EQ 69:3 (1997), 245–266

Steve Bishop

Protestant Missionary Education in British India

Mr Bishop is a school teacher who is doing part-time post-graduate study at Trinity College, Bristol, in the area of science and religion. But his interests are wider, as this article shows.

Introduction

The Indian mission field presented the early missionaries with a number of challenges. E. P. Rice, a London Missionary Society missionary, identified many of the obstacles confronting the nineteenth-century missionary: 'the institution of caste'; 'the absence of all religious and social liberty'; 'the utterly perverted standard of conduct'; the 'oppressive supremacy of the Brahman class'; 'polytheistic idolatry'; 'the fear of malignant demons'; 'the belief in religious merit'; 'pantheistic teaching'; 'the degradation of woman'; 'the degradation of low caste'; and 'a whole jungle of superstitious beliefs and corrupt practices'.[1] Compared with other mission fields there was a highly developed social political structure that went hand in hand with a sophisticated religious system where individual religious dissent was extremely difficult.

The most striking thing about the missionary strategy in India is the emphasis on education.[2] The key questions that this paper will seek to address are as follows:

1. Why did the missionaries place so much of their time, money and effort into such an expensive enterprise?
2. Was education a distraction from the task of the evangelisation of India?

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[1] Richard Lovett, *The History of the London Missionary Society 1795–1895* (London: Henry Frowde, 1899), Vol. II, 4–6.

[2] It should be noted that while this essay deals with schools and colleges, education is not exhausted by schooling. For example, both Church and parents have an educational responsibility, that of the nurture of Christians and children.

3. What were the objectives of missionary education?
4. To what extent were they fulfilled?
5. What was its relationship to the gospel and evangelisation?
6. Why were the Scots so prominent in missionary education?

In an attempt to answer these questions we will begin by sketching the state of education in India prior to a large-scale missionary awakening, which can be dated from 1792 and the publication of William Carey's *Enquiry*.[3] We will then look at the strategy embraced by the Serampore trio and the Scot Alexander Duff. From there we will look briefly at what has been termed the Anglicist-Orientalist debate. This will take us up to 1835. A cursory look at higher education and the other Scottish missionaries involved in education precedes an evaluation of the educational strategies by examining the perceived aims and seeing to what extent they were fulfilled.

Prior to 1793 there was very little European or Protestant missionary involvement in education in India. Native education took place in pathsalas, Indian village schools. Their purpose was to produce pupils who were literate so that they could obtain jobs. Secondary education consisted of either private tutors or Persian schools. Standards were often poor.

The early Catholic missionaries had had some involvement in education, but this had declined by the end of the eighteenth century. The first non-Catholic missionaries to go to India from Europe were the pietists Bartholomew Ziegenbalg and Henry Plutschau who arrived on 9th July 1706.[4] Neill cites five principles that stood out in the strategy of these pioneers; the first was:

> Church and school are to go together. Christians must be able to read the Word of God, and therefore all Christian children must be educated.[5]

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[3] William Carey, *An Enquiry into the Obligation of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens* (new edn. foreword by Brian Stanley) (Didcot:BMS, 1991).

[4] George Smith, *The Conversion of India: From Pantaeus to the Present Time* (London: John Murray, 1893), 95. A. H. Oussoren, *William Carey Especially His Missionary Principles* (Leiden: Sijthoff's Uitigeversmaatschappj, 1945), 19; Stephen Neill, *A History of Christianity in India 1707–1858* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), ch. 2.

[5] Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2nd edn 1986), 195.

It is these pioneers that influenced William Carey (1761–1834).[6]

Serampore and Duff

Carey arrived in India in 1793 and by 1794 he had set up his first school. By 1795 he had outlined ambitious plans for a College. For William Carey schools were 'one of the most effectual means of spreading the light of the gospel through the world'.[7]

In 1800 he moved to Serampore and became one of the Serampore trio. The trio's long-term goal was to reach India with native preachers. To facilitate this meant a threefold strategy: the translation of the Scriptures into native languages; preaching; and the establishment of schools and a college to train up Christian Indians to be missionaries.[8]

Joshua Marshman (1768–1837) was the 'chief architect' of the trio's educational policy. The development of Baptist educational undertakings in India, according to Potts, is 'largely the story of the Marshmans'.[9] Marshman had been influenced by Lancaster's monitorial system.[10] In 1811 he was utilising the system in their 'Benevolent Institution', which had been set up in 1809 for 'the education of the neglected and poor Anglo-Indians'. By 1818 they

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[6] Oussoren (1945); Brian Stanley, *The History of the Baptist Missionary Society 1792–1992* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1992), 39; Carey's familiarity with the Tranquebar missionaries is apparent in his *Enquiry*, 62:

> In 1706, the King of Denmark sent a Mr. Ziegenbalg, and some others, to Tranquebar, on the Coromandel coast in the East Indies, who were useful to the natives, so that many of the heathens were turned to the Lord.

G. Smith (1893), 96, notes that 'Carey took up the mantle of Schwartz'. Christian Fredrick S[ch]wartz, who died in 1798, continued the work of Ziegenbalg and Plutshau at the coast mission.

