CONVERSION AND ACCULTURATION OF URBAN

CHRISTIANS IN NORTHERN INDIA

Thesis for the Degree of M. A.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
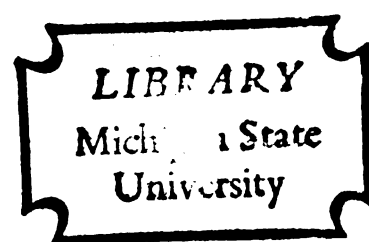
Wise B. Joseph

1965

THESIS

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ABSTRACT

CONVERSION AND ACCULTURATION OF URBAN
CHRISTIANS IN NORTHERN INDIA

By Wise B. Joseph

The acculturation processes resulting from the impinge-
ment of Western cultures upon the small non-Western societies
of the world are among the most challenging and complex areas
of dynamic cultural phenomena studied by anthropologists.
Despite careful observation and study of many acculturation
situations in scattered parts of the world, anthropologists
have given little attention to the acculturation process
resulting from religious change and contact with European and
American Christian missionaries.

This study is a preliminary attempt to delineate the
process of Conversion and Acculturation of Indian Christians
in urban northern India. It points out how the cultural
patterns of urban Christians differ from the traditional cul-
tural patterns of people in the North Indian state of Uttar
Pradesh. The author traces the cultural variants carried by
the Christians and shows how this diversity is a result of
conversion. The study also reveals how a small group of people,
by adopting the Western form of Christianity as its religion
and by coming into continued and prolonged contact with Western

missionaries, builds up an extensive Western outlook.

Conversion in this study is considered as the exchanging allegiance to one religious community for allegiance to another community. Conversion is regarded as meeting individual needs and group circumstances. The study, thus also examines why some segments of the population (mostly Untouchables) accepted Christian conversion and others did not. It also explains why Untouchables, who were mostly attracted to accept Christian baptism in the wake of Christian mission activities, are averse to it at the present time.

Society and culture in Uttar Pradesh is discussed as a background to acculturation. To trace the process of conversion, the situation of contact with Western missionaries, and the Western form of Christianity, the history of conversion has been briefly described. In order to delineate aspects of acculturation, the need dispositions of the converts and their present cultural patterns have been explained. Through these descriptions, the study gives a picture of the variety of changes which have taken place in the cultural traditions of the converts as a result of Christian conversion and contact with Western missionaries. Aspects of the conversion to Christianity of the Uttar Pradesh and Syrian Christians in Kerala provide a comparative dimension to the study in terms

of differences in kind and degree of acculturation. The

methodological approach is afforded by the cultural historical

and historical functional schools of ethnology.

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by

Wise B. Joseph

A THESIS

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of Anthropology

1965

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The fledgling work of any writer is likely to be a meagre
achievement in comparison to the professional knowledge and
assistance imparted to him. This treatise is no exception.
The training and enthusiasm that serve as basis for this study
came from many quarters.

To his teachers, the author owes his training in anthro-
pology. He, however, especially acknowledges indebtedness to
his major professor, Dr. Ralph W. Nicholas, whose ready accep-
tance of the topic for research, creative support and generous
guidance led to the completion of this study. Sincere thanks
are also due to other members of the committee, Dr. Seymour
Parker and Dr. John D. Donoghue whose help and directions were
invaluable.

The author is thankful to the Rev. Warren J. Day of the
Peoples' Church, East Lansing, Michigan and to the Rev. James
P. Alter, Director, Christian Retreat and Study Center, Dehra
Dun, India for providing him with very useful literature per-
taining to the topic, for continued interest and encouragement
which were a great assistance in pursuing the present study
and most helpful in stimulating author's thoughts about the
problem.

Thanks are also due to fellow graduate students for useful discussions on the topic.

An especial note of thanks goes to Miss Margaret Flory, Secretary, Commission on Ecumenical Mission and Relations of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. and to Miss Madeline Brown, Librarian of the United Presbyterian Mission Library at the Inter-Church Center, New York, for being very kind in making available to the author numerous mission reports and other pertinent literature.

Though encouragement and assistance have come from various sources, the author alone is responsible for the end product presented here.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background

The geographical discoveries emanating from areas of European settlement since the end of the fifteenth century, and the growing hegemony of Western Europe over the globe accelerated the meeting of civilizations. In this meeting, Christian missionary activities, with their imprint of Western culture, percolated in various societies of non-Western world. The dream of a Christian world which slumbered in the memory of the West, since its own conversion, gave fervor to Christian missionaries' desire to spread the word of the Christian god among the heathen. Since the fifteenth century the contact of Christian missionaries and missions with natives in non-Western societies has increased continuously. In this human drama, Asia, Africa and Latin America were most affected. In all the Latin American countires, Christianity has survived the revolutions and became the dominant religion of the new regimes. In Asia and Africa, members in some segments of population changed their religious affiliation and entered the Christian ranks. In India "the great bulk of adherents came into the group in the latter half of the nineteenth and early

twentieth century, especially in the so-called 'mass movements' when most members (chiefly Untouchables) entered the Christian ranks." (Schermerhorn 1962: 498, cf. Pickett 1933: 27).

Examining this historic development we are confronted with two questions: Why do persons in some segments of a population change their religious affiliation and others do not? How does the religious change impinge upon the cultural traditions of the converts? These questions ask for explanation.

Although missionaries have given accounts of their activities in scattered non-Western societies, they have given little attention to these questions. Hyslop writes, "The great part of the materials, especially the writings of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, manifest only a single minded conviction: that our sole obligation is to proclaim the gospel with a view to conversion." (Hyslop 1964: 459). Social scientists have also neglected the study of Christian groups in non-Western societies. For the first decades of the twentieth century anthropological observers did not have the dynamic view which would make the problem of Christian conversion interesting. About fifty years ago, the communities anthropologists studied were often almost isolated from the civilized world. In those days

> The anthithesis between the apparently un-progressive
> primitive and self-consciously developing man was so
> strong that the anthropologist tended to assume too
> easily that he was dealing with static conditions.
> Even where some radical change in the social institu-
> tions of a people could not be passed over . . . the
> anthropologist was apt to take a retrospective, even
> nostalgic, point of view. He was more concerned with
> what had been lost than with the positive implications
> of the change. (Firth 1956: 80-81).

As the twentieth century has progressed anthropologists
have noticed that "a meeting, an encounter, of the different
cultural and religious worlds is inevitable" (Kraemer 1960: 11).
The annihilation of distance with the introduction of Modern
Western technology has brought cultures and religions all over
the world into closer contact with one another than ever before.
In this process, anthropologists have taken a more dynamic view
of culture and religion. They have realized that cultural and
religious groups react to contacts with other cultures and
religious groups, and to the working of its own institutions.
Thus, "a people's culture is, by definition, their traditional
heritage, but nevertheless their organized activities, their
beliefs, their social structure and their artifacts are con-
stantly subject to change" (Richards 1959: 373).

Avowedly, a people's culture is subject to change under
contact with different cultures. In order to determine the
cultural change, anthropologists have laid the path for an

objective study of variety and change in cultural traditions. In the present study, reactions of some segments of the population in Uttar Pradesh, while in contact with Western Christian missions have been delineated in the light of the variety and changes occurring as a result, in their cultural tradition. Hence, a study of a Christian group using this anthropological approach, provides some answers to the two nodal problems stated earlier. Norbeck writes, "Of special interest among the newer trends is (an) . . . interest in the nature of religious change" (Norbeck 1964: 222). "Changes in the religious sphere have given . . . important . . . insights on the general process of cultural change" (Lessa and Vogt 1962: 453).

In the present study an attempt has been made to delineate some functions of religious conversion and the processes of acculturation resulting from conversion. It describes in broad outline, the acculturation process resulting from Christian conversion and the impingement of European and American missions upon the Christian converts of northern India.

Since terminology is an essential tool in research, and terms must be as clear as possible, a discussion of the "idea of conversion" and "concept of acculturation" might be helpful before going further.

The Idea of Conversion and Concept of Acculturation

Scholars of religion have found that religious ideas help in the struggle for existence. Accounts of primitive religion vividly document religion as an instrument to overcome the perils and to satisfy the needs of life. An interesting description of the dependence of hunting peoples like the North American Indians, on spiritual powers is found in the works of anthropologists like I. O. Dorsey, F. Boas and Ruth Benedict. Thus writes Herskovits: "Man everywhere uses religion to find and maintain himself in the scheme of things" (Herskovits 1964: 361). Undoubtedly, like many other aspects of social organization, religion is commonly conceived as possessing an inherent fixity (Howells 1962: 251). "In fact, however, it is not exempt from the law of change, but such change is gradual and is not liable to be considerable unless new needs or new cultural contacts arise" (Nock 1961: 2). Frankfort, Schauss, Linton, Barber, Hill, Slotkin, Belshaw, Herskovits and Geertz have discussed how religious change takes place in various simple societies (Lessa and Vogt 1958: 453-512).

But these works explain the cultural phenomenon of "religious change" and do not give any insight into the individual phenomenon of "conversion" with which we are concerned here.

Idea of Conversion:

In order to understand the individual phenomenon of conversion, we will have to review the two opposite poles of man's religious history. On the one side, there are religions of tradition, which are the systems of religious observances of social units. They are indigenous and have grown up among the very social groups they serve. They do not commend their own tradition to others. Hinduism and Judaism are good examples of such religions of tradition. On the other side, we have prophetic religions. They are founded on the historical figures of great personal force, like Jesus, Mohammed, or Buddha. They are "imperialistic, going out to bring into the fold others than those people among whom they grew up" (Howells 1962: 5). They have a message and sufficient vitality to carry it abroad. They create in men the deeper needs which they claim to fulfill.

> Acts xvi 30 represents the jailer at Thessalonica as saying to Paul and Silas 'What must I do to be saved?', but this is in a story told from the Christian point of view. If such a man used phraseology of this sort, he could have meant only 'What am I to do in order to avoid any unpleasant consequences of the situation created by this earthquake' (Nock 1961: 9).

If an individual turns deliberately from a tradition or peity generally held and characteristic of his society, to another it may be called "conversion."

Whereas Hinduism is a religion of toleration and non-proselytization, Christianity, Islam and Buddhism are proselytizing religions. Radhakrishnan in his famous treatise, 'Eastern Religions and Western Thought' cites the views of great Hindu leaders as follows:

> Ramakrsna experimented with different faiths, tested them in his own person to find out what is of enduring worth in them. He meditated on the Quran and practised the prescribed rites. He studied Christianity, and lived like a Christian anchorite. Buddha, Christ, and Krsna, he declared, were forms of the Supreme and they are not all. The monks of the Ramakrsna Order join in any worship which is pure and noble and celebrate the birthdays of Krsna, Christ and Buddha. Ram Mohan Roy instructs that the Brahmo Samaj should be a universal house of prayer open to all men without distinction of caste or colour, race or nation. Over the door of Santiniketan, the home of the Tagores, runs an inscription not only 'In this place no image is to be adored,' but also 'And no man's faith is to be despised'. Gandhi says: 'If I were asked to define the Hindu creed, I should simply say: Search after truth through non-violent means.
> . . . .
> He wrote . . . in the Harijan: I believe in the Bible as I believe in the Gita. I regard all the great faiths of the world as equally true with my own. (Radhakrishnan 1959: 312-313).

These views indicate that Hinduism is a religion of toleration and the idea of conversion does not occur in Hinduism. Frequently books on Hindu religion and philosophy also show that it is not a proselytizing religion. Interestingly enough, it is not wholly true. The following remarks of Srinivas reveal that it has been a proselytizing religion:

It is frequently said by apologists and reformers that
Hinduism is not a proselytizing religion like Christianity
and Islam. This again is not strictly true. Besides the
Buddhists and Jains, the Lingayats, who began as a militant
reformist sect in the South in the twelfth century A. D.
secured converts from all castes from the Brahmin to the
Untouchable in the early days of their history.

* * *

Conversion when it occurs in Hinduism is an indirect or
'backdoor' affair, spread over decades if not centuries,
and affects entire groups and not individuals. (I am
aware that some Brahmin and Lingayat monasteries have
converted individuals as well as groups of people, and
that the Arya Samajists believe in conversion).

* * *

It is true that Hindus do not try to convert Christians
or Muslims, but in a sense conversion is going on all the
time within Hinduism. The lower castes and tribal people
have been undergoing Sanskritization all the time, and
sects, Brahminical and non-Brahminical and Vaishnavite
and Shaivite, have actively sought converts. Persecution
for religious views and practices has not been unknown.

* * *

Hinduism does not convert people in the overt way in which
Christianity and Islam do, but this does not mean that
there is no conversion in it. In the past, alien groups
such as the Scythians, Parthians, White Huns, Yeu-chi and
many others have been absorbed into the Hindu fold, and
it is not unlikely that even alien individuals were able
to become Hindus.

* * *

Quite apart from Sanskritization, many Hindu sects did
openly try to convert.
(Srinivas 1962: 132, 106-107, 133, 153-154, 154).

Nevertheless, Hinduism is considered a non-proselytizing

religion, for there is no formal mechanism for the conversion

of individual non-Hindus. "This is partly due to the caste

system, as without membership in a caste a man has no place in society--he cannot find a bride, he cannot confer a recognizable status on his children, and he has no rules with which to regulate his relations with others" (Srinivas 1962: 154).

By conversion, theologians generally mean the reorientation of the soul of an individual. In Buddhist philosophy conversion means entering a new way of deliverance from evil and suffering. Christian theologians commonly view conversion as coming into the Christian fold and in the Kingdom of God by baptism. According to Moslem theology, conversion is a submission to three articles of Moslem faith: iman or doctrine, ibadat or religious duty, and ihsan or right conduct (Noss 1960: 698).

Theologians usually regard the cause of conversion as a quest for truth and a realization that the old was wrong and the new is right. On the other hand, some psychologists hold that conversion is "caused by a type of temporary neurotic condition, resolution of which results in the establishment of a 'new life'" (Stanley 1964: 60). Other definitions also emphasize this aspect (Johnson 1959: 117; James 1929: 186; Benson 1960: 496).

A definition of conversion acceptable to anthropologists is "the exchanging of allegiance to one religious community for

allegiance to another." (The term 'religious community' has been used here in the popular sense of a religious group. The common idea in contemporary Indian thought about a religious community is based on religious identity and social exclusiveness). They have shown that a basis of conversion is to meet individual and group circumstances.

> Among the Mundas and Oraons of Chota Nagpur in India, for example, there had been anti-landlord rebellions since the second half of the eighteenth century, especially in 1820 and 1830. Christian missions arrived around the mid-century, and people flocked to join them, in order to gather new strength to offer fresh resistance to the aggressiveness of their alien landlords" (Worsley 1957: 245).

Sangree in his study of Bantu Tiriki found that those antagonized by and excluded from Tiriki age groups joined the mission church for alternative affiliation and status--Tiriki women accepted Christian conversion to escape the drudgery of brewing beer for their uncongenial husbands (Sangree 1957). Stone has observed in a case study of Negro folk community in River Island that personal and cultural goals are served by the religious experience of conversion. One who experiences conversion (which is signalized by visions) secures membership in church (because membership in church is solely through conversion) and impresses people and satisfies family wishes (Stone 1962: 329-348). Firth says, "With many of the peasantry of

Oceania or Africa conversion has been not so much a search for
a better way of life as a search for a way of getting a better
living" (Firth 1956: 108-109). These brief statements give
a very general indication of how idea of conversion is used
in contemporary anthropological research.

Concept of Acculturation:

In order to define the meaning of the concept of accul-
turation, the Social Science Research Council appointed a
committee to delimit the phenomena related to this concept.
This committee put forth the following definition: "Accultu-
ration comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of
individuals having different cultures come into continuous
first hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original
cultural patterns of either or both groups" (Redfield, Linton
and Herskovits 1936: 149). In the same memorandum the authors
draw attention to the difference between the concepts of Accul-
turation, Cultural change, Assimilation and Diffusion. Accul-
turation is only an aspect of culture change; assimilation may
be a phase of acculturation. Diffusion, though occurring in
all instances of acculturation, also takes place in types of
contact which are not "first hand".

In this study, emphasis is laid on the concept of accul-
turation and assimilation. The study deals with the prolonged

first hand contact between Christian population of Uttar Pradesh

in north India and selected groups from another population--

Western missionaries. The effects of contact between foreign

missionaries and Indian Christians are assessed in the light

of the present way of life of these Christians.

The rate of acculturation and assimilation of the

receiving group, according to Linton, is a function of the

relative ease with which the foreign cultural element can be

perceived by the receiving group. Therefore, it logically

follows that elements of technology used by the donor group

will be accepted far more rapidly and readily than the abstract

cultural elements of the social organization and value orienta-

tions of the donor group. Generally elements of technology

give immediate economic and social advantages and so will be

adapted quickly.

There are different situations in which acculturation

occurs; these are related to the types of contact situation.

Herskovits has described three situations: first, where elements

of culture are forced on a people, or where acceptance is volun-

tary; second, where no social or political inequality exists

between groups; in the third, there may be three alternatives:

where there is political but not social dominance; where domi-

nance is both political and social; and where social superiority

of one group over another is recognized without there being
political dominance (Herskovits 1964: 533). Undoubtedly,
political and social dominance are factors in accelerating or
retarding cultural change. Where superiority of one group is
recognized, a desire for uniformity with the superior group
acts as a powerful force to assimilate the customs of the domi-
nant group. Kroeber has contended that "much human acculturation
has been voluntary" (Kroeber 1948: 343). Furthermore, the
factors most likely to function in the adoption or rejection
of a cultural element once perceived, according to Linton are
curiosity, a desire for novelty and advantage, a desire for
prestige and finally the utility and compatibility of the
element with the pre-existing culture. If these factors are
found, the receiving group would voluntarily accept and con-
form to elements of the culture of the conor group. According
to Spiro, in the American situation, acculturation is "an
exclusive function of the group's desire . . . for accultura-
tion" (Spiro 1955: 1240).

