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Contextualizing Christian Theology in South Asia: An Analytical Study from 1542-1947

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Abstract

South Asian region has largely been under the influence of Indian, Chinese and Arabic cultures. All of the religious traditions have been strongly localized and tolerated various forms of folk cultures. Christianity in this region came in the early sixteenth century and flourished in the colonial era. It is normally assumed that it escaped from the process of adaptation and syncretism. However, this is not the case, as there were a number of missionaries not interested in Europeanizing their converts as in the case of Jesuits missionaries in India. Here in this article an attempt has been made to explicate the early attempt of western missionaries and local Christian to localize Christianity. To achieve this goal this paper has been divided into three sections. First section sheds light upon the overall attitude of early missionaries to the indigenous cultures and religions of India. Second section deals with the early efforts of contemporization in Indian Subcontinent. Third section will illustrate the situation church had to face after the partition of India, and how this partition impeded the process of contemporization movement. As a method, this article reviews the efforts of both native Christians and missionaries to indigenize Christianity in Indian first chronologically and then thematically.

Keywords: South Asian Christianity, Indian Christianity, contextualization, Malabar controversy, jesuits in India, religion and culture

Introduction

This paper highlights the early contact of Christian missionaries with the religions and cultures of India and the process of contextualization in South Asia during 1542-1947. In this regard, this paper addresses these basic questions: how early missionaries viewed Indian culture and its religions? How the early contacts of missionaries and natives helped to shape their understanding about each other's religions and cultures? How the process of contextualization which is widely

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known today in South Asian context was emerged? Who were the pioneers of this movement? What were the basic characteristics of the earlier forms of contextualization? And what are the new trends in Christian missionary attitudes regarding the cultures and religion of South Asia?

2. Undivided India and its Religions and Cultures in the Eyes of the Missionaries

Christian mission in India started in the first half of sixteenth century. Early missionaries came to India with the supremacy notion of western civilization and religion. They made little attempt to understand the religious traditions and culture of India. They believed that Indians were primitive pagan and whatever they considered right was wrong and hence it was their responsibility to teach them the right way of doing things. Consequently, the response of early Christian missionaries towards their host religions and cultures was hostile and confrontational. They strongly denounced idol worshipping and bowing to animals practiced by Hindus. They also questioned the lives of Hindu mendicants, arguing that such practices are inhuman and were also common before the arrival of Bible in western societies; however, Bible has saved the west from the practice of such evil norms.¹ Andrew Gordon, a Presbyterian missionary in Punjab criticized the whole structure of Indian civilization in the following words:

“It (Indian Civilization) is selfish, looking to the pleasure and aggrandizement of the rich, the noble, the powerful, and the wise, whilst it cares not for the poor, helpless, ignorant, base and miserable masses. It is oppressive and cruel to man and beast, and cares not to utilize wind, water, steam, lightning and laborsaving machinery, so long as there is another poor man's muscle available, or a bit of whole skin left on the galled back of the ass, mule or camel. It is a superstitious and inconsistent civilization, paying homage to the idle mendicant, who is the most useless of all men, and at the same time despising the poor laborer, and treating with horrid cruelty the beast which he worships as God. This civilization is ingenious enough in little things.”²

The above mentioned paragraph is an indication how the earlier missionaries saw the less technological Indian civilization and connected it to the Hindu religion. The connection of religion and civilization was a common theme in the writings of early missionaries because they credited Christianity for the technological, industrial and scientific progress of west. So, they thought

¹Andrew Gordon, *Our India Mission: A Thirty Year's History of the India Mission of the United Presbyterian Church of North America, Together with Personal Reminiscences* (Philadelphia: Inquirer Printing Co Stereotypers and Printers, Lancaster, 1886), 75.

²Ibid., 76.

themselves not only as the bearer of true faith but also a true western civilization. These early Christian missionaries came to the subcontinent with the notion of religious superiority and a theology of exclusivism. This notion of superiority was not only limited to Christian teachings but also extended to western cultural superiority because they entwined the ideal and values of western civilization with the tenets of Christianity. As David Bosch, a South African historian of mission wrote, “The advocates of mission were blind to their own ethnocentrism. They confused their middle-class ideals and values with the tenets of Christianity. Their views about morality, respect ability, order, efficiency, individualism, professionalism, work, and technological progress, having been baptized long before, were without compunction exported to the ends of the earth.”³

This view in its extended form is quite visible in the writings and enquiry reports of early Christian missionaries, as like all other westerners they were the most conscious propagandist of this superiority culture. William E. Hocking (1873-1966), an American philosopher in his book upon mission history entitled *Re-Thinking Missions: A Laymen's Inquiry after One Hundred Years* published in 1932 argued that the world is leading towards a world-culture that is definitely western.⁴ Along with this supremacy notion, missionaries were inclined to think that the “Christian West” had the right to impose its views on others.⁵ Edward Said has also argued about the notion of western cultural superiority among the colonialist powers and orientalist, who served as a tool to western imperialism.⁶ William Muir (1819-1905), who served as a missionary in India, also wrote a polemical biography of Prophet Muhammad, entitled *The Life of Mahomet*⁷ arguing Islam was incapable to allow progress and change.⁸

Due to this superiority complex, they believed that their subjects were culturally impoverished, superstitious, ignorant, pagans, poor etc. They considered

³David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (New York: Maryknoll and Orbis Books 1991/ 2006), 364-65.

⁴For full detail see: William E. Hocking, *Re-Thinking Missions: A Laymen' S Inquiry after One Hundred Years* (New York, London: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1932). The book can be accessed through this link: <https://ia801408.us.archive.org/0/items/rethinkingmissio011901mbp/rethinkingmissio011901mbp.pdf>. (Accessed on 07-04-2017)

⁵David J. Bosch, *Transforming mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, 366.