[7] William Carey to Jabez Carey, Serampore 20 August 1815. Cited in Stanley (1992), 51; and Timothy George, *Faithful Witness: The Life and Mission of William Carey* (Leicester: IVP, 1991), 143.

[8] Brian Stanley, *History*, 48–52; John D. Watts, 'Baptists and the transformation of culture: a case study from the career of William Carey', *Evangelical Review of Theology* 17 (3), 1993, 329–41.

[9] That is Joshua and Hannah and their son John Clark. E. Daniel Potts, *British Baptist Missionaries in India 1793–1837: The History of Serampore and its Missions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 116.

[10] The monitorial system was developed independently by the Scottish Anglican Revd Dr Andrew Bell (1753–1832) and the Quaker Joseph Lancaster. The former developed his system while at a school in Madras. Lancaster's system

had established 92 schools with about 10,000 pupils. However, by 1824, a lack of finance meant that the elementary schools had to be closed.

Serampore College was opened in 1818. The College's original aim was the training of Christian Indians to be missionaries to their own people.[11] Thus the curriculum was broad, it included Western science and the study of Oriental languages. The College included non-Christians as well as Christians among its pupils. When it opened it had 18 non-Christians and 19 Christians. It is the only tangible aspect of the trio's educational work that remains.

After the deaths of the trio the College was unable to attract suitable teachers and students. It fell short of Carey's vision.

The Scottish Presbyterian Alexander Duff (1806–78) landed in India on 27 May 1830 after twice enduring shipwrecks. His initial visits to other missionaries in the area, led him to the conclusion that contemporary missionary strategies were failing. He saw

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was propagated by the Royal Lancasterian Institution which in 1813 became the British and Foreign School Society.

The Lancasterian system was described as:

> The most prudent and peaceable means of instruction which may be exercised on the multitudes of orphans who have no religion ... and Christians who scarcely know why they are called by that name .... A few European youths, well instructed in the system, would plant schools throughout that vast country with the greatest rapidity. These schools might be conducted in many instances by native teachers and after twenty or thirty years ... idolatry would be cut up by the roots. (*Report of the Finance Committee and Trustees of the Royal Lancasterian Institution for the Education of the Poor for the Year 1812* (London, 1813), 17–18; cited in G. F. Bartle, 'The role of the British and Foreign School Society in elementary education in India and the East Indies 1813–75', *History of Education* 23 (1), 1994, 17–33).

Marshman's 1816 book, *Hints relative to Native Schools, together with an outline of an Institution for their Extension and Management*, did much to promote the monitorial system in India.

[11] Though Christopher A. Smith ['Mythology and missiology: a methodological approach to the pre-Victorian mission of the Serampore trio', *International Review of Mission* 93 (330), July 1994, 451–75] postulates that Serampore College had two faces:

> In reality, the college had two rather different personae by which it appealed to contrasting constituencies. In India, it functioned as an Arts and Science College, while to supporters in the North Atlantic World it was portrayed as a school that would train Indians to replace Europeans completely as missionaries, and so create a truly indigenous church.

This however, may reflect latent dualism on Smith's part. There is no reason to suppose an 'Arts and Science college' could not train indigenous pastors.

that direct attacks on Hinduism through street preaching were largely ineffective.[12] A decade later he recalled his original strategy:

> we shall, with the blessing of God, devote our time and strength to the preparing of a mine, and the setting of a train which shall one day explode and tear up the whole from its lowest depths.[13]

He used Christian education through the medium of English, rather than native languages, targeted at the high-caste Brahmins. His justification:

> ... in the very act of acquiring English, the mind, in grasping the import of new terms, is perpetually brought in contact with the new ideas, the new truths, ... so that, by the time the language has been mastered, the student must be tenfold less the child of Pantheism, idolatry and superstition than before.[14]

Duff's 'trickle down' policy aimed at educating the high-class Brahmins, in the hope that the minority would eventually effect the majority.

Duff viewed Christian education through the medium of English as a 'large and effectual door opened for immediate exertion'.[15] Immediate because other branches of missionary labour such as preaching meant that 'before any profitable intercourse could be maintained with the mass of the people, much time must necessarily be expended in acquiring such an idiomatic form of speech, and in gaining such an intimate acquaintance with their habits of thought and long cherished opinions, as would enable you to address them with effect.'[16]

Duff opened his school on 12 July 1830, with the help of the Hindu liberal reformer Ram Mohan Roy.[17] He started with five and by the end of the week he had 200 boys wanting to attend. The support of Ram Mohan Roy, who was not a Christian, was invaluable in attracting many pupils whose parents were sceptical of Duff's missionary motives. Roy was able to remove parental prejudice against reading the Bible by urging them to: 'Read and judge for yourself'.[18]

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[12] George Smith, *The Life of Alexander Duff, D.D., LL.D* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1879), ch. V.

[13] Smith (1879), 108–9; italics in original.

[14] Duff, *India, and Indian Missions* (1839); cited in Laird (1972), 207–8.

[15] Duff, *Missions the Chief End of the Christian Church*; also *The Qualifications, Duties, and Trials, of an Indian Missionary* (Edinburgh: John Johnstone, 1839), 69.

[16] Duff, *Missions the Chief End* (1839), 69.

[17] Smith (1879), 112 ff.

[18] Smith (1879), 121.

