue. The Rev BL Rice of the London Missionary Society, made an extensive study of Karnataka and published a 12-volume serial called *Epigraphic Carnatica*. His brother, the Rev EP Price, wrote the history of Kanarese literature and their father was credited with publishing the first Kannada newspaper. In 1824 the Rev William Reeve of the same mission produced the first English-Kannada dictionary. Dr F Kittel of the Basel Mission produced a voluminous and monumental work of lexicography while a colleague of his, Rev H Moegling, published many medieval Kannada literary works for the first

time and introduced the first Kannada journal — *Mangalore Samachar*. The Bangalore City Corporation honoured Rice and Kittel by naming two parts of the city after them.

## 2.7 RELIGIOUS PLURALISM: ANCIENT RELIGIONS

Jamaica may have developed as a multireligious society but India is a museum of religions and the birthplace of many of the world's religious reformers. Karnataka has never been isolated in this regard. It has made its own contributions to the religions of the world and their philosophies.

### 2.7.1 Buddhism

Founded by Siddharta Gautama (BC 563-483), the son of a rich Hindu king, Buddhism is one of the living religions of the world. Gautama went out in search of emancipation from human suffering, and became Buddha — the *enlightened one*. His followers became missionaries (*Dharmadootas*) who internationalized this religion even before the Christian faith took its first steps. His *Dharma-Chakra*, the wheel of religion, which King Ashoka adopted, adorns the coat of arms of India. The *Dhammapada* — the holy scripture — is a collection of the sayings of Buddha.

Buddhism was also a missionary religion like Christianity and spread to the neighbouring countries. Buddhism was introduced into Karnataka in the time of Ashoka the Great (circa BC 244). The records show that it was patronized by Tulunadu rulers and flourished at Banavasi and Karwar until the 10th century AD. From Banavasi, Ashoka sent a *Dharmadoota* named Rakhita to Sri Lanka and other places. Today, apart from Bangalore, where the Mahabodhi Society renders social and charitable work, there is no visible sign of Buddhism left in Karnataka. However, after the invasion of Tibet by the Chinese, when the Dalai Lama was sheltered in India, refugees who followed him were sheltered by the Indian government at Bylakuppe in Coorg and Mundagod in North Kanara. Their camps, wandering monks in mustard coloured (saffron) robes, and the Tibetan roadside markets are common sights in Karnataka and make Buddhism visible once again.

Until recently, to a great extent, Buddhism lost its identity in the land of its birth because of Hinduism's absorption philosophy which claims that Buddha was one of the incarnations of Lord Vishnu:

Hinduism is a great religion of synthesis. Even Buddhism, which began as a revolt against Brahminism, could not escape its influence. Externally, it remains in the garb of Buddhist doctrine, but internally it absorbs all that one finds in popular Hinduism (Pandit 1982: 13).

The Hindus in Karnataka by and large regard Buddha as one of the incarnations of the god Vishnu. The NathaPanth', which once prevailed in South Kanara, is recognized by some as a branch of the *Vajrayana* sect of Buddhism and by others as a branch of Saivism, which was influenced by Buddhism (Dikshit 1967:120). In Buddhism and Jainism the saints are called *Nathas*. Father Anthappa feels that, because of this fact, the early Catholic missionaries gave the same title to Jesus by also calling him *Yesu-Natharu*. Pinto (*Navabharat* 1 Jan 1987:1) describes the famous Kadri temple in the South Kanara district as the centre of the Buddhist faith. She quotes the famous Italian traveller, Pietro de Vella's travel records in support:

The Lokeshwara image which is of Buddhist origin is a masterpiece in bronze that can be traced back to the tenth century BC. The dignified statue, three feet high, has an elaborate headgear and reflects the image of 'Dhyani Buddha'- which occupies a place of prominence in the temple. It is also called the temple of 'Bodhisatva Manjushri'. However, all the original evidences are overlooked, as it is now a Hindu temple.

After India's independence, Buddhism saw a revival, as they found a new champion in Dr Baba Ambedkar. This movement started not because of any theological doctrine, but mainly because of sociological factors. Therefore, according to Thomas and Wilkinson (1972:V), "since 1956 an estimated three and a half million of the former 'untouchable' caste in India have become Buddhists. Shortly before his death Dr B R Ambedkar, the great leader of the Scheduled castes, publicly adopted and embraced Buddhism at a 'Diksha' ceremony in Nagpur. Millions have followed him in his choice. According to the 1961 census there were 3,250,227 Buddhists in India, an increase of 16.71 per cent over the 1951 census... In Mysore state it showed an increase

with 8000 people embracing it."

In Karnataka there would have been a much greater exodus of scheduled caste people to Buddhism, if not for the opposition of the local Bhima Sena (Shetty 1978:11), who prevented them turning to the Christian faith. Is there a meeting point between Christianity and Buddhism? According to Swami Prabhavananda(1963:174) of the Ramakrishna Mutt,

Philosophically the Buddhist *Nirvana* is identical with *Moksha* of the Hindu philosophers which is the release from the bondage of *Karma* and ignorance and the attainment of the "Kingdom of Heaven within". In reality there is no difference in the ultimate goal between Hinduism, Buddhism and Christianity. The Moksha of the Hindus, the Nirvana of the Buddhists and the Kingdom of Heaven of the Christians are really one and the same.

Though many deny that such synthesis exists, interesting clues and connections can be established.

### 2.7.2 Jainism

This religion, with its ancient Indian *Swastika* as religious mark, was founded in the sixth century BC by a wealthy Indian prince, Vardhamana. (Paradoxically, Adolf Hitler's coat of arms also displayed this sign (perhaps because of his dream of aryanism), contrary to the Jain philosophy of peace and non-violence.) He revered the title, *Mahavira*, a great hero, but adopted a life style of self-denial and asceticism, in search of knowledge that would provide release from *karma* (from the consequence of the cycle of birth and death). He advocated rigid application of *Ahimsa* (non-violence). Later, Mahatma Gandhi adopted this philosophy. The sacred scriptures of Jainism are called *agamas* (precepts) or Siddhantas' (treaties). Mahavira lived at a time when great leaders were on the horizon in other parts of the world. Confucius and Lao-Tze were preaching in China, Zoroaster was propagating his faith in Persia, and Jeremiah and Ezekiel, the great prophets of Judaism were also preaching repentance.

The father of one of India's great emperors, Bharat (which is the Indian word for India and comes



from Emperor Bharat) was considered the first among the twenty-four founders of the Jainism — *Thirthankaras*. Emperor Bahubali is widely known in Karnataka as *Gomateshwara* and worshipped as god by the Jains because of his sacrificial spirit. He and his brother fought a fierce battle to gain control of their father's kingdom. Though Bahubali won the battle, he renounced all his earthly possessions. He came to Shravanabelagola in Karnataka in search of peace and tranquillity and practised severe penance. There are five granite monoliths erected in his memory in Karnataka, which are worshipped with great pomp and pageantry. In 1980, when the 1000th head anointing ceremony took place, it was estimated that nearly 5 million people from all over India and the world gathered at this place. Jainism has left its definite imprint on Karnataka. It stood independently and extended its influence for nearly 900 years. Its religious propaganda reached its zenith under the patronage of the Hoysala kings. The monuments erected for Mahavira and some of the Thirthankaras at South Kanara district testify to their glory. Outstanding poets and philosophers of Karnataka belonged to this religion.

Again, like Buddhism, it is alleged that Hinduism also absorbed Jainism. It has gained their sympathy and is regarded as one of their kin religions. At the same time, it also stands as a symbol of religious integration.

One of the famous shrines in Karnataka is *Sri Dharmastala Kshetra*. Here pilgrims from all over India and from different religious backgrounds flock every day. Incidentally, this shrine's leadership is in the hands of a Jain family that inherit this office through hereditary system. The deities worshipped here are Hindu gods. Surprisingly, the worship of the spirit gods of ancient Tulunadu is an important feature of this place. The priests who perform the religious duties are from the Brahmin class.

Is there a meeting point between Christianity and Jainism? Jainism's influence meant that Christianity could not take root in Kanara in earlier centuries. Their sacrificial theme may accept Christ's doctrine of atonement. But they may not accept the death of Jesus on the cross for their *Ahimsa* (non-violence) doctrine may not subscribe to the theology of blood. However, there is one meeting point. Prabhavananda (1963:159) maintains that "their concept of salvation and Roman Catholic theology of salvation are the same — through faith, instruction and works" and

adds that "Jains are believers in a man-God concept". But Prabhavananda points out that "this concept is not quite the same as the Hindu *avatar* or the Christian Son of God or Son of Man concept" and explains that Jains consider the best way to worship God is to become Sons of God — *Paramatmas*, supreme perfected spirits — themselves.

### 2.7.3 Hinduism

What is Hinduism? Is it just the oversimplified Western concept of venerating animals, bathing in the Ganges or other rivers, and being divided by castes? Or is there more to it? It is not an easy task to define Hinduism, since it has various schools of thought and 330 million gods. Yet, Hinduism speaks of itself not as a polytheistic religion, but speaks of one God, and *Hindutva*, ancient religious philosophy. Hindus argue that the various gods and goddesses of the Hindu pantheon are mere representations of the powers and functions of the one supreme God. That one god, *Trimurthy*, Trinitarian in concept, is recognized as Vishnu, Shiva or Iswara and Brahma. But because Vishnu had been incarnated (*Vishvaroop*) ten times in the popular forms of Rama, Krishna and others, he is a popular god and his followers are called *Vaishnavites*. At the same time the followers of Shiva, mostly in South India, advocate *Saivism* as the supreme manifestation of god.

Hindus often refer to their faith as *Sanatana Dharma* — eternal law or order. Though it is steeped in mythological stories (*Puranas*) and has become a popular religion, it also stands on the solid ground of holy writings as reflected in the *Vedas*. The Vedas are supposed to have been composed over several centuries and completed about 900 BC. The Vedas were later supplemented by other writings, including the *Brahmanas* and the *Upanishads*. Whereas the Brahmanas specify how rituals and sacrifices have to be performed, the Upanishads (literally, sitting near a teacher), also known as *Vedanta* (finality of the Holy Scriptures), are the treatises of the Hindu philosophy. Along with that "*Bhagavad-Gita*" (Song of God Krishna or Celestial Song), which is part of the mythological epic *Mahabharata*, also found a prominent and proud place in Indian spirituality.

Hinduism has always been the binding force in Karnataka. Ironically, Karnataka was the recipient

of three schools of Hindu philosophies as expounded by *acharyas* (great teachers) Shankara, Ramanuja and Madhava. Though another Hindu sect, Lingyatism, had blazed a separate trail, it has been recognized as a kin religion of Hinduism like other religions.

### 2.7.3.1 Advaita philosophy

Sankaracharya (AD 788-820) was a Vedic thinker, poet and saint from neighbouring Kerala. As a boy, he renounced worldly pleasures to become a *sanyasi* (a sage) and plunged into the eternal quest for the real truth that lies beyond mundane existence. Thereafter, he travelled far and wide on this quest and established four religious centres, known as *Mutts*. He also appointed the pontiffs responsible for propagating his philosophy. One of them, *Sharada Pita*, is situated at Sringeri in Karnataka. Sankara advocated *Advaita Vedanta*, which means dualism:

There are three things considered as real: God, the soul and unconscious nature; and yet in reality it is one. How is this possible? Let nature and soul be absorbed in God without leaving any trace of differentiation, and reality is but one. This does not annihilate souls and nature; for they are real by reality itself, recast according to the absolute transfiguration, which is Brahman (Johanns 1943:23).

Sankara held that when absolute knowledge is achieved, it is the knowledge in which the Absolute, called the *Brahman* or *Atman*, is recognized as consciousness and bliss. Though the universe is not real, knowledge and bliss are real; on account of *maya* (illusion) the soul does not see this. Therefore, in order to bring liberation, Sankara reconciled the paths of *Karma* (deeds) and *Bhakti* (devotion) with that of *Jnana* (Knowledge):

Man achieves release or liberation from the vicious circle of 'Samsara' by recognizing the fact that his inmost self is not different from the Absolute. This recognition is the realization that the inmost self of man is neither related to nor a part of the 'Atman' or 'Brahman'. This whole philosophy is reduced to the expression --'Tat Tavam Asi' --Thou art that (Pandit 1978:25).

Sankara's philosophy was advocated in recent years by Sri Ramakrishna and his disciple, Swami Vivekananda and former President of India, Sarvapally Radhakrisnan. Moreover they believed that every faith and religion could be accommodated in the philosophy of Advaita. However, some believe that there is a close Christian parallel in Sankara's teachings. According to Prabhavananda (1963:83), "Many learned Hindus are surprised by the simplicity of his gospel, the miracle episodes and historical narratives in them, and they cannot believe that the *Karmic* type of scriptures could possibly be without the Christian revelation."

Klostermaier (1967:36) believes that with regard to "the knowledge of God, Sankara and St. Thomas are almost identical; because Christ's experience (*sic*) is not due to outside influence, but because of an inside urge". In his study on Advaita philosophy, Dr Samartha (1974:46) points out that, "In his encounter with Christianity, Swami Vivekananda made an attempt to fit Christ into the pattern of 'Advaita Vedanta' by describing him as 'Advaitin' and made a selective use of Christ's sayings to justify this description."

### 2.7.3.2 Visista Advaita philosophy

In the eleventh century AD Ramanujacharya, the founder of *Visista Advaita* — non-dualism, was born in Tamilnadu. Non-dualism means it admits the plurality of matter and of souls and so it is *Vishesa* or *Visista* (qualification). Ramanujacharya lived in Melkote in Karnataka for about 22 years (AD 1093- 1116) and built a temple for Lord Narayana there. He preached the Vedantic theism of *Bhakti* (intense love and worship of God), which demands absolute self-surrender and obedience; which also gives rich inward experience (*Anubhava*) and leads to the attainment of *Prapti* (complete salvation). As Prabhavananda (1963:305) puts it,

Ramanuja led the people to the bosom of truth. He argues that God and soul or men are not the same though they are separate from each other and the highest ideal and the ultimate goal are to love and worship God and surrender ourselves utterly and completely to him.

Unlike Sankara, Ramanuja believed that God is omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient and that the relation between God and the individual soul is one of dependence that is eternal, personal and real. He did not believe in the unreality of the world or of the individual soul. Pandit (1978:27) explains:

Ramanuja's interpretation of the 'Brahma Suthra' seems to be sincere and correct. The idealistic system of Sankara is confronted by the pantheistic system of Ramanuja, although he may be termed a pantheist. We also find theism in his system, in that he never believes that the individual soul after release loses its individuality.

For many, the *Bhakti* experience, which Ramanuja advocated, arose from the Christian understanding of mysticism, and Jesus' saying, "I and my Father are one" is parallel to this phenomenon. One of the great Tamil poets, Tiruvalluvar, a follower of Ramanuja, incorporated his teachings in the very popular epic poem, *Tirukkural*. Tiruvalluvar lived at a time when the southern kings had contact with Egypt, Greece and Rome in the West. It is recorded that a representative of the Pandyan king attended the ceremonies of the Emperor Augustus in Rome. Popley and Pope (in Subramanyan 1970: 7), who translated and studied the classic writings of Tiruvalluvar, suggest that speculatively, "it would be wonderful to reconstruct a meeting of the Tamil saint of Mylapore, Tiruvalluvar, and St Thomas of the Christians. Tiruvalluvar, too, is associated with the place called Mylapore and his date could well have been the date of St Thomas. And traditionally Tiruvalluvar is said to have been a man of low caste, a vellavan, and a community low in the social scale among which the Apostle could have been working."

### **2.7.3.3 Dvaita Vedanta philosophy**

Karnataka's own contribution to the Vedic revival of India is through Madhavacharya, the founder of the *Dvaita Vedanta* philosophy. Madhava's premise in these teachings was that both knowledge and the object of knowledge must be real, otherwise no knowledge would be possible. Dualism is not between spirit and matter or between good and bad, but the distinction between the independent Supreme Being and the dependent principle of life. This philosophy, called *Pancha-Beda*, is based on the five real and eternal distinctions (Hastings 1915:231):

- (1) Between God and the individual soul
- (2) Between God and matter
- (3) Between the soul and matter
- (4) Between one soul and another
- (5) Between one particle of matter and another

Madhava, who was called Anandamitra by his guru Purnaprajna, was born in AD 1197 (it might be Saka year 1118 or AD 1238 ) and died at the age of 79. He toured throughout South India and propagated his theory of dualism in opposition to the monotheism of Sankara and others. He produced thirty-seven different aspects of *Vedanta* and also commentaries on the *Brahma Sutra*. His works in Sanskrit were translated into Kannada during his lifetime by his disciple, Kanakadasa. Based on the date AD 1238, the *Astamutas*, the eight monasteries he founded at Udipi in Karnataka, organized a nationwide celebration of his 750th anniversary in 1988.

Is it possible to find a meeting place between Christianity and Madhavanism? The general assumption that all the South Indian reformers were influenced by Christianity is especially true of Madhava on many counts. Prabhavananda (1963:319f) contends that "Madhava's philosophy is contrary to the teachings of all other Indian religious schools; Madhava might have been influenced by certain missionaries during his time who might have penetrated into India."

An important supporting theory was based on his birth place — which is called Prajakshetra, or Rajatipura or Kallianpur today, which is in the vicinity of Udipi in the South Kanara district. Sturrock (1894:147) mentions that "the moral code of Madhavacharya is a high one, and his teachings are held by a community of Christians at Kallianpur, which was mentioned by Cosmos Indiacopleustes in the 6th century". Hastings (1915:234) also supports this assumption: "Here in Kallyanpur as far back as the 6th century AD, Cosmos Indiacopleustes, a globe trotter, had found a Bishop who was appointed from Persia." Besides, there are some legends that connect Madhava's life and teachings to those of Jesus. For example, Madhava held the view that Lord Vishnu's son was born of a woman called Lakshmi. He took human form in order to save humanity and guide them to heaven. He argued that salvation, which consists of a perfect knowledge of God and ourselves, has to be obtained in union and co-operation with *Vayu* (which

in Kannada and Sanskrit means "the Spirit") his son. According to Tuluvaite (1966:52), "the doctrine of salvation solely through 'Vayu' the son of Vishnu is found in this form alone in Madhavanism of all the faiths in India". Desmet (1964:72) asserts that "a superficial reading of Madhava's writings may give the impression that his doctrine is very close to Christian philosophy. Guided by this impression some have been tempted to postulate a measure of Christian influence upon his thought, especially with regard to his doctrine of absolute predestination."

## 2.8 MODERN RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS: THE BHAKTI TRADITION

The Hindu religion is not only philosophical and Brahminical but also the religion of the masses. Though the "Hindu" label in general applies to all who claim that religion, it is estimated that there are about 250 Hindu sectarian groups, worshipping as many gods and goddesses in Karnataka alone because the ordinary people find gods in everything. That includes veneration of rivers and mountains, animals and human beings. By following the ancestral religion and its social and religious customs and practices, the religions in India are practised in the narrow confines of the families, as well as bound by caste systems. By and large, the popular Hinduism is a traditional affair rather than an intellectual or philosophical one. Many ordinary people do not understand the tenets of the philosophies, yet they are familiar with the mythological stories that are the fabric of their religious system and beliefs. Folk tales like *Yakshgana*, *Hari-Kata* and *Tala-Muddale* and recently, the movies and stories of Ramayana and Mahabharata have popularized them. Hinduism is not only a philosophical religion, but also a simple one that touches the hearts and homes of millions of people. The number of small *Gudies* (temples) built for a number of deities testifies to this. Both Aryans and Dravadians contributed to this phenomenon. While organized Hindu religion is guided by celibate *Acharyas*, the ordinary daily rituals are carried out by ordinary priests, including the head of the family sometimes. Each family has a *Kula-Daiva* (family deity) or *Ista-Devaru* (favourite or personal god). Thus, to a great extent, they practise the theory of the priesthood of all believers. Religion is a private and personal affair more than a public affair like Christianity. The popular temple festival attracts almost all the communities who take part in it without any reservation or religious bias.

In earlier times, especially in Tulunadu, many sects offered sacrifices that included human beings, as blood was considered popular with the gods. These sacred sacrifices could be performed by recitation of *mantras* (sacred prayers), which, until recently, could only be performed by male Brahmin priests. Since the government banned human sacrifice, they have had to adopt lesser ways and means.

Basically, all Hindus worry about *Karma Samsara*, which means re-incarnation, due to the deeds performed in the previous life. The only end for this is to obtain *Mukti* (salvation) at any cost. As Hogg (in Sharp 1971:234) explains:

Unless a way of salvation can be found they are condemned to an endless process of re-incarnation — an indefinitely continuing chain of lives, all of them unsatisfying and crushed with falsity of illusion. It is from this dreary prospect that the orthodox seek to be rescued. That is what they understand by salvation.

Therefore, to achieve salvation, Hindu thinkers have adopted ways and means called *Gnana-Marga* (way of knowledge), *Bhakti-Marga* (way of devotion) and *Karma-Marga* (way of deeds), as well as *Raja-Yoga* — a method of special postures of breathing and rhythmical repetition of the proper thought formulas or exercise that will be helpful to control the body, mind and spirit. Of all these systems, the *Bhakti-Marga* became very popular and deeply embedded in the psyche of the people, which contributed to the intense spirituality. It is similar to the modern Charismatic movement of the Christian church. It provides solace and a simple, straightforward approach to God for ordinary people and kindles the realization of the union between God and a person. The exponents of these "I and Thou" theories are regarded as the Saints, who recaptured the hearts and homes of the people by developing simple devotional lyrics known as *Kirthanas* or *Bhajans*. The *Bhakti* movements played an important role in Karnataka in the medieval period. The saints humbled themselves by calling themselves *Dasa*, or the servants of the Lord (*Haridasa*). Purandaradasa and Kanakadasa were the great Vishnava saints.



## 2.9 REFORMED RELIGION: THE VEERASAIVISM

The followers of Lord Shiva are called *Saivites*. Saivism is a strong and persistent ancient tradition within Hinduism. Some trace its origin to the Aryan period and others claim it belongs to the earlier period of the aborigines. It witnessed a great revival during the reign of Vikramadita VI (AD 1076-1127). Saivites are commonly known as *Lingyats* or *Shivabhktas* in Karnataka. They are also known as *Veerasivas*, which means the heroes, as Sargant (1963:1) explains:

Veerasiava may be translated as a staunch Saivite, like a staunch Anglican who does not wish to associate himself with any other church except the one represented by the Church of England. 'Veera' literally means hero or champion and is here used to express the idea of warrior zeal in the cause of Siva and Siva only.

*Veerasiva Siddanta* (Veerasiva philosophy) in Karnataka has been championed by a host of fervent devotees, including Prabhudeva, who is also called Allama Prabhu, the famous Basaveshwara, Channabasva, Siddarama, the renowned poet, Sarvajna and a woman saint called Akkamahadevi. They are described as "the brightest stars in the spiritual horizon" and are known as *Sivasharanas* (devotees of siva) or the saints. They made the 12th century AD the golden age of this religious philosophy. The religious centre, Anubhava Mantapa, became their parliament of religion with Allama Prabhu as its first president (*Purohit*).

Lingyatism became a strong and very popular missionary movement, drawing many followers in Karnataka. Nearly 20% of the people of Karnataka are followers of this religion. They also have a strong influence in the political arena of the state. Jatti, former Vice-President of India, championed its cause fully. Various programmes are propagated through *Basava Bhavanas* (centres) and *Jangamas* (travelling evangelists) as well as the literature programme blessed by various heads of *Mutts* (religious dioceses). They are engaged not only in religious activities but also in social development, like opening educational and charitable institutions.

The Lingyats are also "people of the book". They recognize the four *Vedas* and twenty-eight

*Agamas* (sacred writings). They hold the sacred sayings and teachings of *Sivasharanas* and the *Saiva-Siddanta* as the highest pinnacle of divine knowledge. *Vachana-Shahitya*, the collection of sayings of the saints, deals with profound philosophical and theological dictums of their religious philosophy. The Rev Channappa Uttangi of BM earned eternal gratitude from the Lingyats for collected the sayings in spite of his Christian conviction.

Lingyatism also advocates five principles of life, known as *Panchacharas* (Aerthayil 1989:101):

- (1) Sadachara (discipline in religious and ethical life)
- (2) Ganachara (loyalty to the community)
- (3) Brutachrya (attitude of a servant)
- (4) Sivachara (devotion to a Guru)
- (5) Lingachara ( habitually wearing the Linga)

The followers of this sect worship a miniature *Shivalinga*, a replica of phallus (*Linga*), which is in union with *yoni*, a female reproductive organ. They represent Lord Shiva and his wife, Shakti, whom they worship (Dasgupta 1955:49). According to Nandimath (1942:123), Linga serves as the symbol of salvation:

The Linga is the symbol of Para-Brahman, the supreme Lord, the mass of ineffable light in the column of blazing fire and the cosmic principle which is the source of the universe and the visible symbol of invisible 'Chaitanya' (consciousness), which exists internally in being.

In order to approach the goal of salvation, Lingyat devotees undertake an initiation ceremony called *Linga Diksa* for their children. They believe that through this process, the *Guru* transforms the *Jivatma* of the disciple into *Shivatma*. Thus, the whole of life is transformed and becomes *Lingamaya* (life dominated by Linga). In Veersaivism, Linga worship has become so prominent that it shares equal status with the cross Christianity. It creates a harmony of *anga* (the soul) with *Linga* (the God); a union between the soul and the eternal reality (*Paramasiva*). In this process they believe *Istalinga*, the favourite Linga, will lead them to attain spiritual pilgrimage (*Linganga*

*Samarasya*). Vasanthkumar (1973:54) shows the contrast between this and the Christian faith:

This view is quite opposite to the Christian view of salvation, which is through Christ, which is free and by grace. Whereas in Lingyatism by 'Linga-Diksha' one cannot get salvation automatically, but has to work out his own salvation; and 'Lingadeeksha' is only an instrument, which puts him on the path.

On the mystic journey to salvation, the climax of Basava's teachings is where the individual soul finds union in the superior soul. That longing is epitomized in his *Vachanas* (poems), which always end with the name of God --*O Kudala Sangama Deva*. This aspiration has been described as somewhat parallel to the Israelites' sentimental attachment to the "God of Zion" or the importance of Calvary to the Christian.

The Lingyats are the people who are closely associated with the practice of reverence to the bull, which is called *Basava*. The concept of the bull is like the Christian doctrine of the "Lamb of God". Lingyats believe that this *Pasu* is the advocate of salvation, and so is placed in the temples gazing directly at the *Linga*. They sprinkle *Vibuti* (holy ashes) on their bodies and put a *Trisula* (spear of Shiva) mark on their foreheads, because of sacramental value. They use and wear *Rudraksha* (beads) for prayers. They show great respect (*Gurubhakti*) to their teachers; and wash their feet (*Padooka* ceremony) and accept *Prasada* (sacrament) from them. Uttangi (1969:58), whose parents were converts from Lingyatism to Christianity, describes the significance of this tradition:

When a Guru incarnates in human form for the salvation of his 'Bhakta' (devotees), he becomes the real Guru. He is not only a loving father and mother but also a lover. Besides, he is a wise man and one who initiates, one who teaches and one who shows the way of salvation.

Basava or Basवेशवारा, one of the great Lingyat leaders, was born in AD 1160 and became the most influential champion of this faith. He was addressed as *Bhakti-Bhandari* (the treasurer of devotion). Though by birth he was a Brahmin, he became a follower of Veerasivism by

conviction. He served as minister of finance to Kalachuri of Bijjal king of Kalyan. His teachings had a universal appeal and attracted people of all castes. He championed five principles:

- (1) the abolition of all caste distinctions
- (2) the uplifting of the 'Panchamas' (low caste)
- (3) the equality of women
- (4) the growth of literature in regional language
- (5) the importance of *Kayaka*, the dignity of labour

(Murthy & Ramakrishna 1982:146)

His mission was a militant crusade against Brahmanism, rituals and caste distinctions in society, which gave new hope to the oppressed. His teachings included mysticism, inner purity and monotheism, as well as social reform activities that touched equality for outcasts and raising the status of women in the society. Basava focussed on the internal purity of thought and *kayaka*, actions that are equally demanding, along with external application and ceremonial ritualistic orders. He emphasized devotion and worship to one God and a duty-bound vocation in life. He called everyone to serve all humanity, irrespective of caste or creed, state (rich or poor) or gender. He aimed at the spiritual regeneration of the masses through simple faith and devotion to God. Paying tribute to Basava, a Christian minister described him as "the most compassionate person", saying that "Basava's greatness lies in the universality of his message. He was a successful man who lived a full contented life, which balanced both the spiritual and temporal dimensions. He gave his people the richness and genius of his extraordinary literary talents. His radiance is like a mirror, which reflects the life and religion of Karnataka" (Samartha 1972:148).

It is speculated that Basava had an influence on Jainism. At the same time, some believe that he was influenced by Christianity. According to Sargant (1963:25-26), "Basavanna might have been influenced by Christian teachings. In such case if Basava or his forerunners in the Veersaiva movement knew anything about Christianity, it must have been the Christianity of St Thomas' Christians in India or the Nestorian Christians in other parts of Asia. Could Christianity have influenced the Veersaiva religion in its early stages?"

This assumption opened the way for some interesting developments called *Nudi* movements through which many in the north Karnataka became followers of the Christian faith. But its mass exodus was prevented by shrewd moves of its religious leaders. It has been also observed that Lingayats are the people least receptive to Christianity in Karnataka. Dr David of Wilson College Bombay maintained that "in fact, Lingayatism proved to be an important obstacle for missionary success".

## **2.10 THE ANCIENT RELIGIOUS PRACTICE: SPIRIT WORSHIP**

Karnataka has something in common with Caribbean culture, perhaps even with African cult and Amerindian Spirit worship. Anthropologically, they form a kin religion because of their belief in spirits. Ancestor worship forms the basis for this practice. It shows the way of expressing filial piety beyond the grave. They do so in the belief that the dead are assured of a faithful continuing role in society and the family, and that their spirits bless the living, which is why they are revered or worshipped.

In Karnataka the spirits are addressed as *bhutas*. To some extent, even converts to Christianity sometimes feel guilty at the prospect of leaving their dead kin unattended in the underworld. It is believed that if the spirits of the dead ancestors are not given offerings and worship, they become hungry or angry ghosts, formless, pitiful, wandering and uncontrolled. Spirit worship is largely a mythological affair, but in the South Kanara district it has a strong historical and sociological foundation.

In Tulunadu, bhuta belief and practice is central. Its power is so great that people feel they will die if they forsake the worship of the spirits. In spite of modernization, it has not disappeared, but is deeply rooted in the hearts and homes of the Tulu people; and was recently revived in the name of culture.

What are bhutas? They are the spirits of deceased persons and can be good or evil in nature. The evil spirits are believed to be those of people who died violently, committed suicide or still have not obtained complete satisfaction in their lives or attained peace for their souls. The good spirits

are great and popular persons or strong warriors. These restless spirits choose dark and empty places, graveyards and jungles as their haunting grounds. There are hosts of bhutas, but the five major and most dreaded ones are the *Ivaru Daivangalu* (five guardians), namely *Kalkuti*, *Koti-Chennaya*, *Baidya*, *Panjurli* and *Chandi*. There are also many family bhutas or village bhutas (Sturrock 1894:2f). The displeased bhutas are believed to cause sickness, epidemics, such as plagues and malaria, as well as misfortunes. Hence the practice of black magic is associated with them.

In order to escape the wrath of the bhutas, people (particularly, lonely and pregnant women) try to avoid spirit-inhabited places, like cemeteries or Banyan trees, and take care to please them. The devotees of these spirits organize festivals called *Nema*, where shedding blood is considered an important element of the festivity. They seek favours from bhutas and the divination powers of the *Pujari* (priest) are considered very important for this purpose. The power of the spirit is used to seek favours and also to harm their enemies.

In the nineteenth century, there was a large-scale conversion to Christianity. The encounter of Jesus with many demon-possessed people became the Good News to these people, who were bound and oppressed by such beliefs. Those who responded to the gospel, though they were not low caste, became receptive to the gospel, mainly to escape from the fear of the bhutas. These people came under the hereditary leadership of the headman called Gurikar, who held temporal and spiritual powers over his community and played an important role when people embraced Christian faith.

In the North Kanara district there is a tribe called *Siddies*, who claim some kind of antiquity for themselves. Though most of them are Muslims, there are Christians among them. Interestingly, a surveyor, Campbell (1883:397) points out that the family names of this forest tribe, who are called *Maratha sidis*, are of the oldest and be connected to the Christian stock. They trace their origin to Abyssinia and some to the Portuguese. But their life style shows they belong to an earlier period. If it is so, what may be their origin?

## 2.11 THE INFLUENCE OF FOREIGN RELIGIONS: THE ISLAMIC FAITH

India has been influenced by two great world religions from the Middle East. The Portuguese introduced Christianity into India. The Mogul Empire established in India by Barbar, a Turk from Central Asia, lasted from 1526 to 1858. Thereafter, Muslim dominated in India. Muslims became an influencing power not only because of its missionary zeal, but also by force and inducement and even challenged Christian expansion. Islam also made cultural and political contributions in India. For more than a thousand years, Islam was the dominant religion in Asia. This resulted in the division of the subcontinent into India and Pakistan, who also became arch-rivals politically and religiously. Recent nuclear bomb testing by both countries created worldwide tension and proved this rivalry.

Hindus and their communal parties consider the Muslims a threat. Muslims are a factor to be reckoned with sociologically and politically; and some Muslim leaders have become national figures. Recently, the demolition of a Mosque at the birthplace of the Hindu god, Rama, at Ayodya in Uttar Padesh escalated the tension between the two communities. The sporadic eruption of communal disturbances between them are a regular feature in India today.

The Islamic faith was introduced into Karnataka in the 14th century and patronized by successive Muslim rulers. When the Bhamini kingdom came into power in 1346, Bijapur became its capital. The Muslim rulers in the Deccan area of Bijapur and the neighbouring Hindu Marathas were always in a state of belligerence. In 1686 the Mogul king, Auranagazeb, annexed the Deccan Kingdom. Later, it was handed over to Nizami of Hyderabad. When Hyder Ali and Tippu Sultan ruled the old Mysore state, they patronized the Islamic faith. The Muslims built mosques and *madrases* (religious schools for children); and the Muslim contribution is very much evident in the political, cultural and daily life of society. Recently, the Koran was translated into Kannada, signifying a departure from its orthodox stand.

The Prophet Mohammed, who appeared in the seventh century, believed that Judaism and Christianity had wandered from the path of truth. Therefore he began to give the world a new direction. Hence the Muslims believe that their faith is the culmination of the revelations given

to the faithful Hebrews and Christians of old. Chief among the doctrines of Islam is the conception of Allah as the one and supreme being, who is ever addressed as All-Seeing, All-Hearing, All-Speaking, All-Knowing, All-Willing and All-Powerful, and thus held Absolutely Unitary. Other prominent beliefs in Islam are belief in angels (like Gabriel), Judgement, Paradise and Hell. The religion faithfully holds on to five important duties or obligations. Muslims strongly believe that their holy book, the Koran, came directly from Allah. Almost all its historical narratives have biblical parallels, including stories of the patriarchs, beginning with Abraham whose son Ishmael received pride of place in their system. Jesus is considered one of the Prophets, but not the Son of God. Muslims regard Mohammed as Allah's most supreme prophet.

The members of Ahmediya, one of the Muslim movements, believe that their religious leader, Mirza Quadiyari, was an incarnation of Jesus. They call him *Yus Asaf* and narrate fascinating stories about him, especially during the Easter season.

Trade links between India and Arabia were established long before the birth of Islam. Pliny's records show that in the first century AD that there were Arab settlements on the Malabar Coast. They came from Aden and the Rastrakuta kings gave them privileges to develop trade connections and even to construct mosques. In coastal Karnataka they are called *Navayats*, *Hanjamnas* or *Mapilas* and established themselves as a strong community. The Portuguese traveller, Durat Barbose (1514) refers to them as Moors who became prosperous during the Vijyanagara Empire, developing rice and horse trading. The Muslims also believe that Jesus is one of the prophets but do not accept his death on the cross. They maintain that he only fainted and story of the resurrection is a fabrication of the disciples.

## 2.12 THE CHRISTIAN HERITAGE

When did the gospel of Christ reach Karnataka? Some argue that Jesus visited India during the silent years between 12 and 30 to study under the sages while some trace it back five hundred years ago to the arrival of the Portuguese. Still others trace it back to the Dominicans, who evangelized India in the 13th century. It is no exaggeration to claim an Indian influence in the ancient world. In the ancient world, particularly in Persian record, there is a reference to India



(Esther 1:1) and the Roman Empire covered a vast territory, including the Orient or the East, which is also known as Asia Minor (2 Cor 1:8), and included India (Qualben 1947:8). So a Christian presence goes back almost to the beginning of the early Christian history. However, its influence was only minimal.

A bird's-eye view of the history would be something like this:

(1) The mysterious millennium (52 -1118 AD)

Even though it cannot be established authentically, yet, there are some traces of Christian influence in India from the St Thomas and St Bartholomew's traditions and legends, and a living Christian community, who claim their heritage from St Thomas.

(2) The hidden years (1118-1498 AD)

The second period, during which time it was hidden, commences from AD 1118 with the revival of Hinduism under the great religious reformer, Madhava, until the arrival of the Portuguese.

(3) The influenced years (1498 -1810 AD)

In the third stage we see the emergence of European colonization and the Cross followed the flag. After Vasco da Gama's arrival, the fiery missionary, Francis Xavier came first to the neighbouring states of Kerala and Tamilnadu. Karnataka did not have to wait long for the Roman Catholic Church to take root there, however.

(4) The expanding years (1810-1910 AD)

Full-scale activities of various Missions developed evangelization and social action, resulting in the Christian faith reaching out to the four corners of this land. Along with that, Roman Catholic missions, in particular the Paris Foreign Mission and the Jesuits, launched vigorous evangelization. The arrival of John Hands of the London Missionary Society at Bellary in 1810

inaugurated Protestant missions in Karnataka. This led to the glorious years of the church's expansion in Karnataka.

(5) The formative years (1910 –1947 AD)

The world wars were turning points in the history of the Indian church. The church saw a transforming mission paradigm and the emergence of a new indigenous structure.

(6) The growing years (1947 onwards)

After Indian independence, the indigenous leadership took control of the Church and its expansion is seen in the formation of the twelve Roman Catholic and four Protestant church dioceses. Along with that many neo-evangelical churches also began to make inroads. How did all these developments in the growth of the church take place? Were they due to biological growth or to evangelization?

**Vasco da Gama's melodrama**

The authentic history of Christianity in India began five years after Columbus' discovery of the West Indies. In his bid to reach India, Columbus lost his dream, which was later realized by the Portuguese sailor, Vasco da Gama. India was well known to the ancient world as a great country with an ancient civilization. For centuries its Western belt was also famous for trade and commerce with the Mediterranean world. For a long time, India could be reached by land from the northern Asian peninsula or the ancient silk route. When Muslim enemies blocked that route, it became necessary to discover a new and easy route. Prince Henry's guidance and the discovery of the monsoon winds a few years earlier helped in this process. As the head of a Portuguese expedition, Vasco da Gama sailed the Atlantic and the Indian Ocean and reached the West Coast of India on May 20, 1498. Vasco da Gama did not visit Karnataka, but landed in neighbouring Kerala. Later, the Portuguese captured the tiny state of Goa, which remained in their possession until 1962. Karnataka is sandwiched between these states of India. So it felt the full implications of these events as well as the Christian faith. Vasco da Gama felt he had achieved his objective

fully.

It is generally understood that India had trading contacts with the Middle East, including Palestine. An Indian Government publication, *Perspective* (Jan 1997:33-34) credits King Solomon with the establishment of Jewish settlements in India. In II Kings 9:28 we read about Solomon's fleet which was used to bring various commodities, including ivory, apes, monkeys, cedar and scented wood. Karnataka is famous for beautifully carved sandalwood items. Sandalwood has a lovely fragrance and is used for decorative pieces. According to Moraes (1994:14), King Solomon had wood imported for building the temple and palaces at Jerusalem and they were exported from the Indian port of Ophir. The St Thomas Christians tell legends that establish the link from the first century of the Christian era.

Aroused by Marco Polo's expeditions, King Joao I and his successor, Joao II, took a keen interest in discovering new routes to India, and sent many expeditions. The Pope offered ample rewards to those who helped in the Portuguese efforts in this regard. According to Neil (1964:140), the age of discovery had two main purposes:

It is clear from the early records that the bold and hardy men who made the great voyages, and the rulers and others who stood behind them, had two great purposes in view. First, to bring the light of the true gospel to hitherto unknown nations who had lived in darkness. Secondly, and from the point of view of that age even more important, to enter into contact with the Christian Churches which were believed to be in existence in those lands; and to make a great world alliance of the faithful, through which at last the power of the Muslims would be brought to the ground.

Bartholomew de Dias had already reached the tip of Africa and, faced by tempests, returned disappointed, naming it the Cape of Storms. When Vasco de Gama reached that spot, he named it the Cape of Good Hope for it gave him a new direction to go round the Cape to reach his destination. He brought an end to almost a century of consistent efforts to reach the East. With the help of Ibn Majid, a Gujarathi Muslim, as navigator he reached Calicut on the Malabar Coast of India on 27 May 1498. This event contributed to India's dominance for the next 450 years.

At that time, Islam was on the rise. According to Mundadan (1984:238), Panikker, a Muslim Indian diplomat, stated that "to a devout and patriotic Iberian, Spaniard or Portuguese to fight against Islam was a stern imperative, a combination alike of religious duty and patriotic necessity". The Muslim Arabs held effective control and monopoly of the eastern Mediterranean region and demanded heavy tolls from the merchant caravans. The discovery of a new passage was vital.

From the world-view of mission, it should be noted that the Islamic crescent advanced more successfully than the cross in India because it yielded more political power. Vasco de Gama was pushed into a corner by the strong opposition of Arab merchants, who convinced the kings in Malabar to condemn the Portuguese as spies. Given the country's history, Christians take third place and that of a minority of 3% of the total population. Being a minority in India, the Christians are often faced with discrimination and persecution as well.

The Portuguese had twin objectives. Having heard about the existence of Oriental Christians as well as the legendary Prester John of India earlier, the Portuguese wanted to seek his help. Some held that Prester John was a Christian emperor of India or a great Christian mystic hidden in an unknown land. Marco Polo also referred to him, which inspired Prince Henry to investigate new routes to reach him (Moraes 1964:107). Following Prince Henry's grand strategy to take Western Christendom, Vasco da Gama was pleasantly surprised at the East Coast of Africa, when the ships that belonged to Indian Christians greeted him. Perhaps these Christians were none other than the St Thomas Christians of Kerala. On the other hand, they might have been Nestorian Christians had never heard of the Pope or Catholic Christians. This contributed to the desire of the Portuguese to bring the Indian Christians under papal authority. The Portuguese naturally regarded it as inconceivable that any Christians should exist in independence of the Bishop of Rome. So they wanted to unite eastern and western Christians. They felt that these Oriental Christians were heretics and wanted to convert them to their true and holy faith. Based on Vasco da Gama's observations, King Manuel I wrote a letter to the Zamorin of Calicut and sent the Christians greetings. He recognized that St Thomas and St Bartholomew had evangelized their land (Moraes 1964: 121). The King also commended this to the Cardinal Protector:

The King of Calicut is a Christian and so too are the majority of his subjects, although they are considered heretics. Out of the thirty-eight kings of India, the greater number were Christians in the same manner as the Christians of Calicut. The chief of these Christian kings is called king of Polmemder and of Varcem (Mundadan 1984:251).

At first Christian priests accompanied the colonizers as chaplains. But the group of eight missionaries who accompanied Cabral, who led the second expedition to India in 1500, had a different purpose. They were full of zeal and wanted to plunge themselves instantly into the task of mission. Thereafter, Portuguese ships brought secular and religious (belonging to an Order) priests to India, not only to look after their spiritual needs, but also to convert the non-Christians. The *Padroado* granted by Pope Nicholas V in 1454 gave Portugal exclusive patronage privileges in Africa and the East Indies (Kane 1981:58). This gave them ecclesiastical administration of the Church in India and the power to present suitable candidates to be appointed as bishops. Thus, with privilege and propaganda the new passage to India was opened.

### **2.13 THE ANTIQUITY OF EARLY CHRISTIANITY IN INDIA**

The beginning of Christianity in India is attributed to the apostolic paradigm of the followers of Jesus Christ, particularly St Thomas, who is the patron saint of India, for according to legend he preached and was martyred in Madras, India. The early Christian history in India is built on this legend, which was even acknowledged as part of our historical truth. In his autobiography, *Discovery of India*, India's first Prime Minister, Nehru (1947:197) states:

India was, it must be remembered, a country of many religions in spite of the dominance of the Hindu faith in its various shapes and forms. Apart from Jainism and Buddhism which had largely faded away from India and been absorbed by Hinduism, there were also Christianity and Hebrew religions. Both of these probably reached India during the first century after Christ and both had found a place in the country. There were a large number of Syrian Christians and Nestorians in South India and they were as much part of the country as anyone else.

### 2.13.1 The St Thomas tradition

The Indian tradition that has been honoured since time memorial narrates that Thomas came to Cranganore on the West Coast of India about the year 52 AD. Scholars differ on the apostolate of St Thomas in India. There are Western, Indian and Portuguese documentary and oral traditions handed down from generation to generation. Not only St Thomas Christians, but people of other faiths also claim this history and heritage (Mundadan 1984:1-66). St Thomas converted some caste Hindu families on the Malabar Coast, whose descendants call themselves St Thomas Christians to this day. The Orthodox Church in Kerala claims this heritage and therefore fought against the Portuguese attempt to bring them under papal authority. Syrian Orthodox, Jacobites, Chaldeans, Marthomaites, Roman Catholics, the Church of South India and others still claim this heritage. St Thomas also visited the Coromandal coast and some even claim that he went to China. Later, he returned to Mylapore and suffered martyrdom at St Thomas Mount in Madras where his remains were interred. The San Thomas Basilica of Mylapore was erected over this burial place. The pilgrimage of millions of people, both dignitaries and common folk, down through the centuries and Pope John Paul II's historic visit in 1986 validate this memorial.

Numerous legends, articles, chronicles and scientific research papers exist about the Apostolate of St Thomas. After thorough investigation, Mundadan (1984:64) concludes that the investigation "into the western tradition and different aspects of the Indian tradition give me the impression that the central content stands out in clear relief, namely, St Thomas the Apostle preached, died and was buried in South India."

The Indian tradition consists of *Pattus* (songs), local records, oral traditions maintained by generations and *Thorana* as well as the feast of St Thomas celebrated on 3 July. This tradition is based on three sources:

The Malabar tradition- the stories told to the Portuguese by the people of Malabar, especially the Christians of St Thomas. The Chaldean tradition- what has been gathered from the East Syrians and their books. The Mylapore tradition- what the people of oromondal coast told the Portuguese (Mundadan 1970:38-39).

The earliest apocryphal record, the Acts of St Thomas, was written in Syriac around the third century AD at Edessa. It narrates in great length the missionary activities of St Thomas and legends connected with them. Some of the historical church buildings in Kerala, and the memorial in Little Mount and the Basilica in Madras stand as the historical evidence in support of the above claims. Accordingly, Hambye (1952:374) states that it is "perhaps through an argument of convergence that some historical certitude can be reached on the Indian apostolate of St Thomas. All the material we have, can be summed up in one single affirmation- Since early times, at least since the fourth century, there is general agreement in the West and in India, as to the coming of St Thomas to this country."

### **2.13.2 The authenticity of Mylapore mythology and mystery**

While it is not difficult to believe in the Kerala tradition, there could be some reservations about the Mylapore tradition. For, apart from Mylapore Church heritage, no Tamil Christians claim any historical antiquity for their church tradition. Also Mylapore tradition has always been disputed as many scholars find it difficult to accept the evidence it produces. Joseph (1952:56) suspects that the Mylapore church was the site of a Muslim shrine. Portuguese writings on this subject seem to be based on a deposition made on oath by one Diego Fernandes in 1543. It is also assumed that an eastern merchant led them to this theory after which they were very interested in excavating a tomb at Mylapore and claiming it as St Thomas' tomb. Thus it came to light with their profound backing. However, Mundadan's (1984:37f) reference that "the location of the tomb of St Thomas might be identified in some other place" and Heras' (1929:284) statement that "the tomb of the Apostle would someday be found in Malabar" make it seem opportune to search for evidence outside Mylapore. Brown (1956:57), who served as Bishop in the Anglican diocese of Kerala, is also of the opinion that

It is clear that the identification of the Mylapore tomb as the burial place of St Thomas the Apostle, and the inscription of special sanctity to various places in the locality is not sufficient. St Thomas Mount and the little mount were entirely the work of the Portuguese whose known attitude towards the saints and eager desire to find apostolic relics do not induce confidence in their historical judgement or critical examination of the facts.

It is generally assumed that Christianity came to Karnataka only through colonialism. While Kerala tradition has *Pattus* and ancient Tulunadu has *Paddamas* and *stala Puranas* (legends of the places), Karnataka is devoid of epics, relics or oral traditions. Nevertheless, there is one strong argument that cannot be overruled as mere hypothesis. St Thomas, a fisherman of Palestine, would not have bypassed the Kanara coast, which is close to Malabar, when he evangelized.

## 2.14 THE PORT TOWN OF MALPE

The claims to the tomb at Mylapore present a paradox. Quoting from the Nestorian, Solomon of Basars *Book of the Bee*, Cardinal Tisserant (1957:4) points out that "St Thomas was buried at Mahluph, a city of the land of Indians". Hosten (1963:5) quotes the same source, but adds another anecdote to this story: "Habban, the merchant, brought his (St Thomas) body and laid it in the blessed city of the Lord. They say he was buried in Mahluph, a city in the land of the Indians." Generally, Mahluph has been attributed as being Mylapore in Madras. However, this assumption can be challenged in favour of Malpe in South Kanara district, on the following grounds:

In the Tulu language the historic town of Malpe near Udipi is called *Maluphe*. Etymologically, this name comes closer in Tulu language, than any derivation of Mahluph. Secondly, on the way to Malpe from Udipi travellers have to go through a place called Kalmane. Mundadan (1984:57-58) associates Mahluph with Calamina or Qalimaya in India. Marco Polo and Nicholas de Conti also referred to Calmina (Padipura 1970:24). Thirdly, some claim that Mylapore received its name from the Peacock, the national bird of India. Moraes (1964:34-35) claims that there was a place called *Muyiri-khodu* or Muzirus, which was supposed to be visited by the Apostle St Thomas and later by St Francis Xavier. In Tulu and Kannada peacock is called *Meiru* and *Meiyura*, respectively. Moreover, a place called Muzirus has been identified as a place near Mangalore. The Vijayangar Empire, which included the province of Tulunadu, had a peacock throne, *Mayura Simhasan* (Mundadan 1984:223). Fourthly, Gazetteer (1973:51-52) says "Bucca Raya II or Salva Narsima II gave permission to the Vijayangara emperor to build a port city at St Mary's island- Malpe in Kanara, which was part of the Vijayanagara empire." Mundadan



(1984:43) maintains that " St Thomas sold himself to a lord, ambassador of the king of Bisanga (Vijayanagar) in order to come to India and preach the Gospel. He preached and baptized many... and the lands of Mogor." Again, the word *Mogor* sounds like the Tulu word for fisherman, *Moger*, which is the main caste of the coastal area. Finally, in reference to the above, in Moraes (1964:35) states a footnote that the Christians of that area perpetuated the anniversary of death or Shradha' of their ancestors, a custom which is still practised by the Brahmins in Canara. Since all these may subscribe closely to the above hypothesis, it may be assumed that the historians made a mistake not to look into all these possibilities and to identify these places with Kanara.

Mundadan and others feel that Mylapore received recognition only after the Portuguese came to India. Hosten (1936:16) notes that they built up a story saying that "St Thomas had erected a cross and had predicted that when the sea reached it, white men from the West would come to revive the religion he preached." This might have been a ploy of the Portuguese, to justify their own conversion to win people for Christianity in India, as their counterpart Spaniards did in the Caribbean. They also would have switched the burial sites since some accounts state that "the remains of St Thomas were taken to Edessa in the fourth century from where he was martyred" (Silva 1984:90). If this is true, then the Portuguese might later have brought the remains back and, in order to give a prominence to Mylapore, might have arranged to bury them in that city. By that time Malpe would have become less important.

### **2.14.1 Nayar communities**

There was an interesting article in the *Deccan Herald* (Jan 1989:1 P5) about a community called *Niris*, who are still living on the Kanara Coast. While some claim their origin is a mystery, others think that they are of Malabari origin. Some state that, according to their own ancestral tradition, they came to worship at Gokarana and Kollur near Coondapur, and settled between the vicinity of Udipi and Coondpur. But today their language and customs are mingled with those of the local people of Dakshina Kannada.

They may have come from Malabar to the ancient Christian settlement of Kanara not by accident, but because of their own old connections. There is a legend that has been attributed to Thomas

of Cana or Canane (*Cnai Thoman* is what the Thomas Christians call him), who came to India from the Middle East.

By marrying a Nayar woman, Cnai Thomas fostered a Christian community at Cranganore that always traces its origins to him (Mundadan 1984:90f). Perhaps they might have travelled to Kanara after the death of their ancestors or because of persecution, and merged with the local dominant community or found solace in the company of fellow Christians.

### 2.14.2 Gondaphores correlations

Gondaphores is known by various names and his name is spelt in various ways, such as Gundaphar and Gudnaphar. The St Thomas tradition is connected strongly with the legend of a king of India, although the location of his territory is disputed. Nevertheless, Mundadan (1984:206) makes an interesting reference that cannot be overlooked:

Many attempts have been made to identify the kings mentioned in the Acts (of Thomas) and to locate their respective kingdoms. It is suggested by several scholars that Gudnaphar might be the King of North India (probably the writer of the Acts had in mind Gondophares) who reigned in North-West India some time in the first century BC/AD, and Mazdai, a South Indian king, who ruled sometime in the first century AD in Kerala, or in Coromonadel, or even in **Karnataka** (*emphasis added*). Attempts have also been made to identify Gudnaphar itself with a South Indian King. For example, Kandapapa (or Kutnappar) Raja.

While this is an exciting proposition, Mundadan's later reference to "Mylapore as the possible site of the martyrdom of St Thomas" is disappointing because he failed to analyze the name of King Mazadi in other connections or search for possible clues in Karnataka even though he made a reference to it. Mundadan may perhaps have ignored to do so because Karnataka is not his native place and also was not in the spotlight for St Thomas traditions. But there are many proofs to look into.

(1) The foreign invasion of India began with Alexander the Great. The Greeks and later Arabs were called *Yuvanas* in Tulunadu. Many references point to the Greek connection in Kanara. The spice, black pepper, is abundantly available in Kanara and was called *Yuavanapriya* (dear to Greeks and Romans). The foreign invaders were branded as devils (bhutas), and the dreaded one in Tulunadu is *Kalkutti*, who is ascribed to Arab tradition. Also, words from Arab folklore like *Masjeed* are found in Tulu *Paddanas* (Silva 1957:9).

(2) Gondophares, who fought with Alexander the Great, was thought to be a Parthian prince. The Indo-Parthian relationship was testified even by the Indian, Doordarshan in a television serial. According to Firth (1961:7), a missionary historian of Karnataka, "I should be willing to agree that St Thomas did perhaps visit both India and Parthian for it does not seem impossible entirely to disregard the element of historical truth in connection with Gondophares" Moraes (1967:31) quotes another fascinating anecdote from Joseph:

King Gondophernes of the Punjab, who was a St Thomas convert, preferred the title - 'Deva vrata' (devoted to God- singular) to the then usual titles 'Deva-Puthra' and 'Devanam priya' (=son of God, and dear to the Gods-); and adopted a characteristic symbol viz., a small "v" surmounting a large "O" standing on an inverted "T" as its base. The symbol looks like a big wine cup (chalice) such as the chalice used by Christ at His Last Supper at the Eucharist. . . . And the chalice and not the Cross is the earliest known Christian symbol (see Encyclopedia Britannica- S V chalice).

In support of this theory another claim can be made. While the name Thomas is very popular in Kerala, the name *Deva* either as prefix or suffix (eg, Devaraja, Krishna Devaraya) is more popular in Karnataka for kings as well as for gods (*Devaru*) in Kannada. Hosten (1936:3-4) contributes another interesting point in this regard, namely that "Kandappa Raja is the Christian name of Gondaphores". Again, Hosten quotes Barbose (who makes reference to the story of the wise men from the East), stating that "according to an Armenian legend, Magi Gasper's name resolves into Gondaphores, as the king of Indians" and adds that "St Thomas baptized the Magi and the Indian Queen of Saba claimed descent from King Gondaphores".

(3) St Thomas' story is woven into the legend of Habban, who was the merchant in search of a carpenter for King Gudnapher; and Thomas was sold to him by Jesus (Mundadan 1984:FN 7). Heras (1984:8f) quotes Fraquhour, who suggests that "St Thomas was brought to India by Habbanas who was a Christian, who might have been one of the Parthian Jews, who became a disciple of Christ on Pentecost day after hearing St Peter's sermon at Jerusalem (Acts 2:9)". In the *Deccan Herald* (Sept 6, 1987:5) Varghese states that "Kerala had trade ties with King Solomon and therefore, Jews might have settled in Cranganore in Kerala even before the birth of Jesus. A wedding song of the ancient Christians of Malabar mentions a Jewish merchant called Habban who arrived in Cranganore in AD 55 accompanying St Thomas and he stayed in a Jewish settlement. He is said to have baptized about 40 Jews" (Mundadan 1984:10).

But, Hosten (1936:403) refers to the statement of a government official, Raamasami Ayyar, who says that "the coastal town in Karnataka, Kundapur either belonged to a Buddhist or Jain king- Canda Raja, or Kandappa Raja or Chosa Raja". In an interview, Abishankar mentioned that near the famous Banavasi (near present-day Kundapur in Kanara) there is a place called Gudnapur, which means "the disciples".

