

A CONTEXTUAL MISSIOLOGY OF THE SPIRIT: A STUDY OF
PENTECOSTALISM IN RAJASTHAN, INDIA

by

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Abstract

This thesis studies the identity, context and features of Pentecostalism in Rajasthan, India as well as the internal and external issues facing Pentecostals. It argues for an indigenous origin of Pentecostalism in Rajasthan, as it is a product of local Spirit revivals in the existing churches and the missionary activities of Indian Pentecostals. It also reveals that both the intra-church as well as extra-church issues place Pentecostals in a 'missio-ethical dilemma.' The thesis aims to suggest 'a contextual missiology of the Spirit,' as a new model of contextual missiology from a Pentecostal perspective, which has emerged from this study. The inherent theological characteristics of Pentecostalism underline the pneumatological foundation of a contextual Pentecostal missiology. As a contextual missiology of the Spirit it has certain contextual features. By dealing with the global-local tension, it can be considered a glocal missiology. It is capable of promoting ecumenicity at various levels, and so it is an ecumenical missiology. By empowering people to engage in spiritual as well as socio-political issues, it aims to be a transformational missiology. As it is concerned with the well-being of the community, it has the potential to become a public missiology.

Dedicated to the Loving Memory of

The late Dr. Thomas Mathews, the Apostle of the Desert of Rajasthan

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Abbreviation

AICC	All India Christian Council
AIT	Asian Institute of Theology
<i>AJPS</i>	<i>Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies</i>
ATA	Asia Theological Association
BJP	Bharatheeya Janatha Party
CHAI	Church History Association of India
CISRS	Centre for Religion and Spciety
CLS	Christian Literature Society
CMS	The Church Missionary Society
CNI	Church of North India
CSS	Christhava Sahithya Samithy
CUP	Cambridge University Press
<i>Dharma Deepika</i>	<i>Dharma Deepika: A Journal of South Indian Missiological Research</i>
FBC	Filadelfia Bible College
FFCI	Filadelfia Fellowship Church of India
GLS	Gospel Literature Service
<i>Good News</i>	<i>Good News: The First Pentecostal News Weekly in Malayalam</i>
<i>IBMR</i>	<i>International Bulletin of Missionary Research</i>
<i>ICHR</i>	<i>Indian Church History Review</i>
IPCoG	Indian Pentecostal Church of God
ISPCK	Indian Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge
IVP	Inter-Varsity Press
<i>JAM</i>	<i>Journal of Asian Mission</i>
<i>JPT</i>	<i>Journal of Pentecostal Theology</i>
<i>JPTS</i>	<i>Journal of Pentecostal Theology Supplement</i>
LMS	The London Missionary Society
MIIS	Mylapore Institute for Indigenous Studies
<i>Mission Studies</i>	<i>Mission Studies, Journal of the International Association for Mission Studies</i>
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
<i>NIDPCM</i>	<i>New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements</i> (eds. Burgess and van der Mass)
NMM	Native Missionary Movement
OUP	Oxford University Press
<i>Pneuma</i>	<i>Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies</i>
RPC	Rajasthan Pentecostal Church
RSS	Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh
SAIACS	South Asia Institute of Advanced Christian Studies
SAP	Sheffield Academic Press
SPCK	Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge
TCWSI	Tribal Christian Welfare Society of India
UCNI	United Church of Northern India
VHP	Vishwa Hindu Parishad
WCC	World Council of Churches

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Pentecostalism has become a leading force in global Christianity today.¹ Allan Anderson observes that the global Charismatic Christianity is ‘the fastest expanding religious movement in the world today.’² Analyzing the phenomenal growth of Pentecostalism, Philip Jenkins comments that it is ‘perhaps the most successful social movement of the past century.’³ According to Anderson, if the statistics of David Barrett are taken into account, Pentecostalism is the second largest segment of Christianity after Roman Catholicism, and it ‘represents a quarter of all Christians.’⁴

Pentecostal Christianity is growing rapidly in India as in many parts of the world. Stanley Burgess observes that Indian Pentecostalism is the fifth largest sector of Global Charismatic Christianity.⁵ Pentecostals are present in almost every part of India, including north-west India, where the Christian population is comparatively low. In Rajasthan, the largest state in India, the Christian message has had little impact. According to the 2001 Government census of India, Rajasthan has a

¹ In the present study the terms ‘Pentecostal’ and ‘Charismatic’ are used interchangeably with the same meaning unless otherwise stated. A short discussion on the definition of the term is given in a later part of this chapter.

² Allan Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity* (Cambridge: CUP, 2004), 14.

³ Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (Oxford: OUP, 2002), 8.

⁴ Anderson, *Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 1. He considered David B. Barrett and Todd M. Johnson, ‘Annual Statistical Table on Global Mission 2003,’ *IBMR* 27, no.1 (2003): 25.

⁵ Stanley M. Burgess, ‘Pentecostalism in India: An Overview,’ *AJPS* 4, no.1 (2001): 85.

population of 56.51 million, but less than one percent are Christian. However, Pentecostalism is the fastest growing Christian movement in Rajasthan.

1.1. The Background

My involvement in Christian ministry in Rajasthan since 1991 has motivated me to undertake an in-depth study of Pentecostalism in Rajasthan. I have participated in the movement in various capacities as a researcher, pastor and trainer, having been associated with the Filadelfia Fellowship Church of India (FFCI), one of the largest indigenous⁶ Pentecostal churches in north India, with its headquarters in Udaipur, Rajasthan. The Native Missionary Movement (NMM) is its parent organization, and its theological institution Filadelfia Bible College (FBC), located in Udaipur, is the first and the most important Pentecostal theological college in Rajasthan, and I have been serving as a lecturer as well as the Registrar of the College for several years.

There is a popular notion in India that Christianity is an imported religion from the West. In many parts of the nation, including Rajasthan, Christianity is generally identified with colonization.⁷ Furthermore, there is a misrepresentation of the origin and nature of Pentecostalism in India in general, and Rajasthan in particular, as it is viewed as a product of western Pentecostalism. Many from both within and outside the movement regard Pentecostalism in Rajasthan as an

⁶ Through out this thesis, the term 'indigenous' (people) is used to mean (people) belonging to from Rajasthan as well as other states of India. The terms 'Rajasthani/s,' 'local' (people) and 'native/s' are used interchangeably to mean people from Rajasthan, including both tribal and non-tribal. Wherever necessary, the term 'tribal' is used to show the difference. Moreover, if these terms are used differently, the distinction will be mentioned.

⁷ For a detailed discussion, see Paul M. Collins, *Christian Inculturation in India* (Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate, 2007), 18-22.

imported movement from south India, where Pentecostalism was supposedly brought from North America.

In contemporary India the whole issue of religious identity is a serious concern. The aforesaid notions about Pentecostals in India have some serious repercussions. Such a misrepresentation will cause others to view them as foreigners, and places them in a potentially vulnerable situation, which may lead to faith conflicts. Although all Christians are exposed to attack from Hindu militant groups, Pentecostals seem to be a particular target as they have been labelled as a proselytising group even by other Christians. This misrepresentation of Pentecostal origins in Rajasthan may also cause internal struggles within the movement. Both these internal and external issues in turn affect Pentecostal missiology, which has its own impact on the maintenance and growth of the movement. Therefore, it is vital to investigate the problem of Pentecostal identity in Rajasthan.

Given the situation and problem, this research intends to investigate the historical context of Pentecostals in Rajasthan by addressing three central questions that have directed this research. First, what is the identity of Pentecostalism in India as a whole? This thesis will investigate whether there are any grounds for asserting that Pentecostalism in India is a product of Western Pentecostalism. There are various accounts regarding the origin of Indian Pentecostalism. According to G.B. McGee and Burgess, the 'Pentecostal and Pentecostal-like movements' in India preceded the twentieth-century Pentecostalism in the West by at least forty years.

The earliest report of the history of Spirit revivals in India is related to the revival in Tirunelveli (now Tamil Nadu state) during 1860-61, under the leadership of John Christian Aroolappen.⁸ The Tirunelveli revival was followed by a series of Spirit revivals in various parts of India, including north India, without any influence from the West.

Second, what is the origin and nature of Pentecostalism in Rajasthan? This thesis will investigate whether there is any basis for believing that Pentecostalism in Rajasthan is an imported religion from south India. At the same time, this thesis maintains that the mission theology and practice of Pentecostals have played a significant role in the origin, establishment and growth of the movement in the state. Pentecostalism in Rajasthan is more than six decades old and its beginning can be understood as an outcome of the missionary ripple from various other states in north and south India as well as the Spirit revivals among the natives, without the influence of any foreign element. One of the remarkable features of early Indian Pentecostals was their missionary zeal, which moved them as missionaries to several parts of the nation. It is significant that indigenous missionaries of India from various states, including south India, came to the state of Rajasthan with the Pentecostal message. Mr. and Mrs. Jiwa from Madhya Pradesh were the first Pentecostal missionaries to Rajasthan. Another Pentecostal missionary, Peter Lal from Uttar Pradesh, established the first Pentecostal congregation in the state. K.V. Philip and Thomas Mathews were the first south

⁸ G.B. McGee and S.M. Burgess, 'India,' in *The New Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, ed. S.M. Burgess and Van Der Mass (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 118. However, the expression 'Pentecostal-like' is open to question. This will be discussed in chapter two.

Indian Pentecostal missionaries. They lived among the local people and established many congregations in the state. The FFCI, founded by Mathews, is currently the largest Pentecostal denomination in Rajasthan. Also there were some local Spirit revivals in Rajasthan which had no external influence. As a result, a number of local leaders were produced, who later played a significant role in the growth of the movement. Today, there are scores of Pentecostal organizations and thousands of Pentecostal believers scattered all across Rajasthan, and so Pentecostalism has become a local movement. In addition, there are a number of completely autonomous Charismatic congregations meeting in private homes, open spaces, under the shade of trees, house-fronts and the like across the state.

Third, what are the consequences of a false profile of Pentecostals in Rajasthan? This thesis will explore issues facing Pentecostals, from within and outside the movement, because of misconceptions regarding their origins in India. There are several concerns before Pentecostals, especially from the religio-political spheres of society. Although Pentecostalism in Rajasthan is growing faster than other sectors of Christianity, it faces a number of external issues, which in turn are affecting the existence and growth as well as the mission theology and practice of the movement. Because anti-conversion laws⁹ have been introduced in many states including Rajasthan, mission work has become very difficult in contemporary India. Many activists from minority religious groups believe that

⁹ Although the Indian Constitution advocates religious freedom, a few states in India (for example, Arunachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Orissa) have passed an anti-conversion law. Many other states like Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Chattisgarh and Rajasthan, have introduced the law, but have not yet received approval to implement it. Although the laws are introduced as 'Freedom of Religion Bill,' they are generally known in India as 'Anti-conversion Bill,' as these laws are to 'provide for the prohibition of conversion from one religion to another.'

this law will certainly curtail any form of missionary activity, as they fear that even charity works could be labelled conversion activity, thus incurring serious criminal charges and even violent attacks on Christians. Pentecostals believe that they will face serious consequences from such a law because of their socio-economic status, since Pentecostal Christianity in Rajasthan is predominantly a religious movement concentrated among the poor segments of society, chiefly among the rural tribals¹⁰ like the Bhils.¹¹

This thesis will also investigate whether these external as well as internal issues place Pentecostals in a dilemma. Christians in India, and Pentecostals in particular, are often accused of being a proselytising community, converting only the poor and the disadvantaged segments of society. It is difficult to work among the tribal communities and other poor segments of society today. On the other hand, non-tribal people, especially the Indian urban, middle class and the affluent have recently shown an interest in Pentecostalism, as in many cities around the world. Reuben Gabriel observes that today Pentecostalism has ‘some of the most affluent and accomplished segments of Indian Christians.’¹² Thus, the dilemma faced by Pentecostals seems to be whether to continue working with the ‘poor and weak’ or to move to the responsive urban middle class. At the same time, Pentecostals are concerned that their original mission of empowering the tribal people and the poor could be affected if they change their focus to urban missions. While analysing American Pentecostalism, Robert Mapes Anderson observes that

¹⁰ The term tribals is commonly used in India to mean tribal people/communities.

¹¹ Bhils are the largest tribal group in Rajasthan and the second largest in India. Pentecostalism has followers from other tribal communities as well.

¹² Reuben Louis Gabriel, ‘Reflections on Indian Pentecostalism: Trends and Issues,’ *Dharma Deepika* 6, no. 2 (2002): 67.

the ‘impressive success’ of Pentecostalism in the ‘underdeveloped regions’ and its ‘inroad into the established churches’ attest to the vitality of the movement.¹³ However, in the light of the present changes in the religio-political milieu of Rajasthan, it might be difficult to continue serving the tribal communities. Thus, it appears that Pentecostals are in what I will term a ‘missio-ethical dilemma.’¹⁴

However, this thesis will argue that ‘a new contextual missiology’ is emerging both from the particular context of Rajasthan and from the mission theory and practice of Pentecostals there. Stephen Bevans, a leading Catholic theologian, convincingly argues that developing contextual theologies is a ‘theological imperative.’ According to him, both the external and internal factors point towards such an imperative.¹⁵ The particular Indian situation shows that constructing contextual theologies is a ‘contextual imperative’ also. The accusation that Pentecostalism is an imported religion from the West calls for the necessity to develop contextual theologies in India. Both Paul M. Collins¹⁶ and Hwa Yung,¹⁷ identify the impact of colonization as one of the major impulses behind contextualization.¹⁸ Pentecostals are at a significant stage as their socio-economic status and the change in the religio-political context of Rajasthan, as well as the

¹³ Robert Mapes Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited: The Making of American Pentecostalism* (New York: OUP, 1979), 5.

¹⁴ Discussion on the ‘missio-ethical dilemma’ will be given in chapter five.

¹⁵ For more details of the discussion, see Stephen B. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, rev. ed. (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2002), 3-15.

¹⁶ Collins, *Christian Inculturation*, 11-22. According to him, inculturation emerges from two different imperatives, ‘academic and political.’ ‘The academic relates to the developments in theology, anthropology, ethnography and sociology,’ and the political relates to colonization, as there is ‘direct relationship between colonization, movements for independence and moves towards inculturation by the churches.’ (See p.11).

¹⁷ Hwa Yung, *Mangoes or Bananas? Quest for an Authentic Asian Christian Theology* (Oxford: Regnum, 1997), 62.

¹⁸ The terms contextualization and inculturation are used interchangeably in this study to mean attempts to make Christian faith meaningful to a particular context, unless otherwise stated.

impact of global Pentecostalism, have put them in a ‘missio-ethical’ dilemma. This situation is significantly affecting their mission theology and practice. Nevertheless, it appears that, whether knowingly or unknowingly, what they have tended to do in such a situation is to formulate or reformulate their missiology, which in turn has helped to generate a new model of contextual missiology.

1.2. Objectives and Significance of the Study

There are various objectives behind the current investigation. One is to explore the identity of Indian Pentecostal Christianity by tracing the historical context of Pentecostalism in India. ‘Identity concern’ is one of the most daunting challenges facing Indian Christianity in the wake of Hindu militancy and the subsequent religio-cultural nationalism.¹⁹ As mentioned earlier, Christianity has been accused of being a foreign religion in India. In this context, the current research responds to Roger Hedlund’s call to acknowledge the contribution of Pentecostal churches along with other churches towards the indigenous identity of the Indian Church.²⁰ Therefore, this study is expected to contribute to the story of indigenous Christianity in India, as well as to the ongoing exploration of global Pentecostalism.

The second objective of this study is to make a north Indian contribution to Indian Pentecostal history. Although relatively little has been written on Indian

¹⁹ A lengthy discussion on ‘religio-cultural nationalism’ will be given in chapter 4.

²⁰ See Roger E. Hedlund, *Quest for Identity, India’s Churches of Indigenous Origin: The “Little Tradition” in Indian Christianity* (Chennai/Delhi: MIIS/ISPCK, 2000), 135; Roger E. Hedlund, ed., *Christianity is Indian: The Emergence of an Indigenous Community* (Chennai/Delhi: MIIS/ISPCK, 2000), xvi; Roger E. Hedlund, ‘The Witness of New Christian Movements in India’ (paper presented at the IAMS Assembly in Malaysia, 2004).

Pentecostalism, there has been a growing interest in the subject in recent years.²¹ However, thus far there has been no comprehensive history of Indian Pentecostalism that gives due representation to every region as most studies focus on south India.²² Although Pentecostalism has not made as much impact in the north as in the south, north Indian Pentecostalism is over a hundred years old. It should also be noted that other forms of Christianity did not make much progress in north India in the early days.²³ At the same time, post-colonial north India has seen a number of Pentecostal missionaries working in the rural areas, and as a result, many indigenous Pentecostal churches have been formed. It is significant that many consider the Mukti revival in north India, associated with Pandita Ramabai, as the origin of Indian Pentecostalism, arguing that it preceded the Azusa Street revival. However, in the writing of the history of Indian Pentecostalism, north India has been largely ignored, though attempts are now being made to record the history of Pentecostalism in the north-east.²⁴ The dearth

²¹ For example, see Sara Abraham, 'A Critical Evaluation of the Indian Pentecostal Church of God: Its Origin and Development in Kerala' (MTh thesis, Senate of Serampore, 1990); Saju Mathew, *Kerala Pentecosthu Charithram* [Kerala Pentecostal History] (Kottayam, India: Good News Publications, 1994); Sam Mathews, 'The Pentecostal Movement in South India: Relevance in Theological Education' (DMiss thesis, SAIACS, Bangalore, 1996); V.A. Varughese, 'A Historical Analysis of the Origin and Development of the Pentecostal Churches in Kerala with Special Reference to its View of Mission' (DMiss thesis, SAIACS, Bangalore, 1996); T.S. Samuel Kutty, *The Place and Contribution of Dalits in Select Pentecostal Churches in Central Kerala from 1922-1972* (Delhi: ISPCK, 2000); Yesunatha Das, 'An Evaluation of the History of Pentecostal Dalits in Kerala' (MTh thesis, SAIACS, Bangalore, 2001); A.C. George, 'Pentecostal Beginnings in Travancore, South India,' *AJPS* 4, no.2 (2001): 215-37; Paulson Pulikottil, 'As East and West Met in God's Own Country: Encounter of Western Pentecostalism with Native Pentecostalism in Kerala,' *AJPS* 5, no.1 (2002): 5-22; Paulson Pulikottil, 'Emergence of Indian Pentecostalism,' *Dharma Deepika* 6, no.2 (2002): 47-58; V.V. Thomas, 'Pentecostalism among the Dalits in Kerala from 1909 to the Present: A Subaltern Reading' (DTh thesis, Senate of Serampore, 2004).

²² The best example is Michael Bergunder, *The South Indian Pentecostal Movement in the Twentieth Century*, Studies in the History of Christian Missions, ed. R.E. Frykenberg and Brian Stanley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008).

²³ According to the 2001 India census, north Indian states have more than 650 million people, but only 2% of the total Christian population lives there.

²⁴ For example, O.L. Snaitang, ed., *Churches of Indigenous Origins in Northeast India* (Mylapore/Delhi, India: MIIS/ISPCK, 2000).

of material on north Indian Pentecostal history is apparent if we glance at the sources given in the *NIDPCM* for the history of Pentecostal movement in India.²⁵

Therefore, the current study aims to fill this gap to a certain extent.

The third purpose of this study is to investigate the historical origin and theological features of Pentecostalism in Rajasthan, an area that has been totally ignored in attempts to write the history of Indian Pentecostalism. As stated earlier, there is a popular notion among Pentecostals and other Christians as well as non-Christians that Pentecostalism in Rajasthan was brought by missionaries from south India, particularly Kerala. There are vital links missing in previous studies related to Pentecostalism in Rajasthan, and it is one of the major purposes of this study to explore these missing links. It is anticipated that it will serve as an important chapter in the historiography of north Indian Pentecostal Christianity.

The fourth purpose of this research is to make a Pentecostal contribution to contextual missiology. Roman Catholics have made the most significant contribution to contextual missiology, but a major aim of this study is to explore Pentecostalism in Rajasthan, not only in terms of its contribution to indigenous Christianity in India but also as a source for developing a contextual Pentecostal missiology, which can act as a new model in contextual missiology. The intention is to make an initial investigation, preparing the ground for further research. This study hopes to be able to propose a 'contextual missiology of the Spirit' in the contemporary Indian milieu, characterised by such complex issues as religio-

²⁵ McGee, 'India,' 125-26.

cultural nationalism, religious intolerance, the anti-conversion laws and the subsequent persecution. As we will see later, Pentecostalism in Rajasthan is the outcome of indigenous Spirit revivals in various parts of India, as well as local revivals and the missionary activities of indigenous people. Their missiology seems to have played a significant role in the growth and establishment of Pentecostalism, in spite of the missio-ethical dilemma faced by Pentecostals due to external as well as internal issues. This mission theology is a contextual missiology. Therefore, this study aims to develop a contextual Pentecostal missiology in the light of changing local situations and the impact of the global connection upon it. One of the original contributions of this thesis is to propose a new contextual missiology, which I term ‘contextual missiology of the Spirit.’

1.3. Initial Consideration of Sources

Although no work has been undertaken in the particular area of this research, and none on Pentecostalism in Rajasthan as a whole, there are several related studies which will be introduced in each chapter. However, at this stage it is helpful to outline works on Pentecostal history in India as well as Rajasthan.

1.3.1. Indian Pentecostalism

One of the most important questions regarding the Pentecostal Movement in India, as in many parts of the world, is related to explanations of its origin and growth. For the purpose of this study, works on Indian Pentecostalism can be outlined under the following four classifications.

The first, and earliest, is the biographical approach to writing Indian Pentecostal history. There is little record of early Pentecostalism in India as early Pentecostals did not show much interest in producing written narratives. Nevertheless, a few Pentecostal leaders tried to write their stories, or other people wrote about them, mostly in the vernacular. Although the purpose of such attempts differs, they contain a certain amount of Pentecostal history. Pastor K.E. Abraham's *Yesukristhuvinte Eliya Dassan*²⁶ and Robert F. Cook's *Half a Century of Divine Leading and 37 Years of Apostolic Achievements in South India*²⁷ are leading examples of such early attempts. Nevertheless, all these efforts should be treated as hagiography and, as Michael Bergunder rightly observes, the 'providential approach' of 'hagiographical tradition' is 'hardly compatible with academic history.'²⁸

The second is the Syrian Christian approach to Pentecostal history in India. There are a few attempts by Pentecostal authors of Syrian Christian origin to write about the history of Indian Pentecostalism, particularly in south India. Saju Mathew's *Kerala Penthecosthu Charithram*²⁹ and Daniel Ayroor's *Keralathele*

²⁶ K.E. Abraham, *Yesukristhuvinte Eliya Dasan* [The Humble Servant of Jesus Christ-Autobiography of Pastor K.E. Abraham], 3rd ed. (Kumbanad, India: K.E. Abraham Foundations, 2001). It was first published in 1965.

²⁷ 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).

²⁸ Michael Bergunder, 'Constructing Indian Pentecostalism: On Issues of Methodology and Representation,' in *Asian and Pentecostal: The Charismatic Face of Christianity in Asia*, ed. Allan Anderson and Edmond Tang (Oxford: Regnum, 2005), 179.

²⁹ Mathew, *Kerala Penthecosthu*. This is an important work as the author tried to write history from the margins.

*Pentecosthu Sabhaka*³⁰ fall into this category. However, non-Syrians, mainly Dalit Pentecostals, argue that such attempts are biased and prejudiced.³¹

The third category is the history of Dalit Pentecostalism. There are recent endeavours to explore the contribution of Dalits to the formation of Pentecostal Christianity in India. The authors can be divided into two categories. The first set of authors is non-Dalits who discuss the contribution of Dalit Pentecostals to the Pentecostal Movement in India. T.S. Samuel Kutty's *The Place and Contribution of Dalits*³² and V.V. Thomas's thesis, 'Pentecostalism among the Dalits in Kerala',³³ are noteworthy examples. The second category of writers is Dalit Pentecostals, who question the credibility of the outsider's view of Dalit Pentecostalism and present an insider's perspective. The best example is Yesunatha Das' thesis, 'An Evaluation of the History of Pentecostal Dalits in Kerala.'³⁴ Although this seems to be a reaction to the Syrian Christian approach, it brings out some important links that are missing in previous approaches. However, such a 'reactionary approach' might also be biased. Therefore, it is essential to construct an alternative historiography of Indian Pentecostalism which adopts a more comprehensive and global approach.

The fourth category includes works that adopt a comprehensive approach to Indian Pentecostal history. This has been the approach adopted by a number of

³⁰ Daniel Ayroor, *Keralathele Pentecosthu Sabhaka* [Pentecostal Churches in Kerala] (Mavelikara, India: Beer-Sheeba Bible Institute, 1985).

³¹ For further discussion of the argument, see Das, 'Evaluation of the History,' 56-62.

³² Kutty, *Place and Contribution of Dalits*.

³³ Thomas, 'Pentecostalism among the Dalits.'

³⁴ Das, 'Evaluation of the History.'

scholars in recent years, and reflects the global interest in the phenomenal growth of Pentecostalism. The journal *Dharma Deepika*³⁵ devoted an entire issue to exploring Pentecostalism in India. Roger Hedlund's *Quest for Identity*³⁶ and *Christianity is Indian*,³⁷ and Allan Anderson and Edmond Tang's edited volume, *Asian and Pentecostal*,³⁸ include discussions on the contribution of Indian Pentecostals against the backdrop of mainline Christianity in India. Anderson's recent book *Spreading Fires* has an important chapter on the Mukti revival in India.³⁹ Michael Bergunder's work on South Indian Pentecostalism is a significant piece of research in this category.⁴⁰

These more comprehensive works focus on three major areas: the historiography of Indian Pentecostalism, the indigenous nature of Pentecostal Christianity, and the Dalit contribution to Pentecostalism. However, they neglect north Indian Pentecostalism, and thus miss the vital contribution of missionary activities of indigenous missionaries to the growth of Pentecostalism. To investigate this overlooked factor is a focus of the present study. It is significant that both Bergunder⁴¹ and Anderson⁴² value the important role of missionary activities in the global expansion of Pentecostalism. While Bergunder relates this missionary zeal to the missionary movement of the nineteenth century, Anderson sees it as

³⁵ *Dharma Deepika* 6, no.2 (2002)

³⁶ Hedlund, *Quest for Identity*.

³⁷ Hedlund, *Christianity is Indian*.

³⁸ Anderson, *Asian and Pentecostal*.

³⁹ Allan Anderson, *Spreading Fires: The Missionary Nature of Early Pentecostalism* (London: SCM, 2007), 75-108.

⁴⁰ Bergunder, *South Indian Pentecostal*.

⁴¹ Bergunder, 'Constructing Indian Pentecostalism,' 180-86.

⁴² Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 206-224.

the product of Pentecostal theology, and in particular its pneumatology and eschatology.

1.3.2. Pentecostalism in Rajasthan

Although Pentecostalism is growing rapidly in Rajasthan, no systematic effort has been made to study the movement closely. However, the FBC took the initiative to encourage its students as well as faculty members to study Pentecostalism in Rajasthan. As a result, several efforts have been made with diverse foci. These studies can be classified into two main categories. The first include studies done from a general Christian perspective, which focus on Christian contributions to the Bhil tribal community.⁴³ In these studies the contribution of Pentecostals is also evaluated alongside other Christian sectors. For example, Abraham Cherian has studied the religion of Bhil tribal people in Rajasthan and their response to the Christian message. He limited his research to the Jhadol Taluk in the district of Udaipur. In his PhD research, Cherian evaluated the contribution of churches and Christian mission agencies to the holistic development of the Bhils in Rajasthan. He argued that the accusation that ‘Christians have made the tribals poor convert,’ is invalid and concluded that Christian mission among these tribal communities has brought holistic progress in the social, educational, economic and spiritual aspects of the Bhil community.

⁴³Abraham 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’ (MTh thesis, Asian Institute of Theology, Bangalore, 2001); Abraham T. Cherian, ‘Contribution of Churches and Missions to the Bhils of Rajasthan’ (PhD thesis, AIT, Bangalore, 2005).

The second set of studies focuses on Pentecostals with various interests. The principal interest of most authors has been the application of certain Biblical concepts or strategies to the life and ministry of Pentecostal ministers.⁴⁴ J. Samuel's study investigated the contribution of Pentecostals to the Bhil tribal communities.⁴⁵ However, the author considered only the Rajasthan Pentecostal Church (RPC), the largest Pentecostal congregation in the state. Prasad Abraham's study is an evaluation of the theological educational status of Pentecostal ministers in Rajasthan.⁴⁶ Apart from these studies, there are a few biographies of pioneer Pentecostal missionaries in Rajasthan.⁴⁷ Although they contain some elements of Pentecostal history in Rajasthan, they have been done with a promotional purpose, not produced as academic work on Pentecostal history.

⁴⁴ For example, Mary Mathews, 'A Comparative Study of the Role of Women in Ministry in the Early Church and the Development of Women in the Native Missionary Movement' (BD thesis, UBS, Pune, India, 1995); Willy Abraham, 'The Pauline Concept of Pastoral Commitment with Special Reference to the Church in Ephesus and Its Implications to the Filadelfia Fellowship Churches of India in North India' (MTh thesis, SAIACS, Bangalore, 1996); Johny P. Abraham, 'The Study of the Life and the Missionary Methods of St. Paul to the Present-Day Church Planting Ministry in North India and Its Application to the Ministry of Filadelfia Fellowship Church of India in Rajasthan' (MTh thesis, AIT, Bangalore, 2004).

⁴⁵ J. Samuel, 'A Study of the Impact of Rajasthan Pentecostal Church among the People Groups in Udaipur District, with Special Reference to Bhil Tribes' (MDiv thesis, AIT, Bangalore, 1996); J. Samuel, 'A Study on the Influence of Rajasthan Pentecostal Church in the Socio-Economic Upliftment of the Bhil Tribes in Udaipur District' (MTh thesis, AIT, Bangalore, 2006).

⁴⁶ Prasad Abraham, 'The Significance of Theological Education, with Special Reference to Filadelfia Fellowship of Church India, in Rajasthan' (MTh thesis, AIT, Bangalore, 2004).

⁴⁷ Thomson Thomas Kaithamangalam, *Marubhoomiyil Thalarathu* [Not Exhausted in the Desert: A Biography of Thomas Mathews] (Udaipur, India: Cross and Crown, 1998); John Thollander, *He Saw a Man Named Mathews: A Brief Testimony of Thomas and Mary Mathews, Pioneer Missionaries to Rajasthan* (Udaipur, India: Cross and Crown, 2000); Thomas Thonnakkal, *Marubhoomiyile Aposthalan* [The Apostle of the Desert: A Biography of Thomas Mathews] (Udaipur, India: Cross and Crown, 2004); Roger Simmons, *Vision Mission and A Movement: The Story of Dr. Thomas Mathews and the Native Missionary Movement* (Richardson, TX: NMM, 2008); Wilson Varkey, *Ormayude Theerangaliloode...* [Through the Shore of Memory: A Biography of K.V. Abraham] (Trichur, India: Good Shepherd Ministries, 2005).

All the above studies have certain weaknesses. All have focused on only one particular denomination, the FFCI, although there are other churches. Moreover, there is considerable overlap in the different studies. Furthermore, the major weakness of these works is that most lack critical evaluation. Thus, there is a need for a more in-depth study of Pentecostalism in Rajasthan in order to construct a viable Pentecostal missiology.

1.4. Key Definitions and Limitations

Most of the significant terms and concepts as well as the geographical regions related to the discussion will be introduced and defined in the course of the study. However, it may be helpful at this stage to briefly explain some of them.

1.4.1. Definition of Terms

Firstly, it is important to define ‘Pentecostalism’. As Anderson observed, it is an enormous task to define ‘Pentecostal’ as the term refers to various movements, including the indigenous movements in the Majority World ‘that have adapted to their cultural and religious contexts to such an extent that many western Pentecostals would probably doubt their qualifications as “Christian” movements.’⁴⁸ Who Pentecostals are in Rajasthan will be discussed in chapter three. The present study adopts a more inclusive definition, following Walter

⁴⁸ Allan Anderson, ‘Introduction: World Pentecostalism at a Crossroads,’ in *Pentecostals after a Century: Global Perspectives on a Movement in Transition*, JPTS 15, ed. Allan H. Anderson and Walter J. Hollenweger (Sheffield: SAP, 1999), 19-20.

Hollenweger,⁴⁹ Anderson⁵⁰ and Amos Yong.⁵¹ Such a definition embraces Classical Pentecostals, Charismatics and Neo-Pentecostals, who share a common emphasis on the experience of the Holy Spirit. A broad definition is needed to refer to Pentecostalism in Rajasthan as some of the early classical Pentecostal churches in Rajasthan have now moved closer to the Neo-Pentecostals in response to changing contexts.

Secondly, the term ‘globalization’ needs to be defined. Although it contains a complex set of meanings with socio-political and economic implications, in this study it is used with reference to the globalization of Pentecostalism in order to express the interconnectedness of Pentecostal movements around the world. There are various common features of Pentecostalism, irrespective of their geographical and denominational differences. Local expressions of Pentecostalism are affected by the global movement in several ways. Byron Klaus observes that ‘Pentecostalism has generated a global culture’ sharing a ‘common spirituality’ even though it is an indigenous religion with its ‘autochthonous character’.⁵²

Simon Coleman proposes a ‘multi-dimensional, yet culturally specific sense’ of

⁴⁹ Walter J. Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1997), 1.

⁵⁰ See Anderson, *Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 9-15. He calls them ‘spiritual gifts’ movements (p.14).

⁵¹ Amos Yong, *The Spirit Poured Out on All Flesh: Pentecostalism and the Possibility of Global Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 18-19. He aligns himself with *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), xviii-xxi. In *Discerning the Spirit (s): A Pentecostal-Charismatic Contribution to Christian Theology of Religions* (Sheffield: SAP, 2000), 21, though he initially adopts a more exclusive definition, later he calls for a more inclusive approach (see pp. 149-61).

⁵² Byron D. Klaus, ‘Pentecostalism as a Global Culture: An Introductory Overview,’ in *The Globalization of Pentecostalism: A Religion Made to Travel*, ed. Murray M. Dempster, Byron D. Klaus and Douglas Petersen (Oxford: Regnum, 1999), 127.

the global culture of Charismatic Christianity.⁵³ The impact of globalization of Pentecostalism on the local Pentecostals will be discussed further in chapter five.

Finally, the term ‘missiology’ is to be defined. As Jan Jongeneel observes, today a broad interpretation of the term ‘missiology’ is generally accepted in both Roman Catholic and Protestant circles, to include a wide range of studies ‘appropriate to the understanding of mission, its context and practical application.’⁵⁴ Although terms like *apostology* were used by theologians, Jongeneel states that he prefers to use the term ‘missiology.’ He mentions three arguments to support his preference for the term ‘missiology’: the biblical argument, the historical argument and the secular argument.⁵⁵ ‘Intercultural theology’ is a significant term preferred to ‘missiology’ by many contemporary western theologians. While discussing the cultural context of the origin of intercultural theology, Werner Ustorf observes that ‘the term [intercultural theology] has not only been widely accepted in Western theology, but in many instances, it completely replaced the terms mission or missiology.’⁵⁶ However, in this study, I have chosen the term ‘missiology,’ and along with the three arguments Jongeneel mentions for his

⁵³ Simon Coleman, *The Globalization of Charismatic Christianity: Spreading the Gospel of Prosperity* (Cambridge: CUP, 2000), 6.

⁵⁴ Jan. A.B. Jongeneel, *Philosophy, Science, and Theology of Mission in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: A Missiological Encyclopedia*, part I: The Philosophy and Science of Mission, 2nd rev ed. (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2002), 63.

⁵⁵The Biblical argument explains that like *apostology*, the term missiology is also rooted in the Bible (in the Latin translation). The historical argument explains that ‘missiology’ is an older term, ‘the logical end’ of a discussion began in the sixteenth century, firstly among the Roman Catholics and then among the Protestants. The secular argument explains that the term ‘missiology’ is used and understood even in non-religious terms. For example, ‘diplomatic mission,’ ‘parliamentary missions,’ and ‘commercial missions.’ Therefore, Jongeneel views that it is not strange to speak about missiology as an academic discipline which researches ‘missions’ in general and Christian missions in particular. For more details of the discussion, see Jongeneel, *Philosophy, Science, and Theology*, 64-65.

⁵⁶ Werner Ustorf, ‘The Cultural Origins of “Intercultural Theology,”’ *Mission Studies* 25, no.2 (2008): 233. For more details of the discussion on intercultural theology, see pp. 229-51.

choice of the term missiology, have added a fourth reason, the contextual argument for such a preference. In the Indian context, the term missiology seems to be more appropriate given the present climate of religio-cultural nationalism. Although at face value, the term ‘inter-cultural theology’ sounds good in the multicultural Indian context, it might give a negative impression as in this case, for Hindu militants, the term may appear to be just another conspiracy to impose western culture upon Indian culture.⁵⁷

A ‘contextual missiology of the Spirit’ is proposed in this study as a new model of contextual missiology from a Pentecostal perspective. The present research seeks to develop a more inclusive and broader approach to contextual missiology, which embraces various aspects of peoples’ lives given the perpetual nature of the changes cast upon them, and also recognizing the emphasis of the Spirit by Pentecostals in Rajasthan. While mapping Asian Christianity to outline the formation of Christian Theologies in Asia, David Thompson urges that the ‘Pentecostal manifestations of theology’ should not be ignored just ‘because an alternative theological emphasis is preferred,’ and he affirms that ‘they are an inescapable part of the map.’⁵⁸ This study on Pentecostalism in Rajasthan takes Jongeneel’s definition of ‘missiology’ as a starting point. According to him:

⁵⁷ However, this does not mean to argue that the term ‘intercultural theology’ is not at all relevant to India, but to state that in the current Indian situation, the term may causes further religious suspicion. On the other hand, the term ‘mission’ is used in contemporary India also as a public word. For example, ‘Vajpayee’s Mission,’ and ‘Prime Minister’s mission.’ As Ustorf comments, in spite of the fact that intercultural theology is a product of ‘theological repentance in the North,’ its voice in the global theological discussion is not prevented. Ustorf, ‘Cultural Origins,’ 229-31.

⁵⁸ David M. Thompson, ‘Introduction: Mapping Asian Christianity in the Context of World Christianity,’ in *Christian Theology in Asia*, ed. Sebastian C.H. Kim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 19. For more details, see pp.17-19.

Missiology is the academic discipline which, from a philosophical, empirical, and theological point of view, reflects on the history, theory and practice of Christian world mission as a means for both preaching the gospel, healing the sick, and casting out “evil spirits” (active in idolatry and immorality), for the glory of God and the well-being of all human beings.⁵⁹

This Spirit dimension, inchoate in his use of ‘healing the sick, and casting out “evil spirits,”’ will be expanded upon in order to develop a ‘contextual missiology of the Spirit.’⁶⁰

It is significant to note that many contemporary missiologists recognize the Spirit dimension in missiology. Like Jongeneel, Hwa Yung also considers these aspects, ‘deliverance from diseases and demonic powers,’ as a part of mission, but failed to develop Spirit dimension as a distinctive aspect. Both Kirsteen Kim⁶¹ and Andrew Lord⁶² further expanded this Spirit dimension of missiology. In her important study on the pneumatology of three Indian theologians, Stanley J Samartha, Vandana and Samuel Rayan, Kim concludes that the Indian spiritual tradition provides opportunity for a ‘mission Pneumatology.’ However, Kim considers that there should be other forms of distinctive Indian pneumatology

⁵⁹ Jongeneel, *Philosophy, Science, and Theology*, 64.

⁶⁰ By quoting Jongeneel ‘healing the sick, and casting out “evil spirits,”’ this is not meant to be an exhaustive list, but simply to state that this is an indication of missiology of the Spirit which will be developed further in this research.

⁶¹ Kirsteen Kim, *Mission in the Spirit: The Holy Spirit in Indian Christian Theologies* (New Delhi: ISPCCK, 2003); Kirsteen Kim, ‘Indian Contribution to Contemporary Mission Pneumatology,’ *Transformation* 23, no. 1 (2006): 30-36; Kirsteen Kim, *The Holy Spirit in the World: A Global Conversation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2007).

⁶² See, Andrew Lord, *Spirit-Shaped Mission: A Holistic Charismatic Missiology* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2005).

from Pentecostal-Charismatic sources.⁶³ She further develops this into a new mission theology of the Spirit in the world in her new book *The Holy Spirit in the World*,⁶⁴ in which she not only discusses the mission of the Spirit in the world, but also the issue of discernment of the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit. Lord tried to develop a holistic approach to mission from a Pentecostal-Charismatic perspective. However, he anticipates that ‘there are directions in which this theology needs to be stretched and deepened’⁶⁵ In this regard, the present study is in line with these expectations, aiming to develop the Spirit dimension of contextual missiology more fully. That is why I refer to the contextual missiology emerging from the study on Pentecostalism in Rajasthan as a ‘contextual missiology of the Spirit’ because it is intended to reflect the flexible and progressive nature of mission theology in response to changing contexts, and under the influence of Spirit experiences. Such a missiology is sensitive to the context and also to experiences of the Spirit. Further discussion of this will be found in chapter six.

In this study the term ‘contextual’ is used in a complex sense as it has manifold dimensions. On the one hand, it is used to mean the external aspects of the faith community, the church, and on the other, it is used to mean the internal aspects. The external aspects of the faith community include various issues such as religio-political, socio-cultural and ecological ones. The internal aspects include the issues the community faces as well as their Spirit experiences. As the community

⁶³ Kim, *Mission in the Spirit*, 233. She believes that Pentecostal pneumatology will differ significantly as they interpret the Holy Spirit ‘within the matrix of spirit-world.’

⁶⁴ Kim, *Holy Spirit in the World*.

⁶⁵ See Lord, *Spirit-Shaped Mission*, 141-42.

has a major role in the theological process, the experiences of the community are given a significant place in the development of contextual missiology. The communities' encounter with the external and internal context as well as their encounter with the Spirit is significant in their theological formation. Communities cannot be isolated from their external context, and at the same time, communities cannot ignore the internal issues. The explanation of 'context' by Bevans while discussing 'doing theology contextually' is important in this study. According to him, contextual theology must take into account 'the experience of the present, the context' along with the 'experience of the past.' This individual and collective experience or context is rather 'complex and represents a combination of several realities,' such as the experiences of personal life of individuals and community, their cultural context and social location, and also the reality of social change. In brief, 'the context in all its dimensions is the inevitable starting point of theological reflection.'⁶⁶ Therefore, the multifaceted experiences of the Pentecostal community are taken into consideration in order to develop a contextual missiology. In chapter six, reflection from the Spirit experiences of the Pentecostal community in Rajasthan when they face various issues from within and without the movement and their place in shaping their theology will be discussed in the development of a contextual missiology. The term 'community' is not meant to replace 'contextual'; rather this study maintains that there is an inseparable interconnection between the community and its context.

⁶⁶ Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, 5-7.

1.4.2. Geographical Locations

This study is focused particularly on Rajasthan, situated in the north-west part of India.

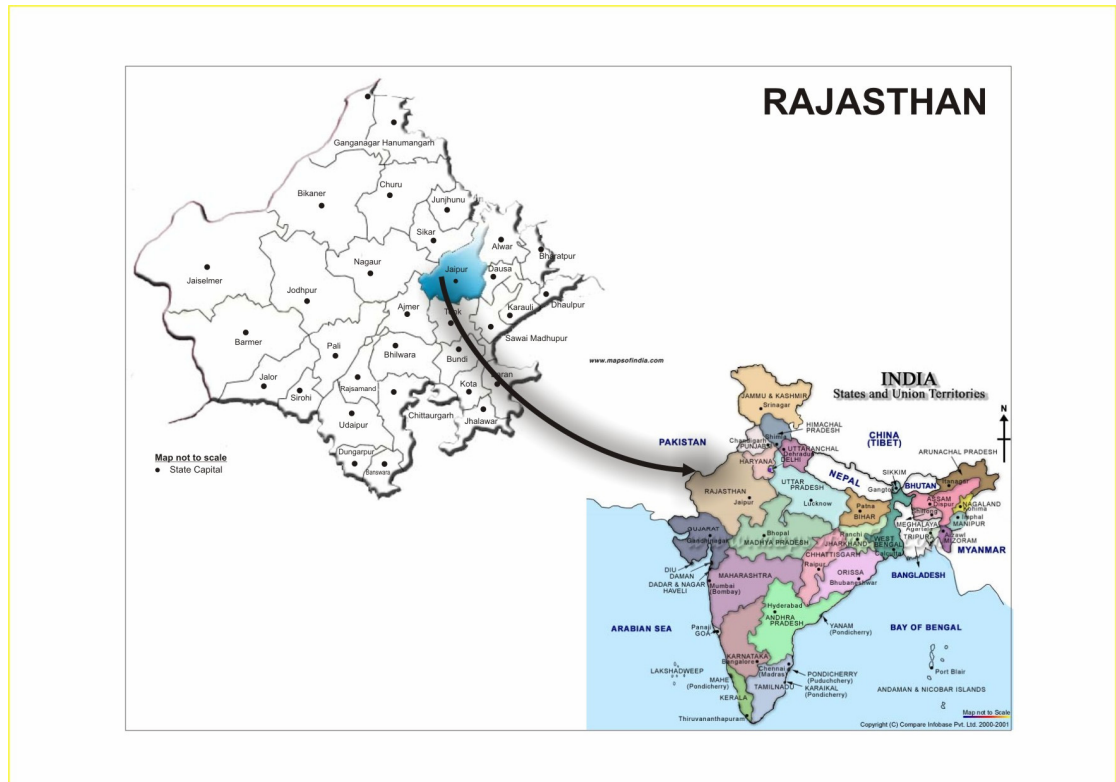


Figure 1 Geographical Location of Rajasthan

Most districts in Rajasthan have representation of Pentecostals, as the map below shows. However, there are chiefly seven districts, namely Alwar, Jaipur, Ajmer, Kota, Udaipur, Dungarpur and Banaswara, where there is comparatively more Pentecostal concentration.

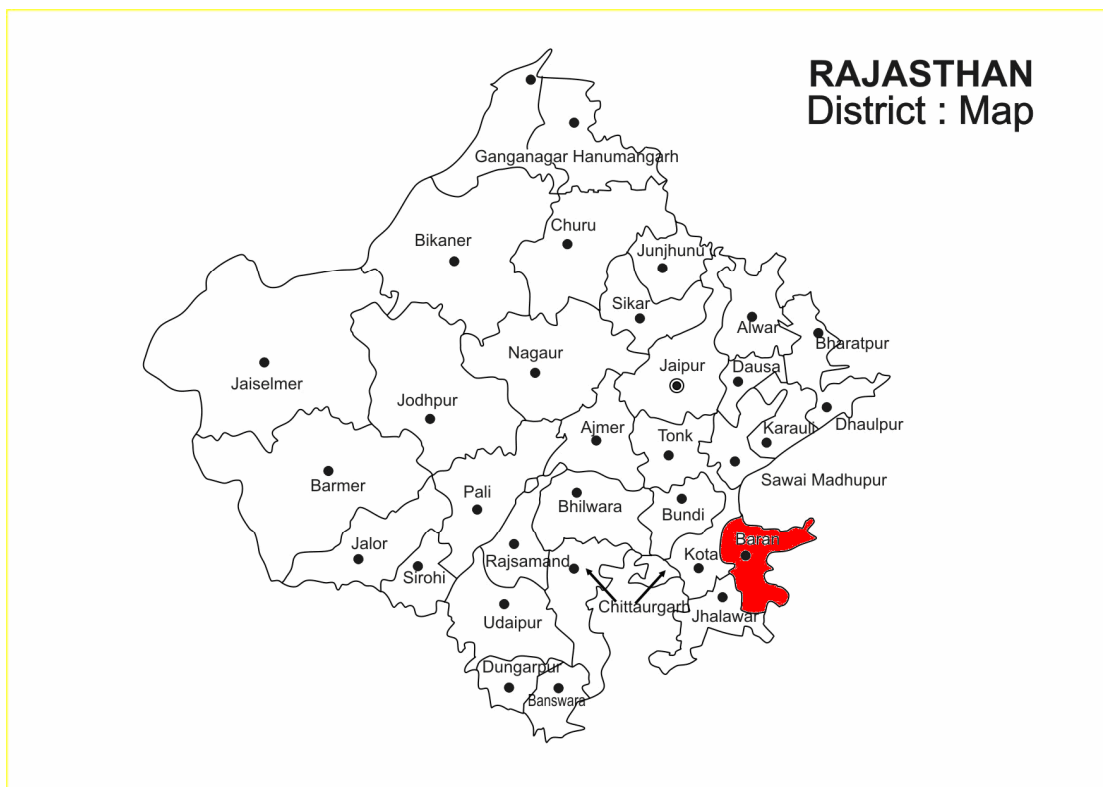


Figure 2 Pentecostal Presence in Rajasthan ⁶⁷

However, for the purpose of the present research, the main focus will be on Jaipur, Udaipur and Banaswara as they have the greatest presence of Pentecostals.⁶⁸

1.4.3. Other Limitations

Many indigenous Pentecostal churches have developed since the movement began in Rajasthan. However, it would be difficult to discover every detail concerning their origin and development as there are few written sources. There are certain personal factors that have affected my field research. I came to Rajasthan (north India) from Kerala (south India) as a missionary. Although I have been living in Rajasthan since 1991, people in Rajasthan still consider me a foreigner. Therefore,

⁶⁷ The district of Baran (shaded in the map) does not have any Pentecostal presence, thus far.

⁶⁸ Separate maps are given to show the greatest presence of Pentecostals as well as the focus of this research. See Appendices 3 & 4.

it has not been easy for me to get all the necessary information from the tribal people. However, I have made every effort to do so despite the limitations of my status as a non-tribal and non-Rajasthani.

Another issue has to do with the language. The tribal communities have their own local dialect. However, most of them speak Hindi, in which I can also communicate. On a few occasions I had to depend on a translator. When information is translated into English from Hindi or other local languages the accuracy of the information is sometimes affected. Fortunately, I had the advantage of being able to call upon the help of students as well as staff of FBC who are able to communicate in English, Hindi and other local dialects.

The non-availability of statistics on Pentecostalism in Rajasthan was another significant concern. It was not possible to obtain statistics from Pentecostals themselves as there is a general fear and suspicion among Christians in the state, as in many other north Indian states, which makes them reluctant to provide statistical data. Most leaders said that they did not keep an official register with details of church members. In a separate enquiry, the former Rajasthan state government of *Bharatheeya Janata Party* (BJP) demanded from all churches the details of their members.⁶⁹ Christians had the impression that the government had an undisclosed reason for this demand, and so they became suspicious. Therefore, no Pentecostal pastor or leader was willing to give any statistics. In addition, there are some pastors who believe that it is sinful to count the number of their

⁶⁹ Most states where the BJP is the ruling party did the same thing, by collecting details of Christians. That is why there is such suspicion among Christians.

believers. They refer to the example of David, who attempted to take a census of the people of Israel with dire consequences (2 Samuel 24:1-17).⁷⁰ Thus, their fear of the BJP government as well their understanding of the Bible discourages them from providing any statistical data.

Moreover, the sudden death of Thomas Mathews after the commencement of my study was a real set-back.⁷¹ Being the most prominent and the most effective Pentecostal missionary in Rajasthan, he was one of the prime sources of information. Nevertheless, my association with him since 1991 gave me ample opportunities to interact with him, and this has contributed significantly to this study.

1.5. Methodology and Procedure

The present study is a missiological investigation which endeavours to integrate research from various fields in order to provide a comprehensive perspective on a complex issue. Many contemporary missiologists have explored the interdisciplinary nature of missiology. The Catholic missiologist, Francis Anekwe Oborji, argues that ‘Mission is an *intersubjective* reality in which missiologists, missionaries and the people among whom they labour are all partners.’⁷² In their introduction, the editors of *Missiology: An Ecumenical Introduction* affirm that

⁷⁰ In this passage, the Lord’s anger is aroused against David when he ordered for a census to be taken in Israel, and consequently the Lord sent a plague on them. However, there are examples in the Bible where Moses and other leaders of Israel took a census of people in accordance with the commandment of the Lord (see Numbers 1:1-3, 26:1-4). All the Bible verses in this study are taken from NKJV unless otherwise stated.

⁷¹ Thomas Mathews died on 24 November 2005.

⁷² Francis Anekwe Oborji, *Concepts of Mission: The Evolution of Contemporary Missiology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2006), 54.

‘missiology does not set itself apart from’ various fields of study such as history, anthropology, sociology and social psychology.⁷³ According to Samuel Escobar, a leading Latin American missiologist, ‘*missiology* is an interdisciplinary approach to understanding missionary action. Missiology examines missionary facts from the perspectives of the biblical sciences, theology, history and social sciences.’⁷⁴ Intercultural theology also recognizes the importance of a ‘multi-disciplinary approach.’⁷⁵

It is clear from the sheer magnitude of the phenomenon that the study of Pentecostalism requires an interdisciplinary approach. The first conference of the European Research Network on Global Pentecostalism took the same view. It ‘focused on theoretical and methodological issues in researching Pentecostalism from multidisciplinary perspectives: anthropology, sociology, history, religious studies and theology.’⁷⁶ According to Mark Cartledge, a leading charismatic voice in practical theology, a ‘multi/interdisciplinary approach to theology’ is an ‘important aspect of twenty-first century theology.’⁷⁷ Therefore, although this study is primarily theological and missiological, it includes historical, sociological and anthropological reflection.

⁷³ F.J. Verstraelen, et. al. ‘Introduction: What Do We Mean by Missiology,’ in *Missiology: An Ecumenical Introduction: Texts and Contexts of Global Christianity*, ed. F.J. Verstraelen, et al. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 2.

⁷⁴ Samuel Escobar, *The New Global Mission: The Gospel from Everywhere to Everyone* (Illinois: IVP, 2003), 21.

⁷⁵ Ustorf, ‘Cultural Origins,’ 244.

⁷⁶ ‘Birmingham GloPent Conference Report,’ <http://www.glopent.net/Members/webmaster/birmingham-2006/birmingham-conference-report/> (accessed 14 September 2006). The conference was held on 19-20 January 2006, in Birmingham.

⁷⁷ Mark J. Cartledge, ‘Pentecostal Theological Method and Intercultural Theology,’ *Transformation* 25, no. 2-3 (April & July 2008): 100.

This study essentially uses the inductive method to understand Pentecostalism in Rajasthan. However, the deductive approach is also used, particularly in the area of history. As mentioned earlier, the results are expected to lead to the development of a contextual Pentecostal missiology. Jongeneel observes that, ‘Missiology as a scientific discipline needs both induction and deduction.’⁷⁸ According to David Bosch, it is a ‘false alternative’ to choose only one of them, and so he suggests making use of both. He further explains that neither the deductive method nor inductive method should be ‘practised in isolation from or over against one another.’⁷⁹ Wherever possible, triangulation⁸⁰ is done to obtain better results from findings. This study follows the voice of Anderson, a leading voice in global Pentecostal historiography, in order to explain the history of Pentecostalism in India as it seems to be significant in the Indian context. According to him, rather than the ‘history from above,’ a ‘new history’ that is concerned with the ‘history from below’ from the perspective of those on the margins is necessary. Therefore, he suggests that ‘in the writing of Pentecostal history, there needs to be “affirmative action” to redress the balance, where the contribution of national workers, pastors and evangelists is emphasized. We need to plumb the depths of oral histories and bring to light that which has been concealed for so long.’⁸¹ Many mission historians like Wilbert Shenk⁸² and Mark

⁷⁸ Jongeneel, *Philosophy, Science, and Theology*, 178.

⁷⁹ David J. Bosch, *Witness to the World: The Christian Mission in Theological Perspective* (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1980), 44-45.

⁸⁰ According to Alan Bryman, triangulation can be used to ‘refer to a process of cross-checking findings deriving from both quantitative and qualitative research.’ See, Alan Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: OUP, 2004), 275.

⁸¹ Allan H. Anderson, ‘Writing the Pentecostal History of Africa, Asia and Latin America,’ *Journal of Beliefs and Values* 25, no.2 (2004): 149. For more details, see pp.139-49. He used the same approach in his *Introduction to Pentecostalism*.

⁸² Wilbert R. Shenk, ‘Introduction,’ in *Enlarging the Story: Perspectives on Writing World Christian History*, ed. Wilbert R. Shenk (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2002), xi-xvii.

Hutchinson⁸³ emphasize the significance of such a new paradigm in the contemporary global historiography of mission. This issue will be discussed in detail in chapter two. Therefore, in the current research on Pentecostalism in Rajasthan, the voices of the natives rather than those of south Indians are taken into account to get a better picture of the movement.

This study follows contemporary theologians, like Robert Schreiter⁸⁴ and Bevans,⁸⁵ who suggest that context is the starting point of contextual theologies. Schreiter suggests that local theology has to be sensitive to three areas. The first is culture. He argues that without an initial examination of the context, ‘a theology readily can become either irrelevant or a subtle tool of ideological manipulation.’ Secondly, it must be sensitive to the procedure. Although the professional theologian has a role, the community has a major place in developing local theology. The community ‘takes much more responsibility in shaping theological response. Much or even most of this theology never comes to be written down as it emerges from the reflection of those myriad small Christian communities....’ Thirdly, it must be sensitive to history. A ‘transformation of the present’ as well as a ‘reconstruction of the past’ is needed to construct local theologies.⁸⁶ Schreiter further explains the indispensable relationship between the theologian and the community in the theological process. The theologian cannot produce ‘a theology in isolation from the community’s experience,’ and the community needs the theologian ‘to ground its own experience within the Christian traditions,’ and thus

⁸³ Mark Hutchinson, et al., ‘The Ongoing Task: Agendas for a Work in Progress,’ in *Enlarging the Story*, 115-23.

⁸⁴ See Robert J. Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1985), 12-16.

⁸⁵ See Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, 3-7.

⁸⁶ Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies*, 3-5.

helps to ‘create the bonds of mutual accountability’ between the local and the global.⁸⁷

Following Schreiter, Bevans affirms the significant role of the faith community in the development of contextual theologies. He convincingly argues that the trained theologian has an important but limited role in the theological process. According to Bevans, the theologian’s role is to articulate more clearly the expression of the community, ‘deepening their ideas ... and challenging them to broaden their horizons....’ Furthermore, as the context is taken seriously in contextual theology, ‘theology cannot be understood as a ‘finished product, produced by experts, that is merely delivered to a Christian community for its consumption,’ and at the same time, ‘theology cannot be the mere recording of what “the people think.”’ Instead, theology must be ‘an activity of dialogue, emerging out of a mutual respect between’ the faith community and ‘listening professionals.’⁸⁸

As Anderson observes, Pentecostal theology is ‘more than written and academic theology,’ but is ‘found in the preaching, rituals and practices of churches.’ He refers to the ‘enacted theology’ (theology in practice) seen in global Pentecostalism.⁸⁹ While discussing the problems of Pentecostal traditioning, Simon Chan points out that the ‘strength of Pentecostal traditioning lies in its powerful narratives,’ but its ‘weakness lies in its inability to explain itself.’⁹⁰

⁸⁷ Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies*, 18.

⁸⁸ Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, 17-18.

⁸⁹ Allan Anderson, ‘The Contextual Pentecostal Theology of David Yonggi Cho,’ *AJPS* 7, no.1 (1999): 102.

⁹⁰ Simon Chan, *Pentecostal Theology and the Christian Spiritual Tradition*, JPTS Series 21 (Sheffield: SAP, 2000), 20.

Having been involved in the movement in various ways since 1991, I have had ample opportunities to interact with its senior leaders, pastors and ordinary believers. I used to regularly attend the monthly FFCI pastors meeting at Kherwara, Udaipur between July 2000 and March 2005 and have attended the rural and urban churches of both Rajasthanis and others since 1991. My own observations have prompted me to reflect on how to serve the community better. As a missiology lecturer at FBC, I have been interested in the unfailing connection between mission classrooms and the mission fields,⁹¹ and so I used to visit students in their mission fields, and learn about their experiences to see how I could make the necessary changes to the mission courses.

For the specific purpose of this study, research was carried out using a qualitative research approach. A combination of methods such as interviews, focus groups, participant observation, life histories and documentary analysis has been used.⁹² Despite its weaknesses, Schreiter claims that ‘no other approach takes the problems of identity as seriously as does the ethnographic approach.’ According to him, some of these weaknesses have ‘emerged out of the struggle to create a contextual and a local theology along lines of identity.’⁹³ Therefore, the local history, theology and missiology of Pentecostalism in Rajasthan have been studied by using methods drawn from ethnography. Participant observation has been used to study features of Pentecostalism in Rajasthan. According to Danny

⁹¹ See my article ‘Connecting mission field and class’ *Cross & Crown* 34, no.6 (November-December 2004): 12-15, where I have highlighted the importance of the indispensable link between the mission class-room and the mission field. I argue that mission field is an equally or more potent resource to study mission theory and practice.

⁹² Mark J. Cartledge, *Practical Theology: Charismatic and Empirical Perspectives* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2003), 69-74.

⁹³ Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies*, 14. He argues that the weaknesses of ethnography can be overcome.

Jorgensen, participant observation is an excellent methodology to study the ‘organization of people and events’, ‘continuities over time and patterns’ and the ‘relationship among people and events.’⁹⁴

Interviews were conducted with both Rajasthani and non-Rajasthani people of various categories such as Pentecostal leaders, pastors and lay people.⁹⁵ The interviews had two main purposes, historical as well as theological and contextual. The interviewees included three elderly people in their late eighties, who have been members of the first Pentecostal church in Rajasthan since its inception, seven participants of local revivals who became Pentecostals, as well as three non-Pentecostal eyewitnesses of the revivals, and eighteen leaders and ten pastors from all the twelve major Pentecostal organizations. Five group interviews (focus group)⁹⁶ were conducted separately for pastors,⁹⁷ women⁹⁸ and young people.⁹⁹ I attended an important Charismatic Leaders meeting, held in Jaipur on 08 May 2006. Seven non-Pentecostal leaders from various churches were interviewed to obtain a better picture of the relationship of Pentecostals with other church traditions. Semi-structured questionnaires were used for the interviews in order to explore the situational issues as they arose.¹⁰⁰ Two rural tribal congregations¹⁰¹ as

⁹⁴ Danny L. Jorgensen, *Participant Observation: A Methodology for Human Studies*, Applied Social Research Methods Series, vol. 15 (London, New Delhi: SAGE, 1989), 13.

⁹⁵ For the importance of interviews in qualitative research see Tom Wengraf, *Qualitative Research Interviewing* (London: SAGE Publications, 2001), 1-70. Also Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 318-44.

⁹⁶ For more details of focus group in qualitative research see Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 345-62.

⁹⁷ Two Pastors’ meetings took place in Udaipur (on 07 May 2006) and in Banaswara (on 12 May 2006).

⁹⁸ This took place on 06 May 2006.

⁹⁹ Two group interviews for young people took place on 13 May 2006.

¹⁰⁰ For the advantages of semi-structured interviews, see Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 320-29. Also, Cartledge, *Practical Theology*, 71-72.

¹⁰¹ Ebenezer Church and Immanuel Church (both are pseudonyms)

well as an urban mega-church in Udaipur¹⁰² were particularly chosen for participant observation.¹⁰³ Each interview was tape recorded, and the most relevant information has been paraphrased, translated if not in English, and transcribed and analysed.¹⁰⁴

The current research involved the active participation of individuals. The participants included both men and women aged between 19 and 88 years, and south Indians and north Indians, mostly Rajasthanis. They included senior leaders, local pastors, and lay people from Pentecostal churches in Rajasthan, particularly Jaipur, Ajmer, Udaipur, Dungarpur and Banaswara as well as non-Pentecostal leaders including Catholic and Protestant like Church of North India (CNI), Methodist, and others. All the participants were able-bodied, and no minor was involved in any part of this research. All the senior leaders were literate and most local pastors were semi-literate, though some were illiterate. Most members of rural congregations were illiterate while most belonging to urban congregation were literate, with a small minority illiterate.

As I have been involved with the movement since 1991, there were no difficulties in approaching the participants. I attended the funeral service of Thomas Mathews,¹⁰⁵ where almost all the leaders and pastors, both Pentecostals and others, in the state were present, and so it was comparatively easy for me to

¹⁰² RPC

¹⁰³ For a discussion on participant observation see Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 291-317. Also, Cartledge, *Practical Theology*, 70-71.

¹⁰⁴ For the need to record and transcribe interviews see Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 329-33.

¹⁰⁵ Thomas Mathews died on the 24th of November 2005. It was a two days service (26-27 November 2005) and so many Christians from all over the state and outside came to attend the same as he was one of the most prominent Pentecostal leaders in north India.

approach them personally. Twenty Pentecostal leaders were approached and were given the letter explaining my research details. Eighteen of them accepted the request and offered their full cooperation, and gave their written consent. Similarly nine non-Pentecostal leaders were approached, and all of them except two offered full participation, and also gave their written consent. The two who did not offer full participation were not included in this research. The focus groups of women and young people were selected with the help of their respective local pastors, and the focus groups of pastors were selected with the help of senior leaders. The letter was written in Hindi describing my research project as well as requesting their participation, and the pastor read it out to the congregation. Those who were willing were selected and asked to fill a consent form, with the help of the pastor as well as that of another two witnesses from the church. The consent form was read to them before they gave their consent. For participant observation of congregations, the local pastors were approached personally and the letter was provided, which was read before the congregation, and no objection was raised. They were asked through the pastors to fully participate in the research. However, in all the cases, the participants were given the right to withdraw at any time, but were asked to inform the local pastor first. It was my intention to discard the data collected from those participants who had withdrawn. However, nobody withdrew from the current research. The participants were clearly told about the purpose of the study. The participants were not given compensation of any kind, either financial or non-financial, for their participation.

There was a feedback session at the end of data collection for further verification and a more complete description of the purpose of the research as well as access to the results of the research. It was stated that the report of the research could be sent to all those who were interested. Almost all the participants were anonymous, except some prominent leaders as well as early Pentecostals, whose written consent was sought in advance to use their names in the thesis. All the data collected was treated as confidential. I assigned pseudonyms to individuals only at the writing-up stage. I have adopted pseudonyms for the two rural congregations also. The research data was stored on audio cassettes, the transcribed copies were kept electronically on memory discs, and the hard copies were kept in files. The complete data was kept securely in such a way that only the researcher will have access to it in the future. The data will be kept for five years, at which time it will be completely destroyed.

Some prominent leaders in the state asked me not to make any notes on the statistics of the movement, such as the details of people groups that have representation in Pentecostalism, the rate of growth of the movement, and the details of churches, as these statistics may cause problems from Hindu militants. Therefore quantitative research is avoided in this study.

The qualitative research consisted of three phases. The major focus in the first phase was to identify and locate Pentecostalism in Rajasthan as well as to choose the focus groups, the congregations for participant observation and the target group to be interviewed, which included the leaders, pastors and lay people. The

research is concentrated on a few districts in Rajasthan. Bryman suggests that ‘in qualitative research, the orientation to sampling is more likely to be guided by a preference for theoretical sampling than with the kind of statistical sampling.’¹⁰⁶ Silverman states that ‘purposive sampling’ as an important method of selection and says that it is often regarded as being synonymous with theoretical sampling. ‘Purposive sampling demands that we think critically about the parameters of the population we are interested in and choose our sample case carefully on this basis.’¹⁰⁷ The current research focused chiefly on three districts, namely Jaipur, Udaipur and Banaswara. Along with convenience and accessibility, there are other grounds that guided this selection. These districts have a higher Pentecostal population, and so most senior leaders are from these districts only. As most organizations have their base in these districts all the leaders who were interviewed were from these districts except a few who were from Ajmer and Dungarpur. However, for the purpose of participant observation and group interviews, the congregations as well as focus groups were chosen from Udaipur district due to easy access and the convenience of travel. Two rural congregations, Ebenezer church and Immanuel church, were chosen because one had a Rajasthani pastor and the other had a south Indian pastor, and the urban church, RPC, was multi-cultural and had both south Indian and Rajasthani pastors.

The second phase included in-depth interviews of individuals, focus groups and participant observation of three congregations and the leaders’ meeting. The

¹⁰⁶ Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 102.

¹⁰⁷ David Silverman, *Doing Qualitative Research: A Practical Handbook* (London: SAGE Publications, 2000), 104-05. According to him, the only difference between theoretical sampling and purposive sampling occurs when the intention behind purposive sampling is not theoretically defined (p.105).

interviews were conducted to understand Pentecostal history, internal and external issues as well as their effect upon the people, the role of the Spirit in formulating and reformulating their mission theory and practice, and also Pentecostal attitude to other Christians, non-Christians, Hindutva, politics and social mission. The focus groups of pastors, women and young people were conducted for diverse purposes. In all the groups every individual was allowed to participate and express their opinion. The pastors' group in Banaswara consisted of eight pastors and that of Udaipur consisted of thirteen. The main purpose was to understand the socio-economic status, inter-cultural tension, the global impact on the local, inter-denominational issues, and the challenges from Hindu militants. The women's group consisted of ten participants and all were tribals. The major purpose was to understand why tribals, particularly women, are attracted to Pentecostalism. The young people's group consisted of seventeen, including both urban and rural people. The main purpose was to understand the global and local dynamics. There was a separate interview for the eight young people who were from the rural areas in order to understand more specifically the impact of global Pentecostalism on the rural youth.

All three congregations were selected for participant observation over a twelve-week period to understand their theology, global influence, the global-local tension, and the external and internal challenges and their effect on Pentecostalism in Rajasthan. Ebenezer church has a Rajasthani pastor, and the Immanuel church has a south Indian pastor. They are both located in Udaipur district, and each has around two hundred attendees on Sundays. I participated the Sunday worship

meetings on eight occasions at all three congregations. Apart from taking detailed notes of the testimonies and sermons, I also recorded my general impression and feelings during each service.¹⁰⁸ The major attention was given to understanding their theology, the impact of global Pentecostalism, and both the internal and external issues they face, by observing their style of worship, prayer, testimonies, sermons, instructions, slogans, songs and means of evangelism.

In the process of data analysis, a balance between critical distance and sensitivity was maintained.¹⁰⁹ Realising the importance of different types of sensitivity in qualitative research, such as historical, cultural, political and contextual, efforts were made to become sensitive to meaning without forcing my own explanations on data.¹¹⁰ A variety of sources such as both technical and non-technical¹¹¹ literature, personal and professional experiences and insights have been used as analytical tools.¹¹² Triangulation was used particularly to verify the data and analysis related to the early history of Pentecostalism in Rajasthan as well as the local revivals and their theology. Both *etic* (outsider) and *emic* (insider) approaches have been used in the analysis.¹¹³ As Harvey Cox observes, it is important to listen both to ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ voices in order to have a

¹⁰⁸ For the importance of field notes, see Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 306-09.

¹⁰⁹ Anselm Strauss and Juliet Corbin, *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*, 2nd ed. (London: SAGE Publications, 1998), 42-48. They discuss ‘a balance between objectivity and sensitivity.’

¹¹⁰ John Swinton and Arriet Mowat *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research* (London : SCM Press, 2006), 57-58

¹¹¹ Non-technical literature consists of letters, biographies, diaries, reports, videotapes, newspapers, catalogues and other materials. See Strauss and Corbin, *Basics of Qualitative Research*, 52.

¹¹² Strauss and Corbin, *Basics of Qualitative Research*, 42-52.

¹¹³ Kenneth Pike was the first to coin the terms ‘*etic*’ and ‘*emic*.’ See Kenneth Pike, ‘Etic and Emic Standpoints for the Description of Behaviour,’ in *The Insider/Outsider Problem in the Study of Religion*, ed. Russel T. McCutcheon (London: Cassell,1999), 28-36.

comprehensive understanding of Pentecostalism.¹¹⁴ According to Oborji, one of the major tasks of missiology is to ‘make missionary praxis a subject of its scientific endeavours, not from the safe distance of an onlooker but in a spirit of coresponsibility and of service to the church.’¹¹⁵

Documentary analysis was carried out on the sources which included personal notes and articles by Pentecostal leaders, like Mathews, and other relevant documents available at FBC, the minutes of various churches, organizations and institutions, prospectuses and curriculum details, and other related documents of theological institutions. DVDs, CDs, audio cassettes and periodicals in Malayalam (*Cross and Crown*), Hindi (*Angel*) and English (*Cross and Crown*) containing the preaching and teaching of Pentecostal pastors were also examined in order to study Pentecostal theology and missiology more precisely.

The third phase included the incorporation of suggestions and recommendations. The manuscript of the sixth chapter which outlines the contextual missiology in the light of the findings was shown to two Pentecostal leaders from Rajasthan who are active participants in the movement, and their suggestions and comments were taken seriously and incorporated into the text.

This study is not an attempt by an insider to present the most appealing picture, nor by an outsider to expose weaknesses; rather all care will be given to study the movement with a right mixture of empathy and appreciation, while at the same

¹¹⁴ Harvey Cox, ‘Foreword,’ in *Pentecostals after a Century*, 12.

¹¹⁵ Oborji, *Concepts of Mission*, 54.

time keeping the necessary distance to make a critical evaluation. It is significant to note the voice of the Indian Catholic missiologist Louis Malieckal in this respect:

...theology today is seen as a living search arising out of commitment to the people. The starting point is praxis and the subject is people themselves in their life-struggle. They do the initial articulation which will be in the form of a search for ultimate meaning of this struggle. The role of the professional theologian is to ponder, interpret and highlight this meaning, while participating in it as a member of this struggling community, and thus enable them to discover it more fully.¹¹⁶

Therefore, my personal background and presuppositions will influence the findings of this study. Born as the son of a classical Pentecostal pastor, I went to Rajasthan with the same tradition. However, several years of ministry, study and involvement in the Pentecostal movement in Rajasthan have caused me to move a little away from my traditional classical Pentecostal background. Today I see myself as standing in between Classical Pentecostalism and Neo-Pentecostalism. I recognize the limitations of my position as an outsider in terms of culture and ethnicity, and as an insider in terms of church tradition. However, my experience of living in the state for several years has helped to reduce elements of suspicion in my approach. Being a part of the movement makes it difficult at times to maintain a critical distance. However, every effort has been taken to maintain an element of detachment where possible, so that my findings will not be unduly influenced.

