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The Indian Christian Theological Association

H. JAI SINGH

At the last meeting of the Indian Theological Conference, held at Madras in December, 1960, it was unanimously decided to establish an association for the general purpose of promoting study and exchange of views on Christian theology, especially as related to the Indian environment. In previous years meetings of the Indian Christian Theological Conference have been informal gatherings, without any constitution, but at Madras the need for a continuing organization was stressed. Consequently the Indian Christian Theological Association was organized, a constitution written and a continuing committee elected.

The Association will provide opportunities for discussion and forums with a view to gaining a deeper understanding of the Christian faith. There is a theological renaissance in the Christian world today. The Theological Association should provide avenues whereby an understanding of the issues underlying this renaissance might be gained. What are these issues, how are they related to one another, and what divergent answers are being given in regard to them? There is the further problem of the interpretation of the Christian tradition. What is the part of myth and symbol in the Christian tradition? What is the meaning of myth as it is being interpreted today? The Theological Association may be able to help us understand what psychotherapy is doing for people and how the Christian faith can be made available to heal the sick in mind and body. Again, much is being said and written today on the relation of art and religion. The Theological Association may provide opportunities for us to know what the Indian art is saying as to the situation of man in India. What is the voice of our poetry in the various parts of India? What are Indian Christian artists attempting to say? It is often true that genuine art speaks for the theological and spiritual needs of man more clearly than either the rigid and formalistic language of theology or philosophy, for art is deeper than logic.

As its name implies, the Indian Christian Theological Association has a dual relationship and responsibility. Firstly, it is related to the universal community of Christians everywhere and shares in the common concerns of the Church Universal.

Its second loyalty is to the Church in India, for it is in this situation that God has placed us. The Christian faith must be interpreted and communicated in the context of the Indian environment. This is not an easy task, for there seem to be radical discontinuities between the Christian faith and aspects of the environment. There is need to interpret the faith in such a way as to establish some continuities with the surrounding culture in terms of religious tradition, art and poetry, philosophy and scripture.

The task of the Indian Christian Theological Association is endless. Merely human resources are inadequate for its accomplishment, but with faith in God, we can make a beginning.

The membership in the Association will be open to any Christian theological institution (a college, a study centre, a religious brotherhood, etc.) and to any professing Christian who pays the annual subscription. The subscriptions are Rs.15 per year for institutions and Rs.7/50 for individuals. Members will receive copies of *The Indian Journal of Theology* without additional charge.

The activities of the Association will include the holding of periodical conferences devoted to the study of particular aspects of the Christian faith, and the encouragement of the writing of papers on theological subjects, and the publication of such papers. There may be other related activities that the Association may decide to undertake from time to time. A conference of the Association will be normally held every three years. Individual members of the Association will be free to attend the conference and institutions will be invited to send one delegate each.

The officers of the Association shall be a chairman, and a secretary-treasurer who shall be elected at each conference and will hold office until the next regular conference or for a period of five years, whichever is less. The plans for the periodic conferences and other activities of the Association will be normally made by an advisory committee consisting of the officers, one of the editors of *The Indian Journal of Theology* and four others elected at each conference. For the current session the members of the committee are as follows: Dr. P. D. Devanandan (chairman), Dr. Herbert Jai Singh (secretary-treasurer), Rev. Fr. P. De Letter, Dr. P. David, Rev. J. R. Chandran, and Rev. W. Stewart, and one of the editors of *The Indian Journal of Theology*.

The Association hopes to meet its expenses from income received from membership fees and from special contributions from individuals or institutions.

All who desire to become members should write to the secretary-treasurer, Herbert Jai Singh, Leonard Theological College, Jabalpur, M.P.