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Globalization and Militant Hindu Nationalism:

The New Context for Theology in India

Dissertation

Submitted to

The College of Arts and Sciences of the

UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON

In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for

The Degree

Doctor of Philosophy in Theology

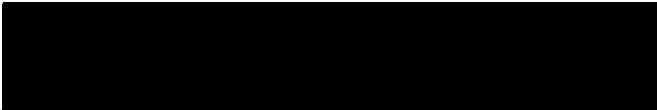
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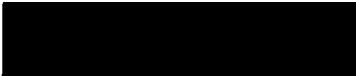
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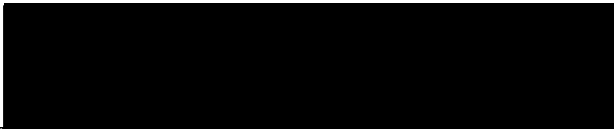
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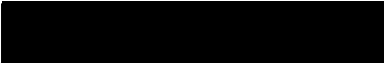
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ABSTRACT

GLOBALIZATION AND MILITANT HINDU NATIONALISM: THE NEW CONTEXT FOR THEOLOGY IN INDIA

Rev. Satish Antony Joseph
University of Dayton, 2008

Director: Dr. Dennis Doyle, Ph.D

This dissertation is an attempt to propose new directions for Christian theology in India in the present context of globalization and militant Hindu nationalism. In recent years, Christians have been the target of violent attacks by militant Hindu nationalists. Critically analyzing the history of Christianity and militant Hindu nationalism in India, this dissertation claims that militant Hindu nationalism originated in the context of Western colonialism, which brought about a crisis of religious, cultural, and national identity among Hindus. It also left India poverty-stricken. The above claim is not made without taking into account contesting rationale for militant Hindu nationalism, especially, caste status quo. It is further claimed that globalization is perceived as recreating “colonization-like” situations, only now at a staggering speed and on a global level, thus representing economic, political, cultural, and social issues formerly associated with colonialism. The contemporary attacks on Christians by militant Hindu nationalists must be understood within the dynamics of globalization.

The Church in India needs to respond to the crisis emerging from globalization and militant Hindu nationalism. It is proposed that a renewed theological initiative can provide the basis of such as a response. The theological initiatives proposed here build upon the method of contextual theology proposed by Robert Schreiter. Building also on the already existing theology in India this dissertation proposes that the three traditional areas of focus of Indian theology – inculturation, interreligious dialogue, and social justice – would be addressed within newer frameworks of interpretation, implementing advances in the field of intercultural communications. The main conclusion of the dissertation is that it is through renewed theological initiatives that the Church in India can become genuinely Indian in a way that re-appropriates the relative cultural and religious integration the Church had achieved in the pre-colonial era.

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This dissertation would not have been possible without the help of a number of people. Please accept my sincere gratitude.

First and foremost, I wish to thank Dr. Dennis Doyle, the director of this dissertation. When I almost gave up, you pulled me out of the dumps and created the environment for me to accomplish this task. Your vision, insights, guidance, encouragement, persistence, honesty and faith is a crucial part of this dissertation. Above all, thank you for the “conversations.” I am a better theologian, more importantly, a better person because of you.

I wish to thank Dr. Sandra Yocum Mize, Dr. Willam Portier, Dr. Michael Barnes, and Rev. Dr. Robert Schreiter C.P.P.S for their commitment to the project. Your input and suggestions have been invaluable. Thank you.

I also wish to thank my family in India for their constant encouragement and prayers. Mom and Dad, Suresh, Anupama, and Sawani, thanks for all the support and prayers - the secret ingredient in any academic theological work.

Sincere gratitude is due to Deborah Bauer for sitting many hours and painstakingly proofreading the manuscript. Your friendship and support has brought much inspiration.

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Introduction

The national Catholic weekly *America* in its Feb 20, 2006 issue carried this news article: "Hindu Mob Attacks Bishop, Officials in India." As the weekly reported, on the 29th of January, Bishop Thomas Dabre of Vasai, India and other church officials were visiting Ghosali village in western India to bless a hostel for poor students. At the end of the ceremony, a mob of about 200 Hindus used stones and slogans to attack the ecclesiastical entourage. Their slogan was loud and clear: "Christians go back!" "Foreign dogs, get out!" The Bishop's response was significant: "This is well planned. It arose from the same tactic of anti-Christian propaganda used by Hindu fundamentalist groups."¹

The above incident raises a number of issues. First, after two thousand years of Christian presence in India, Christians are called "foreign dogs." Second, in Ghosali violent means were employed to register social protest. Yet it is widely claimed that Hinduism essentially does not lend itself to the closed and monolithic radicalism associated with Muslim, Jewish, or Christian militancy. Hinduism is associated with socio-cultural differentiation and a capacity for integration, which is incompatible with collective militant consciousness. Third, Bishop Dabre's response suggests that the attack was the work of Hindu "fundamentalists." Fourth, this attack was only the latest in a

¹ *America*, Feb 20, 2006, 6.

series of attacks on Christians in India. In other words, many Hindus in India would share similar antagonism against Christians.

The above issues raise significant questions. Why is Christianity still called “foreign?” Why are some Hindus attacking Christians in different parts of India? Are the attacks against Christians genuinely an anti-conversion backlash or are the attacks instigated by high caste Hindus who are afraid that low and scheduled caste people who are converting to Islam, Buddhism, and Christianity are eroding the political base upon which upper caste Hindus depend to stay in social dominance and power? What is the identity of those who attack the Christians? With what term does one name the violent social protests? Is violence against Christians an isolated phenomenon or is it part of a more complex process? Most importantly, how can Christians respond to the systematic violence against them? An attempt to address these questions is the subject matter of this dissertation.

The main thesis of this dissertation is that globalization and militant Hindu nationalism form the new context for theology in India and that the Church in India must make a theological response to the crises that emerge from globalization and the resulting militant Hindu nationalism, a response consisting in renewed theological initiatives that integrate and address the issues of inculturation, interreligious dialogue, and social justice within newer frameworks.

In chapters one and two, we will trace the origin and growth of Christianity in precolonial and postcolonial India as well as the origin and growth of militant Hindu nationalism. This historical survey is meant to underscore the misperceptions that Christians and militant Hindu nationalists have about each other’s history. Whereas

militant Hindu nationalists fail to consider Christian presence in its totality, Christians fail to consider the origin and rise of militant Hindu nationalism within its historical context - the context of colonialism. The conflation of the terms colonialism and Christianity on the one hand and colonialism and globalization on the other, as well as the claims of religious harmony in precolonial India are contested. Hindu violence against Christians is also naively termed fundamentalism. Analysing these conflations and claims, I will argue that understanding the complete and complex history of Christianity and militant Hindu nationalism (as opposed to fundamentalism) can be a useful resource for future dialogue and interreligious work.

Chapter three is dedicated to a brief analysis of the concept of globalization, with a special focus on those overall aspects most relevant to this dissertation. In particular, the discussion will reveal the complexity of the phenomenon. The complexity arises not only from its wide social impact but also from the speed and intensity with which it affects society. Employing the concepts compression, intensification, reflexivity, relativization, homogenization, heterogenization, disjuncture, deterritorialization, reterritorialization, and imagination I assess the economic, political, and cultural impact on society in general and India in particular. I present globalization as a problematic. Sifting through contested data and providing examples from India I argue that, economically globalization has not created an equitable economic system even in developed countries; that politically power gets concentrated in the hands of those who control the capital flow; and culturally, it creates problems of identity.

In chapter four a further analysis of globalization will relate it more specifically to two contemporary social phenomena: crisis of personal and social identity and the rise of

global resistance movements such as militant Hindu nationalism. The concept of 'nostalgia' will help understand the problem of identity in a global world. In particular we will assess the role of religion in preserving the identities of particular communities that are threatened by cultural fragmentation in the wake of globalization. Thus, this chapter will explore the rationale behind militant Hindu nationalists' questionable treatment of Westernization, colonization, Christianization, and globalization as synonymous. Within the history of these phenomena we will also trace the origin and rise of militant Hindu nationalism and its violence against Christians. Alternative views that highlight the caste complexities of the phenomenon will also be considered. I will argue that even though other opinions are credible they offer only partial explanations. On the contrary, I suggest that understanding militant Hindu nationalism as a struggle for identity addresses the complexity of the phenomenon at hand. The above analyses and claim will provide grounding for the thesis that globalization and militant Hindu nationalism form the new context for future theological work in India.

The concept "context" is significant in this dissertation since it claims that context must determine the theological agenda. Thus, the fifth chapter will focus on the historical development of contextual theology in general and Schreiter's model of contextual theology in particular. Schreiter's model of contextual theology provides a useful framework for doing theology in a globalized world. In particular, Schreiter's application of the advances in the field of intercultural communication to theology in a globalized society is offered as a framework within which the church in India can make a theological response to the crises emerging from globalization and militant Hindu nationalism.

Following Schreiter's framework, which claims that contextual theology begins with previously existing theologies in a local community, chapter six will outline and evaluate the previously existing Christian theologies in India. The review will reveal that Indian theology both in pre-independence and post-independence India was multidimensional and occupied itself with three issues: inculturation, interreligious dialogue, and social justice. This critical evaluation of the previously existing theologies in India will not only provide the themes for renewed theological initiatives but also serve as a corrective to earlier weaknesses in the areas of inculturation, interreligious dialogue, and social justice. I will contend that in the context of globalization and militant Hindu nationalism, any new theological initiative in India must continue the multidimensional approach and address inculturation, interreligious dialogue, and social justice within newer frameworks. The renewed theological initiatives suggested for India is based on Schreiter's "new catholicity."

In chapters seven and eight I will attempt to propose directions for any new Christian theological work in India in the context of globalization and militant Hindu nationalism. The renewed theological initiative in India would focus on three issues. First, in India the church faces the challenge of becoming truly Indian even while maintaining an authentically Christian identity and remaining faithful to the gospel and tradition. It can achieve this in two ways. First it can incorporate Schreiter's insights on intercultural communication and its implications for the gospel/culture relationship to further develop the already existing theology of inculturation. I also suggest that a retrieval of the Hindu-Christian cultural, religious, and social tradition of the precolonial era can be a major tool for intercultural and interreligious dialogue. It may also provide

concrete directions for the future. In the context of globalization the Indian Church must develop a truly Indian identity. Another major task the Church in India faces is the challenge of building mutual respect and dialogue with other religious traditions. A viable theology of interreligious dialogue will give it much credibility and relevance in India. Such a theology of interreligious dialogue must address the issues of universality and particularity. I argue that the framework for interreligious dialogue proposed by Mark Heim may provide the necessary breakthrough. The Jaina theory of *nayavada*, which is similar to Heim's framework, can give this effort a truly Indian identity. Third, in the context of globalization the Church faces the challenge of the gross injustice that plagues the nation. While, on the one hand, it must bring liberation to the victims of globalization, on the other hand, it must address the issue of the massive poverty that four hundred million Indians face everyday. In more recent times, economic liberalization under a globalized market system has brought unimaginable amounts of wealth to some people while others are being denied their rightful means of existence. The Church in India must address this challenge by focusing extra attention on those whom globalization affects negatively. Schreiter's concept of *telos* offers a theological resource for addressing the crises arising out of globalization. Developing the *teloi* for a global India can be a truly interreligious project. These issues will be discussed in greater detail in chapter seven and eight.

Indian theologians have done much to address the above three issues. However, the context of globalization creates a sense of urgency and new levels of complexity with which these issues must be addressed anew with a heightened awareness of how these concerns are interconnected and overlapping.

Chapter 1

The Origin and Spread of Christianity in India: An Overview

Introduction

The two hundred strong mob that attacked the Christian community at Vasai shouted, “Go back foreign dogs!” How foreign is Christianity in India? The answer depends on whether the question is a historical or a cultural question, or whether one refers to the complete history of Christianity in India beginning in the first century or limits oneself to the colonial era. The present chapter as well as chapter two deal with the following two overarching questions. First, who are the Christians? How foreign are they? Second, who are the people who systematically attack Christians? Why are they attacking the Christians? Does the term “fundamentalists” fit the description? The answers will require a historical survey of both Christianity in India and the growth of militant Hindu nationalism.

In this chapter and in the next, therefore, an attempt will be made to trace the origins of Christianity and militant Hindu nationalism in India. Such a historical review will reveal the fact that both Christianity and militant Hindu nationalism are grossly misunderstood. On the one hand, the militant Hindu nationalists’ charge that Christianity is alien amounts for the most part to be an attack on colonial Christianity. The existence

of precolonial Christianity and its relative integration with the Hindu society of the early centuries is almost never taken into consideration. On the other hand, Christians are often quick to identify the militant Hindu nationalist attack on them as the work of Hindu fundamentalists. As the research below will indicate, militant Hindu nationalism defies simplistic description. Even though, the caste complexities associated with it are real, its origins during the colonial era and the intensification of attacks against Christians after economic liberalization in India, makes it a complex phenomenon to analyse.

This brief historical review will reveal different two different kinds of Christianity: the precolonial relatively integrated kind and the colonial systemically violent, all absorbing kind, (though acknowledging that some missionaries like Robert de Nobili showed tremendous zeal for integration). The latter threatened to change the very identity of Indian society. Two important points must be made at the very outset. No claim is being made here that India was an interreligious paradise in precolonial times. Alternative readings of the Indian religious history amply suggest that an idealized and romantic notion of interreligious harmony is academically untenable. Both these opposing views are analyzed. I conclude that the historical evidence available by behalf of Hindus toward Christians. Second, not only with regard to Hindus and Christians, even with regard to Muslims, Buddhists and Jains, while there are some instances of violence, there also seems to be significant evidence of a noticeable pluralistic coexistence.

The brief historical review of the origin and growth of Christianity in India that begins this chapter will focus on showcasing its ancient presence in India as a unique religion, and yet capable of a high degree of cultural integration with other religions, particularly, Hinduism.

The origin and growth of Christianity in India

The section below will give an account of the origin and growth of Christianity in India. It demonstrates that Christianity is neither as foreign as militant Hindu nationalists imagine it to be, nor is its presence in India merely a colonial endeavor. Rather, Christianity came into India in the first century and soon became relatively integrated and inculturated. Its relationship with other religions and local cultures did not become systemically conflictual until the arrival of the colonists. As will be explicated later, the reasonably successful religious coexistence between religions in general and between pre-colonial Christians and the local Indians can be an important resource for future theological work in India, particularly in regard to inculturation and interreligious dialogue.

Phase I – The origins

Historically, the first claim of the presence of Christianity in India dates it back to the arrival of Thomas the Apostle in c. 52 CE.² However, historical data does not yield any categorical evidence in this regard. The earliest historical datum about the presence of Thomas in India is a third century Syrian apocryphal work called the *Acts of Thomas*.³ Other third and fourth century writings like those of Gregory of Nazianzus and Ephraim also give some indication of the ministry of Thomas in India.⁴ In spite of the ambiguous data, the Thomas tradition gains credibility because of the living tradition of St. Thomas

² R.E. Frykenberg, "India," in *A World History of the Christian Movement*, ed. Adrian Hastings (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999), 148.

³ Mathias Mundadan, *History of Christianity in India: From the Beginning up to the Middle of the Sixteenth Century* (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 1984), 23-7.

⁴ Some scholars divide the indicators of Thomas' ministry into two periods: the Pre Nicean and Post Nicean writings. It is the post Nicean writings that refer to the apostle's Indian mission. For more on this see E.R Hambye, "St. Thomas and India." *The Clergy Monthly*, 16 (1952), 362-75. Those post Nicean writers who refer to the Indian mission include, Gregory of Nizianzus, Rufinus, and Paulinus of Zola.

Christians in India. Archaeological data such as the tomb of Thomas in Mylapore, South India, and the St. Thomas Mount serve to strengthen the case.

The geography of the ministry of Thomas is equally contested. Some scholars propose both a North-West Indian mission and a Southern mission while others support only a Southern mission. However, the absence of a living tradition in the North and the presence of a living faith community in the South make the former claim doubtful.

There are two major sources that provide indications of Thomas' apostolate in India: the Western Source and the Indian Source. The Western source (sources outside India) favor the existence of a North West Indian mission along with a Southern mission. According to this tradition Thomas' mission started in the Kingdom of Gudnaphar. Scholars suggest that Gudnaphar may have been a North Indian king during the first century. Gudnaphar himself is said to have converted to Christianity. Thomas then moved on Southward at the invitation King Mazdai and converted many there. However, he also met his death at the hands of the same king.⁵

The Indian tradition, on the contrary, limits Thomas' mission to South India.⁶ This tradition, however, relies heavily on oral tradition, which makes the tradition lacking in the kind of evidence that the Western tradition presents. The written accounts of the Indian tradition, such as songs and literary compositions that do mention a Thomas mission, cannot be traced back beyond the seventeenth century.⁷ However, the presence of the living community does support the Indian tradition as a considerable source of information.

⁵ Ibid., 27-8.

⁶ Stephen Neill, *A History of Christianity in India: The beginnings to AD 1707* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 30.

⁷ Mundadan, *History of Christianity in India*, 36.

There is no mention of a North Western mission of Thomas in the Indian tradition. Instead, having first landed in Cranganore (presently in the state of Kerala) in 52 CE, Thomas is said to have converted some high caste Hindus in the region, then travelled Northward all the way into China, and finally returned to the South. He then formed the Christians there into an organized entity. He is said to have been martyred there.

The most convincing reports about the Southern mission of Thomas come to us from the colonial powers that reached India. When the Portuguese arrived in India in 1498, they discovered a well-established Christian tradition that credited its origins to Thomas. The church they showcased to the Portuguese as the grave of the apostle was later excavated and it yielded human remains.⁸ Whether the skeletal remains were those of Thomas is widely debated. The best conclusion is expressed in the words of Bishop L.W. Brown:

We cannot prove that the Apostle worked in south India any more than we can disprove that fact: but the presence of Christians of undoubtedly ancient origin holding firmly to the tradition [and other favourable factors] may for some incline the balance to the belief that the truth of the tradition is a reasonable probability. The evidence we have cannot do more than this.⁹

The original community of Christians suffered some decline in the course of time. However, the community found a new lease on life in the Christians who came to the South of India from Persia. The Persian Church – also called the East Syrian Church – faced persecution from 310-379 CE under the Sassanid king, Sapor II. Many Christians fled to safety and some reached the Indian shores. From the fourth to the tenth centuries,

⁸ For a vivid description of the excavation see Neill, *A History of Christianity in India*, 34-5.

⁹ As quoted in Neill, *A History of Christianity in India*, 36.

other Persian Christians came in large numbers as traders, merchants, and pilgrims. This gradual confluence of two peoples of Christian faith finally resulted in the Indian Church becoming heavily dependent on the East Syrian Church. The ecclesiastical traditions of the Indian Church gave way to the East Syrian ecclesiastical traditions. This worked both to the advantage and disadvantage of the Indian Christians. In one sense, it guaranteed their continuity, but it also robbed their tradition of its Indianness theologically, liturgically, and canonically.¹⁰ Culturally, though, as will be shown in the paragraphs below, Christians of this time integrated reasonably well with their Hindu counterpart.

Church historians who look for common strands in the various versions of evidence (oral tradition, apocryphal literature, and living tradition) conclude strongly in favor of an apostolic tradition in India. The most convincing evidence is the vibrant Christian community in Kerala, whose members for centuries vow allegiance to Thomas as their founder. Today, there are at least seven communities that lay claim to the apostolic tradition.¹¹ Sheer numbers also serve as a powerful indicator. Thirty percent of the total Christian population in India is in the State of Kerala which encompasses the geographic area covered by the apostolic mission – a much higher concentration than the rest of India. One fourth of the population of Kerala is St. Thomas Christian.

The social life of the Christians reveals much about the reasonable cultural symbiosis that early Christianity had achieved in India. In fact, the St. Thomas Christian community can be argued to be a classic example of a community where Christians were rather well integrated into their social environment. Some of the details of the integration

¹⁰ Mundadan, *History of Christianity in India*, 115.

¹¹ The seven Churches are The Syro-Malabar Church (Catholic), Orthodox Syrian Church, Independent Syrian Church of Malabar, Mar Thoma Church, Malankara Church (Catholic), Chaldean Church of the East and St. Thomas Evangelical Church.

provided below may be questioned for historical reliability. However, some of these historical reconstructions are arguable conclusions reached from the evidence that exists to the present day. For example, rituals, architecture, and literary traditions that support such cultural integration exist even today. Thus, these facts are not historical facts in the same way that we could call the Holocaust a historical fact, but the living traditions point to them being most probably true without their factuality being absolutely determined.

Some indications of the cultural integration between the early Christians and Hindus can be found in the example of the Christians who received Hindu names, conducted rituals of worship like the Hindus, and accepted some of the social customs of the Hindus. The men practiced various professions, most significantly, even working as warriors in the *Raja's* army. The women in accordance with the custom of the noble caste stayed at home and engaged themselves in housekeeping.

One consequence of the Christians striking deep roots in the Indian culture was the high social status assigned to them. They were regarded as equal to the higher caste Hindus – not as superior as the Brahmins but on par with the *Nairs*. E.R. Hambye contends that they held a status higher than their contemporary Jews and Muslims.¹² On the one hand, this high social status was mainly due to privileges granted to them by local rulers, and on the other hand, some credit goes to the very Christians who integrated themselves well into a predominantly Hindu society. This can be testified to through the fact that Hindus often invited Christians to reside near Hindu temples so that "... when occasion arose they could be asked to come and purify by their touch the sacred vessel."¹³

¹² E. R. Hambye, "Medieval Christianity in India," in *Christianity in India*, ed. H.C. Perumalil and E.R. Hambye (Alleppey, Kerala: Prakasam Publications, 1972), 35.

¹³ Ibid.

Another sign of the social integration of Christians into local society was reflected in the way the St. Thomas Christians had adopted many Hindu religious and social customs and in the way they participated in each other's religious feasts. Christians made offerings at Hindu shrines and enjoyed privileges at Hindu temples, while Hindus came with live offerings of birds and animals to the annual Christian feast of St. George. In a number of places such as Palayur, Paravur, Niranam, Kallupara, Kattutturitti, Irinjalakuda and Piravam, churches and temples were constructed side by side and, oftentimes Christians functioned as trustees of the temples as did Hindus of the Church.¹⁴ The manner of celebrating festivals were so similar that all the religious paraphernalia such as ceremonial umbrellas, drums, musical instruments etc., that Hindus used were also used by the Syrian Christians. Often the churches and temples had only one set of these articles between them which was used by both these communities at their respective festivals.¹⁵ Some of these traditions such as the ceremonial umbrellas, and the flagstaff are unique to the Syro-Malabar, Syrian Orthodox and Mar Thoma Christians even to this day, giving credence to the claim that the early Christians were rather well integrated into the cultural milieu of the times.

There were other similarities between Hindus and Christians. Horoscopes were cast for new born babies, the *thali* identified a married woman from an unmarried one, and Christians observed the same pollution rituals that Hindus observed after births and

¹⁴ L.W. Brown, *The Syrian Christians of St. Thomas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956), 172. Brown mentions the example of the Anaparampal Bhagwati temple whose trustee was a Syrian Christian by the name Vallelattu Panikkar. At Aranula four Brahmin families were said to have been converted, but one family continued to serve the temple, the head of the family raising the flag at the beginning of the festivals.

¹⁵ The Kuravilanat church, which had elephants for its festivals, lent them to the neighbouring Ettumanur temple. Ibid.

deaths.¹⁶ These Christians also accepted the caste system. Practices such as auspicious times for important events and the tying of the *thali* during marriage rituals are observed even today, although, their symbols have been Christianized.¹⁷ As mentioned before, cultural symbols like these give credence to the cultural integration thesis.

Brown contends that perhaps it was because of the Christian acceptance of Hindu religious symbols, expressions and particularly the caste system that they never attempted large-scale conversions. Gouvea, the sixteenth century writer, explains that often it was expediency that determined the Christians' relationship with low-caste people. The Christians did not consider themselves to be polluted by touching them, but because the *Nairs*, who were forbidden by the Brahmins to touch the lower castes would resist any contact with them unless they had purified themselves, they followed the pollution regulations.¹⁸ However, it would not be wrong to conclude that as time passed the caste practices of these early Christians did adhere to the fundamental Hindu rites of purity.

Church architecture was another example of the cultural integration these early Christians had achieved. The church building was a stunning combination of East-Syrian planning with architecture and decoration inspired by local Hindu craftsmen and the local Kerala temples. A flagstaff at the western entrance was a prominent feature at both

¹⁶ Ibid., 173.

¹⁷ The husband presents a gold pendant known as *minnu* to his wife. The Minister blesses the *minnu* and then holds the thread with the *minnu*, for the groom to tie it around the neck of the bride. By this they declare that they are tied together for life. A *minnu* is in the shape of a banyan tree leaf (considered sacred in the Hindu tradition). Banyan tree spreads out to cover a wide area and provides shelter and comfort to others. It represents eternal life and symbolizes unity. Thus the *minnu* represents a long and happy married life, a safe and comfortable place for children to grow up and a family that cares for the needs of the community. Hindus also use the *minnu* known as *thali*. Christians use a cross on one side of the *thali*. It is tied with a thread spun with twenty-one threads from the wedding saree. For this first seven threads are spun together, then three such threads spun together to make the final one. After seven days the *minnu* is put on a gold chain and then the thread is removed. A married Christian lady always wears her *minnu*, as a sign that she is married. She wears it till the death of her husband. But most of them wear it till the end of their life. *Minnu* is not an ornament but it is a part of her life.

¹⁸ Gouvea, 315.

temples and churches. These flagstaffs and the ritual associated with are still in use in contemporary Syro-Malabar, Syrian Orthodox and Mar Thomas Churches.

There is little information about the liturgical practices of the original Thomas Christians. Their later liturgy followed the East-Syrian tradition. However, the Nestorian influence was very apparent in their theology.¹⁹ The Eastern practice of using leavened bread was also true of the Thomas Christians.

The above description of the integration of the early Christians into their environment or the religious harmony among the religions in India is hardly taken for granted by all scholars. There are those like Placid Podipara, Mundadan, Leonard Fernando and G. Gispert-Sauch who make the case for exceptional religious harmony. Placid Podipara, for example comments that the Thomas Christians were “Hindu in culture, Christian in religion and Oriental in worship.”²⁰ While, on the one hand, Mundadan attributes the culturally harmonious existence whereby difference and sameness is delicately balanced to the “temperamental adjustability and open-mindedness”²¹ of the Hindu majority, on the other hand, the Christians (and Muslims) were themselves Indianized, Hinduized, and Keralized. Leonard Fernando and G. Gispert-Sauch are also of the same mind. As they suggest,

The Indian Christians lived their faith for around fifteen centuries, apparently untroubled in their way of thinking and worship distinct from those of their Jain, Buddhist, Hindu and, more recently, Muslim neighbors. They were in harmony with their surroundings; there is no evidence of conflict with other communities.²²

¹⁹ The Nestorian influence and other Hindu practices incompatible with Christian beliefs were corrected at the Synod of Diamper in 1599 AD.

²⁰ Placid J. Podipara, *The Thomas Christians* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1970), 97.

²¹ Mundadan, *History of Christianity, Vol. I*, 153.

²² Leonard Fernando and G. Gispert-Sauch, *Christianity in India: Two Thousand Years of Faith* (New Delhi: Penguin Books India, 2004), 72.

Other authors are more cautious about the claim. More recent scholarship has attempted to identify an oppressive and exploitative version of precolonial Hindu society. They cite the caste system and Hindu India's violence against other religions, particularly Buddhism and Jainism, as examples of oppression and aggression.

One must admit that there is some credibility to this argument. First of all, traditional accounts say St. Thomas himself was martyred in India.²³ That is clearly an indication that all was not well. There are other examples. Neill, for example, recounts the persecution of the Jains at the hands of a Hindu king by the name of Kuna in the seventh century. In this instance about 8000 Jains were put to death.²⁴ Wendy O'Flaherty also provides some evidence for Hindu intolerance of Buddhism and Jainism as early as the tenth century AD.²⁵ According to her, the often ignored differences between those who worship Shiva and Vishnu, the North Indians (primarily associated with the invading Aryans) and the South India (primarily associated with the Dravidians who migrated to the South as a result of the Aryan invasion), and between Hinduism and non-Hindu religions point to intra and interreligious strife of Hindu India. She further suggest that rise of *sadhus* (translated as soldier monks) during the golden age of India under the Gupta period Empire (320-550 AD) and the emergence of the powerful martial tradition betrays the claims to tolerance and inclusivity.

Vinoth Ramachandra agrees. He proposes that the contemporary romanticization of precolonial religious atmosphere, the noble role assigned to *sadhus* as the forerunner

²³ There is hardly any agreement on the circumstances leading to the martyrdom of the apostle. Some suggest that he was shot by an errant hunter, others that he was pierced with a lance at the order of the king, still others that he was killed by envious Brahmins who were discredited by Thomas before the king.

²⁴ Neill, *A History of Christianity in India*, 58.

²⁵ Wendy D. O'Flaherty, "The Image of the Heretic in the Gupta Puranas," in B.L. Smith ed., *Essays on the Gupta Period* (New Delhi: Motilal Banarasidas, 1983), 107-27. Also see, Gail Omvedt, *Dalit Visions: The Anti-caste Movement and the Construction of an Indian Identity* (Calcutta: Orient Longman, 1995).

of Hindu nationalism, the myth that violence and persecution were “foreign” to the Hindu religious ethos, and that violence and intolerance were the work of Mughals and the British is contrary to the available evidence.²⁶ Ramachandra sees in the stratification of Hindu society into castes the institutionalization of violence and a denial of any concept of human freedom.²⁷ Similarly, In a more complex analysis of pre-colonial and colonial politics of Hindu nationalism, Sumit Sarkar has questioned the assumption of precolonial “subcontinental unity extending back into a glorious past.”²⁸ Sarkar argues that the politics of Hindu nationalism is such that even the political struggle for independence assumed Hindu overtones because majority of the nationalists came from the upper-caste Hindu. They were able, in imagining and fashioning a unified India, to blur away crucial interreligious and intra Hindu distinctions that were oppressive and exploitative.²⁹ One example of such a social system was the *adhi kari bheda* (differential rights, claims and powers) devised as a Brahmanic way to effectively manage distinctions of ritual, belief and philosophy.

The same argument also applies to Hindu India’s relationship with other Indian religions. O’Flaherty, for example, suggests that intolerance of Buddhist and Jain religious traditions were so intense that the deity “Shiva himself was said to have become incarnate as the philosopher Shankara in order to explain the Vedas, destroy the temples and books of the Jains, and massacre all who oppose him, particularly the Jains.”³⁰ Such instances leads Ramachandra to conclude that whereas the Hindu society was remarkably

²⁶ Vinoth Ramachandra, *Faiths in Conflict? Christian Integrity in a Multicultural World* Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 68-72

²⁷ Ramachandra, *Faiths in Conflict?* 68-72.

²⁸ Sumit Sarkar, “Indian Nationalism and the Politics of Hindutva,” in ed., David Ludden, *Making India Hindu: Religion, Community, and the Politics of Democracy in India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 275.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ O’Flaherty, “The Image of the Heretic in the Gupta Puranas, 120-121.

resilient, social stability came at a price – the suppression of all dissent from below³¹ and in general of their religious other.

The above readings of Indian precolonial religious history is meant to suggest that while there were striking examples of religious and cultural integration, one must balance it with ignored aspects the India's precolonial religious history. For example, Neill, who earlier provided the example of Jain persecution at the end of the seventh century suggests that the persecution he cited was only a rare example of religious violence in the history of Hindu India and was in "flagrant contradiction" of the generally mild and gentle character of Indian religious traditions.³² Historical evidence also points to relatively tolerant character of Indian religious traditions. For example, Ashoka, India's most illustrious ruler who ruled from 269-232 B.C. converted to Buddhism and espoused a policy of nonviolence or ahimsa after the carnage resulting from his war against the Kingdom of Kalinga. According to James Heitzman and Robert L. Worden, his tolerance of different religions reflected India's regional pluralism.³³ Hinduism did indeed see, as some authors indicate, a resurgence during the golden age of the Guptas (320-550 AD), and it was involved in a philosophical and theological struggle with Buddhism and Jainism. But historical accounts do not suggest instances of systematic violence against Jains and Buddhists of the same kind, for example, initiated by the Portuguese colonists. On the contrary, as some scholars suggest, Brahmanism did not manifest itself in any opposition to Buddhism (the two usually lived side by side in relative harmony) but in its

³¹ Ramachandra, *Faiths in Conflict?* 68-72.

³² Neill, *A History of Christianity in India*, 58.. It must be stated that Hindu-Muslim conflict has a different history. While the different religious traditions lived in harmony, the peace between Hindu's and Muslims was destroyed with the arrival of Muslim invaders in the first half of the thirteenth century. Muslim rulers would often impose Islamic law upon Hindu populations.

³³ James Heitzman and Robert L. Worden, eds., *India: A Country Study* (Washington DC: Federal Research Division of Congress, 1995), 10.

successful resistance to Islam where Buddhism was swept away.³⁴ In fact, Shankara, the founder of the Vedanta philosophy, who O'Flaherty suggests was said to be the incarnation of Shiva and came to destroy the temples and books of the Jains, adopted some Buddhist and Jain practices while remaining dedicated to the Hindu philosophical traditions.³⁵ This view is also supported by Hajime Nakamura, who suggests that the number of inscriptions of the Gupta period (320-500 CE) may be an indication of the influence and prestige of Buddhism in the society of that time.³⁶ After the Gupta period Buddhism continued to maintain its influential position. Thus, King Harsha, who in the post-Gupta period unified most of Northern India, was a Buddhist.³⁷ What is true with regard to Buddhism was also true of Jainism in the Gupta period. Flaherty's view, then, must be balanced with an account of the comprehensive history of Jainism which suggests that Jainism flourished during the Gupta period.³⁸ While there may be some instances of violence, one is unable to give evidence of systematic violence against Buddhist and Jain institutions and places of worship. This is also significant because low caste Hindus and particularly *dalits* have converted to Buddhism and Jainism in large numbers in independent India and yet have not faced the systemic ire of militant Hindu nationalists. This is true also in contemporary India – a claim that Muslims and Christians cannot make.

