

Christian Personal Law Reform

JWP held a meeting on the Need for a Uniform Civil Code in 1978. The Parsi's and Muslim community disagreed. Their Personal Laws had not been codified and that was a priority with them. At this meeting it was decided that each community will take this up to reform and amend their own Personal Laws. Mrs. Jyotsna Chatterji requested each community to set up a sub committee to work on this issue.

The representatives of the Christian community's requested JWP to take up the task of reform in the Christian Personal Laws as Mrs. Jyotsna Chatterji had placed cases of women seeking divorce that were pending in the various courts, because section 10 of the Indian Divorce Act is anti women and made divorce impossible. In 1980 Mrs. Jyotsna Chatterji convened a meeting of church leader of all denominations and explained to them the various aspects of the existing Personal Laws and the need for legal reform. She then took the help of Mr. P.M. Bakshi, Member of the Law Commission to make draft bills of the Christian Marriage and Divorce Act and the Indian Succession Act and the Christian Adoption Act.

After ten years of lobbying with the various churches and church leadership, in 1990 the National Council of Churches consisting of 27 denominations, the Catholic Bishops conference and the Joint Women's Programme came together to discuss the draft prepared by Joint Women's Programme with the help of financial assistance from the Church of North India. After a thorough 3 day discussion on the bills the changes were adopted and the drafts were once again circulated to the various churches.

The Roman Catholic church raised a fresh protest that they could not go against the canon laws on the question of divorce. After several discussions only in 1993 a proposal was made by Mrs. Jyotsna Chatterji on the definition of divorce which brought all the churches together and another sub committee was set up to finalise the drafts. This was placed before Prime Minister Narasimha Rao in February, 1994.

Since 1980 onwards the JWP has been continuously lobbying for change in the CP Law by holding meeting of Christian women, lobbying with several Prime Ministers and Law Ministers who had always said that if the church leadership agrees the government will have no problem in accepting the changes. We are now waiting for the government to place the bill in the parliament. JWP's lobbying with the concerned government department continues.

August 30, 1996.

Ms. Saroj Dubey,
President - Mahila Wing,
Janata Dal.

Dear Ms. Dubey,

You will be surprised to get a letter from me but I do hope you will remember my name. I had requested Ms. Kiran Arora to ask you to help us get an appointment with the Prime Minister with regard to the passage of (1) the Christian Marriage Bill 1994; (2) the Indian Succession Amendment Bill 1994; and (3) the Christian Adoption and Maintenance Bill 1994, which had been drafted by the Joint Women's Programme along with the Ecumenical Committee for Changes in the Christian Personal Laws and had received the approval and support of all the Church leadership.

The above matter has been lying in the P.M.'s Office but no action has been taken on the same, even though the P.M.'s Office and the Law Ministry had informed us that as soon as the Christians have reached a consensus the Government will implement the action for change.

The copy of the letter addressed to the Hon'ble Prime Minister will give you the details. The enclosed letter was received in the P.M.'s Office on 24th August, 1996. The Christian Personal Laws as they exist are very discriminatory to women and the Christian community have now accepted this fact and have worked together to propose the amendment bills. Please do help us in this regard to get an appointment with the P.M., so that we can express our demands before him once again. We would also like you to be a part of our delegation when we visit the Prime Minister.

Thanking you and with regards,

Yours sincerely,

JYOTSNA CHATTERJI
Convenor - Ecumenical Committee for Changes in CPL
Director - JWP

Introduction

For the last few years, the Christian community, consisting of members belonging to different denominations, has worked towards a new legislation for the civil effects of Christian marriage and now a consensus has been arrived at.

History

The campaign for changes in the Christian Personal Laws was then taken up by the Joint Women's Programme in 1983. In different meetings held in several places, participated in by bishops, clergy, lawyers, the laity of the Churches and social activists, it had come to the conclusion that Christian Personal Laws, as enacted and administered in India, were out-dated, unjust and inhuman, and did not meet the needs of the present century. The Indian Christian Marriage Act 1872, the Indian Divorce Act 1869 and the Indian Succession Act 1925 were discriminatory. Women suffered and were treated differently from men. Besides, there were no laws to enable Christians to adopt children.

