CHAPTER TWO

A PROFILE OF CATHOLICISM AND PENTECOSTALISM IN TAMILNADU AND THE INTERACTION BETWEEN THEM

2.1. THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN INDIA

The Catholic Church in India is part of the Roman Catholic Church under the leadership of the Pope and the Curia in Rome. It is a communion of three individual 

sui juris churches: Latin, Syro-Malabar and Syro-Malankara.\textsuperscript{49} There are about 19.9 million Catholics in India who represent around 1.55\% of the total population, and the Catholic Church is the largest Christian church in India.\textsuperscript{50} There are 167 dioceses in India organised into 30 provinces.\textsuperscript{51} Of these 130 are Latin rite dioceses, 29 Syro-Malabar dioceses and eight Syro-Malankara dioceses. India has the second largest Catholic population in Asia, after the Philippines.

According to Syrian Christian tradition, Christianity was introduced into India almost from its inception by St. Thomas, one of the Apostles of Jesus Christ.\textsuperscript{52} This tradition

\textsuperscript{49} For an updated information about the Catholic Church in India see the official website of the Catholic Bishops Conference of India, \url{http://www.cbci.in/Church-in-India.aspx}.


\textsuperscript{51} \url{http://www.cbci.in/DiocesesofIndiaDisp.aspx}, (accessed on October 13, 2013)

holds that Thomas landed on the coast of Kerala in 52 A.D. and set up seven churches - Malankara, Chyal, Kothamangalam, Niranam, Paravur (Kottukkayal), Palayur and Quilon.\(^\text{53}\) Then he travelled to the place, in Coromandel Coast, now called Madras, where he was martyred at Mylapore in 72 A.D.\(^\text{54}\) However, regarding the authenticity or provability of this tradition, there is no unanimous agreement among scholars.\(^\text{55}\) One of the difficulties in establishing the arrival of St. Thomas is that none of the written accounts concerning the mission of St. Thomas which have been preserved is ancient.\(^\text{56}\) Hence scholars like C. B. Firth puts the visit of St. Thomas to South India not under the category of certainty nor probability but possibility. Firth notes,

None of these views can be regarded as proved. Consequently, we must either suspend judgement altogether or admit that whatever opinion we hold depends to a large extent on conjecture, with or without loyalty to a church tradition. With this proviso and without any strong conviction I should be willing to agree that St. Thomas did perhaps visit both indo-Parthia and South India.\(^\text{57}\)

However, there are scholarly claims that Christianity in India has an ancient origin. For example Stephen Neil strongly opines,

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\(^\text{54}\) Cf. K. M. George, Christianity in India through the Centuries (Secunderabad: Authentic Books, 2009), 87. For a general understanding of St. Thomas in Mylapore in India see also, S. J. Anthonysamy, A Saga of Faith: St. Thomas, the Apostle of India (Chennai: Santhome Cathedral Basilica, 2004). The author gives an overall picture of St. Thomas in India based on various traditions.


\(^\text{56}\) The supporters of St. Thomas tradition refer to the Gospel of St. Thomas which is an apocryphal book. However, according to Stephen Neill, it would not be wise to ignore them all as having no historical value. He says in the oral Syriac traditions, in spite of discrepancies and differences there is a common pattern. Cf. Stephen Neill, 33.

\(^\text{57}\) C.B. Firth, 17.
It is possible that in this dark period the apostle Thomas came to India and that the foundation of the Indian church goes back to him; we can only regret the absence of any sure historical evidence to support this view.\textsuperscript{58}

Whatever the truth may be with regard to St. Thomas, Christian presence in India has been ancient probably from the third century.\textsuperscript{59} There are strong traditions that claim there were migrations of Christians from West Asian countries since the fourth century.\textsuperscript{60} It is believed that there was an exodus of Christians from Persia to India in the fourth century and later in the seventh century.\textsuperscript{61} 15th century saw the coming of Roman Catholic missionaries in the wake of Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama’s arrival which marked the beginning of ‘a new epoch in Indian Church History’.\textsuperscript{62}

This century also witnessed the advent of Europeans and the beginning of a slow but sustained missionary activity that gained momentum during the 16\textsuperscript{th} century. Portuguese missionaries introduced the Latin Church in India. They made contact with the St. Thomas Christians in Kerala, which at that time were following Eastern Christian practices and were under the jurisdiction of Church of the East. They also reached neighbouring places in Tamilnadu and sought to introduce the Catholicism among them.

The Portuguese were given the patronage for the propagation of the Christian faith by Pope Nicholas V on 8\textsuperscript{th} January 1455.\textsuperscript{63} Pope Leo X in 1514 established the Padraoda by which the Portuguese obtained certain ecclesiastical rights over the Christians and

\textsuperscript{58} Stephen Neill, 33.

\textsuperscript{59} Cf. R. H. S. Boyd, An Introduction to Indian Christian Theology (Delhi: ISPCK, 1989), 7.

\textsuperscript{60} Cf. Ibid.

\textsuperscript{61} Cf. A. Mingana, The Early Spread of Christianity in India (Manchester: University Press, 1926).

\textsuperscript{62} Cf. C. B. Firth, 48.