¹¹⁶ Louis Malieckal, 'Realising an Indian Theology of Mission,' in *A Missiology for Third Millennium: A Contextualized Mission Theology*, ed. Thomas Aykara (Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 1997), 128.

The remainder of this study is as follows: chapters two and three provide a historical background of the study, with chapter two focusing on the investigation of the historical context and the origins of Indian Pentecostalism. The third chapter will discuss the historical development of Pentecostalism in Rajasthan, and also some theological features of the movement. The fourth and fifth chapters present a contextual study of the movement, focusing on the external and internal issues faced by Pentecostals. Chapter four will present the religio-political issues, including various concerns like the minority problems, religious intolerance, and the religio-political nexus. Chapter five will further discuss the internal issues Pentecostals are facing from within the movement, and since Pentecostalism has become a global movement today, both the local as well as global challenges will be discussed. Chapter six provides an outline of a 'contextual missiology of the Spirit' emerging out of this research. This chapter will propose a new model of contextual missiology in the light of the current study on Pentecostalism in Rajasthan, clarifying the meaning, the theological basis, and the contextual features for this new model. Chapter seven is a short conclusion, which includes a brief summary of each chapter as well as further implications of the thesis.

Chapter 2

HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND IDENTITY

Pentecostalism in Rajasthan is not an isolated movement; rather it is an integral part of Indian Pentecostalism. Although it has local characteristics in terms of its nature and growth, they are parallels and links with Indian Pentecostalism at large. A clear picture of the movement in the state cannot be drawn in isolation but only against the backdrop of Indian Pentecostalism as a whole. Therefore, this chapter explores the historical context and identity of Indian Pentecostalism. Identity crisis is one of the most daunting challenges facing Indian Christianity today. In the wake of the rise of religious intolerance in recent years in the Indian milieu, the quest for identity is a widely-discussed issue among Indian Christians. In the context of Rajasthan in particular, the question of Christian identity is a major concern.

2.1. The Identity Quest

In the contemporary Indian scenario religious identity is a serious issue, as it is strongly connected to socio-political domains. There have been attempts by socio-political scientists to study the undercurrents of diverse communal conflicts in India in the recent past.¹ Most research has concluded that religious identity linked to politics is the major reason for such clashes, and scholars have recognized the significance of religious identity. T.V. Sathyamurthy, commenting

¹ For example, Sudhir Kakar, *The Colours of Violence: Cultural Identities, Religion, and Conflict* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); T.V. Sathyamurthy, ed., *Region, Religion, Caste, Gender and Culture in Contemporary India*, vol.3 (Oxford: OUP, 1996).

on the recent move of religion into the political arena, notes that until the early '80s, region was a more powerful criterion than religion in deciding this identity. However, religion has been pushed into the forefront of politics to become a major influence in contemporary India.² According to Sudhir Kakar, involvement of religious rather than social identities increases violence and conflict. Religion brings to conflict between groups a greater emotional intensity and a deeper motivational thrust than language, region or other markers of ethnic identity.³

There are various reasons why it is necessary to examine the Indian Pentecostal identity. One of the chief reasons is that the quest for identity is the focus of serious missiological discussion today in the light of the changes in the Indian religio-political context. Another important fact is the enormous impact of global Pentecostalism on local contexts, as will be discussed in chapter five. The definition of Pentecostalism is a debatable issue. Many classical Pentecostals hesitate to include some forms of charismatic Christianity within the category of Pentecostalism. Therefore, both the particular Indian religio-political context and the global Pentecostal context mean that it is important to explore the issue of Indian Pentecostal identity.

² Sathyamurthy, 'Introduction to Vol 3: Region, Religion, Caste, Gender and Culture in Contemporary India,' in *Region, Religion, Caste, Gender*, 36.

³ Kakar, *Colours of Violence*, 47.

2.1.1. A Socio-Religious Issue

Identity crisis is not peculiar to India, but is a critical issue in South Asia in general. The identity problem in South Asia is centred on religion.⁴ A major reason for this is that there is an intricate relationship between the social, religious and political aspects of society. According to Michael Amaladoss, an Indian consultant for Interreligious Dialogue, the socio-religious conflicts have accentuated the problem of identity in the recent past, and he identifies political, economic and religious reasons for this identity crisis. However, he argues that although there is a clear political root to the conflicts and strong economic factors that inspire the political struggle, religious identity is the most important factor in all of them. Political and economic forces use the power of religious identity to achieve their ends. According to Amaladoss, ‘The majority groups try to assert their dominance because of their numbers. The minority groups seek to protect themselves and search for autonomy.’ Furthermore, he suggests that the potential that religion has for such conflicts consists in the sense of social identity and integration that it confers on a particular group.⁵ Bardwell L. Smith also sees social, economic and political elements in communal conflicts, but, like Amaladoss, believes that ‘the problem at its deepest is inescapably religious.’⁶

In most of the attempts to deal with the South Asian issue of socio-religious identity, a considerable portion of the discussion is related to India. Moreover,

⁴ Bardwell L. Smith, ed., *Religion and Social Conflict in South Asia* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1976); Michael Amaladoss, ‘Identity and Harmony: Challenges to Mission in South Asia,’ in *Mission in the Third Millennium*, ed. Robert Schreiter (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2001), 25-39.

⁵ Amaladoss, ‘Identity and Harmony,’ 25-26.

⁶ Smith, *Religion and Social Conflict*, 12.

research on the socio-religious identities of Indian communities has increased, probably due to the rise of religious militancy and its impact on politics. James Massey⁷ and Sathianathan Clarke⁸ both deal with the socio-religious identity of Christians in India, with a particular focus on the identity of Dalit Christianity. While Massey deals with the basic question of Christian Dalit identity within its historical background, Clarke discusses Dalit identity from a subaltern perspective.

As has been mentioned in chapter one, some states in India have recently introduced an anti-conversion law, and others have revised their law of freedom of religion. In this context, religious identity is a significant issue for discussion. Sebastian Kim's *In Search of Identity*⁹ is a significant source in this regard. He discusses the issue of religious conversion within the larger situation of the search for identity, and examines the major debates on conversion between Hindus and Christians, and among Christian theologians in post-independent India, with the aim of tracing trends in theological and ideological interpretations of conversion from both the Hindu and Christian points of view. He also examines the themes of 'human rights' and 'tolerance' from both perspectives. Kim identifies that more than socio-political factors, religious dynamics are the key to identity quest in

⁷ James Massey, *Dalits in India: Religion as a Source of Bondage or Liberation with Special Reference to Christians* (Delhi: Manohar Publishers, 1995).

⁸ Sathianathan Clarke, *Dalits and Christianity: Subaltern Religion and Liberation Theology in India* (New Delhi: OUP, 1999).

⁹ Sebastian C.H. Kim, *In Search of Identity: Debates on Religious Conversion in India* (New Delhi: Oxford, 2003).

India, and so he suggests that both Hindus and Christians should search for a ‘common identity, while also affirming self-identity.’¹⁰

There is a general perception that the majority religion in India is attempting to absorb the minority religions. The recent actions by the Hindu dominated BJP government in the state of Gujarat is an example. It is reported that the Gujarat Assembly took the decision on 19 September 2006 to make an amendment to the Freedom of Religion Act by equating Jainism and Buddhism with Hinduism for certain purposes. The BJP spokesperson, Prakash Javedkar, explained that this decision was important in order to form a Hindu Civil Code, which would tie Buddhists, Jains and Sikhs together with Hinduism. However, the minority religions, especially Jainism and Buddhism, see it as a new threat from the Hindu majority.¹¹ On the other hand, Christians see it not as a fresh effort, rather as a Hindu tendency to absorb the minority religions. They argue that the aboriginal tribal religions have lost their individual identity through a practice called *sanskritization*, a process by which tribals and Dalits were assimilated into the Brahminical Hindu fold,¹² and were brought under the broad category of the majority religion, Hinduism. The term *sanskritization* was coined by the Indian sociologist M.N. Srinivas, and for him, ‘*sanskritization* is the process by which a “low” Hindu caste or tribal or other group, changes its customs, ritual, ideology

¹⁰ Kim, *Search of Identity*, 199.

¹¹ Special Correspondent, ‘Gujarat Faces NCM Fire on Law: Minority Communities React Strongly, Congress Hits Out at Modi Government,’ *The Asian Age*, 21 September 2006, 2.

¹² For further discussion on the Sanskritization of tribes, see Henry H. Presler, *Primitive Religions in India* (Madras: CLS, 1971); Ebe Sunder Raj, *National Debate on Conversion* (Chennai, India: Bharat Jyoti, 2001), 132-35; Ashish Chripal, ‘The Sanskritisation of the Tribals,’ in *Tribes in Transition: Indian Christians Reflect on the Original Inhabitants of the Land*, ed. Hrangkhuma F. (Bangalore, India: SAIACS, 2004), 67-76.

and the way of life in the direction of a high and frequently “twice-born caste.”¹³ S. Selvam states that the ideas of *sanskritization* ‘are part of the ideology of Brahmanism.’¹⁴ Srinivas claims that *sanskritization* is not confined to Hindu castes, but also occurs among the tribes, and consequently the tribe undergoing the process claiming to be caste, and therefore Hindu.¹⁵ However, the Indian Christian theologian Ashish Chrispal concludes that although the *sanskritization* project claims to be a natural, voluntary process, in reality it is fostered and manipulated by the Hindutva ideology.¹⁶ Srinivas’ observation supports this conclusion, as he admits that in the traditional system the only way to become a Hindu was to belong to a caste, and the mobility was usually related to a group, not an individual or a family.¹⁷ Therefore, by *sanskritization* the status of many tribal communities has changed from being a tribe to becoming a caste to be included in the social ladder of the caste system so that becomes Hindus.¹⁸

2.1.2. A Missiological Issue

Various scholars have explored the identity of the Indian church.¹⁹ In the face of contemporary challenges from Hindutva ideology and the resultant religious militancy, the church in India is very aware of the need to investigate the

¹³ M.N. Srinivas, *Social Change in Modern India* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966), 6.

¹⁴ S. Selvam, ‘Representing Hinduism,’ in *Untouchable: Dalits in Modern India*, ed. S.M. Michael (London: Lynne Rienner, 1999), 81.

¹⁵ Srinivas, *Social Change*, 7. Tribes in India are not generally counted as castes, but are considered Scheduled Tribes (ST).

¹⁶ Chrispal, ‘Sanskritisation,’ 76. The concept of Hindutva ideology will be discussed in detail in chapter four.

¹⁷ Srinivas, *Social Change*, 7.

¹⁸ According to the caste system of India social order, tribes are not included as castes, but they are treated as Other Backward Tribes (OBT).

¹⁹For example, Hedlund, *Quest for Identity*; Hedlund, *Christianity is Indian*; F. Hrangkhuma, ed., *Christianity in India: Search for Liberation and Identity* (Pune/Delhi, India: CMS/ISPCK, 1998); Snaitang, *Churches of Indigenous Origins*.

indigenous nature of Christianity in India. Slogans like ‘Christianity is a foreign religion, and so Christians are not Indian nationals’ are purposely being spread all over India, particularly in the northern part. Therefore, it has become one of the most urgent tasks for the church not only to identify the indigenous expressions of Christianity but also to probe its indigenous identity.

The search for the Indian church’s identity, especially in the religiously tense context, has been a principal issue in many Indian theological conferences. For example, the nineteenth Annual Meeting of the Indian Theological Association (4-8 May 1996), published its papers under the title *The Church in India: In Search of a New Identity*.²⁰ This volume deals with three aspects of Indian Christian identity. The first is the search for its root in Scripture and Tradition. The second is a discussion of indigenous issues like inculturation and inter-religious dialogue. The third is an exploration of various dimensions of ecclesial identity such as the autonomy of the church, its inner life and its relationship to other churches. The 10th Conference of Centre for Mission Studies (15-17 January 2004) in Pune, Maharashtra, was another important consultation.²¹ The issue of identity of Christians in India in the context of ‘Hindutva and Nationalism’ was discussed from four major perspectives- historical, theological, biblical and theoretical. As R.E. Frykenberg has observed, although not all Christian scholars and thinkers are in agreement on every matter, ‘all Christians, to a greater or lesser degree, have been made to feel less secure and more uneasy, if not fearful, by State actions taken in the name of, or under the influences promulgated by, Hindutva. Their very identity as Indians has been questioned, and is now at stake.’²²

²⁰Kurien Kunnumpuram, Errol D’Lima and Jacob Parappally, eds., *The Church in India in Search of a New Identity* (Bangalore: NBCLC, 1997).

²¹ See, Mark T.B. Laing, ed., *Nationalism and Hindutva: A Christian Response* (Delhi/Pune, India: ISPCK/CMS, 2005).

²² Robert Eric Frykenberg, ‘Preface,’ in *Nationalism and Hindutva*, xiii.

However, the indigenous identity search of the Indian church became more dynamic at the start of this century. In particular the Mylapore Institute for Indigenous Studies (MIIS), Chennai, India was organized to facilitate vigorous research into indigenous Christianity in India with the aim of developing it as a new academic discipline.²³ It is publishing a series of research projects under the title ‘The Indigenous Christianity Series’ to document the fact that Christianity exists in numerous local expressions, and its greatest growth has been in the post-colonial period.²⁴ This research project is a clear indication of the desperate nature of the search of Indian Christians for indigenous identity.

2.1.3. A Pentecostal Research Issue

The quest for identity is an important issue for research among Pentecostals in many regions of the globe. Pentecostalism in several parts of the majority world, especially Latin America and Africa, has been studied very seriously. Even in the Asian context, an interest in researching Pentecostalism is on the rise particularly in the Philippines,²⁵ Korea,²⁶ China²⁷ and India.²⁸ The complex nature of the

²³ R.E. Hedlund, ‘Introduction: Indigenous Christianity as a Field for Academic Research, Writing, Publication,’ in *Christianity is Indian*, xiii.

²⁴ Hedlund, *Quest for Identity*, v.

²⁵ Jeong Jae Yong, ‘Filipino Pentecostal Spirituality: An Investigation into Filipino Indigenous Spirituality and Pentecostalism in the Philippines’ (ThD thesis, University of Birmingham, 2001). The major discussion in *AJPS*, 8, no.2 (2005) is Filipino Pentecostalism. Also see Joseph Suico, ‘Pentecostals in the Philippines,’ in *Asian and Pentecostal*, 345-62.

²⁶ For example, Boo-woong Yoo, *Korean Pentecostalism: Its History and Theology* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1988); Chong Hee Jeong, ‘The Formation and Development of Korean Pentecostalism from the Perspective of a Dynamic Contextual Theology’ (ThD thesis, University of Birmingham, 2001); Hyeon Sung Bae, ‘Full Gospel Theology and a Korean Pentecostal Identity,’ in *Asian and Pentecostal*, 527-50; Chong Hee Jeong, ‘The Korean Charismatic Movement as Indigenous Pentecostalism,’ in *Asian and Pentecostal*, 551-574.

²⁷ Tony Lambert, *China’s Christian Millions: The Costly Revival* (Crowborough, UK: Monarch Books, 1999); Wesley Luke, *The Church in China: Persecuted, Pentecostal and Powerful*, *AJPS* Series, no. 2, ed. Wonsuk Ma, William W. Menzies, and Joseph R. Suico (Baguio, Philippines: *AJPS* Books, 2004); Deng Zhaoming, ‘Indigenous Chinese Pentecostal Denominations,’ in *Asian and Pentecostal*, 437-65; Edmond Tang, ‘“Yellers” and Healers: Pentecostalism and the Study of Grassroots Christianity in China,’ in *Asian and Pentecostal*, 467-508.

²⁸ For example, Bergunder, *South Indian Pentecostal*; Das, ‘Evaluation of the History’; S. Mathew, *Kerala Pentecosthu*; Kutty, *Place and Contribution of Dalits*; V.V. Thomas, ‘Pentecostalism among the Dalits.’ *Indian Pentecostalism* was the subject of discussion for *Dharma Deepika* 6, no.2 (2002).

definition and the rich diversity of Pentecostalism (internal issues) as well as the socio-religious and political contexts (external issues) are some key reasons for the identity issue becoming an essential concern.

The reaction by many Pentecostals to Anderson's *Introduction to Pentecostalism* is a clear indication of Pentecostal concern about identity. As Michael Wilkinson observes, the question of identity is a core issue in the book.²⁹ The response shows that Anderson's research raised two major issues with regard to identity concern. The first issue is related to the regional representation of Pentecostalism. Joseph Castleberry, a reviewer of the book, argues that Anderson has not given satisfactory attention to Pentecostalism in many parts of the world. His treatment of Pentecostalism in Africa was appreciated, but other regions are not equally represented in his research.³⁰ However, as Anderson has responded, Pentecostalism in other regions like Asia is yet to be explored.³¹ The second issue is related to Anderson's inclusive and broad definition of Pentecostalism.³² Anderson defended his stance by stating that his 'treatment of Pentecostalism is an attempt to be inclusive and intercultural in resisting exclusive, expansionist and Western-centred approaches.'³³ As he has followed an inclusive definition, many indigenous revival movements as well as people have found their identity in Pentecostalism. However, sharing their Pentecostal identity with others has created some uneasiness in several classical Pentecostals. All these reactions clearly demonstrate that Pentecostals are concerned about their identity.

²⁹ Michael Wilkinson, 'When is a Pentecostal a Pentecostal? The Global Perspective of Allan Anderson,' *Pneuma* 28, no.2 (2006): 278.

³⁰ Joseph L. Castleberry, 'History from Below Should be Fair to Missionaries Also,' *Pneuma* 28, no.2 (2006): 271.

³¹ Allan Anderson, 'The Hazards of Writing a Book on Global Pentecostalism,' *Pneuma* 28, no.2 (2006): 284.

³² Wilkinson, 'When is a Pentecostal,' 278.

³³ Anderson, 'Hazards of Writing,' 284.

The above-mentioned project ‘The Indigenous Christianity Series’ by MIIS, has already investigated stories of the origin and features of many churches instituted by Indian nationals. This research has included various Pentecostal churches also, as most Pentecostal churches are of indigenous origin. According to Hedlund, the Pentecostal contribution to the indigenous character of Christianity in India is significant and is worthy of academic investigation.³⁴ Realizing it as a neglected topic by scholars, he includes many Pentecostal churches in his edited volume *Christianity is Indian* with the purpose of affirming their presence and contribution in South Asia.

The search for identity has also become an important subject of research for Indian Pentecostals. Research into Pentecostal identity in India can be grouped under three principal categories. The first one is related to the regional identity of Pentecostalism,³⁵ but much research is focused on south India. S. Mathew’s work on the identity of Kerala Pentecostalism has been a major study. He set Kerala Pentecostalism in the wider context of global Pentecostalism by giving a brief survey of the worldwide Pentecostal Movement in the initial decades of the twentieth century. Although he aimed his study at ordinary people, which means it lacks critical evaluation, it became an important source for many later researchers. Michael Bergunder’s research on south Indian Pentecostalism is the most significant one in this category.³⁶ His study includes the history, beliefs and practices of Pentecostals in the four south Indian states, namely Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. The second category discusses the socio-economic identity of Pentecostalism. The major works in this category deal with

³⁴ Hedlund makes this argument in his various works. See, Roger E. Hedlund, ‘Nationalism and the Indian Pentecostal Church of God,’ *ICHR* 39: no.2 (2005): 91-107, and ‘Indigenous Christianity as a Field,’ x.

³⁵ The significant ones are S. Mathew, *Kerala Penthecosthu*; George, ‘Pentecostal Beginnings in Travancore’; Pulikottil, ‘East and West Met’; S. Mathews, ‘Pentecostal Movement.’

³⁶ Bergunder, *South Indian Pentecostal*.

Dalit Pentecostalism³⁷ and chiefly focus on the role of Dalits in the beginnings and growth of Pentecostalism. Thomas argues that Dalits were the people who largely responded to the movement in the early period.³⁸ As the Pentecostal message appealed to the socio-economically weak Dalits in Kerala, many of them began to follow Pentecostalism, at least in the initial decades of the movement. Yesunatha Das criticizes the writers of Pentecostal history for neglecting Dalits in the making of the Pentecostal Movement in Kerala. The third category of research deals with the denominational identity of Pentecostalism.³⁹ This research studies various Pentecostal denominations, mostly in south India. However, scholars focus on only one particular church, namely the Indian Pentecostal Church of God (IPCoG). A significant attempt is made to study the history of Assemblies of God (AoG) in India⁴⁰ and a few attempts have been made in relation to Pentecostalism in Rajasthan.⁴¹ Although only the FFCI is given attention in all these investigations, they demonstrate a clear indication of the concern about the identity of Pentecostals in Rajasthan.

The above discussion concludes that the quest for identity is a subject for research within the church in India. Therefore, it is imperative to study the identity of Indian Pentecostals as well. Thus, in line with this research concern the present chapter investigates the historical context and identity of Indian Pentecostalism.

³⁷ Kutty, *Place and Contribution of Dalits*; Thomas, 'Pentecostalism among the Dalits'; Das, 'History of Pentecostal Dalits.'

³⁸ V.V. Thomas, 'Pentecostalism among the Dalits in Kerala from 1909 to the Present: A Subaltern Reading,' *UBS Journal* 3, no.2 (2005): 89.

³⁹ P. Vimala Grace Darly. 'The Indian Pentecostal Church in Kerala, 1924-54' (MPhil thesis, Kamaraj University, Madurai, India, 1989); Kunjappan C. Varghese, 'Reformation Brings Revival: A Historical Study of K.E. Abraham and His Contributions in the Founding of the India Pentecost Church of God' (PhD thesis, Trinity International University, Illinois, 1999); Abraham, 'Critical Evaluation.'

⁴⁰ A.C. George, *Trailblazers for God: A History of the Assemblies of God of India* (Bangalore: SABC, 2004).

⁴¹ J.P. Abraham, 'Study of the Life'; P. Abraham, 'Significance of Theological Education'; W. Abraham, 'Pauline Concept'; M. Mathews, 'Comparative Study'; John Philip, 'A Study of Native Missionary Movement with Special Reference to Rajasthan' (MTh thesis, Union Biblical Seminary, Pune, India, 2003); J. Samuel, 'Study of the Impact'; J. Samuel, 'Study on the Influence.'

2.2. Pre-Pentecostal Christianity in India

An understanding of Christianity in India before the occurrence of the Pentecostal revival in the nation is essential for identifying Indian Pentecostalism. As J. Massey observes, history has great significance in understanding identity as ‘historical roots can provide the clue to the lost identity’⁴² However, an extensive approach to Indian Church history is beyond the scope of this study. Therefore, a brief survey is conducted with the aim of understanding the Indian Christian tradition and other developments that remain as antecedents of Indian Pentecostalism.

2.2.1. Early Christian Traditions

It is important to note that Christianity in India has a non-western origin. There is a strong tradition which claims that India came under the influence of the message of Jesus long before Westerners reached the subcontinent. Christians in India believe that their history is as old as the history of Christianity itself. It is reported that Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the first President of independent India, made a remarkable comment during his address at the St. Thomas Day celebration in New Delhi on 18 December 1955: ‘Remember, St. Thomas came to India when many of the countries of Europe had not yet become Christian, and so those Indians who trace their Christianity to him have a longer history and a higher ancestry than that of Christians of many of the European countries. And it is really a matter of pride to us that it so happened.’⁴³

⁴² James Massey, *Roots: A Concise History of Dalits* (Delhi: ISPCK, 1994), 2.

⁴³ A. Mathias Mundadan, *History of Christianity in India: From the Beginning up to the Middle of the Sixteenth Century, up to 1542* (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 1984), 1.

There is a well-established ancient Christian tradition that St. Thomas, one of the twelve disciples of Jesus Christ, came to south India in AD 52, and preached the gospel even to the high caste Brahmins, and as a result formed seven churches.⁴⁴ In addition to many later sources, most scholars refer to the *Acts of Judas Thomas*, an apocryphal work in the Syriac language, dated to the fourth century, as the earliest document which mentions St. Thomas and his preaching in India. Nevertheless, drawing inferences from the same work, there is a north Indian tradition about the apostolate of St. Thomas that he also preached in north-west India.⁴⁵ Although there are arguments against such an early origin of Christianity in India, based on the absence of more reliable historical sources, A. Mingana presents evidence for the presence of Christianity in the area surrounding old India to the north-west, west and south-west, where there were bishops as early AD 225. Therefore, he argues that it is 'improbable to suppose that there was no Christian community in India ... before the second half of the fourth century.'⁴⁶ As Frykenberg observes, whatever be the place or date accepted for the St. Thomas arrival, the undeniable fact is that 'forms of Christian presence and tradition became established' in India 'during the earliest centuries of Christian era.'⁴⁷ The local Christian communities (St. Thomas Christians) have their own

⁴⁴ For more discussion, see Mundadan, *History of Christianity*, 30-31. For details on those churches which claim the St. Thomas tradition in their origins, see, Hedlund, 'Indian Instituted Churches: Indigenous Christianity Indian Style,' in *Churches of Indigenous Origins*, 5.

⁴⁵ For a detailed discussion of the sources of the St. Thomas tradition, see J.N. Farquhar and G. Garitte, *The Apostle of Thomas in India According to the Acts of Thomas*, The Syrian Churches Series, vol.1, ed. Jacob Vellian (Kottayam, India: 1972); Xavier Koodapuzha, *Christianity in India* (Kottayam, India: Oriental Institute of Religious Studies India, [n.d.]); A. Mingana, *The Early Spread of Christianity in India* (Manchester: University Press, 1926); Stephen Neill, *A History of Christianity in India: The Beginnings to AD 1707* (Cambridge: University Press, 1984); Mundadan, *History of Christianity in India*.

⁴⁶ Mingana, *Early Spread of Christianity*, 6.

⁴⁷ Robert Eric Frykenberg, 'Christians in India: An Historical Overview of their Complex Origins,' in *Christians and Missionaries in India: Cross-Cultural Communication since 1500*, ed. Robert Eric Frykenberg (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 34.

oral and literary traditions and other well-structured documents that mention the Apostle Thomas' arrival, preaching and martyrdom in India. It is important to understand that the real question is not related to the early presence of Christianity in India, but rather to the identity of Thomas.

There are strong traditions that claim there were migrations of Christians from West Asian countries from the fourth century. It is believed that there was an exodus of Christians from Persia to India in the fourth century and later in the seventh century.⁴⁸ Consequently, active contact with Syria was maintained, and thus Indian Christians had bishops from western Asia until the coming of the Portuguese in the fifteenth century. From the very beginning, the Syriac heritage has been a source of inspiration and prestige for the Thomas Christians, who themselves were known as Syrian Christians. Thus, when the Portuguese came to India towards the close of the fifteenth century, they found a powerful Indian Christian community, which traced their origin to Apostle Thomas. It is significant to note that many key leaders as well as followers of early Pentecostalism, especially in south India, came from this Syrian community of Christians. They are still proud of the ancient Syrian-Christian tradition and the non-western origin of Christianity in India⁴⁹

2.2.2. Western Mission

It was the arrival of the Portuguese from the close of the fifteenth century that brought Indian Christianity into a strong relationship with western Christianity.

⁴⁸ For more discussion on the Persian origin of Christianity in India, see Mingana, *Early Spread of Christianity*, 4-5.

⁴⁹ For details on the Syrianness of Kerala Pentecostals, see Pulikottil, 'East and West Met,' 13-15.

As A.C. George rightly comments, their arrival ‘changed the face of Indian history as well as the history of Christianity.’⁵⁰ The foreigners thought that the local Christians were imperfect and ‘needed teaching, instruction and perfecting.’⁵¹ The Portuguese Catholics even began to object to the Malayalam (language of the state of Kerala) and Syriac theology and liturgy. The Syrian Christians found themselves falling slowly under the control of the Pope, and subsequently there was a mounting tension. Because they were forced to accept Portuguese domination, the relation of the Indian Church with the eastern Syrian Church of Persia was terminated, and Thomas Christians were brought under the jurisdiction of the Portuguese *Padroado*.⁵² However, Roman Catholic ascendancy was challenged, and eventually a revolt was initiated by the Syrian Church against the Catholics, with most Syrian Christians returning to their older tradition and affiliation with the Patriarch of Antioch. On 22 May 1653, Thomas Christians for the first time installed their own High *Metran*, and thus, Parambil Tumi (Archdeacon Thomas) became India’s first indigenous archbishop, taking the title Mar Thoma I.⁵³

Catholic growth in Portuguese India was not limited to the high-caste Syrian Thomas Christians, but moved north from Kerala to Goa. Catholic missionary achievements were largely a result of the work of great Jesuit missionaries like St. Francis Xavier, who established Catholic Christianity among the low-caste people

⁵⁰ George, ‘Pentecostal Beginnings in Travancore,’ 222.

⁵¹ Mundadan, *History of Christianity in India*, 282

⁵² A. Mathias Mundadan, *Indian Christians Search for Identity and Struggle for Autonomy* (Bangalore, India: Dharmaram, 1984), 31. The “Padroado” system was entrusted to the Portuguese kings by the Pope to evangelize the people wherever the Portuguese set up their trading colonies, and the system also included the right for kings to send bishops, priests, and missionaries to the foreign lands.

⁵³ Frykenberg, ‘Christians in India,’ 42.

of fishing villages in the southeast and southwest coasts of India, and Robert de Nobili, who began to work among the Brahmins of Madurai in Tamilnadu. Thus, by the beginning of the eighteenth century, the Catholic Christianity was well established in India. However, Christianity was barely visible and showed few signs of growth in north India, where the population were Hindus, with Muslim rulers.⁵⁴

2.2.3. The Modern Missionary Movement

The missionary spirit of the eighteenth and nineteenth century was a major factor behind the later Pentecostal revival. In its special issue on Pentecostalism, the editorial of *Dharma Deepika*, comments that Indian Pentecostal historiography must consider the work of mission agencies in India as ‘the increased missionary fervour of the period was important for the spread of Pentecostalism in India.’⁵⁵

Protestant Christianity was established in India only in the beginning of the eighteenth century through the coming of several missionaries from the West. The German Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg and Heinrich Pluetschau of the Danish-Halle Mission came to Tranquebar, India in 1706 as the first Protestant missionaries to India. One of the remarkable contributions of their mission activity was Ziegenbalg’s translation of the New Testament into the Tamil language, the first Indian language into which the Bible was translated. The Moravian Missions were

⁵⁴ Samuel Hugh Moffett, *A History of Christianity in Asia*, vol.2, 1500-1900 (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2005), 23-26.

⁵⁵ Chief Editor, ‘Editorial- Pentecostalism,’ *Dharma Deepika* 6, no.2 (2002): 2.

involved in forming small cells within the churches to enrich the spiritual life of the congregations through Bible study, prayer and evangelism.⁵⁶

Robert Clive's reorganization of the East India Company laid the foundation for the revitalization of the English chaplaincies, as well as Protestantism, throughout India. David Brown, Claudius Buchanan and Henry Martyn were some of the most distinguished evangelical chaplains.⁵⁷ Calcutta replaced Tranquebar as the centre of Protestant missionary expansion. The formation of the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge (SPCK) by the Anglicans further accelerated missionary work in India. The Church Missionary Society (CMS) was founded in 1799, and it became a leading missionary organization in India. Similarly, the London Missionary Society (LMS) established a number of centres in South India in the 19th century.

The coming of the Baptist missionary William Carey in 1793 is an important chapter in Indian missionary history. With the arrival of his colleagues, William Ward and Joshua Marshman in 1799, they became known as the Serampore Trio, and the Serampore Mission stimulated the rapid growth of Protestant missions due to its contribution towards literature, education and evangelism. The East India Company revised its charter in 1813, and thus gave freedom for Christian mission in India, and subsequently India saw an increase of missionaries in the nineteenth century. Several English missionary organizations like the CMS, LMS and SPG (Society for the Propagation of the Gospel) were active in south India in the 19th

⁵⁶ Moffett, *History of Christianity in Asia*, 243.

⁵⁷ Moffett, *History of Christianity in Asia*, 244-45.

century. CMS interacted actively with the Syrian Christian churches, and consequently influenced them greatly. According to A.C. George, CMS played an important role in changing the face of Christianity in south India, especially Kerala, and later there were spiritual awakenings among these Syrian Christians.⁵⁸

2.2.4. Precursor of the Pentecostal Revival

These missionary endeavours created many ripples in the spiritual life of Indian Christians, which in turn produced an atmosphere conducive for revival. Here we identify some of the most significant factors that can be considered as antecedents to Pentecostal revivals in India.

It seems that there was a spiritual vacuum in the church in India before the revival. G.V. Job described the dismal spiritual condition of the Indian church.⁵⁹ According to Job, the church was in need of ‘a definite spiritual lead,’ and he asked, ‘Who can give these to India except those whose minds are disciplined in the teachings of Jesus and whose hearts are inspired by a glowing vision of His Kingdom?’⁶⁰ This dead spirituality is the chief reason, according to George, why many Christians at the beginning of the twentieth century embraced Pentecostalism, when it came with a living spirituality.⁶¹

The availability of Scripture in indigenous languages was another important factor in the pre-Pentecostal era of Indian Christianity. The Bible was translated into

⁵⁸ George, ‘Pentecostal Beginnings in Travancore,’ 219.

⁵⁹ For more details, see G.V. Job, et al., *Rethinking Christianity in India* (Madras, India: A.N. Sudarsanan. 1938), 15-16.

⁶⁰ Job, *Rethinking Christianity*, 16.

⁶¹ George, ‘Pentecostal Beginnings in Travancore,’ 220-24.

many local languages before Pentecostalism came to India, and many of the researchers into the Pentecostal revival in various places identify this as an important factor behind this revival. While both George⁶² and Mathew⁶³ emphasise the value of the translation of the Bible in the early Indian revivals, both in Tamilnadu and Kerala, Snaitang observes that Bible translation by the Welsh missionaries had an important role in the revival in Northeast India.⁶⁴

Furthermore, there were reform movements in the existing Christian churches in south India, particularly Kerala, years before the coming of Pentecostal revivals and missionaries. Even the early missionaries from the West, like R.F. Cook, one of the most prominent western Pentecostal missionaries who laboured in India for many years during the first half of the twentieth century, acknowledged this. Taking the example of the formation of Marthoma Church, Cook, in his autobiography, recognized that around a hundred years before their arrival in India spiritual reforms were taking place in Kerala.⁶⁵ Bible preaching by lay people as well as leaders was a significant factor behind such reforms. George considered that such preaching in the Malankara Church produced an ‘awareness of the shallowness of religion practised by the Malankara Christians,’ and that in turn created a desire to apply biblical truth in their daily lives.⁶⁶ Mathews Mar Athanasius, Metropolitan of the Syrian Church, was a leading figure reformer within the church. He encouraged the laity under him to start prayer meetings and

⁶² George, ‘Pentecostal Beginnings in Travancore,’ 219.

⁶³ Mathew, *Kerala Pentecosthu*, 40.

⁶⁴ O.L. Snaitang, ‘The Indigenous Pentecostal Movement in Northeast India,’ *Dharma Deepika* 6, no.2 (2002): 6.

⁶⁵ Cook, *Half a Century*, 27.

⁶⁶ George, ‘Pentecostal Beginnings in Travancore,’ 222.

bible study. He also organized special meetings for the preaching of the word.⁶⁷ Another leading clergy, Thomas Mar Athanasius, also tried to lead the church along the path of reform. When both these leaders found that their efforts to bring reform within the church was in vain, they left the mother church, along with their followers, and subsequently formed a new one known as Mar Thoma Church in 1889.⁶⁸ With the influence of Sadhu Kochukunju Upadeshi, the Syrian Christian churches became more pietistic in their spirituality, and many who attended his revival meetings later became Pentecostals.⁶⁹ K.E. Abraham, the founder of IPCoG, says that he ‘received the call for ministry’ after attending one of the meetings conducted by Kochukunju Upadeshi.⁷⁰

On the other hand, some believers advocated more revolutionary reforms, emphasizing the need for adult baptism by immersion, the priesthood of all believers, and the separation from this-worldly affairs. They separated themselves from the newly formed Mar Thoma Church to form the Brethren Church in Kerala. They were also called separatists, and they attracted many people from the CMS and the Basel Mission. V. Nagel from Basel Mission was one of the most outstanding missionaries, who joined the Brethren movement, and he composed a number of Malayalam songs which are still popular among Kerala Christians.⁷¹ Later, the Keswick missionary Gregson was led to join the Brethren movement by Nagel, and subsequently the movement began to expand to several parts of

⁶⁷ Mathew, *Kerala Penthecosthu*, 38.

⁶⁸ George, ‘Pentecostal Beginnings in Travancore,’ 223.

⁶⁹ Mathew, *Kerala Penthecosthu*, 43.

⁷⁰ K.E. Abraham, *IPC Praarambha Varshangal* [The Early Years of IPC], 2nd ed. (Kumbanad, India: K.E. Abraham Foundation, 1986), 14.

⁷¹ George, ‘Pentecostal Beginnings in Travancore,’ 223.

Kerala. In one way or the other, the Brethren faith created a favourable environment for the growth of Pentecostalism. In 1908, the prominent British Pentecostal Thomas Ball Barratt was invited to India, and financed, by Anthony H. Groves, son of the Brethren missionary Anthony Norris Groves, and for more than seven months, he travelled and ministered to many places in India, including Mukti.⁷² Although George Berg had been in India, since 1901, he came to Kerala for the first time in 1909 as a Pentecostal speaker at the Brethren convention at Kottarakara.⁷³ However, later the Brethren were unable to tolerate his teachings on tongues, and as a result he had to work independently and became a key figure in the growth of Pentecostalism in south India, as will be discussed later. According to Abraham, the native Brethren people believed Holy Spirit Baptism to be a subsequent experience to salvation and even conducted tarrying meetings to receive the Spirit baptism, and that is why Berg was allowed to preach in the Brethren Convention. However, their problem was with the teachings on speaking in tongues.⁷⁴ As George has rightly observed, with the spread of the Brethren movement, the 'stage was set' for Pentecostal beginnings in Kerala.⁷⁵ Many early Pentecostal followers were originally from the Brethren movement.

As discussed earlier, there were many missionary organizations at work in India in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. They in turn created a missionary zeal and passion among the indigenous Christians. The Protestant missionaries were

⁷² Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 85-86.

⁷³ George, 'Pentecostal Beginnings in Travancore,' 224-25. However, as Dev has noted, there was no criticism offered against his Pentecostal teaching in the convention. Later in 1910, he was forbidden from preaching at the Brethren Convention. See Dev, 'Enthukondu Topeka' (Why Topeka), 'Unarvukalum Bratharan Prasthanathinte Pankalithavum -4' (Revivals and the Role of Brethren Movement). *Good News Weekly* 29, no.3 (6 February 2006): 11.

⁷⁴ Abraham, *Yesukristhuvinte Eliya Dasan*, 63-64.

⁷⁵ George, 'Pentecostal Beginnings in Travancore,' 224.

zealous about a rapid evangelization of India, and later this paved the way for a religious awakening. J. Edwin Orr, a prominent researcher into evangelical revivals in the twentieth century, observes that the dynamic missionary activities in diverse parts of India in the nineteenth century contributed not only to the growth of Protestant Christianity in India, but also to the later revivals. According to him, there were about six hundred missionaries belonging to various mission agencies actively involved in mission during this period and their services later paved the way for religious awakenings.⁷⁶

It appears that there was a trend for independent mission due to the increase in mission agencies. According to Moffett, this trend had begun with Carey, and was to accelerate through the rest of the century,⁷⁷ because there was a tension between the Church leadership and the mission organizations. For example, C.T. Ewart Rhenius, a Lutheran minister and one of the greatest CMS missionaries in India, was a linguist in Tamil, and worked for the Society for 15 years (1820-35). He finally joined the Plymouth Brethren due to the tension and the consequent frictions between the CMS and the SPG. It is important to note that the first revival in India with Pentecostal features took place in Tirunelveli under the ministry of John Christian Aroolappen, who was trained and ordained by Rhenius.

⁷⁶ J. Edwin Orr, *Evangelical Awakening in India* (New Delhi: Masihi Sahitya Sanstha, 1970), 9.

⁷⁷ Moffett, *History of Christianity in Asia*, 269.

2.3. The Origin of Pentecostalism in India: Multiple Jerusalems

As observed by A.C. George, a prominent Indian Pentecostal historian, there has been little serious in-depth study on the history of Pentecostal movement in India.⁷⁸ However, as mentioned in the previous chapter, there have been various approaches to the origin and history of Indian Pentecostalism and the current research identifies three major approaches.

2.3.1. Approaches to Pentecostal Origins

The first and most popular approach is the Eurocentric (North-America centred) approach. One of the most traditional ways of understanding the story of Indian Pentecostalism has been to see it as a product of North American Pentecostalism. The comment of Frank Bartleman, a narrator of the Azusa Street revival, on the revival reveals the superior mentality of those who take the Eurocentric line. He said, ‘The present world-wide revival was rocked in the cradle of little Wales. It was “brought up” in India, becoming full grown in Los Angeles later.’⁷⁹ Although Bartleman accepted that the Indian revival⁸⁰ took place prior to the Azusa event, his statement shows that he wanted to give the later revival pride of place. Nevertheless, as Anderson argues, the Mukti Revival was a ‘full-grown’ Pentecostal revival like the Azusa Street Revival, even before the report on the

⁷⁸ George, ‘Pentecostal Beginnings in Travancore,’ 218.

⁷⁹ Frank Bartleman, *Azusa Street: An Eyewitness Account* (Gainesville, FL: Bridge-Logos, 1980), 22.

⁸⁰ By which he meant the revival at Pandita Ramabai’s Mukti Mission.

Los Angeles events had reached India.⁸¹ According to Joe Creech the ‘myth of origin’ that the Azusa Street revival is ‘the central point from which worldwide Pentecostal movement emerged’ is the ‘long-term effect’ of Bartleman’s accounts. He rightly comments that as most historians of Pentecostalism heavily relied on Bartleman, other points of origin were neglected.⁸² There has been a notion even among many south Indian Pentecostals that Pentecostalism was brought to India by North American missionaries.

This Eurocentric view holds that the Pentecostal Movement came to and spread in India through western Pentecostal missionaries who had received the Azusa Street experience. Alfred G. (1874-1944) and Lillian Garr (1878-1916), who came to Calcutta (east India) in late December 1906, were the first among them. T.B. Barratt of Norway came to Coonoor in 1908, and shortly afterwards Mary Weems Chapman began to work in Madras before moving to Travancore. George E. Berg, an independent American missionary of German origin who had experienced the Azusa Street Revival, came to South India in 1908 along with his wife Mary Berg.⁸³ One of the outcomes of their work was the establishment of the first Pentecostal church in Kerala, Thuvayur Church (1911).⁸⁴ Another American missionary, R.F. Cook, who received Holy Spirit baptism from the Azusa Street

⁸¹ Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 75-108. See also 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, no.3 (1999): 648-665.

⁸² Joe Creech, 'Visions of Glory: The Place of the Azusa Street Revival in Pentecostal History,' *Church History* 65, no.3 (1996): 406-09.

⁸³ Berg was working in South India with Bangalore as his station, from 1901, as a Brethren missionary, but he received the Azusa Street experience only in 1906. For further details, see Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 95-98; George, 'Pentecostal Beginnings in India,' 224-25; George, 'Pentecostal Beginnings in Travancore,' 24-26.

⁸⁴ According to Mathew, it was an independent church, but accepted Pentecostal faith as the result of the revival meetings conducted by Berg. See Mathew, *Kerala Penthecosthu*, 31. The church building was constructed only in 1914.

mission in 1908, came to India with his wife and two daughters in October 1913.⁸⁵ Although he came as an independent missionary, later in 1919, Cook joined the AoG, USA. However, after ten years he left the AoG and worked independently until he joined the Church of God (CoG, Tennessee, Cleveland, USA) in 1936. A number of other foreign missionaries with the Pentecostal message came to India,⁸⁶ particularly the south, and many other existing missionaries were converted to Pentecostalism. According to *the NIDPCM*, around a thousand people from various parts of the country were reported to have spoken in tongues, including sixty missionaries.⁸⁷

However, it is wrong to argue that Pentecostalism in India was begun and spread by western missionaries. One of the major reasons for this notion is probably the inaccurate reports by the early Pentecostal missionaries in India. Both McGee⁸⁸ and Anderson⁸⁹ refer to some of these reports. For example, as McGee observes, Garr announced that ‘Captain Angel Smith was the first to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit in India.’ Nevertheless, they were aware of the revival, accompanied by tongues speaking that had already begun among the native Christians before their arrival. Max Wood Moorhead, a Presbyterian missionary who was converted to Pentecostalism through the ministry of the Garrs in Calcutta, credited the Calcutta revival with the first outpouring of the Spirit of

⁸⁵ Cook, *Half a Century*, 21.

⁸⁶ For more details concerning the foreign missionaries who came with the Pentecostal message to India, see Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 75-108; Mathew, *Kerala Penthecosthu*, 32-35.

⁸⁷ McGee and Burgess, ‘India,’ 118-126.

⁸⁸ Gary B. McGee, ‘The Calcutta Revival of 1907 and the Reformulation of Charles Parham’s Bible Evidence Doctrine,’ *AJPS* 6, no.1 (2003): 134-136.

⁸⁹ Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 82-83, 89.

God in India.⁹⁰ He reported that the Spirit manifestations at Mukti, particularly tongues speaking, were received only in late December 1906 after hearing the report of the Los Angeles revival in the *Apostolic Faith*. Therefore, as Anderson rightly comments, ‘Moorhead became the origin of the mistaken assumption that the Pentecostal revival in India was a direct consequence of the Azusa Street revival.’⁹¹ It is evident that there was a move to ‘focus Calcutta as the birthplace’ of Indian Pentecostalism.⁹² This intention is very clear in Moorhead’s report which stated that the Pentecostal fire spread to every part of the Empire from Calcutta through western missionaries.⁹³

In a study of Kerala Pentecostalism, Paulson Pulikottil, a leading Indian Pentecostal theologian and Biblical scholar, passionately argues against such a Eurocentric approach to the history of Indian Pentecostalism.⁹⁴ As he suggests, such an approach definitely underestimates the possibility of the manifestation of the Holy Spirit and the response of the people towards it in other places. In his study on ‘Pentecostal Beginnings in India,’ A.C. George has tried to expose the weakness of the myth that Pentecostalism in India is directly linked to the Azusa Street Revival.⁹⁵

The second approach argues that the revival at Pandita Ramabai Saraswati’s Mukti Mission in Kedgaon, near Poona, India, in 1905-7 marked the beginning of

⁹⁰ McGee, ‘Calcutta Revival,’ 138.

⁹¹ Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 82.

⁹² McGee, ‘Calcutta Revival,’ 138.

⁹³ Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 89.

⁹⁴ See Pulikottil, ‘East and West Met.’

⁹⁵ See, A.C. George, ‘Pentecostal Beginnings in India,’ *Dharma Deepika* 6, no.2 (2002).

Indian Pentecostalism. Many non-Pentecostals⁹⁶ as well as Pentecostals⁹⁷ consider it to be the beginning of the Pentecostal revival in India. Anderson argues that the story of the origin of Indian Pentecostalism must begin with Pandita Ramabai and the Mukti Revival.⁹⁸ On the other hand, many classical Pentecostals in India have only recently acknowledged the Mukti Revival to be part of the Pentecostal Movement.⁹⁹ They argued that this revival did not play any vital role in the making of the Pentecostal Movement in India. As Bergunder has rightly observed, the Mukti Mission was separated from the Indian Pentecostal Movement and identified with the larger evangelical awakening in the beginning of the twentieth century.¹⁰⁰ However, very recently the Mukti Revival has caught the attention of Indian Pentecostals as well as others and, when the centenary of the Pentecostal Movement in India was celebrated (6-11 December 2005) the Mukti revival was acknowledged as the beginning of Pentecostalism in India.¹⁰¹

Although many studies have recognized that the Mukti Revival preceded the Azusa Street Revival, they have not given it due credit in the origins of the Indian

⁹⁶For example, see Roger E. Hedlund, 'Critique of Pentecostal Mission by a Friendly Evangelical,' *AJPS* 8, no.1 (2005): 71.

⁹⁷For example, Ivan Satyavrata, 'Contextual Perspectives on Pentecostalism as a Global Culture: A South Asian View, in *Globalization of Pentecostalism*, 204-05.

⁹⁸Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 76-77.

⁹⁹See for example, George, *Trailblazers for God*, 29-36. He argues that it is a false notion to believe that the 'revival that broke out in the girls Home of Mukti Mission marked the beginning of Pentecostalism in India.' According to him, the revival at Mukti Mission caught much attention because of the international publicity given to this mission.

¹⁰⁰Bergunder, 'Constructing Indian Pentecostalism,' 187.

¹⁰¹For more details, see 'Athmeeya Avesam Unarthiya Penthecosthu Sangamam' [Pentecostal Gathering that Aroused Spiritual Excitement], *Good News Weekly* 28, no. 51 (2006), 1. The celebration was organized by the Pentecostal Council of India (PCI), an organization of lay classical Pentecostals in India. However, it is mostly active in Kerala, and among Keralites (people of Kerala) in other parts of the globe.

Pentecostal Movement.¹⁰² Bergunder acknowledges that India had a significant role in the global revival in the initial decades of the twentieth century and lists a few Indian revivals, including the Mukti Revival. However, his hesitation to acknowledge the significance of the role of the Mukti Revival in the origins of Indian Pentecostalism is very clear when he argues, ‘the Mukti Mission became a vital link for the global Pentecostal network that was to be established and it helped create Pentecostalism; but it was not the Pentecostal beginning in India.’¹⁰³ Nevertheless, the recent celebration of the centenary of the Pentecostal Movement in India challenged this argument because as stated, it shows that most contemporary Indian Pentecostals consider the ‘Mukti Revival’ to be the beginning of Pentecostalism in India. Although Bergunder and others neglect the significance of Mukti on the basis of its failure to make any lasting impact, Anderson’s recent research challenges this. His study reveals that the Mukti Revival had a long lasting impact in north India, and its legacy continues, even though the Mukti Mission is regarded only as a philanthropic institution today. A number of Mukti products went out as missionaries to several parts of north India, including Rajasthan, and thus, according to Anderson, ‘Mukti was often the first port of call for Pentecostal missionaries’¹⁰⁴

The third approach argues that Indian Pentecostalism began with ‘Pentecostal-like Movements’ before and after the Mukti Revival. The *NIDPCM* opens the account of the Pentecostal story in India with ‘Pentecostal-like phenomena’. It insists that

¹⁰² See for example, Cecil M. Robeck, Jr. *The Azusa Street Mission and Revival: The Birth Place of Global Pentecostal Movement* (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, 2006), 250-256; Bergunder, ‘Constructing Indian Pentecostalism’; Bartleman, *Azusa Street*.

¹⁰³ Bergunder, ‘Constructing Indian Pentecostalism,’ 187.

¹⁰⁴ Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 99. For more details of the discussion, see pp.75-108.

the ‘Pentecostal-like movements’ in India preceded North American and European Pentecostalism by at least forty years, and were unrelated to Pentecostal happenings in North America. It gives brief accounts of the story of a few revivals, such as the awakenings of Tirunelveli in 1860 and of the Khassi Hills (in the north east part of India) in 1905. However, it labels these revivals as ‘Pentecostal-like Movements,’ and many other writers both indigenous¹⁰⁵ and foreign¹⁰⁶ follow the same lead. On the other hand, careful research reveals that these Indian revivals are similar to other Pentecostal revivals in many other parts of the globe, including Azusa Street. The account of George Henry Lang¹⁰⁷ on the life and work of J.C. Aroolappen as well as the study of J.C. Dev,¹⁰⁸ a former Brethren church historian from Kerala, on the role of the Brethren movement in Indian revivals, reveals that tongue speaking, prophecy, and interpretation of tongues, visions, and the exercise of other spiritual gifts were in operation in the Tirunelveli awakening under the leadership of Aroolappen in 1860. Moreover, McGee’s study of Pentecostal revivals in India shows that in addition to the manifestations of the Holy Spirit, the Tirunelveli revival resulted in strong

¹⁰⁵ See George, ‘Pentecostal Beginnings in India,’ 42-43. However, it is interesting to note his change in position. In his article ‘Pentecostal Beginnings in Travancore,’ (p. 220), he affirms that the Pentecostal movement in south India (at least) began as an indigenous movement. However, later in his work on AoG history, he included all the indigenous revivals as antecedents of the Pentecostal revival, but began the south Indian Pentecostal story with the Azusa Street missionary George Berg. See George, *Trailblazers for God*, 32-33.

¹⁰⁶ Burgess, ‘Pentecostalism in India,’ 86.

¹⁰⁷ George Henry Lang, *The History and Diaries of an Indian Christian (J.C. Aroolappen)* (London: Thynne, 1939). Lang’s account of the Tirunelveli revival is based on the Diaries of J.C. Aroolappen. For the details of revival, see pp.138-92.

¹⁰⁸ J.C. Dev, ‘Bharathan Unarvukal: Oru Avalokanam’ [Indian Revivals: An Analysis], ‘Unarvukalum Bratharan Prasthanathinte Pankalithavum -3’ [Revivals and the Role of Brethren Movement]. *Good News Weekly* 29, no.3 (30 January 2006): 4. Dev left the Brethren Church and joined hands with Pentecostals in 2006. He has written a series of articles on the role of the Brethren Movement in the Indian Revival, in *Good News Weekly* 29, no.3-6 (2006) preceding the centenary celebration of Indian Pentecostalism.

missionary activity and made some significant contributions, as will be discussed later.¹⁰⁹

Therefore, it is important to consider why western historians hesitate to regard them not as fully-fledged Pentecostal revivals but only as ‘Pentecostal-like movements.’ According to McGee, the Pentecostalism that emerged in India had important differences from western Pentecostalism.¹¹⁰ He found the absence of the utility of tongues for missionary preaching which was a hallmark of classical American Pentecostal theology to be one of the major differences. However, research by Anderson¹¹¹ and McGee himself¹¹² very clearly shows that in reality early Pentecostals soon realized their mistake and had to reformulate their theology on tongues. Thus, the Garrs, the first missionaries to India from Azusa Street, came to India motivated by a theology of missionary tongues, but later changed their position. Although this ‘hallmark’ and ‘missionary test’¹¹³ concept of tongues failed in the early years of Pentecostalism, the Azusa Street Revival was considered as the birthplace of Pentecostalism. However, due to the absence of this tongues theology, Indian Pentecostalism is treated differently. Except in the matter of these ‘Signs and Blunders,’ as Anderson calls them¹¹⁴ indigenous

¹⁰⁹ G.B. McGee, ‘Pentecostal Phenomena and Revivals in India: Implications for Indigenous Church Leadership,’ *IBMR* 20, no.3 (1996): 113-14.

¹¹⁰ McGee and Burgess, ‘India,’ 121.

¹¹¹ Allan Anderson, ‘Signs and Blunders: Pentecostal Mission Issues at “Home and Abroad” in the Twentieth Century,’ *JAM* 2, no.2 (2000): 193-210; Anderson, *Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 190.

¹¹² McGee, ‘Calcutta Revival,’ 123-43.

¹¹³ See for more details, Anderson, *Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 190. Also see, Robeck, *Azusa Street Mission*, 236-40, for a discussion on how the theology of tongues was developed and used for mission in the early years of the Pentecostal Movement in North America.

¹¹⁴ Anderson, ‘Signs and Blunders.’ Many early Pentecostals of the Azusa Street Revival believed that ‘when they spoke in tongues, they had spoken in known languages (*xenolalia*) by which they would preach the gospel’ to other parts of the globe. Therefore, they thought that there was no time needed for the indefinite ‘delays of language learning,’ and it was often referred to as the ‘gift of languages.’ However, later it was realized that such a belief was wrong.

Indian revivals, without the influence of western Pentecostals, had almost all the characteristics of the Azusa Street Revival in the beginning of the twentieth century. Therefore, the term ‘Pentecostal-like movements’ should be seen as an example of the deliberate unwillingness of Euro-centric advocates to give Indian Pentecostal revivals their due place in history.

2.3.2. The Significance of Multiple Jerusalems Theory

The current research employs Anderson’s ‘many Jerusalems’ theory for the origins of Global Pentecostalism to understand the Pentecostal beginning in India as well as in Rajasthan, as it seems to be the best explanatory mode.¹¹⁵ He critiques the overarching theory of the genesis of the Pentecostal Movement shaped by North Americans, and he restricts the ‘Azusa Street origin’ to North American Classical Pentecostalism, which is contrary to the popular notion of Global Pentecostalism. Anderson argues that the Global Pentecostal Movement is not the child of the Azusa Street revival only, but the product of many indigenous revivals in diverse parts of the globe. According to Shenk, the shift from ‘being Eurocentric to polycentric’ is a dynamic reality of the third millennium, and he urges that ‘the task of historical interpretation must be brought into line with this new reality.’¹¹⁶

The present study recognizes the significance of Pulikottil’s voice in the writing of Indian Pentecostal history, for he argues that ‘there is a great need to understand the historical consciousness of the native.’¹¹⁷ The ‘multiple Jerusalems theory’ serves historiography in various ways. First of all, as David Daniels

¹¹⁵ Anderson, *Introduction to Pentecostalism*.

¹¹⁶ Shenk, ‘Introduction,’ xi-xiii.

¹¹⁷ Pulikottil, ‘East and West Met,’ 22.

observes, this theory provides ‘an alternative to the Eurocentric model of writing Pentecostal history with its center-to-periphery schema’.¹¹⁸ With the help of evidence from the life and writing of early Indian Pentecostals, Pulikottil argues that from the initial period Indian Pentecostals rejected a Eurocentric interpretation of Pentecostal history.¹¹⁹ As discussed below, the ‘multiple Jerusalems’ theory finds that many indigenous revivals have been left out in the grand Euro-centric narratives, including the Indian revivals.

Secondly, the ‘many Jerusalems theory’ falls in line with the postcolonial approach to historiography. As the postcolonial interpretation of history is a ‘history from below’ and ‘voices from the edges’, Pulikottil observes that such an approach will help to ‘reconstruct history from the perspective of those who are left out’ by traditional grand narratives and thus give them ‘their due place in history.’ Therefore, he suggests that a postcolonial approach to history can be an effective tool in Pentecostal historiography.¹²⁰

Thirdly, the ‘multiple Jerusalems theory’ qualifies the subaltern perspective of history.¹²¹ As Pulikottil observes, this perspective attempts to ‘rewrite the history by focusing on those who were on the fringes and by reconstructing specific, local and particular accounts’ of the story’ and it also provides space to ‘understand

¹¹⁸ David D. Daniels III, ‘Grasping the Global Reality: A Review of Allan Anderson’s An Introduction to Pentecostalism,’ *Pneuma* 28, no.2 (2006): 276.

¹¹⁹ According to Pulikottil, the Indian reaction against such Eurocentricism in Pentecostal history can be dated as early as 1955 in India. For further discussion, see Pulikottil, ‘East and West Met,’ 19-21.

¹²⁰ Pulikottil, ‘East and West Met,’ 5-8.

¹²¹ The term ‘subaltern’ was popularized by the Italian Marxist writer ‘Antonio Gramsci’ in the 1920s and 1930s to replace the most commonly used ‘proletarian class.’ See Clarke, *Dalits and Christianity*, 6. This term has been brought to the fore of critical scholarship in India by Ranajit Guha, G.C. Spivak and others, and the study is referred to as the ‘Subaltern Studies Collective.’ For a discussion on the same, see Sathianathan Clarke, ‘Subalterns. Identity Politics and Christian Theology in India,’ in *Christian Theology in Asia*, ed. Sebastian C.H. Kim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 278-79.

relationships between dominant groups and the subalterns, those who have placed themselves at the centre of history and those who are pushed to the periphery.’¹²² Thus, the story of those who are on the fringes will also be taken into account in the ‘multiple Jerusalems theory.’

Fourthly, the ‘multiple Jerusalems theory’ rejects the ‘colonial mimicry.’¹²³ In India, the advocates of Hindutva ideology regards Christianity and colonialism as being synonymous, and it advocates that Christianity was brought to India by western missionaries. As Pulikottil rightly observes, the Hindutva activists allege that the message and method of the Indian church, and even their approach to history, are in continuity with the colonial missionaries. For them, the Indian Christian worker is ‘just another mimic man of colonialism.’¹²⁴ In the present context of religious intolerance, and the subsequent identity quest of the church, it is necessary to avoid such an interpretation of history.

2.3.3. Indian Revivals

The ‘multiple Jerusalems theory’ leads us to understand that Indian Pentecostalism is the outcome of many indigenous revivals in several parts of the subcontinent. A number of revivals took place with Pentecostal characteristics in various places years before western Pentecostalism had reached India. However, it seems that the story of many such revivals is yet to be told. Orr recorded many such indigenous revivals in India.¹²⁵ According to him, the most distinctive feature

¹²² Pulikottil, ‘East and West Met,’ 6.

¹²³ This concept was developed by Homi Bhabha and others. See for more details, Pulikottil, ‘East and West Met,’ 21.

¹²⁴ Pulikottil, ‘East and West Met,’ 22.

¹²⁵ His works include *The Flaming Tongue: The Impact of Twentieth Century Revival* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1973), *The Fervent Prayer: The Worldwide Impact of the Great Awakening of 1858* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1974), *Evangelical Awakenings in Southern Asia* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Bethany Fellowship, 1975), and *Evangelical Awakening in India* (New Delhi: Masihi Sahitya Sanstha, 1970).

of these revivals was that they were ‘not the stirring among European missionaries and civilians, rather the outbreak of revivals among indigenous Christians....’¹²⁶

The following is an attempt to identify a few of these revivals from diverse parts of the subcontinent. However, this is not an exhaustive description, rather an overview to show that there were revivals with Pentecostal characteristics occurring all over the country.

2.3.3.1. South India

As mentioned already, in the light of the research that has been done so far, the revival in the Tirunelveli district of Tamilnadu state in South India under the leadership of a local evangelist Aroolappen in 1860 is the oldest revival in India with Pentecostal characteristics. Aroolappen had been trained as an Anglican catechist, and was ordained by Rhenius, a Prussian Lutheran minister sent out as a missionary to Tirunelveli by the CMS, who emphasized self-support and self-propagation for the Indian churches. He was described as ‘one of the ablest, most clear-sighted and practical, and most zealous missionaries that India has ever seen,’ and is referred to as the ‘Apostle to Tirunelveli.’¹²⁷ Later, Aroolappen was greatly influenced by A.N. Groves, an independent missionary from England who embraced the millennial eschatology of the Plymouth Brethren.¹²⁸ However, the revival that took place during his ministry received no influences from western

¹²⁶ Orr, *Evangelical Awakenings in Southern Asia*, 59.

¹²⁷ Robert E. Frykenberg, ‘Historical Introduction,’ in *Tirunelveli’s Evangelical Christians: Two Centuries of Family Vamsavazhi Traditions*, ed. and trans. David Packiamuthu and Sarojini Packiamuthu (Bangalore: SAIACS Press, 2003), xxix.

¹²⁸ Their eschatology included the belief in the imminent coming of Christ, hope for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, spiritual gifts, and an egalitarian concept of ministry. See McGee, ‘Pentecostal Phenomena,’ 113. For more details on the role of Groves in the history of the Brethren Movement, see F. Roy Coad, *A History of the Brethren Movement: Its Origins, Its Worldwide Development and Its Significance for the Present Day* (Exeter, Devon: Paternoster Press, 1968). Later, the Brethren Faith became a predecessor to Pentecostalism in south India, as discussed earlier.

missionaries. As McGee rightly observes, from the beginning ‘the revival took an indigenous course.’¹²⁹ Aroolappen began his missionary activities in a village called Christian Peta in Tirunelveli in 1840, and consequently a Brethren congregation was formed in 1842. Having learned of the visitation of God in the United States, England and Ulster in 1857-59, Aroolappen began to pray for a movement of the Spirit in India, and consequently an outpouring of the Holy Spirit occurred in 1860. G.H. Lang’s report, based on Aroolappen’s diary, shows that like other Pentecostal revivals there were months of preparation, which included prolonged prayer, preaching on holiness, weeping and confession of sins before the actual outpouring of the Spirit. Aroolappen’s diary has details of the outbreak of the Spirit revival. According to him, from the fourth of May ‘the Holy Ghost was poured out openly and wonderfully’ upon the congregations.¹³⁰ There were visible manifestations of the Spirit, such as speaking in tongues, interpretations, visions, prophecies, bodily shaking, people falling down, weeping and intense conviction of sin.¹³¹ Aroolappen states that although ‘some tried to quench the Spirit’ the work of the Holy Spirit continued even in other nearby villages, and people began to speak in tongues, interpret and prophesy.¹³²

This revival lasted for five years and made some lasting contributions. Dev considers that the greatest contribution of the revival was that Aroolappen’s church became a missionary church.¹³³ McGee quotes the report of Ashton Dibb, a

¹²⁹ McGee, ‘Pentecostal Phenomena,’ 113.

¹³⁰ Lang, *History and Diaries*, 143. For more details, see pp.142-46.

¹³¹ Lang, *History and Diaries*, 143-46; Also see Orr, *Evangelical Awakenings in Southern Asia*, 59-60; McGee, ‘Pentecostal Phenomena,’ 113; Dev, ‘Bharathan Unarvukal,’ 4.

¹³² Lang, *History and Diaries*, 145.

¹³³ Dev, ‘Bharathan Unarvukal,’ 4.

CMS missionary and an observer of the revival, that the baptism of the Holy Spirit filled the members of Aroolappen's church 'with a holy enthusiasm; and caused them to go everywhere preaching the gospel, in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.'¹³⁴ The evangelists from his church travelled by faith, without salary or support, and set their own itineraries. As a result, conversion of many non-Christians took place, and western missionaries were amazed. Another significant contribution was that women were actively involved both in the revival as well as in the subsequent evangelistic work. One of the most far-reaching contributions was that the awakening began to spread to the nearby state of Travancore (present-day Kerala). George's study describes the extensive implications of this revival in Tamil Nadu as well as Kerala.¹³⁵

Furthermore, there were three indigenous revivals in Kerala in the years 1873, 1895 and 1908, prior to the coming of western Pentecostal missionaries. In all three revivals people were filled with the Holy Spirit, and had the experience of speaking in tongues and other Spirit manifestations such as healings and visions.¹³⁶ K.E. Abraham states in his autobiography that as a nine year old boy he

¹³⁴ *Memoir of Anthony Norris Groves, Compiled Chiefly from His Journals and Letters*, 3rd ed. (London: James Nisbet, 1869), 616, quoted in McGee, 'Pentecostal Phenomena and Revivals,' 113.

¹³⁵ George, 'Pentecostal Beginnings in Travancore.'

¹³⁶ George, 'Pentecostal Beginnings in India,' 43. Also see Edith L. Blumhofer, 'Consuming Fire: Pandita Ramabai and the Global Pentecostal Impulse,' in *Interpreting Contemporary Christianity: Global Processes and Local Identities*, ed. Ogbu U. Kalu (Grand Rapids, Michigan, Eerdmans, 2008), 220-21. In her study on Pandita Ramabai and Indian Revivals, Edith Blumhofer also mentions that there were Spirit manifestations including speaking in tongues in the 1873 revival. Mathew Daniel, in his biography of Sadhu Kochukunju Upadeshi also mentions about the Spiritual revivals in Kerala in 1873 and 1895. See Mathew Daniel, *Sadhu Kochukunju Upadeshi [A Biography of Sadhu Kochukunju Upadeshi]*, 9th ed. (Thiruvalla, India: CSS, 2006), 68-69.

participated in the 1908 revival and witnessed the power of God manifested in many people, but he did not realize what it was.¹³⁷ According to him, this revival took place before Berg came to India in 1908 as a Pentecostal.¹³⁸ The people did not have the scriptural knowledge to understand this experience in terms of Holy Spirit baptism, accompanied by speaking in tongues, until Berg arrived from North America. However, Abraham did not regard these revivals as having any root in western Pentecostalism. Even while referring to his own Pentecostal experience, he insisted that it was two months after his experience of the Holy Spirit baptism that he came into contact with Cook, the American Pentecostal missionary.¹³⁹

The Kerala revivals were the outcome of the activities of indigenous evangelists from Tamilnadu. The Tirunelveli awakening had produced many revival preachers, and several of them, including Aroolappen himself, travelled to Kerala to preach the revival message. Apart from Aroolappen, Ammal Vedanayagam and David¹⁴⁰ also travelled through various places, and preached in many Syrian churches, awakening in people a desire for a deeper personal Christian life.¹⁴¹ According to Orr, the Kerala awakening was marked by intense sorrow for sin,

¹³⁷ Abraham, *Yesukristhuvinte Eliya Dasan*, 12.

¹³⁸ Abraham, *Yesukristhuvinte Eliya Dasan*, 62-63. However, as mentioned earlier Berg was here in India as a Brethren missionary before he came as a Pentecostal. According to Anderson, Berg came to India with his Pentecostal experience in February 1908. See, Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 95.

¹³⁹ Abraham, *Yesukristhuvinte Eliya Dasan*, 86-88.

¹⁴⁰ He was popularly known as Tamil David.

¹⁴¹ George, *Trailblazers for God*, 31.

spiritual renewal in the lives of Christians, increased sale of the scriptures, and the promotion of evangelism.¹⁴²

T.G. Oommen, a pioneer Pentecostal leader in Kerala and an outstanding leader of IPCoG in its early years, believed that the false prophecy regarding the second coming of Christ by both Koodarapallil Thommen and Justus Joseph adversely affected the revival movement in Kerala.¹⁴³ On the other hand, both McGee and Dev suggest that severe criticism of the revival by foreign missionaries was the chief reason for the decline of the revival in Tamilnadu.¹⁴⁴ According to Dev, the exercise of spiritual gifts was restricted in the Brethren church after the death of Aroolappen. He argues that it was in the Brethren church that the revival began in India for the first time, and had they preserved and propagated the 1860s revival experience there would not have been either a Pentecostal or a Charismatic Movement, as the Brethren Movement was strong enough to include the characteristics of both the Movements. Thus, the Brethren Movement missed the opportunity to be the ‘care-takers’ of the greatest revival in Indian history.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴² Orr, *Evangelical Awakenings in Southern Asia*, 62.

¹⁴³ T.G. Oommen, *IPC yum Anpathu Varshathe Sevana Charithravum* [IPC and History of Fifty Years Ministry] (Mallappally, India: T.G. Oommen), 1979, 3-4. Thommen and Joseph were the two most prominent revival preachers of the time. In 1875, Thommen prophesied that Jesus Christ would return in glory on 2 October 1881. Joseph began to propagate this prophecy and many people believed and expected the same and thus formed a church known as Revival Church, which was later known as ‘Six Years Party’. When the prophecy failed, many left the revival group. Also see Daniel, *Sadhu Kochukunju Upadeshi*, 90-91.

¹⁴⁴ McGee, ‘Pentecostal Phenomena,’ 113; Dev, ‘Bharathan Unarvukal,’ 4.

¹⁴⁵ Dev, ‘Enthukondu Topeka,’ 4.

2.3.3.2. North India

The Sialkot (Punjab in pre-independent India) revival in 1904 revived the missionary work in north India. The American missionary John Hyde was working in Sialkot at the headquarters of the United Presbyterian Mission. He was engaged in constant and extensive prayer for revival and subsequently became known as ‘Praying Hyde,’ ‘the Apostle of Prayer’ and ‘the man who never sleeps.’ The revival broke out early in 1904 in the girl’s school at Sialkot, headed by Mary Campbell, and from there spread to the nearby theological seminary. According to Basil Miller, public confession of sins, holy laughter, dance, clapping of hands, shouting, falling to the ground, trance-like states, and visions of heaven, angels and Jesus were some of the major visible manifestations of this revival.¹⁴⁶ While there was no specific record of speaking in tongues, nowhere is it mentioned that there was no speaking in tongues. On the other hand, it is said that each year the Sialkot convention witnessed ‘fresh baptisms of the Spirit unto sanctification, unto prayer, unto praise and service.’¹⁴⁷

The Dholka (Gujarat) awakening is another link in the history of Indian revivals, particularly in the north. According to Advocate P.T. Joseph, the former Dean of Gujarat Christian Ashram, an outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the boys’ orphanage in Dholka, near Ahmedabad, Gujarat in 1905, took place simultaneously with the Mukti Revival.¹⁴⁸ On the other hand, Orr dates the revival

¹⁴⁶ Basil Miller, *Praying Hyde: The Story of John Hyde, A Man of Prayer* (Belfast, Northern Ireland: Ambassador, 2000), 47.

¹⁴⁷ Miller, *Praying Hyde*, 75.

¹⁴⁸ P.T. Joseph, ‘*Pentecosthu Sathabdhium Dholkam Unarvum*’ [The Centenary of Pentecostalism and the Dholkam Revival], *Good News Weekly* 28, no.43 (2005): 4.

to 1906. There were six hundred boys in the orphanage, run by the Alliance missionaries, Mr. Mark Fuller and his wife. Confession of sins and cries of penitence, tongues-speaking and spontaneous prayer meetings, even at midnight, were some of the significant manifestations of this revival. Although there is a disagreement in terms of the date, the greatest impact of this revival was that ‘a wave of evangelism surged’ to the surrounding villages.¹⁴⁹

Unfortunately, no primary records of both these revivals are available. Furthermore, both of them were led by western missionaries, although not directly linked to North American Pentecostalism.

