



Research article

GANDHI'S VIEW ON NATIONALISM AND THE PARTICIPATION OF CHRISTIANS IN THE INDIAN NATIONAL MOVEMENT

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ABSTRACT

Mahatma Gandhi played a decisive role in unifying the country against the British colonial forces and in providing an impetus in developing an Indian national identity and national consciousness. His programs like *Swadeshi*, *Swaraj*, *Satyagraha*, and Movements like Non-cooperation, Civil Disobedience, and Quit India have undoubtedly boosted the morale of the people of India and contributed to the consciousness of India's wellbeing and nationalism. Along with other Indians belonging to various religious ideologies, Christians too have played a very important role in India's national movement. Gandhi acknowledged the significant participation of Christians in freedom struggle and was highly appreciative of certain prominent Christians who were closely associated with him in the national movement. Thus, Christians are as much the sons and daughters of this soil as anyone else in this country. Christians have always been true patriots and true nationalists and this legacy is unquestionable.



Introduction

Today, Indians take pride in their identity as Indians. The fact that India has a strong government, judiciary and an army to protect and maintain order makes one feel grateful to the nation. It was mainly in the backdrop of the British rule in India and the subsequent exploitation of the Indian people that a nationalistic feeling began to grow among the Indians. Doubtlessly, Mahatma Gandhi played a decisive role in unifying the country against the British colonial forces. Along with other Indians belonging to various religious ideologies, Christians too played a very significant role in India's national movement. The objective of this article is to look into Gandhi's view on nationalism and the participation of Christians in Indian nationalist movement.

1. An Overview of the Emergence of Indian Nationalism

The Indian nationalist movement gradually succeeded in bringing to its knees the English colonial power. The process of the emergence of Indian national identity can be traced back to the ancient times as India was ruled by different rulers from time to time such as Ashoka (304-232 B.C.), Samudragupta (335-380 CE), in ancient times and Akbar (1542-1605) to Aurangzeb (1618-1707) in Medieval times.¹ However, it was in the 19th century that the idea of a national identity and national consciousness developed.

The consciousness of being suppressed and exploited under the British colonial rule tied different groups together. People sought for solidarity during their battle against the British colonialism. One of the outstanding leaders that led the freedom struggle against the British in India was Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhi's non-violent² approach brought in a fresh momentum to Indian nationalism.

2. Gandhi and Nationalist Struggle

When Gandhi emerged in the Indian national movement after his long stay and struggle against racial discrimination in South Africa, he had already found a new weapon (*Satyagraha*) to fight injustice and exploitation both at the individual and national level.³ As Gandhi came to the front line leadership of the national movement as the prime leader of the Indian National Congress, a new wave of change began to surface. Gandhi was successful in mobilizing the Indian masses – men and women – urban and rural – into the national movement.

3. Gandhian Nationalism

Gandhi played a crucial role in India's Independence struggle against the British and in providing an impetus in developing Indian national identity and national consciousness among the people of India. His unique philosophy and peaceful methods of agitation were instrumental in gaining freedom from the English colonial power. Gandhi's idea of nationalism can be understood from the following movements he initiated.

¹ Khadraoui Amina, "Gandhi's Nationalist Movement (1920-1947): A Non-Violent Path towards Independence" (Unpublished Master Degree Thesis, University of Tlemcen, 2016), 4.

² Gandhi believed that if non-violence was properly applied, it will prevent bloodshed not only in India but in the entire world. To understand more on how non-violence works, read M.K. Gandhi, *Self Restraint V. Self Indulgence* (Ahmedabad: Navjivan Publishing House, 1928), 146-150.

³ Sanjeev Kumar, "Gandhi and Indian Nationalism," in *Gandhi in Twenty-First Century*, ed., Ashu Pasricha (New Delhi: Deep & Deep Publications Pvt. Ltd., 2011), 58-59.



