CHAPTER SIX

AN INTERPRETATIVE UNDERSTANDING OF THE PERCEPTIONS ON PENTECOSTALISM

6.1. INTRODUCTION

The present study has already pointed out that there is a general agreement among the respondents of both the quantitative survey and in-depth-interviews on the presence and the impact of the phenomenon of Pentecostalism within the Catholic Church. The analysis of the data on the perceptions of Catholics on Pentecostalism has brought out several insights which necessitate interpretation and discussion. A few selected key themes are discussed below in the light of the findings:

6.2. PERCEPTIONS ON GOD-EXPERIENCE

In their work, ‘The Anthropology of Experience’, Victor Turner and Edward Bruner turn to Dilthey’s discussion of experience, quoting, ‘… reality only exists for us in the facts of consciousness given by inner experience’.\(^{217}\) Thus, according to Bruner and Turner, experience is what comes first. Their focus was upon how ‘Individuals actually experience their culture, that is, how events are received by consciousness. Experience is not just sense data, cognition, or products of reason, but also feelings and expectations. That experience comes to us not just verbally but also in images and impressions. From this perspective, lived experience, as thought and desire, as word and image, is the primary reality.’\(^{218}\)


\(^{218}\) Cf. Ibid, 280.
In the assessment of Neo Pentecostalism, Harvey Cox describes the ability of Pentecostalism to advance a ‘primal spirituality’. This includes first ‘primal speech’ (ecstatic utterance), secondly, ‘primal piety’ (articulation of archetypal religious expressions, trance, vision, praise healing, supplication and thirdly, ‘primal hope’ that looks forward to a new age, which is God’s Kingdom on earth. In short, the Pentecostal movement seeks the very nature of spiritual experience behind the Christian faith. However, Catholic respondents, who also attended Pentecostal prayer meetings (482), thought that by being able to pray better and having the opportunity to listen to the Word of God in a deeper way, they came closer to God and thus, had God-experience in themselves. Hence, in this study it has been observed that in the perception of the Catholic respondents Pentecostal idea of God experience is beyond this primal spirituality.

6.3. PERCEPTIONS ON THE IMPACTS OF PENTECOSTALISM

According to the respondents, particularly of the in-depth-interview, Pentecostalism has helped believers to move to the inner core of religion – an intimate experience of God. Pentecostalism is perceived to offer its adherents an assurance of God experience and individual salvation. The findings point out that this experience has become a reality in the lives of those who have testified to the positive impact of this new phenomenon in their lives such as:

- Able to have an experience of healing (28%)
- Have the peace of mind (83%),
- Feel that they are liberated from the power of evil spirits (25%),
- Able to free themselves from the personal difficulties like alcoholism,
- Able to find solutions to their day-to-day problems
- Able to grow in self-confidence and personal integrity (70%)

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- Able to relate well with people (67%)
- Realise that they are now led by the Spirit (67%).

These existential realities of life are of paramount importance to them that they seek the imminent presence of God in their lives.

This factor points to the aspect of day-to-day religion practised by people today. This point was echoed by one of the interviewees of the in-depth-interview, as he said,

Catholics go there looking for Jesus experience, Spirit experience, Abba experience and Spiritual experience. It is the need of the people. Therefore they go. There is the possibility of an intimate relationship with God with an emotional involvement in the liturgy. The Catholic Church happens to think that there should not be any space for emotions. But the fact is there cannot be true worship without emotional involvement. It is an essential phase.\(^220\)

6.4. New Identity

According to Stephen Hunt,

The Neo-Pentecostals have moved beyond USA, Latin America and Africa to Asia. This movement is marked by the emergence of different streams of Pentecostalism adapting itself to increasing cultural diversities in different parts of the world including India. This movement is now identified by its increasing pluralism, enculturation and marketability.\(^221\)

The outcome of such developments is the positive contribution of Pentecostalism to identity construction. This trend has been identified in the present study. Listing out the benefits of opting for attending Pentecostal worship services, meetings and gatherings, the respondents stated that they experienced self worth and felt wanted. They claim to have received a new identity.

