1973

The Social Role of the Christian Colleges in India

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Recommended Citation
The Social Role of the Christian Colleges in India

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A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Loyola University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts

June

1973
L I F E

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author wishes to express his deep sense of gratitude to Dr. John Wellington for his acceptance to direct the thesis: first, for the help and guidance he gave toward its formulation and toward having it tailored to manageable proportions; second, for the interviews during which the salient points of the thesis could be discussed; third, for his valuable criticism during the oral comprehensive examination which has helped shape the thesis in its present form.

He owes much to Dr. Gerald Gutek for his concrete suggestions in view of making the thesis assume some practical utility: the guidelines provided in the last chapter have been thought over thanks to Dr. Gutek's observations.

The author likewise acknowledges his gratitude to Dr. Patricia Kubistal for her initial instructions and for her continued technical assistance regarding the execution of the thesis.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: CHRISTIAN COLLEGES IN INDIA TODAY

The intent of the present study is to analyze the social mission of the Christian Colleges in India today, and by means of this analysis to make a philosophical inquiry into their distinctive function of fostering the social concern of their students and through this social concern help the development of their personality.

In other words, this study proposes to probe into the role which Christian institutions of higher learning have to play in Indian society today. Taking for granted that this role is not played fully by preparing the students for the examinations that lead to a university degree, it probes into the incumbent duty of the colleges to foster the self-growth of the students and finally it analyses how this flowering of their personality can and ought to be procured by creating and developing in them a social concern for other human beings around them. By social concern in the context of the dramatic situation of Indian society today we mean the sensitivity of the students to the struggles of other human beings around them and the creative response to the challenges such a situation poses to their own future life.
It is obvious that in the assessment of this social role of the colleges, norms of Christian education in the modern world will be given prominence. The documents of the Second Vatican Council, especially those on Christian Education and on the Church in the Modern World, will provide the background for the reflection. The inquiry will further seek to appreciate how inter-related are the social concern and the self-growth of the youth at college, and in what manner the Christian concept of integral human stature should affect the attitude of Christian educators toward their charges.

The motivations of Christian enterprise in higher education in India have been expressed at various times in one or the other of the following categories: 1) the desire for conversions, the colleges serving as means and situations for the encounter with Christ; 2) a remote preparation for the acceptance of the Christian message by the non-Christian communities; 3) a service to the Christian community itself in supplying college seats more readily to its youth and thus helping it in its economic betterment; 4) a commitment to national service as a whole without any particular group in mind.

At the National Consultation of Principals of Christian colleges held at Tambaram, Madras from December 30, 1966 to
January 5, 1967 the Right Reverend Lesslie Newbigin, Bishop in Madras proposed the following definition of the aim and purpose of a Christian college:

I suggest the following statement of our purpose:
To offer to students of all communities that kind of training for the whole person which is congruous with God's revelation in Christ of the nature of manhood, and is appropriate to the needs of India at this point in world-history. 1

In the vast horizon it opens up before us, this statement evokes the guidelines which could help determine the role of the Christian colleges in India.

The Christian colleges are a small part of the system of higher education in India, which is largely made up of affiliating universities. There are 82 of them, along with 10 unitary Institutions of a university standing. Since Independence in 1947 the Government of India has made impressive efforts in providing colleges; even so, over 85% of the approximately 1900 Arts, Science and Commerce colleges in the country are under private management.

The 128 Christian colleges belong to this latter category. The Roman Catholics operate 77 of them; 36 are

under Women's Orders, 21 are under Men's, and 20 sponsored by a Diocese. Of the 44 Protestant colleges 12 are run by single denominations, and 32 are under united sponsorship. The remaining 7, all founded since Independence, are under Syrian Catholic management.

Enrolment in Christian Colleges is around 160,000. The Christian communities account for less than 3% of the total population of the country, but their colleges have slightly more than 7% of the 2.2 million college students. This points up a potential influence of Christian higher education beyond what the percentage of Christians would indicate. The number of Christian students in the Christian colleges is around 33%; the majority of the remaining two-thirds are Hindus, and the rest is composed of a sprinkling of Moslems and Parsees, Sikhs and Jains.

There are relatively more Protestant than Roman Catholic colleges in the North. The North has also some of the oldest Christian colleges. 101 Christian colleges are in cities of more than 100,000 inhabitants. Bombay, Calcutta and Madras have 19 Christian Colleges.

Colleges have been founded at times by Christian missionaries in areas where the needs of disinherited groups were most obvious. Thus the colleges run by Christians in Assam have an especially high percentage of students from Scheduled
and Backward Communities, accounting for upwards of 80 to 90% of their total enrolment, while the over-all percentage of such students in the Christian colleges is just around 16.

Although 75% of the Christian colleges are within 15 miles of one another, there has been little evidence, until the very recent past, of any significant collaboration between them. Even elementary forms of cooperation like sharing of facilities or programs or faculties have been virtually non-existent. However, the colleges have been developed, by and large, for the service of the several churches and of the nation.

In this Chapter we have stated the objective of the thesis; we have adopted a working definition of the Christian college; and we have furnished a brief statistical overview of the Christian colleges which indicates certain features of their numerical, geographical and missionary importance in the total educational picture of the country.

Chapter Two will trace the evolution in the social thought of Indian universities in general, and of the Christian college in particular; utilising the basic sources of reference relevant to the thesis, it will endeavor to clarify the notion of the social mission of the Christian colleges as it is understood by prominent educators and Church personalities deeply concerned with the social facet of Christian higher
education.

Chapter Three will deal with the difficult question of analyzing the varying modes of awareness of the social situation that could be detected among the students of the Christian colleges. It will try to sort out the negative and positive reactions toward the immense social problems the country is facing, and to assess the extent of social concern among college youth.

Chapter Four will be concerned with the theoretical and practical aspects of stimulating social consciousness among college students, and of widening their social outlook toward the larger horizon of national development.

Chapter Five will endeavor to elaborate on the essential points of inquiry in the thesis: if in the context of Christian colleges social concern and personal growth are necessarily inter-dependent traits of the students; if according to the Christian understanding of man's nature there is a perpetual and intimate dialogue between those two traits, how Christian colleges in India could live up to their social mission in initiating that dialogue.

Chapter Six will provide the summary and some guidelines of a somewhat practical nature resulting from the analytical reflection on the social role of the Christian college in India today.
CHAPTER II

THE SOCIAL MISSION OF THE CHRISTIAN COLLEGES:
A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The Government of India appointed a commission in 1964 consisting of eighteen eminent educationists, thirteen Indian and five drawn from the United States, Great Britain, France, Russia and Japan to advise the Government on the national patterns of education and on the general principles for the development of education at all stages and in all respects. The commission presented its findings on June 29, 1966: the massive 933-page report has been published by the Ministry of Education under the title, *Education and National Development*. No more important document has ever appeared on the educational scene in the country. In Chapter I on 'Education and National Objectives' the commission makes the following statement:

In our opinion the most important and urgent reform needed in education is to transform it, to endeavour to relate it to the life, needs and aspirations of the people, and thereby to make it a powerful instrument of social, economic and cultural transformation, necessary for the realization of the national goals.\(^1\)

The publication of the Report has proved to be a stimulus to the combined reflection of the Christian colleges in India,

since salient observations found in it concerning the social role of education in the country have triggered joint consultations and seminars on this subject. The first impressive consultation of the Principals of Christian colleges was held at Tambaram near Madras during the week sitting over 1966 and 1967. The full text of the consultation is presented in *The Christian College and National Development*.

The Consultation was the outcome of the ISS-FERES Project (named with the initials of the two administering institutions Institute for social studies, The Hague, and International Federation for Social and Socio-Religious Research, Louvain). The Project had been launched in 1964 by the World Council of Churches and the Roman Catholic Church. Six field studies - two in South America, two in Africa and two in Asia - were undertaken by their joint efforts. Higher education under Christian auspices was an obvious choice for a study of the Churches' social concerns in India. Principals of no less than 115 Christian colleges conferred with representatives from the Churches and educationists Indian and foreign. An empirical study on 'Christian Higher Education and Indian National Development' had been conducted by Dr. Richard Dickinson over a period of 18 months. The results of this study along with the relevant parts of the Report of the Indian Education
Commission provided the basis of reflection on the social role of the Christian colleges.

As a follow-up of this consultation the Jesuit Educational Association of India held two seminars in 1967 and 1968: *Educational Perspectives in Modern India* along with *Education and Social Concern* are the two volumes containing the papers presented in these seminars. Despite the fact that full participation in them was limited to Jesuits, the reflections and proposals contained in the proceedings would be fairly representative of a wider range of educationists engaged in Christian colleges.

*Whither Catholic Education?* presents the results of a consultation of a more broad-based body of educationists. Convened by the Xavier Board of Higher Education, 180 persons engaged in Catholic institutions discussed their educational orientations almost on the eve of the National Seminar of May 1969 on 'The Church in India Today'.

The proceedings of the Seminar on *Indian Philosophy and Social Concern* held in 1966, and the slender volume of *The Philosophy of Sarvodaya and Its Educational Implications* provide a few insights into the stirrings of social thought in Neo-Hinduism, and as such are helpful material in the understanding of sensitive Hindu youth in our colleges.²

²*Sarvodaya* means 'Welfare for all', literally 'Dawn for all.'
The special number of the *Journal of Christian Colleges in India* on Moral Education published in December 1969 by the National Board of Christian Higher Education in India touches on the internal conflicts youth experiences regarding the solution of social problems.

Having cited the basic sources of our references we are in a position to trace the evolution in the social thought of Indian educators. The Report of the Indian Education Commission opens up a vista of the social mission of all universities in India:

There are so many new pulls and forces, as well as old ones, operating in our national life - as, indeed, in the life of man as a whole - that its balance has become very precarious, and there is a danger of losing our bearings unless universities are able to play this role adequately by involving themselves deeply in the study and evaluation of the social process. Such involvement is vital since the universities are preeminently the forum for a critical assessment of society - sympathetic, objective, unafraid whose partiality and motives cannot be suspected. 3

The changing concept of university education attuned to the needs of the times is underscored by Valerian Cardinal Gracias of Bombay in his keynote address at the National Consultation of the Principals of Christian colleges:

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No longer can we take a purely individualistic view of education, nor even, like Cardinal Newman accept the idea that the main purpose of higher education is the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake. These objectives remain, but they are now recognized to be merely partial. They have to be completed by attention to the social dimensions of all rightly-oriented educational activity. The social side of university education is much greater in a society like India which has accepted an egalitarian democracy as its political and national goal.

The observations of Cardinal Gracias are particularly appropriate in the context of the genesis and growth of modern education in India. The Indian University, patterned on its English model, had remained too long in a kind of splendid isolation, concerned largely with a program of liberal education with an overwhelming emphasis on literary rather than on scientific knowledge; it had likewise remained unrelated to the changing needs, the emergent values and the new sociological patterns of a young democracy. It was high time that it ceased to produce mere colonial versions of the English gentleman. Perceptive scholars of the Indian educational set-up began to point out that the British legacy had made the Indian college dysfunctional in a developing society. Socialization as an important aspect of education was stressed, among others, by Dr. Zakir Hussain, President of India:

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Educational institutions have to correct their one-sided intellectuality and devote themselves more consciously and systematically to the exercise and nurture of the social urges inherent in the young. They should abstain from directing the intellectual, the technical, the emotional elements of youthful disposition to isolated development, and attempt, whenever possible, to let them grow and flourish in the service of others and in mutually shared work.5

We find, then, a fairly general consensus during the sixties, articulated by Christians and non-Christians alike, that the Indian colleges have a social mission to fulfill and that there are a number of social functions that flow from that mission. There is a growing awareness that if colleges anywhere in the world have some social responsibility, the Indian colleges have a special social mission, because India is a developing country and also because the attitudes toward work and service present particular difficulties in the climate of the yet prevalent Hindu socio-religious concepts.

