

ORDINARY INDIAN PENTECOSTAL CHRISTOLOGY

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is an investigation into the nature of Christology among ordinary Pentecostals in India. Pentecostalism is growing rapidly among Tribal-groups, Dalits, lower castes and ordinary people. However, the movement has not articulated its theological identity in order to consolidate and further its development. Therefore, this study aims to analyse the ordinary Christology using qualitative research methods such as interviews, focus groups, and participant observation. It is argued that their Christological understandings have been formed and expressed in challenging circumstances and given extraordinary energy through Pentecostal phenomena associated with revivalism. Ordinary Indian Pentecostals understand Jesus as the healer, exorcist, provider and protector in the context of poor health-care, a spirit worldview, extreme poverty, caste-system and religious persecution. Their Christian experience enables them to acknowledge Jesus as the Saviour, Lord and supreme God. These Christological themes are consonant with the larger Pentecostal tradition, theology and indeed the New Testament testimony. The argument critically engages with scholarship in Pentecostalism and the broader Christian tradition to propose a modification of these Christological categories.

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To

Sheena
with love

ABBREVIATIONS

AoG	Assemblies of God
ABD	The Anchor Bible Dictionary
AJPS	Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies
BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party
BSP	Bahujan Samaj Party
CLS	Christian Literature Society
CMS	The Church Missionary Society
CNI	Church of North India
CoG	Church of God
CSI	Church of South India
Dharma Deepika	A Journal of South Indian Missiological Research
DJG	Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels
DPL	Dictionary of Paul and His Letters
EPW	Economic and Political Weekly
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IBMR	International Bulletin of Missionary Research
IJST	International Journal of Systematic Theology
IMR	Infant Mortality Rate
IPC	Indian Pentecostal Church
JEPTA	Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association
JPT	Journal of Pentecostal Theology
LMS	The London Missionary Society
MLA	Member of Legislative Assembly
MP	Member of Parliament
NCRB	National Crime Records Bureau
NDBT	New Dictionary of Biblical Theology
NDT	New Dictionary of Theology
NFHS	National Family Health Survey
NIB	The New Interpreters Bible

NICNT	The New International Commentary on the New Testament
NIDPCM	The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements
NIGTC	The New International Greek Testament Commentary
PHC	Public Health Centre
Pneuma	The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies
RSS	Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh
S.C.	Scheduled Castes
S.T.	Scheduled Tribes
TS	Theological Studies
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UP	Uttar Pradesh
VHP	Vishwa Hindu Parishad
VKA	Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WHO	World Health Organisation
WMUS	Women's Union Missionary Society

Glossary of Hindi and Indian Terms

<i>adivasis</i>	Tribal people
<i>advaita</i>	non-dualism (Hindu philosophy)
<i>anganwadi</i>	government run nursery school in villages
<i>antaryamin</i>	in-dweller
<i>avatara, avatar</i>	incarnation
<i>Babri-Masjid</i>	a Muslim Mosque at the site of Ram's birth in Ayodhya
<i>bhaktas</i>	devotees
<i>bhakti</i>	devotion
<i>bhakti marga</i>	way of devotion
<i>bhoots</i>	ghosts, evil spirits
<i>bhopa, bhua, bhuva-bhagat</i>	traditional healers
<i>Brahman</i>	the ultimate (absolute) reality
<i>brahma Sutra</i>	precepts of Brahman (Hindu Philosophy)
<i>bramanic</i>	related to <i>brahmin</i> caste
<i>crore</i>	10 million
<i>crorepati</i>	billionaire
<i>dakan</i>	evil spirit
<i>Dalit</i>	'untouchable'
<i>deeksha</i>	initiation ceremony
<i>devara</i>	shrine
<i>ekal vidyalayas</i>	one teacher school
<i>guru</i>	religious teacher, advisor
<i>Hindu Dharma</i>	Hindu moral order
<i>Hindutva</i>	political Hinduism, Hinduness
<i>Isvara</i>	god
<i>jadhu tona</i>	black magic
<i>jadi-booti</i>	roots and leaves
<i>jnana marga</i>	way of knowledge
<i>jungali</i>	uncivilised with bad customs and manners
<i>karma</i>	deeds
<i>karma marga</i>	way of deeds
<i>Lok Sabha</i>	lower house of the Indian Parliament
<i>malik, ooparwala</i>	master, God
<i>mantras</i>	Chants

<i>mata, mataji</i>	female deity of Tribal people
<i>mimamsa</i>	interpretation of Hindu scripture
<i>mukti</i>	salvation
<i>nirguna Brahman</i>	the ultimate reality without attributes
<i>padre, padri</i>	pastor, priest (Christian)
<i>panchayat</i>	village council
<i>pooja, puja</i>	rituals, Hindu worship
<i>puranas</i>	Hindu scripture
<i>purna avatara</i>	complete and final incarnation
<i>Rajya Sabha</i>	upper house of the Indian Parliament
<i>Ram-Janmabhoomi</i>	the movement to build a temple of Ram to
movement	replace the Babri Masjid at the site of Ram's
	birth in Ayodhya
<i>rath-yatra</i>	chariot procession
<i>sadhus</i>	saints, monks
<i>saguna Brahman</i>	God with attributes
<i>Saiva Siddhanta</i>	Precepts related to <i>shiva</i> sect
<i>sakshi</i>	testimony
<i>samsara</i>	the world
<i>Sangh-Parivar</i>	the RSS family of organisations
<i>sarpanchs</i>	elected head of a village council
<i>sati</i>	immolation of widows
<i>satyagrahi</i>	one who pursues the truth
<i>shaivism</i>	Related <i>shiva</i> sect
<i>shakti</i>	power
<i>shifa</i>	healing
<i>shuddhikaran</i>	purification ceremony, reconversion to Hinduism
<i>tantric, tantrik</i>	black magician
<i>trishuls</i>	tridents
<i>upanishadic</i>	related to <i>upanishads</i> (Hindu Scriptures)
<i>vaisnava tradition</i>	tradition related to god <i>Vishnu</i>
<i>vedantic</i>	related to <i>vedas</i>
<i>vrata</i>	religious vows
<i>yishu</i>	Jesus

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The southward shift of Christianity has facilitated pioneering inquiries into the phenomenon of Pentecostal growth in Asia, a movement thought to be marginal, if not nonexistent.¹ It was estimated that in 2000, Asian countries had 135 million Pentecostals/Charismatics, second only to Latin America.² Such a phenomenal growth has compelled many researchers and observers to investigate Asian Pentecostalism with new vigour and sympathy.³ This change in approach has resulted in considering Pentecostalism as a significant social and religious movement in the Asian scenario. Theologians and religious observers have begun to consider the beliefs and practices of the movement and critically appreciate its social and theological relevance.⁴ However, researchers face two inherent obstacles. First, Pentecostalism exists in a diverse socio-cultural milieu within Asia. Therefore, there is a danger of over-generalisation from very specific expressions of its doctrines and practices. Second, the lack of historical and theological documentation of Pentecostalism in Asian countries has made the

¹ To have a glimpse at the impact of Christianity in the Southern hemisphere see, Philip Jenkins, *The New Faces of Christianity: Believing the Bible in the Global South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

² David B. Barrett, George T. Kurian, & Todd M. Johnson, *World Christian Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 13-15.

³ Allan Anderson, *Spreading Fires: The Missionary Nature of Early Pentecostalism* (London: SCM Press, 2007), 75-108; Michael Bergunder, *The South Indian Pentecostal Movement in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2008); Allan Anderson and Edmond Tang (eds.), *Asian and Pentecostal: The Charismatic Face of Christianity in Asia* (Carlisle: Regnum Books International, 2005).

⁴ Donald E. Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2007); Allan Anderson, 'Revising Pentecostal History in Global Perspective,' *Asian and Pentecostal*, 147-173, especially, 166.

study of the movement a difficult task.⁵ These days efforts are being made to gather oral traditions, and local research projects have been carried out in order to salvage the mission stories and local theologies from the margins. These endeavours resulting from self-awareness among Pentecostals keen to understand and articulate local expressions which are peculiar and unique, however, have met with limited success.⁶

1.1 Pentecostalism in India

What is said about Asian Pentecostalism is true concerning Indian Pentecostalism too.⁷ On the Indian sub-continent the Pentecostal movement is growing fast. According to the *World Christian Encyclopedia*, by 2000, over half of India's 62 million Christians were Pentecostals/Charismatics.⁸ By now in 2010, the proportion will have increased even further, as this decade has seen tremendous growth all over India, especially in North India among the Tribal people, Dalits,

⁵ Wonsuk Ma, 'Asian (Classical) Pentecostalism: Theology in Context,' *Dharma Deepika* 6/2 (July-December 2002): 13-33, 14.

⁶ Anderson, *Spreading Fires*; Bergunder, *The South Indian Pentecostal Movement*; In Kerala Pentecostal History Saju Mathew has done a fairly good job of bringing up many forgotten pioneers of Pentecostalism; see Saju Mathew, *Kerala Penthecosthu Charithram*, 2nd ed. (Kottayam, India: Good News Publications, 2007); A. C. George, 'Pentecostal Beginnings in Travancore, South India,' *AJPS* 4/2 (2001): 215-37; A. C. George, *Trailblazers for God: A History of the Assemblies of God of India* (Kothanur, Bangalore: SABC Publications, 2004); Elijah Jong Fil Kim, 'Filipino Pentecostalism in a Global Context,' *AJPS* 8/2 (2005): 235-254; Young-Hoon Lee, 'Korean Pentecost: The Great Revival of 1907,' *AJPS* 4/1 (2001): 73-83; Paulson Pulikottil, 'Emergence of Indian Pentecostalism,' *Dharma Deepika* 6/2 (July-December 2002): 47-58; Paulson Pulikottil, 'As East and West Met in God's Own Country: Encounter of Western Pentecostalism with Native Pentecostalism in Kerala,' <http://www.pctii.org/cyberj/cyberj10/paulson.html> (accessed 10 January 2010); Ivan M. Satyavrata, 'Contextual Perspectives on Pentecostalism as a Global Culture: A South Asian View,' in *The Globalization of Pentecostalism*, edited by M. W. Dempster, B. D. Klaus & D. Petersen (Carlisle: Regnum, 1999), 203-221; Trinidad E. Seleky, 'The Organization of the Philippine Assemblies of God and the Role of Early Missionaries,' *AJPS* 8/2 (2005): 271-87; Joseph R. Suico, 'Pentecostalism: Towards a Movement of Social Transformation in the Philippines,' *Journal of Asian Mission* 1/1 (1999): 7-19.

⁷ Here Pentecostalism refers to all the Pentecostal and Charismatic churches and denominations which are separated from the mainline denominations to form independent movements. This definition does not include those Charismatics who continue with their own parental denominations; for example, Catholic Charismatics.

⁸ See, Barrett, et. al, *World Christian Encyclopedia*, 360.

and lower castes in rural areas, as well as among the middle class in urban centres. However, until recently, the growth and expansion of the Pentecostal movement in India had not been noticed or documented. Even now it is hard to ascertain the extent and pace of its growth and consolidation. However, recent research has shown that the movement is fast growing. Anyone who travels in cities and villages of India can see ample evidence of the increased growth of Pentecostalism among the common masses. Today, some of the largest Christian congregations in India are Pentecostal churches in cities such as Chennai, Kolkata, Mumbai and New Delhi.⁹ My own past 20 years of experience and gathering of information from North India has convinced me that many are joining the movement.

From its inception at the beginning of the last century with the revival movements,¹⁰ Pentecostalism has grown into a stream of important religious and liberating forces in Indian society. In South India, the movement has considerable influence among the middle class and the urban population. For example, in Chennai city itself, two Pentecostal churches claim a membership of 25,000 to 30,000 each, who meet in multiple services, and include people from all walks of life.¹¹ Similarly, another church in Bangalore boasts of more than 10,000

⁹ Chief Editor, 'Editorial – Pentecostalism,' *Dharma Deepika* 6/2 (July-December 2002): 2.

¹⁰ See G. B. McGee, 'Pentecostal and Pentecostal-like Movements (1860-1910),' in *NIDPCM*, edited by Stanley M. Burgess (Michigan: Zondervan, 2002), 118-119. Also see G. B. McGee, 'Pentecostal Phenomena and Revivals in India: Implication for Indigenous Church Leadership,' *IBMR* 20/3 (July, 1996): 112-114.

¹¹ New Life Assembly of God (AoG) Anna Salai Little Mount, Chennai; for more details see website: http://www.nlag.org.in/about_us.htm (accessed 22 December 2009). Another church Apostolic Christian Assembly (ACA), Purasavakkam, Chennai, claims 30,000 members and it also claims to have 250 branches in Chennai city. However, Michael Bergunder cites the membership of ACA as only 8,000 which may be due to the fact that the research was conducted before 1999. The German version published in 1999.

members.¹² Even North Indian cities like Mumbai and the states of Punjab and Delhi have seen the springing up of many indigenous Pentecostal and Charismatic churches.¹³ For instance, the New Life Fellowship (NLF) in Mumbai itself has more than one thousand house churches while extending its activities into other states.¹⁴ Recently, the NLF has been targeted by Hindu fundamentalists in the state of Karnataka for allegedly converting Hindus to Christianity.¹⁵ Similarly, another indigenous Pentecostal movement known as *Yeshu Darbar* in Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh claims a gathering of 50,000 to 60,000 people of every caste and religion who were healed and delivered from evil possession.¹⁶ South Indian states like Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh have also seen major growth of indigenous Pentecostal movements.¹⁷ Furthermore, India is the largest missionary sending nation in Asia;¹⁸ and most of these missionaries are Pentecostals. It is claimed that the Indian Pentecostal Church of God (IPC) has about 2,500 churches all over Kerala alone,¹⁹ while the Assemblies of God has

¹² Full Gospel Assembly of God Church (FGAG), see website: <http://salvationband.wordpress.com/2009/01/30/revpaul-thangiah-%E2%80%93fgag/> (accessed 22 December 2009).

¹³ Roger E. Hedlund, 'Indigenous Pentecostalism in India,' *Asian and Pentecostal*, 218. Also see Roger E. Hedlund, *Quest for Identity: India's Churches of Indigenous Origin, The 'Little Tradition' in Indian Christianity* (Delhi: ISPCK, 2000), 193.

¹⁴ Hedlund, 'Indigenous Pentecostalism,' 230-232. Some sources say that in 1996 there were more than 3,000 house churches, targeting people according to language and group; see Satyavrata, 'Contextual Perspectives,' 218.

¹⁵ Vikhar Ahmed Sayeed, 'Now, Karnataka,' *Frontline* 25/20 (27 September - 10 October 2008), <http://www.frontlineonnet.com/fl2520/stories/20081010252002500.htm> (accessed 23 December 2009). Also see Interview with Karnataka Home Minister Dr. V. S. Acharya; Sanjana, 'There is a Limit to Religious Freedom,' *Tehelka* 5/38 (27 September 2008), http://www.tehelka.com/story_main40.asp?filename=Ne270908incoldblood.asp (accessed 23 December 2009).

¹⁶ See website: <http://www.aaidu.org/yeshuDarbar.htm> (accessed 23 December 2009).

¹⁷ See Bergunder, *The South Indian Pentecostal Movement*; Hedlund, 'Indigenous Pentecostalism'; Roger E. Hedlund, *Christianity is Indian: The Emergence of an Indigenous Community*, rev. ed. (Delhi: ISPCK, 2004).

¹⁸ See Todd M. Johnson, David B. Barrett, and Peter F. Crossing, 'Christianity 2010: A View from the New Atlas of Global Christianity,' *IBMR* 34/1 (January 2010): 30; <http://www.internationalbulletin.org/system/files/2010-01-029-johnson.pdf> (accessed 9 January 2010).

¹⁹ K. A. Shaji, 'Holy Ghost on Malabar Coast,' *Tehelka* 4/42 (27 October 2007), http://www.tehelka.com/story_main34.asp?filename=Ne271007holyghost.asp (accessed 22 December 2009).

5,000 churches all over India.²⁰ Similarly, there are many Pentecostal denominations working in the south as well as in the north with hundreds of churches.²¹ According to Hedlund, in 1999 there were 60 Pentecostal Bible colleges in Kerala alone.²² In Kerala many adherents of the mainline denominations have moved from their respective churches and joined Pentecostal churches, a fact noticed by the secular press.²³ Shaji reports, 'The Pentecostal movement's growing clout has alarmed the Syrian Christian church, which commands the largest following. Several of its denominations – like the Jacobites and Marthomites – have witnessed a sharp erosion in their ranks'.²⁴ Heavenly Feast, a neo-Pentecostal church that opened in Kottayam, Kerala, just five years ago, has grown to a congregation of 8,000 in this town alone and is popular among new converts, not least because it permits members to wear jewellery, unlike the more austere Pentecostals.²⁵

However, in North India and certain parts of South India the situation is rather different. Pentecostal growth has predominantly taken place in rural areas – among the poor, Tribal people, Dalits and lower castes. The Tribal-belt of North India, states like Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Orissa, has experienced remarkable growth. The recent spate of communal violence against Christians by *Hindutva* forces in these states provides us with evidence of the perceived threat of the growing number of Pentecostal

²⁰ Y. Jeyaraj, 'Comments,' in George, *Trailblazers for God*; Y. Jeyaraj is the General Superintendent of All India Assemblies of God.

²¹ See Hedlund, 'Indigenous Pentecostalism,' 215-244.

²² Roger E. Hedlund, 'Critique of Pentecostal Mission by a Friendly Evangelical,' *AJPS* 8/1 (2005): 83.

²³ Shaji, 'Holy Ghost on Malabar Coast.'

²⁴ Shaji, 'Holy Ghost on Malabar Coast.' It is very clear from the article that the author is not sympathetic to Pentecostal churches.

²⁵ Shaji, 'Holy Ghost on Malabar Coast.'

churches.²⁶ Unfortunately, exact facts and figures are not yet available. Most of these Pentecostals are poor, illiterate and live in small hamlets in remote villages, where facilities like transportation, medical help and schooling are limited.²⁷ Arun Jones, who has undertaken some research in North India says that middle-class mainline Protestants are generally far from anxious to welcome low caste, poor people into their churches. However, Pentecostals welcome whomsoever they can get. Thus, Pentecostal fellowships tend to have more appeal to lower class and lower caste populations.²⁸

The Pentecostal movement in India has acquired diverse forms and been expressed differently, depending on geographical locations, culture, people-group in which the movement has developed and languages spoken. There can even be a distinction between Pentecostal denominations existing in the same geographical area, in terms of their tenets and practices. Some Pentecostal groups consist of only a single ethnic group.²⁹ Nevertheless, there are certain features that bind them together as a movement. The most significant of these is the emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit. Moreover, most of the people who joined the movement in the beginning were either underprivileged members of the society or people with physical or spiritual troubles (often diagnosed as demonic). Another interesting fact is that the majority of the people who join Indian Pentecostal

²⁶ For example, commenting on the violence against Christians which took place in August 2008 in Kandhamal, Orissa, Vijay Simha says, 'The rise in the number of Christians in Kandhamal is offering radical Hindu outfits like the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) the perfect alibi to launch an aggressive anti-Christian movement.' See Vijay Simha, 'In the Name of God,' *Tehelka* 5/36 (13 September 2008), http://www.tehelka.com/story_main40.asp?filename=Ne130908CoverStory.asp (accessed 23 December 2009).

²⁷ The actual condition of these Pentecostals will become clear when we discuss the Indian context (chapter 5). See also Miller & Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism*, 173-174.

²⁸ Arun W. Jones, 'Faces of Pentecostalism in North India Today' sent by the author through e-mail on December 22, 2009. It is also published in *Society* 46/6 (November 2009): 504-509.

²⁹ For example, Church of God in Kerala has a separate wing exclusively for Dalit believers.

churches belong to the younger generation, since the Indian population is relatively young. There are many possible reasons for this, such as the lively worship style of Pentecostalism which turns to songs and dance, life-changing messages and prayer meetings, all attract the younger generation.³⁰ Older people appear to be more bound by their religious or denominational traditions and find it fairly difficult to integrate into the movement. Furthermore, Pentecostalism is attracting people from Dalits, Tribal-groups and lower castes because it provides them with a sense of dignity and hope that is non-existent in other sections of Indian society.³¹

The Indian Pentecostal movement is highly contextual and indigenous in nature; the worship, practices and life-style of its members reflect the culture and practices of the locality. Roger Hedlund underlines this fact:

Indigenous Indian Christianity is found in the Little Tradition of the so-called fringe sections largely (not exclusively) of Pentecostal, Charismatic or Evangelical origin. Questions of contextualisation, adaptation, accommodation, and the cultural transformation of the Christian faith are topics of hot debate in the traditional Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant denominations – all churches of ‘Great Tradition’ in religious studies – whereas cultural incarnation of the faith is a normal expression in churches of Little Tradition.³²

This is especially true in North India where Pentecostal churches are being targeted for dogmatism and rigidity in their outlook in relation to doctrine,

³⁰ Reuben Louis Gabriel, ‘Reflections on the Indian Pentecostalism: Trends and Issues,’ *Dharma Deepika* 6/2 (July-December 2002): 67-76, 69.

³¹ Miller and Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism*, 174.

³² Hedlund, *Quest for Identity*, 3.

especially when it concerns the uniqueness of Christ; albeit they are able to attract many people from other religious traditions. Arun Jones contrasts mainline protestant churches and the Pentecostals:

Thus in North India at least, we are left with a rather paradoxical situation. Mainline Protestantism, whose rhetoric and theology tend towards liberalism, is currently experienced sociologically and ideologically as a somewhat closed and calcifying Christian tradition, with little room for new people and fresh religious perspectives. Pentecostalism on the other hand, whose rhetoric tends towards the conservative and dogmatic, is in reality a highly adaptable social and religious movement, twisting and turning and transforming itself to adjust to the realities of a civilization whose ancient roots continue to sprout new branches and leaves.³³

In addition, Pentecostals are strict in outlook on holiness and fervent in their mission activities. These elements have enabled them to develop a form of Pentecostalism true to its neighbourhood, to proclaim Christ as Lord.

1.2 Need for a Contextual Pentecostal Christology

Even though the movement has been growing at a fast pace, on the one hand it faces adverse external challenges such as religious pluralism, cultural diversity, poverty, caste-oppression, communalism and especially a recent spate of violence against Christians. These elements have affected the growth and consolidation of the movement negatively. On the other, there are various issues within the movement like schism, caste-consciousness, leadership conflicts and cross-

³³ Jones, 'Faces of Pentecostalism.'

cultural differences. However, the movement faces a fundamental impasse, namely the lack of an articulated theology, especially Christology.

Now, the task of retrieving the theology of the Indian Pentecostal movement is a painstaking job, as the pioneers of the movement were so engrossed in their mission that they were wary of developing a carefully articulated theology of their vibrant faith. Even when we find some description of their doctrines, they are compilations of biblical references that are apologetic in nature, to prove the distinctive Pentecostal doctrinal positions like Spirit baptism, water baptism, holiness, or the prohibition of the wearing of ornaments. Nevertheless, as a whole, it is clear that Indian Pentecostals have a rich tradition of oral theology informed by their experiences and by transformations they have undergone. Now, given the above-mentioned community struggles, it is vital to articulate and systematise those rich experiential and popular theological categories.

Closely related to the aforesaid handicaps is the lack of systematic theological training for its leaders, especially in North India.³⁴ Although missions were taking place at a rapid pace, and many churches were established, there were no facilities to give them theological education until recently. Therefore, pastors are not able to give believers in-depth biblical teachings or lead them to a higher level of Christian maturity. This has negatively affected the spiritual growth of the community. Recently more emphasis has been placed upon educating pastors and lay leaders. However, the courses offered are insensitive to the socio-cultural and

³⁴ However, it is an interesting fact that Kerala has a number of Bible colleges, but only a few offer standard degree courses. It is also interesting that a new generation of Pentecostal scholars are coming up, who study in denominational set-up, rigorously academic, as well as 'Pentecostal' in spirituality and outlook.

religious context of India and are, therefore, less relevant to the pressing needs of the congregations.³⁵ This lack of contextual expressions of faith formulation is detrimental to the ministry and the mission of the Church. Therefore, it is important to retrieve contextual theological expressions to educate the pastors and leaders for both ministry and mission.

It could be argued that any growing Christian movement needs a strongly articulated Christology relevant to its context, which would tackle its growth, consolidation and internal and external struggles. Further, such a contextual Christology should be sensitive to the socio-political, religio-cultural, and economic milieu. A Christology, which does not address these contextual issues, cannot be relevant to the people.³⁶ As a result, it is vital to have a dynamic interaction between the scripture and the culture of the people. This does not mean the revival of old rituals and practices, or to blindly adopt everything in the culture. On the contrary, it involves incorporation of values and worldviews by bringing them to interface with the gospel. Nevertheless, it is essential to draw clear lines wherever alienating and oppressive elements are found in the culture. In the Indian context, this interface of culture and the Gospel has created a new form of Pentecostal culture that combines the positive values of the culture with

³⁵ This is true of most theological colleges in India and many of the Pentecostals trained in these colleges have the same outlook. Even the contextual theologies of other movements seemed less useful for Pentecostals.

³⁶ For example, Michael Amaladoss, *The Asian Jesus* (Delhi: ISPCK, 2005); R.S. Sugirtharaja (ed.), *Asian Faces of Jesus* (New York: Orbis Books, 1993); Volker Kuuster, *The Many Faces of Jesus Christ* (London: SCM, 2001); A. Alangaram, *Christ of the Asian People: Towards an Asian Contextual Christology* (Bangalore: Asian Trading Corporation, 1999); M. Thomas Thangaraj, *The Crucified Guru: An Experiment in Cross-Cultural Christology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994); Jose M. de Mesa and Lode L. Wostyn, *Doing Christology: The Re-Appropriation of a Tradition* (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 1989.); Anton Wessels, *Images of Jesus* (London: SCM, 1990).

the Gospel values.³⁷ Moreover, Pentecostals live and carry out their evangelistic and mission activities among the people of other religions. This poses the challenge of religious pluralism, which sometimes escalates into violence and persecution. A contextual Christology needs to consider the cultural and religious plurality of the context at face value.

This pattern can be seen in the New Testament. The gospels and epistles give us enough evidence that early followers used various facets of the person and work of Christ to face their particular situations.³⁸ In India various theological traditions such as Dalit theology, Tribal theology, and the Indian version of liberation theology have developed their own contextual Christologies.³⁹ There are other indigenous expression of Christologies which co-exist with traditions and culture of the Indian context.⁴⁰ However, such efforts have not been made in the Pentecostal movement.

The Indian situation even today has many parallels with first century Palestine such as the purity laws and caste system, poverty, armed struggle (such as Maoism), linguistic-cultural rivalries, and communalism. The mixing of politics

³⁷ There are contextual expressions such as calling Jesus *Prabhu* or believer as *Yeshu Bhakta* (devotee of Jesus, similar to Hinduism).

³⁸ Dean Flemming, *Contextualization in the New Testament: Pattern for Theology and Mission* (Illinois: IVP, 2005); Mesa and Wostyn, *Doing Christology*, 215-298; Ben Witherington III, *The Christology of Jesus* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990).

³⁹ Sebastian Kappen, *Jesus and Cultural Revolution: An Asian Perspective* (Bombay: A Build Publication, 1983); also see, Sebastian Kappen, 'Towards an Indian Theology of Liberation,' in *Leave the Temple*, edited by Felix Wilfred (Trichirapally: Carmel, 1992); A. Wati Longchar, *An Emerging Asian Theology: Tribal Theology Issue, Method and Perspective* (Jorhat: Tribal Study Centre, 2000); L. H. Lalpekhluu, *Contextual Christology: A Tribal Perspective* (Delhi: ISPCK, 2007); A. P. Nirmal (ed.), *A Reader in Dalit Theology* (Madras: Gurukul, 1986) and V. Devasahayam (ed.), *Frontiers of Dalit Theology* (Madras: ISPCK, Gurukul, 1997).

⁴⁰ We shall explore some of them in Chapter 5. Robin H. S. Boyd, *Kristadvaita: A Theology for India* (Madras: CLS, 1977); Hubert Manohar Watson, *Towards a Relevant Christology in India Today: An Appraisal of the Christologies of John Hick, Jürgen Moltmann and Jon Sobrino* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter lang, 2002).

and religion and the resultant cultural-nationalism has turned out to be detrimental to the unity of the country, as well as to the safe existence of the minority population, including Christians. Here the Indian Pentecostal movement needs a strongly articulated Christology akin to the New Testament pattern to sustain its momentum, plus an overt involvement with its immediate surroundings. Nonetheless, the aim of this thesis is not to impose any Christological models upon the people. Instead, it seeks first to discover what Christological ideas believers have developed in their complicated situation and how they use them in their personal, family and community life, ministry and mission of the church.

A strong contextually-oriented Christology is vital for an active involvement in the society too.⁴¹ Ordinary Pentecostals enthusiastically participate in evangelistic activities and through such activities many are being liberated from the dismal situation they are in. This has resulted in a rapid proliferation of Pentecostalism among the poor. It is an interesting fact that even political parties have begun to acknowledge Pentecostals so much so that now it is normal for political leaders to attend Pentecostal conventions. Such progressive momentum happened not as a result of a conscious efforts or systematic social programs by Pentecostals. It is because of the positive changes and the testimonies of ordinary members; their new-found faith, the spiritual urge and the better condition of life they enjoy now.

However, a contextual Christology can add further momentum to such evangelistic activities. Moreover, this can also give them theological validity to

⁴¹ Stephen B. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, rev. ed. (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2002), 3-15; A. Alangaram, *Christ of the Asian People: Towards an Asian Contextual Theology* (Bangalore: Asia Trading Corporation, 2001), 144.

involve in the society and share social concerns around them. It is natural that after becoming Pentecostals, members shrink back from society due to their holiness understanding and avoid any overt religious and cultural practices of the society. Moreover, members find themselves powerless and ineffective in the larger society, due to their poor condition and the opposition they face. However, a realisation of the worth of their own Christological articulation as well as of a portrayal of Christ which is relevant to their own society may change the inhibitions, and the psychosis they inherit. Once ordinary believers are convinced about something, they are ready to forfeit their life for a cause. Then a picture of Christ, strongly anchored in biblical tradition, Christ who has consciously become involved in his society, would certainly impel ordinary members to move outward with a clear agenda of 'liberation'. However, this liberation motivation should not be equated to Marxian economic categories or formal Liberation theology models. It needs to spring from spiritual and individual aspects, and then move towards social, economic and political realms, as this study shows. Considering all these aspects, it seems vital to develop an ordinary Christology for the movement, from the people's perspective.

For this purpose, qualitative research is carried out to unearth the intricate threads of Christological formulations of the Pentecostal believers, informed by their Spirit-experience, socio-political, religio-cultural and economic situations and particularly the intense persecution they face. Once we identify those traits, it is possible to analyse and even suggest a model of Christology which is faithful to their situation and biblical tradition as well as a model that will do justice to the larger Pentecostal tradition.

1.3 Aim of the Study

The aim of the study is to identify and articulate the Christology of ordinary Pentecostals in India for the ministry and mission of Pentecostal churches on the basis of contexts such as caste oppression, economic exploitation, cultural prejudices, political discrimination and religious persecution.

This aim can be achieved by exploring the socio-economic, religio-cultural and political contexts of the believers, in order to understand how their personal and communitarian understanding of Christ has taken shape and how this formulation helps them to face the particular situations they experience. It is also significant to find out whether their formulation of Christology is sufficient to face and sustain the onslaught of forces detrimental to the movement, and whether it helps them to get involved in society.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

Within this overall aim, therefore, the study has five specific objectives:

1. To analyse Pentecostalism in India, its inception, history, and its current state with a view to setting the popular Pentecostal Christology in its historical and contemporary context.
2. To survey, very briefly, the contextual Christologies within the Indian context and to situate Pentecostal Christology in dialogue with them. This is to explore how other Christian traditions, theologies and practitioners identified, experienced and portrayed Christ, which can be helpful in forming a Pentecostal Christology.

3. To assess the Christological articulation of the lay people, lay leaders and pastors who are mostly illiterate or semi-literate, through a qualitative empirical study, in order to understand and articulate their popular Christology.
4. To evaluate the data collected to identify various traits and nuances of Pentecostal Christology and to recommend any modifications needed.
5. In the light of a critical engagement with the Christological articulation of the people, develop a practical Pentecostal Christology for the Indian context.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This enunciation of Christology which comes out of the experience of ‘ordinary’ people may shed light into the methods and models of pastoral care to be employed in this context, which will make believers strong in their faith and mature Christians. This Christology may also prepare them to face external challenges such as poverty, caste system and persecution. It can also act as a catalyst to mission and evangelism and help them achieve a deeper involvement in their context.

This elucidation of Christology can also give a theological identity to the Pentecostal movement, as well as act as a unifying factor in the theological realm. It may be a catalyst to theological self-expression and encourage Pentecostals to articulate their faith, experience and doctrines. It may also contribute to Indian Pentecostal scholarship, theological education, and Indian/Asian contextual Christologies, as well as worldwide Pentecostal scholarship.

1.6 Limitations of the Study

Since the research is designed to unearth a popular Christology, people approached will be mostly illiterate or semi-literate within village contexts in different states of North India. Many of them may not be able to articulate their Christological ideas in formal categories. This will have an effect on the nature of the data. Moreover, Pentecostals are scattered along vast geographical areas and speak different local dialects. The local languages can act as barriers to communication and the collection of data. There are no written sources of Pentecostal theology or Christology found in these contexts and, therefore, data will be gathered mainly from the testimonies of the people interviewed. Similarly, documentary sources of history of North Indian Pentecostalism are scant, and this may influence the outcome.

Therefore, in the following pages we will endeavour to search into the Christological conception of ordinary Indian Pentecostals by talking to the ordinary people themselves. The Christological inputs we receive from them will be systematised, to understand fully the underlying elements of a Pentecostal Christology within the Indian context.

1.7 Overview

We will divide the project into various chapters. Chapter Two focuses on the methodology of the study. It discusses the importance of exploring the Christological ideas of ordinary people and the relevant methodology employed in the research. This chapter highlights the importance of ordinary theology, especially an ordinary Christology for an Indian context. Further, it also explains

various methodological tools used in the research to collect the relevant information from the people.

Chapters 3, 4 and 5 form the background of the study and deal with contextual aspects. To understand and articulate the Christology of a people it is vital to know their context and the issues they face; their history and Christological traditions around them. Therefore, Chapter Three deals with major issues encountered by ordinary Pentecostals and the way in which they are affected by them. These issues add colour and content to their Christological articulation. We shall concentrate on issues like lack of health-care facilities, economic disparity, poverty, illiteracy, the caste system and communalism, which are the most pressing issues people face. These aspects decisively impact and shape ordinary Indian Pentecostal Christology.

Similarly, the origin and history of a movement is decisive in forming its fundamentals and further growth. Therefore, Chapter Four will deal with the history of Pentecostalism in India, especially focusing on the revivals and resultant mission which resulted in the origin and growth of the movement. Here we shall mainly concentrate on North Indian history as our study is mostly situated in North India. North Indian Pentecostal history has not been explored in its entirety and we have only meagre information available. Therefore, we shall concentrate on those states where significant growth of the movement has been recorded.

Within the formulation of a Christology, existing Christologies in the context can make valuable contributions. They may also help a Christology to identify its

salient features as well as its limitations. Therefore, Chapter Five will elaborate on the Christological articulations existing in the theological scenario in India. It is not possible to discuss all these strands but we shall choose the more representative of them to find out what they can contribute to a Pentecostal Christology. We shall divide them into various categories such as religious, cultural, political and so on.

Chapters 6, 7 and 8 form the core aspects of the study; the articulation of ordinary Indian Pentecostal Christology, its evaluation and development and the constructive proposal, respectively. Chapter Six deals with our main findings from the research among the ordinary Pentecostals. This chapter portrays their Christological insights as articulated through their testimonies, songs, conversations, both formal and informal, and messages preached in the churches. These themes have been coloured by their context and the spiritual fervour they cherish. Their Christological articulations have been elaborated in various themes such as Jesus as healer, exorcist and provider and so on.

Chapter Seven endeavours to critically evaluate Indian Pentecostal Christology closely, by looking into its various aspects. We shall also analyse and elaborate its nature and characteristics, to see what it looks like. This chapter also will try to tally this Christology with the Christology of the larger Pentecostal tradition, as well as the New Testament testimony of the person and work of Christ.

Chapter Eight ventures to construct an appropriate model of Christology for the Indian context. Here we shall rescript ordinary Christology in the light of Pentecostal scholarship to present it to the wider scholarship. In the light of

evaluation, rescription and contextual factors, we shall also propose certain Trinitarian, dialogical and liberative elements to ordinary Christology. These elements may enrich Christology and help ordinary people to engage in their context.

Chapter Nine will conclude the discussion. It will also highlight this Christology's contribution in the wider context and point out certain vital areas for further research in Pentecostal scholarship.

In short, this research seeks to construct a Pentecostal Christology from the perspective of ordinary people, which may help to consolidate the movement and its mission, theological enterprise and Christological articulation in global Pentecostalism and Christianity.

Chapter 2

METHODOLOGY

Theology has been often referred to as *fides quaerens intellectum*, ‘faith seeking understanding’ (Anselm) in classical definitions.¹ It is ‘faith’ venturing to inquire and find out possible solutions for puzzling questions about God and the world. Theology thus grows out of ‘faith’ that incites reflection, inquiry, and pursuit of the truth not yet possessed, or only partially possessed. There are at least two fundamental roots of this quest. First, this ‘faith’ is the faith in God, and God is, and remains a mystery beyond human comprehension. However, the incomprehensible God has been revealed in Jesus Christ, as sovereign love, and experienced through the work of the Holy Spirit. Second, this ‘faith’ presupposes a ‘situation of faith’.² Believers do not live in a vacuum. Like all people, they live in particular historical situations that have their own distinctive problems and possibilities. These two aspects, the ‘faith in God’ and the ‘situation of faith’, bring up new questions, insights and disclosures.³ However, this ‘understanding’ which ‘faith’ seeks is deeply coloured by the cultural context and the experience of the people.⁴

Human beings are open when they ask questions and keep seeking; when they are, as Augustine says, ‘ravished with love for truth’.⁵ There are certain questions that arise from the context: Do the faith and proclamation of the community lead to the

¹ A.N.S. Lane, ‘Anselm,’ *NDT*, edited by Sinclair B. Ferguson & David F. Wright (Illinois: IVP, 2000), CD-Rom.

² Daniel L. Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. (Michigan: Eerdmans, 1991), 3.

³ Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding*, 4.

⁴ Robert J. Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies* (New York: Orbis Books, 1985), 75-78.

⁵ Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding*, 4.

transforming praxis in the personal and social life of its members as well as in the larger society? Are the proclamation and practice of the community true to the revelation of God in Jesus Christ, as attested in the scripture? Similar questions lead us into the larger issue of the nature of theology.⁶

Although modern thought tends to regard theology as a theoretical science of God, there is a strain originating in the earliest Church and developed in the Middle Ages that identifies theology as ‘a cognitive disposition and orientation of the soul, a knowledge of God and what God reveals’.⁷ According to Edward Farley, theology in its original and most authentic sense is a fundamental dimension of every Christian’s piety and vocation. It is the insight, understanding or wisdom proper to the life of the believer and concerned with the believer’s ways of existing in the world before God.⁸ Further, Gustavo Gutiérrez, the liberation theologian argues that theology is reflection on *praxis* in the light of faith and is a dialectical movement between action and reflection. He understands theology as a tool to alleviate the injustices of humanity. Thus the role of theology is to speak to those inequities, thus becoming a critical reflection on ‘praxis’.⁹ These definitions of theology presuppose that what we call ‘theology’ is not a defined system of metaphysics put forth by professionals. Rather, it emerges out of people’s experience, while looking for possible solutions. Therefore theology is always contextual, practical and ‘ordinary’.

⁶ Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding*, 10-15.

⁷ Edward Farley, *Theologia: The Fragmentation and Unity of Theological Education* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 35.

⁸ Farley, *Theologia*, 156-159; also see Jeff Astley and Ann Christie, *Taking Ordinary Theology Seriously, The Grove Pastoral Series* (Cambridge: Grove Books Limited, 2007), 5.

⁹ Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation*, rev. ed. (London: SCM, 2001).

2.1 Theology as ‘Contextual’ Faith

This description leads us to understand theology as ‘contextual’ rather than ‘theoretical’.¹⁰ Theology should be determined by the context, i.e. by the insights and resources from the life of the people to whom it is being directed. Otherwise theology will become a tool of ideological manipulation to justify the status quo rather than to give hope and liberation to the people. Therefore, ‘the contextualisation of theology is really a theological imperative,’ asserts Bevans.¹¹ Even though various reasons are cited by the scholars for contextualisation, the rapid growth of Christianity in the southern hemisphere and the widespread oppression in those contexts make the contextualisation of theology an urgent task.¹²

According to Bevans, doing theology contextually means taking into account two things: first, the faith experience of the *past* that was recorded in the scripture and kept alive in tradition; and second, the experience of the present – the *context*.¹³ The context includes the experiences of a person’s or group’s personal life which allow a person to, or prevent a person from, experiencing God in their lives. There are also experiences of life – personal or communal – in our contemporary world: the moments of tragedy such as genocide, revolutions and so on. Moreover, personal or communal experience is possible only within the context of the culture whether it is secular or religious. We can also speak of context in terms of a person’s or a community’s ‘social location’. Finally, the notion of present experience in our context involves the reality of social change; a change for better

¹⁰ Sigurd Bergmann, *God in Context: A Survey of Contextual Theology* (Hants: Ashgate, 2003), 5.

¹¹ Stephen B. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, rev. ed. (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2002), 3.

¹² Bergmann, *God in Context*, 6-20.

¹³ Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, 5.

or worse.¹⁴ However, here we need to be cautious to interpret Christian faith authentically by considering the specific traits of Christian Scripture. Balancing both these aspects is vital for theology; Moltmann calls these ‘identity and relevance’.¹⁵

2.2 Theology as ‘Practical’ Faith

When we take the people’s experience as a valid source on which to ground theology, theology becomes ‘practical’. ‘Practical theology focuses on human experience in the specific context and endeavours to reflect theologically on that experience,’ contend Swinton and Mowat.¹⁶ It seeks to explore the complex dynamics of particular situations in order to enable the development of a transformative and illuminating understanding of what is going on in the context. The authors define Practical theology as ‘*critical, theological reflection on the practices of the church as they interact with the practices of the world with a view to ensuring faithful participation in the continuing mission of the triune God*’.¹⁷ The fundamental aim of practical theology is to participate in the mission of God and to reflect critically and theologically on situations in order to provide insights and strategies enabling faithful change in the context.¹⁸ It also recognises and respects the diversity of interpretation within the various expositions of the

¹⁴ Schreier, *Constructing Local Theologies*, 24; According to Bevans, in the globalised world, two factors are influencing social change. First, the cultural impact of modernity, with the revolution brought about by electronic media and the contemporary expansion of global connectedness (with its materialistic outlook). Second, the idealist side of modernity has encouraged oppressed people to struggle for their rights and privileges; see Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, 5-7

¹⁵ Bergmann, *God in Context*, 7.

¹⁶ John Swinton & Harriet Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research* (London: SCM, 2006), iii; Paul Ballard & John Pritchard, *Practical Theology in Action: Christian Thinking in the Service of the Church and Society* (London: SPCK, 1996).

¹⁷ Swinton & Mowat, *Practical Theology*, 25 (italics original).

¹⁸ Swinton & Mowat, *Practical Theology*, 25; Duncan B. Forrester, *Truthful Action: Explorations in Practical Theology* (Edinburgh: Clark, 2000), 7.

Gospel and seeks to ensure and encourage the Christian community to remain faithful to the narrative of the original God-given plot of the Gospel and to practise faithfully in the context as that narrative unfolds.¹⁹

Moreover, practical theology locates itself with a creative tension between revelation formulated historically within scripture, doctrine, tradition, and the continuing innovative performance of the Gospel as embodied and enacted in the life and practices of the Church as the latter interact with the life and practices of the world.²⁰ Similarly, Bevans also endorses that theology needs to consider culture, history and contemporary thought forms along with scripture and tradition, as valid sources for theological expression.²¹ Thus, theology becomes a venture, which reflects critically on the shared dialogue of a particular community.²² Consequently, practical theology is essentially contextual.²³

2.3 Theology as ‘Ordinary’ Faith

A contextualised theology, which is essentially practical, presupposes that theological endeavours must listen to the voice of the ordinary people to understand how they appropriate the Gospel message in their particular context. According to Groome, theological enterprise should not be in the exclusive domain of the specialist, but instead,

Theology should arise from the faith of a community reflected on in the light of the Story/Vision and not from a group of scholars isolated

¹⁹ Swinton & Mowat, *Practical Theology*, 5.

²⁰ Swinton & Mowat, *Practical Theology*, 5.

²¹ Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, 4.

²² See, Mark J. Cartledge, *Practical Theology: Charismatic and Empirical Perspectives* (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster Press, 2003); Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*; Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies*.

²³ Ballard & Pritchard, *Practical Theology in Action*, 2-5.

from the community to reflect on the community's behalf. This later kind of 'theology' (and we have it in abundance) contributes little to the ongoing faith life of the Christian community.²⁴

Taking the cue from this understanding, Jeff Astley has developed a form of practical theology which listens to the heartbeats of the ordinary people; he calls it 'ordinary theology' or 'popular theology'. He defines it as *'the theology and theologising of Christians who have received little or no theological education of a scholarly, academic or systematic kind'*.²⁵ Therefore, it is a theology emerging from the experience of ordinary believers. According to Astley and Christie, 'ordinary theology' is often both fundamentally secular but also deeply religious and spiritual. It is secular in the sense that it is grounded in our experience of the everyday roles of ordinary life. It is also religious as a form of theology that keeps close to the religious impulses and especially to the spirituality that drives people and heals them. It is, therefore, significant and intimate to the person who cherishes it and, hence intensely personal.²⁶

According to Astley, justification for an ordinary theology lies in the fact that those who are involved in religious education and pastoral care need to be familiar with the religious beliefs and thoughts of their learners, and the process of their

²⁴ Thomas H. Groome, *Christian Religious Education: Sharing our story and Vision* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980), 229; According to Schreiter, in the development of local theologies, the professional theologians can help the community to clarify its own experience and to relate them to the experience of other communities past and present. Thus, the professional theologian has an indispensable but limited role. The theologian cannot create a theology in isolation from the community's experience; see Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies*, 18.

²⁵ Jeff Astley, *Ordinary Theology: Looking, Listening and Learning in Theology* (Hants: Ashgate, 2002), 56, (Italics Original); Ann Christie & Jeff Astley, 'Ordinary Soteriology: A Qualitative Study,' *Empirical Theology in Texts and Tables: Qualitative, Quantitative and Comparative Perspectives*, edited by Leslie J. Francis, Mandy Robbins & Jeff Astley (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 177-196; Also see, Jeff Astley, 'In Defense of "Ordinary Theology,"' *British Journal of Theological Education* 13/1 (August, 2002): 21-35.

²⁶ Christie and Astley, 'Ordinary Soteriology,' 179-180; also see Stephen Pattison, *The Challenge of Practical Theology* (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2007), 18-19.

religious believing and thinking. He further adds that the church needs to study ordinary theology, the language and logic of the believers so that it may properly exercise its ministry of pastoral care, worship, Christian education, apologetics, preaching and evangelism, and all other concerns.²⁷

Moreover, ordinary theology may unravel the hidden dimensions of the believers' intimate faith and understanding of God and the wider implications this faith brings to their lives. This understanding can be useful for professional theologians engaged in the systematisation of theologising.²⁸ However, the role of the community in forming theology is vital since the members articulate their own faith experiences in their own dialects. The larger community often raises questions of faith, provides experience of their struggle and recognizes the response and solutions at hand. According to Schreiter, gifted individuals within the community such as poets, prophets, and teachers working on its behalf, actually shape the theology, which is then in turn accepted or rejected by the community. Recent research into oral traditions indicates that it is individuals capturing the spirit of those communities who do the actual shaping of folk songs and epics.²⁹

2.4 Empirical Theology

The ultimate aim of practical theology is to explore the experience, beliefs and practices of individuals and communities and for this it uses a few tools and methods of the social sciences. However, this does not mean that theology is

²⁷ Astley, *Ordinary Theology*, 146-147.

²⁸ Swinton & Mowat, *Practical Theology*, viii-ix.

²⁹ Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies*, 17.

relegated to a subset of social sciences.³⁰ Moreover, every nuance of ‘faith’ and experience very often cannot be adequately grasped by the methodological tools of social science. It is in this context some people like Johannes van der Ven from the Roman Catholic University at Nijmegen and the British group around Leslie Francis began to propose what is known as ‘empirical theology’ which enables ‘the direct use of empirical tools and methods in theology’.³¹

Van der Ven has understood theology as an empirical discipline to explore the theological ideas of the people in a particular context. He has extensively incorporated social-scientific research to provide an intra-disciplinary enquiry, in which theology provides an overall framework that incorporates the appropriate techniques and methods of the social sciences to further its own work.³² The term intra-disciplinary refers to the idea of borrowing concepts, methods and techniques from other disciplines with a view to integrating them into another science.³³

Empirical methodology enables ordinary theology to study the religious convictions, beliefs, images and feelings of people. In this endeavour, the

³⁰ Mark. J. Cartledge, ‘Empirical Theology: Inter-or Intra-disciplinary?’, *Journal of Beliefs & Values* 20/1 (1999): 98-104.

³¹ Johannes A. van der Ven, *Practical Theology: An Empirical Approach* (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1993), 27; Johannes A. van der Ven, ‘An Empirical or a Normative Approach to Practical Theological Research?’, *Journal of Empirical Theology* 15/2 (2002): 5-33; Ottmar Fuchs, ‘Relationship between Practical Theology and Empirical Research,’ *Journal of Empirical Theology* 14/2 (2001): 5-19; The recent emergence of empirical theology in Europe was by the effort of J. A. van der Ven from the Roman Catholic University at Nijmegen and the British group around Leslie Francis. Their interest in experience and contact of theology with lived life played a major role in reconstructing and promoting the discipline both with practical and theoretical efforts. According to Cartledge, the phrase ‘empirical theology’ means different things in Europe and the USA. In the USA it is a type of modern liberal theology which appeals to autonomous human reason as the arbiter of truth. However, in the British context, it is associated with social-psychology of belief and values and descriptive theological accounts.

³² Cartledge, ‘Empirical Theology,’ 100; Cartledge, *Practical Theology*, 14; Astley, *Ordinary Theology*, 106.

³³ Cartledge, ‘Empirical Theology,’ 101; Cartledge, *Practical Theology*, 15-16.

theological problem and its goal are first posed and a theological question formulated. Then it is translated into publically verifiable measurements. Using social scientific research methods, empirical testing is carried out and the results are then subjected to theological interpretation, so as to answer the original theological question and in so doing, explain the meaning and relevance of the study.³⁴

Given the unique Indian context, this empirical approach will be helpful in taking ordinary Pentecostal believers' experiences seriously and the articulation of their faith at its face value. In the Pentecostal movement, the believers cherish their Spirit-experience and consider it as the primary source of their Christological understanding. Moreover, the hostile situation in which they are deeply involved evokes challenging 'experiences'. However, human experience is not a flawless source for theology. It has its own limitations, not least due to the imperfection of human experience itself, and complications related to cultural and social backgrounds. Nevertheless, when the Spirit works in human experiences, the Bible is seen in a new light and creates an interpretative context. This raises new questions and challenges and brings answers from the Gospel, which are not always obvious when the Bible is reflected on in abstraction.³⁵

2.5 Pentecostal Theology and Empirical Research

Now it is important to see the possibility of using empirical research methods in Pentecostal theology to draw out the ordinary theology of Pentecostal believers.

³⁴ Astley, *Ordinary Theology*, 106-107; Cartledge, 'Empirical Theology,' 103; Gerben Heitink, *Practical Theology: History, Theory, Action Domain* (Michigan: Eerdmans, 1999), 220-230.

³⁵ Swinton & Mowat, *Practical Theology*, 6.

Pentecostalism, from its inception, has been a people's movement, and was originally a movement of the poor and the rejected of the society.³⁶ Even today this is true almost everywhere the movement takes root. A systematic analysis of the contributions of this movement worldwide shows that the liberational role (spiritual as well as social) it plays even today is commendable. For example, after undertaking a full year of empirical, sociological and theological analysis of the Pentecostal movement in Latin America, Shaull and Cesar conclude that the movement became a major liberative force among the poor of the Majority World. Shaull explains the radical changes taking place in the lives of the disadvantaged and the way they respond to their surroundings:

The Pentecostal message and experience had radically transformed their understanding and experience of their world and enabled them to restore their broken lives and thus find new life and energy. Poor marginalised women and men had found the power they needed for the physical, mental and often material renewal and for a successful struggle to overcome the most destructive forces around them.³⁷

Therefore, it is not a surprise that *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* terms Pentecostalism as 'originally "a religion of the poor"'.³⁸

³⁶ Jeffrey T. Snell, 'Beyond the Individual and into the World: A Call to Participation in the Larger Purpose of the Spirit on the Basis of Pentecostal Theology,' *Pneuma* 14/1 (Spring 1992), 54.

³⁷ Richard Shaull & Waldo Cesar, *Pentecostalism and the Future of the Christian Churches* (Michigan: Eerdmans, 2000), 119.

³⁸ F.L. Cross & E.A. Livingston (eds.), 'Pentecostalism,' *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 1254.

This character of Pentecostal spirituality and for that matter Pentecostal theology is essentially practical and touches the lives of ordinary people in every aspect.³⁹ For instance, J. D. Johns suggests that Pentecostals are inclined towards an epistemology and corresponding approach to social reform, which is generally compatible with Freire's model of *praxis*.⁴⁰ However, he sees it as a contemporary expression of the epistemology found in the Scriptures.⁴¹ The Pentecostal epistemology is formed by the knowledge that is grounded in God and God is known through encounter.⁴² Moreover, for Pentecostals truth is not just propositional truth, but truth leads them to experience God and transformation in life. According to Land, the Pentecostal paradigm of truth is known and expressed through *orthodoxy* (right praise-confession), *orthopathy* (right affections) and *orthopraxy* (right praxis).⁴³

Now if *Praxis* is a type of knowledge in which a learner engages and transforms the social realities of his existence and empowers the oppressed so they can read their own plights, and gives them a voice to speak to those situations, as Freire understands,⁴⁴ then Pentecostal theology even transcends this definition. The reason is, as Pentecostals understand, *praxis* is not mere human endeavour instead

³⁹ Browning conducted a study on the practical theology of a Pentecostal church and underlines that its spirituality is practical and contextual; see Don S. Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 243-277.

⁴⁰ For a detailed exposition and analysis of this nature of the Pentecostal movement see, Cheryl Bridges Johns, *Pentecostal Formation: A Pedagogy among the Oppressed* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993).

⁴¹ Jackie David Johns, 'Yielding to the Spirit: The Dynamic of a Pentecostal Model of Praxis,' in *The Globalization of Pentecostalism: A Religion Made to Travel*, edited by M.W. Dempster, B.D. Klaus & D. Petersen (Carlisle: Regnum, 1999), 70-84, 75; Jackie David Johns & Cheryl Bridges Johns, 'Yielding to the Spirit: A Pentecostal Approach to Group Bible Study,' *JPT* 1/1 (1992): 109-134.

⁴² Johns, 'Yielding to the Spirit,' 74.

⁴³ Stephen J. Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 41.

⁴⁴ Johns, 'Yielding to the Spirit,' 73-74.

of divine action through the agency of the Spirit. The Spirit-filled person engages with his/her environment with the power of the Spirit.⁴⁵ When a person is filled with the Spirit, God infuses the human spirit with *dunamis*, opening the way for transforming vertical discipleship into horizontal responsibility.⁴⁶ Lovett explains:

For 'Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty' is a claim long attested to and affirmed by Pentecostal-charismatic believers...The Spirit is God and God is expressed in community, shattering and renewing, rending and healing, revealing and transforming, lifting and liberating a people unto God. When the human spirit is grasped and energised by the Holy Spirit, it is given the necessary power to go beyond itself enabling it to perform tasks beyond our normally anticipated human ability and comprehension.⁴⁷

Hence, it is right to call Pentecostal theology 'ordinary theology' on the basis of the definitions we have explored in this section, since it brings radical transformation among the disadvantaged to bring about change in themselves and to change others.

These features of Pentecostal theology justify the use of empirical methodological tools for the exploration of the ordinary theology of Pentecostal believers.

Pentecostalism has its base among the ordinary folks in India and this entails the

⁴⁵ Johns, 'Yielding to the Spirit,' 80.

⁴⁶ Leonard Lovett, 'Liberation: A Dual-Edged Sword,' *Pneuma* 9/2 (Fall, 1987): 166; Bridges Johns also says, 'The role of the Holy Spirit is that of one who activates conversion in which a person enters into a new realm, and new level of consciousness. The Holy Spirit is the agent of sanctification and also gives power for service with a concept of mission being grounded in historical experience but with consequences which go beyond present history. The Holy Spirit enables a person to experience the paradox of suffering and the power of renunciation. One is enabled to side with the oppressed and to become a servant of the poor by becoming poor in the spirit (humility)'. Johns, *Pentecostal Formation*, 100.

⁴⁷ Lovett, 'Liberation: A Dual-Edged Sword,' 165.

need to use interviews, focus groups, and the collection of oral stories for the formation of Pentecostal theology, especially a Pentecostal Christology.

2.6 Ordinary Christology

In every period of history, Christology has been shaped by the needs and concerns of the context. A close reading of the New Testament and the history of Christian theology will show that Christology always is normed by soteriological requirements.⁴⁸ In the post-modern world, however, the threats of human suffering and injustice are at the forefront of our needs. Therefore, human suffering and injustice must set boundaries for an adequate Christology today. This dire need presumes that Christology should be translated into the realm of ‘ordinary people’.

This understanding has a valid theological justification, since the incarnation itself is seen as ‘translation into ordinariness’ or contextualisation *per se*. Nicholls presents the case:

Contextualization is not a passing fad or a debatable option. It is essential to our understanding of God’s self-revelation. The incarnation is the ultimate paradigm of the translation of text into context. Jesus Christ, the Word of God incarnate as a Jew, identified with a particular culture at a limited moment in history though

⁴⁸ Religion confronts a wide range of fundamental human needs. Paul Tillich sees the predominant need in the ancient world to be anxiety about death, in the medieval world to be anxiety about guilt, and in the modern world to be anxiety about meaninglessness. Paul Tillich, *Courage to Be* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952); also see Tyron L. Inbody, *The Many Faces of Christology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002), 19-59; Jose M. De Mesa & Lode L. Wostyn, *Doing Christology: The Re-Appropriation of a Tradition* (Quezon City, Philippines: Claretian Publications, 1989), 30-40.

transcending it. In his life and teaching he is the supreme model of contextualization.⁴⁹

The implication of this process of translation is seen in the apostolic witness and the life of the New Testament Church.⁵⁰ That the individual Christologies found in the four Gospels and the Epistles vary according to the life situations of the communities in which they evolved proves the essential nature of contextualisation and the plurality of Christologies.⁵¹ In the history of dogma the affirmations of the truths of God's revelation in the Scriptures have always involved a selection of themes and contextualized language in response to the particular theological and ethical issues confronting the Church in a particular moment of history. The creeds, confessions and statements of faith reflect this process.⁵²

Christ is at the heart of Christian belief, thought and practice; therefore Christ is at the heart of Christian theology. What Christians claim to know as distinctive and authentic about God is because of Christ. According to Marsh, given the Gospel history and the narrative about Jesus Christ, which truly portray a genuine effort of contextualisation, the task of interpreting God's presence and action will draw

⁴⁹ Bruce. J. Nicholls, 'Contextualisation,' *NDT*, edited by Sinclair B. Ferguson & David F. Wright (Illinois: IVP, 2000), 164; Bruce. J. Nicholls, *Contextualization: A Theology of Gospel and Culture* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1979).

⁵⁰ The difference in theological emphasis and preaching method between Paul's address to the synagogue in Pisidian Antioch (Acts.13:16-41) and his address to the Areopagus in Athens (Acts.17:22-31) is but one notable illustration of the sociological and theological inevitability of this translation; Nicholls, 'Contextualisation.'

⁵¹ Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *Christology: A Global Introduction* (Michigan: Baker Academic, 2003), 19-58; Dean Flemming, *Contextualization in the New Testament: Pattern for Theology and Mission* (Illinois: IVP, 2005).

⁵² De Mesa & Wostyn, *Doing Christology*, 223-298; Flemming, *Contextualization in the New Testament*; Anton Wessels, *Images of Jesus* (London: SCM, 1990).

interpreters to the margins of their own social worlds.⁵³ Ku ster also endorses a similar view:

*The biblical stories about Jesus Christ, the narratives of believers, men and women, on the one hand, and the themes which determine them on the other, are the two complementary forms shaping the text. They came to interact with the stories of men and women the generative themes of the con-text which govern them. As a result a dense fabric of stories and themes takes shape.*⁵⁴

What will result is a practical theology with Christology at its heart; an ordinary Christology born of deep exploration of the experience of Christ in ‘in-between’ worlds – that is, in the biblical narrative world and in the believers’ experiences today – a Christology that is done from the perspective of the people, from a particular location.⁵⁵

According to Ku ster, Christological discourse is a hermeneutical event. The story of Jesus can be told from different viewpoints: his birth and public activities, suffering and death on the cross, and resurrection.⁵⁶ People interpret their own stories through these Christological stories and *vice versa*. Here the stories evoke a whole web of *generative themes*. The generative words and themes of local community, when linked together, enable the full disclosure- linguistic or

⁵³ Clive Marsh, *Christ in Focus: Radical Christocentrism in Christian Theology* (London: SCM, 2005), 18.

⁵⁴ Volker Ku ster, *The Many Faces of Jesus Christ* (London: SCM, 2001), 32 (Italics original).

⁵⁵ Marsh, *Christ in Focus*, 3-17; Ann Christie, ‘Who Do You Say I Am?: Answers from the Pews,’ *The Journal of Adult Theological Education* 4/2 (2007): 181-194.

⁵⁶ Ku ster, *The Many Faces of Jesus Christ*, 30; These options are typically represented by incarnational theology in Roman Catholic confession; the theology of cross in the Protestant confession; and resurrection theology in the Eastern Orthodox confession.

thematic universe -of a community.⁵⁷ Christological interpretations emerge from a creative dialogue between the biblical text and the contemporary context in which an interpreter or a community engage with an ancient text as a dialogue partner with specific questions that arise from a contemporary context.⁵⁸

In recent times, theologians have tended to bring two sets of priorities from their own contexts to the process of contextual interpretation. Liberation theologians bring socioeconomic, political and gender concerns to brush up the portrait of Jesus, while theologians of inculturation integrate religio-cultural issues.⁵⁹ In the Indian context both of these issues are relevant while shaping a Christology. However, as Nicholls cautions us, valid contextualization takes place only where there is unreserved commitment to the path of discipleship; loyalty and commitment to Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord of all of life, personal and social, and to his Gospel.⁶⁰

2.7 Ordinary Indian Pentecostal Christology

When the story of Jesus passes through the hermeneutical grid of the Pentecostal community in the power of the Spirit, it produces *generative themes* that liberate people from the tyranny of evil leading them to freedom and joy.⁶¹ Consequently, the Pentecostal community becomes the harbinger of a truly context-oriented Christology which is in every sense an ‘ordinary Christology,’ since it stems directly from the experience of ordinary people in their context. It is a Christology

⁵⁷ Ku□ster, *The Many Faces of Jesus Christ*, 33.

⁵⁸ J. Levison & P. Pope-Levison, ‘Christology,’ *Global Dictionary of Theology*, edited by William A. Dyrness & Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen (Nottingham: IVP, 2008), 176.

⁵⁹ Levison & Pope-Levison, ‘Christology,’ 176.

⁶⁰ Nicholls, ‘Contextualisation.’

⁶¹ These themes are elaborately discussed in 6th chapter; See how experience becomes source of theology, De Mesa & Wostyn, *Doing Christology*, 11-12.

that sprouts from the struggles of the community; hence it is ‘practical,’ ‘contextual’ and ‘ordinary’. Further, it is not a Christology that is systematically articulated or created by professional theologians, but instinctively articulated by the people. In other words, it emerges from the context of the community without the conscious effort of the people who are theologising. Moreover, it is a corporate affair; every single member of the community unknowingly partakes in this process. This Christology or rather ‘Christological themes’ take shape and texture in the worship context of the community; the Spirit experience and the miraculous elements of the Gospel act as essential ingredients.⁶² It can be named elemental spirituality and it is very close to the Christology of the early church. This Christology acts as a beacon of liberation and becomes a pedagogical process awakening consciousness, inciting members to action just as Schreiter maintains, ‘the role of the community in the development of the theology shows how the poor become the subject of their own history’.⁶³ Therefore, it is vital to retrieve these Christological themes to fully comprehend the overall Christological understanding of Pentecostal believers.

However, no scholarly literature has been produced on Indian Pentecostal Christology and this work is an initial attempt to articulate the ordinary Christology.⁶⁴ Therefore, it is methodologically necessary to select few churches

⁶² For instance, Schreiter affirms that one cannot speak of a community developing a local theology without it being filled with the Spirit and working under the power of the Gospel. Theology is the work of God through a human, graced community; Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies*, 24.

⁶³ Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies*, 17.

⁶⁴ Recently efforts have been made to bring out text-books for theological students by Pentecostals in Kerala but these are more or less similar to systematic theology format; see T.P. Varghese (ed.), *Pentecosthu Daivasasthram (Pentecostal Theology)*, rev. ed. (Thiruvalla, Kerala: Readers Publications, 2002); M.V. Chacko, *Daivasasthram (Systematic Theology)*, 2nd ed. (Secunderabad: OM Authentic Books, 2002).

as representatives to investigate and map ‘ordinary Christology’.⁶⁵ But India, as we know, is a huge and diverse country with a population of more than one billion people. It is a country of contrasts with an incredible diversity of religions, languages, customs, and landscape. Moreover, Pentecostals in India come from various cultural contexts, religious backgrounds, languages and geographical locations. Therefore, to form a standard and uniform Christology is a difficult task. Nevertheless, the majority of Pentecostals all over India are first generation believers and go through similar situations, which we shall explore in the Indian context. The only exception is the Pentecostals from the South-Indian states of Kerala and Chennai city who are third or fourth generation Pentecostals having a different set of problems.⁶⁶ They are socially and economically better off and may hold a slightly different understanding of Christ owing to their improved status. Nevertheless, even in Kerala most of the people joining the Pentecostal movement face similar issues as those in the rest of India, even if it is perhaps to a lesser degree. These shared features of Pentecostals allow us to envision a Christology with certain characteristics in common.

As we have already seen, Pentecostals in North India are mostly from Tribal and Dalit backgrounds and a tiny minority are from the Hindu religious tradition. Therefore, the sample churches have been selected considering the diversity of Pentecostal population in India comprising believers of South-Indian, Tribal, Dalit and Hindu backgrounds.

⁶⁵ Richard J. Mouw, *Consulting the Faithful: What Christian Intellectuals can Learn from Popular Religion* (Michigan: Eerdmans, 1994).

⁶⁶ Even in Chennai city the condition of the majority of the Pentecostals are similar to the North Indian Pentecostals; see Bergunder, *The South Indian Pentecostal Movement*, 121-180.

2.7.1 Sources of Ordinary Indian Pentecostal Christology

It is well known that Pentecostalism is rooted in oral culture, rather than literary culture.⁶⁷ One of the forms *par excellence* of communication of the Pentecostal religious experience is the personal testimony. It is directed both inward toward the community of believers and outward toward the world.⁶⁸ Pentecostals make their theological-world with their personal testimonies, what God has wrought in their lives. Telling of one's personal story of God's activity is central to the ordinary expression of faith.⁶⁹ It attempts to represent in verbal form the shape of a life.⁷⁰ Moreover, testimony not only has the capacity to generate the knowledge, but also gives proper weight to our dual nature as both socially indebted and individually rational creatures.⁷¹ In Pentecostal churches, ordinary members articulate their theological world with their testimonies. There is a popular saying among Indian Pentecostals that 'a testimony begets another testimony'. In the testimonial narrative, one communicates his experience to another or to others.⁷²

According to Cartledge, Pentecostal testimony could be said to function by means of three interrelated modes: personal story, congregational story and denominational story.⁷³ Along with the testimonies of believers, the sermons, missionary stories, auto/biographies, and worship as well as related activities in

⁶⁷ Walter J. Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997), 18.

⁶⁸ No Author, 'Pentecostal Conversion in the Popular Perception of the Sacred: Some Methodological Elements for its Analysis,' *Voices from the Third World* XIV/2 (December 1991): 55.

⁶⁹ Mark J. Cartledge, *Testimony in the Spirit* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 17; Alan Jacobs, *Looking Before and After: Testimony and the Christian Life* (Michigan: Eerdmans, 2008).

⁷⁰ Jacobs, *Looking Before and After*, 24.

⁷¹ Jennifer Lackey, *Learning from Words: Testimony as a Source of Knowledge* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 3; Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition: A Study in Historical Methodology*, translated by H.M. Wright (New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 2006), 47-113.

⁷² No Author, 'Pentecostal Conversion in the Popular Perception,' 55.

⁷³ Cartledge, *Testimony in the Spirit*, 17.

the local church contribute to the larger testimony of the community.⁷⁴ They include stories of healing, exorcism, miraculous provision and protection. These testimonies form the bedrock of ordinary Indian Pentecostal Christology, since Christologies of the gospels are similarly formed by testimony.⁷⁵ Christology emerges when the Gospel is interpreted by ‘a congregation of men and women who believe it and live by it’.⁷⁶ Therefore, these testimonies reflect a combination of personal values, corporate beliefs and particular circumstances of ordinary people. Moreover, they also point to the wider Pentecostal traditions, as well as to the larger Christian faith.⁷⁷ Cartledge argues that testimony is a means of social knowledge construction which integrates other forms of knowledge such as perception, memory, consciousness and reason. In Pentecostal spirituality it acts as a mechanism of reinforcement and commitment and also as a means of integrating social knowledge enabling us to enter into the world of Pentecostal theology.⁷⁸

Cartledge calls this narrative world a ‘script’ and, along with David Martin, he argues that scholarly engagement with this ordinary expression of faith can be said to be a ‘rescription’.⁷⁹ This ‘rescripting’ process, however, is not for ‘a damaging revisionist account, which seeks to supplant Pentecostal presupposition with alien categories’; rather,

⁷⁴ Martyn Hammersley, *Reading Ethnographic Research*, 2nd ed. (London: Longman, 1988), 35-36.

⁷⁵ The Gospels themselves are the testimony of the eye witness; see Richard J. Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony* (Michigan: Eerdmans, 2006), 5; also see Richard J. Bauckham, *The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony* (Cambridge: Grove Books, 2008).

⁷⁶ Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (Michigan: Eerdmans, 1989), 227.

⁷⁷ Cartledge, *Testimony in the Spirit*, 17.

⁷⁸ Cartledge, *Practical Theology*, 52-57.

⁷⁹ Cartledge, *Testimony in the Spirit*, 16-17. ‘Rescription’ can be defined as a re-narration of the ordinary testimony for the purpose of an academic theological account.

It seeks to maintain a tension between a revised script that is *both* in continuity with *and* in discontinuity with the existing script. It seeks to move ordinary theology forward through a deeper analysis of its testimony mode and a broader dialogue with the Christian theological tradition, illuminated by the insights of the social sciences.⁸⁰

In our study, this ‘rescription’ is carried out taking into account (a) the New Testament scholarship regarding the person and work of Christ, (b) Pentecostal tradition as well as contemporary Pentecostal scholarship, (c) the context of the believers and (d) the Christological formulation of other Christian traditions in India.

There are different levels of conversation in the methodological process of ordinary Pentecostal Christology. The first level consists of the ordinary discourse of the believers and this is the main focus of the study. However, the second level, namely denominational or confessional theology as Cartledge puts it,⁸¹ has not been distinctively developed by the denominations of the congregations of the present study. Therefore, sermons preached in the congregations and articles in the popular magazines can be taken as confessional theology. They can give a clue to the particular denomination’s concept about Christ and their practices. Even this level can be understood as a reproduction of the primary level. The third level is the academic discourse on Pentecostalism and wider contextual theological enterprise of India and the Majority World.

⁸⁰ Cartledge, *Testimony in the Spirit*, 17-18.

⁸¹ Cartledge, *Testimony in the Spirit*, 19-20.

2.8 The Researcher

It is important to give an exact picture of the researcher in relation to his/her denominational and theological position since, as Swinton and Mowat affirm, ‘qualitative research as a mode of knowledge-formation cannot be understood apart from the person of the researcher who carries it out’.⁸² A researcher should enter into the context of the study with the right questions and methods. While doing the research, s/he needs to understand the impossibility of standing outside of the research field and, therefore, it is vital to carry out critical self-reflection (*reflexivity*) which may help to monitor and respond to the contribution to the proceedings.⁸³

Taking the cue from the above understanding, here I confess that I am a Pentecostal in my faith and an insider to the community I have studied. Having had two decades of involvement with the movement in North India and knowledge and experience of the Pentecostal spirituality, I have seen my research greatly enriched.⁸⁴ Many years of exposure and participation in the context, culture, language and struggles of the common believers, and my experience as a Pastor and a Bible College teacher has helped me comprehend the ordinary theology of the members with more insight. Interaction with the Bible College students from various parts of India, several visits to various churches, ministerial responsibilities and close contact with members of the Pentecostal community in different states of India showing language and cultural diversities enabled me to

⁸² Swinton & Mowat, *Practical Theology*, 59.

⁸³ Swinton & Mowat, *Practical Theology*, 59.

⁸⁴ John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approach* (London: Sage Publications, 2003), 184-185, 200.

appreciate their Christology in their own particular situations which has been of great help because it has enabled me to ‘see through the eyes of the people being studied’ as Bryman affirms.⁸⁵ Familiarity with the people and pastoral experience acted as added advantages, by enabling believers to express their Christological understanding as well as the issues they face without hesitation. Due to my affinity with people and inside knowledge of the situation, I may ‘act as a catalyst’ and can ‘enable people to develop their own analysis’.⁸⁶ Simultaneously, my South-Indian background within a different cultural context, life-style and many years of theological education in ecumenical settings has enabled me to view the movement and its theology with critical distance. Thus, both the insider (*emic*) and outsider (*etic*) orientations allowed me to be ‘sensitively critical and yet constructive’.⁸⁷

2.9 Research Methods

The primary aim of this project is to find out what the common Pentecostal believers’ ideas on the person and work of Christ are in their particular situations. To achieve this end, the research was carried out using qualitative research methods such as personal interviews, focus groups, participant observation and informal interaction with Pentecostals. This is exploratory research into the ordinary *beliefs, practices and consequences* of the Christology of Pentecostal believers.

⁸⁵ Alan Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 279.

⁸⁶ Ernest T. Stringer, *Action Research*, 2nd ed. (London: Sage Publications, 1999), 25.

⁸⁷ Cartledge, *Testimony in the Spirit*, 21; Stringer, *Action Research*, 25-26.

Three Pentecostal churches were selected for the project and all are located in the two North-Indian states, Rajasthan and Gujarat. They were selected owing to the fact that they represent the character of the membership pattern of Indian Pentecostalism; they comprise predominantly Tribal and Dalit members, with a few people from Hindu religious background and local and South Indian Christians. The names of particular churches and their locations are withheld, owing to the hostility shown against Christians, especially against Pentecostals, in these states. These churches were selected after having given due consideration to the representative character of Indian Pentecostal churches.⁸⁸ One is from an inner village with almost 200 members; another one is in a city and has more than 600 members while the third one is in a town and has 100 members.⁸⁹ In the village and town churches the members are illiterate or semi-literate and come from poor backgrounds; however, most of the members in the city church are educated and in better social and economic standing. Moreover, the three churches also represent the participation of various people groups: Tribal-groups, Dalits, various caste-groups from Hindu background, and also Christians from South India and the locality.⁹⁰ At the same time, other churches of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra were also visited while members from states of Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Punjab were also interviewed so as to accommodate the diverse nature of Pentecostalism in India.

⁸⁸ Jane Ritchie, Jane Lewis & Gilian Elam, 'Designing and Selecting Samples,' in *Qualitative Research Practice: A Guide for Social Science Students and Researchers*, edited by Jane Ritchie & Jane Lewis (London: Sage Publications, 2003), 77-107; Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 84-88.

⁸⁹ The membership is not the exact count as pastors hesitate to give exact number of members due to the volatile situation.

⁹⁰ Tribals and Dalits formed about 80% of the interviewees. The village church does not have any South Indian Christians. Uwe Flick, *An Introduction to Qualitative Research* (London: Sage Publications, 1998), 64-66.

In order to gain access to these churches, I sent letters to their Pastors explaining what my objectives were; they were happy to accommodate me, after having discussed the matter with members of their congregations.⁹¹ I explained the details of the project and clarified all the questions and doubts of the church officials.⁹² The main concern of the Pastors was that names of the churches, pastors and members should not be made public, because of unsettled conditions.⁹³ I assured them that these details would be withheld and only pseudonyms would be used and, if needed, a draft of the manuscript of the project would be sent to them to verify the facts.⁹⁴

The actual research was carried out on a full time basis between June and October 2009. My inside knowledge of the people and the movement as well as knowledge of the culture and context of the study added more depth and colour to the research.

The data was collected using various qualitative research methods such as participant observation of worship services, personal interviews, focus group interviews, and documentary analysis. The data was also triangulated, so as to essentially crosscheck the veracity of the materials, both oral and written. This is done to eradicate any possible distortion in the data and avoid any extreme positions or ideological views.⁹⁵

⁹¹ Creswell, *Research Design*, 65.

⁹² Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 512.

⁹³ For instance, Wessly Lukose gives an account of the difficulties encountered by the Pentecostal churches in these states; see Wessly Lukose, 'A Contextual Missiology of the Spirit: A Study of Pentecostalism in Rajasthan, India' (PhD Thesis, University of Birmingham, England, 2009), 26-27.

⁹⁴ Creswell, *Research Design*, 201-202; Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 513-514.

⁹⁵ Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 545; Creswell, *Research Design*, 204.

2.9.1 Ethical Review

This project was undertaken following the stipulations of the Ethical Review Guidelines of University of Birmingham with respect to the participants' rights, sensitivities and right to privacy.⁹⁶ The participants were clearly informed that their conversations would be recorded using an audio recorder, if this was allowed, and therefore they needed to sign a consent form stating that their involvement was entirely voluntary. They were also informed that they were under no compulsion to participate in the interview and focus group and that at any point in time they had every right to withdraw from the project, if they so wished to.⁹⁷ Privacy and confidentiality was assured; their actual names were withheld and only pseudonyms appear in the project.⁹⁸ Detailed information is stored securely and will be destroyed after seven years.

I also explained to the would-be participants that there would be no negative consequences for them, if they chose to withdraw from the project.⁹⁹ They were also informed that they were entitled to see the transcript of the project, so as to ensure there was no misrepresentation.¹⁰⁰ All the participants readily agreed to these arrangements and were happy to narrate their personal stories and views.

2.9.2 Participant Observation

Participant-observation is one of the best ethnographic methods because it allows the researcher to immerse in a group for a period thus observing the life-styles,

⁹⁶ Ethical approval for field research was granted in the month of June 2009.

⁹⁷ Creswell, *Research Design*, 64-65.

⁹⁸ Creswell, *Research Design*, 64-65; Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 356.

⁹⁹ Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 356; Finch & Lewis, 'Focus Group,' 178.

¹⁰⁰ Creswell, *Research Design*, 66-67.

listening to people's experiences and asking questions directly.¹⁰¹ This is done overtly, after the people concerned have agreed.¹⁰²

2.9.2.1 Sunday Services

I attended Sunday services of each church for three weeks simultaneously and took notes. I also participated in their worship (singing, Psalm-reading and Holy Communion) and also explained the aims of the project to the believers. The songs, sermons from the pastors and the testimonies of believers in the services were recorded using the audio recorder and also noted down.¹⁰³ Furthermore, as mentioned, I also visited other churches in the states of Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Kerala.¹⁰⁴ In general the essential content of the worship in these churches is similar. However, there were perceived differences also. For instance, in the village church, the songs were sung in local dialect or in Hindi, while in the city church both Hindi as well as English songs were sung. In the town church the majority of the songs were sung in Hindi. Worship in the village church lasted four hours, while in the city church it lasted only two hours. The songs, sermons and particularly testimonies proved to be rich sources of the people's understanding of Christ. Testimonies (which were often rather lengthy) by members explained their struggles and the way God had answered their prayers. Immediately after the service, people gathered for special prayer for healing and other matters. Bottles of oil and water were prayed over to be used later in the case of any sickness.

¹⁰¹ Colin Robson, *Real World Research: A Resource for Social Scientists and Practitioner-Researchers* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 320-322; Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 292.

¹⁰² Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 301-302. Also see Creswell, *Research Design*, 186.

¹⁰³ Cartledge, *Practical Theology*, 85.

¹⁰⁴ See appendix 5.

2.9.2.2 Prayer Meetings

I also attended the Friday fasting prayer of both the village and town church and participated in prayer meetings of the above mentioned states as well. In these meetings people prayed for healing; exorcisms were carried out and special prayers for blessing and protection were offered. Moreover, a sermon was preached by the Pastor and special prayers were offered for church growth and evangelistic activities. In the village church, I got the opportunity to attend the baptism service of new converts and also listened to their conversion stories as they were told before baptism took place.

All these churches have regular ‘area prayer’ in different locations, in the evenings; these prayers are conducted in believers’ homes. I attended many of these prayer meetings during the research period. Personal testimonies were often given in these meeting and a short exhortation or message was given by the leader. This is a time of fellowship, prayer and of sharing a meal.

2.9.3 Personal Interviews

Interviewing the Pastors, lay leaders and members is another important method to draw out the contextual experiences and the Christological framework of Indian Pentecostalism. Both formal and informal interviews were conducted to accommodate wider views. Semi-structured interviewing was used as most of the people are illiterate or semi-literate in a village context.¹⁰⁵ Since many of the interviewees were not formally educated, Pastors selected the people for me, as they knew those who could speak and articulate the Christological notions. I

¹⁰⁵ Robin Legard, Jill Keegan & Kit Ward, ‘In-depth Interviews,’ in *Qualitative Research Practice*, 138-168; Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 318-324; Cartledge, *Practical Theology*, 86.

asked the Pastors to select members from a wide range of categories such as women, men, youths, the newly converted as well as members with long experience and those who were involved in church activities and so on to get more inclusive views. Here more participation was given to women as a few of them only participated in focus groups (due to the nature of much of Indian society). When women were being interviewed, one more person accompanied them for the duration of interview, because of cultural sensitivities.

2.9.3.1 Formal Interviews

Ten people were interviewed; out of them six were women (60%). Four (40%) of them were new believers, five (50%) of them were less than 35 years of age. Two (20%) of the interviewees were evangelists who had no theological education. Almost 80% of them were either illiterate or semi-literate. More participation was also given to youths and newly converted believers, as the interviews were meant to understand the life experiences of the people and how they appropriated Christological notions in their daily lives.¹⁰⁶ They were asked to narrate their life-stories specifically, their life before conversion (including their religious lives, suffering, sickness etc); the circumstances in which their conversion had taken place; the opposition they faced, and the transformation that had happened in their lives.¹⁰⁷ After hearing the stories, they were asked a few questions such as, how they understand Christ in their personal, family and community lives; what

¹⁰⁶ Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 322-323.

¹⁰⁷ Uwe Flick, *An Introduction to Qualitative Research* (London: Sage Publications, 1998), 98-101; Creswell, *Research Design*, 185-188.

changes (spiritual, financial) their lives have experienced; how they testify about Christ to others, and so on.¹⁰⁸

2.9.3.2 Informal Interviews

To accommodate the wide variety of voices of Pentecostalism in India, informal interviews were conducted among people from the different states mentioned above. These include ordinary members, area leaders, evangelists and pastors, male and female, young and old. Seventy five people were interviewed in thirteen different places. Besides, I interacted informally with a large number of people on several occasions and noted down their views regarding Christ. Data was recorded using an audio-recorder.

2.9.4 Documentary Analysis

The village and the town churches that were studied do not have, as yet, any documents regarding their faith affirmation or doctrinal statements. These churches were established recently and the members are generally poor and uneducated. Therefore, there is a complete lack of documents. The city church, however, does have its own formal faith affirmation though not documents of any significance. The denomination of the city church and the village church (both of them belong to same denomination) has significant amounts of information regarding mission, charity and spiritual activities. There are two magazines that published periodically in English and Hindi. I acquired several copies of them and also copied electronically some of the old issues where copies were unavailable. These magazines give us valuable information on various mission activities,

¹⁰⁸ See the questions in appendix 9.

stories of church growth, healing miracles, their conception of Christ and other doctrinal statements. I have obtained some biographies, compact discs containing testimonies and programmes, and song books published by the respective denominational headquarters of the various churches.¹⁰⁹

2.9.5 Focus Groups

To understand the deeply-rooted Christological perception of the Pentecostal community in the Indian setting, it is central to gather their collective views on the person and work of Christ. This is possible through the practice of testimony by members participating in conversations. In the Pentecostal setting, the usual practice of narrating the personal and corporate testimony in a worship context, as well as in informal gatherings, was found to be an excellent method to obtain the communitarian understanding on Christ.¹¹⁰ Therefore, I decided to conduct informal ‘focus groups’ where people speak about their testimonies and views freely in a non-threatening environment; while keeping the subject focus in view.¹¹¹ It was a suitable method to go deeply into the theme we intended to explore and also a means to ‘develop an understanding on *why* people feel the way they do’.¹¹² It was the best way to appreciate the testimony in context, as participants were completely at ease about sharing their personal stories with one another.¹¹³ Moreover, the believers were able to bring forth the issues that they deemed to be significant and came out with a general consensus, or difference. It was also helpful to listen to conversations among the participants: their reactions

¹⁰⁹ Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 381-384; Robson, *Real World Research*, 348-351.

¹¹⁰ Cartledge, *Practical Theology*, 52-60.

¹¹¹ Helen Finch & Jane Lewis, ‘Focus Group,’ in *Qualitative Research Practice*, 170-198; Robson, *Real World Research*, 284-286.

¹¹² Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 348

¹¹³ Cartledge, *Testimony in the Spirit*, 18.

and facial expressions enabled me to have a better grasp on the subject in question.¹¹⁴

The participants were selected from diverse age groups, new and experienced believers, and those who were involved in the Christian ministry. The village church consisted of people of the same ethnicity, language and culture. In the city and town churches, the participants were selected in part by looking into the ethnicity, language, education and financial condition of the members. The Pastors were careful to select the believers who were competent enough to speak about the subject. The number of women was kept lowest in the village and town church owing to the cultural setting of these contexts. I was also informed by one pastor that some people might be unable to speak about the subject and that the language barrier can create a communication gap.

Nine focus groups were conducted, three sessions in each church. In each church twelve people were invited to participate on the assumption that some would not turn up. In the village church all twelve people participated; however, in the city and town churches eight and ten people attended the sessions respectively. The average group size was ten.

The first focus group was conducted in the city church on Sunday July 12, 2009, immediately after their main worship service and continued over the following two Sundays. Eight people participated in the group, including two women. Those who participated were recommended by the senior Pastor. All of the participants were educated; however, none had a theological background. The discussion took

¹¹⁴ Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 348.

place in Hindi. The participants did enthusiastically participate in the discussion and suggested that a deep-rooted understanding of Christ was imperative in their lives.