\textsuperscript{63} Cf. R. E. Frykenberg, 127.
the East. The Franciscans, the Jesuits, the Dominicans and the Augustinians were the pioneers in the missionary work in Portuguese India, and they succeeded in bringing the majority of people under Christian influence. Their work extended to Cochin, Cranganore and along the coast as far as Mylapore. In the beginning of the 16th century, the whole of the East was under the jurisdiction of the Archdiocese of Lisbon. On June 12, 1514, Cochin and Goa became two prominent mission stations under the newly created Diocese of Funchal in Maderia. In 1534, Pope Paul III raised Funchal as an Archdiocese and Goa as its suffragan, deputing the whole of India under the Diocese of Goa. As Joseph Thekkedath records, “Till 1558 the Diocese of Goa was the only Latin Diocese for the whole of India. In 1558 Cochin was established as a separate diocese for the southern and eastern parts of India. In 1606 the new sea of Mylapore came into being.” This created an Episcopal See - suffragan to Funchal, with a jurisdiction extending potentially over all past and future spread of Christianity from the Cape of Good Hope to China.

Around 1540 the newly founded Society of Jesus arrived in Goa. At the same time many Christians from Portugal migrated to India as a result of the inquisition in Portugal. Francis Xavier, a Jesuit missionary, landed in Goa on 6th May 1542. He was known as 'the apostle of the Indies'. He made Goa his headquarters and visited Travancore, Malacca (Malaysia), the Moluccas (the East Indies), Ceylon and Japan.

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64 Many conversions were made not out of compulsion but because of the privileges offered to the converted Christians. Cf. Domenico Ferroli, _The Jesuits in Malabar_ (Bangalore: Bangalore Press, 1939), 379-382.


66 Cf. K. M. George, 108.

67 Joseph Thekkedath, 256.

68 Leonard Fernando S. J., “Daring and Exemplary Missionary Francis Xavier (1506-1552)” _Indian Church History Review_ 39/2 (2005): 84. There are 137 letters of Francis Xavier available to us from which we can make an authentic report of the contribution of Xavier and the Church in India at that time. Cf. Ibid. 76.

69 Cf. K. M. George, 108.
In 1557, Goa was made an independent Archbishopric, and itsfirst suffragan sees were erected at Cochin and Malacca. The whole of the East came under the jurisdiction of Goa and its boundaries extended to almost half of the world: from the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa, to Burma, China and Japan in East Asia. In 1576 the suffragan See of Macao (China) was added; and in 1588, that of Funai in Japan.

In 1606 a sixth suffragan see to Goa was established at San Thome, Mylapore, near the modern Madras. Missionary work progressed on a large scale and with great success along the western coasts, chiefly at Chaul, Bombay, Salsette, Bassein, Damao, and Diu; and on the eastern coasts at San Thome of Mylapore, and as far as Bengal. In the southern districts the Jesuit mission in Madurai was the most famous.\(^{70}\) According to Thekkedath, “In the sixteenth century and the first half seventeenth, there was a notable expansion of the Church in most of the costal regions controlled by the Portuguese.”\(^{71}\) It extended to the Krishna River, with a number of outlying stations beyond it. The mission of Cochin, on the Malabar Coast, was also one of the most fruitful. Several missions were also established in the interior northwards, e.g., that of Agra and Lahore in 1570 and that of Tibet in 1624. Still, even with these efforts, the greater part even of the coast line and many vast tracts of the interior northwards were practically untouched. The Portuguese missionaries were followed by the Dutch, the French, the Italians and the British along with other European and American missionaries. The missionaries took the Christian faith to the non-Christians of India. It has created a cultural confluence among the peoples of India with mutual enrichment and respect which the historians call ‘cultural symbiosis’. As A. M Mundadan concludes,

The Presence of Christians in India must have had its impact on Indian society. Just before the arrival of the Portuguese, Christianity was practically confined to Kerala. The co-existence of Hindus, Christians, Muslims and Jews in Kerala brought about a

\(^{70}\) For a record of their mission, Cf. J. Scudder Chandler, History of the Jesuit Mission in Madura: South India in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries (Madras: M. E. Publishing House, 1909). For a general understanding of the expansion of Christianity under the Portuguese, see Joseph Thekkedath, 256.

\(^{71}\) Joseph Thekkedath, 3.
modus vivendi which some historians have called ‘cultural symbiosis’, in which it is not easy to discern the specific influence of one religion over the other.  

2.2. THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN TAMILNADU

Currently, Christians are a minority community in Tamilnadu. Christians are mainly concentrated in the southern districts of Tamilnadu. The Roman Catholic Church (Latin Rite), the Syro-Malabar Catholic Church and the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church constitute the Catholic population in Tamilnadu. The Latin Rite of Roman Catholic Church is the oldest and the largest among all.

Today with 17 dioceses, that include the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Madras – Mylapore and its suffragans Chengalpattu, Vellore, Coimbatore, Ootacamund, Archdiocese of Puducherry- Cuddalore and its suffragans Thanjavur, Kumabakonam, Salem, Dharmapuri, Archdiocese of Madurai and its suffragans Tiruchirappalli, Dindigul, Sivagangai, Thoothukudi, Palayamkottai and Kottar, the Roman Catholics have a rite-based homogeneous presence throughout the state. The Syro-Malabar Roman Catholic Church created its first ‘Diocese of Thuckalay’ in 1996 in the district of Kanyakumari, Tamilnadu. The Syro-Malankara Rite of Roman Catholic Church also newly established the ‘Diocese of Marthandam’ in 1996 in the district of Kanyakumari, Tamilnadu.