The concepts of work and service are more difficult of application in India than in many other countries because of the subtle but pervasive influence of Hinduism even on those who do not adhere to its practice to any noticeable extent. Hinduism, unlike Judaism and Christianity, has no sense of finality with regard to work in this world; with its cyclic sense of history it offers little incentive to the building

of the Earthly City. One of the most unfortunate factors of the Hindu socio-religious culture is the sense of timelessness in India's confrontation with reality; it tends to maintain an attitude in stark contrast to a world moving forward in a dynamic process of evolution; it favors the growth of an escapist philosophy and of a spirit of procrastination, which together soften the disparity between the promise and the performance. These facets of the Hindu outlook on life, along with the theory of metempsychosis, stifle the achievement-motivated resoluteness of the human spirit characteristic of those raised in a Judeo-Christian mentality. In his study of Indian Culture and Society, Richard Lannoy has this to say:

Transmigration is another manifestation of the Indian idea of oneness of all life. It leads to an open-ended sense of perfectibility, less anguish in the face of time, a less fanatical will to achieve everything in a single lifetime. ...The sense of finality was absent from the Hindu world-view; in such a scheme the drive of the performance principle tends to be viewed as no more than absurd vanity.

Moreover, the theory of 'Maya' or Cosmic Illusion, although not applied in the day-to-day life, makes its influence felt in the diminished importance of the

fulfillment of earthly tasks. More importantly, in the Hindu ethos the concept of work is heavily loaded with a sense of moral duty to be performed, regardless of its results on others or its impact on the human growth of the worker. Marxist ideology has contributed to a profound understanding of the humanizing value of work: Man's confrontation with Nature with his ultimate triumph over it, brotherhood of man with man deriving from work, and leading to the emergence of the New Man. The positive aspects of the Marxist intuition have been a help to Christians in the discovery of the meaning of work imposed by God on Man. But by and large, Indian society has hardly benefited by such an intuition. Refusal to work or the denial of the right to work may be viewed in Hindu society as an economic disability, but not altogether as a barrier to the expression of the human personality, which barrier leads to a progressive alienation and dehumanization.

Educated persons in India raised in the Hindu socio-religious culture would easily disdain any manual work, because in their conception work and learning would belong to entirely different categories of human occupation. The easy availability of illiterate labor tends to perpetuate the attitude of disdain toward work among the educated classes. At the same time these experience the crippling
effect of their attitude; for progress in the area of industrial technology only results from an intelligent manipulation of matter, that is, when people are willing to work with both minds and hands.

Finally, the generally accepted law of 'Karma' or 'Action-with-its-Inevitable-Reaction' diminishes in the eyes of the Hindus the value of service rendered to fellow-humans. The strict law of individual retribution takes away a good deal of the stimulus from the desire to serve another, since the other can in no way escape from the reaction built into his present existence as a result of the action of his previous existence. Service, then, can at best benefit the doer and not the apparent beneficiary, from whom evil and suffering can after all only be deferred but not effectively removed. These concepts are a clear challenge to the ethical stance of the Christian colleges.

There is likewise the growing conviction among educators that divisive factors created by caste and creed, race and language have to be effectively challenged, and the cleavages healed before the social mission of the colleges could be achieved to any extent. It is right here that we situate the distinctive social mission of the Christian colleges. This is voiced by Cardinal Gracias:
Though we have not a monopoly of spiritual ideals, we have in our profound God-given understanding of man and his role in the world a potential contribution to India's self-development, which could have incalculable influence if it were clearly grasped and continually kept in view by all Christians working in the field of higher education. The healthy development of any modern society depends on the right understanding of man's nature and the inviolable dignity of the human person as such. This last principle is the foundation of all true democracy as it is the foundation of the Indian Constitution. But it is essentially a Christian concept. There is no clear basis for it in traditional Indian thought. 7

And he points out that a partiality toward the poor is consonant with the fulfillment of this mission, when he says:

In keeping with our Christian ideals and following our Master Jesus Christ, we should have a special place in our hearts and our institutions for the poor, the underprivileged, the abandoned; and our concern for them should be the hallmark of the Christian character of our colleges. 8

The Cardinal's words seem to be an echo, mutatis mutandis, of a part of the Opening Message of the Second Vatican Council:

Let our concern swiftly focus first of all on those who are especially lowly, poor and weak, Like Christ, we would have pity on the multitude weighed down with hunger, misery, and lack of

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8 Ibid., p.38.
knowledge. We want to fix a steady gaze on those who still lack the opportune help to achieve a way of life worthy of human beings. As we undertake our work, therefore, we would emphasize whatever concerns the dignity of man, whatever contributes to a genuine community of peoples.

At this point it would seem to be opportune to make a distinction between 'social mission' and 'social work': the former refers to a panorama of thought and action, while the latter with its narrower connotation means a particular form of the humanizing activity of man by which he renders service to the maladjusted and to those suffering from unjust social conditions. Social mission is the inspiration and social work the function flowing out of that inspiration; there is a dialectical movement in the process of their interaction.

Through the humanization of nature, man creates the objective world of culture, which forms, so to speak, his cosmic-social extension, the prolongation of his mind, his heart and his hands. The more complex, the more universal this world of culture, the more radical is the change that is brought about in the consciousness and the aspirations of man.

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Despite the close bond between social mission and social work, a college adopts at times a pure social-work approach which does not challenge the academic community, nor even contribute, except in a marginal way, to the welfare of the society it seeks to serve. Extra-curricular activities of students, like the building of houses and roads, and the digging of wells and canals, when divorced from the inspiration of social mission, just lead to the social-work trap, an impasse in the spirit leading to frustration.

The social-mission approach, on the other hand, leads of a fulfillment of the academic community by linking it vitally with the society it seeks to aid in its self-development. Such an approach implies a study of the problems of society and of its aspirations; the duty of creating responsible citizens, effective leaders and efficient personnel right in the midst of the society that is being helped; optimum involvement and opportune withdrawal of the academic community itself during the process. Social progress being an extremely complex process affecting the totality of human existence, the colleges can ill afford to immerse the students in the multifaceted research that would be required. However, the symbolic participation of a college in the process would consist in academically-grounded approach in a few well-defined areas.
When the aforementioned conditions are fulfilled, new vistas are opened before the students, of service to society at large and to the nation as a whole. Then the college is in a position to perpetuate a dialogue in their spirit between the 'movement phase' of emotional appeal involved in community development and the 'institutional phase' of purposive and scientific application. Dr. S.K. Hulbe of Ahmednagar College, Ahmednagar sums it up as follows:

It is only when social service attains some academic value that we can expect sustained interest from students and faculty. Through the mutual influence of the college and the community on one another the quality of living and learning should significantly improve. By integrating itself with the community, the university will have fulfilled a mission toward itself. The social-mission approach thus suggests a 'theorist' as well as an 'activist' role for colleges in India. 11

It would indeed come as a surprise to many that as early as the twenties the Lindsay Report on the social mission of the Christian college in India spelt out principles and carried recommendations that would in no way be inapplicable to the situation obtaining today.

In the Chapter entitled 'The Opportunity Before the Christian College' the Report says:

The Christian Church is concerned in all sorts of ways with the economic and social problems of the village community. All over India there are experiments being made to bring knowledge to bear to help the villagers, but these experiments are often isolated and often being conducted with insufficient knowledge. There ought to be some college centre to which the workers in the village could go for the knowledge they need. 12

In what one might term A Theology of University Extension the Lindsay Report raises pertinent questions:

Should a college, a place of higher learning, be concerned with the problems of village hygiene or of village agriculture? Are such extremely utilitarian concerns part of the Christian message? Our answer is that harnessing knowledge in the service of love or putting the scientific mind behind the merciful heart is an essential part of the Christian message which is both urgently needed and warmly welcomed in present day India. 13

The Church as such has no purely secular mission:

"Christ, to be sure, gave His Church no proper mission in the political, economic, or social order." 14

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13 Ibid., p.164.
It could likewise be maintained that a university college as such has no purely spiritual mission. However, a college run by a church is the community in which the spiritual mission and the secular function meet and fuse, and bring enrichment to each other. The Christian college is the situation in which there emerges the realisation that temporal functions are intimately bound up with the eternal destinies of individuals and communities.

The Vatican Council does in fact consider a training for an eventual contribution toward the building of the earthly city an integral part of authentic schooling:

A true education aims at the formation of the human person with respect to his ultimate goal, and simultaneously with respect to the good of these societies of which, as a man he is a member, and in whose responsibilities, as an adult, he will share. 15

In his paper on 'The Current Thinking of the Churches' Dr. Theodore Gill speaks of Christ the Master as the Ideal of the positive, all-embracing spirit that should pervade our colleges:

We in Christian colleges will cultivate the spirit, by which I do not mean weeding and watering medieval ectoplasm. I mean we will do what we can to encourage a world-affirming, life-loving,

15 Ibid., p.639.
gratitude-showing, creation-enhancing style, mold, spirit. ... We will take Christ for our guru, who is no unapproachable, authority figure, but is a man for others, with others, doing things, not just teaching or attitudinizing. 16

When thus understood in its global perspective, the social mission of our colleges will introduce the students to the unrolling of history in which they are no mere spectators. Bishop Newbigin says:

It should be one of the marks of a Christian college that it gives its students a sense of history of which they are a part, of its direction, of the fundamental choices which have to be made in our time and of the light which is cast upon these issues by an understanding of history which finds its centre and turning point in Jesus Christ. 17

We resume: The Report of the Indian Education Commission has laid great stress on the achieving of social transformation in the country through schools and colleges. There has also been a fresh accent in the Vatican Council on the social responsibilities of educational institutions. These two influences combined together have stimulated the social thinking of Christian colleges in broadening the basic outlook of higher


education, and have led them to clarify the concept of a social-mission approach to society at large. In the context of persistent prejudices regarding work and service, which are rampant in the socio-religious climate of India, the academic communities of Christians begin to pose questions relative to their social role on different levels - local, national and even international.
CHAPTER III

THE EMERGING SOCIAL CONCERN AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

A college in India is a peep-hole through which many of its students look at the frustration of their society. Several of the problems confronting it are not specifically educational problems; they are seemingly insoluble questions arising out of the economic and social conditions prevalent in the country as a whole.

Students arrive at college with a wide range of attitudes toward society. Various factors have had their influence on their disposition: their family situation, the degree of their exposure to realities in society, the introverted or outgoing aspirations and ambitions that have been developed in them during their school-career. Generally in the course of their first year at college a certain number among them begin to reflect on the immense problems that confront the society in which they live, their home-state and the nation as a whole, thanks to the widening contacts with their companions from other strata of society and from other parts of the country. Moreover, the social themes they meet with in their readings in magazines and reviews, and in watching plays and movies put them in touch with human situations involving varying
degrees of suffering and misery, injustice and inequality of opportunity. A few of them even develop the critical faculty of analyzing the social programs of the political parties.

However, a good number of students both from the small affluent segment and from the underprivileged sections of society look upon college education as a transit-camp where they have to collect a degree which is a pre-requisite for employment. The degrees, in many cases, do not relate to the jobs they will be taking; and the content of the courses leading to the degrees, even in subjects like Economics and Politics, may not have sufficient relevance to the contemporary Indian situation.