3.1. *Swadeshi*

Gandhi's idea of nationalism can be seen in his call to the practice of *Swadeshi*, which demanded self-reliance and self-sufficiency at the personal, societal and national levels. He believed that Indians must take *Swadeshi* vow because in it lies the prosperity of India. According to Gandhi, to use foreign articles rejecting those that are manufactured in India is to be untrue to India. He called it an unwarranted indulgence.⁴ Gandhi insisted that starvation in India could be avoided if every house in India had its spinning wheel and if people were busy with their handlooms.⁵

According to Gandhi, *Swadeshi* can be defined as that spirit in us which restricts us to the use and service of our immediate surroundings to the exclusion of the more remote. He believed that such *Swadeshi*, if reduced to practice, will lead to the millennium.⁶ His call to boycott foreign items came from his clear conviction that India should learn to be self-reliant. Gandhi believed that the real reform that India needs is *Swadeshi* in its true sense. Gandhi believed that without cottage industry the Indian peasant will be doomed.⁷ Therefore, he called for a revolution in mental outlook. Because he believed that the way to *Swaraj* (home rule) is *Swadeshi*. The idea of *Swadeshi* has undoubtedly boosted the morale of the people of India and contributed to the consciousness of India's wellbeing and nationalism.

3.2. *Swaraj*

For Gandhi, the word *Swaraj* is a *Vedic* word, which means self-rule. He said that as every country is fit to eat, to drink and to breathe, even so is every nation fit to manage its own affairs, no matter how badly.⁸ According to Gandhi, Real *Swaraj* will come not by the acquisition of authority by a few but by the acquisition of the capacity by all to resist authority when it is abused. In other words, *Swaraj* is to be obtained by educating the masses to a sense of their capacity to regulate and control authority.⁹ Gandhi also was highly critical about the modern civilization in His *Hind Swaraj*.¹⁰ For Gandhi, self-government depends entirely upon internal strength, upon the ability to fight against the heaviest odds.¹¹ He believed that *Swaraj* can be maintained, only where there is majority of loyal patriotic people to whom the good of the nation is supreme above all other considerations.

According to Gandhi, "It is *Swaraj* when we learn to rule ourselves. It is, therefore, in the palm of our hands."¹² Gandhi wrote in *Hind Swaraj*: "If man will only realize that it is unmanly to obey laws that are unjust, no man's tyranny will enslave him. This is the key to

⁴ M.K. Gandhi, "The Swadeshi Vow" 17th May, 1919, in *Young India 1919-1922* (Madras: S. Ganesan Publisher, 1924), 1268-1269.

⁵ Gandhi, "The Swadeshi Vow," 1269. See also M.K. Gandhi, *An Autobiography or the Story of my Experiments with Truth* (Ahmedabad: Navjivan Publishing House, 1927), 450-454.

⁶ Gandhi, "Swadeshi", 21st June, 1919, in *Young India*, 1277-1278.

⁷ Gandhi, "Swaraj in Swadeshi," 10th December, 1919, in *Young India*, 484-485.

⁸ M.K. Gandhi, *Village Swaraj* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1962), 16.

⁹ Gandhi, *Village Swaraj*, 16.

¹⁰ For more details on this topic, read Madhuri Santanam Sondhi, *Modernity, Morality and the Mahatma* (New Delhi: Har-Anand Publications Pvt. Ltd., 1997), 67ff.

¹¹ Gandhi, *Village Swaraj*, 16-17.

¹² M.K. Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1938), 60-61.



self- rule or home-rule.”¹³ To Gandhi, *Swaraj* is the abandonment of the fear of death. A nation which allows itself to be influenced by the fear of death cannot attain *Swaraj*.¹⁴ He said, “By patriotism I mean the welfare of the whole people.”¹⁵ Gandhi’s concept of *Swaraj* was deeply embedded in his vision of a free India. He believed in a patriotism that does not benefit one group but all equally.