This, too, is a study of voluntary acculturation. In
the process of change following first hand contact between
Western missionaries and Christians of Uttar Pradesh, the
question to be examined is: How far has assimilation of cul-
tural elements of Christian missionaries been consciously furthered
by the converts themselves?

The Problem

There are, in any civilization, clearly differentiated
groups which 'carry' variants of a common tradition. In
India these variants are differentiated according to caste
and class; religious communities; linguistic and regional
groupings, age, sex and family history; tribal, peasant
and urban levels of cultural development (Singer 1958: 193).

One of the sects with which we are concerned in this study, is

of urban north Indian Christians. Contemporary Indian Christians

are second, third, or fourth generation. The great bulk of

them have Untouchable ancestors. Pickett mentions in 'Christian

Mass Movements in India' that in the United Provinces (now

Uttar Pradesh) members of depressed castes mostly Sweepers,

Doms, Chamars and a group of the Mazhabi Sikh were converted

(Pickett 1933: 51, 53). Pickett also mentions that Mazhabi Sikh

before conversion were professional thieves, but after conver-

sion they improved their reputation. About the Christian groups,

converted from Untouchables he further comments: "Out of some

of these groups individuals have emerged and gone forward

rapidly to surmount obstacles of illiteracy, insanitary living

conditions, poverty, and social oppression" (Pickett 1933: 336).

These statements show that membership in north Indian Christian

community cuts across several scheduled castes and that it is

a relevant unit for the study of social mobility and of

"modernizing".

This study aims, in the first place, to outline in brief the kind of society from which Christian converts came and something of the cultural traditions which they brought with them into Christianity. It has been said earlier that the great bulk of adherents came to the group in the latter half of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, when most members (chiefly Untouchables) entered the Christian ranks. Thus, this study aims to show, in the second place, the factors which attracted the Untouchables and low caste persons to embrace Christianity in the latter half of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, and the factors which have made them averse to conversion since then, despite the fact that they still rank lowest in the caste hierarchy of Uttar Pradesh. Furthermore, the study is aimed to point out in the third place, the process and extent of acculturation that has taken place in the urban north Indian Christian Community.

The three aims are interconnected, and they throw light on the main problem of this thesis.

In delineating the social and cultural picture of the society from which converts came, the study falls within the sphere of ethnography, in unravelling the historical aspect of conversion, it comes under cultural history and in revealing the trends of acculturation, it comes within the orbit of cultural dynamics.

Scope and Methodology

The study is confined to Uttar Pradesh, the most populous State of India. Until mutiny of 1857, the major portion of the province, called Oudh, was under Muslim rule. Oudh was annexed by the British in 1857.

The present population of Indian Christians in Uttar Pradesh is 101,641 out of which 59,348 are urban and 42,293 are rural (India 1963: iii, 36). Most of the Indian Christians are descendants of converts who entered the Christian ranks in the Christian Mass Movements of later nineteenth and during the first three decades of the twentieth century. The increase and decrease of Christian population in Uttar Pradesh is well marked. The Christians were only 48,000 in 1881. They kept on increasing at each census till their figure reached 208,000 in 1931. Their number fell to 163,000 in 1941 and further to 124,000 in 1951 (India 1953: 20). It has further fallen to 101,641 in 1961 (India 1963: iii). The large increase in their number between 1881 and 1931 is indicative of the great rate of conversion. This aspect provides an opportunity to investigate the factors making conversion attractive and repulsive in time perspective.

The history of conversion and many decades' contact of of converts with Western missions create an occasion of

acculturation. The cultural patterns of urban Christians of Uttar Pradesh lend themselves well to demonstrating the process of acculturation and assimilation.

The investigation is confined to urban dwelling Christians in Uttar Pradesh. The choice to study only urban Christians is made on two bases: One, the contact situation--The contemporary urban Christians in Uttar Pradesh are descendants of earlier converts, who were mostly recruited to the Christian fold from rural scheduled casts. During the "Christian Mass Movements," converts were brought into the mission compounds or walled areas surrounding missionary's bungalow in the cities. Most of the mission stations and churches of the Western style are located in cities. Within the urban situation, the Christians come in regular contact with Western missionaries and Western forms of religious organization. Besides, the Christian 'enclaves' that are well distinguishable within the ambit of urban centers, portray the group life of the Christians. In each locale, the Christian group clearly presents a picture of westernization resulting from contact with Western missions and from an attempt to channelize their own culture which is different from other groups.

In contrast, the rural Christians don't come in continued 'first hand' contact with Western missionaries. Moreover, the

rural society being far more knit and homogeneous, the rural

Christians have less opportunity to deviate from their tradi-

tional rural way of life. Thus, the rural Christians demon-

strate few of the results of the process of acculturation

resulting from conversion.

Two, preponderance of Christians in urban centers. A

large number of Christian population in Uttar Pradesh is con-

stituted of urban dwelling Christians. Thus, confining the

study to urban Christians gives a greater representation of

Christian population in Uttar Pradesh.

Furthermore, as a member of the urban Christian com-

munity of Uttar Pradesh, the auther is able to speak of

Christian acculturation on the basis of personal experience

rather than from the standpoint of an outside observer.

One of the aspects of conversion, seen in this study

is acculturation of the convert. By accepting conversion to

Christianity, the convert comes in continued contact with the

Western type of religious organization, with Western missions

and with Christian institutions run on Western patterns. All

these result in the contact of the convert with the Western

way of life. The convert finds some economic and social ad-

vantage and meets some of his life problems by adopting the

Western way of life. Thus, one of the functions of conversion

as discussed in this study, is acculturation.

In order to examine the acculturation of urban Christians
in Uttar Pradesh, first the background of the converts has been
studied, second the situation of their contact with Western
ways of life has been noted, and lastly their cultural patterns
have been described. This will help in tracing out the variants
of cultural traditions that are carried by the urban Christians
of Uttar Pradesh. The study has been bases upon the methodo-
logical approach afforded by the cultural-historical school
of ethnology. The cultural-historical approach helps to
analyse, how the present social structure and Western outlook
of urban Christians is a result of the acculturation process
resulting from the religious change and contact with Western
missionaries. It also helps to visualize the change in the
cultural traditions of the converts in time perspective.
Furthermore, it aids in examining how these changes have passed
from earlier converts to their contemporary descendants. Many
sources have been tapped for gathering the material. Some of
the available accounts of the Christian missions in Uttar
Pradesh and written works on Indian Christians during the last
and present centruy have been utilized. The quantitative data
has been procured from Census reports, mission reports and
from other works available on Uttar Pradesh Christians.

Various mission publications, newspaper articles, and statistical information on education, widow marriage, occupation and residential enclaves, etc., have aided in unveiling the aspects of acculturation. The author's personal experience and observations have helped him in sorting out and utilizing data. The author has had to pick and choose, collect and select both for the sake of avoiding conjecture and for a scientific analysis. The anthropologist, as a scientist, may not take part in the battle of creeds and rituals.

A brief comparison of Indian Christians of Uttar Pradesh with Syrian Christians of Kerala has also been added to the study. The objective of comparison has been to ascertain how the two groups of Christians differ in the extent and degree of acculturation.

No matter what the angle of attack on our problem, neither conversion nor acculturation takes place in a vacuum; these come about in a social setting. Therefore, this thesis begins with a discussion of society and culture in Uttar Pradesh.

CHAPTER II

SOCIETY AND CULTURE IN UTTAR PRADESH

Background
The People and Religion
Caste and Outcaste
Ideologies and Customs

CHAPTER II

SOCIETY AND CULTURE IN UTTAR PRADESH

Background

Uttar Pradesh lies between north latitude 23° 52' and 31° 18' and east longitude 77° 3' and 84° 39' in Northern India. Its boundary in the north runs with the Nepal and Tibet in the Himalayas, on the west and southwest are the States of Himachal Pradesh and Punjab, Delhi, Rajasthan and on the south, States of Madhya Pradesh and Bihar. It consists mainly of a vast alluvial plain, well irrigated by the river Ganges and its tributaries. This region was known in classical times as Aryavarta, the land of Aryans. Before Muslim rule this region had several Hindu princely states. In the year 1194, the Slave King, Qutub-ud-Din Aibak, defeated the Ruler of Kanauj and added the domain of Kanauj to his kingdom, the Delhi Sultanate. This conquest brought the plains from Meerut to Banaras--almost the entire present area of Uttar Pradesh-- under Muslim rule. From that time until the Mutiny, the major portion of the province remained under Muslim rule. After Mutiny in 1857, with the annexation of Oudh, the whole province came under British rule and was known as the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh. In 1949, the three princely states, Rampur,

Tehri Garhwal and Benaras were merged into the province and in
January 1950, on the inauguration of the new Constitution of
the Indian Republic, the province was named Uttar Pradesh.

The historical continuity of culture in Uttar Pradesh
is traced from prehistoric times. Basham writes: "The land
between the Ganges and its great tributary river Jamna, has
always been the heart of India. Here, in the region once known
as <u>Aryavarta</u>, the land of <u>Aryans</u>, her classical culture was
formed" (Basham 1959: 2). The following extract from 1931
census of United Provinces of Agra and Oudh also conveys its
cultural continuity:

> Archaeological discoveries have revealed the existence
> in the Punjab and the confines of Sind of a highly de-
> veloped urban civilization which extended eastwards
> towards, perhaps into the territory of the United Provinces.
> Every urban community depends on extensive agriculture and
> on trade. Indus civilization with its magnificent develop-
> ment of arts and crafts, with relations on the one side
> with its enterprizing neighbours in Sumeria and on the
> other with the territories to the east, must have exerted
> profound influence on the political, social and economic
> organization of the whole of Northern India. If this
> view be accepted or allowed even in part, it will be clear
> that the historical continuity of culture in Northern India
> must be reckoned with and that the United Provinces in
> particular must be expected to survive features in the
> social, political and economic order which date back to
> the order associated with the Temple State. Here, too if
> anywhere in India, will there be evidence of contact with
> other cultures, for on the eastern borders set by edict
> and regardless of nature and the historical distributions—
> are folk allied in speech with the Austric family whose
> traces are found in the Himalayas as far west as sacred
> Simla itself, and the mingling of stocks from Mongoloid

areas filtering in through different passes in small num-
bers with stocks from the south, and the passage of enter-
prise from the west along the river routes mark the United
Provinces an area of development by constant contact. Here
we have developed urban communities on sites which must
have been used for many long centuries because distinguished
by natural advantage; we have village communities self-
sufficient and self-maintaining; we have tribal communities
with their settled order and distinctive institutions
(United Provinces, Part I 1933:   541-542).

From the above, it is clear that Uttar Pradesh has an

ancient and more or less continuous urban social and cultural

tradition. Huntington has shown that historical traditions

and cultural ideologies, though not visible on the surface are

nonetheless inexorable forces in shaping the destiny of a group.

They exert their silent influence in a subtle but demonstrable

manner (cf. Huntington 1945: Chapt. 1).

Therefore, Muslims who entered Uttar Pradesh, and the

subsequent Muslim converts from among the Hindus and Untouchables,

not only acquired a great deal from the traditional culture but

their social organization remained largely subjected to local

conditions. But the two cultures of Muslims and Hindus were

capable of equal potentialities, each of the cultures acquired

some of the characteristics or cultural traits from the other

and there developed in some regions of Uttar Pradesh, a common

and synthetic culture. Hence, the society and culture in Uttar

Pradesh has a historical continuity and is based on cultural

traditions formulated centuries ago. There is no doubt that "every culture is a precipitate of history" (Kroeber and Kluckhohn 1963: 312); so contemporary society and culture in Uttar Pradesh is the result of its many centuries' history.

Uttar Pradesh has an important position in the cultural history of Northern India. Here, in this region the classical culture of Aryans took its firm and final roots. The most fertile districts of northern India and the vehicle of its commerce and civilization developed along its most sacred river Ganges which has been a source of blessing and Mother of life for many Hindus. Here was the abode of Rama and Krsna, incarnations of god Visnu. Vaisnavism, the dominant sect of Hinduism in north India, had its birth in Uttar Pradesh. The Mahabharata and the Ramayana, the two great epics of Hindus, originated from this region. Thus, Uttar Pradesh is the heart of Hinduism in Northern India.

Uttar Pradesh is the most populous state in India. Its present area is 113,654 square miles and its population according to 1961 census is 73,746,401. Its density of population is 649 persons per square mile. It has fifty-four districts and two hundred-seventy-five towns. Out of the present total population of the state, 64,266,506 are rural and 9,479,895 are urban dwellers (India 1963: 36). During 1901-1961 the

population of the State increased 51.7 percent. The increase

of population in rural area in this period is 49.1 percent and

in Urban area 76.3 percent (India 1963: 133), that is, during

the past sixty years there has been a considerable migration

of rural population to urban centers.

In 1931 (which is an important date, for by then, the

great bulk of Christian converts, with whom we are concerned

in this study, had been made) the population of the United

Provinces of Agra and Oudh was 49,614,833 and the density of

population was 442 persons to the square mile. At the census

of 1931, out of every thousand persons in the province, 112

were urban and 800 were rural. Thus the large proportion of

the population of the state has always been constituted of

rural people.

It is important to note, in connection with the distri-

bution of population in rural and urban areas of the State,

that in any region with a profound majority of one religion,

persons of other religions reside mainly in towns. This is

because minorities do not feel at home in rural conditions,

especially when religious feeling runs high and the bulk of

the population is illiterate. This fact is evident from the

census of 1961, as is shown in the table below:

TABLE 1

CENSUS 1981

TABLE I

1961 CENSUS

Uttar Pradesh   Number of persons in each religion living in rural and urban areas:

	Buddhists	Christians	Hindus	Jains	Muslims	Sikhs	Others
Total: 73,746,401	12,893	101,641	62,437,313	122,108	10,788,089	283,737	620
Rural: 64,266,506	6,179	42,293	55,986,395	57,622	8,023,336	150,589	92
Urban: 9,479,895	6,714	59,348	6,450,918	64,486	2,764,753	133,148	528

(India 1963: 36-37)

28

The People and Religion

The population of Uttar Pradesh includes descendants of many pre-Aryan or pre-Dravidian aboriginals and tribes who have, during the course of many centuries, been incorporated into the Hindu social system. The Ahir, Dom, and Dosadh of Uttar Pradesh are examples of such a transformation of aborigines into Hindu castes (Imperial Gazetteer of India 1907: 314). During Muslim invasions and rule, many Hindus and Untouchables accepted conversion to Islam and the present Muslims of Uttar Pradesh have largely Hindu ancestors. Likewise, the Indian Christians of Uttar Pradesh owe their existence to conversion from Hindu, Muslim, Untouchable and tribal families.

During the British rule Hindi and Urdu both had claims to the stutus of a lingua franca in Uttar Pradesh. Since independence, Hindi is considered the lingua franca. There are many dialects of Hindi used in different regions of rural Uttar Pradesh. In cities a hybrid tongue called Hindustani is commonly used in daily intercourse.

There are adherents of Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism, Christianity, Buddhism, and Jainism in the State. Like most other States of India, the main religion of Uttar Pradesh is Hinduism. Its adherents constitute 85% of the total population of the State. According to the Census of 1961, Hindus

are 62,437,313; Muslims 10,788,089; Sikh 283,737; Christians
101,641, Buddhists 12,893 and Jains 122,108 (India 1963:ii-v).
The following table gives a bird's eye view of their popu-
lation from 1881 to 1951:

TABLE II

	Number per 10,000 of population							
	1951	1941	1931	1921	1911	1901	1891	1881
Hindus	8,505	8,367	8,436	8,492	8,505	8,520	8,586	8,596
Muslims	1,428	1,543	1,498	1,446	1,439	1,438	1,382	1,374
Sikhs	31	42	10	3	3	3	2	1
Christians	20	29	42	44	37	21	12	11
Buddhists	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Jains	15	18	14	15	16	18	18	18

(India 1953: 19)

From the above table we notice that in 1951, for the first time
since 1881 Hindus showed a rise in proportion to the total
population. Their population, which was nearly 86 percent in
1881, had been gradually declining and stood a low of less than
84 percent in 1941. It started rising from 1951 as we notice
in the past two decennial census. The decline of Hindu popu-
lation from 1881 to 1941 was the result of conversion of Hindus
to Christianity and Sikhism and due to the higher rate of in-
crease of population among the Muslims. The increase between

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1941 and 1951"is due principally to the exodus of Muslims to Pakistan and to the reversion to Hinduism of the 'imperfectly converted' Sikhs and Christians" (India 1953:19).

Sikhs show a great increase from 1931 onward. The number of Sikhs in Uttar Pradesh was about 11,000 in 1891. It increased to about 15,000 in 1911 and remained steady up to 1921. In 1931 it rose to over 46,000 and in 1941 the number registered an even greater increase to 233,000 as a result of proselytizing activities mainly in the Rohilkhand, Agra, and Meerut divisions. In 1951 their number had fallen to 198,000.

The Christians kept on increasing at each census till 1931 when there were 208,000. Their figure fell to 163,000 in 1941, to 124,000 in 1951, and further to 101,641 in 1961. The main cause of these reductions is the reversion to their original religion of"imperfectly converted" persons and decline in conversion activities. From 1881 to 1931 an appreciable number of Hindus, Muslims and Untouchables accepted Christianity.

