

II. INDIAN WORLDVIEW

1. Unity of All Things [*eka jivam*]:

- 1.1 All things are part of the same cosmic force field. There are no qualitative differences between life/non-living beings, beings/forces, good/evil. All are manifestations of the same underlying unity.
- 1.2 All life is one. There are no qualitative differences be gods, humans, animals or plants. All life ranges from pure spirit through mixed matter/spirit to pure matter.
- 1.3 All life forms must be revered as sacred. Consequently, we must treat all life with respect. To kill an animal is to take life, and it only extends our bad karma and cycles of reincarnation.

2. The Material World is made up of Moving Particles:

- 2.1 All the differentiated, manifest, substantial forms of reality evolved or devolved from a single, unmanifest, equilibrated substance.
- 2.2 The present manifest forms are made up of a great many 'particles' that have different properties such as hot-cold, and active-passive.
- 2.3 What triggered the 'first' movement [action or karmam] of the generative process is unknown, hence presumably there is an inner property, such as the codes of and for action that is 'written' into all substances. This is like the 'dissatisfaction' of the five elements that is often equated with desire, which replicates at a higher level of organization the inception of other diequilibrated entities.
- 2.4 Indian culture is person-centered. There is no dharma [code of conduct], no unit of time, no food or soil that is moral or good for all persons at all times. Everything is context specific.
- 2.5 One acquires one's 'substance' from one's 1) parents, 2) village, 3) house, 4) sexual encounters, 5) food one eats, 6) people one touches, and so on. Through these one constantly is in danger of getting out of balance. Consequently one must be careful of what comes into one's body at all times in order to maintain an equilibrium.
- 2.6 Different entities in the manifest world have different degrees of substantial equilibrium and disequilibrium.

- 2.7 As a result of disequilibrium, humans and even gods must continue to strive to restore equilibrium to their bodily substance. This equilibrated state in the body is the key to health and well being.
- 2.8 To maintain identity with one's village is to eat the food raised there, to drink the water there, and to breathe the air there. This is why parents often send children to their 'home towns' in order to regain their primal territorial identity.
- 2.9 The search for states of equilibrium in everyday life are rudimentary fascimilies of actions aimed at achieving *moksha* - the ultimate equilibrated order that transcends all context. Actions such as pilgrimage can lead to a permanent release from the differentiated, manifest world and a total immersion in one's essence, which is the universal essence, the undifferentiated primordial substance.
- 2.10 Because everything is made of moving 'particles' there are no sharp boundaries between thing, no eternally fixed entities. Everything is constantly changing and interchanging with that which is around it.

3. Purity and Pollution:

- 3.1 Equilibrium and spirituality lead to purity. Disequilibrium and anything that ties us to this world lead to impurity.
- 3.2 Impurity includes:
- touching dead bodies or anything dead, such as hair clippings. Consequently barbers, surgeons, leather workers and all who handle dead things are defiled.
 - dealing with body excretias and dirt. Consequently, washer men and villager sweepers are defiled.
 - sexual contacts, especially with people of another caste, are defiling because they introduce foreign particles into the body.
 - spiritual ministries, on the other hand, are purifying. Consequently priests and especially household purohits are clean.
- 3.3 The community must maintain some people [the priests] who are pure enough to communicate with the gods in order to receive their blessings such as crops, children and well being. To do so, other castes must take away their defilements and dispose of them. For instance, Barbers must take away the dead hair of the priests, Sweepers clean their yards, etc. If the community loses touch with the gods and their blessings, it will decay and die.
- 3.4 Boundary maintenance between pure and polluted things is of high importance, otherwise one is constantly defiled.

4. Hierarchy:

- 4.1 All life is ranked along a line of hierarchy of purity and pollution, spirit and matter.
- 4.2 The ranking is based not on the model of a ladder, but on degrees of exclusion from the pure. This involves the principle of 'encompassing' and 'encompassed'.
- 4.3 Each person and community of life [*jati*] has its own functions to do [*dharma*] in maintain the whole society. In doing these without complaint is to gain purity in this life, and a higher rank in the next.
- 4.4 The most stable relationships are 'patron-client' relationships in which one is superior and responsible for the other, and the other is inferior and serves the first. This is not a contractual relationships, but one is born into it, and inherits it from one's family.

