

Missionaries, Christianity, and Education in 19th Century Punjab

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Christianity has been present in South Asia for almost two millennia, with a strong claim of apostolic origins. However, while there has been a continuing presence of the religion in South India, in North India it has had several moments of introduction and extinction. The latest introduction of the Christian religion in North India was via Western Christian missionaries in the early part of the nineteenth century. Earlier banned by the East India Company so that they do not interfere in its mercantile operations, Christian missionaries became a major force in India, despite their small numbers, during the Victorian age, carrying a strong voice mainly through their educational and healthcare initiatives. Among the first missionaries who arrived in the Punjab in North India were the American Presbyterian Missionaries, who quickly embarked on one of the most extensive educational enterprises in the region. Choosing the Punjab due to its developing 'martial race' theory and untapped nature, these American missionaries braved months at sea and then the long and arduous land journey to Ludhiana, then the extent of the East India Company's territories. The meeting of the Rev'd John C. Lowrie with Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1835, and the setting up of the first English medium school in Ludhiana, were watershed moments in the political and educational history of the Punjab and have had a long and lasting effect on the development of the state and polity in the region.

Keywords: missionaries, American Presbyterian, Christianity, English school, Punjab, Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Sikhs, Fakir Syed, Lahore, Ludhiana.

The British East India Company which landed on the shores of India in August 1608, and made their first commercial treaty with the Mughal Emperor Jahangir thereafter, slowly began to muster military and political power, in addition to its economic might by the beginning of the eighteenth century. The rapid decline of the Mughal Empire after the demise of Emperor Aurangzeb in 1707, decentralized India into several hundred principalities all jostling for power. Being one of the premier economic powers in India, the East India Company became a major player in local politics and after the battles of Plassey [1757] and Buxar [1764] defeated the joint forces of the Nawab of Bengal, Sirajudaula and the Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II, and gained from the emperor the right of 'Diwani'—revenue collection, from the lucrative provinces of Bengal and Orissa. Having entered the realm of governance, the Company slowly expanded its influence and through a series of 'subsidiary alliances' made most of the important princes of India its feudatories. Those princes which opposed the Company were firmly dealt with resulting in the expansion of the Company's territories stretching from Bengal to the borders of the Punjab, from Bombay to the southern coast and the region of Madras (Metcalfe & Metcalfe, 2012). Since the East India Company was a commercial company, its main interest lay in gaining financial benefits from India. During the industrial revolution, India became the 'Golden Sparrow' providing both raw materials and a market for manufactured goods. Therefore, the Company, as well as its shareholders, directors, and even employees, reaped huge dividends out of India (Naroji, 1962).

As a commercial venture, initially the East India Company was not interested in improving the lives of the people of India; money-making was the sole interest. However, with the rising tide of liberalism in Britain, the start of the slavery abolitionist movements, etc., the Company could not ignore the progress of the Indian people especially since it now governed large swathes of Indian territory directly. The Charter Act of 1813 specifically allotted money for education in India for the first time and also permitted all Christian missionaries to come to India. The following Charter Act of 1833 ended the Company's commercial role, making it a purely administrative service, now under greater control of the Westminster Parliament. The Act also changed the post of the Governor-General of Bengal into the Governor-General of India and introduced wide ranging bureaucratic and administrative reforms. Hence the first 'Governor-General of India' under this new dispensation was Lord William Bentinck, long regarded as the father of utilitarian liberalism in India. It was during the government of Lord Bentinck that the practice of *Satti*—the ritual burning of a Hindu wife on her husbands' funeral pyre—was banned in 1829; *Thuggee*—banditry, was also countered during this time, with a government department under William Sleeman created to suppress it. Even in Britain the 1830's was a time of great change with the Roman Catholic Relief Act of 1829 which gave rights to Catholics for the first time since the Reformation, and the Reform Act of 1832 which enfranchised most men. The 1830's was therefore a time of drastic change in state and society in both Britain and India.

