

**CHRISTIANITY
AND THE GROWTH OF
INDUSTRIALISM
IN ASIA, AFRICA
AND SOUTH AMERICA**

Report of the
JERUSALEM MEETING
of the
INTERNATIONAL MISSIONARY COUNCIL
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PART FOUR
STATEMENT

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The following statement was prepared by a committee appointed by the section of the Council which discussed the Christian Mission in Relation to Industrial Problems. After consideration and amendment by the Council as a whole it was accepted by formal vote as their official statement.

STATEMENT BY THE COUNCIL

THE CHRISTIAN MISSION IN RELATION TO INDUSTRIAL PROBLEMS IN ASIA AND AFRICA

CHRIST THE LORD OF ALL LIFE

THE International Missionary Council desires to preface its report on industrial conditions by asserting, with all the power at its command, its conviction that the Gospel of Christ contains a message, not only for the individual soul, but for the world of social organization and economic relations in which individuals live. Christ came that men might have life, and might have it more abundantly. When He wept over Jerusalem, He lamented the spiritual ruin, not merely of an individual, but of a whole society. He chose as His apostles not the wise and learned, but men engaged in the ordinary occupations pursued in all ages by the mass of mankind. His teaching used as its vehicle illustrations drawn from the labour of the shepherd, the fisherman, the wage-earner and the peasant. By the message of divine love revealed in the Incarnation the division between the spiritual and the material is overcome, and all human relations are transfigured. In the light of that revelation His followers have learned that they cannot love God unless they also love their fellow-men with a love that transcends differences

of race and class and economic position. It is in such love, Christ taught them, that they will find the Kingdom of Heaven. If they are to be faithful to their Master they must try all social and economic systems by the standard which He revealed. It is their task to seek with the help of His spirit to realize love with ever-increasing fulness, not merely in their own hearts, but in their social order, in their political relations and in the daily transactions of the factory and the market-place.

Approaching the problems of social life in such a spirit, the Christian will welcome the triumphs of science and technical skill by which the resources which God has given to His children have been made more fully available for the service of all. But he will regard material wealth as an instrument, not as an end. He will value it primarily as an aid to spiritual growth and vitality. He will desire that economic interests shall be, not the master, but the servant, of civilization. He will recognize the truth of the words—‘there is no wealth but life’—and will judge different forms of economic activity, not merely by their success in increasing riches, but by the degree to which they foster a Christian character and way of life among all members of the human family. In particular, he will try the social and economic system by three simple, yet fundamental, criteria :

1. Christ's teaching as to the sanctity of personality. The sanctity of personality is a fundamental idea of Christian teaching, which is reiterated again and again in the New Testament. ‘I am come that men might have life.’ ‘Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these ye did it unto me.’ ‘It were better for a man that a millstone were hanged about his neck and that he were cast into the sea, rather

than that he should offend one of these little ones.' In the light of such sayings any form of economic organization which involves the treatment of men primarily as instruments of production, or which sacrifices the opportunity of full personal development which should be the right of every child, is evidently anti-Christian. Human beings, the New Testament teaches, are not instruments, but ends. In the eyes of God all are of equal and infinite value.

2. Christ's teaching as to brotherhood. The teaching of the New Testament is that all men are brothers, because all men are children of one Father, and that they owe to each other the service which is the expression of their common sonship. The Christian ethic, therefore, would seem to preclude such struggle for gain or self-advancement as snatches opportunities for personal success at the expense of the community or of its weaker members, and the organization of economic life primarily with a view to the enrichment of individuals. 'He that would be greatest among you let him be the servant of all.' 'Blessed are the meek.' 'How hardly shall they that have riches enter the Kingdom of Heaven.' Co-operation in unselfish service, rather than competition for individual profit, would seem to be the temper most appropriate to a Christian society.