Talavadi (1989:40 & 336) affirms that "Gondaphares was a Kannadiga" and in addition quotes Permulail in *Indian Ecclesiastical Studies* (1971:128), who says that "a Mysore Raja named Kutnappar (Gundaphar) had invited Thomas to India". Whether Gondaphores or Gudnaphar refers to the same person and also has some connection with Kundapur in the South Kanara district of Karnataka in the early first century, needs further investigation. Moreover, it can also be inferred that because piracy prevailed in that area earlier, Mazadi may have been a pirate or feudal chieftain and one of the subordinates of Gudnaphar or Gondophores. Writing in a Karnataka tourist brochure, Kamath says that the "St Mary's island in the South Kanaradistrict centuries ago harboured pirates, and one Captain Kidd started his ignoble career on Kanara's splendid shores before transferring his activities to the Caribbean".

### 2.14.3 The Brahaminic connections

It is believed that Brahmins are the ones who opposed St Thomas during his apostolate in India

(Neil 1964:51). While quoting Clement of Alexandria, the disciple of Pantaenus, who heard from a merchant about the existing Christian community in India, Hoover (1839:51) adds that the "Brahmins are those who obey the commandments of bhuta, whom they honor as a god, because of the holiness of his life" Abishankar (1987:100) confirms that Brahmins and others are worshippers of *tuleтары* deities, and bhutas are also considered to be part of the *Ganas of Shiva* in Kanara.

Who are these Brahmins? There is a place called Tonse close to Udipi and Malpe as well as in the vicinity of Kalyanpur in the South Kanara district, from where the Tonse Pai family hails. This area is surrounded by black stone hillocks and in a small hamlet, called Manipal, the Tonse family's educational institutions and business enterprises are situated today. The late Dr TMA Pai, an educationist, and the late TA Pai, former Finance Minister of India, were instrumental in developing multifaceted activities in Manipal. Perhaps they had a Jewish background for Marco Polo stated that he saw a Jewish community near Mount Ely in coastal India, which may be near Mangalore. The Tonse Pai family are Gaud Saraswath Brahmins, who speak the *Konakni* language. They also speak *Tulu* and hence are called *Tulu* or *Shivalli Brahmins*. Mascrenhas (1970:83) asserts that "among the Christians in Goa and Mangalore even today there are groups which go by the name 'Thonse': they are eastern Nazarenes; that is, people who are descendants of those who accepted Christianity from St Thomas himself, in a word 'Thomas Christians'." On the basis of this, it may be concluded that there is a hypothetical connection between Christianity in the South Kanara district through the instrumentality of the above community.

In 1498 Vasco da Gama landed on an island called Thonse Par, which he named *El Padron de Santa Maria* (St Mary's island), where he planted a cross and built a church which was later destroyed. He built a church on nearby Anjadiv Island that became a centre for pilgrimage. The erection of an Indian Naval Academy is planned for North Canara soon. When excavation commences, some evidence may be unearthed to assist in unravelling the history of this place. It is believed that icons of St Thomas and St Bartholomew adorned the facade of this church on either side of its main entrance. Perhaps, then, it may be inferred that Thonse Par derived its name from St Thomas, which Vasco da Gama would have changed to suit his own interest.

#### 2.14.4 The hypothesis of twin brothers

There are some more interesting legends, which may be linked to the Apostolate in Karnataka. According to the Roman breviary and notes on an old copy of the Bible found in a Catholic house in Kalyanpur, St Bartholomew, another disciple of Jesus, also came to India. This visit was even confirmed by Eusebius in the beginning of the fourth century as well as by Jerome in the later half of the fourth century. The apocryphal work known as the "Gospel of Bartholomew" says that Panteaenus visited India in the second century, and that he brought a copy of St Matthew's Gospel in Hebrew to that place. Ferroli (1939:58) cites Eusebius who stated that Pantaneus of Alexandria (a convert to the Christian faith who visited India between 150 and 200 AD to preach the gospel), upon his arrival in India found people who were acquainted with the Gospel of Matthew, to whom Bartholomew, one of the Apostles had preached and had left the gospel in the Hebrew language. McBrinine (1982:133) cites Dr Edger Godspeed and also refers to the ministry of Bartholomew. Mundadan (1969:38,46 &51) refers to an East Syrian, Abuna (Bishop) who gave testimony in 1553 about the Apostle St Thomas' visit to India and said that St Thomas was "accompanied by two other Apostles - St Bartholomew and St Judas Thaddeus". Hosten (1936:5-6) argues that "the stone figure at St Thomas' museum at Mylapore, along with St Thomas' statue, is of St Bartholomew".

The name Thomas was derived from the Aramaic word *Teoma*, meaning "the twin". St John uses this name three times in its Greek form (John 11:16; 20:34; 21:2). The question of whose twin Thomas was, is not answered. According to tradition, Bartholomew was a missionary to Armenia and was flogged to death and Jerome is supposed to have said that "he wrote a gospel, which is also known as the Gospel of St Bartholomew, which is an apocryphal book". Thus, it may be suggested that Thomas and Bartholomew might have been identical twin brothers (Heras 1975:206) or relatives. While St Thomas may have gone to Kerala, St Bartholomew preached at Kanara. There are also stories connected with their martyrdom. In his commentary on St John's Gospel, Barclay (1960:104) points out that the "death of Bartholomew seems to be located in India". In this connection, Moraes' (1964:45) assertion that "some believe that Bartholomew was executed by the Satavahana kings Pulumavi and Aristakama" sounds more interesting for our purpose. For Satavahanas were the kings of Karnataka. Both Thomas and Bartholomew might

have died like martyrs. While one was martyred in Karnataka, the other might have been killed elsewhere.

#### **2.14.5 The Kallianpur tradition**

Kallianpur is a small hamlet, also known as Tonse Village, situated about six kilometres from Udupi in Karnataka on the southern bank of the river Swarna. A living tradition that has been carried down by generations of local Christians exists here. According to a local historian, Lewis (1981:13):

At Colomban or Collambe village at its ancient maritime port adjacent to the Kallian fort and its ancient temple, St Bartholomew preached the faith. 'Kalliana' is a land of joy and the suffix 'Pura' indicates town or fort. The local tradition holds such details as Bartholomew having camped in the precincts of one of its temples close to the fort and preached the gospel by which Hindu deities and 'Purohits' were disturbed and were unhappy.

Actually, the Catholic Church in Kallianpur venerates him as the "Apostle of Kallianpur" and has perpetuated this legend for generations. They also believe the tradition of Pantaenus and claim that the gospel of St Matthew was found at Kallayanpur. Statues of the twelve apostles adorn the local Milagres church. The statues are so arranged that Bartholomew takes pride of place among the other apostles. His statue is placed nearest to the sanctuary as the chief apostle. They also quote in Konkani, the local language, that "Bethal administered water baptism to the local farm labourers and there are people who trace their ancestry to him". Mascarenhas (1970:86) also supports the above theory and adds that an ancient famous place near Kallianpur, presently called Barkur, may have derived its name from the corrupt usage of *Bar + Tulmai + Ooru* (Ooru means city).

Mundadan (1984:100) and others argue in favour of Bombay Kalyan, but support for the claims for the South Kanara district cannot be overlooked. Bombay Kalyan is a distant suburb of Bombay whereas Kanara Kallianpur is not only near the coast, but there are also historical places

like Udipi, Malpi, Basrur and Coondapur. All these places have been identified as those known to the Greek world as *Aluvakhecta* or *Olokliora*, the territory of Alva or Alupas rulers. Therefore, Hoover (1839:72-73) argues:

The names of Male and Kalyan fix the locality beyond all reasonable doubt. Male in the Malabar language signifies pepper, which is produced in this region.... With regard to Kalyan, it is more probable the Calian of Cosmos is the ancient city of Calianpur of which some ruins are said to still be in existence near the sea-coast two days' journey to the north of Mangalore.

The Patriarch Zaleski (1912:230) supports this argument and affirms that "Kallianpur where the Apostle Bartholomew established the Church, and where there was a community of Christians, is none other than in Kanara near Mangalore".

Finally, there is one more speculative evidence. At the Nicean Council in 325 AD, among the 318 Bishops present there was a signatory who signed as "John the Metropolitan of Persia and Great India". Many claim he was the friend of Eusebius who drafted the Nicene Creed and that the reference to "Great India" is, in fact, to the See in Kalyan and its Bishop. No doubt Cosmos's reference to it may also confirm this hypothesis. Many also trace Oriental philosophy in the Nicene Creed. Kallianpur is close to Udipi where the great philosophy of Madhawacharya flowered. Thus, Karnataka's place in this heritage cannot be doubted.

#### **2.14.6 The Mangalore legacy**

Father Ferroli (1951:17-18) mentions that on the Arabian sea coast off Mangalore, an olive tree cross was discovered in 1493 which came to be known as the "Mangalore Cross". A stone cross with a similar design was also found on the Anjadiv islands. This is definitely a pre-Portuguese date. Furthermore, Moraes (1964:54) refers to the visit of Fr Penteado in 1532, during which time an old Brahmin showed him some copper plates bearing the inscription of a cross and a peacock on the reverse. They pertain to the grants of land made in favour of the Church. This was the usual gesture made by rulers in those days to their subjects and temples.



Penetado was able to decipher the same with the help of another Brahmin from Kanara country who said, that "the grandfather of the king was called Atelaraja and his father Campellaraja and himself Bocaraja... who ruled the kingdom annexed by force which included ...Canara". No doubt these names are Kannada names and perhaps belong to Vijayanagara emperors. Thus, we may conclude with Stewart (1928:107) that:

It is certain that Christianity had obtained a foothold in South India at a very early date. It is extremely probable that the flame of evangelical fervour had flickered considerably prior to the year AD 345. The Christians in South India became such a force that later kings and rulers were ready to confer special privileges on them in order to secure the favour and support of an Indian influential body

Anthappa (1997:157f) discovered some old stone crosses at some early Christian locations and the graves of early Catholic missionaries. He points out that many were Greek Maltese crosses and it was common practice in India among Christians to tattoo the sign of the cross on their forehead. This shows that before the Portuguese introduced Latin crosses, the Christian influence was prevalent in Karnataka.

What happened to the Christian faith in Karnataka? Perhaps Christians might have faced persecution, disappeared or undergone some kind of transformation, which is important in the context of mission. Hastings (1915:234) cites Gorbe, who states that "Christians in Kallyanpur were Nestorians" and Cosmos' reference to the "Bishop appointed from Persia" also suggests the same. History records that Nestorians underwent endless persecution. As a result, the Christian Church here would have been suppressed on account of that. Therefore, as Perumalai (1964:45) says, "the Bartholomew Christians might have merged with the Christians of Bombay". Or perhaps as Moraes (1964:45) maintains, "the history of the Christians of St Bartholomew thereafter intermingled with the Christians of St Thomas when the Persian Church established its control over the Indian Christians". They might have migrated to other parts of India where Christians might have sheltered them. In this connection, it is worth noting Thenyon's (1982:15) statement that "Christians from Malabar received and incorporated into their community the people who had come there (Kerala) due to natural disasters and persecutions.

They helped the revival of Malabar Christians materially and spiritually."

### PART III CONCLUDING COMMENTS

The ancient history of India shows that Karnataka was the hub of activities. Perhaps Christianity reached here through apostolic mission or as a result of Christian *diaspora*, and not because of the conquering colonial powers as is generally thought, but remained incognito.

### THE CONCEALED CHRIST IN KARNATAKA

Originating from Judaism in one corner of the world, the Christian faith gradually spread eastward as far as Central Asia, which includes India in the Eastern Hemisphere. We cannot overlook the fact that Christianity reached Asia before moving to the European world. Of all the faiths competing for the allegiance of the Roman Empire — many of them with a much more promising outlook and more theological depth than the Christian faith — why did the Christian faith emerge as dominant? How could it challenge the powers, mysteries and philosophies of many ancient religious forces? According to Latourette (1975:106-7),

It took over and adapted much from Judaism. In organization it fitted into the patterns of the Empire. More than any of its rivals, Christianity appealed to men and women from all races and classes. In contrast with the philosophies... it had a message for the simple and the ignorant. It also won many of the keenest and most highly trained minds. It accommodated itself to the Graeco-Roman world. It availed of Greek philosophy to think through its theology...

Better than its rivals, Christianity gave to the Graeco-Roman world what so many were craving from a religion. To those wishing immortality it pointed to the historic Jesus, risen from the dead, and to the promise that those who believed in him would share with him in glorified, eternal life. To those demanding high morality it offered standards beyond... to those craving fellowship it presented a community of worship and mutual aid, with care for the poor, the infirm and the aged. To those who, distrustful of reason, longed

for a faith sanctioned by immemorial antiquity, it pointed to the long record reserved in what it termed the Old Testament going back to Moses and beyond him and pointing forward to Christ. To those demanding intellectual satisfaction, it could present literature prepared by some of the ablest minds of the day.

Though the above may not apply fully to the spread of Christianity in Karnataka, there are several reciprocal features. Why?

(1) Vasco da Gama, a faithful Roman Catholic like Columbus, saw that he had to please God, who showed him the new land, and decided to win it for his God. When the Portuguese squadron reached the Malabar coast, they fell on their knees on the shore in thanksgiving to God and sang the *Salve Regina* (Moraes 1964: 10). Thereafter, Mary became the mother of salvation to millions in Asia.

But there is a vast difference in the degree of acceptance of the Christian faith in India or Karnataka. Unlike the Muslims, the Christian colonial powers did not support the Christian mission. Even in Goa, where the Portuguese had full control, the Christians were in the minority then as they are now. When the British imposed colonial rule in India, their primary interest was economic rather than the support of their own religion. The British government imposed several restrictions on missionary activities. Though Christianity might have enjoyed some concessions, the church did not use them as inducement or in proselytization, hence Christianity remained a minority.

In fact, instead of aiding Christianity, the colonial power damaged it. It created an image of Jesus Christ as being fair complexioned and not an Asian, and a foreign God. Hence Christianity looked like a foreign religion in India. The Christians, in turn, adopted English or Continental life styles and worship, reflecting an alien image. The converts began to eat pork and beef in India where these animals are still regarded as sacred. Then Christian alienation from political and social life also contributed to the suspicion that they were supporters of British rule. Today, the foreign aid flowing in for Christian causes lends support to such suspicions.

Then, too, perhaps Christianity could not survive in this land owing to a lack of indigenous leadership. It is only at the beginning of this century that we see the emergence of indigenous leadership in Karnataka.

(2) Christianity became a majority religion in the Caribbean mainly because Jamaica, being a small country, could not maintain its Arawakan culture and so became the victim of colonial domination. It emerged as a completely new nation when its ancient local native community was wiped out. In India and Karnataka, however, Hinduism as a majority religion preserved and maintained its old cultural identity against the onslaught of imperialism and the introduction of Christianity, which became a minority religion. Karnataka belonged to a world which was famous for its ancient civilization with strong political power. Moreover, Christianity in India encountered strong opposition from the Muslim rulers right from the very beginning. Vasco da Gama had to face strong Muslim opposition. The Christian faith thus had a difficult task surviving amid persecution after the martyrdom of its original leaders.

Religions everywhere in the world also survived or flourished because they were aided by imperialism, colonialism, war and trade. This is a fact in the history of India and Karnataka. Perhaps the Christian faith could not survive the competition from highly philosophical, theological and royally patronized religions Buddhism, Hinduism and Jainism and also Islam enjoyed royal support for centuries.

The political history of Karnataka which began after the second century AD had Jain, Vaisnava and Saiva Kings whose patronization of their religions and influence on the people are evident in the numerous temples built in Karnataka (Padmamukhi 1970:112).

(3) Another important fact is that other religions had larger followings as well as a stronger background and simpler philosophies. India is a land of legend and myth. Traditional Hinduism is full of them. But Christianity could not lure the minds of the people with its strong historical revelation and its biblically based tradition. Syncretism is a revolt against the uniqueness of revelation in history. Christianity either could not compromise its teachings or theology with

others and wanted to preserve its uniqueness, or it did not allow syncretization to take over its own religious values. Hence, Christianity might have preferred to fold up rather than blend with other religions.

It is well-established that Hinduism emerged as a religion of synthesization. Recently the Prime Minister of India Atal Bihari Vajpayee who heads the Hindu communal party-dominated government said, "Hinduism is not a religion; but a commonwealth of religions." Buddhism and in Karnataka Jainism testify to that effect. It is also observed that demon worship, which the Tulu Nadu people practise, has its origin in sumer or elom in the Middle East; so also *Linga* worship, to which the Lingyats adhere. Furthermore, some feel that *Linga* is a miniature *stupa* of Buddhism, or carved stone pillar erected in honour of Vishnu. The type of mixture of African religious influences with Christian faith that took place in Jamaica could not happen in Karnataka because Hinduism could not absorb Christianity. Historically, it is quite evident that Christianity did not try to undermine or erase Judaism or any other religions. It was from Judaism and for the sake of the renewal of Judaism that Christianity sprang. Indeed, at the outset, it appeared to be one of the several sects of Judaism.

In recent years, many Indian national and religious leaders advocate unity among all religions. They acknowledge Jesus as the greatest *Guru* or, to some extent, as the Sovereign One. But they also argue that all religions lead to the same God, or all rivers will ultimately join the great ocean. This philosophy is called *Sarva Dharma Samanya*. Mahatma Gandhi and Swami Ramakrishna were exponents of this theory. The latter argued that truth is one and the sages call it by different names. By including Jesus Christ in his sarvadharm concept, Swami Ramakrishna said, "In each instance the result was the same. One God was revealed in incarnate Christ, speaks through prophet Mohammed, was in the guise of Vishnu the preserver or Siva the complete" (Smith 1965:66). This ideology is gaining ground in many places, especially in the Hindu mutts. At Dharmastala in South Kanara, a parliament of religions takes place every year during the temple festivity at which time a prominent Christian leader is asked to present the Christian world-view.

At the same time, there is quite a strong religious tolerance among the masses, who see something good in it or feel that by doing good they can gain the favour of God. For example,

on some of the Roman Catholic festivals in India, such as a feast of Mary in Bangalore, the Muslims decorate the chariot in which the statue of Mary is taken around. Likewise on some of the Hindu religious festivals, like *Karaga*, the Muslim participation is a must. Even at the Dharmastala parliament of religion, the Bible Society is invited specially to arrange a Bible stall, and the head of the *kshetra* (religious centre) permits the distribution of scriptural portions.

No doubt this type of religious cohesion and co-operation is urgent and very necessary in countries like India where religious pluralism exists. Otherwise the Christians have to face endless communal hostilities and persecution; especially with the emergence of communally-based political parties. The Christians have tried to forge a united front, which has helped the survival of Christianity amidst political and social opposition. To a great extent, these events have forged interreligious understanding.

(4) It should not be forgotten that even Hinduism was imported to India with the arrival of the Aryans. It might have assumed an oriental form and philosophy therefore did not appear to be an alien religion. It might have contributed its ethos to the various existing religious influences and even enriched them. This amalgamation would not have made a difference to the Indian religious pantheon. The geographical locality of some of the modern Hindu teachers who might have been influenced by the Christian faith should not be overlooked. In this regard, Rice (1847:481) states that patriotic "Hindus will hardly like the notion that their greatest modern philosophers have borrowed from Christianity (Sankaracharya was born near Cranganore, Ramanujacharya near Madras, and Madhavacharya near Udipi, all the localities with Christian influence)".

While Hindus and Buddhists claim that Jesus visited the Tibetan valley before his crucifixion, the Ahmediya Muslims maintain that he visited Kashmir after his resurrection. Recently, the followers of Satya Sai Baba, whose second home is Bangalore, produced a full-length movie on the "Lost years of Jesus". Based on the inference in Buddhism, they claimed that Jesus was in India between the years of 12 and 30. Even if this inference is true, no one traced any oriental touch or philosophy in the teachings of Jesus to show that he studied under Indian Gurus. More than that, Sai Baba's followers maintain that the second coming of Christ has been fulfilled in the

incarnation of Sai Baba, but keep Jesus only at the corner of their faith and adoration!

Karnataka can also trace its history to the date of the beginning of the Christian era. This adds to the theory of the concealed presence of Christ in the ancient religions of India, while establishing the antiquity of Christian mission dating back to the apostolic era. No one can point a finger and say that Christianity is a foreign religion. It is indeed a *Sanathana Dharma*; for Christianity is ever ancient and ever new. Jesus Christ is also the source of all religious ethos in India. Also, if the non-Christians are vocal that Christ visited India and learnt his teachings from Indian sages then they cannot reject Christ, but must also accept him as their saviour without a shadow of doubt.

We can assert that Christ is a concealed or the unknown God in Karnataka. Our ancestors would not have been able to recognize Jesus as a different God or might not have realized that his teachings were hidden as part of their own faith and practices, or might have been fully integrated with the society. Christian teachings are either hidden or have been synthesized. It seems that in earlier times religions were enriched by exchanging some of their values and each other's philosophies. If Christianity co-existed along with other religions, it might have influenced other faiths mysteriously and spiritually silently and been absorbed by them. Therefore, the hidden Christ must be redeemed from concealment in other religions. Perhaps we have to search for the meeting point or melting point of all religions and search for its roots.

(5) Christianity is not the only religion that expanded with proselytization. Every religion, including Hinduism, survived by that method. In Hinduism, *Acharyas* or reformers tried to win others by debate and so undertook missionary journeys and converted people to their ideology. Still today they try to win them back with every possible missionary method. They feel that Christianity is winning the people through charitable institutions and therefore have come forward themselves to do so.

There is another angle. In Kerala, Christianity survived because it had a caste system and had also become a socially needed community by being a prominent business and now even politically conscious community whereas in Karnataka, Christians never had those characteristics.

In summary, in the matter of a decade in the fifteenth century the Eastern and Western world met because of Columbus and Vasco de Gama. The world became a melting pot of different cultures and civilizations and provided a cutting edge for religious ethos. When the Christian religion accompanied trade and commerce to south India, it was readily accepted or accommodated — not because it offered a new commodity or philosophy, but because it had a fascinating foreign coating. Though it can be argued that the missions carried apostolic Christianity, it depicted a Western style of life and witness, which is carried to this day.

The Christian missionaries did not venture into mass movement gains nor exploited the helpless people. As a result, Christianity gained a small percentage of low caste people, which was not a boon like other states. Unlike in other states, the Christian mission never attempted to launch a mass movement in Karnataka to reach the people from the lower echelons of society and never encouraged a caste system within the Church. Christianity became good news to rich and poor. One thing is certain — Christianity was not brought to Karnataka by the conquering colonial powers as has mistakenly been thought. It was there much earlier because of the apostolic spirit. According to Sargant (1969:35), "the existence of an older Christian community may have been the reason for the success of the Roman Catholic mission in certain areas. If only such community did remain until the Portuguese came, it is certain that they were absorbed when the Jesuit mission began to move about." The editor of the *SK Gazetteer* stated that Christianity was established in Karnataka even before the visit of Marco Polo in the thirteenth century; possibly in the first century, given the evidence of the Greek connection they had. Finally, Rice (1897:480) concludes that the "close connection of the greater part of Mysore with Malabar and the West Coast affords grounds for supposing that the Christian influence may have been around us even at the early period and might have been extended to this country".

Therefore, the Christian evangelization process should take a fresh look at its earlier tradition, especially after the colonization process. It should examine the missionary brand of Christianity, which has come in the last three centuries to see whether that is what India needs today. No doubt the Christian mission is a *dharma*— a religious duty. Christianity was built on Jewish foundations yet it was radically different. The Christian faith became the fulfilment of Judaism and went beyond the Jewish faith, developing its own codes and theology. It did not compromise with



other religions and maintained its distinctiveness despite some traces of Greco-Roman influences in it.

In the final analysis, if Christ is to be acknowledged as the Supreme One of all the people, and if he carries the revelation of God, the Christian mission demands a profound confession and more commitment from all its followers in India. To that end, Christianization rooted and built in the Indian culture and system should emerge to show that Christianity is ever ancient, ever new on Indian soil. This, then, will also lead to an examination of the evangelization and Christianization process and an evaluation of its methodologies, modules and values.

## CHAPTER 3

**The evolution of mission modules in Jamaica and Karnataka**

## PART I MISSION MODULES IN JAMAICA

**3.1 THE CATHOLIC MODULE**

With the advent of Columbus, the devout Spanish Catholic, Roman Catholicism took root in the New World. On 3 August 1492, Columbus in his flagship, *Santa Maria*, accompanied by two more caravels, *Nina* and *Pinta*, sailed from Palos de la Frontera in Spain. These caravels became the symbols of conquest as the natives were accustomed to small boats. Today the ecumenical movement uses the symbol of a boat to show the Christian presence in the whole inhabited world, but not as conquerors.

The first missionaries to undertake the task of evangelizing the indigenous peoples in the Caribbean were the friars of the Franciscan and Dominican Orders. The Dominicans' goal was to convert the heathens. Their enthusiasm was matched by that of the Franciscans and later by the Jesuits. They believed that the local people could be won by demonstrations of peace, love and good example. As a result of all their efforts, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the American continent saw a strong Roman Catholic presence outside Europe.

Catholicism received a boost in the Caribbean with the introduction of the *repartimiento encomienda* system in 1499. By this system the Spanish Crown gave or commended the natives to Spanish *Conquistadores* on the understanding that they would not only have the right to exact labour from the natives but, in return for this favour, would provide them with religious instruction and protection. The papal directive stated that "the Catholic faith must be preached to the Indians and they in turn acknowledge the Catholic Church, and the Pope as the high priest; and in his name the King and the Queen of Spain were to be acknowledged as superior- lords and kings of the Caribbean islands and of the mainland. If they failed to meet this obligation of the Requirement, they were to be subjugated by force to the Church and the Crown" (Bisnauth

1989:13).

During that time, Juan Gines de Sepulveda, who was sent by Diego Columbus in 1510 to undertake the settlement of Jamaica, was strongly advocating taking extreme steps towards the natives. According to him, the natives were barbarians and idolaters committing sin and therefore merited either war or conversion to the Christian religion and submission to the jurisdiction of the Spanish Crown. With his eye all the while on gold, he ruthlessly set about the task of conquering and converting the natives. Some of the Conquistadores even sought biblical approval for their heinous crimes. According to Bisnauth (1989:19), the "colonizers massacred 12 local natives in honor of the Apostles, daily" and "quoted Luke 14:23 to justify the use of force and St Augustine, who advocated the use of force against Donatist schismatists".

The subjugation of the natives was challenged by Bishop Bartholomew de Las Casas, a Dominican, who questioned the right of the Conquistadors to force conversion. He argued that "no submission, no servitude, no burden can be imposed upon the people without their free consent" (IAMS 1993:94). However, the greed of the Conquerors triumphed over the desire of the friars. In order to survive, the natives adopted a compromising formula: they saw Jesus as *Jocahuna* (Son of Wammurreti-Kwonci), the Holy Spirit as *Hurakan* or *Guabancex*, Catholic priests as *Bhoito* or *Piaiman*, Satan as *Kanaima*, heaven as *Coyab* and the Virgin Mary as *Atabei*. This accommodation reduced the colonizers' violence to them.

The missionary strategy of that period fell into three stages. In the first stage the *padres* checked and even rebuked the excesses committed by the soldiers in their treatment of the Indians. Secondly, the priests founded mission settlements known as *reducciones* to facilitate the Indians. These *reducciones* under the control of the religious orders were considered wards of the crown. The *reducciones* were built around the church where the friars could protect the Indians and impart the Christian faith to them. In addition, the natives were taught new methods of agriculture and crafts. The Spanish kings forbade officials to interfere with the missionaries in their efforts to convert the natives to Christianity. After ten or twenty years, the missionaries handed the converts over to the secular clergy. Thirdly, the friars supervised their growth and thereafter they were allowed to live in a civilized municipal society (Kane 1981:65).

The missionaries also developed another strategy. They were afraid that the natives might go back to their old practices so they used the settlements to establish monasteries to keep the infant Christians in their custody. They felt that the natives had a limited capacity for understanding the intricacies of Catholic theology. Therefore, they were taught only the basics from the *Doctrina Christiana*, such as to make the sign of the cross and memorize the Our Father, the Hail Mary and other prayers. Some received advanced teaching, such as the Creed, the Ten Commandments, and the cardinal virtues. But, they felt that the indigenous people lacked the knowledge which would qualify them to receive the Eucharist. The Church also barred the natives from Holy Orders with the excuse that natives were not fit for the office of priest.

The consequence of such actions was a decline of the church. The lack of priests and the difficult living conditions for foreigners, coupled with the language barrier, resulted in a drop in converts. In 1622 the Provincial Synod of the Caribbean met in Santa Domingo. Jamaica was among the many islands represented. The Synod took some far-reaching decisions to improve conditions, but the missions remained in the hands of foreigners for a long time.

The Christianization process saw an upswing with the arrival of the African slaves in the West Indies. In 1685 the Spanish Council of the Indies declared the slave trade legal and Christian instruction was made compulsory. The French Government ordered slaves to be baptized without any reservation. According to Augier and Gordon (1962:93), article 2 of the Code Noire, 1685 read as follows:

All slaves in our islands shall be baptized and instructed in the Catholic religion, Apostolic and Roman. We instruct the colonists buying newly arrived slaves that they should inform the Governor and Intendment of it within one week at the latest, on pain of a summary fine, and they shall give the necessary orders to have them instructed and baptized in due course.

The most outstanding Jesuit missionary was St Peter Claver (1581-1654), who worked among the slaves for forty years and, according to Kane (1981:65), "instructed and baptized about

300,000 slaves (including even dying ones). Pope Leo XII made him the patron of all missionary work among Negroes throughout the world."

Most of the African slaves were followers of different tribal religions and some of them had also had contact with the Islamic faith. Many of them engaged in secret forms of African witchcraft and sorcery, in particular the practice of obeah. They believed that the spirits of their ancestors or tribes dwelt in the *Voodoo* or high priest and made their will known through him (Carter et al 1964:78). The Africans practised their ancestral faith and believed in the presence of a Supreme Being, who is the author and preserver of creation — God Almighty (*Amity or Gara mighty*), Omnipresent and Omniscient. They also believed that there were superior and lesser gods, and good and bad spirits. To please them, blood sacrifices of chickens and animals were made, as well as libations with wine, herbs and incense. They performed sacred dances, accompanied by drums and shouts of praise and prayers, and the elaborate ceremonial dance in which the priest and the priestess as well as devotees danced. They wore charms or amulets to ward off the evil spirits. Some believed in *Voodoo*, the religion of the Dahomey tribe, who worshipped the non-venomous serpent *Dangee*. The "John Canoe" dancing form, that was practised as an African puberty dance, is still seen in Jamaica.

These practices were held in suspicion and the members suspected of being evil cults and branded satanic by the Euro-centric Catholic Christians. They could not understand the African language or style. Therefore, all forms of assembly were forbidden in Jamaica, largely out of fear of conspiracy and revolt (Morrish 1982:29). However, their accommodation in the Christian faith process provided an opportunity for many of the African slaves and freemen to become Christians and to adopt some kind of syncretistic cults for themselves. However, such cultic practices are not popular in Jamaica.

At the dawn of the British Jamaican history, the Catholic Church and its clergy became practically nonexistent. The British exercised a bipartisan policy as only the Protestant denominations were allowed to serve. In 1792 there was only one priest on the island and a handful of Catholics. They were French refugees from Haiti, Spanish merchants from South America and a few Irish and English. The priest confined his ministry only to the Catholics of Kingston, with no intention of

evangelizing others. This trend continued until emancipation. In 1837 Jesuits arrived on the island and after that the Church saw a new birth. In 1889 an English Jesuit was consecrated as the titular Bishop of Jamaica. In 1893 American Jesuits took over this mission station and administered it. However, they had only foreign priests, which did not help to develop the native clergy. Therefore, in 1952 St Michael's Seminary in Jamaica was opened for this purpose. One of its first students, Samuel Carter, became the first local bishop and later Archbishop of Kingston (Jamaica) in 1971. He was succeeded by his classmate, Edgerton Clarke in 1996, who was bishop of Montageo Bay. There is one more diocese in Mandeville. Slowly the church began to see growth. By 1972 it rose to 8 to 10% of the total population. Today there are about 200,000 Catholics, including 94% of African origin, with a small number of Chinese, East Indians from India and Levantine, while White Europeans and North Americans number less than five percent (Osborne 1994:429-430).

We have noted the various adopted by the Church and its emissaries in the New World. The introduction of slaves into the West Indies also shifted missionary zeal among the early missionaries. The peculiarities of mission development in Jamaica can only be understood against the background of Africanism or the African influence on mission in Jamaica.

### **3.2 AFRICANISM IN THE CARIBBEAN**

When Africans were brought to the Caribbean, they brought their own beliefs and practices. However, they could not maintain solidarity in their native faith as they were dispersed across many islands. Nor could they compete with the overwhelming presence of the dominant religion of the colonists — the Christian faith. Soon the Africans became more Europeanized and Christianized and their own cultural forms and life styles adapted to the foreign cultural norms. Africanism continued to survive in some places, however.

Two factors contributed to these changes. In the first place, African religious ideas were capable of modifying and adapting to the new life style of the plantation system. Secondly, any attempt by the slaves to practice African religion was frustrated by the local plantation owners and the white elite. Therefore, religion was practised clandestinely and irregularly. The result was that

some aspects of the African religious practices withered away, but despite significant changes, remained recognizably intact as African in structure (Bisnauth 1989:83).

At first, the Christian missionaries considered African slaves devil worshippers and warned that the practice of black magic would be destroyed by fire and brimstone. Some of the black magic was used by the slaves against the plantocracy and caused them more harm. In 1760 Jamaican legislature banned the people from practising *Voodoo* and imposed the death penalty on violators of this law. But the African slaves continued their ancient religious practices against all odds. Their influence on Jamaican culture prevailed in disguise; but is now in the process of being revived.

Their influence on Jamaican culture is reflected in the body language of worshippers, in the dances of Kumina, Revivalism, Ring Games, Bruckins and ninth night rituals. The ninth night ritual is primarily a Revivalist practice. They believe that the spirit of the deceased will affect the living for good or bad. Therefore they sit up (keep awake) for one or two nights before the body is buried. They believe that, following the pattern of Christ's resurrection on the third day, the spirit or soul is resurrected on the third night. On the ninth night, the spirit of the dead person returns to its former home. Therefore, they treat the dead with respect (Bisnauth 1989:179). While some conduct worship services, other play games to keep awake. Similar practices are also evident among some of the Christian communities in Karnataka. These prayer meetings, as they are called, are held soon after the burial or after a certain number of days. The rhythm of the drum beat, a method of communication within the community, goes beyond religion as it is woven into the social fabric with ancestral links. Such reflections can even be seen in today's dance hall music or carnival.

Some of the African slaves who came to Jamaica belonged to the *Ashanti* tribe from the Akan region in Ghana. They worshipped a god called *Nyankopon* and his wife, *Asase Yaa (Yere)*. The present Maroon county's centre is called Accompong, which once served as the centre for African religious culture. Accompong was also the name of Akans who believed that he was the God of heaven, the creator of all things. Their other god, *Anansi*, found a place in Jamaican folklore. Anansi was the hero of the West African Akan folk tales who was notorious for his guile and

craftiness. Other African religions that were introduced included spirit-filled cults like *Voodoo* (*Vodun*) *Shango* of the Yoruba, *Kumina* and *Obeah*.

The Obeah cult was also based on the spirits of the dead. The welfare of the dead was of paramount interest to the relatives. The spirits of people who died tragically or who roam about after death because they long to go back to their ancestral land were called *duppies*. They were considered evil and restless hence need appropriation. The spirits of enemies were called *bugaboo* and considered to be evil and vampires. They were also known as *Ol higue* or *Anancy*. These spirits were believed to be reincarnated in animals or in the birth of new babies hence pregnant mothers were asked to be careful.

A great degree of village participation was exercised in their worship. The faithful gathered under large silk cotton trees in the evenings and ceremonially sacrificed chickens and other animals, amidst chanting, singing and dancing until the people were exhausted. They wore masks during the ceremonies, which signified that they were establishing a link with their ancestral land. African drum beat added a sensual rhythm for the sacred dances for the spirits. The ancestral spirits took them back to their native roots. In this process they were guided by *Okomfo* (priest) and *Obayifo* (wizard) who was responsible for the performance of Obeah.

The rationale of the Caribbean Obeah was based on witchcraft and magical power, both of which were originally practised in Africa. The priest and the Obeahman used herbs and plants, which were believed to possess medical and magical qualities. Some of them were even poisonous and were used to inflict harm while others were used for healing purposes. The Obeah men or women also distributed charms they wore for protection against any cruelty or harm as well as used as weapons to take revenge on enemies. Obeah is still practised in the rural areas.

The spirit worship of the Africans, to a great extent, follows the same pattern as *Bhuta* worship in Tulunadu. In Africanism, the *Orish-nle Voodoo* and *Abosom* were regarded as minor gods. Their worship was performed by trained and duly recognized priestesses and the priests. Sometimes a village chief or senior person in the community took over this role. The ritual has the following characteristics according to Bisnauth (1989:87),



An important part of the worship service devoted to the lesser gods consisted of an elaborate ceremonial dance in which the priests, priestesses and devotees of the gods danced until some of the worshippers become 'possessed' by the gods. The dance was done to the rhythm of drums. The gods who made their appearance at the dance were greeted with a litany of praise and with gifts in the form of sacrifices or libations. Sometimes the priests interpreted the mood of the gods, and gave words of counsel and warning to the assembly of worshippers.

Another striking inheritance of past Africanism is the funeral service in Jamaica, which even today is a big event that surprises many foreigners. Although the established churches do not encourage ninth night rituals, in many rural areas they are still a part of community life.

Until recently, the African influence in Jamaica was disguised, but with the emergence of the cultural demand for the African heritage it is being integrated. In some instances, these cultures were "baptized" by the Christian Church, especially the Roman Catholic Church, who knew how to synthesize them even into European Christianity. As a result, African divinities were incorporated with Roman Catholic saints. The Catholic belief in saints and the use of incense in worship, and sacramentals like the crucifix, the rosary and holy water added to that atmosphere. The people made the adaptation and also accepted the RC priest as well as the Obeah man without distinction. Sometimes they came to the same person for cures and divinations.

Another trend developed in Jamaica with the arrival of the Protestant Christian missionaries. The slaves were now able to celebrate some of their African religious rituals in the name of Christianity. This came to be known as *Myalism*, the holy religion of angels and of the spirit. *Myal* is the term used to describe religious and quasi-religious roles in Jamaica.

This phenomenon became more and more a mixture of Myalism and Christianity, ending as a permanent addition to the Afro-Christian cults...The mixture of African and the European religions even invaded the orthodox churches, where an occasional member would be seized by the spirit during a service - a development that was sometimes disconcerting to the minister in charge (Curtin in Alleyne 1988:100).

The priest, *Myalman* or *Okomfo* is the counterpart of the West African priest from the Akan tribe, who received his inspiration from the world of African spirits, but here from his experience as a Christian.

Myalism reflected the dominant form of Africa-derived religion that developed among the slaves in Jamaica. It emerged as the first religious organization of Africans in Jamaica and was said to have characteristics of the typical West African secret cult societies. It was connected with Coromantees and the Obeah. Africans blended their native religion with the new religious experience of Christianity and produced a mixture. For Africans, resorting to the power of spirits is a means to resist slavery and Myal men harnessed the spiritual forces. The Obeah represented evil work hence it was hostile to Myal. Today *Koromanti* dance or play is performed in the Maroon camps and contemporary Maroon religious rituals.

The followers of these sects rely upon supernatural revelations received through dreams and claim the ability to foretell the future: "The converts of Baker and Gibbs (American evangelists who came to Jamaica) placed great emphasis on dreams and visions. They claim that while God has given the Book (i.e. the Bible) to the whites; He had given dreams to the Africans, as a source of revelation" (Bisnauth 1989:176). They also believe in speaking ecstatically in strange languages, which is similar to the African belief in ancestral possession of the spirit, but now claimed to be under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. According to Bisnauth (1989:178), Myalman (*Okomfo*) received his inspiration from the African spirits:

As *Okomfo* became increasingly Christianized, he came to rely more and more on the inspiration of the spirit from the world of Christian beliefs- the Holy Spirit. This is not to say he forgot the African spirits completely. With his African instinct for a more initiative and dynamic experience of spiritual realities, he preferred direct revelation under the inspiration or possession of the Holy Spirit to mediate revelation through the reading of the Bible. His inability to read the Bible no doubt made him much more dependent on 'spirit' revelation. In any case, he probably felt that the direct revelation by the Spirit was much more authentic than that which came by way of the Book.

When the great revival of the 1800s took place, this African heritage paved the way for the introduction of a new type of religious ethos and Christian worship in Jamaica. It created Afro-Christian syncretistic religious practices — a mixture of Christian and African beliefs. They were reflected in *Vodun* of Haiti, *Santeria* in Cuba, *Shango* of Trinidad and *Assarici* (*Asase Yaa*) in Jamaica (Bisnauth 1989:87f). The old Ashanti religion included belief in a Supreme Being who was called *Onyame* or *Nyame* or *Nyankopen*. Many people find in this title a remarkable likeness to the Hebrew *Yahweh*-Jehovah, the name of Israel's God. Some Ashanti sayings were also very similar to phrases in the Hebrew Scriptures (Carter et al 1964:78). Perhaps this could serve as another example for religious cohesion among many religions.

Myalism is also known by various names. It is called the *Pocomania*, which is also known as *Kumina*. Some other sects are known as *Zionists*, *Jordanites* and *Bedwaranists*. By and large, its followers all have little or imperfect Biblical knowledge, but are rich in fantastic superstitions based on African religious practices, especially of the ancient Ashanti cult of Central Africa. To establish their authenticity, its followers consider it important to be baptized by immersion, and thereby found strength in the native Baptist faith. They are also called "Spiritual Baptists". Alleyne (1988:89-91) argues that the native Baptists, Methodists and Moravians accommodated these infiltrations into the Christian faith from Myalism. However, they led to the emergence of various systems, also called "Christian", that are practised in Jamaica. The two branches of Myalism — *Convince* and *Kumina* — crystallized into autonomous traditions while other forms of Myalism most strongly influenced by Christianity ended up as Revivalism (and Zionism) and *Pukumina* (*Pocomania*). Alleyne (1988:91) states that this adaptation of Africanism to Christianity became a more attractive package for the slaves:

The introduction of Christian forms into African cosmology can be viewed as a solution to the problem of how to legitimize religious practices in the eyes of the ruling class while forging instruments of group cohesion and identity also for use in resistance and revolts. However, it led to syncretization or unilateral conversion of the 'pagan' culture to Christian faith.

The arrival of Garveyism, which advocated "black heritage", was a blessing for Myalism whereas

other orthodox Christian faiths, devoid of all these paraphernalia and rituals, began to face a critical challenge. Once again, African religion received a boost with the introduction of the Pentecostal movement from America. Their "Spirit-filled" atmosphere as well as the role of the "spiritual fathers and mothers" looked akin to their African practice, but with Christian ethos. It provided some kind of substitution for African spirit in its worship and began to attract more members. They showed their inclination to love, sing, shout, dance and pray aloud and make use of body movement. They like to see dreams and visions and speak in tongues with emotion and ecstasy. They do not want religion to be based on books or theology but on a face to face, heart to heart, body to body, person to person and community to community communication — both verbal and non-verbal. This trend also influenced the traditional Protestant churches, who clamour to go back to that type of "Spirit-filled" worship. A change of heart is visible on the part of many who had reservations about such an atmosphere in their worship and wanted to maintain solemnity and dignity. However, this has created some confusion in the minds of the faithful and is a challenge to church leaders to examine the theology of worship and to missiologists to study how church growth can be affected by these phenomena.

Edward Seaga (1982:4), the former Prime Minister of Jamaica, points out that these groups are surprisingly concentrated predominantly in the urban areas. According to his survey, in 1982 there were about 50 Bands with about 1250 followers of Pukkuminas, and 240 Bands with about 6000 Zionists.

### **3.2.1 The *Convince* and the *Kumina***

The Convince is the oldest surviving form of Myalism, which existed before the emancipation of slaves. The members of the groups recognize a hierarchy of spirits based partly on degrees of removal from the contemporary generation, with the strongest Bongo ghosts coming from Africa and others deriving from ancient Jamaican slaves and Maroons. They also recognize lesser spirits of departed ancestors as well as the spirit of the recently departed Obehamen.

Convince is clearly related to Kumina. Therefore its ceremonies are like Kumina cults with Christian elements in the form of readings from the Bible and the singing of Christian hymns. It

is accompanied by the clapping of hands and Bongo songs are sung in a call-and-response format and with Bongo dance. Convince was introduced into the Baptist churches by Myalists in the period just before emancipation. They tried to legitimize Myalism by introducing Christian elements into it and as evidence of conversion.

The 'Bantu' people from the Congo-Angola area of Africa brought what is known as *Kumina* religion to Jamaica. Among the African deities, Shango, Obei, Oto and King Zombi occupy the highest places. *Shango* is the name of the Yoruba God of thunder and *Zombi* is identified as the ancestral spirit. The pivotal element in Kumina religion is the worship of ancestral spirits. Alleyne (1988:92) cites Simpson, who states that when someone dies "the personal spirit (soul) goes directly to Oto King Zombi, never to return to earth, if in life, the person had never been possessed by a spirit. If the person had been possessed by a Zombi, his soul takes on a new quality, and, at the death of the person, the soul joins all ancestral Zombi spirits and can return to duties of various kinds on earth, including attending cult ceremonies and possessing living individuals."

Kumina in Jamaica differs from Revivalism as the Christian influence is not as great as in Revivalism. The spirits occupy a central place in their worship and belief. They believe that there are heavenly spirits of the Triune God and the angels who are like sky gods of African origin — Judee, Oto, Goomba and Fayah. Next come the earthbound gods, spirits of the fallen angels or the prophets, Apostles or Evangelists. They also include King David and Moses. The Kumina religion also accepts sky-bound deities, which in the African faith are called as Fato, Wilmot, Darcos and Ajax, and then there are "ground spirits" (Bisnauth 1989:180).

Followers who are possessed by the spirit, roll, groan, dance and speak or sing in unknown tongues or languages. They use drums to evoke the spirits and offer wine and blood sacrifices as well as silver coins. The leaders smear the blood on themselves and wear brightly coloured clothes, which are the favourites of the spirits. These leaders occupy an important place in community life. They travel to the spirit world to receive the message, but also interpret the message to the groups. They use the colour red and vegetables to please the spirits. Some believe that in the whole process, an East Indian, especially Hindu, influence is also evident.

Women also can become leaders of these cults. The Zionists have more female than male leaders. The female leaders are called mothers, the men are called captains. They also have deacons and elders to assist them. These groups meet at a "sealed ground" or "mission ground" as Pocaminas call it or "mission house" as the Zionists call it. A tall pole in the centre marks its identity and activity. It serves as a flagpole, which, they believe, attracts passing spirits. There is also a place called the "hut", a kind of vestry for private consultations and healing practices. Visitors are welcome, but are screened beforehand to ascertain their motives. The mother of the service holds a pair of scissors to cut the evil spirit and uses a whistle to warn the spirits. There is also a key to open the door of salvation. The drum is the central part of the ceremony. The altar is covered with a white cloth and has a Bible, candles, holy pictures, a jar of water for rituals as well as fruit and flowers and hymnals on it. They hold prayer meetings for spiritual exercise, street meetings for evangelization and ritual meetings for specific purposes, such as thanksgiving for a particular event, for instance deliverance from sickness or an evil spirit. One of the special events is called "feasting at the table of the deities" and takes place from Sunday night through to Tuesday night. Feasting at midnight is the special feature of this event. It serves as an alternative for the sacrament of Holy Communion.

### **3.2.2 The Pukaminias**

The marriage of Myalism and Christianity came to be called Pocamania, the strongest of the Jamaican native religions until the emergence of Rastafarianism in the 1930s (Sunshine 1988: 18). Pukuminia is also known as Pocomania. Its followers gather under large cotton trees or poco yards, which they worship and treat as holy, after sacrificing some chickens. Then the leader begins an extempore song, which is answered in chorus, and followed by a dance which grows wilder and wilder until they are in a state of excitement bordering on madness. In that process they declare that the world will end and Christ will come and therefore God has sent them to pull down all Obekhas and catch all the shadows. In order to have an effect on their actions, they refrain from drinking or smoking during that period, and exclude those who have had a bad past. In all these events the emphasis is on singing and spiritual dancing rather than on preaching and Bible explanation.

The leader in Pukaminia is known as the Shepherd and addressed as "Daddy", who, in turn, regards others as sons and daughters. The female leader is known as "Mother". Their assistants are known as shepherd boys and regard one another as brothers and sisters.

### 3.2.3 The Revivalists

Between 1830 and 1860 a great religious revival spread throughout the island of Jamaica. In 1860 a great revival also took place in the South Karama district, but with a different effect on the mission of the Church there. There people came out of demon-possessed religion. At first there was great rejoicing in Jamaica as the revival was seen as the blessed work of the Holy Spirit. The thanksgiving soon made way for African spirit-filled experience called Revivalism or Zionism. The Africans blended their native religion with the new religious experience of Christianity and produced a kind of a mixture. Though not authorized to form a group openly, it emerged as the first religious organization of Africans in Jamaica and developed as a dominant factor among the slaves. It also constituted the hotbed of slave rebellion. They cooperated with the native Baptist rebels to fight for emancipation.

Revivalists or Zionists rejected the European nature of revival and showed interest in the cultural package of Afro-Jamaican religious characteristics, including trances, dream prophecies, spirit seizure and wild dancing. They also provided spirit possession which led to dancing. The music was characterized by certain rhythms which demonstrated the African tribal presence. Alleyne (1988:86) describes the various spirits: *duppies* were the spirits of the dead, who, after leaving the body, returned or roamed about with the apparent objective of journeying back to their ancestral land of Africa. They were also called *Bugaboo* and were hostile spirits. There was also another spirit called *Shadow*, which belonged to the living people, and the Obeahman would catch this shadow and nail it to or bury it beneath the silk cotton tree. Myalmen made sure to be present at the funerals to catch the shadows and make sure that they were properly buried lest the spirits bring harm to the family of the dead person. Since the spirits of the dead are believed to affect the living for good or bad, it is imperative that the dead are treated with respect.

But with the influence of evangelical faith, this process took a new turn. It included some kind of syncretism and accommodation of the Christian faith within African religious practices. It included trances, dream prophecies, spirit seizure and wild dancing. The marriage of Myalism and Christianity came to be called Pocomania, the strongest of the Jamaican native religions until the emergence of Rastafarianism in the 1930s (Sunshine 1988:18). Alleyne (1988:100ff) cites Chevennes, who points out their characteristics:

They considered themselves holy people who neither drank nor smoked and they excluded all those who were known to lead bad lives. The people with a divine mission that permeated their campaign to catch shadows and dig up obeah. For they claimed God had sent them to destroy all wickedness and went about calling on people to pray. And they worshipped by dancing round and round inside a circle of swaying onlookers. They danced until they fell to the ground uttering words that were taken to be divine revelation of the Spirit.

According to Barret (1977:222), almost all Revivalist churches in Jamaica have a syncretism of African and Christian rituals. The assimilation of Christian and African beliefs blended to co-exist with the dominating Christian faith and even, to some extent, overshadowed it. This happened because religious syncretism was commonplace in African society too. Local African religious were not averse to accepting influences from other religions or to accepting other gods and divinities into their pantheon, especially when these foreign gods seemed as powerful as the local ones and had attributes that appealed to people meeting them for the first time (Alleyne 1988:87).

The Revivalist meet regularly but their meetings last far into the night. They believe in ceremonies like anointing with oil by the Shepherd or Father (*Thata*) of their group. They claim that they can communicate with the dead, especially through dreams, the medium of revelation. They demonstrate the possession of the Holy Spirit to combat the Obeah man, and to ward off the devil. In their worship they invariably wait for someone to be possessed by the Spirit and to receive revelation through visions and dreams. Dancing is part of their service, which also includes drinking of rum ceremonially. They wear blue gowns for their encounter with the spirits and white gowns while performing healing. They prefer singing hymns edited by Ira D. Sanky and reciting



the psalms. In their prayers they first invoke the Holy Spirit and the four gospel writers.

### **3.2.4 The Rastafarians**

Though Rastafarianism is a 20th century phenomenon, it probably has its origin in African religious faith and traditions. Visitors to Jamaica could hardly fail to notice the people with dreadlocks who are generally called Rastafarian or Rastas. It is the most recent religious development in Jamaica and some claim it is an indigenous contribution to the world religions. However, it has an African-oriented consciousness and ideological focus and is connected with Haile Sellassie, the former emperor of Ethiopia. Unlike other Afro-Jamaican religions, "spirit possession" is totally absent in Rastafarianism, and it is projected more in cultural forms than as religious ethos. Interestingly, it is also Messianic or Millenarian in nature.

One of the symbols of Rastas is their hairstyle - which is twisted, uncombed and long dreadlocks. It symbolizes two things: (1) the Old Testament concept of those who accepted Nazarite vows (Numbers 6:2f) and (2) the followers of the Lion of Judah, and represents the mane of a lion. Owens (1976:154) points out that it stands for "the fullest expression of nature" or represents "an ideological heritage from the ancient days when Ethiopians wore locks as a special sign of priesthood - which is continued even today among the Mau-Maus in Kenya". *Nya Binghi* or "locksmen" are their priests who claim their authority is of Aaronic line.

There were many Jamaicans who saw a new day in the resurrection of this movement to glorify Africa. The inspiration behind this movement came in the 1930s, when the national hero, Marcus Garvey launched the "Back to Africa" campaign. While others used it to take them back to African heritage, Garvey gave blacks new hope after a long period of inferiority and helplessness. Although the prospect of a "return to Africa" or "Africa for the Africans at home and abroad" seemed distant and remote, it did not stop them. When there was a general disturbance and unrest due to the Rasta movement, they displayed an attitude of standing up and fighting for a new day. The government appointed a committee to investigate their status, which made several unanimous recommendations and helped stop their persecution.

Garvey used the movement to establish black nationalism and founded the Universal Negro Improvement and Conservation Association and the African Communities League. According to Bisnauth (1988:187), Garvey's objective, among other things, "was to establish a Universal Confraternity among the African race; to promote the spirit of racial pride and love; to reclaim the fallen; to minister to and assist the needy; and to assist in civilizing the backward tribes of Africa".

He propagated this philosophy in the USA, the UK and elsewhere and this eventually led to the overthrowing of racial segregation and discrimination all over the world. Another great Rasta hero was Bob Marley, who sang its glory through Reggae music. Reggae became not only a rebel music of the blacks, but more a channel of evangelization of Rasta philosophy. It became "the new psalm" or "gospel" to the music world. The *National Geographic* (1985:124) quotes Jimmy Cliff, the Rastas artiste, who said, "We need a way to express ourselves. American music is about girls and cars; our Reggae is about truth and rights. Rastafari means to live in nature; to see the creator in the wind, the sea, and the storm." According to Watty (1981:23), the emergence of the Rastafarian movement was "a protest against colonialism in all its forms and, in particular, the persistent denigration of Africa in the Caribbean and, by implication, persons of African descent. The Rastafarian presence and witness in the Caribbean has been as impressive as it is unique. And in any search for an authentic Caribbean identity, their contribution must be taken into account."

The Rastas believe they are the chosen people of God and consider themselves the black Israelites. They also assert that Jamaica is "Babylon" and see their experience as the "Babylonian captivity". Bob Marley's iconography of Babylon was used as both medium and message and recognized as a chant against the political system. It shows the flight of Jah's people from Egypt/Babylon (Exodus and exile) to Ethiopia — the Rastafarians' Eden — as well as their diaspora like the Biblical Jews. They saw African unity under Sellassie and hoped their exile would be over soon. At one stage they started advocating that "Africa is our fatherland and we are its legitimate descendants; salvation lies in ascending to the skies of Africa" hence they sought repatriation to Africa (Mulrain 1989:8). They claim that Sellassie was 225th in the line of Ethiopian kings in unbroken succession from the Queen of Sheba, who bore King Solomon's son. Therefore, Rastas claim that he is the true Messiah in David's line, and not Jesus. The Rastas

believe that God, whom they address as *Jah*, was incarnated as Haile Sellassie. When he was crowned Ras Tafari in November 1930, his title became a name which also signified the power of the Holy Trinity. So, Rastas attribute to him the titles King of Kings, Lord of lords, Conquering Lion of Judah and Morning Star. Rastas saw in Sellassie the fulfilment of Revelation 5:2 "the Root of David" and also chapters 17 and 19 referring to "the Lamb of God" and the one who would usher in the new millennium. Though Sellassie openly denied that he had any divinity in him when he visited Jamaica in 1965, Rastas hail him as the "living God". His picture is adored everywhere where Rastas live or work. When he visited Jamaica, he was given an unforgettable and rousing reception. In the Rastas' view, Sellassie's visit gave a certain prestige to the cause of the black tribes of Israel living in captivity. Even Sellassie's abdication and eventual death did not disappoint them. Rastas refused to accept the logic of people who made fun of them saying; "All mortal men die. Sellassie died. Therefore, Sellassie was mortal." They rebutted it saying, "God cannot die. Sellassie is God. Therefore, Sellassie is not dead." They claim that he still lives and walks amongst them in a different identity today. They call themselves the elect of Jah and insiders to religious truth.

To them, the colour black is holy and beautiful, and white is evil, ugly and inferior. They claim Jesus was a black man with curly hair and Ethiopian blood in his veins. According to Simmonds (*Sunday Gleaner* March 20, 1994: 10b), those are generally accepted as their tenets of faith. Rastas study the Bible to establish their religious claim; and also charge that white men are traitors who had distorted the Biblical passages. They regard the Bible as the book of symbols and use their spiritual genius to declare the millennium concepts to which Rastas alone have the key to reveal its mysteries.