2.3.3.3. Central India

The Mukti Revival is the most outstanding among all indigenous revivals in India. As mentioned earlier, it took place in 1905 at Pandita Ramabai Saraswati’s Mukti Mission, founded to care for orphans and widows, in Kedgaon, near Poona, Maharashtra.¹⁵⁰ Inspired by the 1904 Welsh Revival, Ramabai commenced special daily early-morning prayer meetings for revival from the beginning of 1905. The number of praying girls gradually increased from 70 to 500. From mid-1905, these girls began to experience manifestations of the Spirit such as tongues, trembling, shaking, intense confession of sins, ecstasy, falling down, clapping, shouting of praises, exorcism and other Pentecostal features. The indigenous origin of this revival is very clear from Ramabai’s words, ‘... why should everything that does not reach the high standard of English and American

¹⁴⁹ Orr, *Evangelical Awakening in South Asia*, 148.

¹⁵⁰ For more details of the revival, see Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 77-89.

civilizations, be taken as coming from the devil?’¹⁵¹ Some may question the legitimacy of regarding Ramabai as Pentecostal because there was no report that she spoke in tongues.¹⁵² However, Anderson’s study very succinctly shows that she defended ‘the Indian Pentecostal manifestations including tongues.’¹⁵³

Among all the revivals in India, the Mukti Revival contributed greatly to both Indian as well as global Pentecostalism. Some who have studied Mukti recognize its impact in the Indian subcontinent in terms of dispersing the Pentecostal fire and evangelism. Both Orr and George believe that Pentecost came to Mukti and its flames spread to other places in the state of Maharashtra, like Mumbai, Pune, Dhond, Aurangabad and Yeotmoal.¹⁵⁴ Apart from its long-lasting impact in terms of conversions and changed lives, this spiritual movement influenced various denominations, such as the Christian and Missionary Alliance, Anglican, Baptist, Friends, Methodists and Presbyterians.¹⁵⁵ The current research finds that the Pentecostal message was introduced to the state of Rajasthan for the first time by a Mukti woman, as will be discussed in chapter three. Anderson’s study shows that the Mukti Revival was holistic in its impact because Ramabai’s Mission aimed to ‘provide a total environment’ for its community by training them in ‘income-generating skills.’ That is why, after the revival, the Mukti Mission expanded to include ‘a rescue mission, a hospital, an oil-press, a blacksmith forge, a printing press, a complete school that provided college entrance, a school for the

¹⁵¹ Mukti Prayer-Bell (Sept 1907), 10, quoted in Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 84.

¹⁵² Ruth Vassar Burgess, ‘Pandita Ramabai: A Woman for All Seasons,’ *AJPS* 9, no.2 (2006): 195.

¹⁵³ Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 83-85.

¹⁵⁴ Orr, *Evangelical Awakening in South Asia*, 146-47; *Evangelical Awakenings in India*, 111-14; George, *Trailblazers for God*, 34.

¹⁵⁵ Hedlund, *Quest for Identity*, 161.

blind, and training departments in teaching, nursing, weaving, tailoring, bread and butter making, tinning, laundering, masonry, carpentry and farming.’¹⁵⁶

While discussing Mukti’s place in global Pentecostalism, Anderson identifies four far-reaching consequences.¹⁵⁷ Firstly, Mukti shows that the revival in India preceded and inspired that of Azusa Street, and that it was a ‘full-grown’ Pentecostal revival. Secondly, women played a more important role in the Indian revival than in the American one. Thirdly, Mukti revealed an openness to other Christians, and thus we see ‘an ecumenicity and inclusiveness’, in sharp contrast to the rigid exclusivism of the Pentecostal Movement in general. Finally, Mukti became the source of inspiration for Latin American Pentecostalism.

2.3.3.4. North East India

Another revival broke out among the tribal communities in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills¹⁵⁸ in north east India in the early 1900s. It began with evening prayer meetings at Mawphlang in the Khasi Hills of central Assam to seek an outpouring of the Holy Spirit throughout Khasi and the entire world. In 1904, these prayer meetings became more fervent. However, the real outpouring of the Spirit with visible manifestations took place in March 1905 during the Presbytery meeting at Pariong in the west Khasi hills, and then spread to Mizoram.¹⁵⁹ Intense conviction of sin, loud singing with outstretched arms and dancing, exorcism, visions,

¹⁵⁶ Allan Anderson, ‘Pandita Ramabai, the Mukti Revival and Global Pentecostalism,’ *Transformation* 23, no.1 (2006): 38.

¹⁵⁷ Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 87-89; Anderson, ‘Pandita Ramabai,’ 46-47.

¹⁵⁸ Presently in Meghalaya, but formerly a part of Assam.

¹⁵⁹ Orr, *Evangelical Awakening in South Asia*, 112-13.

trembling and falling down on the ground, prophecy and ‘prayer-storms’¹⁶⁰ were recorded. Although ‘tongue-speaking’ was not mentioned in the written revival accounts, as Snaitang observes, ‘individual expression of speaking in tongues might have taken place.’¹⁶¹ As McGee comments, in contrast to many other revivals, this revival had no prominent person involved.¹⁶² It is reported that at least some missionaries disapproved in the beginning, as they saw people, including leaders, jumping for joy, but later changed their minds as the revival transformed the Christians and won hundreds of non-Christians to Christ.¹⁶³

This revival had both indigenous and foreign elements to it. According to T. Nongsiej, prior to its occurrence, there was an expectancy and preparation among the natives for revival.¹⁶⁴ There was a prophecy by a newly converted Christian, U. Domdoi Khardewsaw, from Umyiap village in the west Khasi Hills that a great earthquake would rock the whole district of Khasi and Jaintia Hills in June 1897, but nobody gave heed to this prediction. However, the prophecy was fulfilled, and as a result, both Christians and non-Christians began to turn to God in prayer and repentance. Nongsiej argues that these events provided the background for the revival that took place later. Although there had been a long expectation for a spiritual awakening among both Christian and non-Christian natives, Snaitang

¹⁶⁰ Long, loud and intense prayer was referred so.

¹⁶¹ Snaitang, ‘Indigenous Pentecostal Movement,’ 7.

¹⁶² McGee, ‘Pentecostal Phenomena,’ 114

¹⁶³ Orr, *Evangelical Awakening in South Asia*, 113.

¹⁶⁴ T. Nongsiej, ‘Revival Movement in Khasi-Jaintia Hills,’ in *Churches of Indigenous Origins*, 21-31.

believes that the Khasi Revival had a connection with the 1904 Welsh Revival as Christianity in the Khasi Hills had its root in Welsh Presbyterian mission.¹⁶⁵

It is reported that another revival took place in Calcutta in 1907 with the coming of western Pentecostal missionaries Alfred and Lilian Garr. Alfred Goodrich Garr was the pastor of the Metropolitan Holiness Church in Los Angeles. He and his wife Lilian were among the first Azusa Street missionaries to travel overseas. After their Spirit baptism, and being motivated by their missionary tongues theology, as discussed earlier, they came to Calcutta in December 1906.¹⁶⁶ In January 1907, they were invited by Pastor C.H. Hook to share about the Azusa Street Revival, and also to hold services at William Carey's former Baptist church in Lal Bazar, Calcutta. They continued their meetings in a large house at Creek Row, rented by Moorhead, who at the time was Presbyterian secretary of the YMCA in Ceylon, Sri Lanka. Lilian Garr informed the Azusa Street Mission about the revival in March 1907 and reported that thirteen or fourteen missionaries and other workers had received Spirit baptism.¹⁶⁷ Moorhead was one of them, and soon he became an independent Pentecostal missionary. McGee's study reveals that the revival manifestations included a deep sense of conviction of sin, public confession of sin, falling to the floor, howling, shrieking, groaning, praising, holy laughter and singing in tongues.¹⁶⁸ Although Garr insisted on the doctrine of missionary tongues and tongues as the initial evidence of Spirit

¹⁶⁵ Snaitang, 'Indigenous Pentecostal Movement,' 7.

¹⁶⁶ While Anderson states that the Garrs arrived India in 1906, Bergunder states this was in 1907. See Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 89; Bergunder, *South Indian Pentecostal*, 24. For more discussion on how the Garrs were directed by their tongue theology to come to Asia, see Estrela Alexander, *The Women of Azusa Street* (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 2005), 89-92.

¹⁶⁷ Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 89.

¹⁶⁸ McGee, 'Calcutta Revival,' 128-29.

baptism, within weeks he had to modify Parham's doctrine on the utility of tongues. However, he retained the doctrine of tongues as the definite sign of Holy Spirit baptism.

Among all the Indian revivals, this is the only revival that is directly connected to the Azusa Street revival, and it was one of the latest of all the revivals discussed above. However, the most significant fact is that Calcutta Revival, initiated by the Gars, was primarily a revival among foreign missionaries, and the number of participants in the revival was comparatively small, and had little impact on the Indians, unlike most other revivals.

2.3.4. Indian Pentecostalism and Western Pentecostal Missionaries

As discussed above, indigenous revivals with Pentecostal experiences took place in various parts of India even before the western missionaries came to India with the Pentecostal message. This does not mean that North American Pentecostal missionaries played no part in the making of the Indian Pentecostal Movement. However, as A.C. George comments, the Azusa Street missionaries 'became instrumental in sparking the Pentecostal flame' in certain parts of India, and they played a particularly significant role in the growth and development of Pentecostal churches in south India.¹⁶⁹ On the other hand, western missionaries could not have achieved much without the assistance of local Pentecostal workers. Both in the southern and northern parts of India, at least in the initial period of their mission,

¹⁶⁹George, 'Pentecostal Beginnings in India,' 42

western Pentecostal missionaries were chiefly involved in spreading the Pentecostal message among the missionaries and the existing Christian communities. On the other hand, indigenous Pentecostal workers were involved in the evangelisation of the local population. This does not mean that foreign missionaries were not involved in the evangelisation of indigenes. However, this was not their major contribution, even though there were exceptions, such as Berg and Cook, who made vigorous efforts to spread the message to the indigenous people.

Although the Indian Pentecostal Movement cannot be considered a direct product of North American Pentecostalism, western Pentecostal missionaries made some major contributions to the making of the Movement. The most significant contribution was the establishment and consolidation of Pentecostal churches. While indigenous Pentecostal revivals produced spiritual awakening and missionary zeal, western Pentecostalism assisted by laying foundations for the institutionalization of Pentecostal churches. In the early indigenous Pentecostal revivals, the indigenes gave priority to evangelism rather than church planting. It is likely that it was due to 'the spirit of the age,' at least in north India in the early part of the twentieth century, that indigenous Christian missionaries had not shown much interest in ecclesiastical institutions. For example, Sadhu Sundhar Singh, one of the early twentieth-century north Indian Christians, who made a lasting impression on indigenous Christianity in India, did not see the significance of ecclesiastical institutions and organizations in his 'non-ecclesiastical, individual

and personal religion.’¹⁷⁰ Even in the post-colonial era, many para-church organizations like Operation Mobilization (OM) and India Every Home Crusade (IEHC) made vigorous evangelistic efforts, but until recently were not interested in the establishment of churches. McGee suggests that this earnest passion by indigenous believers to ‘increase the number of conversions’ was a major contributing factor in the indigenous spiritual awakening in India since 1905.¹⁷¹

S. Burgess observes that western missionaries in north India began to set up institutions such as orphanages, schools and mission stations because of intense opposition.¹⁷² The establishment of Pentecostal centres,¹⁷³ churches¹⁷⁴ and Bible Institutes¹⁷⁵ clearly shows the role of missionaries in the institutionalization of Indian Pentecostalism. Some of the established Pentecostal churches, such as the AoG and CoG, were brought to India through western missionaries. Although many early Pentecostal ministers from the West came to India as independent missionaries, sooner or later they joined the established churches. Mary Weems Chapman was the first AoG missionary to south India, but the work of AoG was established in India through Cook, from when he became affiliated to the AoG in 1919 until he left them in 1929. Some indigenous Pentecostal churches together formed the ‘South India Full Gospel Church’ (SIFGC) under the leadership of Cook.¹⁷⁶ Later SIFGC joined together with the newly formed indigenous church,

¹⁷⁰ Surya Prakash, ‘Contribution of Sadhu Sundar Singh to the Indigenous Christian Movement in India,’ in *Christianity is Indian*, 121.

¹⁷¹ McGee, ‘Later Rain,’ 649.

¹⁷² Burgess, ‘Pentecostalism in India,’ 91-92.

¹⁷³ For details of Pentecostal centres in north India, see Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 91-95.

¹⁷⁴ For more details, see Pulikottil, ‘Emergence of Indian Pentecostalism,’ 47-58.

¹⁷⁵ For more information on Pentecostal Bible Institutes in India, see Burgess, ‘Pentecostalism in India,’ 91-92; George, *Trailblazers for God*, 297-330; McGee and Burgess, ‘India,’ 122.

¹⁷⁶ This denomination included many churches. See Abraham, *IPC Praaramba Varshangal*, 86.

the ‘South Indian Pentecostal Church of God’ under K.E. Abraham, and formed ‘Malankara Pentecostal Church,’ with Cook as its President and Abraham as vice-President.¹⁷⁷ However, Cook and SIFGC later joined the CoG (Cleveland, TN) in 1936, two years after Abraham’s separation. The first Pentecostal Bible institutes were established by western missionaries. Bethel Bible School (later College) was established by John Burgess and Mt. Zion Bible Institute by Cook. Spencer May and Mary Chapman together published the first Malayalam Pentecostal magazine, the *Pentecostal Trumpet*.¹⁷⁸

Another major contribution of western missionaries was the spreading of the Pentecostal message among the Dalits. There was a great response by the Dalits to Pentecostalism when many early ministers began to work among them, particularly in south India. The best example of this is Kerala, where the indigenous Pentecostal ministers began to work among the Syrian Christians, but the American missionaries concentrated on the Dalits. Cook makes this clear when he says, ‘our main work here is mostly among the low castes, those called the untouchables or the neglected, such respond readily to the Gospel and become sincere worshippers of the supernatural. The Lord blesses them abundantly in spite of their gross ignorance.’¹⁷⁹ In his research on Pentecostal Dalits in Kerala, Yesunatha Das argues that Cook’s work among the Dalits and their subsequent conversion was an essential factor behind the growth of Pentecostalism in Kerala.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁷ Abraham, *IPC Praaramba Varshangal*, 87.

¹⁷⁸ McGee and Burgess, ‘India,’ 122.

¹⁷⁹ Cook, *Half a Century*, 27-28.

¹⁸⁰ Das, ‘History of Pentecostal Dalits,’ 67, 73-89.

However, the most important and undeniable fact is that indigenous workers played a significant role in the expansion of the Pentecostal Movement in India. Although it received momentum and the churches became organized with the coming of western missionaries, the real impetus behind the movement was the formation of indigenous Pentecostal churches.

In conclusion, it can be said that India experienced the Pentecostal fire before the coming of western Pentecostal missionaries, but the latter were responsible for introducing western Pentecostal denominations. 'Experiential Pentecostalism' had been taking place in India since the middle of the nineteenth century, but 'denominational Pentecostalism' began with the coming of American Pentecostal missionaries. The tension between the experiential and institutional is going on even today. Classical Pentecostalism has become denominational and established, and is mostly seen in south India, but it did not make much impact in the north.

2.3.5. Pentecostal Revival as Contextual

Many of the above indigenous revivals were not considered to be 'Pentecostal revivals,' as this term was not used at that time. Later, following the Azusa Street Revival, it was only that movement which was identified or referred to as the Pentecostal Movement. However, as discussed above, most Indian revivals preceded the Azusa Street Revival, and had almost all the Pentecostal characteristics.

There are certain common features found in both the Indian revivals and in other revivals around the world which took place simultaneously. When the indigenous people heard the stories of revival there created a desire in them to expect a similar one in their own places. Conversions took place in great numbers during most of the revivals. Transformation of the lives of existing Christians was very evident. There was an enthusiasm for prayer, scripture reading and other spiritual activities. An earnest desire to be involved in missionary activities was a major outcome of these revivals.

On the other hand, certain distinctive characteristics were evident in the Indian revivals. In most of them, indigenous leadership was a remarkable feature. The Spirit used indigenous people, who played a significant role in these revivals. Many revivals had a contextual element, not only in terms of preparation and expectancy, but also in the way the actual revival took place and the local expressions and styles that were observed. Although we see some common features in all these revivals, there were some unique elements in each, which I refer to as 'local expressions of the Spirit revival.' This shows that in revival, the manifestations and expressions, and also the responses of the people towards it, took place in indigenous and contextual ways. Another significant fact is that Indian revivals mainly occurred among the marginalized and less privileged groups like orphans, women and ordinary people. In most cases, people were inspired to listen to revival stories from other places, and so there was a long period of waiting and preparation prior to revival breaking out.

There were trans-cultural elements in some of these revivals, as in Khasi, and subsequently this brought some conflict and confusion. Western missionaries were mainly happy with the revival in the beginning, but when they saw some of the unusual visible manifestations they began to disapprove because they were unfamiliar with them. It seems that some of the western missionaries wanted to be in command of the revival element, for there was more publicity and reporting, including inaccurate reporting, which suggests that they wanted to control the Pentecostal revival, as happened in Calcutta.

2.4. Conclusion

The present chapter shows that the quest for identity is a socio-religious and missiological concern of Indian Christianity, including Pentecostals. Pentecostals are an integral part of Indian Christianity which has had a long history. The Indian Christian tradition is rooted in Eastern rather than Western Christianity. Although both the Catholic and the Protestant form of Christianity were brought to India by Westerners during the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries respectively, India has a strong tradition of indigenous Christianity, as old as Christianity itself. It is true that the eighteenth and nineteenth century missionary enterprises created an earnest missionary passion and zeal among the indigenous population, and this paved the way for a spiritual awakening. However, the above discussion shows that Pentecostalism in India is not an imported religious movement; rather it is the product of indigenous spiritual awakenings that took place in contextual style among local people in several parts of the nation. Although there were some western Pentecostal missionaries in India, they were not attached to the

colonizers, but were independent missionaries, mostly from North America. Moreover, some of them became Pentecostal in India itself. Their service assisted the Indian revivals to become organized and institutionalized. Nevertheless, the real expansion of the movement began to take place through indigenous Pentecostal churches and workers, who took the movement to various regions of the nation, including Rajasthan. The next chapter will focus on Pentecostalism in Rajasthan.

Chapter 3

PENTECOSTALISM IN RAJASTHAN

This chapter provides a historical and contextual study of Pentecostalism in Rajasthan. It begins by describing the origins and historical development of Pentecostalism, before outlining some of the contextual and theological features of the movement in order to understand the movement as an indigenous initiative. This is necessary as Christianity in general, and charismatic Christianity in particular, faces severe challenges from religious militant groups in the state. Although Pentecostalism is only in its adolescent stage in Rajasthan, it has become the fastest growing sector of Christianity. In the present context of persecution and other related opposition, the relationship of Pentecostals with other churches is also studied.

3.1. Christianity in Rajasthan

Pentecostalism is one of the most important expressions of Christianity in Rajasthan. In order to place it in context, it is important to trace the origins of Christianity in the state. When Christian missionaries entered Rajasthan, it was one of the princely states in India, and was known as *Rajputana*.

3.1.1. Early Christianity

Most works on Christianity in Rajasthan begin with Scottish Presbyterians Williamson Shoobred and Thomas Blair Steele, the first Christian missionaries to

Rajasthan in 1860 as will be discussed below.¹ However, there are allusions to an early Christian presence in the state. In James Tod's historical ethnographic account of Rajasthan, entitled *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, there is a description of a much earlier Christian presence.² As Denis Vidal has observed, until almost twenty years ago, Tod's work remained the basic text and standard reference work on Rajasthan for all historians.³ Tod's study on the kingdoms of Rajasthan revealed the Persian ancestry of the Mewar Princes.⁴ The kings of Udaipur were exalted over all other princes of the state. According to *Maaser-al-Omra*, a major source that Tod referred to in order to establish his argument, the kings of Udaipur received the title 'Rana,' and were the descendants of Noshirwan-i-Adil. His son Noshizad, whose mother was the daughter of Caesar of Rome, embraced the Christian faith in the sixth century and entered Hindustan (India) with numerous followers. Although Noshizad was slain, his descendants remained in India, and from them were descended the *Ranas* of Udaipur. Thus, Tod concludes that being the seed of Noshizad, the Sesodia race of Rajasthan are the descendants of a Christian princess.⁵ While Tod's hypothesis of the origins of

¹ For example, John Robson, *The Story of the Rajputana Mission* (Edinburgh: Offices of United Presbyterian Church, 1894); Ashcroft Frank, *Story of Our Rajputana Mission* (Edinburgh: Oilphant, Anderson and Ferrier, 1908); W. Abraham, 'Pauline Concept'; A.T. Cherian, 'Contribution of Churches'; J. Samuel, 'Study on the Influence.'

² James Tod, *The Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan or the Central and Western Rajpoot States of India*, vols 1-2 (n.p., 1832).

³ Denis Vidal, *Violence and Truth: A Rajasthan Kingdom Confronts Colonial Authority* (Delhi, India: OUP, 1997), 24.

⁴ Tod states that he builds up his argument mainly on the basis of a number of sources like, *Maaser-al-Omra* written in 1204. The writer explains the lineage of the Ranas of Mewar, while giving account of Sivaji, the founder of Maratta Kingdom. He argues that Sivaji is also a descendant of the Mewar Ranas. For more details of the discussion, see Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, 242-50.

⁵ Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, 246, 48-49.

the Rajputs kingdoms is not generally accepted, Vidal argues that it is rejected only because it did not fit into the nineteenth century colonial ideology.⁶

If the story of a Christian root of *Ranas* of Udaipur is true, this may explain why they showed favour towards foreign Christian missionaries. The *Ranas* were strong opponents of colonial powers, as Vidal shows in his study of the Serohi Kingdom.⁷ However, it is significant to note that foreign Christian missionaries were welcomed, assisted, supported, protected and listened to by most of the *Ranas*.

George Carstairs' account of Christian activities in Rajasthan also suggests a Christian presence before the coming of Shoolbred. Although there have been no records of the conversion of indigenes, Carstairs' story gives the impression that there was a small Christian community centred on the British cantonment at Nasirabad. There is a suggestion that there was a chapel for the British army as he mentions that the church building at Naisrabad was burned along with the bungalows during the Sepoy Mutiny in 1857,⁸ and it is believed that the church service was conducted in English for the small English community.⁹ The history of Christianity possessed by the local Christians¹⁰ at Beawar also supports an early

⁶ Vidal, *Violence and Truth*, 29.

⁷ Vidal, *Violence and Truth*.

⁸ In 1857, for the first time, Indian nationals began to show their opposition to British rule in India in an organized way. Indian soldiers in the British army began to fight, and thus created a considerable tension in the army. The event was known as the Sepoy Mutiny.

⁹ George Carstairs, *Shepherd of Udaipur and the Land He Loved* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1926), 46-48.

¹⁰ During field research, I was quite surprised to find that elderly Christians in many places kept a record of their history in the Hindi language. For example, Mallu Sardar, *Banaswara Mission Ka Itihas* [History of Banaswara Mission] (Ratlam/India: L. Maida, 2000).

account of Christian origins.¹¹ Nevertheless, it is likely that evangelistic activities began in Rajasthan only with the coming of Scottish missionaries.

Christian missionaries came to Rajasthan soon after the Sepoy Mutiny.¹² In 1859, Shoolbred and Steele were sent as missionaries to Rajasthan by the United Presbyterian Church (UPC) in Scotland. Unfortunately, due to the adverse climate conditions Steele fell ill on the way, and on 10 February 1860 he died of a liver abscess.¹³ Although Shoolbred was shaken by the death of his companion, he continued his journey along with Dr. Wilson from Bombay and reached Beawar, a small town, 33 miles west of the city of Ajmer, on the 3rd March, where he began his mission. Shoolbred was involved in various missionary activities in later years. Firstly, he opened a school at Beawar, and at the same time he held evangelistic services on Sundays at his residence. Interfaith debate and street preaching were regular practices, and Shoolbred continued his missionary activities until his death in 1896.

Many other Scottish missionaries followed Shoolbred, and almost all of them engaged in similar missionary activities as him. Most of them began their mission with a school, and others came as medical missionaries and later established hospitals and medical schools.

¹¹ I have interviewed a few elderly Christians in their late eighties from Beawar. One of them is a retired advocate. Although not published, they kept a written record of the Beawar Christian History in Hindi, the national language.

¹² Carstairs concludes that the Mutiny served as a stimulant and caused the UPC to embark upon a fresh missionary enterprise in India in 1858. See Carstairs, *Shepherd of Udaipur*, 42.

¹³ Ashcroft, *Rajputana Mission*, 29-30.

The CMS and the Canadian Presbyterian Mission were also involved in missions in Rajasthan. The CMS initiated their mission in 1880, mainly focusing on the Udaipur district, and all their mission stations had a Christian congregation as well as a school. The United Church of Canada Mission began their work in 1914 by concentrating on Banaswara in south Rajasthan. It was an Irish Presbyterian mission, a branch of the Canadian Protestant Mission Society.¹⁴ P.C. Jain claims that although many Bhils accepted the Christian faith because of Christian preaching, the mission had taken the 'form of a socio-economic movement.'¹⁵ Later in 1970, the Canadian Mission had brought itself under Church of North India (CNI), the newly constituted indigenous organization, with Nagpur as its headquarters.¹⁶ The Banaswara Mission was transferred to Banaswara-Bhopal Diocese, and later in 1981 to Ajmer Diocese.

The Roman Catholics (RC) were late-comers to the state. They began their mission in Banaswara, Rajasthan in 1921 with Father Daniel, who came with churchmen from Thandla Mission, Madhya Pradesh. However, the RC Mission gained momentum with the coming of the French missionary Father Charles, who also came from Thandla Mission in 1933 with a band of four assistants.¹⁷ Usually an RC mission station included a school, a hostel, a dispensary, a social work centre and a church.

¹⁴ Shyam Lal, *Tribals and Christian Missionaries* (Delhi, India: Manak Publications, 1994), 44.

¹⁵ P.C. Jain, *Christianity, Ideology and Social Change among Tribals: A Case Study of Bhils of Rajasthan* (Jaipur: Rawat, 1995), 115.

¹⁶ The Church of North India, *The Constitution of the Church of North India and Bye-Laws: As Amended up to 21 October 2005* (Delhi: ISPCCK, 2006), 39.

¹⁷ For more details, see Lal, *Tribals and Christian Missionaries*, 45; Jain, *Christianity, Ideology*, 50.

It is clear from the letters of CMS missionaries that they struggled to sustain their mission in the state. As there was no proper transport, travelling made mission even more difficult¹⁸ and the lack of rain produced famine and poverty. The missionaries' letters asked for medical personnel to help them as well as the local community.¹⁹ They found it difficult to help the increasing number of sick people in the villages. Such a mammoth challenge caused Shoolbred, to long for spiritual gifts. He reflects in a letter to his home church in Scotland: 'Into the smoky glimmer of the fire a poor consumptive man was carried on his rude couch. Alas! What could I do for him?' Shoolbred confessed that there were occasions when he longed for, and was 'almost tempted to pray for the possession of those miraculous gifts which the Master and His first disciples dispensed.'²⁰ It is apparent that there was a scarcity of missionaries, particularly local missionaries. Haywood mentioned that there was not even a single Bhil clergy man in the state.²¹ This created a tension in the Society about whether to continue their mission in Rajasthan or to hand over to some other agency. According to Lane Smith, due to the shortage of staff and money, all the western missionaries were in favour of handing over the Bhil Mission to other societies, but the bishop opposed the proposal.²²

¹⁸ It is important to understand that even today travelling to certain areas of the state is a Herculean task. Detailed evidence of the increasing difficulty travelling in the state is found in Cherian's research. See 'Study of the Religion of the Bhils,' 10.

¹⁹ For example, Rev. A.I. Birkett asked for a doctor because of the influence that a medical missionary could exercise and also because of the need for proper medical advice for the missionaries. See A.I. Birkett, 15 March 1916, CMS Letters, University of Birmingham Library (hereafter cited as CMS Letters).

²⁰ Quoted in Carstairs, *Shepherd of Udaipur*, 54.

²¹ Canon, 15 March 1916, CMS Letters.

²² Smith H.J. Lane, 12 December 1919, CMS Letters.

3.1.2. Contemporary Christianity

The post-Independence era saw a great number of indigenous mission agencies coming to the state to be involved in various forms of Christian mission. Abraham Cherian gives a list of various Christian missions including Pentecostals in Rajasthan.²³

The CNI is the most prominent Christian church in Rajasthan as in many other north Indian states. It was constituted on 29 November 1970 at Nagpur, Maharashtra by the union of six churches: The Council of Baptist Churches in Northern India, The Church of Brethren in India, The Disciples of Christ, The Church in India, The Methodist Church (British and Australian Conference) and The United Church of Northern India.²⁴ Although the CNI does not have a wholly local origin, it has become an indigenous church. The Canadian Mission began in Banaswara and was later aligned with the United Church of Northern India, before the latter merged with CNI along with other churches. They mostly continued the work that the foreign missions began. Cherian's study reveals that CNI chiefly concentrated on socio-educational developments of their followers, rather than on evangelistic activities.²⁵

Missionaries began to come to Rajasthan from other states of India from the second half of the twentieth century. Many south Indian missionaries came to the state to engage in evangelistic activities. In 1960, four Kerala graduates from the

²³ For details of their works, see A.T. Cherian, 'Contribution of Churches,' 101-02, 115-128.

²⁴ *Constitution of the Church*, 39-40.

²⁵ Cherian, 'Contribution of Churches,' 101-02, 115-116.

Hindustan Bible Institute, Chennai, Tamilnadu, visited Rajasthan and distributed Christian literature, but were beaten badly by Hindu religious fanatics. One of the graduates was M.A. Thomas, a Baptist. He later established the Emmanuel Mission International (EMI) in Kota. It is one of the most significant non-Pentecostal organizations in the state. EMI places emphasis on education, and it encourages the graduates from its Bible Schools to establish a school everywhere they work.²⁶ The mission urges its workers to establish their mission through these schools, which are known as Emmanuel Mission Schools. The church planting wing of EMI is called Christian Believers Assembly (CBA). Along with church planting, EMI has established a number of schools and orphanages in Rajasthan as well as other neighbouring states. It is likely that CBA has contributed more towards the field of education than any other Protestant segment in Rajasthan. It has also established the only Protestant hospital in the state.²⁷ The Rajasthan Bible Institute (RBI), founded in 1970 with Jaipur as its headquarters by Anand Choudhary from Bihar, north India, who has a Brethren background, is another prominent organization in Rajasthan. Choudhary was inspired by M.A. Thomas to work in Rajasthan.²⁸ RBI is the first established theological institute in the state and it concentrates on church planting.

Both Thomas and Choudhary came after the introduction of the Pentecostal message to the state. However, Pentecostals were not well organized when Thomas arrived. Later para-church organizations like the IEHC and OM were

²⁶ Cherian, 'Contribution of Churches,' 123.

²⁷ T.K. Rajalakshmi, 'A Saffron Assault,' *Frontline* 22, no.7 (12-25 March 2005), under 'Communalism,' <http://www.frontlineonnet.com/fl2207/stories/20050408001104000.htm> (accessed 12 July 2007).

²⁸ Anand Choudhary, interview by author, Jaipur, Rajasthan, 09 May 2006.

involved in non-church planting evangelistic activities.²⁹ However, today there are more Pentecostal than non-Pentecostal organizations working, and many other organizations have been influenced by the Pentecostals in various ways, as will be discussed later. Most non-Pentecostals are aware of the significance of charismatic experiences such as healing, exorcism and the like in their church planting ministry in Rajasthan. Many plainly admit that Pentecostal effectiveness in spite of the hard context of Rajasthan has prompted them to rethink their church planting strategy.

3.2. Pentecostal Beginnings in Rajasthan

Current research reveals that Pentecostals entered Rajasthan in the first half of the twentieth century. They were one of the pioneer messengers of the Christian message in the state. Although early Pentecostals could not establish themselves as an organization, the Pentecostal message came to Rajasthan prior to the coming of many other Protestant churches. The present study questions the validity of two major myths. First, Pentecostalism in Rajasthan is the product of south Indian Pentecostals. Second, Pentecostalism is a post-independence event in the state. The present research argues for an early advent of Pentecostals, much earlier than is generally believed by both non-Pentecostals and Pentecostals alike.

Previous studies argue that Pentecostalism was brought to Rajasthan by Pentecostal missionaries from south India, particularly Kerala.³⁰ According to them, K.V. Philip was the first Pentecostal missionary and Thomas Mathews the

²⁹ However, IEHC has begun church planting missions in the state very recently.

³⁰ For example, J.P. Abraham, 'Study of the Life'; W. Abraham, 'Pauline Concept'; J. Samuel, 'Study on the Influence.'

second. These studies focus exclusively on the role of south Indians, and have created the impression that Pentecostalism originated from south India. Anderson discusses two major reasons for the neglect of the contributions of indigenous workers in the historiography of Pentecostalism outside the western world. According to him, one of the chief ‘reasons for the distorted picture we have of Pentecostal history is the problem of available documentary sources.’ The early Pentecostal history of the non-western world entirely depends on the writings of western missionaries, and subsequently the national workers are not represented adequately. Another major reason is that a number of ‘people responsible for the grassroots expansion of the movement have passed into history forgotten and their memory is difficult to recover.’ Therefore he urges that ‘this may be one of the most important reconstructions needed in Pentecostal historiography.’ However, Anderson further comments that it is almost impossible to reconstruct Pentecostal history from written sources alone, and he emphasises the significance of ‘retrieving oral traditions.’ Therefore he insists that ‘we must record for posterity the stories of those still living who remember the past.’³¹

The current research observes that these two issues, as raised by Anderson, are relevant in the writing of Pentecostal history in Rajasthan. All the above-mentioned studies on Pentecostalism without exception have been carried out by south Indians, and that is likely to be the reason for the neglect of the contribution of north Indians in the making of Pentecostalism in Rajasthan. The pioneers who brought the Pentecostal message to the state have passed away, and so their story

³¹ Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 8-10.

has been ignored by writers, thus making it difficult to retrieve their history. This research is not claiming to completely correct the distortion of Rajasthan Pentecostal history, but attempts to redress the balance.

As discussed in chapter two, this thesis employs the ‘many Jerusalems’ theory by Anderson to give a better understanding of the origin of Rajasthan Pentecostalism. This poly-centric theory is an alternative in the historiography of Pentecostalism, and will help to correct the general misunderstanding, particularly in Rajasthan, that all Pentecostals are south Indians. For example, according to D.K. Samanta, Pentecostals are mostly migrants from south India and they speak their own language like Malayalam (the state language of Kerala) and Tamil (the state language of Tamil Nadu).³² Pentecostals are called ‘*Madirasis*,’³³ which means people of Madras.³⁴ There is a misunderstanding that all Pentecostals belong to Ceylon Pentecostal Mission (CPM) with Ceylon as its headquarters. The best example of this is seen in the work of Shyam when he discusses Pentecostal missions in Banaswara. He comments, ‘The parent body of this sect [Pentecostals] in India is in Madras; abroad it is in Ceylon. In Banaswara district, this was started in 1968 at Banaswara town by pastor Thomas Mathews.’³⁵ However, the reality is that Mathews was from Kerala, and he came from an IPCoG background with Kumbandu, Kerala its headquarters, and later, he became the founder of the NMM. Therefore, in the present research, Pentecostal missionaries from both

³² D.K. Samanta, ‘Christian/ Pentecostals,’ in *People of India (Rajasthan)*, vol. 38, part 2, ed. B.K. Lavania, et al. (Mumbai: Popular Prakashan, 1998), 247.

³³ Not only Pentecostals, but south Indians are generally called as *Madirasis* in most north Indian states.

³⁴ Madras is the old name of the city of Chennai, Tamilnadu.

³⁵ Lal, *Tribals and Christian Missionaries*, 58-59.

north and south Indian states as well as the local revivals and missionaries find their place in the making of Pentecostalism in Rajasthan.

3.2.1 The Arrival of the Pentecostal Message

The Pentecostal message was brought to Rajasthan for the first time by Pentecostal missionaries from other states of north India. One of the greatest impacts of early Pentecostal revivals in India, as in most parts of the globe, was its missionary passion. The Pentecostal spirit took its people beyond their boundaries. In *Spreading Fires*, Anderson researches the missionary nature of early Pentecostalism. He concludes that missionary fervour was a significant feature of early Pentecostal missionaries. Thus, the missionary waves from various revivals like Mukti, Kerala and others impelled the people to be witnesses of the Pentecostal message in many parts of north India including Rajasthan.

The present research found that a Mr. and Mrs. Jiwa brought the Pentecostal message to Rajasthan for the first time in the 1930s. The message came to the district of Banaswara. Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal Christians alike in Banaswara interviewed during the fieldwork affirm that the Jiwes were the first carriers of the Pentecostal message to this place.³⁶ This introduction of Pentecostalism to Rajasthan in the first half of the twentieth century was directly linked to the Mukti Revival. Mr. Jiwa was a native of Jawara, Piplod in Madhya Pradesh state, who married a girl from the Mukti Mission run by Pandita Ramabai. She had an experience of the Holy Spirit baptism with speaking in

³⁶ Mallu Sardar as well as other prominent Pentecostal leaders from Banaswara, like Tajendra Masih, Valu Singh and Pathras Masih acknowledged this fact during interviews.

tongues. The Jivas were working in Uttar Pradesh before they came to Rajasthan. According to Malaya Sardar, a local Christian in his early nineties and author of *Banaswara Christian Mission*, when they came to Banaswara the Jivas were allowed to work with the Canadian Presbyterian Mission.³⁷ However, they were not given full freedom to teach about water baptism and Holy Spirit baptism within the church. They did not plant any Pentecostal churches, but were involved in vigorous evangelistic activities. Although the Jivas did not have a significant Pentecostal impact, they are known as *pavitratma vala* (Holy Spirit people- those who were filled with the Holy Spirit) and *dubki vala* (immersion people- the people who were advocating and practicing adult baptism by immersion). Mrs. Jiwa was known by local people as *anya bhasha vali* (tongue-speaking lady) and *hallelujah vali* (hallelujah-speaking lady). It is significant that Mrs. Jiwa is known and talked about more than Mr Jiwa by local people, even today.³⁸ Although Sardar still remains a non-Pentecostal, his interest in Pentecostalism grew after his wife was filled by the Holy Spirit during a local revival, as will be discussed later. Until her death she attended a Pentecostal church. Sardar still keeps a group photo of the young Mrs Jiwa in the Mukti Mission along with Pandita Ramabai and other girls of Mukti.

It is probable that a picture can be drawn regarding the Indian revivals in the light of Anderson's account in *Spreading Fires*. His chapter on Indian Pentecostalism discloses the fact that there were many young boys and girls who went as

³⁷ Sardar, interview by author, Banaswara, Rajasthan, 13 May 2006.

³⁸ It is common even today in many villages in north India that the name of women were not known to the public much, but referred as *unki avurath* (his lady- that means the wife of so and so), and so in many instances, it is not easy to identify the name of women.

missionaries as the result of these indigenous revivals. According to him, 'both Mukti and Dhond missions continued to be main centres for Pentecostal mission.' The young men at Albert Norton's Dhond Mission married young women of Ramabai's Mukti mission, and many of these young people went as missionaries to various parts of north India, including Gujarat and UP.³⁹ Thus it is likely that Mr. Jiwa came from the Dhond mission and he married Mrs. Jiwa from the Mukti mission, and after their marriage they went to UP as missionaries and later moved to Rajasthan in the early 1930s. Whether there is a connection between Mr. Jiwa and Dhond mission or not, which is yet to be established, the significance of the above discussion is that the Pentecostal message was brought to Rajasthan for the first time by a product of Mukti, an indigenous Pentecostal revival in India, not by foreign Pentecostal missionaries or their products.

The second event regarding the coming of the Pentecostal message to Rajasthan took place in the next decade. Peter Lal, a native Pentecostal missionary from UP, came to work in the district of Ajmer in 1942. He was sent as a missionary from the *Dua ka Ghar* (House of Prayer), Lalbagh, Lucknow, UP. *Dhua ka Khar* is an indigenous Pentecostal church established by a local Pentecostal minister, B.M. Chand, in 1942 at Nishadganj, Mahanagar in Lucknow. It was the vision of the founder of *Dhua ka Khar* that it would be an independent church from the very beginning, and the church still retains this vision.⁴⁰

³⁹ Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 86, 100-01.

⁴⁰ B.M. Chand's son is the pastor of the church today. B.M. Chand served as the Secretary of Northern Region of the All India Pentecostal Fellowship. B.M. Chand, 'All India Pentecostal Fellowship: Northern Region,' *Cross and Crown* 5, no.4 (1975): 18-19.

Although Peter Lal began his preaching in the Methodist Church (now CNI church), he soon started to work independently along Pentecostal lines. He came to Rajasthan at the invitation of Miss Pindi Das, who was the principal of a mission school for girls in Ajmer. She was a lady of prayer from Punjab and a member of the Methodist Church. In an interview, Lal's wife Mary Athena Lal said that even though she was a member of the Methodist Church, she came to a personal experience of Christian conversion only after hearing the first sermon by Lal in the Methodist Church.⁴¹ Mary's parents were interested in the young preacher from UP and wanted to have him as Mary's future husband. However, her grandfather was opposed, saying, 'we will not give our daughter to a wanderer,' as Lal was an independent missionary with no financial support. Therefore, they insisted that he get some secular job employment alongside his preaching ministry. Later, he was employed by the Indian Railway as a Divisional Officer before marrying Mary in 1945. He received Rs.30.00 as his salary, and he used to travel and preach, supporting himself financially. After the marriage, they began cottage meetings, and two years later established a local church at Christian Ganj, Ajmer, in the house of Mr. Alexander. It was called 'Bethesda Church,' and it was the first Pentecostal church in Rajasthan. Mary received Holy Spirit baptism in 1948, and she saw a vision of Jesus taking her to the river. She immediately underwent water baptism because she believed the Lord was speaking to her about this. Although they did evangelistic work among non-Christians, their major work was among the existing Christians.

⁴¹ Mary Athena Lal, interview by author, Ajmer, Rajasthan, 19 May 2006.

Samuel Nur Massey, a railway traffic officer, was a member of Bethesda Church from its beginning. His aunt, Mrs. Blessy Lazarus, and her husband N. Lazarus, who was the railway station master of Ajmer, received a Pentecostal experience and became members of Bethesda church. When Samuel's wife received the Holy Spirit, she received the gift of prophecy as well.⁴² They described the way that many people came to hear Lal's preaching and received the Holy Spirit baptism. According to Rev. Jordan Emmanuel Ramble, a retired Evangelical Director of the Methodist Church in the Diocese of Rajasthan, although there was missionary passion and enthusiasm in prayer among the existing churches, there was no teaching on the exercise of spiritual gifts.⁴³ There was much opposition from the Methodist church when Lal began to administer water baptism. However, many were baptised, and the church continued to grow.⁴⁴ Although Pentecostal ministers, like Robert Clove (from Jaipur) and O.J. Wilson (from Jabalpur, MP), used to come and help the congregation, the Bethesda church in Ajmer did not survive for long after the death of Lal on 08 October 1966.

Many later Pentecostal leaders from south India questioned Lal's ministerial credentials when he joined the railway. They hesitated to call him a Pentecostal missionary, because Indian Pentecostals, particularly in the south, have a general belief that a pastor or minister committed to fulltime ministry should not have a secular job. However, in an interview, Lal's wife Mary related stories of Lal's extensive travelling and preaching of the Pentecostal message in various parts of

⁴² She is in her late eighties today. She prayed for me and gave a prophetic message when I finished the interview with her.

⁴³ Jordan Emmanuel Ramble, interview by author, Ajmer, Rajasthan, 19 May 2006.

⁴⁴ S.N. Massey, interview by author, Ajmer, Rajasthan, 19 May 2006.

the state, such as Jodhpur, Jaipur, Kota and Udaipur, while continuing in secular employment. She said that there were many occasions when he went away to preach leaving herself and their children in Ajmer alone for days.

3.2.2. Local Revivals

The current research found that revivals in existing churches played a significant role in the development of Pentecostalism in Rajasthan. *Atma ka gauruti* (Spirit revival) occurred in a few places in Rajasthan, during which people witnessed new and unusual spiritual experiences in the mainline churches. However, they did not recognize it as revival, nor did they compare it with any Pentecostal revivals as they were unaware of them. These local revivals took place without any external influence. It is significant that, as in Tirunelveli, Kerala and Mukti, there was a Holy Spirit outpouring among the local Christians in Rajasthan also. These Rajasthani revivals have many parallels with other revivals in India.

It appears that the first Spirit revival in Rajasthan took place in Udaipur in 1959-60 in the Shepherd Memorial Church, then a Methodist and now a CNI church. According to John Masih, a chief participant of these spiritual happenings, a spiritual thirst and hunger developed among many members of the church after Emmanuel Loel made several visits to the church in 1959. Loel was an Air Force officer from Jabalpur, MP, and had a Pentecostal experience. Many people in the church began to gather for prayer in the church and in various houses of church members. There was definitely an increasing desire for prayer, and some spent extensive hours in prayer. In these prayer meetings people had many spiritual

experiences including speaking in tongues and falling on the ground in the presence of God. People left behind their bad habits and showed a missionary zeal to be witnesses of Jesus and thus developed a great desire for spiritual gifts. However, they did not recognize it as a revival. According to J. Masih, it was only when K.V. Philip arrived from Kerala in 1960 that people were able to understand that their experience was ‘in accordance with the experience of the first century Christians in Acts.’⁴⁵ As Doulat Masih, the local CNI priest, was very much influenced by this spiritual ministry, Philip received a favourable reception during his first visit to Udaipur. This welcoming atmosphere is probably the reason why he selected Udaipur as his base and decided to establish a Pentecostal ministry there.

Although the Pentecostal message came to some places in Rajasthan from other states, there is no report of a fully fledged local Spirit revival as such until there was an outpouring of the Holy Spirit in 1965-67 in Banaswara. This Spirit revival had almost all the Pentecostal characteristics. It is significant that it took place in Banaswara, the place where the Pentecostal message was first introduced in the state through the Jiwa’s more than thirty years previously. Many prominent local Pentecostal leaders of the state, including Tajendra Masih, Pathras Masih and Valu Singh Geraciya, are the products of this Rajasthani revival. They are some of the most influential indigenous Pentecostals leaders in Rajasthan today. The first event took place on 26 December 1965 in a medical store run by Mr. Praveen. Some young people, including Praveen, Tajendra Masih and Sohan Lal from the

⁴⁵ John Masih, interview by author, Udaipur, Rajasthan, 15 May 2006.

CNI church met in the medical store. After having a conversation about Christ's death and resurrection they began to pray. Suddenly, the Holy Spirit came upon them. Tajendra describes the event:

We were just making an ordinary prayer when the Spirit of the Lord came upon us, and we all fell down from our chairs, and we began to speak in other tongues. It was in a market place. All the people who came to the market began to come to the store when they heard the loud voice. They began to ask, "what happened? What is it?" We could not control our voice, and even we did not know what was happening. Then came, Rev. Jethanji, a local priest from the Canadian Church, and he prayed for us. I just opened the Bible, and my eyes fell on Act 1:8.⁴⁶

From then onwards they began to gather every night in the CNI Mission hostel for young boys between the ages 10-20, for all these young men were residents of this hostel. More people began to receive the power of the Holy Spirit. Pathras Masih was another young man who received the Holy Spirit baptism. Later this revival spread to the girls' hostel as well. Although there was strong opposition from the CNI church, such meetings continued for two years. Valu Singh, another participant of the revival 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.⁴⁷

The Banaswara revival seems to be similar to many other Indian revivals. One of the most important features of it was that there was no external influence or connection; rather it was believed to be a direct outpouring of the Spirit of God on

⁴⁶ Tajendra Masih, interview by author, Udaipur, Rajasthan, 23 May 2006.

⁴⁷ Valu Singh, interview by author, Banaswara, Rajasthan, 12 May 2006.

the natives. It is significant that it took place among the young people in the hostel, as happened in Mukti and Dholka. As in many other places, such as Tirunelveli, the people who experienced the revival faced strong opposition from the existing church leadership. There were visible manifestations of the Spirit in this revival, including speaking in tongues, singing in tongues, falling down, visions and dreams, confession of sins and shaking of body, as occurred in many Indian revivals. Another important fact is that those who experienced the revival did not recognize what was happening as it was an entirely new experience for them. They began to talk about the 'new words and phrases' they uttered when they became 'out of control' in prayer. Tajendra Masih, who participated in the revival, says,

we knew that something spiritual was happening as there were obvious changes in our behaviour, but could not realize it as the Holy Spirit baptism until when Pr. Thomas Mathews came from Udaipur to Banaswara, and taught us from the Scripture. We heard for the first time that it was a Pentecostal revival. However, by the time he came in 1968, many of those people who experienced this Pentecostal revival went back due to severe opposition from the Presbyterian Church.⁴⁸

Thomas Mathews and his first convert in Rajasthan, Samson Wilson, stayed in Banaswara for a while and taught people the Pentecostal message. This produced a number of indigenous missionaries like Tajendra Masih, Pathras Masih, and Valu Singh and who were sent to Itarsi Bible College in MP for theological training. Mathews left his colleague Wilson to work there. These three men later

⁴⁸ T. Masih, interview, 23 May 2006.

became known as the Banaswara trio and are among the most influential indigenous Pentecostal leaders today. Consequently, Banaswara has a large number of followers of Pentecostalism.

3.2.3. South Indian Pentecostals and the Pentecostal Movement

The greatest impact of Pentecostalism in Rajasthan was brought about by south Indian Pentecostals. As has been seen, people were experiencing manifestations of the Spirit in the existing churches in various places, but there were not many Pentecostals to explain what was happening. As Pentecostalism was brought to Rajasthan by north Indian Pentecostals from outside the state the non-Rajasthani Pentecostals have a major role in the origin and growth of Pentecostalism in Rajasthan. However, the contribution of south Indian Pentecostals was vital, as with their coming there was a new vigour, passion and meaning to these spiritual experiences of Rajasthanis. The Pentecostal missionaries from south India took this indigenous revival to further heights, and thus made it a movement in Rajasthan.

South Indian Pentecostals used to come and preach from the beginnings of Pentecostalism in Rajasthan. K.E. Abraham, the founder of IPCoG, stated in his autobiography that he visited Rajasthan in 1944.⁴⁹ Although he was working in Delhi, Pastor M.K. Chacko, a pioneer Kerala Pentecostal missionary to north India, engaged in evangelistic activities in Rajasthan. In December 1963, he concentrated on his work in Jaipur, the capital of the state, for six months and thus

⁴⁹ Abraham, *Yesukristhuvinte Eliya Dasan*, 371.

established the first Pentecostal church in the city.⁵⁰ A few months later, one of Chacko's north Indian disciples, Claude Roberts from Delhi, took charge of this church, which was called the 'Full Gospel Church',⁵¹ and he still continues as the senior minister of the church. Kurien Thomas, the founder of Itarsi Fellowship,⁵² used to visit Rajasthan from 1961.

From the early 1960s, more missionaries from Kerala began to come to Rajasthan with the Pentecostal message. K.V. Philip was the first, followed by Thomas Mathews, both of whom were from the IPCoG background but came as independent missionaries. Both were the product of Shalom Bible School (Kottayam, Kerala), founded by P.M. Philip, a well known missionary leader of IPCoG. After them, there were a number of missionaries from Kerala as well as Tamil Nadu. In the initial stages of their ministry, Kerala Pentecostals used to preach in the annual convention conducted by Philip and Mathews. The coming of south Indian missionaries added new momentum to the Pentecostal movement in Rajasthan, and it has resulted in the formation of many churches and missionary organizations.

There were five missionaries who came with Philip when he visited Rajasthan for the first time, and they stayed in Udaipur and ministered in the CNI church for one month. Many people were reported healed during these spiritual revival

⁵⁰ M. Oommachan, *Pr. P.M. Chacko: A Humble Servant of Jesus Christ* (Bhopal, India: The Good News Centre, 1978), 32.

⁵¹ Claude V. Roberts, 'Defender of Faith Gone Home,' *Cross and Crown* 15, no. 5 (February 1985): 8-9.

⁵² Itarsi Fellowship is one of the oldest and largest independent Pentecostal churches in north India with its headquarters at Itarsi, Madhya Pradesh.

meetings conducted by Philip and his team. John,⁵³ a participant of these meetings, has described with enthusiasm the many healings that took place, such as the complete healing of the blind and deaf. His wife's grandmother was one of those who received sight. These healing events enabled Philip to receive a warm welcome in the church. After a month-long visit Philip left Udaipur but came back a few months later to establish his Pentecostal mission in Udaipur. As mentioned earlier, Doulat's family were very much influenced by this Pentecostal message and experience, and so the situation was conducive for Philip to spread Pentecostalism among these existing Christians in the initial period of his ministry. However, when Devadasan from UP came and preached about water baptism after an invitation from Philip, the situation began to change. The church came to know that Philip was also a '*dubki vala*,' and that is why they began to oppose him until he moved to Jodhpur. John says that he went to Jodhpur to take baptism under Philip on 07 October 1963. Although Philip moved to Jodhpur, the CNI people, particularly the young men and women at the mission compound, continued prayer meetings every evening.

Philip continued his ministry in Rajasthan until his death in 1979 when he was in his early forties. He established a Pentecostal congregation in Jodhpur, and it was affiliated to IPCoG. P.M. Thomas, his son-in-law, is currently serving as the pastor of this congregation. Philip used to travel to various places spreading the Pentecostal message. Thomas Mathews' words illustrate his commitment to north Indian mission:

⁵³ J. Masih, interview, 15 May 2006.

He [Philip] loved north Indians and lived for them. For that he picked up Hindi and was very proficient in that. He had adapted himself totally to the north Indian way of life- a phenomenon rarely found among missionaries coming up from south India He was many times beaten by enemies of the Gospel; had starved many times in his early days. His memory will always be a challenge to all serious Christians and ministers of this country.⁵⁴

Apparently, the greatest contribution of Philip to Pentecostalism in Rajasthan is that he inspired Mathews to commit himself to the mission in Rajasthan, and thus, Mathews later became the most prominent Pentecostal missionary to Rajasthan. Mathews himself says that it was ‘Philip who challenged me at Shalom in 1962 to choose the most backward and hostile state for my pioneer Gospel work and I have never regretted my decision to come over here.’⁵⁵

With the coming of Mathews from Kerala to Rajasthan on 27 April 1963 Pentecostalism took a new turn. As Anand Choudhary has commented, Mathews made Pentecostalism a movement in the state.⁵⁶ He was one of the most effective south Indian missionaries to Rajasthan.⁵⁷ He was known as the ‘Apostle of the Desert’ among Pentecostals and non-Pentecostals alike, and that is why Thomas Thonnakkal, the writer of Mathew’s biography, gave the book the title,

⁵⁴ Thomas Mathews, ‘Two Grains of Wheat in the Desert Land,’ *Cross and Crown* 15, no. 7 (1985): 21. This article is written six years after the death of Philip, and soon after the death of his wife in 1985.

⁵⁵ Mathews, ‘Two Grains of Wheat,’ 20.

⁵⁶ Choudhary, interview, 09 May 2006.

⁵⁷ For more details on Mathews’ contribution to north Indian mission, see Wessly Lukose, ‘Dr. Thomas Mathews and His Contribution to Indian Missions,’ *Cross and Crown* 36, no. 1 (March 2006): 24-27, and Finny Philip, ‘The Thomas Mathews Revolution,’ *Cross and Crown* 36, no. 1 (2006): 18-20.

Marubhoomiyile Apostalan (The Apostle of the Desert).⁵⁸ His outstanding ministry of evangelism and church planting among unreached people groups in north India won him the William Carey Award in 2002.⁵⁹ His sacrificial service to Indian church caused *World Christian Encyclopaedia* to list Mathews along with other renowned Christian leaders in India such as St. Thomas, C.F. Andrews, Francis Xavier and Bakt Singh.⁶⁰

Pentecostalism in Rajasthan owes much to Mathews as he made some valuable contributions to the movement. His greatest contribution was to contextual mission. Mathews realized over the years that he had to translate himself to the particular north Indian context for an effective Christian mission. Consequently, he made necessary changes to aspects like food habits and language for example. He gave up his interest in rice and Malayalam to adopt chappathi and Hindi. Later, '*chaval aur Malayalam chodo, chappathi aur Hindi apnavo*' (give up rice and Malayalam, accept *chappathi* and Hindi instead), became his slogan.⁶¹ He was one of the most effective Christian orators in Hindi. Another contribution was to church planting as he advocated producing worshipping, caring and witnessing churches in every village of north India.⁶² This emphasis on church planting seems to be the chief reason for the rapid growth of FFCI. More than a thousand

⁵⁸ Thonnakkal, *Marubhoomiyile Apostalan*.

⁵⁹ This is a prestigious award given by the Indian Evangelical Team during their Silver Jubilee celebrations to the most effective cross-cultural missionary in north India.

⁶⁰ Bruce Graham, et al., 'India,' in *World Christian Encyclopaedia: A Comparative Study of Churches and Religion in the Modern World*, vol. 1, 2nd ed., ed. David B. Barrett, George T. Kurien, and Todd M. Johnson (Delhi, India: OUP, 2005), 363.

⁶¹ Rice is a usual south Indian food and chappathi, a north Indian item. Malayalam is the state language of Kerala and Hindi is the national language of India, and the commonly used language in north India.

⁶² For more details on Mathews Church Planting Movement, see Philip, 'Thomas Mathews Revolution.'

churches were established in thirteen states of north India during his 42 years of ministry. This means that at least two new churches were formed every month.⁶³

Donald McGavran wrote a note of appreciation about the fascinating growth of FFCI churches in Mathews' Bible, 'Donald McGavran, with high appreciation for the church multiplying which Rev. Thomas Mathews is doing in Udaipur. The Garasiyas and Bhils are loved by God, Christ intended for them to become followers of the Saviour, and a liberated people.'⁶⁴

Moreover, Mathews thought that there should be an emphasis on cross-cultural mission in north India when he entered into Christian service, and he himself was a cross-cultural missionary from south India. However, he recognized the importance of equipping the natives rather than focusing on cross-cultural missionaries. He found that native missionaries are more effective, fruitful and acceptable in north India, and that is why he formed NMM. Furthermore, although hundreds of churches were established all over north India under the banner of FFCI, Mathews gave freedom to each church to function in its own cultural and indigenous way. He wanted churches to be self-governing with a freedom to raise funds, train leaders, construct buildings, and using indigenous means in worship.

Community Development was another important feature of his vision. As a conventional Pentecostal missionary Mathews was not interested in the social aspects of mission in the initial years of his ministry. Nevertheless, he became

⁶³ This does not mean that Mathews himself had established these churches, but his vision and motivation were key factors behind the growth of FFCI.

⁶⁴ Thonnakkal, *Marubhoomiyile Aposthalan*, 3. MacGavran made this note of appreciation in Mathews' Bible on 17 December 1980.

conscious of the significance of becoming involved in the development of communities, and consequently, schools, orphanages, hostels and vocational training were established in various places. A careful observation shows that Mathews' was a progressive missiology as he realized that he needed to change the means and methods of mission in the light of the changing context. Such a progressive missiology caused him to become one of the most effective Pentecostal missionaries in the history of Indian Church. Although his death on 24 November 2005 was unexpected, he has had a lasting impact in Rajasthan.

Later, many other missionaries came from Kerala and Tamilnadu. K.V. Abraham, the present vice-president of FFCI, Peter Kuruvila, the founder President of Agape Fellowship Church, Gladis Iswar Raj (Tamil Nadu), who took over the first Pentecostal church after the death of Peter Lal, and Y. Yohannan, the founder President of Bethel Fellowship, are some of the leading missionaries who came from south India. Many who came for secular employment later resigned their jobs and entered into full-time ministry after receiving a call. These include K.O. Varghese (the present General Secretary of FFCI), Johnny P. Abraham (the state secretary of FFCI) and A.M. Joseph (former vice-president of FFCI).

An analysis of the early issues of *Cross and Crown*, the first Pentecostal periodical from Rajasthan, shows that there was a strong connection between Pentecostals in Rajasthan and south Indian Pentecostals, at least in the early years. There was regular report of what was happening among Pentecostals in Kerala,

including reports on the deaths of Kerala Pentecostal pastors and preachers.⁶⁵ There were also special articles and issues published in memory of Kerala Pentecostal preachers.⁶⁶

Anderson's observation regarding the link between Pentecostalism and the existing churches is true in Rajasthan also. According to him, 'Pentecostal missionaries almost invariably started their work within the framework of existing missionary networks, both evangelical and mainline mission.'⁶⁷ Most pioneer south Indian missionaries were working among Christians at least at the start of their ministry. Many of their first converts were already Christians in various existing churches, mostly 'mission churches,' when they became Pentecostals. However, later south Indian Pentecostals became involved in educational and community development programmes along with the expansion of evangelistic and church planting activities. Theological institutes were established to train the local ministers. Funds were raised to build churches in many parts of Rajasthan. Evangelistic activities were accelerated through various means, including modern means of communication such as radio, TV and other audio-visual devices along with spiritual resources like healing, exorcism and miracles. All these activities resulted in the multiplication of native Pentecostal believers, missionaries, pastors, leaders, churches and organizations. Thus in brief, the south Indian missionaries,

⁶⁵ For example, see Thomas Mathews, 'Pastor Abraham: Now Belongs to History,' *Cross and Crown* 5, no. 4 (1975): 14-15; 'Pastor T.M. Varghese Promoted to Glory,' *Cross and Crown* 15, no. 9 (1985): 6-8.

⁶⁶ See for example, Thomas Mathews, 'The Late Pastor Abraham: End of an Epoch...? Or the Beginning,' *Cross and Crown* 5, no. 4 (1975): 16-18. This was published soon after the death of K.E. Abraham. *Cross and Crown* 15, no. 5 (1985) was a memorial issue on Pastor M.K. Chacko, who was called the 'lode-star of the Pentecostal Movement in North India,' by Kerala Pentecostals.

⁶⁷ Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 8.

particularly those from Kerala, have played a pivotal role in making Pentecostalism a movement, and thus Pentecostalism in Rajasthan has become a significant chapter of Indian Pentecostalism. However, as will be discussed later, Pentecostalism became a predominantly tribal religion in the state as more tribal people became involved in the movement.

3.3. Contemporary Pentecostalism in Rajasthan

Although Pentecostals made little advancement in the beginning, Pentecostalism is making a significant progress in the state today. It is true that most pioneer missionaries of Rajasthan were independent workers concentrating mainly on their local churches. However, currently there are a number of Pentecostal organizations working and at least four north Indian Pentecostal organizations have their headquarters in Rajasthan. Although Pentecostals are a minority, they try to involve themselves in various aspects of society and also contribute to the development of the community in several ways. As a result, Pentecostalism has become a significant local religious movement.

3.3.1. Pentecostal Concentration

As mentioned earlier, the Pentecostal message first came to three districts of Rajasthan, namely Banaswara, Ajmer and Udaipur. However, Pentecostalism expanded to other districts in the course of time. Today there are Pentecostals, at least in small numbers, in almost all 33 districts of Rajasthan, except Baran. The northern districts of Rajasthan were the regions most neglected by Christianity in general due to their desert climate as well as the repressive religious nature of the

people. However, very recently some Pentecostal churches have chosen to concentrate on north Rajasthan. For example, FFCI has launched evangelism and church planting mission in the districts of Bikaner and Nagaur. Bethel Fellowship began a church planting mission in the districts of Dhaulpur, Dausa, Karauli, Sawai Madhupur, and Hanumangarh in 2004. Although north Rajasthan does not have a significant Pentecostal presence, all those districts now have a few Pentecostal congregations.

Southern Rajasthan has the greatest representation of Pentecostal Christianity. As mentioned in chapter one three districts, namely Udaipur, Jaipur, Banaswara and Ajmer, have the largest number of Pentecostals. However, these three districts have the greatest representation of Christians generally. Most Charismatic organizations concentrate on these districts, mainly because of the responsive nature of the tribal people there. Another reason is that it is comparatively easy to work where there is some Christian presence, rather than working in a new place. Also there is a tendency to build on the foundation of others. Although many south Indian pioneer missionaries concentrated only on south Indians in the beginning of their ministry, they have gradually changed their focus to natives. Many Kerala churches also have changed their attention from their own communities to Rajasthanis. For example, until recently, the Rajasthan chapter of IPCoG did not have many indigenous congregations. On 28 February 2007, it inaugurated their mission centre in Jaipur with the aim of reaching the natives.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ 'IPC Rajasthan Mission Centre *Uthkhadanam*,' *Subhashitham* 2, no. 6 (2007): 5

They have also launched a Bible Training Centre with the intention of training Rajasthani missionaries to establish churches locally.

The research shows that Udaipur has the maximum representation of Pentecostals. The change in focus of Pentecostals in Banaswara, Jaipur and Udaipur is very evident. In Banaswara, Pentecostals concentrated their missionary activities on the villages, and tended to neglect urban areas, except for a few congregations which are focusing on certain linguistic communities. For example, there are four congregations concentrating only on the south Indians, mainly people from Kerala and Tamil Nadu. In Jaipur, the Pentecostal focus was the city, and little effort was made until recently to reach villages. The best example is the Alpha church, the largest Pentecostal church in the district. Peter Kuruvila, the founder and senior minister of the church, and also a prominent Pentecostal leader, has admitted that his church realized the significance of reaching the villages only very recently.⁶⁹ Subsequently, they have appointed missionaries to a few nearby villages. In Udaipur, Pentecostals seem to have focused both on the city as well as villages. There are a number of churches in the villages under the banner of various organizations, and in most parts of the district there is a Pentecostal church. At the same time there are Pentecostal churches in the city as well. RPC is the largest Pentecostal congregation in the whole state, with over six hundred members. Calvary Covenant Fellowship is another growing Pentecostal congregation in the city. Most leaders admit that FBC is a major reason for the growth of Pentecostalism in Udaipur. Apart from that, Aravalli Bible Training Centre is

⁶⁹ Peter Kuruvila, interview by author, Jaipur, Rajasthan, 08 May 2006.

established as a daughter institute of FBC, recently expanding its mission to the neighbouring villages. There was no established Pentecostal training school in Jaipur until recently. In brief, it can be argued that since Pentecostals in Udaipur have focused both on the city as well as villages in their mission work, the district has seen the greatest expansion of Pentecostalism in Rajasthan. However, Pentecostals in Banaswara as well as Jaipur have failed to maintain a balance between urban and rural mission, but have concentrated on either one or the other. Consequently, Pentecostals did not expand there as much as in Udaipur.

People from existing churches were the first converts of Pentecostalism, as most Pentecostal missionaries began their work among them. Nevertheless, gradually the focus has shifted to the non-Christian natives, and so villages soon became the main focus. Although Non-tribals were approached in the early stage of Pentecostal missions, the tribals soon became the primary target as they began to be responsive to the Pentecostal message.

3.3.2. A Predominantly Tribal Religion

Pentecostalism in Rajasthan is a movement of the poor and the marginalized segments of the society, particularly tribals. Pentecostalism in Rajasthan is predominantly a tribal movement, in spite of the fact that it has followers from non-tribal backgrounds as well. Pentecostalism has made inroads into many tribal communities in Rajasthan, and so a majority of its followers are tribals.

Twelve out of the eighteen Pentecostal leaders who were interviewed revealed that their focus is on the tribal people. Seven of them said that their mission service is completely among the tribal groups. Six leaders said that they had not yet turned to tribal communities. However, four of the six have only south Indians as members in their churches, and their church services are in their mother tongue, Malayalam. Although the majority of Pentecostals are from the Bhil tribe, as it is the case with Christianity in general in Rajasthan, Pentecostalism has followers from other tribes as well.⁷⁰

It is important to understand why tribal communities have turned to Pentecostalism. Although the spiritual means like healing and exorcism are the major means for the growth of tribal Pentecostalism, identity concern seems to be an important reason for the tribals turning to Pentecostalism. The identity issue has always been a significant issue in the Indian context among the Dalits and other socially downtrodden people since early times. It is observed that as in the case of the conversion of many Dalits to Buddhism during the time of Ambedkar,⁷¹ one of the major reasons for the tribal people embracing Pentecostalism is related to the issue of identity. Ambedkar realized the need to have a better identity for Dalits. Balkrishna Govind Gokhale's study reveals that Ambedkar was searching for a total transformation in the lives of his followers

⁷⁰ For an understanding of people groups who have representation in various forms of Christianity, see Rajasthan Harvest Network, *To Glorify God by Reaching the Unreached in Rajasthan for Lord Jesus Christ*. (Jaipur, India: Rajasthan Harvest Network, 1998).

⁷¹ Ambedkar is known as the chief architect of the Indian Constitution. He had to suffer a great deal from the high castes as he was from a lower caste Hindu background. He, along with many of his followers, embraced Buddhism after considering many alternatives.

into 'a new identity, a new culture,' and that is why they accepted Buddhism.⁷² Identity concern has been one of the principal issues discussed during the participant observation of the Pentecostal tribal churches at Kherwara and Macadadeo, and even in the pastors meetings. Many tribal pastors and believers have argued that they have gained a new identity through becoming Pentecostals. Some of them have said that their status and position have improved. One pastor has admitted, 'we were not allowed to sit along with certain groups of the people, but here in the church we have been seated along with great servants of God.'⁷³

Anderson's observation regarding the involvement of laity in Pentecostal worship seems to be significant factor that appeals to the masses in Rajasthan. According to him, Pentecostal liturgy with the emphasis on 'freedom in the Spirit' has also been a factor that has contributed to the appeal of the movement. Anderson observes,

This spontaneous liturgy, which Hollenweger has identified as mainly oral and narrative, with an emphasis on a direct experience of God through his Spirit, results in the possibility of ordinary people being lifted out of their mundane daily experiences into a new realm of ecstasy, aided by the emphasis on speaking in tongues, loud and emotional simultaneous prayer, and joyful singing, clapping, raising hands and dancing in the presence of God. This made pentecostal worship easily assimilated into different cultural contexts.... Furthermore, this was

⁷² Balkrishna Govind Gokhale, 'Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar: Rebel against Hindu Tradition,' in *Religion and Social Conflict*, 21.

⁷³ Heeralal, interview by author, Kherwara, Rajasthan, 06 May 06. 'Great servant of God' (*Parameswar ka Mahan Das*) is a common term used by Pentecostals in north India to address a Christian minister who has a well known ministry or who is possessed with much power of the Holy Spirit.

available for everyone, and the involvement of the laity became the most important feature of pentecostal worship....⁷⁴

Women also have been given a voice in Pentecostal churches. They have said that they were not encouraged to come to the front, but in the church they have been given the opportunity to participate and take responsibility, ‘we are allowed to preach, share, and give testimony, and also to lead the choir and prayer groups.’⁷⁵ Practices, such as the holy hug⁷⁶ following the Holy Communion, non-tribal believers and pastors eating along with the tribal believers and pastors, the seating of unschooled and untrained pastors along with the trained and the educated pastors and leaders, the involvement of the entire congregation in worship, Scripture reading, prayer and testimony, were cited by tribal Pentecostals to show that they are welcomed and accepted by the Pentecostal community with little discrimination. They have argued that such opportunities have provided them with a new identity. However, this does not mean that there is no differentiation in the Pentecostal churches, and the tension within the movement will be discussed in chapter five.

What McGavran calls the ‘redemption and lift’ factor also seems to be important in the choice of Pentecostalism by the marginalized.⁷⁷ He talks about the spiritual redemption and the socio-economic lift Christianity brings to the masses. At the

⁷⁴ Allan Anderson, ‘Global Pentecostalism in the New Millennium,’ in *Pentecostals after a Century*, 223.

⁷⁵ Group interview by author, Macadadeo, Rajasthan, 07 May 2006.

⁷⁶ There is a practice in Rajasthan of embracing fellow Pentecostals after Holy Communion, which they call the ‘holy hug.’ However, one is only allowed to embrace members of the same sex.

⁷⁷ For more details, see Donald A. McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 209-220.

same time, McGavran argues that the line between ‘redemption’ and ‘lift’ is a thin one, and therefore such ‘separation must not be too rigorously interpreted.’⁷⁸ However, Peter Wagner underlines that this ‘redemption and lift’ has been taking place among the Pentecostals as well, especially when people from the lower strata of society are converted.⁷⁹ A careful look into the Pentecostal Movement in Rajasthan shows that this ‘redemption and lift’ factor is likely to be another reason for the phenomenal growth of Pentecostalism among the tribal communities in Rajasthan. The tribal Pentecostals in Rajasthan can be seen as a redeemed and lifted up community. A.T. Cherian’s study shows that there was socio-economic enhancement of tribal people after coming to Christian faith, and his survey included Pentecostals also.⁸⁰ Most people said that they also achieved material prosperity by the power of the Holy Spirit. They shout the slogan that ‘we are not poor, but rich in the Lord.’

3.3.3. A Growing Christian Sector

Although Pentecostals were initially looked down on as a sect and were not welcomed in Rajasthan, today they are accepted by other Christians. Christian growth was extremely slow in the state. However, with the coming of Pentecostals, the momentum for the growth of Christianity in Rajasthan has increased. Currently, Pentecostals are the fastest growing sector of Rajasthan Christianity despite the fact that they are latecomers in the soil. Many non-Pentecostal leaders have acknowledged Pentecostal impact in the state. According to Chouhan, a leading evangelical leader in Rajasthan, the charismatic expression

⁷⁸ McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth*, 212.