Both these opposing views must be kept in mind as we review the history of early Christianity in India and the religious history of precolonial India. Three

³⁴ A. K. Warner, *India Buddhism* (Delhi: Motilal Banarasidas, 2000), 486. Warner goes further to suggest that Brahmanism considered it their duty to battle in favor of Buddhism in their defence against Islam.

³⁵ Ibid., 32.

³⁶ Hajime Nakamura, *Indian Buddhism: A Survey with Bibliographical Notes* Vol. I (Delhi: Motilal Banarasidas, 1987), 146.

³⁷ Ibid. 147.

³⁸ Asim Kumar Chatterjee, *A Comprehensive History of Jainism* Vol. I (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 2000), 89-98.

observations can bring this discussion to a conclusion. First, while some authors give evidence to interreligious strife in precolonial India, evidence of systematic violence against Christians are rare. Rather, scholars with reasonably well founded rationale depict these early Christians as “Hindu in culture, Christian in faith and Syrian in doctrine, ecclesiology, and ritual....”³⁹ S.G. Pothan confirms this view. “...they were Christian in faith only, but in all else, they were Indian.”⁴⁰ Perhaps, this is an indication of the cultural integration they had accomplished.

Second, the interreligious disharmony some authors point to may be interpreted as more as “intrareligious” disharmony. In other words, whereas caste oppression was a reality, Hinduism has shown the tendency to treat Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism as part of Hinduism. The absence of violence against Buddhism and Jainism in spite of large scale conversions in contemporary India is a compelling argument. Third, violence in the pre-colonial and post-colonial period was qualitatively different. The brutality and aggression of colonial violence was systemic and its aim was the conversion of an entire people to another way of life. While one can claim that the violence of the oppressive caste system was also systemic the goal here was the preservation of traditional social structures. Sarkar and Ramachandra’s thesis does bear merit that to the extent that Hindu society based on caste stratification it was exploitative. Such oppressive structures or the confluence of politics and religion in the structuring of such structures is not uncommon, as Sarkar points out. Iran, Ireland, Protestant England⁴¹ and even Puritan America exhibited such tendencies. This last

³⁹ Frykenberg, “India,” in *A World History of the Christian Movement*, 154.

⁴⁰ S.G. Pothan, *The Syrian Christians of Kerala* (New York: Asia Publishing House, 1963), 54.

⁴¹ Sarkar, “Indian Nationalism and the Politics of Hindutva,” 272.

point is not an effort to justify the Hindu caste oppression but to find a rationale for the contesting claim of relative religious coexistence in precolonial India.

For the most part then, there is a case for the existence of a reasonably effective religious and cultural pluralism in the Indian subcontinent. The relatively well integrated life of the early Christians only serves to strengthen that claim.

We began this chapter with the question, "How foreign is Christianity?" We replied that the answer depended on whether the question was a cultural or a historical one. Historically, Christianity cannot lay claim to Indian origins in the same way as Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism can, although it can boast of antiquity. Whereas the latter two are purely of Indian origin, Hinduism was a result of the mixture of local religious practices and the beliefs of the invading Aryans who came to India toward the middle of the second millennium BC. In that sense Hinduism can claim indigenous growth in India, if not pure indigenous origin.⁴² Historically, then, while Christianity may be alien to India in the sense of not having originated there indigenously, culturally the same cannot be categorically claimed. Historically, Christianity can claim a long and continuous presence on Indian soil. Culturally and socially too Christians have a history of living in relative harmony with the people of India. It was not a flawless phenomenon, but nevertheless, it provides a strong case for the claim that Christianity cannot be associated with colonialism in its entirety as many Hindus are inclined to do. In other words, the past history and experience gives evidence that they do not have to live in conflict. This above survey has implications for both Hindus and Christians alike. The precolonial history can be of immense use as a resource for contemporary cultural,

⁴² Neill, *A History of Christianity in India*, 23.

religious and theological discussions. As the final chapter will suggest, retrieving the history of the integrated Hindu-Christian tradition may offer some clues for a renewed theological initiatives in the context of militant Hindu nationalism and globalization.

To the original arrival of Christianity in India and its existence for the first thirteen hundred years, one must add the second phase of Christian influence – that of the Roman Catholic Church through the Portuguese colonizers. The “foreign” tag given to twenty-first century Christians by militant Hindus is more associated with this second wave of Christian influence and with the third arrival of Christianity with the British colonizers.

Phase II – The beginning of Western colonial Christianity

The second phase of Christian presence in India began with the arrival of the Portuguese colonists whose economic, political, and religious interests mingled like the three oceans surrounding the Indian sub-continent at its southernmost tip. As we shall discover, this wave of Christianity, in contrast with the original Christian presence, was undoubtedly intolerant, systemically violent, and culturally all absorbing. The systemic violence introduced by the Portuguese presence was categorically different from any violence that may have occurred between Hindus and Christians in precolonial India. To this history we now turn. As mentioned earlier, the Christianity that most militant Hindu nationalists refer to is the Christianity introduced by the colonists.

The great voyages of discovery that were characteristic of the latter part of the fifteenth century did not leave India unscathed. Spain and Portugal pioneered many voyages, and one in particular under the leadership of Vasco da Gama reached the Indian shores in 1498. Like all other colonizers, the intentions of the Portuguese pioneers were

complex - part trade, part religion, part colonization. Violence and strife were part of establishing any colonial settlements in India. Fortunately for the Hindus, the focus for once shifted from Hindu-Muslim⁴³ strife to Portuguese-Muslim strife since in many ways, European political fortunes were being replayed in India in these struggles. By 1510, the present State of Goa was captured by the Portuguese and later became the capital of all Portuguese settlements in Asia.

Although the king of Portugal established these settlements for trade benefits, religious motives were not far from his mind. As a reward for the King's religious zeal, Pope Leo X granted the king and his successors the right to ecclesiastical patronage in the lands conquered in Asia and Africa – later called the *padroado*.⁴⁴ The functions of the *padroado* included presenting candidates for bishopric and other offices, as well as staffing, maintaining, and equipping the missions.

The Portuguese establishment in India both politically and spiritually can be read as a fascinating success story if one is willing to bracket out that it was not achieved without much violence. Not all converts to Christianity, however, were the result of physical

⁴³ Although Islam was present in India from the time of Prophet Muhammad, Muslims entered India as invaders only in 1211. During the last quarter of the twelfth century, Muhammad of Ghor invaded the Indo-Gangetic plain, conquering in succession Ghazni, Multan, Sindh, Lahore, and Delhi. Qutb-ud-din Aybak, one of his generals proclaimed himself Sultan of Delhi. In the 13th century, Shams ud din Iltutmish (1211 - 1236), a former slave-warrior, established a Turkic kingdom in Delhi, which enabled future sultans to push in every direction; within the next 100 years, the Delhi Sultanate extended its way east to Bengal and south to the Deccan. During this time, the Qur'an and *sharia* (Islamic law) provided the basis for enforcing Islamic administration over the independent Hindu rulers. This became the reason for much conflict between the Hindus and Muslims. Later the Muslims from Persia, known as the Mughals invaded India under Babur in 1526. The Mughal rulers for most part were more tolerant of other cultures and religions and under the reign of Akbar religious toleration was encouraged. But for most part Hindu and Muslim rulers imposed the demands of their own religious traditions upon entire populations.

⁴⁴ Cyril B. Firth, *An Introduction to Indian Church History* (New Delhi: ISPCK, 2001), 51. Apart from the ecclesiastical patronage granted in the conquered lands, the *padroado* claimed another right which was not granted by the Pope – the right to sanction or not to sanction the promulgation of papal Bulls in their territory. In fact, depending on the relationship with the papacy, rulers often prohibited the enforcing of papal documents in these territories without their approval.

coercion. Local populations also indulged in namesake conversion to gain protection from the Portuguese against Arab invaders.⁴⁵ But as Cyril Frith writes:

Temples and mosques were destroyed and the public worship of Hindus and Muslims forbidden in the Portuguese settlements. Only Christians could hold public offices; converts might not be disinherited because of conversion, and they enjoyed the same privileges as the Portuguese.⁴⁶

Thus began the gradual process of assimilation of the local population of Goa into the Portuguese way of life – as Western culture. Hindu family names were replaced by Portuguese names, local food, dress, language, and music were replaced by Iberian cultural traditions, Catholicism was imposed on the local population,⁴⁷ Hindus and Muslims were expelled from government services, construction and repair of Hindu shrines were prohibited, and by a decree passed by General Barreto in 1557, it became impossible to practice Hinduism openly within Portuguese Goa.⁴⁸

It was not only the Hindus and Muslims who experienced violence from the Western Christian newcomers. The original Christians of India were also victims. By this

⁴⁵ The conversion of the *Paravas* – a community of people along the Southern most coast of India is a classic example of namesake conversion for protection. The *Paravas* were rough and depended on pearl diving, fishing and sometimes piracy for survival. But they were also threatened by Arab invaders who exploited and enslaved them. For protection from the marauding Arabs, the entire population of 20,000 *Paravas* became Christian. But they were Christians only in name. They remained Hindu in all other aspects because any indoctrination was impossible with such a large number of converts. It was only when Francis Xavier came a decade later that any doctrinal teaching could occur. For a more detailed description see Joseph Thekkedath, *History of Christianity in India: Vol II, From the Middle of the Sixteenth Century to the End of the Seventeenth Century 1542-1700* (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 1982), 155-83.

⁴⁶ Firth, *An Introduction to India Church History*, 52.

⁴⁷ Wicki, in his *Documentata Indica II* states that there was no need of such forced conversions. The church was well on the way to growth on its own. However, the conversions were such that most of the converts simultaneously continued to hold on to their previous practices. The Portuguese authorities, on the other hand, wanted the new converts to totally abandon their former practices. The Portuguese authorities, therefore, ordered the destruction of idols and banned pagan worship within their boundaries. Isoephus Wicki, ed., *Documentata Indica II*. (Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu Series. Rome: Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu, 1948), 759.

⁴⁸ Fernando and G. Gispert-Sauch, *Christianity in India*, 113-24.

time the Thomas Christians numbered anywhere between 80,000 - 100,000 people⁴⁹ and had about sixty churches. The priests dressed and married like the Hindu priests, they celebrated feasts like the Hindus around them did, and they shared non-Christian traditions such as the observation of auspicious and inauspicious time to conduct important activities. Likewise, for important feasts like the feast of St. Thomas and the feast of our Lady, many Hindus came to the Church for the celebration.⁵⁰

In the beginning, the relation between the Portuguese and Thomas Christians was cordial. As Ferroli suggests: "The Portuguese, in the early days of colonization, treated the native Christians in all respects as coreligionists, hearing their confessions, giving them holy communion and lending churches for celebration of the Syrian liturgy...."⁵¹ As time went on, however, the Portuguese began to find the beliefs and customs of the Thomas Christians heretical. Indian Christians' refusal to venerate images, the reference to Mary as the mother of Christ, and other local practices began to offend the Western Christian sensibilities. Moreover, since much of Christian literature and worship were by now in Syriac, the entire corpus of sacred literature was considered suspect. For this reason, once the bishopric of Goa was established, the Portuguese began to enforce conformity between the two Christian communities. The areas of differences between the two churches ranged from ecclesiastical authority to sacramental practices to priestly life. It was the Portuguese efforts to bring the Thomas Christians under Roman authority, however, that proved to be the last straw. The events came to a climax at the Synod of

⁴⁹ Fr. Dionysio in 1578 estimated the number to be 80,000. Fr. Pacheco, writing around the same time numbered them at 70,000. Their contemporary, Fr. Valignano thought their number to be 100,000. See Isoephus Wicki, ed., *Documentata Indica : Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu Series* (Rome: Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu, 1948), 968.

⁵⁰ Thekkedath, *History of Christianity in India I*, 26-30.

⁵¹ Ferroli as quoted in Firth, *An Introduction to India Church History*, 54.

Diamper in June 1599. Convoked and presided over by the then Archbishop of Goa, Alexis de Menezes, the Synod brought the Syriac canon in line with the Vulgate, warned believers against non-Christian influence, forbade Christian children from attending schools conducted in the traditional Hindu style, forbade clerics from enrolling as soldiers, called for a removal of all Nestorian influence⁵² from their doctrines and literature, imposed celibacy on priests, urged clerics to work for the conversion of non-Christians of all castes,⁵³ and organized ecclesiastical territories according to Roman practices.⁵⁴

The Synod of Diamper provoked much discontent among the Thomas Christians. Further efforts to impose the decrees of the Synod, particularly the efforts to annul the office of the archdeacon, led to a general revolt by the Thomas Christians against the Roman Archbishop in 1653. Thomas Christians who did not submit to the Roman authority gathered at the Koonan Cross of Mattancheri and declared under oath that they would not accept any authority except from the Eastern Church. Thus, they installed their own high Metran (leader), who took the title Mar Thoma I.⁵⁵ The division between the Roman Church and the Thomas Christians was now permanent.

The second wave of Christianity that swept India had not left the country as tranquil as the first wave. It is noticeable that up until then, there were two radically diverse modes of Christian existence in India: the first, though far from perfect, was

⁵² The St. Thomas Christians reference to Mary as the mother of Christ (*Chistotokos*) rather than the Westerns Church's reference to her as the Mother of God (*theotokos*) is one example of the Nestorian influence.

⁵³ Most St. Thomas Christians belonged to the higher castes. .

⁵⁴ Thekkedath, *History of Christianity in India*, 65-90.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

relatively peaceful and sought harmony through inculturation and integration whereas the second was systemically conflictual and sought exclusivity through violence.

The second wave was too early to give rise to any semblance of a Hindu nationalist struggle. India did not exist as a single, united political and geographical entity as yet for such a project to originate. However, it may be argued that the colonial experience of Christianity perhaps laid the foundation for such a project. Such a movement would come to fruition during the third wave of Christian presence in India through the British colonial power – the subject matter of the next section of this chapter. The Portuguese, though, had effectively succeeded in establishing Roman Christianity within their territories but not without also affecting the delicate balance that had existed between the various religions and also among the Christians themselves. However, this was only the beginning of the assimilation of Indian culture by the Christian West. The British would continue this process.

Phase III – Consolidation under British rule

The British came to India primarily as traders and not as missionaries. The British were a mixed bag. They were colonizers in the fullest sense of the word, and there were no two ways about that. However, once British rule was established in India, they established educational institutions and began social reform. As a consequence, missionaries began to flow into the country. Whereas on the one hand Western education introduced Western ideas into India, on the other, a national self-consciousness began to develop. This was not inconsequential for both the nation and the British crown. The section below will account for the history of the Christian presence in India under the British and its implication for India – the rise of Indian nationalism.

There were distinctive differences between the British and Portuguese colonial powers. British atrocities against Indians were largely economic and political, although its effects were widespread and spilled over into the cultural realm as well. The British religious motivations were neither as integral nor as explicit as those of the Portuguese, but their presence opened the doors for Christian missionaries to enter India on a large scale. The Portuguese, on the other hand, had clear religious ambitions along with economic and political goals and engaged in religious conversions. Whereas the Portuguese only employed those Indians who became Christian, the British employed all Indians as long as they supported the British regime. Whereas the Portuguese failed to empower the Indian population, the British unwittingly generated a certain self-pride in the Indian through the introduction of liberal Western education and ideas. The most dramatic result of British education was the rise of a distinctive militant Hindu nationalism. The pages below will outline this third phase of Western and Christian influence in India.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century the British had established their rule over almost all of India. As with the Portuguese, the British too were slow in making changes to the Indian cultural scene. But there was a telling difference in the way the British influence was gripping the country. First of all, the British brought new forms of Christianity into India in a big way– the Anglican, Methodist, and Baptist forms. Second, unlike the Thomas Christians who were primarily higher caste Christians, Christianity spread also to the lower caste Hindus. Third, Western ideas impacted this new British colony through English education. For example, the first institution for higher education, although called the “Hindu College,” was established by men who valued enlightenment

and rationalist philosophy. This deistic approach to education was in contradiction to the traditional religions of India. Simultaneously, Christian educationists also used the same medium to introduce their own ideas to the Indian population.⁵⁶ The aim of both these groups of people was the same – a reform of orthodox Hindu notions.

The British entered India as a trading company. Gradually though, the East India Trading Company became a mere prelude to British rule in India. Meanwhile, Baptist and Anglican missionaries were beginning to flood India. The most prominent among them were William Carey and Alexander Duff. In Calcutta, Duff exploited the progress already made in the field of English education to further the Christian cause. Duff's plan was simple – to replace the traditional Hindu system of education with the liberal system which included positive Christian teaching. Soon other similar schools were founded in Bombay, Madras, and Agra.⁵⁷ As a result, conversion to Christianity became almost a daily affair even though the new converts faced ostracization by their own families. Some high-profile conversions caused no small furor in the Hindu circles. Krishna Mohan Banerjee (1813-1885), Lal Bihari Day (1824-94), Kalicharan Banerji (1847-1907), and Shushil Kumar Rudra (1861-1925), all from Bengal, were the principal figures. Other prominent converts included Nilakantha Goreh from Varanasi, Ramabai Saraswati (1858-1922) from Maharashtra, and Professor Ramachandra (1821-1880) from Delhi. There were some Muslim converts too. The most significant among them was Qazi Maulvi Sayyad Safdar Ali (1830-1899).⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Firth, *An Introduction to Indian Church History*, 181.

⁵⁷ Ibid, 184-85.

⁵⁸ For more detailed information on these persons see Fernando and Gispert-Sauch, *Christianity in India*, 157-74.

In 1858 India came under the direct governance of Queen Victoria. This was the result of the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857, which brought Indians of all spheres in a revolt against the high-handedness of the British authorities. The causes of the uprising are many. However, it is the religious or cultural factors that are crucial for this discussion. One of the factors for the mutiny had to do with the ammunition used by Indian soldiers who worked in the British armed forces. News spread that these cartridges were greased with cow and pig fat – the former repulsing the Hindus and the latter the Muslims. The resulting revolt was not necessarily an anti-Christian revolt, but was definitely an anti-British revolt. Still, missionaries both foreign and Indian were also targeted and attacked. The new converts to Christianity were particularly vulnerable.⁵⁹

In the beginning, the English government officially took a position of neutrality with respect to the different religions in India. In spite of this, the conditions remained favourable for Christianity to flourish. With India now as the brightest jewel in the British crown, Christian mission initiatives began to flood India. The Methodist Episcopal Church of America, the University Missions, the English and Canadian Baptists, and the Society of St. John the Evangelist were among the new arrivals into the country.⁶⁰

The state of the Roman Catholic Church during this same time can be best described as stagnant. The suppression of the Jesuits, the spread of Muslim rule in South

⁵⁹ The religious aspect of the Mutiny of 1857 is debated. Firth, for example, indicates that one of the results of the Mutiny was an attack on Christians, even though the initial target may have been the British in general. The fact that there are recorded instances of death of Indian Christians at the hands of Indian sepoys only substantiates Firth. These attacks suggest that there was a perception on behalf of the Hindus and Muslims of a definite Christian conspiracy against them. See Firth, *An Introduction to Indian Church History*, 188. Others, such as Stephen Neill, basing his conclusion on the opinion of Indian historian R.C. Muzumdar, suggests that there was no Christian conspiracy to change the faith of Hindus and Muslims. See Stephen Neill, *A History of Christianity in India, 1707-1858* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 417.

⁶⁰ Ibid. 190.

Indian Catholic strongholds, and the negative impact of the French Revolution on the recruiting of missionaries were all partially responsible for this state of affairs. There were rare bold experiments by individual missionaries, but none that impacted the nation on the same level as British education. John Antony Dubois, for example, served in the South for more than twenty years. He described himself as “conforming myself to the usages of the country, embracing in many respects the prejudices of the natives, living like them, and being almost a Hindu myself; in short being made all things to all men that I might by all means save some.”⁶¹ Another missionary stalwart missionary who adopted a similar approach was Roberto de Nobili who proclaimed himself to be a “twice born” Roman Brahmin. He aimed at interacting with the highest caste Brahmins. To this cause he gained complete mastery over Sanskrit, engaged the Vedanta philosophers, and avoided any action (eating flesh) that might give offence to the Hindus.⁶²

By 1840, Catholic missionary activity increased manifold in India after Pope Pius VII re-established the Jesuits. For the first time women missionaries belonging to various religious congregations began to enter India.⁶³ Meanwhile in 1831, Gregory XVI, ‘the pope of the missions,’ took the reins in Rome. His efforts proved vital for the growth of Catholicism in India. His major achievement lay in extracting Indian Catholicism from the hands of the powerful *padroado* and bringing India under the direct influence of Rome. By the apostolic letter, *Multa Praeclare*, Gregory “tried to put an end to the Portuguese claims, to make plain the full jurisdiction of the Holy See over all the

⁶¹ John Antony Dubois in “Letters on the State of Christianity in India,” as quoted in Neill, *A History of Christianity in India, 1707-1858*, 277.

⁶² See R. C. Frykenberg, “Christianity in India: An Historical Overview of Their Complex Origins,” in ed. Robert Eric Frykenberg *Christians and Missionaries in India: Cross Cultural Communication since 1500* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003). 43-45.

⁶³ The Sisters of St. Joseph were one of the first pioneers in 1827. They came and settled in Pondicherry in the South, which was a French stronghold.

churches in India, and to assert that, when vacariates had been created, the vicar apostolic appointed by the pope had full and perfect authority over all Christians of the Roman obedience in the territories assigned to them.”⁶⁴ This development was not without its share of conflict. However, once the relationship between Portugal and the Holy See was re-established in 1843, ground was cleared for the creation of an episcopate in India with Joseph Da Silva Torres as the first archbishop of Goa. Other vicariates at Bombay, Madurai, Pondicherry, Hyderabad, and Bengal were only logical developments.⁶⁵

Although Roman Catholicism grew in nineteenth century India, there was something tragic about this new wave of growth. Unlike the Christianity of the pre-Portuguese period and the missionary initiatives of Dubois, this new found Catholic presence was essentially European. Long forgotten were the missionary experiments of De Nobili and Dubois. In every respect Roman Catholicism in India was exactly that – Roman.

One of the characteristics of colonial Christianity in India was its critique of typically Hindu practices. *Sati*, the practice of self-immolation of widows, child marriage, and caste inequalities were some of the customs subject to colonial social reform. Of these issues, the British dealt most stringently with caste inequalities. The early Thomas Christians were all high caste Hindu converts as were many converts to Protestantism under British rule. However, one of the notable features of colonial Christianity was the possibility that it offered to the low caste Hindus: liberation from the bondages of caste inequalities. This possibility resulted in some large-scale conversions to Christianity, although the possibility of a casteless society worked more ideally than in practice for

⁶⁴ Neill, *A History of Christianity in India, 1707-1858*, 286.

⁶⁵ For details about these vicariates see Neill, *A History of Christianity in India, 1707-1858*, 276-306.

them. In fact, it only introduced the low caste converts to a Western class-ridden social structure, and sometimes high caste converts continued to practice the caste system as Christians. Both Catholic and Protestant churches insisted on a repudiation of the caste structure on behalf of the new converts. The trade off, however, would prove to be problematic in the long run. Often this was done by an insistence on adopting Western practices like eating meat or wearing Western attire and even burying the dead in a common cemetery.⁶⁶ In any case, groups of new converts often tended to focus on survival and turned into introverted groups - Indians as citizens but Westerners in practices.

At the end of this section an important contrast can be drawn between the precolonial and postcolonial Christian presence in India. Whereas the Christians of the precolonial era were Indianized, Hinduized, and Keralized, the latter Indian Christians were Indians merely as citizens but were transformed into Westerners in practices. In essence, herein lies the validity of the argument that militant Hindu nationalists raise against Western and Christian institutions. Colonial Christianity was essentially changing the identity of Indian converts into Westerners. As later research will indicate, when external powers both influence and radically change the local political, economic, and cultural identity of a people, it gives rise to resistance movements that focus on either regaining or recreating the lost or endangered identity.

If one adds the caste dimension into this picture, the complexity is heightened further. As was mentioned, one of the social institutions that the British targeted was the caste system. People from the lower castes or the outcastes who converted to Christianity were liberated from the caste structures. This impelled scores of low and outcaste Hindus,

⁶⁶ Ibid., 404-5.

especially in rural India, to convert to Christianity. Hindu nationalists (who were predominantly higher caste Hindus) saw in this phenomenon a Christian conspiracy to destroy the very fabric of Indian society.

The caste issue must be briefly analysed at this point, although a larger discussion will follow later. I reject any claim that Hindu nationalist militants are justified in attacking Christians because colonial Christianity opposed the oppressive structures of traditional Hindu society. In fact, Christianity along with Buddhism has been the most powerful instrument of the liberation of low caste Hindus. However, I am inclined to take seriously the Hindu perspective that the disruption of the traditional Hindu caste structure entailed a change in the basic structure and identity of a predominantly Hindu society. To that extent it was inevitable that resistance movements would develop against the Christians along with British colonial power.

The fourth wave of Christian influence in India, outlined in the section below, concerned an internal social readjustment rather than the influence of alien forces. Even though this was an internal phenomenon, the impact was as dramatic as the arrival of the Portuguese or British. The review of the origin and growth of Christianity in India would not be complete without a brief reference to conversion of the *dalits* (outcastes) and *adivasis* (aboriginals). We turn to that history now.

Phase IV – The Christianization of *dalits* and *adivasis*

This fourth section deals with the conversion of low caste Hindus and Indian aboriginals to Christianity. The converts consisted of two main groups of people. The first group was the *dalits* or outcasts – the people who had no place within the Hindu caste structure. The second group was the *adivasis* or aboriginals, who were mainly animists and nature worshippers. We will first deal with the *dalits* and then with the conversion of the *adivasis*.

The *dalits* were a victimized group outside the Indian caste social structure. Scholars are divided about the causes of their conversion to Christianity. Whereas some claim that they converted because they were often servants of the colonial masters or because they received monetary assistance, others claim that the movement toward Christianity began as a liberation movement from the oppressive caste system. Thus, *dalits* in the Indian States of Punjab, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Bihar converted in large numbers to Christianity. Historically, this movement spread all over India. Louis Prakash suggests that caste and feudal oppression, opportunities for upward social mobility, a greater awareness of injustice brought about by education, a widening of their world view, and conversion as a form of social protest are the main reasons.⁶⁷

To the conversion of *dalits* one must add the conversion of *adivasis* – the aboriginal peoples of India. For the most part, they remained isolated and limited their habitat to the thick forests of central and North East India. They were neither Hindu nor Muslim and had their own system of beliefs that centered around animal and nature worship. They were not immune to the outside influences, but under Hindu and Muslim

⁶⁷ Louis Prakash, "Bettiah Mission, Tribal Mission and Dalit Mission in Bihar: three Streams but One Socio-Religion Movement," in *Indian Church History Review* 34 (December 2000): 117-52.

rulers they developed a system of self-administration which hinged on common ownership of land. Their harmony was disturbed by the British administration. The East India Company saw the tribal farms and villages as unforgoable revenue. As a result British administrative patterns were imposed on the *adivasi* population. Here occurred a real clash of civilizations between the tribal self-sufficient democratic administration versus the British system based on private ownership. The *adivasis* could not but adapt to the cultural, political, and economic changes. As a result, their secluded environment was opened to outside influences, though Hinduism had already had some influence in their lives as did the Muslim rule. Some *adivasis* opted for the teaching of the Indian Mystics⁶⁸ who took the best of Hindu and Muslim traditions and created a third option for the *adivasis*.

On this scene arrived the Catholic missionaries. The British missionaries had arrived there a little earlier, but they could not match the French and Belgian Jesuit activities. Much of the education and development of the *adivasis* can be attributed to the Catholic presence. Large scale conversions took place during this time. In retrospect, though, scholars such as Fernando and Gispert-Sauch contend that the conversion of the *adivasi* population was inevitable. They would have converted to either Hinduism or Islam as the result of the influence of each of these cultures.⁶⁹ Christian missionaries happened to be present when the *adivasis* were at a crossroad.

⁶⁸ For example. Kabir Das and Tulsi Das are two of the greatest mystics of India. Kabir Das lived in the northern part of India in (and around) the holy city of Benares (also called Varanasi). He is widely renowned for his pithy couplets and songs that connect life and spirituality in a simple yet powerful way. Born in 1398, he combined Hindu and Muslim spiritual practices and challenged his listeners to the genuine practice of religious faith. At his death, both Hindus and Muslims claimed him as their own. Kabir immensely contributed to the Bhakti Movement in India. Surdas, Tukaram, and Meera (a woman mystic) are some of the other greats figures of India mysticism

⁶⁹ Fernando and Gispert-Sauch, *Christianity in India*, 185.

The attraction of *dalit* and *adivasi* Indians to Christianity began a new phase in the history of Christianity in India. There were mass conversions with sometimes entire villages accepting Christianity. If in the earlier conversions of higher class intelligentsia India found enlightened Christians, in the mass conversions it found its numbers. As we will see later, these mass conversions had serious repercussions for both Indian society in general and Indian Christians in particular.

The fourth phase of Christian expansion was crucial for three reasons. First, Christianity sunk its roots into the very heart of India by including the rural Indian population into its fold. Second, through the conversion of the lower castes and aboriginals, it spread beyond the Indian intelligentsia. It could now boast of a certain egalitarianism. Third, it instilled in the new converts a dignity, heretofore impossible for them. As we shall see in the next section, contemporary militant Hindu nationalists place much emphasis on the re-conversion of the *dalit* Christians back to Hinduism.

The previous four sections dealt with the origin and growth of Christianity in precolonial and pre-independence India. Christianity continues to grow in India. But in contemporary India, the challenges it faces are immense. The foremost among them is its evolution into a truly Indian entity. This section below will give a brief account of Christianity in post-independence India and the challenges it faces.

Phase V – Christianity in post-independence India

Post-independence India saw some form of Church organization emerge. Anglican as well as mainline Protestant churches such the Congregationalists and Methodists were brought together by Bishop V. Azariah to form the unified Church of South India in 1947. The church of North India was formed in 1970. The Lutherans,

Baptists, and Anabaptists maintained their own identities as did the Roman Catholic Church, even though the *Padraodo* tried to maintain its own territories in Goa. Once Goa was ceded to India in 1961, maintaining an independent ecclesiastical territory became a logistical impossibility.⁷⁰ The St. Thomas Christians who declared their autonomy from the Catholic Church still exist as independent entities. The Syro-Malabar Church and the Syro-Malankara Church, however, are now in communion with the Catholic Church.

Christianity in all forms continued to grow in independent India. Apart from mass conversions, a new feature of post-independence India was the development of medical and educational missions.⁷¹ Missionary hospitals, as well as institutions of primary, secondary, college, and graduate education form the backbone of Christian presence in India. In spite of its stupendous growth, however, merely 2.5 % of the Indian population is Christian.

The Indian Church was left with a tremendous challenge in the post-independence India – to become a truly Indian church. Indian churches began to inculturate themselves into the Indian context. Indian architecture, Indian liturgy, the use of Hindu religious symbols, and Hindu styles of worship were adopted. For the most part, however, in its doctrines, appearance, and seminary education/training, Christianity in India maintains a distinctive Western flavor.

⁷⁰ Frykenberg, "India," in *A World History of the Christian Movement*, 188.

⁷¹ Some statistics should be useful here. According to the *Directory of Church-Related Colleges in India*, New Delhi, AIACHE, 2001, there were 271 Christian colleges, 4727 secondary and high schools, 9779 primary schools and 7218 kinder garden schools and 4969 special centres for social education and re-education. in India. In the medical field, according to the 2001 *Statistical Year book of the Church* there were 737 Christian hospitals and 2429 dispensaries in India. In addition, it administered 242 leprosaria, 865 homes for the elderly, 2112 orphanages, 2021 nurseries, and 587 marriage counselling centers. All statistics taken from Fernando and Gispert-Sauch, *Christianity in India*, 235-236.

Conclusion

The sections above briefly describe the origin and growth of Christianity in India. The review reveals some important points. First, India's Christian history dates to antiquity. Its presence in India should not be limited merely to the arrival of Westerners into the country. While Christianity may be foreign in its origins, historically it is hardly a new-comer. Thus when one refers to Christianity in India, one must take into consideration its entire history from the first century to the present. It existed in relative harmony with its cultural and religious surrounding for more centuries than its systemically violent colonial counterpart. Militant Hindu nationalists must especially refrain from associating Christianity exclusively with the latter. Contemporary Christianity can hardly be compared with colonial Christianity even though its ecclesiastical traditions remain predominantly Western. The task of becoming truly Indian, however, remains a gargantuan challenge for the Church in India.

Second, precolonial Christianity was categorically different from the Christianity of the postcolonial times. As has been mentioned earlier, I do not argue that the Indian religious environment was ideal. However, the qualitative change in interreligious relationship is noticeable after the arrival of the first colonists. Violence and the attempts to change the other without a movement vice versa became systemic during colonial history. Under the Portuguese systemic violence was in practice and the British, in conjunction with the Crown, attempted to reform the predominantly Hindu society. Some of the reforms were needed, but nevertheless they could not be achieved without also transforming the fabric of Hindu social structure no matter how oppressive. This would

create the conditions for the rise of militant Hindu nationalism. A fuller discussion of this point will follow in chapter five.

In the next chapter, we will review the origin and development of what we term militant Hindu nationalism from the colonial times to the present. The review will reveal the complexities of this phenomenon. As said earlier, just as militant Hindu nationalists confuse Indian Christian history with its colonial past, Christians in India confuse Hindu nationalist history with fundamentalism or else see it primarily as an effort to preserve Brahminic caste hegemony. Even a selective review of the origin and growth of militant Hindu nationalism, however, will reveal that it originally developed primarily as a struggle for identity in the context of colonization.

