

The eleventh commandment: thou shall not convert

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The West Bengal Government has withdrawn orders on conversion. It has withdrawn an order on furnishing details on conversion following strong exception to it from the State Minorities Commission. Why this forced sterilisation of religious statistics?

The matter was taken up with the authorities after the Darjeeling district intelligence branch issued a circular asking for monthly reports on the number of persons converted to Christianity.

Senior police officials had informed the commission that the step was taken at the instance of the State intelligence branch to keep track of religious configuration of the State populace (TheHindu, February 16).

Why should the State Minorities Commission come in the way of the State police gathering intelligence reports? The commission was upset by the Darjeeling intelligence branch decision to collect the statistics. Was it because it was keen not to open up facts and figures to the prying eyes of the state?

The facts are available from church literature. "During the last 30 years the Catholic population increased by ninefolds to nine lakhs," brags an official report. The Laussane Covenant states "we believe that we engaged in a constant spiritual warfare..."

Why should the official efforts to collect intelligence be stopped by the State Government, was it with an eye on the coming by elections in the State? Or something more fishy?

Arms sales

The western powers want social and political conflicts to continue unabated all over the world in order to justify their arms sales. Every nation that is having a population of 100 millions is considered a potential enemy, in order to sell arms, and treat every nation as a business partner, a curious dichotomy.

The famous Huntington document, which delineates half a dozen cultural groups as the ultimate actors of the world's political stage, has placed religious conversion in a new perspective. Christianity was a state enterprise for all European countries. Well organised religious conversion can be a potential bomb to explode cultural values, disturb political affiliations and torpedo national loyalties.

A few major religious conversions located strategically can work wonders. One Pakistan was carved out of India. One Jharkhand was added recently. The Niyogi Commission report refers to the role of Rev. Joel Lakra, the principal of Theological College, Ranchi, who was closely associated with the WCC pioneered Jharkhand movement for a separate adivasi State in Bihar. Though India has become independent the missions are suffering from colonial dyspepsia. Once it had confused the western arms superiority with the superiority of the Christian creed.

A fraud on humanity

Mahatma Gandhi called religious conversions a fraud on humanity. "This proselytisation will mean no peace in the world. Conversions are harmful to India. If I had the power and could legislate I should certainly stop all proselytising."

The Hindus have nothing against Jesus Christ. But they are definitely against Christianity as a cult put up by St. Paul, which believes in the St. Caprian's axiom, *Extra ecclesiam nulla salus* (outside the church no salvation). *Sarva Dharma samabhava* is a heathen idea, a doorway to hell. Evangelising the heathen is the holiest task of a believing Christian.

J. C. Kumarappa who was a faithful Christian himself exposed the political ambition of the missionaries: "Before these Christian missionaries landed in Africa, the Africans had their land with them, but not the Bible. Now they have their Bible with them, not their land."

When C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer was the chief minister of Travancore, the temples of the State were thrown open to the harijans and the Archbishop of Canterbury resented the legislation on the ground that it gave a serious setback to the conversion of harijans into Christianity.

The very literature produced by the International Missionary Council and World Council of Churches put in circulation through evangelical literature societies and proclamations made by Billy Graham and other evangelists that they must produce at least one thousand million converts, for this they have to work in Asia, especially India.

"In fact missionary activity is like ideological warfare. It is systematic, motivated and directed, that looks to establish a particular religion for all human beings, in which the diversity of human race, mind and needs is forgotten. The global missionary business is one of the largest businesses in the world. Not only Catholic church but also various Protestant organisations have set aside billions to convert non-Christians to Christianity. Organised conversion activity is like trained army invading a country from the outside. The missionary army goes to communities where often there is little resistance to it, or which may not be aware of its power or motives. It will take advantage of the communities that are tolerant

and open-minded about religion and use that to promote a missionary agenda that destroys this tolerance" - David Frawley.

The Christian missions work through the World Council of Churches and International Council. These organisations work under the direction and control of the governments of the United States, Canada, Britain and Australia.

