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# Some Aspects of the Asian Situation and Their Significance for Training for Service to the Church

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## THE REVIVAL OF RELIGIONS

THE revival of the ancient religions of Asia is one of the most important factors in the international situation which has developed since World War II. It may be regarded as part of a current worldwide revival of religion, or, on the other hand, there may be some ground to think that the Asian development stimulated a world movement. Religion is now more important as a factor in national and international affairs than has been the case for many centuries. The Asian churchmen, in the book *Christianity and the Asian Revolution*, state: "Nationalism imparts a new interpretation to religion. Instead of being an isolated and insulated factor in people's lives, largely otherworldly and spiritual, religion is made a part of the this-worldly and secular force of nationalism." This is very true, but it is a statement made from a Western viewpoint, even if made by Asian Christians. Asian religion has always been "this-worldly," permeating the fabric of personal and communal life within the context of a world view which does not sharply separate the "natural" and the "supernatural." Nationalism may now strengthen religion, but revived religion equally strengthens nationalism.

The tension between the ethnic and universal claims of the revived religions is most interesting to observe. Some Sinhalese Buddhists may be zealous to propagate Buddhism in Germany and in India, but the mass of the Sinhalese people are far more zealous about making Ceylon a Buddhist state at the expense of the Tamil-speaking mission organs in Ceylon. The leaders of its government may sincerely desire to make Buddhism a potent spiritual force in international affairs, but the Burmese Buddhists at the same time certainly equate Buddhism with patriotism. They strive through a multiplicity of means to make it the bond of national unity. To some extent the equally passionate desires to make the nation one in the bond of a single religion and to propagate the

faith abroad reflect in the minds and hearts of sincere and devoted men of religion like the Burmese prime minister, U Nu, the two poles of concern for their country: national renewal and a place of international leadership. A country like Burma, without the material resources of her great neighbor India, can yet hope for influence through spiritual illumination and power.

Moreover, in every Asian land there are ultraconservative groups which can conceive of their religion only in those ethnic terms which have so long been the majority point of view, and they fight ferociously against the establishment of the secular state and of religious pluralism. Dar-ul-Islam in Indonesia and such Indian parties and organizations as the Mahasaba, Jan Sangh, and Arya Samaj regard the profession of Christianity as treason to the state and the people. These last three look upon every Muslim in India as a subversive agent of Pakistan. The formation of Pakistan itself rests solely on the identification of statehood with religion. The militant Soka Gakkai of Nichiren Buddhist background in Japan, which seeks to annihilate all other religions including other Buddhist sects, has embarked on a political course, but has not yet shown itself to be ultranationalistic as have those others. When the spirit of religious statism, of mystic nationalism, grips a people, it becomes an imminent danger to religious minorities and to cultural pluralism.

#### NATIONALISM

This Asian nationalism, which in each country asks the blessing of the ancient folk religion and, in turn, supports it with special privilege, is the chief characteristic of the social context in which the young churches live and witness to the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is a nationalism which is exceedingly sensitive and which may be described as adolescent. As peoples and cultures these lands are very old and very proud of a long-continued tradition. As independent modern nations they are very new and are as sensitive about their honor and self-sufficiency as any American teen-ager. It is also a nationalism which confidently looks to the welfare-state nation as a messiah that will cure all the age-old ills and grievances of the people. It will give them land, bread, and the factories which will raise their standard of living. It will cure their diseases and prolong lives. It will give dignity and worth to

the common man. These things were supposedly denied by the colonial regimes. An independent nation will now speedily achieve them, it is supposed. This is a nationalism which tends to combine antiquarianism and revolution. Present pretensions of competence in domestic affairs and leadership in the international scene are supported by pointing to ancient glories, and the past is newly hallowed. At the same time there is faith in modern science and technology to solve all national problems and to achieve the social and economic goals common to the Asian revolution. Most interestingly, however, while the leaders build their plans on science and technology and fan the flame of patriotism by recalling past glory, they seem at the same time to fear what may happen if technology becomes the master rather than the servant. They also must combat a heritage of inertia, lack of individual initiative and responsibility, a tendency towards graft and nepotism, and certain religio-social customs which hamper the attainment of the aims of the revolution. Therefore, while conservative religionists would lead the nation back into the past, many political leaders turn to the reform movements in religion, such as the various organs of Neo-Hinduism, which seek to reinterpret it in terms relevant to contemporary life. They seek allies in providing a spiritual foundation for social life and political structure. This is the symbolic significance of Dr. Radhakrishnan's position as vice-president of India. That great missionary for religion in general as well as for Neo-Vedanta philosophy in particular, represents the avowed intention of Nehru and his associates to keep material ends and means subject to spiritual illumination and guidance. Thus religion and nationalism come into a new kind of union.

One of the most significant points at which nationalism and religion join forces in Asian countries is their mutual concern, almost an obsession, with peace. The newly independent countries have very meager resources and in the face of aggression could not long defend themselves. They need international peace and prosperity as essential conditions for working out long-range plans and even for their preservation. Moreover, all of South and East Asia appears convinced of the threat of atomic annihilation in a third world war. The voices of political and religious leaders unite in appeals for peace and together support a policy of Asiatic neutral-

ism. Each of the religions stresses its contribution to world peace. Buddhism especially has laid claims to being best suited to provide a spiritual basis for a peaceful, just, and stable world order. Burma built a "Peace Pagoda" to mark the beginning of the new Buddhist era. The literature produced in the Theravada countries, particularly in the English language, is filled with the subject of peace. The same is true of the literature of the reform movements and the popular cults of Hinduism. New Japanese sects like the Perfect Liberty Kyodan and Daijyo Kyo stress the elimination of discord and the attainment of lasting peace and welfare.