\(^{220}\) Fr. Panneer Selvam, interviewed by the researcher, Salem, 05.03.2011.

\(^{221}\) Stephen J. Hunt, 192.
When asked about impact of attending Pentecostal prayer meetings in their personal lives, the following were the responses of the respondents of the quantitative survey, who also attended Pentecostal prayer meetings: ‘I have developed self-confidence’; ‘I have grown in personal integrity’; ‘I have peace of mind’; ‘I am able to relate well with people’ and ‘I have grown in my spiritual life’.222

6.5. LIFESTYLE IMPACT

Pentecostalism has contributed to the emergence of a new lifestyle ethic impacting the daily spirituality at work and home. While global diversity transcending human divisions is claimed as the hallmark of neo-Pentecostalism, the presence of sectarian tendencies has been reported in this study. The claims to have attained a new experience have contributed to discriminatory practices within families. The following findings from the study and responses from qualitative interviews throw light on the above observation.

As it has been analysed earlier in Table – 4.24, to the question how attending Pentecostal prayer meetings impacted their personal life, 245 (50.8%) out of 482 respondents said that they felt isolated to a large extent, 79 (16.4%) said to some extent and 59 (12.2%) said it somewhat impacted. Put together, 383 (79.4%) respondents can be taken as to have isolated in their families, though it affected them in different and varying degrees.

When it came to how it affected their family life (Table: 4.25), 292 (60.6%) respondents said that their family is divided to a large extent, 73 (15.1%) said to some extent and 52 (10.8%) said it somewhat divided their families. Put together, 417 (86.5%) of the respondents thought their family was divided because of their affinity with the Pentecostal churches.

When the respondents of the quantitative survey were asked about their perception on the types of impact, 829 (51.6%) strongly agreed and 338 (21%) agreed that it caused division in families.

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222 As found in Table No. 4.24 of the quantitative data.
Conflicts can happen when family members have different views or beliefs that clash. Though occasional conflict is part of family life, ongoing conflict can be stressful and damaging to relationships. It leads people to situations where they are unable to manage their feelings and become intentionally hurtful, aggressive or even violent.

6.6. PERCEPTION OF THE SHIFT TO PENTECOSTALISM: MULTIPLE PARTICIPATIONS, CONVERSION OR AFFILIATION

The findings do not support the popular observation that the members of the Catholic Church have deserted or abandoned the parental faith. The data reveal that only 30 (1.7%) of the respondents of the quantitative survey indicated about their dual membership and the rest of them (452) have satisfied with just participating in such worship, meetings and gatherings.

62.5% of the respondents indicate that a desire for a deeper understanding of the Word of God –study of the Bible- has been one of the major attractive factors. The general agreement of the respondents of the quantitative survey on the reasons for Catholics attending Pentecostal prayer meetings were: to get psychological relief (72.4%), to have a healing experience (67.1%), to seek fellowship (61%), to pray better (61.4%), to look for wonders and new things (66.4%), as people are welcome there (63.2%) and because of the misunderstanding with priests (64.6%).

The process of conversion is critically interpreted by Henri Gooren who terms this process as “conversion careers’. In his work entitled ‘Religious Conversion and Disaffiliation” defines this term as the member’s passage, within his or her own social and cultural context, through level, types and phases of religious participation. It represents a systematic attempt to analyse shifts in levels of individual religious activity, pre-affiliation, affiliation, conversion confession and disaffiliation. Based on an analysis of many of the conversion stories contained in the literature on Latin America and his own field work in Nicaragua, he argues that many informants did not convert to a Pentecostal church, they only joined the church for a while (i.e affiliation). Based on this analysis and observation it can be interpreted that in the

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present study those who expressed a positive shift to Pentecostalism explained their perception only in terms of affiliation.\textsuperscript{224}

Of the 1729 respondents of the quantitative survey, only 30 said they had dual membership i.e. they had become members of one of the Pentecostal churches besides their membership in the Catholic Church. 482 respondents who also attended Pentecostal prayer meetings said they attended Pentecostal prayer meetings at different levels of frequencies. In the perception of the respondents of the survey, this factor is more an affiliation than conversion.

