

JOURNAL OF THE  
COLOMBO THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Volume IX

2013

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**CTS Publishing**

Colombo Theological Seminary  
Sri Lanka

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First published by Colombo Theological Seminary  
189 Dutugemunu Street, Kohuwela, Sri Lanka

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Printed in Sri Lanka.

ISBN -978-955-8238-64-6

## CONTENTS

<b>Contributors</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>Editorial</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>Mission Mechanisms: God's, Paul's, and Ours</b> <i>A Historical Sketch of Missionary Methods</i> <i>Alex G Smith</i>	<b>1</b>
<b>A Study of the Importance of Disability Theology in a Sri Lankan Church Context</b> <i>Arulampalam Stephen</i>	<b>45</b>
<b>Two Legitimate Models of Ministry among the Poor</b> <i>Ajith Fernando</i>	<b>61</b>
<b>Psalm 101: Leading with Character in Ancient Israel</b> <i>Ivor Poobalan</i>	<b>67</b>
<b>'Refresh My Heart in Christ': Philemon as a Case Study in Reconciliation for the Sri Lankan Church</b> <i>Mano Emmanuel</i>	<b>93</b>
<b>The Life and Times of Christian David</b> <i>Napoleon Pathmanathan and G P V Somaratna</i>	<b>127</b>
<b>A Guide to Articles in Volumes 1-8 of the JCTS</b>	<b>231</b>

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## EDITORIAL

We are pleased to announce the launch of volume nine of the *Journal of Colombo Theological Seminary (JCTS)*. We expect this journal to be published by July every year. It is the official journal of the Colombo Theological Seminary (CTS). We invite anyone who agrees with the mission statement of CTS to submit high-quality research papers to make the *JCTS* one of the most prominent journals in theological studies in Sri Lanka.

The vision of CTS is to serve the church in Sri Lanka and the nations by nurturing people, and by providing theological resources in unique and powerful ways. The publication of academic and educationally important material is part of the mission of CTS. We have endeavored to publish the *JCTS* every year in order to encourage evangelical Christian scholars in Sri Lanka and elsewhere to realize that vision.

This year we have six articles for the journal from experienced evangelical “Mission Mechanisms: God’s Paul’s, and Ours – A Historical Sketch of Missionary Methods” by Alex G Smith; “A Study of the Importance of Disability Theology in a Sri Lankan Church Context” by Arulampalam Stephen; “Two Legitimate Models of Ministry among the Poor” by Ajith Fernando; “Psalm 101: Leading with Character in Ancient Israel” by Ivor Poobalan; “Refresh My Heart in Christ” : Philemon as a Case Study in Reconciliation for the Sri Lankan Church” by Mano Emmanuel and “The Life and Times of David” by Napoleon Pathmanathan and G P V Somaratna.

These articles cover differing subjects such as missiology, practical theology, Old Testament theology, New Testament and Sri Lankan Church History. The authors come from various theological backgrounds, but they hold the faith in Christ as the centre of their scholarship.

The manuscripts submitted to us are read by the journal's editors to be of limited interest, or which are considered inappropriate would not be accepted.

We gratefully acknowledge the contribution of the authors to this journal, and the support that we have received from our colleagues on the editorial work in order to continue the publication of this journal. The contributors have made a substantial investment in the preparation of the articles in this volume. Therefore, they would be happy that the articles are well received by those who read them.

May these articles sharpen your minds and rouse your hearts. Let us run the race set before us with our eyes fixed on Jesus.

**G P V Somaratna**

July 2013





**MISSION MECHANISMS:  
GOD’S, PAUL’S, AND OURS**  
*A HISTORICAL SKETCH OF MISSIONARY METHODS*

ALEX G SMITH

**INTRODUCTION**

Over the centuries various tactics and diverse strategies were practiced in Christian missions to reach the variegated peoples and tribes across the multi-cultured globe. In this paper I take a bird’s eye view over the sweeping terrain of intercultural encounter, rather than a worm’s eye analysis of mission methods. A wide angled perspective helps see the major tactics, rather than the microscopic in-depth one that details innards.

What means, methods, modes and mechanisms were best applied in world evangelization for bringing the nations into the Kingdom of God – God’s, Paul’s or ours? Throughout all Scripture God’s ways certainly focused on His mighty power, miraculous wonders, sovereign control and righteous character. He was and is supreme Sovereign Lord over His universe. God is the divine initiator. It is His mission, His harvest, His church and His workers in the field.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Matt.9: 38; 16:18.

Paul was well trained in Jewish Law under Gamaliel. He had a dramatic conversion experience in which he personally heard the voice of the Lord and was divinely commissioned to disciple the Gentiles in particular.<sup>2</sup> Yet he seemed to be wholly dependent on God for direction through prayer, visions and the voice of the Holy Spirit.<sup>3</sup> Modern day servants of mission at least give credence to the same process, but a growing tendency is to rely more on human resourcefulness. Allen notes we sometimes tend to measure success by statistics.<sup>4</sup> We frequently use worldly tactics and utilize popular institutional means to accomplish God's purpose. If and as we truly depend on the Holy Spirit in our humble application of these tools, God can use such modes.

### Early Church Period

While the seeds of God's mission were clearly in the Old Testament and Israel was to be a Light to the Nations,<sup>5</sup> mostly that function was attraction,<sup>6</sup> more passive than active. Following the prophet Malachi came four hundred silent years. Suddenly John the Baptist broke out upon the scene in Palestine, proclaiming the Messiah, preparing for a new epoch of faith.<sup>7</sup>

Then Jesus Christ chose and apprenticed twelve Jewish disciples for his worldwide mission.<sup>8</sup> He commanded them to

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<sup>2</sup> Acts 9:1-20; 26: 9-20.

<sup>3</sup> Acts 13:2-4; 16:6, 9-10.

<sup>4</sup> Roland Allen, *Missionary Principles* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964), 85-86.

<sup>5</sup> Isa. 42:6, Matt.5:14-16, John 17:3, Phil.2: 15f.

<sup>6</sup> William Owen Carver, *Missions in the Plan of the Ages* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1951), 186.

<sup>7</sup> John 1:19-35.

<sup>8</sup> Mark 3:13-19; Matt.4:18-22.

focus on the Jews,<sup>9</sup> though He himself also dealt with outsiders like the half breed Samaritans, the Roman Centurion, the Syro-phoenician woman, and the Greeks seeking Him before His crucifixion.<sup>10</sup> This pre-Pentecost period was preparation for fulfilling His wider vision for the whole world. He announced His Great Commission to the disciples,<sup>11</sup> launching them into mission to the ends of the earth.

With the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on that post resurrection Pentecost, the Church was born and dispatched on its worldwide mission.<sup>12</sup> God's initial method for that mission was simple yet unique. He required all Jewish males from all nations to be there at the Feast of Weeks. Thus men from some sixteen major regions of the known world were represented at that Pentecost, speaking fifteen or more languages.<sup>13</sup> These Jews and proselytes returned home across the globe to share the good news with their relatives, friends and communities.<sup>14</sup> God's first and best method is virile human witness. Roland Allen points out this "spontaneous activity of individuals" which caused the rapid expansion of the church.<sup>15</sup>

For quite some time the Church remained in Jerusalem and Judea, until in God's sovereignty a great persecution arose after Stephen was martyred. This caused the laity of the

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<sup>9</sup> Matt 10:5-8.

<sup>10</sup> John 4:9; Luke 7:2; Mark 7:26; John 12:20.

<sup>11</sup> Matt. 28:18-20.

<sup>12</sup> Acts 1; 2.

<sup>13</sup> Acts1:7-11.

<sup>14</sup> Donald McGavran, *The Bridges of God* (New York: Friendship Press, 1981), 24.

<sup>15</sup> Roland Allen, *The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1967, 143.

church to be scattered abroad.<sup>16</sup> Wherever they went they witnessed to Christ and started churches.<sup>17</sup> Some from Cyprus and Cyrene (Libya) came to Antioch and proclaimed the Gospel to Greek Gentiles, and “the hand of the Lord” moved “a large number who believed and turned to the Lord.”<sup>18</sup> Barnabas, sent from Jerusalem to investigate, went and found Paul and brought him to Antioch. From there the Holy Spirit sent them out as a team to Asia Minor, where God used them to start new congregations of believers throughout Asia Minor.<sup>19</sup>

### **Paul’s Mission Methodology**

Paul carefully maintained an apostolic role in his ministry. His purpose was to equip the saints to do the work of ministry in building up the whole body of Christ.<sup>20</sup> The pattern of the Apostle Paul was to go to the synagogue first.<sup>21</sup> Two reasons were: first, the priority to bring the Jews to Christ,<sup>22</sup> and second, to make contact with the Gentile proselytes<sup>23</sup> and believing God-fearers<sup>24</sup> who joined themselves to the synagogues. These Gentile proselytes and devout God fearers were potential bridges to their Gentile relatives, friends and societies.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Acts 7:56-8:1.

<sup>17</sup> Acts 9:31, 11:19.

<sup>18</sup> Acts 11:20-21.

<sup>19</sup> Acts 13:1-5.

<sup>20</sup> Eph 4:11-12.

<sup>21</sup> Acts 9:20; 13:5, 43-46; 17:17.

<sup>22</sup> Rom.1:16; 2:9-10; Acts 3:26.

<sup>23</sup> Acts 2:10, 6:5, 13:43

<sup>24</sup> Acts 10:2, 22, 35; 13:16, 26; 17:4, 17.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. McGavran, *Bridges*, 32.

Paul took an itinerate approach to evangelization, going from key trading centers to the next major center.<sup>26</sup> In these he found mixed multi-cultural communities where the gospel could be seeded to take root. Paul relied on oral preaching of Christ and His resurrection along with personal interaction with individuals, families and groups.<sup>27</sup>

Another indispensable method of mission is prayer.<sup>28</sup> Paul prayed and relied heavily on the leading of the Holy Spirit, including through the Macedonian vision. He also held prayerful discussion with his team in the decision process.<sup>29</sup> In this case his “man” turned out to be a woman at a prayer gathering. Lydia believed and her household was baptized. Next the Philippian jailor and his whole family followed in baptism. This was another method of Paul, namely baptizing households and starting house churches built around families.<sup>30</sup> He then committed the fledgling fellowships to the Holy Spirit,<sup>31</sup> and with prayer and fasting “commended them to the Lord.”<sup>32</sup> Mission is the outreach of Christ’s love and sacrifice. Therefore, methods must always be honorable, considerate of others, truly loving, and gracious with sensitive compassion for all.<sup>33</sup> Paul’s method included staying at strategic centers of response sometimes for a year or two,

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<sup>26</sup> Robert Hall Glover, *The Progress of World-wide Missions* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1939), 36.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.* 35-37.

<sup>28</sup> Arthur Judson Brown, *The Foreign Missionary Yesterday and Today* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1950), 185.

<sup>29</sup> Acts 16:9, 10.

<sup>30</sup> Acts 16:14-15, 31-34; 18:8; 20:20; Col. 4:15.

<sup>31</sup> Roland Allen, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul’s or Ours?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1962), vii

<sup>32</sup> Acts 14:23,

<sup>33</sup> Brown, 290.

such as Corinth and Ephesus.<sup>34</sup> Elsewhere intense persecution threatened his life forcing him to move on.

Paul maintained connections, communication and counsel with the churches through personal visits and sending pastors, teachers and workers to instruct them. He also wrote letters and epistles to encourage and correct them.<sup>35</sup> As “the crowning missionary method”<sup>36</sup> he trained pastors, leaders and converts. From those within these local congregations<sup>37</sup> Paul appointed and ordained elders.<sup>38</sup> One fresh mode of operation occurred when the Jews rejected him, but the Gentiles were open to his redemptive words. He left the synagogue and made a deliberate choice to go to the Gentiles, because they were more receptive to the Gospel.<sup>39</sup> At Athens Paul affirmed the vision of God who made the nations from one man and set boundaries and times for each people.<sup>40</sup> None were beyond the scope of His salvific mission in Christ. His methods were flexible and the opportunities universal. Paul recognized that all humans of all tribes were created in the image of God, legitimately the offspring of God.

Thus through the missionary methods employed in the early church, the followers of Christ multiplied, crossing cultural, linguistic and ethnic barriers until the Roman Empire, from Caesar’s household to families of the lowliest slaves, was turned upside down.<sup>41</sup> The church persisted and was sustained for all time. Thus in the second and third centuries the church

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<sup>34</sup> Carver, 178; Glover, 36.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid. Carver, 196.

<sup>36</sup> Glover, 37; 2 Tim. 2:2.

<sup>37</sup> Allen, *Missionary Methods*, 154.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 84f, 100; Acts 14:23, Titus 1:5f.

<sup>39</sup> Acts 13:42-49.

<sup>40</sup> Acts 17:16-28.

<sup>41</sup> Acts 17:6.

was firmly established. By the fourth century, particularly following the conversion of Emperor Constantine, it had become popular, legitimized, formalized, and institutionalized.<sup>42</sup>

### **Mission under the Newly Established Church**

While the lethargic church at large failed to cross barriers to reach the next peoples needing evangelization, God still affirmed ways for witness to those Barbarians. One surprising method was the banishment of aberrant believers. One early heretic was Arius of Alexandria (256-336). He and his followers were censured and expelled from the empire in 321 at the Council of Nicea.<sup>43</sup> They went northward and shared the Gospel with the Goths and other Barbarians. In time the great majority of Goths became Arian Christians.<sup>44</sup> The influence of Arianism also spread across North Africa, Spain and much of Italy.<sup>45</sup> Consequently, when the Barbarians sacked Rome they respectfully spared many of the churches. The Gothic movement spread through families, tribes, and people groups. Family and group movements formed the historic method of conversion and church extension.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Edwin Munsell Bliss, *The Missionary Enterprise: A Concise History of its Objects, Methods and Extension* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1908), 21-22.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid. 22-23.

<sup>44</sup> Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christianity* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1953), 100; Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity: Vol.1 The First Five Centuries* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1970), 212-215. Audius, another expelled heretic, similarly won Goths)

<sup>45</sup> Ibid. Latourette, *A History of Christianity*, 331.

Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1964), 38.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid. Neill 31-77; Latourette, *A History of Christianity*, 100-101; J. Waskom Pickett, *Christian Mass Movements in India* (Lucknow:

Another heretic was Pelagius (360-420), condemned in 431 by the Council of Ephesus. He with others was instrumental in reaching the Gallic peoples in the early fifth century.<sup>47</sup> In time the Celtic peoples of Gaul, Galatia and Britain were converted family by family, clan by clan, village by village.

One other cultic pseudo-Christian group in Persia was the Manichaens, originally founded by Mani (216-276). They went eastward along the Silk Road to China.<sup>48</sup> The impact of their teaching, witness and art is visible along that route and in West China still today. Though no major movement of evangelization occurred, they were part of this method of Christian influence. Earlier Persian missions from the first century along the Silk Road occurred. Then the more successful Nestorians began to extend the Gospel into central Asia and China. By the early seventh century the Nestorians were well established even in China's capital.<sup>49</sup> Some consider them to be heretical, though modern scholarship affirms they were amazingly orthodox in many doctrines, including the virgin birth. "The Nestorian heresy, like the Arian, still left Christ the central and solitary figure."<sup>50</sup> While the Nestorians adapted contextually to Buddhist styles, they maintained many fundamental biblical truths.

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Lucknow Publishing House, 1933),37f; Donald A. McGavran , *Understanding Church Growth* (Grand Rapids, MI: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.,1970),173f, 296f.

<sup>47</sup> Latourette, Vol. 1, 209, 350.

<sup>48</sup> Gillman, Ian and Hans-Joachim Klimkeit, *Christians in Asia before 1500* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.1999), 18-19, 208.

<sup>49</sup> Neill, 65.

<sup>50</sup> Speer, Robert E., *The Finality of Jesus Christ*. (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1933), 136.



**Methods and Means for the Darkening Ages: 400-800**

Significantly in 410 mistreated but unconquered by the Empire and largely neglected by the Roman church, the Barbarian Goths, Visigoths and Vandals plundered decadent Rome.<sup>51</sup> As time proceeded the dire persecution of the early church period gave way to a more peaceful acceptance among the populous, especially following Constantine's edict. Methodology began to change by mixing politics with the spiritual. Under popularized Christianity, mission methods began to run parallel to imperial military conquests. Papal politics and policies became intertwined with civil structures. As Rome conquered people after people so the church Christianized them.

Monasteries became major strategic centers for preserving light in the Dark Ages that soon arose. Monasteries were the heartbeat of Christianity throughout the declension of the Roman church. They preserved the Scriptures, maintained church functions, trained monks for mission, and generally acted as salt to the community. They were basically self-supporting, though gifts from the surrounding communities were not rejected. The monks cultivated the ground, grew their own food, served local communities and conducted missions beyond their boundaries. From about one thousand centers, monastic Irish *Perigrini* and Benedictines expanded mission to many tribes across Britain and continental Europe.<sup>52</sup> Two significant missionary monasteries at Iona and Lindisfarne, off the coasts of Scotland and England respectively, were beacons of light, faithfully sending forth the Gospel.<sup>53</sup> Effective missionaries arose from various

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<sup>51</sup> Latourette, *A History of Christianity*, 95.

<sup>52</sup> K. S. Latourette, *A History of The Expansion of Christianity Vol. 2 The Thousand Years of Uncertainty*. (Grand Rapids MI.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1970), 36-78.

<sup>53</sup> Bliss, 26.

monasteries, advocating the Christian faith and spreading it widely.

In the meantime Muslim invasions and tribal attacks threatened the church. The political mix of church and state brought confusion, often beclouding biblical truth. In 732, Frankish ruler Charles Martel halted the advance of the Muslims at Tours, holding them at the Pyrenees.<sup>54</sup> His son Charlemagne, sole notable ruler of the Franks from 771 till his death in 814, was a great leader and Emperor of the revived Roman Empire. He initiated the Carolingian Renaissance under Alciun and others.<sup>55</sup> During his long reign the Saxons and Lombards were conquered by the sword and initial outreach to the Vikings begun.<sup>56</sup> Here methods of force and warfare were tempered with prayer and religious rites. Of necessity Christian force met Muslim invasion, stemming their seemingly unstoppable advance. Similarly attacks from Saxons and others were forcibly repelled. Charlemagne was one of the mightiest warrior statesmen of all time.

Throughout the Western and Eastern Roman Empires the early church fathers encouraged increased emphases on buildings for churches, cathedrals and schools, such as the vast intricate cave complexes in Cappadocia. Often for safety and protection, monasteries were constructed like fortresses and castles. Christianity became increasingly institutionalized through various methods of consolidation. Sadly at times, cutting edge outreach in missions became less prioritized. Obsession to reconvert Arian Goths to orthodoxy ignored outreaches to other animists.<sup>57</sup> One key lesson on missionary

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<sup>54</sup> Neill, 63.

<sup>55</sup> Latourette, Vol.2, 100, 388.

<sup>56</sup> Neill, 78-80.

<sup>57</sup> Bliss, 23; Latourette, *A History of Christianity*, 331.

methods is to be careful not to stop evangelism in order to consolidate. Otherwise, it becomes difficult to restart mission and to re-stimulate evangelism. Keep doing both together. Discipleship is an important method, but should supplement, not supplant witness and evangelization of peoples still outside the gospel. Both should proceed simultaneously.

Strategically, mission centers arose in Rome and Alexandria (Carthage) in the West and in Constantinople, Antioch, Edessa, and Persia in the East.<sup>58</sup> Generally the European church knows less about the exciting history of the eastward mission movement of the Byzantine Church, than their own.<sup>59</sup>

### **Mission Means in the Viking and Muslim Era (800-1400)**

The Vikings were brave sailors and fierce warriors, reaching far afield with their swift long boats on wild raids of plunder for treasure, especially silver and gold. Again the lethargic confused churches in the Dark Ages tended to ignore their mission duty to nations beyond their Christianized border. So God brought the Norse and Muslims into their church and evangelized regions. In the midst of this devastating impact on the church, God granted these raiding hordes contact with the gospel. If the church fails to go to the unchurched, God often brings the unreached to areas of Christian influence, like is happening with refugees and the diaspora to-day.

The agents God used to reach the Norse included Christian women taken captive, and dedicated monks kidnapped in Viking raids. Transported back to Scandinavia these believers were forced into marriage and servitude to their captors, respectively. Like the little Jewish captive girl in Naaman's household, maintaining their faith and being witnesses

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<sup>58</sup> Gillman, 22.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 1-5.

eventually brought about the conversion of their Viking captors, chieftains, clans, and whole communities. Thus God's method in that time was similar to Joseph in Egypt. Captivity and slavery became the avenues through which godly character produced a harvest for His kingdom. Vikings and Muslims destroyed churches, devastated monasteries and killed monks and laymen alike. They pillaged rich churches and devastated missionary centers like Iona and Lindisfarne time after time.<sup>60</sup> Like the invading Saracens, marauding Vikings penetrated further afield, setting up colonies and establishing residences as far away as Iceland, Russia and North America.

Wherever Muslim hordes invaded they conquered and converted by the sword. However, copying their religious-military-political methodology became the bane of Christians. Where the church reverted to using military force as the primary method for extending her influence, it usually failed. It failed against the Muslims in the Crusades. It failed during the European Colonial Era in Asia, Africa and South America. It failed later under the Papal missions of Spain and Portugal. And it failed when briefly some Reformers attempted to use the sword to convert whole towns in Europe.

### **Methodology Changes in the Reformation: 1500-1800**

Few doubt the necessity of the Reformation in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, though some methods were questionable. The Reformers were largely dealing with a nominal, formalized, almost universally accepted Christianized state church throughout Europe. This degraded, mixed pseudo-Christianity demanded a new and personal commitment to Christ, essential to spiritual salvation and vitality. That message for that time among that kind of audience was warranted and correct.

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<sup>60</sup> Latourette Vol.2, 108.

However, doing away with the missionary structure of the Roman Church through rejecting its monasteries was primarily a serious weakness of the Reformers.<sup>61</sup> Ignoring and eliminating the monastic system produced a methodological flaw that neglected the church's mission to the nations for centuries, except by continuing Catholic endeavors. For almost three hundred years the Reformation conducted no significant mission to foreign unreached masses.<sup>62</sup> This was exacerbated by the Catholic Counter Reformation, which absorbed so much of the Reformers' energy, resources and attention.<sup>63</sup>

A primary exception was Count Zinzendorf whose missionary vision stimulated the Moravian movement to reach many nations. Though often simple, Moravian methods were commendable. They sent their members often with their families to serve those void of Christ's message. In some situations the Moravian emissaries of the gospel even sold themselves into slavery in order to reach those under tyrannical control. These servants of Christ adopted the local culture and conditions, lived among the people, learned their language, and identified with and served the indigent communities, whether slaves or free. They evangelized mostly individuals and usually started small churches in dozens of nations. This remarkable effort set the model for future missions to follow, influencing William Carey, Hudson Taylor and others. But during early Reformation centuries the Moravian mission was a notable exception.

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<sup>61</sup>Ralph Winter, "The Two Structures of God's Redemptive Mission" in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*, (Pasadena CA: William Carey Library, 1999), 226f.

<sup>62</sup> Paul Pierson, "A History of Transformation" in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*, (Pasadena CA: William Carey Library, 1999), 263.

<sup>63</sup> Neill, 220.

In the early nineteenth century when the Reformers restarted mission to the nations, one obvious change of methodology became detrimental to historic mission approaches. Following their pattern of calling for individual salvation and individual holiness among nominal church members, the Reformers carried that individual model over into pioneer missions to unevangelized nations, peoples, tongues and tribes.<sup>64</sup> This caused significant problems for fresh individual converts. They stuck out like sore thumbs before their unbelieving families, relatives, associates and broader communities. This was a change from previous pioneer patterns of converting and baptizing whole families, extended families, tribes and groups, observed both in Scripture and in prior church history. The new method gathered in individual converts, one by one. Bliss noted that methods of early Christian mission “has been individual rather than general, personal rather than national”<sup>65</sup> This major strategy of evangelism produced a disjointed, gathered church of unconnected individuals, which outsider unbelievers viewed as “foreign” misfits. Nevertheless, God often wonderfully overruled Reformer’s flawed methods by ushering whole tribes and family-friendship groups into His kingdom, despite the missionaries’ intent. People movements arose among many animistic tribes, including Mizo, Naga, Karen, Toba Batak, Karo Batak and others.

Meanwhile the eleventh century continuing Roman Catholic missionary movement sent forth grand missionaries such as Francis of Assisi (1181-1226) who rejected the Crusade approach to Muslims in favor of love, Raymond Lull (1235-1315) who went to the Muslims of North Africa, John

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<sup>64</sup> R. Pierce Beaver, “The History of Mission Strategy” in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*, (Pasadena CA: William Carey Library Beaver 1999, 244), 249.

<sup>65</sup> Bliss, 206.

Montcorvina (1246-1329) who served among Buddhist Mongols in China, and later Francis Xavier to the Orient, particularly Japan. Xavier became the Father of Modern Catholic Missions. These Catholic missionaries often practiced missional patterns that frequently were quite contextual though often politically involved.

The Catholic inquisitions of the thirteenth and later centuries ushered in periods of negative chaos, diverting the church from its primary mission responsibility. The horrid methods of purifying and cleansing it of heretics as defined by the Papacy were contra mission. Later militant methodology used by Spain and Portugal to Christianize nations was also miserably inadequate. Motivated by God, gold and glory they endorsed, in the name of the church, gory warrior atrocities of the Conquistadores against Mayan, Aztec and Inca peoples.<sup>66</sup> Nevertheless, these conquests by force did produce a pseudo belief akin to Christianity for generations, ushering in an era of nominal, largely untaught, members throughout Latin America. As the Roman Catholic system reinforced human works as the basis of faith the coerced converts transferred their idolatrous practices into syncretized Christian worship.

### **Modern Mission Era 1800-present**

Slowly Protestant missions emerged from the Reformation. In 1792 William Carey, a British Baptist, became the Father of Modern Protestant Missions. Influenced by the diaries of famous navigator Captain James Cook and impacted by the period of colonial exploration, Carey went to the Bengali area of India. Against great odds and through much personal pain the Serampore Trio (Carey, Ward and Marsh) established a

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<sup>66</sup> K. S. Latourette, *A History of The Expansion of Christianity Vol. 7 Advance Through Storm*. (Grand Rapids MI.: Zondervan Publishing House 1970), 442).

church. Carey's first priority was proclaiming Christ and His saving Gospel. In 1809 near Lal Bazaar, Calcutta they built their first church. It survives today and still functions fully. The building is much the same as when constructed. This spiritual lighthouse stood near a street where prostitutes plied their fleshly trade.

Carey was also deeply concerned to improve the economic, health and living conditions of his adopted land. Robert Speer wrote, "The missionary methods which he advocates include agriculture, the introduction of good cattle, and promotion of the conscious interests of the people. The project which he set about accomplishing at once upon his arrival in India was a mission which would maintain itself upon and for the industrial life of the community. He engaged in the manufacture of indigo. He made the best type of paper in India. He devised new methods of paper-manufacture. He introduced the first steam engine erected in India. He began the first Indian newspaper."<sup>67</sup> Among many other improvements Carey set up experimental gardens and obtained for India the best seeds and roots from England. In Carey's 1792 landmark *Enquiry* he argued, "Would not the spread of the gospel be the most effectual means of their civilization? Would that not make them useful members of society?"<sup>68</sup>

In 1812 Adoniram Judson was among the first American missionaries to head off to fields abroad. During the voyage, Scripture led him to a new conviction on baptism. Arriving in India he requested Carey to baptize him. Because the British

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<sup>67</sup> Speer, *Finality of Christ*, 149-150.

<sup>68</sup> William Carey, *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens*, (Dallas TX: Criswell Publications, 198), 54.



American War was in force, Judson and his wife Ann Hasseltine were forced to locate in Burma, where they faced incredible odds under most difficult conditions, including imprisonment.<sup>69</sup> Yet these early pioneers, along with their many fellows, persevered through their dependence on God in unbelievably trying circumstances to see the people reached and the church initiated. Those who went to West Africa expected to survive only two years. They packed their goods in coffins and were prepared to die there. What incredible dedication. Some might say this was a method of foolish folly. Nevertheless, from the sacrificial lives and deaths of these pioneer apostles of the cross sprouted sustainable, indigenous churches.

The Colonial Period accompanied the era of exploration with the Christian West occupying land after land like pawns of a chess board. Missions followed under the protection and sometime opposition of the ruling colonial powers. The mission method mentality arose declaring that to civilize meant to Christianize. Mabie affirmed “The legitimacy of foreign missions as the profoundest agency in the ongoing civilization of the world, is beyond question.”<sup>70</sup> Bliss wrote, “The low plane of living made the most ordinary comforts and even necessities of life very rare, and not even among the South Sea Islanders was ‘the gospel of the clean shirt’ more needed. With most, the very conception of orderly, and what to Americans seems decent, living had almost to be created by special instruction.”<sup>71</sup> Thus colonial imperialistic approaches were instigated, albeit with good intention. Contextualization

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<sup>69</sup> Alex G. Smith, *Siamese Gold: A History of Church Growth in Thailand: An Interpretive Analysis 1816-1982*, (Bangkok, Kanok Bannasarn, 1999), 7-8.

<sup>70</sup> Henry C. Mabie, *The Divine Right of Missions*, (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1908), 86.

<sup>71</sup> Bliss, 206-207.

## *MISSION MECHANISMS*

was not then on the horizon of mission. Westernization and civilization were. If the native population were naked, they needed proper clothes; if illiterate they needed good education; if worshipping strange gods they needed conversion; if following odd customs and rites they needed to become civilized, after dominant European patterns, of course. Therefore church buildings, ceremonies and services were modeled after Christianity in the West. No wonder many came to view the church and those who joined it as western and therefore “foreign.”

Thus critics often charged that the missionaries of that era destroyed cultures, decultured peoples, and dominated the power structures. While some of that may be sadly true, even worse culprits of destroying cultures and denigrating native peoples were unprincipled European traders and controlling colonial authorities. They blatantly raped the land, decimated the resources, and enslaved peoples. The movie “The Mission” clearly portrayed this tension of traders against missionaries in South America.

The headquarters of most missions reflected dominating western control, being located in cities like New York or London. In 1865 Hudson Taylor changed that for the China Inland Mission, having CIM’s administrative decisions maintained on the field in China, though still made by Europeans. Today’s Third World Mission Movement should beware lest they return to older patterns of control from their centers such as Seoul, Singapore, Sao Paulo or Nairobi.

### **Method of Early Mission Station Compounds**

Mostly the method of gathering individual, unconnected and usually isolated converts into a fellowship became the dominant method of mission. The Mission Station Approach arose for the safety and survival of the missionaries and their

families, as well as places of refuge for their converts. Mission and church emphases exacerbated this pattern by calling seekers to “Come out from among them, be you separate, and touch not the unclean thing.” On the other hand facing threats and even death, the rejected individual converts found a haven in the mission compounds. The missionaries accepted them, protected them, educated and healed them, and paid them so they could survive.

Employed as hired helpers such as cooks, house keepers, printers, builders, evangelists, teachers, catechists and colporteurs, these scattered usually lone believers also formed the church.<sup>72</sup> While it is easy today to criticize this Mission Station Approach, it may have been the only practical method for those pioneer conditions, where survival was the most urgent order of the day.<sup>73</sup> The problem was that when conditions changed and improved, missionaries did not adapt their methods accordingly. Thus small ingrown churches developed, but generally no significant group movements arose. Later McGavran reacted to the methodological weaknesses of “one by one against the tide,” advocating rather the catalyzing of people movements in different strata of society and among every different ethne.<sup>74</sup>

### **Three-fold Foci for Mission and Evangelism Proposed**

From studying Christ’s Great Commission, Presbyterians and others identified three major emphases for mission. The ministry of Jesus and that of his disciples centered around three main activities: proclaiming, teaching and healing.<sup>75</sup> Interpreting these as mission methods they began churches,

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<sup>72</sup> McGavran, *Bridges of God*, 46-48.

<sup>73</sup> Smith, 35-40.

<sup>74</sup> McGavran, *Bridges of God*, 39f. This was McGavran’s homogeneous unit approach.

<sup>75</sup> Math 4:23; 9:35f; Acts 10:38.

established schools, and built hospitals as equivalent to the biblical mission to evangelize, educate and heal.<sup>76</sup> Subsidiary activities included printing literature and translating the Bible.

In time this threefold approach of preaching, teaching and healing led to a tension of priorities. What method was best? One said “Evangelize first and then educate the Christians as agents of future transformation of the nation.” Another advocated, “Educate non-believers (Buddhists, Muslims, Hindus) so that they might later become Christians and thereby influence their nations for God.”<sup>77</sup> In Thailand and elsewhere in the late nineteenth century this tension began to divide the missionaries. Most were evangelical and solid, but the emphasis on better and more social methods to disciple the nation brought division and confusion. In time the social and educating influence dominated.<sup>78</sup>

Under Daniel McGilvary’s “evangelize first” methods, the church there had grown, from 40 in 1879 to 4,000 in 1911, to 6,934 by 1914, and was expected to keep increasing.<sup>79</sup> But from 1915 something caused the growth rate to drop, and the movement began to plateau through 1940. Unfortunately after McGilvary’s death the education emphasis took priority over evangelistic church work. More schools and hospitals were built. To staff them with qualified teachers, many educated Thai pastors and foreign missionaries working in the churches were reassigned to the schools and colleges. This produced a negative affect on the nurture of new converts and the growth of the Thai churches. The annual average rate of church growth dropped to a mere 0.7 per cent per

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<sup>76</sup> Smith, 36-40.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 94-96.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 166.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 93.

annum,<sup>80</sup> as the lack of nurture caused it to plummet. During the same time, the institutions grew steadily in number, name and fame.<sup>81</sup>

Sadly, my research discerned that this stagnant leveling of membership over the next twenty-five years was not due to a lack of receptivity. In fact the reaping remained strong, just as it had in previous decades. But the lack of nurturing, pastoring and discipling in the churches caused the plateau, as many new families came in through the church's front door, only to leave out the back door. In the early twentieth century a similar lack of care and teaching occurred among many mission situations around the globe.

My specific research on Thailand between 1913 and 1940 identified that 16,132 new converts were baptized into the Thai church, not counting another 8,627 children also baptized. In 1913 the Presbyterians had 6,921 members.<sup>82</sup> At best, had almost 25,000 new baptisms been retained, the church would potentially have reached more than 30,000 members. In 1940 the actual church membership was less than a third of that, only 9,399. Therefore, in spite of 16,132 new adult convert baptisms, the net gain was only about 2,500. Sadly the loss of over 13,000 magnified the fact that 82.7 per cent of adult baptisms were not retained by the church.<sup>83</sup> Eventually the methods of the social gospel took root with their human service values, often without adequately proclaiming saving faith. The emphasis became works not words, deeds not beliefs, and action not faith. Both were needed. Changes in mission methods and values can

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<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 158.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 161.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 158.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 93f; 157-169.

have a devastating impact of the growth of the church. A clear lesson declares that sound discipling and nurture must accompany evangelistic receptivity.

### **Indigenous Church Methods**

Possibly the most significant and valued methods for missions are indigenous church principles. On occasion, from the days of William Carey until today indigenous methods keep rising to the fore. Unfortunately vested interests in western and even majority world agencies, funders, and administrative controllers sometimes keep indigenous methods in the background or on the sidelines, rather than at center stage.

Certainly Carey (1761-1834) had deep respect and a bias towards developing native indigenous work. Despite his western heritage, Carey encouraged local native believers to take charge of the work and multiply their witness widely. He established Serampore College as a means to raise the educational level of aspiring native Christians and to influence Indian Hindus, Muslims and Buddhists towards the Gospel.

Rufus Anderson (1796-1880) of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission also advocated indigenous church principles. So did his British contemporary Henry Venn (1796-1873) of the Anglicans' Church Missionary Society. Thus a fresh method of doing mission arose with the Three Self Emphasis of indigenous churches. This became a major thrust in the late 1800s and early 1900s.<sup>84</sup>

Ideally churches ought to be self-supporting from the beginning.<sup>85</sup> They are also to be self-determining, governing their own church affairs, local outreach and missions. The

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<sup>84</sup> Brown, 33f, 291f.

<sup>85</sup> Allen, *Missionary Methods*, 154-156.

third mark of an indigenous church is to be self-propagating. Alan Tippett taught there is more to the nature and characteristics of truly indigenous churches than these, but the Three Selves are foundational.<sup>86</sup> Tippett emphasized the importance of the church's self image in its community, seeing "itself as *the* Church of Jesus Christ in its own local situation, mediating the work, the mind, the word and the ministry of Christ in its own environment."<sup>87</sup> From early days Karen believers in Burma modeled these three self-indigenous principles.<sup>88</sup> Following this approach normally precludes inherent problems of "rice Christians" that generally plagued the Mission Station Approach.<sup>89</sup>

John Nevius (1829-1893) of the Presbyterian Church USA served in China during the days of Hudson Taylor. Nevius recognized serious weaknesses in mission strategy and methods, particularly related to the Mission Compound Approach. Therefore Nevius advocated that rather than isolate or extract believers from their indigenous locations they should be left in their indigent settings to serve in their local situations. They ought not to be sent off to be disciplined in some distant institution, center or school. He believed, "Christianity should not disturb the social relations of its adherents."<sup>90</sup> Rather the believers should "illustrate the Gospel in the spheres of life in which they were called."<sup>91</sup> Interpreting 1 Corinthians 7:20-24, Nevius suggested they

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<sup>86</sup> Alan R. Tippett, *Verdict Theology in Missionary Theory*, (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1973), 148-163.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 155.

<sup>88</sup> Bliss, 262-263.

<sup>89</sup> Bliss, 291.

<sup>90</sup> John L. Nevius, *The Planting and Development of Missionary Churches*, (Philadelphia: The Reformed and Presbyterian Publishing Company, 1958), 19.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

## *MISSION MECHANISMS*

remain in the callings and professions in which they were occupied when first coming to Christ and be self supporting. If they were farmers then remain as farmers. Also let them manage their own church fellowships as unpaid leaders, deciding and determining what needs to be done. Indigenous believers were the best local witnesses and the key to propagating the Gospel to their families, relatives and friends. In the late 1880s quite a number of mission advocates adopted Nevius's approach in China and Korea, where the Presbyterians invited him to teach these indigenous principles. Significantly, through Three Self methods Korea produced amazing growth, unusual among Buddhist nations. Surprisingly, the Chinese communists also endorsed the Three Self approach.

Nevertheless, some agencies, both in western and majority worlds today, feel threatened because they fear losing tight rein. This challenges the status quo whereby funding control is relinquished or at least disrupted on both raising and distributing funds. Indigenous principles also seem to make institutional training establishments less relevant. Often a token nod of the head is given to indigenous methods, but in reality not much is rescinded by the missionary establishment. This may pose a definite tension between indigenous and western partners today, like it did going into the twentieth century.

Another keen advocate of indigenous principles was British Anglican, Roland Allen (1868-1947) of the Society for the Propagation for the Gospel. He served in China and endorsed the Nevius plan to establish Three Self churches from the beginning. Allen also "wanted the forms of the church to be adapted to local cultural conditions and not be imitations of Western Christianity. To accomplish this, missionaries would have to hand over responsibility to the local leaders in the



community, who would not be professional clergy either in their training or in their compensation.”<sup>92</sup>

### **Post War Effects of Changing Organizational Structures**

Conflicting methods used by different mission agencies and denominations in the same regions, often caused disruption, misunderstanding and sometimes inequalities on fields. An attempt to overcome this was introduced in a system for delegating spheres of influence, called Comity.<sup>93</sup> During colonial times prior to World War II, as gentlemen’s agreements, mission comity carefully divided and distributed regions within countries to different mission organizations for exclusive development. But after the war, as newer mission agencies, independents and particularly diverse Pentecostal denominations came on the scene, comity no longer held validity. Since the newer agencies had no place given to them in comity, they felt free to go anywhere and everywhere they liked. Consequently this caused considerable confusion, but also stirred renewed vision and mission activity.

