PREFACE

The book presented here is a slightly revised form of the doctoral thesis called "Influences of Hinduism on Christianity in Andhra Pradesh". A few errors pointed out by readers have been corrected. Prof. em. N.-P. Moritzen has given many valuable suggestions, not all of which could be incorporated into this revised edition. He for instance pointed out that the picture given of the Evangelical churches in Andhra Pradesh as being mainly influenced by Western movements does not conform with the findings of Dr. Werner Hoerschelmann, who wrote a thesis on independent preachers in Tamil Nadu and showed that these are deeply rooted in the Indian culture. Such preachers did not cross my path during my research work in Andhra Pradesh, and I believe that particularly with regard to the development of Christianity in Andhra Pradesh and in Tamil Nadu there are strong differences, even though these states are neighbours. This becomes clear if one looks at the history of the Christianity in Andhra Pradesh, which begins effectively more than 200 years later than in Tamil Nadu. I have not investigated such phenomenon of independent preachers more extensively, except the Bhakt Singh movement, which is founded by an Indian and gives itself the face of an Indian church. On the other hand, Western influence in this community has also become obvious during the research work.

It is clear that this work is only a beginning. Others are called to develop, deepen or oppose what I have found and written down. I am glad that I could take part in the research on this rarely touched field.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

According to S. Radhakrishnan, any religion is bound to respond "creatively to every fresh challenge, whether it comes by the way of outer events or of ideas", in order to be "healthy and progressive".[1] Christianity has been exposed to many challenges, while it was carried around the world by its missionaries. Not always it responded creatively, but also destructively to these challenges. In India, the existence of a religion whose roots extend into the third millennium before Christ, has been the greatest challenge and still remains to be so. The challenge was responded to in various ways, and has formed and influenced the Indian Christianity tremendously.

1.1 The Encounter of Hinduism and Christianity

Christianity came to India in three different episodes, the first being the one which led to the development of the Thomas Christians in Kerala, the second being in the wake of the Portuguese colonialism, and the third in connection with the British conquest. In the three episodes, Christianity was brought each time from a different background: In Kerala, the Thomas Christians claim to have been founded by the apostle Thomas, but they are mainly influenced by the Syrian Orthodox Church. The wave of Christian missionaries brought by the Portuguese vessels was Roman Catholic, while the second wave which came with the British was mostly from the Protestant background. Thus, almost all facets of Christianity are today represented in India.

Many of the early missionaries, who came to India in the wake of colonialism, had a vital interest in the Hindu religion, trying to convert high caste members in order to win the entire Indian population.[2] They are partly responsible for the revival movements of Hinduism itself, beside of making known the complex philosophies of Hinduism to the western countries. The success of their attempts to spread the Christian faith all over India was, however, limited.[3]

When, mainly in South India, outcastes and low caste members decided to embrace Christianity in greater numbers, this was also, on the side of the missionaries, a move away from the attempts to convert high caste Hindus. Suddenly, the Christian church in India began to grow rapidly, but the reason for the numerous conversions was social and economic dissatisfaction rather than spiritual desire. Many missionaries were unable to enter into a process of transformation of the religion which was followed by most of the converts.[4] Instead, that religion was usually branded as superstition and devilish and therefore to be abolished.

The conversion to Christianity brought some change with regard to the position within the caste system. Although, in the beginning, the conversion to Christianity was often considered a step away from the Hindu community, the Christian community is now commonly accepted as a group within the caste system, a little higher in status than the caste from which it originated. The strong continuation of caste segregation by the converts allowed some higher castes to acknowledge Christianity as a new caste within the Hindu society.

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1. S. Radhakrishnan, *Religion and Culture*, p. 8

2. Many missionaries believed that, if they would convince the religious leaders to embrace Christianity, then the others would follow like sheep follow the shepherd.

3. Although there is almost no area where not at least a few Christians are found, the Christian population forms a very small minority against the Hindu population.

4. Because most of the outcastes in South India are from Dravidian background, their religion was a mixture of their own village religion and the concepts brought to them by the Aryan movement.

1.2 Reason for this Study

Throughout the recent decades, i.e. after 1960, only very little research work has been published on the Christianity in Andhra Pradesh, and if so, the studies are limited to a small and culturally more or less homogeneous, geographical region. One study of major importance is that of P.Y. Luke and J.B. Carmen with the title *Village Christians and Hindu Culture* (published in 1968), which studies in detail the Christianity in some villages in the Medak diocese of the CSI, i.e. in the north-west of Telangana.[5] This is an in-depth study from the Christian point of view, i.e. it deals also largely with questions regarding Christian membership, beside studying the social behaviour and the customs of the Christians in the particular area. The other study entitled *Christians in Andhra Pradesh* is compiled by P.D. Wiebe and published in 1988, and deals with the Mennonite Brethren Church mainly in the Mahbubnagar district, i.e. south of Hyderabad. This study is concerned with the process of inculturation of the Mennonite Brethrens in the said area. Besides, it provides valuable material on the social situation of the Christians and their spiritual development.

Apart from these two extensive studies, there are a few articles published by M.E. Prabhakar on the social situation of the Christianity in Andhra Pradesh, mainly related to the area of Guntur district and the Medak diocese of the CSI. Even less articles have been published by other scholars during the recent decades. Other research work is available in unpublished form mainly as theses for the B.D. or the M.Th. degree.[6] All these studies are confined to small regions of Andhra Pradesh or to one particular Christian denomination and deal mainly with the cultural or social setup of the Christian community. Most of them do not touch the concepts prevailing among the Christians under study and tend to interpret the prevalence of Hindu customs among the Christians as relics of the previous religion which will soon die out.

It has, however, become apparent that the Hindu customs and manners are continuously practised even in the fourth and fifth generation of a Christian family in Andhra Pradesh, and the tendency is towards further inconsiderate acceptance of more Hindu customs and manners rather than a critical analysis and re-interpretation of the same in the sense of a Christianization.[7] Thus, the need was felt for a study which attempts to find the reason for the adoption and continuance of numerous Hindu customs and social patterns among the Christian communities in Andhra Pradesh.

1.3 The Scope of this Study

The scope of this thesis is to provide an insight into the day-to-day life of the Christians in Andhra Pradesh and to reveal elements in the spirituality of the Christians in this area, which derive from the Hindu culture and spirituality. It shall help to understand the concepts and patterns of behaviour among the Indian Christians in Andhra Pradesh on the basis of comparison, and shall attempt to find the reason for the perseverance of Hindu manners and customs among them.

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5. The Medak diocese comprises the area northwards and westwards from Hyderabad up to the boarders of Andhra Pradesh

6. *cf.* the list of unpublished sources in the bibliography.

7. Christianization, in this context, means to evaluate the custom in the light of the biblical doctrine, to retain what appears to be acceptable and to discontinue what is against this doctrine.

1.4 Limitations of this Study

It is obvious, considering the geographical extent and the ethnic and cultural multitude of Andhra Pradesh, that this study can not cover *all* aspects of society, culture and religious life. The research work had therefore to be limited without becoming superficial, in order to achieve the object which has been explained above.

Thus, the study deals with customs and habits related to events which are outstanding in a person's life, like birth, marriage, sickness and death, including some regular customs which are observed in most parts of Andhra Pradesh. The study excludes practices which are followed exclusively by a certain group within a limited region of Andhra Pradesh. It investigates, in comparison to the corresponding Hindu concepts, religious and philosophical concepts which are of major importance for the day-to-day life of the Christian community. It further examines the social order prevailing among the Christians in Andhra Pradesh in reference to the topic of the thesis, and compares this order to the Christian doctrines as laid down in the Bible.

The thesis does not elaborate on the various models of Christian Theology, developed by Indian Theologians with an attempt to indigenize the Christian theology[8], because firstly, there are no eminent scholars in Andhra Pradesh, and secondly, these models have never reached the grass-root level, where they are almost completely unknown and have had no impact on the day-to-day life.[9]

Christian communities with a mainly tribal background, like the Good Samaritan Evangelical Lutheran Church in Khammam district, had to be completely exempted from this study, although they live also at least partly under the influence of Hinduism. It would, however, not be justifiable to include such communities without a detailed study of their own cultural background, which is beyond the scope of this thesis.

Hinduism[10] in Andhra Pradesh was studied in a selective way, because the emphasis of this thesis lies on the Christianity. Since most of the Christians derive from the *Vaishnava* sect and have been followers of the *bhakti marga*, these traditions were preferably dealt with. Dravidian customs, which exist among the villagers in Andhra Pradesh and have been influenced, but not eradicated by the Aryan movement, had also to be discussed in the thesis whenever it was appropriate.

This way of dealing with the Hinduism in Andhra Pradesh is legitimate, because the major scope of the study is to bring into light the appearance of the Christian communities in Andhra Pradesh as communities under the influence of Hinduism in a broader perspective, and not to give a detailed presentation of the various Hindu denominations or sects in Andhra Pradesh, which has been done exhaustively by various scholars.

1.5 Methodology

To achieve the goal set up above, this thesis is divided into two major parts:

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8. most of these models outline a Christian *bhakti marga*

9. Of course some elements of those theologies are also found among the ordinary Christians, but they follow them not because of theological reflection, but because it is their spirituality. These elements will be discussed later on.

10. Hinduism can be hardly described as a religion. *Cf.* the definition on page 9

1. The introductory section (chapters 2 and 3) and
2. The main section (chapters 4, 5 and 6)

The introductory section, especially chapter 3, provides the basic knowledge about the development of the Christianity in Andhra Pradesh and its social background, which is necessary in order to understand why the Christian communities are influenced by Hinduism in various ways. This section includes also a survey of the development of Hinduism, which shall provide the basis for the comparative study in the following main section. The main section compares customs and manners among the Christian community in Andhra Pradesh with the corresponding elements in Hinduism, and evaluates them partially in the light of the Christian doctrines. The chapter 6 attempts to explain the conceptual background which leads to the adoption or continuation of Hindu social patterns and customs by the Christian community.

It has been found necessary to refer to both, the "Great Tradition" and the "Little Tradition"[11] of Hinduism and Christianity. This shall help to understand the philosophical and ideological background of the various habits and customs.

1.5.1 Collection of Material

To collect the necessary material, four methods were adopted:

1. collecting material from libraries and archives

2. collecting material through questionnaires

3. collecting material by field work

4. collecting material by discussing various subjects with scholars who have done research in the specific geographical area for a long time

1.5.1.1 Material from Libraries and Archives

A lot of material was collected from archives at different places in South India. The United Theological College at Bangalore provides a very rich collection of unpublished material, both in form of primary sources, like minutes and research theses which compile information on the Christianity in Andhra Pradesh, as well as published material in the form of books and magazines. The Andhra Christian Theological College at Hyderabad provided a number of unpublished papers especially on the Malas and Madigas in Andhra Pradesh. The Gurukul College at Madras also was a source of information mainly on the Lutheran churches in Andhra Pradesh. The Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society in Bangalore is an institute which collects and analyses material on the social situation of the Indian Christians, mainly in South India, and provided valuable material on the social situation of the Christianity in Andhra Pradesh.

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11. The concepts of a Great and a Little Tradition have been developed by Robert Redfield and can be characterized as follows:

   – The "Great Tradition" is the world-view as it is reflected in the scriptures and moral and cultural norms of the society.
   – The "Little Tradition" is to be understood as the appearance of the "Great Tradition", adjusted according to local customs, life-style (which depends on many factors like climatic situation, biological environment and so on) and occupation of a social entity.

A few published articles and books[12] were of great help to substantiate and to supplement the material which had been collected during the field work.

1.5.1.2 Material from Questionnaires

Two questionnaires were compiled during the research work and sent to more than 30 different Christian communities in Andhra Pradesh, in order to collect statistical and historical data. The response to these questionnaires was rather poor, and only a few replies came back. Thus it was necessary to draw information about the different Christian denominations in Andhra Pradesh from various sources and publications, which may not be up-to-date.[13] All means were exploited to get the latest data, including visiting various centres of the churches, in order to obtain more relevant material.

1.5.1.3 Material through Field Work

The Christianity in Andhra Pradesh is split in numerous denominations, which, however, could be grouped together in three major groups[14]:

1. Protestant churches
2. Evangelical churches
3. Roman Catholic Church

With each of these groups, contact was established at two levels, i.e. with the leadership (pastors, priests or evangelists) on the one level and with the membership on the other. In both cases, a random system was applied in order to cover a wide area and to collect the required material. In spite of attempts to cover the entire area of Andhra Pradesh, most of the locations visited are in the Nellore, Chittoor, Cuddapah, Khammam and Hyderabad districts. Various tours were made between 1989 and 1992.

The field work was done by selecting various locations, both villages and towns, with considerable Christian population. These locations were then visited and interviews were held with Christian leaders[15] and members of the congregations. Special emphasis was laid on questions which are covered in this thesis.

Often the interviews were informal, in order to avoid suspicion from the interviewed person.[16] On the other hand, a general openness was observed among the interviewed people in many aspects. This made it also possible in some cases to hold interviews while making notes and recording the interview on tape. In all other cases, notes were made immediately

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12. especially P.Y. Luke/J.B. Carmen: *Village Christians and Hindu Culture*, and P. Wiebe, *Christians in Andhra Pradesh*, both about Christians in different areas of Andhra Pradesh, namely Mahbubnagar, Karimnagar and Adilabad districts

13. It is to be noted that the various churches in Andhra Pradesh are not very much interested in keeping their statistical data up-to-date.

14. Details about the various denominations in Andhra Pradesh are given in the section 2.2

15. i.e. pastors as well as elders

16. It was noticed during the interviews, that many Christians hesitate to talk about certain topics, as e.g. the prevalence or existence of the caste system within the church, especially when they know that the information given might be presented in the frame of a research thesis

after the interview, and those notes were again rectified, in case a majority of statements (i.e. more than 50 %) differed from the previous statement on the issue.[17]

A number of interviews were also held with different Hindus on certain customs which are also followed by the Christian community.

1.5.1.4 Material through Discussions with Various Scholars

A very good source were also discussions with different scholars who had gained a lot of experience during their research work on Christians in Andhra Pradesh during the past years. It is unfortunate, that only a few scholars have specialized in this area. One of them is Dr. M.E. Prabhakar[18], who is the Associate Director of the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society at Bangalore. Another interviewed person was Dr. P. Suryaprakash, UTC, Bangalore.[19] Dr. E.C. John, Principal of the United Theological College, Dr. B.C. Paul and Dr. M. Victor Paul, both Professors at the Andhra Christian Theological College, were also partners in various discussions on the topic during 1990 to 1992.

1.5.1.5 Evaluation of the Material

All the material had been collected and evaluated. Some material had to be excluded, because it was not possible to get sufficient evidence or proof for the statements given by only a few informants.

It has proved to be quite difficult to evaluate the material which was received from the above mentioned sources, because wide variations especially with regard to statistical data like membership and profession or religious practices have been observed. This may have several reasons, which have been taken into account in this study. A few of them are listed below:

- Christians visit different denominations and are counted as members of each denomination (together with their families)
- informants do not know the appropriate answer to certain questions[20]
- informants do not want to give certain answers[21]

Whenever statistical material is presented, the sources are mentioned for further reference. With regard to information on concepts and practices, the utmost care was required when it came to the generalization of the collected material for all Andhra Pradesh. It appeared, however, that the differences were less determined by the geographical location than by the social setting. As two major social settings exist in India, i.e. the urban and the

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17. It was also noticed that some people gave replies in order to impress the interviewer and to give the impression that the interviewed person is entirely committed to the truth.

18. with him a discussion took place in June 1992

19. The interview was held on 17.3.92

20. e.g. they may be asked about their profession. The answer may be "farmer", but in fact they own only very little land and spend most of their time as coolies, earning wages according to their daily work.

21. This is especially observed with regard to caste. While in the face of government officials, Christians tend to say that they were non-Christians belonging to the Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes, they would reply to a representative of their own church that there is no caste any more since they became Christians. *Cf.* the section on page 87, where this issue is discussed more detailed

rural settings, these are referred to separately with special indications in the text, whenever necessary.

<u>1.5.1.6 Presentation of the Material</u>

This thesis first gives an outline of both, Hinduism and Christianity, how it developed and now appears in India and especially in Andhra Pradesh. Further, it examines the original meaning or purpose of certain practices, beliefs and concepts which are commonly followed. Then, it will be investigated to which extent those practices, beliefs and concepts of the Hindu background are still or have become part of the life and faith of the Indian Christian community in Andhra Pradesh, which will include not only religious, but also social issues.

Regarding orthography, it was found that there is no consistency in the English literature when printing Sanskrit terms. Even the use of diacritics was found to be inconsistent. In this thesis, a transcription of Sanskrit terms into a form which is easily readable and can be understood by both, Sanskrit scholars and other readers who are not familiar with the Sanskrit terms, has been used. All terms are explained either in the text where they appear or in the glossary in appendix B. The orthography of English terms follows the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English* (edition 1980).

The various scriptures are quoted from English translations, and the source is usually mentioned. With regard to portions of the Bible, the Revised Standard Version was normally used.

1.6 Preliminary Definitions

When using different terms, readers may, according to their educational, social and religious background, differ in the interpretation of some of the terms which are used quite often in this study and also elsewhere. Therefore it is essential to give definitions of some of the terms used most commonly in this thesis in order to avoid misinterpretation.

The Term "Hinduism"

To define Hinduism seems a task which can only be achieved by excluding certain aspects or by including almost everything that appears in India. Beginning with the fact that the word "Hindu" was first used by non-Indians to name the people living behind the river "Indus" (Hindus)[22], which included all cultures, religions and social entities which were present at the time of beginning colonialism in the Indian subcontinent, the word became later the synonym for the religious ideas and philosophies which originated and remained in this area and which base on the Vedic scriptures, the *Upanishads*, the great epics[23] and/or the *Bhagavadgita*.

These philosophies have influenced the day-to-day life in the Indian sub continent to a great extent, and a number of scriptures which belong to the Hindu religion give expressive guide-lines for the social life of the people to an extent which can be rarely seen in other religions. E.g. the caste system originates from the idea of four different *varnas*, as described in the *Rigveda* X,90. But the major source for the day-to-day life and the social order of the

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22. it originates from the Persian word "*sindhu*", which also was used to name the non-Muslim people living around and beyond the Indus

23. *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*

Hindu people are the so called *dharmasastras*, to which the *Manusmriti*, the scripture with the greatest impact on Hindu society, belongs.[24]

Thus, if we talk about Hinduism in this study, it cannot be restricted to the philosophical questions discussed in the above mentioned scriptures. It is essential to consider also the impact which Hindu doctrines have on the day-to-day life of the people, its strong influence on the social structures prevailing in India and its eminent impetus on the cultural heritage of India.

Therefore, when speaking about Hinduism in this study, the term does not only refer to a philosophical, religious system, but also to the social system and the cultural heritage which have been created or influenced by the Hindu scriptures.[25]

Whenever necessary, reference will be made to the scriptural sources in order to show the original basis of the phenomenon under discussion.

The Term "Indian society"

When talking about Indian society, one may think of the entire Indian population as a whole, but another may think of the Hindu community as a religious entity. Quite common, the caste system which is doctrinally a product of Hinduism will be understood as element of the Indian society, though there are social communities in India which do not accept or follow the caste system (at least from the doctrinal point of view).

In this thesis, the term Indian society is used in the sense of Indian Hindu society and sometimes also referred to in this way. Thus, when using the term "Indian society", it does not refer to the Muslim, Sikh, Christian or Jain population.

The Term "religion"

When we talk about Religion, one must bear in mind that all religions who claim to be popular, i.e. for the people, do bear more than one face. Usually, there is the "Great Tradition" of the religion which bases on its holy scriptures. In contrast to this, there is the "Little Tradition" of the religion, reflecting how the people have understood the philosophy and how they themselves understand what it means, to be religious.

With regard to Hinduism, the term religion is used in spite of the complexity and diversity between the various Hindu sects and scriptures. Appropriate terms are used in order to define more specifically which sect or denomination of the Hindu fold is meant. Christianity as a religion bases alone on the biblical scriptures,[26] the interpretation of which is however a matter of the individual and thus often the cause for schisms and segregation. The diversity among different Christian denominations is, however, not as great as between the various Hindu sects.[27]

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24. the *Manusmriti* has been written between 200 B.C. and 200 A.D., according to Klaus Mylius, *Geschichte der Literatur im alten Indien*, p. 294

25. Hindu scriptures are the Vedas, the *Brahmanas*, the *Upanishads*, the *dharmasastras* and other *smritis*, and the great epics, including the *Bhagavadgita* which enjoys great popularity

26. The Roman Catholic Church, however, includes the "tradition" as an additional source for Christian doctrines.

27. Those communities which claim to be Christian but have an additional "scripture" which was revealed to the leader of the community by God, are not recognized by the Christian communities and are therefore also not included in this thesis.

The Term "caste"

The social system in India is dominated by the so called caste system. This system divides the society into different groups, which are again divided into small groups which are put into hierarchical order. Each group has it's specific characteristics, both in appearance and in day-to-day life.

The terms caste and *jati*[28] are used interchangeably. They are generally used for such a small group, which is strongly segregated from the other groups.[29] While in Indian society the social system knows more than only two kinds of social entities, generally we will talk about either the *varna*, which is the term used in the *Rigveda* to denote the four "super"-castes[30] in general, which are however divided into numerous subgroups (which are again divided into subgroups), and the *caste* or *jati*, as we describe the usage of this term later.[31]

The thesis deals predominantly with the social groups which originally did not have any place in the caste system. For these groups the terms outcastes, Harijans or dalits are used interchangeably.

The Term "church"

The term "church" derives from the Greek word κυριακη, which means "belonging to the Lord". In the English translation of the Bible, the term "Church" appears several times as a translation of the Greek word εκκλησια which means "gathering" both, of a secular as well as of a religious meeting. A more appropriate translation of this Greek term would have been "community" or "congregation".

When speaking about "the church", the meaning of this term varies depending on the context. The term is used for the building in which the Christian community gathers for worship (the house which *belongs to the Lord*). It is also used for the Christian community as a whole, including all Christians from different denominations (those who *belong to the Lord*). The most common use, however, is the one for a certain denomination. Thus, names for different denominations often happen to include the term "church" (as in Andhra Evangelical Lutheran Church, South Andhra Lutheran Church, Church of Christ, and others).

In this thesis, the term is generally used in the latter meaning with a further distinction between the established churches and the evangelical churches.[32] This distinction has become necessary because the evangelical churches are young churches which have been established during the last two or three decades, and show fundamentalistic tendencies. Because of this fundamentalism, there is a stronger rejection of non-Biblical concepts and customs. Besides, the ideological influence from Western countries, by visits of evangelists as well as sending leaders to evangelical colleges in the Western countries, is apparent.[33] The established

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28. *cf.* also the section 4.1.1 on page 97

29. i.e. they do not permit intermarriage or any other kind of relationship with any other of such groups

30. *brahmins, kshatriyas, vaishyas* and *sudras*

31. *cf.* the section on the caste system on page 97

32. for a detailed description of evangelical churches see the section 3.5

33. It remains to be seen how these evangelical communities develop in the future with new generations coming up, and how far they will accept concepts and customs which are now being rejected in the same way as they had been rejected by the foreign missionaries 100 to 150 years ago.

churches are all the churches which have been established by foreign missionaries in the nineteenth century or earlier.

If necessary, a different usage of the term "church" is indicated and explained within the text.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORICAL SURVEY OF HINDUISM AND

CHRISTIANITY IN INDIA

In this chapter, a general account is given of the development of Hinduism and Christianity in India up to the beginning of the 20th century. The 20th century then will be dealt with only with regard to Andhra Pradesh in chapter 3.

2.1 Glimpses of the Development of Hinduism

This section can truly only include some glimpses of the development of Hinduism. It gives an account of how the different philosophies and religious sects in Hinduism have developed and deals a little more detailed with developments which had and have also impact on the Christianity particularly in South India.

2.1.1 The Beginnings

Hinduism[34] is, according to archaeological findings, one of the oldest of the world religions. It has influenced the Indian subcontinent for more than 3000 years and has had a great impact on both, the cultural as well as the social development in this area.[35]

The four Vedas are the major source of information about the Aryan religion. The oldest, the *Rigveda*, dates around 1200 B.C., followed by the *Samavedas*, the *Yajurveda* and the *Atharvaveda*.

It is obvious that the religion reflected in the Vedas was a nomadic religion, with no fixed or common sanctuary; sacrificial rituals[36] were performed at the homes or at places which were chosen according to certain characteristics.[37] Among the Gods mentioned in the Vedas, *Indra* gained highest respect, as he had conquered the enemy of mankind, the demon *Vritra*. *Agni* was as important, as he is the mediator between men and the *devas*. By means of the firegod *Agni*, the sacrifices (in form of *soma*, a juice from a plant with the same name) were brought to heaven and the *devas* came down to the men performing sacrifices.

The Vedas are chronologically followed by the *Brahmanas*, a kind of commentary to the Vedic hymns. The *Brahmanas* are a manifestation of priestly power, in the sense that a sacrifice performed with the proper knowledge will result in the desired benefits. Those who perform a sacrifice without the proper knowledge will do it in vain. The importance of the Vedic Gods is reduced, and the sacrificial fire became identical with the universe, thus making the performers of the fire sacrifice, i.e. the priests, the preservers of the cosmic order. The priest, during the performance of a sacrifice, raised to the status of gods. The goals desired by these sacrifices and promised by the priests were wealth, power, health, long life, prosperity, and after death immortality.

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34. The following presentation bases mainly on U. Schneider, *Einführung in den Hinduismus*, and David C. Scott, *The Hindu Religious Tradition*, in P.S. Daniel (Ed.), *Religious Traditions of India*

35. traces go back to the Indus valley civilization in the 3rd millennium B.C. and to the Aryan religious texts in the 2nd millennium B.C. It is possible that elements of the religious belief common in the Indus valley civilization have entered Hinduism and mingled with the Aryan religious ideas

36. see also the section 6.3.1.1 on page 191

37. see also K. Mylius, *Geschichte der Literatur im alten Indien*, p. 33

2.1.2 The *Upanishads*

With the end of the *Brahmana* period, philosophical speculation about the status of individuals after death begun, and the theory of *brahman* as the "world-soul", which had already begun in the Vedic literature, was now refined and deepened. To it, the theory of an individual soul, the *atman*, was added, and a major part of the speculations deal with the relation between the two.

