

**INFLUENCE OF INDIAN CULTURE ON
THE INDIAN CHRISTIAN CHURCH
IN CHATSWORTH AND SURROUNDING
AREAS**

**INFLUENCE OF INDIAN CULTURE ON THE INDIAN
CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN CHATSWORTH AND
SURROUNDING AREAS**

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DECLARATION



The Registrar (Academic)

UNIVERSITY OF DURBAN-WESTVILLE

Dear Sir/Madam

I, **Paskaran George Narain** , hereby declare that the dissertation/thesis entitled:

**INFLUENCE OF INDIAN CULTURE ON THE INDIAN CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN
CHATSWORTH AND SURROUNDING AREAS**

is the result of my own investigation and research and that it has not been submitted in part or full for any other degree or to any other University.



(Signature)

2003.04.02
Date

DEDICATION

This is dedicated to my mother Mrs Subbamma Christina Narain and my sister Mrs Hazel Rathamoney Rungan and both my sons, Siva Kumaran Paskaran Narain and Kubendhran Paskaran Narain, who were the inspiration for me to enter the corridors of higher learning and then to serve.

They believed in the dictum:

“Service to Humanity is Service to God”.

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CHAPTER ONE
AN OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In the researcher's work as a minister of religion, the researcher has had interactions with the community and assisting Indian people of all religious denominations. The nature of the current problem seems to take different dimensions and patterns in the way these manifested a few years ago. The realization that change and transformation was having a significant impact on the way people behaved, their values, attitudes and norms, made the researcher acknowledge that current realities of our life styles seriously challenged the roles and functions of the church. The researcher began to reflect on creative and innovative ways of addressing the current needs of the masses that are part of our congregations.

Beyond the fact that Christians throughout the world face many kinds of difficulties and often persecution, these images underline the diversity of issues that Christians are called to reflect upon today. Christians must not only wrestle with traditional problems of communicating the Gospel in the light of complex religious traditions and cultural values, they must also reflect on entrenched racial prejudices, drug wars, complex political relationships, long-smoldering liberation issues, and all the problems associated with expanding city populations and secularization of societies.

Christians now face a situation in which these realities are rapidly changing. The dismantling of apartheid in South Africa and the new dispensation has had consequences, all of which still being digested by Indians.

Architects have a technical term for those structures that are designed and built by the people who will live in them. They call this vernacular architecture. For millennia people have taken whatever are at hand – rocks, mud, and pieces of wood – to construct dwellings for themselves. On a world historical scale, of course, this has far and away been the most common kind of architecture, and even today, produces structures of marvelous subtlety and beauty.

In this study the researcher would like to make a similar point for the kind of theology people commonly do as a part of their everyday lives. The researcher will refer to this as contextual theology: that theological framework constructed, often intuitively, by Christians seeking to respond faithfully to the challenges their lives present to them.

These thoughts took precedence in the researcher's mind, and were often overwhelming. The researcher could not identify any immediate or miraculous solutions to the multitude of problems currently faced by our people. However, through all these changes, a common thread seemed to be like the anchor, presenting consistently all the time. The common thread was obviously our Indian Culture and its dynamics, which seemed like the cement that kept everything together. In other words, people invariably dealt with their daily issues using snowy cultural tools that they had inherited as part of them being Indian. Such cultural responses

to their problems have enabled them to integrate their Indian cultural values into their expression of Christian faith.

The researcher realized that understanding the influence of Indian Culture on Indian Christianity was not an easy task, but required considerable research, unearthing the views of scholars and individuals from the Chatsworth and surrounding areas, and processing the information in a systematic and logical manner, so that an objective and academic interpretation of the results could be tested and validated against formulated hypotheses.

The primary task of this thesis is to examine the various cultural responses of Indian respondents to daily issues in dealing with their Christian faith.

1.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

The research methodology and approach would embrace the following to elicit the best findings and to make conclusive interpretations regarding the topic under research:

1. To clearly define the scope and objectives of the research. This is critical as it helps the researcher to focus on the problems identified and to generate solutions, so that the research does not become cluttered with too much of information, which needs to be explored through further research and investigation.

2. Specific hypotheses will be formulated and tested against the findings, once again to provide clear definition of the scope of the research.
3. It is important in a study of this nature, and in any empirical research to conduct literature reviews, so that other scholarly views and opinions can be incorporated within the field of the research and its objectives.
4. Interviews with a random sample of respondents from the Chatsworth and surrounding areas will enable the researcher to elicit the views of people with regard to the purpose of the research, so that their practical views and opinions would offer greater insights to the objectives and findings postulated in research.
5. The information and data gathered will have to be analyzed and organized in a systematic and orderly manner, so that objective and fair findings and validation can be made in the research. recommendations and conclusions on the findings within the context of the research.
6. The writer would have the task of making good interpretations, recommendations and conclusions on the findings within the context of research.

7. Future recommendations and hypotheses can be generated for future scholars and students to explore and validate through scientific research processes.

1.3 MAJOR OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The primary objective of the research is to analyze the interactions of the Church and Indian Culture within the context of its historical dynamics and current challenges. This would encompass, inter-alia, the following sub-objectives: -

1. To conduct a literature review of the cultural dynamics, historical belief systems and current scholarly views on the role and functions of the Church.
2. To propose a Conceptual and Functional Model on the role and functions of the Church, specifically with regard to its current applicability in the Indian Community. This would form inter-alia, a blue print and guideline for those ministers who were still constrained by an inability to challenge restrictive mental paradigms, and for those who were not responsive to the dynamic changes taking place in our environment.
3. To examine how the Cultural Aspects of Indian Life led to the successful adoption of the teachings and doctrines of Christianity and its subsequent refinements. Cognizance was taken of the fact that the impact of western values and life styles required that it became imperative for the Church to respond to current issues and

problems, which affected the lives of people on a daily basis, and to redefine its approaches to espousing Christian values within the context of environmental changes.

4. To demonstrate that the role and functions of the Church required constant redefinition, modifications and enhancements, so that it became a meaningful vehicle for facilitating change and improving the quality of lives of individuals, living in a troubled society.
5. To conduct interviews with a representative sample group of respondents from Chatsworth and surrounding areas to establish their views on the stabilizing factors of Indian Culture in the current situation. This would obviously require a critical review of the definition, meanings and interpretations of the concept of culture from a cognitive perspective.
6. To conduct a critical evaluation of the views, belief systems, cultural dynamics and ideologies of the different Church denominations, with specific focus on how these have changed with the process of time in order to adapt to the socio-economic needs of our people.
7. To consolidate the information gathered and to create linkages within the areas of commonality between the different Church denominations, and to demonstrate that Indian Culture has had an influence on Indian Christianity specifically in the areas of

integration, transitions, growth, evolvment and refinement of Christian principles and doctrines.

8. The study is needed because Church leaders and individuals need to understand the purpose, past practices and philosophy of Christians, and how the Church could assist to facilitate change and transformation with its entire concomitant problems and turbulences.
9. Christianity, like other religions espouse tolerance, respect for other, humility and a sacrifice of the “ego”, which is the evil of all behavior.
10. The role and functions of the church need to be redefined in line with current changes and socio-economic needs of people.
11. Biblical Christianity is a dynamic process born in a change setting, and since it introduces change in the life of individuals and society, it resists being bound by narrow ethnocentrism.
12. The mission of the church of Jesus Christ is to introduce Christ into the lives of people everywhere, despite cultural differences.
13. To demonstrate the changes of norms experienced from moving from one culture to the culture of the ministry.
14. To show that the local church does exemplify an integrated “Systems Theory Approach” in maintaining in social organization.

1.4 KEY QUESTIONS

The research will focus on answering, inter-alia, some of the following questions: -

1. How applicable are the past doctrines, principles and practices of Christianity.
2. What has changed and why? Therefore, how relevant were some of the past teachings?
3. How has the cultural history, belief systems and values of the Indian community helped to integrate Christians into their daily life?
4. What are the current socio-political, socio-economic and socio-religious needs of the Indian community within the context of the church, and how is the church to respond to this.
5. What should the role and functions of the Church be in current times?

These questions will enable the researcher to obtain relevant information in order to develop greater insights and an understanding of the influence of Indian Culture on the Indian Christian Church.

1.5 RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The hypotheses for the research study are as follows:

1. That the views, belief systems, attitudes, behaviors and ideologies of Indian Culture have contributed to reinforcing and enhancing the principles, teachings and doctrines of Christianity.
2. That the cultural aspects of Indian life have led to the successful adoption of the teachings and doctrines of Christianity.
3. That there is an important and interdependent relationship between Indian cultural values and the values of Christianity.
4. Indian people who were not Christians are currently more drawn to Christianity, because they are able to relate to the teachings of Christianity.
5. Christianity, like other religions espouse tolerance, respect for other, humility and a sacrifice of the “ ego”, which is the evil of all behavior.
6. The role and functions of the church need to be redefined in line with current changes and socio-economic needs of people.
7. Biblical Christianity is a dynamic process born in a change setting, and since it introduces change in the life of individuals and society, it resists being bound by narrow ethnocentrism.
8. The mission of the church of Jesus Christ is to introduce Christ into the lives of people everywhere, despite cultural differences.

1.6 SOME KEY CONCEPTS

1.6.1 Cultural Integration

National and political integration as well as community and cultural integration been discussed frequently by social scientists and politicians in developing and developed countries, and the debate is still going on currently exploring various aspects of the process. Studies were done by Indian scholars concerning different parts of the world, ranging from the rise of nation states in Europe, European economic integration, the reunification of Germany or Korea, the Federation of the West Indies or Malaysia onto the tendencies towards unity, diversity and disintegration in the African countries with their tribal differences and India's internal differences based on language, religion and caste. (Subramaniam 1979: 2-3).

These debates have, on the one hand given rise to a considerable amount of theorizing about the historical, social, political, economic and cultural factors that bring and keep people together in some form, and on the other, to discussing several techniques and tricks to keep them apart or bind them. In this process, however, the cultural factors receive only marginal attention in their own right either in academic or political debate, and are discussed in a manner usually related to ethnicity and factors flowing there from. Social scientists propose that in order to achieve cultural integration involve bypassing cultural differences by socio-economic means, by educating individuals towards accepting a

common identity, and assisting individuals to change old restrictive mindset through religious affiliation and understanding.

Academic literature on integration is based upon the implicit premise that any integration of things cultural is meaningful only as a prelude to political integration, that is, the creation of a cohesive nation state with identifiable loci of political decisions regarding the allocation of resources. It rarely discusses cultural integration in its own right as a separate process viable in itself (Subramaniam 1979: 1-3).

Indian integration has been achieved and refurbished without much relation to political integration and the research will focus on how these transitional changes have been achieved through the influence of Indian culture.

1.6.2 The Process of Enculturation

The concept of socialization in sociology or enculturation in anthropology provides insight into the transmission of the norm of a group. Through this process a person learns what is expected of him or her in a given situation. The process of enculturation can bring an outsider (either through birth or through migration) into a comfortable relationship to the society within a period of two to five years. An individual must respond correctly, both consciously and unconsciously, to the various stimuli within situations, permitting others to see that he is adapting. Anything short of this dynamic, involving adaptation to the new society and its cultural ways, produces breakdown in communication. The agent of change must know the system of the culture before he can effectively participate in its change (Mayers 1987: 89-90).

1.6.3 Culture and Christianity

Culture is the shaping of human existence, while Christianity bears witness to the lordship of Jesus Christ that is not of this world, though fully oriented to it. Christianity without culture or cultural impact is historically unknown and inconceivable. Western cultures cannot be understood apart from their links to Christianity. Our problem is to correctly distinguish the two concepts and to consider both the positive and negative aspects of their relationship.

In its origin, the Christian message is related to a specific culture. We must thus ask the nature of Christianity's tie to that original culture, whether it remains the same when immersed into changing cultures, and whether it can be reconciled with history. We must also enquire into the mediation of culture and Christianity and the role of the churches in the process.

1.6.4 Acculturation

"Truly I say unto you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me" (Mt. 25:40).

Inevitably contextualisation, which may be described as the vital feature of missionary presence and missionary work, has received a new and intense perspective. It is no longer only a matter of pedagogical-pastoral adaptation of liturgy, homiletics or catechesis, but more a step forward in Christology and a summons to systematic theology. It is no longer

possible to think about the principle of adaptation as a question of missionary strategy. Rather, adaptation must be understood as an interpretation and an exploration – which are important and ever and again necessarily new- of the whole tradition regarding the Christ-event, as it exists now, in its contacts with nonbiblical cultures and patterns of humanity.

An acculturative process of this nature affects not simply a few aspects of the cultural encounter between Christians and non-Christians, so that doctrine, ethical and symbolical expressions, liturgical usage, and socioreligious institutions change. Nor does a dialogue based on these elements aim at a cross-fertilization of different cultural and religious elements. Least of all does the reference to the cultural-anthropological relativity of all human reality serve as a mere observation on incidental change, in which two religious groups, one' own and alien one, are involved through a dialogical process. Under discussion is what might be referred to as “qualitative catholicity,” that is, to abandon oneself in faith and trust to a yet unknown presence of God and Christ in alien persons and to accept such a communication in contemplation and thanksgiving. In this way the individual as well as the entire church set out on a pilgrimage toward the final advent of God’s reign.

1.6.5 Inculturation

“To the Jews I became a Jew...to those under the law I became as one under the law...to those outside the law I became as one outside the law”
(1 Cr. 9:20-21).

Ever since the discussions at the Third Synod of Catholic Bishops in 1974 at Rome, the wish to transpose the gospel message, theological formulations, and ecclesiastical lifestyles and to assimilate them with various cultures has also found its way into the vocabulary of the Catholic Church. The Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (Dec. 8, 1975) on “Evangelization in the Modern World” very distinctly referred to this desire to translate the gospel message “without the slightest betrayal of its essential truth into the language that these particular people understand,” and suggested that, “The transposition has to be done with the discernment, seriousness, respect and competence which the matter calls for in the field of liturgical expression, and in the areas of catechesis, theological formulation, secondary ecclesial structures, and ministries.” And very pointedly the text continues: “The word ‘language’ should be understood here less in the semantic or literary sense than in the sense which one may call anthropological and cultural.”

1.6.6 Incarnation

“Have this mind among yourselves, which was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men” (Phil. 2:5-7).