Towards the latter part of the Colonial Era predominant National Missionary Councils were organized. The International Missionary Council of 1921<sup>94</sup> expressly declared that the “only bodies entitled to determine missionary policy are the missionary societies and boards, or the churches which they represent, and the churches in the mission field.”<sup>95</sup> Thus

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<sup>92</sup> Gerald H. Anderson, *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Mission*, (Grand Rapids Michigan: William B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), 12.

<sup>93</sup> Bliss, 137-138.

<sup>94</sup> Minutes of the International Missionary Council, Lake Mohonk, New York: Oct. 1-6, 1921, 24.

<sup>95</sup> Ruth Rouse and Stephen Charles Neill, *A History of the Ecumenical Movement 1517-1948*, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press 1967), 367.

these National Christian Councils had representation from both the missionary agencies and the major church denominations. But after the end of World War II, new movements to gain independence, especially among the younger churches in many colonial countries, also brought structural changes for the church and mission. In 1948 the World Council of Churches was initiated. Soon after, National Council of Churches replaced these National Christian Councils. Unfortunately, this eliminated missionary societies from expressing any significant voice in influencing mission at national or regional levels. This organizational change affected the future of mission, particularly among conciliar denominations.

### **Rethinking Mission Methods and Strategies Controversy**

By the mid 1930s disgruntled attitudes towards mission increased, particularly following the release of the Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry (1930-1932),<sup>96</sup> which leveled criticism at several areas of mission. This strongly questioned methods.<sup>97</sup> In January, 1933 Robert Speer responded to these criticisms in *"Rethinking Missions" Examined*. Some of the Inquiry's critical influencers held that all religions were equal and arose from human seeking.<sup>98</sup> The Inquiry advocated increased social service, a call to "fulfill the religious life of the Orient,"<sup>99</sup> and a reduced emphasis on the uniqueness of Christ - because all are "brothers in a common quest"<sup>100</sup> with non-Christian religions. The negative criticisms in the Inquiry

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 376; By the Commission of Appraisal, William Earnest Hocking, (Chairman). *Rethinking Missions A Laymen's Inquiry after One Hundred Years*, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1932).

<sup>97</sup> Robert E. Speer, *"Re-thinking Missions" Examine*, (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, Jan 1933).

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 27-35.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 28, (*Layman's Inquiry*, 16.)

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 28, (*Layman's Inquiry*, 31.)

basically called for a change of theology which automatically affected changes in methods of mission. Many liberal missions and some evangelicals implemented these faulty recommendations.

Years later younger churches called for a moratorium on mission, coining the motto “Missionary go home.” This also accompanied a call from western nations for mission workers to come home to help their troubled churches. Many churches in the West experienced declining memberships, reduced resources, and burgeoning social problems in their homelands. This led to further changes in mission methods. The National Churches wanted more control, but when asked if they desired workers or finances, generally their choice was the latter. Had indigenous methods been solidly in place, this would never have been a question. Instead, through this foreign funding many younger churches virtually became “indigenized” front churches for overseas denominational mission and agencies. Consequently, funds were given to the national church councils, many missionaries were withdrawn, and those who remained became fraternal workers under the control of the National Council of Churches or national denominations. This had its value for the existing established churches, but it generally put a deadly dampener on apostolic mission. The church became inward rather than outward focused.

This changed the dynamics and involvement of the church in its mission to the world. National pastors claimed they alone should be the evangelists to their peoples and that fraternal workers should just fit into assigned specific teaching roles. Rouse comments that the new younger churches as “minorities in their respective peoples, were now strong enough to assume much of the burden not only of their own support and direction, but also of the evangelization of their

respective lands.”<sup>101</sup> This was a flawed methodology, especially in nations or peoples who had only a tiny percentage of Christians. It took decades before they accepted significant responsibility for mission. It also denigrated the calling of God on people from all nations, who sensed God’s hand on them to go as evangelists and missionaries to those nations, where still huge blocs of people were largely without the Gospel. In much of the post WWII’s unchurched world there was ample space for both local leaders and overseas missionaries to work together in vast unreaped harvests. The independent mission societies and the non-conciliar churches fared better than did the denominational conciliar churches under these methods.

### **Ethne or People Movements and Other Methods**

At the 1974 Lausanne II Congress on Evangelism, Ralph Winter’s emphasis on six Unreached Blocs as major challenges for mission, and Donald McGavran’s challenge to work towards People Movements to bring in unreached peoples groups, stimulated a new vision and era for mission. Now it was no longer sufficient to see a Christian presence in each political nation only, but also vital to plant the church in every tribe, tongue and people – *panta ta ethne*. This stimulated many new movements using modern methods such as mass media (literature, radio, film), hi-tech Bible translations, literacy projects, and also faith healing campaigns - often through television. It also gave rise to considerable canned methods of evangelism or discipling initiated in the West, and frequently exported therefore, as valid for the whole world. Not all these methods were on the cultural wavelength of the ethne.

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<sup>101</sup> Rouse, 370.

During the mid to late twentieth century a concern for more contextual approaches in mission increased. Strangely this emphasis had roots in the rising nationalistic mission churches and their response “of resentment of non-white peoples at white domination.”<sup>102</sup> Largely, it was “initiated and promoted by missionaries and to that extent was artificial. Some of the nationals opposed adopting indigenous forms of architecture on the grounds that even when modified, these were associated with non-Christian traditions and so would compromise the Christian faith.”<sup>103</sup>

### **The Rise of Majority World Missions and Indigenous Movements**

In recent decades writings proliferated on cultural contextualization like the continuum of the C1-C6 scale, Insider Movements, Jesus Movements and others. These emphases are more indigenously oriented, but not necessarily new. In the past, movements under Prophet Harris in Africa, Ko-Tha-Byu in Burma, and Cargo Cult leaders in the Pacific Islands modeled this kind of insider model. This high expectation desires the Gospel to permeate whole societies, predominately through indigenous agents producing family networks of genuine followers of Jesus who remain identified with their cultures. Then through God’s transforming power and in appropriate cultural ways these indigenous believers will influence their whole society for the Lord, transforming their communities into the kingdom of God on earth. This vision commends an urgent call to prayer from the worldwide church of the twenty-first century. But if these are truly insider movements, then missionaries from all compass points do not have a direct missional role in them. Let the Holy Spirit entirely rule in and through these indigenous initiatives.

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<sup>102</sup> Latourette Vol.7, 49.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

The amazing rise of majority world missions<sup>104</sup> is an exciting phenomenon of the last quarter century. One development from China is the Back to Jerusalem Movement. While this is currently much smaller than the projected 100,000 missionaries, it is nonetheless remarkable. While indigenous, it may lack some expertise in intercultural mission. Like early Korean and Singaporean missions, initial efforts may tend to be ethnocentric in approach. Time and experience will likely remedy that. Its method of mission may be naïve, particularly in avidly following Christ's instructions within a context of sending out the disciples locally to Israel only, not across intercultural situations abroad (E-2 or E-3).<sup>105</sup> Recognizing a need for training in cross-cultural methods might help alleviate many pitfalls here. The Church universal should stand behind this movement in prayer, affirmation and encouragement, but should not overly meddle, force outside methods on it, or control the progress of the mission. Let this mission infant learn to walk on its own at its own pace. Remember that the Goths, Vikings and others did not become mature "Keswick Christians" overnight. It took time for the Holy Spirit to nurture the process through the pain of persecution and patient struggles in their progress towards full spiritual maturity.

Another complexity in mission today is that everybody and anybody is doing intercultural mission, often without any real awareness of what that requires or entails. Unfortunately many independent individual or local church exported programs reproduce western patterns of work frequently void of any sensitivity to the indigenous peoples or conscious

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<sup>104</sup> Earlier called Third World Missions or Two Thirds World Mission

<sup>105</sup> Math 10:1-23; Mark6:7-13; Luke 10:1-12. Instructions for going to local Jews in Palestine, not overseas.

adaptation to their cultures. Some ride on the wave of popular short term missions, either from the West or from majority world churches. Some independent individuals may be totally unconnected from the body of Christ. While such zeal is good, the effects can be quite counterproductive to informed indigenous realities. Some efforts are deeply self promoting and self driven programs. This may partly be a consequence of globalization. Some positive influence from these efforts alleviates humanitarian needs among destitute peoples around the globe. In the process they also stimulate mission vision, personal involvement and genuine compassion in those who participate.

## CONCLUSION

The challenge of mission in the twenty-first century is still to find adequate methods, means and effective strategies to reach the majority Hindus, Muslims, and Buddhists, which includes the Chinese. Unfortunately eighty-six per cent of Buddhists, Muslims and Hindus do not personally know a single Christian.<sup>106</sup> Thus in the Global World today, the tough places of the earth still plead for believers in Jesus to sacrifice their comforts and go live among them. Christ's followers from all nations living dedicated, holy lives in their midst become credible to them, gaining a hearing for the Gospel. At the same time these advocates must be sensitive to the cultural context. Remember again the majority have no close neighbor believers. God's best method is still live human witnesses who exhibit His transforming power.

One means to help accomplish this is the transformation of seminaries, Bible schools and even missionary training

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<sup>106</sup> Todd M. Johnson & Kenneth R. Ross, *Atlas of Global Christianity 1910-2010*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 14-16.

institutions. That need particularly relates to the curriculum, which requires a change of thinking from dominant western models to more intercultural and contextual approaches in methodology, particularly in indigenous communications. A living practical dimension needs to drive the teaching, rather than a knowledge-oriented one. Furthermore these institutions should expand horizons for more decentralization, more lay extension opportunities, and an increased reduction of academia's standards for the laity. Training institutions need requirements that produce greater facility for the mobilization and preparation of multitudes of lay people for mission, including non-traditional models of business professional service across cultures. The Philippines is already progressing along this line, although their training academies still lag far behind in adapting speedily to this need.

The exciting methods and values of the Theological Education by Extension approach of the 1970s were not always accompanied by adjustments to curriculum, adequate to the needs of indigenous churches or suitable for intercultural mission. A revolution of practical training and appropriate courses will remedy that. The constraint of regulations, standards, and outside accrediting associations are mostly based on a western mentality and model. These should become more flexible and dynamic to meet the real needs of mission churches and indigenous missions. A new generation of training methodology and an applicable revised practical curriculum for laity will provide a giant leap forward for future missions to the last frontiers.

Finally, a careful review of the history of methods, strategies and approaches in past generations of missions provides lessons for the future. Hopefully mission today will not repeat the errors of the past, especially among the rising tide of developing majority world missions. Creative approaches need



first to be seriously tested and evaluated before advocating their general adoption. Experimentation is to be encouraged, but not at the expense of ignoring evaluations under the Great Commission. Planting reproducible churches, multiplying congregations and making truly functional members of the church that serve and impact communities constitutes the goal. Methods and strategies must be governed and evaluated by biblical principles and appropriate outcomes if the modern mission movement is to complete the urgent task of evangelizing all unreached peoples in our generation.

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# **A STUDY OF THE IMPORTANCE OF DISABILITY THEOLOGY IN A SRI LANKAN CHURCH CONTEXT**

ARULAMPALAM STEPHEN

## **INTRODUCTION**

Disability issues are historically low on the Church agenda. From biblical times, people with disabilities have been stigmatised and intentionally excluded from participating fully in church practices and worship by restricted access and theological assumptions regarding impairment. The Bible itself has often been used to oppress people with impairments and keep them from fulfilling their God given calling in the church. Yet the fact remains that disabled people continue to be a minority in most church congregations. It is important to develop a theology of disability amongst the congregation. Unless churches take this seriously people with disabilities will never feel fully integrated, included and welcomed in the body of Christ.

The Church must confess its role in the systematic exclusion of people with disabilities in society. The Church must take steps to encourage the active participation of people with disabilities in worship and it must allow positive readings of scripture regarding disability to be heard from church pulpits.

This will educate the congregation and enable people with impairments to connect their lived bodily experiences to their faith. Within disability studies the language used to describe people with disabilities has become particularly important. Pejorative terms such as “the handicapped”, “the crippled” or “the disabled” generalise and often stigmatise large groups of people. Such terms demean the value of the human being and oppress people socially.

### **Sri Lankan Context**

In Sri Lanka 7% of the population has disability due to either the natural disasters or man made disasters.<sup>1</sup> Church of Ceylon created room for disable people to become priests at the diocesan council in 2005.<sup>2</sup>

### **My Personal Experience**

I am Arulampalam Stephen. I was born in Jaffna, Northern part of Sri Lanka, in 1972. When I was nine months old I lost 40% of my sight; now I am almost totally blind (90%). I am aware of this handicap and I have accepted it as I have accepted my own self as I am. Often I have revolted against God and his Providence for making me “incomplete” and asked him WHY? I received no answer, only – at times – a soft murmur, “Let my grace be sufficient.”

From the ages five to ten I attended our village school, which was entirely dominated by the able people. My parents did not like to send me to the school for the other able or differently able people, because they were not ready to accept the plurality of humanity. At the age of ten my family

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<sup>1</sup> Lakitha P. R. Mendis, The Report of the Standing Committee, (Colombo: M.N.T. Peiris, Secretary, Diocese of Colombo), p.320.

<sup>2</sup> Lakitha P. R. Mendis, The Report of the Standing Committee, (Colombo: M.N.T. Peiris, Secretary, Diocese of Colombo), p.321.



managed to send me to study at St. John's College , Jaffna (Anglican) to follow my secondary education. There I had the opportunity to deepen my knowledge and practice of the Christian religion besides the Christian religious practices of my family, mainly Bible reading, prayer and Church going. There also I had the privilege to mingle with people of other denominations as well as other faiths. My School experience opened the gate to think about my self and my identity.

Even though I studied at the normal school, the majority of the students were able people. Therefore from time to time I seriously asked my self; why am I a differently able person? "Who sinned that I am born blind? (John 9:2)" This kind of experience forced me to think more and more about my disable identity. During my advanced level period I was in a helpless and hopeless situation because of the lack of provisions in the education system for the differently able people. I questioned about the existence of God (Psalm 14:1) and also I tried to control the power of God within my academic performance and blamed God for creating me as differently able person.

After finishing my Secondary School A level I spent some years of confusion and uncertainty about my self, the purpose of my life, my future, my family and God's guidance in that chaotic situation. I seriously considered to take my own useless and meaningless life. I felt that my life had no meaning, no purpose, no goal, no direction and no help from my family, my school my church... my God. I felt that my life was shattered. The slow process of restoration and reintegration of my fragmented personality began in 1997.

In that year I went to the Theological College of Lanka to prepare myself for the priesthood in the Anglican Church. Why

did I go to the Seminary? There were some holy and some unholy reasons for it.

1. To begin with, my mother had offered my life to God when I was nine months old, near my death: “if you save my child from death, I will offer him to you.” Hann’s experience of old is not uncommon in Sri Lanka. For many years I lived in the awareness of this vow to God, and in the midst of my years of desperation I reminded myself of it.
2. In those years all other roads to the future were closed to me.
3. I needed to survive in spite of everything and of everybody
4. The Church can be a refuge and haven for me – handicapped as I was – and will receive me in her bosom like a mother.

At the seminary I began the process of restoration and re-integration of my shattered personality.

My spiritual strengthen and my academic formation, as well as my social and communal integration were not separate aspects in my life. They impinged upon each other to build a homogeneous whole person. I was challenged in every aspect of my life and I saw in every challenge an opportunity to grow in depth and in stature. My formation gave me the opportunity to become ecumenical and opened my eyes to see the otherness of other; during my years of academic and spiritual formation I was going through a spiritual crisis where I identified God as calling me to become a Christian in order to introduce the values of Christ to others. During my years of academic and spiritual formation I was going through a spiritual crisis where I identified God as called me to become a

disable person in order to identify my self with the disable people and work for the empowerment of my community and introduce disable Christ to others.

At moments I felt that, like Abraham, I was blessed by God so that I might become a blessing for others (Genesis 12:1-3, Isaiah 49:6). This experience moved me from a selfish individualistic concern for my safety and salvation to a communal expression of my life with others; in other words, from self to church, and in the true experience of the Church to discover my own self again. The History of the Church became my favourite subject of study. There I found that people like Francis of Assisi, Bishop Oscar Romero, Fr. Michael Rodrigo and a great multitude of witnesses also had gone through the experience of becoming a blessing for others. Even when we broke the bread together we remembered the importance of breaking our prejudices and ideologies.

After my ordination to the diaconate on the 25<sup>th</sup> of November 2001 I was sent to Jaffna in Northern part of Sri Lanka as a Chaplin (school for deaf and blind) to work in the midst of War and poverty. After my ordination as a presbyter I continued my ministry in Jaffna. From time to time people came to me with their brokenness; even my family members came to me with their frustrations. Killings, human rights violence and sexual harassment were part and parcel of our day to day life. During that time I understood the meaning of being blind disabled to serve to the sighted saviour; and also to take the pain of my people as my pain (Isaiah 53:1-12). In most cases I could do nothing to help, but I learned to listen to others. I felt that the Spirit of the Lord was also upon me, who had anointed me to preach the good news. I just suffered with the sufferers, and in that solidarity suffering I discovered suffering of God in Christ and in his people, whether Christian or not. I lived poorly among the poor. I learned the importance of

going through the experience of voluntary poverty in order to listen to the voice of the voiceless people.

<sup>1</sup>Now I am back at the Theological College of Lanka, not as a student but as a chaplain and tutor. I am learning much from the students and also from my colleagues in the Faculty. I am in constant dialogue with the students individually and in groups. I listen to them as they pour their unique stories: By understanding their stories I understand my own ability and disability; by encouraging others I encourage myself; my way of teaching is just sharing and learning from each other; by learning from the students I deepen in my own faith and commitment. I not only refresh my thoughts, but also mainly I refresh my own vacation as a disabled person.

### Literature Review

The World Council of Churches (WCC) has produced a theological document regarding disability. The statement, entitled *A Church of All and for All*,<sup>3</sup> is a foundational report, released in 2003, for all denominations exploring disability in their own contexts. It offers pointers and insights on major theological themes. Its aims are to enable churches to interact with disability discourse and to equip the Church to address issues of inclusion, active participation and full involvement of all people in the spiritual and social life of the church.<sup>4</sup> The report addresses theological issues of the *imago Dei*, healing and the image of the disabled Christ. However, most importantly, the document attempts to address and apply disability theology practically in the context of worship; offering some advice on how to be fully inclusive in worship.<sup>5</sup> Finally, the statement offers a vision of the

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<sup>3</sup> Arne Fritzson and Samuel Kabue, *Interpreting Disability: A church of all and for all*, (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2004)

<sup>4</sup>Fritzson, *Interpreting*, p. 65

<sup>5</sup> Fritzson, *Interpreting*, p. 82

Church as a fully inclusive, hospitable place of welcome without discrimination.<sup>6</sup>

Disability theology is a relatively new discipline, stemming from liberation theologies. Although the Sri Lankan Churches are yet to examine this area, there is an ever-expanding body of literature on the subject and practical guides to including people with disabilities in the life of the church. There is far too much literature to review with any depth here but I have chosen a few of the key texts on which my theories are based.

Possibly the most ground breaking book on disability theology is Nancy Eiesland's, *The Disabled God*. Coming from a disability rights perspective, Eiesland develops a powerful image of God in a "sip-puff wheelchair".<sup>7</sup> This image of a broken God is most visibly seen through Jesus' actions on the cross and his visible wounds after the resurrection.

The impaired Christ reveals a new humanity as the "revelation of true embodied personhood".<sup>8</sup> In her final chapter, Eiesland attempts to apply her theories to a practical element of worship that speaks of Christ's brokenness and embodiment through the Eucharist. She develops a liturgy that is inclusive for both disabled and non-disabled people.

Roy McCloughry and Wayne Morris's book, *Making a World of Difference*,<sup>9</sup> examines the main themes and issues of disability theology. They dedicate their final three chapters to practical solutions for the inclusion of disabled people in the life of the

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<sup>6</sup> Fritzon, *Interpreting*, p. 86

<sup>7</sup> Eiesland, *The*, p. 89

<sup>8</sup> Eiesland, *The*, p. 100

<sup>9</sup> Roy McCloughry, Wayne Morris, *Making a World of Difference*, (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2002)

church. This includes a charter for healing and intercession<sup>10</sup> as well as “ten ways for churches to do something practical”<sup>11</sup> for people with impairments in the church.

*Copious Hosting*, by Jennie Weiss Block,<sup>12</sup> develops a theology of access for people with disabilities. Whilst Eiesland’s liberation model focuses on the rights of the impaired person within the church, Block’s approach applies to a broader cross section of the church and is therefore more inclusive.

There is a vast wealth of literature examining disability from a biblical perspective such as the collection of articles combined in *This Abled Body*,<sup>13</sup> or the collection of essays in *Human Disability and the Service of God*, which focus on theological and biblical implications of disability in contemporary church life.<sup>14</sup> Whilst these books offer both theological and biblical studies to the subject of disability, as well as, practical suggestions for the inclusion of people with impairments, very few attempt a practical application of their theological theories.

To date there has been very little research undertaken into how disability theology can be integrated into church life in practical ways. Whilst practical steps to include disabled people are necessary and important, unless we also address the underlying theology, people with impairments will never feel fully welcomed or included in our churches.

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<sup>10</sup> McCloughry, *Making*, p. 111

<sup>14</sup> McCloughry, *Making*, p. 125

<sup>12</sup> Jennie Weiss Block, *Copious Hosting*, (London: The Continuum International Publishing Group Ltd 2002)

<sup>15</sup> Hector Avalos, Sarah J Melcher, Jeremy Schipper Eds., *This Abled Body*, (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007).

<sup>14</sup> Nancy L Eiesland, Don E Saliers Eds., *Human Disability and the Service of God*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998).

### Theology of access

Erik W. Carter suggests in *Including People with Disabilities in Faith Communities* several indicators of a welcoming congregation. He proposes that people with disabilities must be able to participate in the activities offered at the church and access the facilities available. The congregation must make all people feel welcome and included in all activities, striving at all times for a “common community”. An inclusive congregation recognises the contribution, gifts and talents of all members in the church and are willing to facilitate the use of those gifts regardless of the perceived ability of the person.<sup>15</sup>

Whilst these suggestions for inclusion are commendable, the Church must also address its theology in relation to disability in order to become a fully inclusive community.

A theology of access is one such attempt to develop a theology that creates full inclusion within the church community. Weiss Block proposes that the purpose of a theology of access “is the inclusion of people with disabilities in the Body of Christ”.<sup>16</sup> Creating access for those on the margins is not supplementary to the Christian faith but is an imperative of it. “The gospel of Jesus Christ is a gospel of access; creating access for those on the margins is a Christian mandate”.<sup>17</sup>

Jesus had an inclusive ministry; he cared about and gave access to all people no matter what their ability or social standing. Therefore, excluding people with disabilities from

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<sup>15</sup> Erik W Carter, *Including People with Disabilities in Faith Communities*, (Maryland: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co, 2007), p. 28-31

<sup>16</sup> Weiss Block, *Copious*, p. 120

<sup>17</sup> Weiss Block, *Copious*, p. 120

full inclusion and participation in church life actually threatens the ministry and gospel of Jesus Christ. Creating access for people with disabilities involves more than providing facilities of a practical or physical nature. It additionally involves providing access for people's spiritual and theological needs.

The process of creating an accessible community is demanding and costly: financially, emotionally, ethically, physically, spiritually and theologically. It requires church congregations to examine critically their practices, beliefs and assumptions, to study them in light of the gospel and to come up with strategies for change in their practices.

Weiss Block acknowledges, "A theology of access demands that we search our community with truth and face the serious reality that some people of God have been systematically denied access to the community".<sup>18</sup> Churches in Sri Lanka therefore must also admit that we are individually responsible for excluding people from participating fully in church life through our attitudes and actions.

These are not easy truths to face; however if the Church is ever going to become the inclusive community it is called to be then it must embrace the reality that it is responsible for the systemic exclusion of marginalised people. The Church must recognise that it has used the Bible to exploit and exclude people with disabilities, including neglect and prejudice of individual needs. From this, a new theology may develop, one that embraces the spirituality of disabled people and allows them to teach the Church something about God from their perspective.

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<sup>18</sup> Weiss Block, *Copious*, p. 122



Weiss Block admits that the practical realities of inclusion are daunting. Developing a theology of access will require the Church to consider who it is and what it stands for. It will challenge the Church to redefine long held theologies, traditions and beliefs. It will put strain on limited financial and human resources as church buildings are modified and adapted. A theology of access will potentially lead the Church to develop new models of hospitality and mission in areas that they had not anticipated or expected.<sup>19</sup> Yet this is surely the challenge of the gospel, to “make disciples of all nations”<sup>20</sup> regardless of race, gender or ability.

### **Suggestion and Conclusion**

The Church must be aware of and address current stigmatising behaviours. These behaviours can manifest themselves through low expectations of people’s individual abilities or by using language that demeans the value of the human being. The Church must also acknowledge that the Bible has often been used to uphold past and present exclusive practices against people with disabilities.<sup>21</sup>

The Bible contains a mixture of messages regarding disability. Some of these readings have been good whilst others potentially bad. Bad readings of scripture have traditionally contributed to the oppression and exclusion of people with disabilities within the life of the church.

It is high time that new and more positive readings of disability in the Bible are given prominence in the church pulpit. People with impairments should be encouraged to share with the

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<sup>19</sup> Weiss Block, *Copious*, p. 124

<sup>20</sup> Matthew 28:19

<sup>21</sup> Beth Creamer ,Deborah, *Disability and Christian Theology*, (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc 2009).

church something of their experience of God from their particular viewpoint. People with disabilities must be given opportunities to exercise their spiritual gifts within the communities they are a part of, thus revealing something new about the body of Christ and an inclusive God.

The disabled Christ provides a picture of God that bears witness to our weak and vulnerable bodies. Christ, on the cross, experienced impairment and in his resurrected body carried the stigma of disability through the scars on his hands and feet. This is a relatively new and positive reading of the Bible which can bring new insight into disability and the understanding of strength through weakness.

Perhaps some of the greatest imagery of an inclusive church is Paul's description of the body of Christ in 1Corinthians 12:12-27. This passage shows a picture of the church united in difference. The body needs to work together in order to fulfil its potential. If it rejects any part of the body then it ceases to function as efficiently as it should. Equally the church, in rejecting difference of any kind, becomes weaker and ceases to function to its full potential. In order to fulfil its purpose the church must support and encourage those who are perceived to be weaker or less capable as they are necessary to the spiritual health of the church.<sup>22</sup>

What greater symbol or outworking of this theological statement could there be for the inclusion of people with disabilities than the act of Holy Communion. In the sacrament the church congregation acknowledges their own human frailty and brokenness before a God who became frail and

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<sup>22</sup> M. Hull John, *'The Broken Body in a Broken World: A Contribution to a Christian Doctrine of the Person From a Disabled Point of View'*, *Journal of Religion, Disability and Health*, No 4, Volume 7.

broken for us. In this sacrament the church is united in weakness, the stigma of disability is turned on its head and the meaning of strength is redefined. These positive readings of scripture have been neglected in the past and need to be heard today in order for the church to become the inclusive place it is called to be.

Christ's message and mission was inclusive: in fact the gospel as a whole is a gospel of access. The Christian calling is to make disciples of all people regardless of ability, race or gender. Therefore, the Church must take the inclusion of people with disabilities seriously as it is a Christian imperative not an optional extra.

This gospel imperative should drive the Church to provide not only physical access to premises for people with impairments but should also enable spiritual and theological growth whilst developing a theology of disability which will benefit the whole congregation. This could be done through regular preaching on disability issues, bible studies and talks. Opportunities should be given for people with disabilities to lead worship from their particular perspectives, thereby encouraging them to integrate their lived experience of disability with their faith.

Developing an attitude of inclusion and access in church will be costly, demanding and at times painful. Yet it is also radical, adventurous and at its core the Christian calling. The Church is called to be an inclusive, gracious people, following the example of the risen and disabled Christ.

Living out the calling will require the Church to put aside old values that have historically oppressed people with disabilities. It will require honest and truthful confession. It will possibly require the modification of much loved church buildings. Yet

## *DISABILITY THEOLOGY*

in doing all of this the Church will grow nearer to the vision of the body of Christ as an inclusive people, each uniquely different but complimenting each other in worshipping the God who became disabled for us. In order to step towards this vision the Church must take disability theology seriously. It is at the heart of becoming a fully inclusive community and only when the deeper issues are addressed will people with impairments feel fully included and welcome in Christian communities.

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## **TWO LEGITIMATE MODELS OF MINISTRY AMONG THE POOR**

AJITH FERNANDO

When one thinks of ministry among the poor, the first impression that comes is that of great socio-economic needs. Yet, we cannot forget the urgent need to evangelise the poor. I have come to the conviction that the glaring and urgent need to remedy inequality in the world requiring large-scale humanitarian assistance programmes cannot be adequately met by groups following the typical discipling model of ministry such as that of evangelistic organisations and churches.

The discipling model works through pastoral care of individuals. There are so many physically needy people in the world and substantial financial assistance available for them that we simply would not have the ability, if we were to use the discipling model, to help as many people as need to be helped and to make best use of all the available funds. Discipling is a labour-intensive ministry, as it calls for people to get close to individuals and minister comprehensively to their spiritual, social, physical and mental needs. Youth for Christ in Sri Lanka, the organisation for which I work, has primarily adopted the discipling model of ministry. Christian social service organisations can admirably fulfil the need for larger relief and development initiatives among the poor. I believe they are an important segment of the body of Christ.

This division of responsibilities among groups within the body of Christ has become necessary in many countries for practical rather than theological reasons. It is necessary for the church to have a holistic ministry. However, in some countries it is not advisable, and sometimes not legally permitted, to combine larger social programmes with evangelism. In Sri Lanka, this may soon be prohibited by law, and already organisations with both social and proclamation ministries in their primary objectives are not being granted government registration. The allegation is that unethical allurements are being offered through socio-economic assistance to “bribe” people into becoming Christians. People who convert to Christianity are often told that they have betrayed their family religion for a bag of provisions.

The above environment may necessitate the separation of evangelism from major social projects for practical rather than theological reasons. The body of Christ, represented by Christian relief and development organizations, is responsible for uplifting the socio-economic lot of people. The body of Christ, represented by evangelistic organisations and churches, is responsible for evangelizing and discipling people. A few decades ago Evangelicals pitted social action against evangelism. Then we had a stage when social action was presented as a partner of evangelism within a given body. Now, in some countries like Sri Lanka, major social projects are done by some segments of the body of Christ distinct from evangelism, which is done by other segments.

After the tsunami hit Sri Lanka in December 2004, for four months the Youth for Christ ministry gave all its time to relief work, especially in schools to enable students and those associated with them to recover from the tsunami. It was a time of intense and very exhausting ministry. Yet we could not proactively share the gospel with those we were ministering to because we were permitted into the schools on the condition



that we did not do so. Of course, the friendships forged sometimes resulted in subsequent evangelistic fruit through personal work. After four months we decided that we would return to our primary call to evangelism, though we continued with some social (mainly educational) programmes. We refused many offers of funding for large social projects as we needed to get back to our vocation as youth evangelists (for which raising funds was much more difficult).

Separating these two types of ministry is helpful for other reasons, too. Many poor people do not have a personal identity of which they are proud and wish to guard. Owing to this, it would not be a major issue for them to leave their family religion, in order to join a religious group which offers them economic assistance. This could result in people becoming Christians for reasons other than the core of the Christian faith. This is an inadvisable situation both for the “convert” and for the church. The separation of economic assistance and evangelism as outlined above could be a way out of this situation.

In our early years of working with the poor, seeing the desperate need to assist families in their economic development, we launched some schemes to give loans to enable them to begin income-generating projects. Soon we found out that it was almost impossible for our workers to recover the loans. Evangelists do not make good debt collectors! Youth for Christ subsequently launched a sister organization, Y-Gro, that operates independent of us – which has been much more successful in such ministries.

Of course, there will be overlap in the functions performed by each ministry group. Ministries majoring on social work and those majoring on evangelism will, to varying extents, have some aspects of the programmes of the other ministry group. For example, local churches with a vibrant evangelistic

ministry may also have some very significant social projects. Also it would be wise for those in each group to be aware of and learn from the best principles and practices driving those in the other group. Workers in development organisations should adopt incarnational lifestyles in keeping with the model of Christ. The picture of the social worker coming from outside and delivering aid to the people without establishing friendship with them is a denial of many Christian principles and often fosters animosity towards the social service workers among those who are recipients of the aid. On the other hand, those discipling people from poorer backgrounds must do all they can to ensure that they are treated justly by society and must help them in every way possible to develop economically and socially.

While major social projects may not be part of our programme, teaching on social responsibility should be part of the regular discipleship curriculum. Following Christ includes being committed to the poor and to their economic needs and to ensuring justice to them. In Youth for Christ we have challenged our volunteers to consider vocations which are connected to poverty alleviation. We are happy that many of them have gone into such vocations working both in the government and the non-government organization (NGO) sectors. Volunteers and alumni are serving as teachers in schools in economically deprived areas and in most of the Christian social service agencies.

Another important aspect of the discipling of young volunteers would be giving them opportunities to be involved, at least in a small way, in meeting the socio-economic needs of others. On my part, despite restrictions within my ministry to involvement in heavy social projects, I have made it a priority to be available to Christian social service agencies to minister to those working in them – as a counsellor, theological advisor, and Bible teacher.

Because the Bible teaches a holistic approach to mission, the teaching of all Christian groups should be holistic. However, in practice, the different segments of this body may focus more on some aspects of the mission than others; but the combined result would be a body of Christ that is holistic in its mission.



# PSALM 101: LEADING WITH CHARACTER IN ANCIENT ISRAEL

IVOR POOBALAN

## I. INTRODUCTION

Psalm 101 is a unique, brief piece of poetry found within the Hebrew Psalter. It has been classified as a 'Royal Psalm',<sup>1</sup> and of the nine such psalms identified, it is the only representative located within the Fourth Collection (Pss.90 – 106).<sup>2</sup> Its most apparent unique feature is the preponderance of the first-person-singular verb<sup>3</sup>, and the first-person-singular pronominal suffix.<sup>4</sup>

Psalm 101 has long been recognized to bear Wisdom motifs, and this understanding has played a major role in the interpretation of the psalm. Another outstanding feature (in contradistinction with the other units within the Collection) is

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<sup>1</sup> Samuel Terrien, *The Psalms Strophic Structure and Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003) p.43; Leslie Allen, *Psalms 101-150*, WBC 21 (1987) p.3; H. J. Kraus, *Psalms 60-150*, Trans. H.C. Oswald (Fortress, 1989) . Also see, H.A. Kenik, "Code of Conduct for a King: Psalm 101" *JBL* 95 (1976), 391 – 403.

<sup>2</sup> Psalms 2; 20-21; 45; 72; 101; 110; 132 and 144, Terrien, *Psalms*, p.43

<sup>3</sup> Ten occurrences in eight verses:

אֲצַמִּית אֶדְעֵ שְׂגִיחֵי אִשִּׁית - אֶחְסֶלְךָ אֲשַׁכִּילָה אֲזַמְרָה אֲשִׁירָה  
(twice) אֶוֹכֵל

<sup>4</sup> Eleven occurrences: v.2 (3 times), v.3 (twice), v.4 (once), v.6 (3 times), v.7 (twice)

the absence of the descriptive, narrative-poetry form. In its place we have the crisp, staccato effect brought about by the employment of terse couplets and the repetitions of key terms and phrases.

Again, other than for the ambiguous clause *מְחִי תְבוּא אֵלַי*, there is not a hint of dissonance, uncertainty or lament. The human agent is not weak, lonely, fearful or corrupt. On the contrary, the Psalm pulsates with a sense of purposefulness and clarity.

All these factors raise the logical question about composition. Is it possible for the reader to discern an editorial intention in the location of this psalm? Does 101 in some plausible manner function to carry forward the implicit themes of the Fourth Collection? Are there identifiable linguistic and conceptual links with the psalms in her co-text that confirm such a function?

A final introductory note may be in order to underline the importance of our present study. Possibly, other than for Psalm 98, our psalm (within the Fourth Book) has received the least amount of scholarly attention in the history of interpretation.<sup>5</sup> A number of reasons may be postulated for this phenomenon, not least of which may be the Christian apprehension of I-centered assertions,<sup>6</sup> as well as the

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<sup>5</sup> See the bibliographies in the relevant commentaries by Marvin Tate and L. Allen, *WBC 20 & 21*; Also, E. Gerstenberger, *Psalms (Part 2) and Lamentations* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001).

<sup>6</sup> “The royal protestations may grate on Christian ears as self-righteous, and far from the ideal that “they who fain would serve thee best are conscious most of wrong within.” It must be appreciated that there is a difference of religious culture at this point. The tone is sincere; a sense of boasting is absent (cf. v5). The psalm pleads not sinless

traditional, Protestant aversion to any underlying theology that emphasizes *righteous acts* as a valid, and indeed necessary response to enjoy a covenant-relationship with God. Even if these latter proposals remain merely speculative, yet the paucity of research done on this Psalm provides us the initial impulse to engage in the exegetical exercise we have undertaken.

## II. TRANSLATION AND TEXTUAL ISSUES

8. Of David. A Psalm.

Loyalty<sup>7</sup> and Justice, I will sing

To you O Yahweh, I will sing praise

2a. I will be wise<sup>8</sup> in the way of blamelessness<sup>9</sup>

When will you come to me?<sup>10</sup>

2b. I will walk with integrity of heart<sup>11</sup> within my household<sup>12</sup>

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perfection but a conscientious attitude toward royal duties . . ." Allen, *Psalm 101 – 150*, p.6.

<sup>7</sup> חֶסֶד has no equivalent in English, and various terms such as 'steadfast love', 'kindness', 'solidarity' and 'love'(NIV) have been used. Here following NRSV and a number of scholars, not without considering the importance of covenant loyalty already pervading the Psalm.

<sup>8</sup> Hifil cohortative of שָׁכַל: The verb occurs around 60 times. The semantic range includes: understand, see, make wise, succeed, act with insight, or devotion.

<sup>9</sup> 'Being complete' תָּמַם: Frequent in both Job (the theme of blamelessness) and the cultic language of Leviticus, Numbers and Ezekiel (the theme of ritual purity and perfection). See תָּמַם in *NIDOTTE (Vol 4)* pp. 306-310

<sup>10</sup> אֵלַי has been a challenge to any reader. Gunkel and Kraus emend מִתִּי to אֵמֶת so, 'truth shall come', see Allen, p.2

<sup>11</sup> Following NRSV, Terrien, Allen. NIV retains the meaning 'blameless' and maintains the correspondence with the cognate in v.2 and v.6.

<sup>12</sup> בֵּית can refer to the physical house or to the social setting of a 'household'.

3. I will not place before my eyes

A vile thing<sup>13</sup>

The making of images<sup>14</sup>

(I have hated)

It shall not cleave within me.<sup>15</sup>

4. A perverse heart shall be far from me

A wicked man<sup>16</sup> I will not befriend<sup>17</sup>

5. The one who secretly slanders his neighbor

I shall destroy him

Haughty eyes and a proud heart

I shall not tolerate

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<sup>13</sup> דָּבַר־בְּלִיעַל: Following Willem Van Gemeren, *Psalms – Expositors Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2008), and *NIV*. Also translated ‘base’ (NRSV, Terrien, Kenik); ‘wicked purpose’ (Allen) and ‘godless things;’ see Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms III (101 – 150) – Anchor Bible* (New York: Doubleday, 1970).

<sup>14</sup> After Dahood who draws attention to the parallel in Ps. 40:5. Cf. John Kselman, ‘Psalm 101: Royal Confession and Divine Oracle’, *JSOT* 33 (1985), p.48.

<sup>15</sup> בִּי: Literally ‘in me’. The context suggests a reference to the inner person rather than an external attachment that is suggested by the translation ‘to me’.

<sup>16</sup> רָעַךְ parallels לְרָב עֲקָשׁ and therefore taken as a reference to a person. See M. Dahood, *Psalms III*, Anchor: “Though many versions interpret ambivalent *ra* as neuter ‘evil’ I prefer on the basis of parallelism to understand *ra* as an ‘evil person’.” p.5

<sup>17</sup> In the context of personal relationships it is best to understand וְדַע in the more specific sense permitted by the semantic range. So Dahood, p.5.