5. Time:

- 5.1 Time is fundamentally linear, but overlaid by cyclical time.
- 5.2 Individual beings constantly cycle through the manifest universe in the process of *samsara*.
- 5.3 There is no sharp difference between history and myth, reality and fiction. This world is fundamentally *maya* [illusory].
- 5.4 Nevertheless, we must now deal with the world as if it were real, for the only way out of it is to return to a basic equilibrium.

6. Space:

- 6.1 Space is particular in nature, so it has sacred-defiling characteristics associated with it, just as do objects and beings. The terrain around a village is a microcosm of cosmic history of the gods and ancestors.
- 6.2 There are other levels of space parallel to this one, including the world of the gods and the world of animals.

7. Priority of Order over Righteousness:

- 7.1 Fundamental to the Indian worldview is the concept of a cosmic order that must be maintained. Chaos is the greatest evil.
- 7.2 The cosmic order is threatened by evil which threatens to undo or invert that order.

- 7.3 The cosmos the battle ground of the unending contest between good and evil, Rama and Ravana, good kings and bad kings. The one who wins sets up the empire or kingdom.
- 7.4 When good wins, it can set up the righteous kingdom, but to win it is free to use evil methods if the evil side is already doing so. Otherwise the battle would 'not be fair'. Consequently, violence, killing and hatred characterize both sides of the battle.
- 7.5 Righteousness is secondary, and can only be sought after good wins the battle.

IV. A COMPARISON OF KEY HINDU AND CHRISTIAN CONCEPTS

In responding theologically to Hinduism, we need to see how their key concepts compare. This will enable us to see, in part, areas of difference and conflict, and bridges that might be used to communicate Christian understanding.

1. Righteousness and Sin:

- 1.1 Hinduism: Advaita Hinduism makes no fundamental distinction between good and evil. Both reflect a deeper oneness. Gods, humans and animals do both.
"The difference between weakness and strength is one of degree; the difference between virtue and vice is one of degree; the difference between heaven and hell is one of degree; the difference between life and death is one of degree; all differences in this world are of degree, and not of kind, because oneness is the secret of everything. All is One, which manifests Itself, either as thought, or life, or soul, or body, and the difference is only in degree." Vivekananda: 1978:13
- 1.2 Christianity: makes a fundamental distinction of kind between good and evil. Good is living in obedience to God's ways, evil is to disobey them.

2. Karma and Grace:

- 2.1 Hinduism: has justice without love, mercy, and forgiveness. Everyone must bear the consequences of their own *karma*.
- 2.2 Christianity: believes in justice and punishment, but also that God is love and he bore our *karma*.

3. Maya and Historical Realism:

- 3.1 Hinduism: holds that the external world is *maya* and that there is no real distinction between history and myth, fact and fiction. All is illusion.
- 3.2 Christianity affirms a real, orderly external world, and a real history within it. God works out his redemption in that history.

4. Advaita/Dvaita vs Contingent Dualism:

- 4.1 Hinduism: holds either to the unity of all things (*advaita*), or to dualism (*dvaita*), or to dualistic-monism (*dvait-advaita*). In *advaita* all is one, so one worships gurus, humans, animals and plants.
- 4.2 Christianity: holds to a contingent dualism in which God, the eternal, infinite and omnipotent being creates an orderly, finite and contingent universe which exists outside of himself.

5. Samsara vs. Death and Judgment:

- 5.1 Hinduism: has no final judgment, only an endless transmigration terminating in cessation of being.

5.2 Christianity: has a moral judgment that maintains righteousness, and brings the hope of eternal heaven and joyful existence.