⁶Edward Said, *Orientalism* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978)

⁷William Muir, *The Life of Mahomet*, 1st edit., 1861 (London: Smith, Elder and co., 1931)

⁸William Muir, *The Caliphate: Its Rise, Decline and Fall* (Edinburg: J. Grant, 1924), 601.

themselves and their vision as an embodiment of light, vision enlightenment and knowledge.⁹ Just to add, when a missionary depicts such a picture of the subject it is virtually impossible to determine which of these depictions referred to west's culture and which to its religion. The first step of characterization presupposed the other.¹⁰ This missionary approach to other cultures was similar to the colonial approach to cultural imperialism in which you delegate the values, rituals, culture and the religions of your subjects. This missionary approach violated traditional milieu which goes back to the edict of Pope Gregory the Great (r. 590-604) in which the pope instructed to respect and maintain the English people's existing places of pagan worship so that after their conversion, the new Christian could continue to use their familiar places for worship.¹¹ However, this missionary attitude was not developed in South Asia and they denounced every form of wisdom inherited by the local people. As Sister Michel, from St. John of God sisters Lahore states: "Today in light of history we see many of the churches in Asia including Pakistan as being caught which had not given any recognition to the indigenous cultures of the people resulting in the lack of proper inculturation of our Christian faith."¹²

This cultural superiority mindset of the missionaries was the integral reason why they failed to adopt the local values and indigenizing Christian faith in the context of India. This missionary approach impeded the promulgation of Christianity in India, limiting itself to only low class people. As an eminent Jesus missionary P. J. Hoffmann states "the whole of modern mission work in India has gone to the pieces on the rocks of rigid Europeanism and for that reason it is a great fiasco."¹³

Realizing this fact behind paucity of conversion among high class people the missionaries steadily changed their behavior towards indigenous cultures and religions and they started to pay positive attention to the host cultures and religions. It is also interesting to note here that earlier this change was limited to Hinduism only because the word "culture" in India was generally used as a synonym for

⁹Ibid., 365.

¹⁰Ibid., 366.

¹¹Michael Greene, *Leader's Guide for Primary Source Readings in Catholic Church History* (Saint Mary's Press, 2005), 30.

¹²Sister Michel, Research Seminar, Third world Theologies: Comparative Methodologies, 13-18 March, Pastoral Institute Multan, *Focus* 12, no.1 (1989), 39-46.

¹³Friedrich Heiler, *The Gospel of Sadhu Sunder Singh*, trans., Olive Wyon, (London: George Allen & Unwin LTD. 1927), 230.

Hinduism.¹⁴ A. J. Appasamy's book, *The Gospel and India's Heritage and Rethinking Christianity in India* is regarded among classics on this topic and theme. Along with the intention to convert high class Hindus to Christian faith, following figures and factors were important in developing this trend in India.

3. Francis Xavier (1506-1532) and the Beginning of Jesuit Mission

The Jesuit Priest Francis Xavier started an active mission in the coastal areas of India, Goa and later on in the South East Asia. He came to Goa with the view that Hindus and Muslim the predominant religions of the region were completely incorrect and their teachings were mere distortions to the truth. He carried with him a typical missionary belief that his job was just to teach, as there was nothing to learn from indigenous cultures. Though he came with very harsh views, the experience of Francis Xavier led him to rethink and reorient his preaching methods. He adopted some of the indigenous forms to preach Christianity like language and dress. In one of his letters to the Society of Jesus in 1543, he reported his preaching progress in Malabar which is now a part of Kerala. He translated the Catechism, Apostle's creed, the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, the *Ave Maria*, and the *Salve Regina* into Malabar language.¹⁵ As a method of preaching, he memorized these translations and preached in indigenous language.¹⁶ In 1554, just two years after his death, the whole Bible was translated into Tamil language. However, the use of the indigenous languages as a tool to preach Christian faith was a first of its kind practice that Xavier adopted to indigenize Christianity at Indian soil. However, he did not allow to celebrate liturgy in indigenous languages. In one of his letter written to the Latin patriarch of Jerusalem in 1597, he warned him about the negative consequences on the use of indigenous language especially Syrian language in Church services. He wrote "I humbly suggest that he (The Latin Bishop) be instructed to extinguish little by little the Syrian language because the Syrian language is the channel through which all that heresy flows. A good administrator ought to replace by Latin."¹⁷ In addition, he did not compromise with indigenous cultures and believed upon the superiority of European cultures and religion at such a level that even, he changed the names of converts with French or Portuguese.¹⁸ He also developed a religious song in

¹⁴David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, 4.

¹⁵For detail see: M. K. Kuriakose, *History of Christianity in India: Source Materials* (India: The Senate of Serampore College, 1999), 33.

¹⁶Ibid., 27-32.

¹⁷Ibid., 39.

¹⁸Cyril Bruce Firth, *An Introduction to Indian Church History* (Madras: Christian Literature Society, 1962), 58-60.

Vernacular language. The earliest example of this can be found in the form of “The Ramban Song” also known as “*the Song of Thomas*” attributed to Thoma Parvam composed in 1601.¹⁹ This song is still sung at ceremonial occasions; its words describe the mission story of St. Thomas and his evangelical work in Malabar Coast.²⁰

4. Robert De Nobili (1577-1656) and Malabar Controversy

Later another Jesuit missionary Robert De Nobili²¹ (1577-1656) made some genuine efforts to indigenize Christianity in undivided India. He came to Goa, India—the center of Portuguese mission in Asia at that time, in October 1605.²² Before him other missionaries like, Francis Xavier, Father Gonzalo Fernendaz (1520-1578) also worked there. After apprehending the milieu of Madurai he realized, India cannot win for Christ without converting the high class Hindus, however to get them closer to Christian faith was an enormous challenge at hand. After some fieldwork he found that the biggest hurdle in his way was their negative image amongst the high class Hindus because they used to judge the nobility of a person from his meal, drinking and his contact with the untouchables.²³ Missionaries did not fulfill Hindu criteria of nobility because they consumed beef, drink wine and intercourse with the secluded classes of India and hence were called *firangi*²⁴ (low cast people) and their religion as *firangi* religion (the religion of low

¹⁹M. K. Kuriakose, *History of Christianity in India: Source Materials* (India: The Senate of Serampore College, 1999), 43.

²⁰For dull detail of the contents of this song see: Robert Eric Frykenberg, *History of Christianity in India: From Beginnings to the Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 99-100.

²¹Nobili wrote all of his work in Latin and it is inaccessible to the researcher because of the deficiency in the Latin, Tamil and Sanskrit languages. The discussion followed is based upon reliable secondary sources.

²²Collins M. Paul, *Christian Inculturation in India* (England: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2007), 17; however, there are studies who place the date of Nobili’s arrival in India in 1606. For detail see: Keith Hebden, *Dalit Theology and Christian Anarchism* (England & USA: Ashgate Publishing, 2011), 34; Stephen Neill a church historian state his arrival date 20 May, 1605, for detail see: Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions*. 2nd edit., (Harmondsworth: penguin books, 1986), 280.

