

Punjabi Christians

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Christianity entered the Punjab to stay in 1834. Its initial adherents were largely urban, literate, and socially diverse. A mass conversion movement of rural Dalits transformed the community into a larger but far more homogenous and backward community. Christian influence in the Punjab reached its peak in the late nineteenth century, but when politics replaced socio-cultural reform as the dominant elite concern, Christians became marginalized, even though their institutional presence remained significant and relations with neighbors of other faiths good. Punjabi Christians have been overwhelmingly Protestant, but since 1973 Catholic missionaries from Kerala and a growing Pentecostalism have made Punjabi Christianity more diverse.

Recently two different but complementary profiles of Punjabi Christians have appeared in important public documents, which challenge commonly accepted images of Indian Christians. The first was the volume on the Punjab published by the Anthropological Survey of India. This volume, like the others in the series, is based on the premise that India is a *jati*-based society and that the Christians, although defined by their religion, are for all practical purposes one *jati* among many in the Punjab.¹ The description takes note of differentiation within the community in terms of occupation, income, education, denomination, and to a lesser degree caste background as “most original converts are from lower castes in the state.”² Caste is not pronounced within the community, but the community is conscious of its low status and recognizes that conversion has improved their status. The community is also described as speaking Punjabi, eating all types of locally available food, practicing communal endogamy and village exogamy, granting women a generally low but better status than women have in other communities, and having “free exchange with other communities.”³ The community has its own forms of worship and religious festivals, but does share in those of other communities. Thus, while not a caste, Punjabi Christians are caste-like and have not been able to escape from the Punjabi caste hierarchy.

The other profile is found on the Tables on Religion of the 2001 Census of India. The profile these tables present is not that of a community but of an aggregate of 292,800 individuals placed within a single category labeled “Christians.” Of these individuals 47.2 per cent were women, 27.9 per cent were listed as urban, and 45.8 per cent were literate. Among those classified as “workers” an unusually high proportion (32.5 per cent) were listed as “agricultural laborers.” When one compares these statistics to those for the Punjabi population as a whole, it turns out that Christians make up a mere 1.2 per cent of the state population, are less urbanized, less literate, have only a

slightly more favorable sex ratio than the Punjabi population as a whole, and thus could well be considered a backward community within the Punjab.⁴ When compared to Indian Christians in general, Punjabi Christians are less urbanized, far less literate (47.2 per cent vs. 80.3 per cent), and are much less progressive on at least two indicators of women's status (female literacy and sex ratio) than is the Indian Christian population as a whole.⁵ They thus represent, in a very "forward" state, a very backward portion of the Christian community in India.

Both profiles, provided by outside sources, are very provocative, calling for both explanation and more information. The purpose of this essay is therefore to provide some historical background and a somewhat fuller, more integrated picture of present day Punjabi Christians, particularly from inside sources.⁶ It begins with an account of origins and of the kinds of Christianity which came to and spread within the Punjab. It then goes on to describe within an historical framework the converts to Christianity, the institutions Christians created, the relationships between Christians and Punjabis of other faiths, religious organization and leadership within the Christian community, and finally Punjabi Christians and Punjabi culture. This survey covers all of the Punjab up to 1947, but confines itself to the Indian Punjab after Partition. Of special concern will be the issue of distinctiveness. In what sense have Punjabi Christians been distinctive vis-à-vis both other Punjabis and other Christians elsewhere in India?

I

There is a tradition that the Apostle Thomas, one of the original twelve disciples of Jesus, visited the Punjab. This tradition is based on the story of Thomas visiting King Gondoporus in India told in *The Acts of Thomas*, a third century Gnostic composition originating most probably in Edessa. There was a Parthian ruler by a similar name ruling in the Punjab at or near the time when Thomas could have visited the Punjab (the dates of his rule are uncertain), and so the critical choice has been either to consider the plainly fictional story to have been based on the historical fact of a visit or to see the reference to Gondoporus as a mere literary device inserted to give the story's strong Gnostic message some link to history.⁷ In the unlikely event that such a visit did in fact occur, there is no evidence of any continuing Christian community in the region resulting from it, even though *The Acts of Thomas* says that Thomas converted not only Gondoporus himself but others as well. If the visit to Gondoporus is ruled out as most unlikely, then it is safe to conclude that Christianity came to India not overland, as Islam and Vedic religion had, but by sea, which would account for its late arrival in the Punjab.

An historically more reliable starting point might be May 5, 1595 when the third Jesuit mission to the Mughal Emperor Akbar visited him at his court in Lahore. While the three members of this mission directed most of their attention to the Emperor and his court, Fr. Emmanuel Pinheiro also sought to evangelize the local population (with the Emperor's permission). The first converts, described as persons of humble birth, were baptized on September 15, 1595.⁸ The Jesuits also opened a school at which children of the court might learn

Portuguese and in 1597 built a large church under court patronage. From that point on the congregation grew. It included a few well-born Muslim converts, but the vast majority were Hindus and from “a low grade of society,” many of whom were in economic distress.⁹ However, in 1614 when war broke out between Akbar’s successor, Jahangir, and the Portuguese, the church in Lahore was forcibly closed and the congregation migrated to Agra.¹⁰

The Emperor Shah Jahan in 1632 ordered the Lahore church to be destroyed and there is no information about it after that.¹¹ References to Christians in Lahore after 1614 do exist, but remain very sketchy throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. At least some of the Christians were Armenians, and the bulk of them seem to have been soldiers,¹² but it is unclear whether or not there were any Punjabis among them. Maharajah Ranjit Singh’s armies included some Christians who were not Punjabis but Europeans and other outsiders. A Fr. Adeodatus visited Lahore to perform marriages for some of Ranjit Singh’s European officers in 1829 and stayed for two years looking after the families of about fifty Christian soldiers.¹³ Thus, until the 1830s Christianity seems to have been the religion of a very small number of commercial and military transients from outside the Punjab and had yet to take root among the Punjabis themselves or show signs of becoming a continuing religious community there.

This changed with the arrival of the Rev. John C. Lowrie at Ludhiana in November 1834. Lowrie had set sail from the United States with his wife and another couple with instructions to start a mission in North India.¹⁴ On advice from Christians in Calcutta, he chose to go to the Punjab, in part because of its healthy climate and strategic location for “spreading the gospel” elsewhere; in part because the Punjab was not “occupied” by any other mission society; in part because of the presence there of the Sikhs “who are described as more free from prejudice, from the influence of Brahmins, and from caste, than any other people in India”;¹⁵ and in part because he had received an invitation from Captain Wade, the British Political Agent in Ludhiana, to take over a school he had already started there. Lowrie’s stay in the Punjab lasted only fourteen months and he baptized no converts, but he did lay the foundations for what was to follow. When he left in January 1836, he was replaced by two missionary couples and he met another contingent on the way before sailing home. The first three converts in Ludhiana, two Bengalis and an Anglo-Indian from a Roman Catholic family, were baptized on April 30, 1837. Punjabi converts were to come later.