6. My eyes are on the faithful in the land  
To dwell with me  
The person who walks in the way of blamelessness  
Shall be my minister<sup>18</sup>

7. The one who practices deceit shall not live in my household  
The one who speaks lies shall not be established before my  
eyes

8. Every morning I will destroy all the wicked of the land  
To cut off from the city of Yahweh all the workers of evil.

### III. AUTHORSHIP, SETTING, AND DATE

In common with all the psalms, speculation about the authorship of 101 abounds. While it may seem banal to mention that the superscription ‘To *or* Of David’ offers no confirmation, it may be important to point out that such a superscription does not therefore become vestigial. The *association* of the Psalm with King David provides a literary locus and thus enables the Psalm to bear the nuances of the Davidic tradition. At the same time the blurring of the author’s signature frees the Psalm to become the shared liturgy of successive worshipping-communities beginning with ancient Israel, and extending even to the Church today.

Emette Weir notes the strong influence of the Wisdom Tradition within the Psalm and suggests that:

“The Psalm was composed by or under the influence of the Wise Men [and] was intended for use by a prince at the time of his accession”<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Some translations, ‘minister to me’ (NIV, NRSV, Dahood, Van Gemeren). Kraus adopts, ‘He may serve me’. The ambivalence of Terrien (‘for my ministers’) and Allen (‘has been my minister’) is better.

His notion of a 'prince' however is borrowed from the work of Arthur Weiser<sup>20</sup> whose suggestion of a 'Reigning Prince' as the author of the Psalm has the advantage of being based on information gleaned entirely from the text. He notes that the speaker:

- Has a large house (vv. 2,7) which is 'home' to many people (v.7)
- Expects others to consider it an honor to serve him (v.6)
- Possesses far-reaching power (vv.5-6)
- Has judicial authority to expel the 'evildoers' from the city of Yahweh (v.8)

Although all the factors above do not preclude the speaker from being a simple 'ruler' or 'post-exilic governor',<sup>21</sup> nevertheless the concentration of allusions to the pre-exilic period of the monarchy – political power, the all-important **בִּית**, those who minister, and the **עִיר־יְהוָה** – renders the suggestion of a pre-exilic Royalty-figure as more plausible to most commentators.<sup>22</sup>

Gerstenberger notes that the superscription of 101, "for the first time since Psalm 86 establishes a David connection, and for the first time since Psalm 90, again links a psalm to a

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<sup>19</sup> Emette Weir, 'The Perfect Way, A Study of Wisdom Motifs in Psalm 101' *EvQ* 53(1981) p.59

<sup>20</sup> Weiser, A. *The Psalms* (UK: SCM Press, 1962) 647-650

<sup>21</sup> See Weir, 'The Perfect', p.54.

<sup>22</sup> Helen Kenik, 'Code of Conduct for a King: Psalm 101' *JBL* 95/3 (1976) 391-403 cites Gunkel, Crim, Kraus, Mowinckel, Johnson (p.394). Also see Allen, p.3; Terrien, p.692.

person at all”.<sup>23</sup> This fact may be significant for at least two reasons:

1. Within the thesis of Book IV importance is given to the *individual*, both as the covenant-partner of Yahweh, and hence the object of his affection (91; 92:10-11; 94:16-19; 102; 106:4-5) and, as Yahweh’s agent in establishing his rule in human society (99:6-7; 101; 103:7; 105:9-10, 16-22, 26-27, 42; 106:16-18, 23, 30).
2. Psalm 101 presents an important contrast to the מְלִיךָ הַיְהוָה psalms that precede it. We shall examine this further when we consider how Ps. 101 coheres with its co-textual psalms.

#### IV. GENRE

Our presuppositions about the genre of a text significantly affect our reading of literature. Therefore we now turn to consider the literary background of Psalm 101.

##### A Song of Royalty?

Most scholars prefer to categorize this as a ‘Royal Psalm’, but by what definition? Terrien establishes the broader categories by which a psalm may qualify to be a ‘Royal Psalm’:

*“This type of psalm hails the enthronement of a new scion of the Davidic dynasty and then moves on to the adoration of Yahweh, king of all nations, announcing the advent of the final Anointed One (Messiah) at the end of time” (italics added)*<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> *Psalms (Part 2) and Lamentations*, p.206.

<sup>24</sup> *The Psalms Strophic Structure and Theological Commentary*, p.43.

It could be reasonably argued that the highlighted elements are hardly discernible in our psalm. In addition we find that in the other 'Royal Psalms' (see footnote 2) except Ps. 144:

1. They employ explicit royalty categories such as 'king', 'throne', 'sceptre', 'rule' etc. Psalm 101 does not.
2. The subjects of the king exalt or idealize the human individual, and/or this is (also) done by the report of a divine oracle. These are at best inexplicit in 101.<sup>25</sup>
3. The 'Royal Psalms' indicate a clear communal or cultic setting for the psalm. This is not explicit in 101.

The factors above will caution the exegete from hastily superimposing alien categories on to the Psalm. Allen's reasons are more modest. He thinks this is a 'Royal Psalm' because the fact "may be deduced from the claim to judicial authority in 'Yahweh's City'".<sup>26</sup>

Proposals regarding genre have varied from Brueggemann's 'language of treaty' to 'the individual lament' (so Kaiser, Johnson, Eaton and Allen), and to some kind of 'Enthronement' song (Gunkel, Kraus, Weiser and Kenik).<sup>27</sup> Kenik understands the Psalm as a type of Royal Statement before Yahweh:

"The king, on a specific occasion, declared what he will do during his reign, what he will reject, and what must be the attitude of his community. The most obvious situation for such a bold affirmation was surely the event

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<sup>25</sup> But see exegesis of 101:6 below where we might detect evidence for a 'divine oracle'.

<sup>26</sup> *Psalms 101 – 150*, p.3.

<sup>27</sup> See Allen, pp.3-4

at which the king assumed his position as ruler of the people of Yahweh when he declared his integrity before Yahweh as one faithful in his loyalty and obedience.”<sup>28</sup>

Her explanation is worth repeating here:

“The king of Judah was not just a political sovereign, nor did he stand for the nation as a god like the king of the ancient orient. He was rather one from among the people of Yahweh who, because of the singular privilege of being anointed to kingship, bore a special responsibility of guardianship for the faith of the nation. His special task was obedience to the voice of Yahweh that demanded of him the practice of justice.”<sup>29</sup>

#### A Poem of Wisdom?

Much of the discussion on Psalm 101 unfortunately has given little place to the explicit Wisdom Motifs that have been woven into her. Covenant relationship to Yahweh is one that requires insight (שכל); it is viewed as a journey (אתהליך); on a road of blamelessness (בדרך תמים). Even a cursory reading of Proverbs for instance shows the association of these motifs with Wisdom.

Kenik observes:

“The basic role of the king presented here is also the understanding of the king’s position as it is set down in the wisdom teachings”<sup>30</sup>

In conclusion:

“The royal theology contained in Psalm 101 draws upon the sacred covenant on which Israel was founded and the

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<sup>28</sup> Kenik, ‘Code of Conduct’, p.395

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, p.395

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, 399.

inherited sapiential tradition that flourished and was nurtured by the scribes attached to the royal court".<sup>31</sup>

We may thus conclude that Psalm 101 was written within the historical setting of the Royal Court of pre-exilic Israel, by the king (or one closely associated with him) for use at one or more covenantal functions involving both the king and the people at large.

## V. STRUCTURE AND STYLISTIC FEATURES

*For such a short psalm there have been a surprising variety of structural analyses (Allen)<sup>32</sup>*

Notwithstanding the valuable analyses of a number of scholars, we propose a schema as follows:

Introduction (1a – 2a)

1a Superscription

1b Hymnic dedication of song to Yahweh

2a Longing for covenant relationship

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibid*, 403.

<sup>32</sup> Terrien sees a hymn formula: Superscription, Four strophes of three bicola each, and a short but pungent *Envoi* at the end (pp.691-2); Allen: Two 'largely symmetrical strophes', vv.1a-5 and 6-8 (p.5); Gerstenberger's analysis: Superscription (1a), Introduction (1bc), Confession of Innocence (2-5) and Affirmation of Righteousness (6-8); M. Buittenweiser, *The Psalms* (New York: KTAV, 1969): The voice of the singer (1-4) and a divine oracle (5-8, into which he interpolates Ps. 97:10a after 6a!); John Kselman (pp.46-50) argues for two speakers as well: Introduction (1-2), King's protestation of innocence (3-5), Divine oracle (6-7) and Conclusion (8); Helen Kenik (pp. 393-4) suggests that the Psalm is framed by 'lyric couplets' (1 and 8), these contain within them 3 groups, each composed of four elements: 2-3a, 3b-5, 6-7.

Royal Manifesto - The Expression of Covenant Loyalty (2b)

Application of the Royal Manifesto - Part 1 (3-5)

Interruption to Affirm the Status of the Faithful (6)

Application of the Royal Manifesto - Part 2 (7)

Goal of the Royal Manifesto (8)

### **What are some outstanding features of the Psalm as a whole?**

#### The use of the prefix conjugation

Of the 15 occurrences of verbs, 14 use the prefix conjugation (cohortative or imperfect). Our translation has (in common with most including NIV, NRSV) understood a sense of intention and purposefulness and hence translated the verbs with the future tense 'shall' or 'will'. However see Allen who reads a past tense into the use of the imperfect.<sup>33</sup>

#### Repetition<sup>34</sup>

Within this short psalm a number of words or phrases are used on more than one occasion:

- יִהְיֶה (1, 8)
- בְּדֶרֶךְ הַמַּיִם (2, 6)
- בְּקִרְבֵי בֵיתִי (2, 7)
- לִבִּי (3, 4, 5)
- לְנַגֵּד עֵינַי (3, 7)
- אֶצְמִית (5, 8)

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<sup>33</sup> *Psalms 101-150*, p.1.

<sup>34</sup> See W. Van Gemeren, 'Psalms', *EBC*, p.641 and Allen, p.5: "Repetition is clearly the key to the structure"

### Inclusio and Balance

We already noted Kenik's observation that, "the Psalm begins and ends with a lyric couplet, each of which names Yahweh." She also argues for 'balance' created by a series of identical phrases: לַגִּיד עֵינִי; בַּקֶּרֶב בֵּיתִי; בַּדֶּרֶךְ תָּמִים.<sup>35</sup>

### Chiasm

Kselman reconstructs a chiasmic structure in vv. 3-7 as follows:<sup>36</sup>

- vv.3-5    A    לַגִּיד עֵינִי  
              B    דְּבַר-בְּלִיעַל  
              C    עֲשֵׂה-סִטִּים  
              D    גְּבַה־עֵינִים
- vv.6-7        D    עֵינִי  
                  C    עֲשֵׂה רַמְיָה  
                  B    דְּבַר שְׁקָרִים  
                  A    לַגִּיד עֵינִי

This reconstruction becomes a fundamental point of departure to argue that Section A-D (I) is the voice of the poet, and Section A-D (II) the voice of God. Nevertheless the fact that much of the text in 3-7 has been excised to identify this chiasm raises serious questions about its credibility.

More reasonable chiasmic constructions have been recognized in v. 3 and v. 7.<sup>37</sup> In v. 3 the chiasm is interrupted by the

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<sup>35</sup> "Code of Conduct," p.393.

<sup>36</sup> "Psalm 101: Royal Confession," p.47.

<sup>37</sup> Dahood, *Psalms III (101 – 150)*, p.4; Kselman, „Psalm 101: Royal Confession," p.47



presence of the only verb *in the perfect* in the Psalm, שִׁנְאַתִּי. This may function to make most emphatic the assertion, “I have hated”.

### Metaphorical Language and Movement

One may recall that in the Introduction we mentioned the ‘crisp, staccato effect’ created in the Psalm by the use of brief couplets and repetition.

Here we note the metaphorical use of Heart (3 times), Eyes (4 times) and Walking (twice). In the poet’s thinking what do these metaphors convey? They are all used as ways of speaking about and explicating the core ideal of his Royal Manifesto; תָּם (perfection, blamelessness or integrity).

Consequently, it may be said that the psalmist uses ‘heart’ to signify the *locus* of תָּם, the ‘eyes’ to signify the *focus* on תָּם, and the ‘walking’ to signify the *modus* to תָּם.

### Numerical Structure

This is the term used by Kselman when drawing attention to the rather interesting numerical patterns he finds in the Psalm. He notes two in vv. 3-5:

a) The ‘royal confession’ contains seven verbs: שִׁנְאַתִּי אָשִׁית אֶכְלֵ אֲצַמִּית אֶדַע יָסוּר יְדַבֵּק

b) The royal confession “also includes a seven-member list of the persons the king is committed to avoid if he is to follow the *drk tmym*”:

- One who speaks perverseness
- One who makes idols
- A person of perverse heart
- An evil person
- One who slanders his neighbor in secret

One haughty of eyes  
One arrogant of heart.<sup>38</sup>

We may add to this the suggestion that Kselman has not exhausted the examples of numerical patterns in the Psalm. See for instance the following within the ‘Royal Manifesto’ (vv.2b-8):

- Seven verbs in the first person singular
- Seven uses of the preposition כִּי
- Seven participial forms (adopting the LXX *poiountas* for עֹשֶׂה. See BHS, text-critical notes)

This feature, using the typical Hebrew symbolism of numbers, further accentuates the emphasis on ‘perfection’ or ‘completeness’ by the use of patterns of seven.

## VI. EXEGETICAL NOTES

### Introduction (1a-2a)

#### *Hymnic Dedication of Song to Yahweh (1b)*

“Loyalty and Justice I will sing  
To you O Yahweh I will sing praise”

Our translation deliberately retains the literal reading although it doesn’t translate with a pleasant flow. The NIV attempts the latter: “I will sing of *your* love and justice”. We propose that modern, Greek-influenced notions of attributes as impersonal qualities affect our reading of this phrase. The psalmist inhabits the thought-world of the Ancient Near East where divine attributes are often personified. So one would speak of the most definitive quality of the god as if

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<sup>38</sup> Kselman, pp.48 – 49.

representative of the deity (cf. 'Wisdom', 'Word' in OT). The parallelism of the bi-colon should guide the interpreter, and the less ambiguous colon ("to you O Yahweh I will sing praise") should be the key to explicate the more ambiguous ("Loyalty and Justice I will sing"). The psalmist wants to celebrate יהוה the venerated Name in aniconic Israel. When he celebrates and praises הַסֹּדֵר וְהַשֹּׁפֵט he is not simply cataloguing some qualities of Yahweh, but addressing Yahweh by referring to his personified attributes that represent יהוה.

### *Longing for Covenant Relationship (2a)*

"I will be wise in the way of blamelessness;  
when will you come to me?"

In this bi-colon we have the interesting juxtaposition of a statement of intent and a question. In addition, the latter includes hermeneutical difficulties that have intrigued successive generations of interpreters.

In his 'Short Notes' on Psalm 101, T. Booij clinically examines the nature of this enigmatic colon. He first establishes that emendation is unnecessary:

The text of Psalm ci has apparently been handed down in good condition and is supported by the ancient versions...Moreover the Hebrew clause *matay tabo* makes good sense – although we fail to see its reference.<sup>39</sup>

He sees the declarations of a king or protestations of innocence as a means of eliciting a response from Yahweh:

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<sup>39</sup> T. Booij, 'Psalm ci.2 – 'When wilt thou come to me?', VT 38(1988), 458-62

The royal declaration concerning the 'Way of Integrity' aims at moving God to do something.<sup>40</sup>

And, since there is no complaint, and no indication of distress, the question is seen as evidence that the King 'misses something, the fulfillment of a heart's desire'.

Isolating the possibility of encountering God by way of a dream in OT thinking, and noting that such a significant event did take place in the early reign of King Solomon (1 Kings 3), Booij makes a convincing case for the hermeneutic of 'When will you come to me?'. The question is really expressing the King's deep longing for a revelation of Yahweh, possibly by a dream.

#### Royal Manifesto – The Expression of Covenant Loyalty (2b)

"I will walk with integrity of heart in the privacy of my household"

Kselman draws attention to the difficulties created by the clear connections of this phrase both to the preceding clause ("I will be wise in the way of bamelessness") – first person imperfect verb + prepositional phrase including the root *tmm* – as well as to what follows (vv. 3-7). He concludes:

Perhaps the solution is to understand the sentence is serving a Janus-like function, joined both to what precedes and to what follows.<sup>41</sup>

This 'Janus-like' feature supports our proposal that this bicolon forms the overarching theme of the Psalm. This is the summary of the ruler's loyalty oath, hence the title we have chosen;

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<sup>40</sup> Booij, p.459

<sup>41</sup> "Psalm 101: Royal Confession," p.47.

Royal Manifesto. The implications of this manifesto will be fleshed out in vv. 3-8.

Meanwhile the use of the *hitpalel*, אֶתְהַלֵּךְ is unique in the psalm. Could this therefore be deliberate? Since it indicates reflexive action it may function to enhance the sense of purposefulness in the statement; “I will *make myself* walk...”

The collocation of בְּתַמ־לִבִּי has most interesting parallels in the Hebrew Bible.<sup>42</sup> This is found in three other texts: Psalm 78:72; 1 Kings 9:4 and Gen. 20:5-7.

The first is a reference to *David*, who is there presented as the *epitome of God’s solution to rebellious Israel*. Psalm 78 as a whole has a wisdom provenance by virtue of the fact the first eight verses prefaces the recitation of Israel’s history so as to underscore the psalm’s pedagogical value.

The 1 Kings text brings together a surprising number of elements found in Psalm 101. The context is God’s instruction to Solomon, *the epitome of the Wisdom Tradition in Israel*, on how he can be successful:

וְאַתָּה אִם-תֵּלֵךְ לִפְנֵי כְּאִשֶּׁר הָלַךְ דָּוִד אָבִיךָ בְּתַם-לִבָּב  
אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִיךָ חֻקֵּי וּמִשְׁפָּטֵי הַשִּׁמֹר. (1Kin 9:4)

‘David’, ‘walk’ and ‘integrity of heart’! The text of 1 Kings may well form the background to the thought-patterns of the psalmist at this point.

Even the mention of ‘integrity of heart’ in Genesis 20 pertains to *the conduct of a king*, Abimelech. This passage interestingly

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<sup>42</sup> See Alex Luc, לִבָּב in *NIDOTTE* (vol. 2), pp.749-54

mentions the direct intervention of God *in a dream*, and the *vindication* of the king on account of his תָּם-לִבָּב.

#### Application of the Royal Manifesto – Part I (3-5)

לֹא-אָשִׁית – The verb שִׁית ‘to set’ occurs 83 times, of which the highest concentration (30 times) is in the Psalms. Here the king *refuses* to ‘set before [his] eyes’, דְּבַר-בְּלִיעַל, ‘a vile thing’. How are we to understand this latter phrase?

Fifty years ago Winton Thomas explored the word בְּלִיעַל in the OT<sup>43</sup> and reviewed its rendering in ancient versions as well as contemporary English and German versions. He concluded that the meaning most strongly associated with בְּלִיעַל out of its 29 references is ‘swallower’. Consequently דְּבַר-בְּלִיעַל is ‘something which engulfs one in ruin’.<sup>44</sup>

The idiom may be further exposed if we consider the parallel concept within the text, i.e. עֲשֵׂה-סֻטִים. In the Hebrew Bible סֻטִים is a *hapax legomenon*, the plural of סֹט, ‘fall away’. However Dahood understands שׁוֹת (Psalm 40:5) as an ‘alternate spelling’ and obtains help from its rendering there as ‘gods’. Thus he translates עֲשֵׂה-סֻטִים as ‘making of images’.<sup>45</sup> This in turn helps us to consider the ‘thing of vileness’ to represent an object of idolatry. We think the final phrase in v.3 confirms this reading.

לֹא יִדְבַק בִּי – ‘It shall not cleave within me’. The verb דָּבַק is used for the powerful bond of marriage in Gen. 2:24. Interestingly the verb occurs as a key word in another

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<sup>43</sup> Winton Thomas, ‘lu^Y!B in the Old Testament’ in J.N. Birdsall, R. Thomson eds. *Biblical and Patristic Studies in Memory of Robert Pierce Casey* (Freiburg: Herder, 1963), pp.11-19

<sup>44</sup> Thomas, p.19

<sup>45</sup> *Psalms III (101 – 150)*, p.5.

Solomonic narrative in 1 Kings 11. This is a chapter that catalogues Solomon's folly and God's consequent judgment. Its opening argument is telling:

- Solomon *loved* many foreign women (and married them, 11:1)
- This was a clear violation of Yahweh's covenant demands because such alliances would threaten to, 'incline [your] heart to *follow their gods*' (11:2)
- Solomon *clung* (דָּבַק) to *these*, i.e. the 'other gods' (by use of the masculine plural, rather than the feminine plural, pronominal suffix) *in love*.

In 2 Kings 18:6, in contrast, King Hezekiah 'clung' to Yahweh and did not depart from him. Our psalmist too, apparently symbolizing the corrective to Solomon's idolatry, is able to assert on the contrary, "I have hated".

"A perverse heart shall be far from me"

The adjective עֶקֶשׁ is found 11 times in the Hebrew Bible, of which 7 occurrences are in Proverbs. Twice it is found in the parallel texts, 2 Samuel 22:27 and Psalms 18:26. The earliest use is in an axiomatic text in Deuteronomy 32:4-5 where Yahweh is described as, **פְּעֵלוֹ כִּי כָל־דְּרָכָיו מִשְׁפָּט אֵל אֱמוּנָה**, Integrity, His ways, Justice, and Faithfulness are all concepts found in Psalm 101. Deuteronomy then contrasts this God with his people who are **דָּוָר עֶקֶשׁ וּפְתִילָהל**. From the example of Solomon, the poet knows the power that association has in shaping values. So the perverse-hearted one, or 'wicked person' leave alone 'befriending', will not even get near the king.

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<sup>46</sup> All the references, in this instance, are located within the Wisdom Tradition.

“The one who secretly slanders his friend, I will destroy him.”

מְלוֹשְׁנֵי ‘slander’(v.5) occurs only twice in the Hebrew text; here and in Proverbs 30:10. In the latter reference too a master is being given a slanderous report about one of his servants by a peer of the servant. This behavior is frowned upon. The King too will not ignore the corroding influence of such a servant. In fact he will respond in the strongest possible manner, אֶצְמִית, ‘I will destroy’.

Eleven of the 15 occurrences of צַמַּח are in the Psalms. The 4 times it is rendered in the first-person it is found in texts related to our Psalm (101:5, 8; 2 Sam. 22:41; Psalm 18:41). At the end of Psalm 94 (which we will later see is the most closely related co-textual psalm) צַמַּח is used in the second person imperative form, in an urgent cry to God for vengeance.

“Haughty eyes and proud of heart, him I shall not tolerate”

This description continues to identify the ‘slanderer’ above. גְּבוּהָ comes from the idea of ‘tallness’. This then is a person who has a lofty view or a high opinion about himself. לֵבָב וְרַחֵם ‘spacious hearted’ is opposite in meaning to the English idiom, ‘big hearted’. Here it connotes greed. Once again the only other reference to גְּבוּהַ־עֵינַיִם וְרַחֵם לֵבָב is found in Proverbs 21:4.

#### Interruption to Affirm the Status of the Faithful (6)

Since the preoccupation of the Psalm is with action against everything that militates against the דְּרֹךְ הַתְּמִים, we could see v.6 as an interruption, for the purpose of an aside to that minority of ‘faithful ones’ in Yahweh’s City. As they rejoice with the king for his stance against ungodliness, they must ask the silent question, “What about us? Where do we fit within this new society? Will our faithfulness to Yahweh, and indeed



the king be vindicated?” On the other hand these hypothetical, unspoken questions could be addressed by the king himself (cf. his question in 2a). V.6 is a response to such a concern.

The fact that the verse has no verb until the end, and in view of the use of the participles **וְאִמְנִי** and **הִלֵּךְ**, we find ourselves inclined to see in the hymnic v.6 the evidence of a *Divine Oracle*.<sup>47</sup> This proposal meshes well with the important idea that **שָׂרָה** (out of its 97 occurrences) is predominantly used in a cultic sense. ‘He will minister to me’ would then be a reference to God speaking to affirm the vital connection between those who practice integrity and those who will be consecrated to serve Yahweh. This interpretation is further strengthened by the fact that in the only other occurrences of **שָׂרָה** in Book IV – Psalm 103:21; 104:4 – the semantic domain is the *service of Yahweh*, whether angels or natural phenomena. Further v.6 may on this view become the resolution to the question in 2a.

#### Application of the Royal Manifesto – Part II (7)

“The one who practices deceit shall not live in my household;  
the one who speaks lies shall not be established before my eyes”

The application of the manifesto is rounded off by a construction that is entirely parallel with its beginning in v.3. Two new phrases are used in v.7; **עֲשֵׂה רַמְיָה** and **דַּבֵּר שְׁקָרִים**.

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<sup>47</sup> For this see the argument of Kselman, ‘Psalm 101: Royal Confession and Divine Oracle’, pp 45-62: “The presence of such divine oracles in a variety of psalm types, especially in laments (Ps.12:6) and *in royal psalms* (Ps.2:6-9) is a commonplace of scholarship...’(p.52). Under ‘Translation and Textual Issues’ (above) we noted that M. Buitenvliet in 1969 had proposed that vv.5-8 constituted a divine oracle. We would only go so far as to see v.6 alone as a divine oracle. In v.7 the king returns to application of his manifesto.

The similarity to phrases in v.3 is not hard to see. רמִיָּה 'deceit' is found 8 times, and on 6 occasions clearly means *deceitful speech*. שקר is most concentrated in Jeremiah, Psalms and Proverbs, and is most commonly translated 'lying'. However on three occasions in Jeremiah the term refers to the falsehood of idolatry (Jeremiah 10:14; 13:25; 51:17). The 'deceit' and the 'lies' then do not refer to dishonesty as we would assume. The Psalm is addressing the insidious and seductive power of idolatry as the sum total of deceitfulness and falsehood. Its agents wish to be close to the throne by becoming associates in the king's 'household'. But since the King will not 'set' nor 'cling' to an idol, her agents 'will not live' nor 'be established' in the king's presence.

#### Goal of the Royal Manifesto (8)

"Every morning I will destroy all the wicked of the land  
To cut off from the city of Yahweh all the workers of evil"

Now the psalmist is ready to state his objective. The Royal Manifesto aims beyond the privacy of the king's household; its vision is nothing less than 'the city of Yahweh'. Nevertheless the psalmist has well understood the principle that the rule of God is established inside-out; that is, until it is practiced בְּיָתִי בְּקִרְבִּי, it cannot be established בְּעִיר־יְהוָה.

The reference to 'every morning' may find parallels in the idea that the king administers justice in the morning (cf. 2 Sam 15:2; Jer. 21:12). The goal of the Manifesto is to transform the city of Yahweh into the place of His perfection by making it exclusively a home for those who will walk בְּדֶרֶךְ הַמִּים.

## VII. COHERENCE WITH THE PSALMS OF THE FOURTH COLLECTION

Our study of Psalm 101 will be incomplete without some reflection on how it coheres with the individual units which constitutes her co-text. The evidence of clear linguistic connections has been alluded to during the preceding exegesis. Now we turn our attention to a few outstanding thematic connections.

### A clear contrast to the **יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ** Psalms that are placed before 101

Beginning with Psalm 93 we hear the refrain, 'Yahweh is King'. The entire focus, in the light of the failure of the Davidic dynasty (Ps.89), has been placed on Yahweh. He alone delivers, he alone deals with the **פְּעֻלֵי אֲנִי**, he alone defends the city of Yahweh. Psalm 101 sets a balance. The human agent is not made entirely redundant. Yahweh still looks out for his 'faithful ones' to mediate his rule and act as his emissaries. The human king therefore is a complement to the Divine King.

### A Mirror of the Issues Raised in Psalm 94

A careful reading of Psalm 94 shows that it shares many ideas with 101. The 'God of Vengeance' in 94 is complemented by the king who takes vengeance in 101. Both psalms are concerned with the importance of Wisdom (**שִׂכְל**) in following Yahweh. The sense of isolation experienced by the godly individual in 94:16-19 is resolved by the affirmation of 101:6. In 94:23 God is implored *twice* to 'destroy' the evildoers; in 101 the king *twice* undertakes to 'destroy' the evildoers.

### Juxtaposition with Psalm 102

Psalm 102 is the only other psalm in the Collection to use the first-person narration throughout. At the same time it conveys

a very opposite ‘feel’ to Psalm 101, in that it is the emotional low-point of the whole book with its note of distress, alienation, longing etc. Why then have these psalms been placed together?

Pre-exilic Israel regulated her entire worldview along the categories of the Wisdom Tradition, fundamentally holding that the covenant with Yahweh ensured that righteousness in accordance with *Torah* guaranteed reward, whereas violations of *Torah* equally guaranteed judgment and disaster.

We have argued that 101 is a pre-Exilic psalm. The Exile shattered this schema. The idolatrous and the ungodly triumph whereas the righteous suffer. The creative response to this theological predicament was the tradition of the Lament. God is absent, God is silent, and yet Israel has nowhere else to turn except to her covenant-partner; to weep, complain, charge and implore. Wisdom shows how things commonly obtain and argues for the *sovereignty* of Israel’s God. Lament responds to the all-too-often experience of dissonance and emphasizes the *relational character* of Israel’s God. Psalms 101 and 102 are juxtaposed because Wisdom and Lament are not mutually exclusive theologies; they are two sides of the same coin, or better still, two faces of the same God.

## VII. CONCLUSION

Our study of Psalm 101 leads us to the conclusion that it was written by a king or someone closely associated with him during the pre-Exilic period in Israel. That the implied king belonged within the era of the divided-monarchy is evident from the Psalm’s strong allusions to the reign of Solomon

which, in turn, forms the backdrop against which the present king considers his own conduct.

The employment of 'wisdom' motifs, and the plausible interpretation of 'When will you come to me?' as expressing a longing for a divine revelation like the one Solomon experienced in 1 Kings 3, shows evidence that the poet does not share the pessimism of Psalm 89 with regard: either to the stability of Israel's covenant relationship with Yahweh, or the necessity and function of the institution of the monarchy. On the other hand, the implied critique of Solomon's idolatry, and the corresponding unambiguous affirmation of covenant loyalty suggests a king in the mold of Hezekiah or Josiah, thus making the Psalm read as a Royal Manifesto set within a period of reformation and renewal.

The psalmist in Ancient Israel offers a refreshing model of how one may lead with character and courage in challenging times. At a time in history when the character-ethic has given way to the personality-ethic, when image has trumped the substantial, Psalm 101 recalls Christians in leadership to the most necessary commitment of their calling: the commitment to consistently look to honour God at all times (101:1); the commitment to rigorously maintain personal holiness (101:2-3); and, the commitment to courageously uphold social righteousness (101:4-5). It may be safely said that the church in Sri Lanka, and worldwide, has never felt more acutely the need for leaders in the mould of Psalm 101.



# **'REFRESH MY HEART IN CHRIST': PHILEMON AS A CASE STUDY IN RECONCILIATION FOR THE SRI LANKAN CHURCH**

MANO EMMANUEL

## **INTRODUCTION**

Max Turner points out that this letter gives us an important insight into Paul's view of reconciliation although the Greek term *katalesso* does not occur. He goes on to say that Philemon is "probably the most detailed discussion in the NT" on the subject.<sup>1</sup> We eavesdrop on a conversation between the aged apostle Paul and the head of a church in Colossae. Philemon is known for his love for the church. Presumably though, he would have not known what to do about Onesimus, formerly a possession in his household, now part of the church. Paul speaks into this situation which is fraught with complexity as culture encounters gospel claims. This small letter had been claimed by those who wanted the institution of slavery upheld, as well as those wanting to abolish it as incompatible with the gospel, each insisting that Paul supported them. The fact that Paul addresses an issue of a broken relationship between two Christians who are socially divided is always relevant to a church that struggles to experience and maintain the unity in diversity the New

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<sup>1</sup> Max Turner, "Human reconciliation in the New Testament with special reference to Philemon, Colossians and Ephesians." (*European Journal of Theology* 16, no. 1: 2007) p37.

Testament describes so beautifully. The Sri Lankan church is no exception as it tries to maintain its witness in a divided society where conflict often exacerbates to violence and where might makes right. Within the church too, conflicts abound and are rarely resolved in ways that honour God and preserve relationships. People react to conflict by ignoring each other, gossiping, nurturing bitterness or moving away. Sri Lankan society, like the society of the community of the New Testament church, is considered an honour-shame based culture, and so this essay attempts to read the letter from this social scientific perspective, asking if the Sri Lankan church can find principles for reconciliation within this small epistle.

### **The Social Context**

The Mediterranean culture of the New Testament was an honour-shame culture.<sup>2</sup> This meant it was a collectivist culture where people saw themselves not as autonomous, introspective individuals but as part of a collective. Such persons have been described as 'dyadic' in that they always thought of themselves, not on their own terms but on the basis of at least one other person's opinion. That person would probably be the leader or central figure of the group.<sup>3</sup> The most basic of these groups was the family or kin-group. These kin-groups exerted a powerful influence both on the self-understanding and the behaviour of its members. People lived their lives in accordance with the expectations placed on

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<sup>2</sup> See J.G. Peristiany, *Honour and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society*, (USA: University of Chicago, 1966),

David A. deSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship and Purity: Unlocking New Testament Culture*, (Illinois: IVP Academic, 2000), Bruce Malina, *The New Testament World: Insights from Cultural Anthropology*, (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001).

<sup>3</sup> Bruce Malina, 'Understanding New Testament Persons, in Richard R Rohrbaugh (Ed) *The Social Sciences and New Testament Interpretation*, (Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1996), p45.



them by their group. People also owed an allegiance only to their kin group. “Out group members are fair game for challenges, deception, and lies or general unconcern.”<sup>4</sup> People were judged and assessed according to stereotypes. Basic to this way of perceiving people was the belief that “behaviour and character were fixed and unchanging.”<sup>5</sup> A slave would always have a ‘slave mentality’ and an aristocrat would always be an aristocrat. “Just as animals looked and behaved the way they did because of their genetic source and place of origin, so too with people.”<sup>6</sup>

About one in five people living within the city of Rome was a slave.<sup>7</sup> Slavery in the ancient world was very different from slavery in the modern era. For example, no one was consigned to slavery simply through belonging to a particular race, and slave and free could not be told apart simply by appearance or attire.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, slavery fundamentally reduced the person to the status of a piece of property (‘a living tool’ as famously defined by Aristotle). It was “subjection to the power of another...a fundamental alienation, a “shame” ...a social death.”<sup>9</sup> Slaves might be occupied in a variety of pursuits from cleaners and cooks to child-minders and housekeepers. However, they still had no legal rights and were obliged to do what they were told and to go where they were instructed. This included being separated from their family and being sold or sent away. The situation a slave served in was dependent

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<sup>4</sup> Malina, ‘Understanding Persons’, 49.

<sup>5</sup> Craig de Vos, Craig S. ‘Once a Slave, Always a Slave? Slavery, Manumission and Relational Patterns in Paul’s letter to Philemon’, *JSNT* 82, (2001) 93.

<sup>6</sup> Malina, ‘Understanding Persons.’ 49.

<sup>7</sup> David A. deSilva, Honor, *Patronage, Kinship and Purity*, (Illinois: IVP Academic, 2000), 190.

<sup>8</sup> deSilva, *Honor, Patronage*, 190.

<sup>9</sup> Turner, ‘Human reconciliation’, 41.

on the kind of master he or she had and the relationship between them. "As a system founded on force, slavery was inevitably accompanied by fear, both the owners' fear of their slaves' intrigues and the slaves' fear of the whims of their masters."<sup>10</sup> However favourable their lot, a slave's greatest desire was to be free. One of the commonest ways a slave responded to an unfavourable situation was to run away.<sup>11</sup> Runaway slaves would try to disappear in a big city or a far off land, normally embarking on a life of crime to exist. A slave might also run for refuge to a temple, where they might make a payment to the gods and plead with the priests to be released in the name of the gods.<sup>12</sup> They might also flee to a temple or a statue of the emperor, not for freedom, but in the hope that they would be sold on to a different and better master.<sup>13</sup>

### **What kind of man is Philemon?**

Philemon is presumably a wealthy man since he is a slave owner and also the owner of a house big enough for the church to use as a meeting place. He is therefore also one of their leaders, and in cultural terms would be seen as the church's benefactor or patron.<sup>14</sup> Paul refers to him as a "friend and fellow worker" (1b) and speaks warmly of him, commending his love for the Christians and his faith (vv 4-5). Paul's greeting suggests that if Philemon was another kind of man, Paul might have needed to take a different approach

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<sup>10</sup> John M. G. Barclay, "Paul, Philemon and the Dilemma of Christian Slave-Ownership, *NTS*, Vol 37, (1991), 167.

<sup>11</sup> Barclay, 'Paul, Philemon', 169.

<sup>12</sup> Bruce Nicholls and Brian Wintle, *Colossians and Philemon*, (Singapore: ATA, 2005), 200.

<sup>13</sup> David A deSilva, *An Introduction to the New Testament: Contexts, Methods and Ministry Formation*, (Illinois: IVP Academic, 2004), 670.

<sup>14</sup> DeSilva, *Honor, Patronage*, 124.

with him (8-9).<sup>15</sup> But since Philemon's reputation for love for his church is such, Paul can appeal to him to recognize how the gospel's claims can be displayed in this situation. Barclay describes Philemon as "the man to whom it is easy to appeal."<sup>16</sup>

In his context, Philemon had 'ascribed' honour, that is, honour that was his because of his birth as a wealthy, free male. He also has 'acquired' honour, in the church at least, as the host and patron of the church. His status is very different from that of the slave, Onesimus, and the imprisoned Paul. The system of patronage was widespread in the Mediterranean world. A patron-client relationship was one between people of unequal social status, in which the socially 'superior' patron extended his socially 'inferior' client certain benefits, for example protection and the use of his influence to gain career advances, position and so on, in exchange for his client's loyalty, services and willingness to uphold his patron's honour.<sup>17</sup> Although this was a relationship which was vulnerable to exploitation and based on an uneasy alliance, at its best, it was closely linked to personal honour and obligations and strengthened by "the values of friendship, loyalty and fidelity."<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> The temptation is to take a text that describes or deals with conflict and use it as a model for every situation but the New Testament describes different ways in which the apostles dealt with conflicts, or advice others in such situations (e.g. Acts 6, Acts 15:37-38, Gal 2: 11-13, 1 Tim 5:20 etc).

<sup>16</sup> William Barclay, *The letters to Timothy, Titus and Philemon*, (Edinburgh: St Andrew Press, 1976), 277.

<sup>17</sup> John H Elliott, 'Patronage and Clientele', in R. Rohrbaugh, *The Social Sciences and New Testament Interpretation*, (Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1996), 148.

<sup>18</sup> Elliott, 'Patronage', 149.

We have no indication of what Philemon felt about his slave's behavior. Had he spoken to the rest of the church about it? Had it caused him shame to be defied in this way by such a lowly member of his household? Had his relationship with his slave (even if Onesimus was an unbeliever) been worthy of a Christian master (Eph 6:9, Col 4:1 etc)? Perhaps he had been gracious and kind to his slave or perhaps he has not, in which case he might have had an uneasy conscience about his behavior. David deSilva points out the interesting fact that Onesimus had received Christ as a result of his encounter with Paul, but not within Philemon's household, in spite of the church that met there!<sup>19</sup> Marcus Barth suggests that if Philemon had treated Onesimus the way both Jew and Gentile contemporary literature urged, he would indeed have treated Onesimus as a brother, that is, with decency and fairness, and Onesimus would not have run away.<sup>20</sup> On the other hand, Onesimus is described as "useless" to Philemon (v11), and that must in part at least be due to the slave's own disposition and actions.<sup>21</sup>

### **What had Onesimus done wrong?**

Theories abound regarding Onesimus' actions. It is often assumed he has stolen money from his master and run away.<sup>22</sup> While the fact that he is now with Paul implies that he did leave his master's house, theft is nowhere explicitly stated in the letter. DeSilva argues that this speculation owes more to the common Greek and Roman tales of the 'crafty slave',

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<sup>19</sup> deSilva, *Introduction*, 670.