3.3. *Satyagraha*

The concept of *Satyagraha* played an important role in Gandhi’s idea of nationalism. He was convinced that *Satyagraha* could be used as an effective weapon against any kind of violence and exploitation. According to Gandhi, *Satyagraha* is a method of passive resistance where there is no fear of defeat. A *satyagrahi*¹⁶ enjoys a degree of freedom not possible for others, for he becomes a truly fearless person. Such *Satyagraha* can be, practiced not only against a government but against society as well.¹⁷

The word *Satyagraha* is a combination of two words, *sat* which means ‘truth’ and *Agraha* which means ‘firmness.’¹⁸ Thus, for Gandhi, *Satyagraha* meant literally holding on to Truth¹⁹ and therefore, he called it ‘truth-force.’ Since Truth is soul or spirit, it is therefore, known as ‘soul force.’ It excludes the use of violence because man is incapable of knowing the absolute truth.²⁰

Gandhi taught that only those have the strength that flows from truthfulness can engage in passive resistance.²¹ He argued that *Satyagraha* is more potent than physical strength, which is as worthless as straw when compared with the former.²² Gandhi’s idea of *Satyagraha* undoubtedly provided a new strength to the Indian nationalist movement.

3.4. The Non-cooperation Movement

The Non-cooperation movement initiated by Gandhi is one of the significant freedom struggle movements against the British in India. Gandhi asked all Indians to give up the titles and honorary posts given by the British government. Gandhi also believed that Non-cooperation is the only way to avoid violence in the struggle for independence.²³ Gandhi himself returned the gold medal granted to him for his humanitarian work in South Africa.²⁴ He did it in pursuance of the scheme of Non-cooperation.

¹³ Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule*, 76. Read a critical view on Gandhian idea of *Swaraj* in, Anil Chandra Banerjee, *Nationalism in India* (Kolkata: Five Star Printing Works, 2010), 476-491.

¹⁴ Gandhi, “Fear of Death,” 13th October, 1921, in *Young India*, 898.

¹⁵ Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj*, 64.

¹⁶ A person who practices the discipline/policy of *Satyagraha*.

¹⁷ M. K. Gandhi, *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* (Delhi: Government of India, 1999), vol.8, 151, 152. *Satyagraha* continues to free India as a method of political agitation. To get more details on this, read Sondhi, *Modernity, Morality and the Mahatma*, 70.

¹⁸ Gandhi, *An Autobiography or the Story of my Experiments with Truth*, 293.

¹⁹ Truth with capital ‘T’ in Gandhian writings generally refers to that which constitutes fundamental metaphysical reality, ‘what really is.’ See Sondhi, *Modernity, Morality and the Mahatma*, 72.

²⁰ Gandhi, “Principles of Non-Co-operation,” 23rd February, 1921, in *Young India*, 222.

²¹ For Gandhi, *Satyagraha* went far beyond mere ‘passive resistance’ and became strength in practicing non-violent methods. See Ram Laxhan Mandal, *Gandhi and Revolution: Contemporary Views* (New Delhi: Anmol Publications Pvt. Ltd., 2015), 25.

²² Gandhi, *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol.9, 340.

²³ Gandhi, “The Mahomedan Decision,” 9th June, 1920, in *Young India*, 191, 192.

²⁴ Gandhi, “The Principles of Non-Co-operation,” 4th August, 1920, in *Young India*, 219.



According to Gandhi, non-cooperation predominantly implies withdrawing of co-operation from the State that in the non-cooperator's view has become corrupt and excludes Civil Disobedience. Non-cooperation is also a branch of Satyagraha which includes non-violent resistance for the vindication of truth.²⁵ Gandhi also maintained that, non-cooperation, however, does not in any way mean anarchy or absence of order. For Non-cooperation with the State means a closer co-operation among the people themselves.²⁶ The Non-cooperation movement launched by Gandhi made the Indian masses fearless and it gave a new shape and renewed strength to Indian's freedom fight.