Nationalists find that the specters of colonialism and imperialism are still effective in stimulating emotions and arousing zeal for support of their programs. Ancient wrongs are repeatedly recited to keep their memory alive. There are frequent allegations about supposed imperialistic aims of aggression and of interference with national interests. Just as it was becoming increasingly difficult to continue whipping a dead horse, the Middle East crisis brought anti-imperialism back with increased furor. It is said to be imperialistic designs — usually meaning those of the Western nations — which also threaten the peace of the world and hold the atom bomb poised over mankind.

#### NATIONALISTIC PRESSURES ON THE CHURCHES

Since mystic nationalism closely allied with revived religion is such a potent factor in the environment of the young churches, it is not surprising that nationalistic pressures on the Christian community are so intense. Both the conservative reactionaries and some adherents of the new religious movements charge Christianity with being divisive in the domestic scene and the root of imperialistic aggression in international relations. Christianity is equated with European-American culture and politics. There is consequent fear of religious institutions financed from the West and partly staffed by Western personnel. This is a part of a more general concern about Western influence, and there is reluctance to allow the foreigner any part in national development other than as a servant of national organs and interests. Foreigners in general, not just missionaries, have increasing difficulty in securing entrance visas and residence permits in most Asian countries. All

foreigners are being progressively eliminated from so-called strategic areas. Christian organizations controlled by foreigners are just as suspect as is any foreign agency of any sort in the United States. If Americans in a position of strength could within recent years indulge in an orgy of antisubversive activities which passed beyond the bounds of reason, that those in a position of national weakness might be subject to similar fears ought not to excite wonder.

The obvious association of Christianity with the former colonial order is not forgotten as quickly by non-Christians as it is by us. In the countries of South Asia there stand those huge churches which at government expense ministered to the garrisons and to the white and Eurasian peoples involved in the colonial structure. Many of them are now deserted, or are used by tiny congregations. They often occupy strategic sites on which nationals look with hungry eyes. Government subsidies to the extensive educational and welfare services of the churches remain as a token of the old order. Such things spelled special privilege and are still resented. The lack of former governmental support for various indigenous religious institutions is decried. The argument is repeatedly presented that the former British policy of "nonintervention in religious affairs" was really intervention on behalf of Christianity and against Buddhism and Hinduism.

However, of much more significance than such baseless suspicions of subversive activity on the part of present foreign religious interests is the widespread belief that Christianity denationalizes its converts, removes them from the common life, and substitutes alien customs for national traditions. Even the man who is a zealous partisan of science and technology in the development of a country's material resources is likely to be very conservative with respect to many areas of cultural tradition. Antipathy to the importation of Western cultural expressions of Christian worship and life has recently been strengthened by the use of the media of mass communication by many new agencies. There is a very genuine fear of the fragmenting of the population into mutually exclusive communities when unity is vitally necessary to the realization of the plans for national development and even for national self-preservation. That is why there is so much resentment toward the multi-

plying of Christian denominations and sects which draw attention to themselves. I doubt very much whether Christian divisions — excepting those of the competing agencies — prevent the Hindus from becoming Christians, since they are accustomed to great diversity in Hinduism. Disunity bothers them after they become Christians and see the practical denial of reconciliation in Christ. The foreign ways of worship and teaching and the separation of Christians into a little world of their own apart from their neighbors are much more formidable barriers to understanding and evangelism. In some areas pews in churches, wearing shoes in the sanctuary, and singing Western hymn tunes exclusively are taken to be indications of the complete repudiation of the national heritage required of Christians. Even where there is full tolerance, Christian failure to manifest any interest in a common concern about religious matters, even on an academic basis, is resented. It was, for example, pointed out with sadness in India how few Christians participate in the Union for the Study of Great Religions, and in Japan it was said that not even token contributions could be expected from Christian bodies toward the expense of the forthcoming International Congress of the History of Religions.

The specific forms which nationalistic pressures assume vary from place to place, but they are similar throughout the whole area. There is an extreme sensitivity toward anything which may be interpreted as a slight or insult to the religion of the majority. An innocent skit included in a private entertainment at a school of nursing in an interior town in Burma was interpreted as an insult to the Buddha and the Sangha. It was greatly embroidered in the retelling and caused a tremendous furor. Both the local Christians and the Burma Christian Council had to issue statements of apology in the case that any unintentional discourtesy had occurred, and they had to give verbal guarantees that all offensive references to Buddha and Buddhism would be avoided in the future. The government of Ceylon is following a policy of deliberate favoritism to Buddhists in special benefits to the Sangha, renovation of the temples, preference to Buddhists in governmental job placement, and support of religious schools, because Christians were supposedly thus favored by the colonial regime. The parliament recently voted to establish Christian, Hindu, and Muslem "Advisory

Committees" to the Ministry of Culture and Religion, and the churches are in a quandary about accepting membership, not knowing whether this is a device of the government intended for control or co-operation. The imposition of Sinhala as the official national language places great disabilities upon all except the Sinhalese Buddhists. Throughout South Asia Christians are repeatedly attacked for their ministry to aboriginal, animistic peoples, as in the Burma hill country and in Assam, because such people respond positively to the Christian Gospel and are removed from possible incorporation into the majority community.

