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A Church Growth Study of the Chachkapi Church in Bihar State of India

Manohar Kujur
Andrews University
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ABSTRACT

A CHURCH GROWTH STUDY OF THE CHACHKAPI CHURCH IN BIHAR STATE OF INDIA

by

Manohar Kujur

Adviser: Bruce Bauer
ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dissertation

Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: A CHURCH GROWTH STUDY OF THE CHACHKAPI CHURCH IN BIHAR STATE OF INDIA

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Chachkapi Church is the only growing church in its pastoral district. However, its growth is very slow. Adventism first came at Chachkapi in 1957 and by 1998 it had grown to 161 members. This shows its potential for growth. The church members are Oraon and the majority of the people who live around the area belong to the same community. Oraons were the first to accept Christianity in Chotanagpur South Bihar. Growth was by a people movement. According to present trends, churches among the Oraons are growing slower in comparison to the other tribals in Chotanagpur.

In an attempt to find a way to help the church grow this study looks carefully at two things: first, the Oraon community is carefully analyzed. Special attention is paid
to their world view, cultural beliefs, practices, and needs. Second, the Oraon church at Chachkapi is examined historically to discover growth patterns as well as reasons for both growth and stagnation.

Based on this analysis, a detailed strategy aimed at promoting church growth is proposed which has three major parts: (1) a plan to meet temporal and spiritual needs by community caring and close identification, (2) evangelism methods which hope to foster a people movement, and (3) follow-up training and equipping new members for service and evangelism. The paper concludes with specific recommendations for further use of this strategy.
Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

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CHURCH IN BIHAR STATE OF INDIA

A Dissertation
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

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Manohar Kujur
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To my parents
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of this dissertation is to study the church growth patterns of the Chachkapi Seventh-day Adventist Church and design a strategy to enhance its growth.

Justification

The Bihar Section of the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church is divided into four circles. They are the Santhal Pargana Circle, the East Chotanagpur Circle, the West Chotanagpur Circle, and the North Bihar Circle. The first three are in the southern part of Bihar, where mostly tribal people live. Christianity in Bihar has spread mostly among the tribal people. About 75 percent of all Christians of the state live in South Bihar.¹

The Chachkapi Church comes under the West Chotanagpur Circle. At present this is the slowest growing circle. Among the non-institutional churches of the West Chotanagpur Circle, the Chachkapi Church stands second in membership (161 members in 1998). In its pastoral district, Chachkapi

is the only organized church; there are thirteen companies. There is only one full-time pastor to care for all these worship groups. At the moment there seems to be a lack of vision and leadership in this church.

Most of the people living in the West Chotanagpur Circle are from the Oraon community which is largely animist, although some have converted to Christianity and Hinduism.¹ The pastor and lay leaders need training and effective methods if they are to be successful in evangelizing the Oraon people.

To a certain extent the church is facing the problem of lethargy. It lacks the warmth of fellowship and passionate worship services which will keep it spiritually alive.

While some people are receptive to Christianity, there is great opposition from the Hindu community whenever any effort is made to bring people to Christ. In some of the villages, pastors and lay leaders are not allowed to conduct evangelistic campaigns. Even house-to-house visitation and sharing the gospel message are not permitted. Interested persons are threatened with expulsion from their villages, confiscation of their property, and even physical harm. These are some of the challenges facing the pastor and lay leaders as they attempt to formulate a workable strategy

which will enable them to share the Gospel in the face of opposition and bring about church growth.

**Methodology**

This is a church growth study of Chachkapi Church of the Bihar Section. A careful study of ten years of growth had been done, as seen in the finances, statistics, history of the church with emphasis on outreach, opinions of members, and church leaders. The study also includes a look at the location of the church, type of facilities, current church activities, and membership demographics.

In doing this study the researcher also developed, from different libraries, a working bibliography of materials describing the surrounding community of the Chachkapi Church. Books on evangelism and church growth were studied to form the basis for analysis and provide source material for developing strategies to enhance church growth.

**Overview of the Dissertation**

Chapter 1 introduces the dissertation, while chapter 2 gives the history and description of the Chachkapi Church. Chapter 3 describes the community surrounding the Chachkapi Church. Chapter 4 analyzes the current situation of the Chachkapi Church. Chapter 5 develops strategies for church growth. The summary, conclusions, and recommendations appear in chapter 6.
CHAPTER 2

HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION OF THE CHACHKAPI CHURCH

Chapter 2 describes the impact of Christianity among the Oraon. The history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Bihar is also given. The Chachkapi Church is described at length including its growth in membership and finance. This background lays a foundation for what follows in analysis and strategy.

The history of Christianity in Bihar first made an impact among the Oraon of Chotanagpur in 1850.¹ After nine years of hard work the Lutheran missionaries realized their first converts on June 9, 1850.²

The Roman Catholic missionary, Father August Stackman, first came to Chotanagpur of Bihar on July 10, 1867. He made the first Catholic converts on November 8, 1873.³


Christianity continued to grow so that by 1981 there were over 740,186 Christian converts.¹

In 1981 Christianity was 1.06 percent of the total population of Bihar. In 1981 the population of Bihar was 69,914,734 and in 1991, 86,338,853.² By 2000 it is expected to grow to nearly 102,762,972. If Christianity remains at 1.06 percent of the total population of Bihar, there would be over 1,089,287 Christians in the state by the year 2000.

History of the SDA Church

The Seventh-day Adventist work in East India began with Miss Georgia Burrus (later Mrs. Georgia Burgess), a missionary from California who arrived in Calcutta on January 23, 1895, to start her work as a Bible instructor. She also ministered to the needy women of Bengal. On December 8, 1895, D. A. Robinson and his family and Miss May Taylor arrived in Calcutta from London to start their medical ministry. In 1896 they opened a school for Hindu girls and in 1897 an orphanage. This orphanage was shifted to Karmatar, in Bihar, about 234 kilometers northwest of Calcutta in 1898. There they also opened a medical

¹Albert Vasantharaj, Bihar: Church and People Groups (Madras: Church Growth Association of India, 1992), 153.

²Albert S. Vasantharaj, ed., Bihar: Church and People Groups (Madras: Church Growth Association of India, 1982), 151, 153.
dispensary. This was the beginning of the SDA work in Bihar.¹

In 1920 the work in Bengal and Bihar was organized as one unit under the East India Section with its head office at Karmatar. Elders R. J. Barrowdale and W. B. Votaw were the first evangelists in Bihar. They worked mostly among the tribal peoples of South Bihar. Very soon the headquarters were shifted to Ranchi.²

As the work progressed in 1996 the East India Section was divided into two units, the West Bengal Section and the Bihar Section. By March 1999 there were 44 organized churches and 105 companies with a membership of 8,015 in the Bihar Section.³

Even though the SDA work in Bihar began in 1898, the first converts in Chotanagpur were made in 1920. Seven Oraon of Kurgi were the first to accept Adventism. Kurgi comes under the pastoral district of Chachkapi Church, but at that time the work at Chachkapi had not begun.

The companies at Jamgain and Jhinjhri were formed in 1953 with a membership of four in each group. The companies at Bobro and Kudarkho began in 1956, with a membership of six and five respectively. Even though these five companies

¹Peter Mundu, President of East India Section interview by author, 13 November 1993, Morabadi Villa, Ranchi.
²Ibid.
³Robert Marjee, Secretary of Bihar Section, interview by author, 15 June 1999, Morabadi Villa, Ranchi.
did not grow into churches, they did produce a few church leaders.

Daud Tirkey was an Adventist living in Kudarkho village. He was a carpenter and his house was beside the village road. On marketing days, he would display his handicrafts to sell to the people who passed by. He would stop the people and tell them about his new-found religion. After a long time a few people from Chachkapi showed some interest in knowing more about Christianity.

One day S. Lakra, then the Circle Leader of the West Chotanagpur Circle, visited Daud Tirkey, who at once wanted to take Pastor Lakra to Chachkapi to give a Bible study to the interested people. Lakra was reluctant to go, but Daud Tirkey insisted they go right away. In Chachkapi, Lakra gave a Bible study to a few interested people. The people liked the message and wanted to know more about it. Pastor D. K. Down, then the president of the East India Section, made arrangements to conduct a series of evangelistic meetings at Chachkapi. As a result nine persons took their stand for the Lord and were baptized.

The newly baptized members shared their faith with their relatives. In the beginning, these relatives were resistant and considered the Christian converts outcasts. However, their changed life, healthful living, and Christian songs attracted them. This led another six persons to accept Adventism and be baptized in 1959. Thereafter the
Chachkapi Church began to grow. By the end of 1998, the total membership of the Chachkapi Church was 161 members.

The five companies that already existed in the Chachkapi pastoral district still remain but never have become organized churches. In fact, the very company that brought the Gospel to the Chachkapi Church ceased to exist because all the members migrated, leaving no believers in the village.

After the establishment of the Chachkapi Church, ten more companies were raised up in that pastoral district. However, the believers from one of those groups also migrated so that at present the pastoral district has one organized church and thirteen small companies.

Five companies are within 10 kilometers from the Chachkapi Church and the members of those companies come to Chachkapi to worship. The rest of the companies worship in their own villages. Table 1 shows the names and dates for all the pastors at the Chachkapi church.

**Description of the Church**

Twenty questionnaires were randomly given to church members of the Chachkapi Church. Of the twenty, five had been converted to Adventism from animism and the rest were born Adventists. Eight of the respondents were young people and the other twelve were adults. The purpose of the questionnaire was to find the reasons for accepting or
remaining in Adventism, their responsibilities in the church, outreach activities, opinions on the progress of the church, and their current church activities. The information contained in the following section comes mostly from their responses.

Conversion from Animism

When the respondents were animist, they disliked their religious and social practices. They felt that Dharmes, the supreme deity, was too far away to listen to them. At the same time Dharmes did not interfere with the evil activities of the devil. Their worship and propitiation of the devil did not give them full protection; neither did they receive blessings from the evil spirits. They were always surrounded by malevolent spirits and evil eyes. This gave them no peace of mind. So there was an innermost desire to
find freedom from the dominion of devils and witches. As they learned that Jesus had power over the devil and could protect them from the devil's mischievous work, they readily accepted Christianity.

Their religious practice had also taught them that their god is pleased when people eat, drink, dance, and make merry. However, they realized that drinking rice beer was one of the causes for their poverty. They were poor and had no status in society. They could not educate their children so that the next generation might have equal footing with the rest of the people. As the SDAs taught them healthful and temperate living, they chose to be in a community that would help them to overcome their drinking and give them a better life.

They also realized that, even though their children might be educated, they would never have equal footing with the rest of the community, because the caste system of Hinduism would still make them feel that they belonged to a lower caste. They realized that in Christianity there was no caste system, that all were equal in the sight of God. This also led them to accept Adventism.

The presence of a Lutheran church in the community had made them realize that the living standard of Christians was much higher than their own. They had also seen that the Christian children received a better education and were more
progressive than others. Therefore education, as well as a better standard of life, led them to accept Adventism.

According to their previous religion, life only consisted of the present. Adventism offered them a better present and a hope for a brighter future life after death. This teaching also attracted them. Others were attracted by listening to the lively and meaningful Christian songs.

Reasons for Remaining SDA

The question was asked to those born Adventists: "What do you like most in Adventism that has led you to remain in the church?" Some refused to comment. A few of them said that they had been born as Adventists, therefore they were Adventists. It seems that they had not yet experienced the joy of accepting Jesus as their Lord.

Some expressed that the Adventist community is much better than any other non-Christian or Christian community. They liked the healthful and temperate lifestyle of Adventism and they have also realized that the truth is in Adventism, because it teaches and practices all the teachings of the Bible, including the Sabbath.

Responsibilities in the Church

Out of twenty members, twelve responded that they had not been given any responsibilities in the church. Of the eight, two had held two offices and three had held three offices in the church. Since there are 161 members in the
church, it appears that church responsibilities are given to persons who are more active than the others.

**Outreach Activities**

Of the twenty, one person responded that he was involved in conducting lay evangelistic meetings in the village. Five of them were actively involved in giving Bible studies. Two of them had conducted a Vacation Bible School. Another two had helped needy or sick people. Their love and care had won the hearts of the people and eventually these people had become members of the church. Two of the respondents had offered prayer for others; they had also cast out the devil from people and had won them for the Lord. Some accompanied music groups and participated in singing as well as giving moral support in the witnessing work.

Most of the converts in the church became members due to personal contact and relationships with others. In 1995 lay members conducted an evangelistic meeting in their village. They took care of the sick and needy. They also cast out devils through prayer and brought seventeen people to the church. In 1996 they also brought thirteen persons to the Lord. All these conversions were due to the active participation of church members in the outreach activities.
Progress of the Church

Many opinions were given regarding the progress of the Chachkapi Church. The highest number of members (8 of 20) wanted a larger church building, since theirs is very small and old. Some members mentioned that there is no room in the church so they do not feel like inviting other people to attend.

The second largest group opted for opening a church school for their children. If a church school were opened, even non-Adventist children would come to school. The church school would not only give an Adventist education to the church members' children but also to non-Adventist and non-Christian children. The influence of the school might bring some souls to God.

Four respondents believed that lay evangelism is one of the best means to win more souls. The Chachkapi Church members also suggested that rather than having a visiting pastor, they needed a regular pastor in their church, who would train them and lead them in witnessing. They also requested a training program in which they could learn practical ways of evangelism.

Some suggested that team work would be more profitable to win more members. They want everybody to work together. At the same time, many felt that the members must be sincere, faithful, and honest.
The respondents felt the need of conducting a revival meeting, to enhance their spiritual life and revitalize them to do outreach work. They also felt that they should have mid-week prayer meetings for the members as well as for others.

The opinions of the church members regarding winning new people are very important since they live with the people and know what the best way is to win the confidence of the people and lead them to accept Adventism. The church building, a school, revival meetings, lay training programs, and other activities of the church were all suggestions in reaching the people with the truth.