If it is necessary to integrate all cultural structures, then God’s incarnation in Jesus Christ is no exception to the rule – the more so if we consider that in this fact man’s value has been greatly enhanced. In this light one wonders what to make of the objection, so often brought against theological contextualization, that Christ is neither African, Roman,

French, American, nor Jew, as he does not belong to any nation. Such a view fails to see a definite link between the mysteries of God's incarnation in Jesus Christ with human life. My belief that the Christ-event implies universal redemption does not contradict the cultural limitation of the human nature of Christ in Jesus of Nazareth. On the contrary, it presupposes this if it is not itself to be spiritually disincarnated. Seen in a cultural-anthropological context, God became not "merely man" in Christ, but a man conditioned by Hebrew-Aramaic-Semitic culture.

A careful analysis of what Christian witness ought to be is no longer simply factual, but it has begun to disturb the dreams that once inspired the missionary movement, and to undermine the traditional view that missionary culture is superior. Criticism is directed more & more against the paternalistic missionary attitude that had solutions for a non-Christian world. Whereas it must be admitted that missionaries did an enormous volume of work among people of other faiths, unfortunately there cannot be any doubt that missionaries have made incalculable mistakes in carrying out their message. For this reason, reorientation for cross-cultural communication should be a priority in future Christian witness in South Africa.

1.6.7 Culture

a. The word "culture" (from Lat. *Colo*, "till, cultivate, honor," and *cultural*, "cultivation, training"), even in antiquity, denoted both the outer cultivating of nature and the inner cultivating of the mind and soul

(*cultura animi*). Up to the 18th century the primary reference was to the perfecting of one's physical, mental, and spiritual qualities.

In the 19th century another meaning was added to this more individual sense. "Culture" now came to embrace all kinds of human works and constructs, including the tending of nature, the raising of plants and animals, utensils, tools and machines, nourishment, practices of sleep and locomotion, types of human expression, - language, government, social institutions, customs, moral norms, mythical and religious ideas, magical and cultic practices (i.e. rituals and ceremonies), symbols, the knowledge and interpretation of reality in philosophy and- science, works of art, and educational ideals. Reference began to be made of the cultures of geographic or social units, of broader traditions (e.g., Western culture - Tradition), of an epoch (e.g., the Middle Ages), or of a people or class. Everyday language also employs a valuative concept of culture; only works of higher value are designated as culture. Such valuation is also at work in the distinction common in German between *Kultur* (intellectual culture) and *Zivilisation* (material culture).

b. Mitchell (1968:47) defines culture as a complex whole that includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities acquired by an individual as a member of society. It is a historically transmitted pattern of meanings transmitted in symbols.

c. The different definitions of "culture," it suffices here to state that by culture is understood "the totality of practices and customs, which are developed by a group of people and transferred from one generation to the next." This circumlocution stresses that culture is the outcome of

human initiative and possesses a social prominence, which lives in its transmission. Consequently, we understand culture to be a totality, which develops and which is corporative and plural.

Culture is a plan, according to which society adapts itself to its physical, social and ideological environment (Hesselgrave 1978:68). Persons wishing to convey a message to other cultures must learn before they can tell, and listen before they can speak. They need not only to know the exact meaning of the message for their audience, but also to understand the world in which the message must be communicated. Culture is a human-made part of the environment and functions as total equipment of ideas for survival. No human being or group of human beings can ever be without culture. The exchange of meanings between cultures on a footing of mutual respect and co-existence is a necessary condition of Christian witness in the plurality of cultures.

Conflicts in the communication between cultures will necessarily develop where one party seeks to dominate or suppress the others (Amaladass 1990: 11). The co-existence of cultures, not merely as private properties, but as having a public responsibility in society, becomes possible only when every culture is able to make space for other cultures. This includes a much wider concept than tolerance. It entails acceptance of others as equal participants.

1.6.8 Concept of Plurality of Culture

Possible definitions of culture are so numerous that it might be better to use the plural “cultures”. Cultures result from our encounter with nature

and generate decisive values. Since cultures are governed by the dynamics of the life and survival of human societies, they can and must adjust to new situations and compensate for the loss of past values by new meanings and changes in the cultural system. In this regard, religion plays a vital part in all cultures and civilizations.

Cultural plurality presupposes that there are many different cultures that are equally active in the world (Streng 1968:251). Christian churches have always known that religions were plural and that there were other religions than theirs. This consciousness of plurality has raised a number of problems because the church was convinced on a number of grounds that Christianity was the only truly valid religion, the only effective “way”. That we now speak of missiological implications of plurality. Means that a new assessment of its meaning in Christian witness has emerged. The new understanding includes and adds the concept of the equality of cultures and demands respect for one another’s integrity for the elimination of conflicts in the exchange of meaning. This new awareness in plurality of cultures is forcing the dominant western culture to shift its traditional center to include other cultures into the area of truth (Gilroy 1989: 39). The quest is to remove all imbalances, including the western position of clear superiority, to one of parity. This shift in cultural consciousness in turn has a vast effect on missiological consciousness – namely, witness among equals. For effective intercultural witness, or sharing of meanings to take root, the playing fields should be leveled. A measure of credibility from the sending culture should be shown. Where there is injustice and inequality, the agents should overtly fight this situation in order to get to ground level. It is only when the “objects” of witness are empowered and accepted as equal partners that

authentic and lasting communication can take place. Cultural plurality should drive the church in the direction of ecumenical tolerance.

Effective Christian witness in the plurality of cultures compels the church to recognize and distinguish two fundamental kinds of positioning. The difference between symmetrical and asymmetrical communication follows.

1.6.9 Symmetrical Communication

In a symmetrical conflict both parties involved are on a more or less equal level of power and resources. The deterrence like political influence, military strength and economic power define the level of power that a community has. A symmetrical situation often leads to the recognition by each side that the other is a partner in communication. It is possible to encourage a free flow of information between both partners. If both parties recognize this, it is not impossible for them to find common basis upon which they can freely interact. The opposite of symmetrical witness, is asymmetrical witness.

1.6.10 Asymmetrical Communication

In an asymmetrical communication process, the partners are situated at different levels of power and resources. Political influence, military strength, economic power, and so on, are unequally distributed among the participants. The superior tends to impose its ideas on the inferior. Power imbalances corrode self-confidence in the weaker partner. In such a case a strategy of empowerment should first be employed.

1.6.11 Messengers – A Problem

i) The problem with Christian witness worldwide has largely been the agents themselves. Their actions were sometimes highly controversial. In the eyes of the recipients of the witness, missionaries were agents of distortion of their cultural heritage. It was common for missionaries to view their cultures as a pinnacle of humanity's achievements. Western civilization seemed demonstrably superior in its technology, industry, political institutions and weapons. Without reflecting much on the implications of their actions, missionaries tried to carry the Christian message across, and found it hard to distinguish between cultural imperialism and Christian witness. In this way, they were aggressive towards African belief systems. These aggressions involved expressing their thoughts, feelings and belief in a way that was often dishonest and violated the rights of black people. The goal was to dominate and win – forcing the African people to lose in every sphere of life. Their basic attitude was that of an aggressive act, presenting their worldview as universal and that of other faith as stupid and irrelevant. Feelings of others did not matter to them.

In South Africa, for example, the use of political and economic force to impose a foreign culture was preferred. A host of discriminatory laws were passed by the white parliament to control the destination of black people. This cultural domination was characterized by an ethnocentric posture on the part of the white ruling minority. At this cardinal point, where would one expect the church to be a catalyst for change, it became an agent fostering dependence, legitimizing only the white people's

interests in South Africa. Black struggle in the political and social arena could form part of a total strategy for cultural equilibrium. Their task should be to develop a counter-hegemonic culture in South African society (Kritzinger 1988: 215). Such an approach should maximize the likelihood of interaction of parties belonging to different cultural camps, and enhance dialogue.

Culture is not static and fixed. It is elastic. The concept of culture is comprehensive and dynamic so as to allow for adaptation and development. Authentic Christian witness immersed in love can be developed effectively between cultures where faith in God could take root. In such circumstances, witness means engaging in a process of sharing faith, hope and love in the 'mobility of human cultural and religious history' (Hoedemaker 1991: 205).

ii). **The Multiformity of Christianity**

Christianity must be seen in its different forms when we consider its relation to cultures. Here, we must distinguish between the gospel, Christian history and theology. The gospel denotes God's communication with us in the person, life and history of the one who loved his own to the very end and who gave the promise of the kingdom of God especially to the marginalized and to those without rights. The communication of the gospel through human word and cultures must be seen in the context of the condescension of God and the integration of the world into Gods plan. In the history of Christianity the gospel that has been handed down has entered into many new cultural arrangements.

1.6.12 The Concept of Norm

The term “norm” has many uses in scholarly literature. “Norm generally denotes what is normative, that which is the foundation for expectation within society” (Mayers 1987: 78) When some one acts in a particular manner, given a particular situation, he is in fact acting according to what is normative of that society. Hence the dynamics of Indian Culture play a significant role in determining the behavior and values espoused by Indian Christians. Some of the underlying norms of humility, tolerance, survival against adversities, subservience, a will to succeed against restrictions, all factors which demonstrate in this research, that Indian Culture has strong links with Christian norms, values and behavior, and serves to reinforce a Christian way of life.

The sum of expectations within a given society is the collection of norms of that society. Many Indian people have, therefore, adopted the teachings and doctrines of Christianity, as it symbolizes a fusion of Indian Culture with a more pragmatic view and application of life. Mayers states that the norms of any social group equal the sum of its values, norms, expectations, rules and aspirations. In turn the norms of an individual within a society or social group equals all of the norms of the groups of which he has been, or is a part. Thus the role and functions of the church are in a process of constant modification and refinement to respond to the needs of individuals or groups at any given point in time.

Christianity is responsive to the needs of people within their cultural context. As many Indian Christians originally originate from cultural backgrounds, which were not Christian, the thesis will examine their

cultural orientations and what prompted them to make the full transition to Christianity. The aspects of Indian Culture will also be examined, in relation to how these strengthened some of the Christian values.

1.6.13 Maintaining One's Norm

By maintaining one's norm, one is maintaining identity and the authenticity of one's identity. For some reason, all religions put pressure on the person or group to remain constant in identity. The naïve person assumes that to maintain authenticity, one needs to maintain one's norm. This unfortunately is the "one-culture" approach, which was referred to by Mayers (1987: 80). Christianity responds to clarify such ethnocentrism, and takes positive steps through its teachings to expand the knowledge of people so that they adopt a more wholesome and pragmatic perspective of life, while still retaining the positive elements of their identity and cultural values.

1.6.14 Change of Norm

Mayers states that: "Every norm, whether individual or corporate, has a built-in mechanism for change, i.e., zone of experimentation." (Mayers 1987: 84). When one is living in deprivation of norm, by choice or because he is forced to, positive reactions of pleasure or negative reactions of irritation or bitterness may result. One's norms are constantly changing in significant ways that either encourage or discourage the growth and development of the person.

With the significant changes of transformation, and the concomitant social, political, economic and technological pressures, many individuals are moving towards adopting a religion that they think is more responsive to addressing some of these factors.

1.7 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I firstly set out to identify the social context of my research, followed by a statement of my major objectives of the study, key questions and a statement of my research hypothesis. In considering the nature of this research, I found it imperative to define a few crucial and significant concepts that will emerge in the course of this research.

After establishing the research design, I will provide an historical overview of the emergence of the Indian Church in South Africa.

CHAPTER TWO
THE EMERGENCE OF THE INDIAN CHRISTIAN
CHURCH IN
SOUTH AFRICA

2.1 INTRODUCTION: LITERATURE SURVEY

The background relating to the immigration of Indians from India, their religious orientations and backgrounds, and the transition from their previous religious beliefs to Christianity is important to contextualize within the scope of this research. The emigration of agricultural labourers, artisans and traders from the Indian sub-continent to various parts of the British Empire began soon after the emancipation of slaves in 1833 and continued until 1917.

The issue of Culture and Christianity has wide interest throughout the world, specifically with regard to its usage in missionary work. My objective is to design a practical guide which draws insights from various fields of behavioral sciences, academic disciplines, scholarly views and viable case studies conducted in the Indian area of Chatsworth to enable individuals to make a paradigm shift so that they are able to see the inter-relationship between the demands of today and the work of the Church through their own culture.

According to Mayers, “ Each change in our lives and in the world about us forces us into a change of perspective and a change of background – in effect, a change of culture” (Mayers 1987: xi). The purpose of this dissertation is to make it easier to handle differences of culture and subculture more gracefully, and to understand the integration of Indian Culture with Christianity so that we can build on the capacity of our congregation to lead a more wholesome quality of life. Mayers in his book quoted above says that: “Culture is everything that is part of one’s everyday life experience”. It includes: -

- a) Tangibles such as food, shelter, clothing, literature, art, music etc.
- b) Intangibles such as hopes, dreams, values, rules, space, relationships, language, body movements etc. (Mayers 1987: xi).

The purpose of this research is also to understand some of the cultural dynamic prevalent in the Indian community, and to link these to the development, evolution and refinement of some of the teachings and principles applicable to Christianity. I therefore propose that we examine some of the following dynamics.

“Every individual has his own expression of culture. When two entities come together, there is a cross-cultural encounter because no two individuals have the same list of, or integration of, cultural details. However, when people agree to recognize themselves as members of the same culture, they obviate differences, but when shared features are minimal and a distinctive entity emerges, people from this emergent group see themselves as a different culture. Cross-cultural encounters thus occur between subcultures and, more noticeably between two

distinct cultural groups. These often impair the quality of encounters between individuals, and places impediments in learning and integration” (Mayers 1987: ix)

Christianity focuses on how the Christian can work with change in a change setting, and how the Christian can work with cultural differences and still maintain a sound Christian faith rooted firmly in the Holy Scriptures. The mission of the church is to introduce Christ and His teachings into the lives of people everywhere: “Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation” (Mark 16:15). The gospel of Jesus Christ is not tied to one culture but allows all individuals to transcend his own culture.

This does not imply that we must attempt to establish a “Christian Culture”. Rather Christianity leads to the regeneration of specific cultures by the work of grace within the hearts and lives of Christians living within those cultures.

The dissertation also examines the social structure in the Indian Culture, within the context of promoting Christian values, norms and activities. The model of this group of society is examined under the following headings:-

1. The norms of the group or of an individual within the group is generally the sum total of all the values, norms, rules, expectations, aspirations etc. of the group or individual. This is referred to as Culture.

2. Social organization will be looked at from the perspective that it comprises the network of social relations that structures the social organization in which the group or individuals operate.
3. One needs to know and be sensitive to the identity factors of a group or individuals within the group.
4. The dissertation highlights that the activities in which the group or individual participates, helps to further define its identity and values.
5. Values underlie all that the society is and does. Cognition motivates values and establishes how they will operate within the society.
6. Conflict of norm is the disruptive tension that results when one seeks to change one's norms or moves into some cross-cultural or cross-sub-cultural setting those forces a change in the norm.