²³See for detail: M. K. Kuriakose, *History of Christianity in India: Source Materials* (India: The Senate of Serampore College, 1999), 50.

²⁴*Firangi* is the appellation under which the Europeans are designated by the natives of India. It is derived from the term Frank and has been introduced by the Mahometans. See: Abbe J. A. Dubois, *Letters on the State of Christianity in India* (London: Longman, 1823), 11.

cast people).²⁵ In 1607, he wrote letter to Bellarmine in which he described his accommodation method in order to get attraction of High caste Hindus. He wrote “my food consists of a little rice with some herbs and fruit; never meat²⁶ and egg cross my threshold. It is necessary to observe all these, for if these people did not see me do such penance, they would not receive me as one who can teach them the way to heaven because that is the way of life their own teacher observe.”²⁷

Other missionaries somehow accepted Hindu terms—*firangi* and *firangi* religion—however, Nobili reacted to this and disguised himself in the robe of a Brahman *Sanyasi* and named him an Italian Brahman in order to associate himself with high caste Hindus instead of *firangis* or *pariah*. He fully indigenized himself in Hindu life style. He give up beef, fish, wine, eggs and other things that they disliked or abhorred.²⁸

He also learned the scriptural languages of Hinduism, Sanskrit and Tamil to acquaint himself with their books.²⁹ For this, he was named first oriental scholar³⁰ and European to know the sacred languages of Hinduism. Max Muller (1823-1900), a great German scholar of Sanskrit and the editor of “the sacred books of the east” also mentioned him in his “lectures on the science of language,” delivered in the Royal Institution in London. After this, he became the first European Sanskrit scholar who was capable of quoting from Hindu religious texts like the Laws of Manu and *Purans*.³¹

²⁵For full detail see: Vincent A. Cronin, *A Pearl to India: The life of Robert de Nobili* (London: Rupert Hart, 1959) 43-45; Joseph Brucker, “Malabar Rites”, *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. Vol. 9. (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1910) <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09558b.htm>>. Accessed at 30 Apr. 2018.

²⁶The meat was prohibited in Indian spirituality. Those who eat meat were considered impure in Hinduism. However, migration movement among Indians to foreign countries in search of better employment and globalization compelled the modern Hindus to eat meat. For detail see: Dr. Daud Rahbar, *Culture kay Ruhani 'Anasar (Spiritual Elements of Culture)* (Lahore: Snag-e-Meel Publications, 1998), 27-29.

²⁷Vincent A. Cronin, *A Pearl to India: The life of Robert de Nobili* (London: Rupert Hart, 1959), 74-75.

²⁸Savarimuthu Rajamanickam, *The First Oriental Scholar* (De Nobili Research Institute, 1972), 84-85.

²⁹M.K.Kuriakose, *History of Christianity in India: Source Materials* (India: The Senate of Serampore College, 1999), 51.

³⁰For full detail see: Savarimuthu Rajamanickam, *The First Oriental Scholar* (De Nobili Research Institute, 1972)

³¹For full detail see: Max Muller, *Lectures on the Science of Language*, (London: Green Longman and Brothers, 1861) 147-149. The text can be accessed through, the

As an inculturation method, he dressed himself like a Hindu Brahmin and started wearing a yellow robe, a cap of same colour and a turban on his head, calling himself a *sanyasi*³² (austerity). He observed the rituals of high caste Hindus like, wearing threads but giving them Christian meaning and interpretation. For example, he used to wear five threads, three of gold—representing trinity—two of silver, representing them as body and soul.³³ In his letter to Pope Paul V in 1619 AD, he explained that long tuft and thread indicated the nobility of the family and had no relationship to religion or worship.³⁴

He also adopted the caste system of India which means denying the basic principal of Christian missionaries and theology that all people are equal in the eyes of God. Zoe C. Sherinian quoted that Christianity does not require from any one to “lose his caste or pass into another, nor does it induce anyone to do anything detrimental to the honor of his family.”³⁵ He only allowed the Brahmin Hindus to touch him and only high caste Hindus were allowed to visit his friary. He allowed his followers to observe their own specific rituals and to wear their tribal dresses. He separated the new converted according to their social strata and caste. He allowed ceremonial bath that Hindus take to purify themselves on certain occasion like in river Ganges (a sacred river in India according to Hindu traditions); the use of sandalwood in the funeral, marriage and other ceremonies; threading ceremony normally a sister binds on the shoulder of her brother and sometime to ward off the evil spirit and for good fortune (*rakhi*). He also composed indigenous music in Tamil and Sanskrit to lure the people to Christianity.³⁶ So in this way the adaption of some Indian rituals and traditions helped the new converts to retain their indigenous identity along with Christian identity. The new converts also denied taking saliva ritual in baptism because it was considered an impure act in their previous religious texts. The laws of Manu clearly considered the 12 waists of body as impure and saliva was also one of them. It states, “An earthen vessel which has

webpage:[https://ia600107.us.archive.org/1/items/M.MullerLecturesOnTheScienceOfLanguageDeli/M.%20Muller%2C%20Lectures on the science of language deli.pdf](https://ia600107.us.archive.org/1/items/M.MullerLecturesOnTheScienceOfLanguageDeli/M.%20Muller%2C%20Lectures%20on%20the%20science%20of%20language%20deli.pdf).
(accessed at 30 April, 2018)

³²The one who renounce the worldly life and live as ascetic.

³³Robert De' Nobili. I." *The Irish Monthly* 9, no. 102 (1881), 643-62.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/20496667>.

³⁴M. K. Kuriakose, *History of Christianity in India: Source Materials* (India: The Senate of Serampore College, 1999), 51.

³⁵Zoe C. Sherinian, ed., *Tamil Folk Music as Dalit Liberation Theology* (USA: Indiana University Press, 2014), 74.