This philosophy is extensively discussed in the *Upanishads*, which can be considered the continuation of the *Brahmanas*.[38] The *Upanishads* are mostly in dialogue form: a guru is teaching his disciple or a father is teaching his son. Sometimes, public debates are also recorded. Here not only the philosophy of *brahman* and *atman*, but also the idea of *karma* and *karma samsara* (rebirth) develops.[39] One of the older *Upanishads* that deals with these ideas extensively is the *Aitareya-Upanishad*, which points out finally that *atman* is the one power which redeems the individual from the cycle of rebirths.[40]

The *Chandogya Upanishad* discusses the cause of rebirth and gives two answers: rebirth is solely determined by one's knowledge, and: rebirth is determined by both, knowledge and action (*karma*). In the same *Upanishad* the identification of *atman* and *brahman* also takes place.[41] Only formless matter is real, and all that exists has it's origin and basis of existence in *brahman*, which doesn't have any form, which cannot be described, which cannot be known adequately, and which is the ultimate reality. The one who realizes this fact will also find bliss, peace and the redemption from the cycle of rebirths. This goal can be achieved only by experience and requires ethical qualification. The one who seeks to know *atman*

> must be animated by the spirit of faith (*sraddha*), live an austere life (*tapas*), be free from passions (*viraga*), practise chastity (*brahmacharya*), be detached (*uparati*), be patient (*titiksha*) and be tranquil (*shanti*).[42]

Only the one with these qualifications and willing to live an austere life, may, under the guidance of a guru, be able to realize the truth.

In contrast to this impersonal philosophy, there is also a theistic system found in the *Upanishads*. *Brahman* is referred to as 'this Person' or 'the immortal Person'. The *Svetasvatara Upanishad* reinterprets Vedic texts in order to indicate that the Vedic gods are all different aspects of the one Lord. This supreme Lord is then called Rudra, only a minor deity in the *Rigveda*. His originally malevolent character had already been changed in the *Yajurveda*, where he is called *Shiva* ("Auspicious").[43] Now, he is referred to as the personal manifestation of *brahman*, and to know him is, according to the *Svetasvatara Upanishad*, the way to *moksha*. One gets to know him as residing within oneself through

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38. However, the oldest *Upanishads* do also interpret and continue some philosophical speculations found in the creation hymns of the *Rigveda* and in cosmological hymns of the *Atharvaveda*

39. It must be noted that the *Upanishads* do not present a consistent philosophy. Many ideas are touched and dropped again, while others are followed up and developed into a whole system. The philosophical systems dealt with in this section are, however, the bases for the various subsystems.

40. *cf.* K. Mylius, *Geschichte der Literatur...*, p. 83

41. *cf.* the statement "This is my *atman* within my heart, this is *brahman*." in III,14,3-4

42. Daniel Acharuparambil, *The Self, the Unknown Knower, in the Upanishads*, p. 28

43. other names given to him are *Shambhu* ("Benign") and *Shamkara* ("Beneficent")

meditation (*dhyana*).[44] Meditation is supported by *mantras*, of which the most important is the syllable *Om*, which, according to the *Chandogya Upanishad*, represents the entire universe. By using *mantras*, the *murti* (form) of the Lord which is hidden in one's self can be brought forth and thus made visible.[45]

The doctrine of rebirth, which is also called *karma-samsara*, was generally accepted already in the 6th century B.C., but there was no satisfactory solution to the question how to escape repeated rebirth even in the early Upanishadic speculations. Although the *Upanishads* provided a way to realize eternal truth, this was unattainable for most of the people. Together with the political changes in the areas where the Vedic tradition had settled, this lack of a proper and easily accessible way to *moksha* led to a decrease of Brahmanical authority and to the formation of new religious sects, which did not at all rely on the Brahmanical tradition. By the end of the 6th century B.C., Buddhism and Jainism became very popular, and the Brahmanical tradition had to find ways and means to regain its old authority which had lasted for more than a thousand years.

Dharma, which had been related only to ritual practices, became now a very important factor in the day-to-day life. As *karma* determines the rebirth of *atman*, it became essential to know exactly how to avoid the accumulation of bad *karma* in order to improve the status of *atman*. *Karma-kanda* were the texts which deal with such questions in the times of the *Brahmanas*, and later the *Kalpasutras* gave comprehensive advice as to what was proper. Among these the *dharmasutras* are found, which give advice for the individual's day-to-day life within the society. Basing on the *dharmasutras* the *dharmasastras* were developed, of which the *Manusmriti* or *Manavadharmasastra* ("Law of Manu") and the *Yajnavalkyasmriti* are the most important. Their origin dates between 200 B.C. and 300 A.D.

In the *dharmasastras* the final goal is the same as in the *Upanishads*: the release from *samsara*. The emphasis, however, lies on the social duties of each individual. The basic system is the *varnashrama dharma*[46], within which one has to fulfil his duties. The *ashramas* are

brahmacharya	stage of a student. The student shall study the Veda under the guidance of a guru. At the end of this stage, the twiceborn (*dvija*) is vested with the sacred thread.[47]
grihasta	stage of a householder. The householder shall attain *kama*[48] and *artha*[49]
vanaprastha	stage of renunciation and meditation. The individual lives in the forest (*vana*) in an *ashram* and learns to control his senses by restricting himself from enjoying any kind of luxury or comfort. He studies the *Upanishads* and the *srutis* and practises penances. At this stage, he is assisted by his wife.

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44. A similar intention to support the idea of a personal supreme deity is found in the *Mahanarayana Upanishad*, however here the deity is named *Narayana*, a name of Vishnu, and an attempt is made to re-interpret the Vedic rituals as meditative acts (for instance, the breath is interpreted as the sacrificial fire)

45. This is in sharp contrast to Vedic teachings: there the *mantras* represented the powers and the Gods, but there was no or only vague idea of a physical form (*murti*) of a God

46. the term consists of *varna* (class) and *ashrama* (stage of life)

47. the *brahmacharya ashrama*, i.e. the education in the Vedas, is accessible only for the *dvija*

48. *kama* means pleasure

49. *artha* means economic and political activity

| *sannyasa* | stage of total renunciation and inwardness. The individual lives entirely independent and without desire. |

These *ashramas*[50] had importance only for the 3 upper *varnas*, i.e. the *brahmins*, *kshatriyas* and the *vaishyas*, while the fourth *varna*, the *sudras*, did not belong to the *dvija* (twice-born), who were of Aryan origin.[51] They had to serve the three upper *varnas*. The *brahmins* had the duty to control the Vedic ritual and to transmit the Vedic knowledge. *kshatriyas* were assigned the duty of protecting the people, and giving gifts, and were privileged to sacrifice and to study the Veda. The *vaishyas* had the same privileges, but their duties were to protect the cattle, to lend money, to cultivate land and to engage in trade.

This model of a society produced by the *dharmasastras* led eventually into the development of the very complex caste system during the first millennium A.D., which governs the Indian Hindu society until today[52].

2.1.3 The Yoga System

In the younger *Upanishads*[53], the doctrine of Yoga has been introduced as a response to the Buddhist movement. The *Svetasvatara Upanishad* explains how to perform certain *yoga* exercises. Yoga, according to the *Maitri Upanishad*, brings all that is nonself to rest and thus helps to release the *atman* from all fetters. In this stage, the identity of *atman* and *brahman* can be experienced.

With this doctrine of *yoga*, a link was established between the Brahmanic tradition and the Buddhist movement.

Later, Patanjali writes the *Yogasutra* which gives *yoga* a classical form. It later becomes one of the six philosophical systems.

2.1.4 The Epic Literature

Approximately from the fourth century B.C. onwards, a new type of Brahmanical literature came into existence: the epics. The best known among these are the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*, which both originated from the *Kshatriya* background, where they existed already for a few centuries and have been edited over a long period to include various traditional material. Both, in their present form, tell about different incarnations (*avatara*) of Vishnu in order to save the world from devilish powers within a different historical framework.

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50. generally, they shall be completed one after the other, however there are authorities who permit to enter *sannyasashrama* after completion of *grihastashrama* or even after *brahmacharyashrama* (*Manusmriti* VI, 38; Yajnavalkya III, 56) *cf.* P.H. Prabhu, *Hindu Social Organization*, p. 91

51. The *dharmasastras* followed the pattern of *varnas* as it was introduced already in *Rigveda* X, 90

52. see also the section beginning on page 97

53. the first where the idea of Yoga appears is the *Katha Upanishad*, "where the human body is compared to a chariot driven by a charioteer (the intellect) using the mind as reins to control the senses" which are the horses. The self (*atman*) is the passenger in the chariot. A hierarchy of powers is found in this interpretation like in the *Yoga*, and the goal to be reached according to the *Katha Upanishad* is quiescence like in the Buddhistic *Yoga* theory. David C. Scott, *op.cit.*, page 99f

2.1.5 The *Bhagavadgita*

As part of the *Mahabharata*[54], the *Bhagavadgita* (shortly called "Gita") has gained major importance within the Hindu world till today and was very much favoured by Hindu reformers like Ramakrishna or M.K. Gandhi. In the *Bhagavadgita*, Krishna discusses with Arjuna the question whether it is right to fight for worldly gains against the own relatives. Krishnas response is that Arjunas worries are unnecessary as there is a distinction between the physical appearance and the permanent self (*atman*) of a person, the latter of which cannot destroy and cannot be destroyed by any weapon. After this introduction, Krishna says that one has to fulfil his *dharma*, which can be done by action without attachment, i.e. acting without any interest in the results of the action.

Finally, Krishna reveals himself as the supreme Lord, who manifests himself among human beings in form of an *avatara*, in order to restore righteousness and justice. Whoever worships him in true devotion will find salvation. Thus, *bhakti marga* is introduced as the discipline of devotion, by which one may attain *moksha*. Then, Krishna breaks all limits by saying that he is accessible to everyone who worships him.

2.1.6 The *Puranas*

Puranas are collections of writings which are dated back up to the time of the *Atharvaveda* but created outside the Vedic tradition, with many additions made by theistic schools during the first millennium A.D. They originally contained texts on

- the creation of the universe
- the re-creation of the universe
- the genealogy of the gods and sages
- the ages of the world and their rulers
- the genealogy of kings

Members of the Brahmanical tradition, who had become worshippers of Vishnu or Shiva, adopted the *Puranas* to give Brahmanical status to their own theistic practices. While in the beginning their was no sectarian intention and most material had its background in Brahmanical teachings, later *Puranas* were written which exclusively supported one God as the supreme God above others. Examples are the *Vishnu Purana* which deals with Vishnu and the *Vayu Purana* which deals with Shiva and contains also descriptions of the *Pasupata* and the *Lakulisha* sect, both Shiva followers.[55]

The *Pasupata-Lakulisha* sect understood *moksha* not merely as the liberation from all sufferings, but also as the freedom to act at will like Shiva. The desire is to obtain a superhuman body which makes one equal to Shiva. This goal was reached by observing different disciplines put up in five stages, which had to be completed one after the other.

The earliest *Vaishnava* sect is the *Pancharatra* sect, which, in the *Vishnu Purana*, tries to keep alive the Brahmanical system and lays special emphasis on the worship of Vishnu. A theology of creation emerges, which says that Vishnu is both, *purusha* and *prakriti*, the creator

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54. *Mahabharata* 6, 23-40

55. These sects stand in contrast to the *Smartas*, who were devotees of Shiva but within the Brahmanical *varnashramadharma* framework. They actually were the ones interested in giving the theistic practices a Brahmanical status, irrespective of a particular god, while the *Pasupatas* and the *Lakulisha* or *Pasupata-Lakulisha* are pure Shiva sectarians.

and the material of creation.[56] As *avatara*, Vishnu intervenes several times in the world affairs for the welfare of the creation. The *Vishnu Purana* integrates remarkably the Upanishadic monism and *Vaishnava* theism.

Theism in the *Puranas* became more and more evident. Now temples as places of worship gained importance as a result of the Gupta rulers'[57] strong support to *Vaishnava* theism, following which political rulers began to give royal patronage to other theistic sects as well.

A consequence of Puranic theism was a change in the way of communication with the gods or with the personal supreme god. The sacrifice was replaced by the *puja* from the 2nd century B.C.[58] onwards, but became dominant only after the 5th century A.D. *Puja* was originally a ceremony of hospitality, performed when honoured guests[59] entered the house. This ritual was transformed to become an expression of worship to images in both, home and temple[60]. The worshippers receive flowers and food which had been brought into contact with the deity as *prasada* (free gift or graciousness) in return. Major importance gains also the *darshana* (auspicious viewing) of the deity, which is another expression of the deity's benevolence and graciousness. The image used for worship is a manifestation of the deity, his *murti*, made available to the worshippers. Thus, the deity is treated like the personal God of the devotee.

2.1.7 Tantra

The theistic sects began in the 5th century A.D. to produce their own literature, called *Agamas*, in which they describe their own ritual practices and introduce also the *tantra*[61] system. *Tantra* emphasizes the physical body as the place of divine powers, as it is considered to be a microcosm of the universe.[62] This nature of the physical body has to be brought into the consciousness of the individual person by practical *sadhana*, practical means like *mantras*, yogic meditation and the ritual use of images. The individual identifies himself with the deity *in the form of the image*, which has to be accurately designed in order to reveal the true identity of the deity. Then the individual gains access to the god and to his powers.

The *mantra*, according to the *tantra* system, contains only one or a few syllables, each of which is said to have divine power. By pronouncing the *mantra* properly, this divine power is released. *Mantras* should be accompanied by the proper *mudra* (gesture), which has the same power as a *mantra*.

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56. This is quite similar to the doctrine of *atman* as the ultimate and only reality, from which the creation emerges

57. 320 to about 500 A.D.

58. according to inscriptions

59. for instance *brahmins* who had been invited to the house to perform a certain ritual

60. *puja* in this sense includes the invocation of the deity, offering him a seat, offering water to wash his feet, to drink and to bath the idol, offering fresh garment and a sacred threat, anointing with sandal paste, offering flowers, incense and a lighted lamp, offering food or a gift, making obeisance to the deity, *pradakshina*, singing verses of praise and bidding the deity farewell. Other offerings may be added, and each action is accompanied by the recitation of *mantras* (David C. Scott, *The Hindu Religious Tradition*, p. 136f). *Cf.* also U. Schneider, *Einführung in den Hinduismus*, p. 83 and 159

61. the term *tantra* is used here to denote those beliefs according to which divine power, existing in human beings, can be released by following certain practices.

62. this goes to the extent that geographical locations and planets are located at certain places in the body.

During *puja*, which is performed every day, the worshipper also performs yogic meditation, of which the *mantra yoga* and the *laya yoga* are characteristic for the various ways of meditation, used in tantrism.

In *mantra yoga*, the worshipper meditates on one mystical syllable, and in *laya yoga*, the worshipper attempts to dissolve (*laya*) the world which is present in his body as a microcosm. By controlled breathing, the worshipper awakes his *kundalini*, which is the limited consciousness and energy (*shakti*) of the individual, and leads her through the *susumna*[63] upwards through different *chakras*[64] until she merges with the unlimited *shakti* which resides in perpetual union with Shiva. During the ascension, the world is consumed and destroyed, and the final stage is the union of the *atman* with the cosmic *shakti*.

Tantrism has broken a barrier which was put up by Brahminism, as *mantras* were not allowed to be transferred to any individual by anyone, but only by Brahmins to "twice-born" men. Now, *tantra* does not restrict the use of *mantras* in such a way, but allows anyone who knows their meaning to teach them to everyone, even children, women and *sudras*. Anyone was allowed to be initiated who sought refuge in the Lord, i.e. Shiva. The *guru*, who now was no longer necessarily a *brahmin*, took the place of those carrying religious authority.

2.1.8 *Bhakti*

Bhakti yoga, which is mainly supported in the *Bhagavadgita*, is from the 6th century A.D. onwards followed by more and more Hindus especially in South India. The *Nayanmars*[65] and the *Alvars*[66] came from different social backgrounds and included also women. They used Tamil instead of Sanskrit, thus making their poems accessible for the common people. In their poems, they share their own experiences in *bhakti*, being emotional and personal devotional hymns, which often refer to the *Puranas* and to the great epics. Salvation for them was not to unite with *brahman* or with the Lord, but to enter into eternal, blissful relationship with the personal Lord by means of devotion[67].

The hymns of the *Nayanmars* became in the 10th century the *tirumurai*, the basic scriptures for *shaivasiddhanta*, which, developed in the 13th century, emphasizes the divine grace and eternal distinction between the *atman* of the devotee and Shiva.

The *Alvars* have been inspired by the cult of Krishna Gopala. They took over the role of the *gopi*, longing for the beloved like abandoned lovers. Their hymns are collected in the *Nalayira Divyaprabandham* ("Four Thousand Sacred Hymns").[68]

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63. *susumna* is the most important of a vast number of channels which connect the senses and the mind

64. *chakras* are located along the spine and represent centres of different levels. The spine is assimilated to Mt. Meru, which is said to be the cosmic axis.

65. *Nayanmars* are Shiva devotees who were outstanding in creating *bhakti* poems

66. *Alvars* are the counterparts of the *Nayanmars* on the Vishnu side

67. in expressing this goal, Ramakrishna once declared that he wanted "to taste sugar, not become sugar."

68. Nathamuni (9th century A.D.), the first Vaishnava *acharya*, attempted to bring together the *agamas* introduced from the North with the hymns of the *Alvars*. The *Nalayira Divyaprabandham* is credited to him.

2.1.9 Sankara and the *Advaita Vedanta*

Sankara, in continuance of the Brahmanical tradition, developed and supported the *advaita* position in his commentaries to the *Upanishads*, the *Bhagavadgita* and the *Brahmasutra* of Badarayana. According to him, the entire *vedanta*[69] teaches that *brahman* is devoid of all qualities (*nirguna brahman*), and all what can be experienced in the phenomenal world is actually *maya* (illusion), causing *avidya* (ignorance, lack of knowledge) in human beings. As the Vedas, however, tell about a world of Gods, Sankara introduces two levels of truth, the lower being that of ordinary experience (*vyavaharika*), the upper that of absolute reality (*parmarthika*), in which only *brahman* really exists. Even the *karma samsara* and *moksha* is actually unreal, as no individual self (*atman*) really exists. Only the knowledge (*jnana*) of *brahman* in its real form without any qualities can result in *moksha*.

Sankara accepts both, *bhakti marga* as well as *karma marga*, but only as a preparation for the *jnana marga*, which alone can lead to ultimate reality. He created ten orders of *sannyasis*[70], which lived for the only purpose of gaining the knowledge of *brahman*.

2.1.10 Ramanuja and the Qualified Monism

Ramanuja was the major inspiration for the establishment of the *Srivaishnava* sect. He lived in the 11th and 12th century and developed the "qualified monism" (*visishtadvaita vedanta*)with its *bhakti* philosophy as a way to salvation, by further developing Sankara's monism. According to Ramanuja, the world is a real creation by *brahman's maya*. The world with all it's beings (*atmas*) is the body of *brahman*, and the individual selves are accordingly parts of *brahman* like the light is part of a fire. As *atman* is embodied, it cannot recognize it's actual nature. Only the knowledge of *saguna brahman*[71] leads to *moksha*. Release of the bondage of ignorance, however, can only be done by the Lord himself, who may be initiated to do so through the sincere devotion (*bhakti*) of the worshipper. Then, the *atman* would live in permanent, blissful devotion to *brahman* as the final stage of *moksha*.

As Ramanuja referred to the *Upanishads* and the *Bhagavadgita* to support his arguments, he was in a better position than those who simply relied on the sectarian scriptures. Due to the reliance on these sources, he taught that only twice-born were able to practise *bhakti yoga*, as *karma yoga* and *jnana yoga* were necessary for effective devotion. Ramanuja also accepted the *varnashramadharma* system, however *Srivaishnava sannyasis* were required to continue all religious duties, since *karma yoga* was the preliminary condition for the performance of *bhakti yoga*.

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69. the Vedanta includes the Vedic scriptures and, according to Sankara, also the *Bhagavadgita* and the *Upanishads*

70. these orders are known as *dasnamis*

71. *saguna brahman* is *brahman* with all auspicious qualities, contrary to *nirguna brahman*, which is *brahman* without any quality.

2.1.11 The *Bhagavata Purana*

The *Bhagavata Purana* as it is extant came into being most probably in the 9th century A.D.[72] and emphasizes worship of Vishnu through Krishna, where Krishna Gopala takes a major role[73].

According to the *Bhagavata Purana*, intensive devotion is the principal *dharma* for a devotee[74]:

> The scriptures enjoin that man's supreme duty (Dharma) consists in cultivating devotion through hearing and repeating His names and through other devotional practices.[75]

With the passage of time, the *Bhagavata Purana* has become one of the principal scriptures for the Vaishnava *bhaktas*.

In the North, the *bhakti yoga* developed roots later from the 13th century onwards through Jnanesvara in Maharashtra and many others, up to Caitanya in Bengal in the 16th century. Those followers of *bhakti yoga* produced literature in form of poetry and songs which became very popular, because they did not use Sanskrit, but the local language, and came from the bottom of the heart of the ordinary people.

2.1.12 Devi Worship

The worship of goddesses has been existing independent from the Brahmanical traditions for centuries all over the country in various forms, especially as an expression of religious spirituality in the villages and among Dravidians and tribal people.[76]. The Devi was named in various ways, and she represents two contrasting aspects, the creating and maintaining and the destructing power. Later, in the epic literature, names are given to her like *Kali* and *Durga*, as which she enters the Brahmanical tradition, though as a minor deity.

The myth told about her in this tradition is that she slew *Mahisha*, a buffalo demon. Later, an account of her origin is given in the *Markandeya Purana*, according to which the fierce radiance of Shiva, Vishnu and Brahma has created her in order to kill *Mahisha*. Here, *Kali* is part of *Durga*.

By the eighth century, both were identified as consorts of Shiva. In the literature, the question of who is superior to the other has been answered in different ways, at times giving Shiva the superiority, at times *devi*. With further development, the two different aspects, which are represented in *devi*, received different names: the benign aspect was preferably called *Gauri*, *Uma* or *Parvati*, while the ferocious aspect was called *Durga*, *Kali* or *Camunda*.

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72. the exact time of origin is not known. It is likely that a different version has been existing already 500 to 600 years earlier, while the extant form is a third and thorough revision of the original text, which depends greatly on the *Alvars* (*cf.* Vishnu Puri, *Bhakti Ratnavali*, p. 7-10)

73. see the section on the *Alvars* on page 20

74. see also Subhash Anand, *The Spirituality of the Bhagavata Purana*, p.458-462

75. *Bhagavata Purana* 6.3,22; quoted from Vishnu Puri, *Bhakti Ratnavali*, p. 100

76. In early Tamil literature, reference is made to goddesses which had been worshipped in the south since the early Christian era. Among them is *Kanya Kumari*, a virgin goddess, and *Korravai*, the goddess of the mountains, to whom the tribal people sacrificed buffaloes and other animals. In the northern mountain area goddesses were worshipped by orgiastic rites and bloody sacrifices. The *Kali* cult in Bengal is influenced by local Devi cults.

The goddess is also *shakti*, which means the creative power that activates *prakriti*. Her devotees are called *shaktas*. At this point, tantrism gains importance as it teaches to reunite the *shakti*, i.e. the female aspect present in oneself, with Shiva.

2.1.13 Reform Movements

With the advent of the British emperors, the English educational system was introduced and led to the discovery of a number of malpractices which had crept into Hinduism, like the child marriage, denial of remarriage to child widows and widows on the whole, and *sati*, the burning of a widow on the pyre of her husband.

2.1.13.1 Rammohan Roy (1772-1833)

Rammohan Roy was a social activist, fighting for social reforms, being successful in enforcing the abolition of *sati*[77], and also a religious reformer, having translated the *Upanishads* into Bengali and English. He founded the Brahmo Samaj[78], which should propagate his interpretation of the *Upanishads* and of the Christian faith, which was monotheistic[79] and strongly opposed against idolatry. According to his theology, everybody had the capability of discovering the existence of the creator and ruler of the universe by simple observation of the nature. "Inductive reason and intuition" are the means to attain truth.

The members of the Brahmo Samaj gathered every Saturday evening for common worship. As Rammohan Roy was opposed against any man-made doctrines, there was no doctrine for the Brahmo Samaj as well. The major purpose of the gatherings was to listen to the *Upanishads* and to a sermon, and to worship the One God together by singing and praying. The movement was strongly opposed by orthodox Hindus.[80]

2.1.13.2 Debendranath Tagore (1818-1905)

The Brahmo Samaj, which lost much of its vitality after the death of Rammohan Roy, was joined by Debendranath Tagore in 1843 and then reorganized by him. He drew up a declaration of faith which was to be accepted as "*Brahma Dharma*" by everyone who wanted to join the Brahmo Samaj. He also emphasized the Hindu background of the Brahmo Samaj and did not attempt a synthesis of the major religions, which was a major goal of Rammohan Roy.

2.1.13.3 Keshub Chunder Sen (1838-1884)

Keshub Chunder Sen, a Vaishnava, joined the Brahmo Samaj in 1857 and started in 1859 the *Brahma Vidyalaya*, a theological school to train Brahmo missionaries.[81] Keshub emphasized that a Brahma "had to forsake orthodox forms of cult, caste system and the sacred threat".[82] This view was not supported by Debendranath and a number of elder members of

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77. in 1829; due to his efforts, the denial of remarriage to widows was legally abolished in 1856, and he was a strong fighter against the caste system

78. on the 20th August 1828, the Brahmo Sabha was founded and later named Brahmo Samaj

79. he was a strong supporter of Unitarian faith

80. Antony Kolencherry, *Universality of Modern Hinduism*, p. 16-29

81. Before he joined the Brahmo Samaj, he had founded "The Goodwill Fraternity", as he believed that one expression of faith is to live in brotherhood with each other.

82. A. Kolencherry, *Universality…*, p. 37

the Samaj. Following a dispute on these principals, Chunder Sen founded the "Brahmo Samaj of India" in 1866. Finally in 1880, Keshub Chunder Sen founded the Church of New Dispensation or *Nava Vidhana* to develop a "religion of life". Here he tried to harmonize the three major world religions, i.e. Hinduism, Islam and Christianity, by adopting religious rites of the different religions.

2.1.13.4 The Arya Samaj

The Arya Samaj is actually the counterpart to the Brahma Samaj. It was founded by Swami Dayanada Saraswati (1824-1883) with the aim to propagate the Vedas and to re-establish Vedic monotheism in its original form. Social reforms were a major part of its campaigns, and it emphasized education at the grass-root level, which was only of little concern of the Brahmo Samaj.

One important aim was to readmit people who had embraced Christianity or Islam through the *suddhi* rite. This rite included also some kind of uplift of the outcastes, because they were then invested with the sacred thread and were allowed to draw water from the wells used by high caste members[83].

With the Brahmo and the Arya Samaj, it was also for the first time that a distinction was made between social life and religion. It was felt that social practices which had been developed within Hinduism were not to be treated as religious elements[84].

2.1.13.5 The Ramakrishna Mission

The Ramakrishna Mission has been founded by Swami Vivekananda[85] (1863-1902), who was inspired by Sri Ramakrishna (1834-1886). Ramakrishna, who was a mystic having visions of Kali, Jesus, Krishna, Mohammed and others, attracted many people, including Keshub Chunder Sen. Vivekananda promoted the teachings of his guru around the world by giving lectures, and was mostly received sympathetically. He made India known to the world as a country of rich spiritual heritage, and emphasized the superiority of *advaita vedanta* above other religions, though, according to Ramakrishna, all religions were equally true. He admitted, therefore, that even other religions can lead somebody close to the truth, but only through *advaita vedanta* one could reach the highest stage of spiritual truth.[86]

Like the other movements, the Ramakrishna Mission emphasized the need for social services, but this should be done by using Western technologies. On the other side, Vivekananda did not condemn the caste system, and he admitted also the image worship as appropriate at its place. He was against radical reforms towards the West.