The dissertation will examine each one of these components in much more detail within the influence of Indian Culture on the Church

2.2 BACKGROUND : EMIGRATION OF INDIANS TO SOUTH AFRICA

According to G. Naidoo (2001: 6-8), "The movement of Indians outside of India is interesting. Contrary to popular belief that Indians began emigrating onto South African soil in 1860; it is historically recorded that

Indians made their first appearance as slaves into South Africa in 1653. E.S. Reddy who was head of the Anti-Apartheid Commission in the United States for many years records the following:-

“Soon after Jan van Riebeeck set up a Dutch settlement at the Cape of Good Hope in 1652 to supply to Dutch ships plying to and fro from India and the East Indies, people from India were taken to the Cape and sold into slavery to do domestic work for the settlers, as well as the dirty and hard work on the farms...

A woman from Bengal named Mary was bought for Jan van Riebeeck in Batavia in 1653. Two years later in 1665, Van Riebeeck purchased a family from Bengal, Domingo and Angela and their three children from the Commander of a Dutch ship returning from Asia to Holland. On the 21 May 1656, the marriage was solemnized at the Cape between Jan Wouters, a white and Catherine of Bhengal who were liberated from slavery. Jan van Riebeeck sold Angela, who had taken care of his children to Abraham Gabbema, his deputy and law officer. Gabbema granted freedom to Angela and her three children before he departed from the Cape in 1666, except that she was required to work for six months in the home of Thomas Christoffel Muller. She integrated easily into the white community even while continuing relations with her friends whom were still in slavery. She asked for and obtained a plot of land in the Table Valley in February 1667.... Until the late eighteenth century, when the import of slaves from Asia was prohibited, many hundreds, if not thousands of persons from India mainly from Bengal, Coromandel Coast of Kerala were taken to the Cape and sold into slavery.

Ship's officers and officials of the Dutch East India Company returning to Holland usually took slaves or servants with them at a high profit in the Cape (slaves could not be taken to Holland where slavery was abolished). While most of the Indians were obtained from the Dutch trading posts in India, had brought a considerable number. Most of the Asian slaves worked on the farms and were treated cruelly as were the Africans. There were almost as many (if not more) slaves from India as from Indonesia..." (Naidoo 2001: 6-8).

Emigration of Indians to Natal began in 1860 as a result of a need for indentured labourers to work on the sugarcane plantations. Although there was considerable opposition to the importing of indentured labourers from various sectors, the Law 14 of the Natal Government made it legal to import Indians from India. The first group of immigrants arrived on the S.S. Truro on the 16th November 1860 from Madras. The second ship the S.S. Belvedere arrived on the 26th November 1860 from Calcutta, and these followed regular shipments until July 1866, with about 6445 disembarking during this period. Another economic recession then halted demands for more labourers for the next few years, and on 13th February 1871, some returned to India on the Red Riding Hood. The first indentured labourers who completed their contracts and returned to India complained to the Indian Authorities about the conditions of their indenture, and the stark differences in culture and social factors. However, in 1874 immigration began again and thereafter a steady flow of men, women and children arrived each year until the Indian Authorities finally terminated the Natal scheme in 1911.

A total of 152 184 indentured immigrants arrived from India between 1860 and 1911 as well as a considerable number of “Passenger” Indians who had come at their own expense under the ordinary immigration laws of the colony. Both groups included a predominance of Hindus, but the immigrants included Muslims, Christians, and a few Parsees and a handful of Buddhists, all of who were free to practice their religion and to have their place of worship (Brain 1983: 4).

It is with the Christian minority and the final transition of other religious groups to the successful adoption of Christianity that this is concerned, as it also examines the integration of Indian culture and values into the Christian faith (Brain 1983: 4).

Research on the history of any Christian denomination in the 19th century Natal raises the subject of Indian Christians and how Indian Christians have integrated their Indian cultural past into the Christian faith.

Questions such as how many Indian Christians immigrated from India, i.e. what proportion of the group had been baptized in India, and what happened to those Christians when they arrived in Natal, are important in this study. The Indian community in South Africa is an example of an immigrant group with considerable cultural variety and diversity. Upon the arrival of the immigrant groups to Natal, they encountered, not one, but two, major foreign cultural influences in the new land. Settling mainly in Natal, the immigrants encountered, on the one hand, the Zulu culture of Africa, and on the other, the Western culture of the British and the Afrikaner population groups.

The western way of life was seen as having a number of commonly found characteristics at that time, viz., dominance of the Christian religion, a high degree of industrialization, an inclination towards democratic state structures, and a certain unity of values, norms, traditions and customs (Schoombee and Mantzaris 1985: 51, 53).

Srinivas suggests: “ It is inevitable that the degree of acceptance and acculturation of various groups towards an imported or indigenous cultures varies considerably” (Srinivas 1960: 20).

Records of immigration maintained by the Department of Indian Affairs contain ninety-one volumes of which sixty-two relate to ships from Madras and twenty-nine with vessels from Calcutta. These volumes record personal data of the immigrants, which include inter-alia. the details pertaining to caste. Christian immigrants supplied one of the following alternatives in the column marked caste: Christian; Syrian Christian: Native Christians; Mala Christians; Pariah Christians or more rarely Roman Catholic or Protestant. This information reaffirms that a number of immigrants were of Christian faith, importing different denominations of the Christian religion. This is a significant finding, as later in the study, with the move of Non-Christian Indians to the adoption of the Christian faith, we will notice patterns of integration and acculturation which not only shaped the principles of Christianity, but also drew somewhat heavily from the values, principles and norms prevailing in the Indian culture.

While there have not been any studies on the current research topic, there are some important studies, which could adequately shed some insights

on the topic under review:- Oosthuizen (1975: 2), states: “Various factors have laid the foundation for Pentecostal penetration amongst Indians. These include the breaking up of the joint family system, legislation affecting Indians, caste discrimination of the established churches, language difficulties, incompetence to read religious texts and disintegration of the Hindu caste system”.

2.3 LEGISLATION

Oosthuizen discusses how various legislations that were passed in the last century made the Indian community insecure. For example, the 1897 Indian Immigration Restriction Act imposed educational, health and means tests against non-indentured Indians who sought admission into Natal, Transvaal or the Cape Province; and the Franchise Act of 1896 disenfranchised Indians (Oosthuizen 1975: 2). Indians, like all other so-called non-white groups, experienced political insecurity in this country (by virtue of being treated as second class citizens). If Indians were removed from the local authorities and were politically insecure, as Oosthuizen states, how could Pentecostalism provide an answer? The Pentecostal Church did not provide any political solutions. It just created a sense of false security by encouraging Pentecostals not to participate in the political spheres.

The research also examines current legislative factors and post-apartheid factors that have contributed to influences of Indian culture on Indian Christianity.

2.4 DISCRIMINATION OF ESTABLISHED CHURCHES

Other possible reasons for the Pentecostal revival as Oostenhuizen suggests relates to the discrimination of the Established Churches. As it must be acknowledged that many white dominated churches were invariably instruments of the state, and most of its doctrines and teachings those of white dominated ministers, the church currently has a considerable responsibility to adapt and modify the way it offers Christianity to Indian people, while at the same time, is responsive to the changing times. This element therefore is explored more in depth in this study, and other scholarly view sought and cited.

In the Pentecostal movement, Indian women who converted to Christianity were not stopped from wearing their traditional dress codes, i.e. the sari or their Tali or Tikka (red dot on forehead – all of which are sacred symbols of Indian culture). The point made by Oosthuizen is significant, for the Roman Catholics were generally aloof and adopted a superior attitude towards Indians. Oosthuizen states that Indian Roman Catholics were quick to disband Indian styles of dress and culture in general (Oosthuizen 1975: 4-7), thus reaffirming that the more conservative churches did impose some of their own values on their Indian congregation, thus taking away elements of identity and independence.

The Pentecostal missionary movement was aware that cultural values, modes of dress and norms of behavior were important to Indians. For instance there was no stigma attached to dawn the Indian garb, viz. wearing the sari, using the Tali, dot, or singing, speaking and praying in

the vernacular. Pentecostal converts did not lose their Indian characteristics.

According to Nadar (2001:55), “The way in which the Bible is interpreted concerning certain matters of dress code is interesting. In the past, as was advocated by Pastor Rowlands and others, a woman had to have her head covered with a piece of material (scarf). Almost every woman within the church followed this practice until very recently (the last ten years). Currently there are only a small number of women who still follow this practice. As almost all the women I spoke to, as the starting point to their faith, the authority and infallibility of the Bible, it is interesting to hear their ‘new’ interpretations of Paul’s injunction for women to have their heads covered. The most interesting idea was that this passage was misunderstood because it was taken too literally. The passage, one woman said, was supposed to have, not a literal meaning, but a figurative one – therefore Paul means that a woman’s covering is her husband. Although the woman found no problem in reinterpreting the Scriptures, their interpretations still leaned toward patriarchal bias. Almost all the women I spoke to believed in the submission of a woman to a man. The way that was explained was that a woman was supposed, lovingly and willingly, to submit to a man’s will and do what makes him happy. However, there was no room for the man to submit to the woman. It was also interesting to see how different women approached the various Biblical texts and how clichés that are actually harmful to women are used, not just by men, but by women too.

2.5 CASTE SYSTEM

The caste system has been an important factor in attracting Hindus to Christianity. It is necessary to explain the concept of the caste system, before expanding on Oosthuizen's view on the caste system.

According to the Rig-Veda, Hindu Society is hierarchically organized. It is stated that from the Hindu God Brahma, the four castes were derived. From the head of Brahma, the Brahmin (priests) were derived; from the arms and shoulders of Brahma, the Kshatriyas (warrior/nobility caste), from the waist/loins of Brahma, the Vaisya (Agriculturalists and trader castes), from the feet of the Brahma, the servant caste (Sudra) was created. The caste, which falls outside this caste hierarchy, is the untouchable caste, the Harijans or Dalits or Pariahs. Whether these views are deliberately concocted by the Brahmin (priests), in order to further their own interests, or whether these ideologies are myths will not be debated, as it falls outside the scope of the research topic. However, these views and beliefs did create barriers amongst the Indian community; possibly a mechanism to retain control and divide at the same time.

Caste may be defined as: "A hereditary, endogamous, usually localized group having a traditional association with an occupation and holding a particular position in the local hierarchy of castes" (Srinivas 1962: 3).

Upon arrival in South Africa, Indians did not observe caste rules. Caste became irrelevant as Indians were housed in barracks, without any consideration for caste, and other restrictive rules, as their existence was now determined on survival together as a minority group.

2.6 ANECDOTAL HISTORY

Pentecostals do not consult the almanac for auspicious days regarding marriage. They do not restrict marriages to so-called 'lucky months'. Children born in mid-July/mid-August are not considered to develop into rogues and thieves. The first, third and fifth children of Tamils are lucky if girls, while the fourth, sixth and eighth are especially unlucky if girls, the sixth and eighth are lucky if boys. Children are born during the Deepavali Festival are considered naughty.

To a greater extent the distance that westerners maintain in family relationships comes to the fore in the Hindu society also, a further sign that the traditional society is disintegrating, giving scope to other forces to enter it. While among Tamils close kin may marry each other in certain cases, this is never allowed among the Hindi. Christian influence leads more to the Hindi approach. There is a close relationship between son and mother with the Hindi, often resented by the daughter-in-law. This relationship is also obvious in Pentecostal families when both are Christian but is affected when the mother remains Hindu. She then considers her child to be wrongly informed and apostate. In this case however a Pentecostal son will take care of his aged Hindu parents. While women in Hindu families have their meals separate from their husbands, in many Pentecostal families are enjoyed together and family prayers are held at the table. Scripture reading and prayer play a central role in Pentecostal homes.

Among Indian South Africans basic kinship groups are defined with little precision and vernacular terms are largely replaced by English terms. Kinship ties are however seldom completely severed

Pentecostals do not practice the avoidance customs prevalent among Hindu and Gujarati speaking sections by which a woman avoids any relationship with her husband's eldest (or elder) brother. Among Hindi speaking Hindus the bridegroom's eldest brother symbolically ties a necklace round the neck of the bride after which they avoid each other (Jithoo 1970: 101). Among the educated and Pentecostals this custom is not upheld.

The home language is affected as a result of the process of westernisation. As the westernisation process continues the Indian vernacular languages are further affected. New approaches to the fundamentals of existence were made or experimented with and the old ones were modified. English became the lingua franca and in many instances the home language. Competition with those who had 'arrived' became an issue. Whereas family goals overruled individual roles, the opposite is now true. Individual decision-making receives precedence. Joint families break up due to the Group Areas Act, where housing provisions do not make provisions for these joint families. Another factor is that sons move to better residential areas and distances from work left very little time for family-gatherings. High salaried members of the joint family also refuse to be a part of it, as they have to bear most of the brunt financially.

Differences in outlook between younger and older generation's plus a difference in living standards give a greater opportunity for further segmentation. Here the formation of Pentecostal groups surrogates for the joint family. It has always been considered by the Hindu that religion be performed by joint families. Much more effective than that by an individual member or nuclear family. Pentecostalism is the religion of the group.

Pentecostalism has one of its major causes this process of individualisation, namely a decision in which an important step is made into Pentecostal Christianity, which emphasises personal decision and not Christian tradition as in the established church, where one can be a Christian, based on one's parents descent.

Certain barriers to change exist: (1) Psychological barriers: (i) conservation of old people; (ii) fear of the unknown; (iii) habit; (iv) reverence for the past; (v) moral principle; apprehension concerning the moral consequences. (2) Cultural barriers: Values and attitudes: Tradition (fatalism: whatever happens is the will of God –strong in certain aspects of Hinduism), cultural ethnocentrism-superiority of one's own culture pride and dignity- pride in their tradition and way of life. (3) Social Barriers: group solidarity, rigidity of the social structure (Pillay 1972: 25).

2.7 CULTURAL IDENTITY

The residents of Chatsworth could be termed expatriates who were victims of expropriation by the Group Areas; hence they came from

diverse backgrounds, religious orientations and cultures. They had to adapt to a new set of unwritten rules, an unknown culture, while striving to maintain their own cultural identity.