The local church pastor felt that the basic need of the Oraon people is economic improvement. Most of the people depend on agricultural products for their livelihood; they also need to work as laborers in the dry season. When the gospel message is presented, these people expect that, along with the spiritual blessing, financial help will be given to them. When they do not get financial help, they become reluctant to accept the Adventist teachings.

The pastor has noted that Hindu domination also hinders the spreading of the gospel message. They consider Christianity a Western religion. Becoming Christian is giving way to Western domination. Christians eat beef (cow), their goddess. All these factors lead them to resist and even oppose the spread of Christianity.
The main problem the pastor is facing is the nonavailability of audiovisual aids. The people are less educated and need some audiovisual aids to focus their attention. Audiovisual would also help fix the message in people's minds. In addition, the pastor also expressed a need for sufficient and timely evangelistic funds since the work suffers when the work is not done on time.

The pastor realizes that he, as well as the lay members, must be well trained to reach others. The work will progress if teamwork and small group dynamics are introduced into the church. According to the pastor, the inactive members are not fully converted; they are selfish and lack consecration.

Current Church Activities

In 1997 the church activities slowed down slightly. The church members requested the Section to have a regular church pastor, to open a church school, and to have the church building rebuilt. Since the Section could not meet their needs, some of the members no longer actively participate in church activities.

In spite of all these problems, five members are engaged in giving Bible studies. A small group of members goes into the village to help the sick and needy. They also conduct a branch Sabbath school. They tell Bible stories to children and offer prayers in houses.
In 1998 the Section was able to meet some of the church members' requests. This was an encouragement to the members, and as a result more of the members have become active witnesses again.

Production of Professionals

So far Chachkapi Church has produced one ordained pastor, two medical workers, three evangelists, and ten teachers. Most of these people are working in the denomination with a few of the teachers working outside.

Membership and Church Growth

Recent church growth is divided into two time periods. The first part deals with 1957 to 1986 and the second part from 1987 to 1998. The Sabbath School and church attendance records are from 1987 to 1998.

Church Growth, 1957-1986

The first nine converts were made at Chachkapi in 1957. During the first decade (1957-1966) the Chachkapi Church grew from nine to thirty-two members. Even though Chachkapi Church was the only growing church in the pastoral district, its growth was very low.

The church members of the Chachkapi Church shared their faith with their relatives and friends; as a result, during the first decade three more companies were formed. In 1958 two companies were added: Bakhar, with five members, and Piska Nagri with four. In 1960 the Khirda company was added.
with five members. So at the end of the first decade the total membership of the pastoral district was sixty-seven. One member died in 1966, so the total membership was sixty-six with the total membership of the Chachkapi Church being thirty-two. The Average Annual Growth Rate (AAGR) for the first decade for the Chachkapi Church was 13.67 percent; the Decadal Growth Rate (DGR) was 255.55 percent. The DGR for the district was 94.11 percent.

During the second decade (1967-1976) one more company with three members was added to the pastoral district. In addition fifteen members were added to the Chachkapi Church. Since there were three deaths in the church, the total membership by 1976 came to forty-four. A total of eighteen members was added to the pastoral district, but there were six deaths, which left an increase of only twelve members or a total membership of seventy-eight members. The Average Annual Growth Rate (AAGR) for the second decade for the Chachkapi Church was 3.05 percent; the Decadal Growth Rate (DGR) was 37.5 percent. This shows that church growth was very slow during the second decade. The DGR for the district was 18.18 percent.

In the third decade (1977-1986) five more companies were added to the pastoral district. The first was formed in 1977 at Patratoli with four members. The second was added in 1980 at Itachindri with six members. The third was formed in 1984 at Bantoli with two members, and one more was
added in 1986. The fourth and the fifth companies were added in 1986 at Tero Amartoli and Bero with five and seven members, respectively. Except Tero Amartoli, the other four companies are within 10 kilometers of the Chachkapi Church. Therefore, the members of these companies are counted with the members of the Chachkapi Church. During the third decade two more members were added to the company at Kurgi. At Khirda, one member was added and the companies at Bakhar and Piska Nagri had one baptism each.

The total number of baptisms during the third decade in the pastoral district was fifty-two. There were six deaths and the five members of the Kudarkho company migrated. So there was a total loss of eleven members. The total increase to membership was forty-one. In 1986 the total membership of the pastoral district was 119. Total baptisms during the decade were forty-three, but because of four deaths the total increase to membership was thirty-nine. The AAGR during the third decade for the Chachkapi Church was 6.63 percent and the DGR was 88.63 percent. The DGR for the district was 55.51 percent. During the third decade more companies were added and the number of baptisms was greater than the first two decades. The fourth and last decade of the Chachkapi Church is described separately.

Church Growth, 1987-1998

During the fourth and the last decade (1987-1997) there were ups and down in the growth of the Chachkapi Church.
Some years the church had more baptisms, whereas in other years it had more losses than gains. Table 2 shows the details of church membership and attendance during the decade.

The Average Annual Growth Rate from 1987 to 1997 was 5.75 percent, and the DGR was 72 percent. In 1989, the pastor of the church conducted a revival and evangelistic meeting at Chachkapi. This resulted in ten baptisms; seven were from the children of members and three were from outside. One member was transferred in. So eleven members joined the church in that year. The AGR for 1989 was 13.48 percent.

In 1994, nine members were dropped from the church record. Five young people had married non-Adventists and lived like them, so the church board dropped their names. Three members had migrated and could not be traced. The last person was a drunkard. In spite of giving counsel and warning, he could not overcome his drinking habit, so his name was also removed from church membership. In that year eight members joined the church by baptism. Seven were children of members and one was from the world. The AGR for that year was -1.78 percent, the largest loss of membership in the history of Chachkapi Church.

In 1995 the Personal Ministries director from the Division conducted a Lay Training Program. In it he challenged the lay people to witness for the Lord. This
resulted in an active participation in the outreach program. The lay members took care of the sick people of the village and provided medical treatment. They cast out a devil from a family through regular visits and prayer. The lay members conducted evangelistic meetings. As a result seventeen new members were added. In the history of the Chachkapi Church, 1995 was the year it had the second highest number of baptisms, which was a result of strong lay member participation. Of the seventeen baptized in 1995, eight were children of members and nine were from the world. The AGR for that year was 14.54 percent. Since a good AGR for a church is 14 percent, 1995 was a good year for Chachkapi Church. The AAGR for the fourth decade for the Chachkapi Church was 5.14 percent and DGR was 59.3 percent. The DGR for the district was 47.89 percent.

In 1997 there were ten baptisms: two were children of members and eight were from the world. Bobro and Bero had two baptisms and Chachkapi six. The AGR for the year was 7.30 percent. The following year, in 1998, there were nineteen baptisms in the pastoral district: six were from children of members and thirteen were from the world. Kurgi, Khirda, Patlo, and Piska Nagri had one baptism each; Pola had two, Bobro three, and Chachkapi ten. Since the members of Bobro worship at Chachkapi there was an increase of thirteen members. There were two transfers in and one
transfer out; total increase of members in 1998 was fourteen. The AGR for the year was 9.52 percent.

Sabbath School and Church Attendance

Figure 1 gives the average Sabbath School and church attendance in comparison to the church membership for the years 1987 to 1998. There were never 100 percent in attendance at Sabbath School or church. This trend is mostly because a few members of the family stay home to look after their crops in the field or their cattle.

Figure 1 also shows that Sabbath School attendance is higher than the church attendance. This difference is because children attend Sabbath School but some do not stay for the church service as the message presented is above their level.

In 1989 Sabbath School and church attendance increased because the church pastor conducted a revival meeting in the church that year. It seems that the spirit of revival did not continue long, because again Sabbath School and church attendance fell. The decrease in Sabbath School attendance continued until 1991, when again attendance slowly began to increase. However, church attendance dropped until 1994. As mentioned previously, in that year nine church members were dropped from the church records due to apostasy and migration. Perhaps the increased number of apostasies caused the attendance at church to decrease. However, the lay training program, as well as the annual meeting at
Fig. 1. Church membership compared to church and Sabbath School attendance.
Chachkapi Church, boosted the Sabbath School and church attendance. At the same time the lay outreach program became more lively in the church. Even though in 1996, there was no regular church pastor at the Chachkapi Church, the Sabbath School and church service attendance did not fall, but actually increased.

Figure 2 presents the information on gains and losses that appears in table 2. It is evident that 1989 was a year of good growth (13.48 percent), while 1994 was a year of losses (-1.78 percent). Fortunately 1995 shows the highest gain (14.54 percent), while 1996 also reported a good gain of 8.73 percent; 1997 showed a gain of 7.30 percent; and 1998, 9.5 percent.

In the past ten years there were only seventy baptisms in the church, out of which thirty-eight were from the children of members and thirty-two were from the world. Since one person was transferred in, in that decade the total increase of members was seventy-one. During this decade, baptisms in other companies of the pastoral district totaled thirty, giving exactly 100 baptisms in the pastoral district.

Most years the losses of church membership were due to deaths. During this decade there were eight deaths. In 1994 the total membership loss was ten, one due to death and nine dropped from church membership. In the other companies
TABLE 2
CHURCH GROWTH IN THE CHACHKAPI CHURCH, 1987-1998

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>'87</th>
<th>'88</th>
<th>'89</th>
<th>'90</th>
<th>'91</th>
<th>'92</th>
<th>'93</th>
<th>'94</th>
<th>'95</th>
<th>'96</th>
<th>'97</th>
<th>'98</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Membership</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabbath School Attendance</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church Attendance</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Baptized Members</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Baptisms - World</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfers In</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfers Out</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Deaths</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Members Dropped</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composite Membership</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGR</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>13.48</td>
<td>4.98</td>
<td>-0.94</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>-1.78</td>
<td>14.54</td>
<td>8.73</td>
<td>7.30</td>
<td>9.52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fig. 2. Membership gains and loss, 1987-1998.
of the pastoral district there were seven deaths giving a total loss of twenty-five.

Tithes and Offering, 1993-1996

Table 3 shows the tithes and offerings from 1993 through 1998. This table gives the total tithes and offering of the pastoral district to which Chachkapi belongs. The pastor has maintained only a combined record for the Chachkapi Church and all the companies. Since some of the receipt books were not available, the tithe and offering records have been taken from the records of the Section office.

### TABLE 3

**TITHE, MISSION FUND, BIRTHDAY/THANKS, AND LOCAL FUND FOR 1993-1998**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>TITHE</th>
<th>MISSION FUND</th>
<th>BIRTHDAY/THANKS</th>
<th>LOCAL FUND</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>5,889.43</td>
<td>2,915.81</td>
<td>78.95</td>
<td>2,915.85</td>
<td>11,800.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>9,836.55</td>
<td>3,071.92</td>
<td>58.00</td>
<td>3,071.92</td>
<td>16,038.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>9,572.50</td>
<td>3,883.10</td>
<td>30.35</td>
<td>3,983.10</td>
<td>17,569.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>21,663.20</td>
<td>5,623.75</td>
<td>54.00</td>
<td>5,623.75</td>
<td>32,964.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>23,032.00</td>
<td>4,647.00</td>
<td>87.00</td>
<td>4,647.00</td>
<td>32,413.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>12,829.00</td>
<td>3,346.45</td>
<td>42.00</td>
<td>3,346.45</td>
<td>19,563.90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tithes for 1993-1998

Table 4 shows the tithe potential, as calculated by the pastor from a survey of members, together with the actual amounts paid. Figure 3 also shows the actual percentage of tithe paid each year compared to the potential tithe.

TABLE 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Tithe Potential</th>
<th>Tithe Paid</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Rs. 27,590.00</td>
<td>Rs. 5,889.43</td>
<td>21.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Rs. 28,359.00</td>
<td>Rs. 9,836.55</td>
<td>34.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Rs. 32,800.00</td>
<td>Rs. 9,572.50</td>
<td>29.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Rs. 33,782.00</td>
<td>Rs. 21,663.20</td>
<td>64.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Rs. 35,754.00</td>
<td>Rs. 23,032.00</td>
<td>64.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Rs. 38,466.00</td>
<td>Rs. 12,829.00</td>
<td>33.35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 3. Percentage of potential tithe paid, 1993-1998.
The tithe per capita was very low in 1993, only Rs. 52.58. However, it improved in 1994 to Rs. 89.42. In 1995 it fell to Rs. 75.97, but there was great improvement in 1996 when it rose to Rs. 158.12. In 1997 it fell slightly to Rs. 156.68, but in 1998 it fell even more to Rs. 79.68. This was largely due to a poor crop that year. This information appears in table 5.

The average increase in membership from 1993 to 1998 was nine members a year, and the average increase in tithe was Rs. 5,257.99 a year for the same period of time. The promotional work of the Section Stewardship Department director in the Chachkapi Church in 1996 seems to have helped members return a more faithful and systematic tithe.

TABLE 5
TITHE PER CAPITA FOR 1993-1998

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Tithe per Capita</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Rs. 52.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Rs. 89.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Rs. 75.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Rs. 158.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Rs. 156.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Rs. 79.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Offering for 1993-1998

According to instructions given by the Section office, all offerings beside tithe and investment are divided into two equal parts. One part is the mission offering that is sent to the Section. The other half is the local fund, which remains for local church expenses. Therefore, in the table the mission fund and the local fund are equal. In reality the local fund should be slightly less than the amount shown, because the mission fund includes the investment offering, besides the equal division of the other offerings. Since the church record books are missing, the local fund is shown on the basis of the mission fund, as recorded in the Section office.

Figure 4 shows that the mission fund for 1993 was Rs. 2,915.85. There was a slight increase in 1994, to Rs. 3,071.92. In 1995, even though the tithe had fallen slightly, the mission fund increased over the previous year. In 1996 the tithe increased greatly as did the mission fund. The increase in the mission fund was due to the promotion of tithes and offerings by the department director of the Section. A poor crop yield lowered the tithe and mission fund in 1998.