6. Moksha vs. Salvation:

6.1 Hinduism: the end is cessation of the self and merger into the infinite.

6.2 Christianity: the person retains identity and becomes perfect.

7. Dharma vs. Corporate Responsibility:

7.1 Hinduism: each person is totally on his/her own.

7.2 Christianity: we are called into *koinonia* and covenant community life.

8. Guru vs. Christ:

8.1 Hinduism: the worshiper has a personal tie to the guru and god, but no community.

8.2 Christianity: we are followers of Christ, and therefore part of the same family.

9. Margas vs. One Way:

9.1 Hinduism: all roads lead to God. We choose the one we want to take.

9.2 Christianity: Christ is the only way.

10. Relativism vs. Absolutes:

10.1 Hinduism: everything is relative.

10.2 Christianity: there are absolutes, both historically and morally.

11. Ahimsa vs. Nonviolence:

11.1 Hinduism: violence is evil and the person should withdraw from life lest she/he be drawn into its actions and so acquire *karma*.

11.2 Christianity: violence is evil, but a person must be involved in life and its activities to fight against evil. The model is the incarnation of Jesus.

HINDU WORLDVIEW

THE 'TWICE-BORN' CASTES

NON-ARYAN CASTES

OUTSIDE SOCIETY

CASTES:

Brahmin
priests,
teachers,
advisors

Kshatriya
rulers,
kings,
warriors

Vaishya
agricult.,
merchants,
traders

Sudra
servants,
washermen,
artisans

Untouchable
sweepers,
leatherworkers

STAGES OF LIFE:

Student
clothing,
schooling

Householder
marry, have
children,
business

Retired
hermits,
live in
forest

Ascetic
Not a 'stage',
anyone can become
an ascetic

GOALS OF LIFE:

Dharma
virtue
(caste specific)
specific).

Artha
material
success:
wealth.

Kama
pleasure: art,
music,
sex, dance.

Moksha
release through
knowledge, disciplines,
(yoga) devotion, duty.

WAYS TO RELEASE

Karma-yoga
duty

Raja-yoga
disciplines

Bhakti
devotion

Jnana
wisdom

V. EVANGELISM AMONG HINDUS

Adapted from Dr. Theodore Srinivasagam

1. Hindrances to Hindus following Christ:

There are several hindrances for Hindus accepting Christ, and following Him. A few of these are given below.

1.1 Hindrances emanating from theological issues:

- 1.11 The need for **salvation**--Hindus say, "We are not sinners, only ignorant."
- 1.12 The Christian claim of the **uniqueness** of Jesus Christ, and a call to leave other gods and goddesses.
- 1.13 The call to **conversion** and separation leading to changing one's faith, religion, way of life and community.
- 1.14 Fear of the **wrath of their gods** (especially their community gods) if these are forsaken.

1.2 Hindrances pertaining to Christian Community:

- 1.21 The many denominations and divisions in the church are a great hindrance. So too the many litigations among Christians.
- 1.22 Nominal Christianity in the church confuses Hindus because they often mistake nominal Christianity as the genuine one, and so reject it.
- 1.23 Worship of idols and veneration of saints by the Roman Catholic Church gives the impression that Christianity is not very different from Hinduism.
- 1.24 Most Hindus identify Christianity with western culture because of the western Christian way of worship, the use of western songs and music, and the way Christian festivals such as Christmas are celebrated with eating, drinking and dancing. Also the mannerisms in preaching, psychological techniques used in evangelistic meetings, dependence on western theology and literature, and architecture used in church buildings are foreign to India.
- 1.25 Many Hindus view the church as being rich and receiving funds from the west. So conversion to Christianity is construed as being due to financial inducements.
- 1.26 There are several misconceptions in the minds of Hindus about Christians. Some of them are:
 - they are not patriotic,
 - they have lost their culture and are westernized which is considered bad,
 - they come from lower castes,
 - they eat meat including beef,
 - and they are considered bad and immoral in some parts of India.

