

EDUCATION: A REASON OR A MEANS? TOWARDS A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF MISSIONARY EDUCATION

The International Missionary Conference of 1910 was significant in many ways. Apart from laying the foundation for an ecumenical understanding between churches and people, and promoting a rational approach to faith and its practices, the 1910 Conference will be recalled for providing space for raising subaltern voices from the mission fields.¹ Those subaltern expressions made a deep impact not only on the theological discourse and mission practices, but also on the social and political formations of the people in the colonies. People's claims for subject-hood are the expressions of their urge for freedom. A critical enquiry to locate the nature and content of missionary practices, thus, is pertinent for churches in their attempt to promote the quest for freedom and liberation among the marginalized societies around the world.

This short paper is divided into three sections. The first section is a brief evaluation of the impact of missionary education; the second section attempts to delve in a critical enquiry to locate why missionary education has failed, if so, to meet the expected objectives; and the third deals with identifying the pertinent challenges that the mission enterprises encounter at the present context.

I. The Age of Missionary education.

Among the various debates to locate the impact of missionary education, four of them may invite special iteration. They are (1) the introduction of scientific rationality and the promotion of technology; (2) promotion of the concept of social equality, (3) being a catalyst for of religious renaissance, and (4) seeds of a new ecclesiology.

1. Towards a New Rationality

Though the ramification of the Western scientific rationality based on dialectical reasoning is a point of contention among social scientists today, missionary education is remembered in history for its unrelenting effort to introduce Western theory of knowledge to the people in the periphery. It is argued that the rational approach to science fostered the growth of technology, development of communication and proposed urbanization as a means to consolidate progress in a community. Urbanization coupled with industrial production initiated new approaches in

production and labour relations.

Although these changes accelerated the growth of capitalist modes of production and its related social formations, it enhanced the ability of societies to meet their needs in food production, health care as well as offering a variety of services to initiate an overall improvement in the quality of life.

An East Asia Council of Churches meeting in 1964² observed that productivity and industrialization are gifts from God and signs of God's providence to people in this generation. They are seen as the signs of an abundant life that Christ has promised.

This rational knowledge was appropriated as freedom. In the agrarian context where the traditional knowledge promoted a fear of nature, the missionary attempt to offer scientific knowledge goaded people towards freedom from the mysteries and dependence of nature. But the appropriation of knowledge as freedom was at the cost of decoupling freedom from responsibility.

2. Promotion of the Concept of Social Equality

The concept of individual freedom was a rather alien concept in a majority of the colonized countries. Community relations mediated through tribal and caste social formations, created social hierarchies based on the relative location of each member. Social harmony was depending upon the adherence of the members of the community to the rules of hierarchy. Individual freedom that the missionary education introduced presupposes social equality in the place of social hierarchy.³ Conceptually, the emphasis on social equality strengthened the ability of respective individuals in the community to engage in social contracts with others as equal partners.

Within the context of social formations similar to that of India, where the right to education was mediated by the caste system and its rigid caste rules, promotion of the universal right to education was a subversive act. Caste rules prohibited the lower caste people from acquiring knowledge, and for those who dare to attempt it, severe punishment including pouring of melted mould in their ears was suggested. The rights of women were not qualitatively different from the rights of the lower caste people. Education was primarily a religious subject and the strength of the ancient educational methods was its capacity to perceive all human knowledge within the ambit of a theological system. Unfortunately the religious control of knowledge and its decimation only legitimized the social alienation of women and the lower caste people

from the right to acquire knowledge.

Missionary efforts to extend education to dalits, women, tribals and other marginalized communities demonstrated its potential to initiate a social revolution with greater ramifications.

2.a. Legal Structure The development of a political and legal structure that corresponds to the changing relations of the colonized nations from agrarian social formations into industrial ones was an immediate outcome of the concept of individual freedom. Individualism introduced by Western education provided a new understanding of the human person, which ultimately lead to the redefinition of social legislation. Individual freedom was an alien concept in the traditional societies where rights and responsibilities were determined by the structural priorities of the communities.

2. b. Democratic functioning It is also argued that the introduction of the concept of individual freedom and the relative development of a legal structure promoted the evolution of a culture of democratic social functioning. Suggesting that a democratic culture was unknown to the tribal societies prior to the introduction of Western educational philosophy would be a grave mistake; yet, the right of equal participation based on an equal valuation of the contributions of individual members was accentuated by the concept of universal education.