The second focus group first met in the village Church on August 2, 2009 and continued for the next two Sundays. The participants were mostly evangelists who worked among the tribal villages; no women participated. Almost all of these participants were semi-literate or illiterate. Twelve people participated in the discussion and aired their views on Christ and on how they did ministry among the non-believers.

The third focus group was conducted in the town church. The focus groups were on 6 September, 2009 and two subsequent Sundays. Ten people participated in them. This group was a mixture of church members, lay leaders and evangelists.

The focus groups included 28 men (93.3%) and 2 women (6.6%). The number of men between the ages of 20-29 was 9 (30%); 30-39 was 8 (26.6%); 40-49 was 4 (13.3%); 50-59 was 5 (16.6%); 60-69 was 2 (6.6%). Participation of the women in the focus groups was considerably lower (only 2) in comparison to that of men. However, as already mentioned, women were given preference in the personal interviews to compensate for this imbalance. The village church consisted entirely of believers from Tribal background; however, in the town church along with Tribal believers, there were believers from Dalit and Hindu settings. The city church included believers from Tribal, Hindu and South-Indian Christian background, as well as those speaking different languages. The participants specified their occupations. In the village and town churches most of them were

farmers or labourers; however, along with their work they were also involved in evangelistic and pastoral ministries. In the city church participants had different professions such as business, working for private firms, teachers, doctors, government employees, and so on.

Over the discussion sessions, some of the participants were asked to narrate their testimony – the conversion experience, the way they experienced Christ on a daily basis and the changes triggered in their lives.¹¹⁵ Taking the clues from the testimonies, a number of questions related to the person and work of Christ were asked to the believers and a lively discussion followed.¹¹⁶

Each focus group recording was subsequently transcribed using content analysis which highlights the major Christological themes emphasised by the participants.¹¹⁷ These themes were compared with other sources appearing in published documents and songs as well as the data collected from participant observation and personal interviews.¹¹⁸

2.9.6 Data Analysis

The data created from participant observations, personal interviews and focus groups was transcribed, typed and read carefully. Then the data was broken down into discrete parts, closely examined, compared for similarities and differences,

¹¹⁵ In the village and town church the focus groups were conducted in the church building. In the city church, it was in a conference room near the church complex. Once participants arrived, their names and other information were noted down. Then I welcomed them and explained the nature and purpose of the project. I also explained how the focus group is useful for this project and how the event would be managed. See Finch & Lewis, 'Focus Group,' 176-177; Flick, *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*, 118-119.

¹¹⁶ Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 355-356.

¹¹⁷ Robson, *Real World Research*, 352-357; Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 348-349, 398-411; Finch & Lewis, 'Focus Group,' 196.

¹¹⁸ Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 275; Creswell, *Research Design*, 195-196.

and questions were asked about the phenomena as reflected in the data.¹¹⁹ The sections of them which seemed to be distinct incidents and stated opinions about important topics were then highlighted.¹²⁰ Then prominent ideas and topics were *coded*.¹²¹ These codes gave rise to seven themes which are discussed in Chapter Six.¹²² These themes are closely interconnected and form a *grounded theory* which will be explained in the same chapter.¹²³

The data collected has a wide range of implications in personal, family, community and the social lives of the people. They point to intimate experiences and life situations of the respondents and larger sections of the society and can be useful in drawing out various levels of conceptualisation in the spiritual, social, political and economic realms.

Summing up, it is obvious that Indian Pentecostals cherish an ‘ordinary’ Christology emerging from their experiences in their contexts. To unearth and comprehend this Christological heritage, it is essential to carry out our research using empirical methodological tools. Therefore, we turned to interviews, focus groups, participant observation and so on for data collection. In the following chapter we shall explore the general Indian context to find out what the contextual experiences of the people are. The study will focus on various issues arising in

¹¹⁹ Juliet Corbin & Anselm Strauss, *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1990), 62.

¹²⁰ Creswell, *Research Design*, 190-192.

¹²¹ G. B. Rossman & S. F. Rallis, *Learning in the Field: An Introduction to Qualitative Research* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1988), 171; Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 402.

¹²² Creswell, *Research Design*, 193-194.

¹²³ See the diagram at the end of chapter 6; Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 401-405; A. Strauss & J. M. Corbin, *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1998), 12.

Indian society, which affect the Pentecostals and act as catalysts to their Christological articulations.

Chapter 3

THE INDIAN CONTEXT

This chapter will address the contemporary Indian society in which Pentecostal churches are emerging and growing in order to understand the contextual experiences of Pentecostals, by placing their Christology firmly within the context. To achieve this aim we need to consider the general socio-political, religio-cultural and economic conditions which affect the Pentecostals, so as to understand how theology, especially Christology, is being shaped by these factors. It has already been mentioned that the Pentecostal movement is growing fast among Tribal people, Dalits and other lower castes in Indian society, who are mostly poor and illiterate or semi-literate. Therefore, the Christological perception among these people is intricately conjoined to their immediate context, as well as their struggles. Besides, the former factors essentially offer multilayered interpretations to their Christological understanding. Hence, it is important to consider the context in which the various Christological features are continuously being added and explained. There are many issues to consider; however, here we will limit our focus on some of the most pressing issues directly affecting common Pentecostal believers; these are discussed in the pages that follow.

The structure of the Indian society has undergone considerable change in the last decade; currently, India is undergoing one of the most dramatic and transformational events in its history. Its tremendous growth in the industrial and commercial sectors, showing massive economic growth potential for the coming

years, makes India a genuine world power candidate.¹ However, in the midst of incredible economic advances, a major chunk of the population has been left behind to fend for themselves in utter poverty and impoverishment due to corruption, nepotism and faulty policies of successive governments, as we shall see. Paradoxically, the Indian Constitution claims India to be a sovereign, democratic republic, assuring its citizens justice, equality and liberty and promoting fraternity among them all. By constitutional amendment in 1976, the concepts of socialist and secular ideals were added to promote and keep the real spirit of democracy and freedom of religions among all citizens.² However, a cursory glance into the grass-root strata of Indian society would definitely persuade most people that India is a nation of teeming paradoxes.

3.1 India: An Emerging Power

India is the world's fifth largest economy and an expanding market; it now stands amongst the leading powers of the world.³ India's GDP rate has been one of the highest in the world for the past several years. 'Within five years, India's growth rate will overtake China,' claims Kaushik Basu.⁴ Experts have projected that, 30

¹ Sunil Bharati Mittal, 'Market Unbound,' *India Today* XXXIV/34 (18-24 August 2009): 60.

² The Preamble of the Constitution of India says, 'We, the people of India, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a sovereign socialist secular democratic republic and to secure to all its citizens: justice, social, economic and political; liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship; equality of status and of opportunity; and to promote among them all fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the nation; in our constituent assembly this twenty-sixth day of November, 1949, do hereby adopt, enact and give to ourselves this constitution.' See Constitution of India, http://india.gov.in/govt/documents/english/coi_part_full.pdf (accessed 10 January 2010).

³ Dilip Bobb, 'Year of Revival,' *India Today* (11 January 2010); <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/site/Story/77320/Cover%20Story/Year+of+revival.html> (accessed 14 January 2010).

⁴ Kaushick Basu is the prime minister's chief economic advisor, Kaushick Basu, Interview given to NDTV News Channel on 6 January 2010, http://www.ndtv.com/news/videos/video_player.php?id=1190535 (accessed 6 January 2010).

to 40 years from now India will be a developed country.⁵ Various reasons can be argued in favour of this perception. India is blessed with enormous and unique resources; it has huge tracts of fertile land with significant climate and coastal diversity, which help the country grow anything and everything.⁶ Besides, more than half of India's population today is under 25 years of age and, more importantly, about 40% is under the age of 18. India has a stable democracy and, most significantly, its youth have a very strong entrepreneurial spirit.⁷ 'A longstanding productive working population and a huge domestic consumer market, India is predicted to become the fifth largest consumer market in the world by 2025,' predicts Sunil Mittal, the Chairman of Bharti Enterprises.⁸

India has achieved significant growth in information and communication technology, as in both the medical and educational fields.⁹ India has some of the finest colleges in the world, specialising in various disciplines.¹⁰ Indian scientists are not lagging behind in key areas of cutting edge research and are rubbing shoulders with the developed world. Even in the latest stem cell research, India

⁵ For instance, Hans Rosling, 'Asia's Rise - How and When,' *TED India 2009*, (Filmed November 2009, Posted November 2009), http://www.ted.com/talks/hans_rosling_asia_s_rise_how_and_when.html (accessed 4 January 2010); Hans Rosling is a professor of global health at Sweden's Karolinska Institute and he gives an excellent and scholarly projection of the economic growth of India.

⁶ Jagdish N. Sheth, 'Great Ideas, Great Minds,' *India Today* (6 October 2008), <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/site/story?sId=16109&secid=30> (accessed 16 December 2009).

⁷ Samit Basu, 'Brave New Demography: Youth Power,' *India Today* (14 December 2009), <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/site/story?sId=73519&secid=30> (accessed 16 December 2009).

⁸ Mittal, 'Market Unbound,' 60.

⁹ Moreover, India is the fifth-largest producer of electricity in the world. It has the second-largest road network in the world, the second-largest rail network under single management, and a civil aviation market that will touch 100 million passengers by next year. It also has the third-largest number of telephone subscribers of the world over; Aroon Purie, 'From the Editor-in-Chief,' *India Today*, (19 October 2009), <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/site/story?sId=65455&secid=39> (accessed 16 December 2009).

¹⁰ Raj Chengappa, 'India's Best Colleges,' *India Today* (2 June 2008), <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/site/story?sId=8688&secid=30> (accessed 16 December 2009).

has proved its mettle. 'India now has a global presence in both basic and clinical research in stem cells. We are in the big league now,' says D. Balasubramanian.¹¹

The introduction of free market economy and its neo-liberal policies, as well as the resultant rapid economic growth of the past few years, have created a new brand of urban upper and middle class who have purchasing power. A recent survey conducted by market researcher Nielsen across 35 cities shows that, for affluent individuals, gyms, spas and beauty parlours are the new hangout zones, while fine dining and shopping are high priorities. The survey estimates a total of 2.5 million affluent households in India.¹²

A recent book by Australian author Geoff Hiscock, an expert on Asian economies, concludes that, as the Indian consumer seeks new experiences from food and wine, installs luxuries such as in-home spas and holidays in exotic destinations, modern retail is on its way to becoming the key driver of the country's economy. India's consumer demand, like China's, is simply unstoppable. Younger Indians are more confident and are willing to borrow to finance their consumption.¹³ A MasterCard study estimates that, by 2015, the growing affluent class will spend \$36 billion on shopping, dining and leisure; \$15.3 billion on automobiles,

¹¹ Quoted by Raj Chengappa, 'How Stem Cells can Save your Life,' *India Today* (25 January 2010), <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/site/Story/79189/Cover%20Story/How+stem+cells+can+save+your+life.html> (accessed 29 January 2010); D. Balasubramanian is the L.V. Prasad's director of research and recently chairman of the apex government committee overseeing stem cells work in India.

¹² No Author, 'What's Hot,' *India Today* (9 November 2009), <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/site/Story/68638/Lifestyle/What> (accessed 16 December 2009); Eight in 10 Upper Middle and Rich (UMAR) eat out regularly and shopping is a craze: nine in 10 shop at modern retail stores, mainly for footwear, jewellery, handbags, sunglasses, cosmetics, fragrances, pens and watches. Nine in 10 affluent individuals own a house and two in five have a home theatre and/or modular kitchen.

¹³ Geoff Hiscock, *India's Store Wars: Retail Revolution and the Battle for the Next 500 million Shoppers* (Singapore: John Wiley & Sons (Asia) Pte. Ltd, 2008). According to the latest research in the India Retail Report 2009, retail spending by Indian consumers is expected to rise from \$300 billion now to \$400 billion by 2010; See No Author, 'What's Hot.'

personal computers, mobile phones, health and medicine and, consequently, in so doing they will stimulate the cycle of consumption, investment and job creation.¹⁴ Of course, these facts and figures present a euphoric impression for those who see from the peripheries.

3.2 India: A Nation of Inequalities

Ironically, all these achievements have been enjoyed by a section of Indian society only. A close scrutiny gives us a picture which is entirely different from the above-mentioned facts and figures. It is important not to lose sight of the fact that the recent economic growth has been more lopsided than ever before. Furthermore, large sections of the country's population continue to suffer, very acutely, with reference to a whole range of development deficits. Rather than alleviating the wretched condition of the poor and the downtrodden, the so-called liberalisation of the economy and globalisation have only helped the politically powerful and the rich few.¹⁵ The glaring inequality that exists in the country is vividly portrayed by Aiyer:

In a country where over 77% of the populace, or an estimated 836 million people, earn an income of Rs.20 per day and over 300 million are living below the poverty line, nearly half the Rajya Sabha¹⁶

¹⁴ Malini Bhupta, 'The Job Bonanza,' *India Today* (7 May 2007), <http://www.indiatoday.com/itoday/20070507/cover1.html> (accessed 9 November 2009). Also see V. Sridhar, 'Retail Invasion,' *Frontline* 24/13 (30 June – 13 July, 2007), <http://www.frontlineonnet.com/fl2413/stories/20070713005300400.htm> (accessed 18 December 2009).

¹⁵ See Praveen Jha & Mario Negre, 'Indian Economy in the Era of Contemporary Globalisation: Some Core Elements of the Balance Sheet,' *Macroscan* (17 May 2007), <http://www.macroscan.org/anl/may07/anl170507Indian%20Economy.htm> (accessed 10 November 2009).

¹⁶ Rajya Sabha is the upper house of the Indian Parliament.

members and nearly a third of those from the Lok Sabha¹⁷ are worth a crore (10 million) and more.¹⁸

The stark contradiction between the condition of the state and the wealth of the legislators is baffling. Uttar Pradesh has 59 million, or over a third of its population, living below the poverty line. However, the Chief Minister Mayawati is the richest chief minister in all states while also boasting of 113 crorepati MLAs.¹⁹ Similarly, Madhya Pradesh has over 25 million (of the 60 million people) living below the poverty line, boasts of 80 crorepati MLAs.²⁰

The disparity between the rich and the poor is increasing day by day. The income of the minority indeed has been rising fast but, at the same time, the income of the majority has been stagnating or falling.²¹ Among wage and salary earners, the top 20% of the population in urban India earns 56% of the income while the bottom 20% earns barely 3.4% of the income.²²

The social and economic conditions of indigenous peoples like Dalits and Tribal groups have been adversely affected by their integration into the global economy through market-driven processes. According to Aiyar, 301 million, a fourth of the

¹⁷ Lok Sabha is the lower house of the Indian Parliament.

¹⁸ See Shankkar Aiyar, 'Richest Politicians,' *India Today* (23 February 2009), <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/site/story?sId=28888&secid=30> (accessed 10 November 2009). He adds: Just the top ten Rajya Sabha members and the top ten Lok Sabha members have reported a cumulative net asset worth Rs. 1500 crore (crore =10 million)...Members of legislative assemblies seem wealthier than many MPs. The top five MLAs across the 30 states are worth Rs. 2042 crore. The 10 top losers in the last Lok Sabha polls—including Nyimthungo of Nagaland who reported total assets of Rs. 9005 crore- is Rs. 9329 crore. The Marxists are the only exception in this study. The CPI (M) has 301 MLAs across 10 states but has only two MLAs with declared assets of over Rs. 1 crore. Of the 537 candidates who contested on a CPI (M) ticket, only seven had assets of over Rs. 1 crore, of which five lost in the elections.

¹⁹ MLA = Member of Legislative Assembly (People's representative from the state).

²⁰ See Aiyar, 'Richest Politicians.'

²¹ Utsa Patnaik, 'A World of Distress,' *Frontline* 26/07 (28 March - 10 April 2009), <http://www.frontlineonnet.com/fl2607/stories/20090410260701100.htm> (accessed 11 November 2009).

²² Shankkar Aiyar, 'Inclusive Inequality,' *India Today* (24 September 2007), <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/site/story/Inclusive+inequality/1/1235.html> (accessed 12 November 2009).

population (of 1,111 million) is living off less than a dollar a day.²³

Simultaneously, India is also home to at least 36 dollar-billionaires. At the height of the stock market boom, the wealth of just five individuals in the country exceeded \$100 billion, or 10% of the GDP. One could argue that much of this is anecdotal evidence and that poverty has come down in the post-liberalisation era. Indeed, there is some evidence of a trickle-down effect.²⁴

The poverty level has dropped by 8.38%, from 35% to 27%, in the two 10-year periods; between 1993-94 and between 2004-05. 'Perhaps, the high tide of the last two years of 9-plus per cent growth may have lifted many more boats to the shore. But has the theory of percolation worked?' 'Not quite,' says Aiyar.²⁵ Yes, there is marginal growth and a few poor are earning more, but the distance between the poor and the rich, whether in villages or in metros, is widening. An *India Today* study based on data from the National Sample Survey Organisation for the periods 1993-94 and 2004-05 reports that expenditure and income show that inequality, as measured by the Gini coefficient,²⁶ has gone up across the country. 'Inequality, indeed, is the only constant across states, castes, religions and segments,' laments Aiyar.²⁷

²³ Aiyar, 'Inclusive Inequality.'

²⁴ Aiyar, 'Inclusive Inequality.'

²⁵ Aiyar, 'Inclusive Inequality.'

²⁶ The Gini coefficient is a measure of statistical dispersion developed by the Italian statistician Corrado Gini and published in his 1912 paper 'Variability and Mutability'. It is commonly used as a measure of inequality of income or wealth. It has, however, also found application in the study of inequalities in disciplines as diverse as Health Science, Ecology, and Chemistry.

²⁷ Aiyar, 'Inclusive Inequality.' The reason behind this is, the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) aimed at promoting child health and nutrition is not working properly.

3.2.1 Poverty

India is fast earning the dubious distinction of being ‘the hunger capital of the world’. The nutritional status of children has not improved over the past five years.²⁸ India has 40% of the malnourished children of the world. Roughly one-third of all children in India are under-weight.

Paradoxically, a survey in a private school in Delhi has found that roughly one-third of the children there are obese.²⁹ ‘The rise in per capita total grain demand of the minority, which is getting richer and demanding more animal products, is being more than cancelled out by an enforced fall in per capita grain demand of the majority which is stagnating or getting absolutely poorer,’ observes Patnaik.³⁰ The result is an overall decline of food intake of the poor and increase in mass hunger.³¹ The National Sample Survey data on consumption shows that, between 1993-94 and 2004-05, over 60% of India’s rural population has seen a substantial absolute decline in the intake of both cereals and animal products such as milk, eggs and meat, while the top 10% registered a sharp rise in animal product intake, though not in cereal intake.³² ‘Rapid aggregate income growth over the past two decades has not addressed the basic issue of ensuring the food security of the population. Instead, nutrition indicators have stagnated and per capita calorie consumption has actually declined, suggesting that the problem of

²⁸ R. Ramachandran & T. K. Rajalakshmi, ‘Unhealthy Trend,’ *Frontline* 26/07 (28 March – 10 April 2009), <http://www.frontlineonnet.com/fl2607/stories/20090410260702100.htm> (accessed 14 November 2009).

²⁹ Bibek Debroy, ‘A Case for India Whining,’ *India Today* (24 September 2007), <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/site/story?sId=1230&secid=30> (accessed 14 November 2009).

³⁰ Patnaik, ‘A World of Distress.’

³¹ M. K. Misra, *Indian Social Problems* (Jaipur, India: Mark Publishers, 2009), 208-09.

³² Patnaik, ‘A World of Distress.’ Also see, G.C. Manna, ‘On Calibrating the Poverty Line for Poverty Estimation in India,’ *EPW* (28 July 2007): 3108-3115.

hunger may have got worse rather than better,' observes Ghosh.³³ At the same time thousands of tonnes of food grains are rotting away in the states like Punjab.³⁴ Such a state of affair negatively affects the Pentecostals who are mostly poor.

Rural unemployment is rampant and this leads to poverty and affects the poor badly.³⁵ Even after 61 years of Independence, 318 million Indians do not have access to safe drinking water.³⁶ Even when they have, as the UNDP report reports, poor people 'still have to pay for their water, sometimes 10 to 20 times more than their richer neighbours'.³⁷

The struggles of the common people, especially farmers, are increasing day by day. Agrarian depression continues, as do farmer suicides. Every year, over 20,000 farmers commit suicide out of despair over failing crops and impossibly high debt.³⁸ Mujumdar sarcastically comments the evil effect of the liberalisation of the economy on the poor masses:

In the euphoria of liberalisation and globalisation of the Indian economy, agriculture became the Cinderella of Indian policy-makers.

Blessed were they who debunked the whole philosophy of planned

³³ Jayati Ghosh, 'Securing Food for the People,' *Macroscan* (18 August 2009), <http://www.Macroscan.org/cur/aug09/cur180809Food.htm> (accessed 16 November 2009).

³⁴ NDTV News, 'Pawar Promises Action after NDTV Report on Wasted Wheat,' *NDTV News* (18 March 2010), http://www.ndtv.com/news/videos/video_player.php?id=1209941 (accessed 19 March 2010).

³⁵ Abhiroop Mukhopadhyay & Indira Rajaraman, 'Rural Unemployment 1999-2005: Who Gained, Who Lost?,' *EPW* (28 July 2007): 3116-3120; K. Sundaram, 'Employment and Poverty in India 2000-2005,' *EPW* (28 July 2007): 3121-3131.

³⁶ N. R. Narayana Murthy, *A Better India, A Better World* (New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd, 2009), xiii.

³⁷ Quoted by Jayanta Bandyopadhyay, 'Endless Thirst,' *India Today* (6 October 2008), <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/site/story?sId=16141&secid=3> (accessed 17 November 2009).

³⁸ N. A. Mujumdar, 'Rural Development: New Perceptions,' *EPW* (28 September 2002): 3983, <http://epw.in.ezproxid.bham.ac.uk/epw/uploads/articles/4601.pdf> (accessed 16 November 2009).

economic development: those who exulted in the alleged miraculous powers of the market-led economy believed that they have begun to live in heaven. Economic reforms created an adversarial environment for agricultural growth and rural development.³⁹

‘The situation is deteriorating rapidly and the entire farming sector is heading for a total collapse, if no rapid remedial measures are taken,’ warns eminent agriculture scientist M.S. Swaminathan.⁴⁰ Similarly, Professor K. Nagaraj’s recent study of farmer suicides shows a higher incidence in states that produce export crops, as well as in certain Tribal population-predominant states.⁴¹ Such a predicament badly affects the common populace, especially Dalits and *Adivasis* (Tribal people) who form most of the Pentecostal believers in North India.

3.2.2 Incapacitated Education

Today, India has the largest number of illiterate people in the world, over 390 million. Twenty five million Indian children are out of school, accounting for 20% of the world’s total.⁴² The reason is Primary Education is in shambles. Going by enrolment statistics in India’s schools, one may think that the country is doing well;⁴³ however, as per recent count, around one-fifth of all primary rural schools in the country do not have a building to house students and another one-fourth

³⁹ Mujumdar, ‘Rural Development,’ 3983; Also see Utsa Patnaik, ‘Neoliberalism and Rural Poverty in India,’ *EPW* (28 July 2007): 3132-3150.

⁴⁰ Quoted by Raj Chengappa & Ramesh Vinayak, ‘Grain Drain,’ *India Today* (11 June 2007), <http://www.indiatoday.com/itoday/20070611/cover1.html> (accessed 17 November 2009); M.S. Swaminathan is currently chairman of National Commission on Farmers.

⁴¹ K. Nagaraj, ‘Farmer Suicides in India: Magnitudes, Trends and Spatial Patterns,’ *Macroscan* (March 2008), http://www.macroscan.org/anl/mar08/pdf/Farmers_Suicides.pdf (accessed 18 November 2009).

⁴² Narayana Murthy, *A Better India*, 138.

⁴³ For instance, between 1991 and 2003, the gross enrolment ratio in primary education rose from 82 to 95% and in upper primary education from 54 to 61%. See Murthy, *A Better India*, 138-139.

have only one room and one teacher for all five classes. This number rises to 40% in states like Assam and Arunachal Pradesh.⁴⁴ According to Murthy, a survey by Harvard University's Michael Kremer found that one out of four teachers in government owned elementary schools was absent at any given time.⁴⁵ A recent national survey revealed that close to 35% of children in the 7-14 age group surveyed could not read a simple paragraph and almost 60% could not read a simple story. The average drop-out rate in state schools is 53%. According to an assessment undertaken at a national level, there is an estimated shortage of about one million classrooms and 2.5 million school teachers.⁴⁶ However, in cities there are schools of international standard which are affordable only to the rich.

Indian higher education also faces difficulty.⁴⁷ Just one out of nine children finishing school joins a college.⁴⁸ A study by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council showed that 90% of the colleges and 70% of the universities that the Council graded were of average or poor quality. Indian students now spend \$7 billion to go abroad and study in foreign universities, because of the poor quality of education at home.⁴⁹ Such a condition of the educational system badly affects the Pentecostals who are poor and live in inner villages.

⁴⁴ Jha & Negre, 'Indian Economy.'

⁴⁵ Narayana Murthy, *A Better India*, 139.

⁴⁶ Narayana Murthy, *A Better India*, 139.

⁴⁷ See Narayana Murthy, *A Better India*, 135-138.

⁴⁸ Raj Chengappa, 'Higher Education: How to Clean the Mess,' *India Today* (13 July 2009), <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/site/Story/49794/Higher+Education:+How+to+clean+the+mess.html?page=0> (accessed 18 November 2009).

⁴⁹ Chengappa, 'Higher Education: How to Clean the Mess.'

3.2.3 Incapacitated Health Care

The state of the nation's health is in disarray. It is a well-known scandal that India is practically at the bottom of a list of more than 170 countries, in terms of the proportion of total health expenditure that is financed by the government.⁵⁰ Even today, 250 million do not have access to basic medical care.⁵¹ The findings of NFHS-3⁵² shows that the infant mortality rate (IMR)⁵³ before one year of age, is 57, which means more than one in 18 infants dies before they are one year old. 'The country may be witnessing an 8-9% economic growth and the government may think that India is a world power in the making,' cautions Ramachandran, 'but these findings tell the real story of where all that growth is headed'.⁵⁴ More tellingly, this is equal to the average of all the Least Developed Countries, 2.5 times that of China and eight to 10 times higher than that of developed countries.⁵⁵

The outreach and delivery of integrated child development services is extremely poor. As per NFHS-3 data, the services of an *anganwadi*⁵⁶ are available only to a third of the children and the supplementary food scheme reaches only 26%. As a result, nearly half the children under the age of five are stunted, which reflects their childhood nutritional status. Under-nutrition extends to adults as well. Over

⁵⁰ Venkatesh Athreya, 'Far from Healthy,' *Frontline* 27/01 (2-15 January 2010); <http://www.Frontlineonnet.com/stories/20100115270108400.htm> (accessed 4 January 2010).

⁵¹ Murthy, *A Better India*, xiii.

⁵² The third National Family Health Survey which had carried out during 2005-06.

⁵³ The infant mortality rate is counted on the number per 1,000 children.

⁵⁴ Ramachandran & Rajalakshmi, 'Unhealthy Trend.'

⁵⁵ Ramachandran & Rajalakshmi, 'Unhealthy Trend.' The same is true for children under five, wherein the child mortality rate (CMR) is 74 (one in 13) as compared to 92 of NFHS-2. This is too far from the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of a CMR of 42 by 2015.

⁵⁶ Anganwadi is a government run nursery school in the villages which provides food for poor children.

half the women and nearly one-fourth of the men are anaemic. This is a direct consequence of the continued lack of balanced nutrition from childhood into adulthood, especially among women.⁵⁷

Women are the worst hit in terms of access to health services. According to the NFHS-3 data, only 17.3% of women have ever received any service from a health care worker. Only 17.9% of the public health centres have a woman doctor. As a direct consequence, 56.2% of women (aged 15-49) are anaemic, which actually represents an increase from the NFHS-2 data of 51.8%. The percentage of pregnant women who are anaemic has also increased from 49.7 to 57.9%.⁵⁸ This condition has greatly affected the health of the poor and was clearly testified to in the interviews.

3.2.3.1 Commercialisation of Health-Care

In addition, health-care has slipped into the hands of the private sector, to the peril of the poor. In an environment of private-sector-dominated health care, unnecessary treatments abound. It is estimated that in India two-thirds of the money spent on medical treatment goes towards buying unnecessary drugs because of unnecessary prescriptions by private practitioners. Such an environment has enabled the pharmaceutical industry to thrive.⁵⁹ Many drugs are sold at huge profit margins of 200-400%, thus putting essential drugs beyond the reach of the common masses. Ramachandran & Rajalakshmi remark:

⁵⁷ Ramachandran & Rajalakshmi, 'Unhealthy Trend'; they also add: Nearly one-fifth are underweight for their height, an indicator of both chronic and acute under-nutrition. These figures are nearly double the levels of under-nutrition even in sub-Saharan Africa.

⁵⁸ There is a proliferation of brand names in India, with as many as 80,000 brands in the market. Even so, only 20-40% of the people have access to all the essential drugs they need. See Ramachandran & Rajalakshmi, 'Unhealthy Trend.'

⁵⁹ Ramachandran & Rajalakshmi, 'Unhealthy Trend.'

The prices of drugs have grown at a disproportionately high rate when compared with the Wholesale Price Index (WPI). Yet, policymakers are reluctant to impose any price control because of the industry lobby prevailing over politics. The existing price control regime is far from effective as most essential medicines are outside its purview.⁶⁰

Besides, the government subsidy for health does not reach the poorer sections of the population either. According to a WHO report, only 10% of the total subsidy goes towards the benefit of the poorest 20% of the population, whereas the richest 20% avails itself of 33% of the subsidy.⁶¹ A study conducted by the Economic Research Foundation, New Delhi, remarks, 'The greater reliance on private delivery of health infrastructure and health services, therefore, means that overall these will be socially underprovided by private agents, and also denies adequate access to the poor'.⁶² According to the Report of the National Commission on Macroeconomics and Health, 2005, households undertook nearly three-fourths of all the health spending in the country. Public spending was only 22%, and all other sources accounted for less than 5%. There are many states where households undertake more than 80% of all health spending, indicating an exceptionally high burden upon them.⁶³ Naturally, the poor fall into debt burden or look for alternative healing methods. This explains the popularity of Pentecostal healing and the significance of the Christological perception of Jesus as divine healer.

⁶⁰ Ramachandran & Rajalakshmi, 'Unhealthy Trend.'

⁶¹ Ramachandran & Rajalakshmi, 'Unhealthy Trend.'

⁶² Economic Research Foundation, (New Delhi), 'Government Health Expenditure in India: A Benchmark Study,' *Macroscan* (30 October 2006), http://www.macroscan.com/anl/oct06/anl301006Health_Expenditure.htm (accessed 4 January 2010).

⁶³ Economic Research Foundation, 'Government Health Expenditure.'

3.2.3.2 Ill-Health and Poverty

Ill-health and poor access to health services are increasingly seen as major dimensions of poverty.⁶⁴ Poor people are caught in a vicious circle: poverty breeds ill-health; ill-health results in impoverishment and indebtedness.⁶⁵ Health-care expenditure cuts poor households' budgets in two ways. They have to spend a large amount of money and resources on medical care. They are also unable to earn when ill. Moreover, rural people have a relatively higher burden of indirect costs (such as: expenses on transport; food/stay; tips given to secure access to any person or facility, opportunity; cost of lost wages of the sick, as well as the accompanying person, etc).⁶⁶ Very often the poor have to borrow funds at a high interest rate to meet both medical expenditure and other household consumption needs, which takes them into indebtedness.⁶⁷

Some sources, such as the Commission on Macroeconomics and Health of the World Health Organisation (2001), have argued that better health care is the key to improving not only health but economic growth also. However, it seems difficult to improve the quality of health care delivery in developing countries. A recent survey conducted in 100 hamlets of a poor rural area of Udaipur district, Rajasthan, which is one of the poorest districts in India, with a large Tribal

⁶⁴ Adam Wagstaff, 'Poverty and Health Sector Inequalities,' *Bulletin of the World Health Organisation* 80/2 (2002); http://www.scielosp.org/scielo.php?pid=S0042-96862002000200004&script=sci_arttext&tlng=en (accessed 3 January 2010).

⁶⁵ World Bank, 'India: Raising the Sites-Better Health Systems for India's Poor: Findings, Analysis, and Options,' *Health, Nutrition, and Population Series* (Washington DC, 2002).

⁶⁶ P. R. Sodani, 'Determinants of Demand for Healthcare in Surveyed Tribal Households of Selected Three Districts of Rajasthan,' *Demography India* 28/2 (1999): 257-271; also see K. V. Narayana, 'Changing Health Care System,' *EPW* (22-29 March 2003): 1230-1241; Sonia Andrews & Sailesh Mohan, 'User Charges in Health Care: Some Issues,' *EPW* (14 September 2002): 373-375.

⁶⁷ Akash Acharya & M. Kent Ranson, 'Health Care Financing for the Poor: Community-based Health Insurance Schemes in Gujarat,' *EPW* (17 September 2005): 4141, <http://epw.in.ezproxye.bham.ac.uk/epw/uploads/articles/1133.pdf> (accessed 25 November 2009); Also see No Author, 'Expansion for Profit: Health Care,' *EPW* (24 August 2002): 3476, <http://epw.in.ezproxye.bham.ac.uk/epw/uploads/articles/9714.pdf> (accessed 25 November 2009).

population and an unusually high level of female illiteracy has shed some light on this issue.⁶⁸ Villagers' health is poor despite the fact that they use health care facilities and spend a lot on health-care. The quality of the public service is abysmal and unregulated and private providers, who are often unqualified, provide the bulk of health care in the area.⁶⁹ 'The current health scenario in India is often described as dismal or disturbing,' comments Bose.⁷⁰ Except for a few states like Kerala, Goa and Tamil Nadu which have done relatively well, the situation in most parts of the country is a cause for worry.⁷¹ Such neglect of people's welfare, by both state governments and central government, have played a major role in the emergence of Maoist armed insurgencies (naxalism) in the states of Jharkhand, Orissa, West Bengal and Bihar. Now they are a major security threat for the governments of these states.⁷² This poor condition of the health care system gives credence to healing ministries of the Pentecostal churches.

⁶⁸ Abhijit Banerjee, Angus Deaton & Esther Duflo, 'Health Care Delivery in Rural Rajasthan,' *EPW* (28 February 2004): 944, <http://epw.in.ezproxye.bham.ac.uk/epw/uploads/articles/7389.pdf> (accessed 25 November 2009). The data collection took place between January 2002 and August 2003 and at the time of the 1991 census, only 5% of women were literate in rural Udaipur. One of the churches selected for our research belongs to one of these Tribal villages of the Udaipur district.

⁶⁹ Banerjee, Deaton & Duflo, 'Health Care Delivery,' 949.

⁷⁰ Ashish Bose, 'India's Disturbing Health Card,' *EPW* (15 December 2007): 10-13, <http://epw.in.ezproxye.bham.ac.uk/epw/uploads/articles/11314.pdf> (accessed 25 November 2009).

⁷¹ Anit N Mukherjee & Krishanu Karmakar 'Untreated Morbidity and Demand for Healthcare in India: An Analysis of National Sample Survey Data,' *EPW* (15 November 2008): 71-77; also see Deepa Sankar & Vinish Kathuria, 'Health System Performance in Rural India: Efficiency Estimates across States,' *EPW* (27 March 2004): 1427-1433; Pranab Bardhan, 'Poverty and Inequality in China and India: Elusive Link with Globalisation,' *EPW* (22 September 2007): 3850-51, <http://epw.in.ezproxye.bham.ac.uk/epw/uploads/articles/11058.pdf> (accessed 25 November 2009).

⁷² Amarnath K. Menon, 'Tackling the Red Terror,' *India Today* (26 October 2009), <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/site/Story/66450/Cover%20Story/Tackling+the+Red+Terror.html> (accessed 5 January 2010). Also see Bernard D'mello, 'What is Maoism?,' *EPW* 44/47 (21 November 2009): 39-48, <http://epw.in/epw/uploads/articles/14167.pdf> (accessed 5 January 2010); Tilak D. Gupta, 'Maoism in India: Ideology, Programme and Armed Struggle,' *EPW* (22 July 2006): 3172-3176, <http://epw.in/epw/uploads/articles/791.pdf> (accessed 5 January 2010); Nandini Sundar, 'Bastar, Maoism and Salwa Judum,' *EPW* (22 July 2006): 3187-3192, <http://epw.in/epw/uploads/articles/795.pdf> (accessed 5 January 2010).

3.2.4 Lack of Roads and Transportation

Another perennial problem people of interior villages are facing is the lack of good roads and transportation facilities. The villagers have to walk miles to get their provision, medical help and employment. This has adversely affected the overall development and the standard of living.⁷³ Out of 600,000 villages existing in India only about 50% have road access.⁷⁴ India's road quality is well below global standards and results in inefficiencies.⁷⁵ The road construction has been hamstrung by bureaucratic red-tape, funding difficulties and land acquisition problems, and these factors have slowed economic development of the rural populace. The existing network of 2.7 million kms of rural roads is neglected, under-funded, and under-maintained.⁷⁶ States like Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh have barely 15% road connectivity. This leads to income disparity between those living in urban areas and those in rural areas.⁷⁷ This situation affects the poor, economically, and so Pentecostals who live in remote areas.

3.2.5 Harmful Practices

Poverty, lack of education and health care, coupled with strong religious and cultural bindings, has led to the prevalence of harmful cultural and religious

⁷³ Jagdish Khattar, 'The Paths to Prosperity: Low Cost Transport,' *India Today* (14 December 2009); <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/site/Story/73518/Cover%20Story/The+paths+to+prosperity.html> (accessed 20 December 2009).

⁷⁴ I. Prasada Rao, B. Kangadurai, P. K. Jain, & Neelam Jain, 'Information System for Rural Road Network Planning - A Case Study,' *GIS Development* (8 October 2009), <http://www.gisdevelopment.net/application/Utility/transport/mi03218.htm> (accessed 18 November 2009).

⁷⁵ G. V. Krishna Reddy, 'Lessons in Nation Building,' *India Today* (24 August 2009), <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/site/Story/56580/Cover%20Story/Lessons+in+nation+building.html> (accessed 25 November 2009); although India has the second largest road network in the world, with 3.5 million km of roads, only 2% of Indian roads are National Highways.

⁷⁶ Vineeta Pandey, 'The Road to Development in Rural India is Literally a Road,' *DNA* (10 December 2009), http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report_the-road-to-development-in-rural-india-is-literally-a-road_1322070 (accessed 18 December 2009); she says, 'In 2000, about 40% of India's villages lacked all-weather roads and nearly 74% of the rural population was not fully integrated into the national economy.'

⁷⁷ Aiyar, 'Inclusive Inequality.'

practices mostly among villagers and the lower strata of the society. Even though these practices have existed historically, it is believed that occurrences are declining as time moves on. However, it is obvious that some of the practices like witchcraft for curing diseases, female infanticide, child marriage and traditional healing methods are widely practised in rural areas.⁷⁸ Even the old practice of burning a wife on the funeral pyre of the husband (*sati*) also reappears now and then.

Traditional healers have found a strong foothold due to the lack of sufficient medical facilities to villagers.⁷⁹ The uneducated villagers are more susceptible in falling prey to baseless superstitions. The evil of human sacrifice still continues with many women sacrificing lives to get a baby themselves. Infanticide in India occurs mostly among poor, rural populations. In a gruesome incident, a *tantrik* advised a couple to sacrifice 11 boys to get a child for themselves while 5 boys were sacrificed in Hingoli, Maharashtra.⁸⁰ Daughters are considered economic burdens because of the high cost of weddings and dowries, while sons provide income, and are seen as insurance policies by their parents. New prenatal sex-determination techniques, such as ultrasound, have led to an increase in the abortion of female foetuses rather than female infanticide, in urban centres.⁸¹

⁷⁸ Dipesh Chakrabarty, 'The Power of Superstition in Public Life in India,' *EPW* (17 May 2008): 16-19.

⁷⁹ Kshitiz Gaur, 'Hot Iron Rod Pressed on 10-yr-old to Cure Fever,' *The Times of India* (24 August 2009): 1.

⁸⁰ 'Five Children "Sacrificed" by Childless couple,' *NDTV News* (18 March 2010), http://www.ndtv.com/news/videos/video_player.php?id=1209886 (accessed 18 March 2010).

⁸¹ L. S. Vishwanath, 'Female Foeticide and Infanticide,' *EPW* (1 September 2001): 3411-3412 and Yogesh Snehi, 'Female Infanticide and Gender in Punjab,' *EPW* (11 October 2003): 4302-4305; Also see Rashmi Dube Bhatnagar, et. al., *Female Infanticide in India: A Feminist History* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2005).

Even though child marriage is now prohibited by law, the fact remains that, in 2005-06, nearly half of adult women aged 20 to 24 years were married before the legal age of 18. That the rural poor, less educated girls and those from the central and eastern regions of the country are most vulnerable to this practice points to a huge failure in public policy when dealing with the determinants of its prevalence.⁸² Some are as young as six or seven years old when they are married. The girls themselves rarely have any say in the matter.⁸³

The prevalence of *Sati* in UP and Rajasthan has been reported; witchcraft and other dangerous customs still persist in rural India. The prohibition of widow re-marriage among upper caste Hindus is rampant.⁸⁴ In such situations the Pentecostal message of Spirit-empowerment and spiritual liberation sound encouraging to many while strengthening the credibility of the missionary activities of Pentecostals. More of this aspect will be discussed in the sixth chapter while we look into the background of ordinary Pentecostals.

3.2.6 Communal Violence

Another significant issue that is detrimental to the Christian minority, especially to the groups such as the Pentecostals who are mission minded, is the violent communal activities of certain ‘fundamentalist organisations’. Communalism is politics based on religious identity. It could be argued that no other phenomenon

⁸² Editorial, ‘Restraining Child Marriage,’ *EPW* XLIV/15 (11 April 2009): 7.

⁸³ See B.S. Negi, *Child Marriage in India* (New Delhi: Mittal Publication, 1993).

⁸⁴ L.S. Vishwanath, ‘Female Infanticide: The Colonial Experience,’ *EPW* (29 May 2004): 2318.

has affected life in the subcontinent so adversely as communalism.⁸⁵ In India today, the main communal offensive comes from *Hindutva* ideology as played out by *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* (RSS) and its related organisations like *Vishwa Hindu Parishad* (VHP), *Bajrang-Dal* (BD) and the political wing *Bharatiya Janata Party* (BJP). The Hindutva movement concerns itself with building a strong Hindu Nation based on the tenets of '*Hindu Dharma*'.⁸⁶

3.2.6.1 Communalisation of Political Discourse

Even though communal tensions and riots prevailed in the Indian society even before Independence (1947), the post-1989 phase of political instability and electoral stalemate helped the BJP and *Sangh-Parivar* members to create divisions in communal lines by exploiting Hindu sentiments. They raised and orchestrated a nationwide debate on cultural nationalism, and sustained it politically by launching the *Ram Janmabhoomi* movement.⁸⁷ According to Sheth, the objective of this political agenda was to convert the demographic majority of Hindus into a political majority, ensuring a durable electoral majority – a step in the direction of making India a Hindu nation. To achieve this end, the BJP along with the *Sangh-*

⁸⁵ Saumya, 'Communalism: Narratives in Chhattisgarh,' *EPW* 43/2 (12 January 2008): 39, <http://epw.in.ezproxye.bham.ac.uk/epw/uploads/articles/11428.pdf> (accessed 2 December 2009); 'The processes of communalisation can be understood through upsurge of religious consciousness in society and its mobilisation for political ends...playing communal antagonism and highlighting religious solidarity. Communal politics involves playing the card of one religious community in opposition to the other religious community,' defines Soumya.

⁸⁶ Ram Puniyani, 'Communalism and Minorities,' *Religion and Society* 49/1 (March 2004): 1; Rizwan Qaiser, 'Communalism and the Conceptualisation of "Hindu Rashtra,"' *Social Action* 44 (January-March 1994): 81-96.

⁸⁷ K. Gopalakrishnan, 'Ideals of Secularism on Test in India,' *Indian Currents* (15-21 February 1999): 22-23; V. Karthikeyan, 'Religion in Politics,' *Indian Currents* (15-21 February 1999): 13.

Parivar worked continuously on various fronts, in a longer time frame.⁸⁸ Further, he explains how the BJP achieved their communal goal:

First, the BJP transited smoothly from the discourse which it had itself created, of genuine versus pseudo-secularism (as if the party really was committed to secularism), to the new one of Hindu unity. This was initially articulated defensively in terms of cultural nationalism, but later, brazenly as Hindutva – a political doctrine holding that India belongs to Hindus and asserting that all people living in India must identify themselves historically and culturally as Hindus, even as they follow their different religions. Second, the BJP devised a new electoral strategy, forging alliance with regional parties. Its objective was to create communal polarisation nationally and in the process secure and durably consolidate the Hindu majority support in its favour.⁸⁹

To this end, according to Sheth, the BJP engaged in a series of campaigns beginning with the *rath-yatra* (chariot procession) and then mobilising grass root support of Hindus by involving them in the supposedly pious act of carrying bricks to Ayodhya from different parts of the country for building a Ram temple at the site of the *Babri-Masjid*.⁹⁰ 'It may not build the temple on the site of the mosque' comments Sheth, 'but it literally built, brick-by-brick, the political edifice of Hindutva in wider society'.⁹¹

⁸⁸ D. L. Sheth, 'Political Communalisation of Religions and the Crisis of Secularism,' *EPW* XLIV/39 (26 September 2009): 74, <http://epw.in.ezproxye.bham.ac.uk/epw/uploads/articles/13967.pdf> (accessed 2 December 2009); Ashok Nehru, 'Selling the Fascist Ideology: RSS Strategy,' *Indian Currents* (25-31 October, 1999): 15-18.

⁸⁹ Sheth, 'Political Communalisation,' 74.

⁹⁰ Sheth, 'Political Communalisation,' 74.

⁹¹ Sheth, 'Political Communalisation,' 74.

However, the extent to which it has succeeded in this endeavour is difficult to ascertain, but it is fairly apparent that a conscious policy to induct the *Sangh-Parivar* cadre into the nation's administrative machinery was followed.⁹² A good example is the Police Force.⁹³ It is widely reported that the Police Force in states ruled by the BJP, such as Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat, has been 'saffronised'⁹⁴ by inducting recruits from the *Sangh-Parivar*. The consequences are by now well known. In the communal conflagrations, the police not only refused to intervene to save the victims but actually abetted members of organisations such as the VHP and the *Bajrang-Dal* in their crimes.⁹⁵ This explains the frequent attacks upon Pentecostals and inaction of police while some are still languishing in prisons.⁹⁶

3.2.6.2 Hindutva and Violence

In fact, in many cases, a communal division is created by riots in an area where no communal tension existed before, where even a communal consciousness did not exist.⁹⁷ Today communal riots are being manipulated for reinforcing the communal divide and instilling communal ideology to the Tribals and Dalits who were not the target groups of the *Sangh-Parivar* earlier. Riots, in return, reinforce

⁹² See Richard Bonney, *Harvest of Hatred: The Concerned Citizen's Tribunal Report of Gujarat, 2002* (Delhi: Media House, 2004).

⁹³ For example, see Asghar Ali Engineer & Amarjit S. Narang (eds.), *Minorities and Police in India* (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers, 2006).

⁹⁴ Saffronisation is used to denote the pushing in of the extremist Hindutva ideology in social, educational and governmental institutions.

⁹⁵ K. N. Panikkar, 'Ways of Hindutva,' *Frontline* 26/07 (28 March-10 April 2009), <http://www.frontlineonnet.com/fl2607/stories/20090410260702600.htm> (accessed 2 December 2009).

⁹⁶ Editor, 'Arrested on False Charges,' *Cross & Crown* 37/3 (January-February 2008): 21; See another incident of false charges slapped on believers for proclaiming Christ; Editor, 'A Plan for me...even in Prison,' *Cross & Crown* 36/2 (July-August 2007): 12.

⁹⁷ See Lancy Lobo, 'Adivasis, Hindutva and Post-Godhra Riots in Gujarat,' *EPW* (30 November 2002): 4844-4849, <http://epw.in.ezproxye.bham.ac.uk/epw/uploads/articles/9761.pdf> (accessed 2 December 2009).

the communal identity.⁹⁸ Generally, it is relatively the poor and the deprived who are the victims of riots.

The work of Christian missionaries among Tribals in remote areas has come as rough and ready fuel for the RSS ideology to identify a new 'communal issue'. 'RSS propaganda tactics has always resorted to demonising Christian missionary activities using the bogey of conversion,' comments Sarkar.⁹⁹ For the last decade, the *Sangh* and its front organisations like the *Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram* and the VHP have been targeting the Tribal belt of India, which includes Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Orissa and Gujarat.¹⁰⁰ For example, while surveying the riots that took place in 2003-2004, Asghar Ali Engineer describes a riot fomented by the BJP among Tribals. In Madhya Pradesh, state elections took place in December 2003 and the BJP won. The BJP was trying to Hinduise Tribals in Jhabua and created enmity between Christian Tribals and other Tribals, in order to win their political support. Thus Jhabua became communally sensitive and clashes took place there between the *Bhil* tribe and Tribal Christians.¹⁰¹ As a result many Pentecostals suffered.

⁹⁸ Angana Chatterji, 'Hindutva's Violent History,' *Tehelka* 5/36 (13 September 2008), http://www.tehelka.com/story_main40.asp?filename=Ne130908HindutvasViolentHistory.asp (accessed 10 December 2009); Saumya, 'Communalism: Narratives in Chhattisgarh,' 39.

⁹⁹ Sumit Sarkar, 'Conversion and Politics of Hindu Right,' *EPW* (26 June 1999): 1691-1700; Benjamin Lakra, 'Conversion and Tribals of India,' *Indian Currents* (8-14 February, 1999): 39-41.

¹⁰⁰ Editorial, 'Communal Violence in Orissa,' *EPW* (5 January 2008): 6; Also see Saumya, 'Communalism,' 39; Panikkar, 'Ways of Hindutva.'

¹⁰¹ Asghar Ali Engineer, 'Communal Riots, 2004,' *EPW* (5 February 2005): 518, <http://epw.in.ezproxye.bham.ac.uk/epw/uploads/articles/142.pdf> (accessed 2 December 2009); Jhabua has many Pentecostal churches and many are joining the movement recently.

Similarly in Karnataka, the Hindutva forces have unleashed violence against the Christian community, especially against Pentecostals, in the name of forcible conversion, and destroyed many churches while attacking innocent people.¹⁰²

3.2.6.3 Atrocities against Tribal Christians

Similarly, the *Sangh-Parivar* persistently perpetrated atrocities on Tribal Christians in various states.¹⁰³ A list of these atrocities, such as the burning of churches and prayer halls, beating up *adivasi* Christians, performing forcible purification (*'shuddhikaran'*) ceremonies on them and other forms of harassments, are well documented.¹⁰⁴ Lobo speaks about the then BJP Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee's response, 'When *adivasi* Christians were in intense anguish there came the Prime Minister of India to Dangs, not to console the victims of atrocities but to score a point for the *Sangh-Parivar* saying a national debate on conversions was the need of the hour'.¹⁰⁵ In a relatively peaceful south Gujarat Tribal area these atrocities shook the confidence of the people; many of the victims were Pentecostals.

Lobo explains the strategy of the *Sangh-Parivar*. Attempts were made to establish

¹⁰² Sanjana, 'An Unholy Crusade,' *Tehelka* 5/39 (4 October 2008); http://www.tehelka.com/story_main40.asp?filename=Ne041008coverstory.asp (accessed 22 December 2009).

¹⁰³ Francis Gonsalves, "'Destroy Christians, Kill them, Jai Sriram!': The Traumatic Experience on a Black Christmas Day,' *Indian Currents* (4-10 January, 1999): 20-22; This issue of *Indian Currents* reports the violence against the Tribal Christians and quotes all the main English national dailies on the violence carried out by the *Sangh-Parivar*.

¹⁰⁴ Lancy Lobo, *Globalisation, Hindu Nationalism and Christians in India* (Jaipur: Rawat, 2002), 182ff. Of the 51 instances of atrocities, 41 took place in the Dangs, nine in Surat and one in Valsad districts of south Gujarat. Of 41 atrocities in Dangs, 24 were to do with burning of churches and prayer halls, eight with beatings, and four with various kinds of harassment. Of nine instances in the Surat district four had to do with burning churches, two with beatings and three with other forms of harassment.

¹⁰⁵ Lobo, 'Adivasis, Hindutva,' 4846; Tisy Jose, 'Conversion: A Convenient Mask,' *Indian Currents* (18-24 January 1999): 10-13; Valson Thampy, 'National Debate on Conversions,' *Indian Currents* (18-24 January 1999): 16-17.

branches of the *Bajrang-Dal* and VHP in each village and make non-Christian Tribals members. *Deeksha* (initiation ceremony) was given to persons joining the *Bajrang-Dal* in which ‘*trishuls*’ (tridents) and saffron headbands were distributed. Non-Christian *sarpanchs*¹⁰⁶ and economically better-off persons and unemployed youth of villages were made members. *Sangh-Parivar* widely distributed calendars depicting the Hindu god Hanuman and idols of gods and goddesses during the Navaratri and Ganapati festivals. Financial help was also given. Moreover, *Sangh-Parivar* published anti-Christian pamphlets and orchestrated an anti-Christian campaign through newspapers. *Sangh-Parivar* showed open hostility against Christians after the instalment of the BJP government; anti-Christian meetings were organised. Personal conflicts in the villages were converted into Hindu-Christian communal conflicts.¹⁰⁷ In one documented case, the *Sangh-Parivar* recruited four educated unemployed youth from each village. They were given training and an honorarium of 250 rupees per month to collect information about their own village and pass it to the *Sangh-Parivar* centres. Generally 20 villages constituted a centre. Information collected included the names of opinion makers in the village, leaders, Christians and non-Christian Tribals, movements of the missionaries, factions and quarrels in the village, and so on.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ Elected head of the village is known as ‘*sarpanch*.’

¹⁰⁷ Lobo, ‘Adivasis, Hindutva,’ 4845-6. People of these areas testified, ‘*Baharathi loko aveene dhamal kare chhe, ame to shantithi raheta hata*’ (outsiders have come and created disturbances when we were living in peace). It must be noted that these atrocities were preceded by certain activities of *Sangh-Parivar* in the adivasi areas.

¹⁰⁸ Lobo, ‘Adivasis, Hindutva,’ 4845-6. For instance, the Dang district being small was divided into four centres: Subir in the north, Ahwa in the south, Waghai in the east and Narkadi in the west. Each centre was headed by leaders known for their notoriety in the area.

3.2.6.4 Ideology of Hindutva

According to M.S. Golwalkar, the ideologue and second head of the RSS, minorities may stay in the country, but should be wholly subordinated to the Hindu nation, claiming nothing and deserving no privileges at all, far less any preferential treatment, not even citizen's rights.¹⁰⁹ Golwalkar developed the 'ethnic-racist and national content' of the concept of 'Hinduness' and Hindutva was thus marked with high discipline, puritan, ritualistic and rigid hierarchies.¹¹⁰ According to Saumya, this agenda is achieved through the systematic penetration of Hindutva ideas into the young hearts of Tribal children by running schools on the pretext of eradicating illiteracy in remote areas while in fact spreading Hindutva education with an aim to stopping conversions to Christianity and encouraging reconversions to Hinduism. A crucial role is played by *Vidya Bharti*, an educational unit of RSS which educates young children through primary and secondary schools (*Saraswati Shishu Mandirs*) when following the RSS Hindutva ideology. In addition to this, there are 'ekal' *vidyalayas* (one teacher school) with the aim of 'saving the Tribals from undesirable foreign influence'.¹¹¹ However, the proponents of this ideology send their children to Christian mission schools for 'convent education' and do not fear the conversion of their children, but do not want Tribals to go to Christian schools for they fear 'forcible conversion'.¹¹²

Recently the common masses, especially Tribals, Dalits and even the urban middle class began to realise the insidious agenda of Hindutva cadres. Faced with

¹⁰⁹ M.S. Golwalkar, *We or Our Nationhood Defined* (Nagpur, India: Bharath Publications, 1939), 48.

¹¹⁰ Saumya, 'Communalism,' 39.

¹¹¹ Saumya, 'Communalism,' 39.

¹¹² Francis Gonsalves, 'Debating Conversions,' *Indian Currents* (8-14 February, 1999): 35.

the prospect of losing political power, Hindu communalism has been resorting to violence and even terrorism to consolidate its position. Violence, both spontaneous and premeditated, has always been an integral part of communalism.¹¹³ For instance, in Kandhamal, Orissa State, houses belonging to Christians were set on fire and pastors and members of the community were attacked and burnt alive. Scores of churches and prayer houses were burnt down.¹¹⁴ Informed sources said that the policemen on duty at various police stations made no attempt to prevent the protesters from attacking Christians and their property. According to Prafulladas, the evidence suggests that they were acting on the instructions of their political bosses.¹¹⁵

Large-scale displacement of the population has been a common consequence in almost all communal incidents in recent times.¹¹⁶ In Orissa, thousands of Christians have taken shelter in the forest, to escape from the attacks of the members of Hindu communal organisations. A condition of their return to their homes is reconversion to Hinduism. The state was controlled by the BJP has not discharged even the basic duty of protecting the lives and property of citizens.¹¹⁷

¹¹³ Panikkar, 'Ways of Hindutva.'

¹¹⁴ Prafulladas, 'Project Orissa,' *Frontline* 25/19 (13-26 September 2008), <http://www.frontlineonnet.com/fl2519/stories/20080926251900400.htm> (accessed 10 December 2009); Rajni Majhi, a 19-year-old Hindu girl who studied in a local college but worked in the orphanage as an auxiliary nurse, was burnt alive and a priest was beaten up badly.

¹¹⁵ Prafulladas, 'Project Orissa.' The violence also saw attacks on Christians who belonged to the Scheduled Castes and on people who claimed Tribal status, on the grounds that they spoke the Kui language of the Kondh Tribal people.

¹¹⁶ In Gujarat, more than 100,000 people belonging to the Muslim community fled their homes and lived for months in camps. It is estimated that about 80% of them have not been able to return to their homes.

¹¹⁷ Vijay Simha, 'In the Name of God,' *Tehelka* 5/36 (13 September 2008), http://www.tehelka.com/story_main40.asp?filename=Ne130908CoverStory.asp (accessed 22 December 2009); also see Panikkar, 'Ways of Hindutva.'

3.2.6.5 The BJP and Communalist Politics

According to Sheth, the strategy of the BJP was shrewd: to convert and co-opt the caste politics of Indian society into the Hindutva communalist movement. As a result, regionally powerful castes began to be subfused gradually with the culture of religious communities, thereby transforming faith communities into ethno-religious communities. This was marked by the growing participation and power of Other Backward Castes (OBC), Dalits and Tribals in organisational activities and events of popular Hinduism often sponsored and promoted by the *Sangh-Parivar* – religious congregations and festivals as well as management of religious establishments.¹¹⁸

Even though the Hindus and the Muslims had a strained relationship even before the independence, the conflict has been aggravated after the demolition of the *Babri-Masjid*, a Muslim shrine which was supposedly built on Lord Ram's birth place, Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh and the subsequent communal conflagration in 1992 by members of various Hindu nationalist organizations. Ten years later, Gujarat riots of 2002, perhaps the most intense Hindu-Muslim conflict in India since the bloodshed that accompanied the partition of India created a wide chasm between the communities which resulted in enhanced terrorist activities and communal disturbances and caused lasting wounds in the Hindu-Muslim relations that may take decades to heal.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸ Sheth, 'Political Communalisation,' 78.

¹¹⁹ Sheth, 'Political Communalisation'; Bonney, *Harvest of Hatred*; Chatterji, 'Hindutva's Violent History.'

There are various theories and arguments forwarded by scholars who have expertise in this field of study.¹²⁰ For instance, Ashutosh Varshney in his work on ethnic violence, in which he almost absolves politicians and the *Sangh-Parivar*, that has been associated with most post-independence Hindu-Muslim conflict, by stressing that the absence of civic ties between members of communities as the major factor that leads to violence.¹²¹ However, Wilkinson convincingly argues that ethnic riots are far from being spontaneous eruptions of anger. Instead, they are often planned by politicians for a clear electoral purpose. These violent conflagrations are, according to Wilkinson, caused by political elites who play on existing communal tensions to advance a political agenda.¹²² Similarly, Paul Brass in his book demonstrates that communal tensions are maintained with lethal rioting, and how this is essential for the development of militant Hindu nationalism and for other organisations and individuals.¹²³ This issue has adversely affected the Pentecostals all over India.

3.2.7 The Caste System

Another issue that badly affects the Pentecostals is the caste system. Even after 60 years of Independence, the biggest disadvantage in Indian society is the caste-

¹²⁰ See Roshni Sengupta, 'Communal Violence in India: Perspectives on Causative Factors,' *EPW* (14 May 2005): 2046-2050.

¹²¹ Ashutosh Varshney, *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002).

¹²² Steven I. Wilkinson, 'Communal Riots in India,' *EPW* (29 October 2005): 4768, <http://epw.in.ezproxyd.bham.ac.uk/epw/uploads/articles/1313.pdf> (accessed 10 December 2009); Also see his *Votes and Violence: Electoral Competition and Communal Riots in India* (New Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 1-10.

¹²³ Paul R. Brass, *The Production of Hindu-Muslim Violence in Contemporary India* (Washington, DC: University of Washington Press, 2003), 5-7. Also see his 'Development of an Institutionalised Riot System in Meerut City, 1961 to 1982,' *EPW* (30 October 2004), <http://epw.in.ezproxyd.bham.ac.uk/epw/uploads/articles/8354.pdf> (accessed 10 December 2009).

system and its evil practice of untouchability.¹²⁴ Indian society is divided into different castes and sub-castes. Lower castes, Dalits and Tribals are being denied their right to live in mainstream society.¹²⁵ According to the census of 2001, the Dalits constituted 16.2% of the total population of India, whilst the Tribals accounted for 8.2%.¹²⁶ The Dalits are not only discriminated against, but their women are raped, their men are physically assaulted and their children are made to work as bonded labourers. They have no access to the land, are forced to work in degrading conditions and are often beaten up by the police and the dominant caste groups.

The state, instead of coming to their rescue, has always acted against their interests in close nexus with the upper class. The Dalits are being pushed into peripheries of the society and are often considered to be worse than animals.¹²⁷ Although, Tribals are not part of the Hindu caste-system, they are also considered to be 'untouchables'.

¹²⁴ M.P. Raju, 'Thou art Untouchable, Thou shalt Remain so,' *Indian Currents* (9-15 August, 1999): 24-28; Ambrose Pinto, 'Dalits: Victims of an Oppressive Caste System,' *Indian Currents* (9-15 August, 1999): 29-31, 34.

¹²⁵ See, M.K. Mishra, *Indian Social Problems* (Jaipur, India: Mark Publishers, 2009), 44-51; Paramjit S. Judge & Gurpreet Bal, *Mapping Dalits* (Jaipur, India: Rawat Publication, 2009); Ramesh Chandra (ed.), *Liberation and Dalit Articulation of Dalits* (Delhi: Isha Books, 2004); S.K. Modi, *Socio-Economic Development of Dalits in India* (New Delhi: Navyug Publishers, 2009); M. Sundara Rao, *Tribal Economy: An Analysis of Primitive and Plain Tribes* (Ambala Cantt., India: The Associated Publishers, 2009); Ramnika Gupta, *Tribal Contemporary Issues: Appraisal and Intervention* (New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 2007); P.K. Mohanty, *Encyclopaedia of Scheduled Tribes in India* (vols. 1-5) (Delhi: Isha Books, 2006).

¹²⁶ Census India, http://www.censusindia.gov.in/Census_Data_2001/India_at_Glance/scst.aspx, (accessed 15 December 2009). According to 2001 census it is in Punjab that Dalits are in highest proportion (28.9%), followed by Himachal Pradesh (24.7%), West Bengal (23%), and Uttar Pradesh (21.1%). In all other states, they account for less than 20% of the population. On the other hand, Tribals have a high population in absolute terms in several states: Madhya Pradesh (12.2 million, 20.3%), Maharashtra (8.6 million, 8.9%), Orissa (7.1 million, 12.6%), Chhattisgarh (6.6 million, 31.8%) and Andhra Pradesh (5.0 million, 6.6%).

¹²⁷ Kancha Ilaiah, *Why I am not a Hindu: A Sudra Critique of Hindutva Philosophy, Culture and Political Economy*, 2nd ed. (Calcutta: Samya, 2005).

However, it should be noted that the Indian Constitution abolished caste and untouchability, and states that discrimination on the grounds of caste stands prohibited. In addition, there is a 'directive' emerging from the state to promote socio-economic development of Dalits and other weaker sections. Yet the caste system not only continues to exist, but has strengthened its grip as well. The powerful vested interest groups have found it convenient to continue with the system because practically all the labour force who work as scavengers, sweepers and other menial jobs are Dalits.¹²⁸ Although there have been some movements which have come up in mainstream politics, they become established political parties and run after political power. For example, even in the state of Uttar Pradesh where a Dalit party is ruling (BSP), the condition of the Dalits is not only deteriorating but considered to be worse than that of many other states.¹²⁹

3.2.7.1 The Caste System and Economic Deprivation

The caste system not only exerts its influence on the social arena, but also becomes a mechanism to oppress the Dalits, Tribals and the lower castes economically.¹³⁰ Caste has long been used to regulate economic life in India.¹³¹ A

¹²⁸ Pinto, 'Dalits: Victims,' 29-30.

¹²⁹ Venkitesh Ramakrishnan & Ajoy Ashirwad Mahaprashasta, 'Victims Always,' *Frontline* 26/24 (21 November - 4 December 2009), <http://www.frontlineonnet.com/fl2624/stories/20091204262400400.htm> (accessed December 15, 2009); The Authors add further: A two-day international seminar on Uttar Pradesh, organised by the Observer Research Foundation, a Delhi-based think-tank, provided the data that within a month of the government's assumption to office, seven Dalits were killed and three Dalit women were raped in the Muzaffarnagar, district. A field study presented at the seminar revealed that in scores of villages in western districts such as Baghpat, Muzaffarnagar and Meerut, Dalits were unable to occupy land allotted to them because of intimidation and in some cases even physical prevention by upper-caste groups. A section of the police and the administration were hand in glove with the upper-caste elements that even repeated orders from the Chief Minister's Office to the District Magistrates failed to have any effect in a number of cases. Also see Ilaiah, *Why I am not a Hindu*, 47-49.

¹³⁰ K. Srinivasan & S. K. Mohanty, 'Deprivation of Basic Amenities by Caste and Religion,' *EPW* (14 February 2004): 728-735, <http://epw.in.ezproxid.bham.ac.uk/epw/uploads/articles/9484.pdf> (accessed 15 December 2009).

¹³¹ Nicholas Dirks, *Castes of Mind: Colonialism and the Making of Modern India* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2001).

community-based system of enforcement regulates caste privileges by means of social ostracism, violence, and economic penalties that find their justification in elements of the Hindu religion.¹³² Amartya Sen has shown that there is social exclusion which results in economic disparity.¹³³ Without intervention, the untouchables, who lie at the very bottom of the social order, find themselves restricted to the most despised occupations and the lowest wages. At this point, it is central to look into the market behaviour.

While elaborating on economic discrimination on the basis of caste, Thorat and Newman argue that caste-based discrimination is prevalent in the Indian market and that this causes a series of adverse consequences not only on income distribution but also on the economic growth of the Dalits and Tribals,¹³⁴ though some would deny it.¹³⁵ In fact these workers are discriminated against both in the public and private sectors, but the discrimination effect is much larger in the private sector and results in low wages to Dalits and Tribals.¹³⁶

¹³² B. R. Ambedkar, 'Philosophy of Hinduism' in *Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar: Writings and Speeches*, Vol. 3, edited by Vasant Moon (Bombay: Department of Education, Government of Maharashtra, 1987) (first published 1936), 1-94. Also see Deepak Lal, *The Hindu Equilibrium: Cultural Stability and Economic Stagnation – India 1500BC-AD1980*, vol. I (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989).

¹³³ Amartya Sen, 'Social Exclusion: Concept, Application, and Scrutiny,' *Working Paper, Social Development Paper No 1*, (Manila: Asian Development Bank, June, 2000). <http://scholar.google.co.uk/epw/uploads/articles/11132.pdf> (accessed 10 December 2009).

¹³⁴ Sukhadeo Thorat & Katherine S. Newman, 'Caste and Economic Discrimination: Causes, Consequences and Remedies,' *EPW* (13 October 2007): 4122, <http://epw.in.ezproxyd.bham.ac.uk/epw/uploads/articles/11132.pdf> (accessed 12 December 2009).

¹³⁵ For example, Thorat and Newman *quotes the Economist* magazine, 'There is no evidence that [Indian] companies discriminate against [the lower castes], and argued that the relegation of low caste Indians to the bottom of the social structure is a function not of discrimination in the private sector but of the actions of a different culprit altogether: 'government, and the rotten educational system it has created.'

¹³⁶ S. Madheswaran & Paul Attewell, 'Caste Discrimination in the Indian Urban Labour Market: Evidence from the National Sample Survey,' *EPW* (13 October 2007): 4146-53, <http://epw.in.ezproxyd.bham.ac.uk/epw/uploads/articles/11136.pdf> (accessed 12 December 2009).

3.2.7.2 The Caste System and Discrimination

Discrimination is rampant in higher educational institutions as in Engineering and Medical colleges where in the name of merit the percentage of Dalits and Tribals allowed to enrol is a meagre 2%.¹³⁷ This is because, as Marc Galanter has pointed out, three broad kinds of resources are necessary to produce the results in competitive exams in terms of merit, such as economic resources (for prior education, training, materials, freedom from work, etc); social and cultural resources (networks of contacts, confidence, guidance and advice, information, etc); and intrinsic ability and hard-work. The above-mentioned are lacking among the untouchables.¹³⁸ Having conducted field work in three important universities of India, Deshpande and Newman portray that Dalit students are being discriminated against in the universities as well as in the job market and lack many advantages that turn out to be crucial when shaping their employment outcomes in comparison to higher castes.¹³⁹

The acts of discrimination which show their ugly head in these areas include the refusal by public health personnel to vaccinate Dalit children, denial of access to water sources, and refusal to serve Dalits tea at teashops and to cut their hair at barber shops. They are not allowed to join the queue with caste Hindus at government-run fair-price shops. Access to burial grounds and temples are also

¹³⁷ Satish Deshpande, 'Exclusive Inequalities: Merit, Caste and Discrimination in Indian Higher Education Today,' *EPW* (17 June 2006): 2438-2444, <http://epw.in.ezproxid.bham.ac.uk/epw/uploads/articles/2212.pdf> (accessed 15 December 2009). Also see S. Srinivasa Rao, 'Dalits in Education and Workforce,' *EPW* (20 July 2002): 2998-3000, <http://epw.in.ezproxid.bham.ac.uk/epw/uploads/articles/4367.pdf> (accessed 15 December 2009).

¹³⁸ Marc Galanter, *Competing Equalities: Law and the Backward Classes in India* (Oxford, New Delhi, 1984).

¹³⁹ Ashwini Deshpande & Katherine Newman, 'Where the Path Leads: The Role of Caste in Post-University Employment Expectations,' *EPW* (13 October 2007), <http://epw.in.ezproxid.bham.ac.uk/epw/uploads/articles/11134.pdf> (accessed 15 December 2009).

barred to them in many places.¹⁴⁰ Even educational institutions are not free from the practice. Higher caste parents ask their children to skip the noon meal provided in schools, if the food is cooked by Dalits.¹⁴¹ Behind these trends of dominant caste behaviour is the classic Hindu understanding of purity and pollution, according to which food prepared by a Dalit – an ‘untouchable’ – is considered ‘polluted’, by virtue of its contact with the intrinsically-polluted Dalit. ‘On another level,’ comments Thorat, ‘dominant caste opposition to Dalit cooks also represents a power struggle over livelihood rights and functions to break Dalit economic aspirations’.¹⁴² This issue badly affects the Dalit Pentecostals who form a sizeable number in North-Indian context socially and economically.

3.2.7.3 The Caste System and Hindutva

The State of Gujarat which is known as the ‘Hindutva laboratory’ abounds in atrocities against Dalits and Tribals.¹⁴³ Ironically, the same Dalits and Tribals who

¹⁴⁰ S. Viswanathan, ‘Cracks in the Wall,’ *Frontline* 26/08 (11-24 April 2009), <http://www.frontlineonnet.com/fl2608/stories/20090424260804200.htm> (accessed 16 December 2009). In the Thanjavur district in Tamil Nadu, the authorities of a state-owned temple recently barred Dalit girls in a team of college students from entering the temple to help clean the place of worship. Only caste-Hindu students were allowed to do the voluntary service. A similar situation prevails at Nallathoor village, 20 km from Cuddalore and close to Puducherry. Untouchability is practised in many forms, and Dalits in the village complained of discrimination. They said they were denied entry into the village temple and were not allowed to cultivate temple land. They complained that the pathway to their burial ground was rendered useless by a section of caste Hindus. They did not have access to the community hall and a private wedding hall. They said that when they protested, false cases were filed against them. The two Dalit ward members, the local people said, did not have any say in the panchayat’s affairs.

¹⁴¹ Sukhdeo Thorat & Joel Lee, ‘Caste Discrimination and Food Security Programmes,’ *EPW* (24 September 2005): 4199-4200, <http://epw.in.ezproxyd.bham.ac.uk/epw/uploads/articles/1149.pdf> (accessed 16 December 2009). Also see about PDS among Dalits in same article. Thorat & Lee narrate an example; a village in Ajmer district, Rajasthan, a Dalit widow named Sunita (name changed), was hired to prepare when the Midday Meal Scheme began in July 2002, Dominant caste parents ordered their children not to eat the mid-day meal at their school, effectively launching a proxy hunger strike through their children. By the pressure of dominant castes the headmaster expelled Sunita, and hired a dominant caste woman to cook in her place.

¹⁴² Thorat & Lee, ‘Caste Discrimination,’ 4199-4200.

¹⁴³ The state of Gujarat is known to be the hub of Hindutva ideology. In Vaso village (Nadiad), Gujarat, When Gandabhai Manabhai, a Dalit, died on 17 August 2006, upper-caste Hindus did not allow his family members to perform the last rites at the panchayat-run crematorium. It is said that members of lower castes like harijan, rohit, vankar, vaghri, tadpada, rawal, bajaniya, saneva and chamar should take their dead to other locations.

suffer such discrimination willingly became foot soldiers of Hindutva in the Muslim carnage of 2002 and Christian persecutions of their own kith and kin later. According to Puniyani, this was accomplished through the successful co-option of Dalits and Tribals in their fold by offering deceptive discourses and practices to achieve its larger political objective: to expand the BJP's electoral base.¹⁴⁴ The vulnerability of Dalits to Hindutva politics has a variety of explanations as Panikkar rightly suggests: Dalits and Tribals, who traditionally lived with a sense of deprivation in the margins of Hindu cultural life, find 'Hinduisation' attractive; when Hindutva invites them to be part of a larger and 'superior' tradition, many of them accept it with a sense of pride.¹⁴⁵

Moreover, to prevent the Dalits and Tribals from joining egalitarian religions like Christianity and Islam, Hindutva forces have exerted pressure on state governments and enacted anti-conversion laws¹⁴⁶ in the name of a 'Freedom of Religion Bill', so as to harass them and keep them under their control. However, Omvedt aptly reasons against such propaganda:

It is a matter of fact that India saw the birth of the first great missionary religion of the world – Buddhism. It is also true that the major 'inducements' offered by Christianity to the rural low castes were those of self-respect – and, while the established churches today,

¹⁴⁴ Ram Puniyani, *Contours of Hindu Rashtra: Hindutva, Sangh Parivaar and Contemporary Politics* (Delhi: Kalpaz Publications, 2006), 233-243. Also see Pralay Kanungo, 'Co-opting Dalits into the Hindutva Fold,' *EPW* (19 May 2007), 1852, <http://epw.in.ezproxid.bham.ac.uk/epw/uploads/articles/10631.pdf> (accessed 16 December 2009).

¹⁴⁵ K.N. Panikkar, 'Foreword,' *Hindutva and Dalits: Perspectives for Understanding Communal Praxis* (Kolkata: Samya, 2005), xi-xi.

¹⁴⁶ South Asia Human Rights Documentation Centre, 'Anti-Conversion Laws: Challenges to Secularism and Fundamental Rights,' *EPW* (12 January 2008): 63-73; Cyriac Thomas, 'Anti-Conversion Laws in India,' *Indian Church History Review* 41/2 (2007): 126-41; Kaly Bose, 'Conversions not due to Coercion, but due to Caste-Inferiority,' *Indian Currents* (25-31 January, 1999): 19-21.

which do show reflections of caste, have mostly given up conversion efforts, the evangelical Christians who are carrying these on show hardly any sign of caste distinctions. In any case, to argue that a person should stay in his or her 'ancestral religion' is a denial of human freedom; to put legal obstacles to this is an infringement of the Constitution – which was presided over and presented to the nation by an ex-untouchable who himself felt the necessity of saying, 'I was born a Hindu but will not die a Hindu'.¹⁴⁷

3.2.7.4 The Caste System and the State

The apathy of successive central and state governments and their mindless policies has further deteriorated the conditions of the Dalits and the Tribals. State Governments across the country have shown a remarkable reluctance to use the Schedule Caste/Schedule Tribe Atrocities Act which was meant for their protection.¹⁴⁸ Quoting figures from the 2007 Annual Report of the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), the Asian Centre for Human Rights' the publication 'Torture in India 2009' states that the NCRB reported a total of 30,031 cases – including 206 cases under the Protection of Civil Rights Act and 9,819 cases under the S.C./S.T. Act – against the S.C.s in 2007. Although the average charge-sheeting rate for the crimes against the S.C.s was 90.6%, the average conviction

¹⁴⁷ Gail Omvedt, 'Caste System and Hinduism,' *EPW* (13 March 2004), 1180, <http://epw.in.ezproxyd.bham.ac.uk/epw/uploads/articles/8133.pdf> (accessed 10 December 2009).

¹⁴⁸ Debashis Chakraborty, D. Shyam Babu & Manashi Chakravorty, 'Atrocities on Dalits: What the District Level Data Say on Society-State Complicity,' *EPW* (17 June 2006): 2478-2481, <http://epw.in.ezproxyd.bham.ac.uk/epw/uploads/articles/2221.pdf> (accessed 16 December 2009). For example, atrocities against the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes registered a steady rise in Maharashtra from 890 cases in 1999 to 1385 cases in 2007, the latest year for which government statistics are available; Also see Somen Chakraborty, 'Blood Bath in Bihar: Caste Unabated,' *Indian Currents* (15-21 February, 1999): 16-20.

rate was only 30.9%.¹⁴⁹

In September 2001, the most contentious issue for Indians was the demand for the inclusion of caste discrimination as a specific form of racism. The government, led by the BJP, blocked any reference to caste in the documents of the Durban Conference by using a combination of legal as well as academic arguments and the diplomatic power of the emerging superpower.¹⁵⁰ According to Visvanathan, it was obvious that a government led by the Hindu nationalist BJP would thwart any international scrutiny of Hindu social practices.¹⁵¹ However, eight years later, the Congress-led government has showed a similar inflexibility in allowing any discussion of caste discrimination at the Durban Review Conference. The charge that the obstinate blocking by the Indian government of all discussions on caste in international fora is merely a symptom of the proclivity of upper caste India¹⁵² to deny the very existence of caste discrimination may, therefore, have a fair element of accuracy to it.¹⁵³

To summarise our discussion of the Indian context, then, we have outlined the most pressing issues which affect the Pentecostals. In the formulation of an Indian

¹⁴⁹ Lyla Bavadam, 'Growing Unease,' *Frontline* 26/24 (21 November - 4 December 2009), <http://www.Frontlineonnet.com/fl2624/stories/20091204262400900.htm> (accessed 16 December 2009).

¹⁵⁰ The Durban Conference is the World Conference against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

¹⁵¹ Shiv Visvanathan, 'The Race for Caste: Prolegomena to the Durban Conference,' *EPW* (7 July 2001): 2512-2516, <http://epw.in.ezproxyd.bham.ac.uk/epw/uploads/articles/5628.pdf> (accessed 17 December 2009) and also see, Shiv Visvanathan, 'Durban and Dalit Discourse,' *EPW* (18 August 2001), 3123-3127, <http://epw.in.ezproxyd.bham.ac.uk/epw/uploads/articles/5776.pdf> (accessed 17 December 2009).

¹⁵² Sam Paul, 'Christian Council Disappointed with Treatment of Dalit Issues at UN Anti-Racism Conference,' *All India Christian Council* (30 April 2009), <http://indianchristians.in/news/content/view/2986/42/> (accessed 15 December 2009).

¹⁵³ Editorial, 'Caste Out, Yet Again,' *EPW* XLIV/20, (16 May 2009): 5, <http://epw.in.ezproxyd.bham.ac.uk/epw/uploads/articles/13508.pdf> (accessed 15 December 2009).

Pentecostal Christology, these issues are to be considered to get a true portrayal of their understanding of Christ. Obviously, the life struggles of Pentecostals colour the Christological articulation while the hostile situations they confront enrich their outlook of Christ as we shall see later. However, now we shall turn our attention to the history of the movement to see how its Christology is influenced by the origin and growth of the Pentecostal movement.

Chapter 4

INDIAN PENTECOSTAL HISTORY

The origins and history of a movement indeed influence its theology; so is the case with Christology. In this chapter we shall address the history of the Indian Pentecostal movement briefly to elucidate how its Christological articulation has been shaped in the long run, and how the historical consciousness of Pentecostals might have contributed to the formation of their Christology.

The reconstruction of Pentecostal history in India faces countless difficulties and odd challenges such as dearth of written sources or of eye-witnesses. Therefore, to reconstruct this history in its entirety is difficult,¹ and such efforts have not been all that successful, as the pioneers failed to keep adequate records of events. There were many reasons for this. First of all, many of them in the forefront of the movement were not highly literate and they lacked training in documenting the events that were taking place. Moreover, their aspiration to reach out to the maximum number of souls possible, before the imminent return of Christ, meant that history-writing was considered a futile exercise.² Besides, the western Pentecostal missionaries who had relevant training had, knowingly or unknowingly, left out the valuable contributions of the native pioneers.³ What we have is some hagiographical descriptions and autobiographies of a few leaders.

¹ Ivan M. Satyavrata, 'Contextual Perspectives on Pentecostalism as a Global Culture: A South Asian View,' in *The Globalization of Pentecostalism*, edited by M. W. Dempster, B. D. Klaus & D. Petersen (Carlisle: Regnum, 1999), 203-221, 205.

² Augustus Cerillo Jr. & G. Walker, 'Bibliography and Historiography of Pentecostalism in the United States,' *NIDPCM*, 390.

³ See Allan Anderson, *Spreading Fires: The Missionary Nature of Early Pentecostalism* (London: SCM Press, 2007), 7-9.

However, the common believers, who spearheaded the movement, were left out in the peripheries of the history and in the unknown tracts of the time.⁴ What Frykenberg says is true about Indian Pentecostal history:

What we call “forgetting,” in a collective sense, happens when any community fails to transmit to posterity what its members understand about themselves and events in their past. “Remembering,” by enhancing and preserving its own history, is one of the crucial means by which a community empowers itself.⁵

Even when we do find some details, these need sifting and re-arranging to make sense. Moreover, it is essential to read between the lines to get at least a dim picture.⁶ Therefore, it is virtually impossible to dig out all the details of history with chronological accuracy. However, it is noteworthy that in recent times a reasonably fair account of South-Indian Pentecostal history has appeared.⁷

In the case of North Indian Pentecostal history what we have now is the early history of revival and mission (1905-1920 approximately) sketched by Allan

⁴ Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 7; Stanley M. Burgess, ‘Pentecostalism in India: An Overview,’ *AJPS* 4/1 (2001): 85-98, 98.

⁵ Robert. E. Frykenberg, ‘Christianity in South India Since 1500: Historical Studies of Trans-cultural Interactions within Hindu-Muslim Environments,’ *Dharma Deepika* (December 1997): 5; Similarly Anderson also comments, ‘The multitudes of nameless people responsible for the grassroots expansion of the movement have passed into history forgotten and their memory is very difficult to recover.’ Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 8.

⁶ Allan Anderson, ‘Revising Pentecostal History in Global Perspective,’ *Asian and Pentecostal: The Charismatic Face of Christianity in Asia* (Carlisle: Regnum Books International, 2005), 158-160. According to Anderson, the foreign missionaries knowingly or unknowingly omitted the names of native missionaries who were in the frontlines of the battlefields. In some cases, racial prejudice also created tensions in the mission; see Anderson, ‘Revising Pentecostal History,’ 163-165.

⁷ See Mathew, *Kerala Penthecosthu Charithram*; Bergunder, *The South Indian Pentecostal*; T.S. Samuel Kutty, *The Place and Contribution of Dalits in Select Pentecostal Churches in Central Kerala from 1922-1972* (Delhi: ISPCK, 2000); V. V. Thomas, ‘Pentecostalism among the Dalits in Kerala from 1909 to the Present: A Subaltern Reading,’ *UBS Journal* 3/2 (September 2005): 89-94.

Anderson and others,⁸ deciphering the letters and correspondence of the foreign missionaries who laboured at the beginning of the movement.⁹ To write the history of North Indian Pentecostalism, we need to trace a fifty year history, between 1920 and 1970, and make historical connections, on the basis of a difficult retrieval process. The generation who knew these ages of Pentecostal history has already died. But it is noteworthy that A.C. George has given a reasonably fair account of the history of Assemblies of God in India which also includes North India.¹⁰ Another challenge researchers face is to check the veracity of the stories narrated by the Pentecostal believers. Therefore, care has to be taken when sketching a fair picture.

The history of Pentecostalism in India is the history of Pentecostal mission and the Church growth movement. It is the encounter of the Gospel with the religious-cultural and socio-political contexts of India. It is the story of a Spirit movement; the story of Spirit-filled people who faced the powers of darkness; of their triumphs and failures, joys and sorrows, unity and division, love and hate, their partnerships and even clashes; of divine and human elements working together.

4.1 Methodological Shift in Pentecostal Historiography

Recently, Pentecostal historiography has undergone major shifts; it looks at what is now popularly known as ‘history from below’ or ‘history from the edges’. The

⁸ Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 75-95; Also see, Gary B. McGee & S. M. Burgess, ‘India,’ *NIDPCM*, 118-126; Burgess, ‘Pentecostalism in India,’ 85-98; McGee, ‘Pentecostal Phenomena’; Gary B. McGee, “‘Latter Rain’ Falling in the East: Early-Twentieth-Century Pentecostalism in India and the Debate over Speaking in Tongues,” *Church History* 68/3 (1999): 648-665; George, *Trailblazers for God*.

⁹ Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 9-13.