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83. It is common belief that most of those members of low castes who embraced Christianity or Islam did so because there was no caste distinction within these religions. However, the expected social uplift wasn't accomplished so fast, and disappointment took the place of earlier enthusiasm. Thus the reconversion with the prospect of immediate social uplift within the Hindu community was actually the response from Hinduism to the disappointment caused by baseless promises made by the missionaries or by too high expectations raised among the converts due to the message conveyed to them.

84. This distinction seems to be prevailing nowadays. When talking about certain social customs with different informants, they all tend to interpret these customs as elements of Indian culture, not based on any religious grounds, even though most of these customs have been introduced in the *smritis*, referring to older sources, which are considered to be religious texts

85. his original name was Narendranath Datta, which he changed into Vivekananda at the time of his initiation by Ramakrishna

86. *cf.* his lecture *Is Vedanta The Future Religion?*, p. 26-28

2.2 Highlights of the Development of Christianity in India

2.2.1 Christian Missions Before the 16th Century

It is a well known fact that, in the area of Kerala, Christianity was existing already in the early centuries A.D., and a number of scholars claim that the Christian community in Kerala was founded by the apostle Thomas, one of the disciples of Jesus Christ. Although this claim is controversial[87], it is obvious that Christianity existed at the South-West-coast of the Indian subcontinent already in the third century, which most probably was due to the fact that Jewish people were entertaining trade relations between Palestine and the Malabar coast[88]. The two major theories about the origin of Christianity in India are:

1. St. Thomas came to India with these Jewish traders, preached and was buried in South India.

2. Being an important place of trade, Kerala also attracted Christian missionaries, who came from the East-Syrian or Persian Church in the 3rd century[89].

Whatever the case may be, the Christian community which developed out of the early missionary efforts, became a social entity within the Hindu community, and they were looked at like a caste among other castes, but with a very high reputation, being trusted by the local Hindu sovereigns and employed in their army.

2.2.2 The Roman Catholic Mission in India

2.2.2.1 The Beginnings of the Roman Catholic Mission in India

With the Portuguese expanding their trade empire all over the world, Roman Catholicism found its way to India. In the early stages, i.e. in the beginning of the 16th century, Franciscan priests were sent with the garrisons to provide in the first instant spiritual nourishment for the soldiers. The first Indians to become Christians were some of those who worked for and were in lasting contact with the Portuguese. The governor offered financial subsidy to the converts, thus encouraging the conversion by material means. When the *Nayars*[90] were also attracted to embrace Christianity, mainly for the Portuguese army, the Raja began to object these conversions. He made the converts to outcastes and untouchables, while the converts to Islam received benefits[91]. Schools and hospitals were built by the Portuguese in due course of time, mainly of course for the Christians.

As already mentioned, with all fleets sent by the Portuguese king, also a number of Franciscan priests was sent to nourish the Portuguese and Indian Christians as well as to spread the Gospel. In 1517, twelve of them reached Cochin with the commission to settle the

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87. it is not within the scope of this thesis to discuss the different evidences or claims which are supporting the various views

88. A.M. Mundadan, *History of Christianity* Vol I, p. 20

89. *ibidem*, p.21

90. The *Nayars* were members of the caste in Kerala which provides the soldiers.

91. A.M. Mundadan, *History of Christianity in India*, p.360-363. The growing Christian community had accordingly to be protected and supported by the Portuguese, *ibid.* p. 366f

Franciscan order there and to establish a *custodia*.[92] Their leader Antonio de Louro was authorized to establish three monasteries at Cochin, Goa and at another suitable place. The one at Cochin was built during 1518-1522 and named St. Antony monastery. However, in the beginning the number of friars living in the monastery was quite small, because some died and many left the place out of several reasons. Also, the other monasteries which had been established had to be manned.[93] Thus, with the establishment of Portuguese settlements at Goa, Cochin, Calicut and Chaliyam, a basic Christian representation had settled along the Southern West coast of India. With this, the Portuguese were ready to establish and to maintain trade relations as well as to proclaim the Christian faith.

The next move was taken towards the South-East coast of India, or the so called "Fishery-Coast". There the *Paravas*, who were pearl fishers, lived and followed their profession. The fact that pearl fishery is quite a profitable enterprise, there was rarely peace in this area. The Muslims had managed to get the control over the pearl fishery and had established themselves in the town of Kayalpatnam, from where they controlled all sea-trade. The Portuguese desired to make an end to the Muslim domination in this area and, after having received orders, Joao Flores arrived at the Fishery Coast with his fleet and challenged the Muslims.

A war began which lasted fourteen years, in which the Portuguese finally gained victory. The *Paravas* were baptized in 1536 and 1537 in great numbers.[94] The total number of baptism has been put at 20000, which may include all *Paravas* in thirty villages.[95] After a new fight initiated by the Muslims against the *Parava* Christians, which was won by the Portuguese, the *Paravas* were left in peace by both, the Hindus as well as the Muslims. Now, the exploitation of the pearl fishers was continued by the Portuguese.[96]

The area of Portuguese settlements spread northwards to Nagapattinam, and then to Mylapore, where a new Church was established by them on the spot where it was said to be the grave of the Apostle Thomas. On the West coast, the Portuguese went northwards up to the Chaul Bassein and established settlements all along the coast.

2.2.2.2 St. Francis Xavier (1506-1552)

St. Francis Xavier, who was one of the founding members of the Society of Jesus[97], was sent to India on the request of the Portuguese king together with Paul de Camerino in 1541. After landing at Goa, he soon began to collect the children and to teach them the Word of God, by using rhymes and singing the lessons. A few months later, he decided to move to the *Paravas* and to teach them the gospel, as he found them baptized but entirely ignorant

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92. A *custodia* is a branch of a religious order.

93. A.M. Mundadan, *History of Christianity in India*, p. 376f

94. A.M.Mundadan, *History of Christianity in India*, p. 394f. The motivation for this mass conversion is not clear. One version suggests, that the *Paravas* were in danger of being exterminated by the Muslims, thus calling the Portuguese for help and in return embracing Christianity. The other is that none such danger was there, but the Indian Christian Joao da Cruz felt responsibility to proselytize the *Paravas*, and thus he tried his best to do so.

95. *ibid*. p. 397

96. Those who were to collect the taxes for the Portuguese king, often in their greed demanded much more than the actual taxes from the pearl fishers. A.M. Mundadan, *History of Christianity*, p. 398f

97. The Society of Jesus is an order which was founded by Ignatius of Loyola and approved by the Pope in 1540 with the goal to propagate the gospel and to serve the poor and sick people. Besides, spiritual discipline is one major object of this order.

about the Christian faith.[98] From Tuticorin, where he had settled, he went into the villages, teaching the Word of God to the Christians. He also baptized unbaptized Christian children, took care of the sick and organized help for those who had been exploited by the Portuguese. As he was the Apostolic Nuncio[99] and pioneer Jesuit missionary to the whole of East Asia, he decided to travel on to Indonesia in 1545, the people of which he was told were more responding to the Christian message than the Hindus. He returned in 1548 and had to organize the Jesuit missionaries who had come to India in the meantime. He also visited the Fishery Coast again, organizing spiritual gatherings, and went up to Bassein. He then left India after fifteen months of extensive work and went to Japan only to return to India in 1552, when he was appointed the Provincial of the Society of Jesus in India and the East. He first had to deal again with organizational matters of the Society of Jesus in India and was forced to expel some men from the Society. Then he left again, this time for China, after only three months of stay in India, and died before he was able to reach the interior of China, on an island off the Chinese coast on 2.12.1552[100].

2.2.2.3 Roberto de Nobili (1577-1656)

Another most important Jesuit missionary was Roberto de Nobili, who arrived in India in 1606. He settled at Madura in Tamil Nadu and learnt with the help of a schoolmaster a lot about Hinduism, its philosophy and customs.[101]

In order to reach his missionary goal he decided to let himself appear like an Indian, claiming to be a *kshatriya*, since he was the offspring of a noble Italian family, and thus being able to come into contact with the high caste members. He followed the caste rules strictly. Soon Hindus came to see what he was doing, and he began to instruct a group of young man in the Christian doctrines. This he did not by mere teaching, but by discussing the various issues extensively, and the students were able to comprehend the doctrines of Christianity very soon. Within one year, he could baptize ten Hindus who had declared to be convinced that to follow the Christian religion would be the right way. As he emphasized the necessity of a guru, many decided to become his disciples and to accept him as their guru.[102]

In his book *Adaptation* Roberto de Nobili writes about the rules of the church regarding the missionary strategy and points out that the church never condemned any custom which is not sinful, and that he would follow this principle in regard to caste and all customs related to caste. However, this was the point against which objections were raised by his opponents from the side of the Portuguese, while also from time to time the *brahmins* in Madurai tried to chase him out of the town. However, the opposition from the *brahmins'* side could be pacified, but not that from the Portuguese side. They sent a letter of complaint to Rome to the General of

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98. He had to use Tamil but did not learn the language properly. Instead, he asked Tamilians who also knew Portuguese to translate the major lessons and then he learnt the phrases by heart, thus being able to teach the basic doctrines of Christian faith to the Christians and their children. C.B. Firth, *An Introduction to Indian Church History*, p. 59

99. the Apostolic Nuncio is the representative of the Holy See

100. His body was then taken to Goa secretly and he was canonized in 1622. C.B. Firth, *Introduction…*, p. 60-67

101. He was aware of the fact that Christianity was, especially among the high caste Hindus, considered to be the religion of the Portuguese and their followers, which actually meant that it was considered to be a religion which allows all sort of habits which are forbidden in Hinduism, but not an universal religion. Those who became Christians joined, in the Hindu's view, the caste of the *Parangis*, and therefore lost the social identity. Thus he thought of ways to convey the message of Christ to these people appropriately, in order to make them realize the true values and doctrines of Christianity and to show that Christianity was able to accommodate itself even in the Indian setting.

102. C.B. Firth, *Introduction…*, p. 111-113

the Society of Jesus, and with that began a long fight for what was the right method to propagate the gospel to the Hindus. In a conference held in 1619 at Goa the method of accommodation, as de Nobilis method was called, was condemned by the majority. But four years later, the Pope responded to the conference in favour of de Nobili, thus enabling his mission to continue in the approved manner. The mission was extended northwards and turned more towards the *sudra* caste and the *Adi Dravidas*.[103] De Nobili left India in 1645, having grown old and unable to continue the ministry. He came back in 1647 and spent the rest of his life in retirement in a hut outside Mylapore, where he died in 1656.

The Jesuits founded other mission centres at Mysore in 1648 for work in the Mysore State and adjoining parts of Tamil Nadu and at Pondicherry in 1689 for the Mission of the Carnatic. The Jesuit missions thus covered a great part of the southern area of India, however with comparatively few missionaries.

One problematic element in the work of the Jesuit mission was the so called *padroado*, the agreement between the Pope and the Portuguese king, that the latter has the entire jurisdiction over the Catholic Church wherever the Portuguese settled. This permitted the Portuguese king to take influence on all steps taken by the Catholic missionaries, while he had the duty to establish and to maintain the Roman Catholic Church in the respective countries under his dominion. this caused problems to the Jesuits, since the Portuguese king tried to interfere with their work.

2.2.2.4 The End of the Jesuit Mission in India

In 1773, the Society of Jesus was suppressed by the Pope, bringing the Catholic mission in India almost to a standstill. Only a few Franciscan missionaries were there to keep up what had been begun, but in many areas, the Christians were left without care and thus returned to Hinduism or became Muslims. In 1814, the Society of Jesus was restored, and new Jesuit missionaries were sent to India. During their absence, priests who were in charge of the various stations, didn't accept the papal jurisdiction but only that of the Portuguese king, and as the Pope was trying to regain power over the Catholic Church in India, a fight between those loyal to the Portuguese king and those loyal to the Pope (who were mainly Jesuits) began[104].

2.2.2.5 The Revival of Roman Catholic Mission in India

It was only in 1886, that the Pope Leo XIII signed a new contract with Portugal, which was to clear and to pacify the situation by dividing the power of jurisdiction.[105] Meanwhile, the new Jesuit mission in India made efforts in many fields which had been so far neglected: They built schools, trained native clergy[106], established religious institutions, made efforts towards self-support, trained Catechists and began the fight against the caste system and other

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103. This created new problems, as it was necessary to do the ministry for the different castes at different times, because each caste demanded full attention only for their own community. Thus, ministers for the higher and for the lower castes were appointed separately. Those serving the lower castes and the *Adi Dravidas* were called *pandaraswamis*, and those for the higher castes were called *brahmin sannyasis*. The *pandaraswamis* were quite successful and could, to some extent, also bridge the gap between the lower and the higher castes. A. Francis, *A Socio-Historical Study of the Pandaraswami as Instituted by the Jesuits*, p. 324-328

104. S. Rajamanickam, *Madurai Mission – Old and New*, p. 311-314

105. cf. C.B. Firth, *Introduction…*, p. 220-222

106. it was one of the major set-backs that, at the time when the Society of Jesus was suppressed, there was no indigenous clergy who could have taken the responsibility of nourishing the already existing Christians

social evils. Besides, they were further engaged in propagating the gospel to the Hindus and continued to address Brahmins as well as members of lower castes[107]. However, as it took one century to solve the problem which rose due to the *padroado*, the development was not encouraging during the 19th century.

The mistake of not educating indigenous clergy[108] was, in the beginning of the 20th century, made good by educating and ordaining Indians as priests in a greater number, and later also as bishops. For the purpose of training, theological seminaries were established all over the country. The most important of these was the papal seminary founded at Kandy in Ceylon (1893), which was moved in 1954 to Poona.[109]

Because the Roman Catholic Church does, unlike the Protestant Churches, also have religious orders[110], especially women orders had some impact on the Roman Catholic community in India, a number of which has been established in India.[111] The main work of these religious congregations are the care for the poor, maintaining hospitals, schools and orphanages and to provide places for contemplation and religious studies.

2.2.3 The Protestant Missions in India

The 18th century saw a change in the Christian scene in India. With the rise of other European forces trying to get their share of the wealth of India, so called Protestant governments came into the country and established settlements and fortified camps, mainly along the east coast. With the fleets, in the same way as the Portuguese did long time ago, they took priests or pastors[112] to take care of the Christian soldiers, but also with the aim to communicate the gospel to the Hindus.

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107. S. Rajamanickam, *Madurai Mission – Old and New*, p. 314

108. up to the middle of the 19th century, most Catholic missionaries relied on lay catechists, while the Indian priests at that time came all from Goa and were not well educated. *cf.* C.B. Firth, *op.cit.*, p. 226f

109. This seminary does have very high standards. Other major seminaries to train Indian clergy were established by the Jesuits in Kurseong (North Bengal, in 1889) and at Shembaganur in the Palni Hills (in 1895).

110. There are religious orders also in the Protestant Churches, but they are normally formed and maintained independently from the church, while in the Roman Catholic Church, the religious orders are a vital element for the development of the church and under the supervision of the Holy See.

111. Some of the women orders established in India are:

    – The Congregation of the Religious of Jesus and Mary (beginning in India 1842 at Agra, mainly in the North)
    – Sisters of St. Joseph of Chambery (beginning in India 1849 at Visakhapatnam)
    – Carmelites of Mother Carmel (founded in India as a Pontifical Congregation of Syro-Malabar Rite for women in 1866. Its main area is Kerala)
    – The Salesian Missionaries of Mary Immaculate (beginning in India 1889 in Nagpur, working mainly in Mandla district)
    – Sacred Heart Congregation for Women (founded in Kerala in 1911)
    – Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters (beginning in India 1933 at Indore, Madhya Pradesh, mainly working in Nimar District south of the river Narmada, but also having centres in Bangalore, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat and Mangalore)
    – Missionaries of Charity (founded in Calcutta by Mother Teresa in 1950)

112. the term "pastor" is generally used in the Protestant Churches and means "shepherd". It shall indicate the duty of the religious leader to take care of the spiritual needs of the Christian community.

2.2.3.1 The First Protestant Missionaries: Ziegenbalg and Plütschau

The first Protestant missionaries with the explicit order to evangelize the Hindus arrived in India in 1706 as missionaries of the Danish government. They were Germans with the names Bartholomew Ziegenbalg and Henry Plütschau. They landed at Tranquebar (Tarangambadi), which lies south of Pondicherry. Being Lutheran missionaries, they began to learn Portuguese[113] and Tamil, and taught the soldiers as well as their native servants the Christian doctrines. By adopting orphans they did their first social services as well as made converts by baptizing the orphans, who were then brought up in some kind of orphanages. They started schools for both, Tamil and Portuguese. Ziegenbalg was soon able to preach in Tamil and began also to translate basic Christian literature. After three years, more missionaries were sent and land and houses were purchased as living quarters and schools.[114]

The work of the missionaries was not smooth sailing. Instead, they had to face opposition both, from the commander of the Danish colony[115] and from the secretary of the Mission Board in Copenhagen, the latter eagerly trying to reduce the cost of the mission by forcing the missionaries not to support the Indian Christians financially.[116]

Ziegenbalg died very early in 1719, shortly after followed by the only other experienced missionary Gruendler, leaving behind three young and inexperienced men. The fact that the caste distinction which had not been rejected by the first missionaries was now objected by one of the young missionaries, caused confusion and disturbances. Only after 1725, the mission work spread to other areas and went into the kingdom of Tanjore, where many Roman Catholic Christians lived, of whom some became Protestants. The first Lutheran Indian pastor was ordained in 1733, And other stations were established already earlier in Madras, Cuddalore, Negapatam and Trichinopoly.

2.2.3.2 The Growing Protestant Mission in South India

In Madras, Philipp Fabricius and C.F. Schwartz may be the best known of the Protestant missionaries. Fabricius, who had arrived in India in 1742, became famous for his extended literature work. He translated German hymns and the Bible into Tamil. Besides, he published a dictionary of the language, which became a standard work for a long time.[117]

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113. this language was in common use at that time

114. It may be mentioned here that the S.P.C.K. of England supported the mission financially, while the administration and basic financial support was with the Danish king. The candidates for the mission, however, were recruited from the University of Halle in Germany, thus making the mission actually a three nation enterprise.

115. The controversy with the commander began about 2 years after the missionaries had arrived, when they indirectly held the commander responsible for the loss of a money chest which had got lost when the boat capsized on the way to the shore. In a letter, they also stressed the point that they were sent by the Danish king, thus having the support of the royal authority. However, as the Danish colony was not the property of the Danish king, this was an impudence against the commander.
It seems also that there was a growing suspicion that the converts might become too many and finally overpower the European community. All these things helped to deteriorate the relation between the missionaries and the commander. Anders Nørgaard, *Mission und Obrigkeit*, p. 28-32

116. It seems indeed that the missionaries were handing out their support to the Indian Christians too thoughtlessly. On the other hand, it was obviously impossible to refuse help, when so many people who were living in extreme bad conditions approached the missionaries. However, this might have led to the remark that "the Tranquebar mission was nothing but a great almshouse" (J. Richter, *A History of Missions in India*, p. 163; quoted from C.B. Firth, *Introduction…*, p.137

117. C.B. Firth, *Introduction …*, p. 139-140

C.F. Schwartz worked between 1750 and 1798 for the so called Tranquebar mission, being for 12 years at Tranquebar, from where he went on preaching and teaching and visiting remote places. In Trichinopoly, he made converts among Hindus as well as among the British troops. He founded also an orphanage there.[118] The S.P.C.K. agreed to finance a station there and Schwartz was appointed missionary of that station from 1767 onwards. He became also chaplain to the troops. He continued his work there until 1778, touring the country and serving the British troops, besides learning the languages Arabic and Persian, both a help in communicating with the *nawab* of Arcot, who was a Muslim. He also made friendship with the Raja of Tanjore, Tuljaji, and on his invitation he moved to Tanjore after another missionary was appointed to take care of the station at Trichinopoly, in 1778. Only two years later, after he had mediated between Hyder Ali and the British in vain, a war broke out, which lasted for four years, causing much distress to the Tamil people. During the war, Schwartz had to help in providing food for the refugees in the fortified camps. Because the officials had confidence in him, he was entrusted with many responsibilities in the political area, as long as he was at Tanjore. Through his efforts, the Protestant Christian community grew also elsewhere in the Tamil country. He died at Tanjore in 1798.[119]

2.2.3.3 New Missions under the British Rule

The nineteenth century was that of the British rule. In the beginning of this century, many Protestant mission societies came into existence and sent missionaries around the world and also to India. The following societies were among the earliest founded:

- Baptist Missionary Society (1792)

- London Missionary Society (1795)[120]

- American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (1810)[121]

- Church Missionary Society (1799)[122]

- The Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society (1813)

But first, the East India Company was not much in favour of missionary work among the Hindus, since this could endanger their major goal to have a prosperous trade relationship with the Indian rulers.[123] The opposition from this side was removed only in 1813 with a new Charta for the East India Company.[124] But before this, another missionary came to India who

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118. This was done mainly for the children of the British soldiers who had died in a blast of the powder magazine.

119. C.B. Firth, *Introduction …*, p. 140-143

120. This mission was first interdenominational, but then became mainly Congregationalist

121. This is the first American society and has a Congregationalist background

122. The C.M.S. is an Evangelical Anglican Society

123. The policy of the British was not to remove the Indian rulers, but to make them subordinate to the British rule, which was represented by British Residents at strategically important places.

124. The section 33 which is of importance in this regard reads as follows:

> And whereas it is the duty of this country to promote the interest and happiness of the Native Inhabitants of British Dominions in India; and such measures ought to be adopted as may tend to the introduction among them of useful knowledge, and

changed the scene in spite of the opposition faced from the East India Company.

2.2.3.4 The Baptist Missionary Society: Protestant Missions in the North

In 1793, William Carey arrived in India together with Dr. John Thomas, who had already worked in Bengal before, as missionaries of the Baptist Missionary Society (B.M.S.). The opposition from the side of the East India Company was strong, and they had to go to Bengal to start their missionary work.

The first aim was to make the mission self-supporting as soon as possible. The money they brought was spent after two months, and there was no provision to supply them with more. Just after they had got some land for cultivation, Thomas and Carey were appointed managers of the indigo factories in North Bengal. Carey then settled with his family in Madnabati in Malda district. He learnt Bengali and Sanskrit, preached and translated most parts of the Bible into Bengali and opened a school. After five years he purchased his own indigo factory in order to provide a living for the Christian community.

When in 1799 four missionary families arrived, who were not allowed to go to Bengal, but who had to go to the Danish settlement at Serampore, Carey decided to join them there, and he and Thomas went to Serampore in 1800. Two of the newcomers, Joshua Marshman and William Ward, together with Carey, formed a famous team.

Ward, who was a printer, was entrusted the work of printing the New Testament in Bengali. Marshman, a teacher, founded boarding schools for Anglo-Indian children in order to earn money for the mission. The press also earned some income, as orders from outside were accepted. Slowly also an Indian Christian community grew, and members of different castes desired baptism.

In 1801, after the publication of the Bengali New Testament, Carey was appointed professor of Bengali in the college of Fort William at Calcutta. Later, he also became professor of Sanskrit and Marathi. Thus, the mission became self-supporting and could even build up a fund for continued support.[125] Now the plan developed to translate the Bible into all languages of the East, as there were numerous pandits in the college who could do this job. When Carey died in 1834, six versions of the whole Bible, twenty-three of the New Testament, and ten of smaller portions had been published.[126]

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religious and moral improvement; and in furtherance of the above subjects, sufficient facilities ought to be afforded by law to persons desirous of going to and remaining in India, for the purpose of accomplishing those benevolent designs, so as the authority of the Local Government respecting the intercourse of Europeans with the interior of the country is preserved, and the principles of the British Government, on which the Natives of India have hitherto relied for the free exercise of their religion, be inviolably maintained; and whereas it is experienced to make provision for granting permission to persons desirous of going to and remaining in India for the above purpose, and also to persons desirous of going to and remaining there for other lawful purposes; be it therefore enacted, that when and as often as any application shall be made to the said court of Directors, for or on behalf of any person or persons desirous of proceeding to the East Indies for permission so to do, the said Court shall, unless they shall think fit to comply therewith, transmit every such application within one month from the receipt thereof to the said Board of Commissioners for the affairs of India… (M.K. Kuriakose, *History of Christianity in India: Source Materials*, p. 88f)

125. C.B. Firth, *Introduction…*, p.147-150

126. The translations were of course not of the best quality, and many –sometimes severe- revisions had to be made. They gave, however, an opportunity to many people to read the Bible for the first time in their own languages. C.B. Firth, *op.cit.*, p. 151f

Serampore was not only a centre of schools, printing and translation. It also was planned to make it a centre of all missionary activities of the Baptist Missionary Society in India and beyond. They began to send missionaries to different places, but only after the revision of the Charta of the East India Company they were able to do this more extensively.

As the Serampore mission became more and more independent, problems rose with the home mission board of the B.M.S. which wanted to have more control over the activities in India. After attempts of mediating[127], the three founders of the Serampore missionary work, Carey, Marshman and Ward separated from the B.M.S. During the time of controversy, they founded the now famous Serampore College in 1818, which was granted the power to confer degrees by the Danish king in 1827. The college remained independent until 1854, when it was handed over to the B.M.S.

They also had begun in 1818 to publish a weekly newspaper in Bengali, called *Samachar Darpan*, and a monthly magazine in English called *The Friend of India*. These became vital instruments in the struggle to remove social evil and to educate public opinion on such issues.[128]

2.2.3.5 The Conversion of the Nadars in Travancore

At the same time, in the Southern Travancore State, W.T. Ringeltaube, a German Lutheran, was the pioneer missionary to the *Nadars* in that area. He went there on the request of an Indian Christian named Vedamanikam, who had preached the gospel in Mayiladi and where some twenty people desired baptism. He baptized them and stayed there in order to preach the gospel. In 1810, the *Nadars* began to ask for baptism. He first refused, but then baptized 400 of them after he believed that their motives were not only material. However, he was sure that most of them did not long for salvation in the first instance.[129] On account of ill health, he had to leave India in 1815. When his successor, Charles Mead, arrived in 1817, a mass movement began among the *Nadars*.

2.2.3.6 British and American Mission Societies in India

After 1813, mainly English mission societies entered India and established mission stations all over the country, generally under the protection of the East India Company. To introduce the episcopal system of the Anglican Church, a Bishop see was established at Calcutta with three archdeaconries at Calcutta, Madras and Bombay.[130] In 1833, Madras and Bombay were also made bishoprics.