The Rastafarians appropriated the messianic promises for themselves simply by regarding themselves as the reincarnation of the scattered children of Israel, and Jamaican negroes were the elect who would eventually be transported by their God Messiah to the Promised Land (Bisnauth 1989:189).

Because of their claim to the Hebrew heritage, they observe the eating habits prescribed by the Jewish religion according to the Old Testament and practise vegetarianism. Though they abstain

from drinking alcoholic beverages, smoking *Ganja* is regarded as the pipe of peace. Their most important religious ceremony is called *graounation*, which means grounding in the Spirit of God. In that celebration they anticipate the bliss of the new life and promised land. They share a common meal of *ital* (vegetables and herbs) and pass the smoking pipe of ganja on communally and sacramentally. Hence, it is a kind of Holy Communion for them. This celebration bars those who do not live a perfect life and fail to show love and charity to others. Although they hold the institution of marriage of lesser importance, Rasta couples nevertheless hold high standards of fidelity. Rastas are a predominantly male-oriented community of African stock. Women are generally regarded as subordinate to men, and Rastas insist on traditional patriarchal values in family relationships. They regard one another as brothers and greet in the name of Jah. Perhaps in using the name of Jah and telling of his and Rastafarianism's glories, they are more fervent evangelists than any Protestant Christians in Jamaica. Red, gold and green are the Rasta colours and their flags can be seen wherever they live.

Their membership initially included young and lower class people. At one stage even university graduates found the Rasta way of life acceptable. More recently, however, men and women of all ethnic groups and social strata have joined the ranks of Rastafarian (Miller 1991:95). Hence, they have become more acceptable as a religious group. Most of them are ex-Christians but claim that they do not belong to any church. There are also Rasta followers and sympathizers who are "clean faced" and belong to upper class homes. It is estimated that today there are about 100,000 followers of this faith. About 90% of them are from the Protestant or Catholic Churches and the Pentecostal sects. As many of them are either not happy with the organized church system or disappointed with the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, they remain what Nettleford calls "functional Rastafarians".

Their diaspora syndrome began to wane around 1963 when conflict broke out between Rastas and the public. Since then their tone has changed. Rastafarianism survived crises from a hostile society as well as from the government and began to have an influence in the wider society. Rastafarianism and "dread culture" have spread throughout the Caribbean and beyond. Their chief adherents have been black men — young men seeking to find themselves and older men disillusioned by a system that seems stacked against them. However, in more recent times, men

and women of all ethnic groups and social streams have joined the ranks of Rastafarian (Miller 1991:95). Thus they have become a more acceptable group in the religio-cultural milieu.

The drums are symbols of Rasta inspiration. The *Nyabingis*, their religious leaders, conduct religious services for them in a way similar to that of African tribal leaders. The drums provide a pulsating base for their music while guitars and other instruments add to the rhythm. Rasta songs are called freedom or redemption songs and in their own right are said to maintain spiritual values, in spite of their recent commercial success. Their theology may be interpreted as the passionate determination to lift the people into a new ethos and release them from the domination of mental and earthly slavery. They also portray Old Testament concepts like the anger of the downtrodden and liberation. Advocates of white culture therefore call Rastas a rebel group or the Black Nationalist Church.

Because Rastafarians believe in the divine nature of each human being and that each person is a "piece of God" (Nettleford 1993:18), they claim to be "the true believers and the only righteous ones" (Miller 1991:95). Rastas frequently use the personal pronoun "I". When it is used twice — "I and I" — it indicates "you and I" as well as both God and self. Perhaps this candid expression of "I" and relating it to God was derived from the *Aham Brahmasmi* concept of Advaita philosophy "I and God are the same". Singh (CJTS 1989:46) maintains that the Hindu influence can be seen in the Rasta movement: "It is the African version of Hinduism with African divine personages ... Rastafarians hail the goddess *Kali* (a deity of India) in their prayers; and their Ganja smoking ritual is due to Indian influence." This view is supported by Leonard (CJTS 1982:24 & 35): "In the establishment of Pocomania church and Rastafarian faith and practices the Hindu influence has strong reflections. Their tradition of spiritual writings or speaking, the offering of vegetables, hoisting of flags, dancing style and black magic and so on emanate from Hindu religious pantheon; as well as their 'speaking in tongues' practice, in which we can recognize Indian languages - Hindi, Bengali and Urdu."

Rastafarians are totally antagonistic to Christianity, charging them especially with being people controlled by the white people in the West. They are particularly antagonistic Roman Catholics. According to Walker (*Sunday Gleaner*, Feb 25, 1996:3D),

Despite its religious claims, Rastafarianism is still essentially, a protest against cultural and political imperialism rather than a religion. Their dependence on the Christian Bible for validation only relegated them to being a denomination of Christianity. Every religion is guided by its own peculiar Holy Writ. More importantly, the late Emperor consistently rejected claims to divinity and that, any literate, rational and reasonable person would think, should have closed the question.

### **3.2.5 The Ethiopian Orthodox Church**

The Ethiopian Orthodox Church was founded in Jamaica in 1969. It was a Coptic church in origin and Haile Sellassie was a member.

The legendary Priest-King, Prester John, was recognized by both the Malabar Orthodox Christians in India and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. This Church accepted only the Creeds of the first three General Councils of the Christian Church, namely at Nicaea in 325 AD, Constantinople in 381AD and Ephesus in 431AD. It also accepts seven sacraments, of which Baptism and the Eucharist are elaborately performed. The dance of the priests in the Communion service is said to be unique.

Contrary to the wide acceptance of this faith, however, Rastas showed reservations about joining it. Most of the locksmen and others of the militant variety did not find the Church to their liking because it was more Christian than they had expected it to be. Then, too, the leadership were not locksmen and the central tenets of the Church say nothing about the divinity of Haile Sellassie (Barret 1977:206).

But when Bob Marley died, the Orthodox Church came to prominence again as an *Abuna* (Bishop) of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church was called upon to conduct his funeral service. When there was a split in the Ethiopian Church, Jamaica also was divided in its loyalty. In 1997 when Sellassie's great grandson visited Jamaica, both sections of the Church tried to unite to form a welcoming party.

### 3.3 THE PROTESTANT MODULE

Jamaica houses many Protestant denominations. The emancipation of the slaves opened the door for this phenomenon.

#### 3.3.1 The Anglicans

The transition of the people of Jamaica from the Roman Catholic faith to that of the Church of England was to have profound and lasting effects on the future development of the island. With the English conquest of Jamaica, the Church of England became the official state church. Shortly after Charles II ascended the British throne in 1660 he received reports from the Jamaican colony concerning the general lack of religious organization and the open immorality and uncivilized behaviour of a fair proportion of the British colonists on the island. Consequently, he issued instructions that, in addition to martial law, the Church of England was to be established in Jamaica in order "to discourage vice and debauchery" (Morrish 1982:32).

In the early days, the Anglican Church received generous aid from the British government. The Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (SPCK) founded in 1677 made concentrated efforts at evangelism, but could not challenge the colonizers to take advantage and convert their slaves. The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG) was only concerned with the supply of ministers to the colonies. Although the Anglican Church was the pioneer Protestant church on this island, it remained small. In 1820 there were only twenty Anglican clergymen on the whole island. The ministers received stipends from the government treasury. However, the ministers were all whites and only associated with the upper class. They made very little effort to reach out to the slaves and accepted the social distance between the slaves and the plantocracy. The few ministers available had no missionary zeal or inspiration for evangelization. According to Davis (1977:7)

The people who brought Christianity to the new world were not missionaries. They were secular Christians with not only limited religion, but also had the spirit to impose culture, colonizing zeal, a thirst for wealth and zeal to expand the British empire. The West Indies promised success, so they came in spite of the high rate of mortality.

Almost 81% of the population were slaves, but the Anglican Church was not interested in them. In fact, some of the ministers even refused to conduct church services for or administer the sacraments to non-whites. Bisnauth (1989:136) states that the Rev George Bridges, an ardent champion of the planters in Jamaica, justified the reluctance of the planters to have their slaves instructed in religion on the grounds that they could not spare the slaves the time for instruction. Bridges argued that the economic plight of the planters forced them to extract as much work as they could from the slaves. Some of the planters were of the opinion that salvation (and by that token, Christianity) was for whites only. The ministers preached the "gospel of submission" to the slaves and insisted on the rights of the plantocracy. The plantocracy feared that freedom would bring ruin to the economy and social structure of the island and that conversion would give the slaves a notion of equality. According to Davis (1977:9), the whites felt that any "concession of equality in the society at that time would be a death blow to both the psychological and physical foundations of slavery. The dehumanized Africans, if allowed to develop the feeling that they were equal to their masters, would resist any attempt to hold them in servitude."

The plantocracy believed an organized church would be a threat to their free and immoral life. Many considered religion a farce which imposed restrictions. Osborne (1994:430) states that "the slaves were excluded from the baptism by a very high stole fee (about 3-4 Sterling) which a slave owner had to pay, should he want his slaves baptized as Anglicans".

The arrival of the Moravians and the Baptists on the island forced the Anglican Church to baptize the slaves, lest the non-Conformists gather all of them into their folds. It should be noted that the Anglicans were so suspicious of the other churches that in 1831 Rev George Bridges, who supported the planters against the abolition of slavery, became the co-founder of the Colonial Church Union in Jamaica. The Union was responsible for the active persecution of Baptist and Methodist missionaries and the destruction of their chapels.

The antipathy with which the whites generally regarded the blacks made it inevitable that a separate church organization should be set up for the slave converts. Cromwell's "Western design", uncompromisingly directed towards the expansion and consolidation of Protestantism, inspired England to send out teachers to propagate the Christian gospel. His concession to non-



confessional churches to preach in the British colonies and thus to weaken the Catholic faith and challenge the Anglicans opened the way for many denominational Protestant Churches in the Caribbean. The non-Conformist churches who started arriving on the island gained more members and thus provided a challenge to the established Church. By the beginning of the nineteenth century the pro and anti-slavery controversy had reached boiling point. At the same time many developed a spirit of dissent and an attitude of cynicism towards religion. In 1815, a resolution was passed by the Legislative Council, granting slaves the right to receive religious instruction.

The Church was under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Bishop of London. However, the bishop's jurisdiction was purely nominal. It was the responsibility of the local governor, acting on behalf of the Crown, to appoint clergymen. Jamaica was divided into fifteen "parishes", each run by a vestry — which was also responsible for raising taxes for the maintenance of the ministers and the building and maintenance of churches. The governor was influenced in his decisions by the parish vestry, which consisted of estate owners who exploited the situation. They considered the ministers little more than the hired hands of the vestry. The plantocracy dominated the parish. The clergymen held office at the pleasure of the governor, but only after local vestries had made their choice, and their salaries were voted by the planter- dominated assemblies.

Sometimes the priests were recruited from among the planters, merchants or military officers who were unsuccessful in their professional life. The calibre of priests was so low that in 1774 Edward Long lamented that "some of them may be qualified to be salt fish sellers or act as boatswains". Bisnauth (1989:61) adds that the "fact that the Caribbean church before 1825 lacked any kind of Convocation and the fact that without bishops residing in the area, it was bereft of local spiritual leadership, did not help to reduce the influence which the plantocracy had on the Church".

Furthermore, the fact that many clergymen were deficient in both learning and piety did not help to make the Church a creative force or the clergy an imaginative body. The appointment of the first Anglican Bishop of Jamaica in 1824, Christopher Lipscombe, saw a new day in the colony:

The Bishops made it plain that they conceived it their duty to make some reparation for past neglect and to do all in their power to ameliorate the lot of slaves. In his reply to the

address of welcome, Bishop Lipscombe stated that he intended to adopt measures to improve the spiritual conditions of the slave population (Cayless in CCC 1982:7).

Thereafter, the mission of the church was directed to all classes of people in society. The missionary occupied a peculiar place in Jamaican society: he was a member of the white society, but an ally of the slaves. The Church took up the task of reaching out to the slaves and evangelizing them as a matter of policy. Slave marriages and baptisms were encouraged, recognized and registered. The Sunday markets were abolished so that many more could attend worship services. The Bishop appointed school teachers and catechists and made them directly responsible for instruction on the estates. The Church Missionary Society (CMS) and ISPCK supported him in this venture and so by 1844 the number of priests had increased to 90. In 1904, the first native or black minister was ordained, to be followed in 1911 by PW Gibson, who, among other distinctions, went on to become the first diocesan Bishop from 1956 to 1967.

### **3.3.2 The Moravians**

The Moravian Church was the first mission to reach the slaves in the Caribbean islands. This community of believers from Danish Halle Mission had a tremendous desire to share their faith and experience with others. They felt sending missionaries to a distant land was a kind of religious renewal and labelled it diaspora.

While attending the coronation of King Christian VI of Denmark in 1731, Count Zinzendorf met a slave from the West Indies. Anthony Ulrich of St Thomas Islands (the present Virgin Islands), who was accompanying his master, narrated their hardship to Count Zinzendorf, who felt that it was like the Macedonian pleading with him about their need to hear the gospel, and decided that God was calling him to do something for the slaves. The Count, who was a pietist, considered mission outreach and conversion of non-Christians vital diaspora and, accordingly, urged the *Unitas Fratrum* (Unity of the Brethren) to act forthwith. So on 18 August 1732, the first missionaries were commissioned with very little financial backing. The directors of the Danish West Indian Company refused them the passage, but the Danish royal family supported them, in the same way they had supported evangelism in India in 1706. The first two missionaries to the

West Indies were a potter and a carpenter, respectively, but they were men of passion and piety. What they lacked in knowledge, they made up for in zeal. Kane (1981:80) commends this spirit, stating that "like the early apostles they were unlearned and ignorant men; and like them, they were despised by the cultured people of their day".

In 1754 the Moravians were invited by two wealthy plantation owners to send missionaries to their estates in Jamaica. They considered "a Christian slave was more of an asset than a liability on the sugar plantation. They felt a Christian slave was a better slave — a docile, obedient slave — and one more willing to keep within the law " (Lewis 1982:24). Thus, the Moravians became the first Christian Church in Jamaica to attempt to reach to the slaves and propagate the Christian faith in any realistic way. But it took nearly fifty years for them to build a strong Christian community. Although Kane (1981:80) states that "in almost every place their endeavors bore fruit", Williams (1994:34) disagrees, pointing out that "although the Moravians were the first to send missionaries directly for evangelization of the African slaves in the Caribbean, they made very few converts".

In order to identify with the slaves, the Moravians adopted a novel scheme: they bought some slaves and placed them on estates to work with fellow slaves as evangelists and do pastoral work among them. While some attribute the scheme with success, many think it was not the right strategy. Gayles (Williams 1994:34) argues that the "scarcity of African converts among the Moravian flock was due primarily to the fact that the missionaries acquired property, bought slaves, used them to carve out their livelihood and treated them no differently from the way the other slave owners treated theirs."

The Moravian Church in Jamaica is basically rurally oriented and composed mainly of slave converts. In spite of strong opposition from the slave masters, they did succeed in building the church in the Caribbean. According to Robinson (Kane 1981:79):

Within twenty years of commencement of their missionary work the Moravian Brethren had started more missions than Anglicans and Protestants had started during the two preceding centuries. Their marvelous success was largely due to the fact that from the first

they recognized that the evangelization of the world was the most pressing of all obligations that rested upon the Christian church; and that the carrying out of this obligation was the common affair of the community.

### **3.3.3 The Methodists**

Methodist missionaries followed the Moravians into the Caribbean. Nathaniel Gilbert, a planter and the speaker of the Assembly of Antigua, returned from England, where he and ten of his slaves had been baptized by Wesley. Thomas Cooke, who was appointed Superintendent of the American Conference assumed the functions of bishop and visited Jamaica in 1789, was mainly responsible for spreading Methodism in other parts of the Caribbean.

In the beginning, the missionaries were more concerned about the sins of the people than the sins of the planters. Hence questions like abolition and emancipation were not on their agenda, while they demanded holiness from the slaves. This led to the emergence of the Wesleyan Holiness Mission in Jamaica, who wished to introduce the local people to essential European techniques for saving the soul rather than sympathize with them or understand the cultural heritage of the black people. The missionaries were also fearful of the planters and so were hesitant to make their views public. They constantly urged their converts to be loyal and obedient to their masters. However, when the campaign for the abolition of the slave trade was mounted in Britain, the church began to realize its failure.

Unlike the Moravians, who campaigned mainly in rural areas, the Methodists at first tended to concentrate on the towns in much the same way the Wesleyan missionaries in England directed their efforts at the urban poor. While the poor people in the urban areas were legally free, (Kane 1981:79) they and the free blacks nevertheless suffered from political disenfranchisement and social ostracism from the white society. The Methodist missionaries recruited their own converts primarily from among the freed Coloured people and freed blacks. But very few whites joined the Methodist church.

Latourette (1975:1203f) holds that originally "Methodism was an awakening movement identified

with screaming, laughing, visionary and convulsion experiences". But in Jamaica they became an established church and lost ground, which was later won by the revivalist or Pentecostal groups.

### **3.3.4 The African Episcopal Methodists**

The black people in the British colonies were interested in Christianity for two reasons. First, it was the white man's religion and they wanted their favour. Lowenthal (1972:176) cites a story of the twisted colour discrimination: "A white man displayed a picture of Jesus showing that he had a fair complexion and golden hair and was not like a Negro. It made the blacks look for a Saviour with white complexion." Others felt he was superior and more powerful than their own evil-dominated practices.

The African Methodist Episcopal Church, which originated in the USA in 1787, was a protest movement against white superiority. In America at that time, people of colour were called Africans although most of them were not born in Africa, but in America. But, "so great was the prejudice against the blacks, that the white Christians did not want to sit with them in the same pew or allow them to sit on the floor or pray next to them" (Bayne & Talbot 1982:3). Those who turned away from this Church group formed the Free African Society, expressing mutual concern for their own economic well-being by helping the free men of African descent to practise self-reliance, thrift and self-help. They came to Haiti in 1823 and then to Jamaica in 1912, believing that the black people of African descent there needed a Church of their own. However, they found only partial acceptance in Jamaica.

### **3.3.5 The Baptists**

Another church that saw mission to the slaves as its primary task was the Baptist Church. The Baptists took pride in calling themselves "the poor man's Church" and made a powerful appeal to the downtrodden and the common people. They stressed the basic Christian doctrine of human equality and fraternity. As a result of their involvement in the freedom struggle, the Baptists considered themselves the symbol of the Church's opposition to slavery and all other forms of injustice and waged a bitter struggle against the planters.

The Baptists came to the Caribbean from the USA and England. In 1782 George Lisle and Moses Baker, two freed Negro slaves from the USA, came to Jamaica where Lisle began to conduct religious services at the Kingston Race Course (now National Heroes Circle) and organized the first congregation in east Kingston by 1789. His converts included slaves, freed blacks and Creoles (ie, persons of mixed race). Morrish (1982:35) states that "the two American (freed) slaves were simple people and uneducated Negroes who easily mingled Christian elements of their faith with the superstition and more pagan ideas and ritual of primitive cultures". In seven years they had baptized about five hundred persons. The *Jamaica Baptist Union Handbook* (1990:3) records that "the strategy of appointing the black Baptist preachers led to the indigenous effort to reach their own kind of people and definitely this homogenous effort had its success".

The membership of the Baptist Church was predominantly black. The government and those who had trading interests did not favour the establishment and growth of strong indigenous churches. They did not like the presence of the church on their estates and resented the presence of the missionaries and their teachings. Therefore, the planters introduced a license system to preach and conduct religious services. They considered the chapels and meeting houses, especially of the Baptists and Wesleyans, centres of subversion and ordered Sunday to be a working day. From 1802 onwards, laws were passed prohibiting teaching and preaching to Negroes. The missionaries were even threatened with imprisonment, hard labour or whipping and death, if the dictums were violated. Lisle was arrested and suffered greatly at the hands of the authorities.

By then William Carey had established the Baptist Missionary Society in England. The Jamaican Baptist leaders felt that missionaries from the "mother country" would ease the situation. There was growing dissatisfaction with the institution of slavery in Britain — partly due to changing economic interests and partly to the intense lobbying and agitation of the newly formed Anti-slavery Society. Therefore, in response to appeals from Jamaica, English Baptist missionaries arrived in 1814.

Their arrival did not ease or alter the situation, however. The planters treated all Negroes, whether freed or slaves, alike. The *JBU Handbook* (1990:4) states that "Baptist congregations formed a Union, for greater cooperation, co-ordination and consolidation in the light of the

mounting pressures brought upon Baptists not only by the planters, but also from the government and the established Church". As the popularity of the Baptist movement grew, both the State and the Anglican Church considered Baptists a political threat. On January 26, 1832, the planters' militia, under the leadership of the Reverend Bridges, Rector of St Ann's Bay, formed what could be called the colonial church union. The non-conformist churches were attacked ruthlessly.

This struggle for justice was considered the Baptist war of 1831 and was led by Sam Sharpe, a Baptist deacon from St James. He used the Bible to fight for justice and staged a sit-down strike at Christmas time to highlight the plight of the slaves and force the planters to pay them just wages. Despite good organization, the strike turned into a riot and was treated by the government as insurrection. The missionaries, especially the Baptists, who had never been popular with the planters, now found themselves being blamed for all the disturbances. Knibb, Burchell and other Baptist preachers and the Moravian, Pfeiffer were arrested and charged with inciting the slaves to rebellion (Black 1958:159-160). Knibb even received death threats. The Colonial Church Union vandalized, burnt and destroyed Baptist chapels and members' dwellings all over the island as well as the first Baptist church in Western Jamaica, which was only a week old. Black and white Baptist leaders were arrested. Sharpe was later hanged in the town square at Montego Bay. His enemies tried to dispose of his body, but his close associates removed it that night and interred it beneath the pulpit in the Baptist chapel (Burchell Baptist Church) at Trelwany.

Burchell, Knibb and other missionaries continued to play significant roles in support of the emancipation struggle of the slaves. Knibb, as the leader of the liberation struggle of the people, took this challenge from Jamaica to England and the USA and gained staunch support from anti-slavery societies. What Carey did for India, Knibb did for the emancipation of slaves in Jamaica. Eventually his efforts were rewarded. On the day of emancipation, he gathered the people in the chapel square at Trelwany. At midnight he pointed to the clock and cried, "The hour is at hand; the monster is dying." Then when the clock struck twelve, to the jubilant cheering crowd he announced, "The monster is dead, you are free!" Later, he wrote, "Never did I hear such a sound. The winds of freedom appeared to have been let loose. The very building shook at the strange yet sacred joy" (Sherlock 1967:56).

After emancipation, the Baptists established "free villages" for the freed slaves. They made sure that church members of good standing occupied these lands, and built churches as well as schools. In gratitude, the newly settled villagers named their churches, districts and institutions after memorable figures and events, such as August Town (in remembrance of emancipation) and Victoria Town (after Queen Victoria). When the system of apprenticeship was introduced, Knibb led an agitation which forced the House of Commons to appoint a committee in 1836, which was eventually responsible for heralding full and final freedom.

In 1843 the Jamaican Baptist Missionary Society was founded as an indigenous society to reach out to the people. It extended its mission to the ancestral land of Africa (to Cameroon in West Africa) and to other parts of the West Indies. It also established a theological college named after Calabar (a colony in Africa) to train the nationals for pioneering work in evangelism and pastoral oversight. In 1849, the Jamaica Baptist Union was formed as an indigenous church body and acted as the catalyst to share missionary personnel and funds.

The 1860 revival, which was sponsored by the Baptist Churches, led to the revival of what is called the spiritual Baptist movement. It had a special effect on the people of African origin and resulted in the emergence of indigenous churches, like the Revivalists, Pocomanians and Zionists, with syncretistic religious practices.

### **3.3.6 The Quakers**

The Quakers or members of the Society of Friends came to Jamaica as early as 1655. The Quakers formed an important part of Jamaican society and their founder, George Fox, visited the island in 1671. King Charles II exempted the Quakers from taking the oath of allegiance to the king, military conscription and paying taxes. They also showed no respect for the Church of England, which earned them the name "Dissenters".

The Society of Friends were the first people in Britain to protest against slavery and the slave trade in the USA as well as in the Caribbean. In 1755, they were the first people to agitate for the abolition of slavery and emancipation of slaves. They formed an anti-slavery committee, which



was joined by Granville Sharp and his supporters, parliamentarians, and Wilberforce and other champions of the cause. In protest against the Church of England, which was on the side of the planters, the Quakers supported missionaries from evangelical churches coming to the Caribbean and encouraged the slaves to attend their church meetings in spite of protests from the plantocracy.

### **3.3.7 The Salvation Army**

Within twenty-five years of their founding, the Salvation Army, with their slogan "soup, soap and salvation", contributed to the life and mission of the Church in the Caribbean. The first convert was a Jamaican slave who went to England with her mistress. She returned to her native country and became an effective missionary for her own people. Mother Foster advocated the Salvation Army principles in spite of all opposition. In 1887, the Church made its official entry into Jamaica and played an important role in the life of the nation. Their methods of evangelism, revivalism, spirit and musical gifts attracted people. Donald Sangster, a former Prime Minister of Jamaica, was a Salvation Army member.

### **3.3.8 The Churches of the Reformed Traditions**

"Unity in mission" became the watchword of the ecumenical movement. This was necessary since the Reformation literally dismembered the Church and hampered its mission and evangelism. The Reformation provided a new theology but at the same time led to the fragmentation of the Christian Church and Jamaica is a classic example of this phenomenon. Divisions within the Church brought confusion to new members in mission countries. In their efforts to gain more converts, the white Protestant churches brought with them parochial denominationalism.

Among the Churches of the Reformed tradition, the Germans only established their church in Jamaica after the American Lutheran churches had adopted the Caribbean islands. The Dutch Lutheran Church was established in other parts of the Caribbean and concentrated mainly among the East Indians who lived on the sugar plantations. The Presbyterian Churches from Scotland and Ireland, along with other churches, broke the apathy for evangelism in the Caribbean.

### 3.3.9 The Presbyterians

In 1800 the Scottish Presbyterians wanted their *Kirk* only for the Europeans in Kingston. But then the slaves who accompanied their masters were allowed to attend the church service, which led the missionaries to reach out to the slaves and the coloured people. However, this move was met with bitter opposition from many of the planters. With the growing concern for the slaves, the Scottish mission built their first congregation, Hampden of Trelwany parish, for them in a remote place, which eventually led to the starting of many more churches.

Following the Baptists, the Jamaican Presbyterian mission from the very beginning not only reached the black people within their fold, but also went back to their roots in Africa. Andreas Riis, the only surviving missionary who came from Switzerland, urged the Basel Mission to send missionaries to Ghana in 1836. Except for one woman, who survived and married Riis, the first missionaries who went there died. The Riis couple continued their mission until 1839 before deciding to abandon their efforts due to the difficult survival conditions and lack of converts. Before departing, Riis visited the Ashanti chief, who said that if he saw a black man follow that religion, then he would also. That statement led the Jamaicans to send their missionaries to Ghana (the Akuapem region) in 1842. They were sent from Lucea Presbyterian Church (at present the UCJCI). Supported by the Basel Mission, they helped build schools. In 1847 four candidates became the first Christians from the local African population. The Basel Mission contributed to the religious and educational life and economic development of Akropong, which proved to be a good foundation for national development (*The Gleaner* Aug 1, 1997:C4).

In 1846, the Synod of the United Presbyterian Church in Jamaica sent Hope Waddel as a pioneer missionary to Calabar. The ship that carried missionaries to Africa was wrecked off the coast of the Cayman Islands, a colony south of Cuba, which has close connections with Jamaica today. Seeing the urgent spiritual need of the small community, Waddel urged the Presbyteriana Church in Jamaica to extend its mission like the tent pegs that Carey spoke about (Isaiah 54:2). Neil (1979:309) mentions that Waddel's party included "a Jamaican mulatto, and others of Negro blood, who later joined the mission... Members of the African race in the West Indies have in

many cases rendered notable service in the building up of the African church in Africa."

Later, Waddel assisted Ward and others from Jamaica to go to Nigeria as missionary teachers. In 1965 the United Church of Jamaica and Grand Cayman (UCJGC) was formed and Francis Ibiam, then governor of eastern Nigeria and President of the WCC, was the guest preacher. On that occasion, Ward was installed as the first Moderator of the UCJGC.

When the East Indians arrived in Jamaica, the Presbyterians and the Quakers, supported by the existing political and religious groups like the Baptists, waged a virtual war against Indian religions, which they considered heathenish and pagan. According to Seasram (CJTS 1993:14), they "employed various techniques to obtain converts. Appealing to the intellect by emphasizing the strength of Christianity was a convenient starting point. Visual aids such as the magic lantern, which depicted scenes of the life of Christ, were also frequently used by the missionaries. In addition they realized that the conversion should have economic and social advantage, which consequently included many other factors to their ministry."

The PCJ faced many problems in Jamaica. The growing national awareness, and self-understanding of its ministry and mission in the Jamaican and Cayman Islands context resulted in a search for greater autonomy and wider local church union. Sustaining the ministry, given the economic factors, proved to be the key issue that shaped the PCJ's perspectives on church union and its future relationship with the Church of Scotland (Hewitt 1994:45). While the Church of Scotland desired a Jamaican Church that was more self-supporting, it failed in its plans to put in place a viable system that would lead to the training of sufficiently qualified lay and ministerial leaders. The scarcity of such leaders led to an unhealthy dependence on foreigners again.

### **3.3.10 The Congregationalists**

Christians in war-torn Europe recognized the needs of peoples outside their own countries. As a result of the evangelical revival, British Protestant Churches organized their efforts to spread the Christian faith to "millions perishing in heathen darkness". According to Neil (1964:324),

The new spiritual life into which many Christians entered found expression in a sense of responsibility for personal witness to Christ and for missionary service. A number of missionary societies were formed at this time, some of them reverting to that non-denominational pattern which had been the original ideal of the London Missionary Society, which was established in 1795; many of the older societies received new support and an influx of recruits from among those who had been influenced by the revival.

This enabled the churches to look beyond their own traditions or denominations. To avoid being tied to any particular form of church or government was the main concern that led the LMS to go all over the world. Carey aroused the interest of benevolent clergy and laity to promote the gospel. Since Christ was not divided they wanted to show a united effort to make known "the glory of his person, the perfection of his work, the wonders of his grace, and the overflowing blessings of his redemption" (Fisher 1915:586).

Influenced by the evangelical revival, Wilberforce proved instrumental in the formation of the London Missionary Society and urged the LMS to send missionaries to the West Indies. They came to Jamaica in 1834 and were given responsibility for the rehabilitation of the freed slaves. They followed the ex-slaves up into the hills and districts far from the main centres, where they built churches among the poor people and served them under the most difficult conditions. By 1861, they had about 1700 members. In 1870, however, the LMS decided to withdraw from Jamaica as they found it too costly to maintain the mission venture. When the LMS withdrew, the Congregational Union of Jamaica was formed as most of the ministers were of Congregational background. In 1887 the LMS sponsored a missionary couple on teaching assignments to Central Africa. Compared to the Presbyterians, the Congregationalists were in a better economic position and less dependent on foreign support.

### **3.3.11 The Disciples of Christ**

The Disciples of Christ or the Christian Church emerged under the leadership of Barton Stone, an Irish American Presbyterian minister. Three years after the emancipation of slaves in Jamaica, a small band of ex-slaves who had established a church in the hills of St Andrew appealed through

a congregational missionary of Jamaica in Oberlin College in Ohio, USA to send them missionaries. Five graduates responded and the church began to reach out to rural Jamaican communities, largely neglected by other denominations. According to Lowe (UCJCI 1992:2),

The Disciples' movement in Jamaica grew by a process of assimilation. Churches connected loosely with other denominations readily changed their affiliation and joined the Disciples. Most of them were former Baptist churches. This, plus the fact that Disciples of Christ practiced baptism by immersion, led to them being called "Christian Baptists" as distinct from "Union Baptists".

In 1950 the Disciples of Christ in Jamaica achieved local autonomy. Shortly afterwards they joined with others to start dialogue on Church union. The Disciples believed that the unity of the Church is necessary for its growth and the sake of mission. In 1953 the Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Moravians, Methodists and Disciples formed the Jamaica Church Union Commission. But when these efforts failed, the Presbyterians and the Congregationalists formed the United Church of Jamaica and Grand Cayman in 1965. In 1992 the Disciples of Christ also joined and the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands came into being. This was a significant step towards church unification. Jamaica showed to the world that organic union is still possible and necessary. With this union the UCJCI became a visible entity in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands.

### **3.4 The Neo-Religious Movements**

#### **3.4.1 The Sabbatarians**

Jamaica responded well to the neo-Christian movements. The American Seventh Day Adventists founded their first church in Kingston in 1903 and by 1992 had 150,000 members in more than 700 churches across the island, thus outnumbering all the established churches. Today, they proudly claim that one person is converted in the West Indies every five hours, and a church is raised within three weeks; and there is one Adventist for every 40 Jamaicans.

The Adventists maintain that Adventism should be based on or grow only through the Bible and

biblical literature. According to Gerloff (1992:290), "Adventism with its emphasis on non-denominational forms and congregational structures, on moral transformation and final victory over evil and oppression, and on the leadership of God in human affairs and his dominion over all nations, obviously had an enormous attraction."

Their growth is attributed to a giving of the tithe and the overall participation of members in personal, public, lay and tent missionary literature evangelism, and Sabbath school evangelism. Those converted were immediately trained as colporteurs and they are also engaged in social action programmes (eg, a temperance programme), hospitals and schools.

### **3.4.2 The Pentecostals**

The early Jamaican Pentecostal movement began in a revival meeting held at Liberty Valley in St Ann around 1919. According to the 1982 statistical records, the Pentecostal churches (which appear in the statistical records for first time only in 1943), including the Church of God, had nearly half a million members. Gerloff (1992:161) states that from 1925 to 1952 the Pentecostals grew rapidly in the Caribbean and increased from 4 % in 1943 to 13% in 1960 to 20% in 1970. The Pentecostals fall into two main streams: those who follow the Trinitarian doctrine and those who take the Jesus-centric stand.

Through these movements many outsiders were brought into the Christian church. The Pentecostals reached the poorest and lowest people, in downtown areas and on the outskirts of the cities. They touched the life of the poorly educated, worst housed, lowest paid and most victimized of the population. Smith (1993:1) maintains that "Pentecostalism as manifested in Jamaica is not merely a religious phenomenon but an expression of the need of some sectors of the society to give a positive response to prevalent social attitudes".

At the same time the established churches followed a strict code of conduct, demanded ethical rationalism and maintained disciplinary measures for their members. For example, as early as 1896, the Anglican Bishop Nuttal issued a "Letter to Professing Persons" to be read in all Anglican parishes. He identified universal morality with Christians and included sins to avoid like the sin

of sexual immorality.

Over 80% of the members of some of the Pentecostal groups are women, who also provide leadership in many churches. Smith (1993:21) contends that "fear of getting caught with pregnancy and thereby relapsing socially, is probably the strongest factor in the continuing adherence to the Pentecostal group on the part of a great number of women". The Pentecostal pattern of worship was also uplifting. Their belief in sanctification through the filling of the Holy Spirit and baptism by immersion attracted the masses. The shouting and swaying, emotional excitement and body movements took them back to their African heritage while healing, prophecy, dreams and visions also added to this faith.

Therefore, Broos (1997:52) argues that the practice of the black lower classes was typified by middle-class observers as both superstitious and immoral — superstitious for its healing lore and immoral for its enthusiasm and lack of a marriage rite. It was to this milieu that Pentecostalism was introduced as a solution for the living style of the black lower class. Through Pentecostalism black lower class Jamaicans could credential themselves to perform the marriage rite. At the same time American powerful revivalism legitimized enthusiasm and spirit possession.

There was also another factor in the Pentecostal growth. The poor people thought that the established churches were limited to the upper class with their hats and smart clothes and suits. In the Pentecostal churches, however, they found that they were welcome in their ordinary clothes and immediately felt at home. Jamaican immigrants were also responsible for the spread of Pentecostalism in the United Kingdom. According to Hollenweger (Gerloff 1993:2), "it provided protection from the cold foggy surroundings with a warm West Indian Service!"

### **3.5 PEOPLES OF OTHER FAITHS**

#### **3.5.1 The Jewish faith**

It is generally assumed that Jamaica received the first Jewish stream in 1509, along with the successor to Columbus, de Esquivel. However, according to the *Sunday Gleaner* (12 March

1995:2a), when Columbus undertook his famous journey, some Jews also accompanied him and stayed with him at New Seville. Because of an edict of the Spanish Inquisition about 300,000 Jews left. Some of them became Christians and found themselves accepted. Others left for other places and they saw an opening in the New World. As the Inquisition had no force in the new territory, those who became Christians reconverted to the Jewish faith again. According to DeSouza (1981:255), the present spiritual leader of the Jewish community in Jamaica says that they were called "Crypto Jews" or "Secret Jews" or even Maroons, who practised their religion secretly meeting in homes. DeSouza further claims (1981:258) that "Columbus himself was from a Maroon family". When fire destroyed two different traditional synagogues in 1882, efforts were made to unite and form one congregation and this eventually took place only in 1921.

There is another story circulating that when Columbus was marooned in Jamaica during his fourth and final voyage in 1503, there was a mutiny. Some of the crew members who stood with him were Jews, including two brothers, Moshe and Abraham Henriques, with whose help he hid his booty. Recently, their descendants claimed the right to search the north coast for what they consider their treasure.

Two streams of Jewish migrants came to Jamaica: Shephardic Jews, who came in 1692 from Spain and Portugal, and Ashkenazi Jews, who arrived from Germany, Poland and Russia. According to DeSouza (1981:263), "Jews helped the British to capture Jamaica as well as to negotiate the Spanish to surrender. As such, they enjoyed special protection from the British. During that period they also built synagogues in Port Royal, Spanish town, Kingston and Montego Bay." There were also some migration from the Netherlands, England, neighbouring Guyana, Surinam and Brazil. When Spain granted *asiento* to the English in 1713, a lively trade sprang up between Jamaica and the Spanish. The Jews, who came from various parts of the world, brought their business expertise along with them and became successful entrepreneurs. They controlled import and export firms, the cement factory, one of the leading newspapers, a radio station, hotels and earlier the telephone company. Many of them also held high posts in the civil service. They are well known for their lavish style and generous entertainment; and as amateur theoreticians. Citing the 1962 survey Lowenthal (1972:196) states that "of the dozen most influential white Jamaicans named, half were Jewish." Perhaps among all the ethnic minorities, Jamaican Jews played a significant role in the



social and economic life of the island.

The first Jews were debarred from holding public office; but 1831 removed these restrictions. Bisnauth (1988: 77) records that as early as 1849, eight of the forty-seven members of the Jamaican Assembly were Jews. And in that year when Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement) was celebrated, they even managed to have the House adjourn its sitting for their sake. They enjoyed so much religious freedom that they were even exempted from military service on the Sabbath. They observed most of the feasts and fasts, performed circumcisions, marriages and burials according to their own rites and had a separate butcher for the kosher killing of animals for consumption. Death and emigration have resulted in the recent decline of the Jewish community.

Paradoxically, Jews, who themselves were the victims of slavery in the Old Testament, were supporters of slavery in the colonial period. Bisnauth (1989:70) states that "much of the slave trade was in Jewish hands". Again in the history of religions, Jews were regarded proselytizers. But Bisnauth maintains that Judaism of the Caribbean diaspora was not interested in proselytization. Even now it is doubtful whether they have any proselytes from the black Jamaican community.

Like Jews elsewhere in the world, the Jews in Jamaica claim to be Yahweh's chosen people and look forward to their Promised Land. But very few of them returned to Israel when the nation of Israel was inaugurated.

### **3.5.2 The East Indian influences**

After emancipation, the plantation industry in the British West Indies faced a labour crisis. The natives either refused to work on the estates or demanded higher wages. They did not permit their children to grow up on the estates either. In order to supplement the declining labour force and to create competition among the people, therefore, efforts were made to bring in labourers from other countries. Irish and German immigrants were offered generous incentives to fill the labour shortage. But as they were not agriculturists, they failed to meet the planters' demands. The Indian subcontinent, which was under the British Empire,

met this need. The Indians in the rural areas, who were suffering from poverty and drought as well as caste and class discrimination, were searching for green pastures and took advantage of that situation.

It is estimated that more than half a million Indians came to the West Indies between 1843 and 1917. They went to a number of British, Dutch and French colonies in the Caribbean. In 1838 the first two parties of East Indians were brought to the Guyana sugar estates. The first immigrants to Jamaica landed on 10 May 1945. Thereafter, it is estimated that about 600,000 poor and landless peasants and hill tribal people, mainly from the Indo-Gangetic plains as well as from Madras State were also transported. Interestingly, there is no record of anyone from the state of Karnataka coming although the job and living conditions in the Caribbean would have suited anyone. When the 150th anniversary of the East Indians' arrival in Jamaica was celebrated in Jamaica in 1995, the Governor General issued a proclamation declaring May 10 Indian Heritage Day.

When the East Indians were brought in, the term "slavery" was anathema. Instead, they were called indentured labourers or "Coolies", an Indian term for casual workers. By all accounts the Indians did not have an easy voyage or time. Sherlock (1967:59) states that the "voyage from India was long; the ships were often slow. And during the first years the death rate was high. As many as seventeen or even twenty out of one hundred died on early voyages." On arrival at the Old Harbour, they were distributed to various sugar cane estates, banana plantations and livestock farms, according to the requirements of the planters. Thus, again, as in the case of the Africans, Indian solidarity was broken. According to Lowenthal (1972:62), the planters and the natives treated them worse than the slaves.

They met with more unjust and inhuman manner than slavery. Coolies were cheated, starved, flogged and murdered. The Indians received little sympathy from the black and Colored West Indians who resented them for keeping the wages depressed or spurned them as drudges. Where East Indians were numerous, Negroes moved off the sugar estates, into the towns or into the small holdings, shunning plantation work as fit only for slaves from a foreign land.

At first these indentured labourers were required to serve for ten years, at the end of which time they were transferred to another estate or, if they wished, were given passage to return to India. But as the number of immigrants began to increase and when the return fare became a costly affair, the plantocracy thought of another inducement. According to Shepherd (1986:14), it was felt that if the immigrants were treated humanly and their welfare protected, they would remain in the colonies voluntarily. Therefore, as a key inducement, free grants of land were offered. As the social and economic prospects back home were discouraging and the distance between the countries was so vast, many took advantage of the offer. As a result, nearly 62% stayed back in Jamaica after the expiration of their indentured contract. Some of those who stayed voluntarily drifted to the urban areas.

### 3.5.2.1 *The Hindu faith*

Most of the Indians who came down to Jamaica were Hindus by birth. At first, all the East Indians maintained their Hindi language, cultural identity and religious practices faithfully. They gave the names of their gods to their children and brought them up in their ancestral faith and used to celebrate family events and religious ceremonies like Holi and Diwali. They built temples to their popular deities and offered sacrifices to *Kali*. They used drums in worship and their prayers included chanting and shouting, "*Jai Kali Mai*" (victory to mother *Kali*) or "*Namo Sri Narayana*" (Praise be to the Lord *Narayana*). They also introduced Ganja smoking and tantric cults that attracted Afro-Jamaicans and added more lustre to their spirit-filled atmosphere.

Lowenthal (1972:147) maintains that the Hindu caste (*Jati*) system was a criterion that played a major role in the immigration process: "as many as fifty different caste affiliations were likely to appear on the manifest of a shipload bound for the Caribbean". Most of the East Indians from the north were from the low caste called *Chamaras*, traditional leather workers. They were also dark skinned, but assumed superiority over Afro-Jamaicans. Although some regarded crossing the sea as the Vedic punishment of *Kalapani* (which means "black waters" and according to Hindu tradition, crossing the sea was evil and led to banishment and spiritual malaise), it nevertheless proved to be a blessing in disguise. In the foreign country their former caste distinctions were

thrown out and the *Jati* system soon disintegrated. All their kinship networks were gradually dismantled. Most of the immigrants were from *Sri Narayana Panth*, a Caribbean state. There were also followers of Saints Kabir and Ramananda, who pioneered the *Bhakti* movement, which was simple, attractive and spread without caste consideration or any distinction. There was no need of high caste priests to guide them either. They could also worship anywhere without any ban on their practices or restrictions.

The Indians were regarded as heathens in the Caribbean because of their strange religious practices and idol worship, which was even stronger than the prevalent African traditions. Their dress, languages and food habits contributed to their be considered aliens. The Indian immigrants were vegetarians and, traditionally, their religious faith applied to some animals, too. Therefore the Baptist Church opposed their immigration and called for them to be banned on moral grounds:

The immigration of number of heathens and pagans, foreigners with their religious superstitions, idolatry and wickedness will act most injuriously on the morals of the black inhabitants of the island, and hinder very much the effects that are new in operation for their moral and religious improvement (Shepherd 1986:15).

On the other hand, Indians thought of the Negroes as *Kafari*, meaning infidels. However, very little prejudice and antipathy developed between the two races in Jamaica, unlike in the other Caribbean islands. Shepherd (1986:16) cites Comins, a visiting Indian official who, after a tour of Jamaica early in 1890, concluded that "as a rule, Coolies and Negroes get on well together and live amicably on the estates". Shepherd goes on to point out that the reason for this was mainly that "while Indians were living on the estates, the ex-slaves settled down in the villages and thus avoided any confrontation. Besides, unlike the Chinese, who came ... and prospered as business people, the Indians were not business minded and lived as commoners and not competitors among the community."

The West Indian plantation conditions made the caste structure difficult to maintain. Caste lost its relevance in the Jamaican milieu. Being a minority, they were generally Christianized — Catholics in the French Antilles and Protestants in Jamaica. But in Guyana and Trinidad, because

of greater numbers, most of them remained Hindus and Muslims. While in Jamaica their cultural and religious life was submerged, on the other islands it was maintained to a great extent. Today there is fresh immigration from India for business and professional interests. Not only are the newcomers preserving their faith, they are also invoking the ancient spirit in the heart of Jamaican Indians to go back to the faith of their ancestors. In addition, most of them have brought the neo-Hindu movements, such as *Sathya Sai Baba* and *Ananda Marga*, which are more attractive and accommodating, with them. The Caribbean educational system also demands that school religious education include the essence of all the religions. Hence there is a renewal and greater awareness of these religions today.

### 3.5.2.2 *The Islamic faith*

Islam was introduced into the Caribbean by Africans from the Mandingoes tribe. According to Williams (Sunshine 1988:16), "the transportation of Muslims from Africa to the West Indies was for the purpose of converting them to Christianity". Thereafter, every shipload of Indian immigrants that came to Caribbean islands contained a few Muslims also. While other islands like Trinidad received the majority, Jamaica received only a few. Muslims in Trinidad, Guyana and Surinam organized themselves by forming *Jamats*, which helped them to maintain their religious faith and beliefs. They felt very strongly about their religious obligation and prayed regularly, arranged for the teaching of *Qur'an*, celebrated Muslim festivals, attended Mosques on Fridays, gave alms, fasted during *Ramadan*, abstained from eating pork and drinking liquor, circumcised and married their children. Unfortunately in Jamaica they lacked the leadership of the *Imams*. Plantation life did not allow them to attend prayer meetings on Fridays or to read their Holy Book. The Muslims were also not in a position to build the mosques around which their religious life was centred. As a result they did not flourish. Today there are few Muslims living in Jamaica and they try to maintain their religious identity.

At first the West Indians perceived Islam as a sect within Hinduism. This was due partly to the ignorance of the larger society about other religions and like the Hindus, the Muslims were Indians. Also, for the sake of survival, Hindus and Muslims from India maintained a common front in matters relating to racial, linguistic and cultural identity in the land of their sojourn.

### 3.5.2.3 *The Chinese*

The Chinese also came as indentured labourers to the West Indies, around 1850, but were found unsuitable for work on the estates. Therefore many found their way into the villages and towns as petty traders and craftsmen. Entrepreneurial success puts the Chinese among the most successful and best educated of the West Indian ethnic groups. Lowenthal (1972:204) states that the "average Chinese income was almost five times that of blacks and thrice that of coloured Jamaican in 1960". Their children attended schools and were better educated than any other ethnic or racial people. This created anti-Chinese feelings. By 1960 there were five times more Chinese workers than Jamaicans and when riots broke out in Kingston in 1965, many Chinese stores were looted and burnt down.

Thereafter, the Chinese became more open to the non-Chinese Jamaicans. The younger generation mixed with the locals and produced Chinese-coloured West Indians, although the older generation did not like it. Some of the older people tried to maintain their old religious identity. In the beginning they continued their ancestral faith of Confucianism, Shintoism and other faith practices. They tried to keep their culture through the Chinese script, certain festivals, marriage celebrations and even separate cemeteries. But soon most of them embraced Roman Catholicism, which might have boosted the Roman Catholic Church's status and wealth after suppression during the British regime. According to Bisnauth (1989:203), "The wealth that they (Chinese ) accumulated in commerce, the non-agricultural nature of their occupation, and the fact that so many became Christians, brought this group as a whole respect from, if not absorption into, the burgeoning 'greater tradition' of the colonies." When Hong-Kong was handed over to the Chinese, fresh Chinese immigrants began to arrive in Jamaica. They are trying to preserve their cultural identity at any cost - which includes the introduction of the Chinese martial arts to Jamaican youngsters.

## PART II MISSION MODULES IN KARNATAKA

## 3.6 CHRISTIANITY IN MEDIEVAL INDIA

Christianity in India began to stir up in the second millennium. With the rising of the Mongol kings Genghiz Khan and Kubla Khan, the Nestorian church took the initiative and established its mission throughout Central Asia. According to Latourette (1975:402),

When the Mongol storm broke across Eurasia two of the chief missionary orders of the Catholic Church, the Franciscans and the Dominicans, were in the first flush of their enthusiastic youth. They took advantage of the new day to plant missions, which were scattered from Russia to the China Sea.

India, which was in the middle of their route, provided a resting place both for missionaries and travelers. Accordingly, many missionaries would have visited the well-known Christian centre of the time. The Pope commended the missionary work and urged the Christians in "Lesser India" to receive them. Lesser India then comprised parts of the Indian coast from Sind to Kanara. Though it may not be possible to establish Christianity in Karnataka during that period, Hosten (1936:444f) makes an interesting reference: "There was a Catholic Church in a certain place called Ramagiri in India in 1145 and a Father Caurain suggested that it might be Ramanagra (commonly known as Closepet), a place 30 km from Bangalore." Anthappa (1997:10) adds: "In the Catalan map of 1375, in Deogil of India there was a Christian king. Deogil must be in the neighborhood of the Ramoggiri in India of Nilos Doxpatris (c 1143) and of the Katholikas who used to be sent till then by the Patriarch of Anthioch." He goes on to say that Deogil was near the Mogor town, which we have seen with the iniquity of Christianity in Karnataka.

The first known reference to Christian mission in Karnataka is made during the time of Jordan of Severac (AD1324), who later became Latin Bishop of Quilon in the Great Indies. He was burning with zeal for the conversion of the people by the appeal of Monte Corvino. Therefore he appealed for missionaries and "five Dominicans responded to the touching appeal of Friar Jordan and were dispersed among various mission stations in **Kanara, Mysore** (*emphasis added*), Malabar and

Travancore. The conversions increased. Jordan himself says that before he left for Europe in 1328, they had reached the highest total of ten thousand" (Moraes 1964:98). According to Anthappa (1997), Jordan was aware of the *Vachana* prophecies.

Tuluvite (1966:63) claims that out of them about 350 were from Canara coast. When Marco Polo (either 1288 or 1298) visited Kanara at the end of the thirteenth century, he witnessed the Christian influence there (Abhishankar 1973:102). John of Marignolli records that he saw a Christian city south of Mangalore near Mount Delly, which in the Catalan map of AD 1375 was marked likewise (Hosten 1936:408). A Christian grave found at Anekal near Bangalore is supposed to indicate Dominican work in Mysore and said to have been erected in AD 1400. These dates and records precede the Portuguese period.

Muslims in India who had found a foothold in India could not tolerate the conversions made by Bishop Jordan and stoned him to death at Thana near Bombay. Perhaps this extinguished the expansion of Nestorian Christians and missionaries including those in Karnataka. According to Stewart (1928:92),

It is possible that as the result of the Muhammadan conquests Christianity had practically disappeared from the whole of India... The Christian kingdom mentioned by Marco Polo as existing at the end of the thirteenth century amongst the number of those submerged by the Muslim deluge.

After that, the Christian churches regained their popularity only during the middle of the second millennium. During the period of the Vijayanagar empire, as well as of the Ikkeri and Adilshah kingdom, there were Christian soldiers. Abed-er-Razak, an Islamic visitor to the Vijayangara empire in 1442 recorded: "The Vazir of Vijayanagra is a Christian and his name is Nameh Pezir" (Stewart 1928:92). Moraes (1964:295f) gives a detailed account of Razak's visit and the Christian influence in those places. Razak also visited Mangalore, which then belonged to the Vijayangara empire.

Ikkeri which is in the Malenadu area of Karnataka was ruled by the Kaledi family who fought



against the Portuguese. The Christian faith flourished under the royal patronage who were generous in granting both freedom of worship and freedom of religion. " No one was to be converted to Christianity by force. On the other hand, the Nayak undertook to see that no Christian would be forced by the Brahmins to go to the temples on feast days to fire salute of musketry" (Thekkedath 1982:278). According to Sargant (1963:35), "Shivappa Nayak (1645-60) had soldiers with Nestorian background. Inscriptions record that there were 30,000 Christian subjects in the kingdom of Shivappa Nayak of Bedanur." According to the *Deccan Herald* (1 September 1989:5), when a new Roman Catholic See was created at Simogga, Nagaraj, a non-Christian, acknowledged this fact: "By 1713 there was a considerable number of Christians in the kingdom of Bedanur. This would appear to have occasioned the signing of the solemn treaty between Someshakar Nayaka and the Portuguese on February 19, 1714 guaranteeing the Christians freedom to profess their religion and to build churches."

### **3.7 CHRISTIANITY DURING THE COLONIAL PERIOD**

#### **3.7.1 The Roman Catholics**

Some may argue that the Christian mission coincided with the arrival of the Portuguese. However, it is certain that the Portuguese never established themselves in Karnataka. There are also no records to show that, like its counterparts in other parts of India, the Roman Catholic Church in Karnataka had mass conversions. Above all, the Christian faith would not have had such results in the last two hundred years without prior Christian influence. According to Panikkar (Mundadan 1984:239), "it was only during the interest in the Catholic world known in history as the counter-reformation, that the spirit of evangelization began to take Asia into its sphere". Rewarded by the Papal Bull and backed by the Portuguese King Manuel (1495-1521) and his successor, Joas II (1521-1577), the Portuguese deemed it "their most sacred duty, together with the colonial conquest, to plant Christianity in inestimably vast regions of the east and the west" ( Richter 1908:44). Therefore, when Vasco da Gama landed at Calicut on his epoch making visit on May 21, 1498, he saw the dawn of the new day for the Roman Catholic Church. According to Firth (1961:51),

The Portuguese fleet that came to India contained besides sailors, soldiers and merchants, priests and Friars- not only as Chaplains to soldiers and merchants but for mission work as well. With the first fleet that arrived after Vasco de Gama's first landing - that was under abral in 1500, came eight Franciscan friars. As early as 1512, one of the friars, Louis de Salvador preached at Vijayanagara and was martyred there.

At first, their pastoral activities were confined mainly to their own fleet and their employees in their business localities. Because of the shortage of the priests, they could not reach out to others. Also, conversion does not appear to have been the main motive for the Portuguese in the beginning. As far as India was concerned, their impression was that the majority of the Indians were already Christians and contact with them would strengthen the Christian West (Mundadan 1984:239). But the arrival of Francis Xavier changed the scene because of his ardent passion for evangelization of the other people. He became the patron saint of the Indian Catholic Christians, particularly of the Tamil Christians.

Francis Xavier started his mission in India in 1542. As a friend of Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits, Xavier was chosen by the Pope for that task. He was a passionate disciplined missionary with dedication and devotion and an eager longing for the salvation of souls. He gave a new impetus and momentum to the expansion of the Christian faith, particularly in the East. He came to India armed with considerable power as the representative of the King of Portugal as well as the Apostolic Nuncio, which furnished him with authority from the Pope. Authority, distinguished birth, personal sanctity, fame both ecclesiastical and worldly, and the active support of every civil and military officer of the King of Portugal, all these were his in full measure. What more could any human being ask for before venturing upon such an arduous task (Thoburn 1892:193).

According to Thekkedath (1982:156f), this fiery evangelist had to his credit about seven hundred thousand converts during his lifetime. Seeing the vast non-Christian population, kindled his missionary desire to lead them to Christ. He adopted a large-scale mission strategy. He converted fisher folk on the east coast of India, whom he baptized en masse. Neil (1979:156) states that in "the earlier days Xavier had been inclined to accept uncritically the doctrine of the *tabula rasa* -

the view that in non-Christian life and systems there is nothing on which the missionary can build, and that everything must simply be levelled to the ground before anything Christian can be built up".

Though some criticize his tactics, let us not forget that the *Paravas*, a fishing community which was almost on the point of extermination by Muslims, was rescued by the Portuguese. Thus, according to Mundadan (1984:396), "by 1537 the entire Parava community had accepted Christianity and, according to da Cruz, numbered about 80000 souls (in the south?) and 60000 in the territories of Vijayanagara ..Pedro Gonsalves, the vicar of Cochin wrote in 1555 that he used at times to baptize 1000 and 1500 on a single day, and in the three years he had been there, he had baptized more than 120,000."

However, the Portuguese were also no exception to the rule of cruelty. Paravas were treated by some unscrupulous Portuguese authorities as badly as they were treated by Muslim or Hindu lease holders. In order to become rich, the Portuguese levied many taxes on the fisher folk, which became unbearable to the poor. But Francis Xavier came to their aid by converting them as Catholics. Xavier is the patron saint of India as well as Tamil Christians wherever they are today. His tomb in Goa is a shrine to this day.