³⁶*Ibid.*, 74.

been defiled by spirituous liquor, urine, ordure, saliva, pus or blood cannot be purified by another burning.”³⁷

However, Nobili’s fellow missionaries who were also working in the same area strongly condemned his new approach. They blamed Nobili that he was interpolating Christianity by adding non-Christian elements in it like idolatry and superstitious ritual of Hindu and Mohmmadan religion. There were six objections made against him and were sent to Vatican. First, he allowed his converts to wear sacred thread, which is the identifying mark of the twice-born caste; second, he allowed the sandal-paste on the forehead which is the identifying mark of sacred ashes of Shiva (a preserver god in Hindu trinity) or trident of the Vishnu (the destroyer god); third, he did not prohibited ceremonial bath, which is an important Hindu ritual; fourth, he permitted the sacred tuff of hair grown by Brahman; fifth, in the marriage ceremony he substituted the ring with the *tali*, along with the neck ornament which was worn by Hindu women as the sign of the marriage and last, he introduced such practices in Christian theology and creed which were not purely and originally Christian but of Hindu origin.³⁸

Fernandez who was his co-missionary along with Nobili thought this indigenization effort, as an anti-Christian and sent a letter to Rome to declare them heretical and to take serious actions against him. Vatican put Nobili in trial before Goa inquisition.³⁹ He defended his position by strongly arguing that the ritual allowed him to convert people and hence had nothing to do with Christian teachings and its theology, as they were mere signs of the local cultures. In 1623, a papal document was issued and declared his method and contemporization approach according to the teachings of gospel. It included statement from Reid B. Locklin’s vernacular Catholicism;

“Taking piety on human weakness, till further deliberation by us and the Apostolic See, we grant by the present letters, in virtue of the Apostolic Authority, to the Brahmin and other gentiles who have been and will be converted to the faith permission to take and wear the thread and to (grow) the *kudumni* as distinctive sign of their social status, nobility and of other offices; we allow them to use sandal as an ornament; and ablution for the cleanliness of the body; provided

³⁷Max Muller, ed., *Sacred Books of the East: The laws of Manu*, trans., G. Buhler, (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1886), 191.

³⁸Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions*, 2nd edit., (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1986), 289.

³⁹It was an institute of Roman Catholic Church to investigate the heresies. To knw its full history see: Michael C. Thomsett, *The Inquisition: A History* (USA: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2010)

However that to remove all superstition and all alleged causes for scandal. The Christians should receive these emblems from a catholic priest who will bless them reciting pious prayers approved by the ordinary for the whole diocese at which time they should make a profession of faith. Old threads should be destroyed and replaced by new ones blessed in honor of trinity which the three strands were to serve to recall.⁴⁰

So, with the interference of Vatican, Nobili's method of indigenization was approved. He continued his work in Madurai. He left Goa when he turned blind and later died in 1657.⁴¹ Not a century past, the use of these rituals in the church started a hot controversy among the missionaries. This controversy is known as "Malabar rite Controversy"⁴² in the History of the church and was a victory for him, as previously all the indigenous elements were declared as anti-Christian and heretical. In 1736 an edict was issued from Rome which invalidated several indigenous practices they accustomed to like such as the use of Gita and Hindu musical instruments in the Marriage ceremonies, wedding gifts not to be handed over to the parents of bride or bridegroom but through an ecclesiastical person, when dowry was taken to bridegroom's home after wedding no gifts would be exchanged, folksong known as *vovios* should not be sung in ceremonies either in public or private, fixed days to crush rice, grind condiments or flour, fry cakes and etc., during marriage ceremonies, anointing of bride or bridegroom (known in Punjab as *Mayon bithana*) was banned, rituals at the time of child birth, six day of the birth of a child (probably Muslim ritual '*aqiqah*') was prohibited, prohibition of fasting on the eleventh day of the moon or in Hindu days, prohibition of wearing *dhoti* (a garment worn by male Hindus, consisting of a piece of material tied around the waist and extending to cover most of the legs) by men and *cholis* (a short-sleeved bodice worn under a sari by Indian women) by women and last but not least not to call any Christian with Hindu surname.⁴³

This edict abolished all previous efforts made to indigenize Christianity in India and Nobili's new method of preaching, hampering the growth of Christianity in India. Abbe J. A. Dubois, a Roman Catholic Missionary in Mysore wrote a letter

⁴⁰Reid B. Locklin, *Vernacular Catholicism, Vernacular Saints: Selva J. Raj on Being Catholicism on Tamil Way* (New York: Suny Press, 2003), 20.

⁴¹Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions*, 2nd edit., (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1986), 296.

⁴²Most of the first-hand literature upon the controversy is in Latin language as it was the official corresponding language between the church and missionaries at that time and also very rare.

⁴³M. K. Kuriakose, *History of Christianity in India: Source Materials* (India: The Senate of Serampore College, 1999), 51.

to Rev. W. J. Mysore on August 7, 1815, in which he said that “a great number of proselytes preferred renouncing the new religion to abandoning their practices. A stop was put to conversion; and the Christian religion became odious to the Hindus on account of its tolerance.”⁴⁴ The decrease in the total number of Christians was an evident fact to it. As he described “there is not at present in country more than a third of the Christian who were to be found in it eighty years ago.”⁴⁵ The early phase of the arrival of Jesuits missionaries ended in 1760 because of internal conflict. Jeyaraj Rasiah, a Sri Lankan Jesuit priest wrote, “In 1755, Sebastian Joseph de Carvalho e Melo, Marquis of Pombal became dictator of Portugal. He had a pathological hatred of the Jesuits and he managed to suppress the Society of Jesus in all Portuguese territories between 1755 and 1760. He forced the Papacy in 1773 to suppress the society completely in the Church.”⁴⁶ Consequently, Jesuits could not restart their mission in India until 1860.

5. Colonial Era and the Arrival of Protestant Missionaries

Half century later from Nobili, Protestant mission commenced in India in 1705 AD. Ziegenbalg (1682-1719) was the first Protestant missionary sent under the patronage of Frederick IV, king of Denmark with some clear job description and instructions. In his instruction manual, he was clearly encouraged to adopt a method suitable to the existing circumstances and to interpret Christian faith with all possible simplicity.⁴⁷ He was the first to translate the New Testament in the Tamil language in 1704 AD.⁴⁸ Here in this period, oral Christian-Hindu and Muslim religious controversies caused a turmoil. The earliest apologetic conversation believed to be happening in 1751 AD. This debate was about the concept of God, spirit and salvation, involving a German Christian missionary Frederick Schwartz (1726-1798). Hindus accused missionaries that they converted people to Christianity with material benefits. The local Hindus considered conversion similar to the change in their caste,⁴⁹ a pertinent issue Nobili reconciled with his adaptation method, as high class Hindus were not converted to Christian

⁴⁴Abbe J. A. Dubois, *Letters on the State of Christianity in India* (London: Longman, 1823), 14.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, 12.