1.3 Hindrances pertaining to socio-cultural issues.

Hindus live in close knit communities and caste groups. While many would like to break down these barriers, they are afraid to do so, owing to social pressures. Some hindrances that spring from these issues are as follows:

- 1.31 They fear being ostracized from their community and caste groups, and labeled as betrayers.
- 1.32 They believe that only lower caste people become Christians, and so fear mixing with them.
- 1.33 They are afraid of being labeled unpatriotic.
- 1.34 Marriage prospects and employment opportunities in the community are less if they become Christian. [Some men are willing to become Christians to marry a Christian woman, but many question whether such conversions are genuine]

1.4 Hindrances pertaining to economic issues:

- 1.41 Hindus fear being cut off from claims to family property.
- 1.42 They fear the loss of government concessions and jobs offered to untouchables.
[Note: the government does not consider Christians to be untouchables, even though they are converted out of untouchable castes]

2. Approaches to Reaching Hindus.

2.1 Religious aspects.

A theology that is consistent with the bible and at the same time that can be understood by the Hindu mind longing for peace and bliss needs to be developed.

2.11 General approaches to reaching Hindus.

2.111 **Use of words:** One should fully appreciate that words such as God, trinity, world, human, sin, salvation, rebirth, and incarnation have entirely different meanings and connotations to Hindus. So when using these terms one should explain what the Biblical view is of these. Take the example of 'sin'. For many Hindus there is no such thing as sin; for others it means committing crimes such as murder or adultery; for still others it is going against one's conscience; and for still others it is going against the wishes of their family, caste or community.

2.112 **Use of bridges:** One should look for bridges between the Christian faith and Hinduism, just as Paul did in Athens. Some of these are as follows:

- there is a lot of wisdom in Hindu Scriptures. One can use sections or quotations from them, such as from the Rig Veda, Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, either to clarify or reinforce a truth.
- using of certain terms such as 'Trinity.' The Hindus can grasp this easily as there are similar concepts in Hinduism such as Trimurthi (Brahma, Vishnu, Siva as one). Or we can use terms like *sat-chit-anand*. However, we must be fully aware that 'Trinity' is very different from Trimurthi, and so on.
- Hindu respect for Scripture should be fully used. Quoting from the Bible, reading it, and having bible studies has a profound influence on Hindus.
- while the concept of *avatar* (appearances of gods to destroy evil dowers) is ingrained in Hinduism and can be used to explain the incarnation, it should be done

so cautiously, for the two concepts are very different.

2.12 Approach to specific groups of Hindus:

Because Hinduism varies a great deal, no one approach will be satisfactory in reaching them all. So, before evangelism of Hindus is attempted, one should get to know the beliefs and practices of the particular group to whom we are witnessing, and then devise a suitable strategy to reach them.

As intellectual Hindus are concerned about God, humans, the soul and so on, we should not only understand the various schools of thought in philosophical Hinduism, but also be clear of the biblical teaching and then present the Gospel to them along these lines.

The following approaches are useful for specific groups of Hindus:

- 2.121 **Philosophical Hinduism:** Today this consists largely of *Vedanta*. This kind of Hinduism is attractive to intellectuals. It derives its philosophical systems from the Vedas and Upanishads. Because the soul of God and humans are in union, no savior is needed. There are three main schools of thought in this area:
- *Advaita*: The best proponent of this was Sankara (788-820 a.d.). this is the philosophy of non-dualism. God and humans are not different, but one.
 - *Vishistadvaita*: The best proponent of this was Ramanuja (1017-1137 a.d.). This is the philosophy of modified dualism. God and humans are separate, but share one soul.
 - *Dvaita*: The best proponent of this was Madhava (1199-1278 a.d.). This is a philosophy of dualism. There is a clear distinction between God and humans, with the former being superior. There is some evidence of Christian influence on this philosophical system.
- 2.122 **Bhakti Hinduism:** Most Hindus are in some degree followers of *bhakti* or salvation through devotion to a god. It is important to realize that this form of Hinduism is closest to Christianity, and so there are many bridges. Yet it also poses some of the greatest problems because of its doctrine that all gods are one, and that each person should have the right to choose their own god [*ishta devata*].
- 2.123 **Popular Hinduism:** This is based on traditions, temple cults, worship of idols, fear of spirits, magic, exorcisms, and so on. Adherents are devoted to certain gods and goddesses who bring prosperity and protection to them. They also worship and do rituals to appease them. Here fear is a common emotion.
- Because this type of Hinduism is extremely varied, the presentation of the Gospel has to be made specific to the needs of each group of followers of a certain god or goddess. To those afraid of their deities, the message that 'God is love' has a powerful attraction. Emphasizing the moral character of God, and highlighting the positive aspects of the Christian faith which are negative to Hinduism also helps. Popular Hinduism is mixed with spirit worship, and preaching the power of God who can deliver them from the power of evil spirits has a positive influence.