### **3.7.1.1 Mission in Kanara**

It is rather strange that Xavier did not set foot on the soil of Kanara, even though he must have passed along its coast several times. There is only one reference which says that the ship carrying the dead body of Francis Xavier from China to Goa berthed at Karwar and local people venerated him before it was taken to Goa. Why he skipped that place, which also consisted of fisher folk with whom he had a successful mission elsewhere, is unknown.

According to Fr Meersman, the first church established in Mangalore was Our Lady of the Rosary, a typical Dominican church, around 1570. The Franciscans moved from Mangalore to Gangolly, and then to Raichur. There is some reference to the work of the Augustinians and the Carmelites with Karwar (1620) as their headquarters. However, the most successful among them were the

Jesuits, who in spite of their suppression in 1773, continued their good work whenever doors opened up to evangelize. They laboured in Canara and Mysore, and at Mudgol in the Raichur district, where they had a flourishing mission as early as 1735.

The Portuguese received a special right from the Holy See for their contribution to the expansion of the Church in Asia. The Padroado empowered them to nominate ecclesiastical heads in their territory. However, they quarrelled with the Propaganda Fide every now and then, which affected the Church for many years (Thekkedath 1982:414f). Kanara came under the diocese of Goa, and when the number of the Christians increased, the Propaganda appointed in 1674. Thomas de Castra of Goan origin (who was then in Rome) as Vicar Apostolic of Kanara. But he had difficulty in exercising his power as, under Padroada, Goa did not recognize his credentials (Silva 1957:71). Thus, in 1681 Joseph Vaz was sent to minister and intervene and to bring about an amicable solution between the disputing groups.

Vaz did not have sufficient priests who could be stationed in different parts of the province. He travelled the length and breadth of Kanara baptizing the children. He brought back several apostates into the faith; catechized their children, and helped to rejuvenate Christian life in Kanara, which was languishing due to a lack of priestly ministry. He built many chapels and would go to various places to celebrate the feasts of the Church with great pomp. He worked with exceptional zeal and tact, and kept alive the faith among the Christians (DeSouza 1983:25 & Ferroli 1951:192). With the death of Bishop Castra in 1684, Propaganda did not appoint a successor to him and so again Goa established its episcopal jurisdiction over Kanara.

Because of the Propaganda-Padroada quarrel, some Catholic families in Brahmavara-Kallyanpur area in South Kanara joined the Syrian Orthodox Church. It was a strange move, as the Orthodox Church never had Christians from outside Kerala before then or even afterwards. However, today they remain as family churches. Even before the so-called ecumenical movement came into operation, we can see some co-operation for mission work. For instance, in spite of the estrangement due to the Reformation, the missionaries from the Basel Mission sheltered the Roman Catholic Bishop Aluvaros Julius I when he arrived in Mangalore in 1883. Being the Bishop appointed by the Propaganda, he was prevented from taking charge of the Vicariate of

Mangalore.

### **3.7.1.2 Mission in Bijapur**

With the downfall of the Mughal empire, the Deccan Peninsula of India was divided into five or six Muslim kingdoms, one of which was Bijapur. Because of the good number of Christians in Bijapur, a diocese was created which came to be known as the See of Idalcan. It is argued that these Catholics migrated from Goa, but it is surprising how people could come to the enemy territory and grow so fast. However, this growth necessitated the appointment of a Bishop by the Propaganda in the year 1637. Matthew de Castra was a Brahmin convert, who had a jurisdictional confrontation with the Archbishop of Goa (Thekkedath 1982:417-420). Adil Shah (1622-60) of Bijapur showed tolerance towards the mission work. As a result, two Jesuit priests got permission to build a house and minister to the Christians in Bijapur. Castra also got permission from the Sultan to build churches and he ordained about 30 to 35 priests, especially young Brahmin converts. He was succeeded by another Brahmin convert, Custodio de Pinho, in 1669. But the Bijapur mission saw its end during the Maratha invasions and thereafter became part of the Vicarage of Great Moghul in 1696. Along with that, Christian influence also receded. Today Bijapur constitutes a district of the state of Karnataka and has the lowest number of Christians in the whole state.

### **3.7.1.3 Mission in Bellary**

Another least evangelized area today is Bellary, although it was the cradle of Christian mission in Karnataka since the Middle Ages. Some claim that it had the influence of the great Francis Xavier, but there was no evidence of any mass conversion happened here, except a record of the Bellary Diocesan Directory (1982:36), which states:

In Chittapur of Gulbarga district, the tradition is that 'Chowranna Gurugalu' has come and said Mass under a tree spreading altar clothes on a stone. Who is this Chowranna Gurugalu? Perhaps St Francis Xavier. The older generation that used to go to Goa periodically, had great devotion to St Francis Xavier. Chitapur has Catholics from 1502.

and is mentioned in Medas Tylor's book; so also at Raichur, Mudgal and Shorapur.

The Jesuits continued some work in the Gulbarga and Raichur districts in the 19th century, but with very little success. In 1928, the Holy See detached the two districts of Raichur and Gulbarga from the diocese of Hyderabad and the district of Bellary from the archdiocese of Madras-Mylapore and formed the present Bellary diocese. The new mission was entrusted to the care of the Friars Minor of the English Province, and is now slowly gaining its former glory of the Bijapur ecclesiastical See.

#### **3.7.1.4 Mission in Mysore**

The Mysore Mission was founded in 1598 by Fr Leonardo Cinnami, a Jesuit, although the Christian presence in that area was recognized much earlier. This mission was under the Archbishop of Goa, who sent Italians as well as Portuguese priests. Having failed in his earlier mission in Kanara, Cinnami wanted to develop a new strategy, like his mentor, Robert de Nobili of Madurai Mission:

He discarded his cassock, adopted a sanyasi robe and made de Nobili's approach and penetrated into Mysore. The first convert he made was at Srirangapatnam in 1648. In the course of time this became a flourishing mission (Meersman 1971:36).

Cinnami changed his mission style to reach the upper class but had no greater success with this style than when he was a freelance preacher. His mission raises the fundamental question of whether the indigenous mission style is the right approach in mission.

In the beginning, he was denounced as *Parangi* (foreigner), but later he won favour from the Mysore Wodeyars when they saw his adaptations to the Kannada language and culture. Cinnami and his companions trudged through paths and lands that were entirely unknown to them and among people with whose language, manners and customs they were totally unacquainted. In the course of his apostolic wandering, like an Indian monk, Cinnami travelled barefoot. But he carried on his mission with zeal and courage in the midst of hardship, trials and tribulations.

His first conversion at Srirangapatnam led other Brahmins to enter into dialogue with him about their faith, but without leading to any further conversions. His main converts were from the Golla community, which rose to 30,000. There would have been more if it were not for the trouble caused by the persecutions and apostasy, as well as prohibition of conversions while they were in the service of the kings. The caste problems also added to that phenomenon (Ferrolli 1955:ii).

In spite of these consequences, the Mysore diocese played the role of a mother, giving birth to many new dioceses in South India. It stretched from the River Krishna to Cape Comorin, covering the present thirteen dioceses. It was estimated that there were 385,000 Roman Catholics in 1750; of whom 35,000 were accounted to have come from Mysore. After the suppression of the Jesuits, the Mysore mission was handed over to the Society of Foreign Mission in Paris.

### **3.7.2 The French Foreign Mission**

In the history of Karnataka stories of the persecution of Christians are misinterpreted or forgotten. First, there was the martyrdom of a missionary who built the church at Heggada Devana Kote. He was beaten to death by the local people. Then a Muslim king, Tippu Sultan of Mysore, destroyed twenty-five churches and tortured the Christians in his dominion. At Kiranganar near Srirangapatnam he cut off the noses of about 600 people. More persecution was prevented by the timely intervention of a French general who was friendly with the Sultan. All the priests were banished from the kingdom and only a few churches were spared destruction. Later, he feared the Kanara Christians whom he suspected were close to the English army general because of the common religion. He was further infuriated when the Christian soldiers in his army withdrew because of his hatred of fellow Christians.

Then on the fateful night of Ash Wednesday, February 24, 1784, Tippu's soldiers carried out a secret order and entered every Christian settlement simultaneously throughout Kanara. Families, including children in their mothers' arms, were arrested and taken as captives to Srirangapatnam. Nearly 60,000 people (some estimate 80,000) were forcefully led away as captives bound together in chains. Many died of fatigue, ill-treatment and disease. Some escaped into the jungle, some were forced to accept Islam and were circumcised. Many resisted and died as martyrs (Lewis

1981:7).

This is the saddest period in the history of the Karnataka churches. The captivity lasted fifteen years and only few people returned after Tippu's defeat by the Duke of Wellington in 1799. Some priests were arrested and others fled. It is said that the tragedy of it was that no spiritual leader was available to console the Christians in the darkest hour of their history. The few faithful sustained their faith by reading *Krista Purana* (the story of Christ). Tippu also destroyed churches like the Rosario Cathedral in Mangalore and the Milagres Church in Kallinapur; and used the stones to build mosques. Thus, not only the colonists but other fanatics were also brutal in their treatment. The Christian Church in Karnataka bore all the suffering and pain with dignity. To maintain communal harmony, however, when Pope John Paul II visited Mangalore in February 1986, this historical holocaust was not highlighted.

Sometimes politics and religion become strange bedfellows. Tippu and his father, Hyder Ali, were friendly with the French garrison though they were Roman Catholics, but both hated the Protestant English people. One of the foremost foreign French missionaries who came to the court of Tippu and received his favour was Abe Dubois. He stayed on even after the fall of Tippu and won favour from the British. Dubois rebuilt the churches Tippu had destroyed, and introduced smallpox vaccination, which saved many people from this epidemic. However, at times, he thought that his labour was in vain. He wrote that in India Christianity stood no chance; and predicted there would be no trace of Christianity in India within that century (Ferroli 1955:236). Therefore, he discouraged even the Protestant missionaries who landed in Mysore for evangelistic work. A Methodist missionary Elijah Hoole, believed that if the government could support and encourage mission work, Christianity would flourish. But Dubois opposed it, saying the Hindus were so prejudiced against Christianity that the government taking sides would do more harm than good (Soans 1977:73). When Tippu was ruling, the Christian churches in Mysore came under the jurisdiction of the Coromandel Mission, and their Bishop Champenois saved the Church with great difficulty. Later on March 16, 1845, Mysore, Coorg and Wynad were formed into one Vicariate and Bishop Charbonnaeux was made its first Vicar Apostolic. By then, Bangalore, which had nearly 6000 Catholics out of 13,500 Catholics in the entire South India, became the residence of the Bishop although Mysore retained the title of diocese. Charbonnaeux ordained the first Indian



priest, a Mangalorean Bonaventure Coehlo, on 15 August 1851, followed by Ignatius Gemma, a Kannada priest from the Tigla community. Along with Mar Ephrem, Vicar Apostolic of Mangalore, Charbonnaeux attended the First Vatican Council, held between 1860 and 1870.

In 1702 French Jesuits from Pondicherry began the Telugu Mission in Bangalore, which was then a small village. Later, Italian priests, followed by French Jesuits, worked among the high caste people. They faced severe persecution in Devenahalli and Chickballapur at the hands of Vishnavites. When the Jesuits were suppressed, the Paris Foreign Missionary Society took over this field. With the influx of Tamil Christians - especially to the Kolar Gold Fields - the Tamil Christian population increased in the Bangalore Archdiocese.

January 26, 1887, was the memorable day in the history of the Catholic church in India. At St Patrick's Cathedral Bangalore, the Apostolic Delegate surrounded by the South Indian bishops announced the formation of the ecclesiastical provinces of Pondicherry, Madras, and Verapoly, as per the Bull *Humanae Salutis Auctor*. Veerapoly See had Mysore, Coimbatore, Hyderabad, Mangalore and Vishakapatnam as suffragan dioceses. The third Eucharistic Congress of India took place in Bangalore in 1904. Ten Archbishops and bishops and about one hundred priests representing twenty one dioceses were present on that occasion.

The growth of the Roman Catholic Church during the next hundred years is so spectacular in Karnataka it necessitated the creation of eight dioceses. All the dioceses are headed by indigenous leaders although most of them with the exception of one, have today Kanara Catholics as the Bishops. However, when analyzed, this goes to show, that it was not spectacular like those in other parts of India. Karnataka was not a mass movement area; but the church has grown due to the persistent evangelization spirit and early missionary activities. They covered the vast field by foot for several days. Faced all sorts of opposition, persecution even death. Some of the kings were hostile; while others protected them. They used exorcism to cast out the demons; healed the sick; prayed and created wonders. Anthapps books records of their heroism's. Even many lay people stood strong in their faith amidst all sorts of persecutions. Some of their leaders who were appointed by them as catechists who rendered meritorious service to their people.

The missionaries did not indulge in proselytization activities or took advantage of the helpless conditions of the people. Bangalore Archdiocesan report (1948:40) states that Bishop Coadou felt, "at all times I came back upon the necessity of preaching to the pagans and I exhort the priests to seize even the least opportunity to labor for the conversion of so many thousands of their countrymen who were sleeping unconcerned in the darkness of idolatry." The severe famine of 1876-78 and the outbreak of a plague in 1898 would have created more opportunities to increase the Christian population. The villagers migrated to Bangalore in search of jobs and food. Some of the neglected came to the mission houses begging for baptism. But the Church did not take advantage of the helpless conditions of the people for the sake of numerical gain by administering cheap baptism. It is recorded that during that national crisis nearly five million people were directly affected during that time; but the Mysore Mission baptized only 13 777. Because many missionaries feared that this type of instant conversion would not be helpful to sustain the converts in the Christian faith. They took up only relief and rehabilitation as their main responsibilities and admitted to the fold only those who accepted Christianity on their own. After the Jesuits entered the arena, the Catholics established many educational institutions, but never misused them for proselytization. This was testified by the Head of Sri Dharmastala Kshetra, Mr Heggade, while participating in the centenary celebration of the Jesuits in Karnataka (1978:42): "Nobody ever made an attempt at proselytization in schools. The Jesuit Fathers were keen on the students learning the principles of morality and building up of character."

According to Abraham (1979:4),

The task of building and catechizing the Christian communities in the Mysore kingdom fell on the Jesuit Fathers of the Malabar mission and Fathers of the Society for Paris Foreign Mission. The Catholic community in the coastal areas of Kanara were catechized by the Carmelites and the Jesuits of the Province of Venice. The Franciscans Fathers of the south of Milan were mainly responsible for the work of establishing and catechizing the Catholic communities in the Telugu Mission area of Karnataka. The Padroda priests, who were under the jurisdiction of Goa, catechized the scattered tiny Catholic groups of North Karnataka.

Despite the degree of Christian spirituality, the laity were hardly taught to be animators in mission and evangelization remained only in the hands of the priests and the religious (monks and nuns). After the Second Vatican Council, the accommodation theory was adopted for the indigenization of the liturgy. This opened the way for Catholics from Hindu backgrounds to identify freely with worship. This led to confrontation between Christians from a Portuguese background and those from a Hindu background. The former saw indigenous liturgy as syncretistic in its approach whereas the latter appreciated the new reform, even though some felt it was compromising with non-Christians. In this regard it should be noted that even Fr Cinnami's mission had no bearing on the Catholic Church in Karnataka.

Vatican II also created a stir in evangelization. However, it allowed more room for theology of mission and failed to translate the mission into action. Some of the old (conservative) missionaries and priests were confused by this dichotomy and new approach and asked why they had gone out evangelizing at all. Today, the Church appears to be maintaining the status quo. It is more concerned about matters of consolidation of its pastoral ministry than conversion. The Church's spirit of evangelization seems to have been forgotten although the term "new evangelization" is used. The paradigm shift in the Church is so evident that at present it has become more institutionalized and neutralized. It is engaged more in socio-political and educational activities than evangelization. Therefore, conversions hardly take place in the life of the Church.

The persecution of Tippu and the Padroada-Propaganda quarrel weakened the Catholic faith. With the arrival of the British, they missed their patronization while the arrival of the Protestant missions created a competitive spirit, and there was "sheep stealing" on both sides. Then the Tamil Christians boosted the Church numbers, but created tension between Kannada-speaking Christians and others. This, in turn, led to a linguistic problem in the Church and stirred group rivalry, thereby tarnishing the Christian image. Lay leaders and priests both contributed to the conflict, which, in fact, marred the Christian teaching and witness. In spite of all the drawbacks, however, the Catholic Church is still a strong force in Karnataka's religious and public life.

### 3.7.3 THE PROTESTANT MISSIONS

Protestants actively engaged in missions for the first time in the nineteenth century. It was also the century of the lowest ebb of Catholic mission energy. According to Winter (1974:134), by engaging fully in evangelization the Protestants established their strength in this one century. The churches were successful because they realized that they should be united for the sake of mission. So, even before the ecumenical movement came into being, they worked in unity and joined hands in mutual consultation and the Comity arrangement:

In the year 1902, missionaries working all over India gathered at Madras to avoid confrontation and competition in mission work. They came to understand each other and mark the territories of their activities. This principle was not applied to the towns and was not followed by the Roman Catholics (Neil 1964:54).

However, after the arrival of conservative-minded churches, this spirit weakened.

Although the British monarchy was ruling India, their support for mission work was minimal. In 1662 the East India Company decreed that all missionaries must obtain prior permission: "There shall be no compulsory conversion, no interference with native habits and no cow killing in Hindu quarters" (Smith 1963:66).

The Protestant Mission began when Carey swung the cradle for modern mission in 1792 and came to India. In Karnataka it began after the English defeated Tippu Sultan in 1799 and allowed Protestant missionaries from the UK to come to India. However, like Carey who was refused permission to land at Calcutta, John Hands, the London Missionary Society's first missionary to Karnataka, was refused permission to come to the then capital, Srirangapatnam or to nearby Bangalore. When the British Parliament removed the restrictions on non-English missions, other European missions, moved by the conviction of pietism, took advantage of the government's open door policy.

### *3.7.3.1 The Danish Royal Mission*

The gateway for Protestant Christianity to enter India opened with the establishment of the East India Company in 1600 AD. They were followed by the French and Dutch companies with business interests. Under the patronage of the Danish royal family, Bartholomew Ziegenbalg and Henry Plütschau arrived at Tranquebar on July 9, 1706. They were also treated badly by the Danish East India Company, but their persistence opened a new chapter in Protestant missions history. They were followed by Schwartz, who arrived in 1750 and won universal respect through sheer force of character until his death in 1778. He even visited Srirangapatnam on a peace mission to Hyder Ali, who liked him so much that he issued an order to his people "to permit the venerable Padre to move everywhere unmolested and to show him respect and kindness" (Firth 1961:171). Today, however, Gilani and others brand him a spy for the British, though the Tanjore ruler, Serfojee Raja paid tribute to his integrity.

Schwartz found out that his converts from Tiruchirappali were serving in the Mysore army. Taking advantage of his visit, he conducted church services for them in Tamil which, then, could be the beginning of Protestant Christianity in Karnataka. He began to preach openly as he had no restrictions about it. This small group of Christians continued even after the fall of Tippu. It was here that Sanakaralingam, later known as Samuel Flavel, got his copy of the New Testament in Tamil and became the first convert and later a preacher. He was involved in evangelization and converted and baptized twenty-four local people at Srirangapatnam. When he left for Bellary, these converts were also dispersed, but like the apostolic church, became the instrument for spreading the church. The first Indian minister to be ordained by the Tranquebar missionaries in 1733 was Reverend Aaron. His extended family began to spread in South India, which included the South Kanara district.

### *3.7.3.2 The Anglican mission*

The Church of England used to send chaplains to India, only to look after the spiritual needs of the employees of the East India Company and the military stations. But when the Company's charter was revised in 1668, the Archbishop of Canterbury approved the appointment of chaplains

to other parts of India. After the Battle of Plassey in 1757, when British supremacy over India was established, the door was open for wider evangelization. One of the clauses added to the East India Act of 1813 laid down:

The duty of this country is to promote the interest of the British dominance in India, with the useful knowledge and religious improvement and to make provision for granting permission to persons desirous of going to reside in India for the above purpose (Gibbs 1972:225).

When the charter was revised by the British Government, at the instance of Wilberforce and Claudius Buchanan in 1793, permission for conversion of the natives was also granted. With the appointment of the first Bishop at Calcutta in 1814, missionary work in India gained new momentum with the help of CMS. Bangalore became an important military station during the rule of Tippu Sultan. Here, the first church built by them was called Drummer's Chapel, which is not traceable today. In 1811 they built the present St Mark's Cathedral. They also built small chapels in and around military stations and on estates for the European planters. Because the English did not support mission to the local Kannada Christians, there was no Anglican church in old Mysore state. The Tamil Christians and workers who became Anglicans elsewhere migrated to Karnataka's mines and estates. The churches received grants of land from the government at strategic points. Later, the Anglican Church promoted mission work in Bangalore and reached the Muslim women by opening Zenana Mission and an Urdu school for their children. A small medical clinic also was opened exclusively for them, which has now become a general hospital.

In the Bombay Karnataka area, some of the Basel Mission Christians who were dissatisfied with the foreign missionaries, petitioned the Bishop of Bombay to accept them. As a result the Anglican Church took root in that region in 1889. The SPG took over the evangelization activities from the SPCK. Their women missionaries extended their mission to the *Bhat* community women and taught them embroidery. In Ranenebennur, they were able to convert some of the Chalavadi community. These people traced their connection to Chinmaya, a disciple of Basava, the Lingyat reformer. One of the SPG leaders, Mara rose to the position of archdeacon. Their mission was extended to the convicts in the North Karnataka area. The present Holy Name Cathedral of the

Karnataka Northern Diocese was built with the help of these convicts. According to Sargant (1987: 170),

The Anglicans made education compulsory for the children of the criminals. The mission also tried to find jobs at spinning and weaving mills, Railways and Municipality. Lady missionaries used medical skills as a means of proclaiming the gospel in action. The SPG also opened boarding schools exclusively for the children of the Lingayat community at Gadag and Belgaum.

### 3.7.3.3 *the London Missionary Society (LMS)*

Evangelistic work among the natives in Karnataka began in 1810 with the arrival of John Hands of Bellary. Before he began his mission work, he realized the need to touch the heart of the people with their language. But, the local language Kannada had lost its glory, especially its old splendour of the Vijayanagra Empire. So, as a first step, he undertook the difficult task of learning the Kannada language and translated the New Testament by 1825 and the whole Bible by 1831. Hands also opened a printing press in Bellary, and like Gutenberg's Press, the Bible became the first book to be printed in Kannada.

In the beginning they struggled to gain converts. Hands considered it a hopeless task and his colleagues, Wardlaw and Thompson, likened the situation to barren and arid land with very dry bones. Yet, their efforts and vision as well as that of other early missionaries, who built churches wherever they pioneered mission work, bore some fruit. One of the churches in Brucepet was built in 1824, which is today named after Hands. According to Abraham (1974:21), who later became a bishop in the CSI,

Within eight years of his advent when he had just baptized only three families, he thought of building a huge church building, which was large enough to provide place for worship for the Christian congregation, which multiplied enormously during the next century and a half. This is evidence of his faith, vision and Christian hope, which is an example emulated by successive Christian generations.

In the beginning, the LMS concentrated on work among high caste people and had converts from Brahmins, Rajputs, Goldsmiths and Lingayats, among others. But later they changed their reservation about the low caste people. As a result, they had more successful large-scale conversions around the Halvi-Kavutalam area where people wanted to be delivered from the oppressive power of the high caste Goudas. The majority of the people in that community became Christians and others thought it right to follow suit. They saw the missionaries' concern for the sick, the blind, the lepers and the oppressed, who saw new hope in the church. When the construction of the Tungabhadra River dam began at Hospet, the Telugu migrants from Andhra Pradesh gave them scope to expand their work. They were also able to gain people from the Lingayat community who were influenced by the *Kodekallu Vachanas*. In the western area of Karnataka State, Belgaum drew their attention. They worked among the upper caste people, but claims of more receptive areas, as well as understaffing, made them withdraw from this area. They handed this territory to the American Methodists in 1904, and further assisted them when they wanted to do evangelism in the northern part of the Hyderabad Karnataka area. They began their work in the Bangalore and Chickaballpur area where they built a rural hospital. However, compared to the mission work of other Missions, the LMS had limited success.

Under the leadership of Hands the LMS developed various activities. They established the Religious Tract Society (1815), the Reading Society (1815), the Home Missionary Society (1815), a branch of the British and Foreign Bible Society (1818), the Native Auxiliary Missionary Society (1831) and a Mercantile Bank and Co-operative Society (1885) (Sabapathy 1986:6). Their plans also included entrusting the evangelistic activities to the local leadership. Perhaps the development of indigenous leadership from its incipient stage, could be considered the most valuable contribution of the LMS. Samuel Flavel was ordained by them as the first Indian pastor. This church also gave two bishops to the CSI — H Sumithra (who later became the first Indian Moderator of the CSI) and HDL Abraham.

Because their Church had the system of congregational government, they introduced lay participation in ecclesiastical affairs, including their role in the administration of Holy Communion in the CSI. Their support for the formation of united bodies for theological and general education helped the cause of the Church to a great extent, eventually leading to church union.



Among the missionaries, the Rice family left a valuable legacy by creating Western interest in India, the Kannada language and Karnataka. Father Rice, who served for 50 years, was a Tamil and Telugu linguist, and published a monthly magazine, *Arunodaya*. His son, Benjamin was a scholar and became Director of Education and Archaeology. His brother Edward wrote a history of Karnataka. One of the Rice brothers attended the International Missionary Conference of Edinburgh in 1910.

#### 3.7.3.4 *The Basel Missionary Society (BMS)*

When the British Parliament in 1833 removed the restrictions on non-English missionary activities, the first European Missionary Society to take advantage of the government's open door policy was the Basel Mission. This ecumenical society was founded in 1815 in Basel, Switzerland by Moravians and Lutherans of Germany and the Calvinists of Switzerland in gratitude for God's providence in saving their country from Napoleon's invasion. The evangelization of people outside Europe — especially in Africa and Asia — became their first priority. At first this Mission opened an institution to train workers for the British and Danish Missionary Societies and later supplied a large number of their missionaries to the CMS as there was money in England, but not enough men, and there were plenty of men in Germany, but no money.

In 1834, the Basel Mission sent three missionaries, Lehner, Greiner and Hebich, to India who landed in Mangalore. Their original intention was to work with Tranquebar missionaries. But, as they received cooperation from Anderson, the British Collector stationed at Mangalore, they decided to settle in South Kanara and open a new mission station. Hebich learnt Kannada, Greiner Tulu and Lehner Konkani — the local languages— so that they could easily communicate with the three predominant communities in the district. Hebich excelled in his mission and ministry, and earned the name of Master Fisher of Men, an unofficial and honorary gesture (title) generally reserved for members of the British royal family (Neil 1972:87). According to Soans (1984:29), a whole British regiment in India was named after him (the 39th Madras Native Infantry Regiment also called "Hebich's Own") to honour his particular mission among the soldiers.

When the Basel Mission began their work, the LMS sent a Tamil catechist named Aaron, who had

been baptized by Flavel, to help them. The Wesleyan Methodists also sent one of their workers, Malachi. Later, during the first and second world wars, when German missionaries were deported as enemies, the WM extended their support and Tomlinson served in the South Kanara district.

#### 3.7.3.4.1 *BMS Mission in South Kanara*

The Basel Mission had remarkable success in the land. The conversion trend in South Kanara has been described as the Tulu movement which coincided with the Jamaican revival movement of the 1860s. The Tulu-speaking *Billavas* (Toddy tapers), *Mogeras* (Fisher folk) and people from the *Bunts* and Jain communities joined the Christian faith.

The revival movement began in 1869 at Keppulla, a small village, when two families abandoned their religion. The movement spread like wildfire from village to village. Many missionaries and catechists were sent to the area to preach the Gospel... Due to this revival, many Hindus came forward to get instruction in the Gospel of Jesus Christ and later became Christians (Jathanna 1955:14). Analyzing this movement, Godwin Shiri (1985:182) identifies four chief motives for the Tuluva people's response: (1) the Gospel offered the forgiveness of sins; (2) the rotten social conditions in which people lived and from which they wanted to be liberated; (3) good witness of Christian neighbors, and (4) dread of demons (Bhutas).

The growth of the Church in this region was not due to a homogenous movement paradigm or a mass strategy. The *Basel Mission Report* (1887:18) states that

Arasappa, leader of the Billavas approached the missionaries saying that 5 000 members of his caste would become Christians if he were given a prominent position. When refused he was discouraged. Missionaries were not ready to admit anyone to the Church. They were received only after strict Bible teaching and Christian instruction. They adhered to the qualitative values in conversion and not in any quantitative gains. Baptism and the Lord's Supper were not only considered holy sacraments but also used as yardsticks of the Church discipline. Membership of the church was granted only through Confirmation, for which two years' preparation was given, when Luther's Catechism was taught. Bible

teaching through Sunday school, youth groups and Scripture examinations was emphasized besides church services. They believed that the primary task of their mission was to nurse the congregation with the Word of God, and to nurture them spiritually and morally.

As a result, the conversion trends gradually fell and some even returned to their old faith. Some were disappointed at the lack of material benefits. Some sought solace in the newly started Hindu revival group, the Brahmo Samaj. Though the Basel Mission was economically and industrially a rich organization, it did not attract large scale conversion. As a result, the conversion trends gradually fell and some even returned to their old faith.

However, the Mission's work saw rapid success before the first world war. The Basel Mission had nearly 100 church workers with about 20 000 members both in North and South Karnataka as well as in the neighbouring Malabar and Nilagiri regions due to the vigorous evangelistic efforts. In 1889, the first Indian Pastor, Sebastian Furtado, was ordained in Mangalore. This encouraged the development of indigenous leadership.

#### *3.7.3.4.2 BMS Mission in North Karnataka*

The Basel Mission extended its work to the Bombay Karnataka, Bijapur and Dharwar districts. From 1835 onwards Hebich and Moegling began their work as pioneer missionaries in that area. In the beginning they visited the British army stationed in the South Maratha country. A good Christian British collector, C.B.Mills, helped them to secure properties and build their mission stations. In 1841, several people accepted baptism and many from the Lingyat and Gauda communities were converted. These people were also encouraged by the influence of the *Kalagnana Vachanas*. There were also people from the *Kuruba* (shepherds), *Akkasaligas* (goldsmiths), *Badiga* (carpenters) as well as from the *Devanga*, *Holeya* and *Mahar* communities.

When the great famine and plague ravaged that area towards end of the nineteenth century, it evoked missionary sympathy and concern. As a result, they set up relief camps, opened children's homes and established hospitals. Since the women of this area did not mingle publicly, the women

missionaries as well as pastors' wives did special outreach work among them. Their work was opposed by the Lingyat religious leaders, the *Swamies* of Hubli, who feared that it might lead to mass conversion. But this was never the intention of the Mission. This opposition, however, curtailed its progress.

### *Mission in other parts of Karnataka*

Coorg is a land of beauty and bounty on the Western ghats where the British developed coffee and tea plantations. Missionaries like Kittel could work tirelessly in the refreshing climate. The feudal kings of that area also gave the Basel Mission permission to start its mission work and here they established the "Coolie Mission" in 1879 for the benefit of the estate workers. Most of the workers were either from the neighbouring Tamilnadu or Kerala states or from the lower caste. They were also superstitious and feared demons. The Mission had marginal success among them, but none with the native Coorgi people. Although Coorgies were devout people and respected the Christian faith, they were nevertheless apprehensive of accepting it. They feared they would miss "the solidarity of *Okka* - the family ties as well as the ancestral share in the property, and the free life style copied from the European estate owners" (Furtado 1964:74).

The Basel Mission also encountered another barren field, the North Kanara area on the West coast. Though this area was in the immediate neighbourhood of the Portuguese colony, Goa, they had very little Christian influence. Though the Basel Mission started schools and built churches, missionary efforts were unproductive. The churches were filled with migrants from the South Kanara district and not the local people. When the Basel missionaries were sent out during the first world war, the work was handed over to the National Missionary Society. Later, the NMS handed it over to the Mar Thoma Syrian Church (a splinter group of the Orthodox Church of Kerala), who came with great zeal for evangelizing. This ancient Church, which claims its legacy to St Thomas, came to the area where either Thomas or Bartholomew might have preached the gospel and were martyred. This area began to blossom. The Basel Mission were also successful mission in the Malabar area.

The Basel Mission also had a wider involvement in India. They responded to the request of the

Serampore missionaries and moved into North East India and Bangladesh. But it did not last long. Whenever the missionaries went to the Nilgiri hills for the summer holidays, there never was a holiday from mission work for them. They saw an opportunity to reach out to the *Thodas* and *Badagas*, the tribal people of the hills. They even translated the Gospel of St Mark and St Luke in their primitive language. The Basel Mission also had a wider involvement in India.

The people of Karnataka will always remember the fine contribution of Basel missionaries like Kittel and others who were hailed as the "pole stars in the firmament of Kannada literature". The Basel Mission can also pride itself on producing leading Indian ministers like the world-renowned theologian, Stanley Samartha, who initiated the concept of dialogue with people of other faiths in the WCC circles. Vasanth Dandin from South Kanara and the Bombay- Karnataka area became the Moderator of the Church of South India.

### *3.7.3.5 The Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society (WMS)*

After the resurgence of Methodism, it took nearly a century before the Wesleyan Methodist Mission (British background) came to Karnataka. America and not India was their target. They gave only secondary importance to India. Again, it was Wilberforce who was responsible for the WMS taking up mission work in Karnataka in 1813.

After the fall of Tippu, there were Christian soldiers stationed at Bangalore, which by then had developed into a strong British army settlement. A request was made to the Methodist Mission in Madras to send pastors as chaplains. In 1821, Rev Elijah Hoole and Dr James Mowat came to Bangalore to work among the Tamil and English people. With the intention of extending their work among the Kannadigas, they visited the old Mysore Kingdom. However, when they met Abbe Dubois at Srirangapatnam, he discouraged them and advised them to return to England at the earliest opportunity. He stated that it was not possible to make real Christians among the native Hindus, whom he described as "drunkards, drummers and pariahs (outcasts), who did not show the remotest inclination to turn to Christianity" (Dubois 1977:26). However, they did not give up.

In 1834 the WMS decided to give up their work among the Tamil and English-speaking people. Just then the LMS requested the WMS to take over its Kannada field at Mysore. The Anglican Church also asked them to take up their small military mission field at Hunsur. Gubbi, a small village that was the centre of the old Mysore Kingdom, became the mission centre. It was also a place free from the priestly domination of the Brahmins and higher castes as well as from European influences. Thomas Hodson, who devoted nearly fifty years of service to the Church, became the first Kannada missionary.

The Maharajah (king) of Mysore was then deposed by the British government, who also annexed the kingdom of Coorg. This action angered the people who believed there was a close connection between the English government and English missionaries hence they hated the Christian Church. This resulted in slow church growth. After forty-two years, the Wesleyans had only eleven members. When the princely powers were restored under the subsidiary system, missionaries once again won royal patronage and the support of the people.

In order to spread the gospel throughout the state, the WMMS appointed evangelists who became more zealous than any other church workers in Karnataka. The missionaries themselves went out on evangelistic tours regularly. One of them, Norman Sargant, who served for nearly forty years, became the Bishop of the Mysore Diocese in 1952. Tomlinson, who edited the Kannada newspaper, *Vrittanta Patrika* and also introduced indigenous evangelistic approaches, was another prominent figure in Mysore. They opened schools, hospitals and clinics and established a printing press. However, apart from providing the first Bishop of the CSI in Mysore, Premaka Gurushantha, this Mission failed to produce leadership among the Kannada-speaking churches, except for some of the lay people who gained high civil positions in the secular society.

### 3.7.3.6 *The American Methodist Episcopal Church (AMEC)*

The American Methodist Episcopal Mission came to India in 1857. William Butler was the first to come, followed by William Taylor, who conducted mission work throughout the country. As a result of his work in Bangalore and its surrounding areas, the Methodist General Conference authorized the formation of the South India Conference in 1876. Cook, who was responsible for

the mission work in the Caribbean, came to India and helped in the establishment of the churches.

One of Taylor's assistants, SP Jacob went to Kolar and worked among the children at a boarding home run by an English missionary lady. She maintained that home with about 1270 children during the great famine of 1876 to 1878. When she found it difficult to continue her work, the Methodist Mission started Faith Mission for that purpose. Many of the boarders of the home later became ministers of the church.

When Taylor proceeded north to conduct meetings in Secunderabad, many English-speaking people in the (Muslim rulers) Nizam's dominion were converted. The eastern part of the dominion had the Kannada-speaking area, which was called Deccan Karnataka, where the LMS missionary, Charles Ward was working. He invited Taylor to assist him and eventually became a successful mission field for the American Methodists. However, it was not an easy field because the Christian gospel was not welcomed. The missionaries who were driven out from the city were forced to take shelter in an old tomb for nearly eight months. That empty tomb was called *Chor Gumbaz* because it was a hiding place for thieves. But, according to Seamonds (KCC 1969:39),

From this empty tomb, Christ's Gospel began to radiate outward in all directions over the Kanarese Deccan area. It shone down into Gulbarga City, toward the summer palace of Nizam of Hyderabad. Its rays pierced northward even to Bidar, 80 miles away to the historic strategic capital city of the Bahmini kingdom for centuries .

The Hyderabad-Karnataka area provided spectacular growth to the AMEM and so the LMS sent one of its workers, Paul, from Bangalore. Bidar became one of the most fruitful mass movement areas of the Methodists where many low caste people, rejected by the high caste society, accepted the Christian faith. According to Hollister (1956:161),

The first convert, Buchanan, was baptized in November 1858. He was a white bearded patriarchal 'Shastri' who heard Missionary Earnsbarger preaching at Tintini Jathra (festival of the Hindus) and came all the way from outside the district of Gulbarga. He also brought along with him five other men who covered 100 miles on bullock cart or on foot to seek

aptism.

Today, Bidar holds the record for the highest number of Christians in Karnataka state. AMEM's Bishop Picket, who made a study of the mass movement in India, investigated its impact. He noted that even though there was a spontaneous response, the missionaries showed constraint in accepting people without proper instruction. They wanted the converts to be equipped with proper knowledge of the Scripture:

From the boundary of Gulbarga-Raichur area, a large number of people might have been baptized during the past 12 months, if we had been able to care for them. Under the existing circumstances, it seemed unwise to baptize in new villages. We consider that our first duty is to those who have already received baptism and to care for them in as much as our limited force of workers is able to do so (*Methodist Journal* 1898:23).

If the churches in Karnataka had not followed this kind of policy, there would have been a larger number of Christians in this land. At the same time it should be noted that most of the members belonged to the lower echelons of society:

Today the AMEC's South India Regional Conference comprises of more than 80% of the membership from depressed classes. It has been demonstrated through the mass movement that the Gospel has the power to uplift people, give them hope and freedom from the darkness of their bondage" (Sampathkumar 1989:8).

When the AMEC celebrated its 50th anniversary, it adopted the motto: *Every Christian is a witness and a soul winner*. With this new emphasis, lay witnessing received a boost in various parts of the state. They also accepted appointments of the local Deacons and elders, opened rural Bible school to train them, and entrusted them with the responsibility of looking after the rural congregations. Two factors contributed to the growth of the AMEC. First, in spite of the poverty, the members contributed generously to the ministry and mission of the Church, following the tithing system. Though the ministers were taken to task in this regard, the stewardship principles were given high priority in Christian teaching. When the Great Depression of the 1930s affected their



work, the Home Missionary Movement - a self-supporting project - was successfully launched. The second factor was their real spirit for revival and evangelism. In the AMEC, every Pastor, and especially the District Superintendent and women evangelists, were responsible for evangelistic outreach in their given district. They used every opportunity, especially non-Christian festivals, to launch evangelistic campaigns. The women also made a significant contribution to the mission of the Church. They opened schools and boarding homes as well as medical clinics. Their deaconesses remain unmarried and share a common life like Catholic nuns. However, they were denied ordination to the ministry of the Word and Sacrament.

This Church shows special concern for spiritual renewal. Every year during summer, the church organizes district tent meetings and a final one takes place for the whole Conference during the winter season. The *Dharur Jathra* attracts a large number of people from all over and of the simple village people show their faith and their give generously to the Church.

As a result of their enthusiastic response, evangelization and Christianization here have shown great potential. Even American missionaries like *Thata* (grandfather) Seamonds and his family members guided the Church in that direction. They built some Christian villages and gave them Biblical names like Bethany and Nazareth, which are unusual in India. Because of the backwardness of the area, they tried to develop them socially and economically. More than that, they enabled many men and women to immigrate to the USA, which contributed to the welfare of their people and their homes. Perhaps no other Christian church in Karnataka showed this kind of paternalism of the Methodists.

When the Ecumenical movement was at its peak in India, the Methodists also participated in the Union negotiations. But, in order to maintain their integrity at the national level, they opted to join the CSI. When this union effort failed in 1981, the Methodists in India formed an autonomous body, the Methodists in India formed an autonomous body and a separate Conference was formed for the Karnataka region. On that day the Methodist Church had come of age. For a long time, Karnataka failed to produce quality leadership. For the first time, a local person from the Raichur district, Kariappa Samuel, was elected to the episcopal office which was indeed a tribute to the one hundred years of Methodist work in Karnataka. Recently three more Kannadigas, James,

Sampathkumar and Raja were elected bishops.

### 3.7.3.7 *The Baptists*

When the comity relationship began to lose its grip, many minor churches began to take advantage to establish their church.

Even though Carey, a Baptist, did pioneering work in the translation of the New Testament into Kannada in 1812, no Baptist Mission Churches were established in Karnataka for a long time. Later some independent groups came with the focus on adult baptism and Ebenezer Church for the English-speaking people was established in Bangalore followed by regional language churches. Thereafter, through migrant Telugu and Tamil baptist Christians, many churches mushroomed. In 1961, the independent Baptist Theological Seminary was also established at Bangalore. Surprisingly they prepared candidates for the Baptist churches in North East India rather than for Karnataka. In 1963, the United States-based Southern Baptist Convention opened a mission hospital in Bangalore, thereby opening a new field for them in Karnataka. They launched intensive evangelistic work in some rural segments and among the immigrants from Andhra, and were able to establish more churches. Recently, they formed a federation of Baptist Churches called *Karnataka Baptist Sabegalua Samukta Sangha*, which has an affiliation of nearly one hundred independent churches.

### 3.7.3.8 *The Brethren Assemblies*

The origin of the Brethren Mission in Karnataka has been traced to Miss Antsy at Kolar in 1874. After she handed over her work to the AMEM, the mission moved to the Malvalli area in the Mysore-Mandya district, which was allotted to them under comity arrangements with WMS. They opened schools and boarding homes and offered training in tailoring and printing. They also opened a leprosarium in Sankeshwar situated in the Belgaum district. They worked in that area among the immigrants from Gujarat during the great famine. It is estimated that in almost ninety years more than a hundred and fifty missionaries from various parts of the world laboured here, but they were disappointed with the results. According to (Newton s.a:12):

Mysore state has been one of the least fruitful areas and is a special interest to those who want to examine obediently the failures as well as the accomplishments of the Brethren Missionary activities.

Although there are more than fifty Assemblies worshiping in various parts of the state today, most of the members are from other established churches. As they are independent, and in the absence of any structural set-up of the church, there is very little co-ordination between them. This church is entirely dependent on lay participation hence its theological contribution is almost nil. Their rigid Biblical evangelicalism, especially in admitting others to Holy Communion, kept many away. Since most of the leaders of the neo-evangelistic organization called India Every Home Crusade, belonged to this Church, their evangelistic efforts swelled the Brethren Assemblies in recent years. However, in spite of its Bible-based fundamentalism, there are splits in the church. When a break-up occurred in the Kollegal Brethren assembly, the break-away group invited the India Evangelical Lutheran Church from Tamilnadu.

### *3.7.3.9 The Pentecostal Assemblies*

Pentecostal churches came to Karnataka as a result of the Pentecostal movement in Europe and America in the present century. Because of their foreign affiliations they remained independent and so very little understanding and co-operation developed among them. They did not respect the comity arrangements and almost all the groups increased through sheep stealing tactics, or with the help of immigrant people. Many of the members joined because they were dissatisfied with their churches for various reasons. Most of their pastors had very little theological education, but had a good Bible knowledge and organized "Spirit-filled" worship.

Among the Pentecostals, the American-based Assemblies of God, founded in 1914, are structurally and theologically more advanced. They established a theological college at Bangalore, but again most of the candidates were trained for work outside Karnataka. Recently, the Church has been trying to spread in Bangalore city and in some rural areas of Karnataka State. The Roman Catholic charismatic movement has brought some understanding between a few leaders of the Pentecostals and the Catholics. However, the ordinary faithful are still generally suspicious

about coming closer to the Roman Catholics.

#### 3.7.3.10 *The Evangelical Church in India*

The Oriental Missionary Society (OMS) moved to India when the door was closed to it in China, after the Communists took over that country. In Karnataka, they were assigned to an area between Raichur and Dharwar district in 1944 according to the comity arrangements. The immigrants from Andhra Pradesh to the Tungabhadra dam sites and their eagerness to plant more churches helped the OMS to spread. Their evangelistic spirit enabled them to become the fastest growing church in Karnataka today. They now have more than 100 congregations and, as comity arrangements are no longer effective, they have spread to other church areas also. Recently they became autonomous and are now called the Evangelical Church in India.

In the beginning, the OMS opened a theological seminary at Gadag for those who could not gain admission to the Serampore Theological College. But it closed down when the OMS missionaries left India. The Church was the first to introduce the *Jeeva Prakasha* Correspondence Course type of evangelism, by which it was able to spread the gospel to thousands of people. They launched an intensive evangelistic campaign, called *Every Creature Crusade*, to reach out to others. They also made their converts practise tithing, which contributed enormously to the Church growth as a self-supporting church. Thus they demonstrated how a church committed to the task of evangelism can grow.

#### 3.7.3.11 *The Seventh Day Adventists*

As in Jamaica today, the Seventh Day Adventists are another fast growing church in Karnataka. Between 1965 and 1985, its membership grew by 60%. Is this growth due to its doctrinal standards or American missionary backed evangelistic strategies? Seventh Day Adventists follow strict principles and precepts and some innovative evangelistic approaches. They run educational institutions and have won public support because of their vigorous temperance programmes; for instance, against alcoholism, smoking and drug abuse. They also launch attractive health programmes. The *Bible emphasis seminars* and *Soul Wining harvest goals* as well as tithing

system have contributed to the growth of this Church.

Structurally, they still function as a mission field of the World Adventist body. Therefore, there is a demand to develop selfhood, from "mission-view to church-view structure".

### 3.7.3.12 *The Jehovah's Witnesses*

Jehovah's Witnesses came to Karnataka as International Bible Students. They were very zealous evangelists, who stood at street corners offering their books and *Watch Tower* periodical. They began to knock at every door, welcome or unwelcome. However, most of the time they approached only the average Christians and with their well-trained biblical doctrines and interpretations confused and lured people to their following. They used the Kannada Bible published by the Bible Society of India, yet substantiated their claims by printing some of their misinterpretations. Their apocalyptic teachings have scared many people away.

They owe no allegiance to any temporal power because they assert that it goes against their belief to adore any other God except Jehovah. Because of this, they do not serve in the police or military forces and even refuse to sing the national anthem. As in some other parts of the world, they are often drawn into legal litigation including India as well. This led some critics to brand all Christians as anti-national. Nevertheless, their Kingdom Halls can be seen in many parts of Karnataka.

### 3.7.3.13 THE CHURCHES IN DIASPORA

#### 3.7.3.13.1 The Tamil Church

Sargant made a classical study of Tamil Christians in *Diaspora*. In his book, *The Dispersion of the Tamil Church* (1941), he shows how the Tamil Christians in search of livelihood went to various parts of India and abroad (Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Fiji islands and other places). Some also made their way to the Caribbean islands. The Tamil people came to Karnataka as soldiers during the regime of Hyder Ali; and later to Kolar Gold Fields and various estates in Karnataka. As a

result, the Tamil Christians became a majority community in Bangalore, which created linguistic problems within the churches. At times it turned ugly and marred the Christian faith and witness.

### 3.7.3.13.2 The Churches from Kerala

Another community that came to Karnataka were the people from Kerala. The Keralites, being an enterprising community, are well scattered all over the world. Wherever they went, they took their religious traditions too.

After the establishment of the United Theological College in Bangalore in 1910, students from all over South India came there for higher studies. In the beginning, the local migrants from Kerala worshiped as one community along with the UTC students, irrespective of their denominational differences. Gradually, however, as their numbers increased, the desire for separate congregations along denominational lines grew. As a result, several denominational congregations were formed, which demonstrated the ugly side of Christian disunity. A former Kerala bishop (UTC 1971:1) remarked, "It is a pity that these communities have to carry over through all parts of India, the divisions in Kerala in their mission field also." This division was so evident that when the Orthodox church was split, they asked the local Wesleyan Methodists to allow them to conduct their worship in Malayalam and in orthodox style.

The Mar Thoma Church, which is an offshoot of the Orthodox Church, was aflame with the zeal for evangelistic work due to the dynamic leadership of the late Abraham Mar Thoma Metropolitan. Although the Mar Thoma Evangelistic Association of the Church was labouring under heavy debts in those days, it still accepted the challenge of the new mission field outside Kerala — in the North Kanara district of Karnataka. Here, the Basel Mission handed it over to them in 1907 due to war and the non-productive nature of the North Kanara field. The Mar Thoma Church took that challenge with great determination. Even though most of the people were uneducated and full of caste feelings, they did not close the field. When lack of funds and missionaries almost forced them to give up, two young men and a couple volunteered to work in that area with a new vision. They formed an *Ashram* type of collective living and served there for number of years. This experiment made it popular. Later, one of them became the Bishop and

another Vicar-General of the Church. This field was entrusted to the care of a missionary bishop and the Maramon Convention of the Church made an annual pledge to this mission work. This time the missionaries concentrated more among the Agar community. They continued their educational and medical work as well as some small scale socio-economic activities.

This evangelistic work rekindled the spirit of mission among the Mar Thoma Churches in Bangalore where active lay people sponsored and supported the evangelistic work in the nearby Hoskote area. Here, they began to gain new converts, including some Hindu *Swamies*. The work started with only two workers now expanded to engage nearly 45 workers. An important feature of their work in Karnataka was that of adopting the local languages and adapting to the local culture, while maintaining their ancient Syrian heritage. They have also shown how to make mission work self-supporting and self-propagating. Christians scattered all over the world regularly contribute to this mission work. Their spirit shows how lay people, when motivated, can support this kind of venture.

The Catholic Church from Kerala with its various ancient traditions also tried to establish itself in Karnataka. Among them the Syro-Malabar traditional Church opened its theological seminary and other activities in Bangalore. Like the Orthodox Christians, they also kept their Churches exclusively for themselves and not for the natives of Karnataka. However, they ventured into the mission field in North-East India and other areas.

### **3.8 FROM MISSIONS TO THE CHURCH IN MODERN INDIA**

#### **3.8.1 The Church of South India (CSI)**

The nineteenth century saw the transformation of missions, which felt that the unity of churches is necessary for the mission in India. With this the movement from Mission to the Church began. It took place at the same time that the Indian national freedom movement gained its final momentum. Several factors impinged on the movement from Missions to the Church: The World Wars crippled some of the Mission operations, especially the German missionaries of the Basel Mission, which became an orphan mission. The confiscation of Church properties, the cut in the

foreign support, the failure of ad hoc arrangements (Kanarese Evangelical Mission) and the emergence of the IMC also helped in the rethinking of mission. This inspired the Indian Churches to come together at Tranquebar in 1919 and issue the Tranquebar Manifesto. According to Neil (1972:170):

We face together the titanic task of winning of India for Christ - one fifth of the human race. Yet, confronted by such an overwhelming responsibility, we find ourselves rendered weak and relatively impotent by our unhappy divisions - divisions for which we were not responsible, and which have been, as it were, imposed upon us from without; divisions which we did not create and which we do not desire to perpetuate.

It paved the way for the ecumenical movement in India. But it took some time to take shape. Its first joint committee could meet only in 1928 at Hudson Memorial Church in Bangalore. As a result of this move, the Anglican Church, the Wesleyan Methodists and the South India United Church joined the union negotiations. After prolonged deliberations, on September 27, 1947 (within 50 days of India's independence), "the most important event in the church since Pentecost" (as it is described by the first moderator, Bishop Hollies) took place with the formation of the Church of South India in Madras. This venture of faith, the greatest step forward in church unity in modern times, was welcomed all over the world, both as an achievement and as an example of ecumenical vision and passion.

Among the first Bishops consecrated for the CSI on that day were Premaka Gurushantha of the WMS for Mysore and Hospet Sumithra of the LMS for Rayalsema Diocese. The acceptance of this new order was evident as Gurushantha, a minister of the Kannada-speaking Wesleyan Church of Bangalore Hudson Memorial Church, was installed as Bishop in St Mark's Anglican Cathedral. He epitomized this great event by preaching the memorable sermon, "This is God's doing, and it is marvelous in our sight".

In all these happy events, the Basel Mission Churches in India, with the exception of its Malabar section, kept aloof, along with a small Anglican Church in North Karnataka which belonged to the Bombay Diocese. Finally in 1958, the Churches from North Karnataka joined the CSI. In 1968



the Basel Mission churches in South Kanara and Coorg joined, but its breakaway group still fighting on this issue. With all these amalgamations the Mysore diocese became too big and it was felt that, for the sake of evangelization, it should be divided. In 1970, this move led to the trifurcating and the Northern, Southern and Central Dioceses were formed, and new Bishops were elected and consecrated. When the state changed its name to Karnataka, all these dioceses also added the prefix "Karnataka" to their names.

In 1997 when the CSI celebrated its golden anniversary, it had twenty-one dioceses (including a diocese in Sri Lanka because of the Tamil Christians) and a membership of 2.3 million.

### **3.8.2 Other Churches which integrated with the CSI**

The following missions, which started separately in Karnataka, later joined the Church of South India.

#### *3.8.2.1 The Church of Scotland*

In 1959, the only church belonging to the Church of Scotland of the Presbyterian tradition joined the CSI. From 1864 this Church served the needs of Scotland's soldiers and businessmen, and after independence its membership decreased gradually. In 1965 when it was about to be sold, Bishop Sargant suggested forming a bilingual church for Kannada and English-speaking people. This experiment proved to be successful as it is the only CSI Kannada church in the Cantonment area. Today it has grown numerically, and because of its strategic location has become quite active. Its chiming clock tower is a city landmark.

#### *3.8.2.2 The India Gospel League*

In 1954, an American sponsored organization, India Gospel League, wanted to relieve itself of its four churches situated in the Bangalore slums. Bishop Sargant again took the initiative to accept them and their workers.

### 3.8.2.3 *The South India Telugu Mission*

This mission of the Christian Reformed Church of American origin began its work in the heartland of Karnataka-Chitradurga. It was a mission to the Telugu immigrants and, once again, Sargant was responsible for accepting them as there was no other CSI church operating there. If evangelism was taken in the right spirit, it might have provided an opportunity to bring back the age-old Christian faithful (of Ikkeri Nayak's time and the *Nudi* movements) who had gone back to their old faith due to the neglect of the church.

## **3.9 PART III CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS ON THE EVALUATION OF MISSION MODULES IN JAMAICA AND KARNATAKA**

— Colonization or Christianization? Evangelization or Proselytization?

### **3.9.1 Jamaica**

By the beginning of the twentieth century the cross of Christ had become the universal symbol of Christianity. It also became the symbol of power as it adorned the crowns of many monarchs. It also became the sign of the crusades against the non-Christian world. The cross was not only regarded as the crowning glory of the Christian presence in the so-called Christian nations like Jamaica, but also in the non-Christian world, including India.

Imperialism and colonialism became ingredients for the triumph of Catholicism in the medieval era. As devout Christians, Columbus and Vasco da Gama desired to gain control of the new world first for their business. At the same time they also desired to spread the Christian faith. So, the first act after setting foot on the shore of the new world was, to raise the cross and begin to preach about Christianity. Therefore all expeditions were accompanied by priests, who were chaplains to their own fleet members spiritual welfare but also served as missionaries. Columbus took six Friars with him on his second expedition, which was advertised as "missionary" (Williams 1964:6).

It was Columbus' dream to reach the regions of India and convert its princes to the Holy Faith.

He underscored the discovery as a profound fulfilment of prophecy, using Isaiah 11:10-12 as the direction from God to "reach out" and "reclaim" the people from different nations and "from the islands of the sea"- "from the four quarters of the earth". In his letter to the monarchs of Spain he admitted that "for the execution of the enterprise of the Indies, neither reason nor mathematics, nor world maps were profitable to me; rather the prophecy of Isaiah was completely fulfilled". When Columbus saw the land, with tears running down his cheeks, he planted the Christian standard on the beach, kissed the ground, sang the *Te Deum*, and called it San Salvador-Holy Saviour (Watty 1981:12). Seeing the way he worshiped with symbols and signs, the natives also fell on their knees and shouted "Taino! Taino"(peace)! But, innocent blood was later spilt in the name of religion. On the third expedition, Columbus built a church and later willed portion of his income for mission work.

On the other hand, Vasco da Gama had an interest not only in discovering a new passage, but also in fighting against the powers of Islam. When the Portuguese squadron sighted the Malabar coast, they fell on their knees at the sea-shore in thanksgiving to God, and began to sing, *Salve Regina* (Moraes 1964:10). Vasco da Gama, a faithful Roman Catholic like Columbus, saw that he had to please God, who showed him the new land, and decided to win it for his God. Thereafter, Mary became the mother of salvation for millions in Asia. According to Kane (1978:58),

Beginning with Columbus and Vasco da Gama, all the Spanish and Portuguese explorers regarded their expeditions as likewise crusades and missionary voyages, for the purpose of seeking Christians (as well as spices) and of opposing unbelievers with fire and sword if they rejected the Christian law which the missionaries first preached with the spiritual sword.