3.5. The Civil Disobedience Movement

Civil Disobedience was yet another non-violent form of agitation that Gandhi launched against the British. He insisted that "Disobedience to the Civil has to be absolutely non-violent, the underlying principle being, the winning over of the opponent by suffering and love."²⁷ An out and out civil resister simply ignores the authority of the State. One may refuse to pay taxes and one may refuse to obey the law of trespass but in doing so, one never uses force. In fact one invites imprisonment, arguing with self that a state allows personal freedom only in so far as the citizen submits to its regulations.²⁸

Gandhi believed that Civil Disobedience is the inherent right of a citizen. Civil Disobedience is never followed by anarchy. To put down Civil Disobedience is to attempt to imprison conscience. Therefore, Civil Disobedience can only lead to strength and purity.²⁹ Gandhi believed that when the spirit of Civil Disobedience permeates the people of India, crimes or violence will be practically things of the past.³⁰ He said the greater our innocence, the greater our strength and the swifter our victory.³¹ Though the Civil Disobedience movement did not succeed as planned, it did prepare the people of India for greater sacrifices. It also helped develop nationalist spirit among the people.

3.6. The Quit India Movement

According to Gandhi, the cry of "Quit India" has arisen from a realization that if India is to shoulder the burden of fighting for the cause of mankind, she must have the glow of freedom now.³² Gandhi wanted the British rulers to withdraw quietly. He wanted to see the end of British domination altogether because it was an obstacle to all progress. According to Gandhi, there are two ways of getting rid of imperialism: either we wipe out the Empire or we quit it. Gandhi believed in the method of quitting it because it did not require violence.³³ Gandhi insisted on the need of coming together to create a true democracy.³⁴ The Quit Indian

²⁵ Gandhi, "Non-Co-operation – its theory and Practice," 23rd February, 1921, *Young India*, 222-223.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 127.

²⁷ Gandhi, "Requisite Conditions," 3rd November, 1921, in *Young India*, 932.

²⁸ Gandhi, "The Momentous Issue," 10th November, 1921, in *Young India*, 933-934. More details on the statements of Civil Disobedience can be seen in Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. 17, 391.

²⁹ Gandhi, "The Immediate Issue," 5th January, 1922, in *Young India*, 943.

³⁰ Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. 18, 237.

³¹ Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. 24, 46.

³² Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. 83, 305.

³³ Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. 82, 335.

³⁴ Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. 83, 184-185.



movement resulted in mass civil disobedience. Gandhi mobilized people across India to mark their protest against the British forces in peaceful manner showing their love for the nation and it gave a strong signal to the British that they might lose their control over India.

Gandhi's idea of nationalism was built in non-violent methods of protest against the British imperialism for the freedom of India. His programs like *Swadeshi*, *Swaraj*, *Satyagraha*, and Movements like Non-cooperation, Civil Disobedience, and Quit India clearly reveal his idea of nationalism. Patriotism for Gandhi meant the broadest good of humanity at large. Gandhi envisioned a new Indian society free from all forms of exploitation. Gandhi also acknowledged the significant participation of Christians in freedom struggle and was highly appreciative of certain prominent Christians who were closely associated with him in the national movement. In the following section, the Christian participation in Indian national movement will be discussed.

4. Indian Christian Participation in the National Movement

Christians in India have played a remarkable role in India's freedom struggle. Though Christian participation in the national movement has been questioned over the years, their claims have been proven to be wrong as the records show that a good number of Christians were in the forefront of freedom struggle in different parts of India.

In the following section a brief study of nine selected prominent Christians who participated in the Indian National Movement is undertaken. Seven out of the nine are Indian nationals. Three from Tamil Nadu, One from the former Punjab Region (Lahore), one from Uttar Pradesh and two from Kerala. The rest of the two are foreign nationals who played a major role in India's freedom struggle. This selection is done to showcase the participation of Christians from across India. It is also to be noted that many Christians participated in the National Movement from all over India and it is beyond the scope of this article to make a mention of all of them. The limited number is chosen in this article for pedagogic purpose.