Hence this shift/affiliation has to be understood as a search for a deeper spiritual experience, multiple participation, affiliation and not as abandoning of the parental faith.

6.7. Theory of Deprivation Revisited

Sociology of religion has studied the link between Pentecostalism and theory of deprivation. The sectarian characteristics of early Pentecostalism and the beliefs that emphasize a spiritual elitism, millenarianism and holiness all appear to have had an attraction to sections of the poor, the downtrodden, and the socially marginalised.\textsuperscript{225} Pentecostalism was for a long time regarded as the religion of the dispossessed and the marginalised.\textsuperscript{226} This link between Pentecostalism and deprivation has also been the core aspect of sociological accounts of Black Pentecostalism. In terms of theology, these Afro-deprivation in the form of social marginalization, low social status and the effects of discrimination has dominated the appraisals of black Pentecostal churches in the United States and seemed applicable to black communities in Diaspora.\textsuperscript{227} Caribbean Pentecostals, though sectarian in nature,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{226} Cf. Stephen J. Hunt, “Sociology of Religion”, 182.
\item \textsuperscript{227} Cf. Ibid.
\end{itemize}
provide compensatory aspects of religion, in that, the principal emphasis has been on offering futuristic Kingdom of God. However, while admitting to distinct social roots, Miller\textsuperscript{228} interprets the movement as a genuine religious quest among the masses.

The rise of neo-Pentecostalism has reopened the earlier sociological issues including the theory of deprivation. In her study of Catholic groups of Charismatics, Neitz\textsuperscript{229} found little evidence of deprivation. According to her deprivation was not part of the conversion narrative. Conversion was often motivated by deeper commitment or service to God. The findings in this study do support the above position that the reason for this new found allegiance has been purely on the need for a deeper quest for God.

This study has found that people from different walks of life – the rich and the poor, the educated and the uneducated, the urban as well as the rural based – have affinity with Pentecostalism. To put it in the words of Fr. Devasagayaraj, “Pentecostalism attracts people of all sorts. Those who cannot be part of the structured Catholic Church, go there. From dissatisfaction and dejection people go there.”\textsuperscript{230}

Speaking on the vulnerable groups of people targeted by the Pentecostal churches he added,

\begin{quote}
But, the most vulnerable sections of the society i.e. socially, economically, educationally backward people and possibly Dalits and those who are psychologically weak are the target groups of Pentecostalism.\textsuperscript{231}
\end{quote}

As per the inferential analysis of the data, economic conditions definitely have an impact on the respondents with regard to their affinity with Pentecostalism. Rural,\textsuperscript{228}


\textsuperscript{230} Fr. Devasagayaraj, interviewed by the researcher, Puduchery, 07.03.2011.

\textsuperscript{231} Ibid.
single and low income group people have greater tendency to have an affinity with Pentecostalism.

Hence in the perception of the Catholics, the theory of deprivation—in terms of social mobility is not cited as the reason for their shift.

6.8. RELATIVE DEPRIVATION

In their discussion on the link between the rise of neo-Pentecostalism, the middle classes and deprivation, sociologists have identified that the deprivations which are identified with Pentecostal sectarianism ultimately lead not only to the overcoming of economic and status short-comings, but in practical terms could raise the adherent to a greater status and material wealth by inculcating mainstream values.

“The emphasis on relative deprivation has concerned commentators of the neo-Pentecostal movement. This concept is derived from the work of Max Weber (1970). For Weber,

relative deprivation is a subjective element which allows individuals in a similar social situation to perceive them as not achieving the rewards of wealth and honour that they deserve. The distinctive aspect of relative deprivation is that it is culturally and historically specific—defined in relation to the standards of a particular society at a particular time. Moreover, that such deprivation is not merely economic but linked to status and whatever a society regards as significant and worthwhile possessing. Put another way, a social group experiences relative deprivation when it feels deprived in comparison to other similar groups, or when expectations are not met. It is not the fact of being deprived as such, but the feeling of deprivation which is important.\(^232\)

In the opinion of the researcher the findings do not openly support absolute deprivation but the presence of relative deprivation cannot be denied.

