CHAPTER – VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS
The history of planting and growth of Christianity, Christian faith and Christian Church in a vast, varied and complex Hindu society like India is a glorious saga of historical adventures, persecutions and challenges.

The genesis, growth and activities of Church of South India in the southern part of India and its Rayalaseema Diocese in the most backward and drought prone districts of Rayalaseema region of Andhra Pradesh is an another venerable milestone in the Indian Church history. The highly dedicated, selfless and courageous Christian missionaries thousands of miles away from their native dwelling made their voyages surpassing all hurdles and hardships stepped into this tradition bound caste-ridden land with an evangelical zeal to spread the message of their Triune Almighty God Jesus Christ. They poured out their lives without measure for the cause of the Kingdom of God to be established in this temporal materialistic world.

The Indian Church history seed was sown by St. Thomas, the disciple of Jesus Christ in the First Century A.D. After the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 Christianity was separated from Jewish roots and the
Christian Church stood out as a quite separate, mainly gentile community. After the assassination of St. Thomas in 62 A.D. at Madras the Christians in India established and maintained religious relations with Christians in other countries like East Syria, Mesopotamia and Persia. These Christians who came to South India from Persia, settled down in South India and became Syrian Christians and converted the fishermen who were untouchables in that area into Christianity. Since then persons with a divine vision and zeal visited India and propagated the message of Jesus Christ the peace and love and started evangelising the people.

Christianity spread rapidly in India with the arrival of the Portuguese as they insisted everyone who lived in their settlements to be a baptised Christian. They also encouraged Portuguese soldiers to marry low caste women and consequently their progeny emerged as Roman Catholic Christians. Later, the Jesuit Missionaries of whom the work of St. Francis Xavier of Spain who was also the friend of St. Ignatius Loyola was notable in spreading Christianity in Indian continent and converting the low caste people to Christianity. The Jesuit missionaries adopted various techniques in impressing upon the Mogul rulers as well as higher caste Brahmins to show that Christianity is a newly discovered Fifth Veda.

The Protestant Christianity entered India with the establishment of Danish East India Company at Tranquebar. The translation of New
Testament into Tamil and a part of old Testament enriched the Danish missionaries carry out their missionary work in South India. The Society for Propagation Christian Knowledge (SPCK) Mission contributed much towards the funds of the Danish Mission and subsequently this responsibility was taken over by the Society for Propagation of Gospel (SPG). Later in the beginning of nineteenth century the Church Missionary Society (CMS) missionaries arrived in South India and very soon emerged as effective missions in establishing Churches and proselytisation.

With the arrival of William Carey the modern missionary movement originated among Protestants. He was responsible for founding of Baptist Mission Society and arrived Bengal as its first missionary. He settled in Serampur and the missionaries at Serampore were pioneers in the translation of the Holy Bible into Indian languages. The year 1795 is another landmark in the annals of Church history. The Anglican evangelists, Presbyterians and Methodists joined together to form London Missionary Society.

The renewed Charter of East India Company in 1813 by British Parliament enabled free admission for missionaries into India. Appointment and sending of Bishops to Calcutta started. The generation following Seepoy Mutiny of 1857 was that of the most rapid Christian expansion in India. There was a remarkable movement towards Christianity among low caste
people in various parts of the country including tribal people. Mass conversions took place. At the same time the Christian missionaries and evangelical workers all suffered persecutions and many were killed. An important landmark in Indian Church history was holding of the first All India Missionary Conference at Allahabad in 1872 and followed by series of such conferences for every ten years which finally paved the way for establishment of National Missionary Society in 1905. This National Missionary Society stressed the need and importance of one Christ, one Church and one Union.

The Protestant missionaries who arrived India adopted a simple understanding methodology in preaching the Gospel and they could very easily reach the illiterate common men in Indian society and thus made them to accept Jesus Christ and enabled them to slowly join as members of the Church. In this way the Churches established by European Christian missionaries gradually replaced the Hindu religious customs and traditions including Idol worship. From the homes of the Hindu converted Christians. The Indian Christians also started adopting and following the foreign and westernized Christian traditions and procedures in all their religious practices, worship, church constructions including their dress and language.

