

**THE EDUCATIONAL MINISTRY OF THE BAPTIST MISSIONARIES IN THE ERSTWHILE ANDHRA PRADESH****Abraham Posthamas**

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**Introduction:**

With the British rule in India, along with the Western education and rationalism, Christianity had also entered. The Christian missionaries undertook the spread of education in the country, though the missionaries have also taken up several types of service activities to make themselves as much closer to the people of the country as possible, but were always aimed at the spread of Christianity as their utmost object. This paper aims at presenting the pioneering work done by Baptist missionaries from the early days of their evangelistic efforts

**Literacy Status**

Literacy levels in the state were at a very low level. In 1901, only 3 per cent of the population was literate, the rest 97 per cent was illiterate. Over the period literacy levels were increasing albeit with slow momentum. By 1951 the literacy level achieved in the state was 9.2 per cent. The situation is worse in Telugu speaking districts of the state. Except Hyderabad which was being capital of the state, in all other districts of Telangana, the literacy rate was much below the state averages.

As a matter of fact, female literacy rate was very much lower than that of males. Among the major religious groups, the literacy rate was higher in Christians community followed by the Muslim. Literacy rate was lowest in the Hindu community and among them, the literacy rate varied with class-hierarchy where upper castes like Brahmins had the highest literacy rate and in the lower castes particularly SC community, the literacy levels were insignificant and negligible

The poverty of the Christian community is in itself a most embarrassing factor in the problem, but the indifference of the parents and the inertia following centuries of ignorance and servitude, are the most formidable obstacles in the way of educating the bright children which throng every Christian hamlet.

Baptist missionaries aimed to teach the students to be both practical and spiritual, and, in order to encourage self-support among them, and started a garden in connection with our Bible School. The students work in this garden after school hours and on Saturdays and literally begged for the opportunity to do so. They were paid for their work by the hour and in this way earn money for their books and clothes.

The teachers of these schools are also pastors of the congregations where they live. These teachers get their support from three Sources, namely, from the People, government Grant's, and a small aid from mission funds.

School work was carried on with peculiar difficulty in the Deccan because the Nizam's Government gave no grant to help the work, hence the whole burden fell on the people and on the mission. People there are perhaps still more indifferent to education than they are in other parts of the mission field. No Government aid was received to help mission schools in this state, and funds are limited. The Christians were few and didn't appreciate education sufficiently to induce them to help in the support of the teacher.

One of the boys from the High School, who had read up to the sixth form developed a most interesting work in the village to which he was assigned. He gathered over fifty children together, in standards from the infant to the fourth. Though only an out-caste Madiga, by his manly Christian conduct and superior education, he won for himself the respect and regard of all the caste people and became the special friend of the Reddy and Karnam of the village. Such cases as these show us the great possibilities for service opened to our trained and educated young men in this land and fill our hearts with hope for the future.

“Our teachers have struggled heroically, facing famine and cholera undismayed. In the midst of danger and privation they have stuck to their posts and proved themselves true soldiers of Jesus Christ.” Says one report

#### Hostels as second homes

The hostel will be a home for the students where they will have opportunities for study and recreation, such as they cannot obtain in their present ill-ventilated rooms and unsanitary surroundings, and where they will be under the best possible moral influences at all hours. There will be a small library and reading room and a recreation ground, and possibly a garden. The power for good such an institution is equal to that of the college itself.

Missionary educational work in India reaches two distinct classes of the people, Christians and non-Christians.

The aim of mission schools maintained for non-Christians was evangelistic, to make known the truth in the most effective way possible to the rising generation of India.

Missionary education for Christians may roughly be said to be of two kinds: first, general, for all Christians, aiming at both spiritual and intellectual results, to train the intellect and develop the whole character and all the powers of, at least, the rising generation of Christians, so that they may become fit to hold a high position and exert a powerful influence on their surroundings;

second, special, for the training of Christian workers, both teachers and preachers, through whom the missionary must multiply himself for the work of the evangelization of India.

#### Village schools

Under the famine conditions prevailing on the field for fully nine months of the year 1906, the question of the support of the pastors and teachers was a most serious one. Through all these hard times, however, both the workers and the people held fast to their determination to carry on the work themselves and to look to God alone for assistance. Special contributions were raised to meet the special need. In some cases, a single Christian in a village supported the teacher during the trying months when the others were unable to assist. Fortunately, the government grant earned by the village schools was exceptionally good in 1908, and thus the teachers were greatly helped in the midst of the hard times.

### **Industrial work**

The aim of all industrial work in this mission should be to help the largest possible number of people to help themselves with a view to increasing their ability to support themselves, their schools and their churches, in the communities in which they live."

Believing that education which fails to combine manual with mental training is seriously defective, especially in India, with its scorn of the man who works with his hands,

In accordance with these resolutions the Ongole Christian industrial school was closed June 30, 1907, and the industrial experiment station was opened July 1, 1907, with twelve of the industrial school boys as pupils. To date the boys have spent three hours and a half each day in school work., the same number of hours each day in field work, and one hour each day in Bible study.

Trade school work has been the common School branches up to and including the sixth standard. Daily wages are based on both school and field work, and a percentage of 70 is demanded in order to receive full wages according to the schedule.

The field work has included rebuilding the mud walls of the compound mud walls of the compound, putting up a cook- house for the dormitory with mud walls and thatched roof, digging a well, plowing, harrowing, manuring diking, and planting twenty-one acres of land, and preparing and planting one acre as a market garden. One boy is working at tailoring under Mrs. Bawden's instruction.