Catholic Christians constitute 6.1%  of the total population of Tamilnadu according to the National Census – 2011. The diocese-wise Catholic population and their percentage against the total population are given in the following table (Summarised from the Catholic Directory of India 2013)  

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72 A. M. Mundadan, History of Christianity in India, 518.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>Diocese</th>
<th>Catholic Population</th>
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<td>Chennai-Mylapore</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Chengalpattu</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>Pondicherry-Cuddalore</td>
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<td>Thanjavur</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Kumbakonam</td>
<td>214115</td>
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<td>Marthandam</td>
<td>31402</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Thuckalay</td>
<td>20788</td>
<td>1.15%</td>
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2.3. PENTECOSTALISM IN INDIA

There have been various approaches to the history of origin and development of Indian Pentecostalism. The first and most popular approach is North-America centred, which holds that Pentecostal movement came to India through western Pentecostal missionaries who had received the Azuza Street experience. Alfred G (1874-1944) and Lillian Garr (1878-1916), who came to Calcutta in late December 1906, were the first among them.

The second approach argues that the revival at Pandita Ramabai Saraswati’s Mukti Mission in Kedgaon, near Poona, India in 1905-07 marked the beginning of Indian
Pentecostalism; many non-Pentecostals as well as Pentecostals consider it to be the beginning of the Pentecostal revival in India. Anderson argues that the story of the origin of Indian Pentecostalism must begin with Pandita Ramabai and Mukti Revival. The Mukti Mission became a vital link for the global Pentecostal network that was to be established, and it helped create Pentecostalism in India. However, very recently, the Mukti Revival has caught the attention of Indian Pentecostals as well as others and, when the centenary of the Pentecostal Movement in India was celebrated (6-11 December 2005), the Mukti revival was acknowledged as the beginning of Pentecostalism in India.

The third approach argues that Indian Pentecostalism began with “Pentecostal-like Movements” before and after the Mukti Revival. The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements (NIDPCM) opens the account of the Pentecostal story in India with “Pentecostal-like phenomena”. It insists that the “Pentecostal-like movements” in India preceded North American and European Pentecostalism by at least forty years, and were unrelated to Pentecostal happenings in North America. It gives brief accounts of the story of few revivals, such as the awakenings of Tirunelveli in 1860 and the Khassi Hills (in the north-east part of India) in 1905. However, it labels these revivals as “Pentecostal-like Movements”. Pentecostal revival ideas got an important boost in India when the first active participants from Azusa street landed there. In the beginning of 1907, the Garr couple arrived and held meetings in English for “missionaries and Christian workers” in


Calcutta and as a result regular Pentecostal gatherings were reported at the Carey Baptism Chapel. 79

George E. Berg, who received the baptism in the Holy Spirit at the Azusa Street mission returned to India in 1908 and lived in Bangalore, using it as a centre for his work. Fire Baptized Holiness missionary, Daniel Awrey, visited India in 1910-1911 with Frank Bartleman (the chronicler of Pentecostal origins in Los Angeles). In 1911, J.H. King also visited India, receiving independent missionaries R.E. Massey and D.S. McHaffey into the Pentecostal Holiness Church. A permanent Pentecostal Holiness work began in 1920 under J.M. Turner. 80

Within a very short time, a widespread and diffuse Pentecostal network was established that could be called the beginning of Pentecostalism in India. 81 McGee argues that late nineteenth century India also witnessed remarkable outpourings of the divine Spirit. 82 Covington Allison Kidd claims that Pentecostalism often refers to one specific denomination; it can also refer to the much wider scope of Charismatic Churches. While the Pentecostal, or Charismatic Church is known for having numerous sub-groups (i.e. Assembly of God, Full Gospel Church, Apostolic Church, Methodist Pentecostal Church, among many other indigenous or independent congregations), many similarities exist among these groups. Spirit baptism, healing, mission work, and the emphasis on the Christ’s second coming are common beliefs among the majority of ‘Pentecostal’ or ‘Charismatic’ churches. 83

81 Cf. Michael Bergunder, 79-85.
2.3.1. Pentecostalism in South India

Garry B. McGee points to a series of Pentecostal-like revivals in the then Madras Province (now Tamilnadu) and in Travancore (now Kerala), South India. According to Burgess M Stanley,

The first of these occurred in Tirunelveli in the then Madras Province in 1860-61, followed by an outpouring of the Spirit in Travancore in 1874-75. In both cases charismatic gifts (prophesy, glossoalalia, glossographia, and interpretation or tongue) and other Pentecostal phenomena (prayer for the sick, falling down and shaking, as well as restoration of the offices of apostle and prophet) were present.

The leader was John Christian Aroolappen, a native Anglican catechist who had been trained by pietistic missionaries. Aroolappen’s ministry and the revival itself took an indigenous course, with little or no further influence by missionaries. Evangelistic outreach involved both men and women, and resulted in many conversions. Among Aroolappen’s converts was the former Brahmin Justus Joseph, who formed the Revival Church in 1875. Joseph’s group continued into the early twentieth century, though discredited and criticised by the more conventional missionaries. As McGee points out, Pentecostalism had already established itself in India long before word of Azusa reached the subcontinent.