Lowrie was a missionary of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. His successors formed its Lodiana (later Punjab) Mission and expanded their work to include major “mission stations” at Jullundur, Ambala, Lahore, Hoshiarpur, Ferozepore, and Moga. The next mission to arrive in the Punjab was that of the Church Missionary Society, which the Evangelical wing of the Church of England had organized back in 1799. Both its Himalayan Mission and Punjab Missions were created not by a decision in London but at the initiative of Evangelical British civil and military officers posted in the region. In 1852 the Society’s first missionary, Robert Clark, arrived in Amritsar which was to remain the mission’s headquarters. It later established mission stations at

Jandiala, Narowal, Batala, Tarn Taran, at Peshawar and along the northwest frontier, as well as in Kashmir. It also created Christian villages at Clarkabad, and in the canal colonies of the western Punjab. The third mission to enter the Punjab was that of the Associate Presbyterian Synod of North America, which in 1858 joined with the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church to form the United Presbyterian Church of North America. Its first missionary arrived in Sialkot in 1855. From there it was to expand to include Gujranwala, Gurdaspur, Jhelum, Zafarwal, Pathankot, Pasrur, and Rawalpindi. The last of the early missions was that of the Church of Scotland, whose missionaries arrived in Sialkot late in 1856 only to be killed in 1857. The mission began again at Sialkot soon afterward and grew to include Gujrat, Wazirabad, Chamba, Jammu, and Jalalpur. These four missions worked in cooperation with one another, dividing the region up geographically in such a way as to prevent competition between them. Together they put a distinctively Protestant stamp upon Christianity in the Punjab, which was to last until close to the end of the twentieth century.

A striking feature of these early missions was that in three out of the four cases they were drawn to the region by the presence of the Sikhs. Lowrie's reasons for going to the Punjab have already been mentioned above. The Punjab Mission of the Church Missionary Society was also to be a mission amongst the Sikhs. As the Society's Proceedings for 1850-51 indicated,

The Sikhs, on account of their being a religious sect into which anyone can be initiated - Hindus, Mohammedans, and even Europeans, and all of them being of one caste - are the more ready to be influenced by our preaching and those of them who have been converted to Christianity at Cawnpore and Benaras are very highly spoken of and being far superior to the Hindu converts. The Punjab Mission, therefore, as being a thank-offering to Almighty God for the victory He has given us over that warlike nation, ought to be planted in the midst of the Sikhs, that is, in Umritsar, and from thence branch out...¹⁶

The Church of Scotland received a bequest in 1855 for the explicit purpose of establishing a mission to the Sikhs.¹⁷ Yet once these three missions actually arrived in the Punjab, there is no evidence that they specifically "targeted" the Sikhs in their evangelistic and educational work, even though they considered the Sikhs to be the group most receptive to the Christian message. In fact, as their misperceptions indicate, they made little effort to study Sikhism in any depth, not even to challenge or refute it. Whatever Christian-Sikh polemics existed during the nineteenth century were very mild in comparison to the polemics between representatives of these two communities and their Hindu and Muslim counterparts.¹⁸

A second wave of Protestant missions arrived in the Punjab towards the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries under very different circumstances. These included the Salvation Army, the Seventh Day Adventists, the American Methodists, the Zenana Bible and Medical Mission, and the

Church of England Zenana Missionary Society. The last two societies were exclusively for women and were part of a major influx of single women missionaries from Protestant societies which began in the 1870s. At this time the Roman Catholics - who had hitherto confined their efforts to the European, Anglo-Indian, and other Roman Catholics in the British military and civil services in the Punjab - also began work among the local Punjabi population. Following its concordat with the Portuguese Padroado in 1886, the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith in Rome created the Lahore Diocese, appointed its first bishop, and in 1888 entrusted its development to the Belgian Capuchins. Soon afterwards, some disgruntled Protestants approached one of the priests, expressing a desire to become Roman Catholic. They were admitted after proper instruction, but soon left when they did not get what they wanted.¹⁹ Yet, despite this setback, the diocese set aside sufficient people and funds to sustain steady evangelistic work among the Punjabis. By 1931, the last census in which denominational affiliations among Christians were recorded, about 11.6 per cent of the Christian population of the Punjab was Catholic.²⁰

In the years following independence and partition, there have been five important developments that have altered the ecclesiastical patterns established in the nineteenth century. The first of these was the completion of the transfer of power from the overseas missionary societies to Indian churches under Indian leadership. These transfers of power varied in nature, with some speedy and others gradual, some earlier and others later, some involving structural change and others only placing Indians in positions formerly occupied by Europeans or Americans. The second consisted in a series of adjustments in ecclesiastical boundaries among virtually all denominations following Partition so that the Indian churches became completely separated from the Pakistani churches on the other side of the border. A third development was the significant change in the position of the Catholic Church in the Punjab. In that church foreign personnel were replaced by a far larger number of priests and nuns from Kerala. In 1973 the Jullundur Diocese was created with the Rt. Rev. Symphorian Keeprath OFM Cap. as bishop. Since then it has expanded rapidly both numerically (largely at the expense of the Protestants) and in institutional presence. A fourth development paralleling the third was the arrival of Evangelical and Pentecostal missionaries belonging to Indian (Protestant) missionary societies based largely in the South. Their work has been devoted to evangelism and the creation of new churches. Some of them have worked independently of, and others in cooperation with, the older Protestant denominations in the Punjab. Finally, this period has also witnessed the emergence and growth of a number of indigenous Punjabi churches which have been independent of all formal ecclesiastical ties with larger denominations inside or outside the Punjab. As a result of all these developments, the ecclesiastical picture and the church loyalties of Punjabi Christians are far more Indian, more diverse, and more complex than they were one hundred years ago. The largest Christian denominations in the Punjab at present are the Catholic Church, the Church of North India (successor in 1970 to the Presbyterian, Church of Scotland and C.M.S. missions), and the Salvation Army, while the

number of independent Pentecostal churches have been growing and winning most of the converts from other faiths.²¹

II

Christianity got off not only to a late start but also to a slow start in the Punjab. The missionaries took time to become familiar with the languages and with the people. One sees in their reports and correspondence a reliance on stereotypes which were products more of conventional European wisdom about Punjabis than of their own personal experience with the Punjabi people themselves. The result was that the number of initial converts was very small; probably by 1857 there were no more than two hundred of them. As Table I suggests, after 1857 the pace of growth picked up somewhat, so that by 1881 the Census recorded a total of 3912 Indian Christians in the province, which at that time included both Delhi at one end and the northwest frontier at the other.²²

These converts came from very diverse backgrounds, as indicated in Table I which provides data on the converts of the earliest mission in the Punjab.²³ This table does not represent the proportion of converts from various caste and religious backgrounds found in the other three missions as well, but it does show that at this stage the Christians in the Punjab were not a homogeneous community. The community was also, from what data can be gathered, quite diverse occupationally as well. Many of its members were mission employees; the missions needed evangelists and teachers to carry out their work, while conversion often cut the converts off from their former sources of livelihood. Some were government servants of various kinds, a few were still engaged in agriculture or trade, some were in domestic service, and others had entered the emerging modern sector of the economy.²⁴ One thing virtually all Punjabi Christians had in common at this time was that they were urban, if not before conversion then almost certainly afterwards, as social boycotts against converts were so effective that a convert could not survive in his village.²⁵