Thus, within the last decade of the fifteenth century, the world saw a meeting place for both the Eastern and Western world. It became the melting pot of different cultures of the world and their civilization which provided the cutting edge for a new religious ethos. The Church took seriously the great commission of Jesus to reach all nations and all people everywhere. Along with that they also sometimes made the sacrament of Baptism a cheap means for conversion to establish statistical records.

The meeting of East and West introduced a new type of civilization. The discovery of the New World also gave a new dimension to the expansion of the Church in the East and the West. Although the Church had problems in coming to terms with scientific discoveries and inventions, it did not fail to make use of these benefits for the purpose of mission. The Renaissance contributed to the civilization of the world in many respects. So also various strategies adopted by the Church served the cause of humanity and helped them to build a better life. It is no exaggeration to say that, as a result of all these, for better or worse, the world has seen a transformation because of the gospel.

No doubt the Christian faith came to the Caribbean as part and parcel of European colonialism. Thus it provided for the introduction of colonized Christianity. Some accuse the Church of assisting slavery and perpetrating the evils of colonialism. Others allege that "the church was absolutely destitute of any missionary character and had no message for the slave and little interest in his welfare" (McNeill 1911:18). This is not completely true. While few churches endorsed the evils of slavery, many others fought against it. The opposition of the missionaries who objected consciously to this kind of treatment and their prophetic role should not be underestimated.

By the time the British took over the reigns of West Indies, the original inhabitants, namely the Arawaks, were completely wiped out. In 1813, Claudius Buchanan in his Report of the State of the colonies states another reason:

Our native subjects in the West Indies stand in closer relation to us than those in the East and claim a prior regard. Our native subjects are in different circumstances. We have dragged them by force from their native country and appropriated their bodily services to our use. Justice therefore requires that we faithfully acquit ourselves of every moral obligation toward them (in Cayless 1982:6) but could not replace devotion to *Ganga ma* or *Kali ma* of the Indian masses. Thus worldwide evangelization of 'heathens' as Christians took place during the colonial era. Why? In the final analysis, many of the devoted and dedicated leaders wanted that the whole world should 'kneel before Jesus and acknowledge him as the Lord and savior.'

But we cannot overrule the other side of the colonization advantageous. It enabled the promotion of the meeting of the East and West, which introduced a new type of civilization in which we live today. The 'discovery' of the new worlds also gave a new dimension to the expansion of the church in the East and the West. Although the church had problems in coming to terms with scientific discoveries and the inventions, the church did not fail to make use of these benefits for the purpose of mission. The renaissance contributed to the civilization of the world in many respects. So also various strategies adopted by the church served the cause of humanity and helped them to build a better life. It is not an exaggeration to say that as a result of all these, for better or for worse, the world has seen a transformation because of the gospel. At the same time, many people found it is beneficial to embrace Christian faith. Although the established Churches provided the much needed social and economic condition, it was only minimum in Jamaica compared to India. It saved Jamaica from developing into 'nominal or rice Christians.'

To some extent it created caste-class division among the Christian people who thank God today is slowly receding. Broos (1997:93) quotes. Donald McGavran on 'Church Growth in Jamaica.' The Presbyterians, Methodists and Anglicans are churches of the classes. The Baptists who championed the slaves, the Moravians, the Brethern and the Disciples of Christ are the churches of masses, but their leadership and public worship is solidly upper class. The Church of God, Adventists, Pentecostals and Church of Christ are churches of the masses, with leadership largely from the masses, overlapping occurs quite widely (but) fourteen out of fifteen adults of the masses are actively out of the old line churches (even if not in their pure forms) and have altered Christianity, the religion of the Europeans.

The Missions advocated and practiced personal religion, personal integrity and personal sexual conduct which made slave owners uncomfortable. That is why they fought against slavery. Though some of the established churches failed to support the slave cause, many non-cofirmamist churches came to the aids of the slaves. Even many rebel churches like African Methodists, Wesleyan Holiness Church emerged under the same nomenclature and theology. In addition, the government also imposed a rule that all evangelical missionaries to obtain permission before rendering any service to the slaves. The 1802 the Jamaican Municipal act declared:

Non Conformists were free to organize and worship as they pleased, subject to any laws pertaining to all citizens governing such things as treason on libel and to their securing from the proper ecclesiastical authority a license for the place of worship. Preachers had to take an oath of loyalty and to subscribe to the main items of the 39 articles (Johnson 1989:75).

Under this act, missionaries, especially the Methodists and the Baptists found it impossible to function. Secondly, their parent Society also acted cautiously as they did not want to antagonize their society or their government at home. For instance, when the Methodist missionaries in Jamaica drafted resolutions opposing the slave issues, their Home board not only publicly repudiated that kind of action; but also recalled from Jamaica the Chairman and principal authors (Ref. Johnson 1989:75).

Nonetheless, we must commend the spirit of the missionaries and the way in which they reached out and touched the people with the gospel. They did not hesitate to involve in the freedom struggle. Then having led the people to the promised land of freedom, the missionaries were unwilling to leave the new converts unprotected. They built mission stations and the Christians enjoyed not only protection, but also found some kind of Christian solidarity. Later when a rebellion spread across the island, martial law was declared and the rage of the hostile planters were directed against the missionaries who were blamed for the insurrection. A committee of the Assembly declared that it had been their teaching and preaching which led the slaves to resist the lawful authority of their owners. So, the Mission houses and churches were attacked and destroyed. At least two attempts were made to burn down the Church at Hampden, but were unsuccessful (McNeill 1911:27). Much more than any patronization in the Christianization process in Jamaica, we can see more victimization.

With the advent of the evangelical minded missionaries from the established churches, a new day dawned in the evangelization process. Before the emancipation of the slaves, the church membership was limited. But it grew upwards afterwards, when the evangelical churches ventured to reach out to the slaves with the gospel in the West Indies. At first, the churches governed by the 'Comity' agreement, amicably worked together in establishing more churches. We must also

note, that though the great evangelical awakening in 1860s created some stir, it did not result in mass movement.

It is not certain that this can be called as the proselytization or patronization. Some of the earlier activities of the church might have been unilateral or involved evangelistic malpractices. But, first of all we must draw a demarcation line between conversion and proselytization. And evangelization. The evangelization should lead to genuine conversion and should stem from the heart resulting in a change to a new life style and change of faith altogether. Whereas, the proselytization should be regarded gaining membership through stealing the sheep of other churches. Or crossing over the frontier of one's faith or church to another just because of some small personal gain or small doctrinal differences. If during the colonial missionaries era they would have exploited the sociological conditions of the people, then this proselytization would have been stupendous. For, during that period there were lot of animosity between the churches who forbade their members to attend any other church, even when there was no church of their own in that district. Every church wanted the monopoly of that place. But now the climate has changed. With ecumenical spirit prevailing and vast world before them, why anyone should go on fishing expedition of other churches?

Today in Jamaica no one can say that they never heard of Jesus or the gospel. Because, the Christian faith is the byword in this land in every respect. However, when the recent church growth is analyzed, it reveals that this growth is mainly due to sheep stealing tactics; especially churches with neo-evangelicalism background coming from the American continent. They have shown very little respect to comity arrangements. In the earlier period no proselytization activities were carried on by the Protestant missionaries after they took the reins from the Roman Catholic Spaniards. Today within the Christian church proselytization is so much on the increase that the JCC or the CCC or any other church has any temporal power over other churches.

For that reason, the churches should realize that there is a need for common witness today. The division and the fragmentation of the church has not only led to confusion but also stopped evangelization. It not only breaks the code of conduct of poor stewardship that undermines Christian mission, but also involves violation of the Gospel values. It has resulted in a wrong

practice of conversion to a denominational church rather than Christ. We see much more proselytization taking place in the Christian denominations. The statistics indicate that at least half a million people did not want to identify with any church or religion. A large portion of the population, especially the men, are outside the churches. Unity of the Body of Christ should become urgent in this quest.

Unfortunately, evangelization in the Caribbean is either despised or rejected or more so, it has been misunderstood or misinterpreted. The Latin American and Caribbean Council of Churches both rejected any type of celebration to commemorate the arrival of Columbus in 1992. They accused that:

Evangelization reminds us of invasion, the subjugation and destruction of the native cultures, the negation of indigenous religion and violent imposition of a new religion. For we are more and more aware of the endless crimes committed in our continent by white (Christians) people against other races. Countless millions of aborigines have been killed throughout history since the arrival of Columbus in these lands and until our days. Entire people were exterminated; and those who survived were cast into misery and their cultures and beliefs were smothered. Millions of black men and women were brought by force and sold as merchandise. Their family and tribal ties were broken. Their cultures were destroyed and they were subjected to vile slavery. Resistance usually met with torture and death (in IRM- WCC 1993:11-12).

There is no doubt that the above observation is true in the early stages of Christianization. Maybe, because it was associated with merchants who thought conversion is a profit making business. But we should realize that true evangelization is a cause for celebration in that we share the good news of Jesus. For, it comes as God's good news to all people everywhere. We must also note that no established church then or even now supported any kind of proselytization activity. Today the main principle of the church is not to call any people as 'uncivilized,' 'Barbarians' or 'pagans.' The church also says, evangelism is inviting the people to search God, not necessarily the 'Christian God.' In this pursuit not few, but the whole community are invited to share this discovery. There are still many who are outside the churches who have not heard the gospel



message. What can we do? Ignore them? Can we forget that we have to share the Good News of Jesus with others? And when they accept Christ, should we neglect them? One redeeming factor in the Christianization process in Caribbean is, that it was not considered as stigma. The people need not change their community identity like converts in India. We cannot ignore the conviction and the primary commitment to evangelism of the evangelical churches to reach out to the people. They hold on to their conviction that the message of God's salvation uniquely and ultimately in Jesus Christ should be made available to all. They hold on to their obligation that it should be proclaimed or shared to every person and to every race. In this regard they might have used aggressive evangelistic methodologies or displayed obedience to their churchanity rather than to Christianity.

Although the Roman Catholic Church in the colonial era grew with that process, today it has restrained itself from such activities. The Vatican Council II condemned conversion by use of dubious methods. The Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity says: "The Church strictly forbids that anyone should be forced to accept the faith, or be induced or enticed by unworthy devices" (*Ad Gentes* 13); and no one should be "forced to act against his convictions nor is anyone to be restrained from acting in accordance with his convictions in regular matters" (*Dignitatis humanae*- Declaration on Religious liberty).

According to statistical records of 1892, there were only 4 Christians among thousands of people who came from India to Jamaica. Yet, within one hundred years, these Jamaican Indians have more or less become Christians. How has this happened? Some charge that Indian settlers became the targets of Euro-Christianity through the proselytizing activities of their missionaries. But others admit that the conversion to Christianity of a large percentage of former Hindu and Muslim population of Jamaica, contributed to the process of Indian acculturation to the norms of the Creole Society (Ref. Shephard 193:150).

We have seen the opposition from the Baptists and other churches to evangelize the Indians. Though the Anglicans at first tried, and Quakers also took some measures; but it was the Presbyterians who showed considerable interest towards the Indian immigrants in the Caribbean. They opened 'Mission Stations' and appointed Indian Catechists to bridge the language barriers.

It should also be noted that few Christians among the immigrants might have acted like the leaven. Shepherd (1993:155) states that some of the converted repatriates acted like missionaries for their own 'benighted' people; and even returned to India to bear witness among their own people. In other words mission should take place if and when those who were blessed by knowing the gospel of Christ should acknowledge with gratitude and share it with others. In other words that is what precisely the Jesus commanded "Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he had mercy on you" (Mark 5:19)

Christianization is never an easy proposition. First, the East Indians were stubborn non-Christians. They tried to maintain the faith of their fathers as far as possible. However, in Jamaica, being far away from ancestral touch, and in the absence of proper religious teachers or leaders they were unguarded and left alone. When the earlier immigrants passed on, the new generation grew up in a new culture oblivious of their heritage. This resulted in taking shelter under the majority religion. This shows the power of submersion of a minor religion with the major religion, which is a usual phenomenon. Thus, in Jamaica, Asians gave up their culture and religion to become Jamaicans; rather than to give their culture to enrich Jamaican society. But in India Christianity could not compete with the majority religions of Hinduism or Islamic faith.

Secondly, it also showed that the Indians both at home and in Jamaica, are willing to accept the truth in other religions because of their tolerance to other religions. It reflected the spirit of Indians in search of religious values for centuries. That led people of Karnataka to accept the new faith, which also touched their social life. Thirdly, East Indians and Muslims in the Caribbean were not interested in gaining followers for their religions and lost their proselytizing force (Lowenthal 1972:151) Fourthly, the non-Christians never wanted to take shelter or were satisfied by producing some kind of syncretistic religious systems to survive; as Christianity was strong. But in India, the missionaries built Mission compounds to keep the new Christians from recanting. Fifthly, Muslims and Hindus who were divided by caste and factionalism now wanted a new identity; and only solution for them was to see that Christian faith did not discount on that dividing factor. But in India their base was strong with whole community behind them, with sympathy from the political powers.

Jamaica also produces another phenomenon as against other Caribbean islands. In Trinidad and Guyana, Hinduism still persists; and maintains its symbolic distinctiveness amidst Christian influence. With their roots so deep in African cultures, in Jamaica, the Afro-Jamaicans opted for their ancestral faiths and convergence with Creole culture; which resulted in developing local cults, pantheism, magical practice and spirit possession and 'pagan' aspects of Creole faith (Ref. Lowenthal 1972:153). Though the 'ticket system' of the Methodist church which was also in vogue with the Presbyterians, and served as the check list of the conduct of the Christians, it failed to stop them in indulging these practices in private.

The faith movement in Jamaica during the great religious revival of the 1860s opened a Pandora's box of the Christian faith. It led to the emergence of many syncretistic religious process. It helped to revive the old 'spirit' filled worship in their African heritage. Though missionaries frowned on their addiction to dancing and drumming, the Christian faith could not remove the cultural heritage of the people for ever. It is interesting to note that the worship of 'spirit' gods is shared by people from different continents. The animistic worship of the 'spirit' finds some kind of commonality in India, Africa and in the Caribbean. It also confused the people to distinguish what is the 'Holy Spirit' or the 'evil spirit' and to use them as part of the Christian faith. Thus in Jamaica the Christian worship is devalued.

The apathy for evangelism today is evident in most of the established churches because of the theological stand or because of the lack of conviction or interest for the evangelization. Therefore the spirit of evangelism is dying both in Karnataka as much as in Jamaica. For example, as the State Church- the Anglicans did not evangelize in the beginning. The following reasons were given: (1) shortage of ministers to provide pastoral care; (2) the slaves lacked education; (3) the slaves were treated as the property of the planters who dehumanized them; (4) they believed the great commission was given only for the Apostles; and (5) there was no need to evangelize others. Unfortunately, it appears that some of the trends are still continuing to this day - even in the established churches. No doubt, ministerial students are coming forward in good numbers and are theologically equipped. But, most of them tend to become the ministers of the church and not evangelists. At the same time, there are many that are poorly equipped to take any evangelistic challenges that serve some of the para church agencies. But today neo-evangelical churches have

scored their goal over the established churches.

Among the new churches the Pentecostal churches have made great inroads in the Jamaican society. Roswith (1992 :156f) shows that between 1925 and 1952 its rapid expansion claimed about 3 to 4 percent of the total population of Jamaica and more than 400 churches on the island. Many people like 'spirit- filled worship' rather the traditional church atmosphere. However, the Sabbatarian churches like Seventh Day Adventists were not showing that kind of emotional worship but they are also increasing. What may be the reason? The observation of Ashley Smith (1995:10f) may be right: "over 80% of the total membership of the some of the Pentecostal groups in Jamaica consists of female members. They also represent poorly educated, worst housed, lowest paid and most victimized of the population, and naturally, as birds of a feather, they roost together." The devotion of women in the church activities and the religious life in not a new phenomenon in this country, as it is rather universal. But it was very phenomenal in Jamaica. Perhaps a deeper study of the growth of the church is necessary to determine the contributing factor to this phenomenon.

To what extent is the culture a factor for evangelization? How much cultural values are helpful in the evangelization process? The Christian faith served as a melting pot where mixed cultural ingredient cannot satisfy all. Some of its features served as apology for the Christian faith also. However, we cannot forget that it is difficult to identify a basic cultural expression that will add or will have its impact on the faith process on all the people in Jamaica. Which is the genuine or right culture? The Caribbean culture was formed by the dynamic cross-cultural fertilization of many cultures that were brought into this land. The natives who came from South American islands, the Africans, the Indians and Chinese and many others contributed in various degrees or a superlative mix to this phenomenon. Then they served not only as a melting pot; but also as freezing pot for anyone to be converted to Christ. The '*Verdun Proclamation*' of WCC- CCC (IRM- WCC 1993:63) states:

The religious mosaic of the Caribbean presents to the world with the most interesting feature to be found anywhere. Here we have a very curios blending of African and European religious practiced..

What is interesting about the meeting of religions is the fact that although the Europeans used all sorts of force physical and psychological to wipe out the beliefs and practices of Africans, they have not succeeded and these beliefs and practiced continues to live on.

Because of its multi-national background, we will be alienating some when we prefer one type of cultural expression over another. This cannot be the mission, as Christ is no longer a dividing God. We cannot show any preferential attitudes or look back when there is a globalization and unification process all over the world. But, sometimes ethnocentrism blinded the church's hegemony to recognize the cultural values. And thus we also fail to recognize the process of enculturation for the mission of the church.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the church in Jamaica was largely divorced from the cultural forms and patterns of the people it represented. It was a church *for* the people, but not *of* the people. The church in its concern for maintaining its European identity, could not meaningfully minister to people with black identity. In attempting to preserve its own identity the church accentuated the identity problem of black people (Erskine 1981:85).

Therefore, Erskine feels that the church in the Caribbean, in the last quarter of the twentieth century, shows evidence of their willingness to change so that black people will be redeemed. He therefore, concludes that "in so far as the church is willing to look itself, it may find itself and become the agent of salvation for the black people"

There was also another danger. In order to maintain the ancestral faith connected with Africanism, the Christian faith was further mixed and gave room to synchronistic religions in Jamaica. With all kind of mannerism and the rituals, it created doubt on the faith of the people which by and large was created on the basis of European Christianity, which in the third world many consider as the 'Biblical' faith. Some of the African cultural ethos are visible very distinctively. Some were curiously blended without any original trace, and sometimes submerged to produce a new syncretistic religious outlook with horrible practices. Effort are being made now to re-introduce them in the guise of an indigenization or contextulization, though the present generation is unmindful of their cultural heritage or sold to modernism. This has created a

dilemma whether to recognize or condemn them. It is not only a sensitive issue but also a theological dilemma.

The religious practice is confusing in Jamaica. They not only loose their patriotism but also their status in the universal Christianity. It is some kind of politics that emerges when the demand for more black power is voiced. "The prophetic vision of Rastas", according to Nettleford (in Owens 1976:3), "assumes a particular significance in the religious sphere of Jamaican existence, second only to the political vision which receives special reinforcement from institutional control of coercive power, but with which the Rastafarian phenomenon shares the prime concern of decolonization." Therefore, "in the Rastafarian theology we find a critique of the very foundations of capitalist / imperialist society and culture. This anti-imperialist thought in Rastafarianism is understandable given its historical circumstances and development. Having drawn itself on the spirit of Garveyism , Rastafariansism has been in turn an important source of inspiration to the anti-imperialist struggle" (Owens 1976:8).

This represents a strong reaction to European domination and against white domination, while at the same time forgetting that they are Jamaicans first. It advocates not only a new religious language, but also a new imagery for the communication of black religious values. For example, the Rastafarian movement identifies strongly with Africa. Its craft and music are defiant of a cultural imposition, which denies the validity of things African. Mainstream churches have by no means escaped the impact of the Rastafarian protest. Even more than Pentecostalism, Rastafarianism has forced the mainstream churches to re-examine their theological claims, their liturgies and role vis-à-vis the underlying political ideologies and economic structures to which they give legitimacy (Smith 1990:58).

Therefore, this situation calls for a deeper study and reflection. The old established churches may have to change that Euro-American structure and life-style to indigenous ways. But when that process was in the making, the arrival of the American evangelical churches further confused the situation. They provided an alternative, in more attractive packages, which perhaps made them gain more members than anyone. Hence, the question of the relevance of 'indigenous'

attractiveness of worship or theology concept become serious questions for the church in Jamaica. Can an authentic Christianity of the Caribbean emerge with its indigenous theology and worship pattern that will be acceptable to all?

In recent days the social issues have achieved prominence in the task of evangelism. However, this then raises the fundamental question- whether a social gospel is the answer; or whether the people would understand new ideology or theology, or whether only the cross of Christ can come as the Good news to the people in their daily simple living; and not in their cultural garb? The influence of radical or liberal theology is very low in Jamaica, because it still has very deep conservative roots and leanings. Today, the Rastas are not a force or a challenge to the Christian church as its influence is slowly diminishing. Social gospel cannot serve as an attraction either. Whereas the Christians in Karnataka are exposed to new theology because of various institutions are stationed in Bangalore. At the same time, there are also plenty of conservative evangelicalism also exists.

The churches in Jamaica should be commended for the excellent way it has displayed the Christian witness on some instances. At one stage it showed its deep concern to evangelize those whose roots are in Africa. Knibb initiated 'Mission to Africa' and raised the funds. He quoted the Scripture portion, "Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hand to God." Then Presbyterian churches sent their missionaries in the last century to Africa. However its successor, the UCJCI, has not only forgotten to send missionaries today to those parts, or to maintain its link with those places; but looks only to UK or USA as mission fields. They accepted missionaries from India and other places. However, other churches think only in terms of the black theology or to return to its ancestral heritage and do not look beyond their shores. Even mission among the non-Christians in their own soil has become a forgotten task in Jamaica. The churches in Jamaica need a new horizon, a new vision to see the perspective of the world mission. They have to come out from their reserved shells or complacency, to evangelize those who have not heard the gospel. It also needs a greater awareness to reach their own people who are standing outside the gospel or are behaving as if they have not heard the gospel. Mission is not only going abroad, it is there in our backyard, is amply true in the context of Jamaica.

In the final analysis, the Christian church in Jamaica did not become a center for mass movement

due to the liberation from 'slavery', nor people were converted with inducements or political favoritism. The simple fact is, Jamaica is a small country and with Christian influence being in dominance, it spreads out without any kind of opposition.

In Karnataka many of the ordinary people though not followers of Shankara or Madhava and not well versed with Bhgavad Gita or Upanishads, yet their simple faith was nurtured by Purandra Dasa and Sarvajna and others. Above all Basavanna's immense contribution cannot be erased from the minds of the people. Then as people are always communal minded, any religion will have hard time to penetrate. That is why the early missionnries had time to reach out to the people in spite of their many strategies and mission modules. Cinammi's experiment with indigenous system did not produce desired result.

Today, Jamaica projects an image profoundly of a 'Christian' nation; or at least as a 'Religious' country. No doubt this may be an impressive record. If we look at the above figure and tables, it appears like we can soon see the fulfillment of our Lord's dictum wherein almost all Jamaicans can be his 'baptized disciples' as per the terms of the great commission! How did this happen? Is it due to emancipation or evangelization? Was it due to colonization or Christianization? Whether slavery was responsible for increased commitment or religiosity to the church? Whether its struggle and pain of earthly life led them to long for heavenly reward in the spiritual solace of the church? Or was it due to the successful Christianization process? Or is it a biological growth?

The old Jamaica does not provide the picture that proselytization has been carried as part of the Christian Missions then. Nor does it indicate patronization from the successive Christian governments. There are no accounts of forceful or deceptive evangelization by the missionaries either. In fact there was antipathy and rivalry among the Missionary Societies, more than unity to gain more converts. But there is a paradox in Jamaica today. Particularly for anyone coming from the same colonial system but a multi- religious and a dominant Hindu culture. The Christian atmosphere, which is evident everywhere in Jamaica; and the favorable trends which makes them to enjoy government patronization, shows it is God's own country. The Ministers of the Government, the head of the State the present Governor General who are devout Christians, adds to that phenomenon. When comparing with India, the patronization policy looks quite obvious



in Jamaica as it faces no opposition from any quarters. But then the society is ridden with crime, violence and social inequality that one wonders whether there are any Christian values or the impact of the Gospel? Are they also a western import that accompanied the Christian faith and has become a social evil? If Jamaicans with all Christian background could be so violent and hurtful to others, what would they be, those in Karnataka without any Christian influence?

This factor could be a very much case for the devalued religious ethos in Jamaica. So, Christians need to do lot of soul searching. There is also another side to this picture. Cuthbert's study shows that only about 68.1% are real adherents among those who profess their faith in Christianity in Jamaica today. The 1984 statistics indicates that more than 750 000 people (that means one third of its population) do not like to state they belong to any religion or would like to remain as neutral in respect of their own religious persuasion. So, when we see the realities and growing trends in this direction, it poses a great challenge even as the church growth is slowing down.

### **3.9.2 Karnataka**

Now let us turn our attention to Karnataka for a brief evaluation. At long last the Christian church has become a world- wide phenomenon, even in Karnataka where multi-religious factors remain. The Christian Church is a recognized entity amidst its minority status. Was it because of the Gospel of Christ? Or was it because of the various means and methods the Missions and the church employed for the last two to three hundred years and made the Christian presence felt in the length and breadth of this land?

If numbers are taken as the criterion, the success of the Christian missions in India reveals another paradox. Accurate statistics are hard to come by, but as per the general assessment in 1914, in all India level, the Christians numbered about three- and- a half million. Of these nearly two-thirds were Roman Catholics; 10% Syrian Christians, and a quarter million the Protestants. Stephen Neil (1972:125f) who provides the above data states: " the Roman Catholics had quadrupled their number in a century; and the Protestants who began with almost nothing in the beginning of the nineteenth century almost multiplied about eight times." It was not till the later half of the 19th century that, for the first time, the full force of Christian evangelization was felt throughout the

length and breadth of the country, and the number of Christians jumped from something over a million in 1850 to almost 12 million at the beginning of the 20th century (Moore 1964:13). No doubt this is because of missionary boon and not because of the British empire that controlled India!

The paradox is to some as the above picture may show a success story of Christian mission in the last two to three hundred years as Christians emerged from zero to millions. But at the same time people like Panickar and others rejoice saying that "the attempt to capture teeming millions of Indian population with millions of dollars or conquer Asia for Christ has definitely failed" (in Webster 1996:10 &33). The fact is, even with the indirect support of the British, the Protestant Missions did not venture into proselytization or conversion. Instead, they simply engaged in the educational or medical work with a love of Christ. Their motto was always 'service to humanity is service rendered to the divinity.' They fulfilled the Nazareth Manifesto in St Luke 4:18-19 wholeheartedly. They also thought they could assist the government in its developmental activities rather than to gain converts.

But Panickar and other Christian haters are wrong in if they look at the Christians census in India which is still a microscopic minority less than 3% to the total of about 900 million people. In retrospect, a review of the statistical figures seem to say that the Christian church failed, not in mission but not in proselytizing the vast millions of people! Instead, the church evangelized and served the cause of mission faithfully and well. The church has spread like a leaven and its influence permeated the length and breadth of India like the salt and the Christian witness is like a lamp.

The mission of the church in Karnataka up to the first millennium had concealed Christ amidst the predominant religions of the day; and perhaps never appeared like a conquering religion or destroying faith of others. If some of the hypothesis that we have drawn earlier can be accepted, then it has served as the seed, which died, but from where the religious heritage had germinated in India. Its antiquity serves as a heritage for Christian mission. The second phase depicts the spring time for Christian mission during the colonial period. It began to bloom with the missionary vision and blossomed to bear fruit, because religiosity of India prepared the ground for its

growth.

At times the evangelistic work appears seasonal. Its true pre-independence showed that it rose like the high tide sweeping the people. And at some other times it created mere ripples of a low tide. When the church was established it forgot its roots how it has shot up. It also forgot its obligations, its calling. That although the new evangelical churches tried to stir up this issue, they were ridiculed.

Even though the Christian mission had all the advantages with various factors in its favor, it never exploited the situation. Rather, it was more interested in qualitative Christianity than quantitative gains of Christian adherents. Millions of rupees have been spent on mission work in India over the last few centuries. But the Christian church never used it as an inducement to gain converts, otherwise Christianity would have a different story to tell. Of course, there may be exceptions. The Roman Catholic Church burst out with zeal and evangelization during the Portuguese period elsewhere, but not in Karnataka, as the Portuguese did not rule any part of Karnataka. The Catholic Church more or less had biological growth. Today the RC church is not enthusiastic about evangelization either.

Charitable works was not a bait for mission endeavor in India. The Basel Mission launched its mission strategy that aimed to minister to the body mind and spirit, and never used it as an inducement. Almost every Mission followed that suit to show wholeness of the Gospel. The Methodists tried to lift the oppressed and the depressed, and accepted them only when they saw that those people could not find a place in the society. As the World Vision survey (1980:3) rightly reports: "Christian conversions, however were minimal, partly because missions concentrated on the welfare of the converts rather than seeking to inspire larger group movements." However, today, the newly formed churches are primarily interested in evangelization for gaining converts and attempt very little welfare work. At the same time they picture a success story.

In the earlier years, there has been so much of activity, both formal and informal to make Christ known, loved and served throughout the world. But being a minority, Christianization of

Karnataka was not possible. Therefore, when we analyze the church growth, it shows that the church in Karnataka has grown slowly not because of misdirected proselytization activities, but due to genuine evangelization. Perhaps some sociological factors also served in the background, but not to the full extent. When we analyze the history of the church in Karnataka, we can confidently say that it grew in the earlier days because the church was always engaged in the mission and evangelization, unlike the present day when it is more or less biological growth.

What are the gains of mission work? The Indian social system was such that when the missionaries arrived, the caste structure relegated people to bonded labor, poverty and disease. The repressed were waiting for liberation. So, when the missionaries demonstrated the love of God, they found social equalities and human dignity, which made the Christian faith attractive. This is very much evident in Karnataka.

It is quite likely that only the Christian church was involved in any social action for the people. While other religions kept aloof from such social action, perhaps due to caste system, Christian missionaries jumped into the arena with sympathy and empathy. Though the government was also involved in such programs, the people saw the mission work with new perception and appreciated 'missionary spirit' which in India. The social action as well as the healing ministry gave another dimension to the people through its charitable and social welfare programs and centers. There was also this reason:

The Mission took up the task of social reformation since most converts belonged to the caste of toddy tapers. There are also converts who were former exorcists, sorcerers, beggars, and musicians etc., and entirely incompatible with Christianity. Other occupations such as those of fishermen and barbers were exclusive to certain castes and unless the Christian community is strong enough to afford employment to such converts, it is almost impossible to find them work in the labor market (Muller 1913:167).

Thus the Missionaries provided succor, and promised new life to the oppressed and depressed class of people. The important characteristic of mission was the fight against the caste structure. As stated earlier, in the beginning missions tried to penetrate into high caste circles. But when

their receptivity was low, the churches turned their attention to others. However, by and large in Karnataka, the Christian Missions never allowed the caste issue to either gain converts or allowed it to be perpetuated and practiced within the church. The Basel Mission report (1887:34) states: "From the very beginning of our work in India to the present day, we have never allowed this monster to raise its huge head in our churches." It is the proud heritage of the Karnataka Christians, that they are a mixed community in Christian church where caste connections are almost faded. All are considered equal and enjoy a common fellowship everywhere. But even now in some other southern states, caste continues to persist and play a major role in the Christian church.

Another dimension of mission was the power of the gospel or Jesus that was demonstrated by the missionaries. Some performed miracles in the name of Jesus. Christianity became their salvation. When their evil spirit, which they feared, did more harm than good; and the native medicine men could not cure them and when their religions failed to support them in any way, they sought the shelter in Christian faith. However the church rejected instant Christianity or the mass movements to attract the people. Instead the church was ready to offer them dignity of life and dignity of labour.

As a matter of fact, these depressed classes are in all parts of India beginning to discover that Christianity has much to offer them, and in the Christian missionary they have not only a spiritual guide but also an invaluable friend. They found in Christianity doors opening to their children who could for the first time enter any public employment worthy of the name. Christianity offers them emancipation from the bondage their forefathers have lived for millennia. Christianity eliminates totally the stigma of social degradation and restores human dignity. Like the welcome shower, it gives a hope for happiness in this world and a better life in the world to come (Thoburn 1892:403).

Can the evangelization in Karnataka be considered as a gain for the Christianization? The answer is simply, no. By and large, because it was the process of evangelization that had contributed to the mission, rather than the material things which attracted the converts. It was the simple gospel and love of God manifested in it which even empowered the people to face any kind of loss or

consequences when becoming the followers of Christ. For, when the people came forward to embrace Christianity in the earlier days, they did so with a spirit of sacrifice. They left their ancestral homes, faith and practices, but also the property, comforts and status in the society. They even faced persecution, social boycott and ex-communication from their own relatives. They were even denied basic amenities like food and water.

In India, conversion to Christianity demands in most cases great sacrifices. The convert is ruthlessly expelled from the rigid caste system and is thus socially and economically ruined. He not only loses all the rights and privileges of his caste; but, owing to the widespread joint family system and nephew's right of inheritance loses all share in the family property ( Muller 1913:167).

No doubt missionaries acted like godfathers to those who were thrown out from the society. They came forward with shelter and provided them in every possible way. It was because the love of God that constrained them to act likewise. It was the humanitarian considerations rather than proseytization that were the priority in Christian mission in Karnataka. It is said that Carey belonged to a radical group in Leicester, which took its stand against slavery and boycotted sugar produced by slave labor in the West Indies. Apart from persuading the government to fight against *Sati*, he also established the horticultural society to show the poor people that they can grow more food to sustain themselves.

What should be the consequences of mission and evangelism? Indian Hindus were afraid of *Karma* the consequence of deeds done in previous generations, which they experience now. But in Jamaica, in spite of the Christian influence, the violence, sexual debauchery goes on without any fear of the judgement of God for their actions. While the Muslims dream of Paradise (heaven) or (hell), the Christian believe that by singing "Gentle Jesus, meek and mild" they can obtain forgiveness of sin and obtain free Salvation or go up to *Swarga* (heaven) for which Christ died; and will not go down to *Naraka* (hell) as punishment for their sin.

When we review the mission of all the churches in Jamaica or India there is one truth we cannot override. If Missions would not have reached out to the lowly and the outcast, Christianity would have been a religion of the upper class and intelligentsia, and not of the oppressed and depressed;

or of the slaves and the downtrodden. Secondly, in spite of all sectarian or denominational differences, the evangelization of the people was to lead them towards Christ the savior. But it may raise the question, how far are they able to develop genuine Christianity? No matter the churches, which were either led by the Bishop or by a *Tatha*, true Christian faith lies in the hearts of the people. If all the sects of the churches were God centered, Christ experienced, Bible based, Spirit filled worship- all as per their own theological understanding wanted to lead the people of God to the presence of God or to obtain Salvation of God or at least to God consciousness.

That kind of living was not only a personal issue but also had its impact on the society they lived. Therefore, the Christians in 'the land we love' or in 'the land we live' should be able to demonstrate those religious values. To that end we have to conscientize the Christians in Jamaica and crystallize our faith in Karnataka. The people of God are not only dream about entering the promised land, but they also have an obligation to make the land where they live or love as promise land where peace and justice will prevail; where God's goodness and kindness will overflow, and where people will live in solidarity with one another as members of one family without any discrimination of caste, color or Creed. If the religion can able to transform the people and their daily life, then there is a future for humanity.

Now let us come to terms with the failures of the mission. The Church Growth Association research report (1975:6) gives the following reasons:

- The country was under the foreign political rule and people mistook preachers as agents of political rulers.
- Those who preached the message were foreigners and people misunderstood the gospel to be a foreign religion.
- The appalling spiritual darkness and illiteracy of the people.
- The word 'Christian' was misunderstood to mean followers of a religious system, rather than one who followed Christ.
- Hindu religious renewal, and activities of the Rasthrtiya Sevak Samaj

They are all true to a great extent. But unfortunately Christianity then and now still regarded as

a foreign religion with its theology, worship pattern and Christian way of life.

Afro-Jamaican believed in the mystical powers of witchcraft, charms and occults. Though missionaries opposed them, people or the planters never doubted its power. And though it was hidden under the ashes; now emerged in the name of culture. Whereas in Karnataka, the missionaries took strong opposition to it, and curbed and controlled it with the power of the gospel. They used Bible as the talisman, prayers as the weapon, the church as the sacred shield, the name of Jesus as *Mantra* and the Holy Spirit as the super power. Hence it almost disappeared from its scene. In this respect, the impact of the gospel cannot be underestimated.

The widespread distribution of Bible portions and tracts meant that they were both read and talked over by the people. They enlightened them greatly as to the truths of the Bible and excited a universal expectation of their ultimate triumph in their minds. They were convinced that to be a Christian is both right and good (Mullins 1854:24).

Even though the Protestants had the Kannada Bible since the beginning of missionaries it was not used as the talisman, though regarded as the Word of God. The Catholics did not have their own full Bible until 1996 and so they did not attach much reverence to it as much they gave respect to the Mass and Mary.

Also the gospel came to the people in a foreign outfit, and so it was regarded as a foreign religion and alienated them from the Indian nationals completely. In all types of missionary modules, the missionaries unwittingly planted European churches in this soil. The Christian's worship followed Western hymns and religious pattern; and the imitation of their life-style like eating beef and pork, and wearing pants and coats has completed that process!. Their names were changed - though claimed as Biblical names! It is so obvious that except in few names, it is very difficult to identify the root of the Christian families as their whole life has seen a transformation. As a result, it is evident to see a similarity of German culture among Basel Mission Christians; American life style among the Methodists; English life style among the old Mysoreans; and Portuguese mannerism among the Roman Catholics. To a great extent Christians live like aliens among their own brethren and as a shut-in community living in the Mission compounds. In the name of the preservation of



faith from impurity and from the old influences, the Missions erected barriers and built mission compounds in every mission station. It narrowed down their public appearance altogether. In brief, the Mission of the church completely ignored anthropological and cultural values of the various communities in Karnataka. On the contrary, they were despised as Shahi (1983:230) notes.

The colonialists never wanted an Indian culture to emerge and in fact worked against it. Most attempts to create an Indian Christian culture were stamped out because Indian Christians were supposed to absorb foreign culture, which claimed to be Christian. The Indian Christians were, as a result, made to feel guilty about their own Indian culture and made to reject their cultural roots. Those who were not influenced by this Western design adapted indigenous religious pattern of a Hindu and ancestral life- style into Christianity. But it only added to the confusion.

Finally, the Good News of Jesus Christ has been preached in no small measure in the length and breadth of India for the last five centuries. Most of the foreign missionaries as well as Indian ministers made considerable efforts to evangelize. We cannot condemn the missionary worldview or their actions altogether. Their paternal attitude has contributed to this apprehension. They feared that the new converts would backslide if they were not protected well within the walls of the Mission compound. They felt it was their fundamental duty to support and share their means with the less fortunate brothers and sisters as per the great commandment. They acted as guardians not merely in spiritual matters, but also in moral and ethical values. As a result, ironically, only a few Christians opted for professional careers like law and business in Karnataka. Very few have entered into politics and mingled with the social life of others. As a result Christians more or less have become a shut-in community in Karnataka if not throughout India. McGavaran (1958:59) was right, when he points out:

Those Mission station churches are lacking in the qualities needed for growth and multiplication...growth comes hardly to the Mission station wedded to a gathered colony...  
The Mission station becomes an end in itself, instead of a means to the discipline of the people.

At the same time, it should be noted that conversion was not an easy proposition. In India as in

Asia, it was a different story. The vast population, and strong opposition from other religions and sociological pressures, erected a challenging barricade for Christian mission. The church has retreated from evangelization; and the paradigm shift has changed the mission gear. The mission no longer remained in the hands of Christians alone. Every other religion has been inspired by it. In fact the mission slipping out from the hands of the Christian church, became a challenging factor in the pluralistic world. It also began to have an holistic approach wherein evangelization and has disappeared in this transition.

It is recorded that at the beginning of the twentieth century, in India, there were 22000 Protestant and 28000 Roman Catholic missionaries. The Home Minister of the government of India replying to a question in the Lok Sabha after Independence stated:

In 1966 to 67 there are 6400 foreign missionaries from 57 countries engaged in different mission work; and about Rs. 135.16 (Rs 1351.6 million) has been received during that period for mission work (in NCCI 1969:109).

Missionary presence in India has continued to decrease after India's independence. In Karnataka today, the few missionaries remaining in this land were those who had made India their home after retirement.

But we cannot forget ever the sacrifice of the past missionaries, their enthusiasm, and their willingness to bear hardships and their tolerance in the mission of the church. Their toils and tears, sweat and blood poured for the salvation and humanization of mankind in Karnataka cannot be forgotten. They loved India and the Indian people. For their sake they were ready to die, and some even died young or buried their dear ones in this soil. These would be part of the annals of the missionary movement. The Souvenir brought out by the Karnataka Southern Diocese of CSI in 1988 refers to the records the work of the missionaries during the first fifty years of work: 22 Missionaries died between 30-40 years of their age. While returning home, two missionaries died due to shipwreck. A majority of the missionaries returned home in complete state of broken health.

More could be added to the heroism of the pioneer missionaries who fulfilled their missionary obligation with such devoted and dedicated spirit all over the world. When this is complied it may be a voluminous record which will go a long way in the history and mission of the church in this land and everywhere and the saga of sacrifice made for mission of the church in every land.

## CHAPTER 4

### A PARADOX IN MISSION: PARADIGM SHIFT OR PARAGON TWIST?

#### PART I TRANSFORMING MISSION

#### 4.1 THE CHANGING CLIMATE IN MISSION

Two memorable decades in the mission of the church helped in its outstanding devolution since its evolution. The first was 1490 to 1500 when Christopher Columbus and Vasco da Gama discovered the New World and extended the Christian faith beyond its boundaries. The second was 1690 to 1700, the last decade of the eighteenth century, when William Carey and missionary societies launched the modern missionary movement. They rediscovered the church's mission and fixed the pegs of the Christian tent in the uttermost part of the world.

By the dawn of the twentieth century, the church had become a truly universal and influential entity in the world. It had christianized countries like Jamaica and had a recognizable Christian presence in countries like India. How did this happen? For nearly five centuries missionaries, merchants and mercenaries all contributed to the globalization of Christianity, and employed an evangelization strategy to share the Good News of Jesus through various means, methods and mediums. It reached Negri's shores in Jamaica and claimed Mount Everest in India. Glasser (Bassham 1974:7) describes this phenomenon:

For more than sixty generations the church sometimes more and sometimes less has spontaneously Reached out from its local congregations with the Gospel. And, through planned expansion by means of para-church agencies such as missions, orders and societies it has surmounted geographical, linguistic, social and economical barriers to communicate the Gospel transculturally and bring new peoples to Christian obedience

This development was so swift in the last two centuries, statistically speaking, that, according to Barret (IBMR 1994:244-245), "from 300 missionaries in 1815, this number rose to 62,000 by 1910; and now has risen to 2.1 billion". Christian presence has become a household word all over

the world. Latourette (in Winter 1970:36-37) attributes this success to the following reasons:

- (1) Christianity was continuing to spread and was more widely represented than any other religion had ever been.
- (2) This spread was achieved less through government support and direction than at any time since the conversion of Constantine early in the fourth century.
- (3) Christianity was becoming more deeply rooted among more people than at any previous time.
- (4) Christianity was having a wider effect on mankind outside Europe than it was or any other religion that had ever existed.
- (5) Christians were coming together in a global fellowship embracing both European and non-Europeans, as they had not previously done.

As we approach the dawn of a new century, we notice a changing climate in mission. There is an explosive picture of the devaluation of mission. This not only poses a grave danger to the future of mission, but also threatens the church's very existence, especially in terms of the "demise of evangelism" in the agenda of mission. This process is not confined to the 1990s but was present throughout the century. Bosch (1991) describes this development as "transforming mission: a paradigm shift in mission theology". His analysis not only gives a kaleidoscopic world-view of mission, but also the transition that has taken place in this century which affected the mission of the church. Bosch (1991:xv) explains why this transformation is necessary:

"Transforming can be an adjective describing "mission". In this case mission is understood as an enterprise that transforms reality. "Transforming" can, however, also be a present participle, that activity of transforming, of which "mission " is the object. Here, mission is not the enterprise that transforms reality, but something that is itself being transformed."

Hans Küng (1995) also undertakes a similar missiological journey from apocalyptic paradigm to ecumenical paradigm. So he suggests (1995: 111) that the church must prepare a 'macro paradigm' to meet the challenges of the new millennium. This climatic change in mission was it a mere paradigm shift or a paragon twist? There was a transformation in the theology and philosophy of mission but also a transition in its methodologies and a remarkable difference in mission modules.

Various issues contributed to this phenomenon which transformed the scene we saw in chapter 3.

Various issues contributed to the emergence of this scene in Jamaica and Karnataka. The first twenty-five years saw the beginning of the ecumenical movement. The guilt of the First World War and the introduction of Communism tarnished the Christian faith. The next twenty-five years saw materialism and secularism capturing the global attention and the second World War adding to the shame of the Christian faith. In the following twenty-five years many nations gained political freedom; and the new nationalism led to the scientific and technological revolutions opening a new vistas in the life of the world. During the same period subcultures, drug addiction, new age movements and transcendental meditation once again challenged the advancement of the Christian religion. This resulted in making India a pilgrimage centre with Indian *gurus* attracting the Western world to the introduction of some fascinating teaching and techniques. At the same time, India was attracted to the modern TV and electronic culture, which replaced traditional religious practices.

This pattern changed in the next twenty years in Jamaica and Karnataka. There was a resurrection in the life and mission of the church. The younger generation, who were sold earlier to the new phenomena, now emerged as the new champions of religious life. As a result the downward trend was reversed. The church in these two countries gained new upward mobility. The churches developed consortiums and began to vibrate with new life and vitality. There was increased church attendance, financial gain and renewed missionary vision.

How did this happen? It all took place as a result of the contributions of the Second Vatican Council, the ecumenical movement, the uniting of some old established churches, the development of new theologies and new union structures in countries like India and Jamaica, evangelicalism, which influenced churches in Jamaica, and the evangelistic campaigns of Billy Graham and others. By and large, it was especially because of a new awareness of the work of the Holy Spirit, introduced by the Pentecostal movements. It was a movement of the people for the people and by the people. The people showed that they wanted "old time religion" which is "good enough for you and me". The religious atmosphere and music lifted the emotional euphoria and Jamaica witnessed those phenomena once again with all their glories. At the same time Karnataka, which

was influenced more by the Ecumenical movement, took a different direction in the mission of the church.

This Pentecostal revival took place not only in the Christian religion, but also in other faiths. They emerged with a renewed spirit and also as a challenging force against the Christian faith. In the context of this challenge, and as we stand on the eve of a new century with all the challenges that await us, the question is where the Christian church stands in its calling to mission and evangelism. This question has become a crisis as various factors contribute to this character of the Christian faith, especially in Jamaica. The key players in this development were the Evangelicals and the Ecumenicals.

The Evangelicals desired a theology of mission and considered the task of evangelization urgent. They showed their passion to rescue the "heathens" from the corruption of the human heart and provide an experience of the "salvation of the soul". They became insensitive to the followers of other religions and claimed arrogantly that Christianity was the superior religion. In order to impose their faith on every one, they used various methodologies in the name of religion.

The Ecumenicals, on the other hand, wanted a theology of religion, a social gospel, a new humanism and the recognition of all people, irrespective of their beliefs and practices. This standing led to a major rift between the ecumenical and evangelical worldview, which affected the life of and direction in which the church was moving. Mission was blurred and its concept narrowed down. Evangelism came to a standstill, especially in Karnataka. Though the present Christian population seems to be progressing and increasing in Jamaica and Karnataka, closer evaluation shows that church growth is more or less due to the biological transfer of membership rather than to the evangelistic or missionary efforts of the churches.

As the history of the world changes, we have to ask whether the paradigm shift led to the success of mission or has caused a paragon twist in mission. Some feel that the church cannot refuse to read the signs of the times and respond with intelligence, reason and responsibility to the new situation. Let us look at the dynamics which contributed to this process — its perspectives and future prospects.

## 4.2 THE TRANSFORMING MISSION PARADIGM AND PERSPECTIVE

A paradigm shift in mission is not a new phenomenon. Since the beginning of church mission, there has been a transition in its paradigms. At first, to reach its target audience the Jews, its priority was "Christo-centric": to prove that Jesus, who was crucified, buried but now living and the ascended Lord was the Messiah. Then the early church shifted its focus to the "gentile" people, and believed that its "Jesus-centric" mission was to be based on his great commissions. It accepted this task as its top priority; waiting for the Holy Spirit as mandatory, in which the whole world is the territory; making every person a disciple of Christ as its propriety; and establishing the church everywhere as its strategy. It went all out to fulfil that mandate and to proclaim Jesus as the Saviour of the world, who would come again to establish his reign with all glory and majesty. It extended the ambit of mission to reach out to the people of every colour and creed, and commissioned missionaries and evangelists for this task.

Then, during the medieval period, the Reformation and Counter Reformation, the Church moved from its axis to the "Church's mission" and predominantly the Roman Catholic Church. Thereafter, when the Protestant churches began to reach out in the "heyday of colonialism", it turned into a multifaceted "denominational mission". It showed that the church had no alternative without being militant and triumphant at all times and in all places. For centuries evangelization together with social action became the prominent feature of this kind of mission. It made the church proud to sing the hymn, composed by the great English Prelate of India, Reginald Heber (1783-1826):

From Greenland's icy mountains,  
 From India's coral strand,  
 Where Africa's sunny fountains  
 Roll down their golden sand,  
 From many an ancient river,  
 From many a palmy plain,  
 They call us to deliver,  
 Their land from error's chain.



The missionaries passionately believed they had to launch an aggressive evangelistic approach to destroy the "non-Christian religions" they encountered and preach Jesus as the only Lord and Saviour. They stood at every available place — in markets and on street corners as well as at non-Christian festivals or gatherings — to denounce non-Christian religions. They performed exorcisms to show that Jesus had more power than any other god. They offered social service in the hope that it would lure more people to the Christian faith. They built mission compounds for 'converts', to keep them inside the fold and protect them from going back to their ancestral religion. They also imposed excommunication as a measure to impose church discipline to preserve the Christian principles.

The beginning of the twentieth century saw a call to consolidate Christian churches for effective mission. But by mid-century, the whole concept of mission underwent a transformation. First, it began with the demise of the colonial empire in India in 1947 and in Jamaica in 1962. Secondly, the church realized that it should redeem itself from narrow mission confines to "God's Mission" — *Missio Dei*. The Willingen Conference of the IMC, which coined this concept, declared (Bassham 1979:34):

"The missionary movement of which we are part has its source in the Triune God himself. Out of the depths of His love for us, the Father has sent forth His own beloved Son to reconcile all things to himself, that we and all men might, through the Spirit, be made one in Him with the Father, in the perfect love which is the very nature of God."

No doubt it was a right perspective. In a certain sense, however, it left the missionary task "to God" and made the church "relax" from its responsibility. As a result, evangelization has been more or less shelved. Mission became the activity of the Triune God and very little of the church. Interestingly, the architects of this statement include Russell Chandran from Bangalore, Karl Hartenstein, Mission Inspector of the Basel Mission and Leslie Newbegin, a former bishop of the CSI. As Bassham (1979:69) sums it up, "this shifted the old concept of God-church-world, which has now changed to God-world-church".

Today, the changing world order also creates new challenges. It poses the vital question of

whether the Christian church should be faithful to the Gospel of Jesus Christ or reverse its strategy in response to the context in which the Gospel is to be communicated. Its own misconduct in matters of Christian principles and activities has left a crucial condemnation of the Gospel. It raises the crucial question of the application of the Christian witness to the saving power of Jesus. At the same time, the patches of the "non-Christian" world, instead of creating urgency in mission, lead to complacency in mission. The church fails to show the missionary imperative in its normal affairs.

Today the term "mission" also seems ambiguous. This term has been adopted by other religions as well as by the secular business world. Christians realize that they are living in a pluralistic society with religious pluralism and have to respect them. Many other issues described earlier openly challenge Christian faith. Prabhu, an Indian theologian (*Mission Studies* 1986:85), criticises it, saying:

"The fact is that in a large part of the Third World the term "mission" has become unacceptable because of its association with the colonial mission. This is quite evident in India. The word "mission" has, in fact, all but disappeared from the missionary vocabulary of the Indian church (that is from its extra-ecclesiastical discourse), because it evokes in our people the alarming images of a powerful and aggressive religious movement that threatens to destroy their national identity and culture."

Apparently these trends contributed to what some refer to as the "demise of evangelism". So, "mission doctors" prescribe medicine for the ills of the mission work. These medications are far from remedies for the malady of mission. As a result, evangelization, which was the focus of mission, has been paralyzed. The church is failing to show an eagerness to press forward in this task. Instead, the church has not only begun to raise the question "What is mission?" but also "Why mission?" No convincing answer could come out of this query, however. These transforming mission paradigms and perspectives had an effect on the mission of the churches in Jamaica and Karnataka as well. To some extent, it brought these churches to the crossroads. Now let us attend to these crossroads.

## PART II MISSION IN TRANSITION IN JAMAICA AND KARNATAKA

### 4.3 THE CHURCH AT THE CROSSROADS

As a result of this transition, today the confused church stands at the crossroads. Various internal and external factors contributed to its impact on both the first and the third world.

#### 4.3.1 The internal crisis

The influence of Communism, materialism, secularism and modernism, the resurgence of other religions and the world wars fought by the Christian nations, who eventually used the destructive atom bomb to win the battle, raised the relevance of the application of the gospels. The conflict between faith and science, traditionalism and rationalism, the political and religious power struggle, intellectual power and infallibility of the Bible nurtured tensions and affected the faith. Darwinism, Communism and demythologization, the "death of God" and the emergence of various theologies added more confusion to the simple faith of the people. The Christian religion always withstood its challenges to faith and stood the test of time. During this crisis, though at times it looked as though the church was crumbling under heavy pressure, it emerged with a renewed spirit of renewal.

By and large the concept of a monopoly of mission began to slip from the hands of Christians. Mission became an all-embracing concept, especially in terms of Christian relationship with other religions. The demand for cultural identity, the recognition of other religions, and the search for indigenization (inculturation) began to capture the Christian mind and mood, and confused the Christian faithful. The paradox, however, was that the Christian faith, which once rejected the other faiths as "false", now came forward to accept them as "true" religion. To many it appeared like Christianity compromising with other faiths.

At this juncture, another problem arose. The evangelicals tried to establish the uniqueness of Jesus as Savior of the world without compromise. They zealously declared that Jesus is the whole and sole Savior of the world. Their extreme wing advocated evangelicalism that began to tear the church apart. As in olden times, they demanded the visible expansion of the Christian church and

the extinction of other religions. They adopted aggressive evangelistic strategies and zealously went all out to popularize the Christian faith. They used modern electronic media and the healing ministry to woo the people, and prophesied doomsday messages to mesmerize the masses. Once again, they started to amplify religious countries like India as if these had more "ungodly" people than theirs. To their supporters at home, they projected dubious pictures about India's need for the gospel and, in the name of religion, amassed wealth for themselves. Jamaica pictures this phenomenon very profoundly.

This also took place in the areas where the established churches were functioning. These neo-evangelical churches began to capture larger number of followers than any prelate of the church. They emphasized the 'Believer's Baptism' and 'Speaking in tongues as a result of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit' as a must for every Christian. This proselytization practice within the Christian faith was condemned as "sheep stealing". But these neo-church pastors argued that "while the shepherds slept, they cared for the lost sheep". The established churches, on the other hand, remained domesticated with all coldness.

During the same period, the Ecumenicals began to advocate new dynamism in mission. They presented mission theology with a difference. Their negative approach to traditional evangelism set the church back. Mission theology framed theory and theology of mission more than the practical dimension of evangelism. Dialogue with people of other faiths or no faith, justice issues and social concerns replaced old traditional methods. Some even made painfully strong criticisms like "the old missionary ways were mistaken ways". They suggested multicultural and multifaceted holistic mission. However, with all their mission thinking, they developed "roof-top" mission gardens more than "grass root" mission. Many churches thus remained inside their four walls, quite satisfied with their ritualistic religious practices for their own members. This paradigm shift, in fact, twisted the mission concept, shifted the accountability of the church in its missionary obligation and marked the end of so-called "Christendom". The European nations, who once went out with the gospel, saw its slow death within its own four walls whereas the churches in Jamaica and India, who received the Gospel from them, showed they were more vibrant than those who preached to them. In a way the mission movement changed as more 'third world' missionaries from the nearly 'two-third world' went out to the so-called 'first' crumbling Christian world.

### 4.3.2 The national crisis and socio-political challenges

When the church was at the crossroads facing an internal crisis, it also faced an external crisis from the socio-political climate. Evidently in this regard the Indian church faced more confrontation than their counterpart in Jamaica.

During the second half of the century, colonialism almost came to a halt. Winter (1970:13) calls this trend "the retreat of the West". He lists nearly eighty nations which gained political freedom between 1943 and 1969, resulting in the collapse of the hundred years of European empire in the non-Western world. Their long period of political domination, cultural impositions and economic imperialism made these nations dependent on various levels. After independence, these free nations began to emerge with selfhood and were eager to build new nations with a renewed vision. Many minority cultures showed a craving for a cultural renewal which enabled them to see renaissance of their own culture. The progress of many nations was weakened by the corrupt practices of some of their leaders, political upheaval and the emergence of communal parties.