The founding of the Madras Pentecostal Assembly was attributed to two Swedish missionaries, Karin Anderson and Ida Nelson, who in north India had probably been in close contact with the Mukti Mission. “As they waited for their ship in Madras on

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86 Cf. Ibid.

their way back to Sweden in 1913, did evangelistic work there in Guindy; and, as a result, a Pentecostal congregation started there led by the Tamil Benjamin Jacob”.

The first Assemblies of God missionary to South India was the veteran Mary Weems Chapman, who travelled extensively, holding meetings in Bombay, Mukti, Dhond, and Bangalore, finally settling in Madras in 1915, founding the Pentecostal work there. While in Madras, a delegation from Travancore requested her to come there. In 1922, Spencer May, a British Assemblies of God missionary from Wales, came to Trivandrum to join with Mrs. Chapman. Together they published the first Malayalam Pentecostal magazine, the *Pentecostal Trumpet*. The most far-reaching Pentecostal missionary initiative came from George E Berg (active participant of Azusa Street, who landed in India in 1908) and Robert F. Cook, who joined him in 1913.

By the end of 1960s, many more Pentecostal churches were established in Andhra Pradesh. The Church of God of Prophecy, Cleveland, came into Andhra Pradesh. In 1979 the Earl Stubbs moved to Hyderabad, who gave new impulse to the work in Andhra Pradesh. New Pentecostal churches were also founded by Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) in Andhra Pradesh. Another important ministry founded by an NRI was started by P.J. Titus in 1982, which was born in Kerala. He founded the New Testament Church. Bergunder M (2008) claims that the south Indian Pentecostal movement is no simple copy of western models, but shows many contextual appropriations to elements of Hindu and Indian Christian popular spirituality. This parallelism is a characteristic trait of Pentecostal spirituality in South India.

### 2.3.2. Growth of Pentecostalism in Tamilnadu

As mentioned earlier, the revival in Tirunelveli, under the leadership of the local evangelist, Aroolappen in 1860 is the oldest revival in India with Pentecostal

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88 Michael Bergunder, 79-85.

89 Cf. Ibid.
characteristics.\textsuperscript{90} The Tirunelveli revival was followed by a series of Spirit revivals in various parts of India, including north India, without any influence from the West.\textsuperscript{91}

The south of Tamilnadu became an important centre of indigenous Pentecostal churches. Sadhu Kochukunju, in the beginning of the 1940s founded a church, called Kirubasanam, in Kanyakumari, which developed into one of the most important indigenous Pentecostal churches of Tamilnadu. Quite a few important Tamil pastors turned their back on the Ceylon Pentecostal Mission in the 1940s and 1950s. “It was probably in the 1940s that John Rose came into conflict with the Ceylon Pentecostal mission, and he founded an organization of his own that he registered as the Full Gospel Pentecostal Church”.\textsuperscript{92}

Despite a series of earlier missionary activities, the Pentecostal movement gained a foothold in Tamilnadu only after the Second World War. In June 1949, the American couple Doris and Robert Edwards consecrated a small church near Senkottai. In the meantime, indigenous Pentecostal churches also developed vigorously in Tamilnadu. In the 1950s, the Indian Pentecostal Church in Andhra Pradesh started some missionary work in Tamilnadu. In 1951, one Mr. Chelladurai, who left the Ceylon Pentecostal Mission, founded his own church, which later gained importance as Apostolic Fellowship Tabernacle.

From the 1960s onward certain Pentecostal churches with limited outreach began to play dominant roles in certain regions, for instance, in the big cities of Madras, Coimbatore, and Madurai and in the Southern tip of Tamilnadu. The rapid Pentecostal growth generally observed in Tamilnadu was also to the advantage of the Ceylon Pentecostal Mission. “In this period, the centre of gravity of the work of the Ceylon


\textsuperscript{91} Cf. W. Lukose, 14.

\textsuperscript{92} Michael Bergunder, 79-85.
Pentecostal Mission shifted from Kerala to Tamilnadu”. The official headquarters for India became Madras.

By the 1970s, the Assembly of God experienced a breathtaking and stable growth and at the end of the twentieth century they were by far the strongest force in the Tamil Pentecostal churches (Jeyaraj R, 1995). In Madras, the Pentecostal movement experienced big growth in the 1970s, and the city became the most important centre of the movement in south India. In Palayamkottai, M. Rajendran directed an orphanage and a small church under the name of the Indian Christian Assembly at the beginning of the 1970s.

In Nagercoil, Y. S. Devasundaram of the Jehovah Salvation Church sought to strengthen contact with Canadian partner organizations in the mid-1970s. The Full Gospel Pentecostal Church had its centre of activities in Kanyakumari District. The most significant was the Apostolic Christian Assembly with G. Sundaram as its sole leader. Another important Madras-based church was Maranatha. Sadhu G. Devanesan founded the “Beginning Pentecostal Truth Church”, headquartered at Kanyakumari, and severely criticised the existing Pentecostal movement. He introduced the practice of dividing men and women at worship by a curtain. He died in 1983 and his followers believed that he would soon rise from the dead.

2.4. **Major Pentecostal Churches in India**

From the worldwide perspective, the Assemblies of God is the largest Pentecostal denomination. Indian Pentecostal Church of God, Church of God in India, Assemblies of God, Sharon Fellowship Church, The Pentecost Mission, and World Missionary Evangelism Church are some of the Pentecostal denominations.

