CHAPTER II

ESTABLISHMENT OF PROTESTANT MISSIONS IN THE CENTRAL PROVINCES

Several Christian missions were established in India in the nineteenth century. Unlike the earlier ones of the eighteenth century whose activities were confined to the coastal lands and the big towns, the new ones penetrated into the interior of the country. The Central Provinces, being the heart of India, could not remain long out of the purview of the missionary work in the nineteenth century.

In fact, there was greater scope for humanitarian work and more opportunities for the spread of the Christian Gospel in this province than in any other province which had already seen the missionary work. The Central Provinces was comparatively backward in all respects than the earlier three Presidencies and the latter provinces of the North-Western Provinces and the Punjab. In this Province the largest number of aboriginals, tribals, backward and depressed communities resided. There were well marked distinctions between the upper classes and the down-trodden. Social inequalities and economic disparities were rampant. The aboriginals and the tribals were treated as outside the pale of civilised life. Their existence, though outwardly free, was highly miserable. For lack of means and assistance from those who were resourceful they were not in a position to improve themselves. The State had always neglected them and the society always treated them as inferiors. Hence no facilities whatsoever were ever provided to them for advancement. Education was non-existent in their society. The municipal or the local administration did not exist there. The medical
facilities were non-existent. There were neither proper roads to link their localities with bigger places nor any sanitary arrangements. Nature was their only companion. Their agricultural methods and means of production were primitive. Modern ideas of economic development through cooperation was unknown to them. Those who came in contacts with the so-called civilised people were merely exploited and enslaved. The wages they received could hardly make their both ends meet. This state of primitive economy, social degradation, lack of education and want of means of improvement provided considerable scope for the institutions and organisations which could take interest in promoting their welfare. The Hindu and Muslim social orders had not made any such arrangements for their uplift. When the Christian missionaries came to know about these things they found considerable scope for their work amidst them to whom they could really render some help and at the same time bring them to the fold of their own religious orders.

Finding virgin soil for missionary work in the territories of the Central Provinces, a number of Christian missions, from the Christian world, poured into the Central Provinces at different times in the nineteenth century. Among them the following were the most significant in points of their resources, dedicated workers and burning zeal for emancipation of the social, economic, intellectual and cultural life of the teeming mass of neglected humanity, residing in a scattered manner in the wildernesses of the Province having no good contacts with one another.

The United Free Church of Scotland Mission

The first missionary society that ventured to come to the Central Provinces was the United Free Church of Scotland Mission. Its first missionary who landed on the shores of India was Donald Mitchef. After eight months, three other missionaries of that order, viz.
John Cooper, James Mitchell and Crawford joined him at Calcutta in 1823. In 1830 Alexander Duff, a notable member of the mission arrived in Calcutta, joined his colleagues and became head of that mission. He chalked out a programme for the work of his mission and in persuassion of that plan, a branch of the mission was founded at Kamlpee, a military centre of the East India Company, sixteen kilometres away from Nagpur. Here a poor house and a school were started in the same year and a sub station for mission work was established at Nagpur where a church was built up in 1840. This church was the first church in the Central Provinces. A turning point came in the history of this mission in the Central Provinces in 1845 when in view of the central position the Nagpur sub station was made the main centre of the mission and Kamlpee Mission was relegated. With £ 2000 bequest for the mission work by the wife of Captain William Hill, an officer in Madras Cavalry stationed at Kamlpee, and £ 500 donated by her husband, the Nagpur Mission was set on proper footing. The reorganised and renovated Nagpur Mission was kept under the charge of Rev. R. Stephen Hislop who opened a school in 1846 and emerged as the greatest missionary leader of the Central Provinces. Hislop school made fairly rapid progress under Principal Cooper who was incharge of it upto 1857, then under Hislop himself upto 1862 and subsequently under Principal David Whitton during whose time the school was upgraded to a college in 1883. Besides the educational work, the Nagpur mission devoted its attention to the work for public health also along with its evangelistic work which was taken up systematically in an organised manner since 1874. In 1883 the zenana work was entrusted to Miss Jane M. Small. During the subsequent years of the nineteenth