This kind of transformation in all their attitudes and activities created a kind of detachment between Indian Christians and Indian non-
Christians. The Hindu started calling Christianity as a foreign religion and a converted as 'Christian'.. In addition to this the Hindu-converts to Christianity were mostly from the depressed classes of Indian society who were socially departed in the order of social hierarchy and were treated as mostly untouchables. This also created lot of identity of Christianity with that of untouchables' religion. Not only the Christian doctrines and sacraments, but also the singing, playing of musical instruments all were western styled. Educated Indian Christians also followed western models and styles. Even the Churches construction, architecture administration of Churches, the funding all were western adaptations and foreign aided. Thus, the Churches in India were branded as foreign Churches and foreign institutions. This has been the status and position of Christianity and Churches functioning in India since the beginning.

This has not only been the situation of Churches when compared to other religion in India, but within the Indian Churches also there was no unity and uniformity. Basically the whole Christian Community was divided among themselves as Roman Catholics (followers of Pope) and Protestants (followers of Martin Luther who opposed the authority of Pope). Even among the Protestants, there were various denominations which followed different kinds of Church procedures, worships, doctrines and practices. There were pure conservatives among Protestants like Anglicans
and there were also liberals like Lutherans. Under these circumstances, there became a need for the Ecumenical Movement for Church unity in India.

The desire for Unification of Churches was discussed for the first time by the Anglican Bishops and then followed by Methodists, old Catholics and so on. The call given by the founders of National Missionary Society for the unification of churches into one United Church for India resulted in the efforts for Churches Union Movement in India. While forming part of the Church Union, in most cases the sacrifice was gladly made and someone both the sides felt that the new basis was more suitable for Indian Church than either of the systems it replaced.

The first fruit of Churches Union Movement was the formation of South India United Church (SIUC) in 1908. The Edinburgh Conference of World Missionaries held in 1910 put forwarded the necessity of three important movements within Church Union Movement; namely International Missionary Movement, Movement for Faith and Order and Movement for Life and Work. The All India Conference of Indian Christians (AlCIC) in 1921 while reiterating its opposition to the Non-Cooperation Movement of Gandhiji speculating ecclesiastical as well as political implications stated that the Indian Church like the Indian Nation had to be liberated from foreign rule and the time had come when all Protestant Christian Missions as such had to be completely merged into one Indian Church.
The Church Union Movement in South India received a setback in the initial attempts. The critical comments made by one of the London Missionary Society Missionaries in 1929 that the proposed union would be sacrificing too much Christian liberty. But the proposal was strengthened by the South India United Church, the Anglican Church and the British (English) Methodist Church. However, of all the Church bodies which negotiated Church Union in South India the British Methodists had the least difficulties in accepting it. The All India Conference on Church Union convened at Nagpur in 1931 brought together all those who were involved in the Church Union in South as well the North India.

The year 1947 was marked by two epoch making events; the first being the attainment of Indian Independence and the second being the inauguration of the Church of South India (CSI). The Church Union Movement's another fruit was the formation of Church of South India, which was made possible after lengthy discussions among autonomous Indian Churches which had been historically related to the mission societies. The Churches of Anglican, English Methodist, American Reformed (Presbyterian), British and American Congregational and Basel (Lutheran Reformed) traditions all united to become Church of South India in 1947 and in the same year its Constitution was also drafted.
Another fruit of Church Union Movement in Andhra Pradesh was the formation of Rayalaseema Diocese in Rayalaseema Region in 1950 covering certain areas of the four districts namely Cuddapah, Kurnool, Anantapur and Chittoor. This is a consequential and sequential development after the formation of Church of South India. This Diocese is the outcome of the amalgamation of Churches belonged to four Missions viz., London Missionary Society; Church of India, Burma and Ceylon (CIBC) formed as SPG; American Arcot Mission; and Kanarese Church of Mysore Diocese all operating in Rayalaseema region. The Telugu Church Council (TCC) having few Churches in Anantapur and Cuddapah Towns kept itself away from Union. After the formation of Rayalaseema Diocese a constitution was also drafted to enable the Diocese to function in an orderly manner. By the formation of Church of South India – Rayalaseema Dioceses (CSI – RD), there were no original Christians belonged to Church of South India but all belonged to anyone of the other Churches amalgamated as Church of South India.