The 1830's was also the time when Christian missionary activity picked up in India. Several Christian denominations began to set up mission stations in different parts of India. Christianity, of course, was not an alien religion in India. St. Thomas, one of the Apostles is said to have visited Taxila in northern Pakistan as well as the eastern coast of India near modern day Madras and is in fact buried at Mylapore. While Christianity became extinct in northern India due to repeated invasions during the first millennium AD, it flourished in southern India where several different rites of Christians still form a substantial proportion of the population. Christian missions again entered northern India with the arrival of the Portuguese in the sixteenth century at the court of Emperor Akbar, and a small community was also established. Writing in his memoirs, Emperor Jahangir fondly remembered the times of religious harmony during the reign of his father when, 'Sunnis and Shias met in one mosque, and Franks and Jews in one church, and observed their own forms of worship' (Jahangir, 1909, p. 37). It is also said that Jahangir himself had a picture of Jesus and his mother Mary in both his palaces at Agra and Lahore (Purchas, 1931, Vol. IV, p. 432). However, bad relations with the Portuguese during the reign of Emperor Shah Jahan meant that Christian missionaries and Christians became unwelcome in the empire, and soon the small Christian community dwindled and was extinguished.

Christianity again entered northern India— a third time—with the Christian missionaries on the heel of British advances in the region in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Beginning in 1793 with William Carey, an English Baptist missionary, small trickles of missionaries began to enter India. Carey worked in the Bengal area till his death in 1834 and established the first Christian institution of higher education, Serampore College in 1818. Following him the London Missionary Society sent missionaries in 1805 to Vishakhapatnam; Rev'd. Charles Rhenius of the Church Missionary Society arrived in Madras in 1814, and the Church of Scotland sent its first missionaries in 1829. During this time several Presbyterian churches from the United States of America and elsewhere also began to send in their missionaries to India, usually to fields hitherto unoccupied by other missions (Harding, 2008, p. 17). It was in this environment that the first American Presbyterian missionaries were sent to India in 1833 (Cox, 2002).

First American Presbyterian Missionaries in India

The mission of the American Presbyterian Church under the aegis of the Western Foreign Missionary Society USA started when the Rev'd J.C. Lowrie and the Rev'd William Reed were entrusted with the task of starting a mission station in India. They were 'invested with full power to select for their field of labour any part of India which, after due enquiry and consultation with the friends of the missionary cause in that city, might seem the most eligible' (Datta, 1939, p.1). Thereafter Rev'd Lowrie and Rev'd Reed together with their wives left for Calcutta on the ship *Star* on May 29, 1833. (Lowrie, 1850, p. 9). Their voyage took them more than four months to reach Calcutta. Rev'd Lowrie, who kept a journal noted of their arrival:

Passing the stately European mansions on Garden Reach, and the Company's Botanical garden, and Bishop's College on the opposite side of the river, we were soon in the midst of

increasing multitudes of boats, and the hum of many sounds, until presently we swept under the walls of Fort William and were in full view of Government House. Landing at one of the *ghats* or stairs, we were soon received with the greatest kindness by the Rev. W. H. Pearce and his estimable wife (Lowrie, 1850, p. 18-19).

After coming to Calcutta, Lowrie noted that 'we had been instructed by the Society to make inquiries on arriving at Calcutta, as to the most eligible sphere of missionary labour. The Upper Provinces of India, it was supposed, might be such a sphere, but we were at liberty to choose any other part of the country that should appear to be more inviting' (Lowrie, 1850, p.19). They remained in Calcutta a few weeks and consulted widely on their choice of mission field. In the end they decided upon the North Western provinces of India—present day Indian Punjab and Haryana [Pakistani Punjab was under the rule of Maharaja Ranjith Singh]. Lowrie noted that the reason for this choice was because the provinces '...contain a numerous and hardy population, with a better climate than the lower provinces, and there is a ready access to the lower ranges of the Himalaya mountains in case of the failure of health (Lowrie, 1850, p. 41). An added advantage was that there were very few Christian missionaries in the region and therefore these missionaries would be opening up an entirely new field. In fact, when Protestant missionaries came to India they usually chose their mission fields in areas hitherto unoccupied by other missionaries so that the largest possible ground could be covered in the shortest time.¹