Among the missionary societies which now entered India were the Church Missionary Society (C.M.S.), the Wesleyan Methodists Missionary Society and the Church of Scotland. The American Board had already got two missionaries into India in 1812, who had settled at Bombay in 1813. The C.M.S. established Corresponding Committees at Calcutta (1812), Madras (1814) and Bombay (1818). They sent in the beginning not only British, but also

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127. Marshman went to England in 1827

128. C.B. Firth, *ibid.* p. 153-155

129. C.B. Firth, *ibid.*, p. 156f. There an extract of one of his letters in 1813 is quoted:

> I have now about 600 Christians…Three or four may have a longing for their salvation. The rest have come from all sorts of motives, which we can only know after years have passed. (p. 157)

130. This action was taken to provide proper supervision for the Anglican Christians in India and not with a missionary intention. The first bishops were appointed from England with no experience on the Indian Christianity, and there was no draft on how the bishops and the missionary society should work together. C.B. Firth, *Introduction …*, p. 159

German missionaries from the Basel Mission, which was then one of the first non-British missions to send missionaries to India on its own. They started work at South Karnataka at the west coast in 1834. Shortly after the German Gossner Evangelical Lutheran Mission came to Bihar in 1839, followed by the Leipzig Evangelical Lutheran Mission which succeeded the Danish Tranquebar Mission. American Missions, beside the American Board, were the American Presbyterians (Punjab 1834, Uttar Pradesh 1836), the American Baptists (Andhra Pradesh and Assam, 1836) and the American Lutherans (Andhra Pradesh, 1842).

In South India, i.e. mainly in the area of Tamil Nadu, the situation at that time was such that the early missions of the 18th century had grown old.[131] In 1826, the property was handed over to the S.P.G. on the order of the Anglican Bishop of Calcutta. Thus, the earlier Lutheran mission in South India came under the control of the Anglican Church.[132]

The Anglican objection to the caste system within the Church caused the episcopal order to remove casteism entirely from the congregations of the previous Danish mission.[133] This rash decision led to an uproar in the Christian community, and many Evangelists refused to follow it. Later, when the Leipzig Mission came in 1846, many of them returned to Lutheranism, since the Lutheran missionaries continued to permit the caste on the same basis as it was done in the 18th century.[134]

In Tinnevelly, where Christians had been left without proper pastoral care, the Lutheran missionaries Schmid and C.T.E. Rhenius were sent in 1820 by the Correspondence Committee of the Anglican C.M.S.[135] When, after about ten years, Rhenius wanted to ordain a number of Indian evangelists as pastors according to the Lutheran rite, the C.M.S. objected. In 1835, after Rhenius had published a book review in which he criticised some Anglican beliefs and practices openly, he was dismissed from the C.M.S. With him, the remaining Lutheran missionaries resigned from their posts, planning to open a new mission at Arcot. However, on the request of one of Rhenius' former Catechists, they returned after a short time and opened work of the German Evangelical Mission, "drawing away after them 67 of the congregations".[136] After the death of Rhenius in 1838, the German missionaries returned to the C.M.S. within two years.[137]

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131. most missionaries had come from Germany under the auspices and support of the S.P.C.K. and the Danish king, but the administration and decision making was more or less in their own hands. From Germany, there were not many new candidates, thus the number of missionaries as well as the number of Indian Christians was decreasing.

132. C.B. Firth, *ibid.*, p. 161; H. Grafe, *History of Christianity…*, p. 33-35

133. The missionaries of the Danish mission had tolerated the caste system to prevail within the Church, believing that, with the passage of time, people would be convinced on the basis of their Christian faith that there is no such distinction in the Christian community. H. Pearson writes in his book *The Memoires of the Life and Correspondence of the Rev. Christian Swartz*, Vol II, p. 115-119, on Schwartz' dealing with the caste system:

> The happy consequence of his mild and forbearing conduct was, that the distinctions of the caste among his converts, were gradually disappearing and would probably, in time, have been entirely forgotten (quoted from M.K. Kuriakose, *History of Christianity…*, p. 70)

134. C.B. Firth, *Introduction…*, p. 161f

135. H. Grafe, *History…*, p. 33

136. C.B. Firth, *Introduction…*, p. 163f; M.E. Gibbs, *The Anglican Church in India 1600-1970*, p.134-137

137. C.B. Firth, *Introduction…*, p. 164. M.E. Gibbs, *ibid.*, p. 140

2.2.3.7 The Development of Christian Education in India

The missions in the 19th century built numerous educational institutions, often for the Christian converts in the first instance, but generally also open to the non-Christian community. One attempt to overcome Hinduism by the scientific knowledge presented in the schools was the school of Alexander Duff[138], which was opened at Calcutta with the help of Rammohan Roy in 1830. The school soon expanded, having 150 to 200 students who gained astonishing knowledge.[139] The success of Duff's school may be one of the reasons for the British to make available funds for educational purposes. In 1854, with the Educational Dispatch of Sir Charles Wood, the modern system of public education was introduced.[140] However, until that Dispatch was issued, Christian schools remained independent, as they did not receive any support from the part of the government. Thus, they could follow their own educational policies.[141] On the other side, whenever one of the students desired baptism, opposition rose from the part of the family or the caste.[142]

With the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857, the work of Christian missionaries in North India, especially from the British background, was severely endangered. Missionaries were threatened and Indian Christians sometimes even murdered during the course of the Mutiny, though the revolt wasn't based on religious questions, but an uproar against the British rule. Still 37 missionaries and members of their families were killed during the mutiny.[143]

2.2.3.8 The Rule of the British Crown in India

The Mutiny was also the end of the rule of the East India Company. Instead, the queen of England became the ruler over India. But this did not seem to change the pre-conditions for the missionary societies, as queen Victoria refused to impose her own faith on any of her subjects.[144] However, the British government did not restrict the movements and actions of the missionaries, like the East India Company did, thus creating a different, more friendly environment for missionary activities. Therefore a number of new mission societies came to India in the second half of the 19th century.[145] This is also the time when, for almost the first

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138. Duff arrived as a missionary of the Church of Scotland in 1830. C.B. Firth, *ibidem*, p.182

139. The belief that it would be possible to convince the Hindu students of the truth of Christianity merely on the basis of education, however, proved to be an underestimation of the reviving powers of Hinduism. None the less, Duff succeeded in convincing some of the well educated and also high caste students to embrace Christianity

140. According to that, schools were to be established according to a certain system, of which most were private, receiving grant-in-aid from the government. Universities as well as Departments of Public Instruction were established in the capital cities.

141. The forerunner in establishing secondary schools was the Church of Scotland. A number of the schools founded by them later became also famous colleges at many cities like Bombay (1832: Wilson High School and Wilson College), Madras (1837: Madras Christian College and High School), Nagpur (1844) and more.

142. Until 1832 in Bengal and 1845 in the rest of British India, a convert to Christianity lost his legal right of inheritance. Other restrictions were there for those who desired to become a Christian. The missionaries often had to take care of the converts completely. C.B. Firth, *ibid.*, p. 185-186

143. according to M.A. Sherring, *The Indian Church during the Great Rebellion*, quoted from C.B. Firth, *Introduction…*, p. 189

144. According to C.B. Firth, she shall have said: "Firmly relying Ourselves on the truth of Christianity, and acknowledging with gratitude the solace of religion, we disclaim alike the Right and the Desire to impose Our convictions on any of Our subjects." (*op.cit.*, p. 189)

145. Some of these are:

time in the history of India, the aboriginal people (tribal), who had been displaced by the Aryans and Dravidians, were confronted with the Christian religion.[146]

Now, while there was the impression that Christianity would make its way in India, because many educated Indians decided to embrace Christianity, reform movements for Hinduism came into existence, partly a result of the educational efforts taken by the Christian missionaries and the Christian government.[147] The Indian National Congress, a political party with which a nationalist movement came into existence, was founded in 1885. This made it easy for people who were disappointed with orthodox Hinduism to find a basis for their own ideas of religious life within the frame of the Indian cultural setting.[148].

2.2.3.9 Zenana Mission

It is to the credit of the Christian missions, however, that the world of education was opened also for the Indian women. In the first half of the 19th century, girls schools were established by the wives of some of the missionaries at Serampore, Bombay and Calcutta. In 1849, the first secular public school for high caste girls was opened in Calcutta. Since 1854, the mission societies began to send lady missionaries for the work among women, and so called *zenana*-schools were established all over the country. In 1857, Duff opened a Christian day school for girls, and in 1859 the American Presbyterian Mission started a girls' boarding school at Dehra Dun. Soon, special societies for the *zenana* work were established, like the Zenana Bible and Medical Mission and the Church of England Zenana Missionary Society in 1881.[149]

Isabella Thoburn[150] founded a school which later became the Isabella Thoburn College at Lucknow. Most famous among those who developed education and emancipation for women was Pandita Rama Bai (1858-1922), who came from a *brahmin* family. She was trained in reciting the *Puranas*, and finally, after the death of her parents, came to Calcutta, where she married as an unorthodox Hindu woman a Bengali graduate of a different caste, who died only after 2 years. She returned to Poona with her little daughter and was associated with the Prarthana Samaj, working for the improvement of the social situation of child widows. In 1883 she became a Christian in England where she had gone for training and education. Then she went to America and spent three years in learning and giving lectures. Those interested in her work formed a Ramabai-Association. This association promised to finance a widows home which Rama Bai intended to build in India. In 1889, she opened a

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    –   Methodist Episcopal Church of America
    –   University Missions
    –   English Presbyterians
    –   Canadian Presbyterians
    –   Canadian Baptists
    –   Society of St. John the Evangelist

146. The first and lone attempt was made in 1599, when archbishop Menezes sent preachers to the hill tribes in Kerala. In 1846, the Gossner Evangelical Lutheran Mission began work in the Chota Nagpur area among the Kols, a collection of tribes in that region. Among the Santals on the boarder of Bengal and Bihar, the work of various missions had also created a large body of Christians. Christian communities were also founded among the Gonds and Bhils in Central India and the Konds and Pans of Orissa. Mass conversions occurred in the North-east region of India, making it an area with a high Christian population. C.B. Firth, *Introduction...*, p. 197-199

147. see section 2.1.13 beginning on page 23

148. C.B. Firth, *Introduction...*, p. 189-191

149. In the beginning, the school work among women and girls was done often in the *zenanas*, because the women were not allowed to leave their homes

150. she was a missionary of the Methodist Episcopal Church and came to Lucknow in 1870

school and the widows home called Sarada Sadan in Bombay. Both were moved to Poona after one year, where stiff opposition was raised as people alleged she would use the home for Christian propaganda. However, the home and school were continued and had considerable influence on the social situation of Indian woman.[151]

2.2.3.10 Mass Movements

A remarkable effect had the famine of 1876-1878, during which many people were helped in various ways by the Christian missionaries and thus desired to become Christians. The desire was generally fulfilled, but only after the famine was over, in order to avoid the accusation that the missionaries would exploit the needs of the people to make converts. Also the famine may have been only the trigger for the mass movements towards Christianity, which continued long after the famines were over.[152]

2.2.3.11 Medical Mission

Also medical mission work was taken up during the 19th century. In the beginning, men who were ordained and at the same time medical practitioners or medical specialists were sent to India from 1836 onwards by the American Board.[153] After 1860, the medical mission was given greater importance, and "medical evangelists" were sent in greater number to India. Some missions[154] developed medical stations or hospital at many or almost all of their mission stations. The number of medical missionaries grew from seven in 1858 to 140 in 1895, plus 168 Indian doctors.

The medical work among Indian women became very important. In 1870 Clara Swain, a fully qualified lady doctor, came to Bareilly in Uttar Pradesh and opened a women's hospital there in 1874. Other hospitals were then established all over the country by the newly founded Zenana and Bible Medical Mission and the Church of England Zenana Mission.[155]

With the rise of medical missions, the need for medical colleges and training institutions for nurses had to be dealt with.[156] In 1881, the Agra Medical Mission Training Institute was founded under the leadership of Dr. Valentine. Then followed the North India

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151. The home accommodated at times 40 child widows. When Rama Bai went to Central India to gather girls who had become widows during the famine in 1896, she had to establish another home called Mukti at Kedgaon, Poona District, in order to give them shelter. A number of American ladies joined her in the work, and a large institution grew which is now known as The Ramabai Mukti Mission. C.B. Firth, *Introduction…*, p. 193-195

152. The mass movements occurred not only among the outcastes, but also among *sudras*, and was strongest in the region of Andhra Pradesh. The accusation that the conversion was done on material basis was raised also by Christians and by many missionaries, who often did not want to be too fast to baptize those who desired to become Christians. C.B. Firth, *Introduction…*, p. 200-204

153. The missionaries first worked at Madras, Arcot, Travancore, Madura and other places in the south, but other missions joined them soon at other places in India, like the American Baptists and the London Mission Society.

154. like the (Scottish) United Presbyterian Mission, the Free Church of Scotland Mission and the Basel Mission

155. Many hospitals have been established in the Punjab area

156. The profession of a nurse was actually not known in India until the arrival of Vasco da Gama. The care of the sick people had always been the duty of the relatives, and in case of incurable diseases which were believed to be infectious, the sick person was expelled from the community, forced to survive on his or her own efforts, or to die. It was in the beginning very difficult to find students for this profession, and they were generally recruited from the Christian orphanages or from the neglected groups of the society. *Cf.* Lois M. Marsilje *et.al.*, *A New Text-Book for Nurses in India*, Vol I p. 44

School of Medicine for Christian Women (1894) and the Christian medical school in the Deccan at Miraj. At Vellore, a medical school for women was founded by Dr. Ida Scudder, which later became the famous Christian Medical College. Until political independence, a great majority of the nurses was Christian.

Major fields in medical care of the medical mission were the care for women, children and lepers, the treatment of eye diseases and tuberculosis, and the performance of surgery. In Arogyavaram in the south of Andhra Pradesh lies the Union Mission Tuberculosis Sanatorium, which has been established in 1915 and became one of the leading centres for treatment of tuberculosis. An important centre to treat and rehabilitate lepers in Andhra Pradesh is located at Dichpalli. It is organized and financed by the Mission to Lepers, which had been founded in 1874. Other major centres under this mission are at Purulia (West Bengal) and Karigiri (Tamil Nadu), the latter also being a research centre.

In 1926, the Christian Medical Association of India came into existence, providing a basis for the organization of medical work under the management of the Indian churches.[157]

2.2.3.12 Towards Self-Sufficiency

All mission work had one goal in common: to make the Christian community self-sufficient. For this purpose, agricultural land was purchased and given to the Christians either on loan basis or on lease, sometimes also as a gift.[158] Industrial schools were established to train the Christians in professions which should help them to earn their own livelihood.[159] Institutions worth mentioning are the American Arcot Mission's Agricultural Institute at Katpadi (Tamil Nadu) and the Slater Poultry Farm of the American Presbyterian Mission at Etah (U.P.), where there is also a Christian Agricultural Inter College and the Allahabad Agricultural Institute.[160]

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157. C.B. Firth, *Introduction…*, p. 208 ff

158. To hand over land as a gift to the recently converted Christian proved to be a mistake, because the land was then soon sold, in case the crop was not sufficient to maintain the family. Thus, this practice was abandoned and land was given only on lease or on loan basis.

159. both, men and women were trained in different areas. While the men learnt carpentry, metal work, brickwork and farming, the women were taught in lace-making, embroidery, sewing or even knitting. It seems that these attempts were not as fruitful as expected. Often, the mission was the only institution which used the services of people thus trained, and there was no demand in the Indian market for certain articles, or Hindus refused to employ Christian workers for their own house constructions or other industrial work.

160. C.B. Firth, *Introduction…*, p. 212ff

CHAPTER 3

CHRISTIANITY AND HINDUISM IN ANDHRA

PRADESH

In this chapter, an introduction is given into the geographical area of Andhra Pradesh and the development of Hinduism in Andhra Pradesh. Further, an account is given of the development of the Christian churches which are located in Andhra Pradesh, together with a brief survey of their social situation and constitution. This chapter goes into more details than the chapter 2, but an exhaustive study would go beyond the scope of this thesis. However, all information which is necessary within the scope of this study, will be provided here.

The chapter is divided into three major parts:

I.   A brief geographical description of the region of Andhra Pradesh, including some social and political aspects up to the 18th century

II. A brief survey of the development of Hinduism in Andhra Pradesh until independence

III. A survey of the development of Christianity in Andhra Pradesh. This section is again divided into three major parts:

A.   the Protestant churches, which includes the established churches (which had been founded by foreign missionaries)

B.   the Roman Catholic Church

C.   the evangelical churches, i.e. all churches which have developed during the recent decades, sometimes on the efforts made by Indian Christians.

Emphasis lies on the third part, which shall provide the basic data for the following study of the influences of Hinduism on the Christianity in Andhra Pradesh. The need of a deeper study of Hinduism in Andhra Pradesh was not felt, because the development of Hinduism was already described in the previous chapter and with that, most of the material which is needed for this study has been provided.

3.1 The Region of Andhra Pradesh

Andhra Pradesh is named after its people, "the *Andhras*, who are mentioned in the *Aitareya Brahmana*, the theological prose section of the Vedic literature, and also in the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, and the *Puranas*. Megasthanes, the Greek Ambassador to the Court of Chandra Gupta Maurya, mentions in his *Indica* that the Andhras were a militarily strong, independent race. Their kingdom, Assaka (Asmaka) was near the Godavari river in the south."[161] From 226 B.C. till the end of the third century A.D., the Simukha of the Andhra Satavahana dynasty extended the kingdom to the West Coast and north to the area of Nagpur.[162] From 550 A.D. until the end of the 12th century, the Pallava dynasty ruled over the Andhradesa. In 1332 A.D., after a short rulership of the Kakatiya dynasty, the Muslims invaded the region from the north and established the Muslim rule in the Telangana area. The remaining parts of the Andhradesa came under the rule of small Reddi kingdoms, which were

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161. M.E. Prabhakar, *Rural Telangana: Socio-Economic Situations, with Particular Reference to The C.S.I. Karimnagar Diocesan Area*, p. 3

162. R.C. Majumdar/P.N. Chopra, *Main Currents of Indian History*, p. 76-77

conquered by the Muslims during the 16th century. In 1589, Hyderabad was made the capital of the Muslim kingdom by Mohammed Kuli.[163]

3.1.1 Glimpses of the Political Development Since the 18th Century

Under the pressure of the British, the Nizam, who had ruled over most of the Andhradesa since 1724, kept only the rule over the Hyderabad-Deccan, collaborating with the British government which had occupied the Circar districts.[164] In 1801, the British conquest of Andhra was completed by the annexation of the Nellore and Chittoor districts to the British Dominion, after the Nizam had entered into a treaty which made him a subsidiary to the British, but permitted him to keep some power.[165] In 1948, the Princely State was merged with the Indian Union, after it had gained independence from the British rulers in 1947.

It was only in 1956 that Andhra Pradesh got its final boarders according to the extent of the major spoken language, Telugu. Andhra Pradesh is divided into 3 areas which are called as follows:

1. Circar districts (or Coastal districts)
2. Rayalaseema
3. Telangana[166]

3.1.2 Glimpses of the Social Development Since the 19th Century

In the 19th century Andhra Pradesh appeared as a region inhabited by innumerable castes which lived separated from each other, with certain caste distinctions and caste marks. Intermarriage as well as interdining was strictly forbidden. V. Ramakrishna in his book *Social Reform in Andhra* divides these castes into three social groups, namely:

1. the privileged,
2. the underprivileged,
3. the untouchables or unprivileged.

The *brahmins* were divided into two groups:

Vaidikis* or *Srotrias	those who performed priestly functions and conducted sacred rituals
Niyogis* or *Laukikis	those who were skilled in military profession and administration

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163. P.Y. Luke/J.B. Carmen, *Village Christians and Hindu Culture*, p. 1f

164. The Nizam was forced to sign away the land in return for the help he received from the British in his war against Mysore

165. V. Ramakrishna, *Social Reform in Andhra*, p. 1f

166. see also the map in Appendix C on page 215

There were actually no or only very few *kshatriyas* in Andhradesa. The *vaishyas* took the role of trading, money lending and banking. The *sudras*[167] were peasant and artisan classes between the *vaishyas* and the untouchables. The agriculture was controlled by the *kammas*, *reddis*, *velamas* and *rajus*. The *balijas* or *balija naidus* had been successful in trading for many centuries and were thus in a comparatively high position, alongside with the *vaishyas*.

At the bottom of the social order were the Malas and Madigas, untouchables, who were also called *panchamas*.[168] The Malas were mainly employed as agricultural labourers or weavers, and only a few of them were independent farmers. The Madigas were leather workers who had to manufacture leather articles necessary for the daily work. Their duty was also to beat the drum at festivities in honour of the village deity, and to remove the carcasses which they were allowed to eat.

There is no intermarriage or interdining between these two castes, like between the other castes and their subdivisions. Characteristic for these untouchable castes is their desire to gain some respect at least in the face of other untouchable groups by imitating and following rules of the higher castes, which are set up in the respective scriptures and law books.[169] This process is called "sanskritization"[170] and is certainly motivated by the permanent suppression and discrimination of the lower castes and local tribes by the members of the high castes. However, as the higher castes were generally against the raise of status of the lower castes, they often prevented them from adopting these "higher customs".[171]

Among the Malas there is a group called *dasaris*. They are the priests to the Malas and derive from a *Vaishnava* background, following Ramanujas *visishtadvaita vedanta*. Their origin is not exactly known.[172] They are supervised by the *brahmin* priests and allotted

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167. among them the *kammas* (dominant in the circars), *reddis* (dominant in the Rayalaseema area), *kapus*, *telagas*, *rajus*, *balijas*, *kamsalas* and many more subdivisions

168. The origin of these two castes is mythologically explained in several ways, one more popular of which is quoted here from S.A. Hassan, *The Castes and Tribes of H.E.H. The Nizam's Dominions*, p. 409-410:

> Once upon a time, when Parvati and Siva were on a ramble, Parvati becoming unclean, was obligated to leave her menstrual clothes under a tree and from these garments sprang Chinnaya, whom the heavenly pair engaged to tend their divine cow, Kamadhenu. Chinnaya once tasted the cow's milk and found it so delicious that he was tempted to kill the cow itself and eat its flesh. He immediately carried his impious design into effect, but the carcass of the cow itself was so heavy that none, not even the gods could move it. Siva thought of Jambavant, who was practising penance, and called out to him, 'Mahadigaru'. Jambavant, who thus obtained the name Mahadiga or Madiga, appeared at Siva's call, lifted the dead body, and cut it into pieces. Siva ordered Chinnaya to dress the beef and invited all gods to a feast. But Chinnaya, unfortunately, while trying to blow down an effervescence, spat into the cooking pot and the gods, observing this, left the dining hall. Siva, in anger, cursed Chinnaya and Jambavant for their negligence and degraded them to the lowest caste. Chinnaya's descendants are called Malas, while Jambavant ate after the leaving of Chinnaya and drank water after him, the Madigas are ranked below the Malas in point of social standing.

169. e.g. abandoning the eating of meat, remarriage of widows and other customs which were common among them, or the adoption of certain rituals which are followed among the higher castes

170. the term sanskritization has been introduced by M.N. Srinivas

171. J.A. Fonseca, *Marriage in India in a Christian Perspective*, p. 13f

172. One story goes that a *sudra* from the Northern parts of Andhra Pradesh, who didn't get children, took a vow that he would devote one of his children to the service of God if he would be blessed with children. On this vow, he got many children. One of them he named

villages which they have to serve. For their religious services, they receive a fixed amount, of which they have to pay some kind of taxes to the *brahmin*. They do not only perform sacrifices and religious ceremonies, but are also fortune tellers and spiritual gurus, teaching the *Vaishnava* doctrines and stories. Because of various changes, including the possibility for outcastes to visit the Hindu temples, and due to the fact that a number of religious rites can also be performed by the elders of the village community, the authority of the *dasaris* has nowadays decreased, and they have taken up different professions.

Slavery, which, after it was abandoned officially, was continued on the contract basis[173], is a common social evil in Andhra, still witnessed today. Women were generally suppressed, and widows, especially in the higher castes, were "deprived of all pleasures in life"[174]. The custom to marry the daughter to a deity as *devadasi* became a resort for the parents, when they were not able to pay the dowry. *Devadasis* became an independent caste, with own rights of heritage, own customs and rules of conduct, while the term *devadasi* became a synonym for a prostitute.

The education was, in the 19th century, very poor and consisted only of learning Sanskrit, Telugu and arithmetic by pure repetition and learning by rote, without catching the meaning of the material. This education was accessible only to members of the higher castes. Lord Munro, the governor of the Madras presidency, to which most of the Andhra area belonged, initiated the formation of the Board of Public Instruction in 1926, which established proper schools in all districts. The scheme, however, lasted only for ten years, and then no more significant steps were taken to improve the overall education of the people for nearly twenty years. G.N. Taylor[175] promoted the education of the people and opened schools at different places which were financed partly by the people who sent their children for education. Thus, an efficient educational scheme developed from the Rajahmundry region which later became also the centre of the reform movements in Andhra Pradesh. The number of schools grew rapidly between 1862, when there were only very few schools in the area, and 1899.[176] In 1877, three first-grade colleges were established. The first who grabbed the opportunity for an extensive and good education were the *brahmins* with 73% of all college students during 1876-1886. The untouchables did only represent 7% in the primary and 3% in the secondary education, although they formed the biggest part of the Andhra society.[177]

Nearly 50% of the population was related to agriculture, of which 50% were farming land owners. Due to the high revenues imposed on the agriculture by the East India Company, many of these either gave up farming or became depending on the rich landlords by borrowing money from them. Another major part of the population was engaged in some industry, mostly spinning and weaving, a small part working in other industries like metal processing, chemical production and so on.[178]

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dasari and separated him for the service to God. He was deprived of the right of inheritance and had to go begging. J. Aberly, p. 9

173. the landlord loaned some money to the farmer who worked on his land, and he had to sign a contract according to which he and his family had to labour for the landlord for his lifetime

174. V. Ramakrishna, *Social Reform in Andhra*, p. 11f

175. he was the Sub-Collector to the Revenue Commissioner of the Northern circars at Rajahmundry

176. the progress was faster in the circars than in the so called Ceded districts. *cf.* V. Ramakrishna, *Social Reform in Andhra*, p. 18-20

177. *ibid.*, p. 25f

178. *ibid.* p. 24-34

3.2 The Development of Hinduism in Andhra Pradesh

Before the 12th century A.D., *bhakti* was the predominant philosophy in Andhradesa. It then split into *Veerashaivism*[179] and *Veeravaishnavism* or *Srivaishnavism*, both militant forms of the respective *Vaishnava* and *Shiva* sects[180]. The *Srivaishnavism*, under the leadership of Brahmanaidu of Palnadu, attempted to do away with the caste system entirely by creating the "caste of heroes" (*padma nayaka kula*) which was a conglomerate of different castes. At the end of the 12th century, these two groups clashed in a war and lost much of their ideals and enthusiasm in the following centuries. *Veerashaivism* developed into a ritualistic sect which created a number of new sub-castes.

Vemana, a Telugu poet belonging to the *Reddi*-community in Rayalaseema, emerged in the 17th century, writing against the religious hypocrisy and decadence of moral values among the ruling people. He condemned caste, ritualism and other evils in his writings using humour, irony and sometimes harsh sarcasm.[181] He didn't gain much success in his attempts to reform the Andhra society, since he was alone in his efforts.

Vemana was followed by Pothuluri Veerabrahman, who was a *Vishvabrahmin* by birth. He propagated Vedic knowledge for all, condemning the hierarchical system of caste and criticizing idolatry and superstition. He supported women and fought against child marriage. His disciples continued his teachings which are followed and supported by Vishvabrahmins even today.