¹⁰ George, *Trailblazers for God*.

centre of gravity of Christianity has shifted from global north to global south. In this shift, the Pentecostal movement has played a dominant role.¹¹ Earlier, it was a frequently made claim that Pentecostalism was a product of North America and was exported from there to the ends of the Earth. Burgess terms this ‘Amerocentric historiographic assumptions’.¹² In such narratives, those Pentecostal revivals which contributed to the origin and growth of the movement in the Third World as well as the native workers who had toiled day and night were not deemed worthy enough to be mentioned.¹³ This sort of history was made by those Pentecostal scholars who used uncritical and hagiographical tradition to prove that Pentecostal beginnings started from their own particular churches.¹⁴ Now Pentecostal historians speak about the multi-centred or poly-centric origin of Pentecostalism, rather than about Topeka or Azuza Street origins.¹⁵ For instance, Everett A. Wilson rightly identifies the issue:

Since ‘Pentecost,’ as early enthusiasts referred to their collective experience, had several beginnings, the problem is to decide which of the claimants should take title to the distinction. But multiple subsequent ‘outpourings’ demonstrate that in any event, no claim can be made to exclusivity.¹⁶

¹¹ Anderson, ‘Revising Pentecostal History,’ 151; Jenkins, *The Next Christendom*, 7-8.

¹² Burgess, ‘Pentecostalism in India,’ 85-86.

¹³ Anderson, ‘Revising Pentecostal History,’ 158-159.

¹⁴ Such tradition is called the ‘providential approach,’ on the belief that Pentecostalism was a spontaneous, providentially generated end-time religious revival; see Augustus Cerillo Jr., ‘Interpretive Approaches to the History of American Pentecostal Origins,’ *Pneuma* 19/1 (Spring 1997): 30-32; Cerillo Jr. & Walker, ‘Bibliography and Historiography,’ 397-399.

¹⁵ Everett A. Wilson, ‘They Crossed the Red Sea, Didn’t They?: Critical History and Pentecostal Beginning’ in *The Globalization of Pentecostalism*, 85-115, 91; For instance, Everett A. Wilson rightly identifies the issue: ‘Since ‘Pentecost,’ as early enthusiasts referred to their collective experience, had several beginnings, the problem is to decide which of the claimants should take title to the distinction. But multiple subsequent ‘outpourings’ demonstrate that in any event, no claim can be made to exclusivity.’

¹⁶ Wilson, ‘They Crossed the Red Sea, Didn’t They?,’ 91.

Anderson questions the notion of North America as the ‘Jerusalem’ or origin of Pentecostalism; instead, speaks about many ‘Jerusalems’.¹⁷

Today’s historians have begun to read ‘history from below’ rather than ‘history from above’; history taken from the perspectives of the poor and powerless rather than the rich and powerful.¹⁸ This is known as ‘subaltern historiography’. Such history is recorded from the memory and lips of ordinary Pentecostal believers. Therefore ‘subaltern history’ is predominantly an oral history which is built around people. It not only allows leaders to be made heroes, but also ordinary people. It offers a challenge to the established myths of the history and provides a radical transformation of the social meaning of history.¹⁹ Therefore, the primary task of ‘subaltern historiography’ is to retrieve the local traditions from those who are still alive and are able to remember and to record them for posterity.²⁰

The documentary sources of Pentecostal history outside the western world which are available to us are predominantly the letters, reports, and periodicals of western Pentecostal missionaries. These sources mostly talk about the activities of western missionaries and the official positions of power and privilege of their authors, ignoring the native workers who were the foot-soldiers of the mission. Therefore, according to Anderson, we need to ‘read between the lines’ to

¹⁷ Anderson, ‘Revising Pentecostal History,’ 153; Anderson comments, ‘There were many “Jerusalems”: Pyongyang, Korea; Beijing, China; Pune, India...Pentecostalism has many varieties, and not just the North American classical Pentecostal kind.’ Also see Dale T. Irvin, ‘Pentecostal Historiography and Global Christianity: Rethinking the Question of Origins,’ *Pneuma* 27/1 (Spring 2005): 35-50.

¹⁸ Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 4-13; Anderson, ‘Revising Pentecostal History,’ 147-173, especially 166; Bergunder, *The South Indian Pentecostal*, 11-14; Michael Bergunder, ‘Constructing Indian Pentecostalism: On Issues of Methodology and Presentation,’ *Asian and Pentecostal*, 188-191.

¹⁹ Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 1-18.

²⁰ Anderson, ‘Revising Pentecostal History,’ 159.

appreciate those left-behind heroes and their stories.²¹ With this in mind, it is central to develop a methodology for Pentecostal history-writing enabling the writing of a balanced history, rather than a one-sided story, considering diverse aspects of the Indian Pentecostal movement.

4.2 Methodology for North Indian Pentecostal History

As mentioned earlier, a reasonable account of South-Indian Pentecostal history is available today; therefore, we do not need to repeat what is already common knowledge. Instead, we shall focus on North Indian Pentecostal history. For this purpose it is crucial to include certain vital aspects enabling us to construct a fair and balanced historical account, one which could be used as a methodological framework for the writing of North Indian Pentecostal history. This will also help us to dig out the forgotten stories of heroes and heroines who were real trailblazers in the mission fields in order to do some justice to their hard work.

4.2.1 Poly-Centric Historical Approach: *Local* and *Regional* Histories

First of all, it is essential to look into the *local* and *regional* histories. This is because Pentecostalism in India, especially in the north, is not a single monolithic structure originating in a particular centre but emerged from different contexts, times and as a result of the work of different people.²² What W.R. Shenk says is apt here. We must develop a ‘polycentric’ idea of church history, considering the ‘missionary and indigenous dynamics’ of church growth.²³ Besides, North India consists of a number of states with diverse languages, cultures and geographies;

²¹ Anderson, ‘Revising Pentecostal History,’ 158-159; Anderson, *Spreading Fires*; Bergunder, *The South Indian Pentecostal*; Mathew, *Kerala Penthecosthu Charithram*.

²² Satyavrata, ‘Contextual Perspectives,’ 207.

²³ Wilbert R. Shenk, ‘Introduction,’ in *Enlarging the Story: Perspectives on Writing World Christian History*, edited by Wilbert R. Shenk (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2002), xi.

there are many indigenous independent Pentecostal and Charismatic movements here. Hence, writing a meta-history connecting all these states and denominations is a rather complicated task.²⁴

4.2.2 Religio-Cultural and Socio-Political Context

Secondly, it is crucial to consider the religio-cultural and socio-political contexts of North India which are different from the contexts of the south. In the south, especially in Kerala state, a sizeable Christian community existed when Pentecostalism appeared on the horizon.²⁵ People of other religions knew what Christianity was, and indeed what its practices were. Moreover, between the 18th and 20th centuries, many Protestant mission movements, like the London Mission Society, sent their missionaries to the south.²⁶ They introduced the native Christians to biblical ideas and created spiritual hunger.²⁷ Besides, some revivals had already taken place and at least some of the people were familiar with ‘Pentecostal-like’ experiences.²⁸ Thus, when Pentecostal missionaries reached India from the West, Kerala became a fertile ground for Pentecostal mission.

²⁴ Of course, there are churches of South Indian Pentecostals like the IPC or the Sharon Fellowship Church or branches of the Assemblies of God which is a worldwide Pentecostal denomination in many states of India. Nevertheless, their beginnings in North Indian states were attributed to unique events and leadings and later contributed to by further deciding factors.

²⁵ These Christians claimed their origin to Saint Thomas, disciple of Jesus Christ; see A. Mathias Mundadan, *History of Christianity in India Vol. 1, From the Beginning up to the Middle of the 16th Century (up to 1542)* (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 1984); V. Titus Varghese & P.P. Philip, *Glimpses of the History of the Christian Churches in India* (Madras: The Christian Literature Society, 1983); Varghese Perayil, *The Oath of Coonan Cross* (Adoor, Kerala: Kerala Study Centre, 2007); C. B. Firth, *An Introduction to Indian Church History* (Delhi: ISPCK, 1976); See Samuel Hugh Moffett, *A History of Christianity in Asia: Beginnings to 1500*, Vol.1, 2nd rev. ed. (New York: Orbis Books, 1998); Pulikottil, ‘Emergence of Indian Pentecostalism.’

²⁶ According to Lamin Sanneh, missionaries compounded the nature of foreign domination by showing racial prejudices and aligning with colonizers, which was often transferred into the ecclesiastical realm; see Lamin Sanneh, ‘World Christianity and the New Historiography,’ in *Enlarging the Story*, 100-101.

²⁷ The missionaries carried out self-help programmes and other charity works. There was emphasis on education and social reformation by missionaries, as well as awakened natives.

²⁸ McGee, ‘Pentecostal and Pentecostal-like Movements (1860-1910),’ 118-119. Also see McGee, ‘Pentecostal Phenomena,’ 112-114.

However, the North Indian situation was entirely different. Although the Mukti revival was prominent, its effects did not materialise in church growth as had happened in the south.²⁹ After a few years, the Mukti movement became stagnant; native missionaries were unable to withstand the hostility encountered in North India. For instance, according to Hollenweger, the Mukti Mission leadership of 1963 claimed that they were totally ignorant of the Pentecostal revival of 1905, in the Mukti centre.³⁰ The reason for the death of the revival movement lies in the religio-cultural contexts of 19th and 20th centuries which were strong enough to resist the overtures of Pentecostal missionaries. Religion and culture, especially Hinduism and its practices, caste hierarchy, family bonding and strong communal boundaries acted as strong barriers.³¹ Besides, widespread misapprehension that Christianity was the religion of beef-eaters and lower castes added more obstacles to Pentecostal growth.³²

Further, Christian missions had sparked a religious reformation among Hindus, which resulted in resisting Pentecostal advancements in North India. This reformation had developed in two ways. The first strand was a reformation movement; some began to bring a renaissance among the Hindus by condemning and trying to abolish practices like *Sati*, child marriage, idol worship and other

²⁹ Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 88. See about Mukti Revival in pages 112-113. Even today, the people around the small town where the revival took place (Kedgaon, about 60 km from city of Pune) do not know about Pentecostalism. I have visited the Mukti mission centre twice few years back (2000 and 2004) and asked people around the town about Pentecostalism; however, most of the local people do not know what it is.

³⁰ Walter J. Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997), 120; see the footnote 11; This is conveyed by G. Fletcher, Superintendent of Ramabhai Mukti Mission in a letter dated 21-3-1963 to Hollenweger.

³¹ This is true of Christianity in general also. See M.D. David, *Missions: Cross-Cultural Encounter and Change in Western India* (Delhi: ISPCK, 2001), 1-14.

³² Sunand Sumithra, *Christian Theologies from an Indian Perspective* (Bangalore: Theological Book Trust, 1995), 8.

harmful practices. For instance, Raja Rammohan Roy who is known as ‘the father of Indian renaissance’ was instrumental in bringing about many such reforms to Indian society.³³ The second strand, in defensive mode, emphasised to revert to old traditional practices such as idol worship, polytheism and superstitions. Some like Swami Dayananda Swaraswati rejected idolatry, but began a movement called ‘Back-to-Vedas’. This branch of thought became more militant and gave rise to organisations like *Arya Samaj*, which later became a catalyst in the formation of militant organisations like the RSS.³⁴

Within the socio-political realm, it is significant to note that western imperialism and Christian missions came hand in hand and seemed to support each other, though they were often in sharp disagreement. This created a view among the average educated Hindus that Christianity was the faith of the oppressors. Western imperialism was the catalyst which facilitated the emergence of a nationalistic spirit which resulted in the formation of various movements like the ‘Non-cooperation,’ ‘Self-rule,’ and ‘Quit-India’ movements.³⁵ Thus, the North Indian situation was much harder than its southern counterparts. Therefore, the Pentecostal history of North India must be written taking the former contexts into account.

4.2.3 Subaltern History

In North India major Pentecostal growth has been among Tribals, Dalits and lower caste people, i.e. groups experiencing social ostracism, caste cruelty, utter

³³ Sumithra, *Christian Theologies*, 16-18.

³⁴ Sumithra, *Christian Theologies*, 19.

³⁵ The *Sepoy Mutiny* in 1857 was the first spark. Later in 1885 this desire of self rule resulted in the formation of Indian National Congress and the subsequent freedom movement.

poverty, various illnesses and demonic oppression. The Pentecostal message of bodily healing and empowerment in the Spirit attracted them. As Anderson argued, the healing ministry was one of the most potent instruments of Pentecostalism worldwide³⁶ and this is true of North India.³⁷ Further, given the above fact, it is worth focusing on the movement as an instance of social protest just as Robert Anderson shows;³⁸ however, it would be a mistake to equate 'ecstatic religious experience' of Pentecostals as a 'surrogate for success in the social struggle'.³⁹ The growth of the Pentecostal movement was the result of social protest of oppressed local people.⁴⁰ According to Frykenberg, subaltern reconstructions of history tend to deconstruct all previous perceptions of history by assuming that they are deficient. The constructions claimed are those of 'popular memory' or 'oral traditions' and these are drawn from below.⁴¹ Therefore, it is of the utmost importance to understand the historical consciousness of the natives as 'listening to the margins' intently.⁴² We need to ask what sort of historical memories they carry and how this consciousness came about.⁴³ Hence, while writing the North Indian Pentecostal history it is essential to explore mission works among the poor masses, with special emphasis on healing and exorcism.

³⁶ Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 35-42.

³⁷ Hedlund, *Quest for Identity*, 11.

³⁸ Robert M. Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited: The Making of American Pentecostalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979).

³⁹ Anderson, 'Revising Pentecostal History,' 149.

⁴⁰ See Hedlund, *Quest for Identity*, 9.

⁴¹ Robert E. Frykenberg, *History and Belief: The Foundations of Historical Understanding* (Michigan: Eerdmans, 1996), 294.

⁴² Ronald N. Bueno, 'Listening to the Margins: Re-historicising Pentecostal Experiences and Identities,' in *The Globalization of Pentecostalism*, 268-288.

⁴³ As Paulson says, 'Pentecostalism is (still) the religion of the subalterns in most parts of the world; they are not the subjects of their history.' See Pulikottil, 'As East and West.'

4.2.4 Local Revival Movements

Another important aspect is the revival movements that have occurred in different places at various times. Many of them were sporadic and isolated in nature. In some cases there were mass conversions, where hundreds of people altogether were baptised and churches established.⁴⁴ There were powerful manifestations of the works of the Spirit like healings, exorcisms, prophecy and many confessing their sins with loud cries. Then these people began to take the revival fire into nearby villages and towns and churches began to grow. Moreover, such revivals were not a one off event, but rather were repeated again and again in different locations. Wilson rightly comments, 'Revivals lasted not because the movement had an impressive beginning, but rather because periodic renewal keeps the enthusiasm vibrant despite energy-sapping generational, organisational and circumstantial changes'.⁴⁵ Thus, North Indian Pentecostal history ought to consider the local revivals in various regions and localities.

4.2.5 Role of Native Missionaries

In shaping North Indian Pentecostal history, it is imperative to highlight the role and work of North Indian native missionaries as Anderson argued.⁴⁶ As already mentioned, North Indian Pentecostal history is the history of the encounter of the gospel with different people-groups in their religio-cultural, economic and socio-

⁴⁴ However, these were not like the mass conversions which took place earlier with the foreign missionaries as a group people decided to join Christianity. F. Hrangkhuma, 'Factors that contributed to the arrest of Mass Movements towards Christianity in India,' *Christianity in India: Search for Liberation and Identity*, edited by F. Hrangkhuma (Delhi: ISPCK, 2000), 312.

⁴⁵ Wilson, 'They Crossed the Red Sea,' 92.

⁴⁶ Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 5-9.

political contexts. That is, it is a mission history.⁴⁷ However, this has not come about as western historians earlier believed: from western countries to the rest of the world. It was as a result of Spirit movements in different locations at various times and by ordinary people.⁴⁸ Anderson rightly observes that the Pentecostal movement's emphasis on the empowering ability of the Spirit to equip ordinary believers for missionary service, without requiring prior academic qualifications, helped Pentecostalism to depend on 'national workers' more heavily than any other mission.⁴⁹ Women also had played a significant role in Pentecostal mission and church growth.⁵⁰

Today we can find some biographies, reports and testimonies dealing with North Indian church growth, but written with South-Indian gist. This is because, just as in the beginning of the Pentecostal movement in India the foreign missionaries controlled the administrative and financial set-up, many of the mission organisations and churches in North India are also being controlled by South-Indian Pentecostals, especially from Kerala; people who have financial resources, access to infrastructure, and secular as well as theological education.

⁴⁷ A. Mathias Mundadan, 'The Changing Task of Christian History,' *Enlarging the Story*, 23; He says, 'the history of Christianity is the history of the impregnation of these contexts by the gospel, the assimilation of the cultures of the peoples by the gospel and that of the gospel by their cultures, and the history of the consequent changes in the Christian movement and of the cultures of the people.'

⁴⁸ Anderson comments, '...Pentecostalism is not a movement that had a distinct beginning in the USA or anywhere else...it is a movement or rather a series of movements that took several years and several different formative ideas and events to emerge. Pentecostalism then as now is a polynucleated and variegated phenomenon; Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 4.

⁴⁹ Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 7.

⁵⁰ Michael Bergunder, 'Women and Leadership in the South Indian Pentecostal Movement,' *Dharma Deepika* 6/2 (July-December 2002): 35-40; Although Bergunder writes about South Indian Pentecostalism, it is true for North Indian Pentecostalism; Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 4.

However, some of the native workers at the beginning were not recent converts but were already Christians in denominational churches,⁵¹ as in the case of Kerala Pentecostalism at the beginning of the 20th century. Therefore, postcolonial historiography does provide some help when looking at particular historical events, from the perspectives of the natives.⁵²

On the other hand, in North India, Christianity and colonialism are considered synonymous by those who advocate the Hindutva ideology.⁵³ For them, the native missionaries are agents of colonialism getting huge financial resources to convert gullible poor masses. Therefore, it is important to establish the native character of Pentecostal mission in the construction of North Indian Pentecostal history.

4.2.6 Western Missionary Movements

The western missionary movements played a definite and crucial role in the growth of the Pentecostal movement, though North India was a hard place for foreign missionaries in terms of climate, culture, language and strong anti-western feeling.⁵⁴ The people attracted to them were mainly Dalits, Tribals and poor people. It is important to remember that at least some of the western missionaries had racial prejudice and did not allow native leadership.⁵⁵ Even worse, at the beginning some were not interested in lower caste people embracing

⁵¹ For example Shanmukh Bhai Patel who was a pioneer in the revival in Gujarat and Maharashtra was working among Church of North India (CNI) and Brethren Churches; Shanmukh Bhai Patel, interview by author, Pipal Kuah, Gujarat, 10 August 2009; Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 4.

⁵² Pulikottil, 'As East and West.'

⁵³ Hindutva reasons that Christianity was brought to India by the colonial powers and alleges that the message and method of missionary work of the native Indian Pentecostal churches is in continuity with that of the colonial missionaries.

⁵⁴ McGee, 'Pentecostal Phenomena,' 124.

⁵⁵ James Massey, 'Christians in North India: Historical Perspective with Special Reference to Christians in Punjab,' *Religion and Society* XXXIV/3 (September 1987): 99-102.

Christianity.⁵⁶ Nevertheless, later many of them did convert and missionaries made extra efforts to teach them the Bible and to encourage them to pursue education.

When Pentecostal missionaries entered the scene, there were only a few Christians in the north. Many who embraced the Pentecostal faith in the beginning were these converted Christians. Further, many Pentecostal missionaries targeted the existing western missionaries, who knew local languages and customs. This resulted in the formation of networks and some modest growth.⁵⁷ However, North India proved to be the hardest mission field because missionaries could not make considerable foray into caste-ridden society.⁵⁸ Then, they concentrated on establishing philanthropic institutions.⁵⁹ Therefore, it is important to ponder on the contributions of western missionaries, both non-Pentecostal and Pentecostal, in the history of North Indian Pentecostalism.

4.2.7 South Indian Contributions

Another important aspect is contributions of South-Indian Pentecostals to North Indian Pentecostalism. After the 1940s western missionaries began leaving India because of the Indian Freedom movement. Thus, whatever negligible Pentecostal work had been carried out in the north came to a standstill. However, by that time, many Pentecostal missionaries from Kerala had begun to move towards the north. Most of them were ordinary people, having no financial support, and even not

⁵⁶ Massey, 'Christians in North India,' 101. Massey says that in the beginning the missionaries were interested only in preaching the Christian gospel to high caste people. For instance, one missionary wrote to the Board of Foreign mission that the coming of low cast as 'raking in rubbish into the church.'

⁵⁷ Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 90.

⁵⁸ McGee, 'Pentecostal Phenomena,' 124.

⁵⁹ McGee, 'Pentecostal Phenomena,' 124; see footnote 117.

knowing any North Indian languages.⁶⁰ Nevertheless, their zeal was such that they ventured into the unknown. They came to the places where there was some Christian presence and instilled biblical teachings of believers' baptism, Spirit-baptism and the importance of a holy life among the existing Christians. With the help of local Christians, they moved into the un-evangelised territories and began to establish churches. Later, missionaries from Tamil Nadu also began their mission. Consequently, several Pentecostal denominations came into existence. Therefore, it is essential to look into the contributions of south-Indian missionaries in the history of North Indian Pentecostalism.

However, at this point we need to consider what Bergunder terms 'the existence of historical connections and synchronous interrelations' between various Pentecostal denominations existing in the north and south.⁶¹ This is because the south-Indian Pentecostalism influenced the worship, doctrine and life-style of North Indian Pentecostalism. Furthermore, it is also important to focus on churches that have split and pastors who formed their own denominations by splitting the churches they were part of in North India.⁶² Hence, the historian needs to break up the sources and apply a 'hermeneutic of suspicion' to them.⁶³

⁶⁰ The stories of M.K. Chacko, Kurian Thomas, K.V. Philip, Thomas Mathews, proves this fact; see M.K. Chacko, *An Autobiography* (Delhi: Pastor M.K. Chacko, 1976); Thomas Thonnakkal, *Marubhoomiyile Appostalan* [The Apostle of the Desert: A Biography of Thomas Mathews] (Udaipur, India: Cross and Crown, 2004); Thomson Thomas Kaithamangalam, *Marubhoomiyil Thalarathu* [Not Tired in the Desert: A Biography of Thomas Mathew] (Udaipur, India: Cross and Crown Publications, 1996); Roger Simmons, *Vision Mission and a Movement: The Story of Dr. Thomas Mathews and the Native Missionary Movement* (Richardson, TX: Native Missionary Movement, 2008; Kurien Thomas, *God's Trailblazer in India and around the World* (Itarsi, India: Kurien Thomas, 1986).

⁶¹ Bergunder, 'Constructing Indian Pentecostalism,' 189; Bergunder, *The South Indian Pentecostal Movement*, 12-13.

⁶² Bergunder, *The South Indian Pentecostal*, 12-13; 'It is precisely these friction,' comments Bergunder, 'that are most important for the historian who tries to sketch a diachronous network.'

⁶³ Bergunder, *The South Indian Pentecostal*, 13.

4.2.8 Mission Organisations

Another noteworthy aspect which needs to be considered is the work of hundreds of para-church mission organisations.⁶⁴ They carried out significant missionary work in almost all parts of North India, through distributing tracts and Bibles and through radio evangelism.⁶⁵ Many of the members of these organisations were Spirit-filled Christians who had an enthusiasm for North Indian evangelism. Through them, many people came to know Christ; they directed these new contacts mostly to Pentecostal churches, thus contributing to the already existing Pentecostal works.

4.2.9 Global Influence

Lastly, it is vital to consider the global influence upon the Indian Pentecostal movement and its history. Even though western missionaries went back, the bonds remained. Many North Indian Pentecostal churches have partnerships with Pentecostal churches in western countries, in terms of ministry and financial resources.⁶⁶ Moreover, recently the worldwide neo-Pentecostal and Charismatic movements have had tremendous impact upon North Indian Pentecostalism in terms of worship style, theology and mission practices, especially in urban centres, even though their effectiveness is still to be ascertained.

Hence, it is essential to take these factors into account when attempting to write a history of North Indian Pentecostalism. We will consciously attempt to highlight these factors, so that a reasonable and fair picture may be drawn out. Here we

⁶⁴ Satyavrata, 'Contextual Perspectives,' 207.

⁶⁵ Mission organisations like *Operation Mobilization* (OM), *India Every Home Compassion* and *Jesus Calls* of D.G.S. Dinakaran in Chennai and so on.

⁶⁶ Satyavrata, 'Contextual Perspectives,' 206.

shall neither discuss the history of Christianity in India, nor the Pentecostal history of South India as there are ample resources available on these topics. Rather we shall approach the discussion of the history of Pentecostalism in North India directly. However, to trace it, it is vital to have a glimpse at revivals which occurred at the beginning of the twentieth-century so that the Pentecostal history may be contextualised and the origin and growth of the emerging Pentecostal movement understood.

4.3 Twentieth Century Revivals in India

The Pentecostal history in India can be safely characterised as a history of revivals among the native people, followed by rapid mission development. These revivals originated among the native Christians and their influence was far-reaching. 'India played an important role in the worldwide revival that took place in the first decade of the twentieth century, especially through the events in the Khasi Hills and at the Mukti Mission,' comments Bergunder.⁶⁷ Obviously, the formation of Indian Pentecostal churches in North India can be attributed to the revival movements in the last century. In the following pages we shall briefly survey the revivals which influenced, some way or another, the formation of Pentecostal churches in India as whole, and particularly in the north.

4.3.1 Revivals in South India

The precursor of the Pentecostal movement in south-India can be traced back to revivals that broke out in Kerala in denominations like Mar Thoma Church and churches run by CMS in 1860, 1873 and 1895. It was John Christian Aroolappen

⁶⁷ Bergunder, *The South Indian Pentecostal Movement*, 23.

of Tirunalveli, now in Tamil Nadu, who became instrumental in the revival. He was a CMS trained catechist and happened to read about revivals in the US, England and the Ulster in 1857-59. A mighty revival broke out on March 4, 1860 in Tirunalveli; this outpouring was accompanied by prophecy, glossolalia, glossographia, interpretation of tongues, dreams, visions and intense conviction of sins among nominal Christians.⁶⁸ This revival resulted in passionate evangelistic activities among the native people, which were neither supported by missionaries, nor by western money. Conversions ensued in numbers which amazed western missionaries, who were struggling to educate the masses and to convert them.⁶⁹

Within a decade, the revival extended into nearby Travancore, in Kerala, through a disciple of John Aroolappan, named Mathai (*Pandikaran Mathai Upadeshi*), among CMS and Mar Thoma Churches. He came to Kerala with construction workers and preached in many places of central Travancore. His evangelistic meetings created intense conviction of sins and shaking of the bodies as well as renewed interest in Bible reading among the Syrian Christians. The prominent leaders who carried forward this revival were Rev. Yustus Joseph, a Brahmin convert to CMS, Mathaikutty and Yakobkutty, and a few others. This revival continued for more than three years but later waned. However, the revival had wider consequences, which resulted in the reformation of existing churches. Later, more radical reforms were advocated by other members, such as believer's baptism, holy life and biblical teachings and went on to establish the Brethren Church. This movement was called *separatist*. The predominantly Christian

⁶⁸ See G. B. McGee, 'Pentecostal and Pentecostal-like Movements (1860-1910),' in *NIDPCM*, 118-119. Also see G. B. McGee, 'Pentecostal Phenomena and Revivals in India: Implication for Indigenous Church Leadership,' *IBMR* 20/3 (July, 1996), 112-114.

⁶⁹ G. B. McGee, 'Pentecostal Phenomena and Revivals in India,' 113-114.

population in central Travancore became a fertile ground for the Pentecostal seed to grow rapidly.⁷⁰ This context paved the way for the Pentecostal movement in South India.

4.3.2 Revival in Northeast India

Just as in the south, the ground was prepared for the revival in the north of India. According to McGee, in 1880-1882, Methodist missionaries toured the land for the promotion of Holiness. 'Both Holiness and Higher Life currents flowed through India,' says McGee.⁷¹ In late 1897, leaders of various mission agencies in India issued a special call to prayer for the conversion of the country.⁷² Snaitang says that the hard-work of various western mission agencies in the areas of education, medical service and theological teachings enabled many Tribal people to abandon their primal religious rituals to embrace Christianity. Their pietistic kind of spirituality led them to the early Christian spirituality which contributed to the revival.⁷³ The Welsh missionaries brought out the translation of the Bible and encouraged people to read and preach and instructed the Bible as the supreme authority in matters of faith, ethics and daily life. The preparation of local leadership by missionaries to be appointed as school teachers and evangelists contributed to the revival as well.⁷⁴ According to Snaitang, the formation of

⁷⁰ A better description of this revival by Sadhu Kochukunju of Idayaranmula who was also a prominent figure in Marthoma Church is given in a Malayalam Pentecostal Weekly called Maranatha Voice; Muthapackal Kochukunju, 'Malankara Kanda Maha Unarv' (Malayalam) (The Great Revival that Saw Malankara), *Maranatha Voice* (10 October 2006): 8-9, 14.

⁷¹ Gary B. McGee, "'Latter Rain' Falling in the East: Early-Twentieth-Century Pentecostalism in India and the Debate over Speaking in Tongues,' *Church History* 68/3 (1999): 649.

⁷² For instance, the 1898 Keswick Convention in England prayed for the missionary efforts in India by special appeal of Pandita Ramabai that God would raise up 200,000 Indian evangelists. See G.B. McGee, 'Pentecostal and Pentecostal-like Movements (1860-1910),' in *NIDPCM*, 119.

⁷³ O.L. Snaitang, 'The Indigenous Pentecostal Movement in Northeast India,' *Dharma Deepika* 6/2 (July-December 2002): 6.

⁷⁴ Snaitang, 'The Indigenous Pentecostal Movement in Northeast India,' 6.

Christian indigenous movements and leadership such as the Home Mission in 1900 led to the rise of indigenous awareness among the Christians. The formation of the Church of God in 1902 attributed to native missionary enterprise and leadership played vital roles in the origin of this revival.⁷⁵

When the news of this revival in Wales reached India, there were expectations in many quarters. A revival began in March 1905, among Tribal people in the Khasi Hills in the northeast India. The movement was first experienced during the Presbytery meeting at Pariong in the west Khasi Hills, and spread to Mizoram and Korea in the following year.⁷⁶ Believers began to confess their sins and participate in passionate worship and even, probably, spoke in tongues.⁷⁷

The revival in the Presbyterian Church had several elements of Pentecostal expressions such as praying aloud, singing, dancing, trembling and being slain in the Spirit.⁷⁸ ‘Therefore,’ comments Snaitang, ‘the outbreak of the revival movement might well be seen as a significant harbinger for the gradual rise and development of Pentecostalism in Northeast India’.⁷⁹

4.3.3 Revivals in North India

Similarly, North India also experienced a series of revivals which somehow had an effect on the spiritual landscape. The earliest move of the Holy Spirit happened in North-West India as early as 1895, at a camp meeting in Lonavala near Pune

⁷⁵ Snaitang, ‘The Indigenous Pentecostal Movement in Northeast India,’ 6.

⁷⁶ T. Nongsiej, ‘Revival Movement in Khasi-Jaintia Hills,’ in *Churches of Indigenous Origin in Northeast India*, edited by O. L. Snaitang (Delhi: ISPCCK, 2000), 32-34.

⁷⁷ Snaitang, ‘The Indigenous Pentecostal Movement in Northeast India,’ 7.

⁷⁸ Snaitang, ‘The Indigenous Pentecostal Movement in Northeast India,’ 7. Also, see, McGee, ‘“Latter Rain” Falling in the East,’ 652.

⁷⁹ Snaitang, ‘The Indigenous Pentecostal Movement in Northeast India,’ 7.

conducted by the Norwegian missionary Gelson Gegson. Then the revival spread to other places like Bombay, Pune, Dond, Aurangabad and Yeotmal.⁸⁰

4.3.3.1 Revival in Mukti Mission (Kedgaon, near Pune)

The expectation of a revival had grown in the Mukti Mission at Kedgaon, near Pune, founded by Pandita Ramabhai to care for orphans and widows. In June 29, the power of the Spirit manifested like fire, so much so that people ran for water to quench the fire. There was also confession of sins, shaking of the body, visions, dreams and coming under the power of the Spirit. Moreover, the revival created evangelistic fervour among the recipients of the power of the Spirit.⁸¹ Ramabhai explained the revival as the means by which the Holy Spirit was creating a contextual form of Indian Christianity and working in harmony with the Indian psyche to suit their nature and feelings.⁸²

According to Anderson, it is unlikely that Azusa Street had any influence on the Mukti revival. Moreover, there was a tendency among American missionaries, even from the beginning, to discount the revival at Mukti as non-Pentecostal owing to the fact that there was no tongue-speaking phenomenon at the beginning of the revival.⁸³ However, according to Bergunder, Ramabhai and Mukti mission as an institution later backed out of the Pentecostal movement and interpreted the

⁸⁰ Finny Philip, 'The Thomas Mathews Revolution,' *Cross & Crown* 36/1 (November 2005 - March 2006): 20.

⁸¹ Quoted by McGee, "'Latter Rain' Falling in the East;' See also Helen S. Dyer, (comp.), *Revival in India 1905-1906* (Akola, Maharashtra: Alliance Publications, 1987), 37-49; According to Dyer, Ramabhai took a band of Spirit-filled helpers to Pune and began a series of meetings in which the Methodist Boy's School was specially blessed. Blessing also came to the Zenana Training home of Miss Soonderbhai Powar, an Indian woman working like Ramabhai. The whole of the school, about 120 girls were in a state of revival. Similarly, the Boy's Christian Home at Dhond, run by Albert Norton also experienced a revival.

⁸² Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 85.

⁸³ Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 83.

revival as part of the larger evangelical awakening in the first decade of the twentieth century.⁸⁴

4.3.3.2 Revival in Dholka (Gujarat)

Similarly, in Dholka town of Gujarat also experienced a powerful revival.⁸⁵ The revival started in a prayer group of Bethel Alliance Church. According to P.T. Joseph, the Dholka revival began in April 5, 1905, a few months before the Mukti revival.⁸⁶ However, according to George, it was in 1906.⁸⁷ Joseph contends that the living links to this revival are Elambhai Master in Dholka, a grand old man of 83 years, and Rev. B.B. Christian, son of V.B. Christian. The revival took place during the lifetime of Elambhai's father, Punjabhai Nathubhai.⁸⁸ In 1900 there was a severe famine. The Alliance missionaries brought 600 orphan boys into the hostel which had been constructed there and the Kheda camp which was another orphanage for girls accommodating about 400 orphans. According to Joseph, some believers who received Holy Spirit baptism in April 1905 in Dholka went to the Mukti Mission Ashram of Pandita Ramabai and, through them, the fire of revival was kindled in Mukti Mission in June 1905.⁸⁹

Sarah Cox, a member of the Christian Missionary Alliance said, 'One after another we missionaries and our Indian Christians were baptised according to

⁸⁴ Bergunder, *The South Indian Pentecostal*, 24.

⁸⁵ Dholka is 35 km to the west of Ahmadabad City in the state of Gujarat.

⁸⁶ P.T. Joseph had interviewed these two people and written an article. P.T. Joseph is a retired advocate of Gujarat high court and actively involved in legal issues related to the Christians in north-India. P.T. Joseph, 'Dolka Revival and After,' Electronic copy, sent through e-mail. Nerius Dholakia, who lives in Ahmedabad, has also written a book called 'Alliance Mission' and he has described the 1905 revival in Dholka.

⁸⁷ George, *Trailblazers for God*, 34; Wesley Duewel, *Revival Fire* (Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995), 223.

⁸⁸ Joseph had personally visited Elambhai Master in the first week of January 2003 and collected the stories of this revival. Elambhai is running a magazine called "Dhumati Sagdi" (Smoking Furnace) in Gujarati language. P.T. Joseph, 'Dolka Revival and After.'

⁸⁹ Joseph, 'Dolka Revival and After.'

Acts. 2:4 – many of our small girls,... a number of young men and missionaries received this precious baptism at that time’.⁹⁰ Robin Boyd who wrote the church history of Gujarat gives only a faint allusion to this revival and a casual reading may not reveal the facts. He says, ‘At times there were among these orphans real experiences of spiritual revival’.⁹¹ It seems that mainline historians are not bothered about the revivals. It is difficult to ascertain the effect of this revival in the formation of Pentecostal movement in Gujarat.

4.3.3.3 Revival in Sialkot (Punjab)

Earlier the missionaries targeted high-caste people in the Punjab, but in between 1834 to 1885, they had only 447 converts. In the latter days of August 1905, in the second annual convention of Sialkot in Punjab (now in Pakistan), a revival broke out. Of 300 people gathered most of them were Indian workers, men and women of the Punjabi Dalit community, but there were also some western missionaries from the Scottish and American Presbyterian Missions present. After the 1905 ‘Sialkot Revival,’ the number of baptised members climbed to 3450 in 1906, and to 16,025 in 1915, an annual increase of 1,250.⁹² ‘This revival, prepared for seven years by Praying Hyde’s Punjab Prayer Union, was a classic revival, with conviction and confession of sin and unusual conversions,’ comments Edwin

⁹⁰ Quoted in George, *Trailblazers for God*, 34.

⁹¹ Robin Boyd, *Church History of Gujarat* (Madras: The Christian Literature Society, 1981), 110

⁹² J. Edwin Orr, ‘The Outpouring of the Spirit in Revival and Awakening and its Issue in Church Growth,’ (British Church Growth Association, 2000); <http://www.churchmodel.org.uk/Orr%20HS%20BOOKLET%20A4.pdf> (accessed 12 January 2010); Also see J. Edwin Orr, *Evangelical Awakening in South Asia* (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, INC, 1975), 144-154; Also see Basil Miller, *Praying Hyde: A Man of Prayer* (Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1943).

Orr.⁹³ It spread into different parts of the Punjab as well as into the state of Uttar Pradesh; places like Dehra Dun, Almora, Moradabad and Allahabad.⁹⁴

According to Massey, it was a Punjabi Dalit Christian, named Ditt,⁹⁵ who played a major role in the revival and conversion movement. Pickett, in his famous book 'Christian Mass Movements in India', comments that the real founder of the church in Sialkot was Ditt.⁹⁶ He brought more than 500 people from his caste into the faith, within eleven years of his baptism (1884). By 1915, almost all the Dalits known as *churas* of Sialkot became Christians.⁹⁷ It seems that the real hero of this movement was left out by a number of historians. Today, many Punjabi Dalits both Christians and non-Christians are joining the Pentecostal movement.

4.3.3.4 Revival at Calcutta

The arrival in late December 1906 of Alfred and Lillian Garr, the first missionaries to India from the Azusa Street revival, prepared the ground for Pentecostal revival in Calcutta and nearby regions. They were invited to speak to the Women's Union Missionary Society (WMUS) and some of the missionaries experienced the visitation of the Spirit.⁹⁸ At the invitation of Pastor C.H. Hook on January 13, 1907 Garr began to conduct services at the Carey Baptist Chapel in Lal Bazaar which was built by William Carey. It was the time of a missionary conference, and missionaries had come from across the subcontinent and Ceylon (now Sri Lanka). With the ministry of Garr people developed a deep sense of

⁹³ Orr, 'The Outpouring of the Spirit.'

⁹⁴ Duewel, *Revival Fire*, 223-227.

⁹⁵ For a brief sketch of the story of Ditt see Massey, 'Christianity among the Dalits,' 10-11.

⁹⁶ J. Waskom Pickett, *Christian Mass Movements in India* (New York: Abingdon, 1933), 56.

⁹⁷ Pickett, *Christian Mass Movements*, 47-49; Also see John C. B. Webster, *The Christian Community and Change in Nineteenth Century North India* (Delhi: Macmillan, 1976), 231.

⁹⁸ Gary B. McGee, 'The Calcutta Revival of 1907 and the Reformulation of Charles Parham's Bible Evidence Doctrine.' *AJPS* 6/1 (2003): 123.

conviction of sin, which resulted in repentance; also in the praising of God at the top of their voices. Under the inspiration of the Spirit, people began to sing in ‘tongues’ in unison, even glossographia⁹⁹ and intercessory prayers with ‘groans that word cannot express’ (Rom. 8:26).¹⁰⁰ Many missionaries experienced baptism in the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues.¹⁰¹

A revival also broke out in Calcutta during the ministry of Garr in 1907 in the Elliot Road orphanage run by Fannie Simpson, a Methodist missionary. Many of the girls in the orphanage were baptised in the Spirit. Simpson also experienced the baptism of Holy Spirit, which created tension between herself and the leadership; eventually, she was re-called back to the USA. However, she returned to India as an independent Pentecostal missionary and established a girl’s orphanage in Purulia, about 1915.¹⁰²

What is significant in these revivals that even though there were western missionaries involved in revival all across North India, the leaders of the revivals were almost always Indian people themselves. Following each revival, a large number of people joined churches.¹⁰³ However, these were not Pentecostal churches but the existing missionary churches. For example, according to Duewel, the number of Christians in the Punjab quadrupled from 37,695 to 163,994.¹⁰⁴ These revivals prepared the ground for Pentecostal mission activities in successive decades.

⁹⁹ Tongues in writing.

¹⁰⁰ McGee, ‘The Calcutta Revival of 1907,’ 124.

¹⁰¹ McGee, ‘Pentecostal Phenomena and Revivals,’ 121.

¹⁰² George, *Trailblazers for God*, 35.

¹⁰³ Duewel, *Revival Fire*, 227.

¹⁰⁴ Duewel, *Revival Fire*, 227.

4.4 North Indian Pentecostal History

These revivals were not ends in themselves but led to widespread mission campaigns in many parts of North India.¹⁰⁵ Pentecostal history is the history of missions and it was these mission activities which contributed to the initial phase of Pentecostal history. In this section we shall explore briefly the mission which ensued immediately after the revivals of first decade of the 20th century; the history from 1905 to 1920.

4.4.1 North Indian Pentecostal History (1905-1920)

4.4.1.1 Mission in North India

The Mukti Revival in North India had far-reaching effects, not only in India but also at an international level.¹⁰⁶ The news of the Mukti-Revival stirred similar revivals in Valparaiso and Santiago in Chile, South America in 1909. According to Anderson, Chilean Pentecostalism has its roots in the Mukti Revival, which did not promote a doctrine of ‘initial evidence’.¹⁰⁷

The Mukti Revival lasted for a year and a half and resulted in 1100 baptisms at the Mukti school. More than 700 of these young women functioned as teams venturing into the surrounding areas with the Gospel message, sometimes even for more than a month and about 100 of them going out daily even risking persecution.¹⁰⁸ Thus, Mukti operated as the main centre for Pentecostalism in India and many from different places received Spirit-baptism and spread the fire in their respective places. Moreover, the Dhond mission started by Albert Norton,

¹⁰⁵ See Anderson, *Spreading Fires*; Orr, *Evangelical Awakening*; Duewel, *Revival Fire*.

¹⁰⁶ Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 87.

¹⁰⁷ Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 89.

¹⁰⁸ Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 79-87. Ramabhai also formed a ‘Bible School’ for 200 young women for prayer and evangelism and they spread the revival fire wherever they went.

which was near to Kedgaon, also experienced the revival and became a mission centre for North India; he termed it 'one of the mother colonies for Pentecostal work in India'.¹⁰⁹ Unfortunately, we do not have the details of the works they carried out and the places they reached.¹¹⁰

One of the most significant mission activities of Mukti was related to famine relief and to empowering the marginalised and oppressed in society.¹¹¹ The women were at the forefront of mission activities, which had a profound effect upon the status of women in the context of low status and oppression.¹¹² Moreover, there was openness to other Christians, 'an ecumenicity and inclusiveness that stands in stark contrast to the rigid exclusivism of subsequent Pentecostal movements'.¹¹³ However, ironically, the Mukti Revival did not contribute in terms of Pentecostal church growth and, even after 100 years, Pentecostal churches are scant in those parts of Maharashtra.

4.4.1.2 Mission in Calcutta and Surrounding Areas

The Garrs began to spread the Pentecostal message to different parts of India, Sri Lanka and Hong Kong. Their strategy was aimed at reaching the existing missionaries, who knew local languages and customs, so that they might later spread the Pentecostal fire. This resulted in the formation of Pentecostal networks and spreading of Pentecostalism at a rapid pace.¹¹⁴ Many who received Pentecostal experience were thrown out from their parental mission bodies. As a

¹⁰⁹ Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 86.

¹¹⁰ It seems that people from there moved to different states of North India such as Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and spread the Pentecostal message.

¹¹¹ Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 86-88.

¹¹² Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 88.

¹¹³ Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 88.

¹¹⁴ Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 90.

result they began to develop their own Pentecostal mission. These independent missionaries purchased properties and opened mission stations in larger cities along the railroad lines, to facilitate evangelism.¹¹⁵ However, North India proved to be the hardest mission field and so missionaries could not make any considerable foray into the cast-ridden and superstitious minds of the people.¹¹⁶ Then, the early Pentecostal missionaries concentrated on establishing institutions such as orphanages, elementary and industrial schools, correspondence schools, radio programmes, leper asylums and dispensaries.¹¹⁷

A revival broke out in the school and orphanage run by Shorat Chakrabarty, a Bengali woman with an M.A. degree who founded a Pentecostal mission in Allahabad with her co-worker Dorothea Chandra in 1910. This place became a centre for the spread of Pentecostalism and many were converted and baptised in the Spirit there.¹¹⁸ Faizabad, Bahraich and Basti near Nepal became main centres of Pentecostalism and buzzing mission activities had thrived. During 1910, there was significant Pentecostal expansion to all over Punjab and North West India.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁵ McGee, 'Pentecostal Phenomena,' 124.

¹¹⁶ McGee, 'Pentecostal Phenomena,' 124.

¹¹⁷ McGee, 'Pentecostal Phenomena,' 124. The AG has the most extensive system of institutional networks such as an orphanage and girl's school at Bettiah; a girl's orphanage at Purilia; the James Harwey Boys' school at Nawabganj; a leper work at Uska Bazar, begun in 1911 by Minnie Abrams; the 'Baby Fold' at Rupaidiha; a girl's industrial school at Siswa Bazar etc. The best known AG work is in Calcutta, "Mission of Mercy" which now feeds over 20,000 hungry people every day, a hospital, a school of nursing, a junior college, a vocational school, six village clinics, a hostel for destitute youth, a drug prevention program, and 12 schools that provide instruction for 6,000 children.

¹¹⁸ Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 90. In 1911, Chakrabarty moved her centre to Nanpara in the northern Bahraich District and organised a Pentecostal convention in which many missionaries received Spirit-baptism.

¹¹⁹ Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 90 ff.

In 1911, mission stations were established in the Basti district nearing Nepal by Robert Massey,¹²⁰ Dick Mahaffey and Minnie Abrams. A number of 'All India Pentecostal Conferences' were held in different places and they became catalysts in Pentecostal mission growth in different regions of North India and Nepal.¹²¹ Anderson describes many anonymous missionaries in Nepal and surrounding areas and even two Indian missionaries going to Iraq, whose fate is unknown. Similarly, many Indian evangelists laboured sacrificially to spread the Pentecostal message.¹²² Many missionaries of conservative societies who knew Indian languages received Spirit-baptism and by 1913, some 200 foreign missionaries began to spread the Pentecostal message. Similar stories of missionary accomplishments are available to us.¹²³ However, after some years these movements declined and the Pentecostal movement became stagnant.

4.4.2 North Indian Pentecostal History (1920-1960)

This period can be rightly termed as a transition period in the Pentecostal movement in North India and is plagued by a dearth of documented historical resources. It may also be called as 'the dark era' or what we can call the 'cooling

¹²⁰ This mission was taken over by James Harvey and joined to AoG in 1916 and established an orphanage, a home for widows, and a training school for boys. See Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 93.

¹²¹ Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 91-92.

¹²² Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 92. In Punch, part of Kashmir two Anglo-Indian women, Edith Kirschner and L.A. Baker worked since 1910 under much hardship, ran a girl's schools and converted some Muslims, which resulted in physical violence against them. A revival broke out in 1919-20 in the Quaker mission in Itarsi, in Madhya Pradesh, led by Indians such as Khushi Lal, Jaganath, PyareLal and Har Chand and spread to several other Quaker missions.

¹²³ Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 93. Maud Orlebar, the CMA Missionary opened a 'Pentecostal home' (Beulah Home) for tarrying for Spirit-baptism in Bombay. In 1908, it became a centre for Pentecostalism where Indian evangelists, Bible women were trained. People from Dalit and tribal communities were accommodated and ran a school for their children and a refuge for women. Vibrant mission activities occurred through native workers, especially Gumut Row, who started the first Pentecostal paper in an Indian language, Marathi. Later Annie Murray began work in Aurangabad among the poor, where many became Pentecostal believers, through the work of four Indian preachers at their own expense.

off’ period with most missing links of North Indian Pentecostal history. It is hard to dig out every possible reason behind the decline of the movement.

At the same time South Indian Pentecostalism was moving forward and increasing in number of congregations and in mission activities.¹²⁴ We need to treat this period very cautiously as no one has ever ventured into the study of this before.¹²⁵ To have a better picture, first we shall explore the factors that played negative roles in dampening the enthusiasm of the movement and resultant ‘cooling off’ effect.

4.4.2.1 Decline of the Movement

We can point out several external and internal factors underlying the decline of the movement in the north, a fact which affected the growth of the movement considerably. Some of them are discussed below briefly.

Socio-Political Context

The period subsequent to 1920 was one of the turbulent eras of Indian society. Although Christian missionaries were against enslavement and exploitation of the native people, the general population, especially in North India considered Christianity as the religion of the oppressors. There was a general animosity against Christianity and the political nationalism of Hindutva forces was utterly

¹²⁴ A comparative study of South Indian Pentecostalism, especially the Kerala Pentecostalism with North Indian during the period may help us to pinpoint the factors that were causing the decline of the North Indian Pentecostal movement, even though both contexts were different.

¹²⁵ The only exception is the history of Pentecostalism in Rajasthan by Wessly Lukose; see Lukose, ‘A Contextual Missiology of the Spirit.’

against Christian missionaries.¹²⁶ This political climate definitely affected the growth of the movement. Political discontent against the British rule was at its zenith.¹²⁷

Religio-Cultural Context

As already mentioned, the religio-cultural context acted as a formidable factor in the non-proliferation of Pentecostalism. North Indian Hindu society was an impervious target, unlike South Indian Christian society. The general population did not know what Christianity was and considered it to be a pagan religion. Indeed educational and charitable activities were appreciated by a section of the society; however, conversion was a contentious issue.¹²⁸ Moreover, the caste-ridden society divided itself into various groups and sub-groups, some of which considered Christianity as the religion of Dalits and lower-castes, as most of the converts came from those backgrounds.¹²⁹ The patriarchal and andro-centric society acted as a rigid structure for the first missionaries, mostly women.

¹²⁶ M.T. Cherian, *Hindutva Agenda and Minority Rights: A Christian Response* (Bangalore: Centre for Contemporary Christianity, 2007), 155-205; also see, C.V. Mathew, *Saffron Mission: A Historical Analysis of Modern Hindu Missionary Ideologies and Practices* (New Delhi: ISPCK, 1999).

¹²⁷ Sumithra, *Christian Theologies*, 8-12; As already noted there were many movements like 'the Non-cooperation movement, 'the Self-rule movement' (*swaraj*) 'the Quit India Movement,' and so on taking place in the political front.

¹²⁸ Antony Copley, *Religions in Conflict: Ideology, Cultural Contact and Conversion in Late Colonial India* (Delhi, India: Oxford University Press, 1997); Sebastian C. H. Kim, *In Search of Identity: Debates on Religious Conversion in India* (New Delhi: Oxford, 2003).

¹²⁹ Albones Raj, 'Mass Religious Conversion as Protest Movement: A Framework,' *Religion and Society* XXVIII/4 (1981): 58-66; Hrangkhuma, F. (ed.). *Christianity in India: Search for Liberation and Identity* (Delhi: ISPCK, 2000).

Lack of Native Leadership

After 1920, many Pentecostal missionaries from abroad began to go back as they were ageing.¹³⁰ Besides, the heat of the Indian independent movement began to be felt increasingly upon foreign missionaries.¹³¹ They controlled administration as well as financial matters¹³² and as a rule did not ordain native leaders.¹³³ Most of the converts were uneducated, from Dalit or lower-caste settings and were not trained to lead from the forefront. They were always in supportive roles and had no financial resources. This might have led to a paralysis of administrative and mission activities. As foreign missionaries left, the existing missions might have experienced financial difficulties which could have been a major constraint in the growth and consolidation of the movement. Moreover, the people who had converted were mainly staying in 'mission compounds'. Benjamin P. Shinde had argued that the mission-station model retarded the development of Indian Pentecostal leadership in the north.¹³⁴ These factors would have led to the 'cooling off' of the movement. However, in the south, native missionaries began 'faith ministry' or harnessed their own resources and walked away from

¹³⁰ The reason behind this assumption is that many of the Pentecostal missionaries were already serving in India for several years in other missionary churches and the experience of Spirit-baptism led them to be Pentecostal missionaries. For instance, Alfred Garr targeted already existing missionaries who knew the local languages and customs (he could not speak the Indian languages with the gift of tongues as expected); see Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 90; Anderson says, 'The focus of their ministry was now on reaching missionaries with their message...because these missionaries (unlike the Garrs) knew the customs and languages of India...Most of these came from evangelical faith missions like the CMA and the CIM, but sometimes missionaries from older denominations were affected.' Burgess also says that about sixty veteran missionaries living in India embraced the Pentecostal gift of tongues; Burgess, 'Pentecostalism in India,' 89.

¹³¹ See religio-cultural and socio-political context, pages 99-101.

¹³² Anderson, 'Revising Pentecostal History,' 163-164.

¹³³ Pulikottil, 'Emergence of Indian Pentecostalism,' 52; Gary B. McGee, 'Missions, Overseas (North American Pentecostal),' *NIDPCM*, 896.

¹³⁴ Benjamin P. Shinde was a product of the Junnar Boy's Orphanage and one of the earliest trained Indian missiologists; see B. Shinde, 'The Contribution of the Assemblies of God to Church Growth in India' (M.A. Thesis, Fuller Theological Seminary, School of World Mission, 1974); Burgess, 'Pentecostalism in India,' 93.

missionary paternalism; asserted their independence while launching their own church movements.¹³⁵

Non-Establishment of Pentecostal Congregations

Yet another significant factor that led to the decline of the movement was the lack of strong native Pentecostal churches. We do not know the exact number of congregations which started with the revival movements. For example, even though the Mukti revival was so powerful, it is unclear how many Pentecostal congregations were formed by the Mukti missionaries.¹³⁶ It seems that most of the people who were revived remained in their own existing denominations. Further, some of the converts like Sadhu Sundhar Singh were against the formation of ecclesiological structures.¹³⁷ However, in the south, people who were part of the revivals formed independent Pentecostal congregations, later organised into major Pentecostal denominations.¹³⁸ Unlike in the south, a strong church growth movement was not attained in the north where missionaries were primarily concentrating on running orphanages, rescue homes for widows, schools, etc.¹³⁹

¹³⁵ For example, the Indian Pentecostal Church (IPC), an independent church movement by K.E. Abraham and other co-workers in Kerala. Pulikottil, 'Emergence of Indian Pentecostalism,' 54-56.

¹³⁶ Allan Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 2004), 124; Also see Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 88 and Bergunder, *The South Indian Pentecostal Movement in the Twentieth Century*, 24; J. Edwin Orr, *Evangelical awakenings in southern Asia* (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, 1975).

¹³⁷ See P. Surya Prakash, 'Contribution of Sadhu Sundhar Singh to the Indigenous Christian movement in India,' in *Christianity is Indian: The Emergence of an Indigenous Community*, rev. ed., edited by Roger E. Hedlund (Delhi: ISPCK, 2004), 121.

¹³⁸ K. E. Abraham, *Yesukristhuvinte Eliya Dassan* [Autobiography of Pastor K. E. Abraham], 3rd ed. (Kumbanad, India: K. E. Abraham Foundation, 2001); Mathew, *Kerala Penthecosthu Charithram*.

¹³⁹ Gary B. McGee & S. M. Burgess, 'India,' *NIDPCM*, 124.

Lack of Theological and Missionary Training

Although early Pentecostals had their mission in the power of the Spirit and achieved good results, they failed to develop indigenous means and methods to construct their own theology, according to contextual needs. Many of them were trained in the denominational patterns and, even after the Spirit experience, their theology remained the same, except in a few areas such as the doctrine of tongue-speaking or Spirit-baptism. Of course, we are not ruling out the formation of the Fourfold Gospel and other doctrines.¹⁴⁰ These were suitable for South India, especially Kerala, as it had a considerable Christian population. However, the North Indian mission context needed much more innovation, due to unfavorable conditions such as rigid caste-system, strong cultural and religious binding, and lack of Christian exposure to the common population.

The biblical and missionary training essential to the movement's endurance was not available at that era, because the mission proceeded immediately after the revivals which were so hectic. Instead of giving training to local believers, foreign missionaries might have used their help to further expand mission activities. They also lacked a theology of mission¹⁴¹ and even today the pioneering missionaries of Kerala Pentecostalism in the north face the same situation.

Schism

Mission was carried out by people and organisations having no long-term vision or corporate spirit, which is typically 'Pentecostal'. The lack of co-ordination

¹⁴⁰ Four-fold Gospel – Jesus Christ the saviour, baptiser, healer, soon coming king – is the formative doctrine of classical Pentecostalism. For more information on Fourfold Gospel, see Chapter 7, pages 275-276.

¹⁴¹ Gabriel, 'Reflections on Indian Pentecostalism,' 69-71.

among the leaders as well as divisions dogged progress. Personal prejudice, organisational envy, theological dogmatism, cultural-superiority and many other factors hampered the unity of mission and had negative effects.¹⁴² As a result, within a few years of its inception, the movement had split into many western and Indian organisations.

Disapproval of Work of the Spirit by Missionary Churches

Another possible reason for the decline of the movement was perhaps due to the disapproval of the work of the Spirit by denominational churches. As already noted, many people who received the Spirit-baptism remained in their respective churches. Many missionaries, or pastors, who were from a denominational background could not digest the manifestations of the Spirit, and considered them to be demonic.¹⁴³ The believers who experienced the work of the Spirit did not have the essential biblical knowledge to defend their experiences as most of them were illiterate or had only partial knowledge of biblical teaching. This might have dampened the initial enthusiasm and prevented the believers from exercising the gifts of the Spirit regularly and witnessing in the society.

4.4.2.2 Spiritual Decline in North India and the Coming of Kerala Pentecostal Missionaries

The general spiritual climate of denominational churches was in decline in this era. Many Pastors were not concerned about the spiritual growth of their parishioners and people were not much interested in spiritual activities. Although

¹⁴² Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 85.

¹⁴³ At least some of them were influenced by enlightenment thinking and relegated the supernatural. For example, one participants of the revival in Banswara in Rajasthan has said that he was shocked to see that the girls who spoke in tongues were beaten by the Canadian Presbyterian missionaries who were in charge of the hostel; see Lukose, 'A Contextual Missiology of the Spirit,' 113.

the above-mentioned factors acted as detrimental to the proliferation of Pentecostal churches in the north, many believers who experienced the Spirit-baptism and revival continued to keep the experience intact. This assumption was proved right when Kerala Pentecostal missionaries reached north, as these Spirit-filled people responded to the Pentecostal message. For example, M.K. Chacko, the first pioneer Pentecostal missionary who went from Kerala to North India in 1937, was initially sponsored by one Miss Karen Kamath from Bombay, a Swedish missionary who was very zealous and ready to work with native pastors.¹⁴⁴ In Kanpur, a Christian called Masih Das supported him. Later when Chacko left for Delhi he entrusted the work to Miss Kamath and to Masih Das.¹⁴⁵ Later Miss Kamat went to Lahore (now in Pakistan) and worked with Pastor K.J. Samuel and continued to do so even after the partition.¹⁴⁶ It seems that Samuel was the first Pentecostal missionary in that area of Pakistan. In Pratapgarh, Rev. Ericsson invited Chacko to conduct meetings in his church in Mussoorie in Uttar Pradesh. Although Chacko did not mention his church affiliation, he was probably from one of the missionary churches. Later Chacko was invited to speak in a missionary conference in Mahoba, Uttar Pradesh in 1938, and many people received Spirit-baptism.¹⁴⁷

When pastor Chacko and his family came to Delhi, he was invited by a Methodist pastor P.D. Philip several times. Once he had a week's special meeting in that

¹⁴⁴ Chacko, *An Autobiography*, 9-10; Also see Thomas, *God's Trailblazer*, 26.

¹⁴⁵ Chacko, *An Autobiography*, 13-14; Unfortunately, the details of these people are not given by Chacko. We may assume that they had previous Pentecostal experience and that was why they were ready to join Chacko in his Pentecostal activities and Chacko was ready to handover the work to them.

¹⁴⁶ Thomas, *God's Trailblazer*, 26-27.

¹⁴⁷ Chacko, *An Autobiography*, 12-13.

church and consequently some people began to attend Chacko's church.¹⁴⁸ Again he was invited by the Methodist bishop Baker and Rev. Lance to speak in a minister's conference in Roorkee (now in Uttarakhand state). Chacko narrates, 'I preached the full gospel truth. Many pastors and ministers were against me, but those who invited me said that what I preached was correct'.¹⁴⁹ These episodes show that, although there was a general decline of spiritual fervour among Christians in the north, some people kept the revived spirit and had spiritual longing.

Furthermore, it seems from Chacko's autobiography that some Pentecostal churches did exist in Uttar Pradesh and surrounding places in the 1930s.¹⁵⁰ For instance, according to Kurien Thomas, there were two young men, Harry Liddle and Joni Peters working in Agra and the church was begun by Chacko.¹⁵¹ Indeed, those were Pentecostal churches. Chacko also mentions a baptismal service in a Pentecostal church which existed in Nawabganj in U.P., led by Pastor Gideon.¹⁵² Nonetheless, from his testimony it is almost impossible to decipher how much Pentecostal works existed in the states surrounding Delhi in the 1930's and subsequent decades. According to the description of his account, no Pentecostal church existed in Delhi as he claims that his congregation was the first one. But it is obvious that there were some Spirit-filled people who had enthusiasm for evangelism.

¹⁴⁸ Chacko, *An Autobiography*, 15.

¹⁴⁹ Chacko, *An Autobiography*, 16; Besides he was invited to preach in missionary conferences of the Baptist Mission, the Swedish mission, the Norwegian mission etc., and according to him, he 'went to wherever full Gospel was not preached.' Chacko, *An Autobiography*, 21.

¹⁵⁰ These churches could be certain Assemblies of God Churches begun by missionaries as George mentions; see George, *Trailblazers for God*, 193.

¹⁵¹ Thomas, *God's Trailblazer*, 22-23.

¹⁵² Chacko, *An Autobiography*, 22.

Later, in 1943, Kurien Thomas, another pioneer missionary from Kerala, along with his friend Pastor John, came to the north. According to him, there existed a small Pentecostal church in Parel, Bombay, led by Pastor Lewis; the ministry of Thomas resulted in a spiritual revival there.¹⁵³ Similarly, in Jhansi, Sadhu Paradeshi had a ministry and he worked there some years before Thomas' arrival. Paradeshi had a special anointing in casting out evil spirits, and the public manifestation of such activities resulted in the baptism of some people and in the formation of a Pentecostal church. When Thomas arrived at the scene, Pastor William Rajandram was leading the church.¹⁵⁴

In 1942, Pastor K.J. Samuel from Kerala had arrived in Lahore (Pakistan) where there was a church formed by Chacko. The church was known as 'Lahore Pentecostal Church'. Kurien Thomas was stationed in Lahore for a few months and used to reach out to places like Bhatinda and Ferozpur in the Punjab.¹⁵⁵ There he had special meetings in the home of P.D. Benjamin, a ticket inspector on the Railways. Later he left his job and involved himself in full-time ministry.¹⁵⁶ Benjamin became a powerful instrument in the formation of Pentecostal churches in states like Gujarat and Maharashtra, mainly in the Tribal areas in 1970; we shall explore this later.

In 1945, Thomas settled in Itarsi for mission works, through Chacko who encouraged him to move there. Chacko had already baptised some Christians from

¹⁵³ Thomas, *God's Trailblazer*, 22.

¹⁵⁴ Thomas, *God's Trailblazer*, 22.

¹⁵⁵ Thomas, *God's Trailblazer*, 25-26; According to Thomas, there were many believers in and around Lahore and there were some Pentecostal works even in some villages like Fathipura and Shekhikhadi.

¹⁵⁶ Thomas, *God's Trailblazer*, 26.

the Friend's Mission (Quakers), before Thomas arrived in Itarsi.¹⁵⁷ The Friend's Mission had been working in Itarsi and surrounding villages for many years. However, because of financial difficulties, they had stopped going into the villages, when Thomas arrived in the scene. According to him, he had no support from anybody but by faith began to work in those villages where, later churches were formed.¹⁵⁸ In 1962, he had begun a Bible school, now known as Central India Bible College, training many native missionaries.¹⁵⁹ Moreover, many churches were established and registered as 'Fellowship of Pentecostal Churches of God', in 1966 which now boasts of hundreds of churches in North Indian states and includes many native workers.¹⁶⁰

Thomas also mentions one of the early Pentecostal churches in Lucknow in U.P. started by Pastor S.M. Chand, where, in 1960, a mega convention was conducted by T.L. Osborn. Many people were healed of their ailments and there was a great movement of the Spirit. However, opposition from Hindu militants was so strong that the convention had to be stopped.¹⁶¹

Similarly, another Pentecostal pioneer, P.S. Samuel, began mission work in Raipur, Chhattisgarh, in 1949, among the local tribal people. Through him many churches were established.¹⁶² Later, several missionaries from Kerala came to

¹⁵⁷ Those Christians were Mr & Mrs Francis, three young people, Ebenezer Simon, Miss Mary Simon and a young girl; see Thomas, *God's Trailblazer*, 31.

¹⁵⁸ Thomas, *God's Trailblazer*, 32-33.

¹⁵⁹ Thomas, *God's Trailblazer*, 78-82; Thomas had also conducted revival meetings in Bhopal in M.P. in 1947 immediately after the independence of India. Earlier many places were ruled by Hindu or Muslim kings and it was forbidden to preach publically. He also visited many places including Kota, Udaipur, and Ajmer in Rajasthan.

¹⁶⁰ Thomas, *God's Trailblazer*, 87-89; also see Hedlund, *Quest for Identity*, 119.

¹⁶¹ Thomas, *God's Trailblazer*, 75-77.

¹⁶² Mathew, *Kerala Penthecosthu Charithram*, 273; H. Wilfred, 'In Fond Memory of P.S. Samuel,' *Hallelujah* 11/12 (15 June 2006): 6-7.

various parts of the north and established Pentecostal churches. Prominent among them were P.M. Samuel and P.I. John.

This gives us an outline of Pentecostal work in the period running from 1920 and 1960. There were not many churches, however, some people preserved Pentecostal activities intact in different locations which enabled later missionaries to make those places their bases. Now we shall turn into the most important era of North Indian Pentecostal history, one which saw major growth.

4.4.3 North Indian Pentecostal History (1960-2000)

A new era in the history of Pentecostalism began after Indian Independence; Pentecostalism began to spread its roots deep down into the hard soil of the north. The outpouring of the revivals in different parts of North India had watered the spiritual wilderness and new sprouts of greenery, in the form of Pentecostal congregations, began to raise their heads here and there. The next 40 years of North Indian Pentecostal history were generous in growth and multiplication of the movement. It is impossible to look into each and every state of the north in this work; instead we will outline important milestones and growth, selectively. As noted earlier, most western missionaries had left India by 1947 and the control of all churches came into the hands of Indian leadership. However, in the case of the Pentecostal movement, there were only a few churches. For example, quoting Shinde, George states that the growth of AoG churches in the north was marginal, until 1970. The total number of believers was less than 4,000 and before 1974, the number of churches was only 90. The believers from non-Christian background

were 1,038 and the biological growth brought only 582 people into the church.¹⁶³ Nevertheless, the south had experienced major Pentecostal growth and many young people began to move towards the north with the Pentecostal message as explained above. Besides, a new brand of North Indian Pentecostal missionaries who carried out significant mission work in the hard terrains of the north, especially among Tribals and Dalits also began to emerge in the horizon. In the following pages we will try to draw out a fair picture of what had happened in this era, especially how these revivals and the subsequent mission endeavours contributed to the formation of their Christology.

At least up to the 1970s we are compelled to depend on the biographies of some South Indian Pentecostals. For a later stage, after the 70s, we have certain information, albeit in oral tradition. However, for the latest stage, it is almost impossible to comprehend and describe all the mission activities, as many of them are unknown and multiplying day by day. In addition, it is also risky because of the unsettled conditions and the threat of fanatic elements Pentecostals still face in North India.

4.4.3.1 Revivals in Rajasthan

Although foreign missionaries worked among the Tribals of Rajasthan, there were no Pentecostal churches. However, certain revivals occurred in Udaipur and Banswara, although people did not know them to be Spirit-awakenings.¹⁶⁴ In the Shepherd Memorial Church (CNI) of Udaipur in 1959-60 a powerful revival arose through Emmanuel Loel, who was an Air Force officer from Jabalpur, M.P. They

¹⁶³ George, *Trailblazers for God*, 193.

¹⁶⁴ For a full description see Lukose, 'A Contextual Missiology,' 103-126.

were speaking in tongues and falling on the ground in the presence of God and it was K.V. Philip, a missionary from Kerala who in 1960, explained these as the works of the Spirit. According to Lukose, there was a powerful outpouring of the Spirit in 1965-67 in Banswara. A few young people – Praveen, Tajendra Masih and Sohan Lal – were praying in a medical store and, suddenly the power of the Spirit came upon them and all of them fell down from their chairs and began to speak in tongues. Later they began to gather every night in the CNI Mission hostel for young boys and many more people received Spirit-baptism. However, these revivals did not materialise in church-planting.¹⁶⁵

It was the coming of Thomas Mathews to Udaipur in 1963, after the mission call of K.V. Philip, that made an important milestone in the history of North Indian Pentecostalism.¹⁶⁶ Mathews visited these places and explained the biblical and theological legitimacy of the Pentecostal experience. Some of the young people who experienced Spirit-baptism joined him and began to work among the Tribals in Banswara, Udaipur and other places. The untiring works of Mathews and his co-workers, like Tajendra Masih, Pathas Masih, Valu Singh and many others, resulted in church growth in predominantly tribal areas. One of the valuable contributions of Mathews can be explained in terms of harnessing the church-growth movement which was initiated by local revivals, which were about to extinguish.¹⁶⁷ Under his leadership, the Native Missionary Movement began to accelerate the church growth and gather momentum; the churches are now called

¹⁶⁵ Lukose, 'A Contextual Missiology,' 111-113.

¹⁶⁶ Thonnakkal, *Marubhoomiyile Appostalan*, 46; Kaithamangalam, *Marubhoomiyil Thalarathu*, 17; Simmons, *Vision Mission*, 26. His life and missionary activities are vividly portrayed in these books.

¹⁶⁷ Finny Philip, 'The Thomas Mathews Revolution,' *Cross & Crown* 36/1 (Nov. 05-Mar. 2006): 18-23.

Filadelfia Fellowship Churches. He also began a Bible college for training native missionaries in Udaipur, Rajasthan; now the movement boasts 1,200 congregations spread across 14 states in India.¹⁶⁸

4.4.3.2 Revivals in Gujarat and Maharashtra

There were some revivals in Gujarat and Maharashtra. One among them was through George Thomas Paradeshi from Kerala, who had a special gift as regards healing and exorcism; he came to Nadiad in Gujarat in 1970's.¹⁶⁹ It was said that through him many had accepted the Pentecostal message. His first convert was Joshua G. Raj, a Medical Practitioner in the Nadiad Methodist Mission Hospital.¹⁷⁰ Later Raj became a powerful missionary in Ahmadabad and also in surrounding tribal areas. According to Joseph, many denominational pastors secretly took immersion baptism under the hands of Paradeshi.¹⁷¹ He moved in different parts of North India right from Bengal to Gujarat back then. Paradeshi and Raj used to visit eastern Surat, Dang and Navapur in Maharashtra frequently for missionary work in the seventies and eighties. However, the spiritual revival kindled in the ministry of Paradeshi faded in the long run because it did not establish churches.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁸ Philip, 'The Thomas Mathew's Revolution,' 21.

¹⁶⁹ Such was the conviction and the spiritual revival, that on one day while Thomas Paradeshi and his friends were giving thanks over breakfast, the Holy Spirit came mightily upon them and hearing the commotion, people began pouring in from everywhere. Everyone, who came near the veranda, began to fall down and confess their sins and be filled with Holy Spirit. Joseph, 'Dolka Revival and After,' Philip, 'The Thomas Mathew's Revolution,' 20; Mathew, *Kerala Pentecosthu Charithram*, 191.

¹⁷⁰ When Dr. Raj received immersion baptism he had to pay a high price; he was sacked from his job. He came to Ahmadabad with his family and acquired a house in Maninagar Christian Hill Society. He got himself registered as a medical doctor, began a Dawakhana (Dispensary) in the Gomtipur area, which later on became a Duvakhana (House of Prayer). Joseph, 'Dolka Revival and After.'

¹⁷¹ There are instances when a few took baptism during the night in an overhead water tank in their houses, to make of it a secret affair. Joseph, 'Dolka Revival and After.'

¹⁷² Joseph, 'Dolka Revival and After.'

Another revival took place in Pipal Kuah and Navapur, small tribal villages in the border of Gujarat and Maharashtra in 1970, which resulted in the widespread growth of Pentecostalism in those areas of the tribal belt. There were foreign mission agencies, like the Alliance Mission and the Brethren Mission working among the Tribals.¹⁷³ However, there were no Pentecostal churches. On 20 November 1970, P.D. Benjamin along with Raj, came to Pipal Kuah.¹⁷⁴ According to Shanmukh Patel, Benjamin was so powerful that evil spirits would run away from people even in nearby places.¹⁷⁵ In Navapur, people like Pandhu Bhai, Ranji Bhai and others became leaders. Shanmukh Patel, from Pipal Kuah was also filled with the Spirit. Then he began to take the revival fire to nearby places. His sister and other women were also with him in ministry.¹⁷⁶ He was working with the Brethren and the CNI¹⁷⁷ churches. In Vyara, one of the meetings by Shanmukh Patel became a place of great outpouring of the Spirit. According to him, he was conducting a meeting in the CNI church after his Spirit-baptism. There were some people gathered and the manifestation of the Spirit occurred with voice and the walls of the church began to tremble. Hearing this commotion, people from the town gathered in the church and the Spirit convicted all of them and most of them who were non-Christian Tribals or Hindus spoke in tongues. He claims that, within seven days, he had baptised almost 3,500 people there and that,

¹⁷³ In 1932, Brethren missionaries began working in those parts of Gujarat and Maharashtra and some natives like Boridas Narayan Patel also became prominent leaders. Later, his son Shanmukh Bhai Patel became a powerful instrument in revival and church-growth in tribal areas. Shanmukh Patel, interview, Pipal Kuah, 10 August 2009 and Philip, 'The Thomas Mathew's Revolution,' 20.

¹⁷⁴ According to Shanmukh Bhai Patel, Benjamin was from the Garwal area in Uttar Pradesh and we know that he was working in Indian Railways in Punjab. He had a Christian Ashram in Meerut. Also see Thomas, *God's Trailblazer*, p. 26.

¹⁷⁵ S. Patel, interview, Pipal Kuah, 10 August 2009.

¹⁷⁶ His sister's name is Lingi Bhai and her husband and others used to conduct meetings. These were predominantly tribal areas – Ahwa, Vapi, Vyara, Umed, Utwada, Dharmpur, Nanapeda, Motapada – and churches were established in all these places; S. Patel, interview, Pipal Kuah, 10 August 2009.

¹⁷⁷ CNI stands for Churches of North India, a group of denominational churches.

in his lifetime, he baptised more than 38,000 people.¹⁷⁸ Even dead people were raised and many were healed through his ministry. According to Patel, this revival helped to proclaim Jesus as the only Saviour in those areas.¹⁷⁹ Later Dr. Raj and another missionary, Elison Joseph, worked in those areas and brought many people to spiritual awakening. However, neither Kurien Thomas nor the biographers of Thomas Mathews mentioned these revivals or the pioneers.

The Pentecostal mission continued in these areas by native missionaries without any assistance but some churches were established. In 1981, Mathews along with his friends visited these areas. When they reached Gujarat, according to Mathews, they were directed to a particular house in a village called Raniamba in Ukai. Before their arrival, Gargi, the man of the household, had a vision that five people would be arriving from Rajasthan.¹⁸⁰ Staying there, they conducted several meetings and many miracles were reported; as a result, churches were established. Later Mathews moved to Navapur and people who had already been revived in the earlier revivals joined Mathews. Today Navapur is a centre of Pentecostal mission and has the greatest Christian convention in North India under the Filadelfia Church. It has been claimed that almost 50,000 people gather there each year for a few days.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁸ S. Patel, interview, Pipal Kuah, 10 August 2009.

¹⁷⁹ Shanmukh Bhai Patel narrated a particular incident. One evening outside his church in Pipal Kuah, he was conducting a meeting. A group of people were carrying a dead woman in a bullock-cart to their village. One who was driving the cart said that they would attend the meeting. They kept the dead body inside the church and joined the meeting. There was a powerful manifestation of the Holy Spirit. After a while to their surprise, the dead woman came out of the church and joined in the meeting clapping her hands and jumping. The woman and her relatives gave testimonies in the meeting and such incidents led to conversion of many people.

¹⁸⁰ Simmons, *Vision Mission*, 71-72.

¹⁸¹ Glory M. Philip, 'Celestial Celebration of Saints: Navapur '07,' *Cross & Crown* 37/2 (November-December 2007): 11-16.

Similarly, Dr. Raj's movement also began to grow but was divided into two: one is headed by Raj's grandson, the International Full Gospel Church which has more than 100 churches while the other branch, known as Calvary Sangh, claims about 75 churches. Pastor Navneet Gamit has a church with more than 3,000 members in Vyara. The Fellowship Ashram Church claims to have mission works in almost 150 villages in Gujarat. The Joy Ministry of Vijay Gamit has about 100 churches. George Philip claims more than 100 churches. Moreover, there are many other missions working among the Tribals and all those places are 'Pentecostal' now.¹⁸² In Maharashtra, the New Life Fellowship has extensive works.¹⁸³ Similarly, the Maharashtra Village Ministry, the Mahanaidhan Ministry, the Indian Christian Movement and many others have strong native bases. The AoG Marathi also has extensive church activities in Maharashtra while Pastor Peter Desilva in Pune has more than 10,000 members in a single church.

4.4.3.3 Revivals in Punjab

Similarly Punjab also experienced revivals in the districts of Gurdaspur, Ferozpur and other places which are predominantly Dalit areas in the 1970s. It was through Imdad Masih that the movement began in Gurdaspur and many were healed, delivered of evil spirits, while the dead were raised. Around 1978, he came to Ferozpur and conducted meetings in a CNI church where there was a great revival. There he appointed Babu Kalidas, David Hawel and C.M. Rustum in charge of the churches he established. Throughout the Punjab, many people were

¹⁸² As Bergunder commented, many of them were split and formed new organisations; see Bergunder, *The South Indian Pentecostal*, 12-13.

¹⁸³ Hedlund, 'Indigenous Pentecostalism,' 230-232.

saved through his ministry and became Pentecostal leaders; later, these people consolidated the movement.¹⁸⁴

Another person who became instrumental for the Pentecostal revival in the Punjab in the 1980's was Karamchand, from Ferozpur. His mother was transformed by Imdad Masih's Ministry. He was a policeman and drunkard and used to trouble his mother. However, she was earnest in her prayer for him and, one night he had a vision of Jesus while he was on duty. Then he fasted for 21 days and began to evangelise all those areas. Many miracles occurred as a result of his ministry while churches were also established. Then he joined the Church of God through Pastor John Samuel. However, after 3 years he began his own church called *Atmik Masih Sangati*. He was one of the pioneers in the Pentecostal mission in Punjab.¹⁸⁵ He even moved into states like Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and as far as the south, Andhra Pradesh.

Now, there are many major indigenous and established Pentecostal churches like the Church of God, the Assemblies of God, and the Indian Pentecostal Church in the districts of Ludhiana, Jullundher, Patiala, Gurdaspur, and Dhariwal. For instance, in Ferozpur, Pastor Bod Masih has more than 2,500 members in a single church and almost 40 pastors working under him in different areas. Similarly, in Gurdaspur, Munir Masih boasts of having almost 3,500 members in a single church. In Dhariwal he has extensive works as well. Obviously, the Pentecostal movement is growing in Punjab.

¹⁸⁴ Pastor Pyarelal, interview by author, Udaipur, Rajasthan, 25 August 2009.

¹⁸⁵ Pyarelal worked with Karamchand for 13 years.

4.4.3.4 Revivals in Madhya Pradesh

There were some Pentecostal churches in different cities of Madhya Pradesh, for example, in the early 1960s, Pastor O.J. Wilson began a Pentecostal church in Jabalpur; however, it was after 1984 that a widespread Pentecostal revival occurred in tribal areas. In Indore, Dhinakaran, a famous healing evangelist from the south conducted a meeting in 1984, and many people received Spirit-baptism.¹⁸⁶ A woman called Anitabehn and some others were instrumental in bringing a church growth movement among the Tribal people. People like Sunderlal, Vikolson, Kanyalal and Amos Singh worked among the Tribals of M.P. and established churches. Another person, Rajesh Jain worked among Jain people in Jabhua city and converted many people. Slowly the movement began to grow into the tribal districts of Jabhua, Barwani, Khargone, Dhar, and Khandwa.¹⁸⁷ In the 90s, there was rapid Pentecostal growth in these places. For example, the Jesus Mission by Saju Mathew and James has targeted local people in Damoh and other states since 1994.¹⁸⁸ Now there are many missions working in these places and hundreds of churches have been established.

Simultaneously, other states like Orissa, Bihar, U.P. and Jharkhand, also experienced remarkable church growth among Tribals, Dalits and other people. In Udhampur, Kashmir, P.M. Thomas began a pioneering mission in 1963, which

¹⁸⁶ D.G.S. Dhinakaran of Jesus Call's Ministry, see more about Dhinakaran; Michael Bergunder, 'Ministry of Compassion': D.G.S. Dhinakaran, 'Christian Healer-Prophet from Tamilnadu,' *Christianity is Indian*, 161-177; Also see for his theology, Ghanakan C.G., 'Charismata and Compassion: Dhinakaran, Charismatic Healing and Pastoral Pentecostalism in South-India – A Practical Assessment,' (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, 2006).

¹⁸⁷ Ankur Masih, interview, Udaipur, Rajasthan, 3 September 2009.

¹⁸⁸ <http://jesusmissionindia.org/aboutus.aspx>.

now boasts of 270 missionaries working in the state.¹⁸⁹ Similarly, P.G. Vargis established missionary works in Katra, Kashmir, in 1972 and claims to have several churches and more than 2,000 missionaries.¹⁹⁰ It is almost impossible to fathom all of the works by different Pentecostal missions; most of them are local and indigenous. Local missionaries work in the frontiers where many poor and downtrodden are being rescued from their wretched conditions.¹⁹¹ Besides, a number of Bible colleges, orphanages and charity organisations are run by Pentecostals today, either at individual or organisational level. During 2000-2010, there was significant growth in almost all states except a few like Haryana or Himachal Pradesh, which need to be documented.¹⁹²

Before we end our discussion, it is important to draw out certain practical lessons which may be helpful:

1. Revivals can be described as the immediate reason for the formation and remarkable growth of the Pentecostal movement and its theology in India.
2. The revivals may arise in various periods and places, however, it is important to translate them into church growth and this needs strong native leadership.
3. To sustain the growth, constant spiritual nourishment, a relevant missiology and systematic education are essential; in other words,

¹⁸⁹ <http://www.himalayamission.org/aboutus/history.html> (accessed 5 February 2010); Mathew, *Kerala Penthecosthu Charithram*, 282-283.

¹⁹⁰ See <http://www.ietmissions.org/history.html> (accessed 5 February 2010); P. G. Vargis, *Christuvinuveni Himalaya Sanukkalil* (Pathankot, India: Indian Evangelical Team, 1987). However, some informed sources say that this number is an exaggeration and there may be less than 1,000 missionaries.

¹⁹¹ See Hedlund, *Christianity is Indian*, 108-135.

¹⁹² Jammu-Kashmir has a long history of terrorist activities and that hampered mission works.

developing suitable local models of spirituality and missiology and biblical education are key issue.

4. The Spirit-movements require a concrete theology of its own, especially a Christology to take the movement forward, as the New Testament Epistles show us. Otherwise, as we have seen, movements may vanish into oblivion.
5. Concerted efforts are needed, rather than individualistic and self-serving mission ventures; this presupposes ecumenism among Pentecostals.

Summing up, it is clear that what has been recorded is only a meagre part of the whole of the story. Stories of many parts of North India as well as the hard labour of the common believers are yet to be discovered and documented. This task presupposes further research, which would read 'stories from the margins'. Moreover, above-mentioned revivals and the miraculous events accompanied with them have largely contributed to the Christological articulation of ordinary Pentecostals. One more word is warranted: history always teaches us some lessons, however, the onus is on us to hear and correct the course of action. The History of North Indian Pentecostalism silently whispers to us to ensure that we do not forget them.

Chapter 5

INDIAN CHRISTOLOGY

Christology of any given context cannot stand apart from other Christologies in the context or similar contexts, lest it may fall into the trap of self-sufficiency, short-sightedness and exaggeration of its own worth. It should engage in conversation with other Christologies to understand its limitations and rectify those flaws by taking cues from these dialogue partners. Moreover, by engaging in dialogue these Christologies may eventually enrich one another to serve people better. Therefore, we shall look into some dominant theological strands of Indian Christianity to find out how they portray Christ and whether they may become potential dialogue partners of ordinary Pentecostal Christology. Owing to the constraints of this research, we shall only provide a brief and cursory analysis of the major theological strands, grouping lines of thought which appear to be similar and dividing them into broad categories. Our aim is to find out whether the Christological concepts developed by the dominant theological traditions contribute to ordinary Pentecostal Christology, not so much to explore and evaluate them in detail.

First one might expect to have a glance into Indian Christologies' relation to wider Asian Christologies. However, the discussion of Asian theologies or Christologies begins in Indian soil itself, as Christianity reached India 2,000 years ago, even though it was dormant for centuries in the southern tip of India. The Christians of Kerala did not develop any Christology; however, they held to a tradition known as the 'Syrian tradition' and hence became known as Syrian

Christians.¹ The message of Christ was accessible to them only through prayers, songs, folk stories and liturgy in Syriac, since the Bible was not available in their local languages.² The establishment of the Roman Catholic Church in 1498, by Portuguese, and later the arrival of Protestant missions in 1706 did not give rise to any significant Christology. The only exception to this, perhaps, was the effort of Robert De Nobili at the beginning of the 15th century.³ Thus, whatever meagre Christological formulation had taken place in and around Asia happened in India. Asian nations were under colonialism and whatever existing Christologies were prevalent were imported from the West. It was only in the 19th century that some sort of Christological formulations began to appear as a result of Hindu-Christian encounter.⁴ The rest of the Asian countries lagged behind India in Christological formation. However, later many theologians have come up with their own theologies in various locations of Asia.

Indian Christology can be termed as the conceptualisation and interaction of the person and message of Christ into the socio-economic and religio-cultural realities of Indian people. However, what was widespread in Indian churches and seminaries was an imported western Christology with its philosophical categories and underpinnings, which were alien to Indian Christians. By the end of the 19th

¹ See E.M. Philip, *The Indian Christians of St. Thomas* (1950); Mundadan, *History of Christianity in India*; Varghese & Philip, *Glimpses of the History of the Christian Churches in India*.

² The complete Bible was translated into Malayalam only in 1841. However, some writers argue that the theological contributions of St. Thomas Christians are unique and significant; see A.M. Mundadan, *The Path of Indian Theology* (Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 1998), 31-62.

