

CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE AMERICAN BAPTIST TELUGU MISSIONARIES TO ANDHRA PRADESH & TELANGANA

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ABSTRACT

The American Baptist Telugu Mission emerged as an emancipating religious structure in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. It was then called a new religion. It is the outcome of the zealous efforts of the young faithful members of the American Baptist Missionary Union and the unstinted pioneering work of the Missionaries, who offered for foreign mission service. It was formally started in 1836. The Baptists are a Protestant group under the leadership of Balthasar Hubmaier, one of the four Protestant leaders, the rest being Luther, Zwingli and Calvin. They are a bit nearer to Quakers and Unitarians and are the “Protestants of the Protestantism”.

Keywords: American Baptist Telugu Missionaries, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana

KANDUKUR – 1893

Kandukur is a small village about 50 miles north – west of Ramapatnam. Rev. Wheeler Boggess and his wife worked in the field from starting in 1893 to 1914 for three terms. The Boggesses arrived in Kandukur in 1893 and began their evangelistic work. A Mission bungalow was erected during 1893-1894. Rev. Boggess was a strict believer in the policy of self – support. He openly announced his doctrine in the churches in 1897 and followed it through out the period of his service in the field. Dr. Ferguson was incharge of the field from 1899 to 1901 during the absence of the Boggesses. Seventy-six converts were baptized during 1900 by Ferguson. The Boggesses returned to Kandukur in 1901 and resumed their work.

Social and economic problems could not be ignored if the missionaries were to preach the Gospel to a people who were socially downtrodden and economically deprived. These problems demanded attention as much as spiritual issues.

So the A.B.T.M. established an organized system through which the Socio-economic needs of the needy people in Andhra Pradesh were met with. They met the socio-economic need of the people by providing education to boys and girls, extending medical care, emergency relief, agricultural assistance, starting orphanages and societies such as Christian Endeavour Society and other methods.

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When the American Baptist Telugu Missionaries started their work in 1836 in the Telugu area the social and economic condition of the lower caste people was deplorable due to illiteracy and poor economic background. The society was very rigid with caste distinctions. As per as the lower classes were concerned their economic condition was disappointing. The situation was caused due to the failure of the rains and also the famines that followed as a result. So the Missionaries involved themselves in the upliftment programmes ever since.

The low-caste people who were converted by the American Baptist Missionaries, were originally traditional leather workers of the village community. They had the traditional productive relationships and the system of reciprocal duties and services. Their main duty was the tanning of hides and the manufacture of rule leather articles. They bent the thappets (Trumpet) at the village festivals and ceremonies. They worked as yetis to carry the news and announce news by tom-tom in the villages. They took some parts of their family use. They performed many other subsidiary services for the smooth functioning of the village community. They worked as labourers on long term basis.

SECUNDERABAD – 1875

Secunderabad is within five miles from Hyderabad. It was once a British cantonment with largest British troops in India. Rev. W. Campbell and his wife were sent to Secunderabad to open a new Mission Station. They reached Secunderabad in 1875 and stayed in a travelers bungalow. Campbell held Sunday service in the bungalow itself, and Mrs. Campbell started a Sunday school too. Campbell baptized three converts from a family in December, 1876. He arranged regular English prayer meetings for soldiers. A bungalow was secured in 1878. In 1881 a building adjoining the bungalow was purchased and converted into Chapel – cum – School House. The Campbell left for America in 1881 due to ill-health and returned in 1882.

Mr. and Mrs. Newcomb came to Secunderabad in July, 1884 to assist the Campbells. But they went to Cumbum in the same year to look after the work of the field in the absence of Dr. W.B. Boggs. Campbell opened Nalgonda. The Campbells were forced to leave for America due to the continued illness of Mrs. Campbell in 1888. Mr. R. Maplesden was transferred to Secunderabad from Ongole, to relieve the Campbells in March, 1888. The Secunderabad field was divided and a second station was started at Bolaram assigning W.E. Hopkins to the new station. After a few years of fruitless efforts Bolaram station was closed. The Secunderabad field suffered from frequent changes among the Missionaries and among the soldiers as well. Dr. W.B. Boggs who had been working at Secunderabad for four years, was called as the Principal of Theological Seminary at Ramapatnam in 1899. Mr.