Table I
Background of Lodiana Mission Converts, 1834-1880

Background	1834-1857		1858-1880	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Muslim	15	32%	57	43%
Brahmin	5	11%	11	8%
Other High Caste	3	6%	14	11%
Hindu				
Hindu (caste unspecified)	15	32%	29	22%
Low Caste Hindu	2	4%	12	9%
Sikh	7	15%	9	7%
TOTAL	47	100%	132	100%

These conversions came in almost all cases either one-by-one or by nuclear families. There were only two conversion “movements” during this period, both of which were quite small and limited. The first occurred among some Mazhabi Sikh sepoys in the 24th Native Infantry who had come across some Christian literature during the sack of Delhi in 1857. They became interested and approached their Christian officers for instruction early in 1859. The officers not only responded but also called in a C.M.S. missionary who formed an inquirers class and baptized a few of the sepoys. When the regiment shifted to Peshawar where there was no missionary to call in, the officers continued Christian worship and instruction with the sepoys until General Birch was informed and effectively put a stop to it. In the end only about fifty people, including sixteen sepoys, were baptized.²⁶ The other was a movement that developed very slowly among some Meghs in several villages near Zafarwal in Sialkot district. The first converts were baptized in 1866. The next was converted five years later and gradually other family members and friends joined them so that by 1884 there were 59 Megh converts in those villages. After 1884 conversions among Meghs stopped and in due time thousands joined the Arya Samaj.²⁷

During the fifty years following the 1881 census the number of Punjabi Christians increased very rapidly, as indicated in Table II. As far as can be determined, the annual number of urban converts did not change markedly during that period. What changed the statistics so dramatically was a major conversion movement among rural Chuhras, a caste of menial laborers considered untouchable because they were engaged in scavenging and sweeping in the villages where they lived. This movement began in the 1870s, making some impact upon the 1881 census figures, and tapered off during the 1920s. Since the 1930s the population growth rate among Christians has been about the same as among other Punjabis.

Table II
Increase of Indian Christian Population Relative to the General Population of Punjab, 1881-1931

Year	Indian Christians	Increase of Christians	Increase in General Population
1881	3,912		
1891	19,750	405%	10.7%
1901	38,513	95%	-1.5%
1911	163,994	326%	-2.3%
1921	315,031	92%	3.8%
1931	395,629	25.6%	13.5%

Source: *Punjab Census*

The Chuhra conversion movement is generally traced back to the 1873 conversion of Ditt, an illiterate and lame dealer in hides and skins from the village of Shahabdike, about thirty miles east of Sialkot. Ditt subsequently brought friends and relatives for baptism as well as encouraged fellow Chuhras

to become Christians as he went about his business. The United Presbyterian mission initially held back, allowing this movement to develop on its own and limiting their own involvement to responding to Chuhra requests for instruction and baptism. Meanwhile, other Chuhras independently initiated similar conversion movements in Gujranwala and Gurdaspur districts. By the mid-1880s, as these movements continued to spread, other neighboring missions became involved and rural Chuhras could begin to see the kind of “demonstration effect” which conversion and its concomitant life-style changes were having upon those individuals and families who had been baptized. This did give the movement added momentum, but at the same time it also made the evangelists’ and missionaries’ task of discerning the motives behind each conversion far more difficult. Pandit Harikishan Kaul, the Punjab Census Commissioner in 1911, was probably right in attributing the movement to a generalized Chuhra desire for enhanced dignity and social status.²⁸ By the 1920s the momentum behind the movement was largely spent. The missions simply did not have the human resources necessary to respond to all the requests that kept coming in and the missionaries found it increasingly necessary to give priority, when touring the villages, to nurturing the baptized in their new faith rather than to evangelizing those who had not converted. Moreover, the political context was changing and new Dalit movements were emerging alongside this one, thus offering Dalits more alternatives than they had had before.²⁹

The impact of this conversion movement, which accounted for virtually all of the Christian population growth above the Punjabi average, was considerable. Not only did it greatly increase the number of Christians in the Punjab and attract new missions to the central Punjab, but it also altered the Punjabi Christians’ public image and identity from that of a tiny, literate, progressive, and social diverse urban community to that of an overwhelmingly poor, illiterate, rural Dalit community. Equally importantly, it drew public attention to the plight of Dalits in general and of rural Dalits in particular. Others, especially the Arya Samaj, realized that they had to address Dalit needs and involve themselves in Dalit struggles in meaningful ways in order to stem the tide of conversion or perhaps turn it in their own direction.³⁰ Their sense of urgency about this was heightened in 1906 when the Aga Khan deputation to the Viceroy not only requested separate electorates for Muslims but also argued that the Dalits should not be included in the Hindu population totals when determining proportional representation, on the grounds that Hindus do not recognize Dalits as fellow Hindus. The grant of separate electorates to Muslims in 1909 and then to the Sikhs as well in 1919 in effect politicized religious conversion, as conversion came to involve not just a change of religious allegiance and affiliation but of political constituency as well.

The social profile and public image of Punjabi Christians produced by the Chuhra conversion movement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has not changed substantially, despite all that has happened in and to the Punjab since then. That Dalit conversion movement goes a long way in explaining the relatively low literacy rate and high proportion of agricultural laborers among Punjabi Christians found in the 2001 Census as well as the low

status of the Christian community reported in the recent description of it made by the Anthropological Survey of India. This data is confirmed by post-Independence micro-studies of Punjabi Christians.³¹ Conversations with Pentecostal pastors indicate that some of their new converts come from diverse caste and religious backgrounds, whereas others report that the new converts are almost entirely from Dalit backgrounds.³² The social profile inherited from the past may thus be changing somewhat, but not very much.

III

Jeffrey Cox, in his study of Protestant missionaries in colonial Punjab, made the point that "Alongside the gospel of the spoken word, and the gospel of the printed word, was the gospel of institutional presence."³³ From the very outset, when Lowrie took over for the Presbyterian mission the school that the British Political Agent had started in Ludhiana, the missionaries were inveterate institution-builders. Mrs. Newton started a small girls' school there in conjunction with the orphanage that she had opened during the 1837-38 famine. When Rev. Goloknath established a mission in Jullundur following the first Anglo-Sikh war, he immediately started a school there. Charles Forman did the same thing in Lahore following the conclusion of the second Anglo-Sikh war. When the Church Missionary Society arrived in Amritsar they opened a school there, even though there was already a government school in that city.