The foreignness of Christianity is that which excites such pressures as these which I have mentioned, and similar forces are at work in the churches themselves and express themselves in relation to the Western churches. The young churches are caught up by this nationalism just because they are part of the common life of any land. Their members are no less patriots than their non-Christian neighbors, and they resent charges that their faith denationalizes them. They will go to great lengths to prove that this is not true. The sensitivity of the nation with regard to its dignity, maturity, and competence carries over into the church, where any attempt to hold it in a continuing state of tutelage is resented. Formal missionary control of the church is an anachronism from the prudential point of view as well as Biblically unsound; and where it remains, it is resented. Where hidden control remains despite formal devolution, feelings are just as strong.

However, the most intense nationalistic reactions against Christianity are due not to its foreignness but to its performance of the church's chief function, evangelism. It is the question of conversion which is the root of the antagonism. Were Christianity content to remain a small minority, growing only by births and adjusting itself in noncompetitive fashion to the majority religion, much antagonism would disappear. In Burma and Ceylon this is easily explained by Buddhism's conviction about its unique possession of the truth and the certainty of the Buddhists that nationalism and Buddhism are one and the same thing. In Burma it is the rapid growth of Christianity among the animistic hill peoples, the Karens, the Kachins, and a score of others, that excites strong feeling over conversions. Convinced of the need of national unity and

that the bond of unity is to be found in Buddhism, the Burmese Buddhists consider the hill peoples to be their private preserve for later conversions. They fear that Christianity may become for large minority groups just what Buddhism claims to be for the whole country, namely, the bond of unity and the dynamic force in community life and culture.

The antagonism to conversion in India is not so simply explained, since there are a variety of reasons which give rise to it. There is the simple and easily understood opposition of communalism — of the reactionary, conservative Hindus, who equate Hinduism and nationalism. They oppose the secular state, denounce the constitutional clause guaranteeing the right to propagate religion, and work for the establishment of a Hindu *raj*. To them conversion to Islam or to Christianity is treason. Consequently they undertake missions of reconversion of Christians to Hinduism and sometimes even use coercion. This in their view is merely reclaiming for the community that which belongs to it. Despite their failure to work actively for the incorporation of tribal people and the Harijans into the body of Hinduism, they especially resent Christian evangelism among them. However, the bitterness toward conversion manifested by the reform movements and by prominent adherents of what might be called "Neo-Hinduism" or "Neo-Vedanta," all active in social service and uplift of the depressed classes, is likely to be just as intense as that shown by the Arya Somaj and kindred organizations. These persons are the heirs of Gandhi in many things, including the uplift of the masses; and the lifting of the disabilities and the complete inclusion of the former outcastes and tribal peoples in the social structure are needed to give authenticity to their modern reinterpretation of Hinduism. Moreover, these people hold as a cardinal doctrine of faith the idea that all truth is one, that there is a transcendental unity of all religions, which are equally valid and equally partial paths to the truth. They hold so passionately to this belief that it becomes the motivation for mission on their part. There is no place for conversion from one religion to another, only for mutual recognition and co-operation. Conversion can legitimately take place only from materialism to a spiritual view of the universe and of life. So evangelism which leads to conversion is denounced as "proselytism," and the word

always carries with it something of an air of unworthy motivation, ulterior purposes, wrong methods, and a trafficking in souls which might find a parallel in the slave trade. One wonders how the clause guaranteeing religious liberty, including the right of propagation, ever came to be written into the constitution. Probably it was due to the strength that Christians were able to muster in support of the measure at the time and because a constitution was being written for a modern, secular, democratic state, in which freedom of religion is taken for granted. The most obvious symbols of the Christian effort to effect conversions are the Western missionaries. Since they are foreign as well as evangelistic agents, many consider them fair game for attack.

Restrictions on the entrance and residence of missionaries have steadily increased during the last few years. In the beginning most of these were instigated by local officials. Then the central government professed to be alarmed by the huge increase of missionaries since the end of the war, and especially by the large proportion of Americans in relation to those from the British Commonwealth. The basis of comparison, however, was not quite fair, since the figures employed as the base were those of a sadly depleted staff and not the more normal staff at the beginning of the war period. The central government in the spring of 1955 announced that new missionaries would be granted entrance visas and residence permits only if Indians were not available for the positions which they were to fill and only if they possessed outstanding qualifications. New work, including even extension of existing programs, must receive the approval of the government. No visas are presently being granted to Roman Catholic missionaries, according to the Archbishop of Bangalore, secretary to the Conference of Bishops. During the twelve months from November 1955 to October 1956 inclusive, 10 applications were granted, 14 refused, and 21 had not been dealt with. Protestants have not been treated so drastically, but are finding it exceedingly difficult to obtain visas for evangelistic missionaries.

The state of Madhya Pradesh, in which some very serious acts of violence against Christians have occurred, illustrates in the most extreme degree the pressures brought upon the Christian community by ultranationalists. This state government promulgated

a fantastic order forbidding conversion unless the act were made in the presence of a magistrate, but the central government effected its recall. Then in April 1954 this state government appointed a "Christian Missionary Activities Enquiry Committee," under the chairmanship of Dr. M. B. S. Niyogi, former chief justice of the High Court and ex-chairman of the Public Service Commission of the state. The reason for its creation was said to be this:

It was represented to the government from time to time that the conversion of illiterate aborigines and other backward people was effected by the Christian missionaries either forcibly or through fraud or temptations of monetary gain, and the government was informed that the feelings of non-Christians were being offended by conversions brought about by such methods. The Christian missionaries repudiated before the Government these allegations and charged local officials and non-Christians of harassment and as the State Government found that an agitation was growing on either side, it considered it desirable, in the public interest, to have a thorough enquiry made into the whole question.