The Christian college, like any affiliated college, finds it an extremely complicated procedure and almost an exercise in futility when it tries to prescribe a curriculum and text-books, which would be relevant to the social education of the students. Yet to be faithful to its mission it has to find suitable means to hasten in its student-body the dawn of an enlightened perception of the social situation. The present study will at first take a good look at the pattern of the student-body in the campuses and then examine how best the Christian college could lead its students toward larger preoccupations regarding the
major problems affecting the majority of men, and give shape and form to the idealism of youth which is a positive force in the transformation of society.

Undoubtedly most students get started on the stage of university education in India at too early an age: having had ten to twelve years of schooling in one of the different systems prevalent in the country, they are just sixteen or seventeen when they enter college. Barring the University of Bombay and the universities of Uttar Pradesh, which offer a two-year course known as the Intermediate prior to the two-year Degree course, all other Universities have a one-year Pre-University course or a two-year Pre-Degree Course in the colleges affiliated to them, with a three-year or two-year Degree course following upon it. During the first two or even three years at college, many students give the impression of immaturity in several segments of their behavior-pattern. This has led observers to dub as 'glorified high schools' those colleges which offer only four years of courses leading to the first degree of Bachelor of Arts, Science, or Commerce. Those colleges with Post-Graduate courses of another two years leading to the Master's degrees present a different image of maturity. When we speak, therefore, of college students in general we refer to a somewhat heterogeneous population whose ages range from 16 to 23. Older persons attending college are
still a rare event in most of the Indian universities.

Nearly all the college students in India today were born after Independence in 1947. The story of the struggle and sacrifice of thousands of students involved in the independence movement forms part of their information but in no way part of their experience.

What the students do experience and share with many of their elders is the searing disillusionment of the slow pace of India's progress. They feel that the performance after Independence has largely belied the rosy promises of the past. They see how after 1947 personal ambitions have tended to assert themselves more and more in a scramble for the plums of power, prestige and property. On occasion they even realize that the student-body is being used as a pawn in the political game - a sad legacy of the days of struggle for Independence. Their own personal future looks grim to many of them, as they are confronted with the alarming proportions of unemployment among the educated. Moreover, the falling standards of discipline among adults and a weakening of their civic consciousness and integrity no doubt affect the college youth. No wonder, then, that they are caught up in the negative and pessimistic mood that pervades large segments of Indian society. J.S.Yadava, a Delhi sociologist has this to say:
It does not require a very discerning observation to feel that a deep and distinct air of uncertainty clouds the Indian scene. To a certain extent the rapid social and cultural change which our society is presently undergoing is responsible for creating a vacuum leading to uncertainty. This fact itself is indicative of the magnitude of the problem of national cynicism and hopelessness. The social historians have indicated that one of the major elements, perhaps the most important single element which governs the dynamics of a particular society is the nature of the image of the future. 1

However, the reaction and response to social change among the students are not of an even pattern of cynicism and hopelessness. Growing in a new awareness of individual dignity and importance, they are also conscious of themselves as a social force capable of changing the society and the nation.

Sushanto Das, a specialist in student-problems, points up the deeper urge behind student-manifestations:

"So we go to the streets", the young seem to be saying, "to make ourselves heard and to make it amply clear that what you have to offer us - jobs, sex, literacy, legal rights to own houses or contract marriages - is not enough. We are concerned about the society in which we live, and we do not like the look of it. You rule it, and you have made a mess of it. We would like to change it all, but we have not the power". 2


2 Sushanto Das, "Youth in Revolt", Thought, (Delhi, April 27, 1968), Vol.XX.No.17. p.17.
The concern about the society in which they live is not always synonymous with their 'social concern' in the sense of an effective feeling for people at large, with a view to bettering their human condition. Not infrequently it is about the power-structure of society that they seem to be concerned. And if we probe into some of their manifestations, we can likewise detect an essential concern for their own future. So it was in the uprising of 1965:

The language riots in the South were in part political protests against central legislation which was super-imposing Hindi on non-Hindi States. The students in South India do not want the imposition of Hindi because it will be a disadvantage to them when they compete with the Northener whose mother tongue is Hindi. And so, we can analyse most student protests, as political in garb, but basically born of threat to oneself.

In all fairness, however, it must be avowed that it is not always easy to analyze the ingredients of the motivations that lead to protests and to the desire for positions in the power-structure. Human aspirations are complex phenomena, and simplistic explanations of their working might be highly misleading. Simple, selfless social concern would create an increasing awareness of the problems and opportunities in one's society, with a view to offering one's service to it even to the point of generous dedication and total self-giving. In the Indian situation the major preoccupation would be centered around
the abject poverty of the masses, which has its roots in a radically unjust society; an anger and a resolution born of a deep compassion for their lot would provoke a sincere and courageous social worker to champion the causes of the poor who are oppressed and downtrodden. It is right here that social concern and concern with society seem to get intertwined. For a person's social concern seems to be doomed to pathetic ineffectiveness, unless he secure a place in the decision-making bodies and translate his concern in the shape of suitable legislation and prompt execution. In modern society political power would appear to be the most potent instrument for effecting social amelioration.

There are students who would like to enter the power-structures in order to sweep them clean of the dishonesty, hypocrisy and selfishness with which they find them riddled, and eventually use them as a means of service to society. There are others who seek in the power-structures just a status for themselves, who would like to carve a niche of personal glory, and open out for themselves avenues for easy money, pomp and comforts. Yet others might start with selfless and generous impulses, but their motivations might progressively be vitiated. At times there is an erosion of an earlier ideology of service or an over-identification
with party-politics so that the concern for society is consigned to oblivion.

The wellsprings of the religious culture of the students are also a clue to the understanding of the kind and degree of social concern in their minds and hearts. The traditional practice of Hindu faith lays little stress on the concern for the neighbor. The several acts of charity performed by a Hindu add to the good works of the doer, but they are far from being a manifestation of his involvement in the lives and problems of the beneficiaries, much less of any desire to remedy the social conditions that cause human suffering.

Those Hindus who adhere to monistic philosophy would go so far as to postulate the incompatibility of liberation in this life-known as the state of 'Jivanmukti' - with any form of social concern:

In non-dualistic systems the idea of jivanmukti is not compatible with social concern as understood by us today. In fact 'social concern', 'social value' and such other phrases have come to occupy our mind only recently and we have developed some regard for the ideas expressed by these phrases. ....We are not mentally prepared to accept the fact that the non-dualistic systems of Mahayana Buddhism and Advaita Vedanta do not recognize a necessary relationship between jivanmukti and
social concern. We may re-interpret Buddhism or Vedanta in such a way that social concern becomes a part of its philosophy. But that would be a new Buddhism or Vedanta. 4

R.C. Pandeya expressed the above view in the Seminar on 'Indian Philosophy and social Concern' held in Madras in February-March, 1966. However, N. Veezhinathan and T.P. Ramachandran opposed that view and contended that the 'Jivanmukta' or the person who has attained liberation in this life is the best of all social servants:

The jivanmukta does not deal with the mere symptoms of misery but helps to destroy the root cause of misery, and thus not only removes present suffering but also precludes the possibility of future suffering. Hence it is legitimate not only to deny that Brahman-realization is incompatible with service to society but also to affirm that service of abiding value can be expected only from one who has realized the non-dual Brahman. 5

This second view represents the tendency toward a radical reinterpretation of monistic Hinduism. Other forces reinforced such a recasting of Hindu thought: these were the impact of the Christian stress on individual human dignity, the humanitarian impulses of the West and the democratic principle of individual liberty and human equality. The new ethic compounded of all these was propagated by the social reformers of the nineteenth century.

5 Ibid., p.127.
The Gandhian ideology of the moral regeneration of man through the service of his fellowman was an effort at a spiritualising continuation of the reform movement. Sporadic attempts have been made to keep Gandhiji's ideals alive. His disciple, Vinoba Bhava had initially some measure of success with gifts of land and of labor made over to him for the poor. However, the growth of the spirit of social service has been alarmingly slow in Hindu society. The narrower loyalties toward the caste appear to offset the wider but seemingly vague loyalties to society at large and to the nation as a whole. It is to such a mentality that Nehru attributed the neglect of a genuine social concern in India:

For each person life was divided and fixed up, a bundle of duties and responsibilities within his narrow sphere in the graded hierarchy. He had no duty to, or conceived of, society as a whole and no attempt was made to make him feel his solidarity with it. 6

Social concern, in its widest implication, would seem to be a Christian and through a historical process - a Western concept. In Indian society it has a limited application within the joint-family system in which watchful concern is extended to the members of the larger family.

knit together by blood or marriage relationships. The conditions of urban living, however, have dictated the adoption of the nuclear-family system in many parts of India. Even so, there is a constant return to the idea and implications of the joint-family: This is patent in the conferring or seeking of economic and political favors in which membership in the joint-family receives overwhelming consideration, and nepotism even seems to be taken for granted. Thus a peculiarly limited brand of social concern is forged by the weight of marriage and genetic relationships which merge together several families in a mini-society.

The erosion of the religious spirit among the educated Hindus should logically make them shed the caste-mentality bolstered by Hinduism, and ought to lead them to a new 'religion' of humanity. But according to a perceptive observer of the Indian scene this would not be the case:

The educated Hindu's loss of faith in his traditional religion is not even being compensated by the substitution of a robust atheism having its roots in humanitarianism and compassion. On the contrary, his superstitions are increasing and with it his fears and sense of insecurity, which his loss of faith no longer enables him to cope with.

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The insecurity referred to by V.K.R.V. Rao may be one important reason for the role caste plays in political and economic structures today.

Having outlined the positive and negative influences on the emergence of social concern among the Hindu students, we might now make a realistic appraisal of the quality of social awareness among the Christians who are one third of the student population in the Christian colleges. They fall within a wide spectrum representing the Christian communities of Kerala claiming apostolic tradition as well as the most recent converts of Gujarat and Nagaland. There are continuing tensions among the different rites of Kerala Christians and lingering prejudices based on caste and regional differences among the others. All these enormously diminish the basic unity of purpose and action so necessary for social concern in a community.

The Christian Churches officially teach a rather advanced social doctrine, but by and large tend to be rather traditional and paternalistic in their social activities. Their hospitals and orphanages are indeed a testimony to their spirit of charity. However, newer concerns of social apostolate are yet to find expression in their works, in symbolic if not massive enterprises for
social awakening and social betterment. And since Christian communities betray a general unconcern toward social problems, the social image projected by the Churches turns out to be blurred and almost ineffective.

Christian students reflecting the unconcern of their communities help widen the credibility gap between the avowed social doctrine of the Churches and the observable attitude of their members. A rather simplistic dichotomy between Christian Revelation and the Way of Life, temporal and eternal values, personal and communitarian responsibilities lead them, as well as other Christians, to an individualistic concept of salvation analogous to that of the Hindus:

Revelation acquired a static, conceptualized and depersonalized quality as it was increasingly reduced to a collection of abstract truths, teachings and historical facts. ...(The) neglect of the experiential element of Revelation tended to distort the perspective of the Christian engaged in working out his salvation in the secular world. Salvation began to be conceived in individualistic terms with the emphasis on the liberation of the individual in separation from his concrete environment.