After formation of Rayalaseema Diocese arrangements were made to transfer the funds and properties of the amalgamated Churches to the newly formed Rayalaseema Diocese. However, the disputes relating to transfer of properties to Church of South India by Telugu Church Council (TCC) went as litigation for a long period and finally settled in the Supreme Court of India in favour of Church of South India. The Diocesan Council after
its formation expressed its gratitude to London Missionary Society missionaries both past and present for the enormous services rendered for one and half centuries in Rayalaseema region. After the formation of this new Diocese, some ill feelings of superiority and inferiority complexions erupted among the members of erstwhile Churches which joined in CSI – Rayalaseema Diocese which were later eliminated by the Church leaders. Today there are 426 Congregations in the Dioces with 19 administrative divisions spread over to 53 rural and 16 urban pastorates. This Diocese is engaged in various types of activities like Evangelical, Medical, Educational and Social development through its various Boards like Central Board, Church Board, Medical Board and Educational Board etc.

The beginning of the activities of Church of South India – Rayalaseema Diocese could be attributed to the London Missionary Society with its two Dioceses known as Cuddapah Diocese and Anantapur-Kurnool Dioceses administered by two different Bishops under one administrative body known as 'Telugu Combined Committee'. The Missionaries who started their missionary work in these areas served their love, affection, hospitality, sympathy, benevolence to the poor, backward and destitute masses. These missionaries were deeply moved by the ignorance and superstitions of the non-Christians around them. Hence, they came to an understanding and conclusion that the establishment and development of Christian faith among non-Christians alone would solve the socio-cultural
imbalances among the people. The impact of the selfless services rendered by the missionaries impressed the hearts and minds of these people.

No doubt that the purpose of missionary activity in Rayalaseema was chiefly Evangelism. These missionaries realised the rural background of Indian Society and also knew that India lives in villages. Hence, these missionaries gave much emphasis to visit personally the villages to spread the gospel. They also recognised that the religion, caste and culture in India are inseparable. Accordingly they evolved specific plan and adopted suitable methodology to gospel preaching and focussed their attention towards conversion of individual souls to Christian faith. One such methodology was village campaigns and street preaching. The physical personality of the missionaries, their way of dressing, style of speaking could strike a difference and able to attract the villagers. When these European missionaries visited the villages, the villagers used to call the missionary couple as 'Dora' and 'Dorasani' and surrounded them for listening their Telugu language with English accent.

Another significant method adopted by the Christian Missionaries of the London Missionary Society in Rayalaseema was 'the National approach'. This method was a ‘discussive method’. The missionaries used to invite the learned people from Hindu community to participate in religious debates. These debates invariably centered on God,
Soul, life after death, etc. These discourses in course of time led the people to realise the facts and they inturn started to look at religion from the point of reason and not on superstitious beliefs. This process of enlightenment itself had tremendous impact on society. But when the soothsayers, magicians performed tricks detested the presence of Christians and Christian missionaries.

The Christian missionaries also realised that gospel work in a faction-ridden pagan land like Rayalaseema was not an easy task. They also personally witnessed and experienced the troubles and tribulations which they encountered. Yet they continued their mission work of proselysation with vigour and zeal. Even the geographical and climatic conditions in Rayalaseema also added many problems which caused physical illness to them. They used to walk miles together on foot and to reached nook and corner villages to preach the gospel. Sometimes they laid their temporary tents in the villages, stayed with them and carried out their missionary were.

Another important fact of missionary work in this area was that wives of the Christian Missionaries used to accompany their husbands with equal zeal and interest. They shared the joy and sorrows of their husbands in their Christian service to humanity for many years. Bachelors and spinsters also came all the way as young missionaries to preach and also for
other services. Gospel preaching among women folk also taken up by the established Christian Missions and for that purpose women missionaries were also sent to Rayalaseema.