⁷⁹ C. Peter Wagner, *Look Out! Pentecostals are Coming* (Illinois: Creation House, 1973), 70-71.

⁸⁰ A.T. Cherian, ‘Contribution of Churches.’

of Christianity is responsible for the present growth of Christianity in Rajasthan.⁸¹ Post-independence Rajasthan saw the establishment of various Pentecostal organizations and the formation of numerous Pentecostal congregations in diverse parts of the state. Cherian's research also shows that Pentecostalism has brought expansion to Christianity in Rajasthan and concludes that although missionary work began in Udaipur district in the nineteenth century, there were hardly a hundred local Christian families, but with the coming of the Pentecostal message there are now hundreds of local Christian families in the district.⁸²

One important question to consider is who Pentecostals are. As mentioned in the introductory chapter, this thesis follows an inclusive definition of Pentecostalism. Using this definition, there are many churches in Rajasthan which believe and practise the spiritual gifts and the Holy Spirit emphasis is seen in many churches. There have been changes in worship and preaching styles in several churches, including the main-line churches. However, the task of categorizing the churches in terms of Pentecostalism in Rajasthan is not so easy. The issue has two complex aspects. The first one is the hesitation of classical Pentecostals to include other churches as Pentecostals. They think that such an attempt will cause them to have to compromise, and tempt them to dilute many Pentecostal doctrines which they consider unique.⁸³ It is interesting to note that many south Indian Pentecostals in Rajasthan have this attitude, and it is not surprising to learn that almost all of them

⁸¹ Chouhan (pseudonym), interview by author, Jaipur, Rajasthan, 09 May 2006.

⁸² A.T. Cherian, 'Pentecostal Revival, the Key to Church Growth,' *Filadelfia Jyoti*, Souvenir (Udaipur, India: FBC, 2006), 40. Cherian has done an exhaustive research on Christianity among the Bhils in Jhadol Taluk.

⁸³ Many Classical Pentecostals in Rajasthan argue that adult baptism, speaking in tongues and holiness are some of the unique doctrines of Pentecostalism, and they need to sacrifice them just for the sake of worship and healing.

are from a classical Pentecostals background. The second aspect is the unwillingness of non-Pentecostals to align themselves with the Pentecostals. Many non-Pentecostals fear their church leaders. Others say that denominationalism is not the issue; rather the Holy Spirit is to be given His due place in the church, and so they are not interested in categorizing themselves.⁸⁴

Although early Pentecostal missionaries worked as independent missionaries without any external support, today there are at least twelve Pentecostal organizations working in Rajasthan, apart from many independent local congregations in various places. Then there are six other independent local congregations based in cities, but having out stations in the surrounding villages. Three out of the above eighteen Pentecostal organizations are concentrating mainly on south Indians in their missionary activities. Another three out of these eighteen focuses on only Rajasthanis. The other twelve are missionary organizations, with a multicultural focus. Seven out of these twelve have church planting missions in other states as well. Four of them are based in Rajasthan. FFCI has begun in Rajasthan and has expanded to other states and is one of the largest indigenous missionary organizations in north India, having more than a thousand churches covering at least ten north Indian states.

There are seven Pentecostal institutes for theological education in the state today. Filadelfia Bible College, established by Thomas Mathews and Thampy Mathew, is the first and the only established institute that offers programmes that are

⁸⁴ For example, the CNI pastor at Beawar has the same opinion.

validated by an accreditation agency. Both the Gospel for Asia Training Centre and the Aravali Bible Training Centre offer programmes which are approved by their mother theological institutes. There are two schools which are approved by their parent organization. The other two training centres are run by the respective missionary organizations with an aim to train local workers for church planting missions. At the same time, both FFCI and Mission India run short term laity training at regular intervals. As a result of these missionary organizations and theological institutes, there are hundreds of congregations in the state today.

At the same time there are dozens of schools and orphanages aiming at the socio-economic development of local communities. Although Pentecostals in Rajasthan were apolitical, as in many parts of the globe, they have begun to be involved in politics, and so there are village leaders from the Pentecostal community as will be discussed later.

3.3.4. A Rajasthani Movement

As discussed above, missionaries from north Indian states have played a significant role in bringing the Pentecostal message to Rajasthan, and south Indian missionaries have made a decisive contribution to the making of the movement. However, the real impetus of the movement is the multiplication of many local missionaries. Many non-Rajasthani missionaries began to focus on the Rajasthanis in their evangelistic and church planting activities. The selected converts were sent for training in Bible schools in other states as there were no theological institutes in Rajasthan until Filadelfia Bible College was established in 1982.

They returned as missionaries, evangelists, pastors, teachers and social activists. Consequently, thousands have been attracted to and follow Pentecostalism. They in turn went to work in different villages and established churches, and thus made this a movement in Rajasthan. Thus, both the Rajasthani and non-Rajasthani missionaries have their roles in the origin and growth of the Pentecostal movement in the state.

The most significant fact is that today's Pentecostalism in Rajasthan is identified as a Rajasthani movement where local leaders are at the forefront of leadership, and there has been an increase in the number of local pastors. Although many missionary organizations in Rajasthan have south Indian founders and leadership, most of their workers as well as followers are Rajasthanis. Many of the largest Pentecostal congregations are established by local ministers. Most people who are under training in various theological institutes in the state are indigenes. There are two organizations founded by Rajasthani missionaries and having purely local leadership: Calvary Covenant Fellowship Mission founded by Monohar Kala and Covenant Ministries founded by Pathras Masih. At the same time there are a number of local people who are in the senior leadership, even in those missionary organizations founded by south Indians. For example, Jaswant Rana⁸⁵ is currently the joint secretary as well as Christian minority representative of FFCI. Tajendra Masih is serving as an executive council member of FFCI, and he served as its Vice president, along with K.V. Abraham, from Kerala for many years. There are a number of other leaders, such as Samson Wilson and Valu Singh, who have

⁸⁵ Although Jaswant Rana hails from Gujarat, his ancestors are originally from Chittorgarh, Rajasthan.

served as executive council members for FFCI. There are local ministers serving as teachers in various theological institutes. For example, natives like Benjamin A.K., T. Masih, Cornelius Masih and J. Rana are among the faculty members of FBC. There are schools and orphanages run by local Pentecostals. Many Pentecostals are actively involved in the Tribal Christian Welfare Society of India (TCWSI), and many Pentecostal ministers hold significant positions in this Society, as will be discussed in chapter five. In brief, today mainly natives are seen in Pentecostal congregations, institutes and leadership, and thus they have made Pentecostalism a Rajasthani movement.⁸⁶

3.4. Theological Features of Pentecostalism in Rajasthan

Pentecostals in Rajasthan, as in many parts of the globe, have made little attempt to explain their experience and belief in a formal way. It seems that Indian Pentecostals in general have failed to develop their theology even after a century of expansion. As Simon Chan reminds us, ‘The Pentecostal reality has not been communicated in all its fullness to a subsequent generation. When it was explained, it came through as rather impoverished theological constructs.’ According to him ‘Pentecostal experience’ is richer than ‘Pentecostal explanation,’ and ‘this disparity between experience and explanation has serious consequences for Pentecostal traditioning.’⁸⁷ Therefore it is important to deal with the theology of Pentecostals in Rajasthan to understand them better. The following is only a brief discussion to enable a better understanding of their

⁸⁶ ‘Leadership,’ here, means mainly pastors of local congregations. This does not mean that Rajasthanis were given due representation in the senior leadership of all Pentecostal organizations. More details on this issue will be found in chapter five.

⁸⁷ Chan, *Pentecostal Theology*, 10.

experience, and thus their theology. Emphasis is given to missiology, as this is the focus of the participants themselves, and also the focus of the present study. Most early Pentecostal missionaries from south India had a classical Pentecostal background when they first arrived in Rajasthan. Therefore, the influence of classical Pentecostalism on Rajasthan's Pentecostal theology is clear, even though changes have taken place over time.

3.4.1. Spirituality

For Pentecostals, spirituality and theology are inseparable. Steven Land describes Pentecostal spirituality as theology.⁸⁸ Pentecostal spirituality in Rajasthan can be characterized by its emphasis on prayer, praise, healing and other miracles, and witness. Prayer is one of the most distinctive features of Pentecostal experience in Rajasthan. Land argues that 'prayer- individual and corporate, human and "angelic", with sighs and groans, praise and petition- is at the heart' of Pentecostal spirituality.⁸⁹ Pentecostals in Rajasthan spend extensive periods in prayer. There is a heavy emphasis on prayer in the Bible schools,⁹⁰ pastors' meetings and in ordinary prayer meetings. Having lived on the FBC campus for more than ten years, one of the most repeated phrases I heard in its chapel is 'more prayer, more power, less prayer, less power.' Those who spend most hours in prayer are considered the most powerful ministers. It is interesting that FBC now has a special award for prayer and evangelism. This was partly a response to the

⁸⁸ For a discussion, see Steven J. Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom* (Sheffield: SAP, 1993), 15-57.

⁸⁹ Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, 35.

⁹⁰ For example, the daily schedule of FBC includes four separate sections such as morning devotion (5.45 am – 6.15 am), chapel service (10.20 am – 11.00 am), evening devotion (6.15 pm – 6.45 pm) and family prayer (9.45 pm – 10.00 pm). There are other separate time for prayer like fasting prayer (every Friday night 7.00 – 10.00) and whole night prayer (first Friday night of every month).

example shown by a student from Chattisgarh, called ‘Manoj,’ who used to pray for hours during the night. Academically speaking, he was not a bright student, but the faculty members found that he was very active in evangelism and also was devoted to prayer. Manoj is quoted as saying, ‘I cannot study for hours, but can pray for days. I will not be exhausted even if I pray for the whole day.’ This inspired the college authority to introduce a new award in 2003 for ‘Evangelism and Prayer Life’.⁹¹ Apart from normal church gatherings, there are special prayer meetings, morning prayers, fasting prayers and even warfare prayers.

Worship is another significant feature of Rajasthan Pentecostalism. Praise and worship is an integral part of every church. Prayer and worship are like two sides of a coin for Rajasthan Pentecostals. They insist that every prayer must begin with praise. Therefore, even in private prayer, people start with praise before they actually enter into prayer. Rajasthan Pentecostals speak in tongues both in private and public worship. Pentecostal leaders use tongues in a variety of ways. It is used as a ‘praise language,’ both in private and in public worship, and as a ‘prayer language,’ as well as a ‘warfare language’ in prayer. Prayer is also used as a means of evangelism. Books, like Ed Silvano’s *Prayer Evangelism*,⁹² are used and recommended by leaders involved in evangelism and church growth.

Pentecostal churches in Rajasthan can best be understood as healing communities. The major reason for their growth is found in the healings, exorcisms and other

⁹¹ Filadelfia Bible College, *Prospectus 2006* (Udaipur: FBC, 2006), 15.

⁹² Ed Silvano, *Prayer Evangelism: How to Change the Spiritual Climate Over Your Home, Neighborhood and City* (Ventura, CA: Regal, 2000). I was also given a copy of this book by my church leaders, as it was believed to be a powerful tool in city evangelism.

extraordinary spiritual experiences that take place among people, particularly the less privileged tribal communities. Medical facilities are not available in every place, and transportation is not easily accessible. Even today there are villages where there is no means of transport. People have to carry their sick for several miles to get them into a vehicle. In such situations, healing ministry by Pentecostals is very appealing. Miraculous healings have resulted in the establishment of many Pentecostal churches. The FFCI church established by pastor Heeralal near his house in the Jhadol district, after he was healed from a paralytic disease, is the best example of this.⁹³ Many individuals who have been healed from serious sicknesses have become missionaries. Coma Bhai, the pastor of Kanbai FFCI church, is another example. Therefore, as Paul Mathews, the senior pastor of the largest Pentecostal church in the state, has suggested, most Pentecostal churches in Rajasthan should be regarded as 'healing communities.'⁹⁴ Pentecostalism in Rajasthan can be understood as the fulfilment of the longing of early Christian missionaries for spiritual gifts. As mentioned earlier, the daunting challenges and the mounting needs of the people in Rajasthan caused the missionaries to seek after supernatural gifts.⁹⁵

Personal evangelism by Pentecostal individuals and households is one of the most remarkable characteristics of Pentecostalism in Rajasthan. The observation of

⁹³ Cherian, 'Contribution of Churches,' 117-18.

⁹⁴ Paul Mathews, interview by author, Udaipur, Rajasthan, 25 May 2006. Paul Mathews is the senior pastor of the largest Pentecostal congregation in Rajasthan.

⁹⁵ The early medical missionaries found it difficult to treat the increasing number of sick people in the villages. Dr. James Shepherd, the most effective medical missionary to Rajasthan, took charge of the Ajmer hospital before he moved to Udaipur. He was surprised to see the large number of patients with various diseases coming to his dispensary for treatment. According to the 1874 mission report, throughout that year an average of 600 new cases were treated every month quite apart from the 1100 existing cases. Even today, treating 1700 patients in a month is an enormous task for many less developed villages of the state. See Carstairs, *Shepherd of Udaipur*, 66.

David J. du Plessis is true of Rajasthan as well. According to him, personal witness by Pentecostal followers is the chief reason for the ‘developments of indigenous churches and movements from the very beginning.’⁹⁶ The story of the formation of a Pentecostal church in Pimpri ⁹⁷ village illustrates this fact. Nathu,⁹⁸ along with his wife and children, came to Pentecostal faith in 1994 from a tribal community after receiving deliverance from demonic oppression. When he came to this new faith he was working in Udaipur, more than 75 kilometres from his village. Gradually he began to witness to his family members about his new faith. His brother-in-law became a Pentecostal after Nathu invited him and his family to attend his son’s birthday prayer meeting. When Nathu’s brother-in-law went back he began to introduce the new faith to other members of the family, and eventually a Pentecostal church was formed in his village. Many Pentecostal churches in Rajasthan have similar stories to tell.

3.4.2. Pneumatology

The following discussion is limited to show the emphasis on the Holy Spirit given by Pentecostals in Rajasthan, rather than complete details of their pneumatology. Pentecostals are characterized by their stress on the Spirit. Rajasthani Pentecostals are often called *Pavithrathma vale* (Holy Spirit-people) due to their emphasis on the Spirit of God. An analysis of the curriculum of FBC clearly reveals the Spirit-emphasis. Courses like ‘Pneumatology,’ ‘Holy Spirit in Paul,’ ‘Pentecostal Doctrines’ and ‘History of Revivals and Missions’ are offered as core courses in

⁹⁶ David J. du Plessis, ‘Golden Jubilees of Twentieth Century Pentecostal Movements,’ in *Azusa Street and Beyond: Pentecostal Missions and Church Growth in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Grant McClung (Gainesville, FL: Bridge-Logos, 2006), 71.

⁹⁷ Pimpri is a pseudonym.

⁹⁸ Pseudonym.

most degree programmes with a heavy emphasis placed on the person and work of the Spirit. At the same time other subjects like ‘Acts of the Apostles,’ ‘Homiletics’ and ‘Theology of Mission’ include a separate section on the Holy Spirit.⁹⁹

Pentecostals believe that the Holy Spirit is the real driving force in evangelism and mission. David du Plessis argues that the Holy Spirit makes everyone who receives Him a ‘powerful witness.’¹⁰⁰ Pentecostals claim that church planting and growth is the outcome of the work of the Spirit of God. Therefore, they give importance to spiritual activities as the means for church growth. In the Bible training centres, graduating students are encouraged to receive the power of the Spirit of God to be effective evangelists and church planters before they enter into the mission field. They use prayer, fasting and spiritual warfare as means for evangelism, church planting and growth. A separate course on ‘Spiritual Warfare’ is offered in all Pentecostal Training Institutes.

The pneumatocentrism is seen in their Christology as well, and so the distinction between their understanding of Christ and of the Holy Spirit is not so apparent, particularly for tribal Pentecostals who pray to the Holy Spirit as they pray to Jesus, and consider the Spirit as the healer and deliverer. For example, expressions like ‘*Athma muche Chudaya*’ (the Spirit has delivered me) and ‘*Athma muche*

⁹⁹ For example, ‘Holy Spirit in Acts,’ ‘Holy Spirit and Preaching’ and ‘Holy Spirit and Mission.’

¹⁰⁰ du Plessis, ‘Golden Jubilees,’ 71.

chanka kiya’ (the Spirit has healed me) are repeated in their testimonies.¹⁰¹ When they pray, most tribal Pentecostals use the term ‘*Athma*’ (the Spirit) more times than *Yesu* (Jesus).

Pentecostals in Rajasthan see the role of the Spirit to explain almost every aspect of life. For example, moving from one place to another is explained in terms of being ‘directed by the Holy Spirit.’ Many Pentecostal leaders who began with the vision of reaching north Rajasthan have moved towards the south over time, in spite of their claim to have the vision of reaching the unreached. Most of them explain their decision to move in terms of the Spirit’s guidance. While talking to the leaders of two major organizations about the reason why they moved their bases from the north to the south part of the state, they said that they did so in accordance with the guidance of the Spirit of God.¹⁰² Another example is the explanation of the four leaders who said that they had a specific direction by the Spirit to establish theological institutes.

However, in some cases it seems to be a Pentecostal tactic to use the Spirit to excuse certain types of behaviour, particularly with regard to divisions. The explanation by some leaders and laity for leaving a church is the guidance of the Spirit following periods of prayer and fasting. It is said that two Pentecostal denominations in the state began as schisms from another Pentecostal organization, though later it was projected as fulfilment of divine direction.

¹⁰¹ I have observed several times that the pastors, particularly those who are trained theologically, reiterate the story, saying ‘Jesus through the Holy Spirit healed our sister/ brother, and so, *bolo prabhu yesu masih ki jai* (shout victory to Jesus our Lord).’

¹⁰² This information is given during the leaders meeting on 8 May 2006.

3.4.3. Ecclesiology

Pentecostal ecclesiology in Rajasthan can be summarized as ‘Theology of Involvement.’ For Pentecostals, Church is a symbol of acceptance and participation. In many north Indian villages, women are not treated well, and their participation in the public sphere has not been encouraged in many villages¹⁰³ and female literacy is less than that of men in most village societies. In the early days, women were not taken to hospital as most doctors were male.¹⁰⁴ During field research, most people underlined this fact, especially Pentecostal women¹⁰⁵ as the Pentecostal message and their practice of congregational participation appeal to them, because they have not experienced freedom to a greater degree and traditionally women have been an oppressed class in India. In most churches, the attendance shows that more than 60 % are female. However, A.T. Cherian argues that it does not mean that the membership mainly consists of women, but as men go to work in far away places they may not be able to attend all the church services.¹⁰⁶

In Pentecostal churches, women are allowed to participate fully in spiritual activities alongside men. They are actively involved in church activities such as worship, preaching, teaching, praying for the sick and teaching Sunday school. In certain cases, women are allowed to be a part of church administration. One

¹⁰³ For more details, see Cherian, ‘Study of the Religion of the Bhils,’ 19.

¹⁰⁴ Dr. Shepherd’s farewell address indicates this. In one of the farewell addresses, signed by public officials in Rajasthan, when Dr. James Shepherd was leaving Udaipur in 1882, it was mentioned that local people gained confidence in him when he opened a mission dispensary, and that ‘they began to send even their wives and daughters to be treated’ at his hospital. See Carstairs, *Shepherd of Udaipur*, 142.

¹⁰⁵ This does not mean that participation is only meant for women, but the focus is given to women in this study as they are traditionally a neglected group in the north Indian villages.

¹⁰⁶ Cherian, ‘Contribution of Churches,’ 201.

example is the recent acknowledgement of Mary Mathews as the co-founder of FFCI, following the death of Thomas Mathews. She is now equally respected and honoured and given a voice in the church. There are female deaconesses in some churches. For example, RPC in Udaipur has Mrs. Mathur and Mrs. Dolly as deaconesses along with seven male deacons. FBC has four south Indian women, namely Mary Mathews, Rosmi Abraham, Christy Paul and Dimple Wilson on their faculty. Many Pentecostal organizations in Rajasthan have women evangelists. Anitha Mathew, Mathur, Ribbecca, Santha, Leelamma Varghese and others of FFCI and Thresiamma V.A. of Bethel Fellowship are examples. Apart from paid evangelists, there are many doing voluntary ministry. There are many female choir leaders, like Jyothi (from FFCI, Kherwara). Many churches have cell groups coordinated by women. For example, Santha is the leader of Katchi Basthi area of RPC church. She is the only woman leader among seven area leaders. However, this does not mean that there is equal participation of women in every aspect of church life, especially in church administration. For example, there are no female ordained pastors as their theology prohibits this.

3.4.4. Eschatology

Pentecostals in Rajasthan hold a premillennial eschatology.¹⁰⁷ They also believe in the secret rapture of the church, insisting that the church will not pass through the Great Tribulation that precedes the Second Advent of Christ. As mentioned earlier, the classical Kerala Pentecostals had a important role in shaping the theology of Pentecostalism in Rajasthan as many of the pioneer missionaries were

¹⁰⁷ For example, see the Statement of Faith of FBC (*Prospectus 2006*, 6).

from Kerala. Although there have been tremendous changes in terms of their understating of charismatic expressions of Christianity, their eschatology remains the same. Thomas Mathew's role in the shaping of Rajasthan eschatology is significant. Most of his sermons, at least in the early years, were on eschatological events, and particularly the second coming of Christ. His book *Bhavishyavani Ki Ruprekha* (Outline of Eschatology),¹⁰⁸ written in Hindi, remains the text book for eschatology in most Bible schools, as well as a handbook for many Pentecostals in Rajasthan. His commentary on the Book of Revelation¹⁰⁹ is another important work underlying the premillennial Pentecostal eschatology.

William Faupel's observations regarding the eschatology of early Pentecostals seem to be true of Rajasthani Pentecostals. According to him, 'The second coming of Jesus was the central concern of the initial Pentecostal message. As the movement spread throughout the world, the message was the same.'¹¹⁰ Belief in the imminent return of Christ seems to have played a central role in various aspects of Pentecostal life. It was a guiding factor, at least in the early days of Pentecostalism in the state. One leading Pentecostal leader taught his followers not to watch TV in their home. One of his followers lamented, 'He taught us, "If you keep TV in your home you will get TB in your body."¹¹¹ They believed that as Christ's coming was near they should lead a holy life. This discouraged them from involvement in socio-political activities, which they believed would corrupt

¹⁰⁸ Thomas Mathews, *Bhavishyavani Ki Ruprekha* [Outline of Eschatology], rev. ed. (Udaipur, India: Cross and Crown, 2004).

¹⁰⁹ Thomas Mathews, *Revelation Simplified: Glimpses of Eternity*, rev. ed. (Udaipur, India: Cross and Crown, 2004).

¹¹⁰ D. William Faupel, *The Everlasting Gospel: The Significance of Eschatology in the Development of Pentecostal Thought* (Sheffield: SAP, 1996), 20.

¹¹¹ Chacko (pseudonym), interview by author, Udaipur, Rajasthan, 24 May 2006.

them and disqualify them from being with Christ when He returns. However, eschatology remains the driving force of mission for Pentecostals in Rajasthan, as in many other parts of the world. William Faupel has rightly observed, ‘The belief in the imminent premillennial return of Christ proved to be the primary motivation for evangelization and world mission.’¹¹²

3.4.5. Missiology

The mission theology and practice of Pentecostals have a vital role in the growth and establishment of the Pentecostal movement in Rajasthan. A heavy emphasis on mission has been evident in Pentecostalism in Rajasthan from its very inception, as it is globally. Anderson’s research on early Pentecostalism confirms that the ‘Pentecostal movement from its commencement was a missionary movement.’¹¹³ Regarding its outstanding growth, Paul A. Pomerville argues that the global Pentecostal Movement is a ‘modern missionary phenomenon.’¹¹⁴ This is probably due to Pentecostal pneumatology, as they understood the Holy Spirit as a missionary spirit. They believed that they have been empowered by the Spirit for mission. Pneumato-centricism in Pentecostal mission is evident in every aspect of mission in Rajasthan. Anderson’s observation of the Spirit emphasis in both missionary calling and missionary preparation by Pentecostals¹¹⁵ is found true in the life of many Pentecostal leaders in Rajasthan. Out of the eighteen

¹¹² Faupel, *Everlasting Gospel*, 21.

¹¹³ Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 67.

¹¹⁴ Paul A. Pomerville, *The Third Force in Missions: A Pentecostal Contribution to Contemporary Mission Theology* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1985), 19.

¹¹⁵ Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 66-67. According to him, ‘Pentecostals placed primary emphasis on being “sent by the Spirit” and depended more on what was described as the Spirit’s leading than on formal structures.’ Their missionaries did that job as per the direction of the Spirit, ‘often through some spiritual revelation like a prophecy, a dream, or a vision, and even through an audible voice perceived to be that of God.’ He notes that Spirit baptism was the most required preparation for Pentecostals to engage in mission.

Pentecostal leaders who were interviewed, all claimed the Spirit's guidance in their missionary calling. For example, the present vice-president of FFCI, K.V. Abraham, had a series of spiritual revelations, including prophecy and vision, regarding his calling as a missionary.¹¹⁶ Most of these leaders did not have any formal theological education before they began their missionary work in Rajasthan, but considered Spirit anointing as a requirement for missionary preparation. However, a few realized the importance of theological education and pursued higher education after entering into the ministry.¹¹⁷ Wagner argues that, for Pentecostals, church growth is the outcome of 'the work of the Spirit of God'.¹¹⁸ According to Cherian, Holy Spirit baptism and the subsequent manifestations of spiritual gifts are unique features of the growth of Pentecostal churches in Udaipur.¹¹⁹

Without exception all Pentecostal Bible schools have a missionary vision. This mission emphasis of Pentecostals is obvious even in the curriculum of Pentecostal Bible schools in Rajasthan, where missiology is an integral part of theological education. At the same time, the place of missiology in theological education is significant for Christians in India in general. Siga Arles, a leading missiologist in India, emphatically states, 'mission should be the dominant theme of all theological education in that all subject areas are to be taught from a missional

¹¹⁶ Varkey, *Ormayude Theerangaliloode*, 46-48.

¹¹⁷ Three Pentecostal leaders admitted this fact.

¹¹⁸ Wagner, *Look Out*, 30.

¹¹⁹ For more details, see Cherian, 'Pentecostal Revival,' 38-40.

perspective.¹²⁰ Pentecostal institutes offer programmes with an emphasis on evangelism and church planting. The vision and curriculum of FBC illustrates this fact. Its vision is to ‘fulfil the “Great Commission” in the power of the Holy Spirit.... the vision of reaching the nation by training men and women, who are spiritually vibrant... Spirit-empowered....’¹²¹ The MDiv programme offers eight mission subjects, and two of them are core courses. Five mission subjects are offered for BTh, and two of them are core courses, and the Diploma programme has three mission subjects.

It is not so easy to make a distinction between Pentecostal mission theology and mission practice as they seem to be inseparable. Their mission theology seems to be pragmatic. However, this seems to be the characteristic of global Pentecostalism generally. Pomerville has observed that Pentecostals have a ‘church growth oriented mission strategy,’ and their ‘mission strategy has also been characterized as pragmatic.’¹²² Pentecostals in Rajasthan mainly focus on evangelism and church planting. They argue that whatever the means of mission, the end result must be church planting. They use various means of evangelism, including literature distribution, street preaching, house-to-house witnessing, personal evangelism, healing campaigns, hospital evangelism, as well as power encounter activities like prayer walking and spiritual mapping. The description in

¹²⁰ Siga Arles, ‘The Place of Missiology in Theological Education: How Does Formal Theological Education Shape Future Mission Leadership?’ in *Leadership and Mission: Papers from the 9th CMS Consultation*, ed. Mark T.B. Laing (Pune/Delhi, India: CMS/ISPCK, 2004), 175. He explains how all theological education is given from a mission perspective. See pp. 175-78.

¹²¹ *Prospectus 2006*, 5.

¹²² Pomerville, *Third Force*, 109.

the FBC prospectus regarding the programmes offered by the college clearly reveals the importance of church planting.¹²³ Finny Philip, the present principal of FBC, while evaluating the work of Thomas Mathews, argues that Mathews was consolidating the already-begun north Indian revival into a ‘vibrant Pentecostal church planting movement.’ Finny refers to it as one of the ‘radical revolutions brought to north Indian Pentecostalism by Mathews.’¹²⁴ ‘Church Planting is mission’ was one of the basic mission concepts of Mathews, and this emphasis by Mathews is one of the chief reasons for the remarkable growth of FFCI.¹²⁵ However, they are also involved in social missions, like running schools, medical camps, education aids for children and providing winter clothing.

Another important aspect of Pentecostal mission is that many churches have turned themselves into missionary organizations over the course of time. There are many Pentecostal pastors who began with no other vision except to form a congregation but later established many congregations, and became missionary organizations. There are at least five leaders who have revealed this fact. Four of these five said that they have expanded their vision under the guidance of the Spirit. While two of them said that they had a prophetic utterance to do so, one of them said he had a dream by the Spirit to enlarge his vision, and the other said that he had a direct voice of the Spirit to expand his ministry.

¹²³ For further details, see *Prospectus 2006*, 12. For example, the aim of the Diploma in Theology programme is to ‘prepare the students for pioneer church planting ministry.’

¹²⁴ Philip, ‘Thomas Mathews Revolution.’

¹²⁵ For more details on Mathew’s church planting mission, see Lukose, ‘Thomas Mathews,’ 24-27.

One of the most significant features of the missiology of Pentecostals in Rajasthan seems to be a progressive missiology, and this observation of both their mission theory and practice reveals this progressive nature as well as the Spirit dimension. The following discussion focuses on three major aspects to enable an understanding of the changing nature of their mission. Firstly, changes can be seen in their mission focus. The vision statement of most churches contains the phrase 'to reach the unreached in the villages.' However, very recently, Pentecostals began to think about focusing on the non-tribal and the non-rural as well. Such a shift in focus is seen in many organizations. For example, as mentioned earlier, the IPCoG, one of the largest indigenous Pentecostal denominations in India, began to focus on the rural areas in Rajasthan only in recent years. FFCI, the leading Pentecostal church in Rajasthan, has recently revised its vision statement. The earlier statement declares that FFCI aims to be a leading indigenous Church to reach the unreached with the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to establish village churches in north India. However, the changes in the revised statement are notable: 'FFCI aims to be a leading indigenous organization to reach the unreached with the love and power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and to establish worshipping, witnessing and caring communities in both the urban and rural regions of India.'¹²⁶

Initially emphasis was placed on evangelism and church planting, and little room was given to social mission. People who showed an interest in the establishment of schools were accused of being backsliders. K.O. Varghese, the current general

¹²⁶ Native Missionary Movement, 'SWOT Analysis of NMM' (Udaipur, India: NMM), 1.

secretary of FFCI, is a prominent Pentecostal leader who took an interest in schools several years ago. He said that he was discouraged by his fellow Pentecostal leaders when he expressed his desire to establish a school in Dungarpur, one of the most backward areas in terms of social mobility and progress in the 1970s when he began his ministry. He was accused of ‘moving away from his original calling’ as a minister, and of having ‘moved his eyes from other worldly to this worldly aspects.’ Varghese said that despite the discouragements by many, he had determined to proceed with his vision as he had a ‘clear guidance by the Spirit’ to empower the marginalized through education.¹²⁷ On the other hand, establishing schools in various villages as well as cities is being encouraged among Pentecostals, and it has become an integral part of their mission.

There are even changes taking place in the syllabus of mission subjects in various Pentecostal theological institutes. For example, at FBC, the subject ‘Evangelism and Mission’ has been changed to ‘Theology of Mission’, and other courses like ‘Contemporary Challenges to Mission’ have been introduced. The syllabus of ‘Theology of Mission’ mainly focused on evangelism and church planting. However, very recently it has included social mission as well.¹²⁸ Consequently,

¹²⁷ K.O. Varghese, interview by author, Dungarpur, Rajasthan, 20 May 2005.

¹²⁸ Being a part of the curriculum committee, I remember the voices in the faculty meeting who insisted on the need to include social mission in the syllabus. The most interesting issue is that many of these voices were once ardent opponents of the inclusion of social action in Pentecostal mission.

there are changes in the outline of courses. There are even missionary training institutes, who have included vocational training in their programmes.¹²⁹

There was a time when Pentecostals in the state were opposed to Christian involvement in politics. Participation in politics by members was prohibited, and politicians were not welcomed. However, there has been an increase in the number of politicians among Pentecostals. Cherian's study reveals that there are Pentecostals serving in various capacities, such as *Taluk pradhan* (chief of a Taluk), *sarpanch* (chief of a village), *gram sachiv* (member of a village council) and *ward panchs* (chief of a ward in a village). Some of them have also been actively involved in church planting ministry and have established their own congregations.¹³⁰ In fact there are a few pastors who are actively involved in politics today. At least one minister, Manohardas,¹³¹ who was a fulltime pastor of a local Pentecostal church until recently, has even left his fulltime pastoral work to fully engage in the socio-political welfare of the community due to the change in context. According to him, because there was nobody to hear their problems, the Spirit gave him the wisdom that they needed their own people to represent them in the influential circles of society.¹³² Moreover, a few Pentecostal leaders are actively involved in Human Rights activities, as will be discussed in chapter five. Pastors and believers are encouraged to be members of the Tribal Christian Associations and show their solidarity and act in unison in times of need for the protection of rights and from exploitation by various political parties.

¹²⁹ For example, both FBC and Rajasthan Bible Training Centre have training in tailoring for ladies.

¹³⁰ Cherian, 'Pentecostal Revival,' 39.

¹³¹ Pseudonym.

¹³² Manohardas, interview by author, Udaipur, Rajasthan, 24 May 2006.

There are changes even in terminology. In the vision statement of some churches, their purpose is stated as ‘transforming the communities,’ not simply as ‘reaching’ them. In many places the newly-established church buildings are no longer called ‘church,’ but ‘community hall.’ The minister is called ‘community developer’ instead of pastor. Much change is taking place in the light of the change in context. It is suggested that in the future it will not be easy to go somewhere simply as a pastor or preacher, but rather as a community developer.

Secondly, there are definite changes taking place in the position of theological education in Rajasthan. In the initial period, Pentecostals thought that only Bible knowledge and an anointing by the Spirit of God were the qualifications needed to be a minister. Early Pentecostal missionaries were not interested in theological training and even discouraged people from having any theological education. A senior leader has lamented that when he expressed his desire for theological education, his leader told him, ‘Christ’s coming is nearing. Don’t waste your time in the Bible schools. If you are filled with the Holy Spirit, that is enough. You should learn not Cemetery Theology¹³³ (Seminary theology) but *Kneeology*’ - Theology on knees.¹³⁴

¹³³ Initially, Pentecostals in India were not willing to send their young people for theological training in seminaries, as they thought that the theology youngsters learn from the seminaries is a dead theology and that is why refer it as cemetery theology. In an interview, T.G. Koshy, the founder principal of Faith Theological Seminary (FTS), Kerala, explained the hardship he faced from his fellow Pentecostal leaders, pastors and believers. FTS is the first Pentecostal institution in India which obtained validation for its degrees from the Senate of Serampore. T.G. Koshy, interview by author, Birmingham, 11 April 2008.

¹³⁴ There was an impression among the early Pentecostal leaders in India that a minister should spend time on his/her knees before God in prayer and learn the Bible on knees. It is believed that the Lord would reveal the ‘mystery of His Word when people are on their knees.’ Those who advocate such a concept have coined the term *Kneeology*.

However, as the churches started growing, Pentecostals realized the importance of education. On the basis of theological education, Rajasthan Pentecostal ministers can be classified as those who are untrained, those who have received some informal training, those who underwent certificate or diploma level formal training, and those who have a valid Degree from a recognized institution. In the whole state there is only one theological educational institute, namely FBC, Udaipur, which offers programmes that are validated by an accreditation institution. FBC offers various programmes from Certificate to Degree level, which are accredited by Asia Theological Association (ATA). However, there are four other theological institutes that offer certificate or diploma level courses. These institutions can be regarded as denominational Bible Schools or Training Centres. The theological education in the state can be classified as Informal Training, Formal Training - Certificate/Diploma Level, Formal Training – Undergraduate Level, and Formal Training – Graduate Level. Both Pentecostal as well as non-Pentecostal leaders agree that the development of theological institutes was a key factor in the growth of the Pentecostal movement in Rajasthan.¹³⁵ All Pentecostal leaders without exception emphatically stated that the formation of FBC is one of the chief reasons for the growth of FFCI. A leader who recently began a training centre admitted that he received inspiration from FBC to start a Bible school for the growth of his church.¹³⁶ Today there is provision to study for a BA and MA from Mohanlal Sukhadia University, Udaipur

¹³⁵ Both Philip and Cherian argue that the formation of FBC was a significant factor behind the growth of Pentecostalism, particularly FFCI in Rajasthan. See Philip, 'Thomas Mathews Revolution,' 22; Cherian, 'Pentecostal Revival,' 39. Anand Choudhary acknowledges the role of FBC in the expansion of Pentecostalism in the state. Choudhary, interview, 09 May 2006.

¹³⁶ John (pseudonym), interview by author, Jaipur, Rajasthan, 09 May 2006.

for students who study at FBC along with their theological degree BTh and MDiv.¹³⁷

Thirdly, there is a progressive change in the Pentecostal attitude towards persecution in Rajasthan. Persecution has played an important role in the development of Pentecostalism in diverse ways. It had a catalytic effect. Persecution stories acted as Pentecostal inspiration for mission from the early period of the movement, and a great source of motivation for many Pentecostals to commit their life to mission in Rajasthan. For example, as mentioned earlier, Thomas Mathews dedicated his life to missionary service in Rajasthan when he was inspired by the persecution story from Philip that he and his team were beaten badly by Hindu religious militants at Nadhwara, during their trip to Rajasthan, but were protected by an angel of God.¹³⁸ Another example is the story of T.S. David, another south Indian, who was a graduate of Hindustan Bible Institute (HBI), Chennai who was encouraged to go as a missionary to Rajasthan after hearing the martyrdom story of Durai Raj from Tamil Nadu, another graduate from the HBI.¹³⁹ Raj came to Alwar, Rajasthan as a missionary, but was reported as missing one day after he went for morning meditation as usual in the nearby forest. He is believed to have been killed by religious fanatics as he was being threatened by them.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷ It is interesting to mention here that when I expressed my desire to do an MA along with my MDiv, I was discouraged by the leaders, who questioned the use of an MA for ministry.

¹³⁸ Thonnakkal, *Marubhoomiyile Aposthalan*, 16-17, 38-40.

¹³⁹ T.S. David, interview by author, Jaipur, Rajasthan, 10 May 2006.

¹⁴⁰ K. V. Pillai, *India's Search for the Unknown Christ* (Noida, India: Harvest Mission Publications, 1978), viii.

Although persecution placed Pentecostals in Rajasthan in an oppressive context, it has served as a great inspiration for them to work with more passion and vigour. The Church Father Tertullian's words 'the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church' has become a slogan for Pentecostals in Rajasthan, as in many parts of the nation and persecution has played a major role in stimulating church growth in Rajasthan.

Another significant role of persecution is that it has become a Pentecostal inspiration for ecumenism. As will be discussed in detail later, persecution has brought unity among Christians in Rajasthan. It has strengthened their fellowship in various levels. It has fostered unity within each church, among various Pentecostal denominations, and also between Pentecostals and other forms of Christianity.

Above all, persecution has turned out to be a Pentecostal inspiration for changes in missiology. Almost all Pentecostal leaders have agreed that the change in the situation has prompted them to make changes in their mission theology and practice. Many said that certain issues in the state, such as persecution and the introduction of anti-conversion law, forced them to think and act differently. Many leaders quoted Jesus' saying: '... be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.'¹⁴¹ Previously, they had been looking down on people of other faiths as people 'destined for hell,' but have now begun to regard them as 'friends and fellow citizens', 'fellow travellers' seeking truth, 'pre-Christian neighbours' and

¹⁴¹ Mathew 10: 16, NKJV. Most Pentecostals use the KJV. One of the most prominent leaders stated that, 'all the versions except KJV, whether old or new, are perversions'.

‘future believers.’ The previous evangelistic methods like street preaching and literature distribution are not much encouraged. Social mission was a neglected area, but today Pentecostals have begun to involve themselves more vigorously in the social development of society.

3.5. Pentecostals and Non-Pentecostals in Rajasthan

There has been a progressive improvement in the relationship between Pentecostals and non-Pentecostals in Rajasthan. Although the relationship was not encouraging in the beginning, gradually they have developed a friendly and healthy relationship, and have begun to mutually respect and accept one another.

3.5.1. Pentecostal and Non-Pentecostal Divide

Pentecostalism as a product of local revivals among the existing Christian community did not mean that Pentecostals received the same degree of welcome throughout its history. Rather, initially they were not considered a part of the Christian community, as in many other parts of the globe and faced opposition and intolerance from other forms of Christianity. Several stories of the mocking, humiliation, rejection and even physical assault they faced from their non-Pentecostal counterparts were narrated by Pentecostals during the field work.

There is a dual aspect to the opposition faced by Pentecostals. The first is the rejection faced by local Christians who had received supernatural spiritual experiences. They were mocked and mistreated by their church leadership and fellow Christians. For example, as seen earlier, during the revival in Banaswara,

there took place unusual spiritual experiences in the prayer meetings of the young boys and girls in the hostel run by the UCNI. There were visible manifestations of Spirit revival, such as weeping, confession of sins and speaking in tongues. However, they were forbidden by the church leadership from gathering together. According to Pathras Masih, it was told that they were ‘filled by the evil spirit,’ and thus the ‘spiritual thirst was quenched by the leaders of the church’.¹⁴²

According to Tajendra, the first local Pentecostal missionary from Banaswara, the resentful attitude of non-Pentecostals towards Pentecostals is seen at the death of Mrs. Jiwa. The Presbyterians did not provide a place for a church burial when Mrs. Jiwa died, insisting that she was a *dubki vali*. Consequently, she was buried outside the cemetery. However, the important point here is that the leadership of the Presbyterian church was not indigenous, and Tajendra thinks that if the church leadership had been local, the story would have been different.¹⁴³

The second aspect of the opposition is that the south Indian Pentecostal missionaries, particularly from Kerala, faced rejection, neglect and opposition from the existing churches. The issue of contention was not the Holy Spirit baptism but rather water baptism. The Kerala missionaries emphasized the importance of adult baptism by immersion, and they taught the need for baptism by immersion even for Christians in other churches who did not receive adult baptism. This is how tension was created, and the Pentecostal missionaries were labelled ‘*dubki vala*’ (the immersion people) and sheep stealers. They were also

¹⁴² Pathras Masih, interview by author, Banaswara, Rajasthan, 12 May 2006. Today, he is one of the most influential Rajasthani Pentecostal leaders.

¹⁴³ Tajendra, interview, 23 May 2006.

prohibited from entering into the houses of Christians, and there was public declaration in the existing churches to this effect. Pentecostalism in Rajasthan became known as *dubki mission*. The tension continued for many years as many people were converted from existing churches to Pentecostalism. However, Pentecostals eventually realized the need to avoid the process of ‘pentecostalization’ of Christians in other churches, and this is why they gradually shifted their focus on to non-Christians, and particularly the tribal communities.

3.5.2. Pentecostal Impact on Christianity

The current study shows that there are three main areas where the Pentecostal influence on Christianity in Rajasthan is evident. The first one is in the area of Christian spirituality, as was the case with the church in India in general. In my work on ‘Pentecostals and Indian Church,’ I have found that one of the major contributions of Pentecostalism to Indian Christianity is in the spiritual aspect of church.¹⁴⁴ It seems that the church in India tends to be moving towards a waning of spirituality, following the direction of western liberalism and secularism. In his preface to *Fire from Heaven*, Cox states that the predictions of many sociologists prompted him to talk of the death of religion in the West, and that is why, in his book *The Secular City*, he proposed a ‘theology for the “postreligious” age.’ However, three decades later Cox acknowledged that the phenomenal growth of Pentecostalism had convinced him that ‘it is secularity, not spirituality that may

¹⁴⁴ Wessly Lukose, ‘Pentecostals and the Indian Church,’ *Cross and Crown* 35, no.4 (2005): 12.

be headed for extinction.’¹⁴⁵ Through lively and vibrant worship and fervent prayer the churches in Rajasthan became spiritually alive. Today, the Pentecostal style of worship is adopted by many non-Pentecostal churches in Rajasthan. Rev. Krus Loyal, the CNI pastor at Beawar, said that they now have a charismatic style of worship in their church. However, many young people feel that this is a tactic by the leadership to encourage them to remain in the church because they are attracted by music and the Pentecostal pattern of lively worship. Based upon extensive field research in Udaipur district, A.T. Cherian argues that the chief local leaders of most non-Pentecostal mission organizations have had a charismatic experience, and so they practise charismatic spirituality in their ministry. He also reveals that most of them have some connection with Pentecostalism.¹⁴⁶

The second area of Pentecostal influence is in missions. According to Anderson, one of the chief reasons for Pentecostal growth is its ‘strong emphasis on mission and evangelism.’¹⁴⁷ Pentecostals believe that the Holy Spirit is a missionary spirit.

This missionary concept of the Holy Spirit drives them to engage in missionary outreach. When Pentecostals began to make an impact upon tribal communities,

¹⁴⁵ Harvey Cox, *Fire from Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-First Century* (London: Cassell, 1996), xv. He confidently argued that the age of the secular city will soon spread across the globe, and it is an age of ‘no religion at all.’ ‘It will do no good to cling to our religious and metaphysical versions of Christianity in the hope that one day religion or metaphysics will once again be back. They are disappearing forever and that means we can now let go and immerse ourselves in the new world of the secular city.’ See Harvey Cox, *The Secular City: Secularization and Urbanization in Theological Perspective* (London: SCM Press, 1965), 3-4. However, after two decades, he confessed that ‘the great era of modern theology,’ the ‘liberal theology’ is coming to an end, and he argued that ‘the post modern world will require a different theology.’ See Harvey Cox, *Religion in the Secular City: Toward a Postmodern Theology* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984), 268.

¹⁴⁶ Cherian, ‘Pentecostal Revival,’ 38-39.

¹⁴⁷ Anderson, *Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 206.

many non-Pentecostal organizations also followed their example by working among the tribal groups. This does not mean that Pentecostals were the first to work among the tribal communities; rather the 'successful tribal story of Pentecostals' sparked a new initiative among non-Pentecostals to serve the tribal groups more comprehensively. Pentecostal missionary fire ignited a new vigour, zeal and spirit in the missionary activities of other churches as well. Many non-Pentecostal churches began to realize the significance of healing and other spiritual gifts in their mission work. As a result, they have changed their strategies to reach the tribal communities. While conducting a marriage ceremony in a village in the district of Banaswara, a prominent non-Pentecostal leader confessed that the Pentecostal approach would be helpful for his church. He came to the conclusion that only 'the message and method of Thomas Mathews' would result in successful mission work in Rajasthan. By this he meant the Pentecostal message and practice, as most Christian leaders consider Mathews to be the most effective Pentecostal missionary in the state.¹⁴⁸

The third area of Pentecostal influence is in practical theology. There are two particular aspects of the teaching of other churches that have been influenced by Pentecostals. One example is the attitude of CNI towards the immersion baptism of adults. Until recently, only infant baptism was taught and practised by the CNI. Pentecostals were ridiculed as *dubki vala* in the early days of Pentecostalism in Rajasthan. There was a time when members of CNI who received baptism by immersion were expelled from the church. However, the teaching and practice on

¹⁴⁸ For further details, see Lukose, 'Thomas Mathews,' 24-27.

this issue has changed. In the latest Bye-Laws of CNI there is an amendment to the section on ‘the sacraments of the Church,’ whereby adult baptism by immersion is termed ‘believer’s baptism,’ and is accepted as an ‘alternative practice’ alongside infant baptism.¹⁴⁹ However, some CNI priests and laity see it as a measure to stop the exodus of members to Pentecostal churches. R. Masih, a retired CNI priest, has called the move a ‘defence mechanism.’¹⁵⁰ Another important change is in the understanding and practice of spiritual gifts. One influential evangelical leader admitted that his organization made changes both in theology and methodology after they realized the significance of healing and other miracles. He said, ‘we only preached about the person of Christ, but we realized that not only the person, but also the power of Christ is to be preached and demonstrated to have an effective work among these tribal people.’¹⁵¹ It is significant that this leader referred to the ‘power of Christ’ rather than ‘the Holy Spirit.’¹⁵² However, he acknowledged the changes in their understanding of the manifestation of the power of God. At least five non-Pentecostal leaders in Rajasthan who were interviewed admitted, rather reluctantly, that their understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit has changed after being influenced by the Pentecostal message.

¹⁴⁹ For more details, see *Constitution of The Church*, 17.

¹⁵⁰ R. Masih (pseudonym), interview by author, Ajmer, Rajasthan, 17 May 2006.

¹⁵¹ Babu (pseudonym), interview by author, Jaipur, Rajasthan, 22 May 2006. He is the leader of a large non-Pentecostal organizations in Rajasthan, having more than 300 congregations.

¹⁵² It is likely that his Brethren pneumatology has restricted him from using the phrase ‘power of the Holy Spirit.’

3.5.3. Pentecostals and Ecumenical Attempt

There is an increasing interest in ecumenism among Christians in Rajasthan today. There have been efforts in various districts of Rajasthan to build up a unity among various Christian sectors. In many cities like Udaipur, Banaswara, Ajmer and Jaipur, they have formed a united Christian Association. In most cases, they have a monthly meeting and annual assembly, apart from gatherings on special occasions like Christmas and Easter. It is very significant that during such meetings the ministers share the platform irrespective of denomination. In Udaipur, it is the practice that a Pentecostal pastor will preach when the meeting is hosted by a Catholic church, and *vice versa*. Ministers are included in the administrative body of this fellowship, irrespective of denominational differences. Today, Pentecostal pastors and singers are invited to other churches during special gatherings to preach and lead the praise and worship sessions. Such a practice was unimagined until a few years ago. For example, the RPC choir have been leading the worship during the annual convention of the CNI church in Jodhpur since 2001. Pastor Paul Mathews was invited to be the chief judge in the 2005 singing competition in the CNI church in Udaipur. Many Pentecostal preachers are given an opportunity to preach in mainline churches. I myself was invited to be a guest preacher in the annual convention of a non-Pentecostal church in 2004. Isaiah,¹⁵³ a CNI priest in Udaipur, used to attend the Sunday service at RPC after his own church service, stating that he and his family were interested in the Pentecostal message and worship. Pentecostals used to consider members of other churches to be nominal Christians or unbelievers and were not encouraged to attend their

¹⁵³ Pseudonym.

gatherings. However, today they have begun to participate in the meetings of other churches.

Christians in Rajasthan organize *Masih Mela* (Christian Festival) in many villages. It is a common event in many regions of Rajasthan, and usually takes place during the Christmas or Easter season. They organize special Christian gatherings, and people come from far distances to attend. These meetings include devotions, Bible study, separate meetings for women, children and youth, and gospel preaching every evening.

The present research has found two major reasons for the increasing interest in ecumenical initiatives among Pentecostals and non-Pentecostals in Rajasthan. For most leaders, the chief reason is the increasing persecution of Christians. The intensified persecution from Hindu militant groups has forced Christians to realize the importance of coming together and acting in unity. Christians feel that their rights are not protected and that they are denied justice, and so in response they have decided to come together. There are several examples to underline this fact. The most recent one is the 'peace march' in front of the state Assembly in Jaipur by Christians of all denominations in Rajasthan to protest against the attacks of Hindu militants on the Emmanuel church, Kota. Leaders and members of many churches rallied together under one banner in March 2006.

The second reason for this desire for unity is the increasing understanding between Pentecostals and non-Pentecostals. There was a time when

denominational doctrines created barriers between Christians. However, as discussed earlier, people are being exposed to new expressions of spirituality. It is significant that Pentecostals have changed their attitude to Catholics and other non-Pentecostal Christians. There was a time when Pentecostals believed that Roman Catholicism was the religion of the anti-Christ.¹⁵⁴ Pentecostals were known as sheep stealers. However, the charismatic experience provided opportunities for people to participate in each other's activities and to interact more, and thus they have begun to understand each other better. Due to information technology, people have begun to read about, watch and engage in new experiences, and this has promoted a better understanding of each other. Today CD, DVD, audio and video cassettes, books and magazines containing charismatic messages, praise and worship and other Holy Spirit manifestations are available, even for non-Pentecostals.

This does not mean that there is a smooth relationship between various Christian groups in every part of the state. There is reluctance and a degree of tension in some places. For example, in Ajmer, some Pentecostal pastors have complained that they are not included in the administration of the united fellowship in the city, and that they do not have a voice in such an assembly. Also some non-Pentecostal leaders have pointed out that not all Pentecostals are cooperating in these initiatives. In a discussion during an interview about the ecumenical efforts taking place, Rev. Collin C. Theodore, the CNI Bishop of the Diocese of Rajasthan,

¹⁵⁴ K.E. Abraham, *Mahathiyam Babylon* [Babylon the Great] (Kumbanad, India: K.E. Abraham Foundation, 1993) is the best example for understanding the early approach of Indian Pentecostals to Roman Catholicism. Abraham tries to establish that the Catholic Church is the 'mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and of the abominations of the earth' as mentioned in Revelation 17:5.

expressed his concern that not all were equally interested. He presented me with a book entitled *Uniting in Christ's Mission*,¹⁵⁵ and stated that 'this is what I am trying to do, to unite all Christian missions in the state.'¹⁵⁶

3.6. Conclusion

This chapter concludes that the Christian message had reached Rajasthan long before Pentecostals came to the state, where Pentecostalism is not a breakaway movement from either the existing churches or the Pentecostal revival elsewhere in India. The origins and growth of Pentecostalism in Rajasthan are due to four major reasons. First, missionaries from other north Indian states, influenced by the indigenous revivals in various places of the country, brought the Pentecostal message to Rajasthan. In this sense, Pentecostalism in Rajasthan can be viewed as a product of the missionary outreach of north Indian Pentecostals. Second, the local revivals that took place in the existing churches in Rajasthan have created a spiritual thirst among the Christians. From this perspective, Pentecostalism in Rajasthan can be regarded as a revival movement linked to the spiritual renewal that took place in the existing churches. Third, missionary activities of south Indian Pentecostals played a significant role in the making of the Pentecostal movement as these missionaries took the Rajasthani revival to new heights. Fourth, the involvement of Rajasthani missionaries caused the movement to spread to almost every district.

¹⁵⁵ Enos Das Pradhan, Sudipta Singh, and Kasta Dip, eds., *Uniting Christ's Mission: Towards a United, Holistic, Evangelistic and Cross-Cultural Mission* (Delhi: ISPCK, 2006).

¹⁵⁶ Collin C. Bishop, interview by author, Ajmer, Rajasthan, 19 May 2006.

Despite the fact that the classical Pentecostal theology of Kerala had an influence on the theology and practice of Pentecostals in Rajasthan, this chapter shows the progressive nature of Pentecostal theology. It also suggests that missiology has a significant role in the growth and development of Pentecostalism in Rajasthan. The changing situation, which includes persecution and their Spirit experiences, has been partly responsible for the reformulation of Pentecostal mission theory and practice. Despite the divide between Pentecostals and non-Pentecostals, Pentecostalism has had an impact on other Christians, and the spirit of ecumenicity is on the rise. Although Pentecostalism is a minority religious movement with most of its followers being tribal it has become the fastest growing Christian sector. This does not mean that Pentecostalism grows without any challenge, but in reality they face complex issues from within and without the movement, and for that discussion we now turn to chapters four and five.

Chapter 4

PENTECOSTALISM AND THE RELIGIO-POLITICAL CONTEXT

In the last chapter I described Pentecostalism in Rajasthan. This chapter focuses on religio-political issues faced by Pentecostals. There are several important questions that need to be addressed. Firstly, do Pentecostals face any crisis due to their minority status? Secondly, is religious intolerance an issue in India today? Thirdly, how does the religio-political nexus affect Pentecostals? In this chapter, I will explore religio-political issues at a macro and micro level, and examine their affect upon Pentecostals. This is not to argue that Pentecostals are the only group that face such issues. Christians in many other parts of India, particularly in the north, face similar situations, but it is likely that Pentecostals are particularly affected. It is necessary to consider the external issues involved in a particular context in order to understand emerging Pentecostal missiology, as these issues have had its impact on the theology and practice of Pentecostals in Rajasthan as seen in chapter three.

4.1. Pentecostals: A Minority in Rajasthan

Although Hinduism is the predominant religion, several other religions, including Islam, Jainism, Buddhism, Sikhism and Christianity exist in the state. There is a popular notion that all religious groups, apart from Hinduism, are regarded as minorities in India. However, only five religious communities - Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Zoroastrians (Parsees) - have been given the

official status of National Minorities.¹ According to the 2001 census, these five religious minority communities constitute 18.42 percent of India's total population. The largest group are Muslims (13.4 percent), while Christians make up only 2.3 percent.² Rajasthan has 10.06 percent of its total population from religious minority communities. Since Pentecostals belong to the Christian community, they are a minority group in Rajasthan. Although the Indian constitution provides equality and justice in every aspect for minorities, in reality they struggle to maintain their rights.

4.1.1. Minority Status in India

No Indian Constitutional document gives a clear definition of the term 'minority.' The Indian Constitution refers to minorities, and speaks of those 'based on religion or language.'³ However, religion is the most popular category used to define minority status. Even today the debate on the definition of minority is ongoing. For example, Justice Jagannatha Misra, who is the present Religion-Language Minority National Commission Chairman, asked the central government to ensure that the Schedule Tribe (ST) reservation should not be based on religion.⁴ The Constitution of India guarantees equal rights to all citizens. The Preamble of the Constitution (as amended in 1976) declares that the State is 'Secular,' and that every citizen of India has the 'liberty of thought,

¹ James Massey, *Minorities in a Democracy: The Indian Experience* (Delhi: Manohar Publishers, 1995), 27.

² http://www.censusindia.gov.in/Census_Data_2001/India_at_glance/religion.aspx (accessed 02 October 2008).

³ National Commission for Minorities, 'About NCM,' <http://ncm.nic.in/genesis.html>, (accessed 12 November 2006). This is the official web site of the National Commission for Minorities set up by the government of India.

⁴ <http://www.deepika.com/Archives/archivepage.asp/> (accessed 23 May 2007).

expression, belief, faith and worship and “equality of status and of opportunity.”⁵

India has not only recognized the existence of minorities, and has given them official status, but has also offered special safeguards and rights to the minorities, including religious groups.

‘Unity in Diversity’ is the basic principle upon which the Indian Constitution stands. The balance between national unity and cultural, religious and social diversity is addressed in the Constitution. James Massey, a former Member of the National Commission for Minorities in India, commented that the founders of the Indian Constitution introduced the theory ‘Unity in Diversity’ because they could foresee an ongoing tension between majority and minority groups. Majority groups tend to have a perception that ‘the separate identity of a minority will endanger national unity,’ while minority groups harbour a notion that ‘the majority will absorb them and one day, ultimately, they would lose their identity.’⁶

4.1.2. Minority Welfare and Rights

The concept of minority welfare existed in India even before independence. According to K.S. Durrany, an Indian scholar in Philosophy and Religion, the idea of the Welfare of Minorities can be traced back to the Government of India Acts of 1919 and 1935. Up until independence there was provision even for a separate electorate for diverse religious minorities. However, after independence such

⁵ National Commission for Minorities, ‘Constitutional Provisions,’ http://ncm.nic.in/constitutional_prov.html (accessed 12 November 2006). In the Indian context, a secular state is meant to protect all religions equally and does not uphold any religion as the state religion.

⁶ Massey, *Minorities in a Democracy*, 67.

political privileges enjoyed by the minorities were withdrawn by the government, although they were given the right to establish their own institutions.⁷

In order to safeguard the welfare of minorities, the Minorities Commission was set up. The purpose behind the formation of the Minorities Commission was outlined in the Ministry of Home Affairs Resolution, dated 12 January 1978:

Despite the safeguards provided in the Constitution and the laws in force, there persists among the Minorities a feeling of inequality and discrimination. In order to preserve secular traditions and to promote National Integration the Government of India attaches the highest importance to the enforcement of the safeguards provided for the Minorities and is of the firm view that effective institutional arrangements are urgently required for the enforcement and implementation of all the safeguards provided for the Minorities in the Constitution, in the Central and State Laws and in the government policies and administrative schemes enunciated from time to time.⁸

The Minorities Commission was asked to study the problems of minority communities. Nevertheless, until recently, it was given only the status of a recommendatory agency to the Central Government without having any executive and legal authority. With the endorsement of the National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992, the Minorities Commission became a statutory body, and was renamed as the National Commission for Minorities (NCM).⁹ The first

⁷ K.S. Durrany, *State Measures for the Welfare of Minorities* (Delhi: ISPCK, 1997), 1.

⁸ National Commission for Minorities, 'Constitutional Provisions,' http://ncm.nic.in/constitutional_prov.html (accessed 12 November 2006).

⁹ Durrany, *State Measures*, 2.

statutory Commission was constituted on 17 May 1993.¹⁰ All the five religious communities with the official status of National Minorities have their representatives on the Minorities Commission. It is significant that Pentecostals served in the Commission, representing the Indian Christian community. John Joseph, who belongs to IPCoG, was a member of the first NCM during the periods 1993-96 and then in 2000-2003. Another Pentecostal, Abraham Mathai, is the Vice-Chairman of the Maharashtra Minorities Commission.¹¹ Most states in India have set up a Minorities Commission. The State Government of Rajasthan also has established the Commission for Minorities.

4.1.3. Pentecostals and the Minority Complex

The current research shows that Pentecostals in Rajasthan have been grappling with a minority complex. All the Pentecostal leaders who were interviewed strongly expressed their anxiety over their minority status in the state. Being a minority group, Pentecostals feel that their institutions, property and even their lives are not safe. For example, the recent attack on one of the churches, ‘Emmanuel Mission International (EMI),’ caused Pentecostal leaders to express their concern. EMI is one of the oldest and best established Evangelical Christian organizations in Rajasthan. It has established a number of schools, orphanages and churches in various villages and cities of Rajasthan. Very recently, their leaders have been arrested and imprisoned, and orphanages, schools, and hospitals have been prevented from functioning. The state government even cancelled the charity registration of these ministries over allegations of soliciting conversion, until the

¹⁰ National Commission for Minorities, ‘Genesis,’ <http://ncm.nic.in/genesis.html> (accessed 12 November 2006).

¹¹ Abraham Mathai has been serving on the Maharashtra State Minorities Commission since 2000.

Central government eventually intervened. An experienced Pentecostal leader in Rajasthan lamented in a leaders meeting¹² that if such a bad thing happened to a well-established institution, no Christian organization has a future. However, some local leaders argue that there is no reason to run away from the situation, because the Constitution of India allows the freedom to believe and practise any religion, and the minority status of Pentecostals does not undermine their status as Indian citizens. Therefore, they argue that Pentecostals have to stand firm as Indian citizens, and as part of the Rajasthan community, and should resist their minority complex. Another leader quoted C.V. Mathew's suggestions for an action plan for the Christian Church in India in the context of Hindutva and religious nationalism. Mathew recommended that Christians should be 'concerned about human rights' and 'avoid the narrow agenda of "Minority Rights." Let the latter be the expression of the magnanimity of the majority community and not the obsession of a fear-stricken minority.'¹³

4.1.4. Minority Pentecostals as Nation Builders

Although Pentecostals are a tiny minority in Rajasthan they, along with other Christians, are part of the Indian nationalism. Despite the fact that Christianity in India has many eastern traditions regarding its origin, Christians are unfortunately identified with the western colonizers. The place of Christians in the making of the nation is very evident even from the time of independence. A number of

¹²A meeting of Charismatic Christian leaders took place on the 6th May 2006 in Jaipur, the capital city of Rajasthan. I was present at the meeting.

¹³ C.V. Mathew, 'Hindutva: Majority Religious Nationalism in India,' in *Mission in Context: Missiological Reflections*, ed. C.V. Mathew (Chennai/Delhi, India: MIIS/ISPCK, 2003), 237.

attempts have been made to explore Christian affinity with Indian nationalism.¹⁴ Thomas George's study shows that a series of indigenous Christian movements were on the rise during the Indian struggle for freedom, and these movements helped to build an 'Indian Christian self-awareness.' Subsequently, there took place a new relation to national culture, and Indian Christians began to function in the social and political life of the nation.¹⁵ According to R.S. Sugirtharajah, the 1857 revolt was 'a turning point also in Indian Christian theological reflection' as there were several attempts to oppose the colonial theology. Even after independence, the nationalist spirit was prevalent among the Indian theologians. The theological writings of M.M. Thomas, E.V. Mathew and Paul Devanandan are cited by Sugirtharajah to show that Indian theologians were helping to build the nation through their theological writings.¹⁶ Although Christianity spread to many places through the work of western missionaries, it was the indigenous Christian movements who initiated nationalist feelings and the idea of an Indian indigenous church. George argues that today the story is different, and the Christian message is taken all over India by indigenous Christian missionaries.¹⁷ Although no specific attempt is made to understand the contribution of Pentecostals in the freedom struggle, their nationalist attitude is very clear in the

¹⁴ For example, K.T. Paul, *The British Connection with India* (London, 1928); K.T. Paul, *Indian Nationalism* (London, 1928); Thomas George, *Christian Indians and Indian Nationalism, 1885-1950: An Interpretation in Historical and Theological Perspectives* (Frankfurt: Verlag Peter D. Lang, 1979); Teresa Albuquerque, 'The Role of the Christians in the National Struggle for Freedom,' in *The Role of Minorities in Freedom Struggle*, ed. Asgher Ali Engineer (Delhi: Ajanta Publications, 1986), 158-72; D. Arthur Jeyakumar, 'Christians and the National Movement in India, 1885-1947,' in *Nationalism and Hindutva*, 91-102. J. Kuruvachira, 'Christian Participation in India's Struggle for Independence,' *Mission Today* 8, no. 4 (2006): 355-69

¹⁵ George, *Christian Indians*, 12. This does not mean that all Indian Christians alike participated in the National Movement. However, an important fact is that Christians failed to make a visible representation in the Movement.

¹⁶ R.S. Sugirtharaja, 'Afterward Cultures, Texts and Margins: A Hermeneutical Odyssey,' in *Voices from the Margin: Interpreting the Bible in the Third World*, new ed. R.S. Sugirtharaja (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995), 470.

¹⁷ George, *Christian Indians*, 13.

formation of several indigenous missionary organizations and churches. While many of the mainline churches in India maintained alliances with foreign churches even after independence, at least for some years, most Pentecostal organizations are of indigenous origin. The Indian origin of Pentecostal churches is the chief reason that prompted Hedlund to call them ‘expressions of nationalism in response to colonialism.’¹⁸

Since Pentecostalism in Rajasthan is an indigenous movement, it has been closely connected to nationalism. Although Pentecostals are accused of being followers of a foreign religion, they claim that they are real patriots trying to build the nation India. A study of the practices of Pentecostals in the state reveals that they are making several attempts towards nation building. They affirm that although they are only a minority, they are nation builders in every sense. In his sermons the Pentecostal leader Thomas Mathews frequently used the phrase ‘we are nation builders.’

This claim is demonstrated in their various activities. The use of the National Flag by Pentecostals is an example of this. Several Pentecostal churches in Rajasthan keep the national flag inside the church building, and they wave the flag during worship services, while they sing and praise God. Not only on Sunday, but during common gatherings, like *Masih Mela* (Christian Festival), they use the flag.¹⁹

¹⁸ Hedlund, ‘Nationalism and the Indian,’ 91-107. In order to make his claim, he presents a case study of the IPCoG. According to him, the formation of IPCoG is an example of the national feeling of Pentecostalism against colonialism.

¹⁹ This practice is not to imitate American Pentecostals, who also have the flag in churches, but a deliberate attempt by Pentecostals to demonstrate their loyalty to the nation, as there remains an accusation from the time of British reign in India that Christians are not patriots.

Furthermore, Pentecostals in Rajasthan celebrate national days, such as Independence Day and the Republic Day, along with the rest of the nation. They hoist flags not only in their schools, but also on their seminary campuses and church premises. Prominent people like Bank Managers, Police Inspectors and Freedom Fighters from outside the community are invited as chief guests during such celebrations and are asked to address the people as well as to impart nationalist feelings to their audience. Patriotic songs with the meaning ‘we are patriots of our nation’ are sung in the Bible Colleges during such celebrations. Collective prayers for the peace of the nation are also said. There are articles on patriotism in *Cross and Crown*, the first Pentecostal periodical in Rajasthan, published from Udaipur, Rajasthan.²⁰ Such articles are published mainly during the Independence Day celebration.

Pentecostals in Rajasthan are passionate about securing divine blessings for India, and they make special prayers to that effect. They pray for the rulers, from the President of the nation to the *Sarpanch* (chief leader of a village), and members are encouraged to fast and pray for the nation. They say that they are making such intensive and sincere prayers for the nation on the basis of Scripture. I Timothy 2:1-3, Jeremiah 29:7 and Romans 13:1-7 are the common scriptural passages used to support this,²¹ and these verses are often read publicly. It is common practice in many Pentecostal churches for members to repeat slogans like ‘we bless India,’ ‘we love India,’ ‘God bless India’ and ‘God loves India’. After pronouncing these

²⁰ See for example, Jaswant Rana, ‘Jeremiah as a True Patriot: A Model for Us,’ *Cross and Crown* (Aug- September 1996), 14-16.

²¹ This information is found in the file ‘Academic Session 1999-2000,’ File No. D15.e (Udaipur, India: FBC).

slogans, leaders, especially indigenous ones, are keen to encourage the people to be patriotic and to work for the building of the nation. Apart from this, Pentecostals sing songs with words like 'I Love India, You love India, We love India,' and they try to do so in public meetings.²²

4.1.5. Minority Crisis

There are many who see that minority status in the Indian democracy is in crisis today.²³ Massey states that the problems of minorities are not expressed very clearly, and even the minorities themselves do not articulate their problems. He explains his own experience to support this. Massey served as a Member of NCM, for three years beginning from 1996, and he confessed that he wanted to study the minorities from their written documents. However, he found little written material from the perspective of religious minorities, which has resulted in the publication of *Minorities in a Democracy: The Indian Experience*.²⁴ In this, Massey tries to explain the place of minorities in a democratic nation like India, and the problems they are facing. He also makes some recommendations.

Christians consider the Minority problem is a serious issue. Although the Indian Constitution in principle provides for freedom and rights to minorities, Christians in India have always struggled as a minority. It seems that the genesis of the 'minority problem of Christians' originated right from the time of independence.

Teresa Albuquerque's analysis of the decision of the Advisory Committee on

²² These practices are deliberate attempts by Pentecostals to show their loyalty and patriotism to the nation.

²³ For example, see Massey, *Minorities in a Democracy*; Durrany, *State Measures*. They both discuss the plight of religious minorities

²⁴ Massey, *Minorities in a Democracy*, 13.

minority and fundamental rights, set up by the Constituent Assembly in 1947, reveals the problem. Her study shows that Indian Christians initially demanded a reservation of seats in proportion to the members, combined with the right to contest seats in a joint electorate. K.M Munshi, the legal pilot of the Advisory Committee, commended Christians for their fair attitude in accepting the reservation. Sardar Vallabhai Patel, the Chairman of the Committee, urged the granting of Fundamental Rights to minorities, citing the sacrifices made by them, and the proposal was finally accepted unanimously. However, Albuquerque comments that Christians were responding to the 'goodwill of the majority and surrendered the reservation seats accorded to them,' adding that Christians had agreed to this so that a solid foundation for a lasting democracy could be ensured.²⁵

Nevertheless, even today, six decades after Independence, it appears likely that the attitude of the majority is the same. In its annual conference in 2002, which was held in Bangalore, India, the *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* (RSS)²⁶ passed a resolution stating that the safety of minority communities lies in the 'goodwill of the majority.'²⁷ However, this cannot be taken as being representative of the voice of the majority. Rather, as *The Hindu*, one of the leading newspapers in India, commented, it shows the 'RSS's pretensions as the majority community's sole

²⁵ Albuquerque, 'Role of the Christians, 167.

²⁶ RSS is a Hindu NGO.

²⁷ P.R. Dubhashi, 'Meaning of Secularism,' *The Hindu*, 11 June 2002, under 'Open Page,' <http://www.hinduonnet.com/thehindu/op/2002/06/11/stories/2002061100020200.htm> (accessed 13 Nov 2006).

representative even while violating all religious tenets.’²⁸ The resolution sparked furious responses from people from various walks of society. *The Hindu* condemned it as an open threat to minorities, and stated that it was improper on the part of RSS to pass such a resolution:

Security is the fundamental right of every citizen guaranteed by the Constitution. It is the responsibility of the state to preserve and protect this right, which does not depend on anybody's goodwill. Of course the minority community should have the goodwill of the majority but the reverse is also equally true. There should be a sense of mutual trust and cooperation among all the sections of society. Secularism has been one of the essential elements in the basic structure of our Constitution which lays down that 1) the state has no religion; 2) all citizens however have the fundamental right to follow and propagate their own religion; and 3) it is the duty of the state to protect the life, liberty and property of all citizens, provide security to them and enable them to exercise their fundamental rights. The state will not discriminate between the citizens on the grounds of religion and language.²⁹

However, as reported by *The Hindu*, K.S. Sudarshan, the RSS chief, seems to have changed his position since then, probably as a result of serious reactions to the RSS resolution. He is reported to have said: ‘India does not have any minorities as 99 per cent of the people who live here have their ancestors

²⁸Editorial, ‘Intimidatory Tactics,’ *The Hindu*, 21 March 2002, under ‘Opinion,’ <http://www.hinduonnet.com/2002/03/21/stories/2002032100211000.htm> (accessed 13 Nov 2006).