century, the Nagpur Mission established several outstations like Indora, Mohna, Durkhera, Dhapawara, Borgaon, Nirsan, Patasaongi and Saoner within the district. At every one of these places, a mission school was opened and a dispensary was started at Kamleshwar in 1898. Outside Nagpur district the mission stations of the U.F.C.S. were established at Bhandara, Chhindwara and Sarida in 1863, 1868 and 1889 respectively. At Bhandara the work was initiated by Vankat Rao, a Brahman convert of Bombay, who was posted as inspector of schools then in that town. Rev. Cooper visited Bhandara in 1879 and emphasized the need to start sustained work in that district. On his recommendations Dr. J. Sandilands and J. Dougals were deputed in 1888 for medical and school work respectively. Since then systematic mission work in various directions commenced at Bhandara and continued uninterrupted throughout the country. The credit of opening a mission at Chhindwara goes to Rev. J. Dawson who started work right from the very beginning among the three lakh Gonds inhabiting around the town. In 1885 this mission was transferred to the Swedish Mission for want of resources and adequate number of workers. The establishment of a mission at Sarida could be possible through the generosity of J.T. Morton of London. With the financial help given by him a bungalow was purchased and Rev. Dr. Dougald and Mrs. Revie were entrusted with the Medical work which was extended subsequently to Varora and Nawadi. In course of the time, Sarida Mission station brought within its purview the mission work in the neighbouring district of Chanda with a separate out-station at Naginabagh.

The Gossner Evangelical Lutheran Mission.

This mission in the Central Provinces was sent by Rev. Gossner of Germany under the name of Christian Mission among Gonds. It was in response to an appeal by Donald McLeod who was Deputy Commissioner of Seoni. Pastor Gossner sent a band of six missionaries under the leadership of Rev. Elios Leoch. They arrived at Jabalpur in 1842, proceeded to Mandla and made Karanjia as centre of their work in February 1842. Apparently the climate of the place appeared to be quite suitable for Europeans. But with the advent of summer season, it proved too warm for them. In that kind of climate, four of them died probably of cholera. The victims were Elios Leoch, Julious Schleisner, Karl Glatzky and Heinrich Gossner. The remaining two left the place and their work, and went to Nagpur for the recovery of their health and never returned to the place they had selected. This was the fate of the second Protestant mission which had arrived so enthusiastically with a well-defined programme for its work.

The Church Missionary Society, London.

This society was organised in London in 1799. It initiated its work in India in 1807 by sending a small grant for missionary work. A corresponding committee of the society was formed in Calcutta in 1814 and started its missionary operations in Calcutta and Bombay. The Calcutta Committee sent Rev. F.A. Kriess, Rev. W. Smith and a native catechist Nahamiah Nikant Shastri to Jabalpur and Nagpur in 1852 to explore the possibility of the mission work in the Sagar and Narmada territories and the Bhosala State of Nagpur. In accordance with their recommendations the Calcutta Committee sent

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William Rebsch to Jabalpur in 1854 as a school teacher and lay missionary. He received much encouragement in his work from Mosley Smith, the Sessions Judge of Jabalpur and Rev. A.F. Dawson, the government chaplain. Two years later Rev. E. C. Stuart was transferred from Calcutta to Jabalpur to reinforce mission work started by him. During the Revolt of 1857 the work was impeded but after its suppression in 1858, it was gradually resumed. Rev. Elis Champion reached Jabalpur in 1858 and infused fresh vigor to the slackened working of the Church Missionary Society. Schools were started at Gorakhour, Gonaour, Lordganj, and Sadar Bazar. On his retirement in 1882, the mission was led by Rev. J. P. Ellwood. With the assistance of Rev. E. T. Harbert, G. P. Durrant, C. H. Gill, Issac Vincent and Dr. W. P. Johnson, he further advanced the work systematically organised by his predecessor. The first church was built at Lordganj in 1864 where the European missionaries as well as the Indian converts regularly congregated on Sundays and other special occasions for group worship and performance of religious functions.

From Jabalpur, a centre of their work, the members of the C.M.S. extended their activities to its interior of the district as well as to the neighbouring districts such as Narsinghpur, Sagar, Damoh and Mandla. The former two were regularly visited since 1860 and 1874 respectively, without establishing separate stations at those places until 1878 when the mission work in these districts was handed over to the Swedish Mission. At Damoh the mission work commenced in 1880. Two Indian Christian preachers were hosted for the purpose. They worked under the supervision of the Civil Surgeon of the town in his voluntary

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2. C.M.S. Proceedings 1884–85, p. 98.
personal capacity. The Civil Surgeon was neither an independent preacher nor a part of the mission establishment. Dr. Hooper started medical work in Damoh in 1894. Within Jabalpur district two outstations were opened at Murwara and Ujiyarpur near Katni in 1883.

