

EVANGELICAL REVIEW OF THEOLOGY

VOLUME 17

Volume 17 • Number 3 • July 1933

Evangelical Review of Theology

*Articles and book reviews original and selected from
publications worldwide for an international
readership for the purpose of discerning the
obedience of faith*

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Published by
PATERNOSTER PERIODICALS

successful influence on the political structures were the action of the Governor General Lord Wellesley in 1802 to make the practice of infanticide illegal, and the action of Governor General Lord Bentinck in abolishing *sati* in December 1829. The latter action was the culmination of Carey's protest against this social evil from the beginning of his ministry in Serampore thirty years before. At the same time it is probable that p. 380 Carey's efforts inspired Rammohan Roy in his campaign against *sati*. It appears that these two leaders rarely met.

The work of William Carey cannot be judged only by the immediate successes and failures of the Serampore Mission, for as his friend Christopher Anderson declared in a memorial sermon in Edinburgh in 1834, Carey's labours, however great, were 'chiefly preparatory or prospective.'¹⁶ Carey expected great things from God and he attempted great things for God. He was a man of vision and a man of action. Some of Carey's achievements have stood the test of time, notably Serampore College; others have not. His translation of the Bible into the languages of India was less than satisfactory and has been replaced by others, especially those working under the guidance of the Bible Society. Yet his Bengali grammar and his 87,000 word *Dictionary of the Bengali Language* (1824) helped to raise Bengali from an unsettled dialect to the level of a national language. Carey's role in the Bengali Renaissance is acknowledged by all. In the words of John Watts, 'Carey embraced Bengali and Asian culture in the name of Christ and accomplished much more for the Kingdom and for humanity than he could ever know. And generations rise up to call him blessed.'¹⁷

Despite the limitations of Carey's work as an evangelist, his principles for indigenous self-supporting churches are standard practices today. The heart of Carey's theology is summed up in the words he whispered to Alexander Duff on his death bed: 'Mr Duff, you have been speaking about Dr Carey, Dr Carey: when I am gone say nothing about Dr Carey. Speak only about Dr Carey's Saviour.'¹⁸

Dr. Nicholls has relocated from New Delhi to Auckland, New Zealand from where he will continue his several Asian and international ministries. p. 381

William Carey's 'Pleasing Dream'¹

Ruth Rouse

¹⁶ Smith *ibid.*, p. 7.

¹⁷ Watts *op. cit.*, p. 19.

¹⁸ Pearce Carey, *op. cit.*, p. 428.

¹ The facts in this study have been gathered from contemporary letters, journals and reports, e.g. the Journals of Henry Martyn and Claudius Buchanan: The Periodical Accounts (herein referred to as P.A.) Relative to the Baptist Missionary Society: and the Minutes and Reports of the S.P.C.K. It is unfortunate that the original correspondence between Carey and Fuller has disappeared. Information as to its whereabouts will be welcomed.

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(1949)

The celebrated historian of the ecumenical movement suggests why the first international interdenominational missionary conference proposed by Carey to be held at the Cape of Good Hope in 1810 never took place. Then she gives an imaginative study of who might have attended if it had taken place and what the results might have been. It was not until 100 years later at Edinburgh in 1910 that Carey's dream was fulfilled.

Editor

A VISION FRUSTRATED

The most startling missionary proposal of all time was made by William Carey in 1806. He calmly proposed to Andrew Fuller, Secretary of the Baptist Missionary Society, that they should summon 'a meeting of all denominations of Christians at The Cape of Good Hope somewhere about 1810', to be followed by another such conference somewhere every ten years. Truly an audacious concept! An international and interdenominational conference at a time when conferences of any kind, missionary or otherwise, national or local, were practically unknown! More astonishing still, Carey's vision was of a conference such as was not attempted for another hundred years. Like the conference at Edinburgh, 1910, it was to be a gathering of missionaries, missionary experts and missionary society officials, for the planning of advance and to solve the problems which confronted them all. 'We should understand each other better in two days than in two years of correspondence.'