Duff charged for textbooks and made the parents and guardians formally sign an agreement 'to secure punctual and regular attendance'.[19] Thus he overcame two problems that contemporary missionary schools in Calcutta were facing: taking the free textbooks and leaving, and hopping from one new school to another.

One of Duff's strengths was that he did not overstretch himself. He opened a second school at Taki in 1833 and by 1836 there were 130 pupils. A third school was opened at Fort Gloucester. He concentrated his efforts on education, and even then he concentrated on one main school. This school then became a model for other schools. Although Duff's ideas were never original, he was better at implementing them than many others.The influence of Dr John Inglis is detectable.[20] and many of Duff's ideas were foreshadowed in Charles Grant.[21] Grant, an official of the East Indian Company in Bengal and associated with the 'Clapham Sect', thought that India could be reformed through Christianity and Western learning: a curious mix of Evangelical and Enlightenment.[22]

Orientalist and Anglicist debate

The educational debate in India was for a time centred around what language to use for education.[23] However, there was not the polarisation of views which is often supposed. In 1800 Carey wrote to Fuller:

> We have an intention as soon as we are able to set up a school to teach the Natives English.[24]

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[19] Smith (1879), 138.

[20] Cf Laird (1972), 197 ff.

[21] Grant privately published *A Proposal for Establishing a Protestant Mission in Bengal and Behar* (1787) and *Observations on the State and Society among the Asiatic Subjects of Great Britain* (1792).

[22] See David Bebbington, 'Evangelical Christianity and the Enlightenment', *Crux*, XXV (4), 1989, 29–36; and *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989).

[23] The debate should not be misconstrued as a debate about racial or cultural superiority. (cf C. Peter Williams, 'British religion and the wider world: mission and empire, 1800–1940 in S. Gilley and W. J. Sheils (eds), *A History of Religion in Britain* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994) ch. 20).

[24] Cited in C. A. Smith (1994).

And this thirty years before the arrival of Duff![25] Duff also used the vernacular in his elementary schools. In March 1839 he said:

> The acquisition of [Bengali] as the medium of instructing the mass of the population, is indispensable. . . . it is acknowledged that the Bengali language alone is available for imparting an elementary education to the people at large . . . .[26]

The Anglicists included Duff, Charles E. Trevelyan, Lord Macaulay and Lord William Bentinck (Governor General in India 1828–1835). Their main arguments were:

(i) The success of English medium schools such as the Hindu College and Duff's school.

(ii) The inappropriateness of native languages to convey European learning. According to Duff, Bengali was insufficiently developed as a medium:

> this language does not afford any adequate means for communicating a knowledge of the higher departments of literature, science or theology. It is no more fit for such a purpose, than the whole range of Grecian literature and philosophy. And if it had the requisite vocabulary, it has not the necessary books.[27]

(iii) The Indians themselves wanted English education.[28]

Macaulay commented: 'Whoever knows that language [English] has ready access to all the vast intellectual wealth which all the wisest nations of the earth have created and stored in the course of ninety generations.'

The Orientalists were concerned that if English was adopted as the language of education many students would remain ignorant of their national language which would help to denationalise them, and that they would stop their studies too soon to gain employment as English copyists. They were also dubious of the trickle down theory of education; as J. S. Mill stated: 'It is through the vernacular languages only that instruction can be diffused among the people'.

Bentinck's government passed a resolution on 7 March 1835 which meant that public funds could be granted to European

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[25] This may go some way to explain Carey's blessing on Duff's enterprise (G. Smith (1879), 105–6) (contra Laird (1972), 252–3; who attributes it to G. Smith's or Duff's imagination!).

[26] Duff, *Missions the Chief End*, 77.

[27] Duff, *Missions the Chief End*, 77–8.

[28] Duff, *Missions the Chief End*, 78–9.

learning through the medium of English. It was a victory for the Anglicists and testimony to the standing of Duff. Although the minute claimed to see the importance of vernacular education, it was from then on in decline.[29]

The adoption of the Anglicist policy was a mixed blessing. The use of English meant that there was a common language for the transmission of information and ideas, and it can be said to have contributed, ironically, to an increasing awareness of a national consciousness and integration, because it could unite the country. On the other hand it meant that the vernacular languages remained largely undeveloped.

The influence of Duff on the government's educational policy could also be seen in the 1854 grant-in-aid policy. Grants were made available to those who undertook to run schools and colleges. There was much debate as to whether the missions should accept 'government funding'. It was felt that in doing so the autonomy of the missions in running the schools could be usurped by the paymasters. However, the majority eventually did accept them.

Higher education

The missions' first higher education establishments were Serampore and Bishop's College, Calcutta. The latter was opened in 1824 as an Anglican training college. After the deaths of the Serampore trio the success of Serampore college was mixed. In 1883 Alfred Baynes, who had been asked to report on training provision, recommended that the college should become a 'Native Training Institution'. The BMS concurred with this. In 1890 Baynes recommended that the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS) should abandon the College. However, E. B. Underhill took up the Serampore cause, and obtained a reprieve for the College. Underhill published: *Principles and Methods of Missionary Labour* which presented the case for the retention of the college.