Since the bulk of Indian Christians in Uttar Pradesh trace their background from Hinduism, it is important and relevant to discuss briefly Hinduism. Besides, the unity and continuity of Indian civilization and culture rest upon Hinduism. The tenets of Hinduism, Hindu institutions and ideologies

weigh heavily upon the social order and way of life of Indians.
Therefore, society and culture in Uttar Pradesh cannot be under-
stood without a discussion of Hinduism.

There are some difficulties in the way of understanding
a religion as amorphous and complex as Hinduism. Hinduism
lacks a "church" and a clearly defined body of dogma. There-
fore, it is difficult to define Hinduism because "there are
no beliefs or institutions which are common to all Hindus, and
which mark them off from others" (Srinivas 1962: 149-150).

Frequently, studies of Hinduism focus on scriptural
texts with very little mention of the reality and totality of
religious activity. Hindu scholars and intellectual leaders
conceive of Hinduism as a philosophic tradition based on
scriptural texts. They exclude from its ambit all non-philo-
sophic traditions, such as supernatural theories of disease
causation, shamanism, spirit possession, evil eye, etc. Other
scholars have made a dichotomy of "Hinduism" (or its earlier
form "Brahamanism") and "Popular Hinduism." Under Popular
Hinduism, they imply that Sanskritic and philosophical tra-
ditions are unpopular. Some social scientists such as Redfield,
Singer, and Srinivas have suggested that there are Great and
Little Traditions within Hinduism. By Great Tradition, they
mean the literate religious tradition, embodied in or derived

from Sanskrit works. In the Little Tradition they include the local religious practices and festivals, which have more limited regional or local distribution. But from the anthropologist's point of view, such dichotomies do not explain all the religious beliefs and practices of those who call themselves Hindus. (Tribal people, many of whom were formerly called "animists," are now often included under Hinduism). "Religion, in the anthropologist's view, takes in the whole of a people's belief and practice toward the supernatural, that is toward their concepts of all that is beyond man's power and mundane knowledge" (Mandelbaum 1960: 5). According to this broad view, Hinduism includes the religious ideas from the transcendent ethics of scriptures to the propitiation of bothersome spirits. Thus Kitagawa remarks: "In a sense, Hinduism is nothing more than a generic term for a family of diverse religious tendencies, from magical, superstitious animism to lofty, abstract philosophical systems" (Kitagawa 1960: 104).

A broad view of Hinduism has been taken in this study. A large majority of people in Uttar Pradesh live in rural areas. From these rural Hindus have come a large number of converts in the Christian fold. Therefore, it is pertinent to examine village Hinduism as is found in Uttar Pradesh.

The philosophical tradition of Hinduism which is observed by Hindus in country side is based on various Puramas and two epics, Mahabharata and Ramayana. Hindus in Uttar Pradesh generally belong to Vaisnavite sect. Rama, the incarnation of Visnu, is a popular deity. The major festivals such as Holi, Diwali, Dasahra and Janmastami, which have precedents in Sanskritic scriptures and epics are observed by all Hindus. Along with these, some festivals are observed which have no connection with the Great Tradition. These festivals are of local origin. Marriott has observed in his study of village Kishan Garhi in Uttar Pradesh that out of 19 festivals of Kishan Garhi four have no evident Sanskrit names or rationale (Marriott 1955: 193). Several deities are also worshipped to get relief from sickness, evil spirits, misfortunes, etc. Misfortunes and other ill-effects are not supposed to be re-moved by worshipping high god Visnu and his many avatars. Although members of low caste and Untouchables believe strongly in local deities, the higher castes, who are presumably know-ledgeable about philosophic Hinduism, also participate in the local traditions and festivals. Women of high castes commonly participate in rituals to the local deities which are not exalted in scriptures. The people in the countryside are mostly illiterate and lack an understanding of the philosophic

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traditions of Hinduism, but Hinduism provides a link between
all aspects of their culture and way of life. Hindu institu-
tions, rituals, festivals, observances, customs regulate their
social life and fulfill their economic, social and psychological
needs (Opler 1959: 226).

Undoubtedly, under the aegis of religion people serve
many purposes. In village, the worship of the protective god-
lings; disease goddesses, and other life cycle ceremonies of
village Hindus awake courage and hope in areas of life where
uncertainty and anxiety are most prevalent. When an individual
or a family experiences chronic difficulties, misfortunes or
illness, village Shaman or Bhagat is approached. Such anxieties
are more distinct with low castes and Untouchables who have
economic and social disadvantages. When Christian missions
came to the villages in Uttar Pradesh and provided services
for some of the purposes which protective godlings, disease
goddesses, Bhagats and Shamans served, many Hindus and Untouchables
were attracted toward them to fulfill their immediate needs and
comforts. Thus the missionary provided the alternative services
at many instances which the village Bhagat or village Shaman
provided. William and Charlotte Wiser have thus written their
experiences in Karimpur, a village near Agra in Uttar Pradesh:

"They know that when the village prescriber can do nothing more for a sick child, or a spirit controller fails to cure a buffalo they can fall back on us to secure proper help" (William and Charlotte Wiser 1964: 13).

It is not the author's intention to go into details of Hindu myth and dogma. Suffice it to say that Hinduism possesses "three characteristics: first, a doctrine of radical immanence (pantheism) which finds God in everything; second, a tendency toward tolerant syncretism, which allows it to incorporate almost any ritual or deity into its own system; and third, a complex conception of individual destiny, contained in the doctrine of Karma, reincarnation, and moksha" (Prabhu 1963: 6). These concepts are generally known to all Hindus in Uttar Pradesh but their interpretation are at times different from people to people. "Hindus generally believe that the soul is eternal but is bound by the law of Karma (action) to the world of matter, which it can only escape after spiritual progress through an endless series of birth" (Yarrow 1964: 200). There are different views about release (Moksha) from transmigration in different Hindu sects. On the basis of Kolenda's study of Sweepers of Khalapur village, in Uttar Pradesh, it can be surmised that lower caste Hindus and Untouchables give different interpretation to the <u>Karma</u> theory and reject its <u>Sanskritic</u> interpretation (Kolenda

1964: 71-81). Risley remarked on the philosophic tradition:

> Thses ideas are not the monopoly of the learned; they
> are shared in a great measure by the man in the street.
> If you talk to a fairly intelligent Hindu peasant about
> Paramatma, Karma, Maya, Mukti, and so forth, you will find
> as soon as he gets over his surprise at your interest in
> such matters, that the terms are familiar to him, and that
> he has formed a rough theory of their bearing on his own
> future (Risley 1915: 244).

Though the concepts of Hinduism are not common to all
Hundus, yet, "the Hindu way of life," Hindu institutions and
customs identify the adherents of this amorphous religion.
To quote Srinivas, "while it is not possible to define a Hindu,
it is not very difficult to identify a person as Hindu"
(Srinivas 1962: 150).

Under such circumstances, it can further be postulated,
without entering into detailed analysis of creeds, that the
simple doctrines of Christianity might have attracted some
caste Hindus to accept Christian conversion.

The few aspects of Hinduism that we have discussed thus
far would remain incomplete without a discussion of the Hindu
caste system and the ideas regarding pollution and purity.
These two cardinal aspects of Hinduism have been described un-
der the rubric of Caste and Outcaste.

Caste and Outcaste

The caste system is sometimes termed the Hindu phenomenon. "The structural basis of Hinduism is the caste system" (Srinivas 1952: 212). The word 'caste' has been derived from the Portuguese 'casta'--race or tribe. Basham writes:

> When the Portuguese came to India in the 16th century they found the Hindu community divided into many separate groups, which they called Castas, meaning tribes, clans, or families. The name stuck, and became the usual word of the Hindu social group (Basham 1959: 148).

Unfortunately, there is very little trustworthy account regarding the origin of Caste.

> According to orthodox Hindu belief, mentioned for the first time in the Rigvedic hymn Purushasukta the four varnas or orders formed the limbs of primeval man (Purusha), who was victim in the divine sacrifice which produced the cosmos. The Brahmins emerged from his mouth, Kshatriyas from his arms, Vaishyas from his thighs and Sudras from his feet. The Untouchable castes find no mention in the hymn (Srinivas 1962: 150-151).

Certain Hindu thrological ideas such as rebirth (Samsara), the idea that the deeds done by an individual determine his position in his next birth (Karma),papa (sin), punya (merit), moksha (Salvation), and dharma (morality) are intimately related to the caste system. The idea of Karma teaches a Hindu taht he is born into a particular caste because of certain actions he performed in a previous life (janma). Birth in a

particular caste is considered an index of a soul's progress

toward God. <u>Dharma</u>, the total body of moral and religious

rules, is to some extent identified with the duties of one's

caste. Thus caste is the most peculiar religious and social

product of Hinduism.

According to Hindu belief, of the four major <u>varnas</u>,

the top three, the Brahmans, Kshatriyas, and Vaishyas are

divided from the fourth, Sudras by a crucial line: they are

assumed to be "twice born," whereas the Sudras are not. The

function of Sudras was to serve the upper twice born caste

members. Sudras are forbidden to share in knowledge of the

holy writings or any of the benefits of the religion. Out-

side, and below these four castes is the fifth main division,

or the fifth rank--the Untouchables, "that is part of the

Hindu hierarchy of castes and yet stands quite outside the

Hindu system" (Isaacs 1964: 60).

According to Manusmriti,

> The Untouchables were set off as people whose touch was
> supposed, literally, to pollute, and elaborate regulations
> were established governing the conditions of their separa-
> tion from the rest of the people. Untouchables were Hindus
> who were kept outside the Hindu pale while their lives re-
> mained governed to a remarkable extent by Hindu sanctions
> rules (Isaacs 1964: 61).

It is true that there are conditions within Hinduism

fixing permissible contact between high order and low, but the

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Untouchables were placed beyond all touch at all times.

> It is this Untouchability, according to the noted Indian
> scholar, G. S. Ghurye, that marks the Hindu caste system
> from all others, past or present. Set apart to perform
> needed but ritually impure functions, the Untouchables
> also performed that peculiarly useful function in any
> society of occupying the bottom, that bottom of the
> bottom where mere lowliness--such as that suffered by
> the Sudras--was underpinned by a condition that was
> clearly sub-human. This was hard on those elected to be
> the sub-human but helpful to the Sudras, no doubt, and
> to everybody else on up the line (Isaacs 1964: 27).

Much has been written on the Indian caste system and
there is hardly any aspect of this phenomenon which remains
untouched. Hutton claimed that he has compiled a list of
more than five thousand published works on the matter (Hutton
1951: ix). However, for the purpose of this study we would
discuss only the definition, the outstanding features of caste,
and the various castes that exist in Uttar Pradesh.

For a long time the Hindu leaders and scholars "Have
tried to perceive the complex facts of the caste system in
terms of varna" (Scrinivas 1962: 7). But this view is fallacious
and the caste system does not fit into the varna-frame. The
changing pattern of the Indian social life and the changing
mode of economic activities has necessitated a new look at the
whole problem of defining a present-day Indian caste. F. G.
Bailey has attempted to give a sociological definition of caste.
He begins by finding four referents of caste: (1) Varna: Varnas

are not groups but categories. To take Varna as caste is wrong.

All castes do not come under Varna identification. Muslims

and tribal groups do not come under Varna. (2) Caste catego-

ries: These are aggregates of persons, usually in the same

linguistic region, usually with the same traditional occupation

and sometimes with the same caste names. But caste groups are

different from caste categories. The Ahirs living in Behar do

not marry Ahirs of Rajasthan. (3) Caste associations: In

few regions, they satisfy certain modern functions. They

function as welfare and improvement associations and they act

as political interest-groups. (4) Caste as Jati: Bailey

holds that Jati is the main sociological referent of the word

'caste'. He says, "(Jati) meeting all the criteria suggested

by Nadel for the recognition of social stratification. These

groups were exhaustive, since everyone belonged to a caste:

They were exclusive, since no one belonged to morethan one

caste. Caste were groups, in that members not only had common

attributes but interacted with one another in a way that they

interacted with no member of another group. The castes were

ranked, and finally they were organically related so as to

form a system.

A recruitment is by birth into the caste. Everyone, in

normal circumstances is born into one or another caste and stays

in it for life."

Bailey further points out three aspects of caste activities: (1) There are those activities which segregate castes from one another and define them as distinct groups. In a village the difference of caste is to some extent marked by residential segregation, each of the larger castes at least, and always the Untouchables, having their ward or street.

(2) Interdependence of castes: This rests on division of labor. First, there are tasks which can be performed by only one caste. Secondly, castes form a system because each caste has a differential access to political power. There is concentration of force in the hands of one caste.

(3) The third aspect of caste activities is hierarchy. Hierarchy of arrangement is directly dependent on economic and political power. (Bailey 1963).

On the basis of above concepts Bailey considers two common kind of definitions of Caste: Caste as rigid social stratification: Under this definition caste is seen as social class system. The rank is ascribed at birth. There is no role for personal achievement. Mobility is not existent.

Caste as religious phenomenon: Dumond and Pocock hold that in the caste system we have to do with religious ideas connected with purity. They suggest that the caste system

becomes clear when we realize that it is related to religious
conceptions and these religious conceptions are apprehended by
purity. It is above all the religious ideas rather than eco-
nomic values that establish the rank of each group. But on
the basis of empirical evidence we can say that economic values
change rank. The caste which has no financial means to stop
polution can't elevate in rank.

However, for the purpose of our discussion we would
follow the definition of caste as given in Indian Census Re-
port of 1911: A caste is

> an endagamous group or collection of such groups bearing
> a common name and having the same traditional occupations,
> who are so linked together by these and other ties, such
> as the tradition of a common origin and the possession of
> the same tutelary deity, and the same social status, cere-
> monial observances and family priests, that they regard
> themselves and are regarded by others as forming a single
> homogeneous community (Indian Census Report 1911: 367).

The outstanding features of the caste system may
briefly be described as follows: Firstly, those belonging to
it may marry only within the limits of their own caste;
secondly they eat only such food as has been prepared by a
member of the same caste or--in accordance with carefully pre-
scribed rules--of a recognized higher caste; thirdly, they
believe themselves to be polluted through contact with, and
sometimes even through the approach of, members of a lower

caste, and restore their Levitical purity by means of elaborate ablutions and other ceremonies; fourthly they are bound by heredity to one occupation and one form of religion and are expelled from the caste if they change their religion. Besides these fundamental characteristics, recent studies on caste system have shwon that castes are inter-dependent, yet they are generally dissatisfied with their position in the social hierarchy. This is evident from the remarks of Turner in Census of India 1931 for the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh: "The opportunity of the Census was seized by all but the highest castes to press for recognition of social class to secure if possible, a step upwards in the social ladder" (Census of India 1931 United Provinces of Agra and Oudh: 529).

In Uttar Pradesh, the highest caste are in the order of Brahman, Ksatriya or Rajput and Vaish. Brahman are Khattris who claim Rajput descent. Below them are Banias who are merchants, and Halwai, confectioner who are placed in a high grade of purity. Further come those castes from the hands of some or all members a high caste Hindu can accept water. They are Gujar, who keep cattle, sell milk and butter; Ahir who are also cowherds; Kurmi or Kunbi and the Mali and Kachhi who grow vegetables. Below these are a group of castes whom the orthodox Hindus may not touch but from whose hands water can be

drunk. They are Bhars, Banjaras, Tharus. Lower to these are Kalwar who distill liquor, Teli or oilman. Below these come Chamars, carriers of dead cattle and leather tanner. The last two groups in the social scale whom no Hindu will touch are Dhanuk, Dosadh, Kori and Pasi and the lowest are Bhangi, sweeper and Dom, scavanger.

There are also some castes which are engaged with village industries. The highest in the list are perhaps those connected with metals. The Sonar, goldsmith, and those who make copper utensils. Lohar, smith, and Barhai, carpenter are in a grade lower to goldsmith and coppersmith. In the second lower grade come Kumahar or potter and weaver. The Dhobi or washerman who washes foul linen and especially of women at parturition is considered as Untouchable and of no estimation.

The population of scheduled caste is 15,399,881 of which 14,332,181 live in rural areas and 1,067,700 in urban (India 1961: 99).

Muslim society is also divided into castes. According to the census returns of 1931, the following are the major Muslim castes which have been arranged by Ansari in the following order:

I. Ashraf: Sayyad
                        Shaikh
                        Mughal
                        Pathan

II.	... ...	Muslim Rajput
III.	Clean Occupational Castes:	Julaha - weaver
		Darzi - tailor
		Qassab - butcher
		Nai or Hajjam - barber
		Kabariya or Kunjra - greengrocer
		Mirasi - musician
		Kumhar - potter
		Manihar - bracelet-maker
		Dhuniya - cottoncarder
		Fàqir - beggar
		Teli - oilpresser
		Dhobi - washerman
		Gaddi - grazier, milk-man
IV.	Unclean Castes:	Bhangi - sweeper

Thus we notice,

in both caste systems that of the Hindu and that of the Muslim, the ideal castes are those which are at the top. Among Hindus these are the Brahmans while among Muslims these are Ashraf. The lower ranks in both the systems, instead of getting nearer to their parallel caste ranks, almost always looked upward in the social scale. The Brahmans have always been the ideal for all the lower Hindu ranks; the Ashraf, on the other hand, dominated the thoughts of the lower Muslim strata (Ansari 1960: 67).

In conclusion, we may say that the foundations of caste system lay in social distance, vertical as well as horizontal. Each group (caste) is an exclusive social unit which almost always looks upward in the social scale--toward the ideal top-ranking castes. A low caste Hindu attempts to give up his traditional practices and to acquire those of the higher Hindu castes; a low caste Muslim has always higher castes as his ideal.

According to accepted theories of social distance, if there is great hatred between two groups (castes), they prefer to avoid each other (Ogburn and Nimkoff 1950: 266). It may therefore be surmised that the need for a rise in society and for avoiding the pressures of high castes, persons in the lower castes and Untouchables accepted conversions to Islam, Christianity and now to Buddhism.