2.c Nationalism Equally important is the emergence of nationalism that too owes its spirit to the rationality offered by Western educational priorities.⁴ The concept of freedom goaded to the assertion of self-hood among the natives was eventually translated into nationalism. Moreover, the sense of equality with the colonialist, offered by English education also helped the emergence of nationalism

3. Religious and Cultural Renaissance

Religious and cultural renaissance in the colonies were not intentional for the missionary movement, yet surfaced as an outcome of the educational activities. There were two shades of renaissance visible in the Asian nations.

3.a. Religious reformation Since the concepts of individual freedom and democracy was not articulated lucidly within the traditional religious system, the introduction of these concepts challenged the faith system to redefine itself. To meet these challenges,

the religious concepts were subjected to critical enquiry informed by secular science and hermeneutical principles. A radical reformation was the outcome of such enquires. While seeking a distinction between tradition and ethics, these efforts promoted the reconstruction of traditions informed by the values of ethics. Gandhi, for example, asserted that “no scriptural text could supersede his reason for life.”⁵

This was a time when social practices situated its legitimation within the language of theology and scripture and thus earned spiritual meaning. The best-articulated model for this corroboration is the case of widow-burning, commonly known as Sati in India. The word Sati, a feminine noun in Sanskrit, denotes virtuous women, derived from the Sanskrit root Sat or truth, implying that women who submitted themselves to be burned in the funeral pyre of their dead husband out of their devotion would attain the spiritual realm of “Satimata” or goddess.⁶

Hindu reformers lead by Mohan Roy realized that an a-priori rejection of the practice as superstition, or a legislation to classify the traditional practice as a criminal act and thus punishable under law, would not help to terminate the practice. Missionaries including Alexander Duff urged colonial administration to initiate radical social legislation to ban the practice. But Roy argued that anything less than a counter theological formulation would only reach deaf ears. Thus the construction of a counter theology and counter culture with the aim of providing new meaning to the belief systems of the people was initiated and that lead to the rapid reformation of traditional religions. Sati was only one of such practices. The result was the reaffirmation of one’s own religious traditions and cultures. It is an oft-quoted statement from Gandhi that “I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all the lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any. I refuse to live in other people's houses as an interloper, a beggar or a slave.”⁷

3.b. Emergence of Fundamentalism The second impact of religious assertion initiated by missionary education was rather negative. Remnants of this approach with a more increased tenor are echoed in the present time within the mantle of religious and cultural fundamentalism. As Koyama had observed in one of these lectures, Missionary Christianity was informed by a bi-polar world view which assumes that the existence of two mutually exclusive worlds, viz., the Christian world and the non-Christian world.⁸ While the Christian world represents the ultimate truth, missionary Christianity presumed that other religions conveyed vain, foolish and wicked conceptions. Alexander Duff’s statement is a categorical expression of this attitude. “These religions”, he said, “are spread out before us like a universe where all life dies

and death lives”⁹. The Christian task therefore was to do everything possible to demolish this gigantic fabric of idolatry and superstition. Duff, Wilson, Miller and other educational missionaries located the objective of education within this simple logic, to unseat the superstitious gods from the consciousness of the colonized people.

Unseating the traditional religious systems from the mind of the natives was considered as a faith imperative by missionaries since that act, they believed, would prepare the ground for the acceptance of the gospel. However, the total rejection of the faith systems of the other facilitated the creation of a sense of absoluteness of the self, and it was often considered as an essential trait in the service of the gospel. The Tambaram Conference of the International Missionary Conference reiterated the need for creating a sense of total confidence in one’s own faith¹⁰. Mission discourse during that time held the view that the fundamental problem for the people is the lack of any absolutes in their lives, and in the absence of absolutes, they tend to surrender themselves to relativisms, which sooner or later will lead them to fundamental and radical uncertainty of the meaning of life.¹¹ Therefore providing an absolute was seen as a mandate of mission, and as neo-orthodoxy iterated, such absolute is present only in the Christian Gospel, because it alone is the work of God.¹²

Overconfidence on their faith as the only absolute truth prevented the educational missionaries from appreciating the values of self-critique or repentance. Language of absolutes viz., truth, culture, social system, religion, and the rest, failed the mission enterprise to be self-critical, or self-examining with a spirit of repentance and an urge for purification. Aggressiveness replaced humility as a virtue, and humility was perceived as a weakness. It was unfortunate to recall that there was no serious expression of repentance or confession expressed in the Commission Reports on the massacre in Jallianwala Bagh, in which missionaries were accused of having direct involvement. It was a common knowledge that opium trade financed some of the missionary educational activities; yet, the Commission Report maintained an indefensible silence on these crucial issues. Uncritical absolutism led to the overconfidence of the self while the abundant optimism regarding their mission objectives prodded them to negate the subjectivity of the ‘other’.