The history and description of the Chachkapi Church reveals steady growth. The Sabbath School and church attendance as well as tithe and offerings are also improving.
In the next chapter the setting for the Chackapi Church is described in order to discover possible ways to help increase the rates of growth in the various areas.

Fig. 4. Mission fund.
CHAPTER III

DESCRIPTION OF THE COMMUNITY OF
THE CHACHKAPI CHURCH

This chapter describes the community surrounding the Chachkapi Church. In the first section, the general population is described. In the second, the Oraon tribe is described in depth because these tribal people constitute the great majority of the inhabitants of the area. The final section describes other institutions in the area surrounding the church.

The Community

Population

Chachkapi Church is 47 kilometers (km) west of Ranchi. Within a range of 10 km of Chachkapi village there are twenty-four villages with a population of 26,136 just to the east. To the west are nineteen villages with a population of 18,071, to the north are twenty-five villages with a population of 16,879, and to the south twenty-six villages with a population of 14,029. Chachkapi village itself has a population of 1,289. The total population in the area is 76,404. Of these, 17,490 are mainstream people, 2,782 are from the scheduled castes; and 56,132 are from the
scheduled tribes. Of the tribal population, 45,068 are Oraon, while 11,064 are Munda and Kharia.¹

Religion

The major religious groups living within 10 km from Chachkapi are Animist, Hindu, Christian, and Muslim. In 1998 among the Christians there were 4,978 Catholics, 342 Lutherans, 161 Adventists, 156 Pentecostals, and 128 belonging to St. Paul's Gospel Church.

Literacy

In 1998, 19.78 percent of the community were literate and 80.22 percent were illiterate. Males were 28.77 percent literate and females, 10.80 percent literate.

Economy

Most of the people depend on agriculture for their livelihood. They grow rice, wheat, and vegetables. There are a few ironsmiths, cattle tenders, potters, weavers, and basket makers. Some also work as laborers. The per capita income for a year is Rs. 21,122.00, which is below the poverty level.

¹A 1991 census record is on a floppy for government use only. Therefore I have made a survey on the basis of a 1981 census. The scheduled tribes are known as adivasi which means the ancient inhabitants. The scheduled castes are Harijans or untouchables. Harijans do not come under the five castes of Hinduism. The mainstream people are other than the ancient inhabitants of India or the philosophical Hindus, Muslims, or any converts from them.
The Oraon Tribe

This section briefly describes the Oraon community that is the principal community living in the area of the Chachkapi Church. It gives their culture, characteristics, economic status, religion, festivals, rites of passage, and institutions.

Cultural Life

The Oraon live in mud houses with tile roofs. The single men and women live in separate dormitories. Their livelihood is agriculture, hunting, trapping birds, and fishing. Their main foods are rice, vegetables, and meat of all kinds. Rice beer is their favorite drink. They also chew tobacco.

Men wrap a thin towel around their waist or wear shorts. However, the well-to-do people wear shirts and trousers. The ladies wear blouses and short sarees down to their knees. Children up to the age of four remain naked. Women wear coin necklaces, brass bracelets, leaf ear rings, and wooden combs in their hair. They also make permanent black designs on their body.

The Oraon use drums, flutes, and cymbals for singing and dancing. Men and women join hands and dance in a circle.
While greeting, the younger person bends lower than the elder one. They have the Panchayat type of village government.¹

Characteristics of the Oraon

Among the thirty tribal groups in Bihar, the Oraon rank second in number. However, they supersede the rest of the groups in development.² Among the tribals of Bihar, not only in the past but also today, the Oraon are far ahead of the others in literacy, as well as social, economical, and political aspects of life.³ In many areas, such as politics, administration, technology, medicine, and education, they hold the higher posts.

The Oraon are physically strong and have a natural beauty and good health. They are short in stature, their skin is dark brown often approaching black. Their hair is black and tends to curl.⁴

They are hard working, obedient, and submissive by nature. They are also sincere and simple. Because of these characteristics the people have been liked by their

¹A village council or an official organization that governs the local rural areas are known as Panchayat.


³Ibid., 9.

⁴Ibid., 52.
employers. They have been good laborers at home as well as abroad.¹

Since they are hardworking, they dislike being inactive.² Farmers at heart, they consider it derogatory to engage in occupations like weaving, basketry, pottery, and working in iron.³

Emotionally, Oraons are cheerful, simple, calm,⁴ have a sense of fun, and a sturdy gaiety. They dislike being alone. Men like to have a jolly wife with three or four children and a dog.⁵

Economy

"The Oraon economy is a primitive, subsistent, self-sustaining economy whose basic features are food gathering, hunting and agriculture."⁶ Agriculture is the main occupation of Oraons. "Over 96% of the population directly


⁴Ibid., 52.

⁵Chatterji, 79.

or indirectly depends on agriculture."\textsuperscript{1} They also keep livestock, trap birds, and catch fish. They work with cotton, making garments and fishing nets. They extract fibers from some plants and grasses and spin them into rope to use in building houses and for other domestic and agricultural purposes. They weave mats with date-palm leaves, and also produce rain hats and raincoats out of the same leaves. Fish traps are also made out of wild grass. Every Oraon is his own carpenter. Only a few of them make instruments out of iron.

Although agriculture is the principal occupation of the Oraons, it does not support the family throughout the year or pay the rent to their landlords. When they are in need they borrow money or paddy at usurious interest. Some poor Oraons give away their children or nephews to a more well-to-do tribesman or even to a non-Oraon to work as servants. A whole family may become servants to others. After the lowland paddy harvest many families go to Calcutta to work as laborers.\textsuperscript{2} Sometimes they also migrate to Punjab. Some even permanently migrate to North Bengal to work in the tea estates.

Generally Oraons are poor, live in mud houses, are poorly dressed and underfed. However, they have to work very hard for their landlords and are oppressed by the money

\textsuperscript{1}Ibid., 7.

\textsuperscript{2}Roy, The Oraons of Chotanagpur, 119, 120.
lenders. Occasionally they are taken away by the labor-recruiters to work in other places, so they live a very hard life.

Christianity has brought a great change among the Oraons. They are receiving better education, which helps them to get better jobs, thus their living condition has improved. Even their moral standards have become better. By seeing the better economic conditions of the Christian Oraons non-Christian Oraons are taking an interest in educating their children. They have formed an association to raise funds with which to assist their children to get an education. The Bihar Government is giving a stipend for the education of the tribal people and allots service reservations for government jobs.¹

Religion

The Oraon practice animism. The animist "Oraons have a composite type of religion."² They believe in one Supreme Deity and a number of spirits and powers. Some spirits are superior, others are inferior; some are beneficent, others are malevolent; some are beneficent impersonal powers, others are malevolent impersonal powers and forces. "Totemism has almost lost its religious aspect among the Oraons, and shamanism is involved in the Oraon's Magic

¹Ibid., 122-123.

²EIT, s.v. "Oraons of Chotanagpur."
rather than in his religion proper."\(^1\) The Oraon believe that some living beings, objects, and objects of human art possess mysterious energy. Their gods and good and evil spirits are represented by visible objects of worship. These may be a piece of stone or lump of earth or pegs of wood or a wooden post.

Their worship is not to bring them into a relationship with the Supreme Deity or spirits but, rather, to manipulate or control their powers. They attempt to appease or propitiate their gods or spirits by offering sacrifices of fowl, goats, buffaloes, and bulls. Occasionally they (landlords) also offer human sacrifices.\(^2\) Their rituals are associated with feasting, drinking rice beer, dancing, and love making.

According to Shashi, the "Oraons believe in the immortality of souls."\(^3\) So they worship their ancestors.\(^4\) There is no concept of sin among the Oraon.\(^5\) Therefore, a person receives no blessing or curse because of his action, neither in this life nor in the life to come. They also do not believe in the existence of hell or heaven.


\(^2\) EIT, s.v. "Oraons of Chotanagpur."

\(^3\) Ibid., 103.

\(^4\) Ibid., 101, 102.

When science fails to bring the desired results, they turn to magical and religious rites. They also take precautionary measures by employing magical and religious rites before starting activities like hunting, fishing, and agriculture so that their activities will run smoothly and they will be successful in their endeavors.

For the Oraon, religion and magic need to be considered separately because their practices differ. Religion "is essentially the business of the community," whereas "magic is ordinarily the business of the specialists."¹ In the religious acts, a priest propitiates the deities and spirits, whereas the magician performs divination and neutralizes the ill effects of an evil eyes or an evil mouth. The head of each Oraon clan and the elders of each Oraon family perform the religious rites for their clan and families. Only special priests perform the religious rites for the whole community.

The religious rituals and sacrifices are administered by the priests, known as pahans.² They are really the mouth-pieces for the community. In some villages they are known as maigas or baigas. These priests have one or more assistants.

In some villages, including Chachkapi, the office of the priesthood is hereditary, whereas in others priests are

¹Roy, Oraon Religion and Customs, 6.
²EIT, s.v. "Oraons of Chotanagpur."
elected once in three years.\(^1\) This election to the priesthood is by some supernatural process. Only a married person can be elected to the priesthood and at the end of each year the marriage of the pahan and his pahanin (wife of pahan) is celebrated. This marriage celebration is a representation of the marriage of the sun god and the earth. If the pahan happens to be a widower, then his married son goes through the celebration ceremony.\(^2\)

Deities, Spirits and Supernatural Powers

Roy divides the Oraon deities, spirits, and supernatural powers into ten different classes.\(^3\) The supreme deity of Oraon is known as Dharmes. The spirit of dead ancestors is from the second class of spirits. In the third class are found the tutelary deities and spirits of the Oraon village. The fourth class of spirits gives success in hunting. A tutelary spirit of the village, the spirit of a dead person is the fifth class of spirit. A sixth class of spirits is the household spirits. The seventh class resides in certain objects and symbols. An eighth class consists of tramp or stray spirits. Familiar spirits come under the ninth class, and the tenth and final class is the evil forces.

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\(^1\) Roy, Oraon Religion and Customs, 7.
\(^2\) Ibid., 7, 8.
\(^3\) Ibid., 15, 16.
Dharmes

The Oraons believe in one supreme god known as Dharmes or Dharmesh or Dharmi.\(^1\) He is the creator of the universe and mankind.\(^2\) He is the source of light and life.\(^3\) He is the holy one, perfectly pure, beneficent, full of goodness, and mercy.\(^4\) He is the sustainer and giver of all. He is also an omniscient god.

He does only good for the welfare of human beings and the universe. People look to him for help and happiness. "The Oraons regards him as anterior to all, the Author and preserver, controller and punisher of men, gods and spirits of all that exists in the visible and the invisible universe."\(^5\)

Usually people do not worship Dharmes, because he does not interfere with the work of the evil spirits or is too far away to listen to them. However, when all their attempts to appease and propitiate the evil spirits or devil fail to cure diseases or terminate other calamities, then they turn to him as a last resource.\(^6\) People offer a white

\(^1\)Dalton, 256.
\(^2\)EIT, s.v. "Oraons of Chotanagpur."
\(^3\)Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics (ERE), n.d., s.v. "Oraon."
\(^4\)Ibid.
\(^5\)Roy, Oraon Religion and Customs, 23.
\(^6\)Hastings, s.v. "Oraon."
fowl or goat as a sacrifice to Dharmes. While offering prayer or sacrifice, the people turn their face to the east, in the direction of the rising sun. People also worship him to have children and plentiful crops.

Ancestor spirits

"The Oraons believe in the immortality of soul"¹ and life after death.² Human spirits or souls are beneficent in nature. They can be divided into two classes: the souls of the living and the souls of the dead.

The living human souls. The human soul comes out of the body either involuntarily or voluntarily. Ordinarily human souls come out of the body involuntarily, such as in sleep, sickness, and death. When a person is asleep or sick, the soul comes out of the body and wanders around. An Oraon avoids waking a person suddenly. They call the person several times, giving time for the soul to enter the body to avoid death.³ Dharmes, as well as the ancestor spirits, guard these souls and protect them.

The souls of wizards or witches, however, come out of the body voluntarily. These souls are mischievous and are called chor-deva or thievish spirit. They take the form of a black cat or a human pygmy, as small as a human thumb.

¹EIT, s.v. "Oraons of Chotanagpur."
²Tirkey, Smiling Oraon, 18.
³Roy, Oraon Religion and Customs, 26.
They bring fatal sickness to a sleeping person, bite the ends of people's hair, lick the saliva trickling down from the corners of their mouth, or nibble the skin of the soles of their feet. They even eat the boiled rice which Oraons put out for the morning meal. If any person hurts or kills chor-dewa, the person whose spirit has become a chor-dewa gets hurt or dies.

Souls of dead persons. The spirits of the dead ancestors are venerated by the Oraon because the ancestors protect their souls when they are asleep or sick. At the same time when a person is sick the ancestor spirits stay near the sick person and do not allow the evil spirits to bring any harm to them.

When Oraons are ill for a long time and there is no sign of improvement, they pray to their ancestors saying, "Underneath this earth you ancestor spirit dwell, (as) overhead dwells Dharmes. Do you see us or not? Do remove our illnes. Do you not understand? How long will you torment us?" They also make a vow to their ancestors that on recovery they will offer a grey fowl. They offer food on the evening of the annual Harbora (bone-drawing) ceremony near the kundi (a memorial stone) on leaf plates and leaf

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1Traisi, 93.
3Ibid., 29.
cups for their ancestors. They believe that at night their ancestors come out from the underworld and eat the food. They also offer food to their ancestors when they celebrate other festivals.

The worship of malevolent spirits

The Dharmes is the benevolent deity and Oraons worship him when all their efforts fail to propitiate the malevolent spirits. The Oraon believe that they are surrounded by many evil spirits, which bring sickness, suffering, and death. Therefore, they propitiate the evil or malevolent spirits that they may not cause any harm to them.