Chapter II

A Selective History of Militant Hindu Nationalism in India

Introduction

This chapter traces the origin and the rise of militant Hindu nationalism in India. This is a selective assessment rather than a totally comprehensive presentation. The focus will be on those movements and personalities whose initiatives resulted in the development of a definitive militant Hindu nationalism that was averse to foreign influence on what was termed by the Hindu nationalists as *Hindutva* or 'Hinduness.' This selective review of the origin and growth of militant Hindu nationalism will reveal that it originally developed primarily as a struggle for identity under British colonialism. There are other contesting arguments as well, particularly that militant Hindu nationalism developed mainly as struggle to preserve the hegemony of the upper castes. As I will suggest, this view is not without merit; however, I argue that even the caste struggle should be understood as a problem of identity.

This chapter offers a systematic analysis of the phenomenon of militant Hindu nationalism primarily as a problem of identity. I will argue that Hinduism did not have strict boundaries prior to its clash with colonial powers. It was in opposition to Muslim (the rationale for Hindu-Muslim conflict will be addressed in this chapter) and Christian

colonizers that its boundaries began to be defined. The issue becomes even more controversial when the gain of one community is perceived as the loss of the identity of the other. Research provides ample evidence that when communities define themselves in opposition to the other the relationship between them often becomes conflictual.⁷²

Scholars also contend that militant Hindu nationalism saw a resurgence in contemporary India, in part, due to their perception that globalization was a new form of colonialism.⁷³ The conflation of the terms “colonialism” and “Christianity” on the one hand and “colonialism” and “globalization” on the other is another significant debate in the academic arena. I will analyse both sides of the argument. I will argue that although the militant Hindu nationalist claim that globalization is a threat to the religious, cultural, and economic identity of India as a nation, just as it was in the colonial era, has its drawbacks, it still offers some valid perceptions that need to be taken into account. Similarly, colonization and globalization, even though they are distinct phenomena, also have similar implications. Thus, when militant Hindu nationalists argue that under globalization Christianity would eventually replace Hinduism, that multi-national companies would destroy the local economy, and that Western culture would transform local cultural traditions, one cannot take their conclusions lightly.

This chapter will also focus on stating the problem in question – namely the connection between the struggle for identity and militancy. This section will conclude that, although the connection between identity crisis and militancy is certain, militant Hindu nationalists are misguided in identifying mainline churches as the real culprit for

⁷² For example, Sumit Sarkar, *Beyond Nationalist Frames: Post Modernism, Hindu Fundamentalism, History* (Indianapolis: Indian University Press, 2002), 219. Also see, Mike Featherstone, *Undoing Culture: Globalization, Postmodernism and Identity* (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, 1995), 6.

⁷³ Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 133-4.

the Hindu identity crisis in modern India. In a similar vein, Christians are misguided in understanding militant Hindu nationalism as a fundamentalist movement or purely as a caste struggle.⁷⁴ Dealing with the problem of militant Hindu nationalism will require from Christians both a deeper understanding of the complexities of the phenomenon and a genuine effort to realize the Church in India as a truly Indian entity.

The final section will also explain the point that, since militant Hindu nationalism is often mistakenly described as fundamentalism, one must differentiate the two. Fundamentalism is a very specific phenomenon with its own history and origin. Although seemingly similar, Protestant fundamentalism was a specifically anti-modernist movement. Militant Hindu nationalism is hardly anti-modern, although it is anti-western and anti-Christian. It is important to clarify these nuances, since falsely naming a phenomenon can only lead to misconceived conclusions.

A. The origin and the rise of militant Hindu nationalism

Tracing the root of militant Hindu nationalism is not an easy task. There are many layers of processes which some scholars trace back to the arrival of the Muslim invaders, others to the Portuguese, yet others to British colonial rule. The common strand in either of these opinions is that any consciousness of a religious or national identity developed in the context of an external threat. To get a clear picture of the roots of militant Hindu

⁷⁴ For example, Lancy Lobo, *Globalization, Hindu Nationalism and Christians in India*, 9. In his preface Lobo writes: "The argument of this book is, in the context of globalization, Hindu nationalists are fighting a last ditch attempt by deceit, cunning and cleverness to clandestinely retain the Brahminical hegemony and advancement of political privileges, which they had been continuously enjoying for centuries." Also see, I.K Shukla, *Hindutva: A Autopsy of fascism as a Theoterrorist Cult and Other Essays* (Delhi: Media House, 2003). Shukla describes Hindu nationalist militancy as the ascendancy of Hindu Fascism, a movement of the saffron Nazis, 8. Johanna M. Lessinger describes *Hindutva* in a similar fashion. According to her, "The Growth of Hindutva with its bigotry and brutality... is an attempt to use violence to impose its will, to create hegemonic ideas and to undermine existing democratic structures, which has led opponents to dub the movement as a fascist one." Johanna M. Lessinger, "'Religious' Violence in India: Ayodhya and the Hindu Right," in *The State, Identity and Violence Political Disintegration in the Post Cold War World*, ed. R. Brian Ferguson (New York: Routledge, 2003), 172.

nationalism, one must delineate these various layers – the religious and the political as well as the places where these two converge.

Books on Indian history do not give any indication of the emergence of a nationalist or Hindu religious consciousness during the ‘foreign’ Portuguese colonial presence. A number of reasons may be suggested. First, at the time of the Portuguese arrival, India did not exist as one political entity. It consisted of a number of independently ruled kingdoms geographically tied together as a sub-continent. Second, Hinduism generally is characterized by relative “socio-cultural differentiation and a capacity for integration” which is incompatible with a collective militant consciousness.

⁷⁵ Unlike Christian, Islamic, or Judaic militancy, which often claim a “primordial”⁷⁶ ideology contained in a “Book” to drive their fundamental beliefs, Hinduism in the fifteenth century could not claim the kind of orthodoxy that monotheistic religious traditions did. Jaffrelot claims that the extreme social and religious differentiation within Hinduism gives it the appearance of a “conglomeration of sects” rather than of one unified sect like Islam or Christianity, a disunity which inhibited a collective Hindu consciousness. A third reason could be attributed to the fact that, although high caste Hindus were aware of “foreigners” in their midst, they were more concerned with ritual

⁷⁵ Christopher Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 1. By this Jaffrelot means that Hinduisim has the capacity to incorporate varying forms of worship within itself ranging from the difference in culture of the low castes from the high. Jaffrelot suggests that there is a great difference between the high caste Sanskritized Hinduism which he calls The Great Tradition and the low caste Hinduism or the Little Tradition or popular Hinduism. Hinduism, according to him lacks a unity in the Great Tradition, it lacks one single ‘Book’ which can serve as a reference point for the various forms and in fact lacks the kind of orthodoxy claimed by Judaism, Islam or Christianity.

⁷⁶ Chetan Bhatt compares the rise of Vedic Hinduism to the rise of nationalist ideologies in Europe. According to him Europe turned toward ‘primordial’ (primordial meaning an ideologically derived grid of intelligibility within which anything can be understood; or an overarching framework that provided ideological coherence) ideologies to define modern constitutional nationality based on collective ethnic identities. Chetan Bhatt, *Hindu Nationalism: Origins, Ideologies, and Modern Myths* (New York: Berg, 2001), 9-10.

integrity rather than with some ethnic criteria for discrimination.⁷⁷ Once they were assured of ritual integrity, then any foreign group was free to integrate itself within the community. Many of the earlier converts to Christianity in the Portuguese West-India were high-class Brahmins. This also explains why the St. Thomas Christians, who were predominantly higher class Brahmins, managed to live in relative harmony with the local Hindus. As far as the Portuguese were concerned, Hindu society may have expected to integrate the newcomers into the fabric of Hindu social structure as they had done with the Thomas Christians. Perhaps their past experience functioned as a precedent. Lastly, the Portuguese never became the kind of national power that the British did – threatening Hindu identity in its totality. Thus, a nationalistic movement could not form out of a comparatively localized phenomenon. The more nationalistic movements were to begin later in Bengal, the stronghold of British power, and then spread to other parts of the country as British power took hold of the entire sub-continent.

According to the well-known Indian historian Romila Thapar, the first step “toward crystallization of what we call Hinduism was born in the consciousness of being the amorphous, undefined, and subordinate other,”⁷⁸ when Muslim invaders in the 16th Century raised in the Hindus a consciousness of living in an indigenous culture. The Muslim invaders were the first to blatantly violate the Hindu social structure. As invaders, Muslims would have to fit as *Kshatriyas* or warrior caste within the caste stratification. This would mean an acceptance of the natural superiority of the *Brahmins* – a position totally unacceptable to the Muslims. There were other Muslim practices that violated the Hindu religious sense; cow slaughter is particularly mentionable. Here then

⁷⁷ Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India*, 2.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 5.

lies, perhaps, the first traces of a Hindu consciousness, later concretised in the Maratha Empire ruled by Shivaji.⁷⁹ Yet, as Jaffrelot suggests, this did not imply “the existence of a sense of religious war based on ethnic or communal consciousness.”⁸⁰ Thus, at this point, Hindu militant consciousness was primarily a ritual phenomenon – meaning that any Hindu-Muslim conflict served as a means to correct the ritual aberrations that the other may have introduced while in power.

The construction of Hindu nationalism as an ideology, as an ethnic differentiation, and as a modern phenomenon took place between 1870 and 1920 under British colonial rule. While it is appropriate to say that the origin and development of Hindu nationalism took place within the context of colonialism, it would be simplistic to assume that such a linear explanation will adequately account for the complexities involved. On the one hand, English education offered under British colonialism was a major factor in the origin and spread of Hindu nationalism. Through it, Indians were introduced to Western concepts and ideas. In particular, the specifically primordialist ideologies of nineteenth century Europe which became the basis for modern constitutional nationalism defined primarily through a perceived collective ethnicity or language gave the Indians a way to discover and engage a form of archaic Hinduism.⁸¹ Indians also became familiar with the American War of Independence and the ideals of the French Revolution - liberty, justice, and equality. Thus the very education that the British introduced in India became the force behind an Indian renaissance. On the other hand, the primordialist ideologies within

⁷⁹ Ibid., 4. From the time of the arrival of the Muslims, the Hindu-Muslim struggle can hardly be called an ethnic strife. The Hindu reconquest of the area under Shivaji can be best interpreted as a ritual correction of Muslim violations. Thus, every time a Hindu ruler recaptured the throne cow slaughter was banned and the sanctity of places of worship restored.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Bhatt, *Hindu Nationalism*, 10.

colonial India became inextricably related to the dynamics of Indian caste elitism. While it gave shape to a form of nationalism, in India it was also associated with archaic Vedic Hinduism and related to regional, linguistic, and caste elites.⁸² Even in later discussion on globalization, caste will remain a constant variable that will contribute to the complexities associated with contemporary militant Hindu nationalism. India, in the nineteenth century, was subject to a web of social complexities. Regional interests mingled with national struggles for identity, cultural plurality clashed with caste barriers, linguistic diversity competed with the struggle for unity, and religious identities mixed with national identity. If one adds the complexities introduced and even imposed by colonial powers in the form of political, economic, social, and cultural dictates, it is natural to conclude that some form of internal reform was inevitable.

Two layers can be delineated within the movement we identify as Hindu reform – Hindu nationalism as a secular political movement⁸³ and as a religious nationalistic movement. Hindu nationalism as a secular political movement can be traced back to Brahmo Samaj founded by Rammohan Roy in 1828. At best this organization can be described as a confluence of Hindu cultural nationalist ideas with those of Indian nationalism.⁸⁴ The original Brahmo Samaj, unlike the later religious nationalistic

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Scholars such as Jim Masselos argue that a number of elements contributed to this phase; the emergence of an educated elite, the vested interest of these elite, and the birth of organizations that provided the fora for this group of people to voice their interests and new found attitudes. However, in final analysis the Mutiny of 1857 and the transfer of power from the hands of the East India Company to the British crown had to play a part in the development of political awareness and in the emergence of a national consciousness. See, Jim Masselos, *Indian Nationalism: A History* (Elgin, Illinois: New Dawn Press Inc., 2005), 55-6. In its early stages, Indian Christians did not wholeheartedly participate in the Indian freedom movement. For their own safety and security they preferred a Christian political authority in India. Also, Christians benefited from the economic modernization of the country. However, after the partition of Bengal in 1905, Christians joined the movement.

⁸⁴ Bhatt, *Hindu Nationalism: Origins, Ideologies, and Modern Myths*, 23.

movements, could hardly be termed specifically Hindu. Antony Copley associates the original Brahmo Samaj with a certain “liberal and universalistic outlook.”⁸⁵ He states:

This variant of nationalism stood for territorial rather than ethnic claims, embraced all communities within that territory, belonged to a contract tradition of the formation of the state with an emphasis on individual human rights, and sought to play down the role of religion in political life.”⁸⁶

Jaffrelot agrees with this assessment but also further argues that Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru (independent India’s first Prime Minister), and the Indian National Congress (India’s first political party founded in 1885), in general adopted this secular form of nationalism. Here there was no room for hierarchy and no room for domination by any one religious group.⁸⁷ In fact, Christian converts from Hinduism were among the members of the original Brahmo Samaj.

A split within the Brahmo Samaj occurred in 1850 and then again in 1866. The former was led by Debenranath Tagore (1815-1905) and the latter by the radical Christian reformer Keshab Chandra Sen (1838 –84). The latter group’s agenda for reform included “Christianizing Hinduism.” The former faction, on the other hand, argued for the authority and supremacy of Hinduism. Here is where we first see the origins of a specifically Hindu nationalism based on Hindu superiority and exclusivity,⁸⁸ which would later be crystallized by Hindu nationalists. One such individual was Chandranath

⁸⁵ Antony Copley, “Introduction: Debating Indian Nationalism and Hindu Religious Belief,” in *Hinduism in Public and Private*, ed. Antony Copley, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 6.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Bhatt, *Hindu Nationalism: Origins, Ideologies, and Modern Myths*, 23. Also see, Masselos, *Indian Nationalism: A History*, 92-116. Maselos argues that this latter and more radical group were a relatively small and amorphous group with a more distinct sense of identity from which they derived their romantic view of India as a nation. Their identity developed gradually in opposition to the external other (Muslims and colonial British) and Vedic texts served to provide the much needed religious and cultural identity, even if the very source of identity was flawed.

Basu (1844-1910), who popularised the term "*Hindutva*,"⁸⁹ a term for everything quintessentially Hindu and a term frequently used by militant Hindu nationalists in contemporary India.

The ideals of Hindu nationalism initially found in the Brahmo Samaj were later concretised by Dayanand Saraswati (1824-83) and his Arya Samaj founded in 1875. The Arya Samaj was founded as a reaction to the British colonial power and Christian missionary activity. The conversion of high-caste Hindus as well as the large scale conversion of low-caste Hindus sent a warning signal to many concerned Hindus. The possibility of India becoming a Christian nation seemed a real possibility. As a response to this threat, some high-caste Hindus took it upon themselves to reform both society and Hinduism from within. For example, Dayanand Saraswati adopted both Indian and Western ideas to bring about this reform. On the one hand, he accepted the Western critique of Hindu practices such as the caste system, but on the other hand, he identified Vedic Hinduism⁹⁰ as the centrifugal force for a renaissance. Dayanand proposed that the original caste system was not oppressive and that in its current form it had been corrupted and degraded during the historical period documented in the *Mahabharata*,⁹¹ but that the original purity could be regained.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 25.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 9-10.

⁹¹ The Mahabharata is one of the Epics of the vast collection the books that comprise Hindu Scriptures. Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India*, 18. Contemporary militant Hindu nationalism owes much of its philosophical thinking to Dayanand's rationale. Dayanand's call for reform came primarily due to the British institutional aversion to certain Hindu practices, particularly its idolatrous polytheism and caste system. The reforms undertaken by the British administration not only denigrated Hindu customs and traditions but also aimed at abolishing them by law and complementing them with more Western cultural patterns. Moreover, it became easier for Christian missionaries to contribute to the broader social and cultural changes legally proposed by the colonial power. It was as a response to this threat that high-caste Hindu's undertook to reform Hinduism internally and the nation externally. However, Dayanand was not opposed to Western criticisms of Hindu religious and social practices but argued that Vedic era Hinduism was free of the denigrated practices that it was now accused of. He pointed out that in the Vedic era the Hindu deity was only worshipped in the form of an abstract absolute and that caste was not an endogenous

The identification of Vedic Hinduism as the basis for revival is a crucial point to be noted. Until its interaction with foreign powers, Hinduism did not exhibit the kind of cohesiveness that characterizes Christianity or Islam. British education, however, introduced Hindu intellectuals to European "primordialist ideologies" in which the Western society found the basis of modern constitutional states carved around collective ethnic consciousness.⁹² Hindu nationalists heavily borrowed from the European "primordialist ideologies" to form their own nationalistic ideology' and Vedic Hinduism proved to function as the much needed overarching cohesive force.

Another idea borrowed from Europe was the concept of "Orientalism."⁹³ Orientalism – a concept proposing that "India was the cradle of all civilization, or the original homeland of humanity, that Hinduism represented humanity's primal philosophy, or that Hinduism offered redemption for contemporary humanity, even that

hereditary system, rather that it was a criterion for determining ritual social hierarchy based on ritual purity. According to Jaffrelot this trend of reasoning allowed Dayanand to achieve three objectives: first it allowed him to simultaneously accept the British criticism of the then existent caste system while creating the rationale for replacing it with a more traditional social hierarchy. Second, it allowed him to both repudiate and accept Western values. For example, whereas he was critical of the Western dress and manners he saw their sense of duty and discipline something to be emulated. Third, by proposing that reformed India be based on the Vedic era social hierarchy based on ritual purity he was recommending a traditional Brahminical world view as a means of maintaining social cohesion as opposed to the current oppressive caste arrangement that could deem divisive. These three points will be crucial in understanding contemporary militant Hindu nationalist agendas and strategies.

⁹² Bhatt, *Hindu Nationalism*, 9-10. Primordial here refers to "an ideologically derived grid of intelligibility within which anything can be understood; or an overarching framework that provided ideological coherence. Bhatt suggests, "the association between exclusivist forms of ethnic nationalism and ideologies or primordialism need not have been a necessary one, but frequently was, and had its roots in eighteenth century varieties of nationalist thinking that were to grow in force within Europe during the nineteenth century."

⁹³ D. Kopf, *British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance* (Calcutta: K.L. Mukhopadhyay, 1969). The British Orientalists were appreciative of the ancient religious and cultural traditions of classical India. This definition is quite contrary to Edward Said's definition of Orientalism. Contained in Said's definition was the idea of Western supremacy. According to Said, Orientalism is a "style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between 'the Orient' and the 'Occident'." This is connected to the idea that Western society, or Europe in this case, is superior in comparison to cultures that are non-European, or the Orient.

humanism itself could be conceived as resulting from Hindu values...⁹⁴ – was a creation of European thought. British English education introduced Indian nationalists to these ideas which they readily exploited to create a nationalist ideology. Thus Hinduism, with its immense capacity for integration, adaptation, and social-cultural differentiation, began to reform itself in order to fit into the modern world.

It might be worth considering here that this integrationist vision of Hinduism is contested. Just as the pre-colonial religious harmony in India is contested, the colonial context of militant Hindu nationalism is also contested. Vinoth Ramachandra, for example, argues that the view that Hinduism represented a pure and problem-free pre-colonial Hindu world represents a “deeply disturbing re-reading of Indian history and religious traditions.”⁹⁵ Rather, Ramachandra suggests that the claim of a pre-colonial inclusivist and tolerant Hinduism is a myth and an argument that scholars who subscribe to the “colonist” thesis uncritically accept. Ramachandra rejects two common assumptions of many Indian intellectuals and theologians: first, that *Hindutva* can only be presented as a Western or modern distortion of a pre-colonial Hindu world or that Hindu nationalism was a patriotic attempt to liberate a Hindu India from colonial slavery; second, that Christian mission in India was an extension of colonialism. Rather, along with scholars like William R. Pinch, this school of thought suggests that the argument that militant Hindu nationalism was a patriotic attempt to liberate a Hindu country from colonial slavery is contradicted by the evidence of developments such as the rise of militant *Sadhus* or armed sages, which points to a totally different dynamic. They claim that the militant movement represented an elitist vision on behalf of militant nationalists

⁹⁴ Bhatt, *Hindu Nationalism*, 11.

⁹⁵ See Vinoth Ramachandra, *Faiths in Conflict? Christian Integrity in a Multicultural World* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 47-85.

to maintain the caste hegemony. This vision, according to them, was then supported by the self-given right to bear arms.⁹⁶ Indian authors also support similar views. Lancy Lobo, for example, suggests that Hindu nationalists are fighting a last ditch attempt by deceit, cunning, and cleverness to clandestinely retain the Brahminical hegemony and advancement of political privileges which they had been continuously enjoying for centuries,”⁹⁷

The above views may carry some semblance of truth. In fact, I do not make any claims that caste considerations may not have had any influence in the development of militant Hindu nationalism. Yet there are baffling aspects related to caste that defy explanation. A look at the contemporary situation in India reveals a striking contradiction. Perhaps, the present situation is precisely the reason that one should not reduce the rise of militant Hindu nationalism and even its resurgence today primarily to caste. On Oct 14, 2006, thousands of people attended mass ceremonies in India at which hundreds of Hindu *dalits* converted to Buddhism and Christianity. Again on 27th May 2007, several thousand tribal and *dalit* Hindus in India converted *en masse* to Buddhism at a ceremony in Mumbai.⁹⁸ These conversions are a means of social protest against the oppressive caste structure. In spite of these mass conversions to Buddhism, there are no systematic attacks on Buddhist institutions. On the other hand violence against Muslims and Christians continue unabated.⁹⁹ Even as recently as July 11, 2008, a Jesuit home and church as well as the Protestant orphanage in Tumudiband (Kandhamal district, Orissa

⁹⁶ See, William R. Pinch, “Soldier Monks and Militant Sadhus,” in *Making India Hindu*, ed. David Ludden (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005).

⁹⁷ Lancy Lobo, *Globalization, Hindu Nationalism and Christians in India* (New Delhi: Rawat Publications, 2002), 9.

⁹⁸ http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/6695695.stm

⁹⁹ www.catholic.org/international/international_story.php?id=28542

State) were looted and destroyed. If militant Hindu nationalism were purely a caste issue then militant Hindu nationalists should exhibit the same violence against Buddhists as it has exhibited against Christians. Yet, there have been no attacks on Buddhist and Jain populations in the recent past.

Thus, describing militant Hindu nationalism primarily as a caste issue fails to capture the complexity of the nature of the phenomenon at hand. I do not claim that caste is not a factor within the militant Hindu nationalist ideology. In contrast, I am not inclined to consider caste struggle and the question of identity to be unrelated. I consider the caste issue to be an integral dimension of the identity issue. To consider either of these issues as unrelated is to simplify the complexity of the issue.

I argue that complexity of the problems associated with militant Hindu nationalism, comes from understanding it as a reaction to the simultaneous political, social, cultural, and religious reorganization of Indian society under colonialism. Politically, colonial rule undermined any possibility of self rule of India as a nation; socially, the caste-based social structure – no matter how oppressive or unjust– faced the threat of disintegration; culturally, age old traditions, mores, practices and life styles were in jeopardy; religiously, an ancient faith tradition faced the threat of extinction; and economically, the unjust practices of colonial hegemony threatened the traditional small scale industry of India. Organized militant Hindu national consciousness emerged, then, as a reaction to political, economic, social, cultural, and religious threats to the very identity of a people by an organized, militant, and alien power. Prior to the violent threat, the same peoples had coexisted for centuries under a different social arrangement, albeit, under a different political system. The main issue that emerges as an area for focus, then,

is the issue of identity – identity understood broadly as encompassing the political, economic, social, cultural, and religious dimensions. In the pages below we will trace the development of militant Hindu nationalism as a problem of identity which includes within it the attempt to maintain the caste status quo.

If Dayanand Saraswati's Arya Samaj gave form to Hindu nationalism, it was the thoughts of Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay (1838-94) that transformed it into an ideology. Chattopadhyay's main concern was to understand how culture relates to power in the context of the British subjugation of India. More specifically, he wanted to understand how the Europeans seemed to be culturally equipped for power and progress and how the people of India were subjected to a European nation for such an extended duration. In suggesting answers to these quintessential questions, Chattopadhyay gave not a political rationale but religious and cultural explanations. In his answers there was no attempt to define the political boundaries for India, but rather, his efforts were focused on the need to find a way to create a national culture and a national identity (essentially Hindu identity). He attributed the failure of the Indian people to a cultural backwardness, resulting in a failure "to face up to the realities of power," starting from the first Muslim invasion and extending up to the British rule.¹⁰⁰

The remedy for this cultural backwardness, according to him, lay in "a total regeneration of national culture."¹⁰¹ Chattopadhyay preferred to call the national culture a national religion. Moreover, he saw in Hinduism not only "one of the greatest religions,"¹⁰² but also the means through which an Indian national culture and identity

¹⁰⁰ Partha Chatterjee, *The Partha Chatterjee Omnibus* (Oxford: Oxford university Press, 1999), 54.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 74.

¹⁰² Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay as quoted in Partha Chatterjee, *The Partha Chatterjee Omnibus*, 74.

could be established.¹⁰³ In the process, Chattopadhyay also coined the definition of the term Hindu. For him “Hindu” incorporated all the religions that had sprung from a common source¹⁰⁴ and all those religions that are supported by the Sanskrit sacred scriptures.¹⁰⁵

In essence this was first time that Hinduism was being defined, and its definition emerged in opposition to other religions. As Chattopadhyay suggests, “Hinduism is defined by those who are *not* Hindu.”¹⁰⁶ In the process of defining Hindu, Chattopadhyay did more than just define it. One of the crucial consequences of his efforts was that a lot of cultural elements that were not religious, such as social ethics, politics, law, folklore, and popular observances were now incorporated within the term “Hindu.”¹⁰⁷ In Chattopadhyay’s thought, then, we come across the origins of a nationalistic thinking that is clearly defined as Hindu, over against other modes of thought.

It was mentioned earlier in passing that reform within Hinduism originated in the Bengal Presidency. But Hindu nationalism was more than a localized movement. What happened in Bengal was only a prelude to similar movements in other places. Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920) became the central figure in the nationalistic movement within the Bombay Presidency. Because Tilak was a prominent national figure next only to the likes of Gandhi, his opinions on Hindu nationalism were significantly

¹⁰³ The question that emerges is that why should Hinduism be the essence of the national culture or religion in a pluralistic India? Chatterjee summarizes Chattopadhyay’s reasoning thus: first, it opened the possibility of a large scale popular movement, and second, it received an impetus from the new found appreciation of Eastern spirituality in the West.

¹⁰⁴ Chatterjee calls Chattopadhyay’s reasoning flawed because both Judaism and Christianity and even Islam to an extent spring from a common source yet they are radically different religions.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 76. Buddhism and Jainism do not have their scriptures in Sanskrit. In fact, Buddhism’s *Pali* scripture in itself is a social protest against the more ritualistic Hinduism that supported the priestly Brahmin caste.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

consequential. His contribution to *Hindutva* lay in his association of present day Hinduism with the archaic Aryan heritage and the creation of a Hindu-Aryan primordialism which centred around Hindu popular devotionism and nationalism. The nexus created between the popular-devotionism and the political archaic-Vedic was the genius of Tilak.¹⁰⁸ Hindu nationalism was now set to spread as a common Hindu agenda rather than an elite movement.

By the early 1900s, it was time for the various factions in different parts of the country to organize themselves into a common entity. In 1910, an attempt to establish an all-India Hindu organization was made in response to the formation of the Muslim League, an all-Muslim organization. From these efforts was born the Hindu Sangathan (Organization of Hindus). The aim of the Hindu Sangathan was to organize "Hindus of different castes and sectarian groups into a unified front for effective political action."¹⁰⁹ Later named the Hindu Mahasabha,¹¹⁰ the organization worked to develop the link between groups and individuals in the cities of North India and expand itself to rural India.

As head of the Hindu Mahasabha, it was the militant-minded V.D Savarkar who systemized and popularised the concept of *Hindutva*. Savarkar provided a comprehensive definition of Hindu identity by spelling out the essence of being a Hindu. To accomplish this he distinguished *Hindutva* from Hindusim. For him, Hinduism was a Western creation that was defined primarily through personal or collective religious beliefs. He

¹⁰⁸ Bhatt, *Hindu Nationalism: Origins, Ideologies, and Modern Myths*, 35.

¹⁰⁹ Lise McKean, *Divine Enterprise: Gurus and the Hindu Nationalist Movement* (Chicago: The Chicago University Press: 1996), 67.

¹¹⁰ The Hindu Mahasabha (conference) was formed in 1915 during the *Kumbh mela*, where millions of pilgrims gather for an auspicious and purifying bath in the river Ganges. The *mela* becomes a time for Hindu religious organizations to earn prestige, recruit followers, conduct discourses, and listen to popular Hindu preachers. It is also an occasion for religious and political leaders to form and consolidate alliances.

demoted religion, religious beliefs, and practices and promoted history as the basis of Hindu identity. For him Hinduism is only one of the attributes of *Hindutva*.¹¹¹

“*Hindutva*,” on the other hand, “is not a word but a history.”¹¹² For Savarkar, history “comes essentially from outside India, though invasions, wars and conquests directed at Hindus, rather than through any essentially historical capacity within Hinduism...”¹¹³

Savarkar conceived a *Hindutva* which was defined only in the context of an external threat. According to him, a “Hindu was conferred his name at the point at which his conflict with others began.”¹¹⁴ Thus, in Savarkar’s *Essentials of Hindutva* he claims that Hindu national identity is formed primarily through conflict with “non-self” embodied in the Muslim and British invaders.”¹¹⁵

‘Hindu’ in Savarkar’s “Hindu identity” is defined as that which “embraces all the departments of thought and activity of the whole being of our Hindu race.” According to him, Hindu and *Hindutva* are defined by “residence in Hindustan, love for and worship of its land”;¹¹⁶ common blood, common culture, common laws, rites, feasts, and festivals are part of the Hindu identity. A significant aspect of Savarkar’s *Hindutva* had to do with India’s physical geography. The first requisite of Hindu identity was “citizenship by paternal descent within physically bounded territory of India.” The second requisite was “the bond of a common blood. A Hindu must be a descendant of Hindu parents.”¹¹⁷

Based on this second requisite, Savarkar rejected the British understanding of caste

¹¹¹ Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India*, 27. For a more recent history of the Hindu nationalism also see, Christophe Jaffrelot, ed., *Hindu Nationalism: A Reader* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 1-19.

¹¹² A quoted in Bhatt, *Hindu Nationalism: Origins, Ideologies, and Modern Myths*, 86. Also see Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India*, 26-33.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 87.

¹¹⁵ McKean, *Divine Enterprise*, 80.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 79.

¹¹⁷ Bhatt, *Hindu Nationalism*, 94.

differentiation within Hinduism. Instead, he proposed a race-oriented understanding of the caste, whereby, all Hindus are seen as belonging to one race even while accepting the caste distinctions.¹¹⁸ Savarkar's conception of caste, then, included the *dalits*, the *adivasis*, and other lower castes. In his assessment, they too belong to the Hindu nation since they inherit Hindu blood and consider Hindusthan as their holy land.¹¹⁹

Scholars such as G. Pandey suggest that Savarkar even imagined a place in the Hindu society for Christians and Muslims who have lived in India perhaps as long as the Hindus themselves. But it would be a subordinate place as 'citizens.'¹²⁰ Thus for example, Sister Nivedita, an Irish woman who became a disciple of Swami Vivekananda, should be considered Hindu since she could be assimilated into the Hindu society as the early Hun invaders were. Even if he imagined Christians and Muslims as the threatening "them," by defining the converted Christians and Muslims as members of the Hindu race, he left open the possibility of reintegrating them into Hindu society.

Another requisite of *Hindutva* was common culture and civilization, which in this case happened to be Vedic-based or the Sanskrit civilization. The common civilization shared by all Hindus consisted of various elements, as Bhatt states:

...common thoughts, actions and achievements of Hindus, their history ('the story of the action of our race'), literature ('the story of the thought of our race'), and arts, their shared laws, rites customs, festivals

¹¹⁸ Savarkar was faced with the same dilemma as Dayanand who in his retrieval of Vedic era Hinduism found justification for a less oppressive caste system than the British were critical of, while maintaining that social cohesion and integration was possible under the Vedic conception of caste. Savarkar too subscribed to the Vedic understanding of caste as a hierarchically conceived society based on ritual purity. By this he strived to present the Hindu nation as racially undifferentiated. In this way, first, he presented an integrated concept of Hindu race as opposed to the racial supremacy that British colonialism was based on. The difference in the colonial understanding of caste as prevalent in India at the time and the Hindu nationalist's understanding of caste as a system in need of reform is crucial to the dynamics of this dissertation as it has implications for the present attacks against Christians in a globalized India.

¹¹⁹ McKean, *Divine Enterprise*, 85.

¹²⁰ G. Pandey, "Which of us are Hindus?" in *Hindus and Others: The Question of Identity in India Today*, ed. G. Pandey (New Delhi: Viking, 1993), 251.

and feasts, all of which were determined by the 'mother tongue',
Sanskrit...."¹²¹

The definitive conceptualization of a Hindu identity by these three criteria effectively excluded Muslims and Christians who, despite sharing a common geography with the Hindus, fell outside the criteria Savarkar proposed. In his own words:

For though Hindusthan [Hindu land] is to them a Fatherland as to any other Hindu, yet it is not to them a Holyland [sic] too. Their holyland is far off in Arabia or Palestine. Their mythology and Godmen, ideas and heroes are not the children of this soil. Consequently their names and their outlook smack of foreign origin. Their love is divided. Nay, if some of them be really believing what they profess to do, then there can be no choice – they must, to a man, set their holyland above their Fatherland in their love and allegiance. This is but natural. We are not condemning nor are we lamenting. We are simply telling facts as they stand. We have tried to determine the essentials of Hindutva and in doing so have discovered... that Mohammedan or Christian communities possess all the essential qualifications of Hindutva but one and that is they do not look upon India as their Holyland.¹²²

Keeping in mind Savarkar's understanding of Hindu identity, it is easy to comprehend his adoption of the practice of *suddhi* (purification ritual by which untouchables, Christians, and Muslims publicly embraced Hinduism).¹²³ But under Savarkar the practice of *suddhi* went a step further. It became the mainspring of the Hindutva ideology and the "war" to defend the Hindu nation against attacks from British and other Christian missionaries.¹²⁴

Bhatt attributes Savarkar's bellicose language to an "overwhelming fascination and obsession with the aesthetics of Hindu militarism."¹²⁵ By 1941 Savarkar was calling

¹²¹ Bhatt, *Hindu Nationalism*, 97.