5. The Indian National Congress and Christians

The Indian National Congress (INC) was founded in 1885. As it was a peaceful movement when it started, many Christians joined this movement. As per official congress report, 35 Christians attended the INC meeting held at Madras in 1887.³⁵ In the succeeding INC sessions too, the participation of Christians was notable.

However, the Christian participation in INC began to decline after 1892 because of the evangelical emphasis of other-worldliness, the fear of majority Hindus in the INC, and due to the fear of losing favor from the Government. Later on, as INC took a radical stand under Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Aurobindo Ghosh, there began extreme hostility between INC and the British Raj. It infused fear in the minds of Christians and they began to leave INC. However, Christian participation in the National Movement continued unabated whether by being part of INC or by not joining the INC.

³⁵ See Arthur Jeyakumar, "Christians and the National Movement in India: 1885-1947," in *Nationalism and Hindutva: A Christian Response: Papers from the 10th CMS Consultation*, ed. Mark T.B. Laing (New Delhi: ISPCK, 2005), 92.



5.1. K.T. Paul³⁶

K. T. Paul was active in Indian National Movement. According to him, the Non-cooperation Movement has done a world of good and it also provided Gandhi his dominant influence.³⁷ K.T. Paul wrote frequently to William Paton, urging him to quickly settle the issues pertaining to India. K.T. Paul wanted the Government to release all the *satyagrahi* prisoners who were non-violent. It was K. T. Paul who coined the phrase 'Christian Nationalism' in the context of the British rule in India.³⁸ He believed that Christian faith insists on Christian patriotism as a religious duty that one should cultivate to become all things to all if one wants to serve one's country. In this context, Rajagopalachari once said that K. T. Paul had discovered the unity between Christianity and Indian patriotism and he was the pioneer in building up a truly Indian Christianity.³⁹

K. T. Paul was highly critical of the Government policy of Press ordinance that curbed their freedom, and the use of force against peaceful agitations. He also represented the Indian Christian community at the Round Table Conference held in London from 12 November 1930 to 19 January 1931. In paying homage to K.T. Paul, Gandhi called him as a thorough nationalist. He also said that his death was a great loss to India.⁴⁰ This comment of Gandhi on K.T. Paul is an answer to those who question the role of Christians in India's national movement. K.T. Paul was a great Christian and equally a great nationalist and it is affirmed by Gandhi himself.

5.2. V.S. Azariah⁴¹

V. S. Azariah's views show his nationalism. Throughout his life, he opposed the system of communal electorates. In 1930 at the Lambeth Conference of the Anglican Bishops, he along with other Bishops issued a letter on behalf of India to the *London Times*. In that letter, they appealed for India's proper place in the Commonwealth of Nations and insisted that India should have full voice in determining the destinies of her own country.⁴² This was the demand INC was emphasizing during that time. Azariah argued that Christians ought to have the privilege of voting in the General Electorate because the civic rights of the Indian Christians were not different from those of other communities. It clearly shows his

³⁶ K. T. Paul hails from Salem, Tamil Nadu. He resigned his government job and became a tutor in history in Madras Christian College. He was appointed as the General Secretary of Y.M.C.A in 1916. See M.M. Thomas and P.T. Thomas, *Towards an Indian Christian Theology: Life and Thought of Some Pioneers* (Tiruvalla: Christava Sahitya Samithi, 1998), 127.

³⁷ Arthur Jeyakumar, *Christians and the National Movement: The Memoranda of 1919 and the National Movement with Special reference to Protestant Christians in Tamil Nadu: 1919-1939* (Bangalore: Centre for Contemporary Christianity, 2009), 134.

³⁸ See Aswathy John, "Christians in Nation Building and Nationalism: The Contributions of K. T. Paul," in *New Life Theological Journal* 5/2 (July-December 2015): 73.

³⁹ John, "Christians in Nation Building and Nationalism: The Contributions of K. T. Paul," 77.