An individualistic outlook is, then, the outcome of the cardinal principles of Hinduism; the outcome, likewise, 

of not translating into action the teachings of Christianity. We could, therefore, assert that the vast bulk of students in the Christian colleges are not actually and effectively inspired by their religious beliefs in the matter of social concern. They are swayed by immediate personal success, by a university degree that is for them a key to earning a living, a key also to release them from the bondage of caste and poverty, tradition and authority. They often tend to constitute elitist groups of their own, shutting themselves off from their communities; they become a 'class' or a caste apart, but not without its own internal dissen­sions:

Unrepresentative though it be of Indian society, and distinct from the masses outside its walls, the University still reflects the incoherences, tensions and schisms of the country that is its setting. ...Such cohesion as it does possess is oftener the result of external pressures upon it than of any feeling of community within it, except in the sense that the cleavage between educated and uneducated in India runs deep, and those involved in the educational process tend to consider themselves a class apart. 9

The Report of the Education Commission likewise points out the lack of concern for social and national unity that characterizes most educational institutions:

Instead of promoting social and national integration and making an active effort to promote national consciousness, several features of the educational system promote divisive tendencies; caste loyalties are encouraged in a number of private institutions.  

Possibly the greatest single obstacle to India's social and economic progress is the lack of a sense of national purpose. An American writer has this to say:

I spoke to many students on the direction India was taking, but found neither joy nor hope nor any indication of that substitute for money in an underdeveloped country - a fierce, nationalist do-or-die determination to sacrifice, come what may, and make a go of it.  

A subtle attitude of fatalism aggravates the social apathy, taking for granted the poverty and inefficiency prevalent everywhere. Those who make feeble attempts to do something about ameliorating conditions seem to sink into a morass of frustration, especially in the context of village uplift in which the pre-condition of establishing empathy with the villagers seems to be essential:

The chief reason for almost all attempts at rural development sponsored by the educated classes turning out into fiascoes is the unfamiliarity with village conditions. Even those among the

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10 *Education and National Development*, *op. cit.*, p.18.

staff and students who venture into the villages soon tire and turn back because they find themselves in unknown and uncharted environment. 12

With its numerous spawning grounds of misery and destitution, India induces a torpor as regards a real and therefore disturbing social awareness. Students as well as others gradually harden themselves to the pain they have to live with, and the conscience bogs down into the mire of callousness. Familiarity breeds disappearance. Or, it could be ... 'a motivated resistance to potentially painful awareness about social life' according to the analysis of Kenneth Kenniston, a Yale psychologist who says:

Truly to recognise a problem in society means to become aware of a problem in one's life as a member of society. ...Most men resist awareness of problems in their own lives, and they dislike obligations to improve their societies - it is easier to cultivate one's garden behind a wall of blindness. These shared resistances are often supported by a kind of rhetoric of pseudo-awareness which, by appearing to talk about society, understanding and praising its virtues, seeks to reassure us that we can rest tranquilly at night. 13

A somewhat clear picture as regards certain aspects of the social concern of our students emerges from the

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results of a Survey of Opinions and Attitudes of Students in Jesuit Schools and Colleges in India. Though limited to the institutions of one Order, the Survey is not too unrepresentative of the type of students in Christian colleges. It was undertaken in 1967 and 1968 by Father Achilles Verstraeten, S.J. of St. Xavier's College, Calcutta with the technical cooperation of Dr.(Mrs) Kamla Patel, D.Phil., till lately Lecturer in Psychology at Loreto College, Calcutta. The main objective of the study was to obtain factual information about the major achievements and weaknesses of the Jesuit system of education. In the results under the section entitled 'Attitudes toward the Underprivileged' we have the following data:

a) Only half the students fully agree that it is the duty of every citizen to help the underprivileged.

b) Coolies, laborers and servants are classified by all as under-privileged people.

c) About 70% of the students and teachers display favourable attitudes toward the underprivileged, 10% are indifferent and 8% display unfavourable attitudes.

d) The students are in favour of all the activities mentioned in the questionnaire by way of social service to the under-privileged, with the exception of slum-clearing. However, they actually undertake few of the activities. Yet, they claim to devote an hour or two per week to social work.

e) Half the students have hardly any awareness of the problems of servants and their families.
Half of them find rather satisfactory environmental conditions for the common man around their neighbourhood. 14

In the light of the preceding statements and findings, it would seem that social concern and action have been timorous and half-hearted on the part of the students. On the side of the Christian educators, there has been no clear and forceful formulation of a philosophy of social concern till about a decade ago. The Vatican Council made a massive attempt in the early sixties to make the Catholic Church enter into a dialogue with the world in all its dimensions, including pre-eminently the social dimension. The articulate expression of the Church's mind on social problems has had valuable repercussions on other Christian Churches as well. And a happy outcome is that the Christian colleges have begun in all earnestness to lay due stress on leading the students toward a growth in and a manifestation of their social concern.

Concurrently during the last decade the social thinking of students has been stimulated by their reading about and especially by their meeting youth dedicated to service, such

as members of the American Peace Corps, and of Voluntary Service Overseas from France, Germany, Britain, Japan, Australia and New Zealand. The example of young men and women from these affluent countries dedicating their time and energy and talents to the service of the neglected masses of India has helped awaken the dormant ideals of self-sacrifice in many Indian youths. These recapture in varying degrees the moods and the experiences of Nehru and his companions many years back:

Now forces arose and drove us to the masses in the villages, and for the first time, a new and different India rose up before the young intellectuals who had almost forgotten its existence or attached little importance to it. It was a disturbing sight, not only because of its stark misery and the magnitude of its problems, but because it began to upset some of our values and conclusions. So began for us the discovery of India as it was, and it produced both understanding and conflict within us. 15

Certain groups of college students exposed to a fruitful dialogue with Indian villagers through well-organized work-camps experience a deep social awareness born of a sympathetic social inquiry. This awareness inevitably leads them to the realization of their indispensable role in changing the face of society. The following formulation

15 Jawaharlal Nehru, op. cit., p.25.
may be considered a peak-point of the concern which makes
the youth pulsate with the urge for action:

Youth in India is filled with a burning desire to
transform the country. We refuse to be a part of
that machinery which is responsible for perpetuating
social injustice and impatiently await the opportu-
nity to pull down those structures which are respon-
sible for the status quo. Our organisation stands
for the genuine aspirations of the Indian youth
and we feel that in order to achieve our goal we
must ultimately secure the participation of our
members in the fields of administration, law-making
and other walks of public life. In order to
achieve this, individuals must be trained and
militant members must be recruited who will trans-
form their lives and dedicate them to the nation.
In other words, we aim at National revolution
through personal revolution.

We now review briefly our analysis of the emerging
social concern of students in the Christian colleges.
Nearly all of them are post-Independence products fed on
promises of progress that have not materialized. Caught
up in moods of cynicism and disillusionment, some have
manifested their faith in 'Street-politics'. Many others,
convinced that they are a social force to be reckoned with,
have aspired to influence and change the powers that be.
As regards concern for the victims of social injustice, for
the downtrodden and the underprivileged, few creditable

16 The All India Catholic University Federation Way,
things could be attributed to the youth in the past:
Hindu students largely in harmony with their individualistic ethic, and Christian students mostly out of tune with their avowed communitarian doctrine have, by and large, remained unconcerned with the society around them. However, there are signs that during the past decade something has stirred: conferences and seminars, personal reflection and exemplars of social action conspire to shake our students out of their lethargy and unconcern, and urge the best among them toward a fulfilling social commitment.
CHAPTER IV

EDUCATING TOWARD

SOCIAL CONCERN AND A SENSE OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Functioning as a subsystem of society and deputed by it to aid in the intellectual, social and moral growth of youth, an educational institution is helped or hindered by the religious and cultural traditions, values and expectations of the community it serves. Rapidly changing societies like the Indian urban centers experience the pressures of industrialisation, and the college is confronted with the problem of the 'cultural lag'. By cultural lag we mean the discrepancy between technological change and the non-technological patterns of social values and behavior. It is an asset in so far as it ensures cultural continuity and facilitates the entry of the individual into his heritage. It is also a liability in the sense it impedes the individual from adapting himself to the changing social realities brought about by technology. The implications of the cultural lag in a developing country like India suggest the need for a socializing education.

It is, then, necessary to isolate the factors of a socio-cultural nature which operate in Indian society
crippling the effectiveness of the educators in their efforts to develop in students an active social conscience blossoming in desirable social values and social responsibility. Our attention is immediately drawn to the group-mentality operating within the caste as a residue of the joint-family system. Selig Harrison says: "It is a fundamental Indian psychological urge to find group commitment, any group commitment, for its own sake". ¹ By and large, group expectations, group interests and group traditions seem to dictate the individual's aspirations, allegiances and patterns of behavior. "Group mobility is a characteristic of the caste system, whereas in a class system, it is the individual and his family that move up and down". ²

Caste, regional and linguistic loyalties are the larger restrictions on the individual, and often play a decisive role in the recruitment policies of private industry and business as well as in the recruitment practice in the Public Sector and in Government Services where a group or caste has grabbed power in a particular department.

Rare are individuals large-minded and courageous enough to transcend the barriers of caste, region and language with the assertion of a national identity.

This segmented group mentality operating on various levels accounts for the lack of social commitment starting from the neighborhood to the nation. Dr. D.R. Gadgil, Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission, has complained:

Indians have no sense of neighborhood. The individual thinks of himself as a member of a caste rather than as a member of a community, and it is the caste system which accounts for the state of Indian sanitation. Only personal cleanliness needs to be observed, with careful - no, scrupulous - attention to the taboos against pollution. Each one, nursed by the caste complex takes it for granted that someone, somehow will get rid of the refuse afterwards. 3

There is irony in the fact that after the Constitutional Abolition of Untouchability in 1949, caste-consciousness has intensified, and "there is a growing evidence that caste functions as the unit of social action and is the core of the new politics". 4 The achievement of political democracy would seem to be unrelated to the process of socialization. "So ingrained is the concept of

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inequality in the Indian mind that we have a curious situation in which political equality rubs shoulders with social distance". These anomalies could be explained in terms of a dread of individual insecurity in modern democracy and of the millennial sanction of caste-inequality in Hinduism.

In the context of the failure of society and of Hinduism to inspire the student with social concern transcending groups and castes, regions and languages, it devolves on the colleges to accept the challenge of social education. It is then disheartening to hear Gaudino, a perceptive observer of university education in India say: "The most important fact about the Indian student's education is that he is untouched by it". In many instances the relationship between the student and the college seems to be one of a mere bargain - payment of tuition fees as against a degree leading to a good job and a high salary. However, against Gaudino's global pessimism, it should be maintained that several colleges, Christian and non-Christian, are awakening to their responsibility of forming a

right conscience in their students, which is best judged by the quality of their social conscience; for if their conscience is unrelated to reality, they would fail to come to grips with the moral issues of their times.

In his paper on 'The Social Bases of Education' already referred to, Alfred D'Souza enlarges on how our educational institutions could mediate the dialogue between the student and the social facts of his environment:

(The colleges) must prepare the conditions for the evolution of a more human order by a planned assault on the apathetic acquiescence of students and society to social injustice and human degradation. In other words, we must have faith, vision and moral courage to dramatise the socio-moral issues of society and shock people out of their habitual 'unseeability' and resistance to awareness. 7

He would advocate the adoption in our colleges of the method of 'prophetic protest' employed with considerable skill in recent times by Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., and Daniel Berrigan. Creative educational leadership demands it. Our colleges must shed the timorous approach to situations destructive of social justice and human dignity. Upholders of the status quo for all practical purposes, they generally tend to exalt the virtue of

conformity. They rather need to develop in the students a creative non-conformity. Referring to Robert Havighurst's analysis of social deviancy, D'Souza would have our colleges encourage socially desirable deviance. As Havighurst himself remarks:

> It is too much to expect the educational system to produce prophets and saints, but it can produce intelligent supporters of innovation. Therefore good education will always show an openness to deviancy - a willingness to give deviancy a chance to prove itself.