<sup>20</sup> Marcus Barth and Helmut Blanke, *The letter to Philemon*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, UK: William B Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2000), 316.

<sup>21</sup> Barth suggests that Onesimus might have lived with the epithet 'useless' for so long he had believed it and despaired. *Philemon*, 342.

<sup>22</sup> Barclay, 'Paul, Philemon', 163.

portrayed in comedies, who stole from his master and either used that money to pay for his release, or fled before he could be discovered.<sup>23</sup> Some scholars suggest that Onesimus had been sent by the church to offer assistance and perhaps financial aid to Paul and stayed on.<sup>24</sup> However, based on the description of him being “useless”, and not being a believer, it seems unlikely that Philemon would have sent Onesimus on such an important errand to Paul. It is more likely, as Barclay concludes that Onesimus ran away.<sup>25</sup> After meeting Paul, Onesimus had converted to Christianity and become a source of companionship and service to Paul (11-12).

Furthermore, it is obvious he has done Philemon some injury for which Paul offers to take responsibility (v18). It is possible that Onesimus stole some small items from the household in order to fund his journey.<sup>26</sup> The fact that Onesimus decided to run away and to risk such a long journey (1,200 miles from Colossae to Rome) seems to indicate a severe break down in the relationship between slave and master. Onesimus risked both the physical hazards of the journey as well as the terrible consequences of being caught.<sup>27</sup> If he had been sent back to his master, this escapade could have led to severe punishment and reduced his chances of ever being considered for release. Runaway slaves faced a penalty of a severe flogging, torture and even execution by such cruel forms as crucifixion.<sup>28</sup> Whatever else he had done, he had compounded his crime by running away.

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<sup>23</sup>deSilva, *Introduction*, 670.

<sup>24</sup> Barclay, ‘Paul, Philemon’, 163.

<sup>25</sup> Barclay, ‘Paul, Philemon’, 165.

<sup>26</sup> Turner, ‘Human Reconciliation’, 40.

<sup>27</sup> Turner, ‘Human Reconciliation’, 39.

<sup>28</sup> Turner, ‘Human Reconciliation’, 39.

Some scholars suggest that Onesimus may have set out to find Paul rather than have met him by accident. A slave who was fearful of the consequence of some dispute with his master might flee to a patron or friend of his master to seek refuge and mediation. If this was the slave's intention, his action could be viewed as being in the interests of his master and therefore not liable to punishment. He would not be a fugitive because he would be considered still a part of his master's household.<sup>29</sup> Turner puts forward the theory that Onesimus sought a patron who would advocate his manumission. It is interesting that Paul at no point mentions Onesimus's repentance. Evidently in Paul's eyes, he has done nothing that requires repentance.<sup>30</sup> Paul does say "if he has wronged you in any way, or owes you anything..." (v18) thus acknowledging that Philemon may have suffered some loss, maybe even the loss due to the service Onesimus should have provided in the household.

### **What is Paul's relationship to the two men?**

DeSilva points out that in social terms Paul is Philemon's social inferior. Paul is not wealthy. He works with his hands and his itinerant lifestyle makes him an unknown figure in the cities he visits, though his Roman citizenship is one thing in his favour.<sup>31</sup> And yet, in the letter, not only is there an implied equality, Paul even portrays himself as Philemon's benefactor or patron based on the fact that Paul led Philemon to Christ. It is Philemon who is indebted to Paul and not the other way around.<sup>32</sup> Philemon is Paul's client. Paul may therefore quite

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<sup>29</sup> Turner, 'Human Reconciliation', 39. See also deSilva, *Introduction*, 670.

<sup>30</sup> Turner, 'Human reconciliation', 39.

<sup>31</sup> deSilva, *Introduction*, 671.

<sup>32</sup> deSilva, *Introduction*, 671.

legitimately require of Philemon a benefit, not monetary but perhaps of greater value (Ph19, 20).

Paul does however seem to emphasize his own weakness and shame. He identifies himself as a prisoner (v1), the only time he begins an epistle in this way. But that shame becomes an honour because he is not a prisoner of the Roman Empire but of Christ who has supreme honour in the church. Paul is being all things to all people here – he identifies himself both with Philemon and the status of patron, but also with Onesimus the slave. Just as Paul is father to Philemon he is also father to Onesimus (10, 12). Philemon therefore must recognize that Onesimus is now his brother (16, 18).

### **What does Paul want?**

Paul does not ask for Onesimus to be freed (manumission). Barclay suggests that he deliberately keeps his request vague because both options open to Philemon are fraught with problems.<sup>33</sup> If he manumits Onesimus, he is setting a precedent which would make him unpopular with the other slave owners. It would also mean he would have to manumit any other Christian slaves in his home, causing either resentment among the other slaves or a sudden rush of slaves to 'convert' so as to obtain the same benefits. Also he will be seen to be rewarding a slave who ought to have been disciplined. On the other hand, if he does not free him, how does he treat him as a brother? Does he treat him differently at church gatherings than at other times? The wording of Paul's request is such that it is ambiguous. It could be interpreted as a request for manumission or for a new relationship in which Onesimus is both slave and brother. "Thus we are left with the particular paradox of a letter which is framed with consummate skill, to induce Philemon to act in

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<sup>33</sup> Barclay, 'Paul, Philemon', 175-177.

the way Paul wants and yet leaves extraordinarily unclear what exactly is being requested.”<sup>34</sup>

De Vos argues that Paul was not being ambiguous. After all, he expects to be obeyed; therefore he must have given a command.<sup>35</sup> He asks the question, “What difference would manumission make here?” DeVos argues cogently that manumission, though it might bring some relaxing of constraints and punishment, did not significantly alter the relationship between slave and master. He points to several examples from ancient Roman society indicating that freedmen or women could still be expected to carry out similar if not the same duties as before manumission, be punished as harshly for disappointing their masters, remained disenfranchised and could even be sold again. As such says de Vos, even if Paul had asked for manumission it would not necessarily have affected the relationship that existed between Philemon and Onesimus.<sup>36</sup> DeVos’s conclusion is that Paul was asking for Onesimus to be treated as a brother and even more radical, to be treated as a guest (v17). While a brother must be treated with care and respect, a guest must receive the best a host had to offer. The honour of the host was linked to the honour of his guest. A guest took precedence over everyone in the household except the host’s parent.<sup>37</sup> What Paul was asking for Onesimus, was the freedom, care and honour worthy of his new status as a brother in the Lord.

DeSilva suggests that Paul wants Philemon to send Onesimus back to him to be a companion and help to Paul, a help which Philemon ought to be providing, but perhaps cannot

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<sup>34</sup> Barclay, ‘Paul, Philemon’, 174.

<sup>35</sup> de Vos, ‘Once a slave’, 91.

<sup>36</sup> de Vos, ‘Once a slave’, 98-101.

<sup>37</sup> deVos, ‘Once a slave’, 103.



personally due to his own responsibilities to family and church. Being informed of Paul's need in this way would make Philemon want to respond positively to his patron or friend. It would also make his refusal to help a friend in such circumstances unacceptable.<sup>38</sup> However, if Paul wants to see Onesimus being treated as a brother within the household, it seems too easy an option for Philemon to send Onesimus to Paul and rid himself of an embarrassing situation. More likely that Onesimus is to stay with Philemon and live out this new relationship at least until Paul visits, when Onesimus might be released to assist Paul as the "new Timothy."<sup>39</sup> This might be the "even more" that Paul expects Philemon to do (v21).

Therefore, what Paul is asking for is far more radical and costly than manumission, more than a return to the status quo with Philemon overlooking Onesimus' faults. He is asking for a transformed relationship. – The replacing of a master-slave relationship with a relationship between brothers and between host and guest.<sup>40</sup> Equality between Paul and Onesimus is implied in the interchangeable relationships: "welcome him as you would welcome me" (v17); "that he might be of service to me in your place" (v13). 'It appears that for him (Paul) reconciliation means something more like the reversal of the alienations which allow and define the demeaning conditions of "slavery."<sup>41</sup> If Philemon is to treat Onesimus as a brother, not just in the spirit (i.e. during times of worship) but in the flesh (in all the mundane aspects of family life), then this "largely gives back the personal identity,

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<sup>38</sup> deSilva, *Honor, Patronage*, 125.

<sup>39</sup>R. C. Lucas, *The Message of Colossians and Philemon*, (Leicester: IVP, 1980), 187.

<sup>40</sup> DeVos, 'Once a slave', 101.

<sup>41</sup> Turner, 'Human Reconciliation', 41.

honour and social standing (“brother” rather than “slave”) that the institution itself effectively denied or effaced.”<sup>42</sup>

Whatever else Paul is hoping for, his main interest is that there is reconciliation between the brothers-not forced, not superficial, but a voluntary, heartfelt, costly, sustained relationship with all its attendant difficulties. This calls for humility on the part of both men – for Onesimus to return and seek restoration and for Philemon to offer not a long suffering forbearance or condescension but brotherly love.

While many commentators point to the similarity between the letter to Philemon and other contemporary letters from patrons on behalf of their clients, N. T. Wright points out the contrast between this epistle and the often cited letter of Pliny to his friend Sabinianus on behalf of a freedman.<sup>43</sup>

“OUR freedman, whom you lately mentioned to me with displeasure, has been with me, and threw himself at my feet with as much submission as he could have fallen at yours. He earnestly requested me with many tears, and even with all the eloquence of silent sorrow, to intercede for him; ....in short, he convinced me by his whole behaviour that he sincerely repents of his fault. I am persuaded he is thoroughly reformed, because he seems deeply sensible of his guilt. ... . Concede something to his youth, to his tears, and to your own natural mildness of temper: do not make him uneasy any longer, and I will add, too, do not make yourself so; for a man of your kindness of heart cannot be angry without feeling great uneasiness. ... and in so much the stronger terms as I have very sharply and severely reprov'd him, positively threatening never to interpose again in his behalf. But

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<sup>42</sup> Turner, ‘Human Reconciliation’, 41.

<sup>43</sup> N.T Wright, *Colossians and Philemon*, (Leicester, UK./Grand Rapids Michigan: IVP, 1986), 167.

though it was proper to say this to him, in order to make him more fearful of offending, I do not say so to you. I may perhaps, again have occasion to entreat you upon his account, and again obtain your forgiveness; <sup>44</sup>

Pliny appeals to Sabinianus' natural qualities and temperament. Paul asks Philemon to set aside his dignity and self interests. Pliny asks only for some concessions for the freedman, Paul asks for reconciliation, Pliny aligns himself with his friend, not with the slave, assuring Sabinianus that he has reprimanded and warned the freedman regarding his actions. Paul identifies with Onesimus as much as with Philemon.<sup>45</sup>

## **Applications for the Church in Sri Lanka**

### **Paul leads by example**

Paul's warm appreciation of Onesimus shows that Paul has embraced the new community of Christ in which slavery is no longer a barrier to brotherhood. In the Sri Lankan church, we would find it hard to break the barriers that divide – between ethnic groups, gender, between those of the 'middle-class' with those of the 'lower class', or 'servant class', even though we rarely use the word 'servant' these days. In most homes domestic help would not be expected to sit with, eat with or socialize with the employer's family. In many organizations, 'minor staff' does not socialize with Executives. It is debatable if some church leaders would find it comfortable to share close fellowship even with their junior leaders. Would a white collar, middle class CEO find it 'normal' to have a 'brother' from another class/caste socialize with him, question him, teach him? Some might find it difficult to share the communion cup with someone from a lower status. When

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<sup>44</sup> Pliny the Younger (A.D. 62?–c.A.D. 113). Letters. <http://www.bartleby.com/9/4/1103.html>,

<sup>45</sup> Wright, *Colossians*, 167.

honour is conferred on leaders in the church, new barriers are sometimes formed, not only through a sense of status but also through suspicion and insecurity. Paul who had in every aspect “reason to be proud” (Phil 3: 4ff) was able to truly love and appreciate a fellow believer from a completely different background and what is more, to place his own reputation on the line to speak on his behalf. Paul’s intervention on Onesimus’ behalf not only changed Onesimus’ life but also the life of the Church. Christian leaders in Sri Lanka would do well to emulate the boldness and conviction with which Paul was prepared to ‘put his money where his mouth is.’ Paul is aware of his position and his authority. Yet it is not just a technique but part of which he is that he is comfortable identifying himself as brother to both slave-owner and slave. For him Onesimus is not defined by his slave class, as the honour-shame culture dictates, but by his being in Christ. For Paul Onesimus’s future is not determined by social status – the possibilities are endless for someone who is a new creation (2 Cor 5:12).<sup>46</sup>

In his opening salutation, Paul chooses not to describe himself as ‘apostle’ as he does in other almost every other of his epistles. He chooses to describe himself as ‘servant of Christ’ (v1, 9). By laying aside apostolic authority to command, he also sets an example to Philemon who is being asked to set aside his rights as slave owner.

### **Paul openly addresses a shameful situation in the church**

The letter is addressed to the whole church, thus making what was a ‘private’ matter between Philemon and his slave

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<sup>46</sup> In a culture which stereotyped people, Onesimus could have been written off as a ‘typical slave’: ‘lazy, negligent, wilful, cowardly and criminal.’ DeVos, ‘Once a slave’, 95.

Onesimus into a matter for the church.<sup>47</sup> In the Sri Lankan culture this would cause a lot of problems. Church leaders and/or affluent donors would be deeply offended that such a matter which involved them was made public knowledge, or that anyone should advise them to do what they “ought to do” (v8). If the matter did become public knowledge, most people would probably want to support the cause of the wealthy patron who provided the church somewhere to meet. It is quite likely that a lot of gossip would arise about what Onesimus had done and how undeserving he was of the privilege of being owned by a Christian master.

Paul considers this situation important enough to write a letter to Philemon which will be seen by others.<sup>48</sup> The “you”s in v3 and v22-25 are plural.<sup>49</sup> In the agonistic culture of the time, the fact that this letter was not a personal missive confined to Philemon but a letter to the church would be considered a challenge to Philemon’s honour.<sup>50</sup> Paul forces a situation on Philemon to which he must respond. In Sri Lanka this would be seen as shaming the leader/pastor. Quite likely, a modern day Philemon would simply extricate himself from his relationship with this troublesome apostle and seek out

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<sup>47</sup> Kirk D Lyons Sr. points out that the inclusion of other names in the address is not just part of Paul’s technique to apply pressure on Philemon to comply. Instead their inclusion and the letter’s inclusion in the canon suggest that the letter had didactic value for the whole church and not just for Philemon. Kirk D. Lyons Sr. ‘Paul’s confrontation with class.’ *Cross Currents* 55, no. 3 (Fall2005), 322-339. 121.

<sup>48</sup> Petersen adds the fact that by mentioning Timothy Paul is making the matter known even more widely than in the local church. Petersen, Norman R. *Rediscovering Paul: Philemon and the Sociology of Paul’s narrative World*. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 100.

<sup>49</sup> Lucas, *Colossians*, 184.

<sup>50</sup> Chris Frilingos, “For my child, Onesimus’: Paul and domestic power in Philemon.” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 119, no. 1 (Spring2000), 99.

another apostle whose teaching was more congenial. Paul's agenda for the church is growth to maturity, not protection of an individual's status. Unfortunately, the church often does seem not to desire maturity with the same passion that Paul does. We are 'double minded people' as James would call us (James 1:8), wanting to be church but also flirting with the desire to protect our image, not upsetting the influential and rich and preserving the status quo. This is seen in the fact that serious sins like child abuse or spousal abuse, sexual misconduct among leaders, or financial misappropriation can be covered up 'for the sake of the church' or for the protection of the perpetrator who enjoys a privileged status in the church, whereas, for the sake of the name of Christ, we should seek confession, repentance, restitution and restoration.

Why does Paul not write privately to Philemon? Would that not be more in accordance with Jesus' teaching in Mt 18: 15-17 and serve to save face for Philemon? Is Paul being radically counter cultural here in boldly making Philemon's dilemma public? Paul is not seeking to show Philemon his fault (he has still not made his decision regarding Onesimus) but to give him an opportunity to respond wisely to a situation which must be known to many in the church already, and to act in a way that will prove his honour. Philemon's decision about Onesimus' future cannot be private because Onesimus is now part of the larger household of God and not merely Philemon's household.<sup>51</sup> However, Paul chooses not to command, but to entreat as brother and co-worker as well as apostle. Since he occupies a position of authority, in saying what he does, he does not shame Philemon. It is not a humiliation to obey the

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<sup>51</sup> deSilva, *Introduction* 669. See also Lyons 'Paul's confrontation' p122 in which he suggests that the use of a letter, in this case unavoidable because of Paul's incarceration, gives the hearer(s) time and space for reflection which a face to face encounter would not allow.

words of someone who is recognized as having the authority to command.<sup>52</sup>

Onesimus must also go back to the master he wronged and face the consequences of his actions. As Barclay puts it, "Christianity is not out to help a man escape his past and run away from it; it is out to enable him to face his past and rise above it...Christianity is never escape. It is conquest."<sup>53</sup> Facing up the consequences of our actions is difficult in the Sri Lankan culture. To own up to a fault is to shame oneself. Paul defers to cultural values of honour and shame, patronage and clientele but moulds them to the needs of the church.

### **Paul is a mediator**

In Sri Lankan culture, a weaker person might require a mediator to speak on their behalf. For example, a person in domestic employment who has fallen out with his or her employer, or needs to ask for some special favour may seek out someone of the same social standing as the employer to speak on his or her behalf. DeSilva points out that this kind of mediation was common in the Greco-Roman world. Citing Pliny's letters to the emperor Trajan on behalf of Voconius, he shows that a client may approach a patron to ask a favour on behalf of another. When considering the request that Voconius be given a senatorial office, Pliny stands as guarantor of Voconius' character. Trajan's assessment of Pliny, not Voconius will be the basis of his decision.<sup>54</sup> In a similar way, Paul asks that Onesimus be judged and treated, not on the basis of his past behavior but on the basis of Paul's reputation (v17).

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<sup>52</sup> Julian Pitt Rivers, 'Honour and Social Status' in John G. Peristiany (ed) *Honour and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society*. (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1965), 58.

<sup>53</sup> Barclay, *Colossians*, 281.

<sup>54</sup> deSilva, *Introduction*, 674.

While we should be working to create structures and a culture in which brothers and sisters are able to ‘speak the truth in love’ to one another, one step towards empowering the ‘weaker’ brothers and sisters in our context too, would be to speak on their behalf, to accompany them to meetings in which they feel disempowered and so on. Ajith Fernando remarks that although our theology affirms equality, our structures may deny them. He mentions one example: the fact that often people who are not fluent in English are made to feel inadequate in churches or organizations when meetings are held in that language.<sup>55</sup>

### **Paul models the proper use of authority**

In v8, Paul declares that instead of commanding he will appeal. Barth suggests that the whole of Philemon, especially v8-9 “can be considered a discussion of the proper and improper use and recognition of authority”.<sup>56</sup> Just as Paul renounces his power to command, so Philemon must set aside his own ‘rights’ in order to welcome Onesimus back. And, in spite of Paul’s reticence, Philemon must surely recognize the apostolic authority. His apostolic authority is ‘veiled’, so that Philemon is encouraged to make a response born of “love and a sense of duty” rather than simply obedience to authority.<sup>57</sup>

The meaning of *parakalo* (‘appeal’) covers a wide semantic field including “calling for help, inviting, summoning, entreating, pleading, urging, exhorting, charging, encouraging or warning, comforting, consoling and cheering up.” The fact that these words occur so frequently in Paul’s letters (the verb 54 times and noun 20 times) shows that these were a foundational aspect of Paul’s didactic methods.<sup>58</sup> This,

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<sup>55</sup> Ajith Fernando, personal email dated 15 July 2013.

<sup>56</sup> Barth, *Philemon*, 309.

<sup>57</sup> Lyons, ‘Paul’s Confrontation’, 124.

<sup>58</sup> Barth, *Philemon*, 316-317.



although collectivistic cultures tend to be authoritarian. DeVos states that in such contexts, emphasis is placed on 'values such as obligation, duty, obedience to authority, subordination and acquiescence, dependency and respect for tradition.'<sup>59</sup>

Paul's authority comes through in his request but it is a spiritual authority that he has earned so that even though he does not invoke his apostolic identity, we are still aware of it. Paul clearly relies heavily on his relationship to Philemon. In Sri Lanka, close, honest, accountable relationships are hard to come by for Christian workers in general and church leaders in particular. An inability to keep confidences, competitiveness and judgmentalism on one side, and insecurity, pride and defensiveness on the other are some of the reasons for this. Paul shows the fruit that is borne when he can appeal to someone whom he genuinely appreciates in the Lord rather than command. Barth remarks that Paul lays on Philemon's shoulder a hand that is both warm and heavy. The warmth is experienced through the genuine appreciation and commendation he receives, and the pressure is felt in the exhortation to continue to be the leader Paul can be proud of.<sup>60</sup>

It is hard to miss the imprint of the incarnation and passion of Christ in Paul's response to Onesimus. Paul shares in the sufferings of the slave by being himself a prisoner, but his sentence is due to his voluntary identification with Christ. So too Christ voluntarily identifies himself with us in his incarnation, allowing the pain and humiliation of his confinement in time and space to be part of his mission to save those who are slaves to sin. Paul absorbs the cost of being a peacemaker, being willing to place to his account what

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<sup>59</sup> DeVos, 'Once a slave', 95.

<sup>60</sup> Barth, *Philemon*, 253.

is owed by Onesimus to Philemon, as Christ absorbs the wrath that should fall on us, thus making peace in his body on the cross. Paul shows us the meaning of grace in his actions on Onesimus' behalf. "Paul's specific repayment of Onesimus' debt (vv 18-19a) was founded upon and intentionally reflects the payment for all sin which the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished for the world (for example, Isa 53:11; Matt 1:21; Rom 3:25; 1 John 2:2)." <sup>61</sup>

In Sri Lanka, much of the ills of nation and church alike can be attributed to abuse of power. Whether it is the power of politicians, pastors, husbands, parents, or employers, we have learned the bitter lesson that power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. 'Servant leadership' has become a buzzword with little adherence. Barth comments that from Ignatius of Antioch to Theodore of Mopsuestia to Calvin, interpreters have commented on the humility shown by Paul and commended an attitude of meekness to be shown by leaders. <sup>62</sup>

### **Paul allows the individual to decide**

The second person singular pronoun in its various forms is frequently used. In v2c, 4-8, 10-23 the singular form of the verb follows the term "brother". The decision is to be the decision of an individual. <sup>63</sup> This letter is a "model of non-directive eye to eye pastoral counselling."

Paul's desire in this is that Philemon be given a chance to show the maturity expected of a leader in the church. Paul allows Philemon the opportunity to choose how to work out the ramifications of Onesimus being a brother in Christ (8-16), to

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<sup>61</sup> Nordling, John G. 2007. "The gospel in Philemon." *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 71, no. 1: 71-83. p14.

<sup>62</sup> Barth, *Philemon*, 319.

<sup>63</sup> Barth, *Philemon*, 112.

grapple with how all that he knows about and has experienced of the gospel must apply in this particular situation. Paul deliberately refrains from unleashing the full force of his authority, so that the hearers can learn to make independent decisions on the road to maturity.<sup>64</sup>

“In the service of Christ, the free man Paul asks for a free man’s response.”<sup>65</sup> Paul has faith that the Spirit’s work in Philemon will produce the required fruit. Authoritarian leadership in the church makes the assumption that the ordinary believer cannot be trusted to follow the Spirit’s leading. But true spiritual maturity cannot come through coercion or pressure. A free choice means that there can be reconciliation. A forced taking back will result in bitterness and resentment. Also Philemon’s honour is maintained. By responding positively, Philemon gains greater honour as someone who is trusted to do the right thing (v8 ‘what you ought to do’). Paul shows that he has complete confidence that Philemon will do the right thing – he expects the best from him and gets it. If we expect very little from one another, we will probably get what we expect.<sup>66</sup>

In a country where many believers are first generation converts, the church is weakened when new believers are encouraged to assume leadership responsibilities before they have been properly disciplined, when gifts and not fruit are emphasized and when pragmatism replaces wisdom. How can mature leaders encourage their emerging leaders to grow in wisdom? Is it by insisting on submission, and obedience, and through the arbitrary exercise of power as demonstrated by the Roman Empire? Philemon is given the benefit of time and

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<sup>64</sup> Bengt Holmberg, *Paul and Power*, (Oregon, Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1978), p82-83. Holmberg points out that in Philemon’s case, the options are limited by what Paul himself says.

<sup>65</sup> Barth, *Philemon*, 316.

<sup>66</sup> Barclay, *Colossians*, 283.

the discretion to decide 'what you ought to do' (v8). The word implies a code of conduct that befits someone of Philemon's status.<sup>67</sup> The church benefits from encouraging those of high social status to pursue honourable behaviour. Throughout history, the concept of '*noblesse oblige*' suggested that privilege entails responsibility. In Sri Lankan culture, however, the higher the social status, power or privilege, the lower the responsibility one is expected to show others and this can attitude can infiltrate the church if not challenged.

### **Paul invokes the familial aspect of the church**

In both ancient Greek and Roman societies there were other voluntary organizations one might join including religious, social and economic associations. The church might easily be mistaken for one of these but Paul grounds the identity of the church not in common activities, skills or the voluntary nature of the group but in the work of Christ who has made a new humanity.<sup>68</sup>

The letter, says Lucas, "in the deepest sense...is a family letter, from brother to brother, concerning a third brother."<sup>69</sup> Paul uses the technique of assigning roles to the main players in this scenario as members of the same Roman *domus*, or household. In the Roman household the *paterfamilias* wielded an undisputed power over other members. The Roman Empire added weight to this image by elevating its leading citizen, the emperor, as the supreme *paterfamilias* of the family of citizens.<sup>70</sup> Paul makes full use of the range of meanings associated with the household language (1 Thess 2:11-12, Gal 4:1-7, 1 Cor 4:14-21). As we have seen, Paul calls Philemon his

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<sup>67</sup> Barth, *Philemon*, 313.

<sup>68</sup> Marianne Meye Thompson *Colossians and Philemon*, (Michigan: Wm B Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2005), 236.

<sup>69</sup> Lucas, *Message*, 186.

<sup>70</sup> Frilingos, 'Child', p97.

“brother” (v 7) and Onesimus his “son” (v 10). Frilingos suggests that this strategy is used to challenge and displace Philemon’s authority and his claim over Onesimus.<sup>71</sup> But perhaps more in keeping with Paul’s methods, is that Paul is reminding the believers of what he has taught several times, of the closeness, intimacy and relationship to one another that results from being born again into a family whose head is God. Paul more often than not wants to stress the fatherly nature of his relationship to the church, taking care not to burden them with more rules than necessary (1 Thess 2:7-9, 2 Cor 12:14, 2 Cor 1:24).<sup>72</sup> The church is a ‘fictive kinship group’. It is the household of God.<sup>73</sup> DeSilva explains how the New Testament maintains the ethos of the household of God within the Church. The terms ‘brother’ and ‘sister’ are the ones most frequently used to describe the relationships within the church.<sup>74</sup> It may be significant, as Sabine Bieberstein and Brian McNeil note, that the letter addressed to Philemon also addresses a woman, Apphia, as witness.<sup>75</sup>

Mutual love, demonstrated in sharing resources, commitment to another’s spiritual welfare, and commitment to unity were some of the important characteristics of this family.<sup>76</sup> Another significant characteristic was a distinctly counter-cultural replacement of competition with cooperation and mutual honouring. While honour was sought outside the church by

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<sup>71</sup> Frilingos, ‘Child’, p100.

<sup>72</sup> Holmberg. *Paul*, 85. Holmberg says this is what Paul learned from Hillel and from Jesus’ own model.

<sup>73</sup> deSilva, *Honor, Patronage*, 200-239.

<sup>74</sup> deSilva, *Honor, Patronage*, 213.

<sup>75</sup> Sabine Bieberstein and Brian McNeil. "Disrupting the normal reality of slavery: a feminist reading of the Letter to Philemon." *Journal For The Study Of The New Testament* no. 79 (September 1, 2000): 105-116. P105-11.

<sup>76</sup> deSilva, *Honor, Patronage*, 220.

competition, believers were taught to “outdo one another in showing respect” (Rom 12:10), think of others more highly than themselves (Phil 2:3). They were taught that no one was less important than another but when one is hurt, all hurt and when one is honoured all are honoured (1 Cor 12:24-26).<sup>77</sup> Hierarchy must be replaced by mutual submission (Eph 6:1-9). Advocacy and forgiveness were also part of the family’s ethos (Mt 18:21-35, Gal 6:1-2). Family members were expected to cover up the shame or disgrace of a family member rather than allow it to be spread abroad. Thus Joseph does not wish to expose Mary to public humiliation (Mt 1:19).<sup>78</sup> Forgiveness and reconciliation were also expected of those within a kinship group.<sup>79</sup>

Paul’s role as *paterfamilias* includes a continuing educational role with three components: teaching, being a role model, and correction.<sup>80</sup> This relational model shapes the church’s mode of response to him -not as duty to an outsider but in the context of a family relationship. They owe him a debt that cannot be repaid (phl 19, cf 1 Thess 2:8) and should respond with grateful obedience.<sup>81</sup> The paternal relationship is at once “milder...and more demanding” for “when are you free from the obligation of respecting and obeying “father” and when have you repaid the debt of gratitude to the person who has given you life (eternal)?”<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> deSilva, Honor, *Patronage*, 212-222. deSilva states that what is true of the physical body is true of the social body of the household. What is felt by one is felt by all.

<sup>78</sup> deSilva, Honor, *Patronage*, 172.

<sup>79</sup> deSilva, Honor, *Patronage* 172.

<sup>80</sup> Holmberg, *Paul*, 78.

<sup>81</sup> Holmberg, *Paul*, 78.

<sup>82</sup> Holmberg, *Paul*, 79.

This familial view of the church is something that would help the Sri Lankan church with three provisos. It is not unknown for Christian leaders, especially in some types of church government, to assume a paternal role towards their followers. However this role has not been redeemed by being brought under the Lordship of Christ. That means that the role they assume is more similar to the role of the Roman paterfamilias who had absolute authority over his children, even the right of life and death. Christian leaders who abuse their workers verbally and even physically, who make decisions over who should marry and whom they may marry, who demand unquestioning obedience and exert draconian methods of discipline exist and seem to thrive. To those new to the faith, these models are not questioned because they are culturally acceptable (as seen in some political leaders). What is required are church leaders who will assume the role of the father described by Jesus – the one who sets aside dignity and offended pride and runs to welcome the prodigal home (Lk 15:11-32).

Secondly, this fatherly care must be devoid of favouritism. Paul modeled Jesus' own way of gentleness with the weak while being ready to sharply discipline those who continued to sin. Unfortunately the church can often be swayed to discriminate against the weak in favour of the strong – the male, the rich, the powerful, the confident have a voice and find privileges denied to the child, the woman, the poor, the timid.

Thirdly, Sri Lankan Christians need to see that while the gospel upholds family life, it also enlarges the borders of family so that family includes all those who love the Lord. The downside of a society in which family is important is that Christians see their responsibility to others end at their own front door. 'We have a tremendous opportunity before us to honor Christ by

saying his blood is more important than our own in determining who shall be our family.’<sup>83</sup>

### **Paul redefines the court of honour**

Philemon as a man who enjoys the status of ascribed and achieved honour might well feel that he will lose face in the wider community when it is known that he welcomed back a runaway slave with open arms. In a situation where the church’s values clashed with that of society in general, the church dealt with the loss of honour in society by showing that those embodying the virtues valued by the gospel were in fact worthy of honour, notwithstanding how they were beheld by the dominant culture. If the church continued to be true to the gospel, not just Philemon but others too would be subject to public loss of status and honour. What the gospel calls for is a determination to set aside earthly honour for the eternal honour bestowed on believers by God himself.<sup>84</sup>

De Silva shows how Paul, by writing to the whole church, allows the Christian community that meets in Philemon’s house to be the ‘court of reputation.’ The court of reputation is the ‘sole body of significant others whose approval or disapproval should be important to the individual.’<sup>85</sup> This individual takes his decision in full view of the church. The church is not just an observer but a participant in his decision. They must be satisfied with Philemon’s decision.<sup>86</sup> In fact, the church too must imitate Philemon and welcome Onesimus back as a brother.

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<sup>83</sup> deSilva, *Honor, Patronage*, 55, 238.

<sup>84</sup>David A. deSilva, *Despising Shame: Honor Discourse and Community Maintenance in the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Atlanta: SBL, 2008), 146ff.

<sup>85</sup> deSilva, *Introduction*, 674.

<sup>86</sup> Barth, *Philemon*, 113.



God was 'the supreme member' of this new court of reputation. He would bestow honour on the believer on the final day, but even before that, his approval could be experienced through the believer's own conscience (Rom 8:16-17; 1 Jn 3:21-22), through the scripture's affirmation and through the recognition of virtue by the church, the new family of God.<sup>87</sup> The leadership of the church played a vital role in bringing believers before this 'court of reputation', by describing their behavior as being either commendable, praiseworthy in God's eyes or not (Rom 1:8; 1 Cor 1:4-9; Col 1:3-8; 1 Thess 1:2-10; 2:13-16).<sup>88</sup> Paul therefore is one channel of God's approval when, as a church leader he affirms what is honourable in a given situation.

In Sri Lankan culture, where the church is increasingly being marginalized and even persecuted, Christians will need to take encouragement that honour is defined and conferred by the alternative court of reputation. Christian leaders then play an important role in being that channel of God's approval in the face of the shame that is applied to us by media and extremist propaganda.

### **Paul re-defines honour**

Philemon like Paul and Jesus ( Heb 12:2; 1 Pet 2:4-8) must 'despise shame' that society conferred on him in favour of the honour that would be conferred on him by God and the church, who together make up his court of reputation.<sup>89</sup> Paul constantly reminds Christians that it is God who decides what is honourable. Sri Lankan Christian leader and author Ajith Fernando points out that in the New Testament, categories of shame and honour are used to promote holiness (Eph. 5:3;

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<sup>87</sup> deSilva *Honor, Patronage*, 55ff

<sup>88</sup> deSilva, *Honor, Patronage*, 59.

<sup>89</sup> deSilva, *Honor, Patronage*, 54.

Eph. 5:4, 1 Cor. 15:34; see also 2 Thess. 3:14).<sup>90</sup> Fernando, a Methodist, draws a parallel between this New Testament emphasis on accountability and the community encouragement of holiness, and the early Methodist 'class' and 'band' system in which believers through close fellowship and accountability sought holiness.<sup>91</sup>

For the church in Sri Lanka, there is a challenge for leaders as well as believers to unite to honour those who embody Christian virtues. What difference might it make in a society where dishonesty, corruption, violence, and even murder can be and often are rewarded by other 'in groups', if the church was to unite behind believers, to encourage them to despise shame, and live by principles of truth, honesty, justice, forgiveness and other biblical values, in the face of insults or persecution by society. Although the church espouses these values, we are still tempted to honour the rich donor over the poor evangelist, we sympathize with, but think unworldly, the person who loses their job because they will not massage the figures, we forget rather than learn from the faithful disciple whose body is now too weak to allow her to serve. What would happen to the church if honour was heaped on those who embody Christian virtues rather than on those who hold social status or office (though one hopes the groups will not be mutually exclusive).

### **Paul asks Philemon to return grace for grace**

In terms of patron-client reciprocity, God is the supreme patron who has showered favour or 'grace' on his church. Although Paul does not remind Philemon of the grace he has received from Christ, there is sufficient mention of the

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<sup>90</sup>Ajith Fernando, 'Wesley Groups and Holiness' in Darrell L. Whitman (ed) *World Mission in the Wesleyan Spirit* (Franklin TN: Providence House Publishers, 2009). ,

<sup>91</sup> Fernando, 'Wesley,

relationship of the main players to Christ to form a basis for the appeal to grace (vv 4, 9, 16). Also, Philemon has received benefits from Paul his patron, which he ought to reciprocate. In fact he owes Paul his very life (vv19,20)

‘The fundamental ethos governing relationships of patrons and clients, benefactors and beneficiaries, and friends is that grace must answer grace. The receiving of favor must lead to the return of gratitude, or else the beauty and nobility of the relationship is defaced (disgraced).’<sup>92</sup>

What Paul encourages Philemon to do is to make a response of grace in the face of the grace he has received, not just from Paul but from God himself.

‘When the magnitude of God’s generosity is considered, gratitude and its fruits must of necessity fill our speech, attitudes and actions. The New Testament authors outline what a just and suitable response would entail, guiding us to act as honorable recipients of favor and averting us from making an ugly response of ingratitude, neglect or disloyalty, which would also lead to the danger of exclusion from future favors yet to be conferred...’<sup>93</sup>

In the world of the New Testament, ‘grace’ was not purely a religious term. It was used to refer to the reciprocity between patrons and clients, between friends and between humans and their God or gods.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> deSilva, *Honor, Patronage*, 155.

<sup>93</sup> deSilva, *Honor, Patronage*, 155.

<sup>94</sup> David A. deSilva. ‘Patronage and Reciprocity: The Context of Grace in the New Testament’, *Ashlands Theological Journal*, 31 (1991), 38.

'Grace' referred both to a particular act or gift of generosity from patron to client, as well as the attitude of a favourable disposition which gave rise to the act. The same term is also used to describe the response of gratitude at receiving the gifts from a benefactor or patron. The use of the same word for both the action and the response imply that one gives rise to the other- grace must be met with grace.<sup>95</sup>

Philemon is being asked to forgive rather than take revenge. Revenge is considered a normal reaction to an affront to honour in Sri Lankan culture. In unequal relationships, the more vulnerable, like students, employees, junior church workers and the like generally will not speak out for fear of repercussions for their future. As this is being written the newspapers carry the story of a government official who stormed into a school and made the headmistress kneel in front of him and threatened her with assault for daring to ask his daughter to lengthen the skirt of her uniform. Meanwhile in a tertiary education center a student has laid in wait for, and attacked a lecturer with a knife because she refused to accept his assignment which was submitted late.

The church needs to be continually reminded that we have all received grace from God, our ultimate benefactor, and this grace needs to be returned. We show gratitude to God when we offer grace to another. To be grateful and to show grace is honourable, while exacting revenge and ingratitude are vices which bring us shame.

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<sup>95</sup> deSilva, 'Patronage', 39. deSilva points to the well known artistic depiction of the 'three Graces' which in which the three young women represent the benefactor, the one who receives a gift and the one who returns it. The unbroken circle in which they dance suggests the continual giving and receiving giving beauty and continuity to the relationships.

### **Paul challenges the church to recognize the social implications of the gospel**

Lyons compares Philemon's situation with that of Ananias who being a respected Church leader was called to incorporate the man known as Saul into the Church. God spoke on the new apostles' behalf.<sup>96</sup> 'Paul, by his actions, refused to allow his audience the comfort of two worlds (religious and social) independent from one other. He illustrated their homology and God's mediation agitating both realms.'<sup>97</sup> Peterson states that Paul's demand "transforms Philemon's previously comfortable double life in the two domains by rendering the institution of slavery in the domain of the world as a rock and the institutional domain of the church, whose support Paul has cultivated in this letter, as a hard place."<sup>98</sup> This case represents for Paul a case not just of personal relationships but more deeply, of conflicting identities.<sup>99</sup> Will Philemon view his primary identity as being 'in Christ' or as 'master'? Paul, by bringing the case of one individual to the church, disrupts or 'ruptures' the normality of slavery and allows the new society created by the gospel to both perceive it anew and act on it.<sup>100</sup>

The church in Sri Lanka has been slow to recognize the social implications of the gospel in our context. During the many years of civil war when thousands of people were victims of discrimination, when thousands were being victimized and killed, the church in areas unaffected by the war largely ignored their plight. Shamefully some within the church claimed there was no problem in the country. Others still feel that it is not the church's role to meddle in matters of injustice and oppression because God has already ordained

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<sup>96</sup> Lyons 'Paul's Confrontation', 333.

<sup>97</sup> Lyons, 'Paul's Confrontation', 334.

<sup>98</sup> Petersen, *Rediscovering*, 289.

<sup>99</sup> Petersen, *Rediscovering*, 289.