The Protestant Christian Community in Rayalaseema region was overwhelmingly drawn from the depressed classes which revealed that the mentality of the people was largely one of the subservience. For centuries, their social and economic environment had been such that they had developed a strong "begging" mentality; and even after over one hundred years of Christian influence there was little self-reliance, self-help or initiative. Whatever ambition they had, they were dependent upon the help of others for fulfillment. There was general inferiority complexion. There was a strong community sense, a family and group cohesion. Individuals were not free to do what they would like to do, especially if it involves any departure from their normal practice. These communities were desperately poverty-stricken. The average income per head per year was very low. These people were largely rural. Among these people the Christian Church was established largely by the efforts of a Western Mission which came from an environment diametrically opposite to that of the community here. The Mission had its basis in a higher civilization with a strong superiority complexion. It was highly individualistic in outlook; it was comparatively economically rich; its missionaries were predominantly urban in outlook. Consequently, fundamental mistakes were made in the establishment of the
Church amongst these communities and Indian leaders also had sympathized with the intense difficulties of missionaries in having to adjust themselves for Christian work here. The fundamental mistake which had been made was that the sources of the Mission had been largely used externally and not internally i.e., they had been used for the direct support of the Church work rather than for the economic uplift of the community so that the community itself had to support the Church.

In addition to the services of European Missionaries in this area good number of native clergy also did tremendous work in evangelising the people. They not only accepted Jesus Christ as their saviour but also underwent theological courses, got ordained and served as Bishops and Presbyters. They served the Churches as Pastors, Presbyters and contributed for establishment of new Churches in their neighbouring areas. The preaching of gospel by native presbyters also strengthened the evangelical movement and gave good results. The untouchables like Malas and Madigas in Rayalaseema area were attracted easily by the preachers belonged to the same community. The recruitment of Mala Pastors and Madiga Pastors and sending them to their respective caste villages was also another technique adopted by the Christian missionaries in Rayalaseema. The Rayalaseema Diocese immediately after its formation realised the need for building up of leadership in the Church and identifying missionary zeal among the youth so as to make use of them for missionary work.
As stated earlier, it was very clear that the purpose of missionary activity was chiefly evangelism. To achieve this goal the missionaries chose the school as an important tool. They considered schooling as a part of the Church activities. They used the same venue both for school as well as Church. On week days they used the room as school and on Sundays it was used for Church worship. From Monday to Saturday the time was devoted for secular learning, and Sunday was exclusively used for religious instruction in which Bible stories, religious prayers and practices were instructed. Thus, it may not be an exaggeration to state that these missionaries were not only pioneers in the field of Church building but also expansion of education in Rayalaseema region.

The London Missionary Society was also the pioneer in introducing the western type of education in this Region. English literature, History, Arithmatics, General Knowledge, Geography and Sciences were the main subjects in the schools. Their educational institutions were acclaimed to be best places of higher learning. In course of time Junior Colleges and Degree Colleges also came into being. Besides these schools these missionaries also started Teacher training schools in areas like Cuddapah to train candidates for secular teaching. The english education brought into focus revolutionary changes in the socio-economic and cultural aspects of the people in Rayalaseema districts. Further, these educational institutions run by the Missionaries had lasting impact on the traditional life of the people
of the downtrodden among whom the present Scheduled Castes like Malas and Madigas figured prominent.

During pre-independence period the whole village education was managed by the London Missionary Society Schools and later by Church of South India, Rayalaseema Diocese. With the change in government policy on education all these schools were taken over by the State Government and only management was left with the Church.

Realising the economic backwardness of the Dalits who were converted to Christianity and whose children were enrolled in Mission Schools, for their advantage, the missionaries started Boarding Homes, Hostels attached to the schools. With this the children could pursue their education without any hurdle and break. Further the Churches sanctioned monthly stipends, yearly scholarships to them as a financial support for their studies.

The disciplinary code included in the curriculum, the moral teachings, habits like self-service, love, affection, brotherlyhood, regularity and time consciousness all put together formed the part of bringing up of the children in the mission schools as well as in boarding homes and hostels. Individual attention was paid on each student by the missionaries and the teachers in the schools. They used to set apart considerable time to interact
with the students and their parents to review their progress and ascertain their present problems.

The Christian missionaries did not lag behind in extending medical services to the poor and sick of Rayalaseema. They established hospitals and other medical units in three areas and through these hospitals they not only treated the Christian converts but also opened service to others also so as to exhibit Christian love and charity to non-Christians.