²⁹ Dubhashi, ‘Meaning of Secularism.’ *The Hindu* published a number of responses by many people on those days following the RSS resolution.

belonging to this land. The concept of "minority" and "majority" is from the West, which has been forcing its ways on the people all these days....'³⁰

Pentecostals in Rajasthan, like other Indian Christians, argue that they are facing discrimination on the basis of religion. According to Jaswant Rana, who serves as the founding patron of TCWSI and also as the Minority Representative of FFCL, tribal Christians lose their privileges and rights purely on the basis of religion. Once a tribal man or woman becomes a Christian his or her tribal privileges are denied.³¹ This is not an exclusive problem of Pentecostals in Rajasthan, but a common issue faced by all Christians. The leaders of All India Christian Council (AICC) raised the issue of discrimination shown to the religious minorities and Dalits in India at the anti-racism World Conference at Durban in 2001. They submitted a memorandum to the representatives of the United Nations (UN) explaining how the majority is harassing the minority groups like the Dalits, Christians, Muslims, Buddhists and Sikhs. They blamed the RSS and Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP)³² and argued that '*Hindutva pariwar*'³³ is a threat to religious minorities and Dalits. The AICC leaders complained that a 'hate-campaign' is being conducted against the minorities in the country and requested an enquiry by the UN and other international bodies into the conduct of such religious groups. Christian leaders consider this a 'great achievement' as they

³⁰ Sunny Sebastian, 'India does not have any Minorities: RSS Chief,' *The Hindu*, 17 March 2004, under 'National,' <http://www.hinduonnet.com/2004/03/17/stories/2004031704511400.htm> (accessed 13 Nov 2006).

³¹ Jaswant Rana, interview by author, 15 May 2006.

³² VHP is another Hindu NGO

³³ The collective group of all Hindu militant organizations such as RSS, Bajrang Dal, VHP and Shiv Sena is known as *Sangh Parivar* or *Hindutva Parivar*. In this study, both are used interchangeably with the same meaning, unless otherwise mentioned.

argue that for the first time the UN and the international community acknowledge the existence of the suffering experienced by minorities in India.³⁴

There are two major problems raised by the fact that Pentecostals are a minority in Rajasthan. Firstly, Pentecostals have no influential voice, as they have no representation in the State Assembly or in lower levels of administration. Secondly, Pentecostals think that they are treated as second class citizens in many instances. The majority religious groups seem to believe that the minority are subject to their control, and consequently, the latter face unwarranted persecution. Several cases have been recorded by Pentecostals of Police authorities not being willing to listen to their problems or register a case against a militant group who has inflicted atrocities against them. Many local Pentecostal leaders have insisted that their followers are put under enormous pressure to accept the majority religion.³⁵ They believe that the majority is imposing its will on them over the issue of religious belief and practice, and that is why their rights and privileges are denied.

There are manifold dynamics to the struggle of Pentecostals as a minority group in Rajasthan. However, this is not to argue that it is a problem faced by Pentecostals alone; rather it is probably the case for all Christians, irrespective of denominational affiliation and location in India. The current study identifies

³⁴ Special Correspondent, 'U.N. Apprised of "Discriminations" in India, *The Hindu*, 6 September 2001, under 'Regional,' <http://www.hinduonnet.com/2001/09/06/stories/04062017.htm> (accessed 15 November 2006).

³⁵ Even during the recent religious violence in Orissa, it is reported that Christians were forcibly to be converted to Hinduism by Hindutva groups. For more details, see Parvathi Menon, 'Conversion to Hinduism a Condition for Christians to Return Home in Khandhamal,' *The Hindu*, 1 October 2008, under 'Front Page,' <http://www.thehindu.com/2008/10/01/stories/2008100161861400.htm> (accessed 01 October 2008).

various dynamics related to the issue of minority status. First, there are religious dynamics. There is a popular notion that Christianity is a western religion, and so Indians are being converted to a foreign religion. Pentecostals in particular are accused of converting others. It is argued, in particular, that they are converting Hindus, and so Hinduism is decreasing. On the other hand, tribal Pentecostals feel that they are the original inhabitants of the land alongside other tribal people, and they have their own tribal religions. Thus, they have the freedom to choose their religion. Tribal Pentecostals raise various issues, such as the ‘introduction of the anti-conversion law’, the ‘accusation that they are followers of a foreign religion’, and the ‘denial of their tribal as well as constitutional rights’, to argue that the will of the majority is being imposed on them.

Second, there are cultural dynamics. There is a misconception that Christianity was brought to India by foreigners who wanted to bring changes to indigenous cultures as well. Similarly, there is a misunderstanding that Pentecostalism was brought to Rajasthan by south Indians, as discussed in chapter three. Initially, south Indian Pentecostals were called *Hallelujah vala* (People who shout Hallelujah) and *dubki vala* (immersion people)³⁶ by other Christians. Therefore, Pentecostalism was misunderstood as a south Indian religion, at least in the initial period of the movement, and this impression still exists.

Third, the minority issue has political dynamics. Another wrong notion in Rajasthan is that Christians are opposed to the political party BJP and that they

³⁶ In Hindi language, immersion baptism is called *dubki baptisma*. Since Pentecostals practise immersion baptism of adults, they were called *dubki vala*, and Pentecostalism was called *dubki mission* by other Christians during the early period of Pentecostal history in Rajasthan.

never support BJP as it is a Hindu dominated party. Against this, it is argued that such a notion is wrong because other parties also have Hindus as their major followers. Beside this, BJP has some Christian members as well as a Christian MP (Member of Parliament).³⁷ Most churches pray very intensely during election days that a government which opposes Christians should not come into power. Special fasting prayers are organized, and people are encouraged to pray for a government that favours Christians.³⁸ Such practices are interpreted to mean that Christians are an anti-BJP community. The need to constantly pray for the election of pro-Christian governments was emphasized in the leaders meeting on 08 May 2006. However, Pentecostals argue that they are not against any government, but against political parties and governments that oppose Christians and their freedom to practise their faith. There is a popular notion that the BJP is acting against the will of Christians. The increasing number of well planned attacks on Christians and the introduction of the anti-conversion law in most of the states where the BJP has been ruling, have given an impression to minority Christians that the BJP is against them.

Fourth, there are the social dynamics. Christians are involved in educational projects, especially among outcastes and tribal communities in the rural villages. Christians argue that as a consequence tribal communities and other marginalized

³⁷ H.T. Sangliana, the BJP MP from Bangalore North, Karnataka, is a Presbyterian from Mizoram. However, while the final draft of this thesis is being written, it is reported that Sangliana resigned as a BJP MP, as there was a great deal of pressure on him from the party, following his stern voice against the recent violence on Christian minority by the Hindu militants in the state of Karnataka.

³⁸ I can recollect what happened in one such meeting a few years ago. The preacher was questioned after preaching, because he said 'after all, it is God who brings people into authority, and so we should not advise God.'

people will no longer be subject to the Brahminical social order³⁹ and so it can no longer be implemented as these oppressed communities will be enlightened through education. The tribal communities will be enhanced socially through assimilation and involvement with other people in the Pentecostal community through its emphasis on participation and involvement, as discussed in chapter three.

4.2. Religious Intolerance

India was known as a nation of religious tolerance and harmony until the recent disturbing signs of religious tension. India is the birth-place of religions such as Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism, and at the same time the nation has welcomed many other religions such as Christianity and Islam. India is a religiously pluralistic society, more so than many other nations. However, there have been examples of a number of religious conflicts in post-independent India, and in the past few decades there has been a tremendous growth of religious intolerance. Christianity and Islam in particular face severe hardship from militant Hinduism.

Various reasons lie behind this intolerant religious climate. Religious conversion is believed to be one of the most significant reasons for the fanatical religious attitude of some Hindu militants. In his research on religious conversion in India, Sebastian Kim finds that the conversion issue is a major concern for Hindus, as they argue that it is ‘the major cause of communal tension.’⁴⁰ Plamthodathil Jacob observes that the aggressive propagation of other religions, and the conversion of

³⁹ The social order based on caste in India is also known as Brahminical social order, as the Brahmans occupy the top-most position in this order.

⁴⁰ S. Kim, *In Search of Identity*, 187.

Hindus into these religions, have prompted Hindu religious leaders to form many fundamentalist movements.⁴¹ However, in his recent research on ‘Hindutva Movement and Christian Responses,’ Soban Kumar Daniel argues that the Hindutva proponents hold to a ‘twisted and exaggerated’ account of Christian mission in India. According to him, ‘the colonial rule as a system of Government did not fully succeed in converting a great percentage of people, as claimed by the leaders of Hindutva,’ and he cites a number of examples to show the indifferent attitude of colonial rulers towards missionaries.⁴²

The foreignness of religions seems to be another major reason behind religious intolerance. Currently, vehement voices are saying that ‘Christianity is a foreign religion’ which understanding has existed from colonial times. According to Stephen Neill, the *Padroado* system of the Portuguese played a significant role in the misunderstanding of Christianity by Indians. Since the King of Portugal had received a special commission from the Pope to attend the interests of Christian faith in the east, trade and Christianity were intimately associated with one another. Therefore, Neil observes: ‘To the Indian cynic, the missionary work of the Christian churches appears only as one further form of unscrupulous European aggression in eastern lands; the Christians of the sixteenth century could not regard it as other than a natural and necessary accompaniment of every European

⁴¹ Plamthodathil S. Jacob, ‘Religious Climate in India Today: An Introspective Analysis’ in *Nationalism and Hindutva*, 76.

⁴² S. Soban Kumar Daniel, ‘The Challenges of the Hindutva Movement and Christian Responses in India’ (MPhil thesis, Birmingham: University of Birmingham, 2004). For more details of the discussion, see pp.63-69. At the same time he ardently criticizes Evangelical Christianity for their aggressive evangelistic attempts to convert Hindus to Christianity, as well as other means used to achieve this end.

enterprise in Asia.’⁴³ Once the British Raj was established in India the Christian message began to spread to many parts of India, especially in the north, through foreign missionaries. Many mission stations were formed along with the British cantonment. This is how the misunderstanding that ‘Christianity is foreign’ began to be established at the grassroots. This concept very much predominates in the north as south India had an early Christian presence, as discussed in chapter two. Jacob has noted that the foreign allegiance of some churches even after independence has further strengthened such misconceptions.⁴⁴

As will be discussed later, Pentecostals, along with other Christians, see that more than anything else, the recent resurgence of Hindutva ideology and its propagation is likely to be a major reason for creating an intolerant religious situation in contemporary India. In recent years the ‘foreign issue’ has been raised by Hindu militant groups, and took a new turn when they began to make their cry in an organized way. There are many, like Jacob, who argue that the propagation of Hindutva ideology has served as a useful tool to promote Hindu fundamentalism and fanaticism.⁴⁵

⁴³ Stephen Neill, *A History of Christianity in India: The Beginnings to AD 1707* (Cambridge: University Press, 1984), 86.

⁴⁴ Jacob, ‘Religious Climate in India,’ 71.

⁴⁵ See for example, Jacob, ‘Religious Climate in India,’ 76-77; Daniel, ‘Challenges of the Hindutva; S.M. Micahel, ‘Culture, Nation and Conversion Issues in Mission Today,’ in *Missiology for the Twenty-First Century: South Asian Perspectives*, ed. Roger E. Hedlund and Paul Joshua Bhakiaraj (Delhi/Chennai, India: ISPCK/MIIS, 2004), 359-68. He argues that the rise of the *Sangh Parivar* is the real cause of such religious tension in India (see p. 359).

However, Indian sociologists like R. Thapar argue that ‘Religious intolerance is not alien to Hinduism.’⁴⁶ Although the intensity of such intolerance has been on the rise Christianity has faced religious intolerance from its very inception in India. S. Kim points out a number of examples, like ‘the Hindu personal laws, withdrawal of concessions for Scheduled Castes and Tribes, “freedom of religion” legislation, and above all, physical attacks on Christian communities by the *Sangh Parivar*,’ to show the limitations of Hindu tolerance regarding the matter of conversion of Hindus to other religions. He further comments that Nehru and other national leaders were well aware of the boundaries of Hindu toleration, and that is why they set up the ‘political scheme of secular India to safeguard the interests’ of people of various religious faiths.⁴⁷ Frykenberg observes that despite the ‘decline and disappearance of Western missionaries,’ after independence, the growing ‘radical movements and cross-cultural transformations’ caused the rise of vociferous fundamentalism in India.⁴⁸

Moreover, there are others, like Peter Van der Veer, who see the trans-national ties of Hindu migrants in the growth of religious tension in India. Van der Veer discusses the trans-national characteristics of religious nationalism in his work on *Religious Nationalism*. Studying the case of Ayodhya, he argues that ‘the involvement of Hindus who live outside of India has proved crucial.’⁴⁹ He presents many examples to illustrate the trans-national nature even in national

⁴⁶ R. Thapar. ‘Syndicated Hinduism,’ in *Hinduism Reconsidered*, ed. G.D. Sontheimer and H. Kulke (New Delhi, India: Manohar, 1997), 76.

⁴⁷ For more details of the discussion, see Kim, *In Search of Identity*, 187-88.

⁴⁸ Frykenberg, *Christians and Missionaries*, 47.

⁴⁹ Peter van der Veer, *Religious Nationalism: Hindus and Muslims in India* (Berkeley, LA: University of California, 1994), xii.

enterprises. The VHP had planned to build a temple on the site of Rama's birth-place using *ramshila* (bricks of Rama). These sacred bricks (as they argue) have been brought to Ayodhya from every part of India, particularly north India. However, the vital fact is that 'some of the stones most prominently exhibited came from the United States, Canada, the Caribbean and South Africa.'⁵⁰

It seems that the militant attitude of *Sangh Parivar* and their influence behind the rising attacks on minority groups is evident, and it has caught the attention of international communities. The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) is reported to have said, 'an increase in such violence has coincided with the rise in political influence of groups associated with the Sangh Parivar ... that views non-Hindus as foreign to India and hence deserving of attack.'⁵¹ Very recently the European Union (EU) has 'conveyed its "serious concerns" over "massacres" of Christians in India,' following the brutal killing and persecution of Christians in the state of Orissa.⁵²

Today, the issue of the foreignness of Christianity is regarded very seriously in Rajasthan. This is partly due to the fact that, as described in chapter three, the advancement of the Christian message in the state was initiated by Scottish missionaries. After them, a number of missionaries from abroad as well as from south India came to the state. Therefore, there developed the misconception that

⁵⁰ Veer, *Religious Nationalism*, 4.

⁵¹ Sridhar Krishnaswami, 'U.S. Panel for Naming India, Pak as "Countries of Concern,"' *The Hindu*, 2 October 2002, under 'Front Page,' <http://www.hinduonnet.com/2002/10/02/stories/2002100205270100.htm> (accessed 22 November 2007).

⁵² Correspondent, 'PM Responds to EU Concern over Attacks on Christians,' All India Christian Council, 30 September 2008, under 'News,' <http://indianchristians.in/news/content/view/2436/47/> (accessed 29 Sept 2008).

south Indian Christians are agents of foreign missions. Many Pentecostal leaders have plainly confessed that they feel insecure and have no assurances of safety for their lives and properties as the intolerant attitude of Hindu militant groups is growing ever stronger. They have admitted to being afraid of certain religious organizations. On the basis of religion, they are forbidden certain concessions they are supposed to receive as tribal people. The anguish of Pentecostals against such discrimination has been evident in their speech. In a pastors' meeting in a village in Udaipur district, the local pastors from the tribal community asked, 'why are we forbidden our reservations and concessions once we become Christians? Don't we have the right to get the privileges of Scheduled tribes?'⁵³ At the same time, the frustration of the local tribal pastors in Banaswara was evident when their rights as tribals were questioned after accepting the Christian faith. One of their leaders questioned the authority of the people to challenge the validity of the tribal rights of Christians in Banaswara,

Who can say that we are not *adhivasi* (tribal)? Who denies our right as *adhivasi*? If some missionaries came from abroad long years ago, what should we do, we have not come from abroad. We are the original inhabitants of this land, and nobody can deny our tribal rights, nor force us to move from our homeland. Who can dictate to us to do what we need to do? We have the right to stay in our land and to believe and practise any faith we decide.⁵⁴

All the three most senior Pentecostal leaders from south India have claimed that religious intolerance in the state has increased in the past two decades. The senior pastors, Thomas Mathews and K.V. Abraham, said that even though there were

⁵³ This meeting took place at Macadadeo on 07 May 2006.

⁵⁴ Manu (pseudonym), interview by author, Udaipur, Raj, 23 May 2006.

occasions when they had to face opposition in the beginning of their ministry during the 1960s, they were able to preach and share the Christian message without any fear, but today that is not the case. According to Mathews, the organized expressions of intolerance began in the 1990s: ‘There was no such systematic and pre-planned way of opposition and attack in the early days of Pentecostalism in the state.’⁵⁵

Local Pentecostal leaders have acknowledged that initially they had few religious problems. At first, they faced opposition from other established churches, rather than from Hindus, as discussed in chapter three. One leader lamented, ‘We the local Christians never faced such form of attack some twenty years ago. Today we cannot believe that even our own neighbours sometimes turn against us purely on the basis of religion.’⁵⁶ Pentecostals argue that the foreign issue has little relevance as Pentecostalism is an indigenous religion. While talking about his Pentecostal experience, one of those who participated in the local Spirit revival in Banaswara said:

I was filled with the Holy Spirit when we few local people prayed together. It was not a formal meeting. There was no foreigner, nor a south Indian, nor a non-Rajasthani. We were all from Banaswara. While we were praying, God poured out His Spirit upon us. I began to speak in unknown tongues. Then how can others say that my experience is a foreign experience. It is my personal experience, directly received from the Spirit. No one can challenge it.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Thomas Mathews, e-mail to author, 30 June 2005.

⁵⁶ Sanu Masih (pseudonym), interview by author, Banaswara, Rajasthan, 12 May 2006.

⁵⁷ Manu (pseudonym), interview, 23 May 2006.

Another Pentecostal leader said, ‘We have no foreign connection, no foreign money and no foreign leadership, and all our pastors are local people from Rajasthan. Ours is an Indian church, by Indian leadership, run by Indian money, and we work among our own people, and then who has the problem.’⁵⁸ Although this argument is true in their case, it may be wrong to assume that all Pentecostal churches are completely free of foreign influence. There may be at least a few churches that maintain foreign connections in terms of financial dependency, training and administrative structure. All this clearly shows that the Pentecostal minority in the state, like other Christians, are experiencing more religious tensions today than in the past.

4.3. Hindutva and Religio-Cultural Nationalism

It seems that Hindutva ideology has been taking the form of a religio-cultural nationalism. However, such nationalism is to be understood not as a sudden development, but as the achievement of long term efforts by Hindu extremists influenced by this ideology. Hindutva (literally, Hindu-ness) is a fundamentalist ideology of militant Hinduism, and this concept was developed by V.D. Savarkar.⁵⁹ M.T. Cherian’s recent research on *Hindutva Agenda and Minority Rights*⁶⁰ reveals the religious, cultural, ethnic and political ideology of Hindutva movements. According to him, Hindu fundamentalism is by nature,

reactionary, exclusive, separatistic, intolerant, oppositional, politically motivated, claiming to be custodians of truth ..., claiming to be agents of a true community,

⁵⁸ Chinnu (pseudonym), interview by author, 25 May 2006.

⁵⁹ V.D. Savarkar, *Hindutva: Who Is a Hindu*, 6th edn. (New Delhi, India: Bharti Sahitya Sadan, 1989), xi.

⁶⁰ M.T. Cherian, *Hindutva Agenda and Minority Rights: A Christian Response* (Bangalore: Centre for Contemporary Christianity, 2007).

claiming to be working for the glorious future which is based on the golden past, ... claiming to be struggling for eradicating evils from the society through radical changes for which often militancy is accepted as a means⁶¹

A significant consequence of Hindu religious fundamentalism is the alternative versions of nationalism in India. There are two principal versions of nationalism in the country.⁶² The first is Indian nationalism, which is a heterogeneous, territorial nationalism that upholds the unity and equality of all citizens irrespective of their distinctiveness. The second is Hindu nationalism, which is a homogenous and religio-cultural nationalism that advocates only one religion, one language, and one culture.

Although the wedlock between nationalism and religion is explicitly clear in post-independent India, there are indications of such a marriage in the 19th century. C.V. Mathew gives a picture of the role of various individuals and organizations behind such nationalism. According to him,

Religious nationalism, of which the seed was sown in Punjab by the Arya Samaj and watered in Bengal by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Swami Vivekananda and others, grew as a mighty tree in Maharashtra. Lokatnanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920), Vir Savarkar (1883-1966) and his Hindu Mahasabha, Dr. K.B.

⁶¹ Cherian, *Hindutva Agenda*, 157.

⁶² However, a third version of nationalism, 'neo-orthodox Hindu approach' is also proposed in contemporary India. This approach provides 'spiritual confidence for ordinary Indians, and lays the theological justification for identification' with Hindus for all Indians irrespective of religion. For a discussion, see Sebastian C.H. Kim, 'Hindutva, Secular India and the Report of the Christian Missionary Activities Enquiry Committee: 1954-57,' in *Nationalism and Hindutva*, 139-40. For more details of this approach see, Ashis Nandy, 'The Politics of Secularism and the Recovery of Religious Tolerance,' *Alternatives* 13, no. 2 (1988): 177-94; Ashis Nandy, *Time Warps: Silent and Evasive Parts in Indian Politics and Religion* (London: Hurst, 2002), 60-88.

Hedgewar (1889-1940) and his Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, and the Vishva Hindu Parishad have been primarily responsible for this accomplishment.⁶³

Following Mathew, both Cherian and S.M. Michael argue that for defining Indian nationalism in terms of ethnicity and for Hindutva ideology, Arya Samaj is the predecessor of all the later Hindu fundamentalist organizations.⁶⁴

However, as most works on Hindutva reveal, Savarkar, the former president of the Hindu Mahasabha from 1937 to 1944, was chiefly responsible for the evolution and development of militant Hindutva ideology.⁶⁵ According to Lise McKean, Savarkar systematized and propagated the principles that underlie the ideology of Hindu nationalism (*Hindu rashtavad*) through his writings and speeches. Later, 'during the late 1980s Hindutva became the most common referent for the ideological and organizational forms of the Hindu nationalist movement (VHP, RSS, Shiv Sena, Bajrang Dal).'⁶⁶ For Savarkar, as Michael observes, Hindutva 'refers to a people united by a common country, blood, history, religion, culture

⁶³ C.V. Mathew, 'Hindutva,' 213.

⁶⁴ For more discussion, see Cherian, *Hindutva Agenda*, 168-75; S.M. Michael, 'Hindu Nationalism and Indian Christian Response,' in *Reflecting Mission, Practicing Mission: Divine Word Missionaries Commemorate 125 Years of Worldwide Commitment*, vol. 2, ed. Steyler Verlag (Nettetal: Steyler Missionswissenschaftliches Institute, 2001), 477-78.

⁶⁵ See for example, Cherian, *Hindutva Agenda*, 168-75; Michael, 'Hindu Nationalism,' Lise McKean, *Divine Enterprise: Gurus and the Hindu Nationalist Movement* (Chicago/London: The University of Chicago Press, 1996); Ronald, Neufeldt, 'Hindutva and the Rhetoric of Violence,' in *The Twenty-First Century Confronts Its Gods: Globalization, Technology and War*, ed. Hawkin, David J. (Albany State: University of New York, 2004); Daniel, 'Challenges of the Hindutva,,'; Sumit Sarkar, 'Indian Nationalism and the Politics of Hindutva,' in *Making India Hindu: Religion, Community and the Politics of Democracy in India*, ed. Ludden David (New Delhi: OUP, 1996), 270-93; Jaffrelot Christophe, 'Hindu Nationalism and Democracy,' in *Transforming India: Social and Political Dynamics of Democracy*, ed. Francine R. Frankel, et al. (New Delhi: OUP, 2000), 353-404; Patnaik Arun and K.S.R.V.S. Chalam, 'The Ideology and Politics of Hindutva,' in *Region, Religion, Caste, Gender and Culture in Contemporary India*, vol 3 of *Social Change and Political Discourse in India: Structures of Power, Movements of Resistance*, ed. Sathyamurthy, T.V. (Oxford: OUP, 1996), 252-80; Brenda Cossman and Ratna Kapur, *Secularism's Last Sigh? Hindutva and the (Mis)Rule of Law* (Oxford: OUP, 1999); C.V. Mathew, 'Hindutva,' 212-37.

⁶⁶ McKean, *Divine Enterprise*, 71.

and language.’⁶⁷ Hindutva advocates consider Savarkar’s monograph *Hindutva: Who Is a Hindu*, which was first published in 1923, as their text. However, the publishers of the later editions claim that ‘Savarkar’s book is for all time’ as the principles outlined ‘in this book will guide Hindus ... for centuries to come.’⁶⁸ As Ronald Neufeldt comments, this book has not only outlined the ‘ideology of Hindutva but also the program of the Hindutva forces of today.’⁶⁹ His discussion of the essential qualification of a Hindu reveals the Hindutva intrigue to alienate Muslims and Christians from the mainstream Indian society. According to him, ‘a Hindu is that to him the land that extends from Sindhu to Sindhu is the Fatherland (Pitribhu), the Motherland (Matribhu), the land of his patriarchs and forefathers.’ Savarkar made it more clear and specific when he said:

That is why in the case of some of our Mohammedan [Muslim] or Christian countrymen who had originally been forcibly converted to a non-Hindu religion and who consequently have inherited along with Hindus, a common Fatherland and a greater part of the wealth of a common culture- language, law, customs, folklore and history- are not and can not [sic] be recognized as Hindus. For though Hindustan to them is Fatherland as to any other Hindu yet it is not to them a Holyland too. Their holyland is far off in Arabia or Palestine. Their mythology and Godmen, ideas and heroes are not the children of this soil. Consequently their names and their outlook smack of a foreign origin.⁷⁰

⁶⁷Michael, ‘Hindu Nationalism,’ 482.

⁶⁸ Savarkar, *Hindutva*, x.

⁶⁹ Neufeldt, ‘Hindutva and the Rhetoric,’ 157.

⁷⁰ Savarkar, *Hindutva*, 113. For more details, see pp.110-113.

Sumit Sarkar, an Indian professor of History, notes that Savarkar's teachings on Hindutva invested 'culture' with 'Hindu religious meanings and associations.'⁷¹ Later his ideology was further propagated and developed by Hegdewar and his successor M.S. Golwalkar. Hegdewar argued that Hindu culture was to be protected, safeguarded, and nourished as 'Hindu Culture was the life and breath of Hindustan.'⁷² Golwalkar opposed territorial nationalism as he thought that it had deprived the people of their real Hindu nationhood.⁷³ The words of K.S. Sudarsan, the current leader of RSS, shows that Hindutva still holds the same position. He said, 'The country can have only one Hindu culture . . . and so all must accept Ram – if not as divine, at least as the nation's hero.'⁷⁴ The formation of militant organizations of *Sangh Parivar* like the Bajrang Dal illustrates the fact that Hindutva ideology encourages the use of violent and unethical means to achieve its end. Hansen's study shows that Bajrang Dal was formed in 1984 by Vinay Katiya, an RSS *pracharak* (preacher) in Uttar Pradesh 'as a militant youth wing of the VHP, with the intention of recruiting young underemployed men from the lower castes for militant and daring action in conjunction with the ensuing battle for the Hindu nation that the VHP envisaged.'⁷⁵

Meanwhile, the verdict of the Supreme Court regarding the concept of Hindutva seems to be significant in the propagation of Hindutva ideology, and at the same

⁷¹ Sarkar, 'Indian Nationalism,' 274.

⁷² Cherian, *Hindutva Agenda*, 190.

⁷³ Sarkar, 'Indian Nationalism,' 274.

⁷⁴ Tapan Basu, et al., *Khaki Shorts Saffron Flags* (Hyderabad: Orient and Longman, 1993), 7.

⁷⁵ Thomas Blom Hansen, *The Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 155.

time it gives approval to Hindutva advocates.⁷⁶ In *Secularism's Last Sigh*, the authors argue that 'the Supreme Court erred in concluding that Hindutva constitutes a "way of life" of the people of the subcontinent, and its deployment constitutes neither a violation of the prohibition on promoting religious enmity and hatred,' and so the Court's conclusion 'has effectively vindicated the profoundly anti-secular vision' of the nation that the 'Hindu Right has long been trying to promote.'⁷⁷

Thus in conclusion, with the help of *Sangh Parivar*, Hindutva ideology and its current developments have given a religio-cultural face to nationalism. In reality this ideology has produced a number of conflicts in India in recent years. Kajsa Ahlstrand's observation on the growing religious tension in India shows the impact of the link between religion and culture. He writes, 'The celebrated Indian religious pluralism and religious tolerance is now at risk. Religion is being seen as a source of identity (linked to culture and ethnicity) excluding "the other."⁷⁸ However, such a marriage seems to be a real threat to minority religious groups in India.

Various incidents reveal that Pentecostals in Rajasthan face the dreadful consequences of Hindutva ideology. The extremist Hindutva advocates desire to

⁷⁶ There was a series of highly controversial cases against the elected representatives of the Hindu nationalist Shiv Sena/BJP alliance government in the western state of Maharashtra for the violation of section 123 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951. Although the Bombay High Court had found the culprits guilty, the Supreme Court accepted the arguments of the appellants concluding Hindutva as 'a way of life.' For more details, see Cossman and Kapur. *Secularism's Last Sigh?* 16-25.

⁷⁷ Cossman and Kapur, *Secularism's Last Sigh?* 3.

⁷⁸ Kajsa Ahlstrand, 'Toward a Paradigm Shift in Christian Mission: South Asia and North Europe,' in *Theology and the Religions: A Dialogue*, ed. Mortensen Viggo (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 165.

wipe out religious minorities, particularly Muslims and Christians from India and there has been severe persecution of Christians since the early part of the 1990s. In line with this stand of Hindutva, the VHP leaders made a public statement in 1997 that ‘they will make the district of Banaswara free of Christians by 2000 AD.’⁷⁹ A few weeks after this declaration many Pentecostal pastors were attacked. Pastor Shan⁸⁰ from Shalom ministry was brutally attacked by the Hindu militants in Banaswara. This was followed by a series of such assaults on Christian workers, including local Christian ministers. It is said that within three years after this threat there were ‘at least 25 violent attacks against Christians’ in the state.⁸¹

The Hindutva proponents employ a number of popular religious and cultural symbols as a powerful means to nationalize the masses.⁸² For example, the cow slaughter ban was such a tool used to exploit the sentiments of people. What was done to a Pentecostal pastor in Banaswara district reveals the unacceptable nature of the tactic. Dhiru,⁸³ a graduate of FBC and the pastor of an FFCI church, was in prison for more than four months following a false allegation that he had killed a cow. This incident shows that religious and cultural symbols can be used against another community. The cow slaughter ban was used as a strategy to unite people and at the same time to falsely accuse Christians of killing and eating cows.

⁷⁹ Lalu (pseudonym), interview by author, Banaswara, Rajasthan, 12 May 2006. In his letter to Dr. Manmohan Singh, the Prime Minister of India, regarding the persecution of Christians in Rajasthan, in 2006, John Dayal, the National Secretary of All India Christian Council, also mentioned about this threat of VHP leaders. See, <http://indianchristians.in/news/content/view/300/47/> (accessed 27 November 2008).

⁸⁰ Pseudonym.

⁸¹ This was expressed during the pastors meeting in Banaswara, 13 May 2006.

⁸² Hansen, *Saffron Wave*, 75.

⁸³ Pseudonym.

As a direct influence of Hindutva ideology, there has been an attempt to rewrite history. The Hindutva faction has made a major effort to revise India's educational policy. According to Daniel, they wanted to give a Hindu colour to Indian history, moral values and thus to the entire educational system.⁸⁴ In the States where BJP has been ruling, the number of Vidya Bharati schools and other RSS affiliated schools has been growing, and they present Indian culture as Hindu culture. There is an impression that Christian schools did not submit themselves to the Hindutva force by adopting their curriculum, and so the Hindutva advocates see Christian schools as obstacles to implementing the vested interests of Hindutva. Pentecostals explained that there are incidents of rejection of applications for recognition of their schools in Rajasthan. The directors of three Pentecostal schools have described their difficulty in obtaining recognition for their schools from the BJP Government and said that they had to knock on every door to receive this recognition.⁸⁵

Minority groups feel that one of the major intentions of Hindutva militancy is to disband the Minorities Commission. It is likely that Hindu militants see it as a threat to the implementation of their militant ideology and the violent means to achieve their ends. Golwalkar's solution to the minorities' problem is assimilation, for he said that the minorities should be 'wholly subordinated to the Hindu nation, claiming nothing, deserving no privileges, far less any preferential

⁸⁴ For more details see, Daniel, 'Challenges of the Hindutva,' 43-46.

⁸⁵ Sinu (pseudonym), interview by author, Udaipur, Rajasthan, 15 May 2006; Jiju (pseudonym), interview by author, Udaipur, Rajasthan, 22 May 2006; Mohan (pseudonym), interview by author, Udaipur, Rajasthan, 26 May 2006.

treatment – not even citizen’s rights.’⁸⁶ Therefore, organizations like RSS and its offshoots have raised their voice in favour of disbanding the Commission. As Jaffrelot has observed, their ‘aim was to remove some of the protections granted to the minorities ... and in effect, to assert the strength of the Hindu majority.’⁸⁷ When V. Augustine, the former Christian representative in the Minorities Commission, came to Rajasthan in 2004 to address Christians, some representatives from the Pentecostal community expressed their concern about the serious threat they faced from militant groups.⁸⁸ In his address, Augustine said that Christians have the freedom to practise and propagate their faith, but they have to remember that ‘it is the majority who gave us such a freedom, and so we should be grateful to the majority.’ However, his reply evoked mixed responses. Some took it as the expression of the submissive outlook of Christians; others saw it as evidence of the impotence of the NCM; for yet others it was an echo of the fear of minorities; and to others it characterized the arrogance of *Sangh Parivar* imprinted on the NCM.

4.4. The Nexus between Politics and Religion

Pentecostals along with other Christians as well as other minority religious groups hold that one of the greatest challenges they face is the implications of the relationship between politics and religion. However, as McKean observes, the interrelationship between Hindu religious organizations and politics is a complex

⁸⁶ M.S. Golwalkar, *We or Our Nationhood Defined*, 4th ed. (Nagpur: Bharat Prakashan, 1947), 55-56, quoted in Michael, ‘Hindu Nationalism,’ 483.

⁸⁷ Christophe, ‘Hindu Nationalism,’ 361.

⁸⁸ In this meeting I was one of the representatives of the Pentecostal Community in Rajasthan.

one, and is ‘historically variable.’⁸⁹ As will be discussed below, many sociologists suggest that this nexus between religion and politics threatens the image of India as a tolerant nation. Although evidence of the religious connection with politics can be seen throughout the history of India, such a link is more apparent in contemporary India.

The chief reason for such a religio-political connection is said to be the propagation of Hindutva ideology and the subsequent revival of Hindu politics. Therefore, India has witnessed political revivalism by means of religion, and consequently this has given meaning to some core concepts of the nation, like secularism, as will be explained later. The BJP has become one of the leading political parties in India today. Its unforeseen electoral gain in the 1998 election was crucial in its emergence as a leading opponent to Congress, the major Indian political party. Patnaik and Chalam best explain how religion was used for political as well as electoral gain. According to them, the achievement in 1998 opened the possibility of a coalition of BJP and the *Sangh Parivar* groups using the Hindu card like ‘the Ramjanmabhoomi issue.’ The organization of *Ratha Yatra* (1990) and *Ekta Yatra* (1991) gave an indication of a vigorous political campaign on behalf of Hindus. The BJP election manifesto for the 1991 election reveals that the BJP aims to build up an ‘all-India Hindu Identity.’ It says that BJP,

as the party of nationalism ... offers a complete, new and higher alternative to the current dismal scene. As the party of Swadesh and Swadharma, is wedded to our country, our people and our culture. It believes in consensus and cooperation, and

⁸⁹ McKean, *Divine Enterprise*, 5.

not in contrariety and conflict. It would uplift the poor and downtrodden, without putting caste against caste, without inciting class against class.⁹⁰

It is very significant to note that although caste and class are mentioned, religion seems to have been deliberately omitted.

The nexus between religion and politics is apparent mainly in the states where the BJP rules or has ruled. This link was especially clear during the election. There are a number of examples quoted by Brenda Cossman and Ratna Kapur from the speeches of Shiv Sena and BJP leaders illustrating how religion was used for electoral gain during the state election in Maharashtra in 1987.⁹¹ A recent incident related to the last election in the State Assembly of Gujarat in 2008 further illustrates this fact. Narendra Modi, the present chief minister of Gujarat and a BJP candidate, was given notice by the Election Commission who asked for an explanation about a comment that provoked the religious sentiments of people during his election campaign. However, the most significant issue is that although his statement aroused a great reaction among the people, he wanted to continue with Hindutva ideology in his election campaign.⁹² Cossman and Kapur argue that 'Hindutva cannot be separated from its appeal to religion, or from its assault on the legitimacy of religious minorities.'⁹³

⁹⁰ Patnaik and Chalam, 'Ideology and Politics,' 272; for more details of the discussion, see pp. 252-80.

⁹¹ See Cossman and Kapur, *Secularism's Last Sigh?* 21-22.

⁹² It is reported that he justified the brutal killing of Serabudeen, who was a Muslim, by the state police. The murder case was charged against the police. The case is in the Supreme Court, and the trial still continues. However, people were shocked to hear such an irresponsible statement from the Chief Minister, and many people believe that he made such a comment for political gain aiming at some Hindu votes. For more details, see 'Theranjeduppu Commission Idapettu: Modikku Notice' [Election Commission Interfered: Notice Sent to Modi] <http://deepika.com/mainnews.asp?> (accessed 07 December 2008).

⁹³ Cossman and Kapur, *Secularism's Last Sigh?* 3.

There are clear illustrations of the nexus between religion and politics during the BJP's rise to power. For example, religious leaders began to counsel government officials. Jaffrelot gives examples to show that the RSS exerted a strong influence over Indian politics while BJP was in power. According to him, *Sangh Parivar* leaders regularly met the then Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and other key ministers like L.K. Advani. Special meetings were convened by Rajendra Singh, the RSS chief, to interact with BJP Members of Parliament (MPs). He was allowed to address a group of top bureaucrats, including the chief secretary and the Director General of Police in the presence of the ministers of the BJP government in Uttar Pradesh.⁹⁴

It is also significant to note that the RSS has moved from the position of its founder in their attitude to politics. Hedgewar argued that Hindus did not need a political party of its own, but a communal discipline and revitalization, but the RSS was turned into a more politically conscious and active body through establishing political front organizations.⁹⁵ However, Golwalkar emphasises the superiority of religion over politics.

The political rulers were never the standard-bearers of our society. They were never taken as the props of our national life, Saints and sages, who had risen above the mundane temptations of self and power and had dedicated themselves wholly for establishing a happy, virtuous and integrated state of society, were its

⁹⁴ Jaffrelot, 'Hindu Nationalism,' 364.

⁹⁵ Cherian, *Hindutva Agenda*, 190-91.

constant torch bearers. They represented the *dharmasatta* [religious authority]. The king was only an ardent follower of that higher moral authority.⁹⁶

Although the RSS did not contest any elections, as Jaffrelot has observed, ‘its democratic credentials have been affected’ badly due to its attempt to influence those in power, and thus it has been transformed ‘into a kind of advisor to the government.’⁹⁷

However, with growing criticism from various spheres of society of its ideology and the marriage with *Sangh Parivar*, BJP has tried to reinterpret the Hindutva concept. It seems that they are attempting to redefine various terms for the purpose of political gain. There are efforts to equate Democracy with Majoritarianism, and also to redesign the terms and meanings used by early advocates of Hindutva. The BJP has been making vigorous attempt to redefine secularism to give it a new title ‘positive secularism,’ referring to the current secularism advocated by Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of the independent India, and others as ‘pseudo-secularism’. They argue that their new definition, ‘positive secularism,’ will safeguard all religious groups and minority rights. McKean’s observation regarding the religious entanglements with democracy in contemporary India is significant:

With the increasing prominence of Hindu nationalist ideology, secularism came to be widely interpreted as the state’s obligation to support all religions, with the greatest support going to Hinduism, the religion of a purported majority of Indians According to Hindu nationalists, because Hinduism emanates from

⁹⁶ M.S. Golwalkar, *Bunch of Thoughts* (Bangalore: Jagrana Prakashan, 1966), 37-38, quoted in Jaffrelot, 363.

⁹⁷Jaffrelot, ‘Hindu Nationalism,’ 363.

spiritual values, it is uniquely tolerant of other religions and is the sole basis of an authentically Indian secularism. Such an indigenous secularism, which advocates state support of all religion, is presented as superior to Nehruvian pseudo-secularism, imported from the West, which advocates strict separation of state and religion. Following from these propositions regarding secularism, spirituality, and Hinduism, Hindu nationalist conclude that a Hindu state is necessarily the best guardian of an indigenous Indian secular democracy.⁹⁸

However, S. Gopal states that Nehruvian secularism does not mean a state where religion is completely discarded. On the other hand,

It [Nehruvian Secularism] means freedom of religion and conscience, including freedom for those who may have no religion. It means free play for all religions, subject only to their not interfering with each other or with the basic conception of our state. It means that the minority communities, from the religious point of view, should accept this position. It means even more, that the majority community, from this point of view, should fully realize it. For by virtue of numbers as well as in other ways, it is the dominant community and it is its responsibility not to use its position in any way might prejudice our secular ideal.⁹⁹

The minority groups seem to be watching with suspicion the new secularism as proposed by BJP. As in most states where the BJP rules, it is argued that the freedom of minorities is at stake, and so they see the new concept as a sugar-coated pill to safeguard the interests of the majority over the minority. The most

⁹⁸ McKean, *Divine Enterprise*, 6.

⁹⁹ S. Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru: An Anthology* (N. Delhi, India: OUP, 1983), 327. Veer, *Religious Nationalism*, 23.

significant result of such a wedding between religion and politics is the religious tension that now exists.

Incidents have been reported show that in those states where BJP is the ruling party the tension between the religious communities remains, and in reality minority rights and privileges are curtailed. Although there is constitutional provision for religion, due to the strong link between religion and politics, the religious minorities are reported to be in a perilous situation in many parts of north India. It is likely that they are under attack even with the consent of the governmental authorities including the police. For example, many like David Emmanuel Singh sees that the post-Godhra event in Gujarat is an example of governmental support of religious violence. There took place violent conflicts between Hindus and Muslims in a small town called Godhra in Gujarat in North West India. This spread all over Gujarat, resulting in the brutal killing of hundreds of Muslims. Singh has observed that the response of the BJP government both in the state and at the centre seems to be dismal. In most of the conflicts 'police either connived with the murderers or played the role of a passive observer.'¹⁰⁰

The recent report by the Tehelka reveals that not only the Police Commissioner, but even the Gujarat chief minister played a role in the aftermath of the Godhra

¹⁰⁰ See for more details, David Emmanuel Singh, 'Beyond Controversy: Christian Mission and Communal Religious Violence in Contemporary India,' <http://www.martynmission.cam.ac.uk/CDSingh.htm> (accessed 10 July 2007).

crisis.¹⁰¹ If this report is true, the future of the minorities under BJP rule is at risk.

However, the report is yet to be verified.¹⁰²

There are many incidents that cause Christians to believe that the Hindutva political party BJP and its government cover up atrocities committed by the *Sangh Parivar* and other organizations. The response from people in authority when Christian priests and missionaries were attacked and churches were burned has further strengthened this suspicion. The best example is the response of A.B. Vajpayee, after his visit to the Dangs district of Gujarat, which was followed by an intensified attack on Christians during Christmas 1998. On 10 January 1999, the then Indian Prime Minister and leader of the BJP, Vajpayee, called for a ‘national debate on conversion.’¹⁰³ The observation of Earnest W. Talibuddin reveals the impression of Christians regarding Vajpayee’s call. He comments,

... Christian nuns have been raped, Christian priests and missionaries have been executed, even burnt alive. But instead of any word of condemnation for such ghastly, anti-social and inhuman acts, in order to cover them up and divert the attention of the public, a national debate on the issue of conversion has been strongly recommended by those in authority!¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ Rajendra Vyas, ‘Narendrabhai Got the Police on Our Side,’ *Tehelka.com*, 8 June 2007, under ‘Gujarat 2002-The Truth,’ http://www.tehelka.com/story_main35.asp?filename=Ne031107Narendrabhai_Got.asp (accessed 13 December 2007).

¹⁰² Tehelka is an unofficial independent investigation agency. Modi and other BJP leaders rejected the report. For a response to this report by a leading periodical in India, see Dionne Bunsha, ‘The Tehelka shock,’ *Frontline* 22, no. 1 (1-14 January 2005), under ‘Gujarat,’ <http://www.hinduonnet.com/fline/fl2201/stories/20050114006401800.htm> (accessed 10 October 2008).

¹⁰³ Kim, *In Search of Identity*, 187. For more details of the discussion, see pp. 157-58.

¹⁰⁴ Earnest W. Talibuddin, ‘Mission Context Today: Inter-Religious and Cultural Conflicts,’ in *Emerging Indian Missiology: Context and Concepts*, ed. Joseph Mattam and Joseph Valiamangalam (Delhi, India: ISPCK, 2006), 26.

Such a call was questioned even by many Indian historians like K.N. Panikkar. In *Frontline*, a leading National Magazine in India, he writes

The response of Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee, who is considered a good man and a liberal by many, was the most devious. By calling for a public debate on conversions, he suggests that the blame, in fact, rests with the victims. His move is a veiled threat to individual freedom, guaranteed in the Constitution after extended discussion in the Constituent Assembly.¹⁰⁵

There was a similar call for dialogue in September 2008 on the issue of conversion by Advani, another prominent leader of BJP. *The Hindu* reports his comment in the context of the ongoing religious oppression against Christians in Orissa. He advocated that the ‘time has come for a free and frank democratic debate and inter-faith dialogue on the issue of religious conversion with a view to building a firm national consensus against proselytisation’ However, he condemned the violence: ‘there can be no justification for violence or vandalism in the name of religion.’¹⁰⁶

The AICC reports that there are more intensified and pre-planned violent attacks on Christians by Hindu fanatics in BJP-led states. The recent statement issued by John Dayal, Member of the National Integration Council, before the NCM, on 4 August 2006 is an indication of this concern.¹⁰⁷ Another example is the current (2009) tense situation in Orissa, where BJP is the ruling party along with Biju

¹⁰⁵ K.N. Panikkar, ‘Towards a Hindu Nation,’ *Frontline* 17, no.3 (1999): 20.

¹⁰⁶ ‘Advani Calls for “Free and Frank” Debate on Conversion,’ *The Hindu*, 25 September 2008, under ‘National,’ <http://www.hinduonnet.com/thehindu/holnus/002200809250940.htm> (accessed 10 Oct 2008).

¹⁰⁷ All India Christian Council, ‘Plea for Fair Treatment to Christian Community,’ 27 July 2007, <http://www.indianchristians.in> (accessed 13 December 2007).

Janata Dal (BJD) in the coalition government. Thousands of Christians have fled to the forests, and to other states to save themselves from militant Hindus. Dozens of Christians have been killed, hundreds of houses of Christians have been burned, and a number of churches have been demolished. *The Times* reports that 50000 Christians have been forced to flee, and more than 3000 Christian homes and 115 churches have been destroyed.¹⁰⁸ The assaults on Christians are going on, despite the nationwide protest from people of all walks of life. Thus the suspicion that BJP is an anti-minority party has further strengthened.

Pentecostals in Rajasthan are seriously concerned of the consequences from the nexus between politics and religion. At the aforesaid leaders meeting in Jaipur, pastors expressed their serious concern about the passive reaction of the state police when Christians have been attacked. The objects of their concern included the lack of cooperation from the Government and other domains of authority like the police, less protection for minority groups and their places of worship, the police's reluctance to file charges against the majority when they attack the minority, the police's delay in reaching a location where there is an attack and atrocities taking place in the presence of the police. Pastor Veeru from north Rajasthan gave his testimony in the meeting and explained how he was arrested on a false accusation of trying to convert others. He said that the police were not ready to hear him, and he was imprisoned for a few days. He testified that although he initially had ill-feelings towards the police, later he began to pray for

¹⁰⁸ Rhys Blakely, 'India: Where Christians are a Target for the Religious Murder Mobs,' *The Times*, 6 September 2008, under 'Asia News,' <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/asia/article4687075.ece>; Also see Gethin Chamberlain, 'Christians Hide in Forests as Hindu Mobs Ransack Villages' *The Observer* 31 August 2008.

them as he knew that he would not get fair treatment from them, but that only God could change their minds.¹⁰⁹ Pastor Chandu from Udaipur district said that the police were not ready to charge an FIR (First Information Report) against the people who attacked Christians without cause.¹¹⁰

Pentecostal leaders in Rajasthan strongly feel that the freedom to profess and practise their religion has been affected ever since the BJP came to power. Thomas Mathews firmly states that ‘since 1962, for twenty five years I had not much problem,’ but today ‘we can not conduct a free public meeting in Udaipur.’¹¹¹ All the Pentecostal leaders who were interviewed expressed their concern that the freedom to profess and practise their religion is being seriously affected in contemporary Rajasthan. All stories of persecution narrated in the pastors’ meeting in Jaipur contained incidents that had taken place since the early half of 1990s. Meera bhai, a local pastor from Udaipur district who was brutally attacked by Hindu extremists, was asked why the severe attack was not reported to the police. He stated:

What is the use of reporting to the police? Do you think that they will help? They are all ardent supporters of Hindutva and its allied organizations. They don’t mind us, but on the contrary they may file a false charge against us, saying we are converting people and destroying peace in the community. What an irony it is! When we are attacked we will be charged with a fraud case saying we have

¹⁰⁹ Veeru (pseudonym), interview by author, Jaipur, 8 May 2006.

¹¹⁰ Chandu (pseudonym), interview by author, Udaipur, Rajasthan, 16 May 2006.

¹¹¹ For more details see, W. Abraham, ‘Pauline Concept,’ 12.

disturbed the communal peace. Therefore, I do not want to go to police station. I am afraid of the police station.¹¹²

However, this does not mean that all cases were ignored by the Police. There have been a few incidents of the police protecting Christians from dreadful attacks. Also there were occasions when Christians were protected by local Hindus when they were assaulted by militants.¹¹³

Thus in conclusion, due to the nexus between religion and politics, especially with the BJP, Pentecostals fear that they, with other minority religious groups, will suffer the loss in the long run under the BJP government. They suspect that justice and fair treatment will be denied to them. Many Pentecostals, along with other Christian segments, see that the introduction of the Anti-Conversion Law is the gravest consequence of such a religio-political nexus as this law was introduced mostly in such states where BJP has been the ruling party.

4.5. The Issue of Conversion and Persecution

The issue of conversion and persecution is not new in the Indian milieu. However, in recent years it has become a complex issue. Frykenberg describes it as ‘a bone of contention, controversy, and confusion’ in contemporary India.¹¹⁴ Kim’s work, *Religious Conversion in India*, is a significant study on this subject. He finds four major explanations in the literature ‘why conversion is problematic in India.’

¹¹² Meera Bhai (pseudonym), interview by author, Udaipur, Rajasthan, 27 May 2007.

¹¹³ Even during the recent religious violence in Orissa, many persecuted Christians were protected and taken care of by local Hindus.

¹¹⁴ Robert Eric Frykenberg, ‘Introduction: Dealing with Contested Definitions and Controversial Perspectives,’ in *Christians and Missionaries in India*, ed. Frykenberg, 17.

First, the conversion issue is problematic due to communalism. Second, conversion confronts the ‘socio-economic establishment.’ Third, the ‘Hindu counter conversion movements’ deepen the conflict. Fourth, contrasting views of conversion by Hindus and Christians have exacerbated the divergence further, for the Hindus see conversion in socio-political terms, but the Christians see it in theological terms.¹¹⁵

As Kim has noted, the conflicting views on conversion by Hindus and Christians are important when discussing the issue of conversion and persecution. Hindus link conversion ‘with colonial power, ecclesiastical expansion, political manipulation’ and ‘social disturbance.’¹¹⁶ Consequently, they are suspicious of everything including the awarding of the Nobel Prize. Ashok Singhal commented on the award of the 1998 Nobel Prize to Amartya Sen, an Indian economist, for his work on welfare economics that this was a ‘western conspiracy to promote literacy in developing societies in order to bring them within the ultimate pale of a global Christian order and thus “wipe out Hinduism from this country.”¹¹⁷ On the other hand, Christians think that it is the plan of the upper-caste Hindu nationalists to oppose conversion, as Christians link conversion with ‘social uplift, caste mobility, and the search for justice.’¹¹⁸ They argue that the supremacy and dominion of these nationalists will be affected as the Dalits and tribal communities will be educated and their identity strengthened, and that is why the

¹¹⁵ For more details of the discussion see, Kim, *In Search of Identity*, 4-6.

¹¹⁶ Kim, *In Search of Identity*, 188.

¹¹⁷ Gauri Viswanathan, ‘Literacy and Conversion in the Discourse of Hindu Nationalism,’ in *The Crisis of Secularism in India*, ed. Anuradha Dingwaney and Rajeswari Sunder Rajan (Durham/London: Duke University Press, 2007), 133-34.

¹¹⁸ Kim, *In Search of Identity*, 188.

social work done by the Christians is opposed by militant Hindus. According to S.M. Michael, ‘when the lower-caste students are educated in Christian schools, they learn not to go to the money-lenders, to the land-lords, to become bonded labours. If this happens, the nationalists claim, the age-old structures will be destroyed, and where will the *zamindars* (landlords) get their labour from?’¹¹⁹

Moreover, Pentecostals, at least in Rajasthan, see a spiritual dynamics in conversion, as an outcome of their public mission like healing and exorcism. The story of a recent convert to Pentecostalism seems to explain this position:

.... My daughter was seriously ill. We took her to a nearby clinic, but there was no relief. We did not have money to take her to far away private hospitals. We came back home hopeless. Meanwhile one of our neighbours talked to us about going to *giriya ghar* (prayer house) and praying to Jesus. We were not interested in the beginning, but one late night my daughter became seriously ill. There was no transport to take her to any hospital. We began to cry thinking that our daughter will die. She began to throw her tongue out, open her eyes wildly, and move the body violently. Then we called our neighbour, and as soon as they saw the girl, they began to pray to Jesus to heal our daughter. To our surprise, she began to be normal. Then she sat on the coat and asked for water. The next Sunday we went to the *giriya ghar* along with our neighbour. From then onwards we began to go to church every Sunday. The Holy Spirit is our helper in every situation. He began to bless us in every aspect of our life. Then why can't we worship Jesus? We do not have proper transport in our village, proper medical

¹¹⁹ Michael, ‘Hindu Nationalism,’ 485. M.T. Cherian also gives the same reason for the opposition of Conversion by the militant Hindus. See Cherian, *Hindutva Agenda*, 158.

facilities; we do not have money to go to private hospital in the far away cities. Jesus is healing us freely, then how can you say that we cannot turn to Jesus.¹²⁰

History has witnessed a number of counter-devices used by Hindu extremists to check conversion by Muslims and Christians. The early approach to protecting Hindus from religious conversion was the implementation of Hindu personal laws against those who were converted to other religions from Hinduism.¹²¹ The converts were expelled from the Hindu community, and various benefits and privileges of converts from a Scheduled Caste and Tribal background were withdrawn. Another approach was the criticism on untouchability.¹²² Following many socio-religious reformers, Savarkar criticized the practice of untouchability, as he believed that favours for untouchables were necessary to counter the conversion attempts by Muslims and Christians. However, McKean's research reveals that others reacted against Savarkar's policy to please untouchables.¹²³ There are untouchables who argue against Hindutva ideology.¹²⁴

One of the most effective tools to check conversions from the Hindu fold has been the Hindu counter-conversion movements. Although active reconversions of Christian or Muslim converts are taking place in a well organized way, this conversion was practised by the Arya Samaj, and the practice was called *shuddhi*

¹²⁰ Kanakam Bai (pseudonym), interview by author, Udaipur, Rajasthan, 23 May 2006).

¹²¹ Kim, *In Search of Identity*, 140.

¹²² There was a social practice among the Hindus in the pre-independent India to consider people of lower castes as well as outcastes as impure, and so the people of higher castes were not willing to have contact with them. For more details of the practice, see Valerian Rodrigues, ed. *The Essential Writings of B.R. Ambedkar* (New Delhi: OUP, 2002). See pp.95-98, 114-118, 321-406.

¹²³ For more details of the discussion, see McKean, *Divine Enterprise*, 84-87.

¹²⁴ For example, see Kancha Ilaiah, *Why I am not a Hindu: A Sudra Critique of Hindutva Philosophy, Culture and Political Economy*, 2nd ed. (Calcutta, India: Samya, 2005).

(purification). McKean observes that in spite of the opposition from ‘conservative upper castes’ Savarkar promoted *shuddhi*, and subsequently many ‘untouchables, Christians, and Muslims publicly embraced Hinduism.’¹²⁵ Later, as Kim has noted, VHP, RSS and Bajrang Dal actively employed *shuddhi* to reconvert many from Dalit, tribal and other backward classes and castes ‘as a part of their pursuit of Hindutva.’¹²⁶ Conversion is likely to be the purpose behind the origin of VHP. McKean gives an account of the words of Chinmayananda, the founder of the organization, in response to her comment that official VHP records state he is its founding president:

When your pope came to India [Paul VI in December 1964], he said he was going to convert 125 people to Christianity. Public opinion made him withdraw his plan but I was in Bombay and announced that I would convert 200 people to Hinduism and I did. Then I had the idea to start a group to work for conversions. I didn’t have enough people of my own so I asked the RSS for their help. Guruji [RSS head, Golwalkar] liked the idea and had thousands of workers everywhere. The VHP has grown into a mighty force. It is all over the world. After I started the VHP, I returned to my own mission as spiritual teacher of Vedanta.¹²⁷

Probably the same idea is used today by the *Sangh Parivar* to launch the programme *ghar vapasi* (homecoming) to bring many tribal communities into the Hindu fold. The Parivar started their own schools and other social activities in the tribal areas, and function under Hindutva ideology. It is strange that the issue of conversion is treated differently with regard to diverse religious communities.

¹²⁵ McKean, *Divine Enterprise*, 85.

¹²⁶ Kim, *In Search of Identity*, 140.

¹²⁷ McKean, *Divine Enterprise*, 102.

When people embrace the Christian faith, it is called conversion and is regarded as a threat to social order. However, when people are forced or enticed to become Hindus, it is referred to as *suddhi* or *ghar vapasi*.

Another approach by Hindu militants to check conversion has been written Hindu criticism of Islamic and Christian exclusive truth claims, dogmas, and their conversion activities.¹²⁸ Kim notes the work of both Ram Swarup and Sita Ram Goel, and concludes that ‘through their extensive research and reading of Muslim and Christian material, they provided important sources for Hindus in their opposition to Islam and Christianity in general and conversion in particular.’¹²⁹ In his work Arun Shourie, the former cabinet minister of India under the BJP rule, also criticised Christian missionary activities in India.¹³⁰ According to L. Stanislaus, the summary of most literature and documents that oppose Christianity is that missionaries are involved in ‘mass conversions by incentives, deceit, allurements’ and ‘coercion.’¹³¹

The most terrifying approach is the use of physical violence to oppose conversion. Both the converted and the converter are attacked, and in many cases, Christians are assaulted without any clear evidence of conversion. Hundreds of cheaply available books, booklets, pamphlets, documents, and CDs containing material

¹²⁸ For more details on such Hindu literature, see Kim, *In Search of Identity*, 140-42; L. Stanislaus, ‘A Christian Response to Hindutva,’ in *Nationalism and Hindutva*, 198-99.

¹²⁹ Kim, *In Search of Identity*, 141.

¹³⁰ For example, see Arun Shourie, *Missionaries in India: Continuities, Changes and Dilemmas* (New Delhi: Rupa, 2004). Using examples from the writings of Swami Vivekananda and Gandhi, Shourie, analyses the work of Christian missionaries in India. He argues that whether evangelization or social work, Christian mission has conversion as its major purpose, and so the result will be denationalization.

¹³¹ Stanislaus, ‘Christian Response to Hindutva,’ 198-99.

against Christians are distributed everywhere to ‘create an atmosphere of hatred and abhorrence towards Christians and Muslims.’¹³² The speeches of many Hindu militant leaders have intensified the tension, and caused trouble. Daniel’s study contains a number of examples of such provocative talks from many leaders including Ashok Singhal, the International President of VHP, K.S. Sudarsan, the current leader of RSS, and Praveen Togadia, the International General Secretary of VHP.¹³³ Many Pentecostal leaders in Rajasthan believe that these two approaches, the confrontational literature and speeches by Hindu nationalists, have caused the religious tension. All four chief Pentecostal leaders from the district of Banaswara argue that it was once a peaceful district, but the militant groups have created tension over the last ten years or more.¹³⁴ As described earlier, a publicly stated intention to wipe out Christianity from the district of Banaswara has caused the growth of religious intolerance and violence since the 1990s.

Many parts of India witnessed an intensified persecution of Christians in the latter part of the last millennium. Many sociologists as well as Christian writers conclude that the accelerated phase of assault on Christians began in 1998, when the BJP came into power to head the Central Government.¹³⁵ There has been a series of violent attacks against the Christian community in the recent past in Rajasthan which attracted global attention with the attack on EMI, Kota in 2006.

¹³² Stanislaus, ‘Christian Response to Hindutva,’ 199.

¹³³ Daniel, ‘Challenges of the Hindutva,’ 50, 60-61.

¹³⁴ This is expressed during the Leaders Meeting on 08 May 2006.

¹³⁵ Pradeep Mandav, *Communalism in India: A Paradigm Shift to Indian Politics* (Delhi, India: Authors Press, 2000), 191-94; Michael, ‘Hindu Nationalism,’ 475-76; Bengt G. Karlsson, ‘Entering into the Christian Dharma: Contemporary “Tribal” Conversion in India,’ *Christians and Missionaries*, 133-34.

The State Secretariat of the Marxist Communist Party of India (CPI- M), Rajasthan fervently criticized the BJP-led Government for its ‘adversarial stand against the Dalits and minorities ever since it came to power.’ According to the CPI- M statement, the Kota incident was ‘a planned attack by the workers of BJP, Bajrang Dal and the Vishwa Hindu Parishad on Christian institutions with the tacit support of the State Government.’¹³⁶ Without exception, all the Pentecostal leaders have expressed their deep concern regarding the issue. The best illustration of this anxiety was seen when pastors and leaders of Rajasthan gathered in the capital city Jaipur to declare a day of prayer on 8 May 2006.¹³⁷ In the meeting, eleven pastors confessed that they were attacked by Hindu militants during their Christian service in the state. Two of them, who were recent victims of inhuman attack, described their experiences. They both stated that they were assaulted simply because they were Christian workers.

On the other hand, persecution is not new to Pentecostalism in Rajasthan. As mentioned earlier, the team of missionaries, which included K.V. Pillai, K.V. Philip, K. John and others, faced severe hardship from religious fanatics at the beginning of their Rajasthan mission. As mentioned above, they were badly beaten at Nathwara, Udaipur, and it is reported that when they were attacked by fanatics they were protected by angels.¹³⁸ However, they argue that such incidents were very rare in the state and organized attacks on Christians are recent.

¹³⁶ Special Correspondent, ‘Ban on Book by Rajasthan an anti-Dalit act: CPI (M),’ *The Hindu*, 30 April 2006, Mangalore edition.

¹³⁷ I was asked to represent Pentecostals in the Udaipur District along with a few other key leaders.

¹³⁸ K.V. Paul Pillai, ‘Forward,’ in Thonnackal, Marubhoomiyile *Aposthalan*, 16-17.

Another chief strategy seems to be attacks on Christian public meetings, a number of which were pointed out by leaders during the field research. The most recent was the attack on the Rajasthan Christian Festival 2005 organized by charismatic Christians in Banaswara. According to many charismatic leaders, contrary to what normally happens, a fair and neutral report of the Banaswara attack was published in the local newspaper.¹³⁹ Furthermore, the *Masih Mela* organized by the charismatic Christians of Udaipur district in 2002, and the *Mela* organized by the FFCI churches in Kherwara area of Udaipur district in the year 2004, were also attacked. In most cases the attacks were launched not by local people, but by Hindu militants from other places. Lam Lal, a local school master and one of the coordinators of the Kherwara *Mela*, says that he was amazed to see that among the fifty odd people that came to disturb the meeting there was not a single individual from Kherwara.¹⁴⁰ This seems to be a tactic by Hindu militants in general, as P.V. Veer observes in his study on Ayodhya as discussed earlier. According to Veer, the relative peace of the place was disturbed when a campaign was launched, not at the initiative of the 'local monks but by a Hindu nationalist movement with branches all over the country.'¹⁴¹

At the same time, it seems that Christians are becoming fearful and suspect that they are being persecuted deliberately. The example of Pastor Pal¹⁴² who was involved in a road accident has given rise to this suspicion. His motor bike was hit

¹³⁹ The local News Paper in the Hindi language reported the incidents in detail on three consecutive days. See for more details, *Banaswara Bhaskar*, 26-28 October 2005, Banaswara edition.

¹⁴⁰ Lam Lal (pseudonym), interview by author, Kherwara, Rajasthan, 14 May 2006.

¹⁴¹ Veer, *Religious Nationalism*, xi.

¹⁴² Pseudonym.

by a Jeep and he was seriously wounded, sustaining multiple leg fractures. However, he believes that it was a deliberate attack and claims that he has reasons for this conclusion. According to him, the incident took place only a couple of days after he demanded police action against an attack on local Christians in Udaipur district. He says that the Jeep driver hit his bike twice and dragged him with the bike for a distance. A journal published in Bangalore featured a photo of this pastor with the caption, 'persecuted for Christ in Rajasthan.'¹⁴³

In recent years another effective tool used by Hindu militant groups, especially in Rajasthan, is to gather information about missionary training, which in turn is assumed to be used to develop strategies to counteract conversion. As there is an assumption that the missionary training institutes foster conversion programmes, secret agents have been sent as missionary trainees to Christian theological institutes. They come with a fake name, fake certificate and reference, and obtain comparatively easy entry as most Pentecostal institutes do not have a very systematic and organized method for recruiting students. Even at FBC, the most organized Pentecostal theological institute in the state, until recently, the method for recruiting students was not very efficient. The college mainly considered academic credentials as well as a reference from the local pastor for admission. However, two similar incidents in the recent years have prompted the college authority to develop a more suitable recruiting system.¹⁴⁴ A young man was admitted to the college for a two year Certificate programme in Theology (CTh)

¹⁴³ In order to keep the identity of this pastor confidential, the details can not be given.

¹⁴⁴ Being the Registrar of the FBC in those days, I was part of the Selection Committee for admitting students. Therefore I was there when both these incidents happened. I was one among those to argue for the need to develop a more efficient system to recruit students.

in the academic year 2001-2002. He had submitted a reference letter, saying that it was from his local pastor from Madhya Pradesh (MP), which stated that he was a fresh convert from a Hindu family. The pastor's surname was given as Masih.¹⁴⁵ His fellow students noticed some strange behaviour and reported it to the faculty members, which initially was not taken seriously by the College authority. It turned out that the young man was struggling to pretend he was a genuine Christian, but realized that he could not continue in disguise and finally left the college. Soon everybody was shocked to see a local newspaper report accusing the institute of practising forced conversion. A similar incident took place a few months later. Two other students came with a reference letter from a local pastor in Indore, MP. Surprisingly, this pastor's surname was also Masih, and he requested that admission be given to these two young men, who were introduced as new converts from a Hindu family. They did not have any sponsor to bear the expense of the study. However, before they were given admission a few senior students were suspicious of their movements and reported this to the faculty members. After a few hours of questioning these young men admitted that they were sent by a nearby militant organization, and they begged to be forgiven and not to be reported to the police. They were pardoned and sent away peacefully, as the Principal of the college said, 'we should not retaliate as it is our theology to forgive even our enemy.' After these incidents, FBC started taking measures to develop a more efficient strategy for recruiting students from various states.

¹⁴⁵ *Masih* (literally means Christian) was a common surname held by most north Indian Christians.

As in some other states, a law banning religious conversion has been introduced in Rajasthan as another measure to counter conversion.¹⁴⁶ Pentecostal leaders have suggested that the chief purpose has been to make conversion illegal and this has created more religious tension. The minority representative of a Pentecostal organization argued that they regard it as a hidden move to put all Christian workers in prison. Pentecostals, like other Christians, look at the anti-conversion law with suspicion. Careful observation of the proposed law creates doubt about its purpose.¹⁴⁷ They see it as a part of a hidden agenda of the Hindutva advocates as this law has been introduced mostly under the BJP rule. Pentecostal leaders point out the ambiguities in the law. For example, the sections on ‘Definitions’ and ‘Explanation.’ Explanation (a) says that ‘Own religion’ means one’s forefathers. That means any person can accept Hinduism from any other religion because that will be termed as homecoming to the religion of their forefathers. However, moving from Hinduism to another religion will be interpreted as conversion. Explanation (b) implies that they cannot preach or teach eschatological topics like ‘life after death, and heaven and hell.’ The Law says that those convicted will be imprisoned for at least two years, and this can be extended to five years. It is not possible to obtain bail for this offence. Such a harsh punishment causes Pentecostals to believe that the chief intention behind such a move is to put all Christian ministers in prison. Pentecostals disagree with

¹⁴⁶ The Rajasthan State Assembly passed an Anti-conversion Law in 2006 but it never became enforceable law as the Indian President did not approve it. However, the Assembly re-introduced the Law and passed it on 20 March 2008 despite the previous Law 2006, still awaiting the assent of the President. See Appendix 4, for a copy of the Bill 2006 and Appendix 5 for a copy of the Bill 2008.

¹⁴⁷ Some prominent Pentecostal leaders discussed the details of the law with me on 8 May 2006 in Jaipur. The Bill 2006 (Appendix 4) is used for discussion. It is clear that both the Bills do not differ in matters of our discussion in this paper, except years of imprisonment. Compare Appendices 4 and 5.

both the objects and reasons for the bill. They argue that communal harmony was disturbed only after the Hindu militants began to launch their campaign of terror, and that prior to this it was relatively a peaceful state, and people of all religions lived in the state with mutual respect and love. Although the Law has been introduced in the State Legislative Assembly, it has not yet been approved by the Governor. However, Christians say that the threat remains unless BJP changes its Hindutva ideology and its stand against the religious minorities.

Many Christians think that the anti-conversion law will have serious repercussions, as it will be misused by the Hindutva party. They argue that their educational institutions, medical clinics and other community development projects can be closed down, as happened to the EMI. Therefore, Pentecostals along with other Christians have strongly argued against this law. This law against conversion has been passed in five states of India, and a few other states have introduced it but it has not yet received approval. However, except in Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu all other states have witnessed the introduction of the law while BJP had been ruling the state. Therefore, Christians suspect that they are not safe under BJP rule.

Kim's concluding remarks while discussing 'Hindutva and Secular India' are important. According to him, the nationalist Hindus have little room for religious tolerance as they use 'political power to deal with conversion. By regarding Christian conversion as a socio-political issue and also by imposing the Hindutva ideology on the people regardless of their beliefs and practices, *Sangh Parivar*

‘suppress the freedom of individuals,’ and thus fail to safeguard the Constitution.¹⁴⁸

On the other hand, Gauri Viswanathan observes that even while drafting the Indian Constitution during Independence, there was a ‘strong move by powerful Hindu lobbies to ban conversions altogether.’ However, she argues that the final draft of the Constitution resisted the attempt to ‘outlaw conversions and instead made the propagation of religion permissible under the law’ (Article 25, Section D), by giving everyone the fundamental right to ‘profess, practise or propagate religion.’¹⁴⁹

All the Pentecostal leaders in Rajasthan have said that they cannot and they should not retaliate as it is their theology not to hate those who persecute them, but to pray for them. However, most have said that they should use their civil rights as well as minority rights, which the Indian Constitution provides. Nevertheless, some have argued that they cannot expect any justice from the BJP Government, and so people should be prepared to go to jail. Some leaders in the above-mentioned meeting said that Veeru’s experience of praying for the police is a model, and, ‘one day the Lord will change such jails as places of worship like the prison in Philippi, as we read in Acts 15.’¹⁵⁰

Pentecostals argue that they suffer the most from persecution as they are labelled as a proselytising group, even by mainline Christians. Rana comments that

¹⁴⁸S. Kim, ‘Hindutva, Secular India,’ 141.

¹⁴⁹ Viswanathan, ‘Literacy and Conversion,’ 135-36.

¹⁵⁰ This was expressed in the Leaders Meeting on 08 May 2006.

Pentecostals are always accused of being a proselytizing community whenever a persecution occurs.¹⁵¹ This type of accusation is evident in the writing of mainline church writers. There are indications of unfair treatment of Pentecostals by non-Pentecostal writers over the issue of conversion. For example, S.K. Daniel criticized Pentecostal missions because they give importance to evangelism. However, he defends the conversion of Dalits to mainline churches, arguing that they receive a new identity at baptism. This means, it is likely that when non-Pentecostals evangelize, particularly when the mainline churches are involved in the conversion of Dalits, it is regarded as a mission of Dalit improvement, but when Pentecostals are involved in the conversion of tribal people, it is categorized as ‘aggressive evangelism’ and fundamentalism. Pentecostals and other charismatic groups are called ‘Christian fringe groups,’ and ‘new movements and sects’ supported by fundamentalists from outside the country. Daniel argues that the public does not understand the ‘distinction between the mainline Churches and fringe fundamentalist groups.’¹⁵²

Another recent incident which has further intensified Pentecostal suspicion about other Christian communities was the summit of Hindu-Christian religious leaders in Kerala on 29 September 2008, held against the background of the recent attacks on Christians and churches in states like Orissa, Karnataka and Kerala. The summit was held at the initiative of the Kerala Catholic Bishops’ Council (KCBC) and was attended by several chief leaders of other churches as well as the *Sangh Parivar* groups. However, Pentecostals viewed this summit with suspicion,

¹⁵¹ Rana, interview, 15 May 2006.