'The committee's plans include the acquisition of an additional plot of five acres for gardening and building purposes, and the erection of a store-room and work-shop building by student labor; the students to make the brick, burn the lime, and build the building from the foundation up, meanwhile carrying on their school work and the gardening experiment.

Sudra children are coming in increasing numbers to mission schools. In one village the caste school was abolished and the whole school came over to us. What this mingling of the caste children with the out-caste in our village schools, and this instruction of all by a Christian teacher, will mean in days to come we can but dimly see, but it requires no prophet to say that we are sowing here the seeds of a mighty spiritual awakening for India. Parts of the mission there seems to be a desire among the Sudras for schools taught by Christian teachers.

### **Ongole Faith Orphanage**

Ongole has also a very large orphan work, both that of the station missionary, and that of the Ongole Faith Orphanage, which was begun by the editor of this Report HENRY HUIZINGA in 1900, and which still continues to flourish under the hands of Mr. Baker. It is thought to be the best division of the work at Ongole that Mr. Baker retained the full control of the Faith Orphanage, which will be carried on the same basis as always

### **Kurnool High school**

The High School at Kurnool rejoices in the possession of one of the finest high school buildings in South India. The Government Educational Department has classed it among the model high school buildings of the Presidency and has sanctioned Rs. 70 for special exhibition photographs of the building when completed.

### **Educational Work.**

The whole missionary enterprise may be said to be one of education, for our preaching, our healing, and even our trading and daily work are educative to the people. But apart from this we carry on a special educational work, both higher and lower, and of various forms, religious, secular, in industrial. We believe that education under Christian auspices, pervaded by the spirit and aims of a Christian purpose, is a useful and helpful stimulus to social progress, an effective instrument of social regeneration, and as such is counted a noble and legitimate missionary instrumentality. The aim of our educational work is thus defined by our Conference in its last Report:

“The central aim in all our educational work is evangelistic: that is, schools exist for the purpose of bringing pupils under gospel influences, and for leading them to Christ. In addition to the impartation of secular instruction it is our purpose to inculcate the doctrines and principles of the Christian faith, and so train up a race of men and women who shall be able intelligently to support, conduct, and extend the worship and work of the churches to which they belong.

Our mission rightly regards education as a most important department of our work that needs to be greatly strengthened on every hand. Our educational work is largely of two kinds as represented in our two main educational institutions, the College at Ongole and the Theological Seminary at Ramnapatam. Sometimes the two objects are combined, as they are even in the two institutions named. But ordinarily the college, and a great deal of our work of all grades, stands for pure education, on a broad basis, being a general preparation for complete living. Under this head will come our three high schools, and nearly all of our village schools, and in this category, though highly specialized, will come our industrial education. On the other hand, the Theological Seminary stands for the training of Christian workers, to fit men and women to become more efficient winners of souls, and especially to work for the distinct object for which the mission is here. Like this are our Bible training institutions Ongole and elsewhere, also our training schools in Bapatla and Ongole. Much of the work in our boarding schools is directed toward the same end.”

### **THE COLES MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL, KURNOOL**

“The Government order of recognition was received on the 1st. of Feb., and you may well imagine that there was great rejoicing in Kurnool. On the 24th, we held a Public Meeting to commemorate the event. It was largely attended by the leading Hindu and Mohammedan of the town, and great enthusiasm prevailed. The order of Government recognizing the school was read, one of the leading lawyers of the town presided and congratulatory speeches were made.

The work of the school, though interrupted to some extent by the epidemic of cholera, was on the whole satisfactory. In January the new V. Form was opened with 24 students. The total strength of the school at the close of the year was 177, distributed as follows: V. Form 24. IV. Form 28, III. Form 32, II. Form 30 and I. Form 43. Of these, 37 were Christian students representing four mission fields as follows: Cumbum 6, Kinigiri 8, Nandyal and Kurnool 22.

With the opening of the V. Form the need of an additional teacher become imperative. Mr. Mangalam David, B, A., LT. is the man we found. He is not only a capable teacher, but also a most devout and consecrated Christian. From the first he took his place with us in our Telugu services, though a Tamil man himself. He teaches a class in Sunday school and often leads our services. We feel that he is a great acquisition not only to our High School but also to our church. The school fees for the year amounted to Rs 2705-13-0, an increase of Rs 211-8-0 over the previous year. With the addition of new teachers and the necessity of providing equipment for the school, it became evident that we could not school before the Reference Committee, asking for an additional along on the present appropriation. We laid the needs of the appropriation of Rs. 1600 for the year 1907-0-8. recommended to the Woman's board for sanction.

It is a great joy to report that the new building for the High School to be known as "The Coles Memorial" is at last beginning to materialize. In the month of April, a telegram came. It was a cable from Boston, announcing that Dr. and Miss Coles had given \$ 10,000 for the High School building. As speedily as possible the work of drawing up the plans and estimates was carried out. Mr. I. M. Lewis, one of the best architects in Madras was assigned to this important task, and by November the plans were completed. The Foundation Stone is to be laid on the 27th of March and we hope to have the building ready for occupation by June of 1908.”

### **Conclusion**

This is how the early missionaries worked hard and relentlessly defying all odds and the heat of Andhra Pradesh ,with hardly any facilities the pioneers worked sincerely to introduce education to the poor and the downtrodden and we are now reaping the fruits of the labour of these early missionaries.

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