<sup>100</sup> Bieberstein, and McNeil, 'Disrupting', 11.

governments for that. Paul, writing in a time when the church was a minority, like it is in Sri Lanka, sought the 'establishment of little oases where an alternative way of life was being practiced and could be observed.'<sup>101</sup> In post-war Sri Lanka, some churches and Christian Organizations are seeking to do that - to intentionally create counter-cultural, alternative societies where reconciliation is a greater virtue than revenge, where truth is more honourable than lying and where mutual submission takes the place of unassailable autocratic leadership. The question is why this endeavour should be limited to some and not all. Perhaps the rest of the church is guilty not so much of being blind to gospel claims but of assuming that those values will spring up without being planted, nurtured and guarded.

### **Paul prays**

Lastly but not least, Paul prays. As Barth says, "To be included in Paul's prayers means that Philemon has been constantly referred to God's mercy and care. Also it reminds Philemon that his life, his decisions, and actions are all lived out before the all-seeing God."<sup>102</sup>

Intercession is the "strongest non-violent means to encourage and warn persons in possession of power".<sup>103</sup> We must not underestimate the power of prayer in matters of spiritual formation and of reconciliation. Paul excels in his prayer life, remembering people with thanksgiving for who they are, and asking God for spiritual riches over material comfort in a way that we seldom tend to do. Our prayers tend to be dominated by our congregation's physical needs. But perhaps we need to wrestle more in prayer for the church's holiness, the ability to

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<sup>101</sup> Lucas, *Message*, 188.

<sup>102</sup> Barth, *Philemon*, 270

<sup>103</sup> Barth, *Philemon*, 271.

comprehend and express the love of Christ, the courage to make difficult decisions, the willingness to lead by example, the readiness to serve rather than be served. Philemon needs to recognize that within “every good thing we share for the sake of Christ” (v6) is responsibility for our brothers and sisters, partnerships with people different from us, peace with previous enemies. Presumably Paul has prayed over this letter, and is sending it with the love he feels for his son Philemon.

Structures that seem so permanent, necessary and irreplaceable, like slavery, can be dismantled, and prayer plays no small part in their demolishing. Stories of transformed societies are usually preceded by fervent, faithful prayer. It is easy to give in to the propaganda and forget that “history does not belong to the armies, the politicians, the corporate giants, the global media or terrorists. Their power may seem to be glaringly obvious but it does not last. Those who have the power to change history are those who pray.”<sup>104</sup>

## CONCLUSION

As we consider Paul’s approach to a dilemma facing one Church leader in the early church, we receive several nuggets of wisdom for dealing with issues of reconciliation in the Sri Lankan context. Within the existing framework of our honour shame culture, we see that the church must define what is honourable based on the gospel’s agenda for transformation. Church leaders play a key role in defining honour, and in building communities that are so truly a family that they form the most important kin group in a Christian’s world. Within this fictive kin group, leaders are a channel through which

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<sup>104</sup> John Ortberg, *The Life you’ve Always Wanted*, (Michigan: Zondervan, 2002), 93-94.

individuals who embody the virtues are honoured, and assured of honours to come at the final judgment. Grace is offered, received and returned in a never ending circle of reciprocity born out of gratitude to God. In all this leaders lead the way, but the wider church must help the leader do what is right.

Church tradition witnesses to one Onesimus who was among the many Christians who visited and encouraged Ignatius of Antioch who was on his way to face execution around AD 110. This Onesimus was Bishop of Ephesus. Although Onesimus was a common slave name, it seems more than a coincidence that a person with this name should have risen to such a prominent role in church leadership.<sup>105</sup> If this was indeed the Onesimus of the letter to Philemon, it would give another reason why the letter was preserved. 'It would also provide a stunning testimony to the potential for ministry and leadership that is unleashed when God's call and not the destiny imposed by society's caste system or other external and artificial labels, is supported and enabled by a Christian community daring to live out the implications of our full and equal sisterhood and brotherhood in Christ.'<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> deSilva, *Introduction*, 676

<sup>106</sup> deSilva, *Introduction*, 676.



# **THE LIFE AND TIMES OF CHRISTIAN DAVID**

## **(7<sup>th</sup> August 1771 – 8<sup>th</sup> May 1852)**

NAPOLEON PATHMANATHAN and G P V SOMARATNA

### **INTRODUCTION**

This description on the life of Christian David (1771-1852) is based on his own biographical account as found in a series of articles published in the *Ceylon Friend* from the issue of February 1876.

While reporting his autobiography we have tried to offer notes on the names and subjects that appear in the autobiography. We have also tried to fill the period where he stopped and take the story up to the end of his life. It is our intent that the life story of the first South Asian graduate of Bishop's College in Calcutta, and his successful ministry in the Anglican establishment in Sri Lanka during a time that the leadership of the church was dominated by Europeans, would encourage the present generation of Christians. The information found in his autobiography is corroborated by many writings of contemporary Europeans. His close association with Europeans of high social standing is one reason for the profusion of commendatory statements in contemporary writings. He rose to a fairly high position in the Anglican

Church when nationals were not yet considered suitable for such positions.

The Christian missions with colonial affiliations in Tamilnadu, the homeland of Christian David, had begun to be active a long time before his birth. The Catholics were active in the 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Portuguese missionaries were present from the beginning of the sixteenth century. The French colonies in India from the seventeenth century were covered by their headquarters in Pondicherry. That area was also comprised within the Portuguese *padroado* jurisdiction. The Padroado - Propaganda Dispute hampered the Catholic missionary work in the eighteenth century and the early part of the nineteenth century in India. The French revolution and the Napoleonic wars also affected the nations involved in Christian missionary work. The suppression of the Jesuit order in 1773 also had part in the decline of the Catholic Church in South India. The English Baptist missionary, William Carey (1761 – 1834) who is known as the "father of modern missions", set sail from London for India in April 1793. Even after that the British East India Company did not permit missionaries in their territory till 1813.<sup>1</sup> Therefore the missionaries of the early nineteenth century could gain access to India via territories controlled by the other European nations, such as the Danish and Dutch. The Portuguese enclaves, however, were not open to Protestants.

The political situation in the Carnatic Coast was a tense one during this period. The Seven Years' War (1756–1763) resulted in the defeat of the French forces which limited French imperial ambitions in India. Robert Clive (1725-1774), the

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\* This mark shows the notes found in the original document.

<sup>1</sup> Ainslie Thomas Embree, *Charles Grant and British Rule in India*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1962.

Governor General of the possessions of the English East India Company defeated the commander of the French forces in India, led by Joseph François Dupleix (1697-1763). The English were able to recapture Fort St George in Chennai from the French. However, by the Treaty of Paris in 1763, France could regain Pondichéry, Mahe, Karikal, Yanam, and Chandernagar captured by the British during the war. These small French outposts remained for the next two hundred years, but the French could not entertain any territorial ambitions in India after this.

During the 18th century, Christian missionaries operated in the Indian territories ruled by the East India Company, but their stations were located in territories held by other European trading companies, such as, the Danish enclaves of Serampore on the Hughli River near Calcutta; Tranquebar, south of Madras and the French territories. The Company's view was that active evangelizing had the propensity to disturb the desired tranquillity of the land which would interfere with the Company rule and trade.

Eventually, the British East India Company was able to assert its interests in the Carnatic region from its base at Madras and in Calcutta, without facing any further obstacles from other colonial powers. Hyder Ali (1761-1782) and Tipu Sultan (1782-1799), the rulers of the Kingdom of Mysore, offered much resistance to the British forces. Having sided with the French during the war, the rulers of Mysore continued their struggle against the British with the four Anglo-Mysore Wars. Mysore finally fell to the British forces in 1799, with the death of Tipu Sultan.

The Dutch East India Company ruled the Coromandel Coast and the Malabar Coast from 1610 until the company's liquidation in 1798. It then became a colony of the Kingdom of

the Netherlands until 1825, when it was relinquished to the British according to the Anglo-Dutch Treaty of 1824. The Dutch did not try to convert indigenous peoples to Christianity for religious reasons. They practiced the Protestant Dutch Reformed Doctrine. Their Anti-Catholic religious policy encouraged other religious groups against the pressure of the Roman Catholic Church. Their partial success in diminishing the power of the Catholic Church enabled the indigenous religions to grow at the cost of the Catholic religion. The Dutch evangelism was undertaken more for political and economic reasons than religious.

In 1620, Robert Crappe, leader of a Danish expedition, signed a treaty with Raghunath (1600-1634), the Nayak of Tanjore in Tamil Nadu granting them the village of Tranquebar and the right to construct a fort (Fort Dansborg) and levy taxes. Denmark held colonial possessions in India including the town of Tranquebar<sup>2</sup> (1620), Serampore<sup>3</sup> (1755), and the Nicobar Islands (1755). The Danish colonies went into decline in the nineteenth century, and the British ultimately took possession of them, making them part of British India. Serampore was

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<sup>2</sup> Tranquebar (juq;fk;ghb) is a town in Nagapattinam district in the Indian State of Tamilnadu, 15 km north of Karaikal, near the mouth of a tributary of the Kaveri River. It was a Danish colony from 1620 to 1845. The Danish East India Company founded a fort in 1620, which was to be a commercial settlement. It was known as Fort Dansborg and was built by a Danish captain named Ove Gjedde. This fort was the residence and headquarters of the governor and other officials for about 150 years. It is still known as Trankebar in Danish.

<sup>3</sup> Serampore (Bengali - Shrirampur **শ্রীরামপুর**) was part of Danish India under the name Frederiksnagore from 1755 to 1845. Serampore Mission (1800-1845) was India's first Christian missionary organisation. William Carey, Joshua Marshman, and William Ward established this mission on 10 January 1800. They started preaching, teaching and printing the message of Jesus from two places in Hughli district and eventually spread to other parts of the Indian Sub-continent.

sold to the British in 1839, Tranquebar in 1845 and; the Nicobar Islands in 1878. The first Protestant missionaries from Europe were the Danish-Halle Mission. It established work in South India in 1706 which lasted until the mission was dissolved in 1825.

The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge sought the assistance of the Lutheran mission in Tranquebar, as "they have not as yet been able to prevail with any of the British Nation to undertake the service of the Protestant Mission to the East Indies." Therefore the SPCK continued to employ Danish and German Lutherans to conduct its missionary work in the British Settlements of Fort St. George and Fort St. David.<sup>4</sup>

The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK), which helped Christian David to come to Sri Lanka, was founded in 1698, and is the oldest Anglican mission organisation. By 1709 SPCK was spreading further afield: a printing press and trained printer were sent out to Tranquebar to assist in the production of the first translation of the Bible into Tamil done by the German Lutheran missionaries Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg and Heinrich Pluetschau from the Danish-Halle Mission. SPCK has continued to work closely with churches of many different denominations, whilst retaining a special relationship with churches within the Anglican Communion.

Christian David's home territory Tranquebar is situated in Tamil Nadu, 15 km north of Karaikal, near the mouth of a tributary of the Kaveri River. It was a Danish colony from 1620 to 1845. The fact that Christian David was born in the Danish territory was providential in his future Christian ministry.

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<sup>4</sup> Leighton. and Mornay Williams, (eds) *William Carey: Serampore Letters*, New York, Fleming H. Revell Company, 1892

### **Christian David's Family Background**

Rev. Christian David belonged to a Hindu family of Chetty caste. Chettiar or Chetty, is a title used by various mercantile castes in South India especially in Tamil Nadu state. It is regarded in Tamilnadu as a high caste among Tamil people. His father, Sattianaden, was born in the year 1723 of Hindu parents, in the fort of Tranquebar. This was the period when Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg and Heinrich Pluetschau, who began work in 1705 in the Danish settlement of Tranquebar were active in evangelism. The powerful saintly character of another Lutheran missionary, Rev. Christian Frederick Schwartz, (1726-1798) impressed this Hindu man. He developed a respect towards the Christian God. He was not reluctant to seek help of the missionaries in spiritual matters. He was 33 years when he was baptised by the Rev. Kohlhoff Sr., in "Jerusalem" church at the Fort of Tranquebar on 12<sup>th</sup> November 1756. He eventually became a catechist under the Danish mission. He was a pious man who could please the missionaries as a trustworthy friend. Because of these good testimonials the Danish government appointed him as a native Judge. His fourth son, Christian David, was born on 7<sup>th</sup> August 1771 at Tillaiady near Tranquebar.<sup>5</sup> Sattianaden handed his son over to Rev. Schwartz to educate at Tanjore.<sup>6</sup> Christian David also began to experience Christian kindness when he attended the prayer meetings of Pietist tradition held at the home of another catechist, Danielpulle, who was a close friend of Sattianaden.

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<sup>5</sup> C. D. Veluppilai, *A history of the American Ceylon Mission*. Vattokoddi: American Ceylon Mission., 1984, pp. 34-35.

<sup>6</sup> Sargant, *The Dispersion of the Tamil Church*, Madras: SPCK. 1940, pp. 31-33; Hugh Pearson, *Memoirs of the life and correspondence of the Reverend Christian Swartz.*, Volume 2, London, 1839, p.149.

David was baptized on the 2<sup>nd</sup> April, 1775, at the Bethlehem Church in Porrear near Tranquebar by the Rev. Klein, who was one of the Danish Missionaries at that station. Rev. Schwartz was the mentor of the family and he took care of the four sons of Sattianaden. As a child, Christian David did not show any interest in education and avoided attending the local Tamil school. He was sent in 1776 to the Royal Danish Missionaries in order to admit him into their seminary at Tranquebar. The principal of the seminary was Mr. Klein who had baptised Christian David. Here he received an education to equip him to a disciplined Christian life. He accompanied his principal and Rev. Schwartz when he made pastoral visits to the adjoining villages and experienced the Christian life and ministry from his childhood. An interesting episode which affected his thinking is reported in the memoirs of Rev. Schwartz.

"An interesting anecdote connected with this distressing season, is related by Christian David, whose father was a convert of Schwartz, and who had himself waited when a boy on the apostolic missionary. They had been travelling all day, and arriving at a small village at sunset, the good man sat down under a tree and conversed with the natives who came around him, while his horse keeper was cooking their evening meal. When the rice and curry were spread on the plantain leaf, Schwartz stood up to ask a blessing on the food they were going to share, and to thank God for watching over them through the dangers of the day, and providing so richly for their repose and comfort. His heart was full of gratitude, and expressed itself in the natural eloquence of prayer and praise. The poor boy for some time repressed his impatience, but his hunger at last overpowered his respect for his master, and he ventured to expostulate, and to remind him that the curry would be cold. He describes very touchingly the earnestness and solemnity of the reproof he received. "What!" said he, "shall our gracious God watch over us through the heat and

burden of the day, and shall we devour the food which he provides for us at night with hands which we never raised in prayer, and lips which have never praised him!"<sup>7</sup>

After spending eight years from 1777 to 1785 in the seminary, Christian David became a pious and committed Christian and equipped him for Christian ministry. Rev. Schwartz on a visit to the seminary blessed him saying: "May God make you a useful harbinger to carry the good tidings of salvation to your benighted countrymen." The education at Tranquebar equipped him for his ministry. He was able to have good grounding in English, in addition to German and Telugu, apart from his mother tongue Tamil. He was able to converse in Sinhala after some time in Sri Lanka. He left Tranquebar on 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1787 with his mother and sister to Tanjore where he was appointed catechist by Rev. Schwartz, on the 7<sup>th</sup> of the same month. During this period Christian David became the 'Timothy' of Rev. Schwartz and began his itinerant preaching in the capacity of a catechist.

His mother died on 1789 at the age of 44 in her village Swartsamapooram and was buried in their family grave. Christian David married Mary (Moottoammal) proposed by Rev. Schwartz and approved by his father. A few days after the marriage, Rev. Schwartz appointed him as catechist to the Tanjore mission of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

In the year 1800, Rev. Jaenicke of the Lutheran mission visited Tanjore from Madras and proposed that Christian David should go to Jaffna as a Tamil preacher. In 1800, on 18<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Christian Frederick Swartz, *Memoirs of the Life and Correspondence of the Reverend Christian Frederick*, New York: Appleton, 1835, .p. 227



March, he left Nagapatnam and arrived two days later on 20<sup>th</sup> at Kayts and reached Jaffna on 22<sup>nd</sup>. He was appointed a preacher and Superintendent of 47 schools in the Districts of Jaffna and Mannar. He was required to visit the schools and churches in these two districts three times a year. David's father Sattianaden died when he was 78 years old, on 9<sup>th</sup> October 1801. In 1801 he had baptised 119 persons and had converted 84 Catholics from 'Popery.'<sup>8</sup>

Christian David's education became very useful in Sri Lanka. His caste background also enabled him to associate with the Vellala majority in the Jaffna peninsula. His ability to converse in English fluently enabled him to make many friends among the Europeans. The government authorities had a positive view of his character and activities.

Compared to the other European Christian organizations the Anglican Church in this period had a negative view on the caste issue. The leaders of the Anglican Church made several attempts to eliminate caste completely from the church. However, high caste Anglicans vehemently objected to this. Christian David also fell into the high caste camp. His attitude regarding caste in the Christian church has been criticised by many scholars. It is reported that in his Church in Jaffna the high castes were served communion first and then the lower castes. This was a habit he learnt from the Danish missionaries in Tranquebar. From the time of Ziegenbalg they made the two communities sit at church separately and had offered communion separately at the Lord's Table, drinking out of the same cup, but the high caste converts drinking first.

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<sup>8</sup> P.N. Saverimuttu, *The Life and Times of Oratio Bettacchini*, Rome, 1980, p.13.

The question of caste in the Christian church was brought to the attention of Bishop Heber in the 1820s. He consulted Christian David to get his opinion on it assuming that it would be reliable. David wrote a long letter upholding the institution of caste not only among Hindus but also among Christians. His view was that caste was a social concern rather than a religious matter. He further stated that "no matter how far a Paraiyan might improve in education and financial standing, he would never be acceptable to those of Sudra origin, to the point at which they would be willing to eat with him."<sup>9</sup> Christian David's advice was for greater toleration and forbearance.<sup>10</sup> The caste system is a severe stumbling block for European Christians accepting India's culture. The debate continued during the time of Bishop Daniel Wilson (1833-1858) of Calcutta. He made a serious attempt in this direction. In a pastoral letter Bishop Daniel Wilson decreed that caste must be given up "decidedly, immediately and finally."<sup>11</sup> Yet the caste system continued to be a controversial topic in the Indian church.

Christian David pointed out that, these matters relating to caste were merely worldly distinctions. Christian David's somewhat liberal attitude to the issue of caste is indicated in his letter to bishop Heber "that high caste and low caste among Christian congregations in the South, were buried in a common burial ground took part promiscuously in the funeral

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<sup>9</sup> Stephen Neill, *A History of Christianity in India: 1707-1858*, Cambridge University Press, 2002, p. 404

<sup>10</sup> John William Kaye, *Christianity in India: An Historical Narrative*, London: Smith, 1859, p. 354

<sup>11</sup> Stephen Neill, *The Story of the Christian church in India and Pakistan*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970, p. 79.

ceremonies, contrary to the heathen nations, that death levelled all distinctions."<sup>12</sup>

According to all available reports Rev. Christian David performed an excellent service in Jaffna.<sup>13</sup> Regarding him Samuel Newell of the ABCFM reports in 1813, "He obtained permission from the government to erect a free school in Jaffna in which a number of native youths are to be supported at the expense of the government and train up for school masters, afterwards to be employed in native schools, which the governor is about to re-establish in the district of Jaffna. Mr. David wished me to represent to the board of commissioners the needy state of this part of the island, and the facilities for evangelizing the people, and to request, when they have a missionary to spare, they would send him to Jaffna." According to Newell, "in the single Protestant congregation in the Jaffna there were only two persons capable of instructing the people on the Bible. One of them was Rev. Christian David, a native of Thanjavur. The other was the Dutch Mrs. Schrawder who held regular meetings in which she read the Scriptures and explained them in Tamil."<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> *The Dispersion of the Tamil Church*, Madras: SPCK, 1940, p.353

<sup>13</sup> J. W. Balding *One Hundred Years in Ceylon*, p. 91, Bede Barcatta *A History of the Southern Vicariate of Colombo*, Kandy: Montefarno, 1991, Vol. I, p.75; Robrecht Boudens, *Catholic Missionaries in a British Colony*, p. 33; Lorenz Beven, *History of the diocese of Colombo*, p.; *Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society*, Vol. 5, p. 24.

<sup>14</sup> Joseph Tracy, Solomon Peck, Enoch Mudge, *History of American Missions to the Heathen, from their commencement to the Present time*, Worcester, 1840, p. 58; *The Panoplist, and Missionary Magazine*, Vol. 11, p. 190.

It is recorded that Christian David helped Rev. J.D. Palm<sup>15</sup> of the LMS, and James Lynch and Thomas Squance of WMMS, in learning Tamil; the latter were the first Methodist missionaries to Jaffna. Similarly the American missionaries and some British Colonial officers of the early period received Rev. David's assistance for their Tamil studies. This association with leaders of the church and the colonial government helped him in his ministry, especially to improve the conditions of the schools which were under him.

Christian David was ordained by Bishop Heber. He is regarded as the first native in Ceylon to be ordained an Anglican Priest (1824). According to Beven he was a proponent who was given the title Reverend.<sup>16</sup> He was made a colonial chaplain mostly in charge of the Tamil community in Sri Lanka.<sup>17</sup> In his visits to Colombo he preferred to serve the Tamil speaking Colombo Chetty community at St. Thomas Church at Gintupitiya.

In his travels to Colombo he took the coastal road tract as the Kandyan territories were under the King of Kandy. The road network did not connect Jaffna and Colombo through Kurunegala till the middle of the nineteenth century. On the way he visited the churches and congregations in Mannar, Puttalam, Chilaw, Negombo and Colombo. On these journeys he met government officers and received the support of the government for his ministry. He also noticed the failure of the attempts of the Dutch Reform Church to convert the people in Negombo, Kammala, Marawila, chilaw, Andipani, Navakkadu, Puliyanakula, Kalpitiya, Arippu, Mannar and several other

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<sup>15</sup> *Select Reviews of literature and Spirit of Foreign magazines*, Vol. 6, Philadelphia, 1811, p. 372.

<sup>16</sup> Beven, op. cit. p.24.

<sup>17</sup> Beven, op. cit. p. 31.

places. The so-called 'protestant Christians' had now become Catholics.

The value of his ministry was seen by the fact that he received invitations to write his biography from several people of standing. There is no doubt that he made a profound contribution to the phenomenal growth of the Christian activities among the Tamil people. He paved the way for the Europeans who arrived after him. From the correspondence, that Christian David had with Rev. James Cordiner (Dec 31, 1801), Rev. W. Jon (December 24, 1804) and J. Twisleton, February 27, March 2, March 14, and July 1814 <sup>18</sup> one could see the genuine interest of Rev. David of the souls under his care. In his correspondence he gives the impression of a real and deep solicitude for his flock.

He was able to see the improvement of Christian missionary work in Jaffna when the Methodist (1814), American (1816) and CMS (1818) missionaries arrived in Jaffna. Even the Catholic Church experienced an improvement with the arrival of Oratio Bettacchini and the formation of the Northern Vicariate in 1847 with Jaffna as the cathedral town.

After half a century of ministry in Jaffna he passed away at the age of 81 and was buried at the churchyard of St. John's Church in Chundikuli. His son Frederick became a proponent in Mannar.

***The Ceylon Friend*, February, 1876, Vol. viii, Second Series, No.74**

**EMINENT MISSIONARIES OF THE PRESENT CENTURY:**

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<sup>18</sup> W.K. Lowther-clerke, *A History of the SPCK*, London, 1959.

### Rev. CHRISTIAN DAVID

The subject of this sketch is not much known in England. He was a Missionary of the Church of England in Ceylon, but a man of so large a heart, that he worked with the Wesleyan Missionaries and others; and the story of his life, written by himself, is so very beautiful that an abridgment of it cannot but interest our youthful readers.

His father was born in the year 1723 of heathen parents, in the fort of Tranquebar. The celebrated Missionary Ziegenbalg<sup>19</sup> came to Tranquebar from Denmark, and through his instrumentality Mr. David was led to Christ, at the age of thirty-three, and was baptized into the Christian faith. Christian David was born August 7<sup>th</sup>, 1771; and at five years of age was sent to school, but preferred play in the jungle to study, and often ran away. His father was very wishful that he should become a Minister of the Gospel, and prayed much for him and for his conversion to God. In the year 1776 he was received into the seminary<sup>20</sup> of the Danish Missionaries at Tranquebar, and there the light shone upon his mind, and he sought and found the Saviour of mankind. He remained in that institution nearly eight years, and made great progress in his studies; and at the end of the year 1785 the venerable Schwartz,<sup>21</sup> came to this seminary to examine the students,

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<sup>19</sup> Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg (1683–1719) was a member of the Lutheran clergy and the first Protestant missionary to India. He was born in Pulsnitz, Saxony. After an abortive excursion to Sri Lanka, where the Dutch did not welcome foreign missionaries left and made his way to Tranquebar in 1706.

<sup>20</sup> During this period the word seminary was used to refer to a school, especially a theological school for the training of priests, and ministers. It was also used to refer to a normal school, especially one of higher grade.

<sup>21</sup> Christian Friedrich Schwarz (1726-1798) was a German Protestant missionary to India. He was born Sonnenburg, in the

when he said to the youth, "May God make you a useful harbinger to carry the good tidings of salvation to your benighted countrymen!" and sometime after he became one of his catechists. After his marriage to a Christian lady in 1790, he was placed in charge of a congregation in Tinneveli;<sup>22</sup> and there he sowed the seed of the Gospel from village to village and from house to house, praying that the Lord of the harvest would make those heathen villages truly Christian ones.

After this he fell away for a time, but was graciously restored; and then went to Tranquebar, and subsequently to Jaffna, South Ceylon, where by the kind recommendation of a friend the governor appointed him superintendent of the schools and Minister to the people.

Forty-seven schools in the district were under his inspection, and he also visited his congregation in their own homes, exhorting them, and praying with them, week by week. St. John's Church was in a decayed state, and the commandant used to keep his cattle in it, which was a great grief to Christian David.<sup>23</sup> One morning he opened the door of the vestry, when the sheep began to bleat; and he knelt down and asked the Lord to incline the heart of the commander to give

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electorate of Brandenburg, Prussia. He arrived in 1750 Tiruchirapalli via Tranquebar. In 1769 he secured the friendship of Thuljaji (1738–1787) the raja of Tanjore, who, although he never embraced Christianity, afforded him every assistance to his missionary labours. Shortly before his death he committed to Schwarz the education of his adopted son and successor, Serfoji II (1777 – 1832). The raja of Tanjore erected a monument, in the mission church, in which he is represented as grasping the hand of the dying missionary and receiving his benediction.

<sup>22</sup> Tinneveli (jpUney;Ntyp) Bishop R. Caldwell, Caldwell R. Bishop, *A History of Tinnevelly*, Madras: Asian Educational Services, 1982.

<sup>23</sup> "Lieut.-Colonel B. G. Barbut. Commandant and Collector of Jaffna., 1795-1803" (*Journal of the Dutch Burgher Union of Ceylon*, Vol. XXIII, April, 1934. No. 4. pp. 194-195).

the church into his charge. He obtained it, got it cleaned and repaired, and in that church he continued to preach until the year 1841.

But prior to this he became also superintendent of the female orphan schools in Jaffna, and being an excellent Tamil and English scholar, he translated for the government some valuable Tamil books which described the virtues of Indian medical plants.

In the year 1806 Dr. Claudius Buchanan<sup>24</sup> visited Jaffna and heard Christian David preach. He was delighted with the sermon, and said that King George III would have been pleased to listen to it. When Lord Molesworth<sup>25</sup> arrived in Ceylon he

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<sup>24</sup> Claudius Buchanan (1766 –1815) was an ordained minister of the Church of England, and missionary for the Church Missionary Society. Claudius Buchanan, after holding a chaplaincy in India at Barrackpur (1797–1799) was appointed Calcutta chaplain and vice-principal of the college of Fort William in Calcutta. In this capacity he did much to advance Christianity and native education in India, especially by organizing systematic translations of the scriptures. His journey (1806-1808) to investigate conditions in South India and Sri Lanka, reveals valuable information about the conditions of Christianity in the first decade of the nineteenth century.

According to Claudius Buchanan, "The only Protestant preacher in the town of Jaffna is Christian David, a Hindoo catechist, sent over by the mission of Tranquebar. His chief ministrations are in the Tamul (sic) tongue; but he sometimes preaches in English language, which speaks with tolerable propriety; and the Dutch and English resort to him. I went with the rest of his church, when he delivered extempore a very excellent discourse, which his present majesty George the third would not have disdained to hear. And this Hindoo supports the interest of the English church in the province of Jaffna." Claudius Buchanan, *op. cit.* p. 55.

<sup>25</sup> Lord Molesworth was the Commandant of the Galle garrison. On Sunday, 3 July 1814, at Lord Molesworth's request the Methodist missionaries held their first Service in the Dutch Church, Galle. He died at



greatly encouraged the Missionary; and at a later period the Columbo Bible Society<sup>26</sup> was formed, of which he became a member, and for which he translated the liturgy and portions of the Word of God. In the year 1820 he joined the Church of England, but his zeal was unabated, and his labours yet more abundant. He was respected and beloved by all parties, and was admitted into holy orders by Bishop Heber in St. John's Church, Jaffna - the very building which he had rescued from being occupied with cattle. He visited Madras, Tanjore, and Tranquebar, where he saw the progress of Christianity in places which were once the very strongholds of Satan. He preached from the pulpit of "Father Schwartz,," as he called him, and on his return to Jaffna resumed his evangelistic work. On one occasion the church was crowded, and he says, "We sang Lutheran hymns in Tamil, translated by one of the Missionaries of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge."<sup>27</sup> There were present on that occasion Protestants, Roman Catholics, heathens, and a few Mohammedans, some of whom were compelled to stand in

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sea in 1815. Rev. James Chater's (first Baptist missionary to Sri Lanka) two children who were in his protection also died in the shipwreck. In 1817 the Jaffna Wesleyan English School (Jaffna Central College) was founded with Rev. Lynch as principal. Thomas Smith, *The origin and history of missions*, Volume 2, Boston, 1837, p. 91.

<sup>26</sup> Colombo Auxiliary of the British and Foreign Bible Society was founded in 1812. Rev. Christian David was present at the fourth Annual General meeting of the Ceylon Bible Society held in Colombo in 1818. *The Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society 1818*, Volume 5, p.12.

<sup>27</sup> The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK), which is the oldest Anglican mission organisation, was founded in 1698 by an Anglican priest named Thomas Bray, and a small group of friends. In 1709 SPCK sent a printing press and trained printer out to Tranquebar to assist in the production of the first translation of the Bible into Tamil done by Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg and Heinrich Pluetschau.

John Nicholas Norton, *Bishop Heber*, p. 84.

the outer verandah,<sup>28</sup> but listened with great attention to the truth.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of April, 1852, he celebrated his eighty-first year, and the sixty-second of his marriage. He had then six children, twenty-eight grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren; and his confidence in the truth and power of Christianity was such that he said: "I earnestly recommend all my countrymen and others to study rather the book of books than any other. I acknowledge with all my heart that I am not worthy of the manifold mercies which the Lord bestowed on me from my birth up to this moment; time, and even eternity, will not be enough to express them."

Soon after this the venerable Missionary entered on his reward, leaving behind him many converts, of whom some became Missionaries themselves. There are native members in Ceylon to-day who were brought to Christ through his instrumentality; and many, doubtless, will be his joy and the crown of his rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus.

We have seen that the ancestors of Christian David were heathens. They worshipped Siva and Vishnu and Brahma; and what that meant we learn from those who have witnessed the sad and degrading rites which are observed in the temples of Ceylon. Had not his father become a believer in Jesus, the son would not have been named "Christian," and in all probability he would have grown up in superstition and idolatry, and would have thrown away his talents on the most worthless objects. It is the Gospel only which can elevate the mind and

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<sup>28</sup> According to *the Oxford English Dictionary*, the word verandah originated in India. It may have been an adapted word in the English language from the Portuguese *baranda*, which again was borrowed from Indian languages, referring to a railing, balustrade or balcony.

renew the heart of man; and it can do this, whether the man be a refined European, a superstitious Brahmin, a barbarous Kafir, or a blood-thirsty Fijian. It is the grand moral lever which lifts society out of the mire and places it on the eternal Rock. Oh, pray for India, for Ceylon, for the whole eastern world with its millions of immortal souls; and pray, youthful reader, that you may be inspired with the spirit of such men as Christian David and other Missionaries of whom we have written and have yet to write.

T.S. From the Magazine – *At Home & Abroad* – 1881 vol. 3; *Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine: Being a Continuation of the Arminian*, 1825, p. 403

***The Ceylon Friend*, February, 1876, Vol. viii, Second Series, No.74**

**AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF THE LATE REV. CHRISTIAN DAVID**

The name of Christian David is a well known one in the history of Christianity in India; and forms a link between the days of the illustrious missionary Schwartz, and our own times. The present autobiography of the venerable minister has been submitted to us by his grandson, the Rev. Christian David,<sup>29</sup> an esteemed minister of the Church of England in Colombo. The composition is in the form of a letter addressed to the writer's son, "Mr. Solomon David, Government catechist, Cotanchina,<sup>30</sup> Colombo." With the exception of a little condensation of the language and some other necessary editing for the press, the work is substantially as it was left by

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<sup>29</sup> Beven, op. cit. p. 96.

<sup>30</sup> Beven, op.cit. p.96. Tamil (nfhl;lhQ;Nrid) කොටුනේතන Sinhala  
^කොටුනේතන),

the author. It will we doubt not prove edifying to Christian readers and interesting as a record of men and times fast passing into oblivion. [Editor. *Christian Friend*]

### **Autobiography**

Many highly distinguished Christians have often advised me to prepare a brief memoir of my life, whose good and kind advice I thought useless, remembering the unerring words of our ever blessed Saviour to His disciples: "But rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven' (Luke x.20)".

In the year 1839, in the month of February, when His Excellency the Governor, Sir A.S. Mackenzie,<sup>31</sup> made his first circuit to Jaffna and in company with the Government Agent condescendingly paid me a visit at St. John's Church,<sup>32</sup> His Excellency very kindly among other very interesting things enquired the period of time since I was employed in ministerial duties, and what success I made. To which I humbly answered, "Nearly *forty years in Ceylon*,<sup>33</sup> and the Lord has blessed my weak labours in this province and also my periodical visits in outstations, and among my flock of different classes of people in this Island." Upon which, His Excellency mentioned to me as follows:

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<sup>31</sup> His Excellency the Governor, Sir A. S. James Alexander Stewart Mackenzie (1784 – 1843), was a Scottish politician and British colonial administrator. He was the Governor of Ceylon from 7 November 1837-15 April 1841 (K. M. de Silva. *Social Policy and Missionary Organization in Ceylon, 1840-1855*, 1965).

<sup>32</sup> Founded in 1823 by the missionaries of CMS.

<sup>33</sup> SPCK sent him from Tranquebar to Jaffna in 1801. (SPCK Archives, London David to Cordiner 31.12. 1801).

“The Rev. Mr. B. Bailey,<sup>34</sup> the senior colonial chaplain of Government, informed me that you left with him several years’ correspondence in manuscripts and documents, and at my request kindly lent me all those books &c., which I kept with me for a few months and perused them at my leisure hours and exceedingly rejoiced to find how the Lord had blessed your unfeigned labours in the vineyard of our Lord in this Island: and that gentleman, the Rev. Mr. Bailey<sup>35</sup> further said that he intends to publish a short memoir of your life after your death, but I would strongly advise you to write your own life in your life time.”

I then respectfully observed, “I shall be grateful to my gracious Creator if my unworthy name be written in the Lamb’s book of life!”

Again that good Governor very seriously observed, “First, it is your grateful and bounden duty to acknowledge publicly that God according to His predetermination has graciously chosen you for your own temporal and spiritual happiness and also used you as an instrument in His hands to promote His glory and His knowledge among your benighted countrymen for their temporal and spiritual happiness here and hereafter; secondly, to evince as a token of your gratitude towards your spiritual father and benefactor whom God raised to be your instructor, helper and supporter from your infancy; and lastly, that your own family and your converted countrymen and others may read your life and perceive how that a merciful

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<sup>34</sup> The Rev. Benjamin Bailey (1797-1871), *Ceylon Government Gazette*, Jan to Dec 1834. He was the chaplain of St. Peter’s Church, Fort, in 1820. Beven, op.cit. pp.26-27.

<sup>35</sup> Benjamin Bailey was born on the 5th June 1791. He was appointed to the Ecclesiastical Establishment of Sri Lanka in 1829, became Senior Colonial Chaplain in 1832 and Archdeacon of Colombo in 1847. He retired from the post in 1852.

God so loved and wonderfully guided you hitherto, and that it may be the means of stirring and stimulating them up to follow your example to their own temporal and spiritual happiness here and hereafter.”

I then very respectfully thanked him for his disinterested and Christian like advice, and promised him, God willing by His grace if I be spared, I will by His help write a brief sketch of my life according to His Excellency’s kind suggestions. Afterwards His Excellency ardently and affectionately wished me every success and prosperity in my ministerial duties during my life, and bidding me farewell returned with Mr. Dyke<sup>36</sup> to the Kutcherry<sup>37</sup> where he was then residing.

Before I attempt to write a short sketch of my life, I think it right to relate some very short account of the life of my most affectionate and pious father, with a hope that my own family and whoever else reads will derive some benefit.

In the year 1723, in the month of November - the day unknown – my father was born in the Fort of Tranquebar who was a *Vellan Chetty*<sup>38</sup> of the sect of Siva, from respectable parents. My beloved father often said to me that when he was young his father every day, in the morning and especially in the evening times, procured and selected some flowers of

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<sup>36</sup> British Government Agent was Percival Ackland Dyke. He served as Government Collector for Jaffna for four years (1829-33) and Government Agent for the Northern Province for 32 years (1833-43; 1843-60; 1861-67). He was known as the "Raja of the North". He died on 9 October 1867 and was buried at St. John's Cemetery at Chundikuli.

<sup>37</sup> Kachcheri is a Hindustani word initially used for the Revenue Collector's Office in the early years of the British Colonial Administration in Sri Lanka.

<sup>38</sup> Vellan Chetty community is a sub-caste of Chettiars in South India.

different kinds, considered by the heathens as sacred to be offered to their gods, and used them for an offering to Siva. Out of the same he keeps some separately, and after having done with his heathen ceremonies, he brings them holding with his both hands together with pure water throws them towards heaven, loudly exclaiming, O God of the Christians, bless my poor son and make him Thy child. The moment the son sees that his father has finished the usual ceremonies, he slowly runs to his bed room and lies down flat pretending himself to be asleep. When his father comes near him, seeing his son fast asleep, he puts a cross on his forehead and breast, praying slowly O God of the Christians bless this child and make him Thy son. My father mentioned to me that his father took great pains by placing him in a good school under a learned master, so that he may attain a regular Tamil education; his ardent wish and desire was towards his son's education to bring him up first of all in the Tamil language. Before my father was twelve years old, he completed his Tamil course of studies in Grammar, Arithmetic & c., and he became a complete master of the same language in literature and the science, and then he was appointed by the Danish Government, through the recommendation and request of his father, as a superintendent over the Mint, in which situation he gave full satisfaction to his superior.

The wise and gracious God excited in him a great desire to seek and procure most of the valuable works of the Indian philosophers who unanimously write against the idol worship, plainly and strongly proving that there is only one God who is the great Creator of heaven and earth, and that except people worship Him they cannot enjoy true happiness here or hereafter. My beloved father having collected most of the said works, in process of time made it his business to study them daily. While he was earnestly perusing them he found out that the heathen religion which was published by Vedewiagen and

others was false, and that whosoever believes in their doctrines will never go to heaven; and his mind was perplexed about the religion he then professed and how to find the sure way to know and serve the only true God.

God graciously moved the heart of one of the pious Danish kings to send from Denmark to Tranquebar the first devoted and celebrated missionary, Ziegenbolg (sic.), to preach the ever blessed gospels to my benighted countrymen in the East Indies.