The international missionary conferences held in 1854, 1860, 1888 and 1900 were not of this character: they were 'chiefly great missionary demonstrations fitted to inform, educate and impress'.² p. 382

But Andrew Fuller turned the project down:

I consider this as one of bro'r Carey's pleasing dreams. Seriously I see no important object to be obtained by such a meeting, which might not be quite as well attained without it. And in a meeting of all denominations, there would be no unity, without which we had better stay at home....³

It is characteristic of the ecumenical situation of the time that Fuller rejected Carey's idea, not because of the obvious difficulties of transport, or of travel in a world at war, but because of the universally held assumption that Christians of various churches could not meet without quarrelling. The project indeed was less unpractical than might be thought. Capetown formed the crossroads between East and West, the outward and homeward port of call for traders, civil and military officials and missionaries. The London Missionary Society's veteran, Vanderkemp, was on the spot and might have organized the reception and accommodation of the conference. Andrew Fuller, missionary statesman and saint though he was, made a 'great refusal'.

WHAT IF CAPE TOWN 1810 HAD BEEN HELD?

² World Missionary Conference, 1910, Vol. IX, p. 8.

³ Letter of Andrew Fuller to William Ward, Serampore, December 2nd, 1806, quoted in *William Carey* by S. Pearce Carey. Carey Press, 1934, pp. 268, 269, which see, *passim*.

If it had been otherwise, missionary and ecumenical history might have been changed. The World Missionary Conference of Edinburgh, 1910, resulted in the International Missionary Council; it made possible the Faith and Order movement and ultimately the World Council of Churches. Capetown, 1810, and ensuing decennials, might have anticipated by many decades the results of the Edinburgh conference. For Carey, not Fuller, was the practical man. It was Carey who discerned the signs of the times. He and other missionary pioneers were in eager correspondence both on the strategy of missions and on details of missionary policy. They were already wrestling with every subject dealt with by the commissions which prepared for Edinburgh, 1910. Small wonder that Carey longed to substitute personal conference for the lengthy and uncertain process of correspondence carried by sailing-ship.

First on the programme at Capetown, 1810, would have come, as at Edinburgh: 'Carrying the Gospel to All the Non-Christian World'. Carey's *Enquiry*, 1792, had surveyed the beginnings of Protestant p. 383 missionary work by the Moravians in Greenland, Labrador, the West Indies (where Wesleyans were also at work) and Abyssinia; by Eliot and Brainerd among the North American Indians; by the Halle-Danish Mission in South India; by the Dutch in Ceylon and the Netherlands East Indies.⁴ But since 1792, an advance had taken place, unparalleled in so short a time. Missionaries had entered Astrakhan and the Caucasus; Sierra Leone and South Africa; Bengal, Bhutan, Agra and Bombay; Burma; China; the South Sea Islands and New Zealand. Advance abroad was made possible by the swift spread of missionary organization at home: the Baptist Missionary Society (1792); the London Missionary Society (1794, largely Congregational); the Edinburgh and Glasgow Missionary Societies (1796, Presbyterian); the Church Missionary Society (1799, Anglican); the London Jews' Society (1802); the two great auxiliaries—the Religious Tract Society (1802) and the British and Foreign Bible Society (1804). Though the Wesleyan Missionary Society was not organized till 1813, Methodist missions had already a Committee of Finance and Advice (1804). On the Continent, the Netherlands Missionary Society began in 1799; Jänicke opened his Missionary Seminary in Berlin in 1800.

At Capetown it would surely have fallen to Carey, under the title, say, of 'Eighteen Years of Miracle', to bring his *Enquiry* up to date as a basis for plans of advance. World evangelization was the passion of those early missionaries: to them any new field entered was just a stepping-stone to yet another. Vanderkemp, with all South Africa before him, is lured on by Madagascar. Robert Morrison, first into China, keeps in view 'the important islands of Japan ... to prepare for a voyage by some of us to that country' and to discover whether his Chinese Bible could be altered for use there.⁵ Meantime he thinks out southward advance to Cochin, Malacca, Singapore, Java, Sumatra and Borneo. Before ever the Baptist pioneers land in Burma, the 'regions beyond' it are Carey's main interest ... 'the east side ... borders upon China, Cochin China and Tonquin, and may afford us the opportunity ultimately of introducing the Gospel into those countries. They are quite within our reach.'⁶ Letters from India are full of calculations as to the number of missionaries required to evangelize that land. We can envisage the Capetown conference uniting in appeal p. 384 to the home societies to send out a missionary force multiplied tenfold, if even the most crying opportunities were to be met.