Since those beginnings the mission school in the Punjab has found itself in four quite different educational contexts. At the outset each school was autonomous, choosing its own medium of instruction, curriculum, textbooks, and modes of student assessment. The mission schools and those set up by the government during this period were quite similar, except that the mission schools not only had compulsory Bible classes and Christian worship but also introduced English at an earlier stage than did the government schools.³⁴ The Wood Despatch of 1854 introduced standardization of curriculum and of examination as well as grants-in-aid for schools that submitted to government inspection and gained "recognition" from the Education Department. During this period, when the educational "system" was taking shape in the Punjab, not only were mission schools the only schools offering a western, "government-recognized" education in the cities of Ludhiana, Jullundur, Sialkot, Gujranwala, Rawalpindi and Peshawar, but also their heads played influential roles in educational circles.³⁵ In addition, mission schools played a pioneering role in the education of both women and Dalits.³⁶

The educational context shifted once again when the Government of India appointed an Educational Commission in 1882. The Commission's hearings provided an important stimulus to the Punjab's newly formed religious associations - the Arya Samaj, the Singh Sabhas, the Muslim *anjumans* - to establish their own schools and gain recognition for them. Within a very short period of time mission monopolies in "recognized education" came to an end and inter-religious competition for cultural influence through education became stronger than ever. What distinguished the mission educational institutions from

the newer ones was not only their continued quality but also the non-communal character of their faculties and student bodies. It was also during this period that the stated aims of mission education began to change. Initially that aim had been primarily evangelistic, with a secondary interest in disseminating a broader Christian cultural influence. However, in the 1920s and 1930s Christian educators placed less emphasis upon evangelism and more upon character building based on Christian ideals. To cultural influence they now added the development of educated leadership for the Christian churches and community.³⁷ Their most noteworthy innovation was in the area of rural education, primarily through the highly creative and influential work of the Training School for Village Teachers at Moga, which drew national as well as international attention.

Independence and Partition in 1947 changed the educational context yet again. All the Christian colleges at the apex of the Punjab educational system - Forman Christian College and Kinnaird College in Lahore, Gordon College in Rawalpindi, Murray College in Sialkot, and Edwardes College in Peshawar - ended up in Pakistan. In the reorganization that followed, Baring College in Batala was raised from an intermediate to a degree college (and later introduced post-graduate courses), but it did not cater to the urban elites as its predecessors had done.³⁸ Perhaps more significantly, the Punjab government invested more heavily than ever before in popular rather than just urban elite education by opening a school in every village. As a result, Protestants closed many of their village schools and consolidated their educational efforts in a much smaller number of urban boarding schools. This trend was counter-balanced to some extent after 1973 when the Roman Catholics began opening a large number of new (most often English-medium) schools in villages as well as towns and cities.³⁹ Both Protestants and Roman Catholics treated their educational institutions as Christian contributions to national development and national integration, as the chief means for the educational advancement of the Christian community, and as disseminators of value education within the wider society.

The other major Christian institutional presence in the Punjab has been the mission or Christian hospital. The evolution of medical missions in the Punjab is difficult to trace in any detail, but the issue did come up at the Punjab Missionary Conference on December 27, 1862. In the discussion of a resolution that "Medical Missionaries would prove very valuable auxiliaries to the direct work of propagating the Gospel" John Newton of the Lodiana Mission provided this testimony in favor of the resolution.

When I came to India, almost 30 years ago, thinking that I might be stationed where medical advice could not be had, I brought with me a number of medical books; some of which I read on the voyage. I had not been long in the country, before I found myself engaged in a small practice; having sometimes 20, 30, and even 40 patients, in a day. Cases being sometimes brought to me, which I was utterly unable to treat, I recommended their being taken to the Native Doctor, at the Government Dispensary. But, instead of following this advice, the sick often begged me, with importunity,

to do what I could; saying that *my* medicine would do them far more good than the Government Doctor's; because *he* gave it as an official duty; whereas *I* gave it for God's sake. A medical missionary, therefore, may find a sphere of usefulness almost anywhere.⁴⁰

The sense of the meeting appeared to be that medical missions would help "win the affections and confidence of the people, in imitation of the *Great Physician*, 'who went about healing all manner of diseases'."⁴¹

From that time on there was a kind of progression, which varied in its timing from mission to mission, from recruiting missionary doctors and nurses who not only set up urban dispensaries and clinics but also joined in winter itineration through the villages, to the creation of hospitals, and finally to developing a training center for Indian medical personnel to service those hospitals. A most significant feature of early Christian medical work in the Punjab was that most of it was done by women for the benefit of women, because virtually all of the doctors practicing western medicine in government or private medical facilities were men. In fact, medical work became a top priority, along with education and evangelism, for the large number of single women missionaries entering the Punjab from the 1880s onward. The Church of England Zenana Missionary Society was responsible for St. Catherine's hospital in Amritsar and an Indian woman doctor, Dr. K. M. Bose, was in charge of a small general hospital in the village of Asrapur.⁴² The first United Presbyterian medical missionaries were both women and the mission's hospitals in Sialkot and Sargodha were created for women.⁴³ The Lodianna Mission's two hospitals in Ambala and Ferozepore were also women's hospitals.

However, the most important Christian medical institution in the Punjab has been what is now Christian Medical College and Hospital, Ludhiana. Begun in 1894 as the North India School of Medicine for Christian Women with representatives of seven mission societies on its governing board, it received government recognition as a medical school in 1902. In 1909 the Punjab Government asked that it admit non-Christian students and in 1915 transferred to it all the students in the Women's Department of the Lahore Medical College. It was then renamed Women's Christian Medical College. The first time the hospital admitted men as patients was during the 1947 Partition riots. In 1951 the college took steps to be upgraded to the M.B.B.S. level, a condition for which was that it become co-educational and an All-India institution. It also changed to its present name. Since then it has built a new hospital (1957), upgraded nursing education to the B.Sc. (1973) and M.Sc. (1985) levels, and added a Dental College in 1991.⁴⁴

These educational and medical institutions have provided not only employment for many urban Punjabi Christians but also opportunities for their upward social mobility, which might otherwise have been denied them. Their schools and colleges played a significant, and in places a dominant role in the development of education in the Punjab and, in the years prior to World War I when socio-cultural reform was high on the agenda of the Punjabi elites,

exercised considerable cultural influence. That influence declined after the war when those elites turned their attention away from the socio-cultural to the pursuit of political power and influence. However, Christians, and especially Christian women, managed to maintain a position of considerable importance in the teaching and medical professions in the Punjab, until overwhelmed by the large number of people from other communities entering these professions in the years following Independence.