Rev. Champion's attention was drawn to the backward community of two million Gonds residing in Mandla district among whom more fruitful missionary work was possible. With this end in view he regularly visited Mandla and prepared ground for the activities of his missionary society. He held regular religious services in a place given to him by a retired military officer named Captain Waddington for the use of mission work. In 1873 he acquired a site for erecting mission buildings, settled down there and made Mandla the head quarters of the C.M.S. Gond Mission. In the extensive field of his work several sub mission stations were established in the Gond areas. Rev. E. P. Harbert, H. P. Parker, J. Lotham and Dr. W. P. Johnson came to manage the work at new stations in 1884. A church was built in Mandla town in 1885 and the estate of Chiraidongri was purchased from the Government in 1887 for establishing a Christian colony for the converted Gonds. A few sub stations were also established in other parts of Mandla district. At Patpara and Barwaspur sub stations, E. P. Harbert started schools in 1885, and at Patpara W. P. Johnson established a hospital in 1887. At Deori, sixty four kilometres away from Mandla, H. P. Parker opened a school in 1890. At Marpha sub-station he spread the mission work in the neighbouring places of Baragoan and Mangalganj near Chiraidongri. Subsequently the work was extended to the villages of Moria, Khajri and Rachka. The other eminent missionaries who joined the Mandla Gond

1. C.M.S. Proceedings 1880, p.12.
Mission were Rev. H.J. Molony, F.D. Price and S. Waker in the years 1890, 1892 and 1899 respectively.

The Friends Foreign Missionary Association, London

The members of this organisation are also called the Quakers. This mission was organised in 1861. In 1865 its attention was drawn to the extension of the arena of its missionary work to India. After fully ascertaining the fruitful sphere of work Miss Rachel Metcalfe was sent in 1866 to Banaras, the principal Hindu religious and cultural centre in the heart of the northern India. She was joined by Elkanah and Irena Beard in 1869. It took them a couple of years to realise that Banaras was a wrong choice for missionary work in India. There they could not make any headway and the missionary work could not cut any ice. Therefore disappointed and frustrated they shifted the arena of their work to the Central Provinces. To begin with they came to Jabalpur in 1870 and studied the scope for their work in its urban surroundings. As the Church Missionary Society and the Methodist Church Mission were already functioning there and were having good work with their limitations, it was hardly possible for a new missionary society to find much work for it. Therefore they proceeded towards Hoshangabad in search of a suitable place where no other missionary organisation was functioning and the scope for work was adequate. On the way they stopped for some time at Sohagpur where Samuel Baker, H. John Williams and his wife Effie joined them. After studying the scope for work at Sohagpur they reached Hoshangabad in 1875 and established their headquarters there.

After five years of evangelical work with indifferent results they established a mission station and an orphanage at

Hoshangabad and entrusted that work to Mr. and Mrs. Williams. In 1887 a girls orphanage was opened at Hoshangabad. In the same year C.E. Henry and Susan Dalmas reached Hoshangabad. Several other missionaries of the Friends Foreign Missionary Association reached Hoshangabad. Among them were Eliza Frankland in 1891 and Earnest Charles and his wife Marion Ker in 1897. On the death of Miss Rachel Metcalfe in 1889 several other missionaries poured in to make the Hoshangabad Mission an important centre of the Friends Foreign Missionary Association. The new entrants were D. Charles, A. Nebel Terrell, Sarah R. Pike, S. Catherine Murphy, Elizabeth Jackson, Clara Hooper, Alfred Taylor, Fanny Bruin and Joseph Taylor. With their support the mission work was extended to Savalkhara, Rohma, Porcha and Malachat. Another missionary named Joseph Taylor opened Seoni Malwa for mission work in 1890 and a sanatorium was set up at Pachmarhi, the well known hill station of the Central Provinces. In the same year George Swan, a new arrival, opened sub stations at Lahi, Samangaon, Simordha, Salí, Lokhartalai, Kaparia and Nandanwara.