The same tendency was also reflected in the church. The development from "mission to Church" would have given to the indigenous churches a new dimension in mission. But at first, two world wars crippled many missions, including the Basel Mission in Karnataka, which became an "orphan mission". Then the struggle for selfhood of the church created tension. Many missionary personnel felt they would have to leave the mission position as the winds of change were blowing against them. While some regarded the missionaries as a valuable asset to be retained, the vast majority, including some Christians, wanted them to leave. They argued that the native churches had come of age and should therefore be managed by them and not by outsiders. The Indian government also supported such move and restricted or denied the Visas for foreign missionaries. As a result, the number of foreign missionaries began to decrease. In 1969 it was reported to the Indian Parliament that "it was estimated that before Independence, there were 22000 Roman Catholic and 28000 Protestant foreign missionaries worked in India. Annually about Rs13.5 (US\$ 4 million) had been received for mission work from abroad" (Dharmaraj 1969:109). But subsequently this figure was reduced so rapidly, that now only handful of them, mostly retired ones, made India their home after long years of service stay here. But in countries like Jamaica, there were no restrictions to have any number of missionaries, though earlier they were also

unhappy about the missionaries' presence in their country.

In the absence of foreign missionaries and support, the indigenous churches began to face financial crises. This made the local churches carry a heavy burden. It led them into overdraft or to sell valuable properties. Stewardship emphasis was laid on the local Christians that sometimes looked like an unbearable burden. Many failed to come forward to the ministry due to no bright future. As a consequence of this situation, mission and evangelism was pushed to the bottom of the agenda. Very little budget provision was made for these concerns. The infighting in the church, leadership struggles and corruption in its own courts eroded the credibility as a Christian church. It also raised serious doubts in the minds of the foreign Missions as to the maturity of the churches to take up this responsibility.

#### *4.3.2.1 The Church in the pre-independence era*

Mahatma Gandhi's entry onto the scene at the beginning of this century saw the rapid growth of the nationalistic spirit in India. It is worth noting the opinion of Subramanyan (1981:90), a Hindu author, about the new trends that emerged:

"In the wake of independence it was the communist who set about trying to judge the foreign missionary and found him wanting. In the later years the Hindu reactionary has set about saying that Hinduism has to be saved from foreign missionaries."

Gandhi valued Christian principles and its missionary contributions; but not its missionary strategy and methodologies. Gandhi's national building activities made him the "father of the nation". His concept of *Sarvodaya* was equated with the concept of the Kingdom of God. His concern for the *Dalits* made him their saviour. His crusade against evils like communalism and alcoholism made him the "apostle of peace". His martyrdom made him immortal.

With Gandhi's entry, the Indian National Congress gained new momentum. He presided over only one Congress session — in Belgaum in Karnataka. It led to the launching of the non-cooperation movement towards the struggle for freedom:

This incident had a great impact on Karnataka. It led to the establishment of the branch of the Indian National Congress in Bangalore, and the introduction of the *Khadi*, the abolition of untouchability, the antiliquor campaign and the village uplift programs (Hassan 1970:198).

When the National Congress was established in 1885, missionaries supported it and even encouraged the Christians to join it. They saw the National Congress as harmless and hoped that it would confine itself to non-political activities. But as soon the Congress advanced its political objectives, the attitude of most of the missionaries changed. They withdrew their support and discouraged Christians from even participating in the national struggle (Shiri 1982:4). Very few Christians from Karnataka took an active part in the national affairs or struggles. Sometimes Christians failed to take advantage of the favourable trends. In 1923 the Maharajah of Mysore made changes in the constitution of the state. The Indian Christian community was given the exclusive privilege of electing five representatives to the Assembly. It is not known who represented the Christian community then. Mr Devadas was among them and was known as "Gandhi Devadas. Henry Devadas, who participated in the freedom struggle, later received the *Tamrapatra* from the government. Some Christians also wore *Khadi* as a symbol of patriotism. But by and large the whole Christian community stood in the background. Even the presence of a foreign missionary like *Deenabandhu* C F Andrews did not instil confidence in the Christian minds. In fact, the expulsion of an American missionary, Ralph Kaithan, who staunchly supported the *Sarvodaya* movement from Bangalore, added to their fear. Therefore, many national leaders began to suspect Indian Christians and accused them of being subservient to colonial rule.

This political situation hampered the mission very badly. It resulted in loss of confidence and a frightened spirit in mission activities. Opposition mounted with violence in many instances. While LMS missionaries recorded that no animosity was shown to them or to the Indian Christians; the Wesleyan churches reported clashes with the Congress party workers who regarded the gospel as well as the Christians as alien to Indian faith. The young patriots threw stones and garbage at the Christian meetings (Sargant 1983:25).

This shocked the Christians, who always felt safe with the British government with whom they developed some kind of affinity because of the common religion they both practised. As Mysore

Maharaja was the British Regent, he too showed a lot of respect for foreign missionaries and the Christians, as did Nizam of Hyderabad, who showed a similar attitude towards the American Methodists in the Deccan area. Other parts of Karnataka enjoyed many concessions under the Madras and Bombay presidency governed by the British Governors. German missionaries, however, suffered under the British government

Like Gandhi, Garvey became the national hero of Jamaica because of his fight for the black cause. "Although nothing much came of his schemes, Garvey, himself a strong and colorful personality, acquired a powerful hold on the imagination of the mass of the people and did much to create unity among Negroes and give them a pride in their race. Later political leaders were to profit from the lessons of Garvey's career " (Black 1958:232-233). But the church kept aloof from Garveyism and kept up its Westernization. They did not want to spiritualize the blackness or politics since people were looking at it from the world-view of Caribbean theology.

#### 4.3.2.2 *The Church at the time of independence*

The independence of India in 1947 was a catalyst in this process. Nehru recognized the Christian presence as part of Indian history. In his *Discovery of India* (1947:19) he stated:

India was it must be remembered a country of many religions, in spite of the dominance of the Hindu faith in its various shapes and forms. Apart from Jainism and Buddhism which had largely faded from India and had been absorbed by Hinduism, there were the Christian and Hebrew religions. Both of these probably reached India during the first century after Christ and both had found places in this country. There were large numbers of Syrian Christians and Nestorians in South India and they were as much a part of the country as anyone else was.

Jamaica gained its political freedom in 1962. Soon afterwards the United Church of Jamaica and Grand Cayman was formed to show that Jamaica attained its selfhood in church affairs also. Though the Church did not take an active role in the freedom movement or thereafter in the political affairs of the country, its contribution is always recognized. Many of its members, including ministers of the church, have received national honours for their contribution to nation



building.

The dawn of independence gave a new spirit to the Indian Christian church. In its executive committee, the national Christian Council (*NCC Review* 1947:4) welcomed independence: "We rejoice that by the providence of God our country has attained political freedom. We are thankful for the indication that religious liberty for all and the interests of the minorities will be safeguarded." The Christians did not object to the secular character of the constitution in spite of their strong faith in religious affairs. But Fr Jerome D'Souza, a Mangalorean Jesuit, and another Bengali Christian leader, Dr H C Mukerji, were able to add this clause to the Constitution: "Citizens of India are free to participate, propagate and preach their religion." This freedom of religion clause saved the Christian church afterwards when it faced mounting opposition. The broad-based Constitution of India declared:

We the people of India, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a Sovereign, Socialist, Secular, Democratic Republic and to secure to its citizens, justice, social, economic and political liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship, equality of status and of opportunity and to promote among them all fraternity, assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the nation.

With the passage of time a lot of changes got underway. Many began to treat Christianity as the ethnic faith of the white man, mainly because the church still continued to hold on to its Western traditions and system and showed very little interest in indigenization. The warning given by Mundadan (1983:23) and other Christian leaders was ignored:

The quest of the Christians for an Indian form of Christianity has to take into serious consideration the national consciousness, the consciousness of the people of independent India which implies a looking back to the cultural and spiritual past looking forward to the emergence of a modern secular India.

Many expected that, with the dawn of independent India, the Christian church would disappear. In spite of this assurance, the missionary perspective has changed. Traditional mission was slowed down as opposition began to mount. Gospel and tract distribution, *bazaar* preaching, and mass

conversions became things of the past. The Indian church showed a lack of confidence in evangelization and fear of any missionary approach. Gaining converts, which was considered the crowing glory of mission, became a thorn in the flesh for the Christian church. The paradigm shift put mission and evangelism in reverse gear. The church began to give more attention to congregational life and ministry.

#### *4.3.2.3 The post-independence years*

Being caught up in the minority complex in India as well as the Christian ethical style, Christians showed a reservation towards the political game. They became apathetic towards politics. Therefore, organisations like the Madras Native Christian Association tried to conscientize Christians on their primary responsibility to the nation. But its efforts were in vain. They considered political activities or power struggles social evils. As a result, they once again failed to take part in active politics. Except Roman Catholics, some of them took active political roles. The only other person who fought the election was Mrs Grace Tucker, a Tamil Christian, who became a deputy minister in the Nijalingappa Government. Very few became members of the local municipal councils. B A Bhasme was the first to become the Mayor of Hubli-Dharwar Municipal Corporation. Before they became bishops of the CSI, C D Jathanna and V P Dandin were members of the municipal councils.

Though Indian Christians are better educated and well-respected citizens, their apathy towards national and political issues remains unchanged. Godwin Shiri (1978:2), who made a study of this tendency, says: "It is mainly because the Christians blame the low socio-economic constraints and their minority status is the cause for all omissions, particularly as far as inactivity in socio-political participation is concerned."

When the nationalistic movement began to take shape in 1932, there were discussions about the place of Christians in the political structure of India. While some favoured a separate electorate and reserved seats for Christians, others wanted them to become a force by themselves as a people to be recognised. At an ecumenical meeting that took place in Poona, the Christians declared: "Indian Christians shall not form a political party, though membership of any party was not banned to them." However, the Canara Catholic Association demanded that "communal electorates

should be maintained for Indian Christians". This misunderstanding between Bombay and Canara Christians grew, and Mr Shrestha, a leading Barrister of Mangalore, was invited to a Round Table Conference in 1931 to explain the Canara Christian stand. Later, a joint committee of the Catholics and Protestants met in 1945 and made a joint representation to Nehru. Thereby:

By renouncing their claim to a separate electorate and later to reservation of seats, the Christians had invested their future in the goodwill of the major community which had responded to this trust with the generous gesture assuring their religious and cultural rights (Fonesca in CHAIR 1983:109).

Nehru commended this move and said "it was an act of faith for all of us". But, because of absence of the Christians members, their voice was feebly heard in the Indian Parliament or the Legislative Assemblies.

The picture in Jamaica was quite different. Though the churches were not directly engaged in the political process, people are politically conscious. Also, because of being a Christian majority, they never faced any threat for their survival. The present Governor-General is a devout Christian and a lay pastor of the UCJCI. Some of the ministers belong to the leading churches of Jamaica. But it sometimes looked difficult to please the politicians, who go for popular support more than to listen to church's prophetic voice. But in creating political consciousness in Jamaica, the Jamaica Council of Churches always played a greater role. For example, on one occasion:

It led the nation in prayer and fasting in an attempt to create a peaceful atmosphere for the General Election of 1980. Consequently, it also drafted Guidelines for a peaceful election". It appointed a Monitoring Committee to see the Guidelines were observed and to take appropriate action against those who violated them. This was a concerted positive attempt by the churches to replace the power of violence and terrorism with the power of love, peace and hope (JCC 1966:11).

#### *4.3.2.4 The aftermath of the Gandhi-Garvey era*

Post-independent India saw Christians tormented on several fronts. In the martyrdom of Gandhi

immediately after independence Christians lost a great sympathiser. Thereafter, Christian missionary activities were attacked on all fronts. The Hindus forgot that they also sent missionaries to foreign lands; but blamed the expansion of the Christian church on the foreign mission enterprise. The first blow came when the Madhya Pradesh government appointed a Commission with a Chief Justice of the High Court. Neogi Commission found missionary activities objectionable and recommended:

That the Central government shall order the following steps: ordering the missionaries to leave the country. Severely controlling conversions and baptisms, prohibiting by law medical assistance as an instrument of the apostolate and amending the constitution so as to limit the right of propagating religions to Indian nationals (in Pothucamury 1961:23).

But, as a rebuttal to this report, prominent Hindu and Muslim leaders made a statement in which they expressed their full admiration and appreciation for the work of the Christian mission:

We wish to pay tribute to the high standard of integrity and public service generally maintained by Christian traditions of selfless service they have established. It is not our experience that they seek to undermine patriotic or national loyalties while they make no secret of their own faith in their religious tenet. They have maintained in general standards of intellectual honesty and fair play in their dealings with their word and contributions. To this example some of us owe a great deal (in Pothucamury 1961:23).

Nehru and the general elections came to the rescue of Christians. The NCCI argued that the Congress government should not play into the hands of those who were anti-Christians. With the death of Nehru, the Christian church lost a fair-minded defender. Further, the Congress party lost power several times; and communal-based political parties, who were unsympathetic towards Christians, took advantage of the situation. Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Rastriya Swayam Sevak Samaj and such communal forces emerged as defenders of the Hindu faith. They alleged that foreign Missions had set a target of converting India into a Christian country:

Large-scale conversions are taking place mostly among adivasis and persons belonging to other backward classes of the state. The illiteracy and poverty of the people are

exploited and promises of monetary medical and other aid are given to allure them to renounce their religions and to adopt another religion (in NCCI 1969:486).

The sensitive northeast India where Christians became a majority religion was barred to outsiders. But the truth was the church growth in that area was due to their own zeal and financial contribution and not to outside missionary efforts. The opposition people did not recognise this fact. Inspired by the MP government, many other states, and even the central government, also introduced the Freedom of Religion Bill. The Bill not only objected to conversions, but also threatened those who were involved with dire consequences. Many churches were burnt down and ministers imprisoned. Christian institutions faced insecurity. In many issues, the British like the Portuguese used Christianity, either directly or indirectly, to support their rule. In return, their power guarded the Christian faith from all who opposed it. They allowed prayers and Bible teaching in school, which continued in India until the introduction of a secular educational policy, when this practice was withdrawn. But while even in Jamaica this practice is slipping away, in India, in recent years, especially after independence, whenever communal parties take political power, they want to introduce Hindu *Saraswathi puja* in schools and rewrite the syllabus with more Hindu mythological stories. In some places Christian churches and institutions were attacked and they introduced legislation which not only banned conversion to the Christian faith, but the government also arrested those who baptized people from other faiths. Many feared that Christianity was a threat and would eventually eliminate the old religions of India with its genuine popularity and its varied humanitarian activities, which had been neglected by them for centuries.

The Christians cannot make too much of an issue of prejudices against them, not only because of Christ's teachings but also as a minority in India. In Jamaica, though government ministers may be Christians, they show sympathy only during elections and at other times are non-committal.

In Karnataka it created great fear among the Christians when they go out and evangelise, which they used to do earlier. Nevertheless, organisation like *Bhima Sena* decried "Christian missionary activities as fraud and inducement to lure the low caste people" (Shetty 1978:9). The Christian church began to fight this issue in the Court of Law. The Supreme Court always upheld their freedom to practise and propagate the fundamental religious rights. None of the Bills became law.

"In 1954 the Supreme Court of India upheld an official decision that the right to propagate one's religion was a fundamental one under the Constitution and belonged to everyone (citizen and non-citizen) who enjoyed the protection of Indian laws" (in Pothacumary 1961:30).

Elections also saved the church from this catastrophe. Ram Jethamalani, a present Union Minister and jurist, asked Christians to be courageous and to wait for "God's intervention". Russell Chandran formed a Christian Union of India, so that, together with the leadership and support of JC Rayan, President of the Catholic Union of India, a joint lobby could protect the Christian faith.

When the church was recovering from this testing time, there was another shock, which made Christians afraid. Many anti-Christian forces spread false propaganda that proselytization activities were being carried on with the help of foreign funds. Surprisingly, after India's independence, more Christian organisations and institutions were established, and money for various purposes poured in through Christian agencies from abroad. Even though the government was gaining valuable foreign exchange, it wanted to keep a strict vigil and control on the inflow of foreign money. Accordingly, the Foreign Contributions (regulation) Act was introduced. On August 6, 1986 the Indian Parliament published a list of agencies alleged to be violating this Act. The Government even blacklisted some of them and did not hesitate to raid their premises. Some of the insurgence activities in other parts of India were blamed as part of a Christian conspiracy. Christians became victims of false propaganda. Some Christians supported such moves because they believed:

Such dependence on the West had kept the Indian church away from the mainstream of Indian social and political life. Colonial protection and missionary paternalism prevented the Indian church from understanding its own identity and seeing its proper role in the Indian society. The dependence of the Indian church on foreign aid had only increased in recent years. Several Christian institutions and programs would simply collapse without foreign aid (Philip 1987:30)

The irony is that those who stated this either emigrated to the Western world in search of green pastures or were receiving huge financial support for their own pet projects. Some argued that

the Christian church, being universal, had a mutual mission based on the biblical principle that Christian charity can cross all barriers. But many of the people felt that Christians had godfathers in CIA agents! Because by then the USA had become a large mission supporting country, and was also trying to become a political superpower in the world.

Jamaica was safe under the above circumstances as foreign money was needed to stabilise its economy and there was no fear of conversion. Also Jamaican churches do not operate any major institutions, which drain their budget. The pastoral ministry though was not attractive enough to lure many candidates, the generosity of the congregational support helped to them augment this loss. Hence the churches are no longer dependent on their parental Mission bodies for subsidies.

During the time of the emergency rule imposed by Indira Gandhi in 1975, the church in India again underwent a baptism of fire. This drastic measure made not only the people, but also the church, fearful. The church was caught in a new dilemma. Most of the church leaders, including the NCCI, directly or indirectly supported the Indira government. They favoured and even endorsed her famous "twenty-point program" as a manifesto for the mission:

The group (of church leaders) unanimously endorsed the philosophy and rationale which underlines the program, as the church of Jesus Christ has always been concerned for and has been engaged in the liberation and upliftment of the underprivileged (NCCI 1975:509).

Under the leadership of MM Thomas, some Bangalore-based Christians and institutions began to resist this issue on the basis of human rights. They began to argue that the twenty-point program was nothing new as human welfare is the common concern. Thomas argued that "in Jesus Christ the Church represents the human dignity of all the people of India. From this angle the church's concern with human rights and with justice and freedom, is for all people" (in Sumithra 1984:66). As Thomas was then the Moderator of the World Council of Churches, even though his statements and actions embarrassed the Government, it could not take any drastic measure against him for fear of worldwide disapproval.

The Government imposed press censorship. As a result, the Christian organizations which received foreign support could not raise their prophetic voice. The Religion and Society of

CISRS, Aikya of SCMI could not bring out its journal or make any comment on current affairs, which were considered anti-national. "M.M.Thomas boldly wrote against the lapses of the Indira Government. Since there were no takers to publish his writings, however, they were circulated privately as mimeographed copies which later published as a book entitled *Response to Tyranny*" (Sumithra 1984:66).

What should be the role of the church in such a situation? Should the church respect Caesar as admonished by Jesus? No doubt political sympathy is necessary for the survival of churches where they are a minority. In Jamaica this question may not arise because of its Christian image. Indian churches mostly never hesitated to play the role of the prophets of the Old Testament. Even if its voice was feeble sometimes, it was yet heard by the government. The Christian church can still proclaim the Good News of Jesus of Nazareth, who came to proclaim justice and peace and who has come to bring Good News to the poor and the needy (Luke 4:18-19).

#### *4.3.2.5 The Church amidst communal-secular tensions*

Lately, the political scenario in India is not exactly ideal. The corruption scandals, floor crossings, the divisions among the parties have all contributed to an unhealthy atmosphere in India. The minority status of Christians also proved an ineffective voice of the community. They will not be able to create an impression at the national level because they do not have money or popular backing. At the same time, where they can make an impact, in places like Kerala, Goa and the North Eastern States, the Christian politicians behaved no better than any others. The Christian politicians in Jamaica also set a similar example. Is it possible for the Christianity to redeem the political culture anywhere in the world today like it transformed the Roman government in the past? If the "Kingdom of God" concept has nothing do with the "kingdom of the world", then the Christian gospel is not Good News at all.

However, whenever the church showed a tendency to become involved in national affairs, it invariably supported the ruling party:

In the effort to preserve its own rights as a minority the church in India seems to be losing its self hood. Hence it falls into the trap of being manipulated by the powers that be. It has



made the church a defensive rather than a positive and creative minority. It has consequently been unable to perceive events with a prophetic vision, though at times efforts were made by some to narrow the gap between their commitment to a radical faith and actual practice as Christians in a larger community (Omen in *Journal* 1985: 71)

But the climate is changing. Once during election time, a bishop in Karnataka (a foreigner) was forced to issue a statement supporting the Congress party. He was criticized by some Christians and so hastily withdrew his statement. The Roman Catholic Church used to issue official statements or give guidelines to its members during elections. But that was not appreciated by the authorities. Whatever the consequences may be, the Christian church did not miss its role in the nation-building activities.

Of late communal parties are emerging as ruling parties. They hate the Muslims and Christians and are now "taking up swords" to fight against them and the institutions run by them. Fundamental rights saved the Christians, however, though in some places persecution and burning down of churches frightened the missionaries. Though indigenous missionaries are involved in the church extension, these communal parties spread anti-propaganda that large-scale missionaries are employed and foreign money flows to India to convert the whole of India.

Because Indian Christians are not silent in the forefront of the socio-political arena, they are defenseless and at the mercy of other parties. It is generally recognized that Christians do not exercise the right to vote enthusiastically. Secondly, today the *Panchayat Raj* (local government) system provides a grassroots involvement, which Christians can use. Here they can play an effective role as they are recognized as educated and cultured people at the local level and have won their confidence and protection. Thirdly, in the CSI liturgy during the intercessory prayers, the names of the President, the Prime Minister, as well as leaders of the States are included. Most of the churches used to remember national and international events in their intercessory prayers. The united actions of all Christians seem necessary to counteract the opposition they are facing. Usually they come together only when they are facing a crisis. The churches are trying to educate their own people in their civic responsibilities and in nation building. Christians who have sought to preserve, should show that they are responsible citizens of their country by their involvement in the important national issues:

The Christian mission should always revolve around our Lord's dictum, 'pay the Emperor what belongs to the Emperor and pay God what belongs to God' (Mt 22:21). Real Christian love comes to effective fruition only through its manifestation in wider and higher forms of service to people through the involvement of Christians in public life (Jathanna 1978:359).

Sometimes God uses people like Cyrus (II Chronicles 36:23) to bring liberation and peace to his people. During the seventies when Jamaica was rocked with election violence, the JCC was able to bring two major political parties — the JLP and the PNP— to sign election guidelines prepared by the JCC. But it was Bob Marley who scored a victory when he was able to bring both the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition to attend his Peace Rally and to shake hands.

#### **4.4 THE INTERNATIONAL CRISIS**

The World Wars crippled the economy of many nations and caused considerable damage to the life of the church. Consequently, the Basel Mission became an 'orphaned mission'. As Germany was at war with Britain, the B M in India was considered also to be German and treated as an enemy. The loyalty of some of its missionary members was held suspect. It was a period of 'Babylonian captivity', which caused the repatriation of the missionaries of the Basel Mission and the appropriation of its industries. Many Indian Christians, who depended on all these institutions, were deprived of their livelihood.

After the First World War, the British Government, for the purpose of safeguarding its position in relation to non-British agencies and desiring to undertake missionary, educational or other philanthropic work in India, issued three memoranda identified as 'A', 'B' and 'C'. Memorandum 'A' basically applied to non-British Protestant Mission Societies, and in Karnataka it was applied to the Basel Mission. Memorandum 'B' was meant for the missionaries of the Roman Catholic Church; and 'C' to any foreigner who was interested in carrying forward the purpose indicated in the memorandum (Jeyakumar in CHAI 1984:119).

As a result, the Basel Mission was forced to take some drastic actions. Its German and French supporters were divided and the French-speaking group formed a committee, *Mission Suisse de*

*Secours pour La Mission Aux Indies in Lausanne*, Switzerland in December 1914. This was formed mainly to support the Swiss missionaries who remained in India. The newly formed International Missionary Council also came to the aid of the Missions. Pierre de Benoit, Lausanne committee's representative to India, had close connections with the IMC. His father-in-law was the host of the IMC conference that took place near Geneva in 1920. He met Dr JH Oldham, the General Secretary of the IMC, and sought his intervention with the British government to release help from the Government for mission work. The Secretary of the NCCI, William Paton, together with Oldham made representation to the government on the plight of the German Mission. The Anglican Bishop of Madras was appointed the guardian of the KEM and soon the properties were returned to the Mission. A missionary paid the following tribute to him:

It was Oldham's role as the convener of the Committee on Missions and Governments to back-up the efforts of local missionaries to mitigate the sufferings of the German missionaries to get them released from internment and (within their limited resources) to carry on some of their work the foreign office in London greeted with astonished relief his mandate to speak on behalf of all the main Protestant Missions (Bliss 1984:20).

When the international crisis erupted, it created missionary cooperation. The Basel Mission closed down and handed over some of its fields to others due to the war and financial crisis. It sold its valuable properties undervalued. It sought the help of other churches and sought their cooperation. While the Basel Mission congregations in Bombay were entrusted to the care of American Methodists, the North Kanara district was handed over to the National Missionary Council, who in turn passed it on to the Mar Thoma Church of Kerala. The Coorg and Nilgiris work was taken over by the Methodist Missionary Society. When the medical work was affected, Rev Sawday of the Wesleyan Methodists came forward with a generous gift. The great depression in America forced the American Methodist Church to tighten its belt. Otherwise, they would probably also have helped the mission work. Perhaps this kind of cooperation is hardly seen anywhere else in mission history. It led the Missions to live together and work together for the cause of Christ. The Wesleyan Methodist Mission sent one of its veteran missionaries, Rev WE Tomlinson, to assist the mission field in the former Basel Mission area. He brought with him his passion for evangelism and indigenization in worship. He also invited RA Hickling of the London Mission to South Kanara to introduce and demonstrate his special skill in lyrical evangelism.

Tomlinson also toured South Maratha and helped in drafting the new constitution for the KEM, which Sargant (1989:116) describes as a "significant but controversial contribution", because it gave prominence to lay leadership:

We wish to give the Indians a far fuller share in the conduct of the affairs of the mission.... We trust we shall be able to give to laymen and give to women a place in the church life, high in the KEM she is now denied.... In this country the church should be Indian in thought and feeling.

During that time, the Malabar section of the Basel Mission decided to seek affiliation with the newly formed South India United Church, which eventually became the springboard for the formation of the CSI. For its work in South Kanara and South Maratha (Bombay Karnataka), the Swiss missionaries who were backed by the new society in Lausanne requested the authorization of the government to continue their missionary work through a new body, to be called the Kanarese Evangelical Mission

In the meantime, tensions between Swiss missionaries and the supporters of German-speaking missionaries emerged. This necessitated the formation of an autonomous body for the B M churches on the basis of Tomlinson's proposals. On July 1 1927, the Mission work was retained in the hands of the Mission, which called itself as the United Basel Evangelical Mission in India. It separated its field (Mission) work like medical and orphanages and the Pastoral work. Perhaps the impact of the IMC begins to take effect here. The schools and churches were handed over to the local church bodies whom they termed 'young churches' rather than 'daughter churches', and the Indian colleagues were called 'fraternal workers'. However, it led to some kind of discrimination. Those connected with the Mission were known as 'field Mission staff'. They enjoyed certain privileges and purse for their support. The pastoral work was entrusted to the District Church Board for South Kanara and South Maratha areas which was formed with an overall superstructure of a Synod in which Malabar section of the Basel Mission (even though it was part of SIUC) found its place.

This was the beginning of the leadership tussle and infighting in the Indian churches. When the leadership was thrown open to the indigenous leaders, it posed a grave danger. Laymen desired

positions in the church administration and it led to group rivalry and tensions within the church. The Church looked like a political arena and developed a tendency for legal battle that became a cancerous sickness. 'Big party', 'small party', 'Church Union Party' were formed among the Basel Mission Christians to grab power. This phenomenon is a strange paradox, as by and large the Christians kept aloof from political systems.

The BM properties were vested in a separate trust association that was formed in 1934. In this situation when the church union issue surfaced, many thought the church would lose all its valuable property. Some of the leaders did not support the Union. They feared that in the new structure they would lose their grip, power and privileges. This led to endless legal battles, and perhaps apart from the Jacobite-Orthodox Churches quarrel, it was the longest record of judicial entanglement, where millions of dollars was spent. Following this event, the BM also imposed gradual cuts in its mission subsidy so that church could become self-supporting within few years' period. But medical and orphanages still received their support. Pastoral work of the church, but more of the evangelistic work, suffered.

However, the Indian Church in the beginning tried to show considerable interest in evangelism and mission in its own way. The Church Board formed the Evangelistic Forward Movement or *Deshiya* (National) Mission. The Christians were asked to donate at least a coin for mission work *Pie Patty*. An annual door-to-door campaign was launched for this purpose in BM churches and lay people gladly gave their best. The evangelists were placed at some strategic locations and were supported through this gift. This vision has faded in the Church today.

In recent years, Bishop C D Jathanna tried to revive the evangelistic spirit in the KCD. He launched "the Gubbi Mission, as a venture of faith to serve all people for fullness of life". The nomenclature inspired the people with the nostalgic memory of the pioneer work carried out at Gubbi by the Wesleyan Methodists. So, it generated considerable interest of the diocesan people to be involved in the mission of the church. It began to make great strides to raise funds through *Gubbi Jathra*.

The Wesleyan Methodist Mission also underwent structural changes and became the Methodist Mission in 1938. Districts were formed not only for administrative purposes but more for

evangelistic purposes. For this reason, the Mysore Missionary Society was formed, which was supported by the gifts of the Indian Church for evangelistic activities. The Hudson Memorial Church in Bangalore became the first self-supporting church. Many churches became 'Mother' churches and planted 'daughter churches.'

"The end of the Great War is the beginning of a new era" wrote an LMS Missionary from Karnataka. Due to the depleted strength of missionary staff, the LMS was forced to seek the cooperation of WMS for its institutional work, as well as to develop indigenous leadership to take the task of the church. As a result, 'United' institutions came into being in places like Bangalore, and the LMS set up the Kanarese Church Council in 1923. Another sad effect of the war was the closing down of the theological seminary at Mangalore in 1918. The students from the Basel Mission were sent to Tumkur Seminary, which was jointly run by the LMS, WMS and American Methodists. This move once again displayed ecumenical characteristics. After the Second World War, when the Tumkur Seminary faced the problem of closure owing to a lack of students, almost all the established churches joined hands in forming the Karnataka Theological College in Mangalore.

The American Methodist Church began to expand vigorously after the First World War, but the economic depression of the thirties became a stumbling block to its progress. The Church thereafter introduced a vigorous 'tithing system', which has become a feature of their move to be self-supporting. But village pastors who used to be active evangelists felt insecure because of the pressure to achieve full local support from their poor churches, and neglected evangelistic work. The Church set up a Home Mission Scheme to support evangelism and pastoral work.

Jamaican churches also faced some crisis. The Congregational Churches both in Karnataka and Jamaica grew very slowly. After 100 years in Jamaica, the LMS began to withdraw its foreign missionaries. Then, by the end of the nineteenth century, many of the locally trained ministers began to challenge the missionary hegemony. According to Rev Raymond Coke, the former Moderator of the UCJGC, in the Presbyterian Church local ministers were not treated on an equal basis with the white missionary pastors and so there was a lot of resentment. First, black candidates were not ordained to the ministry because they were considered persons of weak calibre. They were pushed to the rural areas, while white-skinned candidates were given

favourable placements. The discrimination was so high that the Scottish Mission formed the Jamaica Mission Council to look after the interests of white personnel only. However, when native Ministers were appointed to prominent churches, they were despised not only by the foreigners, but also by their own people. "No prophet is accepted in his own home-town!" To strengthen its pastoral work, recruitment and proper ministerial training was taken up and well-qualified theological colleges were established. The church also tried to give better remuneration for pastoral work. On the initiative of the JCC, the United Theological College of the West Indies took place in 1966. Mainstream churches, including the Roman Catholics have joined hands in this program. UTCWI is affiliated to the University of the West Indies. In the recent years even Pentecostal churches have been sending their students for ministerial formation.

#### **4.5 MODULES IN MISSION — MODALITY AND SODALITY: ITS SUITABILITY**

Ever since the church received the mandate for mission, it was under an obligation. It obeyed its Lord's commission to take the Gospel to all nations. It sent the missionaries who went out even to the remotest corners of the world and touched the hearts and homes of millions. The missionaries learnt difficult languages in order to communicate the Good News of God in the languages of the people. Their saga of sacrifice even to the point of death, became the 'seed of the church'. Many accepted Jesus Christ, which made a difference in their personal and community life. They adopted various means and methods to communicate and touch the lives of millions. Because of this fact, the present generation is still reaping the benefits; and has new hope.

In the beginning of missionary era, the foreigners themselves came forward to preach the gospel at every vantage point. They used 'Bazaar preaching' methods; showed 'Magic Lantern' pictures and used such other modules. Though people were attracted by this new media presentation, they served only as a means of entertainment. So, when they saw the receptivity of the people was not forthcoming as expected, they changed their strategies. They appointed national evangelists who worked under the direction of the European missionary leader. But sometimes they also followed their leadership styles and their methodologies, which was in contrast to the life style or culture of their own kith and kin. So, their own people as 'foreigners' despised them. Missionaries also stood as the vanguard for any syncretistic mixture in the gospel teaching. However, today many of the old missionary methodologies are outdated because the world is very much progressed.

Some of the foreigners encouraged preaching the gospel in the indigenous style. But while the "non-Christians" thought it was a gimmick, the new Christians were confused on the 'truth' of the Christian faith. Because the classical Indian dances and music are practiced either by Hindus or Muslims which reflected their own religious ethos; but now only the name of god was substituted for Jesus. Similarly, Jamaican cultural expressions are also associated with African spirit dances or worship. Therefore, because of the non-Christian background, orthodox Christians disapproved of such indigenous experiments. They rejected it fearing its syncretistic nature, which might lead to a 'contamination of the gospel'. Some even thought that culture is an outdated experiment in the modern world. However, by and large, the Christians are out of touch with their own culture, or ignorant of their own heritage.

But with a long tradition behind them, and with the cultural resurgence gaining grounds today, there is a need for rethinking. The churches should have no hesitancy in identifying which is real 'Christian' expression. The Church is making use of these cultural symbols and media to express that the Christian faith is not a foreign religion; but part of their heritage. Christian communication is striving to preserve true creative values in response to God's communication of Himself in Jesus Christ. It is rooted in the local soil, but everything must be built upon the incarnate Christ. The Christian cultural expression is reaching other untouched areas too — such as art, painting, and sculpture in which there are non-Christian contribution galore, and in which they are far behind. Every effort should be made to communicate Christ in the best possible manner and means. Perhaps, in this regard, a paradigm shift is necessary and urgent in all missionized countries.

Today, some dub the success story of the church as 'Christian population explosion', or 'missionary exploitation'. They allege that the church engaged not just in evangelization, but also employed poor 'proselytization' tactics. They allege the people were attracted or duped by the charitable and humanitarian works of the church hence the church has multiplied. Some even charge that the church, with the help of sympathetic governments, pressurized the people to accept the Christian faith under duress. However, though there may be some truth in it, by and large in most cases, the church followed the model and mission of Jesus, their Lord, no matter what way one may interpret that mission today. It was that zeal and love that prompted them to reach out to others. It served as the birthright and obligation of every Christian.



The missionary dimension underlines a basic principle, i.e. salvation and humanization as the objective of the church's missionary activity. Thus humanization is not a mere concept in mission history, but is part of all missionary imperatives ever since the Church came into existence. The mission was considered as an outreach, not only in terms of geographical extension of its field, but more so as a demonstration of reaching out to humanity manifesting in humanitarian outreach everywhere. It not only touched those who were spiritually poor, but also those who were economically and socially poor. They have given dignity to the downtrodden and oppressed, equality to the outcasts and livelihood to the poor. It was always the church in mission, and not missions as a separate activity of the church. Thus, mission reflects God's wholeness in Jesus Christ, which he offers for the fullness of humanity. The whole and sole aim of the church was always to provide a holistic mission. Today, the church has inherited that mission which has been modelled after Christ's own mission. Therefore, Karnataka Central Diocese (1983:2) declared:

Mission is to make a man (or a community) a complete human being.... It addresses man in the totality of his being, individual and social, physical and spiritual, historical and eternal. Therefore mission should be considered not only as a geographical extension of its field, but more- so as a demonstration of concern for humanity. These spiritual and sociological functions should touch every facet of humanitarian outreach everywhere. They should give dignity to the downtrodden and oppressed, equality to the outcasts and livelihood to the poor.

If the IMC and WCC amalgamation has a point, then the church does not need an umbrella under which to take shelter, but only a healthy heart to pump new blood! The church needs two very important life support systems, evangelism and social action, which are like the two lobes of the lungs in the human body. In the absence of even one, the church would collapse. Normally the church has adopted two structures to further God's redemptive mission and used both words and deeds to demonstrate this concern. They are the modalities and the sodalities. To some extent while in Karnataka, its influence is seen in every corner; but in Jamaica, it is very much limited. Though UCJCI has an outreach programme through the Mel Nathan institute, it looks like a private enterprise rather than of the Church. Some of the strategies of the churches through these two structures are no doubt noble, but others are dubious. While some were active and dynamic but others were passive and became money spinning agencies. Sadly they dichotomize Christ's...

mission and caused more harm than good. Many felt ashamed of the evangelization and took shelter in social action, dialogue with people of other faith, development as an umbrella for mission. So, what is the suitability of modalities and sodalities?

Though there are so many of them let us pick one or two as case studies:

#### **4.5.1 Modalities: its vulnerability**

Through educational, vocational, industrial, agricultural and medical missions the churches tried to reach as many as possible with their spirit of *diakonia*. What were their objectives? To gain converts? The Basel Mission report (1930:306) states its objectives:

First to lessen, if possible remove, the social difficulties which the caste system in India puts in the way of our missionaries while founding Christian congregations. The second objective may be called mission work in itself. Evangelization, not by preaching or direct promulgation of the Gospel but by the power of example, by Christianity in its practical every day life. It is evangelization by practical illustration of Christian diligence, discretion and integrity.

There were several important considerations, which forced the Missions to adopt this social strategy. One of them was the ethical questions involved in continuing the family trade or *Kula-Kasubu*. Some of these occupations had certain ethical questions which missionaries thought is contrary to the Christian faith. So they were despised as social evil with taboos:

Most of our converts have belonged to the cast of toddy drawers. As palm wine is not only manufactured into sugar but also distilled into brandy. This business has special dangers for new converts and might work great injury to the young church. There are also converts who were formerly devil priests, sorcerers, musicians and so on, callings or profession which are entirely incompatible with Christianity. Other occupations such as those of fishermen, barbers are exclusively in the hands of certain castes. And until the Christian community is strong enough to afford employment to such converts it is almost impossible to find work or a market (Mullens 1913:67)

But to what extent have these mission projects served the cause of evangelization? Earlier, some missionaries showed their reservations and were opposed to industrial mission. They preferred direct evangelism to social action. At the same time, some opposed any attempt of evangelization through institutions and even resigned from the mission job. There was conflict between the ordained and lay missionaries on this issue (Wilson 1980:103f). In 1852 the Basel Mission, which was struggling with this dilemma, appointed an Industrial Commission, which stated:

On the one hand, to instruct the converts from the heathen, in the ways of a truly Christian management of their earthly trade, to train them to purposeful use of their time, to intense diligence in their jobs and to frugality in their lives, and finally to instill in them the Christian virtues pertaining to citizenship (is the church's duty). On the other hand, the aim is also to help them achieve a better life and - as far as feasible- to assist them with the establishment of their own independent trades (Fischer in *Wholeness of Christ* 1985:22).

In many of the Christian enterprises and institutions, community prayer formed part of the daily exercise. But employment never served as an inducement for conversion. However, there is no denial that these establishments had a great impact on the people. According to Jathanna (1955:30),

Christians exercised a good influence on their fellow workers. Non-Christians felt the manner of life in which they saw the native Christian workers was, far better than their own lives..... Always in these places work commenced with the reading of the word of God and with prayer and all the employees attended this.

It also developed lay leadership within the church, on one hand, but became a breeding ground for church politics and divisions.

The Missions also did not neglect the weak and unskilled persons - the blind, the lame and the widows. It provided suitable job opportunities that helped the weaker sections of the community. Following the European example, the Christian institutions introduced a six days a week and ten working hours a day schedule, which made the workers industrious and disciplined. The labour-management relationships were also cordial. Since the labor union or communist influence was

absent among the workers at that time (and also missionaries were heads of the church), there was some kind of subservience or dependency. Some even have described it unfairly as slavery.

However, this agenda also raises several questions. First, this kind of charitable mission touched the poor and the downtrodden and gave some living standards and equality in the society. But it also made the converts depend on their Mission bodies, which even now continues for the third world churches. Secondly, the Christian principles or ethical standards come in the way of developing entrepreneurship and secular businesses. Although Christians are skilled people, they have remained an economically poor community. In Jamaica, some orthodox Christians do not like fellow believers to open shops where liquor is sold. Thirdly, since acceptance of the new faith meant the loss of a job, denial of a share of the ancestral property, excommunication from the caste and the loss of profession associated with caste bias, Missions took the task of rehabilitation and more industrial enterprises were developed (Wilson 1980:92). This was more evident in Karnataka than Jamaica. Christians in Karnataka have failed to prove themselves successful in business ventures. Out of compassion, the Missions also provided certain basic amenities, like housing, which developed into Mission compounds or stations and made Christians parochial.

#### • **A CASE STUDY: MISSION THROUGH EDUCATION**

India was famous for its level of education from the days of the Indus valley civilization. The *Gurukul* system and Nalanda and Takshshila universities were the hallmarks of this civilization. But the education was reserved for the ruling class and children of the priestly castes. However, the modern education system no doubt has been the legacy of the British Raj and missionaries have played a complementary role.

The contribution of the nineteenth century missionary work with regard to language, culture and literature is still regard as superb by the people. The literary movement of the church has been of such immense value and has even drawn compliments from non-Christians to the missionaries: "We Kannadigas have to remain grateful to them and not ungrateful creatures. The growth of present Kannada and its literature has the patronage of foreign missionaries" (Huilgol 1962:12).

Apart from imparting general education, the Missionary societies also pioneered women's

education, which was denied in India earlier. Wilson (1986:109), quotes the Mission report - *Harvest Field* - which says: "Christianity when first introduced into India, found women neglected, ignorant and downtrodden and it entered upon the difficult but noble task of improving, educating and evaluating them." The Wesleyan Missionaries also published a monthly magazine called *Mahila Shakti* (Women's Power), not only to educate women on vital issues like 'Sati,' Remarriage of widows etc. but also to prevent women from being exploited.

The LMS even contemplated starting a Christian university at Bangalore at the beginning of the last century. It never materialized, however, and resulted in the recall of the concerned missionaries to England in 1826 (Sargant 1984: 147). In the educational mission, WMMS enjoyed full support from Hindus and Muslims who organized a mass signature campaign in Mysore requesting the missionaries to impart English education. The church was first to open a College in Mysore as far back as 1901 -Hardwick College. This too was closed down. Maharajas of Mysore supported this venture whole-heartedly

The BM won the credit in South Kanara district for fostering the highest literacy percentage in the whole of Karnataka. The Mission opened schools in every village where they had a small congregation. In fact, they experimented with a new type of ministry. The church building was used during the weekdays as a school and most of the teachers also served as village evangelists. This was not only a good economic measure, but also a good social strategy in that it kept both the premises and personnel active all the time. It was a good concept of stewardship! Instead of wasting millions of rupees on a church building where activity lasts only a few hours in the week, and appointing a full-time Pastor for only a few families with limited activities. This move was a wise one.

In Jamaica, the government supported the missionary venture to impart education due to the non-cooperation of the planters. Then they yielded little, but with ulterior motives: 'these institutions should inculcate respect for and submission to superiors while keeping children out of mischief'. Therefore, primary schooling spread slowly and touched most people only superficially. Williams (1971:70) quotes the author of the history of Jamaica who wrote: "Learning is here at the lowest ebb: there is no public school in the whole island, neither do they seem fond of the thing:... The office of the teacher is looked upon as a contemptible character; to read, to write and cast

accounts is all the education they desire, and even these are but socially taught."

And so educational aid developed only after emancipation, but slowly. "In 1834 at the time of emancipation there were only 7 primary schools in the island. In 1860 it rose to 460. In 1883 only 22,000 Negroes out of the quarter million in the island could write. 1892 made elementary education free and this boosted literacy to twice what it had been in 1866. But, as the government gave low priority to this issue, it did not cross the secondary level" (*Sunday Gleaner* 3-8-97:5A). By 1900 the church had established all the primary schools in Jamaica. Today the church operates many higher secondary schools.

The Basel, Wesleyan and London Missions were also responsible for introducing printing technology and a publishing programme. Apologetic books as well as literature and tracts denouncing the evil habits of gambling, alcoholism were produced. Their prophetic voice helped the people to lead a decent life. The printing presses were seen as a great instrument for spreading the Good News of the Christian message through printed tracts or books. But today the publishing houses are on the verge of bankruptcy. The Missions were also responsible for the publication of the first newspaper 'Mangalore Samachara,' 'Vrithanta Patrike' and others. The purpose of these papers were to get in touch with people and to let them know about the Christian faith as well as to mould public opinion. Thus, they aimed at liberating people from many of the traditional practices and customs, which the missionaries found culturally and socially backward (Wilson 1986:104f).

In Jamaica, publishing any book is a costly affair, and therefore, very few attempts were made in this field. In addition, the market is saturated by American and European publications; hence, local authors hardly have a market.

One of the finest contributions by the American Methodist Church was in the area of adult literacy, which has taken a back seat at present. Though adult education is needed in Jamaica, the church has not taken a keen interest in this field. It allowed the Jamaica Adult Literacy Council to do this work. However, many of the old folks know Bible portions or hymns by heart, hence the church did not venture into this field.

The great famines and floods of the last century in India left many children as orphans. In order to provide them with shelter and a livelihood, Missions opened the boarding homes and orphanages. This not only gave a livelihood but also indirectly contributed to the development of Christian homes. The Tumkur Boarding Home Centenary Souvenir (1977:6) records: "One of the characteristics of this work was, when the inmates reached marriageable age the boys and girls from their boarding homes were brought together in marriage, and new Christian families were formed. They were also provided with a house, some land a pair of bulls and some tools to start their life together!" Though UCJCI also operates two Boarding homes- for boys and girls, they operated with no such motives, moreover reaped such results!

In recent years, many institutions and some foreign philanthropic childcare organizations have come forward to sponsor specialized ministries and offer educational welfare program in India with the help of generous overseas foster parents. This has been a great boon to a number of children and have given them hope for the future. Many institutions have been opened. In Jamaica nobody has made efforts to explore such possibilities, though it would have been a blessing to many poor children whose families are struggling with the high cost of education. It is commendable that most of the funds in UCJCI were solicited through the philanthropic members of the church. Hence with such limited support no new institutions could be established. Although this foreign aid has some serious sociological drawbacks and also scandalized diocesan financial affairs in India; yet, one cannot underestimate the benefits many of the youngsters received from such programs. In these activities, it is not just Christians who were the beneficiaries, but also children belonging to other faiths. Because of the broadminded policy of the donors, there was no attempt to convert them, and so the society is at ease.

An important breakthrough achieved by the Christian institutions in India is in the area of caste-class problems. In their institutions, churches never made any distinction between rich and poor people, or between high or low caste people. When Brahmin students refused to sit along with others and threatened to boycott classes, missionaries were even prepared to close down the schools rather than allow such social segregation to prevail. The Basel Mission had Ananda Rao Kaudinya, a Brahmin student, with Thimappa an outcaste as his Teacher. But in other parts of India, the caste system created havoc within Christian schools and institutions. Today, colour has no real influence in Jamaica, as all are equal. The poor students do face an uphill task, however,

to gain better education.

Until independence, Bible teaching and prayers were part of the educational pattern in Christian schools in India. Most of the parents and students appreciated this as it gave moral and value-based standards of life. The Bible was not only considered as a piece of the best English literature but also as a moral guide. So, neither 'the *Raja* (the king) nor parents of the children ever objected to prayers and teachings of the Bible which held a prominent place in the curriculum' (Wilson 1986:68). The imparting of religious values and moral education served as a major stimulus in shaping the social revolution in India.

But when Independent India adopted secularism, the opportunity to impart such value-based education was lost. Perhaps that is why the youth are exposed to dowries, drugs, drinking habits and other evil practices. However, in spite of the religious background in Jamaica, where schools begin with Christian prayer and Christian education forms part of the curriculum, the drug abuse and some evil practices like -Satanic cults, are raising their ugly heads in schools. The students even bring knives and guns to inflict injuries on fellow students. The room for teen-age pregnancy in the educational institution has spoiled the fair name of the institutions.

In India, in earlier years, some Christians, who were employed by the government and in the public sector, bore Christian witness through their dedicated services and moral integrity. Today we see a dearth of persons of such caliber both in the Church and in the society. Jamaica also faces a similar predicament. The Christian church seriously thinks of imparting moral values and of moulding ideal Christian lives through the educational system. In this regard the attempt of the Roman Catholic Church in education in Jamaica is praiseworthy. It adopted a 'ten year plan' and urged: "The overall purpose of the plan is a spiritual renewal that by 1992 will develop the People of God of the Archdiocese into a Church truly and fully alive" (Osborne 1988:435-6).

To what extent have the above projects helped in the proselytization? To what extent have these institutions served as channels for evangelization in the past and now? No doubt both in India and Jamaica, Christians once stood on the highest pedestal of literate among others and recognized as a forward community. They were employed in the highest posts in the government and industrial world. But education was never used as mere bait to induce others. The governments



also did not encourage such practice. For example, even in Jamaica, in 1852 the English Government took a firm step:

A ruling was given that no financial grant would be paid to any school unless a "Conscience Clause" was inserted into the institution's constitution. This ruling guaranteed to any child attending these schools the liberty of absenting himself from religion classes should tenets contrary to his faith be taught (Osburne 1988:417).

This trend was evident in India also. There is a difference, however, in values between Jamaica and India today. In Jamaica, there is no need to make educational institutions 'means for evangelization', but only to use them to serve the cause of education whether it helps the church or not. Through a chaplaincy programme, the church tries to reach to the students, but not with any eye on the gains. But we cannot fail to notice that the old ecumenical agencies, like the Student Christian Movement, folded up in Jamaica, as it failed in its mission to the student community; while the Evangelical Union is also limping.

In India, on the other hand in a non-Christian world, this ministry and mission is quite different. The Wesleyan Methodist report (1936:12) records; "there is no doubt that schools and colleges in the past have rendered yeoman service in the cause of the evangelization of India. And in the future too, they could be used for Gospel work if only the Christian workers in these schools, are filled with a steady zeal and stand firm in this noble calling."

This cannot be a correct perspective of the past, nor a right prospectus for the future. For, when Missions started schools and colleges in India, many felt Western education would undermine the very philosophical foundation of other religions and pave the way for widespread receptivity to Christianity and the successful evangelization of India. In fact, a pioneer of collegiate education in India, Alexander Duff, believed that in educational institution he was planting a time bomb, which, when it went off, would shatter the rock of Hinduism. True enough the bomb has gone off, and its effects are seen everywhere in India, but it did not affect non-Christian religions in India. There are very few converts from these institutions. Paradoxically it shaped some of the finest leaders of India from non-Christian backgrounds! Thus "Christian colleges actually contributed to the strengthening of Hinduism and Islam while simultaneously weakening the power of

Christianity to draw and win them" (Pothacumary 1969:111).

Besides, after Independence, the Christian institutions in India faced another grave situation. They lost the dedicated spirit of the missionaries. Consequently, examination results deteriorated, as did standards of education and other extra-curricular activities, such as sports, for which Christian institutions used to be well known. The brain drain of dedicated Christian teachers and the falling standards in most of the Christian institutions are shockingly irrevocable. At the same time, quarrels within Christian circles have marred the Christian witness. In fact, in some places they have become the breeding ground for church divisions and corrupt practices which have affected the life and witness of other Christians. English-medium instruction has become so popular in India that even non-Christian schools have adopted the 'convent education style'.

At the same time, the Christian involvement in the education field has stirred others so much that today almost every community has established numerous educational institutions. In fact the non-Christian institutions are overtaking the Christian institutions in the matter of good results and better facilities. Today, we can only sing the glories of the past Christian Missions! Most of the institutions (particularly Protestants) have remained the same structurally, and economic constraints have added to the problems. Therefore, seeing all the above situations many have been questioning where has the missionary spirit in the Christian institutions gone today? Thus the Christians have lost a vital front!

After the missionary era, the achievements of the Christian institutions appeared as a past glory. Protestant educational institutions suffered setbacks due to lack of finance, forcing some to close down or be handed over to others. They became big liabilities of the church. When some of them recovered, they made several efforts to upgrade their schools and turn them into full-pledged colleges. Thereafter, many of the old high schools were made junior colleges. On the other hand, Roman Catholic institutions with vast resources continued to grow. Though in terms of gains in respect of 'winning others' to Christian institutions they are still prestigious institutions. The RC Dioceses even established 'the Chair of Christianity' which enabled the teaching of Christianity at the Universities of Mysore and Mangalore, which otherwise is barred because of India's secular policy.

There is still some old missionary appreciation in the minds of the public who crave admission to these prestigious institutions. But in order to maintain them, the church started taking donations and employed illegal ways to raise funds. Under such circumstances, as well as on account of the system of grant-in-aid of the government, should the Christian church still hold on to the responsibility of maintaining the educational institutions at all cost? A wise counsel from a distinguished Christian educationist is worth noting here:

We must remember that education is the responsibility of the Government, and it is the duty of the secular government to make provision for all citizens. This must be specially noted in the context of primary and high school education. Secondly these institutions should be run by the Christian educationist and not by ecclesiastical heads (Someshaker 1969:32).

Today, the Christian students face another disadvantage. They are not able to advance to the level of higher or professional education because of the high cost involved. Education is becoming competitive and commercialized, and also privileged due to the State's reservation policy for castes. Therefore, churches should either form united institutions, or the church should think of subsidizing their education, seek the support from philanthropic agencies as well as set apart special funds to help deserving Christian students.

#### **4.5.2 Sodalities: its viability**

In recent years the world has seen a great thrust in missionary venture; and exciting reports about the church growth comes from Africa and Asia. How this has happened? A closer look may reflect the age-old missionary venture attempted once again. According to Karokaron (1978:23): "Terms like capturing, recapturing, triumphs, conquering, winning etc., which are not uncommon in the missionary adventure of the colonial period in India." The evangelically minded churches that tried to recapture the vision of mission in such an aggressive manner repeat them. Some like-minded Christians and organizations vowed to make this type of evangelization an everyday and everyone's business. They utilized aggressive names like 'Every Home Crusade', 'Operation Mobilization', 'Campus Crusade', 'Teen Challenges', 'Youth for Christ' etc. this purpose. They launched vigorous evangelistic activities with or without the help of any local church; but with the

support of foreigners - especially devout Americans. Surprisingly, except for Youth for Christ, very few other Sodalities have made their in-roads in Jamaica. Perhaps Jamaica, being already a 'Christian country', makes this kind of aggressive mission redundant.

Most of these organizations are functioning like 'sodalities', which were described earlier. Surprisingly, with the Independence of India, instead of their suppression, we can see them mushrooming. No doubt they are engaged in serious, faithful and often fruitful evangelistic activities. The evangelical churches and devout Christians with an evangelical leaning support them fully. At the same time, quite a number of faithful lay Christians expressed their faith in and support for them. Because they felt these organizations were instrumental in reviving and recapturing the ancient evangelistic spirit of the Church. They reposed their confidence because they saw in them the Holy Spirit's new initiative for the evangelization of the world. Commending this type of mission, Theodore Williams (1984:23), the then President of WEF, states:

The Lord of the church, who is also the Lord of the Missions, raises up para church missionary movements through the faith and vision of individuals or groups of individuals to cut their own channels and carry on their task of reaching the unreached because they believed firmly what was God's will for His people.

While we can gladly accept this missionary vision, some lacuna can be seen in their ventures. They are fully backed by the foreign support in which the opposition political parties cry fault. The strategies, which they adopted in most cases, raised suspicion regarding their sincerity. No doubt they project a lot of success stories. While some tried to exploit the gains, others engaged in duplicating the work. Some tried to touch the sentimental chord of pious liberal hearts of Christians in the West, so that money would be poured in in the name of God uninterruptedly. In the name of evangelism they used mass-media techniques to project a dubious picture of Christ to capture hearts here and abroad. Many of them produced inflated statistics. The evangelical Christians of the West, who were fascinated or satisfied that they helped the cause of the Gospel, liberally support them. For this purpose, they operate multinational agencies similar to the operations of multinational business corporations. Even some evangelical leaders are suspicious of their operations:

In many areas multinational Mission agencies are being perceived as hindering and even preventing the effective Mission of the Gospel in the context where they operate... Their over-riding commitment is to maximize the marketability of the Gospel. Their sales approach reduces the Gospel and runs counter to the spirit of incarnation (Samuel & Sugden 1981:449).

Bangalore is the headquarters of various organizations and self-styled preachers. Evangelical campaigns by both nationals and foreigners take place every now and then. The representatives of many Mission agencies come to the country as 'tourists' because of government restriction on missionaries or denial of work permits for that kind of work and abuse the public platform.

To some extent, this trend, without exception, is seen in Jamaica also. 'Crusades' are the hallmark of almost every church. However, in many of these meetings, it is a mere gathering of Christians, and of those who are born again and again in different churches! In addition, most of these meetings are advertised as 'healing' meetings to lure the crowds. The organizers also try to gain the patronage of church leaders and tried to show their credibility by organizing 'pastors conferences,' but cooperation of the established churches is often not forthcoming. At the same time some take strong exception to such evangelistic strategies and criticize them. How far are mission and evangelism advanced under the aegis of these system? Let us examine one of them.