Therefore, there was a need to redraft a new set of legislations governing the Christian community in matters of the family. The Joint Women's Programme (JWP) along with the Church of North India drafted a new Christian Marriage and Matrimonial Causes Bill, the Indian Succession Amendment Bill, and the Christian Adoption and Maintenance Bill in 1985 with the help of Shri P.M. Bakshi, Member, Law Commission, and met the then Prime Minister, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi in 1985, who wanted the opinion of the official Church. The drafts were sent for comments to all Churches. This was followed by (1)

several meetings with the Churches; (2) meetings with Law Minister, (3) joint deputations to the Prime Minister; and (4) follow-up meetings with leaders of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (C.B.C.I.). The Law Ministry gave the assurance that Christian Personal Laws will be changed as soon as a consensus draft was placed before the Government, which had the support of all Churches in India. A National workshop was held from March 27 to 29, 1990, at the CNI Bhavan, New Delhi. It was organised by the National Council of Churches in India (NCCI), the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI) and the Joint Women's Programme (JWP). After this all the Churches were requested to send in their comments and the Christian Marriage and Matrimonial Causes Bill 1990, the Indian Succession Amendment Bill 1990, and the Christian Adoption and Maintenance Bill 1990 were formulated.

The Catholic Bishops have been concerned about the sanctity and indissolubility of Christian marriage and the misunderstanding their support to the Christian Marriage Act 1990 could cause among the faithful at large.

The Catholic Bishops were also concerned about the urgency of a comprehensive bill and updated legislation on marriage, which was equitable to women. As there was no other way out of the impasse, the Standing Committee of the CBCI, at its ~~September~~ 1993 meeting, decided not to object to the draft bills' presentation to the Government. It rather decided to help in finalizing the draft, so that it had as Christian a character as possible. The laity of the Catholic Church, All India Catholic Union (AICU) and Satyashodak, in the meantime, had given its support to the new draft bills.

Background

As the laws stand, the main enactments on the subject, namely, the Indian Divorce Act 1869, and the Indian Christian Marriage Act 1872 are more than a century old. In the normal course of events, the very fact that these enactments are so old would have been regarded as a sufficient justification for examining their provisions - not necessarily with a view to recommending change in every case, but at least with the objective of applying one's mind to it and coming to a conclusion whether changes are needed. Apart from that,

even on the merits, many of the provisions of the two acts are regarded by many persons as totally out of date with modern social conditions. Some of the provisions of the Act relating to divorce would, in any case, need revision because of the constitutional mandate of equality.

These are, in themselves, important considerations for undertaking a revision of any law. They are of still greater importance when one is concerned with marriage and divorce, for these are matters which bring the family and the law into contact at vital points. Matrimonial legislation, which is too much in advance of or too much behind, prevailing social conditions may exist on the statute book, but its existence is no guarantee that it continues to receive the support of those to whom it is applicable. It follows, therefore, that an attempt to assess and re-assess matrimonial legislation at fairly regular intervals is good for society, though this does not necessarily mean that every time when a review is made, radical changes will be considered necessary in all provisions.

I. Christian Marriage and Matrimonial Causes Bill 1994

(a) Marriage

The Bill is a consensus of the Christian people of India to update their laws pertaining to marriage and matrimonial causes bearing in mind the vast social changes that have taken place in the last century. As stated above, the law on the subject comprises of two major enactments. Of these, the Indian Christian Marriage Act 1872 is in need of urgent improvement on several points of substance. To mention the most important changes at this stage (i) the conditions of marriage are nowhere set out conveniently in the Act in a manner that will give at a glance the position in that respect as regards all Christians. This has been taken care of; (ii) secondly, there is a bewildering variety of forms of marriage as envisaged by the 1872 Act. It is felt that while the parties should be allowed to enjoy, at their option, the facility of a religious or a secular marriage (as at present), there is scope for simplifying the law in this regard. Besides this, from the linguistic point of view, the provisions of the 1872 Act on marriage are very badly in need of revision. All these changes have been conveniently carried out, keeping in mind the objectives mentioned above. (iii) There are provisions for marriage for minors, which have been excluded. (iv) Marriages annulled by any Church have been declared null and void under this Act in order

to avoid a double process of obtaining annulment under the existing State laws.