Rev'd Lowrie also noted that the missionaries also wanted to aid the efforts of the East India Company in 'a movement to promote the spread of the English language and learning in some of the important cities in those Upper Provinces,' and therefore the choice fell on Ludhiana [then spelled Lodiana] as the first station of the missionaries.² Rev'd Lowrie gave a very detailed and informative description of the town of Lodiana in 1834:

This was the frontier post then occupied by the British on the north-west, and a town of some twenty thousand or twenty-five thousand people, whose numbers were rapidly increasing. It contained a number of Afghans and Cashmerians in additions to the Sikhs and Hindus. The Afghans were from one thousand to two thousand in number, and were chiefly the retainers of two exiled kings, who after a variety of sad fortunes, one of them having been cruelly deprived of his sight, had taken refuge under the protection of the British, and had been living at Lodiana for nearly twenty years, receiving a large annual pension from the generosity of the East India Company...The Cashmerians were more numerous. They had been driven from their homes by a famine and by the oppression of the Sikhs, to whom their beautiful valley was in subjugation, and several thousands of them were now following their various occupations, chiefly that of weaving, at Lodiana. From these classes, and from the Hindus, a number of scholars could be procured to attend the English school. Some of the Sikh chiefs, also, were anxious to have their sons acquainted with English, and an Afghan chief, living west of the Indus, had actually sent his son to the care of the Political Agent at Lodiana for the same purpose...(Lowrie, 1850, p. 42-43).

¹ Even though the missionaries came from competing denominations, there was a large degree for cooperation amongst them. For example Rev. Robert Clark while writing on the Church Missionary Society's work in the Punjab noted: '... We who are in the Punjab have seen, and therefore we bear witness, that God's grace is not confined to any one Church or people. Dearly as we love our own Church we have seen that coverts are not made only in the Church of England...' Clark, (1885), p.2.

² For a long time missionaries had been proponents of the English language. Alexander Duff, a missionary of the Church of Scotland, was the first to establish a school in July 1830 where from the inception he taught in English. This was even more significant since till 1835 the official language of the British Government of India was Persian. In his defense Duff wrote: "It now appeared that the choice could only lie between . . . Sanscrit. . . and English. The determination of this choice involved the decision of one of the momentous practical questions connected with the ultimate evangelization of India. . . . The question was 'Which shall hereafter be established as the language of *learning* in India 1 Which will prove the most effective instrument of a large. liberal and enlightened education 1' The wrong determination of so vital a question. at the outset, would have greatly retarded . . . every subsequent movement. It was not, therefore, without earnest prayer to God for counsel and direction, that a decision was attempted.' Duff, (1839), p. 517. Also see, Vermilye, (1890).

Before embarking on the long and arduous journey to Lodiana on the north western frontier of British territories in India, the missionaries petitioned Governor General Lord Bentinck for permission, as ‘some of our countrymen, twenty years before, had been required by the men then in power to withdraw from the territories of the East India Company’ (Lowrie, 1850, p. 45). However, now it was the 1830’s and the liberal government of Lord Bentinck was no longer going to be a hindrance for missionary endeavours. Lowrie therefore joyfully noted that, ‘in no respect were our misapprehensions and misgivings more entirely without foundation, and more happily removed, than in our obtaining readily the permission of the Governor General in Council...’ (Lowrie, 1850, p. 46).