Cultural identity and belonging are not simply ascribed or inherited by birth; they also – and more importantly - emerge from processes in which people are slowly educated by those around them to make judgments the group considers appropriate about a great host of things, and to make meta-judgments about the relative value of their own and others' judgment. Judgments are made in widely disparate domains, and to the extent that the standards in these domains cohere and are shared by members of the group, we may speak of cultural integration. Hence, residents of Chatsworth developed their own group identity, values and coping skills. The process of integration had thus begun in its own way for this group of the Indian population.

Perfect integration, of course, is never accomplished, and there are always disagreements that separate fractions of the group from one another. These cultural divides indicate lines of actual or potential conflict, and they often correlate to differences that are social, economic, generational and /or geographical in nature. Such differences notwithstanding, a viable degree of integration remains possible even within a diverse population, so long as the group's defining principles are not overly narrow, rigid or monolithic. Ideally they identify a range of possibilities in which differences and discussion are permitted, even encouraged, with the result that actors can interact in situations of lively interest and debate specific judgments of specific items. In the process,

they can gradually renegotiate their values, while also reaching finely tuned meta-judgments about themselves and each other.

The political, economic and social pressures contributed to individuals searching for some degree of stability, which the emerging Churches in the area offered through their teachings and acceptance of Indians despite their religious differences.

2.8 RELIGION AND CULTURE

Religion is a social phenomenon, which is always to be found fully blended with the way of life of individuals and communities. It is impossible to find an individual who practices religion in isolation from culture. Let us express this observation differently. If we wish to find out how one person is culturally distinct from another, religion will be a very significant indicator of distinction. It happens that most prominent cultural achievements of every community, are religious artifacts – places of worship; ritual practices and paraphernalia; clothes of religious hierarchy; religious art; music; religious organizations; and so on.

It is therefore impossible to study any religion without studying the cultural contexts in which the religion is manifested. Conversely, it is impossible to conduct a comprehensive study of any culture, without including its religious components.

Religion is both an individual and a societal affair. The same could be said of culture. Whatever is manifested as the culture of people can be

found at the micro level in the lives of individuals that compose that society.

Culture is a social product, dependent upon a person's understanding and interpretation of themselves and their environment. Every generation ends up reconstructing the culture it has inherited from previous generations. This reconstruction is conducted under the direction of opinion leaders. The majority in every society are followers.

Culture is defined as the cumulative manifestation of a person's achievements over generations and in physical space. Culture has six pillars. It is important to appreciate that religion, as a social phenomenon is an important pillar of culture, intricately related to other pillars viz., politics, economics, ethics, aesthetics, religion and kinship (Mugambi 1996: 5).

Religion can be defined in many different ways. The following are analogies cited by Mugambi (1996: 5), to assist us to appreciate religion and culture in human individuals and communities:

i) Religion is the 'fabric' with whom human beings as individuals and communities weave the web of their social existence. The pursuit of Christianity for many Indian people in the Chatsworth and surrounding areas has therefore become an established way of life, as it espouses a more refined, cosmopolitan and acceptable way of living in current times.

ii) Religion is the 'compass' with which human beings as individuals and communities, 'steer the ship' of their social existence. We are living in

troubled times, where the impact of change and transformation coupled with uncertainty, fear, crime, hijacking, robberies, rape etc, and the impact of westernization is having a deleterious effect on our daily lives. Christianity provides an anchor to many people who are caught floundering and confused by what life brings with it on a daily basis.

iii) Religion is the radar through which human beings as individuals and communities monitor the starting point and destination in their search for personal and social identity. Christians are offered direction and focus, which is conveyed through the philosophy and doctrines of their religion.

iv) Religion is the 'stethoscope' with which human beings, as individuals and communities, diagnose the pathological conditions of their social environment. Christianity helps Christians to understand what is going on around them and also to deal with the various pathologies manifested in any given point of time in their society and communities.

v) Religion is the 'slide rule' with which human beings, as individuals and communities identify their relationships with the rest of entities in the cultural and natural environment. Christianity promotes a philosophy, which espouses that every human being should be respected, irrespective of his or her personal circumstances. It does not promote divisions like the caste system, or differentiation based on wealth being a dictator of social status.

vi) Religion is the thermometer with which human beings as individuals and communities measure the heat generated by social and psychological tensions. Christianity, through its doctrines and teachings offering the

tablet, which cools down the temperature of psychological stress and tension, offers with it a state of bliss and peace of mind.

vii) Religion is the 'means' by which human beings define their sense of belonging within the cultural and natural environment.

viii) Religion is the set of beliefs and practices through which human beings as individuals and communities affirm the ultimate origin, ultimate purpose and ultimate destiny of all aspects of reality.

ix) Religion is what human beings do in the expression of their joys and sorrows, hopes and fears, failures and achievements, frustrations and expectations.

In scriptural religions, the authority for resolving doctrinal conflicts is vested in the sacred texts. However, this authority does not eliminate all the difficulties, because controversies remain over the principles of interpreting those texts. Christianity does not have any ambiguities in the interpretation of its scriptures, and all the denominations advocate and preach a common philosophy of Christianity.

Every culture has its collection of basic teachings about its self-understanding in relation to its history, environment and to other cultures. Religion has the most condensed creeds embodying these basic teachings. Hence Indians adopting Christianity carry their cultural heritage and understand that Christianity offers a more holistic understanding of themselves, their history, environment and those of other cultures.

Every culture has a set of ceremonial activities, which solemnize its identity. Rituals are common acts which, when performed on special occasions, are accorded special meaning for the purpose of conveying specific messages to both the participants and the observers. Religion serves as the most appropriate pillar to solemnize a community's self-understanding.

Indian followers who were previously Hindus, but converted to Christianity, were accustomed to ceremonial activities and rituals. Some of the rituals have applicability to issues of humanness, which is also common with teachings of Christianity, for example, respect for parents, brothers and sisters, and treating everyone with care, kindness and consideration.

2.9 CULTURAL ADAPTABILITY

A successful religion must also be culturally adaptable. Thus it should be acceptable in many cultures, without losing its essence, and without becoming burdensome to new cultures in which it is acceptable. If it becomes the organizing principle of a culture in which it is accepted, the culture should not become alienated from its historical roots by that acceptance.

2.10 DYNAMICS OF SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

Social transformation, or social reconstruction, is always effected through an interaction of the leaders of opinion and their followers, in every pillar of culture. Thus the conservative and the transformative forces are

always in tension, and the stance of reconstruction will depend on which of the forces becomes most influential. It is important to appreciate that conservative forces are not always of negative value.

If all societies were totally dynamic, it would be impossible for cultural character to emerge and become consolidated. The function of conservative forces is to consolidate those achievements, which they cherish, for whatever reasons they might have to convince the majority. Thus there will be times when conservatism is preferable to change. Likewise the transformative forces will be useful when indeed a culture needs change. If a culture becomes totally conservative, it would suffocate itself. Some cultures in the past have died because they lacked the capacity to transform themselves under changed circumstances. Each of the opposite tendencies, when promoted to their extremes, has their advantages, and also, their disadvantages.

2.11 CONCLUSION

This chapter focuses on the historical emergence of the Indian Church in South Africa, which is an important component to my research project. My initial steps were to provide a literature survey. This is followed by a background of the emigration of the Indians to South Africa, an analysis of the legislation, discrimination of the established churches, the caste system, anecdotal history and an analysis of the cultural identity phenomena. I then set out to understand the role of religion and culture, cultural adaptability and the dynamics of social transformation. Against this background my next chapter will focus on the Pentecostalism to the Indian community.

CHAPTER THREE
PENTECOSTALISM IN THE INDIAN COMMUNITY

**3.1 INDIAN VIEWS ON THE RELATION OF CHRISTIANITY
AND THE NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS**

The approach of Christianity to the non-Christian religions determined the field of theological enterprise. The existence and vitality of non-Christian religions challenge the Christian church as never before. In fact Christianity has hardly touched and hardly made an impact on the great religions of the world.

This is the challenge to the church today. There is a need for a re-thinking of Christian theology in terms, which would be intelligible to the church and to the Indian mind. Although the fundamental truths of Christianity must not be compromised, its foreignness in the cultural sense of the word has to be overcome. There is a deep concern to the Indians in this country for the selfhood of the church as this whole question is deeply related to the doctrine of the church.

Various reasons for an Indian Christian theology are obvious. One should, however, emphasise theology and not merely the geographical area. The church in South Africa have their own problems to face – problems such as poverty, sickness, marriage, illiteracy, dislocation of the national life because of the Group Areas Act, industrialisation, magic, resurgence of the indigenous religions, syncretism with its philosophic

idealism and the Gnostic – theosophical idea of tolerance and universality. The Hindu spirit in South Africa is reviving to such an extent that it becomes missionary and a spirit of equalization is in the air which is not only a characteristic of the church in South Africa today, but also in the West.

An Indian Christian theology must develop from the Christian spirit utilising Indian instruments. A real difficulty does arise when we talk about an Indian Christian theology. For several reasons there is a general misunderstanding as to the value of theology, with the result that many turn a cold shoulder upon it. One reason is attributable to the mechanical recitation of the creeds without actually understanding their meaning. This leads to the idea that they are really unnecessary to the spiritual life of the church as well as the individual, and in fact a positive hindrance to faith. They are veils hiding the true glory of Christ.

The church's tradition in as far as it is based on scripture, need never exclude the justification and development of an Indian Christian theology, as the church is a continuous entity whose very nature demands the spontaneity and flexibility of the Holy Spirit. The adverse approach to theology must not be sought in theology itself but in the circumstances, which caused a tendency to be rather on the line of imitation than of spontaneous creation to develop an Indian Christianity.

Independent patterns of conduct develop gradually. The church starts with 'conversion' and only after the spiritual life has developed to maturity does the process of intellectual reflection on Biblical truths

begin. The theological line is thus first, *acceptio*, then *possessio* and then *reflectio* of which *possessio* is the most significant. The important functions of reflection may be delayed when the Gospel, with all its implications, is not fully possessed since it has not fully penetrated the mind of the church, and also because theology is in a way a response to a need, namely for purposes of reputation, or defence of faith, it is in the early church, the churches in Asia and Africa that the church started in the fields of apologetics, and later the more positive aspects of theology became emphasised by giving instruction to members, catechists and ministers concerning their approach to the non-Christian religions (Oosthuizen 1972: 14-15).

3.2 'RITUALISTIC INTEGRATION' OF CHRISTIANITY AND NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS

According to Kumar (2002:1), both Christianity and non-Christian religions appropriated and assimilated elements of ritual from a variety of sources throughout their respective histories. In the process of assimilation, it was the Roman Catholic Church that sought to initially lead the process during the colonial period. According to Heitzman (1987: 791-826), 'ritual integration' was sought in the paradigm of political integration. The ceremonial centres were therefore influenced by political leaders. This was later developed further by Rudner (1987: 361-379), who argued that 'collective worship' at temples was inclined as part of political function.

In the Indian sub-continent, the first attempts with intercultural and interreligious integration of ritual elements was propounded by the Jesuit Priest, Robert de Nobili (1577-1651). Amongst his ritual integration were the sacred thread, sandal paste and tuft of hair (Smith-Diehl 1978:706).

Another contemporary of de Nobili was the French Benedictine Monk Henri Le Saux, known in India as Abhishiktananda. He attempted to combine the Hindu Advaitic experience with his Christian experience. According to Friesen (2001:4-5), at the Ashram Benedictine rules were followed, however, many Hindu customs and practices were incorporated into the daily life of the monks.

In the course of the nineteenth century, contemporary Hindu movements (e.g., the Ramakrishnaites, the Hare Krishna's and the Satya Saiites) have attempted the process of ritual integration. The Satya Sai movement admits to its universal approach in integrating various religious symbols and meanings into its message and practice. The Hare Krishna movement seems to have fashioned their Hindu message and daily ritual practice close to the Christian Charismatic movement.

In light of ritual integration, Kumar (2002:6) noted that the Mariamman festival of porridge prayers commences on Good Friday and closes on the Easter Sunday, while the Hare Krishna movement host their Rathayatra on the Beachfront in Durban during the same days.

3.3 HOW THE INDIAN PENTECOSTAL CHURCH DEVELOPED

The church is a fellowship of people who have confessed faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. Pentecostals are a denomination, which places much emphasis on the workings of the Holy Spirit, and their name is drawn from the Bible (Acts 2). The Pentecostals consider themselves to be the “Pure Church” and they consider the other established churches as “Babylon”, where no revivalistic preaching is heard.

Pentecostals do place emphasis on strong autonomy and its board of elders/pastors governs all of its affairs. Even though many of the Pentecostal churches profess autonomy and independence, some still operate in a dictatorial fashion, whereby the pastor is totally in charge and decides who does what and the congregation follows with “his” ideas.

Pentecostal churches accept the Bible at face value and very loosely interpret the Bible and in the case of choosing officers, Ephesians 4:11 is applied without any proper interpretation and sound hermeneutics. The larger Pentecostal churches among the functions belong to organizations such as Bethesda Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa and Assemblies of God, etc.

Some over zealous person or some person who supposedly has the gift that the apostles possessed most often leads the Pentecostal church. Many of the established churches even though critical of the Pentecostal churches, are often intimidated because of the zeal of these believers, especially in the area of evangelism.

Pentecostals are noted for being outspoken and the charisma allows them to even speak out against other religions. Pentecostal churches among the Indian community have greatly influenced society and is often considered very contagious because many churches from the established groupings like the Methodist have restructured their services the “Pentecostal Style”.

The Pentecostal approach is that of commitment and encounter. Its process of analysis has been directed to Hinduism rather than to the westernising process. The new set of beliefs is much more dynamic because they are in a ‘few explosive pockets’ rather than in a seemingly chaotic sea of beliefs. Cultural disintegration can also bring with it changes in religion associated with that culture as is the case with Christianity in the western world. In Hinduism the family (Kutum) system, with its patriarchal authority, forming a closely-knit society supported a system of values covering both the sacral and the secular. In a western-orientated society these values are affected as it has a dynamic society with its own system of values to which the religion is gradually adapted. Although religion is the primary source of a person’s values, these are affected by society in which a person finds himself and criteria change to some extent according to the changes in society. These value changes have helped Indians, more specifically Hindus to improve their socio-economic position.

Of the religious societies, those, which tend to be, are more monotheistic stable than, for example, polytheistic societies. Hinduism’s defence is a

new emphasis on monotheism. This is the case with Pentecostalism in spite of the fact that the latter has broken the identity between the social and religious groupings. The Islamic society among Indians is thus more stable than Hinduism.