Another impact of missionary activity in Rayalaseema was the introduction of female education. In fact, the London Missionary Society was the pioneer in the field of female education in Rayalaseema. The distress of women in Indian Society profoundly moved the hearts of missionary ladies and as such they for the first time started the efforts to wipe away the tears of ladies. They directed all their efforts to counteract the misconceptions about women and combating their ignorance.

The missionaries were of the opinion that educating a male person means educating an individual but educating a female means educating the whole family. Another important aspect of the encouragement of female education was that the missionaries thought that the educational activity among the females was an easy access to reach the homes of caste Hindus which was otherwise closed to them. First, the missionaries' wives
encouraged the female children of their Bungalow workers and in course of time started a small school in 1880 exclusively for girls in Madanapalle.

Another consequence of the Missionary activity in Rayalaseema was the upliftment of untouchables. In fact, the London Missionary Society was the pioneer in the fields of promoting the welfare of the untouchables. Before the coming of Missionaries the untouchables namely Malas & Madigas had to live in worst miserable conditions and were not entitled for education and they were segregated and treated as virtual slaves by the upper castes. The missionaries besides their evangelistic work, also concentrated on education and social work. They established many schools orphanages & hospitals only for the sake of these weaker sections. A new epoch was envisaged among the untouchables who became independent in thought and thus could break the chains of "bondage" to which they were subjected hitherto and led for socio-economic emancipation. The Dalits who were brought by the London Missionary Society Missionaries in later years emerged as eminent educationalists, administrators, Judges, Lawyers, Officers, Doctors, Principals and even Vice-chancellors. Prof. M.Abel who served as Principal of Madras Christian College, and who later served as Vice-chancellor of Sri Krishnadevaraya University, Anantapur for two terms is a case in point.

The missionaries exercised profound influence on the minds of Rayalaseema people. Besides their role in education, they attacked the
prevalent social and religious evils to better the social conditions. Besides the secular and sacred instruction in the educational institutions, the missionaries also gave proper nourishment to the students about the dangerous effects of the social evils of the then Society and prepared them to fight against the superstitions, caste system, child marriages, infanticide, suppression of womanhood, Sati and other social evils.

Thus, the early Churches like London Missionary Society which operated in the four districts of Rayalaseema region provided place not only for its religious, spiritual and other evangelical work like propagation of the word of Jesus Christ but also opened its doors to come out of its theological and spiritual circumscription and joined the mainstream of open society by forming an integral part of it and by falling in line with other institutions of social life in extending social service activities.

Ever since formation of Church of South India the growth of the new united church has been so impressive that the prophets of gloom who foretold its disintegration sooner than later have been proved wrong. Under the leadership of successive Moderators, Bishops, Presbyters and lay leaders, the CSI has been led into several significant initiatives and innovative ventures which have helped it not only to act as a channel of God’s loving concern and care for His people but also to deepen and consolidate its newly acquired unity. So much so it can be said today that
the CSI has achieved organic unity produced by, as the CSI Constitution says, "a combination of different elements, each bringing its contribution to the whole, and not by the absorption of any one by any other.

However, the present study also brought into light the inherent lapses and weaknesses crept into the Church of South India and Rayalaseema Diocese although the years of its formation.

The Founding Fathers of the CSI were clear that the aim of the church union movement was to produce a single church for South India keeping the door open for the Baptists, Lutherans and the Orthodox and Mar Thoma Churches to join them as and when they wanted to. They did not intend the CSI to be an end in itself. It was to be a means to achieve further and wider unity among all the Churches in South India.

The fact that even after 55 years of the existence of the CSI, no other churches like the Lutherans, Baptists, Methodists Telugu Church Council and others have joined the union indicates that the wider unity envisaged by the Founding Fathers is yet to be realised. The Baptists and the Lutherans who were involved in negotiations with the CSI in the beginning have finally dropped off from the union scheme. The Joint Council of the CSI, CNI and the Mar Thoma Churches has proved to be a non-
The CSI has lost interest in it because it considers organic union the only serious unity.