IV

The Christian message was new and different in nineteenth century Punjab. It challenged not only the established orthodoxies and pervasive religious eclecticism but also the social hierarchies of the period. It was met with varying mixtures of curiosity, resistance, hostility, and indifference. Those Punjabis who accepted it and underwent baptism were labeled as scoundrels, a disgrace to family and community, and were socially boycotted by friends and kin. Yet its foreign missionary and Indian proponents persisted in spreading the message through the preached and written word as well as through a growing institutional presence which served the needs and aspirations of the urban middle class in particular. It was their successes in winning occasional converts from among this section of Punjabi society that made Christians and Christianity appear to be such a threat to the socio-religious foundations of Punjabi society. This perceived "Christian threat" has been viewed as directly responsible for the rapid growth of the Arya Samaj in the Punjab,⁴⁵ for the creation of the Amritsar Singh Sabha⁴⁶ and for generating the religious competition reflected in the pamphlet literature, religious debates, educational developments, and social service endeavors of the time.⁴⁷ On the other hand, there were also members of the Punjabi middle class who genuinely appreciated what the Christian were doing for the betterment of Punjabi society. Two examples, one urban and one rural, illustrate the kind of ambivalent relationships between Christians and members of other communities of caste and religion during the late nineteenth century.

In 1880 the Church of England Zenana Missionary Society began its work in Amritsar by visiting zenanas for both evangelistic and educational purposes, opening schools for girls, and starting St. Catherine's hospital for women. They won a few converts from among the middle class women they visited and one, who did not convert, reportedly told her husband, "Well, one thing you will allow: whatever Christianity may be for *men*, it's a good religion for *women*."⁴⁸ In 1885 both the Arya Samaj and some Muslims organized a joint campaign to boycott the mission's girls' schools and close the zenanas to mission visitors. This campaign was a temporary and partial success, but some men defied the organizers and the missionaries reported that the campaign had stimulated greater interest in education among the women.⁴⁹ When another campaign was launched in 1900 there were women and girls who were actually subverting it!⁵⁰ As Anshu Malhotra has shown, the Arya Samaj and Singh Sabha reformers had a very different agenda for the women in their lives.⁵¹ However, while the

C.E.Z.M.S. activities posed a clear threat to their domestic ideals, the women themselves seemed to see the Christians as opening options to them that they did not have before.⁵²

Missionaries, when itinerating through the villages surrounding their urban mission stations during the winter months, often reported being well received by members of the dominant groups in the villages they visited. However, it was not the landowners but the Dalit menials who worked for them that took a serious interest in Christianity and converted in large numbers. Almost invariably those who were baptized faced harassment and persecution, not from their caste fellows, who unlike the upper castes rarely brought sanctions against converts, but from the landowners who saw in conversion the possibility of revolt. Mission reports are full of stories of converts losing wages and work, being unable to use village shops and village wells, being singled out to perform forced labor (*begar*) for the government, being reported to the police for theft or other trumped up charges. The missionaries were not of one mind about whether to intervene with the district authorities on behalf of converts who had been wronged in these ways or to insist that the converts work things out with their landlords as best they could. The C.M.S. missionaries seemed to be the most willing to intervene, whereas the United Presbyterians seemed most adamantly committed to restraint.⁵³ Persecution and harassment lasted until the landlords became convinced that their dominance was no longer threatened.

Some studies conducted since Independence indicate that relations between Christians and members of other religious communities in rural Punjab were shaped far more by the village hierarchies of caste status and power than by explicitly religious considerations. A 1977 study of six villages in Gurdaspur district, which has the highest concentration of Christians in the Punjab, revealed that religion and religious values played a very minor role in Christian-Sikh relations. The two religious groups had little to do with each other either at the explicitly religious level or at the social level. Relationships were defined socio-economically, as landlords and laborers, who happened to be of different religions. Where this hierarchy was accepted, relationships were cordial; where it was not, as in one village with a Christian majority which controlled the village *panchayat*, they were not.⁵⁴ These conclusions were confirmed by two later studies that found little social integration; Christians were seen as and functioned as a Dalit caste which was low in the village hierarchy and whose members were treated accordingly.⁵⁵

In urban Punjab the picture is pretty much the same, except among the educated elites. Christians, like others, tend to live in their own *mohallas* and confine their social relationships to neighbors and those with whom they work. Educated Christians in white-collar jobs are more spread out and have friendships with educated people of other communities.⁵⁶ A major Christian initiative in inter-faith relations at the educated elite level was the creation of the Christian Institute of Sikh Studies at Baring Union Christian College in 1966. Unlike the preaching and debates of the past, it sought not to score points over opponents but to promote understanding of one's neighbors. It promoted a series of major inter-faith dialogues on such subjects as popular religion, the nature of

guruship, rituals and sacraments, death and suffering.⁵⁷ Following the example of its second director W. H. McLeod, it also brought modern critical scholarship to bear upon its study of historical and contemporary Sikhism,⁵⁸ which in some Sikh academic circles was considered to be a hostile act. The Institute had to curtail these dialogues following Operation Bluestar and to change its name to the Christian Institute of Religious Studies.

What this brief sketch suggests is that relations between Christians and members of other social groups in the Punjab have been shaped over the past two centuries initially by the evangelistic aims of the Christian missions; secondarily by changing political contexts, agendas, and power imbalances; and always by the particular social demographics of the Christian community relative to other communities of religion and caste within Punjabi society. Communal prestige and respect in the Punjab has been accorded less on the basis of right doctrine or notions of purity and pollution than on the basis of power, wealth, education and access to other resources. Christians in the Punjab have long borne the “scoundrel” and especially the Dalit image. This is to some extent countered by a progressive, enlightened, service-oriented image, but the Dalit image has come to dominate more and more, and has given Christians their “place” from which they have related to others in the social hierarchy of the Punjab.⁵⁹

V

It was not just the Christian message that was new and challenging to early nineteenth century Punjab. Christian patterns of religious leadership and organization also proved to be innovative as well. Stanley Brush has shown how the Protestant mission society, based as it was on the principles of voluntarism, cooperation, purposefulness and rationality,⁶⁰ presented quite a contrast to prevailing Punjabi patterns of religious organization and leadership, whether orthodox or sectarian. He went on to argue that the Protestant mission society provided an organizational model, which the western educated religious reformers of the late nineteenth century used both to face the “Christian threat” and to change religious beliefs and social practices within their own communities. The Arya Samaj, the Singh Sabhas, and the Muslim *anjumans* are examples of this organizational revolution, which Brush called the “Protestantization of the Punjab.” One can see the “mission model” at work not only in the organizational patterns of these new reform bodies but also in their chosen agendas and modes of operation.⁶¹

How well did this innovative pattern of organization and leadership suit Punjabi Christians? Initially leadership within the Christian churches was vested in the foreign missionaries. John C. Lowrie’s successors organized themselves into the Lodiana Mission in 1837. All male missionaries sent out by the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions to the Punjab belonged to that mission. The churches they formed became part of a presbytery, in which all foreign and Indian clergy as well as elected representatives of the presbytery’s churches were full and equal members. In this parallel structure the totally foreign

mission, which reported directly to the Board of Foreign Missions in New York, made all the important decisions, including the allocation of funds and personnel, while the powers of the more egalitarian presbytery were limited to ordaining and disciplining clergy. Exceptional Indian clergy, like Rev. Goloknath and Rev. Kali Charan Chatterjee, were invited to attend mission meetings but they were not mission members. The United Presbyterian and Church of Scotland missions in the Punjab had the same kind of parallel structure. The Church Missionary Society structure was also parallel but far more complex. Their "mission" or Missionary Conference reported to a Corresponding Committee in India, made up of Evangelical Anglican civil and military officers, which then reported to the C.M.S. in London. Their churches became part of the Calcutta Diocese, and after 1877 the Lahore Diocese, of the Church of England. Since these dioceses were dominated, not by missionaries but by the chaplains and churches of the British ecclesiastical establishment, the "mission churches" and their representatives were treated somewhat separately.