³ Robert De Nobili was a Portuguese Jesuit missionary; he came to India 1605 and attempted to appropriate the philosophy and language of India for the communication of the message of Christ. However, he was not so successful; for more details see, Boyd, *An Introduction to Indian Christian Theology*, 11-14 and David Jenks, *Six Great Missionaries of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (London: A. R. Mowbray, 1930).

⁴ Boyd, *An Introduction to Indian Christian Theology*, 17-18; it is through the writing of Raja Ram Mohan Roy we see some Christological articulation in India, even though he was not a Christian in the conventional sense.

century, the theological scenario began to change and Indian theologians began to realise that Christologies articulated in the West were irrelevant to Indian people. This was partially due to the socio-political and religio-cultural change which occurred in that period which detonated the freedom struggle and gave rise to patriotic feelings among Christians.⁵ This realisation facilitated the proliferation of Christological articulations in the 20th century. We should not misunderstand them as voluminous systematic works, rather they were small and arose within the context.

Various people have classified Indian theologies into different headings, according to their own personal perspective.⁶ We shall divide Indian Christologies into four broad categories, considering their field of study and the way they portray Christ; Christologies from: 1) secular perspective 2) religious perspective 3) cultural perspective and 4) socio-political perspective. Chronologically speaking, 1 and 2 emerged earlier while 3 and 4 were developed recently and are numerous. From each group we shall consider some to be representative in their depiction of Christ.

5.1 Christologies from Secular Perspective

The people who endeavoured to present Christ in the secular perspective were mainly social and political leaders who attempted to reform Indian society and leaders of the Indian Freedom Movement. The Christologies from secular perspective primarily emerged as a reaction to the western mode of Christianity. It

⁵ Here we shall not deal with the socio-political and religio-cultural context of India; we have already explored them briefly in the History of Pentecostalism (pages 99-101) and also in general Indian context in Chapter 3.

⁶ For example see Boyd, *An Introduction*; Sumithra, *Christian Theologies*; Hubert Manohar Watson, *Towards a Relevant Christology*, 52-94; Mundadan, *The Path of Indian Theology*.

was also equally due to the captivating power of the person and the message of Christ, which became an inspiration for their reform movement.⁷ This group belonged to Hinduism but had a secular outlook. After hearing the Gospel, they grappled with the person and teachings of Jesus and tried to appropriate what was feasible for them but rejected the western interpretation of Christ as well as what was incompatible with their own traditions.⁸ They portrayed Jesus as a great moral teacher. Prominent among them are Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1772-1833), Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948) and S. Radhakrishnan (1888-1975) amongst others.⁹ We shall take Mohan Roy as a representative, to see how these people understood Christ.

5.1.1 The Christology of Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1772-1833)

Roy was one of the greatest social reformers, scholars and rationalists attracted by the teachings of Jesus and often called ‘the father of modern India’. He was instrumental in abolishing harmful practices like *sati*,¹⁰ child-marriage and enacting legislation for widow-remarriage.¹¹ He was influenced by the Islamic teachings of monotheism and his contact with ‘Unitarians’ resulted in his rejection of the polytheism of popular Hinduism. Roy was attracted to Christian ethics

⁷ Jacob Parappally, *Emerging Trends in Indian Christology* (Bangalore: IIS Publications, 1995), 6.

⁸ Anantanand Rambachan, ‘A Hindu Look at Jesus,’ *Vidhyajyoti Journal of Theological Reflection* 58/12 (December 1994): 773.

⁹ Balwant A.M. Paradkar, ‘Hindu Interpretation of Christ from Vivekananda to Radhakrishnan,’ *Indian Journal of Theology* 18/1 (January-March 1969): 70-73 and 77-80; P. Fallon, ‘A Critical Evaluation of the Hindu Interpretation of Christ,’ *Indian Journal of Theology* 18/1 (January-March 1969): 81-87; Ronald Neufeldt, *Hindu-Christian Dialogue: Perspectives and Encounter*, edited by Harold Coward (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1989), 162-175; Parappally, *Emerging Trends*, 6-9; Watson, *Towards a Relevant Christology*, 53-57; Boyd, *An Introduction*, 19-26; Sumithra, *Christian Theologies*, 209-230.

¹⁰ *Sati* is the practice of burning the wife in the funeral pyre of the husband. He became a crusader against this custom when he was the unwilling witness of the *sati* of his brother’s wife. With the help of Lord William Bentinck, he was able to stop it by legislation.

¹¹ In Hinduism widow remarriage was not allowed and not only he brought legislation for it but also proved it by marrying a widow.

rather than dogma.¹² We may summarise his fundamental ideas into the following points: first, monotheistic faith in the unity of God; second, morality is the essence of true religion, and moral degradation is the accompaniment of polytheism and idolatrous worship; third, rationalism demands that religious beliefs should be reasonable and reason should purify religion of superstition and unnecessary mysteries and miracles.

Roy was inspired by the *Upanishadic* teachings on *Brahman* as Supreme-being and Jesus' ethics, especially the Sermon on the Mount which shaped his Christology. He published a book called '*The Precepts of Jesus*' based on the teaching of Jesus which was inspired by the four Gospels; his intention was to provoke Hindu intellectuals in the cause of the moral reform of Hindu society.¹³

Roy ultimately denied the full divinity of Christ. For him, Jesus was a great teacher and 'messenger of God'. According to him, the 'Son of God' title was just the expression of the created nature of Christ, although the most highly exalted of all creatures.¹⁴ Roy proved what he called 'the natural inferiority of the Son to the Father' by quoting many passages from Bible.¹⁵ He held that Jesus is merely authorized with power from God, but did not possess this power, intrinsically. Roy explained the Johannine text which speaks about the unity of the Father and the Son, as 'a subsisting concord of will and design, such as existed among his

¹² Boyd, *An Introduction*, 19.

¹³ Ram Mohan Roy, *The Precepts of Jesus* (Calcutta: The Baptist Mission Press, 1820).

¹⁴ Boyd, *An Introduction*, 22; He elaborates: Jesus is the Son of God, a term synonymous with that of Messiah, the highest of all the prophet; and his life declares him to have been, as represented in the scripture, pure as light, innocent as a lamb, necessary for the eternal life as bread for a temporal one, and great as the angels of God or rather greater than they; see Raja Ram Mohan Roy, *Second Appeal* (Calcutta: Printed by the Baptist Mission Press, 1821), 69, cited by Boyd, *An Introduction*, 23.

¹⁵ Mohan Roy, *Second Appeal*, 12.

apostles and not identity of being'.¹⁶ For him, the claim that Jesus was God-man cannot be accepted, as it is incompatible with the *vedantic* understanding of the supreme-being.¹⁷

Although Roy affirms the virgin birth, miracles, and even the bodily resurrection of Christ, he does not give much emphasis to these aspects. He believes that the saving work of Christ is accomplished only through his teachings. For this reason, he does not see any significance in the vicarious suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus.¹⁸ For him, Christ's death is merely the supreme illustration of those precepts, whose communication invited the sole object of his mission.¹⁹ In Roy's thinking, 'the blessing of pardon' is available 'from the merciful Father through repentance, which declared the only means of procuring forgiveness of our failures'.²⁰ Thus, Roy negates the need for an atoning death. He finds divine injustice, if God inflicts suffering on an innocent person on behalf of others.²¹

Similarly, others in this group appreciated the person and message of Jesus, but were wary of acknowledging the divinity of Jesus and accepting him as God, which was impossible for them. Parappally rightly comments, 'Commitment to the person of Jesus Christ must remain a pre-requisite for understanding the person

¹⁶ Roy, *Second Appeal*.

¹⁷ Parappally, *Emerging Trends*, 8; Ironically, he believed in the Virgin birth and the miracles of Christ, however, rejected the personality of Holy Spirit as the agent of Christ's birth saying that it would mean the Godhead having had intercourse with a human female. The miracles of Jesus did not carry any weight in India where so many other miracles are believed.

¹⁸ Parappally, *Emerging Trends*, 8.

¹⁹ Sumitra, *Christian Theologies*, 44.

²⁰ M.M. Thomas, *The Acknowledged Christ of Indian Renaissance* (Madras: Christian Literature Society, 1970), 27; According to him, repentance is the only means for salvation. He affirms that there is not 'a single passage pronounced by Jesus enjoining such a doctrine of the Cross, as all sufficient and indispensable for salvation.'

²¹ Boyd, *An Introduction*, 24.

and message of Christ'.²² Hence, their interpretations of Christ remained that of 'outsiders'.

5.2 Christologies from Religious Perspective

This strand of Christologies emerged in response to Hinduism and we can mainly divide them into two areas: the Christologies which emerged in response to the Hindu philosophical system²³ and popular Hindu religious piety. The former mainly utilises the *vedantic* tradition of Upanishad, expounded by Sankara but the latter uses popular devotional (*bhakti*) tradition (especially Ramanuja's *Vishishtadvaita* - modified non-dualism). We shall look into both in due turn.

Advaita Philosophy

The Hindu sacred scriptures can be divided into sections dealing with action (*karmakanda*) and knowledge (*jnanakanda*). The *mimamsa* maintains that ritual actions are of primary importance because performing dharma is the central purpose of the *Vedas*. Sankara, on the other hand, maintains that the knowledge is of greater importance, for liberation is the central message of the *Vedas* and only knowledge leads to liberation.²⁴ This liberating knowledge is referred to in the 'great sayings' (*mahavakya*) of the Upanishads, namely: 'I am the absolute' (*aham brahmasmi*); 'this self is the absolute' (*ayam atma brahma*); 'everything is indeed absolute' (*sarvam khalu idam brahma*); and 'you are that' (*tattvamasi*). To realise the existential force of these claims is to be liberated and to distinguish pure being and worldly phenomena. The ultimate or *Brahman*, in its timeless

²² Parappally, *Emerging Trends*, 9.

²³ For a brief description of Indian philosophical systems, especially *advaita* philosophy, see Ramakrishna Puligandla, *Fundamentals of Indian Philosophy* (New Delhi: D.K. Printworld, 1997) and Aravind Sharma, *The Philosophy of Religion and Advaita Vedanta* (Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications, 1997).

²⁴ Raimundo Panikkar, *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism: Towards an Ecumenical Christophany* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1981), 110-116. K.P. Aleaz, *The Relevance of Relation in Sankara's Advaita Vedanta* (Delhi: Kant Publications, 1996), 25-30.

essence as identical with the self, is beyond all predicates and qualities (*nirguna*).²⁵

However here we face a problem when explaining the existence of the world. If Brahman is without even existence how did the reality come to be one? There will be dualism. To sort out this difficulty the Upanishads explain Brahman as the efficient and, at the same time, the material cause of the world. *Brahma Sutra* 1.1.2 says, ‘*that* by which the world originates, etc.,’ ‘Brahman is the omniscient and omnipotent cause of the origin, persistence and passing away of the world’. It is from *that* which all beings spring into existence, in which they live, and into which they return at the end.²⁶ This is *saguna Brahman*, *Brahman* endowed with attributes; also called *Isvara*. Thus, in its temporal mode, Sankara presents a personal Lord (*Isvara*), with attributes (*saguna*), so that people with a lower level of knowledge can approach him through devotion.²⁷

It is the *saguna Brahman* that people worship in different names and forms. It is God as *saguna Brahman* that was endowed with such qualities as love, kindness, mercy who stands in relation to humans and the world. In short, *saguna Brahman* is a personal God. *Brahman* is also designated as *sat-cit-ananda* (being-consciousness-bliss), and in Sankara’s theology we can see him using these three words to explain *Brahman*.²⁸

²⁵ P. Nagaraja Rao, *Introduction to Vedanta*, 3rd ed. (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1966), 113-133 and Eric Lott, *Vedantic Approaches to God* (London: The MacMillan Press, 1980), 20-26. Brahman is the inexpressible, invisible, inaudible and unthinkable ground of all existence. Brahman is neither a he nor a she but is the It. Brahman is neither to be identified with any God or gods men worship. Brahman can never be captured by the senses or intellect, but can only be examined in a flash of the highest mystical intuition. This is *nirguna Brahman*; see Puligandla, *Fundamentals of Indian Philosophy*.

²⁶ Panikkar, *The Unknown Christ*, 106-107.

²⁷ Aleaz, *The Relevance of Relation*, 49-60.

²⁸ Panikkar, *The Unknown Christ*, 148-155; Also see Aleaz, *The Relevance of Relation*, 49-50.

Some of the Indian theologians like Keshab Chandra Sen, Brahmabandhav Upadhyaya, Raimundo Panikkar and others employed Vedanta philosophy to re-interpret Christian spirituality so that it would make sense to the Hindus. In this endeavour they explained Christ in these philosophical categories. Here we shall explore the idea of Upadhyaya briefly to see how Vedanta philosophy is used to explain the person and message of Christ.

5.2.1 The Christology of Brahmabandhav Upadhyaya (1861-1907)

According to Upadhyaya, Christianity came to India in western garb, with its purity and originality hidden under a series of unfamiliar terms and structures.²⁹ Therefore, it was essential to adapt the message of Christ to the Indian thought system and for this he found Sankara's philosophy as the best medium. He writes, 'The Hindu mind is extremely subtle and penetrative, but is opposed to the Greco-Scholastic method of thinking. We must fall back on the *vedantic* method, in formulating the Catholic religion to our countrymen'.³⁰ He had also advocated that it was possible for a Christian to be culturally Hindu but religiously Christian.³¹ His argument was that if Greek philosophy and culture could be the vehicle of Christian theology in the West, similarly, Indian philosophy and culture could be the best means to establish the Gospel in India.

²⁹ Bhabanicharan Bandhopadhyay was born in 1861 to a Brahmin family. In 1888, at the age of twenty-seven he went as a *Brahmo* teacher to Hyderabad in Sindh, and there chiefly through his friendship with two missionaries, Redman and Heaton gradually became a Christian. In 1891, baptised in February by an Anglican, affirming at the same time that he would not thereby join the Church of England; in September he became a Roman Catholic. In January 1894 starts *Sophia* from Karachi. He took the name Brahmabandhab, the friend of Brahman (Theophilus). He visited Europe during 1902-03; disappointed with the west, he began a daily Bengali newspaper *Sandhya*, culturally and politically anti-British. In 1907 Upadhyaya underwent *prayashcitta*, the penitential rite by which the excommunicate formally returns to the Hindu fold. On September 10 he was arrested by the British Government on a charge of sedition. On October 27, he died while recovering from a hernia operation.

³⁰ B. Animananda, *The Blade: Life and Work of Brahmabandhab Upadhyaya* (Calcutta), 68.

³¹ Sumitra, *Christian Theologies*, 62.

5.2.1.1 Christ the God-Man

Using the *saccidananda* concept, Upadhyaya explained the Christian understanding of Trinity to conceptualise his Christology.³² For him God the Father is *sat* (Being), Christ as *cit* (consciousness) or revelation of God's inner being and Spirit as *ananda* (bliss).³³ The uniqueness of Christ lies in 'his unfolding the mystery of God's inner life'. This is also Christ's claim to his divinity.³⁴

In one of his Sanskrit hymns – the *Hymn of the Incarnation* – he expounds his Christology.³⁵ Christ is the image of God, *Brahman* and in him the eternal Word (intelligence, *cit*), the fullness of the Godhead dwells. Here he calls Christ *Nara-Hari* (Man-God). He held the conviction that Christ was fully God and fully man. Christ is infinite, the upholder of the universe, and yet was born of a virgin; though he is 'infinite in being' (*nirguna*), yet he is also 'with relations' (*saguna*) and so personal and knowable. His use of *Hari*, in fact a proper name used for god Vishnu, and, for this reason, many Christians opposed this.³⁶ However, he rejected the idea of Christ as *avatara* such as Rama or Krishna of Hindu *Vaisnava* tradition to denote the incarnation of Christ. For him, there was only one incarnation, that of Christ, in whom God himself became incarnate. There was a qualitative difference between Hindu *avatars* and the incarnation of Christ.³⁷

According to Upadhyaya, humans are composed of five sheaths: animate, vital,

³² Julius Lipner & George Gispert-Sauch (eds.), *The Writings of Brahmabandhab Upadhyaya*, vol.1 (Bangalore: The United Theological College, 1991), 126.

³³ Earlier Keshab Chander Sen also explained the Trinity in terms of *Saccidananda*.

³⁴ Sumitra, *Christian Theologies*, 66.

³⁵ Brahmabandhab Upadhyaya, 'The Hymn of the Incarnation,' *The Twentieth Century* 1/1 (1901): 7-8.

³⁶ Boyd, *An Introduction*, 78-79; It is, however, commonly used in Hindu circle as a synonym for God.

³⁷ Boyd, *An Introduction*, 80-81.

mental, intellectual and spiritual. In human beings these five sheaths are controlled by personality (*aham*), however, in Christ they are activated by *logos* or *cit* of Trinity. Hence, Christ is different from *avatars* of the Hindu *puranas*.³⁸

Upadhyaya also describes the work of Christ. Christ's deeds are holy and this shows the essential connection between God and morality.³⁹ Christ pours out his life for others, giving himself as a sacrifice, acting as both priest and victim. He destroyed the poison of sin, won victory over sin and death. He is the 'soother of the human heart' and 'vanquisher of fierce death'.⁴⁰

This theological position of explaining Christ in the *advaita* philosophical system accentuates the dominant trend of Hindu intellectualism in the national scene. Upadhyaya and others attempted to present a Christ relevant to that context. It seems that they could make an impact among highly educated Hindus; however, this philosophy was beyond the reach of the common masses.

Bhakti Tradition

The second strand from religious perspective is the Christologies which use the *bhakti* tradition. The main tenet of the *bhakti* tradition is the existence of a personal god, *Isvara*, however, unlike *advaita* it never blurs the differences between God and humans. For Ramanuja, the impersonal *Nirguna Brahman* of Sankara was a useless God. God is related to the world as a human soul is related to the body, and since this is not a relation of identity; a personal relationship is

³⁸ Lipner & Gispert-Sauch (eds.), *The Writings of Brahmabandhab*, 190.

³⁹ Here Boyd contents that perhaps Upadhyaya implies a contrast with the deeds of Krishna; Boyd, *An Introduction*, 78.

⁴⁰ Boyd, *An Introduction*, 79.

possible between God and a devotee.⁴¹ In this relationship there is warmth and love and personal devotion, there is experience of God's grace, there is utter self-abandonment to the love and the power of God.⁴² *Bhakti* tradition also rejected the caste system.⁴³ These qualities attracted many Indian Christians. Theologians belonging to this strand are Appasamy, Narayan Vaman Tilak, H.A. Krishna Pillai, Vengal Chakkarai and so on. Here we shall focus on Appasamy.

5.2.2 The Christology of Appasamy (1891-1975)

Appasamy regards Jesus as the *avatara* of God; however, not like *avataras* in Hinduism.⁴⁴ In Hinduism *avatara* is of a recurring nature, incomplete and comes to the destruction of the wicked.⁴⁵ However, for Appasamy Christ is the only *purna avatara*, in whom the fullness of Godhead dwells bodily (Col.2:9). The incarnation of Christ is once and for all and is unique.⁴⁶ Christ came to seek and save the lost and sinful. He regards the Hindu *avatara* as theophanies, rather than

⁴¹ Boyd, *An Introduction*, 111. Moreover, in this system, *jnana marga* and *karma marga* are being rejected for salvation; instead *bhakti marga* is seen as the best way.

⁴² Boyd, *An Introduction*, 112.

⁴³ 'Let no one ask a man's caste or sect;' 'Whoever adores God, he is God's own.' Quoted by Boyd, *An Introduction*, 111.

⁴⁴ Appasamy was born in Tamil Nadu on 3 September 1891. His Father had been converted from *Shaivism*. He studied philosophy and religion at Harvard and later at Oxford where he received a doctorate of Philosophy. The influence of great scholars such as Farquhar, B.H. Streeter, B.F. Von Hugel, R. Otto, led him to learn from the experience of the bhakti writers of India. Another influence was that of Sadhu Sundar Singh. After returning to India in 1922 he became an editor of the Christian Literature Society. He had constructed his theological system using Ramanuja. He associated himself to the 'Rethinking Group', of which P. Chenchiah and V. Chakkarai were the leaders. In 1946 he became archdeacon and served from 1951 until his retirement in 1959 the Church of South India (CSI) as bishop in Coimbatore Diocese. He died in 1975.

⁴⁵ In Gita, Krishna tells Arjuna, 'I will come again and again, *Yuga* after *Yuga*, for the protection of *dharma* and the destruction of evil.'

⁴⁶ V. P. Thomas, 'Indian Christian Approaches to the Knowledge of Christ,' *Indian Journal of Theology* 18/1 (January-March 1969): 90.

incarnations; consequently not historical. Appasamy emphasizes the reality of humanity and historicity of Jesus.⁴⁷

5.2.2.1 Christ and God

Appasamy rejected the Chalcedonian formula that Christ is metaphysically one with the Father. Instead, he expressed the union between Christ and Father as one of deep communion.⁴⁸ How is Christ related to the Father? Is the relation one of identity of substance? The Chalcedonian solution says that the Christ is the same substance (*homoousios*) as the Father. Accordingly, there is a metaphysical unity between the Father and the Son. Appasamy challenges this view and holds that the union of the Father and the Son is a moral unity. The Son from all eternity is so conformed to the Father's will, that the two persons are one, but in a moral rather than a metaphysical way.⁴⁹ He brings this view to refute the *advaita* philosophy's monist tendency which claims that Christ and the believers are one in a metaphysical way. The relation between the Father and Christ is not one of identity but rather of a completeness of harmony in thought and purpose.⁵⁰ In Gethsemane, Christ surrenders his will entirely to the Father. The doing of the Father's will was the essence of his oneness with the Father. Appasamy's explanation was intended to show that Christ and the Father are not 'one' in the *advaita* sense.⁵¹

For Appasamy, similar to Christ's union with his Father, the union of believers with Christ is a moral union based on love and obedience (Jn.14:28; 10:30). In

⁴⁷ Thomas, 'Indian Christian Approaches,' 90.

⁴⁸ Sumitra, *Christian Theologies*, 101; Appasamy takes John 10:3, 'I and my Father are one' as moral union not as a metaphysical unity.

⁴⁹ Boyd, *An Introduction*, 120.

⁵⁰ A.J. Appasamy, *What is Moksa?* (1931), 59.

⁵¹ Boyd, *An Introduction*, 121.

Jn.17:20 Jesus prays, "... that they may be one, as thou Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us". This 'as,' according to Appasamy, implies that the two relationships are of the same kind. That is, Christ and the Father are not one in the *advaita* sense. There is a difference of function and a difference of person too.

Appasamy also connects the Johannine idea of *logos* and the Hindu idea of immanent God- the *antaryamin*, in-dweller. He exegetes Jn.1:10; 'He was in the world' and interprets this as the immanence of Christ, the presence of the *logos* in the world even before his incarnation.⁵² He supports this idea with Ramanuja's commentary on the *Taittiriya Upanishad*, 'Having created that, He then entered the same'. Appasamy holds that because men have not understood Him, even though He is immanent in them, He has become flesh.⁵³

5.2.2.2 The Work of Christ

Christ's life of selfless love, which leads to suffering and death, is the supreme illustration of God's love. As a result, humanity is morally influenced by it to a life of faith-union with Christ and to a life of *bhakti*.⁵⁴ According to Appasamy, the cross indicates the universal need of suffering. Human sin brought suffering and the death of Christ on the cross. However, he interprets the suffering of Christ in terms of moral influence, rather than vicarious suffering or sin bearing. The central fact of the cross is not a negative fact of sin-bearing, but a positive fact of

⁵² Sumitra, *Christian Theologies*, 102-103.

⁵³ Boyd, *An Introduction*, 124-125.

⁵⁴ Thomas, 'Indian Christian Approaches,' 91.

faith-union with Christ. This union is strengthened and given added depth by the revelation of suffering love on the cross.⁵⁵

It is obvious that the Christologies of the *bhakti* strand attempted to present Christ in the light of the religiosity and devotion of the common people, like Christ as the *avatara* God. They also rejected highly philosophical categories which might sound inaccessible to the ordinary people. In this effort, however, they seem to have diluted the person of Christ, by connecting him too closely to the stature of a mere human being.

5.3 Christologies from Cultural Perspective

The third category of Christologies emerged in the Indian theology in response to the cultural situation of Indian society attempted to present Christ in the categories of the common masses. These Christologies were indigenous in nature and reflected a mystical and popular religiosity. The people who were behind them were evangelists in the true sense of the word, who ministered among the common people. Their mystical experiences acted as the fountainhead of their theology while the cultural elements added shape and colour. Moreover, they were pioneers in contextualising the Gospel to make it understandable to the culture, language and concepts of the ordinary people. Their spiritual experiences led them to develop Christologies which were highly mystical but at same time down to earth. Notable among them are Sandu Sundar Singh, Sadhu Kochu Kunju and Subha Rao. Here we shall explore the ideals of Sundar Singh and recent developments in this field.

5.3.1 The Christology of Sadhu Sundar Singh (1889-1929)

⁵⁵ Watson, *Towards a Relevant Christology*, 60-61.

Sadhu Sundar Singh can be considered to be the most famous Indian Christian who has yet lived; his influence has extended to most of the western world as an evangelist and mystic.⁵⁶ He used stories and parables in local languages to convey the message of the Gospel. His famous adage, 'Indians greatly need the Water of Life, but they do not want it in European vessels,' shows his commitment to develop a spirituality in Indian cultural setting.⁵⁷ Here it is important to have a glimpse at his mystical theology, before we turn to his Christology.

5.3.1.1 Mystical Theology

His theology was mystical as well as practical. Moreover, he emphasised the supernatural elements in his theology. The basis of Sadhu's mystical theology was his direct experience of Jesus Christ. His own conversion experience and visions of Jesus contributed to the formation of his theology, especially Christology. He says:

It was not imagination. If Buddha or Krishna had shown himself it would have been imagination, for I worshipped them. But for Christ to

⁵⁶ Sundar Singh was born in Rampur in the region of Patiala northern India in September 1889. As a Sikh, Sundar was taught about Hinduism and by the age of seven he had already memorized *Bagawadgita*. His mother died when he was 14 years old. He was against Christianity, persecuted missionaries and even tore the Bible apart and burned it. However, he couldn't find the peace he had been seeking for in his own religion. Three days after he burned the Bible, he woke up at 3 a.m. and planned to commit suicide. He was thinking of throwing himself in front of a train that usually passed by at 5 a.m. But in the early morning he had a vision of Jesus. He saw Jesus' figure in the radiance. Thereafter his life was transformed. In 1905, on his birthday, he was baptized in an English church in Simla. Later, Sadhu enrolled himself in St. John School of Theology in Lahore and became a licensed preacher in the Anglican Church. However, later he surrendered the license and became a Sadhu. He used to travel Nepal, Bhutan and Tibet to evangelize those areas. In 1929, he visited Tibet again and was never seen since. See for details, A. J. Appasamy, *Sundar Singh: A Biography* (Madras: Christian Literature Service, 1966) and C.F. Andrews, *Sadhu Sundar Singh: A Personal Memoir* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1937).

⁵⁷ Friedrich Heiler, *The Gospel of Sadhu Sundar Singh* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1927), 232.

show himself, he whom I hated, is a miracle and clear proof that he is a living Christ.⁵⁸

Most of his theological writings developed as parts of trances or visions and he often spoke about having visited heaven.⁵⁹ He gave prominence to the visions and ecstatic experiences he had. He explains this way:

There are pearls in the sea but to get them you have to dive to the bottom of spiritual things; it is not a trance but it is like a dive because as a diver has to stop breathing so in the ecstasy the outward senses must be stopped.⁶⁰

Moreover, his spiritual life was founded on constant communion with Christ, through prayer. Unlike many Hindu *bhaktas* his prayer was not just a self immersion in the Absolute but, rather a continuous practice of the presence of Christ. For Sadhu, the aim of prayer was the union with God, however, this was the union of two free personalities rather than absorption in the divine.⁶¹ He explains:

If we want to rejoice in God we must be different from Him; the tongue could state no sweetness if there were no difference between it and that which it tastes.⁶²

The ecstatic experiences were part of his life and these took place in a walking, not a dream state.⁶³ Moreover, suffering held a significant place in Sadhu's

⁵⁸ Quoted in Sumitra, *Christian Theologies*, 93.

⁵⁹ His main writings are, *At the Master's Feet, Religion – Meditations on God, Man and Nature, The Search After, With and Without Christ, Visions of Spiritual World, The Real Pearl* and many other articles.

⁶⁰ Burnett Hillman Streeter & A. J. Appasamy, *The Sadhu: A Study in Mysticism and Practical Religion* (London: Macmillan and Company, 1922), 132.

⁶¹ Boyd, *An Introduction*, 95.

⁶² Heiler, *The Gospel of Sadhu*, 242.

⁶³ Boyd, *An Introduction*, 95.

experience and theology. He underwent severe hardship; however, his asceticism was not rigid. His aim was to bear witness to Christ's love and grace and he often spoke of the joy of suffering.⁶⁴ He says,

Through suffering God strikes us in love. The Cross is the key of heaven. The Cross will bear those who bear the Cross, until it bears them up to heaven, into the actual presence of glorious Redeemer.⁶⁵

5.3.1.2 Christology

‘Sundar Singh was always Christocentric in his thought and his theology stems from his own experience of Christ, rather than from theistic consideration,’ comments Boyd.⁶⁶ Sadhu considered Christ to be fully God. Christ was the content of his visionary experiences. He says, ‘I do not believe in Jesus Christ because I have read about him in the Bible. I saw him and know him in my daily experience’.⁶⁷

Sadhu contends that our immediate experience is of Christ and it is only through him, in the power of the Spirit, that we can know the Father. Sadhu expounds the idea through one of his visions:

The time I entered heaven I looked round about and asked, ‘But where is God?’ And they told me, ‘God is not seen here anymore than on earth, for God is infinite. But there is Christ, He is God, He is the

⁶⁴ Boyd, *An Introduction*, 95.

⁶⁵ Heiler, *The Gospel of Sadhu*, 117.

⁶⁶ Boyd, *An Introduction*, 98.

⁶⁷ Sadhu Sundar Singh, ‘The Living Christ,’ in *Readings in Indian Christian Theology*, edited by R.S. Sugirtharaja & Cecil Hargreaves (London: SPCK, 1993), 73.

image of the invisible God, and it is only in him that we can see
God...⁶⁸

In another vision he speaks about Christ in relation to the Trinity, especially to the Spirit. He had thought of three separate persons sitting as it were on three separate thrones; but through a vision it was made plain for him. He illustrates it:

I entered in an ecstasy into the third heaven...And there I saw Christ in a glorious spiritual body sitting on a throne...Christ is always in the centre, a figure ineffable and indescribable...And streaming out from Christ I saw, as it were waves shining and peace-giving, and going through and among the saints and angels, and everywhere bringing refreshment, just as in hot weather water refreshes trees. And this I understood to be the Holy Spirit.⁶⁹

Sundar Singh fully accepts the idea of incarnation. Christ is like a king going about *incognito* among his people to help them; men saw him and still see him, but do not recognise his divinity. Men without faith and direct experience cannot accept the divinity of Christ. 'Faith in the divinity of Christ grows out of the immediate experience of the heart'.⁷⁰

To appreciate Sadhu's idea of the work of Christ fully, it is essential to explore his idea of sin. According to Sadhu, human beings are sinners and the smallest sin, even an evil thought, is sufficient to keep us outside the kingdom. He connects it with the popular Hindu doctrine of *karma* but rejects the related doctrine of

⁶⁸ Streeter & Appasamy, *The Sadhu: A Study in Mysticism*, 54.

⁶⁹ Sundar Singh, 'The Living Christ,' 76.

⁷⁰ Boyd, *An Introduction*, 98.

samsara.⁷¹ Moreover, he considers sin as the negation of goodness, rather than an active principle. Human beings are unable to do good by their own power. The sinful nature brings its own retribution, as well as the degradation of the whole personality, which can be termed *karma*. This *karma*, can cast us into hell, unless we avail ourselves of the salvation offered in Christ.⁷² Christ, through his suffering and death, brings salvation to humanity.

He frequently spoke of Christ's death and the revelation of the love of God through Christ's suffering. He describes it:

Christ knew that neither silver nor gold, nor diamonds nor any other jewels would suffice to produce life to the soul, but that what was needed was the surrender of life for life, the surrender of soul in order to save the souls of men. That is why He gave His life for the redemption of the world.⁷³

According to Boyd, here we come to the idea of the substitutionary theory of atonement.⁷⁴ There can be no *karma marga*, no possibility of obtaining salvation by our own works. While other religions say, 'Do good and you will become good,' Christianity says, 'Be in Christ and you will do good'.⁷⁵ For Sadhu, the work of Christ is not finished with the forgiveness of sin, rather it involves bringing of freedom from sin; 'sanctification'. He explains:

Jesus Christ came not only to forgive sin, but to make us free from sin.

We receive from Christ a new vital power which releases us from

⁷¹ Boyd, *An Introduction*, 100; The doctrine of *Samsara* says that people are repeatedly re-incarnated due to deeds in their previous birth; unless one escapes this cycle, there is no *mukti* (salvation)

⁷² Boyd, *An Introduction*, 101.

⁷³ Heiler, *The Gospel of Sadhu*, 150.

⁷⁴ Boyd, *An Introduction*, 102.

⁷⁵ Boyd, *An Introduction*, 101.

sin... To be saved by Christ is to receive new life from Him, to become a new creature.⁷⁶

The attempt of this strand to present Christ in terms of the people's thought form by using stories and metaphors had wider impact. This strand attempted to serve 'the water of life in Indian cup'. The miraculous and mystical aspects of spirituality have a greater audience among the religiously-minded Indian village population.

5.3.2 Recent Cultural Christologies

Recently, theologians from various theological traditions and affiliations have come up with Christological articulations to address various cultural and social issues in Indian society. One of the most significant approaches is the presentation of Jesus in Indian cultural images and metaphors familiar to the common people. Here Michael Amaladoss and his practical presentation of Jesus in various images, is worth mentioning.⁷⁷ According to Amaladoss, Jesus was born and lived in Asia, however, due to historical circumstances he comes back to India as a European.⁷⁸ Therefore, it is vital to present Christ in Indian cultural images to make sense to Indians. He is cautious to avoid the images with significance in other religious traditions; instead, he chooses metaphors with a cultural tone which is common to all.⁷⁹ Following the New Testament pattern of titles of Jesus, he proposes various titles such as *sage*, *guru*, *avatar*, *satyagrahi*, *servant*, *pilgrim* and so on. He advises us that these images should not be compared. 'Each one has

⁷⁶ Quoted in Heiler, *The Gospel of Sadhu*, 62.

⁷⁷ He is a Roman Catholic Priest and has authored more than 22 books and 330 articles; Michael Amaladoss, *The Asian Jesus* (Delhi: ISPCK, 2005).

⁷⁸ Amaladoss, *The Asian Jesus*, 1; here he is alluding to the presentation of Christ in India in the western cultural images.

⁷⁹ Amaladoss, *The Asian Jesus*, 7-9.

its special appeal in particular situations to particular people at particular times'.⁸⁰ He contends that these metaphors would help 'to discover the Asian Jesus, to follow him in an Asian way and to witness him before other Asians in a meaningful manner'.⁸¹ He advocates Jesus as the only saviour; through him, God's saving love reaches out to all people.⁸²

Similarly, Thomas Thangaraj depicts Jesus as the 'crucified *guru*'.⁸³ He seeks to establish a 'dialogue between the Christian understanding of Jesus the Christ and the Saiva Siddhanta concept of *guru*'.⁸⁴ Alangaram also portrays Jesus in a similar way within the wider context of India and Asia, with titles like Jesus as *evangelist*, *liberator*, *servant* and so on.⁸⁵

In another approach, Felix Wilfred suggests a *kenotic* Christology in the context of communal frenzy and marginalisation of the poor.⁸⁶ In Jesus, the divine mystery has limited itself in a particular culture to be a Jew. This particularity is an inextricable part of the mystery of Christ. Therefore, he advocates:

...*kenosis* is the permanent horizon for the understanding both of his divine as well as human nature in their inter-relatedness. This opens up development of contextual Christologies based on the particular cultural and historical experience of peoples and nations. Self-

⁸⁰ Amaladoss, *The Asian Jesus*, 200.

⁸¹ Amaladoss, *The Asian Jesus*, 200.

⁸² P.R. John, 'Towards Indian Christology,' in *Seeking New Horizons*, edited by Leonard Fernando (Delhi: ISPCK, 2002), 63.

⁸³ Unfortunately, the constraint of this work does not allow us to deal them in detail. M. Thomas Thangaraj, *The Crucified Guru: An Experiment in Cross-Cultural Christology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994).

⁸⁴ Thangaraj, *The Crucified Guru*, 89.

⁸⁵ A. Alangaram, *Christ of the Asian Peoples: Towards an Asian Contextual Christology* (Bangalore: Asian Trading Corporation, 1999).

⁸⁶ Felix Wilfred, *On the Bank of Ganges: Doing Contextual Christology*, rev. ed. (Delhi: ISPCK, 2005), 175-181.

emptying was at the origin of the message of the Kingdom of God which Jesus preached and represented in his person.⁸⁷

Moreover, the experience of Jesus suffering for others, which is truly an experience of kenosis, is something that relevant to the poor of India, irrespective of their religions.⁸⁸

5.4 Christologies from Socio-Political Perspective

The fourth category of Indian Christologies emerged in response to the socio-political changes and advocates dialogue with secular and religious movements; it emphasises liberation from the socio-economic evils existing in Indian society. Religious conflicts, antagonism between communities and socio-political ideologies have threatened the integrity and safety of Indian society. Moreover, caste discrimination, religious oppression, and rampant economic exploitation also became sources for the development of Christologies. Therefore, dialogue and liberation are considered to be indispensable acts in the Indian context because they both reinforce and contribute efforts to address the struggles which exist in socio-economic and religious realms. Thus, some Indian Christians have felt the need of dialogues between different religions for peace and harmony among communities, while others have emphasised dialogue with socio-political and economic forces to bring liberation to the oppressed and the poor. Prominent among the first group are P.D. Devanandan, Swami Abhishiktananda, and Stanley Samartha. The second group consists of persons as well as of theological movements; M.M. Thomas, Sebastian Kappen and K.C. Abraham are well-known

⁸⁷ Wilfred, *On the Bank of Ganges*, 176.

⁸⁸ Wilfred, *On the Bank of Ganges*, 176.

among the people; Dalit theology, Tribal theology, and an Indian version of liberation theology are important among the movements. Here we shall explore the idea of M.M. Thomas, who advocates dialogue, for nation-building and for liberation.⁸⁹ We shall also look at Dalit theology to see its explanation of Christ in the context of caste-system and economic oppression. Lastly we shall turn to the recent development of Spirit Christologies taking one example, which also focuses on liberation.

5.4.1 The Christology of M. M. Thomas (1916–1996)

The socio-political changes in the sub-continent and the renascent Hinduism with its powerful ideology for social change led Thomas to search for a theology relevant to the postmodern India.⁹⁰ He calls his theological framework ‘theological anthropology’. Humanisation is in the core concept of his thinking.⁹¹ He begins his theology from the world, it is a contextual or situational approach, and, therefore, it is action-oriented. He insisted that four essential factors should be maintained in dialogue, ‘first, Scripture; then, Christian tradition; next, *Koinonia* of the Church, and finally its mission in the contemporary world’.⁹² Here his understanding of Christ bears a unique status.

⁸⁹ M.M. Thomas was born at Kavungumprayar, Kerala in 1916. During his first year in college, he came to know Christ personally. His active involvement with the youth wing in the Mar Thoma Church opened new avenues in Christian leadership. Thomas was the co-founder and secretary of the Kerala Youth Christian Council Action; its main objective was to bring the social implication of the Gospel. He became the moderator of the WCC central committee from 1968 to 1975. In the period of Emergency, he worked against the Indira Gandhi government. After this, in *Janata Party* rule he was appointed the governor of Nagaland, in 1980. He died on 3rd December 1996. Thomas was one of the most important Ecumenical Theologians. He wrote more than 60 books on Theology and Mission, including 24 Biblical commentaries in Malayalam.

⁹⁰ Boyd, *An Introduction*, 314.

⁹¹ M.M. Thomas, *Salvation and Humanisation* (Bangalore: Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society, 1971), 6-9.

⁹² Boyd, *An Introduction*, 314.

The human quest and struggle for liberation has its answer in Jesus Christ. To Thomas, the historicity of Jesus Christ is the essential part of Christology.⁹³ Jesus Christ is 'the meeting point in history where God fully reveals Himself and where humanity realises itself fully'.⁹⁴ He is the 'redemptive centre' of world history.

5.4.1.1 Lordship Christology

Thomas advocates that the ultimate framework of reference for Christian thought is neither God nor humanity but Jesus Christ who is God-Man.⁹⁵ Thomas developed his Lordship Christology in the context of contemporary revolutionary changes, its meanings and the implications of the Christian faith to such a context.⁹⁶ In his book *The Acknowledged Christ of the Indian Renaissance*, he sought to expound the presence of Christ in renascent Hinduism,⁹⁷ and advocated the need for Christians to engage in dialogues with other religious traditions and secular ideologies to accomplish the mission of Christ.

He interprets lordship in terms of the kingly rule of Christ over all realms of life, from a starting point, that Jesus Christ is the agent of creation and redemption (Col.1:16-20). This kingly rule should be understood in terms of 'overcoming sin and all the structures of evil, and finally death itself and of the end-event, namely the conversion of the kingdoms of this world into the Kingdom of God through Christ'.⁹⁸ Thomas was criticized for his identification of revolutions with the

⁹³ T. M. Philip, *The Encounter Between Theology and Ideology: An Explanation into the Communicative Theology of M.M. Thomas* (Chennai: CLS, 1986), 57

⁹⁴ Philip, *The Encounter Between*, 58.

⁹⁵ Thomas, *Salvation and Humanisation*, 6.

⁹⁶ M.M. Thomas, *The Secular Ideologies of India and the Secular Meaning of Christ* (Madras: CLS, 1976) and *The Christian Response to the Asian Revolution* (London: SCM, 1966).

⁹⁷ M. M. Thomas, *The Acknowledged Christ of the Indian Renaissance* (Madras: CLS, 1991).

⁹⁸ Philip, *The Encounter Between*, 56.

revelation of God in Christ;⁹⁹ nevertheless, Thomas clarifies that his notion of Lordship was developed so as to emphasize the historical person of Jesus Christ.

The lordship Christology of Thomas tries to provide a theological interpretation of history. For him, Christ is the meeting point of history where God fully reveals God-self and where humanity realises itself fully.¹⁰⁰ He criticised Christian *advaitic* tradition, which interpreted Christ in mystical terms, dissociating the historic person of Jesus from his Hebraic background. He also rejects the Christian theological interpretation of history in a sense of pietistic evangelical spirituality which emphasises individualism, for they are *ahistorical*.¹⁰¹

5.4.1.2 Christ as the Dynamic of Revolutionary Humanism

Thomas sees Jesus Christ as the revelation of God in solidarity with the poor and the oppressed.¹⁰² The crucifixion of Jesus provides a potent vision in uplifting the downtrodden as well as in working for the transformation of society. The crucifixion also points to the question of the ultimate destiny of suffering humanity. Thomas is of the opinion that the Crucified Christ liberates humanity from Satan; and Satan is the spiritual consolidation of the forces of dehumanization, poverty, oppression, disease, sin and death.¹⁰³ He interprets Jesus' crucifixion, resurrection and glorification as the dynamics of a

⁹⁹ Sunand Sumithra, *Revolution as Revelation: A Study of M. M. Thomas's Theology* (New Delhi: Theological Research and Communications Institute, 1984).

¹⁰⁰ Philip, *The Encounter Between*, 58.

¹⁰¹ Philip, *The Encounter Between*, 57. He asks not to reduce the Gospel of redemption of all things in heaven and earth, and the message of Christ's renewal of humans in their total relations into a cult of pietism or the more sophisticated existentialist self-understanding which may motivate humanity to be liberated from the burden of history through a mystic self realization. See Philip, *The Encounter Between*, 58.

¹⁰² Philip, *The Encounter Between*, 59.

¹⁰³ Philip, *The Encounter Between*, 61.

revolutionary humanism to which Jesus' person is central and is the way to the kingdom of God.

Thomas' Christology is thoroughly based on his interpretation of the Cross. God's love is manifested on the Cross.¹⁰⁴ Thomas believes the message of the Cross of Christ offering divine forgiveness is relevant to present humanistic ideologies like Marxism from degenerating into instruments of totalitarian schemes of dehumanization. The crucified and risen Christ justifies every human ideology and releases them for works of love to the redemption of humanity; and hence, makes the ideology of Marxism-Leninism a truly secular humanism.¹⁰⁵

Thomas views the Cross as a power releaser, as he identifies it with the Kingdom and says that the Cross is the Kingdom of God moving with power into the history of humanity, by taking control of the powers of this world.¹⁰⁶ This interpretation of the Cross has to do with his view on corporate aspects of sin. He says, 'Corporate sin has a momentum unknown to personal sins'.¹⁰⁷ To illustrate this he talks of the caste-system prevalent in India. He says that, when ideologies are absolutised, they tend to become 'principalities and powers'. Thomas interprets the Cross as power to redeem the principalities and powers and to release us from the power of our collective sins.

For Thomas, the resurrection of Jesus marks the inauguration of a new humanity. God's act of raising Jesus is viewed by Thomas as an act of 'New Creation'.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ M. M. Thomas, *The Realisation of the Cross* (Madras: CLS, 1972), 44.

¹⁰⁵ Philip, *The Encounter Between*, 66.

¹⁰⁶ Philip, *The Encounter Between*, 66.

¹⁰⁷ Thomas, *New Creation in Christ*, 20.

¹⁰⁸ Philip, *The Encounter Between*, 68.

All kinds of divisions created in society by nature, culture or history are broken down by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Therefore, the life of Jesus, the crucified and risen serves as a model in the dialogue between the secular ideologies of India and the Indian renaissance. Christ is the revelation of God in secular solidarity with the poor and powerless.¹⁰⁹ Jesus identified Himself with the poor and oppressed in their struggle for human dignity and social justice. This will unite Christians and non-Christians in involving themselves with the political struggle for the transformation of Indian society.¹¹⁰

5.4.1.3 Salvation as Humanization

Thomas considers salvation to be humanisation.¹¹¹ Sin prevented humans from freedom and creativity but God redeemed human beings in Christ. The God of the Bible is the God of history who liberates people from their bondage. Salvation involves social liberation. It includes community and unity among human beings.¹¹² True humanism is to be found in the humanity of Jesus. Therefore, the mission of the Church is humanization. He says, 'the Gospel of salvation must work itself out also in the realm of history and politics'.¹¹³ The need of the hour is participation in the struggle of the people. 'The Churches cannot stand on the side-lines as spectators, but must involve themselves in contemporary Asian existence in solidarity with the human and spiritual struggle of the world of the Asian renaissance and revolution'.¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁹ Philip, *The Encounter Between*, 69.

¹¹⁰ Philip, *The Encounter Between*, 70.

¹¹¹ Thomas, *Salvation and Humanisation*, 8-9.

¹¹² Thomas, *The Secular Ideologies*, 194.

¹¹³ Boyd, *An Introduction*, 319.

¹¹⁴ Thomas, *The Acknowledged Christ*, 310; Also see M.M. Thomas, 'My Pilgrimage in Mission,' in *Frontiers in Asian Christian Theology: Emerging Trends*, edited by R.S. Sugirtharajah (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1994): 156-160.

The attempt to address the serious issues of emancipation of the poor and nation-building, which are inseparable aspects in theologising is an eye-opener to the traditional theological method employed in India. Their concept of the presence of Christ in authentic religions and in progressive secular ideologies may help to augment the process of dialogue. However, although dialogue is essential, the message of Christ can be blunted in the process of dialogue.

5.4.2 Dalit Christology

The emergence of liberation theology in Latin America has influenced Christians in India and they began to articulate theologies on similar lines, but also with certain differences.¹¹⁵ The main concern of all of them is the articulation of the person and work of Christ for the liberation of the oppressed. We shall concentrate on the Christology of Aravind Nirmal, a prominent Dalit theologian.

5.4.2.1 Dalit Theology

Dalit theology is a theological movement developed on behalf of Dalits, irrespective of their religions, regions, background or languages. According to Nirmal, one of the pioneers of Dalit theology,

It is a theology about the Dalits or the theological reflection upon the Christian responsibility to the depressed classes. Secondly, it is a theology for the depressed classes, or the theology of the message addressed to the depressed classes and to which they seem to be

¹¹⁵ Unlike liberation theology of Latin America, the Indian version of liberation theology is wary of uncritical use of Marxian ideology as well as of religious dialogue.

responding. Thirdly, it is a theology from the depressed classes, that is, the theology which they themselves would like to expound.¹¹⁶

Thus, Dalit theology is solely for the depressed people who are under pathos (suffering and pain) which speaks about their causes, emancipation in Indian churches and in larger society. It tries to create awareness among the Dalits about their rights and privileges and also among other people, especially among Christians. It also brings out the biblical and Christological understanding of the suffering of this people and looks for remedies from a biblical perspective.

5.4.2.2 Indian Church and Dalits

It is a fact that 70 to 85% of the membership of the Indian church comes from among Dalit communities; they became the backbone of the Indian church. The upper caste people consists of only 15 to 20%. However, upper caste converts had an edge over the Dalit converts because they were educated and naturally assumed leadership within the church. The caste system made way into the life of the Indian church. There were no inter-marriages among Dalits and non-Dalits. They would celebrate communion together but this did not result in social interaction over meals.¹¹⁷

5.4.2.3 Indian Christian Theology and Dalits

As mentioned, the leadership of the Indian church was in the hands of upper caste Christian converts who were also the chief spokespersons of Indian Christian theology. These upper caste convert theologies basically witnessed continuity

¹¹⁶ A. P. Nirmal, 'Towards a Christian Dalit Theology,' in *A Reader in Dalit Theology*, edited by A. P. Nirmal (Madras: Gurukul, n.d.), 58.

¹¹⁷ A. P. Nirmal, 'Dalit Theology,' *Transcending Boundaries* (Bombay: Vikas Adhyan Kendra, 1995), 74-75.

between the Christian faith and their former Hindu faith. Thus Indian Christian theology concerned and obsessed itself with *bramanic* tradition. Therefore, the classical Indian Christian theology never noticed the social reality of the Indian church seriously. There existed a wide gap between the Indian church and Indian theology. It was only in the eighties that a new theological paradigm in the form of Dalit theology emerged. The pathos of Dalits now began to be articulated and found a theological expression of its own in this new paradigm. It was this pathos, this sense of suffering, which became the keynote of Dalit theology.¹¹⁸

5.4.2.4 The Dalitness of Jesus

For Nirmal, the Dalit who follow Christ are not just Dalit, but Christian Dalit. This means, 'First of all that we affirm that Jesus Christ whose followers we are, was himself a Dalit despite being a Jew. It further means that both his humanity and divinity are to be understood in terms of his Dalitness. His Dalitness is the key to the mystery of his divine humanity'.¹¹⁹

Nirmal reads the Gospels with a Dalit eye and from a Dalit perspective. He recapitulates some of the features of the Dalitness of Jesus. In the genealogy of Jesus, according to Matthew (1:1-17), the names of some of the women would startle and shock us; they were considered to be 'untouchable' and 'impure' in the eyes of the Jews. They were scandalised and reproached in their contemporary society.¹²⁰ They are the dalitness of Jesus. Jesus was also referred to as a

¹¹⁸ Nirmal, 'Dalit Theology,' 74-75.

¹¹⁹ Nirmal, 'Dalit Theology,' 74-75.

¹²⁰ The first name is that of Tamar, the daughter-in-law of Judah. She outwitted her father-in-law by sleeping with him and conceiving from him (Gen. 38:1-30). Secondly there is Rahab, a gentile woman, a harlot who helped the Israelite spies (Josh. 2:1-21). Thirdly, Ruth, a Moabite woman, who was considered to be untouchable, became the great grandmother of King David and, fourthly, Bethsheeba, the illegitimate wife of King David.

‘carpenter’s Son’. That sounds like looking down upon his father’s profession.¹²¹

In his birth he was in a Dalit condition, in a cattle shed, away from comfort, far from human activities.

Another aspect of Jesus’ dalitness is the fact that he preferred to use himself the title ‘Son of Man’. Even though it is used in different ways, the use of the title to portray his suffering and death is used by Nirmal to develop his Christology. He quotes the ‘Son of Man’ saying of Jesus precisely to demonstrate the dalitness of Jesus.¹²² Jesus encounters rejection, mockery and contempt, suffering and, finally, death. All this suffering originated from the dominant religious tradition of his time. He underwent these experiences as the prototype of all Dalits.¹²³ Another important aspect of Jesus’ life is his total identification with the Dalits of his day. Again and again, Jesus was accused of eating and drinking with publicans, tax collectors and sinners of his day (Mk.2:15-16). Moreover, his visit to Samaritan villages and cities is a good example of his attitude towards the rejected and Dalits of his day.¹²⁴

The Dalit Jesus’ ‘Nazareth Manifesto’¹²⁵ in the Gospel according to Luke is very important for Dalit theologians.¹²⁶ Balasundaram explains Nirmal’s concept. The Dalit Jesus’ Nazareth Manifesto speaks about who his liberation is meant for. The

¹²¹ Nirmal, ‘Towards a Christian Dalit Theology,’ 66.

¹²² For example, ‘And he began to teach them that the Son of man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again’ (Mk. 8:31); ‘It is written of the Son of man that he should suffer many things and be treated with contempt’ (Mk. 9:12); ‘For the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve and to give his life ransom for many’ (Mk. 10:45).

¹²³ Nirmal, ‘Towards a Christian Dalit Theology,’ 66.

¹²⁴ Nirmal, ‘Towards a Christian Dalit Theology,’ 67.

¹²⁵ “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me, to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives. And recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour” (Lk. 4:18-19).

¹²⁶

two illustrations Jesus uses (Luke 4:25-27) indicate that the liberation he is talking about is meant for the Dalits but not for non-Dalits. The gentiles were preferred to Israel; with reference to the widow of Zarephath and Namaan, the Syrian. While there were many widows in Israel, it was only to Zarephath that Elijah was sent. So too was Namaan, the leper from Syria who Elisha cleansed. There were many lepers in Israel but they were not cleansed. Thus the Dalits were set over against Israel.¹²⁷

The cleansing of the temple by Jesus is taken by Nirmal and used to illustrate Jesus' concern for the people and to restoring their right to worship. This act of Jesus is very important in the Indian context, as Dalits were not allowed to enter the Hindu temples and face segregation in the Indian churches. Nirmal contends that this episode is full of significance for a Christian Dalit theology. Owing to Lightfoot's interpretation of Mark 11:15-19, that Jesus, the messianic king, restores to the gentiles their religious right, Nirmal says,

Jesus the messianic king thus restores to the gentiles their religious rights. Lightfoot's interpretation makes sense to the Indian Dalits who had to struggle for the temple entry rights...We the Indian Dalits know what it means to be denied the right to pray and worship...In his act of restoration of gentile right to worship, we see a pre-figuration of the vindication of the Dalit struggle for their prayer and worship rights.¹²⁸

¹²⁷ F. J. Balasundaram, *Contemporary Asian Christian Theology* (Delhi: ISPCK, 1995), 67.

¹²⁸ Balasundaram, *Contemporary Asian*, 169-170.

‘There are many other examples of Jesus’ sympathy for the Dalit of his day,’ asserts Nirmal, ‘but his dalitness is best symbolized by the cross’.¹²⁹ On the Cross, he was the broken, the crushed, the split, the torn, the driven-asunder man, the Dalit in the fullest possible meaning of the term. ‘My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?’ he cried aloud from the cross; the Son of God feels that he is forsaken. ‘That feeling of being God-forsaken is at the heart of our Dalit experiences and Dalit consciousness in India. It is the dalitness of humanity and divinity that the Cross symbolises’.¹³⁰

Thus, this strand shows the contextual needs and aspirations of the oppressed who suffer in the social, economic, religious and spiritual realms. By introducing Jesus as one who suffers with the victims and as a liberator does justice to the person and message of Christ. It also reminds the Church about its liberative mission.¹³¹ Nevertheless, it seems that, in this liberative model, spiritual liberation which is a prerequisite for every other kind of liberation, is forgotten or pushed into the periphery

5.4.3 Spirit Christologies

Another recent development in Christological narrative within the Indian context is the emergence of Spirit Christologies. Earlier, the Spirit-dimension of Christology was either neglected or relegated in mainline denominations.¹³² Some Indian theologians endeavoured to explain Christology in terms of the Spirit’s outworking. Prominent among them are Chenchiah, Swami Abhishiktananda and

¹²⁹ Nirmal, ‘Towards a Christian Dalit Theology,’ 69.

¹³⁰ Nirmal, ‘Towards a Christian Dalit Theology,’ 69.

¹³¹ Wilfred, *On the Bank of Ganges*, 137.

¹³² Boyd, *An Introduction*, 241-242.

Chakkarai who consciously highlighted the relevance of the work of the Spirit in an Indian religious and cultural setting. Recently, Samuel Rayan has proposed a Spirit-Christology primarily to present Christ in his humanity so as to enhance the liberation. It also tries to replace ‘the Christology from above’ (*Logos* Christology) with ‘the Christology from below’. Also, a number of published doctoral theses have been written which explain the Spirit-Christologies of Indian theologians.¹³³ We shall look into the Christology of Samuel Rayan, a Roman Catholic theologian and long-time campaigner for the rights of the Dalits of India, who formulates a Spirit-Christology for the socio-political and economic liberation of the oppressed. He was critical of the Church’s neglect of the poor and oppressed.¹³⁴

In one of his books, *Breath of Fire*, he sees the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God and of Jesus Christ, as the heart of the Christian gospel.¹³⁵ Drawing on the *shakti* tradition, he portrays the Spirit as a ‘breath of fire,’ who empowers us in committed historical action.¹³⁶ He advocates a spiritual struggle to overcome the forces of violence and oppression in society and to bring about justice. According to him, the Spirit is the ‘breath’ or yeast of new life that invigorates the ‘bread,’

¹³³ For instance, Kirsteen Kim, *Mission in Spirit: The Holy Spirit in Indian Christian Theologies* (Delhi: ISPCK, 2003) and Christina Manohar, *Spirit Christology: An Indian Christian Perspective* (Delhi: ISPCK, 2009).

¹³⁴ He says, ‘We go out of our way to secure enormous funds to run colleges, special schools, medical colleges and excellent hospitals, all of which we know only the richer classes can afford. Aid goes to the poor mainly in relief or in emergency cases...The churches seem to be saying something like this: “I am a rich Christian. So many (how many?) millions of rupees come into my hands every year from funding agencies abroad. With this I serve my class, the upper class, irrespective of religion. Now here are the poor Christians. Government, you, please, take care of them. You must if you are just.”’ See Samuel Rayan, ‘The Justice of God,’ in *Living Theology in Asia*, edited by John C. England (London: SCM, 1981), 217.

¹³⁵ Samuel Rayan, *Breath of Fire – The Holy Spirit: Heart of the Christian Gospel* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, n.d.).

¹³⁶ Rayan, *Breath of Fire*, vii.

which is the earth, and in so doing, brings about a redistribution of its resources to the benefit of all.¹³⁷

Rayan outlines his Spirit-Christology and relates it to four key events in the Gospels, the annunciation, the baptism, the resurrection and Pentecost.¹³⁸ He considers the annunciation as a second act of creation by the Spirit and because the Spirit is at work in Jesus from annunciation, not just from baptism, he claims that his Christology avoids adoptionism. The baptism of Jesus was not the first but a fresh, more personal experience of the Spirit which guaranteed the coming of the Spirit upon us and on Earth.¹³⁹ The resurrection was Jesus' fullest and most decisive experience of the Spirit, an experience which wholly transformed him to provide humanity a decisive future. Moreover, the resurrection brought about by the Spirit is 'God's strongest act of dissent and most definitive rejection and subversion of the power and project of prince and priest,' who crucified Jesus.¹⁴⁰ For him, Pentecost reveals the whole meaning of Jesus for human history and destiny, as the disciples are then empowered to participate in his mission.¹⁴¹

However, in his Spirit-Christology, he does not consider Jesus as the exclusive source of salvation. For him, Jesus reveals salvation, realises it historically, and becomes its perfect exemplar. Jesus is unique as a normative manifestation of

¹³⁷ Kirsteen Kim, 'The Holy Spirit in Mission in India: Indian Contribution to Contemporary Mission Pneumatology,' *Oxford Centre for Mission Studies* (6 April 2004), http://www.ocms.ac.uk/docs/TUESDAY%20LECTURES_Kirsteen.pdf (accessed 10 November 2010).

¹³⁸ For a fuller analysis of Rayan's theology and Spirit Christology see Kim, *Mission in Spirit*, 138-194, especially 178-183; Also see Kirsteen Kim, 'Mission Pneumatology with Special Reference to the Indian Theologies of the Holy Spirit of Stanley Samartha, Vandana, and Samuel Rayan' (PhD Thesis, University of Birmingham, 2001).

¹³⁹ Kim, *Mission in Spirit*, 178.

¹⁴⁰ Kim, *Mission in Spirit*, 179.

¹⁴¹ Kim, *Mission in Spirit*, 178-179.

God; however, Jesus is decisive and absolute for Christians, though not exclusive, and we may expect other mediations of the same salvation.¹⁴²

In the above pages we had a glance at the dominant strands of Christologies prevailing in the Indian scenario. They are diverse in form and disposition and have sprung up from divergent settings of theological thinking. Their efforts to depict Christ in a way that is intelligible has added shades and colours to Christological articulations worldwide. However, the mystery of the incarnation eludes the precise definitions and explanations and very often the use of philosophies or ideologies complicate their portrayal of Christ. Moreover, the most vexing question is how far these Christologies are appreciated and comprehended by common people. The situation is further complicated by the lack of participation in the theological process by believers of the churches these theologians belong to. Theologians seldom consult ‘the faithful’ and often forget to ensure the validity and utility of the Christologies they articulate for ‘believers’ and Christ-seekers. Many a time their notions and explanations stand above the grasp of ordinary folks.

Indian Christologies are attempts at presenting the mystery of Christ in a way that is intelligible to the unique and peculiar context of India. Unfortunately, Indian society is not a monolithic homogeneous structure but is made up of manifold elements put together. Hence, while presenting Christ, the communicators face various challenges such as religious pluralism, cultural diversities, the hierarchical structure of society and differences in languages. Additionally, each people group has its own set of beliefs and practices which is dissimilar to that of other groups.

¹⁴² Kim, *Mission in Spirit*, 182-183.

Even in a given locality or community there are sharp distinctions in beliefs, rituals and world-views. These differences pose challenges to the pioneers who venture out to present the person and message of Christ. Consequently, these circumstances presuppose a multiplicity of Christological articulations.

What we have seen in the pages above are the strenuous efforts undertaken by various pioneers to present Christ in a meaningful way to different sections of the society. However, due to the existence of diverse settings, very often a Christology directed towards a religious affinity does stand in contrast even to the people of the same religion.

For example, as we have seen, the *advaitic* strand of Christology is in opposition to the *bhakti* strand of Christology. Similarly, the ideals of liberation Christology stand in contrast to the philosophical branch. The liberation strand would condemn the latter as contributing to the superiority and caste feeling among the Christians. Likewise, the mystical strand seems to be incompatible with the dialogical strand, as the former speaks of Christ in exclusive terms while the latter is open to comparison. The dialogical strand sounds good in the context of religious pluralism and social oppression; however, its worth and effectiveness are not communicated to Christians and they remain lofty ideals in text books. Cultural Christology though, attempts to contextualise the message in cultural and religious settings, but in doing so its use of the terms and metaphors often offend Christians and makes the message of Christ similar to dogmas of other religions.

Another concern is the neglect of a personal spiritual aspect in Christology. Many of these strands are not able to penetrate into the hearts and minds of the ordinary

people. One of the reasons could be attributed to their inability to address the personal spiritual struggle of the people – a fact which may be counted as one of the root causes of many of the problems people face. Often these Christologies are general and broad and stand aloof from the experiences people undergo. Although, some of them claim to use the methodology of ‘Christology from below,’ often their articulations are exclusive and highly intellectual.¹⁴³ Many of them are incapable of addressing the needs and aspirations of village folk who have been undergoing severe crises – sickness, harmful rituals, spiritual oppression, witchcrafts and so on.

Even though the Spirit Christologies emphasise the work of the Spirit, they have failed to apply the work of the Spirit in the lives of the suffering masses. The gifts of the Spirit such as healing, exorcism and other miraculous aspects, have been relegated or pushed aside due to the influence of western enlightenment ideology present in theological formulation. This proves detrimental to the personal liberation of the downtrodden, as the Spirit is the agent of liberation. If Christ carried out his ministry in the power of the Spirit, touching the lives of the ordinary people as the Gospels testify, the Indian Christologies need to use similar methods in the Indian context.

¹⁴³ For instance, after having conducted an empirical study in a Dalit village regarding the liberative aspects of Dalit spirituality, Charles Sounderajan concluded: The empirical study has pointed out that the teaching of the church has not been helpful to the people at all...Dalit theology for that matter has been alien to the people. The socio-economic conditions of the persons speaking Dalit theology are very different from the actual Dalit consciousness...It has actually been imitating the political leaders and their work ethic. See Charles Sounderajan, ‘A Search into the Liberative Aspects of Dalit Spirituality for the Construction of a Theology of Dalit Awakening’ (Unpublished MTh Thesis, Senate of Serampore College, 2003), 94-95; similarly, Charles Singaram questions the methods employed by Dalit theology, see Charles Singaram, ‘The Question of Method in Dalit Theology’ (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Birmingham, 2004).

Furthermore, some Christologies do not take New Testament testimonies about the person and the message of Christ as their primary source; some of them are not even based on canonical writings.¹⁴⁴ These Christologies need to be critically evaluated and used with discretion for the articulation of Pentecostal Christology. Therefore, Pentecostal contextual Christology needs a critical and renewed approach, which takes the context, as well as biblical insights, in balance.

Now for Pentecostals these Christologies can give certain clues – how to articulate Christologies and what specific areas need addressing in an Indian setting. Christologies from religious perspective can be helpful in presenting Christ both to the intellectual, as well as to ordinary people. The emphasis on Christ's humanity and divinity by the philosophical approach can be useful in fortifying Pentecostal Christology.

Besides, as the Pentecostals mostly come from the lower strata of the society, the elements of liberation and mystical Christologies are essential ingredients for an ordinary Pentecostal Christology. The emphasis on dialogue for nation building and religious amity is crucial for Pentecostals. They can also be helpful in identifying the pertinent issues of in the context and used as handy tools. The Spirit-Christologies come closer to the Pentecostal understanding of Christ, and therefore, can be useful concepts when applied to a Spirit-informed liberation Christology. We will highlight these positive ideals and draw on them in the construction of an ordinary Christology for Indian Pentecostals. However, for Pentecostals, given the situations in which they emerge, Christology cannot be a

¹⁴⁴ R. S. Sugirtharajah (ed.), 'Prologue and Perspective,' *Asian Faces of Jesus – Faith and Culture Series* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1993), ix.

set of principles or system of doctrines; but Christology must be enacted in everyday lives. It should answer their questions and give them enough courage to face opposition and persecution.

So far in the Indian Pentecostal setting, no Christological articulation has appeared, or no conscious effort has been made, to form a Christology. As Pentecostalism is growing fast among the poor, it is imperative to consider the Christological articulation of the common believers to find out what it looks like. Therefore, in the following pages we shall look into the ordinary Pentecostal Christology within the Indian context.

Chapter 6

ORDINARY INDIAN PENTECOSTAL CHRISTOLOGY

This chapter will explore ordinary Indian Pentecostal Christology as it emerges from the experiences of ordinary Pentecostals in India. Before we start, we need to address certain key questions: who are the people we will be examining and what contextual experiences have they gone through? How far do their experiences shape and give content to their Christology? Does the Christology they cherish make any differences to their lives? The majority of Pentecostals belong to the lowest strata of the Indian society and, therefore, this Christology is essentially an ordinary people's Christology. Hence, it can certainly be included in the genre of what Jeff Astley terms 'ordinary theology'. The Christology I will be describing here is certainly an 'Ordinary Christology,' because it stems directly from the convictions of ordinary members who seek to follow Christ intimately, without any assistance from external agencies.

We have had a glimpse at the larger socio-economic and religio-cultural contexts of these believers in Chapter 3. However, to comprehend their spiritual outlook (and especially the factors that have contributed to the formation of this 'Christology') more fully, it is essential to be familiar with the very particular context of these believers, especially of those on which the major part of this research is based. It is Tribal and Dalit members who form the majority of Pentecostals in North India,

while a tiny minority are from Hindu religious backgrounds as well as a few South Indian Pentecostals and North Indian Christians who embraced Pentecostalism.¹

Tribals and Dalits of India are generally poor.² Centuries of social conditioning and deprivation have seriously wounded the Tribal and Dalit psyche; they deeply long for recognition and respect.³ Very often they are reluctant to change, perhaps because of the terrible bitterness and indifference they developed through many years of suffering.⁴ The caste system and untouchability have pushed them into the peripheries of villages, deep into the jungles and mountainous locations.⁵

They have a three-tier worldview, based on a close relationship between nature, human beings and various spirits; their priority is in the order of material things,

¹ According to Philip Jenkins the Dalits represent 90% of the membership of Protestant churches in India; Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 183-184. The actual condition of Tribals and Dalits has been discussed in Chapter 3. In the case of Pentecostalism in North India more than 90% of the Pentecostals are from Tribal and Dalit backdrop. The membership of all the major and smaller denominations in North India has similar constituents. They have a similar membership pattern, either in a single church or different churches for these three groups in the same locality.

² In Central India – the states of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Maharashtra, Orissa, Jharkand Chhattisgarh – are populated by various Tribal-groups. According to 2001 Census there are 85 million Tribals in India and out of this 16 million live in North Eastern states. The predominant tribes in Rajasthan are *Bhils* and *Minas*; in Gujarat *Bhils*; in Madhya Pradesh *Bhils* and *Oraons*; for detailed description see K. S. Singh, *The Scheduled Tribes* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994); P.K. Mohanty, *Encyclopaedia of Scheduled Tribes in India*, 5 vols. (Delhi: Isha Books, 2006). For detailed history and practices of *Bhil* tribe, see Bachchan Kumar, *The Bhils: An Ethno-Historic Analysis* (Delhi: Sharada Publishing House, 1997); P.A. Augustine, *The Bhils of Rajasthan* (New Delhi: Indian Social Institute, 1986). Similarly, there are about 1,000 Hindu lower castes registered in India and according to the 2001 Census there are 166 million in total. The largest of these castes are the *Chamar* (one-quarter of the number of the scheduled castes), *Bhangi*, *the Adi-Dravida*, *Pasi*, *Magida*, *Dusadh*, *Mali*. Each Indian state has its own list of scheduled castes; Rajasthan-76, Madhya Pradesh-60, Orissa-88, etc. See Fakir Ram, *Dalit Awakening Moving Upward* (Delhi: Swastik Publications, 2010), 44-45; Sanjay Paswan, *Encyclopaedia of Dalits in India*, Vols. 1-14 (Delhi: Kalpaz Publications, 2004); also see http://censusindia.gov.in/Census_Data_2001/Census_data_finder/Census_Data_Finder.aspx (accessed 4 June 2010).

³ Ram, *Dalit Awakening*, 46; Paramjit S. Judge & Gurpreet Bal, *Mapping Dalits* (Jaipur, India: Rawat Publication, 2009); James Massey, *Down Trodden: The Struggle of India's Dalits for Identity, Solidarity and Liberation* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1997), 23-61; Abraham T. Cherian, 'Contribution of Churches and Missions to the Bhils of Rajasthan' (unpublished PhD Thesis, Asian Institute of Theology, Bangalore, India, 2005), 42.

⁴ James Massey, *Down Trodden*, 23-40; James Massey, *Bharat ke Masihi Dalit* (Dalit Christians of India) (Delhi: ISPCK, 2003); Cherian, 'Contribution of Churches and Missions,' 42.

⁵ Massey, *Down Trodden*, 41-61; Massey, *Bharat ke Masihi Dalit*.

spirits and a high God.⁶ Proximity to the jungle, a primitive worldview and strong faith in supernatural elements made them fearful of spirits and ghosts.⁷ A sick person is usually not taken to hospital, instead treated with *jadi-booti* (roots and leaves); they turn to traditional religious practices to ward off malevolent spirits, which are believed to be the cause of illness. They often consider *jadi-bootis* and traditional religious practices to be more powerful than allopathic medicines.⁸ According to Saxena, their priority is for ‘magico-medical and indigenous treatment’ and therefore, it seems that they often seem to disregard sanitation and hygiene.⁹ However, we should not forget the fact that it is their downtrodden condition and lack of resources which contributes such an outlook to a large extent.

Tribals and Dalits believe in a number of spirits, both benevolent and malevolent.¹⁰ Their whole social and religious life is intricately related to the spirit world.¹¹ The people consider these spirits as powerful enough to keep their children from sickness, make them fertile, provide rain, and the welfare of domestic animals. Various categories of spirits such as village spirits, clan spirits, and spirits of the

⁶ Sathianathan Clarke, *Dalits and Christianity: Subaltern Religion and Liberation Theology in India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999), 71; Cherian, ‘Contribution of Churches and Missions,’ 42.

⁷ Papachan, Focus Group Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 7 August 2009; Chad M. Bauman, *Christian Identity and Dalit Religion in Hindu India, 1868-1947* (Michigan: Eerdmans, 2008), 40; Stephen Neill, *Out of Bondage: Christ and the Indian Villager* (London: Church of England Zenana Missionary Society, 1930), 21-34.

⁸ Cherian, ‘Contribution of Churches and Missions,’ 25-26; Pastor Luke, Interview by author, Rajasthan, 7 July 2009.

⁹ L.L. Saxena, *The Bhils of Rajasthan – Their Habitat, Economy and Society* (Jodhpur, India: Books Treasure, 2000), 171-172.

¹⁰ For a comprehensive understanding of the names of spirits worshipped by various Tribal groups in different states of India see, H. H. Risley and E. A. Gait, *Census of India 1921, Religion* (Calcutta: Superintendent Government Printing, India, 1923); also see <http://www.archive.org/stream/cu31924014522746#page/n179/mode/2up> (accessed 11 July 2010).

¹¹ Paul G. Hiebert, ‘Spiritual Warfare and World View,’ in *Missiology for the 21st Century: South Asian Perspective*, edited by Roger E. Hedlund & Paul Joshua Bhakiaraj (Delhi: ISPCK, 2004), 472.

ancestors are identified.¹² The fear of these spirits motivates the people to worship and offer sacrifices to the spirits. Every village worships a female spirit which is considered to be the guardian spirit and generally known as *mata*.¹³ These spirits are thought to protect people in distress and if the village got polluted, it is thought they would withdraw protection. If these spirits are not placated or offered sacrifices, they are supposed to be angry and it is believed that they can cause harm to life and property.¹⁴

There are many malevolent spirits, which are to be dreaded and warded off by any means. Certain spirits create nuisance by playing tricks on people. There are dangerous spirits too; they cause illness, accidents and calamities.¹⁵ It is believed that the dead are a part of the community and have dealings with those who are still alive.¹⁶ Images of dead men and women, riding on horseback with bows and arrows are found engraved on stone tablets in villages, to give protection to the

¹² Ghanshyam Shah, 'Conversion, Reconversion and the State: Recent Events in the Dangs,' *EPW* (6 February 1999): 315, <http://epw.in/epw/uploads/articles/8620.pdf> (accessed 2 May 2010); Cherian, 'Contribution of Churches and Missions,' 33; Abraham M. Ayrookhuziel, 'Distinctive Characteristics of Folk Traditions,' in *Religions of the Marginalised: Towards a Phenomenology and Methodology of Study*, edited by Gnana Robinson (Delhi: ISPCK, 1998), 2-4.

¹³ In Rajasthan, Udaipur these spirits are known by different names such as *vyavar mata*, *hingotri mata*, *handon mataji*, *sitla mata*, *ori mata*, *moti mata*, *mote mata* and so on. There is another kind of spirit, called *bavazi*, such as *bheru bavasi* and also *mangara baba*, *megh baba*, etc. Small pox is considered as caused by *sitla mata*. Also see, Shah, 'Conversion, Reconversion and the State,' 315; Sathianathan Clarke, 'Re-viewing the Religion of the Paraiyar: Ellaiyamman as an Iconic Symbol of Collective Resistance and Emancipatory Mythology,' in *Religions of the Marginalised*, 35-53.

¹⁴ Papachan, Focus Group Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 9 August 2009; Daniel Katapali, 'Indigenous Missions and the Savara Tribal Church of Srikakulam,' *Christianity is Indian: The Emergence of an Indigenous Community*, rev. ed, edited by Roger E. Hedlund (Delhi: ISPCK, 2004), 270; Clarke, *Dalits and Christianity*, 71-75; Bauman, *Christian Identity and Dalit Religion*, 40-41; Ayrookhuziel, 'Distinctive Characteristics of Folk Traditions,' 2-3; Ilaiyah, *Why I am not a Hindu*, 91-96.

¹⁵ Hiebert, 'Spiritual Warfare and World View,' 471; Abraham T. Cherian, 'A Study of the Religion of the Bhils of Jhadol Taluk in Udaipur, Rajasthan and Their Response to Christian Faith in the Post-Independent Period' (Unpublished MTh Thesis, Asian Institute of Theology, Bangalore, India, 2001), 43.

¹⁶ Clarke, *Dalits and Christianity*, 73.

people from malevolent spirits.¹⁷ Some spirits are thought to help those who engage in robbery, beating, killing and snatching others' property.¹⁸

If any benevolent spirit possesses anybody, it may show itself through various actions and signs and is not considered to be harmful. A message spoken by such a person is counted as prophetic, as coming from the spirit.¹⁹ Even though Tribals and Dalits believe in a benevolent high God, no offering or sacrifice is made for such a God, as he does not harm them. That God is known as *malik* or *ooparwala*, which means master or one who is transcendent.²⁰ The belief in malevolent spirits has made them increasingly preoccupied with fear. Their material needs or physical problems are immediately attached to spirits, the benevolent high God is sought only as a last resort.²¹

It is also important to discuss the idea of sin among these people. For them, sin is essentially related to the community and inter-relationships between its members.²² To break a taboo is sin because breaking taboos results in provocation of the spirits, which a fact which carries adverse aftermath and penalty by the village council.²³

¹⁷ Prabhakar Joshi, *Ethnography of the Primitive Tribes in Rajasthan* (Jaipur, India: Printwell, 1995), 196.

¹⁸ Papachan, Focus Group Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 2 August 2009; Cherian, 'Contribution of Churches and Missions,' 33.

¹⁹ George, Interview by author, Udaipur, 3 July 2009; But George said that his sister being possessed by a good spirit, resulted in often shaking her body and dancing vigorously. Though it is considered harmless, they felt it to be a nuisance which affected her normal life. She was prayed by a pastor and got delivered from it. Also see Cherian, 'A Study of the Religion of the Bhils,' 43; Clarke, *Dalits and Christianity*, 76-77, 87-89.

²⁰ Clarke, *Dalits and Christianity*, 71; Cherian, 'Contribution of Churches and Missions,' 33.

²¹ Cherian, 'Contribution of Churches and Missions,' 42.

²² M.C. Raj, *Dalitology* (Tumkur, India: Ambedkar Resource Centre, 2001), 245-246.

²³ Cherian, 'Contribution of Churches and Missions,' 41; J. Samuel, 'A Study on the Influence of Rajasthan Pentecostal Church in the Socio-Economic Upliftment of the Bhil Tribes in Udaipur District' (Unpublished MTh thesis, Asian Institute of Theology, Bangalore, India, 2006), 29.

Every village has a *devara* (shrine) and a *bhopa* or *bhua* who acts as the village priest.²⁴ People rush to village shrines whenever they face any natural calamity or epidemic to seek the protection of the guardian spirits of their village.²⁵ It is believed that the spirit to whom they offer sacrifices and food has become angry and is, therefore, tormenting them. The *bhopa* wields great power and authority over the villagers and his words are obeyed with awe, as it is believed that the spirits possess him regularly.²⁶ The priests usually ask for money, alcohol, cockerel, or goats for the ceremonies; some demand bigger amounts, unaffordable to the poor villagers, and even threaten the victims with consequences of spirit affliction, if they fail to give what they demand.²⁷ According to some respondents, in the act of exorcism, the *bhopa* is either possessed by the spirit or acts as if controlled by it. The terrified family would bring the demanded items somehow, spending hard-earned money. S/He would declare that the spirit has descended on the sacrificed animal and left the house.²⁸ Then gleefully, s/he would collect the money and other items and walk away.²⁹ However, in most cases, after a few days, the patient would develop symptoms of possession or sickness. Then s/he would demand more money and materials to appease greater spirits. Having found no recovery, the family would look for a *bhopa* with greater powers, who would in

²⁴ Ebenezer, Focus Group Interview, Tabor Church, Gujarat, 23 August 2009; Clarke, *Dalits and Christianity*, 76-77, 85; A female who has the power to heal is known as *bopi*.

²⁵ Ebenezer, Focus Group Interview, Tabor Church, Gujarat, 23 August 2009.

²⁶ Mani, Focus Group, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 2 August 2009; According to Cherian, incidents of fraud and exploitation of gullible villagers by *bhopas* are frequent in interior villages. He narrates an incident; in December 2003, in Dayya village of Jhadol, a *bhopa* brutally killed his second wife and her son to raise his first wife who had died of burning; having found no success he killed himself; Cherian, 'Contribution of Churches and Missions,' 27.

²⁷ Pastor Luke, Interview, Rajasthan, 5 July 2009.

²⁸ They usually sacrifice goats and cockerels.

²⁹ Pastor Luke, Interview, Rajasthan, 5 July 2009; Mathai, Focus Group Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 9 August 2009; Cherian, 'Contribution of Churches and Missions,' 27-28.

turn demand more money and items; ultimately, the family becomes penniless and falls into irrevocable debt and poverty.³⁰

In addition, according to the respondents, magical practices are widespread among these people.³¹ Several of the interviewees acknowledge that many people are oppressed by the infestation of demonic spirits, as they claim. Some people even claim that using evil spirits (*dakan*) through magic and chants one can dry a plant or tree within a few hours.³² It is also believed that with the help of these spirits, witches can steal away the harvest produce or spoil the financial security of a person. Some respondents claim that women are being sexually exploited using wicked spirits. More surprisingly, some people afflict their enemies with illness with the help of witches or even kill others.³³ Evil spirits are also seen as causing illnesses such as paralysis, swelling all over the body, urinary problems and so on.³⁴ While exploring the religion of Dalits in Chhattisgarh, Bauman also portrays a similar picture:

The religion of rural Chhattisgarh in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was (and in many ways still is) about power and control, about survival, protection and order. It was about the concerns of everyday, about diagnosing illness, interpreting omens and signs and

³⁰ Cherian, 'Contribution of Churches and Missions,' 28.

³¹ Mathai, Focus Group Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 9 August 2009.

³² It shows the power and authority of the person who does witchcraft.

³³ Joel, interview by author, Maharashtra, 2 September 2009.

³⁴ If a person needs protection from these witches, s/he has to get the help of the master witch, who gives some bangles to be worn over the shoulder, uttering certain *mantras*, which are believed to be powerful over all witchcraft. He is considered to be more powerful than a *bhopa*. Cherian, 'A Study of the Religion of the Bhils,' 73. Mathew, Focus Group Interview, Tabor Church, Gujarat, 23 August 2009.

about performing rituals intended to smooth one's path in this life and the next.³⁵

There are many other beliefs concerning the spirit world. The people believe that the 'evil eye' causes diseases and ill-luck.³⁶ It can destroy family members, ruin the fortune of a person, and bring harm to domestic animals, crops and houses. To avert the evil eye, the villagers place skulls and monkey tails on poles outside their homes. Chickenpox is considered to be the blessing of *mata* and no treatment is undergone for it.³⁷ Moreover, they ascribe diseases like measles, typhoid and others to a spirit's attack. This attitude becomes a major reason for their ill-health and untimely deaths of many, along with overconsumption of alcohol.³⁸ They believe that gods drink alcohol and taught them to brew it and, hence, there are no ceremonies, whether it is worship, traditional hospitality, death or marriage, without serving alcohol.³⁹ Some even say that 'my god is my alcohol'.⁴⁰

Besides, by chasing the Tribals and Dalits into the jungles and the peripheries of villages, others have deprived them of their livelihood and 'caste Hindus look down upon them as backward and "jungali", i.e., uncivilised with bad customs and

³⁵ Bauman, *Christian Identity and Dalit Religion*, 40.

³⁶ The evil eye is a look that is believed by many cultures to be able to cause injury or bad luck to the person at whom it is directed for reasons of envy or dislike. It also refers to the power of certain persons of inflicting injury or bad luck by such an envious or ill-wishing look. Mathai, Focus Group Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 9 August 2009.

³⁷ Mani, Focus Group Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 2 August 2009.

³⁸ The drinking habit of the Tribals, even by borrowing money from unscrupulous money lenders, pushes them into debt and poverty. Ebenezer, Focus Group Interview, Tabor Church, Gujarat, 23 August 2009; Mohender Singh Bedi, *Drinking Behaviour and Development in Tribal Areas* (Udaipur, India: Himanshu Publications, 1998).

³⁹ Cherian, 'Contribution of Churches and Missions,' 61.

⁴⁰ David Hardiman, 'Healing, Medical Power and the Poor: Contests in Tribal India,' *EPW* (21 April 2007): 1406.

manners’.⁴¹ Governmental developmental plans like industrialisation as well as onslaught of greedy contractors and middlemen have destroyed the natural resources and cures Tribals used, affected their life and health profiles. The forest dwellings, lack of education and natural resources, have made them very poor.⁴² The complex worldview and lack of health care have a severe impact upon their psyche and health.⁴³

Along with the above-mentioned context, a sizeable number of Pentecostals belong to the South Indian Christian context which we have explained in Chapter 4.⁴⁴ They joined the Pentecostal movement from the Syrian Christian churches in Kerala or are second or third generation Pentecostals. They hold a different worldview and idea of sin which are briefly mentioned in this chapter.⁴⁵ Moreover, some Pentecostals come from Hindu religious settings and their former beliefs and understandings are similar to the ideas expressed in ‘Christologies from religious perspectives’ in Chapter 5.⁴⁶

With this background information we shall start the discussion of the Christological ideas held by the believers from such contexts and how they face the above-

⁴¹ Shah, ‘Conversion, Reconversion and the State,’ 315-316.

⁴² Manna, ‘On Calibrating the Poverty.’

⁴³ Wagstaff, ‘Poverty and Health Sector Inequalities’; Sodani, ‘Determinants of Demand for Healthcare.’

⁴⁴ See pages 99, 109-110; it is generally believed that one of the disciples of Jesus, Saint Thomas came to Kerala in 52 AD and converted a few high caste Hindu families. He then organised the Christians of Malabar and established a few churches in Kerala. Then he moved to Coromandal, and suffered martyrdom on or near the Little Mount, today’s Chennai, and his body was brought to Mylapore and was buried there. The Syrian Christians of Kerala still hold on to this tradition and majority of Kerala Pentecostals are from this background. See Mundadan, *History of Christianity in India*; Varghese & Philip, *Glimpses of the History of the Christian Churches in India*.

⁴⁵ See pages 240-241.

