Although, as per tradition, the Christian missionary work in India was started on the Malabar coast of Kerala in 52 A.D., by St. Thomas the disciple of Jesus Christ, it was the Jesuit Missionaries of Catholic Church who started the first Christian missionary enterprise in 16th century in Andhra. The decline of French power has led to the rise of East India Company in Andhra and thereby Protestant Missions in course of time. The British East India Company which was adopting religious policy of neutrality to protect its trade links and political power, did not allow the Christian missionaries to India in the beginning except a few Anglican missionaries to provide religious instruction to British soldiers and British officials who were stationed in India as members of East India Company.

Only after the passage of Charter Act of 1813 in British Parliament, several missionaries came to India and Andhra for the propagation of Christianity. Those, who came to Andhra from different denominational backgrounds to spread Christianity include the London Missionary Society at Visakhapatnam in 1815, the Godavari Delta Mission at Narsapur in 1839, the Church Missionary Society at Machilipatnam in 1841, the American Baptist Mission at Nellore in 1841, the American Lutheran Missionary Society at Guntur in 1842, the Canadian Baptist Mission at Kakinada in 1874 and the Salvation Army at Vijayawada in 1884.

Although these missionary societies' main purpose was proselytization i.e., conversion of Indians to Christianity as commanded by Jesus Christ "Preach, teach and heal", (Mathew 4:23), to achieve their goal, they adopted fourfold
method i.e., evangelism, establishment of schools, hospitals and philanthropic activities of different kinds.

The Canadian Baptist Missionary work among the Telugu people of North Coastal Andhra was initially organized and conducted by two independent missionary organizations from Canada such as Ontario and Quebec society from 1874 when John McLaurin and A.V.Timpony started evangelical work and the Society for Atlantic Provinces from 1875, when the 'serving seven' namely W.F.Armstrong, Mrs. Armstrong, Mrs.Boggs, Miss Eaton, Churchill, Currie, Rufus Sanford started their evangelical work at Coconada. They continued as separate organizations with Cocanada as its Central place for 37 years i.e. upto 1912 during which period these organizations kept their own separate identity not only in the administrative and financial aspects, but also in sending their own missionaries and organizing their own mission fields. During this period the missionaries of both the fields comprised of evangelists, educationalists, Doctors, nurses and others with or without their families came to Coastal Andhra Pradesh and laboured very hard in the alien lands for the glory of His kingdom, and spent lots of money; braving the climate, health, comforts and language. The important aspect of this period was the establishment of 22 missionary fields, all along the coast of Bay of Bengal from Krishna District in the South to that of Ganzam district in the north and organized several institutions such as schools, hospitals, theological and industrial organisations.
After 38 years of independent work, these two missionary societies united and formed as one mission known as The Canadian Baptist Mission, in India in 1912 and continued for 35 years i.e. upto 1947 as a single mission society. There after the dissolution started from Mission to Church and all the properties including the churches, schools, hospitals and other evangelistic and vocational institutions gradually came under the control of native laity and clergy.

On the basis of the linguistic differences in the territorial expansion of the church, such as Telugu and Oriya, only a small portion of Northern border lands of Andhra Desa such as Ganjam, Koraput, Rayagada districts in Orissa State became the Utkal Baptist Church Association while the area located between Srikakulam to Krishna Districts in Andhra, the majority of area in Southern region became the Convention of Baptist churches of Northern circars (CBCNC).

In order to plant a Baptist Church the missionaries from Canada from the very outset, enlisted co-labourers from the Telugu converts to labour side by side with them when making evangelistic tours through the villages. Indian co-workers were placed as supervisors of children in the boarding houses, Indian teachers trained by the missionaries were placed to serve in the schools, nurse aids and dispensers were used in the medical ministry, and finally the entire medical program was transferred to the Church's doctors and nurses and administrators of the mission hospitals. Indian brethren were installed in the villages as teachers and preachers, and leaders of assemblies who had become Christians as a fruit of the Gospel effort.
The first center of the Canadian Baptist Mission was established at Cocanada in 1874. The proclaiming of the Good News of redemption through faith in Jesus Christ from this center soon followed by centers at Akidu, Avanigadda, Samalkot, Chicacole, Bhimunipatnam and Ramachandrapuram which brought spiritual fruit. Both men and women were saved. In consultation with the new converts, it was found expedient to unite them into a local church. After prayer and fasting, a simple church organization was formed with a Charter membership of several Telugu Christians. The formal planting of the Canadian Baptist Mission in India can thus be traced back to this modest beginning at Cocanada.