There may be many non-theological reasons for the failure of the attempts for a wider church union. Property interests, personal ambitions, personality clashes of leaders, some pressure from the parent Churches abroad, and at times conscientious objections pertaining to faith and order, might have been responsible for some of the churches dropping out of the union scheme, and for discouraging the CSI from taking further steps towards a wider union.

Whatever may be the reasons for the failure of the church union movement to take-off after the birth of the CSI, the matter of serious concern is why CSI has ceased to inspire and attract other churches to join the wider union envisaged by its founders. Apart from the mundane considerations mentioned above, certain doubts and questions have been raised by the other churches concerning the model of church union by the CSI and some developments within the CSI. For instance, the Baptists fear that “the church union is a move toward Rome, and towards our ultimate surrender of Reformation”. They do not feel strongly the need for organic unity because they think that “in the united church, the freedom and autonomy of the local church would be lost and the evangelistic fervor would slowly decrease”. Likewise, the Lutherans also question the need for organic unity.
unity. Dr. K. Rajaratnam, the widely acknowledged leader of the Luthrean Churches in India, has said on several occasions that the CSI has become so big and unwieldy that the local church/parish has been relegated to an obscure position in the total life and mission of the church.

The fears and anxieties about the marginalisation of the local church/parish in the CSI cannot be easily brushed aside because they are based upon certain undesirable and unexpected tendencies which have come to be seen in its organisation and administration, and which have affected adversely the place and role of the local church/parish in the structure and mission of church. Local church is the real church but not the Synod or Diocesan Councils and their officers. The local churches are the cells that constitute the Church universal. So, unless these cells are alive and active, the Church of South India will be ineffective in carrying out its purposes for the world. The unity and peace which are expected to be promoted by the Church of South India should be reflected in the unity and peace in the local congregation/parish. The local congregation is to be seen as the replica of the universal church as well as the United Church of South India in the particular neighbourhood locality in which the congregation/parish is situated.

Looking at the local congregations in the CSI, it is difficult to say that they conform to the image of a local congregation projected above.
The stress on organic unity and the zeal to consolidate that unity on the part of the leaders concerned have brought into play what Robert Micheles, a famous sociologist, has called "the iron law of oligarchy" as a consequence of which authoritarian and centralising tendencies have raised their ugly heads in the structures of authority and decision-making processes, and the concentration of power is at the top in the hands of a small group of persons. In the process, the local congregation has been reduced to the extremely limited role of electing one or two representatives to the Pastorate Committee, and coming together once a week on Sunday for worship.

There are no programmes implemented to nurture the congregations in Christian life and doctrine because the presbyterys are too busy with some administrative responsibilities and duties like managing schools, boarding homes, orphanages and other service institutions to find any time for his ordained pastoral duties. Likewise, the Bishop is so much pre-occupied with presiding over innumerable committees and boards, and attending all sorts of meetings and conferences outside the diocese concerned that he seldom pays any attention to the problems of the local congregation. The net result of all this is that the local congregation which is expected to the real and authentic CSI in that particular locality is neither given a proper space in the mission of the CSI there nor is it equipped for such mission. In the absence of a proper and sufficient role in the total mission or ministry of the CSI, the local congregations are divided and faction
ridden on account of pastorate committee elections, involved in wasteful litigation, and are completely indifferent and insensitive to the call of Jesus Christ to be with Him amidst the poor and oppressed in that locality. As long as this situation prevails, it is difficult to say that the organic unity has helped the CSI to become an effective instrument of God's purpose for his people, and to make people believe that it is the presence of Christ in the world and that it is a sign of God's rule of justice and righteousness.

There is another dimension to the unity to which the CSI is committed. The unity achieved by the CSI is expected not only to promote the sense of belonging and togetherness among its own members but also to achieve the unity of all human kind and even with the whole universe. The unity of the CSI is only a means for it to become "a fit instrument for carrying out His purposes in the world". This secular dimension of unity is not sufficiently understood and practised in the CSI. The unity of the CSI will be visible to all only when it goes out of its own circle to join with the whole human community amidst which it is located and participates in its struggles for a better quality of life. In other words, the unity of the CSI must lead it to see that the church and the world are inter-linked. The mission of the church in and to the world, and the unity of the church, are the two sides of the same coin. One cannot exist without the other. So it is expected of the Church of South India to use the organic unity it has achieved as an instrument to serve the world and the community within which it is situated, and to work for the
eradication of all barriers of caste, religious bigotry, economic disparities and social discriminations that cause divisions among Christians and thereby perform the ministry of reconciliation. In other words, the organic unity challenges the CSI to embody in its life and to reflect in its experience the work of unity with justice that heals divisions.