- 2.124 **Tribal Religions:** Tribes throughout India practice a great variety of religions, some influenced in varying degrees by Hinduism. Central to most is the fear of spirits, magic, worship of animals, plants and totems, and divination. Worship is to appease the spirits, and gain protection and prosperity. The Gospel should be presented to them as the deliverance of God from their fear of the evil spirits. Furthermore, most tribals are exploited, and the message of the love and justice of God is attractive.
- 2.125 **Mystic Hinduism:** There are many gurus of Hinduism with varied emphases. Some stress meditation and yoga. Others claim supernatural powers of healing, performing miracles, foretelling the future, etc. Thousands follow such gurus. When presenting Christ to followers of this type of Hinduism, the emphasis should be on meditation, in the Christian way, on the God who can heal and perform miracles, and on the Holy Spirit.
- 2.126 **Secular Hindus:** There are a growing number of nominal and secular Hindus who may be materialist, and who accept any religious practice, or are indifferent to religious practices. The reality of God and the non-permanence of the material world should be emphasized in preaching the biblical message.
- 2.17 **Hindu Sects and Cults:** There are various sects in Hinduism such as Shaktiism, Tantrism, Hanuman worship, Kali worship in Bengal, Venkateswara in A.P., Murugan in Tamilnadu and Swami Ayyappa in Kerala. We need to understand their teachings in order to present the Gospel to them.
- 2.18 **Militant Hinduism:** In recent years various Hindu reform movements are giving rise to militant Hindus opposed to the spread of other faiths among the Hindu population. They are involved in propagating Hinduism and reconverting people of other faiths, including nominal Christians, back to Hinduism. Such movements include the Arya Samaj, Rama Krishna Mission, Vivekananda Kendra, Hari Krishna, and Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sang (RSS). A number of these have joined to form the Vishwa Hindu Parishad which opposes the spread of Islam and Christianity. We must remove their apprehensions about Christianity and present to them the God of love and forgiveness.
- 2.13 Hindu concepts that can be used in presenting Christianity:
- 2.131 **Karma and the cycle of rebirths (*samsara*):** Jesus Christ, because of his death on the cross, has taken the penalty of our sins and so delivered us from the cycle of rebirths and *karma*.
- 2.132 **Peace or *shanti*:** We can obtain peace with God through Jesus Christ. At core, Hinduism is a search for peace.

- 2.133 **Bliss:** Being in communion with God is bliss and this can be had through Jesus Christ.
- 2.134 **Holiness:** Hindus respect 'holy people' which is evident by external marks such as simple life-style, worship, asceticism, suffering, peacefulness, and so on. The Christian message can be a powerful tool to a call to true holiness in Christ.
- 2.135 **Love:** To the majority of Hindus who are afraid of their gods, the message of a God of love is a powerful attraction.
- 2.136 **Immortality or *amrita*:** This has a powerful attraction to common people who have little interest in becoming a part of the one cosmic spirit.
- 2.137 **Salvation or *mukti*:** This, too, has a great appeal to common folk.
- 2.14 Christian concepts that can be emphasized: There are several Christian concepts that are important in presenting the Gospel to Hindus:
- 2.141 **Creation:** The creation of the world by God in an orderly way--a creation that obeys the laws set by the Creator (there is no theology of creation in Hinduism).
- 2.142 **Scriptures:** We need to present the Scriptures as historical facts (in Hinduism all scriptures are myth or other-worldly stories).
- 2.143 **Jesus:** We need to present Jesus as a historical person with a recorded genealogy.
- 2.144 **Peace:** God offers us peace through Christ.
- 2.145 **Salvation:** This is a gift of God because of God's grace to us.
- 2.146 **Sacrifice:** Jesus is our once-for-all sacrifice for our sins.
- 2.147 **Forgiveness:** We can have assurance of forgiveness of sins.
- 2.2 Social and Cultural Aspects:
The social and cultural aspects of following Christ should be explained to inquirers. Some are listed below:
- 2.21 In becoming a Christian one is not denationalized in India. Many Indians are Christians and good Indians.