What of the *personnel* at Capetown? Contemporary documents show no obstacle to the presence of any one of the following possible delegates. Let us look first at the

⁴ Carey's *Enquiry*, pp. 36, 37.

⁵ Broomhall: *Robert Morrison*, pp. 108, 109.

⁶ P. A., Vol. III, p. 285.

missionaries available. In South Africa, the L.M.S, Moravians from Germany and the South African Missionary Society (a Boer organization) were on the spot; India would have sent Carey and Marshman (B.M.S.); Taylor (L.M.S.) from Bombay; Jacob Kohlhoff, forty years in the Halle-Danish Mission, Swartz's successor at Tanjore; Robert Morrison would have come from Canton, China; one or two of the L.M.S. missionaries from Tahiti who in 1810 were refugees in Sydney; from Russia, Pinkerton, perhaps, the Bible Society agent in St Petersburg.

The younger churches would have had at least one representative. The Tamil Saththianadhan, ordained in 1790 according to the Lutheran rite, could have accompanied Kohloff. His ordination sermon, published by the S.P.C.K. 'to evince the capacity of the Natives for undertaking the office of the Ministry', had made him well known in England. He could preach in English, and his whole personality demonstrated that the secret of evangelization lay in the raising up of indigenous teachers and ministers.

Among the 'evangelical chaplains' would have been those fervid promoters of missions, Samuel Marsden from Sydney, N.S.W; Claudius Buchanan, Calcutta; and of course, Henry Martyn; while the missionary societies would have sent Josiah Pratt, secretary of the C.M.S; Andrew Fuller and Dr Ryland, B.M.S; George Burder, secretary of the L.M.S; Joseph Hardcastle, treasurer of the L.M.S. and the Religious Tract Society; Thomas Coke, pioneer of Methodist missionary effort in America and the West Indies. His heart's desire was to establish Methodist missions in India: he would have leapt at the chance to go eastward to Capetown. America had as yet no foreign mission, but the several home missionary societies working among Indians and Negroes would doubtless have been represented.

Among missionary-minded laymen one sees there Robert Haldane from Scotland; William Wilberforce, M.P. for Yorkshire, surely, with his parliamentary experience and wide missionary sympathies, the predestined chairman of the conference; Zachary Macaulay, former Governor of Sierra Leone, and his brother Colonel Macaulay, British Resident in Cochin, India, and according to Claudius Buchanan, 'on the subject of the Syrians the highest authority in the world'.

And what of Europe? One name stands out, the John R. Mott of the early nineteenth century. This fascinating personality was a German, p. 385 C. F. A. Steinkopf.⁷ As soon as he left Tübingen University, he became secretary of the *Deutsche Christentumsgesellschaft* at Basel (and later helped to found the Basel Mission). He became chaplain of the German Savoy Chapel in London in 1801. He was 'foreign secretary' of the Bible Society as well as of the R.T.S. He travelled repeatedly and systematically all over Europe, establishing Bible Societies, and was thus an unofficial liaison officer between every European and British missionary interest, securing numerous Continental candidates for the English societies. He had friends in every church, including many Roman Catholics. With Steinkopf at Capetown, the missionary voices of Europe would have been effectively heard.

Many of these men were in correspondence with Carey: all of them were deeply concerned, not only with the world-evangelization and its strategy, but with the main points of policy and method dealt with a hundred years later by the Edinburgh commissions.

A QUESTION OF RELATIONSHIPS

The relation of missions to indigenous culture and customs was a live issue. The missionaries had a high standard for inter-racial intercourse and manners. 'Be meek and

⁷ C. Schoell: *Carl Friedrich Adolf Steinkopf*, 1890 (a sixteen-page biography).

gentle among them ... Cultivate the utmost friendship and cordiality with them, as your equals, and never let European pride or superiority be felt by the natives in the mission house at Rangoon.⁸ But where draw the line between courtesy and compromise? What about suttee and child marriage and caste? Of none of these had the missionaries heard before coming to India.