- **A CASE STUDY: THE BIBLE SOCIETY**

The British and Foreign Bible Society was one of the products of the missionary era. While it was primarily it designed to meet the needs of devout Christians as their spiritual food; it soon became a means for evangelism also. It was founded in 1804 in London; and its branches were established in India at Calcutta in 1811 and at Bellary in 1818. It became an independent entity in 1944. In Jamaica, it was part of the West Indian Bible Society and was established in 1812. It became autonomous in 1967. In India the Bellary branch merged with the Madras Auxiliary, and in 1878 became an independent Auxiliary, which is known today as the Karnataka Auxiliary. Even though the Kannada speaking churches were under different Missions and in different geographical locations, yet they fall under the umbrella of the Bible Society. All of them came have together and contributed to the translations and revision of the Kannada Bible from time to time. Even today

almost all the denominational churches use the same Bible, to sow the seeds of the Gospel, and supported the Bible cause wholeheartedly.

The Bible is the book of the church as well as the Good News to the world. While it serves as *manna* - it also provides the bread of life for others. It is also considered the 'double edged sword' (Heb 4:12) for the conversion of the people. Hence, it is one of the most effective instruments of God's Mission. Therefore, Bible Societies adopted a strategy of the translation and wide distribution of the Word of God was its fundamental duty; in order that 'everyone may have the Word of God in their life-time, in their own language and for a price which they could afford to pay.' However, in recent years, it looks as if this spirit has evaporated. Christians neglect the Bible and majority of them do not think that it will touch the people and convert them. Then, in the name of linguistic or biblical scholarship, various translation projects in various languages including in Kannada have surfaced; again with the help of foreign agencies. The churches also shown their preferences to various translations made by some of the evangelically minded scholars. This led to confusion in the churches where various versions are used and in the minds of the faithful on its authenticity and its uniqueness as the Word of God. This also made the Muslims question the validity of the Bible. Mass distribution of scripture portions also has provided room for a more quantitative rather than qualitative value of the Bible. According to the Bible Society of India, Karnataka Auxiliary, the scripture circulation during the last 110 years in Karnataka as follows:

1875 - 1974 : 11,130,939

1975 - 1985 : 57,900,030

Total : 69,030,969

In other words, in the last 110 years, according to the Bible Society the distribution figure of Holy Scripture is more than double the population of Karnataka! At the same time, we cannot forget an anomaly, that is, the literacy rate of the state is only 33.35%; and the Christian population remains the same—between two and three percent. Likewise, the Jamaican statistical figure reveals that in 1996 alone, it distributed 2.2 million units of Scripture, which is close to its population figure!

David Barret (IBMR Jan 1997:24) in the annual statistical table on Global Mission 1997, shows this irony "Out of the 600 million scriptures distributed annually by the UBS," its report laments, "we are doing a better job in reaching out to Christians than we are to non-Christians. Most of our effort is actually therefore to the people who have been reached by the gospel already." If this is true, then how can we claim that the Word of God is a popular book? How far is it being used as 'the seed' that will enable us to gain a greater harvest? Sometimes the Bible Societies magnified its small isolated gains as if it is a great success story. The only redeeming feature in the Bible Society's ministry is that, unlike other multinational evangelistic agencies, the Bible enjoys considerable support, some of it sentimentally, from almost all the major denominations. The Bible is still the only base which unites all churches in spite of all doctrinal divisions. That support includes Roman Catholics also after the Second Vatican Council. For this reason, it has been described as: "An evangelical movement a social movement, a missionary movement, an ecumenical movement and a lay activity movement of the church" (Metzer in UBS Bulletin 1981:2).

The Bible Societies, however, do not receive enough official support or mandate from the churches for their evangelistic thrust. Because, structurally, the Bible Society is an independent organization in which individual membership forms its basis. At the same time, because of its recent strategy to distribute scripture as a means for evangelism, it took the distribution of Scriptures into its own hands with marketing skills which promoted a 'commercial' outlook that has killed its original evangelistic fervour. Without the proper machinery for follow-up, or church support, this gigantic operation has produced only statistical figures! If the Bible Society could change its structure and functions, it could become the cornerstone of the churches.

The Bible Society Constitution stipulates that no Biblical portion be circulated with any kind of notes or comments. But recently it has developed an evangelistic approach which includes scriptural portions for special audiences, such as Muslims and victims of drugs, dowry and other social ills. Time and time again it has brought out Biblical messages on various issues, like justice and peace, freedom and human rights as being relevant for our time. Christians, it seems, have not yet realized that God's word not only speaks to them but also to the modern world and to the crying need of the society. Christians hardly come forward enthusiastically to share God's Good News with others and participate in giving the Word to the world.

Despite all this, the philosophy of the Bible Societies around the world to foster mutuality in mission is praiseworthy. Bible Societies have joined hands in this global task through an excellent arrangement of the United Bible Society. The world service budget enables every society to share their contribution in the global fellowship and draw their share according to their need and programmes whereby they would reach the people. Although this is an exemplary partnership model, local Christians are unconcerned and lethargic about it. According to statistical records, the local contribution from Karnataka during the last 110 years was only Rs. 1.2 million (or Rs 12,31,197), whereas in 1985 alone the total operational cost of Karnataka Auxiliary was Rs. 1.8 million (or Rs. 18,14,121). Likewise, in Jamaica, though the total indigenous support was nearly 0.5 million Jamaican dollars, it was admitted by the General Secretary that it contributed only about 5 to 8% of the of the budget in 1996. Dependency on foreign support is very dangerous in the mission of the Bible Society.

After the Second Vatican Council, the Roman Catholic Church has shown interest in participating in the Bible Society's mission and ministry, but mainly in the inter-confessional Bible translation projects and to some extent in the scripture distribution. As a result, in 1996, the common Bible for the Kannada speaking Christians, an inter-confessional project, was released. This is significant, because the Catholic Church, for the first time in nearly 500 years, is going to have its Kannada Bible. Sometimes Catholic interest in the Biblical apostolate has surpassed Protestant churches, except in financial support to its cause.

For the effective execution of its mission, the Bible Society is seeking solidarity with all the churches. This would result in much enrichment and also helpful to bring together the Churches for common exposition of the Word of God, perhaps unity in mission will see a new day to bear a united witness to Christ. Then only can it become a modality for mission, and provide enough toll for evangelism. It need not then remain in its sodality structure for

Missiology has always been considered the task of the church to articulate the biblical foundation of missions. This had been a regular feature of traditional Protestant/evangelical Missiology. Roman Catholic Missiology too in the wake of its famous biblical renewal has realized this in the midst of this century (Spinder in *Mission Studies* 1986:51).



accessible like any consumer product with a push button system. Not only Christianity, but recently Hinduism, entered cyber space by opening a home page to the web browsers. In that action, unlike many Hindu temples in India, which still exclude low castes and untouchables from *darshan* (viewing the God); but also performing *pujas* (worship), the internet has become an open temple without any walls or restrictions. The church also has not failed to use this modern media to reach the people with the Good News of Jesus, even in the farthest corner of the world. It has become a meaningful and useful means to touch the lives of many who would not otherwise hear the message of salvation. We can be sure that "God's word will not return empty; but will accomplish its purpose". The only thing is that it should speak to people in their own language and to their hearts. There is no need to twist its paradigm in this way.

- **A CASE STUDY: MEGA MASS COMMUNICATION MEDIA**

Mass communication is the gift of the modern world. It has made the world a global village where no event passes unnoticed. There are no barriers which exist between any nations, as it provides educational as well as entertainment to all types of audience. With the new computer technology and electronic revolution, the world can now be reached far beyond man's wildest dreams.

Today, India is scientifically and technologically well advanced nation. It is estimated that nearly 85% of India's population is covered by more than 500 TV stations and 160 radio stations. Besides, more than 10,000 cinema houses provide entertainment for about 15 million people daily. They screen over 500 films, which are produced annually in different languages touching millions of people in both rural and urban areas (Zachariah 1981:80).

In most Indian movies images of Christians are rather badly portrayed. Christians are depicted as villains, drunkards or bootleggers and cheats. To add insult to injury, some of the films and dramas, which are directed by Christians, have hurt the feelings of other Christians. Added to that, Hollywood movies which saturate third world countries project rape, violence, divorce of so-called 'Christian people' of the Western world. The soap operas, which capture the daily audience at prime time - once used for family prayers - picture life as if there is nothing good to display. Other modern media, like the internet, rather than being an aid for educational purposes, have added still more evil to the media.

Christians in India are not in a position to erase this bad image. Because of the difficulty of commercial viability, Christian films are difficult to produce. Those who ventured, have had their fingers burnt at the box-office. Christian production cannot subscribe to cheap and vulgar popularity either. Some producers tried to pick up Christian themes for their commercial movies. But in order to attract the crowd they were loaded with other cheap gimmicks, hence they lost their values. However, films like *Karunamayi* (Merciful Lord) based on the life of Jesus and produced by non-Christians became popular because of their touching appeal, but they never become popular as box office success hits. It is also reported the film *Jesus* produced by the Campus Crusade for Christ has massive audience throughout out India, though it was a Western production, but dubbed to Indian languages. In Jamaica, film production is not a regular commercial enterprise. But what they have produced also falls into the same category as Indian commercial movies. In Jamaica, the Conservative Christians also despised the dance hall or the Reggae music; though sometimes Jamaican worship displays the same characteristics.

There is a general apathy and feeling of aversion or prejudice in the minds of many Christians about the 'celluloid screen'. Many despise it as sexy and too unethical and ban them. Not only the films, but also film stars or those who are in such an industry are rejected by the Orthodox Christian society. Hence many Christians do not venture into the field. At the same time, paradoxically, Christians welcome some of the films produced in the West, in spite of all their shortcomings, and believe they have religious value for the Indian mind! The Christian church should evolve plans to educate the people and to produce films which will remove prejudices from the minds of both Christians and non-Christians. The church should attempt to present qualitative Christian values.

India is a secular country. Officially, it does not support any religious propaganda. Occasionally, especially during the festivals, Doordarshan or All India Radio broadcast Christian programmes. But the government has given licences to many Christian agencies to operate from India, but to broadcast their programme from other countries. Therefore Christian agencies should make use of the Christian agencies, like 'Far East Broadcasting Associates' (FEBA), Trans World Radio and Christian Media Center (CMC) for this purpose. Karnataka Christians are aware of the ministry of these agencies functioning in Bangalore and they participate in their various programmes. Some Christian agencies tried to use Radio Ceylon, which is very popular, but could hardly afford to

use it as the cost involved is very high. But most of the audience for this program, are only Christians. The lack of publicity as well as apathy of the people for Christian program is not serving its purpose well. Besides, they are operating from outside the country, and sponsors who are conservative evangelicals have rigid policies and control on the programmes produced. In most of the programmes, audience reaction has not been respected due to this parochial outlook. Even many Indian leaders are followers of conservative or evangelical policies and so do not take any steps to meet the people where they are. Hence, only stereotyped programmes are produced. The Christian communication system should be attuned to the culture and spiritual values of India, which should reflect other human and social aspects. And above all, due to lack of understanding between these agencies and the churches no follow-up work has undertaken and the fruits of their labour are lost.

## **4.6 THE CULTURAL SHOCK**

### **4.6.1 Inculturation**

It is true that after nearly 2000 years of missionary endeavor and Christian presence, there is a general complaint that in spite of its numerical growth, Christianity has not gained much in depth. Especially in terms of its identity or the indiginity, it is not deeply rooted in the local soil; but still reflects its connection with America, England or other European nations. It is more evident in India as Christianity existing amidst Indian multireligious looks like a potted plant brought to India by the foreigners. Added to that, dependency on foreign funds still gives more to this impression. Smith (1988:44) who describes this phenomenon in his book, *Real roots or potted plants* states:

Over the centuries of Christian missionary activity, the Church in the Caribbean has remained a potted plant, which has managed to survive in the little containers in which it has been brought from the nurseries. It has not yet taken root in native soil. It is either used as a means of finding compensation, reassurance and legitimization, or rejected as one of the structures of domination and oppression.

No doubt "whenever the gospel is introduced to a new culture it comes as a foreign import, associated with foreign habits of thought, with foreign methods of working and with foreign ways

of worship" (Grant 1961:1). These criticisms are genuine and call us to look in retrospect and renew our image. Therefore, the church needs flexibility, adaptation, translation, inculturation (some call it enculturation), contextualization, indigenization and so on, ins hort the gospel should be incarnated in the soil; and it should be baptized in our cultures.

"Indigenization means to be rooted in Christ but related to the soil" declared the 1952 IMC Conference. It is not the destruction of the faith, but enrichment of our faith and the demonstration of our faith, not as an alien religion but as part of our soil. Samartha (1981:81) states:

The plurality of cultures, religious and social systems is not new in human history. Within the church recognizing that it is catholic and not monolithic, the plurality of customs, ecclesiastical structures, theological formulations and ethical attitudes has been generally accepted.

Does indigenization aid the mission of the church? No doubt it makes the church at the local level as focal point in the matter of evangelization. It should be also helpful to the quest to find God, who can become the redeemer of the society, and as the transformer of the community around. It gives a public image of reconciliation or recognition or even a compromise formula with other religions. And it also fails to offer something 'new' that Christian church can offer. It makes everyone to be complacent in their own circle rather than to seek and search for truth in religious experience. De Nobil's and Cinnami's experiments in this regard give ample evidence of this fact.

There is a very interesting commonality between Jamaica and Karnataka, namely that in both places a simultaneous 'great revival' took place in 1860s. But its impact had a lot of differences and also contradictions. In Jamaica, it created a hybrid type of plant - the emergence of Spiritual Baptists with a mixture of Christianity and other African indigenous religions. They reflected a synthesis between old African culture, their symbolism and other expressions such as shouting, rolling, dancing, dreams and visions, with the Christian message of deliverance from sin and suffering.

No doubt Jamaican culture is also a mixed phenomenon hence it is difficult to point to

authentic Jamaican presentation which reflects an African or American background. There is a crisis of identity in the Jamaica churches. Though the Congo drum has made its entry into some churches, some of the orthodox people miss the silence or dignity in the church service. However, the irony is that many of the churches still follow European evangelical pattern or adopted what Hewitt (1994:122) calls the "pipe organ church culture". In some churches, Jazz music and Western instruments have replaced or co-exists with the Pipe Organs. As a result, the traditional hymns have given way to others in which people participate joyfully with dancing mood. The churches are tuned to choruses as part of the revival process. "Praise the Lord", "Amen" echoes and reechoes in the worship services, sometimes used rather wrongly. Those who still hail from or cling to the Reformed tradition, frown upon such expression!

The UCJCI felt that liturgical renewal was necessary. So some liturgical dances were introduced in the church for the enrichment of worship, which some despised as "an exhibition of women's anatomy". Also, when there are strong reservations about the loud music and bodily movement outside, to create the same pattern at the worship was rejected by many. That kind of presentation either related to the dance hall or the Spiritual Baptists. Besides, the dance hall music is associated with the new cultural ethos or carnivals. In all this 'cultural craziness' the churches cannot forget that they are Jamaicans first and that is the 'land they love'.

In Jamaica, theologians like Smith, Williams and others feel keenly about making the Gospel relevant to the soil. They plead for the adoption of an authentic 'Caribbean theology' and not 'Black theology'. Smith (1990:13) urges:

Caribbean theology aims at producing a new Caribbean person with a more healthy self-concept. This Caribbean person will have a more positive approach to self-development and community development; will be less susceptible to the high-powered sales techniques of the exploiting business enterprise of the North; will be more capable of maintaining a rational approach to marital and sexual responsibility; will be more productive at the work place, feeling less alienated from the productive system; will be more capable of partnership on a global scale, having a greater sense of assurance in interacting with peoples of other regions and other cultural, political and economic orientations.

Jamaica by and large rejected black theology and opted for the 'Caribbean theology' to give a new identity. It reflects their cultural background drawn from Amerindian, African and Asian heritage with lexical and idiomatic form of their own. That is why many rural people are at home with Patois usage at the ordinary worship than the "Queen's English" of the established churches. Besides, the ordinary Christians in Jamaica are more concerned about biblical absolutism than theological relativism. That is why the ordinary preachers with all their dramatization attract more attention than Jamaican theologians with all their philosophies. Though the challenge of the black power movement has gained ground, the Church felt that the theological quest should address other issues that confronted the young Church, rather than the colour of Jesus. However, the Rastafarians emerged as a symbol of that power than the church

Does this phenomenon show the depth of cultural heritage that is deeply rooted in our blood? Today, more or less the same phenomenon has been grafted with American neo-religious movements. But they are considered the 'influence of the Holy Spirit'. Some orthodox people may sway to the new mood of worship, but they will neither acknowledge that it is due to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, or that the mood is inherited in their blood! One of the great problems is the influence of the evil spirit or demonology, that people find it very difficult to distinguish between the evil or the Holy Spirit! Therefore demonology is still a recognized factor in Jamaica. But people who are so immersed in the dominant Western culture reject it.

Whereas when the revival took place in Karnataka, especially in South Kanara district, the people who came out from the society that was influenced of the (evil) spirit, were frightened to go back to their old practices. So they isolated themselves from their ancestral roots, but immersed completely into the new culture of their European missionaries. But it gave them solidarity with the rest of the modern world.

Is cultural expression is helpful for the mission of the church? Sometimes it can be very dangerous. For example, in Jamaica, there is a new cultural sweep that is taking place with the introduction of the dance hall. It is music and movements in which a heavy drum beat is used and Jamaican Patois is laced in the form of a chant or chat. The lyrics run the spectrum from sociopolitical issues to the sensual. It never fails to move the feet and the hips - in fact, whole body - in a fast tempo and hence is called a "vortex of vibes and vibrations". It projects the theme

of sexuality in a glorified form. Introduction of Carnival in the recent years added to its wider acceptance. Therefore, when Christian worship with jazz type music and dance was performed in the churches, it raised eyebrows. Those who were brought up in strict Presbyterian or Anglican traditions see them as 'cultural prostitution.' In the same manner, because Indian dances are associated with Hindu temple worship, Christian adaptation of it is still viewed with suspicion.

In Jamaica, people of many nations brought their various backgrounds, norms and values as we have seen in an earlier chapter. When they brought a religion, it usually reflected the cultural heritage of the people or the nation from where they originated; and when they became dominant, they tried to submerge others. In Europe, with the majority being Christians and the culture and Christian religion embedded for so many centuries, it was hardly possible to distinguish between the two. So when the missionaries came to a country like Jamaica, they had no problem in imparting "Euro-Christianity" because it was considered the "superior religion" of the conquerors and the planters. They gave their own name or the estate name (and even nicknames) to their converts as 'Christian' names. Though the majority of the people in Jamaica claim Afro-Jamaican identity, missionaries thought of Africa as a dark or poor continent. Therefore, Smith (1990:10) states

Caribbean reality has a number of features which constitute its uniqueness as a historical, sociological and cultural phenomenon. These include the dominance of the culture of the plantation; external and economic control; the enduring spiritual and psychological consequences of slavery and indentureship; transitoriness and 'Missionary Christianity'.

Sometimes we are colour blind in our perceptions. We create God in our image, then have to remember God created us in His image, and we can identify him with our spirit. In that sense, Rastafarians in Jamaica with their strident anti-white rhetoric have created a 'black God'. However, in that process they have chosen Ethiopian Emperor Haile Sellassie, who was not black but a Semite, and even rejected the local black hero, Garvey. Likewise, some Jamaicans today even are influenced by the nation of Islam's leader- Louis Farakhan, in spite of his emphasis on the Islamic faith.

But at the mount of the transfiguration, neither Moses nor Elijah stood between Jesus and the

disciples. Neither their color, personalities nor greatness came between the Cross and the glory. It was God's manifestation through Jesus that caught their attention and reverence. It was the rejuvenated and true vision of Christ that Peter saw. Likewise in our mission, though we might have changed our perception from salvation of souls to a humanization process of the bodies; from articulated vision of the living Lord to many gods of others; from the evangelistic spirit to general theological formulated statements, we cannot miss the message of the fulfilment of God's purpose for humanity. Moses and Elijah stand for that fulfilment with the cross of Christ in the centre. They show that the law and the prophesy can find itself only in Jesus Christ.

When Christianity reached India, the missionaries thought that they should have an aggressive approach to suppress the strong traditional religions which they encountered. Therefore, they banned many cultural expressions in Christian worship because they were associated with Hinduism. Even the names of the people were changed, because many were associated with Hindu gods and goddesses. Instead converts were Christened with 'Biblical' names like John, Mary and even Caesar and Cleopatra, which were considered Christians! However, the anomaly produced by such changes was that the native people also received foreign trade names such as 'Shepherd' 'Baker' and so on, instead of their own Indian trade names like Achar and Shetty!

Today the Hindus as a foreign religion are challenging Christianity. But they too do not hesitate to copy others or Western media. They too adopted Christian mission pattern and conversion began to increase on their side also. The Muslims began to gain more converts than the Christians in India. It is not because of their universal appeal, universal brotherhood and a universal God. But with the discovery of 'black gold' (oil in the Middle East), the Muslim nations began to prosper and also support the propagation of their faith. Islam began to spread into some of the Christian countries - recently, a mosque was built even in the Christian citadel - Rome; and a temple at Jamaica. Likewise, there is a strong rejuvenation of the Hinduism all over the world which rekindled their mission. It is reported that more than 2000 Hindu temples have sprung up in the USA alone in recent years. Even the churches were converted as Museums and Theaters.

Obviously, in the West, the missionary sending churches of past years, have themselves become the (missionary) receiving churches today. Because they lost their missionary vision and passion. Secularism and materialism have eroded the spiritual life of the churches in the West so much, that...



churches are 'empty'. Indian god men like Sri Sai Baba, Rajneesh staked their claim as saviours of humanity. The Ramakrishna Mission, the Hare Krishna Movement and Satya Sai Baba have all won followers in the so-called Christian countries. Sexism and modernism which influence modern youth gave birth to the hippie movement.

At the beginning of this century, the advent of communism threatened the church. The Russian revolution shattered the naive optimism and self-effacing style of the Christian church. The two biggest countries — the USSR and China — were dominated by communism, which influenced the neighbouring countries, like India, and other parts of the world. The close relationship between the Soviet Union and India has resulted in the Communist ideology penetrating India, and the labor movement was impressed by it; and even some state governments, like Kerala, ruled by them, in spite of its strong Christian influence. Though Communism influenced neighbouring Cuba and its sway had an impact on the Caribbean, Jamaica was spared. Of late, the Indian government also has come under the Hindu communal party- Bharatiya Janata Party.

#### **4.6.2 The dilemma of the Church - being universal and local**

Today the Church has become an universal entity. As a result in Missionized churches we can see Presbyterian worship with German songs -even national anthems; English code of 'discipline' among the Weslyans; American life style among the Methodists; candle lit altars at the Anglican Churches, and Roman vestments in the Catholic churches in Karnataka and Jamaica. No doubt all this will unify the Christians everywhere. However, it leaves the question of the identity of the church at the local level or in indigenous culture. Though the new Church CSI designed some new clerical habits and the Bishops have saffron colour vestments to resemble Indian asceticism, yet, the style is still Western! On the other hand in the UCJCI, the church still shows that it has a European hegemony. It still uses European Hymn books, has no liturgical style of its own and even has no common liturgy or hymn books. In spite of the hot climatic conditions, a variety of Geneva gowns have become the sacramental vestments which shows lack of uniformity in UCJCI. Roman Catholicism till recently with its connection with the Latin Mass and with Vatican connection also endorsed the foreign image.

The emergence of a truly authentic Indian church with its identity has yet to surface. Although the

CSI liturgy is considered one of the best, it still does not reflect indigenous features. In rural areas some indigenous methods are used, and some churches have made bold approach in this regard, but these are just minimal. Therefore, the Indian churches, especially the Roman Catholics, began to search for their identity in the process of indigenization. But with the lack of knowledge of the indigenous culture, the Christians have not been able to distinguish what is right and wrong. So, when the church introduced new ways and worship patterns through adaptation of indigenous form, but though it gave an indigenous image, it deprived the image of the universality of the Church. But this indigenization reflected something of a syncretism, especially of the Hindu religion. Added to that, the proposal of dialogue with our neighbors also brought suspicion in the minds of the faithful Christians.

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of India, which felt that the need for planting an authentic Indian church, demanded some reconsideration. They desired that the church should be reformed and renewed in the Indian context. They issued the following guiding principles to adapt the indigenization system:

A deep respect for a Christian message and cult, research in more prominent or common element of non-Christian rituals and ways of worship. Deeper study and instruction on the inner meaning of the liturgical worship should be our goal. Particularly the role of the liturgical signs through which the whole life should be committed to participate in the mystery of Christ must be explained to the faithful. However this instruction must go hand in hand with the cultural experience of a true and meaningful worship (Amalorpavdas 1968:8)

A National Biblical and Liturgical Center was established in Bangalore with D S Amalorpavdas as Director. It conducted experiments, organized orientations and workshops to inculcate this reform. But suspicion is still written large in the minds of the Catholic Christians even to this day.

The battle between the traditionalists and the reformers created tension and confusion in the churches in India. The clergy and laity both criticized the indigenous introduction in the worship. In the new liturgical renewal process, the readings from the non-Christian religious scriptures and other sources added more fuel to the fire. Some accused this practice saying "the Holy Bible was

made poorer". Some pointed out that the universal solidarity of the Church was lost in the narrow parochial regionalism. While some welcomed the inculturation saying "it creates an Indian atmosphere of worship through postures, gestures, objects and symbols typical of Indian religious traditions"; others criticized it vehemently saying, "it is an introduction of Hinduism and syncretism and a curious mixture of Hinduism, Protestantism and Catholicism an example of inter-confessional, inter-religious syncretisms". But Amalorpavdas (1973:48) argued: "In order that the local church has to be missionary and announce the gospel, we must understand the reality of India and within that reality spell out the church's role and function."

After the Second Vatican Council, the Roman Catholic Church replaced Latin with the local language (the vernacular). The Roman Catholic Church introduced the indigenization of its liturgy in India. But it has created "confusion of thought among Christians who are led to think that evangelization is superfluous" (George 1971:17). Another important feature of indigenization was the introduction of regional languages instead of Latin, which was the universal trademark of Roman Catholic worship before. However, this rocked the Archdiocese of Bangalore, because of its multi-linguistic metropolitan characteristics. As we have seen earlier, many factors contributed to the emergence of the Tamil Roman Catholics to form the majority in this diocese. But the formation of the new States on the linguistic basis made, Kannada Christians claim superiority and a prominent place in the Mass of the Church, although they are in the minority. Even the authority of the hierarchy was challenged as no Kannadiga was appointed to that post until 1987. Although the Mangalore Catholic priests were appointed as prelates and installed in many of the Karnataka Archdiocese, they were also considered as non-Kanndigas because they spoke Konkani language. It not only split the faithful, but also marred the Christian witness, to a great extent.

In Jamaica, some tried to experiment with Reggae music or dub poetry. But it is not appreciated because of its association with the dance hall artistes. Though the churches used the choruses in their worship and sing and dance to its tune, people associate such moves with the dance hall or Spiritual Baptists or African religious practices, about which they have reservations. The Jamaican people ignored the Negro spiritual which once depicted the agony and ecstasy of the black people. The Jamaican church has to rescue itself from its European image and should rediscover its identity and solidarity with its past and its own background.

#### 4.7 THE CASTE-CLASS CONFLICT

The caste system and communal interests are an eternal curse of India and also remained in many of the Indian churches. While it is still maintained elsewhere, Karnataka churches are far from it. There may be some sporadic events or issues in this respect; but they are a minimum.

In Jamaica after independence, the church faced the danger of losing the sympathy of the mass of under-privileged people from Afro-Jamaican community. One of the situations that prompted this was the clothes. While the members who belonged to the old established churches showed their aristocracy, the ordinary people felt that they "cannot conform to the strict jacket-and-tie convention of the respectable churches". Johnson (in IRM 1935:345) points out that "one of the commonest excuses given for non-attendance (ordinary people) at the traditional churches was lack of suitable clothes."

This partly explains the popularity of revivalists meeting in the bush, where the worshipers wear whatever clothes they please (or, very often, whatever rags they may possess) without having to conform to the strict jacket-and-tie convention of the respectable churches; and where they are encouraged in their worship to make use of non-European cultural tradition (Jay in IRM 1962:471).

It is surprising that in spite of the hot Jamaican weather conditions, Western-style clothing has found superiority and also as a cultural format of the Christians! But today this process has been reversed. In many of the traditional mainline churches in Jamaica, people dress casually, whereas people of the rural or ghetto churches, go to the churches with full costume and hat!

This class conflict in Jamaica resulted in tensions within the society - between the lower class people and the middle class people. It also added to the decline in membership in the mainstream churches, and the emergence of Rastafarianism, as well as various other sectarian churches. "Tele-evangelists" began to capitalize and emerge as the new champion of such people especially in the urban ghettos. With the emergence of the American Missions in which Adventists and Pentecostals have gained grounds. Byfield (*Sunday Gleaner* Feb 25, 1996:4D) writes that "these churches are growing in spite of their conservative nature, because they provide answers to

questions of ultimate meaning; and believe in a God who has power and clout. Whereas liberal churches have a weak concept of God." According to Smith (1993:33f), "Pentecostalism is a social phenomenon which has become a normal part of the Jamaican landscape. Found in the vicinity of sugar estates, outside large industrial complexes, on the fringes of urban centers and in the slums of alleyways of small towns Pentecostalism draws its support from transient groups responding to economic and social conditions. It is not merely a religious phenomenon but a response to prevalent social attitudes."

A few years ago, the JCC under the sponsorship of the WCC, arranged a Consultation on the theme: 'The Life and Mission of the Church in the building of a new Jamaica'. One of the important features of this move was the coming together of churches of different traditions, not merely to talk but also to spend time in seeking solutions to the problems of Jamaica by putting aside denominationalism. Although unity is still maintained on the surface, it is alleged that many of the churches falling outside this parameter, are still rapidly growing, mainly because they cater to the needs of the poor and downtrodden.

In the matter of ministerial formation also the church practiced class interest. During the colonial era or when the Missionary Society were in control, there was discrimination among the church workers. Many nationals were kept only as 'evangelists', and never given pastoral responsibilities. They also had a system wherein the first few years of ministerial formation should be spent in the evangelistic field. But today very little interest is shown for the appointment of evangelists, or sending them to the field. Immediately after their studies, within a year the candidates are ordained and made 'ministers'.

There was another problem. Because of the low salary paid in the third world churches, very few come forward to serve the churches. The congregations who belonged to higher class in the society also despised them. So some of the churches employed less educated people and provided some basic theological education. But it added more insult to the injury. This also led to the problem of providing another shallow foundation in the Christian faith and people began to drift to other churches. Some churches adopted some short-cut methods. They used lay people not only for preaching (some with no training at all) but also in the sacramental functions of the Church. This was sought to ease the heavy demands on the limited available ministers, as if the

churches had grown leaps and bounds. According to the Reformed tradition, that step was in conformity with the 'priesthood of all believers'. In Jamaica there was also a brain drain of ministers. Many of the ministers who went abroad for higher studies did not return to serve the church because they found green pastures in the West.

So under the guise of new vistas of mission, foreign missionaries were again invited. This time the former LMS, which has now emerged as the Council for World Mission and has become rich endowment, has become the facilitator of this process. The churches historically connected to the LMS, like Jamaica and India, were used to develop mutuality in mission through sharing of people, ideas and money on the basis for partnership in mission. Though the CWM attempted a new formula of sending, receiving and sharing the mission, on the contrary it went against to the moratorium principals accepted world wide. The missionaries were used for pastoral work. The Mission bodies acted like rich god-father with a generous purse. In the name of Mission, the Western churches grew rich as they continued to raise money in the guise of supporting local missions. They continued to dole their support to their former churches for various projects. So, under economic constraints of the developing nations, stewardship practices of the local churches suffered.

Today though the theological colleges upgraded the ministerial status by granting degree-oriented education, and the churches are offering better stipends, this situation has not eased in Jamaica. At the same it also led to an adverse situation No one wants to go to the rural congregations because they are an uneducated lot!

The CSI closed its door to foreign missionaries because of government restrictions. In spite of the fact that it sent its missionaries to other countries through CWM, it had forgotten is own missionaries or the mission cause. Jamaicans hardly sent missionaries through CWM, and when they sent, it was only to the first world churches. and not on the basis of so called "South to South". Again, a lot of discrimination was practiced in missionary treatment of the first and the third world.

#### 4.8 THE CRUCIAL ISSUES IN ECCLESIOLOGY

In 1810 Carey wanted a world Christian leaders' gathering at Cape Town in South Africa the centre of the world. But no listened to him, and mission remained a disunited efforts. Thereafter, between 1840 to 1910 it is estimated there were about 828 meetings- national and international meetings took place around the world to foster unity among the warning Christian church. But a world church remained a distant dream. Why is this so?

The Reformation was good, but the outcome of it was the division of the churches. Thereafter, no church had any common ground that is acceptable by the whole Christendom. Though the outstanding feature common to all Christians is that they have One Saviour and Lord- Jesus Christ, and hold one common Bible, no church in the world truly agrees on a common Creed, worship pattern, sacraments, constitution, structure and theology. Though down through the centuries the churches, especially the ecumenical movement in the twentieth century, tried to bring together the churches of different factions, and to bring a common consensus, except in agreeing on the following formula, it hardly brought the churches together to agree on any religious precepts. It cast doubt on whether any church union efforts can last forever.

The Ecumenical Movement created a great stir in the Indian Church where its need was keenly felt. The Indian Church was preparing for such a movement a long time before. "A conference of missionaries was held at Bangalore in the year 1879 at which 118 Christian's workers, fourteen of them Indians, were present. For the first time detailed discussion of the possibility of a Church of Christ in India in which western denominational differences may be forgotten, was heard at this meeting" (Neil 1964:540). Perhaps the voice of the receiving churches was rather feeble during that time. As such, no important plan was developed. But eventually, this desire saw the emergence of the Ecumenical Movement in the twentieth century. It is however, interesting that while the Ecumenicals supported church unity for the sake of mission. But it did not realize 'evangelization of the world in our generation,' through this emerged the modern ecumenical movement. Surprisingly, the evangelicals also did not see it as a helpful formula for the purpose of evangelization. While people like McGavran and the Fuller Seminary faculty felt that the functioning of the Church of South India proved that point, Konrad Raiser, the General Secretary of the WCC in his book, *Ecumenism in Transition* said that there was "a paradigm shift in the

ecumenical movement" also which upset its goals. Raiser (1991:5B) posed a question concerning the goals of the Ecumenical Movement:

The juxtaposition of the various functions and goals conceals the unresolved tensions. Is church unity, the promotion of human community in justice and peace, or the spiritual, missionary and ecumenical renewal of the churches the foremost goal of the ecumenical movement?

The division of Christians not only poses a theological problem but also a stumbling block for faith. In many of the nations like India, where the Christians are in minority, they faced threat from their own people. It forced them to seek unity in mission for their survival or to develop common witness in mission. The churches in India and Jamaica paved the way for this realization. The church union brightened the scope for mission. However, by and large, they remained more or less like a mirage of the mission.

The scandal of disunity can be mitigated but not removed. Is unity of the churches necessary for their own survival or to save it from the opposition it faces? The ecumenical movement was not able to solve this dilemma for it was only a superfluous structure. So organic union was sought as an alternative. This raises an important question. At what cost should the unity be achieved for the sake of mission? Regrettably, "they (unity and Mission) exist in polar tension. Unity realized at the expense of missionary outreach results in introverted stagnation and mission realized at the expenses of unity results in fragmentary dissolution" (Philip 1987:43).

We must note that although the 'comity' arrangement was worked out in India as far back as 1902, it did not help in the advancing of the spirit of evangelization, but at least it developed cooperation among the mainline churches. However, with the invasion of sectarian churches, this small gain also disappeared. The ecumenical spirit later developed and brought the churches together; but it helped little in the growth of the church through the evangelism process. Although the Ecumenical Movement was inaugurated with the impressive slogan —*The evangelization of the world in this generation*— the agenda about evangelism in mission remained on the periphery.

During the ecumenical journey it was strongly felt that the denominational structure of the church



was a stumbling block for the mission of the church; and therefore the churches must be united. No doubt this was a right and timely realization. So, alliance of the churches was sought as an alternative mission module. But in many instances this dream did not realize; as any of them wanted to give up their structures or leadership positions.

The picture of the Protestant churches is very complex. The wide spectrum of its division makes the task of unity all the more difficult because

the Protestant Christian community was made up of people who had accepted faith, where Protestant missionaries brought the practices from the West. Thus they faced a major problem of identity as a community of people drawn from many different backgrounds and communal identities can be made one. In addition, they had embraced a faith which had not yet become a part of the Indian cultural milieu; a faith that necessitated conforming to western forms of life and worship. The problem of identity was further complicated by financial dependence, since most of the Christians came from economically backward classes and were unable to support themselves or their ecclesiastical structures. They also had to receive guidance and instruction in the new religion from people of an alien culture (Singh 1980:105).

At the Edinburgh IMC Conference of 1910, the great Indian leader, Azariah pleaded that 'there can never be real progress unless the aspirations of the native Christians to self-government and independence are accepted, encouraged and acted upon'. These hopes and aspirations led to a meeting in 1919 of 33 Indian church leaders with only two foreigners present. The famous Tranquebar Manifesto pleaded for unity as the first priority for the mission as a matter of survival as well as a matter of responsibility. The Indian church realized that 'united they can stand; divided they fall'. This important goal for union was crystallized when the Indian leaders stated:

We face together the titanic task of winning India for Christ, one fifth of the human race. Yet confronted by such an outstanding responsibility we find ourselves rendered weak and relatively impotent by our unhappy divisions, divisions for which we are not responsible and which have been as it were imposed upon us from without, divisions which we did not create and which we do not desire to perpetuate (Sundkler 1954:101).

The people of India refused to be divided in the name of Christ. "The men who carried the union negotiations knew that in the face of the vastness of the missionary task in South India the divisions among Christians was an open shame and impediment" (Ward 1953:13). Bishop Azariah's powerful oft-repeated plea was "church union in the west may be of academic interest; but it is a matter of life and death with us here in India living as we do in the midst of a vast non-Christian population". Eventually, step by step, this hope and aspiration moved towards its fulfilment. The Anglicans, the Methodists and a United Church of the Presbyterians and Congregationalists came together. They met at the Hudson Memorial Church in Bangalore for their first meeting, between the March 18 and 19, 1920. Describing this event, Bishop Sargant (1987:xiii) says, "this profoundly affected the history of the Christian church in India and made the ideas expressed by J.C. Winslow in his IRM article on 'A Vision of India' real." With this missionary vision and obligation the quest for unity of the church began in earnest. This dream was finally realized when the Church of South India was inaugurated on September 27, 1947 within 50 days of India's independence.

When the Church of South India was inaugurated, for many - both inside and outside - the church looked like an 'ecumenical marriage' with an option for separation by mutual agreement if things went wrong. But this alliance has stood the test for the last 50 years, although many times its internal unity has been at stake. Today, it has projected itself as a very strong church with about 3 million members in 11,000 congregations spread across 21 dioceses, which include one in Sri Lanka. At the fifth Synod, Bishop Sumithra (1958:7), who hailed from Karnataka, emphasized:

In spite of all the failures, God has blessed us abundantly in our Church. In spite of the disputes and divisions, the Church is one, our former differences are dropped forever. We are no longer known as belonging to a foreign mission or church but to the Church of South India. This land is ours. This Church is ours and we are Christ's. God has united us. We will stay together and grow together. The Tranqubar Conference also gave a clarion call for unity throughout India.

As a result many joined hands in union negotiations because when the CSI was formed, it maintained that it was not completely a 'United Church' but rather a 'Uniting Church'. Having taken into its fellowship various churches, it kept its door open for wider union:

From the very beginning, the CSI made it clear that when the next step came to be taken towards the final goal, that is a single church for India, it would be prepared to die in order to become a real living part of a real church of India. It determined therefore to engage itself in an unflagging attempt to widen and strengthen the fellowship between itself and its parent churches to work towards the goal of full union in one body of all parts of the church of Christ (Paul 1972:8).

Later, the American Methodist Church, the Mar Thoma Syrian Church, the Lutherans and the Baptists in the South and seven other denominations in North India began their pilgrimage in search of unity. The Church of North India was achieved with more churches coming together in 1970, after prolonged and agonizing moments. But, after this Union, no tangible merger took place. Instead, some kind of councillor union was formed as an alternative for Church Union. It provided only a sort of federation but not an organic union. In 1978, a joint council of the CSI, CNI and the Mar Thoma Church was established and that moved towards conciliar unity. Explaining its features, Chandran (1980:76) says:

It is in the background of this ecumenical discussion and consensus about the integral relationship between conciliar and organic unity we have to understand and interpret the joint council of CNI, CSI and Mar Thoma Church.... In spite of such differences and diversities they have a relationship with one another which is one of the most basic dimensions of unity, namely a common faith, mutually recognized sacraments, ministry and membership. The joint council has been extended to give visible expression to this inner unity acknowledged by the three churches.

As a result of this move, the Joint Council meets at least once a year. Intercommunion takes place and the names of the heads of the churches are included in the intercessory prayers during liturgical worship. There was also a proposal to name this Confederation "The Bharat Church" to search for its identity in India. But many rejected it because they feared their denominational identity and heritage would be lost.

One of the great achievements of the CSI is the ability to submerge the denominational spirit. By and large throughout CSI unity is seen though very few maintain their denominational tradition.

But in the UCJCI, generally, denominational identity is kept more or less though people tried to forget about it.

This ideal spirit of unity has, however, been rocked several times by internal strife and squabbles. Every now and again it is stated that evangelism may be more effectively fulfilled in accordance with the prayer which Christ prayed that by the unity of his disciples "the world might know that he had been sent to be its Saviour". But that idealism has remained a mirage in the CSI. The linguistic and leadership crises, millions of dollars being spent on litigation, financial scandals, caste and color discrimination and administration lapses have all made CSI Christians bow their heads in shame on several occasions. The police intervention in house of worship, open fighting on the church premises has openly challenged Christian witness. Court litigation's are not confined only to sociological issues but also on spiritual matters like the ordination of Presbyters and even consecration of Bishops. They have made Christians a laughing stock in the face of the general public. Mockery of Christian witness took place by performing religious services at the roadside or in a park in protest against hierarchy. No doubt they caught the eye of the press and the public, but for utter shame of Christian faith and practice. The public statements or yellow journalism also washed the dirty linen publicly. In all these infighting the churches have forgotten their fundamental duty.

The CSI also took another wrong step. In places like the Middle East or the USA, where there are very few CSI Christians, it established its own denominational church. The CSI once gave a glorious picture that it was the church in communion with others, but this parochial action showed that union was unfortunately not in its essence.

The Tranqubar manifesto clearly stated that the purpose and nature of union was 'to fulfil the evangelistic calling of the church.' This has been enshrined in the CSI constitution very clearly. Even larger dioceses were divided into smaller ones with that clear mandate, so that the bishop can give 'effective leadership' for evangelism. This was given as the reason for the division of the Mysore Diocese in 1970. It declared that 'from the point of view of pastoral care and evangelistic concern, a diocese needs to be small enough to share a common purpose'. But the division created more chaos or the leadership struggle took a more prominent place in the church more than task of bearing witness to the gospel. Today they hardly speak about the evangelism but more about

the litigation in the civil courts. In the matter of the appointment of the Bishops the church dragged the spiritual overseership to the judicial court presided by a non-Christian judge and asked his opinion on its faith and practices. In the election of the bishop's as the spiritual head of the church, the public image of the church has been completely disgraced. Instead of engaging in the mission of the church, the endless court cases and open challenges have made a total mockery of the Christians. Commenting upon the struggles and quarrels which Bishop Sargant depicted in his book, *From Missions to Church in Karnataka* (1987:207), Newbegin in its Epilogue states:

The story of the quarrels, the disputes, the court cases have long been a feature of life in the Indian church and still, alas disfigure it. It is right and necessary to acknowledge this unhappy element in Indian church life. But it is right also to remember that underneath it all, generally unreported, the life of thousands of local congregations goes on day after day, often marked by wonderful evidences of the work of the spirit who has never left the church in spite of its sins. All who have shared in the life of the church of South India know, with thankfulness to God, that this work of grace goes on and has never ceased (Sargant 1987:207).

No doubt the ecumenical movement and in particular CSI has inspired church unions around the world. Between 1925 and 1971, about 57 unions of churches were consummated involving some 164 churches in 28 countries. However, when the CSI or CNI failed, in Jamaica these hopes were kindled. Though there was no political or external threat in Jamaica, in 1965, the Presbyterians and Congregational Churches in Jamaica found it necessary to form the United Church of Jamaica and Grand Cayman. Originally five churches were partners in the Church Union negotiations but they withdrew with the exception of the Disciples of Christ who showed that union is still possible in the world. Together with the UCJGC they formed the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands in 1992.

Hewitt (1994:38f) says, "the formation of the United Church of Jamaica and Grand Cayman in 1965 made it the first trans-confessional union of Churches in two English speaking Caribbean nations". He further cites various factors that contributed to that Union. First and foremost, the churches continued to look to the mission bodies for the support of the foreign personnel; but also for their own existence. Because the local workers were poorly paid, many people did not come

forward for ministry in the church. Though Hewitt (1994:56) points out that "the leaders saw union as a way of ensuring that the Church would become economically viable," it was not. Worst of all, mission or precisely evangelism has to fight for its survival. He also states- the nationalistic movements that was inspired by Garvey, the independence movement, dependency of the churches on foreign personnel and money, lack of stewardship principles in the churches, the influence of American Missions, the emergence of Rastafarianism and so on. The UCJCI also showed its spirit of ecumenism in a splendid way. It could have established its own churches wherever Jamaicans lived as expatriates, but tried to reach out their own people through the 'Farm Workers Mission Program' with the help of other established churches in the USA and Canada.

There are some interesting differences in the church unions of the UCJCI and the CSI. When the Church Union Commission in Jamaica appointed by the five constituent bodies prepared the first draft of the 'Basis of Union', it was rejected because there were some theological disagreement and administrative matters. The Moravians wanted the concept of 'bishopric' which others rejected. In the CSI the episcopacy was accepted as 'historic' but was connected 'in the constitutional form'. This gave the CSI a recognized place in the ecclesiastical world, especially in its standing with the Anglican churches of the world. The Disciples insisted upon Believers (adult) baptism. Though the CSI made provision for such a practice, as there was no Baptist background in the CSI, it never came up as an issue. The Wesleyan Methodists did not want to give up their heritage and link with their own Churches in the Caribbean. So also, the American Methodists who first showed interest in India, kept themselves away because they would lose the inflow of financial gains from the USA!

However, there was also another feature in the Jamaican Union. There was no dissenting party in the union and it was smooth sailing. In India, on the other hand, dissension is still carried on in one way or another, resulting in lengthy court cases and costing millions of dollars. That is mainly because of property issues. For, in Jamaica full integration including property took place, whereas in India, many churches did not want to part with the mission properties. Also in most of the churches old denominational traditions and worship pattern is merged, in some of the churches the old system still persists. The elections in the diocesan council or Synod are the norm of the CSI and Indian churches, which sometimes projected ugly partisan picture and competitive

spirit. But in Jamaica there is a symphony in the synodical affairs. In Jamaica, the UCJCI makes stewardship as basis for its mission and ministry, and that venture is dynamic. But the Indian church still exhibits its dependency on the foreign funds.

However, Union does not look like a helpful forum for the mission of the church. The UCJCI looks like a dying church as its official statistical figure shows membership of only about 14,000 in 1997. Paradoxically, when the UCJGC was formed in 1965, it had 147 Congregations with about 15,000 members. But it shows only a marginal increase now. When the UCJCI was formed in 1992, it was stated that its membership was around 20,000 spread across 200 congregations, which includes the congregations in the Cayman Islands also. The Church is not serious enough to look into this deteriorating phenomenon while caught up in raising money for its survival.

In the beginning, the CSI sent missionaries to Thailand and Papua New Guinea. From Bellary, Rev. Sathya Joseph and Sister Jyothi were sent out as missionaries to those places. Within Karnataka, the church operated Talvadi Mission and supported other missionary programmes of the CSI. After the formation of the Council for World Mission, missionary exchange programmes are being facilitated to third world countries. When the first Mysore Diocesan Council met in June 1948, Bishop Gurushantha reminded the delegates:

The early missionaries, Indian ministers and evangelists spread the good news throughout our province. They were the real fishers of men and they had to struggle hard and made tremendous sacrifices to bring men to the feet of our Lord. These early Christians after experiencing peace of mind and assurance of salvation, became fishers of men and brought their relatives and friends to the light of the Gospel.

His successor, Norman Sargant was a Methodist missionary, who was known for his zeal and enthusiasm for evangelism. Once again the Diocese reechoed the evangelistic task of the church. The Diocesan Council (1952:3) recorded: "In the work of evangelism, the diocese, it is happy to note, that it has been active this year. Our Bishop has been able to give direction and encouragement for the work to be carried out in the future which if it is helped will before long bear much fruit for the glory of God and for His kingdom."

But as the days went by, interest began to fade. The Renewal and Advance Committee set up by the CSI Synod to review its performance in the first 25 years, warned that by and large in the Church of South India,

evangelism has come to occupy a minor place in the life, thought and activities of the Dioceses. There has been a slackening of the sense of commitment to the Christian life and task and the sense of vocation has gradually become weak among both ministers and laity (Paul 1968:43).

All the noble ideals of church union disappeared into the thin air of vested interests and crooked practices. Recently, the General Secretary of the CSI admitted its failure by saying "the time of mass conversions is over". But he said, "there are anonymous Christians who number hundreds and thousands". If this is true, then this should raise an important missiological question. Is Christian obligation only to preach the gospel? Or is baptism also a criterion in the mission of the church? One redeeming part of the mission in India is that, although by and large Christian witness was tarnished or Christian presence was quite often submerged in administration priorities, in the midst of lukewarm treatment of evangelism, many lay Christians still believe in it.

Ever since the CSI was formed it has never forgotten the contribution of missionaries. So whenever leadership was needed, it did not hesitate to make foreigners Bishops. In one hand it created the impression that Christianity in India still dependent on foreigners. On the other it is rather ironical that many first world churches, though speak about the world mission, yet do not recognize the contributions of the third world people to their church.

Owing to government policy, overseas personnel and support was almost reduced to a trickle in India; and due to Mission policies in Jamaica. It made the local Christians to bear the burden. While some took that challenge ungrudgingly, others who have grown with Mission psyche, thought the church does not need their support. So, the local church faced a big crisis on self-supporting and overdraft increased adding liability to the church budget. Some cut their budget and the first victim of that move was the mission budget. To meet the financial needs, valuable properties were sold and some ventured to develop them. But financial mismanagement or lack of business experience of Karnataka Christians made the church bankrupt. Then stewardship



education developed which forced the people to give more, which some did with reluctant.

Some Mission bodies argued against supporting the daughter churches, because of their newfound love as partners in the world mission. So, the CSI took a noble decision. It urged Mission bodies not to support its old allies, but to pool their support to CSI as one Church; so that it could be distributed according to the needs of the whole church. Though this system was a novel idea, it snapped the link between the parent Mission bodies and the daughter churches. As a result, a new generation may forget its ancient heritage as well as the saga and sacrifice of their old missionaries. However, in the name of mission, foreign money still flows into the coffers of the indigenous churches is damaging is slowly growing self-support strategy.

For the church to be authentic, it should gain its self-hood; it should be self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating the Good News to other people of the marvelous things God has done for them. This proclamation of the Good News is the central task of any church. The difference between Jamaica and India may be that Jamaicans know who Jesus is and what God has done for humanity through him. For the Indian counterparts, there may be little or no knowledge at all about him. Therefore, if Indian Christians do not have anything to proclaim, is it necessary for them to live amidst multi-religious society? And if they have a Good News in Jesus, can they keep quiet or sit inside the church without sharing with others?

Finally, we must recognize that the church is militant and triumphant! The church could be saved from internal strife if its main preoccupation was mission and spreading the good news of Jesus. It should look forward to the mission field and not inward to its own self-needs or image. Therefore, the church in Karnataka or Jamaica should make every efforts to bring home a living awareness of its responsibility. To be in mission, as declared by the Second Vatican is:

As the members of the of the living Christ incorporated and configured to Him by baptism and through confirmation and Eucharist, all the faithful are duty bound to work together for the growth and spread of His Body to bring it as soon as possible to fulfillment' (A G No.36).

#### 4.9 THE DEBRIEFINGS IN MISSION STRUCTURE

Among the creations of the missionary movements were denominational and interdenominational Mission bodies. They raised funds for mission works in distant land, recruited missionaries and trained them. They became the channels of church extension in all the six continents of the world. Later, they stood as vanguards to the younger churches when they took shape in their soil.

Although these churches existed over centuries, yet the churches in the Mission countries were ambiguously and indiscriminately called them as the 'Younger Churches!' The so-called 'mother' churches thought they are now old to pass on their responsibilities to their 'daughter' churches! However, like young nations, the church also faced many challenges or overburdened to take additional burden of mission, to shoulder this responsibility to their own people. Later another type of discrimination in the status of the church began to surface. Some churches were branded as the 'church in the South' the 'church in the third world.' On what basis? Purely on the basis of their economic conditions and not on the numerical strength of the Christian members. Paradoxically, the churches which earlier sent missionaries all over the world, forgot that they had mission in their own backyards. Then with a new mission philosophy, some European churches tried to show their magnanimity. They accepted pastors from the third world. But most of them not only hesitated to call them as 'missionaries.' Some also kept them as second hand church workers. In some of the Christian church apartheid, caste and color consideration was practiced and supported. They were buried deep in secularism, drug abuse and so many moral evils. They served as an apology for the Christian Gospel; and Christians downsized spiritual and ethical standards and displayed more Un-Christian characteristics than the non-Christians to whom they thought the Gospel is needed. Still old colonial mentality persisted. Then Home Missions began to act like wealthy grand parents or godparents to provide monetary support to this churches indirectly and held control likewise. The mission bodies became inter-church aid agencies rather than mission promoters. The paradox is, that it helped in the emergence of leaders from the so-called 'Third World'; but made them subservient. Indirectly, the Mission bodies controlled their members from missionized countries and made them dependent on them perpetually in the form of dollar doling strategies. Whether mission advanced or curtailed in handing over this responsibility or with new strategy?

One such move that showed some hope was the formation of the Council of World Mission. It was formed with the help of the old London Missionary Society and the Presbyterian Missionary boards. Its main objective was to develop missionary co-operation among its members- its former (daughter) churches. It developed exchange of missionaries in partnership with its member churches; especially among the third world or South-South cooperation. As mission belongs to the whole church it is the right move in the right direction. However, this noble goal was thwarted when money became the criteria for mission. Instead of helping the churches on their evangelistic efforts for which its forerunner LMS or the earlier Missionary bodies were founded, the CWM became an inter-church aid society. It made even now the younger or its member churches to look to the CWM for financial support for its mission projects. The old concept of moratorium on mission was neglected as money was made available even for pastoral needs. More or less in the CWM the evangelistic work which should have been its criterion was sidelined. It ignored what way back at the IMC Tambaram Conference (1940:66) emphasized: "For a new venture in co-operation and united planning in evangelism various Missions and churches at work in any area assume joint responsibility by combining their resources of men and money in order to meet effectively the evangelistic need and urgent opportunities."

Today, many Mission Societies, like the CWM Basel Mission, which were exclusively founded for that specific functions, have changed their mission aims and objectives from their original purpose and perspective. If they had heard the voice of the Holy Spirit, he would not have advised them to change their mission objectives. For the love of God should help the lost and us to reach the least, the last even today. It's the betrayal of trust and undermining the will and testaments of the founding father. It is also dashing the dreams of those who supported it with their 'widows might,' who hoped that the whole world should be blessed by God's plan of salvation. At the same time, we must admire many indigenous mission agencies, particularly in India, which sponsor and support hundreds of missionaries with their own indigenous- in particular with lay peoples support and engaged in evangelizing especially the unreached all over the world. Lay people came forward because, the churches failed in this task. The world always needs the gospel of Christ in spite of its modernism and secularism. Besides, the 'hathenism' and atheism is still prevailing in our society in one form or other. The world still needs transformation, and if the gospel can do that it is still welcome. If the gospel cannot do it, then we can keep quiet or think otherwise.

Another dimension which added to the crisis in the sixties was, the call for the 'Moratorium on Mission.' In some places slogans like 'missionary go home' was heard. Some of the churches which contributed to that phenomenon, acted contrary to that concept. Government restrictions on the foreign missionary presence also added to that tensions. In the absence of missionaries, national leadership bloomed and withered. Infighting and mismanagement added to the failure and credibility. The churches though became self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating, yet not out the wood completely. Instead of reducing foreign missionary personal and foreign fund, dependency on them increased.

Then Mission boards began to talk about new trends in mission: 'Joint action for mission' 'Partnership in mission' and so on. They developed new structures in their boards which gave opportunities for their former 'Mission Stations,' now independent churches - to sit in their important decision making committees. Mission saw its terms of policies, personnel and more about the money and not about the 'harvest' of the old times.