¹²² As quoted in Bhatt, *Hindu Nationalism*, 98.

¹²³ For more on *Shuddhi* see, R.K. Ghai, *Shuddhi Movement in India* (New Delhi: Commonwealth Publishers, 1990).

¹²⁴ McKean, *Divine Enterprise*, 85.

¹²⁵ Bhatt, *Hindu Nationalism*, 103.

to "Hinduize all politics and militarise all Hindudom."¹²⁶ This call for militant nationalism is characteristic of Savarkar's Hindu ideology. He called for a practical militarization of all Hindus starting from the age of fourteen with the aim of raising a Hindu national militia.¹²⁷ To Savarkar, then, we attribute the rise of "militant Hindu nationalism."

Post-Independent India turned out to be very different from the one that Savarkar and the Hindu Mahasabha had anticipated. To gain national political power in independent India, the Hindu Mahasabha contested the first elections against the more secularist Indian National Congress led by Jawaharlal Nehru. The Congress won the elections hands down. Moreover, the militancy that Savarkar and the Hindu Mahasabha had so carefully nurtured turned upon them when Gandhi was assassinated by Nathuram Godse, a member of the Hindu Mahasabha.

From the 1930s, leaders of the Indian National Congress had declared itself to be a secular political party that wanted to establish a nation based not on Hindu nationalist ideologies but "on rational ideas and norms of behavior which would rise above religious beliefs and practices."¹²⁸ This view of the secular Indian leaders recognized the primary unit of the nation as either free individuals or religious communities based on equality. They categorically rejected a hierarchical view of society dominated by Hindus and promoted a nation "that was based on a composite notion of culture, as evident in the writings of Nehru, for whom the secular genius of India rested in its capacity to

¹²⁶ McKean, *Divine Enterprise*, 71.

¹²⁷ Bhatt, *Hindu Nationalism*, 104. It is significant to note that Savarkar essentially opposed Gandhi's policy of non-violence. For Savarkar non-violence was not only wrong but actively immoral. On the other hand, justifiable aggression defined individual or collective morality. It is significant to note that Gandhi was assassinated by Nathuram Godse a member of the Hindu Mahasabha and a close friend of Savarkar.

¹²⁸ Yogendra Malik and V.B. Singh, *Hindu Nationalists in India: The Rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party* (New Delhi: Vistaar Publications, 1994), 5.

assimilate exogenous elements.”¹²⁹ B. Graham best describes India’s secular leaders as Hindu traditionalists. They cherished their Hindu culture¹³⁰ yet refused to give it an ideological commitment, unlike the more xenophobic Hindu nationalists.¹³¹ The Gandhian and Nehruvian kind of secular nationalism differed from the agenda of the Hindu nationalists in that every one of their campaigns was directed toward achieving secular ends rather than any specifically Hindu gains.¹³² They were committed to the promotion of a culture compatible with a pluralistic Indian population.

It was in response to such a secular and pluralistic agenda of the Congress Party that militant Hindu nationalists in the Indian state of Maharashtra launched a Hindu revivalistic movement under the auspices of the Rashtrya Swayamsevak Sangh (National Volunteer Corps) or the RSS.¹³³ In post-independent India, the RSS became the primary militant Hindu nationalist organization pursuing the goal of Hinduization of Indian society.

Between 1949 and 1965, the RSS launched several national organizations in its pursuit of fashioning a society based on *Hindutva* as defined by Savarkar. The Bharatiya Jana Sangha (Indian People’s Party) was created to represent the political ambitions of the RSS.¹³⁴ The aim of the party was to gain political power at the center to execute the

¹²⁹ Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India*, 83.

¹³⁰ The first Indian government formed by secular leaders defended the sacred cow, promoted Hindi as India national language and gave impetus to ayurvedic medicine – the herbal system of medicine prescribed by the ancient Vedic sages.

¹³¹ B. Graham, “The Congress and Hindu Nationalism,” in *The Indian National Congress*, ed. D. A. Low (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998), 174.

¹³² Bhatt, *Hindu Nationalism*, 111.

¹³³ The RSS was originally founded by Keshav Baliram Hedgewar (1889-1940) in 1925 in reaction to the secular politics of the Indian National Congress. His successor, M.S. Golwalkar further radicalized the ideas of Hedgewar into an ideology in his book *We or Our Nationhood Defined* (Nagpur: Bharat Prakashan, 1947).

¹³⁴ The leader of the Bharatiya Jana Sangha during this time was Deendayal Upadhyaya, a RSS worker. His philosophy can essentially be called, as Chetan Bhatt terms it, an ‘Integral Humanism.’ Upadhyaya’s version of Integral Humanism stood for a rejection of large-scale technology and mechanized industrial

Hindutva agenda. Other organizations like the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (World Hindu Council) or VHP represented the ideological wing of the RSS. The VHP was born from within the RSS when, on August 29-30, 1964, about 150 delegates representing various Hindu traditions decided to create a new organization with the aim of consolidating and strengthening Hindu society, protecting and spreading Hindu ethical and spiritual values, and establishing strong bonds with Hindus living abroad.¹³⁵ All the above political and ideological organizations that were affiliated with the RSS together called themselves the *Parivar* (family).

The *Parivar*'s quest for political power did turn into reality twice in the Indian political history. Its first stint was in 1977 when the Jana Sangha came to power after two years of emergency declared by the then Congress prime minister, Indira Gandhi. The coalition politics of the *Parivar* lasted a little over two years and Indira Gandhi's Congress Party was returned to power in 1980. However, the years in power convinced key RSS and Jana Sangha members to form a new political party. Thus was born the Bharatiya Janata Party (Indian People's Party) or BJP. From 1980 the VHP effectively engaged itself in mobilizing a Hindu vote bank for the BJP. Its sole aim was the establishment of India as "*Ram Rajya*" or the kingdom of the Hindu deity Ram.¹³⁶

The role of the VHP in developing a Hindu ideology for modern India has been crucial. Its ideology revolved around creating a modern Hinduism as the national religion

development, and a rejection of Western economic and cultural imperialism. His philosophy evolved from the non-dualistic philosophy of the medieval Indian philosopher Shankara, in which all of creation is seen in light of a single unifying principle and *Dharma* was the key to this understanding the unifying principle. Upadhyaya understood politics to be part of this unifying principle based on Hindu nationalistic values.

¹³⁵ Bhatt, *Hindu Nationalism*, 180. The VHP's ideology was based on that of Savarkar's Hindu Mahasabha. 'Hindu' for the VHP stood for all people who respected and followed the eternal values of life, ethical and spiritual, that have developed in Hindusthan.

¹³⁶ The concept of *Ram Rajya* is not entirely defined. Whereas *Ram Rajya* is not as indeterminate as the Christian concept of Kingdom of God, it is not spoken of as an unearthly reality since it is associated with the geographical boundaries of the State of India and beyond to include Pakistan-controlled Kashmir.

of India and including Hinduism as the defining characteristic of the nation.¹³⁷ It did this by conducting a vociferous and militant discourse centring around the theme of Hindu identity. Hindu identity was presented as “threatened” by minority communities such as the Muslims and Christians. However, under the leadership of the moderate Atal Bihari Vajpayee, during the 1984 general election the party managed to secure merely two seats in the 532 seats Parliament. Vajpayee’s moderate stand was blamed for the debacle and the more militant Lal Krishnan Advani took over the reins in 1986.

Meanwhile, after 1992 other new militant Hindu nationalist organizations were formed in keeping with the *Hindutva* ideology. The Bajarang Dal (Hanuman’s Army), the Hindu Jagaran Manch (Hindu Revival Forum) and the all women’s youth wing, the Durga Vahini (messengers of the Goddess Durga) are worth mentioning. These organizations under the original RSS umbrella form the core of the militant Hindu consciousness in contemporary India.

Under the more extremist leadership of Advani,¹³⁸ the BJP openly pursued the *Hindutva* agenda. In 1992, militant Hindus destroyed the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh – a revered Muslim mosque which had become the focal point of Hindu militancy. Riding strong on Hindu sentiments, the BJP came to power in the 1998 general elections. This was the second time that political parties in affiliation with the RSS had gained power.

Perhaps, this is a good place to understand the Hindu-Muslim violence. A question that is often asked is that if the legacy of colonialism is the power behind

¹³⁷ Peter van der Veer, “Hindu Nationalism and the Discourse of Modernity: The Vishwa Hindu Parishad,” in *Accounting for Fundamentalism*, Vol. 4, The Fundamentalism Project, eds. Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 656.

¹³⁸ See, L. K. Advani, *The People Betrayed* (Delhi: Vision Books, 1979).

militant Hindu nationalism, then why is there proportionately more violence against Muslims than against Christians? A brief discussion may help understand Hindu violence against Muslims. It will also reveal that colonial politics is not unrelated to the issue.

The history of Hindu-Muslim conflict may be studied under different stages. Before the establishment of British rule in India, Hindu-Muslim conflict revolved around the rise and fall of both Hindu and Muslims empires. Muslim destruction of Hindu places of worship ((Muhammad Ghazni's destruction of the Somnath Temple in modern day Gujarat) and Hindu efforts to reconstruct them had been part of the pre-colonial political and religious landscape.

During British colonial rule, Hindus and Muslims often fought side by side both in the British army and against the British. Thus, in India's first war of Independence in 1857, both the Muslim and Hindu soldiers equally hated the British for using animal fat to grease the arms and ammunitions they employed. However, it was also during this time that Hindu animosity toward Muslims was beginning to become widespread and strong. As early as 1856 the historical trope of Muslims as invaders destroying India's prosperity and harmony was beginning to emerge. The Gujarati writer Narmadashankar (1833-86) for example, wrote about the Muslims as plunderers and rapists. The Hindi writer Bharatendu Harishchandra (1850-1885) wrote about the hoarding, harassing and ravaging Muslims. Similar writings also appeared in Bengali.¹³⁹

Hindu-Muslim animosity became stronger during British colonial rule. Two simultaneous processes contributed to the increasing alienation of the Muslims. First, the birth of Hindu nationalism and second the compulsions of British colonial politics. Savarkar and Golwalkar's definition of India as Hindu essentially excluded the Muslims

¹³⁹ Ian Talbot, *India and Pakistan: Inventing the Nation* (New York: Oxford University Press 2000), 40.

and Christians. "Hinduness" was defined as being rooted in the soil of definite geographical boundaries and linked back to the Orientalist construction of the golden Vedic age. On the other hand, as the demand for self rule in colonial India gained strength, the idea of elected legislatures proposed by the Indian National Congress began to frighten the Muslims.¹⁴⁰ Their fear was not unrealistic. In a nation of Hindu majority where Muslims were already being alienated, the demand for self rule gave birth to the notion of a separate nation.

Muslim nationalism also crystallized during this time. In the literature of Muslim poets such as Mohammad Iqbal (1877-1938), in the intellectual inspiration of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan (1817-98), in the mass appeal of the Khilafat Movement, and in the separatist nationalism of Muhammad Ali Jinah's Muslim League, the birth of a Muslim nation (Pakistan) was realized. Meanwhile, Hindu-Muslim violence had reached unprecedented levels even prior to partition and Indian independence.¹⁴¹ After independence Hindu-Muslim relations have always remained contentious. Militant Hindu nationalists have consistently raised the precolonial history, particularly the destruction of Hindu places of worship and Hindu ethos during Mughal rule and the reconstruction of some mosques (for example, Babri Masjid was destroyed by militant Hindu nationalists in 1992) as the central motivation for violence against Muslims.

It is the above history that makes Hindu-Muslim relation more contentious than the Hindu-Christian relations even though in recent years violence against Christians has assumed unprecedented proportions. But there are others reasons. Christians, for most

¹⁴⁰ Rajmohan Gandhi, *Eight Lives: A Study of the Hindu-Muslim Encounter* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1986), 9.

¹⁴¹ See Yasmin Khan, *The Great Partition: The Making of India and Pakistan* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).

part, stayed clear of the politics of partition. Muslims, on the other hand, were solely responsible for the partition of the sacred Hindu land. Secondly, Christian population is far lower (2.5%) as compared with the relatively larger Muslim population (13%). The institutional strength of the Christians is also an advantage. Christian educational, health and charitable institutions are nationally and internationally acclaimed. A vast majority of Muslims, on the other hand, as during the British times, remain in relative poverty. Christian institutions, particularly in the post-independence era focused much on charitable works and the general uplifting of the poor and weaker rural populations even as they strengthened their urban presence. This makes the general Indian population to be better disposed toward Christians. However, as mentioned earlier, as far as militant Hindu nationalists are concerned Christians and Muslims are equally “foreign.”

Returning to the militant Hindu nationalist agenda, one of the priorities in the BJP once it came to power was a review of the Indian Constitution. This review was meant to be the cornerstone of the Hindu reform movement. The 1998 BJP manifesto had included a commitment to appoint a commission to comprehensively review the Constitution of India. There was no indication as to which parts of the Constitution would be reviewed. Bhatt suggests that keeping in mind the RSS-BJP ideology, two terms within the Preamble of the Constitution that defined India as a “sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic republic,” were problematic – socialist and secular.¹⁴² Ironically, the BJP pursued the policy of economic liberalization that the previous Congress government had begun.¹⁴³ The Constitutional review never passed the political test, and the BJP lost

¹⁴² Bhatt, *Hindu Nationalism*, 176.

¹⁴³ Although one must admit that no matter what the ideological stand of individual governments, one of the characteristics of a globalized economy is that individual States have little control over their own economies. Global markets and multi-national companies often control the economic policies of nations.

power during the 2004 elections. However, the militant *Hindutva* agenda continues to be carried forward by the RSS and its political and ideological organizations, particularly the VHP. In contemporary globalized India, the RSS-BJP combined with the various militant organizations under them forms the nucleus of the attack on Christians.

B. The connection between militancy and identity

Since we have considered militant Hindu nationalism as an identity issue, it will be worthwhile to briefly examine the connection between militancy and identity, even though a larger discussion on globalization and identity will follow in chapter Four.

Scholars such as Thomas Meyers call fundamentalism¹⁴⁴ and other form of identity struggles, “the modern-day identity mania.” He considers identity to be essential to a social being, since, it is necessary for a person to be a “responsible participant in social interaction.”¹⁴⁵ Identity is “an open process of negotiation between the self-image that the individual conjures up of himself and the image that his partners in social interaction form of him in changing contexts.”¹⁴⁶ According to Meyers, “identity is not a possession but a social process of achieving equilibrium between conflicting expectations.”¹⁴⁷ Similarly, Manuel Castells suggests that “identities organize

Thus the BJP's economic policies should be understood more as a compulsion rather than a preference. However, another reason can be found in Peter van der Veer's examination of the ideology of the VHP. He suggests that VHP is not an antimodernist movement, rather within the context of the nationalism discourse the VHP is essentially modernist in the sense that its logic is “deeply implicated in Western conceptions of modernity.” It does not reject capitalist developments, science and technology, rather the secular state.

¹⁴⁴ Meyers uses “fundamentalism” as a case in point. What is true of fundamentalism is applicable to religious and nationalist militancy as well. For example, “fundamentalism” by itself does not explain the insurgency in Iraq. Iraqi insurgency is also a struggle for national and international identity, under threat from an ‘alien’ power.

¹⁴⁵ Thomas Meyer, *Identity Mania: Fundamentalism and the Politicization of Cultural Differences* (New York: Zed Books, 2001), 14.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 15.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

meanings,”¹⁴⁸ and that “meaning is organized under primary identity.”¹⁴⁹ Different cultures necessarily imply differentiated identities.

Meyers further suggests that struggles for identity grow out of an “exclusionary dynamic that marginalizes growing numbers of people.”¹⁵⁰ Applying this dynamic to the modern globalized world, he argues that there is a “powerful worldwide tendency toward the hardening of the indigenous cultural identity which aggressively resists globalization and the import of alien cultures from other parts of the world, whose spread tend to undermine local cultures.”¹⁵¹ A similar argument can be made with regard to the development of militant Hindu nationalism in the context of colonialism.

Certain conclusions can be drawn from the above discussion. There is no doubt that a predominantly Hindu society was being reorganized in multiple ways by the colonial powers. The self [Hindu self] had to redefine itself in the context of the “other”. The Hindu self could not allow the “other” to emasculate or to recreate its identity completely.”¹⁵² Even the most trenchant critics of precolonial Hindu society, such as Sarkar, in some way attribute the rise of Hindu nationalism and militancy to the dynamics of colonialism. They attribute both the organization of an inchoate Hindu society without defined boundaries and the later construction of the ideology of unified Hinduism to the

¹⁴⁸ Manuel Castells, *The Power of Identity* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 7.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Meyer, *Identity Mania*, 15. Also see, Castells, *The Power of Identity*, 8. Castells’ concept of collective identities is significant here. In Castells’ schema, there are three forms or origins of collective identity building. In *legitimizing identity*, social and cultural identity is extended to society by dominant institutions. Under *project identity*, social actors build a new identity that redefines their position in society, thus seeking the transformation of the entire social structure. Movements such as militant Hindu nationalism belong to the third form – *resistance identity* – which is “generated by those actors who are in positions/conditions devalued and/or stigmatised by the logic of domination, thus building trenches of resistance and the survival on the basis of principles different from, or opposed to, those permeating the institutions of society....”

¹⁵² Jyotirmaya Sharma, *Hindutva: Exploring the Idea of Hindu Nationalism* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2003), 131.

dynamics of colonialism.¹⁵³ It is not unreasonable to argue, as this dissertation does, that colonial rule both stimulated such unifactory dynamics and provoked them into existence. The influence of Orientalism and the impetus it gave to the construction of Hinduism based on the Vedic texts as well as the denigration of Hindu practices and incipient patriotic sentiments together contributed to the rise of Hindu nationalism and later militant Hindu nationalism.¹⁵⁴ Thus, militant Hindu nationalism may be best seen as a struggle for the construction of a collective identity since Hindus increasingly experienced a social, cultural, political, and economic alienation under oppressive Western colonial powers.

The above review also shows that militant Hindu nationalism was a gradual development. The first step in this development was the origin of Indian nationalism. One can conclude that up until 1857 Indian nationalism could be defined as a Hindu revivalistic movement *sans* militancy. It stemmed from the national identity crisis emerging from colonialism, particularly, British colonialism. It was the result of the introduction of Western liberal ideas into India, which familiarized the Indian intelligentsia with concepts such as liberty, justice, and freedom. The roots of Indian nationalism lie here. The second stage began during the First War of Independence in 1857.¹⁵⁵ During and after the war Indian nationalism became increasingly militant. There was an increasing consciousness of not only protecting the cultural and religious identity of India but also of attaining independence from the British. The third stage was the development of the definition of "*Hindusthan*." Based on the idea of primordialism, militant Hindu nationalists began to define India as a Hindu nation with very specific

¹⁵³ Sumit Sarkar, "Indian Nationalism and the Politics of Hindutva," 273.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, 279.

¹⁵⁵ The British historians refer to this same event and the Indian Mutiny of 1857.

criteria for those who belong to it and those who do not. Most significantly, "Hindu" was defined in opposition to the non-Hindu. As a consequence, Christians and Muslims found themselves excluded from the land of their birth. The fourth stage was the quest for political power. This quest came from the desire to create a nation based on religious, national, racial, and cultural ideology. It also came from a desire to purify the nation both from internal inadequacies and from any external influences (Western, Christian, and Muslim) that had destroyed the Hindu national identity. By internal inadequacies I mean the desire for internal reform. For example, realizing that the caste-ridden social structure had its drawbacks, both Dayanand and Savarkar expressed the need for some corrective strategies. However, it is not clear what these strategies would be or if it would only serve to maintain a status quo under new but still oppressive structures. In these four stages, we find the origin and development of contemporary militant Hindu nationalism.

The main point of the above discussion is that militant Hindu nationalism originated in opposition to an external "other." Perhaps it can be concluded that in the absence of a threat to the religious, cultural, and political identity of India, militant Hindu nationalism would not have originated and developed in its present form.

C. Hindutva and Indian Christians

Militant Hindu nationalists have attacked both Christian and Muslim places of worship and its congregations. In the section below, we will focus particularly on the rationale for the militant Hindu nationalists' attack on Christians. As mentioned earlier, violence against Christians stems, first, from a perceived threat to Hindu religious and cultural identity, and second, it stems from a selective understanding of Christian history in India. A third reason for these attacks comes from treating colonialism and

globalization as synonymous and equating the role Christianity will play in a globalized world with that of Christianity's collusion with the colonists.

As mentioned earlier, I do not agree either with the conflation of Christianity and colonialism, or with the larger conflation of colonialism, Christianity and globalization. However, I argue that while militant Hindu nationalists are not justified in their limited reading of Indian Christian history, and that while they are not justified in attacking Christians because of their liberative action on behalf of the low caste Hindus, history compels us to understand the Hindu conflation of the varied phenomena as an important aspect of the identity issue associated with colonialism and globalization and with colonialism and Christianity.

As mentioned in the sections above, the colonial powers made the spread of Christianity in India very easy. Conversion to Christianity was contentious both in the earlier and latter stages, and both among the intelligentsia and common folk. Soon, both colonialism and Christianity become synonymous to the early militant Hindu nationalists. The Portuguese experience of colonialism made this connection even easier. They saw both colonialism and Christianity as their common enemy. In contemporary India, the militant Hindu nationalists are inclined to perceive globalization as the new phase of colonialism. This compels us to turn our attention to the relationship between militant Hindu nationalists and Christians.

At this point we must examine more closely the conflation of terms that militant Hindu nationalists employ as mentioned above: the conflation of Christianity and colonialism and colonialism and globalization. Both of the above are contested.

The conflation of the terms Christianity and colonialism is common. Christianity, Christian mission, or for that matter all things Christian has become a useful category to describe exploitation and things anti-national. In similar fashion Christian colonialism is described as a symbol of the oppression of the weak (East and South) by the strong (North and West).¹⁵⁶ The conflation, in one sense, is accidental. By this I mean that Portuguese and British colonizers undeniably also happened to be Christians. While the violence and favouritism of Portuguese colonial Christianity and deriding patronization of British colonial Christianity are historical realities, not all missionary efforts were oppressive. Robert de Nobili, for example, had tremendous respect for Hindu customs and traditions. Yet, simplistic deducing often reduces contemporary Christianity to the colonial kind. It presumes that somehow only colonial rule is responsible for Christianity. It assumes that all missionaries – the Italian or French Jesuits and the American Evangelical missionaries – are of one kind. It takes for granted the argument that without colonial help Christianity could not have flourished in India.

Yet, as the historical review of Christianity in India has pointed out, Christian missionary activity entered a new aggressive phase in colonial India. Especially under the Portuguese, Hindu places of worship were destroyed, public positions came easy to the converts, and social security was more easily available to Christians. Even though the British Crown did not directly engage in promoting Christianity, some missionaries did attempt large scale conversions. Moreover, as mentioned above, most of the colonizers were Christian. That is why Frykenberg concludes that even though the conflation of the

¹⁵⁶ See R.E. Frykenberg, "Introduction: Dealing with Contested Definitions and Controversial Perspectives," in *Christians and Missionaries in India: Cross Cultural Communication Since 1500*, ed. Robert Eric Frykenberg (Grand Rapids, Michigan: W.B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003), 1-32.

terms is perhaps inaccurate, colonial history does provide grounds for understanding such conflation that cannot be ignored or denied.

Just as the terms colonialism and Christianity are conflated, the terms colonialism and globalization are also used interchangeably. However, scholars consider the connection between colonialism, globalization and neocolonialism to be analytically mistaken. According to Jan Nederveen Pieterse, the main differences between the two lie in the fact that colonialism was territorial, state driven, centrally orchestrated and marked by a clear division between colonizer and colonized. These characteristics, he claims, do not apply to contemporary globalization which is multidimensional, non-territorial and polycentric, and the lines of inclusion/exclusion that run between the middle classes and the poor North and South are blurred. Unlike imperialism, which was multidimensional although driven by a single-minded intentionality, globalization involved multiple intentionalities on behalf of multiple agents.¹⁵⁷ Jagdish Bhagwati too rejects the parallelism drawn between colonialism and globalization especially that claim that they are both responsible for the destruction of indigenous peoples in the same way.¹⁵⁸

On the other hand, the conflation is not entirely baseless. While separating the two phenomena, Pieterse simultaneously admits that the feeling that globalization is another round of hegemony is a political reality. The sense that globalization is a new form of imperialism comes from what is common to these phenomena: powerlessness and frustration; only this time, Pieterse concedes, the dynamics of deprivation are different.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁷ See Jan Nederveen Pieterse, "Globalization North and South," in *Theory, Culture, & Society*, 17 (Feb 2001) 132-133.

¹⁵⁸ Jagdish Bhagwati, *In Defense of Globalization*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 114-115.

¹⁵⁹ Pieterse, "Globalization North and South," 132-133.

The perception of the similarity between globalization and colonialism is evident in yet another area. Characteristic of a globalized world, apart from the cultural homogeneity or heterogeneity it creates, is a liberalized and monopolized market economic system. For example, nations come under pressure to open their markets to cheaper goods from other nations. Militant Hindu nationalists were quick to react to the global economic model by advancing a *neo-swadeshi*¹⁶⁰ movement (supporting Indian made goods) – a colonial theme. In other words, militant Hindu nationalists were invoking colonial themes to counter globalization issues. In the colonial times, the *swadeshi* movement was not merely an economic issue. It was equally an issue of national identity.¹⁶¹ The boycott of foreign-made good and the ownership of domestic good is a matter of national pride and identity.

To bring this discussion to a close, let me state that I do not treat colonialism and globalization as synonymous because these two phenomena are not identical. In fact, there are striking differences between the two. Colonialism was the direct rule of one nation over another and the colonized nation was most often vanquished by military power. The reach of globalization, on the other hand, is wider, its propagators multinational, and its victims succumb to its influence rather than being forced to surrender. On the other hand similarities cannot be categorically denied. For example, a later discussion will reveal how globalization affects the identity of local cultures. Colonial history also reveals a similar process. Globalization resembles colonialism in the

¹⁶⁰ The original *swadeshi* movement was started in colonial India by Gandhi to oppose British economic policies which undermined the domestic small scale manufacturing in favour of large scale mechanized industry in Britain.

¹⁶¹ Santosh C. Saha, "Swadeshi Economics: Toward a Critical Assessment of Hindu Revivalist Economics in India," in *Religious Fundamentalism in Developing Countries*, eds. Santosh C. Saha and Thomas K. Carr (Westport, Connecticut, 2001), 91.

sense that it is an all-absorbing phenomenon. It is in this context that I argue that the militant Hindu nationalists' clubbing of colonization, Westernization, Christianization and globalization, although theoretically inaccurate, stem from the seeming similarity between these phenomena.

The above analysis prepares the ground for the resurgence of militant Hindu nationalists attacks on Christians. After the destruction of the Babri Masjid (Mosque) in 1992, the VHP turned its attention toward Christian minorities in India. A number of reasons may be suggested for this. First, in post-independent India, Christian missionaries experienced phenomenal growth, particularly in the *adivasi* and *dalit* populated areas. Second, the growth in Christian populations also saw the multiplication of Christian educational, medical, and religious institutions. The militant Hindu nationalist organizations saw in this growth a "global Christian conspiracy, orchestrated by an alliance between the Pope and the Catholic Church in Rome, and American Christian fundamentalists."¹⁶² Third, the above perception was compounded by the fact that North American Christian evangelical groups such as AD 2000, Joshua Project 2000, Celebrate Messiah 2000, and the Catholic Charismatic Movement's Evangelization 2000, buoyed by millennialism, had focused on the Indian Subcontinent like never before. Each of these groups aimed to make the Gospel known to every person in India by the year 2000. This evangelistic campaign was perceived by the militant Hindu nationalist organizations as the execution phase of the Christian conspiracy. Fourth, Christian missions both in preindependence India and independent India have worked tirelessly for the lowest caste Indians. In contemporary India, the *dalit* theology is a specialized field focused on the social liberation of the outcastes of the Hindu social structure. Many low caste Hindus

¹⁶² Bhatt, *Hindu Nationalism*, 198.

have converted to Hinduism to escape the oppression of the caste system. In this sense, the Christian medical and educational institutions engaged in social activities, particularly in the rural belts, were perceived as the bulwark of the world-wide Christian conspiracy. Thus a number of churches were burnt, missionaries were raped and killed, and ordinary tribal and aboriginal Christians were compelled to reconvert to Hinduism.

The theoretical basis for such attacks on Christians may be found in Sumit Sarkar's *Beyond Nationalist Frames: Post Modernism, Hindu Fundamentalism, History*. Sarkar suggests that central to militant Hindu attacks on Christians is the sense that religious conversions echoed what happened during colonial times. Even though militant Hindu nationalists and Christians differ on the reason for these conversions, conversion becomes problematic when religious communities and their boundaries are in the process of becoming crystallized.¹⁶³ Hinduism did not have strict boundaries prior to its clash with colonial powers. It was in its relation to Muslim invaders and Christian colonists that its boundaries were drawn by Hindu nationalists such as Savarkar. The issue becomes even more controversial when the gain of one community is perceived as the loss of another. When this happens relations between crystallized religious communities inevitably become conflictual.¹⁶⁴ Sarkar continues by saying that, while the colonial experience only served to tighten these community bonds and boundaries, it also paradoxically made these boundaries fragile because the colonial era in India provided a situation conducive for not just one but multiple community identities.

Two other events unrelated to the evangelistic fervor of the Christian Churches exacerbated the issues surrounding the attacks on Christians. In the political arena, the

¹⁶³ Sarkar, *Beyond Nationalist Frames: Post Modernism, Hindu Fundamentalism, History*, 219.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 219.

Italian-born Sonia Gandhi, widow of the assassinated Prime Minister of India, Rajiv Gandhi, was elected the leader of the Congress party. Even though Mrs. Gandhi has never made a public declaration of her faith, most perceived her to be a Christian. The Congress party under her leadership contested the elections on an anti-fascism and pro-secularization agenda. The 'foreign' Italian (now perceived as Roman) connection only served to agitate militant Hindu nationalists. In Mrs. Gandhi's role as the leader of the Congress party, militant Hindu nationalists saw an extension of the Christian agenda.

The second phenomenon that compounded the problem occurred in the economic arena. In the mid 1980s and 1990s, the apprehension of militant Hindu nationalists that non-Hindu religions, particularly Christianity, would displace Hinduism in India intensified when India as a nation adopted economic liberalization as a strategy for progress and development. The lingering effects of British colonial rule, large scale conversions of lower caste Hindus to Christianity, the sudden influx of Pentecostal preachers from the West, the onslaught of Western culture through the media, and the entry of multinational companies on the Indian economic landscape all contributed to the perception of the militant Hindu nationalists that Hindu identity was essentially threatened. Scholars argue that militant Hindu nationalism saw a resurgence in India in part due to their perception that globalization would result in the destruction of the local religious, cultural, and economic identity of India as a nation.¹⁶⁵ They argued that Hinduism would be replaced by Christianity, that multi-national companies would destroy the local economy, and that Western culture would decimate local cultural traditions. For the militant and nationalistic Hindus, then, Christianization, Westernization, and Globalization become virtually synonymous.

¹⁶⁵ For example, Bhatt, *Hindu Nationalism*, 150; Sarkar, *Beyond Nationalist Frames*, 241.

Scholars such as Bhatt support this line of reasoning. In his words:

A culturally and politically aggressive Hindutva can be seen as both a product of and a response to the new period of global capitalism characterized by the collapse of communism, and the proliferation of general and niche consumption economies, information technology, deregulated, globalized and unevenly contiguous economies, and a global cultural hegemony created by the West.¹⁶⁶

It will suffice to say here that, in the context of a nationalism that emerged in opposition to colonialism, it is not surprising that contemporary militant Hindu nationalist organizations oppose many aspects of globalization even if some of them surreptitiously approve of the economic benefits. In essence, globalization, like colonialism, is all-absorbing. It enters a country from the outside and essentially changes the complexion of society.

The above assessment serves to give a general overview of the relationship between militant Hindu nationalism and Christians. It also draws out the rationale behind the attacks on Christians. The historical connection between the militant Hindu nationalism of the colonial era and the present time lies in the external threat to Hindu cultural identity, Hindu religion, and the definition of India as a Hindu nation. In the section below, we will focus on further differentiating militant Hindu nationalism from fundamentalism. This distinction is important for the main thesis of this dissertation. If Christians must respond appropriately to militant Hindu nationalism, they must define the problem before them correctly. Simplistic conclusions can only compound the problem without leading to any real solutions.

¹⁶⁶ Bhatt, *Hindu Nationalism*, 150.

D. Why militant Hindu nationalism is not fundamentalism

We began this dissertation with an account of the attack on the Christian community at Vasai. Bishop Thomas Dabre of Vasai responded by saying that this attack was the work of “Hindu fundamentalist groups.”¹⁶⁷ I have instead named the attackers militant Hindu nationalists.

Rhetorical studies tell us that to respond to an act/phenomenon (either speech acts or other acts), one needs first to name it. Naming makes the phenomenon clear. Naming also allows for strategy to deal with the phenomenon in question. What we ‘name’ the phenomenon of Hindu violence against Christians is crucial since one of the purposes of this dissertation is to make an intelligible response to the phenomenon of militant Hindu nationalism. My argument rests on the following warrants.

First, “fundamentalism” is of Anglo-American origin and the term was first employed in the United States by Protestant Christians. When the term “fundamentalist” was coined at the end of the nineteenth century, it was meant to include a broad spectrum of Christian religious movements in the United States that formed a united front against modernism. The effort during this period was to restore Christian orthodoxy by holding fast to certain ‘fundamentals.’¹⁶⁸

George Dollar defined the original historic fundamentalism as “the literal exposition of all the affirmations and attitudes of the Bible and the militant exposure of

¹⁶⁷ *America*, Feb 20 (2006): 6.