Hopkins was succeeded by F.H. Levering. Miss Kathrine French, Miss Mary D. Faye and Miss Sussie were all designated to Secunderabad during the period. The Leverings were transferred to Madras in 1910. Mr. and Mrs. A.M. Boggs who were already in Secunderabad assumed the charge of the field. Miss M.E. Morrow and Miss French looked after the educational work. The Leverings again returned to Secunderabad and continued their work. Miss F.F. Hollis joined them in 1913. Mr. and Mrs. Marsh were transferred to Secunderabad. They arrived on April 1, 1921. the Leverings left on April 6, for Kotagiri on the Nilagiri Hills and they retired there.

The Marshes left for America in 1921. Mr. Rutherford was assigned to the Secunderabad field. Miss Hollis continued her service in the field. The co-educational station school was converted into girls school.

Miss Hollis started a kindergarten in 1825. A Church was organized with 83 Christians.

Rev. C.R. Marsh and his wife were the station missionaries in 1929. The special Commission of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society visited Secunderabad on January 13, 1929.

The Kurtzs were the Station Missionaries in 1932. The annual Deccan Association meeting was held in March, Deccan Association. He was also the manger of the Baptist Missionary Review.

Thee were nine primary schools with 132 boys and 35 girls. Five men teachers and six women teachers were working in those schools during 1935. The A.B. Missionaries explored a new mission station in the Nizam Dominions at Secunderabad. It was also the first mission station in the Deccan area.

MAHABUBNAGAR is a village in Telangana about fifty miles south or Secunderabad. The Chutes established a new Mission Station at Mahabubnagar in 1882 and worked up to 1913 with some breaks. They baptized a number of leading native caste people of the district in 1885. A number of Hindu priests and five Muslims were baptized by them in 1891. During 1913 Rev. Chute has traveled 5,155 miles and preached gospel in the villages. Rev. A.M. Boggs and his wife and Mrs. M.E. Farber, M.D. worked in the field in 1922. Mr. Boggs with his preachers preached gospel both among Christians and Hindus.

NALGONDA is situated about sixty miles south –east of Secunderabad. The Friesens started the new Mission station at Nalgonda in 1890 and worked up to 1914 with some breaks due to furloughs. The Friesens belonged to the Mennonite Brethren of Russin. The Christians in the Nalgonda field were mainly from the Malas and Madigas. They worked earnestly for unity among them. Mrs. Lorena M. Breed, M.D., worked as a medical missionary in the

field from 1896 to 1904. Breed's medical skill attracted Muslim women and children and other caste women to the new religion. The Hubberts and Unruhs also worked in this field. The unruhs baptized 1,800 people in 1922. Six churches were made self – supporting and four pastors were ordained. The Unruhs toured the field and baptized 240 people in 1928. There were seven self – supporting churches in the field.

SURIAPET is a small town seventy – five miles due west of Secunderabad. The Hubberts started the new Mission Station in 1900 and worked up to 1929 with some breaks due to furloughs. They baptized 97 converts during that year. A church was organized at Suriapet in 1904. During 1922 both the Christians and Sudras met and formed into a group and visited 121 villages. Sixty – six prayer meetings were conducted and 31 converts were baptized. The Kurtzas baptized 188 converts in 1926 raising the total membership to 2,894.

JANGAON is situated about 95 miles east of Secunderabad. The Mission Station at Jangaon was opened by the Unruhs in 1901 and worked up to 1911. The Penners worked in the field in 1915 and baptized many people. The Board of Directors were elected for the Preston Training School in 1926. Miss Kate M. French was associated with the Rutherford both in the field work and the Preston Institution work.

GADWAL lies north of Kurnool and South of Mahabubnagar between the rivers Tungabhadra and Krishna. The Huizings established a new Mission Station at Gadwal in 1904 and worked up to 1912. The Ownes came to Gadwal field in 1922 and began their work. There were 937 Christians in the field in 1922 in 1925. The local preachers baptized 221 converts during 1928. Seven new schools were opened. The Penners worked in the field during 1928. the Owens toured the field and baptized 211 converts in 1931, raising the total membership to 3,127.

MADIRA is a small town in Khammam District. The Kurtzs opened the new Mission Station at Madira in 1904. The first convert in Madira was Lingapogu Jacob who was baptized by Campbell in Secunderabad. The Kurtzs baptized 380 converts in 1904. They also organized a church with 35 members in Vijayawada. The Longleys worked in Madira field during 1910 and 1911. The Kurtzs baptized 206 converts in 1913. a church was erected in Madira and also at Vijayawada during that year. The School in the field were better attended and better taught in 1922. Some night schools were also started.

HANUMAKONDA – 1879

Hanumakonda is a town in the Nizam Dominions situated between the rivers the Godavari and Krishna. It is 86 miles north – east of Secunderabad and four and half miles from Warangal.