3. Christ's teaching as to corporate responsibility. It follows from the emphasis laid by the New Testament upon brotherhood that a Christian society is under an obligation to use every means in its power to bring within the reach of all its members the material, as well as the ethical, conditions of spiritual growth and vitality. The Christian Church is described by the apostle as Christ's body. It is not a gathering for prayer and worship of individuals

who otherwise are unrelated, but a fellowship and society embracing all human relationships in which all are members one of another ; and it is only in such a fellowship, the New Testament teaches, that men can bear the fruit of the Christian life. All forces therefore which destroy that fellowship—war, economic oppression, the selfish pursuit of profits, the neglect of the immature, the aged, the sick or the weak—are definitely and necessarily in sharp contradiction with the spirit of Christianity. Christian society exists in so far, and only in so far, as Christians show not merely in words but in action that they are eager to ‘bear one another’s burdens and thus fulfil the law of Christ.’

The teaching thus briefly indicated makes it clear that the New Testament does not recognize the antithesis frequently emphasized by later ages between individual and social regeneration. The task of the Christian Church, therefore, is both to carry the message of Christ to the individual soul, and to create a Christian civilization within which all human beings can grow to their full spiritual stature. It is its duty to acquire the knowledge by which the conditions which imperil such growth may be removed, and those which foster it may be established. It is its duty to speak and work fearlessly against social and economic injustice. It is its duty both by word and action to lend its support to all forces which bring nearer the establishment of Christ’s Kingdom in the world of social relations, of industrial organization and of economic life.

We acknowledge with shame and regret that the churches everywhere and the missionary enterprise, coming as it does out of an economic order dominated almost entirely by the profit motive (a motive which

itself stands in need of Christian scrutiny), have not been so sensitive of those aspects of the Christian message as would have been necessary, sensibly to mitigate the evils which advancing industrialization has brought in its train, and we believe that our failure in this respect has been a positive hindrance—perhaps the gravest of such hindrances—to the power and extension of missionary enterprise.

THE PROBLEMS AND SOME CHRISTIAN SOLUTIONS

The International Missionary Council has considered the danger to the establishment and maintenance of Christian moral and social standards arising from the penetration of western economic civilization into countries which have been hitherto little affected by it. Experience shows that the problems presented by such penetration affect directly and intimately the missionary enterprise and, unless treated in the spirit of Christian wisdom, present grave obstacles to the progress of Christianity among the peoples concerned. It has been specially impressed by the following points :

1. The problems presented by the investment of capital in undeveloped areas and the necessity of securing that it takes place on terms compatible with the welfare and progress of indigenous peoples.

2. The necessity, in developing the natural resources of such areas, both of protecting indigenous peoples and of securing the utilization of their resources for the service of the world as a whole, on terms compatible with such people's welfare.

3. The obligation resting on the governments of the economically more advanced countries to secure that economically less developed peoples are pro-

tected against economic and social injustice, and share fully and equitably in the fruits of economic progress.

4. The vital importance of securing that the political and economic action of different nations interested in economic expansion does not continue to produce the friction between such nations which has hitherto accompanied it.

With a view to meeting the problems thus presented, the Council would suggest that the following points should be borne in mind :

1. The Investment of Capital in Undeveloped Areas

a. Public loans made for the development of industrially undeveloped areas are so fraught with the possibility of international misunderstandings and of dangerous combinations between exploiting groups in lending and borrowing countries that such loans should be made only with the knowledge and approval of the League of Nations and subject to such conditions as it may prescribe.

Where the League of Nations is not recognized, earnest consideration should be given to the establishment of other safeguards which may serve the same purpose.

b. Private investments should in no case carry with them rights of political control over the country in which the investment is made, and in no case should the political power of the government of the investing country be used to secure the right of making loans and of obtaining concessions and other special privileges for its nationals.

c. The development of the economic resources of backward countries should as far as possible be en-

trusted to undertakings of a public utility character which have regard not merely to economic profit but to social considerations, on the government of which the people of the country concerned should be adequately represented.