The ministry of evangelizing and church planting, the teaching of illiterate children and adults in church boarding schools, and carrying on a healing ministry in its hospitals, gave rise to the establishing of additional centers in both mission areas with the arrival of additional missionaries and the increase of Indian co-workers. In course of time, 22 mission stations were established by these two Canadian Missionary Organizations at (1) Cocanada North (1874); (2) Bimilipatnam (1875); (3) Vijayanagaram (1875); (4) Chicacole (1875); (5) Bobbili (1878) (6) Tuni (1879) (7) Akidu (1880); (8) Samalkot (1882); (9) Yellamanchili (1890); (10) Vuyyuru (1891); (11) Tekkali (1891); (12) Parlakimidi (1892); (13) Ramachandrapuram (1892); (14) Narsapatnam (1893); (15) Palakonda (1900) (16) Savara (1903); (17) Pithapuram (1905); (18) Anakapalli (1906), (19) Vizagapatnam (1911); (20) Sompeta (1911);
(21) Avanigadda (1912), (22) Rayagada (1905). From these centers, the evangelistic work was conducted to the surrounding areas. These fields embraced a population of several million living in over 3,000 villages and cities. By 1974, the year of centenary, the baptized living membership of the Canadian Baptist Church of India had grown to over 1,50,000 with communicants of over 1,00,000.

The year 1947 was also the year when a basic change took place in the administration of the Baptist Church with the formation of Convention of Baptist Churches of Northern Circars. By this time the stature of the India Christian leadership had matured to the degree that the Canadian Baptist overseas Mission Board (CBOMB) of Canada agreed with the missionaries and the India brotherhood, to transfer the administrative responsibility of the Church entirely to the Indian Canadian Baptist Christians. In God's gracious providence, the Canadian Baptist Church of Andhra Pradesh had reached a stage at which it was adjudged capable of self-administration, self-support, and self-propagation. Through the years many faithful and capable men and women had emerged from the ranks of the Church membership in the area of preachers, teachers, nurses, medical doctors, and lay leaders, to whom the responsibility of the Baptist Church and all of its various endeavors were transferred.

A constitution was formulated in 1947 and was adopted in 1948. A Governing Council and Board of Trustees were elected to head the Church. The indigenous organization was registered with the Indian Government. The remaining missionaries, teachers, doctors, nurses from Canada, later took on the
status of co-labourers, and were gradually phased out as Indian workers took over the various responsibilities, and the Baptist Church constituency of Canada provided the needed operating funds to Indian Baptists. A basic transition of this nature is not without its hardships. But by the 1990's the Canadian Baptist Church of India had become fully conscious of its identity, its calling under God, its mission of accepting the administrative responsibility of proclaiming the redemptive provision in Christ Jesus to their people and beyond, and its position as a sister Church in the larger sphere of the Baptist Churches of the world.

**Churches**: As of today the growing Canadian Baptist Church of India consists of hundreds of church assemblies gathering regularly for worship in their church buildings, and at new places located in cities and many villages over the Church area in Andhra Pradesh State. The Church with its large membership plus its vast communicant constituency has grown into Conference proportionate with many evangelists, preachers, pastors, teachers, Bible women, personal workers, but also many contributing laymen. Active church members are found in various secular occupations or professions of India's society in general, such as farmers, surveyors, railroad and air travel employees, school and college teachers and presidents, government officials, physicians, business men, bus drivers, health department personnel, postal clerks and many more, who shared and supported the endeavors and functions of the true Church of Jesus Christ in India.

**Schools**: The propagation of the Gospel and the training of people for a position of useful service in the Church and for the vocations and professions in
life, is impossible without schools. At its beginning in 1874, the missionaries of
the Canadian Baptist Church of India, faced an illiterate mass of dear people,
living in thousands of villages with no national schools. A teaching program from
the ground up was inevitable.

The first school for children was begun in 1874. In rapid succession a
school program was provided at every church center. As soon as there were
converts who had the necessary information and ability to instruct others, the
educational ministry was extended from these centers to the villages round about.
A tremendous instructional effort was in operation by means of over 500 schools
of the Church years before India's government schools began to reach into rural
areas.

