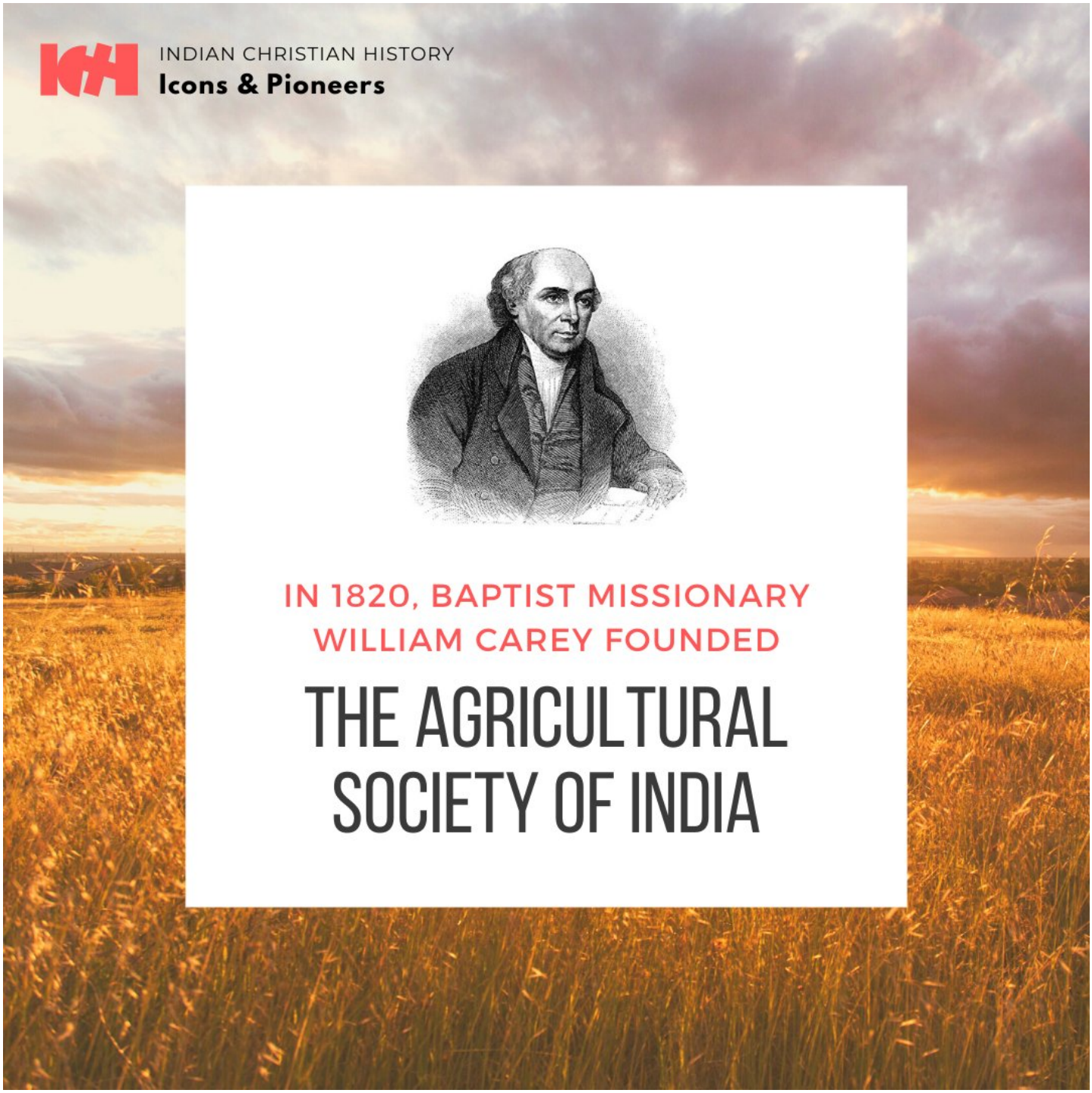
Twitter Thread by Indian Christian History

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As #FarmersProtest continues through the cold North Indian winter, we look back at the steps taken by Christian missionaries to improve #agriculture in India. Exactly 200 years ago, in 1820, #WilliamCarey founded the Agriculture Society of India. #AHSI #Bicentenary #Thread 1/37



In its 200 years of existence the Agricultural & Horticultural Society of India played a key role in scientific education in India. It devoted itself to introducing new types of crops, flowers, fruits and vegetables — now used by us everyday. Some key milestones... 2/37

Sept. 14, 1820: Agricultural Society of India formed by Rev. William Carey in a meeting at the Calcutta Town Hall. Carey was the first secretary. By Oct. 23, 1820, over 50 persons had joined. This pioneering society had both Indian and European members, which was unusual. 3/37

In March 1822 Carey suggested rewarding gardeners who helped develop agriculture and horticulture. Members accepted the proposal and made categories and norms for rewarding gardeners. 4/37

1824: Introduced cash crop seeds brought from America and Mauritius. Under Carey's guidance, investigations had been started on cotton, sugarcane, tobacco, coffee and cereals, etc., which proved to be of immense importance in the

development of agriculture in India. 5/37

1826: The Society was renamed as 'Agricultural and Horticultural Society of India' (AHSI). As time passed the AHSI became a major platform for interaction between indigenous and Western agricultural knowledge. 6/37