The prophetic protest expressive of the concern for society is hardly borne out by the student unrest in India. Students go on strike for specific reasons relating to academic structures or lack of facilities or politics. In the view of a group which discussed Moral Education in India Today:

> Student violence did not represent a rebellion against a whole social system as it seems to do in the West. ...By means of their numbers, students in India have become a force for social change, and the changes which they have implemented so far seem to be in the direction of the lowering of academic standards and orderly self-discipline rather than any positive gains for the radical transformation of education or society. The reason may be that generally university students in India are younger in years and maturity than

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their European counterparts and have not yet articulated, clear conceptions of the kind of changes and improvements in their society which they want to make. 9

Educational leadership can give a practical orientation to the expression of student protest in matters of social concern:

The alumni are often in a position to be able to cut through the tape that blocks social justice. The students of St Stephen's, Delhi were able to obtain proper consideration from municipal authorities for Jhuggi dwellers: including items like water connections proper supervision of sanitary arrangements, quick action against black marketeers. 10

The college authorities are well-placed to link together the former and present students in the cause of social justice.

The pedagogy of social formation aims as its first phase the creation of a community right within the campus of the college. The students have to be helped to get rid of the prejudices they may have imbibed in their homes. While the rich have to learn to shun snobbery, the need of the poorer students in acquiring genuine sympathy for brethren of their own economic status is no less by any means.


10 Nevis Coutinho, "Relations with Alumni", Education and Social Concern, op.cit., p.205.
For it is not uncommon to find poor youths aiming at and securing good jobs, and then having no regard for people in their own milieux. At times a sort of compensatory mechanism seems to be at work, and some of those who have got up the greasy economic ladder treat servants and workers with greater disdain than do those born into something well-to-do-families.

Closely linked with the regard to persons irrespective of their wealth or poverty, the students have to learn that human dignity has no essential relationship with the type of work men do. As an instance of the task before the college we may quote the shaping of the attitude of a student like Dhirendra Nath, a Santal Aborigine, an attitude which is shared by most college students and expresses a widely-held cultural conviction:

'Yes', he asserts without any hesitation, and the rest agree with him, 'in my opinion manual work is meant for the poor and the illiterate. Those who get educated should do better jobs'.

Rating manual work very low in the cultural scale of values is not something peculiarly Indian. As Peter Drucker has pointed out:

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It has always been axiomatic that the man of even a little education would forsake the hoe and the potter's wheel and would stop working with his hands, ... Education was a preparation for dignified leisure rather than for productive work. 12

What is, however, peculiarly Indian about the attitude to manual work is its association with the low castes and the Untouchables. To be liberated from manual work is an exhilarating symbol of emancipation from the low caste and Untouchability, and in general the goal for the upcoming Indian. Hence, one of the functions in the social role of the Christian colleges would seem to be the integration of manual work in the hierarchy of human values in recognition of its contribution to human progress.

The 'productive work' Drucker refers to is of the pre-industrial type, and the Report of the Indian Education Commission comments on it:

In the Traditional Society there was always an antithesis between education and work. Production was always primitive, and no education was required. Productive work was the drudgery of the uneducated lower classes. Education was the privilege of the upper classes. This resulted in an educated elite, who were parasitical in character. But the uneducated peasants and artisans were the real productive workers. 13

The disdain for illiterate productive work of former days seems to carry over in the attitude of students with regard to educated but experimental work. Thus it would be rare to find agricultural graduates preferring actual experimental work in the fields to doing white-collared jobs in offices. The colleges have to discover an effective way of preaching the Gospel of soiled hands.

Manual work of some kind is the real introduction of the student to the Indian village. One who has not felt the pulse of the Indian village does not know India, for more than 70% of its people live in its 550,000 villages. But social work in a village is a complex affair. The work-camp of the students has to be so organized that they do not isolate themselves from the village community. Lack of adaptation may lead to strained relations, and thence to frustration on the part of students. Again a good deal of tension may be generated if the tempo of village life is totally disregarded by too rapid plans for too large-scale programs. In the indispensable preliminary surveys, students with the village-background will prove to be most serviceable. Such responsibilities may induce in them the desire to uplift their brethren rather than attempt singly to escape from stagnant society.

Since 75% of the Christian colleges are situated in
cities with a population of more than 100,000, it is largely in the suburbs and surrounding villages that social work is undertaken on week-ends. Some of the social Service Leagues do offer meaningful training to the students, while several have negative consequences because of the following reasons. First, programs which are condescending and do not sufficiently involve the local community of beneficiaries develop a patronising attitude in the students. Second, several programs undertaken by the Leagues or comparable associations are not conceived as part of a large-scale effort for the relief of definite problems; this gives the students a distorted view of what they accomplish, and induces in them the attitude that they have done their job and fulfilled a duty. Third, a lack of intellectual preparation through lecture outlines and minor research projects in the area of their work leaves the students with blurred concepts of social justice and social action. In brief:

We need much more intellectually-grounded programmes of community involvement, and ones in which the participants cannot confuse self-righteousness and social justice. 14

Besides the remote villages and the suburban areas,

the college campus itself should prove to be a locus of training in the social mission of the faculty and the students. It is mainly on the Principal that the responsibility devolves of providing the needed opportunities. He could place at the service of the local community the facilities of the college: the rooms and the halls, the library and the grounds, encouraging community meetings of educational and social significance. Besides the facilities, the college personnel could be judiciously used for community service. It is in the context of a dynamic inter-relationship between the college and the community that the students can mostly imbibe the larger meaning of service. Promoting the involvement of the influential members of the community in the service-programs will have the added advantage of helping spread the ripples of social mission to society at large.

A fair share of responsibility for stimulating social concern among the students rests on the Faculty as well. The Principal of Isabella Thoburn College, Lucknow paints a gloomy picture of the social mis-education youth imbibes; however, she hopefully points to the teacher as an important catalyst in its social training:

The sad thing is that society and the present educational system immunize the student against moral sensitivity. ...In the home he is being
conditioned to dishonesty, to denial of human dignity and to a callous disregard of human need. This is more true perhaps of lower middle class homes, including Christian homes. ...It will be through his teachers that the student will pick up the meaning of life, the moral code and what is expected of the citizen. ...The complexity of the variables that act upon human personality is enormous, but one crucial variable is the teacher. ...A teacher transmits her value system to her students consciously or unconsciously. To the degree she is committed to the task of Christian education, to that degree will she help build the lives of her students and the Kingdom of God upon earth. 15

John Macia cites heartening results when the faculty members live, work and recreate with the students in camps organized by the Social Service League, in which boys and girls of all communities—even those coming from wealthy homes—rough it out:

From among these young social workers quite a few decide to become professionals in this field and join one of the schools of social work after graduating. Even those who choose another profession often continue taking an interest in the welfare of the less privileged. I have seen B.A.'s and B.Sc.'s who have joined a business firm and become executives in it, devoting their Sundays to the service of the poor in one or another social welfare institution. 16

The success mentioned above points to the efficacy of

16 John Macia, "Social Service for School and College Students" Educational Perspectives in Modern India, ed. T. A. Mathias (Delhi: Jesuit Educational Association of India, 1967) p. 121.
the college in its social mission involving its former students. In fact, Alumni Associations could prove to be a potent influence in the dissemination of sound ideas of social justice and humanity. A prerequisite for the exercise of such a beneficent influence would be that the colleges are in contact with the former students on occasions other than Annual Days and during periods other than those of fund-raising campaigns. Short seminars on social problems should interest at least a small minority of the alumni. Nevis Coutinho points out significant areas of their service in which their social awareness could be stimulated and developed:

The alumni can be sources of information for providing our students with meaningful social work, a picture of social injustices that they are often not aware of, leadership in actual social work. ...It is a great pity that the potential for social awareness and social service latent in our ex-student's associations have not been sufficiently tapped. ...Through their contacts with Government and other circles, they could be instrumental in combating glaring social injustices in the community, or in evoking greater public concern for improving the lot of the underprivileged. 17

Educating the students toward social concern in local and provincial issues should logically and progressively open out before them the larger horizon of national develop-

Development is a UN doctrine, a UNESCO imperative and it is 'the new name for peace'. 18 The Report of the Indian Education Commission laying as it does remarkable stress on the social formation of students, appropriately carries the title: Education and National Development. The Commission purports to chart out a social program precisely because:

...the existing system of education is largely unrelated to life and there is a wide gulf between its content and purposes, and the concerns of national development. 19

The specific Christian service in the immense task before the nation is underscored by a Hindu educationist, J.P.Naik, Member Secretary, University Grants Commission, New Delhi in his address to the Principals of Christian Colleges during their National Consultation:

The third purpose (of Christian private enterprise in education) is the social purpose at the national level. One of the best things in the history of modern India has been the confrontation of Hinduism with Christianity. Hinduism has learnt one great thing from Christianity ...that the way to God lies through the service of man. I think it is a new concert to Hinduism. We have our ways of Dhyana, Karma and Bhakti, but the emphasis on Seva, the service of man as a method and an important method, of realising God, came through our contact with Christianity. And Christian schools have been

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18 Pope Paul VI, Message to the Secretary-General, United Nations, June 1966.

able to infect a large number of non-Christians with a sense of dedication and commitment to education. 20

Would that this glowing tribute proved an exhilarating fillip to rather than a splendid epitaph of the efforts of the Christian colleges! For in practical terms there is much to be achieved to deserve the encomium showered on Christian educational enterprises. First, on the academic level, the colleges should provide more opportunities for the students to understand the aspirations of the nation for a promising future. This would necessitate an imaginative study of the purposes of various programs for national development. It would be a profitable undertaking to help spread the knowledge of existing governmental and non-governmental international organizations such as the UNESCO, UNICEF, WHO, FAO and the ECOSOC. On the plane of action, an insertion of student movements in some aspect of the national program would prove to be opportune for the growth of the national spirit.

Second, a sense of national purpose could be grafted even on a local undertaking, provided the approach is one of a social mission rather than of mere social work. This is illustrated by, among others, The Rural Life Development

and Research Project of Ahmednagar College started in 1961. For the Project was explicitly motivated and guided to meet the following objectives:

a) to meet the ever growing demand of our nation for responsible citizenship, effective leadership, efficient, well-informed and motivated personnel to undertake responsibilities in the field of community development and cooperation;

b) to participate in the process of nation-building by direct involvement in the developmental programme of rural surroundings.  

Third, promotion of national integration should be considered a distinctive contribution to national development. It would demand both an elucidation of the Christian philosophy of man as an individual and man in community, and a practical grouping of students of different social strata and persuasions in the service of the underprivileged. Alfred D'Souza makes an important point in this area of feasible social training:

A useful way to demythologise (these) social and cultural stereotypes would be for the school to provide extensive opportunities for students belonging to different religions, castes, linguistic and regional groups to join together in some form of humanitarian service of the underprivileged sections of society. ...This kind of work will open new channels of social communication and contribute to the gradual erosion of commonly unexamined stereotypes.