Caste formed the crucial issue. Controversy was inevitable between the Halle-Danish men who, with approval of the S.P.C.K.,⁹ allowed caste divisions in the Church even at Holy Communion, and the new missionaries in Calcutta, who insisted that their converts by eating with them should make a complete break with caste before baptism.¹⁰ Polygamy confronted the missionaries in every field, raising the very same questions about the polygamist convert and his wives which remain largely unsolved even to-day.

On the preparation of missionaries there were marked differences of opinion. Should Latin, Greek and Hebrew be taught in the trainingschools? p. 386 Is the best pioneer work done by unordained men, mechanics without literary or theological training? Behind this lay a fundamental question of missionary principle, then much discussed. 'Must civilization precede the gospel, or the gospel civilization?' Samuel Marsden,¹¹ and not he alone, contended that 'the attention of the heathen [to the gospel] can be gained only by the arts': others, that to attempt civilization without the knowledge of the gospel is to little purpose, a view supported by L.M.S. experience in the South Seas of the frequent failure of such uneducated missionaries.¹²

The relations between missions and governments cried for attention then as now in every field, whether the rulers were the chiefs of savage tribes in Africa or Tahiti; or Dutch or Danish colonial governments in South Africa, Ceylon or India; or the officials of the East India Company, and with their varying attitudes towards missions—in Calcutta and Canton so often antagonistic, in Madras almost uniformly helpful.¹³

Home Base questions, in particular the relation of missionaries to their societies, had to be worked out from the very start, and such matters as the provision for pensions, illness, support of widows, children's allowances. It was hotly debated whether missionaries should be encouraged to earn their own living in government employ or in business, as so many were actually doing. Grave difficulties between the Boards and their missionaries arose from the fact that most missionaries went out for life, while their work was directed by men who had never seen a mission field. The lamentable split between the B.M.S. and the Serampore men, which, after Andrew Fuller's death, darkened the later days of the great pioneers,¹⁴ and much other trouble as well, might have been avoided, if society officials at Capetown had seen for themselves the realities of one mission field, South Africa, and had learnt from eye-witnesses the realities of many more.

Problems of co-operation and comity urgently needed attention, strange as it may seem in a world so empty of missionaries. The Lutheran missionaries in South India had long been tenacious of their rights. When the Moravians landed in Tranquebar in 1760

⁸ P. A., Vol. III, p. 426, Instructions to pioneers sent to Burma.

⁹ S.P.C.K. Annual Report, 1810.

¹⁰ P.A., Vol. I, p. 338.

¹¹ Stock: *History of the C.M.S.*, Vol. I, p. 206.

¹² Horne: *Story of the L.M.S.*, pp. 27, 31, 40.

¹³ See S.P.C.K. Annual Report, *passim*.

¹⁴ George Smith: *William Carey*, pp. 359–76.

with a mandate from the Danish Government to establish a base from which p. 387 they might evangelize the Nicobar Isles, the Lutherans forbade them to preach in public, and confined them, while in Tranquebar, within the four walls of the 'Garden of the Brethren'. In 1806, the S.P.C.K. reports 'disorders produced in the established missions, both Danish and English, through certain missionaries sent out by an Anabaptist Society and by that called the L.M.S.'. The strange tendency of missionary societies to enter already occupied territory was unhappily manifest. By 1792 in Sierra Leone there were already churches of freed slaves, Baptist, Wesleyan and Lady Huntingdon's Connexion. In the next ten years, Baptists, Wesleyans, Moravians, L.M.S. and C.M.S. all sent missions to the Colony: only the C.M.S. work (1804) proved permanent. Zachary Macaulay returning to the Colony in 1796 had to use his authority as Governor to stop acrimonious disputes between the missionaries on board ship, which were rousing the mockery of the ungodly.¹⁵ Robert Morrison was toiling at translating the Bible into Chinese at Canton, unconscious that Marshman and his colleagues, aided by a Chinese-speaking Armenian, were producing a Chinese Bible in Calcutta.¹⁶ The result was a painful clash when later on Marshman and Morrison presented their completed labours to the Bible Society, a clash which might surely have been avoided, if the two scholars had met at Capetown and discussed the situation with the genial Steinkopf, and if the conference had arranged for inter-society exchange of plans on that Bible translation which was the distinguishing glory of those pioneer missionary days.