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93 Ibid.


95 Cf. Michael Bergunder, 79-85.
2.4.1. The Indian Pentecostal Church of God

The Indian Pentecostal Church of God is an indigenous Pentecostal movement which began in April 1930. The early name of the church was South India Pentecostal Church of God founded by Pastor K. E. Abraham.\textsuperscript{96} This was a division from Robert Cook’s Malankara Pentecostal Church. The name was changed to “Indian Pentecostal Church of God” after four years that was in April 1934.\textsuperscript{97}

The history of IPC is more or less related mainly to him, a separatist during the period of native revival movement in Travancore. K E Abraham and K V Simon were the two leaders of the separatist movement. Under their guidance there were churches formed. The missionaries from the west also came at the same time to South India for the propagation of the Pentecostal doctrine. Many native people accepted it. In June 22, 1923, Abraham also received the gift of the Spirit (speaking in tongue) and became a Pentecostal believer at the house of C. Manasseh at Paraniyam at Neyyattinkara. During the time of rejection by his own people and the following separation from them, he wrote a book, \textit{Baptism of the Holy Spirit} which made a way for him to be known; it opened many ways to preach and to propagate the Pentecostal message. The first Pentecostal church was formed by his ministry in Mulakkuzha, followed by churches in Pandalm, Elanthoor and Vettiyar. Following that, more churches were established and subsequently in April 13, 1924 a monthly gathering was started with all these churches, which is still continuing among all the IPC churches in different places. These independent churches were given a name in July 1924 ‘Thennindia Pentecosthu Daivasabha’ (The South India Pentecostal Church of God). Even when Abraham and colleagues formed these independent churches, they were in cooperation with Rev. Robert F. Cook who headed “Thennindia Poorna Suvishesha Daivasabha” and Mary Chapman the assemblies of God missionary. Thereafter, the IPC made a remarkable progress in founding churches and taking the gospel in different parts of Kerala as well as other states of India. By 1950, IPC was the leading denomination in South Kerala. The split among IPC leaders caused many

\textsuperscript{96} Cf. T.G. Oommen, \textit{IPC and 50 years of History of Service} (Mallapally: Mallapally Printers, 1979), 3-4.

\textsuperscript{97} Cf. Ibid.
to leave the denomination as well as Christian faith. The division affected the entire growth of the church. It is written by Abraham that he even thought of leaving the organization, however, he decided to stay and lead the church for many successful years. After the 1970s the church formed a national council for the smooth expansion of the church. Today, with more than 7500 congregations, IPC leads the organizations. The native leaders’ vision and hard work caused the growth of the IPC. Even by 1994, there were about 6000 members in the IPC churches in Tamilnadu.98

2.4.2. The Assemblies of God

It is a Pentecostal denomination - the largest Pentecostal church, in fact, in the United States and one of the fastest growing religious groups in the world. The denomination has some 16 million members worldwide.99 It was started in 1914 by a group of Evangelicals who came out of the Pentecostal movements. The Assemblies of God (AG), officially the World Assemblies of God Fellowship, is a group of over 140 autonomous but loosely associated national groupings of churches which together form the world's largest Pentecostal denomination.

The early Indian leaders were Pastors A.C. Samuel, C. Manesseh, R. Samuel, and C. Kunjummen. It is observed that under the leadership of C. Kunjummen, the Assemblies of God had great progress.100 The Assemblies of God is fundamentalist in its approach to the Bible. They also stress eschatology a great deal. The members believe in the pre-tribulational rapture and a millennial kingdom on earth. According to Bergunder there were about 35000 members in the Assemblies of God churches in Tamilnadu.101

98 Cf. Michael Bergunder, 309.


100 Cf. T.G. Oommen, 3-4.

101 Cf. Michael Bergunder, 309.
2.4.3. The Church of God (full Gospel) India

The Church of God (Full Gospel) in India is the registered name of the branch in India of the Church of God. Pastor Robert F. Cook, a Pentecostal missionary, who was associated with Assemblies of God for a while, established the Church of God in India in 1913.

Cook worked in India from 1913 through 1940s. After some attempts to begin a Pentecostal work in northern parts of India, Cook realized that there were ancient Christian communities in southern India, especially in Kerala. After arriving in Kerala, he fell in love with the land and the people. The two joined hands to establish the first registered Pentecostal church in India. It was named the Church of God. Cook was so active that he founded churches in several places. The churches were established in Adoor, Pandalam, and Punalur (Kerala). The Church of God was split into two in the year 1972 on the administrative issues in line with Syrians and non-syrians. Bergunder suggested that there were about 7000 members in the church by the year 1994.

2.4.4. Sharon Fellowship Church

The founder of the Sharon Fellowship Church was Pastor P.J. Thomas. As a result of revival meetings in 1952, Pr. P.J. Thomas started a Bible School and later in 1953 and 1957 two other revival meetings were held. These resulted in the formation of a church. The formation of the church is dated to 1953. Now it has more than 2050 local churches in India and other 34 countries. Rev. Dr. T. G. Koshy is the president of this organization. It has a strong emphasis on theological scholarship. It currently has the only Pentecostal accredited seminary (Faith Theological Seminary) that offers post-graduate degrees.