- The national preacher-evangelist most often was also the village
teacher who gathered around him a group of village people, mostly children, but
also adults, to teach them the rudiments of reading and writing, the content of the
Word of God, the singing of Christian hymns, memorization of Bible verses, and
avenue of communion with the living God through prayer. An unique feature of
the educational facility organized by the Canadian Baptist missionaries was the
establishment of Caste girls schools, a feature to reach the parents of caste Hindus
and Muhammadans who were otherwise unreached and the establishment of
Boarding schools to prepare the church workers beyond the reach of caste and
cultural boundaries of the villages.
The educational ministry of the Canadian Baptist Church which has more than 100 years' history, developed into a system of organized schools ranging from the elementary through the high schools and including Bible Schools, a Bible Institute, and the beginning of a Seminary training center at Kakinada. Schools of various sizes are located at various centers over the Church area. The largest day High Schools located at Kakinada, Visakhapatnam and Akidu employ a staff of more than 150 teachers instructing an enrollment of over 1,400 young people from the first year through high schools. The largest of the schools, the McLaurin high school, with boarding facilities operates at Cocanada with an enrollment of over 700 and a staff of 52. The school, with a Christ-Centered curriculum and Christian teachers, is considered to be a sacred duty of the Church of Canadian Baptist Mission.

**Hospitals**: The land of Andhra Pradesh has made great medical progress during the last several decades. In earlier years, however, it was not so. The vast number of India's rural masses, especially the out-castes, were without medical care and many existed in physical misery and wretchedness constituting a most fertile soil upon which black art, witchcraft, sorcery, healing quackery, demon possession, economic and spiritual exploitation on the part of practitioners thrived. Into this sorrowful need came the emerging Canadian Baptist Church, moved by the spirit of God, with knowledge of sanitation, an ability to extend first aid, and the skills to extend medical aid to combat numerous diseases and relived the masses from untold sufferings. The consecrated emissaries of the church and
mission came with a heart constrained by the love of Christ to make known to the people the love of the Great Physician who is able to heal both soul and body.

It was through the administration of medical aid that India's caste people could first be approached with the Gospel. At times people from even more than 100 miles from different castes and outcastes were waiting at the church hospitals for relief from physical distress and illness. Even today, the Canadian Baptist Church of India is operating some clinics and dispensaries and seven hospitals for general diseases and two leprosy hospitals staffed by Indian Christian doctors, nurses, and supplementary staff.

The Socio-economic and cultural conditions of the newly converted Christians was very bad and hence the missionaries tried to improve it by establishing vocational training institutes by which they imparted skills in Carpentry, black smith, tap making etc. The Lace making and knitting factories were also established for improving the economic status of women. Orphanages were organized at Vijayanagaram, Samalkota, and Akidu and there by they tried to save the children of those parents who lost lives in the I and II World Wards or due to famines. The relief and rehabilitation Programmes were also conducted by the missionaries and Church members in a big way when there were natural calamities such as Cholera, Plague etc. and also during cyclones droughts and famines.
Publication: The Canadian Baptist Telugu Church of India was also operating a publishing house and printing press at Kakinada since 1906. This institution in the beginning was organized by missionaries but it is presently staffed and operated entirely by nationals, including the editorial staff, press operators and composition men. Its staff edited, printed and distributed the 'Ravi' News Paper and 'Vivekavati' magazine. The Publication Society also published Sunday School lessons, sermon helps for ministers, doctrinal material, Bible instruction booklets and guides, hymnals, tracts, marriage and baptismal certificates, and the publishing of books, etc., all in the Telugu and/or English languages. Thus it contributed for the growth of journalism and Telugu literature.

During the past century, there have been hundreds upon hundreds of faithful believers involved in shaping the Canadian Baptist Church of India. The missionaries felt that the Church members should have certain standard of life and amenities befitting it. For this purpose the church was mainly devoted to make the people literate, educated and enlightened. They also concentrated on hygiene of the people. So the church actively established schools and hospitals as these were tangible services. The missionaries learnt and expressed themselves in vernacular to reach the people. They also gave their might during the natural calamities such as cyclones, draught and famines and gave equal treatment to all the people irrespective of caste, creed, colour, class etc. in the schools and hospitals. Thus the missionaries and the early converts have become the first social workers of the area and commenced the task of bringing about a social change in northern Coastal Andhra.

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