Satisfactory working at the above mission stations promoted C.E.F. Munnings and his wife S.R. Munnings to open a mission work at Itarsi in 1893. At the end of the next year Francis Kilbey and his wife Mary extended the work to Rasulia, Bhatna, Isapura, Lalpani, Sankhera and Sameswani. In 1896 a station was opened by C.R. Jones at Bankheri. After two years he was relieved by Edward Butler. In 1897 Earnest Charles and his wife Marion Ker joined their senior colleagues. Thus, after eight years of wandering and hob-nobbing in quest of a centre of the Friends Foreign Missionary Association could build up a permanent centre for its work on the bank of holy river Narmada. The outskirts of the town being established by the backward Gonds and

2. Ibid.
Kurku tribe where the response to the missionary work among them was quite meaningful.

The German Evangelical Mission of America

The fifth Christian missionary society in chronological order which came to the Central Provinces was the German Evangelical Mission of America. This was the first American mission in India which was supported by several European Christian denominations like the Dutch Reformed, the German Presbyterians and the German Evangelicals. It selected Chattisgarh as a field for its work. The pioneer missionary of this organisation was Rev. Oscar T. Lohr who came to Raipur with his family on May 31, 1868 to start mission work at places where it could be more fruitful and on the advice of Colonel Salmain, the Commissioner, who had accorded warm welcome and developed friendship with him, he started his mission work amongst the backward Satnami by opening a normal school for them. In 1869 he bought 1600 acres of land for agriculture at Bismaramur, about 32 kilometres from Raipur. Subsequently this place became the headquarters of the German Evangelical Mission of America. The premises to accommodate the mission were constructed forthwith and the mission church was completed in 1873. In the same year Pandit Ganga Ram, an Indian Christian from Jabalpur, volunteered his services to assist Rev. Lohr. He was posted for general mission work at Ganeshpur near Bismaramur where a chapel was built up for the purpose.

2. Koening, J.C.: A Short History of Bismaramur Station, p.1. (Manuscripts) Folder No. 63-3 His 62, E.S.N.A. Archives, St. Louis U.S.A.
The Evangelical Synod of North America.

The pace of work was very much accelerated when in 1884 the German Evangelical Mission was reorganised in America and transformed into the Evangelical Synod of North America without any other kind of change. With the removal of the word German from its name the Evangelical Synod became more resourceful and better financed by Americans irrespective of their denomination or place of origin. Immediately in the following year, Rev. Tanner and Rev. Jost were sent to Bisrampur to reinforce the existing work. The latter established new stations at Baitalpur and Chandkuri. Rev. A. Hagenstein came in 1899 to Baitalpur from where he went to Parsabhad, a place forty kilometres from Baitalpur. Rev. K. W. Nottrott arrived at Bisrampur in 1892 and after two years of experience of mission work he was sent to Baitalpur where he started a leprosy home. In the years to come the mission work was extended to Jora, Bhatapara and Baloda Bazar by the end of the nineteenth century. Besides the work among Satnamis from Bisrampur centre, missionary work was also undertaken at Raipur proper and entrusted to Rev. John Frank in 1870. Rev. A. Stoll accelerated the missionary programme by establishing a church, a school and an orphanage. He carried on the work alone, with single minded devotion doing slip-sod work till the arrival of Rev. Cass from Bisrampur in 1894. His contribution was the establishment of a seminary in 1898 which became a nursery for preachers to expand the evangelical work at the places they were posted. Thus the chief missionary centres of the Evangelical Synod of North America were Bisrampur and Raipur. While the Raipur centre confined its work

2. Hagenstein, Rev. A. : My work in Chhattisgarh. (Manuscript) Folder No. 82-17, ch 42(1), E.S.N.A. Archives.
exclusively in the urban areas, the Bisrampur Mission spread its tentacles into the rural interiors of the district and concentrated its work among the backward and down-trodden community.

The Methodist Church Mission of America

This missionary society was organised in the year 1819, but entered the mission field comparatively later in the year 1854 at the suggestion of Rev. Alexander Duff who was then visiting the United States of America. The pioneer of this mission in India was William Butler. He came to Banaras in 1856. After some time the organisers of the mission in U.S.A. divided India into two zones named North and South India for the convenience of their work with their headquarters at Calcutta and Bombay respectively. Subsequently the South zone was further subdivided into the Bombay and the Madras Conferences. These zones were made for convenience' sake. They were subjected to readjustment according to the changing circumstances and growing requirements. The Central Provinces fell within the jurisdiction of the North India Conference. Rev. Albert Norton and Rev. G.K. Gilder were sent to Nagpur in 1874 and 1876 respectively. They held meetings at the Railway Institute and the Kamptee cantonment and decided to have mission establishment. In 1886 A.S.E. Vardon and Rev. C.P. Hard were stationed at the Kamptee Mission. A land was purchased to house the mission. The Scottish Church which had already been functioning there since 1840 left Kamptee Mission station in favour of the Methodist Church. In reciprocity the Methodists left Nagpur Mission station in 1889. Thus while Kamptee became the headquarters of the Methodists, Nagpur became the centre of the Scottish Church.