⁴⁰ Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 52, 107.

⁴¹ Vedanayagam S. Azariah was born in Tinnavelly in 1874. He was the first Indian Anglican Bishop. See M.M. Thomas and P.T. Thomas, *Towards an Indian Christian Theology*, 116.

⁴² Cited in See Arthur Jeyakumar, *Christians and the National Movement: The Memoranda of 1919 and the National Movement with Special reference to Protestant Christians in Tamil Nadu: 1919-1939*, 126-127.



nationalism which was in line with the stand of the Congressites.⁴³ Azariah wished India to be free and he wanted Indian Christians to be Indians first.

5.3. Venkal Chakkarai⁴⁴

Venkal Chakkarai was greatly influenced by Gandhi and felt called to participate in the freedom struggle. He joined the Home Rule Movement in 1917 and Non-cooperation movement in 1920. His nationalist interests coupled with his concern for social justice led him into Trade Union movement. In 1926, he became an elected member of the Madras Corporation. He became the Chairman of the All India Trade Union Congress in 1951.⁴⁵ Chakkarai ardently supported joint electorates and strongly opposed separate electorates. He was a socialist and a Christian nationalist.

5.4. S. K. Datta⁴⁶

S. K. Datta had a great respect for Gandhi and his teachings. He was the president of the All India Conferences of Indian Christians in 1923, 1933, and 1934. He was a nationalist like K. T. Paul. His major focus was the integration of the nation and thus he opposed the development of communal consciousness.⁴⁷ He wanted the Indian Christian community to identify itself with the nationalists. He represented the Protestant Christians at the second Round Table Conference held at London from 7 September to 11 December, 1931.⁴⁸ In this meeting he vociferously opposed separate electorates. It is apparent from S. K. Datta's speeches and activities that he actively supported the Indian national movement.

5.5. Augustine Ralla Ram⁴⁹

In 1932 Augustine Ralla Ram, along with other prominent Christian leaders, visited Britain on a Mission Fellowship. When he was in Wales, he issued a Manifesto under the title "The Present Indian Political Situation and the Way Out." He was vehemently criticized for this and had to undergo tough times. In his Manifesto, he questioned the intentions of the British towards India.⁵⁰ The content of the Manifesto proves Ralla Ram not only as a nationalist but also as someone who was sympathetic towards the Congress.

⁴³ Jeyakumar, *Christians and the National Movement*, 127.

⁴⁴ Venkal Chakkarai became a Christian in 1903. He practiced law from 1908-1913. Then he left the job and joined the staff of Danish Mission in Madras. See M.M. Thomas and P.T. Thomas, *Towards an Indian Christian Theology*, 137.

⁴⁵ M.M. Thomas and P.T. Thomas, *Towards an Indian Christian Theology*, 138.

⁴⁶ Surendra Kumar Datta is from Lahore. He was educated in Lahore and Edinburgh University. He became the Principal of Foreman Christian College, Lahore in 1934. See M.M. Thomas and P.T. Thomas, *Towards an Indian Christian Theology*, 133.

⁴⁷ M.M. Thomas and P.T. Thomas, *Towards an Indian Christian Theology*, 133.

⁴⁸ Arthur Jeyakumar, *Christians and the National Movement: The Memoranda of 1919 and the National Movement with Special reference to Protestant Christians in Tamil Nadu: 1919-1939*, 124.

⁴⁹ Augustine Ralla Ram (1888-1957) was a Pastor of the Jumma Presbyterian Church, Allahabad. He was a prominent leader in the United Church of North India.

⁵⁰ Arthur Jeyakumar, *Christians and the National Movement: The Memoranda of 1919 and the National Movement with Special reference to Protestant Christians in Tamil Nadu: 1919-1939*, 125.