At root this issue was about the aims of education: Baynes emphasised the need to train leaders, hence his emphasis on vernacular theology. Underhill saw it as a preparation for evangelism. Both could appeal to Carey's original vision.

George Howells (principal 1906–29), impressed by Underhill's work, did much to improve the standing of the college and it later became a Christian University (1908). He resurrected the Danish

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[29] Laird (1972), 234–5.

charter of 1827 which enabled the college to confer degrees. It was reaffiliated with Calcutta University in 1911, as it had been in 1857. However:

> The nature of the dissatisfaction with the College had changed little since the 1880s: it was said that the College was impossibly expensive, wrongly located, and largely irrelevant to the life of the churches.[30]

It never really fulfilled Carey's original vision.

The Scottish Influence

Higher education was more successful in the South of India. This can be primarily attributed to the larger Christian population in that area compared with the North. This meant that they had a larger number of potential students and teachers. The other striking fact is the impact of the Scots.

John Wilson (1804–75) was a contemporary of Duff. He served the Scottish Missionary Society for 47 years. Wilson had a remarkable linguistic ability: he learnt Marathi, Gujarati, Hindustani, Persian and the ancient language of the Parsi's scriptures. He also studied the Parsi and in 1843 published The Parsi Religion. He was responsible for establishing Bombay College of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1835. Like Duff he felt that Western methods required Western knowledge and came to see that English would establish itself as the 'second vernacular'.

Madras College's origins can be traced back to John Anderson, who opened a school in Madras in April 1837. Anderson had two Scottish colleagues, Robert Johnston and John Braidwood. One of Anderson's successors was William Miller. Miller did much to establish the high reputation of Madras College.

Other influential Scots were the Anglican Revd Dr Andrew Bell (1753–1832), who while at a school in Madras pioneered the monitorial system, and Stephen Hislop (1817–63). Hislop was the first missionary to work in Nagpur, Central India, an area that was outside of British control and ruled by raja Raghoji Bhonsla III. In May 1846 he set up a school in Nagpur, he was convinced that he was 'preparing the way for a great moral revolution in a future age, and that no distant one'.[31]

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[30] Stanley (1992), 296–7.

[31] George Smith, *Stephen Hislop, Pioneer Missionary* (London, 1889). Cited in Neill (1984), 317; and E. G. K. Hewat, *Vision and Achievement 1796–1956: A History of the Foreign Missions of the Churches United in the Church of Scotland* (London: Thomas Nelson, 1960), 106.

Despite coming relatively late to the scene the Scots were soon at the forefront of missionary education in India. At least two factors contributed to this: the example and influence of Duff; and the Scottish educational system.

The Scottish educational system, which has always been separate from the English and Welsh, was also more advanced and recognised more fully the role of religion and education. The Reformers had stressed the importance of education and it was in Scotland that their ambitions were best realised. All prospective teachers had to sign the Confession and Faith Formula of the Church of Scotland. Education certainly up to 1861 was under the control of the presbytery of the Kirk.[32] Whether or not this explains the strong Scottish influence it is difficult to say. More obvious is the influence of Duff. He was directly responsible for the involvement of Wilson[33], Anderson[34] and Hislop.[35]

The Lindsay Report

At the beginning of the twentieth century there were increasing misgivings about the role of higher education in the rapidly changing context of India. In July 1929 the International Missionary Conference set up a commission chaired by A. D. Lindsay to 'review the field of service open to the Christian colleges in India'.[36] They noted the Christian colleges' increasing dissatisfaction with the University system. The alliance between Christian colleges, Government and the Universities which at first was so promising had changed and now proved to be too great a price to pay.[37] The colleges had lost control of the curriculum and were strait-jacketed by the examination system. They had also become too remote from the rest of the Church.

The Lindsay Commission considered four alternatives: (i) to withdraw from higher education; (ii) business as usual; (iii) to cut loose from the Government and establish a Christian Uni-

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[32] Laird (1972) ch VII; J. W. D. Smith, 'The Scottish solution re-examined', *Journal of Christian Education* 11 (2), 104–13.

[33] M. A. Laird, 'The legacy of Alexander Duff', *Occasional Bulletin of Missionary Research* 3 (4), October 1979, 146–9.

[34] Hewat (1960), 83.

[35] Hewat (1960), 103.

[36] *Report of the Commission on Christian Higher Education in India: An enquiry into the place of the Christian College in Modern India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1931) (A. D. Lindsay Chairman). (Hereafter: Lindsay.)

[37] Lindsay, 121.

versity; and (iv) a rethinking of the task, and the creation of a Central Educational Committee.[38] To adopt either of the first two was regarded as renouncing the idea that Christian scholarship does not have a contribution to Indian life and thought.[39] The third might result in a 'guild' for the benefit of Christians only. The only viable option was (iv).

The impact of the report was lessened by the onset of World War 2 which once again changed the conditions in India and thus rendered many of the report's conclusions out of date.