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan told an audience in Oxford that to the Indian Christian, Jesus was the whiteman's god marching with a sword in one hand and the Union Jack in the other.

In 1956 Rajah Bhushanam Manickham, secretary of the World Council of Churches and International Missionary Council, landed in China and met the Prime Minister Chou En Lai. He asked two specific questions: my friends tell me that there is religious freedom for church in China, I wonder whether you could reassure me on this score and tell me whether such freedom is likely to continue in future. My second question is ``what about the future of religion itself in communist China?"

Chou En Lai's reply was crisp and categorical: ``There is freedom to serve to China right, but no freedom to do wrong or upset the Government of China... As for religious freedom, I must make it clear to you that we have sent away these foreign missionaries who were really at heart colonists and who did harm to China. They will not be allowed to come back... The doors are indeed closed once and for all in China to the imperialistic Christian missionaries."

On January 31, 1994 Premier Li Peng of China enforced strict ban on conversion of Chinese citizens by foreigners through serious of regulations on the management of religious activities in China and places of religious activities.

What about secular India which is an open choultry, where the missionary is given royal treatment of the minority status, whose vote banks are cherished assets for the politicians from West Bengal to Kerala, hence the withdrawal of the orders of the Darjeeling police to collect vital statistics on conversions.

The Niyogi Committee report states ``the separatist tendency" that has sgripped the mind of the aboriginal.

The growth of Baptist churches in Nagaland page 175 boasts: The Ministers and members of the Nagaland Legislative Assembly, government officers and employees are active, witnessing Christians in their individual capacity... Last year some officers of high rank went on a preaching tour to various places in both Nagaland and Assam. The government officials (not in their official capacity) gave all possible cooperation... to make the annual conventions, and important church meetings a great success. All India Radio, Kohima station, broadcasts church services, Christian messages and Christian songs... the cooperation of

government servants has a great bearing in the growth of church in Nagaland. This is a rare privilege in India."

The growth of Baptist churches page 115 claims "the government of Meghalaya is run by Christian officers. This is a rare privilege in India. The recent developments are a god given opportunity to the Garo Hills for the furtherance of his kingdom." It is not surprising that insurgency in Nagaland has not grown. The Indian Express January 25, 1995 says that a nexus has been established between the Pakistan's ISI and the illegal Muslim immigrants from neighbouring Bangladesh.

In three out of the seven States, Christians constitute the majority - Mizoram 85 per cent, Nagaland 82 per cent, Meghalaya 55 per cent. Seventy per cent of the Christians in NE are Presbyterians or Baptists. Catholics account for one fourth of the Christian population, and 5.7 per cent of India. The Catholic population, less than 60,000 at the time of Independence in 1947, has increased to 7.2 lakhs in 1990. In Arunachal Pradesh 70,000 people embrace Christianity every year in spite of official resistance and absence of resident missionaries. Yet the quality of their life has yet to improve.

The church is terribly vast organisation and with huge resources to save souls. "It costs 145 billion dollars to operate global Christianity," records a book on evangelisation. The church commands four million full time workers, runs 13,000 libraries, publishes 22,000 periodicals and four billion tracts a year, operates 1,890 radio and TV stations. It has a quarter million foreign missionaries, over 400 institutions to train them". These are figures of 1989.

No state, especially a developing country like India can cope with such pressure where full time missionaries have increased from 420 in 1973 to 5,986 in 1998. Any one caring to visit the resource availability to Christian organisations can log on to <http://www.bethany.com/profile/cindia.html> to study conversion plans not only for Arunachal Pradesh but for all India. India is divided into 186 individual people groups. And a long description is followed by advice on how to convert each to Christianity.

It is to be noted that those holding high ranking positions within the Church councils and missionary organisations happen to be all war veterans. These veterans use technical war lingo of exporting revolution to countries. The developed countries are now making serious efforts to subvert and overthrow governments established by law in developing countries using churches as their tool. A famous Gandhian thinker J. C. Kumarappa, himself a good Christian, said the western nations have four arms - 1. The Army, 2. The Navy, 3. The Air Force, 4. The Church.