Another station of the Methodist Mission was opened at Sadar Bazar, Jabalpur in 1874 by Rev. C.K. Gilder. Then came M. Eales in 1875, M.H. Nicholas in 1876, Levie R. Jenning in 1877, W.R. Brown 1882 and Alfred Creamer in 1886. A church building was erected in 1886 which was inaugurated by Sir Alexander Mackenzie, Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces. Rev. C.P. Hard was transferred from Kamptee to Jabalpur as the Presiding Elder of the Narmada Valley. He was relieved by T.S. Johnson in 1891. The estate of Pilikothi was purchased in 1893. Several schools were opened during his tenure. Dr. Felt came as the Presiding Elder in 1895. An estate at Hawabagh was obtained in 1897.

Khandwa was reached by Rev. A. Norton in 1873, but the real work was started in 1880 when Rev. D. Osborne preached at the Railway Institute. Howe came in 1880 and built a small church at his own expense. In 1883 J.C. Mills started schools and an orphanage at Burhanpur and opened sub stations at the villages of Surgaoteli,Jeswari, Aulia and Kaladit in 1890. Another sub station was opened at Pandhana by Miss Ngatt in 1896.

Narsinghpur was reached by the Methodist Mission in 1891. They purchased the establishment of the E.N.M.S.S. and established their own organisation. Rev. C.P. Hard who came from Jabalpur and became in charge of the district. He remained there until Rev. J.O. Denning relieved him in 1893. Denning started an industrial training school, an orphanage in Narsinghpur and a farm of 170 acres of land at Soghini village. A three storied building of the local rajah was purchased for the orphanage during the famine of 1897.

3. Rinman, Miss V. in In the Heart of India, pp.17-18.
Rev. Charles B. Ward opened the Bastar State for the Methodist Mission in 1892. In this work assistance was rendered to him by A.H.L. Fraser, the Commissioner of the State. A sub station Sironcha was established in Chanda district in 1894 for the missionary work.\(^1\) A circuit at Sironcha was formed comprising Yellandu, Sironcha, Raipur and Bastar State.\(^2\) Rev. Gilder acquired a plot of sixty four acres at the very nominal rent at Sironcha where a dispensary, a school, a bungalow and a church were built up in 1897. Jagdalpur was reached in the same year. Ram Kishore received the missionaries kindly and helped them. Rev. Gilder started work at Raipur in 1898. In the following year some mission buildings were constructed. In 1900 other sub stations were opened at Durg, Chuikhadan, Bandai, Silhoti, Parpori and Patan.\(^3\)


This Swedish society had contemplated to incept a propagation centre in India mainly for religion. It consulted the Free Church of Scotland Mission about the prospects of work among the Gonds. The latter welcomed the idea and thus the work was started. The first band of the Swedish missionaries arrived in Bombay on December 14, 1877.\(^4\) They were received by D. Norfords who was a lecturer at Hislop College of Scottish Church at Nagpur who was deputed by his society for that purpose, and taken to Chhindwara which the Scottish Church Society had tentatively selected for their work. The leader of the batch was Rev. A. Gustav Danielson. At Chhindwara they studied the geography, history and anthropology of the province and decided to use Chhindwara as the take-off place for their work wherever it was possible. From

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1. Ward, C.B.: Our work; Eighteen years a Methodist Missionary in India, p.204.
2. Gilder, G.K.: In the jungle service in Missionary News, April 1921.
4. Rinman, Miss V.: In the Heart of India, p.5.
there they went to Narsinghpur and Sagar in 1878 and decided to establish their stations at both the places. At the former place the field was absolutely virgin as no other Christian mission had reached there, but at the latter place the C.M.S. was already functioning there. However, quite unexpectedly the Swedish Mission willingly vacated Narsinghpur in favour of the Methodist Church Mission of America in 1891 by an agreement with them. This, however, did not come in their way. The Church Missionary Society gladly handed over their establishment of Chhindwara freely to the new comers.

