



Church History Association of India (CHAI)

(Regd. Public Trust. Regn. No. BNG (U)-JNR 532/03-04 at Bangalore)
Dharmaram College P.O., Hosur Road, Bangalore 560 029. Ph. 080-41116234
Email: mail.cha.india@gmail.com. Website: www.churchhistory.in

16th TRIENNIAL CONFERENCE, October 30 - November 1, 2014, RANCHI
(Venue: Social Development Centre (SDC), Dr. Camil Bulcke Path (Purulia Road), New Barhi Toli, Ranchi, Jharkhand 834001)

Call for Papers: Church History Association of India (CHAI), 16th National Triennial Conference, Oct 30 - Nov 1, 2014, Social Development Centre, Ranchi, Jharkhand

Theme: “Peoples’ History: Christianity, Culture and Development”

Scholars are invited to present papers on this theme or sub-themes.

Concept Note

Scholars on Christianity have studied the historical engagement, interaction and impact of the Church in India. Historically, Christianity has been present in India for over two millennia, since the beginning of Christianity itself. Today the Indian Christian community comprises of a cross-section of castes, classes, regional and linguistic communities, besides a large number of Dalit and Tribal/Adivasi communities. Though a minority religion, comprising only about 2.98 percent (24 millions) of the 1200 million population of the country, its impact has been colossal not only among its adherents, but also in the Indian society.

Christianity has influenced all the strata and cultural configurations of the vast Indian society. It has also left an indelible mark on the predominantly Hindu society. Some elements of the Christian message and values have in a significant way penetrated the Indian society especially since the 19th century. It appears that the Christian influence on the Indian society is mainly of a humanistic and secular character.

The Christian presence in India has become conspicuous not because of their religious beliefs, but on account of their educational institutions and health services. All over the country, there are thousands of medical establishments, educational institutions and charitable associations serving millions of people, particularly the poor, the handicapped and the needy irrespective of gender, race, colour, religion, culture, etc. An ever growing number of Indians of all cultures and religions seek education in Church-run institutions.

This is not only on account of the quality of teaching or the subjects taught, but also because of such Christian values as honesty, prayerfulness, faith in God, peace, discipline, dedication, integrity, service, etc. Indeed, Indian life has been to an extent, transformed by Christianity through its insistence on democracy, respect for the human person, monogamy, family ethics, morality, justice, social work through charitable institutions, participation in mass-media, devotion and dedication of the Christians working in civil services and other work places.

Apart from making a yeoman contribution to the wellbeing of the people, the Church's welfare work has inspired Indians to launch similar activities which are now seen in different parts of the country. Setting up such charitable, educational and social institutions for all was not an essential feature of the caste-conscious society, which tended to be socially stratified. Christianity is a religion of love of the neighbour. This has influenced Indian society and promoted a sense of social cause, of service among the people.

Since the 19th century, the Church has been engaged in education and community development of the Dalits and Tribals/Adivasis many of whom also responded to Christian evangelization through conversion. The missionaries opened schools and the Dalits saw conversion as an effective way of acquiring better educational opportunities and for improving life chances. The case of Chotanagpur offers a specimen analysis of the impact of

Christian education among the tribal people. This region comprises 29 tribes, and the major tribes are Santals, Kharias, Mundas and Oraons, who, over the centuries were marginalized by the non-tribal, exploiting intruders into their homeland. When the Christian gospel of liberation was preached to them, they gladly accepted it and subsequently became agents of change from within. What is observed today is the huge social transformation among the Christian Tribal society: they have moved from a jungle-inhabited, agrarian society into a bureaucratic society thanks to educational and occupational mobility.

At the same time, some scholars and anti-Christian organizations have contested Tribal development saying that Christian engagement has only de-tribalized and de-culturated the tribals. But the fact is otherwise: studies have shown that Christian tribals have retained their tribal identity and proudly maintain their respective indigenous dialects, while being modernized. In fact, the missionaries have created and developed rich Christian literature in many tribal dialects which helped maintain these dialects which, otherwise, would have disappeared by now. Also, through the medium of Hindi, missionaries united the tribals in Chotanagpur who spoke only their own dialects earlier.

Scholars are welcome to dwell on various aspects of the theme with a view to highlighting the role of Church and nation building. Since CHAI Triennial is being held in Chotanagpur region for the first time, special focus will be on the Chotanagpur Church.

Sub-themes:

Suitable sub-themes include, but are not limited to:

1. Christianity, education and development
2. Christianity and Tribal/Adivasi Development
3. Christianity and Dalit development
4. Indigenous Peoples, Church and Culture
5. Church, Education and Nation-building
6. Church, Economic development and Social Transformation
7. Church, Development of Languages and Christian Literature
8. Church and Development of Local and Indigenous Leadership
9. Christianity and Liberation of the Marginalized
10. Indigenization of Christianity, Theology and People's Culture

Scholars intending to present a paper shall submit digitally an abstract of 300-350 words to the **16th Triennial Academic Coordinator (Dr. Jose Kalapura, SJ)** at executive.editor@churchhistory.in with a copy marked to CHAI General Secretary at general.secretary@churchhistory.in

The Abstract should be thematically focused and must contain the main points of your paper. The abstracts sent within the prescribed time will be included in the Conference folder/Souvenir and would get preference in the presentation which would be around 30 minutes including discussion.

The length of the Paper should be between 4000-6000 words and should be submitted digitally in Microsoft Word format in the Chicago Manual of Style (15th edition).

Deadlines:

Submission of abstract: September 5, 2014

Submission of Final Paper: Sept 30, 2014

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Rev. Dr. George Oommen,
general.secretary@churchhistory.in; 0972 017 3462
 May 27, 2014