⁴⁶ See pages 147-155.

mentioned daily challenges.⁴⁷ The ideas that emerged are very intimate and subjective in nature and often overlap; however, similar themes recur, again and again, in all the places where studies have been conducted whether it is in urban or rural settings; whether adherents are educated or illiterate.

The geographical locations, the difference in languages or the people-group members belong to, as it has surfaced in the research, rarely affected the Christological understanding people developed. Presumably the reason is in most of the Indian subcontinent, except south India (especially Kerala and Chennai in Tamil Nadu and in urban centres), Pentecostals live under similar circumstances. Therefore, it is not surprising that their ideas of Christ reveal identical thematic conclusions. The only difference we find is a slightly variant understanding held by second or third generation South Indian Pentecostals (even their views ultimately identical in most of the themes) which I shall attempt to include while discussing the Christological themes.

Besides, as has been explained earlier, the Pentecostal movement's revival phenomena have contributed greatly to its Christology. It is obvious from the Pentecostal outlook on spirituality and of the world around them; these beliefs kept re-appearing in the interviews and focus groups. In the revivals, healings,

⁴⁷ Qualitative research methods such as personal interviews, both formal and informal, focus groups conducted among the members, participant observation in the Sunday worship services, Friday fasting prayers and 'cottage meetings' are useful to help interviewees reveal their ideas and intimate knowledge of the person and message of Christ although subjective in nature. The hymns and songs sung in the worship context as well as personal testimonies given in the churches, are rich sources, and provide a glimpse at their Christological underpinning. Moreover, informal conversations with Pentecostal believers in the states of Punjab, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Kerala, Tamil-Nadu, Orissa and Andhra Pradesh brought to light many Christological assumptions and perspectives they cherish in their daily struggle. The published testimonies and mission stories of conversions, healings, church planting and miraculous protection from persecutors provide an immediate representation of the Christological notions they hold.

exorcisms and miraculous feats were common and those experiences they cherish and bring to life even today. The revival fervour is still alive and active in worship services, as well as in their private lives. This revival consciousness highly contributed to the theology they hold, especially as regards Christology and also Ethics. It is deeply ingrained in the Christological themes that have emerged during the study and active in their everyday spirituality. Several remarkable themes have emerged from the analysis of the data which overlap in their content and emphasis. We cannot draw rigid boundaries between these themes, however, they differ in their emphasis on various aspects of Christology. The following are some of the dominant themes.

6.1 Jesus the Healer

One of the predominant themes of the Christology that emerged from research among the ordinary Pentecostals is the notion of Jesus as the healer. This is the primary level of Christological articulation and it forms the very basis of the Christological edifice of ordinary Pentecostals. As we already have explained, healthcare facilities are scant, as well as in disarray in remote villages and a large majority suffer from various illnesses while hundreds die every year.⁴⁸ Besides, lack of financial resources, widespread poverty and inadequate transportation facilities have adversely affected the chances of healing even ordinary diseases. Obviously, it is not surprising that people understand Jesus as the divine healer. Many of the interviewees testified that they had experienced Christ and accepted him through the healing they had experienced. This is also a major reason why

⁴⁸ See Chapter 3, pages 67-71.

most of the people joined Pentecostal churches.⁴⁹ We need to remember that even when they seek medical help from physicians available in villages, in many cases, this results in the draining of their hard-earned resources. In practice, they may not even get the results they desire. In some cases even if a medical doctor is appointed to a Public Health Centre (PHC), either the doctor may not be available or the centre may not have any medicines to dispense to these poor people.⁵⁰ There are private practitioners, but several of them are either ‘quacks’ or extort money from the poor villagers.⁵¹

For instance, one of the persons interviewed, who also serves as a lay evangelist in inner villages says:

My son was gravely ill in his childhood. As usual in the village, I consulted the *bhopa* and he said that the illness was due to the displeasure of an ancestor’s spirit. I spent a good sum of money on sacrifices and rituals... yet the situation was getting worse day by day...Then I took my child to the city hospital which is 25 miles away...We spent a large sum of money on medicines and other things. Later I had to sell a portion of my land to pay off the debt incurred by the treatment...We had almost given up our hope of getting back our son. Then someone spoke about a Christian who would pray for the sick people. We were desperate and took the child to the church. The pastor said that Jesus could heal the child, if I could believe. Then the pastor put his hand upon the boy and prayed in the name of Jesus (*yishu*

⁴⁹ Emma, Interview by author, Udaipur, India, 15 September 2009.

⁵⁰ Mathai, Focus Group Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 9 August 2009.

⁵¹ Banerjee, Deaton & Duflo, ‘Health Care Delivery’; Acharya & Ranson, ‘Health Care Financing for the Poor.’

ka naam me). The boy showed some response and within a week he was totally healed.⁵²

According to him, having experienced this healing, he decided to become a member of the Pentecostal congregation where the healing took place. Later, with help of the pastor, he has started a church in his own village and also evangelises nearby villages.⁵³

Another example of healing in which the recipient is more than convinced that healing comes in the name of Jesus and declares that Jesus is the healer and the only God. Shanti, who was miraculously healed of a blood issue (which is a widespread problem among Tribal women), testifies:

I was suffering acutely from a blood condition...We approached the village *bhopa*, however, he was not able to heal me. Later we consulted a more powerful *bhopa*.⁵⁴ Even though for a week I got some relief, later the problem began to increase. Later I was taken to the Primary Health Centre and the doctor prescribed me medicines. Whenever I took medicines, it was eased, but later it would come back again. I was totally devastated. I was not able to work or do the household chores. My children began to go to school hungry. My husband had to toil day and night to make ends meet. Later I was bed-ridden and only with the help of someone could I get up. I was in a miserable condition (she cries). Then one of my distant relatives told me about the church and prayer for the sick people there. My husband took me to the church on

⁵² Babu, Interview by author, Rajasthan, 5 July 2009.

⁵³ Babu, interview, Rajasthan, 5 July 2009.

⁵⁴ She said that the *bhopa* had performed certain *pooja* and also sacrificed a cockerel. He considered the disease to be the displeasure of *bavazi mata* and also assured her that the problem would be over very soon as the anger of *mataji* had been placated.

a Sunday. The pastor shared with me the story of Jesus and the healing power of Jesus. I put my trust on Jesus for healing. The pastor and the believers together prayed for me and, suddenly, I felt something like lightening passing through my body. At that moment I realised that I had been healed; praise the Lord (she seems to be emotional and raises the voice)...Jesus is the real healer (*yishu such much me chanka denawala hai*) and he is our God.⁵⁵

The incident is reminiscent of the Gospel story of the healing of the woman with ‘issue of blood’ by Jesus (Matt.9:20-22; Mk.5:25-34). Such healings not only have an impact on the person who has been healed, but also the people around them. They themselves are also attracted to the healing power of Jesus and join the Pentecostal churches. According to an evangelist, the attitude of the people is ‘first miracle, then worship’ (*pahle chamatkar, phir namaskar*).⁵⁶

Some people acknowledge that there are many such testimonies of healing taking place through the work of evangelists and even ordinary members, which change the lives of the people. One pastor said: ‘Church is like a hospital; many people come and get the healing and go back’.⁵⁷ See another example of the same nature from the mission field of the state of Orissa reported by *Cross & Crown* magazine:

Evangelist Elias Digal from Lakoti church informed of the healing testimony of a lady who was suffering from a blood condition for a long time. She was fed up with medications and tried traditional religious practices, which in turn also proved futile. She spent lot of

⁵⁵ Shanti, Interview by author, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, Udaipur, Rajasthan, 28 July 2009.

⁵⁶ Biju, Focus Group Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 9 August 2009.

⁵⁷ Ponnachan, Focus Group Interview, Tabor Church, Gujarat, 6 September 2009.

money and was totally disappointed. Three months back, one of her neighbours who is a believer guided her to church and there she came to know Jesus the healer. She requested prayer from the pastor and believers of the church for her healing. On that day the saints prayed earnestly for that expectant lady that she could receive her miraculous healing. Now she is the happiest one to attend the church with all her dear ones in her family as they all repented, believed and were baptised in the water to join the body of Christ.⁵⁸

Some of the people who had received bodily healing not only joined Pentecostal churches, but began to involve themselves in the healing activities among the villagers. The story of Pastor Mathew, who had been bed-ridden due to paralysis for two years and tried both traditional healing methods and medical help in the city is the best example, he narrates:

Not having any result, I was taken back to my village and just left in bed forever. For two years I was bed-ridden. I thought that my life had come to an end and I had given up any hope of recovery. However, someone told me that there was a pastor (*padri*) who would pray for the sick ... I never knew about Jesus Christ or healing in the name of Jesus. The pastor narrated the story of Jesus, how he healed paralysed man in the Gospel...The pastor prayed over me. Although my body did not feel anything, my mind became calm and peaceful for the first time ... Day by day my condition began to change, within two weeks I was able to sit on my bed. When the recovery was fast enough, I could walk within

⁵⁸ Editor, 'From our Mission Field: Report from Orissa,' *Cross & Crown* (September-October 2001):13.

one month. I was convinced that Jesus is true Lord and healer of all diseases. I had decided to serve this great Lord who is able to do great things. Now Jesus is doing many miracles of healing and exorcism through me.⁵⁹

According to him, people are coming to the church through miraculous healings, even though there is intense opposition from extreme religious elements.⁶⁰ Such healing miracles are even noted by secular academicians. Ghanshyam Shah, professor of Social Science at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, accounts for healing as the main reason for Tribals to accept Christianity. He writes:

There are various reasons, as given by them, for accepting Christianity.

The most common reasons are curing of diseases, relief from tension related to day-to-day problems, faith in prayer which helped them in their personal crises, particularly recovery from illness.⁶¹

Then he quotes a testimony:

“I was sick and tried ‘Bhuva-Bhagat’ [traditional healers] but could not get relief. My neighbour, who is a Christian, suggested to me to meet the ‘Padari’ [priest] and ask him to offer a prayer for my recovery. I knew the Padari as he used to visit us. I told him about my illness. He asked me to join him for the prayer and I began to feel better. From that day I attended prayers regularly and later became ‘Cristi’ [Christian].”⁶²

⁵⁹ Mathew, Focus Group Interview, Tabor Church, Gujarat, 23 August 2009.

⁶⁰ Mathew, Focus Group Interview, Tabor Church, Gujarat, 23 August 2009.

⁶¹ Shah, ‘Conversion, Reconversion and the State,’ 315, <http://epw.in/epw/uploads/articles/8620.pdf> (accessed 2 May 2010).

⁶² Shah, ‘Conversion, Reconversion and the State,’ 315.

Similarly, David Hardiman of the University of Warwick, U.K. who conducted a study of healing among the Tribals of Gujarat claims that he too collected testimonies of Pentecostal ‘faith healing’; he says, ‘...we managed to meet some of them [the Pentecostals] and attend their meetings for worship in the Dangs, in 2005, that incorporated healing testimonies (‘sakshi’).’⁶³ He further adds, ‘Faith healing by bodies such as the Pentecostals has come to the fore in recent years, as much in the rich countries of the West, as in the poor and underdeveloped tribal belts of India’.⁶⁴

This is true in South India, even in Kerala state. Having conducted a field research among Syrian and Dalit Pentecostals in Kerala, P.G. Abraham shows that the participants testified that the majority of them had ‘physical problems in their life’ and joined Pentecostal churches because of ‘deliverance of their troubles’ and ‘healing experience’.⁶⁵ Similarly, Siga Arles, a distinguished Indian missiologist, speaking about the Pentecostal churches in Karnataka (Kolar Gold Field), also highlights that the ‘power of healing’ attracts both Christians and non-Christians into Pentecostal churches.⁶⁶

Interestingly, when anything happens in villages, people first approach traditional healers and when this fails they turn to medical help, and eventually approach pastors. However, in small towns, and sometimes in cities, a reverse trend is

⁶³ David Hardiman & Gauri Raje, ‘Practices of Healing in Tribal Gujarat,’ *EPW* (1 March 2008): 49; also see David Hardiman, ‘Healing, Medical Power and the Poor: Contests in Tribal India,’ *EPW* (21 April 2007): 1405-06.

⁶⁴ Hardiman, ‘Healing, Medical Power and the Poor,’ 1406.

⁶⁵ He conducted the study to understand the caste discrimination among various Pentecostal denominations; P.G. Abraham, *Caste and Christianity: A Pentecostal Perspective* (Kumbhaza, Kerala: Crown Books, 2003), 116-118; He notes the response of the people: ‘1. I have experienced God’s deliverance in my trouble. 2. I have experienced God’s healing power in my sickness. 3. God had delivered me from devilish attack.’

⁶⁶ Siga Arles, ‘Indigenous Pentecostal Church Growth at KGF (Kolar Gold Field), Karnataka,’ in *Christianity is Indian*, 392-393, 395.

visible. First, people take medical help; when treatments do not yield the desired results, people consult mediums and resort to traditional religious practices and other means. When all these fail, they come to Christians because they believe that medicine is not working due to infestation of malevolent spirits. In towns and cities there are fake *sadhus* and god-men who take advantage of these innocent miserable people.⁶⁷

Another interesting fact which is noteworthy is that not only does the healing occur before the conversion experience, but also even as believers, people come to depend on divine healing, in the name of Jesus. There are several testimonies in this regard. Listen to Jessy who has experienced the miraculous healing of a cyst in her ovary:

Last year I had developed a cyst in my stomach [later it was known from her husband that it was an ovarian cyst]. It caused intense pain and I could not work or sleep. I was taken to hospital and doctors recommended surgery. However, I needed a big sum of money. It was difficult for us to raise such an amount. I was not able to work and the wages earned by my husband were only enough for daily expenses of the family. It was beyond our capacity. Therefore, we began to pray. The matter was put before the congregation and the pastor earnestly prayed for me. To our surprise within two weeks the cyst disappeared completely. I know that God loves me and heals his children.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Thomas, Interview by author, Udaipur, 8 July 2009.

⁶⁸ Jessy, Interview by Author, Tabor Church, Gujarat, 5 September 2009.

She swears that Jesus' healing power is available even today and he can heal any diseases.⁶⁹ It is a usual scene in village churches for people to come with bottles of oil and even water to be prayed over by pastors to be used for their illness. The believers have strong faith in the efficacy of prayer. So, what they sing in a folksong tune within the worship context is true:

In the name of Jesus, there is healing (*shifa*)
See and read in the word of God
In the name of Jesus, the power of illness is nullified
Jesus has shed his blood, he saved us
Jesus healed us of our entire sickness
See and read in the word of God.⁷⁰

Jesus as the healer is a prominent theme in worship songs; there are several songs in circulation.⁷¹ It is also interesting to see that most of the pastors and evangelists in the village settings use Gospel stories for their preaching, which expound the themes which we discuss in this Chapter.

Some people have testified that they were not immediately healed, although they attended a Pentecostal church. However, they are convinced that Jesus is able to give enough grace to sustain their sickness. Above all, they feel the joy and presence of God.⁷² Some respondents, who are third generation Pentecostals, do not consider Jesus to be a healer as the most important aspect of Christology, even

⁶⁹ Jessy, Interview, Tabor Church, Gujarat, 5 September 2009.

⁷⁰ Participant Observation, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 26 July 2009.

⁷¹ Song of Fellowship (Udaipur, India: Filadelfia Bible College, 2005).

⁷² Jerry, Interview by author, Kolenchery, Kerala, 26 June 2009; Adarsh, Interview by author, Chennai, 2 July 2009.

though they believe in miraculous healing.⁷³ They usually seek medical help along with prayer when they are sick.⁷⁴ It is to be noted that there is no restriction in using medicines or consulting doctors in Pentecostal churches.

For ordinary believers the healing episode is not merely physical recovery or being healthy. Instead, the divine healing affects the totality of their life: physical, social, economic and spiritual. From the interviews, it is apparent that when a person is sick, it affects the net income of the family as one is not able to work.⁷⁵ Therefore being healthy or being delivered from sickness is all-round well-being and peace of mind. In the case of the illness of women, it means that children are not being adequately looked after and other household chores are not attended to. The cattle and the little cultivation they own are usually affected negatively.⁷⁶ Thus, healing of the body contributes the wholistic development of a person and his/her family.

Furthermore, as Jessy said, healing is a definite proof that God loves them and takes care of them.⁷⁷ This understanding inculcates a new confidence in them: that they are someone special in the mind of God. This confidence, in turn, enables them to take 'a giant leap of faith' in the spiritual sphere and a renewed perception of themselves in society. When a person is convinced of the love and constant presence of God, he/she is able to overcome many of the nagging problems and obstacles which stand in the way of their progress whether it is financial, social, cultural, spiritual or personal. This new outlook situates a person in a higher

⁷³ Moncy, Focus Group Interview, Udaipur, 12 July 2009.

⁷⁴ Saji, Focus Group Interview, Udaipur, 12 July 2009; for these people Jesus as saviour and God are the most important aspects of Christology.

⁷⁵ Shanti, Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 28 July 2009.

⁷⁶ Shanti, Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 28 July 2009.

⁷⁷ See Shanti, Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 28 July 2009; also Rosamma, Interview by author, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 5 August 2009.

⁷⁷ Jessy, Interview, Tabor Church, Gujarat, 5 September 2009.

pedestal and brings an attitudinal as well as a character change, which in turn results in a positive self-image and better perception of the realities surrounding the person.⁷⁸ Heredia, writing in *Economic and Political Weekly* agrees: 'For the convert, conversion at this level involves a change of worldview, of the root paradigm, the foundational myth of a people's religious tradition'.⁷⁹ Arles also comments, 'Karl Marx saw religion as the opium of the masses, but in Pentecostal churches there is an efficient use of religion for building a self-image for the poor'.⁸⁰

Divine healing also enables a person to reject the old religious practices as well as fear of malevolent spirits and exploitation of traditional healers.⁸¹ Now, they are no more under those intimidating and enslaving powers; some are even now empowered to heal others. Therefore, it is a spiritual liberation too. Moreover, this makes a difference to their social standing. Even today, being sick in a village society is considered as a misnomer and bad omen. When one is miraculously healed, the esteem and social standing in the community is enhanced. Breman, from the Amsterdam School for Social Science Research, when commenting on healing among Tribals, argued that such healings satisfy a continuing desire for community-based healing. He comments that the popularity of healing dramas performed by evangelical Christians should be understood in collective terms.⁸² Thus, it has social implication too.

The healing is enacted by the power of the Holy Spirit and it is considered to be the direct intervention of the Spirit. It is through the work of the Spirit that healing

⁷⁸ Mani, Focus Group Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 2 August 2009.

⁷⁹ Rudolf C. Heredia, 'No Entry, No Exit: Savarna Aversion towards Dalit Conversion,' *EPW* (9 October 2004), 4546; also see his *Changing Gods: Rethinking Conversion in India* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2007).

⁸⁰ Arles, 'Indigenous Pentecostal Church Growth at KGF,' 395.

⁸¹ Joel, Interview, Maharashtra, 2 September 2009.

⁸² See Hardiman, 'Healing, Medical Power and the Poor.'

takes place. It is considered to be the gift of the Spirit.⁸³ Thus, what German Theologian Adolf von Harnack commented for Christianity is true for Indian Pentecostalism; it is 'a religion for the sick'.⁸⁴

6.2 Jesus the Exorcist

Another dominant Christological theme appeared in the study is the understanding of Jesus as the exorcist. As with Jesus the healer, this theme is a primary level of Christological articulation. There are plenty of testimonies related to people being delivered from demonic possessions and the attack of malevolent spirits. According to villagers, many diseases are caused by spirit attack or perpetuated by evil practices.⁸⁵ An attack from wicked spirits can have severe repercussions and can be life-threatening.⁸⁶ Listen to the ordeal Yeshudas had gone through and how he was miraculously rescued from the attack of evil spirits:

My father was the *bhopa* of my village ... Everything was fine until my father's death. After a month of my father's death, suddenly four of my sisters and mother fell ill in consecutive days. Their bodies were swollen and unable to pass urine. I realised that it was the attack of the spirits that were to be placated because no sacrifices had been offered after my father's death. In panic I began to run pillar to post, consulting other *bhopas* and *tantriks* but to no avail. After few days my wife, who was pregnant then, also fell ill. It was a shock to me. I brought a powerful *bhopa* from a different village but he could not do anything. We spent lot of money... After a week I became ill with the same symptoms. All of my body was swollen and aching and I was unable to

⁸³ Joel, Interview, Maharashtra, 2 September 2009; Mani, Focus Group Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 2 August 2009.

⁸⁴ R.A.N. Kydd, 'Healing in the Christian Church,' *NIDPCM*, 698.

⁸⁵ See the beginning of this chapter.

⁸⁶ Mani, Focus Group Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 2 August 2009.

eat anything or pass urine. I was also bed-ridden and unconscious for some time.

One of my relatives, who was married off to a different village came to know about it; she was a believer. Knowing our condition, she came with her pastor. He prayed over me and in the name of Jesus rebuked the power of evil spirits. From that moment onward all of us began to feel better and within a few days we received complete release from the attack of the spirits. Now I know that Jesus is all powerful, greater than all other gods. He can do everything; he has power over every spirit. I will only worship him.⁸⁷

Within the context of the focus group, some people also shared their experiences of spirit attack and the deliverance they have received in the name of Jesus. Moreover, the discussion mostly revolved around the power of Jesus to rescue from the evil influence of wicked spirits as well as witch-doctors.⁸⁸ These people experienced the delivering power of Jesus in their life and now they do not fear any demonic spirits or traditional religious practices. For example, a participant narrates his testimony of freedom from an evil spell:

My first wife became ill and it turned out that she was infested with an evil spirit. I employed the services of the village *bhopa* and he had said that she was possessed by *hingotri mata*. I spent a large sum of money on sacrifices and other rituals; however, these could not save her. My wife and a four year old daughter died together. After a year I re-married. However, my wife was also attacked by evil spirits. Some

⁸⁷ Yeshu Das, Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 5 August 2009.

⁸⁸ Focus Group, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 9 August 2009.

people advised me that it was the work of some evil people, so I should go to the church and I would be delivered. Then I asked, ‘what is church?’ I did not know what church was. Then with my wife I came to the church. The pastor prayed for me and we got release from the torment of evil powers. Now it has been ten years and I have three children and we don’t have any fear of spirits. Jesus is more powerful than all the spirits. I submit everything to God.⁸⁹

In the focus group, participants claimed that many people in the inner villages are either affected by the attack of spirits or live fearfully.⁹⁰ People believe that these are the works of wicked spirits. Traditional healers first ask for a cockerel to sacrifice; if there is no relief, after seven days a goat is sacrificed. They also use alcohol, incense-sticks and other materials to either please the spirits or ward them off.⁹¹ A cockerel, even in the village will cost Rs. 250-300, and a goat more than Rs. 2000. Moreover, *bhopa* also may demand big amounts like Rs. 1,000-5,000.⁹² They claim that they can deliver the villagers from the spirits. When poor villagers fail to get any result through traditional religious practices, or dangerous events happen, as a last resort only they will approach pastors for their rescue. Many of the members who attend the churches share such incidents.⁹³ They also hand down their testimonies to the suffering people. This has resulted in a rapid growth of Pentecostalism among the poor villagers.⁹⁴ The *Economic and Political Weekly*, for

⁸⁹ Yohannan, Focus Group Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 9 August 2009.

⁹⁰ Focus Group Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 9 August 2009.

⁹¹ Mathai, Focus Group Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 9 August 2009.

⁹² Mathai, Focus Group Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 9 August 2009.

⁹³ Mathai, Focus Group Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 9 August 2009.

⁹⁴ Kuttappan, Focus Group Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 9 August 2009.

instance, undergirds this fact. Commenting on the reasons why Oraons, a group in Orissa, accept Christianity, Pati says:

In a context of uncertainties and insecurities the Oraons, for example, felt that Christianity protected them from the witches and 'bhoots', who were powerless against this system.⁹⁵

In another incident, the children fell prey to curse and attack from wicked spirits. Parsing Baria, an evangelist of the Filadelfia Church in the Panchmahal district in Gujarat speaks about the miraculous recovery of a family:

...the Lord told me to go to a family that was being tormented with sickness and consistent deaths. Four children in that family had died following which even the cattle began to fall prey. The entire household moved to another locality to escape the curse, but the curse followed. Much prayer was done and the Lord through a miracle restored to them what they had lost over the years.⁹⁶

Pastor Kuttappan narrated an incident of miraculous recovery of a young man who was insane for some years, as a result of his ministry. According to Kuttappan, the man used to wander in the forest and village with a sword. Due to his fear that his son would harm others, the father told the villagers that they might kill him if he harmed anybody. One evening people of the village came to kill him. However, his wife did not allow it.

⁹⁵ Biswamoy, Pati, 'Identity, Hegemony, Resistance: Conversions in Orissa, 1800-2000,' *EPW* (3 November 2001), 4204.

⁹⁶ No Author, 'Field News,' *Cross & Crown* 26/6 (August-September 1996): 21.

The next day his sister, who was staying near Kuttappan's house, approached and requested whether he could heal him. This woman had seen that people prayed for deliverance. Then the man was brought to his home, hands tied. Kuttappan kept him in his home, providing food and everything for a month. Meanwhile he was constantly prayed by Kuttappan and the church there. Now he is completely healed and has been undergoing Bible training and is involved in evangelism. According to Kuttappan, due to this deliverance many people from the village joined the church.⁹⁷ It is remarkable that Pentecostal churches act as a refuge for tormented people. As Abraham has shown, even in Kerala (the state with 100% literacy rate), where we find third or fourth generation Pentecostals, a good number of new adherents were delivered from evil spirits and joined Pentecostal churches.⁹⁸

Another interesting fact came out in the research is that very often the attack of malevolent spirits results in paralysis. Hear the story of a married woman narrated by her husband:

My wife was troubled by evil spirits from her childhood. Even after the marriage they used to torment her, make her fall down and wound her and sometimes make her unconscious. Later she was paralysed in one of her legs and became bed-ridden. We spent lot of money for traditional religious practices [He is a truck driver and earns good money]. All of my income would go towards traditional religious practices and treatment but without any results. However, somebody

⁹⁷ Kuttappan, Focus Group Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 9 August 2009.

⁹⁸ Abraham, *Caste and Christianity*, 116, 118.

introduced me to the pastor and he prayed for her; she got some relief.

Then she continued to attend the church and now she is totally healed.⁹⁹

People not only suffer from the direct attack of evil spirits, but there are many instances of the use of wicked spirits by witch-doctors to extract money and torment gullible people. Merchand Masih, an evangelist narrates:

A certain witch-doctor cast a spell on a simple villager and in the process, took nine hundred rupees from him. The man came seeking salvation in the church... When the people of God pray, something in the spirit realm happens. The villager got healed and the witch-doctor came and returned the money to him. This was an instant answer to prayer. This was enough to convince the man and several others to accept the Lord as their saviour.¹⁰⁰

According to *Cross & Crown* magazine the influence of the person of Jesus is so powerful among the villagers that some powerful village-healers (*bhopa*) became pastors to deliver many from evil influences.¹⁰¹ The story of Kesabhai, who was a highly placed *bhopa* around his locality, is an example. He was the chief sorcerer and villagers approached him, whenever ill fate and sickness fell upon them. But a day came when Kesabhai's own three year old son fell ill. He spared no magical devices he knew and practised for others, but in vain. When the villagers came to know about the death of his son, they said, 'the evil spirits whom he worshipped have snatched his child because they are displeased'. No sooner had he recovered

⁹⁹ Reji, Focus Group Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 9 August 2009.

¹⁰⁰ No Author, 'Field News,' *Cross & Crown* 26/6 (August-September 1996): 20.

¹⁰¹ C&C Reporter, 'Field News: How do we Plant a Church in Remote Villages?,' *Cross & Crown* 26/7 (January-February 1997): 2-5.

from the trauma of the loss of his son than his only surviving child, his seven month old daughter was struck with jaundice.

It dawned on Kesabhai that, if traditional methods could not save his son, they couldn't work for his daughter. He took her to the Primary Health Centre where he met an old man named Vakta. Vakta explained the real healing power of Jesus to this 'healer'. Both of them met Pastor Tajendra Masih in Pai village, who shared the Gospel with him and prayed for the child. It is claimed in the magazine that within three days the child was healed. Moreover, it is also testified that he then became a Pentecostal and, through him, many were healed and delivered from evil spirits.¹⁰²

For ordinary villagers being freed from the fear of malevolent spirits as well as liberation from spirit possession is more than a life regained. They live in constant fear of the supernatural and this fear affects all their activities. Just as we discussed when addressing divine healing, the deliverance in the spirit realm positively affects the people's social, economic and spiritual domains; the spirit infestation breaks their financial security, their physical as well as their mental well-being.¹⁰³

In the testimonies of the participants, deliverance brings a new awareness of the spiritual world. Earlier, the worldview was infested with dread of spirits and enslavement to them; always trying to appease them. However, deliverance removes their fear of demonic activities and fear is turned into safety and joy. It is the peace of mind and body which rules in them after they receive deliverance in

¹⁰² C&C Reporter, 'Field News,' 2-5.

¹⁰³ Focus group, Tabor Church, Gujarat, 23 August 2009; Focus group, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 9 August 2009.

the name of Jesus.¹⁰⁴ Earlier, even if they may get respite, nothing guarantees the uninterrupted security and protection from these evil powers, who can return and trouble them. Bauman's description also tallies with this understanding. These people are obsessed with 'performance of daily rituals, the *ad hoc* utilization of amulets and charms, and the protective repetition of *mantras*'.¹⁰⁵ Thus, deliverance in the name of Jesus assures them a long-lasting safeguard from the demonic powers.¹⁰⁶

Further, exorcism enacted in the name of Jesus is totally free of cost and it does not impinge their financial security.¹⁰⁷ Pastors or members conduct exorcism without any rituals or chants. This raises a new consciousness: that satanic forces come to steal their financial resources (John 10:10).¹⁰⁸ According to Dasan, the 'power encounter' with Christ, in which Tribals are healed, expelled the evil spirits that were blighting their lives, reformed their morals and ethics, broke the hold of the *bhagats*, and allowed them to stand up to the shopkeepers who exploited them.¹⁰⁹

Later, believers are taught that they can also cast out demons in the name of Jesus. As one person explained, this understanding makes a huge shift in their worldview; they realise that they have control over evil spirits which have been tormenting them and proceed to rescue others from the clutches of tyranny.¹¹⁰ For example,

¹⁰⁴ Joel, Interview, Maharashtra, 2 September 2009.

¹⁰⁵ Bauman, *Christian Identity and Dalit Religion*, 40.

¹⁰⁶ See Yohannan, Focus Group Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 16 August 2009; Focus Group Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 9 August 2009.

¹⁰⁷ Mani, Focus Group Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 2 August 2009.

¹⁰⁸ Participant Observation, Tabor Church, Gujarat, 6 September 2009; Mathai, Focus Group Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 9 August 2009.

¹⁰⁹ Ebenezer D. Dasan, 'Conversion and Persecution in South Gujarat,' in *Conversion in a Pluralistic Context: Perspectives and Context*, edited by Krickwin C. Marak & Plamthodathil S. Jacob (Delhi: ISPCK, 2000), 161-164.

¹¹⁰ Joel, Interview, Maharashtra, 2 September 2009.

Pastor Mathew claims that he has a special anointing to cast out demons.¹¹¹ The ordinary adherents come to know that through prayer and faith now they can counter the evil forces. Hardiman agrees with it, 'There is a strong emphasis on the healing of all maladies and sicknesses through the power of faith alone. They consider that malign forces cause ill health, and that these forces can be countered through prayer and faith'.¹¹² This brings spiritual empowerment and leads to what we call 'spiritual warfare' which is carried out as an everyday affair one where no specialists are needed. Additionally, as in the case of healing, the act of exorcism is also carried out in the power of the Spirit. Here the work of the Spirit is paramount to obtain the desired outcome.¹¹³

This also results in a lofty understanding of the supremacy of Christ: he is more powerful than any other god.¹¹⁴ Besides, unlike their old deities which may get angry now and then, he is kind enough to deliver them from suffering and ready to keep them safe forever. He does not ask for any sacrifices.¹¹⁵ This perception leads them to the positive affirmation of the uniqueness of Christ over every other god they know. Eventually, they are not hesitant to proclaim that Jesus is the only God.¹¹⁶ Nevertheless, what we need to emphasise here is, that this does not happen by the rational articulation of arguments and counter arguments. Even this understanding does not come from a thoroughly Bible-based divinity and greatness of Christ. But it emerges out of their life experiences of Jesus' pervasive power

¹¹¹ Mathew, Focus Group Interview, Tabor Church, Gujarat, 23 August 2009.

¹¹² David Hardiman & Gauri Raje, 'Practices of Healing in Tribal Gujarat,' *EPW* (1 March 2008): 49.

¹¹³ Mathew, Focus Group Interview, Tabor Church, Gujarat, 23 August 2009.

¹¹⁴ Yohannan, Focus Group Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 9 August 2009.

¹¹⁵ Mani, Focus Group Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 2 August 2009.

¹¹⁶ Mathew, Focus Group Interview, Tabor Church, Gujarat, 23 August 2009.

over all gods.¹¹⁷ For they have knocked on every door they are aware of but with no results. Therefore, they do not debate to prove the uniqueness and supremacy of Christ; rather, they relate this idea to their experiences and persuade listeners to accept the lordship of Christ. This method is used in evangelism and mission. Evangelist Mathew said that he would approach people who were sick and troubled by demonic spirits and then narrate his own testimony and stories from the Bible. Then he would pray for the people in the name of Jesus.¹¹⁸

However, as in the case of healing, those respondents from city contexts and third-generation Pentecostals do not give much importance to exorcism. One has testified that she has seen exorcisms but believes that evil spirits affect those who worship satanic forces. For her Jesus is above every power and he protects his children.¹¹⁹

6.3 Jesus the Provider

Just as Jesus is the healer and the exorcist, another overarching theme that surfaced from the study is the notion that Jesus is the provider. This notion forms the second level of Christological affirmation which is drawn out of Jesus as the healer and exorcist. Concurrently, for some, Christological articulation begins with this theme.¹²⁰ The curing of illness and miraculous rescue from demonic forces in the name of Jesus instils a new spiritual consciousness among the suffering people. Now they place their full confidence in the all-encompassing, all-powerful work of

¹¹⁷ Mathew, Focus Group Interview, Tabor Church, Gujarat, 23 August 2009.

¹¹⁸ Mathew, Focus Group Interview, Tabor Church, Gujarat, 23 August 2009.

¹¹⁹ Jolly, Interview by author, Udaipur, 10 July 2009.

¹²⁰ Prince, Interview by author, Kolenchery, 28 June 2009.

Jesus in all of their activities.¹²¹ Their newfound experience widens the spiritual perception of the work of Jesus into other realms of their struggle, namely economic, social and household realms. 'He gives us blessings and prosperity freely,' asserts Yeshudas.¹²² Jesus who has healed and freed them from the disintegrating powers is also able to provide them and liberate them from the rampant poverty they face. Reji says, 'After we became believers, we are better off people. God blessed us in every area of life: in cultivation, our animals and our works. Jesus gives us whatever we ask'.¹²³ That is, the notion that Jesus is a provider stems from the notions of Jesus as healer and exorcist. Nevertheless, for some people, the Christological perception starts with the notion of Jesus as provider for they were under debt and financial struggle, but after joining a Pentecostal church, their financial condition improved.¹²⁴

This understanding of Jesus as provider in their mundane, hard and struggling life dawns a new epoch of hope and confidence.¹²⁵ Now they muster enough courage and strength to face the stark realities around them. Again, it is not a vain confidence or wishful thinking but an experience of miraculous provisions they are able to testify about in the worship context as well as in daily life.¹²⁶ Their condition explained in the chapter on the Indian context and the immediate struggle described at the beginning of this chapter, undergirds the significance of this Christological theme. Many of them were spending most of their meagre resources either for traditional religious practices or medical treatments and had come to a

¹²¹ Wilson, Focus Group Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 16 August 2009; Raju, Focus Group Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 16 August 2009.

¹²² Yeshudas, Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 9 August 2009.

¹²³ Reji, Focus Group Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 16 August 2009.

¹²⁴ Prince, Interview by author, Kolenchery, 28 June 2009.

¹²⁵ Papachan, Focus Group Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 16 August 2009.

¹²⁶ Testimony, Participant Observation, Udaipur; 19 July 2009; Pylee, Focus Group Interview, Udaipur, 26 July 2009.

stage where they were burdened by debt and poverty. The options before them were either to borrow money from someone, or sell their property or to end their life. There are many men in villages who end their lives due to debt crisis and poverty, leaving behind women and children to mend their own lives.¹²⁷

However, the healing and deliverance experience enables them to save their hard-earned resources to provide for life needs. The standard of living is enhanced: better food, clothing and new facilities at home bring a new sense of empowerment in them, as well as in the opinion of others.¹²⁸ There are several testimonies about the financial prosperity ordinary believers experience after conversion. At the end of the sessions on healing and exorcism testimonies, interviewees underlined this fact.

For instance, evangelist Babu testifies to the changes that occurred after conversion. He says, 'I had spent a huge amount of money on traditional religious practices and medical expenses for the treatment of my son. At the end, because of the debt, I had to sell my ancestral land'.¹²⁹ According to him, however, things began to change for the better after the healing of his son. The money they used to spend in traditional religious practices and treatment began to be used to supply them with better food and household needs. He continues:

...God blessed us greatly. Later I bought a buffalo and started cultivating the land remained with me. God helped our buffalo to produce good amount of milk. In the cultivation also there was a good

¹²⁷ Blessen, Focus Group Interview, Tabor Church, Gujarat, 30 August 2009.

¹²⁸ Thomas, Interview by author, Udaipur, 8 July 2009.

¹²⁹ Babu, Interview, Rajasthan, 5 July 2009.

yield. Then I brought one more buffalo. This is all by the grace of God

(*sab prabhu ka anugrah hai*)...¹³⁰

As he described in his story, it transpired that, after joining the church, his outlook began to change from a pessimism to enthusiasm. He worked hard and began to put all his problems before the Lord. He said that he experienced the providing hand of Jesus. 'Within four years I could buy back my land, although I had to pay more than what I received,' says Babu, 'it is only because of the grace of Jesus, not my ability'. Now he has a good house and his son is ready to join Bible training.¹³¹

Another person also testified in a similar vein. Thomas, who is an *ayurvedic* doctor with the state government hospital, gave a similar testimony:

My wife was sick for a long time; she had stomach pain. We had taken her to best doctors available but there was no improvement. We had to spend minimum Rs. 3,000-4,000 every month on her treatment, doing sonography, X-ray and many other medical tests but the doctors could not find any problems in her. We were really fed up with her illness. It continued for three years. In 2004, someone introduced us to an evangelist and he prayed for her and she was healed. However, after one month the problem began to re-appear.¹³² Again we started spending money on her and it became routine in our life to spend minimum Rs. 2,000-4,000 every month. It continued for a time...With medicines and spending money there was no respite. Later I became also sick, always feeling tired and burdened.¹³³

¹³⁰ Babu, Interview, Rajasthan, 5 July 2009.

¹³¹ Babu, Interview, Rajasthan, 5 July 2009.

¹³² He says, 'We could not understand it and, moreover, we have never bothered to see how through prayer she was healed and there was no Christian fellowship. We lived in our old habits. We thought that the occurrence of the illness was natural.'

¹³³ Thomas, Interview, Udaipur, 8 July 2009.

According to him, all this had started twenty years ago, because of evil religious practices which had led to his father's death. Since then they had been consulting a *tantrik* and every year a minimum Rs.10,000-20,000 were contributed towards traditional religious practices (*jadhu tona*) to avoid troubles in the family. The same person gave him some threads with some *mantras* to be worn, costing Rs.3,000, and assured him of complete healing. However, there was no respite for their trouble. Then he was invited for a prayer meeting and got healing. The believers also prayed for his wife and she was freed from trouble. He says, 'Now we don't spend our resources on traditional religious practices and unnecessary treatment. Jesus has enabled us to save our financial resources'.¹³⁴

Demonic torment is one of the main causes making people poor and destitute, taking away their resources and vitality. Among the interviewees, one of them sacrificed 20 goats for the deliverance from demonic attack of his wife.¹³⁵ At today's lowest market rate, a goat costs minimum Rs.2,000-2,500 and thus he spend almost Rs.50000 on traditional religious practices! Spending such an amount by a poor villager places a huge constraint upon one's financial security and ultimately leads to destitution and irrecoverable poverty.

However, healing and deliverance save financial resources and enable them to either spend money on basic needs or save it. Abraham also underlines the financial aspect of traditional religious practices and comments, '...who were going after such practices and magicians spent a lot of money to get rid of satanic attacks, avoided such practices and used that sum of money for their livelihood'.¹³⁶ Moreover, their new experience in Christ gives them a sense of empowerment in

¹³⁴ Thomas, Interview, Udaipur, 8 July 2009.

¹³⁵ Testimony, Participant Observation, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 16 August 2009.

¹³⁶ Abraham, *Caste and Christianity*, 123.

the financial realm. Their faith in a God who loves them and cares for them empowers them and enables them to move forward in life.¹³⁷ The poor believers engage in hard work and many of them testify that Jesus provides for them in their crucial junctures of needs.¹³⁸ Besides, the conversion experience removes their old habits of consumption of alcohol, smoking, chewing pan, gambling and sexually immoral living.¹³⁹ This change of habits saves a good sum of money. A believer has commented: ‘Jesus in Cana turned water into wine, but for me Jesus has turned wine into chairs and tables’.¹⁴⁰ He was a drunkard and used to spend his earnings for alcohol. However, the conversion experience enabled him to spend money on household needs. Now children are sent to school and provided with better food and clothing. The believers spend more money on cultivation and in buying domestic animals which gives them financial stability and more money to spend on essential goods.¹⁴¹

This providential aspect of the work of Christ is not confined to money matters only; it is applied to the realm of childbearing also. A woman participant had no children eight years into her marriage. The family was desperate to have children and spent a lot of money on *pooja* and other rituals. They also spent money on medical treatment. However, through prayer they begot children. She exclaims, ‘Jesus heard our prayer and provided us with children. He is our provider (*yishu sub kuch denewallah hai*)’.¹⁴² In another incident, a woman was brought to the village church of evangelist Devadas Gamit in Gujarat. She was distraught because she had no child. Her two children had died at birth. She accepted Jesus and the

¹³⁷ Mariamma, Interview by author, Tabor Church, Gujarat, 2 September 2009.

¹³⁸ Peter, Focus Group Interview, Tabor Church, Gujarat, 6 September 2009; Reji, Focus Group Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 16 August 2009.

¹³⁹ Reji, Focus Group Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 16 August 2009.

¹⁴⁰ Yohannan, Focus Group Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 16 August 2009.

¹⁴¹ Johnykutty, Focus Group Interview, Tabor Church, Gujarat, 6 September 2009.

¹⁴² Achamma, Focus Group Interview, Udaipur, 19 July 2009.

whole congregation prayed for her; the lady gave birth to a baby boy.¹⁴³ Another woman whose thirteen children died immediately after birth conceived a son through prayer.¹⁴⁴ This is a reason for people to come to the church. Shah gives an account in *Economic and Political Weekly*:

Another person who has proselytised recently told me, “I wanted a male child. I tried ‘Bhuva’ and also observed ‘vrata’ [religious vows] but it did not help. I talked to the priest and thanks to his prayer now I am a father of a male child. Hence, I developed faith in prayer and became Cristi [Christian]”.¹⁴⁵

The respondents claimed that they also experience the provision of the Lord in the education and growth of their children and testify to it in the worship services.¹⁴⁶

The supernatural provision of Jesus is also extended to their livestock and agriculture. For instance, Joel tells the story of a poor believer whose land produces the best yield in that area:

One of our brothers is an uneducated person. He does not know any of the latest method of cultivation. However, his land produces the highest yield in the village. Even people from nearby villages visit his land to see what sort of methods he uses to get such a harvest. God blesses the works of his people. He is the provider of all our needs.¹⁴⁷

Pentecostal believers very often request prayers from fellow believers and pastors for their domestic animals and cultivation, as many of them depend on these for their livelihood.¹⁴⁸ In times of drought or disease they pray for them in earnest.

¹⁴³ No Author, ‘From Harvest Field,’ *Cross & Crown* 28/5 (September-October 1998): 23.

¹⁴⁴ No Author, ‘From our Mission Field,’ *Cross & Crown* (July-August 2001): 13.

¹⁴⁵ Shah, ‘Conversion, Reconversion and the State,’ 315.

¹⁴⁶ Testimony, Participant Observation, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 2 August 2009.

¹⁴⁷ Joel, Interview, Maharashtra, 2 September 2009.

¹⁴⁸ Testimony, Participant Observation, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 9 August 2009.

Moreover, special prayers are offered for animals at the time of childbirth and sowing and harvesting seasons.¹⁴⁹ People attribute material prosperity to the providing work of Jesus and accordingly, bring part of their produce to the church.¹⁵⁰

Another area of life in which the believers claim to experience the provision of Jesus Christ is in the realm of employment. As already mentioned, most of them are working as manual labourers and earn barely enough to garner two square meals a day. However, after turning believers, even in the midst of their deprived condition, many of them have improved their condition and earn better.¹⁵¹ A better job, hike in wages or income from other activities are all attributed to the name of Jesus and his supernatural provision. The believers testify to such blessings via testimony in the worship services. For example, James, who is a self-employed small time contractor, testified that recently he had been offered a new job in a private firm which was bigger than any of the jobs he had been carrying out for the last few years. He attributes it to the miraculous provision of Jesus because there were bigger contractors tendering for that job. Eventually, he acknowledged the glory to Jesus for all of his material blessings.¹⁵² Interestingly, even third-generation Pentecostals attribute the providing aspect to the work of Christ; they depend on Jesus for their material well-being and progress at work.¹⁵³

In the churches, pastors preach messages attributing this source of all blessings to Jesus and exhort believers to enjoy these blessings with thanksgiving. For example,

¹⁴⁹ Pastor Nathan, Interview by author, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 5 August 2009.

¹⁵⁰ This is a usual practice in the village churches.

¹⁵¹ Saji, Focus Group Interview, Udaipur, 19 July 2009.

¹⁵² James, Focus Group Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 16 August 2009.

¹⁵³ Praisey, Interview by author, Tabor Church, Gujarat, 29 August 2009; Jolly, Interview by author, Udaipur, 10 July 2009.

in the village church, the pastor begins a message with these words: ‘How many of you have been blessed materially?’ All of the people raise their hands and say *hallelujah* in unison. Then he asks, ‘To receive all these blessings what have we done?’ He himself answered the question, ‘We have just said “yes” to Jesus; yes Jesus, we have just bowed down our head before you, that is why we have all these blessings’.¹⁵⁴ He took Isaiah 43:1-6 and emphasised the phrase, ‘you are mine’ (v.1) and ‘you are precious in my sight’ (v.4) and exhorted believers on the provision and protection of believers by Jesus.¹⁵⁵

This understanding of Jesus as provider and the increased income people make have contributed to an attitudinal change in their outlook. Earlier, they were mere earners or receivers but now have been transformed into generous givers. In North India, even today Christians are generally considered to be receivers of financial resources from missionaries and often called ‘rice Christians’. Western missionaries provided converted Tribal and Dalit Christians with essential livelihood and education. This sort of help facilitated the emergence of a ‘receiving mentality’ among Tribal and Dalit Christians.¹⁵⁶

However, the Pentecostal movement reversed this trend. Their change in spiritual perception empowers them to contribute generously to the cause of missionary activities and philanthropic work.¹⁵⁷ Even poor village believers bring their first fruits, the first produce from their animals and a portion of their income to the church. In village churches, every Sunday we can see believers placing these items

¹⁵⁴ Message, Participant Observation, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 7 August 2009.

¹⁵⁵ Message, Participant Observation, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 7 August 2009.

¹⁵⁶ Bauman, *Christian Identity and Dalit Religion*, 71-100.

¹⁵⁷ Pastor Nathan, Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 5 August 2009.

prayerfully near the table of the pastor to be prayed for and blessed.¹⁵⁸ For example, in one of the churches under study, the pastor testified that poor believers contribute to the ministry generously. Four years before the church has started a five-day convention for evangelism and spiritual growth of the believers. Food is provided for all the participants three times a day. According to the pastor, a major portion of the expenses are borne by the poor believers. Even though they do not have much money to contribute, they contribute in terms of food grain, pulses, oil, milk, vegetables and other condiments. Besides, they are more than happy to provide for the sake of the ministry and the mission of the church.¹⁵⁹ The church in the city helps more than 40 evangelists and pastors who 'labour' in inner villages.¹⁶⁰ The believers find real joy and satisfaction in giving to the cause of ministry, and have strong faith: Jesus provides for them, although many of them are poor in relative terms.¹⁶¹ Hardiman, countering the accusation of the Hindu right wing, that Gujarati Tribals are lured to Pentecostalism by foreign funds, says that now Pentecostal churches are 'largely run and financed by the Tribal peoples themselves'.¹⁶² One respondent tried to explain the theology of blessing: 'God made human beings with all good things. In the Garden of Eden, nothing was lacking. For two people there were four rivers. There was abundance. However, because of sin poverty and illness entered into the world'. He continues, 'God's intention is to make us rich. For this purpose Jesus became poor. He took our poverty and pain to make us happy'.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁸ Participant Observation, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 9 August 2009; Participant Observation, Tabor Church, Gujarat, 6 September 2009.

¹⁵⁹ Pastor Nathan, Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 5 August 2009.

¹⁶⁰ Participant Observation, Udaipur, 12 July 2009.

¹⁶¹ Yohannan, Focus Group Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 16 August 2009.

¹⁶² Hardiman & Raje, 'Practices of Healing in Tribal Gujarat,' 49.

¹⁶³ Mani, Focus Group Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 2 August 2009.

In the interviews, focus groups and informal conversations, members claimed that, in the villages, the Pentecostal believers prosper far better than other people in financial terms and in educating their children.¹⁶⁴ McGavran calls it ‘redemption and lift’.¹⁶⁵ They wear better dress, improve cleanliness and are healthier. The obvious reason may be that they no longer spend their resources on alcohol, traditional religious practices or in activities regarded as sexually immoral.¹⁶⁶ Abraham also shows that the same is true in Kerala. He says, ‘...the majority responded that there has been a change in the economic life from their previous stage’.¹⁶⁷ This change has happened ‘when they turned into Pentecostal churches, abolished all malpractices such as smoking, drinking and going for sorcery, etc. This resulted in the saving of huge amounts which could later be used for their family needs’.¹⁶⁸ Donald Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori observe it as one of the positive effects Pentecostalism:

There is substantial evidence for the “social uplift” associated with Pentecostalism, in that Pentecostals have a competitive economic advantage over their neighbours because of their moral proscriptions against alcohol, drugs, gambling and womanising. Without these social evils, believers may produce surplus capital that can then be invested in business enterprises or in the education and welfare of their families.¹⁶⁹

Further, financial improvements of the Pentecostals attract others. One person said:

¹⁶⁴ Reji, Focus Group Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 9 August 2009.

¹⁶⁵ Donald McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 260-277; also see C. Peter Wagner, *Look Out! The Pentecostals are Coming* (Illinois: Creation House, 1973), 93-94.

¹⁶⁶ Reji, Focus Group Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 9 August 2009.

¹⁶⁷ Abraham, *Caste and Christianity*, 122.

¹⁶⁸ Abraham, *Caste and Christianity*, 112-123.

¹⁶⁹ Miller & Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism*, 33.

We have progressed in our works. Our children are sent to school. We don't spend our money on any useless things like alcohol or cigarettes.

Seeing our blessings many villagers joined us.¹⁷⁰

Moreover, in the Pentecostal churches, people are encouraged to spend their resources judiciously and to keep sanitation, as one of the evangelists said to me.¹⁷¹ They are also encouraged to consult good doctors if they are sick, along with prayer.¹⁷² The Pentecostal churches also conduct medical camps for their members as well as for others in villages. There are campaigns for health, safety and hygiene; specialists are invited to teach them and educated members are also trained to teach others.¹⁷³

This study showed that Pentecostal believers fare better than believers of other denominations in finance, health and education. This fact is acknowledged by the believers of other Churches themselves.¹⁷⁴ According to a person who himself is from a Tribal background and a member of a denominational church, their believers still live like their counterparts in the larger society, consuming alcohol, indulging in smoking, gambling and other harmful practices, like traditional religious practices and so on.¹⁷⁵ Such activities affect their financial security and result in a reduced living standard. On the other hand, most of the Pentecostal churches are strict in their outlook on holiness and such practices are strictly

¹⁷⁰ Reji, Focus Group Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 9 August 2009.

¹⁷¹ Kuttappan, Focus Group Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 9 August 2009.

¹⁷² There is a wrong assumption among others that Pentecostals prohibit the use of medicines. However, only a few Pentecostals follow such a rule.

¹⁷³ Pastor Nathan, Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 5 August 2009; The Organisation called Community Health Organisation (CHE) is instrumental in conducting medical camps for villagers in these areas. Coincidentally, my wife, Sheena was working as a community health educator and was also helping in medical camps.

¹⁷⁴ Informal conversations with believers of other denominations revealed that Pentecostals fare better in finance and education of their children.

¹⁷⁵ Informal conversation with Nathulal, Maharashtra, 7 September 2009.

prohibited. If people are found indulging in such activities, they are not allowed to be the members of the church. Such a stringent discipline helps keep people away from old habits. According to Pastor Nathan, some people drop out from churches due to the strict holiness outlook and practice.¹⁷⁶ David Hardiman also comments, 'Conversion was seen as providing a means to transform their lives for the better, in which they abandoned the old wild ways of traditional tribal life, and became sober, hard-working and god-fearing'.¹⁷⁷ Thus, the concept of Jesus as the provider is a major Christological factor among the ordinary believers.

6.4 Jesus the Protector

Another prominent theme which resulted from the field research is the insight that Jesus is the protector. This perception regarding Jesus also springs from the intense personal struggle believers undergo. The above-explained notions of Jesus as the healer, exorcist and provider overlap with this perception of Jesus as the protector. This idea can be arrayed in different layers of the life situation of the ordinary Pentecostal believers. It can be explained as follows: Jesus not only has healed them but also continues to keep them from any possible sickness.¹⁷⁸ Similarly, Jesus has not only liberated them from demonic forces but keeps protecting them from all possible fears, attacks from evil spirits and persecutors. Again, Jesus not only provides them with help in coping with their existential struggles but also continues to protect their lives, their livestock, agriculture and finance from being manipulated or destroyed by demonic forces. Therefore, as in the case of Jesus as the provider, this theme is a second level Christological articulation of ordinary

¹⁷⁶ Pastor Nathan, Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 5 August 2009. It emerged in the research that a number of people have been turning to their earlier religions, due to various reasons.

¹⁷⁷ Hardiman & Raje, 'Practices of Healing in Tribal Gujarat,' 49.

¹⁷⁸ Jessy, Interview by Author, Tabor Church, Gujarat, 2 September 2009.

Pentecostals. Simultaneously, for some, Jesus is the rescuer from caste-ridden social ostracism and oppression. Members experienced liberation from the tyranny of the caste system and became part of a caring community. Therefore, for them, the notion of Jesus as the protector is the starting point of their Christological articulation.¹⁷⁹ Thus, the Pentecostals acknowledge and affirm with astute faith that Jesus is their protector in all of their everyday life situations.

For example, in the worship service a woman testified of her miraculous escape from a poisonous snake. Village houses are made of thatched roofs and mud walls and snakes and other poisonous reptiles may easily hide in them. While she was doing her household chores, a poisonous snake fell on her from the roof. According to her, the snake was so poisonous that had she been bitten by him, within an hour she would have died. But she attributed the protection to Jesus and said, '*prabhu yishu muche bacchaya*' (Lord Jesus has protected me).¹⁸⁰

The believers also extend the protection of Jesus to their agriculture and livestock. Many of them are surviving on agriculture and the domestic animals they own. If rainfall fails or if there is excessive rain at the time of growth or harvest, this can ruin them. Therefore, at the time of sowing and harvest special prayers are conducted for agricultural prosperity. The believers have firm faith in the efficacy of prayer and in God's provision of rain and well-being to their harvest and animals.¹⁸¹ There are testimonies by poor believers to the effect that their crops are protected from draught, pests and also from evil influence.¹⁸² Some of them also

¹⁷⁹ Ginu, Interview by Author, Chennai, 3 July 2009.

¹⁸⁰ Testimony, Participant Observation, Hill-view Church, Rajasthan, 5 July 2009.

¹⁸¹ Pastor Nathan, Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 5 August 2009.

¹⁸² Testimony, Participant Observation, Hill-view Church, Rajasthan, 3 July 2009.

testified that, after they began to attend the church, their agriculture started to show remarkable improvement and fared better than others.¹⁸³

The protection of Jesus is acknowledged in relation to the prosperity of domestic animals too. Any disease spread to the animals may reduce believers' income. Therefore, they are not hesitant to bring their chickens or goats to churches to be prayed for in the name of Jesus by pastors, if they are sick. In the worship services, it is not unusual to hear believers requesting prayers for their goats and cows or for their harvest.¹⁸⁴ For example, a woman testified that, in her village a severe disease affecting domestic birds spread and most of the villagers lost their cocks and hens. She had more than 15 of them and one died of the disease. Seeing this, she gathered them all and prayed over them in the name of Jesus. According to her, none of them perished after the prayer, while neighbours' birds all did.¹⁸⁵

But above all the above mentioned, the notion of understanding Jesus as protector is predominantly related to the external struggles, namely the intense mental pressure and physical abuse and persecution they face as Christians. Many of the Pentecostals undergo severe mental and physical torture due to their new found faith in Jesus.¹⁸⁶ Such pressure and persecution emerges from various groups; from one's own family, village community and external agencies such as fundamentalist organisations which we explored in Chapter Five. Moreover, the believers who have experienced the touch of divine healing, or deliverance from demonic forces, place their complete trust in the overarching power of Jesus and are ready to forfeit all their old religious practices. They just refuse to worship their previous deities,

¹⁸³ Testimony, Participant Observation, Hill-view Church, Rajasthan, 5 July 2009.

¹⁸⁴ Testimony, Participant Observation, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 2 August 2009.

¹⁸⁵ Testimony, Participant Observation, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 7 August 2009.

¹⁸⁶ Johnyikutty, Focus Group Interview, Tabor Church, Gujarat, 6 September 2009.

or bow down their heads before any idols.¹⁸⁷ Besides, they even discard the cultural practices which are incompatible with their new understanding of Christ.¹⁸⁸ For example, it is usual and often customary in villages to greet another person with the common salutation, '*Ram Ram*'. However, when one becomes a believer, he or she stops greeting people in this way because this expression carries religious overtones. Instead, the Pentecostals usually greet people with '*Jai Yishu*' (victory to Jesus) or '*prabhu ka sthuthi ho*' (praise the Lord).¹⁸⁹ This sometimes creates a hostile environment for the Pentecostals.

In a society where religion and culture define the course of action of one's life and force people to fall in line with the system, such rebellious acts cannot be tolerated but are dealt with severity. The believers are both mentally and physically abused so that they fall in line with old practices.¹⁹⁰ If they resist, abuses and revengeful acts against them may increase. Besides, such rebellious behaviour can attract the scrutiny and judgment of the larger village community. The believers can be dragged into the village council and be dealt with severe punishment in the form of penalty or physical assault.¹⁹¹ Even 'honour killing' is also not uncommon. For example, in Madhya Pradesh, evangelist Benjamin was forced to pay a fine of Rs.1,500 and Suresh Alam was locked up for three days.¹⁹² The total village community can turn against a single person for his/her faith. The administration or police only make the matters worse in this matter by supporting the opponents

¹⁸⁷ Chacko, Interview by author, Tabor Church, Gujarat, 2 September 2009.

¹⁸⁸ Shah, 'Conversion, Reconversion and the State,' 315.

¹⁸⁹ Message, Participant Observation, Hill-view Church, Rajasthan, 5 July 2009.

¹⁹⁰ Yeshudas, Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 16 August 2009; Yohannan, Focus Group Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 16 August 2009.

¹⁹¹ Editor, 'Tortured for Christ,' *Cross & Crown* (July-August 1997): 12.

¹⁹² Editor, 'From the Mission Field,' *Cross & Crown* 26/2 (December 1995-January 1996): 21.

instead of extending help to believers.¹⁹³ Sometimes, even secular newspapers report against the believers and pastors accusing them of ‘forcible conversion’.¹⁹⁴

Moreover, the newfound faith and convictions of Pentecostals impel them to testify on their experience to the family members, village community and co-workers. This may further aggravate the situation and can get to a point where a person may be thrown out of home or village or his/her life be threatened.¹⁹⁵ In a village community, which is a closely-knit entity, people are averse to entertaining a new religion or faith or allow it to be established in their territory. Sometimes Pentecostals are not allowed to sit with other villagers.¹⁹⁶ It is usual for Pentecostals to be taken for ‘untouchables’ and to be disallowed from drawing water from village wells;¹⁹⁷ they may have to travel miles to fetch water.¹⁹⁸ At anyone’s home, new believers may confront a hostile situation. A husband may assault his wife for the faith she professes or a father may throw out a son or a daughter from home. They may be forfeited of their rightful ancestral property or from any financial resources.¹⁹⁹

There are many such incidents in which Pentecostals are abused in their homes, in the villages or in the groups they belong to. Some are being thrown out of their homes and villages. For instance, one woman testified that she has been suffering abuse from her husband and other family members, since she started attending the church. Sometimes her husband comes home drunk and physically abuses her and

¹⁹³ Editor, ‘Arrested on False Charges,’ *Cross & Crown* 37/3 (January-February 2008): 21.

¹⁹⁴ V. Sridhar, ‘Numbers Game,’ *Frontline* 16/25 (27 November 1999) and M.V. Kamath, ‘Mission Impossible: Putting an End to Conversion Activity,’ *Times of India* (13 October 1999).

¹⁹⁵ Anita Mathew, ‘He Touched me: Testimony,’ *Cross & Crown* 28/4 (July-August 1998): 13-14.

¹⁹⁶ Yeshudas, Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 16 August 2009.

¹⁹⁷ C&C Reporter, ‘Field News: How do we Plant,’ 2.

¹⁹⁸ Shiji, Interview by author, Tabor Church, Gujarat, 5 September 2009.

¹⁹⁹ Testimony, Participant Observation, Hill-view Church, Rajasthan, 31 July 2009; Raju, Focus Group Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 16 August 2009.

uses abusive language. Other members of the family also mentally torture her continuously by accusing her of accepting a new religion. However, she testified that she was very strong in her faith and whatever happens, even death would not separate her from the faith.²⁰⁰ *Cross and Crown* narrates the story of Anita who had been thrown out of her house because she became a member of a Pentecostal church. She was from another denominational background and announced that she accepted Jesus as her saviour and was going to be baptised. She says, 'Hearing this, they were furious and kicked me out of the house and threw away all my belongings'.²⁰¹ According to her, it was the protective hand of Jesus which enabled her to stand firm in the faith.²⁰²

Another person who had participated in the interview (Raju) was faced with a similar situation. An evangelist introduced Jesus to him and gave him a New Testament. He read it for some time and realised that what he used to worship are not true gods. He began to attend the church and was baptised. Then he was forced to leave his home and his father announced that he would be disowned from his father's inheritance. Moreover, other relatives gathered to beat him. However, somehow he escaped. He says, 'It was only because of the protection of Jesus I escaped their hands (*yishu ka anugrah se bacch gaya*). If Jesus had not protected me, then I would not have been speaking to you today!'²⁰³ The pastor of the church kept him at his residence. However, after two years his whole family turned believers and now they go to church. At the same time, many of them suffer persecution but they claim that they take it as a privilege, for the glory of the

²⁰⁰ Testimony, Participant Observation, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 16 August 2009.

²⁰¹ Mathew, 'He Touched me,' 13-14

²⁰² Mathew, 'He Touched me,' 14.

²⁰³ Raju, Focus Group Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 9 August 2009.

Lord.²⁰⁴ It is an interesting fact that the church acts as a 'refuge' for those who have been persecuted and rejected.

Another area of perpetual oppression emerges from the evil effect of the caste system. Some of the interviewees testified that they felt better and empowered after having joined a Pentecostal church. For instance, Tomy claims that he had been abused by his neighbours and even by his former employer due to his caste. He felt inferior before others and life was miserable for him. But when he joined the church, the attitude of the believers was entirely different. He felt a sense of affection and love from the pastor and believers. He testified that one of the major reasons he joined the church was to escape the caste system and untouchability.²⁰⁵ Similarly, Sam who became an evangelist testified that one of the results of his conversion was the escape from the inferior caste feeling he had been nursing all his life.²⁰⁶ He says, 'Jesus pulled me up from the pit of caste-hierarchy and made me his beloved son and placed me with kings and priests'.²⁰⁷ This positive effect of Pentecostalism is amply testified by non-Pentecostal scholars and considered to be one of the key reasons for its rapid growth among Dalits and lower castes.²⁰⁸ Nevertheless, it is to be noted that this anomaly is not totally absent even in Pentecostal churches.²⁰⁹

More than this abuse, attacks of fundamentalist religious elements, however, create bigger trouble for the Pentecostal churches and believers. As already explained,

²⁰⁴ Pastor John, Interview by author, Tabor Church, Gujarat, 2 September 2009.

²⁰⁵ Tomy, Interview by author, Chennai, 3 July 2009.

²⁰⁶ Sam, Interview by author, Chennai, 3 July 2009.

²⁰⁷ Sam, Interview by author, Chennai, 3 July 2009.

²⁰⁸ Arles, 'Indigenous Pentecostal Church Growth at KGF,' 393; Jones, 'Faces of Pentecostalism in North India Today.'

²⁰⁹ Abraham, *Caste and Christianity*; V. V. Thomas, 'Pentecostalism Among the Dalits in Kerala from 1909 to the Present: A Subaltern Reading,' *UBS Journal* 3/2 (September 2005): 89-94.

these elements are consistently targeting the Pentecostal pastors and churches as well as many from other religious traditions, especially lower castes, Dalits and Tribals who join the Pentecostal churches.²¹⁰ According to Pastor John, they accuse pastors and believers of forced conversions and allege that people are being lured into churches by offering them money.²¹¹ Then he acknowledged that it was only by the protective presence of Jesus the believers are safe.²¹²

There have been many attacks carried out against pastors, believers and churches. In a gruesome incident narrated in a mission story, extremist religious fringe groups attacked a church in a village in Udaipur while worship was being conducted. They beat up evangelists Shantilal and Rajendra in front of the believers until they were left unconscious. These attackers bolted the single door of the church and cruelly attacked believers with rods and sticks, not even sparing women and children. It is described in the story that obviously, only the care and protection of God saved the lives of evangelists.²¹³ As a corollary of the story, the house and motor-bike of the leader of the group who attacked the church was destroyed in a fire. The villagers took it to be the result of the attack and consider it to be the vengeance of the God of Christians.²¹⁴

The story of Jodharam, who is from Bikaner District of Rajasthan, is a classic example of the insidious scheme of extremist groups to persecute new believers. It also portrays how the Christological notion of Jesus as protector is fully realised in the ordinary believer's life. He was from an 'untouchable caste' and through a

²¹⁰ See *India Persecution Update* which gives many incidents of attacks against Christians, especially Pentecostals; for instance, the issue of the month of May 2010 reports killing of two young evangelists; http://www.persecution.in/persecution_india_may2010 (accessed 25 June 2010).

²¹¹ See Sridhar, 'Numbers Game'; Kamath, 'Mission Impossible.'

²¹² Pastor John, Interview by author, Tabor Church, Gujarat, 2 September 2009.

²¹³ No Author, 'Tortured yet Triumphant!,' *Cross & Crown* 26/4 (April-May 1996): 19-20.

²¹⁴ No Author, 'Touching the Apple of God's Eye,' *Cross & Crown* 26/4 (April-May 1996): 20.

healing miracle of his wife he accepted Jesus. While having a meeting at his home, he was asked to appear before the village council, comprising of the leaders of Vshwa Hindu Parishad, Bajrang Dal, Arya Samaj and also the entire village. They forced him to recant his faith. However, he would not relent but boldly narrated his testimony. Meanwhile others took evangelist Pradeep and beat him badly. The next day most of the Hindi newspapers reported the event with headlines such as, 'Hunger and circumstances forced him to become a Christian,' 'Jodharam became Joseph,' and 'VHP expresses concern over the activities of missionaries to convert the natives of Bikaner,' and so on, for four consecutive days.²¹⁵ The fanatic elements attempted to harm him and continuously tried to force him to renounce his faith. As a result of the fact that he would not relent, the *sarpanch* (village headman) finally announced that Jodharam and his family would be thrown out of the village.²¹⁶

According to Jodharam, he submitted his life, the family and their security in the hands of Jesus.²¹⁷ After much prayer he met the police commissioner and explained his newfound faith and sought protection from his oppressors. This gave him a respite, yet he was not safe. He exclaims, 'Jesus is our protector and he turns the hearts of officials like a stream, he is greater than all' (*Yishu hamara taranhara hai, woh subse badkar hai*).²¹⁸

Thus, the notion of Jesus as protector is active and alive in the daily struggles of the Pentecostal believers as individuals and as a community. Even though they go

²¹⁵ Quoted in Editor, 'Tortured for Christ,' *Cross & Crown* (July-August 1997): 12.

²¹⁶ Editor, 'Tortured for Christ,' 12.

²¹⁷ Editor, 'Tortured for Christ,' 13.

²¹⁸ Editor, 'Tortured for Christ,' 13.

through severe persecution, the idea that Jesus protects them, gives courage and a sense of safety helps them face dangerous situations fearlessly.

6.5 Jesus the Saviour

Another significant Christological theme that emerged from the study is the notion of Jesus as the Saviour. The firm faith of the believers identifies Jesus as the only one who saves them from their sins which has severe repercussions in their contexts as we have already seen. The saving act of Jesus, however, is not limited to the spiritual realm only; rather, it encompasses every aspect of their life: physical, material and social. Interestingly, this concept is derived from the perception of Jesus as the healer, exorcist, provider and protector. In other words, the saviour notion emerges from the reflections of their past life of fear and suffering juxtaposed to the safety and happiness they enjoy through the miraculous intervention and change Jesus accomplished in their lives. The believers were under the clutches of sickness, demonic powers, utter poverty and fear psychosis. Their social conditioning and cultural ethos burdened them with guilt. Some were under financial struggle and poverty and others were despised and denigrated by the caste system.

However, the encounter with Jesus transformed the old world to which they were tied down into a brave new world. We may summarise the reflective process in this way: initially, the believers experience healing and deliverance in the name of Jesus and come to the conclusion that Jesus is the healer and the exorcist *par excellence*; secondly, they realise that Jesus is far more powerful and merciful than their former deities; what their gods could not do and very often what their gods would not do, Jesus has accomplished. Therefore, Jesus is greatest of all. Thirdly,

after conversion they experience the providing and protective hand of Jesus in their daily lives of struggle. Fourthly, since what was impossible in the past has been accomplished by Jesus, that is, the peace, prosperity and safety now they enjoy fully, which leads them to elevate him to the role of *the* Saviour. In the case of second- or third-generation Pentecostals, or people who joined from other denominations, the Christological understanding starts from Jesus as Saviour and from this concept they reflect back to the former categories. Hence, the notion of Jesus as Saviour is experiential at the core and has nothing to do with *intellectual* articulations. They understand and envision Jesus as one who acts on their behalf and, therefore, this role can be considered to be a functional category. Simultaneously, they also understand Jesus to be divine and to be the only one who can deliver them from their sins.²¹⁹ Hence, this notion forms a bridge between the functional categories (such as healer, exorcist, provider, protector) and the ontological categories (such as Lord, God) which we shall discuss later. It is both functional as well as ontological. Thus, this notion forms the third level of Christological articulation of ordinary believers.

This idea has clearly emerged in the interviews and focus groups and is very much part of their testimonies in the worship services. The songs and hymns they sing, messages in the worship services and the published mission stories and testimonies also underline this notion of Jesus as Saviour *par excellence*. One of the songs often sung goes:

The name of Jesus gives peace, salvation and eternal life,

I will sing his greatness forever.

Mercy, goodness and life are with him,

²¹⁹ The idea of sin is explained in pages 239-241.

He is eternal, loving, all-powerful Lord,

He loves us, gives us blessing and joy,

I will sing his greatness forever.²²⁰

Similarly, one of the testimonies given in the worship service points to the confession believers make in this regard:

I was very sick and bed-ridden with paralysis and spent a lot of money for the treatment. I was from a Hindu family and consulted many god-men and also carried out *puja* and sacrifices for the healing. I have also visited many temples and called upon many gods. However, there was no relief for my suffering. When I put my trust in Jesus, without any rituals I got complete healing.²²¹

When answering the question, ‘how does he understand Christ,’ he said without any hesitation that Jesus is the greatest of all gods. Moreover, he said that the gods and goddesses he had been serving were enslaving him to sinful activities.²²² However, Jesus gave freedom from sin as well as peace and therefore ‘Jesus is the only saviour and is the greatest of all’; he continued,

...because Jesus has given me the healing I enjoy now; I have worshipped many gods and goddess but I could not get healing and the peace I was looking for. I got healing, peace of mind and joy through Jesus. *Yishu mera udharak hai, yishu mera pap mitha dhiya* (Jesus is my saviour and he has taken away my sins). He is greatest of all.²²³

The testimony of another respondent is worth considering, as he unambiguously affirms that Jesus is the Saviour. He is from a respected Hindu family and used to

²²⁰ Participant Observation, Hill-view Church, Rajasthan, 4 July 2009.

²²¹ Ponnachan, Focus Group Interview, Tabor Church, Gujarat, 6 September 2009.

²²² Ponnachan, Focus Group Interview, Tabor Church, Gujarat, 6 September 2009.

²²³ Ponnachan, Focus Group Interview, Tabor Church, Gujarat, 6 September 2009.

meditate on the contents of religious books. He has a good job in a company. While narrating the story of his conversion, he affirms that Jesus is the Saviour:

My daughter who was 18 years old was infested with an evil spirit. Not only that, all my family was tormented by the influence of satanic powers. ...There was always quarrel and illness in the family. Even without any cause family members used to be sick. To get relief from this influence, we made special rituals in famous temples... However, in the name of Jesus Christ, my daughter got deliverance.²²⁴

He confesses that Jesus is the saviour (*Yishu hi udharak hai*) and only Jesus can save human beings from sins and suffering. He says:

Jesus' name is greater than all names. His name is the true name. In his name all gods tremble. If we just utter his name or think his name, satanic powers will flee. His name has power over every power in the world. His power is eternal, never to be destroyed. Jesus' name is true from the beginning and that name gives me joy and happiness. Jesus is my saviour. He is the saviour of our family. Jesus has given us peace and deliverance from the torment of so-called gods we worshipped. Jesus is the saviour and only he can save us.²²⁵

In one of the churches during the worship service, the pastor was preaching from John 10:10, contrasting the work of Satan and Christ.²²⁶ His words are a summary and typical representation of what the Pentecostal believers confess about Jesus.

When we were away from Jesus, we were under the power of Satan.

Satan comes and steals our money, health, prosperity of our animals

²²⁴ Chacko, Interview by author, Tabor Church, Gujarat, 28 August 2009.

²²⁵ Chacko, Interview, Tabor Church, Gujarat, 28 August 2009.

²²⁶ Message, Participant Observation, Tabor Church, Gujarat, 6 September 2009.

and agriculture. He brings sorrows and illness, he kills our children and our animals. He leads us to sin, adultery, drinking habits and other sinful activities taking away our blessings. He makes us his slaves, gets us into trouble and makes us poor. However, Jesus gives us blessings and eternal life in abundance.²²⁷

Then he narrated some examples of healings and deliverance which took place in the name of Jesus, to persuade the believers. After he quoted Acts 4:12 and affirmed that no other gods can save human beings from Satan and sin, but only Jesus. He also quoted Rom 3:10-12 and said all have sinned and came under the power of Satan. He concluded this way, 'However, Jesus has saved us through his death and resurrection. He is the only saviour; he is the only true God'.²²⁸

Since the people's idea of sin is intricately related to the spirit world and to social relations, it is important to see how they understand Jesus as saviour. First of all, for them sin is the violation of the taboos which may provoke the spirits and lead to the destruction of life and property.²²⁹ Therefore, the concept of Jesus as saviour and for that matter the idea of salvation does offer peace, safety and security. Jesus removes the burden of fear which looms large over their head and fills their mind and body with 'the peace which surpasses all the understanding'.²³⁰ One of the respondents said:

I was nervous in my mind and body because of the evil forces. I felt like I was carrying a heavy load on my head, something like 50 kgs, always. Now I feel very happy. My body became light. Jesus has taken

²²⁷ Message, Participant Observation, Tabor Church, Gujarat, 6 September 2009.

²²⁸ Message, Participant Observation, Tabor Church, Gujarat, 6 September 2009.

²²⁹ Cherian, 'Contribution of Churches and Missions,' 41-43; Raj, *Dalitology*, 245-246; Pappachan, Focus Group Interview, 6 September 2009.

²³⁰ Ponnachan, Focus Group Interview, Tabor Church, Gujarat, 6 September 2009.

away my burden and I feel it in practice. I was “carrying the heavy burden” just as we see in the Bible.²³¹

Moreover, instead of the fear of the spirits, now the believers enjoy the close proximity of the presence of Jesus and of the Holy Spirit, which connect them to the spiritual world they once dreaded. This assurance of permanent safety and fearlessness permeate the spiritual realm and victory over demonic powers in the name of Jesus brings a new understanding of the person and of the work of Christ. In other words, in their experience, Christology and Soteriology intersect with each other.

Secondly, the breaking of community rules which has an effect on oneself and on others in the community is also considered to be a sin. Every member of the community is so heavily interrelated that one’s thoughtless actions can infringe the privileges of others which may cause rupture in the relationships. This in turn may affect the peace and tranquillity of the whole community.²³² Therefore, Jesus the saviour reconciles the relationship which was broken by sinful activities, such as enmity, and establishes peace and unity among the people.²³³ In other words, Jesus is the mediator and reconciler. Such community relationships help a single person to bring many people to faith, which may also explain the rapid migration of Tribals and Dalits into Pentecostal churches.

All of the believers who participated in the study spontaneously affirmed their conviction of Jesus as the saviour while the second- or third-generation Pentecostals and people who joined from other denominations considered it as the

²³¹ Thomas, Interview, Udaipur, 8 July 2009.

²³² Cherian, ‘Contribution of Churches and Missions,’ 41-43; Raj, *Dalitology*, 245-246.

²³³ Kuttappan, Focus Group Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 9 August 2009.

most important Christological theme.²³⁴ They hold a slightly different notion of sin, though. For them, sin is breaking God's law and results in guilt and judgment.²³⁵ Moreover, believing in the suffering and death of Jesus brings salvation. The respondents who joined in from other denominations emphasised this strongly:

Earlier I knew that Jesus was the saviour. However, I never experienced the meaning of salvation. My understanding was that because I was born to a Christian family, I was a saved person...When I joined the church, I fully experienced the meaning and significance of being saved. I understood the meaning of the suffering of Jesus for me. One has to experience the joy of salvation. I am happy and my guilt is removed. Now I know that salvation is an intimate relationship with Jesus. I am no more under the judgement of God. When I read the Bible I understand the saving power of Jesus.²³⁶

From their words it is obvious that they do not have any doubts or hesitation as to passing on this idea to others. The multi-religious context in which they live does not stop them from proclaiming Jesus as the only saviour. Their testimony of salvation experienced through Christ and the reflection of joy that this brings to their lives convince others of the notion that Jesus is a saviour beyond doubts. This idea has evidently come out in a number of interviews. One of the interviewees said:

After my healing experience, I accepted Jesus as my saviour. I know that he has removed all my sins. My relatives and villagers constantly

²³⁴ Moncy & Achamma, Focus Group Interview, Udaipur, 26 July 2009.

²³⁵ Glory, Interview by author, Kolenchery, Kerala, 28 June 2009; Paul, Interview by author, Kolenchery, Kerala, 28 June 2009.

²³⁶ Prince, Interview by author, Kolenchery, Kerala, 28 June 2009.

discouraged me and forced me to renounce the faith. But I cannot do that because I have experienced peace in my life. Now I feel joy. I tell about Jesus to others. I tell them that Jesus can save them from their problems. Jesus only can forgive their sins.²³⁷

In the focus groups this idea was aired very strongly.²³⁸ All of them advocated Jesus as the only saviour. One said, 'Jesus is the only saviour, all other options are false. We should proclaim it to others'.²³⁹ Another respondent said:

We must tell everybody about Jesus. Those who have experienced this great salvation cannot stop telling it to others. It is our responsibility. When many people in the world are perishing without knowing Jesus, we are being saved to tell it to others. I have been called from my family to bring to its members real salvation. We cannot save others. But when the Holy Spirit works in the lives of the people, they will be transformed.²⁴⁰

Thus, for the Pentecostal believers evangelism is by default a life-style. It is not anything carried out by special agencies or highly trained experts. Rather, evangelism is deeply ingrained in the psyche and daily life of the believers and Jesus as the only saviour is proclaimed without any hesitation. This way of communicating and sharing of life-experiences explains the rapid proliferation of the Pentecostal churches in the Indian context.

²³⁷ Ebenezer, Focus Group Interview, Tabor Church, Gujarat, 30 August 2009.

²³⁸ One of the respondents said, 'Drinking habit is a big problem among the people around here. Many have ruined their lives because of this evil habit. However, when one believes in Jesus Christ, there is bodily healing, mental peace and also deliverance from the harmful habits of drinking and sorcery. Those who have experienced these changes testify to their fellow villagers. They encourage others to come and try what they have experienced and people quickly believe it. Moreover, many of the people come to Christ because of the fear of demonic powers. They accept Jesus as redeemer and saviour.' Joel, Interview, Maharashtra, 2 September 2009.

²³⁹ Saji, Focus Group Interview, Udaipur, 26 July 2009.

²⁴⁰ Mercy, Interview by author, Kolenchery, Kerala, 28 June 2009.

6.6 Jesus the Lord

Another important Christological theme which is dominant among the Pentecostals is the notion that Jesus is the only true Lord. This forms the fourth level of Christological articulation and attributes divinity to Jesus. This idea is so widespread that in almost every worship service, personal testimony, even in informal conversion it emerges with clarity and alacrity. Even the common greetings between believers like *Prabhu ka Mahima ho* (Glory to the Lord), *Jai Yishu* (victory to Jesus) underscore this fact. The salutation '*Jai Yishu*' is a classical example of the affirmation of ordinary believers, attributing the glory and victory to their Lord who delivered them from their wretched conditions. A respondent made it clear, affirming victory to Jesus elevates him above all powers (*woh sub ka prabhu hai*).²⁴¹ Moreover, the word '*prabhu*' (Lord) is equated to Jesus Christ and connotes his glorious lordship over all other gods, the reason why he is to be worshipped.²⁴² Thus, this theme brings forth their strong conviction 'Jesus as victor' into the open.

Just as the notion of Jesus the saviour, the notion of Jesus the Lord emerged from a reflection upon the existential categories attributed to Jesus by the ordinary believers; namely, Jesus is the healer, exorcist, provider and protector. Along with these four notions, the believers also include the notion of Jesus the saviour in the reflective process. This inclusion, and subsequent reflective process and articulation, brings a new perception of Christ that lifts him above all. In other words, their present life situations as well as the exceptional status they enjoy in Christ, enable them to place Christ in an exalted position. If Jesus heals, delivers,

²⁴¹ Sabu, Focus Group Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 16 August 2009.

²⁴² Wilson, Focus Group Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 16 August 2009; Biju, Focus Group Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 9 August 2009.

provides, protects, and forgives their sins to grant them peace and joy, then he is greater than all and worthy of worship. Moreover, the worship atmosphere, the experience of the Spirit and biblical teachings in the church provide a strong base for this understanding; Jesus became the centre of their universe. They think of Jesus as Lord of their lives and, as a result, a very personal and intimate relationship is emphasised. One of the respondents unambiguously affirmed, 'He is the Lord of my life, worthy of worship and glory!' (*woh mera prabhu hai, aradhana aur mahima ka yogye hai!*).²⁴³

The idea of Jesus as Lord is a deep-rooted understanding among the believers. They attribute the lordship of Christ in every aspect of their life; whether it is personal, spiritual, social, economic or political. For them in applying this concept there is no differentiation between sacred and secular. It is obvious from their testimonies that, knowingly or unknowingly, they extrapolate this Christological theme to their family, community and larger society. In every worship service, the idea is echoed very clearly in the songs, testimonies as well as in the preaching. For example, one of the songs heard in the churches underlines the idea that Jesus is the victor and the Lord:

Victory to the Lord

Victory to the king

Victory to the Lord of lords

Victory to the Lord who listens to the prayers

Victory to the Lord who heals

Victory to the Lord who gives peace

²⁴³ Jose, Focus Group Interview, Udaipur, 26 July 2009.

Victory to the Lord who gives salvation.²⁴⁴

Even though they go through numerous untold miseries, their certainty and strong faith in the overarching power of Jesus helps them to confess Jesus as the Lord. A testimony which was heard in the worship service pointed to the conviction of ordinary Pentecostal believers in this regard. A woman who was severely abused by her husband testified her conviction. According to her, she accepted Jesus as her Lord, but her husband, an idol worshipper, opposed her becoming a Christian. Very often he abused her physically. (She cried during the testimony). In spite of all this, she has held on to her faith. She requested special prayers from the congregation to stand firm in the Lord.²⁴⁵

Listen to another testimony of a believer who was convinced of the greatness of Jesus, through a healing miracle:

I was an idol worshipper and used to go to many temples. My wife was ill, suffering from constant stomach problems for many years. She could not eat anything. She was only a skeleton and about to die. I have sought the help of *bhopas* and carried out traditional religious practices, sacrificing 20 goats on various occasion for her healing but without any respite. Then a pastor came to my house at night for the first time. He has prayed for my wife and continuously visited me and encouraged me to put my trust in Jesus...I put my trust in Jesus... Slowly, my wife recovered from the illness...Then I began to attend the church and accepted Jesus as my saviour. Jesus is greater than all; all of my former deities. Jesus is my Lord (*yishu mera prabhu hai*).²⁴⁶

²⁴⁴ Song no. 716, *Songs of Fellowship*, (Udaipur, India: Filadelfia Bible College, 2005): 359.

²⁴⁵ Testimony, Participant Observation, Hill-view Church, Rajasthan, 4 July 2009.

²⁴⁶ Testimony, Participant Observation, Hill-top Church, Rajasthan, 2 July 2009.

It is obvious from his testimony that his perception of Jesus as the Lord of his life, his family and all the aspects of life grew day by day.

The continuous reflective process of their newfound experience in Christ convinces the believers of the power and greatness of Jesus. This notion comes alive and emboldens the believers to face the thorny and gloomy junctures of life, disregarding the cost they have to pay. He portrays it:

Then my daughter became gravely ill. People in my village accused me that it was because I have accepted a new religion. They have asked me to indulge in idol worship and get the help of *bhopa*. I said them, Jesus is my Lord (*yishu mera prabhu hai*), he can heal my daughter; even if my child dies I do not worship idols. Even my parents accused me of killing my daughter. They asked me to leave Jesus and go for traditional religious practices. I felt very sad and cried. I said to them, Jesus can heal my daughter. Even if she dies, even if I die, even if all my family die, I do not worship idols; I won't leave Jesus because he alone is the true Lord (*kyonki woh hi succha prabhu hai*). Then I prayed and telephoned pastor. He prayed for her. Later she was taken to hospital and she got healed.²⁴⁷

From the testimony, it is clear that such life experiences, both painful and joyful, harden their commitment towards Christ and provide a deep-rooted experiential knowledge of Jesus as their Lord; their joys and sorrows, gains and losses, prosperity and poverty all come from him.²⁴⁸ According to a respondent, they are ready to suffer and even forsake their lives for the sake of their Lord who is now the centre of all their activities. Furthermore, in their struggles, the believers

²⁴⁷ Testimony, Participant Observation, Hill-top Church, Rajasthan, 2 July 2009.