104 Cf. Michael Bergunder, 309.

2.4.5. The Ceylon Pentecostal Mission (CPM)

The Ceylon Pentecostal Mission (CPM), presently known as The Pentecostal Mission (TPM) is a Pentecostal denomination which originated in Ceylon, now Sri Lanka. It was founded by Pastor Paul. It was the result of a revival in Ceylon, now Sri Lanka.

The international headquarters is now situated in Chennai, Tamilnadu. It has around 2,500,000 members worldwide over 65 nations. This mission was founded in Colombo, Sri Lanka in 1923 by Ramankutty, later known as Pastor Paul. The doctrines of the church\textsuperscript{106} include: Trinity, New Birth, Water Baptism, Baptism of the Holy Spirit as evidenced by speaking in unknown tongues, Divine Healing, Entire Sanctification (of the Body, Soul and Spirit), Overcoming Life, Consecrated ministry, Rapture, Tribulation, and Great Tribulation, Resurrection, the Millennial Reign, The Great White Throne Judgement and Eternity. By 1994, it was estimated that there were about 15000 members in the church.\textsuperscript{107}

2.4.6. The Independent Pentecostal Churches

These churches are sometimes known as “Faith Churches”. There are a number of independent Pentecostal churches, most of which are local in nature, as they were formed from spontaneous groups which gathered for worship, learning the Word and do the work of evangelism. Most of them were started as house churches.\textsuperscript{108}

2.5. Charismatic Movement

The Charismatic movement of the twentieth century can be seen as the resurgence of religion in the post-secularization debate. The Charismatic movement is an expression of this resurgence within Christianity.\textsuperscript{109} It is also viewed as an ecstatic-


\textsuperscript{107} Cf. Michael Bergunder, 309.


biblicalistic revival movement within Christianity. \textsuperscript{110} Many historians regard the movement as a ‘third force’ in the Christian world, between Protestantism and Catholicism. \textsuperscript{111}

Also called neo-Pentecostalism, this movement emerged in the 1960s and spread rapidly in the 1970s. In particular, Charismatics share with their Pentecostal brethren a belief in ‘baptism of the Holy Spirit’ and related ‘gifts of the Spirit’ such as speaking in tongues, healing, and prophecy. Although initially there was some experimentation with independent ‘covenant communities’, the predominant organizational form currently is the parish-based prayer group. \textsuperscript{112} Synan V claims that Catholic Charismatic movement began at Duquesne University in 1967 and started spreading very fast around the world. It influenced thousands of Catholics all over the world for renewal in their churches”. \textsuperscript{113}

\textbf{2.5.1. The Catholic Charismatic Movement in India}

In 1972, Minoo Engineer, a young Parsi civil engineer who had been studying at Fordham University and had been converted to Catholicism through his involvement with Charismatics, brought the Catholic Charismatic renewal to India. In the same year, two Jesuit priests, Fr. Fuster and Fr. Bertie Phillips, who had been in the United States for studies and research, returned to India as Charismatics. These early leaders formed prayer groups – the first beginning in Bombay. The movement spread through Maharashtra State and then to all of India.

In 1974, a group of thirty Catholic Charismatic leaders met in Bombay to hold the first National Charismatic Convention, to begin a journal, \textit{Charisindia}, to print the first edition of \textit{Praise the Lord} hymn book, and to serve the renewal. At present, the

\textsuperscript{110} Cf. Ibid.


\textsuperscript{113} V. Synan, \textit{The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movements in the Twentieth Century} (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Win B. Eerdmans, 1997), 284.
leading Indian Catholic Charismatic leader is Mathew Naickomparambil. The first National Convention was held in Mumbai, and then held in different cities of India – Chennai, Ernakulam, in the north and north-east states also. Today, the Charismatic movement is found all over the country.

2.6. INTERACTION BETWEEN CATHOLICS AND PENTECOSTALISM

The researcher attempted to study the interaction between the Catholics in Tamilnadu with their brethren in Pentecostal churches to know the nature of the relationship. The Catholics in general looked at Pentecostals with suspicion and the Pentecostals looked at the former with hostility. As the researcher could not come across any literature that specifically studied this relationship in Tamilnadu, he met some individual church leaders to elicit their points of view. There were some voices both within the Catholic Church and Pentecostal churches that desired a deepening of mutual understanding and respect between the two communities. They thought that it was necessary, while organic or structural unity was not that easy.

2.6.1. General Issues of Conflict

Fr. Juan Usma Gomez lists the following as the issues of conflict in general:\n
- the understanding of the role and presence of the Holy Spirit,
- the implications of the freedom of the Holy Spirit as well as of the free will of human beings,
- the meaning of Christian initiation, and of baptism of water and baptism of the Spirit within the process of Christian initiation,
- the tension between seeing theology from experience as contrasted with seeing theology from a cognitive perspective,
- the nature of conversion,

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115 Fr. Juan Usma Gomez is the Chairman of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity that takes ecumenical initiatives. It is from the press release of Roman Catholic – Pentecostal International Dialogue held in Venice from 23 – 30 July 1999.
• the Pentecostal certainty of salvation obtained through "Baptism in the Holy Spirit"
• the fear of being found guilty by God for failing to convert the non-Pentecostals.

Indeed, the Catholic and Pentecostal missiology and expression of spirituality are not the same, while their approach to theology is radically different. Initially there was openness among the first groups of Pentecostalism who offered the grace of “Baptism in the Holy Spirit” as a source of spiritual renewal.  