(b) Divorce

1. The topic of divorce amongst Christians was in even greater need of law reform. Both from the constitutional point of view which demands that discrimination between men and women should go, and from the social point of view, substantial expansion of the grounds of divorce was needed. This did not, of course, mean that divorce at the sweet will of one party should be granted for the mere asking. However, reasonably acceptable grounds of divorce, particularly where one party has been guilty of cruelty should at least receive serious consideration. In addition, (with certain safeguards) divorce by mutual consent of the couple should be available to Christians, as it is now available to Hindus and to persons married under the Special Marriage Act, 1954. There is a similar scope for making the law as to nullity and legitimacy more rational.

2. Several procedural aspects of the present divorce law have also proved to be inconvenient irritants in practice, and the time had come to revise the law on those points also.

3. Apart from proposing improvements in point of substance and language, the Bill seeks to collect at one place provisions at present scattered in two enactments - and that too in a very haphazard fashion.

4. For the purposes of this Bill 'divorce' means the dissolution of the civil effects of marriage.

Special Marriage Act

The Christian Marriage Bill 1994 has been drafted to be as close to the Special Marriage Act 1954 as possible.

II. Indian Succession Amendment Bill 1994

The following changes have been made, keeping in mind also Christians belonging to the matriarchal tribal communities.

1. There should be one law of succession for all Christians, irrespective of the regions they belong to, giving equal rights to women and men in property.

2. The Succession Act should be changed, so that the wife has full right to the property of her husband, if the husband died without making a will and without leaving issue and parents. His assets

should not be shared with remote kindred of the deceased and vice-versa. (See also point 5 below)

3. In case the father is dead, the mother should have the right to approve the minor's premarital settlement under section 22 and vice-versa.

4. The provision in section 32, Explanation, depriving a widow of share in her husband's estate if she has made a pre-marriage contract to that effect should be deleted.

5. The present position (in sections 24, 33, 41, 48) under which if there are 'kindred' surviving, the widow gets only one half, should be modified and the widow should get full property.

6. The benefit of minimum guaranteed payment to the widow (section 33A) should be extended to Christians (to whom it does not, at present, apply). The amount (of Rs. 5,000/-) should be suitably raised and the benefit made available even if the husband has made a will.

Illegitimate children (section 37) should have the same rights (on intestacy), as legitimate children.

8. Where the father is alive (and there are no lineal decendants), the mother gets no share at present (section 42-46) - a position that needs to be reformed. The father and the mother should share equally.

9. Where the father is of unsound mind, the mother should have the rights to appoint a testamentary guardian and vice-versa (section 60).

10. The prohibition against death-bed bequests for religious or charitable purposes by persons having near relatives (section 118) should be deleted or substantially modified, as out of tune with current notions (The section applies inter alia to Indian Christians).

11. The bar against a person establishing right as executor or legatee without probate (section 213) should not apply to Indian Christians. Already section 370CI, allows Indian Christians to recover debts etc. Some liberal approach should be adopted in regard to need for probate etc.

III. Christian Adoption and Maintenance Bill 1994

For the first time in the history of Indian Christians, there is a provision for adoption of children by Christians. The major points of the Bill are as follows :

1. Christian women and men should have the right to adopt children of either sex.
2. The adoption should be capable of being effected without court permission.
3. The child to be adopted should not have completed 15 years of age.
4. Sufficient protection be guaranteed for the adopted child.

Drafting Committee for Changes in the Christian Personal Laws

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Rev. Fr. George Kureethra, CBCI
Rev. Fr. Arockiaswamy, CBCI
Rt. Rev. Bosco Penha, CBCI
Rev. Fr. Oswald Gracias, CBCI
Msgr. Willie Nazareth, CBCI
Rt. Rev. Patrick D'Souza, CBCI
Judge S.F. Rego, CBCI
Rt. Rev. Henry D'Souza, CBCI
Advocate George Wilson de Roze, CBCI
Rt. Rev. P.B. Santram, CNI
Prof. Alice Jacob, CNI (Advocate)
Mr. Vikramajit Sen, CNI (Advocate)
Dr. Francis Julian, NCCI (Advocate)
Rev. Ipe Joseph, NCCI
Mr. Chhotebhai, AICU
Mr. Jos Chiramel, AICU, (Advocate)
Ms. Rita Monteiro, Satyashodak, Bombay

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December 12, 1995

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The Law Minister
Shastri Bhawan
New Delhi.