The said missionary, after his arrival at Tranquebar, made it his chief business to study the Tamil language. After he became tolerably acquainted with it, he thought it his duty to publish an affectionate address to my countrymen, proving that “there is one God and one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus;” and at the same time he did not forget to prove strongly that the heathen religion is the invention of wicked men through the instigation and malice of the prince of darkness and great enemy of mankind. The said benevolent Mr. Ziegenbolg (sic.) without loss of time wrote the said address and caused many hundred copies to be printed and distributed among the heathens in and about Tranquebar and Tanjore. The gracious God by His own overruling providence directed one of the said addresses to be given to my beloved father, who with great attention and desire read it night and day, after which he was fully convinced in his mind of the truths of Christianity. Then without consulting with his flesh and blood or his relations, he immediately went with the said tract and opened his mind to the royal Danish missionaries, the Rev. Messrs Saguline, Kohlhoff,<sup>39</sup> Wideberg, and

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<sup>39</sup> Rev. C. S. Kohlhoff (1773-1819), was in charge of the Vepery Mission Seminary in 1836.



Schwartz,, who were then residing at the Fort of Tranquebar,<sup>40</sup> shewing the said address, telling that he had read in that precious epistle that there is only one Creator, a Redeemer and a Comforter; he expressed his anxious desire to be baptized and become one of the disciples and followers of Jesus Christ, the only Saviour of the world.

In the year 1756, on the 12 the of November, at the age of 33 years, he was baptized by the Rev. Kohlhoff<sup>41</sup> senior, in the Church called "Jerusalem"<sup>42</sup> at the Fort of Tranquebar. On that joyful occasion, the venerable Father Schwartz, became one of the sponsors to my worthy and affectionate father.

The merciful God who brought my father so far to the saving knowledge and light of the gospel, also graciously raised him a Christian friend, the most devoted and worthy Danielpulle,<sup>43</sup> the grandfather of the Rev. J. Dewasugayam who is now one of the Church Missionaries at Tinnevely who are related to us by intermarriages. He was then the first and confidential Interpreter to the Danish Governor, and an elder of the Lutheran Church at Tranquebar. Particularly he was appointed by the Danish Government as a confidential and fit annual ambassador between the said Governor and the Tanjore king. My father and Danielpulle became good friends as Jonathan and David both of their souls being knit together.

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<sup>40</sup> Fort Dansborg was built in 1620.

<sup>41</sup> Kenneth Ingham, *Reformers in India, 1793-1833: An Account of the Work of Christian*. Octagon Books (reprint)1973.

<sup>42</sup> New Jerusalem Church in Tranquebar was built in 1718.

<sup>43</sup> According to Kjell Hodne; *Danske embetsmenn og indiske eliter i kolonien* Daniel Pullei (1723-1801) was an active Christian worker in Tranquebar.

"Trankebar1777-1808" *Interaksjoner*, , No. 5, 2008, p. 137.

As they lived close by each other, both of them daily increased in their Christian friendship towards one another. Danielpulle had a regular morning and evening prayer meeting in his upstairs-house, where respective Christian families assembled, and my father was one of the regular attendants there; he used to take me also with him.

Danielpulle used to read one of the precious works of C.H.V. Bogatzky, called “the Golden Treasury,”<sup>44</sup> in the German language. While he was translating every day’s meditation into Tamil, my father immediately copied it out; so that in the course of one year he completed that valuable work. I am moreover happy to mention that it was afterwards revised by the learned and talented Fabricius,<sup>45</sup> a missionary of “the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge,” and printed in the Vepery Mission Press<sup>46</sup> and circulated among the Christians in different parts of the coast of Coromandel, as well as in this Island. I am sure that everyone who with sincere

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<sup>44</sup> This is a 365 day devotional first printed in the 1700s in the German language by Karl Heinrich von Bogatzky

<sup>45</sup> J. P. Fabricius, born at Cleeberg near Frankfort on the Maine on 22 Jan. 1711, studied at Giessen and Halle, was ordained at Copenhagen 1739, laboured at Tranquebar till 1742, when he became B. Schultze's successor in Madras, died there (unmarried) 24th Jan. 1791, after more than 50 years' residence in India.

<sup>46</sup> SPCK was set up at Vepery (situated just outside Madras) in 1726 by Benjamin Schultz. This new venture (Vepery mission) was just an extension of the Tranquebar mission. In 1712, a printing press with Tamil and Telegu typefaces was provided by the SPCK for publishing activities at Tranquebar, on repeated appeals by Ziegenbalg. This mission which was carried on under the auspices of the SPCK, had been established a century previous to the year 1826. The work was conducted in this period by the Lutheran Missionaries of the Royal Danish Mission in association with SPCK. (A. Westcott, *A Brief History of the Vepery (Madras) Mission*, Madras: Madras Diocesan Committee of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1897).

prayer and attention reads the said precious work will enjoy the true happiness both on earth below and in heaven above. I am likewise exceedingly glad further to state that even the Roman Catholic priests and Christians when they had heard and read it expressed their opinion that this valuable book is very instructive and profitable to Christians of different denominations.

I consider it my bounden duty to inform the Christian community at large that the said Danielpulle had translated from the German language into Tamil the Histories on the sufferings of our ever blessed Saviour, the famous and useful work, "Pilgrim's Progress" by John Bunyan, "Scriptural History" called the "Young Man's Companion," "Spiritual Refreshment," and many other edifying tracts. Now these are being collected by the Hindoo Religious Tract Society at Vepery, over which the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Madras is Patron, and the Venerable the Archdeacon is Vice-Patron for the time being. The said Hindoo Christian book society have already caused some of them to be printed and circulated among the Christians.

Now I turn from the above subject to write concerning my beloved father. The Royal Danish Government appointed him as a Native Judge in the Court of Justice at that metropolis shortly after he embraced Christianity, and also he was selected and nominated by the united consent of the Danish Missionaries in their Conference as one of the elders of the Lutheran Church at the said place. I am happy to say, that in both situations he not only gave full satisfaction to his superiors as well as to the people until his death, but also during his life time he most cheerfully and gladly employed his talents in composing many religious works, especially hymns on the precious atonement of our ever blessed Saviour Jesus Christ, strongly proving that His precious blood is sufficient to

cleanse the sins of every repenting and believing sinner, "though their sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow, though they be red as crimson they shall be as wool." (Isaiah i. 18.)

A year prior to his death he was confined at home on his bed by a dislocation of his right leg, which he considered as a special and kind Providential visitation that he should remain at home to prepare more and more for that eternal glory which he anxiously wished to enjoy through the merits of his Saviour after (eyes) were closed in death.

Whenever his friends and relations came to visit him, while he was in his sick-bed, he used to say to them, "Though death was called the last enemy of man, yet I consider it to be my last and best friend, by which I would not only be released from all the miseries, vanities and vexations, and temptations of the devil and of this wicked world and my deceitful heart, but also it will convey me into the glorious and everlasting kingdom of our ever blessed God, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost," and at the same time very affectionately advised them that they should also earnestly and daily prepare themselves through faith by ardent prayer to inherit that eternal kingdom.

A little while before his death, in his last prayer, or rather praises, he was so overwhelmed with admiration and joy, that he lifted up his hands towards heaven, and loudly expressed with fervency, like the first martyr, Stephen, "Lord Jesus, into Thy hands I deliver my soul. Amen. Receive my spirit." Thus he lived, and died in the Lord on the 9<sup>th</sup> October 1801, at his advanced age of 78 years. His body was interred in the burial ground attached to the church called Zion, where I often went with my school fellows whenever a funeral sermon was preached there. That church was first erected in the Fort of Tranquebar by the aforesaid first Royal Danish Missionary

Ziegenbalg, the celebrated translator of some parts of the Holy Bible, and the author of some religious tracts in Malabar.

While I am thinking to write a short memoir of my life, I think it my bounden duty to remark concerning many celebrated and pious native ministers, who have piously and ardently laboured for the spiritual and temporal welfare of their flock, and also of their benighted countrymen in the Coast Coromandel, as well as in this Island. The first regular ordained Lutheran minister was the Rev. Mr. Aaron, who before his conversion was called Armogam, and whose life was published in the German language by the Danish Missionaries. The first regular ordained and learned Presbyterian clergyman was the Rev. Mr. Mello. The names of these eminent and worthy ministers rightly deserve a first place in the annals of the Church of Christ in India.

In the year 1771, August the 7<sup>th</sup>, I was born at Tilleady near Tranquebar on the Southern Carnatic, and was baptized on the 2<sup>nd</sup> April, 1775, at the Bethlehem Church in Porrear near Tranquebar by the Rev. Mr. Klein,<sup>47</sup> who was one of the Danish Missionaries at that station. When I was very young I had an aversion and abhorrence to worship the dumb idols and images. Whenever my heathen relations went to the idol worship, the novelty and curiosity excited me to accompany them, but nothing would induce me to go with them for their worship; but when they gave me raw rice, cocoanuts, cakes, fruits, &c., which they received from their priests, that are offered up to the idols I accepted and eagerly devoured them.

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<sup>47</sup> Jac. Klein, born at Elbing in Prussia 20. Jan. 1721, studied at Halle, was ordained at Copenhagen 1744, embarked at London 29. March 1745, landed at Negapatam 3. Aug. 1746, married 5. March 1761, laboured at Tranquebar nearly 44 years, died there 18. May 1790, and was buried in New Jerusalem churchyard.

As my beloved father observed my unwillingness and hatred to worship the dumb idols, he wished to bring me up also for the Christian ministry. As he had already given up my three elder brothers to the kind care of the venerable Schwartz,, who was his godfather, to train them up for the service of the Lord, so he was very desirous that I should first of all acquire a knowledge of Tamil, before I attended to the study of any other language. He placed me when I was scarcely five years old under the tutorage of a schoolmaster named Arnasalam Wattiyar, who kept a school at his native village called Senganankara, but I made very little progress there, and was so inert that neither the rod nor persuasion could induce me to attend to my lessons. I always detested my daily task, and this induced me to be absent from the school to avoid punishment and generally unknown to my father. On such occasions I generally ran away to the jungle where my father's cattle were taken by the herdsmen to graze. But the merciful God, who desireth not the death of a sinner but rather that he return from his wickedness and live, directed my young, weak mind, while I was in that jungle, to reflect on His wonderful works, whereby I daily little by little observed and perceived the unsearchable loving kindness of the Creator to His creatures, which thoughts brought to my mind some knowledge of the goodness exhibited by the Creator, and led me to observe the plan and the work of creation and His love.

While I was absent from the school and continuing in the above awful pitiful state, God directed the heart of the schoolmaster who generally sent one or two stout school-boys with a strict order to apprehend and bring me direct to the school-room. Whenever these school fellows found me out, they immediately took me to the school where I was sometimes confined without getting my meals and sometimes punished.

At last having found that I was unable to prevent the boys from coming to the jungle to apprehend me, I took another cunning remedy, through the instigation of the devil and wicked boys and my own deceitful heart, to hide myself in a thick jungle called Ayanarcoil Kadu, one mile distant from my home. In this place were images of different kinds of demons, with most dreadful and ugly figures. A fearful soul would not dare approach that place unless on the days appointed for the general offering of the sacrifices. I always got up very early in the morning, every day at about 4 o'clock, and slowly went to the cook room and took sufficient rice and curry. After eating, I went near to the main gate which I carefully opened without the least noise, fearing that should any hear the sound of opening the door, I might be caught as it happened often. Consequently I carefully opened the gate and made my way to the said jungle. I succeeded in my cunning attempt by running every day in the week to the said jungle, excepting on Sundays when God graciously inclined my heart with a great delight to accompany my parents and my Christian relations to the church called Bethlehem at Porrear, where I was baptized. During the week days whenever I went to the jungle, I remained there till evening without fear of school boys, man, or devils, but at the same time amusing myself with the various kinds of fruits and flowers of that jungle. Whenever I felt myself hungry, I opened the door of the temple, and without any fear entered in where the idols were placed. If I found there raw rice, cocoanuts, &c., I devoured them. After satisfying my appetite, my next business was to take a strong stick and break some horses and idols made of clay by the potters. These were placed in two rows before the temple. I usually was waiting for my father; and as I knew the hour he generally returned from his office in the afternoon from the Court of Tranquebar, I slowly and innocently entered into the house.

Here I must remark, that according to his invariable custom and rule, my beloved father had private prayers, either before going out or coming in. Even when he got to his office he made it his preliminary business before he took his seat on the chair to pray to God that he may grant him wisdom to enable him to execute his duty, and likewise he never left his office without returning thanks to God. Here I am happy to observe that I had a younger sister aged three years who used every day in the morning and evening to remind my father to pray, as well as loudly calling everyone at home by name to come for prayers. My father merely to try her, sometimes began to pray sitting. Then she immediately said, "Not so, my father, kneel and pray." Accordingly he knelt and prayed. When she was three years and a few months old she was attacked with small-pox which proved fatal. Immediately before her death, she asked for a Bible, and after receiving it, she kissed and put the book on the bed and fell on her face upon it with deep sighs, and happily expired.

To return from this digression, after the prayer was over, my father bade me to sit near him, and then questioned me whether I went to school, to which I was silent, knowing if I should say "No," I shall be punished, should I say "Yes," it will be against the commandment. Afterwards he desired me to bring my lessons, and while examining me, he found that I made no progress, nor attended the school, and with a pitiful tone exclaimed, "O my poor dull boy! May God bless you."

My good father in 1776 made an application to the Royal Danish Missionaries in my behalf in order to admit me into their institution, who very kindly admitted me into the mission seminary at Tranquebar.

The Fountain of all goodness and the Creator of all mankind was graciously pleased to show His wonderful and



unspeakable kindness towards me. Soon after I was admitted into the said seminary, to my encouragement and gratification I found that the Principal of the said institution was the minister, the Rev. Mr. Klein, who baptized me in the church called Bethlehem, by which God was pleased to open to me the first entrance into the kingdom of God to enjoy the means of grace of the Church militant here below, and after death the Church triumphant above.

The said Principal every morning at about 6 o'clock, in the Lecture Hall situated between the male and female schools, regularly delivered lectures, after which he enforced the duty of earnest private prayer, proving its beneficial effects by mentioning the memoirs of little children who early devoted themselves to the Lord.

The said Principal having been pleased very kindly to grant the privilege to every student in the seminary to wait on him to ask his advice and counsel, with great eagerness I availed myself of this edifying privilege. The Professor very affectionately received me also in his study, to whom I opened my heart and begged him to give me his advice concerning my gracious Redeemer and Comforter, and how to obtain His grace, that I may fulfil my baptismal vow and His holy will. Upon which that excellent and pious minister exhorted and instructed me on the said subject, and also chose me to accompany him in his perambulation on his visit to Christians and heathens in the neighbouring villages.

Accordingly I accompanied him in his ministerial visits, and by his admonitions and examples I am happy to say that I daily increased in the knowledge and love of God, and in the faith of Jesus Christ.

By the over-ruling Providence of God, when I first entered into the said seminary, I was placed in the alphabetical class among boys who were younger than myself. The great progress they were making not only made me ashamed but also excited great emulation and desire in my mind in order to exercise in learning; but when I found my desire and endeavour to be in vain, it made me remember the advice of the Professor, who in his daily morning lectures never failed to mention to pray without ceasing, and the benefit we would derive by prayer especially in private. By the blessing of God and by the help of the Holy Ghost, I resolved to pray always before I take in hand to commit my lessons to memory, by which means I made quick progress in my daily tasks, with a view to be promoted to the first or higher class.

The annual examination generally took place in the early part of January. In 1777 the said examination took place, when the Professor, the Rev. Drs. Rottler,<sup>48</sup> John and other missionaries, with all the native elders of the Church and some of the parents and relatives of the children were present. They all assembled in the said Lecture Hall, between the male and female schools, which was beautifully decorated with flowers &c. on the day of examination.

The Professor, the Rev. Mr. Klein, took the Chair and opened the discussion with singing and ardent prayers; and then the scholars were arranged according to their first admittance in the Seminary. I was then placed among the alphabetical class,

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<sup>48</sup> J. P. Rottler (1749-1836), born at Strasburg, Lower-Rhine, France, June 1749, studied at Strasburg was ordained and arrived at Tranquebar with the last mentioned. Laboured at Tranquebar till 1803, when he was provisionally sent to Madras, was unconnected with any Home-Mission 1806 — 1817, when he took charge of the Madras Mission under the "District Committee," died after 60 years' residence in India 24. Jan. 1836.

agreeably to the standing rule, and was examined by one of the native members who immediately placed me from the 6<sup>th</sup> to the 5<sup>th</sup> class, and from the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 1<sup>st</sup> class and I was examined by the examiners of every class.

On that joyful occasion, the aforesaid devoted Danielpulle and my uncle Solomon Chettiar strongly recommended the Committee that I am a fit candidate to be promoted to the first class. Accordingly I was fixed in the said higher class and also had the privilege of catechizing the lower class in the History of the Bible, translated by the said worthy Danielpulle from the German to the Tamil language.

From the year 1777 to 1785 I remained in the said institution nearly eight years. Really I have no words to express the mercies and kindness Providence bestowed on me during that said period. However, I think it proper to state that a few of my fellow pious students and myself formed a prayer meeting every evening between 7 and 8 o'clock. After singing we began to communicate to each other of our experience and feelings and of spiritual things, afterwards each of us prayed, and we concluded the meeting with songs and prayers to Almighty God.

In the year 1785, April the 13<sup>th</sup>, on the ever memorable day of the crucifixion of our Saviour, I received for the first time the Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist according to the Lutheran confession from the hands of the Rev. Drs. Rottler and John. In the latter end of the same year, the Ven'ble Schwartz,, in one of his usual visits to Tranquebar Mission, came also to the Seminary to examine the scholars; and when he saw me among the students he clapped on my right cheek, and blessed me, saying, "May God make you a useful harbinger to carry the good tidings of salvation to your benighted countrymen;" and he spoke with the Missionaries on behalf of

me. After getting their consent, he took me along with him to Negapatam, and placed me under the tuition of the Rev. Mr. Jaricke, who was there a sincere and laborious minister for the English, Dutch, Portuguese, and Tamil congregations, and under whose able tuition I acquired a knowledge of the English language and the principles of Christian Theology.

In the latter part of 1786, I returned from Negapatam to Tranquebar and placed myself under the tutorage of my confessor, Dr. John.<sup>49</sup> In the same year, when Mr. Schwartz, visited again Tranquebar for the purpose of ordaining the Rev. Mr. Kohlhoff junior, in the mission church called Jerusalem, and invested him with the priesthood according to the ritual of the Lutheran Church, Mr. Schwartz, took again a lively interest on my behalf and requested the Missionaries at Tranquebar to send me to his mission station at Tanjore with a view to bring me up in the service of my Lord.

On January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1787, I left Tranquebar with my mother and sister. We arrived at Tanjore on the 7<sup>th</sup>. I waited upon Mr. Schwartz,, who very kindly received me and directed one of his catechists to give me a house in his garden; and that pious minister immediately appointed me as a schoolmaster and catechist in his mission. At the same time he desired Josephpulley, his steward, to deliver to me all the things and placed them under my care, treated me with all the solicitude of a father, used to call me his Timothy, and particularly took me with him to his itinerant preaching in the capacity of a catechist.

In the year 1788, the month of April, by the particular order of the Madras Government, the Rev. Mr. Schwartz, made his long

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<sup>49</sup> . Christopher Samuel John arrived in India in 1771 and continued without a break until 1813.

journey, in company with three civil gentlemen, who held up high situations next to the Governor, to visit the central province of Madras, for the purpose of inspecting and enquiring into the state of the inhabitants and especially of the revenue of every district. Accordingly we travelled through high mountains and jungles, in danger of fierce animals. This journey we completed within a few months, and arrived in the month of September 1788, at the presidency of Madras, where my spiritual father, Mr. Schwartz,, took his abode at the Vepery Mission House till the middle of October. During his stay there, he preached on Sundays and holy days regularly, in the Vepery Mission Church,<sup>50</sup> and occasionally in the Fort St. George<sup>51</sup> Church, when the Governor, Councillors, and many other gentlemen and their respective families eagerly resorted to hear his sermons, which he preached in English. It is needless for me to say that all his hearers of different denominations were delighted and edified by his sermons and returned thanks to God who graciously brought him to renew his visits there.

Neither lapse of time nor of distance has obliterated from my recollections the places and countries and the occurrences in our said travels, which were providentially connected with many interesting and remarkable events, concerning which I have no words to express here how our gracious God preserved our unworthy lives from many perils and dangers of wild beasts and highway robbers on the said journey for the sake of our ever blessed Saviour Jesus Christ.

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<sup>50</sup> Vepery mission church near Madras had about five to six hundred souls. Abbe Dubois, *Letters on the state of Christianity in Indian*, London, 1823,p.18.

<sup>51</sup> A major portion of the fort was completed by the St. George's Day i.e., 23rd April, 1640, and hence named as Fort St. George. The other important construction was the St. Mary's Church in 1680, the first Anglican Church in India.

In November, 1788, the Ven'ble Mr. Schwartz, left Madras, and on his way to his station, he visited Sadras,<sup>52</sup> Cadaloor, Tranquebar, Mayapooram, Cambaconum, and Pawanasam, and in each place he held religious meetings for exhortation and prayer. On his safe arrival at the end of the same month at Tanjore where most of his flocks assembled together and offered their humble thanks to God for His mercies shown towards their father Schwartz,, in preserving him from various dangers and bringing him back in sound health among them.

In the year 1789, the 21<sup>st</sup> March, my beloved and pious mother, whom I cannot forget, died, at the age of 44 years and a few days, in the village called Swartsamapooram, signifying the great and famous city of Swartz. Her remains were interred in the burial ground of the said village attached to the church where the corpses of my two elder brothers and a few of my relations were also buried. On this solemn occasion the Rev. Mr. Kholhoff performed the funeral service.

Here I must remark that the said worthy pastor, Mr. Schwartz,, exerted himself night and day without minding difficulties and went about doing good like his Master in preaching the Gospel to the heathens and Christians, not only in his own country but also in several other places where missionaries are stationed, viz., Trichinopoly, &c.

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<sup>52</sup> Sadras was established as part of Dutch Coromandel in the seventeenth century. It is a fortress town located in Kanchipuram (fhQ;rpGuk;) District, 70 km south of Chennai. Sadras is the anglicized form of the ancient town of Saduranga pattinam (rJuq;f gl;lzk;). The Sadras Fort, built for commercial purposes by the Dutch, is a vast compound enclosing a huge granary, stable and structures used to mount elephants. The fortress was conquered by the British in 1818. Sadras is a fortress town located in Kanchipuram District, 70 km south of Chennai. Sadras is the anglicized form of the ancient town of Saduranga pattinam.

A few miles from Tanjore there was a village called Vallam, where a small fort was built by the English, where a garrison was placed to which the Ven'ble Father Schwartz, never failed to go once a week to perform divine service in the church he built, where I was also accustomed to accompany him. After the divine service was over, he generally reminded me to go among the people and visit as usual the Christians in the neighbourhood and particularly to proclaim the glad tidings to the Heathens, Mahomedans, and Roman Catholics. Accordingly I continued doing so and reported to him what success I made on my aforesaid visits, and in which situation I continued till the end of the year.

My said spiritual father has often proposed and wished me kindly to enter into the holy state of matrimony, with a young woman named Mary or Moottoammal, whom he himself had baptized, and with whom I was well acquainted. Upon this important subject, I thought it my duty to inform first to my beloved father at Tranquebar to obtain his consent, who in hearing these pleasing tidings without the least hesitation not only agreed to the proposal which the Rev. Mr. Schwartz,, his Godfather, had made, but himself and a few of my near relations came down to Tanjore, in order to be present at the marriage feast.

In the year 1790, April 13 th, by the grace of God, the Rev. Mr. Kohlhoff solemnized our marriage, and my bride and myself received the benediction from my father and the Ven'ble the tutor Schwartz,. A few days after my marriage, the said Mr. Schwartz, was kindly pleased to appoint me as catechist to Tanjore mission of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and I continued in my service till the end of that year.

In the year 1791, January 18<sup>th</sup>, the Ven'ble the father Schwartz, directed me to go to Palamcotta as catechist to take charge of the congregation in the Tinnevelly district in conjunction with the much reverend priest Sattianadan, who delivered a sermon in Tamil on the occasion of his ordination, which the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge have caused to be translated into English and printed in England as a specimen of the eloquence of the Indian pulpit and worthy of the public eye.

The first seven years of my residence in the Tinnevelly district, God used me as an instrument in his hands for the enlargement of his kingdom on that populous place where I made my periodical visits in the whole of the Tinnevelly District, as well as Tuticorin,<sup>53</sup> Perumkal, Manipai, and the intermediate towns and villages which were then under the dominion of the East India Company<sup>54</sup> and my whole time and weak talents which God endowed me with were devoted to the benefit and blessing of the inhabitants, exclusive of all personal consideration. We could not then find in the places just mentioned more than about a few hundred Protestant Christians, but in these particular fields, through Divine direction and aid, I sowed the Gospel seed from village to village and house to house, and prayed in full confidence and

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<sup>53</sup> Tuticorin is known as Thoothukudi (Jhj;Jf;Fb). It is one of the seaports of the Pandyan kingdom. It was taken over by the Portuguese in 1548, captured by the Dutch in 1658, and ceded to the British in 1825.

<sup>54</sup> The East India Company was a British joint-stock company formed for pursuing trade with the East Indies. The Company eventually came to rule large areas of India with its own private armies, exercising military power and assuming administrative functions. Company rule in India effectively began in 1757 after the Battle of Plassey and lasted until 1858 when, following the Indian Rebellion of 1857 (India's First War of Independence), the Government of India Act 1858 led to the British Crown assuming direct control of India in the era of the new British Raj.



belief to the Lord of the Harvest that He will in His own good time, all these heathen villages into true Christian ones, and the inhabitants thereof sincere followers of Christ. But I must observe that the great enemy of mankind by subtlety under the shape of an angel of light, tempted me day and night, and sowed tares of spiritual pride in my heart. Relying on self-righteousness which brought me into an utter destruction of my principles, I continued to lead a course of life altogether inconsistent with my profession. After I was betrayed and fallen into such a lamentable temptation by trying to please all parties and to glide through life without offending, this point made me like Balaam of old as recorded in Holy Writ. Number xxii 5.

The Rev. Mr. Jacnicke, one of the missionaries at Tanjore who was also my benevolent Pastor, pitied my fallen state, and endeavoured by his persuasion and pastoral advice to reclaim me from my backsliding. But alas! instead of listening to the advice of my spiritual father, or yielding to the inward admonitions of conscience, or giving heed to the voice of God through the influence of His Holy Spirit, most foolishly I resigned the situation of catechist in the year 1797, July the 2<sup>nd</sup>.

The moment I relinquished my post, my heart was troubled very much, and the place which was once so delightful, in which I was stationed as catechist, became so dreadful that I resolved thus to quit immediately the said place for Tranquebar, my native country, thinking a change of place and company would do me good, and bring me into my former state near my Creator, Redeemer, and Comforter. In the meantime, I must confess, I had lost sight of the unerring promise of our ever blessed Saviour who condescended to say to Saint Paul for his encouragement, "My grace is sufficient for thee." 2 Cor. xii. 9; also Rom. v. 20.

In 1797, after my arrival at Tranquebar, at the end of the same year, the missionary, my benevolent tutor Dr. John, who first prepared me by his wholesome advice that I may worthily partake the Eucharist, kindly advised me again to become a catechist; but the immortal enemy of mankind hardened my heart again to decline the said good offer, and I remained there thoughtless for about a year, abandoning the service of God, and the world and worldly things accompanied all my thoughts.

But as the gracious and wise God does often in His infinite mercy and justice visit His backsliding children with severe trials in order to bring them back to Him, so He chastised me and my family by a severe calamity which brought to my mind the sins I committed against my heavenly Father, and which made me to repent. Immediately I resolved to go to my tutor, Dr. John; and while I was just going towards the Danish church, and turning to his house, I saw him walking in his upstairs; I was then immediately confounded and felt ashamed to go to him. But he having perceived my turning back, God moved his heart to call me with a loud voice to come up to him, which encouraged my heart. That generous missionary, who still had that pastoral feeling towards me, received me, as a tender father does a returning prodigal, not only with many demonstrations of kindness, but also relieved me from my pecuniary wants for my journey from Tranquebar to Tanjore, and also advised me that I should immediately proceed to Tanjore promising at the same time that he write to the Rev. Messrs. Jaenicke and Kohlhoff, so that I may be employed again as catechist in my former situation. I thought it also my duty to go to the most pious and learned Danielpulle, whom I have already mentioned. Accordingly I went to him and acquainted him with what Dr. John proposed, which made him rejoice. He also gave me a letter to the said Messrs. Jaenicke and Kohlhoff . Without consulting my wicked and perverse

heart and relations and friend at Tranquebar, immediately in the name of God I set out to Tanjore, in the 1798, the month of April, and there I was employed again as a catechist under the Rev. Messrs Jaenicke and Kohlhoff, and went on with my duties to the edification of the congregation.

In the year 1800, when Mr. Jaenicke visited Tanjore from Madras, he proposed me to go to Jaffna as a Tamil tutor to his God-son, Mr. Fredrick Gehagen, who was then assistant to the Commissioner extraordinary, for the Northern Province to Colonel Balbet. Though his proposal was against my inclination, I was compelled by a sense of my duty to my gracious Creator and gratitude to the missionaries who were my spiritual fathers. Upon this subject I likewise consulted with my pious brother, Rev. Nyanapragasam, who was then catechist, and also my tried Christian friend, Sandasiapulle, then elder of the Tanjore congregation. Both of them advised me to accede to the proposal. In the same year, on the 28<sup>th</sup> of February, I set out for Jaffna and arrived there on the end of March. But on the 28<sup>th</sup> of May following, the said Mr. Gehagen left Ceylon for Madras. I also accompanied him and landed at Negapatam from whence I went to Tranquebar, and that gentleman sailed to Madras.

In the year 1798, the Earl of Guilford<sup>55</sup> was appointed as Governor to the Island of Ceylon. His Lordship's notice was attracted by the neglected state of religious instruction in the island, which had been conducted to a satisfactory degree during the time of the Dutch Government. The said Governor thought it proper to adopt good measures for re-establishing again those beneficent institutions and appointing preachers

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<sup>55</sup> Frederick North, 5th Earl of Guilford (7 February 1766 – 14 October 1827) was a younger son of Prime Minister Frederick North, 2nd Earl of Guilford . He represented Banbury in Parliament from 1792 to 1794 and served as Governor of Ceylon from 1798 to 1805.

of the Gospel in different parts of the island. In the latter end of October, 1800, His Excellency made his first circuit to Jaffna, accompanied by the Rev. James Cordiner (1775-1836),<sup>56</sup> After their arrival, His Excellency convened a Committee, which, by the kind recommendation of Mr. Gehagen appointed me to be superintendent of schools and preacher of the Gospel at Jaffna, Manaar and other places,

His Excellency required Mr. Gehagen to send a letter to me, which letter reached my hands on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of January, 1801, while I was in the church called Jerusalem, at Tranquebar. The very same hour I received also another one from my relatives and friends who wrote to me to come over to Tanjore at the request of the Rev. Mr. Kohlhoff to offer myself as a candidate for the high and lucrative office of the Head Manager of the Tanjore district, having already secured the interest of Benjamin Torin Esq, President in the court of His Majesty the King Tanjore. Then I went first to Tanjore and showed the letter to Mr. Kohlhoff who immediately wrote to Mr. Jaerricke concerning me requesting his opinion whether my remaining at Tanjore would be best calculated to do good or to proceed to Jaffna. Mr. Jaerricke wrote to Mr. Kohlhoff, that he would advise me to accept the situation of Preacher of the Gospel and Superintendent of schools &c., at Jaffna, and to proceed to the same place without delay. Accordingly he strongly recommended me and promised to give me all necessary testimonials, &c., to go to Jaffna. Upon this subject, I seriously determined to consider for a while when it came to my mind what St. James asserts in his General Epistle-“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.” James i. 5.

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<sup>56</sup> James Cordiner, *A Description of Ceylon*, ed. By S.D. Saparamadu, Dehiwela: Tisara, 1983, Introduction.

After having received the necessary testimonials from the said Mr. Kohlhoff I bade farewell to him and my friends, and left Tanjore in the latter end of January and arrived at Tranquebar on the 1<sup>st</sup> February, 1801, when I showed to Dr. John, my tutor and patron, the papers and testimonials which Mr. Kohlhoff gave me. Seeing them, he was pleased to give me a letter of introduction to his friends at Jaffna and also a testimonial on my behalf.

On the 7<sup>th</sup> February, I bade farewell to my tutor, Dr. John, and to my relations and friends at Tranquebar, and left the place with my family and arrived at Negapatam, from whence we embarked for Jaffna on the 18<sup>th</sup> instant, landed at Kayts on the 20<sup>th</sup>, and reached Jaffna on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of the same month. Colonel Barbet being absent, Mr. Gehagen kindly received me, to whom I delivered my testimonials, papers. &c. After perusal, he forwarded them to His Excellency the Governor of Ceylon the Hon'ble Frederick North, Earl of Guildford. I obtained instructions from His Excellency (dated the 28<sup>th</sup> February, 1801) who appointed me as Preacher of the Gospel and Superintendent of 47 schools in the Districts of Jaffna and Manaar, directing me to visit the said districts three times a year.

Immediately after I entered upon the duties of my new appointment, I re-established or at least brought into operation with the sanction of His Excellency the Governor the 47 schools in the districts of Jaffna and Manaar for the education of the native children, as they were under the Dutch Government. I took a house for rent in the town, where I continued to preach on Sundays and holy days both in the mornings and evenings. I also weekly visited my congregation in their residences for the purpose of exhorting and praying with them, as well as enforcing in private those truths which had formed the subjects of my public discourses.

Here I must remark that in the time of the Dutch Government, the Presbyterian minister used to perform divine service at St. John's Church, which is about a mile distant from the Pettah and situated at Chundiculy. After the British took possession of the Island of Ceylon, the above said Colonel Balbet was appointed Commandant of the Jaffna Fort and Commissioner Extraordinary of the whole of the Northern Province from Chilaw as far as to Batticaloa. The Colonel had in possession St. John's church, the roof of which was in a decayed state, and he used to keep his cattle in the church. Believing in the infallible promises of God, who is the hearer of prayers, and who through His almighty power can move the hearts of all men as they are in his hands, I resolved to go every evening to the said St. John's church to pray that the Lord would direct the heart of the colonel to give up the sacred building to my charge that I might preach the ever blessed Gospel there.

In 1801, December the 20<sup>th</sup>, about 6 o'clock p.m., I went in company with my cousin Josephpulle to the church and tenderly opened the door of the vestry where the animals were secure within. The sheep began to bleat. We immediately knelt down, and I supplicated the Lord that He would graciously incline the heart of the above named gentleman to give the sacred house into my charge for the purpose of preaching His holy word. In the hurry of the moment after prayer, we left the place, forgetting to shut the door. On the 21<sup>st</sup> evening, according to my resolution, at the same hour, I went thither with my said cousin, and finding the door strongly bolted, immediately I thought that the shepherd had secured the door, in consequence of which, we entered into the church through the window on the north side, and kneeling down as I was, engaged in prayer, a great sudden light blazed before my sight, near the pulpit on the east side. I immediately concluded my prayer, and on returning home I mentioned to my cousin about the light I saw in the church

while I was praying. He said that he did not see it, but encouraged me by observing that it was a good sign, and that we should continue to wrestle with God until we got possession of the holy building.

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> as we approached the middle door on the south side of the church, Colonel Barbet came from his residence (which after his death was purchased by Government and is now used as the Kutchery) and requested me to tell the shepherd who was coming behind him, that he must bring the sheep the next morning to the Fort, that he will give him a place to keep them, and also desired me to call on him at the Kutchery in the Fort, as he intended to give over the said Church to my charge, and likewise promised to assist me with prisoners to clean the same. Immediately I offered up my prayer and thanksgiving to God and praised Him like David of old. "Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, *bless* his holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies" Ps ciii. 1-4.

On the morning of the 23<sup>rd</sup>, I went to the Kutchery in the Fort, when Colonel Barbet delivered the keys, and at the same time ordered his peons to get the church well cleaned by the prisoners, and particularly he sent a general notice to every district of Jaffna and Manaar that I was appointed as a licensed preacher of the Gospel by Government and I was to officiate in St. John's Church, and whosoever wished to be married and to have their children baptized might apply to me.

On the evening of the 24<sup>th</sup>, being Christmas eve, I preached for the first time in St. John's Church, and the text I selected for that joyful occasion was Philippians iv. 4. "Rejoice in the Lord

always, and again I say rejoice.” People of every description attended the service, among whom I was gratified to find two Hindu scholars of the Venerable Fathers Schwartz and Jaerricke. So I continued by the help of God to preach regularly, during my residence here, in St. John’s Church till I retired on pension in September, 1841. Since then the church has been given over to the Church Missionary Society, yet by the grace of God, when my health permits me, I do perform occasionally my ministerial duties in the said Church, at the request of the missionary who is stationed there.

In the year 1802, the month of March, His Excellency the Hon’ble Mr. North visited Jaffna and attended St. John’s Church with his suite on the 28<sup>th</sup> of the same month accompanied by Colonel Barbet in order to give his countenance to me and set an example to others. I delivered the sermon inwardly praying that the Lord would bless the words to the hearts of my hearers. The Governor paid great attention to my discourse, and on the following day, in testimony of his good opinion towards me, directed Rds. 250 to be paid to me. This sum was ordered to be paid “to the Rev. C. David, Officiating Preacher of the Gospel, as a mark of His Excellency’s approbation of his exemplary behaviour in the exercise of his holy function.”

Sometime after, I was appointed, as a member of the Committee to superintend the male and female orphan schools at Jaffna, in addition to the Tamil schools in the different parishes. This offer I cheerfully accepted and paid every attention to the situation entrusted on me.

In the year 1803, the month of February, I was introduced to the Rev. Mr. Schroter,<sup>57</sup> who arrived from Colombo on a visit

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<sup>57</sup> *Journal of Dutch Burgher Union*, Vol. IV, no. 69, p. 23



to his father, and a warm and steady friendship soon commenced between us, which, however, was a very short duration. Mr. Schroter after a few weeks returned to Colombo, where he died of fever! Shortly after this, Surgeon Morton of the Royal Artillery, arrived at Jaffna, who being a pious man, it was through this gentleman that I was introduced to the notice of the hon'ble and Rev. Doctor Twisleton, who succeeded the Rev. James Cordiner, the first Chaplain and Principal of all the Government schools in this Island, and also the author of the History of Ceylon.

In April, 1803, when Doctor Christi, Superintendent General of the Vaccine Establishment in Ceylon visited Jaffna for the purpose of introducing that salutary antidote among the native population, he found much opposition from the people who, believing, as many of them still do, that the "small-pox" is owing to the fury of their goddess Ammal, had entertained a notion that any attempt to counteract the rage of the contagion would render them obnoxious to her displeasure; but I soon interposed, and by my influence not only removed this prejudice that existed from time immemorial but set myself the first example by allowing my own children to be vaccinated, and thus proved myself equally alive to the spiritual and temporal welfare of the inhabitants of my district.

The Rev. Mr. Cordiner<sup>58</sup> after due enquiry concerning me, formed a good opinion of my public and private character, and he admitted me into a very intimate friendship, and I continued to carry on a correspondence with him till his departure to England. The Hon'ble Doctor Twisleton who

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<sup>58</sup> The first Church of England chaplain of Sri Lanka was the Rev. James Cordiner. He came to Sri Lanka 1799 and left the Island in 1802. He died in January 1836 at the age 65 at Aberdeen.

succeeded Mr. Cordiner, was equally friendly with me. I had through his interest obtained the sanction of the Governor to establish an English school for the education of the natives of Jaffna. In the year 1804, the Government allowed Rds. 50 per month, the residence of the expense being defrayed by private subscription, of which the greater part was contributed by the officers of His Majesty's 66<sup>th</sup> Regiment then in the garrison of Jaffna.

In the above said year 1804, I was appointed as the first member of the Board of Commissioners for Jaffna; and the following letter from the President of the said board, which conveyed the appointment to me, shewed the confidence placed on me in every way, although I am sensible of my unworthiness to hold such a responsible situation.

“To Mr. Christian David,

“Preacher of the Gospel, &c.