The aims of education

There has always been a strong relationship between Christianity and education. People need to be literate to read the Bible. 'Some degree of education must be added to enable believers to read the Word of God for themselves in their native tongue'.[40]

Though for many missionaries education was subservient to the preaching of the gospel. Typical is the view of C. B. Leupolt, a CMS missionary who arrived in Banares in 1832:

> Another means which we think of the greatest importance, next to preaching of the Gospel, are Schools, or the training up of the young in the fear and admonition of the Lord.[41]

And of Revd J. Oswald Sykes:

> ... the Missionary college supplements the preaching of the Gospel in its simplest form; it does not and cannot supersede it.[42]

Education was seen as a 'powerful instrument' to expose the 'fallacy of idolatry'.[43] It was not primarily a philanthropic venture. It 'was not merely to educate'.[44] It was to uproot Hinduism.

The early emphasis of Marshman and Duff was upon the

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[38] Lindsay, 121 ff and, 349 ff.

[39] Lindsay, 131.

[40] Rev N. G. Clark (senior Foreign Secretary ABCFM), 'Higher Christian education as a missionary agency', in: *Report of the Centenary Conference on Protestant Missions of the World held in Exeter Hall (June 9th–19th) London 1888* edited by James Johnston, Vol. II, (London: James Nisbet & Co, 1889), 185. (Hereafter: Report II 1888.)

[41] C. B. Leupolt, *Recollections of an Indian Missionary* (London: Church Missionary House, no date), 149.

[42] 'The place of education in missionary work', *Report II* 1888, 228.

[43] Leupolt, 150.

[44] Rev Judson Smith (Foreign Secretary, ABCFM), 'The place of education in missionary work', *Report II* 1888, 190.

training of indigenous leaders and as a preparation for evangelisation. William Miller of Madras similarly saw a twofold aim for education: 'a strengthening, training, developing agency' and a 'preparatory agency'.[45] He saw the latter as being primary; the former, aimed at Christians, being secondary and a by-product of its work for non-Christians.

The World Missionary Conference of 1910 noted these four aims present in missionary education:

(a) Education may be conducted primarily with an evangelistic purpose, being viewed either as an attractive force to bring the youth under the influence of Christianity or as itself an evangelistic agency.

(b) Education may be primarily edificatory, in so far as the school has for its object the development of the Christian community through the enlightenment and training of its members.

(c) Education may be leavening, in so far as through it the life of the nation is gradually permeated with the principle of truth. . . .

(d) The motive for missionary education may include the philanthropic desire to promote the general welfare of the people.[46]

Most missionaries would have concurred with those aims, the argument was over the ordering of the priorities.[47] Though the philanthropic aspect was not a primary motivation for missionaries in India.[48]

How successful were these aims?

(a) Evangelistic

If this was solely the role and purpose of missionary schools then they can be regarded as a failure. The number of direct conversions through schools were small. Maurice Phillips (Madras 1862–1908) in 1889 wrote:

> Changed conditions have taken away the value of Mission high schools and colleges as converting agencies. . . . That they are barren

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[45] Dr William Miller, 'Educational agencies in India'. Cited in Lindsay, 22.

[46] *World Missionary Conference 1910 Report III (Education in Relation to the Christianisation of National Life)*, 369–70. (Hereafter WMC 1910.)

[47] Lindsay, 22–4.

[48] The aims of missionary education in India identified by the WMC report were: 1. the conversion of pupils; 2. the development of the Christian community; and 3. preparartory and leavening (17–22).

> is well known. . . . I think I am within the truth when I say, that not more than one or two conversions have taken place in them during the last twenty-five years.[49]

The lack of a large number of conversions was often countered by claiming that the conversions that did take place were 'generally of a far higher type, intellectually, morally, and spiritually, than the men of a lower grade'.[50] Education was at least able to reach some of the higher castes.

(b) Edificatory

The aim of a self-governing indigenous church meant that education was required to train native leaders. This was one of the aims that inspired Serampore College, and CMS policy for schools was as training establishments for native leaders and teachers. This was also the view of the missionary strategist Rufus Anderson:

> Without education, it is not possible for mission churches to be in any proper sense self-governed; nor, without will they be self-supported, and much less self-propagating. For the church-members there must be common schools.[51]

Here again the schools were only partially successful. Smith notes:

> Baptist missionaries in nineteenth century Bengal rarely found that their educational schemes did much more for their converts than provide them with the literacy for reading the Bible.[52]

The colleges and schools were more successful at providing men 'who are influential in Government service, at the Bar, in trade, commerce, and in politics, but not leaders of the Church'.[53] The problem was one of the differential in the rates of pay. Though:

> It is significant that in 1970 the four newly consecrated bishops of the Church of North India had all received their theological education at Serampore.[54]

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[49] Cited in Norman Goodall, *A History of the London Missionary Society 1895–1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press,1954), 460.

[50] Rev J. Murray Mitchell (Free Church of Scotland), 'Discussion', *Report II* 1888, 199.

[51] Rufus Anderson, *Foreign Missions: Their Relations and Claims* (3rd edn revised) (New York: Charles Scribner, 1870).

[52] Christopher A. Smith (1994)

[53] Lindsay Report, 20; citing the opinion of Dr Whitehead, formerly Bishop of Madras.

[54] Stanley (1992), 300.

(c) Leavening

Education as a *praeparatio evangelica* was exemplified by Duff and Miller. And to an extent it became the majority view in the nineteenth century. Miller felt that 'inadequate recognition' had been given to this third aim by the WMC report.[55] As E. S. Summers noted, 'these colleges are leavening society with Christian thought and developing Christian feeling, and so preparing for a great harvest of conversions in the future'.[56] Of all the aims this has been the most successful aspect of missionary education, certainly up until the turn of the century.