Nature worship

The Oraons believe that spirits and devils live in trees, therefore they worship sal and karma trees. At the Karma festival, special respect is given to karma branches. The people believe that the worship of this tree will yield plentiful crops. At the Sarhul festival, sal flowers are given special respect in order to bring plentiful rain. Oraons also worship some rocks and waterfalls since they believe that devils dwell there.

Witchcraft and sorcery

Oraons firmly believe in witchcraft and sorcery. Disease and death are caused by acts of sorcery, usually performed by a female. The witch doctors are known as the
One of the Mosaic laws is strictly followed by the Oraon people: "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." If village people identify a witch, they will put her to death. The Oraons consider Thursday and totem animals taboo. On Thursday they do not touch their plough. They believe that to do so will cause great loss to their crops.

Festivals

The Oraons feasts and festivals are from the pre-vedic religion. Some elements of Hindu festivals have also been borrowed from their Hindu neighbors. The feasts and festivals are connected with food-gathering, hunting, cattle-tending, and agriculture.

Food-Gathering Festivals

The food-gathering festivals are: Khaddi or Sarhul and Phagua. The Sarhul festival is a genuine Oraon festival,
whereas the Phagua festival is borrowed from their Hindu neighbors.\(^1\)

Sarhul

The Khaddi or Sarhul festival is celebrated in the month of Chait (March-April). This is a spring festival when the plants and trees are in blossom and sprout edible leaves.\(^1\) Sarhul is the most important festival of the Oraons.

The Sarhul ritual consists of many ceremonies such as Danri Chhitna (cleaning the village spring); bringing Neg Amm (augural water); examining the augural water; catching chicks, crabs, and fish; taking a ceremonial bath; and celebrating the symbolic marriage of the pahan and his wife. Then follows the ceremonial procession to the Sarna (sal) grove to offer sacrifices for the Chala Pachcho and Dharmes.\(^4\) This festival also signifies the marriage of mother earth and sun. Before celebrating the Sarhul festival, people do not eat edible leaves, fruits, or flowers.\(^5\)

\(^1\)A festival in which the Oraon scatter colored powder on one another as Hindus do in their Holi festival.

\(^2\)Ibid., 191.

\(^3\)Ibid., 193.

\(^4\)Boniface Tirkey, Oraon Symbols (Delhi: Vidyajyoti, 1980), 34.

\(^5\)EIT, s.v. "Oraons of Chotanagpur."
The Sarhul festival begins with the ceremonial bath of men and women on the morning of the set day. The Sarna sup (winnowing basket, the seat of the Chala Pachcho) is arranged with some ears of paddy with grain. Then a symbolic marriage of the earth and sky (Sun) is performed in the courtyard of the pahan. The pahan represents the sun, and pahanin, or pahan's wife, represents the earth. They sit on a yoke placed over a grinding stone and three bundles of thatch or straw. The pahan's assistant and his wife also sit at the right hand of the Pahan. The village headman or Mahto performs the ceremony by putting oil and scarlet powder on their head. Then they drench them with water and shout, barso, "let it rain, let it rain." Then the Mahto offers rice beer to the village ancestors. After that, some of the rice is sanctified by the pahan and put away for use at the time of sowing.¹

The procession then goes from the house of the Pahan to the village Sarna grove. The pahan carries the Sarna sup (the seat of Chala Pachcho). The procession is accompanied with beating drums and the playing of flutes. At the Sarna grove Chala Pachcho is represented by a stone at the foot of a sal tree. There the pahan offers a number of fowl, and a sheep or a goat or a pig as a sacrifice to Chala Pachcho. The sacrificial meat is cooked at the sacred grove and is only eaten by men and not by women. If the Chala Pachcho is

¹Tirkey, Oraon Symbols, 34.
satisfied with the rituals and the sacrifice, there will be plenty of rain; otherwise there will be famine.¹

At the close of the Sarhul festival, the pahan places sal blossoms in the house of every family. This shows that the family will be blessed with an abundance of food in the coming year.²

Phagua

The Phagua festival is celebrated at the full moon in the month of Phagun (February-March) and is a farewell feast to the passing year and a welcome feast to the new year.³ This festival was adapted from the Hindu Holi festival. The Oraons collect wood and branches of trees and heap them in open place. On New Year's Eve they set fire to the wood and dance, shout, and sing around the fire. On the morning of the New Year, they throw colored dust and mud on each other. They cook special dishes, such as rice bread, wheat bread, meat, rice beer (alcohol made out of rice) and enjoy themselves. They also invite others to eat, drink, and join the celebration.⁴

²Roy, Oraon Religion and Customs, 48.
³Tirkey, Oraon Symbols, 31.
⁴EIT, s.v. "Oraons of Chotanagpur."
Only after Phagua can people gather food from the jungle and hunt game for food. Before Phagua no ploughing is done by the Oraon.¹

Hunting Festivals

Hunting is not the principle mode of securing food but is rather a social event. A successful hunt has a mysterious magical influence that secures a luxuriant rice crop,² whereas failure would bring famine.

The main hunting festivals are celebrated in the months of Phagun (March), Baisakh (April-May), and Jeth (June). In the month of March, the Phagun Sendra is celebrated, in April-May the Bisu Sikar is celebrated, and in June the Jeth Sikar is celebrated. "All these hunting festivals are associated with religious and magico-religious rites."³

Before venturing out for hunting the Oraon offer sacrificial goats.

Karma Festival

According to Tirkey:

Karam (Karma) is celebrated on Bhado Ekadasi, that is, on the eleventh day of the lunar month Bhado (August). The centre of the ritual lies in the cutting of three branches of the Karam tree (Nauclea parcifolia) and

¹Tirkey, Oraon Symbols, 31.
²Roy, Oraon Religion and Customs, 277.
³EIIT, s.v. "Oraons of Chotanagpur."
their installation in the middle of the village akhara, the dancing ground, as the Karam Raja.¹

The Karma festival takes place at the time of paddy transplanting in the lowlands. On the first day of the festival, people fast until after the ceremonies. In the evening young men and young women go to the jungle and cut the Karma branches. They return, holding a Karma branch, with dancing, singing, and beating drums. They plant the Karma branch at the akhra. The pahan performs the sacrificial ceremonies to the Karma Devta. At night, people feast and dance around the Karma plant. This Karma plant is decorated with garlands and strips of colored cloth. The next morning they take away the Karma branches and throw them into a stream. Dancing and celebration continue for another two days.² The people also plant the branches in the middle of the paddy field, believing that karma will protect their crops.

According to Tirkey, the Karma festival is mostly for the young people. If they fast and pray properly, they will be blessed with healthy children. Celebration of this festival also ensures protection for the crops and a plentiful harvest.³

¹Tirkey, Oraon Symbols, 39.
²Dalton, 259.
³Tirkey, Oraon Symbols, 39, 40.
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Rites of Passage

Some socio-religious customs are observed by the Oraon community when they pass from one phase of life to another. "The main point of these ceremonies observed at birth, marriage and death by Oraons is incorporation of the member into the community of both the living and the dead."¹

Birth and Name-giving

When a woman is pregnant, a pig is offered to the ancestor spirits and the presiding spirit of her father's village as a sacrifice so the woman and the child will be protected from evil spirits. After delivery, the Danda Kotta ceremony is performed in which a fowl is sacrificed to Dharmes and the ancestor spirits of the woman's husband's village. This ceremony is performed to call off the woman's ancestors, thereafter she belongs to her husband's family and to his ancestors.² After the birth of the child, the mother is considered ritually impure. Five days after delivery a ceremony of purification is performed. All the objects used by the mother and the child are ceremonially purified. The mat on which she was lying is burned. Then she goes to the village well or spring and bathes herself. The stone slab or wooden post at the well is purified with

¹Ibid., 24.

²Tirkey, Smiling Oraon, 24.
vermilion. After this ceremony she is declared clean and can have normal association with the rest of the people.¹

The ritual of name-giving is held on the same day or a day or two after the purification ceremony. The child's hair is shaved off and through rice-water divination, a name is sought.² Two leaf-cups are used. Water is placed in one, and in the other one a few rice grains. One of the elders removes the husks from the grains with his finger nail, and drops a few grains, one by one, into the water. The first two grains are offered in the name of Dharmes and the panch (elders). The third grain is dropped in the name of the child. If the child is female then while dropping the third grain the mother's ancestor's name is taken. If the child is male then the name of the father's ancestor is taken. All the grains must float. If the grain dropped in the name of Dharmes joins the grain of the child, "the name meant for the child is found" and the name uttered while dropping the third grain is given to the child. Until the name is given to the child, they call the baby by the name of the day it was born on or the place it was born. This ceremony is celebrated to ward off any harm that may come to the mother and the child. A feast follows the name-giving ceremony.³

¹Tirkey, Oraon Symbols, 44.
²Tirkey, Smiling Oraon, 24, 25.
³Ibid.
Marriage

The Oraons practice adult marriage. They marry from different clans (surnames) but within the same tribe. Even though children carry their father's title, the children cannot marry someone from the mother's clan for three generations. Persons of the same clans are considered brother and sister.¹

During marriage negotiations, families visit each other, then a ceremony of lota Pani or engagement takes place. At engagement the partners put a sindur (vermilion) mark on each other's forehead. This is the expression of their agreement for marriage. While exchanging sindur the bride and bridegroom stand on a silad (grinding stone), thatching grass, and a yoke. All these are the symbols for establishing a new home.²

Death

At the death of a person, family members, friends, and relatives mourn greatly. The dead body is reverently bathed, anointed, and covered with a new piece of linen. Then the dead body is carried on a stretcher to the place of disposal. Traditionally Oraon cremate the dead. However,

¹Oraon, Oraon, 14.

if a person dies during the rainy season, they bury the corpse, then exhume it later on, and cremate.¹

The Oraons "believe that their tribal dead go to ancestors' abode but not until the ceremonial mourning ends and the obsequies are completed."² One week after the burial of the corpse the Kaman or Gami ritual is performed by sacrificing a pig and offering rice beer to the ancestors of the deceased. After the performance of the main ritual, the soul of the deceased does not yet go to the abode of the ancestors, so they give him a temporary resting place in an inner corner of the house, known as ula. The soul waits there till the rites of death are completed.

In the month of January-February the bone-drowning ceremony is performed. It is known as the Kohan Benia or Hargari. With singing and dancing the Oraon carry the mortal remains which were preserved after cremation to the Kundi (a memorial stone). There they bury the bones. They then believe that the soul has fully gone to stay with the ancestors.

Institutions

The nearest town, Ranchi, is about 47 km from Chachkapi. Bedo is a small shopping center which is about

¹Tirkey, Smiling Oraon, 26.
²Ibid., 27.
10 km away. There is a block office, political center, a bank, but no cinema hall. Instead they have a video house.

The nearest hospital is also at Ranchi. People mostly visit the village doctors who practice homeopathic medicine. There is a small clinic at Bedo.

At Tuko there is a primary school operated by the government. It is 1 km from Chachkapi. There is only one high school, at a distance of 3 km owned by Catholics. There is also a government college 1 km from Bedo.

There are five Christian denominations within the range of 10 km: Catholic, Lutheran, Adventist, Pentecostal, and St. Paul's Gospel Church. The Catholics are about 3 km from Chachkapi at Digha and have a big church and a high school. The Adventists have just built a new church and have also started a primary school at Chachkapi.

The village market is at Tuko, about 1 km from Chachkapi. Bedo has a bigger marketplace but is 7 km away. Market is held twice a week and mostly agricultural products are sold there. Vegetables are the main cash crop, with no industry in the area.

This chapter has described the culture and people surrounding the Chachkapi Church. The next chapter will analyze the Chachkapi Church and its community in order to discover possibilities for church growth.
CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF THE CHACHKAPI CHURCH AND COMMUNITY

This chapter analyzes the current situation in the Chachkapi Church. It also projects possibilities for future church growth in light of the characteristics of the community and church growth theory.

Church Growth and Loss

Since the people of Chachkapi accepted Adventism, there has been a slow but constant growth of the church. As the church began to grow, it also experienced some losses of members. The causes for growth are analyzed first, then reasons for the losses will be suggested.

Causes for Church Growth

The Adventist message first reached the people of Chachkapi because of the faithful witness of a layman from Kudarkho. The first converts from Chachkapi shared their faith with their relatives and friends and their changed life, healthful living, and Christian songs brought new members to the church.

The spirit of lay witness is evident throughout the history of the Chachkapi Church. The main outreach
activities were giving Bible studies, conducting Vacation Bible Schools, helping the needy, offering prayer for the sick, casting out devils, and conducting evangelistic meetings. Recently the church has formed prayer groups that go house to house, sing a few songs, give a short message, and offer prayer. A few members have started house-to-house visitation from one village to another, giving Bible studies to interested people. They also conduct a Branch Sabbath School and distribute free literature.

The number of yearly baptisms has increased because of the revival, evangelistic meetings, lay training program, and lay evangelism. Other effective outreach activities that have encouraged church growth are helping the needy, house-to-house witnessing, and prayer ministries.

Causes for Losses

Death is one of the causes of loss of membership. The other causes are apostasy and migration. In 1994, there was a great loss of members due to apostasy and migration. The church also lost some of the second generation youth.

Most of the young people from the church study in non-Adventist schools and colleges because they are unable to pay the school fee at the Adventist institutions. In addition, they cannot enter an Adventist school because they are not prepared in English. As they grow up in a non-Adventist environment, they marry nonmembers. Therefore, the church loses many of its second generation Adventists.
A few people joined the church just after they were healed or freed from demons through prayer. When life became trouble-free, some drifted back to their old life. Their main reason for accepting Christianity was to receive temporal blessings and most were not interested in spiritual matters.