Furthermore, the absence of a self-critical approach promoted the absolutization of the Christian interpretation of the Divine presence in history. The danger of such absolutization of knowledge was expressed in the theological discourse where the reality of the Divine was locked within the boundaries of a given human comprehension. It also promoted the rejection of any living encounter with the living reality the Divine as a heresy.

At most times, establishment of absolutes was coupled with a political project, with specified political and social functions. One of them is the creation of cultural hegemonies. Political history reminds us that the establishment of cultural hegemony precedes political and economic hegemonies. In his inaugural address at the Jerusalem conference of IMC in 1928, Julius Richter implies this function. He observed that the theological understanding of absolutes are cohabited with the social construction of superiority, and therefore he argued that the Christian missionaries needed to be convinced of the superiority of his or her religion over all others.¹³ Or in other words, the theological construct of absolutes provided the legitimation for totalitarianism.

The advent of totalitarianism in Christianity was perceived as a political project of the Western nations by the nationalist elements in the colonized nations. They responded to this phenomenon with the construction of a fundamentalist, and equally totalitarian approach to religions in other traditions. The Commission III report acknowledged this fact in its statement “What concerns this conference is that the new political consciousness as has been shown, and is almost inevitably anti-British and pro-Indian or pro-Hindu, and in Ceylon pro-Buddhist. Twenty-five years ago Buddhism was offering only a passive resistance to missionary efforts. Today it is establishing schools, founding Young Men’s Buddhist Associations, publishing tracts, holding open air meetings, publishing news papers...”¹⁴ Within a span of twenty-five years, a rather passive faith system has been converted to a militant outfit. The Report further observed that the coupling of the anti-British and anti-Christian feelings lead them to the determination to uphold all that passes under the name of Hinduism or Buddhism.¹⁵

4. Towards a new Ecclesiology

Providing a new social base for the Christian Churches in the colonies was the fourth major contribution of missionary education. The Commission report indicated that the development of self-governing native churches was an objective of educational activities, and the priority given to equipping native leaders found justification in this aim.¹⁶ The Christianization of national life and growth of native Churches was possible, as Commission report suggests, only through the growth of native leadership. To achieve this goal, educational missionaries made Christianity accessible to all people irrespective of their caste, class and gender differentiations. In India, for example, the ancient St. Thomas Church was established as an upper-caste social formation, following the taboos and rituals of other upper-caste groups to ensure their privileged place in the hierarchical social structure. Thus the concept of a

Church, as a communion of all irrespective of caste, class and gender differences was absent in the ecclesiological understanding of the ancient Indian Church.

The emergence of schools in the villages to offer education to the Dalits had an enormous impact in the emergence of new ecclesiology. Education equipped the Dalit community to break the occupational basis of caste. The lack of social mobility and the absence of the freedom in occupation was one of the dominant features for caste structure. Rules regarding purity, and pollution constituted the other major impediments for lower caste people. Educational opportunities for Dalits addressed both these elements. Moreover, missionaries invited them to the table fellowship of the Church. The impact of this invitation to the feast of fellowship forced the Indian Church to rethink the concept of purity and pollution and appreciate the inclusiveness of the gospel message and thus to reconstruct the concept of Church.¹⁷ Newer discourse in ethics and theology along with innovative approach to reading the Bible was a direct outcome of these new understandings of the Church offered by the consciousness of equality of caste.

The initiative to expand the fellowship of the church by including the poor and the marginalized gathered new vigor through the translation of the Bible. The marginalized were reinforced by the Word to defend their place in the table. Moreover, translation of the Bible into vernacular languages liberated the Bible from the conceptual systems, informed by the political and class interest of the upper class. The upper class appropriated the text as a political document to legitimize the reproduction of domination. The Scripture assumed new meaning when it reached the poor and the marginalized.

II An agency for Liberation?: Towards a critical enquiry

The contributions of missionary education cannot be summarized in the three or four categories that have been listed here. The impact is still unfolding. If Churches and mission agencies are to reclaim their relevancy, they must explain why missionary education failed to liberate people from ignorance from hatred and the spiral of exploitation and violence. Certain studies commented that the devastation of communities and people are more visible where ties with the Christian West were stronger.¹⁸

One of the proclaimed objectives of missionary education was to civilize the non-civilized people in the colonies. Educational activities located its rationalization with this claim of civilization. However, one of the major disappointments to the present society is the lack of a nation's moral ability to demonstrate a civilized culture and

habits. What is meant by civilization is the blossoming of people's potential to resolve human problems in peaceful and mature ways, be the problems related to economic organization, political conflicts, or social differences. Strengthening of the creative human mind to construct an environment of peace and justice shall be qualified as a civilized way of living. The emerging political ethos, however, demonstrates that relative barbarianism is accepted as the political normative. Military solutions are sought for all conflicts. The *War on Terror* has turned into a *War of Terror*. Violence is meted out not only against humans and communities, but also against nature, and unfortunately the violence against nature is considered a successful way of economic management.