If practical missionary statesmen, burning to see obstacles to world evangelization removed, had conferred at Capetown and succeeding decennials, is it not more than probable that they would have anticipated the coming of the International Missionary Council by over a century, and have evolved some elementary form of international and inter-society machinery for the united planning of advance, for the securing of missionary comity and for the pooling of missionary experience?

THE BIRTH OF THE ECUMENICAL SPIRIT

Is it fantastic, moreover, to imagine that world missionary conferences begun in 1810 might have hastened not only the appearance of an International Missionary Council, but also of the Faith and Order P. 388 movement and of the World Council of Churches? An ecumenical wind was stirring the sails of the Church. Not for another hundred years were the omens so favourable for ecumenical advance.

1. *Societies were bringing together Christians of different churches and different nations for united action, usually missionary.*

On the Continent a new thing under the sun had appeared—an international and interdenominational society, the *Deutsche Christentumsgesellschaft* (German Christian Society) formed to resist rationalism and to develop Christian life and faith largely through the spread of literature. Founded in the 'eighties with headquarters in Basel, it gathered into its membership people of every class of society from Germany, Switzerland, Scandinavia, the Netherlands and even Britain—Lutherans, Reformed and those outside the national churches—Moravians, Mennonites and even Roman Catholics. It exerted wide missionary influence and among other things gave birth to the Basel Missionary Society, in which Lutheran and Reformed churchmen so freely co-operated.¹⁷

¹⁵ Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay, Trevelyan, pp. 15–16.

¹⁶ Broomhall: *Robert Morrison*, pp. 69–73, S.C.M. Press, 1924.

¹⁷ *Evangelisches Missions Magazin*, January 1947, pp. 1–12.

In Britain the L.M.S. was formed on an interdenominational basis (chiefly Congregationalists, Anglicans and Presbyterians): its foundation was hailed as 'the funeral of bigotry'. The Committees of the R.T.S. and the Bible Society were formed on a fifty-fifty basis of Anglicans and Nonconformists, with a careful balance of churchmanship among their secretaries.

2. *In the mission field, missionaries of different communions were working together under the same societies.*

The C.M.S. was employing missionaries with Lutheran ordination, drawn from Jänicke's Missionary Seminary in Berlin. In this, the C.M.S. was following the example of the S.P.C.K., the oldest Anglican missionary society (1698) which for a hundred years had supported as its missionaries in South India Germans with Lutheran ordination, trained under the Franckes at Halle University and sent out by the Halle-Danish Mission. These men not only built up an indigenous Church in which they ordained Indian ministers¹⁸ with Lutheran rites but, as chaplains under the East India Company, or as part of their ordinary duty as S. P.C.K. agents, in the absence of Anglican chaplains, preached and ministered to English congregations and garrisons, p. 389 conducting weddings and funerals, baptizing and administering Holy Communion.¹⁹

3. *On the mission field, spiritual fellowship was developing rapidly among missionaries of different communions.*

At home there were grave difficulties. It was widely believed, by many besides Andrew Fuller, that Christians of various denominations could not meet in conference without quarrelling about their differences—a belief that persisted long. 'Capetown, 1810', would have given the first of a thousand demonstrations that conferences which bring together men on fire for the same missionary object lead not to dissension but to understanding.

There was a conviction, moreover, that Christians of different churches could not pray together in any one of their several forms without offence or hypocrisy. From its foundation in 1804 right on till 1859, the Bible Society had no prayer at its committees or annual meetings; they wanted Quakers on their committees, and these could not, without in their view dishonouring the Holy Spirit, be present at pre-arranged prayer.

In the mission field, Christians learnt to glory in united prayer. Henry Martyn in 1806 hastens ashore at Capetown on his way to India, to find the L.M.S. missionaries: 'Meeting these beloved and highly honoured brethren filled me with joy.... I joined their family service.'²⁰ In Calcutta, Anglican chaplains, Baptist missionaries and L.M.S. Congregationalists met frequently for fellowship and prayer, 'taking sweet counsel together and going to God's House as friends.... No shadow of bigotry falls on us here'.²¹ Henry Martyn's pagoda on the banks of the Hooghly was habitually used for united prayer meetings:

It would have done your heart good to have joined us at our meetings at the pagoda. From this place we have successively recommended Dr Taylor [L.M.S.] to the work of the Lord at Bombay; Mr Martyn [Anglican] to Dinapoor; Mr Corrie [Anglican Chaplain] to Chunar;

¹⁸ 'Native priests' is the S.P.C.K. phrase for these Indian ministers.