¹⁶⁸ Fundamentalism originated in a Christian context in America in the late 1800s. It was a movement founded to defend the ‘fundamental’ or basic Christian truths against the increasing and wide influence of modernism and the consequent theological liberalism. *The Fundamentals: A Testimony to Truth* was a 12-volume work. It contained the five basic fundamentals which ‘fundamentalists’ adhere to: a) the verbal inerrancy of Scripture b) the virgin birth of Jesus c) his substitutionary atonement d) his resurrection, and e) the authenticity of miracles.

all non-Biblical affirmation and attitudes.”¹⁶⁹ However, both the movement and the term ‘fundamentalism’ have evolved over time and a consensus is elusive.

Second, there is a difference on the meta-theory level that inhibits the identification of these two phenomena. Protestant fundamentalism was an anti-modernist movement. In fact, it developed precisely as a reaction to modernism. The militant Hindu nationalism as manifested in organizations like the VHP are not anti-modernist in the same way as the American fundamentalists were. Scholars such as Peter van der Veer say that, “The VHP is certainly not an “anti-modernist” movement. In fact if nationalism is the discourse of modernity, the VHP’s project is fundamentally modernist.”¹⁷⁰ He derives his assessment from the fact that the early Hindu nationalists readily adopted Western philosophical ideas in order to define Hinduism as a religion and India as Hindu nation. They borrowed heavily from the European Orientalist understanding of India and identified Vedic Hinduism as the “primordial” cohesive force just as European nationalists did.

Third, militant Hindu nationalism was simultaneously a reaction to colonial power and large scale religious conversions, and a result of the openness to Western ideas imparted by the British – a phenomenon quite unlike the fundamentalism that originated in America that resisted European modernist ideas. Fourth, fundamentalist movements are not all necessarily nationalistic. The original fundamentalist movement in America was a religious movement rather than a nationalistic movement, even though one may contend that it was political.

¹⁶⁹ George W. Dollar, *A History of Fundamentalism in America* (Greenville: Bob Jones University Press, 1973), xv.

¹⁷⁰ Peter van der Veer, “Hindu Nationalism and the Discourse of Modernity,” in *Accounting for Fundamentalism*, Vol. 4, The Fundamentalism Project, eds. Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 656.

In this dissertation we will use the term “militant Hindu nationalism” to describe the phenomenon of Hindu religious and nationalist resurgence. This construct works here because it captures the religious, political, and cultural nuances of the phenomenon in question, unlike other constructs or terms. When one adds to it the other reasons mentioned above, i.e., militant Hindu nationalists’ selective acceptance of modernism and its text-free foundations, one is compelled to refrain from treating militant Hindu nationalism and fundamentalism as synonymous.

Conclusion

So far, this chapter has dealt with three important basic aspects that concern the thesis of this paper, which claims that that militant Hindu nationalism in contemporary India is a struggle against the threat to Hindu identity under globalization, and that globalization and militant Hindu nationalism form the new context for any new Christian theological initiative in India. First, we reviewed the history of Christianity in India. The survey brought to the fore the significant fact that Christianity cannot be reduced to its colonial character. Christianity has existed in India from the first century and part of that existence was characterized by cultural and social integration within its Indian milieu. It also argued against the Christian claim that militant Hindu nationalism is a fundamentalist struggle. It was revealed, rather, that it developed as a struggle for identity in the context of an external threat to the national, cultural, and religious ethos of an entire nation. Christians, then, must avoid simplistic explanations of militant Hindu nationalism. Perhaps, the past colonial experience and the present experience of globalization have bearing on the resurgence of militant Hindu nationalism in

contemporary India. A thorough rather than simplistic analysis will allow it to address the issues at stake in an appropriate manner.

Thus far, we have conducted a historical survey of two of the phenomena that concern the thesis of this dissertation: Christianity and militant Hindu nationalism. The survey revealed that both the phenomena are complex and that both Christians and militant Hindu nationalists are simplistic in their assessment of each other's traditions. Whereas militant Hindu nationalists refer to Christianity and its presence in India selectively, Christians tend to ignore the complexities and historical context of militant Hindu nationalism. They often reduce militant Hindu nationalism to fundamentalism or some reduce it to a caste issue. The historical survey also offers a corrective to these selective perspectives. On the one hand, it brings to fore the totality of the Christian presence in India and its harmonious existence with other religious traditions. On the other hand, the survey also revealed that militant Hindu nationalism is a struggle for identity against very real external threats. The point here is that such struggles for identity is contained within the dynamic of colonization and more particularly, in the modern world, within the dynamic of globalization. In the next chapter we will focus on one of the terms in the thesis of this dissertation that still remains undefined, namely, globalization.

Chapter III

Globalization and Militant Hindu Nationalism

Introduction

The main purpose of this dissertation is to make a theological response to the phenomenon of globalization and militant Hindu nationalism, a response consisting in developing renewed theological initiatives by adopting new frameworks to address the issues of inculturation, interreligious dialogue, and social justice. As we shall see in chapter six, Indian theologians, sensitive to the signs of the times, have traditionally responded expediently to the challenges that India has faced over the decades. Three areas have been of particular focus: inculturation, interreligious dialogue, and social justice. However, a new context has emerged for the church and the theological community in India – the context of globalization and the resulting militant Hindu nationalism. The new context does not change the focus of Indian theological efforts, but rather it increases the urgency with which these very issues must be readdressed as it adds levels of complexity to the ways in which these issues overlap and interrelate.

In this chapter we will attempt to a) briefly understand the concept of globalization and its complexity with a special focus on those overall aspects most relevant to this dissertation; b) with the help of concepts such as compression,

intensification, reflexivity, relativization, homogenization, disjuncture, heterogenization, deterritorialization, reterritorialization and imagination, assess the economic, political, and cultural impact on society in general and India in particular; and c) draw a theoretical connection between the economic, political, and cultural dimensions of globalization and militant Hindu nationalism. Analysing contested data and providing examples from India, I argue that, economically globalization has not succeeded in creating an equitable economic system even in developed countries; that politically, power gets concentrated in the hands of those who control the capital flow; and culturally, problems of identity result. Militant religious nationalism is but one manifestation of the cultural effect of globalization. The problems that we identify as the effects of globalization will later become the primary focus for a Christian theological response to globalization and militant Hindu nationalism in India.

A. Defining globalization

Globalization is an immense and complex topic. The immensity and complexity arise not only from its wide social impact but also from the speed and intensity with which it affects society. It can be defined from multiple perspectives and perhaps it will require volumes to present an exhaustive understanding of the topic. In this section we will only attempt a brief discussion of aspects most relevant to this study.

Most books on globalization that attempt to define the term “globalization” almost always begin with the observation that the complexity of the term defies a precise definition. There are also discrepancies about the origin and use of the term. However, we must at least make an attempt to describe the phenomenon at hand.

Malcolm Watters, one of the most authoritative authors on the subject, is of the opinion, that although the word “global” is over four hundred years old, the term “globalization” did not gain verbal currency until about 1960.¹⁷¹ In fact, the term globalization did not enter into Webster’s dictionary until 1961 and did not gain serious academic focus till the 1980s. It was not until 1985 that the first sociological article on globalization appeared.¹⁷²

Robertson defines globalization as a concept that involves two simultaneous processes: “the comprehension of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole.”¹⁷³ He uses the *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* distinction to explain the term.¹⁷⁴ Globalization, he contends, re-enacts the *Gemeinschaft-Gesellschaft* tension across contemporary societies and not just within them.¹⁷⁵ Martin Albrow’s definition is equally concise yet descriptive: “Globalization refers to all those processes by which all the peoples of the world are incorporated into a single world society, a global society.”¹⁷⁶

According to Anthony Giddens, globalization can be defined as “the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice

¹⁷¹ Malcolm Watters, *Globalization* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 2.

¹⁷² This article by Roland Robertson, “The Relativization of Societies: Modern Religion and Globalization” appeared in, C Thomas Robbins, William C. Shepherd, and James McBride, eds., *Cults, Culture, and the Law: Perspectives on New Religious Movements* (Chico, California: Scholars Press, 1985), 31-43.

¹⁷³ Roland Robertson, *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1992), 8. Marshall McLuhan’s idea of the ‘global village’ referring to international interdependence and the seeming compression of the world because of televisual technology, partly explains this process.

¹⁷⁴ Scholars distinguish the pre-modern and modern societies in terms of shift from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft* i.e., from a self-sufficient communal structure to associative social structures. Characteristic of this shift is an isolation of the individual from society, which introduces tension between the individual-society relationship.

¹⁷⁵ Robertson, *Globalization*, 11-12.

¹⁷⁶ Marlin Albrow, *Globalization and Society* (Newbury Park, California, Sage Publications, 1990), 7.

versa.”¹⁷⁷ This is a dialectical process because such local happenings may move in an obverse direction and affect the very forces and relations that shape them. Giddens terms this process as “reflexivity.” One example of reflexivity is the process of business outsourcing. The exodus of jobs from the developed Western nations to less developed nations in a global economy can be called “reflexivity.” Whereas at one time globalizing economies saw developing economies as opportunities for extension of their markets, these very developing economies are now responsible for the rise of unemployment in their respective countries as businesses invest in countries that promise the greatest profit. In other words, even though globalization originated in the West and was meant to benefit its corporations (cheaper cost of production and greater market access), reflexivity theory suggests that certain ingrained dynamics within globalization act back on the very powers that are its agency (job losses and immigration).

Another example is the rise of militancy. Whereas some countries take upon themselves to spread democratic values in other nations, in return they themselves become the victims of the cultural transformations that were effected (for example, militancy and terrorism). Local transformation by distant forces is as much a part of globalization as the lateral extension of social connections across time and space.¹⁷⁸

David Held and Anthony McGrew define globalization as the “expanding scale, growing magnitude, speeding up, and deepening impact of transcontinental flows and patterns of social interaction. It refers to a shift or transformation in the scale of human

¹⁷⁷ Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990), 64.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid. While Robertson and Giddens are similar in their definition of globalization, they differ on the history of its development. Giddens considers globalization to be the result of the development of modern societies, industrialization, and modernity. Globalization, for him, refers to the movement of modernity to a global level. For Robertson on the other hand, globalization in its original sense predates modernity and attributes its present form to the rise of capitalism.

organization that links distant communities and expands the reach of power relations across the world's regions and continents."¹⁷⁹ Held and McGrew caution their readers against over-optimism as a result of this transformation, because, as they suggest, globalization does not necessarily imply a harmonious world society and peaceful global integration. Rather, they caution that increasing interconnectedness can create new animosities and conflicts.

Malcolm Waters is of the opinion that the best way to offer a comprehensive definition of globalization is "to specify where the process of globalization will end, what a fully globalized world will look like." He writes:

In seeking to offer a comprehensive definition perhaps the best approach might be to specify where the process of globalization might end, what a fully globalized world will look like. In a globalized world there will be a single society and culture occupying the planet. This society and culture will probably not be harmoniously integrated although it might conceivably be. Rather it will probably tend towards high levels of differentiation, multi-centricity and chaos. There will be no central organizing government and no tight set of cultural preferences and prescriptions. Insofar as culture is unified it will be extremely abstract, expressing tolerance for diversity and individual choice. Importantly territoriality will disappear as an organizing principle for social and cultural life; it will be a society without borders and spatial boundaries. In a globalized world we will be unable to predict social practices and preferences on the basis of geographical location. Equally we can expect relationships between people in disparate locations to be formed as easily as relationships between people in proximate ones.¹⁸⁰

Accordingly, Waters defines globalization as "a social process in which the constraints of geography on economic, political, social, and cultural arrangements recede,

¹⁷⁹ David Held and Anthony McGrew, *Globalization/Anti-Globalization* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Inc., 2003), 1.

¹⁸⁰ Waters, *Globalization*, 5.

in which people become increasingly aware that they are receding and in which people act accordingly.”¹⁸¹ Waters suggests that globalization, in some manner, includes the following six points:

1. Globalization is contemporary with economic modernization, which involves the processes of economic systemization, international relations between states and an emerging global culture or consciousness, and is at present in the most rapid phase of its development.
2. Globalization involves the systematic interrelationship of all the individual social ties that are established on the planet. Relationships or sets of relationships are linked and systematically affected by them. Isolation, especially territorial, is unsustainable since globalization increases the inclusiveness and unification of human society.
3. Globalization involves the phenomenological elimination of space and the generalization of time. The term phenomenological is crucial since the ‘shrinking of the globe’ is a phenomenological rather than literal truth. As the time between geographical points shortens space appears to shrink leading to the perception that that the world is becoming a smaller place.
4. The phenomenology of globalization is also reflexive in that people self-consciously orient themselves to the world as a whole. Economically this means exploring global markets, culturally this means counter cultures become social movements, and politically this means that governments commit military assistance to maintain global order.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

5. Globalization involves a collapse of universalism and particularism. The sociological distinctions between *Gesellschaft* and *Gemeinschaft*, the public and private, are eliminated and this because globalization annihilates time and space distinctions.
6. Globalization involves a strange mix of risk and trust. While in the past trusting the elements beyond one's boundaries entailed risk, under globalization people extend trust to unknown persons, impersonal forces, and to patterns of symbolic exchange. A fiduciary commitment is necessary and yet a fiduciary panic creates the risk of global systemic collapse.¹⁸²

An analysis

The above definitions have introduced important processes associated with globalization and have exposed us to the complexity of the phenomenon. Some of the important elements are: the compression of the world in space and time, the multidimensional effects of globalization upon society, the generation of conflicts, and the processes of reflexivity and relativization. Below, these important elements of the globalization phenomenon are discussed in greater detail. As we will see, each of these elements lead us toward understanding militant Hindu nationalism as a dynamic within the globalization phenomenon.

One of the characteristics of globalization that could be identified as common to all the definitions given above is the global compression of time and space. Globalization brings about an increasing level of interdependence between nations through trade, military alliance, and convergence of cultures and civilizations. On the other side, another equally significant and simultaneous process termed intensification is also unleashed.

¹⁸² Waters, *Globalization*, 15 –16.

Intensification means that the social network of relations the world over (trade, communication, politics, culture) are determined in such a way that local events are shaped and affected by events occurring far away and local events shape and affect global relations.¹⁸³ As a consequence, Held and McGrew suggest, "Not only does the awareness of growing interconnectedness create new animosities and conflicts, it can fuel reactionary politics and deep-seated xenophobia."¹⁸⁴ In other words, the transformation of age-old social structures for example (such as arranged marriage traditions in India versus Western practices such as dating or extended courtship) can create tension between the two interacting cultures and give rise to conflict in the affected culture. This explains the general suspicion of militant Hindu nationalists toward things Western and an accentuation on things local. Thus, beginning with mid 1800s, militant Hindu nationalists expressed disdain of their colonial rulers and proposed *Hindutva* as the flagship of Indian identity. Globalization intensifies this struggle to preserve local identity be it family laws, caste structures, promotion of local goods, or religious beliefs. Such a struggle manifests itself in different ways in contemporary India. For example, in the cultural sphere, it has taken the shape of a rejection of Western cultural expressions such as Valentine's Day; on the economic sphere, it encourages the rejection of foreign businesses such as KFC, Monsanto, Coke, and McDonalds, while simultaneously promoting locally produced goods; on the political sphere, it rejects international agreements such as the nuclear agreement with the United States and the agreements of the World Trade Organization; on the religious front, it involves the rejection of Western religions and even encourages violence against Christians.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 2-5. The prevalent food shortage and the rising oil prices and the economic crisis in the financial services sector is a classic example of the such a dynamic.

¹⁸⁴ Held and McGrew, *Globalization/Anti-Globalization*, 1.

A second characteristic of globalization is its multi-dimensional character. As David Held explains, "Globalization is neither a singular condition nor a linear process. Rather, it is best thought of as a multi-dimensional phenomenon involving diverse domains of activity and interaction, including the economic, political, technological, military, legal, cultural, and environmental."¹⁸⁵ Sheila Croucher's and other scholars too conclude that territorial "disintegration" or "unboundedness" of political borders, economics, politics, and culture is a primary characteristic of globalization.¹⁸⁶ Croucher also provides a comprehensive description of the many dimensions globalization embraces. From the economic perspective, she explains, globalization entails an unbridled expansion of trade and investment networks that simultaneously tie countries together and create spaces that both exist and extend beyond established territories of the nation-states as we know them. However, the economic expansion would not have taken place without the phenomenal growth of the means of communication technology, particularly the internet. The technological revolution resulted in a cultural revolution of sorts, noticed in the free and rapid movement of ideas, peoples, and cultures. However, the economic, technological, and cultural movements do not take place in a political vacuum. The political aspect of globalization can be seen in the many ways that "multi-layered governance" has emerged. Jan Scholte calls this the era of "post-sovereign

¹⁸⁵ David Held, "Democracy and Globalization," in D. Archibugi, D. Held, and M. Kohler, eds., *Re-Imagining Political Community* (Stanford, California: California University Press, 1998), 13.

¹⁸⁶ Sheila L. Croucher, *Globalization and Belonging: The Politics of Identity in a Changing World* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Inc., 2004), 13-19. Also see Arjun Appadurai, "Disjuncture and difference in the Global Cultural Economy," in *Theory, Culture, Society* 7, (1990), 295-310. Appadurai suggests that there are five dimension that comprise the phenomenon of globalization: a) Ethnoscapes (basically the flow of peoples such as refugees, tourists, immigrants from one place to another); b) Technoscapes (the flow of technology from one place to formerly impenetrable locales); c) finanscapes (comprising the financial aspect such as the flow of currency and stock markets); d) mediascapes (the movement of information via television, newspapers, movies etc.); and e) ideoscapes (the cultural aspects of human existence – ideologies, ideas, cultural values).

governance.”¹⁸⁷ It simply means that nation-states as political entities are increasingly divested of their power to regulate the affairs that determine their own destiny.

International organizations and associations become significantly important in determining and executing policies.¹⁸⁸ For example, the World Trade Organization has essentially become the organization that determines the direction that individual nations must take with regard to trade.

The multi-dimensional nature of globalization has implications for India. First, as seen in the earlier paragraph, anti-global movements also assume a multi-dimensional character. Thus in India, anti-globalists take issue with global politics (the international pressure to sign the nuclear non-proliferation treaty), global economic trends (the entry of large scale retailing such as Walmart), alien cultural symbols (Western clothing, music etc), and even religious changes (increasing entry of foreign missionaries into India). Second, this multi-dimensionality compels the Indian theological community to make a multi-dimensional response to the issues raised by globalization. To make a singular response is to underestimate the scope of the globalization phenomenon. Thus, I will argue that inculturation, liberation, and interreligious dialogue must form an integral part of any new theological endeavors in India, as I stated earlier.

Other important theoretical dimensions to be noted in relation to globalization are the concepts of “reflexivity,” and “relativization.”¹⁸⁹ “Reflexivity” means that globalization is not a one-way process where global decisions impact local territories and

¹⁸⁷ For a detailed description see, Jan A. Scholte, *Globalization: A Critical Introduction* (New York: St. Martin Press, 2005).

¹⁸⁸ Croucher, *Globalization and Belonging*, 17.

¹⁸⁹ Anthony Giddens develops these concepts in *Consequences of Modernity*, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990) and *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991).

its peoples. Rather, it refers to the movement from the local to the global as well, where local decision-making affects the global forces, most often as movements of resistance. In other words, reflexivity means that the two-way movement from global to local and vice-versa is systemic to globalization. Schreiter explains reflexivity as a movement whereby the outflowing of modernization curves back upon the West.¹⁹⁰ This could happen in the migration of colonized peoples to the country of their colonizers and more recently in terrorism. In Robertson's words, "just as anti-modern gestures are in a sense modern, so are anti-global gestures encapsulated within the discourse of globality."¹⁹¹ This means that in spite of the growing interconnectedness of the world, "locality" reflexively becomes a major force in global decision-making. As Waters explains it, the population of a particular locality exhibit the tendency to "make conscious decisions about which values and amenities they want to stress in their communities...."¹⁹² Waters explains again: "Localization implies a reflexive reconstruction of community in the face of the dehumanizing implications or rationalizing and commodifying."¹⁹³

As an Asian Indian living in the United States, for me the concept of reflexivity is even more apparent. As more and more American jobs get outsourced to India, the

¹⁹⁰ Robert Schreiter, *The New Catholicity: Theology Between the Global and the Local* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1997), 13.

¹⁹¹ By reflexivity is meant "the recursive nature of social activity: the various ways in which social entities may be said to act 'back upon' themselves, to adjust to incoming information about their behavior or their workings." Ulrich Beck, Anthony Giddens and Scott Lash, *Reflexive Modernization: Politics, Tradition and Aesthetics in the Modern Social Order* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1994). In more practical terms, Schreiter says, "It [Globalization] affects also the West in a process of reflexivity whereby the outflowing of modernization curves back upon the West." Robert Schreiter, *The New Catholicity: Theology Between the Global and Local* (Maryknoll, Orbis Books, 1997), 13. Also see, John Tomlinson, *Globalization and Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 24-25; Robertson, *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture*, 10. An excellent article on this topic is Christine B. N. Chin and James H. Mittleman, "Conceptualizing Resistance to Globalization," in *The Globalization Syndrome: Transformation and Resistance*, ed. James H. Mittleman (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000). The authors claim that, "In the teeth of globalizing tendencies, resistance movements shape and are constitutive of cultural processes." 167.

¹⁹² Waters, *Globalization*, 5.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

resentment against Indians living in the United States has increased. A well-meaning parishioner, unable to deal with such resentment within herself, expressed her sentiments to me one day at a cordial private meeting. I had to explain to her that the United States was only experiencing now what nations around the world have experienced for years. In the past, American businesses took over local businesses in India resulting in job cuts or sometimes even company closures. The Union Carbide factory, owned by Dow Chemicals, was responsible for the death of thousands of Indians in 1984. The effects of that chemical disaster are apparent as defective babies are born even today. The present American experience as well as the anti-globalization struggles are merely part of the “reflexive” dynamic of globalization.¹⁹⁴

“Relativization” means that globalization, because it involves a process of “intensification of world wide social relations,”¹⁹⁵ brings to the fore issues of time and space. Historically, globalization as a system can be traced back to the expansion of European culture during the colonial era. What relativization means in this context, as Waters suggests, is “... not that every corner of the planet must become Westernized and capitalist but rather that every set of social arrangements must establish its position in relation to the capitalist West.”¹⁹⁶ In Robertson’s words, the rest of the world must

¹⁹⁴ Schreier best explains this by saying: “...reflexivity is one way to explain... that the West is now experiencing the same of ambivalences or contradictions felt by the rest of the world.” Schreier, *The New Catholicity*, 13.

¹⁹⁵ Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity*, 64.

¹⁹⁶ Waters, *Globalization*, 6. For an opposing position see, Sheila L. Croucher, *Globalization and Belonging: The Politics of Identity in a Changing World* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Inc., 2004). Croucher summarizes the view proposed by proponents of globalization who argue that the origin and prominence of globalization as a world system is the result of the natural and logical development of world history. According to this view, every stage in world history has its own principles of social life and world order with its own socio-economic organization, territorial principles and arrangement of power. For example, the discovery of the “new world” led to the unique socio-economic organization of the colonial era. Similarly, the era of the great world wars and the intra-war period witnessed its own territorial principles and power arrangements at work. The era of globalization has its own arrangements. In conjunction with the “unboundedness” of space and time created by globalization

relativize itself to the West.¹⁹⁷ The homogenization of cultures, seen in jeans-clad teenagers subsisting on fast food and glued to gaming screens, is but one example of the relativization process. As we will see later, some scholars prefer to understand the cultural effects of globalization as a “heterogenization” of cultures. Heterogenization implies that the flow of culture does not happen in a linear process from North to the South or from the West to the East, but rather that the process involves a more complex mix and match between different elements of the interacting cultures – a point that will be discussed in detail later in this chapter. The common point though is that both alternatives are perceived as being problematic.

This discussion on reflexivity and relativization must not lead one to conclude that globalization is purely reflexive movement from global to the local and local to the global. Globalization also involves aspects that express “intentionality.” The intentional level includes global level endeavours such as the use of modern communication technologies that shrink space and time (internet), economic initiatives such as Free Trade Agreements, political campaigns and military wars to globalize particular ideologies (war in Iraq to establish democracy), and the export of cultural systems

newer modes of social organization are emerging. The socio-economic organization, territorial principles and arrangement of power under globalization can at best be termed “transnational social organization.” This new phase of social organization has implications for economics, nation-states and principles of power. Economic, social and political activities transcend political boundaries in this new arrangement, which are in turn reinvented and reconfigured. Viewing globalization in this historical context, the proponents argue, should make one reject the assertion that globalization is synonymous with either Westernization, Americanization, Capitalist imperialism, or New-colonialism. On the contrary, globalization is merely a novel social organization that is trans-national.

¹⁹⁷ Roland Robertson and J.A. Chirico, “Humanity, Globalization and World-Wide Religious Resurgence,” in John Beynon and David Dunkerley, eds., *Globalization: The Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 159-163. The authors define relativization as “the process involving the placing of socio-cultural or psychic entities in larger categorical contexts, such that the relativized entities are constrained to be more self-reflexive relative to other entities in the larger context.” They proceed to explain that the relativization of the “self” means that, individual selves must situate himself/herself “in the more inclusive and fundamental frame of what it means to be of mankind.” The relativization of societies means that “situating of concrete societies in the context of a world complex of societies...” p. 161.

(Hollywood movies, television serials, clothing, Western dietary habits etc.) One may have to concede, though, that many globalizing elements are impersonal (e.g., market system) and beyond the realm of individual or sometimes even national control.

The above analysis has brought to the fore characteristics associated with globalization. We have paid particular attention to four of the common characteristics: the compression of the world in space and time, the multidimensional effects of globalization upon society, the generation of conflicts, and the processes of reflexivity and relativization. These characteristics not only familiarize us with the effects of globalization upon society, but also provide us the rationale for the rise of global resistance movements such as Hindu nationalist militancy.

The section below takes this analysis further by assessing in greater detail the economic, the political, and the cultural effects of globalization in India. Apart from this, the section also makes an attempt to include the opinions of globalists who support globalization for the very reasons that anti-globalists resist it. This debate is important because even within the Christian tradition, opinions differ on the matter, although it is my argument that the negative effects of globalization far outweigh its positive effects.

This negative assessment of globalization rests on the rationale that economic globalization is propelled by multi-billion dollar companies whose main motive is to maximize profits. Its “trickle-down” theory may seem to be credible from a macro view but the micro view contradicts some of the statistics. In fact, as we will see later, the statistics seem to indicate that globally, the gap between the rich and the poor has

widened.¹⁹⁸ On the cultural level, whether one subscribes to the homogenization or the heterogenization of cultures, globalization has resulted in local cultures being destroyed on the larger social level. Thus from New York to New Delhi, from Mexico to Mumbai, and from Tokyo to Toronto, big cities are becoming increasingly similar in their cultural flavor. Meanwhile, local cultures are now preserved in museums or showcased before camera-flaunting tourists. Politically too, local populations are being disenfranchized as the power to make decisions is transferred to those who control the capital flow. Decisions that affect local populations are more and more being made on the multinational level. All these factors contribute to the development of animosities, the generation of social conflicts, and the rise of global resistance movements.¹⁹⁹ Seen in this perspective, militant Hindu nationalism is just one manifestation of anti-globalism.

B. Effects of globalization

As mentioned above, discussion concerning the effects of globalization constitutes one of the most contested debates of this century. There are strong contenders on both sides. In the section below an attempt is made to introduce some of the contentions in the economic, political, and cultural realms of society. No attempt will be made to settle this debate in any conclusive way in this dissertation. Rather, the argument

¹⁹⁸ Even in developed countries such as the United States, some economists argue, the income distribution through the 1980's and early 1990's widened. See, for example, Kevin H. O'Rourke, *Globalization and Inequality: Historical Trends*, paper to the Annual World Bank Conference on Development economics, 1-2 May 2001. The International Monetary Fund also notes, "Using newly available income and consumption-based data, our research shows that inequality—as measured, for example, by the widely used Gini coefficient—has risen over the past two decades in most regions, such as developing Asia, emerging Europe, Latin America, and the newly industrialized economies of Asia, as well as in the advanced economies." <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/survey/so/2007/RES1010A.htm>

¹⁹⁹ Robert Schreiter uses Jonathan Friedman's concept of "cultural logics" to explain how cultures choose to respond to the pressures of globalization. Fundamentalism, ethnification, and primitivism are some of the responses that local cultures make. For more on this see, Schreiter, *The New Catholicity*, 21-27.

is that at the present time the benefits of globalization do not justify the costs which it is exacting.

i. The economic debate

As we assess the economic impact of globalization, the general sense is that for the most part the world we live in now is much better than the one fifty years back. As the president of the World Bank, James Wolfensohn noted in 2002, life expectancy at birth in developing countries has increased by twenty years, illiteracy in the developing world had been cut nearly in half, from 47% to 25% in adults over the past thirty years, and over the past twenty years the absolute number of people living on less than \$1 a day fell even as the world's population has grown by 1.6 billion people.²⁰⁰

The World Bank identifies three stages of globalization: 1870 -1914, 1950 - 1980, and 1980 - present. It claims that whereas the first two epochs of globalization did not produce favourable results for the developing world, the present wave of globalization has produces dramatically opposite results. It identifies a group of twenty-nations as "recent globalizers" (among them China, India, Bangladesh, Brazil, Malaysia, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Thailand). It points to these countries as examples of how economic reforms and outward-looking trade policies triggered by globalization can bring economic benefits to millions of people and lift them out of poverty.²⁰¹

The Indian author Baldev Raj Nayar agrees. A strong defender of the economic advantages of globalization, Nayar rejects the claims of anti-globalists who suggest that globalization has caused economic stagnation and impoverishment. On the contrary, in his book *India's Globalization: Evaluating the Economic Consequences*, Nayar evaluates

²⁰⁰ James Wolfensohn, *A Partnership for Development and Peace*,
<http://www.worldbank.org/extdr/extme/jdwsp 030602 .htm>

²⁰¹ Ibid.

the economic effects of globalization for India rather positively. Using both qualitative and quantitative studies, Nayar argues that India has witnessed an unprecedented acceleration of its rate of economic growth and has experienced impressive industrial growth of 07.0% per annum since 1991. He also argues that the denationalization under globalization has only worked to India's advantage since it has made India competitive in the global economy. Moreover, it has led to direct foreign investments which have made India the master of its own economy. Nayar also argues that material impoverishment has steadily declined since economic liberalization was introduced in the country.²⁰²

Jagdish Bhagwati joins Nayar in countering the arguments made by the opponents of globalization that trade and foreign investment produce poor in rich countries, that it bypasses and even worsens poverty in poor countries, and that multinationals exploit the their foreign work force.²⁰³ On the other hand, Bhagwati points out that in countries such as India, an abysmal growth rate prior to its trade liberalization was the result of autarkic policies that kept the poor from gainful employment. The present growth in India, on the contrary, can be attributed to a policy framework that had included globalization.²⁰⁴ Lindbert and Williamson put forth similar arguments when they claim that globalization for most part mitigated rising inequality between participating nations. The nations that gained the most from globalization are those poor ones that changed their policies to exploit it, while the ones that gained the least did not, or were too isolated to do so. They

²⁰² Baldev Raj Nayar, *India's Globalization: Evaluating the Economic Consequences* (Washington: East-West Washington Centre: 2006), viii – ix.

²⁰³ Jagdish Bhagwati, *The Wind of the Hundred Days: How Washington Mismanaged Globalization* (Massachusetts: The MIT Press 2002), 318. Also see Jagdish Bhagwati, *In Defense of Globalization* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Martin Wolf, *Why Globalization Works* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005); Jeffrey Sachs, *The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for Our Time* (New York: Penguin Books, 2005). Of particular interest is Sach's chapter on India where economic reforms are presented as the antidote to India's economic malaise.

²⁰⁴ Nayar, *India's Globalization.*, 320.

admit that the effect of globalization on inequality within nations has sometimes gone both ways, but here too those who have lost the most from globalization typically have been the excluded non-participants.²⁰⁵ Bhagwati further contends that trade liberalization under a global economy is the major reason for enhanced economic performance except for those who refuse to participate in globalizing reform.²⁰⁶ This is attested to in China, where Shang-Jin Wei and Yi Wu argue that the more a region became integrated into the global economy, the more its income grew and regional poverty and inequality declined.²⁰⁷ Bhagwati's and Wei and Wu's conclusions are contested by David Dollar and Aart Kraay.²⁰⁸

Other authors take a more middle of the road approach, blaming both globalization and local politics for the economic malaise of under-developed nations. For example, the effects of global warming are predicted to be catastrophic for the African continent. Drastic climatic changes are supposed to increase the frequency of droughts and, consequently, agriculture. Yet much of the economic deprivation in countries such

²⁰⁵ Peter Lindbert and Jeffrey Williamson, "Does Globalization Make the World More Unequal?" (2001), <http://www.nber.org/papers/w8228>.

²⁰⁶ Jagdish Bhagwati and T. N. Srinivasan, "Outward Orientation and Development: Are the Revisionists Right?" (1999), <http://www.columbia.edu/~jb38/Krueger.pdf>.

²⁰⁷ Shang_Jin Wei and Yi Wu, "Globalization and Inequality: Evidence from Within China" (2001). <http://www.nber.org/papers/w861>. Overall income inequality widened during this period in China but according to Wei and Wu, internal compulsions and national policies were the primary causes.