A critical enquiry of missionary educational policies and goals thus is an imperative, not to reinforce the intuition for withdrawal, but to reaffirm churches commitment to transform itself as an agency to extend God's mercy and liberating solidarity in the troubled world situation.

1. Not to educate

A critical appraisal should start with the very objective of education. Ironically, the correspondence from missionaries to the members of the Commission suggests that the primary objective of missionary education was not to educate.¹⁹ Education was not a reason for educational activities. In the place of a resolve to bring education, these correspondences observed that there were two different objectives for education. a) education was a means for conversion and b) it provided a rational legitimation to imperialist rule.

1.a. Education was a means Introductory reports of the Commission report confessed that it considered education only as a means, either direct or indirect, to fulfill the "great commission" in Matthew to make disciples of all nations and to baptize them.²⁰ This observation was in agreement with a majority of the educational missionaries including Alexander Duff, William Miller, and John Wilson. They argued that the chief aim of education was the conversion of the individual pupils.

To satisfactorily achieve this goal, education was narrowed down to a simple logic; reveal the "revealed truth"²¹ and make the pupil to accept it without questions. However, the uncritical appropriation of the 'given truth' was promoted at the expense of any search for truth.

One of the correspondents to the commission, an American Baptist, was explicit in explaining this goal. He argued that the real purpose is not to educate, but to present

the truth. “We are not commissioned to teach a philosophy to be discussed, but to present the truth that to be accepted.”²² Drafters of the Commission report observed that the ethos of this correspondent is reflected in majority of the letters that they have received.²³

Educational discourse however, rejects this proposition as a healthy educational philosophy and proposes that imposing a given truth is contrary to the aims of education.²⁴ It does not mean that there is no accepted knowledge in any given discipline or faith systems. But the accepted knowledge is to be located through critical enquiry by raising defining questions and sometimes by rejecting the approved hypothesis. While explaining the philosophical basis of *Gurukulam*, Rabindranath Tagore asserted that the rational enquiry of the critical mind is the basis for learning. That process transcends the boundaries of teacher and student; both together assume the role of seekers of truth.

1.b. Social functions of education as “not to educate”

One may wonder why educational missionaries have failed to appropriate the spirit of freedom to enquiry. However, their lack of appreciation for any critical enquiry demonstrated the under-girding social functions:

- i. Firstly, it amounts to a denial of the people’s rights to determine what is good for them. It is true that the educational activities have enriched the knowledge of good and evil, but the right to determine what is good was deprived to the students. Those who control the mechanism of learning, or those who are in power decided what is normative. People were deprived of their ability to construct normatives in their lives. The political project of modernity and globalization also assumed the same logic. Those who have a stake in the prevailing economic and social life determine the so-called good and have transferred them as normatives for others.

- ii. Secondly, the attempt to narrow down education as a means of conversion assumes a political strategy to bring social order by homogenizing the mind. Educational missionaries took pride in the report that during the great mutiny in India, there were limited disturbances in the cities where Christian schools were established.²⁵ This approach goes along with the dominant assumption of the Middle Ages that authority and faith singularly maintained social consciousness. Educational missionaries justified these assumptions through professing their faith as a unifying logic in the political space. Thus they assumed that social coherence would be

achieved by accepting the fundamentals of one interpretation of the Divine in history. The implication of this approach was the denial of rational inquiry as a methodology for education. Education was reduced to a political method to unify social forces. Fundamentalist approaches to religion also share the same logic and transform religion as a political phenomenon to bring social unity.

Gautama Buddha, however, appeared to be suggesting a different logic. Buddha advised his disciple: “Kalamas, it is proper that you have doubt, that you have perplexity, for a doubt has arisen in a matter which is doubtful. Do not be misled by reports, or traditions, or by the authority of religious texts.” For Buddha, plurality of interpretations denotes the strength of any given system, exemplified its inherent creativity, and expresses the beauty of the created world. Attempts for radical homogenization only expressed the perceived fear of the missionaries and the fundamentalists to address the challenges of plurality.

Sadly, the persuasive imposition of an unquestionable truth by denying a tradition of critical enquiry only helped the reproduction of domination. Critical questions, challenges to authority, and rejection of a given social order was perceived as immoral and therefore as an anathema to the basic foundations of faith. Loyalty to a given authority and a given social order was projected as the normative moral act. That approach provided reason for the maintenance of status quo.