6.9. NEGOTIATION

Analysing the profile of the respondents of the quantitative survey, considerable number of respondents are comfortable with the traditional Catholic belief systems and religious practices, while constantly negotiating, with an open mind, with the Catholic Charismatic Movement (474 = 27.41%) and Pentecostalism (482 = 27.87%), which are together known as renewalist or Spirit-filled movements in the Christian tradition. While acknowledging their rootedness in the Catholic tradition, they explore the possibilities of identifying the positive elements from these renewalist movements and incorporate them in their day to day socio-religious aspects of life without leaving sight of their Catholic identity. This factor could be described in the backdrop of fluidity of religions in the contemporary world. Shifting membership from one religious movement to another has something to do with the choice of an individual believer and this fluidity of affiliation is becoming common, as evinced in this research.

Based on the perceptions of the Catholic respondents of both the quantitative survey and in-depth-interview, the researcher could also identify an inner religious quest of Catholics, who negotiated with elements of Catholic Charismatic movement and Pentecostalism in an affirmative effort to have their identities of belonging in a new socio-religious realm, wherein they could exercise the religious agency with greater freedom.

6.10. PERCEPTION ON PERSONALISED FAITH

In citing the reasons for Catholics attending the Pentecostal prayer meetings, the respondents perceived that they (Pentecostals) emphasized a living and personalised faith that allowed life to be led by the Holy Spirit beyond the printed Word of God. In this understanding the individual becomes important who experiences a sense of self-worth as a child of God. However, the respondents rejected an over-emphasis of the exclusivist and individualistic approach by the Pentecostals over their claims ‘we alone are saved’. 71% of the respondents cited this as one of the aspects they did not appreciate with Pentecostals. Further, this exclusivist approach has also created rifts within family as believers and non-believers.
6.11. THEOLOGY OF SUFFERING

Data from qualitative interviews pointed out that Catholics perceived that Pentecostal teaching on suffering was lopsided since they advocated suffering as an evil to be overcome and promised a life free from suffering and pain; Prosperity gospel was given more importance than the theology of the cross. At the same time this offer of freedom from all evils has been attributed as one of the major reasons for the phenomenal growth of global Pentecostalism.

In this study 60.3% of the respondents of the quantitative survey opined that a Christian should love poverty so as to seek the Kingdom of God, though they acknowledged that abundance of wealth is a blessing of God. The Pentecostal world view is void of a holistic approach to life with the absence of vicarious suffering.

6.12. PERCEPTIONS OF CHURCH HIERARCHY

Several questions on the role of Catholic hierarchy were posed to the respondents. They did not appreciate the formal approach of the Catholic priests and appreciated the pastoral approach of the Pentecostal leaders. They indicated that Catholic priests and their office premises offered an administrative look than a pastoral ambience. 64.6% of the respondents of the quantitative survey said misunderstanding with priests was one of the major reasons for Catholics attending Pentecostal prayer meetings. The person-centred approach of the Pentecostal leaders impressed them.

While the respondents were in agreement with strict regulations in the Catholic Church, they were uncomfortable with the centralized administrative structures. Yet they were fine with the authority of the Roman Pontiff, the order of bishops and priests. Though it was very difficult to clearly and unambiguously analyse the responses in this regard, the researcher could identify, particularly from the in-depth-interviews, a desire for greater participation for the lay people in the day-to-day administration of the church.
6.13. PERCEPTIONS ON PENTECOSTAL WORSHIP

The spontaneity in worship, informality, participatory nature of Pentecostal prayers and involvement of all, particularly of women were greatly appreciated by the respondents of both the quantitative survey and the in-depth-interviews. On the other hand noisy worship and uttering unintelligible words were cited as aspects of Pentecostal worship that were not welcomed. However, the respondents were for emotional involvement in worship. Prayer for healing was perceived as the main reason for Catholics to attend Pentecostal worship.