Education was open to a wider stratum of society; it thus exposed many to Christian ethics and principles. Perhaps one of the greatest successes was education for females and the corresponding raising of the status of women. The WMC report summed up the importance of female education for the missionaries:

> The Christianisation of life in India depends in a very real sense on the Christianisation of the women of India. 'The stronghold of Hinduism is in the home, among the women. The men lord it over the women in material things, and the women lord it over the men in the spiritual or religious things.'(p. 42)

William Adam had maintained that the education of Indian girls was impracticable. Indians held the belief that literate girls would be widowed soon after marriage; they also thought that they would become corrupted by contact with male teachers.[57]

The missionaries had shown that education for females was possible and worthwhile. The WMC 1910 report states:

> Missionaries led the way in the education of girls in India, and set an example which has widely influenced the aspirations of the India of today.[58]

The 1931 Lindsay Commission was less enthusiastic about *praeparatio evangelica* as a continued aim of education.[59] They considered that the changes that India had undergone had meant that this view of education was now untenable. What was appropriate for Hinduism in 1830 was no longer so. They wanted

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[55] 'Extracts from pamphlet by Dr. Miller of Madras, circulated among the delegates attending the conference', WMC 1910 Appendix.

[56] Rev E. S. Summers, 'Collegiate education as a means of evangelistic agency', *Report II* 1888, 238.

[57] See E. Daniel Potts (1967), 122ff.

[58] WMC 1910, 25.

[59] Page 145.

to see a modern equivalent developed. They made use of a metaphor of Miller: 'Scripture is the spearhead, all other knowledge is the well-fitted handle'.[60] There is now 'no longer a well-fitted handle'.[61] They wanted to see an education that could 'cure intellectual narrowness'.[62] Hinduism had undergone a change under the onslaught of the first missionaries. It had become more syncretistic it had an 'undiscriminating comprehensiveness', it maintained that the 'truth embodied in all other religions is contained in Hinduism'.[63] It is this syncretism that now needed to be exposed, 'and not the far easier one of exposing the absurdities of the Hinduism of 1830'.[64]

A justified expense?

Missionary education was expensive for the missionary supporting bodies. This often led them to question the validity of it. Particularly at the turn of the century when it was recognised that Duff's 'trickle down' theory was not working.

A deputation on behalf of the LMS was sent in 1913 to reduce missionary expenditure. However, they concluded that only minor economies were possible in education and that:

> Christian education is no appendage but belongs to the central fibre of a mission's life.[65]

In 1933 the LMS board of directors set up an enquiry on 'Education in Relation to Evangelism'. Two questions were asked of the 292 missionaries asking: (1) if they were satisfied that '... the educational work of the Society so far as you know it is making a contribution to the spreading abroad of the Gospel ...'; and (2) if '... through excessive devotion to education we are neglecting other methods ...'?

A total of 167 replied, a response of 57%. Those who had strong opinions about education would certainly have responded thus slightly biasing the results. 155 answered in the affirmative to (1) and 149 negatively to (2). The committee reported:

> We have reached the conclusion that the Society's educational policy in the past has been in the main justified. We are convinced that the

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[60] Cited in Lindsay, 145.
[61] Lindsay, 146.
[62] Lindsay, 147.
[63] Lindsay, 147.
[64] Lindsay, 148.
[65] Cited in Goodall (1954), 463.

> expenditure in men and money on its educational work is not out of balance with the expenditure on what may be described as its more directly evangelistic work. There can be no doubt that the former has greatly strengthened the latter, and that without it the Fundamental Principle and main objective of the Society to preach the glorious Gospel of the blessed God to the heathen could not have been efficiently realized.[66]

Missionary education was thus once again vindicated; although not all would have agreed with the report's prioritisation of education. The missionaries always felt that education in India was a necessary expense – even if their supporters did not.

Comparison with home

Comparing the education offered by the missionaries with that in England, shows that the missionary education was not as backward as one might suppose. There are many parallels with what was happening at home. Lancaster and Bell's monitorial system, with all its weaknesses, was widely used at home and abroad. In India and England education was initially in the hands of individuals and voluntary organisations before the government took increasing control. Much of the impetus for education was in the hands of Christians. In India it was the missionaries; at home it was largely evangelical reformers such as Robert Raikes and Hannah More who were motivated to provide education so that people could read the Bible.

Williams[67] has identified three distinct groups whose ideologies have influenced education: the industrial trainers, the old humanists and the public educators.[68] The industrial trainers emphasised the utilitarian aspect they are concerned with the training of a suitable workforce. The old humanists stressed the transmission of a cultural heritage comprising of 'pure' knowledge. The radical reforming tradition is associated with the public educators.

Most missionary early education, as that at home, was in the old humanist tradition. Knowledge was seen as a body of

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[66] Cited in Goodall (1954).

[67] R. Williams, *The Long Revolution* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1961).

[68] Williams' analysis has since been developed to include several other groups, these are more appropriate to the present educational scene. See for example: Paul Ernest *The Philosophy of Mathematics Education* (Basingstoke: Falmer Press, 1990); and Steve Bishop, 'Beliefs shape mathematics', *Spectrum* 28 (2), Summer 1996, 131–41.

structured knowledge. Children were seen as 'fallen angels' and as Lockean *tabula rasa*. Learning was by rote.