Pentecostal churches were very influential among the Indian "Hindu" community. There is a great vacuum in the Hindu community in terms of losing their followers to Christianity. The Pentecostal church has made inroads into Hinduism and now the majority of the Indian Christians are from the Hindu faith, viz. Tamils, Telegus, Gujaraties and Hindi speaking groups. It has been proven that the Hindus have found a sense of security, not only in their newfound faith but also in their religious atmosphere Pentecostalism has provided.

Although Pentecostalism can get the 'church look' as its social condition improves, the equality before God remains much more important than anything else. One cannot say that Pentecostalism keeps its adherents in 'lower class' situations but rather that it gives self-confidence, a sense of direction and that they feel supported in this. One hears from testimonies in Indian Pentecostal churches inter alia the following: 'I could not afford a washing machine but since I accepted Christ I could buy one,' another 'since I have accepted Christ I bought a second car.' Upward social and economic mobility is the trend. In the Bethesda Church, Apostolic Faith Mission and the Assemblies of God, one has become conscious of this upward mobility where the middle and the lower income groups predominate while in the other mainline/established churches; it is the higher income groups who do so. Some of the lower income groups

adherents of the three above mentioned churches defect to the smaller 'mushroom' churches and groups where they feel at home in an emotional setting. Here the emotional aspects of the services are an attraction although one gets the impression that class distinctions are not totally in the background in some cases. The diversity between Indian Pentecostal groups and churches should however not merely be ascribed to social differences among their members (Oosthuizen 1975: 338-348).

The Pentecostal community of Indians is very positive in its approach when it comes in dealing with sin. And Pentecostalism with its charisma is not afraid of addressing social issues. Pentecostalism has allowed religious experiences, viz. their Indian cultural experiences to be an integral part of its worship and even though the ecstatic and revelational experience is predominant, the Indians are still very much committed to their newfound faith and especially to Pentecostalism. Hindu converts into Christianity felt very much at "Home" in Pentecostal churches because Hinduism allowed ecstatic and revelational experiences and Pentecostalism accommodates such experiences like revelations, dreams, visions, talking to demons, etc.

The loss that the Hindu community faces in terms of losing their devotees can from a Hindu perspective be blamed on Pentecostalism but from a Christian point of view the Pentecostal church will forever be blessed/credited because of the inroads made into the Hindu religion.

As a cultural phenomenon Pentecostalism is an important element in the historical development of the Indian in Chatsworth. Culture is a design

for living whether implicit or explicit. Religion is considered a cultural system that answers needs. With its systems of symbols religion establishes in its adherents certain specific motivations, which are considered to be attainable and thus realistic. Religion establishes powerful moods and the Pentecostalist culture proposes a design for living inspired by such moods in order to obtain these goals.

The Indian Pentecostal church does show total submission to the supernatural world with Jesus Christ being the central personality. Even though Pentecostal churches have emphasized the outward manifestations of the “workings of the Holy Spirit”, the Indians development in the church has been rapid and because of its dynamic, energetic approach, the world looks up to the Pentecostal church.

The Indian Pentecostal church has been noted to be a powerful force because of its outward manifestations like speaking in tongues, testimony, preaching, etc. The Indian Pentecostal church has provided substance to its converts and apart from the emphasis of the supernatural, they provided the “Hope of Glory” to the people who were searching for God but could not find Him in their search apart from the Pentecostal church and its influence.

Pentecostalism is considered as a religion not for the ignorant but for the spiritually enlightened. Pentecostalism has provided group integration where individual’s needs were met and spoken about. Pentecostalism has on many occasions provided faithless Christians an opportunity to use

supernatural faith and even though non-biblical, many Indians have benefited (Oosthuizen 1975: 45).

3.4 PENTECOSTALISM IS MORE POPULAR IN THE INDIAN COMMUNITY

Genuine conversion on Pentecostalism is usually in depth and gets the impression that the whole being of the person is touched in an overwhelming feeling of the presence of God. Pentecostalism considers itself as a religion, not for the ignorant but for the spiritually enlightened.

Social systems influence cultural systems, and religion and culture are intimately related as in Hinduism. In Pentecostalism one finds an integration of individual and group elements, not only individual salvation but also group integration is important. Individual needs are considered to be adequately met by a shared active system of beliefs. The 'group functions' of the Pentecostal satisfy many of the needs of the individual adherents and the belief is this brings stability. A religion can only be understood if the cultures and their circumstances, the individuals that adhere to it and the social structures in which it finds itself, are studied.

Pentecostalism shows people how they may undergo suffering; through it they may overcome their inadequacies. The center of their inspiration is no longer 'this' but 'other' worldly. It does not promise justice but goes beyond and indicates that injustice is not central. Pressures of human condition lead to the formulation of a moral code, which is an effort to

formulate an ‘ultimate solution.’ This solution goes beyond temporal issues. Traditional religion is rejected not so much because of falseness but for ineffectiveness, and irrelevance. The belief in the transmigration of souls is a compensation for the lack of social mobility; the emphasis in Pentecostalism on heaven and its benefits has the same motive. Indian Pentecostals find a great sense of security in the new intensified religious atmosphere.

The attitude to evil in a personal and sociological sense will reveal the intensity of a person’s religious approach. While Islam and Christianity are pessimistic about the world conditions they consider that it can be controlled. Hinduism sees the overcoming of the world only in rejection of it. The Pentecostal dynamic community has also this pessimistic disposition towards the world but meets with tremendous religious optimism’s. Evil that does befall them is due to injustices for which they can sometimes themselves be responsible although this is not always the case. In analysing sin the social structure should also be analysed but Indian Pentecostalism in Chatsworth and surrounding areas reveals very little direct interest in this. Such analysis is given by way of spiritual intuition and visions and therefore Pentecostalism saves its adherents from meaninglessness.

Perfect knowledge of the supernatural is obtainable on earth and such intense spirituality leads to mystical independent movements. Indian Pentecostalism in Chatsworth and surrounding areas sometimes carries with it a tone of Nirvana – to be free from everything. Here salvation is not socialised but personal and through devotion which is actually the

way of the illiterate or semi-literate. Of the four types of religious experience, which are integral, namely, confirming, responsive, ecstatic and revelational experiences, the last three-predominate in Pentecostalism and are variously emphasised. This accounts for the various types of Pentecostalism. The religious experiences involve withdrawal from the social order rather than attacking it.

One finds in Indian Pentecostalism in Chatsworth a combination of ascetic (withdrawal from the world), prophetic (preaching new-obligations) and mystic (contemplative) experience within the group or church. The mystic aspect is in the background. Ethical prophecy in Pentecostalism has affinities with this worldly asceticism. The acutely felt tensions, which are necessary for conversation, intensify an ascetic outlook.

The growth of Pentecostalism in Chatsworth must be ascribed to doubts with regard to the efficacy of Hinduism and the established churches in a situation of cultural contact. New social roles develop which need new methods to cope with it. The loneliness which modern society brings, its confusion and bewilderment is dealt with by religion and no less is Pentecostalism in spite of its attitude to the world.

The total setting of the Indian Community is thus important in understanding Pentecostalism that highlights a form of religious expression with powerful forces – ‘Jesus,’ ‘Spirit of God’ – for help in the situation, often in a magical way. The western-orientated society is one of material self-realisation; Hinduism concentrates on spiritual self-

realisation and Pentecostalism on submission to the supernatural world with Jesus Christ the central personality. Mere submission, however, to unpredictable supernatural forces is not attractive to the modern religious man and here Hinduism is at a disadvantage. Pentecostalism is clear-cut via man's destiny and the supernatural forces at work – this suits the person who works with the logic of modern society. It is effective even in confronting the 'destructive forces of evil.' In Hinduism the supernatural forces have to be continually appeased but in Pentecostalism there is a dynamic, energetic, centrifugal religious approach. In spite of its emphasis on the worldly aspects this type of Christianity is strongly humanistic and with its emphasis on 'the Kingdom of God is within you' it rejects authoritarianism.

A group's ethos is made known in religious belief and practice through the way of life it represents. In Indian Pentecostalism human actions are tuned to a worldview, which upholds a strong symbiotic relationship between the adherents and the powerful supernatural forces. Through the Bible, prayers and speaking-in-tongues, moods are created which motivate people in a setting brought about in such a way that its reality, although supernatural, is pictured, seen and accepted as a powerful force. The Bible is a symbol of devotion, prayer, of expectation and subjection, preaching, of self-searching and admonishing to actions, testimony, of getting relief from inward burdens and expressing joy. These acts are symbols. The Pentecostal service does not merely create moods, which can be intense, but leads nowhere if it does not inspire action. It motivates people and this is the main difference between a Pentecostal service and that of the average established churches.

Furthermore, man cannot deal with chaos and the Hindu worldview in a western-orientated technocratic setting of spell chaos for many. His worldview and view of life needs to be ritualized, there must be order. This is seen in its approach to the rites de passage and events of life. Pentecostalism gives a worldview and a view on life, which is a transitional stage from the traditional, unspecified naturalistic religious approach to the more specific- it makes religion sharper. Apart from this it helps one to endure 'situations of emotional stress through projection.' It flees from the empirical world. The result is not a pessimistic worldview but an optimistic theology and the mood of the latter takes precedence and motivates the existential life of the individual.

Occupations, classes, people of various educated levels and age groups, even men and women (as observed among Black South Africans) often reveal different religious inclinations and express themselves religiously in different ways. In South Africa the professional African finds himself in the Anglican and Methodist Church while the labourers are in the closely-knit emotionally orientated separatist groups. In the white society this stratification is evident. Those in the Indian Pentecostal churches are not of the upper classes of the previous Hindu community. People of different backgrounds however may worship together in the light of the 'equality before God' especially where the church does not disturb the inequalitarian situation.

3.5 PENTECOSTALISM AS A CULTURAL PHENOMENON

Of chief consideration here is the well-being of this group. The change is not only a spiritual one through conversion but also a social one. Its indigenisation process has not been based on external intellectualised aspects but on this mood which comes from the depth of the peoples longings. It takes the heart of Christian concern and puts it in the depth of the old situation, which goes through a process of rejection so that the lifeblood of Christianity can run through 'new arteries' in the Pentecostal church. This occurs in spite of limitations, this is an existential change. Although Pentecostalism does not involve itself 'in the world' it gives the stimulus to economic improvements with its ascetic approach to life, as does separation among Africans.

A question was asked on who was considered to be the finest Christian in order to find out what model they held before them in this respect. There were many and was in this regard but the best seemed to be that 'witnessing to his/her faith' is one of the major aspects appreciated. It is just merely the love of God to them and their love to God that is prominent but the third dimension in this relationship is exemplified for due to these relationships, others are drawn to Jesus Christ and experience salvation.

3.6 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE GOSPEL AND THE SOCIO-CULTURAL SYSTEM

Pentecostalism is closely associated with western culture but is not rigid in the sense that it cannot adapt itself to other cultures among which it moves. Culture is a system by which people live – here they find their norms and values, but certain material means act as vehicles for the specific design for living. From the beginning Christianity asked the question: What should be its relation to socio-cultural systems (Acts 15)? The Judaistic approach emphasising that to believe in Christ one had to become a Jew. One must ask the question: In preaching and what it builds up Christian culture or can the Christian message penetrate and take as its task to generate a cultural system which will then serve as its vehicle? Can there be a Christian and non-Christian culture. At the time of the Council of Jerusalem the main question was whether the Christian church could exist outside Judaism or would it be Jewish sect. Paul carried the day with regard to the relationship between Gospel and the socio-cultural system. Paul put the message at the center of Greek culture and used it as a vehicle for the proclamation of the Gospel to the Greek world.

The Pentecostal churches have not destroyed the Indian culture but their members are Indian orientated, and do not suffer artificial foreign liturgies which stifle the flexibility of their religious expression.

3.7 PENTECOSTALISM AND EASTERN WEAR

Whilst interviewing adherents via the questionnaires some added information were received which are noteworthy, they are as follows:

3.7.1 Sari as Eastern Wear

They felt that the sari is generally acceptable as a respectable dress, ‘in which they do not expose their bodies,’ respectable people wear a sari, through wearing a sari as an Indian, they desire to retain their culture; the sari has a neat appearance, and a women looks charming and pleasant in it. Some thought that the youth should not discard the sari altogether but wear it occasionally; others thought it important that Indian dress should distinguish Indians as persons while the dress itself is modest. Many referred to the fact that it covers the body. Some of the younger women wore saris out of respect for their elders especially in-laws. Hindu girls who wore mini dress often switched over to the sari when their wedding approaches.

3.7.2 Wearing Tali

The respondents were less certain about adapting the tali. For some the tali are not specifically Hindu but they often prefer it to the wedding ring. One pastor rejected the tali altogether because it is deeply associated with the Hindu deities. Tali wearing, says others, simply died off because the wedding ring took its place. Some wear the tali with a cross; others would like to see the yellow string replaced by a golden chain around the neck with a cross-fixed to it.

3.7.3 Women's Hair

For the orthodox, the Hindu women's hair should not be cut, as it is valued as the principal symbol of feminine attraction. The cutting of hair is an abomination. Mostly, the elder females were against the cutting of hair. A number of the young women and girls especially in the Pentecostal church have their hair cut. Older and middle-aged Pentecostals housewives strictly observe the wearing of a sari and having their hair long, while the younger generation is more modern.

3.8 PATTERNS OF INDIAN CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY

The problem of indigenisation is intrinsic to the task of evangelism. When the missionary attempts to communicate the gospel to his audience, a process of indigenisation begins, which involves the psychology, the language, and the culture of both parties. Western missionaries are brought up in a culture that has been for many years closely associated with Christianity, and whose content and expression are alien to the non-Christian country. Their very presence in the mission field, their lifestyle and values are often identified, rightly or wrongly with the religion they advocate. This inevitably imparts to the Christian message a foreignness that easily becomes a source of irritation to the local people. It is therefore important for the preachers of Christianity in the respective Indian areas, to be fully conversant with the culture and values of the Indian people, their background, and where they came from to the Christian faith.

The formation of Indian Christian theology is a task that involves two kinds of loyalty in the mind of the Indian Christian. As an Indian, he wants to be faithful to his cultural traditions; as Christian, he has to present his religious message without diminution, Indigenisation of the Christian faith can be regarded as an intellectual movement between the two loyalties. Some contemporary Christian scholars felt the conflict between traditional Indian values and the Christian ethos.