5.6. Annie Mascarene

Annie Mascarene (1902-1963) was one of the early women freedom fighters of Travancore, Kerala. She was a prominent leader of Travancore State Congress (TSC). Her political career started when she joined the Struggle for Responsible Government in Travancore.⁵¹ Thereafter, she participated in the Civil Disobedience Movement in Travancore along with Pattom Thanu Pillaai. As she became a threat to the British, they arrested her while she was a member of the Working Committee of the TSC.⁵² She was imprisoned for treason.

5.7. George Joseph

George Joseph was another leading figure who participated in the freedom struggle at the national level. He was also very active in Indian National Congress. He was a close associate of national leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, C. Rajagopalachary and Sardar Vallabhai Patel.⁵³ George Joseph was arrested in 1922 for sedition and spent a year in the Lucknow District Jail along with Jawaharlal Nehru, Mahadev Desai, Purushottam Das Tandon and Devdas Gandhi.⁵⁴ He became the member of the Home Rule movement and took a leading role in *Vaikom Satyagraha*⁵⁵ in Kerala in 1924. It was in George's house in Madurai, in 1925 that Gandhi renounced his shirt and put on the loin cloth, which distinguished him thereafter.⁵⁶ He attended the All India Congress Meeting at Madras. Later in 1937 he was elected as a congress member to the Central Legislative Assembly. It is clear from these accounts that George Joseph played a very important role in India's nationalism at the national level.

5.8. C. F. Andrews

C.F. Andrews arrived in India as a missionary on March 20th, 1904 and joined the St. Stephan's College in Delhi. During his stay in India, he familiarized himself with the socio-economic and political problems of the people of India. He along with the support of Gandhi fought against the racial discrimination in India. He also fought for getting the basic right for Indians in Africa. He joined with Gandhi and fought against the policy of recruiting Indian coolies to work in Fiji. In the struggle for independence, Andrews completely identified himself with the Indian nationalists.⁵⁷

Thus Gandhi said of him, "He was a good son of England and he became a son of India. I have not met the better man or better Christian."⁵⁸ Andrews and Gandhi became very close

⁵¹ Joshy Mathew, "Christians and Nation Building in Modern India: With Special Reference to Kerala," in *Indian Church History Review* 50/2 (July, 2016): 118.

⁵² Mathew, "Christians and Nation Building in Modern India: With Special Reference to Kerala," 119.

⁵³ Mathew, *Christians and Nation Building in Modern India*, 119.

⁵⁴ M. Arockiasamy Xavier, "Christians and Indian Freedom Movement: Role of Christians in Tamil Nadu in Individual Satyagraha and Quit India Movement," in *Indian Church History Review* XLVIII/2 (December, 2014): 115-116.

⁵⁵ Agitation for the right of the low caste people to have access to temples.

⁵⁶ Xavier, *Christians and Indian Freedom Movement*, 116.

⁵⁷ M.M. Thomas and P.T. Thomas, *Towards an Indian Christian Theology*, 104.

⁵⁸ Cited in S.R. Bakshi, "C. F. Andrews: A True Gandhian: A Study of His Work for Indian Nationalism," in *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* 51 (1990): 453, accessed March 7, 2018, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44148259>.



friends. There was no doubt about Andrews love for India and Gandhi once said that the heroic deeds of Andrews will not be forgotten so long as England and India live.⁵⁹ Andrews offered his complete support to Gandhi in achieving *Swaraj*. He also pleaded for complete independence for India.

Andres said once, “Independence, complete and perfect independence for India, is a religious principle with me because I am a Christian.”⁶⁰ The legacy of Andrews towards the promotion of Indian nationalism and his participation in India’s freedom struggle can never be forgotten.