It would be easy to criticise the conservative old humanist tradition. However, it merely reflected the contemporary educational climate. This criticism of missionary education is picked up in the World Missionary Conference 1910 Report:

> Missionary education, as carried out during the last fifty years under the influence of English-speaking missionaries, naturally shares the weaknesses of their educational methods at home. It has become a commonplace that much of our education in the home-lands has been futile, because it has not sufficiently been a training for life. It is coming to be recognised among us that education needs to be directed far more consciously and deliberately towards preparing boys and girls for domestic and social life and service . . .[69]

However valid the above observations, what they are asserting is that the old humanist tradition needs to be replaced with an industrial trainer paradigm: education for the market place. Both are equally deficient!

The one exception to the old humanist framework was that missionary education, unlike British education, was not elitist or class/caste structured; although it did assume Western superiority. English and Welsh education existed largely to maintain the stratification in society. Its aim was social control. This was the case even for Hannah More:

> My plan for instructing the poor is very limited and strict. They learn of week days such course works as may fit them for servants. I allow of no writing. My object has not been to teach dogma and opinions, but to form the lower classes to habits of industry and virtue. I know no way of teaching morals but by infusing principles of Christianity, nor of teaching Christianity without a thorough knowledge of Scripture . . . To make good members of society (and this can be only done by making good Christians) has been my aim . . . Principles not opinions are what I labour to give them.[70]

Missionary education in India played its part in attempting to break the caste hierarchy. The purpose of missionary education was not one of social control but of social transformation. Duff and the other Scots used education in the 'struggle against caste and to affirm that a liberal and Christian education could not

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[69] WMC 1910, 6.

[70] Cited in G. Jones, *Hannah More* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952), 152.

recognize or tolerate caste observances within its walls'.[71] With an emphasis on 'education for all'—without caste or sex distinction—the missionaries were more allied to a 'public educator' tradition. They were prepared to admit those of low caste and of no caste even at the expense of losing many of their pupils. For example, John Anderson of Madras accepted three Pariah boys who had deceitfully entered the school; this meant that he lost 100 out of 270 boys. Anderson commented: 'This caste dispute . . . will prepare us for greater trials in the case of a conversion.'[72] The examples could be multiplied. The one notable exception was Robert Noble, a CMS missionary in Andhra Pradesh, who refused to admit the 'outcastes' to his school.

The missionaries also offered a much wider curriculum than that at home. Science played an important role; this was because:

> The sacred books of the Hindus are 'inextricably committed to a collision with the truths of astronomy, chemistry, medicine, geography, and all the facts of modern science.' Instruction in the elements of physical science and or geography not only upsets the old notions on these subjects, but so far forth uproots the Hindu religious system.[73]

This echoes Duff's justification of Western education: 'the incorporation of literature and science with the religion of India, true information on such themes lays a train which, when it explodes, must shatter the whole hideous fabric of Hinduism into atoms...'[74] Science was an integral part of the missionary curriculum:

> It has been asserted that believers have nothing to do with Natural Science. Strange assertion! For what is natural science? If true, what is it but the record and interpretation of God's visible handiworks? And has the Great Creator deemed it worthy of his great name to produce aught, which is unworthy of any of his creatures, far less of any of his own adopted children, to know and understand? Believers, nothing to do with God's works! Why, we would exhort you to assume at once the highest ground, and demonstrate, in all your

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[71] Duncan B. Forrester, *Caste and Christianity: Attitudes and Policies on Caste of Anglo-Saxon Protestant Missions in India* (London: Curzon Press, 1980), 28.

[72] Cited in Hewat (1960), 84.

[73] Rev. Professor Robertson (of Aberdeen, formerly of the Free Church College, Calcutta), 'The education of the young as a regular part of mission work', *Report II* 1888, 194.

[74] Duff, *Missions the Chief End*, 82.

> teachings, that believers alone are properly enabled, and alone are justly entitled to scan and enjoy these works.[75]

Whereas at home a Royal Commission carried out in 1862 found that it was only Rugby of all the public schools that was making any attempt to take science teaching seriously! It was the Classics that formed the staple of the public school curriculum. This served to preserve the order of society.

Duff's approach to knowledge was holistic. He refused to draw a distinction between sacred and secular forms of knowledge:

> . . . all knowledge must cease in [the missionaries'] hands, to be any longer merely secular; seeing that it all may be baptized, so to speak, into the name of Jesus. Indeed, considering the holy uses which all knowledge may be made to subserve, as taught and applied by a pious and skilful missionary, it ought to drop the misleading application of 'secular' together. . . . And, since all knowledge, in a missionary institution, may, and ought to be, enstamped with religious tendencies, and made to bear on religious ends, instead of speaking or writing henceforward, of 'the religious and secular departments,' would it not be more strictly accordant with the truth and reality of things, to speak and write of 'the religious and sub-religious departments.'[76]

This is in marked contrast to education at home where there was almost a dualistic emphasis.

The mix of gospel and Enlightenment it was hoped would pave the way for the Christianisation of India.