3.8.1 An Ethical Issue

There is an increasingly wide acceptance of the so-called 'homogeneous-unit principle of Church Growth' among Christians. People like to become Christians without crossing racial, linguistic or class barriers. If culture is creational and if every human being is deeply involved in a particular cultural system, it follows that in some significant way that individual's self – identity and culture are inter-twined. Every personality is, to an extent, culturally determined. Christianity accepts people as they are. Jesus did not make people into seraphim's or angels in order to meet him halfway. The integrity of people's individual personalities and the integrity of their group's culture must be respected if Jesus' incarnational love is to reflect. This is why no requirement for people to cross-racial, linguistic or class barriers is built into the demands of the Gospel. The other side needs to be mentioned as well. Whenever the gospel enters into a particular culture, some aspects of the culture will necessarily change. The same principle applies to cultures that apply to the salvation of individuals. Only a lack of love will insist that the price of God's grace is to abandon culture. This is why it is difficult to

understand why some maintain that when people become Christians they should stop thinking in terms of their own culture and take the viewpoint that the culture of all Christians everywhere is the “culture of the Kingdom of God.’

3.8.2 Living in Two Worlds: Spirituality and the Changing Role of the South African Indian Women in the Full Gospel Church

Women are challenging the mindset that the church can only deal with matters termed ‘spiritual’ from the Indian community. The roles that South African Indian women have played, and continue to play within the church, are intricately connected to this understanding of spirituality. In other words, it is the separation of the physical world from the spiritual world that has contributed to the discrimination against women within the church. However, this notion of spirituality isn’t the only factor that impacts on the way in which women act out their roles within the church. Culture is an undeniably strong influence in most Indian lives. Hence, one cannot speak about spirituality without engaging with some discourse concerning culture. South African women have undoubtedly become more liberated than their Indian counterparts.

Nadar (2001: 73) contends that many of the practices that Indian women have adopted in South Africa, both within the church and secular life, are largely due to the unconscious appropriation of various discriminatory cultural ideas that prevail in India even today. According to Nadar, such cultural ideas find roots in ancient Hindu Scriptures, and also in folklore and mythology. While many Indian women who accept Christianity, will

say that they abandon any trace of Hinduism in their lives, this is not true, because, at a subconscious level, cultural ideas found in Hinduism do impact on the way in which women conduct themselves.

In order to examine the roles that South African Indian women play within the church, cognizance has to be taken of the various levels with which we are dealing. At least three levels are operative. The first is that of the all-American Pentecostalism (including its theological foundations) that is gently followed and imitated. The second level is the level of the culture of Hinduism from which most Indian Pentecostals have emerged. And finally there are the Christian Scriptures whose comments regarding women connect well with the way in which Indian women are seen in their own culture.

3.9 THEOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF INDIAN PENTECOSTALISM

Pentecostalism is not easily theologically characterised mainly because of its subjectivism. Even though the constitutions differ very little in essentials, its liturgy and order of service is not pre-arranged:

Typical Order of Service where no Fixed Liturgical Order is Accepted

In the enthusiastic Pentecostal churches the service is a 'happening.' In nearly all Pentecostal churches the service is a 'dynamic event.' In the enthusiastic groups the following 'order' predominates:

1. Introductory prayer by the leader
2. Hymn, e.g. 'Send us the Pentecostal Power'
3. Prayer by someone in the congregation
4. Hymn
5. Testimonies, 'Popcorn' testimonies asked for
6. Choruses sung by congregation
7. Hymn – offering taken
8. Prayer – Leader
9. Choruses & Worship Hymn by congregation
10. Sermon – Responses of 'Amen, Hallelujah, Praise the Lord' often heard
11. Hymn/chorus by congregation
12. Healing and exorcism session: One volume of prayer by whole congregation for each 'sick' person – some speak in tongues
13. Closing prayer by someone in the congregation
14. Benediction- Leader. Shaking of hands at the door by pastor.

The subjectivistic interpretation of unscholarly Biblicism does not appreciate a creed; this is evident in some smaller Pentecostal churches.

In his response to the theological position of the Pentecostals TB Barratt states: 'As regards salvation by justification we are Lutherans. In baptismal formula, we are Baptists. As regards sanctification, we are Methodists. In aggressive evangelism, we are the Salvation Army. But as regards the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, we are Pentecostal.... (Bloch-Hoell 1964:174).

While it is most respects different from Roman Catholicism it has the same mystic tendencies and emphasises miracles. In its anthropology it is Arminion with its roots in early Methodism and the Holiness Movement. Its emphasis is the democratic work of the Holt Spirit and the democratic response of the individual. It's a puritanical movement with an emphasis on the individual charisma. It is dynamic, anti-liturgical and anti-traditional. Gradually Pentecostal reactionary churches develop into established free churches. Also extreme subjectivism makes room for a more institutionalised approach as seen in the Bethesda, Assemblies of God and Apostolic Faith Mission.

The Bible remains the 'inspired Word of God,' the infallible rule of faith and conduct to which the conscience of the individual must bow. There is no interest in contemporary theology. The emphasis is 'back to the Bible,' the problem of the established churches is that they are swamped by the unbelief of liberal theology. 'No reaction against fundamentalism is to be discerned in Indian Pentecostalism. James Barr describes the fundamentalist use of scripture as a ritualistic rather than as a propositional procedure' (Barr 1966:203).

The Bible is a holy book with loaded words rather than a book to be analyzed, on which thorough exegesis should be done and which should be relevant to man's whole existence. It is a form of poetry, an almost aesthetic expression of harmony with the true faith, i.e. the tradition. This is why particular verb forms, such as the King James Version, are highly prized... The Bible comes to have attached to it attributes of perfection and of sublime superiority to human feelings and to human judgement,

and the nearest analogy to the way in which these attributes work is the idea of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin in popular Roman Catholicism of some kinds. Like the Virgin, the Bible is the human visible symbol involved in salvation; and like her freedom from all contagion of human imperfection, it has a kind of perfection and sublimity, which makes it sacrilegious for us to analyse and to criticise its seamless fabric.

The degree to which the unthinking and uncritical attitudes towards the Bible which we regard as fundamentalistic, are damaging and dangerous, is related to the social situation (Barr 1966: 203-5).

Fundamentalism is thus ritualism – the law, the special rules, the handling of the Bible, and healing but most of the activities give a ritualistic emphasis to the expression of the Christian message. This is also clear in African separatism. Fundamentalism is not limited to certain Pentecostal churches but is a phenomenon to which some Lutheran and Calvinistic churches are also prone. Indian Pentecostal churches have a minimum of dogma... things are happening. Here people find the Bible as a fixed point of reference in a changing world and this they interpret as if every word has been inspired has itself a fixed and unchangeable meaning. This gives security based on the Bible's infallibility. A ritual is observed without being questioned.

Most of the Pentecostals in Durban of which Chatsworth is part of, accept the Trinity except the United Pentecostal Church where baptism takes place only in the name of Jesus because God is said to have

revealed Himself in Jesus only. This modalistic strain of thinking is rejected by most of the Pentecostal Churches in Durban/Chatsworth. Only a few dogmatic aspects are emphasised. Of importance to Pentecostals is the virgin birth of Jesus, redemption and reconciliation through His blood. If Jesus were not born of a virgin, He would not have been a Redeemer. Continuous reference is made to the 'Precious Blood' of Jesus.

Regeneration and conversion are the fundamental experiences necessary to salvation. Conversion gives 'eternal security.' With regard to regeneration or conversion in Pentecostalism the Calvinistic distinction is not made between regeneration, which is the first step, and conversion, which must lead to sanctification as sin, is progressively conquered.

Pentecostals continuously emphasise the gifts of the Holy Spirit especially prophecy, speaking in tongues and healing although some have reacted against speaking in tongues. The Pentecostals in Chatsworth accept the John Wesley distinction between the ordinary believer and those 'sanctified' or 'baptised with the Holy Spirit.' The 'born again' or 'converted' is a preliminary stage to the full Christian experience that is completed by sanctification or a 'second blessing' or 'baptism of the Holy Spirit.' The Assemblies of God follow the two-stage pattern in which they accept conversion as one stage, then baptism of the Holy Spirit and sanctification as a progress, which continues through life. 'Holiness' requires effort from a person and such an approach is not a profession of the belief of justification by faith alone. In many of the Pentecostal churches the main concern is holiness through one's efforts.

The anguish to live a holy life cannot be minimised; continuously the Pentecostal is concerned about evil in his life.

The belief in the baptism of the Holy Spirit is a belief in God's almighty power. This is especially concentrated upon during campaigns so that not only do first converts receive blessings but also those who have already been converted and for some churches speaking in tongues is an obligatory sign of such experience.

3.10 BAPTISM

People, who switched over from other churches to a Pentecostal church, left these churches because they became convinced that adult baptism is the only correct Biblical approach. Infant baptism nevertheless remains a contentious issue. The consensus among these were that a child cannot understand: "The Bible says: 'Believe and be baptised.' A child can't believe. Baptism means a burial and sprinkling is not burial or conversion. Children are still in sin – they did not understand baptism." Only mature people should be baptised and then they must know why they are being baptised. 'When Jesus took the little children in His arms to bless them, He could have had them baptised instead of blessing them.' Thus, the fact the He didn't is ample proof against the practice. 'A child is too small to repent of sins and accept Christ as Lord and Saviour.' Those from the established churches usually stated: 'I was baptised the wrong way i.e. by sprinkling as an infant' (Oosthuizen 1975: 43). Children are consecrated which takes place during a service in the Pentecostal church where parents promise to train the child in the

principles of Scripture. They are 'dedicated until they grow to accountability, to be baptised. They are blessed as Jesus took them in His arms and blessed them. Consecration means covered by the blood' (Mark 10:13-16). Many stated they are dedicated either to God or to Jesus Christ but only one stated: 'They are dedicated to God in the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is left to adult Baptism.' Infants are baptised in established churches and so included in the covenant of grace.

Over against baptism stands adult baptism, which is accepted by all Pentecostal churches. 'Nobody must be baptised for a marriage. Nobody must be baptised because he is old enough. Nobody must be baptised because others are being baptised. Only those who have been converted and have repented of sin must be baptised' (Oosthuizen 1975: 57).

In summing up, one may say that baptism is generally only for converted believers. It is essentially considered to be an act of obedience; it is also an act of professing one's faith. This is also clear from the constitutions of some of the Pentecostal churches. Rebaptism of those baptised as infants regularly takes place. It can be an act of removing sin and in some of the African independent churches it is often repeated because it receives the status of a purification rite. Historically and biblically adult baptism is for the Indian Pentecostal the only correct form of baptism in spite of the few exceptions. The emphasis is on the method and not the baptismal formula. While the 'Jesus only' people baptise in the name of Jesus only, practically all Pentecostal pastors use the trinitarian formula. Baptism 'in the name of Jesus' is often posed as necessary to salvation with reference to Acts 2:38, 8:16, 10:48, 19:5 but the trinitarian formula

is used. For others it should be in the name of the 'Father', for others again 'in the name of Jesus Christ.' After testimony of their conversion candidates are baptised by immersion – usually the person's head is immersed only once. It is 'an outward sign, seal or expression of an inward death, burial and resurrection, signifying the believers identification with Christ. In the Reformed churches much emphasis is put on the formula read to parents but in the Pentecostal churches the candidate confesses his faith in Jesus Christ and the administrator in white with the candidate also in white, stands in the water and the head is plunged into the water. Usually the name is read among Indian Pentecostals but not the age and some candidates change their names from Hindu to Biblical or English names.

The minister or pastor does the administration of baptism. For the established Pentecostal churches it must be an ordained person, 'ordained in the church.' Some state the pastor or elder may baptise – the elder, if appointed by the General Board of the church.

3.10.1 Pre-Baptismal Instruction

Whether a person should receive instruction in the faith before being accepted as a full member and be baptised, has been positively accepted by the largest majority. Candidates are instructed in the Christian faith and on the meaning of baptism. The length of the period of instruction varies from a few weeks to about six months. Some have no time limit, and the only qualification is 'that they fully understand the word of God.'

Much emphasis is put on pre-baptismal instruction by the older Pentecostal churches such as Apostolic Faith Mission, Assemblies of God, Bethesda and Pentecostal Holiness Church. As the young churches grow more emphasis is put on instruction than on immediate baptism. Some who were born in Christian homes did not receive extensive instruction. In general such extensive instruction does not take place in the Pentecostal churches. The emphasis is on personal conviction of salvation.

In the established churches instruction starts in the Sunday school and may continue for a period of nine to eleven years before a person is confirmed. While instruction in the established churches concentrates mainly on knowledge and through knowledge on a deeper insight into the Christian truths, that of the Pentecostal churches concentrated on the experience of a regenerated life, which grows through what is learnt in participation. Those who received no instruction before baptism were accepted on the basis of their testimony that they had 'an experience of Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.' Most of the recently founded Pentecostal churches gave no pre-baptismal instruction to Hindu converts. Some had three or four lessons.

3.10.2 Baptism of the Holy Spirit

Pentecostals believe that those in the established churches lack the power of the Holy Spirit; that Jesus did not preach until He received this; that speaking in tongues is a sign of being filled with the Holy Spirit. In Hinduism a distinction is made between a devotee who falls into a trance

and an ordinary person. The trance of a devotee who bestows blessing on a ceremony is different from that of an oracle or healer but this is not considered to be important. In Pentecostalism the trance state of the one who receives the Holy Spirit is different from the one who falls into a trance in Hinduism, the latter trance reminds one of the 'demon possessed' person when exorcism takes place.

Baptism with the Holy Spirit is explained as follows: 'It is when the Spirit enters into the soul of a person and his whole life is filled with the Holy Spirit; it is the filling of God's Spirit to such an extent that our will does not motivate our lives but rather the will of God; through it one finds fluency, power and liberty to witness and pray and work for God; God takes control of your life; Acts 1:8.' For others 'it is an anointing of the Holy Spirit; it is a power from heaven that takes control of you and guides your life to God's perfection; one is fully controlled by the power of God; immersed in the Spirit of God.' The spirit comes to 'strong believers.'

Some converts claim that 'Hindus also get the spirit but they get evil spirits.' Some converts give the impression that Baptism of the Spirit is necessary to enter heaven on the basis of John 3:5. Luke, however, makes a distinction between reception of the Holy Spirit and reception of salvation; for him the Spirit is something additional to salvation.