Early converts were absorbed into this structure, but by the 1870s the educated elite clergy and laity were challenging the pattern of foreign dominance inherent in it. Two proposals for change competed for acceptance. One was to transfer power and responsibility gradually from the missions to the church bodies like the presbytery. The other was to include Indians in the membership of the missions. In many respects what followed was a nationalist movement within the churches that closely paralleled the broader Indian nationalist movement. By 1898 the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. had committed itself to a gradual transfer of power from the missions to the churches and in 1935 this transfer was virtually completed in India.⁶² The United Presbyterians did not complete a similar transfer until after Independence. The C.M.S. tried the same course of action by creating in the Punjab a Native Church Council in 1877, but when this failed to take hold (more responsibility than power was transferred), they amalgamated the Corresponding Committee, Missionary Conference, and Native Church Council into the Punjab Mission Council in 1905.⁶³ In 1931 Canon John Bannerji was consecrated Assistant Bishop of Lahore. When the ecclesiastical establishment departed in 1947, the mission council structure merged into the diocesan structure. The Roman Catholics simply replaced foreign with Indian personnel within the same diocesan structure, as did the Salvation Army. However, whereas the Salvation Army had a South Indian Territorial Commander in Lahore by 1930, the Roman Catholics had no Indian clergy in the Punjab until after 1947. Following Independence the missions gradually ceased to exist and the missionaries who continued on had no power base independent of the church bodies now totally dominated by Indians. Then the foreign missionaries themselves slowly disappeared as Indian church and institutional leadership emerged and the Government of India became more unwilling to grant missionary visas.

What this brief survey suggests is that Punjabi Christians accepted the Christian ecclesiastical structures which the missionaries brought with them, but objected to the fact that foreign dominance was built into the functioning of

those structures. Once foreign domination was gone the structures were retained and even extended.⁶⁴ As a result this more modern pattern of religious organization and leadership prevails in the Punjabi churches today. The most famous Punjabi Christian of pre-Independence days to insist upon operating outside those structures was Sadhu Sundar Singh (1889-1929) who followed a more traditional role but at the same time made a significant impact upon urban educated Christians both in India and in the West.⁶⁵ More recently, it is some of the new, independent Pentecostal churches emerging from within the Punjab that have followed the more traditional, guru-centered *sampradaya* model,⁶⁶ but these are still very much the exception rather than the rule.

VI

The vast majority of Christians in the Punjab have always been Punjabis, born in the Punjab, speaking the languages and sharing in the culture of the Punjab. The nineteenth century exceptions were the foreign missionaries, many of whom lived for decades in the Punjab, as well as a small number of migrant Hindustanis and Bengalis, some of whom rose to considerable prominence. To them might be added an influx of South Indians since Independence, staffing Protestant institutions and providing, since 1973, the very backbone of the Roman Catholic presence in the state. The presence of these outsiders has involved at least the educated elites among Punjabi Christians in an engagement not only with a more cosmopolitan Indian and even global culture but also, in turn, with their own Punjabi culture. One sees this engagement most obviously in Christian institutions as well as in English language services of Christian worship. However, the vast majority of Christians remain rural laborers who are immersed in the culture, and especially the Dalit culture, of the rural Punjab. What distinguishes them from other rural Punjabis is not a distinctive set of cultural or political loyalties, but a somewhat distinctive religious focus.

Christians have made important contributions to Punjabi culture. The earliest of these was producing the first grammars and dictionaries of the Punjabi language.⁶⁷ Christians also translated the Bible and some western religious classics, like *Pilgrim's Progress*, which modeled new literary forms that other Punjabis later used in their own writing. Christian cultural influence reached its apex during the second half of the nineteenth century when their role in education was so strong and they were able to influence the reform agendas within other religious communities. At the same time Punjabi culture has made its impact upon Christian worship. A major milestone in this regard was the Rev. Imam-ul Din Shahbaz' setting the psalms to fit the meter of popular Punjabi tunes. The Punjabi *zaburs* (psalms) added greatly to the vitality of both rural and urban Christian worship. Some Punjabi religious forms have also been followed during worship in most Punjabi churches. Worshippers leave their shoes outside the church door. They usually sit on the floor, with men on one side of the central aisle and women on the other. Men who wear turbans have generally kept them on during worship.

Christians have not fared so well in Punjabi political culture. Prior to Independence the Christian leadership, in their opposition to the rampant communalism all around them, refused to organize politically as a community. This, plus the community's small size and generally low status, has effectively marginalized Christians in the political life of the state. No Christian has been elected to the Punjab Legislative Assembly since 1947, although there are a surprising number who have been elected to, and even served as *sarpanch* of their village *panchayats*. At higher levels they have simply been the clients of political patrons belonging to other communities, getting a few patronage posts for their loyal service. On the other hand, Punjabi political culture is alive and well inside the democratically governed churches in the Punjab, so that the style and functioning of "church politics" is far more profoundly Punjabi than western, or distinctively Christian.

VII

Perhaps the best key to understanding Punjabi Christians is provided by the social profiles given at the outset of this essay. Christians are a small minority within the state population and, given their social backgrounds, are now more influenced by than influencing the society around them. The community has produced some outstanding individuals who have served the Punjab and India well in their respective professional fields. They, like some of the better Christian institutions, have been a source of community pride. However, the ongoing struggles of Punjabi Christians for individual and family survival and dignity, as well as for respect as a religious minority, have been shaped far more by their own social profile and community image than by exceptional individuals.

Notes

¹ It is perhaps significant that the small number of other communities identified in this volume by a religious rather than a caste label (e.g., Ad Dharmis, Balmikis, Jains, Kabirpanthis, Mazhabis, Nav-Buddhists, and Rai Sikhs) are also treated as castes. K. S. Singh, general editor, *People of India. Volume XXXVII: Punjab* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2003).

² Virinder Singh, 'Christians', in *ibid.*, 150.

³ *Ibid.*, 152

⁴ The Punjabi population as a whole was 33.9 per cent urban, 46.7 per cent female, and 60.6 per cent literate. The figures given above, and those from which percentages are calculated, are provided in *Census of India. The First Report on Religion Data* (New Delhi: Registrar General & Census Commissioner of India, 2001).

⁵ The female literary rate among Punjabi Christians was 39.5 per cent, whereas for Indian Christians as a whole it was 76.2 per cent (only the Jains had higher

general literacy and female literacy rates), while the sex ratio for the entire Christian population is by far the highest in the country, 50.2 per cent. *Ibid.*

⁶ Although drawing heavily upon the research done for my *A Social History of Christianity: North-West India since 1800* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007), I have consciously sought to avoid making this essay a summary of its contents.