²⁰⁸ In a systematic study, Dollar and Kraay looked at a variety of possible variables that might explain cross-country differences in the extent to which growth reaches to those at the bottom of the population. One of the variables they studied was trade volume. Their research revealed that there was no evidence whatsoever of any systematic relationship between changes in trade and changes in inequality. "There is simply no association between changes in trade to GDP and changes in the Gini measure of inequality or between changes in trade to GDP and changes in the income share of the poorest quintile." However, Dollar and Kraay draw other conclusions that find agreement with Bhagwati's conclusions. They interpret the lack of the correlation between trade volume and inequality to suggest that even though there are "winners" and "losers" as a result of trade liberalization, the losers are losers only in the short run, that the losers do not come disproportionately from the poor, and that effective social protection can ease the transition to a more open economy so that the poor benefit from development. See, David Dollar and Aart Kraay, "Trade, Growth and Poverty," *The Economic Journal*, 114 (February), F22-F49.

as Nigeria, Kenya, Congo, Ivory Coast, Uganda, Somalia, Rwanda, and others they blame on corruption and self-destructive politics.

In the first ever book that presents a collection of writings on the effects of globalization in India, Jackie Assayag and C. J. Fuller suggest that studying the effect of globalization in specific cases in India produces an “entangled complexity”²⁰⁹ of global and local politics. Such a view, the authors claim, makes it difficult to “reduce” the both positive and negative economic and political issues faced by India into “a seamless garment made by globalization.”²¹⁰

Recent economic reports published by both international and Indian government agencies, however, do not share either Nayar’s optimism or Assayag and Fuller’s more “objective,” or “middle-of-the-road” approach. For example, in an article entitled *It’s Official: India’s Dazzling Growth Fails to Dent Poverty*, the October 19, 2006 issue of India’s most widely read financial newspaper, *The Economic Times*, reported:

Economic growth may have been spectacular since 1993 — that is, post-economic reforms — but it seems to be trickling down rather slowly. A soon-to-be-released official report has estimated that poverty declined by a mere 0.74% during the 11-year period ended 2004-05.

Although there are signs of things moving a little faster, at 0.79%, between 1999-2000 and 2004-05, going by another measure, the number of people below the poverty line may have remained unchanged. National Sample Survey Organization’s (NSSO) findings show the number of people living below the poverty line (BPL) at 22.15% in 2004-05, compared with 26.09% in 1999-2000. In the same period, the country’s GDP grew at around 6%.

This mismatch between growth and its distribution is politically worrying as it indicates a rise in economic disparities. Economists say uneven

²⁰⁹ Jackie Assayag and C.J. Fuller, “Introduction,” in *Globalizing India: Perspectives from Below*, eds. Jackie Assayag and C.J. Fuller (London: Anthem Press, 2005), 8.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

growth often leads to social unrest which, in turn, can cause problems for politicians.²¹¹

A December 4, 2007 article further confirmed the economic disparity between the beneficiaries and victims of the economic growth triggered by globalization. *The Economic Times* quoted a spokesperson for the Finance Ministry as saying, "Here we are kissing 10 percent growth and instead of living standards rising, they are falling (for many). India is becoming prosperous but not Indians," Aiyar said. In his words, "The boom is "disproportionately affecting a small percentage of the population." The newspaper report also noted that despite strong growth, India sank in the Human Development Index to 128th place in 2007 from 126 in 2006.²¹²

This analysis is supported by the United Nations' report of the economic impact of globalization. Kernal Davis, Administrator of the United Nations Development Program, reported that, although economies are expanding at a virtually unprecedented rate, inequalities are also "exploding," and the poorest are not benefiting from globalization.²¹³ The disparity in income between the richest and poorest countries has worsened over the decades. The disparity was 3-1 in 1820, 11-1 in 1931, 35-1 in 1950, 44-1 in 1973 and 72-1 in 1992.²¹⁴ Available data indicates that this trend continues.²¹⁵

²¹¹ The Economic Times, Oct 13, 2006. For another example of a sober analysis of the economic impact of globalization see Alok Ray, "Problems of Globalization in India," in *Economic Globalization in Asia*, eds. Partha Gangopadhyay and Manas Chatterji (Hampshire, England: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2005), 136-45. Also see Steve Schifferes, "Globalization Shakes the World,"

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/6279679.stm>

²¹² Data taken from the Gini coefficient published by the United Nations Development Program. See, http://hdrstats.undp.org/countries/country_fact_sheets/cty_fs_IND.html. Also see

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/articleshow/2593534.cms>; Globalization and the Indian Economy in K.C. Abraham, "Globalization and Liberative Solidarity," in *The Agitated Mind of God*, eds. Dale T. Irvin and Akintunde E. Akinade, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1996), 7-9.

²¹³ <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/articleshow/msid-891.cms>

²¹⁴ UNDP, *Human Development Report 1999*. (New York: Oxford University Press), 38. Also see Angus Maddison, *Monitoring The World Economy 1820 – 1992* (Paris: Organization for Economic Cooperation

Davis further reports, “ever-increasing inequalities lead to tensions, social problems, frustration, and alienations.”²¹⁶

Most globalists (supporters of globalization) admit that economic and technological aspects of globalization have increased the gap between the rich and the poor. But they also claim that the poor are less poor than before. The sceptics (opponents of globalization), on the other hand, argue that while the poor may have more resources in their hand than before, “those at the top of the global heap have great buffers of wealth to help them cope with the radical transformations, but the poor do not.”²¹⁷ For example, the disparity between the compensations of the CEOs (chief executive officer) of multinational or major corporations and the salaries of the workers in these same institutions is revealing. In 1982 the disparity was 42-1 in favour of the CEOs. In recent times this disparity has risen to 411-1. Even worse is the fact that this disparity is now considered so normal that such disorders and injustices have been institutionalized and even legalized. The financial crisis of 2008 is a classic example of this disparity. Whereas the rich have the resources to deal with the crisis, the poor have their jobs terminated, homes foreclosed, insurance benefits reduced, and retirement plans made defunct. In the final analysis, then, the sceptics argue that when the rapid pace and quality of changes happen in the economic realm, it leaves the poor incapable of being counted in the globalization equation.

and Development, 1995); and Madison, *The World Economy: a Millennial Perspective* (Paris: OECD, 2001).

²¹⁵ World Bank, *World Development Report 2006*. Also Glen Firebaugh, *The New Geography of Global Income Inequality* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006).

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ Robert A. Isaak, *The Globalization Gap: How the Rich Get Richer and the Poor Get Left Further Behind* (New York: Prentice Hall, 2005), xxi.

Anti-globalists also argue that real power in a global world to determine their own destiny keeps eluding the grasp of most people except for the exclusive groups who control the global flow of capital.²¹⁸ Two recent developments in India may be cited here to stress the point. One development affects the future of hundreds of thousands of victims of the 1984 Union Carbide gas leak in Bhopal. Three thousand people were reported killed that night, although unofficial figures far exceed the official count. In a bid to put the pace of economic liberalization on the fast track, the Indian government is making a concerted effort toward an out-of-court settlement with Dow Chemical, the parent company that owned Union Carbide. *The Times of India* reported: "...the PMO [Prime Minister's Office], backed by finance and industry ministers and the vice chairman of the Planning Commission, are trying to find ways to clear Dow Chemical of any legal liability, so that the company agrees to invest in India."²¹⁹ This has left the victims of the tragedy aghast and abandoned. In an effort to retain the power to determine their own destiny rather than surrender it to those who control the global capital flow, the victims are now demanding that the case be transferred to the Central Bureau of Investigation (India's prime investigation agency), so that justice can be done in a timely manner.

Similarly, "special economic zones" have become the most contentious of issues in India. The government of India is in the process of creating special economic zones to increase foreign investments in India. The attraction for the foreign companies lies in the

²¹⁸Examples of the economic balance running in favour of the rich are many. For example, the Indian car manufacturing firm TATA is involved in acquiring agricultural land in the state of West Bengal, to set up a car manufacturing unit that would produce cars for the rising middle class in India. These cars are to cost Rs. 1,00,000 (about US \$ 2,500). Violent protests have once again marred the project. For a deeper analysis of the economic imbalances of economic globalization see, Isaak, *The Globalization Gap: How the Rich Get Richer and the Poor Get Left Further Behind*.

²¹⁹ "Govt tries to cleanse Dow investment of Bhopal Stain," *The Times of India*, June 30, 2007.

tax breaks and the relatively cheap labor. In just one example, traditional farmers were forced to make way for a special economic zone in Nandigram village in West Bengal State. Police fired upon a protesting crowd that resulted in the death of fourteen people and left seventy people injured.²²⁰ There are reports of rape of protesting women as well.²²¹ Such land grabbing is now common all over India.

The above discussion has served to showcase both sides of the globalization argument. The discussion demonstrated that development, growth, poverty, and inequality are only contentiously measured and statistics can be furnished on both sides that support their respective arguments.

The argument I make is consistent with Amartya Sen's argument that economic development must take place in tandem with political and civil liberties, social inclusion, literacy and economic security.²²² I would add cultural integrity and an ethic of development to Sen's criteria. When development is measured only from the economic perspective in terms of gross domestic product, per capita income or other economic criteria, ignoring other aspects of globalization mentioned above, the result can be the kind of social unrest that seems to be happening in India. The two examples given above serve to emphasise the claim made earlier, that globalization comes with its share of weakness. It is my argument that a macro view of the economic effects of globalization with statistics supporting growth and development must be balanced with the micro view of individual lives and communities that bear the negative effects of globalization. Apart

²²⁰ "They took aim, fired at us: Nandigram villagers," The Times of India, March 17, 2007.

²²¹ <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/1775858.cms>. Examples such as these seem to counter Bhagwati's contention that he is unable to find empirical evidence to link increased globalization with enhanced expropriation [of land]. See Jagdish Bhagwati, *In Defence of Globalization* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 114.

²²² Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 1999.

from the two examples already given above, Joseph E. Stiglitz, former chief economist of the World Bank, published a study called *Voices of the Poor*. A group of economists interviewed about 60,000 poor men and women from sixty countries about how they felt about their situation. The reports (published in three works)²²³ point not only to the economic aspects of globalization such as its lack of financial resources but also to their sense of insecurity, powerlessness, and marginalization, as well as their being excluded from their societies.²²⁴

Whereas globalists argue that the weakness lies with policy-making, others claim that the weakness is inherent to globalization and its profit oriented market system.²²⁵ One has to admit that no country in today's global context can make economic progress without participating in global economic and trade reform. On the other hand, it is impossible to categorically argue that globalization necessarily implies economic development. This dissertation shows that there are ample examples where the opposite may be the case.²²⁶ It may be argued that while some stand to gain from globalization,

²²³ – World Bank, *Can Anyone Hear Us, Crying Out for Change*, and *From Many Lands* (Washington DC: World Bank, 2002).

²²⁴ See Joseph E. Stiglitz, *Making Globalization Work* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2007), 11.

²²⁵ Bhagwati, for example, acknowledges that some aspects of globalization may be harmful to aggregate welfare and, may be objected to even as other forms of globalization can be beneficial. Jagdish Bhagwati, "Globalization: Who gain, Who Loses?" in ed., Horst Siebert, *Globalization and Labor* (Mohr Siebeck: Institut für Weltwirtschaft an der Universität, 1999), 226. Responding to Bhagwati's paper, Eddy Lee says, "In this sense, therefore, there are necessarily losers." Eddy Lee, "Comment on Jagdish Bhagwati," in ed., Horst Siebert, *Globalization and Labor* (Mohr Siebeck: Institut für Weltwirtschaft an der Universität, 1999), 237. See for example also Bhagwati, *The Wind of the Days*, 144. Bhagwati suggests that whereas fears of globalization was the primary concern of poorer nations on the periphery, there seems to be less concern that globalization could assist, not harm the poor. But now, he says, fears have come to the centre. As he concludes, the fears are not about the rich countries becoming losers, but rather, about internal distribution of income, about their poor becoming poorer and not-so-poor becoming poor. Although, Bhagwati suggests, that this fear can be systematically addressed through appropriate effective policy making, his rationale does not guarantee that the cycle of fear will not continue.

²²⁶ The case of the United States is a classic example. This developed nation provides an example among prosperous economies of a widening income distribution during the 1980 and early 90s. See for example, Kevin H. O'Rourke, "Globalization and Inequality: Historical Trends," (May 2001). http://www.tcd.ie/Economics/TEP/2001_papers/TEPNo9KO21.pdf. Statistics reveal that in the United States 840,000 people are homeless at a given time due to various causes; over the course of a year about

others find themselves more and more alienated from the development that globalization promises. Moreover, real power to determine their own destiny keeps eluding the grasp of those who lack economic capital. This results in fewer extremely rich people and increasingly, as we shall see in the next section, disenfranchised and relatively impoverished populations.²²⁷

The above section has focused on the economic impact of globalization. The discussion below will focus on the correspondence between the economic realm and the political realm. The argument here is that globalization does not always guarantee economic development. While globalists may argue that globalization has brought about economic development, based on other statistics I argue that on the contrary the global economic system widens the disparity between the rich and the poor, that it serves to weaken local decision making, especially for the powerless, and that its failure lies in its not being guided by a consistent ethic.

ii. The political debate

That globalization creates a new configuration and distribution of power is now an accepted conclusion in social studies. We have already seen how those who control

2.5 to 3.5 million are homeless one third of them being children. Daniel, Groody, "Globalizing Solidarity: Christian Anthropology and the Challenge of Human Liberation," *Theological Studies* 69 (2008) 258. Also in the United States, one out of eight citizen lives in poverty. U.S. Census Bureau data, <http://www.census.gov/prod/2003pubs/p60222.pdf>. During the 2008 presidential elections, the economy has become the predominant issue trumping an increasingly unpopular war in Iraq. Rising inflation (4.2 % in May), rising unemployment (5.5% in May 2008), rising cost of health insurance (45 million uninsured), the economic crisis brought about the financial services sector (Sept 2008 -) and increasing energy costs have left many of the lowest sections of society on the brink of poverty. In other words, even those nations that have commendable social policies in place are not insulated from the effects of the trade practices under globalization.

See for example, George Rupp who suggests that whereas on the one hand there is the danger of ignoring the "liberating power" of markets, there is also the likelihood that market regulation does not accomplish much but to "soften the corrosive impact of markets" particularly undermine the values that have supported traditional communities and long term environmental sustainability. See George Rupp, *Globalization Challenged: Conviction, Conflict, Community* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 86

the capital flow can and often do adversely affect the configuration of power. As indicated in the section below, the same dynamic affects the political lives of the people.

In a working democracy, real decisions are made by people who are most affected by them. On the contrary, as F. Jameson suggests, in the era of globalization power is exercised the least by those who are immediately affected by it.²²⁸ Andrew Heywood makes a similar claim. He argues that globalization “has major implications for nationalism and for other ideological projects based upon the nation.”²²⁹ For example, political decisions in a globalized world are increasingly being dictated by the economic agenda of those who control the capital flow.

The case of the Dharavi – the world’s largest shantytown in Mumbai, India, is a prime example of political disfranchisement of large populations. It is home to more than 600,000 people, most of whom make their living there. Spreading over 500 acres (2 sq km), small scale cottage industries in Dharavi are estimated to generate almost \$40 million worth of business every year. Its disadvantage lies in its location. It occupies a prime position close to the business district of Mumbai, India's financial capital. For this reason it has attracted a great deal of interest from foreign investors and developers, who plan to “develop” the land. Dharavi's residents, however, are up in arms. As the BBC reports, “People of all faiths - Hindu, Muslim, Christian - have come together to protest against the development of their homes.” Raju Khode, their leader, insists he is not against development. He simply wants it to happen on the slum dwellers' terms. “The

²²⁸ See, F. Jameson, “Postmodernism: The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism” in *Contemporary Social Theory*, ed. Anthony Elliot (Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 339-350.

²²⁹ Andrew Heywood, *Political Ideologies* (New York, N.Y.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 23.

government hasn't even approached us," he says. "We won't let them come here and raze our homes to the ground without our permission."²³⁰

Recent discussion at the World Trade Organization is yet another case in point. There is tremendous pressure on the developing nations of the world like Brazil, South Africa, and India to open their agricultural markets to goods from developed nations whose farming industry is heavily subsidised by their respective governments. This would make local agricultural products uncompetitive against the imported products in the very locality where it is produced.²³¹ In a working democracy such a decision would be made by the people that are most affected by it.

It is in this context that Heywood suggests that, while under "post-sovereign" conditions or what the globalists call the "transnational social organization," political nationalism linked to national self-determination has become redundant. On the contrary, as Heywood argues, under globalization, other forms of nationalism have become strengthened. Cultural, ethnic, and religious nationalism that determine local issues have replaced the previous kind of political nationalism.²³² Militant Hindu nationalism is a fight for identity, but it is equally a political struggle that aims to resist external influence on local culture, economics, and politics. Even as the above argument is made, it must be mentioned that consensus is elusive on the political implications of globalization for the nation-state.

²³⁰ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/6970800.stm>

²³¹ For example see Peter Gallagher, *Guide to the WTO and Developing Countries* (Huston: Kluwer Law International, 2000). This book supports the WTO policies. In its case study on India, it blames government placed trade barriers and restrictions for India's agricultural problems. However, it also admits that small farmers fail to gain from the governments new liberalized agricultural policy under negotiation with the WTO. Also see Y.K. Alagh, *Globalization and Agricultural Crisis in India* (New Delhi: Deep and & Deep Publications, 2004).

²³² Heywood, *Political Ideologies*, 23.

P. Hirst, for example, argues that the world economy is barely regulated enough to suggest a uniform system and that the measures towards the regulation of currency markets and the stabilization of key sectors through international governance are as much a possibility as not. In such a scheme of things, Hirst argues, nation states retain a crucial role. The place of the traditional national democratic state remains intact, although its role is altered from a sovereign political agency to mediator between international process and its peoples.²³³

Nayar too has argued against claims of the demise of nation-state in the new world order of transnational social organization. Taking India as a case in point, he argues that while globalization has certainly led independent nations to succumb to the compulsions of the global economy and has seemingly shrunk the role of the state, the state has not been politically rendered helpless in the process.²³⁴ On the contrary, he argues, Hindu nationalism is evidence for the case that the nation-state still holds its relevance.

Whereas Hirst and Nayar's arguments are focused on the power of the nation states (and to that extent their analysis is correct), democracy is not primarily about the power of nation states. Rather, it is about the concentration of decision making power in the hands of the people who are invested with the power to determine their own destiny. In other words, the issue in question is less about the power of nation states, than about the decision making power being in the hands of the people who are affected by the decisions. Under the current focus of globalization, power eludes the people and perhaps

²³³ See P. Hirst, *From Stateism to Pluralism* (Bristol, Penn: UCL Press, 1997).

²³⁴ Baldev Raj Nayar, *Globalization and Nationalism: the Changing Balance in India's Economic Policy, 1950-2000* (Sage Publications: New Delhi, 2001).

the nation itself and is concentrated in the hands of the economic elite, thus altering the configuration of power.

As seen above, both the economic and political effects of globalization have consequences that seriously affect the lives of the local people. Apart from the economic and political effects, and as we shall argue below, globalization also adversely affects society culturally.

In fact, it is the cultural dimension of globalization that has provoked the largest number of debates and polarizations. The reasons are understandable. For one, culture is a very elusive concept.²³⁵ Since culture is associated with “meaning construction,” it is a complex reality. Secondly, as Tomlinson suggests, culture is more globalizing because cultural forms and products such as dress codes, food habits, music and life-styles have easier mobility.²³⁶ Thus, for example, the media have become the easiest means of cultural transport. Third, it is the cultural dimension of globalization that social scientists say creates problems of identity and instigates various kinds of fundamentalisms and religious and nationalistic militant movements.²³⁷ This is so because, as Tomlinson suggests, “Globalization disturbs the way we conceptualize culture.”²³⁸ Traditionally, culture was associated with fixed locality. It was associated with a particular political territory which bound individuals into some definite “meaning construction.” The connectivity of globalization, he argues, threatens such traditional conceptualization of

²³⁵ In its simplest form, culture can be understood as, “the order of life in which human beings construct meaning through practices of symbolic representation.” See John Tomlinson, *Globalization and Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 28.

²³⁶ Ibid., 22.

²³⁷ Mike Featherstone, John Tomlinson, Roland Robertson, et. al., discuss problems of identity in the context of culture.

²³⁸ John Tomlinson, *Globalization*, 27.

culture.²³⁹ Militant Hindu nationalism cannot be analyzed without focusing on the cultural effects of globalization. We turn to that discussion now.

iii. The cultural debate

The relation between globalization and culture can be discussed in regard to multiple dimensions. Whereas some scholars support the homogenization theory (that global culture will ultimately absorb local culture), others support the heterogenization theory (that the cultural exchange is a two-way street with the global culture affecting the local and in its turn local culture transforming the global). There is agreement, though, that under globalization, cultures interact at such speed and with such intensity that the interaction can best be termed as a “clash of cultures.” The result can range from large populations “imagining” new ways of ‘being’ in the global cultural environment to the rise of national and religious militancy.

In the section below, we will first focus on how global and local cultures interact with each other, and second, focus on the effects of globalization upon local cultures in general. We will then turn our attention to the manner in which local cultures react to the effects of globalization, especially the intensification of local cultures. Third, we will focus on the most apparent symptom of the cultural effects of globalization, the rise of a variety of oppositional forces such as anti-globalization movements, religious fundamentalisms, and religious, cultural, and nationalist militant movements understood as the reflexive intensification of local culture.

Cultural globalization implies more than just the extension of one culture to the detriment of all others. It also implies the evolution of a new global culture with its

²³⁹ Ibid., 28.

accompanying social structures. The “reflexive” nature of globalization²⁴⁰ allows for the hybridization of particular cultures not just in the less developed countries but also in the dominant West. Globalization theories point to the conclusion that the contemporary global society is not merely about the extension of one particular culture but is rather about the dramatic changes that all cultures undergo within the globalized world. Thus even if a “global culture” emerged, it would itself be subject to change within the universal/particular dynamic. This helps to explain the rise of fundamentalists, traditionalists, rightists, nationalists, militants, and radicals both in the East and West alike. In India, it has taken the form of militant Hindu nationalism. The section below focuses on this dynamic.

When it comes to analyzing globalization and culture, social scientists find themselves unified on some aspects and divided on others. They are unified in their opinion that globalization disrupts culture resulting in the fragmentation of social systems and individual lives. As early as 1985 Roland Robertson had cautioned his readers about the consequences of a global social order.²⁴¹ According to him, societal order was bound to become contested and fragmented. As he wrote: “The problem of global order intensifies concern with societal identities. Societies experience pressure to reach, as it were, into their primordial cores within the context of global norms....”²⁴² This explains the reason why primordialist ideologies even if defective (Vedic Hinduism) looked attractive to the early Hindu nationalists who reverted back to the Vedic times to carve

²⁴⁰ Ulrich Beck, Anthony Giddens and Scott Lash, *Reflexive Modernization: Politics, Tradition and Aesthetics in the Modern Social Order* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1994). Robert Schreiter, *The New Catholicity: Theology Between the Global and Local* (Maryknoll, Orbis Books, 1997), 13. Also see, John Tomlinson, *Globalization and Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 24-25.

²⁴¹ Robertson, “Relativization, Religion and Globalization,” 35.

²⁴² Ibid.

out an Indian identity. Their process led them to define a more Hindu identity rather than an Indian identity. However, the perception of Islam and colonial Christianity as aggressors did aid the process.

Sociologists are divided, however, over the manner in which global and local cultures interact. Some scholars argue that globalization intensifies the movement of dominant cultures outward in a manner that integrates heterogeneous cultures into itself. This phenomenon is defined as the "homogenization of culture." The "homogenization of culture" argument claims that globalization is replacing cultural pluralism and diversity with a homogenized global culture,²⁴³ more specifically, Western culture. Culture, in this scheme of things, is understood as "something integrated, unified, settled, and static; something relatively well-behaved which performs the task of oiling the wheels of social life in an ordered society."²⁴⁴ Homogenization theorists argue that global culture is set to replace the more particular culture of the societies at large.²⁴⁵ Simultaneously, the argument is also put forward that the homogenization process runs in general in favour of Westernization and more specifically Americanization. It can be best summarized in the words of Tomlinson:

The globalized culture that is currently emerging is not a global culture in any utopian sense. It is not a culture that has arisen out of the mutual experiences and needs of all humanity. It does not draw equally on the world's diverse cultural traditions. It is neither inclusive, balanced, nor in the best sense, synthesising. Rather, globalized culture is the installation, world-wide, of one particular culture born out of one

²⁴³ Croucher, *Globalization and Belonging*, 23.

²⁴⁴ Robertson, *Globalization*, 13.

²⁴⁵ Mike Featherstone, *Undoing Culture: Globalization, Postmodernism and Identity* (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, 1995), 6.

particular, privileged historical experience. It is, in short, simply the global expression of Western culture.²⁴⁶

A similar opinion is expressed by Croucher:

The focus is on a global culture industry that has people worldwide, from Johannesburg to Rio de Janeiro, Paris to Bangkok, and Los Angeles to Cairo, from townships, favelas, and barrios to upscale apartments, office complexes, shopping malls, and villas wearing Levis, watching MTV, drinking Coca-Cola, smoking Marlboro cigarettes, and visiting, or dreaming of visiting a Disney theme park.²⁴⁷

Benjamin Barber calls the world described above as "McWorld."²⁴⁸ Yet another scholar, Featherstone, suggests:

Here a global culture was seen as being formed through the economic and political domination of the United States which thrust its hegemonic culture into all parts of the world. From this perspective the American way of life with its rapacious individualism and confident belief in progress... was regarded as a corrosive homogenizing force, as a threat to the integrity of all particularities.²⁴⁹

The above view is termed by some as "cultural imperialism."²⁵⁰ U. Hannerz suggests that, since homogenization results from the centre-to-periphery flow of culture, cultural imperialism would mean the impending homogeneous world culture, which will be the extended version of contemporary Western culture. This would result in the loss of local cultures at the periphery.²⁵¹ Featherstone explains why this may be so. Local culture, according to him, is closely tied to place and time, whereas global culture is

²⁴⁶ John Tomlinson, "Globalised Culture: The Triumph of the West?", in T. Skelton, and T. Allen, eds., *Culture and Global Change* (London: Routledge, 1999), 23.

²⁴⁷ Ibid., 25.

²⁴⁸ See Benjamin Barber, *Jihad vs, McWorld* (New York: Random House, 1995).

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 87.

²⁵⁰ John Tomlinson, *Cultural Imperialism: A Critical Introduction* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1991).

²⁵¹ U. Hannerz, "Scenarios for Peripheral Cultures," in Frank J. Lechner and John Boli, eds., *Culture, Globalization and the World System*, New York: University of New York, 1991), 331.

unconstrained by these very factors. The trans-territorial character of globalization gives global culture a significant advantage.²⁵²

There is an alternative view, however, that makes the “homogenization of culture” argument seem simplistic at best. Robertson was perhaps the first to contest the homogenization theory. He suggests that, even though all societies are susceptible to the wide-ranging implications of globalization, it will never result in the emergence of a single, cohesive system. Rather, he argues, the universalism-particularism issue in itself has come to constitute a “global-cultural form.”²⁵³ In other words, rather than seeing universalism as principles that apply to all and seeing particularism as principles that apply to local situations, Robertson suggests that “the two have become tied together as part of a globewide nexus.”²⁵⁴ In his words: “They have become united in terms of the universality of the experience and, increasingly, *the expectation of* particularity, on the one hand, and the experience and increasingly, *the expectation of* universality, on the other.” Robertson calls the latter “particularization of universalism,” or the universal being given global-human concreteness, and the former “universalization of particularism,” or the idea that there is no limit to particularity, uniqueness, difference, and otherness. Globalization, according to him, is the institutionalization of this two-fold process of the universalization of particularism and the particularization of universalism.²⁵⁵ In other words, global culture is the result of the constant interaction between its universalistic aspects and its particularistic reproductions. An example of such an interaction would be the case of the spread of Indian Yoga and yogic practices in

²⁵² Featherstone, *Undoing Culture*, 93.

²⁵³ Robertson, *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture*, 102.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

²⁵⁵ Robertson, *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture*, 102.

the United States. Whereas India has selectively incorporated ideas from Western cultures, such as Western dress habits, to particularize the universal, Western cultures are now being flooded with Indian cultural symbols.

Robertson makes an observation here that is important for this dissertation. He draws a connection between cultural globalization and global resistance movements such as militant Hindu nationalism. Resistance to contemporary globalization, Robertson claims, can be regarded as opposition not merely to the conception of the world as one homogenized system but also to the "conception of the world as a series of culturally equal, relativized entities or ways of life."²⁵⁶ For the militant Hindu nationalists the relativization of things quintessentially Hindu to things foreign would be a problematic since it both changes and hybridizes cultural and religious entities.

There is no dearth of literature on how globalization adversely affects cultural elements of society. Most social scientists do not share the optimism of Marshall McLuhan's "global village" utopia.²⁵⁷ Robertson contends that anti-global movements are encapsulated within the cultural discourse of globalization.²⁵⁸

Other scholars agree with Robertson. They too contend that that while globalization does imply a certain homogenization of the world²⁵⁹ the world has also simultaneously become more culturally diverse. Both Ulrich Beck²⁶⁰ and Waters agree that in the age of globalization individual social ties are systematically related and

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁷ Marshall McLuhan's had theorized that "industrial age" media, transportation and money were being replaced by "electronic age" media, transportation and money – a shift that the restore the collective tribalism of old, albeit on an expansive global scale.

²⁵⁸ Robertson, *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture*, 10.

²⁵⁹ Roland Robertson, *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture*, 8.

²⁶⁰ Ulrich Beck, *Risk Society: Toward a New Modernity* (London: Sage Publications, 1992), 45. Beck claims that modernity,, of which globalization is one manifestation, becomes the rational for the creation of a "risk society."

affected by previously unrelated factors.²⁶¹ That is why scholars like Featherstone contend that the likely outcome of the clash of cultures is the rise of “third cultures.” The construct “third cultures” is defined as “sets of practices, bodies of knowledge, conventions and lifestyles that have developed in ways which have become increasingly independent of nation-states.”²⁶² The rise of third cultures has implications for nations and societies. As a result of the rise of “third cultures,” and as a result of the increasing intensity of contact between cultures, there occurs a “clashing of cultures, which can lead to heightened attempts to draw the boundaries between self and others.”²⁶³ The origin and development of militant Hindu nationalism is a case in point. As noted earlier, the definition of “Hindu” was drawn to delineate the boundary between those who belong (self) and those who do not (Muslims, Christians, colonists) during the colonial period. In the globalization era, cultures clash again, but now, with unprecedented speed and intensity. Movements like militant Hindu nationalism can be perceived as the spark rising out of the clash of cultures.

Apart from the “homogenization of culture” and “universalization of particularism and particularization of universalism” arguments, there is a third way of assessing the culture and globalization dynamic. Arjun Appadurai, one of the most prolific scholars on globalization, rejects both the homogenization thesis and Robertson’s “complementary” view of the relationship between the universal and particular²⁶⁴ and suggests that the central problem of present day globalization is the tension or more

²⁶¹ Waters, *Globalization*, 15.

²⁶² Featherstone, *Undoing Culture*. 114.

²⁶³ Featherstone, *Undoing Culture*,

²⁶⁴ Roland Robertson, *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture*, 103. Robertson writes, “While not denying the fruitfulness of Appadurai’s ideas about the existence of empirically disjunctive relationships between different cultural ‘scapes’ at the global level... my own interpretation is that they were [are] basically complementary.

appropriately, the *disjuncture* between cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenization.²⁶⁵

Appadurai is in agreement with Robertson that the cultural flow takes place in both directions from the global to the local and from the local to the global. However, where Robertson sees neat patterns of cultural flows, Appadurai sees immense disjunctures between the elements within the cultural landscape. Whereas both homogenization and heterogenization theorists see a detectable order in the way global cultural flows occur, Appadurai suggests that it is the *disjunctures* in the global cultural flows that make cultural globalization a complex field for study.²⁶⁶

Appadurai sees the global cultural situation as being characterized by a distortion in the "global cultural flows." According to him, the five elements of the cultural landscape – peoples, technology, capital, information, and ideas – flow along "increasingly nonisomorphic paths"²⁶⁷ Let us take global capital movements (financescapes in Appadurai's language) as an example. The crisis in the American financial services sector has created an equally disastrous financial crisis globally. The ripple effect was seen on global financial markets. On the other hand, a financial crisis in Venezuela, or Sudan or Nigeria perhaps, may not have the same impact globally. However, if Venezuela, Sudan or Nigeria stops oil exports to United States, its impact

²⁶⁵ The above summary of Appadurai's views on globalization is taken from Arjun Appadurai, "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy," in Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 27-47.

²⁶⁶ To study these disjunctures, Appadurai divides the cultural landscape into five dimensions: a) Ethnoscapes (basically the flow of peoples - refugees, tourists, immigrants) from one place to another; b) Technoscapes (the flow of technology from one place to formerly impenetrable locales); c) financescapes (comprising the financial aspect such as the flow of currency and stock markets); d) mediascapes (the movement of information via television, newspapers, movies etc.); and e) ideoscapes (the cultural aspects of human existence – ideologies, ideas, cultural values).

²⁶⁷ Ibid., 37.

can be as globally devastating as the American financial crisis. Of course, Appadurai suggests, there have been some disjunctures in the flow of these elements all throughout human history. But the sheer speed, scale, and volume of these flows are so great that disjunctures have become central to the politics of global culture. This creates an unprecedented "deterritorialization," i.e., the disjunctures created by the nonisomorphic flow of peoples, technology, capital, information, and ideas become the fundamental characteristic the global world.

Deterritorialization, Appadurai suggests, presents unprecedented challenges for the present world. It brings "labouring populations into the lower-class sectors and spaces of relatively wealthy societies, while sometimes creating exaggerated and intensified senses of criticism or attachment to politics in the home state."²⁶⁸ Thus, for example, Appadurai describes how Hindu Indian immigrants overseas have been both helped by and assist the resurgence of militant Hindu nationalism. On the one hand, the resurgence of Hinduism provides the need of religious identification to the Hindu Indians abroad; on the other hand, the flow of finances in the opposite direction help fund the growth of Hindu ideologies. Militant Hindu nationalism would be strapped without the funding of Indian Hindus overseas. Thus as Appadurai suggests, the politics of cultural reproduction for Hindus abroad had become tied to the politics of militant Hindu nationalists at home.