⁴⁶Jeyaraj Rasiah, *The Jesuits in Pakistan* (Lahore: Loyala Hall, 2009), 25.

⁴⁷Hugh Pearson, *Memoirs of the Life and Correspondence of the Rev. Christian Swartz*, vol.1 (London: J. Hatchard and son, Piccadilly, 1839), 90-95.

⁴⁸Sebastian C. H. Kim, *Christian Theology in Asia* (USA: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 45.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, 65.

faith with the fear of changing their caste. An early example of Christian-Muslim debate about the revealed nature Qur'ān was found as early as 1794 AD.⁵⁰

Indian caste system once again became an important issue among protestant missionaries during the eighteenth century. In 1887 AD, he wrote that there were equal numbers of Christian both high caste and low caste backgrounds. He continued that men and women of higher caste were seated on one side of the church and on the other those of the lower castes. Though he preached to them in the light of Christianity, "all are equal."⁵¹ Another impact of the caste system on church was that the country priests and catechists generally belong to one of the higher castes.⁵² Probably, because of the fear that the high class people will not follow the leadership of a low caste priest or catechists.

William Carey (1761-1834), translator of Hindu scriptures into English and the New Testament into vernacular languages of India like Bengali and Hindustani.⁵³ In his efforts to indigenization he adopted Hindu incarnation theme to interpret Jesus to Hindus. In a letter to society in December 1795 cited in *Memoirs of William Carey*, he described his evangelical method. Commenting on Vishnu avatars, he questioned that there is no avatar for the salvation of the sinners.⁵⁴ He also felt the need to work of all Christian denominations with conjointly in the mission field and without interfering with each other.⁵⁵ The theme latter developed as ecumenical movement in Christianity to which we will turn in detail in next chapter. Moreover, he was one of those who urged the government to abolish *Sati* (widow-burning). Before Carey, the administrative reaction was passive; of observation and criticism, however, with the inclusion of religious elements an active intervention of prevention and abolition was noticed.⁵⁶ In 1829, Carey received an order from Governor General of Calcutta indicating the abolishment of *Sati* from there.⁵⁷

⁵⁰Full detail of this early conversation see: Eustace Carey, *Memoir of William Carey* (Boston: Gould, Kendall and Lincoln, 1836), 95-96.

⁵¹Hugh Pearson, *Memoirs of the Life and Correspondence of the Rev. Christian Swartz, vol.2* (London: J. Hatchard and son, Piccadilly, 1839), 115.

⁵²*Ibid.*, 116

⁵³George Smith, *The Life of William Carey* (London: J. M. Dent, 1909), 109.

⁵⁴Eustace Carey, *Memoir of William Carey*, 172.

⁵⁵William Carey, *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1891), 84.

⁵⁶Arvind Sharma and Ajit Ray, eds., *Satti: Historical and Phenomenological Essays* (India: Motilal Banarsidass Publ., 1988), 6.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, 7-8.

Carey founded Serampore College in 1818 which became a translation center of Christian scriptures into both vernacular languages of India and Asian languages like Arabic, Persian Nagari, Telugu Panjabi, Bengali, Marathi, Chinese, Oriya, Burmese, Kanarese, Greek, Hebrew, and English. Hindus, Muslim and Indian Christian worked together. By the time William Carey died in 1834 some six versions of the entire bible had been published, together with 23 versions of the New Testament and smaller portions in ten other languages.⁵⁸ This helped to translate the bible into major languages of India. Translation was a major theme to indigenize Christian faith into Indian context in early protestant church. Abbe Dubois (1765-1948), questioned the translation method and argued that the translation of the Holy Scriptures circulated among them...will increase the prejudice of the natives against the Christian religion and prove it in many respects detrimental to it.⁵⁹

In spite of the prior warning to the limitations of translation method protestant Christians continued to cling on it, and no serious efforts were made to indigenize Christianity in India, until the freedom movement in 1857, an outburst of wild hatred against the foreign conqueror. The first effort was made by a group of Nadir Christian (caste) around 1858. They separated from Church Missionary Society and called themselves *The Hindu Church of the Lord Jesus* but amongst their neighbors they were generally called *Nattar* (national party); they rejected all the forms appeared to be European origin. They abandoned infant-baptism and ordained ministry. They began to use Juice of grapes⁶⁰ instead of wine in Eucharist and observed Saturday as their Sabbath instead of Sunday.⁶¹ However, this change was not recognized by church missionaries who declared such efforts heresies.⁶² But this could not stop the movement of native Christian.

6. Native Christians and Contextualization

Lal Behari (1824-1892), a Bengali native Christian brought forward a proposal for the National Church of Bengal (in 1960s the idea of a united church became

⁵⁸M. K. Kuriakose, *History of Christianity in India: Source Materials* (India: The Senate of Serampore College, 1999), 87.

⁵⁹Abbe J. A., Dubois, *Letters on the State of Christianity in India* (London: Longman, 1823), 2.

⁶⁰Pakistani Christians use it in Eucharist worship instead of wine.

⁶¹Joseph Mullens, *Brief Review of Ten Years' Missionary Labor in India between 1852 and 1861* (London: James Nisbet and CO, 1863), 51-52.

⁶²Joseph Mullens, *Brief Review of Ten Years' Missionary Labor in India between 1852 and 1861*, 52.

reality in Pakistan) which included only the Apostolic Creed,⁶³ allowing great freedom in the matters of liturgy and ministry. However, missionaries rejected the proposal as unacceptable.⁶⁴

In 1868, some of educated native Christians formed “*The Bengal Christian Association for the Promotion of Christian Truth and Godliness and the Protection of the Rights of Indian Christians.*”⁶⁵ These efforts compelled the missionaries to seriously think and ponder over the issue. So, James Vaughan in 1872 at Allahabad Missionary Conference expressed the concern of growing restlessness among Indian Christians with respect to the missionary power.⁶⁶ In 1870, Kālī Charan Banerjee, (1845-1902) a native Brahman Christian, started to publish a journal entitled *The Indian Christian Herald*. In its first issue it stated that “in having become Christian, we have not ceased to be Hindus. We are Hindu Christian, as thoroughly Hindu as Christian.”⁶⁷

The efforts of native Christians brought fruit and the missionaries accepted their lawful demands. In 1898, the missionaries decided to gradually transfer not only responsibilities to the local converts but also their power as well. As a result of this, in the year 1935, majority of the clergy of Presbyterian Church shifted to indigenous leadership.⁶⁸ The basic reason behind this shift was mass conversion movement from 1875 to 1930. It compelled them to adopt various cultural values in Indian Christianity like *bradrisism* and caste system just like the mass conversion, which took place after the conversion of Constantine and forced to accept the cult pagan of saints and the cult of icons in the late third and six century A.D. respectively.⁶⁹

⁶³Apostolic Creed is the standard version of the western church of Christian doctrines where it was included in the churches of Pakistan, especially the Church of Pakistan. For detail see: *Qamus-ul-Kitab, ‘Aqidah Rasuloon ka, Rasuloon ka ‘Aqidah* (Lahore: MIK, 2011), 653-654.