Another consequence of this kind of joint student service of the local community would be the gradual broadening of the bases of social and political identification. In so far as the disruptive, centrifugal forces of caste and regional affiliation are weakened, there is a greater possibility that an 'Indian' identity might be invested with sufficient emotional content to evoke a positive response from our students. 22

Fourth, as a voluntary agency contributing to national development, the Christian college could have a significant role in exemplifying the spiritual and psychological aspects of social action. The Workshop on Socio-Economic Activities of the All-India Seminar on The Church in India Today refers to the great social leader, Jaya Prakash Narayan:

In a recent speech J.P.Narayan described the three modes in which the voluntary agencies can make their best contribution to the national effort: we could briefly summarize them as follows:

a) as a pressure-group of ideas and social consciousness not only among villagers and citizens, but in the developed world, too;

b) as a model of inspiration, as "animators", i.e. people who "bring the heart of the blueprints (plans)" to the people, and heart to the people;

c) as a complementary task-force where Government fails to reach the people because of lack of resources, personnel, time or organisation.23


It is obvious that what the Christian colleges, or for that matter what even the Christian Churches of India pooled together could achieve in view of national development will be a minimal contribution - quantitatively.

However, with regard to collaboration of student groups with governmental organizations, it must be kept uppermost in mind that the training value of such collaboration is far more important than any material accomplishment. 24

In sum, unfavorable religio-cultural factors operating in several subsystems of Indian society tend to blunt the social conscience of students. Hence the college would seem to be the privileged place for a socializing education. On the theoretical level the Christian college could impart to its students, past and present, a humane Christian philosophy of the equality and community of all mankind. On the practical plane, organizing relatively long work-camps in villages along with week-end city-slum social work, the college could help promote an active social conscience transcending the barriers of caste and creed, region and language. Taken together, such a training would help create in the college youth a sense of national identity. Thus social concern, though mostly local in expression, would open out before our youth a vista of National Development as a larger objective of its life-long dedication.

CHAPTER V

SOCIAL CONCERN AND PERSONAL GROWTH
IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

Personal growth is elusive of a scientific definition. Obviously physical growth is irrelevant to our purpose here, since we are concerned with those spiritual and psychological phenomena which characterize human beings in their specific development. Such development usually defies measurement, since it involves an initial assessment of an individual's native talents and a continuing verdict against their possible, successful utilization under given circumstances. However, a judicious observation of the happy outcomes of the inner richness of a human being in relation to society is not altogether impossible.

Human growth has generally a basic reference to the creativity inherent in man; by 'creativity' we do not necessarily imply here productivity in arts, literature, inventions and the like, but simply point to the blossoming of even ordinary gifts in their optimum expression. Again, personal human growth is not something which is achieved once and for all but is an on-going process. It is essentially a process of becoming, a self-actualization coincidental with the duration of life itself. Abraham
Maslow speaks of the interaction between innate gifts and environment which could result in ever-increasing humanness:

Man is ultimately not molded or shaped into humanness, or taught to be human. The role of the environment is ultimately to permit him or help him to actualize his own potentialities, not its potentialities. ...Creativeness, spontaneity, selfhood, authenticity, caring for others, being able to love, yearning for truth are embryonic potentialities belonging to his species-membership just as much as are his arms and legs and brain and eyes. ¹

The dialectic between commitment to the life-situation and self-growth is outlined by Adrian Van Kaam:

The life situation is the region in which and toward which he (a person) must increasingly become himself. This existential self-realization in and through the world is a task to which the person is committed, and which develops according to a project of existence which is not a stale and finished blueprint but a growing insight into what his life should be. The encounter between the personality and the world actualizes many modes of existence. ...The real personality is thus a totality which harmoniously integrates a multiplicity of modes of existence. ²

Maslow provides an analysis of the conflict which the human being experiences in his efforts to grow:

Growth has not only rewards and pleasures but also many intrinsic pains and always will have. ...It frequently means a parting and a separation, even a kind of death prior to rebirth, with consequent


nostalgia, fear, loneliness, and mourning. It also means giving up a simpler and easier and less effortful life, in exchange for a more demanding, more responsible, more difficult life. Growth forward is in spite of these losses and therefore requires courage, will, choice, and strength in the individual, as well as protection, permission and encouragement from the environment, especially for the child. It is therefore useful to think of growth or lack of it as the resultant of a dialectic between growth-fostering forces and growth-discouraging forces (regression, fear, pains of growth, ignorance etc.)

Growth occurs not in the grudging compromises wrenched from the self in different forms of co-existence, but in the generous response to the other in the numerous opportunities for pro-existence. In existential terms, it implies a willing participation in the Other Who is God and in the others' lives by which one is surrounded. This participation is synonymous with social concern in its ampler meaning, and it is indispensable for personal growth. Adrian van Kaam explains it in his existential categories:

It is man's essence to be existence: it is the very essence of the self not to be self-sufficient but to exist, to stand out, to participate in God, in the neighbor, and in the world. This participation is not an accidental thing that may or may not be added to the self. It is an essential constituent of the self. Without it, man does not have a real self but a figment of his imagination. When he concentrates his attention and his energy on this make-believe isolated self, then his real self—which is participation and being 'out there'—

is not developed, does not grow, and will soon be dehydrated and starved because of lack of the nourishment of reality.  

Indian religio-philosophic thought regarding self-perfection had for centuries proposed the ideal of withdrawal from society and the world. The fourth and last stage of the earthly life of the Brahmin - as a recluse from society has been considered the acme of spiritual growth prior to reabsorption in the divine. The impact of Christian thought is bringing about a re-thinking and a re-formulation of the religious social philosophy in India. The concept of individual perfection attainable through the reaching out to social ideals is stressed in the Sarvodaya (=Dawn-for-all) Philosophy which marks a new era in Hindu thought:

Individualistic aim in its extreme form was the idea of ancient Indian philosophies, but Sarvodaya, being a social philosophy, believes that the human individual can attain the spiritual goal only in the social cosmos. The individual can attain his physical, intellectual, moral and spiritual perfection only in a group. Mere renunciation and retirement devoid of any ulterior social purpose, unless it is temporary and for training, is an act of egoistic selfishness however sanctified by religion. It is a mild kind of exploitation of society. ...Every genuine renunciation, (therefore), in addition to the aim of perfection, and self-realization keeps before itself the ideal of social service by example and precept. It is both for the individual and for society.  

4 Adrian van Kaam, op.cit., p.62.  
Hindu religious quest is mainly concerned with spiritual self-realization which, in terms of monistic philosophy, would be achieved when conscious self-identification of the human being with the Supreme Being was attained. This identification is there ontologically all the time, but owing to the cloud of ignorance enveloping humans on earth, it is psychologically realized by very few persons. Once this ignorance is dispelled through mental and spiritual concentration on the Inner-Self ever residing within the shell of the human being, a conscious self-identification with the Divine results, and this constitutes perfect self-realization. It is, then, a question of the individual realizing himself not only apart from others around him, but alone and without any reference to them. Expressed in a modern concept, this self-realization would consist solely in the fulfillment of the vertical dimension of human life, linking man directly with God; there is hardly any reference here to his horizontal relationships, that is, his links with his fellow human beings.

However, during the past decades there has been an awakening, even in Hindu circles, to the socio-political dimensions of the human being, because of the emergence of the integral concept of the human personality. Interdependence of human beings on one another has ever been on
the increase over the past centuries on every level - individual and communitarian, intranational and international. Self-realization, if it is to be total, has to be not merely spiritual but social and political as well. The realization of the self demands commitment to society, and this in its turn leads to some measure of political involvement. Social and political facets of man today are necessarily inter-related. Social and political self-realization can best be achieved through service in its best and widest sense. For service involves the use of traits like understanding and devotion, altruism, courage and creativeness: these actualize the growth-potential of the human being. Society, while being served, aids the servant in its turn by helping in the blossoming of his hidden talents and making him become more of a person. In the socio-political context service shines as a healthy and constructive self-affirmation. The spirit of service induces an ever-renewed vision of the possibilities of man in a holistic and dynamic fashion; and actual service is an opportunity for the translation of the vision in the relationships with co-citizens.

Service offered to society by students and educated persons in India is a significant bridge-building between the intelligentsia and the illiterate masses. In service alone the intelligentsia ceases to be a parasitical group perpetuating itself in its privileged position of being
waited upon by the uneducated classes. In humble service the intelligentsia identifies itself with other members of society, and this identification is a step toward the realization of oneself in the larger humanity.

It is obvious that social and political self-realization is achieved in different modes and styles of service by men and women students. We may just indicate that an orientation toward teaching, nursing and toward occupational fields such as nutrition and dietetics develop woman's special qualities, and as such is a suitable preparation for her social and political self-realization in later life.

The interlocking of personal growth and societal progress is one of the key-thoughts in the document on the Church in the Modern World issued by the Second Vatican Council. It is thus enunciated:

Man's social nature makes it evident that the progress of the human person and the advance of society hinge on each other. For the beginning, the subject and the goal of all social institutions is and must be the human person, which for its part and by its very nature stands completely in need of social life. The social life is not something added on to man. Hence, through his dealings with others, through reciprocal duties, and through fraternal dialogue he develops all his gifts and is able to rise to his destiny. 6

6 The Documents of Vatican II, op.cit., p.224.
The explication of the general principles given hitherto makes it clear that social concern is an essential condition for personal growth, as well as its concomitant element; that it is a means toward personal growth and likewise a necessary complement to it. We now attempt an application of the principles to the Indian educational situation. The students achieve personal growth in the measure they are inspired by authentic social concern; to the extent they are preoccupied with problems of society at large in the very heart of their dedication to their studies; in so far as they relate these studies to a search as to how to pave the way for the economic betterment of the masses, how to provide them with greater educational and cultural opportunities, in brief how to make life more human for them. Here lies for them the problem of cutting across the concentric circles of selfishness dictated by family and community, caste and creed, region and language. If their concern is to become increasingly universal, they have to learn to prefer the value-of-the-other to self-value. Vincent Herr delineates the process which strikes at the root of selfishness inherent in fallen humanity:

In moving from a selfish toward an altruistic manner of acting, a human being shifts his emotional center from the intense preoccupation with self-value to that of value-of-others. Put a little differently, it is a movement from undue concern for the immediate benefit of the self to that of the group, from the I to the 'I-Thou' relation, with the
meaning that the Thou should have a plural rather than singular reference, all-inclusive you in the sense of all those other than self. 7

The general pattern of unconcern for society at large, a malady that afflicts the student-body the world over is indicated by Dr. Eva Shipstone, Principal, Isabella Thoburn College, Lucknow:

Students in the West, ...like other students, are self-centred and selfish. If they rebel at all, it is because they do not find the answers to their serious problems in riches, in science, or in technology. In fact, the student finds these the very root of his dissatisfactions. ...The Indian student likewise is not a fighter for ends, or a crusader against injustice or social evil. He is, like students around the world, concerned with himself. 8

It is not always a crass individual selfishness, but a constricting concern for one's immediate family or close relatives which is obvious in those who seek monetary rewards abroad. They betray the lack of a regard for the country as a whole, although many of them have benefited by its enormous investments in education. Theophanes Mathias, President of the Jesuit Educational Association of India furnishes some figures:

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8 Eva I. Shipstone, "Understanding Our Students", Journal of Christian Colleges in India, op. cit., p. 44.
The so-called 'brain-drain' is developing into a national disaster. It is estimated that 15,000 of our highly qualified physicians, engineers, scientists, agronomists, economists etc. have settled in the U.S.A. and are contributing their talents to increasing the wealth of the most affluent society in the world. A recent study showed that 20% of the products of our best engineering schools, the Indian Institutes of Technology, which cost the public exchequer vast sums of money, migrate to the U.S. and other rich countries soon after graduating. ...There is here an attitude of selfishness which is understandable, but which we cannot complacently accept. 9

But in the same paper Mathias speaks of the production of 20 million more tons of grain in 1968 than in the previous year. The credit in large measure goes to the most progressive parts of India, Punjab and Haryana. He points out the reason:

This is because more and more educated people, retired army officers, business-men, agricultural graduates are settling down in the countryside and helping to bring scientific methods and a modern outlook to the stagnant villages. 10

If the self-fulfillment of these people showing concern for the villagers could be compared favourably with those who do not evince such a concern, we would be verifying the hypothesis that social concern and self-fulfillment correlate positively.