²⁶⁸ Ibid., 39. An example of disjuncture and deterritorialization can also be seen in the attitude toward immigration and the global flow of peoples across the globe. The Japanese, although extremely open to ideas maintain strict control over immigration as do the Swiss and Saudis. However, each of these countries accepts guest-workers, thus creating huge diaspora of Indians in Saudi Arabia, Turks in Switzerland and East Asians in Japan. This leaves huge populations deterritorialized. The movement of new Iraqis in the United States is yet another example. Those who cooperated with the Americans are unsecure in their own nation. They have been given asylum in the United States. But they face racial profiling and anti-Islamic prejudice in the United States.

Appadurai considers deterritorialization to be a major reason for the rise of a variety of global fundamentalisms including Hindu and Islamic fundamentalisms.²⁶⁹

Appadurai assigns *imagination* an important role in the dynamic of global culture. He explains how imagination allows huge deterritorialized populations to reconceptualize their lives in the new global context. Deterritorialized imaginations, he says, can conjure up either images of hope or terror. This is best exemplified by the anxiety of the West with regard to the Muslim populations in their respective countries since the September 11, 2002 attack on the World Trade Centre in the United States. The attacks on the trains in Madrid, London, and Mumbai have put the entire globalized world on a perpetual alert. Previously “unimaginable” terror is now being “imagined” by “deterritorialized” populations. As mentioned earlier, Hindus overseas imagine themselves in relation to their homeland and in their deterritorialized “home” in ways unimaginable before.

In summary, this discussion of cultural globalization is crucial in understanding the relationship between globalization and militant Hindu nationalism. As stated above, there is no single way to describe the relationship between global and local cultures. Although both the homogenization and heterogenization theories seem plausible, the outcome of the global and local culture often leads to disjuncture or a certain disconnectedness in the way social life is constructed. Thus in traditional societies such as India where the organization of life and “meaning construction” came from within its boundaries, people now have to contend with alien competing ideologies that often conflict with existing traditions. This can result in the evolution of new hybrid cultures with their accompanying social structures. Globalization theories all point to the fact that

²⁶⁹ Appadurai, “Disjuncture and Difference,,” 196.

in the contemporary global society, all cultures are bound to undergo dramatic changes. But, more importantly, it can give rise to movements of resistance that focus on stemming the loss of identity and regaining its original purity. This can explain the rise of fundamentalists, traditionalists, rightists, nationalists, militants, and radicals both in the East and West alike. In India, it has taken the form of militant Hindu nationalism.

The above analysis draws out connections between globalization and culture. One of the consequences of global cultural disjuncture is a crisis of identity. Although this connection was already made in chapter one, the theoretical basis of the link between globalization and struggles for identity still needed to be demonstrated.

Conclusion

In an attempt to formulate a Christian response to globalization and militant Hindu nationalism, in this chapter we defined globalization and drew a link between globalization and militant Hindu nationalism. The purpose of the discussion was to connect globalization with the rise of anti-global movements. A study of the economic, political, and cultural effects of globalization has led us to draw the conclusion that the rise of a global resistance movement such as militant Hindu nationalism is contained within the dynamic of globalization. The effect of globalization is felt most of all at the cultural crossroad between the global and local cultures, where the very identity of entire societies face the risk of change. Global resistance movements become a way to reclaim the economic, political, and cultural identity of those affected by globalization.

Thus far, we have analyzed the economic, political, and cultural effects of globalization. Two further theoretical issues still remain to be studied in order to fully explore the connection between globalization and militant Hindu nationalism. The first

section of the next chapter will explore the link between globalization and identity, and the second section will assess the role of religion in identity claiming global resistance movements such as militant Hindu nationalism.

Chapter IV

Globalization, Global Culture, and the Problem of Identity

Introduction

In our discussion on globalization, militant Hindu nationalism, and a Christian theological response to these two phenomena, thus far we have made a number of important observations. First, we have stated that both militant Hindu nationalists and Christians have understood each other's tradition and history very selectively. Second, we have concluded that a fuller understanding of the two traditions will better help both these communities to respond to the challenges emerging from globalization. Third, we have made crucial theoretical connections between certain phenomena: colonialism and globalization, colonialism and Christianity, and Hindu nationalism of the colonial times and militant Hindu nationalism in contemporary India. We have also analysed globalization and its economic, political and cultural effects. Two further theoretical issues still remain to be studied in order to explore more fully the connection between globalization and militant Hindu nationalism.

The first section of this chapter will explore the link between globalization and identity. Our analysis of the history of the origin and development of militant Hindu nationalism has already shown that external forces can trigger the complex process of

either defining or redefining local identities. I will argue that what was true of the colonial times in some respects still holds true in the era of globalization. Exploring the concepts of nostalgia, reflexivity, and theories of identity formation, I will contend that global resistance movements such as militant Hindu nationalism is best understood as a struggle for collective identity within the globalization phenomenon. The concept of "identity" is contested, so a brief discussion will draw attention to relevant objections. I will conclude, however, that identity remains a useful concept to analyse the cultural effects of globalization, particularly, militant Hindu nationalism.

The second section will assess the role of religion in the struggle for identity particularly in anti-global movements such as militant Hindu nationalism. This discussion has direct implications for the thesis of this dissertation since militant Hindu nationalism is in part a religious struggle even as it nurtures political ambitions. I contend that it is the particularistic nature of religion that enables it to be a crucial part of identity creation in a global environment. The third section will more specifically draw out the connection between globalization and militant Hindu nationalism. I will argue that the theoretical links between globalization and the struggle of identity, between identity and religion, and between the religious and political aspects of identity formation are applicable to militant Hindu nationalism. Without justifying the claims of militant Hindu nationalists, it will be argued that anti-global movements such as militant Hindu nationalism represent the reflexive dimension of globalization.

The last section will consider militant Hindu nationalism not merely as a cultural or political issue but also for Christians in India, as a theological issue. In other words, if militant Hindu nationalism emerged in the context of colonial Christianity as a struggle

for identity and continues to exist in India in the context of globalization as a means of maintaining cultural and religious identity, then it becomes expedient that the Church in India make a theological response to these issues.

A. Globalization and the problem of identity

The relationship between globalization and the problem of identity has generated much scholarly research. The problem can be simply explained by saying that in a globalized world the conditions for the identification of individual and collective selves and individual and collective others are becoming ever more complex.²⁷⁰ The complexity of the situation arises from the fact that, culturally, globalization provokes radically novel processes of identity formation. Scholars like Saskia Sassen term this phenomenon the “unmooring” of cultural identities.²⁷¹

Appadurai had earlier suggested that “deterritorialization” is a fundamental characteristic of a globalized world. However, as Sassen observes, “deterritorialization” simultaneously instigates the processes of “reterritorialization.” Globalization sets in motion “a set of processes whereby global elements are localized, international labor markets are constituted, and cultures from all over the world are de- and reterritorialized.”²⁷² In other words, globalization instigates global level transformations that transcend the traditional nation-state boundaries. More significantly, Sassen links de- and reterritorialization with movements of resistance. Limiting herself to the economic realm, Sassen considers the dynamics of resistance of powerless people as the process of

²⁷⁰ Robertson, *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture*, 98.

²⁷¹ Saskia Sassen, “Whose city is it? Globalization and the Formation of New Claims,” in *Globalization and its Discontents: Essays on the New Mobility of People and Money* (New York: the New Press, 1998), xxxi.

²⁷² Ibid.

“speaking back” to the exclusionary politics of globalization. What is true in the economic realm is also true in the cultural realm. From a cultural perspective, “reterritorialization” takes the form of redefining identities. In other words, the emerging global society creates a desire and the capacity for individuals and groups to negotiate and renegotiate new forms of identity.

It is in regard to this development that the theory of *nostalgia* has assumed popular currency.²⁷³ B. S. Turner describes nostalgia as the feeling of rootlessness emerging from “a fundamental condition of human estrangement.”²⁷⁴ Robertson employs the word “homelessness” to capture the sense of nostalgia, estrangement, or alienation; he uses the term to describe the condition of human beings in the modern world. According to him, sociological homelessness is a psychological product of modernization (read globalization).²⁷⁵

Robertson applies the theory of nostalgia to the context of globalization and suggests that globalization has been the primary cause for the rise of “willful nostalgia.”²⁷⁶ Under globalization, “nostalgia” has assumed a global-cultural significance, giving rise to “collective nostalgia,”²⁷⁷ i.e., nostalgic feeling caused by estrangement and alienation in large populations at the same time. According to Robertson, nostalgia arises “because of the perceived need for national integration and the threat of relativization of

²⁷³ Originally proposed by G. Stauth and B.S. Turner, the concept of “nostalgia” was used in a discussion on the influence of Nietzsche in the history of social theory. See G. Stauth and B.S. Turner, *Nietzsche's Dance: Resentment, Reciprocity and Resistance in Social Life* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988). Also G. Stauth and B.S. Turner, “Nostalgia, Postmodernism, and the Critique of Mass Culture, in *Theory, Culture and Society* 5, (1988): 509-26.

²⁷⁴ B. S. Turner, “A Note on Nostalgia,” in *Theory, Culture and Society*, 4/1 (1987) 147-56.

²⁷⁵ Robertson, *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture*, 157.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 155.

²⁷⁷ Fred Davis defines “collective nostalgia” as “that condition in which... symbolic objects are of a highly public, widely shared, and familiar character, those symbolic resources from the past that... can trigger wave upon wave of nostalgic feeling in millions of persons at the same time.” See Fred Davis, *Yearning for Yesterday: A Sociology of Nostalgia* (New York: Free Press, 1974), 122-23.

national identity brought by the compulsion of a global international worldview.”²⁷⁸ In general, he suggests that the world is witnessing an accelerated nostalgia-producing globalization.”²⁷⁹ In other words, in a deterritorialized world, movements of resistance such as militant nationalism or even fundamentalism²⁸⁰ develop as a means to counter the sense of nostalgia, alienation, or estrangement created by globalization.

Social scientists have tried to explain that the sense of nostalgia generates nationalistic, ethnic, and religious reactions against globalization while simultaneously reasserting local cultures. Featherstone, for example, observes that nostalgia, or a loss of a sense of place or homelessness, creates a general loss of a “sense of wholeness, moral certainty, genuine social relationship, spontaneity, and expressiveness.”²⁸¹ An example of the search for collective identity is the case of immigrant workers in Europe and in the United States. In Europe “guest worker” programs were introduced in the 1960s to stem the shortage of large, cheap, and exploitable labor. In spite of providing a range of social services these workers did not enjoy citizenship and in recent times the resurgence of rightist nationalists governments which support strict anti-immigration laws (France, Austria) has once again demonstrated anti-immigrant policies. Thus, in France, Algerian Muslims are barred from wearing head scarves and Indian Sikhs from wearing their traditional turbans. In the United States too, the case of undocumented workers has brought to the fore the identity of immigrants. Decades of immigrant policies have not

²⁷⁸ Robertson, *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture*, 161.

²⁷⁹ Ibid. 158.

²⁸⁰ For a detailed study of the globalization-fundamentalism theories see, Malise Ruthven, *Fundamentalism: A Search for Meaning* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Bassam Tibi, *The Challenge of Fundamentalism: Political Islam and the New World Order* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); S. N. Eisenstadt, *Fundamentalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Thomas Meyer, *Identity Mania: Fundamentalism and the Politicization of Cultural differences* (New York: Zed Books, 2001).

²⁸¹ Featherstone, *Undoing Culture*, 94.

aimed at solving the problem because cheap and exploitable labor is in demand. But the identity of the immigrants is, as Cavanaugh describes it, “a luminal identity, an identity that straddles the border and defines the person as being neither fully here not fully there.”²⁸² When such homelessness is experienced, different groups are motivated to resort to some romantic images or recreate some golden age or even construct a future utopia that provides a “sense of home.” One may call this the reconstitution of their collective identity along cultural, ethnic lines or any other lines. Rituals such as wedding, funerals, and religious celebrations, practices associated with national sports, national celebrations and collective memories embodied in remembering national heroes or events are examples of how collective identity of nostalgic populations are formed. Thus, Indian Hindus celebrate *deepavali* each year in the United States or displaced Iraqis celebrate Iraqi national holidays and religious feasts in Britain, or Bangladeshi refugees celebrate independence day in the slums of Kolkata (Calcutta), or the Mexicans *Cinco de Mayo* in the United States. These rituals and practices serve to form the collective identity of people who find themselves “homeless” in a global world. Surprisingly, even well-established societies in Europe are the victims of nostalgia. Even as the European Union takes more concrete shape, nationalistic movements fanned by anti-immigrant rightist political parties have gained a strong foothold in France, Germany and Austria. In this present [globalization] phase, Featherstone says:

... the response to nostalgia in the recreation and invention of local, regional, and subnational culture has to be placed alongside the perceived destruction of locality through globalization of the world economy, expansion of the mass media and consumer culture, but can

²⁸² William T. Cavanaugh, “Migrant, Tourist, Pilgrim, Monk: Mobility and Identity in a Global Age,” in *Theological Studies* 69 (2008) 344.

also be understood as using these means to reconstitute a sense of locality.²⁸³

In other words, one consequence of the process of compression and intensification of contacts between nation-states and other cultural entities is that it produces a clash of cultures which can lead to a heightened and radical campaign to “draw boundaries between self and others.”²⁸⁴ Thus the riots by marginalized Muslim populations in the suburbs of Paris and the heightened militant attacks on the Christians in Iraq during the American occupation of Iraq are classic examples of such clashes. Robertson calls this process the “search for fundamentals.”²⁸⁵ Considering nostalgia as a reflexive movement within the globalization phenomenon, resistance movements or the search for fundamentals “constitute ways of finding a place within the world as a whole.”²⁸⁶ They are ways in which groups enhance their power or carry out their quest for the assertion of power. This was as true in colonial India as it is in modern globalized India.

The connection between globalization and identity is explored rather widely by social scientists, especially as nationalist, religious, and ethnic movements have intensified in the global world. Identity is understood as “the subjective feelings and valuation of any population which possesses common characteristics (usually customs, language, or religion).”²⁸⁷ In this sense nations can be understood as historical, political,

²⁸³ Featherstone, *Undoing Culture*, 95.

²⁸⁴ Ibid., 115.

²⁸⁵ Robertson, *Globalization*, 166. Robertson is clear in distinguishing “search for fundamentals” from fundamentalism. The former, according to him, can slip into fundamentalism and here he is referring to the “extremists.”

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

²⁸⁷ Anthony Smith, “Towards a Global culture?” in *Global Culture: Nationalism, Globalization and Modernity*, ed. Mike Featherstone (Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications, 1990), 179. Smith suggests that there are three components of identity understood as “feelings and values:” 1. a sense of continuity between the experiences of succeeding generations; 2. shared memories of important events and people which has been turning points of a collective history; and 3. a sense of common destiny.

and cultural identities. According to Smith, identity becomes a problematic under globalization because “global and cosmopolitan cultures fail to relate to any such historic identity.”²⁸⁸ Simultaneously, global culture cannot provide an alternative “global identity” simply because collective identities are associated with particular cultures within specific geographical territories²⁸⁹ – a project impossible to implement in a “deterritorialized” world. For example, when Western cultural symbols such as jeans, Valentine’s Day celebrations, hip-hop music, dating or junk food began to flood the Indian society in the late 1980s, it instigated adverse reaction because it not only threatened what was quintessentially Indian but also replaced it with global symbols devoid of the power to integrate local cultures. Thus, even though dating is alien to the Indian social context and found currency in the new found global environment of urban India, it only served to unsettle the family structure of traditional Indian society. Similarly, the growth and development of the business processing industry struck at the very roots of the identity of the Indian family as a cohesive social entity.²⁹⁰ That is why Johann Arnason interprets modern nationalistic movements to be “the image [identity] of the nation as a cultural totality, capable of imposing a new unity on the diverging ‘life orders’”²⁹¹ in response to the globalization process. Croucher captures this well when she

²⁸⁸ Ibid.

²⁸⁹ Ibid. 180.

²⁹⁰ Take the example of business processing centers which have to remain open at night to cater to the corporation based in North America. The time difference makes it mandatory for the young people employed by these centers to leave for work at the same time when their parents return from work in the traditional work places. It was traditionally the practice that families would have dinner together and even engage in family devotions. The family, for most part, functioned as a cohesive unit. This cohesiveness is now threatened. Not only has the clashing work schedule changed the moral ethic of young people, also, children’s attitude toward the elderly, the rate of divorce and the care of children has undergone dramatic and often catastrophic change. As a result the identity that is associated with being an Indian family or for that matter an Indian society is changing.

²⁹¹ Johann P. Arnason, “Nationalism, Globalization and Modernity,” in *Global Culture: Nationalism, Globalization and Modernity*, ed, Mike Featherstone (Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications, 1990), 227.

suggests that globalization points to a world in flux and the politics of belonging [identity] is a central dimension²⁹² of that flux.

The question of identity becomes especially problematic when a nation-state fails to either represent or provide opportunities to groups to empower themselves towards the construction or the reconstruction of their identities because, as Paglia has pointed out, “identity is power.”²⁹³ It is under such circumstances, Manuel Castells suggests, that a social, political, or religious group may attempt to assume power “to make it the exclusive expression of such an identity.”²⁹⁴ Castells attributes the rise of Hindu militancy in India to the effort of a socio-religio-political group to empower itself with a (re)constructed identity in a globalized world.²⁹⁵

In the above discussion, the analytical tools of the universal/particular dynamic, the theory of nostalgia, the concept of reflexivity, and theories of identity formation have in one way or another provided some indication of the fact that the struggle for collective identity is a reflexive dynamic within the globalization phenomenon. Either the danger of losing identity or the lack of identity can provoke anti-global movements such as fundamentalism, nationalism and militant nationalism.

However, even as identity emerges as a major category in this dissertation it must be stated that some authors see it as a problematic category. Vincent Miller, for example, considers the pursuit of “identity” in the context of globalization to constitute a very

²⁹² Croucher, *Globalization and Belonging*, 36. For Croucher, belonging and identity are not synonymous. According to her, identity does not capture the fluidity and multiplicity of belonging. However, the implications she draws of the relationship between globalization and belonging is applicable to the relationship between globalization and identity as well since according to her, “belonging” is quintessentially a political process by which individuals and groups define, negotiate, promote, reject, violate and transcend the boundaries of identities and belongings.

²⁹³ As quoted by Robertson in *Globalization*, 166.

²⁹⁴ Manuel Castells, *The Power of Identity* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 339.

²⁹⁵ Ibid.

limited cultural practice because rather than preserving tradition it actually only succeeds in alienating whatever does not serve its purpose. For example, in the United States, there is a concerted effort in some quarters to create a Catholic identity around pro-life issues. In some cases, pro-life does not mean end of life issues, such as capital punishment, but rather beginning of life issues, specifically abortion. In other words, for many people the Catholic identity revolves primarily around the anti-abortion agenda at the expense of other Catholic issues such as the other relevant social concerns. Thus for Miller, pursuit of identity is often a function of a population high in religious commitment and low in religious literacy. Not only does identity fail to support the richness of tradition, but it also risks fuelling conflicts.²⁹⁶

Miller's analysis can be a useful tool in describing authentic identity formation. It does not however, entirely exclude the concept of identity as an important concept in discussing the effects of globalization. I have argued thus far that in a globalized world, not only are cultural or national identities at stake, but even the identity of a person as a bearer of rights is at stake. In other words, in a globalized world in which large populations are inclined to feel "homeless," identity becomes a fundamental need. It is unfortunate that some struggles for collective identity give rise to conflict, but, as I also argue earlier, some anti-global movements are contained within the very dynamic or the reflexive nature of globalization. Whether understood as deterritorialization (Appadurai), unmooring (Sassen) rootlessness (Turner), or nostalgia (Featherstone), the struggle for identity is undeniably one of these reflexive characteristics of the globalized world. As mentioned earlier, the rise of anti-immigrant right wing political parties in Europe

²⁹⁶ Vincent J. Miller, "Where is the Church? Globalization and Catholicity," in *Theological Studies* 69 (2008) 412.

provides evidence of the global versus local dynamic. Even as The European constitution is being formed, the Welsh, the Scots, the Bretons, the French, the Austrians, and the Basques are all still looking back to their national identity as a point of reference. It is in this context that this dissertation claims that contemporary militant Hindu nationalism can be attributed to the struggle for collective identity due to a rapid globalization of the Indian subcontinent.

Thus far, we have assessed a number of theoretical presuppositions that have direct bearing on the claim that the revival of contemporary militant Hindu nationalism can be attributed to the struggle for identity due to a rapid globalization of the Indian subcontinent. There is one more connection to be made in this assessment – that of the role of religion in the movements of resistance. As we will argue, although it is the most overlooked dimension of the global/local relationship, it is perhaps one of the most crucial means of populist engagement or resistance movements.

B. Religion and globalization

As mentioned in the introduction to the chapter, this section will assess the role of religion in anti-global movements. First, we will review scholarly arguments as to why, contrary to predictions that in a globalized world religion would lose its relevance, religion maintains a revitalizing presence. Second, we will try to understand how the particularistic presence of religious tradition makes it the source of individual and group identity. Third, we will try to comprehend the reason why religion becomes a means of regaining identity when group identities are either in danger of amalgamation with a larger group or faced with extinction. Fourth, we will also attempt to understand the political nature of religious struggles. In brief, the following pages will first take a closer

look at the role that religion plays in a globalized world, and finally, apply this to militant Hindu nationalism in India.

James Beckford is right in his assessment that many writers on globalization gloss over and even neglect religion in their preoccupation with the political, cultural, and economic dimensions of globalization.²⁹⁷ This is so because under the “privatization thesis”²⁹⁸ religion was expected to be relegated to the private sphere of human existence. Peter Beyer suggests that, although the privatization thesis is one way of dealing with the ambiguity of a global world, it is only part of the story. He contends that globalization, while structurally favoring privatization of religion, also provides fertile ground for renewed public interest in religion. Both Rolans Robertson and Peter Beyer extensively discuss the integral role of religion in the globalization debate. The discussion is crucial for this dissertation, since militant Hindu nationalism in part is a religio-political resistance movement.

Peter Beyer explains the role of religions in a globalized world by proposing two directions that religious traditions can take: first, traditional religions, he contends, are intricately built into particular cultures. By this Beyer means that there is a close relation between a particular culture and its religion since religion functions and operates within particular communities rather than in some vague, generic context. Thus, in the altered global context, religious traditions that normally deal in absolutes face the risk of

²⁹⁷ James A. Bedford, “New Religious Movements and Globalization,” in *New Religious Movements in the Twenty-First Century: Legal, Political, and Social Challenges in Global Perspective*, eds. Phillip C. Lucas and Thomas Robbins (New York: Routledge, 2004), 253.

²⁹⁸ Peter Beyer has written extensively on the validity of the privatization of religion in a global world. For example see, Peter Beyer, *Religion and Globalization* (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, 2000); and the more recent *Religions in a Global Society* (New York: Routledge, 2006). Beyer describes “privatization thesis” as the position that traditional religious forms are no longer definitive for the society as a whole, but can still direct lives of individuals or subgroups. “Privatization” refers to the fact that religion is a matter primarily of individual disposition.

relativization. This adjustment process brings about serious crises in both the traditions and the cultures. Religions in this context begin to assert their 'otherness' or difference in relation to the global. Second, religions, however, could also imbibe the values emerging from the global culture. If religious traditions take this approach, then they can take it upon themselves to address positively the problems engendered by globalization.²⁹⁹ The first option approaches globalization negatively from the perspective of particular cultures, and the second option approaches globalization positively from the perspective of global culture. Either way, religion can become a major player in the globalization debate.

Robertson's understanding yields further insights. Using the concept of relativization, Robertson suggests that, under globalization, subunits within the global whole are compelled to deal with their relativization. In this context, "the traditionally close ties between religions and particular cultures encourage the formation of national and personal identities."³⁰⁰ Religion, then, aids communities to rediscover, reclaim, or maintain their particular identities. In this sense, the rise of religious resistance movements can be attributed to the relativization introduced by globalization.

Whereas Robertson's explanation may provide the logic for religious movements of resistance, militant Hinduism is also intensely nationalistic. This can be explained by

²⁹⁹ Beyer, *Religion and Globalization*, 2000, 9-10. There is another way of mapping religious response to globalization. Beyer calls this the conservative and liberal options. The liberal response sees evil present not in the fact of pluralism both secular and religious, rather in the absence of it. In reality, intolerance and "particularistic ascriptions" are the prime source of evil. The conservative option (an emphatic reassertion of tradition in spite of modernity) emphasises making religion even more relevant in modern society. It sees evil in the direction that modernity is taking the world. Conservative religion tries to contradict modern social structures contrary to the liberals who embrace it. Hindu nationalist militancy can be categorized as the latter kind of response to globalization. It stresses its own socio-cultural particularism and emphasises the relativizing forces of globalization as the prime manifestation of evil in the world. Beyer, *Religion and Globalization*, 86-92 and 108.

³⁰⁰ Beyer, *Religion and Globalization*, 29.

the fact that the boundaries between the religious and political dimensions of militant Hinduism are very blurred. As Robertson suggests, most of the religious forms of resistance are not purely religious but essentially political.³⁰¹ In the proliferation of religio-political conflicts, Robertson sees empirical evidence of a reaction to globalization.

Robertson goes further to argue that on the one hand the relativization of nations, societies, and individuals encourages the search for particularistic identities and for the answers to "humanistic" concerns such as the ends of humanity and the ultimate meaning of human existence; in short, issues that concern human transcendence.³⁰² These issues, according to him, are intrinsically religious. Thus for example, during the British colonization of India, some Indian nationalists turned to religion to define the identity of the nation in religious terms. India was associated with a particular religious tradition. Similarly, in a globalized India, militant Hindu nationalists are once again turning to religion to regain the national identity. I do not argue that this identification is correct or that other interests are not at stake such as caste status quo, but that the dynamic under discussion has some credibility. On the other hand, because the search for identity and meaning itself originates in the context of the relativization of nations and societies, the problems of globalization are intrinsically political. Thus militant Hindu nationalists

³⁰¹ Roland Robertson, "Globalization Politics and Religion," in James A. Beckford and Thomas Luckmann, eds., *The Changing Face of Religion* (Beverly Hills California: Sage Publications 1989), 15.

³⁰² Ibid., Also see Peter Beyer *Religion and Globalization*, 84-86. Beyer contends that in the modern globalized society, the imminence/transcendence dynamic has changed. In traditional societies, the boundary between good and evil was determined by a person's acceptance of the dependence of the immanent on the transcendent, its unity and as a result, the acceptance of God. This arrangement was the source of moral conduct that guided the behavior of people. Religion asserted its' public influence by defining group boundaries and group solidarity. But this dynamic has been transformed in a global world. Under the altered arrangement, morality has lost its central structural position and religion less and less becomes the determining factor for group solidarity and behavior. On the level of society as a whole, Beyer concludes, the criterion for specifying the transcendent and its societal role has been undermined.

considered a Hindu rightist political party in power in India as the best way to ensure India's Hindu identity. Robertson calls this phenomenon the "politicization of theology and religion... and the "theologization of politics."³⁰³

John Meyers further clarifies the role of religion under globalization. Religious and cultural processes, he says, are sources of collective authority.³⁰⁴ Such a collective bargaining or identity assuring element becomes necessary under globalization because it brings about rapid changes in the core structures of particular societies: family, morality, and religion. This is true in countries such as India in which, in spite of its increasing political independence and economic power, is succumbing to Western cultural patterns. As Beyer contends "What appears to some in the West as moral, economic, and political decline of their own culture appears to some in the non-West simply as continued Western cultural, economic and political imperialism."³⁰⁵ In such a situation, Beyer, like Meyer, concludes that religion with its capacity for communal organization becomes an obvious candidate for structuring a response to unprecedented social and cultural changes.³⁰⁶ The recent Indian Premier League cricket matches are an example of such a process. Organized for the first time in the same format as the American NFL, the games came with all the ingredients of organized sports in North America – cheerleaders included. Lightly clad cheer leaders have never decorated the Indian sports scene where cheerleading is not perceived, as in North America, a sport in its own right. Not only were Hindu sensibilities disturbed but many ordinary Indians questioned the aping of

³⁰³ Roland Robertson and JoAnn Chirico, "Humanity, Globalization and Worldwide Religious Resurgence: A Theoretical exploration," in *Sociological Analysis* 46 (1985) 238.

³⁰⁴ John Meyers, "The World Polity and the Authority of the Nation-State," in *Studies of the Modern World System*, ed. Albert Bergesen (New York: Academic, 1980), 131.

³⁰⁵ Beyer, *Religion and Globalization*, 91.

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

Western practices sans relevance for India. However, it was the Hindu nationalists that raised the banner of protest. Radical Hindus protested the commercial portrayal of women during the IPL as vehemently as Indian Muslim radicals when Sania Mirza, the Indian tennis star, entered the tennis court in unconventional sports gear. The religious banner of protest became the most vociferous and visible. Religion, thus, has the power to offer collective bargaining power against those forces that disturb the social, political, economic, and cultural status-quo. Globalization is perceived as one of those forces.

Beyer also suggests that religion's capacity to offer a structural response to the ambiguities of the global world is particularly effective when political and economic structures fail to respond adequately to the ambiguities created by globalization. Since religions are rooted in local cultures, Beyer continues, religious leaders have the potential to portray regional conflicts in religious term. Religious response, particularly the conservative response, encourages the dichotomization of the world into "religiously pure and impure, into us and them."³⁰⁷ To quote Beyer:

Such a clear religious message can, under the current conditions, lead to successful mobilization of entire populations. Politicization on the religious basis then becomes a way of regions to assert themselves in the face of globalization and its consequences.³⁰⁸

Under globalizing conditions, religion can be expected to take one of the two directions: either its role can be limited to private religious practices or it can be assigned a broader social function. The later choice itself offers two possibilities: an ecumenical one, concentrating on the global problems generated by the global conditions, or a

³⁰⁷ Ibid. 92.

³⁰⁸ Ibid.

particularistic one that encourages cultural separateness of one's cultural domain through a "re-appropriation of traditional religious antagonistic categories."³⁰⁹ Movements that display the latter characteristic are called "anti-systemic" movements. Because of the socio-cultural and particularistic nature of religion, such religious movements succeed in making religio-cultural themes the subject matter of politics. In Beyer's words, "religious movements supply religion as a cultural resource for the political and legal systems."³¹⁰ The description of militant Hindu nationalism in India and its quest for political power as a religio-cultural entity is a sound example of such a dynamic.

The anti-systemic religious systems have two common characteristics. First, they find a common agenda in the problems that emerge as consequences of the globalized world. The relativization of individual and group identities is one such problem. Thus, the militant Hindu nationalists' claim that Indian culture would be diluted by Western culture is a "relativization" argument. Second, the militant Hindu nationalists seek to address those problems by themselves becoming institutionalized in the political and legal systems of particular societies.³¹¹ Again, the rise of the militant Hindu nationalists to political power in India was the way in which anti-systemic religious forces institutionalized themselves. School history books were re-written and radical constitutional amendments were attempted to accommodate the "Hindutva" ideology. In this manner anti-systemic religious forces succeed in countering the globalizing forces from transporting religion from the realm of the private to the public.³¹²

³⁰⁹ Ibid., 93.

³¹⁰ Ibid., 94.

³¹¹ Ibid. 107.

³¹² Ibid., 108. Also see Satish Deshpande, *Contemporary India: A Sociological View* (New Delhi: Viking Books 2003).

The above section has reviewed the theoretical connection between globalization, identity, and religion. A few crucial points have emerged. First that, far from losing its power, religions can maintain a revitalizing presence in globalized societies because they are intricately connected to particular cultures. Second, religion, because of its particularistic presence, is a primary source of individual and group identity. Third, when group identities are either in danger of amalgamation into a larger group or faced with extinction, religion offers a means of regaining lost ground as movements of resistance. Fourth, religious struggles are rarely purely spiritual in nature. They are deeply political movements, and political power is often seen as a means of gaining control and identity. Militant Hindu nationalism is a classic example of a response to the prospects of relativization of a particular cultural identity in India. Let us take a closer look at the phenomenon of militant Hindu nationalism.

C. Militant Hindu nationalism and globalization

Having assessed the role of religions in a globalized world, namely, that they become a primary source of individual and group identity, we must draw the practical implications of this assessment for India, especially in relation to militant Hindu nationalism.

Yogendra Shah, emeritus professor of sociology at the Centre for Study of Social Systems, Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi, concurs with Beyer. Analyzing the cultural impact of globalization upon India, Shah limits the homogenizing effect of globalization to specific significant aspects.³¹³ Unlike the colonial cultural context, which

³¹³ Yogendra Shah, *Culture Change in India: Identity and Globalization* (New Delhi: Rawat Publications, 2000) 97.

was largely characterized by domination, globalization, Shah suggests, entails “interdependence, reciprocity and exchange.” However, he observes, the nature of reciprocity is at the moment imbalanced in favor of the developed Western cultural entities. Such imbalances have an impact on local societies. First, they create negative perceptions about the globalization process in local populations who become suspect about the motivations of richer nations, their social, political, and economic institutions, and the “authenticity of the nature of interdependence.”³¹⁴ Secondly, he suggests, “it accelerates the growth of cultural self-consciousness and cultural identities,”³¹⁵ a point to which we will return in the next few pages.³¹⁶

Shah makes yet another significant observation for the Indian context. One must admit, he says, that the process of globalization brings about many technological, economic, ecological, and social changes. As Shah opines, however, “The extent to which it [globalization] may constitute a threat to local and regional cultural identities in India depends largely on the manner in which globalization is *perceived* [*italics mine*] by

³¹⁴ Ibid., 98. A number of cases come to the fore as examples. The World Trade Organization and its efforts to remove trade barriers is perhaps the prime example of this. Global trade agreements are stalled because developed nations provide huge subsidies to their farming population whose products then become cheaply available for developing or underdeveloped nations. If the poorer nations removed these barriers, local agricultural products will become uncompetitive in the very countries they are produced. India and Brazil are two of the main opponents to the WTO proposal in its present shape.