A word in passing need to be mentioned about certain ideas regarding pollution and purity. The ideas regarding pollution and purity are cardinal to Hinduism. There are no doubt differences between the various regions and castes in the rules regarding pollution, but everywhere they cover a large sector of life. Intercaste relations are governed by ideas of pollution. There are many kinds of restrictions between castes--on the free acceptance of food and drink, on intermarriage and sex relations, on touching or going near a member of another caste, etc., and they all relate to pollution. It is this notion of pollution in Hinduism which for many centuries kept the outcastes and Untouchables under subjection of high castes. Before the concerted efforts of humanitarian leaders such as Gandhi and Ambedkar and before the Act of 1949 for the abolition of Untouchability, the economic, social and cultural condition of these outcastes

was very deplorable.

Aside from the discussion of the caste and outcaste, a description of ideologies, institutions and way of life of the people is necessary to complete the picture of society and culture in Uttar Pradesh.

Ideologies and customs

Hinduism and the caste system have reacted to major social forces during the past few centuries. The Renaissance of Hinduism has resulted many reforms in the Hindu social order. Contact with Islam and with Christianity--from which it is not easy to separate contact with British--produced a revolution in Hinduism. Sikhism and the Arya Samaj in North India developed as a counter-challenge to Islam. Christianity as the conversion of Hindus to the Christian religion further gave vigor to the Arya Samaj movement. Many members of the Jat caste embraced Sikhism and some Untouchable Chamars also entered the Sikh group in Uttar Pradesh. As a result of Arya Samaj activities, during the past few decades, however, some Christian converts returned to their original castes. The outcaste reform movements and Untouchability Act have opened opportunities among depressed castes for education, employment and for an improved social intercourse with other castes. Industrial development has led the Untouchables to find job opportunities in urban factories; high caste and low caste work together in factories. The changes which are taking place, since Independence, in the three chief carriers of tradition--village, caste and joint family--might affect Hinduism and society to a considerable extent in times to come.

Despite change, there has always remained a tendency to recover and reinterpret India's traditional culture. In such circumstances it is important to visualize the basic conditioning factors that ruled not only the earlier phases of Indian culture and civilization, but have gone so deep into the social psychology of Indians that they continue to dominate their life and conduct, in a large measure, even to this day. The Hindu Dharma-Sastra and other scriptural literature of the Hindus deals with what ought to be the way of life of an individual. Most of these basic ideas have been very widely held by all Hindus--the high caste as well as the low caste, the rich as well as the poor, the learned as well as the lay, the village folk as well as the urban dwellers.

The Hindu doctrines of varna, asrama, karma and maya convey that the keynote in life is the renunciation of the material. This idea is more characteristic of ancient than of modern India. With the achievement of Independence, the interest in revival of India's traditional culture has become strong. The revival has affected Uttar Pradesh too.

Since the present study deals with conversion and acculturation of Christians which occurred during a long period of time, we would confine ourselves to some major customs and ideologies which have continued in the society. Also, since

most of the converts of the Christian mass movements of the

closing nineteenth and early twentieth century came from rural

Untouchables, we would lay stress more on the way of life of

those rural Untouchables.

The peasants! houses are made of mud or wattle and dab.

The doors are of rudest kind and the roof was sometimes

thatched, sometimes tiled, sometimes formed of beams resting

on walls which supported a layer of hardened clay. The huts

of the Untouchable are still ruder. The roof may be covered

with straw, reeds, or sugar cane leaves resting on light

rafters or bamboos. There is generally no wooden door. They

usually offer no facilities for the isolation of the sexes.

The Untouchables, Chamars and Bhangis, live outside the village

site. The work of women among the Untouchables in rural areas

may be divided into three classes: independent labor, work

which is supplementary to the husband's and, lastly, that which

is common to both sexes. The Chamars traditionally remove the

dead cattle, tan leather, and make shoes, but principally they

work as laborers in the fields. The Bhangi sweepers and Doms,

besides removing night soil and cleaning the villages and

towns, make the coarse bamboo matting, fans and basketry.

The low castes and Untouchables traditionally depend

for their livelihoods on the Jajmani system. At each harvest

the landlord or cultivator gives a certain amount of grain to members of low and Untouchable castes. Some of the low caste and Untouchable people who have migrated to urban centers now work in industrial plants but a great many Chamars still work as shoe repairers, shoe makers, tanners and laborers. Sweepers work as scavangers. Although the idea regarding pollution by the touch of these Untouchables is not rigid in urban Uttar Pradesh, the spirit of untouchability still prevails. Even in the city, the touch of a Sweeper or Dom, is abhored. In the villages contact with Untouchables is still strictly avoided. Untouchables have their own priests; the village Brahmans priests do not serve for them. If they make a sacrifice to some deity of the higher tradition they give their offering to the priest and not directly to the diety in the temple or shrine.

The joint family is the fundamental unit of society and a significant institution. The joint family system is also prevalent among Muslims. In general the joint family consists of members of three or four generations, joined together on the basis of common ancestry and property. It comprises of parents and children, (unmarried daughters) brothers and step-brothers and unmarried sisters, sons' wives and their children and sometimes descendants and collaterals up to many

generations recognizing the patriarchal authority of the eldest
male member, and sharing the same hearth, roof and family re-
sources. The sons earning commonly goes to the family coffers
and if the son is unemployed he is supported by the family
purse. The classical Hindu joint-family system is based on
Grihya-Sutras which not only prescribe ceremonies and rituals
for building a house but dictate the concept of joint family.
The psychological bond between the members of the joint
family is so strong that kinship relationship is put above all
other relationships in loyalty and support. The rural joint-
family fulfills most of the so-called primary and secondary
functions. The economic, social, psychological and physical
needs of the individuals are fulfilled within the family. In
a way, it is both a unit of production and consumption. The
family provides the function of socialization and education of
the children. In most cases the father trains the son for his
occupation. The daughters help their mothers and other women-
folk in looking after the household work. The rural joint
family also provides sucurity to the aged and widows. Widows
continue to live in husbands family after his death.

The customs of marriage differ from caste to caste and
between Hindus and Muslims. According to Hindu religion,

. . .vivah (marriage) is in essence a ritual and a for-
mality, of course very important through which an indi-
vidual has to go, to be able to start his or her life in
the Grihasthasrama, i.e. the householder's life. The
meaning of vivah refers mainly to the ceremony of
'carrying away' the bride to the house of the bridegroom
(vi+vah=to carry). But the term has long since come to
be applied to the whole of the wedlock ceremony (Prabhu
1963: 148-9).

"Among the Hindus, vivaha (marriage) is generally con-

sidered as obligatory for every person" (Prabhu 1963: 149).

Generally, particular care is taken to marry maidens. No

sooner a girl attains puberty, her parents look forward to

marry her soon. The same concept applies to Muslims too.

This may be a cause of early marriages in Indian society.

Due to such reasons, romantic marriages are not found and the

sole responsibility to choose the mate for the girls rests upon

parents and other relatives. Even today, in cities there are

mostly arranged marriages.

In many castes and especially among country people,

"the essential thing is that the marriage ceremong should be

performed:after it is over, the girl remains in her father's

home and does not go to her husband's to live with him until

she attains puberty" (O'Malley 1932: 91). The child marriage

Restraint Act of 1929 (popularly known as the Sarda Act) has

made marriage of boys under eighteen and of girls under four-

teen illegal, but this has not prevented such marriages.

Furthermore, the rules of endogamy and exogamy are very
rigid in Hindu marriages. The endogamy rule states that
marriage must be with a member of the same jati. The rule of
exogamy relates to gotra, pravara and sapinda. These rules of
exogamy have undergone certain changes and modifications yet
they are important in marriageability among the high caste
Hindus. Gotra denotes herd, family or the clan. The gotra of
a family is said to be named after the rishi-ancestor who
founded the family in the immemorial past. The rule per-
taining to gotra in Hindu marriage according to the Grihya-
Sutras and the Dharma-Sastras is "that no man shall marry a
maiden from within his own gotra" (Prabhu 1963: 155). Parvara
means "the list of ancestors" and the pravara rule dictates
that "a man shall not marry a woman who can be traced from
any of the ancestors as mentioned in his pravara" (Prabhu 1963:
156). Sapinda means that "a person shall not marry a woman
who is a sapinda on his mother's side, up to the sixth degree
in ascending or descending line; this means that sapinda
relationship ceases to exist with the seventh degree in as-
cending or descending line between two individuals with
reference to their maternal relatives" (Prabhu 1963: 155).

High caste Hindu marriages depend not only upon
gotra, parvara and sapinda, but also upon astrological

calculations and horoscopes. Such rules are not found among Muslims. Sometimes cross or even parallel cousin marriages are preferred among muslims. But as we have already said before, "the social life of many Muslim groups is honeycombed with Hindu customs and observances"(Titus 1959: 175), so in Muslim marriages especially in Uttar Pradesh villages, Muslims follow customs and rituals customary to the group in which they or their ancestors belonged before conversion. In fact in matters of inheritance, dowry and the like Muslims follow rules to a large extent similar to Hindus (Titus 1959: 175).

Another important thing in Hindu marriage custom is the dowry. Though the dowry system and the prohibition of widow marriage have been removed by law, they still function in the society of Uttar Pradesh. Large amounts are paid to the bridegroom's father by the bride's father. Though widow marriage is permitted by many low castes, but the couple must frequently obtain permission of the caste council, which gives its consent only after it has considered the propriety or advisability of the marriage. Some low castes have tended to give up widow marriage in imitation of the high castes. In some low castes levirate is also found; i.e. the widow marries a brother of her deceased husband (O'Malley 1932: 93).

It is not possible to discuss in detail the various customs, rituals and taboos of Hindus and Muslims from whom converts came to the Christian fold. However, the life of a Hindu, and in a less degree that of a Muslim, is regulated by a code of ritual observances, which are the chief part of his religion.

It is also important to note that Hindus generally give preference to a son over a daughter. "The birth of a son is said to enable one to obtain moksa" (Prabhu 1963: 149). The position of a wife in a Hindu family is considered to be lower than that of a husband. Prabhu writes: "As a wife woman has to subject herself to the authority of her husband." She has to obey her husband and pay respects to all the elders in the family. She will eat only after the husband has eaten.

Before closing an account of society and culture in Uttar Pradesh, a brief discussion of food habits of the people is deemed necessary to complete the picture. "The orthodox Hindu regards the eating of certain kinds of food as something more than the means of obtaining sustenance or of satisfying the appetite" (O'Malley 1932: 103). Food in the Hindu home is almost a sacrament to be celebrated with due ritual. "It is hedged round by restrictions as to the way in which it should be prepared and the company in which it should be eaten"

(O'Malley 1932: 103). Aside from such restrictions, there are certain unwritten laws and traditions as to the kinds of food which may properly be eaten. Some birds and animals are too sacred to be killed or eaten. High Caste Hindus, except the martial Rajput and Jat castes, do not eat meat. Though food habits have changed in recent decades and some high caste Hindus have started eating meat and eggs although beef is still taboo. The low caste and Untouchables eat meat and even beef but they will not kill an ox or a cow, but merely eat the meat of those which have died a natural death. Vaishnavas of Uttar Pradesh are strict vegetarians and abjure intoxicating liquor. Muslims eat meat, beef but do not take pork and liquor.

In sum we may say that society and culture in Uttar Pradesh has a unity and continuity with Indian civilization and is based on distinctive Hindu values. City life is undergoing rapid change and its influence is gradually being felt in the villages where traditional ways and values are still preeminent. Educated people of the higher social strata ᛁ readily adopt elements of Western culture, but the poor and Untouchables are still submerged in their old poverty and poor social status.

CHAPTER III

THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN CONVERSION IN UTTAR PRADESH

History of Christian Missions in Uttar Pradesh
Background of the Converts
Situations of Contact Between Converts and
 Western Culture

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History of Christian Missions in Uttar Pradesh

Unlike Hinduism, both Christianity and Islam are pro-
selytizing religions, which spread in India by the conversion
of Hindus. While the first real contact of Islam with Hinduism
occurred just at the close of the tenth century of our era, the
beginning of Christianity in India goes far back in the fourth
and fifth decades of the first century A. D. "The history of
Christianity in India begins with the establishment of the
Syrian Church in Malabar, which claims . . . to have been
founded by the Apostle St. Thomas . . ." (The Imperial Gazetter
of India 1907: 441; cf. Richter 1908: 27-32; cf. Thomas 1954:
12; cf. Panikkar 1963: 47; cf. Kroeber 1948: 433). Whatever
the truth about St. Thomas, there is little doubt that from
at least the sixth century, there were scattered groups of
Christians in India and a community of Christians in Kerala
(Spear 1963: 31). The writings of the Egyptian and Arabian
traders, and the inscriptions on the tablets found in South
India and deciphered by English and German Indologists, document
this fact (cf. Richter 1908: 30-35).

These early Indian Christians lived in isolation until

the arrival of the Portuguese in the fifteenth century. The Portuguese started a conversion movement in Goa to strengthen their colonial power. But it was of very little importance. In fact, missionaries from abroad were the most influential agents of the spread of Christianity in India and for its inroads on Hinduism.

The history of Christian missions in Uttar Pradesh may be divided into four epochs. The first period which ended with the Mutiny of 1857. The second period which opened in 1857 (when British Crown took over direct rule of India) ended in 1881, when the mission policy changed. "Up to 1881 no serious attempt was made by the missionary societies to work among the depressed classes in the villages" (Bhatty 1938: 7). The third period falls between 1881 and 1930s. The fourth period begins from 1941 onwards. Thus a description of the Christian missions and their activities in these time positions would aptly delineate the salient aspects of conversion in Uttar Pradesh.

Period ending 1857: The Jesuits who had in their ambitious plan the conversion of the whole world, did not confine their activities to south India. During the Mogul period, the tolerance and indifference of Akbar and his successors permitted the foundation of Catholic missions in northern India. By the

close of the eighteenth century, Roman Catholic missionaries
succeeded in making sporadic conversions in some districts of
Uttar Pradesh, especially in Agra and Lucknow (cf. Thomas 1954:
105-149; cf. Jardar 1949: 23). But the real history of missions
in Uttar Pradesh begins with the nineteenth century, when several
Protestant missions entered in various districts of Uttar Pradesh.
In 1814 the ban on Christian missionaries was removed, opening
doors for European and American missionaries. Prior to this,
as a reason of British East India Company's policy to preserve
the indigenous institutions as far as possible, the earlier
Christian missionaries were opposed by the British Trades,
who drew lucrative profits from pilgrim taxes at Hindu and
Muslim shrines. The success of the early missionaries was
handicapped by lack of funds, and, what was worse, by the poor
example of European Christians in India (Thomas 1954: 153).

The missionary societies that had organized in Europe
and America were zealously sending their missionaries to
proclaim the gospel in all the parts of India. Within the
first three decades of the nineteenth century, missionaries
of various European missions and of the American Board had
started laboring in Uttar Pradesh. London missionaries started
their activities at various stations on the banks of the Ganges,
as far up as Mirzapur. Baptist missionaries established

themselves in Banares, Chunar, Agra, and Mathura. Missionaries from the General Assembly of Presbyterian Church in the United States of America and also the Reformed Presbyterian Church began their labors in Saharanpur, Fatehgarh, Farrukhabad, Mainpuri, Agra and Allahabad. Missionaries of the Wesleyan Society also established themselves in several districts of Uttar Pradesh. (Campbell 1852: 32-33).

In contrast to the early Catholic missions, which gave greater importance to formal conversion, the Protestant missions in Uttar Pradesh were more concerned with the dissemination of Christian knowledge. They gave greater importance to street preaching, circulation of the Bible and pamphlets and humanitarian work (cf. Thomas 1954-186).

In the beginning, Christian missionaries concentrated mainly on persons of high caste Hindu and Muslim families who lived in cities. Some Hindus and Muslims of the upper social strata accepted conversion. The attraction and zeal for the new religion which they considered superior to the religion of their forefathers was a reason for their conversion (Bhatty 1938: 2).

A little later many children and families, who were rendered orphan and destitute owing to the repeated outbreak of famines, enteres the Christian ranks. Missions established

orphanages for them at Fatehgarh, Agra, Mirzapur and other places (Bhatty 1938: 2). Along with this, missions established schools and printing press and other small industrial plants in order to give education, and support to these orphans and destitutes (Bhatty 1938: 3).

In 1835, British officialdom introduced English system of education, following Macaulay's recommendations, which opened Christian literature to many Indians who went to educational institutions. It gave opportunities to missionaries to present gospel to many Indians. The beginnings of evangelism in India brought some converts. In 1844 British opened the entire Indian Civil Service (except 750 highest positions) to English-speaking Indians, without distinction of race or creed. Christians educated in mission schools get good positions. This attracted some Indians toward Christian mission schools to attain English education for the new opportunities in the British administration. Although many conversions were made through these schools, there was a substantial dissemination of Christian teaching through this medium.

This early wave of conversion did not last long. Western education and the religious inspiration of Christianity made the intellectuals look for "the secret of new life in the neglected portion of their own religious heritage" (Spear 1963:

183). Many educated Hindus and Muslims started opposing the
activities of the missionaries. As a result, not many converts
were made from high caste Hindu or Muslim families and the
progress of the early Christian missions came to a halt.