### PART III THE TRANSFIGURATING MISSION

#### 4.10 DICHOTOMY IN MISSION THEOLOGY

The gradual flickering of the evangelistic zeal, the loss of confidence in the traditional missionary methods, the perplexity created due to the newly developing mission theology began to affect the life and mission of the church as the church saw a transition. The crises in theology of mission developed during the twentieth century had far reaching consequences in its vision and action. The church not only began to ask what is mission? Why there must be missionaries? This led to heated debate on mission. The intense debate and nature and function of mission resulted in polarization of mission theology. The dichotomy between the conservative and radical worldview generated heat in the two camps called, Evangelicals and Ecumenical. The critical approach to the mission theology split the church with those who followed ecumenical persuasions and others who devoted to the evangelical faith. Whereas the Ecumenicals felt they have to convinced people about the value to Christian faith; the evangelicals felt that the evangelism is their conviction which they have to share one way or other, whether people accept it or not. The evangelicals also

maintained Biblical fundamentalism and its verbal validity. Besides they gave importance to the visible manifestation of the Holy Spirit as well as revivalism. The Ecumenicals more or less moved out from Biblical relativism to theological idealism. While they approached the mission, which includes recognition of other faiths and ideologies; the evangelicals launched more vigorous approach to establish Jesus as the only Savior of the world. Thus ecumenism became a problem for evangelization; and evangelization has become a problem for Ecumenicals. Thus centrifugal and centripetal force in Christianity are in conflict. As a result of this split, instead of doing theology, undoing of missiological perceptions began to take place. From practical evangelical aspects, the church began to pronounce policy on mission. From theoretical evangelistic concerns, theological jargons on mission were framed. The ugly confrontations and radical and liberal expositions of the Word, brought impoverishment to the Biblical foundation of the mission. The Ecumenicals through International Missionary Council and later through the World Council of Churches developed new types of theologies for mission. The evangelicals through many of their meetings under the patronage of Billy Graham went in opposite direction. The Roman Catholics through the Second Vatican and later through the Synod of Bishops began to interpret Missiology. This has put the devoted into a dilemma in whom to believe. Even though all these gave critical insights and exhaustive latitude for different approaches, yet, mission in respect to evangelism remained only Vatican and later through the Synod of Bishops began to interpret Missiology. This has put the devoted in a dilemma in whom to believe. Even though all these gave critical insights and exhaustive latitude for different approaches, yet, mission in respect to evangelism remained only on surface level. The remarkable convergence of thoughts and the theologies from the mainstream of Ecumenicals, evangelicals and Roman Catholics which has been stored in a dam constructed by our theologians threatened to burst.

Today, however, the process is so changed that it is the theologians who want to give a new missiology to the church and not the missionaries, which used to be other way round in the olden days. But theology will not advance the cause of mission. Today theology has submerged the mission and dampened the spirit of evangelism.

The new development of mission theology gave more room for theological controversies. Its concessions on the message of salvation and discrediting of the traditional mandate for mission, made many uncomfortable. To equate other religions with Christianity and to consider non-

Christian religions also as normal ways of salvation, confused the faithful in the religious pluralistic society. The Bombay Eucharist Congress(1964:184) acknowledged: "Outside the Christian Church there is at least an implicit form of Christianity. The role of the missionary is not so much to save souls." But, this statement disturbed the faithful Christians who believed that Christianity is the only one supreme religion. Introduction of humanistic and sociological approach like liberation theology, justice and peace issues, replaced modules like evangelization, proclamation of the Gospel and so on. 'God is dead,' 'Salvation is humanization.' and such theologies began to emerge from their camps. Salvation which was once considered as spiritual, now became a social issue. A personal matter began to have a corporate dimensions. It became a liberation process, and not completely redemptive in nature. Some of its advocates began to say 'man need not be delivered from penalty and power of sin, but more so from the demonic power and structure that destroy his authentic manhood and alienate him from the society. Indirect support to anonymous Christianity questioned the wisdom of conversions and rite of baptism to the believers. 'Hidden Christ in other religions' receives special recognition. Therefore, some missionaries questioned that if non-Christians could be saved without Christianity, what was the use of missionaries going all over the world sacrificing their lives for the Gospel? If it is to make Hindus better Hindus and Muslims better Muslims then why were these religions were called as 'heretical faith' earlier?. Many liberal theologians called that kind of evangelistic efforts were wrong! This and the criticism leveled against the former missionaries who toiled and died as martyrs for the cause of the Gospel angered many. All these issues exploded inside the church and made it uncomfortable.

The cultural awakening of the century also demanded rethinking of mission theology in the midst of religious pluralism. Jamaica was saved from this predicament because it was not so pluralistic a society; and also radical theological influence was minimal. But in India, some of the theologians began to say that Christ has already been 'Found' 'Recognized', 'Acknowledged', 'Unknown', 'Unbound' and 'Hidden' in the Indian religious systems and milieu. Paradoxically, some of the foreign missionaries found values in Indian spirituality or mysticism, which their predecessors held in suspicion. The radicals even started to recognize non-Christian religious faith as good as the Christianity. This made orthodox people to question the age-old practice of conversion. Some of them confused and asked: "If non Christians are being saved outside Christ's church and their religions are for them the channels of grace, why then disturb their good faith? And what have we

come to do? To preach Christ or to make Hindus better Hindus and Muslims better Muslims?" (in Amalorpavadas ND:1).

All these issues threw doubts on the uniqueness of Jesus Christ as the Savior of the World and universality of the Gospel. Therefore, matters like conversion and baptism were redefined. The missionary methodology of the past was invalidated. Inter-faith Dialogue, development, inculturation, contextulization were introduced as alternate mission models for today. This resulted in developing 'Anonymous' or 'Hidden Christianity' among non-Christians which became more popular than professing Christianity. Some conservatives misunderstood their perception. A Missiologist commenting on this trend said: "That modern thinkers appear to see, mission of the church more in the context of nation building or humanization than in that of making new Christian adherents" (Karakaran 1978:117).

During this time, a section of the Christians got agitated. They rose in revolt against this new theological thinking and all its practice. They believed the Bible is the Word of God, and should be supreme; and the Salvation is in Christ alone and final in and through his atoning death. They reiterated old missionary mandate and showed deep concern for unevangelized people around them. They based their faith on conservative theological stand, age-old evangelical methods and above all biblically based, emotionally charged, and salvation oriented. Karnataka had its fair share of these conservative evangelicals. One of Karnataka's evangelists, the late Augustine Salins, became world famous with his emotional approach and was known as the 'Weeping Evangelist of India'. This kind of trend was not new in Jamaica in spite of the influence of age-old established churches. Almost all Christians are emotionally charged and prayer and fasting, crying and rejoicing are their spiritual experience.

These differences between the radical and evangelical theologians threatened the unity of the Church. The church began to debate vigorously and bitterly the theology of mission than methodology of evangelism. The dilemma deepened and has reached bursting point - a point of no return. It divided the church vertically and created a cleavage similar to that of the Reformation. Each group developed contempt and suspicion of the other. However, Jamaica has the fair share of evangelicals, the division was not so evident.

The confronting, confusing and conflicting development added more death-blows to the evangelization process. The de-evangelization process contributed more to negative missiological perception rather than to a positive and dynamic missionary activism. It opened opportunities to a few globe-trotting scholars and leaders to attend a series of conferences harping on the same theme but in different tunes. In the meantime while the mission activists were left alone in his field. Geneva and Lausanne became 'Mecca' the pilgrimage centers for the chosen few. While the theological think tanks coined theological jargons which remained in the roof-top gardens, the grassroots evangelists were left alone in the remotest of corners. While concern for the poor was discussed at the five star comforts, the age-old social problems and burning local issues remained at the periphery at the common level.

In order to project and foster their ideologies a number of consultations and conferences were held. The mission moved from the field to the conference halls. Instead meeting around the round table, leaders met in hotel lobbies. Millions of rupee were spent and tons of documents were produced. They began to interpret mission to suit their own world view or hid their own fears and frustrations. The fruits and findings of all these conferences remained in the form of voluminous dead documents that hardly percolate down to the earth. Little attempts, if any, were made to study or implement its recommendations in letter and spirit by the local congregation, which is in fact at the grassroots in mission. Winter (1970:73) describes the years between 1945 and 1969 when these developments took place as "the 25 unbelievable years" and believes:

The mission began to move towards a new understanding of mission as well as the development of a theology of mission... However the unbelievable years had made one thing utterly certain: that, the ever unfolding diversity and complexity of the Christian movement and had not out-grown its one mission nor its many missions.

Bassham (1979:1), who takes the same journey, but extends it up to 1975, says; "in these years of world wide tensions between evangelicals, ecumenical and Roman Catholics, the Christian mission underwent a process of massive change. The historical context of mission, Western culture and Christianity in 19th and 20th century developments contributed a creative tension in world mission."



However, this development also influenced the theological Seminaries where future ministers are trained. Theologians with diverse world views began to influence and train ministerial students to suit their own philosophies; and many of them followed their teachers. But many of their local congregations remained more or less in the same old theological understanding and maintained traditional or orthodox passivity while opposing any kind of change and theology.

In all these developments, Karnataka church was affected badly; but not visibly or internally. Some of the prominent leaders in the ecumenical, evangelicals or Roman Catholic circles made Bangalore their home; and the Roman Catholic side provided a nickname - 'Rome of the East!' M Thomas, who was the Moderator of the Central Committee of the WCC; Theodore Williams, Chairman of the World Evangelical Fellowship, and Cardinal DS Lourdasamy, President of the Congregation of Propaganda Fide of the Vatican, were all domicile of this place. Delegates from Karnataka went down for many important gatherings and their voice was heard with respect and attention. Ironically, some of the churches sent top class theologians to the world conferences, while they're own churches lagged behind in keeping step with any new trends. They also left little impact in the life and mission of the church. Ecumenical Christian Center founded with the vision of the Bangalore Christian Council, became a world famous forum for ecumenical thinking and action. However when all the new theologies circulated, lay people generally showed very little interest. The twentieth century was marked with a series of missiological conferences with the emphasis on mission.

#### **4.11 TRANSPARENCY IN MISSION: TRANSFORMING MISSION, TRANSFERRING VISION OR TRANSGRESSING THE COMMISSION?**

The critical ideological and theological division in the church during the twentieth century had a great impact in the mission of the church. The polarization between the radicals - the 'ecumenical' and the conservatives-the 'evangelicals,' widened the gap between mission and evangelization. The war of words between produced voluminous documents on mission that is hardly read by anyone. Theology of mission was defined to suite the new order. Bangalore which was the center of the ecumenical and evangelical leadership of India witnessed this deep cleavage. The Gospel which was considered as the 'Good News' became a bad news for many - not only for the non-Christians but also among the radical Christians. Instead of becoming the 'Gospel of Salvation,'

for the world, it became a narrow theological formula. The liberals challenged the evangelical perception 'salvation of the souls' and called for liberation, humanization and so on. To many Jesus or the salvation became irrelevant. Thus, evangelism which produced mission in the past centuries hardly found its residue in this new mission agenda. Although this century began with that dream 'evangelization of the world in our generation,' the ecumenical drama that followed thereafter showed less urgency towards this goal. While the church recognized disunity as a stumbling block for such aspirations; the Union churches overshadowed the cause of evangelism. Leslie Newbegin lamented "There is almost a total neglect of the missionary factor in the modern ecumenical movement" (IBMR 1994:4). Amidst all the confusion, the urgency towards missionary obligation or consciousness was lost. Thus, instead of mission progressing, we see a status quo. Traditional evangelism came to stand still.

With the new trends, the mission moved from the mission field to conference venues. It has twisted and transferred the vision of evangelism. As a result, the changing scenario has provided a paradigm shift in mission. It not only reflected that mission was in transition, but also a transformed its basis. It has created utter confusion and retarded the Christian mood for mission. Mission became a past history. It added a sort of amnesia in evangelization. It also painted an ugly picture of the methodology of the veteran evangelists of the bygone era and forgot because of their efforts the world church has come into being. It called for repentance of the 'past mistakes in mission.' Can we live like ungrateful people for what mission has done to us or to our ancestors?

Today other issues in the church have replaced the focus on evangelism. The evangelization which served as the means for Christianization has been bypassed. The church growth which was the criteria for the mission of the church replaced. The church which was once vocal, world wide, militant and triumphant because of evangelism now humbled and silenced.

With regard to church growth, McGavran (1970:vi) points out that concern "for evangelism and church growth is essential part of the Christian faith and irreplaceable part of the work of the church". But today, the church is silent about this vital concern or shows very little enthusiasm about it. On the other hand, it projects a distorted picture of the mission. Even though Missiology is not numerology, we cannot forget how number game played in the matter of religion. It

provides an eye opening analysis of our efforts and also helped in augmenting the support of the faithful.

The Church Growth Association Of India'(1985:3) reports: "the year between 1881 - 1954 Christians were the fastest growing religion in India, who increased from 0.71% to 2.35% of the population. But thereafter, in other words after India's independence it gradually started to fall. In the year between 1951 - 1961 Buddhism replaced Christianity with a phenomenal growth. Thereafter, between 1961-71 and then 1971-1981 even though the Christian population eventually shows 2.43% of the population, yet compared with the National average of 24.69% it is the lowest. However, we cannot overlook the statistical records, which paint a sad picture.

**Table 4.1**

<b>Religions</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Hindus	82.7
Muslims	11.3
Christians	2.4
Sikhs	2.0
Buddhists	0.7
Jains	0.5
Others	0.4

While analyzing the trends, it is reported that in this century, the percentage of Christians fell in India, except in the Northeast region of India. With respect to Karnataka, the percentage of Christian population in the total population of Karnataka was falling from 2.1% in 1961 to 2.09% in 1971 and then it has further come down to 2.06% in 1981. Although it is numerically registered as 24.7% - an increase from 6,13,026 to 9,64,449 - we should not forget that, in comparison with the population growth rate 26.75% we have fallen short. It is not an exclusive phenomenon of Karnataka, for Christian population in the total Christian population of the country is also on the decline. It decreased from 4.6% to 4.3% between 1961 and 1971, but was reversed during 1971-81 with the slight upward trend to 4.7%. So, can we surmise that the days of evangelism was over? Or can it be carried only with the foreign support? Whether any church has grown with the real evangelistic efforts like that of the last century? Whether that type of evangelism can be

exercised in the future? During the same period the growth rate among the six major communities of India shows the increase of Muslim population from 57.8 million to 75.5 million (30.6%)

**Table 4.2 Growth in Major Indian Communities 1961-1981**

<b>Community</b>	<b>1961-1971 (in Millions)</b>	<b>1971-1981 (in Millions)</b>	<b>In Percentage</b>
Sikhs	10.3	13	26.7
Hindus	444.2	549.8	24.1
Jains	2.6	3.2	23.5
Buddhists	3.8	4.7	22.5
Christians	13.8	16.1	16.8
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>548</b>	<b>648</b>	<b>24.7</b>

This demographic picture reflects that the percentage growth of Christian was lower than the overall growth rate of population of India and other religions. This confirms that age of mass conversion is over. All the gain from the mission of the church through evangelistic efforts, in the form of church growth which altered drastically and numerically in the religious map of India can no longer hold good. So, should we acknowledge that during the twentieth century the mission is in a declining stage? Can we assume that in the post- independent era, we have failed in our evangelistic task? If statistics are the yardsticks to measure the success and failure of mission, can we then conclude that Karnataka was lagging behind in that task during the last decade? Can we summarize that it is either in a stagnated condition or in a dying situation? Another hard realities is the population of India is now almost double or nearing one billion mark. In that case the whole figure referred there would have been doubled, and along with that Christian task also increased to unlimited heights and to impossibilities.

But the evangelism also raises many other questions. In spite of nearly 500 years of mission work, have we failed to see a spectacular growth of the church? If so what is the reason? But, the church is not dead and the Church of cannot die because it is founded by Jesus Christ- the living Lord and nurtured by the apostles and martyrs down the ages. But what is the truth of this century? What would contribute to the future of religious experience of the people?

'Hindutva' of Hinduism, asceticism of Zen Buddhism, Reggae of Rastafarianism, 'Jihad' of Islam, charismatic influence of Pentecostalism, the Sabbath of the Adventist will not win the people to new religious atmosphere. The institutional religion may give room for community life in the new era. Denominationalism may yield to artificial ecumenism. The boiling point of evangelicalism will slowly become cold as they come in grip with the realism of the new world and shifting current of modern issues. On the other hand the dialectical approach of the liberals and ecumenical will lead no where. Apart from the general increase in population figures year after year, there is another tendency which we cannot oversimplify. In India, we would not have been a microscopic minority with at least five hundred years of missionary history. As a matter of fact, there are twice as many non-Christians in India today, as there were when William Carey arrived in 1793. If a reference is made to the history of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism or Islam in India, it can be seen that religions still flourish. It shows sizeable increase in other religious community, notably of Muslims. Both Baber, the founder of the Mughal Empire and Vasco da Gama entered India more or less during the same period. But Muslims not only conquered India but also made Islam to occupy the second place as the largest community. Similarly there is an alarming increase of atheists or people who do not state their religious affiliation. In India they show an increasing trend of 67%. There were many other contributing factors.

This was even considered a universal trend: The number of evangelized people in the world now shows at 1.3 billion, four percent less than in 1980. But the percentage of Christian in the world has also dropped by 1.5%. The evangelized now constitutes 28% of the world population. In the last 5 years Muslims added to their number by 97 million adolescents bringing their total to 817 million. Hindus gained 64.8 millions to reach 648 million and Buddhists added 22 million to reach 300 million. The number of Protestants, Roman Catholics and Orthodox Christians now stands at 1.5 billion or one third of the world's population (Dayton 1980:9).

What are the implications of this phenomenon? This answers the question whether world evangelization is a reality or an illusion. Whether the church is sleeping or sitting with complacency? Whether the age of church growth through evangelism is over? Whether the church should quit its task or its mandate? Whether all the mission consultations and meetings negated or supported mission cause? Even if millions of Bible portions are saturated through out India, whether it can convert the whole of India? Even with millions of foreign money whether it is

possible to make every Indians as followers of Christ? Whether the cause of the mission advanced with all united efforts of the Christians? All of them show folly of Christian evangelicalism.

World mission is not proselytizing the whole world as Christians. Christian mission is not conquering everyone for Christ or enrolling them as members to the Christendom. It is not engaging in creating a commonwealth of Christians or a Republic headed by Christ. It is making Christ's mission all over the world, so that everyone will hear the Good News or may be beneficiaries of Christ's mission. The 'Good News' is not passing on the 'Good.' It is by engaging themselves in this task, the Christians share their obligations to make their neighbors as the citizens of the dominion of God; so that they can enjoy all the privileges and benefits of His influence in the society where they live.

Christians would not have gone out proselytizing other Christians if they would have understood its basic concept. They would not have adopted the aggressive tactics in 'pushing the gospel message down the throats of others.' No one can be converted to the faith, but must be born. Mission is not going out for the sake of gaining membership for the Christian church and make them as exclusive community. People do not like those who will come to convert us. Conversion is not for the sake of mathematical jugglery; to add numbers to Christian population or to increase adherents to one particular denomination. Missionaries are not proselytizers. They are the agents to introduce spirituality and religious values; and not one who will create bias or prejudices. Change of religion is a very traumatic experience in India. Abandoning ancient belief was nothing less than cultural treason. A convert became a non-person a *persona non-grata* outside his kinship group. Earlier days the converts were denied the opportunity to observe the rituals of his traditional religion even when they lost their dear ones.

In Jamaica the slavery did not come as advantageous for Christianization. But it was the real cause of failure of the church. The slaves found frustration in their psyche for treating them not as human. Even after emancipation or independence poor became still poorer. But the introduction of the new-religious movements like Pentecostalism gave to their inner emotion and ego an opportunity to burst out which was hidden all these days. But, mission is not for the sake of giving false promise of heaven or threat of hell. It is an exodus from the old ghettos to meet the people where they are and liberate them and give them the foretaste of the reign of God which

they can claim as their promise and live with that promise in their land as an inclusive community.

We have seen two structures of God's redemptive Mission that were operative down through the centuries. We have examined their success and failures. How far have they added to church growth? Or have they been helpful to build a whole person in body, mind and spirit? Or caused a stumbling blocks for Christian witness and mission? No doubt considering hundreds of years of mission and evangelism and the small percentage of Christians today, it looks like the Church has failed in its task. A distinguished Indian scholar and diplomat K.M. Panikkar had written, which Webster (1966:10) quotes: "It will hardly be denied that, in spite of the immense and sustained effort made by the Churches with the support of the lay public of the European countries and America, the attempts to conquer Asia for Christ has definitely failed."

On the contrary, especially the established church mission programs, still depend on former Mission bodies for support which comes in different labels or packages. At the same many of the third world countries also survive with foreign grant or aid package. But one redeeming feature of this mission is that it broke the barriers of 'sending and receiving' churches, though some differentiation is still maintained.

The church has benefitted from the missionary agencies or funding institutions. But, in terms of modalities, they look like the past glories and as white elephants today. Our institutions which were once considered as arm of the church for evangelization, has paralyzed the Church's budget. Therefore, after 100 years, most of our institutions remained structurally static, whereas others have advanced scientifically and technologically, professionally and profitably. But our institutions are still like potted plants. Therefore the Naraspor consultation of the NCCI (1967:216) warned:

Much of the energy of the church is wasted in the efforts to maintain and preserve religious institutions which are irrelevant both to the biblical understanding of the church and to Indian situation. Factionalism, and power struggle corrupt the inner life of the church. There is an extensive dependence on overseas funds. Exclusive dependence on paid workers often stifles church growth. New forms of church life must be found which more faithfully represent the nature and calling of the people of God in the Indian setting.

Though the CSI may boast that it has about 500 residential hostels with about 35,000 children whose living conditions and educational needs are met. But the fact is many of these institutions and programs are supported by many of the philanthropic agencies of USA, Germany and elsewhere. They have given the image to the recipient that they have rich benefactors in the West!

Therefore, is it wise to hand over some of the institutions to the Governments as it has the responsibility to look after its own citizens' needs? Many of the Christian institutions have become eyesore for the public as a center for conversion. So instead of running on loss it would be better to hand them over to others as they are like dead cows. Many suggests likewise, while others oppose it because of Christian pride. No doubt Christians were pioneers in many fields that contributed to the progress and prosperity of the nations and the societies. Their actions have given human dignity, and uplifted the downtrodden and oppressed. They gave equality to the outcasts and livelihood to the poor. In fact they touched every facet of community life and humanitarian aspect. A writer in the Deccan Herald (6 June 1989:5) recalled: "Though missionaries had come to this land to spread the message of Christ, they crossed their boundary and took up interest in contributing for the progress of the society and their zeal to know more about the people of India, the language, culture, literature, forced them to involve themselves deeply in the day today affairs of the nation."

In terms of Sodalities, the danger is that most of them are still supported by the foreign funds. How far many of these gigantic mission project and operations are dependable? When they find it difficult to voice their opinion on change their policy or methodology that is best suited their operations, is it worth attempting them because it brings in the money? If the Gospel could not find its relevance or failure to adopt to our situations and conditions, then what is the point in continuing that kind of mission? Their independent nature also created a wide gap between them and the established church. Analyzing this the evangelical leaders themselves cautioned:

We believe that when the multinational mission agencies have an unincarnate Gospel they invariably bypass the national church. They also weaken the witness of the national church in the same way that multinational business corporation often weaken local industry. We think that those multinational mission agencies are inadequate for the mission of the church when their very nature hinders them from becoming incarnate expressions of the



Gospel (Samuel Sugden 1981:17).

The Joint Consultation of the NCCI and CBCI (1981:2) also passed harsh judgement:

"In spite of all these years of missionary endeavor we are still a microscopic minority with a lot of expectations. There can be four ways of responding to this - expect a miracle? feel pity for the poor pagans? try to convert a few? think afresh on God's plan for 97.4% who are not Christians?" Further, it has given a timely warning (1981:2): "The church in India is a pyramid upside down with a small minority of Bishops, Priests and nuns forming the precarious base. Further she is like a patient in the hospital receiving oxygen and food through tubes. For all the mission work is supported by foreign funds; and when these stops, she would collapse!"

When the World Conference on Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches held at Melbourne ( 1983:440),it declared:

World's poor have not heard the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.... The Church of Jesus Christ is called upon to preach the Good News to the poor following the example of its Lord who was incarnated as poor, who lived one among them and gave to them the promise of the Kingdom of God."

But in the name of poor others became rich! They received funds from abroad for social action in their own countries. From the beginning the missionaries reached out to those who are poor or outcasts. But unfortunately some chose to criticize this action and termed it as exploitation or proselytization. Because the missionaries came with the colonizers, the later did not choose poor countries, the Christian church bore this accusation. In fact the colonizers who made these countries poor; while church ministered to the poor. Jamaica was Christianized because it was a poor country. In fact Jamaica is a potentially a rich country, with all natural beauty and bounty. Also, India minus the population could have been a rich country. Once India was the target of all the foreign invasions because of its richness and business potentialities. But circumstances made them today as poor countries or developing nations. So, we also cannot generalize that the Gospel preaching was meant only to convert the slaves, poor or the marginalized people. For, the

church was established for planters as well as for the Conquistadors in Jamaica. In India there were converts from Brahmin and other upper classes. And all found the Gospel equally acceptable as a new way of life. But for the people in the lower echelons it gave a new hope for living and made them more receptive to the gospel than other:

India was also a rich religious country. Jamaican Amerindians or African slaves also had rich religious tradition. But if the Gospel has come as a Good News then can we blame the missionaries for carrying them? "When the Gospel was presented to the outcasts who were dissatisfied with their state in life there was then wide acceptance. As part of the message the individuals have been given a sense of self recognition and self-worth. The Gospel provided the answer to felt need ( Pentecost 1982:145)." It also had another advantage. The foreign religions gave the people in the lowest social order some kind of superiority feeling. Though it might look like a false hope or grafted plant yet, the recipient found that they are equal to 'white people' as they also practice the same religion. There were some other added dimensions also. For example, whenever there was response to the gospel, there were social boycott from those who opposed it. Therefore, Christianity being a religion of community, whenever there was response to the Gospel, the church did not shirk its responsibilities to its followers. In fact by welcoming others to its fold it, showed its solidarity with those who were boycotted, thrown out and neglected. Therefore it can be said that the mission activists of the past centuries and social thinkers of the present are all moved by the same impulse to work for human development and social transformation so that people may have fullness of life. In this respect whether social action can replace evangelization? Anto Karokaran who made a study of Indian perspective on evangelization and *Diakonia* made a useful survey (1978:223f) and stated:

Missionaries in general are no more inclined to look upon or use works of charity, socioeconomic programs, educational and medical activities, primarily as means direct or indirect to convert others to Christianity or to extend the institutional church or to win a hearing for preaching. Liberation and development of man and society form one of the most important aims of evangelization. The fruitful missionary work is not only when one becomes instrumental in bringing new members into the church but also when one could influence others with Christian ideals and uplift the poor. And finally, the understanding of evangelization is necessary for today which includes, a new approach to social

engagement, a new form of witness, and a new perception of the church and a new awareness of solidarity with men of other faiths.

But today, some think the contrary. They accuse the church, saying that it was proselytization rather than evangelization that took place in the Christianization process. But some considered it civilization rather than evangelization. Even Mahatma Gandhi (1941:50) doubted mission motivation when he said:

Christian mission will render true services to India if they can persuade themselves to confine their activities to humanitarian services without the ulterior motive of converting India or unsophisticated villagers to Christianity and destroying heir social super structure which notwithstanding the fact that it may have defects has stood now from time immemorial the onslaught upon it from within and without.

Earlier, Swami Vivekananda voiced the same apprehension at the World Parliament of Religions at Chicago when he said:

No religious outlook would be complete without a reference to the remarkable awakening taking place in many parts of the country among the depressed and non-caste classes in favor of Christianity. Victims of ages of social oppression and injustice, their movement is largely a social one, and there can be little doubt that in a few years there will be such an in gathering from those class to the Christian church (Barrows 1978:204).

How did the fear gather strength? Did social action have an upper hand over evangelization? Even though it is partially true, one need not fully agree with Karakoran(1978:204), when he said: "Works of charity socioeconomic uplift programs and other forms of Diaconia such as educational and medical works are primarily a means for conversion." For, conversion with bribery, inducement or proselytization are not the criteria for mission work - they are only the side-effects of mission. If it had such religious motives, millions of dollars spent on mission work would have had rich dividends. With general support, at least with some kind of political favors from British and Portuguese Governments for centuries, and thereafter worldwide involvement of various missionary agencies, as well as with unlimited resources in their command, India would have been

converted or conquered as Christianized country in no time.

But today have we failed in our responsibility both qualitatively and quantitatively? We must realize that there was no spectacular church growth due to churches' involvement in social action. Though Christian missions transformed the society and acted as agents of social change, and its influence had marginal impact. It did not result in large scale conversions because; mission work was not easy or calm. Certainly it is unthinkable that 50-60 years of Mission work will bring an age-old complete social and religious change in the community. There was always up and downs in the missionary efforts'

Some people think that mission in the past was an aggression and so we should adopt some passive approach: "Christian missionaries naturally thought of their message as yeast that would eventually leaven the whole lump of Indian Society. They hoped to introduce a life that would spread spontaneously" (Grant 1959:23). Though, the hopes and aspiration is Biblical, yet, Jesus also demanded laborers for the harvest; and spelt out the missionary mandate and strategies. He even sent out disciples in mission. Thus mission involves going out, preaching and doing good. But we cannot think that only evangelical concern can usher in the reign of God? We cannot say that the malady of the church's failure find a remedy in the church growth principles. At the same time our approach to mission cannot be in a passive scale; but should be dynamic and active.

The churches needs a deep introspection in this regard. It need a solid motivation for mission. It should have the prophetic and proclamatory voice which can make any difference in the life style of the people. When it converts the hearts and the soul, then only it will transform the society. Therefore, we should not think that by transforming our methodology in mission we can make any difference; neither by transferring our responsibility to others we can achieve our goal. But only by obedience to the Gospel of Christ. We cannot compromise on this. For the gospel of Jesus Christ is still the Good News for whole humanity.

But the most important factor is, in all the Christian activities not excluding socio-economic programmes, we are guided by a religious motivation. We believe that God creates all human beings, regardless of caste, colour or creed. In the incarnation of Jesus, humanity gained importance as he treat all equal. So our chief responsibility lies in the service is to restore the

divinity in the humanity; and in the service to humanity we render our service to the divinity. In knowing and loving God and serving others in the name of God without discrimination, we serve God in the world. Therefore one cannot say that the Christians took advantage or exploited any situation even of colonialism.

But ever since the church engaged in mission, there were suspicion and resistance both inside and outside the church. Its mainly because the churches developed denominational Christianity and not Christianity of the gospel. Added to that there were changing and challenging situations all the times. Therefore the unity of the church is of paramount interest for mission. But whenever the church filled with pietism or it created further divisions. When ever it had crisis its division multiplied. The crisis in life results either in tragedy or in triumph. In the life of the church it provides either a scope for disaster and disintegration more than renewal and reformation. It happened likewise on many instances. Likewise, today the ecumenism has contributed to a transition and transient mission options.

We have seen that this century which has progressed with the expansion of the church, looks like at stand still today in terms of Evangelization activities. We have seen that various issues and situations contributed to this phenomenon. There are also other developments especially renaissance of other religions, emergence of communal and political parties which hated the advancement of Christian Churches. They provided trials and testing- time to the church's mission. And then we cannot forget that today we are living in a fast- changing and challenging world. The scientific and technological revolution of our time has made the world a global village. It also has given a scope for more social awakening than religious matters. Cinema, television, radio, drama, dance and other cultural resurgence saw the channels for communication as the great boon to capture the hearts and homes of the people.

The twentieth century has given top priority to the development of a dynamic theology. The church did not remain in the periphery of 'other worldliness' but revolved around the world in which we live and contemporary society. It became an earthly and living theology as experience formulated theology and theology became the experience. Therefore, liberation, black, Davit, Caribbean, Feminine and such other theological flowers began to bloom. This aspect also led mission taking form in terms of the Christian presence, Indigenization, humanization and justice

and peace and other forms. Thus though mission was contextualized, yet it failed to energize the Christian church. But it conscientized the Christian church.

However, the twentieth century mission became the a storehouse of statements! Archbishop of Canterbury William Temple reported to have said at the closing session of the Amsterdam assembly in 1948 that 'the total number of words spoken at the assembly must be, like the distance between the earth and farthest star!' This is not an exaggerated statement but evident throughout all the ecumenical and evangelical conferences of this century and its deliberations. Probably what the Christian church spent in terms of money and energy in this century, especially after the second World War, would have been much more than five hundreds of years of missionary enterprises since the time of Reformation.

Before the world congress on World Evangelization, Carl Henry reported to have argued that, 'one major weakness of modern evangelism lies in its abandonment of the heavy burden of evangelism to a small company of professional super-sales men'. Therefore in the editorial of 'Christianity Today' he pleaded that 'the congress should make an effort to restore evangelism to the local congregation as a continuing individual concern'. This was taken up very seriously at Lausanne Congress, which appointed a continuing committee. But before its recommendations ink dried on the paper, more and more conferences were arranged and again documents added more weight of the paper to these issues! In fact evangelicals and Ecumenicals were at the throat of each other, and lost the opportunities to implement all its pronouncements. Perhaps all these organizers may argue that they do not have infra-structures to implement the outcomes of all these conference and to make them a reality in the grass-root level. But some of the structures like Karnataka and Bangalore Christian Councils were abandoned due to lack of support from the local churches. Even JCC in Jamaica has not owned by all the churches. In such a case, the question is whether it is worthwhile to spend so much time, money and energy on our part when it touches only the tip of the iceberg.

Whereas when the Second Vatican Council pronounced sixteen documents totalling 103,014 words, covering almost every aspect of the Church, it took every step to percolate it to the parish level. The CBCI concern to bring home the fruits of the renewal process are praiseworthy and commendable. Perhaps that was possible because RC is one church; whereas WCC or NCCI or

JCC are only the federation of churches. WCC always reiterated that it is not a church; but only a federation of churches. So, it poses a question. Whether the churches need a centralized system to control and direct the churches like the Roman Catholics? No doubt the fragmentation of the Christian church should make an introspection in this regard with very serious mind.

But in the last few years wisdom dawned on the church. There is some kind of reconciliation between evangelicals and ecumenical. The Roman Catholic Church took the first step to welcome other Christians as 'separated brothers'. Observers were sent to other meetings and Conferences. In 1982 at Vancouver even evangelicals took part in the WCC assembly. They made no secret of their joy in ecumenical fraternity when they asked, "whether evangelicals do not have the obligation along with other Christians to seek to overcome the scandal of disunity and disobedience of the churches that the world might believe Him?" (Gill 1983:44). Jamaica serves as a model for such understanding and approach. Though there is considerable difference in the approach and thinking of the Ecumenicals and the Evangelicals, yet there is a willingness to listen to one another and reconciliatory approach to sit together. Instead of developing a breaking point, there is a meeting point. In that sense the Harare WCC Assembly decision is a welcome move.

One of the important fruits of the ecumenical age was the setting up of the secretariat for Christian unity at Vatican. The successive Popes, Cardinals and WCC leaders like 'Vissert Hooft, Philip Potter spared no time to build ecumenical spirit. Many sided ecumenical coordination activities were attempted. Cardinal Willebrands as the head of the Secretariat, feels that 'division among Christians is a basic anomaly'. Therefore he moved a plan for setting up the joint working group on common witness as a base for moving ahead with the tasks. The theological confrontations of the church was narrowed down or summarized to the four issues which are welcomed by all. Glasser in the Forward to Bassham's book analyzes (in 1979:xv):

The nature of the truth found in non-Christian religions.

The nature of the activity of God beyond the limits of the Church.

The nature of the mission of the church in those parts of the earth

here people cry for justice. The nature of the church and the non-Christian world around it.

The evangelicals, by adopting the theme for the Berlin Congress OF "one race, one Gospel and one task", also contributed to this phenomenon. If these could be the criteria for our common mission, then, why should we split our oneness in Jesus Christ his only and one mission? We should always remember that the same Bible challenges all Christians and the churches, and all are called to share in the same mission of God. Then, we should all study and reflect and pray together towards a common Missiology based on our call to common witness.

And this new concept of the common witness is a great step towards ecumenical policy. Because it includes everything that devotes the life and work of the church or the individual Christian believer: preaching or proclamation *Kerugma*(fellowship) or being in an open community (*Koinonia*) with sacrificial service (*diakonia*) and communication with people of other faiths (dialogues). They constitute a major comprehensive concept of Christian witness.

When all these concerns in varied degrees come within the purview of all sections of the church, why can they not meet around the table to share with each other their missionary obligation? And above all, an evangelical leader from South Africa argued at WCC sponsored Symposium on Evangelism: "The ecumenical evangelical polarity hinders, impedes and sometimes prevents evangelism at grass root level. Therefore we must meet not around a theological statement, but around a living Savior (Cassidy 1974:12)" At the Vancouver Assembly, evangelicals were unhappy that the term evangelism was not used by the General Secretary in his report to the Assembly. But Potter justified its stand: "a basic point of the world council is, that of confessing our faith in Jesus Christ as God and Savior. What else is there to say?" (Verstraelen 1983:17). However, that statement needs not only courage for verbalization but also articulation. Bishop JW Sadiq, former President of the NCCI, while participating in the Bombay Eucharistic Congress (Vol. II 1964:181) quoted John R. Mott's vision for larger evangelism wherein he said: "The Supreme purpose of the Christian church is to make Jesus Christ known, trusted, loved and obeyed and exemplified into whole range of individual life body and mind and spirit and also in all human relationships." That is the right Christian witness at all times.

Christianity, true to its inspiration in Jesus as the new man, is primarily concerned with humanity. Surprisingly this statement has come out forcefully from the liberal theologians:



In the life death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth God, who has acted to save the world is the core of the Christian Gospel. Mission therefore could be defined as the communication of this message of salvation through Jesus Christ to the end that all people may respond in faith and be saved. Mission is essentially evangelistic mission or mission of salvation (Thomas 1971:2).

Let us remember that when all the Christian movements started, fundamentally they all were committed to the same conservative ideological framework. Everyone, deep down in his/her heart, dreamt of world evangelization and to make Jesus as the Savior of the World. But either their faith was weakened or circumstances changed, or they faced pressure from both inside and outside, all of them contributed to the shift in its emphasis on various degrees. For example, debate on 'Honest to God,' 'Death of God' theologies raised hornet's nest in the minds of the Christians. It placed a new urgency to establish the uniqueness of Christ. The challenge between Christian faith vis-a-vis, the non Christian religions led them to realize something good in other religions also. . The polarization between religion and science never ever resolved anytime in the history of the world. It will not be compromised even though the computer age of the new era made the world a global village; though internet will be able to catch even the religious activities in its world wide web.

Therefore in order to avoid such threat and further divisions in the Christian Church, all must plead for a new consensus in the new age as we face this gigantic task. Bassham (1969:358) argues:

With an attitude of openness towards each other and a deep involvement and concern for the world in which the church must fulfil its mission, the various Christian traditions can now fruitfully interact with each other in seeking to clarify, comprehend and act upon a theology of mission determined by God's purpose for the church in the world today.

Finally, what is the outcome of all these issues? No doubt there is a paradigm shift in the agenda of the church today. But after the paradigm shift due to the modernity and post modernity situation, or from religious superiority to multi religious superiority, the church need a new ethos for the future. Küng (1975:792f) says "Christianity has a future even in the millennium after

Christ". So the Christian church in Jamaica and India will definitely have a future. The future of religion also depends on the human future. When the future of the people is filled with peace and prosperity, security and solidarity they may not need a religion. Though it may make the people secular and materialistic, the religion always stood as the backbone of this in the society. Therefore this aspect and not the hierarchical, theological, confessional or denominational religion should be able to shape the future of the world in our generation. We cannot predict what it should be; but together we should shape it. The future holds new synthesis and essence in respect of multi-dimensional situation. So that the whole world, which God still loves, can become a better place to live, not only in the next millennium, but also until the dawn of the new age. As the church stands amidst changing scenes and grapples with the question of the future of mission which has been blowing across the Christian church throughout the century, the church needs new directions. As the church now looks forward to the twenty first century, to the new millennium, it should not fail to take note of this transition. It needs introspection and retrospection in its action and reflections. This phenomenon in the application and articulation of the mission of the church should be viewed with all seriousness now. Therefore today the church should rediscover the world. Only in India, being a minority, the church should have hope like the early church had, "Do not be afraid little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32). And for Jamaica, the church should become a leaven which will permeate the society (Mt 13: 31-35); and also influence the world over by growing like a mustard seed.

*Christus extra muros ecclesiastica* means, 'Christ outside the wall of the church' still to be searched; and also proclaimed. Hence we cannot confine our mission within the four walls of the church. Therefore, the churches have the global mission, a mission in all the six continents, a mission to all people on earth and for all ages. It cannot be narrowed down to the third world or pagan religious world. The Mexico Conference of CWME emphasized: "We therefore affirm that the missionary movement now involves Christians in all the six continents and in all lands. It must be the common witness of the whole church bringing the whole Gospel to the whole world. (Latham 1964:83)." In the evangelical language the task is: 'let the (whole) earth hear his voice'. If every Christian could be concerned with this aspect, why should we be divided? when we proclaim God's Word to the world which He still loves, for which He sent His only begotten son Jesus Christ as Savior, why we should be quiet? And so it is our task today either to make explicit or implicit what Christ is meant to be. Jesus is not an exclusive Christian God but he is the

Saviour of the world. The church is not a club for a few members, but for the whole world.

Is eschewing evangelism is the right course because it creates antagonism with our fellow human beings? What we need today is evangelical missiology; the missiology that is not only biblically based, but also practically oriented, in which the evangelism would be the central point for all Christian mission, and not the mission theology. There may be some who favour the great commission. Others may opt for the great commandment. But no doubt everyone regards Acts 1:8 "You are my witnesses" as the grand cornerstone of mission. This is our faithful evangelism in all ages and at times.

In the final analysis if we are convinced that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the World, if we believe that proclamation of that Good News is the obligation of every Christian, and bringing together all believers into one fellowship is the task of the church, then there is no need to shift the paradigm of the church nor twist the paramount missiology. Then if our mission transparency reflect that we have a new vision for mission, instead of transgressing the Great Commission of our Lord, we can translate that vision into words that everyone can understand; and words into action.

In the evangelical language, the task is: "let the (whole) earth hear his voice". If every Christian could be concerned with this aspect, why would they be divided? If they proclaim the same Word of God to the world, why should they be divided?

From our survey of the Christian mission in Jamaica and Karnataka, it seems that the "planted" churches have not succeeded in putting aside the divisions transplanted into them by the missionary churches from the West. Keeping in mind that those who were Christianized had very little understanding of the different church traditions which caused the divisions between the churches in the West, one realizes that those not belonging to the Western world have not yet been liberated from the indoctrination imposed upon them by the churches from the West. As in the case of colonization, the minds of the colonized were still kept in the captivity of Western concepts and attitudes long after the colonizers had left their countries. A long process of decolonization of the previously colonized mind had to be started in order to liberate the minds of the colonized and to bring them to the acceptance of their own humanhood, which would allow

them to appreciate their own human dignity and to take responsibility for their own position in the world. In the same way, the "planted" churches will have to be liberated from the "church-colonizers" in order to be obedient to prayer expressed by the Lord of the Church, namely that those who follow Him will be one. In both Jamaica and Karnataka, the indoctrination and domination by the churches from the West still continue. A new day will dawn on these churches in their mission outreach when they will become able and willing to work out their obedience to Christ in their own way instead of being told by the so-called mother churches how to follow Christ.

## CHAPTER 5

**Two different worlds hearing the same Gospel****5.1 THE CHURCHES IN JAMAICA AND KARNATAKA — ROOTED IN THE SOIL OR POTTED PLANTS?**

After a broad survey of the Christian mission in Jamaica and Karnataka, the first question that needs to be answered is: what is the nature of the churches in these two countries that were called into existence by the Christian mission? Are these churches rooted in the soil of these countries or are they only potted plants? Commenting on the Church in the Caribbean, Smith (1984:44) stated:

Over the centuries of Christian missionary activity, the Church in the Caribbean has remained a potted plant, which has managed to survive in the little containers in which it has been brought from the nurseries. It has not yet taken root in native soil. It is either used as a means of finding compensation, reassurance and legitimization, or rejected as one of the structures of domination and oppression.

It is true that after nearly two thousand years of missionary endeavour and Christian presence, there is a general complaint that, in spite of its numerical growth, Christianity has not gained much in depth outside the Western world. In terms of their identity, the Christian churches outside the Western world have not yet succeeded in being deeply rooted in the "local soil" of the different cultures, but still reflect their connection with the Western churches by whom they were planted. No doubt this criticism is genuine and especially of the church in Jamaica. The churches both in Jamaica and Karnataka lacked flexibility, adaptation, translation, inculturation, contextualization and indigenization — in short, the gospel failed to be incarnated in the soil of these countries. They were not baptized in the cultures of these peoples.

There is a very interesting commonality between Jamaica and Karnataka, namely that in both these countries a simultaneous great revival took place in the 1860s. But its impact was vastly

different and even contradictory in the two countries.

In Jamaica it created another type of "potted plant" phenomenon — the emergence of spiritual baptists like the Revivalists, Zionists and Pukumánias with a mixture of Christianity and other African indigenous religions. They reflected a synthesis between the old African culture, their symbolism and other expressions, such as shouting, rolling, dancing, dreams and visions, and the Christian message of deliverance from sin and suffering. This phenomenon showed the depth of cultural heritage that was deeply rooted in the minds of the people of Jamaica and its emergence when opportunities to emerge were offered. Some people, who were deeply immersed in the dominant Western culture, rejected the revival and the way it presented itself. Many orthodox people were swayed to the new mood of worship, but would not acknowledge that it was due to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit or that the mood was "in their blood"! One big problem in all of this was the influence of so-called evil spirits or demonology. People found it very difficult to distinguish between the real inspiration of evil spirits and the Holy Spirit!

When the revival took place in Karnataka, on the other hand, especially in the South Kanara district, the people, who came from a society that was strongly influenced by evil spirits, were afraid to go back to their old practices. They thus isolated themselves from their ancestral roots, but immersed themselves completely in the new culture of the European missionaries. Consequently, existing amidst the Indian multi-religious pantheon, Christianity looked even more like a full-grown potted plant in India. In addition, dependency on foreign funds even increased.

A characteristic of this kind of Jamaican receptivity during that period was the clothes. Jay (IRM 1962:472) states that the old established churches showed their aristocracy and most of the people felt they could not conform to the strict "jacket-and-tie" convention of the respectable churches. Johnson (IRM 1935:345) points out that "one of the commonest excuses given for non-attendance (of ordinary people) at the traditional churches was lack of suitable clothes". It is surprising that, in spite of the hot weather conditions in Jamaica and Karnataka, Western-style clothing should be regarded as superior and a cultural format of Christians! Today a change in this tendency can be noted. In many of the traditional mainline churches today, people dress casually whereas in the new rural or ghetto churches, the people go in full costume and hat.

Ironically enough, the springing up of the Pentecostal churches in the UK among Jamaican immigrants was also due to the fact that "in the cold foggy surroundings of the UK, the warm West Indian service gave them a new momentum. And so they carried their new spiritual and cultural atmosphere to the transplanted society" (Gerloff 1992:220).

In Jamaica at present, the religious-cultural phenomena attached to the revival are making their appearance again in some churches. The introduction of the dance hall, with its music with a heavy drum beat and Jamaican Patois in the form of a chant or "chat" and body movements, has brought a new cultural sweep in Jamaica. The lyrics cover everything from socio-political issues to the sensual. This "vortex of vibes and vibrations", as it is called, never fails to move the feet and the hips — in fact, the whole body — at high tempo and projects (and seemingly glorifies) the theme of sexuality. The introduction of the carnival in recent years added to its wider acceptance. Therefore, the performance of guitar and folk or jazz music and dance in Christian worship, raised some eyebrows. Some people, brought up in the strict Presbyterian and Anglican traditions, saw this as cultural-religious prostitution. Similarly, because Indian dances are associated with Hindu temple worship, their Christian adaptation is still viewed with suspicion in Karnataka.

The attitude of the churches both in Jamaica and Karnataka indicates their uncertainty towards expressions of the cultural heritage of the indigenous peoples in the churches. To a certain extent, the Christian Church thus remains an alien body in the world of cultures outside the Western world. As the world gradually moves into a process of continuous and all-embracing globalization, the alienness of the Christian Church may also slowly disappear. In this process it might happen that the cultural context as well as the contexts of church traditions become less and less important. The effects of globalization on the world as a whole are still to be seen. From the survey of the Christian mission in Jamaica and Karnataka it would seem that the Church will not be at the forefront of what happens to the world through the process of globalization.

## 5.2 STATISTICALLY SPEAKING

In his study on church growth, McGavaran (1970:vi) points out that "concern for evangelism and

church growth is an essential part of the Christian faith and an irreplaceable part of the work of the church". Today, it seems, the Church is silent on this vital concern or shows very little enthusiasm for it. Even though Missiology is not numerology, let us not forget how the "numbers game" played an important role in matters of religion. It provides a revealing analysis of efforts by different religions to win people to their fold.

Evangelism by the Christian churches by name raises many questions. Despite nearly five hundred years of mission work, no there is no visible spectacular growth of the church. The statistics cannot be overlooked. In all India the religious position today is as follows:

**Table 5.1 Major religions in India**

(as percentage of total)

<b>Religions</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Hindus	82.7
Muslims	11.3
Christians	2.4
Sikhs	2.0
Buddhists	0.7
Jains	0.5
Others	0.4

In respect of Karnataka, the percentage of the Christian population in the total population of Karnataka fell from 2.1% in 1969 to 2.09% in 1971 and 2.06% in 1981. Although it is registered numerically as 24.7% (an increase from 613,026 to 964,449), let us not forget that, compared to the population growth rate of 26.75%, the Christian population still falls short. This phenomenon is not exclusive to Karnataka for the Christian population of India as a whole is also on the decline. It decreased from 4.6% to 4.3% between 1961 and 1971, but then increased to 4.7% between 1971 and 1981.

A decline in the Christian population is considered a universal trend: the number of evangelized people in the world at present (1999) stands at 1.3 billion — 4% less than in 1980. The



percentage of Christians in the world has dropped by 1.5% and the evangelized now constitute 28% of the world's population. In the last five years (1994-1999) Muslims increased by 97 million, bringing their total to 817 million; Hindus gained 64.8 million to number 648 million, and Buddhists gained 22 million to number 300 million. The number of Protestants, Roman Catholics and Orthodox Christians now stands at 1.5 billion or one-third of the world's population (Dayton 1980:9).

According to an analysis by the Church Growth Association of India (1985:3), between 1881 and 1954 the Christian faith was the fastest growing religion in India, increasing from 0.71% to 2.35% of the population. Between 1951 and 1961, Buddhism replaced Christianity with phenomenal growth. Thereafter, from 1961 to 1971 and then 1971 to 1981, although the Christian population eventually reached 2.43% of the population, compared to the national average of 24.69%, it was the lowest.

During the same period (1971-1981) the growth rate among the six major communities of India (excluding Assam) shows the increase of the Muslim population from 57.8 million to 75.5 million (30.6%).

**Table 5.2 Growth in Major Indian Communities 1961-1981**

<b>Community</b>	<b>1961-1971 (in millions)</b>	<b>1971-1981 (in millions)</b>	<b>In percentage</b>
Sikhs	10.3	13	26.7
Hindus	444.2	549.8	24.1
Jains	2.6	3.2	23.5
Buddhists	3.8	4.7	22.5
Christians	13.8	16.1	16.8
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>548</b>	<b>648</b>	<b>24.7</b>

The above figures reflect that the percentage growth of Christians was lower than the overall growth rate of the population of India and other religions. This confirms that the age of mass conversion is over. All the gain from the mission of the Church through evangelistic efforts in the

form of church growth, which altered drastically and numerically in the religious map of India, can no longer hold good. Should we, then, acknowledge that mission in the twentieth century is on the decline? May we assume that in the post-independence era the churches have failed in their evangelistic task? If statistics are the yardstick for measuring the success and failure of mission, may we then conclude that Karnataka was lagging behind during the last decade (1990s)?

Without repeating the status of the Christian population in Jamaica, it could be concluded that the declining trend can also be pointed out in Jamaica (see section 3.8). It seems that the heyday of growth for the Christian churches is past. The Christian faith will have to look anew at its mission to the world at large. Our survey makes it clear that the established church mission programmes still depend on former mission bodies for support, which comes with different labels and in different packages. At the same time many of the third world countries also survive with foreign grants or aid packages. The barriers of sending and receiving churches have not yet been broken down.

The churches in Jamaica and Karnataka have benefited enormously from the missionary agencies or funding institutions of the West. But, in terms of modalities, they look like past glories and white elephants today. Today the institutions once considered the arm of the Church for evangelization have strained the Church's budget. Therefore, after one hundred years, most of these institutions have remained structurally static while others have advanced scientifically, technologically, professionally and profitably, but have contributed little to the Christian cause. It was not without reason that the Naraspor consultation of the NCCI (1967:216) warned:

Much of the energy of the church is wasted in efforts to maintain and preserve religious institutions which are irrelevant both to the biblical understanding of the church and to the Indian situation. The inner life of the church is corrupted by factionalism and power struggles. There is an extensive dependence on overseas funds. Exclusive dependence on paid workers often stifles church growth. New forms of church life must be found which more faithfully represent the nature and calling of the people of God in the Indian setting.

Though the CSI may boast that it has about five hundred residential hostels with about 35 000

children whose living conditions and educational needs are met, the fact is that many of these institutions and programmes are supported by American, German and other philanthropic agencies, which has given the recipients the notion that they have rich benefactors in the West.

Is it wise, then, to hand over some of the functions to the governments as they have the responsibility to look after the needs of their own citizens? Many advocate doing so while others are opposed to it because of Christian pride. No doubt Christians were pioneers in many fields that contributed to the progress and prosperity of the nations and societies. Their actions have given human dignity and uplifted the downtrodden and oppressed. They gave equality to the outcast and livelihood to the poor. In fact, they touched every aspect of community life and humanity. According to the *Deccan Herald* (6 June 1989:5),

Though missionaries had come to this land to spread the message of Christ, they crossed their boundary and took interest in contributing to the progress of the society and their zeal to know more about the people of India, the language, culture and literature, forced them to involve themselves deeply in the day-to-day affairs of the nation.

### 5.3 UNITY IN MISSION

When the Christian missionary movements started, they were all fundamentally committed to the same conservative ideological framework. Deep down in their hearts, they all dreamt of world evangelization and making Jesus the Saviour of the world. But circumstances changed and they were faced with pressure from inside and outside, all of which contributed in varying degrees to the shift of emphasis in mission. According to Potter (Verstraelen 1983:7),

While we have reached a certain consensus on evangelism, the very content of evangelism is now under fire. Honest to God, death of God theologies place a new hesitancy about the uniqueness of Christ ... the non-Christian religions have brought about a failure of nerves among Christians concerning their evangelistic witness.

Therefore to avoid further divisions in the Christian Church, all must plead for a new consensus

in the new age as we face the gigantic task of evangelization. Bassham (1969:358) maintains that with "an attitude of openness towards each other and a deep involvement and concern for the world in which the church must fulfil its mission, the various Christian traditions can now fruitfully interact with each other in seeking to clarify, comprehend and act upon a theology of mission determined by God's purpose for the church in the world today".

Finally, what is the outcome of all these issues? No doubt there is a paradigm shift in the agenda of the church today. The focus on evangelism has been replaced by other issues in the church. Evangelization, which served as the means of Christianization, has been bypassed and church growth, which was the criterion for the mission of the church, replaced. The church, once vocal, militant and triumphant because of evangelism, is not humbled and silenced.

The churches still claim to have a global mission, a mission in all six continents, a mission to all people on earth and for all ages. It cannot be narrowed down to the third world. The Mexico Conference of the CWME (Latham 1964:83) affirmed "that the missionary movement now involves Christians in all the six continents and in all lands. It must be the common witness of the whole church bringing the whole Gospel to the whole world."

In evangelical language the task is to "let the whole earth hear his voice". If all Christians were concerned with this aspect, why would they be divided? If they proclaim the same Word of God to the world, why should they be divided?

From this survey of the Christian mission in Jamaica and Karnataka, it seems that the "planted" churches have not succeeded in putting aside the divisions transplanted into them by the missionary churches of the West. Bearing in mind that those who were Christianized had very little understanding of the different church traditions that caused the divisions between the churches in the West, one realizes that those not belonging to the Western world have not yet been liberated from the indoctrination imposed upon them by the churches from the West. As in the case of colonization, the minds of the colonized were still kept captive in Western concepts and attitudes long after the colonizers had left their countries. A long process of decolonization of the previously colonized mind had to be started in order to liberate the minds of the colonized

and bring them to accept their own humanhood, which would allow them to appreciate their own human dignity and take responsibility for their own position in the world. In the same way, the "planted" churches will have to be liberated from the "church colonizers" in order to be obedient to the prayer of the Lord of the Church that those who follow him may be one. In both Jamaica and Karnataka indoctrination and domination by the churches from the West still continue. A new day will dawn on the churches in Jamaica and Karnataka in their mission outreach when they will become able and willing to work out their obedience to Christ in their own way instead of being told by the so-called mother churches how to follow Christ.

#### **5.4 MISSION IN DIALOGUE**

There is a creative dynamics at work in the psyche of humankind which expresses itself in the awakening to a liberation for freedom and peace. This force is at work especially in the political dynamics operating among the nations of the world. In spite of a destructive force in the revival of nationalism among some nations, nationalism is gradually losing its grip on people's minds.

The religions of the world still resist this creative force, however. Although all religions claim to work for peace in creation, they have not proved their claim in relation to each other. Until the religions of the world prove their claim by creating peace among themselves, their credibility and claim will be in jeopardy among the people of the world. Unless they can demonstrate peace among themselves, they will not convince the nations of the world that peace is imperative for a peaceful co-existence for the nations of the world.

In Jamaica, where Christianity is the dominant religion, the churches do not seem very interested in dialogue with the other religions in the country. In Karnataka, where the Church finds itself a minority group in the midst of a multitude of religions, there is still very little interest in dialoguing with other religions on bringing about peace among the nations. A new paradigm shift will have to take place in the Christian Mission to the world — a paradigm of co-responsibility with all other religions for the restoration of creation. Without such a paradigm of co-existence with all other religions of the world, there will be no future existence for either the Christian religion or any other religion that does not accept this paradigm.

## **5.5 CONCLUDING COMMENTS**

In conclusion, the survey of the history of the Christian Mission in two different worlds confirms the necessity for a complete rethinking of the goal of the Christian mission in an approaching era of globalization. A new understanding of the meaning of the Christian message to the world is needed, a message to which the Christian Church can once again commit itself — not to preach and practise this message on its own, but to do so in the awareness that the Church is on a mission together with peoples of other faiths to maintain and restore creation to the glory of the Creator.

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