“Jaffnapatam.

“Sir,- It is with great pleasure I inform you of His Excellency's pleasure in appointing you of the first members of the Board of Native Commissioners, in particular as I think the situation His Excellency has honoured you with is a very arduous and responsible one, and that I shall receive great help from your acknowledged activity and integrity, and from your knowledge of the English language.

“I am, Sir,

“Yours truly,

(signed) “HENRY LAYARD.

“President of the Board “of Native Commissioners.

“Jaffnapatam, 10<sup>th</sup> April, 1804.”

In the year 1805, the late Rev. Mr. Palm,<sup>59</sup> one of the missionaries of the London Missionary Society,<sup>60</sup> (afterwards he became a minister of the Dutch Presbyterian Church at Colombo) settled at Tillepally of the District of Jaffna, about whom the famous Doctor Buchanan speaks at large in his “Christian Researches,”<sup>61</sup> (p.299) with whom I formed an acquaintance and continued to co-operate with him in the great cause for which he was sent.

In the same year by his suggestion I opened a correspondence with the London Missionary Society, and furnished them with a luminous detail of the moral and religious state of the inhabitants of the province of Jaffna and Manaar, for which I received that thanks.

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<sup>59</sup> Rev. Johan David Palm, Minister of Wolvendaal Church. He was born at Colberg, a seaport town in Prussia, in 1775, studied theology at Berlin, joined the London Missionary Society (LMS), and was at the Scotch Church, Swallow Street, in 1804. The Hon. F. North applied to the LMS for missionaries, and four members of the Society, including Palm, were sent out. Palm arrived in Ceylon in 1805, and joined the others, Messrs. J. P. M. Erhardt, M. C. Vos, and William Read, had already arrived. He was first stationed at Tellppali, in the Northern Province, where he built a chapel, school, and house. He was there for three years, and when the LMS withdrew from the Island he moved to Kalutara, where he established a school. He was chosen to succeed the Rev. Giffening as pastor of Wolvendaal on August 27, 1812, and he exercised that office for thirty years. Mrs. Palm died at Colombo, December 17, 1822.

<sup>60</sup> The London Missionary Society (LMS) was a non-denominational missionary society formed in England in 1795 by evangelical Anglicans and Nonconformists. The first group of their missionaries came to Sri Lanka in 1805.

<sup>61</sup> Claudius Buchanan, *Christian Researches: Asia*, p. 98.

In the very same year, I became well acquainted with Sir Alexandar Johnston<sup>62</sup> for whom I translated several valuable Tamil books particularly one on the names, description and virtues of Indian medical plants, and occasionally afforded my assistance in the Supreme Court as Interpreter, where trials of magnitude took place at the session. Sir Alexander had placed an implicit confidence on me, and never failed to countenance all my reasonable undertakings and suggestions concerning the extension of Christianity in the Island of Ceylon.

In the year 1805, July the 19<sup>th</sup>, on the assumption of the Government of the Colony by the Lieut. General Rt. Hon'ble Sir Thomas Maitland,<sup>63</sup> the first measure adapted by him was to reduce the Ecclesiastical Establishment, and all the schools under me were at once abolished. This was a severe shock not only to me, but also to the rising generations. But however by the grace of God, I, with the assistance of Messrs. Lusignan, Layard and Mooyaart<sup>64</sup>, contrived to raise a fund by subscription, and opened a school in the Pettah to which I paid all my attention, but this desirable institution was soon abandoned in consequence of the departure of several of these gentlemen from Jaffna, and I myself would have in all probability sunk into obscurity, had it not been for the support I occasionally received from the said Messrs. Layard and Mooyaart.

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<sup>62</sup> Alexander Johnston, (1775-1849) was third chief justice of Ceylon from 6 November 1811 - 1820.

<sup>63</sup> Lieutenant-General Sir Thomas Maitland (1759–1824) was a British soldier and colonial governor of Ceylon from 19 July 1805 to 19 March 1811.

<sup>64</sup> J.N. Mooyaart, was the assistant collector of Chilaw and Puttalam districts in 1833. *The Asiatic Journal and the Monthly Register for British and Foreign India, China and Australasia*, London, 1934, p. 272.

In the year 1806, the famous and Rev. Dr. Claudius Buchannan visited Jaffna, and attended St. John's Church, and has recorded the subjoined flattering testimony of my weak labours in his "Christian Researches" (p 300):-

"The only Protestant Preacher in the town of Jaffna is Christian David, a Hindu catechist sent over by the missionaries of Tranquebar. His chief ministrations are in the Tamil tongue, but he sometimes preaches in the English language, which he speaks with tolerable propriety, and the Dutch and English resort to hear him. I went with the rest to his Church, when he delivered extempore a very excellent discourse, which his present majesty George the third would not have not disdained to hear. And this Hindu supports the interest of the English Church in this province of Jaffna."

From the year 1806 up to the year 1808, I went on with my ministerial duties among my flock and persons of every description of religion. In the year 1809, the most pious and excellent Lord Viscount Molesworth was appointed as Commandant to the garrison at Jaffna. I was introduced to his Lordship by Captain Truter. My circumstances and those of Mr. Palm<sup>65</sup> (who was then residing at Tillepally) soon attracted his Lordship's notice and he wrote to Government for an allowance to be granted to both of us for the support of our schools. The Government according to his Lordship's request authorized Mr. Palm and me to receive Rds 25 each per month for the purpose of establishing schools. His Lordship made arrangements for the English Service to be performed by us alternately for the garrison and others in the Fort Church every week.

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<sup>65</sup> Rev. J.D. Palm was among the first Protestant missionaries to visit Ceylon from England. He was among the four agents of the LMS in 1805.

In one of my letters I wrote to Dr. John, “that ever since I had the honour and happiness of the acquaintance of Lord Molesworth,<sup>66</sup> Colonel and Commandant of Jaffna, I have clearly perceived, by his frequent pious conversations and actions that he is strongly resolved and well inclined to promote the glory of our Saviour and the real happiness of the poor and ignorant natives of this place.”

The old church of St. John’s was at this time in a state of decay, which I brought to the notice of the Colonel, and a fund was raised by subscription, which was very small, but however I went on with the repairs by my own money with which God blessed me.

In 1812, March the 11<sup>th</sup>, General Sir Robert Brownrigg, as Governor, established the Colombo Bible Society, and proposed to publish a Tamil translation of the Scriptures. I was consulted by the Rev. Mr. Bisset,<sup>67</sup> Secretary to that institution, as to which of the then existing versions they should prefer for the purpose as unexceptionable. I gave my opinion in favour of one made by the Danish Missionaries, and this offered an opportunity of forming a friendship which afterwards existed between me and Mr. Bisset.

In 1813, in the latter end of December, I first visited Colombo, and was personally introduced by the Hon’ble Dr. Twisleton to the then Governor, Sir Robert Brownrigg.<sup>68</sup> I was lodging under the hospitable roof of the said Dr. Twisleton at St.

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<sup>66</sup> Findlay, G. And W. Holdsworth *The History of The Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society* vol. 5, London: The Epworth Press, 1924, p. 27.

<sup>67</sup> George Bissett was one of the first colonial chaplains in Sri Lanka. He was the brother in Law of Governor Brownrigg.

<sup>68</sup> William Martin Harvard, *A Narrative of the Establishment and Progress of the Mission to Ceylon*, p.162

Sebastian Street, where he had a large and commodious house. At the request of the said Reverend gentleman, I preached on the Christmas Eve, on Phillip. iv. 4, "Rejoice in the Lord always, for again I say rejoice." On this occasion several Protestants and Roman Catholics, Chetties and missionaries of different denominations, besides native preachers and Burghers, were present. But now through an almighty and overruling Providence that regulates every event in the world, I am still alive and gratified to hear that in the same compound a place of public worship was erected, bearing the name of "Trinity Church."

In 1814, January the 1<sup>st</sup>, I preached at the Wolfendahl Church,<sup>69</sup> and the text selected for the occasion was 1 Cor. vii. 31- "For the fashion of this world passeth away." Here also most of the Chetties and different classes of people attended. During my stay here, my time was fully engaged in visiting the Chetty families to exhort and pray with them, when I embraced the opportunity to give notice to them, that there will be divine service at t. Peter's Church in the Fort<sup>70</sup> on their behalf, and requested them to attend with their families on the 9<sup>th</sup> February 1814. Accordingly I had the happiness to deliver a sermon in the said St. Peter's Church, on the above mentioned date, before His Excellency &c., which the Ceylon Gazette (No. 647) thus notifies:-

"On Saturday evening, the 9<sup>th</sup> Feb., 1814, at 7 o'clock, the Rev. Christian David, Malabar Preacher of the Gospel, of Jaffna,

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<sup>69</sup> Wolfendahl Church was built in 1748 (Arnold Wright, *Twentieth century impressions of Ceylon: its history, people, commerce*, p.279)

<sup>70</sup> St Peter's Church was converted from the Dutch governor's banquet hall, it was first used as a church in 1804. St. Peter's Church, Fort was consecrated and set apart for the service of God" by Bishop Middleton in 1821 at the request of Governor Barnes.

performed divine service and preached in the Fort Church, from the Gospel of St. Matthew 9<sup>th</sup> ch., verse 36. 'But when He saw the multitude, He was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted and were scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd.' The sermon and prayer were both in the Tamil language, and the form of the latter was an exact translation from the English liturgy. His Excellency the Governor Sir Robert Brownrigg, the Hon'ble the Chief Justice Johnston, the Right Hon'ble the Viscount Molesworth, and the Hon'ble Rev. Dr. Twisleton<sup>71</sup> with their respective families, and the Mr. Bisset, the Sinhalese and Malabar preachers of Colombo, and a numerous congregation of the civil and military inhabitants were present. The church was chiefly filled up by the families of many respective Protestant Chetties,<sup>72</sup> on whose account the solemnity of the day had been appointed. Those Chetties are a part of the Malabar Christian congregation, consisting of about 500 souls that have been long resident in Colombo and the neighbourhood, united by their firm attachment to the Protestant religion, by frequent intermarriages and the vicinity of their dwellings, they form almost a distinct community. Mr. David, formerly a pupil of the Ven'ble Schwartz,, preached with such an effective and impressive gesture, and with elocution so natural and articulate, that even his hearers who were unacquainted with the Tamil language felt a persuasion of the propriety and the force of the delivery. The profound attention of his Malabar brethren with the various dresses of their families, and the contrasted appearance of European and Asiatic Christians

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<sup>71</sup> The Honourable Thomas James Twisleton, afterwards archdeacon of Colombo. He was born on the 28<sup>th</sup> September, 1770 and died on the 15<sup>th</sup> August 1824 at Hambantota.

<sup>72</sup> Colombo Chetty are mostly Roman Catholics or Anglicans and are found in almost all niches of Sri Lankan society. Several Colombo Chetties who migrated to Sri Lanka in the Dutch period often became members of the Dutch Reformed Church.



joining together in the public worship of their Maker formed a scene of most striking and gratifying effect. That these Malabar Christians have presented to His Excellency the Governor a petition for some assistance towards enabling them to build a place of worship, to the expense of which they themselves are ready to contribute, their request will meet with a favourable answer.”

A serious distinction existed at this time among the members of the said Tamil Episcopal Congregation at Colombo, owing to some misunderstanding between themselves and their pastor, Mr. Ondaatjie,<sup>73</sup> but by the grace of God I found means to altar these things and restore tranquillity in the congregation, and for which the Rev. Dr. Twisleton in union with the desire of His Excellency the Governor Sir Robert Brownrigg, convened a meeting of the people and delivered an appropriate address, expressive of the gratification he felt on harmony being revived among them, as follows:-

“To the principal Protestant Chetties of Colombo.

“I think myself fortunate in being the organ of communication between the Government and so respectable and enlightened a body of men, and more particularly on a subject dear to my heart, which is the furtherance of the Christian religion in this Island, and the probability of seeing the native Protestants united as one with their pastors in the worship of their God and Redeemer Jesus Christ.

“I have often contemplated with pain the religious state of the Protestant Chetties of Colombo, which I understood in some measure to arise from a want of cordiality amongst the

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<sup>73</sup> Reggie Candappa , *History of the Colombo Chetties*, Colombo: M.D. Gunasena, 2000, p. 31; Nilan Cooray *Quarterly Tours* – No. 20 National Trust – Sri Lanka, 27th November 2001, p. 9.

members, and in some instances from a misunderstanding or something worse existing between the Rev. Mr. Ondaatjie and certain individuals of consequence among you. Under such circumstances I was almost in despair of seeing any effort put forth to alter the lamentable state of things. But blessed be God, His favours when least expected sometimes most suddenly appear, and I consider it a blessing from God that the benevolent and truly Christian man, the Rev. Christian David, has appeared among you. By his good advice and urbanity of manners has reconciled jarring interest and worldly animosity, and has inspired into all a sudden spark of heavenly fervour, which I trust, will be the cause of enlightening many of your adult brethren who are slumbering on in darkness, and raise a flame of Christian devotion into your whole body, which shall be communicated to your children and your children's children, and be continued down to your posterity till the end of time on earth."

From Colombo I arrived at Negombo in the middle of February, 1814, where I made my stay for a few days performing my ministerial duties. It being Lent then, I had the gratification to witness, not only the Burgher communities, but likewise the Roman Catholics, males and females, in their mourning dresses. They attended Divine service, and I am happy to say that the Roman Catholics paid great attention to my preaching as I addressed them on the sufferings of our Saviour Jesus Christ. I left Negombo and arrived at Chilaw in the latter end of the same month to my great gratification and thankfulness to a kind Providence – a pleasure better felt than I can here express. I found there the Protestant weaver Christians, most of whom and their ancestors are well known to me. They were residents of Mannapai one of the principal provinces of the Tinnevely district, over whom I was appointed as catechist by the ever estimable Ven'ble Schwartz,, in 1792, at the time of the Dutch government.

Here I would observe that one of the Dutch Governors of the East India Company directed the Chief of Tutucoreen <sup>74</sup>to send some weaver Christians to Colombo. Accordingly he did send about 50 families, and soon after their arrival there they were ordered to proceed forthwith to Chilaw, where through the direction of the Ceylon Governor a small church (24'x12') was built for public worship, in which myself and the congregation immediately assembled and offered up prayers and thanksgivings to God for having spared my life, to meet my old flock. I remained for a fortnight and regularly performed morning and evening services, and also preached on Sunday, Friday, and holy days when the Collector and Commandant of that place, the Lieut. Burke, besides the weaver Christians and burghers, &c., attended, to whose notice I brought the necessity of opening a subscription for raising sufficient money for erecting another larger church for public worship. Accordingly a subscription paper was made, which the said two gentleman have not only cheerfully and handsomely subscribed but circulated it in and about the vicinity of Chilaw, and particularly brought the same to the notice of Government and realized some few hundred rix dollars,<sup>75</sup> which sum was deposited at the Kutcherry there.

In the middle of March 1814, I arrived at Aripoo<sup>76</sup> from Chilaw, where His Excellency and Lady Brownrigg came to see the pearl fishery. Both His Excellency and his lady requested me to remain there in order to perform divine service on the

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<sup>74</sup> It (Tamil Thooththukkudi Jj;Jf;Fb) is located about 590 kilometres south of Chennai

<sup>75</sup> Dutch word is Rijksdaalder. A unit of currency introduced into certain former European colonies such as Cape Province and Sri Lanka.

<sup>76</sup> Robert Knox, who was a prisoner of the Kandy during 1660 to 1679, finally escaped by reaching the Dutch Fort at Aripoo on a Sunday in October 1679, via Anuradhapura and along Malwatu Oya.

following Sunday, but I mentioned to them that my English Prayer Book is with my clerk who is now at Manaar (sic.) where I intended to go to perform divine service on Sunday. Then Lady Brownrigg told me that she would provide me with a Prayer Book, and shall also have a clerk suitable to answer the responses. This conversation we had on Friday afternoon and on the following day, notice was given that divine service will be held on Sunday morning precisely at 11 o'clock in the large bungalow<sup>77</sup> which was erected for receiving visitors &c. On Sunday morning, Lady Brownrigg sent me a prayer Book, and a little while after she came to me and said, "Mr. David, it is high time to go to the bungalow, and there you will find a reading desk and cushion for kneeling, and the clerk ready for you." Immediately I went thither. Many civil and military and other gentlemen from different places that came to the pearl fishery<sup>78</sup> were present. I commenced the morning service at 11 o'clock, and to my greatest surprise found His Excellency, the most devout Governor, as a substitute for a clerk. His most exemplary behaviour astonished the congregation. After service was over I thanked most humbly the Governor for having condescendingly taken the clerk's part of the service. Immediately, like David of old, I thanked our gracious Creator, "What am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that Thou hast brought me hitherto." (2 Sam. vii. 18.)

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<sup>77</sup> The residence of Governor North (1798-1805), was built on a low cliff, a stone's throw from the then prevailing beach at Arippu. An article by Wisumperuma in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Sri Lanka*, Vol 51, 2005, pp. 79-96, discusses the mansion's history and architecture.

<sup>78</sup> Mannar District has been famous for pearl fishing since the early part of the 19th Century. Richard Boyle in 2001 writing in *Himal Southasian* pointed out that pearl fishing was an integral part of Sri Lanka's colonial history, and the island's north-western coastline enjoyed a pre-eminent reputation for producing the best pearls in the world.

In the latter end of March 1814, I arrived at Jaffna, and according to the instructions I received through the sanction and support of Government, a boarding school was established for bringing up and qualifying 36 native youths to be school masters for the 36 parishes in Jaffna.

According to the instruction I received from Government I embraced every opportunity in making my second visit to Colombo in March 1815. Although I did not remain long there, yet I had the happiness to visit particularly the native Christian family attached to St. Thomas's church<sup>79</sup> in their house, to exhort and to pray, especially to remind them of the great blessings which God had bestowed on them by causing a church to be built and ministers and catechists appointed to preach the ever blessed Gospel, together with the schoolrooms built for the education of male and female children. One schoolmaster was appointed for the boys, and the niece of the Rev. Mr. Dewasagayam (one of the Church Missionaries in the Tinnevely district) as schoolmistress for the girls.

In the middle of July 1815 I left Colombo and arrived at Negombo. In this journey I was happy to find my old friend Capt. Truter, the Commandant there, and also had the pleasure to perform divine service in English. From thence I came to Chilaw, and also visited Putlam, Calpentyn, Aripoo, Manaar, &c., and remained in each district a few days for performing divine services. From these places I collected some money and delivered the same to the Chilaw Kutcherry, with a request to deposit it in the Chilaw Treasury with the former

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<sup>79</sup> Brownrigg encouraged the building of churches, the first being St. Thomas's Anglican church at Gintupitiya (1815). R.K. de Silva, *19th century newspaper engravings of Ceylon-Sri Lanka: Accompanied by original texts with notes and comments*, Colombo: Lakehouse, 1998

sum for the purpose of erecting the proposed church at Chilaw, and arrived at Jaffna.

On the 12<sup>th</sup> January 1816, I received instruction from Dr. Twisleton, the then chaplain and superintendent of all the schools in the Island, to repair forthwith to Colombo. I left Jaffna by the latter end of the same month, and on my way I did not fail to visit the congregations between Jaffna and Colombo. During my stay at Colombo, I always officiated in St. Thomas's church, and on week days in the washers' quarter called Kehelwatta.

Let me observe here that though the Liturgy of the Church of England was not then printed in Tamil, yet it was my invariable rule to read it from my own translation. I had a great delight from my youth with the form and compilation of the said book which has been deservedly ranked as the purest and sure mode of our ever established church, for the public worship of God; and I earnestly desired from my infancy to have such a valuable book in Malabar for the use of my poor benighted countrymen. According to my earnest wishes God enabled me to translate that edifying Liturgy into my own language,<sup>80</sup> which translation His Excellency Sir Robert Brownrigg, the warm friend, protector and patron of the Church of Christ, took from me and delivered it to the first Bishop of India, the Right Rev. Dr. Middleton,<sup>81</sup> who was then on his first visit to

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<sup>80</sup> *The Book of Common Prayer, with the Psalter*, translated by the Rev. Christian David of Jaffna, was printed at Serampore in 1818, 410 pp. (John Murdoch, *Catalogue of the Christian Vernacular Literature of India*, Vepery, Madras, 1870, p. 189)

<sup>81</sup> Thomas Fanshawe Middleton (January 28, 1769 – July 8, 1822) was a noted Anglican bishop. In 1814, he became the first Bishop of Calcutta. This diocese included not just India, but the entire territory of the East India Company and Sri Lanka.

Colombo, and requested His Lordship to get 5,000 copies of it printed at Serampore,<sup>82</sup> at the expense of His Excellency. This work was completed in the year 1817, and was distributed among my Christian friends in this Island as well as in Coast Coromandel.

Since then there have been several editions of the liturgy which were attempted to supersede mine, but from the variations in the several versions there has not been that desirable unity in reading as experienced in the English liturgy, and I earnestly long to see an established version of this highly important book adopted universally in the worship of the established church for the Tamil congregation in this island as well as in Jaffna.

In the year 1817 by the Providence of God the Hon'ble Mr. Templer<sup>83</sup> was appointed as collector to Chilaw,<sup>84</sup> to whose notice I brought all the circumstances respecting the collections made at Chilaw, and requested him to use his influence to accomplish my long and earnestly desired wish of having a spacious and commodious church erected. That benevolent gentleman by using his interest collected some

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Eyre Chatterton, *A History of the Church of England in India, Since the Early Days of the East India Company*, London: SPCK, 1924.

<sup>82</sup> The Serampore Mission Press was established in Serampore in 1800 by William Carey.

<sup>83</sup> E.J. Templer was appointed in 1825 to be collector of sea customs for port of Colombo, and to be assistant to collector of Colombo, and sitting magistrate of Negombo. *The Asiatic journal and monthly register for British and its Dependencies*, London, 1825, Volume 19, p. 850

<sup>84</sup> Francis James Templer was the Collector of Chilaw. He was responsible for putting up the church building in 1817. The *Ceylon Gazette* also states that it was named "St. James' Church" in compliment to Francis James Templer. A mural tablet is seen to this day embedded in the east wall of the church.

additional sums within two years for the sacred edifice. While I purposed through divine aid to realize my aforesaid earnest wish, this Christian and worthy gentleman with his well known zeal and benevolence in such causes came forward nobly to assist me in the work. He with myself together with his lady and my wife amidst a concourse of spectators laid the foundation stone with its solemn ceremonies, and as a token to evince my gratitude and remembrance towards the said Mr. Templer, with his concurrence, the sanctuary was named "Saint James' Church" after his Christian name.<sup>85\*</sup>

In June 1820, when the Right Rev. Dr. Middleton visited the Island of Ceylon, I received a letter from the Hon'ble Dr. Twisleton directing me to come down to Colombo with a desire of recommending me to His Lordship for holy orders. Accordingly I left Jaffna, and on my way to Colombo visited Manaar, Calpentyn, Chilaw and Negombo, performing my ministerial duties in each place, and arrival at Colombo at the end of the same month. Dr. Twisleton recommended me to His Lordship as a fit and proper candidate for holy orders, but to my great disappointment the said Archdeacon informed me as follows:- "That His Lordship had mentioned to him that it has not been determined as yet whether native preachers could be ordained or not, that His Lordship has been corresponding with His Majesty's ministers in England on the subject and further acquainted me to wait till the Bishop

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<sup>85</sup> \*This is a curious instance of the canonization of a Government official.-ED.C.F- (Editor - *Ceylon Friend*)

In 1814 under the direction of the British Governor of Ceylon, a small cadjan building was erected as the place of worship. When the congregation began to increase, it was decided to build a larger church on the very same spot.. The Anglican Church in Chilaw, St. James' Church (1831), celebrated its 175th anniversary on November 11 in 2006. (*Island newspaper* Nov. 05, 2006)



receives an answer concerning it.”\*<sup>86</sup> Afterwards I left Colombo in the middle of July the same year, and on my way to Jaffna I visited again Negombo, Chilaw, Putlam, Calpenty, Aripo, Manaar, &c., and remained in each district a few days for performing my ministerial duties and also administering the sacrament of baptism &c., and arrived at Jaffna in the month of September the same year. My old flock received me most joyfully, and I continued to perform my ministerial duties on Sundays, Fridays, and holy days as usual, especially I never failed nor forgot to visit the Christian families from house to house, and to put up prayers &c. with them.

In November, 1823 I received a letter from the Hon’ble Dr. Twisleton directing me to come over to Colombo; before my leaving Jaffna, I requested the late Rev. Joseph Knight<sup>87</sup> to take charge of my congregation of St. John’s Church, and to officiate for me till my return, who readily complied with my

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<sup>86</sup> \*An illustration of the alliance between Church and State.-  
ED.C.F. (Editor - *Ceylon Friend*)

M. A. Laird, *Bishop Heber in Northern India: Selections from Heber's Journal*, p. 27. *Life of Bishop Heber*, p.84 states: "The island of Ceylon attracted his attention at an early day, as a part of his jurisdiction which would well repay a more careful culture; but the difficulty was to find clergymen to occupy the ground. Many stations which had been established in years past were as yet quite destitute of religious services, and, in his anxiety to do something to meet the demand, the Bishop bethought him of a native catechist, Christian David, once a pupil of Schwartz, and proposed to admit him to the ministry, in case the reports concerning him should prove favorable. The answer returned to his inquiries was so satisfactory, that the faithful schoolmaster was sent for without delay, and ordained at Calcutta. This was the first instance in which a native was admitted to holy orders in India." (John Nicholas Norton, *Life of Bishop Heber*, London, 1858, p. 84)

<sup>87</sup> Rev Knight One of the first CMS missionaries to Sri Lanka in 1818. After 22 years of dedicated service as a missionary and after founding St. John's College, Jaffna, Rev Knight died on 11th.October, 1840 and was buried in the CMS churchyard, Kotte.

request. I left Jaffna in the month of December and on my way visited all the congregations and arrived at Colombo on the 15<sup>th</sup> instant, and on my arrival wrote the following letter to Dr. Twisleton:

“Colombo, 18<sup>th</sup> December, 1823.

“To the Hon'ble and Ven'ble

Dr. T.J. Twisleton,

Archdeacon, &c., &c., &c.

“Hon'ble and Ven'ble Sir,- I have with greatest pleasure and gratification perused the statute of the Bishop's College at Calcutta<sup>88</sup>, and the Professor's letter c., you were pleased to send, which I herewith return you with warmest thanks.

“Knowing the sincere and lively interest which you are pleased to take in the propagation of Christianity among the natives of this island, in which a kind Providence has continued you about twenty years and given you the first place in the church, and also remembering the many instances of your former kindness to me I am encouraged to address you at this time.

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<sup>88</sup> Bishop's College of Calcutta was founded by the first Anglican Bishop of Calcutta, Bishop Thomas Middleton on 15th December 1820 at Sibpur, on a site next to the Botanical Gardens by the side of Hoogly river. The original buildings still survive as part of the Bengal Engineering College. It was originally intended to serve as an Arts and Science College, as well as for the training of Indian Christians for the priesthood, and as catechists and teachers in Christian Colleges and Schools. The first students were received on March 9th 1824. The first Indian and the first student of the College to receive ordination was Christian David, a Tamil, working in Sri Lanka.

“It is still fresh in my recollection that having been instructed and brought up under the patronage of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, a Society which has brought many who were in darkness and in the shadow of death into the way of eternal life, respecting which I made a statement of the labours and success of the Society’s missionaries to you, and at the same time expressing my earnest desire to employ my weak talents in spreading the knowledge of Christianity among the inhabitants of this island; and you caused a boarding school<sup>89</sup> to be established at Jaffnapatam in the time of the Governor Sir Robert Brownrigg, in 1814, who fully appreciated the importance of such a school as highly necessary in a heathen country, and immediately directed that a boarding school should be established under my superintendence with a view that young and old should be educated in the principles of Christianity; but you are aware that on account of certain misrepresentation, the school was unhappily abolished, by the succeeding Government and some of the scholars are employed in the Government service, some in the Church, Wesleyan and American Mission Society as preachers, interpreters, catechists, and some of them who are young are pursuing their studies in the school of the American Missionaries at Batticotta.<sup>90</sup>

“It is needless for me to tell you, that such a state of fluctuation must prove exceedingly prejudiced to the interests of Christianity and it appears to me very desirable to have a school placed on a very permanent foundation. Coming to the point I beg leave to say that though many of my exertions and

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<sup>89</sup> Reginal L. Rajapakse, *Christian missions, Theosophy and Trade: A History of American Relations with Ceylon 1815-1915*, Ph.D Thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 1973. p. 107

<sup>90</sup> Bertram Bastiampillai, “The American Missionary Enterprise in Northern Ceylon in the Early Decades of the nineteenth Century,” *Indian Church History Review*, pp.85-110.

labours have failed, yet I am thankful to God, they are not entirely lost; that wise and omniscient Being, in due time has brought to this extended field (where hundreds of labourers are yet wanting) many missionaries of different denominations whose labours are prospering by the blessing of God under the patronage of a kind Government; and it indeed rejoices me on one hand, when I see some of the ruined churches in the Jaffna<sup>91</sup> district rebuilt, the Gospel preached to the ignorant, and the children taught to know their letters, and their Creator; and on the other hand it grieves me when I see that there is nothing done in this island by the ancient Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge of which though I am unworthy to be called a member, yet being a child of it, and having lately read its publications and different reports of the Diocesan and District Committee, which speak of the laudable and extended doings of the Society for promoting Christian knowledge in other countries, and which not only awakened in my mind a desire that the inhabitants of this island might share the benefits of that Society, but also encourages me humbly to entreat your kind indulgence, which I would particularly suggest, that it would be very beneficial if there should be a boarding school established in Colombo at the charge of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge and under the immediate control of the Archdeacon, into which the most promising youths might be received and prosecute their studies preparatory of entering the Bishop's College at Calcutta, according to a plan which you were yourselves once pleased to suggest it might become a valuable mode to that important institution and prepare the way for many to be preachers and teachers of their ignorant countrymen: and that you may

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<sup>91</sup> Napoleon Pathmanadan, *The Mission and the Ministry of the Church Missionary Society in Ceylon During British Colonial Period*, M.Th dissertation, University of Glamorgan, 1999, p. 77.

likewise recommend a charity school to be established at Jaffnapatam by that venerable Society to be under the control of the District Committee of Colombo, but under the immediate direction of a sub-committee, composed of the chief civil servants to Government, and any clergymen who are members of the Colombo District Committee in Jaffnapatam.

“This would secure an active superintendence and give such a permanency to the school that it would not be liable to change with any change of Government. Such a school is greatly wanted by the children of my congregation who are growing up in years but in ignorance of the religion they profit except what my preaching may effect. It would also greatly promote the benevolent objects of the Society.

“In addition to these schools the establishment of native free schools at the outstations in the Malabar districts under the direction of the District Committee of Colombo and the immediate direction of a sub-committee consisting of civil servants &c., would no doubt be an important means of promoting the progress of Christian knowledge.

“I cannot conclude without humbly submitting to your kind consideration the lamentable want of the education of the females of the country both in useful knowledge and habit of industry (with which you are well acquainted); and therefore humbly suggest that females should also be admitted into the proposed boarding schools and likewise be admitted to free schools as day scholars, and that the ladies be invited to visit the schools and patronize them by examining into the progress of their learning, and by sending needle work.

The view I have in establishing charity schools is, that we may thereby have a prospect of training youth for the purpose of the Society who shall be attached to our established church

and constitution; but without adopting the primary plan of the Society all is likely to prove lost labours. I cannot appeal to a higher or better testimony than yourself as to the correctness of this statement. During the last twenty-three years, notwithstanding all that has been done for the Government schools of this island, what fruit in a religious point of view is there to be seen? Comparatively none. Many have been taught in the Seminary<sup>92</sup> who are now usefully employed by Government as interpreters, translators &c., but for Christianity nothing whatever has been done; on the contrary, the few who offered themselves as candidates for catechists and schoolmasters, and who were actually employed as such, have been discharged. Alas! Hon'ble Sir, in vain shall we look for a superstructure without laying a foundation. As matters at present stand, we have not the smallest hold upon the native population; and would we ever see it otherwise, we must adopt the means to the end. Now I call the establishment of a charity school the laying of a foundation, into which I would receive a limited number of different classes (always preferring orphans) over whom the master ought to have unqualified control; by this means he would be able to direct their studies and impress their tender minds with sentiments of attachment to the institution and of piety towards God, to watch their various turns of genius, and guide the same to advantage; from such a school may be produced fit candidates for the Bishop's College, useful catechists and school-masters, and those who might have their minds fortified with good and virtuous principles.

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<sup>92</sup> In March 1823 Rev. Joseph Knight inaugurated the Nallur English Seminary with seven students with classes held in his bungalow. The Bible was made the most prominent subject of study along with a good secular Education. In 1839 there were 22 male teachers, 17 schools, 761 students, 30 seminary youths and 77 communicants attached to the CMS mission in Jaffna.

“As to the probable expense of such a school, I cannot speak decidedly. I would recommend beginning on a small scale. A house sufficient for the purpose I presume might be rented for Rds. 20 or twenty-five shillings per month. For the maintenance of one boy I would say Rds 8 or nearly ten shillings; the payment of the masters (and mistress should females be admitted) must be regulated according to circumstances, and of course one or more servants will be necessary.

“Another thing I would strongly recommend to apply to Government for a grant of the church of St. Thomas at Colombo, Negombo, Chilaw, Calpentyn, Manaar and Jaffna, in which I am now occasionally doing duty, and also that of Batticaloa and Trincomalie lately built and also of the decayed churches or places of worship (erected by the Dutch) in favour of the Society. In proposing this I beg leave to remind you of the views and intentions of our late Lord Bishop who in this respect coincided fully in opinion with me, and had his valuable life been prolonged, he would have acted, I have no doubt, on this principle; the time may come when by the exertions of the Society these churches may be again repaired and occupied with more success than ever; and Government having been so good as to make grants of this nature to other Societies, I have the greatest confidence that they would not deny this Society which has higher claims on its generosity. Several of these buildings might be repaired for about £ 100 on an average.

“I humbly conceive you are well aware that the native preachers, amounting to six only in the whole island, are without ordination, and the establishment of Episcopal ordination in the Protestant Church of Ceylon has naturally lowered them in the estimation of the public in general and in the eyes of their own congregation and also of the

missionaries of different denominations in particular, and my motive for observing this is, that without pressing the matters as to all, you may with more earnestness and compassion take the necessary measures to send me to the Coast or to Calcutta (who am the senior preacher of the Gospel) with your recommendation to obtain my ordination as a native missionary of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, in order to enable me as disciple of the well known Schwartz, to perform my holy function with proper authority and without any painful and distressing feelings."

"Although long ago acquainted with the magnanimity of the Society in all cases that deserved their attention, I little thought my humble endeavour in the common cause of our glorious Lord and Master would ever meet with the marked attention which I perused with grateful feelings in the Report of so distinguished and venerable a Society for 1821, and I sincerely hope to see the day when my countrymen will come forward more generally to give their aid in so good a cause, and I have every reason to believe that if the benevolent design of the Society to promote the spiritual and temporal welfare of my countrymen were made known to them and if they were invited they would make contributions and offer their prayers for the success of the Society. And, Honble Sir, give me leave to observe that while I write to you on this subject I do not forget that I am above 50 year of age and that I may not see the fruits of the projected plan, but presuming that the same is calculated to promote the cause of Christianity and the good of my countrymen after my death, I would fain cherish the hope that the good cause by the means will be promoted and that good will be produced when I am no more!

"Respectfully requesting your kind consideration of the subjects thus imperfectly presented and confiding in your



generosity and better judgment, I beg leave to add the expressions of my warmest gratitude and highest respect, and subscribe myself,

“Honble and Venble Sir,

“Your most faithful, grateful and old servant,

(Signed) “C. DAVID.”

Dr. Twisleton forwarded the foregoing letter to the Right Reverend Reginald Heber, D.D. Lord Bishop of Calcutta, upon which he received the following answer from His Lordship:-

Fort William, January 28<sup>th</sup>, 1824.

Dear Sir,- Your interesting packet reached me a few days since, but owing to severe inflammation in my eyes, I have only just now been able to attend to it. You will, I trust, ere this reaching you, have received two letters from me, in the first of which I mentioned a step I had taken in applying to Sir Edward Barnes (Governor of Sri Lanka ) towards meeting the understood wishes of Mr. Armour; and in the second I stated, that, having found it necessary to remain at Calcutta till the beginning of June, any time in the intervening months would answer for his coming to receive ordination. What I then said concerning him, will apply also to Christian David, of whom from various quarters I have heard an excellent character, and whom your recommendation would be of itself sufficient to make me rejoice to see a regularly ordained minister of our Church. He might be comfortably accommodated in Bishop’s College during his stay in Bengal if they would send him hither. I should hope that neither in his case, nor in that of Mr. Armour, would such a favour be thought unreasonable. The general principles of his proposals for a free school appear to

me unexceptionable and highly deserving of encouragement and attention. The success more particularly of female schools in Bengal is such as to make me extremely anxious for their introduction into every part of our Eastern empire. You are the best judge how far the time is ripe for making such an experiment in Ceylon, and whether there is any probability that a subscription set on foot for that purpose within the island would succeed. Should such a subscription appear advisable to you, I should have much pleasure in appropriating to it five hundred (500) Sicca Rupees<sup>93</sup> from a charitable fund at my disposal. I shall be also glad to hear your opinion as to the propriety of applying for the churches or any of them of which Mr. David speaks in his letter to you, also whether the application should be made by me as Bishop, or by the Archdeacons Committee of Colombo or by the Society at home, and whether to the provincial Government, or directly to the colonial officer.

On all these and many other similar points I should indeed rejoice in the opportunity of a personal communication with you. But the same reasons, which made me in the first instance decide on going northward this summer, continue to press on with unabating urgency, and I can only earnestly pray that Providence may give me the health and ability continually, and by degrees, to perform some part of my duty towards all the different regions of this most interesting but unwieldy diocese.

Mrs. Heber, Who begs to unite with me in offering her best compliments to Mrs. Twisleton, is now in bed, having two days

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<sup>93</sup> **Seeca Rupee** is a rupee issued in Bengal before 1836 weighing more than the rupee of the British East India Company. Sicca is used adjectively to designate the silver currency of the Mogul emperors, or the Indian rupee of 192 grains. Sicca rupee valued nominally at about two shillings sterling in this period.

since presented me with another daughter, who I rejoice to say is as well as her mother doing extremely well.

Believe me, Dear Sir,

Your faithful and obd. servant,

(Signed) R.CALCUTTA.

Agreeably to His Lordship's desire and wish mentioned in the above letter, Dr. Twisleton obtained for me letters of orders, dated the 31<sup>st</sup> January, 1824, from the Lieut. General Sir Edward Barnes, Governor for the Island of Ceylon, and also provided me with testimonial papers signed by him and two others, the Revd. Messrs Glenie,<sup>94</sup> Government Chaplain, and Joseph Bailey,<sup>95</sup> Church Missionary. After I received these orders and testimonials, I left Colombo for Jaffna, where I arrived on the 5<sup>th</sup> March the same year; and in the same month I left Jaffna in company with the Rev. Mr. Rhenius and his family.<sup>96</sup>

On Tuesday, the 9<sup>th</sup>, as the wind was not favourable, the boat could not touch Point Kalimere,<sup>97</sup> so we were compelled to

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<sup>94</sup> Monscrieff Sunderland Glenie, succeeded Archdeacon Twisleton. He was formally installed in 1828 as archdeacon. Glenie served as Colonial chaplain in Jaffna in 1815.

<sup>95</sup> Rev. And Mrs. Joseph Bailey arrived in Jaffna in March 1822. They were able to remain there only twelve months. During that period, Rev. Bail took English duties at the Dutch Church. (Balding, Op. Cit. p. 89.

<sup>96</sup> Karl Gottlieb Ewald Rhenius was born at Graudenz on the Vistula River in northern Poland in 1790, went to India in 1814, to Palamcotta in 1820 and died in 1838. See the "Life of Missionary Rhenius" in Schmidt's "Biographies of celebrated Evangelical Missionaries; 1, Leipzig, 1842. He translated the Bible into Tamil

<sup>97</sup> Point Kalimere (Nfhbaf;fiu), is a low headland on the Coromandel Coast, in the Nagapattinam district of the state of Tamilnadu

disembark about five miles to the south of that and remained the whole day.