65.2% of the respondents of the quantitative survey did not like rubrics and ritualism in Catholic liturgy. This could be interpreted as their desire for more spontaneity and informality in worship.

To get a deeper knowledge of the Bible (62.5%) and to listen to the good preaching of the Word of God (68.6%) were said to be the Biblical attractions for Catholics attending Pentecostal prayer meetings. At the same time 60.7% respondents thought that there was no good preaching of the Word of God in the Catholic Church. Again 61.4% of the respondents opined that the Biblical interpretation given in the Catholic Church was not good.

6.14. PERCEPTIONS ON UNDERSTANDING AND INTERPRETING THE SCRIPTURES

The respondents did not question the official interpretation of the Word of God of the Catholic Church or of the Catholic Magisterium but perceived that there should be greater freedom in the understanding and interpretation of the scripture as in Pentecostal churches. About 56.1% of the respondents agreed that ‘one can have his/her own interpretation.’ Though the responses could not be analysed very clearly, the researcher could come across Catholics appreciating the independence Pentecostals enjoy in interpreting the Word of God.
6.15. **Perception of the Plurality of Religion**

66% of the respondents of the quantitative survey (Table 4.61) expressed their agreement that all religions led to God. This openness to and affinity with other religious movements could be understood in terms of personal choice as the following words of Peter L. Berger,

> Making a choice and negotiating in order to make the choice is a universal phenomenon in the modern world. These days people do not assume that people who choose or who mix and match are inherently less religious than those whose lives are shaped by a single religious trajectory in a homogenous religious community. Religion has increasingly become a matter of individual choice. Individuals may indeed make “orthodox” or “fundamentalist” choices - many do – but these too are choices.233

Urbanisation and mass migration, the spread of literacy and higher education, the media and mass-communication – all these have made knowledge of alternate religious possibilities more generally available than even before.

6.16. **Perceptions on the Role of Basic Christian Communities**

The present study showed that a strong support was evident on the positive role of Basic Christian Communities (BCCs). BCCs have been viewed as an alternative structure that seeks to build the local communities of faith for a more authentic and relevant faith expression. People from the neighbourhood gather periodically, share the Word of God among themselves, pray as a community for each other, share a common meal and discuss about their concerns both social and spiritual. In their experience it is the new way of being the community of believers. Respondents of the in-depth-interview, in particular, felt that BCCs offered the believers smaller faith communities, where everyone counted, to live and express their faith. It also gave them a new avenue of solidarity.

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As per Table 4.48, 44.9% of the respondents of the quantitative survey perceived that the number of Catholics attending Pentecostal prayer meetings decreased after the formation of BCCs in their places. 61% of the respondents felt that Catholics attended Pentecostal prayer meetings seeking fellowship (Table 4.28). In their perception, Catholics found in BCCs the possibility of fellowship among themselves and the opportunity to pray better in smaller gatherings, the number of Catholics going to Pentecostal churches was on the decrease.

Michael Bergunder points out several anthropologists have identified commonalities and distinctions between Basic Ecclesial Communities (BECs) and Pentecostal groups in the Latin American context. Quoting a study by Mariz, he states that

> Both bring about a special kind of change of values, marking discontinuity with former life...In the basic communities this is effected by gaining new radical insights into the roles of church and society, while among the Pentecostals dramatic experiences of conversions prevail. In both techniques of religious reflection are practiced either in the reading of the Bible from a liberation theology perspective or in the Pentecostal missionary praxis. Both groups seek to overcome dualism of faith and life, and both mediate the feeling of human worth.\(^{234}\)

Although situations in Latin America and India differ, yet it can be assumed that since BCCs have the potential to provide religious experiences that are similar to that of Pentecostalism, the shift towards Pentecostalism is less preferred.