Despite these positive occurrences, the passage of the Lowrie’s and the Reed’s to Lodiana was not going to be a simple one. Within a few weeks of arriving in Calcutta the beautiful Mrs Lowrie passed away due to deteriorating health during the voyage. (Lowrie, 1850, p. 49). Rev’d Lowrie was devastated by this great loss so soon, but remained determined to continue the mission trusting in God to help him continue on his still long and gruelling journey. After initially planning to leave for Lodiana immediately, the missionaries decided to stay on in Calcutta so that they could learn the native language [Hindustani], and also get more acquainted with the conditions of the country. It is very interesting to note that Rev’d Lowrie was clear that ‘it is a very unsatisfactory plan to depend on interpreters,’ and was determined to master the local language so that he could communicate with the Indians directly (Lowrie, 1850, p. 53). He certainly did not want to remain aloof from the people he wanted to serve and wanted to understand them in their own language.

Conditions for the missionaries became dire when Mr Reed began to suffer from a bad cough during the winter months. Soon thereafter it was clear that the disease was consumption [Tuberculosis], and it was decided that Reed and his wife should return home to the United States (Lowrie, 1850, p. 59). Mr and Mrs Reed then left Calcutta for the US, but three weeks after their departure Mr Reed passed away during the voyage. They began as four missionaries from the United States and now only Rev’d Lowrie was left in the mission—such were the uncertain and trying times of the 1830’s.

Being left all alone, Lowrie then commenced his thousand mile journey to Lodiana on the north western corner of the territories of the East India Company. In those days, the journey was much longer and fraught with all kinds of dangers. The modes of transportation were also slow and largely dependent on the weather. Mr Lowrie noted: ‘There are three modes of travelling in India; by the rivers in boats, or on land, with tents, or in palankeens’ (Lowrie, 1850, p. 62). Rev’d Lowrie travelled mostly by the river which according to him ‘...is, at every season of the year, attended with danger. The boats, even those for the accommodation of English people, as budgerows and pinnaces, are awkwardly built on a more awkward model...the boatmen are unskillful and reckless—during the rains, though you have usually a fine wind, yet you must stem a strong current...Every year many boats are lost’ (Lowrie, 1850, p. 73). During the journey up river Lowrie was very intrigued when he passed by the Hindu holy city of Benaras, its small winding streets and the omnipresent sounds of Hindu chants. He travelled upto Kanpur [then spelled Cawnpore] by boat and then went onwards by palanquin to Lodiana. It took him almost three months to travel up the Ganges to Kanpur and thence onwards ‘From Cawnpore to Agra is about one hundred and ninety miles; which distance I made in fifty hours; and from Agra to Delhi, I was thirty-seven hours in coming’ (Lowrie, 1850, p. 110). In Delhi, Lowrie stayed for a few days and observed the city, once the capital of the vast Mughal Empire but now a shadow of its former glory. He wrote in his memoir, ‘the throne, whence Aurangzeb gave laws to millions...is now covered with defilement, while the hall of audience is lumbered up with old palanquins, worn out carriages, &c. The present Mogul Emperor has no authority out of the palace and seems to care little about its interior appearance, provided he may have plenty to eat’ (Lowrie, 1850, p. 112). Lowrie also went atop the thirteenth century Qutab Minar, erected by Qutabuddin Aibak, the first Sultan of the Slave Dynasty in the thirteenth century. From there he saw that ‘for miles and miles around, you see scarcely anything but the ruins of former greatness—one dilapidated palace, or mosque, or tomb, after another rises in the view till you are almost oppressed at seeing such manifold evidences of the feebleness of man’ (Lowrie, 1850, p. 112-113). After Delhi Lowrie continued his journey to Lodiana and reached the town, almost eighteen months after leaving Philadelphia. (Lowrie, 1850, p. 114).