²⁴⁸ Achamma, Focus Group Interview, Udaipur, 26 July 2009.

experience the comforting presence of Jesus the Lord, who once delivered them from their predicament.²⁴⁹ One of the women, who is totally uneducated, said that when she underwent any pain or trouble in her life, she used to see the vision of Jesus who came and comforted her.²⁵⁰ Thus, in faith they anticipate the same miraculous intervention that materialises in their lives. This, of course, creates a victorious outlook in the midst of those spiritual, social and economic forces which would have otherwise overwhelmed them.

This victorious feeling is directed towards the liberation of fellow human beings from demonic oppression, caste hierarchy and other social evils prevalent in the society. One of the songs refers to this issue:

The 'good news' will be victorious

The demonic powers will be destroyed

In the name of Jesus heads of all humanity will be bowed down

That is the greatest joy

We will demolish the fortress of demonic forces

We will eradicate caste distinctions

We will raise the banner of love

We will unfurl the glorious banner of Jesus the king

The 'good news' will be victorious.²⁵¹

Interestingly, one of the evangelists who performs exorcisms said that while evil spirits are cast out, the spirits make loud confession through the possessed person to the effect that Jesus is the Lord. This happens when he rebukes the demonic spirits in the name of Jesus. Moreover, according to him, the possessed spirit often

²⁴⁹ Yeshudas, Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 16 August 2009.

²⁵⁰ Rosamma, Interview, Udaipur, 5 August 2009.

²⁵¹ Song no. 572, *Zion Geethavaly* (Tiruvalla, India: Immanuel Bible Depot, 2005), 346.

acknowledges that it is the deity of that particular area or the god or goddess which people usually worship. This sort of revelation opens the eyes of many people who realise that until now, they were being cheated and falsely worshipped evil deities, while others outrightly forsake such god or goddess. When these deities are cast out in the name of Jesus, people are convinced of the lordship of Jesus over all spiritual powers and begin to acknowledge him as the Lord.²⁵² In the churches they are also taught that Jesus is the Lord of their entire life through biblical stories.²⁵³

The notion that Jesus is the Lord rings loudly in the evangelistic and mission activities. The ordinary Pentecostals are not hesitant of proclaiming Jesus as *the* Lord in their daily life; instead, they convey this message to anybody who they come across. 'We preach Jesus as Lord, King of kings and Saviour. People understand Jesus as Lord of their lives. They know that Jesus came as a human being but consider him as Lord of all,' asserts Biju.²⁵⁴ An evangelistic song which is sung during worship also underlines this fact:

Let the name of Jesus be victorious

Let the strongholds of the Satan be broken down

Let the banner of 'good news' be raised

Let the Bible truths be echoed.²⁵⁵

Moreover, the life experiences of the ordinary believers play a vital role in the proclamation of Jesus as the Lord. Their experiences are shared with the neighbours and people who are in trouble. They also pray for others in the name of Jesus.²⁵⁶ Through ordinary believers, many are being healed as well as delivered

²⁵² Joel, Interview, Maharashtra, 2 September 2009.

²⁵³ Pastor Nathan, Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 5 August 2009.

²⁵⁴ Biju, Focus Group Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 16 August 2009.

²⁵⁵ Participant Observation, Kolenchery, 28 June 2009.

²⁵⁶ Mani, Focus Group Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 2 August 2009.

from evil spirits. One of the women explained that her family was the first one to become Christian in their village and through her testimony many have now joined the church.²⁵⁷ Thus, through their testimonies and lives the notion of Jesus as Lord and victor comes alive and expands in the community.

6.7 Jesus the Supreme God

This notion is deeply engraved in the psyche and life-styles of the ordinary Pentecostal believers and becomes apparent in their daily life. The believers have no qualms or hesitations in affirming Jesus is unique or the incomparable God. The uniqueness of Jesus, which they affirm and proclaim in their daily encounter with fellow human beings, is a category which emerged from their own life experiences and subsequent 'ordinary' theological reflection. They elevate Jesus above all gods and consider every other deity they know inferior to Jesus. For them Jesus is *God Most-High*. This notion clearly appears in their personal testimonies to outsiders, in worship services and in their evangelistic endeavours. For them Jesus' care and love, the peace and security he brings and his extraordinary power over other deities they followed earlier, enable them to elevate him to the status of 'High God'. This 'High God,' who earlier far removed from their life-struggles and pain is now very close to them in Jesus Christ. They experience his providing and protecting hand in every aspect of their lives. Along with such experiences, the conviction that Jesus is the saviour and the Lord impel them to proclaim Jesus as supreme and unique among all gods. Thus, they do not think twice to acknowledge the supremacy of Christ before anybody.²⁵⁸ This notion, along with Jesus as the

²⁵⁷ Rosamma, Interview, Udaipur, 5 August 2009.

²⁵⁸ Thomas, Interview, Udaipur, 8 July 2009.

Lord, forms the fourth level of Christological articulation. However, at this point more emphasis is given to the supremacy and incomparability of his divine nature.

In the interviews and focus groups this conviction appeared specifically. One of the interviewees said:

People who are worshipping the idols are actually worshipping Satan who is in disguise underlying idol worship. There are 330 million gods and goddesses. Even people do not know 330 of them. Jesus is the only God. Only through Jesus one can be saved. He is *the* God. It is my experience.²⁵⁹

This person was arrested and taken to the police station for his witnessing. According to him, there he narrated his testimony and reiterated that what he said resulted from his experience. His colleagues and superiors alleged that he was propagating Christianity and they wrote to the health secretary of the state as well as to the registrar, as he is a medical doctor. However, there was nothing they could do to harm him.²⁶⁰ Even now he speaks boldly about Christ. He says, 'I testify to the people who are nervous and burdened like me, who spent lots of money on treatment, that Jesus can heal them. He is the only God who will save us. When one comes to Jesus a new perspective is established and old convictions are thrown away'.²⁶¹

Even the uneducated women testify to the greatness of Jesus in their daily encounter with their neighbours and those who are in dire need. One of the women explained it:

²⁵⁹ Thomas, Interview, Udaipur, 8 July 2009.

²⁶⁰ Thomas, Interview, Udaipur, 8 July 2009.

²⁶¹ Thomas, Interview, Udaipur, 8 July 2009.

In my village I testify to the women who are suffering from various diseases and other problems. I pray for them in the name of Jesus. I tell them Jesus would heal them. Even though I am illiterate I tell them He is greater than all gods. People believe it.²⁶²

This conviction of Jesus' uniqueness and greatness is more fervent in the believers who have renounced their earlier religious faith. Most of the people interviewed came from similar backgrounds and they had been troubled by the consequences of the lives they led before turning to Christ. However, their encounter with Jesus brought a new vision of the spiritual reality. They realised and testified that what they were following was mere futility and now they have reached their destiny; the believers do not hesitate to call all those gods satanic and evil gods.²⁶³ One of the persons who testified speaks: 'I was indulging in idol worship and all sorts of rituals (*puja patt*). I used to sacrifice for *bavazi*. Now I know that all those are satanic and futile. Jesus is God (*yishu hi parameshwar hai*)'.²⁶⁴

The idea that Jesus is greatest of all and unique explicitly emerged in one of the testimonies:

Earlier I was an idol worshipper...I thought that those gods would help me and bless me. However, instead of blessings I had many problems. My family suffered from illness and attacks by demonic spirits. But when I accepted Jesus, things began to change. Now I feel peace and there is peace in my family. So I proclaim the greatness of Jesus to everybody... Some people oppose me. There are 330 million gods. But

²⁶² Jainamma, Interview by author, Maharashtra, 8 September 2009.

²⁶³ Joel, Interview by author, South Gujarat, 8 September 2009.

²⁶⁴ Noble, Interview by author, Maharashtra, 2 September 2009.

Jesus is greater than all these gods. I firmly tell the people that Jesus is the only God. He is greater than all gods.²⁶⁵

Therefore, it is not surprising to hear this idea frequently echoing in the worship services through songs, personal testimonies and preaching as we have seen earlier. One of the songs portrays the theme in vivid language:

The name of Jesus is wonderful

The name that removes the sin of humanity

The name that delivers demon possessed and various diseases

The name that heals the blind, lame and lepers

The name that is above every name

The name that is powerful, before him every knee bows down

The name that every power on heaven, earth, hell bows down

The name that defeats every authority on heaven and earth.²⁶⁶

The Sunday sermons as well as public testimonies are pregnant with the idea that Jesus is greater than all. However, it comes out very forcefully in evangelistic activities, where believers unashamedly proclaim that Jesus is God and only Jesus can save humans from their sins.²⁶⁷ As one of the evangelists put it bluntly and humorously following Paul, 'If Jesus is not unique and not above all gods, our life and proclamation are in vain'.²⁶⁸ This proclamation is not a neatly articulated theological argument or an academic presentation of the defence of the greatness of Jesus. Rather, it is the narration of their earlier life of misery and the miraculous intervention and rescue by Jesus, along with his power to do the same for others.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁵ Pylee, Focus Group Interview, Udaipur, 19 July 2009.

²⁶⁶ Participant Observation, Kolenchery, 26 July 2009.

²⁶⁷ Focus Group, Interview, Udaipur, 19 July 2009.

²⁶⁸ Joel, Interview, Maharashtra, 2 September 2009.

²⁶⁹ Focus Group, Interview, Udaipur, 12 July 2009.

Thus, this notion is experiential and practical which is proved with signs and wonders.²⁷⁰ Moreover, they do not engage in any debate or dialogue. The ordinary believers invite people who are in despair to ‘come and taste what they have been experiencing’.²⁷¹ They pray for the needs of the people and miracles take place. Then they boldly proclaim that Jesus is greater than all.²⁷² As mentioned earlier, interestingly, village pastors use gospel stories prominently to proclaim Jesus as healer, exorcist and, ultimately, God.

This attitude has attracted the ire of fundamentalist elements of other religions. As we have seen, many of the pastors and believers have been abused and persecuted for this matter and even today opposition and attack continue. For instance, in a particular village in Madhya Pradesh, right after the worship service the local police came and took ten believers to the police station on charges that they were going from house to house forcing people to accept Jesus as their saviour. In reality, a believer testified to the greatness of Jesus to another person and, when that person realised that he was unable to counter the arguments of the believer, he sought the help of fundamentalists who then pressed a charge of ‘forcible conversion’.²⁷³ Even though such incidents are common, the ordinary Pentecostal believers seldom cease to proclaim the greatness of Jesus. Nevertheless, they are not wary of acknowledging the existence of other gods or spirits, who they formerly worshipped, and the evil consequences.²⁷⁴

²⁷⁰ Focus Group, Interview, Udaipur, 12 July 2009.

²⁷¹ Mathew, Focus Group Interview, Tabor Church, Gujarat, 6 September 2009.

²⁷² Pastor Nathan, Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 5 August 2009.

²⁷³ Editor, ‘Arrested on False Charges,’ *Cross & Crown* 37/3 (January-February 2008): 21; See another incident of false charges slapped on believers for proclaiming Christ; Editor, ‘A Plan for me...even in Prison,’ *Cross & Crown* 36/2 (July-August 2007): 12.

²⁷⁴ Focus Group, Tabor Church, Gujarat, 23 August 2009.

Although believers engage in the proclamation of the uniqueness of Jesus, it is not an exercise meant only for the physical world. It is in fact a war they are ‘waging in the spiritual realm’ as one of the respondents put it. He says, ‘We are not against any other people. Our war is against evil forces that lead people to destruction. Therefore, our proclamation is a spiritual war against satanic forces’.²⁷⁵ At this point the Spirit enables the believers to witness Christ with courage. It is firmly believed that only with help of the Spirit can one achieve it.²⁷⁶ Besides, their newfound joy as well as the confidence in the efficacy of Jesus to change the predicament of their fellow humans, propel them to testify his uniqueness with urgency. According to Pastor Timothy, they have a burning desire in their heart to tell it to everybody. He narrated the story of an evangelist who used ingenious methods to proclaim Christ. An evangelist was sent to a hill-locked region of Gujarat for mission work and he could not make any foray there for more than one year. According to him, the evangelist began to pray and God put an idea in his mind. There were no barber shops around those places and people had to travel long distance for their hair cut. The evangelist asked for a set of scissors and other items from the pastor. With prayer he began helping people, freely giving his service, although he had never trained for this trade. While cutting hair, he would share the Gospel messages. Within a few months, more than forty people joined his church.²⁷⁷ Thomas says, ‘It is my desire that everybody should know about Christ. It is always in my heart as a burning desire to tell about Jesus to everybody. All should escape the futility of false worship and sinful life’.²⁷⁸ Thus, the theme is intricately conjoined to mission and evangelism.

²⁷⁵ Joel, Interview, Maharashtra, 2 September 2009.

²⁷⁶ Joel, Interview, Maharashtra, 2 September 2009.

²⁷⁷ Timothy, Personal interview by author, Tabor Church, Gujarat, 26 August 2009.

²⁷⁸ Thomas, Interview, Udaipur, 8 July 2009.

Some more interesting ideas emerged; even though believers understand Jesus is the incarnation of God, the humanity of Jesus has not been taken to be a crucial aspect. One of the respondents said:

People here consider Jesus as Lord and God. He is greater than all. No power can stand before him. He is all powerful. Perhaps believers do not understand him as a human being like us. When we preach, we tell them that God became a man. I don't think that believers tell anybody that Jesus is a man like us. People always see Jesus as greater than all gods and goddesses.²⁷⁹

Moreover, ordinary believers are not aware of the ontological identity of Jesus with the Father or the Trinitarian Christology.²⁸⁰

From the above discussion, it is obvious that the Christological concept underlying these themes holds that Jesus is able to accomplish anything in every aspect of a believers' life and that he is powerful and greater than all powers. We may summarise the interconnection between the themes and fundamental Christology underlying them below.²⁸¹ When people are healed of their illnesses or delivered from demonic attack or possession, they acknowledge Jesus as the healer and exorcist. This understanding gives them a new sense of empowerment. The healing and deliverance enable them to save their expenditure on medical treatment or traditional healing practices, which leads to financial security and all-round prosperity. They also experience providing grace in all aspects of their lives. Thus people understand Jesus as the provider. They also realise that Jesus not only heals

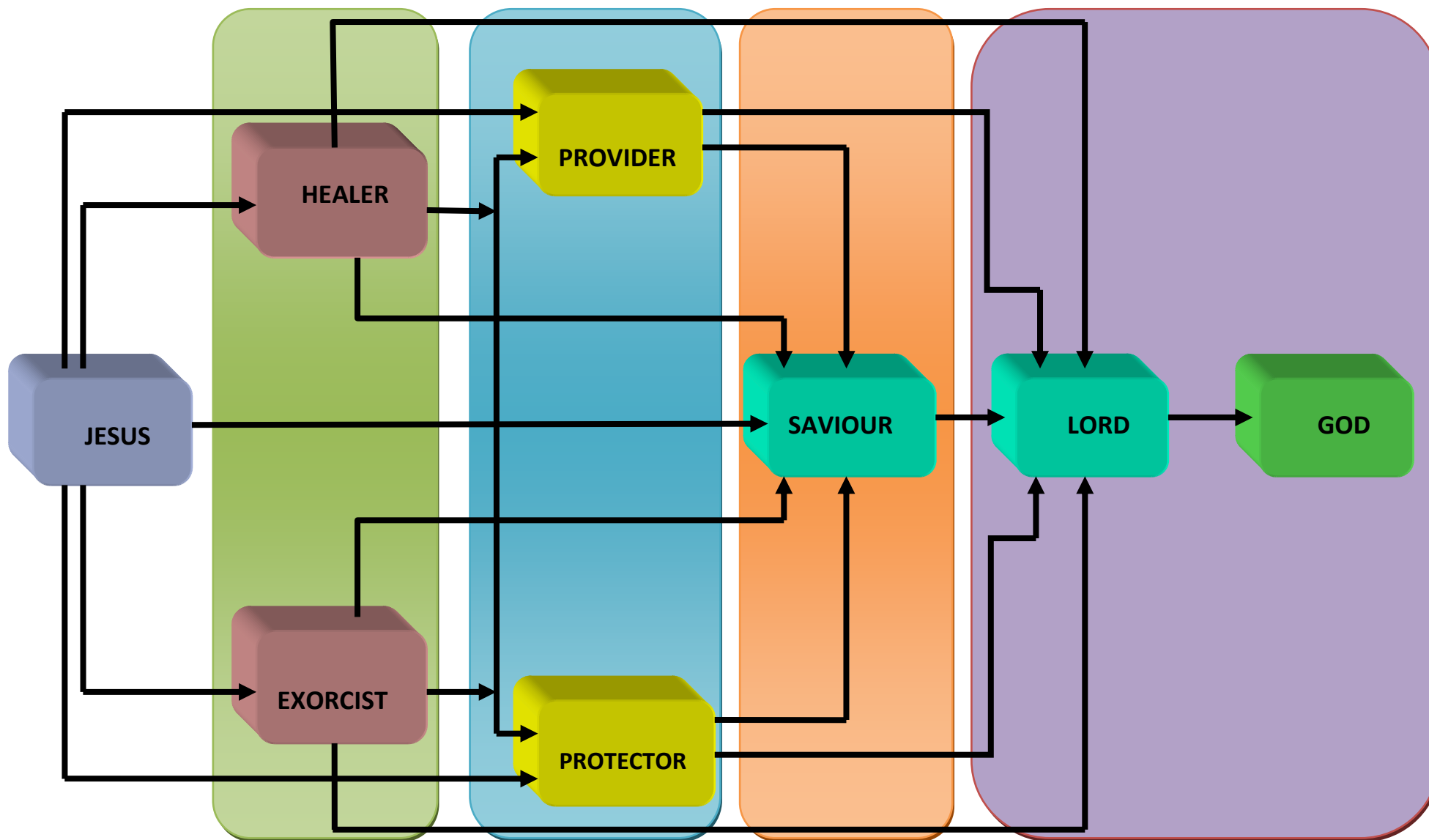
²⁷⁹ Mani, Focus Group Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 2 August 2009.

²⁸⁰ Mercy, Interview by author, Kolenchery, Kerala, 28 June 2009.

²⁸¹ From the data analysis (see diagram) four conceptual levels emerged: (1) Jesus as healer and exorcist; (2) Jesus as provider and protector; (3) Jesus as saviour; and (4) Jesus as Lord and supreme God. These conceptual levels can be regarded as levels of ordinary Christological expression.

and delivers from illness and evil spirits but also keeps them away from sickness and protects them from demonic attack. Moreover, he protects them from external forces (extreme elements). This results in acknowledging Jesus as the protector.

This new understanding – Jesus as the healer, exorcist, provider and protector – along with the peace of mind, joy and prosperity they enjoy as well as the experience of the Holy Spirit and the fervent worship atmosphere in the community enable them to elevate Jesus into an exalted position and confess him to be the saviour. The experience of the Holy Spirit acts as a catalyst in the confessions. Therefore, this notion stands between the functional and ontological categories. The process of reflection does not stop here. Their daily struggles, joy, sorrows and assurance of Jesus' presence in every aspect of their lives, coupled with preaching and teaching of biblical stories, especially Gospel stories enable them to proclaim Jesus as the Lord; now, the whole of their universe revolves around Jesus. This understanding, in turn, verbalised and communicated within the worship context and in evangelistic activities which proclaim that Jesus is *greater than all*. Consequently, they understand Jesus as *the* Supreme God. In certain cases, especially in the cases of those who come from denominational backgrounds or second and third generation Pentecostals, the reflective process may start from Jesus as the Saviour and read back to Jesus as healer, provider and so on.



ORDINARY INDIAN PENTECOSTAL CHRISTOLOGY

Chapter 7

ORDINARY INDIAN PENTECOSTAL CHRISTOLOGY – DISCUSSION

Chapter 6 discussed the dominant Christological themes that ordinary Pentecostals appreciate in their broad religio-cultural, socio-economic and political contexts, as well as in their personal and immediate circumstances. It is significant to see that the Christology they embrace does make a marked difference to their spirituality, along with their socio-economic status. However, it is also important to discuss the feasibility of presenting this Christology systematically to a wider audience of Pentecostals as well as to Christians of other traditions. Several questions arise at this point: what are the limitations of this articulation? Does it show any special characteristics? Is it compatible with the Pentecostal tradition and the New Testament testimony of Jesus? Hence, in this chapter we shall attempt to offer a critical analysis of the scope and limitations of such a Christology. We shall also consider the nature and affinity of ordinary Christology with the larger Pentecostal tradition and with the New Testament testimony of the person and work of Christ.

7.1 Critical Evaluation

Ordinary Indian Pentecostal Christology is the product of the common believers' struggles, aspiration and remedies they draw out of utilizing biblical narratives, especially Gospel stories. It is in every sense a people's Christology; accordingly, far removed from the genre of scholarly and systematic theology. Hence, it is naive and even futile to attempt to seek every factor of a formal Christology in it. Given their context, it is natural for people to emphasise their immediate needs

and concerns and to concentrate on those aspects of Christology that bring solace and immediate remedy. Consequently, the prominent components of this Christology are elementary in nature and can be used as the foundational building blocks of a Christological superstructure for the Indian context. Therefore, while we evaluate this Christology critically, it is vital to bear in mind the context, the experiences people go through and the solutions they seek.

On the other hand, a given Christology cannot be a stagnant entity; it needs to move from an elementary stage to more advanced categories to accommodate and answer changing situations. More seriously, the Christology of a people ought to develop into a more inclusive and balanced entity, more truthful and akin to biblical tradition. This pattern of progressive movement is apparent in the New Testament tradition. Various levels of Christological articulations have been proposed to supplement a more inclusive Christology. For example, while the Synoptic Gospels seem to propose a 'Christology from below' (functional), the Johannine Christology presents a 'Christology from above' (ontological). According to France, it is a progression from the former to the latter.¹ Therefore, it is significant to search for those essential factors that are lacking in this Christology, with a view to making it more constructive and meaningful; more inclusive and enduring.

7.1.1 An Ordinary Christology

Our starting point is a positive note. Close scrutiny will throw light on the salient features of this Christology which is a combination of a Christology from below

¹ R.T. France, 'The Uniqueness of Christ,' *Evangelical Review of Theology* 17/1 (January-March 1993): 24.

and a Christology from above, with a qualification.² Justification of this observation is that, this Christology emphasises the works of Christ such as healing, exorcism and other miraculous events; it envisions a Jesus who is concerned about the poor and destitute and who comes to rescue them. Evidently its elementary components are based on Jesus' public activities and redemptive actions in relation to immediate situations which included the socio-political, the religio-cultural and the economic components. Jesus is the one who brings answers to their struggles in these spheres, as in the Gospels. Thus, it emphasises the work of Christ, as stated above.

Simultaneously, it also strongly asserts that Jesus is the Saviour, Lord and God. He is the only one who can save them from their predicament and sin. He is greater than all powers and he is God. Here we see a strong emphasis on the divinity of Jesus and in the assertion that he is unique and supreme. This sort of description of Jesus points towards highlighting his person. Consequently, we may term this a balanced Christology emphasising both the humanity and divinity of Jesus; a Christology with the right mix of functional and ontological elements.

However, this research showed that, although the work of Christ as a human being forms its basic ingredients, this Christology gives less importance to the humanity of Jesus.³ The people understand and worship Jesus as God but they are unable to acknowledge Jesus as a human being.⁴ Similarly, in asserting Jesus as Lord and God, this Christology seems to advocate the divinity of Jesus and a 'Christology from above'. However, it has emerged from this study that the Christology lacks

² The following explanation expounds this statement.

³ See Chapter 6, page 255.

⁴ Mercy, Interview by author, Kolenchery, Kerala, 28 June 2009.

an ontological conception of the person of Christ. People understand Jesus to be the Son of God but they do not give due importance to his pre-existence or to the Trinitarian relationship with the Father.⁵ These are serious issues which need addressing and shall be discussed in the following pages.

7.1.2 Limitations in the Ontological Identity of Jesus

It is apparent from the discussion that this Christology is similar to the ‘Christology of the Early Church,’ or a primary level of Christological articulation. The people who theologise are mainly ordinary people; many of them are illiterate and poor and the majority are recent converts who hardly have basic Bible literacy. Their main sources of Christological knowledge are stories from the Gospels, especially the Synoptic Gospels, they hear in church, and their personal experience of Christ through miraculous events.⁶ The Christology they articulate emerges when Gospel stories intersect with their contextual experiences. Hence, they focus primarily on the struggles they face and endeavour to find solutions through the work of Christ. In other words, this Christology focuses more on the existential aspects of the work of Christ, such as healing, exorcism and provision, than on the person of Christ. The study showed that many of the respondents were not able to move beyond these functional categories to a deep-rooted understanding of the person of Christ. Even their more advanced categories such as Jesus as the Saviour, Lord and God are the outcome of the former categories.⁷ Hence, it is more or less a functional Christology, one which is

⁵ Mercy, Interview by author, Kolenchery, Kerala, 28 June 2009.

⁶ For example, some of the references heard in the sermons during the participant observation were: Mat. 9:2-8; Mk.5:21-34; Mk.7:24-30; Lk.7:36-50; 8:26-39; Jn.5:1-18.

⁷ This was the process in which the ontological identity of Jesus developed in NT; see France, ‘The Uniqueness of Christ,’ 23-24.

closely connected with the present aspects of the work of Christ; in other words, soteriological dimensions of Christology are prominent. Again, the eschatological aspect of the work of Christ is underestimated. Although some of the pastors claimed that they preach about the return of Christ,⁸ this aspect did not feature prominently among respondents who are more concerned with the present aspects of the work of Christ. However, in South India, Pentecostals do acknowledge eschatological aspect of Christ's work as they were introduced to the 'fourfold gospel'.⁹ Certainly, people understand and acknowledge Jesus as Saviour and God; nevertheless, these ontological categories are drawn out from existential categories. That is, the ontological dimension of Christology is poorly emphasised or seems to be unknown to the Pentecostals. However, it is an interesting point to note that this characteristic is a universal feature of popular Pentecostal Christology in general.¹⁰

Another potential problem closely related to the above point is the absence of the Trinitarian context for Christology. Although ordinary members recognize Jesus to be the son of God, or God, they lack the idea of the ontological relationship between members of the Trinity. They know that God exists as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit but either they do not know the discussion regarding the necessity of the divine equality of Christ (*homoousios*) with the Father or Holy Spirit, or are not concerned about it.¹¹ Their immediate circumstances have a bearing on this. For them, there is a God; God became a human being to save sinful humanity and

⁸ Kuttappan, Focus Group Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 9 August 2009.

⁹ For the discussion of the fourfold gospel, see pages 275-276.

¹⁰ Walter J. Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1972), 311-312.

¹¹ Philipos, Interview by author, Hill-view Church, Rajasthan, 20 September 2009; Joel, Interview by author, Maharashtra, Gujarat, 2 September 2009.

Jesus is the Son of God.¹² In the name of Jesus miracles are performed and they happen through the power of the Spirit.¹³ The intricate relationship between members of the Trinity and the economy of the Trinity are foreign to this Christology. People experience and visualise a Jesus who acts on their behalf, and therefore, their Christology revolves around the work of Christ. A more advanced theological reflection, which we see in the Johannine gospel, where Jesus is portrayed as the Word (*Logos*), is largely absent. His eternal divine status as the ‘Son of God’ and his divine essence with God the Father are all missing. Therefore, the notion of his relationship to God the Father needs to be added to this functional Christology to make it more balanced by containing both these aspects. Satyavrata rightly cautions us, ‘Anything less than a robust Trinitarian spirituality will find itself in danger of being easily assimilated by the powerful monistic philosophical currents of our day’.¹⁴ This issue naturally places a question mark on their understanding of the divinity of Christ.¹⁵

7.1.3 Limitations in the Humanity of Jesus

Another area of concern is the lack of understanding of the humanity of Jesus. Undoubtedly, Pentecostals verbalise their belief that Jesus is the incarnation of God. However, the humanity of Jesus has been unwittingly sidelined. In practice, the divinity of Jesus is emphasised at the cost of the humanity of Jesus. For them, Jesus is all powerful: able to heal, delivers from evil spiritual and social forces,

¹² Anish, Interview by author, Maharashtra, 7 September 2009.

¹³ Meeraji, Interview by author, Maharashtra, 8 September 2009.

¹⁴ Satyavrata, ‘Contextual Perspectives on Pentecostalism,’ 213.

¹⁵ Colin E. Gunton, *Father, Son and Holy Spirit: Toward a Fully Trinitarian Theology* (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 58-74; Colin E. Gunton, *The Christian Faith: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 176-179.

provides and saves them from their predicament;¹⁶ he is greater than all gods or the gods they worshipped; he is able to rescue them from all possible troubles and therefore he is God.¹⁷ In this way, unknowingly they overlook the humanity of Jesus which is an integral aspect of Christology. In fact, many of them are reluctant to acknowledge Jesus as a human being like us.¹⁸ It is obvious that the context plays an important role, as the prominent understanding at this point is that those who perform miracles are divine (*chamatkar ko namaskar*). This one-sided understanding may stop them from imitating Jesus and carrying out Jesus' model of ministry in their surroundings, which would be detrimental to the growth of the movement in the long run.¹⁹

At the same time, it is evident from their testimonies that they hold a qualified 'Christology from below'. The justification of this observation is that their Christology is similar to, and in a nutshell can be explained in terms of, the Christology of the Synoptic Gospels. They understand Jesus as one who is among them, solving their immediate problems of physical illness, poverty and delivers them from the threat of social and spiritual powers.²⁰ He is the one who walks with them and comforts them in their critical junctures.²¹ The paradoxical fact is that, although they do not acknowledge Jesus as a human being like us, they wholeheartedly experience and confess his works as a human being as told in the

¹⁶ Anand, Interview by author, South Gujarat, 30 September 2009.

¹⁷ Prakash, Interview by author, Maharashtra, 2 September 2009.

¹⁸ Mani, Focus Group Interview, Hebron Church, Rajasthan, 2 August 2009.

¹⁹ John P. Meir, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus* (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 196-201; Marcus J. Borg, *Jesus a New Vision: Spirit, Culture, and the Life of Discipleship* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1987), 1-2.

²⁰ Joshi, Interview by author, Gujarat, 29 August 2009.

²¹ Testimony, Participant Observation, Hill-top Church, 2 July 2009.

Gospel stories.²² What we can notice is that this Christology shifts between the divinity and humanity of Jesus. This can be termed a dialectical understanding of the person of Christ: confessing and proclaiming Jesus as divine but experiencing his works as being human. The humanity of Jesus is shrouded in the divinity of Jesus. At this point we find a creative tension between the humanity and the divinity of Jesus. Hence, it is a Christology from above but internally blended with a Christology from below. Consequently, a clear distinction between the divinity and humanity of Jesus cannot be drawn in this Christology. What we have outlined are limitations which may be harmful to the Indian Pentecostal movement in the long run and should be addressed. Therefore, in the next chapter we will recommend some biblical and theological insights to deal with these problems.

7.2 The Nature of Ordinary Indian Pentecostal Christology

We shall now look into the nature of ordinary Pentecostal Christology. As we have seen, theirs is basically a functional Christology emerging from the saving work of Christ. In other words, this Christology is informed and formed by the reflection of the *saving experiences* people undergo in their lives. Therefore, it is closely related to Soteriology. Simultaneously, this Christology moves from functional categories (healer, exorcist, provider, protector) to ontological categories (Lord, God), although the latter group is derived from the former with the theme Jesus as *Saviour* acting as a bridge between these two categories. In actuality, the functional and ontological categories overlap with each other making it difficult for any study to set clear boundaries.

²² Emma, Interview by author, Udaipur, 15 September 2009.

It is obvious from the discussion that this Christology has special characteristics of its own which need discussing to appreciate its worth and usefulness. First of all, it is an *experiential Christology*, which has emerged from the people's intense existential struggles. Most of the Pentecostals come from the lower strata of the society and are constantly confronted by social forces detrimental to their existence. Many of them were either oppressed by evil spiritual forces or physical troubles which result in the draining of their hard-earned resources, inflicting on them a crushing blow leading to poverty. In the midst of such a situation, their new experience of Christ enables them to wade through the struggles; it also lifts them up. Thus, the fundamentals of this Christology are constituted by their emancipating experiences of the work of Christ.²³

Closely connected with the above characteristics is its intimate relationship to the personal lives of the ordinary people and, therefore it can be termed an *intimate Christology*. Their initial knowledge of Christ is not rooted in formal theological discourse or voluminous information but achieved through an encounter with Christ in their healing, exorcisms or any other immediate needs. Such encounters result in spiritual experience and a new vibrant knowledge and intimacy with Christ. Moreover, all this helps to further build the Christological structure up to form a lofty understanding of Christ. Some of them were Christians before. However, as they testified, they had no personal experience of the person of Christ. Once they joined the movement, intimacy with Christ and knowledge of

²³ Satyavrata, 'Contextual Perspectives on Pentecostalism,' 211; William MacDonald, 'Pentecostal Theology: A Classical View Point,' in *Perspectives on the New Pentecostalism*, edited by Russell P. Spittler (Michigan: Baker Book House, 1976), 61-62.

him increased and this intimacy is actualised through the experience of the Spirit and testified in their immediate surroundings.

Besides, as mentioned, the Christological themes which we have explored do not result from theoretical articulation; instead, they are the outcome of intense personal and communitarian reflections on the person and work of Christ. The people verbalise and communicate these themes through testimonies, stories, songs, exposition of biblical narratives and informal conversations in the community to which they are culturally relevant. Therefore, it is a *narrative Christology*. Cook identifies the value of narrative Christology, 'a narrative-centred Christology would seek to maintain the validity and the necessity of particular, concrete experience within a given socio-historical and cultural context precisely in order to sustain the truly catholic and universal character of the mystery that is Jesus'.²⁴ This communication contributes to deliver a contagious faith to other members of their community and this in turn is transmitted to the wider society. Even though most of them are either illiterate or semi-literate, they convey their Christological perception orally. This oral transmission of life-experiences and Christological themes perfectly fits in the social conditioning of the Indian villages and enables common masses to be attracted to the Pentecostal movement. This sort of transmission of the person and work of Christ was the essential nature of the communication of the first-century church.²⁵ Interestingly, this is a very basic and common feature of Pentecostal theology more generally,

²⁴ Michael L. Cook, *Christology as Narrative Quest* (Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1997), 31, 29-66.

²⁵ Casey W. Davis, 'Oral Biblical Criticism: Raw Data in Philippians,' in *Linguistics and New Testament: Critical Junctures*, edited by Stanley E. Porter & D.A. Carson (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 96-124; Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition: A Study in Historical Methodology*, translated by H.M. Wright (New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 2006), 19-30.

as Hollenweger has rightly commented.²⁶ Thus, ordinary Indian Pentecostal Christology is an *oral Christology*.²⁷

Furthermore, this Christology is formed and articulated in the community on the basis of the struggles of its members, and the solutions they themselves draw with the help of Christological narratives form the basic elements. No professional theologians are involved here. Its ingredients come from individuals in the community; for one, Jesus is the healer, for another, Jesus is the provider, and so on. These themes are put together within a worship context and form a coherent whole and are later verbalised and proclaimed by the ordinary members and directed towards the suffering masses. Accordingly, it is essentially a *communitarian Christology*.

Closely related to the oral nature of Christology is its 'kerygmatic' nature.²⁸ Since the Christology is essentially experiential and oral, it is largely communicated in informal settings such as testimonies, conversation and songs. The content of this 'kerygma' is the transforming and liberating power of Christ for the common masses. It is the story of the power of Jesus bringing changes to the lives of ordinary people. It touches the lives of the suffering people as the proclamation is made by the people they know, who were once like them, and who underwent similar predicaments but have now been liberated and transformed. Therefore, the

²⁶ Walter J. Hollenweger, 'Pentecostal Research: Problems and Promises,' in *A Guide to the Study of the Pentecostal Movement*, vol.1, edited by Charles Edwin Jones (London: Scarecrow, 1983), vii-ix; Walter J. Hollenweger, 'Pentecostals and the Charismatic Movement,' in *The Study of Spirituality*, edited by Cheslyn Jones et. al. (London: SPCK, 1986).

²⁷ Satyavrata, 'Contextual Perspectives on Pentecostalism,' 210.

²⁸ Kerygma is the systematic statement of the theology of the primitive church as revealed in its preaching. The kerygma was the proclamation of Jesus' deeds, death and resurrection; see R.H. Mounce, 'Kerygma,' *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, vol.3 (Michigan: Eerdmans, 1986), 9-10.

listeners are convinced of what is proclaimed and in many cases it is readily accepted.²⁹ Moreover, much as in the case of the early Church, this Christology is proclaimed in the power of the Spirit and is seen as being proved by the immediate signs of healing and exorcism.³⁰ It is not only proclaimed in the physical realm but its effect is also extended even into the 'invisible realm'. Hence, it is a *kerygmatic Christology*.

In addition, it is worth noting that this is a *Pneumatologically-driven Christology*. In other words, it is informed and propelled by the power of the Spirit and proclaimed and enacted through the people who acknowledge the work of the Spirit as they themselves claim.³¹ The ordinary members are empowered to venture into the unknown and the Spirit gives power to proclaim the message; the community becomes a channel of liberation in the society, even though the members live in the same conditions themselves.³² They form an alternative community in the midst of a hostile and oppressive culture with harmful religious practices.

At the same time, it is a *culturally-tuned Christology* as well because it is thoroughly based in the cultural context of the people and the common masses do not feel alienated in their cultural setting while they cherish this Christology. It accommodates the positive aspects of the culture to form and proclaim the message of Christ; their lifestyle and faith expressions are the true reflection of

²⁹ Joel, Interview, Maharashtra, 2 September 2009.

³⁰ J. I. H. McDonald, *Kerygma and Didache: The Articulation and Structure of the Earliest Christian Message* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980); also see C.H. Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments: Three Lectures* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1944).

³¹ Mani, Focus Group Interview, Hebron Church, 2 August 2009; Joel, Interview, Maharashtra, 2 September 2009.

³² See Samuel Solivan, *The Spirit, Pathos and Liberation: Toward an Hispanic Pentecostal Theology* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998).

their context. However, it does not advocate the *status quo*, which is often oppressive and harmful for the people. Instead, it transcends and transforms the harmful cultural elements of the society.³³ The community is made of people from different castes, people groups and ethnic orientations in which the distinctions of caste, gender and wealth have been blurred.³⁴ Even women who are not able to speak in the village community are empowered to testify their stories so as to liberate their neighbours.³⁵

It is a *transformative and liberative Christology* too. Both the Pentecostal believers and the outsiders alike testify that the outlook and attitude of the people radically changed and was transformed for the better,³⁶ a transformation which occurred in the social, economic, psychological and spiritual realms of ordinary members. Their newfound faith enables them to stand against the oppressive structure of society. However, it is not to be misunderstood as popular revolution or revolt; instead, silent but definite changes have been taking place in the lives of the people. Moreover, this liberative potential is not limited to the community itself but flows out into the larger society and rescues many. In other words, this Christology empowers people to rescue their own kith and kin who are in the doldrums. Thus, what David Martin asserts is right; in India, Pentecostalism competes with Social Gospel Christianity and Liberationism.³⁷

³³ Joel, Interview, Maharashtra, 2 September 2009.

³⁴ Gabriel, 'Reflections on Indian Pentecostalism,' 68.

³⁵ Rosy, Interview by author, Hill-top Church, Rajasthan, 9 August 2009; Bergunder, 'Women and Leadership'.

³⁶ Reji, Focus Group Interview, Hebron Church, 9 August 2009; Nathulal, Maharashtra, 7 September 2009; Miller & Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism*, 33.

³⁷ David Martin, 'Issues Affecting the Study of Pentecostalism in Asia,' in *Asian and Pentecostal*, 32.

Further, this Christology enables them to face serious challenges such as economic hardships, discrimination and persecution. For the sake of the testimony of Christ people are ready to suffer. Actually many have been falsely accused and persecuted for their faith and jailed while their suffering continues. However, their profound experience of Christ and changes which have taken place in their lives enable them to withstand such perilous situations. Thus it is an *empowering Christology*.

Another noteworthy credential of this Christology is its missionary nature. The Christological themes which have emerged are directed towards missionary endeavours. The transforming experience of the members of the community along with Gospel stories of healing, exorcism, provision and protection are proclaimed in the larger society. The Gospel stories undergirded by the miraculous interventions in the lives of the hearers validate the impact of this Christology. Every member, knowingly or unknowingly, proclaims these themes through their life-styles, the positive changes in their conditions or in testimonies they give in informal settings. Tony Richie explains this sort of testimony as a typical Pentecostal mode of inter-religious dialogue.³⁸ Many a time the communication of the message happens unknowingly when people watch the marked changes in the conditions of a person and are thus attracted to the message. Of course, the members make it a point to share these themes with others. Therefore, it is essentially a *missionary Christology*.

³⁸ Tony Richie, 'Speaking by the Spirit: A Wesleyan-Pentecostal Theology of Testimony as a Model for Interreligious Encounter and Dialogue in the USA with Global Implications' (PhD Thesis, University of Middlesex, 2010); also see Cartledge, *Testimony in the Spirit*, 146-148.

Another very significant and crucial nature of this Christology is its close proximity and resemblance with the Christology of the Synoptic Gospels and in every sense can be called as *Gospel Christology*. A cursory glance at this point will reveal that the Christological themes which have emerged in the study are the basic building-blocks of Gospel Christology. The Gospel tradition is rich in stories which prove the themes of Jesus as healer, exorcist, provider, and saviour. These narratives in the Gospels take place in a similar setting as that of ordinary Indian Pentecostals, although both are separated by a two thousand year gap. Ill-health, poverty, oppression and evil-spirit infestations form the background of this Christology just as in the Gospels. Even a casual reading of the Gospels and a glimpse into the condition of the people in Indian villages would convince anybody of the glaring similarities of these settings. Moreover, the confessions of people who have experienced healing, exorcism or rescue from perilous situations are the same as those in the gospels. The recipients of these miracles have a lofty understanding of Christ and proclaim him in their context, just as we read in the Gospels.³⁹

Another important characteristic of this Christology is its focus on the authority and power of Christ to heal and to deliver from the destructive social, cultural and spiritual forces. Jesus is the greatest of all and is incomparable. Every power whether it is spiritual or temporal, religious or cultural, political or social comes under the authority of Jesus. This idea portrays Christ as the cosmic conqueror of the principalities and powers just as he was portrayed in Colossians (Col.2:13-15). In the New Testament texts, these powers were recognized as the hostile cosmic

³⁹ Mk.5:7; 7:36; Matt.14:33 and Lk.8:39.

powers of the universe that gripped with fear the hearts of many in the Roman world of the day. The popular religion of the first century Mediterranean world conceived of a cosmos haunted by spirits in the heavens, on the Earth and beneath the Earth through association with magic, mysteries or astrology. To remedy this situation, Paul addressed it by announcing that the powers of darkness had been defeated by Christ on the Cross.⁴⁰ A similar understanding is prevalent in the context of our study as we have seen: that the people understand Christ to be victorious over all powers. Therefore we can term it to be a *power Christology*.

It should also be noted that Indian Pentecostal Christology is in tune with the more widespread Pentecostal Christology in which Christ is portrayed as saviour, healer and so on. However, it is not a copy of earlier Pentecostal tradition. Most of the people are unaware that such a Pentecostal Christology exists. It is through their contextual experiences that they have developed these notions of Christ. Nevertheless, it should be noted at this point that, except for a few pastors and some south Indian Pentecostals, not many have advocated the idea of Jesus as ‘the soon coming king’ as in the ‘fourfold Gospel’. This is perhaps understandable, as most of them are reeling under existential struggle. Now we shall turn to analysis to study the affinity of this Christology with the larger Pentecostal tradition and the New Testament.

7.3 Development

Any given system of theology, whether it is biblical or practical, systematic or contextual, needs to include certain basic elements if it is to be called a ‘Christian

⁴⁰ D. G. Reid, ‘Powers and Principalities,’ *DPL*, edited by Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, Daniel G. Reid (Illinois: IVP, 1998), CD Rom.

theology'. These elements include scripture, experience, tradition, culture, context, history, and so on.⁴¹ Christology of a given context also ought to accommodate at least some of these elements if it is to be genuinely an 'ordinary' Christology.

In the case of ordinary Pentecostal Christology we have already explored the context, history, culture and experience of the people which acted as underlying principles, shaped and coloured it. It is true to these factors. In this section, first we shall try to evaluate ordinary Indian Pentecostal Christology in the light of larger Pentecostal theological traditions to see whether the former has any consonance and continuity with the latter. Secondly, we shall see whether this Christology has a biblical base, especially with respect to the Jesus tradition in order to gauge its suitability as an authentic 'Christology'.

7.3.1 Pentecostal Tradition

We should not overlook the fact that theology is always contextual and takes the shape and colour of the context and other local factors in which it evolves. Moreover, Pentecostalism cannot be explained as a monolithic single structure worldwide but has to be understood as different entities with various hues and colours, springing up from cultural diversities. Even though it is difficult to identify a universal unifying thread, Pentecostal movements the world over have certain characteristic features in common such as emphasis on the work of the Spirit, the idea of Jesus as healer and so on. Moreover, as we have seen, the basic

⁴¹ These basic elements are considered to be the formative factors of any given theology, for example see, Sumithra, *Christian Theologies from an Indian Perspective*, 35-38.

commitment to the fourfold (or fivefold) Gospel also may be considered as a distinguishing feature of the movement.⁴²

7.3.1.1 Jesus as Healer and Exorcist

The fourfold Gospel or full Gospel is the fourfold devotion to Jesus Christ as the Saviour, Spirit Baptiser, Healer and Coming King.⁴³ According to Dayton, the Pentecostal movement developed this doctrine from the background of the Holiness movement and various evangelical revival strands of the nineteenth century.⁴⁴ Later, Pentecostal leaders adopted this doctrine and used it effectively in Pentecostal evangelistic campaigns.⁴⁵

However, the unique Pentecostal contribution to this doctrine was the addition of a Pentecostal flavour and a new theological direction. Macchia rightly captures the essence: ‘What was unique was how these themes formed a “gestalt” of devotion in the Spirit to Jesus that reconfigured evangelical piety and gave Pentecostalism its Christological centre as well as its theological cogency and

⁴² Quoted in Donald Dayton, *The Theological Roots of Pentecostalism* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1987), 21; see Stanley Horton, *Into All Truth: A Survey of the Course and Content of Divine Revelation* (Springfield, Mo.: Gospel Publishing House, 1955), 13.

⁴³ This is also often called fivefold Gospel adding Jesus as sanctifier. Dayton, *The Theological Roots*, 19. The ‘statement of truth’ of the Pentecostal Fellowship of North America (PFNA) calls it full Gospel and draws attention to ‘healing for the body’ as well as ‘holiness’ and baptism in the Spirit.

⁴⁴ For detailed descriptions see Dayton, *The Theological Roots*, 15-28; Donald Dayton, ‘The Rise of the Evangelical Healing Movement in Nineteenth Century America,’ *Pneuma* 4/1 (1982): 1-18; Also see Melvin E. Dieter, ‘Wesleyan Holiness Aspects of Pentecostal Origins,’ in *Aspects of Pentecostal-Charismatic Origins*, edited by Vinson Synan (New Jersey: Logos International, 1975), 67-69. For instance, A. B. Simpson founder of the Christian and Missionary Alliance spoke of Christ as the saviour, sanctifier, healer and coming king. See A.B. Simpson, *The Fourfold Gospel: Jesus as Saviour, Sanctifier, Healer and Coming King* (Orlando, FL: Bridge-Logos, 2007); C. Nienkirchen, ‘Simpson, Albert Benjamin,’ *NIDPCM*, 1069-70.

⁴⁵ Raymond L. Cox, *The Four-Square Gospel* (Los Angeles: Foursquare Publications, 1969), 9. For example, Aimee Semple McPherson, founder of the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel summarises it in characteristic Pentecostal style: Jesus saves us according to John 3:16. He baptises us with the Holy Spirit according to Acts 2:4. He heals our bodies according to James 5:14-15. And Jesus is coming again to receive us unto himself according to 1 Thess. 4:16-17.

direction'.⁴⁶ The provision of bodily healing through the atonement and by the gift of the Spirit became one of the main theological emphases of the Pentecostal movement. Dayton considers 'the Divine Healing Movement' of the nineteenth century as one of the 'theological roots of Pentecostalism'.⁴⁷ Horton, in his *The Gifts of the Spirit*, says that divine healing is the only way of healing open to believers and authorised by the Scriptures.⁴⁸ Early Pentecostals were convinced of this and practised the divine healing in their daily life including exorcism.⁴⁹

This Pentecostal emphasis on divine healing and exorcism was true in India and within the larger Asian context. Many of the early Pentecostals in Kerala had supernatural gifts of healing and exorcism,⁵⁰ which helped the establishment of the Pentecostal movement at the beginning of the last century.⁵¹ According to K.E. Abraham, one of the founding leaders of the Indian Pentecostal Church (IPC), many of the early Pentecostals joined the movement due to the healing and other miraculous events undertaken in his ministry.⁵² Although earlier Pentecostals did not consider healing and exorcism to be major Pentecostal doctrines,⁵³ they understood them as instrumental in bringing glory to the Lord

⁴⁶ Macchia, 'Theology, Pentecostal,' 1123-1124.

⁴⁷ For detailed descriptions see Dayton, *The Theological Roots*, 115-141; Kimberly Ervin Alexander, *Pentecostal Healing: Models in Theology and Practice* (Dorset, UK: Deo Publishing, 2006), 8-63.

⁴⁸ Anderson, *An Introduction*, 232.

⁴⁹ For example, Charles Parham wrote in 1902: 'Christ did not leave his believing children without signs...Neither did he send forth his servants to preach vague speculative theories of a world to come, but with mighty power for the relief of suffering humanity: feeding the hungry, clothing the naked; healing the sick; casting out the devils..'. Quoted in Dayton, *The Theological Roots*, 24-25.

⁵⁰ See Mathew, *Kerala Penthecosthu Charithram* and Abraham, *Yesukristhuvinte Eliya Dassan*.

⁵¹ Robert F. Cook, *Half a Century of Divine Leading and 37 Years of Apostolic Achievements in South India* (Cleveland, TN: Church of God Foreign Missions Department, 1955), 25-26, 40-41; Mathew, *Kerala Penthecosthu Charithram*, 49-69.

⁵² Abraham, *Yesukristhuvinte Eliya Dassan*, 104-105, 108-110.

⁵³ However, the Ceylon Pentecostal Mission (CPM) had a strict rule against using any medicine and considered divine healing to be an indispensable doctrine of Pentecostalism.

and used them extensively in missionary activities.⁵⁴ What we can understand from their stories is that divine healing acted as an assurance of God's presence in their personal lives.⁵⁵ Occurrence of healing was considered as a medium for evangelism and 'a vivid message from God to the people'.⁵⁶ For example, Bergunder, after conducting research on divine healing and exorcism among the Indian Pentecostals, comments that the Pentecostal pastors' practices resembled those of *mantravadis* (black magicians) and this has brought deliverance and attracted many to the Pentecostal movement.⁵⁷

Similarly, in a wider Asian context, healing and exorcism acted as springboards to Pentecostal growth and consolidation. For example, it is claimed that the immediate cause for the rapid growth of the Yoido Full Gospel Church of Yonggi Cho is its emphasis on healing and exorcism to alleviate the sufferings of the common people (*Minjung*) in their cultural and religious contexts.⁵⁸ Park says, 'It [healing] is the most important aspect of the ministry of Yonggi Cho and has contributed to the phenomenal growth of the Church'.⁵⁹ This has contributed to the well being of ordinary people, as Ma comments, 'As a result, an "upward mobility" was created, not only in the spiritual and emotional realm but more tangibly in economic and social areas'.⁶⁰ This is true in most of the countries of

⁵⁴ Abraham, *Yesukristhuvinte Eliya Dassan*, 109-110.

⁵⁵ P.M. Philip, *Krishuvil Ente Yathra (My Pilgrimage with Christ)* (Kottayam, India: Royal Calling Books, 1999), 17-22; Cook, *Half a Century of Divine Leading*, 33-35, 56.

⁵⁶ Cook, *Half a Century of Divine Leading*, 81.

⁵⁷ Michael Bergunder, 'Miracle Healing and Exorcism: The South Indian Pentecostal Movement in the Context of Popular Hinduism,' *International Review of Mission* XC/356,357 (January/April, 2001): 101-112.

⁵⁸ Dongsoo Kim, 'The Healing of Han in Korean Pentecostalism,' *JPT* 15 (1999): 123-139.

⁵⁹ Myung Soo Park, 'Korean Pentecostal Spirituality as Manifested in the Testimonies of Members of Yoido Full Gospel Church,' *AJPS* 7/1 (2004): 48.

⁶⁰ Wonsuk Ma, 'Asian Pentecostalism: A Religion whose only Limit is the Sky,' *Journal of Beliefs & Values* 25/2 (August 2004): 198.

Asia where most of the people suffer social, economic and cultural evils which result in illness and evil spirit infestations.⁶¹

Early Pentecostal magazines such as *The Apostolic Faith*, *The Bridegroom's Messenger*, *The Latter Rain Evangel*, *Confidence* and others abound with testimonies and theological justification of divine healing and exorcism.⁶² In the first issue of *Apostolic Faith* William Seymour reported:

Canes, crutches, medicine bottles and glasses are being thrown aside as God heals. That is the safe way. No need to keep an old crutch or medicine bottle of any kind around after God heals you.⁶³

These periodicals also contained many testimonies about how people were healed of asthma, tuberculosis, evil spirits, blindness and many other serious diseases.⁶⁴

Seymour considered health and healing to be intricately linked to salvation and actually, the result of sanctification of the body.⁶⁵ Even some of the early Pentecostals rejected the use of medicines and considered them to be evidence of weak faith.⁶⁶ Likewise, as McClung asserts, a survey of the literature, history and oral stories of Pentecostalism reveals the centrality of the practice of exorcism in

⁶¹ Trinidad E. Seleky, 'A History of the Pentecostal Movement in Indonesia,' *AJPS* 4/1 (2001): 137; Gani Wiyono, 'Timor Revival: A Historical Study of the Great Twentieth-century Revival in Indonesia,' *AJPS* 4/2 (2001): 227-278; Chin Khua Khai, 'Pentecostalism in Myanmar: An Overview,' *AJPS* 5/1 (2002): 54-55.

⁶² See Alexander, *Pentecostal Healing*, 67-70.

⁶³ *Apostolic Faith* (September, 1906), 1.

⁶⁴ See *The Latter Rain Evangel* (August, 1913): 2-11.

⁶⁵ Alexander, *Pentecostal Healing*, 78; Similarly, Alexander Boddy advocated that it was through the Cross that sickness is defeated because 'by his stripes we are healed'. Mark J. Cartledge, 'The Early Pentecostal Theology of *Confidence* Magazine (1908-1926): A Version of the Five-Fold Gospel?,' *JEPTA* 28/2 (2008): 126.

⁶⁶ Douglas Jacobsen, *Thinking in the Spirit: Theologies of Early Pentecostal Movement* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2003), 131 and also see Anderson, *An Introduction to*, 232.

the expansion of the movement. However, major Pentecostal denominations did not develop it into a formal doctrine.⁶⁷

Divine healing, the vital theme of Pentecostalism has been recently elucidated by Pentecostal theologians to capture its significance and develop a theology of healing in Pentecostal theology. Thomas elucidates the relationship between the devil and disease, sickness and sin, healing and forgiveness in the New Testament.⁶⁸ Cartledge establishes the faith and understanding of ordinary Pentecostal believers in the ministry of healing.⁶⁹ Land explains divine healings as 'sign of the eschatological breaking in of the Kingdom of God and last-days restoration for the proclamation of the Gospel of the Kingdom on Earth'.⁷⁰ For Pentecostals, healing is a means whereby the Gospel is proclaimed in both the physical and spiritual dimension of life's reality. Thus, healing restores an individual's sense of wholeness.⁷¹ According to F. Martin, this understanding is congruent with the biblical understanding of anthropology.⁷² Bridges Johns explains the Pentecostal understanding of divine healing:

In the ministry of healing there is the expression of the belief that salvation and healing are for the whole person. The laying on of hands and anointing with oil are means whereby Pentecostals give

⁶⁷ L.G. McClung Jr., 'Exorcism,' *NIDPCM*, 624; Dayton, *The Theological Roots*, 24; Similarly Keith Warrington elucidates Jesus as Healer in early British Pentecostalism; see Keith Warrington, 'The Role of Jesus as Presented in the Healing Praxis and Teaching of British Pentecostalism: A Re-Examination,' *Pneuma* 25/1 (Spring 2003): 66-92.

⁶⁸ John Christopher Thomas, *The Devil, Disease and Deliverance: Origins of Illness in New Testament Thought* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998); John Christopher Thomas, 'Devil, Disease and Deliverance: James 5:14-16,' *JPT* 2 (1993): 25-50.

⁶⁹ Cartledge, *Testimony in the Spirit*, 105-129.

⁷⁰ Stephen J. Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 95.

⁷¹ Cheryl Bridges Johns, 'Healing and Deliverance: A Pentecostal Perspective,' *Concilium* 3 (1996): 45-50.

⁷² F. Martin, 'Gift of Healing,' *NIDPCM*, 694-698.

expression to this belief. As recorded in the Gospels, Jesus comes as the great Physician, healing both sin-sick souls and physical sickness. His touch is one which brings *shalom*, restoring wholeness.⁷³

Today Pentecostal theology envisions divine healing as an overall liberative activity of God in the life of a disadvantaged person.⁷⁴ 'The divine touch upon the human body reveals the good news that even the most weak and despised are worthy of becoming the tabernacle of God's glory. Thus, the outcasts become vessels of honour through which God makes known the mysteries of his Kingdom'.⁷⁵ Further, Pentecostals understand divine healing as 'a means of achieving deeper solidarity with the oppressed and the suffering creation as well as with the Spirit of redemption at work in healing'.⁷⁶ However, Macchia cautions us that one should think critically about sickness in terms of social injustice and poverty.⁷⁷ He contends that there are problems with much of the popular teachings of Pentecostal evangelists on healing because of their implicit isolation of sickness from the broader plight of human injustice and suffering. Moreover, the issue of isolation of healing from the work of the Spirit of God in all of creation to bring redemption and liberation is also a serious matter.⁷⁸

⁷³ Bridges Johns, 'Healing and Deliverance,' 49.

⁷⁴ Shaibu Abraham, 'Healing as Liberation: A Pentecostal Perspective,' *Filadelfia Jyoti* (2008): 26-27.

⁷⁵ Bridges Johns, 'Healing and Deliverance,' 49.

⁷⁶ Frank D. Macchia, 'The Struggle for Global Witness: Shifting Paradigms in Pentecostal Theology,' in *The Globalization of Pentecostalism*, 22.

⁷⁷ Macchia, 'The Struggle for Global Witness,' 21.

⁷⁸ Macchia says that as a consequence, the popular teaching on healing also tends to be isolated from the final eschatological redemption of the body and renewal of that will occur when the kingdom of God comes in fullness; Macchia, 'The Struggle for Global Witness,' 21.

Similarly, Pentecostal theologians have tried to explain the Pentecostal perspective on exorcism in a wider context. For Pentecostals, the act of exorcism is the establishment of God's supremacy over the evil powers and signals the in-breaking of the reign of God over the evil structures of this world. However, theology in general has taken a negative attitude towards this issue because twentieth century cosmology relates only to the physical universe and to the physical dimension of reality. Enlightenment thinking and western scientific worldview visualise reality as mechanistic and deterministic, and dichotomise the physical and spiritual, the body and spirit.⁷⁹

However, Pentecostals see reality as a whole, without differentiating into western dualistic categories; as holistic and trans-rational. Bridges Johns describes the Pentecostal view,

For Pentecostals, truth is not limited to reason...Pentecostals believe that evil spirits may inhabit human beings and use them for evil things....Much like the ancient church, Pentecostals are engaged in a holy war against the kingdom of darkness...It is fought through the weapons of prayer and often involves fasting...Exorcisms are open confrontations in which the evil ones are cast out and persons rescued for the kingdom of Christ.⁸⁰

Thus Pentecostals understand the full Gospel as bringing good news for all of life's problems, which is particularly relevant in the societies of the developing world, where disease is rife and access to adequate health care is very rare.

⁷⁹ Abraham, 'Healing as Liberation,' 26.

⁸⁰ Bridges Johns, 'Healing and Deliverance,' 48.

Salvation, for Pentecostals, is an all-embracing term, meaning a sense of well-being evidenced in freedom from sickness, poverty and misfortune, as well as in deliverance from sin and evil.⁸¹

7.3.1.2 Jesus as Provider and Protector

Similarly, other themes such as Jesus as provider and protector are not uncommon in Pentecostal tradition. Rather, the lives of early Pentecostal pioneers the world over are the best illustrations for the justification of these Christological notions. Miraculous stories of provision and protection form the bedrock of their faith and assurance; they had the powerful presence of Jesus among them and expressed it through their testimonies.

We need to understand the emergence of these Christological concepts in the deprived circumstances and the opposition and persecution the early Pentecostals suffered. Most of them were from poor backgrounds; however, their faith in the provision of God enabled them to overcome the precarious situation they were in. Early Indian Pentecostals testified to miraculous provision and protection in their lives and in missionary activities. Biographies of early Pentecostal leaders like Ramankutty Paul, K.E. Abraham, P.M. Samuel and K.C. Cherian are full of stories of how God provided miraculously for their material needs.⁸² For instance, P.M. Philip, a Pentecostal pioneer of the Indian Pentecostal movement from Kerala, narrates some of his stories of miraculous provision and protection. He

⁸¹ Anderson, *An Introduction to*, 228.

⁸² Pulikottil, 'Emergence of Indian Pentecostalism,' 54.

received financial provision from a stranger and was protected from a terrible accident.⁸³

Similarly, Pentecostal missionaries, as well as ordinary believers the world over also faced perilous opposition from various quarters such as other denominations, other religionists and from governments.⁸⁴ In India, the early Pentecostals not only suffered opposition from denominational churches, but many of them were persecuted for their faith and even killed by fundamentalist religious elements.⁸⁵ Kurien Thomas, who was one of the earliest missionaries to North India, also narrates many of his experiences of miraculous provision and protection.⁸⁶ Once, he was miraculously protected from an attack,⁸⁷ and on another occasion, saved from a train accident.⁸⁸

Similarly, *The Latter Rain Evangel* describes stories of provision and protection to a certain missionary Max Wood Moorhead for the mission work in India.

⁸³ Once Philip was coming from a North Indian missionary trip; reaching Kerala he had to travel by boat to his home. He got the ticket and waited for the boat to leave but it was delayed. Tired of a long journey, he went in a tea shop to have a cup of tea. Meantime, the boat left the place. Now he had only enough money to get to Kottayam a few miles away from his actual destination. He reached Kottayam and began to walk the rest of the distance. Then a voice heard from behind said, 'from where are you coming?' A gentle man came to him, introduced himself and said that he had attended his meeting earlier. He took him to a nearby hotel and provided food and also gave him enough money to reach his destination. As soon as he reached home, the news spread that the boat he had missed had capsized and many people had drowned. Philip, *Krishuvil Ente Yathra*, 158-164.

⁸⁴ See Abraham, *Yesukrishuvinte Eliya Dassan*, 138, 174, 417; Thonnakkal, *Marubhoomiyile Appostalan*, 73-78, 111-113.

⁸⁵ Abraham, *Yesukrishuvinte Eliya Dassan*; Chacko, *An Autobiography*; Thomas, *God's Trailblazer*; Mathew, *Kerala Penthecosthu Charithram*; Thonnakkal, *Marubhoomiyile Appostalan*; Kaithamangalam, *Marubhoomiyil Thalarathu*; Simmons, *Vision Mission and a Movement*; K.V. Paul Pillai, *India's Search for Unknown Christ*, 3rd ed. (New Delhi: Indian Inland Mission, 1984).

⁸⁶ Thomas, *God's Trailblazer*, 21, 27, 40-41, 51-56; In a missionary trip to the city of Banswara, Rajasthan, he was conducting meetings in the house of a medical doctor. During the meeting, the doctor's son came running with a sword to attack him. However, according to Thomas, some unseen force stopped the young man from striking him.

⁸⁷ Thomas, *God's Trailblazer*, 41.

⁸⁸ Thomas, *God's Trailblazer*, 51; in another occasion, he was coming from north Bihar; he heard an inner voice compelling him to get out of the train. Recognizing it as the word of the Lord, he refused to travel on it. After a few hours, he got the news that the train derailed and several passengers had been injured.

Narrating the incidents he encouraged the young people to go for foreign missions.⁸⁹ John Lake, who became a missionary in South Africa (1908), needed \$2,000 for expenses for his journey but had nothing. In answer to his prayer an unknown donor from California, sent to a friend four \$500 drafts.⁹⁰

The Pentecost Magazine of 1909 reports an incident of miraculous protection of some sisters who were involved in a terrible accident, due to storm burst and rain. According to Ida, one of the persons involved in the incident, ‘... praise our mighty Keeper, He had fulfilled Ps.34:20 to us: “He keepeth all his bones, not one of them is broken”’.⁹¹ Another group of missionaries who worked in West China were attacked by raiders and looted of all their personal belongings. The raiders kidnapped women missionaries but these women were miraculously protected from them, even though they had to undergo perilous situations.⁹² What is definite is that these miraculous stories not only served to deepen the faith of the early adherents, but also enabled them to carry out the early mission with great enthusiasm.

7.3.1.3 Jesus as the Saviour, Lord and God

The themes of Jesus as Saviour, Lord and supreme over all other gods are important for Pentecostal movement. Although Pentecostalism emphasises Spirit baptism and the gifts of the Spirit, all these important doctrines are thoroughly

⁸⁹ Max Wood Moorhead, ‘The Lord Working for the Unopened Land,’ *The Latter Rain Evangel* 6/3 (December 1913): 8-11

⁹⁰ T. E. Plumb, ‘The Healer: Dr. John Graham Lake,’ http://www.enterhisrest.org/charismata/lake_biography.pdf; (taken from Ward M. Tannenburg, *Let Light Shine Out: The Story of the Assemblies of God in the Pacific Northwest*).

⁹¹ Ida Florence Sackett, “‘There Shall Be No Evil Befall Thee,’” *The Pentecost* 1/8 (July 1909): 8; also see C. W. Reinhardt, ‘Providential Protection from Storms,’ *The Latter Rain Evangel* (February 1913): 21-22.

⁹² Ivan S. Kauffman, ‘Miraculous Deliverances from Raiders and Robbers,’ *The Latter Rain Evangel* (April 1915): 20-24.

dependent on the bedrock of Christology which exalts Christ as the Saviour, Lord and only God. These Christological notions Pentecostals experience intimately through the work of the Spirit in their personal and community lives. Consequently, they are eager to proclaim Jesus as Saviour and Lord and have no qualms in presenting Jesus as unique. Twentieth-century theological relativism and the onslaught of higher criticism did not deter them from the task of proclamation. It is interesting to observe that when western Protestantism and theology were reeling under the burden of liberalism, Pentecostalism was steadily growing and proclaiming Jesus to be the Saviour. This is all the more true in the Third World situation where multi-religious settings stand against this confession and proclamation. The emergence of the concept of religious pluralism, or the idea of many ways for salvation, did not deter Pentecostals from professing Jesus to be the *only* Saviour.

Early Pentecostals in India were very particular in proclaiming Jesus as the Saviour and Lord and this proclamation was followed by signs and wonders, mainly in terms of divine healing. In Kerala, the Pentecostal proclamation was in the form of the fourfold Gospel and the listeners who were already Christians responded immediately. These proclamations focused on bringing people into a personal relationship with Christ the Lord.⁹³ Early Pentecostal magazines like *Zion Kahalam* and others underline the early Pentecostals' astute faith in the sovereignty and supremacy of Jesus.

As already discussed, the Christological affirmation in the fourfold Gospel was wholeheartedly assimilated by the early Pentecostals and applied to their lives and

⁹³ Abraham, *Yesukristhuvinte Eliya Dassan*, 96.

mission.⁹⁴ The early Pentecostal journals and literature are full of these claims. *The Pentecostal Evangel* boldly asserts, 'He had been made or ordained a Saviour...Christ was manifested to undo, to nullify, to destroy the works of the devil'.⁹⁵ They were convinced about the efficacy of the blood of Christ in salvation, 'No blood, no mercy. No blood, no protection'.⁹⁶

The early Pentecostals were accused of the theological error of forsaking the all-sufficiency of Christ and following a Gnostic spirituality, due to their emphasis on Spirit baptism.⁹⁷ However, it is clear that the early Pentecostals emphasised the supremacy of Christ more than Spirit baptism. For instance, Seymour was categorical about the vitality of Christology and exhorted the people by saying, 'Now, do not go from this meeting and talk about tongues, but try to get people saved'. McClung asserts, 'Seymour, and subsequent Pentecostal leaders since him, had a strong Christology which centred more on the Giver than the gift'.⁹⁸ According to Macchia, Pentecostals have never meant to sever Spirit empowerment from the supremacy of Christ in salvation. He contends, 'After all, Pentecostals have always emphasised that Christ is the baptiser in the Spirit'.⁹⁹

Early Pentecostals strongly emphasised the divinity of Jesus and affirmed Jesus as 'the only true God'. *The Pentecostal Evangel* comments: 'The General Council, with the Christian Alliance and all other real Evangelical Christians, believe

⁹⁴ Simpson, *The Four-Fold Gospel*, 31; They believed and practiced what Simpson says, 'Christ is called the "mighty to save," because no matter how weak or how wicked the sinner may be, He is able to save him to the uttermost' and 'Salvation comes by confessing Christ as the Saviour'.

⁹⁵ No Author, 'Our Jesus,' *The Pentecostal Evangel* 492 (14 April 1923): 1.

⁹⁶ No Author, 'When I See the Blood I will Passover You,' *The Pentecostal Evangel* 493 (21 April 1923): 1; No Author, 'The Power of the Blood,' *The Pentecostal Evangel* 495 (5 May 1923): 1.

⁹⁷ Macchia, 'The Struggle for Global Witness,' 13.

⁹⁸ Stanley H. Frodsham, quoted in L. Grant McClung jr., 'Truth on Fire: Pentecostals and an Urgent Missiology,' *Society for Pentecostal Studies Annual Meeting Papers (1985)* (Cleveland: Society for Pentecostal Studies, 2006): 5, C.D. Rom.

⁹⁹ Macchia, 'The Struggle for Global Witness,' 15.

strongly in the Deity of Jesus Christ'.¹⁰⁰ Whenever there were any attacks against the deity of Christ from liberals, there was a reaction from the Pentecostals. Reacting against liberal attitudes,¹⁰¹ one article says, 'But I desire to exalt my Jesus as a divine Christ...He was in the form of God, He was equal with God. He is God'.¹⁰² Moreover, they considered Jesus as the only way to salvation and proclaimed this conviction.¹⁰³ The name of Jesus is above every name and holds the power to overcome anything in the world,¹⁰⁴ because he has risen from the dead and dwells in us through the power of the Spirit.¹⁰⁵

Although early Pentecostals were particular about the supremacy of Christ, Pentecostal theologians have not adequately developed a theology that introduces Jesus as the Saviour and Lord in a religious pluralistic context. The reason seems to be that Pentecostals are so deeply involved in the defence of Spirit-baptism and glossolalia that Christology has been taken for granted. Moreover, Pentecostals just borrow these ideas from the Evangelical Theology. However, from our study it is very clear that the theological conception of Pentecostals is significantly

¹⁰⁰ No Author, 'The Only True God,' *The Pentecostal Evangel* 324-325 (24 January 1920): 6-7.

¹⁰¹ For example, *The Pentecostal Evangel* quotes a liberal view against Jesus and reacts against it strongly: 'They patronizingly speak of Him as a great man and a great teacher, and so forth. I have a clipping concerning a certain professor in a Baptist college in Missouri. This professor states, "I do not subscribe to the deity of Jesus, nor to His vicarious death and intercessory work. I do not worship Christ or pray in His name, I do not believe that He is divine. I cannot accept the statements in the Bible concerning his pre-existence, and I do not believe that Christ is infallible or that He is a safe one to follow." I suppose he prefers to follow his own gigantic mind. This statement from a man, who has been training the preachers of the coming generation, shows how things are going in the religious world'. See, No Author, 'What Think ye of Christ,' *The Pentecostal Evangel* 496 (12 May 1923): 6.

¹⁰² W.T. Gaston, 'What Think ye of Christ,' *The Pentecostal Evangel* 496 (12 May 1923): 6.

¹⁰³ No Author, 'The Only Way,' *The Pentecostal Evangel* 499 (2 June 1923): 1; 'There is one way only into this place of, safety, this house of defence, this strong habitation, this fortress of the redeemed: "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life, no man cometh unto the Father but by Me," see No Author, 'He That Climbeth Up Some Other Way, the Same is a Thief and a Robber,' *The Pentecostal Evangel* 402-403 (23 July 1921): 3.

¹⁰⁴ Smith Wigglesworth, 'The Power of the Name,' *The Pentecostal Evangel* 480-481 (20 January 1923): 2.

¹⁰⁵ Smith Wigglesworth, 'Our Risen Christ,' *The Pentecostal Evangel* 490 (31 March 1923): 2.

different from Evangelical Theology and Christology, because of the context and the Spirit-experience. The discussion above shows that the Christology held by the ordinary Pentecostals is compatible with the larger Pentecostal tradition.

7.3.2 New Testament Testimony

Pentecostals have always claimed themselves to be thoroughly biblical and have even been accused of interpreting the Scriptures literally.¹⁰⁶ They are particular in comparing and evaluating their doctrines, experiences and practices in the light of biblical testimony.¹⁰⁷ For Pentecostals, theology means clarifying the message of the Scripture in the service of the fellowship and evangelistic mission of the church.¹⁰⁸ Therefore, the characteristics of various Christological themes that emerged in the study need to be reflected upon and evaluated in the light of the New Testament testimony to the person and work of Christ, in order to fully understand its suitability and reliability within the Indian context. Here, we shall use contemporary New Testament scholarship, especially Gospel studies, Historical Jesus studies and social scientific study of the New Testament which will give us a historical picture of Jesus and the activities he developed in his society, to see how these themes have been portrayed. We shall also look into Pauline scholarship to understand whether the ordinary Indian Pentecostal Christological affirmation of divine titles such as Saviour, Lord and God are in tune with New Testament tradition.

¹⁰⁶ Kenneth J. Archer, 'Pentecostal Hermeneutics: Retrospect and Prospect,' *JPT* 8 (1996): 65-66; Hollenweger, *The Pentecostals*, 291-307; French L. Arrington, 'The Use of the Bible by Pentecostals,' *Pneuma* 16/1 (Spring 1994): 101.

¹⁰⁷ Anderson, *An introduction to Pentecostalism*, 225-228; Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, 19; Arrington, 'The Use of the Bible by Pentecostals,' 105-106.

¹⁰⁸ Macchia clarifies this fact: 'The experiences they expressed and interpreted orally and dramatically were formed in the context of the "strange new world of the Bible."' Frank D. Macchia, 'Theology, Pentecostal,' *NIDPCM*, 1120-1121.

7.3.2.1 Jesus as Healer and Exorcist

As we have noted, the themes of Jesus as healer and exorcist form the core of the Christological understanding of ordinary Pentecostals and also are used as effective tools in missionary activities. This is true in the New Testament testimony, especially in the Gospels.

‘Nothing is more certain about Jesus than that he was viewed by his contemporaries as an exorcist and a healer,’ asserts John Meier.¹⁰⁹ Nearly one-fifth of the entire Gospels is devoted to Jesus’ healing and the discussions occasioned by it.¹¹⁰ Kelsey rightly observes, ‘The interest Jesus showed in the physical and mental health of human beings was greater than that of any other leader or religious system from Confucius through Hinduism and Buddhism to Islam’.¹¹¹

Jesus devoted a substantial portion of his ministry to performing miracles of healing for a wide variety of people. Mark devotes around thirty one percent of his Gospel to the miracles and healings of Jesus.¹¹² He focuses on the power of Jesus and on his dramatic confrontations with the forces of Satan (5:1-43).¹¹³ Matthew has his own version of Jesus as healer (15:30-31), *where* he describes

¹⁰⁹ John P. Meier, ‘Jesus,’ *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, rev. ed. (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1989), 1321.

¹¹⁰ The Gospels narrate no less than 34 specific miracles performed by Jesus out of which twenty-two are healings. In addition there are fifteen texts that refer to Jesus’ miraculous activity in summary fashion; see Morton T. Kelsey, *Psychology, Medicine and Christian Healing* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1988), 42. For a detailed classification and description of the healing and exorcism stories in the gospels; see John Wilkinson, *The Bible and Healing: A Medical and Theological Commentary* (Michigan: Eerdmans, 1998), 64-69; B. L. Blackburn, ‘Miracles and Miracle Stories,’ *DJG*, edited by Joel G. Green, Scot McKnight, I. Howard Marshall (Illinois: IVP, 1992), CD Rom.

¹¹¹ Kelsey, *Psychology, Medicine*, 41-42.

¹¹² Blomberg, ‘Healing’; also see Andrew Dauntton-Fear, *Healing in the Early Church: The Church’s Ministry of Healing and Exorcism from the First to the Fifth Century* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2009), 33; Wilkinson, *The Bible and Healing*, 64-69.

¹¹³ Blomberg, ‘Healing’; Dauntton-Fear, *Healing in the Early Church*, 32-33.

those afflicted with several ailments were healed by Jesus and concludes that the crowd ‘glorified the God of Israel’.¹¹⁴

In Luke’s Gospel, both disease and demon-possession are attributed to Satan, and the demons regularly recognize Jesus as the Son of God (4:41; 8:28) who is victorious over them. In fact, many writers, such as Achtemeier, believe that of the four Evangelists, it is Luke who himself a physician, makes most clear the possibility of miracles serving as a basis of faith.¹¹⁵ Jesus’ healings in the Gospel of John are pre-eminently signs designed to bring people to faith in Jesus as Son of God (4:54).¹¹⁶ ‘The signs inevitably lead to explanatory discourses which invest them with symbolic and Christological significance,’ comments Blomberg.¹¹⁷ In Acts, there are explicit links between the healing activities of the apostles and that of Jesus: Acts 9:34 specifies that the healing of the paralytic Aeneas by Peter was by the direct action of Jesus Christ.¹¹⁸ It is also clear that Jesus sent his disciples out to carry on with the healings and exorcisms.¹¹⁹

Similarly, all three Synoptic Gospels agree that the casting out of demons was a significant aspect of Jesus’ ministry. According to Twelftree, exorcism stories are the bedrock of reliable data about the historical Jesus and the most compelling

¹¹⁴ Howard Clark Kee, ‘Medicine and Healing,’ *ABD*, edited by David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1997), CD Rom.

¹¹⁵ P. J. Achtemeier, ‘The Lukan Perspective on the Miracles of Jesus: A Preliminary Sketch,’ in *Perspectives in Luke-Acts*, edited by C. H. Talbert (Danville, IL: AABPR, 1978), 153–67.

¹¹⁶ Harold Remus, *Jesus as Healer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 72–75.

¹¹⁷ Blomberg, ‘Healing’; Joel B. Green, ‘Healing,’ *NDBT*, edited by T. Desmond Alexander & Brian S. Rosner (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP, 2000), CD Rom.

¹¹⁸ Kee, ‘Medicine and Healing’. In Peter’s description of the career of Jesus, he remarks that God’s anointing of him with power and thus God’s presence with him had been manifested in his good deeds and specifically in his ‘healing all that were oppressed by the devil’ (Acts 10:38).

¹¹⁹ Mk.6:7–13; Matt.10:5–10; Lk.9:1–6.

evidence of Jesus being an exorcist.¹²⁰ The Beelzebul passages¹²¹ clearly depict the power of Jesus over demons as the evidence that God's kingdom had broken into the present world order ruled by Satan.¹²² Jesus' authority over the power of Satan was conveyed to his disciples as well.¹²³ Reese comments: 'In fact, the only activity that runs consistently from the opening summary of Jesus' ministry through the accounts of his miracles and into the commission given to his disciples is the casting out of demons'.¹²⁴

For many scholars, the healing acts of Jesus are problematic, largely 'because there is no room for them among the pattern of conduct and perception available in contemporary U.S. and European social systems'.¹²⁵ The Enlightenment mindset of western scholarship and the contemporary social system in which scholars have been enculturated have given rise to various interpretations of the healing and exorcism of Jesus. Pilch observes, 'The advent of modern science in about the seventeenth century disrupted the bio-psycho-spiritual unity of human consciousness that had existed until then'.¹²⁶

¹²⁰ Graham H. Twelftree, *Jesus the Exorcist* (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson Publishers, 1993); Graham H. Twelftree, *Jesus the Miracle Worker: a Historical & Theological study* (Illinois: IVP, 1999); Graham H. Twelftree, 'Demon, Devil, Satan,' *DJG*; Graham H. Twelftree, 'Miracles of Jesus Marginal or Mainstream?,' *Journal of the Study of the Historical Jesus* 1/1 (2003): 104-124.

¹²¹ The Beelzebul passages deal with the charge that Jesus cast out demons by Beelzebul; see, Matt 12:25-29; Mark 3:23-27; Luke 11:17-22; Mk 3:22 [par. Mt 9:34 and 12:24; Lk 11:15].

¹²² David George Reese, 'Demons (New Testament),' *ABD*; Twelftree, 'Demon, Devil, Satan'.

¹²³ Kee, 'Medicine and Healing'; For example, Matt 10:8; Mark 3:13-19; 6:7-13; Luke 9:1-2; Graham H. Twelftree, *In the Name of Jesus: Exorcism among Early Christians* (Michigan: Baker Academic, 2007).

¹²⁴ Reese, 'Demons (New Testament)'.

¹²⁵ Stuart L. Love, 'Jesus Heals the Hemorrhaging Woman,' in *The Social Setting of Jesus and the Gospels*, edited by Wolfgang Stegemann, Bruce J. Malina & Gerd Theissen (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), 85.

¹²⁶ John J. Pilch, 'Paul's Ecstatic Trance Experience near Damascus in Acts of the Apostles,' *HTS Theologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 58/2 (2002): 693.

Blackburn contends that there is almost universal agreement among NT scholars that Jesus performed what is regarded as miraculous healings and exorcisms. The miracles of healing pass the dissimilarity test and satisfy the criterion of multiple attestations.¹²⁷ Gerd Theissen persuasively demonstrates that the accounts of the exorcisms and the healings in the Gospels are to be considered as independent genres with their own motifs.¹²⁸

Some of the Jesus research scholars explain away healing miracles either as mere magic or psychological recovery.¹²⁹ However, social-scientific models might better explain healing in the non-western society. According to Love, a model characterised by spirit involvement and aggression may help to better understand illness as a misfortune caused by cosmic forces.¹³⁰ Moreover, illness was considered to be impurity.¹³¹ Similarly, the belief that the evil eye may cause illness was prevalent.¹³² Every society which depends primarily on animal husbandry for its economic livelihood regards spirit aggression as the

¹²⁷ Blomberg, 'Healing'; Blackburn, 'Miracles and Miracle Stories'; Kelsey, *Psychology, Medicine*, 45. According to Blackburn, however, some like Burton Mack contend that Jesus was not a miracle worker. But Blackburn affirms that sober historical analysis will continue to affirm the high probability that Jesus performed healings and exorcisms. See Burton Mack, *A Myth of Innocence: Mark and Christian Origins* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988).

¹²⁸ Gerd Theissen, *The Miracle Stories of the Early Christian Tradition*, edited by J. Riches, translated by J. Bowden (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1983), 85-94.

¹²⁹ For instance, Jesus restored the sight of a blind man of Bethsaida by spitting on the man's eyes and laying on his hands (Mark 8:22-26). In John 9:6, Jesus is described as making mud from spittle and placing it on the eyes of the man born blind, which mud, when washed away, results in his gaining sight. However, as Mark's version of the incident makes clear, the crucial factor is faith in the power transmitted through Jesus (Mark 7:36). Remus, *Jesus as Healer*; Steven L. Davis, *Jesus the Healer* (London: SCM, 1995); John Dominic Crossan, *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1992). For a brief survey of scholarship, see Amanda Porterfield, *Healing in the History of Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 21-36.

¹³⁰ Love, 'Jesus Heals the Hemorrhaging Woman,' 86.

¹³¹ Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966); Also see Bruce J. Malina, *The New Testament World: Insight from Cultural Anthropology* (Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 161-196; for a brief description of concept of purity and impurity, see Stephen Westerholm, 'Clean and Unclean,' *DJG*.

¹³² Malina, *The New Testament World*, 120-125.

predominant cause of illness.¹³³ Magical practices flourish in pre-industrial settings among all social groups, but especially among lower class urbanites and villagers.¹³⁴ 'Restorative magic has prevailed in feudal orders, from the most ancient ones in the Near East to those in the Greek and Roman periods, in Central and Eastern Asia, in Medieval Europe and pre-Columbian America, down to those that survive today,' contends Sjoberg.¹³⁵ Since the evil spirits upset the order of life, causing illness and other social or physical disasters, magical practices ward off evil and correct imbalances in the spiritual order.¹³⁶ Our context comes very close to such a description.

In such societies, both patients and healers are embedded in a cultural system and it is the whole system that heals. Therefore, Jesus as a healer should not be viewed in isolation, but in association with the cultural system.¹³⁷ Pilch has identified the *folk sector* as a healing agent, in which villagers with recognised power to treat illness, and Jesus comes in to this category.¹³⁸ Elaborating on the healing of the haemorrhaging woman, Love contends that the healing of the woman would enable her to return to her household or become one of the women at the Cross. Returning to her household would open the family to Jesus as their healer, for the household itself would be made whole. Family renewal would mean provision and protection for the woman and increased productivity for the family – essential for the subsistence of agrarian households. The woman's good fortune would spread

¹³³ Love, 'Jesus Heals the Hemorrhaging Woman,' 87.

¹³⁴ Gideon Sjoberg, *The Preindustrial City: Past and Present* (New York: Free Press, 1960), 275.

¹³⁵ Sjoberg, *The Preindustrial City*, 277-278.

¹³⁶ Love, 'Jesus Heals the Hemorrhaging Woman,' 88.

¹³⁷ Love, 'Jesus Heals the Hemorrhaging Woman,' 86.

¹³⁸ John J. Pilch, 'Sickness and Healing in Luke-Acts,' in *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation*, edited by J.H. Neyrey (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson, 1991), 181-209; Love, 'Jesus Heals the Hemorrhaging Woman,' 89.

to her family and other members of her community.¹³⁹ Thus, as Horsely asserts, Jesus' healings were not merely isolated acts of individual mercy but part of a larger program of social healing.¹⁴⁰ This is exactly what happens in the Indian context even today, as we have seen.

In the case of exorcism, Western scientific and rational discourse has a tendency to reduce the 'strangeness' of primitive cultures and the dominant role of supernatural elements in daily life.¹⁴¹ Recently, many biblical interpreters have started to apply current psychological theories as models of explanation for this, such as multiple-personality disorder, which considers possession to be a case of hysteria, mania or epilepsy.¹⁴² These models usually consider possession from a psychoanalytical perspective as the 'projection' of repressed inner emotions or conflict onto another person. However, the possessions in Gospel stories portray a sort of literal 'introjection': the entering and inhabiting of a spirit from outside a person into the inner being of that individual.¹⁴³ 'Thus the alien quality of the process, the intravening spirit,' comments Strecker, 'is cut out and replaced by the possessed person's own self'.¹⁴⁴ Similarly, some sociologically oriented approaches run the risk of reducing possession to a strategy of the underprivileged, or of the oppressed, to strengthen their self-esteem, or to protest their condition.¹⁴⁵ In this perspective cases of possession in Jesus' time could

¹³⁹ Love, 'Jesus Heals the Hemorrhaging Woman,' 98.