Nasraiah, who died in 1825, founded a sect which is called after his name, and was dominant in the Guntur district. He mainly preached to the Madigas, who thankfully accepted the attention paid to them. His teachings were theistic and opposed against idol worship.

From 1775 to 1895, the culture and society in Andhradesa was under a steady decline, which is reflected in the Telugu poetry that was produced by the end of the 18th century. However, in the 19th century, an awakening took place first in the literary field, when poets, under the patronage of the Maharajas, were free to express their thoughts and criticism on the present situation in a common language, accessible to the common people. The result was the initiation of a social reform movement and, as response to the Christian missionary efforts, a reform and propagation of Hinduism through organizations like the Arya Samaj, the Divyajnana Samaj and the Ramakrishna Mission, and of Islam through the *Wahabi* centres, began.[182]

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179. *Veerashaivism* was propagated by Basaveswara (who was also called Basava), who was a minister of the Jain king Bijjala at Kalyan and was thus able to use the state forces for the propagation of his philosophy, which denounced the caste system and other suppressive elements of Hinduism as it appeared at his time.

180. the *Veerashaivism* was supported in Andhra with less militancy than in Karnataka by the three scholars Mallikarjuna Pandita, Sripati Pandita and Manchenna Pandita, and contributed greatly to the Telugu literature. Mallikarjuna Pandita attempted to reconcile the caste system with *bhakti*, instead of discarding it. V. Ramakrishna, *op.cit.*, p. 39f

181. His position towards women was however quite indifferent. He considered women as the source of evil and therefore their movements should be strictly controlled. V. Ramakrishna, *op.cit.*, p. 43f

182. V. Yasoda Devi, *Social and Religious Reform Movements…*, p. 357f

3.2.1 Kandukuri Viresalingam (1848-1919)

The author of social reform movement in Andhradesa was Kandukuri Viresalingam (1848-1919), a *brahmin* from Rajahmundry. He began writing early and was soon confronted with the writings of Keshub Chunder Sen and the ideas of the Brahmo Samaj. He organized secret meetings with other youths to discuss their ideas. He then emerged as the leader of social reforms, fighting for the uplift of women by writing dramas[183], articles and other literature against practices like child marriage, polygamy or the general suppression of women in society, as in widowhood. He also published a journal called *Hasyasanjivini*. He opened girls' schools at Dhawaleswaram in 1874 and in Rajahmundry and was active in promoting education to women and Harijans. Later he also published a journal exclusively for women, called *Satihitabodhini*.

In 1878 he formed the *Sanghasamskarana Samaj*, the Social Reform Association. With the help of the Maharaja of Pithapuram, he could build a theistic High School at Rajahmundry, which was soon followed by a number of educational institutions on a similar line at Rajahmundry, Machilipatnam, Guntur, Cuddapah, Ongole and other places, founded by people who were supporting the idea of educating the uneducated. He built a widows' home in Rajahmundry, where his wife worked as a teacher. He also organized marriages of widows, the first of which took place on 11.12.1881, followed by another 28 marriages in 10 years.[184] Later he also took up publicly the issue of widow-remarriage with a public speech in 1897, for which he received much opposition.[185]

Following this, he lived for some years in Madras, where he purchased a building in Purasawalkam to accommodate the widows' home (established in 1897) and his Chintamani printing press. He returned to Rajahmundry in 1905, after he had assumed leadership of the South Indian Brahmo Samaj and the South Indian Social Reform Association. In December 1906, the Hitakarini Samaj was founded to continue the work after his death.

3.2.2 Raghupati Venkataratnam Naidu (1866-1949)

The successor of Viresalingam was Raghupati Venkataratnam Naidu (1866-1949), who was supported by the Maharaja of Pithapuram. He fought in the same lines like Viresalingam and was supported by his followers as well.

3.2.3 Hindu Revival Movements in Andhra Pradesh

The *Prarthana Samajas* in Andhra Pradesh, the first of which was founded by Viresalingam himself in 1878 at Rajahmundry, were the first groups which were formed with the goal to revive Hinduism. In 1910, the *Brahmo Samaj* was formed out of the *Kakinada Prarthana Samaj* under the leadership of Vemuri Ramakrishna Rao (1876-1939), a disciple of

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183. one is the *Brahmavivahamu* against child marriage, commonly called *Peddayyagaripelli* ("The Marriage of an Old Man"), written in 1876, which is about the marriage of an old man with a three year old child

184. All these widow-remarriages were strongly opposed by the public and could take place only under the protection of Viresalingams students and the police. Many families were excommunicated by the Hindu community on account of their support to the marriage. A problem in this regard was that nobody wanted to take care of these couples, as they did not fit into the Hindu social system. Thus, Viresalingam and his wife had to take care of them. V. Yasoda Devi, *op.cit.*, p.363ff

185. one of his major opponents was the leader of orthodox Hinduism in Andhra Pradesh, Kokkonda Venkataratnam

Viresalingam, and Raghupati Venkataratnam Naidu. Brahmo lodges were established at Guntur and Machilipatnam as well. In 1931, there were 31 centres of the Brahmo Samaj, mainly located in the Circar districts.[186]

The *Arya Samaj* was not as strong as the *Brahmo Samaj* in Andhra Pradesh, but branches were established at different places in Andhradesa, and its missionaries worked for the reconversion of Christians and Muslims successfully.

The *Divyajnana Samaj* or Theosophical Society[187] was more widespread than the *Arya Samaj*, with branches at Machilipatnam, Guntur, Nellore and Madanapalle.[188] At Madanapalle the Besant Theosophical College, the Besant Theosophical High School, the Night School[189] and the Theosophical Lodge were established. The Theosophical Society was open also to Europeans and solemnized marriages between Europeans and Indians, as well as inter-caste marriages.

3.3 Protestant Churches in Andhra Pradesh

Even though Roman Catholic missionaries had entered India already in the beginning of the 16th century, it is justified to say that Christianity in Andhra Pradesh was not established "in any real sense"[190] even in the 17th century. In 1834, "the Catholic Church was almost unknown on the Indian peninsula", and Catholic "missionary work had to start from scratch".[191]

Only in the beginning of the 19th centuries, when numerous new Protestant mission societies entered India, Andhra Pradesh was widely covered by missionaries from different Protestant denominations, whereas the Roman Catholic Church in the beginning of the 20th century counted only about 27,000 members in the entire region of Andhra Pradesh.[192] One interesting feature in this regard may be the following: the different Protestant missionary societies which approached the Andhradesa agreed more or less voluntarily on a system which did not allow interference of the one mission in the work of the others. Areas which were yet untouched by Christian Protestant missionaries, were assigned to the various societies. Thus, nearly the complete Andhradesa was covered with missionaries during the 19th century, and today it is still possible to locate the various denominations on account of the geographical boundaries set up by the missionary societies.

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186. *cf.* V. Ramakrishna, *op.cit.*, p. 152; there a map is shown, indicating the location of all the centres of the *Brahmo Samaj*. The data bases on the census in 1931.

187. The Theosophical society had no impact on the lower classes of society, but attracted members of the higher and educated classes

188. it's representation is stronger in the South and West of Andhra Pradesh, since the centre of this organization is located at Madras

189. A night school is an educational institution for the workers who can not afford to attend school during daytime, because this would mean the loss of their daily income which is necessary for their own and their family's survival. Also Viresalingam had opened such schools.

190. J. Thekkedath, *History of Christianity in India* Vol II, p.300

191. F.A. Plattner, *The Catholic Church in India*, p. 54

192. Houtart, F./Lemercinier, G.: *Size and Structures of the Catholic Church in India*, p. 57. This number refers to the Hyderabad and Visakhapatnam Dioceses. *Cf.* the figure 3.1 on page 71

In this section, the development of the Protestant churches which have been established by foreign missionaries in the 19th century is described in chronological order. Emphasis lies on the social structure of these churches, and only churches with at least 10000 members are included.[193] Whenever possible, information was included about when and to which extent leadership of the church was handed over to Indian Christians.

It must be noted with care that the figures which are given in the following part of this chapter cannot be absolutely accurate. This is due to the fact that much of the information collected has been given by informants who have certain interests or who do not know accurate answers. Official data from the last ten years was almost not available.[194] In spite of these problems, figures are given when some accuracy can be assumed.[195] This allows at least to reveal tendencies of development or changes.

The approximate locations of some of the churches are indicated in the map found on page 216.

3.3.1 The Church of South India

3.3.1.1 The Development of the Church of South India

The Church of South India is a church somewhat unique to the scene of Christianity throughout the world, because it actually is a union of three different denominations which continue to be separated in other parts of the world. It has been possible only in India to unite these three denominations into one church.[196] They are:

1. The Anglican Church

2. The Wesleyan Methodist Church

3. The South India United Church (formed in 1908 by the unification of the Congregationalists and the Presbyterians)

The Anglican Church in Andhra Pradesh was founded by missionaries from the London Missionary Society who first came to *Visakhapatnam* in 1805. This work did not bear fruits for 30 years, however the first Telugu translation of the Bible was created by the missionaries during this period.

In 1822 other missionaries from the London Missionary Society arrived at Cuddapah to open a new station there. This work was more successful, and in 1842 about one hundred Telugu Christians were counted. They extended the work up to Kurnool and Ananthapur districts.[197]

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193. Churches which have developed from tribal communities are not included, because they do not lie within the scope of this study.

194. *cf.* section 1.5.1.5 on page 8 and the section on page 87, where this problem is also discussed.

195. after the verification with other sources

196. *cf.* the discussion on page 101

197. T. John Ratnam: *Church Growth in Andhra Pradesh*, p. 39-42. He mentions also the *Telugu Village Mission* which was started by an Indian Anglican named Rev. Ramiah, who worked in the area of Adoni and got his support from the Christian Reformed Church in America.

The next Anglican missionaries had first started in 1838 on their own and only later became missionaries of the C.M.S. (Church Missionary Society). They were Rev. Noble and Rev. Fox with his wife. They settled in Masulipatam, which is also called *Bandar*, and began their work from their. After many years in which only a few converts were won, a mass movement started in the area from Masulipatam via Raghavapuram, Ellore and Ongole back to Masulipatam. The converts were all from the Madiga caste, while previous converts were from the Mala caste. Only a few converts came also from higher and even from Brahmin castes. The first Indian clergymen were ordained priests in 1866. They were, like a few more of around 30 who were ordained later in the 19th century, from the Brahmin caste background.

In the beginning of the 20th century, the "Indian Missionary Society of Tinnevelly" was launched in Tamil Nadu by the Anglican missionaries who worked there, which should be manned and financed by Indians only. Since there was no area in Tamil Nadu and no favourable welcome by other mission societies where the Indian missionaries could be sent, they approached the C.M.S. Telugu missionaries who suggested to start work in Khammamett area, which was done shortly after the area had been investigated. In 1913, the area of the Anglican Telugu mission became the Dornakal diocese, which later was merged with the CSI.

The Wesleyan Methodist Church began its work at Secunderabad in 1879 with William Burgess as chaplain to the British soldiers in Trimulgherry. He, together with two others, investigated the rural areas around Hyderabad for evangelization. They established stations at Siddipet, Karimnagar and Medak. In the beginning, most converts were from the Mala caste, and only in the early 20th century Madigas desired baptism as well. It was not without opposition from the Mala Christians, that the Madigas were admitted into the Christian community, and the missionaries had to strive hard to solve the hostility between the two castes.[198] In 1931, about one third of the entire membership of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in the Nizam's dominion belonged to the Madiga caste, while most of the remaining two thirds belonged to the Mala caste.[199]

The beginning of the Church of South India can be dated back to 1919, when a conference was held at Tranquebar (Tarangambadi) at the East coast of Tamil Nadu, where representatives of different denominations participated. There, the desire for unity was strongly felt, and the Anglican Church and the South India United Church drafted a manifesto in which it was stated that the unity among the Christians in India was highly desired. It says further that the Indian Christians were not responsible for the causes of the different denominations and therefore desired not to continue as separate churches, but to unite.[200]

This manifesto, in spite of being not an official statement of the members of the two churches, caused the formation of a Joint Committee in 1920 which was joined by the Wesleyan Methodists in 1925. 28 year long discussions finally led to the foundation of the Church of South India.[201]

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198. Much effort in this regard was done by the Rev. W. Edwin Latt . *See* Gajula David, *The Evangelistic Work in the Karimnagar District of Andhra Pradesh from 1870 to 1930 and its Continuing Influence*, p. 18-20

199. Paul D. Wiebe, *Christians in Andhra Pradesh*, p. 104

200. M.K. Kuriakose, *History of Christianity in India: Source Materials*, pp. 317-319. It may be noticed that this meeting was convened by Bishop V.S. Azariah with the help of members of the South India United Church, and that the manifesto was signed by seven Anglicans and 26 members of the South India United Church, including 2 Non-Indians. Thus, this manifesto is an important witness to the growing independence of the Indian Christianity from the foreign influences.

201. C. B. Firth, *An Introduction to Indian Church History*, pp. 240-245

The CSI is divided into dioceses, of which the Medak-, Krishna-Godavari-, Karimnagar-, Dornakal-, Nandyal- and the Rayalaseema-dioceses[202] are located in Andhra Pradesh. Their respective membership can be viewed in table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Development of the membership of the CSI (Andhra Pradesh) according to dioceses

Diocese	No. of Parishes	Total Members	Full Members[203]	Literate Members
Medak				
1948		93,773	20,033[204]	
1978	58	1,38,775	51,104	23,826
1986	58	1,46,451	51,386	25,950
Krishna-Godavari				
1978	76	1,34,890	52,580	61,800
1988	78	1,34,500	53,900	63,000
Nandyal				
1978	30	44,672	33,292	5,600
1988	37	88,988	50,378	24,796
Dornakal				
1978	37	58,723	21,817	8,558
1988	54	73,498	34,680	19,551
Karimnagar				
1978	32	63,582	18,832	9,394
1988	37	65,943	23,454	11,494
Rayalaseema				
1978	56	51,165	20,276	12,221
1988	62	43,437	19,636	21,552
Totals 1978:	289	4,91,807	1,97,901	1,21,399
Totals 1988:	326	5,52,817	2,33,434	1,66,843[205]

The table 3.1 indicates a slow but steady growth in the number of CSI-Christians in most areas. The most significant increase of membership is in the Nandyal diocese and in the Dornakal diocese, while the Rayalaseema diocese does record a decline of membership.

To improve the education among Christians, the CSI also manages numerous schools and colleges (see table 3.2) which are not run exclusively for Christian children, but admit also children of other faiths. A trend is observed that the number of secondary schools slowly increases, while the number of elementary schools decreases (comparing the data of 1986 and 1988).

202. The Ananthapur- and the Cuddapah-Dioceses as well as a part of the Krishna-Godavari Diocese are formed from the former Anglican churches. The Medak-diocese is the former area of the Wesleyan-Methodist mission. The Nandyal diocese was also of Anglican background, but merged with the CSI only in 1975

203. Members who are baptized and confirmed and who are permitted to participate in the Holy Communion and in elections.

204. The data for this year of the Medak Diocese is taken from P.Y. Luke/J.B. Carmen, *Village Christians…*, p.28

205. Data for 1978 is taken from the *Minutes of the Proceedings*, Church of South India, Seventeenth Synod 1980, p. 140/141. Data for 1988 is taken from the separate CSI Synod Statistics Review Report 1988

Table 3.2: Number of schools in the CSI (Andhra Pradesh) in 1988

Diocese	Colleges	Second. Schools	Element. Schools	Hostels
Medak	4	12	24	11
Krishna-Godavari	1	6	57	22
Rayalaseema	1	6	35	24
Dornakal	1	5	15	41
Karimnagar	1	3	4	14
Nandyal	-	6	9	16
Totals 1988:	8	38	144	128[206]

Beside these, the CSI maintains different health centres and hospitals in the area (see table 3.3). The hospitals, which are located at bigger towns, are generally attended to by at least one medical doctor, while the health centres in rural areas are supervised by fully trained nurses and serve also as health schools and mediators between the patients and the hospitals.[207]

Table 3.3: Medical institutions managed by the CSI (Andhra) in 1988

Diocese	Hospitals	Dispens.	In-Patients	Out Patients
Medak	4	12	3,702	35,874
Karimnagar	3	3	5,182	50,671
Rayalaseema	3	3	11,892	72,790
Nandyal	2	2	1,025	7,980
Dornakal	2	2	4,067	17,246
Krishna-Godavari	2	1		30,000
Totals:	16	23	25,868	1,04,561[208]

The CSI has an extensive women program which supports women who are in special need and which organizes educational programs specially for women. They are also actively involved in propagating the gospel in the villages. Besides, a "CSI Order of Women" with about 80 sisters is designed to give a place and spiritual responsibility to unmarried women[209] within the frame of the church.

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206. Data is taken from the CSI Synod Statistics Review Report 1988

207. From the rural health centres, patients will be sent to the hospitals if they are to be continuously supervised.

208. Data is taken from the CSI Synod Statistics Review Report 1988

209. Whereas the authority of unmarried women in the Indian society is generally very low, being the member of a religious order gives women the spiritual and authoritative support from the side of the church.

3.3.1.2 Social Background of the Church of South India in Andhra Pradesh

The Church of South India in Andhra Pradesh to a high extent consists of members of the Mala and Madiga castes. The mixture of the two castes is mainly due to the merger of different missions, which had preferably worked among one caste only, into the CSI. Thus, problems and difficulties are there between the different caste groups.[210]

The area of the Krishna-Godavari diocese does regularly face cyclones and floods, which render the Christians in the affected areas homeless, while the Rayalaseema diocese is often suffering under severe droughts.

The majority of CSI members live in rural areas and are landless labourers. The percentage of literacy lies far below 50% (*cf.* table 3.1) and does not differ much from the overall picture in Andhra Pradesh given by the census 1991[211]. In some areas, tribals have become members of the CSI, like for instance the Lambadis in the Dornakal diocese.

3.3.2 The American Baptist Mission

Apart from the Baptist Church which originated from the Canadian Baptist Mission work, there is the so called Telugu Baptist Church or Samavesam of Telugu Baptist Churches which had been founded earlier by the American Baptists. As explained on page 63, the Baptists do not feel the necessity to unite many congregations under one cover. Thus, there have been two Baptist missions working side by side in the Telugu area, and the churches which originated from their work have not merged so far.

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210. *cf.* for instance the report on the Krishna-Godavari diocese in the *Minutes of the CSI Synod, 1980*, p. 176f

211. *cf.* the table 3.9 on page 91

3.3.2.1 The Development of the American Baptist Church in Andhra Pradesh

In 1835, the first American Baptist missionaries, Rev. Samuel S. Day and his wife, were sent to India and reached Calcutta in February 1836. They settled first in Visakhapatnam but soon went to Nellore which became the headquarters of the American Baptist Mission in 1841. The beginnings were hard, as Days and another missionary who arrived to assist in the work had to return to America due to ill health in 1845.

Only four years later Rev. Jewett volunteered and went to Nellore together with Day, where they found that the property and schools which had been left in the hands of an Anglo-Indian helper had been closed and shattered, and the money entrusted to the helper had been misused for his personal needs. The work developed slowly. Day left in 1849 and another missionary arrived in 1855. Jewett had to leave India in 1863 to recover. In 1865, Jewett returned from his furlough together with Rev. John E. Clough, who began the work in Ongole and opened a mission station there.[212] The Christians grew steadily in number, and in 1899 there were 65000 baptized. 57 years later, the number of baptized Christians was given as 1,40,000.[213] Most converts of that time came from the Madiga caste. Now, there are 2,50,000 baptized members, with an approximate total membership of 6,50,000.[214]

Seven Indian Christians were ordained in the 1870s, and in April 1880 another 24 were ordained to serve in the Ongole area. By 1900, the number of Indian ministers had risen to 700, and by 1953 there were 1495 men trained and ordained for the pastoral services. For the education of these candidates, a theological school was established at Ramapatnam. New stations were erected at Narasaraopet, Bapatla, Vinukonda, Kanigiri, Podili, Donakonda, Sattenapalli and some other places in the 1890s.

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212. Clough had been taking part in the relief work which was taken up during the great famine in 1876-78, by giving employment to many people at the excavation for the Buckingham Canal. Most of them then wanted to become Christians, often only to secure jobs for them. Clough refused for a long time, until he heard that Roman Catholic missionaries were willing to baptize the people, after which he baptized more than 3500 people in three days in 1878. C.B. Firth, *Introduction…*, p. 200

213. Alvin Texas Fishman: *For this Purpose*, p. 1-8

214. Mar Aprem, *Indian Christian Directory*, p. 74; H. Grafe, *Evangelische Kirche…*, p. 175

In 1871 an association was formed which included missionaries as well as representatives of the church. Thus, a body emerged which helped to develop a responsibility among the Indian Christians. Before 1905, district associations were formed in order to provide a platform for all members of the church to express their views and wishes.

Already in 1897 the Telugu Baptist Convention was organized in Ramapatnam, in which a Home Mission Society was established which was entirely run by Indian Christians. From there, missionaries were sent to Nellore and Kurnool districts, and in 1903 they even sent a missionary to Durban/South-Africa. The convention was not only a basis for the Indian Baptists to develop and exercise their own powers and responsibilities, but it was also a witness to the Hindus who slowly realized that the Madigas had become responsible and people of conduct by embracing Christianity.

After 1906, the quest for an independent and self-sufficient Indian Baptist Church became stronger and was raised first by the missionaries themselves. For the purpose, industrial schools were developed to train the Christians who could no longer support themselves, in promising professions. Land which was not used for buildings or other purposes, was given to the Christians who should cultivate it. However, this was not a proper solution, as Hindu neighbours destroyed the crops,because they did not want outcastes to own farm-land themselves.[215] Emphasis was laid on the practice to give one tenth of one's income (the tithe) as a contribution to the church, and slowly this rule, which is a general rule among the Baptists, was accepted.

In addition to these economic measures, a Joint Committee of Missionary Conference and Telugu Baptist Convention was initiated in April 1941. This council should train Indian members for the forthcoming tasks of leading the church. In 1951, the officers of the Telugu Baptist Convention were admitted to the Joint Committee as ex-officio members. Thus, a majority of Indian co-workers was created in the Joint Committee.

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215. Alvin Texas Fishman: *For this Purpose,* p. 55-57

The American Baptist Church in Andhra Pradesh, which is now called the *Samavesam of Telugu Baptist Churches*, counted 2,35,181 baptized members[216] with 635 churches and 1,249 Indian pastors in 1975.[217] There is a Baptist Hospital in Nellore and in Ongole, and a Nursing School in Nellore. Other Health Centres and dispensaries are located in Hanamkonda, Nellore, Ongole and Ramapatnam. Secondary schools and elementary schools are managed by the Samavesam as well as a Theological Training School at Ramapatnam. There are thirty educational institutions managed by the Samavesam of Telugu Baptist Churches. Key centres of the Church are Bapatla, Cumbum, Guntur, Hanamkonda, Jangaon, Kavali, Kurnool, Narasaravupet, Nellore, Ongole, Podili, Ramapatnam, Secunderabad and Tharigoppala[218].

3.3.2.2 The Social Background of the American Baptist Church in Andhra Pradesh

As already told, most converts in this area came from the Madiga caste. The conversion to Christianity imposed some restrictions on them[219] to which they were not used to and which caused, in addition to the social problems rising out of their conversion, even more problems. One of which was the strict prohibition to work on Sundays, which caused loss of income, and the other one not to eat any meat, which the Madigas were actually used to and part of their regular food easily available for them.[220] Here also occurred the problem that, after the refusal to do certain things related to the Hindu worship, the converts had to suffer

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216. since the Baptist do only recognize the so called believer's baptism, there is no distinction between baptized and full or communicant members in this church

217. Mar Aprem, in his *Indian Christian Directory*, counts 2,50,000 baptized members organized in 670 churches.

218. Data taken from *The American Baptist*, 5/75, p. 27

219. These restrictions are not followed by all denominations as strictly as among the Baptists and most of the Evangelical communities.

220. Madigas were allowed to eat the meat of animals which had died of a natural death, since they were also responsible to remove the corpses from the village area.

severe punishment or persecution from the side of the Hindu community.[221] Problems on account of caste origin are reflected in fights for the church leadership.[222]

3.3.3 The Andhra Evangelical Lutheran Church

3.3.3.1 The Development of the Andhra Evangelical Lutheran Church

The Andhra Evangelical Lutheran Church was started by German and American missionaries in the year 1842. While the beginning was made by different mission societies, the work which was started by the American Rev. John Frederick Heyer[223] in Guntur District and by the German Rev. Valett in Rajahmundry was merged under the General Synod in 1850. Due to several changes in the administration and the Civil War in America, the Guntur- and Rajahmundry missions became separated again in 1869, now both under separate American leadership.

Indian helpers were already trained in the early years, but the first Indian pastors were ordained from 1899 onwards.[224] At Rajahmundry and Guntur, training schools for teachers were founded in order to supply the growing number of schools in the area of the mission with properly educated teachers. A college was founded in 1885, and a theological seminary was established in 1921 at Rajahmundry, called Luthergiri. In addition to that, training institutes for Bible women were opened at Guntur and Rajahmundry.

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221. Alvin Texas Fishman: *For this Purpose*, p. 14-15

222. Mar Aprem reports that, at the time of compilation of his directory, there were two groups, each claiming to be the original Baptists church. *Op.cit.*, p. 74

223. Heyer was born in Germany and came to America at the age of fourteen

224. There was one Rev. Jerriprolu Henry William ordained in 1899, followed by Rev. Pantagani Paradesi, who was ordained in 1911. Four pastors were ordained in 1917, and then four more in 1924 and another four in 1925. Thus, slowly an indigenous clergy developed. K.L. Richardson, *An Examination of the Process of Indigenization…*, p. 23

Dr. Anna S. Kugler was the first woman doctor to the Andhradesa and arrived at Guntur in 1893. In 1897, a nursing school was opened at Guntur. The work was slowly extended and in 1899 Lydia Woerner started a medical dispensary at Rajahmundry. Hospitals were established at different places, and in 1926, the Visranthipuram Tuberculosis sanatorium was opened at Rajahmundry.

A lace making school was begun by Mrs. H.C. Schmidt in 1878 at Rajahmundry, which was later extended to the Guntur area as well. This industry became self-supporting and provided employment for nearly 1000 Christian women by 1921.

An orphanage was opened at Guntur in 1900, and a home for young widows in 1919 at Rajahmundry, where the widows could work and produce goods used by the mission.

Both missions were united again only in 1920 after the United Lutheran Church in America had come into existence in 1918. In April 1927, out of the missionary efforts, the Andhra Evangelical Lutheran Church emerged as an independent, Indian church. The AELC at this time received all the responsibilities of the congregations and elementary schools from the United Lutheran Church Mission. By 1944, all other institutions were handed over to the AELC and finally, by 1962, all property which still was in the hand of the American mission, was transferred to the AELC. The church runs schools, hospitals, industrial schools and rehabilitation centres.[225] The area of the AELC nowadays spreads over Srikakulam, Visakhapatnam, East- and West-Godavari, Krishna, Guntur, Ongole and parts of Nellore and Kurnool districts.