Hon'ble Sir,

The Christian community in India has been very anxious to amend their existing Christian Personal Laws and have, therefore, prepared a fresh set of legislations. The Joint Women's Programme (JWP) started the efforts to change the laws in 1984 and thus prepared the draft bills.

These new legislations are supported by churches of all denominations, organisations, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI), 27 member churches of the National Council of Churches in India (NCCI) and other independent churches.

The drafts prepared are as follows: (1) The Christian Marriage Bill 1994 - which is a comprehensive law, dealing with the question of Christian marriage, divorce and related matters; (2) The Indian Succession Amendment Bill 1994; and (3) The Christian Adoption and Maintenance Bill 1994.

We will be much obliged if this consensus is considered and the Christians in India get new legislations on the basis of the proposed bills. This will mean that the Indian Christian Marriage Act 1872; the Indian Divorce Act 1869; and the Indian Succession Act 1925 will stand repealed. The Christians also will have a new legislation on Adoption.

We shall be very grateful if you will expedite the matter at your earliest.

Thanking you,

Yours sincerely,


JYOTSNA CHATTERJI
Director - JWP

Encl: 1. Draft Bills on Christian Personal Laws
2. Introduction to Christian Marriage Bill 1994
3. Supporting letters from different churches and organisations

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JOINT WOMEN'S PROGRAMME

CISRS House, 14 Jangpura B
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February 21, 1994.

Hon'ble Shri Narasimha Rao,
Prime Minister of India,
Government of India,
New Delhi.

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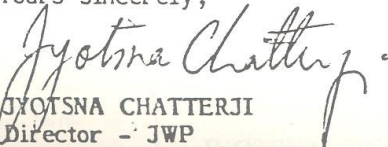
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Director - JWP

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March 25, 1996

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To All Members of Ecumenical Committee for Changes in the Christian Personal Laws

Dear Friends,

The enclosed two letters will inform you about the last effort we had made, at the request of the Law Ministry to get the changes in the Christian Personal Laws (CPLs) into Parliament for action. However, the matter was raised only on March 7, 1996, by Smt. Susheela Gopalan, after I had appealed to her to do so at a meeting organised by the All India Democratic Women's Association (AIDWA) on the subject of "Joint Ownership of Property". Her office has informed me that the answer given by Shri H.R. Bhardwaj is as follows: "Some Christian organisations have submitted certain draft legislations relating to marriage, divorce, adoption, maintenance and succession amongst Christians for enactment. As the policy of the Government has been not to interfere in the personal laws of the minority communities unless the necessary initiative therefore comes from the community concerned, the Government has requested the National Commission for Minorities to give its considered thought on the idea, that the views of the Christian community may be assessed by the Commission by interacting directly with different sections of that community before the matter is processed further. Hence it is too early to set any time-frame for undertaking any legislation in this regard."

Immediately after receiving this, I asked for an appointment with the Minorities Commission and met Mr. B.S. Ramoowalia, Member of the Commission, who said, "The Minorities Commission had already informed the Government that Christian Personal laws be changed according to the request made by the Christian community". He showed me a two-page note, in which among several points these two lines related to the CPLs were included. He requested that I should once again collect support letters from all the churches and send them to him. Also I should convene a meeting of the committee in Delhi, in which he will try to be present. The recommendations of this meeting should be given to him.

I really do not know how to proceed now. Therefore, I would like your advice as soon as possible. Kindly let me know how soon this meeting can be convened.

Looking forward to your responses and with best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

JYOTSNA CHATTERJI
Convenor

COMMITTEE FOR CHANGES IN CHRISTIAN PERSONAL LAWS

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Dec. 12, 1995

The Hon'ble President of India
Government of India
New Delhi.