¹⁴⁰ Richard A. Horsely, *Jesus and Empire: The Kingdom of God and the New World Disorder* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 108-109.

¹⁴¹ Christian Strecker, 'Jesus and the Demoniacs,' in *The Social Setting of Jesus and the Gospels*, 119.

¹⁴² See Davis, *Jesus the Healer*, 78-89. Strecker, 'Jesus and the Demoniacs,' 119-120.

¹⁴³ Strecker, 'Jesus and the Demoniacs,' 120.

¹⁴⁴ Strecker, 'Jesus and the Demoniacs,' 120.

¹⁴⁵ Such approaches are used by John Dominic Crossan, Paul W. Hollenbach and many others.

have been attributed largely to the prevailing Roman colonial oppression in Palestine.¹⁴⁶

Taking all these critical remarks into consideration, Strecker interprets possession as *performance*. The possessed person shows odd behaviour such as screaming, uncontrollable raging and teeth-grinding;¹⁴⁷ during the performance, the borders between identity and non-identity, inside and outside, reality and illusion are obscured.¹⁴⁸ Strecker defines the exorcisms of Jesus as transformative performances or *transformances*. Here, the exorcistic actions of Jesus are regarded as performance ritual actions that bring real transformations within possessed persons and their environments.¹⁴⁹ Although, this theory seems to better explain the exorcisms of Jesus, satisfying the scientific and western rational categories, at least in the context where our research was carried out, such an explanation is redundant. For the people, spirit-possession is very real and they seldom doubt the western dichotomies as westerners do: 'I and not I; identity and alterity; reality and illusion; body and spirit, rationality and irrationality'.¹⁵⁰

From the above discussion, it follows that it is obvious that the Christological themes of Jesus as healer and exorcist are in tune with the Christology of the Jesus tradition in the Gospels. What Hollenweger asserts cannot be an exaggeration,

¹⁴⁶ John Dominic Crossan, *Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography* (San Francisco: HarperSan Francisco, 1994), 88-89; Horsely, *Jesus and Empire*, 107-108.

¹⁴⁷ Mk.1:23-24; 5:2-7; 9:18-22.

¹⁴⁸ Strecker, 'Jesus and the Demoniacs,' 122-123.

¹⁴⁹ Strecker, 'Jesus and the Demoniacs,' 124; Thus, for Strecker, 'approaching possession with performance theory is the best way to shed light on the phenomena, respecting the indigenous experience while preserving its strangeness and opacity to a scientifically justifiable degree'.

¹⁵⁰ Strecker, 'Jesus and the Demoniacs,' 122.

that Third World oral Pentecostal theology is ‘nearer to biblical forms of theology than to the western form of theologising’.¹⁵¹

7.3.2.2 Jesus as Provider and Protector

Just as with the healing and exorcism, the themes of Jesus as the provider and protector play important roles in the Christological conception of the ordinary Pentecostal believers. Both these themes are an essential part of the Jesus tradition and form the building blocks of the Christological edifice of Gospel stories. Provision stories are called gift miracles which include the miraculous multiplication of loaves (Mk.6:30-44); the miraculous fishing trip (Lk.5:1ff); the miracle with the wine at Cana (Jn.2:1ff), and so on. Here the issue is always that Jesus provides material goods in a miraculous way.¹⁵²

According to Theissen and Merz, one of the dominant characteristic features of gift miracle is that it takes place spontaneously; no one asks for it.¹⁵³ Underlying them lies a tradition that, Jesus satisfied the hunger of a needy multitude with a small quantity of food that miraculously sufficed them. Marshall comments, ‘In this act the early church saw the supernatural power of Jesus to provide for human needs and a picture of his spiritual help’.¹⁵⁴

In the Gospel of Luke, one could describe Jesus’ entire ministry as providing food to the hungry. Jesus’ provision of food is a direct continuation of the metaphor of

¹⁵¹ Walter J. Hollenweger, ‘Crucial Issues for Pentecostals,’ in *Pentecostals after a Century: Global Perspectives on a Movement in Transition*, edited by Allan H. Anderson & Walter J. Hollenweger (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 176-191, 178.

¹⁵² Gerd Theissen & Annette Merz, *The Historical Jesus: A Comprehensive Guide*, translated by John Bowden (London: SCM Press, 1998), 294.

¹⁵³ Theissen & Merz, *The Historical Jesus*, 294.

¹⁵⁴ I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text, NIGTC* (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1978), 358.

the God who feeds.¹⁵⁵ Nolland asserts that the feeding account is intended by Luke to make a special contribution to the disciples' insight into the 'providing' identity of Jesus.¹⁵⁶ There is also an element of promise in these stories because Jesus seems to be demonstrating that God can be trusted to provide.¹⁵⁷ Mark also presents Jesus as the Shepherd who provides for all of their needs so that they lack nothing.¹⁵⁸

Several scholars identify the correspondence between the feeding stories and God's provision of manna in the wilderness.¹⁵⁹ Claassens comments, 'Like God, Jesus provides food to the people in a desolate place, evoking provision of manna in the wilderness. And like God's provision of food, there is more than enough for everyone, even leftovers, symbolising the abundance of God's provision of food'.¹⁶⁰ They also show messianic provision and foreshadow the blessings of the eschaton.¹⁶¹ Moreover, the food that Jesus provides is free, echoing the words of Isa.55:1-2.¹⁶² The Gospel of John places special emphasis on the food that Jesus offers (2:1-11; 6:1-15; 21:1-14). They are all proof of God's provision and signs

¹⁵⁵ L. Juliana M. Claassens, *The God who Provides: Biblical Images of Divine Nourishment* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2004), 101. For instance, the Magnificat (Lk.1:46-55) depicts God as filling the hungry with good things (v.53). Jesus' ministry becomes a concrete expression of this promise. The beatitudes in Luke 6:21 tell of Jesus blessing the hungry, promising that they will be satisfied; see Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke, NICNT* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1997), 365.

¹⁵⁶ John Nolland, *Luke 1:1-9:20, WBC*, Vol. 35a (Dallas, Texas: Word Books, Publisher, 1998), CD Rom.

¹⁵⁷ L. Shannon Jung, *Food for Life: The Spirituality and Ethics of Eating* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), 26.

¹⁵⁸ William L. Lane, *The Gospel of Mark: NICNT* (Michigan: Eerdmans, 1974), 233.

¹⁵⁹ Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 363; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke 1-IX, Anchor Bible 28* (New York: Doubleday, 1981), 766; I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text, NIGTC* (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1978), 357.

¹⁶⁰ Claassens, *The God who Provides*, 101.

¹⁶¹ Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 14-28, WBC*, Vol. 33b (Dallas, Texas: Word Books, Publisher, 1998), CD Rom.

¹⁶² Claassens, *The God who Provides*, 101; The providing aspect of the work of Christ is also symbolically portrayed in the Eucharistic meal constituted by Jesus.

of the kingdom of God.¹⁶³ These miracles suggest the unlimited gifts Jesus makes available; the miracle of abundance in the face of scarcity, of extravagance, of transformation and of new possibilities.¹⁶⁴

As we have seen in the case of healing and exorcism, there is much scepticism on the historicity of such accounts.¹⁶⁵ According to Hagner, there is no need to deny the historicity of the miracle simply because we have never witnessed a miraculous multiplication of food.¹⁶⁶ Hugh Montefiore, for instance, elaborates on various miraculous provision of food in church history and tries to elucidate the feeding miracles as paranormal phenomena which can be trusted.¹⁶⁷ While commenting on feeding accounts, Marshall also comments, 'If the precise details cannot be proved historically, it is equally impossible to deny on historical grounds that what the Gospels narrate took place in some sort of way'.¹⁶⁸

The stories of miraculous provision undergird the person of Christ, his divine origin and supremacy. For Marshall, the feeding provides the basis for the confession of Jesus as the Messiah.¹⁶⁹ While commenting on feeding miracles in John's Gospel, Thyen asserts that the underlying theme is Christology.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶³ Claassens, *The God who Provides*, 102.

¹⁶⁴ Gail R. O'Day, *The Gospel of John, NIB*, Vol. IX (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 539-540; Claassens, *The God who Provides*, 102. In another incident, to pay the temple tax for Jesus and Peter, we see a divine provision of money from a fish (Matt.17:24). In fact it is not simply mysterious foreknowledge of Jesus but a miracle of divine provision. This miracle is, however, unique in the NT, in that Jesus performs it for his and Peter's own convenience; Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*.

¹⁶⁵ Nolland, *Luke 1:1-9:20*. Nolland cautions us, 'While it is true, however, that we need to make generous allowance for the symbolism involved in the telling of the story, we should not be content to think that the theology and the symbolism have created the account'.

¹⁶⁶ Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*.

¹⁶⁷ Hugh Montefiore, *The Miracles of Jesus* (London: SPCK, 2005), 77-86.

¹⁶⁸ Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 358.

¹⁶⁹ Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 358.

¹⁷⁰ George R. Beasley-Murray, *John, WBC*, Vol. 36 (Dallas, Texas: Word Books, Publisher, 1998), CD Rom.

Similarly, Léon-Dufourmy contends that it asserts the mystery of the person of Jesus.¹⁷¹ At the end of the narrative, the disciples confess Jesus as the Holy One of God.¹⁷² This is similar to the understanding of ordinary Indian Pentecostal Christology.

Similarly, the Jesus tradition contains deliverance miracles, in which disciples were rescued from different circumstances.¹⁷³ They are concerned with the overcoming of hostile forces, defeating the power of nature or the state.¹⁷⁴ According to Theissen and Merz, rescue miracles include the description of the emergency and an epiphany which brings rescue from outside, by the intervention of a divine figure or one who is already present.¹⁷⁵ The calming of the sea proves Jesus to be the protector from forces beyond the control of the disciples.¹⁷⁶ In relation to walking on water, O'Day comments, 'Jesus reveals himself to his disciples in order to allay their fears, to ensure safe passage, to remind them that God has been, is, and will be their rescue'.¹⁷⁷ After the rescue, the question of the disciples, 'Who then is this?', serves to underline the impression of the uniqueness of Jesus. The story was also taken by the early church to symbolize the suffering and tribulation it underwent and the safety and security Jesus offered to them.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷¹ Beasley-Murray, *John*.

¹⁷² Beasley-Murray, *John*.

¹⁷³ Such as the stilling the storm (Mk.4:35-41), the miraculous walking on the water (Mk.6:45ff) and in the book of Acts the freeing of prisoners (Acts.12:1ff; 16:1ff).

¹⁷⁴ Theissen, *Miracle Stories of Early*, 99.

¹⁷⁵ Theissen & Merz, *The Historical Jesus*, 295.

¹⁷⁶ Perkins, *The Gospel of Mark*, 581; R. Alan Culpepper, *The Gospel of Luke, NIB*, Vol. IX (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 184-185.

¹⁷⁷ O' Day, *The Gospel of John*, 597

¹⁷⁸ R. T. France, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on Greek Testament, NIGTC* (Michigan: Eerdmans, 2002), 271.

However, scholarly scepticism claims that there was no miracle, only a coincidence of timing and that the wind and the waves subsided when Jesus commanded the storm to cease. Nevertheless, Culpepper rightly argues that such an explanation does violence to the story and strips it of its wonder and power.¹⁷⁹ Consequently, the Christological themes of Jesus as the provider and protector have been sufficiently evidenced in the Christological tradition of the Gospel accounts. In the Indian context ordinary believers also experience Jesus as the provider and protector in their everyday lives.

7.3.2.3 Jesus as the Saviour, Lord and God

The Christological titles such as 'Saviour' and 'Lord' refer to the present work and the exalted status of Christ.¹⁸⁰ The first Christians recognised his redemptive role to be universal, unique, complete and definitive¹⁸¹ and the ancient Christian formulas and confessions undergird this faith.¹⁸² Early Christian theology is in reality almost exclusively Christology.¹⁸³

In the Gospels the idea of Jesus as saviour was closely connected with his mission where salvation is achieved as a present experience resulting from a personal encounter with Jesus.¹⁸⁴ In the healing episode of the paralysed man (Mk.2:1-12),

¹⁷⁹ R. Alan Culpepper, *The Gospel of Luke, NIB*, Vol. IX (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 184.

¹⁸⁰ Oscar Cullmann, *Christology of the New Testament*, 2nd ed. (London: SCM, 1963), 193.

¹⁸¹ Gerald O' Collins, *Christology: A Biblical, Historical, and Systematic Study of Jesus Christ* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 296.

¹⁸² Rowan Williams comments, 'Even allowing for the most sceptical reading of the Gospels and Acts, we can say that within about twenty-five years from the likeliest date of Jesus' crucifixion, he was being invoked by Christians as a source of divine favour and almost certainly addressed in public prayer at Christian assemblies'. Rowan Williams, 'A History of Faith in Jesus,' in *The Cambridge Companion to Jesus*, edited by Markus Bockmuehl (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 220; Cullmann, *Christology of the New Testament*, 208; Ben Witherington III, 'Lord,' *DJG*.

¹⁸³ Cullmann, *Christology of the New Testament*, 2-3.

¹⁸⁴ I. Howard Marshall, 'Salvation,' *DJG*.

Jesus' statement that 'the Son of man has authority to forgive sins on Earth' (v.10) has profound Christological significance.¹⁸⁵ This is what is happening among the poor in the Indian context. Their healing experience leads them to acknowledge Jesus as saviour and receive remission of sin in the name of Jesus.

In Pauline literature, according to Luter, saviour means 'one providing salvation,' and often includes the related meanings of 'deliverer' or 'protector;' it is linked to the physical dimension.¹⁸⁶ Christ was the victor and also a liberator from the hostile powers of the sub-lunar cosmos: that vast hierarchy of spiritual authorities and rulers that controlled events in the world of change. Paul himself speaks of conversion as a liberation from the tyranny of these intermediary powers of the cosmos: 'we were in bondage to the ruling spirits of the cosmos' but now saved through Christ (Gal.4:3-5).¹⁸⁷ Many of the Pentecostals have experienced such liberation and understand Jesus as 'saviour'. Further, according to Witherington, the personal encounter of Paul with the risen Christ would have influenced the Pauline concept of Jesus as saviour.¹⁸⁸ In Galatians 1:11-23 Paul states that he has received his Gospel directly from God by revelation.¹⁸⁹ This form of personal encounter and the physical dimension of salvation is similar to the experience of Indian Pentecostals.

¹⁸⁵ The scribes' indignation ('Who has the power to forgive sins but one, God?' v.7), is caused by Jesus' statement 'Your sins are forgiven'. Such a passive formula is used in the OT for God's forgiveness (Ps. 32:1) and is implied as a claim to make performative statements in God's name. See P. Ellingworth, 'Forgiveness of Sins,' *DJG*; In Lk.7:36-50 also see a similar incident which underlines the fact that early Jesus tradition has attributed divine title of saviour to Jesus.

¹⁸⁶ A.B. Luter, 'Saviour,' *DPL*, edited by Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, & Daniel G. Reid (Illinois: IVP, 1998), CD Rom.

¹⁸⁷ Karen Jo Torjesen, "'You are the Christ': Five Portraits of Jesus from the Early Church," in *Jesus at 2000*, edited by Marcus J. Borg (Colorado: Westview Press, 1997), 79.

¹⁸⁸ Ben Witherington III, 'Christology,' *DPL*.

¹⁸⁹ J. M. Everts, 'Conversion and Call of Paul,' *DPL*; Witherington III, 'Christology'.

The title Lord was used by Jesus himself to identify his person and his identity (Mark 12:35-37 cf. Ps.110:7). Witherington cautions us not to dismiss it as the invention of the early church.¹⁹⁰ In the primitive confessional materials Paul's use of *maranatha*, which most probably means 'our Lord, come' (1Cor.16:22), strongly suggests 'the reality and presence of glorified Jesus as Lord'.¹⁹¹ Similarly, in the Christological hymn in Phil.2:6-11, Jesus has been highly exalted as the *Lord* of all and given the name which is above all names.¹⁹² It is the confession of the lordship which constitutes the climactic worship of all creation.¹⁹³ In another 'creedal' passage (1Cor.8:5-6), Paul acknowledges the existence of many 'gods' and 'lords' but considers Jesus to be the supreme among all. Commenting on the verse, Fee affirms that, for Paul, over against the many lords of paganism there is only one Lord, Jesus Christ, who is the agent of creation and redemption.¹⁹⁴ This confession is all the more relevant to the Pentecostal believers as they encounter many gods and lords, but affirm Jesus as the Lord and God. We find further evidence that the experience of the risen Lord led to the climactic confession of Thomas, 'My Lord and my God' (Jn.20:28), in which he appears to equate Lordship and Godhood.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁰ He says, 'This text should not be abruptly dismissed as reflecting the later theology of the early church, especially inasmuch as there is extensive evidence that Jesus saw himself in messianic terms and at least indirectly made messianic claims'. Witherington III, 'Lord'; Also see Gordon D. Fee, *Pauline Christology: An Exegetical-Theological Study* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2007), 393-401.

¹⁹¹ Williams, 'A History of Faith in Jesus,' 220.

¹⁹² Cullmann, *Christology of the New Testament*, 216-218.

¹⁹³ James D.G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998), 246.

¹⁹⁴ Fee, *Pauline Christology*, 90-91. 'For although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth – as indeed there are many 'gods' and many 'lords' yet for us there is one God, the Father...and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist' (1Cor.8:5-6).

¹⁹⁵ John Macquarrie, *Jesus Christ in Modern Thought* (London: SCM Press, 1990), 45.

The theology of Jesus' lordship becomes explicit after the resurrection and the early Christian reception of the Spirit.¹⁹⁶ Their profound knowledge and experience of Jesus' presence in the worship context, through the Spirit and his intimate presence in their struggles enabled them to address him as 'Lord'. Moreover, when they addressed Jesus as the 'Lord,' the understanding was that he had been exalted over all the earthly authorities.¹⁹⁷ This is what is happening with the Pentecostals, as in the early church. The first Christians were somehow able to accommodate such reverence for Christ within their exclusivist monotheism inherited from their Jewish background, producing thereby a distinctive 'binitarian' adjustment in this tradition.¹⁹⁸

The above discussion also points to the fact that the titles such as Saviour and Lord, which had been attributed to God in Old Testament were conferred upon Jesus by the early Christians with all their divine connotations, and they worshipped him without negating the supremacy and divinity of God. Jesus was not worshipped as a second God, or a second-order God; instead Jesus was understood to be of the same essence of God, and of the same saving authority in the cosmos.¹⁹⁹ Edwards portrays it:

The early church and the New Testament authors inevitably found themselves speaking of Jesus with the same words, symbols, images, statements, and texts by which their Jewish forebears spoke of God...The saving activity of Jesus Christ is the expression of the

¹⁹⁶ Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 245; Witherington III, 'Lord'; Cullmann, *Christology of the New Testament*, 208.

¹⁹⁷ Cullmann, *Christology of the New Testament*, 208.

¹⁹⁸ Larry W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Michigan: Eerdmans, 2003), 134-153; Richard J. Bauckham, *God Crucified: Monotheism and Christology in the New Testament* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1998), 25-42.

¹⁹⁹ James R. Edwards, *Is Jesus the only Saviour?* (Michigan: Eerdmans, 2005), 111.

Saving One who, through the prophet Isaiah, declared, 'I, I am the LORD, and besides me there is no saviour' (43:11).²⁰⁰

The same understanding and devotion can evidently be seen in the ordinary Pentecostal believers' attitudes, words, life-styles as well as in the way they address Jesus as the Saviour and Lord in their worship contexts. As a result, they are not wary of acknowledging Jesus as supreme and unique over all other gods they know and do not hesitate in proclaiming him God.

To summarise, Indian Pentecostal Christology unwittingly lacks a strong ontological identity of Jesus and the humanity of Jesus which are vital for any Christology. We have also noted some of the characteristics of this Christology, which make it a valid Christology for ordinary people in India. It is obvious that Pentecostal Christology is compatible with the larger Pentecostal tradition, as well as with New Testament testimonies to the person and work of Christ. Therefore, this ordinary Christology can rightly be termed to be a 'Pentecostal and biblical Christology'.

²⁰⁰ Edwards, *Is Jesus the only Saviour?*, 113.

Chapter 8

A CONSTRUCTIVE ORDINARY INDIAN PENTECOSTAL CHRISTOLOGY

In Chapter 7 we highlighted the affinity of ordinary Indian Pentecostal Christology with the larger Pentecostal tradition and recent Pentecostal scholarship. Here we shall endeavour to rescript the ordinary Indian Pentecostal Christology, by engaging with contemporary Pentecostal and Charismatic scholarship as dialogue partners. This rescripting exercise with Pentecostal theology will help place the ordinary Christology into the wider academic context. In the light of rescripting, we shall also offer a specific constructive proposal for ordinary Christology, which is in effect the thesis of this research project.

We shall group the themes of ordinary Christology into two categories: functional and ontological. Jesus as healer, exorcist, provider and protector are themes related to the existential struggles of the community and the way they perceive Jesus in relation to answers to those struggles, and can therefore be termed functional Christology. The last two themes, Jesus as Lord and God speak about the ontological identity of Jesus where he is understood to be above all. The theme 'Saviour' acts as a bridge between the functional and ontological categories and portrays his presence among the ordinary people and his supremacy and unique status as God. These Christological identities form the narrative structure of the community and define its identity, way of life and spirituality. They also act as a point of contact with non-Pentecostals and people of other religious traditions. We shall now turn to functional and ontological Christological

articulations of Pentecostal theology to place ordinary Christology on a firm footing.

It can be rightly argued that Pentecostalism is more Jesus-centred than Spirit-centred.¹ This is because Pentecostal proclamation revolves around the 'Full Gospel' (fourfold or fivefold Gospel) in which Jesus is proclaimed as saviour, (sanctifier), healer, Spirit-baptiser and the soon coming king.² A glance into the elements of the 'Full Gospel' suggests that they are closely related to soteriological aspects and, hence, point toward a functional Christology. These elements have been intimately appropriated and proclaimed in everyday experiences of ordinary Pentecostals.

According to Dayton, the unique theology of Pentecostalism is neither tongue-speaking nor sanctification but the 'Full Gospel' which provides a historical and theological pattern to analyse the movement.³ According to Thomas, the theological heart of Wesleyan Pentecostalism is the 'Full Gospel' and as a result, Pentecostal theology should be structured around these central tenets. A theology based on the 'Full Gospel' can reveal the ways in which Pentecostalism, as a movement, is both similar to and dissimilar from other movements within

¹ Keith Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology: A Theology of Encounter* (London: T&T Clark, 2008), 34.

² It is to be noted that different people use the terms 'fourfold' or 'fivefold' interchangeably but denote the same idea. See A. B. Simpson, *The Fourfold Gospel: Jesus as Saviour, Sanctifier, Healer and Coming King* (Orlando, FL: Bridge-Logos, 2007); Dayton, *The Theological Roots*, 15-28.

³ Dayton has shown that Pentecostalism borrowed a fourfold-devotion to Jesus Christ as Saviour, Spirit Baptizer, Healer, and Coming King from the Holiness movement and other evangelical strands. Dayton, *The Theological Roots*, 15-28; Dayton, 'The Rise of the Evangelical Healing Movement,' 1-18.

Christendom.⁴ Similarly, Kärkkäinen argues that a valid Pentecostal theology is to focus on Jesus Christ as the centre of the 'Full Gospel' and is a methodological gateway to a balanced theology. Christology and Pneumatology are interwoven in that, whatever Christ is, he is in the Spirit: Jesus Christ as the Saviour, healer and so on. And conversely, whatever the Spirit effects in the believer's life, be it salvation, healing or Spirit-baptism, it is the work of the Lord, Jesus Christ.⁵ Thus, it could be suggested that Pentecostal Christology is basically a functional Christology of the 'Full Gospel' with a pneumatological emphasis.

8.1 Functional Pentecostal Christology

One of the unique features of Pentecostalism is its insistence in applying the work of Christ in every aspect of believers' lives. What is read in the Bible has to be experienced in life in their contextual circumstances, in the power of the Spirit. This leads Pentecostals to appropriate Jesus' actions in the Gospels literally. Jesus has healed many, so healing is available even today. Jesus has provided for the poor, so his ability to provide for believers is still anticipated and experienced. Archer explains:

When Pentecostals read Scripture, they do so from within their cultural-contextual worldview. They read Scripture as the marginalised people of the latter rain. At the centre of the dramatic

⁴ John Christopher Thomas, 'Pentecostal Theology in the Twenty-First Century: 1998 Presidential Address,' *Pneuma* 20 (1998): 3-19, 17.

⁵ Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, 'David's Sling: The Promise and Problem of Pentecostal Theology Today: A Response to D. Lyle Dabney,' *Pneuma* 23 (2001): 147-152, 152.

narrative is Jesus, the divine-human Messiah. Jesus is a mighty miracle worker empowered by the Holy Spirit.⁶

Pentecostals understand that Christ acts here and now through the work of the Spirit. Christology in Pentecostalism is, therefore, rightly termed pneumatological Christology, and this dimension of Christology has been rightly emphasised by Pentecostalism from the beginning. Land, speaking about Pentecostal spirituality affirms that, 'Pentecostal spirituality is Christocentric precisely because it is pneumatic; its fivefold Gospel is focused on Christ because of its starting point in the Holy Spirit...In Pentecostal spirituality, Jesus Christ is the centre and the Holy Spirit is the circumference'.⁷ Thus, the 'Full Gospel' functions as the central narrative conviction of the Pentecostal community.⁸

Pentecostals embrace the Full Gospel, which places Jesus and the Spirit at the centre of God's dramatic redemptive story. The proclamation of the Full Gospel is the declaration of the redemptive activity of God in Christ Jesus and the Holy Spirit to the community.⁹ These confessional-doxological statements flow out of the redemptive encounter with the living Word, Jesus Christ, who is present in their community through the powerful presence of the Holy Spirit.¹⁰ In line with this Pentecostal orientation, Archer argues that to uphold the identity of Pentecostal theology, it is essential to articulate it 'Pneumatologically and

⁶ Kenneth J. Archer, *The Gospel Revisited: Towards a Pentecostal Theology of Worship and Witness* (Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2011), 42.

⁷ Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, 23.

⁸ Kenneth J. Archer, 'A Pentecostal Way of Doing Theology: Method and Manner,' *IJST* 9/3 (July 2007): 312.

⁹ Archer, 'A Pentecostal Way of Doing Theology,' 312.

¹⁰ Archer, 'A Pentecostal Way of Doing Theology,' 312.

organise it around the fivefold Gospel'.¹¹ Furthermore, according to Archer, a Pentecostal theology can avoid the Christo-monistic tendency of Reformation theology of the Word by affirming and addressing the missional role of the Spirit, in conjunction with the missional role of Jesus. Thus, he affirms that 'Spirit Christology would more correctly reflect the Pentecostal story and scriptural testimony'.¹² Alfaro, from a Latin American Hispanic context, also emphasizes that Spirit Christology is a more suitable paradigm for constructing a Pentecostal Christology, provided it is grounded in the experience, faith, and worship of its community and oriented toward liberative praxis.¹³

Additionally, from the beginnings of the movement, Pentecostals read the Gospels within the framework of a Spirit-Christology, where Christ was seen to be carrying out his ministry in the power of the Spirit; this is a popular understanding among Pentecostals. Although ordinary Pentecostals as a rule tend to over-emphasise the divinity of Jesus at the cost of his humanity; in relation to the earthly ministry of Jesus, especially regarding miracles, they firmly affirm him as truly human. The general perception is that

As God, Jesus was able to...heal the sick...but he has chosen not to 'use' his divinity, and he also made it clear that – in his humanity – he was utterly powerless. The miraculous did not occur because Jesus

¹¹ Archer, 'A Pentecostal Way of Doing Theology,' 301-314.

¹² Archer, 'A Pentecostal Way of Doing Theology,' 314.

¹³ Sammy G. Alfaro, 'Foundations for a Hispanic Pentecostal Christology: A Constructive and Liberative Approach' (PhD Thesis, Dallas: Fuller Theological Seminary, 2008).

was God, but because he was filled with the Spirit without measure and always moved in perfect harmony with the Father.¹⁴

Similarly, Williams in his *Renewal Theology* also points towards the Pentecostal-Charismatic position.

We now emphasize that the ministry of Jesus, in terms of His preaching the Good News, healing, deliverance, and many miraculous deeds, flowed out of His anointing by the Holy Spirit. It would be a mistake, therefore, to assume that Jesus did such mighty works because He was the Son of God. Rather, it was His Spirit-anointed humanity and the power resting on that humanity that lay behind His ministry in word and deed.¹⁵

This Spirit-empowerment is understood to be a model of ministry for Christians and Pentecostals firmly believe that the same power is granted to them through Spirit-baptism and enables them to act like Jesus (Jn.14:12).

Therefore, the functional Christology of Pentecostal scholarship is firmly anchored in Pneumatology and we shall explore it from the vantage point of the Spirit-anointing of Jesus. To this end, we shall take Pentecostal scholars Menzies and Shelton as dialogue partners; they expound Pentecostal Christology from the Lucan pneumatological perspective.

Menzies argues that Luke has purposefully redacted his sources to show that Jesus was a Spirit-anointed person who accomplished all the miraculous feats through

¹⁴ C. Dye, *Healing Anointing: Hope for a Hurting World* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1997), 28, quoted in Warrington, *Pentecostal Theology*, 52.

¹⁵ Rodman J. Williams, *Renewal Theology*, Vol.1 (Michigan: Zondervan, 1988), 339.

the power of the Spirit.¹⁶ It is generally argued that descent of the Spirit at Jordan brought Jesus into a new and deeper existential awareness of God as Father, and it also gave him a sense of becoming Son and Messiah. For Dunn, the Spirit initiates Jesus into the new age and covenant at the River Jordan.¹⁷ However, Menzies suggests that the descent of the Spirit and the divine declaration underline the fact that Jesus was equipped for his messianic task and this signals the beginning of his Spirit-led ministry.¹⁸ He asserts, ‘..Jesus’ pneumatic anointing, rather than being the source of his unique filial relationship to God or his initiation into the new age, is the means by which Jesus equipped for his messianic task’.¹⁹ In the temptation narrative, Luke specifically adds, ‘Jesus, *full of Holy Spirit*, returned from the Jordan’ (Lk. 4:1), to stress his redactional emphasis. It signifies that Jesus, as one who has been filled with the Spirit at Jordan, has constant access to the Spirit of God.²⁰ The same phrase was used in the case of Stephen (Acts 6:5; 7:55) and Barnabas (Acts 11:24). Thus, for Menzies, Luke’s description of Jesus as ‘full of Holy Spirit’ indicates that Jesus was empowered to carry out his divinely appointed task rather than pointing to the uniqueness of Jesus’ experience of the Spirit.²¹ Luke also adds that Jesus returned to Galilee ‘filled with the *power* of Spirit,’ which is neither found in Mark nor Matthew. This insertion, according

¹⁶ Robert P. Menzies, *Empowered for Witness: The Spirit in Luke-Acts* (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 133-134.

¹⁷ Menzies, *Empowered for Witness*, 135-137; James D. G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit: A Re-examination of the New Testament Teaching on the Gift of the Spirit in Relation to Pentecostalism Today* (London: SCM, 1970), 28.

¹⁸ Menzies, *Empowered for Witness*, 137-138.

¹⁹ Menzies, *Empowered for Witness*, 138.

²⁰ Menzies, *Empowered for Witness*, 139.

²¹ Menzies, *Empowered for Witness*, 139-142.

to Menzies, points forward to the preaching of Jesus in Nazareth (4:15, 18-19) and to the exorcism in Capernaum.²²

In the sermon of Jesus at Nazareth (Lk.4: 18-19), Luke altered the wording of the quotation from Isa.61:1-2. He omitted 'bind up the broken-hearted' and inserted 'let the oppressed go free,' due to his distinctive prophetic Pneumatology and also to emphasise the liberating power of Jesus' Spirit-inspired preaching and activities, which effect salvation. Here Luke views Jesus' entire ministry as well as his Spirit-anointing in prophetic terms.²³ Thus, for Menzies, all of Jesus' earthly ministry, including the miracles, were carried out by the power of the Spirit. Along with the above argument, according to Menzies, this understanding has implications for the believers. The pneumatic anointing of Jesus at the Jordan and that of the disciples at Pentecost suggests that, for Luke, Pentecost was for the disciples what the Jordan was for Jesus. The logical corollary is that, at Pentecost, the Spirit came upon the disciples in order to turn them into effective witnesses.²⁴

Shelton also brings out his functional Christology from Luke-Acts in a similar vein. He argues that, for Luke, Jesus being the recipient of the Holy Spirit is 'mighty in words and deeds'.²⁵ According to Shelton, Luke does not show as much interest as Paul in the Spirit's role in conversion and who believers in Christ are; rather, power for mission captures most of Luke's attention.²⁶ By comparing

²² Menzies, *Empowered for Witness*, 143.

²³ Menzies, *Empowered for Witness*, 155.

²⁴ Menzies, *Empowered for Witness*, 174.

²⁵ He asserts, 'In Luke-Acts the recipient of the Holy Spirit are, like Moses, "mighty in...words and deeds" (Acts.7:22), even as Jesus himself was "mighty in deed and word" (Lk.24:19)'. See James B. Shelton, *Mighty in Word and Deed: The Role of the Holy Spirit in Luke-Acts* (Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2000), 6.

²⁶ Shelton, *Mighty in Word and Deed*, 6.

and contrasting the references regarding the Spirit in the Synoptic Gospels, Shelton argues that Luke's distinct interest was to prove that the endowment of the Spirit enables the recipient to witness authoritatively. Even in the case of Jesus this is true; anointing was given to him to proclaim the good-news, to release the captives, to confront and defeat the devil, to heal and to do wonders (Lk.4:14, 18ff).²⁷

Luke, like other evangelists, sees the descent of the dove during the baptism of Jesus as a messianic sign and he also reiterates the sonship concept from the genealogy, emphasising that Jesus is the Son of God (Lk.3:38). Also in the temptation account Satan's query, 'If you are the Son of God..' attests the traditional significance of the descent of the Spirit found in all four Gospels. However, in addition to these references, Luke frequently and overtly declares that after the descent of the dove, Jesus was 'full of Holy Spirit' and empowered to do mighty works. More importantly, of all the Gospel writers only Luke notes this.²⁸ Shelton argues that this was a baptism of the Spirit for Jesus one which was similar to that of the believers, although there was one quantitative difference, that Jesus poured out the same Spirit upon the believers.²⁹

In the temptation account, Luke describes Jesus as 'full of Holy Spirit,' which is meant to show that this would result in inspired speech (Acts.6:3,5,8,10; 7:55; 11:23-24). Luke implies that Jesus was filled with the Spirit to conquer temptation. According to Shelton, Luke intended to tell his readers that Jesus

²⁷ Shelton, *Mighty in Word and Deed*, 6-13.

²⁸ See Lk. 4:1, 18; 10:21; 24:19; Acts 1:2; 2:22; 10:38; Shelton, *Mighty in Word and Deed*, 48-49.

²⁹ Shelton, *Mighty in Word and Deed*, 49-50; also see Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 24.

overcame the suggestions of the devil, not by performing a miracle (4:3), but by the words handed down to him by the Spirit.³⁰ What is vital in Luke's unique presentation of the temptation is that it makes a strong statement on Jesus' human nature. Jesus is described in the same terms as other human beings, however, empowered by the Spirit. Luke's use of 'full of the Holy Spirit' and 'led by the Spirit' makes it doubly clear that Jesus' temptations were real and that he was truly human. He relied not on his own power and resources but on God's. Otherwise, the temptations would have been a pre-arranged drama, a mere sham.³¹ This is why Luke uses the same terms to express Jesus' relationship with the Spirit and that of believers. The temptations of Jesus are real, as real as anyone else's dilemmas. He overcomes evil as God expects all people to triumph—through the power of the Holy Spirit. The inspired words that enable Jesus to overcome all of this originate from his experience with God's Spirit of power.³²

In the inauguration of Jesus' public ministry, only Luke mentions that, Jesus returned to Galilee in the 'power of the Spirit' (4:14) and that he read from Isaiah's scroll in the Nazareth synagogue 'the Spirit of the Lord is upon me' (4:18-19).³³ In the book of Acts, Luke emphasised the Spirit in Jesus' ministry, when he recounts early apostolic preachings. Peter, for example, associates Jesus

³⁰ However, this does not mean that the words of Jesus are mere magical formulas that enable him automatically to render the temptation ineffective or that the Spirit's power is a neutral magical power put to any use. Jesus overcame the temptation because of his continuous relationship with the Father. Shelton, *Mighty in Word and Deed*, 59.

³¹ Shelton, *Mighty in Word and Deed*, 60.

³² The same Spirit who empowered Jesus will enable his followers to speak against opposition, just as he predicted: 'And when they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and authorities, do not be anxious how or what you are to answer or what you are to say; for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say' (Luke 12:11-12), Shelton, *Mighty in Word and Deed*, 60.

³³ Shelton, *Mighty in Word and Deed*, 63.

with spiritual power (2:22; 4:27; 10:38), while John the Baptist is associated with repentance (10:37; 19:4).³⁴ Luke also specifically connects the miracle ministries of Jesus and the early church with the Spirit who is the source of miracle-working power and authority.³⁵ Thus, because of his Spirit-anointing, Jesus became ‘mighty in deed and word’ (Lk.24:19; Acts.10:38).

The natural corollary both Menzies and Shelton draw from their theses is that believers are Spirit-baptised to be mighty prophets. Under the power of the Spirit, believers were ‘mighty in deed and word,’ just as Jesus was.³⁶ Stronstad also argues that, by virtue of having been filled with the Spirit of prophecy, the believers become the eschatological community of prophets.³⁷ Therefore, it is vital ‘to recapture Luke’s vision of God’s people as the prophethood of all believers’.³⁸

8.2 Rescripting Ordinary Christology

Let us turn to rescripting the ordinary Christology in the light of the above discussion. It is clear from the idea expressed above that Pentecostal Christology understands Jesus’ earthly activities in terms of Spirit-anointing as well as in human terms. Here the ‘Full Gospel’ comes alive. Using Ted Peters’ analogy of systematic theology to be a ‘wheel’ and the ‘hub’ of the wheel as the Gospel of Jesus Christ, Archer argues that Pentecostal theology structured around the ‘Full Gospel’ and centred upon Jesus Christ, gives the movement its unique theological

³⁴ Shelton, *Mighty in Word and Deed*, 67.

³⁵ Shelton, *Mighty in Word and Deed*, 74-82.

³⁶ Shelton, *Mighty in Word and Deed*, 157.

³⁷ Roger Stronstad, ‘Affirming Diversity: God’s People as a Community of Prophets,’ *Pneuma* 17/2 (Fall 1995): 145-157, 145 (Presidential address of Society for Pentecostal Studies, 1994).

³⁸ Stronstad, ‘Affirming Diversity,’ 157.

identity. 'The Theological centre is the person of Jesus Christ, and protruding out of the centre are the five spokes which serve to explain the significance of the story of Jesus Christ for the community and the world. These spokes are the central narrative convictions of the Pentecostal story'.³⁹ Thus, for Archer, the 'Full Gospel' is crucial in order to understand the origins and enduring accents of emerging Pentecostal theologies. Further, the Christ that occupies the centre of Pentecostal theology is not an abstract or ideological principle, but the living Christ who still accomplishes the will of the Father through the power of the Spirit today.⁴⁰ The discussion of Lucan Christology by Menzies and Shelton also provides us with the following data: that Jesus performed all his miracles by the power of the Spirit.

Similarly, it has been sufficiently demonstrated that the ordinary Christological articulation of the Indian Pentecostals is integrally connected to their testimonies and proclamation of Jesus as healer, exorcist, saviour, God and so on. They understand Jesus in functional categories and introduce Jesus to others in these terms. Indian Pentecostals also firmly believe that these signs and wonders take place through the power of the Spirit. Therefore, the functional Christology of ordinary Indian Pentecostals is similar to the conceptions of the 'Full Gospel'.

However, theological expressions of Pentecostal movements the world over have different emphases and outlooks. Accordingly, ordinary Pentecostal Christology shows certain differences from the 'Full Gospel', just as we have seen, one of the elements, 'Christ as the Coming King' is largely missing (due to the contextual

³⁹ Archer, *The Gospel Revisited*, 15.

⁴⁰ Macchia, 'Theology, Pentecostal,' *NIDPCM*, 1124.

struggles).⁴¹ Using the same analogy Archer used, for ordinary Indian Pentecostals, the 'hub' is the person of Jesus Christ and his Gospel. However, the number of spokes is bigger. There are seven spokes in the wheel; Jesus is proclaimed as the healer, exorcist, provider, protector, Saviour, Lord and God. The rim of the wheel is the work of the Spirit. It is also clear that this functional Christology has radically transformed their conditions, making them strong enough to face the perilous situations they undergo and to rescue many from similar predicaments.

Jesus as healer and exorcist is at the very core of the Christological experience and conviction of the Pentecostals at the primary level and this also helps to disseminate the Gospel's message to the wider community. These themes not only heal ordinary people physically but renew and recreate their wounded psyche and broken world to give them a new life by healing the collective mind of the community and giving a new direction. This conviction is closely related to the revival fervour still prevalent in the community and understood to be the work of the Spirit.

Archer underlines this revival fervour in wider Pentecostal theology. According to him, the latter rain motif played a prominent role in the fashioning of the narrative tradition of the early Pentecostal community, by providing the basic structure for the Pentecostal story.⁴² In fact there would be no Pentecostal story without this revival motif. It enabled the Pentecostals to hold together the message of the Full Gospel because it provided a coherent explanation for the restoration of the

⁴¹ However, in South India, especially in Kerala, this understanding is prevalent.

⁴² Archer, *The Gospel Revisited*, 27.

supernatural gifts. It also provided the primary organisational structure for the Pentecostal story,⁴³ which is true of ordinary Pentecostals who very often appeal to the manifestation of miracles to validate their message. What Archer says is true of Indian Pentecostal Christology, ““Signs and wonders” became an important “proof” for validating the Pentecostal story, and with this came the development of a “signs theology””.⁴⁴

According to Archer, early Pentecostals read the whole Bible through the Book of Acts which was taken to be the beginning and end point in the development of biblical doctrines.⁴⁵ However, for Indian Pentecostals, especially those who come from contexts such as sickness, spirit worldview, poverty and religious and cultural oppression, similar Gospel stories, especially from the Synoptic Gospels, act as the fulcrum of their interpretation. The stories of healing, exorcism, provision and protection pass through the ‘ordinary hermeneutical grid’ of Pentecostal believers and shape Christological themes which change their lives. For them, these stories are not mere doctrine rather they are life, because in truth, they recreate their shattered lives. Ordinary Pentecostals internalise miracle stories in personal and community life and proclaim Jesus to be the Saviour in their society. This portrayal of Jesus acts as the restorative momentum to the members of traditional churches and to the people of other religious traditions. It is to be noted that the background of the Pentecostal movement in the early years of the last century, and the cultural and religious context of Indian Pentecostalism are entirely different. Indian Pentecostals live and work among people of other

⁴³ Archer, *The Gospel Revisited*, 27-30.

⁴⁴ Archer, *The Gospel Revisited*, 30.

⁴⁵ Archer, *The Gospel Revisited*, 35-36.

religious faiths, therefore, the Christological understanding needs to be extended to the understanding and to the appreciation of other religious traditions.

Besides, these primary themes liberate the marginalised and oppressed from their wretched situation and empower them to rise above such denigrating elements in society. Here Jesus is understood to be deliverer. Even more, because they still live in their hostile circumstances, they are ready to come all out, for the sake of Christ. Archer agrees with this, 'The Pentecostals were marginalised people who heeded the call to empty themselves of "self-love" and "self-will" and immerse themselves in the latter rain outpouring, which was the restoration of the Gospel of Christ for the preparation and participation of the end-time harvest'.⁴⁶ This element is vital for ordinary Christology and therefore, we shall re-examine it later.

8.3 Ontological Pentecostal Christology

Our concern at this point is to look into the Pentecostal mode of ontological Christology developed in recent Pentecostal scholarship. Several Pentecostal scholars endorse Spirit Christology in this regard. Hunter supports Spirit Christology, 'so long as Christology and Pneumatology are seen in a Trinitarian structure'.⁴⁷ Habets holds that a Trinitarian Spirit Christology satisfies the requirements for a biblical Christology when it is seen, not as a replacement for, but as a complement to the existing Logos Christology.⁴⁸ His main emphasis is

⁴⁶ Archer, *The Gospel Revisited*, 31.

⁴⁷ Harold D. Hunter, 'The Resurgence of Spirit Christology,' *European Pentecostal Theological Association Bulletin* 11 (1992), <http://www.fullnet.net/np/archives/writings/epta.html> (accessed 1 September 2010); Harold D. Hunter, 'Spirit-Christology: Dilemma and Promise,' *Heythrop Journal* 24 (1983): 127-140, 266-277.

⁴⁸ Myk Habets, 'Spirit Christology: Seeing in Stereo,' *JPT* 11/2 (2003): 216-228.

that Spirit Christology needs to be developed from a Trinitarian framework to avoid denying the ontological identity of Christ with God.⁴⁹ Therefore, here we shall take Ralph Del Colle, the Roman Catholic Charismatic theologian, as our dialogue partner, since he speaks in Pentecostal terms and advocates a classical Trinitarian position in Spirit Christology.⁵⁰

According to Del Colle, the experiential reality in Spirit baptism among Pentecostals and Charismatics becomes the basis for their spirituality. Pentecostal spirituality is essentially concerned with a communion in which God, the self, the neighbour and all of creation are known in prayer and praise of God, witnessing the risen Christ through the power of the Spirit.⁵¹ Taking this idea forward, Del Colle argues that the 'knowledge of God,' or 'religious affection' appropriate for the Christian, is one that brings transformative conversion and praxis, the presence of God mediated by the risen Lord in the Holy Spirit.⁵² What is unique to Pentecostal experience is that this transformation is marked by an experimental effusion of the Spirit as gift and empowerment. Thus, Pentecostalism intrinsically holds that the presence of God is Christologically and Pneumatologically inscribed into our regenerated human faculties. That is, there is no relationship with Christ, without the awareness of the Spirit and vice versa.⁵³

⁴⁹ Steven M. Studebaker, 'Integrating Pneumatology and Christology: A Trinitarian Modification of Clark H. Pinnock's Spirit Christology,' *Pneuma* 28/1 (Spring 2006): 8, 5-20.

⁵⁰ Ralph Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit: Spirit Christology in Trinitarian Perspective* (Oxford University Press, 1994).

⁵¹ Ralph Del Colle, 'Spirit Christology: Dogmatic Foundations for Pentecostal-Charismatic Spirituality,' *JPT* 3 (1993): 94.

⁵² Ralph Del Colle, 'Schleiermacher and Spirit Christology: Unexplored Horizons of the Christian Faith,' *IJST* 1/3 (1999): 288-289.

⁵³ Del Colle, 'Spirit Christology,' 93.

Consequently, Del Colle proposes a Spirit Christology from a Trinitarian perspective. The true Gospel portrayal of Jesus emerges only when the Christological event is understood to be a thoroughly Trinitarian event.⁵⁴ That is, God the Father effects salvation through the Son and in the Spirit; Jesus is both 'Son' and 'Spirit-bearer'. Therefore, the theological elaboration of this idea in the direction of Christian doctrine leads to the construction of Spirit Christology which attempts to represent this reality in the realm of our understanding faithfully.⁵⁵ He explains the relevance of Spirit Christology:

To contemplate the person of Jesus Christ in the light of the Pentecostal-charismatic experience is to explicate the confession of 'truly human' and 'truly divine' within the ambit of a Spirit anointed and transfigured human being that is God's communicative and salvific relation to humanity. He is the mediator of life, mission and our deepest human identity, what we can describe in the language of election as our calling to exist in graced filial relation to God, the source of all reality.⁵⁶

Thus, Spirit experience can truly contribute to an ontological understanding of Christ because it emphasises both his divinity and his humanity.

According to Del Colle, Trinitarian Spirit Christology proposes that the work of God in Jesus Christ proceeds of the Spirit and is enacted in the Spirit such that the

⁵⁴ Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit*, 4; That is, 'the relationship between Jesus and God and the role of Christ in redemption cannot be fully understood unless there is an explicitly pneumatological dimension'.

⁵⁵ Ralph Del Colle, 'Trinity and Temporality: A Pentecostal/Charismatic Perspective,' *JPT* 8 (1996): 101.

⁵⁶ Del Colle, 'Spirit Christology,' 94.

Spirit becomes a gift to humanity in divinizing and missionising power.⁵⁷ Moreover, taking the idea of David Coffey, he argues that the Spirit creates, sanctifies and unites the assumed humanity of Jesus to the divine Son, so that the same Spirit as the Spirit of the Son may be poured out as a gift, enacting a regenerated, empowered and transfigured humanity so that in the eschaton God may be all in all (1Cor.15:28).⁵⁸ It is significant to note that Pentecostal-Charismatic spirituality contributes to a theological recognition of Trinitarian Spirit Christology because 'it apprehends in Spirit baptism/renewal of the living agency and presence of Christ and the Holy Spirit, as co-inhering but distinct, in the full inheritance of Christian initiation'.⁵⁹ The believer knows Christ to be Baptizer in the Spirit and the Spirit is the *Paraclete* who glorifies Christ in the manifestation of *charismata* and the formation of virtue. Here Trinitarian distinctions are not a matter of speculation but of lived experience and Christian witnessing. Moreover, the 'Full Gospel' is central to the Pentecostal-Charismatic experience that understands Christ as Saviour and Baptizer in the Spirit.⁶⁰ In this experience there is an existential awareness of the effusion of the Holy Spirit as gift of the risen *kyrios*.⁶¹ The key issue for a systematic Trinitarian Spirit Christology is whether or not the Son and the Spirit can be distinguished in the Christian experience of grace.⁶² The *Christus praesens* is known through the proclamation that effectively announces salvation. Likewise, prayer and petition

⁵⁷ Del Colle, 'Spirit Christology,' 106.

⁵⁸ Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit*, 124. Some of the Charismatic and Pentecostal theologians use the Spirit Christology of David Coffey for their Spirit Christologies (Del Colle, Steven M. Studebaker). We shall look into the Spirit Christology of David Coffey in a later section of the Chapter, to propose a Trinitarian Spirit Christology for ordinary Indian Pentecostal Christology.

⁵⁹ Del Colle, 'Spirit Christology,' 106.

⁶⁰ Del Colle, 'Spirit Christology,' 106.

⁶¹ Del Colle, 'Spirit Christology,' 106-107; Del Colle, 'Trinity and Temporality,' 111.

⁶² Del Colle, 'Spirit Christology,' 107; Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit*, 169-174.

for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the epicletic dimension associated with the *Spiritus praesens* (Lk.11:13; 24:49), implies a distinction from the *Christus praesens*.⁶³ Thus, the Pentecostal-Charismatic experience reveals the Trinitarian deep structure of Christian faith and theology.

Del Colle also attempts to address three major issues of contemporary theology, with the help of his Trinitarian Spirit Christology. They are (1) contextual issues of culture and human experience; (2) emancipatory concerns of social praxis and a just society, and (3) religious pluralism and the quest for dialogue.⁶⁴ We shall address the last two of these concerns in relation to ordinary Indian Pentecostal Christology later.

8.4 Rescripting Ordinary Christology

Now we shall turn to rescript the ontological elements which are integral parts of ordinary Christology. It was noted above that Indian Pentecostals attribute titles such as Lord and God to Christ, as they experience miraculous intervention in their lives. Jesus who has rescued them from sickness and evil spirits is also the saviour of their entire lives. That is, the saving acts begin with the body and proceed to the inner being and to salvation from sin. Their proclamation of Jesus as Lord and God underlines their basic conviction that Jesus is greater than all the other gods.

However, as we explained in Chapter 7, although ordinary Pentecostals emphasise and proclaim Jesus as Lord and God, ordinary Christology lacks a Trinitarian

⁶³ Del Colle, 'Spirit Christology,' 107; Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit*, 174-179.

⁶⁴ Del Colle, *Christ and the Spirit*, 195-213.

understanding and an ontological identity (both divinity and humanity). Their knowledge of Jesus as Lord begins with their salvation experience which is closely related to their bodily healing, deliverance and protection from social and spiritual forces and provisions in their strugglesome lives. They also experience the constant presence and work of Christ in their daily life. These experiences, along with preaching and teaching about the greatness of Jesus Christ in the church enable them to see him as Lord of their lives. Within the worship context of the community, where the work of the Spirit is appreciated and the experience of the baptism of Spirit gives a further boost to this understanding. Then they extend the Lordship of Christ into every realm of their community and into the larger society. For them, Jesus is greater than all and he is the supreme God.

Therefore, for Indian Pentecostals a Spirit Christology addressing both the divinity and humanity of Jesus with equal emphasis is significant. It needs to be rooted in the biblical tradition, especially the Gospel accounts, which are the primary source of theologising of ordinary believers. Moreover, it has to do justice to traditional Trinitarian Christology, Pentecostal identity and to contextual factors which give rise to ordinary Pentecostal Christology. Del Colle's explanation goes along with this line:

Reference to Jesus Christ is true to the Gospel only when the Christological event is understood to be a thoroughly Trinitarian event, an event in which God effects salvation through the Son and in the Spirit. In terms commensurate with the earliest strata of the canonical Gospels we can state that Jesus is revealed as one who stands in a unique relationship to the God of Israel, that is, his 'Abba

relation' and as one who is filled with the Spirit without measure
(Jn.3:34).⁶⁵

The ontological Christology proposed by Del Colle is essentially a Trinitarian framework which emphasises the divinity and the humanity of Jesus equally while upholding the person and work of the Spirit, which gives Pentecostal spirituality its identity. It is interesting to note that he begins his Spirit Christology from Spirit-experience, which is similar to the understanding of ordinary Pentecostals. Ordinary Pentecostals are unable to articulate their experiences into neat categories and turn them into a formal Christology but their rich Christological and pneumatological experiences can be taken to be stepping stones to a more ontologically oriented understanding of Christ, as Del Colle explains. At this point, ordinary Indian Pentecostal Christology can develop an ontological Christology in Trinitarian terms by defining the relationship between the Christ and the Spirit and the Christ and the Father. This understanding is relevant to a Pentecostal Christology, as Studebaker argues that integration of the Pentecostal experience of the Spirit with theological reflection is the key distinguishing factor of Pentecostal theology.⁶⁶

8.5 Constructive Proposal

In the light of rescription, critical evaluation and the context of Indian Pentecostals it is feasible to make certain proposals, considering ordinary Indian Pentecostal Christology's inherent weaknesses and contextual issues it faces.

⁶⁵ Del Colle, 'Spirit Christology,' 93.

⁶⁶ Studebaker, 'Integrating Pneumatology and Christology,' 19-20.

From the study it has become clear that three areas need to be addressed, namely, first, the ‘Trinitarian’ element of Christology in the light of lack of a concrete understanding of the divinity and humanity of Jesus (ontological); second, the ‘dialogical’ element in the context of religious pluralism and persecution; third, the ‘liberative’ elements in the situation of exploitations and marginalisation. The ideas of the Trinitarian model of Spirit Christology presented by David Coffey will be proposed to add a Trinitarian emphasis as scholars like Del Colle and Studebaker have done.⁶⁷ In relation to other religious traditions we shall engage with a few Pentecostal scholars who have specialised in this area, while from a liberation perspective we shall present ideas from the study of the historical Jesus.

8.5.1 Trinitarian Spirit Christology

We shall now explore important elements of Trinitarian Spirit Christology which are to be added to Indian Pentecostal Christology. Australian Roman Catholic theologian David Coffey shows that Spirit Christology is a necessary complement to *Logos* Christology.⁶⁸ Exploring the idea of ‘the Holy Spirit as the mutual love of the Father and the Son,’ he expounds Jesus’ divine Sonship and the bestowal of the Spirit on Jesus in the Gospels. The mutual love model posits that the Father generated the Son from eternity and that the Holy Spirit proceeds and subsists as the mutual love of the Father for the Son and of the Son for the Father. The Spirit is the love that indissolubly unites the Father and the Son. The identity of the Holy

⁶⁷ Here we shall not discuss Del Colle as he uses Coffey’s idea to explain his Spirit Christology and his Spirit Christology has been discussed above.

⁶⁸ Del Colle discusses the Spirit Christology of David Coffey, Del Colle, *Christ and Spirit*, 91-140.

Spirit as mutual love does not depersonalize the Spirit. The Spirit is a unique divine person whose activity is that of uniting the other two divine persons.⁶⁹

Both Matthew and Luke convey the same idea that both the conception of Jesus and divine Sonship were bestowed upon Jesus through the work of the Spirit.⁷⁰

Coffey also compares the idea of the Suffering Servant of Isaiah with Jesus; both of them were endowed with the Spirit for specific vocations. But the Son had a unique love relationship with the Father, which enabled Jesus to address God as 'abba'.⁷¹ The Spirit was Jesus' love for the Father and the Father's love for Jesus.

In Christ, this love brings the deepest nature of Spirit and hence, the Christ-event became the revelation of the Trinity itself.⁷² So for Coffey, the activity of Christ is 'neither simply divine nor simply human, but something unique, divine-human, theandric'.⁷³

Coffey observes that, in Johannine Christology, the Spirit does not play an active role in the work of Christ as in the Synoptic Gospels. Theology in general has followed the Johannine trajectory. However, for a balanced Christology, the incarnational Christology of John, which assumes Christ's human nature by the

⁶⁹ Studebaker, 'Integrating Pneumatology and Christology,' 11-12.

⁷⁰ David Coffey, 'The Holy Spirit as the Mutual Love of the Father and the Son,' *TS* 51/2 (1990): 203.

⁷¹ Coffey, 'The Holy Spirit as the Mutual Love,' 204.

⁷² Coffey, 'The Holy Spirit as the Mutual Love,' 204-205; Christina Manohar, *Spirit Christology: An Indian Christian Perspective* (Delhi: ISPCCK, 2009), 96.

⁷³ David Coffey, 'The Theandric Nature of Christ,' *TS* 60/3 (1999): 413-415; Coffey explains, 'Christ was neither simply human nor simply nonhuman...While it is true (and important) to stress that the Word assumed a human nature like ours, it is also true that it is rendered unique, theandric, in the act of assumption. For hypostatic union is not a natural potency of human nature. It is a supernatural potency, one that would allow a human nature, God so willing, to be borne by grace beyond its natural limits to an absolute fulfilment. On the part of Christ's human nature it is this transcendence of natural limits along with its unsurpassable outcome in hypostatic union that justifies my use of the word "theandric" in its regard'.

Logos, needs to be complemented by the Synoptic Christology, which speaks about the role of the Spirit in incarnation.⁷⁴ John identifies the incarnation as the product of an act of the Father's love and the Synoptic Gospels as an act of the Holy Spirit. Thus, the conclusion is that 'the Holy Spirit is the love of God expressed *ad extra* who unites the divine Son with humanity in Jesus Christ'.⁷⁵

Moreover, Coffey is keen to establish the ontological character of Christ; both the divinity and humanity; '...the radical bestowal of the Holy Spirit is the cause of the total human reality of Jesus, which is the same as his divine Sonship'.⁷⁶ That is, the Spirit is central to both who Christ is and what he did. Ontologically, Jesus Christ is the union of the divine Son with humanity because the Spirit creates, sanctifies, and unites the humanity to the divine Son. Functionally, Christ can perform his redemptive mission precisely because of the activity of God's Spirit in realizing the hypostatic union.⁷⁷

In relation to the ontological unity of Christ with the Father Coffey asserts, 'The Spirit was given to him as *God's* Spirit; it set up a relationship, a bond, with *God*, which was realised in the course of his life and especially in his death, though naturally this realisation was in the course of his dealings with others'.⁷⁸ Jesus' appropriation of the Spirit means that it became a principle of action, as is the case with the Father himself, and was the pointer of his divinity. Jesus received the

⁷⁴ Coffey, 'The Theandric Nature of Christ,' 428.

⁷⁵ Studebaker, 'Integrating Pneumatology and Christology,' 16.

⁷⁶ Coffey, 'The Holy Spirit as the Mutual Love,' 218.

⁷⁷ Studebaker, 'Integrating Pneumatology and Christology,' 18-19.

⁷⁸ Coffey, 'The Holy Spirit as the Mutual Love,' 217.

Spirit from the Father *but made it his own*.⁷⁹ Moreover, Jesus bestows the Spirit to his fellow human beings which shows that Jesus, like the Father, is divine (Acts. 2:33).⁸⁰

However, there is a marked difference between the Spirit experience of Jesus and that of ordinary believers which also underlines his ontological status with God; ‘Ordinary Christians, to whom the Spirit is also given, also relate to God in the power of the Spirit, and in death give themselves to Him in the Spirit, but though they “receive” and “possess” the Spirit, they can never appropriate it, as Jesus does’.⁸¹

Coffey also sees *communicatio idiomatum* as the ontological communication from the divine to the human nature of Christ.⁸² This is the Father’s communication of his being through the Spirit in and at the inception of his life.⁸³ This makes Christ the unique, only begotten Son of God and places him in a unique ontological relationship with the Father by the Spirit. This is the Jesus whom we see in the Gospels. He is entirely human and in his human nature Jesus relates to the Father. By the special action of the Holy Spirit, Jesus in a human way, just as the divine

⁷⁹ Coffey, ‘The Holy Spirit as the Mutual Love,’ 218.

⁸⁰ Coffey, ‘The Holy Spirit as the Mutual Love,’ 219.

⁸¹ Coffey, ‘The Holy Spirit as the Mutual Love,’ 217-218.

⁸² Coffey, ‘The Theandric Nature of Christ,’ 424-425. This means that the properties of the Divine Word are ascribed to the man Jesus, and that the properties of the man Jesus are predicated of the Word. This doctrine had a long history in patristic Christology. In Reformation times the Lutheran doctrine of the Eucharist demanded the transference of the attribute of ubiquity from the divine to the human nature of Christ. The principle of the *communicatio idiomatum* was therefore invoked and interpreted as a real participation in attributes. The Reformed tradition which (unlike Luther) held that the finite could not contain the infinite was regarded to be valid as a turn of speech but not for describing a real transfer or sharing of qualities. See H.E.W. Turner, ‘Communicatio Idiomatum,’ *A New Dictionary of Christian Theology*, edited by Alan Richardson & John Bowden (London: SCM, 1983), 113; also see Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God: The Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology* (London: SCM, 1974), 231-235.

⁸³ Coffey, ‘The Theandric Nature of Christ,’ 424-425.

Son in the Trinity depends on the Father, is taken into the Trinity. Moreover, this enabled the communication of human experience and suffering to the Trinity; ‘All of Jesus’ human experiences, including his sufferings, are imported into the life of Trinity..’⁸⁴ However, this does not compromise divine transcendence, since there is a dialectic of identity and non-identity between the existence of the Son in his divine and in his human nature.⁸⁵

This expounding of the divinity and humanity of Jesus, in terms of Spirit activity, is significant because it balances the one-sided approach of ordinary Christological articulations described above. As explained here, it is thoroughly Trinitarian and underscores the ontological status of Christ. It makes room for the humanity of Jesus and gives credence to his relationship to and reliance on the Spirit for his activities in his context. Here Del Colle’s Spirit Christology which emphasises the ontological status of Jesus should be added to give ordinary Christology a Pentecostal/Charismatic flavour. Indian Christology has also endeavoured to present a Christology which delineates the divinity as well as the ontological identity of Jesus. As already seen, Upadhyaya’s use of the *sat-cit-ananda* concept which explains the Trinity is valuable in establishing Christ’s ontological relationship with God as well as in structuring a Trinitarian Christology within the Indian religious context.⁸⁶ However, we need to be cautious not to impose these overtly religious and philosophical categories on ordinary Indian Pentecostals. Similarly, Rayan in his Spirit-Christology,

⁸⁴ Coffey, ‘The Theandric Nature of Christ,’ 425.

⁸⁵ Coffey, ‘The Theandric Nature of Christ,’ 425.

⁸⁶ Upadhyaya explicates Christ as ‘infinite in being’ (*nirguna*), yet he is also ‘with relations’ (*saguna*) and so personal and knowable; see chapter 5, pages 147-148, 150.

emphasises the humanity of Jesus.⁸⁷ These ideas are appropriate for an ontological Christological construct of Pentecostal Christology in the Indian context and ought to be included in ordinary Christology.

8.5.2 Dialogical Spirit Christology

Encountering people of other religions and sharing Christ is a way of life for Indian Pentecostals; thus, they are affected by the issue of religious pluralism with all of its practical aspects. Moreover, most of them have come from other religions. Therefore, as Anderson comments, there is an urgent need to ponder the relationship between the Christian Gospel and the ancient pre-Christian religions that continue to give meaning to people's understanding of their lives. Demonizing these religions will not help the cause of evangelism and the healthy growth of the church today.⁸⁸ Although Pentecostals are generally hesitant to discuss the issue of religious pluralism and related questions, recently Pentecostal scholars are beginning to appreciate the need for dialogue with other religions and have developed a theology of religions. Richie contends that it is not appropriate to relegate all religious experience beyond the border of the institutional church to the demonic realm. According to Richie, although there is no salvation outside Christ, that does not mean that there is no possibility of salvation outside the church.⁸⁹

Now more pastors and evangelists encounter people of other faiths. Taking this reality into consideration, Kärkkäinen argues that it is vital to include theology of

⁸⁷ See chapter 5, pages 175-176.

⁸⁸ Allan Anderson, 'Towards a Pentecostal Missiology for the Majority World,' *AJPS* 8/1 (2005): 38.

⁸⁹ Tony Richie, "'The Unity of Spirit': Are Pentecostals Inherently Ecumenists and Inclusivists?," *JEPTA* 26/1 (2006): 31-33.

religions in the Christian educational curriculum. He also elaborates on the implications of the doctrine of Trinity when approaching religious pluralism.⁹⁰ According to Richie, a valid, vibrant Pentecostal theology of religions that does not compromise biblical, historic Christianity or act condescendingly or contemptuously toward other world religions, is both possible and desirable for Pentecostals and for our friends in the interfaith venture.⁹¹

Amos Yong argues that the stress of Charismatic-Pentecostal Pneumatology on the universality of experience of God through the Spirit may contribute to a contemporary Christian theology of religions.⁹² He sees the presence of the Spirit active in creation and in all cultures, which includes religions⁹³ because the Spirit has been poured out on all flesh.⁹⁴ The emphasis of pneumatic elements enables Pentecostals to be open to other religious traditions. According to him, a Pentecostal-Charismatic theology of religions should free human beings for participation in interreligious dialogue. The goal of such dialogue is not merely to agree on similarities, rather even the ‘activity of apologetics needs to be included in acknowledging such conversations to be in the service of the righteousness,

⁹⁰ Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *An Introduction to the Theology of Religions: Biblical, Historical, & Contemporary Perspectives* (Illinois: IVP, 2003), 20; Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *Trinity and Religious Pluralism: The Doctrine of the Trinity in Christian Theology of Religions* (Hants: Ashgate, 2004); Samuel Solivan, ‘Interreligious Dialogue: An Hispanic American Pentecostal Perspective,’ in *Grounds for Understanding: Ecumenical Responses to Religious Pluralism*, edited by S. Mark Heim (Michigan: Eerdmans, 1998), 37-45.

⁹¹ Tony Richie, ‘Neither Naïve nor Narrow: A Balanced Pentecostal Approach to Christian Theology of Religions,’ *Presented to the Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion*, (Philadelphia, PA: November 19-22, 2005): 2, <http://www.nccusa.org/pdfs/naive.pdf> (accessed 2 November 2010); also see Richie, ‘Speaking by the Spirit: A Wesleyan-Pentecostal Theology of Testimony’.

⁹² Amos Yong, *Discerning the Spirit(s): A Pentecostal-Charismatic Theology of Religions*, *JPT Supplement Series* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 29-30.

⁹³ Yong, *Discerning the Spirit(s)*, 312.

⁹⁴ Amos Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh: Pentecostalism and the Possibility of Global Theology* (Michigan: Baker Academic, 2005).

peace and truth that characterise the Kingdom of God'.⁹⁵ He articulates 'pneumatological imagination,' as an experience of and orientation to the Holy Spirit through which one may determine the presence of the Holy Spirit. He also stresses that it is vital to discern the absence of the divine or presence of the demonic in other religious traditions.⁹⁶

Yong proposes a theological framework for interfaith encounter. First, God is universally present by his Spirit; therefore, he sustains religions for his divine purposes. Second, the Spirit ushers in the Kingdom of God and hence, the signs of the Kingdom are made manifest through the Spirit's presence. Third, when there are signs of resistance to and activity against the Kingdom of God, the Spirit can be said to be absent from religions.⁹⁷ Nonetheless, he emphasises that the possibility of the presence of the Spirit in other religions should not de-emphasise the centrality of Christ to salvation, nor should it undermine the importance of evangelism.⁹⁸

Similarly, Richie, draws on the narrative of Acts 2 and the day of Pentecost, offers a Pentecostal perspective of dialogue.⁹⁹ The outpouring of the Spirit enabled a diversity of tongues; the many tongues retain their particularity even as they point to the unity of the one Spirit. These tongues represent, at least potentially, many religions, which in turn point to the redemption of religions (eschatologically), as well as of languages and cultures. The tongues or testimonies of the religious

⁹⁵ Yong, *Discerning the Spirit(s)*, 313.

⁹⁶ Amos Yong, "'Not Knowing Where the Wind Blows ...': On Envisioning a Pentecostal-Charismatic Theology of Religions,' *JPT* 14 (1999): 81-83.

⁹⁷ Cartledge, *Testimony in the Spirit*, 144; Also see Yong, Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh*, 250-253.

⁹⁸ Amos Yong, *Beyond the Impasse: Toward a Pneumatological Theology of Religion* (Michigan: Eerdmans, 2003), 52-53.

⁹⁹ Richie, 'Speaking by the Spirit,' 89-90; Cartledge, *Testimony in the Spirit*, 147-148.

other must first be heard in their own terms, before a theology of religion can be constructed. This will involve a critical analysis of religious beliefs and practices, using a ‘hermeneutic of charity’.¹⁰⁰

With this background, Richie proposes a model of Pentecostal engagement based on the notion of testimony; telling others of what God has done in one’s life in order to encourage them. It can be transformative for the testifier and hearer alike. It contains significant autobiographical elements and doxological content. Use of testimony as a way of interreligious dialogue benefits Pentecostals, since it is integral to Pentecostal spirituality and helps Pentecostals to retain their original energy and vitality.¹⁰¹

Hollenweger, however, develops a theology of ‘dialogical evangelism’ that is less rigid and more respectful regarding mutual sharing between religious others that decry too a sharp demarcation between Christian mission and interfaith dialogue. This is based on the encounter of Peter and Cornelius (Acts 10), and is used as a biblical model for contemporary Pentecostals. Significantly, both participants learn from each other as the Holy Spirit is poured out afresh.¹⁰²

It seems that pneumatological elements in Christological articulation make it possible to interact with other religious traditions. Added to that, for ordinary

¹⁰⁰ Richie, ‘Speaking by the Spirit,’ 113-115; also see Richie, ‘Continuing the Conversation on King: My Really Final Response to Tony Moon?,’ *JPT* 19/1 (2010): 170-179; Richie, ‘Getting Back to the Heart of the Matter: The Way Forward and a Final Response to Tony Moon,’ *JPT* 18/1 (2009): 141-149; Richie, ‘God’s Fairness to People of All Faiths: A Respectful Proposal to Pentecostals for Discussion Regarding World Religions,’ *Pneuma* 28/1 (Spring 2006): 105-119.

¹⁰¹ Richie, ‘Speaking by the Spirit,’ 165-166.

¹⁰² Walter J. Hollenweger, ‘Critical Issues for Pentecostals,’ in *Pentecostals after a Century: Global Perspectives on a Movement in Transition*, edited by Allan H. Anderson & Walter J. Hollenweger (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 176-191; Walter J. Hollenweger, ‘Evangelism: A Non-Colonial Model,’ *JPT* 7 (1995): 116-121.

Indian Pentecostals the centrality of Christ is a point of contact with other religionists, as we have seen. This point of contact is actualised through their testimonies and activities of signs and wonders which happen through the agency of the Spirit. Moreover, ordinary Pentecostal Christology can take cues from Indian Christology which emphasises dialogue for religious harmony, especially for the liberation of oppressed people. In an Indian and an Asian scenario, many voices advocate interreligious dialogue and they can be useful for ordinary Pentecostal Christology. However, a cautious approach is needed so that the supremacy of Christ is not undermined. M.M. Thomas advocates dialogue between Christians and non-Christians (both religious and secular) to involve in the political struggle for the transformation of the Asian society.¹⁰³ Similarly, Appasamy's idea of Jesus as *avatara* as well as the cultural Christology of Amaladoss can be included in the Pentecostal model of dialogue which always undergirds evangelical endeavours.¹⁰⁴ Here Sadhu Sundar Singh's approach to Christology has still greater value in the cultural and religious contexts of Indian villages, as he emphasises the mystical and practical elements of Christology.¹⁰⁵ Developing suitable cultural and religious models of mission and evangelism, like Sundar Singh's, emphasising the work of the Spirit and the mystical aspects which would touch the heart of the Indian masses, the majority of which are ordinary people, should be the priority of Pentecostal missiologists and theologians.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ See chapter 5, pages 164-168.

¹⁰⁴ See chapter 5, pages 152-154 and 161-162.

¹⁰⁵ See chapter 5, pages 157-160.

¹⁰⁶ Using Indian spiritual categories such as storytelling, using parables and a mission without tight ecclesiastical binding can be helpful. See P. Surya Prakash, 'Contribution of Sadhu Sundhar Singh to the Indigenous Christian movement in India,' in *Christianity is Indian*, 113-127.

Richie rightly endorses a typical Pentecostal position: ‘Inclusivism by no means necessitates even a nascent compromise of Christian integrity or of Pentecostal theology and spirituality; rather, it enables Pentecostals to witness with respect to everyone of the limitless love of God in his Son by the power of the Spirit’.¹⁰⁷ Since ordinary Pentecostals constantly interact with people of other faiths and also come under the attack of extremist elements, this notion needs to be included in an Indian Pentecostal Christology.

8.5.3 Liberative Spirit Christology

For a liberative Spirit Christology, we shall propose the picture of Jesus who, by the anointing of the Spirit, acted as an agent of liberation in his own context. Before we chart our course, it is to be noted that Pentecostals naturally shy away from overt social involvement due to their understanding of holiness. However, it is important to emphasise that the holiness Pentecostal spirituality advocates is not an inward-looking and world-shunning piety; rather it is outgoing and world-affirming.¹⁰⁸ Dempster argues that the baptism in the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit restored the Spirit’s empowering in witness. Hence, Pentecostals witness as prophets by virtue of works which are empowered by the Spirit and by words which are inspired by the Spirit.¹⁰⁹ Taking Luke’s portraits of the people of God of the new age, Stronstad argues that by virtue of having been filled with the Spirit of prophecy, the believers became the eschatological community of

¹⁰⁷ Richie, “‘The Unity of Spirit,’” 34.

¹⁰⁸ Shaibu Abraham, ‘Constructing a Pentecostal Theology of Holiness in the Light of Prophetic Understanding of Holiness of God’ (Unpublished MTh Thesis, Senate of Serampore, India, 2004).

¹⁰⁹ Murray W. Dempster, ‘Pentecostal Social Concern and the Biblical Mandate for Social Justice,’ *Pneuma* 9/2 (Fall 1987): 147.

prophets.¹¹⁰ Therefore, Pentecostal believers stand in the heritage of the Spirit-anointed, Spirit-filled, Spirit-led and Spirit-empowered prophet Jesus who is the prophet *per se*¹¹¹ and who carried out a prophetic ministry of renouncing the evils of his society. The holiness Jesus envisioned was not of exclusion but of embracing and compassionate participation.¹¹² Interestingly, early Pentecostals understood Spirit baptism to be power for mission that not only included evangelism but also addressed social issues such as slavery, women's rights, child labour, slum conditions and illiteracy.¹¹³ It was a subversive and revolutionary movement, not based upon either philosophic ideology or critical reflection. It was a movement that experienced God's divine liberation through the Holy Spirit.¹¹⁴ Therefore, it is feasible to propose a liberative Christology for Indian Pentecostals.

As we have already seen, issues such as the caste-system, poverty, oppression, communalism and the resultant social unrest and even armed struggles, make life miserable for ordinary people. Therefore, in our construction of a liberative Spirit Christology it is vital to present a picture of Jesus acting against similar issues in the power of the Spirit in his society. Recent scholarship in Gospel studies, especially the social scientific study of the New Testament and the Historical Jesus research have shed ample light upon the life and ministry of Jesus and these

¹¹⁰ Stronstad, 'Affirming Diversity,' 145.

¹¹¹ Stronstad, 'Affirming Diversity,' 148.

¹¹² Marcus J. Borg, *Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time: The Historical Jesus and the Heart of Contemporary Faith* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1994); Marcus J. Borg, *Conflict, Holiness and Politics in the Teaching of Jesus* (New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1984).

¹¹³ Bridges Johns, *Pentecostal Formation*, 65-66.

¹¹⁴ Bridges Johns, *Pentecostal Formation*, 69.

can help us to draw a picture of Jesus and of how he acted within his society.¹¹⁵

Here we shall concentrate on the historical sketch of first century Palestine and the portrayal of the historical Jesus by Marcus Borg, as they come closer to the Indian situation.

Borg explains Jesus' social and religious context in terms of ritual purity (holiness) and resultant injustices and oppression, and introduces Jesus as someone who acted against those evils in the power of the Spirit and identified with the 'untouchables' and the poor.¹¹⁶ It is interesting to note that Borg identifies Jesus' activities in his context as a result of his Spirit-empowerment which is similar to Pentecostal functional Christology and the Trinitarian mode of Spirit Christology we have outlined above.

This portrayal of Jesus is highly significant within the Indian context as a large section of the population still reel under the evil effect of the caste system and its resultant discrimination. Soares-Prabhu, speaking from the Indian context, describes Jesus as the Spirit-filled evangeliser and Spirit-empowered exorcist.¹¹⁷ Therefore, ordinary Pentecostals may feel at home with a picture of Jesus which

¹¹⁵ For a detailed account see Ben Witherington III, *The Jesus Quest: The Third Search for the Jew of Nazareth* (Illinois: IVP, 1995); James H. Charlesworth, *Jesus within Judaism: New Light from Exciting Archaeological Discoveries* (New York: Doubleday, 1988); James H. Charlesworth & Petr Pokorny (eds.), *Jesus Research: An International Perspective* (Michigan: Eerdmans, 2009); Theissen & Merz, *The Historical Jesus*; Wolfgang Stegemann, Bruce J. Malina & Gerd Theissen (eds.), *The Social Setting of Jesus and the Gospels* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002); Ekkehard W. Stegemann & Wolfgang Stegemann, *The Jesus Movement: A Social History of its First Century* (Edinburg: T&T Clark, 1999); Jerome H. Neyrey (ed.), *The Social World of Luke-Acts* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991).

¹¹⁶ Marcus J. Borg, *Jesus a New Vision: Spirit, Culture, and the Life of Discipleship* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1987); Marcus J. Borg, *Jesus in Contemporary Scholarship* (Pennsylvania: Trinity Press International, 1994); Borg, *Meeting Jesus Again*; Borg, *Conflict, Holiness and Politics*.

¹¹⁷ George M. Soares-Prabhu, *The Dharma of Jesus*, edited by Francis Xavier O'sa (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2003): 19-22.

gives them a model to follow a life of discipleship.¹¹⁸ It is appropriate to add this portrayal of Jesus as a building block of Pentecostal Christology.

8.5.3.1 Jesus in His Context

According to Borg, Jesus' relationship to the Spirit had great implications for his ministry.¹¹⁹ One of the most important characteristics of Jesus' ministry was his deep involvement with the socio-political and economic life of his own people.¹²⁰

Unlike other renewal movements which 'separated' themselves from people and depicted God and religion in exclusive terms, Jesus advocated an 'open' stream which would accommodate even 'sinners,' 'outcasts' and gentiles and introduced a God who was merciful and gracious to all.¹²¹ He was not only born in a particular culture with its political, religious and economic complexities but was also fully involved in it and to some extent even shaped by it.¹²²

The society of his time was divided into various groups determined by three basic elements: power, privilege and prestige.¹²³ The overwhelming majority of the populace belonged to 'lower-stratum groups' who inhabited largely in rural areas and which included peasants, artisans, labourers and slaves.¹²⁴ They were

¹¹⁸ Jon Sobrino, *Jesus the Liberator: A Historical-Theological Reading of Jesus of Nazareth* (Kent: Burns & Oates, 1994), 47-55; John P. Meir, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus* (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 196-201; Borg, *Jesus a New Vision*, 1-2.

¹¹⁹ Borg, *Meeting Jesus Again*, 31-32; Ninian Smart & Steven Konstantine, *Christian Systematic Theology in a World Context* (London: Marshal Pickering, 1991), 150-152.

¹²⁰ Theissen & Merz, *The Historical Jesus*, 125-150; T. Raymond Hobbs, 'The Political Jesus: Discipleship and Disengagement,' in *The Social Setting of Jesus and the Gospels*, 251-281.

¹²¹ Theissen and Merz, *The Historical Jesus*, 146.

¹²² See John Howard Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus* (Michigan: Eerdmans, 1994); Gerd Theissen, *The Gospels in Context: Social and Political History in the Synoptic Tradition*, translated by Linda M. Maloney (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1992).

¹²³ Stegemann & Stegemann, *The Jesus Movement*, 60ff.

¹²⁴ Bruce J. Malina, *The Social Gospel of Jesus: The Kingdom of God in Mediterranean Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 19-22; Stegemann & Stegemann give a detailed account of social situation and stratification of ancient Mediterranean societies; see, Stegemann & Stegemann, *The Jesus Movement*, 60-95.

characterised by their absolute poverty. *Ptochoi*, the Greek word used for the poor in the New Testament denotes the people who were hungry and thirsty, had only rags for clothes and lacked lodging or hope.¹²⁵ This description is similar to the description of the poor in the Indian context.

Roman rule had direct economic consequences which had a huge impact on the Jewish social world. It added a tax burden upon the ordinary people, who were already paying temple tax and other forms of tithing required by the law.¹²⁶ This resulted in increasing debt for the poor and in the confiscation of land belonging to the marginal farmers, followed by arrest, torture and slavery of the family.¹²⁷ Further, Roman rule perpetuated injustice and was chronically oppressive and brutal. Such a situation of sharp social differences created unrest, conflict and even rebellion by slaves and very poor peasants from rural areas.¹²⁸

In such a context, he had a message, the message of the Kingdom of God which would change the existing social structure into an entity of God's reign;¹²⁹ this was not achieved through force, but through service and peace-making.¹³⁰ In the Kingdom, the poor were considered to be the blessed and the meek as powerful (Matt.5:3ff; Lk.6:20ff). It led to freedom, fellowship and justice.¹³¹ Borg rightly comments, 'Like Amos, Micah, and Jeremiah, Jesus challenged the domination

¹²⁵ Stegemann & Stegemann, *The Jesus Movement*, 92.

¹²⁶ Stegemann & Stegemann, *The Jesus Movement*, 116-125; Borg, *Jesus a New Vision*, 84-86.

¹²⁷ Douglas E. Oakman, 'The Countryside in Luke-Acts,' *The Social World of Luke-Acts*, 163-164; Malina, *The Social Gospel of Jesus*, 27; Stegemann & Stegemann, *The Jesus Movement*, 134-136.

¹²⁸ Richard A. Horsley, *The Liberation of Christmas: The Infancy Narratives in Social Context* (New York: Crossroad, 1988), 127-143; K.C. Hanson, 'Jesus and Social Bandits,' in *The Social Setting of Jesus and the Gospels*, 285-291.

¹²⁹ G. R. Beasley-Murray, *Jesus and the Kingdom of God* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1986); Malina, *The Social Gospel of Jesus*.

¹³⁰ Gerd Theissen, 'The Political Dimension of Jesus' Activities,' in *The Social Setting of Jesus and the Gospels*, 225-250.

¹³¹ Soares-Prabhu, *The Dharma of Jesus*, 67.

system of his day, a hierarchical and oppressive social order with sharp social boundaries ruled over by a small class of urban elites. He not only challenged that system; he also had an alternative social vision'.¹³² Thus, Jesus was *political* but not in a conventional sense.¹³³

Holiness/Purity System

One of the vexing issues of his society was the practice of holiness. According to Borg, the dominant ethos and the paradigm structuring of the Jewish social world in first century Palestine was 'Be holy as God is holy' (Lev. 19:2), holiness understood as purity.¹³⁴ The purity laws acted as boundaries between outsiders and insiders.¹³⁵ The core value was God's holiness, understood as to order the world, separation from everything unclean taken as ritual purity.¹³⁶ It created social boundaries between pure and impure, righteous and sinners, whole and not whole, male and female, Jew and Gentile.¹³⁷

Purity is a social system organised around the polarities of pure and impure, clean and unclean.¹³⁸ These polarities apply to persons, places, things, times, and social

¹³² Marcus J. Borg (ed.), 'From Galilean Jew to the Face of God: The Pre-Easter and Post-Easter Jesus,' *Jesus at 2000*, edited by Marcus J. Borg (Colorado: Westview Press, 1997), 11.

¹³³ Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus*; Hobbs, 'The Political Jesus'; Borg, *Jesus in Contemporary Scholarship*, 100-107.

¹³⁴ Borg, *Jesus in Contemporary Scholarship*, 26; 'Holiness generated a social world ordered as a purity system, with sharp boundaries not only between places, things, and times, but also between persons and social groups,' says Borg.

¹³⁵ Stegemann & Stegemann, *The Jesus Movement*, 142; Wolfgang Stegemann, 'The Contextual Ethics of Jesus,' in *The Social Setting of Jesus and the Gospels*, 52.

¹³⁶ Jerome H. Neyrey, 'The Symbolic Universe of Luke-Acts: 'They Turn the World Upside Down,' in *The Social World of Luke-Acts*, 276; Archaeological evidences also confirm the purity system, see Craig A. Evans, 'Context, Family and Formation,' in *The Cambridge Companion to Jesus*, edited by Markus Bockmuehl (Cambridge: The Cambridge University Press, 2001), 12.

¹³⁷ For a detailed discussion see Borg, *Conflict, Holiness and Politics*, 56-72; Borg, *Meeting Jesus Again*, 52.

¹³⁸ Mary Douglas defines a purity system as an orderly cultural system; see, Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966).

groups. One's purity status depended to some extent, on birth¹³⁹ in such a way that a person born to the priestly family was more holy than a common man.¹⁴⁰ One's degree of holiness also depended on behaviour. Those who observed the purity codes were considered as 'the pure' while the non-observant were termed 'outcasts' or 'sinners' and included occupational groups such as tax-collectors and perhaps shepherds. In a purity system sin becomes a matter of being impure or ritually unclean and rendered one 'untouchable'.¹⁴¹

Physical wholeness was also associated with purity and lack of wholeness with impurity. People who were maimed, the chronically ill, lepers, eunuchs were considered to be impure. Purity and impurity were also associated with the contrast between male and female. Men in their natural state were thought to be more pure than women. The natural bodily process of childbirth and menstruation were considered to be a source of impurity and, hence, women had only second-class status in the society.¹⁴²

Purity was also observed in relation to place. At the centre of the purity system was the temple which was taken to be the geographic and cultic centre of Israel's purity map. The temple's 'Holy of Holies' was the point of greatest holiness and from it concentric circles of decreasing degrees of holiness radiated outward ending at the borders of 'the holy land'.¹⁴³ The land of Israel was considered

¹³⁹ Neyrey, 'The Symbolic Universe of Luke-Acts,' 285; Westerholm, 'Clean and Unclean,' 131.