Baptism of the Holy Spirit leads to a concern for souls and 'every Pentecostal should receive the Holy Spirit'; it means 'living in complete relationship with other people to the sacrifice of oneself; water baptism

has lost its meaning and baptism of the Holy Spirit is thus needed'; baptised by the Holy Spirit means to be 'included in God's grace.' Cleansing of sin and overcoming of original sin is described in the context of baptism of the Holy Spirit as follows: 'When a man repents of sin, he is forgiven and turns away from sin but the sinful nature of Adam's depravity is still here. Like repentance it means coming to Christ the second time seeking a clean heart. The Holy Spirit comes to the individual, drives out all carnality, and sanctifies the heart. This is being baptised or cleansed by the Holy Spirit.' Practically all the respondents made a clear distinction between water baptism and baptism with the Holy Spirit – the latter leads to witness, i.e. it gives 'power' to bring the message.

3.11 SALVATION OF THE SOUL

For the great majority the soul is of primary significance; it is 'the essence of man.' The soul 'is the breath of God in us. To be with God is vital and this implies the salvation of one's soul.' It is the 'soul' that continues not the body; in 'after life the soul will bear witness not the body.'

Not the body but the soul will be judged; the soul will appear before God. Eternal life is received through the soul because 'the soul is the spiritual part of an individual – the body is made out of dust and earth.' The soul goes back to God and has to receive 'the consequences of our doings.'

Much is said about the soul, for the Pentecostal, the decisive aspect of man's being. It will be helpful to see how they see the soul existing in the after life as this soul-existence is of all-embracing significance to one's spiritual life.

The general belief in Hinduism is that the soul is 'life', 'self' or 'spirit' and that it does not immediately return to a new corporeal body. For a period of 10 to 16 days (depending on whether it is a Telugu, Tamil, Hindi or Gujarati) it remains near the home, and then it goes to the land of the dead where its state of bliss or otherwise is worked out according to its deeds until it is reincarnated. At set dates each year offerings are made to certain of the dead especially a father, in spite of the belief that they are considered to be reincarnated (Kuper 1956: 177).

The dichotomy between 'soul' and 'body' has been overcome in the fact of Christ's resurrection. He had a 'glorified body- it is a living body- in terms of Christianity, it is the living Christ, the same Christ who was crucified and rose from the grave. The same Christ for yesterday, today and forever; He rose up in a body that is incorruptible.' With Christ they can speak about the resurrection of the body but cannot associate such a resurrection with the existing body of ordinary man; it is rather a resurrection of the 'soul.' This re-emphasis is the net result of the concentration on the intermediate state of the soul.

3.12 JESUS BECAME FLESH OF OUR FLESH, BLOOD OF OUR BLOOD

On this question the humanity of Jesus was emphasized by most of the Pentecostals namely that He came as a baby, took the form of an ordinary human being, born of the flesh of man, so that God ‘was manifested in the flesh: 1 Tim. 3:6.’ He became man, took the nature, and was made lower than an angel in order to redeem man from sin, sickness and death. It was in this form that He ‘took the punishment in our stead for the remission of sins.’ Accepting man’s humanity meant a *kenosis*, emptying himself. Thus man’s physical nature is considered to be of a lower status and sinful, although He was without sin. ‘For God to express Himself on this earth He had to take a human form.’

The major theme of the Pentecostals is that Jesus became man, accepted all the limitations of this except sin, in order to identify Himself fully with man and thus redeem him.

3.13 RESURRECTION

Resurrection is described as a resurrection of the body in spite of its denigration and the emphasis on the soul. It is stated: ‘That which is sown is not quickened till it dies, the mortal body becomes the immortal body!’ The body and soul relationship continues after the parousia: ‘At the coming of Jesus, our souls shall enter once again (if we are dead) into our bodies and be transported to the presence of God.’

Judgement and the resurrection are brought together: ‘At the last judgement of the wicked, all those who previously died will be

resurrected and judged, then cast into the hell of fire. The dead in Christ will rise first.’

Some of the converts who were recently converted from Hinduism did not fully understand the meaning of resurrection. Others saw it as signifying ‘newness of life.’ For others it will be a resurrection of ‘the spirit’ only. On the question as to who will be resurrected the respondents stated, ‘the blood washed children of the Lord’; many said ‘the dead in Christ; those who received salvation for their souls through Jesus Christ; all God’s people.’ A number used the expression ‘the blood washed’ or ‘the saved; those written in the Lamb’s Book of Life; those who live in the hope of His coming; all those who accepted Jesus as their personal Saviour and are again born into God’s family.’

3.14 HAND-CLAPPING

In some of the Pentecostal churches hand clapping takes place during singing especially choruses. It makes an important contribution to the emotional atmosphere. The largest majority of Pentecostals subscribes to it and considers it important for building up atmosphere in the church. They consider it important ‘to make a joyful noise unto the Lord.’ It has an effect on the congregation, which gets rid of its ‘lethargy.’ Most felt when they indulged in hand clapping namely, ‘I feel peace and joy enter me as I go on clapping and singing.’ The joyful optimistic atmosphere of Pentecostalism is greatly enhanced: ‘It gives joy in Christ; we feel the wonderful presence of the Holy Spirit; moved by the Spirit; because the psalmist David said clap your hands and make a joyful noise unto the

Lord; you are free and feel free. You worship God uninhibitedly.’ Power is felt when hands are clapped and it symbolises rejoicing and praise to God while the established churches are criticised for being ‘too stiff.’

It also indicates that ‘sins are forgiven; it takes away other thoughts and creates a motion towards God.’ It has an effect on singing which ‘becomes lively when coupled with one’s whole being.’

3.15 HOLY COMMUNION

The Pentecostals have no fully developed doctrine on the Holy Communion. The outstanding aspects emphasised by this sacrament for Pentecostals is that it is a sign of the death of Jesus, that one is ‘washed in His Blood.’ The blood and wounds of Jesus are given a mystical emphasis. More than in some established churches the epiclesis, the calling down of the Holy Spirit on the elements, receives prominence in a number of Pentecostal churches.

The idea that the sacrament reminds us of the work done for man on the cross and that one receives remission of sins when celebrating it, it was refuted by some of the respondents maintaining that this should have taken place before the celebration of the sacrament and that Holy Communion signifies ‘holiness to God.’ It also described as ‘strengthening one’s faith.’ Nowhere is Holy Communion referred to as the Eucharist. The service of Holy Communion usually follows the liturgical order. A prayer is said before the distribution of the elements. The elements are distributed after the sermon and after the words of

consecration have been said, and the elements are bread and unfermented wine as in some of the independent churches. Some like the Pentecostal Holiness Church, use the Anglican order for the administration of the Holy Communion except that in place of the Lord's Prayer *ex tempore* prayers are said. In some churches only the cup is used, in others the cup and glasses and in some only glasses.

This meal is regarded as an eschatological meal. A special communion for the sick is not the practice. There are respondents who were of the opinion that the Holy Communion could prevent sickness, that God could heal through it and this makes it a very functional meal for some Pentecostals. Holy Communion is not neglected in the Indian Pentecostal churches.

3.16 THEOLOGICAL ETHICS OF PENTECOSTALISM

Smoking has always been a contentious issue with Pentecostal Churches; in fact, it is rejected as unchristian. Many of the respondents who were interviewed stated that they smoke. Pentecostals nevertheless take in general a strict attitude and no Pentecostal would have stated a few decades ago that he is allowed to smoke. Those who abstained from smoking did so because it is 'against the Scriptures; when I was sick God spoke to me and told me to stop smoking.' A number abstain from it for health reasons: 'smoking is unhealthy and diseases such as cancer attack the body' but 'it is also pollutes the soul.' It is thus described as physically bad and 'anything detrimental to the body is also detrimental to the soul.' The Bible says 'abstain from all evil.'

It was often repeated that smoking causes cancer, tobacco is a harmful drug, it destroys the body, it leads to disrespect for elders, it defiles the temple of God, therefore it is unprofitable (Romans 12, on the holiness of the body); ‘if Christ wanted us to smoke he would have built a chimney into us.’

A large section of the respondents referred to smoking as sin, it is not right for a Christian to smoke, it is ‘unclean and must not be touched.’ Others refrained from it because of ‘parental unprofitable’; nobody benefits by it (Col. 2:21-23).

Christ is the *norm and example*. He did not smoke. He cannot be where smoke is. ‘I believe that Jesus is in my heart and if there is smoke in my blood it is impossible for Him to live there.’ Others stated that, ‘it would be no testimony if I smoke’; further it was stated that ‘it is worldly pleasure.’

For several reasons Pentecostals in general abstain from smoking: ‘it is against the Scriptures; the body is the temple of God and it must be kept holy.’ For health reasons: ‘it is unnecessary to become addicted; it is sinful; it could be no testimony; Jesus did not smoke; Jesus will not live in a smoke-infested body.’

3.17 CONCLUSION

In this Chapter, I initially analysed the Indian views on the relation of Christianity and non-Christian religions and 'ritualistic integration' of 'Christian and non-Christian religions'. Therefore, I investigated the sixteen sacraments in Hinduism. This is followed by a controversial yet crucial concept to the integration of Indian culture into the Christian church. I intended to investigate the concept of borrowing elements from the Hindu worship that can be significantly associated to the worship rituals in Christianity. Against this background, I investigated the development of the Indian Pentecostal Church, the place of Pentecostalism amongst the Indian community, Pentecostalism as a cultural phenomena and Pentecostalism and Eastern wear. Thereafter, I analysed the theological aspects of Indian Pentecostalism, the sacrament of baptism, salvation of the soul, the incarnation of Jesus and the resurrection. This is followed by an explanation of hand-clapping, communion and theological ethics of Pentecostalism.

In the next chapter, I will analyse the attitude of the Indian Pentecostalism Movement in South Africa towards their culture heritage and religious background.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE INDIAN PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES IN SOUTH AFRICA: THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARDS THEIR PREVIOUS RELIGION (HINDUISM) AND CULTURE

In this chapter the researcher shall focus on an analysis of the Pentecostal Movement mainly the churches in Chatsworth and surrounding areas with a view to describe, analyse and explain their response to Indian cultural Values. The Pentecostal Movement in South Africa includes The Apostolic Faith Mission, Assemblies of God and The Church of God/Full Gospel Church in South Africa. The largest congregation of the above in the Indian community of South Africa is the Bethesda Temple (Bethesdaland). This church began in the Indian Community firstly in Pietemaritzburg and then in the Corporation Barracks, Durban. It then spread to Chatsworth-Durban South because of the Group Areas Act.

The Pentecostal Movement, mainly the churches in Chatsworth and surrounding areas, was selected for my field research as it presented an interesting challenge with its emphasis on conversion, and mainly because it is predominantly an Indian enclave. The objective was to see how a church totally committed to its Christian mission perceives non-Christian values. Fifty questionnaires were administered and all were returned. Of the fifty, three were invalid i.e. 6% because the respondent's ancestral background

was Christianity. Since this research is mainly focussing on new/first generation Christians, those who are Christians from previous generations were disregarded. Forty-seven received indicated that their previous religion was Hinduism i.e. 94%. For the purpose of this analysis we will use the forty-seven respondents as hundred percent (100%).

The respondents are grouped into two age groups, viz. 20-35years and 36-55years. The interviewed were twelve females in the 20-35years age groups, thirteen females interviewed in the 36-55years age groups and nine males interviewed in the 20-35years age groups and thirteen males in the 36-55 years age groups.

TABLE 1: Trend of Age Groups

20-35		36-55		TOTAL
M	F	M	F	
9	12	13	13	47

Although written questionnaires were used, the researcher directly interviewed the respondents. This method was chosen so as to bridge the gap between quantitative analysis and qualitative understanding.

TABLE 2: Trend of appreciation of Non-Christian values by Church Leadership

FEMALES	YES	NO	TOTAL
20-35	4	8	12
36-55	7	6	13
Total	11	14	25
Percentage %	44%	56%	100%

MALES	YES	NO	TOTALS
20-35	5	4	9
36-55	11	2	13
Total	16	6	22
Percentage %	73%	27%	100%

The respondents were asked about how their church leaders appreciated the non-Christian values. The responses did not make a significant difference in the age groups. However, 73% of the male respondents said that their church leadership appreciated non-Christian values, whereas 56% of female respondents indicated that they believe that their church leaders did not appreciate non-Christian values. It is thus interesting to note that male respondents seem to think more positively about the church leadership's appreciation of non-Christian values when compared to their female counterparts.

TABLE 3: Promotion of Indian culture by church leadership

FEMALES	YES	NO	TOTAL
20-35	3	9	12
36-55	3	10	13
Total	6	19	25
Percentage %	24%	76%	100%

MALES	YES	NO	TOTAL
20-35	1	8	9
36-55	2	11	13
Total	3	19	22
Percentage %	14%	86%	100%

When respondents were asked whether their church leaders promoted Indian culture enough, their responses, were as follows: 76% of the female respondents indicated in the negative and 86% of the male respondents also indicated in the negative. The responses did not make a significant difference in the age groups. It is interesting to note that the church leader do not promote Indian Culture as their congregation would like their culture promoted.

TABLE 4: Relevance of Indian Culture for Christianity

FEMALES	YES	NO	TOTAL
20-35	11	1	12
36-55	11	2	13
Totals	22	3	25
Percentage %	88%	12%	100%

MALES	YES	NO	TOTAL
20-35	8	1	9
36-55	12	1	13
Total	20	2	22
Percentage %	91%	9%	100%

The respondents were asked whether they think their culture is of importance in their practice of Christianity. The respondents did not make a significant difference in the age groups. 88% of the total female respondents indicated in the affirmative and 91% of the male respondents indicated in the affirmative. It is very interesting to note that the majority of the respondents feel the importance of Indian culture in the practice of Christianity.

TABLE 5: Trend of Preservation of Original Mother Tongue

FEMALES	YES	NO	TOTAL
20-35	10	2	12
36-55	12	1	13
Totals	22	3	25
Percentage %	88%	12%	100%

MALES	YES	NO	TOTAL
20-35	9	Nil	9
36-55	13	Nil	13
Total	22	Nil	22
Percentage %	100%	0%	100%

When asked about whether or not either they or their family members retained familiarity of their original mother tongue, 88% female respondents answered affirmatively whereas the male responses amounted to 100% affirmative. Therefore, there is a strong sense of their mother tongue and its significance for their identity. It does seem odd, however, that a significant number of female respondents gave importance to mother tongue and not a significant percentage of them gave credence to the non-Christian values. Perhaps in their view the preservation of ones mother tongue and the preservation of their previously held non-Christian values could be two different things. Nevertheless, there is synchronicity between the two as far as the male respondents are concerned.