The committee was packed with persons known for extreme anti-Christian views. The one Christian had not been a member of any church for many years, and his doctrinal views were not those held by any church body.

This committee was given a general "fishing license" and allowed to determine its own methods of procedure. It toured the state, holding hearings which were in the nature of anti-Christian rallies; it sent out a long questionnaire with questions phrased to be self-incriminating, no matter how answered; and it investigated literature and records. When the bias of the committee became unmistakably clear, the Roman Catholics filed with the High Court of the state a mandamus petition challenging the whole procedure as unconstitutional. The High Court held that the inquiry was not compulsory and denied the petition, but it pointed out that the inquiry was mischievous and dangerous, that the committee did not have the right to deal with the matter in any way that it might like, and that the questionnaire was in the nature of an inquisition. Despite a warning by the High Court the committee continued in the same high-handed way and ranged far beyond the boundaries of Madhya Pradesh, "investigating" missions around the world. It acted as investigator, jury, and judge simultaneously.

It distorted evidence and flouted recognized legal and judicial procedure. The report was submitted on April 18, 1956.

The most fantastic charge in the whole remarkable document is that Christians, led by the missionaries and directed by John R. Mott and John Foster Dulles, are trying to establish a Christian state like Pakistan. The basis for this is a small movement of tribal peoples, known as the Jharkand Movement, in adjoining areas of Bihar, Orissa, and Madhya Pradesh for the creation of a single administrative unit. This little movement is presented as a vast plot, subversive to the welfare of the country, created by the missionaries for their political advantage and financed by vast sums of foreign money. Moreover, this is supposed to be a major piece of strategy in the global "cold war," and somehow it is evidence of the anti-Russian alliance of the United States and the Roman Catholic Church. Christian evangelization is a cloak for Western imperialism. Christian welfare services among tribal people and outcastes are presented as political exploitation resented by these people. This charge seems to strike at the heart of the matter in the estimation of the committee; it reveals the resentment of the communalists toward the transformation which occurs among such people when they become converted. This one example is typical of the report as a whole.

The committee went far beyond its field of competence in making recommendations. These include the following: missionaries engaged in proselytizing should be asked to withdraw; the use of professional services, such as medicine, in conversion should be prohibited; all use of force, fraud, moral and material assistance, etc., in proselytizing should be prohibited; legal control of conversions should be established; and there should be passed an amendment to the constitution making it clear that the right of propagating religion belongs to Indian citizens only, not to foreigners. The committee further proposed that all orphanages be conducted by the state; that all programs for social and economic uplift be approved by the state; that all social services to backward classes should be the responsibility of the state; and that religious institutions should be allowed to serve only their own people. Some of the most mischievous recommendations include these: The best course for the Indian churches to follow is to establish a United

Independent Christian Church in India free from foreign support, and no nonofficial agency should be permitted to secure foreign assistance except through government channels. The government of India should induce the formation by Christian churches and missions of an authoritative organization to lay down and present to the government their policy and methods to be followed in evangelism. The circulation of literature meant for religious propaganda should be prohibited unless specifically authorized by the government. A Department of Cultural and Religious Affairs under a minister should be established at state level.

Because of its fantastic and unfair nature it was believed that the state of Madhya Pradesh would merely file the report and do nothing about it. However, the violently anti-Christian Dr. Katju has been made chief minister of the state, and it is feared that he may make an issue of it. It was discredited with the Central Government from the moment it appeared. Numerous Hindus and secular-minded persons denounced the report, but its deadly work had been done. The communalists had been supplied by an official government report with potent ammunition. Extremist organizations flooded the country, especially the North, with literature, including abridgements or summaries of the report. The National Christian Council issued a very restrained and sober statement, induced some outstanding Hindu business and professional men to issue statements to the press, and then advocated a policy of silence on the matter, supposing that the report would be self-discrediting. The Roman Catholics, on the other hand, kept up a public attack on the report. The Standing Committee of the Conference of Bishops issued a statement which was read in all churches on January 13 of this year; and a book answering the report is being prepared under the name of the Catholic laity of India.

Despite the grossly unfair nature of the Niyogi report the churches and missions must take it seriously. It shows the strength, daring, and unscrupulousness of the hostile forces. It reveals that conversion is the principal front of the attack and the missionary the favorite target. It is a reminder that unworthy methods of evangelism are sometimes used and must be eliminated and that the life and work of the church ought always be of a quality that can confidently bear the most searching scrutiny. It highlights the

need for a fresh study of the nature of Christian witness and of the role of the human agent in relation to that of the Holy Spirit. It emphasizes the need for thoroughgoing cultural indigenization on the part of the Christian community. Perhaps most urgently it raises the question of the place of the foreign missionary in India and other Asian countries where young churches have developed.