**Analysis of the Target Group**

This section discussed how the Oraon community was selected and gives an overview of their culture and its characteristics. The Oraon world view is also briefly analyzed. The last part of this section analyzes the problems, resistance, and the receptivity of the Oraon people.

**Selection of the Target Group**

The Oraon community was selected as a target group since they are the main inhabitants of the area. All the converts of the Chachkapi Church are Oraons. Chapter 2 records that among the tribals of Bihar, Oraons were the first to accept Christianity. According to Albert, there were 207,992 Oraon converts in 1991, which ranks highest among the tribals of Bihar.¹ This indicates that they were one of the most receptive people of Chotanagpur. Present trends show some resistance to Christianity.

¹Vasantha Raj, *Bihar: Church and People Groups* (1992), 159.
Oraon World View

The supreme deity is the high god in the highest sphere. The good and evil spirits belong to the second sphere. Man, animals, plants, and the material world belong to the third sphere of beings and things. Oraons do not sharply distinguish between the secular and the sacred, or between the natural world and the supernatural world.

Problems of the People

Poverty is one of the serious problems faced by the people. Poverty causes landlessness, indebtedness, slavery, and migration. Nontribals often exploit the Oraon by taking advantage of their illiteracy, ignorance, and honesty. Oraons often do not receive a fair price for their agricultural products in the market. The money lenders extract more money than is due. The petty officers oppress the people. During the off season, young ladies and a few men migrate to work in brick-kilns. Many Oraon ladies experience sexual harassment by their masters.

Drinking liquor and rice beer is one of the major problems of the people and one of the main causes for their poverty. They spend most of their earnings on drink, which also keeps them from being able to attend their work regularly. Smoking and chewing tobacco are also common habits that bring poverty, sickness, disease, and destruction to the people.
In chapter 3 devil worship, witchcraft, and sorcery were described as additional social evils of the Oraon people. To appease the spirits, elaborate sacrifices are offered. When anyone is sick he/she is taken to the ohja or witch doctor, which results in great expense for the sacrifice. Witches, as well as suspected witches, once identified, are put to death. This practice brings further harassment by police officials against the individuals or community who execute the punishment.

Major problems faced by the Oraon include sickness, disease, landlessness, indebtedness, poverty, economic exploitation, slavery, bonded labor, illiteracy, ignorance, sexual harassment, excessive drinking, use of tobacco, demon worship, practice of witchcraft, and sorcery.

Resistance of the People

As mentioned in chapter 3, the Oraons are animists and one of their important festivals is Sarhul. On the basis of this festival they call their religion Sarna Dharma. They consider they are part of the Hindu religion. For political reasons, this concept has been promoted by the Hindus who live among them.

Christianity is considered a foreign religion. Becoming a Christian means giving way to British or American dominion. They call India "Hindustan," the land of Hindus. Hindus have a dream: to one day bring about Ram Raj, a Hindu
nation. In order to accomplish this endeavor, they try to prevent Christians from preaching and converting people.

Hindus call the cow Gaw Mata, cow mother or cow goddess. The cow is holy and its meat should not be eaten. Christians, on the other hand, eat beef. The Oraon believe that at conversion people are forced to eat beef. This creates hatred towards Christianity.

Spirit worship also causes resistance to Christianity. Oraons believe that if they become a Christian they would put themselves in danger of the spirits, for the spirits would bring sickness and suffering. The spirits would no longer protect their crops and property, they would not be blessed, and they would not prosper in life. The spirits would not protect them from an evil eye or an evil mouth. Oraons fear that their relationship with their ancestral spirits would be broken, that even their bond with the community and the land would be cut off. So they prefer to remain in their own community and continue to worship spirits.

Oraons are heavy drinkers of rice beer. Their worship and social gatherings are accompanied by heavy drinking. Part of their weekly marketing is rice beer. Offering rice beer to a visitor or relative is considered an act of hospitality. Working mothers give a little wine to their babies so that the babies will sleep while they work. Drinking wine has become a part of their life. They know
that if they accept Christianity they will have to give up drinking. They cannot conceive of how they would live without drinking, therefore, they prefer not to become Christians.

Ostracism and persecution are other reasons why tribals do not to accept Christianity. A Christian convert is considered an outcast and chased out of some villages. Converts are even threatened with the loss of their land and property. They are often excommunicated by their nonconverted families and relatives. Single ladies and men are not allowed to marry their own people. Sometimes they are not allowed to draw water from the village wells. In some places converts are beaten by the villagers. Converts are considered to have despised their tribal religion and unity. These are the factors that keep the tribals from coming closer to Christians and accepting Christianity.

In India the scheduled tribes and the scheduled castes receive special monetary benefits as well as guaranteed places in schools and government jobs. In many places such benefits are not given to a person who converts to Christianity. These are other factors that prevent Oraons from becoming Christians.

Receptivity of the People

In spite of all these drawbacks, people are still attracted to Christianity. The reasons for their response include a healthy lifestyle, relief from social oppression,
deliverance from their fear of evil spirits, healing through prayer, medical care, and a moral and dignified life. Furthermore, their religion is close to Christianity; their belief in a supreme deity leads them to believe in the God of the Bible. Dissatisfaction with their own religion and their simple life attracts them to Christianity.

Healthy Lifestyle

Even though some people do not want to part with their drinking, others realize that their drinking habit has put them down in the society. A survey done at the Chachkapi Church showed that most of the converts accepted Adventism because the church taught good health habits and a temperate lifestyle.

Social Justice

Before independence, when Christianity brought the people justice from the oppression of the landlords and money lenders, many accepted Christianity. Even today when the church helps oppressed people to receive relief, many readily accept Christianity.

Deliverance Ministry

The Oraon worship evil spirits and have to offer elaborate sacrifices to appease them. When offerings become expensive or they cannot find relief from their sufferings,

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2A. Tirkey, "The Uraons and Evangelization," 103-106.
some turn to Christianity to escape from the clutches of evil spirits. They experience Jesus as more powerful than the spirits they worshipped and feared. Jesus has power to cast out the devil and to meet their needs.

**Healing Ministry**

When people experience the tender care by their Christian brethren during times of sickness and suffering, they become open to the Gospel. They are attracted to Christianity when they experience healing through prayer.

**Christian Lifestyle**

The good, moral, and dignified life of Christians encourages other people to want to be part of the group. Christianity also brings equality with the rest of the community since many view Christians as more progressive and prosperous. These factors lead the Oraons to be responsive to Christianity.

**Oraon Supreme Deity and the God of the Bible**

There are many similarities between the supreme deity of the Oraon and the God of the Bible. The supreme deity of the Oraon is Dharmes. He is the creator of the universe and mankind. He is the source of light and life. He is the holy one, perfectly pure, beneficent, full of goodness and mercy. He is the sustainer and giver of all. He is also
the omniscient god. These concepts help the Oraons to believe in the God of the Bible more easily.

**Dissatisfaction with Their Own Religion**

Dissatisfaction with the Oraon religion develops when individuals cannot find protection for their property or receive physical benefits in spite of offering elaborate sacrifices to the spirits. Oraons realize that their social and economical standard is very low. Many are also dissatisfied with their moral standard of life, so are open to alternative religious systems.

**Simplicity of Life**

The people are simple, truthful, and honest. Most are not corrupted by the craftiness of other cultures. Many Oraons are willing to listen to the Word of God and believe whatever they hear. This simplicity of life brings them closer to Christianity.

The analysis of the Chachkapi Church reveals that the members are enthusiastic and cooperative in the activities of the church. If they are trained to take up the leadership of the church and are equipped with appropriate ministries, the church will grow.

Even though the communities around Chachkapi are resistant to Christianity in certain areas, there are still many possibilities for increasing their receptivity and bringing them to Christ. On the basis of the analysis of
the Chakhapi Church and its community, a workable strategy is developed in chapter 5 that should help the church grow.
CHAPTER V

STRATEGY FOR CHURCH GROWTH

There is a great potential for growth in the Chachkapi Church. The church grew when church members witnessed to their relatives and friends, helped the needy, and cared for the sick. House-to-house visitation, health ministry, prayer ministry, revival meetings, evangelistic meetings, and lay training programs were other methods that brought people to Christ.

The loss of members was due to apostasy and migration. The finances of the church have improved each year. Members have returned a faithful tithe and given generous offerings.

The major problems of the community are illiteracy, ignorance, sickness, disease, landlessness, indebtedness, economic exploitation, harassment, alcoholism, demon worship, witchcraft, and sorcery. The people respond to Christianity when their needs are met.

On the basis of the analysis of the Chachkapi Church and the community, this church growth strategy is divided into three parts: (1) meeting the needs of the people, (2) a people movement, and (3) lay leadership and ministries.
By meeting the needs of the people, bringing about people movement, and developing leadership training programs, an attempt will be made to bring about an Average Annual Growth Rate of 50 percent. That means that in the next five years 1,100 members will be added and twenty companies will be established.

Meeting the Needs of the People

The needs of the people are temporal and spiritual. The Oraons are illiterate, poor, exploited, and unhygienic. When their socioeconomic needs are met they become more receptive to the Gospel. The Oraons also believe in spirits and believe that evil spirits bring sickness, sufferings, and death. Their main concern is to appease these spirits and escape from the misery by offering periodic and expensive sacrifices. A basic need felt by many Oraons is for freedom from the mischievous spirits.

Before beginning work for the target group, the field will be surveyed. The influential and contact persons must be identified in order to make friends and receive their approval and support for the intended endeavor.

The mission among the tribals of Chotanagpur was the result of meeting the spiritual and temporal needs of the people.¹ Jesus went about doing good, and whenever Christians have rendered loving service to the people, they

¹Pickett, 335.
have become convinced that "Christianity was the true faith."\(^1\)

According to Sunder Raj, a tribal responds "to regain his lost freedom and equality, for deliverance from fear of the evil spirits, desire for a moral, dignified life and desire to return to the higher form of his native faith."\(^2\)

The aim of this strategy is to meet both the temporal and spiritual needs of the people, thereby bringing about church growth. Meeting the temporal needs is discussed first; then the spiritual needs are addressed.

Meeting the Temporal Needs of the People

The major temporal needs of the Oraon people are education, socioeconomic development, and health improvement. In meeting these needs the Oraon will become more open and receptive to the Gospel.

Education

Illiteracy and ignorance have been the basic reasons for most of the problems in the group. There is general agreement that only through education can people be freed from the misery they are facing.\(^3\) Education not only brings


freedom from misery, it also brings people into the fold of Christianity. According to Paul B. Hiebert, "the most effective way to plant churches in the mission field is to teach people how to read and write."\(^1\) A part of the strategy of the church must be to open more primary schools and adult literacy centers.

Primary schools

A primary school was opened at Chachkapi in 1998. There are over fifty students and two teachers. There is a plan to increase one class each year so that in the course of time this school will offer education through high school. By 2004, four more primary schools will be opened within the range of 10 kilometers of Chachkapi. The places selected are Itachindri, Bedo, Bobro, and Bakhar.

School teachers will be selected from among the local church members. They will be paid a salary of Rs. 500.00 a month. The admission fee will be Rs. 100.00 and tuition will be Rs. 25.00 a month. During the development of the school, the local congregation's contribution will be Rs. 100.00 per month and the section's share, Rs. 150.00 per month for each school. The local church pastor will supervise the schools with overall supervision handled by the Educational Department of the Section.

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Adult literacy centers

According to Atul Y. Aghamkar, "illiteracy has been one of the main problems from the beginning in the work of evangelism and Christian nurture. . . . The priority of the mission areas should have been to educate the public."¹

In co-operation with the Literacy India Trust, Chennai, five adult literacy centers will be opened each year. They will be opened at Chachkapi, Itachindri, Bedo, Bobro, and Bakhar. After increasing the total literacy rates in these villages, literacy centers will be opened in the most receptive villages within a range of 10 kilometers from Chachkapi. P. D. Ekka, church pastor of the Chachkapi Church, will be the project officer for the adult literacy centers.

Once the project is approved, the Literacy India Trust will give training to the project officer on how to open the adult literacy centers, and will also train the teachers how to teach adults. The teachers' qualification should be at least eighth standard. They will be paid Rs. 200.00 a month for ten months by the Literacy India Trust. Within ten months, adults will be able to read, write, and do simple arithmetic. Each adult literacy center will have thirty learners. The total learners in the five centers will be 150.

¹Atul Y. Aghamkar, "Mission in Rural Setting" India Church Growth Quarterly 12 (July-September 1990): 105-109.
The Literacy India Trust will supply a blackboard and lamp for each center and will also supply slates, primers, additional reading books, and a Bible to each learner. The learners' contribution will be to provide chalk and kerosene oil for the lamp.

The classes will meet from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. five days a week. On the sixth day either a health talk will be given, a cultural program will be performed, or income-generation instructions will be presented.

The adult literacy primers are integrated with the Bible. At the completion of the course, learners will be given Bible studies by the church pastor and lay leaders. At least 50 percent or 75 learners a year are expected to accept Christianity through the adult literacy program.

Socioeconomic Development

Over the years tribals have been oppressed and harassed by nontribals, landlords, money lenders, businessmen, contractors, and petty officials. The responsibility of the pastor and lay leaders is to bring social justice and freedom to the oppressed. Part of the Gospel to the tribals will be to free them from the clutches of people who bring socioeconomic injustice and harassment.

People will be taught by church leaders how to save some money from their daily earnings in the local bank or post office bank. They will be taught that what they save
will be useful in times of financial crisis or when they need money for some special purpose.

The people will also be taught better farming methods and how to plant cash crops that yield more income. Cash crops like papaya, ginger, sugarcane, and vegetables will be encouraged.

J. Waskom Pickett realizes that "there are large possibilities in the cottage industries."¹ The people will also be taught to open small-scale or cottage industries, taught how to manufacture detergent powder, detergent liquid, dishwashing powder, phenyl, liquid blue, stamp pad ink, and how to make candles. They will also be taught how to market their products. I learned these skills from the Literacy India Trust in order to train the people and help elevate them from their poverty.