One of the characteristics of Pentecostalism which has exercised a strong attraction since its beginning is the emphasis placed on healing. Preaching a message that promises solutions to concrete needs in a precise moment of life is a powerful tool for Pentecostals to reach both those who have already been evangelized and those who are yet to be evangelized. Nevertheless, this practice is perceived by other Christian communities as a deceptive and proselytizing strategy, a strategy of “conquest”.  

Fr. Valtharis reasons out saying that

while the Catholic Church speaks of reason alone, the Pentecostals speak of the Bible alone. Bible is not just the spoken and written word. It is word made flesh, the incarnate word, the eternal word. Bible is not Christ. God is a person. Pentecostalism in its fundamentalist manifestation becomes the Word-centred and not the Christ-centred.  

2.6.2. Pentecostals and Catholics

Many people consider Pentecostalism as the last fruit of the Reformation. Relations between Catholics and Pentecostals have occasionally been frosty, in part because a

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117 Cf. Ibid.

118 Fr. Valtharis (a Catholic priest of the Diocese of Kottar and a charismatic preacher in his early life as a priest), interview by Author, Diocese of Kottar, 13.2.2011.

few of the biggest names in the Pentecostal firmament are also among the most anti-ecumenical voices in global Christianity. However, the situation is changing with the recognition of the Charismatic experience within the Christian communities, particularly in the Catholic Church. Pentecostals recognize bonds of communion with Charismatics; they claim, in fact, that the Holy Spirit works excellently in those believers who have received “Baptism in the Holy Spirit” independently of the Church they belong. This spiritual unity has given rise to certain missionary associations and alliances.

Aggression and diffidence have frequently been at the root of their relations: the desire to convert clouds the relationships. Pentecostals have difficulty in recognizing the saving value of the Catholic Church and of the sacraments, whereas many Catholics view with suspicion the proliferation of divine interventions and consider the promises of healing, prophecies and spiritual gifts as forms of proselytism.

2.6.3. Pentecostals and Catholics in Tamilnadu

As in the rest of the Christian world, the Catholic-Pentecostal non-formal and unorganised dialogue began in the early 1970s in Tamilnadu. Before the Second Vatican Council, the Catholic Church tended to reject Pentecostalism. But with the Vatican II and its recommendations on ecumenical efforts, there was a tokenism of proximity as found in Christmas carols etc. Catholic bishops would enter the Protestant churches but never a Pentecostal church. They have long accused what they call Pentecostal and Evangelical “sects” of draining Catholics away from the faith – in the 20th century, more people converted from Catholicism to Pentecostalism. Meanwhile, Pentecostal leaders have sometimes been ferocious in their criticism of the Catholic Church. Catholics, on the other hand, hold that Pentecostals have exclusivist, triumphalist and sectarian attitudes.

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120 Cf. Ibid, 9.
121 Cf. Ibid, 8.
122 Cf. Ibid.
From 1990s the Catholic Church tried to grasp with the new phenomenon of Pentecostalism as a social, anthropological reality with the potential to become a popular religion. A critical study and appraisal of Pentecostalism was possible in seminars and institutes, which opened up a positive outlook. Ecumenical efforts of the Catholic Church in Tamilnadu often ended with an engagement of the Catholics and Christians of the Mainline Protestant Churches. Pentecostals, particularly of the Classical Pentecostal churches were never part of these initiatives. Even specific ecumenical initiatives like the Unity Octave\textsuperscript{123} left the Pentecostals behind.

2.7. Network of Pentecostal Churches in Tamilnadu

The leaders of the Pentecostal churches of Tamilnadu had met for several times in the name of The Synod of the Pentecostal churches - a registered body of the Pentecostal leaders with the hope of developing a united forum for Pentecostal community in the state.\textsuperscript{124} In their assessment two principles seem paramount to understand Pentecostal churches in terms of their global influence. Two principles are vital for their vision and mission. First the ministry as Pentecostal churches is to express the unity and love of Christ. Second is the need for a new, flexible and adaptable structure. There is a realisation that the foundation for their progress is unity. The year 2009-2010 was declared as year of consolidation.

Again there is the Apostolic Council that consists of the most senior leaders of the Pentecostal churches. The districts of Tamilnadu have been divided and the Joint Secretaries of the Synod have been given responsibilities as overseers. The Synod is created to unite all the Pentecostal churches, Organisations and Para-church Organisations and to make them one body of the Pentecostal community. The Synod has very clear objectives and the guidelines have been provided to all districts to function effectively. Asian Federation for Independent Pentecostal churches is another registered body under the Tamilnadu Charitable Society Act. This society works to achieve education, economic growth, self-reliance, establishing social welfare

\textsuperscript{123} Unity Octave, a week set apart as the week of ecumenism in the Catholic Church, is between 18\textsuperscript{th} and 25\textsuperscript{th} of January every year.

\textsuperscript{124} Cf. www.synodofpentecostalchurches.blogspot.in (accessed on July 28, 2013).
organisations, conferring discipleship and functions with the authority to bring procedural administrative reforms.