Mr. and Mrs. Loughridge arrived in Hanumakonda on January 9, 1879. After a year's work among the people Loughridge baptized his first convert. A Church was organized in Hanumakonda on January 4, 1880. A day school was also opened. Mrs. Loughridge took care of the school and also work among the women. A.A. Newhall joined Mr. Loughridge in February, 1883. While Mr. Loughridge was busy with the construction of the bungalow Newhall toured the field and preached the gospel. Mr. Loughridge returned to American in 1884 leaving Newhall incharge of the work. Newhall married Miss Menke in 1884. Miss Bortha Menke joined her sister Mrs. Newhall at Hanumakonda. They worked among the girls and the women in the field.

Rev. J. Stuart Timpany a medical missionary was designated to Hanumakonda in 1896. He started a hospital as The Victoria Memorial Hospital. Dr. Timpany attracted both Hindus and Muslims apart from outcaste Christians.

Miss Wagner who was transferred to Hanumakonda in 1901 worked in the nurse training school up to 1904. Then she went on furlough and she had not returned. The Timpanys left for America in 1905. Handing over charge to Rev. J. Wiens and returned in 1907. Miss Anna Linker joined the work in Hanumakonda in 1907. Rev. Charles Rutherford and his wife were transferred to Hanumakonda in 1910 for the field work, but his wife died in 1911. Rutherford continued his work after the death of his wife. He baptized many people in the field. A new boarding school was opened. He returned home with his little daughter in 1913. Rev. B.J. Rockwood succeeded him but stayed only two years. He was transferred to Kurnool in 1915 as Principal of the high School.

Timpany established and carried on two branch dispensaries one at Cumbum and the other at Jangaon, where, over 5,000 patients were treated in 1914. When the Timpanys went on furlough in 1915 Rev. Jesse W. Stanger, M.D., and his wife were transferred from Nellore to Hanumakonda. There was at first a slight falling off in the attendance at the hospital but in the second year he had the largest attendance on record. Mrs. Stanger worked among the women and the children. She supervised the station schools and the Bible and Zenana work. The Timpanys returned in 1917 and the Stengers were transferred to the Clough Memorial Hospital, Ongole. Mr. and Mrs. Rutherford, the second wife, returned to Hanumakonda and relieved Dr. Timpany of his field work.

The Preston Institute was started in Hanumakonda in 1919 by Rutherford in memory of his first wife Mrs. Rutherford. Later on it was transferred to Jangaon.

In 1922 the Station Missionaries were the Timpanys. The Home Mission Society organized the Church in the field and supported their pastor also.

Many caste people freely invited the Christian preachers to their homes. The Muslim parida women admitted the Christian nurses into their houses to treat them. The manleys came to Hanumakonda to attend the medical work. The Penners continued their gospel work. There were five organized churches with 786 Christians. The construction of the Church at Hanumakonda was continued.

One hundred and Seventy – Nine converts were baptized in Warangal during 1926. The station School was continued in spite of the budget cut. The Missionaries shot many cruel beasts of the forests which hunted the villages. Mrs. Manley and Miss Gulban started child welfare centers in three villages.

The Hanumakonda field association was organized in 1928. It began to manage field affairs and paid the salaries of the workers from the local income.

Rev. C. Rutherford was in charge of the field work in 1931. Miss. H.L. Stoudenmire took care of the women's and theological education were needed. So schools of different kinds were established in the fields. To meet the needs of health and hygiene, dispensaries, health centers, hospitals and nurse's training schools were provided in the fields. Economic development and unemployment problem demanded industrial schools and settlements and increasing of the village schools. In this way the evolution of the fields took many turnings. In course of time the small beginnings of the Mission in one or two stations expanded into 28 Mission fields. Each Mission field with expanded into 28 Mission fields. Each Mission field with a Mission Station situated in the crucial place has worked on mostly for the full scope of its expansion. In this chapter an attempt has been made to trace the history of the main Mission fields with special reference to their beginning and the services rendered by the leading Missionaries in spreading the religion and starting educational and medical institutions.

NELLORE – 1840

Nellore Mission Station was founded on February 26, 1840 by Rev. Samuel S. Day, the first Baptist Missionary. Since it was the first station the geographical extent was unbounded. It was then called the 'Lone Star'. Day started the Gospel work from Nellore staying in a rented house. In 1841 an eight acre land was purchased from the Government near the Grand Trunk Road and a Mission House and Chapel were built in the site. A girl's school was also started there by Mrs. Day. It was the first girl's school in the Mission. After a year and seven months the first convert Venkappa was baptized by Day.