Period 1857 to 1881: In 1857 the great Mutiny took
place. Both European and Indian Christians suffered, especially
in the North (Thomas 1954: 192). But the mutiny did not cause
any serious setback to the work of the missionaries. After
1857 when the Crown took over direct rule of India, Queen
Victoria stated a policy of benevolent neutrality toward all
Indian religions; soon the temples and mosques in British hands
were relinquished to Hindu and Muslim corporations. "Since
the Christians had shown themselves loyal to their English
rulers during the uprising, it then became natural for gover-
nors and viceroys to show them increasing favor without the
same anxiety about Hindu disapproval. The firm position of the
British raj gave a halo effect to Western ways, Christians who
adopted them in increasing numbers found their status elevated
in the eyes of many educated Indians" (Schermerhorn 1962).

These factors began to attract the attention of lower
caste persons. "Very soon after the Methodist Episcopal Church
opened work at Moradabad in the United Provinces in 1858, a
group of Mazhabi Sikhs, from a village twenty miles distant

presented themselves as candidates for Christian instruction and baptism" (Pickett 1933: 51). Bishop James M. Thoburn says, "these Mazhabi Sikhs were professional thieves. They were in constant difficulty with the police" (Thoburn, Bishop James M., India and Malaysia: New York The Methodist Book Concern 1896). They probably accepted conversion both in order to get higher status as Christians, and to get some protection from the police. "In 1859 several young men of the Sweeper caste were converted in Budaon District." (Pickett 1933: 51). These converts came as individuals or as families. By 1871 many such groups had begun to ask for baptism. (Bhatty 1938: 7).

Famines occurred at frequent intervals from 1840 to 1881. A famine of intense severity occurred in 1865-67 when 18,000 square miles and 47,500,000 people were seriously affected. Due to this famine a large number of orphans were brought into the Christian orphanages. Another famine occurred in 1873-74 and still another in 1876-78. Millions were rendered homeless and orphans. These orphans and homeless had no alternative but to ask for places in the Christian orphanages. They all thus entered the Christian ranks. Apart from the earlier converts from higher castes, these groups constituted the bulk of the then Christians.

By 1881, the Christian population, including Anglo-
Indians and Europeans, was 74,673. Most of the missions and
their activities were confined to cities. The steeples of the
churches built and maintained on Western pattern could easily
be seen in most of the cities. The converts also lived in
urban areas. These converts, whether in orphanages or in
cities, were in regular contact with the missionaries who
administered the mission work, taught in schools, supervised
the orphanages, preached in churches and streets and managed
the industrial plants. Although actual figures of the increase
in Christian population between 1857 and 1881 are not available,
it is probable that the number of Christians might have increased
between 1871 and 1881. Throughout India, between 1872 and 1901,
the Christian population doubled--from an aggregate of one and
a half million to nearly three million (Imperial Gazetter of
India 1907: 445). On this basis it can be assumed that between
1871 and 1881, an increase in the number of conversions did
take place in Uttar Pradesh. This increase, furthermore was
due to the number of conversions from depressed classes. Thus,
about 1881 these groups started coming into the Church (Bhatty
1938: 7).

Period 1881-1931: Until the year 1881 the number of
Christians in Uttar Pradesh was not very great. But during

1891 to 1931 a very rapid increase took place in the number of Christians. The following Census figures show how rapid growth was during the fifty years:

1881	...	47,673
1891	...	58,518
1901	...	102,955
1911	...	179,694
1921	...	203,179
1931	...	207,879

(From Census of India 1931, United Provinces of Agra and Onah)

TABLE III
Distribution of Christians by Districts in Uttar Pradesh

	1881	1891	1901	1911	1921	1931
Agra	4,997	4,758	5,522	7,229	6,818	8,905
Allahabad	6,079	5,933	6,814	7,055	6,873	7,451
Muttra	338	846	2,262	8,992	6,087	5,675
Cawnpore	3,200	3,036	4,414	5,224	5,929	5,395
Dehra Dun	2,025	2,743	3,134	5,036	5,606	4,820
Farukhabad	826	828	1,128	2,548	3,016	4,246
Mainpuri	146	132	353	2,395	2,935	3,919
Saharanpur	1,793	1,974	2,972	5,548	5,479	3,656
Gorakhpur	993	1,176	1,443	1,608	853	2,365
Benares	1,768	1,364	1,597	1,930	1,857	2,356
Almora	2,393	1,601	1,427	3,315	1,652	2,556
Shahajahanpur	1,408	1,328	1,863	3,954	3,455	1,845

TABLE III Continued

Pilibhit	18	365	1,296	2,085	1,426	1,807
Fyzabad	1,294	1,254	1,502	1,911	1,426	1,754
NainiTal	11	23	1,417	2,413	2,443	1,630
Etawah	158	134	245	693	1,242	--
Moradabad	1,877	3,307	6,103	17,023	16,716	22,836
Aligarh	289	465	5,055	1,147	15,120	18,250
Meerut	4,063	5,435	12,202	18,242	31,119	16,909
Badaun	309	2,581	6,116	11,298	13,136	15,461
Bareilly	23	50	56	115	135	13,804
Lucknow	6,280	5,769	7,297	8,660	7,530	9,772
Etah	117	520	4,365	11,077	12,030	9,356
Bulandshahr	115	210	4,528	10,111	12,411	13,500
Muzafarnagar	54	127	1,402	2,583	6,415	10,156

(From Census of India 1931).

The percentage increase in each of the main religions during the fifty years is also shows as below:

Religion	Percentage Variation 1881-1931
All religions	+10.6
Brahmanic Hindu	+6.7
Muslim	+21.3
Arya	They were not separately tabulated in 1881.
Christian	+330.1
Jain	-15.0
Sikh	+1,176.1

(From Census of India 1931 U.P. Part I, p. 497).

This rapid increase in Christian population between 1881 and 1931 is attributed to the change in policy of the missions (Bhatty 1938:6). From 1881 onwards they concentrated their evangelization activities to the depressed classes in the villages. "When their failure with the higher classes became more and more evident, they diverted their activities to the conversion of the Untouchables and lower castes" (Panikkan 1964:49). Towards the close of the nineteenth century, the concept of the 'White man's burden,' to use Kipling's phrase, prompted the British officials in India to improve the living conditions of the Indians. Roads, Railways, public health, education, canal systems and social reforms were developed. Railways and roads made the rural areas accessible for

missionaries. "During this period oriental scholarship ad-

vanced in Europe and both missionaries and savants began to

take a lively interest in the religious and secular literature

of India.and as a result a better appreciation of Hindus and

Muslims began to gain ground among Europeans" (Thomas 1954:

197). With a better understanding of the Hindus and the needs

of the masses, greater stress was laid by the missionaries on

Christian work. They started dispensaries, hospitals, leper

asylums, widow homes and other activities to help poor and to

improve the lot of the women and depressed classes.

> In 1909 British recognized a series of special claims
> made by religious, caste, and other separate groupings.
> This process gave the leaders of such minority groups (also
> to missionaries) access to positions of prominence and
> authority in the civil service, the army, the railways, the
> communication system, the universities and the provincial
> councils. Christians trained in Mission Schools achieved
> higher literacy rates (in English) than most other groups
> and under the communal policy gained many high-ranking
> posts" (Schermerhorn 1962).

Thus,

> ...new converts came to the faith from the peasantry at
> the lowest end of the caste hierarchy--illiterate, landless,
> poor and servile. The European missionary or priest be-
> came a magical figure who could not only bring assurance
> of supernatural salvation but also deliverance from hunger,
> poverty, and exploitation. Most of all, he brought sym-
> pathy for the plight of the outcaste--a feature as rare
> as it was unexpected" (Schermerhorn 1962).

The missionary's preaching and conversion activities

created an increased discontent among the Untouchables who

remained Hindus and very clearly observed the social rise of others who had been converted. As a result,many discontented Untouchables,sought for conversion. This was quite normal in the light what Barnett has said, "The disgruntled, the maladjusted, the frustrated and the incompetent are preeminently the acceptors of cultural innovations" (Barnett 1941: 171).

The new converts from the depressed castes were removed to the mission compounds or walled areas surrounding the church or bungalow of the missionary. They were given new Christian names by the missionaries--"a symbol of security to set (them) off from the surrounding Hindu community" (Schermerhorn 1962). They were provided simple jobs by the missionaries or in the institutions and industrial plants opened by them. They were given instructions in religion and their children were given opportunities to achieve education in mission schools. In some sense, "the missionary became the 'father and mother' and in the early stages not only provided, but was expected to provide food, clothing, job, education, and medical care" (Schermerhorn 1962).

These situations of security and prestige extended by the missionaries to the converts, attracted the Untouchables in large numbers, sometimes a whole village, caste, large family clan or tribe, to accept baptism. It was an opportunity for

them to satisfy their material needs, to get some relief from

the attitude of the higher castes toward them, and to rise in

the social hierarchy all at the same time. During these years,

in order to keep up with the needs of the converts and to con-

tinue mass movements, the missionaries directed more and more

appeals to the Churches in Europe and America to provide ever

increasing funds to support schools, orphanages, hospitals,

agriculture training centers, industrial institutions, and

Churches in India. Appeals were also made for personnel, and

the additional requirements of the staff, directors, supervisors,

doctors, nurses and other professionals were met from abroad.

Only the intermediate and lower positions were filled from

the ranks of the Indian Christians. Therefore, the economic

power of the mission sending countries was a great factor in

supporting the work of missions. (Davis 1939: 1).

Under such circumstances, large groups of Untouchables

were converted to Christianity during this epoch of mission

work in Uttar Pradesh. A rise of 330 percent in the Christian

population during 1881 to 1931 was caused due to coming in of

large converts from Bhangi, Dom, Chamar and Mazhbhi Sikh castes.

Period 1941 onwards: Beginning with the 1930's, a series

of crises befell the Christian missions and their activities

of conversion. The economic depression in America and Europe

in 1930's brought severe reductions in the funds allotted to
missions for their evangelical and other humanitarian purposes.
Many institutions closed their doors while still more reduced
staff, lowered salaries and decreased their services. This
had a direct effect on the activities of missions and con-
version. Many converts could not get support from the missions,
lost jobs, left the mission compounds, homes and orphanages.
They were thrown back on direct contacts with village and their
old meanial professions, their lot became unhappy, many left
the services of the Church. Some returned to their original
castes. Many villages were left without ecclesiastical leader-
ship. Missionary efforts to make converts in the villages
were hampered. Therefore converts could not be made in the
same number as before.

On the other hand, by this time the various Hindu re-
form movements had gained momentum. The Arya Samaj vehemently
opposed Christian missionary activities. Aryas made attempts
to induce Christian converts from Hinduism to return to their
former religion (Turner in Census of India 1931, U. P. p. 501).
The various caste sabhas made attempts to improve the social
conditions of the respective depressed castes. As the Arya
Samaj rose in importance, educational, social and other acti-
vities like those of Christians were started by them. The Samaj

began to permit the remarriage of widows, a practice which was finally adopted by some orthodox Hindus as well. Thus as Thomas says, "The Arya Samaj not only started large-scale conversions to Hinduism but vigorously combated the proselytizing activities of Christians and Muslims" (Thomas 1954: 222).

Two other important factors impinged upon the activities of the missionaries. Gandhi's fast and newly launched campaign for the removal of untouchability had a far-reaching effect on the conversion of Untouchables. The movement to abolish caste and to improve the social conditions of the Untouchables brought new changes in the life and ways of Untouchables. Some changes also took place in the religious beliefs of the lower castes. The lower castes and Untouchables began to give greater attention on the gods of the Great Tradition. (A detailed account of this change starting from 1931 is given in Census of India 1931, U. P., Part I in Appendix E.)

The upsurge of national sentiments under the leadership of Gandhi and other Congress leaders also affected the missionary activities. "The anomalous condition of Indian nationalism in the 1940's deepened a number of internal divisions within the Christian Community, making it more vulnerable to outside attack. There was tendency among Hindus and Muslims to look upon Indian Christians as denationalised and drawing

inspiration from Europe and European missionaries. After the death of the Extremists' greatest leader, Tilak, in 1920, the Congress had come under Gandhi's uniquely effective control. Gandhi's Independence movement was in a larger sense an appeal to peasant population in India's 700,000 villages which helped in awakening masses to the concept of democracy. Since the Christians were somewhat less than wholehearted in their support of this movement due to the influence of missionaries, who were pro-British or at least had a neutral attitude. Christians were taunted: "They are not true Indians." Thus in the eyes of many Indians, Christian missionaries and their benevolent activities began to take on a new color.

World War II proved to be an added blow. Many missionaries left the mission stations and the replacements were severely restricted. Industrialization in urban centers began to increase rapidly. Migration from villages to urban areas opened ways for Untouchables to find earning avenues in urban industries.

The movement of resurgent Hinduism, the desire for national unity, and the example of the organization and solidarity of Christian community, created among the educated classes the idea of a Hindu community. There are other factors behind the development of communal feelings among both Hindus and

Muslims, but the point is that due to the growth of communal sentiments, Christians began to find difficulties in employment, specifically in non-Christian institutions (Bhatty 1938: 19). The missionaries who were once influential lost much of their importance. (Bhatty 1938: 14).

After Independence and the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947, the Constitution of the newly independent India, in 1949 legally abolished Untouchability. The Untouchables became members of the unhampered majority. While communal feelings did exist under the British rule, after British control ceased, these feelings became much more pronounced. "Long nursed grievances mushroomed into demands for revenge, and although the Muslims received the lion's share, Christians were the target for much of its deflected forces as well" (Schermerhorn 1962). These developments not only revealed various prejudices against Christians, but restricted missionary activities and conversions. Conversion was regarded as a kind of anti-national act. Even today, the Untouchables whose economic and social condition has not markedly improved, have become averse toward Christianity. Many benevolent services which Christian missions extended are being provided by government, religious and other private organizations. Today, special legislation of the government makes available many special

benefits (including scholarships) to Harijans (Untouchables).
On the other hand, the urban influences have resulted in
"Traditionalization" as well as "Modernization" of Untouchables.
The Untouchables who live in cities or who visit cities, are
becoming "Sanskritized," finding new meanings for themselves
in the tenets of the Great Tradition of Hinduism. (Cohn 1963:
53-77).

In conclusion, it can be said that various religious,
economic, social and political developments of the epoch from
1941 to the present have created a situation unfavorable for
conversion. Hence each census from 1941 onward shows a de-
cline in the Christian population of Uttar Pradesh. Since
Independence, the evangelical activities of the missionaries
and Christian church have been curbed. The number of mission-
aries has been considerably reduced and the Christian church
which developed among the earlier converts has been labelled
Indian, and provides for the spiritual communal, social and
cultural needs of the Christians.

Background of the Converts

We have noticed from the history of Christian missions that in the initial stages of mission activities in Uttar Pradesh, converts were drawn mainly from high caste Hindu and Muslim families of the upper social strata. A little later, children and families who were rendered orphan and destitute owing to the repeated outbreak of famines, entered the Christian fold. Lastly, the bulk of the adherents came into the Christian ranks from Untouchables (Bhatty 1938: 2, 7).

The contemporary Christians in Uttar Pradesh (leaving aside those who have immigrated from other states) are thus descendants of these three groups. It is quite likely that the orphans and destitutes who became Christians belonged to the lower economic and social strata. Thus only a small number of early converts came from prosperous high caste Hindu and Muslim families; most converts were Untouchables before accepting Christian baptism. Furthermore, it appears that only a very small number of high caste Muslims entered the Christian fold. Joardar has shown in his study of Lucknow Christians, that 81 percent of the converts in Lucknow are of Hindu origin. He also says that if tribal people are taken as a lower branch of Hinduism the percentage would be still higher (Joarder 1949: 457). Thus, not many converts came from Muslim background.

A few reasons for the small number of Muslim converts may be advanced: First, Christianity and Islam are close to one another in ethical values. Second, there is a deep-seated conviction among Muslims of the superiority of Islam and all that it represents. It gives the "conviction that Islam is the last, the crowning revelation of Allah through the 'Seal (or Last) of the Prophets', Mohammad the 'Best of the Prophets', the founder of 'the best of all Communities'" (Kraemer 1960: 107). Third, Muslims lived for a long time in sullen aloofness from British and Western system of education--treated the British rule as a curse--carried the idea that the other books of Revelation (kitab) were corrupted. This kept them not only far from British administrators and Western education but also from missionaries and their propagation. It was Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan (d. 1898) who after the Mutiny launched a reformation movement among Muslims. This directed Muslims toward Western education and employment in the British bureacracy, as well as chaning their attitudes toward other religions.

The high caste Hindus and Muslims, who in the earlier years of mission work in Uttar Pradesh had embraced Christianity, were those who had been most influenced by Western culture and thought. Some of them became Christians being impressed by Christian ethics. Some held positions in the British

government and accepted conversion to gain favor of their masters.

However, here we are concerned with delineating the economic and social background of these two groups, high caste Hindus and Muslims and low and Untouchable castes as this background is relevant in understanding the change that took place after their conversion and contact with Western missionaries.

Hindus and Muslims of the upper social strata: Almost all of the high caste Hindus and Muslims who accepted conversion in the early days of mission work in Uttar Pradesh belonged to the cities. They were landowners, teachers and writers, traders and businessmen and occupied important positions in the British government. They were educated and economically well-to-do. They lived in large houses, were rigid in cultural traditions, and believed in pomp and show. They kept their women in seclusion and did not allow them to work out of doors.

The Untouchables and low castes: A large majority of converts came from this group. Most of them lived in the countryside. They characteristically lived on sites outside villages. Most of them were Charmars, Bhangi and Doms. "The castes within which Christian mass movements have taken place

are, with few exceptions, very poor" (Pickett 1933: 89). Their

economic and social status was fixed by their birth in the

given caste. Wiser states in his famous work The Hindu Jajmani

System that in a Hindu village in North India, each indivi-

dual has a fixed economic and social status, established by

his birth in a given caste. Although specific data about their

income and family expense are not available, but it is evident

that they depend mostly on income in kind which they received

from their landlords in form of grain under Jajmani system.