Perceived weaknesses

The monitorial system was not without its weaknesses. The system enabled pupils to take on role of monitors supervising younger pupils but meant that learning was by rote without any understanding or application of fresh knowledge taking place. These weaknesses were not unique to India, however, they were also common in England at the time.

The missionary educational enterprise was conducted on a very small budget and often in buildings that were inadequate. Consequently, many of the missionaries overstretched themselves. It is noticeable that those who had most educational

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[75] Duff, *Missions the Chief End*, 87.
[76] Duff, *Missions the Chief End*, 86–87.

influence were those, such as Duff, Robert May, J. D. Pearson,[77] Marshman and Miller, who devoted themselves predominantly to education.

Another associated problem was the lack of suitable teachers. Many schools had to rely upon non-Christian teachers. They had to do so for pragmatic reasons; without them 'Missionary education would be seriously restricted in its extent'.[78] It was regarded as:

> a temporary expediency to meet a temporary necessity; no Educational Mission work can be regarded as satisfactory until it has been provided by full Christian staff.[79]

This raises the question: Can a non-Christian deliver Christian education? The lack of Christian teachers was particularly prevalent in the North of India.

Pupil attendance, especially of the agricultural population, was 'partial and irregular'. [80] Many would attend for a few months only. The large number of religious festivals also interrupted schooling.

As the Lindsay commission pointed out in the mid-nineteenth century there was a coincidence between government and missionary aims. The Western education which provided the best praeparatio evangelica corresponded with the education the natives required for Government service.[81] It was this that made the education so sought after by the natives; it was the passport to employment.[82]

> The rush of the higher and middle classes to English is dependent mainly on the belief that English is the language of 'good appointments'.[83]

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[77] May and Pearson were LMS missionaries based at Chinsura. May founded the first Bengali school in July 1814. By June 1815, there were 15 schools and by 1818,the year of May's death, 36 schools. Lovatt (1989, Vol. II, 14–15) described May as 'an ardent and skilful educationalist' who 'carried on a most successful system of school-work'. J. D. Pearson took over from May, and for the sake of efficiency, reduced the number of schools to 21. Pearson wrote a number of textbooks published by Calcutta School Book Society. He was also the author of *British System of Instruction* (1830).

[78] Rev Professor Robertson (of Aberdeen, formerly of the Free Church College, Calcutta), 'The education of the young as a regular part of mission work', *Report II* 1888, 195.

[79] Ibid, 196.

[80] E. C. Stuart, James Long, J. Murray Mitchell, . . . etc., 'Vernacular education in Bengal', *Church Missionary Intelligencer* Vol. IV (ns), Dec 1868, 378.

[81] Lindsay, 154.

[82] Lindsay, 20.

[83] E .C. Stuart, et al. (1868) , 378.

This was never really anticipated by the missionaries and the Hindu elite were happy to collude with it, albeit on their own terms.

Conclusion

Christianity has always been associated with education. Protestant Christians are the people of the Book. Thus it is necessary for Christians to be able to read. This has always been a motivating factor in Christian education:

> Some degree of education must be added to enable believers to read the Word of God for themselves in their native language.[84]

But why were Indian missionaries concerned with education? Education as a means of evangelisation was chosen for pragmatic reasons: it was in the long-term seen as more effective against Hindu idolatry than preaching. Its aim, in short, was to undermine Hinduism, through a curious mix of Enlightenment learning and Christianity, and thus to prepare the way for the acceptance of the gospel. This was why it was 'peculiarly important' in India,[85] though it was sometimes the reluctant conclusion of the missionary societies.[86] Some saw it as a distraction but there were very much in the minority. Most saw 'advanced Christian education to be an indispensable part of what needs to be done for the evangelisation of India'.[87] Unfortunately, this optimism prevalent in the early nineteenth century failed to take into account the elasticity of Hinduism. Hinduism became more and more syncretistic in response to the missionary impact and thus was able to assimilate much of Christianity and provided a bulwark against the need for conversion.[88]

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[84] Rev N. G. Clark (Senior Foreign Secretary, ABCFM), 'Higher Christian education as a missionary agency', *Report II* 1888.

[85] W. Miller, 'Extracts . . .', WMC 1910,441.

[86] Dr Miller, 'The sixty-ninth anniversary of the Church Missionary Society', *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, May 1868, 163.

[87] Rev William Miller, 'The place of higher education as an instrument of Christian effort', *Report II* 1888, 231.

[88] Acknowledgements. I would like to thank Dr Brian Stanley for his useful comments and constructive criticisms as well as the contributions of the 'Missionaries, Missions and Imperialism' seminar group at Trinity College, Bristol, 1994, where an earlier version of this paper was first presented.

Abstract

The main thrust of the missionaries in British India during the nineteenth and early twentieth century was education. This paper provides an historical overview. The work of Alexander Duff, and the Anglicist-Orientalist debate is examined. A cursory look at higher education and the predominance of Scottish missionaries involved in education precedes an evaluation of the educational strategies by examining the perceived aims and seeing to what extent they were fulfilled. Education both at home and on the mission field reflected the dominant 'old humanist tradition'. However, where home education was education as social control, mission education tended towards education as social transformation. This is reflected in the divergence of the curriculum.