The membership grew from 1,50,000 in 1930 to 2,86,000 in 1967, and the scale of growth is steady by approximately 4000 new members per year.[226]

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225. B.C. Paul: *The Missions of A.E.L.Church as a Factor for Social uplift among the Depressed Classes*, p. 39-40

226. It is with regard to all the Christian denominations in Andhra Pradesh that, if this figure is taken in relation to the population growth and to the total membership, there must be concluded that the growth rate actually declines (*cf* also the tables 3.7 and 3.8 on pages 86 and 87 respectively). The exact figures for the AELC are as follows:

According to a report presented to the Triennial Conference of the United Evangelical Lutheran Churches in India in 1985, the AELC now has 2500 congregations, organized in 210 parishes which are served by 250 pastors and 1000 evangelists, teachers and health workers. The parishes are organized in 5 synods which are the governing bodies.[227] The Church maintains 20 hostels, one teacher's college, the Andhra Christian College, a Law College, and 90 secondary schools. Besides, industrial schools are managed by the Church. At Rajahmundry, a Bible School trains evangelists for rural ministry. Nine hospitals are run beside the Nursing School and medical services in the rural areas. Two centres are operated at Rajahmundry and Macheria to treat leprosy and to rehabilitate cured lepers. The AELC has not succeeded so far in its attempts to become financially self supporting, and receives –though decreasing- subsidies from the Lutheran Church of America.

3.3.3.2 The Social Background of the Andhra Evangelical Lutheran Church

The Andhra Evangelical Lutheran Church consists mainly of Malas (about 73%) and Madigas (25%). It is the biggest of the Lutheran Churches in India with over 300,000 baptized members[228].

At the beginning of the missionary work which resulted in the establishment of the AELC, there were no firm decisions taken against the caste problems and distinctions among the new converts. This resulted in the continuation of caste practices and caste feelings, i.e.

year	number	growth in %
1930	1,49,747	
1940	1,89,057	26.25
1950	2,39,887	26.89
1960	2,65,222	10.56
1967	2,85,887	7.79
1976	2,72,578	
1988	3,00,000 (approximately)	

Source for the years 1930 to 1967: K.L. Richardson, *An Examination...*, p. 42. Source for the year 1976: H. Grafe, *Evangelische Kirche in Indien*, p. 220. The number given for 1988 is only estimated and does not base on official figures. Communicant members in 1976 were 1,67,779.

227. *The Indian Lutheran*, Vol VI, No. I, p. 12

228. United Evangelical Lutheran Churches in India: *Development Workshop*, p. 95

Malas thought of themselves to be superior to the Madigas, while the Madigas often accepted the superiority of the Malas. Different places of worship were built for the Mala and Madiga castes. The fact that Malas were the first to become Christians under the work of the missionaries, gave the impression to the members of higher caste that the Christian community was a community of outcastes. Thus, they generally abstained from becoming Christians. Besides, if members of the higher castes converted to Christianity, it would mean to them persecution and expulsion from their own community.[229]

Although by 1931 nearly 25% of the Christians belonged to the *sudra* caste, these Christians generally separated themselves in worship from the Malas and Madigas and chose different places for their worships. Even today, when the number of members of the *sudra* caste has gone back relative to the number of Malas and Madigas due to several reasons[230], they still separate in all aspects of social life, except in church affairs.[231]

Due to heavy industrialization, many of the Church members, who are weavers or agricultural labourers have poured into the cities, which in turn affects the rural congregations. Several programs are conducted to improve the living in the villages, either by constructing durable houses, by educating the villagers or by offering courses for different vocations. Many of its members are unemployed.[232]

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229. Several examples which furnish the existence of these problems are given in G.J. Abraham Wilson, *The History of the Caste Problem…*, p. 33f

230. Kola Isiah states in his article on the AELC, that most Christians with the *sudra* background do not hold to the church any longer. They have gained lucrative jobs and are no longer interested in the membership with a church which contains mostly of untouchables. in: H. Grafe, *Evangelische Kirche in Indien*, p. 217

231. G.J. Abraham Wilson, *ibid.*, p. 35

232. The Indian Lutheran, Vol VI, No. I, p. 12f

3.3.4 The South Andhra Lutheran Church

3.3.4.1 The Development of the South Andhra Lutheran Church

The South Andhra Lutheran Church with its headquarters in Tirupati has been founded by missionaries from Germany in 1865. The first missionary was August Mylius, who had already been a missionary of the L.E.L.M. in Tamil Nadu, but had left this mission because of its stand towards the caste system.[233] He went back to Germany and after some years of service there decided to approach the Hermannsburg Evangelical Lutheran Mission (H.E.L.M.) to be sent out again as missionary, preferably to India. He was sent to India in 1864 and began work at Sulurpet in the south of Andhra Pradesh. From there, the work spread soon over an area covering almost the entire Chittoor district. Other missionaries followed soon, and they established a number of elementary schools, mainly for the Christian children, in order to enable them to read the Bible. A High School was built in Tirupati on the request of the Hindu community. A Leper's home was constructed at Kodur, and in Nayudupet, the theological training centre, where a number of evangelists were educated, was run as well as an industrial school. Two lady missionaries arrived also to take charge of the *zenana*-mission.

The German missionaries had to leave India when the first world war broke out, leaving behind about 8000 Christians with two ordained Indian pastors. It was only in 1920 that American missionaries from the Lutheran Ohio Synod took over the work. Since 1949 the church is independent, and since 1959 the president of the church is an Indian.

The SALC has today about 28000 members[234] and 31 serving pastors. Its area reaches from the Eastern coast north from Madras Westwards to Puttur and Northwards up to Royachotti and Rajampet. On the East coast it stretches northwards up to Nellore.

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233. *cf.* footnote 133 on page 34

234. according to the *Souvenir of the Post Centenary Silver Jubilee Celebrations,* page 91

3.3.4.2 Social Background of the SALC

While in the early beginning some Brahmins and *sudras* embraced Christianity, later the background from which most of the members came was the Mala caste. A few Madigas are members but make only about 2% of the entire membership. In the coastal areas, also some fisher communities have become Christians.

Within this caste, some subdivisions exist. This created also within the SALC problems with regard to intermarriages and Holy Communion. However, these problems have been overcome in the recent past, i.e. since about 1960, and now there are only very little limits between the sub-castes within the SALC.[235]

In 1952, the American missionaries began mission work in the region of Piler, Royachotti and Lakkireddipalle, the area of which they called "St. Paul's field". Here, most of the converts came from the *sudra* background, i.e. members from the Reddi, Balija, Kapu, Khamma and Raju castes converted to Christianity. It is most interesting to note that, according to the informants, there have never been barriers between these Christians and the Christians from the Mala background, and even intermarriages took place right from the beginning. However, the success in this field was only partial. For many of the *sudras*, their only reason to become a Christian was the high education they would receive with the help of the missionaries, including scholarships for an education abroad. After having received the required benefits, many returned to Hinduism.

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235. This information was given by various informants, one of them being himself married to a woman from a lower subdivision. However, no case is known in which a girl from a higher subdivision was married to a man from a lower subdivision, and there were incidents which hint at persisting casteism. For instance, during one visit to a congregation where Madigas live, the accompanying Mala Christian took his own water with him and did not drink the water offered to him by the Christians there (but he did also not refuse it. He left the glass of water untouched).

3.3.5 The Canadian Baptist Church

3.3.5.1 The Development of the Canadian Baptist Church in Andhra Pradesh

Canadian Baptist missionaries arrived in India already in 1868[236] and began a new and independent work in the very northern and coastal parts of Andhra Pradesh in 1874.

It is interesting to note that the independent missionary work among the Telugu speaking population by the *Canadian Baptists Mission* was initiated by a Telugu Christian in 1870, named Thomas Gabriel. He began his work independently in Kakinada area. Only in 1874, the Canadian Baptist Church decided to support his work and to integrate the mission into their own fold.[237]

There was another mission started by the Canadian Baptists in the Northern part of Andhra Pradesh, i.e. northward from Visakhapatnam and eastward from the coast to Bobbili. It was founded in 1875 by the *Maritime Foreign Mission Board* in co-operation with the already started work of the *Ontario Foreign Mission Board*, which worked in the area around Kakinada. The mission north from Visakhapatnam became known as the *Canadian Baptist Mission North*, while the mission south from Visakhapatnam was the *Canadian Baptist Mission South*.[238] The area of the *Canadian Baptist Mission South* was located around Koliar Lake and Kakinada. The work spread southwards down to the Krishna river.

The Canadian Baptist Mission South founded schools including boarding homes and hospitals, apart from the evangelistic work. The major aim was to enable the Christians to read the word of God. The first schools were established at Kakinada in 1875 and 1876. By 1890

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236. The first Canadian Baptist missionary named A.V. Timpany arrived at Madras on 16.4.1868 and was received at Nellore by the American Baptists as co-worker in the mission work which had been started by the American Baptists in the southern coastal area of Andhra Pradesh. He began to work in Ongole area.

237. N. Surya Rao, *The History of the Theological Training Institution at Kakinada, Andhra Pradesh, 1882-1964*, pp. 1-5 and G. Beaulah Pearl Sunanda, *An Insight into the History of the Canadian Baptist Mission in Andhra Pradesh (1874-1924)*, pp. 12-15

238. G. Beaulah Pearl Sunanda, *An Insight into the History of the Canadian Baptist Mission in Andhra Pradesh (1874-1924)*, pp. 18-21

thirty rural schools had been opened. A manual training school which later became an industrial school at Kakinada was opened, where carpentry, automobile mechanism, blacksmith work and electrical engineering was taught.[239] In 1898, a program was started in order to help the lepers and to take care of them.

In the beginning, it was difficult to recruit Indian helpers for the mission work. Especially regarding *zenana*-work, much help was needed. The mission began to employ Indian women to help reaching the Hindu women, but stopped this practice when they found out that the Hindus won't listen to them because they were paid by the missionaries.[240]

In October 1882 a theological seminary was opened at Samulcotta (north-west from Kakinada). It is important to note that already at this time, out of the 19 students who were admitted, two were female. In the same year, Miss Mary Jane Firth arrived as a women missionary to co-ordinate the *zenana* work.

In 1911, the two Canadian Baptist missions which were working side by side decided to join and became in 1912 the *Canadian Baptist Mission*, working in an area spreading over the districts of Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Visakhapatnam, East and West Godavari and Krishna.

In the 1920s, it became apparent that Indians who were working under the missionary conference, could no longer be called "helpers". Thus, Indian pastors and evangelists became "fellow-workers", and a plan was drawn to reduce the responsibilities and authority of the missionary conference in order to enable the Indian pastors to take over the leadership of the newly developed Church.[241] Already in 1913 first steps were taken in this direction when the Northern circars Baptist Convention came into existence. This was manned entirely by Indian Christians and became responsible for the evangelistic work in certain areas which had been previously under the supervision of the Canadian Baptist Mission.[242]

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239. M.B. Diwakar, *An Investigation…*, p. 2-3

240. N. Surya Rao, *ob.cit.*, p. 15-18

241. N. Surya Rao, *ibid.*, p. 57ff

242. M.B. Diwakar, *An Investigation…*, p. 86

In 1947, the Northern circars Baptist Convention was reconstituted and became the governing body for both, evangelistic and administrative work. The missionary conference was left with some responsibilities but didn't have the power to take decisions on matters of the church administration. Thus, the Baptist Church in the Northern circars was in the hands of the Indian Christians.[243] The total membership today is about 1,50,000.[244]

3.3.5.2 The Social Background of the Canadian Baptist Church

Most of the converts came from the Mala and Madiga background. They were heavily indebted[245] and mostly illiterate. They were coolies or agricultural labourers. The faith in Christ led to the rejection to continue the service for the Hindu worship, which had formerly been their duty.[246] This, in return, led to persecution and suppression by the Hindu caste members.

But with the passage of time, Indian Baptists gained respect among the Hindu community through their education, which was enabled by the missionaries through extensive educational programs, which are continued even today.[247] However, they remained dependent from the missionaries for a long time, and gained economic independence only gradually. Today, the financial situation of the Telugu Baptist Church is that they are basically self supporting with regard to the activities of the church on the congregational level.

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243. M.B. Diwakar, *An Investigation…*, p. 17

244. Mar Aprem, *Indian Christian Directory*, p. 74. The total baptized membership is about 75,000. Since the Baptists generally perform only adult baptism, the total figure is approximately double as much. *cf.* also Grafe, *Evangelische Kirche…*, p.175, where the total number is given as 1,20,000 about 8 years earlier (in 1975).

245. acc. to N. Surya Rao, *ibid.*, p. 11, 73.3% of the Baptist Church members were in debt. Nearly 90% of the Baptist Church members come from the Mala or Madiga background (M.B. Diwakar, *An Investigation…*, p. 10)

246. the Malas and the Madigas had to play the musical instruments when the Hindu idol was taken through the village in a procession.

247. M.B. Diwakar, *An Investigation…*, p. 12; H. Grafe, *Evangelische Kirche…*, p. 178

One notable characteristic of the Baptist doctrine is the belief that union with the entire Christian community is not essential on an organisational basis. They emphasize the importance of the local congregation as the one "body of Christ".[248] This doctrine has helped in accommodating the Christian community in the Hindu social environment, since there was no particular demand for unity and communion across all castes on the basis of the doctrine of the "one body of Christ", although the discriminatory effect of the caste system was felt also among the Baptist Christians, especially if members of different castes converted to Christianity within one village. Major problems arise also when it goes to the election of church leadership.[249]

3.3.6 The Salvation Army

The Salvation Army is unique in the Christian fold and somewhat an outsider church, because its doctrines differ in some aspects widely from those of the other Christian churches. Already its organization is quite different. As its name suggests, the Salvation Army is organized like an army with soldiers and officers who are again organized in corps, divisions and territories. The reason for choosing terms from the military background is the presumption that a Christian always has to be prepared for the fight against the evil forces[250].

The Salvation Army rejects the claim of other denominations that sacraments are necessary for salvation, and knows instead seven different *ceremonies*:

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248. The New Testament teaches that the community of the Christians which is later called "church" forms the body of Christ. This is generally understood as the community of the world wide Christianity, but the term "church" was soon used for the institutional structure of a particular demonination. The Baptists however give importance only to the local congregation as an organizational body, while the link to other Christian and congregations is not organizational, but spiritual. *Cf.* also the article "Baptisten" in E. Fahlbusch (ed.), *Evangelisches Kirchenlexikon*, Vol. 1, col. 355 ff.

249. Mar Aprem, *Indian Christian Directory*, p. 74

250. it may be also inspired by the apostle Paul, who writes in the letter to the Ephesians in the New Testament:

> So stand ready, with truth as a belt tight round your waist, with righteousness as your breastplate, and as your shoes the readiness to announce the Good News of peace. At all times carry faith as a shield; for with it you will be able to put out all the burning arrows shot by the Evil one. And accept salvation as a helmet, and the word of God as the sword which the Spirit gives you. (Eph 6, 14-17)

1. to rank a soldier
2. to hand over the flag
3. to give a vow
4. the initiation of children
5. marriage
6. burial
7. memorial

They categorically refuse to take any kind of drugs, including alcohol and tobacco. They emphasize the love for their fellow beings, as ordered by Jesus, and run social institutions all over the world. They make campaigns on the road, trying to catch hold of the socially outcaste people (like prostitutes, beggars, sick and poor people). By this, they spread the gospel in a holistic manner. The Salvation Army is found in more than 80 countries with a total of three million members.[251]

3.3.6.1 The Development of the Salvation Army in Andhra Pradesh

The Salvation Army has been founded by Rev. William Booth in 1867, when he was preacher in London. In India, the mission began by F. Tucker in 1882. The main emphasis was to remove all social and economic obstacles and to unite all those who were willing to join the Salvation Army by the love of Christ.

In Andhra Pradesh, the mission work began in 1895 by Abdul Azeez, who settled in Vijayawada. From there, they spread to the North, the East and the South. In many cases, entire communities of Scheduled Caste (Mala) origin embraced Christianity at once. The Indian missionaries tried to improve their status by teaching them elementary hygiene and by opening schools for their children. Land societies were established to provide land to the converts. Today, the Salvation Army is also present in Hyderabad, Rajahmundry, Nellore and Visakhapatnam.[252]

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251. Karl-Heinz Gaβner: *Heilsarmee, Die (The Salvation Army)*

252. Mannam Samuel, *Work of the Salvation Army in Andhra Pradesh*

3.3.6.2 The Social Background of the Salvation Army in Andhra Pradesh

As already mentioned, the background of most members of the Salvation Army in Andhra Pradesh is that of the Mala caste. The Salvation Army has done a lot to improve the social situation of its members, as this is one of the major goals of this community to provide social services for all who are in need of it. This means, that the Salvation Army does render its services also to non-Christians.

3.3.7 The Mennonite Brethren Church

The Mennonite Church was founded in the 16th century in the wake of the reformation in Europe by Menno Simons. While the Reformed and Lutheran Churches were formed, the Mennonites, who were regarded as heretics even by those churches, had great difficulty to withstand the prosecution by the Roman Catholic and also by some Protestant churches. They moved to America where they could develop freely and became a huge and significant community. They emphasize the action as a fruit of Christian faith and abstain from smoking and drinking.[253]

There are approximately 600,000 Mennonites in the world, of which 10% live in Asia.[254]

3.3.7.1 The Development of the Mennonite Brethren Church in Andhra Pradesh

The first Mennonite missionaries came from Russia in 1899 and worked under the auspices of the American Baptists, establishing a station at Nalgonda. Soon, the American Mennonites stepped into the work. In order to avoid overlapping and interference with other mission societies, the Mennonites agreed to work in the area south of Hyderabad which had

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253. C. Krahn, *Mennoniten*, in: Kurt Galling, Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart, Vol 4, col. 855-858

254. *Fischer Welt-Almanach 1991*, p. 818

been taken before by the American Baptists but was handed over to the Mennonites. The Mennonites began their work from the stations at Mahbubnagar and Gadwal, which was sold to them by the American Baptists in 1937. Later, after the death of Charles Billington, the Mennonite Mission spread over the area of Narayanpet and Makthal which was the area of Billington's independent mission.[255]

The Christian congregations were organized in "field associations" which again were organized in a "convention" of the field associations. While the field associations met at least twice a year, the convention was to meet annually. Already from the late 1920s onwards, both were co-ordinated by Indians. Their executive power, however, was rather limited and did not extent to decision making with regard to property or appointments, which was in the hands of the so called "Missionary Conference".

In 1946, a "Joint Field Council" was formed which included Indians and had almost the same powers like the Missionary Conference with regard to the local Christian church. Ten years later, in 1956, the Governing Council of the Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church of India replaced the Joint Field Council. All property was handed over to the Indian church in the early 1960s. The Missionary Conference remained as a body of fellowship and encouragement of the missionaries who were still resident. Since then, financial contributions were greatly reduced and are now limited to the support of programmes relating to Christian education and Bible training and the propagation of the gospel. In all other aspects the Mennonite Brethren Church of India has become financially independent.[256] In 1980, three missionaries were still engaged in different Christian programmes related to the Mennonite Brethren Church in the Hyderabad area[257].

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255. Paul D. Wiebe, *Christians in Andhra Pradesh. The Mennonites of Mahbubnagar*, p. 67-70

256. *ibid.*, p. 84-87

257. *ibid.*, p. 79f

The total baptized membership of the Mennonite Brethren Church, according to information received from the church administration, is about 64,000, of which the major part (43,000) live in Mahbubnagar.[258] The remaining members spread over Kurnool (15,000), Hyderabad (2000), Ranga Reddy (2000) and Nalgonda (2000) districts.

3.3.7.2 Social Background of the Mennonite Brethren Church

Most of the members live in villages (about 80%) which are located in remote areas. They mainly derive from the Madiga caste[259]. The remaining but a few come from the Mala caste.

Almost all Mennonites are farmers or coolies, working on daily wages basis. The farmers often own only very little land, so that they are also forced to work as coolies at least for some time during the year. Illiteracy was very high at about 80% in the end of the 1970s. The literacy rate varies depending on the urbanization of an area. Since most Mennonites live in rural areas, the literacy among them is very low.

3.4 The Roman Catholic Church

The Roman Catholic Church is distinct from most other Christian denominations in its doctrines and administration's structure, as well as in its spiritual practice. Even in India, where confessional differences do not play such an important role like in the European

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258. The exact figure given in reply to the questionnaire is 63,520. If the data available elsewhere is taken into consideration, it is difficult to believe that the number of Mennonites is so high, even when including all children. The 1981 census counts only approx. 21000 Christians in Mahbubnagar (*cf.* the table on page 87). In the *Indian Christian Directory* compiled by Mar Aprem and published in 1984, the number is given as 24000. The wide variation reflects also the problems which are discussed on page 87. While the information available to the church shows a much higher membership, the information available to the government is influenced by its reservation policy. Paul Wiebe, quoting P.M. Hamm's statistical report on the Mennonite Brethren Church, gives the total number of Mennonite Christians in 1970 as 18,854. *Op.cit.*, p. 105

259. in a survey done in 1970, there were about 95% of the Mennonite Brethrens from the Madiga caste. *Cf.* Paul D. Wiebe, *Christians in Andhra Pradesh*, p. 105

countries, there is actually no sign visible of any kind of regular relationship between the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant Churches. In fact, the gap appears to be widening with growing Evangelicalism on the one and growing indigenization on the other side.

The Roman Catholic Church has very early begun to use indigenous ways to propagate the gospel. Roberto de Nobili[260] is the first Jesuit missionary who, by accepting the laws of the *kshatriyas* and studying the Vedic scriptures, attracted many members of the high castes to Christianity by means of discussions, already in the early 18th century. When the Jesuits revived their missionary efforts in Andhra Pradesh, they often adopted the local style of building shrines for their own worship places, erected shrines at the roadside and allowed customs which were generally rejected among the Protestant missions, like offering of coconuts and flowers, and so on.[261]

It is one special feature of the Roman Catholic Church that the church does not so much emphasize the oral interpretation of the word like the Protestants do, but the symbolic interpretation by means of gestures, images, more sacraments and the like. One important element in Catholic spirituality is the adoration of Mary, the mother of Jesus. The Roman Catholic Church has given her a godlike status, and it is a quite familiar site in Roman Catholic churches and shrines that a statue of Mary, holding the baby Jesus in her arms, is placed at the central location. There are centres in which Mary is worshipped in the same way like Hindu images are, by offering coconuts, flowers and betel leaves to her.[262]

Another major aspect of the Roman Catholic Church is that it has the so called religious orders or religious congregations. These are communities of people who have taken up a vow not to marry and to do certain duties regularly, which form the characteristic appearance of the particular order or congregation. The best known order of this kind is the order of the Sisters

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260. see page 27

261. see also the chapter 5

262. One already famous place, which has become a pilgrimage centre for both, Christians and Hindus, is located at Vailankanni in Tamil Nadu. There, Mary is worshipped as "Our Lady of Health", and it is reported that she has caused numerous miracles by healing sick people. The place is also called "The Lourdes of the East". (see S.L. Gabriel *et.al.*, *The History of the Shrine Basilica of Our Lady of Health Vailankanni)*

of Charity, which is led by mother Theresa in Calcutta and has the purpose of serving the destitute people all over India.[263]

Beside Mary, there is a wealth of devotees who have led a life in sincere devotion to God and who have been declared by the Holy See as saints, who are also prayed to and displayed as statues in the churches and shrines. The Catholic Church emphatically denies the accusation by some Protestants that this would be idolatry (in fact this expression of spirituality was one of the reasons which initiated the reformation movement). In the view of the authorities, Mary and all other saints are only mediators between God and the devotee, but they are no independent Gods in the sense of a polytheistic religion.[264]

3.4.1 The Development of the Roman Catholic Church in Andhra Pradesh

While the Protestant Churches generally, in most parts of India, began their missions after the Roman Catholic Church, in Andhra Pradesh there was only very little done from the side of the Roman Catholic Church before the Protestant missions began.[265] It can be said that, up to the 20th century, there was only little development of the Roman Catholic Church in Andhra Pradesh. The number of membership in 1901 was only 26,828, which began to grow significantly only after 1920, when the total membership in Andhra Pradesh was 39,810 (see figure 3.1). It must also be stated that, before 1900, many of the Catholics were Europeans who were living in that area as members of trade stations or the government. Most of the remaining Roman Catholic Christians were living in the Guntur area, where the Jesuits

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263. see also page 29

264. The declaration of a Christian (only after his or her death) as a saint is actually only the declaration that the soul of the person is no longer in purgatory(*see also* page 186), but has received a place in heaven in front of the throne of God. Thus, the souls of the saints are able to place the requests of others who still live on earth before God, who will consider them positively because of the support by the souls of the saints.

265. The efforts of the first Jesuit missionaries in the middle of the 18th century, mainly among the *sudras* in the Guntur area under the protection of the French troops, yielded some fruits, but were only temporary until the Society of Jesus was suppressed and had to discontinue its work in India (*see* page 28)

had started the work in the middle of the 18th century.[266] The figure 3.1 indicates the steep rise in the membership of the Roman Catholic Church.[267]

Figure 3.1: Growth of the Roman Catholic Church in Andhra Pradesh from 1901 to 1989

First steps to recognize Andhradesa as an area of importance for the development and propagation of Christian faith was taken under Pope Gregory XVI (1831-1846), who advised the so called *Propaganda* to reorganize the Indian Mission. This resulted in the division of the huge vicariate of Madras into three independent vicariates (with regard to Andhradesa), i.e.

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266. Here, Malas and Madigas became Christians in the wake of the mass movements, which occurred during the second half of the 19th century, and account for the majority of Roman Catholic Christians at that time. *Cf.* M.E. Prabhakar, *Caste in Andhra Churches*, p. 31-32

267. Data up to 1977 according to Houtart/Lemercinier: *Size and Structures of the Catholic Church in India*, p. 57. Data for 1989 is according to *The Catholic Directory of India 1990*. This directory includes statistical data as per 31.12.1989 together with relevant information about the Catholic Church in India.

Madras (retaining the Coastal districts up to the Krishna river), Hyderabad and Visakhapatnam, in the middle of the 19th century. New and inexperienced missionary societies were to work in these areas and to establish an Indian Roman Catholic Church.[268]

The Mill Hill Fathers were invited in 1877 to work in the northern districts of the Madras diocese, and they began the work immediately, discovering that only 6000 Roman Catholics were left over from the Jesuits' work in the 18th century. They now emphasized on the conversion of members of the higher castes, which resulted in slower growth but yielded a strong foundation. In 1928, the Nellore diocese was bifurcated from the Madras diocese. In 1940, this was again divided into two dioceses, i.e. Nellore and Guntur diocese, the latter becoming the most prosperous with nearly 100% growth between 1969 and 1989[269].