Hon'ble Sir,

The Christian community in India has been very anxious to amend their existing Christian Personal Laws and have, therefore, prepared a fresh set of legislations. The Joint Women's Programme (JWP) started the efforts to change the laws in 1984 and thus prepared the draft bills.

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We shall be very grateful if you will expedite the matter at your earliest.

Thanking you,

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(JYOTSNA CHATTERJI)
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Dec. 12, 1995

Hon'ble Prime Minister of India
South Block
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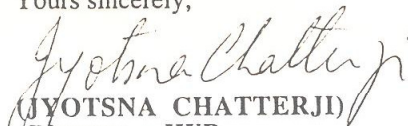
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Ms. Rita Monteiro
Satvashodak
53, Rebello House
132, Hill Road
Bombay - 400 050

Fr. Alan de Lastic
(Rome), H.D.E. (Dublin)
Archbishop of Delhi
and Member
National Integration Council



• Tele: 343593, 312058, 362308
Archbishop's House
1, Ashok Place
Gole Dakkhana
New Delhi-110 001

Ref No 2156/1994.

October 22 1994

The Hon'ble
Mr P V Narasimha Rao
Prime Minister of India
Government of India
7 Race Course Road
New Delhi 110 001

Your Excellency,

With this letter I wish to state that the Catholic Bishops of India who have authorised me to represent them, have no objection to the Christian Marriage and Matrimonial Causes Bill being presented to Government and to Parliament. The Catholic Bishops of India (Catholic Bishops' Conference of India, the 'CBCI'), also has no objection to the other two Bills being presented, i.e. the Christian Adoption and Maintenance Bill and the Indian Succession Amendment Bill.

Thanking you.

With prayers and good wishes.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

+Alan de Lastic
Archbishop of Delhi
Vice President I, CBCI
representing the
Catholic Bishops of India (CBCI)

Rev. Alan de Lastic
D. (Rome), H.D.E. (Dublin)
Archbishop of Delhi
and Member
National Integration Council



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New Delhi-110 001
FAX : 91-11-954321 & 91-11-941111
TELEX : 81-31-0555-ITBN-IN

Ref No 0066/1994

January 14 1994

Dear Sir,

I am authorised to write this letter on behalf of the Catholic Bishops' Conferences of India (C.B.C.I.) and to state that the Catholic Bishops of India have no objection whatsoever to the new Christian Marriage Bill 1994, The Indian Succession Amendment Bill 1994 and the Christian Adoption and Maintenance Bill 1994, being presented to Parliament to become new Legislation and accordingly we agree that the Indian Christian Marriage Act of 1872, the Indian Divorce Act 1869 and the Indian Succession Act 1925 will be repealed.

Given this Fourteenth Day of January 1994 under my signature and seal.

+ *Handwritten signature*

+Alan de Lastic
Archbishop of Delhi
Representative of the C.B.C.I.
Catholic Bishops' Conferences of India



NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES IN INDIA

NATIONAL COUNCIL LODGE
JAG 205
JR 440 001
(INDIA).



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Telegram : AIKYA
Telex : 0715-7456 NBC-IN
Fax : 0712-532939

OUR NEW FAX NO.
91-0712-520554.

Dr.
Rt. Rev. J. M. Irenaeus
President

Rt. Rev. F. C. Jonathan
Rev. Dr. K. Nathaniel
Vice Presidents

Dr. J. A. Oliver
Treasurer

K. LungMuana
General Secretary

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Unit I

Rev. D. S. Jeevan Babu
Unit II

Rev. Dr. Ipe Joseph
Unit III

Rev. (Mrs.) N. Vasanthakumar
Unit IV

Mr. Moses P. Manohar
Unit

Mr. Tomy Prothasis
Financial Consultant

No. CPL/94/7

November 21, 1994

The Hon'ble
Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao
Prime Minister of India
Government of India
7, Race Course Road
New Delhi 110 001.

Your Excellency,

I would like to invite your kind attention to a brief background on how our humble request has come to you.