2.8. **DOCTRINAL PROXIMITY BETWEEN CATHOLICISM AND PENTECOSTALISM**

On some key issues that formed the fault lines of the Protestant Reformation, Pentecostals are arguably closer to Catholics than to the Evangelicals. While classical Protestants stress the doctrine of sola scriptura, that the Bible alone is the only guide to faith, Pentecostals believe in on-going revelation through the Spirit. Similarly, classical Protestantism believes in salvation through faith alone, while many strains of Pentecostalism believe in a faith manifested in holy living and the fruits of the spirit – in other words, both faith and works. Pentecostals and Catholics see grace and nature as complementary, unlike classic Reformation theology which sees a radical discontinuity. Pentecostalism has a sensual, earthy spirituality similar to some forms of popular Catholic devotion.¹²⁵

For these reasons, Harvey Cox has dubbed Pentecostalism “Catholicism without priests,”¹²⁶ meaning an expression of folk spirituality without the Roman juridical system or complicated scholastic theology. Despite strong tensions between Pentecostals and Catholics, these structural parallels suggest a basis for long-term dialogue.

2.9. **EMERGING ELEMENTS OF RECIPROCITY**

Possibilities of new relationships emerged with the efforts of Catholic Charismatic Renewal in the Catholic Church. And again with the participation of a Pentecostal

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leader in the Second Vatican Council,\textsuperscript{127} doors were open to initiate dialogues with several leaders and groups of the Classical Pentecostals. These dialogues were aimed at deepening their knowledge of each other and at overcoming reciprocal misunderstandings. Common and complementary points of faith such as, conversion, the following of Christ, experience and formation were identified. The theme of how one becomes a Christian was also a point of discussion.

Today, through the two documents published for the international Catholic Pentecostal Dialogue,\textsuperscript{128} Catholics and Pentecostals can recognize certain confessional traits proper to their dialogue partner and can understand the basic reason for some of their attitudes. These documents seek to be a useful tool at the service of Catholics and Pentecostals, so that they truly understand one another and are able to overcome reciprocal diffidence and incommunicability and so that they can, through an honest perception of one another in their confessional reality, newly discover one another as brothers and sisters in Christ, who himself prayed “that they may be one” (Jn.17:21).\textsuperscript{129} The ecumenical movement is irrevocable because the decision was not taken locally but by the entire Catholic Church. “To believe in Christ means to desire unity; to desire unity means to desire the Church; to desire the Church means to desire the communion of grace which corresponds to the Father’s plan for all eternity.”\textsuperscript{130} However, the ecumenical process is far from easy.

In that context, Fr. Juan Usma Gomez cites the remarkably ironic conclusion of a recent ecumenical seminar for the bishops of the South America, held in Argentina and organized by the Council for Promoting Christian Unity:

\textsuperscript{127}David du Plessis, a prominent Pentecostal leader took part as a guest of the Secretariat for Christian Unity in the third session of the Second Vatican Council.

\textsuperscript{128}The two documents most recently published for this Dialogue are Perspectives for Koinonia (1990) and Evangelisation, Proselytism and Common Witness (1997).

\textsuperscript{129}Cf. L’Osservatore Romano, 8.

\textsuperscript{130}Ut Unum Sint, n. 9. (Ut Unum Sint, which meant “That they may be one” was the title of the encyclical written by Pope John Paul II in the year 1995 emphasising the commitment of the Catholic Church to ecumenism).
We believe that, guided by the Holy Spirit, we must go out to meet our Pentecostal brothers, appreciating this current of grace and not attempting to resist the Spirit; with love, prudence, and discernment; overcoming an attitude of defensiveness, because fear is not a fruit of the Spirit.¹³¹

With the dawn of the new century, it appears that Catholics, both the clergy and the lay faithful, begin to see Pentecostalism in a better light with a sense of optimism. Maria Arul Raja, commenting on the need for continuing ecumenical efforts with Pentecostals, had this to say:

Let us not bother about numbers and membership. What is important is Gospel in terms of humanizing the world. The other is no more a threat. Let people have their space where they are free from caste, patriarchy and capitalism. Let people come of age and take decisions on their own. Let the Catholic Church congratulate those who become Pentecostals. If the Holy Spirit inspires them, let them take their decision. God is Lord of history. Why should we bother about it?¹³²

The same idea was echoed by a Catholic layman Jeyaraj as well, when he said “I don’t know whether there is any basic difference between the Catholic Church and Pentecostalism. After all we all believe in Jesus.”¹³³ Pancras, a Catholic Charismatic himself, shared the same perception as he said, “Pentecostals also speak about Jesus, give importance to the bible and bear witness to their faith”¹³⁴.

CONCLUSION

This chapter provided a historical analysis of Christianity in India in general and particularly in Tamilnadu. This chapter has presented the information about the Catholic and Pentecostal Churches in Tamilnadu. It has also pointed out some salient

¹³¹ L’Osservatore Romano, 8.

¹³² Fr. Maria Arul Raja (a catholic priest of the Society of Jesus, A renowned theologian, he currently teaches theology at Arulkadal, a Jesuit Institute of Theology), interview by author, Chennai, 15.02.2011.

¹³³ Mr. Jeyaraj (a traditional Catholic), interview by author, Thoothukudi, 16.04.2011.

¹³⁴ Mr. Pancras (a lay catholic charismatic preacher), interview by author, Tiruchy, 15.04.2011.
issues related to their relationships. The study helped to nuance the charismatic and Pentecostal beliefs by the Catholics and thus helped in understanding the significance of their interactions between them. The study helped to distinguish the common features and the distinct elements in both the Catholic Church and Pentecostalism.