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Biblical Foundation for Missions in India: The Mission Theology of Five Christian Missionary Societies in Colonial South India

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Abstract

One of the most important commandment that Jesus taught was “Love your neighbor as yourself. This scripture verse is the basis for all humanitarian aspects of the theology of Mission in the world in general and Missions to India in particular. Christian Missionaries, besides of their evangelistic agenda, brought social liberating gospel that was well received by the converts in India, irrespective of caste backgrounds. As scholars are aware, traditional Indian social structure has stratified itself on caste lines that was beyond human proportions and repair and only an external force could bring a sea change in this condition. In my study, I have done an extensive exploration of the primary missionary tasks that were undertaken by the Christian missionaries in India. As per the scripture portion of Philippians 2:3 Christian missionaries did nothing out of selfish ambitions or vain conceit but rather served with humility to value others above themselves. The conversion and social change among sections of Indian population since the second half of the 19th century appears to have a firm ground based on Biblical teachings of the missionaries. The converts have perceived from the teachings of the missionaries that there is One God, as Father of all humans, and all human beings as his children, and hence they are brothers and sisters. The converts also understood that there was no Biblical base for the hierarchy of persons and all people are considered as His own creation and therefore equal. With this realization, they had willingly participated in the liberating aspects of the mission such as getting education for themselves and for their children and participated in the new economic opportunities. This paper focuses on the Biblical foundations and gospel essence teachings of the missionaries in various preaching forms and people’s interest in this message that forever changed the social landscape of Indian society.

Reference:

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