TABLE 6: Trend of adhering to ancestral customs, beliefs, traditions and rituals

FEMALES	YES	NO	TOTAL
20-35	9	3	12
36-55	11	2	13
Total	20	5	25
Percentage %	80%	20%	100%

MALES	YES	NO	TOTAL
20-35	7	2	9
36-55	13	Nil	13
Total	20	2	22
Percentage %	91%	9%	100%

When respondents were asked whether or not either they or their family members adhere to their ancestral customs, beliefs, traditions and rituals, 80% female respondents answered in the affirmative, whereas 91% male's responses were also in the affirmative. There is a stronger sense of the male respondents toward the adherence of their ancestral customs, beliefs, tradition and rituals than the female respondents. This may indicate that women seem to adhere to their religious teachings as taught by their ministers and elders and are fearful of deviating from those teachings. In other words, women tend to be more orthodox in their religious adherence than male members. Since historically men are more exposed to other

religious communities in their work place, they tend to be less orthodox about their religious practices. However, as more and more women seek job opportunities and become exposed to other religious communities, their situation might also change.

Table 7: Integration of former language, beliefs, customs, etc. with Christian faith

FEMALES	YES	NO	TOTAL
20-35	9	3	12
36-55	10	3	13
Total	19	6	25
Percentage %	76%	24%	100%

MALES	YES	NO	TOTAL
20-35	9	Nil	9
36-55	12	1	13
Total	21	1	22
Percentage %	95%	5%	100%

The respondents were asked whether they attempt to integrate their former language, beliefs, customs, traditions and rituals into their Christian faith only 76% of the female respondents answered in the affirmative, whereas 95% of the male responses were in the affirmative. There is a very strong sense of the male respondents who want integration because of their identity

than their female counterparts. It is also noteworthy that a significant number of female respondents gave credence to the original mother tongue and not to the additional i.e. beliefs, customs etc. As noted in the previous section, women seem to be more orthodox in their adherence to religious practice and men seem to be less orthodox due to factors of interaction at work place and in other areas.

TABLE 8: Extent to which Indian Culture was preserved

FEMALES	YES	NO	TOTAL
20-35	11	1	12
36-55	11	2	13
Total	22	3	25
Percentage %	88%	12%	100%

MALES	YES	NO	TOTAL
20-35	9	Nil	9
36-55	13	Nil	13
Total	22	Nil	22
Percentage	100%	0%	100%

When the respondents were asked about what aspects of their culture they are able to preserve and or integrate into the Christian way of life. 88% of the female respondents answered in the affirmative, but 100% of their male

counterparts answered in the affirmative i.e. more males want to adhere to the Indian Culture.

TABLE 9: Maintaining contact with non-Christians relatives, neighbours and friends, institutions, religious centers, temples

FEMALES	YES	NO	TOTAL
20-35	11	1	12
36-55	13	Nil	13
Total	24	1	25
Percentage %	96%	4%	100%

MALES	YES	NO	TOTAL
20-35	9	Nil	9
36-55	12	1	13
Total	21	1	22
Percentage %	95%	5%	100%

The respondents were asked whether they or their family members maintain contact with their non-Christian relatives, neighbourhood and friends and or visit any of the non-Christian institutions, religious centres, temples etc about the same percentage of both females and males answered in the affirmative i.e. 96% of the females and 95% of the males answered in the affirmative. Even though women seem to maintain contact with their Hindu

relatives and friends, they tend to remain orthodox in religious adherence as shown in previous tables.

TABLE 10: Shaping one's identity by past cultural values

FEMALES	YES	NO	TOTAL
20-35	11	1	12
36-55	11	2	13
Total	22	3	25
Percentage %	88%	12%	100%

MALES	YES	NO	TOTAL
20-35	9	Nil	9
36-55	12	1	13
Total	21	1	22
Percentage %	95%	5%	100%

When the respondents were asked whether they consider their past cultural values to be important in shaping their identity, 88% of the females interviewed responded in the affirmative and 95% of the males interviewed responded in the affirmative. The higher percentage of male respondents in the affirmative. Both the sexes interviewed are very strong in that they believe that their past cultural values are important in shaping their identity.

TABLE 11: Westernization and Indian Church

FEMALES	YES	NO	TOTAL
20-35	12	Nil	12
36-55	13	Nil	13
Total	25	Nil	25
Percentage %	100%	0%	100%

MALES	YES	NO	TOTAL
20-35	9	Nil	9
36-55	13	Nil	13
Total	22	Nil	22
Percentage %	100%	0%	100%

When the respondents were asked whether they perceive the Indian church is more influenced by western culture, the following were their responses, i.e. 100% of both the females and males answered in the affirmative since 100% answered in the affirmative. Church leadership need to acknowledge that they are slipping away culturally and that they need to come back to the point of being themselves that is an Indian church with Indian identity.

From the analysis it may be safe to assume that while church leaders may be tolerant or open to cultural values, ideas, etc. from Hinduism, they do not necessarily engage in either promoting those values among their church membership (Vide Tables 2 and 3). This may be due to doctrinal rigidity and also due to lack of adequate training and skills in comparative theology.

My conversations with the respondents indicated that their theological training did not include any exposure to non-Christian religions and therefore the church ministers and elders seem to lack theological tools and skills in utilizing cross-cultural ideas and concepts to express Christianity.

Nevertheless, it is promising to note that the majority respondents interviewed said that their Indian culture is very significant in the practice of Christianity (Vide Table 4). This suggests that in order to practice ones religious faith, one does not need to abandon or relinquish ones past culture. This is evidenced in the way Christians in India have been able to integrate Indian cultural concepts in reconceptualising Christianity in India. This has developed into what has come to be identified as Indian Christian Theology. Similarly, in Africa, especially in South Africa, African people have integrated very well many of their African concepts, symbols, and rituals into their practice of Christianity. This is clearly evidenced in many African indigenous churches, such as the Isaiah Shembe Church, the Zionist Church and so on.

My analysis suggests that the preservation of ones previous cultural values, concepts, rituals, symbols and language is their practice of Christianity – it's important to maintain their unique identity of being Indian Christian. Christianity as practiced around the world has developed distinct regional features by appropriating and assimilating cultural aspects of those regions. Similarly, Indian Christians, whether they live in India or in a Diaspora country, it is important for them to maintain their distinct way of practicing

Christianity. Christianity being a world religion with many regional and local ways of expressing it, the cultural uniqueness gives people a unique identify of where they came from and what their values and customs are. As such, my analysis shows that it is possible to separate ones religious core doctrines (within case Christianity doctrine) and cultural expressions of those doctrines (Vide Table 6).

My analysis has shown that people are concerned about western influence on their lives as the type of Christianity that they practice is more westernized (Vide Table 11). As pointed our earlier, people are able to separate religious beliefs and doctrines from cultural values, beliefs and customs. They feel more comfortable by being part of their ancient culture even though they may practice Christianity. They are concerned about adopting western dress, listening to western pop music, goings to bars, clubs, dating, etc. practices that are seen as part of western life style. By sticking to their old Indian values, customs and beliefs, even though they may practice Christianity, they seem to believe that their children will have better family values and also that they would appreciate better their Indian heritage.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

In Chapter One, the researcher attempted to provide a background to the study. Among the objectives and key questions highlighted in the background to the study, the main objective that has been pursued in this study was to investigate the extent of the influence of Indian Culture on Indian Christianity, unearthing the view of scholars and individuals from the Chatsworth and surrounding areas, and processing the information in a systematic and logical manner, so that an objective and academic interpretation of the results could be tested and validated. Chapter one also deals with research methodology and design, research hypotheses, and some important concepts such as, cultural integration, enculturation, acculturation, inculturation, incarnation, plurality of culture, one's norms and multiformity of Christianity.

The second chapter, the researcher provided the historical background of the emergence of the Indian Christian church. In the same chapter, particular attention was given to literature survey, emigration of Indians to South Africa, discrimination of established churches, also known as the mainline churches. The researcher also provides an anecdotal history, cultural identity, cultural adaptability and the dynamics of social transformation.

The third chapter, which is the main focus of this study, deals with Indian Pentecostal movement's attitude towards their previous religion, viz. Hinduism. The researcher also provides some valuable information in regard to Hinduism with deep meaning which he believes will be of use to the Indian Christians, leadership and also the congregants. The research also alludes 'ritualistic integration' of Christianity and non-Christian religions. Further the researcher deals with how the Indian Pentecostal church developed, Pentecostalism is more popular in the Indian community, patterns of Indian theology, changing role of the South African Indian women in the Full Gospel Church, and theological aspects of Indian Pentecostalism.

The researcher made the following observations in regard to the data captured and analysed:

- a) The church leadership does not promote Indian culture, as their congregations would like their culture promoted.
- b) Majority of the respondents feels the importance of Indian culture in the practice of Christianity.
- c) There is a strong sense of their mother tongue and its significance for their identity.
- d) There is a stronger sense of the male respondents towards the adherence of their ancestral customs, beliefs, traditions and rituals than the female counterparts. Women tend to be more orthodox in their religious adherence than male members.

- e) There is a very strong sense of the male respondents who want integration because of their identity than their female counterparts. It is also noteworthy that a significant member of female respondents gave credence to their original mother tongue and not to the additional, i.e. beliefs, customs, etc.
- f) Majority of the respondents are able to preserve and integrate their culture into their Christian way of life.
- g) Respondents were affirmative in maintaining contact with their non-Christian relatives, neighbours and friends, institutions, etc. even though women seem to maintain contact with their Hindu relatives and friends, they tend to remain orthodox in religious adherence.
- h) Both the sexes interviewed are very strong in that they believe that their past cultural values are important in shaping their identity.
- i) Majority of the respondents of both sexes were one hundred percent affirmative in that the church is more influenced by western culture.

The researcher suggests the following recommendations from the analysis for the church to become more culturally conscious and relevant in current times:

- a) The church leadership seem doctrinally rigid and lack adequate training and skills in comparative theology and also lack theological tools and skills in utilizing cross-cultural ideas and concepts to express Christianity, therefore leadership should equip themselves (2 Timothy 2:15 – Vide Table 2 and 3).

- b) Church leadership should go back to ones roots; one needs to know from where and what you came from and then only you can move forward, lets take note of this and implement same for a better, balance church.
- c) Church leadership should seek within its people as to whether congregant's needs are in order to become more relevant in regard to the communities they serve, remembering that they are serving an Indian community. In order to postulate the Indian community, the leadership needs to develop programs and also bring the different linguistic groups together culturally.
- d) The Indian churches/pastors should allow themselves to first become students and gain knowledge that is lacking in terms of the Indian culture due to the misunderstanding and confusion created in the minds of the Indian converts from Hinduism to Christianity brought about by the missionaries who first brought the gospel to the Indians.
- e) After a thorough knowledge of the Indian culture is gained and a full understanding is reached over the issue that language and culture has nothing to do with religion and that there is no reason to fear the use of ones cultural past and language, then programs should be implemented for the entire Indian church community to gain the same knowledge now possessed by the leaders.
- f) The Indian church can in its preaching programs open its doors to teachers/pastors who possess knowledge of culture and other languages such as Tamil, Telugu, Hindi, etc. who in turn can promote language and culture amongst the Indian church community.

g) Bible schools should better equip its students by implementing courses of study dealing with culture and languages and students graduating should have done as a prerequisite for graduating, at least one cultural language together with an in depth study of the culture of all the religious groupings among Indians.

h) The Indian church to create culture consciousness among Indians should allow more preachers/teachers of Indian origin into its programs from abroad and locally and should see to it that language and culture is maintained until goals and purposes are fulfilled.

In conclusion, the Indian church should use culture as a valuable mode of preaching and teaching the gospel. Cultural integration also enables the Indian church to be able to engage in dialogue with other religious communities around them

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APPENDIX

University of Durban-Westville
Faculty of Humanities
School of Religion & Culture

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I am approaching you with regard to a research that I am conducting for my Masters Degree Thesis (Religion Education). My research topic is about

“The Influence of Indian Culture on the Indian Christian Church in Chatsworth and surrounding Areas.”

In this regard I would like you to please respond to the following questionnaire as best as you can. My plan is to go through these questions personally and collect the information. I sincerely appreciate your willingness to participate in this research.

I thank you for your time and effort. All information collected from you will be strictly confidential.

Yours faithfully

Rev. Pasharan George Narain J.P.; B.A.(Hons.) U.D.W.
(Religion and Social Transformation)

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Title (Rev; Prof; Hon; Dr; Mr; Ms; Mrs, Miss)

Full Name of Interviewee:

.....

Sex: _____ Age: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Denomination:

Name of Church:

Identity to remain anonymous: YES NO

P.G.N./2002

1 What part of India did your forebears come from ? (State, District, Area)

.....
.....

2 What was your original religious background ?

.....

3 If Christian, were they Christian before they left India ?

If so, which denomination ?.....

4 If they were Non-Christians when they came to South Africa, how did they become Christians ? Was it through Missionary School or other Missionary Activity ? What was the denomination of the mission / church ?

.....
.....

5 Does your Church doctrine allow you to appreciate non-christian values, concepts, symbols, etc.? Explain.

.....
.....
.....

6 Do you or any of your family members speak any of their ancestral language/s ?

.....
.....

7 Do you or any of your family members remember any of your ancestral Customs, Beliefs, Traditions and Rituals ? Explain.

.....
.....
.....

8 Do you attempt to integrate your former Language, Customs, Beliefs, Traditions and Rituals into your Christian Faith ? If so, please comment how ?

.....
.....
.....

9 What aspects of the Indian Culture are you able to integrate into your Christian way of life ?

.....
.....
.....

10 Do you or any of your Christian family members visit any Non-Christian Institution/s, Religious Centre/s and Temple/s ? Explain

.....
.....
.....

11 Do you consider your past as valuable and/or significant in shaping your identity ?

.....
.....
.....

12 Do you consider your religious and/or cultural past as shaping your Identity ? If so, please elaborate. How ?

.....
.....
.....

13 Do you interact with your Non-Christian relatives, neighbours and friends, etc., ? Explain.

.....
.....
.....

14 Do you think that your Church leadership is promoting culture enough, that is, to appreciate the cultural roots from whence you/your forebears came ? Explain !

.....
.....
.....

15 Do you think that your culture is of importance in your practice of Christianity ? Explain !

.....
.....
.....

16 What do you think is needed from a Christian in order to preserve culture and language without compromising Jesus Christ ? Explain !

.....
.....
.....

17 Do you think that the Indian church is Westernized in it's culture ? Explain !

.....
.....
.....

18 What do you think the church should do, to be more culture sensitive ? Explain !

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.....
.....

Questionnaire prepared by Magister Artium (M.A.) Student

Rev. Pascharan George Arain, J.P.

B.A. Hons. U.D.W. (Religion and Social Transformation)