¹⁵² For more details of the discussion, see Daniel, ‘Challenges of the Hindutva,’ 63, 70-72.

because none of the Pentecostal leaders was invited, despite the fact that many Pentecostals were attacked in the recent violence. The statement of Archbishop Cleemis strengthened the suspicion as he is reported to have said:

The summit had taken a stand against compulsory conversions, but at the same time, the freedom of individuals to convert out of deep conviction would be respected.... The attacks on the churches should be seen as isolated incidents. “An attack on a person bearing a Christian name need not be construed as an attack on the entire Christian community.”¹⁵³

Therefore, many Pentecostals believe that they were targeted at the summit, and the reaction of Kerala Pentecostals in particular was very strong.¹⁵⁴

It is also observed that there is persecution, albeit on a less serious level and the anti-conversion law exists in a few states where BJP is not a ruling party. Therefore, as Kim’s study shows, ‘Hindu resentment against conversion is not confined to “fundamentalists” but is widely shared by a majority of Hindus.’ In this context, he suggests a two-dimensional engagement in debate. First, an ‘intra-Christian debate on the motives and agents of conversion,’ to consider Hindu criticisms. Second, a Christian-Hindu debate on the scope, limit and meaning of religious tolerance in both religious contexts with its implications.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³ Special Correspondent, ‘Attacks on Churches Decried,’ *The Hindu*, 30 September 2008, under ‘Kerala,’ <http://www.hindu.com/2008/09/30/stories/2008093054120400.htm> (accessed 28 November 2008).

¹⁵⁴ For example, there are several articles in *Christhava Chintha* 10, no. 112 (3 November 2008). See Anil Kodithottam, ‘Sanghaparivarinte Kapadanadakathil Methranmarude Panku’ [The Role of Metrans in the Fake Drama of Sangh Parivar], 1, 11; Editorial, ‘Christhava- Hindu Munnani Churchayude Lakshyam Vere’ [Christian-Hindu Dialogue with a Different Goal], 2; P.P. Kurien, ‘Nigoodathakal Marangirikkunna Aikya Sammelanangal’ [Summits with Mysteries], 3.

¹⁵⁵ Kim, *In Search of Identity*, 182, 197-200.

4.6. Conclusion

The above discussion reveals that the religio-political situation is a serious issue in Rajasthan. These larger issues affect the local context and thus create tensions in the state. In spite of the fact that Pentecostals are a minority in Rajasthan and face challenges from outside the community, they promise to continue contributing as nation builders. The nexus between religion and culture as well as religion and politics seems to be the biggest concern of contemporary Pentecostals as this has seriously affected religious tolerance. Moreover, 'conversion and persecution' is a vital issue for Pentecostal Christianity as they are accused of being a proselytizing group, even by other Christians. With the introduction of the Law against conversion, the issue has become stronger as it may affect the existence and growth of the movement. Due to the nexus between religion and politics, Pentecostals fear that they, with other minority religious groups, will suffer loss in the long run under the BJP government. However, external pressure is not the only concern for Pentecostals. They are also concerned about internal issues from within the movement, which is the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter 5

ECCLESIAL ISSUES FACING PENTECOSTALISM

In the last chapter I outlined some of the major issues contemporary Pentecostals in Rajasthan face from outside the Movement, particularly from the religio-political context of the state. This chapter focuses on the internal issues Pentecostals are grappling with from within their community. In this study, these internal issues are referred to as ecclesial challenges. As Pentecostalism has become a global movement, these ecclesial challenges are local as well as global. The global impact on the local Pentecostalism and Pentecostal responses to them will also be discussed.

5.1. The Socio-economic Status of Pentecostals

The poor socio-economic condition of most of its followers seems to be a vital concern for the Pentecostal Movement in Rajasthan. As discussed in chapter three, most Pentecostals in the state are from the poor and tribal communities. Therefore, they belong socially and economically to the lower strata of society. However, in most parts of the world Pentecostalism is identified with the less privileged. Wagner notes that Pentecostalism has been ‘a religion of the masses in contrast to the classes, even in the affluent countries.’¹ This fragile socio-economic status is not a characteristic of Pentecostals only, but of Indian Christianity in general. Although Christians are an integral part of Indian society, they are comparatively more backward socially and economically, particularly in

¹ Wagner, *Look Out!* 70.

north India. Indian Christians lack an industrial, commercial and political bourgeoisie.² The Indian church has been chiefly identified with the poor from its inception. Concerning the socio-economic status of Indian Christianity, Job and others have commented that the Indian Christian community is ‘almost the poorest in the poorest country in the world.’³

The nineteenth century witnessed several mass movements towards Christianity in India from the depressed classes and tribes, which resulted in the growth of Protestant Christians in the latter part of the nineteenth and the early part of the twentieth centuries. John Grant notes that ‘this growing community of Christians drew its membership not from intellectuals but from villagers, from outcastes, from aborigines...’⁴ In 1930, it was estimated that 80 percent of Protestant Christians in India were the products of mass movements, and 15 percent of the total Christian population in India were tribal Christians.⁵ According to John Webster, the Dalit movement began with these mass movements and thousands of Dalits were converted to Christianity, and they changed the course of the history of Christianity in India. Therefore, he argues, ‘the history of Christianity in India became inexorably intertwined with the history of the Dalit movement.’⁶ Thus, Christianity began to be identified in the public eye as the religion of the lower

² Wessly Lukose, ‘The Emergence of the Urban Middle Class: A Challenge to the Church in India’ (MTh thesis, SAIACS, Bangalore, India, 1999), 62. In this study, I have tried to show the weak state of the Indian church within the socio-political and economic domains of society, and so urge that the church in India should give attention to the influential urban middle class, with the aim of transforming the nation as a Kingdom society.

³ Job, *Rethinking Christianity*, 18.

⁴ John Webster Grant, *God’s People in India* (Madras: CLS, 1960), 19.

⁵ T.V. Philip, ‘Protestant Christianity in India since 1858,’ in *Christianity in India: A History of Ecumenical Perspective*, ed. H.C. Perumalil (Alleppey, India: Prakasam Publications, 1972), 270-71. It is important to note that according to the 1931 census, 11% of the total population of India were tribals. For details, see Raj, *National Debate*, 145.

⁶ John C.B. Webster, *The Dalit Christians: A History* (Delhi: ISPCK, 1992), 33, 39.

strata of society. However, the need for a self-supportive church became a major missionary concern for Indian Christians. Nevertheless, a significant improvement in the socio-economic status of the Church in India is not yet achieved, as the majority of Indian Christians belong to the lower and poorer classes even today. T.K. John's study provides an image of Indian Christians at the end of the twentieth century. According to him 'about 60% of the Christians are from Dalit communities, 15% from OBC [Other Backward Class], and 12% tribals.'⁷ Therefore, the poor socio-economic condition of the Church in India is a serious concern.

It appears that Pentecostal Christianity in Rajasthan is yet to be a self-supportive community. Twenty out of the twenty five pastors who were interviewed said that their churches need effort to be self-supportive. They are hardly able to support their families with the financial support they receive from the head office of their respective organizations. Only five pastors said that their churches are self-supporting, and three of them stated that their churches support other missionaries as well. These five pastors admitted that they do not receive any support from the head office. The other twenty pastors said that most of their church members are working class and, these churches cannot support a pastor and his family. Ten out of the twenty pastors confessed that they work hard on their farm, alongside their pastoral ministry, in order to meet their needs.

⁷ T.K. John, 'Image: Image of the Christian Presented in India Today,' in *Church in India in Search*, 127. Here, both Catholic and Protestant Christianity are included. On the basis of their social and economic condition, some citizens of India are classified as Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST) and Other Backward Class (OBC).

Financial poverty has been a major reason for the church in India becoming dependant on foreign money. However, such a dependency has resulted in the impoverishment of the Indian church, not only in terms of finance but also in terms of theology. According to McGavran, ‘many churches on the mission field still depend heavily on Western aid.... The colleges and seminaries and orphanages and retirement homes must be counted as foreign aid.’ Therefore, he argued that ‘the social reform they institute, the more intelligent, sweeter, juster social order they foster, are all foreign aid.’⁸ Although there have been many changes since the days of McGavran, the church in India is not completely free from this issue.

The poor socio-economic status of Pentecostals in Rajasthan has caused them to experience the impoverishment of dependency in various ways. As many of its pioneer leaders are from south India, early Pentecostals in Rajasthan had to depend upon south Indians in terms of organizational structure and theology. However, it is wrong to say that the theology of Pentecostals in Rajasthan is completely identified with the south Indian theology, but the fragile socio-economic status of Pentecostals is a major reason for their dependency on others. South Indian Pentecostals claim that they have a distinct theology of their own. Nonetheless, it seems that they have some ties with North America. Michael Bergunder argues that many Pentecostal churches in Asia, as in many other parts of the globe, ‘display a strong white North American evangelical flavour.’ He states that even the theological statements of faith are copied from American

⁸ McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth*, 211-212.

Pentecostal originals,' and that is why he has the impression that Pentecostals are practising 'an American Pentecostal way of spiritual life.'⁹ This influence has probably been the reason why some key south Indian Pentecostal leaders in Rajasthan prefer to use the Scofield Study Bible.¹⁰ Most of them were ardent proponents of dispensationalism, and this is well illustrated in the works on the Book of Revelation and Eschatology by Thomas Mathews.¹¹ However, there are progressive changes taking place with regard to the theology and practice of Pentecostals in Rajasthan, as discussed in chapter three.

Most organizations are headed up by south Indians. Out of the twelve major Pentecostal organizations in the state, ten of them have south Indians as their main leader. The other two organizations have their senior leaders from Rajasthan. However, these local leaders were once part of another organization which was led by south Indians. Nine of these ten organizations have leaders from Kerala, and most of their key positions are held by south Indians. The poor socio-economic status of Pentecostals is regarded by many leaders as responsible for the scarcity of able, local leadership. Many south Indian leaders said that they do not have local people available who have the potential to take over the top levels of church leadership.¹² The senior leadership of FFCI, the largest Pentecostal denomination in the state, is an indication of this. FFCI made some changes in

⁹ Michael Bergunder, 'Constructing Pentecostalism: On Issues of Methodology and Representation,' *JEPTA* 26, no.2 (2007): 55-73.

¹⁰ When I came to Rajasthan as a missionary I was encouraged by some leaders in the state to use the Scofield Study Bible, and I did so for many years.

¹¹ Mathews, *Revelation Simplified*; Mathews, *Bhavishyavani Ki Ruprekha*.

¹² It is interesting to note that the same kind of paternalism was found in western missionary leaders in many places. However, it is important to note that many local pastors also failed to develop the next generation to leadership positions even in their local churches.

terms of its leadership structure in 2007.¹³ Apart from the General Overseer, three of the four Executive Overseers are from south India, and the fourth one is from Gujarat. Although they are some of the most senior leaders of the organization who were there with the founder when it was being built up, the reality is that FFCI has failed to develop Rajasthanis to the senior leadership of the organization even after four decades of its missionary activities in the state. This is the picture of almost all Pentecostal churches. One of the major explanations given by the leaders for this state of affairs is that they cannot find capable leaders from among the local community. Five leaders have admitted that they had to appoint south Indians as they could not find able leaders from Rajasthan. All of them said that their ultimate desire is to develop, train and equip local leaders. They said that they do not want to fill the leadership positions with south Indians, and at the same time they only want to appoint potential leaders, whether from the south or north, for the sake of the movement's stability. However, in conclusion, the current picture of leadership clearly indicates the need for greater representation of local people in the senior leadership of the movement. More concrete and tangible efforts should be made to develop and equip local leaders.

Even in the theological institutions most faculty members are from south India. All the seven Pentecostal training institutes¹⁴ have a greater representation of their staff from south India, particularly Kerala. The list of faculty members of FBC

¹³ For more details, see 'Celestial Celebration of Saints: Navapur 07,' compiled by Glory M. Philip *Cross and Crown* 37, no. 2 (2007): 15.

¹⁴ Appendix 3 has the list of all theological institutes of Pentecostals in Rajasthan.

illustrates this fact.¹⁵ Although there have been measures in recent years to increase the number of faculty members from north India, more concrete effort to bridge the gap is needed. The common explanation for the absence of north Indian staff has been the lack of capable north Indian theologians. ‘That is why we send north Indian students for higher studies,’ said an FBC official. For example, Santiram Sulya from MP was sent to Gospel for Asia Bible Seminary (GFABS), Kerala, for his MDiv and then for his MTh to South Asia Institute of Advanced Christian Studies (SAIACS), Bangalore, and he is currently serving as a faculty member at FBC. Besides Solanki, two MDiv graduates of FBC, Anand Khuntia and Sarat Nayak (both from the state of Orissa) were also selected as faculty members very recently. However, there is not a single Rajasthani graduate of FBC who has successfully completed a BTh or higher degree, even after more than twenty five years of its history, although many have completed Certificate and Diploma programmes. On the other hand, it is important to note that there is a lack of educational opportunities as well as a lack of interest and motivation for education in the villages of Rajasthan.

5.2. Denominationalism

The rise in the number of denominations and the subsequent inter-denominational issues is another significant concern for Pentecostals in Rajasthan. They too, like many other churches, struggle to explain various church-related issues like sheep stealing, shepherd stealing and division. One characteristic of Pentecostalism is that as the movement grows, divisions arise within the churches. This is not

¹⁵ See Appendix 6, which shows the south and north Indian representation of faculty members of FBC.

peculiar to Pentecostalism in Rajasthan, but a general feature of Pentecostal ecclesiology across the globe. In the early years, there were strong ties between Pentecostals in Rajasthan and other states in north India. The Fellowship of the Pentecostal Churches of God in India (FPC) claimed to be the largest Pentecostal Association in north India.¹⁶ According to Mathews, there were 102 full-time ministers on its roll by the year 1976, and a majority of them were north Indians. He argued that from ‘Kerala to Uttar Pradesh FPC ministers are working on faith for the Pentecostal testimony.’¹⁷ However, in the course of time many breakaway groups were formed out of this fellowship. In his study of missionary organizations in Banaswara, Lal observes that ‘the quarrels among the members of the same denomination and hostility between different denominations prevent the Christian missionaries from acting as a united force in Banaswara.’¹⁸ Although ‘doctrine’ is projected as the issue for almost all divisions, in most cases, personal conflicts remain the chief reason for such division. In certain incidents, where doctrine was the issue for division, it is an irony that the breakaway group also followed the parent organization. For example, some south Indian leaders admitted that they left a parent organization some years ago, and a major reason for this separation was related to jewellery, as they taught that believers should not wear jewellery. However, over the course of time, they too began to allow their members to use jewellery.¹⁹

¹⁶ Thomas Mathews, ‘Rajasthan News Letter: FPC Udaipur Convention,’ *Cross and Crown* 7, no. 1-2 (1976): 17. FPC was like a loose federation of many independent local churches, with its headquarters in Itarsi, Madhya Pradesh. Kurien Thomas was its founder, and Thomas Mathews held various key positions of this Association, before he left it.

¹⁷ Mathews, ‘Rajasthan News Letter,’ 17.

¹⁸ Lal, *Tribals and Christian Missionaries*, 64.

¹⁹ This was confessed by three south Indian leaders on 08 May 2008.

It seems that building upon the foundation of someone else is a commonly observed trend among Indian Pentecostals. The early passion for pioneer evangelism and church planting seems to be declining, and instead organizations try to buy workers from other groups. Money was not the criterion for joining an organization in the early days, but today money matters, and in certain cases, it matters the most. Most workers associated with an organization may receive a monthly stipend from the parent organization. However, when they are given a better offer from another, they are tempted to join the second one. Such a practice is commonly known in the state as ‘shepherd stealing.’ In many cases, they join other organizations taking the congregations along with them as most members are illiterate and do not know the differences between organizations. On the other hand, Christian work does not mean that ministers should be kept in poverty. At the same time, another wrong practice is also observed. There are a few workers who receive a monthly stipend from more than one organization, as they are among the ministers’ list of multiple organizations. Therefore, a better system for the selection and function of ministers is needed.

Many organizations have lost their original enthusiasm for working in unreached places. One of the major reasons for this is fear of persecution. It is not easy to work in strange places in contemporary Rajasthan, and so most organizations try to start a new work in places where other churches have already experienced results. Therefore, the southern districts of Rajasthan, like Banaswara and Udaipur, have workers from almost all organizations engaged in missionary activities. Southern Rajasthan is a more comfortable zone, having a comparatively

greater presence of Christians. Many Pentecostal ministers who began with the vision of reaching north Rajasthan have moved southwards over the years. Although every church claims to have a vision for reaching the unreached, in reality most work in south Rajasthan, the most reached region in the state. Many of them give the same explanation that the Holy Spirit asked them to move towards the south. While talking to the leaders of two large churches about the reason why they shifted their headquarters to the south, they replied that they moved in response to the guidance of the Spirit of God.

As mentioned earlier, breakaway churches, sheep stealing and shepherd stealing are common issues disturbing Pentecostal growth in Rajasthan. However, some see this as a reason for growth, as the breakaway group works with more vigour and competence, and subsequently brings growth. At the same time, such competition creates tensions and rivalry within the community and that invites opposition from militant groups. Although most churches become united when there is persecution, there have been cases of accusation against one another. A victim of an attack by Hindu militants in 1996 said that he still believes that a pastor, who left the victim's organization some years ago, was the reason behind this attack. He said that he had enough reason to suggest that the other pastor might have given information of the meetings and asked the militant groups to attack him, and that is why he was the only focus of the attack, and no other individual from the congregation was touched.²⁰

²⁰ Rajesh (pseudonym), interview by author, Udaipur, Rajasthan, 06 May 2006.

The definition of Pentecostalism causes tension among various churches in one way or the other. Some of the editorial articles in *Cross and Crown* show the tension caused by an inclusive definition of Pentecostalism in the initial stages of the movement. For example, an article with the title ‘The Charismatic Renewal’ praised the growing charismatic revival around the globe.²¹ However, a few years later, another article, entitled ‘Charismatics, Wither [sic] Bound?’ fervently criticized Charismatic Christianity, and also expressed an anti-ecumenical attitude.²² It warned that ‘believers of the Word of God should be cautious! [The] Bible warns, “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God.”’²³ As discussed in chapter three, there are many classical Pentecostals who are unwilling to regard many recent Charismatic churches as Pentecostal. They suspect that such an inclusion may affect the stability of the movement. Therefore, many classical Pentecostal churches are not happy with the position of some independent Pentecostal churches that freely relate to Charismatic churches irrespective of their denominational roots. At the same time, many Charismatic churches do not want to be referred to as Pentecostals. For example, the minister of one Charismatic church in Ajmer said that he does not want to call his church ‘Pentecostal.’²⁴ However, his church follows Pentecostalism in many respects, and so it is not easy for an outsider to distinguish it from classical Pentecostalism.

The interdenominational issue is a major concern for Pentecostals in the state. On the one hand, leaders of many small organizations say that they are facing threats

²¹ Thomas Mathews, ‘The Charismatic Renewal,’ *Cross and Crown* 7, no. 4 (1977): 3-5.

²² Thomas Mathews, ‘Charismatics Wither [sic] Bound,’ *Cross and Crown* 12, no. 8 (1982): 3-5.

²³ Mathews, ‘Charismatics Wither [sic] Bound,’ 4.

²⁴ Juhu (pseudonym), interview by author, Ajmer, Rajasthan, 18 May 2006. He is a north Indian minister.

from larger organizations and that their workers are tempted to move to the established churches. On the other hand, leaders of many established Pentecostal churches organizations say that many new churches cause problems because they come from different places and offer large amounts of money to support their ministers, and subsequently their workers are tempted to join the organization that offers better financial support. Although they all say that their vision is to work in the most unreached areas, it seems that a few of them have hired already involved workers and that they work in the already reached area.

It is likely that the denominational emphasis has been developed over the years. Such an attitude was not evident in the beginning, when Pentecostals were more ecumenical in their attitude. The progressive development of the title as well as the contents of *Cross and Crown* illustrates this fact. As mentioned earlier, it is the first Pentecostal periodical to be published in the state, and still remains one of the most prominent Pentecostal publications in north India. Its first volume had the subtitle '*Indian Christian Voice*', with an additional inscription '*A Non-Denominational Christian Monthly Magazine*.'²⁵ The second volume had the subtitle *Full Gospel Voice* instead of '*Indian Christian Voice*.' From the third volume onwards, the additional subtitle is not found. The fourth volume had the subtitle, *Asia's Leading Full Gospel Monthly*. Later it began to come out with no subtitle. Although there has been a heavy emphasis on Pentecostal content in the periodical, the title never contained the term 'Pentecostal.' The most important fact is that this non-denominational periodical has gradually become a

²⁵ See the cover page, *Cross and Crown* 1, no.1 (1970).

denominational journal, as it has become the possession of NMM, and it only contains the missionary activities of FFCI along with other devotional articles.

5.3. Cultural Dynamics

The intercultural issue is another concern of contemporary Pentecostalism in Rajasthan. This cannot be seen as a new challenge; rather there has been evidence of intercultural issues within the community even from the movement's inception in the state. It seems that most leaders fail to understand cultural dynamics at least in the initial period of Pentecostalism. The current research shows that until recently the Pentecostal movement in the state has been increasingly controlled and shaped by south Indians, particularly Malayalees.²⁶ Malayalees do not share the north Indian culture in various aspects like language, clothes and food and cultural differences have played a significant role in many ecclesiastical issues, including the division of churches. Although there are a number of inter-cultural issues such as the use of jewellery, clothes and language, only the problem of jewellery is focused on in this study as an example, as it has been a complex issue that has seriously affected Pentecostalism, particularly in its early years. As mentioned earlier, a few Pentecostal churches in the state are schisms from other Pentecostal organizations. One reason for leaving the parent organization was related to the issue of jewellery. Most leaders who left the parent organizations were from south India and had a background in classical Kerala Pentecostalism. Classical Pentecostals from Kerala do not allow their followers to wear ornaments of any sort. They made non-usage of jewellery part of their doctrine, an external

²⁶ People from Kerala, whose mother tongue is Malayalam, are called *Malayalees*.

sign of holiness. However, later only the south Indian leaders recognized it as a cultural issue rather than a doctrinal one.

The jewellery issue caused much confusion among early Pentecostals in Rajasthan. Intercultural tension has been very evident in matters related to ornaments. The following incident narrated by Valu Singh, a senior Rajasthani Pentecostal pastor from the state, illustrates this:

There was a powerful three days special meeting in Banaswara under the leadership of pastor [Daniel].²⁷ Some local people decided to follow Jesus, and many others had been filled with the Spirit of God. An elderly lady, who accepted Christ, came forward for water baptism. She pleaded to the servants of God that she can not remove the ornaments as she would be expelled from her house. However, *these south Indian pastors* did not give her baptism telling that she can not be given baptism until and unless she removes the ornaments. But the sad part of the story is that she died in the same month. I had a guilty feeling for not giving baptism to this woman. I began to cry thinking of the responsibility of her soul. I got angry with *these Malayalee pastors*.... I said in the next pastors meeting, gold is only a metal, and if you cannot use the gold metal, you cannot use the iron metal also. Then you have to take out all the furniture made of other metals like iron from your houses and church buildings.... Then I said *you should not impose your south Indian culture on us the north Indians*.²⁸

Incidents like these served to bring about a turning point in the FFCI in terms of its understanding on various issues that have cultural moorings. Ten days after

²⁷ Daniel is a pseudonym, and he is from south India.

²⁸ Valu Singh, interview by author, Jaipur, Rajasthan, 12 May 2006. Italics mine.

Valu Singh was interviewed, I interviewed Pastor Daniel. Coincidentally, there was a baptism service on the same day in Daniel's church. It was interesting to observe that he gave baptism to a woman without insisting that she remove any ornaments. In the interview he admitted that having a classical Pentecostal background from Kerala he could not distinguish between doctrine and culture in the beginning of his ministry in Rajasthan.²⁹

Intercultural issues still need to be addressed in Pentecostal churches in Rajasthan as many organizations continue to struggle with them. Local leaders of many organizations complain about the leadership as most organizations have a predominantly south Indian leadership. In many cases even the second line leadership is south Indian. Although it may not be serious at present, the south India- north India tension has been in existence in various aspects of the Pentecostal community. It is true that local members are not experiencing tension over the issue now. However, they have the feeling that they have not been given fair representation in top levels of leadership. A north Indian worker from a Pentecostal organization, who has recently joined a non-religious NGO, said that local people are not well represented in the senior leadership of his church.³⁰ Two other local leaders stated that they left their respective parent organizations to establish their own organizations with a leadership comprising of local people.

Many churches have started to take up the initiative to train local young people, as most front-line leaders have failed to raise an able second-line leadership that has

²⁹ Daniel, interview by author, Jaipur, Rajasthan, 22 May 2006.

³⁰ Dan (pseudonym), interview by author, Jaipur, Rajasthan, 24 May 2006.

a fair representation of local people even after three to four decades of church activity in the state. Many local pastors send their young people for theological training. Others want to send them to English medium schools so that they can send them later for higher theological degrees. There was a time when there were only a few people studying in the English language at FBC. But the trend is the opposite now as more people want to study in the English medium than in Hindi, even though it is comparatively more expensive to study in English.³¹ Many missionary organizations have begun leadership training and now appoint young leaders including local leaders into leadership. For example, the FFCI has sixteen members in its general council, and eight of them are north Indians. There is definitely an increase in the number of local leaders in recent years. As mentioned earlier, the FBC has started sending able north Indian students for higher education, and employing them on the faculty, and they serve in administration. For example, Santiram Sulya (from MP) is currently acting as the Dean of Students. Although, previously this position was held by south Indians, the leadership of FBC realized that as most students are from north India, it is advisable to appoint a north Indian faculty member to this position to help reduce cultural tension.

The above discussion also shows the impotence of the Pentecostal community despite their claim to have spiritual power to overcome every pressure. In conclusion, it can be said that to a certain extent the Pentecostal doctrine of 'being filled with the Holy Spirit' can give a sense of unity and equality among its

³¹ A careful look into the enrolment of students each year for various courses in English and Hindi shows the same. See Appendix 7. The tuition fee is more for programmes in English as they are higher degree programmes.

followers. However, when it comes to the real issues of life, cultural dynamics seem strong, even among Pentecostals in Rajasthan. Therefore, as Michael Giaco concludes in his discussion of Pentecostalism in Quebec Culture, the truth of the matter is that even ‘groups with otherworldly concerns like the Pentecostals are not immune to historical, cultural ... pressures....’³²

5.4. The Globalization of Pentecostalism

Although Pentecostalism in Rajasthan has an indigenous origin without any influence from external sources outside the nation, it has felt tremendous impact of global Pentecostalism in recent years. It appears that there is a tension between the global and the local within the movement. However, as André Droogers observes in his discussion of the ‘internal religious characteristics of Pentecostalism’ and the ‘complex articulation between Pentecostalism and globalization,’ the capacity of Pentecostalism to combine opposite characteristics enables Pentecostals in Rajasthan to tackle the tension.³³ Nevertheless, the challenge is not to be taken lightly; rather it needs serious attention. As Wout van Laar comments, ‘we are witnessing a rapid ‘pentecostalization’ of world Christianity.’³⁴ Whatever the interpretation given to its growth, whether theological, sociological or economic, as Droogers has observed, rapid expansion is the characteristic of Pentecostalism that has drawn the most attention.³⁵

³² Michael Di Giaco, ‘Pentecostalism, Nationalism and Quebec Culture,’ *Pneuma* 28, no.1 (2006): 34.

³³ For more details of the discussion, see André Droogers, ‘Globalisation and Pentecostal Success,’ in *Between Babel and Pentecost: Transnational Pentecostalism in Africa and Latin America*, ed. Andre Corten and Ruth Marshall-Fratani (London: Hurst, 2001), 57-59.

³⁴ Wout van Laar, ‘Introduction: It’s Time to Get to Know Each Other,’ in *Fruitful in this Land: Pluralism, Dialogue and Healing in Migrant Pentecostalism*, ed. André Droogers, Cornelis van der Laan, and Wout van Laar (Zoetermeer: Uitgeverij, 2006), 10.

³⁵ Droogers, ‘Globalisation and Pentecostal Success,’ 41.

Although the term ‘globalization’ has several implications, such as socio-political, religio-cultural, economic and technological, this study uses the term ‘globalization of Pentecostalism’ to express the ‘interconnectedness of Pentecostalism’ across the globe in one way or another, as mentioned in chapter one. As Harold Netland argues, despite the rise of powerful anti-globalization movements and the resurgence of a nationalistic spirit, ‘globalization promotes increased interconnectedness and commonalities across traditional ethnic, religious, cultural, and national boundaries.’³⁶ There are several Pentecostal commonalities despite its regional and ecclesiastical differences. There have been a number of attempts in the recent past to study various aspects of the globalization of Pentecostalism.³⁷ In the contemporary world, it seems that in no part of the world can Pentecostalism claim to be an isolated movement, but different strands are connected to each other in one way or the other. As Coleman comments, ‘one could argue that such similarities are due to the same Spirit infusing different populations around the globe,’ however, ‘the social and communicational links between complex and shifting networks’ of people cannot be ignored. His research of a Charismatic church in Sweden reveals a global charismatic ‘meta-culture’ that transcends geographical as well as ecclesial particularities, and displays remarkable parallels across the globe.³⁸

³⁶ Harold A. Netland, ‘Introduction: Globalization and Theology Today,’ in *Globalizing Theology: Belief and Practice in an Era of World Christianity*, ed. Craig Ott and Harold A. Netland (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 22.

³⁷ For example, Dempster, Klaus, and Petersen, *Globalization of Pentecostalism*; Karla Poewe, ed. *Charismatic Christianity as a Global Culture* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1994); Simon Coleman, *The Globalization of Charismatic Christianity: Spreading the Gospel of Prosperity* (Cambridge: CUP, 2000); Sturla J. Stalsett, *Spirits of Globalization: The Growth of Pentecostalism and Experiential Spiritualities in a Global Age* (London: SCM Press, 2006).

³⁸ See for more discussion, Coleman, *Globalization of Charismatic Christianity*, 67-69.

Pentecostalism in Rajasthan has been deeply connected to Indian Pentecostalism in general and south India in particular, more than in any other part of the globe. As discussed in chapter three, since the coming of K.V. Philip the movement has essential connections to south Indian Pentecostalism, particularly Kerala. Even today, south Indian preachers, crusade evangelists, prophets, singers and Bible teachers are very much in demand in Rajasthan. For example, many south Indian singers like Wilson George³⁹ and Berkman⁴⁰ are among the favourite singers of indigenous Pentecostals in Rajasthan, as in many other north Indian states. A number of songs in south Indian languages, especially Malayalam and Tamil, have been translated into Hindi.⁴¹ Pentecostalism in Rajasthan is indebted to Kerala Pentecostals particularly in terms of finance. Senior leaders of many organizations have confessed that they do not receive financial support from any foreign agency for mission work, but obtain occasional as well as regular personal gifts from Malayalee Pentecostal friends and relatives who work in the Gulf countries, the US and UK.

Pentecostalism in Rajasthan is connected to global Pentecostalism in many ways. A glance through the early issues of *Cross and Crown* reveals the international connection in the early days of Pentecostalism in the state. The contents include a report of what was happening in the Pentecostal movement around the world,

³⁹ He is of Kerala origin, but born and brought up in north India, and was serving as a music teacher as well as choir Master of FBC in Rajasthan. Since 1998, he has settled in Ludhiana, Punjab.

⁴⁰ He was a Roman Catholic priest from Tamil Nadu, and now a Charismatic singer.

⁴¹ For example *Songs of Fellowship*, the most prominent and popular song book in Hindi, has several such translated songs. See *Songs of Fellowship*, 9th ed. (Udaipur, India: FBC, 2005). Nine editions of the song book show its demand and popularity.

entitled ‘Pentecost: International Report,’⁴² and also special articles on the death of international Pentecostal leaders like Lewi Pethrus.⁴³ Moreover, the urban churches in Rajasthan like Rajasthan Pentecostal Church and Agape Fellowship Church (Jaipur), two of the largest and the fastest growing urban Pentecostal churches in the state, look like many other mega-Pentecostal churches in the world. For example, RPC’s pattern of worship and preaching, the use of mass media in the actual worship service, the administrative and ministerial function of the church, the regular visit of charismatic preachers from all over the world, and even the design of the church building⁴⁴ express its link with global Pentecostalism. Many village pastors and believers who are exposed to the worship and function of RPC are tempted to imitate the RPC style. Eleven out thirteen local pastors from Udaipur district expressed their desire to develop their church along the lines of RPC.⁴⁵ During a course on ‘Church Planting’, ten out of the fourteen of a graduating class said that RPC was their model church.⁴⁶

⁴² For example, see ‘Pentecost: International Report,’ *Cross and Crown* 3, no. 5, 6 (1973): 10-15; ‘Pentecost: International Report,’ *Cross and Crown* 4, no. 4, 5 (1974): 9-14. They include other subtitles like ‘Assemblies of God Convene Council on Spiritual Life,’ ‘Society for Pentecostal Studies Sponsors Inter-Pentecostal Dialogue,’ ‘First European Pentecostal Conference Draws Large Crowds,’ ‘Pentecostal Fellowship of North America Meets in Toronto, Canada,’ ‘Charismatic Movement Continues to Grow Among Presbyterians,’ ‘Charismatic Movement Spreading in Ireland,’ and ‘Church of God Nearing 1.5 million Members.’

⁴³ For example, see Eric Andreasson, ‘Pastor Lewi Pethrus Promoted to Glory,’ *Cross and Crown* 5, no. 1 (1974): 14-15; Thomas Mathews, ‘A Tribute to Pastor Pethrus,’ *Cross and Crown* 5, no. 1 (1974): 16-19

⁴⁴ It is said that the design of the new building of RPC was borrowed from the previous building of Lakewood Church, Houston, Texas, when John Osteen was its senior pastor. The founder of RPC was tempted to adopt the design of Lakewood church after his visit to the Lakewood in the early 1990s. This was revealed by a Pentecostal leader from Maharashtra, who attended the funeral service of the founder of RPC, when I was also present (27 November 2005). He said that he was also a visitor at Osteen’s church when the minister of RPC visited the Lakewood church.

⁴⁵ Because it is a mega-church, it is a prosperous, multi-cultural and growing church. This view was expressed during a participant observation of a pastors meeting on 7 May 2006.

⁴⁶ This view was expressed by students in one of my lectures on Church Planting in 2004. This is mainly because of its growth, worship and preaching style and its popularity.

The current research focuses on two major areas where global Pentecostal influence is apparent. The first is its influence on local worship. According to Simon Coleman, worship patterns of ‘charismatic Christians display striking parallels.’⁴⁷ Spirit experiences like glossolalia, healing, exorcism, exuberant worship and spontaneous prayer are part of Pentecostalism in Rajasthan, as in any other parts of the world. The language of the report of the 2007 annual gathering of FFCI includes some typical Pentecostal phrases and practices, similar to those used by Pentecostals generally. The title of the report, ‘Celestial Celebration of Saints,’ itself shows the same thing. The report states:

Navapur convention is known for its distinct flavour of *jubilant worship*. Sangeeta Awale (Mumbai), Pastor Paul Mathews and Filadelfia Bible College Choir led God's people into *dynamic and inspirational music*. The Holy Spirit united the people to enjoy the Lord with *voices resounding, bodies moving, and flags waving*. The energy of the crowd was so great in praise that the earth was literally moved. *Miracles flowed* as the Spirit made inroads into even the most hardened of hearts; and *worship reached jubilant heights* of freedom with dignified pastors and elders even *kicking off their shoes, linking arms, and dancing to the sound of joyful songs of praise!* There were times that the praises of God so took over that many lost the sense of time.⁴⁸

The report includes an account of the women’s meetings as well. It says, ‘women’s meetings were characteristic of the spontaneous praise, adoration, life changing testimonies, and authoritative word by anointed women.’⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Coleman, *Globalization of Charismatic Christianity*, 67.

⁴⁸ ‘Celestial Celebration,’ 12. Italics mine. For more details of the report, see pp. 11-16.

⁴⁹ ‘Celestial Celebration,’ 13.

Coleman's argument that the modern mass communication media has a significant role in the globalization of charismatic Christianity⁵⁰ is true in respect to Pentecostals in Rajasthan. Through their access to the media, they are exposed to global Pentecostal culture, and subsequently the impact on young people is greater than on the older generation. During participant observation in the gathering of young people of RPC, most said that they prefer to have the worship service in English. Almost all of them said that they watch the 'God Channel' on TV and listen to international preachers like Joel Osteen, Joyce Meyer and Benny Hinn. Eight of these seventeen young people live in a rural area. They came to Udaipur city for higher education as well as for jobs. They said that they want to go back to their home church if they have the opportunity to do so. However, in a separate interview, six of the eight said that they are not interested in going back to their home church as the worship language is in Vagri, their local dialect, and the worship style is very local. At RPC, they said that they feel they are in a congregation, similar to other mega churches around the world. 'We feel the heavy presence of God. We have the freedom to worship God. We can stand, jump and dance. We have preaching in English as well as Hindi. We sing both in English and Hindi.'⁵¹ During my visit to a village church in Udaipur district, a young man in the church, who was exposed to urban worship, asked me to preach in English so that he could translate the message into the local dialect, even though I wanted to preach in Hindi.⁵²

⁵⁰ Coleman, *Globalization of Charismatic Christianity*, 66-67.

⁵¹ Group interview by author, Udaipur, Rajasthan, 13 May 2006.

⁵² It was not because he knew English better than Hindi, but he wanted to bring some urban taste to his rural church. He used to attend the worship service at RPC when he joined for his higher studies.

The older generation also listen to international preachers on the TV and via other communication media. John Masih, one of the earliest members of RPC, said that he wakes up at 2.00 in the morning every Sunday to listen to Joyce Meyer on the TV. There are others in the same church, who also listen to her regularly.⁵³ Some of them, after watching such a large crowd, and the praise and worship and preaching style, wanted their pastors to perform in a similar way to these international preachers. As the CDs and DVDs of these preachers and praise and worship teams are available in India people buy them. Lam Lal, is the choir leader as well as youth coordinator in the FFCI, Kherwara. He watches the DVDs of various international preachers, including the south Indian healing evangelist D.G.S. Dhinakaran. Every week he shows some of these DVDs to the members of his church after the Sunday service and most are more than willing to watch them and are interested in international preachers. Lal has a good collection of DVDs of such messages, and he said that his future plan is to open a Christian studio where he can produce and reproduce similar DVDs legally.⁵⁴

The second area where global Pentecostal connection is felt is theological education. There are visiting teachers who come on regular as well as occasional basis from the UK and US to theological schools in the state. The faculty list of FBC is an example.⁵⁵ It has two regular adjunct faculty members, Steven Lombardo (North America) and Ben Pugh (England), who offer regular courses. Apart from them, there are pastors like Martin Hannington and Allan Bell (England), who come regularly to offer other short courses on Christian Ministry

⁵³ For example, Joseph Daniel, interview by author, Udaipur, Rajasthan, 06 May 2006.

⁵⁴ Lam Lal (pseudonym), interview by author, Udaipur, Rajasthan, 14 May 2006.

⁵⁵ Filadelfia Bible College, *Prospectus 2004*, (Udaipur, India: FBC, 2004), 9-11.

and Lewis Houston and Bill O’Leary who come as occasional teachers while others come to offer ministerial training to pastors of FFCI. Some of them are allowed to teach short courses which are not included in the curriculum. Not all that they teach may have relevance in the Rajasthan context, but the college is interested to keep its link with global Charismatic partners. FBC is planning to offer a Masters Degree programme in Pentecostal Studies in the near future, and the curriculum for this is in the process of being developed.⁵⁶ The desire of the Governing Body of FBC is to obtain validation for these programmes from a western university.

5.5. Pentecostals and the Missio-ethical Dilemma

Having reached the dawn of the Third Millennium Pentecostals in Rajasthan seem to be in a dilemma because of various issues, like the religio-political challenges, the socio-economic status of Pentecostals, and the global- local tensions. As this predicament has both missiological and ethical aspects, I refer to it as a ‘missio-ethical dilemma.’ At the same time, this issue seems to be a tension between ‘mission’ and ‘ethics.’ This dilemma involves some complex issues. Some Pentecostal leaders think that they have to move away from the tribal communities and other poor elements of society and focus on the urban middle class. Because of the accusation that Pentecostals as a group have focused on the weak and poor segments of society, they consider that, in line with global Pentecostals, at least in some places in the West, they can prosper to become an affluent middle class religion. They argue that such an attempt can be an answer

⁵⁶ I was also asked to contribute my input.

to the above accusation as well as helping the church to be self-supportive. On the other hand, others believe that they cannot abandon their ethical responsibility to empower the poor and the tribal people spiritually and socially, as it is one of the basic missions of Pentecostals.

Many Pentecostal leaders strongly argue that Pentecostals have to focus more on social mission as they have been accused of being a proselytizing community. However, others think that it is erroneous to move away from what was the original vision of the founding figures to reach the unreached by engaging in evangelistic activities. Some indigenous leaders comment that they cannot simply ignore the socio-political atrocities committed on their members by the militant organizations, even with the help of state government. They insist on the need to work hand in hand with other socio-political organizations and non-religious NGOs to safeguard the interests of the community. Nevertheless, most leaders strongly believe that they only need to use spiritual means to deal with such issues, as socio-political means will completely change the image of the community. Therefore, in brief, the change in situations and the subsequent issues raised have placed the Pentecostal community in the state in a ‘missio-ethical dilemma.’

At the same time, the current research reveals that whether knowingly or unknowingly, the progress Pentecostals in Rajasthan have made both in mission theory and mission practice has enabled them to overcome this dilemma. As discussed earlier, they have been ‘employing the Spirit’ to bring changes in

response to different situations. The vision statement of most churches contains the phrase ‘to reach the unreached in the villages.’ Twelve of the eighteen leaders who were interviewed have admitted that they have focused on the rural areas in the past. However, very recently, Pentecostals began to think of targeting the non-tribal and the non-rural as well. There are indications of a change in focus to include the cities as well in their mission. As discussed in chapter three, the FFCI’s recently revised vision statement illustrates this shift in focus.⁵⁷ This change to include urban communities in their mission was established when FBC introduced the MDiv programme the following academic year with the purpose of encouraging, ‘those involved, or anticipating involvement in Ministry, with a special focus on Urban Mission.’⁵⁸

The change has not been restricted to the rural-urban spheres, but there have been changes in strategies. Due to intense persecution, most organizations have felt the need to strengthen the believers instead of reaching new areas. This is not to argue that they have completely moved away from the mission of reaching the unreached. However, the elevated emphasis does not predominate now. Theological institutes like FBC have changed the purpose of the programmes they offer, as evident in the latest prospectus of FBC. For various reasons, the Bachelor of Ministry (BMin) has been replaced by Bachelor of Theology (BTh). The aim of BTh is to prepare people for ‘Pastoral Care in the Church,’⁵⁹ over against the

⁵⁷ In order to revise vision, mission and other aspects of the organization, a three-day SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) Analysis programme was convened in 2003. I was one among the team of seven from the organizations to do the analysis.

⁵⁸ *Prospectus 2006*, 12.

⁵⁹ ‘Pastoral Care in the Church,’ is understood as a ministry to existing churches.

BMin where the focus was on ‘Church Planting.’⁶⁰ The curriculum history of FBC reads, ‘we started offering Bachelor degree programme for the first time in 1989. As we have given focus to train the students mainly for church planting ministry we prefer to offer Bachelor of Ministry (BMin).’⁶¹

As discussed in chapter three, many organizations began to shift their focus from reaching the oppressive districts in the north to the responsive districts of south Rajasthan. Some argue for the need to wait for when the situation is favourable before working in unresponsive contexts, and so they try to concentrate on more responsive contexts instead of creating tensions in the communities where there are repressive regions. Some others have recognized the need to change the strategy of direct preaching and evangelistic activities, and have started to engage in prayer evangelism. Many leaders suggest that prayer evangelism is the most effective strategy in the present oppressive context as there has been clear evidence of changes in the attitude of people when they spend extensive hours in prayer. ‘Spiritual Mapping’, ‘Prayer Walking’ and other such spiritual means are used to strengthen prayer evangelism. The leaders meeting in Jaipur, as discussed in chapter three, focused on the importance of prayer evangelism. They argued against engaging in open air meetings or literature distribution, but recommended engaging in prayer so that ‘the stronghold of the enemy will collapse.’⁶²

As discussed above, Pentecostals have learned to be sensitive to socio-cultural issues. Although there were tensions in the early days regarding certain issues,

⁶⁰ ‘Church Planting ministry’ is understood as a pioneer ministry.

⁶¹ ‘Programme and Curriculum Details,’ FBC, 1.

⁶² This was expressed in the Leaders Seminar, Jaipur, India, 8 May 2006.

they have made changes in their theology over time. As discussed earlier, the attitude towards the use of jewellery has changed. In the early days, a prominent Pentecostal leader from the state wrote in the *Cross and Crown*:

The wearing of ornaments is a pagan, heathen custom. In every pagan culture, ornaments are associated with idol worship. Idolatry compelled people to wear ornaments, and the worshippers themselves used to wear ornaments and decorate the idols with them. Idols were made of gold, silver and other metals, ivory, precious stones and wood. People began to wear ornaments of the same material.⁶³

It was assumed that it was western Christianity that allowed the use of jewellery:

Some western writers and leaders sometimes seek to impose a bit of American “Churchianity” on Indians and advise people that a little jewellery is alright. Let us be aware of such “concessions.” It may be an encouragement and comfort to many carnal Christians, but it is an abomination to the consecrated spiritual man. [The] Bible forbids jewellery for Christians, but it does not forbid clothes.⁶⁴

The reality is that there is an increasing awareness of the need to be more sensitive to the Rajasthan context in the light of issues related to the religio-political sphere of the society. Jewellery is not an issue among most contemporary Pentecostals. Celebration of Christian festivals such as Christmas and Easter was not encouraged as they were condemned as pagan by Pentecostals in the early days.⁶⁵ Nevertheless, contemporary Pentecostals celebrate them in order to make use of the opportunity to present the Christian message to others. Although it is not

⁶³ Thomas Mathews, ‘Here is the Answer to Your Question,’ *Cross and Crown* 7, no. 8 (1977): 3.

⁶⁴ Mathews, ‘Here is the Answer,’ 6.

⁶⁵ For more details, see Thomas Mathews, ‘Easter: Is it Biblical?’ *Cross and Crown* 6, no. 7 (1976): 8-15.

neglected completely, cross-cultural evangelism is not encouraged, and so not all the missionary students from south India are sent directly to new mission fields in north India as in the past, but have been placed in other fields like administration and teaching. Local people are encouraged to engage in grassroots evangelism, and there is a growing interest in raising more Rajasthani leaders. This can be seen as a counter-measure against cultural tension within the community.

Although there was a time when Pentecostals were not interested in social activities, this has changed. As seen in chapter three, involvement in social mission has become a part of the mission of most Pentecostal churches. Apart from educational enterprises, Pentecostals have been involved in managing orphanages, conducting regular free medical camps, adult literacy programmes, and other vocational training such as tailoring for women. The most effective Pentecostal social activities are the Community Development Programme (CDP) and the Community Health and Education (CHE). Both these projects aim to bring development in the health and education areas of the community. This is done with the assistance of the local people. These missions include a health awareness programme, the education of children who do not have access to schools, and also an adult literacy programme.⁶⁶

As mentioned in chapter three, in the early history of the movement, Pentecostals in Rajasthan, like Pentecostals elsewhere, had an aversion towards involvement in politics. A prominent Pentecostal leader states that ‘political liberation cannot be

⁶⁶ Sheena Abraham, interview by author, Birmingham, 23 October 2008. She has been serving as the CDP coordinator of Udaipur region.

achieved as the present world system is controlled by the god of this world.’⁶⁷ However, as discussed in chapter three, there have been tremendous changes over the years, in spite of the fact that there are people who still maintain this attitude. Today they look for opportunities to participate in the socio-political and secular events of the society, organized by non-religious organizations. Pentecostals participate in protesting against atrocities committed on religious minorities by religious militants. For example, they joined an anti-Hindutva rally organized by some secular forces in Udaipur in 2004. The FBC authorities decided to cancel all classes and other activities in the afternoon of that particular day to enable people to participate in this rally.⁶⁸ Most Pentecostals joined the protest rally in Jaipur against Hindu militants who attacked the Emmanuel Mission in 2006. A few years ago, involvement in such events was considered a taboo for Pentecostals and was regarded as a ‘this worldly event.’

Although Pentecostals are still against the formation of a political party of their own, many now feel the need to work with any political group that safeguards the interests of the community. Apart from that they form Christian associations for the socio-political empowerment of their deprived community, and it is significant to see the involvement of many senior native Pentecostal leaders in such organizations. The best example is the establishment of Wagarh Christian Association by some leading local Pentecostal leaders. This is an association of Christians in the districts of Banaswara and Dungarpur. The chief leader, who took the initiative in the formation of the association stated that the ‘Spirit gave

⁶⁷ Mathews, ‘Charismatics Wither [sic] Bound,’:3.

⁶⁸ I too was a participant along with most of the faculty members and the Principal. All the students also participated in the event.

me the wisdom' to take such a step. He is the chairman of the Association and argues that only because of his position could he approach the Member of Parliament for his constituency when there was persecution against local Christians. He also serves as the joint secretary of the Rajasthan chapter of the Public Union for Civil Liberty (PUCL), an organization of the Human Rights Commission. He states that 'because of my involvement in such organizations, I can now approach any government official; otherwise we cannot even go near to any of these officials, for they do not consider us.'⁶⁹ Tribal Christians in the state have formed the TCWSI, and some prominent Pentecostal leaders hold some of its key positions. For example, Jaswant Rana, an executive Overseer of FFCI, has been serving as the Founder Patron of TCWSI, and Tajendra Masih, another executive member of FFCI, has been serving as its convenor.

There was a time when Pentecostals were not interested in using their legal rights. They were even unwilling to report attacks against their person to the police or to register a case against the perpetrators. They used to say that they should not take revenge, but rather pray for their enemies. They believed that God alone would vindicate their cause, and so their responsibility was to pray that the culprit would turn to the Lord. However, the trend has changed, and they try to report such incidents to the police, even though they insist that they do not get justice or protection from them. The attack on a senior Pentecostal leader and one of his colleagues during the summer outreach week organized together by FBC and RPC in March 1997 illustrates this fact. Some people surrounded these two pastors

⁶⁹ Pathras Masih, interview by author, Banaswara, Rajasthan, 11 May 2006.

while they were distributing literature, and they were beaten badly. On the same night the senior pastor's motorcycle was stolen, and he still insists that the theft was connected to the daytime attack. He said that neither the wounded pastors nor the church took the issue to the police, as they thought that the Lord would deliver justice for them. However, he admitted that 'if the same incident happens today I will definitely take the matter to the police.'⁷⁰ Significantly, a course on Civil and Human Rights has been introduced at FBC as part of the curriculum for all Degree and Diploma programmes. The course is offered by professional Christian advocates with the aim of making students aware of the duties and responsibilities of Christian ministers as Indian citizens, as well as their civil, human and legal rights.⁷¹

There have been changes in the Pentecostal attitude towards both non-Pentecostals as well as people of other faiths. The ecumenical spirit among Christians was challenged in the early days by Pentecostals. An eminent leader wrote:

What Jesus prayed for was not an external, organizational union in the ecumenical fashion. What he meant was the underlying, inner unity by the Holy Spirit and the Word of God.... Ecumenism will end in a world-wide union of churches, and that world (or worldly) religious organization, the Super Church will champion the cause of the world ruler, Antichrist, the Superman.... Here is the clarion call for the last days ... come out of her (the harlot), MY PEOPLE, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her punishments.

⁷⁰ George (pseudonym), interview by author, Chittorgarh, Rajasthan, 16 May 2006.

⁷¹ For more details, see *Prospectus 2006*, 11, 23-33.

This is what we have to say to our Charismatic brothers and to all Christian friends.⁷²

This is a clear indication of an urge for the conversion of other Christians to Pentecostalism. Nevertheless, as discussed in chapter three, there has been notable increase in understanding and cooperation in recent years between various Christian segments.⁷³ The ‘Spirit experience’ as well as the ‘persecution factor’ has further heightened ecumenicity among Christians.

Another article in the same periodical reveals the early attitude of Pentecostals in the state towards association with people of other faiths. The title of the article, ‘And Now Ecumenism of Religions! Christians Beware of the Latest Tactics of Satan!!’ demonstrates this outlook very clearly. It condemned the participation of Christian leaders such as Metropolitans, Archbishops and Bishops in the world congress of religions. It accused it of syncretism and ‘the worst form of blasphemy ... in the name of religion.’ The writer urged that ‘our leaders should have preached the Crucified Christ on the platform of the world Congress, as the Way, the Truth, and the Life.’⁷⁴ However, significantly, a prayer meeting took place in the church building of one of the leading Pentecostal churches a few years ago, organized by all religious groups, at the time of a communal riot in Gujarat. People from other religions such as Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism and

⁷² Mathews, ‘Charismatics, Wither [sic] Bound?’ 4-5. Although there was no connection it is interesting to note that it was very similar to the stance of the American Assemblies of God at the time.

⁷³ It is interesting to observe that later, the same leader served as the Vice chairman of the United Christian Fellowship in Udaipur along with the Senor Minister of CNI, while the RC Bishop served as the Chairman of this ecumenical fellowship.

⁷⁴ Thomas Mathews, ‘And Now Ecumenism of Religions! Christians Beware of the Latest Tactics of Satan!!’ *Cross and Crown* 1, no.7 (1971): 3-4, 9.

Jainism participated in the event. This does not mean that Pentecostals have changed their position entirely, but there has been a clear indication of changes in their approach to other religious communities.

The globalization of Pentecostalism has caused churches to make more global connections. Many churches have a desire to expand their vision to neighbouring states and nations as well. For example, Mathews, the founder of FFCI, made a public expression of such a desire. At the silver jubilee convention of FFCI in 2005 Mathews expressed his desire to change the title of the organization to Filadelfia Fellowship of Churches 'International', instead of Filadelfia Fellowship of Churches 'India,' as he said that there have been a number of prophecies over the years that the church would expand its boundary to neighbouring nations. According to him, the 'I' in FFCI should represent 'International' not 'India'. Although it did not make much impact at that time, it has greater appeal today because Mathews died a couple of weeks after this convention. His desire has become emotionally appealing to the current leadership, who have started thinking along the same lines. Within two years of his death, FFCI expanded its vision beyond the Indian Territory, and today has six congregations in Bhutan.⁷⁵

At the same time, Pentecostalism in Rajasthan has been affected by global Pentecostalism in many ways, as discussed above. Young tribal Pentecostals in Rajasthan are interested in replacing traditional patterns of worship and other expressions of spirituality with global Charismatic features. As a result, there

⁷⁵ For more details, see Special Correspondent, 'An Opening in Bhutan,' *Cross and Crown* 37, no.2 (2007): 20-21.

definitely remains a tension between the 'local' and the 'global'. Although it looks like a daunting task to be relevant to the particular context and at the same time share the common features of global Pentecostalism, the measures Pentecostals have taken have meant that the tension is kept to a minimum. The urban churches try to maintain a global Pentecostal style in worship and other matters of spirituality. On the other hand, they try to include local elements, and consequently they encourage the development of native pastors, but ones who have a global Pentecostal style of preaching. They use western musical instruments to provide a global style of music, but try to sing more songs in local languages like Hindi. Many English songs are translated into Hindi. In their missionary approach, they attempt to reach people from all strata of society. They try to coordinate separate cell groups as per the world view of the people. In those village churches where young people are exposed to urban churches, they have youth choirs. They sing Hindi songs with western musical instruments. At the same time, older people are given the opportunity to sing hymns in the local dialect and in the local style, using local musical instruments. Thus the tension seems to have been kept under control to an extent.

On the other hand, even illiterate people feel that they are a part of a large community. The global Pentecostal connection has developed a feeling of global identity among the natives. This is evident from the testimony of Narayani, an illiterate tribal lady of RPC, who was expelled from her house due to her faith in Christ. In her testimony, she used to say, 'I am not alone, but a part of a big family.' She was referring not only to RPC, but is recognizing that Pentecostals

are a global community, because she frequently sees visitors in the church from other parts of the world.

5.6. Conclusion

The above discussion reveals that Pentecostals in Rajasthan are equally concerned about issues within the community. The contemporary socio-economic status of Pentecostalism as well as the denominational issues affects the image of the movement and causes problems within and without the community. As we have seen, cultural dynamics have a vital influence on the internal strength of the movement. The globalization of Pentecostalism has had an impact on local Pentecostalism. The global-local tension seems to be increasing as the movement grows. These internal issues, along with the external problems, as discussed in chapter four, have put Pentecostals in a ‘missio-ethical dilemma.’ On the one hand, Pentecostals struggle to maintain their indigenous identity by becoming culturally sensitive and on the other, they have a tendency to be globally dynamic by having identified with the growing global Pentecostalism. This chapter also suggests that whether consciously or not, what Pentecostals in Rajasthan are deploying to overcome such a dilemma can be an effective tool to deal with fresh challenges caused by changing situations. Their mission theory and practice seem to be progressive and flexible and moving under the direction of the Spirit in order to deal with challenging situations. This should be seen as the strength of Pentecostal theology to move in line with the Spirit and be adaptive to changing contexts. It seems that a dynamic contextual Pentecostal missiology is emerging from the context of Rajasthan, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 6

TOWARDS A CONTEXTUAL MISSIOLOGY OF THE SPIRIT

As described in the previous chapters, Pentecostalism in Rajasthan sees itself as a Spirit-led movement, and also as a product of local Spirit revivals as well as missionary activities. Despite the external and internal issues it faces, it continues to grow. This chapter presents a new model of contextual missiology in the light of the current study, referred to here as the ‘contextual missiology of the Spirit.’ Four major issues will be discussed in relation to this. First, contextual missiology is explained. Second, the theological basis for this new model is outlined. Third, the contextual characteristics of this new model of missiology are discussed, and finally the importance of a contextual discernment is explained.

There has been a tremendous change in the understanding of theology in the recent past. The contemporary global context has seen the rise of many theologies from the Majority World. It is significant that such theologies have emerged out of different contexts. As Cartledge has observed, ‘with the advent of liberation theology there came a turn to contemporary praxis as the starting point’ of theology.¹ Many, like Gustavo Gutierrez, an original thinker and a chief proponent of Liberation Theology, argue that theology is reflection that comes after action. Theology must continuously follow the pastoral action of the church, and so, instead of telling us what to do, theology must pursue action as a

¹Mark Cartledge, ‘Practical Theology in the context of Pentecostal-Charismatic Studies’ (paper presented at the Glopent Conference, Heidelberg, 2 February 2008).

‘reflection to orient it, to order it, to make it coherent, so that it does not lapse into a sterile and superficial activism.’² Nevertheless, it is wrong to assume that such a concept of ‘theology following action (mission)’ has a purely Majority World origin. In the beginning of the twentieth century, systematic theologian Martin Kahler affirmed that mission is ‘the mother of theology.’ According to him, ‘theology began as “an accompanying manifestation of the Christian mission,” not as “a luxury of the world-dominating church.”’³

6.1. Contextual Missiology

As mentioned in chapter one, missiology has become a widely established academic discipline despite its late origin as a developed field of study. The term ‘missiology’ was coined by Ludwig Rijkevorsel in 1915.⁴ Although there had long been missionary activities, the foundational work for missiology as an academic discipline was done by Gustav Warneck on the Protestant side, and Joseph Schmidlin on the Roman Catholic side.⁵ The place of missiology in theology is significant in the contemporary global context. According to David Bosch,

missiology acts as a gadfly in the house of theology, creating unrest and resisting complacency, opposing every ecclesiastical impulse to self-preservation, every desire to stay what we are, every inclination toward provincialism and parochialism, every fragmentation of humanity into regional or ideological blocs,

² Gustavo Gutierrez, ‘Toward a Theology of Liberation,’ in *Gustavo Gutierrez Essential Writings*, ed. James B. Nickoloff (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 24-25.

³ Martin Kahler, *Schriften zur Christologie und Mission* (Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1908), 189-90, quoted in David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1994) 16.

⁴ Jongeneel, *Philosophy, Science*, 63.

⁵ J.A.B. Jongeneel and J.M. Van Engelen, ‘Contemporary Currents in Missiology,’ in *Missiology: An Ecumenical Introduction*, 438.

every exploitation of some sectors of humanity by the powerful, every religious, ideological, or cultural imperialism, and every exaltation of the self-sufficiency of the individual over other people or over other parts of creation.⁶

Contemporary missiology seems to be in tension with classic or traditional mission theology. As Jongeneel and J.M.V. Engelen note, the traditional theory of mission ‘looks for support in the text of the Bible, and perhaps also in church tradition’ over against contemporary mission theory, which ‘derives the agenda of missiology primarily from the world context.’⁷ In his study of the evolution of contemporary missiology, Oborji observes that ‘dialogue with the contexts ... is the emerging trend in mission studies.’⁸ Malaysian theologian Hwa Yung suggests that an authentic theology must properly be grounded in ‘the pastoral and missiological practice of the church.’⁹ It is significant that a contextual missiology has emerged out of the current study on Pentecostalism in Rajasthan. However, it is necessary to understand the significance and meaning of contextual missiology before discussing its characteristics.

6.1.1. The Significance of Contextual Missiology

Contextual theology is a widely developed concept in present-day theology. Contemporary contextual theology is closely tied to missiology. In an edited volume of the story of the LMS and its successor bodies during the period 1945-77, Bernard Thorogood argues that there are external pressures and internal

⁶ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 496.

⁷ Jongeneel and Engelen, ‘Contemporary Currents,’ 447.

⁸ Oborji, *Concepts of Mission*, 40.

⁹ Hwa Yung, *Mangoes or Bananas*, 26.

developments that shift the context of mission and that need a response, a change both in theory and praxis, meaning theology and strategies.¹⁰ However, it is not easy to develop a missiology in the contemporary global situation. According to Thomas Thangaraj, ‘the task of constructing a theology of mission’ in the present millennium is ‘significantly different from what it would have been immediately after the dawn of the twentieth’ century.¹¹ By this he meant the spirit of mission at the World Missionary Conference which met at Edinburgh, Scotland in 1910 – a significant event in the history of the Protestant missionary movement. The major thrust of the conference was ‘an invitation to Christians around the globe to join in the task of evangelizing the entire world.’¹² According to Bosch, ‘the spirit of optimism and confidence’ which prevailed at the Edinburgh Conference, ‘... represented the all-time high water mark in Western missionary enthusiasm, the zenith of the optimistic and pragmatist approach to missions.’ He claimed that although the western missionary circle in general reacted rather negatively to the Enlightenment, the mood of Edinburgh in its optimism and confidence was a clear indication of the spirit of Enlightenment. Bosch saw that ‘more than in any preceding period, Christians of this era believed that the future of the world and of God’s cause depended on *them*.’¹³ The closing address of John Mott, one of the leaders of the Conference, shows this spirit. He said:

We go out with a larger acquaintanceship, with deeper realization of this fellowship which we have just seen, and that is a rich talent which makes possible

¹⁰ For more details of the discussion, see Bernard Thorogood, ‘The Gales of Change,’ in *Gales of Change: Responding to a Shifting Missionary Context*, ed. Bernard Thorogood (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1994), 1-18; Bernard Thorogood, ‘Whom God May Call,’ in *Gales of Change*, 238-56..

¹¹ M. Thomas Thangaraj, *The Common Task: A Theology of Christian Mission* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999), 11.

¹² Thangaraj, *Common Task*, 11.

¹³ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 334-38.

wonderful achievements. Our best days are ahead of us because of a larger body of experience now happily placed at the disposal of Christendom.... Therefore, with rich talents like these which we bear forth, surely our best days are ahead of every one of us, even the most distinguished person in our great company.¹⁴

However, Thangaraj argues that the optimistic confidence of the Edinburgh delegates about the evangelization of the whole world in a generation has been gradually toned down. He discusses five major reasons - World Wars I and II, the dismantling of colonialism, the resurgence of other religions, the intense consciousness of religious plurality and the rise of post-modern thought - that affected the optimistic spirit of the Conference.¹⁵ Thangaraj highlights three major shifts for constructing a contemporary missiology. First, as the word mission is 'no longer a private property of Christian discourse,' theology should be done in public. Second, theological construction should begin with 'local stories.' Third, a conversational method should be used in theology by widening the circle of conversation and dialogue between Christians and others.¹⁶

There has been a great emphasis in recent years on making local theologies, particularly by Roman Catholic missiologists. There are various terms, like 'localization,' 'indigenization,' 'inculturation' and 'contextualization' of theology, which have been used interchangeably to explain this focus. According to Schreiter, 'despite slightly different nuances in meaning all of these terms point to

¹⁴ World Missionary Conference, 1910, *History and Records*, 108, quoted in Thangaraj, *Common Task*, 17-18.

¹⁵ For a detailed explanation, see Thangaraj, *Common Task*, 18-26. According to him, these five major events and changes that have taken place since 1910 had a radical effect on Christian mission theology and practice.

¹⁶ Thangaraj, *Common Task*, 27-30.

the need for and responsibility of Christians to make their response to the gospel as concrete and lively as possible.¹⁷ He evaluates the appropriateness of all these four terms in contemporary theology.¹⁸ As Schreiter observes, ‘not all attempts in theology are equally sensitive to the context,’ and so ‘they can take quite different approaches to it.’ Therefore, he uses the term ‘local theologies’ in an inclusive way to develop a broader approach.¹⁹ The history of mission has witnessed a number of mission models in various contexts, and several attempts have been made to analyze these models.²⁰ In his study of new perspectives in missiological anthropology, Louis Luzbetak discusses diverse mission models. He classifies them into three theoretical models: ethnocentric (including paternalism, triumphalism and racism), accommodational and contextual (including incarnational as well as inculturational).²¹ On the other hand, Bevans identifies six models of contextual theology: ‘translation model,’ ‘anthropological model,’ ‘praxis model,’ ‘synthetic model,’ ‘transcendental model’ and ‘countercultural model.’²² While discussing the varieties of local theology, Schreiter categorizes them into three major models: ‘translation models,’ ‘accommodation models’ and ‘contextual models.’²³

¹⁷ Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies*, 1. In his discussion on inculturation, Peter C. Phan also views that despite of the ‘terminological confusion’ different ‘terms of varying degrees of appropriateness’ describe the process to make the Christian message more meaningful to the local context. See Peter C. Phan, *In Our Own Tongues: Perspectives from Asia on Mission and Inculturation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2003), 4.

¹⁸ For more discussion, see Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies*, 5-6.

¹⁹ Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies*, 6.

²⁰ It is significant that most of this is done by Catholic theologians. See, for example, Louis J Luzbetak, *The Church and Cultures: New Perspectives in Missiological Anthropology* (New York: Orbis, 1988); Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies*; Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*.

²¹ For more details of the discussion, see Luzbetak, *Church and Cultures*, 64-84.

²² For further discussion, see Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, 37-137.

²³ For more details of the discussion, see Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies*, 6-16.

The contextual nature of Pentecostal missiology has been evident throughout the history of the movement, and although still developing, mission has been an inseparable element of Pentecostalism from its very inception. According to Grant McClung, 'Pentecostal' and 'missiology' has become 'more synonymous than oxymoronic.'²⁴ The contextual nature of Charismatic Christianity will be argued as a prime reason for the phenomenal growth of Pentecostalism worldwide. Anderson proposes that 'Contextual Missiology' must be a salient feature of the twenty-first century Pentecostal missiology.²⁵ According to him,

One of the main reasons for the phenomenal growth of Pentecostalism has been its remarkable ability to adapt itself to different cultural and social contexts and give authentically contextualized expressions to Christianity. Pentecostalism is inherently adaptable to contextualization: the vibrancy, enthusiasm, spontaneity and spirituality for which Pentecostals are so well known and their willingness to address problems of sickness, poverty, unemployment, loneliness, evil spirits and sorcery has directly contributed to their growth.²⁶

Cox observes that Pentecostal capabilities to transact the contextual aspect of religion and also to equip the people to live in the hastily changing global situations are vital for its remarkable growth.²⁷ While analysing David Yonggi Cho's theology, Anderson comments that Korean Pentecostalism should be assessed not only from within the internal cultural and religious context of Korea but also from the external influence of globalization.²⁸

²⁴ L. Grant McClung, Jr. "'Try to Get People Saved' Revisiting the Paradigm of an Urgent Pentecostal Missiology,' in *Globalization of Pentecostalism*, 31.

²⁵ Allan Anderson, 'Towards a Pentecostal Missiology for the Majority World,' *AJPS* 8, no.1 (2005): 29-47.

²⁶ Anderson, 'Contextual Pentecostal Theology,' 102.

²⁷ Cox, *Fire from Heaven*, 218-19.

²⁸ Anderson, 'Theology of David Yonggi Cho,' 109.

6.1.2. Contextual Missiology of the Spirit: A New Model

As stated earlier, a new contextual missiology has emerged out of the story of Pentecostalism in Rajasthan (local story) as proposed by Thangaraj. However, this new model gives more insights into the Spirit dimension of contextual missiology, which is neglected by Thangaraj and others. Although Bosch recognizes the importance of the Holy Spirit in mission, his treatment on the role of the Spirit in contextual missiology is limited.²⁹ It is important to note that most Catholic missiologists like Schreiter and Bevan failed to give a clear picture of the Spirit aspects in contextual mission. As Andrew Lord observed, for Schreiter, Spirit was only ‘a background worker of grace in the church,’ and for Bevans, the Spirit was ‘not seen as a central issue in contextualization.’³⁰

On the other hand, many missiologists recognize the significance of the Spirit dimension in missiology, but have failed to develop this further. As mentioned in chapter one, both Jongeneel and Hwa Yung consider the Spirit element, as part of other aspects of mission, that is, as an addition, not as a distinctive dimension. According to Hwa Yung, an ‘adequate theology of mission’ should involve three aspects. First, it must address the socio-political context of the church. Second, it must also empower the church for evangelistic and pastoral tasks including planting and building churches. Third, it must concern itself with the problem of inculturation. He adds a fourth one which is that it should be ‘faithful to the Christian tradition.’ However, it is significant to note that he specifically includes

²⁹ See K. Kim’s critique on Bosch’s missiology, Kim, *Mission in the Spirit*, 172-74.

³⁰ See Lord, *Spirit-Shaped Mission*, 92.

a Spirit dimension, ‘deliverance from diseases and demonic powers,’ along with the second aspect.³¹ Later, while discussing Evangelical and Pentecostal theologies in Asia, Hwa Yung emphasis the importance of the supernatural and the miraculous aspects in Asian Christian Theology, and he anticipates that ‘in the future the church worldwide will have to give the gifts of the Spirit ... a greater role in its mission and theology.’³² Thus it seems that the contextual as well as the charismatic aspect of mission seems to be characteristic of an Asian theology of mission.

Contemporary contextual Pentecostal missiology, as this study proposes, can serve as a response to this expectation for a contextual as well as a charismatic missiology, as it has a contextual as well as Spirit dimension. This new model broadens the horizon of the Spirit dimension of missiology that Jongeneel and Hwa Yung indicate. The contextual missiology emerging from the current study on Pentecostalism in Rajasthan recognizes the Spirit dimension as a distinctive aspect along with the particular context.

It seems that the contemporary Indian context of conversion also indicates the significance of the Spirit dimension in the development of a contextual missiology. S. Kim’s study on the issue of conversion in India shows that more than a ‘socio-political’ interpretation, a ‘spiritual’ dimension of conversion is required to deal with the problem. According to him, Hindus object to conversions mainly because it seems to them to be a ‘purely human enterprise and not a

³¹ Hwa Yung, *Mangoes or Bananas*, 57-58.

³² Hwa Yung, ‘Mission and Evangelism: Evangelical and Pentecostal Theologies in Asia,’ in *Christian Theology in Asia*, 266. For more details, see pp.261-66.

spiritual transformation,’ and so despite the complex Indian socio-political situation, Hindus look for ‘genuine’ or ‘spiritual’ conversions, a clear demonstration of Spirituality in Christian conversion.³³ Elsewhere he states: ‘We may need a “recovery of the spirituality” of conversion. Whatever it might be, one thing is sure: neither holding on to the “traditional” approach to conversion nor dismissing the importance of conversion in Christian Theology is the way forward.’³⁴

Pentecostal missiologists, like Melvin Hodges and Paul Pomerville, recognize the importance of the Holy Spirit in contextual mission. Although Hodges affirms that the Holy Spirit will produce indigenous churches, he limits the Spirit’s role to witnessing, church leadership and growth.³⁵ Pomerville argues that ‘the dynamic experience of the Spirit’ provides Pentecostals with a direction for contemporary missions.³⁶ As mentioned in chapter one, Andrew Lord’s *Spirit-Shaped Mission* is a significant work expanding the Spirit dimension of missiology.³⁷ However, his discussion on the role of the Spirit in contextual mission is limited chiefly to ‘contextualization and other faiths.’³⁸ Kirsteen Kim develops a mission pneumatology, which emphasises the mission of the Spirit in the world.³⁹ Lord states that he and Kim differ mainly in terms of the starting point of mission theology. While Kim starts with ‘the present experiential working of the Spirit in

³³ S. Kim, *In Search of Identity*, 197-200.