Their money income is very low. The Untouchables raised fowls,

pigs and earned a little cash by selling these and other goods

such as bamboo fans, baskets, shoes and other leather goods.

They sometimes owned plots from one third of an acre to three

acres in size under what is known as Khidmat-maufi which means

free from revenue payments in consideration of service. In

most cases these lands were granted to the ancestors of those

who held them (mostly Sweeper castes) (Pickett 1933: 108).

Some Untouchables, especially Chamars, were made to do com-

pulsory labor. Landowners, the police, petty officials, and

bullies in the higher castes used to compel weak members of

the depressed classes to work for them either without pay or

at less than the prevailing rates of pay. These forms of com-

pulsory labor caused other damage beside loss of wages; they

exercised a corroding influence upon the victims' self-respect and faith in the possibility of improving their condition. Besides, under the jajmani system, they were bound to an economic and social status that was in many respects, oppressive. The Sweepers earned their living by cleaning cesspools and privies, but at times they were in prolonged unemployment, which was even worse. The Sweeper family in return for their services, received stale bread every day from every family for which they had worked. When their well-to-do jajmans had feasts on festivals and other occasions, they received food of a quality that they were never able to buy or prepare in their homes. The Sweeper women who worked as midwives or basketmakers received little extra income in goods from their jajmans. In such circumstances the Untouchables were generally under-nourished.

The Untouchables had many social disabilities which were the outgrowth of the idea that they are unclean. Workers in raw leather along with scavengers were everywhere accounted unclean, because they worked with the bodies of dead animals and with human excreta. Leaving aside Hindus and Muslims who treated the Untouchables as not worthy of contact, the British army officers also hesitated to employ members of the sweeper caste as cook. Some sweepers, in order to seek employment

with British officers, conveniently called themselves as Christians (Pickett 1933: 62).

The social disabilities of Untouchables begin with residential segregation. Castes accounted unclean were restricted to areas allotted to them at one edge of, or a little apart from, the village. Their closest neighbours were generally lowest of the "clean castes." They could not rent or build houses where the "clean Hindu castes" lived. They had severe restrictions of buying and selling. They had to stand outside the shop or at a distance from the seller. The seller would throw the commodity on the street from where the Untouchable would pick up or would throw to him from a distance. They were discriminated as buyers: they must wait, standing off to one side, until customers of other castes have completed their purchases. They could not go up to examine the commodity as others did. Merchants often took advantage of this disability and sold them inferior or damaged goods at high prices. Once they touched an article, it was contaminated and could not be returned. These restrictions are still generally and severely enforced against Sweepers in Uttar Pradesh.

Another disability applied to them, was restrictions as sellers of food products. Those who kept cattle, could not sell milk or milk products to other castes. The Untouchables

had service deprivations. The washermen, barbers who served

other castes did not serve the Untouchables, especially

sweepers. The Hindu seamster sewed for the Untouchable only

if the cloth was given by the merchant, without the Untouchable

putting his hand upon it.

Few disabilities of Untouchables were as harsh as the

refusal to draw water from village wells used by other castes.

Even Chamars and Sweepers in Uttar Pradesh did not share wells.

The Untouchables were nowhere provided with school privileges.

They were not expected to learn to read. The dominant Hindu

and Muslim high castes on the other hand enforced attitudes

of inferiority upon them. As members of Untouchable classes

they were expected to follow a code of behavior which restricted

them to do anything which would raise them above their appointed

station in life. He was not supposed to dress in a style su-

perior to that of his status nor his wife was supposed to

adorn herself with ornaments after the fashion of the high

caste women. His house should not be bigger or better than

other caste people of the village. He was not supposed to

own land and cultivate independently. He was not supposed to

take any new remunerative services except those which were

customary. In short, to be an Untouchable was to undergo all

sorts of humiliations, inconveniences, and oppressions.

Some of these disabilities still persist with Untouch-
ables more especially with Sweepers despite numerous legis-
lations and reform movements. In considering the aspects of
conversion and acculturation. The socio-economic background
of the bulk of the converts is to be kept in view to trace the
changes that have taken place in their economic, social and
cultural patterns. The same has been touched in the next
chapter on aspects of acculturation.

Situations of contact between converts and Western culture

The history of Christian missions and conversion shows
clearly that Western missionaries were the most influential
agents of the spread of Christianity in Uttar Pradesh as in
other parts of India. It is true that missionaries did not
make India more than a temporary home; with few exceptions,
they came for a few years and were replaced by others from
Europe or America. This provided the Christian converts with
regular and prolonged opportunities of contact with Western
missionaries.

For the most part, however nineteenth century missionaries
were not merely other-worldly and apocalyptic, but were narrowly
ethnocentric. They did not bring with them only the message
of the Christian god, but western ideas and western way of life.

It is not a coincidence that the greatest mission-sending
nations have also been the nations possessing the greatest
store of material resources and the highest standards of
living. This circumstance has exerted an incalculable in-
fluence upon the growth of the younger churches and the
nature of the Christian movement that has arisen in their
lands. The financial strength which supports the evange-
listic purpose of the older churches not only has made it
possible to send tens of thousands of missionaries to the
non-Christian countries, but has enabled them to be main-
tained in countries of low economic levels on a scale of
living, housing and expenditure approximating to that of
their homelands.
* * *
The financial resources of the West have made it possible
for mission programmes and institutions to be planned upon
a Western scale of values and standards.
* * *

> The missionary begins his work in the new field as a
> creature of an alien environment, with alien point of view,
> assumptions and standards. The conception of the church
> he has come to develop inheres in his Western environment.
> It is difficult for him to visualize any other type of
> church--building organization, polity, program or maintenance
> --than that in which he has been trained. (Davis 1939: 1,
> 2, 37).

The mission houses with all the material elements brought from the West showed a new mode of life that was Western. Even the religious organization of the Indian Christians, from the very inception of mission work, has been a faithful reproduction of the Western practices. The type of Christian societies and institutions which prevail in Europe and America have been almost bodily transplanted on the soil of Uttar Pradesh. The church with its slanting roof, and tapering steeple, the cross surmounting it, the nave, aisle, altar, vestry, pews and even cushions for kneeling are visible symbols of the Western church. The hymns are not only Western in spirit and composition but they are given to the Indian Christians in the original rhythm and meter through the medium of Urdu and Hindi. They are again, sung in the Western tune to the accompaniment of Western music poured out by the pealing organ. The prayers are offered in the same Western fashion, people are asked to come to the altar in the same manner as in the Western countries. The bread and wine at the time of the Mass, Eucharist or Communion

are served in the same fashion as they are done in Europe and
America. The curate, rector, deacon, archdeacon, bishop and
archbishop or the elder, presbyter or moderator or the pastor,
district superintendent, bishop, annual conference and general
conference--in fact the entire hierarchy of Western Christian
organization has been reproduced by the Christian missions in
Uttar Pradesh.

It is needless to cite the critical remarks of the
Indian leaders about the Western nature of Christian missions.
However, the above facts amply support the fact that entering
the Christian ranks meant a continuing contact with Western
missionaries and thereby, with a Western way of life.

Such contacts occurred through various circumstances
and in varied situations. In the early stages of the mission
activities, when high caste Hindus and Muslims from upper
social strata accepted conversions, they lived for weeks with
missionaries. The reasons were evident. The mission houses
stood for security. When missionaries first came to the cities
in Uttar Pradesh, they chose to live near the British officers
with whom they fraternized. When the ban on missionaries was
removed, large grants of land near the British officers' houses
were made to the missionaries by the government. The Munici-
palities gave the missionary institutions lower rates for water

and electricity. It is no wonder that mission property grew to enormous size under such conditions. Thus the mission house was a kind of a fort for the new convert to save him in the early days of his conversion from the hard criticisms and pressures of the neighboring Hindus and Muslims.

Living for several weeks with missionaries after baptism was intended to be a source of Christian fellowship for the new convert, to impart to him the deeper truths of the faith, and to make him firm in his baptism. In some instances where only one or few members of a large joint family, attracted by the teachings of new religion, were converted, they were then not accepted by their family. Also, returning to their "heathen environment" just after accepting baptism was considered dangerous for the new convert. The early high caste Hindu and Muslim converts were generally educated, belonged to the upper socioeconomic strata, and occupied high positions in the government or were traders or teachers. By having them stay in their mission houses for many days after their baptism, missionaries tried to establish congenial relations between themselves and the natives. Hindus did not like to associate with the beef-eating Westerners; Muslims avoided them as pork-eaters.

When the orphans and destitutes of the repeated famines were brought to the Christian orphanages, they came into regular contact with missionaries, who supervised the orphanages, taught in schools, preached in churches, and managed the industrial plants. Most of the orphan girls were trained by missionary women. They were shown how to fix the drawing and dining rooms, do the bed, plan a meal, wash dishes, stitch dresses, and even polish furniture. In some cases, young men converts were married to such girls.

When the bulk of the converts began to come from Untouchable castes a new situation of contact arose. To remove the new convert from ostracism or persecution in their own villages, converts were often moved into mission compounds, the walled areas surrounding a church or bungalow, and provided with simple jobs. This segregating process of "mission compound living" brought the converts into an isolated social system. Being cut off from the social and occupational ties of his former village, and his old skills turned unuseable the low-caste convert became completely dependent on the missionary. Many of these converts worked as servants for the missionaries. The missionary became the "father and mother" and was expected to provide food, clothing, jobs, education, and medical care. The missionaries who directed more and more

appeals to the Christian Churches in Europe and America for funds, not only received support in money but in consumer goods to help the converts. Thus, the converts kept themselves in frequent contact with the missionaries and were regularly given consumer goods for their needs. Living in the mission compound or walled areas surrounding the missionary's bungalow made the convert acquainted with the Western style of living. The missionary's dress, food, his mission house with solid Western styled furniture, spacious roominess, flowing gardens outside, the motor car in the garage attached to it, many time-saving devices and many gadgets brought from the West, were perceived day after day by the convert.

Church worship also provided the converts with situations in which he came in contact with the missionaries and Western type of church organization. The converts heard the good word from the missionary for an hour or two but they really got acquainted with the western ideas, Western religious organization, and Western order of worship which had been duplicated in the Uttar Pradesh churches.

In mission schools, children of the converts were taught Bible along with other subjects. The manager, principal, and some teachers were Western missionaries. The whole environment of the school, its discipline, its maintenance was done according

to the style.of European schools. In church as well as in
schools, the teachings of Christianity developed in the con-
verts a sense of equality--that all men are created equal--
which was alien to them while they were within the pale of
Hindu social organization.

To sum up, it can be said that the religious change
placed the Christian converts in situations wherein he found
himself in contact over a long period with Western missionaries
and their culture. How have these contacts impinged upon the
life and ways of urban Christians in Uttar Pradesh? The next
chapter deals with this question.

CHAPTER IV

ASPECTS OF ACCULTURATION

Conscious attempt to Westernize

Cultural Patterns of Converts

Extent of Acculturation

CHAPTER IV

ASPECTS OF ACCULTURATION

Conscious attempt to Westernize

The Christian converts who came from amongst Hindus, Muslims and in large numbers, from Untouchables, were fused into a homogeneous community through the activities of the Christian missions and the religious organization of the Christian faith. The earlier converts and their descendants consciously acquired cultural patterns akin to the Western culture of the missionaries. The contemporary Christians in Uttar Pradesh, thus form a homogeneous community with a cultural pattern divergent in many respects from that of the traditional culture of other members of the society.

The contact with Western missionaries and the religious organization of the converts based on a Western pattern have contributed a great deal toward the formation of these cultural patterns. They have adopted many traits of the Western culture. What has led them to assimilate the material elements of missionaries' culture? This demands some explanation. Anthropological observers have noticed the disorganizational effects of missionary enterprise in certain civilizations and simple societies (see, for example, Buck 1939; Junod 1935: 213-228) but have given little importance to factors which

induce a group of converts to assimilate into the way of life
of the missionaries. In the following lines an attempt has
been made to trace the circumstances which led the converts to
adopt the cultural traits of Western missionaries.

In the last chapter we have sketched the contact
situations between early converts and Western missions. In
the initial stages, when the early converts lived for many
weeks with the Western missionaries in their homes or when
during repeated famines, the orphans and destitutes were
carried to mission orphanages, the phase of acculturation that
may be called 'guided acculturation.' Immediately after,
came another phase when the converts consciously borrowed the
cultural traits of the missionaries. It was due to certain
personal need dispositions of the converts.

> Need dispositions,...are tendencies to orient and act
> with respect to objects in certain manners and to expect
> certain consequences from these actions....it is a ten-
> dency to orient and select with an eye to the future, as
> well as with an eye to immediate gratification (Parsons
> and Shils 1951: 114, 115).

Rapoport has shown in his study of "Changing Navaho Religious
Values" that need dispositions are correlated with value shift.
He has analyzed the changing cultural forms of Navaho re-
sulting from the contact of Christian missions in terms of
need dispositions (Rapoport 1954).

The need dispositions of the Christian converts in Uttar Pardesh resulted in assimilating the way of life of the Western missionaries. The following need dispositions have been selected to trace the process of conscious acculturation:

    1. Need for identification with the dominant (White and Western missionary) group

    2. Need for affiliation

    3. Need for economic dependency on Western missionaries

    4. Need for new identity

    5. Need for recognition

    6. Need for prestige

1. Need for identification with the dominant (White and Western missionary) group: Before 1844 no Indian was allowed in the bureaucracy, but when the British opened the Indian Civil Service to English-speaking Indians, "without distinction of race or creed," new opportunities arose for the Christians. After the mutiny of 1857, when the crown took over the direct rule of India, governors and viceroys began to show Christians increasing favor, since Christians had remained loyal to their English rulers during the uprising. So, the Christians became increasingly attached to the colonial

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power. The firm position of the British raj created a halo

effect for Western ways, therefore, the earlier converts

who came from high caste Hindu and Muslim families adopted

the material elements of the Western missionaries' culture.

They desired to identify themselves with the British. They

were educated, had good economic means and some won high

positions in the British officialdom. An increasing number

of them found their status elevated in the eyes of many edu-

cated Indians.

2. Need for affiliation: The religious organization of the

Indian Christians was based on Western patterns. The earlier

high caste converts had already adopted many traits of the

Western missionaries. The latter converts who entered the

Christian fold by accepting baptism, realised that in order

to affiliate with the Christian community they had to fuse

into the Western way of life, which had already been adopted

by the earlier converts. As Joardar has said of the Lucknow

Christian, "Conversion to him [meant] acceptance of Western

style of living" (Joardar 1949: 111). Joardar received the

following replies from some of his respondants when he asked

why the members of Indian Christian community westernized their

style of life:

We adopted the religion of the Western people. In accepting the religion we adopted the Western mode of living. We found that we could not live up to the expectation of the Western missionaries if we did not practice what they practiced.

We found that Christianity was the religion of the dominant people of the world, the British and the Americans. We accepted the religion of the people who enjoyed great prestige. We adopted the mode of the Western people for the sake of prestige.

We adopted the Western mode of living because we found it reasonable and intellectually satisfying.

We westernized our life and attitude for three reasons: 1) it was profitable, 2) it looked honorable to us, and 3) it was significant and symbolic of our new mode of life as Christians. People knew us at sight when we dressed as Europeans. And we enjoyed at the instance of the missionaries to advertise our distinctiveness. We felt also that we stood to gain by it. And we kept up the difference.

Christianity came from the West with Western missionaries who enjoyed enormous prestige as representatives of a powerful and dominant civilization. The acceptance of the religion as well as the mode of their living brought prestige, profit a sense of newness and fashion to the imitating Indian Christians. It was also symbolic of their new way of life. (Joardar 1949: 460-462).

These statements support that the need for affiliation with the Western religion directed the converts to adopt the mode of Western living.

3. Need for economic dependency on Western missionaries: The earlier converts who entered the Christian ranks depended on Western missionaries not only for the spiritual needs, but for economic and social needs also. As Schermerhorn states, "The

missionary became the 'father and mother'" (Schermerhorn 1962).
This factor of dependency led the new convert to copy the
missionary's mode of life. To quote again from one of Joadar's
respondents:

> We came to Christianity for abundant life. The mission-
> aries who came to us spoke of freedom, freedom from the
> tyranny of landlords, freedom from want, and freedom from
> fear. They told us of joyous living and economic uplift.
> They said they would provide free education to our chil-
> dren and free medical treatment to the people who fell
> ill (Joardar 1949: 446).

In order to gain favors from the missionary, the convert
adopted the mode of life desired by the missionary--this was
similar to the missionary's way of living. He accepted the
Western ways of marriage ceremonies, social organization and
religious performances.

4. Need for new identity: Most of the converts came from
among the Untouchables. Becoming converted, they acquired a
new identity. In order to retain this new identity they
assimilated the Western way of life. They had to keep up
a difference between them and other non-converted Untouchables
and also between them and other caste people of the society.
Westernization helped them to achieve this distinctness.

5. Need for recognition: In order to be recognized as a
Christian, the convert took a Christian name sometimes from
the Bible and sometimes the missionary gave his name or the

name of same other missionary at the time of his baptism.

He also imitated the way of life of a missionary which was

associated with Christian culture. Joardar writes:

> In the early days of the missions when a man came to
> accept Christianity he usually came and lived in the
> spacious mission compound. He was asked to burn the
> bridge behind him and come apart from his family. He
> was told to give up all his old traditions and customs
> and to follow Christian behavior in their place. The
> convert had no other Christian ideal before him beside
> the missionary. So he modelled his social behavior on
> that of the Western missionary . . . . The imitation of
> Christ was thus consummated in the imitation of the mis-
> sionary life (Joardar 1949: 301).