As the Government of India wanted to know the consensus of the Churches in India with regard to the three Bills drafted by Church of North India and Joint Women's Programme on i) The Christian Adoptions Bill; ii) The Indian Succession Bill; and iii) Christian Marriage and Matrimonial Causes Bill, the Church of North India, one of the member bodies of the NCCI requested the latter to organise a national Joint Consultation on Christian Personal Law with the Joint Women's Programme and Catholic Bishops' Conference of India in 1989. This well represented national Consultation was convened by the NCCI at CNI Bhavan in March 1990. The Consultation made some changes and modifications. Another national Joint Consultation was again convened by Joint Women's Programme, Catholic Bishops' Conference of India and NCCI at CBCI headquarters, New Delhi in July 1993. After having done necessary modifications on the proposed Bills under the light of whatever had been discussed thoroughly, the final modified proposed Bills were submitted to you.

We are at a loss as we have not heard any positive action about it. I, on behalf of the National Council of Churches in India (having a total membership of about 12 million), earnestly request you to kindly give your favourable consideration on the proposed Bills of Christian Marriage Bill, 1994, Christian Adoption and Maintenance Bill, 1994 and the Indian Succession

Amendment Bill, 1994 within the year 1994. We feel that the Christian women in India have suffered long enough. It is time to act now. We, the Christians in India are the loyal citizens of our motherland. In the case of NCCI, Communal Harmony and National Integration are our two major concerns. I would like to give you a copy of our appeal to all member bodies to organise a chain of 24 hours and also organise a Symposium on peace and harmony in India which was well accepted and observed all over India on 15th August, 1993.

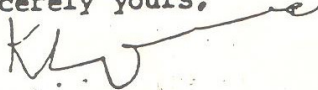
This letter comes to you with my assurance that NCCI fully endorses the three proposed Bills.

I shall be grateful if you could kindly acknowledge this humble letter at your earliest convenience so that I can keep the member bodies and Heads of Churches informed of the action you have taken so far.

Thanking you.

With prayers and good wishes.

Sincerely yours,



Rev. K. Lungmuana
General Secretary

Enc: as above.

- cc: i. Minister of Law
ii. Christian MPs
iii. NCCI Member Bodies
iv. Members of the Executive Committee, NCCI
v. Archbishop Alan de Lastic, CBCI
vi. Mrs. Jyotsna Chatterji, JWP.

CHURCH OF SOUTH INDIA
KARNATAKA NORTHERN DIOCESE

VASANT P. DANDIN

Bishop KND and Moderator C.S.I.

CSI/MDR/KND/BP/58/94

21.2.1994



CSI, Synod Secretariat
CSI Centre, P.O. Box, 682
No. 5, Whites Road
Royapettah
MADRAS - 600 014
Tel. 8271266/827616
FAX 826730

Dear Sir,

As the Moderator of the Church of South India, comprising of 21 Dioceses, having approximately 2½ million Christian membership, I am authorised to state that we fully and fitfully support and endorse the new laws as follows;

- (a) The New Christian Marriage Bill of 1994
- (b) The Indian Succession Amendment Bill of 1994
- (c) The Christian Adoption and Maintenance Bill 1994.

We also appeal consequently to the repealing of the:

- (a) Indian Christian Marriage Act of 1872
- (b) The Indian Succession Act 1925
- (c) The Indian Divorce Act of 1869

It is our belief that these laws be presented effectively to the Parliament for immediate enactment; thus enabling the Christian community at large and in particular the hitherto discriminated Women population, to face a better tomorrow. As 1994 has been earmarked "The International year of the Family", I am assured the laws will come into force without any procrastination.

Yours sincerely,

V. Dandin Bp.

Most. Rev. Dr. Vasant P. Dandin

Bishop KND/Moderator, C.S.I.



Bishop's House
Halyal Road
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THE CHURCH OF NORTH INDIA SYNOD

CNI Bhavan, 16, Pandit Pant Marg, New Delhi-110 001 (India)

REF:55:CISRS-137.

1st February, 1994

Moderator

The Most Rev. Dr. Anand C. Lal
Bishop's House
26 R. B. Prakash Chand Road
Opp. Police Lines,
Amritsar-143 001, Punjab
Phone: 222910

Mrs. Jyotsna Chatterji,
Director,
Joint Women's Programme,
CISRS House, 14 Jangpura B,
Mathura Road,
New Delhi 110 014.