The Nellore field comprised the then Nellore Taluk North of river Penna, all of the Taluks South and a portion of Guduru and Rapur taluks. The town of Nellore, 107 miles North of Madras, is the headquarters of Nellore District. The area of Nellore was about 800 square miles.

Nellore Chuyrch was organized on October 12, 1844. Rev. Van Hussen and his wife who arrived in Nellore on March 21, 1840, worked as Assistant Missionaries to Day. After a period the Hussens went on furlough in October 1845 due to ill-health. The Days also left for America in December, 1845 due to ill-health, leaving the station to the incharge of Eurasian Preachers in 1846.

JEWETT

Rev. Day singly returned to Nellore along with Lyaan Jewett and his wife on February 16, 1849. The under cultivation. The children in the schools worked to have their clothes and rise the grain in the fields for their food. These schools also received no financial support from the Mission. The government recognized the boarding school in consideration of the wonderful service of the Staits. 78 pupils were in the school. It was admitted to grant – in – aid by the government. The Staits retired in May, 1932.

Five Christian native men and three Christian native women and one non-Christian men worked in three primary schools with 74 boys and 34 girls during 1935. There was also one grammar school with 18 boys and 4 girls in the Udayagiri field.

Rev. J.F. Burditt was the first missionary who started the Udayagiri field with grant missionary zeal and the Staits were the long standing Missionaries who brought the development of the field to a climax. Mrs. and Dr. M. Grant Stait was awarded Kaiser – I – Hind Gold Medal for two times.

KURNOOL – 1875

Kurnool is situated on the banks of river Tungabhadra about 160 miles west of Ongole. Clough and D.H. Drake visited Kurnool in 1875 and baptized 26 converts on December 1, 1875. Thus the Kurnool field came into existence.

Drake began the evangelistic work in August, 1876 and baptized twenty – two converts. A church was organized in Kurnool on December 23, 1877. Another church was also organized in Atmakur on the following Suncay. Guravaiah was appointed as the pastor of Atmakur Church. Drake went on furlough in 1879.

Rev. F.E. Morgan and his wife worked in the Kurnool field from 1879 to 1885. Morgan constructed the Mission House in 1882 with the grant of Rs. 5,000/- received from the Mission. Forty – Seven converts were baptized during

1882. Rev. E.E Sillima Succeeded the Morgans in 1885 and left the field in 1888 due to ill-health. G.N. Thomssen worked in the field from 1892 to 1895. Dr. Rogers Memorial Gospel Hall was erected in 1892 to 1895. Dr. Rogers Memorial Gospel Hall was erected in 1893. W.A. Stanton and his wife took charge of the Kurnool field in January, 1895. The Stantons worked in the field up to 1932 with some interruptions due to the furloughs and transfers.

The Kurnool field was divided into Kurnool and Nandyal division was handed over to Dr. Stenger evangelistic and educational work. Medical work was taken care of by J.C. Camran, M.D., and Nurse Training School, by Miss Sadie Robbins.

Rev. Rutherford took over the charge of Hanumakonda field in addition to the work of Jangnon in 1932. One Hundred Thirty Two converts were baptized in the Hanumakonda field. Two chapel school houses one at Doshnpet and the other at Paidapalli centers were dedicated. This was the second Mission Station of the A.B.T.M. in the Telangana.

OTHER MISSION FIELDS

The other mission fields that were started by the A.B.T.M. were Allur (1870), Cumbum (1882), Narsaraopet (1883), Vinukonda (1883), Atmakur (1892), Podili, Donakonda and Sattenapalle in 1894, Markapur and Gurzala in 1895 and Nandyal in 1904 in Andhra area and Mahabubnagar (1882), Nalgonda (1890), Suriapet (1900), Jangaon (1901) and Gadwal and Madira in 1904. Here under a brief account of these Mission fields is given.

Allure is a small town eighty miles north – east of Nellore. Rev. E. Bullard rounded this Mission station in 1870. It was the dedicated work of Rev. S.W. Davis and his wife who worked here from 1901 to 1921, that contributed to the growth of this Mission Station.

Cumbum is a small town in Prakasam District. This Mission station was opened in 1882 by Rev. W.B. Boggs. Boggs took the contract of rail road near Cumbum and provided work for the Christians. As a result he was able to attract the outcastes in to Christianity. However, it was the work of the Newcombs who worked in the Cumbum field for thirty six years from 1885 to 1922, that contributed to the growth and successful functioning of this Mission Station. One of the important features of the Station was that it had 20 acres of land that provided material help to the boarding school.

