

Visiting US Scientist turns evangelist.

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Addressing the students of Indian Institute of Technology at IIT Powai campus, Mumbai on 25.01.2008, Prof. Henry M. Shaefer, Director of the Centre for Computational Chemistry, University of Georgia tried to draw a parallel between the Bible and the Big Bang Theory to make the point that the Christianity is the true religion and the Jesus is the only way to God. Prof. H. M. Shaefer was delivering a lecture on “Stephen Hawking, the Big Bang and God” organised in connection with the three-day annual Techfest meet at IIT campus, Powai. In his speech Prof. H. M. Shaefer quoted the views and comments of various prominent scientists and Nobel Laureates on Science and God and it was towards the end of his lecture that his comments started assuming religious undertones and he began to sound like Benny Hinn speaking on Channel GOD. Prof. H. M. Shaefer is a five time nominee for Nobel award and his controversial speech has not gone down well with the secular students of IIT Powai who have dubbed it as an attempt to subvert their religious belief, according to the media reports. The agitated students have also distributed handbills condemning the religious overtones of his speech and dubbing his views as beyond the domains of academic credibility and as such should not be considered to be scientifically authoritative (TOI: 26.01.08).

Prof. H. M. Shaefer's lecture at IIT, Powai is an eye opener to the intellectual class in the country about the stark reality and gravity of the conversion threat faced by the Hindus in India. Prof. H. M. Shaefer is not an evangelist who come on a religious mission to India but a top scientist who came on an academic mission. If a top scientist like him could make such a speech at one of the most prestigious academic institutions in India and try to subvert the religious faith of a majority segment of the gathering, we can well imagine as to what must be happening in the remote and tribal areas in our county where tens of thousands of Christian missionaries, including many foreign nationals, are engaged in evangelical activities. Besides the regular Church agencies, thousands of Church affiliated NGOs are also engaged in propagating Christianity in different parts of the country. Billions of dollars are pumped into the country each year by many international Christian funding agencies as aid to these NGOs under the garb of relief and charity assistance for the poor or as development aid, most of which is actually used for proselytisation drive. There is no effective mechanism to monitor the diversion of these funds for undesirable activities as the agencies and personnel entrusted with this work are inadequately equipped and poorly motivated.

Proselytisation drive by Christian missionaries including some foreign nationals has become a very grave threat to Hinduism in India. Many foreign nationals who come to India under the guise of tourists, journalists, social workers, teachers and doctors also indulge in conversion activities. Besides financial allurements and free medical aid, even hypnotic methods are used by Church activists to lure poor and gullible to embrace Christianity. There have been

some visible signs of aggressiveness associated with the proselytisation drive of the church activists since last three / four years. A combination of factors like the support from a section of the ruling circles in Delhi and the protective cover given by a strong network of anti-Hindu NGO activists in the country, etc. are believed to have given this new found courage and boldness to the Church activists. Any attempt to check their militant conversion drive by supporters of organizations like VHP and Bajrang Dal is highly exaggerated and blown out of proportions as atrocities on minorities by Hindu fanatics with the help of NGO mafia and highly biased media. Highly fanatic members of State Minority Commission and human rights activists known for their hatred for Hindus also then jump into the fray to further exaggerate the incidents as blatant violations of the rights of minorities by fanatic Hindus and call for probes and stern action against the culprits.

The Maharashtra Minority Commission is not a fully constituted body. Chairman Mohd. Naseem Siddiqui and Vice Chairman, Dr. Abraham Mathai are the two members of the Commission appointed by the State Govt. so far. Mohd. Naseem Siddiqui is an NCP activist and a fanatic muslim fundamentalist. During a recent agitation by a section of Muslims in Bhiwandi against the construction of a police station building at Quarter Gate area in Bhiwandi, he had sided with the illogical demand of a fanatic section of local Muslims even after ascertaining the fact that the proposed police station was coming up in a Govt. plot of land already held in possession by the police department. His strange logic in opposing the construction of the new police station was that Quarter Gate is a totally Muslim dominated locality and if the local Muslims didn't want the police station in their locality, the Govt. should not insist on having a police station in their locality. He had also made some provocative speeches in Bhiwandi opposing the construction of the proposed new police station. This dispute is yet to be settled and the construction of police station is indefinitely delayed.

Dr. Abraham Mathai who is the Vice Chairman of the Maharashtra Minority Commission is also the Gen. Secretary of All India Christian Council, Maharashtra Unit. He is a staunch supporter of the aggressive conversion drive of Christian activists in the tribal areas of the country. Besides the tribal pockets in Maharashtra, he also frequently visits the tribal areas in Gujrat, Rajashtan, M.P., and Orissa to enquire about the atrocities on Christian activists by the members of the Sangh Parivar and conducts extensive media campaign to condemn the Sangh Parivar's intolerance towards the minority communities. This is the background of the two members of the Maharashtra Minority Commission and nobody seems to have any objection against the appointment of such people as members of State Minority Commission.

It is now clear that the Christian activists in India are emboldened enough to go ahead with the implementation of their conversion agenda with the support of a cleverly built up network of Human Rights and NGO action groups and also with the patronage of some political leaders in New Delhi. The Hindu organizations like VHP and Bajrang Dal would continue to put up some resistance against this well planned conversion drive, but their campaign is unlikely to

be effective enough. The anti-Hindutva lobby with its vast network, resources and media support has succeeded in giving a fascist image to organizations like VHP and Bajrang Dal which is being shared by a substantial section of Hindus as well. The VHP and Bajrang Dal activists themselves are to be blamed for this situation as some of their own actions and statements in the past had helped the anti-Hindu brigade to interpret the same as signs of immaturity and intolerance. Under the circumstances all efforts by VHP and Bajrang Dal activists to resist the Christian proselytisation drive are likely to be projected as acts of intolerance and violation of minority rights by the powerful propaganda machinery of the church activists. The anti-Hindu lobby is taking advantage of the general inertia and passivity of the Hindus against all such provocations against their faith. Unless the Hindus realise the gravity and the extent of threat to their faith posed by the Christian missionaries, their agents in India and the patrons abroad and come forward unitedly to meet this challenge, the future of both Hinduism and India would be in danger.