To be recognized as a Christian within the Christian com-

munity and amidst non-Christians was to lead a Western way

of life which was symbolic to Christianity.

6. Need for Prestige: Most of the converts who came from

Untouchables were victims of supression before their conver-

sion. They had lowest economic and social status. Socially

they were segregated from caste Hindus and Muslims. When

they accepted baptism and received help, security, equality

and free social intercourse with missionaries and other

Christians they developed megalomania for prestige. This

prestige they found could be obtained by adopting the Western

way of life. They began to dress like Western missionaries,

to keep their homes on the pattern of missionary homes and

tried to copy everything that was Western. Since Western ways

were given higher prestige, their status was raised and they could mix with people on equal terms. They were even given prestige in the eyes of high caste non-Christians.

Thus, these need dispositions developed an integrated cultural pattern which the subsequent generations of Christians in Uttar Pradesh have reduplicated. Although some changes have taken place during the past few decades, many elements of Western culture are still given great importance. The Western mode of life has become a pattern phenomenon. This development can be seen in the light of the following anthropological concepts:

> Every cultural group, however primitive, tends to channel its own culture building or to elaborate or re-duplicate in building up its trait complexes. Anthropologists have come to regard this channelizing as pattern phenomena (Wissler 1923: 188).

> A culture like an individual is a more or less consistent pattern of thought and action. Within each culture there come into being characteristic purposes not necessarily shared by other types of society. In obedience to these each people further and further consolidate its experience and in proportion to the urgency of the drives the heterogeneous items of behavior take more and more congruous shape (Ruth Benedict 1934: 46).

Cultural Patterns of Christians

As a result of conversion and prolonged contact with

Western missionaries and Western religious organization, the

Christian converts adopted many elements of the culture of

the dominant group (Western missionaries). The contemporary

urban Christians of Utter Pradesh, who are descendants of

earlier converts, form a community having cultural exclusive-

ness and carrying variants of Hindu traditional culture of

Uttar Pradesh. Kroeber says, "Through being born into a

society, every individual is also born into a culture. This

culture molds him and he participates in it" (Kroeber 1948:

288).

The configuration of the culture of urban Christian

community in Uttar Pradesh is based upon an extensively Western

outlook. The Western outlook which the earlier converts

developed through contact with Western missionaries, by adopt-

ing the Western form of Christianity as their religion and by

securing preferential economic treatment under the British

rule, has become a sort of a 'theme' with the urban Christians

of Uttar Pradesh. The theme is the major assumption on which

a culture is based.

However, in order to examine the aspects of acculturation

and to determine the variants of traditional culture that urban

Christians of Uttar Pradesh carry, we would visualize the cultural patterns of Christians.

Residential patterns: We have seen in Tables I and II (Chapter II) that a majority of Christians in Uttar Pradesh live in towns and cities. The earlier converts were taken to mission compounds or walled areas surrounding the missionary's bungalow. They were thus segregated from other Hindus and Muslims. The Christians have kept up this tendency of living in 'enclaves'. In a sense the Christians live side by side. Joardar has shown in his study of Lucknow Christians that a larger proportion of Lucknow Christians live in Ganeshganj and Hazratganj wards. The tables given below show clearly the preponderence of Christians in certain wards of Lucknow:

TABLE IV

Distribution of Indian Christians
in wards of Lucknow:

Wards:	Number of Indian Christians
Daulatganj	23
Saadatganj	40
Chowk	134
Yahiyaganj	215
Wazirganj	986
Ganeshganj	2,465
Hazratganj	2,089
Hasanganj	596

(Joardar 1941:30).

Table V

Proportion of the Hindus and Muslims
to Indian Christians in Wards:

Wards	Hindus	Indian Christians per 1000	Muslims	Indian Christians per 1000
Daulatganj	34,400	0.06	27,167	0.04
Saadatganj	36,012	0.07	28,432	0.05
Chowk	39,217	0.29	29,569	0.21
Yahiyaganj	32,015	0.60	29,659	0.58
Wazirganj	30,121	2.85	27,437	2.55
Ganeshganj	62,217	4.02	7,431	0.50
Hazratganj	50,117	5.00	19,848	2.00
Hasanganj	26,002	0.50	12,628	0.22
Total	310,101	2.00	181,017	3.60

(Joardar 1949:32)

Bhatty has shown that a great number of Christian families in Allahabad are distributed in Muirabad, Muthiganj and in areas surrounding mission schools. (Bhatty 1946: 3). The author has also observed the tendency of Christians to live in enclaves in other large cities of Uttar Pradesh. Generally, the wards or localities (mohallas) where Christians have congregated in large numbers are those where missionaries earlier acquired extensive areas of land and after meeting their needs for institutional purposes gave land to Christians on lease. Besides, wherever there is a group of Christians in a city owning residential buildings, there is a tendency on the part of non-owning or immigrant families to rent houses in that neighborhood (Bhatty 1946: 4).

Sketch Map of the City of Lucknow
Showing the Municipal Wards

DAULATGANJ

HASANGANJ

RIVER GUMTI

SAADATGANJ

RIVER GUMTI

CHOWK

HAZARATGANJ

R. KUKR

WAZIRGANJ

YAHIYAGANJ

GANESHGANJ

EAST INDIAN RAILWAY

Notified Area

R. GUMTI

CANTONMENTS
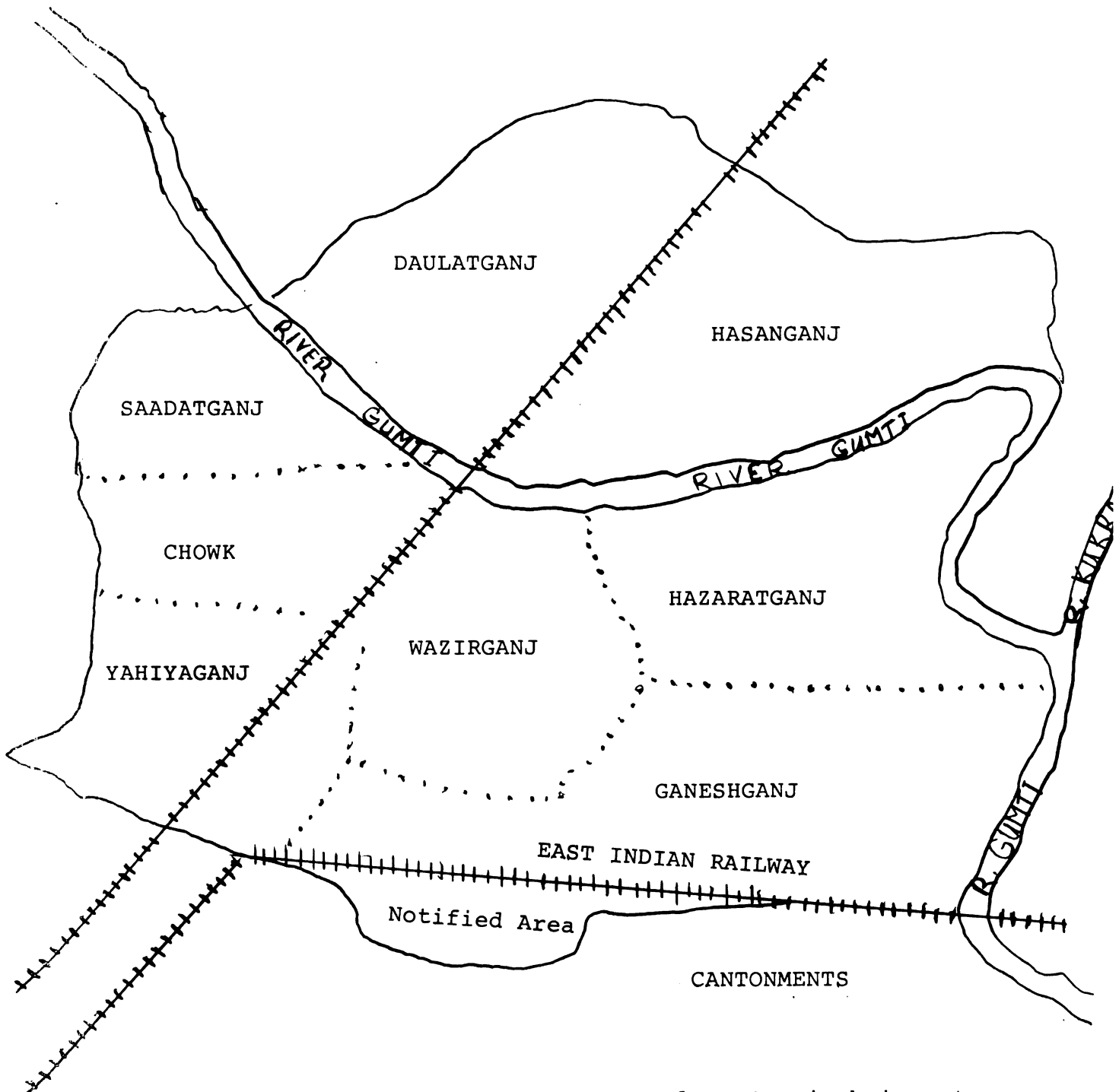
Scale: One inch is equal
to one mile

(Joardar 1949: 31)

The following news extract from The Indian Daily Telegraph,
an English Daily, on housing conditions in Capital city of Luck-
now is worth noticing:

> The best sections of Lucknow belong geographically to
> the local government. The Government House where His
> Excellency the governor of the province resides in winter,
> the commissioner of Lucknow Division's bungalow, the
> Deputy Commissioner house, the city Magistrate's resi-
> dence, the courts, the General Post office and the
> Secretariat occupy the best sites in the city. The next
> best portions are in the hands of Western missionaries.
> The mission Schools and colleges with large grounds
> around them are well-known sections of the city. The
> missionary preachers and teachers live in large houses
> in the open and uncongested parts of Lucknow (The Indian
> Daily Telegraph 1924 Nov. 6: p. 5).

This statement made forty years ago is true today--
Mission compounds and Churches are located in the best areas
of the cities. The urban Christians in Uttar Pradesh have a
tendency to live in areas where there is a large majority of
Christians. This helps them to keep their identity and dis-
tinction among their non-Christian neighbors. They have copied
their religious leaders--missionaries, who lived close to
British officials with whom they fraternized.

The urban Christians in Uttar Pradesh have borrowed the
elements of technology of the dominant culture. The walls
of the Hindu homes are often covered with lithographs of gods
and goddesses, whereas Christian homes have photographs of
weddings, children, etc. They most frequently use porcelain

and china for eating, glassware for drinking and aluminum
vessels for cooking. They have furniture in their homes. Even
in poor homes, the use of table and chairs is common. Those
who are well-to-do display their Westernization by lavish expen-
diture on furniture and household articles. They try to main-
tain their homes in a fashion similar to that of the Western
missionaries.

The breakfast and afternoon tea so common in urban
Christian homes are entirely Western in conception, ingredients
and execution. The urban Christians of Uttar Pradesh eat four
times a day. The meal is taken with the whole family together.
Husband and wife eat together at the same table in middle and
upper class families. Besides the use of meat, fish and eggs,
some families eat canned food too. In his study of Lucknow
Christians, Joadar has found out that 217 families out of 868
in Lucknow used canned food in at least one-fourth of their
meals. (Joardar 1949: 122).

Urban Christians dress in a partially Western way. Men
usually wear Western-style trousers and shirts; women wear
Indian sarees and blouses, but with Western-style undergarments.
Children are also clad in Western fashion. Girls wear frocks
and boys short pants or trousers with shirts. The use of suits
and ties is also very common among upper middle class and

well-to-do Christians. Joardar has found out that in Lucknow,
Christians have 30 percent more clothing and shoes than non-
Christians in the corresponding economic group (Joardar 1949:
151).

Literacy and Occupation: We have to examine literacy
figures among urban Christians of Uttar Pradesh, keeping in
view the fact that the bulk of the converts entered the Christian
fold from Untouchables and depressed classes who were not sup-
posed to read or write. The figures of literacy among Christians
from 1931 onward show that they have made much progress toward
literacy. According to census of 1931, the average number of
literates per mile in United Provinces was 47; in a ratio of
80 males to 10 females. Christians show 156 literate males to
148 literate females. Among Indian Christians in the 15-20 age
group, proportions of literate males and females were almost
equal. This was due to direct efforts of missionaries. In
contrast to the general population, many Indian Christians
were literate in English. (Census of India, United Provinces
1931: 446, 447, 459, 463, 466).

In the City of Lucknow, Joardar found that two-thirds
of the Indian Christians were literate in 1941; the all-India
figure for literacy in the same year was 14 per hundred. The
converts who entered Christian ranks in large numbers till 1931

showed greater interest in education and especially in acquiring knowledge of English. The educated urban Christians of Uttar Pradesh generally converse in English, prefer reading English newspapers and English novels. Even lower groups of Christians converse with a sprinkling of English in Hindustani. The lectures delivered constantly by Western missionaries and tourists, the services in English in some churches, and the opportunities of meeting and talking with Western missionaries induce the educated Christians to make themselves proficient in English.

The men in the urban Christian community of Uttar Pradesh take educational service, secretarial work, religious work, railway work, executive and medical service, technical work and as unskilled laborers. Women find employment in education, domestic service and nursing. Till some years ago nursing as a profession was abhored by Hindu and Muslim women, but Indian Christian women flock to this occupation. Most Hindus and Muslims think that it is not proper for a woman to work outside her home. But the same idea does not prevail among urban Christians of Uttar Pradesh.

Family and marriage: Social and cultural forces impinge upon family organization. The teachings of the Christian faith and the contact with missionaries have heavily influenced the

family organization of Christians. In the earlier stages of

missionary activities, where an entire family entered the

Christian rank ,the family organization continued as a joint

family system instead of a nuclear family system. In a joint

family system, a large number of men, their spouses and child-

ren lived and ate together. The bond between them was cemented

by kinship and through patrilineal descent. Several brothers

and cousins lived together under patriarchal authority of a

common ancester whose age inspired veneration and whose ex-

perience of the world and religion drew cooperation and

obedience. Later, when many orphans and destitutes and other

individual converts came to Christian fold, they formed nu-

clear families. Usually, individual converts were not allowed

membership in their non-Christian joint family after their

conversion. They entirely got out of the old joint family and

lived by themselves without sending their earnings to the

patriarchal purse or receiving anything from it. The indi-

vidual converts found their spiritual, emotional, material

and social needs satisfied by depending on missionaries. The

missionaries, in a sense, served the same needs of the con-

verts which the joint family previously had served. The converted

couples followed the pattern of missionaries. They developed

a more positive attitude to small-unit families. Thus, the

nuclear family pattern is common with urban Christians of Utter

Pradesh. A married man and woman with their offsprings, although

in individual cases one or more additional person, reside together.

Through contact with missionaries a whole set of new ideas

and values passed to Christian converts. The urban Christians

of Uttar Pradesh do not consider rules of exogamy when planning

marriage. They also do not depend on astrological calculations

or horoscopes in the selection of marriage partners or to fix

nuptial dates. The selection of the bride and bridegroom does

not, therefore, follow the traditional customs prevalent with

Hindus and Muslims. Generally the consent of the bride and

bridegroom is sought before marriage. Joardar has found that

86 percent of 832 Christian marriages in Lucknow showed that

they were celebrated with some consent of the bride and bride-

groom (Joardar 1949: 83). In most cases where the marriage

is arranged by the guardians, courtship in a subdued form takes

place after bethrothal. The young man is allowed to go out

with the girl to church functions, club meetings, cinemas, and

parties. If the young man comes to call, he is allowed to

visit the girl. Thus, prenuptial meetings are not at all frowned

on among Christians in Uttar Pradesh. The young girls are

allowed to go out of doors and participate the same way as boys.

Christians are not necessarily required to marry. If a girl does not marry neither she nor her parents are ordinarily criticized. Likewise, romantic marriages are not disrespected. Young men and women meet on equal terms, and have many opportunities for free selection of marriage partners. In some cases, Christian girls, who have freedom of movement and employment find husbands outside the community. Joardar has found that the types of girls who marry outside the community are those belonging either to highest or lowest economic group (Joardar 1949: 92). Christian girls, being more polished in social relations having fewer restriction on social intercourse prove attractive to many non-Christian boys.

Marriage among Christians takes place in the church. The marriage customs of Christians are entirely Western. The white costumes, white flowers, the ring and the wedding march, the reception and tea party as well as the signing of the Church register are all strictly followed by the Christians.

In Christian homes the Hindu traiditional concept of motherhood is not strictly followed. Modern educated Christian women have considerably deviated from the Hindu traditional path, by limiting her family and sometimes by having no family at all. In Christian homes, the old preference for boys (as is found in traditional non-Christian families) does not hold

a place. Boys and girls are equally preferred. Girls are not
kept in seclusion on attaining adolescence as in Hindu and
Muslim homes.

The Christian schools, dormitories, Sunday Schools and
the social life of the Christian enclaves fulfill some of the
functions of socialization. Therefore, the role of parents
and grandparent in the socialization of the children is
lessened among Christians as compared to Hindus and Muslims.
The greater freedom, dormitory life and a craze for distinction
among others develop an independent outlook among children and
the traditional emphasis so prevalent among Hindus regarding
respect and dedication to parents has lost its significance
in Christian homes.

Christians differ from Hindus and Muslims in their
amusements and diversions. Western music and dancing, stamp
collecting, autograph collecting, hunting and birthday parties
are common among Christians. Christians do not feel much
attraction for Indian classical dance or music.

The Christians bury their dead in graveyards the same
way as Westerners do. They do not worship the dead or idols
nor perform rituals for purification after the disposal of the
dead body. Astrology, magic, sorcery and witchcraft are also
not prevalent among urban Christians.