The pastor and lay leaders will become acquainted with government grants and bank loans that are available for the people in order to help the Oraon people find freedom from loan sharks charging outrageous interest rates.

Health Ministry

Unhygienic lifestyles, malnutrition, consumption of alcohol, and the use of tobacco are the major causes of sickness and disease among the people. Superstitious

¹Pickett, 341.
beliefs make sicknesses worse, for instead of getting medical treatment they seek the help of a witch doctor.

To bring health and happiness to the people, a health awareness program will be organized in the receptive villages by the Health and Temperance Director of the Section.

The health message will be presented to the people for fourteen days. The meetings will begin at 6:00 p.m. and end at 7:30 p.m. Charts, slides, and films will be used to give the health presentations. The topics for the health awareness program will be as follows:

1. Superstitious beliefs
2. Germs as the cause of sickness
3. Hygiene around the village
4. Hygiene of the body
5. Proper sanitation
6. Proper drinking water
7. Fresh air and sunshine
8. Worms and diseases
9. Balanced diet
10. The effects of the use of tobacco
11. The effects of smoking
12. The use of alcohol
13. How to overcome evil habits
14. Trust in God.
The health awareness program will be followed by an evangelistic campaign.

Meeting the Spiritual Needs

Meeting the spiritual needs of the Oraon people requires proper understanding of the Sarna Dharma, Hinduism, and Christianity. Those bringing the Gospel must be able to contrast Sarna Dharma and Hinduism, the concepts of Sarna Dharma and Christianity, the supreme deity of Sarna Dharma, and the God of the Bible and the moral principles of Sarna Dharma and Christianity.

Sarna Dharma and Hinduism

Oraons are animists and call their religion Sarna Dharma. They believe Sarna Dharma is a sect of Hinduism. This concept has been taught them by the Hindus who live among them. However, "according to the census definition of Hindus the tribals are not Hindus."¹

According to Hinduism, Brahmins are the priestly caste; Brahmins and gurus or teachers give mantras or sacred prayers to the people. The Vedas are their scriptures; they worship many gods and goddess; and good Brahmins serve as family priests. People of the high castes are not polluted by touch of other high caste Hindus; the dead should be

¹Ponraj, 105.
cremated; and beef should not be eaten.\textsuperscript{1} Such concepts and practices are not in \textit{Sarna Dharma}.

Oraons believe in one supreme deity and a number of spirits, supernatural powers, magic, witchcraft, and in blood sacrifice. Aryans or Hindus entered India only about 2,000 B.C.,\textsuperscript{2} whereas the Oraons claim to be \textit{Adivasi} or the original settlers of the country. The Oraons will be helped to understand that they are not Hindus and that their religion is different from Hinduism. Once they are convinced that they are not Hindu, they will be taught how closely their religion is related to Christianity and in which way Christianity is better than \textit{Sarna Dharma}.

\textbf{Sarna Dharma and Christianity}

There are many similarities between the tribal beliefs and the Christian faith.\textsuperscript{3} Table 6 shows those similarities. This should be taken as a point of contact to reach the target people group.

\textsuperscript{1}Ibid., 99.

\textsuperscript{2}Donald A. McGavran, \textit{The Satnami Story} (Pasadena, California: William Carey Library, 1990), 8.

\textsuperscript{3}Ponraj, 105.
## TABLE 6
SIMILARITIES BETWEEN SARNA DHARMA AND CHRISTIANITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sarna Dharma</th>
<th>Christianity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belief in one supreme deity</td>
<td>There is one God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belief in good and evil spirits</td>
<td>Belief in good and evil spirits or angels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supernatural powers</td>
<td>Supernatural powers of God as well as of the devil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witches and sorcery</td>
<td>Witches and sorcery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blood sacrifice</td>
<td>Blood sacrifice in O.T.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destroy witches</td>
<td>Israelites were commanded to destroy witches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No idol worship</td>
<td>No idol worship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth day is the day of rest</td>
<td>Seventh day is the day of rest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The people will be taught how closely Sarna Dharma is related to Christianity. It will be explained that since the Oraons did not preserve their teaching in written form, slight changes have entered in their concepts. They will be encouraged to accept the teachings of the Bible and do away with error.
Dharmes and the God of the Bible

There are many similarities between the supreme deity of the Oraon and the God of the Bible. Table 7 shows these similarities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DHARMES</th>
<th>THE GOD OF THE BIBLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creator</td>
<td>Creator (Gen 1:1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source of light</td>
<td>Source of light (John 8:12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source of life</td>
<td>Source of life (John 11:25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The holy one</td>
<td>The holy one (Ps 145:17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perfectly pure</td>
<td>Perfectly pure ((Matt 5:48)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beneficent</td>
<td>Beneficent (Matt 6:25-34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full of goodness</td>
<td>Full of goodness (Col 2:9; Ps 34:8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merciful</td>
<td>Merciful (Ex 34:6; Ps 145:8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainer</td>
<td>Sustainer (Ps 55:22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giver of all</td>
<td>Giver of all (Matt 6:25-34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omniscient</td>
<td>Omniscient (1 Tim 1:17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does only good</td>
<td>Does only good (Col 2:9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People look to him</td>
<td>People look to Him for help</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for help and happiness</td>
<td>and happiness (Ps 33:22; 44:15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is all before</td>
<td>Is before all (John 1:1, 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author of all</td>
<td>Author of all (Ps 33:6, 9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preserver</td>
<td>Preserver (Isa 49:8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controller of universe</td>
<td>Controller of the universe (Matt 6:25-34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punisher of man and spirits</td>
<td>Punisher of man and spirits (Ps 104:35; Heb 2:14)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are many similarities between the supreme deity of Oraons, Dharmes, and the God of the Bible. Perhaps because of these similarities, the name Dharmes has been used for God the Father in the Oraon Bible. The Oraons will
be taught that these similarities must be because both Sarna Dharma and Christianity have a common source. They will be encouraged to believe in the rest of the characteristics and attributes of God as found in the Bible.

There are a few differences between Dharmes and the God of the Bible. Dharmes is represented by the sun and does not interfere in the works of the evil spirits. He is also too far away to listen to the people.

The Oraons will be taught that since Dharmes is the creator of the universe, he should not be represented by any of his creation, even the sun. He is much greater and more powerful than all his creation.

The people will be taught how Dharmes created the world in seven days. They will also be taught that the seventh day is the day of rest and they must rest on the seventh day instead of the fifth day.

To Oraons, Dharmes seems to be very far removed from the people. He does not interfere with the activities of evil spirits. At this point they will be taught about the fall of Satan and the fall of man. Sin has separated Dharmes from the people. As the Oraons believe that evil spirits bring sickness, suffering, and death, it will be emphasized that evil spirits could not improve the creation of Dharmes but worsened it and brought sin and suffering into the world.
Before the foundation of the world Dharmes made provision to save the people from sin and evil spirits. This will provide a bridge to teach the plan of salvation and then the life and teachings of Jesus Christ.

Next they will be taught about the miracles of Jesus Christ. Jesus will be presented as more powerful than the evil spirits. He has power to heal the sick, cast out evil spirits, and provide all good things for those who love Him.

Then they will be taught how Dharmes, through Jesus Christ, brought salvation to the world. They will be asked to give up devil worship and worship Dharmes. They will be asked to accept the salvation Dharmes has brought through Jesus Christ.

Once they accept Jesus as their Saviour, they will be accepted into the church as Sabbath School members. After having accepted the full teachings of the church, and showing a changed life, they will be baptized and accepted as church members. In the final stage they will be further nurtured and trained to witness to their relatives and friends.

Table 8 shows the steps in meeting the spiritual needs of the Oraon people.
### TABLE 8

#### STEPS IN MEETING THE SPIRITUAL NEEDS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Difference between Sarna Dharma and Hinduism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Similarities between Sarna Dharma and Christianity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Similarities between Dharmes and the God of the Bible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Dharmes the Creator of the universe and creation of the world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Fall of Satan, the evil spirit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Entrance of sin and fall of man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>The way of salvation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>The life of Jesus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Teachings of Jesus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Miracle of Jesus and His power over the devil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Challenge to give up devil worship and worship Dharmes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Dharmes through Jesus bringing salvation to the world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Call to accept salvation through Jesus Christ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Teaching of doctrines of the church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Baptize them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Nurturing of new believers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Training to witness to relatives and friends</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### A People Movement

The Oraons are a group-conscious people who also have community spirits. They are united to their family, clan, and tribe and respect and value their social and political customs. The group leaders usually make decision for the community and the people abide by the leader's decisions. A people movement approach is possibly the best strategy to bring the Oraons to Christ.

In people movements a group of people from one ethnic group decide to become Christian. The group can be a tribe,
a caste, a clan, or lineage of people. "A tribal movement is always a people movement."¹

Donald A. McGavran defines people movements as follows:

A people movement results from the joint decision of a number of individuals—whether five or five hundred—as from the same people, which enables them to become Christians without social dislocation, while remaining in full contact with their non-Christian relatives, thus enabling other groups of that people, across the years, after suitable instruction, to come to similar decisions and form Christian churches made up exclusively of members of that people.²

Edward Tuite Dalton defines a people group as "a significantly large sociological grouping of individuals who perceive themselves to have a common affinity for one another because of their language, religion, ethnicity, residence, occupation, class or caste, situation, etc., or combination of these."³ This is a group of people that has a close relationship and love for one another because of their common origin, language, religion, and occupation. They individually as well as collectively make a decision to follow Christ.

Biblical Principles for People Movements

In the Old Testament God chose to bless Abraham and his descendants in order to bless the earth through them (Gen

¹Donald A. McGavran, Understanding Church Growth (Madras: Evangelical Literature Service, 1972), 296.

²Ibid., 297, 298.

³Ponraj, 185.
12:13). As Israel grew in number, they made group decisions either for or against God (Exod 32:1; Num 16:1-30; 1 Kgs 18:21, 39; Exod 19:7,8).

The early church in the New Testament experienced a people movement for Christ on the day of Pentecost. There was a group conversion of 3,000 people (Acts 2:41) on one occasion and on another, 5,000 people (Acts 4:4).

The book of Acts also gives evidence of household or group conversions. Donald A. McGavran notes that Paul "did not choose fields. He followed up groups of people who had living relations in the People Movement to Christ."\(^1\) The Old Testament as well as the New Testament gives evidences for people movements.

People Movements Among Oraons

According to Donald A. McGavran, "the People Movement of the Oraons . . . would rank high in bringing them into the fold of God."\(^2\) They are one of the receptive tribes of Chotanagpur.

First the villages must be surveyed to discover the receptivity of the people, and the presence of different ethnic groups in the community must be identified. Since

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\(^1\)Donald A. McGavran, *The Bridges of God* (Chennai: Church Growth Association of India, 1998), 33.

\(^2\)Ibid., 119.
animists are the most receptive people,\(^1\) such groups of people will be selected for a people movement approach. Places of Hindu presence will be avoided as they are more resistant and oppose the spread of Christianity. Other strategies will be used in Hindu areas.

Once a receptive community is identified, concentrated evangelism must begin.\(^2\) After preaching and teaching, a challenge will be given for the whole community to respond.\(^3\) "The individual approach is not only harmful but also will not work among the tribal societies."\(^4\)

"The gospel must become incarnate in cultural forms if the people are to hear and believe."\(^5\) The people become Christian when they are not changed from their social environment or culture.\(^6\) People must feel that they are moving with their own people, so those who have not accepted

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\(^{1}\) Dean R. Hoge and David A. Roozen, eds., *Understanding Church Growth and Decline 1950-1978* (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1979), 278.

\(^{2}\) In concentration evangelism, the evangelists live among the people, identify with them, and then communicate the gospel. They constantly concentrate on one group of people in one or two villages until a church is established. This task may take six months or more (Ponraj, 172).


\(^{4}\) Ponraj, 113.

\(^{5}\) Hiebert, 54.

Christ will come later on. This will enable the church to grow faster.¹

Conversion will be accomplished in two stages. In the first stage the people must give up spirit worship and accept Jesus as their Saviour. In the second stage they will be given the full teachings of the Bible to bring about a complete change in the person.² After baptism they will be spiritually nurtured so that they may become life-long disciples.³

Right after baptism people must be taught to share their new-found faith with their relatives and friends. From the beginning they must be taught to be missionary minded.⁴ They must also "be taught to practice the principles of brotherhood towards all people,"⁵ and must not be prejudiced against other groups of people.

The church must also follow indigenous church principles. The Oraon church should be self-governing, self-propagating, and self-supporting.⁶ The new members must have a place of worship where they can gather for daily

¹McGavran, The Bridges of God, 25.
²Ibid., 15, 16.
³Ponraj, 196.
⁴Ibid.
⁵Pickett, 340.
⁶Ponraj, 196.
worship services. They must use local vocal and instrumental music for praising God.¹

The primary aim of a people movement is to meet the spiritual needs of the whole group of people. However, one should not neglect their temporal needs.² In fact, more attention must be given to the economic welfare of the people.³

Lay Leadership and Ministries

The church growth of the Chachkapi church has been slow, but it is the only growing church in its pastoral district. This suggests potential for growth. The reason for the growth of the church was that the converts lived among their own people and witnessed to their relatives and friends. For better growth, the lay leadership of the people will be developed for "leadership is a way to church growth."⁴ New members must become acquainted with the gospel commission, how to make disciples, methods for communicating the gospel, and lay ministries. The goal of the lay leadership and ministries training program is to bring about a higher level of spiritual life among the members and to better equip them for in-reach and outreach

¹Pickett, 339.
²Ibid., 335.
³Ibid., 340.
⁴Hoge and Roozen, 281.
activities. This will encourage the growth of the church. Some training has already been given and the rest will be given during the weekend services in the months of October and November 1999.