In the same year Rev. N.E. Lundborg and P. Carlson came to Chhindwara from where they were sent to Betul in 1880. Rev. Ivar from Stockholm reached Chhindwara in 1884 and soon they were sent to the villages of Nimpani and Bordhai to set up mission stations. In 1894 they extended their work to two other villages viz. Kondhar and Chicholi. After the death of Rev. Dowson, the leader of the Scottish Church, Chhindwara became the exclusive responsibility of the Swedish Mission. Soon after this Rev. Danielson took the overall charge of the Swedish Mission in his hands and accomplished a round work of his mission with a single minded devotion till his death in 1926. In 1886 the Swedish Mission spread its wing to Amarwara and in 1898 to Seja.

Thus by the end of the 19th century the Swedish Mission had only three stations in the Central Provinces viz. Chhindwara, Betul and Sagar for its work. Their main concentration was among the Gonds who predominated in number at the former two places and at the latter place their number was not altogether negligible. The Swedish Mission had a much brighter future in the Central Provinces in the twentieth century when its activities engulfed practically all its regions.

1. Binman, Miss V.: In the Heart of India, p.11.
The Disciple of Christ India Mission

This society was the third American missionary society which commenced its career in the Central Provinces in 1883. The most conspicuous thing about this society was that it had no factional identity in its nomenclature like the Purists. It commemorated the name of the founder of Christianity by naming it as the Disciples of Christ while organizing it at Louisville in Kentucky in 1875. Another novelty about this mission was that its women wing was also created simultaneously in the same year and both the wings worked parallel with complete unison wherever they went. Its attention was drawn to India firstly because of that its organizers had read about the position of its women; early marriages, sufferings of child wives, agonies of widows, discrimination against the female arrivals and appalling ignorance and deadening superstitions among them; and, secondly, because of the dreadful stories of famines and miserable conditions of its destitutes.

Fully intent to work among the women and in the famine-prone regions, the Disciples of Christ landed in Bombay in 1882. It was mostly in the beginning a women's mission consisting of six women, viz., Mrs. Norton, Miss Wharton, Miss Grabeil, Miss Boyd, Miss Kinsey and Miss Kingsbury and only one male, viz., Rev. Norton. After visiting Berar and the Central Provinces they selected Harda, a tahsil town in Hoshangabad district, as their mission station and commenced work with great zest. They were greatly assisted by T. Marshall, an officer in the Great Indian Peninsula Railways. The second batch of the Disciples of

4. Ibid, p.3.
Christ arrived in 1884, consisting of Miss Kinsey, and Miss Josepha Franklin. They opened schools in 1884. The third batch came in 1893 consisting of Dr. Durrand and Rev. Wharton. The former took up medical work and the latter opened a Bible school. A fine and commodious bungalow was constructed to house the mission personnel and a church was built in 1898 to fulfil the religious requirements of the Americans as well as the Indian Christians. The Harda Station had three substations at Timarni, Charna and Rahatgaon.

Next to Harda Bilaspur figured on the missionary map in 1885. Rev. and Mrs. Adams worked among the Satnamis and built several schools and orphanages for them besides a church in 1887 for common use. The two doctors Arebella Merrill and Olivia Baldwin took up the charge of medical work of the mission in 1889. Dr. E.C. Miller and his wife Dr. B. Miller joined them in 1891. In the same year Miss Kingsbury and Rev. Adams headed the mission in the out stations at Chatapara and Jorabhata respectively. Mungeli, forty eight kilometres from Bilaspur, was opened to mission by Rev. and Mrs. C.W. Jackson in 1888. The church and the necessary buildings were erected in the same year. Dr. E.M. Gordon and his wife Dr. Anna D. Gordon arrived in 1892 and bought the village and the farm of Pindhridih. Pendra was reached by Mr. and Mrs. Madson in 1900.

Rev. and Mrs. Mitchell, Miss Matie Burges and Miss Ida Kinsey came to Bina in 1894 and built a church in the following year. The humanitarian and evangelical work was taken up in the neighbouring villages of Rampur, Bazaria and Itawa. Damoh was chosen as another station in 1894 by Rev. and Mrs. Rambo, J.C. MacGavran and Miss J. Franklin reached there in the following year. Then came Dr. Mary MacGavran

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1. Lynn, H.M. : They Went to India, p 17
2. Franklin, Miss J. : A Short History of Disciples of Christ, p 30
in 1896. A large orphanage, a dispensary, a farm and an industrial workshop were established there. This was the first vocational institution of its kind opened by a mission organisation in the Central Provinces and it served as an example for other missions to follow.