There are no taboos on eating some kinds of food such as beef, fowl, pork or meat of the hunted animal. There are also no rituals and taboos at the time of birth of the child, or on menstruating women or for attending church.

The Christians also have a higher marriage age than non-Christians. Joardar has shown in his study of Lucknow Christians that the average age of brides is 20 years and three months and of bridegrooms is 25 years and two months (Joardar 1949: 85). Marriage age, at least for women, is much lower among non-Christians. Though figures on the average age of brides and bridegrooms in other cities of Uttar Pradesh are not available, it can be surmised on the basis of the findings of Joardar that this average age is the common pattern among Christians in Uttar Pradesh.

The annual rate of natural increase in the Christians is very low, which suggests that Christians limit their families by using contraceptives. Joardar has compared the fertility rates of ten communities of Lucknow as follows:

Community	Rate of Fertility-young couples since 1934
Indian Christians	1.6
Anglo Indians	2.6
Europeans	2.5

Community		Rate of Fertility- young couples since 1934
Hindu	Bengali	3.1
	Kashnivri	2.8
	Khattri	3.6
	Pabari	3.2
Muslims	Shia	3.4
	Sunni	3.6
	Sikh	3.4

(deduced from Joardar 1949: 351)

This picture of fertility in capital of Uttar Pradesh suggests that fertility is affected by the larger use of contraceptives.

The well-to-do Christians in cities of Uttar Pradesh have also started to use electric cooking ranges, automobiles and other time-saving devices.

On the basis of the foregone description of the social and cultural patterns of urban Christians in Uttar Pradesh, it is apparent that the Christians have taken a Western look. This has been due to Christians borrowing the elements of Western culture with their contact with Western missionaries and as a result of their religious change.

Extent of Acculturation

In order to examine the degree of acculturation of urban Christians in Uttar Pradesh we have divided the group into two socio-economic levels: (1) Upper level, including business-men, government officials, doctors and teachers. (2) Lower level, including factory workers, domestic servants and petty clerks.

Upper level: In this group the Christians have adopted many elements of social organization and value orientation along with the elements of the technology of the donor group. Their economic and social positions in the community have afforded them the privilege to live like Westerners. During the British raj, Western mode of living and practice of Western values helped them to acquire good positions of employment and raised their status much higher in the eyes of other Indians. Since Christians' privileged position has changed in independent India, they are given a lowered status by the Hindus. In order to keep up their higher status at least in the Christian community, they cling to Western ways and Western values. Their Western way of life also helps them to gain popularity and position in Church organization. It helps them in keeping contacts with the few missionaries who still work in missions. On the one hand, their distinguished and distinct

position is fading out in the whole society; on the other,

they are maintaining it within the congregation by continuing

Western mode of life.

Lower level: In this group the Christians have adopted

mostly the elements of technology of the donor group. In

doing so they find their status higher as compared to members

of other castes in the same level. The Western dress, smoking

and drinking, hunting, keeping their homes on somewhat Western

fashion give them identity and distinction. During the earlier

stages, when a large number of the lower socio-economic level

converts entered the Christian ranks, through 'Christian mass

movements', they were generally dependent upon missionaries

for their economic and material need. They did not embrace

Christianity because they were impressed by the ethical values

of Christianity and value orientations of the Western mission-

aries but because of the economic and social advantages which

were attached. They cared less for adopting the elements of

social organization and value orientations of the missionaries

for they realized that by copying the Western dress and other

material elements of the Western missionary's culture, they

were in a position to conceal their origin and achieve a

higher status in the society. Thus, they did not adopt the

social organization and values of the missionaries to that

extent as the upper level group members did. "Christians from Harijan families are still considered Harijan by many if not most Hindus" (Schermerhorn 1962) in contemporary society. The lower level Christians, though they carry themselves in Western way to distinguish themselves from other low caste groups, yet they also follow some of the traditional rituals and customs of Hindus. Some believe in Evil Eye, celebrate some Hindu festivals and observe a few rituals of marriage and birth similar to Hindus. Since their dependence on Christian missions has ceased, some have returned to their traditional professions.

In sum, the Christians of upper level have assimilated the Western elements of technology and social organization to a greater degree than lower level Christians.

CHAPTER V

SYRIAN CHRISTIANS

Background

Cultural Patterns

CHAPTER V

SYRIAN CHRISTIANS

Background

As a comparison, for the basis of understanding, how acculturation process has occurred in two Christian groups, a brief discussion of the social structure of Syrian Christians has been introduced here. We have chosen Syrian Christians for two special reasons: They are Christian group recruited on the soil of India; they have also been recruited from the lower strata of the community through the efforts of Western missionaries. Thus Syrian Christians provide a case analogous to that of the Uttar Pradesh Christains.

Syrian Christians form a large community in Kerala (constituted of Travancore, Cochin and Malabar) on the West coast of India. Tradition traces the founding of Syrian Christian Community in the first century A.D. from St. Thomas, whose martyred remains are supposed to be buried in Mylepore, near Madras (Ayyar 1936: 1; Devanandan 1963: 30). Some scholars, however, hold that they came into being in 345 A.D. when a merchant fleet of four hundred men under the leadership of Thomas of Cana and a bishop consecrated by the Patriarch of Antioch came to Malabar and settled there (Rae 1892: 7-8).

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Whatever be the truth about St. Thomas or the origin of Syrian Christians, it is most important to note that the first converts were all drawn from the Brahmans (Ayyar 1936: 34, 235), who were reinforced by the advent of the four hundred Syrians. In the 8th century when the Nestorians grew into importance in Iraq and Persia, some of their missionaries visited the West coast of India and reconverted (some or all of) the Syrian Christians to the Nestorian heresy (Richards 1928: 56-57). In the 16th century, the first European nation which had intercourse with Syrian Christians was Portugal (Rae 1892: Preface). When Portuguese became powerful on the West coast of India, they won back many Syrian Christians into the Roman Church (Day 1863: 56-57). The Portuguese started a conversion movement to strengthen their colonial power. They baptised a large number of Untouchables in Malabar. The Dutch ousted the Portuguese from their maritime supremacy in the Indian ocean, they allowed the Syrian Christians to get a new bishop from the ancient see of Antioch. But as the see of Antioch was then Jacobean, the Syrian Christians who accepted the new bishop sent by the Patriarch of Antioch became likewise Jacobite in this organization. In the 19th century Anglican missions came to help the Jacobeans and converted many of them to their form of worship. The new group seceded to form a

group of their own. In doctrinal matters the Syrian Christians
are divided into ten sects. "Ethnically, the Syrian Christians
are now one and the same people and the various divisions
among them are based on the differences in the religious be-
liefs or doctrinal changes" (Ayyer 1936:60).

It is not important to go into details of their sects
or doctrinal matters for the purpose of the present discussion.
What is important to note is that many Catholic and Protes-
tant missionaries have labored to recruit Christians. William
Grooke mentions in the introduction of Ayyer's Anthropology
of the Syrian Christians:

> From the point of view of ethnology the Syrian and other
> allied churches don't form a race. They have sprung from
> converts recruited, as a rule, from the lower strata of the
> community, rather than from the higher classes, such as
> Brahmans and Nayars, who are less susceptible of missionary
> efforts (Ayyer 1936: ix).

Cultural Patterns

According to Census of India, 1961, there are 3,587,365
Christians in Kerala. Their percentage to total population
is 21.22 (India 1963: iii). The following table gives the
idea of their growth during the fifty years from 1901 to 1951:

Percentage of the Syrian Christians to the Total Population

year	percent	year	percent
1951	32.0	1921	28.9
1941	31.6	1911	26.2
1931	30.8	1901	23.8 (India 1953:27)

After 1951 the Christian population shows a decline. Between

1951 and 1961 it decreased from 32 percent to 21 percent of

the total population. There seem to be several reasons for

this decline. With the merger of the states with the Indian

Republic in 1951 the missionaries no longer retained the pri-

vileged position they had under the rule of the princes. The

Untouchability offence Act of 1955 eased the disabilities to

which the Untouchables were formerly subjected. As a rule

the incidence of conversion decreased. Besides, the lower

marriage age prevalent among Syrian Christians which had been

the cause of the high rate of fertility among them (India 1953:

28) was curbed by the marriage Act and by social reforms coming

in the wake of the merger of the states.

> The Syrian Christians of Cochin and Travancore have
> been all along and even now a very flourishing community.
> Their prosperity is mainly due to the religious tolerance
> of the native government and the protection and patronage
> of the early Hindu rulers of the two States as evidenced
> by the copper plate grants granted by one of the Perumals
> of Kerala (Ayyar 1936: 54).

The Syrian Christians in former times had a high po-

sition. The rulers of land conferred on them high privileges.

They were among the "noble" races of Malabar. and had the

privilege of being called by no other name than that of the

"sons of the king." Nayars who were a military clan regarded

them as brethren. They were mostly merchants trading with

foreign countries on a large scale, and were directly under

the king and were not subject to local chiefs. They enjoyed

almost a status equal to the rulers (Ayyar 1936: 51-55).

These facts show that Christians had a high status before

Portuguese started conversion in Kerala. It is because of

these traditional associations and privileges that Syrian

Christians kept themselves tied with the native customs and

traditions. Even today, Syrian Christians have not given up

many of their traditional Hindu customs. "Scratch a Syrian

Christian and you will find in him a Hindu" is a common ob-

servation among Hindus.

> There is a racial difference between northern and
> southern Christians of Malabar. . .the two do not inter-
> marry. Each despise the other. . .there is thus a tend-
> dency to form new sects as among the Hindu castes (Ayyar
> 1936: 204).

Among Syrian Christians as among Hindus, early marriage

is looked upon with favor. The dowry is prevalent among

Christians. Sometimes a marriage engagement is broken off

because the bride's parents are unable to meet the demands

of the bridegroom's friends, or the marriage takes the form

of an auction, the bridegroom being handed over to the highest

bidder, as in the higher Hindu castes. Although in recent

times some reforms have been made, yet dowry is still a con-

sideration for marriage relations.

Many ancient Hindu customs no longer prevail among the Syrian Christians but a sufficient number survive to indicate the sources from which they have been derived. Thus a pandal or shed, possibly the survival of an ancient custom of marrying under the shade of a sacred tree, is erected and decorated in front of the bride's house. On the night before the wedding the bride is bathed, partly as a fertility rite, (water being a well-known promoter of fertility) and partly to remove any pollution which might have been communicated to her, before the marriage rite is performed. During the marriage ceremony, an amulet, always used in Hindu marriages, is blessed by the priest, who hands it over to the bridegroom, and he ties it round his wife's neck. The marriage badge is not to be removed as long as the wearer remains a wife. The bride is veiled as a protection against the Evil Eye. When the married couple leaves the church, a bellmetal lamp with a metal handle is lighted in front of them as they advance with a view to scaring away evil spirits. The discharge of fireworks for driving away the evil spirits is another distinctive Hindu rite followed by these Christians. Also, the bride's palms and feet are painted with Henna leaves, a sexual stimulation used to promote fertility and also as a protection against demons. This again is common to Hindus. The Hindu bride's

necklet is often among the Christians replaced by manikantha containing one hundred and fifty-three beads.

As regards the menstruation tabu, it is common among the Syrian Christians, as is customary among the Hindus, that the women in their period should be secluded for three days during which time they are not allowed to enter the family kitchen, the pollution being removed by bathing on the fourth day. The Jacobites do not allow the menstruating women to attend the Church services.

At childbirth the women attending the mother are held to be impure and are obliged to purify themselves by anointing their bodies with coconut oil followed by a bath. The mother herself is considered unclean for fifteen days when she is bathed and the lying-in room purified.

Jacobite mourners are under a pollution after a death and fast till the funerary rites are performed and masses said for the soul of the deceased. The rite is performed on the eleventh, fifteenth and twenty-first day as in the case of Hindus.

Astrology, magic, sorcery and witchcraft are still practiced. Some sections have their horoscopes prepared for their infant children and even make offerings in Hindu temples. Auspicious days are selected for starting important undertakings.

Oaths are taken on Hindu deities. Elaborate rules are provided

for the interpretation of dreams (Ayyar 1936: xi, xii).

> In the selection of sites for houses and about the
> details of the structure the Syrian Christians conform to
> a certain extent to the Hindu style. A separate name for
> each house with a compound is current among them. The
> domestic utensils are more or less of the same kind as
> used by other Hindus (Ayyar 1936: 59-60).

In dress, language and in food habits the Syrian

Christians do not differ much from local Hindus. The Syrian

Christians are highly educated, as a group they have perhaps

the largest percentage of University degree holders in India

(India Census Report 1931 Vol. I III: 356).

From the discussion of the cultural patterns of Syrian

Christians, we notice that they have not given up their Hindu

heredity in spite of their reconversion and contact with Western

missionaries. In the nineteenth century, the Anglican missions

came to help the Jacobeans and converted many of them to their

form of worship. The subsequent converts of the nineteenth

and twentieth century, made by the Church of England and American

Baptist Missions have also not given up many of their traditional

Hindu customs.

A contrast between the Syrian Christians and urban Uttar

Pradesh Christians, the Syrian Christians have borrowed minimum

the cultural elements of the Western missionaries. This is

because of two factors: (1) Difference in the background of the two reference groups, and (2) difference in the contact situations.

1. Difference in the background of the two reference groups: The Syrian Christians have been all along a flourishing community. They had high social position and were at par with high caste Hindus. When they accepted reconversion on the arrival of British and American missions, they tried to keep up their Hindu customs and traditions in order to maintain their respect and privileged position in the eyes of their non-Christian neighbors. Besides, they did not depend on British and American missions for their economic and social needs. They adopted the religious organization of the missionaries which they considered was significant. On the other hand, converts in Uttar Pradesh came from among the Untouchables and low castes. They had a very low economic and social status. They depended on missions for their economic needs. They adopted most of the elements of technology of the missionary's culture for they noticed that by doing so they could elevate their social position.

Contact Situations: The Syrian Christians were economically and socially well-off. They were not taken to the mission compounds after their reconversion. Their contact with British

and American missionaries was confined to the religious acti-
vities. In contrast, the converts in Uttar Pradesh were taken
to the mission compounds where they came in frequent and close
contacts with the Western missionaries. Their dependence on
Western missions in the early days of conversion also brought
them in much closer contact with missionaries. The closer
contact with missionaries and the desire to raise their social
status, led them to develop the cultural patterns different
from those caste groups from which they originally came. In
channelizing their cultural patterns they adopted many of the
cultural elements of the Western missionaries.

The difference in the degree of acculturation of Syrian
Christians and Uttar Pradesh Christians also becomes clear in
the light of the following remarks of Herskovits:

> Contact, therefore, can result in minimum borrowing, with
> or without external pressure, or it can range to almost
> complete acceptance of the ways of life of another people.
> In any given case, the aspects of culture that are trans-
> mitted or the transfer of the sanctions of an older custom
> to a new cultural form are the result of particular histo-
> rical circumstances which influence the psychological
> motivations underlying the selectivity that comes into
> play (Herskovits 1964: 539).

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

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SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

It may be recalled that the main problem of this study
is, "In what way is conversion into Christianity a cause for
changes in cultural traditions of urban Christians in Uttar
Pradesh?" To investigate this problem, society and culture
in Uttar Pradesh were discussed, history of conversion was
traced, and aspects of acculturation of the Christian converts
were examined.

Culture in Uttar Pradesh has a unity and continuity
with the traditional culture of India. This unity and con-
tinuity is based on Hinduism. The social structure, social
organization and way of life of the people in Uttar Pradesh
is governed by Hindu religion. A large majority of Untouch-
ables who accepted Christian conversion desired to get out of
the social organization based on Hinduism, under which they
had no identity of their own and no openings for their economic
and social improvement. Conversion was a means of economic
and social mobility.

The majority of Christian converts in Uttar Pradesh
were Untouchables. Conversion not only raised their social
status in the eye of Indians, but their dependency upon Western

missionaries provided them new resources for better living. A large number of converts was made up to the 1930's. The situation changed afterwards due to social and political reasons. The reform movements, the Hindu renaisance movement, the Arya Samaj, caste sabhas, changes in the religious observances of low castes, and the upsurge of nationalism checked the drawing of converts from Hindus and Muslims. Conversions are now pretty much a thing of the past, the churches are concentrating on consolidation rather than on expansion. The preferential position which the Christian enjoyed under British rule has also changed. In many circles, Christians are looked upon as Harijans (Untouchables).

From the description of society and culture and from the historical retrospect of conversion, the aspects of acculturation of the Christian converts, resulting from contact with Western missionaries became evident. The Christians identified Christianity with Western culture. In adopting the Western mode of living they found their social status higher. This voluntary acculturation took place amongst them as a result of need dispositions. The converts consciously borrowed the elements of technology of the Western culture. The Christians of upper level have adopted the cultural elements of social organization and vaule orientation of the Western

missionaries. The lower groups of Christians have adopted mostly the dress, names and religious organization of the Western pattern.

The contrast between Syrian Christians and Uttar Pradesh Christians shows that Uttar Pradesh Christians have adopted the cultural elements of the Western missionaries to a greater degree than the Syrian Christians. This is due to the difference in contact situations of Syrian Christians, who did not have at all the same kind of reference group, as the urban Uttar Pradesh Christians.

Thus much of Westernization that took place was voluntary among Christians of Uttar Pradesh. It is because of the Western way of life of Christians that they carry that Christianity is considered foreign in India. "Both Islam and Christianity entered India as proselytizing religions, gaining most of their adherents from among Hindu and poor depressed classes. Yet in the eyes of perhaps most Indians today, Islam is regarded as more indigenous while Christianity is considered foreign (Schermerhorn 1962).

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