In the Hyderabad diocese which was founded in 1845, no Bishop was installed until 1851. He found only about 7000 Christians living in the Nizam's capital, most of them originating from Goa, Mangalore or the South. Thus, he called missionaries from the Foreign Missionary Society of Milan. In 1863, this society took complete charge of the area but could not proceed with missionary work, as the Muslim ruler was opposed to it. This forced them to serve only the different Catholic diaspora congregations which were in the vicariate. With the great famine in 1876, the missionaries went to the area around Vijayawada, where they were successful in baptizing a number of people. In 1933, Vijayawada became an independent vicariate and became the biggest of all the Roman Catholic dioceses in Andhra Pradesh. Warangal was bifurcated from the Hyderabad diocese in 1952, leaving the diocese in a similar state as in the beginning, with merely diaspora Christians living in it's area.[270] In 1953, the Hyderabad area comprising of the districts Hyderabad, Ranga Reddy, Medak and Nizamabad (plus the Karnataka district Bidar) was made an archdiocese.

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268. F.A. Plattner, *The Catholic Church in India*, p. 54f

269. *cf.* the table 3.4 on page 73

270. F.A. Plattner, *The Catholic Church in India*, p. 55f

The Catholic population today forms only a little more than one fourth of the entire Christian population in Andhra Pradesh[271], yet its impact on the Indian society is extraordinary, since they run many social institutions like widow homes, orphanages, schools, hostels and so on which have gained a high reputation.[272]

Table 3.4: Distribution of Catholic Christians according to dioceses

Diocese	1969	1977	1989
Vijayawada	1,24,129	1,13,849[273]	1,67,184
Eluru	---	75,927	1,30,000
Guntur	66,698	86,502	1,21,430
Visakhapatnam	60,942	83,000	1,12,649
Khammam	---	---	79,166
Hyderabad		38,787	63,453[274]
Cuddapah	---	33,170	55,000
Kurnool	25,916	47,308	50,060
Nellore	43,000	17,296[275]	45,788
Nalgonda	---	31,000	40,000
Warangal	51,525	80,813	38,464[276]
Total:	3,72,210	6,07,652	9,03,194

The following table shows a clear increase in educational institutions run by the Roman Catholic Church in Andhra Pradesh. It is a fact that many of these institutions, especially the high schools and colleges, have a very high reputation, both among all the Christians of different denominations and among Hindus. Especially the schools for girls are of a high quality and meet the needs for a better education of the Indian women.

271. see figure 3.2 on page 89

272. *see* the tables 3.6 and 3.5 on the following pages.

273. The diocese Eluru was bifurcated from Vijayawada in 1977

274. The Hyderabad area is an archdiocese

275. Cuddapah diocese was bifurcated from Nellore in 1977

276. The diocese Khammam was bifurcated from Warangal in 1988

Table 3.5: Number of educational institutions in the Roman Catholic Church in 1979/89

Diocese	Colleges	High Schools	Element.[277] Schools	Technical Schools
Hyderabad	5/7	27/42	30/53	
Vijayawada	2/2	12/22	/150	6/12
Eluru	1/1	5/9	70/71	3/3
Guntur	3/5	15/31	114/156	5/21
Visakhapatnam	2/2	12/32	61/130	2/6
Khammam		/5	/8	/2
Cuddapah	/1	4/11	40/	/2
Kurnool	1/2	7/9	26/18	/1
Nellore		4/8	35/60	1/3
Nalgonda	/1	6/14	18/23	/6
Warangal	/1	10/15	/10	4/4
Total 1979:	14	102	394	21
Total 1989:	22	209	679	60[278]

The following table provides the number of medical and social institutions which are run by the Roman Catholic Church. As the number of private hospitals and dispensaries run by the government rises constantly, the Roman Catholic Church seem to have drawn the appropriate conclusion by emphasizing the construction of homes and institutions for those who are not so much cared for, like orphans, old folk or lepers.

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277. includes primary and upper primary schools

278. Data is taken from A. Nazareth (ed.), *The Catholic Directory of India 1980*, and from L. da Veiga (ed.), *The Catholic Directory of India 1990*. The table is, however, not accurate, as data was sometimes missing with regard to the elementary schools, which may have been more in 1979 as well as in 1989, but have not been recorded in the directory. According to F. Houtard/G. Lemercinier, there were 692 primary and middle schools managed by the Roman Catholic Church, excluding the dioceses Nalgonda, Nellore and Warangal. (*Size and Structures…*, table 83 on page 168)

Table 3.6: Medical and social institutions in the Roman Catholic Church in Andhra Pradesh in 1979/1989

Diocese	Hospitals	Dispens.	Orphan./ Hostels	Old folk/ destitute	Leprosy Rehabil.
Hyderabad	6/7	6/7	8/10	/5	
Vijayawada	12/17	5/4	32/49	2/8	/3
Eluru	10/6		19/23	/3	2/3
Guntur	8/10	14/17	12/46	1/2	
Visakhapatnam	4/8	3/19	17/32	/2	
Khammam	/3	/5		/15	/1
Cuddapah	7/6	3/5	8/10	/3	/2
Kurnool	6/10		14/15	1/3	1/1
Nellore	10/16	6/6	16/21	/6	/4
Nalgonda	3/4	10/17	13/29	1/	1/
Warangal	3/5	13/4	11/2	/2	/2
Total 1979:	69	60	150	5	4
Total 1989:	112	84	252	34	16[279]

The above tables show that the Roman Catholic Church in Andhra Pradesh is putting much effort into social services. This is in sharp contrast to the efforts of the Protestant Churches, which are running such institutions as well, but not to such an extent.[280] The reason for this can certainly be found in the fact that the Roman Catholic Church in India is part of one global structure, the Roman Catholic Church, which has its centre in Rome with the Pope as its head. Although the dioceses are more or less independent in terms of administration, they can rely on the help provided by this structure. Further, quite a big part of the members of the Roman Catholic Church in Andhra Pradesh does not belong to the depressed classes and is therefore able to contribute significantly to the various social services of the church.

The Protestant churches are structured differently. They are geographically limited and completely independent in terms of administration and spiritual life. Most of their members are Harijans, unable to contribute anything to the church. Thus, the church leaders are looking abroad for partners who help them in financial matters to overcome the difficulties in

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279. Data is taken from A. Nazareth (ed.), *The Catholic Directory of India 1980*, and from L. da Veiga (ed.), *The Catholic Directory of India 1990*. The number of hospitals and dispensaries may not be accurate, as the statistics for Eluru and Kurnool counted hospitals and dispensaries under one category.

280. e.g. the CSI, which covers a similar geographical area like the Roman Catholic Church and counts as many members, has only 39 hospitals and dispensaries, while the Roman Catholic Church has 196, and only 128 hostels compared to 252 on the side of the Roman Catholic Church.

financing even the basic structure of the church. These partners are generally the mission societies who have established the respective churches.

The Roman Catholic Church has made great efforts in adopting elements of the Hindu culture in order to use them for the propagation of the Christian message. This is reflected in the architecture of church buildings, which sometimes resemble the architecture of a Hindu temple, as well as in paintings and other art work, where symbols which are commonly known to the Hindu are used as symbols pointing to Christ.

In the Protestant churches, a preference is given to the style of the "mother churches", i.e. the Western churches which founded the particular church in India. The architecture follows the architecture used by the missionaries, and the art does generally not incorporate any elements of the Hindu culture.

3.4.2 The Social Background of the Roman Catholic Church in Andhra Pradesh

Most Roman Catholic Christians in the Guntur diocese are of a high social standard, coming from a higher caste background than is the case with the Protestant Christians.[281] In the other dioceses, except for the archdiocese of Hyderabad, the percentage of Harijan Christians is very high, since they have come to the Christian fold in greater numbers around the turn of the century, and the movement seems still to be going on (*see* table 3.4 on page 73), especially in the dioceses Visakhapatnam, Eluru and Guntur. Many of the high caste Christians in the Roman Catholic Church come from other states and have settled in Andhra because their employers have sent them there. Thus, there are a number of diaspora congregations in the Roman Catholic Church in Andhra Pradesh.

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281. Many of the Roman Catholic Christians in Guntur district derive from Khamma and Reddi castes, the landowners and cultivators. Their ancestors embraced Christianity under the work of the Phiangipuram Mission and particularly the efforts made by Fr. Clement Bonnard between 1827 and 1833. *Cf.* M.E. Prabhakar, *Caste in Andhra Churches*, p. 32

There are less problems on account of the caste background, due to several reasons. One reason is the strict hierarchical structure. Selection of people for the church leadership is usually not a matter of election, but of appointment. Thus, there is no formation of parties and partitions within the church. Another reason is the stand towards caste. It is seen as a non-religious element, which is not to be objected within the church. Thus, members of different castes may partake in a worship but sit separately, without feeling embarrassed. A third reason is the catholic spirituality. It allows the individual to develop his or her own way of spiritual life. There is no uniformity forced upon the Roman Catholic Christians, except with regard to Holy Communion. But even here, the way is paved to accommodate various spiritual approaches.

3.5 Evangelical Churches in Andhra Pradesh

The term Evangelical Churches includes churches which had been established in this century mainly during the last two or three decades, and which generally hold that the Bible as the Holy Scripture has been completely inspired to its authors by the Holy Spirit, thus making it binding in total, since it is the true and infallible word of God.[282] They believe that the life-style has to be changed according to the biblical teachings. This means also that customs which the people were used to from their Hindu background have to be given up entirely, while customs which were common from the Jewish background and are reported in the Bible are being adopted. They often emphasize that a Christian has to know the date when he actually was accepted by Christ and when he himself accepted Christ as his personal Saviour. This would be the only proof that he or she is a true Christian who turned away from the previous life in unbelief. This is also why many of these Churches emphasize the need of adult baptism in contrast to the child baptism common among the established Churches, because

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282. The fact that, on the basis of different interpretation of the Bible, many of these evangelical churches split again and again into new Churches, shows however that it is not that easy to define what is the truth that has been revealed through the Bible to mankind.

they believe that only the one who knows that God is his personal Saviour can receive baptism in its full meaning.

Most of these churches are quite small with regard to membership, in Andhra Pradesh they have generally less than 10,000 members.[283] However, it is interesting to note that many Christians from other denominations like to attend the worships and evangelistic meetings of these evangelical churches.[284] These churches are often financially supported by the foreign churches of the same denomination, which emphasize the need for evangelization of the entire world.

Generally, from the side of the evangelical Churches, there is no partaking in political matters. They concentrate on the biblical issues and believe that only by being a true believer[285] who follows Christ and does not deviate from this way, one can be saved. Thus, being a member or even only sympathizer of any politically or sociologically oriented group, one has to follow their guide-lines and principles and will necessarily cease to follow Christ in the first instance. For them, Christ has had no interest in social matters, but only in the salvation of the mankind.[286] This principle they try to follow by proclaiming the gospel at various occasions and with several means.[287] They generally do emphasize that the only way to change the world is constant and faithful prayer for the early installation of the heavenly kingdom by God.

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283. The statistics given by these churches often do not reflect the true number of members, but over-estimate it. The reason for this is that many members of the established churches are also visiting the worships and meetings of the evangelical churches, because they like the preacher's way of literally interpreting the Bible. These visitors are often also taken into account when the statistics are prepared – provided that statistics are prepared at all.

284. *cf.* the section 3.6.3 on page 92

285. A believer, in this context, is a person who is full of faith that Christ has removed his sins. On faith, see also page 187

286. This refers only to the spiritual salvation

287. For instance, they distribute tracts which contain a biblical message and urge the reader to convert to Christ, or they use the mass media like radio to convey the message of the gospel.

Following is a short description of some of these churches, which are also found in Andhra Pradesh.[288]. A major part is taken by the description of the Bakht Singh Assembly, which has been founded by an Indian and has its centre in Hyderabad. The major membership is in Andhra Pradesh.

3.5.1 The Pentecostal Churches in Andhra Pradesh

The Pentecostal Churches are churches which emphasize the importance of the Holy Spirit as the power which drives man and which gives him also supernatural powers, as they are attributed to the apostles in the Bible.[289]

Those who are admitted as new members have to be baptized by full immersion, irrespective of whether they had been baptized earlier or not. They do not view this baptism as necessary for salvation[290], but to undergo baptism shows that a person has accepted Christ as his personal Saviour. They do, thus, not accept child baptism, because a child cannot confess its sins.[291]

Major importance is given to the <u>Baptism with the Holy Spirit</u> by Jesus, which is necessary to be a true Christian, while the sacraments which are taught by other major churches (Lutherans, Anglicans, Catholics) are considered to be unnecessary for salvation.

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288. As these churches reject to accept any continuity of customs and concepts in any way related to Hinduism, they are only rarely reflected in the further studies. However, for the sake of completeness a short description is given here. The information has been taken mainly from T. John Ratnam, *Church Growth in Andhra Pradesh*, p. 63-67. The selection does not follow a strict pattern but bases on the material which was available. During the field work, a number of evangelistic meetings and worships were visited in both, rural and urban areas, and interviews were held with various leaders and members of the evangelical communities.

289. narrations in this regard are mainly found in the book of Acts.

290. *cf.* the section 5.2.2 on the meaning of baptism

291. There is, however, a rite during which a child is blessed by the leader.

After having been baptized by the Holy Spirit, the Christian who is now born again must also be able to speak in tongues.[292] This is said to be a gift of the Holy Spirit and thus must be available to those who have been baptized in Him.

For Pentecostals it is important that Christ is the healer and as such gives also healing powers to his followers. In their gatherings, they usually give room for prayers for sick people, and whenever it is reported that a person became healed by prayers, it is made known to the congregation as an impulse to praise God.

The Pentecostals, like most Evangelical Churches, practice to give the tithe every month.

There are numerous Pentecostal Churches in Andhra Pradesh, however only a few are listed here as representative for all other Pentecostal denominations.[293]

3.5.1.1 The Pentecostal Holiness Church

In 1958, two missionaries of this church came from England to Maruter in the West Godavari District. They especially preached the gospel in the villages around Maruter and built the first church building of the Pentecostal Holiness Church at the same place in 1960. In 1968 the Andhra Conference was organized to supervise the work in South India which had so far established 10 churches with 12 workers and 189 members. Now there are four district conferences in West Godavari, East Godavari, Guntur and Krishna districts.

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292. This is a phenomenon about which a discussion is found in the New Testament in 1 Cor 12-14. It means actually to talk in the language of the Holy Spirit, which can be understood only by the Holy Spirit. However, Paul says that there are others who have the gift to interpret those who talk in tongues. And he adds, that only when such an interpreter is available, one who can talk in tongues may also do so in the congregation, but only when the interpretation follows immediately. (1 Cor 14,1-5)

293. There are no figures available on the membership of these churches. They count themselves as "churches" or "congregations", each group being one unit. The core of these groups does on the average have less than 100 members, because it is difficult to fulfil the obligations demanded to become a full member. There are more people who sympathize with these groups.

3.5.1.2 The Manna Pentecostal Church

This church was founded by the help of an Indian who worked in USA and desired to support preachers in India. He started sending money to two preachers in 1966, and by 1971 he supported 50 preachers. Now there are 250 preachers supported with the help of others who donate to the mission. Churches have been established in East- and West-Godavari, Krishna, Khammam, Guntur, Nalgonda, Hyderabad, Ranga Reddi, Visakhapatnam, Prakasham and Cuddapah districts of Andhra Pradesh.

3.5.1.3 The India Pentecostal Church in Andhra Pradesh

In 1932, Pastor P.M. Samuel came from Kerala to Andhra Pradesh to preach according to the Pentecostal doctrines. More Keralites came to Andhra Pradesh to assist him in his work, and the India Pentecostal Church in Andhra Pradesh has now about 500 congregations.

3.5.2 The Bakht Singh Assembly

The Bakht Singh Assembly derives its name from its founder, Bakht Singh, and is actually a Telugu church, although its beginnings are located in the area of Tamil Nadu.

The founder of this Christian community was born in a village in Punjab in the first decade of the 20th century and was brought up in the Sikhism. For higher studies, his parents sent him to London where he, under the influence of the European secular society, gave up the habits and customs of his own religion.[294] When visiting a Christian worship for the first time in August 1928, he turned to the Christian religion and in April 1932 he was baptized in Vancouver, Canada.[295]

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294. Bakht Singh: *How I Got Joy Unspeakable and Full of Glory,* p. 7ff
295. Bakht Singh: *How I Got Joy Unspeakable and Full of Glory,* p. 12 and 19

After returning to India in 1933, he was repulsed by his parents, because he didn't want to hide his Christian faith. But his father believed that he had found peace in the Christian faith and therefore invited him to come home after some time. Bakht Singh preached in his hometown and then began to travel to the South, where a group of people in Madras became Christians on account of his preachings. But he rejected the request of these converts to form an assembly. At the end of the 1930's he finally agreed and founded an assembly in Madras. In 1942 he moved to Hyderabad, where he began to establish the Bakht Singh Assembly which consist now of about 900 groups.

In 1950, Bakht Singh came to Hyderabad and settled there. He is especially attracting the educated Telugu Christians, who have problems within there own church and are looking for a community in which the biblical word is interpreted literally.

3.5.2.1 Specific Features of the Bakht Singh Assembly

The Bakht Singh Assembly[296] is somewhat elitist and does not accept every candidate into its midst. Once admitted, the new members are baptized by full immersion.[297] Every Sunday when the congregation comes together for worship, they will also celebrate the Holy Communion[298] to which only those are invited who don't have any sense of guilt or hatred against another, because the believers of the times of the New Testament

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296. The following section elaborates more than the previous sections on the Evangelical Churches, because the Bakht Singh Assembly has a strong support especially in Andhra Pradesh. To describe its structure and basic doctrines in this section may help also to understand the drive of many Christians towards Evangelicalism. Much of the information has been collected by interviews and from books and pamphlets written by Bakht Singh.

297. This is also necessary for Christians who had already been baptized earlier. The second baptism signifies that the member is a "born again" or "reborn" Christian.

> When we are saved and redeemed through the grace of God, we come into a new family – the family of God. In that family, only those who have the life of the Lord Jesus Christ are members. Every one who is called a Christian is not necessarily a member of that family. You may have been born a Christian, and you may have been baptized; you may even be working as Pastor, Preacher or Bishop, but unless you are 'born again' of the Holy Spirit, you are not a member of that heavenly family.(Bakht Singh, *God's Dwelling Place*, p. 59)

298. see the explanation on page 140. The Bakht Singh Assembly calls the Holy Communion "The Lord's Table".

were told to judge themselves before they partook of the Lord's Table. They could not take part in the Table unless they were living at peace among themselves. They could not take part unless they were truly 'born again' – unless … they were prepared to meet the Lord Jesus face to face.[299]

The elements are blessed by the elder and then given to the deacons, who pass them to the congregation which does not come forward to the table. The breaking of bread at the Lord's Table is to "get a closer revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ".[300]

The Bible is believed to be God's Word only, written down without any adulteration by man. They memorize passages from the Bible which support their doctrines and have them ready when need arises.

Most important is the individual's experience of God's work and action in his or her personal life. It is actually a pre-condition to become a member of the Assembly. After being born again according to the doctrines of the Assembly, the individual has also received salvation and thus the question of salvation does not actually arise.[301] Those who are not born again can

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299. Bakht Singh, *God's Dwelling Place*, p. 118. The established churches are criticized for their indiscriminate admission of people to the Holy Communion and for their extended liturgy. For the Bakht Singh Assembly, the Lord's Table is just an assurance that God has accepted the "born-again" believers. It is the *Lord's* table and not man's. The elements are also not viewed as the body or blood of Christ. (Reddimalla Samuel, *A Study of Bakht Singh Movement, its Origin and Growth Especially in Andhra Pradesh*, p. 15f)

300. Bakht Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 119. He writes further:

> His Divine plan is that, by the breaking of bread, we might come closer to our Lord and see Him as He ought to be seen, thus entering into the very heart of God, and understanding the height and depth, the length and breadth of His love. (p. 119)

301. Bakht Singh writes:

> Among Christians we do not say: 'What is your name?' We say: 'Are you saved?' meaning, 'Are you a child of God? Have you found the joy of the Lord? Are your sins forgiven? Have you true peace? Is your name written in heaven?'(*God's Dwelling Place*, p. 43)

and:

> Now, all of us commit many sins even though we are born again. …but because of the covering Blood over us, we are again and again restored, and that Blood of Christ ever ensures and safeguards for us all that we have in Jesus our Lord. In this way, we are given back all that we lost through failures, disobedience and transgression.(*op. cit.*, p. 50)

and:

however not be saved. Thus, the doctrine does not actually teach about the graceful act of God, because either one has accepted the Lord and thus becomes saved, or he rejects the Lord and is thus lost. In both cases, action is required from the side of the individual.

The coming of the Lord is eagerly expected, which makes the members of the Bakht Singh assembly lose interest in the "worldly" things.

The Assembly rejects the idea that salvation could be possible for Non-Christians. "Worldly Christians", as those are called who belong to other denominations, have no chance to get saved except when being born again according to the guide-lines set up by Bakht Singh[302], which means to have received the Holy Spirit.[303] They claim to be the only truly Christian Church in the sense of the assembly of true believers.

The members usually pay one tenth (the tithe) of their personal income to the elders to support the church. Smoking, alcoholic drinks and wearing ornaments is prohibited. Bakht Singh writes regarding the "material that we give to God now", that this is used by God to build the New Creation.[304]

They use different methods for evangelism, as door-to-door campaigns, distribution of pamphlets, correspondence Bible courses and evangelistic meetings.[305]

> Our Lord wants us to be without spot and without blemish before Him (Jude 24). He not only forgives our sins, but he takes away every spot and every blemish from within us. That is true salvation. Do you think that our Lord forgives, and that is all there is to it? Whatever the ugly spot may be, He exposes it, for it will have to be removed completely. (*op. cit.*, p. 76)

302. In his book *God's Dwelling Place*, Bakht Singh writes about the Christians of other denominations:

> Some have even told me: 'We do not preach, we do not like to preach, but people can see from our lives that we are Christians, and they can also become Christians'. Yes! but what can they see from the lives of many of you? Beedies, cigars, cigarettes, worldly saris, and arms full of bangles up to the elbow. Can people see from such lives that you are Christians? (p. 67)

303. *op.cit.* p. 67f

304. *op. cit.* p. 33

305. Reddimalla Samuel, *A Study of Bakht Singh Movement, its Origin and Growth Especially in Andhra Pradesh*, p. 11-29

Each Assembly carries a name of a biblical town or place. They do not like to use the word "church" for church buildings, because it is believed that the true meaning of this word refers only to the congregation of born-again believers. "In the Bible, the word 'Church' was never used for an earthly building. … That is the reason why people have failed to comprehend the heavenly mystery of THE CHURCH. …in the Bible the Church means only those men and women who have been redeemed by the Lord Jesus Christ."[306]

The assembly does not have any foreign missionaries, although during the beginning, some foreign missionaries supported the efforts of Bakht Singh.

There is no constitution for the assembly, because Bakht Singh believes that constitutions or laws are not necessary for the true Church of God[307], and it is also difficult to obtain any statistical material on the membership, as they believe that counting the number of members is not according to God's will.[308]

3.5.3 The Church of God of Prophecy

Another church with its headquarters in Rajahmundry is the Church of God of Prophecy, which had been founded in America in 1903 and came to Maharashtra in 1958. From there, also Andhra Pradesh was reached and then chosen as the state where the headquarters should be established.

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306. Bakht Singh, *God's Dwelling Place*, p. 2. For a more detailed explanation of the term "Church" see the page 11

307. He writes:

> Some people are trying to bind Christians together by man-made constitutions. No church constitution – not even the constitution of the Church of South India – and no man-made constitution whatever can truly bind together the Church of God. It is the inward flow of abundant life in the heart of the believer which binds us, and nothing else can. … But if we are not living in the Spirit, there will be disagreement and factions. The Church of Christ cannot be bound by earthly man-made laws; constitutions are often only made for the sake of the power and authority they give, an authority like that of the Brahmin over the Hindus. (*op.cit.*, p. 112-113)

308. *cf.* 2 Sam 24

3.6 General View of the Christianity in Andhra Pradesh at Present

In this section, the Christianity in Andhra Pradesh is described as a whole, with reference to some demographical and social issues.

3.6.1 Some Demographical and Sociological issues

From the demographical point of view, it can be said that the number of Christians, compared to the state's population, has decreased significantly during the last 2 decades.[309]

Table 3.7: Percentage of Christians in Andhra Pradesh

year	Population		percentage
	Total	Christian	
1951	3,11,15,259	12,32,621	3.96%
1961	3,59,83,447	14,28,729	3.97%
1971	4,35,02,708	18,23,436	4.19%
1981	5,35,49,673	14,33,327[310]	2.68%

Districtwise, the largest Christian population is found in the coastal districts of Andhra Pradesh, as is shown in table 3.8.[311]

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309. see table 3.7

310. Source: M.E. Prabhakar, *Andhra Christians …*, p. 5f

311. This is mainly due to the fact that missionary work in the Nizam's dominion was always difficult and normally not supported by the local government, while along the coast, missionaries could move and work freely under the protection of the British.

Table 3.8: Christian population in 1971 and 1981 per district

District	1971	1981
Guntur	4,15,513	3,61,724
Krishna	2,70,510	2,24,652
West Godavari	1,74,628	1,55,707
Ongole	2,08,707	1,09,101
Kurnool	1,29,274	69,567
Hyderabad	52,444	62,689
Cuddapah	76,914	59,741
East Godavari	71,148	50,644
Khammam	66,733	42,757
Medak	53,298	39,597
Nalgonda	41,249	34,787
Nellore	38,203	32,969
Chittoor	33,036	28,765
Visakhapatnam	22,802	27,834
Warangal	33,747	25,345
Rangareddi	16,591	25,149
Mahbubnagar	25,941	21,077
Anantapur	18,995	16,847
Karimnagar	14,832	12,140
Nizamabad	16,781	11,730
Adilabad	14,456	10,833
Vizianagaram	15,978	6,149
Srikakulam	8,658	3,523[312]
Totals:	18,20,438	14,33,327[313]

These figures show clearly a decline of the overall number of Christians in Andhra Pradesh. In addition to this, it has also been observed that there is an increase of the Christian population in the urban areas. While in 1971 only 20.83% of the Christians lived in urban areas, in 1983 this number increased already to 30.05%.[314]

The steep decrease in the total census figures can not be explained with reconversions or movements of the Christian communities. Most probably, the major reason for it is that many Christians of Scheduled Caste origin have declared themselves as Scheduled Caste members, which they can be only if they do not belong to the Christian community.[315] This

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312. M.E. Prabhakar, *Andhra Christians – Some Demographic and Ecclesial Issues*, p.7-10. Data is taken from the 1971 and 1981 census.

313. The reason for the slight discrepancy between the total number in this table and in table 3.7 in the year 1971 could not be established, but appears to be negligible.