2.22 The constitution and law of India does not prohibit conversion, and permits the practice and propagation of Christianity and other religions.

2.23 One can still be a member of his/her community even after conversion, and be actively involved in the life of the community.

2.24 Christianity is not a western religion. Jesus was an Asian living with an Asian way of life. One does not have to adopt a foreign culture to become a Christian.

2.3 Economic aspects:

Economic aspects of following Christ should be explained to seekers and new converts.

2.31 Financial and other aid should never be promise to seekers.

2.32 The likely loss of economic benefits from the government should be pointed out to seekers from lower castes.

2.33 Faith in God to meet their material needs should be emphasized and case histories given as examples to seekers.

2.4 Dangers to avoid:

2.41 Theological issues:

- do not excessively use Hindu terminology that would lead Hindus to feel better informed and content with Hinduism.
- do not criticize anything that is treated as a curse in Hinduism (such as caste) as there are several Hindu reform movements fighting against them.
- do not use too tender a method of presenting the Gospel as the people may take the concepts of judgment, sin and wrath of God too lightly.
- do not criticize Hindu worship or symbols.

2.42 Community issues:

- do not discourage seekers and new believers from following their own language, music, drama, and customs so long as these do not contradict Scriptures.
- do not discourage new believers from taking leadership in local congregations.

2.43 Economic issues:

- do not give material inducements to seekers.
- do not make new believers dependent on you for material benefits.
- do not flout your wealth in front of seekers.

3. Methods that can be used to make Christ relevant to Hindus.

Before starting evangelism of Hindus in an area, groups likely to respond to the Gospel should be identified. These may be caste groups, age groups or professional groups. Sometimes only women, or only men are responsive. Then select direct and indirect methods to witness to them.

3.1 Direct methods: Direct methods vary from place to place, and community to community.

- preaching in the open air, as well as in homes.
- one-to-one and group Bible studies.
- producing and distributing literature relevant to the group.
- showing Christian films.
- using culturally relevant music, cassettes and music groups.
- having culturally relevant radio and T.V. evangelism.
- large open air meetings, especially in urban areas.
- bhajans, songs, acting sequences, dramas.
- Christian reading rooms, game facilities and gathering places.
- praying for God's healing.
- using dialogue leading to the proclamation of the Gospel.
- repeated visits and explanations of the Gospel to the same families and communities.
- concentrating on family units rather than individuals. Normally we should not baptize one spouse. Rather wait until they come as a couple.
- retreats, special meetings for seekers.
- use revived churches as centers for evangelism and church planting.

3.2 Indirect methods:

3.21 Church and worship:

- congregational worship is absent in Hinduism and attracts many Hindus. So interested Hindus should be taken along to worship services.
- sitting and praying in groups attracts Hindus.
- remove shoes on entering a church and sit on mats. This makes the Hindus feel more comfortable, and is a general sign of worship.
- use locally composed songs set to local music using local instruments.
- the church architecture should conform to the local setting.

3.22 Home and family:

- invite Hindu friends to Christian homes, especially to family functions such as weddings, festivals, etc. This helps break down barriers of misinformation.
- care for Hindu neighbors and help them in times of need.
- be a helpful member in the community. This gives opportunities to witness.

3.23 Social concern:

- concern for the poor, needy, sick and helping meet human needs helps people see the

love of Christ.

- projects undertaken in the name of Christ to help people become self-reliant brings good will.
- medical work, both hospital and community, is very effective.
- where illiteracy is high, literacy classes, schools and hostels for children have made a great impact.