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10 Ibid., p. 9.
The Indian Education Commission makes clear at the very outset its belief in the indispensable link between individual fulfillment and dedication to public interests:

One of the important principles to be emphasized in the socialistic pattern of society which the nation desires to create is that individual fulfillment will come, not through selfish and narrow loyalties to personal or group interests but through the dedication of all to the wider loyalties of national development in all its parameters.

The statement sounds like a practical commentary on the words of Christ as reported by Luke: "Whoever tries to save his own life will lose it; whoever loses his life will save it". A too persistent search after self-growth is bound to be self-defeating; for self-fulfillment requires that the self forget itself in commitment to the social purposes of Life.

The students can best learn to appreciate the link between their growth and their concern for society while they are at college, because it is the college that can provide the theoretical and practical background for such an assimilation. When after college they are enmeshed in some segment of society and have imbibed its prejudices, and have besides their own family concerns, such an under-

standing will be hard to come by. However, to demand an exaggerated altruism from the students during the pre-
paration for their own careers is to be hopelessly un-
realistic. As the Robbins Report remarks:

We deceive ourselves if we claim that more than a small fraction of students in institutions of higher learning will be there if there were no significance for their future careers in what they hear and read, and it is a mistake to suppose that there is anything discreditable in this.\(^\text{13}\)

The crucial problem in the training for social concern lies, then, in offering convincing evidence that self-love and love of others are essentially conjunctive characteristics. As Erich Fromm phrases it:

The affirmation of one's own life, happiness, growth, freedom, is rooted in one's capacity to love, i.e., in care, respect, responsibility, and knowledge. If an individual is able to love productively, he loves himself too; if he can love only others, he can not love at all.\(^\text{14}\)

The humanistic ideal of the fusion of self-love and the love of others should definitely receive the impress of Jesus Christ, the Man for others in the context of a


Christian college. Humanism and faith blend together when the understanding of the human person derives not only from reason, but from divine revelation as well. When the Christian educator's concept of humanity is illumined by the Truths of Creation, Incarnation and Redemption, there will be a subtle but none the less real influence exercised on those he guides in learning and research. These will be helped to make their due contribution to the continuing redemption of the Earthly City while intent on their own personal development. The ideal product of the Christian college is one who grows accustomed to the simultaneous expansion of his inner self and its expression seen in the transformation of the world. This is spelled out in the Declaration on Christian Education issued by the Second Vatican Council:

The hoped-for result is that the Christian mind may achieve, as it were, a public, persistent, and universal presence in the whole enterprise of advancing higher culture and that the students of these institutions may become men truly outstanding in learning, ready to shoulder society's heavier burdens and to witness the faith to the world.  

In this chapter we have attempted a brief analysis of personal growth; we have touched on the concepts of creativity and self-actualization; we have seen how growth,

though internal, requires involvement in a life-situation seemingly external to the growing person. Also that growth is often ambivalent, demanding the sacrifice of certain values for the sake of others. A reference is made to the shifting stand on self-perfection in Indian socio-religious philosophy. Since pro-existence or participation is a cardinal element in growth, it is argued that selfishness stunts a person, while self-love necessarily linked with love of others enhances the person and society. The connection is then pointed out between personal growth and social concern in any human condition, more particularly in an educational situation and finally in the context of the Christian college.
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION WITH GUIDELINES

In the foregoing study we have made an attempt to situate the Christian college in India against the background, social and cultural, philosophical and religious, in which it is growing deeply aware of its distinctive social mission. We have endeavored to analyze this mission in its threefold dimension: reflection on the social realities, concern for the social problems, and action as a response to the social situation.

We have dealt with the question of stimulating social awareness among the students. In a painfully underdeveloped country like India, the Universities should not remain like islands of prosperity surrounded by an ocean of misery: the college students who constitute a very small minority of the population do enjoy amenities relatively far superior to those within the reach of their brethren; vast sums of money are deployed on them at the expense of the tax-payer so that they might have the privilege of access to branches of study virtually denied to vast millions of their countrymen. It would be a great pity if these students were to turn out to be mere professionals or bureaucrats, complacent
in their jobs and stoic spectators of a sorry situation which would seemingly be no concern of theirs. Any college in India, and with greater reason a Christian college with its social mission should imbue its students with a sensitivity to human suffering and an effective concern for the well-being of their less fortunate brethren.

We then looked at the college as the training ground theoretical and practical, for the flowering of the spirit of work and of service. On the conceptual level the college could impart a clearer understanding of man in society, and on the practical level prepare the students to meet the challenge of urgent social problems by getting them involved in situations for which they should suitably be prepared academically, so that the approach is one of social mission, and not one of haphazard social works. The college would thus mediate in the translation of social idealism into the active and enthusiastic fulfillment of a social mission.

Finally we discussed how social concern and personal growth are intimately interlinked and mutually inclusive of each other. In the college situation the students should learn how they could orientate knowledge to the service of their fellowman. They must be convinced that on the development of their potentialities the quality of development of their society and nation will itself depend to a large extent. Thus in the fulfillment of its social mission the
college is called upon to develop the students as individual persons to bring an enrichment to the community in which it is located and to open the wide horizon of national development before its alumni.

We are now in a position to attempt to provide some guidelines of a somewhat practical nature for the fulfillment of the social role of the Christian colleges. We have indicated that only about 7% of the total college-student population come under their direct guidance. The number might appear to be a negligible minority. However, the significance of the contribution of the Christian colleges can far surpass what may seem to be warranted by the numerical computation. This contribution may very well be coordinated by the National Board of Christian Higher Education, which has a potential for the formulation and implementation of policy and program inspired by Christian ideals.

The non-experimental nature of the thesis should rather limit the scope of our guidelines to the normative type based on social philosophy and the Christian concept of student-youth in relation to society. However, a few broad recommendations are being outlined with a practical slant built into them. Their elaboration and application in concrete situations have obviously to be left to the
initiative of the colleges.

First, the Christian college should help foster among the students and society at large the sense of human community. We have indicated that the concept of community in India rests largely on the pattern of concentric circles of bonds, of family and joint-family, of regional and language affiliations. While the integration of the individual in these groups provides him with security, affection and a sense of belonging - which can make even situations of great misery somewhat tolerable - it also blocks from him the broader perspectives of the human community.

That man's destiny both here and hereafter is shaped and achieved in the context of a community is a cardinal tenet of Christianity. The Christian college can prove to be imaginative and innovative in the translation of this truth in the many facets of college education. We are far from a denial of the individual and personal destiny of man. We only affirm that the relationships between the individual and the ever widening circles of communities around him have a bearing on his own destiny and that of others. In a more practical form it is a question here not only of getting the students to experience a sense of community, irrespective of caste and creed, within the college campus, but of making them realize that their
individual destiny is being hammered into shape by the concern they evince toward their fellowman, whatever be the concrete service this concern may have to assume during their college years and later in life.

Within the college campus, in some of the co-curricular associations the students could be helped to imbibe a sense of social and intellectual communion with each other both through discussions and seminars, as well as through participation in college and hostel organizations. Groupings of students cutting across social strata should be designed to help the young shed snobbery and affectation on the one hand, and overcome inferiority complex on the other. Even prayer-meetings common to students of different religions are possible, and do take place in some colleges. Condescending relationships could yield to cordial ones, and exploitive relationships could be converted into service-oriented ones. Student counselors and advisors could prove to be catalytic agents in the fostering of inter-caste and inter-communal friendships.

The students should be helped to reflect over one of the greatest obstacles for national unity in India - the caste-system. Although caste may gradually cease to be an evil in the ordinary social relationships, it threatens the country as an administrative and political evil. The
youth must be made to see and accept that genetic and caste relationships could utmost motivate a sharing of what one has earned through personal labor and honest ingenuity, but in no way justify the handing out of largesses or securing of lucrative contracts or jobs to their relations or their own caste people.

Outside the campus the students should organize peaceful protests against odious acts of discrimination based on caste, which are not at all rare in spite of the Government declarations that such acts are punishable by law. Also, they could bring to the awareness of the public the absurdity of political elections being fought almost on the issue of caste in certain places, instead of being based on the manifestors and performances of the parties. When suitably guided in the understanding of serious problems, some students would prove capable of handling difficult and delicate situations leading to the creation of peaceful communities. With due study, insight and action they may, on occasion, pave the way to rapprochement between labor and management. Through such efforts for communal harmony, they make a creative contribution to the sense of human community.

India's pluralism does present a structural weakness fraught with political danger. But that is no reason to
foist on it a uni-lingual or uni-cultural nationalism. Imaginative cooperation in the college communities could help create human communities in spite of the diversity of languages and cultures.

Second, the Christian colleges could help implant in the minds of the students a sense of the dignity of the human person. This may sound a basic and obvious value which should need no stress. But in the context of the millennial socio-religious tenets of India the truth needs to be driven home. Within the academic set-up, both in the classes on Religion and Ethics and in the meetings of some co-curricular associations, the United Nations Fundamental Rights of Man and the sacredness of the human person as enshrined in the Constitutions of India could be elucidated at some length. The students have to imbibe that the innate value of all human persons lies in their having been created free and rational human beings with the same destiny of fulfillment in God, and that the accident of birth into one or the other category of human division devised by men according to the practical exigencies of a distant past can in no way alter the intrinsic worth of each human being. Also, when discussing the racial problems in other countries the Indian student's attention must be drawn to the humiliations which millions of his own countrymen suffer because of their caste and color, and
he must be encouraged in his determination to set his own home in order.

A wider understanding of the democratic spirit of the age should be interpreted in practical terms in a meaningful participation of the youth in the Student-Unions: this would help enhance their sense of personal worth and increase their self-confidence. Their sense of self-dignity is augmented when they realize that education is a corporate effort of both the teachers and the taught, and that they are not merely the objects of education or depositaries of an assorted list of pieces of information. Even within the limits imposed by the rigid nature of the University system there is some scope to make education student-centered.

The students could likewise be helped to see certain acts and attitudes highly derogatory to the dignity of the human person spreading in several segments of the student-population in the country: malpractices like cheating in the examinations, or worse still, manipulation of grades or marks through payment of bribes. They should set about putting an end to these tendencies which are assuming the proportions of a national disgrace.

Select groups of students, especially of the Economics, Politics and Social Work Departments should be encouraged to study the network of domination and oppression which stifles
human freedom and dignity in society. Through well-directed and intellectually-grounded forums they could attempt to give publicity to the day-to-day deprivations of the masses that degrade human dignity to levels which no statistics can adequately describe.

A test of sincerity in this regard would be provided if each college was prepared to encourage a study of the conditions in which its own lower administrative and maintenance personnel live, to discover to what extent they are ill-fed, illiterate and inhumanly housed, and to devise means of creating for them a more human situation. The study could also embrace the ways of eliminating social habits and attitudes like cringing, fawning and obsequiousness in no way consonant with human dignity.