Making Disciples

The great commission of Jesus Christ is 'going' (Mark 16:15; Matt 28:9), 'sending' (Acts 1:8), 'baptizing' and 'teaching' (Matt 28:19, 20) in the name and authority of Christ (Matt 28:18). "The chief objective of the Great Commission is to make disciples."¹ To make disciples is an imperative verb, while going, baptizing, and teaching are the methods of making disciples.²

According to Harrison and William:

Going, baptizing and teaching are Greek participles. Participles are important but the imperative--make disciples--is the everlasting imperative of Christ; imperative of love burning in His own heart and the imperative of solemn obligation laid upon His followers.³

So a disciple is a person who accepts Jesus as his Lord and Saviour, who is brought into church fellowship, who grows into spiritual maturity, receives training, and who involves himself in making disciples of others.


³E. Myers Harrison and Walter William, How to Win Souls (Wheaton, Illinois: Von Kompen Press, 1952), 9, 10,
Church Fellowship

According to Sargunam, "Christians are called to (1) make disciples, (2) establish churches, (3) reach every people group."¹ Making disciples means bringing believers into a love relationship with each other and other unreached people.² The Gospel is proclaimed not simply "to inform people or to make them feel good," the ultimate goal is to make them followers of Christ.³ The church grows by making disciples. Making disciples involves helping people to make Jesus Christ their Lord and Saviour and bringing them into church fellowship.⁴ The discipling will be done in two stages. At the acceptance of Jesus as their Lord, they will be given baptism and accepted into the full fellowship of the church. According to McGavran the disciples multiply more in number when discipling is done within the same ethnic group.⁵

Warren suggests establishing affinity groups within the church with groups of similar ages, interests, problems, and backgrounds who can relate to each other so that they can

²Ibid., 57.
³Hiebert, 35.
find and meet their specific needs.\textsuperscript{1} People must find friends among the members and form a spiritual family.\textsuperscript{2} New members need to be well acquainted with the church, its purpose, the benefits of being a member, requirements, responsibilities, and the vision and strategy of the church. They must also know how the church is organized and how they can become involved in its ministries.\textsuperscript{3}

**Spiritual Maturity**

The great commission to make disciples means bringing the fullness of Christ in the life of the people and they must be committed to Him.\textsuperscript{4} McGavran and Arn comment:

The second part of church growth is perfecting or growing in grace. It's making sure that the baptized believers become biblical Christians, that their lives are irradiated by the knowledge of the Bible, and that they have a deep personal relationship with Jesus Christ.\textsuperscript{5}

Patterson makes similar comments that they must devote themselves to the teachings of apostles, identify with Christ, and live a spirit-filled obedient life.\textsuperscript{6} New


\textsuperscript{2}Ibid., 314.

\textsuperscript{3}Ibid., 316, 317.


\textsuperscript{5}Donald A. McGavran and Win C. Arn, *How to Grow a Church* (Glendale, California: G/L Publications, 1973) 80.

members must be born of the spirit and live a new life in Christ.¹

In order to develop a Christ-like character new members must involve themselves in His work.² They must also help others, for not helping others brings spiritual feebleness to the people.³ According to Warren,

genuine spiritual maturity includes having a heart that worships and praises God, building and enjoying loving relationships, using your gifts and talents in service to others, and sharing your faith with lost people.⁴ Thus true disciples grow and mature spiritually.

**Training Disciples for Ministry**

One of the most important principles for church growth is that lay leaders need to be well trained whether they are in town or village.⁵ They must be trained at all levels and this must be the first concern of the church.⁶ Lindgren feels that "even spiritually alive persons (lay or clergy)

¹Scott, 57.


⁴Warren, 340.

⁵McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth*, 287.

require adequate sources and skills to enable them to
witness and minister effectively."¹

Most church members will witness for Christ if they are
given proper instruction and follow proper methods.² On lay
training Ellen G. White writes:

Many would be willing to work if they were taught how
to begin. They need to be instructed and encouraged.
Every church should be a training school for Christian
workers. . . . There should not only be teaching, but
actual work under experienced instructors. Let the
teachers lead the way in working among the people, and
others, uniting with them, will learn from their
example.³

Jesus chose humble and unlearned men as His disciples,
who were to proclaim the truth to all the earth. He trained
and educated them so that in turn they would train and
educate others for His ministry.⁴ Nelson also makes a
similar statement, "Train disciples who will go and make
disciples."⁵ He also feels that "on the job training is the
best way to teach laymen for the personal evangelism."⁶

¹Alvin J. Lindgren and Norman Shawchuck, Let My People
Go (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon, 1980), 27.

²Ellen G. White, Evangelism (Washington, DC: Review and
Herald Publishing Association, 1952), 381.

³White, Christian Service, 59.

⁴Ellen G. White, The Acts of the Apostles (Mountain
View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Association,
1911), 17.

⁵Martin L. Nelson, Principles of Church Growth
(Bangalore: Association Trust, 1995) 49.

⁶Ibid., 80.
It is not possible to provide one pastor to each church nor is this in accordance with Christian doctrine. A pastor for every church will actually hinder church growth and multiplication.¹ Lay people must be taught and involved in church responsibility.² Each church must have its own lay ministers whose livelihood will be earned in ordinary occupations.³ The lay leaders should be taught effective methods to communicate the Gospel to the people, how to give Bible studies, how to conduct Branch Sabbath Schools, evangelistic meetings, health ministries, prayer ministries, how to free people from evil spirits, and how to pray for the sick. Lay leaders must also be taught how to meet the needs of people and about the principles of people movements.

Mobilizing Disciples for Witnessing

According to Lindgren, God chose lay people instead of priests to be His prophets in Old Testament time because priests were very busy in their temple services.⁴ Mott recognizes that

the most vital and fruitful periods in the history of the Christian church have been those in which lay men

²Ibid., 87.
⁴Lindgren and Shawchuck, 20.
have most vividly realized and most earnestly sought to discharge their responsibility to propagate the Christian faith.¹

The Church grows when lay people are well mobilized and prepared to share their faith.² "Mobilized lay people are a sign of good church health."³ The church is the body of Christ and every member of the church must work for church growth. Members are "ordinary people but have extraordinary abilities" for church growth. Each member must discover, develop, and use all the spiritual gifts for ministry.⁴

Knowles suggests, "Leaders should not attempt to do all the work themselves. Their duty is to organize the work, delegate responsibility and provide training and supervision."⁵ All the members should be involved in missionary work.

Every family should be visited in the neighborhood and get acquainted with the people's spiritual needs.⁶ "If


³Hoge and Roozen, 281, 282.

⁴McGavran and Arn, 85.

⁵C. Peter Wagner, Your Church Can Grow (Glendale, California: Regal Books, 1984) 187, 188.


⁷White, Christian Service, 12.
every church member had sought to enlighten others, thousands upon thousands would today stand with God's commandment-keeping people."\(^1\)

Special attention must be given to mobilize the new Oraon converts so that they will be more fruitful in their witnessing. "The new churches grow when the new believers evangelize."\(^2\) When new believers witness, growth takes place and churches are planted.\(^3\) When new converts come from a receptive group of people and are still in close contact with their own people, they are the ones to be mobilized to witness to their relatives and friends. Since they have just found a new life in Christ they know the needs, problems, and difficulties their friends will face as they too come to Christ.\(^4\)

The new converts should not be made "subordinate to the older Christian."\(^5\) They should have ample room to grow. Since they have close contact with their own people, witnessing to them will not scare them. New members have an advantage in approaching their own people. "If the church runs out of new converts, its evangelistic potential drops


\(^{3}\)Mott, 1.

\(^{4}\)McGavran and Arn, 77.

\(^{5}\)Wagner, Your Church Can Grow, 93.
Therefore the church should never be allowed to have a shortage of new converts.

McGavran says something similar: The "new members must be given an active part in the government of the church. . . . They must feel that it is their church, in which they have a voice."²

Methods for Communicating the Gospel

The Oraons are an oral society. Throughout history they have preserved their culture and beliefs "in the form of poetry, songs, proverbs, stories, narratives, dances, and various rituals."³ Since their literacy rate is very low, they do not value written information and communication. This needs to be kept in mind in choosing the methods to use to best communicate the Gospel to them. Ponraj suggests "the use of songs, drama, dance, stories, proverbs, visual illustrations, music, art and rituals, . . . radio, tape cassettes, and television."⁴

¹Ibid.
²McGavran and Arn, 78, 79.
³Ponraj, Tribal Challenge, 199.
⁴Ibid.
Singing Songs

Oraons like singing songs and bhajan. These songs and bhajans must be composed to convey the Gospel messages using tribal tunes. Songs also must be composed that teach against devil worship, witchcraft, and the use of tobacco and alcohol. Such songs will constantly remind the people of the biblical teaching and encourage them to do away with such heathen practices. Songs also uplift the spiritual life.

Telling Bible Stories

Telling Bible stories is one of the methods of teaching the people. The stories from the Old Testament about Creation, Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, the flood, and the tower of Babel can be told. Also the stories of Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Gideon, Samson, David, Solomon, Daniel and his friends, and others can be used to convey Bible truth and moral lessons.

From the New Testament, tell about the life of Jesus, His miracles, and parables. Also tell the stories of the apostles. Always remember to make some spiritual application. Ponraj suggests:

Tribals are like children in that they are simple-minded people and they understand spiritual truths

1A religious song sung with clapping of hands and body movement.
better when they are communicated through stories. But the tribals should not be treated as children.¹

Using Visual Aids

"The tribals enjoy seeing things rather than hearing."² Many tribal people cannot concentrate when long sermons are preached. Therefore, the use of visual aids helps to keep their attention. The use of such teaching aids will help catch and keep the attention of the tired and sleepy, especially at night meetings.

Picture rolls, flip charts, flannel boards, and flash cards are useful in telling stories and giving Bible studies. In addition, pictures could be shown using slides, film strips, videos, and movies.

The life and teachings of Jesus as well as health and temperance messages can be presented using film strips. The Jesus Film, by Campus Crusade for Christ, and Davasagar (film of Jesus) can be projected or shown on video cassettes. Receptive people view these movies without objection, but follow-up work must be done to bring the people to Christ.

Dramas and Skits

The Bible stories, parables, and concepts of healthful living could be taught to the people using dramas and skits.

¹Ponraj, Tribal Challenge, 209.
²Ibid.
This should be done to catch their attention and impress certain truths on their minds but must be followed by giving explanations and teaching.

**Memorizing Bible Truths and Texts**

The Oraon must be taught to memorize the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, the Beatitudes, and texts such as John 3:16; Rom 8:28; 1 Cor 13; Ps 23, 91, and many other such passages. Encourage them to repeat the verses several times in order to memorize them. The texts must be taught and explained so that they may understand what they have learned.

**Teach Them How to Pray**

Those who are learning to be Christians must be taught how to offer personal, public, and intercessory prayers. They must offer specific prayers for specific needs. They must have daily communion with God and have childlike faith and trust.

**Rituals**

"Rituals are part of human culture. . . . For oral societies rituals are important since they are the means of storing and transmitting information."¹ Ponraj quotes Paul Hiebert who gives guidelines in dealing with the existing rituals in a tribal society: Acceptance of the old without change

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¹Ibid., 215.
(e.g., folk songs). Rejection of the old because of its old religious meanings. Reinterpretation of the old customs with new Christian meanings. Substitution of the old. Some of the old customs may be rejected and others imported from outside. Creation of new ritual elements . . . in line with forms of symbolism understood within that culture.¹

Rituals such as those that accompany birth, child dedication, marriage, and death must be reinterpreted with Christian meanings. Even agricultural rituals must be given Christian meaning. Christian festivals such as Christmas, New Year, and Easter should be given importance and be celebrated by the tribals.²

Ministries of the Church

Beside regular ministries of the church, special attention needs to be given to youth ministries, house churches, prayer ministries, and the worship service of the church. Through these ministries it is expected that the church will remain spiritually more alive and witness more effectively to the community around the Chachkapi Church.

Youth Ministry

Chachkapi Church is losing youth who study in non-Adventist institutions. The church has taken steps to involve more youth in church activities, outreach, and evangelism. The Youth Department of the Section has organized annual youth camps for four days in the last week

¹Ibid., 215, 216.
²Ibid., 216.
of October. Youth were requested to bring their non-Adventist friends along with them. The Section provides Rs. 2000.00 for the camp and each youth was asked to bring four kilos of rice, one kilo of dal, and fifteen rupees for other expenses. They bring their own bed, Bible, Sabbath School Quarterly, plate, and glass.

Every morning there is flag raising, devotions, seasons of prayer, and inspection. In the evening are flag lowering and the nightly campfire. The first part of the campfire program is devotional and the second part is cultural and social.

The day's program includes instructions, camp duties, and games. The subjects for instruction are (1) Bible, (2) youth leadership, (3) youth evangelism, (4) choosing a life partner, (5) courtship and marriage, (6) child training, (7) income generation, and (8) church responsibilities. The instructors are the president, secretary, and all the department directors of the Section. Between 150 and 300 youth attend the camp each year.

The results of the youth camps are that the youth learn biblical teachings which they do not receive in non-Adventist colleges, develop church leadership qualities, learn a trade or how to open a cottage industry, and how to choose their life partner. Many non-Adventists who attend the youth camp have accepted Adventism and even bring their families to the Lord.
After introducing the youth camp idea many youth have married someone from within the Adventist community. Others have taken up church leadership and also take part in evangelism. Youth camps have helped youth remain in the church, youth leadership in the church has increased, youth attendance has improved, and more youth participate in outreach activities. Youth have proved to be "more active and productive, and to hold more promise than do the elderly, despite their experience and sense of responsibility."

House Churches

House churches are small churches that meet in a house. It was the practice of the early Christian church to meet in homes. The "house church is the key to the love and growth of a church." It is also the training ground for the laity for outreach activities and for the presentation of the Gospel.