The Laussane Covenant states "we believe that we engaged in a constant spiritual warfare." The text continues in military terms: "god's army", "battle", "weapons", etc.

Panel recommendations

The Christian Missionary Activities Enquiry Committee, appointed by the Madhya Pradesh Government consisting of six citizens including Mr. S. K. George, a Professor of Commerce, a devout Christian belonging to the oldest church in India, the Syrian Christian Church, and presided over by the retired Chief Justice of the Nagpur High Court, Mr. M. B. Niyogi which visited 77 centres, contacted 11,360 people from 700 villages, examined 375 written statements, visited hospitals, schools, churches, leper homes, hostels, etc. and after 2 years of arduous labour has made the following recommendations:

- (1) Those missionaries whose primary objective is proselysation should be asked to withdraw. The large influx of foreign missionaries is undesirable and should be checked.
- (2) The best course for the Indian churches was to establish a united independent Christian church in India being independent of foreign support.
- (3) The use of medical and other professional services as a means of conversion should be prohibited by law.
- (4) To implement the provision in the Constitution of India prohibiting the imparting of religious education to children without consent of parents and guardians.
- (5) Suitable control of conversions brought through illegal means should be imposed. If necessary through legislative measures.
- (6) Advisory boards at State, regional and district levels should be constituted of non-officials, minority communities like tribals and harijans being a majority on these boards.
- (7) Rules relating to registration of doctors and nurses employed in hospitals should be suitably amended to provide a condition against evangelistic activities during professional services.
- (8) Circulation of religious literature meant for propaganda without the approval of the State Government should be prohibited.
- (9) Institutions in receipt of grants-in-aid or recognition from government should be compulsorily inspected every quarter.

(10) No non-official agency should be permitted to secure foreign assistance except through government channels.

(11) Government should lay down a policy that providing social services like education, health, medicine, etc. to scheduled classes will be solely by the State Government, and adequate services should be provided as early as possible, non-official organisations being permitted to run only for members of their own faith.

(12) No foreigner should be allowed to function in a scheduled or a specific area either independently or as a member of a religious institutions unless he has given a declaration in writing that he will not take part in politics.

(13) Programmes of social and economic uplift by non-official or religious bodies should receive the prior approval of the State.

It should be noted that even 100 per cent change of religion does not lead to change of economic prosperity as seen from the example of Philippines, the most converted Catholic country, which is also the poorest country in Asia, with the biggest economic divide.

Conversions have to stop. In this context one would like to remind the Christian missionaries "that thou shall not convert" as the eleventh commandment. Theocentric and theocratic eclectics are as dangerous as nuclear warheads. The church's concept of "my god is your god, but your god is no god," does not foster harmony and fraternity. This has to be changed into "your god is my god and my god is your god and accepted by people of all religions."

Secularism should not come to be understood that Hindus in India could be forced into inaction in the face of dire threats to their religion.

The Supreme Court of India said in 1977: "We find no justification for the view that if Article 22 grants a fundamental right to convert a person to one's own religion, it has to be appreciated that the freedom of religion enshrined in the Article is not guaranteed in respect of one religion only, but concerns all religions alike, and it can be properly enjoyed by a person, if he exercises his rights in a manner commensurate with the like freedom of persons following other religions. What is freedom for one is freedom for the other in equal measure, and can therefore be no such thing as a fundamental right to convert any person to one's own religion."

On March 14, 2000 in a fully televised speech Pope John Paul II asked for forgiveness for the past errors of the Roman Catholic Church during a solemn mass in St. Peters Basilica: "We ask for forgiveness for divisions between Christians, for the use of violence in the name of truth, and for the diffidence and hostility engaged against followers of other religions". In the entire church history

he was the only Pope who asked for forgiveness on 94 counts for all the wrongdoings of the church. But the activities of the church are continuing unabatedly and have not been stopped and that is the root of the problem.

(Author of Conversions in India a Geopolitical time bomb to be published later this year.)

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