1827: The first vegetable exhibition and competition was organised by the Society. Initially Europeans participated in the competitions. In 1827, for the first time the society rewarded five Indians. 7/37

1828: Nine well-known Bengalis were members. They were Dwarkanath Tagore, Dyalchund Addi, Oomanundun Tagore, Kasheenath Mullik, Raja Bidyanath Raya, Prusunnukoomar Deb, Ubhuyachurun Baroojya, Shivachundra Das, and Ramkumal Sena. 8/37

1829: Serampore missionaries also included lessons of agriculture, botany and zoology within school curriculums. E.g., #DavidScott, a missionary, opened a school for Garo boys at #Singimari in 1829. He incorporated lessons on agriculture and animal husbandry. 9/37

1830: 13 Jan., 4th annual vegetable exhibition held in Calcutta Town Hall. Silver medals given to gardeners who presented best specimens of cauliflowers, cabbages, & other foreign vegetables. ~100 local malis were rewarded for local specimens. 24 gardeners got Rs 40 prize. 10/37

1830: Import of high-quality cotton seeds from the US, Bourbon and Mauritius. This proved critical decades later when the American Civil War (1861–65) stopped supply to British mills, enabling Indian cotton to break in to the market. 11/37

1830: AHSI established branches and organized agricultural fairs across India to propagate these seeds, from Meerut to Madras. Many are still functioning at the heart of these cities. Experimental farms were established in different parts of the country. 12/37

1830: Otaheite sugarcane from Mauritius which was cultivated at the AHSI Akra farm in 24-Parganas, Bengal. Otaheite cane became very popular throughout the country and was in great demand from every part of India. 13/37

1831: Maize seeds were brought from America for cultivation. Until then it was a little-cultivated novelty in India. Today maize is India’s third most grown grain, after rice and wheat. 14/37

1831: Arrowroot from the West Indies was cultivated at the Society’s farm at Akra which produced very high yield. It was cultivated and largely used as easily digestible and safe food for patients. 15/37

1832: Introduced ginger from Jamaica and potato from England. Potatoes were grown in Bengal in 18th century, but mainly for British consumption. AHSI wanted Indians to grow them too, and imported and distributed seed potatoes in the 1830s. 16/37

1835: Carey's magazine, 'Friend of India' published advertisements for distribution of seeds, like cotton, tobacco by the AHSI. Winners were rewarded for growing vegetables like potatoes, peas and cauliflower, which were new in India. 17/37

1835: Established branches in Lucknow, Madras and Dinajpur, and as far as Singapore. In 1836 shifted to the premises of Royal Botanic Garden, Howrah. In 1836, twenty-five more branches were opened in India. 18/37

1837: A landmark year when the Agriculture and Horticulture Society of India started the first ever Agricultural Journal. 19/37

1838: The Agricultural and Horticultural Society of India became the model for Royal Agricultural Society of England, which was founded in 1838. 20/37

1839: Grafts of fruit plants were successfully procured and cultivated. In 1841 North India reported good quality potatoes from the Society's tubers. 21/37

1841: During the 19th century, many varieties of wheat available in India were hard and unsuitable for fine flour. The Society decided to import wheat seeds from Australia, Europe and Egypt. Thirty-two varieties of wheat was brought from Europe and Egypt. 22/37

1843: Cocoa plants introduced from the West Indies 23/37

1845: Manchester Cotton Supply Association declares Rs.1000 prize for the best cotton grown in India with Society's help. 24/37

1858: Brought bougainvillea to India by importing bougainvillea spectabillis from South Africa. 25/37

Since 1862: 100s of species of ornamental plants introduced from SE Asia, China, Japan, West Indies, South America, Africa & Australia (climbers, orchids, bulbous plants, annual flowering plants, chrysanthemum, dahlia, carnation, etc.) Now popular garden plants in India 26/37

1928: Published first book "An Amateur in an Indian Garden" by Percy Lancaster. 27/37

1935: The Society was awarded the 'Royal' Charter in 1935 by King George V. The name was once changed to The Royal Agricultural and Horticultural Society of India or The Royal Agri-Horticultural Society of India. 28/37

Carey Institute of Horticulture set up in the Society to conduct a one-year certificate course in horticulture, affiliated to Calcutta University. Birla Laboratory set up in society for R&D in horticulture and floriculture. 29/37

1963: First Batch of 12 boys admitted to the certificate course. AHSI Laboratory recognized as Research Center for Ph.D. studies. 30/37

1965: The First National Symposium in Horticulture was organised by the Society in 1965, and a large number of horticulturists participated in the deliberation. 31/37

1979: First Volume of "Horticulture Science" published by the Society. 32/37

2001: Society receives exemption from donation under Section 80G of Indian Income Tax Act. 33/37

2008: Botanical Survey of India requested the society to conduct an intensive training program on Garden Maintenance and Herbarium techniques 34/37

2009: A global workshop called “Good Medicine Works” on interacting with the revolution of Global Ayurveda and Modern Medicine on Mar. 13, 2009 35/37

2019: The AHSI signed a MoU with the Singapore Botanical Gardens, to work together for environment protection and sustainable development. 36/37

Source: (1) Agricultural Initiatives of Serampore Missionaries (1800-1840), Amrita Mondal, Indian History Congress, vol. 74, 2013. (2) AHSI website - https://t.co/0zFfGtWBSq (3) History of AHSI. https://t.co/Gt71KLVj2w 37/37