#### THE CHURCH'S RESPONSE TO NATIONALISM

The response of the churches to such nationalistic and communalistic pressures as the Niyogi report varies from place to place, largely in relation to the strength or the weakness of the Christian community and its degree of maturity. In North India, where the church is relatively weak and much hostility is demonstrated openly, there is a tendency for Christians in public life and even in official positions in the churches to advocate less emphasis on evangelism and to say that this is a time for consolidation rather than expansion. In some parts of the community there is a trend toward introversion and even to a "ghetto mentality." On the other hand, many Christians have been led by events to take a more public stand as professed and preaching Christians. In South India, where Christians are relatively numerous and the church strong, and where there is widespread appreciation of the Christian contribution to Indian life, there is far less timorousness and much more readiness to insist upon recognition of rights. The Dravada (anti-Brahmin, anti-Hindi, anti-northern-domination) movement there helps to divert anti-Christian sentiment and activity, although these are not entirely absent. About 57 per cent of all Christians are to be found in the four southernmost states, and 35 per cent live in the little state of Kerala and the small adjoining portion of Madras State, which together formerly formed the state of Travancore.

Many churches and missions are meeting the challenge of nationalism by fostering indigenization of the cultus and customs, but on the whole very little has been achieved. Churches, worship, and social life are far too Westernized. There seems to be more employment of native forms in the South, although I was most impressed by Hindu Christian music. Indigenous forms of evangelization are far too few. There is a rapid transfer of property from the missions to the national churches. Missionaries are with-

drawing from the direction of institutions and organizations in favor of nationals. A notable attempt is being made, especially through the Committee for Literature on Social Concerns, to relate Christian theology and ethics to the problems which face the Indian nation. Contributions have been made on such subjects as the foundations of Indian democracy and religious liberty.

The union Christian Retreat and Study Center at Rajpur near Mussoorie is at work on an indigenous evangelistic approach to Hindus. The Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society, now in process of formation, is intended to study on behalf of all churches such things as Hinduism "as religion, culture, and philosophy"; the content of the Christian message and methods of evangelism; "indigenous Christian response in thought and action in the impact of contemporary forces of national and international life"; problems created by social and cultural developments in India and the Christian responsibility in this regard; and the Biblical foundation of the Christian faith. Less pretentious Christian institutes for the study of Buddhism have been created in Burma and Ceylon. Another such study center for religion among the overseas Chinese is being set up at Tao Feng Shan in Hong Kong. William Woodward directs an International Institute for the Study of Religion in Japan, and the Kyodan has an Institute on the Theology of Missions, which treats a wide range of subjects. Another notable reaction is the recent reorganization of the National Christian Council of India, in which the missions were eliminated as members, membership was restricted to national church bodies, a drastic reduction of staff and program was made, and a four-year timetable for achieving self-support was adopted.

A very unhappy response to nationalism is to be seen in the rise of independent congregations and association of churches which stress independence of missionary control and their indigenous character as their justification for existence. Often in connection with these same groups a host of lawsuits which advertise the disunity of the church sap its life and deflect it from Christian witness. It is interesting to observe how many of those nationalistic "independents" get funds from American sources on the grounds that they are indigenous and free from missionary control!

## THE ROLE OF THE MISSIONARY

The Western missionary is in danger of being eliminated by governments because of nationalistic considerations. That is a fact which may not be minimized. He is also in danger of being eliminated by the young churches as their perspective is distorted by nationalism or as they seek to remove causes of friction with ultra-nationalists. Yet good missionaries today stand much more in danger of self-elimination than they do of being ejected by government or rejected by the national churches. Numerous British missionary families are going home to stay because they have convinced themselves that they cannot educate their children in India and other Asian countries, and they can no longer tolerate divided families. An even larger number of excellent younger and middle-aged missionaries are thinking of resignation at the next furlough period because they believe that their presence embarrasses their national colleagues, particularly on account of the attacks of ultra-nationalists. Furthermore, a sense of insecurity and especially their uncertainty about the role of the Western missionary in the area makes them want to resign.

Answers to the question, "What is the present role of the missionary?" vary greatly according to the point of view of the person interrogated. I met no one, not even a staunch Hindu communalist nor a rabid Christian "independent," who wanted all missionaries eliminated, although such persons thought that the number should be greatly reduced and all of them excluded from direct evangelism. Even Dr. Niyogi had much good to say about the missionary contribution; and he declared that missionaries would continue to be welcome if, like "the good old missionaries" of long ago, they would love the land and the people, understand and appreciate Indian culture, contribute to the national welfare by their skills and their service, and not try to make converts. One Hindu businessman asserted that the country urgently needs the services of the Christian missionary teacher of ethics, and he lamented the prohibition of religion instruction in the schools.

Christian laymen in the North invariably wanted the missionaries withdrawn from evangelism but desired that they be retained for a wide variety of expert services, especially of the social welfare and educational types. In the South, where the church is strong

and far more confident, there seems to be a desire and a readiness to give the missionary a place in the full range of the ministry of the church, but not at the expense of the assumption of responsibility and authority by the nationals. Even in the North there is some sentiment for allowing the missionary to share in the pastoral ministry, but perhaps this is due to the erroneous and unfortunate belief that the functions of pastor and evangelist are two separate entities rather than aspects of one and the same ministerial office. The one strong plea which I heard voiced for additional missionaries was made by the minister of health Rajkumari Amrit Kaur. She declared that missionary doctors and nurses are greatly needed in India in order that they may demonstrate how science and love may combine in a ministry of health and high standards may be joined with compassion and concern. These desirable qualities can best be caught by contagion from those who possess them with zeal. She would like to have such doctors and nurses assigned by the missions and churches to the ministry of health and she would place them in public institutions.