The Kurku Hill Mission, London

This was the fourth and the last mission organised by the Church of England in the Central Provinces in the nineteenth century. Rev. Albert Norton and P.E. Ward were its first missionaries to come in 1875 to work among 85,487 Kurkus, a hill tribe in Central India. They initiated their work at Ellichpur in Berar and settled down there and made it their permanent headquarters. The Missionary Training Home of London, a training institute for European preachers organised by a society of British ladies, sent Mrs. Sharp and Miss Roberts to pioneer the work among the Kurkus. They arrived at Betul in 1889 and selected Bhaisa-dehi as a centre for their work. They were followed and assisted by Rev. and Mrs. Fletcher, Drake and Hook. Another station in Betul District was opened at Nimpani in 1891 by Miss Raine and Miss Roberts. Thereafter the Kurku Mission work was extended to several sub stations such as Khamla-Bithron, Jhellar and Duni in Betul District where hospitals, schools and an orphanage were started.

The Kurku Mission continued its work successfully till the end of the nineteenth century. Afterwards it decided to concentrate its work in Berar only and left the places in the Betul District of the Central Provinces to the care of the Evangelical National Missionary Society of Stockholm of Sweden which enthusiastically extended its work to this new centre.

The American Mennonite Mission

This was the last American Mission that landed on the shores of India in the nineteenth century. It was named after Menno Simons, a Dutch religious reformer whose thoughts slightly differed from those of Martin Luther and Calvin. He flourished in Holland in the sixteenth century. From him sprang a special sect known as Mennonites. One of the American members of that society George Lambert saw woeful sufferings of numerous victims of the dreadful famine of 1897 during the course of his visit to India when he was on his world tour. His eyewitness account coupled with the wide publicity of the famine in the world press moved the General Conference of Mennonites held at Okarusa, Indiana, to devise ways and means of ameliorating the miserable lot of the famine destitutes in India. That is how the American Mennonite Mission came to India in 1898. The pioneer missionaries of this organisation sent to India were J.A. Resseller, Mrs. W.B. Page, her husband and son. Without disturbing the missionaries of various denominations already working in different parts of India the Mennonite leaders were directed to found their mission at a place where no other mission was working within a radius of forty eight kilometres. They travelled from Bombay to Igaipuri and Bulsar in search of a suitable place for their mission in western India but could not locate it. From there they proceeded to the Central Provinces and reached Rajnandgaon where they were told of the mission prospects at Dhamtari, a town about sixty four kilometres away from Raipur. They reached that place on June 28, 1899 and pitched their tents under mango groves in natural surroundings until a legal agreement was made with the local malguzar.

2. Lapp, J.A. : The Mennonite Church in India, p.36.
for a lease of land for establishing a mission station.¹

In 1899 Rev. Wenger came to assist the pioneers. All of them settled in Sunderganj where a big mission was brought into existence. Inside it a school-building, a poorhouse, a hospital, a bungalow and an orphanage were constructed. The supervision of the orphanage was given to Rev. Jacob and Mrs. Mary Burkhard on their arrival at Dhamtari in 1900 and the medical work was entrusted to Rev. M.C. Lapp and his wife Sarah. Though the activities of the American Mennonite Mission spread over two years during the period under this study and only one mission station was set up, their contributions transcended that brief period to leave an impact on the annals of Christian missions in India.

In short, the main centres and out stations of various missions at the end of the nineteenth century were as follows:

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<td>Damoh</td>
<td>Harda.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hooghly</td>
<td>Bina, Bazaria, Itawa and Rampur.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sagar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evangelical National Missionary Society of Stockholm</td>
<td>Betul</td>
<td>Amagohan, Bordhai, Chicholi, Chitaljheri, Kondhar and Nimpari.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chhindwara</td>
<td>Amwarwara and Seja.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sagar</td>
<td>Khurai.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Board of A. Mennon. Mm.: American Mennonite Mission, Dhamtari C.P., p.10.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Missions</th>
<th>Centres</th>
<th>Out stations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evangelical Synod of North America</td>
<td>Bilaspur</td>
<td>Charpai and Sakti.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Raipur</td>
<td>Baitalpur, Bisrampur, Chandkurhi, Mahasamund and Parsabhader.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friends Foreign Missionary Association</td>
<td>Hoshangabad</td>
<td>Bankheri, Itarsi, Makoria, Pachmarhi, Rasulia, Seoni-Malwa and Shagpur.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kurku Hill Mission</td>
<td>Betul</td>
<td>Bhaисadehi, Duni, Jhaller, Khamla-Bithron and Nimpani.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Methodist Church Mission</td>
<td>Balaghat</td>
<td>Baihar.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Jabalpur</td>
<td>Aulia, Burhanpur, Jeswari, Kaladit, Pandhana and Surgaonteli.</td>
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<td>Khandwa</td>
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<td>Soghini.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Narsinghpur</td>
<td>Bandai, Chukhadan, Durg, Parpori, Patan and Silhoti.</td>
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<td>Jagdalpur.</td>
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<td>United Free Church of Scotland Mission</td>
<td>Bhandara</td>
<td>Nagina Bagh.</td>
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<td>Nagpur</td>
<td>Borgaon, Dhapawara, Indora, Kalmeshwar, Kamptee, Mohpa and Saoner.</td>
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<td>Wardha</td>
<td>Malwadi and Warora.</td>
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The Christian missions came to be established in the Central Provinces since the early years of the fifth decade of the nineteenth century. Although restrictions on the entrance of the missionaries into British India were removed by the British Parliament through its Charter Act of 1833, the East India Company was not very happy with this change in policy. Therefore the three missions that came to the Central Provinces and all others which went to other parts of the country were prompted by the enthusiasm of their European organisations rather than by any encouragement from the company's authorities. The
initial difficulties caused by the lack of knowledge of the country and its people, unfavourable geographical conditions including climate, and superficial knowledge of Indian religion, social orders and uncertainties about the response of the local people to mission work were tided over in course of time by the unwearying zeal and undiminished enthusiasm of the missionaries devoted to their work. With the exception of the second mission whose initial experiences were too horrible to them, the rest of the missions successfully established their groundings by the end of the nineteenth century.

After the transfer of power from the East India Company to the Crown, though by Queen Victoria's proclamation of 1858 a policy of complete religious neutrality and non-interference in religious and social matters of the people was openly proclaimed, the missionaries experienced more freedom, better atmosphere and no inhibitions against the mission work in the minds of British functionaries in the civil and military authorities. They received ungrudging support from them. The earnestness of the mission organisations in England and America, and the attitudes of helpfulness of the European servants of the Government of India were enough to multiply the number of missions in the country and sustained propagation of the humanitarian and evangelical work of the various missions that entered the field and embarked upon their work undaunted by difficulties and inconvenience unlike the medieval crusades against Christianity in the Muslim world. There was no organised opposition to the peaceful work of the missionaries though no advanced communities favoured religious conversion. By the end of the nineteenth century as many as ten missions—four British, four American, one German and one Swedish—had come to the Central Provinces. Out of these, with the exception of the German Mission which was the first to come, none had to wind up its work, and that mission which had to do so was not due to
any opposition or external factors but mainly because of their own psychological apprehensions about the insalubrious climate in which they were required to work. Out of the remaining nine missions as many as four viz. the E.R.R.S.S., the F.F.M.A., the Mennonite and the E.S.N.A., confined their work exclusively to the various regions, while the rest of the five were the all-India organisations and their field of work was extensive. With the exception of only the Kurku Hill Mission which had worked exclusively among the tribal people and had its headquarters in a tribal centre, all other eight missions had their headquarters in the district towns, but had worked in the urban as well as the rural regions. There was no district of the Central Provinces where some mission or the other had not established its stations or sub stations and which was not covered by their activities.

The Christian missions of various denominations functioning in different regions of the Central Provinces had a unique mutual understanding amongst themselves. Fully conscious of the identical nature of humanitarian and evangelical work they were performing in a foreign land several thousands of kilometres from their home countries their work was not marred by jealousies, ill-will or any kind of conflict of interests. Whenever there was a need, they always cooperated with one another and went out of their way to extend help to the new comers even by giving them their own established stations where the work was going on well. In such cases the new comers were saved from the initial difficulties and inconveniences. The Swedish Mission gave way to the Church Missionary Society at Narsinghpur and the Scottish Church left Chhindwara for the Swedish Mission. Another uniqueness about them was that they did not come into conflict with the local people of different religions. By their ceaseless efforts to improve the lot of the down-trodden through Christianity and philanthropic work, the
Christian missions struck roots in the heart of India. The few instances of missions initiating work at one place and then shifting to another place lock, stock, and barrel showed their lack of sound initial planning and the total abandonment of work in one case exhibited their lack of maturity, impulsiveness and want of fortitude to face odds for the sake of their principal love.