Narsaraopet is situated 28 miles west of Guntur. Rev. Maplesden opened the Mission Station at Narsaraopet in 1883. Rev. W. Powell (1887-1902) and Rev. E.E. Silliman (1902-1924) worked sincerely for the growth of this Mission Station and field.

Vinukonda is situated 50 miles South of Guntur. Rev. G.M. Thomssen opened the new Mission Station at Vinukonda in 1883. Rev. J. Heinrichs, Rev. A. Loughridge and Dussman were the important Missionaries that worked in the Vinukonda Mission field. The Dussmans established many self – supporting churches. They toured in the field and preached the gospel.

Atmakur is a small village about 30 miles west of Nellore. It was made a regular station in 1892 by Rev. Hankins who worked up to 1898. Rev. W.C. Owen and his wife worked in the Atmakur field from 1903-1928 with breaks due to furloughs and transfers. Mrs. Owen started a station school in the Mission station in 1903. Miss Booker joined the Owens and worked with her Bible women in the field.

The Owens worked in this field and baptized converts from Malas and Madigas and Sudras also. In spite of famines and war conditions the gospel work went on well.

PODILI is a small town in the Prakasam District thirty miles west of Ongole. Rev. A.C. Fuller founded the Podili Mission Station in 1894. There were already a number of people who became Christians during the Mass Movement of 1878. Fuller baptized about 400 converts who belonged to different castes. Rev. W.T. Elmore, W.J. Longley and witter were the important Missionaries who worked in the field and spread Christianity.

DONAKONDA is a small village situated, 100 miles West of Vijayawada. Donakonda field comprises of Darsi Taluk, F.H. Levering opened the Mission Station at Darsi in 1894. But J.A. Curtis transferred it to Donakonda in 1895. The Curtises worked in the Donakonda field from 1875 to 1935 with the gaps of furloughs. There were 57 native workers and 4,638 church members on Donakonda field in 1905. They baptized 250 converts during their tours in 1912. A school house was built in 1918. A widow home and an orphanage were started in the station. Harvest festivals were held in the field as a part of evangelistic work. Fortynine native Christian teachers and 54 native Christian women teachers worked in 89 primary schools with 1616 boys and 889 girls and three grammar schools with 84 boys and 38 girls in 1935.

SATTENAPALLE is situated in Guntur District twelve miles north of Narasarao pet. Rev. W.E. Boggs and his wife started a new Mission Station at Sattenapalle in 1894. He baptized many converts in 1912. Miss Doroas Whitaker worked in this field from 1920 to 1927. During the period from 1920 to 1927 the total membership of baptisms increased to 2,050. Rev. E. Erickson worked during 1932. Special gospel meetings for 10 days were held by Rev. Fox.

MARKAPUR is situated in Prakasam District about twenty miles east of Cumbum. The Marshes started the Mission field in August 1895. They worked from 1895 to 1921 with some breaks due to furloughs. During their

period the Ramapatnam Baptist Theological Seminary (R.B.T.S) students toured the field and 1,069 persons were baptized in 1919. Twelve acres of mission land was irrigated under wells under his supervision. Mr. M.J. Ramanjulu, who studied in Eastern Theological seminary in philadelphian came with his wife and worked in the field from 1931 to 1935.

GURZALA is situated in Planad Taluk in Guntur District. The Dussmans opened the Mission Station at Gurzala in 1895 and worked up to 1900. They baptized 64 converts in 1896. The Schugrens worked in the field from 1907 to 1935 with some gaps due to furloughs. Two hundred and forty – three converts were baptized during 1907 to 1915. One hundred thirty – three caste people were there among them. The Schugrens baptized 302 men and 198 women in 1931. Four hundred and twenty caste people were there among them. The District Council of the field assumed the responsibility for the agricultural development of 6,500 acres all over the field.

NANDYAL is situated on the southern railway about mid-way between Kurnool and Cumbum. The Stengers started the Mission Station in 1904 and worked up to 1916. The Stengers with native preacher Subbaiah preached people in the villages and baptized ten caste people in 1907. The Church Day celebrations, the new year festivals in Christian centers improved the evangelistic work. Rev. Christenson also worked in this field in 1928. The Nandyal field was under incharge missionaries who worked in the nearby fields for many years.

The Missionaries in their attempts to uplift the socio-economic condition of the depressed classes, educated the people and provided them with job after completion of their education. They extended their help through institutions and through relief measures

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