The organic unity achieved by the CSI needs to be reinforced by the social equality of all caste groups within it and equal opportunities for all dioceses and local churches to develop and become self-sufficient. The organic unity may not mean much to the members of those dioceses and local churches which are economically poor and lacking in financial aid needed for their development. It is too well known to reed any elaborate comment that there are serious economic imbalances and disparities between the rural dioceses which are poor and do not have any resources and the urban dioceses which are rich and prosperous, and endowed with valuable properties and income yielding projects. Even after almost half a century of the existence of the CSI, such inequalities and deprivations have not disappeared. Unity that does not express itself in sharing the material possessions of the church with the needy people and dioceses is only a mirage. No doubt in recent years some schemes have been introduced to facilitate the growth of a 'sharing unity' in the CSI. But that is not all commensurate with the homilies about distributing justice and sharing partnership delivered to ecumenical bodies and other international agencies.
When it comes to the question of rich dioceses of the CSI sharing their affluence with the poor dioceses, especially the rural dioceses, there is a thunderous silence. Organic unity has not so far produced equality of opportunity to all the dioceses. As long as this situation continues, unity in the CSI will be incomplete and imperfect.

Likewise it does not require any deep intuition to see that the wide gulf existing between the Dalits and other caste groups, as well as other inter-caste rivalries and factions. All these cast a dense shadow on the unity of the church. The Dalits are made to feel that they are only second class members in the CSI. They are looked down upon by the so-called higher caste Christians. Marriages between the Dalit Christians and other Christians and between Mala Christians and Madiga Christians are rare. In some places even untouchability is practised against the Dalit Christians by their fellow Christians. The Dalits are segregated in the churches at the time of worship, and they are given elements in the Lord’s Supper in separate cups. All these point out the real divisions existing beneath the surface of the organic unity of the CSI. Further, gender inequality and discrimination shown against women are signs of fissures in the organic unity of the CSI. In order to make the organic unity of the CSI credible and humane, all these inequalities and deprivations should be removed.
Unfortunately, under the dispensation of episcopacy adopted by the CSI, certain positions and officers in the church have come to be identified as sources of power, pert, patronage and conspicuous consumption. And often, the life style and personal relations maintained by the holders of these positions and officers lend credibility to such assumptions and encourage undesirable and incompetent persons with dubious track-record of personal life to aspire these positions through the use of reprehensible methods. If there are still divisions, factions and endless court cases in some places in the CSI, it is mainly due to the competition and rivalry for the loaves and fishes of office. There are even several cases where ecclesiastical dignitaries who are supposed to represent and preserve unity in the church, themselves being the cause of such factions and litigations.

The remedy for all these maladies require that the offices and high positions in the church and its various institutions be divested of their power and influence, and be vested in the ideals of humility, selfless service and sacrifice. In other words, the office of the Bishop and other ecclesiastical leaders must be deglamourised and the church dignitaries must become real suffering servants, following in the footsteps of Jesus Christ. A radical change is also needed in the five-star life style of leaders who must live closer to the poor and project the image of the suffering and servant church. Further, it is necessary that the authority inherent in these exalted positions
be used for the purpose of renewing the church for mission, evangelism, service and human social development. In order to provide the spiritual foundations for the unity of the Church of South India, all the members from the Bishop to the ordinary lay person in the local congregation must try to seek and find Power in powerlessness; Exaltation in humility; Spiritual bliss in material poverty; Fulness of divine presence in self-emptying; New life in authentic suffering and sacrifice. This kind of attitudinal and behavioural change among all those who are at the helm of affairs would enable the Church of South India – Rayalaseema Diocese to regain the past glory and commitment. It is not too late to rededicate itself to fulfil the tasks ahead and achieve the goals of Spiritual, Ethical, Evangelical and Social Development in South India in general and Rayalaseema in particular.