314. M.E.Prabhakar, *Andhra Christians – Some Demographic and Ecclesial Issues*, p.11)

315. The Lists of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes exclude Christians expressively by stating "that no person who professes a religion different from the Hindu or the Sikh religion shall be deemed to be a member of a Scheduled Caste" (P. Muthuswamy/V. Brinda:

happens, because the government does not continue to give the benefits and reservations, which are provided for the Scheduled Castes, to those Scheduled Caste members who embraced Christianity. This restriction leads to extreme poverty and backwardness among the Christians of Scheduled Caste origin[316], because they are also not supported sufficiently by their respective church leadership. The supporters of the government's policy argue that the Christians firstly do not accept the caste system and secondly are supported by the foreign churches abroad. Even if both these points are correct, the facts remain that the support from abroad is just sufficient to meet the most urgent needs for the administration of the church and to run some social institutions, if there is any support at all.[317] The rejection of the caste system has caused additional hardship to the converts, especially by the Hindu counterparts of the same caste, who refuse to treat the convert and his family like a member of their caste. On the contrary, they do everything to make him believe that he has become an outsider, or worse, an untouchable.[318]

Christians, in the face of many high caste Hindus, remain untouchables or outcastes especially in the rural areas. This has become apparent in a cruel way in the so called Tsundoor killing in 1991, where a number of Harijans, most of whom were Christians, were

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Swamy's Compilation on Reservations and Concessions for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, p. 175). It seems, however, that the struggle of those Christians who come from a Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes background, for an inclusion into the lists of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, may soon yield fruits, if the promises of the Central and some State governments are to be believed.(*cf. National Council of Churches Review*, 2/1992, p. 145, where it is reported that the Chief Minister of Kerala had promised to include Christians of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes background in the list of the same, thus making the provisions reserved for those communities accessible even for Christians of the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe origin)

316. M.E. Prabhakar, *Andhra Christians...* p. 16. He supports this view with the example of Guntur district, where the number of Christians decreased by nearly 13%, while the total Scheduled Caste population increased from 4.8% to 9.22%. It is also observed that generally the Christian Madigas enumerated themselves as Scheduled Caste members, while the Malas preferred to enumerate as Christians

317. *cf.* the section 4.3.2 on page 113

318. This is especially true with regard to members of higher castes in the rural areas, where conversion to Christianity occurs only rarely and when, then it is deemed to be the severest possible offence against the caste community. E.g. in the late 1970s, a family belonging to the *Reddi* caste, living in a village near Hyderabad, embraced Christianity. First they were robbed of their livestock, then the well was overdrawn when it was their turn to water their fields, and then their crop was stolen over night. Besides, psychic terror has been put on them. P.D. Wiebe, *Christians in Andhra Pradesh*, p. 128f. Many more such examples could be quoted (for instance from C.P. Thangaraj, *Wither Indian Christianity*, or M.E. Prabhakar, *Caste in Andhra Churches*), which would however exceed the limits of this thesis.

killed brutally by the members of the higher castes in that village. The only cause was that the Harijans refused to be treated like slaves and subordinates by the caste people. Comments on this incident made by many caste Hindus included the suggestion that, only because of the education received by the Harijans from Christian schools, this incident could happen.[319]

Figure 3.2: The Christian Population in Andhra Pradesh According to Denominations

3.6.2 Education

Education is the most vital element in the development of a society. It appears that, according to the census in 1991, still nearly 50% of the Indian population are illiterate, therefore unable to increase their own knowledge by means of reading educational literature. Illiteracy does occur mostly among daily labourers, but also trained workers in certain professions are unable to read and write. It is also obvious that illiteracy is much more

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319. see also the section 4.1.2

prevailing among women than among man. There is hardly one state in which the percentage of literate women goes above 50 points.

Thus, the Indian government has taken up efforts to alphabetize the Indian people under special projects, and the year 1990 was the year of a big literacy campaign.

As far as Andhra Pradesh is concerned, the literacy rate is among the lowest in the list of the different states (see table 3.9 on page 91).

The rather low educational level in India may be due to the educational system which was prevailing before the colonization. At that time, education was meant only for members of the high castes, i.e. the *brahmins*, *kshatriyas* and *vaishyas*, whereas all other people went without any kind of education except in the skills related to their caste profession. Reading and writing was not required for such work, and even nowadays in many families the thinking is likewise. The essential need is to earn the livelihood for the family, and this can be done only if all family members which are able to work join the others in doing so, because the average wages in India are very low compared to the world average. Thus, even if it is felt that it is essential to have at least some general knowledge, many families are forced to send their children to work at a very early age. Quite often (about 75%), children visit the first and second class only, while only about 20% of the children go to school up to the 8th class. A total of about 25% never will be sent to school at all.[320]

When missionaries entered India, their major concern was a proper education for the people, with the major purpose to let them read the Bible themselves.[321] In most cases, they built schools at the places where mission stations had been established, and they admitted not only the children of Christian parents, but also Hindu children to the schools, while preference was given to the Christian children.[322]

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320. J. Desrochers, *India Today* p. 103; this data is valid for the year 1985 and represents the "likely and Maximum percentage")

321. This aim is quite contrary to the prevailing attitude, that the scriptures were to be read and studied only by the members of the higher castes, and not by the low caste people or outcastes. It was certainly one of the major attracting elements in the missionary efforts.

322. *cf.* the brief historical sketch beginning on page 35

After India's independence, many schools, especially those at the elementary and secondary levels, which had been under the management of the churches, were closed or handed over to the Indian government. Only a few schools, mainly at the High School level, were kept in the hands of the churches. These schools generally admit Christians as well as Non-Christians, and they follow the syllabus prescribed by the state or central government.

Table 3.9: Percentage of literates aged 7 years and above in states with more than one crore population (census 1991)

State	1981 (percentage)			1991[323] (percentage)		
	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females
Andhra Pradesh	35.66	46.83	24.16	45.11	56.24	33.71
Assam	NA	NA	NA	53.42	62.34	43.70
Bihar	32.03	46.58	16.51	38.54	52.63	23.10
Gujarat	52.21	65.14	38.46	60.91	72.54	48.50
Haryana	43.85	58.49	26.89	55.33	67.85	40.94
Karnataka	46.20	58.72	33.16	55.98	67.25	44.34
Kerala	81.56	87.74	75.65	90.59	94.45	86.93
Madhya Pradesh	34.22	48.41	18.99	43.45	57.43	28.39
Maharashtra	55.83	69.66	41.01	63.05	74.84	50.51
Orissa	40.96	56.45	25.14	48.55	62.37	34.40
Punjab	48.12	55.52	39.64	57.14	63.68	49.72
Rajasthan	30.09	44.76	13.99	38.81	55.07	20.84
Tamil Nadu	54.38	68.05	40.43	63.72	74.88	52.29
Uttar Pradesh	33.33	47.43	17.18	41.71	55.35	26.02
West Bengal	48.64	59.93	36.07	57.72	67.24	47.15
India	43.56	56.37	29.75	52.11	63.86	39.42

The table 3.9 shows a sharp discrepancy between the literacy rate of women and men. Andhra Pradesh, with a literacy rate of less than 50% in 1991, lies below the average of India. With an increase of nearly 10% over ten years, it lies, however, at the same level like whole India.[324]

There was no data available on the literacy rate of the entire Christian population in Andhra Pradesh. The table 3.1 on page 49 however shows the literacy rate in the CSI dioceses (30.18%), which is far below the average of Andhra Pradesh. It can be assumed, that the data

323. Source: Census of India 1991, Paper 1, Statement 16, p. 67, as published in FRONTLINE, issue 13.-26.4.91

324. The effects of literacy campaigns, which had been launched shortly before the 1991 census was taken, are incorporated in this table, although the effect of literacy campaigns can be truly evaluated only after about ten years, when the actual literacy of the people who had passed the classes is assessed. After the census was completed, the literacy campaign has lost much of its initial strength.

for the other churches is similar, because most of the churches have the same social background with most of their members being daily labourers.

3.6.3 The Trend Towards Evangelicalism

Among the Christians who belong to the established churches, there has also been a tendency which reveals a desire that seems not to be satisfied by the traditional spirituality of the established churches.

It has been observed during the field-work that the Evangelical and Pentecostal churches[325] are growing with regard to membership and attendance. Most of the new attendants are, however, not non-Christians, but are Christians who are not satisfied with the teachings and preachings of the pastors of their own mother-church. Many Christians prefer to visit the worships of such communities and like to attend their evangelistic meetings. The most quoted reason for this preference for evangelical and Pentecostal worship was that the sermon would be more challenging and encouraging. The preacher of that community is believed to be a "powerful" and "gifted" preacher.[326]

In case of established churches, evangelistic meetings are regularly held, to which preachers from an evangelical background are invited.[327] Important elements of such meetings are, beside the sermon which generally encourages the audience to accept Christ as the personal Saviour at the meeting, prayers for the sick or needy people.

All in all, two reasons for the trend towards evangelicalism can be drawn from the answers given by the interviewed persons:

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325. see section 3.5 from page 77 onwards

326. With this two attributes, the quality of being a godly person, strengthened by the power of God and gifted with the Holy Spirit, is meant.

327. It happens also that Evangelical or Pentecostal preachers from abroad, mainly USA, who visit India for a short term, touring the various churches and offering their services, are invited for such meetings.

1. The desire for the materialization of Christian religion[328]
2. The desire for spiritual nourishment[329]

In the evangelical communities these desires are satisfied firstly by the literal interpretation of the promises and prophecies made in the Bible. These include the promise of health, prosperity and wealth to those who believe firmly in God. Prayer is supposed to be highly effective, if it is performed in the name of Jesus, as Jesus says to his disciples:

> Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask anything of the Father, he will give it to you in my name. Hitherto you have asked nothing in my name; ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.[330]

The one who performs the prayer, however, must be a person who is gifted with a power of prayer. Thus, if healings occur or families or individuals get material help from some source, after a prayer was performed by the preacher who continuously emphasizes that God will fulfil all the needs of the people, this indicates that the preacher has special powers received from God. If the prayer does not bear fruit, the person will lose his attraction.[331]

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328. I.e. the God of the Christians shall reveal his strength and power over the evil powers in this world. This desire has its roots in the village religion, where the village deity was responsible for the prosperity and well-being of the village community and of the individual member of the community. All changes of the present situation were expected to be performed by the deity. If the desired changes, which were brought to the knowledge of the deity by means of prayers and sacrifices with the help of the village priest, did not take place, the situation was accepted as the fate of the community. This reason is stated mainly by village Christians.

329. Many Christians are dissatisfied with the way how the Christian message is preached in their own church and with what the priorities are in the established churches. There is "no spiritual challenge" in the sermon, and the godliness of the leader (pastor, priest, evangelist) is not convincing. The interest among the leadership is believed to be materialistic and not spiritual. This reason is stated mainly by urban Christians, who are economically sound.

330. John 16,23-24; transl. Revised Standard Version

331. It is therefore not extraordinary when such preachers make public any instance which indicates that their prayer was successful. The reason for the cure of a disease is often not the prayer, but either the normal course of the disease or the medicine which was taken additionally. However, especially the village people who believe that disease is caused by evil spirits, believe firmly that Jesus has cured them, if they recover after a prayer was performed. They then desire to become Christians, because the power of Jesus over the evil spirit has been proved.

Secondly, the emphasis in the sermons lies on the spiritual decision of the individual to accept Christ as one's personal saviour, and elaborates on the sinfulness of oneself which can be overcome only through Jesus Christ.[332] The preacher promises salvation to those who accept Christ as their personal saviour. This salvation can be fully enjoyed only after death, in heaven. Prosperity and health is a sign of blessing from God, but if these are taken away, one should accept it as fate, because there will be manifold reward in heaven.

Members of the audience are normally willing to follow the call to accept Jesus Christ as their personal saviour. Depending on their religious and social background, they take the decision either as a reconfirmation or as the acceptance of the stronger god.[333]

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332. The attraction caused by this emphasis on one's own sinfulness and incapability to regain a status of complete sinlessness, may indicate that the concept of an original sin has been accepted. However, considering the *jati*-consciousness, it may also be that sin, committed by a relative, is believed to have an effect on the whole *jati*. Consequently, the desire for redemption from sin, which has not been caused by oneself but affects one's life, may also be a reason for the attractiveness of this message.

333. If they belong to a church, this decision does not cause any changes with regard to religious practices. If they had been Hindus, then they will turn to their homes and pray to Jesus instead of the god which they worshipped before. If, in another incidence, the prayer to Jesus fails, they will turn to the Hindu priest and ask him for help, because the Christian pastor is often not available in the villages. *Cf.* also page 135

CHAPTER 4

SOCIAL INFLUENCES

In this chapter, some social issues which are relevant for the day-to-day life in India are explained. Especially patterns of social behaviour which base on Hindu scriptures are taken into account and their influence on the Christianity in Andhra Pradesh is described.

The major part of this chapter is occupied by the caste system, which determines the Indian society till today, followed by a presentation of the social position of women and the discrepancy between poverty and wealth.

4.1 The Caste System

The caste system is the basis for the social structure prevailing in India today. It has a long history, having developed into a direction which was most probably not intended. The worst outcome of the caste system is the so called untouchability, which was strongly opposed by M.K. Gandhi and many other great reformers, but is practised even today.[334]

It is important not to substitute the term "caste" with the term "class", since "classes are more exclusively economic groups", which are "not constituted or supported by any specific legal or religious rules".[335] Castes are formed on both, ethnic and religious grounds, and the economic classification came only after the development of the caste system.[336]

One impressive feature of the caste system is, that it is capable of adjusting to changing economic and political situations, which is the major reason for its continued existence over more than two thousand years. It provides a degree of security to the individual which could and can not be provided by any other system. This has helped also to promote the caste consciousness over the centuries.[337]

4.1.1 The Caste System in Hinduism

In this section, the caste system is explained in its basic structure with emphasis on those elements which are relevant for this study.

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334. *cf.* Mumtaz Ali Khan, *Social Conditions of the Scheduled Castes*, p.26-28. He states that in spite of improved legislation against any practice of untouchability, "offences are on increase", and "there has been no single instance of collective fine" on the basis of the Protection of Civil Rights Act because of negligence from the government's side.
While the Constitution of India prohibits any kind of discrimination on the basis of caste (article 15), it continues to support such discrimination in form of a precautionary measure, by the provision of reservation of seats in the government bodies as well as job reservations for the so called Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Although the initial intention was to minimize the gap between the Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes and the higher castes, now the number of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes increases and the gap widens. The social and economic security which should have been provided by the reservations in all walks of life has become a support to the casteism in India. See also John Malieckal, *Caste in India Today*, p. 86-87

335. T.B. Bottomore, *Classes in Modern Society*, p. 16 (quoted from J. Desrochers, *Classes in India Today*, p. 7-8

336. It is obvious that many factors led to the development of the caste system, and the economic situation certainly played a role in it. In the very beginning, the caste may have been the simple distinction between only two different groups with different occupation, i.e. the *brahmins* and the *kshatriyas*. However, the major reason for the development of the caste system into as what it appears today, was the segregation of different ethnic groups, i.e. the Aryans and the Dravidians, which was then religiously sanctioned and legally enforced. See J. Maliekal, *Caste in India Today*, p. 8-11

337. J. Maliekal, *ibid.*, p. 11f

<u>4.1.1.1 The *varna*, *jati* and caste</u>

As already mentioned in the introduction, the caste system has its root in the *varna* system which has been first described in the *Rigveda* X, 90, which is the *purusha sukta*.[338] Even though this may be a later interpolation into the *Rigveda*[339], there are other parts of the same scripture where the different *varnas* are mentioned.[340] Thus, it can be assumed that a distinction of different castes was already there in the times of the *Rigveda*.

The separation between the *varnas* was, however, not as strict as it has become later.[341] The *varnas*, as they appear in the *Rigveda*, lack the stringent separatism and elitism, which was existing in India in the recent centuries. Also, there were not so many sub-castes. In fact, only the three higher castes (*brahmins*, *kshatriyas*, *vaishyas*), the *dvija*, referred to the Aryans and described a profession rather than an attribute received by birth. The term *sudra* was used for the non-Aryans, i.e. the *dasas* or *dasyus*, who were treated as slaves.[342]

With the passage of time, these four *varnas*, on the basis of social, ethnic and economic facts, developed into numerous different castes which are called *jati*[343], while others who did not fit into the system, became outcastes.[344] The *jatis* made it possible to denote one's caste already at his or her birth, and there was no more a choice of occupation, as was the case in the early stages.

The number of castes is increasing, as can be seen by the following data: In 1901, 2378 castes (without sub-castes) were counted.[345] In 1955 there were about 2400 castes listed as "backward" by the Backward Classes Commission.[346] One major reason for the splits into more castes is most probably the hypergamy (*anuloma*), in which a family of a higher caste chooses a girl from a lower caste.[347] This will raise the status at least of the family to which

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338. There, the four *varnas*, i.e. *brahmins*, *kshatriyas*, *vaishyas* and *sudras* originated from the mouth, the arms, the thighs and the feet of the *purusha* respectively

339. *cf.* K. Mylius, *Geschichte der Literatur im alten Indien*, p. 44-45

340. in VIII, 35, 16-18 only the three higher *varnas*, and in I, 113,16 all four *varnas*

341. Pandharinath H. Prabhu, *Hindu Social Organization*, p. 285f

342. Other groups which were encountered by the Aryans and which did not find place in the three upper castes are the *Rakshasas*, the *Panis* and the *Asuras.* All of them are said to be unfit to perform sacrifices, and became members of the *sudra* caste. Most probably, they all lived in the Northern half of today's India. As far as it is mentioned in the *Rigveda*, they were either farmers or cattle keepers. *Cf.* Prabhati Mukherjee: *Beyond the Four Varnas*, p. 18-24

343. *Jati* derives from the sanskrit word *jan* which means "to take birth".

344. John Maliekal in his book *Caste in India Today* describes that the reason for the development of so many different castes and sub-castes are the same as those who led to capitalism in the Western countries. While in Europe the development and expansion of social, economic and intellectual activity led to a row of different successive social systems, including class system, in India the development was channelized by the existing caste system which became more and more complex. "India's caste division was thus the form behind which were concealed all the social revolutions made in Europe by the emergence of Slavery, Feudalism and Capitalism." (p. 10) The development of the group of outcastes or untouchables cannot be traced back to it's very origin.

345. according to A.E. Punit, *Social Systems in Rural India*, p. 43; found in John Maliekal, *Caste in India Today*, p. 6

346. John Maliekal, *op. cit.* p. 6, footnote 2; with reference to M.N. Srinivas, *Social Change in Modern India*, p. 113

347. The same family would, however, never give the own daughter to the lower caste

the girl belongs, but not to the level of the higher caste, thus creating a new division or sub-caste.[348]

Today the *jati* is a strongly segregated social unit[349], which does permit intercourse with other *jatis* only to a very limited extent. Intermarriages do generally take place only between *jatis* which are considered to be on the same level. Also any contact between two *jatis* of a different level does take place very rarely and usually only if need is there.

A *jati* generally denotes the profession of a person[350], even before he has studied the skills in the particular profession of his *jati*. A boy born as son of a weaver will become a weaver. A boy born as son of a *dhobi* (washer) will become a *dhobi*, and so on.

A *jati* is nowadays usually called caste, even though this term may not always be appropriate, according to sociological rules.[351] It provides the "identification tag" to the individual, and the sense of solidarity among members of one *jati* is overwhelming.[352]

4.1.1.2 The Joint Family

In India, the smallest common social unit is still the so called joint family. The joint family comprises of all members of three generations, sometimes even four.[353] The joint family shares the property and house. Its members have the right of inheritance and can claim a share on partition. Thus, the joint family ensures the economic security of its members.[354]

However, the joint family is now giving place for the so called "nuclear family", which is the parents together with their children under one roof. This is also how most Christians in Rayalaseema are settled in their life, according to a study of P. Hemalata[355], and can be said

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348. The custom of hypergamy is also the cause for an increase in dowry demands. It is possible that a girl's father can offer a higher dowry to the boy's parents of the higher caste, than members of the higher caste could do. This creates competition, which inevitably raises also the dowry. *Cf.* J.A. Fonseca, *Marriage in India…*, p. 68-69 and 120-121

349. The principals of distinction, according to G.S. Ghurye,

> were: first, territorial or jurisdictional separateness; second, mixed origin; third, occupational distinction; fourth, some peculiarity in the technique of one and the same occupation; fifth, sectarian difference; sixth,dissimilarity of customs; and last, adventitious circumstances, suggesting certain nicknames. (*Caste and Race in India*, p. 34)

350. Today, with the developing of many professions in the electronic and other high technology fields, this statement has to be made with care. At least in the towns, certain different *jatis* will join in the same profession, but still there will be inaccessibility for other *jatis* because of lack of education. In the villages, no major changes have been observed so far, because there is also no change in the range of job opportunities, as it is in the cities.

351. Axel Michaels in his book *Ritual und Gesellschaft in Indien* distinguishes between the <u>caste</u>, the <u>sub-caste</u> (*jati*), the <u>clan</u> (*kula*), the *Familienverbund* (which is a patrilinear compound structure of a family up to its third generation, including relatives who live with this family) and the <u>joint family</u>, which will be described in section 4.1.1.2 on page 98. See also Gabriele Dietrich, *Culture, Religion and Development*, p. 341. According to G.S. Ghurye, the term caste is the English expression for the Indian *jati*, and he does not accept the opinion that *jati* would denote only subdivisions of the four *varnas* (*Caste and Race in India*, p. 56). There is no uniformity in the use of these terms in the respective literature.

352. J.A. Fonseca, *Marriage in India…*, p. 70

353. Pandharinath H. Prabhu, *Hindu Social Organization*, p. 217f

354. Axel Michaels, *Ritual und Gesellschaft in Indien*, p. 46

355. P. Hemalata, *Family, Kinship and Cultural Plurality among the Christians in Rayalaseema, Andhra Pradesh*, p. 162

for the other parts of Andhra Pradesh as well. However, even though only a nuclear family is generally found in one household, it has been observed that the relation of the joint family does not fade away. Still the responsibility of the son for his parents is most important and prevailing in most families, and parents will take care of their children, even if they themselves have established their own household. If the newly wed couple establishes a new, independent household, it will normally be geographically close to the households of the relatives. In addition, if the parents are unable to take care of themselves, they usually will be taken care of by one of the families of the children. Decisions relating to social issues of importance for the joint family are often taken by the eldest male member of the joint family, even if it is split into nuclear families.

<u>4.1.1.3 The Malas and Madigas in Andhra Pradesh</u>

In both, the Mala and the Madiga communities, the decisions are taken by a council of elders and are binding for the members of the communities. Offences are discussed by the whole community and then the judging decision is taken by the council of the elders (*panchayat*). It is important to note that the decision taken by the council is binding for all members of the community, and not only selected members.[356] Religiously, many Malas have a Vaishnava background, mixed with the worship of and belief in the village deity. Among the Malas, numerous subdivisions are counted.[357] Noteworthy is the group of so called *dasaris*, who are the priests to the Malas.[358] Usually they have no property but depend on the support of the community which they serve as priests.

4.1.2 The Caste System in the Christianity in Andhra Pradesh

Today, the Roman Catholic Church forms about 25% to 30% of the Christian population in Andhra Pradesh, while the remaining 74% are Protestants of different denominations.[359] Most of them come from the Mala or Madiga caste, which are Scheduled Castes.[360]

The caste system in the Indian Christianity is officially rejected. In Andhra Pradesh, most churches claim that there is no caste distinction, or that caste problems which are still prevailing are dealt with appropriately. They also claim that there are no clashes on account of casteism. However, there are numerous evidences which show that this claim is groundless.[361]

That the caste feeling is still prevailing among the Indian Christians is also reflected in the fact that Hindus, who desire to become Christians and have been trained by a pastor who belongs to a church in which another caste dominates, will choose to join another church in

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356. A collective decision is called *Kattu*. M.B. Diwakar, *An Investigation…*, p. 13

357. J. Aberly in his lecture on the Malas (p. 4) counts 12 different subcastes.

358. On the *dasaris*, see also page 42

359. see also the figure 3.2 on page 89.

360. 96% of the Protestant Christians and 75% of the Roman Catholic Church are from the Mala or Madiga background. According to M.E. Prabhakar, *Caste-Class and Status in Andhra Churches…*, p.17. On the origin of Malas and Madigas, see also the footnote 168 on page 42

361. *cf.* the bibliography which lists a number of articles and books on the caste consciousness among Indian and Andhra Christianity.

which their own caste is dominating.[362] Problems arise when a pastor of lower caste background is installed in a parish where the congregation derives from a higher caste background.[363]

4.1.2.1 The Caste System as Basis for a New Religious Identity

As will be shown later in the section 4.1.2.2, most of the Christian churches in Andhra Pradesh originated from either one or two different castes, which belong to the outcastes whom Gandhi called the *Harijans*. As members of such groups, they were regarded as ritually impure. This was also reflected in the fact that the *dasaris*, who were of the same caste background, were installed by the *brahmins* in order to serve the untouchables. The Hindu temples in which *brahmins* performed the rituals were inaccessible for them. They were not allowed to read the Vedic scriptures.

The uniform caste origin allowed the continuation of the social affiliation which had been existing already before the conversion to Christianity. But now, following a different religion which permitted and actually encouraged them to read the holy scriptures, the social affiliation extended only among the converts and not with the non-Christian members of their caste. On the basis of the new religious identity provided for them by the Christian religion, members of the Christian community, who live together at one place, developed soon some kind of a feeling that they would belong to a new caste or *jati*, which is called "Christianity". The new identity is mainly marked by the religious purity provided to them through Jesus Christ.

The fact that Christianity was the religion of the then rulers may also have added to the feeling of superiority over the Hindu counterparts. The "*jati-consciousness*" continues to exist and provides today the identity to the individual Christian and the required security to all its members.[364] The same solidarity which is found among the non-Christian castes, is also found among the Christian *jatis*. Generally, the decision of the elders[365] forms the basis for the life of the community.

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362. This information was given by a pastor of the SALC who converted Madiga Christians in a village near Puttur, who then joined a neighbouring church which was dominated by Madigas. M.E. Prabhakar reports the same from a pastor who works in East Guntur area. (*Castes in Andhra Churches*, p. 41)

363. G.J. Abraham Wilson, *The History of the Caste Problem …*, p.32. Paul D. Wiebe writes: "The Mennonites assigned a pastor of Harijan background to a newly organized church in the West Godavari area of Andhra Pradesh. It didn't work. The majority of the members in the new church were of the Reddi agricultural caste and would not accept the new pastor's leadership." in: *Christians in Andhra Pradesh*, p. 124. In the SALC, Madigas near Rapur formed their own congregation with their own evangelist because they were not allowed by the Mala majority to take responsible posts within the parish administration. Other incidents have been reported during the field work, in which families, after being baptized, moved to another village where Christians of the same caste origin live. See also C.P. Thangaraj, *Wither Indian Christianity*, p. 25, and M.E. Prabhakar, *Caste in Andhra Churches*, mainly p. 34-46

364. It has to be noted that the church or denomination should not be simply equalized with the *jati*. Even within one denomination, various *jatis*, subcastes of the major caste, exist and segregate from each other.

365. Elders, in the Christian community, are those members who have served the church actively for a long period (at least ten years, but a higher respect gains the one who has been "in active service" for more then twenty years), either employed by the church or as a voluntary and unpaid worker. However, the pastors and priests have generally a higher influence and gain more respect than the non-ordained workers, because of their religious authorization.