⁶⁴Kaj Baago, *Pioneers of Indigenous Christianity* (Bangalore: The Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society, 1969), 2.

⁶⁵Ibid., 2.

⁶⁶Ibid., 3.

⁶⁷Ibid., 3.

⁶⁸For detail see: John Webster, “Punjabi Christians”, the article can be accessed through online link;

http://www.global.ucs.edu/punjab/sites/secure.lsit.ucs.edu.gisp.d7_sp/files/sitefiles/journals/volume16/no1/2-John%20Webster16.1.pdf Accessed at 04-11-2018

⁶⁹Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (London: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), 18.

In 1894, Parani Andi (1831-1909) a contemporary of Banerjee, and a doctor by profession delivered a lecture entitled “*Are not Hindus Christian*” before the ‘Native Christian Literature Society of Madras.’ In his lecture, he identified several similarities in Hinduism and Christianity like *Paramesvara* and *Pārvatī* as Adam and Eve and their sons Subramanya and Ghanapathi identical to Cain and Abel.⁷⁰ In 1887, Kālī Charan Banerjee also founded “*The Calcutta Christo Samāj*” inspired from *Brahmo Samāj*. Their purpose was: “the propagation of Christian truth and promotion of Christian Union, and it was the hope of its founder to gather all Indian Christian within it thereby eliminating the denominations.”⁷¹ The founder of Christo *Samāj* argued for the ordination of women, minimizing the distinction between clergy and laity, relying upon only Apostolic Creed, practicing baptism from lay people, indigenizing theology and no fixed liturgy. In 1888, he held the missionaries responsible for the fact that Christianity was considered a foreign religion in India and the major factor behind this was the missing the indigenization of Christianity to that he named *adjective Christianity*, so that it could be changed from place to place in India.⁷² The views again met with opposition from the missionaries arguing it is impossible to wipe out differences that were eighteen hundred years old. The native Christians rejected these efforts because they thought they were totally independent.⁷³ In 1890, another effort was made, to publish *Zabūr*⁷⁴ in Punjabi language. Rev. ‘Imād-ul-Dīn Shahbāz⁷⁵ (1844-1921) translated it into Punjabi Language. First inclutrated psalm in Punjabi language and tunes were broadcasted in 1908. This time it was not lonely translated but tuned in local music. It was sung in the form of *Bhajan*, with *chimmta* and *dholak* (drum) by a group of haired *marassis*. The psalms were sung in a popular genera *sithniyan*, a popular marriage Punjabi song.⁷⁶

⁷⁰There are some other examples as well like, Solomon’s temple and Hindu temples, prophecies about Christ in Veda. For detail see: Kaj Baago, *Pioneers of Indigenous Christianity*, 17.

⁷¹Paull M. Collins, *Context, Culture and Worship: The Quest for Indian-ness* (Delhi: Indian Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2006), 67.

⁷²Kaj Baago, *Pioneers of Indigenous Christianity*, 5-6.

⁷³Ibid., 7.

⁷⁴Zabūr is an Arabic word. In Islam it is the holy book revealed upon Daud (AS). Qur’ān: al-Nisa, 4: 163; Bani Israil, 17:55.

⁷⁵For Translator’s biography see: Azeem Amir, *Asr-e-Hazir ka Daud* (Gujranwala: Mark Printing Agency Gujranwala, 2005).

⁷⁶Frank Y. Pressly, “The Punjabi Zabūr: its Composition, Use and Influence,” in *Reader in Contextualization for Pakistan*, ed., Qaiser Julius, (Lahore: Open Theological Seminary, 2013), 90-100.

By the early 1900s, Christian missionary started to acknowledge Indian culture, philosophy and religions under the appellation of fulfillment theory developed by T. E. Slater (1840-1912). In his book entitled *The Higher Hinduism in Relation to Christianity: Certain Aspects of Hindu Thought from the Christian Standpoint*, he emphasized, whatever good and true existed in Indian religions (Hinduism) originated into Christianity under the epithet of fulfillment theory. As he stated:

“It is no accident, but a Divine purpose, that has brought the East and the West together, so that each may recognize the other's strength, and understand and appreciate each other's best ideals. Just as the religion of Christ triumphed over the religions of Greece and Rome, not by destroying, but by absorbing from Greek philosophy and literature, and from Roman jurisprudence and government, all in them that was good and true, so will it be in India.⁷⁷”

This idea was later described systematically by J. N. Farquhar (1861-1929) in his book entitled *The Crown of Hinduism*.⁷⁸ In about 1908, Sādhū Sunder Singh (1889-1929) tried to Christianize Indian spirituality and his efforts were equally recognized by both western Christian missionaries and native Christians. He made spiritual voyages all over the India and never returned back.⁷⁹ His ascetic life, contemplation, methods of prayer, celibacy, self-denying, life of poverty and emphasis upon inward experience made him an embodiment of Christian friar, which greatly influenced the western missionaries.⁸⁰ He is also the most celebrated ecclesiastical figure by Pakistani Christians in the church history of subcontinent because of his Punjabi ethnic origin. He is regarded as a Christian hermit with indigenous values, being a model to contemporizing Christianity in a local context.

⁷⁷T. E. Slater, *The Higher Hinduism in Relation to Christianity: Certain Aspects of Hindu Thought from the Christian Standpoint* (London: Elliot Stock, 62, Paternoster Row, E.C. 1906), 291.

⁷⁸J. N. Farquhar, *The Crown of Hinduism* (Oxford University Press, 1920).

⁷⁹It is not an exaggeration. It is evident from the first ever English biography written by Alfred Zahir. For detail see: Alfred Zahir, *A Lover of the Cross: An Account of the wonderful Life and Work of Sunder Singh, a Wondering Christian Friar of the Punjab* (India: C.M.S Industrial Mission Press Agra, 1917), 3-10.