In 1998 implementation of house churches was encouraged in the district. The members of Itachindri, Bedo, Babro,

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1Mott, 105.


4Raja Bahadur and Beulah Herbert, "Prayer Evangelism," Indian Church Growth Quarterly 6 (January-March 1984) 1.

5Ibid.
Bakhar, Patlo and Pola attended the Sabbath services of Chachkapi Church. The members of those companies were encouraged to develop house churches in their own villages. Later, Maranatha (an international group that helps build churches) was kind enough to build church buildings at Chachkapi, Itachindri, Bobro, and Bakhar. Now the members of those companies worship in their own churches. To train and equip the members in conducting services and outreach activities some of the lay leaders from the Chachkapi Church attend the village churches. The members have been encouraged to witness and bring more members into the church.

Worship Services

The missionaries brought Christianity to India together with their Western culture. The worship order, the songs, and the music were all Western.¹ This also happened in the Chachkapi Church. They sang Western songs in Hindi and since they could not afford a piano, they used no musical instrument. After church service they quietly left the church to go home.

In January 1998 the congregation was encouraged to sing songs in their own mother tongue, in the local style, using local musical instruments. After the service a short prayer

¹Aghamkar, 105-109.
session was introduced. Prayer requests were made, and the members corporately pray for the sick, the needy, and any other requests. This helped the members find out who was sick and missing. People are assigned to visit missing members and the sick, pray with them and encourage them to come back to church. Another thing that was started was that after the service the members planned outreach activities.

Changes have taken place. Now the members sing songs in the local languages such as Sadri, Kurukh (Oraon), Mundari, and sometimes Hindi. They use *Khanjri* (cymbals), *dafli* (a small drum with flat rings all around), *jhanjh* (two flat copper plates), and *mandar* (a long type of drum). Since they began using local songs and musical instruments, the song service has become more lively. They also clap their hands and move their body while singing.

**Prayer Ministry**

According to Ellen G. White, prayer is "the opening of the heart to God as to a friend."¹ It is "the breath of the soul,"² "the key in the hand of faith to unlock heaven's

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storehouse, where are treasured the boundless resources of Omnipotence."¹

Ellen G. White also said that "Prayer does not bring God down to us, but brings us up to Him."²

Prayer unites us with one another and with God. Prayer brings Jesus to our side, and gives to the fainting, perplexed soul new strength to overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil. Prayer turns aside the attacks of Satan.³

God answers the prayers of the righteous (Jer 5:16), the earnest (Jer 29:13), and prayers uttered in full confidence (1 John 5:14, 15). If we hide iniquity in our heart, God will not hear us (Ps 66:18). We must offer personal secret prayer, prayer in the family circle, and prayer in public.⁴ "Christ commanded, 'Pray without ceasing,' that is, keep the mind uplifted to God, the source of all power and efficiency."⁵

¹White, Steps to Christ, 99.

²Ibid., 97.


⁴White, Steps to Christ, 102.

Intercessory prayer

Intercessory is the prayer offered on behalf of a person or a group of people, to meet their temporal, social or spiritual need. It can also be offered to bring healing, cast out the devil, and petition for the working of the Holy Spirit to convince and convert a person.

Moses interceded for Israel at Mount Sinai (Exod 32:32) and when Israel was fighting against Amalek (Exod 17:11). Samuel offered intercessory prayer for Israel at Mizpah (1 Sam 7:5). Daniel interceded for Israel's return from Babylon (Dan 9:3-20), God told Ezekiel to find a man who could intercede on behalf of Israel (Ezek 22:30).

In the New Testament we find the example of Jesus. He too offered intercessory prayer. In John 17 Jesus prayed for Himself (vss. 1-5), for His disciples (vss. 6-19), and for all the believers (vss. 20-26).


Robb gives nine reasons for offering intercessory prayer:


In January 1999 intercessory prayer was emphasized in the Chachkapi Church. This encouraged the members and built confidence in offering intercessory prayer. This resulted in the offering of prayer for the sick just after the church service. Those who were sick were also visited and prayed for. Before and after planning the outreach activities, intercessory prayer is offered for the people whom they will contact. The church has also organized a prayer group which goes house to house every evening and has a short worship and prayer session. This group offers prayer in non-Adventist homes. This method has improved personal relationships among the members and has also improved friendships with non-Adventists. People have become more enthusiastic in outreach activities.

¹John D. Robb, Focus! The Power of People Group Thinking (Monrovia, California: MARC, 1994), 103-120.
Power encounter

Timothy Kamps defines a "power encounter" as follows:

A power encounter is a spiritual encounter that exposes and calls to account the powers of darkness in their varied forms by the power of God for the purpose of revealing the identity of the one True God resulting in an acknowledgement of and/or allegiance to His lordship by those present.¹

The God of the Bible is the true God. He is the God of gods and Lord of lords. He has power over the devil to defeat all evil activities.

The Bible clearly teaches the origin (Ezek 28:15-18; Rev 12:7-9; Luke 10-18), nature (John 8:44), and activities (1 Pet 5:8; 2 Thess 2:9; Matt 9:32, 33; 12:22; 17:15-18; Luke 13:11-13, 16; 8:27; Mark 9:22) of the devil. Jesus is more powerful (Rev 12:7-9) and greater (1 John 4:4) than the devil. Jesus has the power to cast out the devil (Matt 4:24; 8:31) and He also gave that same power to His disciples to cast out the devil (Matt 10:1).

The Oraons live in constant fear of evil spirits, an evil eye, an evil mouth, evil personal and impersonal powers, witches, and sorcerers. To appease the trouble-making spirits and cancel the workings of the evil powers, they offer endless and ever more expensive sacrifices.

The pastor and lay leaders were taught on December 4 and 5, 1998, about power encounters and how to deliver the Oraon from the clutches of the devil and bring them to

Christ. They were taught that God can control evil spirits and He is more powerful than the spirits, that He gives freedom from evil spirits and protects from all the evil workings of the spirits.

According to Sundaram, people accept Christianity when they become free from the devils.¹ Power encounters bring people "from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God" (Acts 26:18). Power encounters enthrone Christ at the center of life and allow Him to control every aspect of life.² "Without signs and wonders, the church can not grow."³ It brings conversion and helps people to give up "non-Christian elements" from their lives and society.

The pastor and lay leaders were taught to have a daily infilling of the Holy Spirit and rely on His power for dealing with evil spirits because "the power of God is available to those who obey and trust Him and relate how God's power has personally helped them."⁴

The pastor and lay leaders must prepare themselves through prayer or even fasting. The members were encouraged to minister in teams of three to five. "At the start of


²Van Rheenen, 88.


⁴Van Rheenen, 89.
each session, take authority over the place, time, and people involved."¹ The group must pray in the name of Jesus and command Satan to leave the place and not to bring any disturbance to the person possessed by the devil. They must also pray for their own protection, and the protection of their families, friends, and property, so that Satan will not harm them. The team was taught to cut off any other spirits outside the person to help the spirit that is inside the person.² The team also forbade the spirit to make any manifestation of violence, vomiting, or other kinds of misbehaviors. The devil was then challenged to come out of the person in the name of Jesus Christ. The spirit was commanded to leave the person's house and village and never come back. The team was then instructed to invite the presence of the Holy Angels, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit to come and live with the person. During a deliverance session evil spirits should never be allowed to speak, for they become more stubborn and often will not leave the person.³

The pastor and the lay leaders have the gift of the Holy Spirit to cast out the devil from persons or places. In the past this ministry of power encounter has encouraged church growth. The power encounter training program gave

²Ibid., 185.
³Ibid.
the members a better understanding of the subject and encouraged them to use this gift for the honor and glory of God.

Healing the sick

The Oraon believe that sickness and diseases are the direct expression of the displeasure of the evil spirits upon the person. Sickness may also be caused by an evil eye, an evil mouth, an evil person, impersonal powers, witchcraft, or sorcery. Instead of finding the cause for the sickness and taking medical treatment, they go to the Oiah or witch doctor to find out why the spirit is unhappy or whose curse caused the person's sickness.

The pastor and the lay leaders teach the people the cause for sickness, they teach good health habits as a way to prevent illness, and they also care for the sick. Church leaders advise members about medical treatment, but also anoint the sick with oil, lay hands on them, and pray for them. Many times the sick are healed. By this means members have been added to the church.

A sermon about the healing ministry was given at Chachkapi Church on January 16, 1999. The members were taught to use the spiritual gift of healing for the glory of God and church growth. Healing brings "the person into a
right relationship with the physical, mental, and spiritual
laws of God."¹

According to Ahgamkar:

Miracles play a very vital role in the lives of rural
people. . . . Miracles are often taken as God's
intervention on behalf of and in response to people's
prayer for a certain thing. Therefore miracles leave a
deep impression along with a sense of appreciation in
the heart of those who have been touched by God. . . .
Once people experience the miraculous touch of the
Lord, accepting Him becomes easy.²

There are four kinds of healing for four kinds of
sickness; prayer must be offered to match the need:

1. Sickness of the spirit caused by the person's
personal sin requires prayer to be offered for repentance.

2. Sickness caused by emotional hurts of the person
requires prayer to be offered for inner healing.

3. Sickness caused by diseases or accident requires
prayer to be offered for physical healing.

4. Sickness caused by demonic oppression demands
prayer to be offered for deliverance.³

The following steps of prayer are taken from MacNutt:
Pastor and lay leaders should listen to find out what to
pray for. Then they must lay hands on the sick one so that
the current of healing power may flow through them to the

¹Charles L. Allen, God's Psychiatry (Los Angeles:

²Aghamker, 109.

³Francis MacNutt, Healing (Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave
Maria Press, 1974), 162, 163.
sick person. Prayer should be offered "to the Father, through the Son in the Spirit." They should pray with confidence and with thanksgiving.\(^1\) As James wrote: "And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him" (Jas 5:15). Prayer ministries will help people have a closer communion with God and more concern for the members and people in their neighborhoods. The principles of a power encounter will help free people from the clutches of the devil and bring healing to the sick, which in turn will bring people to God.

On the basis of the situation and analysis of the Chachkapi Church and its community, the above strategy will enhance church growth through meeting the needs of the people, bringing about a people movement, and training lay people for ministries. Meeting the temporal and spiritual needs will increase the receptivity of the people to accept Christ as their Lord. A people movement will help in multiplying churches. The lay leadership and ministries will mobilize lay people and equip them with better methods to witness and help the churches grow.

\(^1\)Ibid., 195-206.
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

There is a great potential for the growth of the Chachkapi Church. All the members of the church are Oraons and the great majority of the community belong to the same homogeneous unit. There are no language or cultural barrier to communicate the gospel to the Oraon people. At the same time the converts live in a community with their unconverted relatives and friends, who can be approached easily. In such a setting increased church growth could be brought about through meeting both the temporal and spiritual needs of the people, fostering a people movement and stressing leadership training.

In the past the church met only a few, limited needs of the people which resulted in good church growth. Meeting more of the needs of the people should cause them to be more receptive to the gospel so that more people could be won for Christ.

Church growth at Chachkapi has been slow since it has been growing through the one-by-one method of conversion. Since Oraons are tribals and animists, a people movement
approach is much more strategic and likely to increase the growth rate of the church.

In the past lay leadership training helped increase church growth. Hence leadership training must be given to the lay people in order to equip them with effective methods that will revive the church as well as evangelize the people. Lay training would also enable them to mobilize the new as well as the old members for outreach. Nurture and discipleship will encourage the members' spiritual growth and result in numerical growth as well.

Since the church was losing second generation youths, special attention must be given to making them disciples and training them in outreach activities. This will help retain the youth in the church as well as encouraging them to be more effective witnesses for the church.

Without God's power and help methods alone will not bring result in church growth. The suggested prayer ministry is a must for guidance, for freeing people from devils, for bringing healing to the sick, and for receiving blessings from God in winning souls.

Recommendations

According to the findings from the church growth study of the Chachkapi Church, the following suggestions are recommended to the pastor, lay leaders, and the Section.
Pastor and Lay Leaders

1. The pastor and the lay leaders must be fully aware of the causes for church growth and loss. They must be encouraged to use extensively the methods which cause church growth and avoid these things which cause the losses.

2. The church leaders must know church finance. The faithful returning of tithe and offerings must be promoted regularly to bring tithe per capita giving close to the tithe potential of the church.

3. The church leaders must place a high priority on making disciples and mobilizing all lay people for in reach and outreach activities.

4. Local church leaders must study the target group around the church and must understand their cultural life, characteristics, economy, religion and rites of passage. They must come to understand the world view, problems, resistance, and receptivity of the target group.

Section

1. The pastor and the lay leaders must be given instruction about the community, religion, literacy and economy of the people who live within ten km from the church.

2. The section leaders must teach local church leaders how to set goals, and develop effective and workable strategies to enhance the growth of the church.
3. Section leaders should not transfer the pastor and gospel worker to other places before the completion of at least five years of service at a place so that they can achieve their long term goals.

4. Section leaders should encourage local churches to open church schools and adult literacy centres.

5. Section leaders must teach local lay leaders the doctrines of the church and train them to conduct evangelistic meetings.

6. Section leaders must conduct seminars on power encounters, healing ministries, evangelism through health ministries, spiritual gifts, leadership training, effective methods to communicate the Gospel to the people, and on people movements.

7. Section leaders must train pastors and lay leaders how to establish income generation projects such as better farming, opening of small scale industries, and tailoring. Appropriate funding must be found and provided.

Global Mission

Global Mission funding should be sought to provide a full-time pastor and gospel worker to encourage a people movement among the Oraon. Global Mission workers must be given appropriate training and funding for such a people movement project.
For Further Study

Mostly tribals live in Chotanagpur and Santhal Parganas in South Bihar. The Mundas, the Kharias, and the Santhals are also tribals and animists. Similar studies should be done on these people groups to enhance church growth among them as well.
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