³⁴ Sebastian C. H. Kim, ‘Indian Christian Mission Ecclesiology: Models for Engagement with Hinduism- with Special Reference to Conversion,’ in *The Indian Church in Context: Her Emergence, Growth and Mission*, ed. Mark T.B. Laing. Pune/Delhi: CMS/ISPCK, 2002, 183.

³⁵ See Melvin L. Hodges, *The Indigenous Church* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1953), 14, 131-34.

³⁶ Pomerville, *Third Force*, 79.

³⁷ Lord, *Spirit-Shaped Mission*.

³⁸ See Lord, *Spirit-Shaped Mission*, 135-40.

³⁹ K. Kim, *Mission in the Spirit*, K. Kim, *Holy Spirit in the World*.

particular contexts,' Lord begins with the 'biblical eschatological theology as a backdrop for considering particular experiences.'⁴⁰ Elsewhere, Kim also suggests that such a mission theology should interact with other contextual theologies, which are 'not primarily biblical and historical but are contemporary theologies,' arising in diverse contexts, 'where the Spirit is at work.'⁴¹

The current research concerning Pentecostalism in Rajasthan reveals the potential of the Spirit dimension in contextual missiology. It proposes a contextual missiology of the Spirit which focuses on the mission of the Spirit in the world through the agency of the church. However, this does not exclude any other agencies of the Spirit or any other mission of the Spirit; rather it recognizes the wider mission of the Spirit in the world as K. Kim argues. This model realizes that the church is a servant of the Spirit in His mission in the world. The mission of the Spirit in the church and through the church does not underestimate the mission of the Spirit outside the church. This model discusses the potential of contextual mission of the Spirit through the church. It also considers that the Spirit can empower the faith community, that is the church, for contextual mission. In this model, the role of the Spirit is not restricted to conversion, evangelism, church planting and growth, but His role is assumed in diverse issues the faith community faces, whether internal or external.

The contextual missiology of the Spirit also maintains that a Pentecostal missiology cannot be completely and purely local in all aspects, as the impact of

⁴⁰ See Lord, *Spirit-Shaped Mission*, 139-40.

⁴¹ Kim, *Mission in the Spirit*, 242-43.

the global on the local is a reality. As seen in chapters three and five, global Pentecostalism has had a great impact on local Pentecostalism along with the internal as well as external issues facing Pentecostals, and also the Spirit experiences have played an important role in their mission theology and practice. This new model can serve as a viable alternative in the light of the present *globalized* Pentecostal context. It takes into consideration global influences, and at the same time it is faithful to the local context as well. Contextual missiology of the kind I am proposing in this present study is a contextual missiology of the Spirit. It is not to argue that all other contextual models should be discarded, but rather to propose this missiology as another significant model alongside other contextual models. This model seems to be more flexible as it is sensitive to the particular cultural or local situation on the one hand, and to the national or global situation of the movement on the other, and at the same time it takes the experiences of the Spirit seriously.

This new model tries to expand the horizons of contextual missiology, and to introduce a missiology of the Spirit moving beyond a simple discussion of the Spirit and His works as mere topics, to a contextual missiology from the perspective of the Spirit. In their discussion of ‘Contemporary Currents in Missiology,’ Jongeneel and Engelen deal with missiologies ‘from above’ and ‘from below.’ By ‘missiologies from above’ they mean the ‘classic,’ or ‘traditional’ mission theory that seeks the support of the Bible as well as church tradition. By ‘missiologies from below’ they mean modern mission approaches

like ‘dialogue,’ ‘liberation’ and ‘humanization.’⁴² In his *Missiological Encyclopedia*, Jongeneel discusses the differences between ‘missiology from above and missiology from below’. According to him, ‘Spirit-centred missiology’ is a ‘missiology from above’ and ‘context-centred missiology’ is a ‘missiology from below.’⁴³ A contextual missiology of the Spirit includes both these missiological aspects, ‘from above’ as well as ‘from below,’ as this model takes into account the Spirit experiences of the community as well as their contexts, both local and global. This model attempts to keep a balance between the changing situations of the community as well as their Spirit experiences, as both have their own influence in shaping the theology of Pentecostals.

6.2. Theological Reflection

Although there is unprecedented growth in the movement, Pentecostal missiology is still developing. As the editors of *Called and Empowered* observed, ‘Pentecostal missiological literature has not kept pace with the explosive growth of the Pentecostal churches worldwide.’⁴⁴ However, it seems that what has developed thus far shows that a Pentecostal missiology should be contextual. For Pentecostals, theology is not acceptable without practice and, therefore, only a practical and pragmatic theology will work for them. Since its inception, Pentecostal theology has emerged out of practice and experience. Stephen Parker

⁴² Jongeneel and Engelen, ‘Contemporary Currents,’ 447.

⁴³ Jongeneel, *Philosophy, Science, and Theology*, 181. He also includes many other missiologies like God-centred, Christ-centred and church-centred missiologies as ‘missiologies from above.’

⁴⁴ M.A. Dempster, B.D. Klaus, and D. Petersen, ‘Editor’s Introduction,’ in *Called and Empowered: Global Mission in Pentecostal Perspective*, ed. M.A. Dempster, B.D. Klaus, and D. Petersen (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), xv.

states, ‘for Pentecostals, theology arises from reflection on experience.’⁴⁵ The strength of a contextual Pentecostal missiology is that it is flexible, enabling it to change under the guidance of the Spirit and in the light of changing situations. In order to make a theological reflection for contextual missiology of the Spirit, ‘the Spirit-Text-Community’, the triad of sources as proposed by Kenneth Archer and John Thomas while developing a Pentecostal Hermeneutics, will be used.⁴⁶ As Cartledge observes, while discussing Pentecostal theological method to relate it to intercultural theology, all these ‘three sources are expected to work together in order to generate theological reflection and inform ecclesial decisions in relation to missiological praxis.’⁴⁷

6.2.1. Pneumatological Missiology

There has been a tendency to neglect pneumatology in mission studies. According to Pomerville, since ‘mission theory is inconsistent with mission practice,’ contemporary missiology reveals ‘pneumatological gaps in mission theology.’⁴⁸ Several decades ago, missiologists like Roland Allen and Allan Tippett identified the dearth of missiological investigation into the important dimension of the Holy Spirit in mission. According to Allen, ‘our concept of the work of the Holy Spirit has been almost confined to the revelation of truth, of holiness, of church government and order. Missionary work as an expression of the Holy Spirit has received such slight and casual attention that it might almost escape the notice of a

⁴⁵ Stephen E. Parker, *Led by the Spirit: Toward a Practical Theology of Pentecostal Discernment and Decision Making*, JPTS Series, 7 (Sheffield: SAP, 1996), 10.

⁴⁶ Kenneth J. Archer, *A Pentecostal Hermeneutic for the Twenty-First Century: Spirit, Scripture and Community* (London: T & T Clark International, 2004). See pp.156-96.

⁴⁷ Cartledge, ‘Pentecostal Theological Method,’ 94.

⁴⁸ Pomerville, *Third Force*, 130.

hasty reader.⁴⁹ Tippet stated that although mission movements in the New Testament were ‘under the specific directions of the Holy Spirit,’ for him ‘the Spirit as a recurring feature of the episodes of church expansion was a belated realization.’⁵⁰

It seems that pneumatology has been eclipsed by both the Christology and Trinitarian approaches. Eugene Rogers argues that such an eclipse of pneumatology is due to the ‘successive trinitarian revival’ in recent years, and this slight on the Holy Spirit is evident in the writings of many scholars, including Karl Barth whose doctrine of the Spirit ‘subsides into christology,’ as the Spirit is denoted by impersonal terms, chiefly the ‘power’ of Jesus Christ.⁵¹ Nevertheless, even non-Pentecostal missiologists recognize the importance of the Spirit for contemporary missiological reflection. According to Jongeneel, ‘pneumatology should not only be about the *right message or doctrine* on the Holy Spirit; but also be about the *right experiences of the Spirit*.... The right experience, on the other hand, makes church and theology go out into the world in mission.’⁵² Shenk states that ‘mission does not belong to the church,’ rather it is ‘the work of the Holy Spirit, who indwells the church.’⁵³

⁴⁹ Roland Allen, ‘Pentecost and the World,’ in *The Ministry of the Spirit*, ed. David M. Paton (London: World Dominion Press, 1960), 21.

⁵⁰ Alan Tippet, *Introduction to Missiology* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1987), 51.

⁵¹ Eugene F. Rogers, Jr., *After the Spirit: A Constructive Pneumatology from Resources Outside the Modern West* (London: SCM Press, 2006), 19-20.

⁵² J.A.B. Jongeneel, ‘Opening Address: Experiences of the Spirit,’ in *Experiences of the Spirit: Conference on Pentecostal and Charismatic Research in Europe at Utrecht University 1989*, Studies in the Intercultural History of Christianity, 68 (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1991), 5.

⁵³ Wilbert R. Shenk, ‘New Wineskins for New Wine: Toward a Post-Christendom Ecclesiology,’ *IBMR* 29, no. 2 (2005), 78.

It is argued here that the Holy Spirit factor was the chief reason for the outstanding growth of Pentecostalism in the first half of the twentieth century. According to Thangaraj, after World Wars I and II, self-confidence in humanity was affected by the human predicament. ‘The Neo-Orthodox movement in Christian theology, as spearheaded by Karl Barth, Emil Brunner and others, clearly articulated this lack of confidence in human nature.’ Therefore, confidence in the efforts of missionaries to evangelize the whole world was eroded after the World Wars.⁵⁴ Nevertheless, when the optimistic confidence of Evangelical Christians for world evangelism was in decline in the post-Edinburgh period, Pentecostal missionaries were found to be evangelising several parts of the globe under the guidance of the Spirit. Anderson’s *Spreading Fires* provides a clear picture of Pentecostal expansion during this period. According to Anderson, the Edinburgh conference and its emphasis had little influence on Pentecostal missions as Pentecostals were not invited to participate.⁵⁵ They believed that while the Holy Spirit was a missionary Spirit, the outpouring of the Spirit was mainly for world evangelization. This was why the gift of tongues was even interpreted by early Pentecostals as ‘missionary tongues,’ to enable them to communicate the gospel effectively in indigenous languages. However, as discussed in chapter two, they soon found this to be unfeasible and reformulated their ‘tongues’ theology. As Anderson’s study reveals, the ‘Spirit-filled missionaries’ were sent out from Azusa Street and other centres to places as far as ‘China, India, Japan, Argentina, Brazil, all over Europe, Palestine, Egypt, Somaliland, Liberia, Angola and South Africa’ within two years of the beginning of the Azusa Street revival. He claims

⁵⁴ Thangaraj, *Common Task*, 18-19.

⁵⁵ Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 211.

that this achievement is ‘arguably the most significant global expansion of a Christian movement in the entire history of Christianity.’ ‘The primary motivation’ for this growth was the Pentecostals’ belief that ‘they had received the Missionary Spirit, who had empowered them to go to the nations.’⁵⁶

Pneumatocentricism is the core of Pentecostal missiology. From the inception of the movement, the Holy Spirit has been understood as a missionary Spirit by Pentecostals. This emphasis on the Spirit in Pentecostal mission theology and practice inspired Pentecostal missiologists like Pomerville⁵⁷ and McClung⁵⁸ to refer to Pentecostals as ‘People of the Spirit.’ McClung further explains this Spirit-centred missiology as ‘a “theology on the move.” Its character has been more experiential than cognitive, more activist than reflective. Pentecostals have often acted now and theologized later.’ Although there have been attempts by Pentecostals to articulate their teachings and practices, ‘only recently have Pentecostal missiologists begun to solidify a more formalized “pentecostal missions theology.”’⁵⁹

History shows a tension within Pentecostalism over maintaining a pneumatocentric missiology. Even in ecumenical initiatives in which Pentecostals have participated, this tension has been evident. The discussion in the 1989 Lausanne II world mission conference illustrates this tension. Although there was

⁵⁶ Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 68. Also see Faupel, *Everlasting Gospel*, 212-221; Gary B. McGee, ‘Early Pentecostal Missionaries: They went Everywhere Preaching the Gospel,’ in *Azusa Street and Beyond*, 35-40. In this article he provides a picture of the spread of Pentecostalism in its initial period.

⁵⁷ For more details, see Pomerville, *Third Force*, 124-27.

⁵⁸ For further discussion, see Grant McClung, ‘Truth on Fire: Pentecostals and an Urgent Missiology,’ in *Azusa Street and Beyond*, 80-83.

⁵⁹ For further discussion, see McClung, ‘Truth on Fire,’ 78.

some consensus regarding the work of the Spirit in evangelism among the Evangelicals and the Charismatics, as Lord has pointed out, ‘the issue of “signs and wonders” and other experiences of the Spirit were absent. According to him, this missing aspect of the Spirit is at the ‘heart of evangelical-pentecostal divisions in understanding the work of the Spirit in mission.’⁶⁰

Although they may differ over their understanding of mission, almost all Pentecostals are in agreement over the missiological purpose of Spirit empowerment. As McClung has noted, for some Pentecostals, the chief purpose of the Spirit experiences, such as the baptism of the Holy Spirit, is for ministry, and especially evangelism.⁶¹ Many other Pentecostal scholars who have studied Lukan pneumatology have demonstrated the missiological purpose of Spirit empowerment.⁶² According to John Penney, the ‘Spirit-endowment’ is for ‘missionary enablement,’ and it is ‘essentially missionary empowerment.’⁶³ Analyzing the various terms used by Luke, such as ‘filled or full of the Spirit,’ ‘baptised with the Holy Spirit,’ ‘receiving the gift of the Spirit,’ and ‘clothed with power,’ Penney concluded that Spirit-endowment is for mission, by which he chiefly meant world-wide mission.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ Lord, *Spirit-Shaped Mission*, 47. For more details of the discussion of this tension see, pp. 45-47.

⁶¹ McClung, ‘Truth on Fire,’ 82.

⁶² For example, see Roger Stronstad, *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1984); James B. Shelton, *Mighty in Word and Deed: The Role of the Holy Spirit in Luke-Acts* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1991); Robert P. Menzies, *Empowered for Witness: The Spirit in Luke-Acts*, JPTS Series 6 (Sheffield: SAP, 1991).

⁶³ John M. Penney, *The Missionary Emphasis of Lukan Pneumatology* (Sheffield: SAP, 1997), 120.

⁶⁴ See Penney, *Missionary Emphasis*, 15, 96-110.

A pneumatological missiology seems to be more holistic and ecumenical in scope, as it deals with spiritual salvation, physical healing, and the material needs of the people. This missiology has the potential to include various difficult issues of life such as sickness, sorcery, evil spirits, injustice and poverty. A wider discussion of all the issues that can be dealt with by a pneumatological missiology is beyond the scope of this study. The present discussion is limited to identifying three issues as examples to show the potential scope of a pneumatological missiology.

A pneumatological missiology can serve many purposes. First, it falls within the wider context of *missio Dei*, a central theme of traditional missiology. The International Missionary Conference (IMC) at Willingen in 1952 accepted the concept of *missio Dei*. Although the phrase itself was used by Karl Hartenstein at the Conference,⁶⁵ it was George Vicedom who brought it into popular use within Protestant missionary circles.⁶⁶ As Shivute Tomas states, ‘at Willingen the whole treatment of missionary theology and strategy was moving towards Trinity-centeredness.’ He argues that Willingen’s trinitarian missiology was strongly influenced by Karl Barth.⁶⁷ It seems that even in the Trinitarian-driven concept of *missio Dei* pneumatology is eclipsed by Christology. For example, the explanation of this concept at Willingen omitted the role of the Holy Spirit, describing mission

⁶⁵ Shivute Tomas, ‘The Theology of Mission and Evangelism: In the international Missionary Council from Edinburgh to New Delhi’ (DTh thesis, Helsinki: University of Helsinki, 1980), 134.

⁶⁶ Pomerville, *Third Force*, 138.

⁶⁷ Tomas, ‘Theology of Mission,’ 134-35. For more details of the discussion, see pp. 135-37. Bosch also talks about the Barthian influence on such a concept (Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 390).

as ‘participation in the sending of the Son, in the *missio Dei*, with the inclusive aim of establishing the lordship of Christ over the whole redeemed creation.’⁶⁸

Due to the emergence of contextual theology there has been a modification and expansion in the understanding of *missio Dei*. Nevertheless, as Pomerville discusses in detail, it created a crisis in mission. Such a broad concept calls the role of the church into question as church mission is trivialized and the primacy of evangelism is eclipsed. He goes on to argue that ‘Pentecostals represent a source for dispelling the confusion concerning the activity of God in the world of mission,’ as they emphasize ‘God’s special mission, as mediated by the activity of God the Holy Spirit through the agency of the church.’⁶⁹ Therefore, a Pentecostal pneumatological missiology can better serve the ‘pneumatological hiatus’⁷⁰ created by the current mission crisis. While discussing mission as *missio Dei*, Bosch notes that a wider understanding of mission can be expounded pneumatologically rather than christologically.⁷¹ Pneumatological missiology understands that mission belongs to God the Holy Spirit. According to Lord, ‘it is an experience of God the Holy Spirit that empowers and sends disciples out in mission and pentecost is a prototype: a “baptism in the Spirit” that generates mission.’⁷² If it is God’s mission, a pneumatological missiology means that it is the mission of the Spirit of God. It is through experiences of the Spirit that God

⁶⁸ Georg F. Vicedom, *The Mission of God: An Introduction to a Theology of Mission*, trans. Gilbert A Thiele and Dennis Hilgendorf (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing, 1965), 5.

⁶⁹ Pomerville, *Third Force*, 137-43.

⁷⁰ Pomerville uses this term to explain that there is an underlying pneumatological hiatus in conciliar theology. See Pomerville, *Third Force*, 141.

⁷¹ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 391. For more discussion, see pp.391-93.

⁷² Lord, *Spirit-Shaped Mission*, 37.

motivates mission.⁷³ It is the mission of God the Spirit, and He directs and equips the church to accomplish His mission in the world.

Second, a pneumatological missiology incorporates the theology of evangelism as well as social action. The history of the Pentecostal Movement shows that there has been a primacy placed on evangelism. As Anderson notes, ‘the power of the Spirit in Pentecostal thinking is always linked to the command to preach the gospel to all nations.’⁷⁴ A pneumatological missiology does not undermine the emphasis on evangelism. As seen in chapters three, four and five, the issues facing Pentecostalism from inside and outside the movement have not arrested its growth in Rajasthan, although they have affected Pentecostals in one way or the other. Old methods of evangelism, such as literature distribution, street preaching and the like have been avoided, but ‘Spirit experiences’ like healing, exorcism, and other manifestations, bring growth to Pentecostal churches. Prayer evangelism gradually takes the place of Street evangelism. Ordinary believers are encouraged to be empowered by the Spirit and exercise their spiritual gifts by using them as tools for community building and growth. The responsibility for evangelism has been shifted from the clergy to ordinary believers, and consequently traditional evangelistic methods have been replaced by charismatic experiences like healing and exorcism. The story of the beginning of the FFCI church in Jawar village illustrates that exorcism and healing help planting churches and growth. Pannalal⁷⁵ came from a non-Christian tribal background, and practised witchcraft

⁷³ Lord, *Spirit-Shaped Mission*, 37.

⁷⁴ Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 212. For more details of the Pentecostal priority of evangelism, see pp. 212-15.

⁷⁵ Pseudonym.

and magic. He was tormented by the evil spirits, and his wife was seriously ill, and finally he decided to commit a family suicide. However, he says that he was guided by some inner voice to visit his neighbour, where he found a Pentecostal pastor who was on an accidental visit to the village. The pastor prayed for Pannalal and his family, and as a result, he was delivered from the evil spirits and his wife was healed. Soon he started witnessing Christ and praying for the sick, and he gradually formed a congregation, and today he oversees four growing congregations in the Girva Tahsil.⁷⁶ Another story, the experiences of Kantilal⁷⁷ and his family, shows the way ordinary women were involved in the healing. He too came from a non-Christian family, and his wife was seriously ill for more than two months. Mrs. Laxmi,⁷⁸ a Pentecostal believer went and prayed for Kantilal's wife and she was healed. Soon the whole family came to Christian faith, and later he became a full time Pentecostal minister.⁷⁹

Moreover, pneumatological missiology takes the theology of social action seriously. As discussed above, Pentecostals argue that Spirit empowerment is intended for the purpose of serving the community. Many draw upon the social concern of the Spirit among the primitive Christian community in Luke-Acts. For example, Max Turner argues from the life of this early community that Spirit empowerment is not only for evangelistic mission, but it has multiple purposes,

⁷⁶ For more details of the story, see Reji Chacko, 'Sharing the Living Manna,' *Cross and Crown* 37, no. 2 (Nov-Dec 2007): 24.

⁷⁷ Pseudonym.

⁷⁸ Pseudonym.

⁷⁹ For more details of the story, see C&C Correspondent, 'They Believed and they Saw the Glory of God,' *Cross and Crown* 37, no. 5 (May-June 2008): 09.

including other kinds of services.⁸⁰ Spirit-filled Pentecostal Christianity is involved in a number of social activities. Miller and Yamamori's *Global Pentecostalism*⁸¹ is a useful study for appreciating the social engagement of Charismatic Christians, particularly in the Majority World. As discussed in chapter three, although Pentecostals in Rajasthan were a bit reluctant in the initial period of the movement, they gradually began to be involved in social development programmes. However, the social aspect of Spirit empowerment is realized by Pentecostals without sacrificing evangelism and growth. For example, Pentecostals are involved in various community development programmes like adult literacy as illiteracy is a significant issue in Rajasthan.⁸² The story of Pyari behn illustrates the importance of literacy programmes in the mission of the church. She has been a Christian for twenty years, but was illiterate until recently. Now she has begun to learn how to read and write, and also do some simple arithmetic as a result of the literacy programme of RPC in Udaipur. She says, 'I can now read the Scripture.' She is the first believer from Katchi Basti, but witnessed Christ in the area, and now being literate she is influencing others to be literate and follow Christ.⁸³

Third, pneumatological missiology takes the theology of religions very seriously.

It is significant that Pentecostalism in the Majority World attracts a large number

⁸⁰ According to Turner, they include services to the church like encouragement, guidance and the like. For more details of the argument, see Max Turner, *Power from on High: The Spirit in Israel's Restoration and Witness in Luke-Acts* (Sheffield: SAP, 2000), 404-118.

⁸¹ Donald E. Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2007).

⁸² According to the 2001 Government census of India, literacy rate in the state is only 15.9%, and among women only 5.7%, in comparison to 64.8% in the rest of India.

⁸³ For more details of the story, see C&C Correspondent, 'The Beloved of the Lord,' *Cross and Crown* 37, no. 4 (March-April 2008): 23-24.

of people from other faiths. According to Anderson, one of the major reasons for this appeal is the ‘Pentecostal emphasis on the transforming power of the Holy Spirit,’ that claims to ‘offer more than the traditional religions did.’⁸⁴ As Jenkins observes, Christianity in the Southern Hemisphere is becoming more and more charismatic,⁸⁵ and will have to face many more interfaith encounters. In the context of the current crisis created in the theology of religions by Trinitarian as well as Christological approaches, the pneumatological approach seems to build a bridge that will carry the debate forward.

It is significant that Pentecostals have entered into the current scenario of the theology of religions in the context of interfaith encounters. Amos Yong argues the significance of a pneumatological Theology of Religion.⁸⁶ According to him, ‘a pneumatologically driven theology is more conducive to engaging these matters [interfaith concerns] in our time than previous approaches.’ Furthermore, ‘only a pneumatological approach to the religions enables us to hold in tension the distinctive confessional claims of Christian faith alongside the actual claims of the religions themselves....’⁸⁷ As Yong hopes, Pentecostals seem to be potential partners who can richly contribute to the field of a Christian theology of religions.

Along with the historical and theological reasons, missiological reasons have been

⁸⁴ Allan H Anderson, ‘The Pentecostal Gospel and Third World Cultures,’ (Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society for Pentecostal Studies, Springfield, Missouri, 16 March 1999), <http://artsweb.bham.ac.uk/aanderson/> (accessed on 07 March 2008).

⁸⁵ For more discussion, see Jenkins, *Next Christendom*, 6-8.

⁸⁶ Apart from Amos Yong, other Pentecostal scholars like Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen and Samuel Solivan also engage in the dialogue of a pneumatological theology of religions. For example, see Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, ‘Pentecostal Pneumatologies in the Matrix of Contemporary Theologies of the Spirit’ (paper presented at the Glopent Conference, Heidelberg, 1-2 February 2008); Samuel Solivan, ‘Interreligious Dialogue: An Hispanic American Pentecostal Perspective,’ in *Grounds for Undersaniding: Ecumenical Responses to Religious Pluralism*, ed. S. Mark Heim (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 37-45.

⁸⁷ Yong, *Spirit Poured Out*, 235-36.

argued as a major rationale for Yong to urge the need for developing a Pentecostal pneumatology of religions.⁸⁸ At the same time, he urges that a Pentecostal theology of religions should not displace other approaches, but rather complement them.⁸⁹ Yong proposes a ‘pneumatological theology of hospitality,’ in the particular context of interfaith engagement. This model ‘empowers a much wider range of interreligious practices more conducive to meeting the demands of our time,’ and it allows Christians to find ‘themselves as guest or as hosts, sometimes simultaneously.’⁹⁰

It seems that Yong’s ‘hospitality model’ is very significant in the contemporary religiously tensed Indian context. His model can also take into account the suggestion of S. Kim more seriously in the particular Christian-Hindu encounter. Kim suggests the need for ‘respect involving restraint’ in the intolerant Hindu-Christian religious context in India, and so he urges that ‘the Christian desire to share their religious experience needs to be respected and appreciated as well as the Hindu sense of faithfulness to dharma.’⁹¹ Elsewhere, he urges that it is important for Christians to realize that the ‘Hindu understanding of conversion is incompatible with the Christian one, but nevertheless to respect the Hindu view, not as a capitulation to Hindu objections nor as a gesture of concession but as an act of genuine respect for Hindu beliefs and practices.’⁹²

⁸⁸ For further discussion, see Yong, *Discerning the Spirit*, 206-19.

⁸⁹ Yong, *Discerning the Spirit*, 311.

⁹⁰ Amos Yong, ‘The Spirit of Encounter: Theology of Religions- Pentecostal and Pneumatological Perspectives’ (paper presented at the Glopent Conference, Amsterdam, 27-28 April 2008).

⁹¹ For more discussion on ‘respect involving restraint,’ see S. Kim, *In Search of Identity*, 199; S. Kim, ‘Hindutva, Secular India,’ 40-42.

⁹² Kim, ‘Hindutva, Secular India,’ 141.

As seen above the stories of healing, exorcism and other miracles in Pentecostal mission in Rajasthan show the importance of pneumatological approach to people of other faiths. Pentecostals' engagement with others, particularly in their life crises, motivates them to use their spiritual gifts to help their neighbours to meet their needs. Pentecostals engage with people of other faiths, not necessarily with the intention of conversion but on a compassionate dimension of the Spirit, although such engagement may sometimes bring conversion. Therefore, the result of this charismatic engagement,⁹³ whether healing, exorcism and conversion, is to be understood as the work of the Holy Spirit, not as human achievement.

The story of Leela⁹⁴ and her family, who became followers of Christ as a result of the friendship and hospitality of Praveen⁹⁵ and family, shows the importance of the 'theology of hospitality' in Rajasthan. Praveen and family shared cooking skills and expertise with Leela's family, who was running a restaurant. They often visited each other's houses and had meals together. Gradually, Leela's family developed an interest in prayers, and they asked Praveen's family to pray for their business to flourish, and this happened. Consequently Leela and her family became Christians. Praveen said that they neither aimed at the conversion of the other family nor called them for prayer, but 'it is the work of the Holy Spirit, and we became an instrument for Him to bless this family.'⁹⁶

⁹³ Here the phrase 'Charismatic engagement' is used to mean the use of various charismatic gifts.

⁹⁴ Pseudonym.

⁹⁵ Praveen (pseudonym) and Family became Pentecostal from a non-Christian background.

⁹⁶ Praveen (pseudonym), interview by author, Udaipur, Rajasthan, 05 May 2006.

Although they engage with people of other faiths, it seems that Pentecostals in Rajasthan have not shown much interest in formal interfaith dialogue as such. The only incident in this regard seems to be the informal dialogue that took place between Jaswant Rana and the Jain Pandits (scholars), in the year 2002. The chief outcome of this dialogue, according to Rana, is that he was able to clarify some misunderstandings the Jains had about Christian teachings, and also that he was touched by their humility.⁹⁷ However, the role of the Spirit is evident in this informal dialogue. Rana shared in the FBC chapel service regarding this dialogue before it actually took place, and he asked the people to pray that the Holy Spirit would give him the wisdom he needed in the dialogue. He also said that he believed it was an opportunity by the Spirit of God.⁹⁸

However, the call for a Pentecostal pneumatology is not at the expense of a Trinitarian view of God. It is not meant to reduce the Trinitarian or Christological focus, but to seek a place for pneumatology in mission theology. A pneumatological missiology places the Holy Spirit in a Trinitarian perspective, seeing the Spirit not just as a force or agent or means of mission, but as the very source of mission. In other words, it is the mission of God the Spirit, and the church is only a servant to work along with Him in His mission in the world. As Pentecostals believe that the first and foremost reason for Spirit empowerment is to serve the kingdom, with a missionary purpose, whether service or witness, most Pentecostals will be comfortable with a pneumato-centric missiology as the

⁹⁷ Rana, interview, 15 May 2006.

⁹⁸ I was present at the chapel service when Rana shared this.

current study shows. To put it another way, the emphasis is on the sovereignty of God the Spirit in mission in a pneumatological Pentecostal missiology.

It seems that the current debate within the pneumatological theology of religions is centred on the issue of discernment. The most common discernment argued for is Christological. However, it is argued that a genuine pneumatological theology should use pneumato-centric Christology for discernment. Roland Allen, a pioneer thinker in linking pneumatology to missiology, is significant in this respect. According to him:

We believe that it is the Holy Spirit of Christ which inspires and guides us: we can not believe that the same Spirit will guide and inspire them [our converts, new believers, new churches, younger churches]. We believe that the Holy Spirit has taught us and is teaching us true conceptions of morality, doctrine, ritual: we can not believe that the same Spirit will teach them.⁹⁹

K. Kim's discussion on the debate of discernment seems to be useful from the perspective of a pneumatological missiology as the Spirit dimension is clear. She discusses four useful biblical criteria for discernment, for she affirms that 'the Christian contribution to the debate of discernment will always be Christ-centred.' The first is ecclesial, 'the confession of Jesus Christ as Lord by the Christian community,' with the help of the Holy Spirit. The second is ethical, 'the evidence of the fruits of the Spirit... in the up-building of community.' The third is charismatic, 'the practice of the gifts of the Spirit,' and the fourth is liberational, 'consideration for the poor,' as the Spirit anointed Jesus announced (Lk 4:18). She

⁹⁹ Roland Allen. *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962), 143-44. He critiques the foreign missionaries' hesitation to trust the local churches and leaders.

suggests that these criteria should not be taken as ‘concrete evidence,’ but as ‘indicators,’ and so ‘any one of these four criteria could indicate the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit.’ However, she adds that ‘discernment is not an easy task,’ but a ‘complex process and an inexact science.’¹⁰⁰

This is not to argue for a limitless pneumatology, but to state the importance of using Spirit-centred Christological discernment, as God the Spirit is sovereign in the church’s interfaith mission. The sovereignty of the Spirit in mission with people of other faiths should be the underlying basis for a pneumatological Pentecostal theology of religions.

Pneumatological missiology seems to be most appropriate in the context of mission in India. As mentioned in chapter one, K. Kim’s *Mission in the Spirit* is a significant study in this regard.¹⁰¹ According to her, ‘mission, however it is done, should be “in the Spirit.”’¹⁰² She tries to derive a ‘mission Pneumatology’ from the pneumatology of the Indian theologians, Samartha, Vandana and Rayan. Kim’s pneumatological model seems to be very important in the Indian context, where most Indian Christian theologians have developed Christological models to approach particularly the Hindu dominant Indian context.¹⁰³ Although she

¹⁰⁰ K. Kim, *Holy Spirit in the World*, 168-69. For more details, see pp. 164-69.

¹⁰¹ K. Kim, *Mission in the Spirit*; Kim, ‘Indian Contribution.’

¹⁰² K. Kim, ‘Indian Contribution,’ 35. She argues, in line with Robin Boyd, that Indian Christology is basically ‘Spirit Christology’ rather than ‘Logos Christology.’ See Robin Boyd, *Introduction to Christian Theology*, rev. ed. (Delhi: ISPCK, 1975).

¹⁰³ For example, M.M. Thomas discusses the ‘acknowledged Christ,’ Stanley J. Samartha the ‘unbound Christ,’ and Raimundo Panikkar the ‘unknown Christ.’ See M.M. Thomas, *The Acknowledged Christ of the Indian Renaissance* (Madras: CLS, 1970); Stanley J. Samartha, *The Hindu Response to the Unbound Christ: Towards a Christology in India* (Bangalore: CISRS, 1974); Raimundo Panikkar, *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism*, rev. ed. (London: Darton, Longman & Tod, 1981).

anticipates distinctive Indian Pentecostal-Charismatic pneumatology, she insists that ‘the main focus of mission Pneumatology in India is not the Spirit as inspirer of mission or the mission of the Spirit, but mission in the Spirit, who is already involved in the world.’¹⁰⁴ However, as Anderson observes, ‘mission is Pentecostalism’s central, most important activity,’¹⁰⁵ and the Holy Spirit as the inspirer and source of mission is a fundamental theme of Pentecostal missiology. Therefore, most Pentecostals may not be comfortable about ignoring the inspirational role of the Spirit in mission. On the other hand, many Pentecostals limit this inspirational role of the Spirit to evangelism, church planting and growth. Nevertheless, the current study argues that the role of the Spirit should not be limited to these aspects only; rather the horizon of Spirit influence must be broadened.

In conclusion, the above discussion urges the central role of the Holy Spirit in contextual Pentecostal missiology. The Holy Spirit knows the context, and He guides His people in different situations, and the contextual needs are met by the Spirit. The Spirit enables his people to meet the challenges of contextual mission, and it is His world, His people, His mission, and His missionaries. As Lesslie Newbigin says, ‘mission is not just something that the church does; it is something that is done by the Spirit, who is himself the witness, who changes both the world and the church, who always goes before the church in its missionary journey.’¹⁰⁶ Therefore, the pneumatological foundation of a contextual missiology

¹⁰⁴ Kim, *Mission in the Spirit*, 242.

¹⁰⁵ Anderson, *Spreading Fires*, 65.

¹⁰⁶ Lesslie Newbigin, *The Open Secret: An Introduction to the Theology of Mission*. rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 56.

has the potential to deal with a variety of contextual issues in mission. Although strategies have changed in the light of the socio-religious and political situations, the role of the Spirit is not affected. For example, some people approach those of other faiths through the means of power encounters, where the emphasis is on the power of the Holy Spirit on overcoming other spiritual powers. Others see Spirit experiences and guidance in the life of other people, and wait for the Spirit to deal with them and lead them to further revelation. In each approach the Spirit has the central place. Similarly, in the case of evangelism, some people directly involved in evangelism say that they have been empowered by the Holy Spirit to witness for Christ. Others engaged in prayer evangelism and other Spirit experiences like healing and exorcism say that the Spirit has empowered them to serve people by delivering them from both physical and spiritual frailty. In brief, a pneumatological basis of contextual missiology serves multiple purposes, as it takes into consideration several aspects of mission, including evangelism, social action, and engaging with people of other faiths.

6.2.2. A Textual Reflection

Many missiologists like Bosch argue that a viable theology of mission should not only be concerned with context but also with the Bible. As M.R. Spindler observes, 'Bosch appears to steer between the simplified biblical founding of mission offered by many fundamentalists and a modernist approach that grounds mission on purely practical motives without any reference to the Bible.'¹⁰⁷ Taking a lead from Bosch, Spindler argues that 'a biblical grounding of mission is not just

¹⁰⁷ M.R. Spindler, 'The Biblical Grounding and Orientation of Mission,' in *Missiology: An Ecumenical Introduction*, 143.

one among several ways to justify mission, but the justification par excellence.’ For Spindler, biblical grounding does not mean to seek ‘literal biblical mandates for all modern missionary activities’ or to legitimate all actions, but to evaluate these activities in the light of an understanding of the Bible.¹⁰⁸ According to Bevans, a contextual theology is an ‘attempt to understand Christian faith in terms of a particular context.’ However, as mentioned in chapter one, he argues that in order to do theology contextually, two issues, the ‘faith experience of the past that is recorded in the scriptures’ and ‘the experience of the present, the context,’ must be taken into account.¹⁰⁹ Biblical grounding is important to Christians in general, and so for Pentecostals around the globe. Noel Davies and Martin Conway observe that, ‘in the absence of ‘Pentecostal creedal formulae and a commonly agreed theology,’ the Bible is ‘the ultimate authority in matters of spirituality, doctrines and ethics.’¹¹⁰

The Bible has become increasingly important in the lives of Christians in the global South, and Jenkins’ recent study clearly demonstrates this fact. According to him, Asian as well as African Christians draw fresh and Charismatic elements from the Scripture. ‘For the growing churches of the global South, the Bible speaks to everyday, real-world issues of poverty and debt, famine and urban crisis, racial and gender oppression, state brutality and persecution.’¹¹¹ While discussing

¹⁰⁸ Spindler, ‘Biblical Grounding,’ 124-25.

¹⁰⁹ Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, 3-5. With ‘experience of the past’ he means experiences that is ‘recorded in scriptures and kept alive, preserved, defended- and perhaps even neglected or suppressed- in tradition,’ and ‘experience of the present’ means, ‘individual and contemporary-collective experience.’

¹¹⁰ Noel Davies and Martin Conway, *World Christianity in the Twentieth Century*, SCM Core Text (London: SCM, 2008), 78.

¹¹¹ Philip Jenkins, *The New Face of Christianity: Believing the Bible in the Global South* (Oxford: OUP, 2006), 5-6.

Indian Pentecostalism, Jesudas Athyal comments that ‘there is an unprecedented emphasis on the reading and study of the Bible’ among Charismatics.¹¹² The Statement of Faith of most churches as well as theological institutes of Pentecostals in Rajasthan show the importance they place on the Bible.¹¹³ As McClung has rightly noted, the emphasis on Biblical authority for mission theology and practice by Pentecostals prompted Pomerville to refer to them as ‘People of the Book.’¹¹⁴ According to Pomerville, ‘while some may question their use of the Book, their hermeneutics, nevertheless Pentecostals seek to be led by Scriptures as by the Spirit in their mission efforts. Their textbook for mission strategy is invariably limited to the Book of Acts.’¹¹⁵ While proposing a Pentecostal missiological paradigm for the twenty first century, McClung emphasizes the inseparable nature of the Word and the Spirit.¹¹⁶

As Pentecostals always explore the life of the early Christian community in the Book of Acts to discover their continuity with it, biblical reflection is important. There are a number of examples in the Book of Acts of how the Spirit experiences of the early Christians play a role in their mission theology and practice. According to Allen, Acts has a distinctive place in the New Testament in its ‘revelation of the Holy Spirit as a missionary Spirit.’ The missionary nature of the Spirit is not hinted at but asserted as the prominent feature in Acts, and to treat

¹¹²Jesudas M. Athyal, *Relevant Patterns of Christian Witness in India: People as Agents of Mission*, Mission-Evangelism Studies, vol.1 (Thiruvalla, India: CSS, 2000), 209.

¹¹³ For example, see *Prospectus 2006*, 6.

¹¹⁴ For further details, see McClung, ‘Truth on Fire,’ 79-80.

¹¹⁵ Pomerville, *Pentecostalism and Missions: Distortion or Correction?* (Pasadena, California: Fuller School of Intercultural Studies, 1982), 352, quoted in McClung, ‘Truth on Fire,’ 79. Although, the exact wordings are not found, the same idea is expressed in Pomerville, *Third Force*, 124-27.

¹¹⁶ For more details of the discussion, see McClung, ‘Try to Get People,’ 45-48.

this ‘as secondary destroys the whole character and purpose of the book.’¹¹⁷ A careful examination of the Book of Acts clearly reveals the pneumatocentricism in early Christian missiology. Spirit experiences like dreams, visions and audible voices played a significant role in formulating and reformulating both the mission theology and practice of early Christianity. In his work on the ‘Spirit as the Source and Test of New Forms of Missionary Activity,’ Allen argues that the apostles were ‘acting under the influence of an intellectual theory’ up until Pentecost, and after Pentecost, they were ‘acting under the impulse of the Spirit.’¹¹⁸ Elsewhere, Allen argues that Acts shows that the Holy Spirit is primarily the dictator and inspirer of missionary work, and He inspires and directs an action ‘which is agreeable to Him and expresses His mind.’¹¹⁹ The following discussion is a reflection from Acts to explain how the Holy Spirit directed His people in accordance with changing situations. Hollenweger predicts that ‘a genuine Pentecostal theology’ that will be ‘different from Western-based theologies and missiologies’ will emerge ‘if the question of hermeneutic principle, the basis from which Scripture is interpreted, becomes a focus of reflection.’¹²⁰

Most pneumatological works have regarded the missionary role of the Spirit only in terms of evangelistic proclamation, church planting and expansion of mission. However, in the light of the wide range of contextual issues and the broadened scope of contextual theologies, the sovereignty of the Spirit to deal with various

¹¹⁷ Roland Allen, ‘Pentecost and the World,’ in *The Ministry of the Spirit*, ed. David M. Paton (London: World Dominion Press, 1960), 21.

¹¹⁸ Roland Allen, ‘The Spirit the Source and Test of New Forms of Missionary Activity,’ in *The Holy Spirit and Mission Dynamics*, ed. McDonnell C. Douglas (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1997), 96.

¹¹⁹ Allen, ‘Pentecost and the World,’ 20.

¹²⁰ Walter Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997), 306.

aspects of the mission of the community should be considered. The Holy Spirit has a role to play not only in planting and growing churches, but also in internal as well as external issues facing the church.

6.2.2.1 The Spirit and Religio-Political Persecution

There are examples of the Spirit's intervention when there were threats to early Christians from the religio-political sphere of society. Four diverse responses by the Holy Spirit are reported in Acts. First, there are examples when the Spirit enabled the Christians to continue to speak in the same location without fear. For example, Peter and John, the disciples of Jesus, were taken into custody by the local authorities who told them 'not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus' (Act. 4:18). On their release they reported all that happened to the other disciples. When they prayed, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke the Word with more boldness (Act. 4:31). On another occasion, Stephen, a man 'full of the Holy Spirit,' was empowered in his preaching in the midst of persecution (Acts 7: 54-56). This incident can be seen as an example of 'supernatural Spirit-inspired defence' in midst of persecution.¹²¹ The Spirit empowered the persecuted believers to witness Christ even in prison (Act 16: 24-34). When Paul was opposed by the Jews in Corinth, he wanted to withdraw from his mission. However, he heard the voice through a vision in the night, saying, 'do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city' (Act. 18:9,10). As a result, he continued his ministry in the same city for another one and a half years.

¹²¹ Roger Stronstad, *The Prophethood of All Believers : A Study in Luke's Charismatic Theology*, JPTS Series, 16 (Sheffield: SAP, 1999), 90.

Second, in certain cases the Spirit told people to move from their existing locations after facing challenges. While Paul was preaching to the crowd in Jerusalem, he said that he moved from Jerusalem because he was asked to do so. While he was praying in the temple in Jerusalem he heard a voice in a trance which said, ‘make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, for they will not receive your testimony concerning Me’ (Act. 22:18). Consequently, he shifted his focus from Jews to Gentiles and moved out of Jerusalem. Third, on other occasions when they were facing persecution the Spirit led them to specific groups to communicate the message. When there was persecution in Jerusalem and its vicinity, Philip was told by the Spirit to go to the desert between Jerusalem and Gaza (Act.8:26-39). Apart from being a man ‘full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom,’ Roger Stronstad saw two other Spirit experiences of Philip in this context. He was ‘led by the Spirit to the Ethiopian Court official’ (Act. 8:29), and ‘he was supernaturally transported by the Spirit after he had baptized the Ethiopian’ (Act.8:39).¹²² While there was severe persecution in Jerusalem and all were scattered to diverse places, Ananias had a dream telling him to go to the house of Judas to heal Saul (Act. 9:10-12). It is significant that all Christians in Jerusalem knew that Saul was a leading persecutor and they were afraid of him (Act. 9:26). However, in response to the dream, Ananias went to meet Saul, and as a result he was healed, filled with the Holy Spirit and became a disciple. Later he became one of the leading voices of early Christian community.

¹²² Roger Stronstad, ‘Affirming Diversity: God’s People as a Community of Prophets,’ *Pneuma* 17, no. 2 (Fall, 1995): 153.

Fourth, on a few occasions, the Spirit confirmed to the early Christians that it was His plan that they undergo hardship. The best example is the testimony of Paul, when he said that it was the will of the Spirit for him to go to Jerusalem where he would face chains and tribulations. He also said that he did not count his life dear to him, but wanted to finish the task (Act. 20:22, 23).

6.2.2.2 The Spirit and Inter-cultural Tension

The Spirit also had a role in resolving tensions over inter-cultural issues in the early Christian community. One such example was the Hebrew-Hellenistic tension among Jewish Christians in Jerusalem (Act. 6:1-2). In order to resolve this they reorganized the administration of the community by choosing seven men to assist in the daily administration of the church. One of the qualifications of these men was to be ‘full of the Holy Spirit’ (Act. 6:3). This suggests the leaders felt that only people with the Spirit would be able to handle the socio-cultural pressures. At other times, the Spirit intervened to correct their views on cultural issues, as in the case of Act. 10: 15, where Peter’s attitude to the Gentiles was changed after being asked to go to the house of Cornelius, a Gentile. While discussing Luke’s ‘portrayal of the charismatic community as an expression of justice by the Spirit’s power,’ M.W. Dempster takes the example in Act. 10 to show that ‘the cultural distinctions between Jews and Gentiles were overcome within the Christian community by the coming of the Spirit.’¹²³ However, there were occasions when even the Spirit-filled leaders failed to overcome such cultural crises. Also at the Council at Jerusalem (Act 15) the Spirit played an

¹²³ Murray W. Dempster, ‘Pentecostal Social Concern and the Biblical Mandate of Social Justice,’ *Pneuma* 9, no. 2 (Fall 1987): 148.

important role in a culturally sensitive situation over the issue of circumcision, a Jewish religio-cultural concern, which was causing tension in the community. However, the decision of the community in line with the Spirit was significant in resolving the issue. In a letter, the leaders stated that their decision was in accordance with the Spirit of God (Act. 15:28). It is likely that it was the Spirit who brought about a consensus in their theological formulation during this time of inter-cultural crisis.

6.2.2.3 The Spirit and Mission Theology and Practice

It was clear that Jesus' promise that the disciples would be empowered by the Spirit for witness not only in Jerusalem but also to the ends of the earth (Act 1:8) included non-Jews as well. However, it was not easy for the Jewish disciples to fully comprehend the concept of a Gentile mission, as their theology did not allow them to develop a missiology that accommodated it. Therefore, the Spirit had to intervene to change their minds. There are examples which indicate that the Spirit took the initiative in formulating or reformulating the Apostles' mission theology and practice. The best example is the mission of Peter to Cornelius' household. In a trance, Peter heard a voice telling him not to call unclean what God had cleansed (Act. 10:10-15). Subsequently, Peter was asked by the Spirit to go to the house of the Gentile centurion Cornelius (Act. 10:19-20). He had the 'direct instruction of the Holy Spirit' and a 'complementary vision.'¹²⁴ Here it is significant to note that Cornelius, a man from outside the Acts community, also received a voice to send men for Simon, who would instruct him about what was to be done. Spirit took the initiation in two simultaneous events, in the life of both Cornelius and Peter,

¹²⁴ Stronstad, *Prophethood of All Believers*, 109.

and resulted in the transformation of both. As Allen has observed, Peter ‘realized that his action was liable to be called in question, but he acted under the impulse of the Spirit.’¹²⁵ While he was preaching, the Holy Spirit fell upon the people and they started speaking in tongues, and this changed Peter’s theology. He asked, who could forbid the *Spirit-filled, tongues- speaking Gentiles* from being baptised? This shows that he, like many other Jewish Christian leaders of the time, believed that the Spirit would work only among certain groups of people, and so baptism was only for them. Now these Gentiles had received the Holy Spirit before they were baptised in water. This incident influenced the reformulation of the theology of the early Christian community, and so later, at the Jerusalem Council, Peter himself made the confession that God acknowledged people by giving them the Spirit (Act. 15:7-11). Referring to the events in Acts 15, Newbigin says that the Spirit experiences reported by Peter silenced the assembly.¹²⁶ Thus, the Spirit experiences of both the leaders as well as the receivers changed the mission theology and practice of the early Christian community.

6.2.2.4 The Spirit and Global Mission

Another important role of the Spirit in the early Christian community was in directing its missionaries in global mission. Even though the promise of Jesus included mission beyond the Palestinian border (Act.1:8), the early community failed to act on this. According to Allen, the disciples of Christ intellectually failed to understand their master’s ‘world-wide commission embracing all the

¹²⁵ Allen, ‘Spirit the Source,’ 100.

¹²⁶ Newbigin, *Open Secret*, 61.

nations.’¹²⁷ However, the Spirit took the initiative when He asked the church in Antioch to set apart and send Barnabas and Saul for a mission beyond Palestine. Subsequently, they embarked on a missionary trip to various regions outside Palestine (Act. 13: 1-4). Later many such missionary journeys were undertaken. As a result, a large number of people from various communities came to Christian faith, and several churches were planted in Asia Minor and its surroundings. It is significant that the Holy Spirit took a special lead in these journeys so that many times He interrupted the schedule and plan of the missionaries. For example, the missionaries were forbidden by the Spirit to preach in Asia (Act. 16:6). Paul and his companions wanted to go to Bithynia, but were forbidden by the Spirit (Act. 16:7), and Paul was guided by a vision to go to Macedonia (Act. 16:9-10).

6.2.2.5 The Spirit and Global-Local Tension

As discussed above, the event that led to the Council of Jerusalem in Act 15 must be primarily regarded as a religio-cultural issue. At the same time, this event can be used as an example of global-local tension. Nevertheless, the global-local categories were not developed in those days as they are today. Certain men from Judea came with their theology, which was shaped by their religio-cultural background, in order to influence the local Gentile community. This created a tension, and the response of the apostles was the call for a council at Jerusalem, where Paul and Barnabas reported the miraculous activities the Lord had done among the non-Jews in other parts of the world. Having travelled to many places beyond Palestine and met many other non-Jewish groups, Paul and Barnabas were certain that the Spirit was at work in other communities. When the apostles in the

¹²⁷ Allen, ‘Spirit the Source,’ 99.

Jerusalem Council heard of what was happening, they were convinced of the need to reformulate their theology. Here, the impact of the global on the local is clear. The apostles of the Jerusalem community (local) were influenced by the works of the Spirit in the region beyond Palestine (global), and it had a tremendous influence upon the decision of the Council in favour of the non-Jewish Christian community. It is recorded that the multitude kept silent when Paul and Barnabas reported the miracles (Spirit experiences) God had done among the Gentiles during their missionary journey (Act.15:12), and after they had become silent, James declared the decision of the Council (v13).

6.2.2.6 The Spirit and Socio-political Issues

From the experiences of the early Christian community it is clear that the Spirit played a role in the socio-political issues as well. The best example is when Paul wanted to appeal to Caesar for a fair trial, which being a Roman citizen he had the right to do (Act. 25:11). When he was arrested, Paul wanted to use his legal right as a Roman citizen to question their unfair treatment of him (Act.22: 23-29). The night after his trial by the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem he heard a 'voice' telling him that he should bear the witness of Jesus in Rome as he had done in Jerusalem (Act. 23:11). It is likely that it was a divine confirmation of his decision to appeal to Caesar. During the shipwreck, Paul told his fellow travellers that a divine 'voice' told him that he must be brought before Caesar (Act. 27:23-24). These experiences show that Paul believed that his appeal to Caesar was in accordance with the divine plan. Although it was meant as a witness to Caesar, it became possible only because he was willing to use his legal rights. Otherwise there

would have been no opportunity for him to witness before Caesar. Therefore, it is likely that the Spirit was giving approval to his decision to exercise his legal rights, and such a decision had two results. First, Paul expected a fair trial before Caesar, and second, he was to be a witness to his faith in Jesus before Caesar. Paul's experiences of the Spirit underline that exercising one's socio-political rights is not contrary to the voice of the Spirit.

In conclusion, the early Christians were making necessary adjustments both in their mission theory and practice in the light of changing situations, but according to the guidance and direction of the Spirit. As seen in the above discussion, the early community responded to the Spirit and Spirit experiences in formulating and reformulating their mission theology and practice. In most cases they made changes under the direct guidance of the Spirit, and on certain occasions they ascribed their decisions to the Spirit. It is important to note that in all the above discussed episodes the Holy Spirit intervened when people were involved. In complex situations, the Spirit intervened and enabled His people to come through the crisis. This demonstrates that in their mission, when the primitive Christian community faced various issues from within and from without, their Spirit experiences played a role in directing their mission. The Spirit experiences of the local communities and the subsequent changes they made in their mission theory and practice demonstrate the contextual nature of their mission. The changing situations, such as socio-cultural, religio-political and global-local issues, and their Spirit experiences had a significant role in shaping and reshaping their missiology. Newbigin, a missionary in India for several years, is significant here:

It [church] is not in control of mission. Another is in control, and his [Spirit's] fresh works will repeatedly surprise the church, compelling it to stop talking and to listen. Because the Spirit himself is sovereign over the mission, the church can only be the attentive servant.... The church's witness is secondary and derivative. The church is witness insofar as it follows obediently where the Spirit leads.¹²⁸

6.2.3. Reflection from the Pentecostal Community

The current study shows that like the early Christian community in Acts, the Spirit experiences of the Pentecostal community in Rajasthan played a role in the theological process. Pentecostals in Rajasthan had encounters with the Spirit in their mission similar to the Acts community, and these experiences had a significant role in formulating and reformulating their mission theology and practice.

Like the Acts community, there were Spirit interventions in the life of Pentecostals in Rajasthan during episodes of persecution. The testimony of Geetha¹²⁹ shows that the Spirit empowers people to boldly witness Christ in times of persecution just as with Stephen in Acts.¹³⁰ The Hindutva militants threatened to cut her into pieces after she became a Christian. She testified that while she was being beaten and dragged by the militants before the village chief, she courageously said, 'even if you cut me into one hundred pieces I will not deny Christ.' She said that the Holy Spirit gave her power to defend her faith.¹³¹ The

¹²⁸ Newbigin, *Open Secret*, 61.

¹²⁹ Pseudonym.

¹³⁰ Although Geetha was brutally persecuted, she was not killed like Stephen.

¹³¹ When Geetha gave this testimony in the church the following Sunday after this incident, in May 2004, I was present at the meeting. She is a full time member of a Pentecostal church at Kherwara.

formation of a Pentecostal church in the village of Lalpur¹³² in Udaipur district was said to be the result of the Spirit's guidance during a threat. The Hindutva militants threatened to burn the house of Lakshman and his family, who were forced to leave the village. However, as Paul was directed not to leave the city of Corinth during opposition, Lakshman was directed by the Spirit to return to his house. Thus, he alone came back and prayed in his house the whole night. The following morning, some of those who had threatened him were amazed to see him and his house unharmed. They told him that they came the previous night to burn his house down, but saw it was on fire. When they spoke to him, he said that he had been in the house praying, and as a result, some of them believed in Jesus and consequently a church was formed. Lakshman says that the Holy Spirit who directed him to go back to his house in the midst of the threat sent the 'fire of the Spirit' (*Athma ki aag*) as on the day of Pentecost to protect him and his house.¹³³ In a third example, as Paul was directed by the Spirit to leave the city of Jerusalem due to persecution, several Pentecostal pastors moved from north Rajasthan to south Rajasthan during persecution, and many attributed such a move to the Spirit's guidance, as mentioned in chapter three.

Kaman, an FFCI pastor had a similar experience like that of Ananias who was directed by the Spirit to go to Saul, the persecutor. When there was severe persecution in Kherwara area Kaman was assaulted by Bhim,¹³⁴ a former RSS leader. However, later being motivated by the Spirit through a dream Kaman went

¹³² Pseudonym.

¹³³ Lakshman (pseudonym), interview by author, Kherwara, Rajasthan, 21 May 2006. On the day of Pentecost tongues of fire appeared on the disciples. See Act. 2:2.

¹³⁴ Pseudonym

to Bhim's house to pray for his wife who was seriously ill with heart disease. She was healed through his prayer. Consequently, Bhim and his family became Christians, receiving baptism from the hands of Kaman.¹³⁵ The story of Bhanu Bhai shows that the Spirit sometimes allowed Pentecostals to undergo persecution as Paul was told that he had to suffer in Jerusalem. Although many people asked Bhanu Bhai to leave his village when he was threatened by the Hindu militants he stayed back, saying that he was told by the Spirit to pay the price by undergoing hardship if he wanted much fruit in his village Karanpur.¹³⁶ He was later assaulted by the Hindutva militants and put a garland of sandals on him, and paraded through the village. However, he did not give up his Christian faith, and within two years he saw many people come to the Lord, and now he is leading a growing congregation at Karanpur.¹³⁷

The Spirit intervened to deal with inter-cultural issues in the Pentecostal community in Rajasthan as in the Acts community. As Peter was transformed by the Spirit from his cultural bigotry, both the south Indians and Rajasthanis overcame their cultural prejudices by their Spirit experiences. As discussed in chapter three, the jewellery issue caused intercultural tension among the early Pentecostals in Rajasthan. In the same incident mentioned in chapter three,¹³⁸ Pastor Daniel said that he was grieved in his heart for not giving baptism to the lady with the jewellery and for all that followed. He heard a 'voice of the Spirit (*athma ki avas*) that the Lord looks at the heart not outward appearance,' and as a

¹³⁵ Kaman Masih (pseudonym), interview by author, Udaipur, Rajasthan, 4 May 2006.

¹³⁶ Kanpur (pseudonym) is a village in the Udaipur District.

¹³⁷ Bhanu Bhai (pseudonym), interview, 24 April 2006.

¹³⁸ See pp.239-40.

result he changed his position. He also said, ‘it is only when we meet with challenges that we are forced to receive a clear guidance from the Lord, otherwise we will stay with our preconceived views.’¹³⁹ The change in attitude of Mahesh¹⁴⁰ and family from Kherwara also shows the role of Spirit experiences in resolving intercultural tension. This family were members of CNI church, but later became Pentecostals. Mahesh said that they did not favour south Indians, but when came to Pentecostal faith, the charismatic experiences changed their attitude towards south Indians.¹⁴¹

Spirit experiences have changed the mission theology and practice of Pentecostals in Rajasthan just as they did in the Acts community. Like the Jewish apostles who were motivated by the Spirit experiences to develop a missiology that accommodates Gentiles also, many south Indian pastors began their ministry among south Indians only, but later became involved in the mission among Rajasthanis because of the Spirit’s intervention. For example, John said that his focus was only people from Kerala and Tamil Nadu, as he was not interested in cross-cultural mission, but later he had a dream that his church is ‘full of people wearing different types of dresses in various colours.’ He interpreted that the Holy Spirit wanted him to have a multi-cultural ministry, and so he started to learn Hindi, and subsequently form a multicultural ministry.¹⁴²

¹³⁹ Daniel, interview by author, Udaipur, Rajasthan, 22 May 2006.

¹⁴⁰ Pseudonym.

¹⁴¹ He shared this with me when I was invited to give a Christmas message in their church on 25 December 2001. Later he became a constant supporter of the south Indian crusade evangelist D.G.S. Dinakaran due to his charismatic ministry. Dinakaran died in 2008.

¹⁴² John (pseudonym), interview by author, Ajmer, Rajasthan, 19 May 2005.

As the early community in Acts expanded its mission beyond the border of Palestine, Pentecostals expanded their local mission after the Spirit's intervention. Initially, many leaders did not have a vision to go beyond the border of Rajasthan and concentrated on Rajasthan in their missionary activities. However, the intervention of the Spirit has expanded their mission beyond Rajasthan. The story of RPC shows the way a local mission first became a national mission and then a trans-national one. Although it began as a single church under Thomas Mathews, RPC has become a leading indigenous organization with a new name, FFCI. The very title RPC shows that he had no vision of crossing the border of Rajasthan. He said that he received instructions from the Holy Spirit in December 1980, when, along with his co-worker Tajendra, he was fasting and praying in the village of Pai.¹⁴³ The Holy Spirit directed him to Rev.3:8,¹⁴⁴ a message to the church in Philadelphia. Mathews felt that the Spirit wanted him to expand his ministry and consequently, he expanded their ministry to Gujarat and Maharashtra, and later to other Indian states as well as Bhutan, as discussed in chapter three.¹⁴⁵ Pathras Masih also shared a similar Spirit intervention which prompted him to expand his mission beyond the border of Rajasthan to MP and Gujarat.¹⁴⁶

As the Spirit had a role in resolving the local-global tension in Acts community, He had a role in dealing with similar tension in Rajasthan. As the Spirit experiences in other communities beyond the border of Palestine influenced the

¹⁴³ For further details, see Thonnakkal, *Marubhoomiyile Aposthalan*, 163-64; Thollander, *He Saw a Man*, 85-86; Philip, 'Thomas Mathews Revolution,' 21. However, RPC still keeps the same name as the mother church in Udaipur, but all other churches are given the title FFCI.

¹⁴⁴ 'See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it.' (NKJV).

¹⁴⁵ See p.259.

¹⁴⁶ Pathras Masih, interview, 11 May 2006.

Jerusalem community, the local Pentecostal communities were encouraged to make changes because of the Spirit experiences in other Pentecostal communities around the globe. As discussed in chapter five, there exists a tension between the younger and older generation in the church due to the influence of global Pentecostalism on the local. However, the Spirit experiences silence the community in diverse ways. For example, in the FFCI church at Kherwara, most old people were not interested in the western style of preaching, music and worship. However, as mentioned in chapter five,¹⁴⁷ when they watch the DVDs of preaching, worship and music of their counterparts around the globe they are motivated to make necessary changes. At the same time the spiritual progress as well as the Spirit experiences of young people in the church pacifies them and has helped them to adjust accordingly.¹⁴⁸

As Paul's decision to use his right to appeal to Caesar was in accordance with the Spirit's guidance, the incidents related to Pathras Masih's involvement in Human Rights activities show the way the Spirit gives guidance on socio-political issues. Pathras said that he was against socio-political activities by Pentecostals as he thought that such involvement was sinful. However, when local Christians were attacked Pathras approached the Police Superintendent of Banaswara, but he was told that it was beyond the control of the police. He was frustrated by this, but the Spirit gave him guidance to approach the Minority Commission, and later the Human Rights Commission. Then a team of PUCL visited the religiously tense places in Banaswara, and that was how he became convinced that his decision to

¹⁴⁷ See p.248.

¹⁴⁸ That is why the old people allow the young people in the church to have modern style of worship along with the local pattern.

use his minority and civil rights was in accordance with the Spirit, and subsequently he began his active involvement with the PUCL.¹⁴⁹

In brief, Spirit experiences have had a significant place in the theological process of the Pentecostal community in Rajasthan as they did in the primitive Christian community. The Pentecostal theology of persecution, culture, mission and socio-political issues were formulated or reformulated after Spirit encounters. The direct intervention of the Spirit in terms of voices, dreams, prophetic utterances, and guidance through the Scripture has influenced the decisions, thinking and position of Pentecostals in Rajasthan. Although contemporary Pentecostals cannot expect the same situations that were faced by the early Christians in their mission the underlying principle is that when Pentecostals face changing situations, they can be directed by the Spirit in their mission theology and practice. They consciously and unconsciously make necessary adjustments in their beliefs and practice in response to changing contexts and under the guidance of the Spirit. This is not to argue that always on all occasions the Spirit intervenes, but there is a significant place for Spirit experiences in the beliefs and practices (in the theological process) of Pentecostals in Rajasthan.

Thus, this reflection from both the Acts community as well as the Pentecostal community in Rajasthan makes the dynamic nature of a contextual missiology of the Spirit more clear: in accordance with the context and under the guidance of the Spirit; when confused by the context, then directed by the Spirit; when challenged

¹⁴⁹ Pathras Masih, interview, 11 May 2006.

by the context, then moved by the Spirit; when tensioned by the context, then led by the Spirit; when confronted by the context, then controlled by the Spirit; when embattled by the context, then energized by the Spirit; when threatened by the context, then strengthened by the Spirit.

6.3. Contextual Features

The current study of Pentecostalism in Rajasthan indicates that contextual missiology of the Spirit has certain distinctive characteristics. In the light of the study some significant contextual features will be discussed.

6.3.1. Glocal Missiology

Contextual missiology of the Spirit has the characteristic to be a glocal missiology as it takes the local-global tension into account seriously. The sociologist Roland Robertson coined the term *glocalization* to refer to the way in which the global and the local intertwine. However, he acknowledges that *glocalize* is a term which was developed in particular reference to marketing issues in Japan in the context of the general problem of the relationship between the universal and the particular. *Glocalization* best illustrates the ‘attempts to bring the global, the macroscopic aspect of contemporary life, into conjunction with the local, the microscopic side of life....’ According to Robertson, *glocalization* seriously downplays the ‘increasingly complex relationship between ‘the local’ and ‘the global.’¹⁵⁰ Bruce Mazlish observes that *glocalization* is a complicated process, as ‘the local affects the global, and the global, the local, and back and forth in a constant

¹⁵⁰ Roland Robertson, *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture* (London: Sage Publications, 1992), 174.

...dynamic.’¹⁵¹ On the other hand, *glocalization* helps people to deal with the global – local tension. In his book *The World is Flat*, Thomas Friedman, a leading economist, discusses how the internet and TV Channels encourage *glocalization*, such as encouraging people to setup websites and international channels in their native language. According to him, through *glocalization*, the local culture easily ‘absorbs foreign ideas and global best practices and melds’ them with its own tradition.¹⁵²

In the contemporary world, the local- global distance is shrinking, and so finding cultural or local specifics has become a daunting task. Schreiter’s comment on *glocalization* is very relevant to understanding the relationship between the local-global in contemporary Pentecostalism:

the important moment for cultural (and theological) production becomes the line of encounter between the global and the local, where the two come up against each other ... some of the most salient features in religion and theology today can be best be described from the vantage point of the glocal. Neither the global homogenizing forces nor the local forms of accommodation and resistance can themselves provide an adequate explanation of these phenomena. It is precisely in their interaction that one comes to understand what is happening.¹⁵³

Thus, there is a greater interrelationship and sense of ‘give and take’ between global and local. In his article on ‘Globalization, Glocalization and Mission,’

¹⁵¹ Bruce Mazlish, *The New Global History* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 67.

¹⁵² Thomas L. Friedman, *The World is Flat: The Globalized World in the Twenty-First Century* (London: Penguin Books, 2006), 422. He also refers to *glocalization* as ‘globalization of the local.’ For more details of the discussion, see pp. 420-26 & pp. 477-88.

¹⁵³ Robert Schreiter, *The New Catholicity: Theology between the Local and the Global* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1997), 12.

Jonathan Ingleby discusses the significance of using the concept of *glocalization* in mission. He talks about ‘hybrid identity,’ a new form of identity as a cultural consequence of the ‘clash between global and local.’ This is a ‘phenomenon which has produced glocalization, a culture which is both global and local at the same time. People continue to draw identity from their locality and its traditions but are also keen to take advantage of new global opportunities, and are often quite creative in combining the two.’ As the contemporary mixed situations are ‘characterized by hybridity and confusion of identities,’ ‘we are becoming an increasingly hybrid world.’ Therefore, he argues that ‘mission cannot afford to ignore the fact’ of *glocalization*.¹⁵⁴ More than others, Pentecostals seem to fit this category as their theology is flexible enough to be adaptable to the local context and at the same time draws upon influences from the global face of the movement.

As seen in the current study, there is a strong interconnection and interaction between global Pentecostalism and local Pentecostalism. As it is a common characteristic of Pentecostalism, the impact and influence of global Pentecostalism on the local is likely to increase. Therefore, a contemporary Pentecostal missiology should have a *glocal* nature. As discussed in chapter five, in order to deal with the global impact on local Pentecostalism in Rajasthan, many global features of the movement have been used with a local flavour and colour. *Glocalization* serves as a bridge allowing local followers of Pentecostalism to be a part of the global movement. Thus, it appears that the Pentecostal nature reveals that a contemporary Pentecostal missiology demands a *glocal* missiology which

¹⁵⁴ Jonathan Ingleby, ‘Globalisation, Glocalisation and Mission,’ *Transformation* 23, no.1 (January 2006): 50.

will take into account the global impact as well as the particularity of the local. It is hard for Pentecostal missiology to be restricted only to a particular context as there are interconnections between Pentecostals at a global level.

Pentecostalism can be understood as a religion of connection as Pentecostals are connected to the Holy Spirit and through the Spirit with others. Spirit experiences, like prophecy, healing, exorcism, and other signs and wonders connect them to the needs of the people, and these needs are met through the power of the Spirit. The Spirit enables Pentecostals to receive prophetic insights about natural calamities like earthquakes, and other national and global issues.¹⁵⁵ Thus Pentecostalism, as a religion of connection, links the Spirit to local and global communities, so a contemporary Pentecostal theology of mission should not only consider the local context, but also take account of what is happening around the world.

There is tremendous interconnectivity between local Pentecostals and the global Pentecostal movement. For example, it is significant that despite strong opposition from Hindu militant groups, and consequently from the government, Indian Charismatics prefer well-known foreign tele-evangelists such as Benny Hinn, Roger Hosma, or Reinhard Bonnke to be the chief preachers in their mass gatherings.¹⁵⁶ However, there are a number of local Indian evangelists with a preaching style similar to their global counterparts. They preach in local

¹⁵⁵ A prophetic utterance was given in Rajasthan on 23 December 2000 by a prophet regarding the fall of the twin towers in New York, and the congregation was encouraged to pray. The prophet said that he saw two huge buildings in a city near-by a sea shore were on fire.

¹⁵⁶ For example, Reinhard Bonnke was the chief guest speaker at the recent Good News Festival (a mass evangelistic crusade) organized in Kerala from 10-13 April 2008. Many Pentecostals believe that this attracted the largest Christian gathering in Kerala.

languages, but use similar terminology and adopt similar practices like slaying in the Spirit, emphasize healing and deliverance, promote the ‘prosperity gospel,’ and use mass media like television to communicate their message. Thus, these strong parallels with other Pentecostals from around the globe reveal the aspect of glocalization in the theology and practices of contemporary Pentecostals.

6.3.2. Ecumenical Missiology

As seen in chapter three, Charismatic experiences have played a vital place in promoting ecumenical relationships between different sectors of Christianity. Therefore, contemporary Pentecostal missiology must be ecumenical in nature. As Spirit experiences unite people from different denominations, they can stand together to achieve a common mission. According to Athyal, because of the increased ‘awareness of Cathartic (emotional release) element ... there are shifts taking place through conscious and unconscious mutual influence between Pentecostal and traditional churches.’ As a result, the feeling of oneness and unity with other members of the Christian community is more visible in Indian Charismatic circles. Athyal hopes that the ‘new spirit of friendship and acceptance’ between Pentecostals and non-Pentecostals is a positive development in the life of the church, as this would give a ‘new dimension to its witness in India.’¹⁵⁷ Despite the growth in number of denominations, denominational distance seems to be shrinking in contemporary Rajasthan as in many other parts of the world.

¹⁵⁷ Athyal, *Relevant Patterns*, 208-10.

Anderson has observed that the definition of Pentecostalism is a key to understanding the ecumenicity of the movement. According to him, ‘adopting an inclusive definition of “Pentecostal/Charismatic” will maximize the opportunities for ecumenism.’¹⁵⁸ As stated in chapter one, the current study has adopted an inclusive definition of Pentecostalism because of the growing ecumenical trend that is taking place in Rajasthan due to the impact of Charismatic experiences among various segments of Christianity. Like Anderson, Hollenweger has also insisted on the ecumenical implications of the Pentecostal Movement by referring to the example of its founding fathers, such as William Seymour, Jonathan Paul and Alexander Boddy, who believed in the international and ecumenical nature of the Pentecostal experience.¹⁵⁹ While discussing Pentecostals and ecumenism, Cecil Robeck observes that although the earlier leaders of the movement believed that ‘Christian unity might be their ultimate gift to the church,’ in subsequent years the movement lost this vision.¹⁶⁰

At the same time, it appears from Pentecostal spirituality that Pentecostal theology is inherently ecumenical because it embraces diverse components of human life. For example, a total participation of body, mind and spirit is emphasized in Pentecostal worship, and the Pentecostal message includes various aspects of life like spiritual, physical and financial. The experience of the Spirit that Pentecostal theology and practice advocates to encompass all aspects of human life has enormous ecumenical potential. While discussing the strength of Pentecostal

¹⁵⁸ Allan H. Anderson, ‘Diversity in the Definition of “Pentecostal Charismatic” and Its Ecumenical Implications,’ *Mission Studies* 19/2, no. 38 (2002): 48.

¹⁵⁹ Anderson, ‘Diversity in the Definition,’ 48. Also see Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 334-49.