¹⁹ See, *passim*, S.P.C.K. Annual Reports. Before 1810 there is scarcely a trace of questioning as to the ecclesiastical correctness of this procedure, though constant regret that Englishmen in regular Anglican orders could not be found for this glorious service. It would seem that the tradition of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Anglican divines, of refusing to unchurch Continental non-episcopal communions, prevailed in Anglican missionary operations.

²⁰ *Journals of Henry Martyn*, Vol. I, pp. 397–8.

²¹ S. Pearce Carey: *Life of Carey* (abridged edition), p. 69.

Mr des Granges p. 390 [L.M.S.] to Vizagapatam, and our two brethren [Baptist] to Rangoon. in these meetings, the utmost harmony prevails and a union of hearts unknown between persons of different denominations in England.²²

4. *A remarkably broad-minded attitude towards Roman Catholics prevailed among missionaries.*

The attitude of the Carey-Martyn generation differed from that of earlier missions. The Halle-Danish missionaries, with encouragement from the S.P.C.K, had in many places built up Protestant churches out of converts from the 'Portuguese', i.e. the half-caste community who were practically all Roman Catholics.

The policy of the Baptist missionaries was rather to cultivate friendly relations with Roman Catholics with a view to gaining light from them on missionary methods. The Baptist pioneers in Burma are instructed 'to find out the present state of the catholics, and in what way they attempt to make proselytes'; and are told, 'If introduced to any of the catholic priests, endeavour to procure their confidence, by an ingenuous and affectionate behaviour towards them'.²³ Henry Martyn in 1807, while at Dinapore, hearing that there were 'large bodies of Christians (i.e. Roman Catholics) at Delhi, Agra, etc.', sent a questionnaire in Latin to the Roman Catholic missionaries in these places, asking: 'Do you itinerate? Have you any portion of Scripture translated, or do you distribute tracts? Do you allow any remains of caste to the baptized? Have you schools? Are the masters heathen, or Christians? Is there any native preacher or catechist? Number of converts?', and so forth.²⁴ A friendly correspondence with several priests was the result.

The *Deutsche Christentumsgesellschaft* adopted a similar attitude. It not only had Roman Catholic members, but one of them, a priest, Johannes Gossner (sixteen years before he became a Protestant), acted as its secretary in Basel, while the Protestant secretary was on military service. The D.C.G. leaders helped a remarkable evangelical movement among priests in Bavaria by every means in their power, but firmly discouraged them from leaving their Church. The Bible Society, p. 391 in the first ten years of its existence,²⁵ circulated Roman Catholic versions, employed Roman Catholic agents, including Leander van Ess, theological professor at Marburg, and records many instances of hearty co-operation in the circulation of the Scriptures from Roman Catholic ecclesiastics. In the same ten years, the Bible Society had made contacts with most of the ancient Oriental churches in the Near East, Orthodox, Armenian, Jacobite or Syrian, Coptic, Abyssinian.

5. *The missionary societies took an ecumenical attitude towards the Orthodox and other Eastern churches.*

These ancient Eastern churches and their place in the missionary enterprise could not have failed to play a large part in the discussions of Capetown. The attitude of the missionary societies of that period towards them was clear and unanimous. Contact with them was eagerly sought in the belief that they were the main hope for the evangelization of Muslims, Hindus and other non-Christians. Missions should be planted among them, the Scriptures should be circulated, schools should be established, not with a view to converting them to Protestantism (this was deliberately discountenanced), but to helping to purify and strengthen their faith and life, so that they might witness to Christ among

²² Letter from Carey to Dr Ryland, January 20th, 1807, quoted in Geo. Smith's *William Carey*, p. 190.

²³ P.A., Vol. III, pp. 329, 330.

²⁴ *Journals of Henry Martyn*, Vol. II, pp. 47-9.