⁷ Bornkamm viewed The Acts of Thomas as “a Christian-Gnostic variety of the Hellenistic-Oriental romance,” the main elements of which were the hero’s journey to a far land, links with historical figures, fantastic works, erotic scenes, and an inclination toward the tendentious. G. Bornkamm, ‘The Acts of Thomas’, in Edgar Mennecke, *New Testament Apocrypha*, edited by Wilhelm Schneemelcher and translated by R. McL. Wilson (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1965), II:428. A good discussion of this tradition is found in A. Mathias Mundadan, *History of Christianity in India. Volume I: From the Beginning up to the Middle of the Sixteenth Century* (Bangalore: Theological Publications of India, 1984), 12, 25-26.

⁸ *Akbar and the Jesuits: An Account of the Jesuit Missions to the Court of Akbar by Father Pierre Du Jarric, S.J. Translated with Introduction and Notes by C.H. Payne* (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1926), 71.

⁹ Edward Maclagan, *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul* (London: Barns Oates & Washbourne Ltd., 1932), 274-285.

¹⁰ Joseph Thekkedath, *History of Christianity in India. Volume II: From the Middle of the Sixteenth to the End of the Seventeenth Century, 1542-1700* (Bangalore: Theological Publications of India, 1982), 430-432.

¹¹ Edward Maclagan, *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul*, 320.

¹² Maclagan says that in 1735 there was a report that there were many Christians in Lahore who were not in the military. *Op. cit.*, 287.

¹³ John Rooney, *On the Heels of Battles: A History of the Catholic Church in Pakistan 1780-1886* (Rawalpindi: Christian Study Centre, 1986), 35.

¹⁴ Mrs. Lowrie died in Calcutta and the Reeds returned home on medical advice. He died at sea.

¹⁵ ‘Mission to Northern India’, *The Foreign Missionary Chronicle* (April 1834), 201.

¹⁶ *Proceedings of the Church Missionary Society for Africa and the East, Fifty-Second Year, 1850-1851*, clv. [Hereafter referred to as *C.M.S. Proceedings* with the years added.]

¹⁷ *Report to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland by the Committee for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, Especially in India, 29th May, 1855*, 13.

¹⁸ Two examples of Sikh tracts concerning Christianity are given in John C. B. Webster, “The Christian Mission to the Sikhs in Punjab,” *Dharma Deepika*, 2 (June 1998), 7-8.

¹⁹ ‘Pauperes Evangelizantur’, *Collectanea Lahorensia* (October-December, 1938), 162-164.

²⁰ *Punjab Census 1931. Report*, 313-314.

²¹ It is virtually impossible to determine the present proportion of Christians in the Punjab who are Protestant or Catholic, as this must be based on church records which are widely scattered and not all that reliable.

²² *Punjab Census 1881. Part I: Report*, 151.

²³ This information is drawn from references to converts found in the mission's annual reports as well as in articles its missionaries wrote for *The Foreign Missionary Chronicle*, *The Foreign Missionary*, and *The Home and Foreign Record*, all of which were publications of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.

²⁴ John C. B. Webster, *The Christian Community and Change in Nineteenth Century North India* (Delhi: Macmillan, 1976), 50 & 75.

²⁵ The one extraordinary exception to this was the village of Ghorawaha in Hoshiarpur district, where eight Muslim Rajput families managed to survive the boycott following their conversion, thanks to government intervention. 'Monthly Concert India', *The Foreign Missionary* (April 1875), 335-338.

²⁶ *C.M.S. Proceedings 1859-69*, 116-118; *1860-61*, 117-119.

²⁷ Frederick and Margaret Stock, *People Movements in the Punjab with special reference to the United Presbyterian Church* (South Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1975), 33-47.

²⁸ *Punjab Census 1911. Part I, Report*, 192.

²⁹ For more detailed analyses of this movement, see John C. B. Webster, 'Large-Scale Dalit Conversion to Christianity in Late Nineteenth Century Punjab as an Early Dalit Movement', in Chetan Singh, ed., *Social Transformation in the Punjab During the Twentieth Century* (forthcoming); *The Dalit Christians: A History* (third edition; Delhi: ISPCK, 2009), 56-63; and 'Christian Conversion in the Punjab: What has Changed?' in Rowena Robinson and Sathianathan Clarke, eds., *Religious Conversion in India: Modes, Methods, and Meanings* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003), 351-380.

³⁰ Bhagat Lakshman Singh was present in 1900 when the Arya Samaj performed *shuddhi* on thirty low caste (Rahtia) Sikhs and shaved their heads. The Rahtia Sikhs told Lakshman Singh that if they could be assured that other Sikhs "would inter-marry and inter-dine with them they would not even dream of going out of the Sikh fold. The demand was only in keeping with the promise made at the time of *Pahul* (baptismal) ceremony which was honoured more by its breach than by observance. I had nothing to say." Bhagat Laskshman Singh, *Autobiography*, edited and annotated by Ganda Singh (Calcutta: The Sikh Cultural Centre, 1965), 162.

³¹ See, e.g., E. Y. Campbell, *The Church in the Punjab: Some Aspects of its Life and Growth* (Nagpur: National Christian Council of India, 1961); Clarence O. McMullen, John C.B. Webster, and Maqbul Caleb, *The Amritsar Diocese: A Preliminary Survey* (Batala: Christian Institute of Sikh Studies, 1973); John C. B. Webster, 'Christians and Sikhs in the Punjab: The Village Encounter', *Bulletin of the Christian Institute of Sikh Studies*, VI (December 1977), 2-27; Philip Dayal, Level of Social Integration of Ethnic Minorities: A Case Study of

the Christians of Gurdaspur District in the Punjab (Unpublished Ph. D. Thesis, Panjab University, Chandigarh, 1982); Vidya Sagar J. Dogar, *Rural Christian Community in Northwest India* (Delhi: ISPCK, 2001).

³² Meeting with Pastors, Carmel Church, Jullundur, October 26, 2002; Interviews with Sant Harbhajan Singh and newly baptized converts, Khojewala village, Kapurthala district, October 27, 2002; Meeting with Pastors, Bethsaida Prayer Tower, Ludhiana, October 28, 2002; Interview with Reginald Howell, Amritsar, August 31, 2005.

³³ Jeffrey Cox, *Imperial Fault Lines: Christianity and Colonial Power in India, 1818-1940* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 52.

³⁴ John C. B. Webster, *The Christian Community and Change*, 154.

³⁵ This is based on the annual reports of the Punjab's Director of Public Instruction. See also John C. B. Webster, *The Christian Community and Change*, 177-178.