### 6.17. PERCEPTIONS ON THE RESPONSE OF PENTECOSTALS TO SOCIAL ISSUES: REJECTION OR SOCIAL PASSIVISM

The neglect of politics and sociological features in religious experiences caused by purely ‘textual’ approaches leads to an inability to recognize how religions like Christianity, or experiences of Pentecostalism, provide an identity as well as religious

faith and set of rules for life. The changing social and cultural environment in which Pentecostal experiences so often unfold is not simply a product of material forces. It affects the participators’ material well-being but also their sense of self-worth and community and their efforts to create institutions for the sustenance of both. This tension between dignity and self-identification in a pluralized and politically unequal world lies at the heart of many testimonials or conversion histories.  

The respondents appreciated the Pentecostal emphasis on a living and personalised faith. However, their preoccupation with privatised faith and their ‘we alone are redeemed’ attitude were perceived as negative that caused deeper divisions among the believers. This privatised faith also exposed their passivity towards addressing social issues. It was perceived that insistence on liberation from individual pain and suffering took precedence over corporate suffering. In the same way the greater insistence on personal sin and deliverance overshadowed social sins and liberation from social evils.

The Pentecostal movement in Latin America is blamed for making no contribution to liberation from poverty and oppression but reflect ‘religious misery as in a mirror’. F.C. Rolim observes that the response of the Pentecostal and other over-spiritualized groups scarcely translates human dissatisfaction when faced with contradictions of modernization. Citing the situation in Brazil, he concludes that response of the Pentecostals legitimizes “as natural the vast social differences and their repercussions on the growing mass of the poor, and the gradual accumulation of wealth in the hands of the rich”.

Further, Pentecostalism does not have a centralised structure nor has a federation of Churches, hence taking a common position has been difficult due to innumerable sects within Pentecostalism. In Chile the leadership of the biggest Pentecostal church a “so called-pastor’s council was founded to support the military junta, which it

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236 Bergunder, “The Pentecostal Movement and Basic Ecclesial Communities”, 173.
described as the answer to the prayers of all believers who consider Marxism to be the highest expression of the Satanic forces of darkness” 237

In contrast, a study on Pentecostalism and social change conducted in Philippines observes the existence of ‘sakop’ 238 (Group alliances). The ‘sakop’ is a multipurpose group which focuses on the welfare of the group rather than the individual. ‘Sakop’ in the Philippines encompasses practically all the levels of a person’s relationship: relatives, peers, classmates, neighbours, officemates and extended family by consanguinity or affinity. The sakop value is best expressed in the family to this day; it remains as the strongest unit of the Philippine society. According to researchers this cultural institution impacts the social consciousness of both the Pentecostals and Catholics alike beyond the religious ethic.

The absence of collective consciousness, preoccupation with the other world and ambivalent attitude to socio-political issues is perceived as points of critique of the Pentecostal movement even in India.

6.18. PERCEPTIONS OF RELATIONSHIP: SEPARATED BRETHREN

Catholic perception of Pentecostals as anti-church and a divisive force is being slowly replaced with viewing them as partners in the faith journey. This shift was notable when some respondents (15.5%) of the quantitative survey approved of their Catholic brothers and sisters becoming Pentecostals. A sense of openness towards Pentecostalism as a religious movement was also noted in the responses of the in-depth-interviews.

As per Table 4.68, 32.7% respondents of the quantitative survey said that they were able to relate with Pentecostals in a spontaneous manner. This positive approach can be inferred as a change in attitude. This positive perception of relationship is reinforced by several reasons.

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In a review on the relationship between Pentecostals and Roman Catholics, David Allen observes that the relationship have dramatically changed since the time when Pentecostals denounced Roman Catholicism as owing more to Babylonian Paganism and Constantinian corruption of the faith once handed over to the Saints. Through the courageous pioneering work of David Du Plessis, the influence of David Wilkerson’s popular *Cross and the Switchblade*, ground breaking pronouncements of Vatican II and through transdenominational contacts at personal level, most Roman Catholics and Pentecostals now see themselves, in the words of Pope John XXIII, as ‘Separated Brethren’. 