¹⁶⁰ Cecil M. Robeck, Jr., ‘Pentecostals and Ecumenism in a Pluralistic World,’ in *Globalization of Pentecostalism*, 340.

theology in terms of ecumenicity, Frank Macchia says that the ‘holistic spirituality that proceeds from an integration of body and soul, nature and spirit, or society and person, ...may explain the potential ecumenical significance of the movement.’¹⁶¹ Therefore, a contextual Pentecostal missiology is ecumenical in nature.

The current research on Pentecostalism in Rajasthan indicates that there are at least three phases of ecumenicity taking place at the moment. The first one is the partnership between various local Pentecostal churches. As mentioned in chapter three, there is an increasing awareness of the need for more partnership, and there are efforts going on in this direction. According to Oborji, ‘in this age of globalization and interculturality it is necessary to encourage an exchange of opinions and information between local churches on theological and pastoral levels.’¹⁶² Despite the proliferation of denominations, there is a growing understanding between various churches at the grass roots level, at least in certain places. Macchia emphasises the need for ‘intra-Pentecostal discussion’ on various conflicting issues.¹⁶³ Therefore, a contemporary missiology should take into consideration the need for local partnership. The Pentecostal experience is the unifying factor in this regard.

However, there needs to be cooperation between Pentecostals and neo-Pentecostals in Rajasthan. As seen in chapter three, the division between classical

¹⁶¹ Frank D. Macchia, ‘The Struggle for Global Witness: Shifting Paradigms in Pentecostal Theology,’ in *Globalization of Pentecostalism*, 25.

¹⁶² Oborji, *Concepts of Mission*, 26.

¹⁶³ Macchia, ‘Struggle for Global Witness,’ 25.

and neo-Pentecostals is diminishing. There is no doubt that the missionary task has a vital role in uniting them in this regard. Several classical Pentecostals have reformulated their theology and practice. The missionary task has caused them to become more of a Rajasthani movement.

The second phase is the ecumenical fellowship with other segments of Christianity. Chapter three shows that the Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal divide is waning because of the attempts to unite at the grass roots level. The persecution factor has played a significant role in this and united public meetings and rallies have often followed episodes of persecution. These are indications of the growing need for partnership in the present hostile context.

A careful analysis shows that Charismatic experiences are another reason for ecumenical initiatives. Many non-Pentecostal churches have been influenced by Spirit experiences like speaking in tongues, spontaneous worship, healing and exorcism, as well as the narrative theology and oral liturgy of Pentecostalism. Several mainline churches have realized the significance of reviving existing churches if they are to survive. As Paul Hiebert said, 'any long-range vision for missions must include not only the planting of new churches, but also the renewal of old ones. The former without the latter eventually leads only to lands full of dead and dying churches.'¹⁶⁴ The charismatic impact on non-Pentecostal churches

¹⁶⁴ Paul G. Hiebert, 'Missions and the Renewal of the Church,' in *Exploring Church Growth*, ed. Wilbert R. Shenk (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1983), 157.

in Rajasthan is on the rise, and so independent Bible study and prayer groups coexist in tension within the traditional churches.¹⁶⁵

The third ecumenical phase is the network that exists between Pentecostals around the globe. As mentioned in chapter five, there are a number of experts from around the world helping Pentecostals in Rajasthan in their missionary training and leadership programmes as well as in their administration. For example, in 2003 a team from Singapore came to help revamp the administrative system of the NMM.¹⁶⁶ Many, like the Latin American missiologist Samuel Escobar, emphasise the need for a global network in mission, not with the intention of encouraging western imperialism, but rather seeing the western world as an equally potential mission field. Therefore, missionaries from the Majority World can be involved in mission work in the West, a ‘mission in reverse.’¹⁶⁷ The underlying idea here is mission in global partnership. Escobar further affirms that ‘global partnership of churches will be indispensable for mission in the twenty-first century.’¹⁶⁸

One of the most significant strengths of a mission theology is its impulse for unity. The missionary spirit and enthusiasm carries with it a call for ecumenicity. This was illustrated at the Edinburgh Conference in 1910. As mentioned earlier, the main concern of the conference was world evangelization, and it subsequently strengthened Christian unity. Thangaraj comments that the global invitation to

¹⁶⁵ However, this also causes divisions.

¹⁶⁶ I was one of the seven members of the NMM team who received such training for administration.

¹⁶⁷ Samuel Escobar, *The New Global Mission: The Gospel from Everywhere to Everyone* (Illinois: IVP, 2003), 162.

¹⁶⁸ Escobar, *New Global Mission*, 164.

join in the task of world evangelization was a plea for unity and it ‘strengthened the ecumenical movement and ultimately led to the formation of the World Council of Churches’ (WCC) in 1948. According to him, this call for unity is ‘the most significant legacy of Edinburgh 1910.’¹⁶⁹ Despite the subsequent sectarian separation of Pentecostals, the contribution of early Pentecostalism towards the ecumenicity of Christianity cannot be ignored. Common Spirit experiences united people from various denominations to stand for the common task of missionary enterprise. This was true in the early period of Pentecostalism in India also. As discussed earlier, people from various revival centres went to several parts of the nation with the vision of proclaiming the Christian message to all. The same was true in the history of Pentecostalism in Rajasthan when Pentecostal missionaries from other states came with a mission to reach the unreached.

At the same time, it is observed that in most Christian movements internal crises have been the greatest hindrances, and this is true of Pentecostalism in Rajasthan as seen in chapter five. In his survey of the Christian movement in Asia, Sam Moffet found that the greatest obstacles to mission were not from outside the church, but from within. Therefore, he asserts that ‘in Asia, as everywhere, Christians have always been their own worst enemies.’¹⁷⁰ Sri Lankan theologian, Vinoth Ramachandra, argues that ‘authentic witness can only be ecumenical witness.’ According to him, the growing unity of people from all backgrounds

¹⁶⁹ Thangaraj, *Common Task*, 11.

¹⁷⁰ Samuel Hugh Moffett, *A History of Christianity in Asia: Beginnings to 1500*, vol.1, rev. ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1998), 506.

will ‘convince sceptics ... that Christians have been caught up into the eternal love of the Father for his unique Son.’¹⁷¹

The above discussion leads to the conclusion that there are various factors that have brought Christians together in Rajasthan. The persecution factor has drawn people from all segments of Christianity to rally against the atrocities committed against them. The missionary task motivates people to stand for a common cause. Spirit experiences join people’s hearts and cause them to stand before God in worship, while disregarding all their differences under the guidance of the Spirit. Therefore, a contemporary contextual missiology must be an ecumenical missiology.

6.3.3. Transformational Missiology

Another important feature of contextual missiology of the Spirit is that it considers spiritual as well as socio-political transformation. Although Pentecostals engage in both, spiritual transformation of individuals and society is given primary focus in Pentecostal mission. Early Pentecostals had a missiology that gave priority to evangelism. There is no doubt that such ‘prioritism for evangelism’ is evident in Pentecostal mission from its very inception. For Pentecostals, what matters most is people coming to the saving knowledge of Christ. Such a plea was evident in the voices of its founding figures like William Seymour, who was reported to have admonished the people after experiencing the revival: ‘Now, do not go from this meeting and talk about tongues, but try to get

¹⁷¹ Vinoth Ramachandra, *The Recovery of Mission: Beyond the Pluralist Paradigm* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1996), 276.

people saved.’¹⁷² As seen in chapters three and five the story of Pentecostals in Rajasthan shows the spiritual dimension of the conversion of individuals, and also the paramount importance of spirituality for Pentecostals. While discussing the problem of conversion in the Indian context, S. Kim observes that ‘Christians both serve this transforming mission of God and are also transformed by it. The testimonies of individuals and communities who have experienced this transformation cannot just be dismissed as socio-political movements or the results of missionary “campaigns.”’¹⁷³

There is a common assumption that until recently, Pentecostals have shown no interest in the socio-political aspects of life. It is argued that they gave little attention to ‘this-worldly aspects’ of life as they claim to be an ‘other-worldly movement.’ The expectation of the imminent return of Jesus was a major reason for such an attitude.¹⁷⁴ The tension between evangelism and social mission is apparent throughout the history of the movement as there was an ‘eschatological restriction’ on socio-political issues. Miller and Yamamori observe that although Pentecostals practice ‘informal expressions of charity,’ like helping out fellow believers in need or even people of other faiths, ‘their focus on the imminent return of Christ typically restricts them from engaging in more programmatic and long-term expressions of Christian social involvement.’¹⁷⁵ However, in reality this is not the focus of most Pentecostals globally today and so more of them have

¹⁷² McClung, ‘Try to Get People,’ 35.

¹⁷³ S. Kim, *In Search of Identity*, 198.

¹⁷⁴ For more details of this discussion, see Miller and Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism*, 20-22; Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *Toward a Pneumatological Theology: Pentecostal and Ecumenical Perspectives on Ecclesiology, Soteriology and Theology of Mission*, ed. Amos Yong (Lanham/New York/Oxford: University Press of America, 2002), 179-81.

¹⁷⁵ Miller and Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism*, 31.

become involved in various social initiatives. According to Dempster, ‘social programs designed to care for the welfare of the poor and the oppressed as well as to change unjust social conditions are fast becoming a hallmark of Pentecostal church ministry....’¹⁷⁶

Changing contemporary situations have caused Pentecostal people to realize the importance of social aspects of mission. This is illustrated in the change in attitude of classical Pentecostals in Kerala.¹⁷⁷ In the first Malayalam Pentecostal weekly, Thomas Vadakkekuttu, who serves as the President of the Pentecostal Council of India (PCI), has criticized classical Pentecostals for not being interested in social development, specifically in terms of educational institutions. In the wake of the appointment of new leadership in the IPCoG in 2007, he urged the leaders to invest in better infrastructure and educational institutions rather than only in missionary training institutions.¹⁷⁸ The recent announcement by the IPC leadership about a new medical college in Kerala is regarded as a response to this call by many followers of the movement.¹⁷⁹

As Dempster has noted, contemporary Pentecostals have realized that social engagement is needed to authenticate the evangelistic efforts of the church so that

¹⁷⁶ M.A. Dempster, ‘Evangelism, Social Concern, and the Kingdom of God,’ in *Called and Empowered*, 22. For a detailed discussion of Pentecostal social engagement, see Miller and Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism*; Donald E. Miller, ‘Pentecostalism and Social Transformation,’ in *The Azusa Street and Its Legacy*, ed. Harold Hunter D. and Cecil M. Robeck Jr. (Cleveland, TN: Pathway, 2006), 335-48.

¹⁷⁷ Classical Pentecostals in Kerala are one of the Pentecostal groups in India who are resistant to change.

¹⁷⁸ Thomas Vadakkekuttu, ‘Dooradarsanam’ [Foresight], *Good News Weekly* 29, no. 37 (2006): 10.

¹⁷⁹ *Good News Weekly*, 01 February (2008): 1.

it is seen as practising what it preaches.¹⁸⁰ Therefore, one of the paradigm shifts in contemporary Pentecostal mission is its interest in socio-political issues. Pentecostals too have realized that they cannot continue a ‘social quietism,’ if they are to develop a ‘Pentecostal model of praxis.’¹⁸¹ They feel the need to participate in the struggles of humanity, and they have begun to redefine their means. The result is a paradigm shift from a ‘partial’ to a ‘full involvement’ in the crisis of communities.

On the other hand, many Pentecostals still prefer to play safe by distancing themselves from politics. In her discussion over the question of whether political involvement is an integral part of the Charismatic movement, Margaret Poloma concludes that ‘Charismatic politics is an ambiguous phenomenon, and it is difficult to predict the direction it will take,’ as it depends ‘more on circumstances, including the social status of adherents.’ According to her, ‘perhaps those who remain apolitical but involved in non-political social action are on the safest ground in terms of Christian theology.’¹⁸² However, the Argentinean systematic theologian Jose Miguez Bonino claims that being ‘free of political and ideological commitment is a false paradise which does not exist.’ He argues that the church always plays a role in society to favour one group or another in the struggle. ‘... We will either support the continuation of oppression or the struggle for liberation. We will support one or the other by the way we teach, worship, preach, use our money, speak or remain silent. There is no third

¹⁸⁰ Dempster, ‘Pentecostal Social Concern,’ 129.

¹⁸¹ Jackie David Johns, ‘Yielding to the Spirit,’ in *Globalization of Pentecostalism*, 70.

¹⁸² Margaret Poloma, *The Charismatic Movement: Is there a New Pentecost?* Social Movements Past and Present Series (Boston, Massachusetts: Twayne Publishers, 1982), 224.

possibility.¹⁸³ Bosch gives a fitting conclusion to the above discussion. According to him, ‘neither a secularized church (that is, a church which concerns itself only with this-worldly activities and interests) nor a separatist church (that is, a church which involves itself only in soul-saving and preparation of converts for the hereafter) can faithfully articulate the *missio Deo*.’¹⁸⁴

However, there are many others, like Kärkkäinen, who argue that the ‘common criticism against Pentecostal mission of its alleged lack of social concern’ is only a ‘one-sided understanding’ due to a ‘persistent misunderstanding among observers of Pentecostalism.’¹⁸⁵ From his extensive research on Latin American Pentecostalism, Douglas Petersen claims that ‘Pentecostals are not suggesting a short-circuiting reality in the realm of social concern’, rather they are committed to transformation. At the same time he urges that ‘Pentecostals, in addition to their social welfare activities must also ...provide viable alternatives that will affect significant change in the social structures.’¹⁸⁶ Nevertheless, Petersen identifies another reason for Pentecostal aversion to political involvement. According to him, ‘Pentecostals have seldom been involved in political action because they have had little hope that a revolutionary change of government would necessarily bring change to the social structure.’ He states that ‘Pentecostals have demonstrated social services instead of political engagement.’ The lack of political involvement by Pentecostals should not be taken as an indication that

¹⁸³ Jose Miguez Bonino, ‘The Present Crisis in Missions,’ in *Crucial Issues in Mission Today*, Mission Trends No. 1, ed. Gerald H. Anderson and Thomas F. Stransky C.S.P. (New York/Grand Rapids: Paulist Press, Eerdmans, 1974), 40-41.

¹⁸⁴ Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 11.

¹⁸⁵ Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatological Theology*, 179. For more details of the claim he makes, see pp. 179-90.

¹⁸⁶ Douglas Petersen, *Not by Might nor by Power: A Pentecostal Theology of Social Concern in Latin America* (Oxford: Regnum, 1996), 146.

they are not interested in social justice, or that they make no contribution to politics. However, as Petersen argues, Pentecostals construct ‘alternative instruments of social justice:’

Social action and political action have become almost interchangeable terms in some circles of Christian social ethics. The definition of social concern that includes only political, state and civil categories cannot capture other equally important areas of social concern. Political involvement is only one alternative among several options of social action to institute social change.¹⁸⁷

In his latest work, ‘Pentecostalism and Political Theology,’ Yong also discusses that although not in any conventional sense, but as an indirect ‘suggestive for an alternative politics’ through preaching, spiritual warfare prayer, and rites of exorcism ‘Pentecostalism has forged an alternative *civitas* in the midst of an existing political order.’¹⁸⁸

Many scholars have discussed the intrinsic strength of Pentecostal theology for social transformation. As Hollenweger states, Pentecostal theology is ‘a theology on the move, whose character has been more experiential than cognitive, more activist than reflective.’¹⁸⁹ Macchia comments that ‘there is potential in Pentecostalism’ to empower God’s people to be ‘a prophetic movement for both personal and social liberation.’¹⁹⁰ According to Miller and Yamamori, ‘Pentecostalism has the potential to be an agent of social transformation.’ They identify three major ways that reflect Pentecostalism’s potential for

¹⁸⁷ Petersen, *Not by Might*, 141, 231.

¹⁸⁸ Amos Yong, ‘Pentecostalism and Political Theology.’ The Cadbury Lectures 2009. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010 [forthcoming].

¹⁸⁹ Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 207.

¹⁹⁰ Macchia, ‘Struggle for Global Witness,’ 16.

transformation. First, it has the ‘potential to blunt the pain of poverty and human rights violations by promising people a better life in the hereafter.’ Second, Pentecostalism has ‘an incremental impact on people’s social welfare,’ as there is ‘substantial evidence for the “social uplift” associated with Pentecostalism.’ They have a ‘competitive economic advantage over their neighbours because of their moral prescriptions against alcohol, drugs, gambling and womanizing.’¹⁹¹ Third, Pentecostalism focuses on human rights, and believes that everyone is created in the image of God, and so ‘all people have equal value in God’s sight.’ Pentecostalism is undoubtedly ‘a religion of the people,’ as every member has ‘the right to interpret the scripture themselves,’ everybody has equal access to God without the need of a mediator, and everybody can receive the Spirit baptism and other Charismatic gifts of the Spirit without any reservation.¹⁹²

Another potential of Pentecostalism, as Dempster observes, is that it is ‘capable of integrating programs of evangelism and social concern into a unified effort in fulfilling the church’s global mission.’ He argues that ‘the rapidly changing social face of Pentecostalism intensifies the need for a theology’ that can ‘inspire and direct the church’s moral engagement with the society without diminishing the church’s historic commitment to evangelism.’¹⁹³ Similarly, Kärkkäinen claims that ‘although Pentecostal mission is focused on evangelism, it is not to the exclusion of social concern.’¹⁹⁴ The current study shows that Pentecostals in Rajasthan have begun to involve themselves in human rights activities and that local tribal

¹⁹¹ A.T. Cherian’s study on the Christian Bhils in Rajasthan shows that this argument is true of Rajasthan. For more details, see Cherian, ‘Contribution of Churches,’ 162-68.

¹⁹² Miller and Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism*, 32-33.

¹⁹³ Dempster, ‘Evangelism, Social Concern,’ 22-23.

¹⁹⁴ Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatological Theology*, 180.

Pentecostals are actively engaged in the socio-political empowerment of their community by forming various tribal welfare societies alongside their evangelistic activities, as discussed in chapter five. However, for Pentecostals, as Philip Hefner states, ‘transformation in the here and now is, strictly speaking, the work of the Holy Spirit.’¹⁹⁵ As contextual missiology is a pneumatocentric theology, it offers the possibility of transformation. This multi-faceted transformation, which includes socio-political aspects, has the potential to construct ‘alternative systems of justice.’¹⁹⁶

However, this does not mean that Pentecostals have a fully developed theology to promote transformational mission. On the other hand, as Samuel Solivan observes, what is happening among Pentecostals today is ‘indicative of the slow journey toward community and social action, and is ‘just an initial venture into a more explicit, self-critical and reflective commitment to the mission of the church in the world.... They are moves in the right direction because they witness to the Spirit’s leading into the world.’¹⁹⁷ Dempster’s observation of Pentecostal social concern is true in the context of Rajasthan:

... current engagement in social ministry among Pentecostals seems to depend more on the individual conscience of influential leaders and the time-bound exigencies of politics and culture than on broadly-shared theological agreements concerning the nature of the church and its moral mission in society. The

¹⁹⁵ Philip Hefner, ‘Transformation as Mission,’ in *For All People: Global Theologies in Contexts: Essays in Honour of Viggo Mortensen*, ed. Pedersen Else Marie Wiberg, Holger Lam, and Peter Lodberg (Grand Rapids, 2002), 179.

¹⁹⁶ Dempster refers to various church social programs, and, according to him, their function is to develop ‘alternative systems of justice.’ For more discussion, see, Dempster, ‘Evangelism, Social Concern,’ 35-37.

¹⁹⁷ Samuel Solivan, *The Spirit, Pathos and Liberation: Toward an Hispanic Pentecostal Theology* JPTS Series, 14 (Sheffield: SAP, 1998), 145.

Pentecostal community is still sorely in need of social ethic to inspire, direct and validate its ministry of promoting and instituting social justice.¹⁹⁸

6.3.4. Public Missiology

One of the most significant features of contextual missiology of the Spirit is its public nature. As Thangaraj has observed, ‘mission’ is no more a private word, but a ‘public word.’¹⁹⁹ Therefore, in the contemporary world the term ‘mission’ itself contains a public element. A contextual missiology of the Spirit takes people into consideration, and so it includes a focus on the well-being of people. As seen in chapter three, when Pentecostals began to engage with various public situations, they developed a quest for the common good, and as a result, they began to adapt their mission theology and practice under the guidance with the Spirit.

There are several theologians, like Jürgen Moltmann, one of the most influential theologians of the twentieth century, who highlight the significance of public theology today. According to him, ‘there is no Christian identity without public relevance, and no public relevance without theology’s Christian identity.’²⁰⁰ He claims that ‘its subject alone necessarily makes Christian theology a *theologia publica*, public theology. It gets involved in the public affairs of society. It thinks about what is of general concern in the light of hope in Christ for the kingdom of

¹⁹⁸ Dempster, ‘Pentecostal Social Concern,’ 129.

¹⁹⁹ Thangaraj, *Common Task*, 27.

²⁰⁰ Jürgen Moltmann, *God for a Secular Society: The Public Relevance of Theology* (London: SCM Press, 1999), 1.

God.’²⁰¹ In his discussion of theology in public from a South African context, John W. De Gruchy’s observes:

There are two diametrically opposing temptations facing theologians who engage the public sphere. The first is the temptation to convince ourselves that theology makes more of a contribution and difference than it does; the second is to underestimate the significance of its role. Both temptations arise out of a misunderstanding of the task of theology in public life.²⁰²

He believes confidently that theology can make a real contribution when ‘rightly pursued within public life.’²⁰³ However, he failed to explain the task of theology in public life in clear terms.

In the context of religious fundamentalism and the minority crisis in India, M.T. Cherian calls for a public theology that should emerge ‘out of the day-to-day expression of the public.’ He urges that the church should ‘identify various public spheres’ for the well-being of the society, and thus he discusses ‘religious public,’ ‘political public,’ ‘academic public,’ ‘economic public,’ professional public (‘public related to professional activities and institutions like medicine, education and management’), and ‘legal public.’²⁰⁴ However, Pentecostals may not be so comfortable with his idea of public theology, which he states ‘emerges from the

²⁰¹ Moltmann, *God for a Secular Society*, 1.

²⁰² John W. De Gruchy, ‘From Political to Public Theologies: The Role of Theology in Public Life in South Africa,’ in *Public Theology for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. William F. Storrar and Andrew R. Morton (London: T & T Clark, 2004), 45. De Gruchy argues that although ‘public theology’ is an equivalent term to ‘political theology’ of the 1960s, it is different in character. ‘Political theology originally referred to those theologies in Europe that gave legitimacy to the state and its claims within the context of Christendom. This understanding prevailed well into the second half of the twentieth century when political theology was radically reconstructed by Johannes Baptist Metz and Jurgen Moltmann to mean precisely the opposite’ (p. 47).

²⁰³ Gruchy, ‘From Political to Public Theologies,’ 45.

²⁰⁴ For a detailed discussion, see M.T. Cherian, *Hindutva Agenda and Minority Rights*, 302-07. He suggests that ‘theology emerges from the discourse of and with the public and not necessarily from the religious community only but from various groups or secular public.’ (See p.302).

open social context of the common public and ... acknowledges the freedom and the liberty of self determination of individuals to reform or reaffirm their religions or to change from one religion to another or to stay without a religion.’ He further suggests that ‘these inter-community dialogues and discussions can lead to the formulation of a public theology that is a theology emerging from, for and by the civil public, the common people.’²⁰⁵

Sauter Gerhard provides us with another version of public theology. In his discussion of public theology within the Hungarian Protestant context, he equates it with the ‘service of theology’, by which he means that ‘theology serves the public domain indirectly rather than acting as a “theology of service”- a theology that claims to be an affirmation of political goals that are underlined by motivations derived from Christian moral traditions.’²⁰⁶ He rejects any public theology outside the church, rather arguing that ‘theology must serve the church preparing for dialogue with other members of the society to give account of our hope if we are asked for its reason (I Pet. 3:15).’²⁰⁷

Pentecostal mission theology in Rajasthan is similar to Gerhard’s concept of public theology, which equips the church to serve the public in different ways. Here, the meaning of public mission is restricted to mission of public interest, of common benefit and of the well-being of the society. The public nature of Pentecostal theology is clear from its insistence that Charismatic gifts as well as

²⁰⁵ Cherian, *Hindutva Agenda and Minority Rights*, 309-11.

²⁰⁶ Gerhard Sauter, *Protestant Theology at the Crossroads: How to Face the Crucial Tasks for Theology in the Twenty-First Century* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 151.

²⁰⁷ Sauter, *Protestant Theology*, 165.

ministerial gifts are open to all. Moreover, several areas of mission, which Pentecostals have been involved in, show that they are giving space to the public. Pentecostal mission includes many elements which serve the public good. For example, the Pentecostal concern for healing is a matter of public interest. There are a number of examples of people suffering with chronic diseases being healed through the Pentecostal mission of healing. As seen in chapter three, there have been many cases where poor tribal people who could not afford to go to hospital have been healed through Pentecostal prayer free of charge. The incident that took place during the *Masih Mela* at Kherwara in 2004 further explains this. When this meeting was disrupted by militant Hindutva groups, as discussed in chapter five, Bhim,²⁰⁸ a former Hindutva proponent, who was converted to Christianity, asked the opponents, ‘what is the problem with you when hundreds of people have been freely healed in these meetings? Can you provide medical treatment and cure to these poor tribal people?’²⁰⁹ Furthermore, Pentecostals assist the public with free medical camps, where doctors and other medical staff willingly offer help to the public, irrespective of any social and religious distinctions.

Similarly, education is a matter of public interest. There are villages in Rajasthan where there is plenty of opportunity for educational projects, including elementary as well as high school education, adult education, and literacy programmes. There are several schools in Rajasthan established by Pentecostals, as well as literacy programmes organized by churches.

²⁰⁸ Pseudonym.

²⁰⁹ I was a participant in that meeting.

Self-awareness of the tribal community is another issue which promotes well-being in society. Miller and Yamamori observe that ‘one thing that keeps poor people stuck in their circumstances is their lack of a sense of self-worth.’²¹⁰ Therefore, Pentecostal participation enables people to improve their self-image as people coming to Pentecostal faith have been given the freedom to participate fully in the community. As Miller and Yamamori argue, Pentecostal theology deals with the issue of ‘personal self-worth,’ and in Pentecostal community, an individual is ‘supported by a vibrant and expressive community of believers’ and so finds ‘a new identity, a group identity, as worshippers become “one with Christ.”’²¹¹ The Christian metaphor of the *imago Dei*, that every human being is created in the image of God can serve as a powerful resource for a public mission theology.

Ecological mission is another area of national interest, and to a limited extent, Pentecostals in Rajasthan participate in such enterprises. For example, in 2002 the staff and students of FBC joined the government effort to plant trees. As a result a number of trees were planted by the FBC students in the vicinity of the campus. However, a specifically Pentecostal Eco-theology is not yet developed to promote this practice. M.L. Daneel’s recent work in Africa points to ways in which this important work can be theologised.²¹² Since it is one of the most urgent issues in the contemporary context, efforts should be made by Pentecostals to help the

²¹⁰ Miller and Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism*, 169.

²¹¹ Miller and Yamamori, *Global Pentecostalism*, 169.

²¹² See M.L. Daneel, *African Earthkeepers: Environmental Mission and Liberation in Christian Perspective*, vol. 2 (Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1999). In this volume the author discusses various ways (including ‘earth-healing rituals’ like ‘tree-planting Eucharists’) in which the African Independent Churches (AIC) in Zimbabwe, responded to the environmental havoc in the nation. He attempts to present a spontaneously enacted theology of AIC within the broader framework of eco-theology.

nation in its ecological crisis. However, it seems that missiology in general has not taken ecology very seriously. Willis Jenkin observes, ‘missiology rarely discusses the significance of earthly context or ecological dynamics for mission theology.’ It is only recently, as the churches have begun to respond to the environmental issues, that missiologists have made attempts to relate ecology and mission.²¹³ According to Moltmann, ecological theology will enable ‘Christians to participate in the necessary changes to our civilization.’²¹⁴ As S. Kim states, ‘the scope of mission is no longer limited to human beings - their spiritual, physical, social, political and economic welfare - but includes nature, which is part and parcel of God’s creation.’²¹⁵

However, this does not mean that Pentecostals have a fully developed, all-inclusive and well-structured public mission theology. On the other hand, what has been done so far is an indication that a contextual missiology of the Spirit has the potential to become a public theology. It is likely that most of initiatives are unconscious efforts by ‘Spirit-led’ Pentecostals. However, there should be more conscious and well-constructed efforts by Pentecostals to join hands with other social as well as governmental agencies so that they become involved in public projects for the building up of the society. If Pentecostals are to contribute to the common good and find some common ground between themselves and the wider community, they need to engage more broadly with the public. For example, they

²¹³ Willis Jenkins, ‘Missiology in Environmental Context: Tasks for an Ecology of Mission,’ *IBMR* 32, no. 4 (October 2008): 176.

²¹⁴ Jurgen Moltmann, ‘Political Theology in Germany after Auschwitz,’ in *Public Theology for the Twenty-First Century*, 41.

²¹⁵ Sebastian C.H. Kim, ‘Eco-Theology and Mission,’ in *Ecological Challenge and Christian Mission*, ed. Krickwin C. Marak and Atul Y. Aghamkar (Pune/Delhi: CMS/ISPCK, 1998), 211.

can get more involved in medical mission by opening both private and public hospitals, as well as by engaging in hygiene and health programmes. Moreover, there should be more awareness of the need to initiate programmes to help the poor and tribal communities escape from socially repressive situations. With the help of human rights organizations and other public agencies Pentecostals can work in more constructive ways to develop these communities.

Similarly Pentecostals can be more involved in educational programmes with the help of government and other NGO's and social welfare agencies. They can also be involved in the business of nation building by cooperating with the government in its development projects. Thus by engaging in such public mission they can well serve the mission of nation building. By doing so, as Ronald Thiemann says, 'the goal of theology ...namely to understand more fully and more critically the Christian faith in order that the community might better exemplify the Christian identity to which it has been called,' can be accomplished.²¹⁶ It is necessary for Pentecostals to become involved in more issues of public interest and formulate or reformulate their mission theology as directed by the Spirit. While making concluding observations regarding the future of world Christianity, S. Kim and K. Kim predict that 'churches will play an active role in national affairs, not limited to the religious domain but, for example, dealing with issues of ecology, economic justice and social equality.' Therefore, Christian contributions to public life, should 'not only to protect Christian interests but for the public good.'²¹⁷

²¹⁶ Ronald F. Thiemann, *Constructing a Public Theology: The Church in a Pluralistic Culture* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster Press, 1991), 135.

²¹⁷ S. Kim and K. Kim, *Christianity as a World Religion*, 226.

6.4. Contextual Discernment

As mentioned earlier, I have attempted to sketch out the contours of a contextual Pentecostal missiology. However, in order to develop such a contextual missiology of the Spirit, it is important for Pentecostals to be sensitive to issues that arise out of particular Indian situations. This is why I refer to it as ‘contextual discernment’.

As the issue of the foreignness of Christianity in India, a product of colonialism, is a serious concern, Pentecostals should be cautious about applying all western charismatic ideologies and practices in local contexts in order to foster global connections. Any attempt to do this without proper regard to local sensitivities may have far reaching consequences, which in turn may affect the growth as well as the image of the movement. For example, economic improvement is an important concern in the poor tribal context of Rajasthan. However, overemphasizing and importing prosperity theology from the West as it may create problems. Therefore, a contextual discernment is very important. In other words, it is necessary for Pentecostals to be sensitive to local cultural contexts when making global Pentecostal connections. Imitation of western, especially North American, Pentecostalism is to be avoided. Efforts should be made to avoid any form of administrative and financial dependency on western Pentecostal churches. While discussing the impact of colonialism on Indian Christianity, Collins states that Christianity was ‘deeply embroiled in the exchange of commodities which imperialism entails.’ Therefore, he warns, ‘any attempt to

redress the balance of cultural expression can itself potentially become subject to the pitfall of commodification.²¹⁸

In seeking the socio-political empowerment of the community, Pentecostals need to be aware that socio-political involvement should not be at the expense of Pentecostal missionary characteristics such as evangelism, church growth and other social mission as discussed in chapters three and six. The formation of political parties by Pentecostals should be discouraged as it may arrest the growth of the movement and create religious tensions. As it has done in the case of the BJP, as seen in chapter four, combining religion with politics tends to create religious tension and disturb communal peace and harmony. However, this is not to advocate the old apolitical or ‘other-worldly’ stance of early Pentecostals, which discouraged Pentecostals from participation in politics. S.Kim and K. Kim observe that ‘the church’s relation to the society and the state has always been problematic and will probably remain so.’ However, they urge that Christians should be involved socially, challenging injustice, and at the same find ‘more constructive ways in which the church can engage in public life in democratic society.’²¹⁹ Public mission should be free from rivalry and corruption because they are some of the most common social evils in Indian society today. The distinctive Pentecostal spirituality, ‘the passion for the Kingdom’ (of God),²²⁰ must be maintained, rather than strong fervour for this-worldly kingdoms.

²¹⁸ Collins, *Christian Inculturation*, 16. For more details of the discussion on the effect of colonialism on Christianity in India, see pp 11-18.

²¹⁹ S. Kim and K. Kim, *Christianity as a World Religion*, 226.

²²⁰ Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*.

Every effort must be made to alleviate unnecessary tensions within and without the movement. Popularizing conversion stories must be discouraged,²²¹ unhealthy practices such as sheep stealing and shepherd stealing should be discarded, and schism and competition in the name of the Spirit should be avoided. People entering fulltime, especially pastoral, ministry, should be encouraged to undergo theological education. These concerns can serve as cautions in the formation and development of a contextual missiology of the Spirit.

6.5. Conclusion

The above discussion shows some important features of contextual missiology of the Spirit and its potential that have emerged out of the study of Pentecostalism in Rajasthan. The Pentecostal characteristic of freedom in the Spirit and its tendency to be adaptable and flexible in diverse contexts gives ample reason to argue for a contextual missiology of the Spirit. This missiology recognizes the distinctive dimension of the Spirit in contextual missiology. It values the role of the Spirit experiences of the faith community on one side and the changing contexts on the other. Maintaining local distinctiveness in every sense, in particular with a *globalized* movement like Pentecostalism, with all its impact on the local is a difficult challenge. Therefore, contextual missiology of the Spirit takes both the local and the global situations very seriously.

The inherent theological characteristics of Pentecostalism underline the pneumatological foundation of contextual missiology as it serves various purposes

²²¹ There is a tendency to give much popularity to conversion stories through literature, internet and other Medias. Sometimes overemphasis on statistics on conversion causes religious tension.

such as evangelism, social mission and engagement with people of other faiths. Examples discussed from the early Christian community illustrate the place of Spirit experiences in a contextual missiology. When the early community was confronted by various situations, both in their life within the community and in their mission outside their spiritual experiences had a pivotal role in shaping their mission theology and practice. Although biblical parallels for all the contemporary situations may not be possible, the similar experiences of Pentecostals in Rajasthan also call for a contextual missiology of the Spirit.

A contextual Pentecostal missiology, as the above discussion shows, has certain distinctive features. It has the potential to uphold the Pentecostal tradition of ‘Spirit-emphasis’ on the one hand, and on the other, it is dynamic enough to deal with the challenging and changing situations. As contextual missiology of the Spirit has a glocal nature, it can deal with the global-local tension more effectively. It is capable of promoting ecumenicity on various levels. A contextual missiology of the Spirit empowers people to engage with the spiritual as well as socio-political context aiming at transformation. As it is concerned with the well-being of the community, it has the potential to become a public theology.

Chapter 7

CONCLUSION

This chapter is a summary of the study presented in this thesis on Pentecostalism in Rajasthan. It also discusses the research findings in the broader research context.

7.1. Summary

In chapter one, the research questions of the current study were identified. They centred chiefly on the identity, origin and nature of Pentecostalism in India in general and Rajasthan in particular, as well as the external and internal issues facing Pentecostals. The remaining chapters were an attempt to answer these questions and to sketch the contours of a contextual missiology of the Spirit in the light of the findings of the study.

Chapter two showed that the quest for identity is a socio-religious and missiological concern of contemporary Indian Pentecostals. It challenged the view that Pentecostalism in India is an imported religion from the West by contending that the movement was the outcome of many simultaneous indigenous Spirit revivals in existing churches across the country. Consequently, it emphasized the significance of a polycentric approach to the history of the origin of Pentecostalism in India. The discussion led us to the conclusion that Pentecostalism is an indigenous movement in India and that Pentecostals are an integral part of Indian Christianity, which has a strong tradition of indigenous

Christianity as old as Christianity itself. Although many Pentecostal missionaries came from the West, they were independent missionaries (mainly North American), and many of them became Pentecostals in India itself. They played little part in these indigenous revivals. It was concluded that western Pentecostal missionaries made two major contributions. First, they identified the Spirit revivals in India as Pentecostal in nature by assisting local participants to understand that their Spirit experiences were similar to those of the early Christian community in Acts as well as of other Pentecostals around the globe. Second, they played an important role in the institutionalization of the revival movement. As the movement began to expand rapidly with the increasing involvement of indigenous people, western missionaries enabled Indian Pentecostals to organize the movement in a more systematic way.

Chapter three showed that Pentecostalism in Rajasthan was part of existing Christianity in the state and was closely related to similar Spirit revivals already occurring across India. As missionary zeal was one of the most remarkable characteristics of the early Pentecostal movement in India, the missionary ripples of the Spirit revival took the Pentecostal message to several parts of the nation, including Rajasthan. This chapter challenged the view that Pentecostalism in Rajasthan is a religious movement from south India. The Pentecostal message was introduced and the first Pentecostal church was already established in Rajasthan by north Indian Pentecostals well before the south Indians began Pentecostal mission in the state. There was a local Spirit revival in existence, as well as a rising thirst for spirituality among existing Christians, when Pentecostal

missionaries from south India, particularly Kerala, came to Rajasthan. The Spirit revival in Banaswara, without any influence from non-Rajasthanis, was very significant for the growth of the movement as it produced some influential native leaders of Pentecostalism. It could be concluded that the south Indian missionaries had a similar role to the one that western Pentecostal missionaries had during the beginning of Indian Pentecostalism. Just as the establishment and institutionalization of the Pentecostal movement in India took place due to the extensive work of western Pentecostal missionaries, so the establishment and institutionalization of Pentecostalism in Rajasthan took place as the result of the rigorous service of south Indian Pentecostals. Although there were many south Indian pioneer missionaries involved in grass-roots level evangelistic activities, even in remote villages, their greatest contribution was towards the institutionalization of the movement. This chapter also suggested that just as the Pentecostal movement in India began to spread to other states due to the wide missionary activities of indigenous workers, the major reason for the present expansion and growth of the movement in Rajasthan is the growing number of Rajasthani Pentecostal workers.

Although Pentecostalism is a minority movement, with most of its followers from a poor socio-economic tribal background, it has become the fastest growing sector of Christianity. Despite the fact that it is a new movement in Rajasthan, there are several Pentecostal organizations, churches and believers scattered all across the state. Chapter three maintained that the mission theology and practice of Pentecostals played an important role in the growth and establishment of the

movement. It also showed that the change in situations significantly affected its mission theory and practice, and thus shows the progressive nature of Pentecostal missiology in Rajasthan. Although the Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal divide has not completely disappeared, Pentecostals have made a significant impact on other Christians, and consequently there is a definite increase in ecumenicity.

Chapters four and five showed that Pentecostals in Rajasthan face intra-church as well as extra-church issues. This is partly due to the misrepresentation of Pentecostalism as a foreign religion. It is argued in chapter four that the complex web of religion and politics has become a serious issue for Pentecostals in Rajasthan as in other part of the nation. Pentecostals, along with other segments of Christianity and other religious minority groups, struggle to maintain their minority rights due to the rise of religious intolerance. The foreignness of Christianity is a major argument that Hindu militants use against Christians. The religio-political situation in India at large affects the local context and thus creates tensions. As conversion is legally forbidden with the introduction of the Anti-conversion Law, religious tension is on the increase, and consequently, it has become a matter of concern for Pentecostals as they are accused of being a proselytizing group, even by other Christian groups. However, despite their status as a minority, the less privileged and persecuted Pentecostals in Rajasthan claim to be making a contribution as nation builders. Although Pentecostalism is becoming more and more Rajasthani as many local people are embracing the movement, Pentecostals are under tremendous pressure from various social and

religio-political challenges such as the minority crisis, religious intolerance and persecution.

Chapter five showed that apart from issues from outside, Pentecostals face several challenges from within the movement. The socio-economic status of Pentecostalism as well as the inter-denominational issues in Rajasthan is affecting the image of the movement and causing problems within and outside the community. Moreover, inter-cultural issues have created a north Indian- south Indian divide within the movement. On the one hand, Pentecostalism is growing, and on the other, the churches are divided into fragments.

At the same time, the impact of the globalization of Pentecostalism on Pentecostals in Rajasthan is considerable. Local Pentecostal spirituality is affected by global Charismatic features, creating tensions within the movement. On the one hand, Pentecostals are culturally sensitive, and on the other, globally dynamic. While Pentecostals in Rajasthan are identified with the growing global Pentecostal movement, they also struggle to maintain their indigenous identity. The local Pentecostals are in a missio-ethical dilemma due to issues from within and without the movement. The socio-economic status of Pentecostals and the change in the religio-political context of Rajasthan, as well as the impact of global Pentecostalism, have placed Pentecostals in this dilemma. This is an indication of the constant and ‘creative tension’¹ within the movement.

¹ This term is used by Bosch to explain the difficulty to hold together opposite positions. See Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 367.

However, in the light of the current study, it is argued that the progress Pentecostals have made both in terms of mission theology and practice over time has enabled them to overcome this dilemma. This shows the contextual nature of their mission theology, and thus suggests that the contextual missiology of Pentecostals in Rajasthan is a possible solution to the missio-ethical dilemma. Whether consciously or unconsciously, the measures Pentecostals have taken to deal with this dilemma have the potential to be formulated as a coherent contextual missiology of the Spirit. It is argued that the contextual Pentecostal missiology that has emerged from this study has the prospect of being a progressive and dynamic missiology, flexible enough to adapt itself to the various life situations of particular contexts. Pentecostals have formulated and reformulated their mission theology and practice over time. When they have been confronted by various issues from within and outside the movement, their encounter with the Spirit also has played a significant role along with the context in bringing about necessary changes in their missiology. Despite the fact that their mission theology is not well-constructed, Pentecostal freedom in the Spirit has enabled their mission theory and practice to adapt to changing circumstances. The dynamism in contextual Pentecostal missiology seems to have the potential to deal with both intra-church as well as extra-church issues.

In the light of these findings, chapter six sketches an outline of a contextual missiology of the Spirit. The study on Pentecostalism in Rajasthan suggests the emergence of a contextual missiology of the Spirit, a new model of contextual mission theology. It has attempted to extend the Spirit dimension of contextual

missiology, which many missiologists have failed to see, and others, including some Pentecostals, have limited to certain issues like healing, exorcism, evangelism, church planting and growth, and interfaith concerns. However, this new model, the contextual missiology of the Spirit, as this study proposes, recognizes the distinctive dimension of the Spirit in contextual missiology. It reveals the pneumatological potential of a contextual missiology, as it values the role of the Spirit along with the context, in diverse issues the faith community faces, whether internal or external. It also discussed the potential scope of contextual mission of the Spirit in the world through the church, His servant. This contextual missiology of the Spirit can serve as a viable alternative, a Pentecostal model, alongside other contextual models. Pentecostal freedom in the Spirit, with its adaptable and flexible nature in diverse contexts, reveals the significance of a contextual missiology of the Spirit.

This chapter concludes that a contextual missiology of the Spirit has theological as well as contextual features. Inherent Pentecostal characteristics indicate its pneumatological foundation. Like the early Christian community in Acts, contemporary Pentecostals in Rajasthan give importance to Spirit encounters in mission, which in turn affects their mission theory and practice. Having a pneumatological foundation, contextual missiology is capable of defending Pentecostal tradition on the one hand, and on the other, it is able to deal with the challenging and changing situations of contemporary praxis both within and outside the community. A contextual missiology of the Spirit has the potential to be a glocal missiology as it reduces the global-local tension more effectively.

Being ecumenical, it is able to promote ecumenicity on various levels. A contextual missiology of the Spirit also aims to engage in spiritual as well as socio-political transformation. It has the potential to be a public theology as it seeks the well-being of the public at large.

7.2. Global Implications

The exploration of the complex and dynamic context of Pentecostalism in Rajasthan may shed light on the issues and problems of the relationship between history, theology and various other situations faced by Pentecostals across the globe. The current study seems to have global significance in three important aspects. First, the study of the origin of Indian Pentecostalism indicates the significance of a polycentric approach to the history of the origin of global Pentecostalism, as argued by scholars like Anderson, as discussed in chapter two. Second, this study also suggests that Pentecostals across the world may be in a similar missio-ethical dilemma due to local-global tensions. It seems that, as in Rajasthan, the globalization of Pentecostalism places global Pentecostals in a missio-ethical dilemma. This globalization has caused significant changes in the movement. Some believe that Pentecostalism has become a respectable middle-class movement, even though it sprang up from the poorer strata of society (the working class) in most parts of the world, especially in the Majority World. Subsequently, it is argued that in the West, especially in North America, Pentecostalism tends to embrace the success-oriented, global market culture. This has caused the theologian Cox to argue that ‘...it is time for a rebirth of that ethic of simplicity, that suspicion “of the things of this world”, for which the early

Pentecostals were so famous.’² Thus, the dilemma facing many western Pentecostals is whether to go with the growing global middle-class culture or to maintain the ethos of early Pentecostalism, and this seems to be an ethical challenge. Pentecostalism in most parts of the Majority World began in the context of oppression, injustice and poverty. However, Hollenweger observes that today Pentecostalism has become a respectable middle-class denomination in many parts of the world,³ and so it appears to want to move away from the poor and ignore its social mission. Therefore, the dilemma before Pentecostals in the Majority World seems to be whether to embrace and emulate western middle-class culture, or to maintain its link with the poor. This challenge seems to be ethical as well as missiological. Thus, global Pentecostals at large appears to be in a missio-ethical dilemma. Third, this study may also provide an answer to this dilemma through the development of a new and helpful contextual missiology of the Spirit that has emerged from the current research on Pentecostalism in Rajasthan. As discussed in chapter six, this new model is flexible as it is sensitive to the particular cultural or local situation on the one hand, and to the national or global situation of the movement on the other, and at the same time, recognizes the influence of the Spirit experiences in shaping the theology of Pentecostals.

Furthermore, this thesis contributes to three major areas of research and academic discussion. Firstly, from a historical perspective, it contributes to the history of indigenous Christianity in India. Secondly, from a missiological perspective, contextual missiology of the Spirit is proposed as a new (Pentecostal) model of

² Harvey G. Cox, ‘Pentecostalism and Global Market Culture: A Response to Issues Facing Pentecostalism in Post Modern World,’ in *Globalization of Pentecostalism*, 394.

³ Walter J. Hollenweger, ‘Crucial Issues for Pentecostals,’ in *Pentecostals after a Century*, 188.

contextual missiology. Thirdly, from a Pentecostal perspective, the story of the Pentecostal movement in Rajasthan adds another chapter to the growing volume of studies on Asian Pentecostalism.

7.3. Further Research

The current study provides an initial research into Pentecostal missiology in India. Deeper study is needed to investigate the tribal world view in north India in comparison with the Pentecostal world view to see the inter-connections, which may further help to explain why tribal people are attracted to Pentecostalism. It is argued that the contextual missiology presented in this study is not applicable exclusively in India, but may work in other contexts as well. Although its theories are universal (global) its practical outworking is particular (local). Further explorations are needed to establish if this model is suitable in various other mission contexts.

Serious research is needed to verify whether a pneumatological model as proposed here is a viable alternative to the Christological model in the contemporary Indian context of mission. As discussed in chapter six, Kirsteen Kim's study is an important attempt to develop this proposal further.⁴ The pneumatological foundation of missiology must be further explored in the Indian context, where many Indian Christian theologians have attempted to make the Christian message relevant to India from a Christological basis.

⁴ K. Kim, *Mission in the Spirit*.

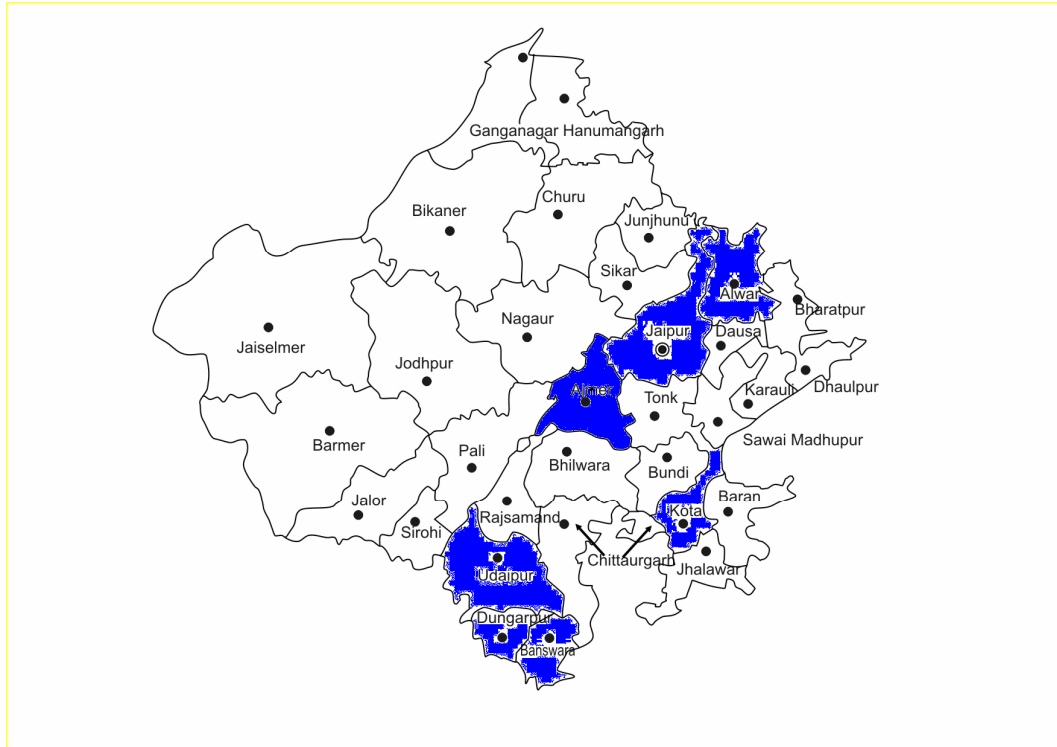
The current study also indicates the need for further exploration of three other vital issues. First, there is a need for a rigorous exploration of the issue of the missio-ethical dilemma of global Pentecostals. Second, there is the issue of the over-reliance on the 'Luke-Acts Pentecostal tradition' in the explanations of the Spirit experiences in the formulation of theology and the need for possible recourse to other sources. For example, the Spirit experiences of Paul and their role in shaping his mission theology might be investigated in order to further develop contemporary Pentecostal theologies. Third, the significance of developing alternative approaches to biblical hermeneutics to construct innovative mission theologies needs to be explored, such as the reflective method as suggested by Hollenweger (as used in this study).

Thus in brief, this thesis argues for an indigenous origin of Pentecostalism in India in general and in Rajasthan in particular, as it is a product of indigenous revivals in the existing churches as well as the missionary activities of Indian Pentecostals. Consequently, this study frames an outline for a contextual missiology of the Spirit, a Pentecostal model of contextual theology. It can be a dynamic model as it takes into account the Spirit encounter of the faith community as well as their context, as it recognizes the Spirit empowerment of the faith community, the church for contextual mission- despite the complex issues it faces, whether internal or external. It is very significant that a contextual missiology of the Spirit focuses on the mission of the Spirit through His servant the church, without excluding any other agencies or mission of the Spirit in the world. This thesis does not restrict the contextual features only to those which are discussed here;

rather there can be more issues and challenges before the church as it moves over time. At the same time, the Spirit experiences can continue influencing the faith community in their mission theology and practice, and so the contextual horizons of the mission of the church will be ever widening.

Appendix 1

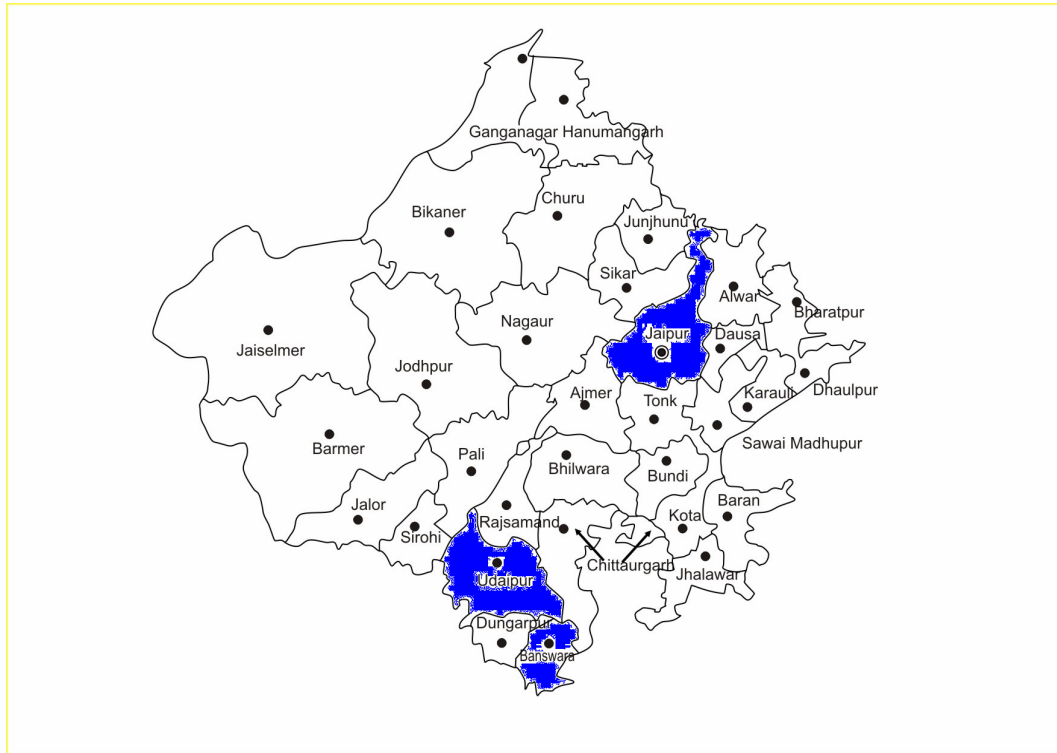
Pentecostal Concentration in Rajasthan



Pentecostals are mainly concentrated in the districts Alwar, Jaipur, Ajmer, Kota, Udaipur, Dungarpur and Banswara, which are shaded in the Map.

Appendix 2

Research Representation



The present research has chiefly focused the districts Jaipur, Udaipur and Banswara, which are shaded in the map.

Appendix 3

Theological Institutes of Pentecostals in Rajasthan

Sl. No.	Denomination	Accreditation Status	Programmes/Duration
1	Aravali Bible Training Centre (FFCI)	A Regional Training Centre of FFFCI (Affiliated to FBC)	Certificate Course- 1 Year
2	Bethany Bible Training Centre (AoG)	AoG (Church Approved)	Certificate Course- 1 Year
3	Calvary Covenant Fellowship Training Centre	Independent (Church Approved)	Certificate Course- 1 Year
4	Filadelfia Bible College	ATA Accredited	MDiv, BTh, DipTh
5	Gospel For Asia Training Centre	A Regional Training Centre of GFA (Affiliated to GFABS, Thiruvalla)	Certificate Course – 2 years, Diploma-3 Years
6	IPC Rajasthan Mission Centre	IPC (Church Approved)	Certificate Course- 1 Year
7	Rajasthan Bible Training Centre (Bethel Fellowship)	Independent (Church Approved)	Certificate Course- 12 months 9 months Training + 3 months practical work

Apart from these institutions both Mission India and FFCI run regular short time training course for laymen and untrained Pastors.

Appendix 4

THE RAJASTHAN DHARMA SWATANTRYA BILL, 2006

(AUTHORISED ENGLISH TRANSLATION)

BILL NO. 12 OF 2006

A Bill to provide for prohibition of conversion from one religion to another by the use of force or allurement or by fraudulent means and for matters incidental thereto. Be it enacted by the Rajasthan state Legislator in the Fifty-Seventh year of the Republic of India, as follows:-

1. Short title, extent and commencement.-

- (1) This Act may be called the Rajasthan Dharma Swatantrya Act, 2006.
- (2) It extends to the whole of the State of Rajasthan.
- (3) It shall come into force at once

2. Definitions: In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires,-

- (a) “unlawful” means which is in contravention of the provisions of this Act.
- (b) “allurement” means offer of any temptation in the form of
 - (i) any gift or gratification, either in cash or kind;
 - (ii) grant of any material benefit, either monetary or otherwise;
- (c) “conversion” means renouncing ones own religion and adopting another;

Explanation: - Own religion means religions of one’s forefathers;

- (d) “force” includes a show of force or a threat of injury of any kind including threat of divine displeasure or social excommunication;
- (e) “fraudulent” means and includes misrepresentation or any other fraudulent contrivance.

3. Prohibition of conversion: - No person shall convert or attempt to convert, either directly or otherwise any person from other religion to another by use of force or by allurement or by any fraudulent means nor shall any person abet any such conversion.

4. Punishment for contravention of provisions of section 3:- Whoever Contravenes the provisions of section 3 shall, with out prejudice to any other civil or criminal liability, be punished with simple imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than two years but which may extend to five years and shall also be liable to fine, which may extend to fifty thousand rupees.

5. Offence to be cognizable and non-bailable:- Any offence under this Act shall be cognizable and non-bailable and shall not be investigated by an officer below the rank of Deputy Superintendent of Police.

6. Power to make rules: - (1) The State Government may make rules for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of this Act.

(2) All rules made under this Act shall be laid, as soon as may be, after they are so made, before the house of the State Legislator, while it is in session, for a period of not less than fourteen days which may be comprised in one session or in two successive session and if, before the expiry of the session in which they are so laid or of the session immediately following, the House of the State Legislator makes any modification in any of such rules or resolves that any such rule should not be made, such rule shall, thereafter, have effect only in such modified form or be of no effect, as the case may be, so however, that any such modification or annulment shall be without prejudice to the validity of anything previously done there under.

STATEMENT OF OBJECTS AND REASONS

It has been observed by the State Government that some religious and other institutions, bodies and individuals are found to be involved in unlawful conversion from one religion to another by allurement or by fraudulent means of forcibly which at times has caused annoyance in the community belonging to other religion. The inter religion fabric is weakened by such illegal activities and causes law and order problem for the law enforcing machinery of the state.

In order to curb such illegal activities and to maintain harmony amongst persons of various religions, it has been considered expedient to enact a special law for the purpose.

This bill seeks to achieve the aforesaid objective.

Hence the Bill.

[Name]

Minister in Charge

Appendix 5

Rajasthan Freedom of Religion Bill, 2008

A Bill to provide for the prohibition of conversion from one religion to another by the use of force or allurement or by fraudulent means and for matters incidental thereto. Be it enacted by the Rajasthan State Legislature in the Fifty-ninth Year of the Republic of India, as follows:

1. Short title, extent and commencement

- (1) This Act may be called the Rajasthan Dharma Swatantraya Act, 2008.
- (2) It extends to the whole of the State of the Rajasthan.
- (3) It shall come into force at once.

2. Definitions

- (1) In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires,
 - (a) “allurement” means offer of any temptation in the form of:
 - (i) any gift or gratification, either in cash or kind; or
 - (ii) grant of any material benefit, either monetary or otherwise;
 - (b) “conversion” means renouncing one's own religion and adopting another; (**Explanation:** Own religion means [the] religion of one's forefathers);
 - (c) “force” includes a show of force or a threat of injury of any kind including threat of divine displeasure or social excommunication;
 - (d) “fraudulent” means and includes misrepresentation or any other fraudulent contrivance;
 - (e) “Minor” means a person under 18 years of age; and
 - (f) “unlawful” means an act which is in contravention of any of the provisions of this Act.
- (2) The words and expressions used but not defined in this Act shall have the meaning as assigned to them in the Rajasthan General Clauses Act, 1954 (Act No. 8 of 1955).

3. Prohibition of conversion

No person shall convert or attempt to convert, either directly or otherwise, any person from one religion to another by use of force or by allurement or fraudulent means nor shall any person abet any such conversion. Provided that any person who has been converted from one religion to another in contravention of the provisions of this section, shall be deemed not to have been converted.

4. Punishment for contravention of provisions of Section 3

- (1) Whoever contravenes the provisions of section 3 shall, without prejudice to any other civil or criminal liability, be punished with simple imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than one year but which may extend to three years and shall also be liable to fine, which may extend to twenty five thousand rupees: Provided that in case the offence is committed in respect of a minor, a woman or a person belonging to Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe punishment of

imprisonment shall not be less than two years and may extend to five years and the fine may extend to rupees fifty thousands.

(2) Notwithstanding anything contained in any other law for the time being in force registration of body registered under the Rajasthan Societies Registration Act, 1958 (Act No. 28 of 1958) of the Rajasthan Public Trusts Act, 1959 (Act No. 42 of 1959) shall be liable to be cancelled, if it is found

(a) that the funds of the body have been used, or are being used or are contemplated to be used for conversion; or

(b) the body is involved in securing conversion.

5. Notice for intention to convert

(1) A person intending to convert from one religion to another shall give prior notice of at least thirty days to the District Magistrate of the District concerned of his intention to do so and the District Magistrate shall get the matter enquired into by such agency as he may deem fit:

Provided that no notice shall be required if a person reverts back to his original religion.

(2) Any person who fails to give prior notice, as required under sub-section (1), shall be punishable with fine which may extend to one thousand rupees.

6. Offence to be cognizable and non-bailable

Any offence under this Act shall be cognizable and non-bailable and shall not be investigated by an officer below the rank of Deputy Superintendent of Police.

7. Sanction for prosecution

No prosecution for an offence under this Act shall be made without the sanction of the District Magistrate or such other authority not below the rank of Sub-Divisional Magistrate, as may be authorised by him in that behalf.

8. Power to make rules

(1) The State Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette make rules for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of this Act.

(2) All rules made under this Act shall be laid, as soon as may be, after they are so made, before the House of the State Legislature, while it is in session, for a period of not less than fourteen days which may be comprised in one session or in two successive sessions and if, before the expiry of the session in which they are so laid or of the session immediately following, the House of the State Legislature makes any modification in any of such rules or resolves that any such rules should not be made, such rules shall thereafter have effect only in such modified form or be of no effect, as the case may be, so however, that any such modification or annulment shall be without prejudice to the validity of anything previously done thereunder.

Statement of Objects and Reasons

It has been observed by the State Government that some religious institutions and individuals are found to be involved in unlawful conversion from one religion to another by allurements or by fraudulent means or forcibly which at times has caused annoyance in the community belonging to other religion. The inter religion

fabric is weakened by such illegal activities and causes law and order problem for the law enforcing machinery of the State.

In order to curb such illegal activities and to maintain harmony amongst persons of various religions. It has been considered expedient to enact a special law for the purpose.

This Bill seeks to achieve the aforesaid objectives.

Hence the bill.

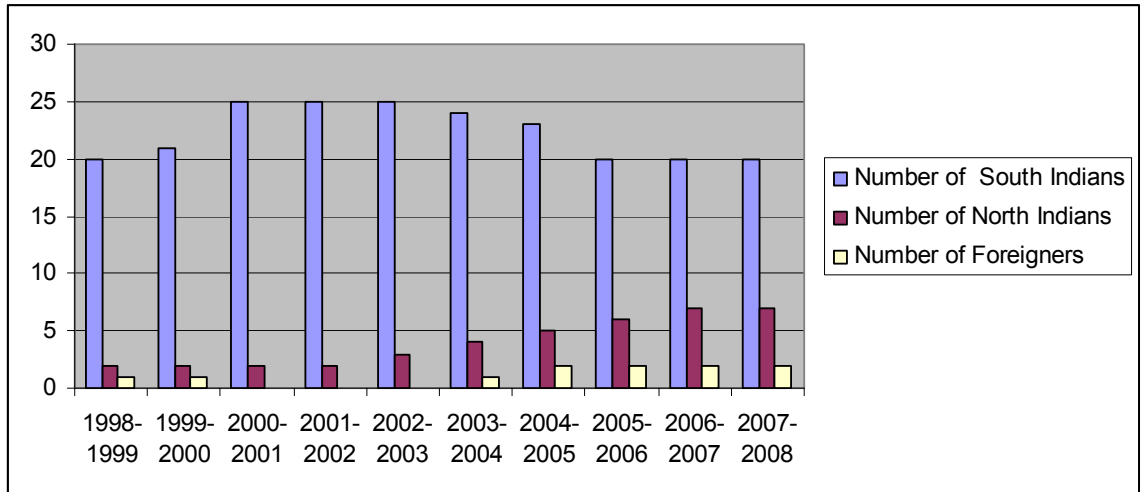
[Name]

Minister in Charge

The 'Rajasthan Freedom of Religion Bill, 2008' is transcribed from <http://indianchristians.in/news/content/view/1484/45/>. This is the official website of All India Christian Council.

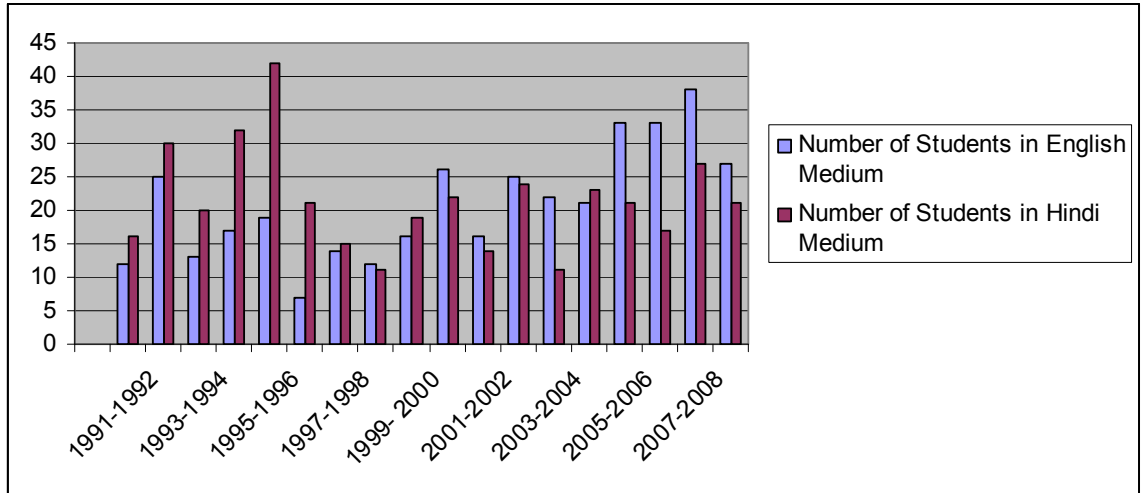
Appendix 6

Regional/National Representation of Faculty Members at FBC



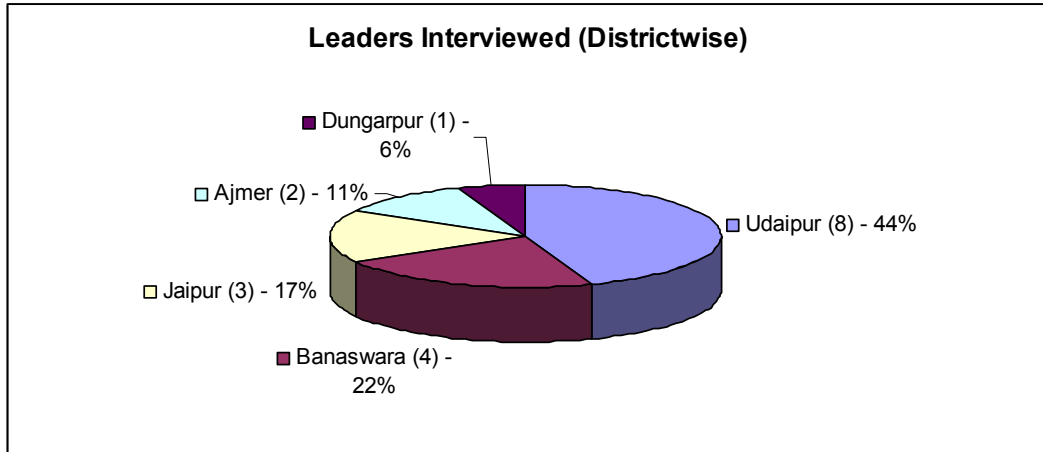
Appendix 7

Enrolment of New Students at FBC



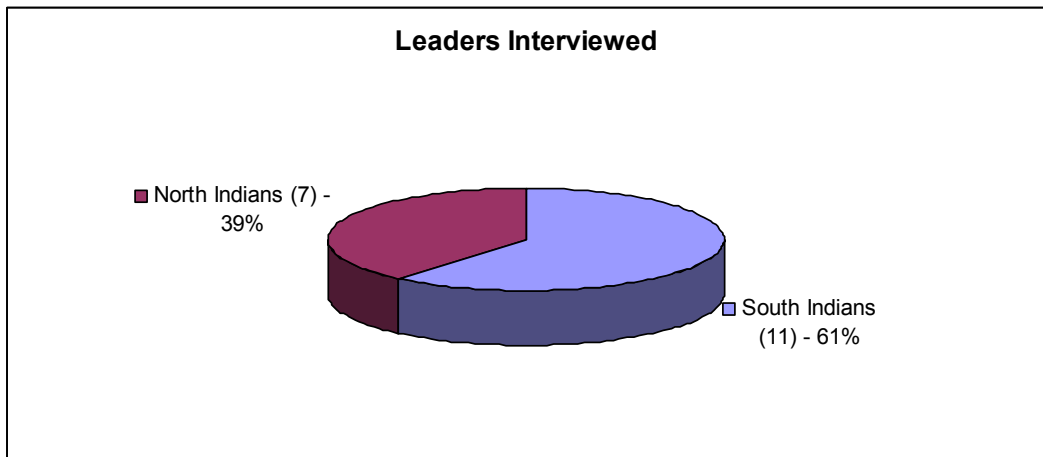
Appendix 8

Pentecostal Leaders (District Representation)



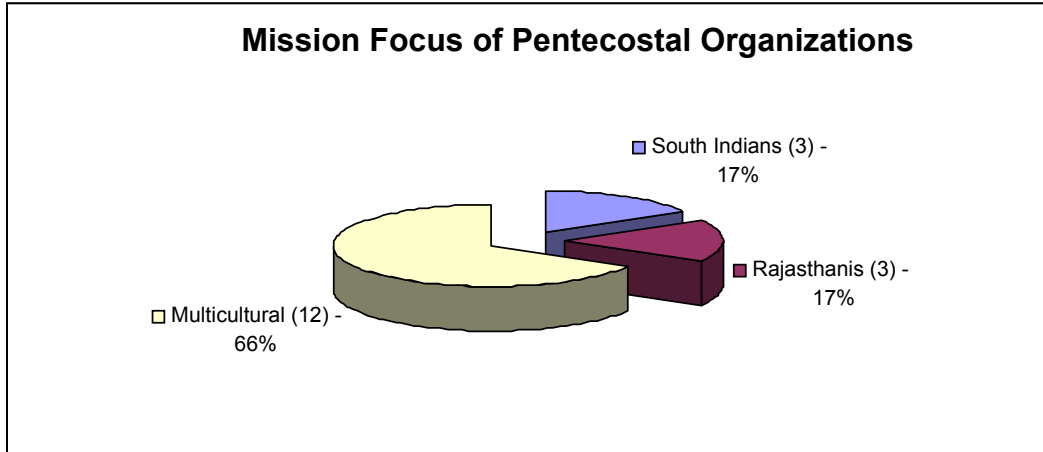
Appendix 9

South /North India Representation of Leaders



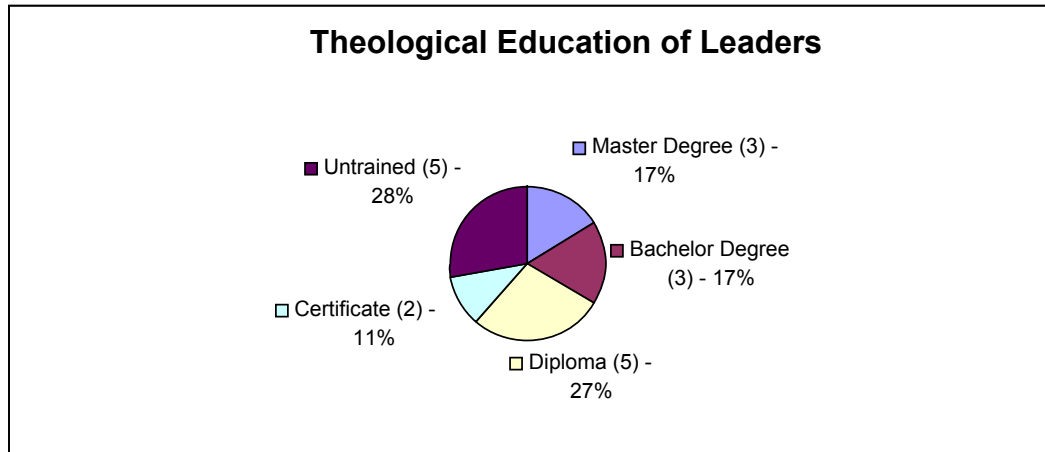
Appendix 10

Mission Focus of Pentecostal Churches in Rajasthan



Appendix 11

Theological Education of Pentecostal Leaders in Rajasthan



All those who hold a masters degree obtained it through distance learning, except one

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