The semiofficial answer of the churches and the clergy to the question, as I heard it expressed again and again, appears to be that the role of the missionary is that of a fraternal worker within a limited range of specialized services. A statement along these lines was formulated by a group of national churchmen in the summer of 1956 under the title "Foreign Missionaries and the Church in India." These men find a parallel between the situation of the Indian nation and the Indian Church. They say:

. . . it has to be realized that the problems facing the Church are very similar to the problems facing the whole nation. When India became independent, she found herself suddenly confronted with the need to run all her institutions and provide the leadership necessary for the national life from her own resources. But having set her face towards progress and growth, India has found it necessary to utilize foreign technical knowledge and the assistance of friends from many European and American countries in the development of the nation-building activities. In some of the important departments of Government it was found impossible immediately to replace foreign personnel with Indian personnel. It is not surprising that the head of the Indian Navy is still an Englishman. But India, while gladly receiving money and per-

sonnel from abroad, is absolutely certain in her own mind that this will not constitute dependence on foreign countries. She accepts assistance from abroad only when, to use a common phrase, there are no strings attached.

Even so the Indian Church has need for assistance from abroad. Not only will the Church require time to replace many of the specialists in various departments of the Church, but she will need new people with special abilities and skills to come from abroad to share in her life and to enable her to achieve the larger independence which is her goal. The Church will also want to be able to receive in her midst some foreign Christians as an expression of the fellowship of the Churches of the world.

The statement indicates that it is necessary that foreign missionaries should come only at the invitation of the Indian Church. It affirms:

We envisage that in fields of service such as education (including theological education), vocational guidance, medical and nursing work (including psychiatry), community projects and rural reconstruction programmes, the need for assistance from specially trained and equipped personnel from abroad will not only continue, but may even increase for some time, bearing in mind the fact that the Church's work in some of these fields is not a self-regarding activity but is intended to benefit everyone irrespective of religion or race, and that some of these areas of service are steadily increasing in extent and scope. In certain other areas of the Church's life and work it is necessary for Indians themselves to undertake full responsibility, as in fact they are already doing in many places. In the administration of Christian institutions, in the running of Christian Councils and Societies, and in the task of proclaiming the Gospel, which is the supreme obligation of the Church, the Church should increasingly utilize Indian personnel and depend on local leadership. In these areas it is therefore likely that there will be a decrease in the number of foreign workers.

The guiding principle, states the report, that should govern the co-operation of the churches within and without India is "that the church of India should be strengthened and helped to attain real independence." Missionaries should come as fraternal workers. Finally, this group looks forward to the day "when reciprocity between the church in India and the churches in other parts of

the world will be completely equal, a many-directional traffic, and will be an expression of the feeling that Christians all over the world have, of belonging to Christ."

Is it strange in view of a statement like this — which is typical of the thinking of church officers and the clergy in India — that the missionaries are uncertain about their role, feel insecure, are oppressed by a sense of futility, and want to withdraw? For at least two decades the missionary has known that with respect to association with the young churches he must work with and under national colleagues for the most part, being with them servants of an independent and autonomous church; and the missionary has hoped from the first days of the enterprise that the time will come when nationals would take the major responsibility for evangelism. It has also been expected that as an area was evangelized and the church grew in numbers and responsibility, so the number of missionaries would decline. It is further generally agreed that in the body of Christ there is fellowship and mutual bearing of burdens and that consequently there is a place for fraternal workers exchanged on a worldwide scale. However, all of this envisages only fraternal workers engaged in a limited range of ministry, rather quietly taking a back seat, submissive to orders, deprived of the principal function of both the minister and the disciple, evangelism; and, therefore, being a kind of second-rate minister and disciple. If only Protestants would affirm as did the Roman Catholic bishops in commenting on the Niyogi report: "Not only to emphasize the spiritual unity of the Church, but to strengthen the social solidarity of Catholics shall be our answer to the attempt to cast aspersions on our missionaries from abroad who are as much our pastors as those of Indian origin." Then one might have more confidence about all this talk about an ecumenical, or worldwide, church!

Moreover, there are some places in Indonesia, where Christians comprise 90 per cent or more of the population and where no foreign evangelists may be needed, but certainly the church in India does not now have the manpower for its evangelistic task. I do not think that a supply of able and stable missionaries will long continue unless some positive conclusion is reached regarding the employment of some missionaries in direct evangelism, recognizing the ultimate evangelistic intent of all of them, and granting

the missionary a place of true partnership, involving equality of status and responsibility, equality in policymaking and in ministry. While some missionaries may be used as fraternal workers anywhere in the life of the church, the great majority need to be freed from service to existing stable, mature congregations and institutions. Joined in a partnership with nationals, they need to be assigned to new pioneer work or to fringe work which has not developed.

The men who framed this statement ask for study and conference on the role of the missionary. However, I fear that a study of the role of the Western missionary would in itself be fruitless. Such study and discussion must start with the subject of *the apostolate of the whole church* and then look at the function of *the missionary, not just the Western missionary, in relation to it*. The young churches are just beginning to send out their foreign missionaries, and in general they are following the old patterns which they decry in theory. Eventually their missionaries will face the same question. There is a radically different era of world mission ahead of the church, now that it is distributed around the world. The Asian Council for Ecumenical Mission has been a significant experiment in a first tentative step, but it has been conceived too much in the terms of fraternal aid rather than apostolate. As it now gives place to the Asian Secretariat and Asia Conference of the World Council of Churches and International Missionary Council, let us hope that the apostolate will come into the foreground of concern.