5.9. Anne Marie Petersen⁶¹

In 1916, as Anne Marie visited Mahatma Gandhi’s ashram near Ahmedabad, the friendship between the two began and this meeting was a turning point in her life. From that day onwards, her aim in life was to start a Christian school for girls based on the models used by Mahatma Gandhi’s ashram and the Danish Folk High School. In 1921 Gandhi laid the foundation stone for the school and a few years later the school was officially opened under the name *Seva Mandir* at a place called Porto Novo, near Chidambaram in Tamil Nadu. Anne Marie decided not to emphasize on English as the medium of instruction in her school. Rajaratnam⁶² notes that her call to the Indians to respect their vernacular, their literature and her strong support to the Indian national movement made her an unwanted person not only for the British government in India but also for her own mission agency.⁶³ Therefore, she left her mission and joined the Indian leaders who were engaged in the struggle for independence.

She supported the movement to such an extent that she was even accused of giving priority to nationalism at the expense of Christianity. After meeting Gandhi at a meeting in Vellor, she did not any longer feel like a stranger but as a child of India.⁶⁴ She fully supported and participated in Gandhi’s non-co-operation moment, for she believed that India has no other way to protest against being trampled down and crushed. For her, being loyal to the poor and the oppressed was a Christian obligation which demanded support to the Indians and their needs.⁶⁵ Anne Marie Petersen was doubtlessly a faithful Christian and a good nationalist. Her lasting friendship with Gandhi made her a true follower of Gandhian ideas. Her sincere participation in India’s struggle for independence and her contribution in the field of education will ever be remembered.

⁵⁹ Cited in Bakshi, “C. F. Andrews: A True Gandhian: A Study of His Work for Indian Nationalism,” 454.

⁶⁰ Bakshi, “C. F. Andrews: A True Gandhian: A Study of His Work for Indian Nationalism,” 455.

⁶¹ Anne Marie Petersen was a Danish schoolteacher who came to India as a missionary belonging to the so called Loventhal Mission in 1909. In 1914 Loventhal left India but Anne Marie Petersen continued her work as a schoolteacher. Read the excellent book on the works of Anne Marie Petersen, Tine Elisabeth Larsen, *Anne Marie Petersen: A Danish Woman in South India – A Missionary Story 1909-1951*, ed., Daniel Jeyaraj (Chennai: Lutheran Heritage Archives, 2000).

⁶² Dr. Rajaratnam is the Director of Gurukul Lutheran Theological College & Research Institute, Madras, India.

⁶³ Review by Dr. K. Rajaratnam, *Anne Marie Petersen – A Danish Woman in South India: A Missionary Story 1909-1951*, <http://www.dihrs.dk/Review%20of%20the%20book.htm>, accessed March 11, 2018.

⁶⁴ Larsen, Anne Marie Petersen, 74-75.

⁶⁵ Larsen, Anne Marie Petersen, 77.



6. Conclusion

Mahatma Gandhi was in the forefront of the freedom struggle against the British. He succeeded in bringing together the Indian masses to fight for India's Independence. His concepts of *Swadeshi*, *Swaraj*, *Satyagraha*, and Non-co-operation, Civil Disobedience and Quit India Movements played a vital role in forming India's national consciousness in the fight against the British. The participation of Christians in this freedom struggle is an unquestionable reality.

A significant number of Christians from different parts of India both Indian and foreign nationals have greatly contributed to India's nationalism.⁶⁶ While some joined the Congress, others continued to support and participate in the Independence struggle without joining the Congress. Gandhi was highly appreciative of many Christians like K. T. Paul, George Joseph, C. F. Andrews and Anne Marie Petersen. Today no one can question the credibility of Christians as to whether did they contribute to India's nationalism. Christians across the length and breadth of India supported the nationalist movement through their participation, writings and speeches. Thus, it is evident that Christians loved India and supported the Nationalist movement and wanted the British to leave India. This undeniable history makes the claims of Christians, credible beyond doubt that they are as much the sons and daughters of this soil as anyone else in this country. Christians have always been true patriots and true nationalists and no one can question this legacy.

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⁶⁶ To get a picture of the Bengali pastor's role in National Movement read, Ajay Chakravorthy, Bengali Pastor's Role Towards the National Movement (1885-1947), in *Indian Church History Review* XLVIII/2 (December, 2014): 131-149.



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