²⁵ See, *passim*, John Owen: *The History of the First Ten Years of the B.F.B.S.*, 3 vols, 1816-20.

the non-Christians. Already by 1802, the Edinburgh Missionary Society had begun planting such missions among Orthodox and Armenians in Astrakhan and Tartary. Their example was followed by the L.M.S. and the Basel Mission.

Claudius Buchanan, evangelical of evangelicals, was a vigorous advocate of this policy. From June 1806 to February 1807 he travelled in South India 'to investigate the state of religion amongst Hindus, Jews, Roman Catholics, Syrians and Protestant Christians' and to promote the circulation of the Scriptures. He travelled in Travancore and up the West Coast, visiting in friendly fashion the Roman Uniate churches and recording that 'the Romish Syrians also want the Bible'. But his main objective was the non-Roman Catholic Syrians. He conferred with their Metropolitan, Mar Dionysius, and their clergy on the translation of the Scriptures into Malayalam; on the establishment of Christian schools in every parish; and on 'their disposition to a union with the English Church'. Such union was seriously discussed, though Buchanan came to consider 'an official union scarcely practical in present circumstances'. His verdict on the Syrian Church was that p. 392 'Providence was about to unfold itself by dispensing the Bible throughout the East, by means of this people':

Finding a church, possessing the Bible, and abjuring Romish corruption ... possessing too an ordination, with which ours is scarcely to be compared ... what more required to make them a useful people in evangelizing that dark region?²⁶

Might not such a conception of the ancient Eastern churches, if developed at Capetown and later decennial conferences, have given courage to the missionary societies resolutely to pursue their policy of co-operation with these churches in spite of the ecclesiastical difficulties which almost invariably arose? And might it not have prevented or modified the policy adopted by American missionary societies in the mid-nineteenth century, of building up Protestant churches from Oriental church converts, which introduced so much bitterness into Near Eastern ecumenical relationships?

6. Missionary thought was concentrated on the building-up of the Church.

There is no stranger fact in missionary history than that the subject of the Church in the mission field found its place for the first time in the programme of a missionary conference at Edinburgh, 1910. Nothing is more certain than that it would have figured prominently at Capetown. As early as 1797, the Baptist missionaries were in correspondence with the Halle-Danish men,²⁷ eager to know how they were building up the Church. Conditions of baptism? Conditions of ordination? Who baptized? Who ordained? Attitude towards caste? Place of the foreign missionary in the indigenous Church? Relation of the indigenous ministry to the foreign missionary etc. etc.²⁸ This last was the most urgent question, for already the new missionaries were convinced that India would be evangelized chiefly by the indigenous Christians.²⁹

Plans for the future of the indigenous Church were already in the minds both of societies and of missionaries. The S.P.C.K. as early as p. 393 1791 had laid down as the

²⁶ Hugh Pearson: *Memoirs of the Rev. Claudius Buchanan, D.D.*, Vol. II, pp. 56, 78, 64-95, 265, 267-9. Spottiswoode, 1819. And see, *passim*, Buchanan's *Christian Researches in Asia*.

²⁷ The Church built up by the Halle-Danish missionaries was by far the most striking instance of an indigenous Church found anywhere. By 1800, it included 18,000 to 20,000 members. (See Hough: *Christianity in India*, Vols. III and IV, *passim*.)

²⁸ P.A., Correspondence with Gericke, Vol. I, pp. 421 and 430 ff.

²⁹ P.A., Vol. III, pp. 329-31, etc.

ultimate aim of their missionary endeavours a self-governing, self-supporting Church with an indigenous ministry:

If we wish to establish the Gospel in India, ... we ought in time to give the Natives a Church of their own, independent of our support: we ought to have suffragan Bishops in the country, who might ordain Deacons and Priests, and secure a regular succession of apostolical Pastors, even if all connections with their parent Church should be annihilated.³⁰

The Serampore missionaries were strong on self-support and self-government. They contemplated a series of local churches, the Indian brethren to choose their own pastors and deacons from among their own countrymen. A European missionary should be stationed every two hundred miles to superintend and to advise, but should always be passing on to plant new churches:

The whole administration will assume a native aspect: the inhabitants will identify the cause as belonging to their own nation, and their prejudices at falling into the hands of the Europeans will entirely vanish.³¹

Concentration on the problems of church-building must surely have drawn missionary attention to the perils arising from church divisions. Might not 'Capetown, 1810', like Edinburgh, 1910, have given rise to a desire for understanding in the realm of faith and order? There was one most cogent reason why it should.