The danger of depriving education from its potential of being a praxis for freedom and liberation was further gnarled when missionaries developed the diffusion theory, a theory parallel to the trickle down theory of the capitalist economic principles as their guiding principle.

1.c. The Diffusion Theory: Reproduction of Domination

E. Stanley Jones, a long time missionary in India explained the logic of this theory.²⁶ He argued that winning the educated upper class will automatically lead to penetration into the social world of the lower classes. The logic that Jones and other missionaries proposed was simple; influence people who have influence in society. Therefore they find justification in concentrating educational activities among the rich and powerful sections in society. It implies that education should be tailored to satisfy the needs of the rich. The emergence of Christian colleges to provide “quality education” was an immediate ramification of this logic. As Jotibha Phule, the Marathi social reformer, had lamented, this shift in educational priority only helped to reinforce inequality and social domination.²⁷ Upper-caste students used education as a means to attain higher status in the social hierarchy.

The diffusion theory also refused to accept the social agency of the poor for change. The missionary understanding of social agency was not different from the neo-liberal economic perspectives, which placed faith only in those who own capital.

One of the reasons for imposing English as the medium of education was buried in this change of priority informed by the diffusion theory. It also reflected the political interest to unify the emotions and ambitions of the colonized people.

The English education was introduced as a component of the prevailing political logic of imperialism. In his famous thesis, Thomas Macaulay (1835) argued that, the English education would promote a cultural revolution and that will make Indians loyal to the crown. Once the revolution was achieved, he wrote, “The Indian people will cease to opt for and aim for independence. The native shall not rise against us and thus the energy will be fully and harmlessly employed in acquiring and defusing European knowledge and in naturalizing European institutions”.²⁸

The majority of educational missionaries were enthusiastic about the Macaulay doctrine and, for them, teaching of the Bible and English language education were inseparable.²⁹ However, language is not just a medium of communication or a symbol of civility but an experience of reality. The language one speaks positions one in relation to the basic truth of life.³⁰ The language also determines the explanation or understanding of the truth and thus directs the social praxis to realize the perceived truth explanations. Furthermore, language is a medium to one’s own social reality, the reality of life. Therefore alienation from the social self was the immediate ramification of imposing an alien language, English, in missionary education. Moreover, depriving people of their mother tongue resulted in their alienation from the truth of life, creating a structural inability in them to search the fundamentals of their own reality.

An implication of this approach to education was evident in the emerging nationalism. The concept of nationalism was devalued to the level of a polemic against the colonial leadership by the English educated elite upper class.³¹ There was no creative space or any attempt at the construction of an alternate theory of governance by challenging the exploitative logic of colonialism. This was because of the alienation of the nationalist leaders from their social selves. Nationalism was short of demanding total liberation of the Indian masses from the forces of domination. The polemical nationalism was satisfied with a narrow goal - replacing the personnel in the ruling structure. It is possible to argue that the English education was one of the major reasons for keeping the nationalist movement as a truncated movement without any

creative potential to satisfactorily address the aspirations of the dalits, the poor and the marginalized.

2. Education as justification for Colonial Rule

The second objective of education was to provide a logic to justify colonial administration. One of the moral questions that missionaries sought to answer was “what right did the Europeans have to occupy, dominate, and to manage the people of Asia, Africa, and the Americas?”³²¹

At the level of ideology an occupying power is always under pressure to seek an explanation of why they dominate and manage the other. It now appears that a multi-billion dollar hi-tech industry has been in operation to construct lies to justify the occupation of Iraq and the murder of innocent women and children. Telling lies and documenting lies assumed moral respectability in the political space in recent time. However, the occupation of the other was a moral question for the missionaries, and therefore they struggled to find legitimate answers to this disturbing question.

In seeking rational justification for education and occupation, missionaries proposed two possible answers, which later assumed the role of an official explanation of the churches and the colonial political leadership. Missionaries argued that: i.) Colonialism was providential, allowing people to encounter the saving grace of God. The imperial success therefore was integral to God’s plan to bless the world. ii.) Occupying other lands and educating their occupants was driven by a moral imperative to modernize the primitive economic relations and to civilize the barbarians.³³ This second explanation was widely shared and suggested as the major objective and outcome of colonial domination. To meet these aforesaid objectives, the educational missionaries employed Western science with a twin purpose; to uproot the superstitious presumptions from the native mind and to develop in them a scientific consciousness.

Alexander Duff recounts an incident. In a junior class he asked his students ‘what is rain?’ A student immediately offered an answer: “rain comes from the trunk of the elephant god Indra”.³⁴ To defuse this faith reading of reality, educational missionaries found that a materialistic interpretation of science is indispensable.