In 1834 Lodiana was an important strategic post for the East India Company. The town of Lodiana had come under the sway of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1806, but under the terms of the Anglo-Sikh Treaty of 1809 Ranjit Singh agreed to the river Sutlej as being the boundary between his and the possessions of the Company. At the same time, all states which were on the British side of the Sutlej came under the Company's protection and a military garrison was stationed at Lodiana in the same year. However, later the garrison was withdrawn and a Political Agency [a type of a diplomatic mission] was established by the British at Lodiana in 1810 for the maintenance of Anglo-Sikh relations. This agency was subsequently moved to Ambala in 1822, and Lodiana demoted to a sub-agency. However, by 1832 the Agency had been re-established keeping in view the importance of relations with Ranjit Singh at Lahore and of relations beyond the Indus with the Afghans etc (Hasrat, 1968). When Rev'd Lowrie came to Lodiana Col. Claude Wade was the Political Agent and was he was rather happy to see him.

A few months before the arrival of Rev'd Lowrie, Col. Wade had set up an English school—the first of its kind—in Lodiana. When he heard the news of an American missionary coming, Col. Wade decided to handover the school to Rev'd Lowrie so that a proper setup might be established—and thus began the educational mission of the American Presbyterian Church in India. On the school, Lowrie noted: 'Some fourteen or sixteen native boys had been in attendance. After a few weeks the number was increased to about fifty, of whom some were the sons of two or three native chiefs, and other respectable native gentlemen...By giving two or three hours a day to the superintendence of the school, and with the valuable service of an Indo-British teacher, the progress of the scholars was very creditable to themselves...' (Lowrie, 1850, p. 119-20).

But before Lowrie could settle completely in Lodiana and attend to the English school, he received an invitation he could not refuse. Apparently Maharaja Ranjit Singh had also heard of the coming of the missionary and the English school 'through his Vakil or Charge de Affaires, at Lodiana, and with his invitation he made a proposal that I [Lowrie] should spend six months of the year at his capital, to take charge of the education of a number of the young Sikh noblemen, the sons of chiefs' (Lowrie, 1850, p. 127-8). Lowrie noted that he was delighted to receive such an invitation as 'through jealousy of foreign influence, Ranjit was reluctant to permit Europeans and other foreigners to enter his territories...' (Lowrie, 1850, p. 127). However, despite this great breakthrough to gain a lot of influence in the Sikh court, which was the only power of consequence in India apart from the Company, Lowrie could not agree to the proposal since he had recently been sick and had been advised by his doctor to spend the hot season in the hills lest he die. Having lost his wife and the Rev'd Reed to the climate and disease, Lowrie declined the offer of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in order to at least set up something in Lodiana for other missionaries to build on.

Rev'd Lowrie at the Court of Maharaja Ranjit Singh

It was sheer luck that the 'Lion of the Punjab' Maharaja Ranjit Singh, still wanted Lowrie to visit and therefore on January 28, 1835 the Rev'd Lowrie set out with a company of '...about sixty person, including myself, munshi [interpreter], horseguard, and our respective domestic servants; as also tent-pitchers, attendants for the elephants, horses, & c' (Lowrie, 1850, p. 129-30). Passing by Paghwarah, Jallandar, Kapurthala, and Amritsar, Lowrie reached Lahore on February 6, 1835. His first impressions of Lahore were:

At two or three miles distance, we entered the ruins of the Old city. A great many mosques, temples, palaces, and tombs, are seen in every direction, and in every stage of dilapidation. Some are almost entire; but most are greatly injured...These ruins are very extensive; so that Lahor may be termed the Delhi of the Punjab...' (Lowrie, 1850, p. 146).

Indeed the ravages of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had left Lahore, once the capital of the Mughal Empire, a declining provincial city at best. When Maharaja Ranjit Singh took over Lahore in 1799, only the ruins of its illustrious past reflected its glory. Most Mughal monuments were in a state of decay, the city had receded within its gates, and the writ of the rulers of Lahore did not carry much beyond its boundaries. It was only under Maharaja Ranjit Singh that Lahore again became a capital of an empire and developed. However, the priorities of the Sikhs and the sheer mass of Mughal monuments meant that much

of the older parts of the city gave a ruinous appearance. Lowrie, though, was pleasantly impressed by the main city and noted:

The present city presents a good appearance at a distance; as it is compactly built, and has several lofty towers, and many brick houses of considerable height. We were conducted to an extensive garden of orange trees, in which a French officer had erected a large summer residence. This place has been assigned for our lodgings, and is all that I could wish for... (Lowrie, 1850, p. 146).