¹⁴⁰ For instance, at the top of the purity ladder stood the high priest and he was the holiest of all; followed by priests, Levites, Jewish men, women, converts, and gentiles and so on. Neyrey, 'The Symbolic Universe of Luke-Acts,' 279.

¹⁴¹ Borg, *Meeting Jesus Again*, 51.

¹⁴² William Countryman, *Dirt, Greed, and Sex* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), 28-30.

¹⁴³ The order was Holy of Holies, Holy Place, court of the priests, court of men, court of women, and court of gentiles and so on. Neyrey, 'The Symbolic Universe of Luke-Acts,' 278-279.

holier than other lands.¹⁴⁴ Holiness was observed in relation to things, time and social groups and objects related to the temple were considered to be holier. Certain food items were considered impure; the Sabbath day was holier than other days; Israelites were God's chosen people and, therefore, a holy nation. Since Gentiles were not God's people, they were considered unholy.¹⁴⁵

The purity system had political and economic implications too. According to Borg, the ruling elites used these laws to further their own agenda. The income of the temple and the temple elites depended upon the observance of purity laws to some extent while tithing was closely linked to purity; un-tithed produce was thus impure and would not be purchased by the observant.¹⁴⁶ According to Borg, this might have resulted in a sort of economic boycott and further exploitation.¹⁴⁷ There are many such similarities between the caste system and the Jewish purity system. Such a predicament is what Dalits, Tribals and lower castes face in India even today.¹⁴⁸

Jesus, however, directly and repeatedly challenged the dominant socio-political and economic paradigm of his society and advocated an alternative vision. In the teachings and activities of Jesus we see a comprehensive alternative social and spiritual vision, which foresaw a 'Kingdom' community, a community not shaped by the ethos of purity, but by compassion and relationship.

¹⁴⁴ Neyrey, 'The Symbolic Universe of Luke-Acts,' 278.

¹⁴⁵ Neyrey, 'The Symbolic Universe of Luke-Acts,' 280-282.

¹⁴⁶ Borg, *Jesus in Contemporary Scholarship*, 110.

¹⁴⁷ Borg, *Jesus in Contemporary Scholarship*, 110.

¹⁴⁸ Anderson H.M. Jeremiah, 'Exploring New Facets of Dalit Christology: Critical Interaction with J.D. Crossan's Portrayal of the Historical Jesus,' in *Dalit Theology in Twenty-First Century: Discord Voices, Discerning Pathways*, edited by Sathianathan Clarke, Deena Bandhu Manchala & Philip Vinod Peacock (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2010), 160.

Compassion as Holiness

According to Sobrino, the ministry of Jesus, especially his miracles, were a demonstration of his compassion.¹⁴⁹ His charismatic power attracted crowds, largely the poor and despised such as women, tax collectors and leprosy affected people.¹⁵⁰ Similarly, Borg identifies Jesus' activities with Spirit and compassion. 'For Jesus, compassion was the central quality of God and the central moral quality of a life centred in God'.¹⁵¹ According to him, Jesus deliberately replaced 'Be holy as God is holy' by 'Be compassionate as God is compassionate (Lk.6:36)'.¹⁵²

Table Fellowship

One of the most radical acts of Jesus against the purity system was his table fellowship or 'open commensality,' sharing the meals with the poor, the tax-collectors and the outcasts to rebuild a community on radically different principles, 'based on an egalitarian sharing of spiritual and material power at the most grass-roots level'.¹⁵³ Pharisees and teachers of the law would not eat with somebody who was impure, since that would make them unholy.¹⁵⁴ The rules

¹⁴⁹ 'The miracles not only demonstrate Jesus' power as healer...but mainly his reaction to the sorrows of the poor and weak'. Sobrino, *Jesus the Liberator*, 90; D. J. Williams, 'Mercy,' *DJG*.

¹⁵⁰ Theissen & Merz, *The Historical Jesus*, 217.

¹⁵¹ Borg, *Meeting Jesus Again*, 46; Borg, *Conflict, Holiness and Politics*, 123-134.

¹⁵² Borg, *Meeting Jesus Again*, 46-48; He adds that compassion has particularly rich connotations because of its etymology: its roots in both Hebrew and Aramaic means womb. To be compassionate is to be 'like womb' with its evocations of nourishing, life-giving, and encompassing. It is the opposite of purity in many ways, perhaps most notably in its inclusiveness. See Borg, *Jesus in Contemporary*, 153-154.

¹⁵³ J.D. Crossan, *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991), 344; S. Scott Bartchy, 'The Historical Jesus and Honour Reversal at the Table,' *The Social Setting of Jesus and the Gospels*, 175-183.

¹⁵⁴ Jesus was accused of 'eating with tax-collectors and sinners' and was with being 'a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax-collectors and sinners'. S. Scott Bartchy, 'Table Fellowship,' *DJG*; Dennis E. Smith, 'Table Fellowship,' *ABD*.

related to meals were deeply embedded in the purity system;¹⁵⁵ refusing to share a meal was a form of social exclusion.

The open table fellowship of Jesus was thus perceived as a challenge to the ideology of the purity class.¹⁵⁶ It had socio-political and religious connotations which included the ritually impure in the fellowship of a messianic community and placed them at a par with those who were higher in the social ladder of the purity system.¹⁵⁷ Moreover, in a patriarchal society, Jesus' message was deliberately addressed even to prostitutes; Jesus accepted the touch and kiss of a prostitute and assured her of forgiveness (Lk.36-50).¹⁵⁸ These credentials of Jesus need to be accommodated into Indian Pentecostal Christology, where many are still considered to be untouchables.

Temple Cleansing

At its climax, the cleansing of the temple characterises Jesus' opposition toward the interpretation of the religious authorities as regards holiness. This action can be interpreted in religious, messianic, prophetic and political terms.¹⁵⁹ Mark presents the action in the temple as a deliberate act (Mk.11:11).¹⁶⁰ It was an indictment of what was taking place in the temple; it became a centre of an economically exploitative system dominated by ruling elites. According to Borg, his ire was not against the poor merchants. This was obvious by Jesus' combining and quoting of two OT passages: 'Is it not written: "My house will be called a

¹⁵⁵ Jerome H. Neyrey, 'Ceremonies in Luke-Acts: The Case of Meals and Table Fellowship,' in *The Social World of Luke-Acts*, 378.

¹⁵⁶ Borg, *Meeting Jesus Again*, 55-56.

¹⁵⁷ Craig Blomberg, *Contagious Holiness: Jesus' Meals with Sinners* (Leicester: Apollos, 2005), 97-163; Borg, *Meeting Jesus Again*, 55-56; Bartchy, 'Table Fellowship'.

¹⁵⁸ Theissen & Merz, *The Historical Jesus*, 219-222.

¹⁵⁹ W.R. Herzog II, 'Temple Cleansing,' *DJG*; Borg, *Conflict, Holiness and Politics*, 163-177.

¹⁶⁰ W.R. Herzog II, 'Temple Cleansing'.

house of prayer for all nations?” (Isa.56:7), but you have made it “a den of robbers” (Jer.7:11)’. The line from Isaiah comes from one of the most inclusive visions of the temple community in the Bible. The temple was to include eunuchs, foreigners and outcasts. The second phrase is from Jeremiah’s famous temple sermon, in which he indicted the Jerusalem elites of his day. It was they who acted unjustly, oppressing aliens, orphans and widows and shedding the blood of the innocent in the temple. As in the days of Jeremiah, the religious elites had turned the temple into a den of robbers and violent people. Thus, the action was directed against the perpetrators of the purity system who were profiteering from the temple system.¹⁶¹ In this episode, Dalit theologian Nirmal sees ‘a pre-figuration of the vindication of the Dalit struggle for their prayer and worship rights’.¹⁶²

Thus, Jesus on the one hand erected a formidable challenge against the purity system; on the other hand, he reinterpreted holiness in terms of compassion, loving relationships and inclusiveness. This inclusive vision of Jesus’ activity was reflected in the early church; it acted as an alternative community with remarkable social radicalism by the power of the Spirit.¹⁶³ In a world with sharp social boundaries, it included women, untouchables, the poor, the maimed and the marginalised. The story of baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch and the conversion and inclusion of Cornelius in the church depict the inclusiveness of the movement. Borg comments: ‘As a boundary shattering movement, it was a social

¹⁶¹ Borg, *Jesus in Contemporary Scholarship*, 115-116; W.R. Herzog II, ‘Temple Cleansing,’ The response from the authorities confirms this: ‘The chief priests and the teachers of the law heard this and began looking for a way to kill him... (Mk.11:18)’.

¹⁶² Balasundaram, *Contemporary Asian*, 169-170.

¹⁶³ Borg, *Jesus in Contemporary Scholarship*, 153.

reality with an alternative vision of human life in community. This, too, is connected to the Spirit: *there is something boundary-shattering about the activity and experience of the Spirit*'.¹⁶⁴ Life in the Spirit does not draw one away from culture and society. It is not an individualistic vision but it creates a new community, or an alternative culture. It was so with Jesus and his followers.¹⁶⁵

Therefore, ordinary Pentecostals need a ministry of the Spirit and compassion and a Christology that accommodates these ideals. Such approaches are actually followed in Indian Christologies to address issues such as poverty, the caste-system, and economic exploitation as we have seen. The Christology of M.M. Thomas, Dalit Christology and the Indian version of liberation theology present Christ as the liberator of the poor. The Spirit Christology of Rayan emphasises the humanity of Jesus to accelerate the liberative efforts.¹⁶⁶ Wilfred suggests a *kenotic* Christology in the context of communal frenzy and marginalisation of the poor.¹⁶⁷ There are many other voices, both theological and secular, which contribute to the emancipation of the downtrodden in the Indian context. An Ordinary Pentecostal Christology should accommodate their credentials to make it more akin to the Gospel accounts of Jesus and to enhance liberative potential. What is important is to have a 'pneumatological imagination,' as Yong proposed, to discern them.¹⁶⁸ Archer suggestively comments,

¹⁶⁴ Borg, *Jesus in Contemporary Scholarship*, 153-154 (italics added for emphasis).

¹⁶⁵ Borg, *Jesus a New Vision*, 194. He says, '...the heart of biblical tradition is "charismatic," its origin lies in the experience of the Spirit-endowed people who became radically open to the other world and whose gifts were extraordinary'; Borg, *Jesus a New Vision*, 32.

¹⁶⁶ See chapter 5, pages 175-176.

¹⁶⁷ See chapter 5, pages 162-163.

¹⁶⁸ Yong, "Not Knowing Where the Wind Blows ..."; Yong, *Beyond the Impasse*.

...orthopathos puts us in touch with the compassionate redemptive liberation of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. This redemptive liberation is anchored in the very passion of God manifested paradigmatically in the ministry of Jesus and the ongoing work of the Christian community empowered and impassioned by the Spirit. We must do theology from a conjunctive methodology that takes seriously orthopathos as the integrative centre for our Pentecostal theology without setting aside either praxis or dogma.¹⁶⁹

To summarise our discussion, it is clear that the Christological themes of ordinary Pentecostals have a major impact upon the lives of the people. However, lack of a systematic articulation of a Christology triggers Christological misconceptions and also prevents them from involving themselves overtly in their contexts. This study urges the thesis that a constructive Christology among Indian Pentecostals should articulate a Spirit Christology with Trinitarian, dialogical and liberative emphasis, one that would bring the necessary correction and impetus to their Christology, thus making it a suitable Christology for an Indian context.

¹⁶⁹ Archer, 'A Pentecostal Way of Doing Theology,' 310-311.

Chapter 9

CONCLUSION

In the previous chapters we have explored ordinary Pentecostal Christology and its various aspects. In this final chapter, we shall summarise what we have discussed so far. We shall also highlight this Christology's significant contributions to the Indian, Asian and global contexts. Finally, we shall identify major areas for further research, so that various other significant aspects of Indian Pentecostal theology, particularly Pentecostal Christology may be unravelled for wider Pentecostal scholarship.

9.1 Summary

Chapter 1 highlighted the growth and present state of Pentecostalism in India. The movement is making a positive impact among the poor, Dalits, Tribal groups and ordinary people. However, the movement has not articulated its variegated theological heritage for its consolidation and further growth. Therefore, it is argued that a Christology developed from the people's side would help the movement to steer its course into the future and enable it to face various obstacles. In order to achieve this, a qualitative research is proposed.

Chapter 2 argued the importance and necessity of contextual and practical expressions of theology and Christology in particular. Since Indian Pentecostalism largely exists among ordinary people, it is proposed that a practical approach is essential to draw out various aspects of Christological articulations. For this purpose, an empirical research is proposed. The rest of the chapter discussed various research methods used for data collection. We employed various methods

such as formal interviews and informal interviews (ethnography), focus groups, participant observation, informal conversations with Pentecostal members and pastors and documentary analysis.

In chapter 3 we discussed various issues in the Indian context which affect the general populace and Pentecostals in particular and contribute to the Christological articulation of Pentecostals. It explained that, although India is experiencing major growth and development in the social and economic realms, only a few enjoy the fruits. The ordinary people suffer the effects of various anomalies which have existed for a long time and also now the negative effects of economic liberalisation and an unbridled consumer market. The most pressing issues affecting common people are poverty and lack of health-care facilities. Dalits and Tribal people face the evil effect of the caste system and resultant untouchability and economic exploitation. For Pentecostals, along with all these issues, the issues of frenzied hostility and persecution create a piquant situation, affect their psyche and social life badly and threaten their safe existence.

Chapter 4 explored Indian Pentecostal history concentrating on North India to place ordinary Pentecostal Christology in its context. The first part of the chapter discussed the methodological shift in Pentecostal historiography and proposed a methodological framework for writing Pentecostal history in North India which takes account of such transformation in scholarly thinking. The chapter also outlined various revivals which took place in the beginning of twentieth century and the ensuing Pentecostal mission. Although in the first instance enthusiastic and vibrant mission activities were carried out, a later lack of concerted efforts

resulted in the stagnation of the movement in North India; we have tried to unravel the reasons for this. However, there were certain Pentecostal activities taking place and a number of South Indian Pentecostals came into the area and advanced the Pentecostal mission. In the second part, we explored various revivals in North India and the growth of the movement among ordinary people. Now, the movement is growing rapidly among the poor, Dalits, and Tribal people and as a result, adding colour and content to its Christology.

Chapter 5 deals with Christologies prevalent in the Indian Christian theological milieu which could be possible dialogue partners for Indian Pentecostal Christology. These Christologies emerged in response to four broader concerns within the Indian context, namely secular, religious, cultural and socio-political concerns. We selected a few from each category and explored their ideas. It is argued that certain elements such as taking culture positively, emphasising the liberative aspect of Christology and appreciating dialogue, among others, need to be taken into account and accommodated by a Pentecostal Christology. However, Christological proposals of some of them are not useful for Pentecostal Christology, since they do not appreciate the divinity and supremacy of Christ. Pentecostal Christology needs to be discerning when appropriating ideals from some of them.

Chapter 6 deals with the ordinary Indian Pentecostal Christology that emerged from the intimate experiences of ordinary believers who were undergoing various struggles. We identified their immediate context and explained that the Christological articulation they cherish stems from their profound contextual and

spiritual experiences. We identified seven major Christological themes, namely, (1) in the context of illness and lack of health-care Jesus is their healer; (2) in the wake of troubles and oppression from evil spiritual forces, the person of Christ comes as the exorcist; (3) in the midst of extreme poverty, they experience Jesus as the provider; (4) in their struggle and persecution, Jesus comes to their rescue and is seen as the protector. These experiential categories enable them to identify Jesus as (5) the Saviour while their continued dependency on Jesus and his continuous presence among them embolden them to confess him to be (6) the Lord. The worship, the work of the Spirit in their lives and teachings from the Bible in churches enable them to make this confession. This new understanding ultimately leads them to proclaim (7) Jesus as God. It is amply clear that these Christological notions have brought radical changes in their personal, family and social lives.

In the first part of Chapter 7 we evaluated the Christology of Indian Pentecostals critically. It has an appropriate mix of both a Christology from below and a Christology from above. However, it lacks an ontological conception of the person of Christ. Moreover, it lacks an understanding of the full humanity of Jesus. These deficiencies can be problematic in the long run. Secondly, we identified several characteristic features of ordinary Christology which are salient features of this Christology. Thirdly, we have also endeavoured to identify its consonance and continuity, in relation to the larger Pentecostal tradition and the New Testament testimony of the person of Christ in order to present it to the larger Pentecostal and Christian audience. It explained that this Christology is

compatible with both Pentecostal tradition and the New Testament testimony of the person of Christ.

In Chapter 8 we rescripted the ordinary Christology in conversation with Pentecostal scholarship to present it constructively to the wider scholarship. In response to the evaluation, rescripting and contextual factors, we also proposed Trinitarian, dialogical and liberative elements which might be added to the ordinary Christology to enrich it and give it added value and meaning. It is believed that these proposals would help Indian Pentecostals to involve themselves actively in their society and enable them to liberate many from the struggles.

9.2 Contributions

This research and its findings have wider significance in Indian, Asian and global contexts in relation to theology, especially Christology. It can also make a rich contribution to Asian and global Pentecostal theology.

Firstly, it emerged that a Christology needs to touch the lives and struggles of ordinary people in order to make it relevant to their context and to achieve this, the ingredients of this Christology must derive from ordinary people. This thesis sends out the message that Christology has to be articulated taking its input from the personal and communal spiritual dimensions of the people.

Secondly, a Christology in an Indian/Asian context should appreciate and appropriate 'signs and wonders,' such as healing and exorcism to alleviate immediate struggles of ordinary people. Along with these elements, the

pneumatological dimension should also be included, to actualise liberative efforts in the context of marginalisation and oppression. This Christology may encourage other endeavours in taking these elements seriously.

Thirdly, it is obvious from the research that the missionary dimension of Christology is an indispensable element in disseminating the message of Christ to the people who are in need. The liberative potential of this proposed Indian Pentecostal Christology can be communicated effectively by ordinary people through their experience and testimony. This research will facilitate the appropriation by other Christologies of the evangelistic and missionary dimension in Christological articulation. It may also help to take ordinary people's testimonies as a valid source for theology. Moreover, emphasising the missionary element and the people's testimonies would enable other Christologies to uphold the supremacy and uniqueness of Christ, in the context of religious pluralism.

This Christology stands as the first attempt to articulate the Christology of Indian Pentecostalism within a hundred years of this movement's existence; moreover, it is also an initial approach to bring out a Christology from the people's side. This research is also unique in its attempt to articulate the history of the North Indian Pentecostal movement. This research also opens a new vista in the theological thinking of the Pentecostal community in India due to the fact that it enables them to appreciate various facets of their theological heritage and history, and to articulate them for the consolidation of the movement and mission while helping to establish the movement's identity in a hostile environment. This also could contribute to the cause of theological education providing methodology, context

and content for Christology. This project can also act as a catalyst to similar endeavours in the Asian and global contexts. This may also encourage Pentecostal theologians worldwide to appreciate and explore the rich and colourful spiritual, theological and historical heritage of Indian Pentecostalism and its contribution to the global Pentecostal heritage, which are largely ignored.

9.3 Areas for Future Research

This study has been an exploration into the Christological notions of ordinary Indian Pentecostals. In the course of the research various theological issues which have a great impact upon people and the larger society have emerged. These issues suggest a few potential areas for further research into Pentecostal theology especially Christology.

One of the important insights that emerged during this research is that Christological notions have changed every area of the life of the people: personal, family, spiritual, economic and social. Given their dismal situation, it is difficult to make such a vast change. Therefore, an in-depth study is needed to understand how these changes have been taking place: how Christological notions affect their inherited worldview and change it for better; how a believer who still lives in such a situation is able to rescue others. These questions need to be dealt with from both sociological and theological angles, to fully recognize the intricate forces and processes behind them.

It has also emerged during this research that Christological formation and the experience of the Spirit are inseparably conjoined for Indian Pentecostals. The gifts of the Spirit, such as healing and exorcism, are carried out in the name of

Jesus. A detailed and deeper research is needed to explore their relationship and the point of intersection. It is also significant to see how the gifts of Spirit such as healing and miracles enrich the Christological understanding of a person and of a community.

Another significant element to be investigated is the relationship between Christology and Soteriology. In the context of a primitive worldview and of oppression by evil spiritual forces, it is interesting to see how people understand the work of Christ. What is the relevance of the suffering of Christ? How do people understand the Cross of Christ? Here their idea of sin also needs to be unearthed to appreciate nuances of Christology people hold.

It is also important to identify the relationship between Christology and ecclesiology. Christological notions form in the crucible of the experience of the community in which the composition of the community plays a crucial role. The worship context and teachings in the church shape Christological ideas. Moreover, the community acts as a liberation agent in the context of oppressive cultural and religious settings. Therefore, it is significant to find the relationship between these aspects, which requires a detailed analysis to augment the liberative momentum of the community.

It is also vital to look at the means and methods to communicate Christological themes to pastors and theological students to appreciate and develop further dimensions of Christological elements of the community. This effort may help the larger Pentecostal community as well as Pentecostal scholarship.

In the area of North Indian Pentecostal history, thorough investigation is needed. It is vital to unearth the lost history of earlier stages, especially between 1920 and 1960, to appreciate the works of the pioneers of the Pentecostal movement in India.

Thus, this research brought into light the Christology of ordinary Pentecostals formed in their particular context. It revealed that their context, history, revival fervour, personal and communal experiences have heavily impacted their Christological articulations, while their Christological concepts have radically changed their existence and enabled them to rescue their compatriots from similar situations. This articulation may help to further the liberative mission endeavours, consolidation of the Pentecostal movement, theological self-assertion of Indian Pentecostals, as well as the Asian and global theological enterprises of Pentecostalism and the larger Christian churches.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Participant Observation

Church: Hebron Church **Date:** 9 August 2009

Time: 10:30 A.M. to 2.30 P.M. **Place:** A Village in Rajasthan

Prayer in the beginning by the Pastor

The main emphasis was praising God for the protection given to the believers last week and bringing them together for worship; greatness of Jesus; thanking him for salvation; all the blessings in believers' lives. Also prayed for those who are sick. Emphasised the importance of Lord Supper, the suffering Jesus underwent and the salvation believers received.

Comment [S1]: Jesus as protector

Comment [S2]: Jesus Lord and saviour

Comment [S3]: Jesus as healer

Comment [S4]: Jesus as saviour

Songs – (Six songs were sung; two were in Hindi and four were in local dialect. The songs in the local dialect were led by a person and repeated by the congregation beating a drum. These songs are called *bhajans*. Some songs portrayed the miraculous power of Jesus; his healing, his power over satanic forces; his love towards his children.

Song 1 (summary)

The name of Jesus gives peace, salvation and eternal life,

Comment [S5]: Jesus as saviour

I will sing his greatness forever.

Mercy, goodness and life are with him,

Comment [S6]: Jesus as saviour

He is eternal, loving, all-powerful Lord,

Comment [S7]: Jesus all powerful; Lord

He loves us, gives us blessings and joy,

I will sing his greatness forever.

Song 2 (summary)

Victory to the Lord

Comment [S8]: Jesus as Lord

Victory to the king

Victory to the Lord of lords

Victory to the Lord who listens to the prayers

Comment [S9]: Jesus as Lord

Victory to the Lord who heals

Comment [S10]: Jesus as Healer

Victory to the Lord who gives peace

Victory to the Lord who gives salvation.

Comment [S11]: Jesus as Lord and saviour

Reading of Psalm (Psalm 56)

The psalm was read by a believer and repeated aloud by the congregation. A prayer was offered by the Pastor after completing the psalm. One of the evangelists spoke for a few minutes about this Psalm.

The main emphasis was God's protection for his people. There are many enemies against the believers. Sometimes they attack us. But God is there to protect us. We are under his wings. He emphasised v 8; 'You have kept count of my tossings; put my tears in your bottle.' God is there to see our tears and he keeps the record of our difficulties and answers us. He would not allow our enemies to overtake us.

Comment [S12]: Jesus as protector

Comment [S13]: Persecution

Comment [S14]: Jesus as protector

After this all the people stood and again sang some worship songs.

Then children recited bible verses.

Immediately after this, time was given for personal testimony

Testimony 1: A believer (male) testified that he owned a buffalo and the income from the milk of that animal was the sole family income. The animal became sick and almost stopped giving milk. However, he prayed for it in the name of Jesus and the buffalo miraculously recovered and began to give milk as usual.

Comment [S15]: Jesus as provider and healer

Testimony 2: A new believer (male). He came from a distant village.

I was an idol worshipper and used to go to many temples. My wife was ill; suffering from constant stomach problems for many years. She could not eat anything and she was thin and lean. I sought the help of *bhopas* and carried out witchcraft, sacrificing 20 goats in various occasion for the healing, but without any respite. Then a pastor once came to my house at night. He prayed for my wife and continuously visited me and encouraged me to place my trust in Jesus. I was totally ignorant about Jesus Christ. I am totally illiterate and did not understand anything. But my wife's condition was very serious and she was about to die. So I put my trust in Jesus. I began to pray with the Pastor. The Pastor encouraged me to take the name of Jesus and taught me that he is healer. Slowly, my wife recovered from the illness. Jesus gave us healing. Then I began to attend the church and accepted Jesus as my saviour. Jesus is greater than all; all of my former deities. Jesus is my Lord (*yishu mera prabhu hai*). Then my daughter became gravely ill. People in my village accused me that it was because I had accepted a new religion. They asked me to indulge in idol worship and get the help of *bhopa*. I told them, 'Jesus is my Lord' (*yishu mera prabhu hai*), he can heal my daughter; even if my child dies I do not

Comment [S16]: Sickness

Comment [S17]: Failure of religious practices

Comment [S18]: Jesus as healer

Comment [S19]: Jesus as saviour

Comment [S20]: Jesus as unique; incomparable

Comment [S21]: Jesus as Lord

Comment [S22]: Jesus as Lord and healer

worship idols. Even my parents accused me of killing my daughter. They asked me to leave Jesus and go for witchcraft. I felt very sad and cried. I said to them, 'Jesus can heal my daughter.' Even if she dies, even if I die, even if all my family die, I do not worship idols; I won't leave Jesus because he alone is the true Lord (*kyonki woh hi succha prabhu hai*). Then I prayed and telephoned the Pastor. He prayed for her and she was healed. Even now people oppose us. I request you earnest prayers for our faith life.

Comment [S23]: Jesus as Healer

Comment [S24]: Jesus as Lord

Comment [S25]: Jesus as healer

Testimony 3: a woman

Praise the Lord. The Lord has protected me from a deadly situation. On Wednesday, I was taking wheat flour to make *chappatis*, a deadly poisonous snake fell on me. It was very poisonous. If I were bitten by him, I would have died within few moments not even having time to drink a glass of water. It was the grace of God, it did not harm me. Lord Jesus has protected me (*yishu prabhu mucche bacchaya*). Jesus Christ saves us from all kinds of dangers.

Comment [S26]: Jesus as protector

Testimony 4: a woman

Last week God was good to me. Our youngest child was sick. As a family we prayed together and the child was taken to the doctor also. Now she is better. Please pray for the speedy healing.

Comment [S27]: Jesus as healer

Testimony 5: a man

Last week God was good to our family. Our children are fine. God protected us from every danger. He kept our animals safe. We received a good harvest of maize and vegetables and we are thankful to God. Our animals are keeping

fine. All should continue to pray for our blessing. (Then he put away some money and a small sack of maize before the Pastor).

Comment [S28]: Jesus as protector and provider

Testimony 6: a woman

Praise the Lord; God brought me safe to the worship service. I am going through great trouble at home and in the village. My husband has beaten me many times because I come to the worship service. Other family members are also against me. They always ridicule me. My neighbours are also against me. But the Lord kept me safe. I have come to worship the Lord. I love God. All should pray for me to stand for Jesus. Please pray for my husband to come to the lord.

Comment [S29]: Persecution

Comment [S30]: Jesus as Lord

Exhortation by an evangelist

Reading 1 Peter 4: 12-14, he has exhorted the believers to rejoice when they are persecuted. 'There are many people to persecute us. Our family members trouble us, our villagers revile us, but when others persecute us and ridicule us we need to rejoice in the Lord. We should pray for them. Take our troubles as joy. Whatever, is happening in our life, dear sister, is not unknown to our Lord (he was specifically speaking to the above woman). We need to be courageous. When we go through troubles and persecution, we are bringing glory to the Lord. So we need to sing, dance and rejoice in the Lord. (In between these words the congregation responded with Halleluiah)

Comment [S31]: Persecution

Offering: Then an offering was taken singing a song; the theme of the song was that Lord is the provider, he gives everything freely and we need to give him back sacrifices of thanksgiving.

Lord's Supper

Then Lord's Supper was conducted with great reverence; some believers helped the Pastor to distribute the elements. The main emphasis in this ceremony was the suffering and death of Jesus for the salvation of the people and at the end of the Lord's Supper a missionary call was given by the Pastor exhorting every believer to bring the good news of Jesus to their villagers. He also asked them to call sick and suffering people to the church to be healed.

Comment [S32]: Jesus as saviour

Comment [S33]: Evangelism

Message by the Pastor (summary)

How many are blessed in your life? (The congregation responded with a loud 'yes') To be blessed we have just said yes to Jesus. We were not worthy of it but we received manifold blessings – spiritually, financially- because of His son Jesus. All the impossible things in our lives are made possible by God. Let us read Isaiah 43: 1-7.

Comment [S34]: Jesus as provider

In Is 53: 1 God says to his people, 'you are mine.' Even though everything is against us God says to us you are mine. Verse 7 says that I have created you. When we are in trouble, don't forget this fact. Because we are his people, God gives us power to speak against illness, our troubles, against the evil spirits. Don't underestimate ourselves as insignificant. We are children of God. We are valuable before God. We may not understand our worth before God but God value us greatly. We are his own people. How can we be his own people? We can be his people only by obeying his words. Psalm 103 says that those who follow his words and those who fear him will be his children. When we said 'yes' to Jesus, we became children of God. Therefore, all the heavenly

blessings are ours. God gives us healing from above, he blesses us in our children's education, and he protects our animals and cultivation. God does not allow any evil spiritual forces to harm us. Because we are his people.

Comment [S35]: Jesus as provider, protector, healer

According to v. 2 when we pass through fire and water, God is with us because he said 'you are mine.' When we go through troubles, persecution, beatings at home, lack of good things, God is there to rescue us. He is there to provide us.

Because we are precious in his sight. We are honoured in his sight. God has

Comment [S36]: Jesus as provider, protector

sent his own son Jesus for us and Jesus said that he will be with us at the end of time (Matt. 28: 17, 18). If God is with us, we need to be faithful in all matters. We should lead a holy life. We cannot live like others live. Is. 43: 6 and 7 says to us that God will bring people from all directions. We should ask God for new people in the church. All of your village should come to Christ. God's intention is to bring all the people to his presence. God wants all to be saved. But if we don't bring this good news to other how will others come to Jesus? Tell the God news of Jesus to your neighbours. Tell them that Jesus would heal them. Tell them that all their troubles created by evil forces will be over. Tell them that their families would be blessed.

Comment [S37]: Jesus as saviour

Comment [S38]: Evangelism; Jesus healer, exorcist, provider

Conclusion

Then the worship ended with prayer and benediction. People began to come for prayer for various needs: some for healing, some for their animals and harvest, some for their children and so on. The rest of the believers went out of the church building and formed a circle and they all shook hands with one another.

Appendix 2

Personal Interviews

Name: Mathai (pseudonym) **Sex:** Male

Age: 38 **Occupation:** Evangelist **Place:** A Village in Rajasthan

Interview Conducted: 5 August 2009

My son was gravely ill in his childhood. He was my first-born. As usual in the village, I consulted the *bhopa* and it was said that the illness was due to the displeasure of the ancestor spirit. I spent lot of money on sacrifices and rituals. First it was a cockerel and later many cockerels and goats also were sacrificed to appease the ancestor spirit. Many more *pooja* were also conducted for the healing, yet the situation was getting worse day by day. It was advised to me by some people to take my son to the PHC; however, the doctor was helpless since the centre lacked essential facilities as well as medicines. Then I had taken my child to the hospital in the city which is 30 miles away. The doctors prescribed some medicines and many medical tests to pinpoint the cause of the illness. We spent huge amount of money on medicines and other things. Later I had to sell a portion of my land to pay off the debt incurred by the treatment. Then we stopped giving any medicine. We had almost given up our hope of getting back our son. Then someone spoke about a Christian who would pray for the sick in the name of Jesus. We were desperate and took the child to the church. The pastor said that Jesus can heal the child if I could believe. Then the pastor put his hand upon the boy and prayed in the name of Jesus (*yishu ka naam me*). There was immediate result. The boy had shown some response and

Comment [S39]: Sickness and failure of traditional methods.

Comment [S40]: Failure of Medical help

Comment [S41]: Financial burden

Comment [S42]: Jesus as healer

Comment [S43]: Jesus as healer

within a week he was totally healed. Now he has completed his high school and wanted to go for theological study.

Can you describe your earlier religious life?

We are from tribal background and used to worship different deities. We also had festivals and ceremonies to offer sacrifices to our ancestors. If anything happens in our family, it was our custom to consult the *bhopa* in our village and offer sacrifices to *mataji*. Because we were scared of those spirits; they can bring destruction to our lives, animals and cultivation. We were living in insecurity and poverty.

Comment [S44]: Insecurity

Comment [S45]: Jesus as protector and provider

What difference you find now?

Now by the grace of God we are fine. My son is healthy and he wants to go for bible study. I am uneducated. I have no good knowledge in bible. But it is a blessing that my son study bible. We spent a huge amount of money on witch-craft and medical expenses for the treatment of my son. At the end because of the debt I had to sell my ancestral land. Now things changed for the better after the healing of his son. The money we used to spend for witch-crafts and treatment began to be used for better food and household needs. Now God blessed us greatly. Later I bought a buffalo and started to cultivate the land remained with me. God helped to have our buffalo to produce good amount of milk. In the cultivation also there was good yield. Then I brought one more buffalo and that also began to give milk. This is all by the grace of God (*sab prabhu ka anugrah hai*). Within four years I could buy back my land although

Comment [S46]: Financial burden

Comment [S47]: Healing leads to betterment; Jesus as provider

I had to pay more than what I received. It is only because of the grace of Jesus, not my ability.

Comment [S48]: Jesus as provider

How do you understand Jesus?

Jesus is our Lord. He is able to heal and save people from their wretched condition. We were in a difficult situation. Jesus saved us. In my ministry when I pray for the people in the name of Jesus, they get healing; they are also released from torments of evil spirits. Jesus is greater than all spirits. Earlier we were in darkness. We were worshipping evil spirits. We spend lot of our money and resources for these evil things. But Jesus gives security and peace freely. Now we don't fear anything. No gods can stand before Jesus. No spirits can harm us if Jesus is with us. Many people are living in fear. I tell them that Jesus only can remove their fear and give them protection and safety.

Comment [S49]: Jesus as lord

Comment [S50]: Jesus as saviour

Comment [S51]: Saviour

Comment [S52]: Jesus as healer

Comment [S53]: Jesus as exorcist

Comment [S54]: Jesus unique or incomparable

Comment [S55]: Jesus as protector

How do you tell about Jesus to others?

I move around my village and nearby villages and testify about Jesus. Many people around here are under poverty. Many are sick. Many people are scared of spirits and tormented by evil spirits. I go and pray for these people. Many have been delivered. They attend the church. In the village people waste money consuming alcohol. They also make it in their homes. Then they create trouble in their homes; beat their wives. They don't send their children to school. I tell them that Jesus can save them from their trouble. Some people oppose me and ridicule me. But I don't bother about it.

Comment [S56]: Jesus as problem solver ; testimony - mission

Comment [S57]: Jesus as saviour

Comment [S58]: Opposition

Do you face any opposition in the ministry?

Of course; at first people were not ready to accept the message of the Gospel. They think that it is a foreign religion. If they accept it, they believe that they would be tormented by their ancestor spirits. In the beginning people abused me and not allowed to enter into their homes. But when people began to be healed and delivered from the power of evil spirits, their attitude has changed and now people accept me. Now they come to me for prayer. Still some people oppose me and revile me. By seeing our blessings they are not able to tell anything against us.

Comment [S59]: Opposition

Comment [S60]: Jesus as healer and exorcist

Comment [S61]: Provision, blessing

Name: Chacko (pseudonym)

Age: 45 Occupation: Job Place: Gujarat

Interview Conducted: 28 August 2009

We are from Hindu background. I was a devout Hindu. I used to read scriptures of our religion diligently. My daughter who was 18 years old was infested with evil spirit. Not only that, whole of my family was tormented by the influence of some sort of satanic powers. The effect of such a condition was threatened the integrity of our family. We had no peace of mind; mentally and physically we were troubled. As a family we were totally gripped by the evil power of Satan. There was always quarrel and illness in the family. Even without any cause family members used to be sick. To get relief from this influence, we have made special rituals in famous temples. We have also carried out witch-craft and other rituals at home with help of certain famous

Comment [S62]: Spirit Infestation

Comment [S63]: Lack of peace and security

tantriks. Major part of my earning was spent on various rituals and offerings and for god-men. It had been informed to us that one of the gods was angry upon us and the gods had infested our daughter. However, in the name of Jesus Christ, my daughter got deliverance. The pastor and the believers came to us and prayed for our daughter. She began to show improvement. The atmosphere of the family has been changed. Now as a family we attend the church.

Comment [S64]: Futility of former religious beliefs

Comment [S65]: Jesus as exorcist

How do you experience Jesus in your life?

Words of Jesus had powerful impact in my life. His words, 'I am the light of the world' 'I am the way, the truth and the life' influenced my life. I have heard these words in a Christian programme in television. I felt that this is something true. I felt that whatever I was doing was futile. Then I began to read Bible. The words and miracles of Jesus had impacted me. I put my trust in Jesus. I understood that this is truth. Our family was in big trouble. Jesus has delivered from our troublesome condition. We had no peace. We were living constant fear what would happen in next moment. But now we are safe. Jesus is with us. God has chosen us to be saved. Not because of our goodness. We know that God loves us.

Comment [S66]: Jesus as greatest

Comment [S67]: Jesus as saviour

Comment [S68]: Jesus as protector

Comment [S69]: Jesus as saviour

Now our life is totally devoted to Jesus. The pastor and believers come to our house and pray for us and conduct worship. We are very happy. My daughter is alright now. Now we don't fear any satanic powers. Jesus is with us. Our money is not wasted on *puja* and other rituals. Now we have joy in our forms. We regularly come to fellowship. We have family prayer and we are happy now.

Comment [S70]: Jesus as protector

Comment [S71]: Jesus as provider

How do you describe Jesus?

He is the Lord. He gives eternal life. Because of Jesus I am alive today and my family is happy because of Jesus. The satanic forces were tormenting us. Jesus' name is greater than all names. His name is the true name. In his name all gods tremble. If we just utter his name or think his name, satanic power will flee away. No power on earth can stand before his presence. His name has power over every power in the world. His power is eternal, never to be destroyed. Jesus' name is true from the beginning and that name gives me joy and happiness. I am convinced about it. Jesus is my saviour. He is the saviour our family. Jesus has given us peace and deliverance from the torment of so called gods we worshipped. Jesus is the saviour (*Yishu hi udharak hai*) and only he can save us. There is no Lord and God other than him.

Comment [S72]: Jesus as lord

Comment [S73]: Jesus as saviour

Comment [S74]: Jesus as incomparable

Comment [S75]: Jesus as saviour

Comment [S76]: Jesus as Lord and God

Do you tell others about Jesus?

I tell my relatives and friends about Jesus. But they are not ready to accept. They consider us as lunatic and accepted other religion. Even my own brother does not accept this truth. My parents are against us. Some of the relatives are against us and try to persecute us. If God is with us we do not have fear anything.

Comment [S77]: Opposition

Comment [S78]: Jesus as protector

How do you tell it?

First I tell our story to the people and tell about the power of Jesus over all the gods and goddesses. I used to tell how Jesus had delivered us from our trouble. I also tell about the futility of worshipping false gods and idols. Some people

Comment [S79]: Jesus as unique and powerful

Comment [S80]: Jesus as deliverer

Comment [S81]: Jesus as unique and powerful

have come forward but they did not stand firm. Because of the pressure from their families and relatives they have gone back. Satan did not allow them to move forward in faith. But we have experienced the power of God in our lives. Now we experience security and peace in our lives.

Comment [S82]: Jesus as protector and provider

Name: Shanti (pseudonym)

Sex: Female

Age: 32 Occupation: House-wife

Place: A Village in Rajasthan

Interview Conducted: 2 August 2009

I was acutely suffering from the issue of blood for a long time. It is all started after the birth of my third child. At first I took the problem as simple, but things began to become worse as time passed. We have approached the village *bhopa*, however, he was not able to heal me. Later I was taken to another village; the *bhopa* there was considered as more powerful. He had performed certain *pooja* and also sacrificed a cock. He considered the disease as the displeasure of *bavazi mata* and also assured me that problem would be over very soon as the anger of *mataji* had been placated. Even though for a week, I was bit ok, later the problem began to increase. Later I was taken to (public health centre) PHC and the doctor examined me and prescribed me medicine. Then the issue of blood stopped for a while. However, again the problem reappeared. Whenever, I took medicines, it was eased, but later it would come back again. I was totally devastated. I was not able to work or do the household chorus. My children began to go to school hungry. My husband had to toil day and night to meet the two ends. We had spent a huge amount of

Comment [S83]: Sickness

Comment [S84]: Futility of religious tradition

Comment [S85]: Failure of medical help

money for my treatment. Later I was bed-ridden and only with help of some I could get up. I was in miserable condition (she cries). I was concerned about my husband and children. Then one of my distant relatives said to me about the church and prayer for the sick people there. My husband took me to the church on a Sunday. The pastor shared me the story of Jesus and healing power of Jesus. I put my trust on Jesus for healing. The pastor and the believers together prayed for me and suddenly I felt something like lightening passing into my body. At that moment I had realised that I had been healed; praise the Lord (she seems to be emotional and raises the voice). From that day I never had the problem recur in my life. Jesus is the real healer (*yishu such much me chanka denawala hai*) and he is our Lord (*Prabhu hai*) and none is like him.

Comment [S86]: Testimony - evangelism

Comment [S87]: Jesus as healer

Comment [S88]: Jesus as healer

Comment [S89]: Jesus as Lord and incomparable

Now we are regular members in this church. Whole of my family comes to the church. Our pastor is a prayerful man and he prays for our problems.

What difference you see after coming to church?

Now we have peace of mind. Even though we have problems we believe that Jesus is able to help us. We go to work and God helped us to be better off in our finance. Earlier we used to spend lot of money for witch-craft and medicine. Now we don't spend our money for these things. Our children go to school. Whenever any illness takes place, the pastor and the church pray for us.

Comment [S90]: Jesus as protector

Comment [S91]: Jesus as provider

How do your neighbours relate with you?

In the beginning, my relatives and neighbours were hostile to us. They told us that you have accepted lower religion and spirits would be angry at us. However, we know that Jesus is all powerful. He would save us from all the troubles. After attending the church, we are blessed in every area of our lives. Now they are friendly with us. Two families from our neighbourhood joined the church.

Comment [S92]: Jesus as protector

Comment [S93]: Jesus as provider

Comment [S94]: Evangelism – testimony

How do you understand Jesus Christ in your life?

We were without any hope, living like animals. We were suffering in our lives with illness and poverty. Jesus has changed our sufferings into blessings. He is our saviour; he saved me from my prolonged illness. I was not able to work or take care of my children and husband. Now I am fine. Now I go to work and earn money. Jesus (*yeshu bapa*) is truly our Lord and God.

Comment [S95]: Jesus as saviour and healer

Comment [S96]: Jesus as Lord and God

Name: Thomas (pseudonym) Sex: Male

Age: 38 Occupation: Doctor Place: Udaipur

Interview Conducted: 8 July 2009

My wife was sick for a long time (since 2004) and she had stomach pain. We had taken her to best doctors available but there was no improvement. We had to spend minimum Rs. 3000-4000 every month for her treatment, doing sonography, X-ray and many other medical tests but doctors could find no problems in her. We were really fed up with her illness. It continued for three years. Moreover, there were many other troubles in our home.

Comment [S97]: Sickness

Comment [S98]: Failure of medical help

In 2007, I happened to go to a friend in Jaipur who was a teacher. I described about my wife's problem to him. There he introduced an evangelist who prays for the sick people and my friend introduced the evangelist to me. The evangelist said that he would come and pray after three days. Of course, after three days he came and prayed for my wife and the problem was subsided. She had no problem for 3 months. However, after 3 months the problem began to reappear. We could not understand it and moreover, we have never bothered to see how through prayer she was healed and there was no Christian fellowship. We lived in our old habits. We thought that it is the natural occurrence of the illness.

Again we have started spending money on her and it became routine in our life to spend minimum Rs. 2000-4000 every month. It continued for a time. In 2007 February I was transferred to Junjhunu and then I was transferred to Udaipur in August, 2008. Then I also became sick, having shivering at evening and continuous fever. With medicines and spending money there was no respite. I could not understand why things are happening this way.

Before twenty years ago, because of witch-craft done by someone people upon our family my father had expired. Since then we were consulting a Muslim *tantrik* and every year minimum Rs.10000-20000 spend on witch-craft (*jadhu tona*) to avoid troubles in the family. For a while things would be in control but recur after sometime. It was because of this all the problems were occurring. The same person has given me some thread to wear chanting some *mantras*

Comment [S99]: Failure of medical help; spending resources

Comment [S100]: Sickness and failure of medical help

spending Rs.3000 and assured me of complete healing. However, there was no respite for their trouble. I was in great distress but I did not tell my illness to anybody.

Comment [S101]: Witch-craft; demonic infestation

In Udaipur I wanted get a house for rent and I asked one of my friends to look for it since I was new here. My friend took me to women who was a nurse and believer who had a house for rent. I have decided to take that house. Then she invited us to her home nearby and there I saw a photograph of Jesus Christ hanging on the wall. By seeing the photograph, I asked her whether they follow Jesus. She said yes. She was a believer for many years. Then I said to her I honour Jesus.

Then she introduced me to another person (Mr. Pargi), who was a believer.

Comment [S102]: Evangelism

Later he invited me to the prayer meeting conducted in his home. In the beginning I did not understand anything taking place there. But I had a strange attraction for the prayer and felt that there is power in the prayer. There was singing, Bible reading and also believers prayed for me. However, I did not tell my troubles to them. I sat there and I felt a comforting presence. On the third day, again I was invited for the prayer and I attended and it continued for few days. In one of those meetings, I felt that I am alright and I have removed all the amulets and threads given by the tantric.

Comment [S103]: Deliverance; Jesus as healer and exorcist

The next day I have received a call from my wife that she has unbearable stomach pain and I informed Mr Pargi about it. I did not tell him to pray for her since I did not know that prayers are offered for the sick people. But he

prayed there and next day I got the phone call from my wife that she is alright.

Comment [S104]: Prayer and healing;
Jesus as healer

Later I have brought my wife and children to Udaipur. Here I began to learn Bible and understood more about Jesus. Now I attend the church regularly and also the prayer meeting in our area.

In the light of your healing, how do you understand Christ?

Satan brings troubles and illness in our lives but Jesus is the healer. He is the

Comment [S105]: Jesus as healer

light of the world. He removes the power of darkness and evil powers. Once a

Comment [S106]: Jesus as exorcist;
powerful

person comes to Christ, his outlook changes, all the wastes are thrown out and becomes a new creation.

Comment [S107]: Salvation; Jesus as
saviour

Can you describe your earlier religious life?

I never was a religious person in Hindu religious tradition. Hardly have I visited any temples. But my family was very religious and still my parents are Hindus.

What difference you find in your former life and now?

Earlier I was nervous, feeling a heavy load on my mind and body. I had been troubled by some unknown forces which I could not understand. But now I feel

light. It is like heavy burden of fifty kilogram is taken away from me. Jesus has

removed my burden. It is exactly as Jesus said 'Come to me, all you who

Comment [S108]: Peace and security;
Jesus as protector

labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest (Matt 11:28).' I was

burdened by problems of life, sin; we were burdened by satanic forces. But I

feel peace and joy. My wife is healthy and my children are good at their

Comment [S109]: Peace and joy;
Jesus as saviour

studies. Now we don't spend our resources for witch-craft and unnecessary treatment. Jesus has enabled us to save our financial resources.

Comment [S110]: Jesus as provider

Then how do you see Jesus and your old traditional beliefs?

All those old gods and goddesses are satanic; through idol worship Satan is taking advantage. There are 36 crore (360 million) of gods and even people do not know the names of 360 of them and they are actually evil spirits. Jesus is the only God; he is the only way. Only through Jesus one can be saved. He is the Lord. It is my experience; it is my life. For testifying this once I was arrested. But I firmly testified that I am telling to the people what I have experienced in my life. It is my desire that everybody should know about Christ. A fire is burning in my heart to tell about Jesus to everybody. When I see anybody puzzled by the forces of darkness, I testify them about Jesus. Jesus is greater than all. All should be escaped from the futility of false worship and sinful life.

Comment [S111]: Jesus is incomparable God

Comment [S112]: Jesus is saviour and Lord

Comment [S113]: Evangelism and persecution

Comment [S114]: Evangelism

Comment [S115]: Jesus is incomparable

How do others look at you?

People of my village and my relatives accuse me of accepting a foreign religion. But they do not understand the joy and peace I enjoy. My colleagues also look at me with contempt. They don't tolerate the way I witness to my patients. They have written to health secretary and medical registrar about it. But they could not do anything.

Comment [S116]: Jesus as protector

Name: Yeshudas (pseudonym) **Sex:** Male

Age: 36 **Occupation:** Labourer **Place:** A Village in Rajasthan Interview

Conducted: 5 August 2009

Earlier we were worshipping idols and spirits. My father was the *bhopa* of my village and used to perform rituals to please spirits and cast out spirits from the possessed people. People usually gather on special days for healing and solving their problems. We had a small shrine in our home. I used to help him and learned some chants and techniques. The deity we used to offer sacrifice was called *narsingji*. Different spirits are worshipped by different people. We also worshipped a deity called *tanas*.

Comment [S117]: Spirit worship

Everything was fine until my father's death. However, things began to change rapidly since then. After a month of my father's death, suddenly four of my sisters had fallen ill in consecutive days. Their bodies were swollen and unable to pass urine. I had realised that it was the attack of the spirits that are to be placated because no sacrifices were offered after my father's death. In my panic I began to run pillar to post, consulting other *bhopas* and *tantriks* but no avail. Later my mother also fell sick. She was old and could not eat anything. Moreover, she had bad dreams that someone calling her from far distance and she was being attacked by huge figures.

Comment [S118]: Demonic attack; sickness

Comment [S119]: Failure of old religious practices

After few days my wife, who was pregnant at that time also fell ill. It was a shock to me. I brought a powerful *bhopa* from a different village but he also could not do anything. We spend lot of money. My sisters' illness began to

Comment [S120]: Demonic attack and sickness

Comment [S121]: Failure of religious practices

Comment [S122]: Spending resources

increase day by day and they were at the point of death. After a week I became ill with same symptoms. Whole of my body was swollen and aching and unable to eat anything or pass urine. I was also bed-ridden and unconscious for some time.

Comment [S123]: Demonic attack and sickness

To be involved in witch-craft is like to be trapped in a spider's web and it is very difficult to escape from the clutches of these wicked spirits. If we keep them happy giving sacrifices – cock, goats, coconut – we are fine. But once things go out of hand, they attack us and make our life miserable and even it can cause harm to our life.

My elder sister who was married off to a different village came to know about it and she was a believer. Knowing our condition, she came with her pastor. He prayed over me in the name of Jesus rebuked the power of evil spirits. From that moment onward all us began feel better and within few days we received complete release from the attack of the spirits. Now I know that Jesus is all powerful, greater than all spirits. He can do everything; he has power over every spirit. I will only worship him.

Comment [S124]: Evangelism; testimony

Comment [S125]: Jesus as exorcist

Comment [S126]: Jesus all powerful; incomparable

Comment [S127]: Jesus Lord and God

Later my child became sick. His condition was severe. Our pastor prayed for him. Then with help of the pastor, we took my child to hospital in the city. Everybody was telling that my son would die but I had the strong faith in Jesus that my child would be healed because from a bigger crisis Jesus had rescued us. The pastor encouraged me to keep my faith strong and as family we

earnestly prayed. The doctor had prescribed expensive medicines. My son was cured and God listened to our prayers.

Comment [S128]: Jesus as protector and healer

How do you understand Jesus in your life?

When I got relief from the attack of the spirits, I realised that Jesus is greatest of all. No gods or spirits can stand before him. He is powerful than all the gods. All my neighbours and relatives know that Jesus has rescued us. I give testimony about it. Some people have come out of their old lives and accepted Christ, because of my testimony.

Comment [S129]: Jesus is Lord; unique and incomparable

Comment [S130]: Jesus as saviour

Comment [S131]: Evangelism; testimony

Jesus is a true God and he can only give peace and security. Earlier, while serving other gods were troubled by their torment. But Jesus gives us joy. When we tell him our troubles, he solves it. He heals us; we don't have to give sacrifices. He gives us blessings and prosperity freely. He listens our prayer.

Comment [S132]: Jesus God and protector

Comment [S133]: Jesus as provider

Now we have peace and security in the family. My sisters are fine and two of them were married off. My children are healthy. Now we don't fear any spirits. We know that Jesus is with us and he protects us from every evil power. Even though sometimes I am troubled, Jesus gives me peace. I pray to God and he gives me his comfort. Sometimes I feel dejected. Sometimes I am so weak in my body, but Jesus gives me strength and keeps me safe. Even in the last night I was troubled by body problem. But I prayed and got relief.

Comment [S134]: Jesus as protector

What about your finance?

I am a labourer. Earlier most of our resources were either given to doctors or to witch-craft. All of our resources were taken away by *bhopas* doing various

rituals and sacrifices. But now whatever I earned is used for the family. No money is wasted on witch-crafts. Bad habits of earlier life are discarded. Our pastor teaches us to live a holy life. Jesus provides us in our needs and he also blessed us with cows. They give milk.

Comment [S135]: Jesus as provider

Do you tell about Jesus to others?

Yes, in my village some people have believed because of my testimony. Last month we have organised a prayer meeting in our home. But our relatives and villagers created troubles and they have attacked us. Then the police came and arrested me and kept me in jail for four days. I was accused of converting people and disturbing the peace of the community. Then I said to my family, if our God is alive, this is not a big problem.

Comment [S136]: Evangelism

Comment [S137]: Persecution

Appendix 3

Focus Group

Kuttappan: I am from tribal background. We used to worship tribal goddesses. I was bed-ridden for a long time. For my recovery, we have approached village bhopa and even my wife has visited some Hindu temples, offered *puja* and could not get any respite from illness. We were suffering from the torment of unknown powers. The demonic powers were creating an inner commotion and I was restless. There were nightmares and scary figures used to appear in dreams. We spent lot of money and tried what we could do. A distant relative of mine, who was a believer, took me to the church. Later the pastor and some believers came to my home and prayed for me for couple of weeks and I received healing. In Jesus' name I received total healing and deliverance. Now I have peace in my life and in the family. Jesus is greater than all.

Comment [S138]: Sickness

Comment [S139]: Failure of religious rituals

Comment [S140]: Demonic infestation

Comment [S141]: Financial loss

Comment [S142]: Jesus as Healer and Exorcist

Comment [S143]: Jesus as unique; greater than all

Susan: I was attending a different denomination and leading nominal Christian life. Before last year I had developed the problem of stones in the kidney. I was suffering from it for an year. It caused intense pain. We had consultation with a doctor and the date for surgery was fixed. We had to spend a good amount of money for the surgery. One of the sisters of this church invited me to attend a service and told me that in the church, the pastor prays for the sick people. Any way I just joined the Friday fasting prayer and the pastor and the believers together prayed for me. As they were praying, the pain began to increase. Then it became unbearable. I told pastor that my pain is increasing.

Comment [S144]: Sickness

Comment [S145]: Lack of finance for medical-care

Comment [S146]: Evangelism

Then he suggested me to pass the urine. For my surprise through the urine 20 stones of different sizes came out. Jesus himself had done the surgery on me. Since then I am alright and I attend this church.

Comment [S147]: Healing event; Jesus as healer

Earlier I was just a Christian for the name-sake. After coming here, I had deeper experience with Jesus. I felt the power of the Holy Spirit. Now I know that Jesus is able to heal all sickness and he is greater than all. He is Lord of my Life. Now as a family we attend this church. God has blessed our family, every aspect of our life.

Comment [S148]: Jesus greater than all

Comment [S149]: Jesus as Lord

Comment [S150]: Provision, blessing

Reji: My wife was troubled by evil spirits from her childhood. Even after the marriage they used to torment her, make her fall down and wound her and sometimes make her unconscious. Later she was paralysed in one of her legs and became bed-ridden. We have spent lot of money for witchcraft (He is a truck driver and earns a good amount of money). All of my income would go for witchcraft and treatment but without any results. However, our neighbour was the member of this church. She told my wife about this church and the prayer. Then we were introduced to the Pastor. The Pastor prayed for her; she got some relief. Then we continued to attend the church and now she is totally healed. Now we know that Jesus is all powerful and able to overcome all the powers of evil. Now we don't spend money for witchcraft. In the church the Pastor encourages us to lead a holy life. Now my daughters go to school and we are better off people. My wife is able to do all the household works and takes care of children.

Comment [S151]: Demonic infestation

Comment [S152]: Loss of resources for witch-craft; failure of religious rituals

Comment [S153]: Evangelism, Testimony

Comment [S154]: Deliverance in the name of Jesus; Jesus as exorcist

Comment [S155]: Jesus is Lord

Comment [S156]: Jesus as provider

Mathew: I was alright until I was 25 years of my life. Suddenly, one day I had developed a high fever and it went on for some days. We tried certain *jadi-booti* and later the village doctor (bhua) had been called in. He diagnosed it as evil eye and carried out some rituals which I could not understand. However, instead of getting better my condition was rather worsening. After a few days I realised that my body was paralysing. I was totally bed-ridden. Then the service of a private doctor had solicited and we spent a sum of money but without any respite. My condition was worsening day by day. Having found no let up, my family took me to the general hospital in the city. The Doctors examined me and I was sent to different specialists. Lot of money had been spent on medical examination such as scanning, blood test and, so on. Nonetheless, there was no positive sign of recovery. My family had to borrow money for my treatment. Not finding any result, I was taken back to my village and just left to be in bed forever. For two years I was bed-ridden. I thought that my life had finished and I had given up any hope of recovery. However, someone had told me that there is a pastor (*padri*) who would pray for the sick. The same person with help of my family and neighbour took me to the church. I never knew about Jesus Christ or healing in the name of Jesus. The Pastor narrated the story of Jesus, how he healed paralysed man in the gospel. I was assured that even today, the healing is possible, if I believe. I was desperate, and ready to do anything. I put all my trust in Jesus. The Pastor prayed over me. Although my body did not feel anything, my mind became calm and peaceful for the first time. Then the pastor began to visit my home regularly. Day by day my condition began to change, within two weeks I was able to sit

Comment [S157]: Failure of rituals

Comment [S158]: Sickness

Comment [S159]: Failure of medical help

Comment [S160]: Spending financial resources

Comment [S161]: Testimony, evangelism

on my bed. Then the recovery was fast enough, I could walk within one month. I was convinced that Jesus is true Lord and healer of all diseases. Then I decided to serve this great Lord who is able to do great things. There is no other God like Jesus. Now through me Jesus is doing many miracles of healing and exorcism.

Comment [S162]: Healing in the name of Jesus;
Jesus as healer

Comment [S163]: Jesus as Healer

Comment [S164]: Jesus supreme God

Annamma: I have been a believer for more than 5years. Last year I had developed a cyst in my stomach (later it was known from her husband that it was an ovarian cyst). It caused intense pain and bleeding and I could not work or sleep. I was taken to hospital and doctors recommended for a surgery. However, it needed a big sum of money. It was difficult for us to raise such an amount. I was not able to work and the wages earned by my husband was only enough for daily expenses of the family. It was beyond our capacity. Therefore we began to pray. The matter was put before the congregation and the pastor earnestly prayed for me. For our surprise within few weeks the cyst disappeared completely. I know that God loves me and heals his children.

Comment [S165]: Sickness

Comment [S166]: Lack of financial resources

Comment [S167]: Healing in the name of Jesus;
Jesus as healer

How do you understand Jesus in your life?

Mathai: Jesus is our Lord and healer. Jesus delivered us from our wretched condition. Earlier I was scared of evil forces. Now I feel peace and security. He also heals our sickness.

Comment [S168]: Jesus Lord, Healer, protector

What are the main problems people face here?

Mathai: People are poor and uneducated. Many people are sick and infested by evil spirits. When people come with such problems, we fast and pray for

Comment [S169]: Poverty and illiteracy

Comment [S170]: Sickness and demonic activities

them. People get healed of stomach problems, fatigue, tiredness, issue of blood and so on. Ordinary people are fed up with *Bhua* (village healer), sacrifices. They are very expensive. When these spirits attack any family, they can kill children, harm wife, even kill domestic animals and destroy crops. *Bhua* and witch-doctors first ask for cockerel to sacrifice, if there is no relief, after seven days a goat is sacrificed. A cockerel even in the village costs Rs. 250-300 and a goat more than Rs. 2000. Moreover, *bhua* also may demand big amount like Rs. 1000-5000. But now we have peace and security. Our money is not wasted on sacrifices to those evil spirits. We don't fear what we feared earlier. Our households are blessed now.

Yohannan: Drinking habit is a big problem among tribal communities. People spend their hard-earned money for alcohol. People suffer from illness and spirit affliction. People come to the church with such problems. When people are healed or delivered, they testify their experience to others and people come and they believe immediately.

Comment [S171]: Miracles lead to church-growth

What are the main reasons by which people come to Christ?

Biju: Most of the people come to the church because of healing and deliverance experience. The attitude of the people is first miracle, then worship (*pahle chatkar, phir namaskar*). Those who received healing and deliverance testify to other people.

Comment [S172]: Miracles lead to church growth

Mathew: People come to Christ because of miraculous events. We teach the people that if one believes in Christ, there will be healing and deliverance from evil spirits.

Comment [S173]: Jesus as healer and exorcist

Can you describe some incidents?

Mathew: There was a young man who was mentally ill in the next village. The man used to wander in the forest and village with a sword. Due to the fear of harming others his father told the villagers that they might kill him if he harms anybody. One evening people of the village came to kill him. However, this man would obey his wife; therefore she did not allow people to lay hand on him and warned them that she would complain to police.

The next day his sister who was staying near my house approached and requested me whether I could help and pray for this man. This woman used to see that people were being prayed for deliverance. Then the man was brought to my home, hands tied. He was kept in our home, providing food and everything for a month. Meanwhile he was constantly prayed by our family and the church. Now he is completely healed and has been undergoing Bible training and involved in evangelism. Due to this deliverance many people from the village has joined the church.

Comment [S174]: Jesus as healer

Comment [S175]: Miracles lead to church growth

Papachan: People of this area are often affected by evil spirits. This area is backward and people are superstitious; people offer sacrifices to ancestor spirits and other spirits. There are many shrines. Some people do black magic to bring disaster upon their enemies and also break the economic security. Some others use evil spirits to snatch others property. Most of the people are uneducated, so they involve in such activities. Through black magic much harm has done to people. To do such things people go to graveyard; do some rituals with cockerel, liquor, incense sticks etc. They make a statue of the

person to be harmed and recite some chants. Within one month, the person can be harmed. However, when a person becomes a believer, these spirits are powerless. Evil spirits are used for evil things but at the end the life of the people who indulge in such activities are terrible. Evil spirits attack them. Such people have always poverty. Satan comes to steal and kill.

Mathew: Evil spirit affliction is a perennial problem in this area. When harvest is taken, first fruit should be offered to the spirits. Otherwise, people believe that there will be severe repercussion. Because of this fear many accept Christ. When we cast out evil spirits from the people, they tell their names. They are the names of deities people worship.

How do you portray Christ in this context?

Biju: We proclaim that Jesus is the saviour. In our villages people suffer from various problems and we testify that Jesus is powerful to deliver from their troubles. Then we pray for the people and people get delivered. Then they are convinced that Jesus is greater than all.

Comment [S176]: Jesus as saviour

Comment [S177]: Jesus greater than all

Wilson: Jesus is saviour and Lord (*Prabhu*). In the name of Jesus when I cast out demons, the name of Jesus is exalted. He is understood to be more powerful than all other deities. Jesus is the victor and incomparable. In the blood of Christ there is victory over satanic powers.

Comment [S178]: Jesus is greater than all gods; unique

What difference you find in believers and outsiders?

Reji: After we became believers, we are better off people. God blessed us in every area of life; in cultivation, our animals and our works. Jesus gives us

whatever we ask. We have progressed in our works. Our children are sent to school. We don't spend our money on any useless activities like alcohol or cigarette. Seeing our blessings many villagers joined with us.

Comment [S179]: Jesus as provider

Mathew: God made human beings with all good things. In the Garden of Eden, nothing was lacking. For two people there were four rivers. There was abundance. However, because of sin poverty and illness entered into the world. But through Christ there is blessing and prosperity. God's intention is to make us rich. For this purpose Jesus became poor. He took our poverty and pain to make us happy. God provides our every need.

Comment [S180]: Jesus the provider

Comment [S181]: Jesus as provider

Comment [S182]: Provider

Papachan: One of our brothers is an uneducated person. He does not know any latest method of cultivation. However, his land produces highest yield in the village. Even people from nearby villages visit his land to see what sort of methods he uses to get such a harvest. God blesses the works of his people. He is the provider for all our needs.

Comment [S183]: Provider

Mathew: When I preach I emphasise the greatness of Jesus. Through Jesus only one can be saved. In salvation, there are five things God freely gives. First, redemption of sin, second healing of the body. Doctor takes fees, for x-ray one has to pay Rs.200. Here surgery is free. Third, deliverance from curse. Satanic powers are defeated by Jesus. Fourth, God's provision, fifth, God's protection. These are all free for those are saved. We don't have to pay anything for these things.

Comment [S184]: Jesus the saviour

Comment [S185]: Jesus the healer

Comment [S186]: Jesus the exorcist

Comment [S187]: Provision and protection

Then how do you understand Christ?

Sabu: I understand Jesus as healer and one who has power over all the demons. We see this in the bible. Even today there is deliverance in the name of Jesus. Jesus forgives our sins. He only can take away our sins. Our earlier gods only lead us into sin and destruction. But Jesus takes away our sins. He protects us from all the evil powers and sickness. He blessed us.

Comment [S188]: Jesus the healer, exorcist, saviour

How do you teach about Christ in the church?

Biju: Jesus is Lord and God. He is the son of God who died for our sins. He is greater than all. He saves us from all the powers of evil.

Comment [S189]: Jesus the Lord, God, greater than all

How do you witness to others?

Kuttappan: We testify that in the name of Jesus there is healing and deliverance. In the name of Jesus there is blessing and protection. We also speak about salvation from sinful activities. We speak about living a holy life.

Comment [S190]: Jesus the healer, exorcist

Comment [S191]: Jesus the provider and protector

Comment [S192]: Jesus the saviour

We are against idol worship and spirit worship. We narrate the story of Jesus to the people, his healing stories, how he casted out demons, how he fed the people.

Can you give any example?

Mathew: Six months before, one mantravadi's wife was troubled by powerful spirits. He tried many things but could not cast them out. She was paralysed and bedridden. I was approached for the prayer and when the demons were casted out within few days she began to walk. Because of this miracle, many people have added to the church from that particular village.

Comment [S193]: Demonic trouble and sickness; deliverance in the name of Jesus

Comment [S194]: Miracle and church growth

In another incident, a woman who had severe problem of issue of blood was rejected from hospital was miraculously healed. She was on her death-bed. One person was sent for me. I went there and prayed for her. She got healing and now she is an active member of the church. The church is like a hospital; many people come and get the healing and go back.

Comment [S195]: Healing in the name of Jesus

Susan: We tell people to stop drinking. We also encourage them to attend the church. Some people listen to us because many are fed up with troubles of their life. Village women have many troubles around them. Many of them are sick. I testify the miraculous power of Jesus to them. Some have joined the church

Comment [S196]: Social involvement

Comment [S197]: Evangelism

What changes find in the life of the people after coming to the church?

Reji: After coming to the church we are better off people. Our cultivation is better. God blessed our domestic animals. Jesus hears our prayer and provides material blessings. Our children go to school regularly. We don't spend our money on useless things. Earlier I used to spent lot of money for liquor and other evil things.

Comment [S198]: Jesus the provider

Biju: We encourage our believers to adopt better way of life. We conduct medical camps with help of church head quarter for the believers and village people. Doctors come and help us and tell the people how prevent common illness.

Comment [S199]: Social involvement

Mathew: We also teach our people to be clean and how to do better cultivation. In church we tell them to keep their homes clean. We also take

people to hospital when they are sick. We encourage people to send their children to school. Financially people are better off after receiving Christ. In many house, there were no domestic animals. But now they have milk-giving animals. Now they have better yields in their cultivation.

Comment [S200]: Social involvement; progress

Comment [S201]: Jesus the provider

When you preach in the church, do you portray Jesus as God as well as human being?

Biju: We Preach Jesus as Lord, King of kings and Saviour. People understand Jesus as Lord of their lives. They know that Jesus came as a human being but consider him as Lord of all.

Comment [S202]: Jesus as Lord, Idea of humanity of Jesus lacking

Mathew: People here consider Jesus as Lord and God. He is greater than all. No power can stand before him. He is all powerful. Perhaps believers do not understand him as a human being. When we preach, we tell them that God became a man. I don't think that believers understand Jesus as a man. People always see Jesus as greater than all gods and goddesses.

Comment [S203]: Idea of humanity of Jesus lacking

Appendix 4

Songs

Song 1

The name of Jesus is wonderful

Let us lift his name all over the world |

Comment [S204]: Incomparable name of Jesus

Let us gather together and worship with joy

He is the Lord and will come back soon |

Comment [S205]: Jesus the Lord

With his outstretched arm and by the might of the Holy Spirit

O' brothers let us proclaim his words |

Comment [S206]: Evangelism

Neither silver nor gold, but by the name of Jesus

Signs and miracles will be done, with his hands |

Comment [S207]: Miracles in the name of Jesus, Jesus miracle worker

The eyes of the blind shall be opened; ears of the deaf shall be heard

The lame shall jump high; the dumb shall praise him |

Comment [S208]: Miracles in the name of Jesus

Demons shall flee away; all the sickness shall be healed

The sick shall be comforted; the sound of praise shall be echoed |

Comment [S209]: Healing and deliverance, Jesus as healer

The Lord will not abandon us to be ashamed

Let us rise up, build; his hands will be with us |

Comment [S210]: Evangelism

Song 2

Victory to the blood of Jesus

Victory to the blood of Calvary

Victory to the blood of gracious Lord

Comment [S211]: Jesus victorious

Victory to the blood that defeats demons

Victory to the blood that gives joy forever

Victory to the blood that gives us authority

Victory to the blood that accomplishes miraculous feats

Comment [S212]: Jesus all-powerful

Victory to the blood that washes the sins

Victory to the blood that sanctifies

Victory to the blood that removes curses

Victory to the blood that forgives us

Comment [S213]: Jesus the saviour

Victory to the blood that gives deliverance

Victory to the blood that gives us victory

Victory to the blood that removes weakness

Victory to the blood that makes us strong

Comment [S214]: Jesus the protector

Victory to the blood that intercedes for us

Victory to the blood that leads us daily

Victory to the blood that makes us righteous

Victory to the blood that gives us eternal life

Comment [S215]: Jesus the protector

Song 3

Name of Jesus is sweet

Name that is incomparable

Name that is delightful

Comment [S216]: Jesus incomparable, supreme God

Name that removes the burden of sin and curse

Name that grants joy and peace

Comment [S217]: Jesus the saviour

Name that is greatest in heaven and earth

Name of Jesus who reigns heavens and earth

Comment [S218]: Jesus the Lord

Name in which every knee bows

Name that everybody bows head

Comment [S219]: Jesus the Lord

How great is that name

Holy, holy and glorious name

Comment [S220]: Jesus greatest of all, God

Song 4

O' brothers and sisters

Sing a song of victory

Our Lord Jesus alive for ever

So let us sing the song of victory |

Comment [S221]: Jesus the victor, Lord

To annihilate sin and curse

Incarnated as a human

Passed through the wrath of God

Alive as the saviour |

Comment [S222]: Jesus the saviour

Great men of this world rest in graves

But our great Lord Jesus

Alive forever in the heaven |

Comment [S223]: Jesus greatest of all, God

Eliminate sorrow, wipe tears

Be vigorous

When Our Lord is alive

Is laziness possible? |

Comment [S224]: Evangelism

Let the doors raise your heads

King of kings, victorious one is coming

Raise up your heads o' doors

To receive the king Jesus |

Comment [S225]: Jesus the Lord and king

Song 5

In the path of truth, carry the banner of love

O' witness of the Lord, move forward

Comment [S226]: Evangelism

O' victorious witness of Lord Jesus

Be strengthened by the power of Spirit

Be Holy, be bold

To wage war against our enemy Satan

Comment [S227]: Evangelism;
spiritual warfare

Let us dress up with armour of Spirit

Take the shield of faith

Wear truth as belt breastplate as righteousness

Take the helmet of salvation

Comment [S228]: Spiritual warfare

We may face unrighteousness

Be victorious through righteousness

Wage war against sin

Until death resist the devil

Comment [S229]: Spiritual warfare

To defeat the foe, to be victorious

To store up the power of Spirit

Let us fast and pray without ceasing

Let us constant in thanksgiving

Comment [S230]: Spiritual warfare

Appendix 5

Names of the Participants

1. Focus Groups

Udaipur

(Between July 12-July 26, 2009)

	Name	Age	Sex	Occupation	Role in the church
1	Jose	34	Male	Self-employed	Believer
2	Saji	29	Male	Working in pvt. firm	Believer
3	Pylee	58	Male	Retired	Elder in the church
4	Babu	38	Male	Evangelist	Evangelist
5	Uddhup	62	Male	Retired govt. employee	Elder in the church
6	Moncy	21	Male	Student	Choir member
7	Pennamma		Female	Retired teacher	Sunday school teacher
8	Achamma		Female	House-wife	Believer
9	Chandy	41	Male	Employed	Believer
10	Aniyankunju	55	Male	Employed	Believer

Hebron Church, Rajasthan (Between August 2-August 16, 2009).

	Name	Age	Sex	Occupation	Role in the church
1	Kuttappan	38	Male	Labourer	Evangelist
2	Mathai	55	Male	Labourer	Evangelist
3	Pappachan	67	Male	Farmer	Lay leader / Evangelist
4	Mani	48	Male	Farmer	Elder /Evangelist
5	Wilson	26	Male	Labourer	Believer
6	Biju	28	Male	Labourer	Evangelist
7	Yohannan	56	Male	Farmer	Elder/ Evangelist
8	Boby	42	Male	Labourer	Believer
9	Sabu	27	Male	Labourer	Believer
10	Reji	31	Male	Driver	Believer
11	James	31	Male	Self-employed	Believer
12	Raju	33	Male	Labourer	Believer

Tabor Church, Gujarat

(Between August 23 - September 6, 2009).

	Name	Age	Sex	Occupation	Role in the church
1	Ebenezer	55	Male	Labourer	Elder in the church
2	Mathew	41	Male	Labourer	Evangelist
3	Podiyan	29	Male	Labourer	Believer
4	Johnnykutty	43	Male	Farmer	Elder in the church
5	Blessen	37	Male	Teacher	Sunday school teacher
6	Peter	46	Male	Labourer	Believer

7	Varkey	52	Male	Farmer	Believer
8	Ponnachan	28	Male	Evangelist	Evangelist
9	Kochumon	26	Male	Farmer	Evangelist
10	John	32	Male	Job	Believer

2. Personal Interviews - Formal

10 people – 4 men; 6 women (from three churches)

Udaipur

1	Thomas	46	Male	Doctor (Ayurvedic)	Believer
2	Joseph	32	Male	Labour	Believer
3	Jolly	27	Female	Employed in pvt. firm	Working with youths
4	Susan	26	Female	Labourer	Believer

Rajasthan

5	Shanti	32	Female	House-wife	Believer
6	Rosamma	35	Female	Labourer	Believer
7	Yeshudas	56	Male	Farmer	Elder/ Evangelist

Gujarat

8	Chacko	45	Male	Job	Believer
9	Praisey	30	Female	Job	Believer
10	Jessy	38	Female	House-wife	Believer

3. Personal Interviews - Informal

Interviews with pastors and evangelists, area leaders, believers – in different places,

Kerala - 7 people

(Horeb Worship Centre, Kollenchery – two sessions – Saturday Prayer; Sunday Worship) – (27, 28 June 2009).

1	Bobin	Male	Pastor	26/6/2009
2	Jerry	Male	Asst. Pastor	26/6/2009
3	Glory	Female	Believer	28/6/2009
4	Mercy	Female	Believer	28/6/2009
5	Paul	Male	Believer	28/6/2009
6	Prince	Male	Believer	28/6/2009

Tamil Nadu (Chennai) – 5 people (Christian Assembly on 5, 6 July 2009)

1	Sam	Male	Evangelist	3/7/2009
2	Ginu	Male	Evangelist	3/7/2009
3	Adarsh	Male	Evangelist	2/7/2009
4	Tomy	Male	Believer	3/7/2009
5	Ashish	Male	Believer	2/7/2009

Rajasthan

Udaipur city – 12 people

1	Mary	Male	Believer	10/7/2009
2	Rony	Male	Believer	10/7/2009
3	Shiney	Female	Believer	10/7/2009
4	Mobin	Male	Believer	11/7/2009
5	Jacob	Male	Area Leader	11/7/2009
6	Scariah	Male	Area Leader	13/7/2009
7	Udaikumar	Male	Area Leader	17/7/2009
8	Silvia	Female	Believer	13/7/2009
9	Pramod	Male	Area Leader	17/7/2009
10	Lilly	Female	Believer	20/7/2009
11	Ajay	Male	Believer	20/7/2009
12	Arti	Female	Believer	20/7/2009

Rajasthan Village

1	Nathan	Male	Pastor	2 /8/2009
2	Hira	Male	Believer	31/7/2009
3	Prapti	Female	Believer	31/7/2009
4	Lalji	Male	Believer	31/7/2009
5	Prem	Male	Believer	7/8/2009
6	Amar	Male	Believer	7/8/2009

Rajasthan Village

1	Stephen	Male	Believer	9/8/2009
2	Rosy	Female	Believer	9/8/2009
3	Johanna	Female	Believer	9/8/2009
4	Rachel	Female	Believer	9/8/2009

Rajasthan Village

1	Geetha	Female	Believer	13/8/2009
2	Jackson	Male	Believer	13/8/2009
3	Vijay	Male	Believer	13/8/2009
4	Tobias	Male	Believer	13/8/2009
5	Sunny	Male	Believer	13/8/2009

Rajasthan Village

1	Bhagavana	Male	Pastor	17/8/2009
2	Chinnamma	Female	Believer	17/8/2009
3	Joy	Male	Believer	17/8/2009

Rajasthan Village

1	Alexander	Male	Believer	20/9/2009
2	David	Male	Believer	20/9/2009
3	Philipos	Male	Believer	20/9/2009
4	Samma	Female	Believer	20/9/2009

Gujarat

1	Varghese	Male	Pastor	28/8/2009
2	Joel	Male	Pastor	28/8/2009
3	Johnsy	Male	Evangelist	28/8/2009
4	Thampy	Male	Believer	30/8/2009
5	Achenkunj	Male	Believer	30/8/2009
6	Eliamma	Female	Believer	30/8/2009

Gujarat

1	Bincy	Female	Believer	28/8/2009
2	Kuriakose	Male	Believer	28/8/2009
3	Thankachan	Male	Believer	28/8/2009
4	Joshy	Male	Believer	29/8/2009
5	Grace	Female	Believer	29/8/2009
6	Pradeep	Male	Believer	29/8/2009

South Gujarat

1	Anand	Male	Believer	30/8/2009
2	Barnabas	Male	Believer	30/8/2009
3	Vavachan	Male	Believer	30/8/2009

Maharashtra

1	Joby	Male	Pastor	7/9/2009
2	Anish	Male	Evangelist	7/9/2009
3	Eappen	Male	Evangelist	7/9/2009
4	Tharakan	Male	Believer	7/9/2009
5	Noble	Male	Believer	8/9/2009
6	Meeraji	Male	Pastor	8/9/2009
7	Babykutty	Male	Believer	8/9/2009

Maharashtra Village

1	Prakash	Male	Believer	2/9/2009
2	Aniyan	Male	Believer	2/9/2009
3	Shanmukh	Male	Evangelist	2/9/2009
4	Jeevan Bhai	Male	Evangelist	2/9/2009
5	Mollykutty	Female	Believer	3/9/2009
6	Sosamma	Female	Believer	3/9/2009
7	Jainamma	Female	Believer	3/9/2009
8	Thressiamma	Female	Believer	3/9/2009

Total -75

4. Informal conversation with members of above churches

After these meetings, I spoke to different people and inquired about their understanding about Christ and also heard their testimonies.

Conversation with 'area leaders'

5. Informal conversation with pastors and believers

Pentecostal pastors and believers from Punjab, Rajasthan, Orissa, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh are also included in the research.

Appendix 6
Letter to the Churches

To

The Senior Pastor

Research Project

Dear Pastor

I am earnestly seeking your consent and valuable help to conduct the project named *Ordinary Indian Pentecostal Christology*, conducted as part of PhD research with the University of Birmingham under the supervision of Dr. Mark J. Cartledge. This project is to identify and articulate the Christology of ordinary believers for a better understanding of the person and work of Christ in their life-situation. I would be very pleased if we could meet so that I might explain this project to you more freely.

I hope that this project will help the Indian Pentecostal churches to articulate theological heritage. If you need any further clarification, please contact my supervisor at the following address: (

[REDACTED]

Thank you for taking a positive step very soon.

Yours faithfully

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Appendix 7

Focus Group Procedures

The Research Project: Shaibu Abraham, University of Birmingham

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this focus group. Material gathered from the focus groups and interviews and worship services will be used to write the PhD thesis entitled *Ordinary Indian Pentecostal Christology* in **the University of Birmingham, UK, Centre for Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies, School of Philosophy, Theology and Religion** under the supervision of **Dr. Mark J. Cartledge**. The aim of the project is to listen to and record the 'ordinary Christology' of the church members, identifying the Christological understanding they have developed. Every single person's viewpoint is valued and your comments, testimonies and knowledge are essential to the project.

Churches Involved:

Hebron Church, Rajasthan, India.

Pentecostal Church in Udaipur, Rajasthan, India.

Tabor Church, Gujarat, India.

The pastors and the councils of the above mentioned churches have agreed to conduct the project.

Explaining the Interview and Focus Group Process

1. Please tell me your name. This will help to appreciate who has said what.
2. After having read the information on the consent form, if you are happy to proceed, please sign the form.
3. In the interview, you will be asked to narrate your personal experience, conversion story etc.
4. For the focus group we will place a card which has your name on it in front of you so that we can follow the conversation and ascribe the correct statement to the right person.
5. In the focus group please speak up one by one so that conversation and views may be clear. Please direct your voice towards the voice recorder.
6. The session may last for one hour.

Hope that you will find this session to be interesting and informative. Thank you.

[REDACTED]

Contact Details of my Supervisor:

[REDACTED]

Appendix 8

Research Project: Ordinary Indian Pentecostal Christology

To the Participants of Interview and Focus Group

The following information is provided for you to decide whether you wish to participate in the present study. You should be aware that you are free to decide not to participate or to withdraw at any time without affecting your relationship with any other parties (Church or University).

The research project aims to understand the ‘Ordinary Christology’ of believers of Rajasthan Pentecostal Church, Udaipur by means of participant observation of worship, focus group, personal interviews and analysis of publically available church information. In the interview, the personal views and opinion of the believers about the person and work of Christ in their personal, family and community life will be explored. In the focus group, attention will be more on the community’s understanding of the person and work of Christ. During these processes data will be collected by recording the conversation by the researcher. I want to assure you that every individual participant has the freedom of not being audio-video recorded. If any participant wants to be anonymous in the video-recording, their images will be distorted using the option in the video camera (distorted body image). You have the freedom to watch what is recorded and have the opportunity to delete the whole or part of the interview. The transcription and the analysis of the data will be done only by the researcher. The recordings will be used confidentially and only for this particular project.

Please do not hesitate to ask any questions either before or after the interview or focus group. I am happy to share the findings with you once the research is complete. I assure you that the pastor or any other church leader will not have access to the data or any information that you give. Moreover, your real name will not be associated with any outputs of the research; instead pseudonyms (false names) will be given to all participants. Your identity as a participant in this interview and focus group will be known only to the researcher.

There are very low risks, if any, associated with this study.

The expected benefits associated with your participation are that you may better understand your faith.

Please sign your consent with full knowledge of the nature of the project and its procedures. A copy of this form will be given to you to keep.

Name.....

Signature

Date

Contact:

[REDACTED]

Contact Details of my Supervisor:

[REDACTED]

Background Information of Participant

Interview and Focus Group

For the purpose of understanding the recording the conversation, it would be helpful if you could provide the following information. Thank you.

Name:

Gender:

Age:

Marital Status

Occupation:

How long have you been in this church?

What other churches have you attended in the past?

Please specify if you were belonging to any other religious groups

Appendix 9

Focus Group Questions

This is exploratory research into the ordinary *belief, practice, and consequences* of the Christology of Pentecostal believers. Therefore, semi-structured interviews and focus groups will be conducted.

The focus groups will be conducted among believers, lay leaders, evangelists and pastors. The following general questions will be discussed in the focus groups:

- How Christ is understood in the personal, the community (church) and the social life of the believers. How is salvation understood?
- What is the identity of the believer or the community? Does being Pentecostal make any change in your social and economic status?
- How are personal and family lives affected after becoming a believer and what role does Christology play?
- How does this Christology help them to be involved in the society?
- How different is the understanding of Christ after becoming a Pentecostal?

Interview Questions

The interviews will be conducted among the believers who are mostly illiterate or semi-literate. The questions will be general in nature asking them to narrate their conversion experience, the changes in their life after the conversion, their understanding of Christ and how this understanding help them to face their daily struggles. Emphasis will be given to draw out their response to the context in the light of their Christological understanding.

- Can you narrate your conversion experience?
- Which religion did you belong to before becoming a Pentecostal?
- What are the perceived changes that have taken place in your personal and family life after becoming a Pentecostal?
- What are the major problems you face in personal and family life?
- What are the struggles you face in society?
- Do you face any particular problem in the church?
- How does the person and work of Christ help you to respond to the struggles you are going through?
- How do you understand Jesus Christ in your personal and family life?
- How do you introduce Jesus to your neighbours and others?
- What are the responses of others when you testify about Jesus?