³⁶ Mrs. Newton's was the first girls' school in the Punjab and other missions followed her lead. When the Presbyterians admitted a Dalit into their school at Lahore, other parents withdrew their children in protest, but the mission remained firm; the Dalit student remained and the others gradually returned. 'Monthly Concert', *The Foreign Missionary* (April 1877), 377. To educate their Megh and Chuhra converts the United Presbyterians created village schools which other villagers, Dalit and non Dalit, also attended. See Robert Stewart, *Life and Work in India: An Account of the Conditions, Methods, Difficulties, Results, Future Prospects and Reflex Influence of Missionary Labor in India Especially in the Punjab Mission of the United Presbyterian Church of North America* (New edition; Philadelphia: Pearl Publishing Co., 1899), 267-270.

³⁷ This can be seen by comparing the aims listed in the *Survey of the Educational Work of the Three India Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America 1926* (pp. 61, 90, 136, 137) with those in the later *Reports and Recommendations of the Deputation of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. Modified and Approved by the Final Conference with the India Council and Other Regional Representatives, March 22-25, 1939* (pp. 25-26).

³⁸ Vinod K. Khiyale, *Hundred Years of Baring's Mission to Batala: Christian Education and Social Change in a Punjab Countryside* (Delhi: ISPCK, 1980), 79.

³⁹ *Diocese of Jalandhar Punjab, India. Directory 1999*, 107-130.

⁴⁰ *Report of the Punjab Missionary Conference held at Lahore in December and January, 1862-63* (Lodiana: American Presbyterian Mission Press, 1863), 109-110.

⁴¹ The discussion is in *ibid.*, 107-110 and the quotation is on page 108.

⁴² Kheroth Mohini Bose, *The Village of Hope or The History of Asrapur, Punjab* (London: Church of England Zenana Missionary Society, n.d.).

⁴³ *A Century for Christ in India and Pakistan 1855-1955* (Lahore: United Presbyterian Church, n.d.), 14, 15, 32, 35.

⁴⁴ A longer version of this history, with full documentation, is provided in chapters 4, 5 and 6 of my forthcoming *Christianity in Northwest India since 1800: A Social History*.

⁴⁵ Kenneth W. Jones, *Arya Dharm: Hindu Consciousness in 19th-Century Punjab* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 48-49.

⁴⁶ Both Harbans Singh and Harjot Oberoi mention that the public declaration of four Sikh boys in the mission school at Amritsar of their intention to convert to Christianity was a precipitating cause for the organization of the Amritsar Singh Sabha, without naming the sources from which this information was derived. Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1983), 232-233 and Harjot Oberoi, *The Construction of Religious Boundaries: Culture, Identity and Diversity in the Sikh Tradition* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994), 235. When examining the records and correspondence of the C.M.S. missionaries at Amritsar, I found no reference to this incident. Had the boys actually converted, this would surely have been reported; either the missionaries did not know about the public declaration or did not consider it important enough to mention.

⁴⁷ John C. B. Webster, *The Christian Community and Change*, 93-186.

⁴⁸ 'Umritsar', *India's Women* (July-August 1881), 175.

⁴⁹ 'Sowing and Reaping', *India's Women* (May-June 1886), 119.

⁵⁰ *Twenty-first Annual Report of the Church of England Zenana Missionary Society for the Year Ending 31st March 1901*, 54.

⁵¹ Anshu Malhotra, *Gender, Caste and Religious Identities: Restructuring Class in Colonial Punjab* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002).

⁵² John C. B. Webster, "The Women of Amritsar through Missionary Eyes," in Reeta Grewal and Sheena Pall, eds., *Precolonial and Colonial Punjab: Society, Economy, Politics and Culture* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2005), 265-288 and *A Social History of Christianity*, 155-167.

⁵³ See John C. B. Webster, "Christian Conversion in the Punjab," 358. Examples of C.M.S. missionary intervention may be seen in *C.M.S. Proceedings 1891-92*, 113-14; *1892-93*, 121.

⁵⁴ John C. B. Webster, "Christians and Sikhs in the Punjab: The Village Encounter," *Bulletin of the Christian Institute of Sikh Studies*, 6 (December 1977), 2-27.

⁵⁵ Philip Dayal, *Level of Social Integration of Ethnic Minorities: A Case Study of the Christians of Gurdaspur District in the Punjab* (Unpublished Ph. D. Thesis, Panjab University Chandigarh, 1982); Vidya Sagar, "The Christian Community in Punjab: An Analogy," *Religion and Society*, XXXVIII (June 1991), 3-17.

⁵⁶ Philip Dayal, *op. cit.*, 306.

⁵⁷ All of these have been published by the ISPCK in Delhi.

⁵⁸ McLeod prepared his *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion* for publication while connected with the Institute. Other books in a modern critical vein by McLeod's two successors were John C. B. Webster, *The Nirankari Sikhs* (New

Delhi: Macmillan, 1979) and Clarence Osmond McMullen, *Religious Beliefs and Practices of the Sikhs in Rural Punjab* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1989).

⁵⁹ The Christian Institute of Sikh Studies organized two conferences to address this image issue and its meaning for Punjabi Christians. "The Gospel for the Punjab," *Bulletin of the Christian Institute of Sikh Studies*, 4 (July 1975), 14-16; Clarence O. McMullen, "The Self-Image of Christians in the Punjab," *ibid.*, 6 (January 1977), 16-23.

⁶⁰ Stanley Elwood Brush, *Protestants in the Punjab: Religion and Social Change in an Indian Province in the Nineteenth Century* (Unpublished Ph.D., Dissertation: University of California, Berkeley, 1971), 38-39.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 264-333.

⁶² A detailed account of this may be found in John C. B. Webster, *The Christian Community and Change*, 208-23 and John C. B. Webster, "American Presbyterian Missionaries and Nationalist Politics in the Punjab, 1919-1935," *Indian Church History Review*, XXXIV (June 2000), 51-73.

⁶³ H. U. Weitbrecht, "The Punjab Mission Council," *Church Missionary Intelligencer* (September 1905), 664-68; H. G. Gray, "Native Church Organization in India," *ibid.* (August 1909), 476-81.

⁶⁴ A good example of this was the creation of the Church of North India in 1970, which brought together the Anglican and Presbyterian churches in the Punjab.

⁶⁵ Two good biographies of him are A. J. Appasamy, *Sundar Singh: A Biography* (Madras: Christian Literature Society, 1966) and Friedrich Heiler, *The Gospel of Sadhu Sundar Singh*, abridged translation by Olive Wyon (Lucknow: Lucknow Publishing House, 1970).

⁶⁶ The best example of this that I have seen is Sant Harbhajan Singh and the Open Door Church in the village of Khojewala, located in Kapurthala district. See John C. B. Webster, *A Social History of Christianity*, 299-300, 350-351.

⁶⁷ John Newton produced the first grammar of the Punjabi language in 1851, the first Punjabi vocabulary book in 1854, and, with Levi Janvier, the first dictionary of the Punjabi language also in 1854. James Massey, 'Presbyterian Missionaries and the Development of the Punjabi Language and Literature, 1834-1984', *Journal of Presbyterian History*, 62 (Fall 1984), 259.