Endeavoring to look at the role of the Western missionary, then, over against the background of the apostolate of the church, keeping in mind the young church missionaries also, what can be said about the part which the representatives of the Western churches may play abroad? First of all, it is quite certain that large numbers of missionaries will continue to be required for the institutional work and the fields of specialization in which they now serve; but I hope that many new forms of pioneering service will be open to them. In all things, however, old and new, their first task is to introduce our Lord Jesus Christ to men and women, preaching His Gospel by word and deed in a multitude of ways. Because of the universal preoccupation with peace on the one hand, and because of the

divisiveness of communalism, on the other, God's continuing work of reconciliation through Christ in the present ought to be emphasized, and the missionary must give himself to the ministry of reconciliation. This means, among other things, that as far as possible the reconciliation ought to be reflected in the composition of the missionary body. There are many occasions when this could be done by working in international and interdenominational teams — interdenominational in cases where questions of doctrine and order are not involved. Certainly there are places today where the white man's effectiveness would be greater if he were in a work group with colored colleagues.

Nationalistic pressures and communalistic hostility in many places make it increasingly difficult for missionaries to work in rural areas, especially among depressed classes who might be stimulated into a mass movement, but there is still pioneering to be done on a vast scale in many rural areas. It would be suicidal to flood such regions with missionaries, for a concentration of foreign forces there would be the signal for attack by both conservative religionists and by government officers. Nevertheless many a missionary can be freed from involvement in well-established church work and put into a pioneer rural situation with some national colleagues. I found a few able young missionaries serving city churches and institutions who said that they would return after furlough only if they could secure permission for such a move. The cities have their pioneer areas, too, and the ashrams of the popular cults. Particularly those which involve faith healing offer a challenge and perhaps a clue to new lines of missionary action. This is probably a time when some missionaries, at least, should be given a roving commission for three or four years, to seek throughout cities and countrysides fresh new lines of experimentation. Detached service in non-Christian institutions and organizations might be a possibility. Some church, for example, ought to be courageous enough to take the health minister's suggestion seriously and offer her the services of half a dozen doctors and nurses.

The most obvious new emphasis required under present conditions is witness to intellectuals, including both the secularized intelligentsia and the devotees of the religions, especially those adhering to the reform movements. This has always been an

obligation of missionaries, but it has been sadly neglected. It has been so much easier on the missionary's mind and his pride to work with peasants, and the statistical returns have appeared to be so much greater. Recently I heard an Indian Christian remark about a former faculty colleague who hated college teaching because the students asked sharp questions and argued and debated and gave him something of a rough time. That man turned with undisguised relief to simple peasant farmers who were deferential and never talked back. The Indian scholar quietly reproved the tendency to seek the simpler people. The lay role in the revival of religions, the intellectual and spiritual ferment of national reconstruction, and the charge that missionaries avoid an engagement with the intellectuals while they stress mass movements, all urgently challenge the representatives of the churches to undertake a new type of witness. This encounter is to be sought in college training, through special centers for study and meditation, through institutions similar to the Ramakrishna Mission and Theosophical Society's "institutes of culture," through participation in activities and organizations where there would be natural, spontaneous acquaintance with intellectuals, and through first-rate study and literature. Urban centers are the chief locations for such ventures, but some missionaries should also be stationed in those rural areas where there are concentrations of ashrams.

Whatever the type of activity, however, the missionary ought to avoid confusing his role with that of the Holy Spirit, by whom alone a man can call Jesus Lord. It is his role to present Jesus Christ and the Gospel and to witness by word and life to the truth that God is in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. He is not to press for conversions, thinking that *he* can effect conversions, and fall victim to the sin of pride and the thirst for statistical proof of his fruitfulness. The Holy Spirit will effect conversions if there is faithful witness, and the missionary then has the important subsequent role of assisting in the upbuilding of the church as a member of the body of Christ and as the heir of a long tradition of churchmanship.

#### TRAINING FOR SERVICE TODAY

Let us assume that all missionaries will be subject to the most careful selection and will receive adequate general education and

professional training for their respective tasks, including a B.D. course for ordained ministers and some Biblical and theological courses for laymen. What special education do missionaries need in addition to this, and especially in view of the situation in Asia?

First of all, every missionary needs an introduction to the history and theory of missions. History, which emphasizes the mission's involvement in culture, will provide orientation and correct myopia and distortion of view. Both humility and courage are products of seeing one's place in the long line of Christian witnesses since the days of the apostles. Missionaries on furlough among my students frequently remark with amazement that all the problems which the mission faces today seem to have appeared in times past. To those who see their place in a worldwide company of witnesses today, there is less temptation for the missionary under pressure to despair like the prophet of old who thought that only he was left faithful to the Lord.

In the field of theory, three issues, above all, determine missionary strategy and tactics: the work of the human agent in relation to that of the Holy Spirit; the relation of the revelation in Christ to truth in other religions; and the relation of religion to culture. Much study is needed in every one of these problems, and the next quarter of a century should bring much enlightenment. However, neither the church nor the missionary can wait for the results of that study. Every agent must from the outset have some understanding of those matters and some convictions about them, or his ministry will be only a matter of day-to-day opportunism and will have no sure goal or direction.