That same afternoon, Fakir Nuruddin, brother of the Prime Minister Fakir Azizuddin, came to see Lowrie and presented gifts etc from the Maharaja (Aijazuddin, 2014). Lowrie noted that the Fakir ‘...introduced the subject of an English school in a very skilful manner; inquiring successively, how I, who understood so little of the native language, could teach the English; how I should act, if different pupils wish to learn different branches; who should decide...’ (Lowrie, 1850, p. 146-7). The next day the Prime Minister, Fakir Azizuddin arrived carrying gifts, and informed Lowrie that the Maharaja would receive him the next morning. Lowrie’s first encounter with Maharaja Ranjit Singh is recounted below verbatim:

We went, about 9 o’clock, to pay our respects to the Maha Rajah. He was seated in an open hall on the highest ground in the enclosure where his palace is erected, and was surrounded by about a dozen of his chief men, all dressed very richly, and sitting on very rich crimson cushions. After being seated on the floor like the rest, and after exchanging the usual compliments, I presented the English Bible and Gurmukhi Pentateuch I had brought with me for that purpose. He then asked, without any further introduction, “Where is God?” “It would be as easy to answer the question, Where is he not?” “Well, if you don’t know where God is, how can you worship him?” Inferring from what I saw, it was their intention to make a trial of my skill in such subjects, I answered more fully: “We do know that God is everywhere present; though he specially reveals himself in heaven; that he can see us, though we cannot see him; and that he has made known in his holy word, (pointing to the Bible I had presented,) how we should worship him” (Lowrie, 1850, p. 149-50).

Lowrie was as much impressed by the Maharaja as Ranjit Singh was by him, and the very next day the Prime Minister brought two young boys—the sons of ministers—to receive English instruction from Lowrie. In Lowrie’s estimation, the Maharaja ‘...is certainly a man of superior mind, and of no ordinary character. All his measures, and all his conversation, evince great sagacity, prudence, and acquaintance with the strong points of the subject under consideration. He is much superior to many of the prejudices and jealousies so common...and seems anxious to imitate those things in the policy or the customs of other people which are better than his own’ (Lowrie, 1850, p. 170).

While in Lahore, Lowrie spent several days sightseeing in the city. Being one of the very few foreign visitors to have resided in the city during that time, his observations give us a rare glimpse into the conditions of the city. Repeatedly Lowrie noticed the bad state of repair of most old monuments in the city, and the general lack of cleanliness—a major British preoccupation later—together with some pockets of development. He noted:

The first was a large mosque, to the top of one of whose minarets there is an extensive view of the city and country around. It is in a bad state of repair, and contains nothing worthy of notice...Next day, we went to see the mosque built by the great Akbar [sic], at the north extremity of the city. It has three domes, faced on the outside with white marble, and its four large and lofty minarets, faced with a fine red sandstone...but now all is in a state of ruinous decay, the whole place being used as barracks for a company of infantry...The palace of Akbar contains one tolerably good hall of audience, open on three sides, supported by graceful marble columns...But in what a changing world we live! In the hall where suppliant princes once knelt in the great emperor’s presence, Ranjit now keeps picketed among the marble columns some half a dozen horses!...[In the city] a sewer, containing black, filthy mud and water, runs in the middle of every street, threatening defilement, unless a person is elevated too high...The streets, moreover, are all so very narrow that two elephants cannot pass, nor even a camel and an elephant...The houses are from three to five stories high, and nearly all built of bricks that have been dug out of the ruins of the old city....They are built

very densely together; the narrow bazaars are crowded, and the streets are full of people; so that the population seems to be very great, and not diminishing...The walls of the city, and its mosques, and the fort, certainly do present the appearance of decay. But that seems to be owing to the Maharajah's neglect. He takes more interest in building up Amritsir. The population of Lahor cannot be less, I should think, than one hundred thousand; yet the present city is a mere village compared with the ancient... (Lowrie, 1850, p. 157-9).