Science therefore assumed the role of a destroyer to uproot given meaning systems, faith explanations, values, moral principles, worldviews, and practices. Science was

not a reason to govern, but science became a means to govern.³⁵ Science was embraced not because of any liking to it but because of the use value it offered to debase an existing knowledge system. And as a result, the knowledge system that people preserved for centuries was destroyed.

These traditional knowledge systems that communities preserved for generations were informed by ethics and morality and underpinned by a faith explanation of the cosmological and social reality of life. In this system, science and knowledge- including agriculture, carpentry, mathematics, medical science, and erotic knowledge- were situated as an extension of theological knowledge.

Negation of this system of knowledge had created a vacuum for moral and ethical discourse in science. Educational missionaries expected that the void created by the destruction of the traditional knowledge could be filled by Christian morality and faith, what they called Christian civilization. However, this attempt failed.

What emerged in its place was an unethical and materialistic approach to social and physical realities. In that process, science was turned into an instrument of exploitation rather than an agent to liberate the poor and the marginalized from the forces of ignorance and exploitation.

Materialist science has become a major threat to nature and environment because it assumes that the creation of new techniques to alter or manipulate the natural world is one of its primary objectives. Such an approach to science devalued nature as a 'thing' and suggested that the distance of nature is the measure of progress or the mark of civilization.

Education for De-earthization

Therefore education was defined as a process of de-earthization. De-earthization promoted a total alienation of people from earth. The earth is reduced to an object of study and not a subjective agency with which to be identified.

It is ironic that this was a time when churches in the Western hemisphere were critical of a materialistic interpretation of science and social reality. Echoes of those critical warnings were heard in the subsequent mission conferences. In 1910, Reverend Sloan Coffin reminded the Edinburgh conference that modern civilization probably was the greatest hindrance to Christian gospel.³⁶ Later, Rufus Jones reiterated the same concern at the Jerusalem meeting of the IMC.³⁷ Educational missionaries, however,

failed to appreciate the depth of Coffin's observation. Churches in the globalized world also failed to comprehend the theological importance of this statement.

III Emerging Challenges

Let me end with two concluding observations. Two compelling realities of our time are globalization and fundamentalism, and mission education has significant role in the development of both these realities. Unfortunately these realities shape and direct mission priorities and practices.

1. Rejection of ungod

What is important to note here is that what is globalization is not just a prescription for a mode of production alone, but it is a way of organizing collective life.

Globalization has assumed the role of a religion with well-articulated theologies, dogmas, rituals, priesthood, missionaries, cathedrals, and of course with its own concept of the divine. It has a concept of hell as well. The heathens and sinners who dare to question the revealed truth of the market divine are condemned to life in eternal hell.

The core of the doctrine has three basic pillars, viz., a). Market as the social principle; b). Growth and modernity as the normative culture; and c). dictatorship of money as politics.

The neo-liberal ideology that governs the present stage of globalization has made the market as the foundation for social and community formation. The market assumes the exclusive right for mediation between individuals, communities, and nations - meaning that the market has become the functioning ecclesia of the present time with ability to interiorize the outside into its logic and control.³⁸ This new ecclesia also comes with a soteriology, and a perfect empirical explanation of the utopia.

However in the market mediation all realities are transformed into commodities. Without assuming themselves as commodities, realities hold no value. Therefore, educational institutions have restructured themselves as a marketplace where the buying and selling of knowledge and skills takes place. Knowledge has to be reshaped on a regular basis to attract prospective buyers. As the competition in the educational market intensifies, the transformation of what is known as knowledge as an attractive commodity also assumes new heights.

Teachers are therefore converted into small vendors selling certain types of specialized commodities. The perversion of education is the critical reality that missionary education needs to encounter with determination in this time of globalization. Unfortunately, Church schools around the world are embedded in the market principals and are in a vanguard position for commoditizing skills and knowledge and to establish the market as the governing norm of life.

The market in recent years has changed into virtual markets where value is added through virtual realities. All productive processes have been subordinated to the fictitious creation of values in the virtual market. In such subordination, the function of wealth and resources are detached from the need to sustain life. Wealth has freed itself from having to be committed to a purpose and is beyond all social determinations. The result is the radical change to the status of capital in society. While in capitalist system commodities assume the role of social subjects, in the globalized world “Capital” has become the ontological category and the foundation for all being.

In the religious level, the logic of market has debased the memory of the Divine in order to enthrone money, with a capital M, as the presiding deity of individuals and nations. And that is the challenge new mission movements should encounter. In order to confront the Capital in the form of ungod, mission initiatives should attempt to build new solidarities between religions and create space for various faith systems to congregate.