2. The Development of the Economic Resources of Undeveloped Areas

In developing the natural resources of undeveloped countries, it is of vital importance :

a. That economic development should not be accelerated in such a way as to prevent due attention being paid to the problems created by changing social conditions, or as to injure the social welfare of the population affected by it.

b. The welfare of the indigenous populations must be the primary consideration, and the practice of alienating land to foreigners without regard to the rights and needs of the peoples of the areas concerned is to be strongly condemned.

c. The utmost care should be taken to prevent the social institutions which preserve the stamina of native peoples from being undermined before they can be replaced by other safeguards.

d. The revenue of the country should be applied primarily to the development of services such as health and education designed to promote the welfare of the indigenous peoples.

3. Protection against Economic and Social Injustice

It is essential that governments concerned with undeveloped areas should apply to them the knowledge gained by a century of experience of the

measures needed to prevent economic and social injustice, and in particular that they should :

a. Stop at once the practice of employing forced labour by companies or private individuals, and also, except in cases of immediate and unforeseen national emergency, by public authorities.

b. Ensure that contracts of labour entered upon by workers of primitive races should be fully understood by them, should be voluntarily entered upon, and should be subject to the approval of the administrative authorities, particularly in regard to their stipulations concerning the following points :

- (1) The length of the contract should not be such as to endanger the home life of the worker.
- (2) Provision should be made for the return of the worker to his home, at intervals where possible, and at the expiration of his contract.
- (3) The general conditions under which the labour is to be carried out, including wages, housing, food and clothing should be satisfactory.
- (4) The medical and sanitary equipment of the work-place should be adequate.
- (5) Where workers are imported from abroad, in addition to the matters mentioned above, especial care should be taken to ensure that the workers are adequately safeguarded during their journeys, and that their return to their homes at the expiration of their contracts, if they so wish, should be fully guaranteed.
- (6) Where workers are imported from abroad, due provision should be made, wherever

possible, that they should be accompanied by their wives, and for the establishment of quarters for married people.

- (7) The practice of prescribing that breaches of labour contracts on the part of workers are to be dealt with as *criminal* offences is to be condemned as incompatible with modern ideas of justice.

c. Introduce the legislative provisions necessary to maintain and advance the standard of life of workers in industry ; in particular :

- (1) to limit the working hours, and to secure not less than one day's rest in seven for all workers ;
- (2) to establish a legally enforceable minimum wage ;
- (3) to ensure proper standards of health and of safety in working conditions ;
- (4) to bring about the progressive elimination of child labour ;
- (5) to ensure that the conditions of women's labour are not such as to imperil their health and the future of the race ;
- (6) to ensure that those workers partially or wholly disabled by accident or sickness arising out of the conditions of their employment are adequately provided for.
- (7) to establish a system of inspection competent to supervise the application of such legislation and to ensure its efficiency.¹

¹ It may be recalled that on all these matters, the governing principles have received the sanction of the nations of the world through the conferences of the International Labour Organization, and that the approved methods of bringing them into operation may be studied in the Conventions and Recommendations adopted by that organization.

d. Establish freedom of combination and organization for employers and employed alike.

e. Develop the social services of education, public health and housing, and take steps to create an environment favourable to a healthy and self-respecting life.

f. Remove all restrictions which have as their effect to impose special economic disabilities on indigenous workers for the economic advantage of other classes of workers and capitalists, by excluding the former from particular employments, by limiting their access to land, by restricting their right of meeting and free speech and by interfering with their freedom of movement.

4. *Avoidance of Friction between Nations engaged in Economic Expansion*

Experience shows that among the most prolific causes of friction among nations has been the rivalry of competing imperialisms to secure preferential access to sources of raw materials, markets and opportunities of investment in the still undeveloped regions of the world. It is of vital importance to the future of civilization that this rivalry, ruinous alike to the nations engaged in it and to the indigenous populations, should be brought under control. Such control can be established only by the action of an international authority, which can do impartial justice to the claims of all nations. The International Missionary Council looks forward, therefore, to such an extension of the activities of the League of Nations and of the International Labour Organization as may result in the creation of an international code, defining the mutual relations between the various

powers interested in colonial expansion, and the indigenous populations affected by it, and also to fuller co-operation between all nations, whether members of the League or not, for the attainment of that object. It regards the economic functions of the League in relation to such matters as loans, concessions, labour and tariff policy and communications as among the most important branches of its work, and desires to see them extended as widely and rapidly as possible.