Since the task of the Christian mission is communicating the Gospel across cultural boundaries, the missionary should be equipped with the tools for acquiring knowledge and understanding of the culture in which he is to live and work and with the key to appreciating that culture. Therefore he needs some knowledge of cultural anthropology, sociology, and history of religions. The combination of these three ought to enable him to understand religion as it is involved in the total culture now and guard against abstracting religion from its social matrix and looking only at its classical formulation in some past age. The stimulation of the imagination and some help both in appreciation of the culture and

in identification with the people are indispensable. Then there follows the actual study of the history, literature, arts, religion, and economy of the country.

Moreover, the missionary must know his own culture thoroughly so that he may be able to distinguish, for example, what is genuinely Christian and what is simply American, and so that he may be able to answer intelligently questions about his culture and his nation's policies. The average missionary today no longer consciously equates Christian truth and the Western cultural forms in which Christianity expresses itself. He is profoundly concerned with separating the "universal Gospel" from European-American civilization and even denominational beliefs and practices, although this is by no means as easy as he thinks. Yet unconsciously the treasure which he carries is contained in the earthen vessel of his own culture and nationality far more than he is aware. A distinguished Dutch Roman Catholic missiologist, who long served in Japan, once remarked to me that Americans make very poor missionaries because they believe so thoroughly that America is "God's country" and American ways are the best ways in which to look at issues and do things. Consequently, he said, they do not understand the genius of other people, and they tend to be impatient with national efforts at adaptation. If this is true of Roman Catholics with their universal training and discipline, how much more true must it be of Protestants! Further, since one of our representatives is regarded by other peoples as being first of all an American and only secondly as a missionary of a supranational Gospel, he is asked repeatedly to explain his nation's ideals, objectives, and policies. Therefore it is required that he know thoroughly the story of the relations between his own and his adopted country as it is set within the larger context of East-West relations, or European-African relations, or North American-Latin American relations. There will always be a tension between his citizenship in a particular nation and his ambassadorship in behalf of a supranational Lord.

The tools of communication are also a primary requirement, and there is today a heightened appreciation of the need for mastery of a language. In some areas at least two languages are required. In a colonial region, such as the Congo, French, the language of

the ruling power, is as necessary as the vernacular. In such a land as India, where regionalism is strong, it is necessary to know well both the national and the regional language. It is now being pointed out that language accurately mirrors a culture, and that learning a language goes hand in hand with acquiring a knowledge of the culture. Language provides a key to understanding culture, and the knowledge of the culture is indispensable to the mastery of the language. Some preliminary introduction to linguistics before beginning actual language study will be helpful.

These three types of tools necessary for the communication of the Gospel across cultural boundaries must be required of all missionaries, but there is a difference in the degree to which it is necessary to pursue them. All need to master the language, but not all need to be pundits. All need to know and be at home in the national culture, but not all need to be experts. The extent of training ought to be suited to particular individuals and their circumstances.

Where is this training to be had? How much is to be acquired at home before sailing (or flying!)? how much overseas? Certainly before going to the country of his assignment the new missionary should have had his introduction to the theory and history of missions, should have acquired his essential tools for cultural and religious understanding, and should have learned the fundamentals about linguistics. It would be well for him to have had some practice in intercultural communication, and this should not be too difficult to provide in our pluralistic society. Some experience in evangelism might well be listed among the essentials, for it does not make sense to expect a man to try to introduce our Lord Jesus Christ to people in another culture when he has not previously attempted it in his own culture and language. Some direction and experience in corporate living ought to be required of those who are to help build a Christian community; and those who are to be exemplars of discipleship have special need of direction in the cultivation of the spiritual life and the knowledge of the resources which may be brought to it.

The feeling seems to be growing that specific language and cultural studies should be given "on the field." They might well be integrated at the initial stage, where there is a large place for

group teaching. The tendency of the members of the group to rely upon English for communication among themselves makes it desirable for the group to scatter in smaller units at the earliest possible time and then perhaps to reassemble later. At any rate, continuing provision for, and examination in, cultural subjects is as necessary as it is with respect to the language. To prepare the missionaries for deputation work, some missions send them on a tour of all stations before furlough. There is sense in some guided travel and observation of the diversity in national life and in Christian work at the beginning of service. The new missionary may then have a general view of both. A *pastor-guru* who would counsel and guide the new missionaries during their first term, and who would not only help them in their personal adjustment but also guide them in their understanding and appreciation of the national culture, would be a blessing. He ought to be a national. Identification with nationals in the same field of professional service can be fostered by the missionary's spending a period of advanced study in the national universities, professional schools, and theological colleges. Some missionaries could certainly come much closer to their national colleagues in India, for example, if they would take a Serampore M. Th. through one of the theological colleges. Long study both in the government universities and in the religious institutions, like the Hindu University at Banaras, should be in the plans of those who are preparing for witness to the intelligentsia.

The first term, which might well be limited to three or four years, might then be considered to be a period of training and vocational testing—a probationary prerequisite to permanent appointment or acceptance of permanent appointment. The first furlough could provide the finishing touches on this initial training program with specific regard to the specialized service or needs or interest of the individual missionary. Visa difficulties make such a training program something of a risk from the point of view of financial investment, but it is a risk well taken. Losses due to denials of visas would probably be offset by a far lower rate of turnover of missionary personnel than we now have.

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