2 Problem of ‘otherness’

The second challenge of our time is fundamentalism. The “other” has turned into a problem and furthermore, the ability to celebrate the presence of the other is rejected as an archaic idea. Educational missionaries were not an exception in endorsing this view. In their equation, the “other” was considered as a misnomer because they perceived themselves as the norm. That means, there is no legitimate space for the other to exist as ‘other’. To reject the presence of the ‘other’ as the ‘other’, missionary movements created a conscious ignorance of the ‘other’. The knowledge of the ‘other’ as ‘other’ was replaced by socially constructed hermeneutics of the other. The importance of anthropology as a science and a partner for mission studies has evolved in this context.

However, in the recent political morality, the ‘otherness’ has become a complex metaphor. While other is painted with scary and dreadful colours, the social symbolization of the ‘other’ is used to invade and conquer the space of the ‘other’.

‘Otherness’ therefore is addressed through the language of war and the death of the ‘other’ is celebrated as a victory of the civilized world. However, one should be reminded of the Biblical imperatives that the death of the ‘other’ is the death of God; because the face of the ‘other’ is the location where God revealed himself/herself in history. To counter the prevailing attitude to otherness mission should become a search for justice and healing by reestablishing the presence of God in community.

But unfortunately, faith has converted itself as a political statement and in that process all religions are transformed into political religions, viz., political Christianity, political Islam, political Judaism, political Hinduism, and so on. The Iraq war has illustrated this phenomenon. Religions by and large have failed in recent years by allowing the abuse of the name of their deity and the reading of their scripture to destroy innocent human lives. Many innocent lives are made victims of a text which Christians claim as their scripture. And the name of the deity that religions use as holy was used to provide a normative for falsehood.

Reading the mission document creates a suspicion that a search with humility to locate which Jesus was introduced in the past is an imperative for the mission enterprise, whether it was the Jesus of the Gospels or the Christ of Constantine. The Christ of Constantine was hailed as the presiding deity of all monarchic and imperialist rulers. This question becomes more pertinent now because the majority of people in the world consider the so-called Christian nations to be the greatest threat to world peace.

This is not an ideological or political statement informed by any prejudice but it is a theological question informed by the concern to re-appropriate the fundamentals of faith. Have we failed to present “the Prince of Peace”? Certainly there are hermeneutical excuses to claim that the sword is a promise of Jesus and therefore a military response to a situation of disorder is justifiable. But the sword that Jesus promises is a sword for creating justice, equality, and peace. On the contrary, the sword of the so-called Christian nations is the sword of the market, to ensure access of oil and to provide protection for commodities and transnational capital; to defend the deified money or the un-god of the market.

We meet at a time when serious retrospection is called for to locate whether we failed to identify the Jesus of the Gospel. The major burden of Alexander Duff was the explicit idolatry he found in other religions.³⁹ This concern should lead us to identify a more deep-rooted and more tenacious idolatry buried in the triumphalist and invading Christianity that was carried around as an answer to all problems.

Theological methodologies suggest that in order to reestablish faith in the Creator God and to become a witness to the source of life, identification and naming of the death-dealing idolatries is imperative. The dominant idolatries of the present time may include patriotism, the concept of national security, and the so-called civilized values. Being daring to reject the Christ that was made as the presiding deity of imperialism is the challenge of faith. That will also lead to recognizing the spirit of the Divine moving through the ghettos of Bethany and Galilee with the outcasts, the poor, the women, the deprived, and others who are being cast out of the centers of power for various reasons. That identification is one of the major mandates for mission today.

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¹ For example, see Address of V. S. Azariah “The Problem of Co-operation between Foreign and native Workers” in *The History and Records of the Conference* World Missionary Conference 1910. (London Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, (no date) pp. 306-315

² EACC Bangkok Assembly *Christian Community Within Human Community*

³ M. M. Thomas *The Christian Response to the Asian Revolution*. (London: SCM Press, 1966) p. 39

⁴ *ibid.* pp. 57-65

⁵ quoted by MSN Menon. “Time to Bridle Religious Impulses” *Tribune* Friday January 7, 2002

⁶ see M. P. Joseph “Suttee: A Critique from an Ethical Perspective” *The Sathri Journal* (1/1993)

⁷ *Young India*, I June 1921, p. 170

⁸ Kosuke Koyama “Carrying the Gospel to All the non-Christian World” April 2002. internet source: www.towards2010.org.uk/papers

⁹ Alexander Duff, speech at General assembly in Scotland 1855. quoted by T.V. Philip, *Edinburgh to Salvador: Twentieth Century Ecumenical Missiology* (Delhi: CSS& ISPCK, 1999) p. 170

¹⁰ Michael Kinnamon and B. Cope (eds.) *The Ecumenical Movement: An Anthology of Key Texts and*

Voices (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1997) p. 332

¹¹ H. Kraemer. *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World* (London: The Edinburgh House Press, 1938, 4th impression) p. 6-7.