7. By their very absorption in church-building the missionaries were courting disaster.

It was an ecumenical instinct which made the L.M.S. 'design not to send Presbyterianism, Independency, Episcopacy or any other form of church government ... but the glorious Gospel of the blessed God to the heathen': but the corollary was wholly impracticable, the idea that 'it shall be left ... to the minds of the persons, whom God may call into the fellowship of His Son to assume such form of church government as to them shall appear most agreeable to the word of God'.³² There is no recorded case of missionaries who found themselves able to leave so momentous a choice to an infant Christian community. Willy nilly, the missionaries built up indigenous churches more or less on the model to which they were accustomed. They carried Independency, Episcopacy, Presbyterianism, Lutheranism and p. 394 Methodism to the heathen, and were reproducing every western division in the non-Christian world.

It required no great amount of acumen to discern the perils of confusion and collision that lay ahead. If missionaries with so broad an attitude towards other communions, who trusted each other and had learnt to work and worship together, had met in council every ten years, would it have taken a century for the idea to dawn that the ultimate solution for denominational strife in the mission field lay in the drawing together of the churches as such, first in the foreign field, and then in the homelands?

If Carey had been given his conference, *if* the missionary world had not ignored its prophet, might not a United Church of China have been a nineteenth-century phenomenon? Might not 'Presbyterianism, Independency and Episcopacy' have combined their strength in some Church of South India decades before the twentieth century?

³⁰ S.P.C.K. Annual Report, 1791, p. 110, footnote.

³¹ 'Form of agreement, respecting the great principles in the work of instructing the heathen', Vol. III, pp. 182-3.

³² See Minutes of the L.M.S., May 9th, 1796; Society's First Minute-book, p. 78.

Once more we would ask—in view of such evident signs of the dawn of ecumenism in the mission field, is it wholly fantastic to imagine that a world missionary conference in 1810 might have heralded not only the advent of an international missionary council, but also the beginning of corporate search for agreement in the realm of faith and order, and the appearance of some form of world council of churches in the mid-nineteenth instead of the mid-twentieth century?

Dr Ruth Rouse is a well-known historian of the ecumenical movement. p. 395

Carey's Commitment to Social Justice

Evangeline Anderson-Rajkumar

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In a popular style the author surveys Carey's 40 years of unceasing protest and compassionate action for those who were condemned to cruel death in the name of religion—infants, widows, the sick and lepers.

Editor

William Carey and fellow missionary John Thomas were riding near Malda, India, in 1794 when they saw 'a basket hung in a tree, in which an infant had been exposed; the skull remained, the rest having been devoured by ants.' This 'holy' act of infanticide had been committed with religious fervour by a Hindu mother.

Infanticide was not uncommon in India in Carey's day. But the British government in India ignored such sacrifice of infants—it didn't want to interfere in religious matters of the people. The Indian masses were ready to sacrifice their lives (and their children's) for the sake of salvation and to escape the karma-samsara cycle. The people were intensely religious and were following (though sometimes misinterpreting) written religious laws.

William Carey strongly protested against these crimes against humanity. He was one of many who prodded the apparently passive government to halt or at least regulate a variety of harmful social practices.

KILLING INFANTS

In 1802 Carey's colleague William Ward studied infanticide on the river island of Saugor. Many women made vows to the Holy Ganges River 'that if blessed with two children, one would be presented to the River'. As many as a hundred children, he estimated (though probably more), were being sacrificed every year.

William Carey, Jr., reported one such sacrifice to his father: A boatman pulled a drowning child into his boat. He presented the infant to its mother. She took the child, broke its neck, and cast it into the river again! p. 396

After joining Fort William College as a professor, Carey protested against infanticide to Governor-General Wellesley. Wellesley called for a study of the frequency, nature, and cause of infanticide in Bengal. So Carey prepared an exhaustive report; other people were