Student-power could be harnessed to arouse public consciousness against the persistent evil of the 'offer' of dowry by the bride at marriage. The Bill for the Abolition of the Dowry System passed in 1959 has been more honored in its breach than in its observance: the insult to the dignity of womanhood continues, as brides are treated like mere goods or chattels in the marriage-market evaluated against the qualifications of the bridegrooms. The system has a flourishing, though at times clandestine operation, because when it is not cash, it is a matter of jewels or fashionable substitutes like being sent abroad
for further studies that the bride's parents are obliged to supply the bridegroom. It is up to the students to fight for a reform so that a great deal of misery may be spared many families, and life-partners are accepted according to the canons of human dignity.

An observation may be in place here regarding social service in general: It would be a detestable alienation of those who are served, if, for instance, those serving them had an ulterior purpose in view repugnant to human dignity, such as aiming at diplomas from the Social Service League in order to present the facade of social concern so that they could more successfully compete in securing lucrative jobs. Rather, in any authentic social service the methods employed and the spirit behind it should affirm the primacy of the dignity of the beneficiaries; these should not be the 'objects' of the service, but the co-partners and the end of the process of development. The social projects should appear and in fact be a process of liberation from the many indignities to which they are subjected, and should lead them toward a fuller human dignity.

Third, the Christian college should prove to be a training ground for humble service. In the Indian situation we may immediately think of the broom and the basket, the axe and the spade; in a sense these are symbolic of humble service. However, the students need not and should
not restrict their dedication to the humblest of material services. The more important task before the college is the instilling of the spirit of humble and fraternal participation in the community efforts without any touch of condescension. Cultural pretensions die hard; they have been inherited from pre-colonial times and strengthened during the British rule; they hinder the spirit of identification of the educated with the masses. It is here that the Christian College could take a lead with concrete manifestations of the Christian theology of work and service. In the Indian context it is imperative that appropriate forms of manual labor be found in order to express the spirit of humble service. And in the context of a predominantly rural India the college should prove innovative in patterns of work with the villagers in order that the students may achieve a sense of solidarity with the masses. Such a team-work would bring mutual enrichment in human terms to all the participants. After graduation a Rural Service Program could be offered: the college in collaboration with a village and in a well-planned social project could introduce the students to manual work coupled with the work of the mind with the possibilities of higher productivity; such work would then assume a high status in the hierarchy of human values proposed by the college.

Within the campus a Gandhian forum could help in the study of the ideals of Gandhian service, as well as of the
example of his spiritual follower, Vinoba Bhave, and find out how they could be translated into action. Campus Cleaning Campaigns may be a symbolic expression. They should lead to more permanent features of self-service so that the students might learn to dispense with the plethora of servants, especially in the hostels, and thus discourage the perpetuation of the illiterate army of workers generation after generation.

Evolving programs and methodologies of functional adult literacy should be part of the students' service to the community in which their college is located. They should also be prepared to help a wider circle of illiterate persons with information and know-how in the procedural tangles with bureaucracy.

Fourth, the Christian college should get the students involved in programs of study and of action leading to the full development of their personality and of their society. Integral humanism should be one of the ideals toward which the college community should tend. Within the academic set-up they should be helped to grasp how human growth is promoted by the quest for excellence, and how personal competence could lead to an improved service to society. An accent on the Social Sciences and a de-emphasis on the exact Sciences may be called for in several of the colleges.
The Christian college should help clarify Christianity as a world-affirming religion even while it asserts the disappearance of the world as we know it. The implication would be that the earthly values involved in social concern are not unrelated to other-worldly values; that the temporal function flowing from the social mission is linked with man's eternal destiny; that the process of humanization through concern and service is directly related to the 'divinising' of man. The ambit of social concern would, then, not be limited to the economic situation alone. Abject material poverty is unquestionably a major factor in human degradation; but other factors like lack of freedom, inequality of opportunity and diminution of dignity are just as noxious ingredients of human deprivation. The students should be helped to see how major flaws in society flow from defective values, and these in their turn stem from a very partial view of man.

The Christian Churches have a responsibility toward the mass of marginal men deprived of cultural and aesthetic growth. The Uppsala 1968 Report says:

We believe that each individual as a creature of God is entitled to fulness of life. We believe that this should be guaranteed through a social structure which liberates man to be God's responsible creature. Jesus Christ calls men together in love and community. But suffering,
deprived or under-privileged people will not experience the love of God unless it is experienced in human relationships. The Church's responsibility is therefore incarnate - to mediate the love of God in the world so that all people may be able to experience it through a loving rather than a depriving community. 1

The role of the Christian college in this regard is analogous to that of the Christian Church. The college community can study in what practical manner it can help the human community around in cultural growth and expression. The colleges either singly or in collaboration with each other could each year delegate some of their more imaginative students and faculty members for a few weeks of intensive study of the fuller development of man in his rural setting; this study may help in the preparation of suitable radio programs.

Fifth, the Christian college should train their students to a social concern geared to action. Individuals are so appalled by the magnitude of the social problems in this country that they easily shrink into inaction. Large groups when faced with these problems generally fritter their energy in interminable discussions; they tend to become social deserters in reality, for 'responsibility'

has a way of turning into an abstraction which is then easily rationalized into inaction. It would seem that small groups have a greater chance of getting things moving; the members would have the advantage of support from their fellows without the disadvantage of the heavy and cumbersome procedures of large groups. And micro-realizations in any sphere inspire confidence for relatively greater tasks.

The Christian college is not merely a proponent of Christian philosophy, but a messenger of Christianity which cannot be equated with a philosophy. In the Indian situation it has the vocation to be a catalyst in societal concern, shaking the students from their centuries-old apathy and lethargy which is their sorry inheritance, and shocking them into life-promoting action. The students should be taught to recognize the needs of the present hour in their community, to respond to them not merely through abstract moral propositions, but through constructive criticism coupled with action. However, while the actions of today must have their own target-dates and immediate objectives, they must be viewed as an integral part of a long-term process of development. Again, while proximity to actual need and the ability to help impose the duty of helping according to one's capacity, sober realism should remind us, even in the midst of energetic
action, that God alone can wipe all tears from all human eyes.

The college should guide and channel the demands of the students for a change in the content and methodology of their education, so that these may be oriented to real life-situations. Almost a radical revision is called for in the syllabi which would at once respond to the national context and supply the directive toward a unifying national ethos, in which the needs of social, economic and cultural development would be reflected. It is common knowledge that at the moment even in the graduate scientific studies there is an absence of practical bias which renders degree-holders misfits in the service for the development of the country's industries.

The practical challenge before the college is how to harness the idealism and the impetuosity of youth for their own growth and the service of their brethren. The students must be guided and encouraged to take up clear issues of social justice, for instance, on behalf of the voiceless victims of loan-sharks who suck their blood with exorbitant rates of interest; on behalf of the casual, unorganized labor exploited by heartless contractors; on behalf of the domestic consumers who are harassed by hoarders and black-marketeers. The students could also, in certain cases, help in the exposure of corruption at
lower levels where inquiry may be possible from the victims. On the positive side, they could help the slum-dwellers and villagers living in sub-human conditions with the procurement of civic amenities like light and water, sanitation and road-facilities; peaceful manifestations in front of the respective offices in company and in sympathy with the neglected groups of people may be necessary for the implementation of the approval granted on paper; speed in the fulfillment of the basic needs is part of social justice.

Finally, the Christian college glorying in its name should be able to communicate to its students sparks of the Incarnate Love of Christ. If an association founded on Gandhian principles could inspire its members with the spirit of truth and dedication that were characteristic of Mahatma Gandhi, a Christian institution should be in a position to transmit what is specific in the incarnate love of Jesus Christ, that is, love for humanity that has been made visible and tangible, love that leads to the ultimate in sacrifice. At a time when insensitivity to misery is seemingly on the increase, when the apathy of the educated man is proving to be a potent menace to the future of India, the Christian college could point to a sacrificial dedication for others born of love as the consummate form of human growth and fulfillment.
In practical terms, the social distress of the masses should produce at least in a handful of the students of a Christian college a churning up of the depths of their hearts so that they do not just feel and talk like calm statisticians, but with compassion for the world, its Poor and Hungry, a compassion arising not from a vague humanitarian urge but from an awareness and personal acceptance of God's Love manifested in the Incarnate Christ. And this will lead to a meaningful personal commitment and dedication. As The Uppsala Report states:

A new style of life will not be produced by documents but by personal commitment, which includes readiness to reorder our time, skills and wealth, and may be lay down life itself, for the achievement of a more just and compassionate society. 2

Several others in the college should be led to experience at least occasionally the urge to share in the hardships of the workers and the peasants. They should be prepared for hidden, non-spectacular services, ready to give up now and then what may be considered luxuries according to Indian standards, willing on occasion even to give up necessities like food and sleep when urgent service calls for such sacrifices. The college should encourage the students to dedicate one or more years of service as teachers or social workers in neglected areas or among backward groups as volunteers or semi-paid employees.

2 Ibid., p.94.
If the above were to sound utopian, it may be due to the fact that we have not appreciated the truth that the incarnate love of Christ has been prophetic. And a prophetic message in the social order is one that proposes and abides by values and priorities that have not yet been accepted by society at large. The community of a Christian college, if it intends to be true to its vocation, cannot evade the responsibility of translating the incarnate love in terms of social order, especially in a country like India. The college is indeed a superstructure of society; yet in its prophetic calling, it has the awesome responsibility of making the supreme message of the Incarnate God heard, understood and accepted. The points we have touched upon pertain precisely to this facet of the responsibility of the Christian college.

In sum, as an educating and Christian institution, the Christian college has the mission to develop a threefold vision in its students: 1) an inward vision, leading to the understanding of one's own personal gifts, and their potential significance for others; 2) a societal vision, leading to a grasp of the society in which one lives and of one's active role in it. For society is the normal testing ground of the authenticity of one's desire to become a man for others. It is in trying to build a fuller expression of justice and charity into the structures of human life that one achieves a human stature.
commensurate with one's efforts; 3) a global vision, leading to a realization of God's design for the human caravan. Occasions do arise when one needs to be articulate and make oneself audible on world social issues. It is by allying oneself with universal causes and concerns that one attains full human stature.

It has become a cliché to say that India is at the crossroads. Several countries are. When India does pass through a crucial phase in her history, crucial on several planes, economical and political, social and religious, what role has a Christian college to play in this immense drama? We have endeavored to analyze the role in one of its major facets: that of an education which would relate social concern to the human stature of the students. The vocation of the Christian college cannot be just doing better what other colleges are doing; it cannot consist in priding itself in producing better results in the examination, which would be a dubious distinction in a highly defective system, nor in turning out more efficient bureaucrats and administrators. The vocation would consist in inspiring youth with the urgency of their optimum self-preparation in view of the social task awaiting them; in helping them acquire a long-range vision of the development of their nation; in imbuing them with the determination to translate their vision into action, convinced that their
dedication to others is their life-mission.

In the ultimate analysis, we find that human potential is entrusted to the educational institution. In their faith, Christian educators vividly realize that seeds of wisdom and of love have been buried in the mind and heart of man by his Maker. Man, paradoxically, is to become what he is, by a dynamic unfolding of the Image of his Creator. How the potential wisdom and love may sprout and flower and fructify in the students for their own good and for the good of society should be the abiding concern of the Christian educators. It remains their greatest challenge as well.
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The thesis submitted by Arul M. Varaprasadam, S.J. has been read and approved by members of the School of Education.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content and form.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

May 9, 1978

Date

Signature of Advisor