



GLOBAL CHRISTIANITY AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF DALITS IN COLONIAL AND POSTCOLONIAL KERALA

Speaker

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Chair

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The transforming power of the 'word of God' proclaimed the globality of Christianity experienced by Dalits in colonial and postcolonial Kerala. What were the implications of the word of God in the everyday life of Dalits where meaning was produced and circulated along with the work in the fields of the landlords?

Christianity provided a different idea of the sacred and a new religious and social imagination to the people. It was this notion of the sacred that resignified Dalits as socially significant from the 19th century onwards. I wish to address the dynamics of this resignification exploring archival and ethnographic materials. Although Christianity entailed globality in its very inception, in this paper I am specifically concerned with Global Missionary organizations founded in the final years of the 18th Century and their tryst with Dalit communities in Kerala. In this paper, I analyze the particularities of these experiences.



Image source: The Cms Gleaner, 1 November 1919, p.152



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Professor P. Sanal Mohan currently teaches at the School of Social Sciences, Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam. He was the former Director of the KCHR. He was Smuts Visiting Fellow at the University of Cambridge and Post-Doctoral Visiting Fellow at the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity, Gottingen, Germany, among others. His areas of research interest include colonial modernity, social movements and questions of identity, Dalit movements and Christianity in India His book *Modernity of Slavery: Struggles against Caste Inequality in Colonial Kerala* was published by the Oxford University Press in 2015.

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