On Wednesday, the 10<sup>th</sup>, we went into a boat very early in the morning with a hard push, and we reached Kodicarre<sup>98</sup> about 10 o'clock, a.m. The Rev. Mr. Rhenius read the morning service, and in the evening he gave a short discourse. Many of the heathens from villages came to see us, to whom we declared the glad tidings saying that "one thing is needful."

On Thursday, the 11<sup>th</sup>, after a short prayer, myself and Mr. Rhenius visited the villages and preached to the heathens and Mahommedans whom we found there.

On Friday, the 12<sup>th</sup>, we again visited the villages and exhorted the people to turn from their dumb idols, to serve the ever living and triune God and His only begotten Son Jesus Christ who alone could save them from their sins. I am thankful to say, the God who opened the heart of Lydia made the people to hear my discourse with apparent interest, particularly as it was delivered from the lips of one of their countrymen.

On Saturday, the 13<sup>th</sup>, I left Kodicarre, and on Sunday, the 14<sup>th</sup>, about 4 o'clock in the morning I reached Negapatam<sup>99</sup> and took my lodging at the house of Mr. B. Van Hek who was my sincere friend ever since I arrived at Jaffna from 1801. Here as soon as I entered into the town every object in view brought

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. It is the apex of the Kavery River delta, and makes a nearly right-angle turn in the coastline.

<sup>98</sup> Kodikkarai (Nfhabaf;fiu), also known as Cape Polimer in Tamil is located near Calimere.

<sup>99</sup> Negapatinam (ehfg;gl;lzk;) served as the capital of Tanjore district from 1799 to 1845 under Madras Presidency of the British. Before that it was the capital of Dutch Coromandel from 1660 to 1781. It was conquered by the British East India Company in November 1781.

to my recollection many delightful things. It was here where I received my education under the Rev. Mr. Gerrick,<sup>100</sup> who was a faithful minister for the English, Dutch, Portuguese and Malabar congregations in 1785, about whom we find on page 482 of Buchanan on Christianity, how highly and respectfully Mr. Schwartz, speaks of him. I was particularly thankful to a kind Providence which spared my life to visit this place again after a period of 23 years. In the morning Mr. Rhenius preached at Negapatam in the Dutch church, and in the evening I preached on the memorable words of our ever blessed Saviour and Lord- "Father forgive them for they know not what they do." Luke xxiii. 34. A great number of Dutch and Portuguese residents of the place as well as natives attended, and among the latter were several of my kinsmen, who on my descending from the pulpit came forming a circle around me, and offered their congratulations. I have been exceedingly gratified to meet among them my friend the Rev. John Dewasugayam, who was then catechist.

On Monday, the 15<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Rhenius left Negapatam in pursuit of his journey to Tranquebar.

On Tuesday, the 16<sup>th</sup>, I started early in the morning from Negapatam and reached Tranquebar, my native place at about half past eleven o'clock, p.m. The gracious God who had preserved my life from many dangers and perils had mercifully brought me to my native place; upon this joyful event I had no words sufficiently to express my gratitude to our Heavenly Father for having brought me in good health to see the place after 23 years' absence, when many and many reflections brought to my mind, I like the Royal Psalmist praised the Lord as asserted in Psalm ciii. 1-4.

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<sup>100</sup> Christian William Gericke succeeded Fabricius in 1788 as the head of the Vepery mission and served from 1788-1803.

On Wednesday, the 17<sup>th</sup>, after exhorting and praying together with my kinsmen who came to see me, I went to see the Rev. Mr. Barrenbrook.

On Sunday, the 21<sup>st</sup>, I attended Jerusalem Church in the morning at the Fort Tranquebar along with Mr. Rhenius. In the evening I preached in the Bethlehem Church, where I was baptized in April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1775, when I was very young, which happy circumstance is still fresh in my memory.

On Monday, the 22<sup>nd</sup>, Mr. John Dewasugayam<sup>101</sup> and myself left Tranquebar and reached Sicilly where we halted for the night.

On Tuesday, the 23<sup>rd</sup>, at 5 o'clock, a.m., Mr. John Dewasugayam left me and went to examine the Church Mission Schools at certain villages; and I reached Sidenberam<sup>102</sup> and visited the famous temple there.

On Friday, the 26<sup>th</sup>, at 7 o'clock, a.m., I reached Sadras<sup>103</sup> and in the evening preached in the Dutch Church.

On Sunday, the 28<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Rhenius preached in the Dutch Church, and in the evening I preached on John xviii. 26. "Jesus answered My kingdom is not of this world," &c. At midnight I left the place with Mr. Rhenius and his family, and passed

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<sup>101</sup> He was the first South Indian Anglican clergyman (d. 1864). He worked as a catechist of Rev. Rhenius before he was instrumental in creating a rift between Anglicans and Lutherans in 1833.

<sup>102</sup> Chidambaram is a city in the eastern part of Tamilnadu located 58 km from Pondicherry. The city is a major pilgrimage site for Shaivites and Vaishnavites.

<sup>103</sup> The Rev. and Mrs. Joseph Bailey arrived in March, 1822, but they were able to remain only twelve months, during which time Mr. Bailey took the English duties at the Dutch Church in Colombo. Beven op. cit., p. 89.

several villages; in each place we failed not to put up prayers and exhort the people.

On Monday the 29<sup>th</sup>, at 4 o'clock a.m., we reached Rayapooram, and Mr. Van Someren the brother-in-law of Mr. Rhenius claimed us as his guests.

On the 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> April, 1824, I preached in the Vepery Church.

On the 29<sup>th</sup> of April, after commending myself and my fellow passenger Mr. W. Godfrey to the guidance and blessing of God, we embarked in the evening at 3 p.m., in the ship "Providence." Captain Ravington, for Calcutta.

On the 9<sup>th</sup> May, we landed from the ship and embarked in a boat and proceeded to Fultafetta.

On the 10<sup>th</sup>, at 5 o'clock, a.m., when we were about to proceed from Fulteferra, the Bishop's College boat, with Principal Doctor Mill's note and servants, came to take us down to the College. I landed at the College, where I was received by the Principal, and offered accommodation in one of the rooms of the College. I was much delighted with Dr. Mills and considered his acquaintance a very great honour and blessing to me. His lady possesses an amiable and affable talent and good disposition, and is particularly kind to the inmates of the College.

On the 11<sup>th</sup>, I was introduced to the Venerable the Archdeacon Corrie,<sup>104</sup> the Rev. Dr. Parish, and the Rev. Thomason; also I

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<sup>104</sup> The Rt Rev Daniel Corrie (1778–1837) He became archdeacon of Calcutta in 1823. He was the inaugural Anglican Bishop of the Madras diocese consecrated in 1835.

had the happiness and pleasure to meet Sir Edward Paget<sup>105</sup> who expressed himself much pleased with my arrival.

On the 12<sup>th</sup>, I went in company with Dr. Mill to the Right Rev. Bishop Heber's<sup>106</sup> for breakfast. At the table His Lordship mentioned that he proposed to admit me into the deacon's orders on the morning of the Ascension day, being the 27<sup>th</sup> of May, and that of the priest's on Trinity Sunday, the 10<sup>th</sup> of June.

On the 28<sup>th</sup>, I went to Serampore for the first time, and visited the Baptist Missionaries at that place.

It was on the morning of the Ascension Day, the 27<sup>th</sup> May, 1824, at 6 o'clock a.m., in St. John's Cathedral at Calcutta,<sup>107</sup> that I was admitted into holy orders as deacon to St. John's church at Jaffna, by the imposition of hands by my ever lamented spiritual father, the Right Rev. Dr. Heber, Second Lord Bishop of India, in the presence of a great and respectful congregation, among whom one of my sincere Christian friends, the Hon'ble Lady Amherst,<sup>108</sup> was also present. On this occasion, an appropriate sermon was preached by my friend and brother in the Lord, the Rev. Dr. Parish. The text selected was Ezek. xxxiv. 23. "And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them even as my servant David, and he shall

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<sup>105</sup> Sir Edward Paget (1775–1849) was a British Army officer. Briefly serving as the Governor of Sri Lanka (2 February 1822–6 November 1822), he was appointed Commander-in-Chief, India on 13 January 1823 and conducted the Burmese campaigns of 1824 to 1825

<sup>106</sup> Reginald Heber (21 April 1783 – 3 April 1826) was the Anglican Bishop of Calcutta from 1823 to his death in 1826.

<sup>107</sup> St. John's Church served as the Anglican Cathedral of Calcutta from 1787 to 1847. It was transferred to St. Paul's Cathedral in 1847. It was modelled according to the St Martin-in-the-Fields of London

<sup>108</sup> Her husband, William Pitt Amherst (1773-1857) was the Governor-General of India from August 1823 to February 1828.



feed them and he shall be their shepherd.” As the sermon was delivered with great energy, every eye of the hearers was attracted towards me, as I was the first native in India, bearing the name of David, and receiving ordination according to the apostolical form of the Church of England. While I was meditating and considering to write at large upon this eventful and joyful era of my life, my mind was perplexed at the wonderful dealings of a mysterious Providence towards me. I am at a loss where to begin and where to make an end!

On the 6<sup>th</sup> June, I assisted Dr. Parish during the morning service in the church at Fort William; and on the evening of the 10<sup>th</sup>, I preached in English in the old Mission Church, on John xvii. 21,22. “That they all may be one, as Thou Father art in Me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me. And the glory which Thou gavest Me. I have given them that they may be one, even as We are one.”

On the 13<sup>th</sup> June, the Trinity Sunday, the Ven’ble the Archdeacon Corrie preached from Acts. ii. 33. “Therefore being by the hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.” Upon this mystery of the day and its intimate connection with the hopes and practice of every humble Christian, he enlarged upon the promise of the Holy Ghost as related to the appointment of several orders in the Church, the perpetuation of an apostolical ministry, and to the decided claim of the episcopal ordination of our Church to that character.\*<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> \*Of course nothing of all this is in the text. Episcopalians are reduced to pitiable straits when they are seeking Scriptural authority for institutions of merely human origin. ED.C.F. (Chief Editor, *Ceylon Friend*)

The service of the day being concluded, I was brought by the Archdeacon as a candidate for the priests' orders, the other priests, four in number present, having previously assembled within the rails of the altar. This office being graver in its nature than that of the ordination of deacon, the Bishop was accompanied by his presbyters. The Epistle and Gospel having been then read, the former by me and the latter by the Lord Bishop, the Bishop read in a most impressive manner the serious paternal charge of the service book, describing the dignity and awful responsibility of things of the sacred function, and concluded with several questions to be answered by me distinctly, particularizing its duties. The beautiful ancient hymn, "Veni Creator," was then sung, after which, the Bishop with his five presbyters laid their hands on my head, the words of the apostolical commission being at the same time pronounced by the bishop, who immediately after delivering the Bible to me, gave me authority to preach the word and administer the sacrament to the congregation to which I shall be lawfully appointed.

On the 24<sup>th</sup>, I dined at the Rev, Mr. Crauford, one of the pious missionaries of the old Mission Church.

On the 27<sup>th</sup>, I preached in the church of the Rev. Mr. Christian, who was also a great friend of mine, and a well wisher of my countrymen.

On the 28<sup>th</sup>, I was extremely happy to have made the acquaintance of the pious Captain Powney, and some other friends, and to dine with them.

On the 13<sup>th</sup> July, being invited by Mr. Kindreson, I proceeded to Barackpore, and had the pleasure to breakfast with him and his lady and her sister, Miss Smith.

On the 27<sup>th</sup>, proceeded to Serampore, where I baptized five Danish children, and dined with Colonel Krifting, the Danish Governor, who kindly received me and promised to give his sanction and protection to the charity schools which I proposed to establish there. Afterwards I went to my son Fredrick's house, who was then afflicted with Bengal fever. He mentioned to me, that the Rev. Mr. and Mrs. Marshman<sup>110</sup> have often visited him and his family, treated him kindly just as his father and mother, have given them every pecuniary aid and assistance for their daily food, and especially have given them good advice and put up prayers with them.

On hearing these things, I thought it my duty to pay a visit to Mr and Mrs. Marshman; so I did it, and offered them my sincere thanks for the kindness they had shown to my son and his family. This charitable lady and gentleman requested me to stay with them for two or three days, and to visit them occasionally during my stay at Calcutta, with a view to hear from me some accounts of my most estimable tutor and spiritual father, Mr. Schwartz, I accepted their kind invitation, and remained under their hospitable roof for about two or three days. During my stay there, I joined with Mr. and Mrs. Marshman in the morning and evening family devotions, and at Mr. Marshman's request I also used to hold prayers by turns.

With gratitude to my most gracious God, I am thankful to mention here that Mr. Marshman has a son by the name of John, 7 or 8 years of age, who had a great delight to join with

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<sup>110</sup> Joshua Marshman, (1768-1837). In the early 19th century Baptist missionaries, William Carey, Joshua Marshman, and William Ward (the Serampore trio) worked just north of Kolkata. Their fundamental approach included translating the Scriptures, establishing a college to educate an Indian ministry, printing Christian literature, promoting social reform, and recruiting missionaries for new areas..

us in the morning and evening family prayers. The most gracious and mighty God, who knew me from the creation of the world, by his mysterious and overruling Providence, has chosen this good young man as a strong instrument in His bands for my relief when I was put into great distress and trouble which will be clearly perceived from the following extract in the "Colombo Observer," No. 137, Wednesday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>. 1841.

THE REV. CHRISTIAN DAVID.

"Among our selections last week, our readers may have noticed a painful statement respecting the circumstances of this very worthy man! But lest it should have escaped their notice, we now bring it prominently forward in the hope that many may follow the good example which has been set by one of the benevolent members of our community in subscribing to his relief. It appears that Christian David is so deeply involved in debt, through the dependence on him of a singularly large and helpless family (surviving at present 6 children and 26 grand children), that the merest trifle is left from his salary for the support of himself and them, and most painful consequences are feared from the urgency of his creditors in pressing their claims. To remove him from such distress, a subscription has been commenced in Ceylon; and Mr. Templer, Collector of Customs, and Mr. Whiting, District Judge of Colombo, have undertaken to receive the subscription that may be made. It is not likely, however that Ceylon will furnish a sum sufficient for the purpose intended, and there is no reason why an appeal on behalf of Christian David should be restricted to that Island. He is a man who should be dear to every friend of the Gospel in India. It is a strong claim that he is one of the distinguished converts of the devoted and catholic spirited Schwartz, What is more, when Schwartz, and his principal colleagues had gone to their rest,

and had been succeeded by some comparatively feeble Christian energies, and by others even hostile to the very doctrines in which lay the strength of Schwartz, and the power of his ministry, the faithfulness and pious zeal of Christian David contributed not a little to maintain whatever of genuine religion has survived in the mission.

“It is now about seventeen years since we had the pleasure of becoming acquainted with him, when he came to Bengal to receive Episcopal ordination from Bishop Heber. This kind hearted bishop delighted in doing honour to that old man, and Lord and Lady Amherst followed the example. In fact he was quite the lion of the day, but neither the honours of the Cathedral nor his constant welcome at the Governor General’s table seemed to do any injury to the simplicity and piety of his heart. He was frequently with us at Serampore and always appeared most happy when, taken amongst the native converts of the mission, he could claim spiritual kindred with them. He also took great delight in calling up his reminiscences of the Ven’ble Schwartz,, and these narrations were full both of piety and virtue. He left on our minds such an impression of his excellence as will always endear him to us, and we therefore solicit for him the sympathy and assistance of our friends with the earnestness of personal affection. We shall esteem it a privilege to convey to his friends in Ceylon any contributions for his relief.” – *Friend of India, March 25.*

On Sunday, the 21<sup>st</sup> August, I preached my farewell sermon in the College. On Thursday, the 26<sup>th</sup>, preached my farewell sermon in the old Mission Church, and afterwards attended the missionary meeting held in the vestry, and gave a very short address, referring to Ps. xlv. 2- “O Thou that hearest prayer, unto Thee shall all flesh come.”

On Monday the 30<sup>th</sup>, at 5 o'clock a.m, Doctor Parish, Chaplain to Fort William, took me in his carriage to the harbour, where the ship called "Lord Hungerford" was riding at anchor; and as the ship was not ready we both went from thence to Mr. Chandes, who, according to his promise took us to two synagogues of the black and white Jews, where we not only saw the celestial fire, but also had a very interesting conversation with their High Priests and Levites or Rabbis about the advent of our Lord. I have indeed no words to express my inward feelings the moment I entered into these synagogues, about the wonderful and unsearchable mercies of God towards the children of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. From thence I went to Mr. Harvert (the brother-in-law of the pious Archdeacon Corrie), and on the 31<sup>st</sup>, early in the morning he took me to the wharf; but as the ship had already sailed, a Christian friend of mine lent me his own boat at my request in order that it might convey me to the ship. I left Calcutta about 9 o'clock a.m., and on my going to the river side I saw at a distance the view of the Bishop's College, which is still vivid before me, where I resided as an inmate for some time until my ordination. Immediately, it brought to my remembrance all the blessings which God the Author of mercies bestowed on me during my stay there. I prayed unto God with tears and sighs who has caused such a blessed and beneficial institution to be established. May the College, as it is the first in India, be always the first in imparting saving knowledge, and by the grace of God may it also prove to be a strong instrument to promote the living faith on the Triune God, by which men may enjoy real happiness in this world, and after death, eternal life in the world to come, through the meritorious atonement of our ever compassionate and blessed Saviour Jesus Christ.

At about 2 o'clock p.m. I overtook the ship at the harbour Fulteferra, where Mr. Richard Anderson, who was a pious pilot, received me very kindly, and we had a very delightful

conversation together on the goodness and Providence of God towards his children.

On the 8<sup>th</sup> September we came to “Light House,” and anchored there, and the assistance of the pilot was not further required. Before his leaving the ship, he and myself went into the cabin and offered up our humble and united prayers to the Triune God. When he took his farewell, I mentioned to him that though we may not meet again in this transitory world, yet by the precious atonement of our ever blessed Saviour we may meet in the kingdom of heaven.

We saw at a distance the flag staff point of Madras, and on the 6<sup>th</sup> October, we came and anchored there; then my two servants and myself went into the cabin, and knelt down and earnestly prayed the Lord Jesus Christ who had the power to rule the sea. Immediately we came out and saw the land boat come near the ship to take us down to the shore. The dubash,<sup>111</sup> who came by the special order of the Sea Custom Master with the boat, desired us all that were in the boat to have our cloaks on, and be careful when sitting in it, as the sea was very rough in this season. He ordered the boatman to row it carefully as quick as possible to the shore, but while we were just approaching the shore, it brought to our recollections of the three waves arising generally from that sea. Really they are very dangerous because many boats have often been upset on such a season as this; but when I saw the sea so calm as a river, I returned my thanks inwardly with sighs and tears to the Lord Jesus who once in the depth of the sea rebuked the bewildered wind and said to the raging waves “Peace, be still.” The dubash, although a heathen, when he

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<sup>111</sup> Dubash is an interpreter; Native man of business in the service of Europeans. Hindi dubhāṣiyā, du- two (Skt dvi) + -bhāṣiyā (Skt bhāṣā language).

saw that there were no waves arising from the sea, but so calm, he was greatly surprised and began to express with great utterance, looking at the European gentlemen, my fellow passengers, "Indeed I say that there must have been among these gentlemen in the boat one that fears God!" As I was a native like himself, he was unaware of my profession, but however he did not mean me, as I was in appearance like himself, for his eyes were directed as above said.

After my landing on the shore of Madras, I saw my brother and two of my members belonging to St John's Church at Jaffna, standing and waiting to meet me; again, I thanked God who directed them to be there present to welcome my arrival from Calcutta and cheer my heart. Immediately after, I proceeded to Vepery, where Dr. Ruttler resides and where also I put up for some time before I went to Calcutta. On the 31<sup>st</sup> October I was attacked with fever which then prevailed in the country, called the Bengal fever; but by the grace of God I was restored to health in the course of a week.

Shortly after my arrival at Madras, having heard of the melancholy death of my old and tried friend, the Hon'ble and Ven'ble Dr Twisleton, the Archdeacon of Colombo, I proposed to set out to Ceylon, but unfortunately as the Revs. Dr. Ruttler and Mr. Falcke were taken with fever, the former requested me to stay and assist them in their respective duties. I officiated for them until their recovery, when they re-assumed their duties. I was taken ill again, but by the blessing of God, was restored to health within a fortnight. Although I was determined to proceed as soon as possible to Ceylon, the monsoon having set in, there was no possibility for travelling either by land or by sea; while, however, I was preparing to leave Madras by land, the Rev. Mr. Falcke died and left Dr. Ruttler without any assistance. Considering the duties of the mission which had devolved on Dr. Ruttler alone in his old age,



and were more than he could bear, I thought it my duty (not only as a clergyman, but also as I was one of his pupils at Tranquebar for many years) to remain with him until he was relieved by the assistance of the Rev. Mr. Hanbrook whom he expected from Valoor.

During my stay at Vepery I invariably preached in the Mission Church on Sundays and Friday evenings in lamp light, and very frequently on Sunday mornings; besides those services I regularly preached on Thursday evenings in the Church Mission church in the Black Town, and in the chaplain's church in the same town, during his illness, and occasionally in St. Thomas's Mount.

On the 26<sup>th</sup> November, I attended the church at Fort St. George, where I was requested by the Rev. Mr. Thomas Lewis, Chaplain to that church, to administer the sacrament of baptism to six Malabar women, which request I gladly complied with, as Mr Lewis had no knowledge of Tamil. I also repeatedly visited the native Christians in their own houses at Vepery in the Black Town, and at Rayapooram, and likewise joined in family worship with them.

In May 1825, when the European descendants, otherwise called the Eurasian inhabitants or Hindoo Britons at Madras, formed the "Madras Auxiliary Apprenticing Society," the Ven'ble the Archdeacon Vaughan, of Madras, was chosen as President, and I as Vice President.

In the early part of June 1825, I received a letter from my ever lamented and spiritual father, the Lord Bishop Heber, who not only communicated to me many interesting and important tidings connected with His Lordship's journeys in the interior to the north of Calcutta, but also intimated his wish that I should proceed to Colombo, and be present there before His

Lordship's arrival, as he was to visit the same place on the following month. On the receipt of this instruction from the bishop, I informed the Secretary of the Apprenticing Society to convene a meeting, that I may resign my Vice Presidentship, returning my warmest thanks for the honour they conferred on me in the nomination.

Before I left Madras, timely notice was given that a farewell sermon will be preached by me on the ensuing Sunday evening, at the Vepery Mission Church, the service commencing at 6 ½ o'clock p.m. The text selected for the occasion was Psalm ciii. 1-4. There were present Hindoo, Britons, Portuguese descendants, Roman Catholics, and even the principal heathens who often visited me when residing at the Vepery Mission House at Madras, and many other classes of people. As the church was full, many of them were obliged to stand out and hear me through the windows. They all heard the sermon with great eagerness and attention, and I concluded the service with the apostolical benediction upon them all.

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of June I left Madras, and arrived on the 4<sup>th</sup> at Sadras. In the course of my journey, I visited all the principal intermediate places commencing from Madras up to Tranquebar, and at every place I halted especially on Sundays. On this blessed day, I held divine service to the people who gladly assembled to hear me, and also did not omit as I travelled to embrace every opportunity in speaking and exhorting about the important concerns of their immortal souls' everlasting welfare to the various descriptions of people whom I met with. Whenever it occurred that I passed a village in the dusk or after evening, and not being able to meet any inhabitants or passengers, according to the salutary advice of our ever blessed Saviour, I ceased not in silence to lift up my heart to the Lord who is the hearer and answerer of prayers,

beseeking Him that He may soon cause to bring the inhabitants of those villages through which I passed to the saving knowledge of His truth, and enlighten their minds through the instrumentality of His holy Gospel, and that its blessed effects be experienced by the villagers.

On the 11<sup>th</sup> of June I arrived at Tranquebar, and took my lodging under the hospitable roof of the late Rev. Doctor Carumerer, who introduced me to the Danish Governor of that place, and to some other influential gentlemen there, who on learning that I was a native brought up by the Royal Danish missionaries in their seminary, kindly received and cordially invited me to their tables, &c.

Here I had the gratification to meet my cousin, the Rev. Dewasagayam, who was then a catechist of the Church Missionary Society, stationed at Mayapooram, and on Sunday I had the happiness to perform divine service in Bethlehem Church, where I was baptized in the year 1775; and it was with feelings of thankfulness and gratitude to God, gratifying to my ears beyond measure, to have heard the very same Lutheran hymn sung then, translated by the late famous Fabricius, which I eagerly wished to be sung before the sermon. It was nearly composed of the following words:-

O, how could I be mute without lisp[ing] the praise of my Lord!  
For, will not His truth and sincerity in everything be manifest?  
For, to the end He will His own Carry and support; and if this we see, it shows His omnipotent [love!

When the first verse of this hymn was struck up by the organist, it inspired my mind with the greatest gratitude to God and delight to my own feelings, and also I had the happiness to meet in the house of the Lord most of my relations and friends, males and females, and some principal

Danish descendants; and they knowing that it would be my farewell sermon, and under the same impression in my mind I preached on John iii. 16.

I had a strong desire to visit Tanjore, where I was brought up at the feet of my great Gamaliel, Father Schwartz,, from 1787. On the evening of the 13<sup>th</sup> June, I left Tranquebar, and passing through the villages I never ceased according to my general custom to pray that the Lord may bring the villages to the saving knowledge of Christ. On the following morning, at about 9 o'clock, I arrived at Mayapooram. I immediately returned my most humble thanks to God who spared my life to see the place after an absence of nearly 37 years, and where in 1788, Father Schwartz, and a catechist and myself, on our journey from Tanjore to Tranquebar, halted a night. It was Mr. Schwartz,'s invariable custom that whether he was at home or on his travels, always to offer up a prayer to the Almighty before his exhortations, not only in the presence of his own people, but also of Roman Catholics, Mahomedans and heathens. These people often came to visit and hear Mr. Schwartz, in the church and at his residence. On that particular night also, he assembled us and giving a brief and edifying lecture to impress in our minds that we are strangers, sojourners and pilgrims from this to another better world, put up prayers, after which I prepared his bed on the floor by spreading a mat and mattress, on which he took his rest with great calmness and peace of mind.

Mr. Dewasagayam not only affectionately received me, but also took great interest in assembling his school-masters and their families, and the school children, &c., in a place erected for Christian worship at Mayapooram. I remained with them the whole day and exhorted and put up prayers. I left this

place and on the 15<sup>th</sup> June, at about 9 ½ o'clock, a.m., arrived at Combocoonam.<sup>112</sup>

Here I must remark that the apostolic Schwartz, and myself travelled annually to visit the small flock in the different villages from Tanjore and Tranquebar. This place was a stronghold of Satan filled with a mass of idol worshippers, but through the indefatigable exertions of Mr. Schwartz, (when I was still with him before my arrival in Ceylon) a grant of a large spot of ground near a tank famous for its excellent water being made to him by the king of Tanjore, a commodious and substantial tiled place of worship was erected; a catechist was appointed to read prayers and lectures on Sundays and other holy days to the Christians who assembled there from the neighbouring villages; and also he wrote and obtained the sanction of the Madras Government to establish a provincial school there. Immediately the school masters were nominated to instruct boys of the high and low castes both in English and Tamil. After the elapse of 37 years as above said, I was greatly gratified on my arrival at this place to find one of the ministers of the London Missionary Society stationed, and likewise a country priest, who for many years was one of my scholars at Tanjore, then called Abraham, but now after his ordination according the Lutheran Liturgy named Wisuwasa Nattoaya, in connection with the Tanjore Mission of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. I stayed here for two days, and both mornings and evenings engaged in preaching at the sacred building erected by the late Father Schwartz,, when the missionary and his family with many other Christians attended. During the day I visited several Christian families and my cousins in their houses, and exhorted to and prayed with them. Here I must with joy and gratitude to God observe

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<sup>112</sup> Kumbakonam கும்பகோணம் is located 40 km from Thanjavur and 273 km from Chennai.

that in this very place which was once the principal stronghold of Satan, where Christianity was totally abhorred and detested, the stigma or stain which was attached (by the profaners and ignorant heathens) to Christianity was at this time partially removed; and I am fully persuaded that the Lord according to His unchangeable promise will soon hasten the time when these fellow countrymen and others who are now scattered as sheep will be brought into one fold under the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls.

I arrived on the 17<sup>th</sup> June at Tanjore, in the house of the late Rev. D. John Caspar Kohlhoff, who with his lady very gladly and affectionately received me, having had known me for a long time when I was at Tanjore as one of the catechists there. When I formerly resided here in 1787, Mr. Kohlhoff proved to me in many respects a sincere friend and wellwisher and took a lively interest in instructing me to advance in the studies of Christian principles in the English language; and after such a long absence his Christian affection to me was unchanged. On the 19<sup>th</sup> June I had the happiness to preach from the very pulpit from which Father Schwartz, preached. I delivered a discourse from 2 Sam vii. 18. "Who am I, O Lord, and what is my house, that Thou hast brought me hitherto?"

On the morning about 8 o'clock, after my arrival at Tanjore, I was requested to perform the funeral service over the remains of a child in the burial ground which is attached to a garden afterwards named Swartspooram, signifying the great and famous city of Schwartz,. After Mr. Schwartz,'s residence as a missionary there, he built the first small church where his body was buried. Adjoining to this church there is a large burial ground where the remains of my mother, elder brothers and many of my relations were interred. A large and magnificent tablet to Mr. Schwartz,'s memory is fixed towards the west side of the entrance of the Fort Church (which was

the second built under the auspices and supervision of the celebrated Father Schwartz,) representing his corpse in a lying posture surrounded with his school children, and particularly the king of Tanjore, named Surbojee Maha Raja,<sup>113</sup> who was brought up under his guardianship, standing before him. The moment I saw that most remarkable tablet in that sacred edifice many reflections came to my mind which I have no words to express.

Before I left Tanjore, with the consent and approbation of the Rev. Mr. Kohlhoff. I gave an address on the formation of the Tanjore Mission Benevolent Society for the publication of Tamil religious and school books and for the relief of the poor.

On the 25<sup>th</sup> June 1825, I left Tanjore and came in the evening to a choultry,<sup>114</sup> called Amma Satteram, which together with the large and famous tank of good water opposite to it, was built by Surbojee Maha Raja, the late Tanjore king, in memory of one of his deceased wives where alms are daily given, such as raw and boiled rice, &c., to different classes of people. On the north side of the compound of the said choultry, charity schools were established for the education of the Mahrati,

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<sup>113</sup> Serfoji II (Tamil ruNgh[p]) (September 24, 1777 – March 7, 1832) was the last ruler of the Maratha principality of Tanjore to exercise absolute sovereignty over his dominions. Serfoji belonged to the Bhonsle clan of Marathas and descended from Shivaji's half-brother Venkoji. He ruled Tanjore from 1798 until his death in 1832. Serfoji was open-minded and tolerant of other faiths. He liberally funded churches and schools run by Christian missionaries. (Indira Viswanathan Peterson, "The cabinet of King Serfoji of Tanjore: A European collection in early nineteenth-century India" *Journal of the History of Collections*, Volume 11, Issue 1, pp. 71-93).

<sup>114</sup> In India choultry means a pillared hall or colonnade of a temple. It is also used to refer to a resting place for visitors where rooms and food are provided by a charitable institution for nominal rates.

Hindustani, English and Tamil languages. At the request of the Head Manager of the place, I went and inspected the schools and found them all in good order according to the regulations given to that effect by the king. I am happy to state that there were also two churches built two miles to the north of the choultry, by the direction and at the expense of the said king for the use of the Protestant Christians. Two catechists were appointed by the missionaries, and supported by the king, to read lectures and prayers on Sundays and holy days. These two catechists collected the Christians in each place of worship, and I went to see them, and after a short lecture dismissed them with a prayer and blessing. I remained in one of the churches that night.

On the next morning I left the place and arrived at a choultry, and spent the Sabbath with a few Christians. Some heathens were also present, to whom I declared that there was no salvation by worshipping the dumb idols, but that they should believe in God who is the Creator of heaven and earth and all mankind, and who "so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son."

On Monday morning, I arrived at Negapatam, where I had the happiness of seeing again my Christian friends who came to visit and congratulate me on my safe return from Calcutta. I gave them a short address and prayed with them. On the following morning, my Christian friends and relatives came to bid me farewell and many reflections came to my mind again, to think of what the kind Providence of God had done for me. Thinking I may see them no more, I inwardly prayed in my heart with sighs and tears recommending them and myself to the mercy and protection of God. After a short exhortation and prayer, I bade them farewell, and immediately left Negapatam and in the evening came to Point Kolmayra.



On Wednesday morning, I hired a boat and sailed over to the other side, and landed on a little hill called Keerimulla which is close by Point Pedro, and arrived there about four o'clock, p.m. The magistrate of that district, Mr. P.F. Toussaint (whom I knew from his youth) received me very kindly, and at my request procured me some palanquin-bearers. I proceeded that night for Jaffna, and while passing every village I ceased not to pray earnestly that God may bless the inhabitants of these villages and bring them speedily to His saving knowledge.

On the following morning, at about 7 o'clock, I reached Jaffna and went immediately to my old dwelling house which I built adjoining the vestry of St. John's church, where myself and family had lived for a length of time. On hearing of my arrival at Jaffna, many of the members and Christians, both male and female, belonging to the said Church, came to pay me a visit and congratulate my safe return from Calcutta, to whom I related all the goodness which my gracious Creator has bestowed on me, and also how He preserved me from perils and brought me back in perfect health among them. After a short exhortation, I prayed with them and dismissed them with thanks.

On Friday, the 1<sup>st</sup> of July, I visited most of my Christian friends in the town, and desired them to attend St. John's church, as I was going to preach there on Sunday the 3<sup>rd</sup>, and leave the place on Monday to proceed to Colombo to meet my ever lamented spiritual father, the Rt. Rev. Bishop Heber.

On Sunday morning, I preached from Psalm cxlv. 18 "The Lord is nigh unto them that call upon Him." I am happy to say that most of the members and Christians belonging to the said church, with their grown-up children were present. In the afternoon, I preached from Psalm cxlv. 19. "He will fulfil the

desire of them that fear Him.” I was likewise glad that those Christians who were in the morning were also present in the afternoon service with many others.

On Monday, before my leaving St. John’s church, many of my Christian friends and members of the church, came very early in the morning to bid me farewell. Whenever I travel either by land or by sea, I followed the blessed example of saints of old, to lift up my heart to God, relying on His unerring words to believers, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” Accordingly I knelt down together with the people and prayed, commending the little flock committed to my charge to His protection, and likewise supplicating that He may preserve me from danger and take me to my family and old flock at Colombo. Afterwards the people and myself proceeded to the first ferry to Colombo, called Kolomputorre,<sup>115</sup> where also I knelt down in the presence of the Protestants, Roman Catholics, Mahomedans and heathens, together with my coolies, &c. Afterwards, myself and servants went into the boat, and at about 4 o’clock p.m. arrived in the first rest-house at Poonerim.<sup>116</sup> The magistrate and officers of the court and headmen of that district came to welcome my arrival, when I first of all prayed with them (as I do always in my journey) and related to them also, how God in His infinite goodness guided me in my long journey, and preserved me. At midnight I left the place and went straightway, with school light and torches, halting a few hours in every rest-house. While passing the villages, I never ceased to pray to God that He may bring in His own good time the inhabitants of those villages to the saving knowledge of His beloved Son. On Saturday, I arrived in the last rest-house at Jaela.

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<sup>115</sup> Colombuthurai (nfhOk;Gj;Jiw) is a coastal suburb of the Jaffna Penisinsula.

<sup>116</sup> The British built a rest house in 1805.

On the 10<sup>th</sup> (being Sunday), I left Jaela with an intention to be present for the afternoon service at St Thomas's Church at Colombo and arrived there at about 4 o'clock p.m. I went immediately to the residence of my family (near St. Thomas's church at Colombo) when the service of that church was over, but to my great gratification, the minister, the church-warden, and most of the Christians who were present for the afternoon service, having heard of my arrival at Colombo came to see me. Immediately I prayed with them, returning my humble thanks to our Heavenly Father for all the blessings bestowed on me, in bringing me back to the bosom of my family and my old flock in such a day as this to meet them all in good health.

On Sunday, the 11<sup>th</sup> of September, the Bishop with his Domestic Chaplain, the Rev. Mr. Robinson, and the Archdeacon, Mr. Glenie, came to the Church. After the prayers have been read by Messrs Franciscus<sup>117</sup> and Ondaatje, I read the communion service, after which I ascended the pulpit and on that joyful occasion I selected as text for my sermon Luke xii. 32. "Fear not little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." I am happy to state that the Church was full and for want of seats many of the Protestants, Roman Catholics, a few Mahomedans, and heathens were standing in the outer verandah and paid great attention to my discourse. In the course of the Divine service we sang Lutheran Hymns in Tamil which were translated by the learned and famous Rev. Fabricius of Madras<sup>118</sup> who was one of the missionaries of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. As I knew that the Bishop understands German I gave to His Lordship a German

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<sup>117</sup> John Martyn, op.cit. p. 139.

<sup>118</sup> J.P. Fabricius (1720-1791) was a native of Frankfort on the Maine; He was a graduate of Halle; arrived in Tranquebar in 1740 and went to Madras in 1742. He died in Madras in 1791.

Hymn Book marking out the hymns to be sung on the occasion. After the sermon was over, the Bishop with a laudable and serious voice pronounced the blessing in Tamil and dismissed the congregation.

On the morning of the 21st at 9 o'clock, all of my candidates for confirmation and myself were present in the said church where I was happy to see English, Portuguese, and Sinhalese candidates also assembled. The Bishop commenced the service of confirmation to the English and Portuguese, but when the Sinhalese and Malabar candidates were to be confirmed, the Rev. Mr. Saram and myself were called by turns within the rails of the altar to assist His Lordship to read the service in each language while His Lordship was reading it in English. On this very solemn and joyful occasion, the Governor with his suite, civil, military and other private gentlemen and Christians of different denominations were present. On this same day, the late Rev. Mr. Armour received the priest's orders, when the Bishop, Rev. Mr. Saram and myself laid our hands on him.

As my ever lamented spiritual father, the Bishop himself has written at large in his journal, as well as his Domestic Chaplain, the Rev. Mr. Robinson, and many others, how indefatigably His Lordship has laboured for the extension of our Redeemer's kingdom in this vast Island until his return to Calcutta, I feel it quite unnecessary to enter into those particulars.

Before I conclude this my memoir, I have to state with sincere gratitude to God who has hitherto spared the unworthy lives of my wife and myself and permitted us to commemorate the 62nd anniversary of our marriage in my 81st year on the 13th April 1852, and through His infinite goodness our lives are still spared. He has also afforded us the happiness of seeing surviving 6 grown up children, 28 grandchildren and 4 great

grandchildren, and also many nephews and nieces on the Coast of Coromandel and some in this Island.

From my long and dear bought experience, I was convinced in my mind to confess that the Holy Bible which our Heavenly Father has graciously caused to be written for our learning and instruction is quite enough to those who sincerely wish to obtain the forgiveness of sin and enjoy peace of mind, and those believers will surely say that they will not part with that blessed book till they change time for eternity; and certainly after death they may anticipate to become heirs of the kingdom of God. Therefore I earnestly recommend to all my countrymen and others to study rather this book of books than any other, which is the fountain of sound and saving knowledge with prayer, candour and a tractable disposition, as those who sat at the feet of the meek Jesus from the beginning have been made wise unto salvation.

I acknowledge with all my heart that I am not at all worthy of the manifold mercies which the Lord bestowed on me from my birth up to this moment; even time and eternity will not be enough to express them. I conclude this my memoir with the words of one of the evangelical poets.

“Could we with ink the ocean fill,  
Were the whole earth of parchment made,  
Were every single stick a quill,  
And every man a scribe by trade;  
To write the LOVE OF GOD above,  
Would drain the ocean dry,  
Nor would the scroll contain the whole  
Though stretched from sky to sky.”  
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; as it was from the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen and Amen.

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