Dear Madam,

I am directed and authorized to state that the Church of North India, which is a union of six major Church denominations and have a membership well over 1.2 millions through the length and breadth of our country that the Church of North India fully supports and endorses the proposed

- (1) new Christian Marriage Bill - 1994 - which is a comprehensive law dealing with the question of Christian Marriage, divorce and related matters;
- (2) The Indian Succession Amendment Bill 1994; and
- (3) The Christian Adoption and Maintenance Bill 1994.

Accordingly, we also agree and endorse that the Indian Christian Marriage Act of 1872, the Indian Divorce Act of 1869 and the Indian Succession Act 1925 be repealed.

We request that these laws be presented to the Parliament and thus enacted for the well-being of millions of Christians of this country, thus relieving them of the age-old discrimination that they have suffered so long.

Thanking you,

Yours faithfully,

V. S. Lall

(Dr. V. S. Lall)
General Secretary, CNI-Synod.

Deputy Moderator

The Rt. Rev. D. K. Mohanty
Bishop's House
Madhusudan Road
Cuttak-753 001, Orissa
Phone: 24748

General Secretary

Dr. V. S. Lall

Hony. Treasurer

Amal K. De

THE INDIAN PENTECOSTAL CHURCH OF GOD

NORTHERN REGION

Indigenous, Independent and the Largest Pentecostal Movement in India
(Regd. No. 9/1935-36)

K. T. THOMAS
PRESIDENT

F-58, GREEN PARK,
NEW DELHI-110016, INDIA
PHONE : 66 87 18

June 22, 1994.

Mrs. Jyotsna Chatterji,
Director, JWF,
CISRS House, 14 Jangpura B,
Mathura Road,
New Delhi- 110 014.

Subject : Changes in Christian Personal Laws

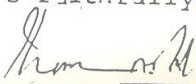
Dear Madam,

As the President of the Indian Pentecostal Church of God, Northern Region and a representative of the Pentecostal movement in India, I wish to fully endorse and support the following new bills :

1. Christian Marriage Bill 1994.
2. The Indian Succession Amendment Bill 1994.
3. The Christian Adoptions and Maintenance Bill 1994.

We request that these bills be presented to Parliament and enacted as a law at the earliest so as to promote the well-being of Christians in India, especially the women.

Yours faithfully,


(REV. K.T. THOMAS)



Tel. :

ALL INDIA CATHOLIC UNION

(Registered under Societies Registration Act XXXI of 1860)

~~20 A, SHEIKH SARAI, PHASE - I, NEW DELHI - 110017~~

No. :

National President :

Chhotebhai
"Noronha Bhawan"
63/2, The Mall
Kanpur 208004 (U. P.)
Tel. : 361363

Date : 21.1.94

Immediate Past President :

George Menezes
64, Mount Unique
Pedder Road
Bombay-400026
Tel. : 387234

Dear Sir,

Senior Vice-Presidents :

Peter Marbaniang, M.P.
9, Canning Lane
New Delhi-110001
Tel. : 3782083

Paul Mantosh, M.P.
51, Western Court
Janpath Road
New Delhi-110001
Tel. : 3715082

I write to you in the name of the All India Catholic Union which represents the interests of Fourteen million lay Catholics in India. We have constantly supported the move for updating of Christian Personal Laws, and have been fully involved in the evolution of the same. A resolution to this effect was first taken in our Annual General Body Meeting at Vijaywada in 1991, reiterated at our AGM at Lucknow in 1992, and again at the AGM in Shillong in 1993.

We hereby fully endorse and support the following new bills:

Secretary General :

J.R. Victor Karunan
C-154, Saket Avenue I
New Delhi-110017
Tel. :

1. Christian Marriage Bill 1994
2. The Indian Succession Amendment Bill 1994.
3. The Christian Adoption and Amendment Bill 1994.

Hony. Treasurer :

Antony Vellara
12, Third Main
Vasanthanagar East
Bangalore-560042
Tel. : 71883

We request that these bills be presented to Parliament and enacted as law in the interest of the Christian People of India, with special concern for women of our community who suffered discrimination under the existing legislation,

Yours faithfully,

Chhotebhai
NATIONAL PRESIDENT