Finally, it must be realized that in spite of all our knowledge about Hinduism and techniques to reach Hindus, it is prevailing prayer for our Hindu neighbors, a consistent Christian life style, and dependence on the Holy Spirit that will bring these people into the Kingdom of God.

VI. CONTEXTUALIZING THE GOSPEL IN HINDU SETTINGS

The church in India must find effective ways to evangelize Hindus. It must also provide a theological critique that defines Indian Christianity over against the Indian worldview and Hindu beliefs. If it does not do so, in time Christianity in India will be come captive to Hindu categories and assumptions and become Christo-paganism.

1. Key Areas of Concern:

- 1.1 Hinduism has no theology of creation or final judgment. We need a theological response to its infinite regressions.
- 1.2 In Hinduism gods are part of this finite world. We need to make explicit the Biblical teaching about God as ultimate reality.
- 1.3 In Hinduism 'incarnations' (*avatars*) are common. But the concept does not carry the notion of an ultimate God crossing a qualitative gap and becoming a part of his creation. We need to make explicit the Christian doctrine of incarnation over against *avatar*.
- 1.4 In Hinduism, each person reaps what he/she sows (karma). There is no place for grace. We need to develop a theology of grace, and of God taking our *karma* on himself (E.S.Jones).
- 1.5 Hinduism is eclectic--all roads lead to God. We need to stress the uniqueness of Christ as the only way, but do so in love and winsomely.
- 1.6 Hinduism does not have a strong concept of the worshiping community. We need to develop the theology of the Kingdom of God, and of the Church as a body of caring, evangelizing and worshiping believers.

2. Indian Christian Theologians and Their Attempts at Contextualizing the Gospel.

- 2.1 Chenchiah: (1886-) "The Universal Spirit"
 - differentiated between churchianity and Christianity. In the end this led him to advocate a churchless Christianity.
 - complained that most Christians emphasize the historical Jesus, but fail to declare the "living and present Christ, the Universal Spirit who is present everywhere."
 - regarding *samsara* he taught, "Jesus offers an escape from *samsara* by leading humanity into the Kingdom of God, which is the transformed world without its fundamental limitations. He regenerates humanity and changes men into sons of God, with no sin in them but with eternal *rama* to draw upon."
 - he said, "We need to communicate Christianity as life and power, and not as institution. In place of baptisms, admissions to churches . . . we have to emphasize the formation

and growth of the Lord in the human heart, the indwelling of Jesus in the human soul.”

2.2 Chakkaraj: (1880 -) “The Selfless Christ”

- accepted the historical, incarnate nature of Jesus, but emphasized also his universal nature. “Christ has been made a prisoner of historical authority and succession--this is history with a vengeance. The Church has made Christ, and can exist without Him, but he cannot exist without the Church, the *ne plu ultra* of Churchianity.” He saw the Jesus of history and the Jesus of experience in creative tension.
- he interprets the humiliation of Christ as a gradual overcoming of one’s ego--*anavam* in Tamil, and *aham* in Sanskrit. He criticizes western theology for overemphasizing one’s individuality. He sees the human ego as the source of original sin. “The personality of Christ can never be what it is in man, for in man it is centralized around the ego, be it metaphysical or psychological . . . this ego is the first and last enemy of man and probably his devout friends, being number one.”
- salvation is “the elimination of the I . . . it is the original sin of man that our living in Christ and Christ’s living in us is designed to destroy.” On the cross Jesus’ words, “My God, why have you forsaken me” is the egoless Christ in perfection.
- he made a sharp distinction between Christ’s incarnation and Hindu *avatars*.