⁸⁰For full detail of his significance in western Christianity see: Friedrich Heiler, *The Gospel of Sadhu Sunder Singh*, trans., Olive Wyon, (London: George Allen & Unwin LTD. 1927), 222-228.

It was only in the early twentieth century, the term of “Indian Christianity” and its elements started to become a part of Christian theologians work.⁸¹

Sunder’s doctrine of sin was more nearer to the Hindu doctrine of *karma* and was altogether different form the European concept of sin.⁸² He visualized Christ himself and claimed that Christ himself made him a Christian. His theology was more Christocentric rather biblical.⁸³ He divided heaven into three parts; first, heaven on earth with the presence of Christ into the heart; second, the immediate state the cross speak to the thieves; third proper heaven to which only a handful of people will enter and *sadhu* himself was amongst them.⁸⁴ His theology was inclusive instead of exclusive.⁸⁵

Rev. Mahindra Singh was an indigenous minister⁸⁶ and priest who belonged to Lyallpur (known as Faisalabad in the present times). Like Nobili, he also advocated the truth embodied by the traditions in India. He converted to Christianity and was baptized by Bishop Bunayr. After baptism Mahindra was sent to Bishops College Kolkata⁸⁷ for theological study. Latter he became priest and was sent to Rajasthan—the largest state by area in northwestern side of India, for missionary work. There he wrote an essay in which he emphasized that the missionaries should respect vulnerable religious personalities of ancient religions like, Shiva (the destroyer God in Hindu trinity), Sheri Ram Chandra (also known as Rama, one of the major deities in Hinduism), and Gautama Buddha (the founder of Buddhism) because historically they were more ancient personalities than Jesus.

⁸¹B. H Streeter and A. J Appasamy, *The Message of Sādhū Sunder Singh: A Study in Mysticism on Practical Religion* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1921), 176.

⁸²For full detail of his conversation about sin see: Sadhu Sunder Singh, *Maktab-e-Masīh (In the Feet of Christ)* (Lahore: Punjab Religious Book Society, 19669), 24-31.

⁸³See: Frederic Heiler, *The Gospel of Sādhū Sunder Singh* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1927), 45.

⁸⁴Kaj Baago, *Pioneers of Indigenous Christianity*, 157.

⁸⁵Yousuf Masīh Yad and Emmanuel ‘Āṣī, ed., *Bashārat ka Safīr: Sādhū Sunder Singh* (Gujranwala: Maktaba-e-Anaweem, 2010), 82-83.

⁸⁶There is a very little documented information about his life and work in India. I just succeeded to find a single reference in the theological journal *al-Musheer*, Rawalpindi, Pakistan.

⁸⁷It was an Anglican theological institute in Kolkata established by Bishop Thomas Middleton (1769-1822). To know his life and work in India and other parts of the world see a two volume work on his life authored by Charles Webb Le Bass: *The Life of the Right Reverend Thomas Fanshaw Middleton D. D. Late Lord Bishop of Calcutta* (London: Gilbert and Rivington Printers, 1831); The text can be accessed through: <https://archive.org/details/lifethomasfansh00basgoog>. Accessed at 02-05-2018.

His fellow missionaries took his statement in theological meaning and strongly criticized him arguing that he was denying the primordial existence of Jesus.⁸⁸

In the last decades of nineteenth century and in early twentieth century Islamic influence was also evident in the Christian hymns for worship, Sunday schools and congregations. In 1899, Christian hymn book entitled “*masīhī gīt kī kitāb*” (the book of Christian song) included ten *ghazals* that clearly embodied this Islamic influence, as *ghazal* was a Muslim-based genre of poetry.⁸⁹ In addition, Persian term *norooz* was used to commemorate New Year and seven hymns were included in it.⁹⁰ Şafdar ‘Alī (1830-1899), a convert from Islam who worked for the Church Missionary Society in the latter half of the nineteenth century, compiled a book of Christian Indian poetry in which he included seventy-eight *ghazals*.⁹¹

7. Contextualization in the First Half of 20th Century

In short, from the above mentioned discussion it is clear that several efforts have been made in relation to the inculturation of Christianity in India from the early sixteenth century and early half of the twentieth century. These efforts started from early missionaries like Nobili, however, were systematically developed by native Christians. The missionary model of inculturation was different from the native, as foreigners except Nobili were merely interested in the translation of Christian scriptures into the vernacular languages of India. These translation can be considered as the first step that initiated a genuine Indigenization effort, however, a complete indigenization is not just to translate the scriptures, to adopt some native terms in Christian theology, to sit separately in church, to sit on the floor, keeping shoes at the entrance of the church. However, real indigenization starts with the inclusion of culture, philosophy and religions. This process began after 1900 and till 1947 a number of theologians like, Krishna Mohan Banerjea (1813-1885), Parani Andi (1831-1909), A. S. Appasamy (1891-1975), Brahmabandhav Upadyay (1861-1907), Sādhū Sunder Singh (1889-1929), T. E. Slater (1840-1912) and their latter successors continued to make their efforts to indigenize Christianity in India.

⁸⁸Asghar Fazal Ilahi Paul, *Kalimatullāh kā Zahūr aur iss ke Fawā'id* (Urdu article) *al-Musheer* 11, no. 11 and 12 (1969), 25-28.

⁸⁹Siknadara Yatim Chapa Khana, *Masīhī gīt kī Kitāb* (Aghra: Siknadara Yatim Chapa Khana, 1899), 266-276.

⁹⁰*Ibid.*, 35-39.