Secondly, the Roman Catholic-Pentecostal dialogue in Latin America since 1972, have reduced polarization to be replaced by respecting each other as dialogue partners. The areas of dialogue have been on Scriptural Inspiration, Present Revelation and the Spirit outside the church, Spirit baptism and adult baptism, Justification by faith and ecumenism. Efforts of ecumenism at local parish level are minimal but have been successful in some places for certain common issues of concern. This shift in attitudinal approach is a positive sign.

Mutual understanding is possible only when each religion seeks to realize its own potential, while at the same time remaining open to the influence of other religions and religious movements in their quest for truth. One should also be open to the need to realise that “religion is often being produced and reshaped in places beyond existing institutions.”

Peter Beyer speaks about people finding religion becoming a new space of belonging and a temporal boundary crosser. He says, “Religion is the archetypal spatial and temporal boundary crosser. Many faiths tolerate and even encourage the idea of belonging to several groups at the same time. Their proclivity toward syncretism


makes combining religious elements and crossing borders the norm rather than the exception.”

The researcher could identify this factor analysed by Peter Beyer in the ensuing research findings. The 482 (27.87%) Catholic respondents of the quantitative analysis had no difficulty in continuing with their Catholic identity and yet attending Pentecostal prayer meetings and Conventions and watching Pentecostal related programmes on the Television. 30 of them had obtained membership in some Pentecostal churches also. Periya Kulandaisamy, commenting on this phenomenon, said, “I don’t think it is wrong that our Catholics attend Pentecostal prayer meetings. It is a big opportunity for them to listen to the Word of God and have a good interpretation of it. After all, people get God’s revelation there.”

This sense of accommodativeness is becoming evident even at the level of Catholic clergy and Bishops. Efforts are taken to reach out to Pentecostals and there is an element of reciprocity from them. Speaking of the efforts taken at his parish level, Fr. Backia Regis had this to say:

> When I invited heads of different churches within the jurisdiction of the parish of St. Patrick, St. Thomas Mount, Chennai, for a get-together, several Pastors of the indigenous Pentecostal Churches as well as of the Mainline Protestant Churches responded positively and we had a very spirited interaction followed by a fellowship meal. But the Pastors of the Classical Pentecostal Churches were conspicuously absent.  

Bishop Singaroyan spoke of the efforts at the diocesan level:

> At the Diocesan level, we organized a convention of the different church leaders. More than 80 Pentecostal church leaders attended it. Their participation was

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242 Ibid., 111.

243 Mr. Periya Kulandaisamy, interviewed by the researcher, Chengalpattu, 03.03.2011.

244 Fr. Backia Regis, interviewed by the researcher, Chengalpattu, 02.03.2011.
noteworthy and throughout the convention, I could personally witness a sense of true fellowship and I believe it was from a deep conviction that we all got the same mandate of evangelization from Jesus Christ. We decided to continue to work on this networking, discussed about avoiding possible collusions in the mission areas and sharing this ministry among us in a collective and a coordinated manner.  

6.19. CONCLUSION

To conclude, the above discussion has brought out that the study highlights that the shift is towards the phenomenon of Pentecostalism than for conversion to Pentecostal churches. The data sufficiently points out that only 30 out of 1729 respondents have declared that they have dual membership. The research also brings to light that they look for a deeper religious experience and hence they find that the phenomenon of Pentecostalism addresses such needs. The Catholic respondents perceive Pentecostal churches/congregations not a threat to their faith. Again in expressing their perceptions on Pentecostalism, the respondents have attempted an indirect critique of their own (Catholic) faith, administrative structures and pastoral priorities. The need for autonomy in understanding the scriptures for personal benefit and for contextual relevance has been expressed boldly in several areas of the study. The respondents have sufficiently expressed the need for reduced ritualism and greater space for emotional involvement in worship and participation of the lay faithful in the administration and ministry of the church. The study thus invites the Catholic Church to re-examine and rectify itself so as to cater to the aspirations and expectations of the Catholics who tend to have an affinity with the Pentecostal phenomenon.

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245 Bishop Singaroyan, interviewed by the researcher, Salem, 08.03.2011.