2.3 Appasamy: (1891-) “Theology of Bhakti”

- emphasized the need for meditation and devotion. “Meditation is in the form of continuous recollection [of God] uninterrupted like the flow of oil. When such steady meditation is attained, all knots are untied.” (Quoted from Chand Upanishad viii 26.2).
- while stressing experiential Christianity, he cautioned against Experientialism that leads to frenzy and ecstasy. He points out that in India “highly wrought emotional religion has its dangers.”
- he defines *bhakti* as: 1) love of God; 2) response to that love; 3) communion with God; 4) immanence of God; 5) protest against ritualism; 6) distinction between God and humans; 7) fellowship in religion; 8) missionary zeal; and 9) revolt against caste.
- he attacks the western pragmatic approach to life. Westerners, he notes, have little appreciation of the ‘inner life.’ He develops the roots of mysticism in Christianity by showing Paul as a mystic.

2.4. Sadhu Sundar Singh: (1889 -) “Contextualized Gospel Cup”

- Christian leaders need to be *sadhus* and live like holy people as defined by Hindus--not as defined by Christians.
- he made extensive use of parables which were more than pictures. He saw them as paradigms of theology.
- he stressed the Asian view of the Kingdom of God. It stresses the need to be ‘other-worldly people’ living in this world. The church is to be a spiritual community, not an institution.
- he bordered on universalism. He stressed the deep longing and commitment to religious experience in India in contrast to the western emphasis on immediate life.

- 2.5 Upadhyay Brahmabanday: () “Vedantic Apologetics”
- saw Vedantic thought higher than Greek philosophy, and so sought to build on that.
 - he saw the three vedantic concepts of *sat*, *chit* and *ananda* (being and truth; consciousness and wisdom; bliss and joy) to be the threefold description of God and parallel to the Christian concept of the tri-unity of God.
 - he sought to adapt the concept of *maya* and reinterpret it in Christian terms--it is the illusion humans are under when they refuse to embrace Christ as Savior.
- 2.6 Raimundo Panikkar: (1918 -) “Unknown Christ of Hinduism”
- trained in European philosophy
 - believed general revelation and common grace mean there is a hidden presence of Christ in Hinduism (cf. Acts 14:16-17; 17:23). In this he builds on Farquhar’s concept of Christ as the Crown of Hinduism.
 - “the power of a symbol may be so enlarged and deepened that each symbol--even if it is primarily and directly meaningful in that environment in which it originated, opens up experiences and realities not intended in the actual symbol.”
 - he sees fallen humans not so corrupt that they are incorrigible. Rather they strive to completion and wholeness. There is something in every human that does alienate them, but allows them to reach fullness of being. We need to discover and fan that flame within them.
 - he rejected Kraemer’s claims of the uniqueness of Christ.
- 2.7 Manilal C. Parekh: () “Gospel of Devotion”
- eclectic. Christianity is not a distinct religion, but an essential part of the harmony of all religions. This lead him to universalism.
 - he felt that the only road to God was *bhakti* and accused Protestants of being far too militant, institutionalized and this worldly oriented. He resisted the mass movements to Christianity, and wanted people to become *bhaktas* of Jesus wherever they are.
- 2.8 M. M. Thomas: () “The Cosmic Christ”
- 2.9 Martin Alphonse () “Christianity as Bhakti”

3. Missionaries and Their Attempts to Contextualize the Gospel in Hindu Contexts

- 3.1 Roberto de Nobili: (1579-1656) “The Brahmanization of the Gospel”
- a contextualized life style
 - a contextualized evangelism
 - a contextualized apologetic.

3.2 Farquhar: (1861-1929) “Christ the Crown of Hinduism”

- saw Christ as the fulfiller of Hindu aspirations and truth.
- had an overriding emphasis on “the humanity of Christ, the moral basis of the message, and the exemplary value of Christ’s life and death in self sacrifice.”

3.3 C. F. Andrews: (1871-1940). “Incarnational Apologetics”

- stressed pietism and identification with India and its causes.
- stressed love of God and avoided teaching the wrath of God.

3.4 E. Stanley Jones (1884-1973) “Christ of the Indian Road.”

- must differentiate between Christ and Christianity. We must preach Christ.
- developed the Round Table Conference method of sharing faiths.
- used *ashrams* to evangelize higher caste Hindus.
- stressed the incarnational nature of Christ and his ministry.
- stressed the Kingdom as central to the message, and the King as definer of the Kingdom.