Lowrie even accompanied Ranjit Singh on two hunting expeditions in the country where he was amazed to see the importance and the seriousness with which the Maharaja and the retinue treated the sport. Lowrie, also attended to the Maharaja in court and noticed the '...half-business, half-conversational manner of their proceedings. As each item was mentioned, something was said by him [Ranjit Singh] either of approbation, or to modify it—which was assented to by the courtiers seated around, who had hardly ventured even to make a suggestion' (Lowrie, 1850, p. 163).

Lowrie remained at Ranjit Singh's court for about a month and then took his leave after being presented with a *Khilat* [ceremonial robe] and other presents by the Maharaja. As soon as he returned to Lodiana he got the news that two more missionaries Rev'd James Wilson and Rev'd John Newton and their wives had landed in Calcutta and will start shortly for Lodiana. It was the same Rev'd Newton who in just over a decade laid the foundations of the mission in Lahore which would lead to the college which stands today.

With the arrival of the new missionaries, the school Col. Wade had started was formally handed over to the missionaries, though Col. Wade remained its patron. As a history of the mission college noted,

The school consisted of Hindus, Sikhs, Christians and Mohammedans, and the last named curiously enough were predominant in numbers, but during the next few years the Hindus constituted much the largest number. These youths varied in age from eight to twenty, and we are told that their places of residence reached from Patna to Kashmir an even Kabul...Two departments were included in the school, the primary and the high school. In the former, Roman Urdu, the elements of English Reading and Writing and the elements of Grammar and Arithmetic were taught. The studies of the high school were remarkable indeed. The boys were taught to use English readers, and the curriculum included geography, English grammar, arithmetic, universal history, natural philosophy, astronomy, evidence of Christianity, geometry, history of England, chemistry, political economy, surveying, history of India, physical geography, mental philosophy, logic, algebra, and the Bible (Datta, 1939, p.2).

By 1849 there were eighty names of the roll, with a daily average attendance of seventy. A department of Persian as well as the teaching of Hindi and Sanskrit had also commenced. By that time the mission school had indeed become the preeminent English school in the region.

Conclusion

The setting up of the school in Ludhiana was perhaps the most revolutionary step by the missionaries in northern India. The mission school was the first 'modern' school in northern India and ushered in the era of English education in the area. The school formalised education, introduced science as a compulsory subject, and also taught people the fundamentals of the Christian religion. These endeavours therefore created a far more deep and lasting impact on not only Ludhiana city, where the first school was established, but also each and every place where they set up a school, and the Punjab and northern India in general. As a result, the Christian missionary enterprise in India developed a distinctive identity since its inception under British rule. Rather than being mainly a proselytising organisation, most mainline Christian missionaries became pioneers of modern education and health in India. In fact, the start of modern education—to a great extent, lends itself to the innovations of the Christian missionaries, and the government merely followed them in a number of instances. Furthermore, due to the educational endeavour of the missionaries, their work expanded from merely converting people and creating perhaps a

'Christian community,' to a stake in the larger development of India as a polity. Thus, their role became critical in all communities—Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and others, since a large majority of the students they taught were not Christian. This focus then meshed well with the British 'civilising mission' of India which took prominence in Victorian Britain, as these schools and colleges lent credibility to the official argument.

In the end, the missionaries did not succeed in converting many Indians—the number scarcely passed 2% of the total population, but their influence and role in Indian society increased manifold. A large part of the national movement in India, both Muslim and Hindu, were educated in missionary institutions and it was often these institutions which taught them concepts of freedom, equality and representation which they ultimately gave them the necessary tools to challenge British rule in India.

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