¹² Ibid. p. 7

¹³ *International Review of Missions* Vol. 3, no. 7, (1913) quoted by Philip, *Edinburgh to Salvador...* p. 180

¹⁴ *Report of Commission III, Education in relation to the Christianisation of National Life*, World Missionary Conference, 1910. (Edinburgh and London: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier) p. 31

¹⁵ ibid. p. 31

¹⁶ ibid. p. 52-55

¹⁷ Eira M. Dalton. *Fellow Workers With God* (Kottayam: CMS Press, 1966)

¹⁸ A. G. Frank. "The Development of Underdevelopment" *Monthly Review* 18(7) 1966, pp. 17-31.

¹⁹ *Commission Report III* One of the correspondents wrote" The real purpose of educational missionary work is not merely to educate...but win our pupils to Christ." P. 17.

²⁰ *Commission Report III* "Go ye therefore and make disciples of all the nations.... We of this commission are concerned with education considered only as a means, direct or indirect, towards this end." p. 16

²¹ ibid. p. 17

²² Letter from Rev. W.A. Stanton, of the American Baptist Telugu Mission to the Commission. *Commission Report III* p. 17

²³ Commission report says: "Quotation to the same effects might be multiplied from the papers before us." p. 17

²⁴ John J. Mearsheimer "The Aim of Education Address" Address at Chicago University, on October 23, 1997, internet source www.ditext.com/mearsheimer/aimsofeducation.html. accessed on 4/13/2004.

²⁵ At a meeting held in Edinburgh in 1859, a letter was read from the Marquis of Tweeddale, the former Governor of Madras. It reads .."it should be remembered that much of the excitement about India had to do with the Mutiny-was that Madras, the most Christianised part of India , had remained quiet during the Mutiny." Quoted by J. C. Ingleby *Missionaries, Education and India: Issues in Protestant Missionary Education in the Long Nineteenth Century*" (Delhi: ISPCK, 2000) p. 158-59

²⁶ Ingleby *Missionaries..* p. 247

²⁷ ibid. p. 276

²⁸ Speech of Lord Babington Macaulay, *Hansard* p. 195, quoted by Jacob S. Dharmaraj. *Colonialism and Christian Mission: Postcolonial Reflections* (Delhi: ISPCK, 1999) p. 69

²⁹ *Commission Report III* p.61

³⁰ see Aloysius Pieris "Towards an Asian Theology of Liberation" in Fabella V., (ed) *Asia's Struggle for Full Humanity* (New York: Orbis, 1980), pp.77

³¹ see Sumit Sarkar, *Modern India: 1885-1947* (Delhi: Macmillan, 2000)

³² Enrique Dussel *Beyond Philosophy: Ethics, History, Marxism and Liberation Theology* (New York: Ronman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003) p. 53-81

³³ William Wilberforce said that the Indian natives were barbarous and low in the scale of European civilization. Hence they should be civilized and converted.” Speech of William Wilberforce, *Hansard*, 22 June, 1813, First Series, Vol. 26, p.164. quoted by Dharmaraj *Colonialism and..* p. 33

³⁴ Alexander Duff in *India and India Missions* quoted by Sanjay Seth “Which Good Book? Missionary Education and Conversion in Colonial India” *Semeia* p. 120

³⁵ Ashis Nandy “Introduction: Science as a Reason of State” in A. Nandy (ed.) *Science, Hegemony and Violence* (New Delhi: OUP, 1990) p. 1-23.

³⁶ During the address to the 1910 meeting H.S. Coffin said “Modern civilization is probably the greatest hinderance to-day to the proclamation of the Christian Gospel.” *The History and Record of the Conference*, World Missionary Conference, 1910.... P. 166

³⁷ Rufus M. Jones “Secular Civilization and the Christian Task” *Report of the Jerusalem Meeting of the International Missionary Council, 1928*, (London: OUP, 1928), pp.284-338.

³⁸ See M. Douglas Meeks *God the Economist* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989)

³⁹ In 1858 Duff gives the rational in *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine* “The most serious controversy that ever rose between God and man is represented in the system of idolatry. In every idol we see God’s rival.” P. 894, quoted by Dharmaraj, *Colonialism...* p. 63.