PROVISION FOR RESEARCH

The International Missionary Council recognizes the difficulties and also the differences of opinion that exist as to both the necessity for and the method in the application of the teaching of Christianity to social organization and economic relations. The Council therefore regards it as of vital importance that Christian bodies both in the mission field and in Europe and America should be equipped for the study of this subject, by the establishment of an adequately staffed Bureau of Social and Economic Research and Information, in connexion with the International Missionary Council. Such a bureau should work in close contact with the workers and national Christian councils in the mission field, the corresponding bureau established as a result of the Stockholm Conference, the departments of the Young Men's Christian Association and the Young Women's Christian Association concerned with industrial and social problems, and the International Labour Office. It should have as its functions :

1. To produce reports and supply information on

the economic and social problems arising from the contact between more advanced economic civilizations and the peoples of undeveloped countries, and with this object to secure that the necessary research is regularly undertaken.

2. To advise the missionary organizations as to the special economic and social problems of the areas in which they are working.

3. To arrange for joint action between different Christian bodies both in sending countries and in the mission field, with a view to the removal of unchristian conditions of life and work.

4. To bring to the notice of Christian bodies and mission boards the urgent necessity of securing an adequate supply of competent workers in the mission field equipped with the necessary economic and social training.

5. To bring to the notice of Christian bodies and missionaries the importance of forming groups of students who will investigate social and economic problems in their various areas and disseminate knowledge with regard to them, and of emphasizing in their schools and other educational activities the social content of the Christian message.

6. To co-operate with other agencies, both public and private, in all measures which have as their object to raise the level of economic and social life. These functions should be performed with the aid of the regular staff of the Council.

The Council refers this proposal to the national organizations, instructing its officers to submit detailed plans, including suggestions for financial support apart from the ordinary funds of the Council, and provision for the maximum co-operation with other bodies concerned.

CONCLUSION

In concluding its report upon industrial problems, the International Missionary Council desires once again to emphasize its conviction that the advancement, by thought and speech and action, of social righteousness is an essential and vital part of the Christian message to mankind. A Christian society is to be known by its fruits. Among those fruits are love, peace, joy and the spirit of patient and self-sacrificing service. It is by the revelation of such qualities with ever-increasing fulness, in their industry, in their politics and in the other practical affairs of their daily life, not less than in their personal conduct, that Christians must seek to commend their Faith to peoples and individuals who have not yet received it. 'If a man love not his brother whom he hath seen, how shall he love God whom he hath not seen?'

The fulfilment of such a mission calls both for devotion and for knowledge. Knowledge, not less than the other gifts which elevate and purify human life, is of God. Christian churches, in all parts of the world, must seek to obtain a fuller knowledge of the social and economic problems which confront them, in order that, under the guidance of their Master, they may be less unworthy instruments in the advancement of His Kingdom.

The International Missionary Council has attempted to indicate some of the practical conclusions, which as it thinks are suggested by the experience hitherto obtained, of the issues raised by the spread of western economic civilization among peoples as yet but little affected by it, and it has suggested

methods by which that experience may be made more fully available in the future for the guidance of all who are concerned in missionary work. It has done so because it believes that it is the duty of Christians, while preserving an open mind to new light from whatever quarter such light may come, not merely to state the general principles of the Christian Faith, but to make clear their application to the problems of human life which arise in the mission field. The Council calls on all who have felt the power of the Christian message to join with it in prayer for a clearer vision of the meaning of the tasks which the service of their Master imposes upon them in their social and economic relations, and for the grace by which these tasks may be more hopefully undertaken.