⁹¹Şafdar ‘Alī, *Ghizā-i Rūh: Hindūstānī Masīhīyon ke Urdū Ish‘ār* (Lucknow: American Mission Press, 1875)

There are also some factors which compelled both native Christians and missionaries to indigenize Christianity. During the early three centuries of Christian missions in India, from sixteenth century to eighteenth century, efforts were made to attract the natives to Christian faith. In this period translation and inculturation of Christian practice was the most appropriate model of indigenization. In the first half of the nineteenth century, the native Christians of high classes started to question the hierarchal structure of church and the mission, and started to establish separate churches, unordain ministers and emphasis was shifted from liturgy to apostolic creed in a bid to promote native leadership in the Indian church. The war of independence 1857, led to a fresh momentum to the indigenization movement and Indian philosophy and traditions under the appellation of fulfillment theory. There were three major phases of indigenization movement before 1947. As majority of native Christian belonged to Hinduism and low castes, early efforts were made in the context of religion and philosophy. There were Muslim who converted to Christianity and their efforts went to another direction. Instead of creating bridge between Christianity and Islam, they choose apologetics and extensively wrote in the defense of Christianity, attacking Islam. The Muslim converts included Imād al-Dīn Lāhiz⁹² (1830–1900) Şafdar Alī (1830–1899), ‘Abdul Masīh (1776–1827), ‘Allāma Barkatullāh (1891–1971),⁹³ Rev. Aḥmad Shāh,⁹⁴ Ṭalīb-ul-Dīn (d. 1917), Pādrī J. ‘Alī Bukhsh, Sayyed ‘Abdullah Āṭham, Akbar Masīh, Ghulām Masīh Numan, Pādrī J. Qalandar, Pādrī Rajab ‘Alī, Molvī Hashmat-ul-Allāh, Wārith-ul-Dīn and Sayyed Yūsuf Hāmid.⁹⁵ Their influence upon Christian theology is also found in the use of Islamic terminologies in Christian theology, the style of writings and the use of Ghazal genera in Christian worship music. However, their major contribution was limited to apologetics. This earlier mentioned aspect is clearly seen in the titles of the books

⁹²In his book *Hidāyat-ul-Muslimīn* he answered the questions raised in Raḥmat-ul-Allāh Kīrānvī’s (1818-91) book entitled *I’jāz-e-‘Īsavī* published in 1854. Moreover, he also wrote *Tanqīd-ul-Khayālāt* in response of Sayyed Aḥmad khān’s thoughts about human intellect. For further detail see: Imād al-Dīn Lāhiz, *Tanqīd-ul-Khayālāt* (Allahabad, Punjab Religious Book Society, 1882)

⁹³He wrote numerous apologies in Urdu language. Barkat-ul-Allāh’s *Eli, Eli, Lima Sabachthani* (1957), *Canā-e-Galīlī kā Mu’jizah* are the replies to the objections raised by Molāna Sana‘ullāh Amartasrī in his book entitled *Islam awr Masīhiyyat*. For further detail see: *Galīlī kā Mu’jizah* (Lahore: Punjab Religious Book Society, 1951)

⁹⁴Ahmad Shah, *Miftāh-ul-Qur’ān* (Lahore: Punjab Religious Book Society, 1908).

⁹⁵The apologetic writings of the mentioned figures are available on www.muhammadanism.org, and www.studyislam.com.

of these writers. Some psalms were also sung in *ghazal* style. Another interesting example is found in the Church of Edward High School, Peshawar where women were seated in a private contained-off (*Purdha Nishin*). Moreover, All St. Church Peshawar displayed the adaptation of mosque architecture to the purpose of Christian worship.⁹⁶ Also rest of the churches followed the western style. Indigenous style of worship places like *Gurdwara* in Sikhism, *Masjid* in Islam and *Mandar* in Hinduism were largely neglected by the missionaries. Recently, some efforts have been made in Sindh where Hindu architecture is being used to build churches in tribal areas. Tāriq Wāris recently stated that these churches were being built for the Hindu converts in Sindh; adding that indigenous architecture was being used with just the difference of cross on the Christian temple.⁹⁷ If Islamic and Hindu architecture is adopted in church buildings or the names of the churches are kept on the names of Jesus and Mary, this can be very helpful to achieve inter-faith co-existence in Pakistan. Muslims have already named their mosques as *Masjid-e-Maryam um-e-Īsā*⁹⁸ in UAE and the *Mosque of Jesus Christ* in Jordan, in order to promote cordial relationship with Christians.⁹⁹ John Stott (1921-2011), the Anglican Missionary also proposed the Jesus mosque idea, however, it has not been adopted by any of the Church organizations yet.¹⁰⁰

8. Conclusion

Jesuit commenced Christian mission in India in latter half of the sixteenth century. The Jesuits adopted contextualization as a method to preach Christianity in the Indian subcontinent. As, the early contextualization was limited to individuals, a question emerged among missionaries about the validity of the method. The church interfered and annulled all the indigenous practices. Consequently, in 1760 because of the internal conflict in the church, the Jesuit mission ended and hence the early handful of early converts either converted to

⁹⁶Vivienne Stacey, "All Saints Church, Peshawar," in *Reader in Contextualization for Pakistan*, ed., Qaiser Julius, (Lahore: Open Theological Seminary, 2013), 101-104.

⁹⁷Tāriq Wāris, (Contextualization in Pakistan), interviewed by Farmān 'Alī, FGA Bible College, Lahore, February 05, 2019

⁹⁸Wikipedia contributors, "Mary, Mother of Jesus Mosque," *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mary,_Mother_of_Jesus_Mosque&oldid=877355863 (accessed March 14, 2019).

⁹⁹For detail visit: <https://www.memphistours.com/Jordan/Jordan-Travel-Guide/Madaba-Tourist-Attractions/wiki/Jesus-Christ-Mosque>. (accessed March 14, 2019).

¹⁰⁰Phill Parshall, *Muslim Evangelism: Contemporary Approaches to Contextualization* (USA: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 171.

their previous religions or stopped to practice Christian faith, as historians failed in finding related to their survival in the annals of history. In the second half of the eighteenth century, a new wave of Christian mission started under the patronage of colonial rulers. Christian communities of modern day India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka also belonged to this period. In this period, a large number of low caste people converted to Christian faith. This mass conversion infused an indigenous spirit among the converts and several attempts were made to contextualize Christianity. Matters of translation during the early missionary encounters in Southeast Asia were not now limited only to the appropriation of Christian concepts. However, attempts were made to indigenize style and form of biblical scriptures and liturgical texts. The Psalms was converted to Punjabi language with local musical instruments. In addition, hymnals included a variety of local tunes and traditional instruments, replacing guitars and keyboards during church services. In architecture, local ashram style was adopted. In liturgy, local bread—*chapātī*—and coconut water replaced wine. Local Christian art was also developed and the images of Christ began to be published by the countenance of guru. Local philosophy and scripture were given an appropriate place and were considered as primary vessels of wisdom. In short, since the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Christianity has developed into a rich and complex artistic landscape, representing the cultural diversity of Southeast Asia.

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