³¹⁵ Ibid. Also see Satish Deshpande, *Contemporary India: A Sociological View* (New Delhi: Viking Books 2003), 171-2. Deshpande analyzes globalization more in spatial terms than in cultural or purely religious terms and identifies “deterritorialization” as the primary characteristic of globalization. Deterritorialization provokes the simultaneous process of “reterritorialization.” According to him, the process of reterritorialization takes two main forms. “First, there is the simple refusal of archaic territorial entities to go away, and, indeed and increase in their mass appeal.” Thus, Deshpande studies *Hindutva* more as a reterritorialization issue than a purely cultural or religious phenomenon. Secondly, as he suggests, “a more complex form of reterritorialization is an integral part of globalization itself, namely, the cultivation and deepening of spatial specificity....” Hence, Deshpande describes *Hindutva* as a struggle for spatial identity.

³¹⁶ For example, 2007 Valentine’s Day celebrations were met with as much opposition as welcome. The militant Hindu nationalist organization *Bajrang Dal* (Hanuman’s army) declared that it would oppose Valentine’s Day celebrations in the state of Madhya Pradesh “tooth and nail,” claiming that the day reflects a Western phenomenon which is destroying Indian culture.
<http://newvote.bbc.co.uk/mpapps/pagetools/print/news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/6358531.s>

the people concerned.”³¹⁷ To the extent, therefore, that it exposes traditional Indian artisans, craftsmen, and artists to the outside world, thus enhancing their economic prospects, globalization is perceived as friendly. When it comes to non-material culture, such as values, beliefs, rituals, and religious practices, however, Shah concludes, “globalization only enhances the consciousness of threats to cultural identity.”³¹⁸

Shah’s use of the term “perceived” is crucial in this context. A comprehensive understanding of militant Hindu nationalism must include an analysis of the movement’s perception of globalization. As Juergensmeyer writes: “In those parts of the world that for much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were under Western colonial control, economic and cultural globalization have often been perceived as an extension of colonialism.”³¹⁹ Militant Hindu nationalists’ perception of globalization and its impact on India is colored by the nation’s past experience of Western colonization. In discussing the cultural elements of globalization in India, then, one needs to particularly keep in focus the early Portuguese and later British political, economic, and religious exploitation.

The theoretical considerations above bring to the fore elements that have a direct bearing on militant Hindu nationalism. They draw one’s attention to the predominantly Western bias of globalization, which makes its comparison with colonialism inevitable, even though there are significant differences between the two phenomena. They also highlight the fact that globalization accelerates the growth of cultural self-consciousness and cultural identities. Moreover, the manner in which local cultures and peoples

³¹⁷ Deshpande, *Contemporary India*, 103.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 104.

³¹⁹ Mark Juergensmeyer, “Religious Antiglobalism,” in Mark Juergensmeyer, ed., *Religion in a Global Civil Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 137. As mentioned earlier, even if the colonialism-globalization relation is contested, the perceived similarities does merit a more than a cursory study. Also see his earlier work, Mark Juergensmeyer, *The New Cold War? Religious Nationalism Confronts the Secular State* (Berkeley: California University Press: 1993).

perceive the effects of globalization determines how they might react to the phenomenon. In India, militant Hindu nationalists equate globalization with colonization, Christianization, and Westernization. There are other observations that were made earlier: that militant Hindu nationalism is both a political and a religious phenomenon; and that it is a reflexive movement that resists the relativization of local cultures to the dominant global culture. The five points below represent an attempt to apply these theoretical assumptions to militant Hindu nationalism.

- a) First, in the minds of militant Hindu nationalists, Hindu religious ethos and Indian national ethos are one and the same thing. As Beyer contends, "The line between Hinduism as religion and Hindu as a broader cultural and national identity is vague and contested." Yet, according to Beyer, as can be commonly observed in the history of the nations of the world, "the construction of religion has been bound up with the rise of nationalist and 'communal' (in the sense of culturally identified group) movements³²⁰ such as Christian Europe, Puritan America, or modern day Islam. This phenomenon is true also in the globalized world. Hence the argument that it has produced the "politicization of theology and religion... and the "theologization" of politics"³²¹ is a credible point.

Universalizing religions offering exclusivist and generalizing values, such as Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity, often align themselves with expansive empires with global ambitions in an effort to expand their belief systems to the

³²⁰ Beyer, *Religions in Global Society*, 189.

³²¹ Roland Robertson and JoAnn Chirico, "Humanity, Globalization and Worldwide Religious Resurgence," 238. Also see Beyer, "Globalization Politics and Religion," 238. Beyer suggests: "Life has become politicised. In the process, that which... is most concerned with life – namely religion... - itself acquires political significance. Meaning and power, primordially united, are reunited."

wider known world. The religion-politics nexus is inseparable. In the past, both these systems were used as means to universalize the values of the other. Religion carries with it political implications. First, religion directly affects the internal politics of states and carries with it trappings of power. Consequently, religion has increasingly become the language of politics in many societies. The role of religion in Iran, Pakistan, and even in the presidential election in the United States are clear examples. Secondly, religious concerns help to create new political constituencies and communities that can enter into competition and even conflict with the powers that be. This explains the reason why some national governments in an effort to either obtain or maintain political dominance and power seek to patronize religious movements. Thus in India, the BJP courted alliance with the VHP, the RSS, and the Bajarang Dal to realize its own quest for power. These new constituencies and communities are cultivated by the political powers to enhance their own influence. Thirdly, such communities and their movements contribute to the self-awareness of one's own traditions and change the way individuals approach their own traditions and those in political authority.³²² Thus the VHP, the RSS and the Bajarang Dal have succeeded in making destruction of the Babri Masjid and the reconstruction of the temple in Ayodhya the litmus test for the average Hindu and the political party that it helps come to power.

Religion thus can assist in two simultaneous processes in its relation to politics. On the one hand, religious movements can pose a challenge to existing

³²² James Piscatori, "Religious Trans-nationalism and Global Order, with Particular Consideration of Islam," in *Religion and Global Order*, eds., John L. Esposito and Michael Watson (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000), 73-80. Even though Piscatori makes these points in the context of Islam, they are applicable to other societies such as India.

authority. On the other hand, political movements can employ the religious dynamics to obtain and enhance their power base. In this process, religious and nationalistic militancy can become the two prominent reactions to globalization. This explains the rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to power in India in 1994. Its ascendancy can be attributed to the religious groundwork done by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), the Rashtrya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), and the Bajarang Dal (Hanuman's Army). Militant Hindu nationalism can thus be viewed as a classic example of what Robertson and Chirico call the "politicization of theology and religion..." and the "theologization of politics."³²³

- b) Second, militant Hindu nationalism is thoroughly a modern day global phenomenon – in the sense that it uses modern day language, technology, and infrastructure to its own advantage. It is in this sense that Chetan Bhatt, who considers culturally and politically aggressive *Hindutva* to be both the product of and a response to globalization (understood as global capitalism and a global cultural hegemony centred on the West), describes the movement as "an amalgamation of the archaic and the obscurantist with the high-tech and the late modern, reflecting the innovatory and modernizing characteristics of cultural nationalism."³²⁴ However, in India this is not a novel phenomenon. As the first chapter explained, the origins of Hindu nationalism lay in Indians exploiting the Western idea of 'Orientalism' introduced by British education and adapting this concept to the Indian colonial experience. They surprised the colonial powers by inventing the "*hindutva*" ideology instead of selling out to the British perception

³²³ Robertson and Chirico, "Humanity, Globalization and Worldwide Religious Resurgence," 238.

³²⁴ Bhatt, *Hindu Nationalism: Origins, Ideologies and Modern Myths*, 150.

of world history. Thus, the BJP's vision of a "resurgent India," entails a combination of Vedic society with the "thrusting vision of an informatics revolution, the Internet, deregulation and economic liberalization, foreign investment and globalization, all guaranteed by a militarily strong, nuclear India."³²⁵ In its mind, both these aspects are compatible.

This view is also supported by Arvind Das. *Hindutva*, according to him, involves a paradoxical process. On the one hand, it entails the "localization of *Hindutva*" while on the other, it calls for its universalization – the latter mediated by a globalized market. To quote Das:

The imagination of this "new *Hindutva*" – political ethnicity – is premised on emergent transnational market practices and is dependent on trans-border technologies that are now extremely powerful in shaping the contours of popular culture. At the same time, it is also based on primordialist "Us-Them" dichotomies that breed communalism....³²⁶

The above views indicate why militant Hindu nationalism is a local phenomenon with universalistic aspirations. It also explains why it both loathes globalization while courting elements of the same phenomenon.

- c) As argued previously, there are strong reasons to conclude that militant Hindu nationalism may be interpreted as a struggle for identity. Nationalism in any form was absent in India until at least the 1860s. In that sense, the establishment and expansion of militant Hindu nationalism is a modern phenomenon. India's confrontation with aggressive modernity took place with the arrival of European

³²⁵ Ibid., 190-194.

³²⁶ Arvind N. Das, "The End of Geography: Nationalism in the Era of Globalization," in *Nations Under Siege: Globalization and Nationalism in Asia*, ed. Roy Starrs (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 43.

colonizers and eventual colonization.³²⁷ But what began as an economic endeavour soon turned into political, cultural, and religious hegemony. After 1813, Christian missions were established and the British political establishment rooted itself firmly in India, often resorting to violent wars. Both the political and religious institutions shared an “aversion to Hinduism, with its idolatrous polytheism and caste system....” Both these social systems were often denigrated. Meanwhile, reforms of certain practices such as *sati* and child marriage were complemented by the proselytising and educational activities of the missionaries.³²⁸ The origin of the militant Hindu movements can be traced to this contact of Hindu tradition and its heritage with Western modernity. The Arya Samaj founded by Swami Dayananda (1824-83), in Jaffrelot’s contention, would be “the militant strand from which Hindu nationalism would spring forth.”³²⁹

- d) Earlier in our discussion on globalization we had quoted Robertson who suggested that, “The problem of global order intensifies concern with societal identities. Societies experience pressure to reach, as it were, into their *primordial*

³²⁷ Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India*, 13-14.

³²⁸ Ibid.

³²⁹ Jaffrelot, *The Hindu Nationalist Movement in India*, 5. Also see Appadurai, who suggests that “the colonial project of essentializing, enumerating, and appropriating the social landscape... were by no means completely effective, especially in regard to the colonizing of the Indian consciousness. In various kinds of peasant and urban revolt (boycott of foreign made goods), in various kind of autobiographic and fictional writings (like that of Rabindranath Tagore), in many different sorts of domestic formation and expression (like the hierarchical family structure), and in various kinds of bodily and religious practices (such as polytheism, vegetarianism, pantheism), Indians of many classes continued practices and reproduced understandings that far predated colonial rule. Moreover, Indian men and women deliberately recast their conceptions of body, society, country, and destiny in movements of protests, internal critique and outright revolt against colonial authorities. It is indeed from these various sources that the energies of local resistance were drawn – energies and spaces... that provided the social basis for nationalist movements.” Appadurai, *Modernity at Large*, 133-4. What was true of colonial India is now true of globalized India. Hindu nationalist movement is, to use Appadurai’s terms, a contemporary “movement of protest” aimed against modern day colonialism – globalization.

cores [italics mine] within the context of global norms...³³⁰ Avijit Pathak, a professor in social systems at the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, applies Roberson's thesis to the Indian context. The fear of cultural invasion (in the Indian context invasion from the West), he suggests, leads to "counter-tendency."³³¹ Cultural sub-systems, then, perceiving a threat to their own cultural identity, take upon themselves to reinvent or reconstruct a new identity employing their "past glory," or through a mythologization of the old tradition. The militant Hindu nationalists' circulation of *Hindutva* and in fact, their reconstruction of the India based on a "golden Vedic age/ethic" can be interpreted to be precisely such a phenomenon. Again, Pathak expresses this well when he says:

The fear of globalization may promote the doctrine of *militant nationalism*. Protect the nation. Sanctify it. Preserve its culture, and its boundaries. And suspect your potential enemies! Yes, this sort of nationalism has an emotive appeal. It gives us a cause, an identity to feed proud of, and an agenda to accomplish.³³²

The primordialists are not without their share of Indian critics. Arvind Das, for example, is of the opinion that militant Hindu nationalists do not genuinely want the "real past" but only a "retrospective mythology." He terms this phenomenon the process of replacing republican, secular, pluralistic India with their "legendary pseudohistory."³³³ BJP and its affiliates' efforts to organize Indian society around the themes of Vedic Hinduism can be perceived as precisely such an attempt. As mentioned earlier, I do not argue that the militant

³³⁰ Roland Robertson, "Relativization, Religion and Globalization," 35.

³³¹ Avijit Pathak, *Modernity, Globalization and Identity: Toward a Reflexive Quest* (New Delhi: Aakar Books, 2006), 99.

³³² Ibid., 101.

³³³ Das, "The End of Geography: Nationalism in the Era of Globalization," 31-62.

Hindu nationalists' claim to create a Hindu identity for India is valid. Rather, my argument is that regardless of the shape that militant Hindu nationalism has assumed, the fact that the movement experienced resurgence in the context of globalization is crucial to recognize.

- e) The concept of "reflexivity" can be an important theoretical tool in understanding militant Hindu nationalism. It can be interpreted as a "reflexive movement" within the dynamics of globalization. As a reflexive movement, militant Hindu nationalism is a response to "the new period of global capitalism characterized by the collapse of communism, the proliferation of general and niche consumption economies, information technology, deregulated, globalized and unevenly contiguous economies, and a global cultural hegemony centred on the West."³³⁴ However, one must remember that reflexivity involves a two-way movement – from the universal to the particular and from the particular to the universal. Thus, in a globalized world, militant Hindu nationalism is itself bound to develop universalistic goals and aims. It carries within itself its own universal mission. As Hansen would say:

... in the Hindu national appellation, this alternative universalism is no longer a critique of the West, but rather part of a strategy to invigorate and stabilize a modernizing national project through a disciplined and corporatist cultural nationalism that can earn India recognition and equality (with the West and other nations) through the assertion of difference. The more the Hindus assert their deep and constitutive difference vis-à-vis the West, and the more Hindu civilization asserts the purity of its alternative universalism and its civilization, the more it

³³⁴ Chetan Bhatt, *Hindu Nationalism*, 150.

will be respected and admired... However to gain respect from the West and from its neighbours, India must be strong and powerful.³³⁵

The above quote confirms Anthony Giddens' assessment that nationalism is a condition for entry into a modern world. It is a means to enter into the worldwide political and economic system. A political or economic entity cannot function without larger international alignments, but this requires the maintenance of strong centralized control on a national level. Religious nationalism, because it strengthens national identity, is highly compatible with the modern global system.³³⁶ Religious nationalism, then, brings together the heretofore irreconcilable elements – traditional religion, modern politics, and market-based economics. Militant Hindu nationalism, like all other similar forces, is far from 'abnormal' or the 'not-yet-moderns,' 'outside' of a democratic and modern world order. On the contrary, religious nationalism functions as a means for these movements to shake off the peripheral location assigned to them in the global evolutionary ladder.³³⁷ Militant Hindu nationalism, then, exhibits the normal process of reflexivity and relativity that is brought into play with the fruition of the global.

- f) Of crucial importance for this paper is the militant Hindu nationalists' attack on Christians. In the late 1990s militant Hindu nationalists, in particular members of the *Vishwa Hindu Parishad* (VHP) – the militant wing of the *Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh* (RSS) -- began targeting Christians, especially the *adivasi*

³³⁵ Hanson, *The Saffron Wave: Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India*, 231.

³³⁶ Mark Juergensmeyer, "The Rise of Hindu Nationalism," in *Ethical and Political Dilemmas of Modern India*, eds., Ninian Smart and Shivesh Thakur (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), 244.

³³⁷ Hanson, *The Saffron Wave*, 234. Also see Reddy, *Religious Identity and Political Destiny*, 25-58. Reddy locates *Hindutva* in a broader culture of critique where identity movement of all kinds compete for recognition, representation and rights.

(aboriginal) Christian population. Even as early as the late the 1980s the VHP had initiated *shuddhi* (literally, purification) to mass convert the *adivasis* to their original Hindu religion. Termed *parivartan* (conversion), the program encouraged them to a religious “homecoming,” emphasising the fact that, after all, Christianity was a “foreign” religion and that as Indians they must return to their original Hindu faith. The movement struck a note among non-VHP organizations such as the Bajarang Dal and even independent Hindu sages. They took it upon themselves to make the *adivasi* population “aware” of their roots before they were led astray by “beef-eating denominations” through their “inducements, fraud and coercion.”³³⁸ For the past couple of years, Christians in India have faced horrid violence. The persecution and harassment from militant Hindu organizations became the focus of the international attention. *The New York Times*³³⁹ and the US Department of State Annual Report on International Religious Freedom³⁴⁰ highlighted the violence against Catholics and other Christians in the Indian states of Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh. The papal visit to India was also met with much protest from the hard line Hindu organizations. Meanwhile, some sections of the Indian press themselves adopted a similar hostile posture. *Dinman* published the article, “Is the Catholic Church Really a Time Bomb?”³⁴¹ which emphatically underscored the anti-Christian sentiment in some quarters of the Indian

³³⁸ Bhatt, *Hindu Nationalism*, 198.

³³⁹ Cecilia W. Duffer, “Attacks on Christians Unsettle Rural India,” *New York Times* (January 23, 1999) “47 suspected Militants in India charged with Missionary’s death,” (January 25, 1999); and “India’s Christians: A Double Standard,” *New York Times* (February 19, 1999).

³⁴⁰ U.S. State Department, *U.S Department of State Annual Report on International Religious Freedom for 1999: India* (http://www.State.gov/www/global/human_rights/ifr_rpt/199/irf_india99.html).

³⁴¹ Ramsevak Srivastav, “Kya Katholic Church Sachmooch Ek Time Bam Hai?” *Dinman* (February 2-8, 1986).

population. During this time a number of churches were ransacked, nuns were raped, and religious leaders and missionaries murdered.³⁴²

Next a spate of violent attacks on Christians began in the Dangs district of Gujarat State and spread to the other North Indian states of Orissa, Bihar, Rajasthan, and Madhya Pradesh, and to the Southern State of Karnataka. A brief chronology of events may help.

In Dumka, Bihar State, Rev. Fr. Christudas was beaten and paraded naked publicly on Sept 2, 1997. On Nov 9, 1997 Christian houses of worship were repeatedly attacked in the Banswara district. On Christmas day, 1997, the most serious of the attacks came in the Dangs district of Gujarat where Christians were assaulted as they gathered for Christmas worship. On May 11, 1998 Shiv Sena (Shiv's army) activists attacked Fr. Octavio Nevis with iron rods in Amarnath, Maharashtra State. On June 16, 1998 Christians belonging to the Friends Missionary Prayer Band were beaten by the village chief and their houses destroyed. On July 18, 1998, copies of the Bible were burnt by alleged VHP and Bajarang Dal activists at the I.P Mission School in Rajkot Gujarat. In the Navapada village of Madhya Pradesh a mob raped four nuns on Sept 25, 1998 – a crime preceded by other acts of arson on Christian institutions.³⁴³ On Dec 25, 1998, Fr. Anthony was assaulted at Subri, Gujarat State and his automobile and motorcycle burnt. In Manoharpur village in Orissa the Australian missionary Graham Staines and his two sleeping sons, three and nine years old, were burned alive on Jan 23, 1999 in their automobile as Bajarang Dal activists chanted, *Jai*,

³⁴² Most prominent of the murders was the one in which the Australian missionary Graham Staines was burnt in his Jeep along with his son, while his wife and daughter watched the carnage helpless.

³⁴³ *The Week*, Oct 11, 1998.

Bajarang Bali (Hail, Bajarang Bali).³⁴⁴ Beginning Dec 24, 2007 Christians were systematically targeted in Orissa. Since then priests have been murdered, nuns raped and hundreds of churches and prayer hall set aflame. The violence reached unprecedented levels in September and October of the same year and has continued through 2008.

Underlying these attacks on Christian institutions and persons is the issue of conversion. There is a strong RSS and VHP conviction that there is a global Christian conspiracy to turn India Christian – a conspiracy brewed together by the Roman Catholic Pontiff and American Christian fundamentalist churches. The conviction is not hard to arrive at. The turn of the millennium saw a sharp resurgence in Christian evangelical activity. Projects such as AD 2000, Celebrate Messiah 2000, and the Catholic Charismatic Movement's Evangelization 2000 publicly aimed to make the gospel known to every person on the globe by the end of the millennium. To exacerbate the situation, John Paul II released *Dominus Jesus* in 2006 – a document that drew much criticism for its ecclesiology from less informed militant Hindu nationalists. Some of these issues will be discussed later in chapter eight.

This chapter has focused on the theoretical aspects of globalization and its effects with a special focus on the rise of global resistance movements, particularly, militant Hindu nationalism. Thus far, we have assessed globalization's economic, political, and cultural impact on the world in general and India in particular. We have also drawn the theoretical connection between globalization and culture, and globalization and religion.

³⁴⁴ A more comprehensive chronology of attacks against Christian can be found in, North-East thinkers Forum, *The March of Hindutva* (Jorhat, Assam: Anonymous), 85-87.

Our assessment has indicated that militant Hindu nationalism can be interpreted as a reflexive movement arising out of the crisis of socio-cultural identity. We have also analyzed militant Hindu nationalism as a modern, reflexive, particularistic, violent movement that nurtures universal goals and assesses how it accommodates both these opposing trends. The above theoretical considerations and the consideration of the particular case of militant Hindu nationalism have performed two functions. On the one hand, they help us see that militant Hindu nationalism, like globalization is a multidimensional phenomenon and that religion is a significant element of this multidimensionality. On the other hand, in light of the tradition of Indian theology, they compel the Church in India to make a credible multidimensional theological response to the situation.

Here, in the last section of this chapter, we will attempt a brief survey of the implications of these realities for theology. A deeper analysis will come in the following chapters, through which we will attempt to arrive at concrete theological proposal in the context of India.

D. Globalization and militant Hindu nationalism – a theological issue?

While globalization is studied by most social scientists as primarily an economic phenomenon, its cultural and religious impact demands that we also look at it as a theological issue. Questions of socio-cultural identities are not merely sociological issues. Earlier in the chapter we had said that Robertson found that the relativization of nations, societies, and individuals encourages the search for particularistic identities and for the meaning of “humanistic” concerns such as the ends of humanity and the ultimate

meaning of human existence; in short, issues that concern human transcendence.³⁴⁵ These issues, according to him, are intrinsically religious. We can reasonably conclude that particularistic movements are first and foremost a striving of the human quest for meaningful existence. They are primarily a transcendental quest or even a deeply religious quest for meaning. That is why in the context of globalization Beyer calls for a new attempt to “specify the transcendent” and consequently give the “central religious dichotomy [immanence/transcendence] meaningful definition and applicability.”³⁴⁶

Schreiter has written extensively on the implications of the new context of globalization for theology. At the turn of the century Schreiter had called upon the theological community to pay attention to globalization as one of the movements of our time that challenges Christians in their mandate to preach the gospel. Both as a global discourse and as a local discourse, globalization, he suggested, provides new challenges and opportunities for the Church to be relevant in the world.³⁴⁷ “Theology,” according to Schreiter, “stands today between the global and the local.”³⁴⁸ Consequently, “Theology must find ways of embracing both the global and the local if it is to be a faithful and credible voice for belief.”³⁴⁹ Schreiter finds his answer in the “enlarged concept of catholicity,” a topic to which we will return in the next chapter. This dissertation finds an important basis for its argument in Schreiter’s model of contextual theology, which we will also discuss at length in the next chapter.

³⁴⁵ Ibid., Also see Peter Beyer *Religion and Globalization*, 84-86.

³⁴⁶ Beyer, *Religion and Globalization*, 86.

³⁴⁷ Robert Schreiter, CPP.S., “Major Currents of Our Times: What they Mean for the Church,” *Origins* 31 (2001) 189-97.

³⁴⁸ Robert Schreiter, CPP.S., *The New Catholicity: Theology between the Global and Local*, New York: Orbis Books, 1997, ix.

³⁴⁹ Ibid.

Theological insights come not merely from Christian theologians but also from within Hinduism. For example, Jeffrey Long, an Irish American Hindu,³⁵⁰ differentiates Hinduism as a universalist pluralist religious tradition from Savarkar's *Hindutva* or Hindu nationalism, which developed as a reflex movement in response to colonialism and suggests that, in contemporary India, it must return to its pluralist identity. He proposes that a Hindu religious pluralism immersed in dialogue can provide a model for "spiritual eclecticism" that was characteristic of the Hinduism of the Vedic times.³⁵¹ A similar call is made by Virendra Prakash in his book *Hindutva Demystified*.³⁵² He distinguishes *Hindutva* from Hinduism and call for a movement toward the latter.

Amaladoss, writing from the Asian context, suggests that globalization is not necessarily an anti-theological process. According to him, God's own plan involves the construction of a global community. However, the globalization project as epitomized by current economic, political, and cultural globalization is perhaps the "wrong" kind of globalization. There is a right kind of globalization that respects pluralism and particular identity and promotes convergence and communion, making proper use of the facilities of science, technology, and the media.³⁵³ Amaladoss suggests that this is the kind of globalization toward which the church in India should labor.

Theologians can also include valid sociological opinions within their theological response to globalization. Analysing the impact on globalization on India, Arvind Das,

³⁵⁰ Jeffery D. Long, *A Vision for Hinduism: Beyond Hindu Nationalism* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2007). Long was officially received into the Hindu Dharma (religious tradition) in accordance with the Vedic ritual of the *Arya Samaj* (a reform movement started by Swami Dayanand Saraswati in the nineteenth century).

³⁵¹ Ibid., 195.

³⁵² Virendra Prakash, *Hindutva Demystified* (New Delhi: Virgo Publications, 2002), 176-9.

³⁵³ Michael Amaladoss, "Towards Global Community," in *Globalization and Its Victims as Seen by its Victims*, ed. Michael Amaladoss (New Delhi: Vidyajyoti Education and Welfare Society/ISPCK, 2000), 214 -42.

for example, hopes that India can escape the excesses of both militant Hindu nationalism and global consumerism. Das' alternative for India is based on "hope, ideals, and human values." His panacea for India's socio-economic, political, and cultural malaise rests on "a conscious striving that would guide the nation toward justice – social, economic, political, federal and gender... an India where even the poor matter as citizens of an autonomous republic." He calls for a "considered evaluation of India's past, a critical examination of its present, and a vision of its future,"³⁵⁴ – a worthwhile theological project to say the least.

The challenge for the theological community in India is clear. If militant Hindu nationalism emerged in the context of colonial Christianity as a struggle for identity and continues to exist in India in the context of globalization as a means of maintaining cultural and religious identity, then it becomes important for the church to make a theological response to these issues – a response that will encompass three areas: inculturation, interreligious dialogue, and social justice.

Conclusion

We have considered some important theoretical concepts and links in this chapter. In summary I have argued the following points: a) that anti-global movements such as militant Hindu nationalism are best understood as a struggle for collective identity within the globalization phenomenon; b) that it is the particularistic nature of religion that enables it to be a crucial part of identity creation in a global environment; c) that the theoretical links between globalization and the struggle of identity, between identity and religion, between the religious and political aspects of identity formation is applicable to

³⁵⁴ Das, *The End of Geography*, 59.

militant Hindu nationalism; d) that without justifying the claims of militant Hindu nationalists, movements such as militant Hindu nationalism can be understood within the reflexive dimension of globalization; and e) that for Christians in India, militant Hindu nationalism is a theological issue.

This dissertation suggests that any new theological work in India must be done in the context of the realities described above. As mentioned in the introduction, this dissertation also suggests that an appropriate theological response should be contextual in nature. In other words, rather than dogma and doctrine alone providing the impetus for theological engagement, the context must determine the theological agenda, albeit, in fidelity to the apostolic tradition. Contextual theology is a post-Vatican II development. Its origins can be traced back to the work of theologians such as Karl Rahner, Edward Schillebeeckx, and John Baptist Metz. More recently, Robert Schreiter has provided a methodological framework for contextual theologies. The next chapter provides a brief summary of Schreiter's model of contextual theology. It is the contention here that Schreiter's model of contextual theology provides a much needed framework within which the church in India can respond appropriately to the challenges posed by globalization and militant Hindu nationalism.

Chapter V

Contextual Theology: A Method of and for India

Introduction

As mentioned earlier, the focus of this dissertation is on the direction Christian theologians and the Church in India must take in order to make a theological response to globalization and militant Hindu nationalism, a response consisting in developing new theological initiatives that would focus on addressing the issues of inculturation, interreligious dialogue, and social justice within new frameworks of interpretation.

One of the primary claims of this dissertation is that any theological work in India must be done within the methodological framework of contextual theology. Thus, rather than de-contextualized dogma and doctrine providing the driving impetus for theological engagement, the context of globalization and militant Hindu nationalism must help determine the theological agenda, albeit, in fidelity to the apostolic tradition.

The discussion below is divided into two sections. The first section provides a brief overview of contextual theology and its development in general. Beginning with Vatican II I will trace the origin and development of contextual theology in the writings of Paul Tillich, Edward Schillebeeckx, and John Baptist Metz among others. This discussion will serve to provide the historical background of Schreier's model of

contextual theology, which forms the basis for this dissertation. In the second part, I will focus more particularly on the work of Robert Schreiter who has provided a methodological framework for contextual theologies in the current context of globalization. Finally, I will argue that Schreiter's model of contextual theology can provide the theological framework within which the church in India can respond appropriately to the challenges emerging from globalization and militant Hindu nationalism.

A. Contextual theology: An overview

Gaudium et Spes, The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, begins with the following words: "The joys and hopes, the grief and the anxieties of the people of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these too are the joys and hopes, the grief and the anxieties of the followers of Christ."³⁵⁵ The starting point of this vital document marks a radical shift in the starting point for Christian theology in general. The document begins with the circumstances and concrete situations of people, particularly the poor. It considers the day-to-day realities of the people of God as the starting point for theological reflection. This theological shift was an attempt to make the gospel a concrete reality in the midst of the circumstances in which the Church found itself.

Vatican II was an eye opener for the Church. A significant number of delegates at the Council were from Africa, Asia, and Latin America, and there was an awareness that the pluralism evident at the Council was symbolic of the larger world. As Karl Rahner mentioned in his commentary on the Council, the Church came to the realization that a

³⁵⁵ "*Gaudium et Spes*," in *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, ed. Austin Flannery O.P. (New York: Costello Publishing Company, Dublin: Dominican Publications, 1998), 903.

very Western Church with a Hellenistic world-view was being challenged to discover itself as a world church in a pluralistic world amidst of a plethora of pastoral and theological problems.³⁵⁶ There was also the realization that old traditional answers would not suffice for the new world situations.³⁵⁷ The search for newer answers did not merely result in new answers; they led to new methods in theology. One of them was contextual theology – a theology for which understanding the context in which the gospel is lived is as critical for any theological understanding whatsoever.

Contextual theologies have evolved over a period of time. To understand the method contextual theologies follow, one must begin with the method of correlation first proposed by Paul Tillich. The intellectual sources for Tillich's method lie in his basic assent with the Existentialist philosophers ranging from Kierkegaard to Heidegger. While Tillich's theology is governed by a clearly worked out ontological structure,³⁵⁸ he correlates this structure with human existential questions and concerns.³⁵⁹ Tillich, in trying to reach the essence of religion and the task of theology, rejected those efforts of the modern study of religion that reduced religion to some natural aspect or condition of human experience.³⁶⁰ On the contrary, Tillich considered religion as connected to the ultimate and unconditional dimensions of life. By this he meant those concerns of human

³⁵⁶ Karl Rahner, "Toward a Fundamental Interpretation of Vatican II," *Theological Studies* 40 (1979) 716-27.

³⁵⁷ Robert Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2001), 2.

³⁵⁸ "Ontology" is thought to be about "what is to be." Whereas some philosophers hold that from a careful analysis of what it is "to be" one can demonstrate the reality of God, Tillich's ontology is confined to showing human finitude, i.e., that human beings are inherently threatened by non-being and that human beings are not themselves the source of the power of being which resists the threat. The question of where the power to resist the threats of non-being lies, is what Tillich calls, "the ultimate concern," in other words, God.

³⁵⁹ J. Livingston, "Christian Existentialism," in *Modern Christian Thought*, eds. James C Livingston, Francis S. Fiorenza (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2000), 140.

³⁶⁰ For example, the philosopher tends to equate religion with metaphysics, sociologists explain religion based on cultural or societal roles and functions and the psychologist may explain religion using categories such as projection etc.

life that give meaning to existence, the “to be or not to be” concerns,³⁶¹ the concerns that condition one’s being—those concerns that determine ultimate destiny and which go beyond all other primary necessities and accidents.³⁶² Attaching religion to ultimate concerns points to the existential starting point for Tillich’s formal criterion for any theology. Calling this the first formal criterion for any theology, he wrote, “The object of theology is what concerns us ultimately. Only those propositions are theological which deal with their object in so far as it can become a matter of ultimate concern for us.”³⁶³ The second formal criterion is, “our ultimate concern which determines our being or not being. Only those statements are theological which deal with their object in so far as it can become a matter of being or non-being for us.”³⁶⁴

On a very broad level, Tillich considered the task of theology to “mediate between contemporary culture and historical Christianity....”³⁶⁵ Tillich’s *Systematic Theology* outlines and undertakes this mediating task by exhibiting a correlation between religion and culture.³⁶⁶ As an individual, the theologian making an analysis of the situation from which the questions of human existence arise seeks to exhibit that the religious symbols used in the Christian message are answers to these questions.³⁶⁷ Tillich

³⁶¹ Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, I (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), 14.

³⁶² Ibid.

³⁶³ Ibid., 12.

³⁶⁴ Ibid., 14.

³⁶⁵ David H. Kelsey, “Paul Tillich,” *The Modern Theologians*, ed. David F. Ford (Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 88.

³⁶⁶ In *Systematic Theology* I-III Tillich undertakes this mediating task of theology, each volume focusing on correlating a major biblical religious symbol as answer with a major human question as expressed by modern culture.

³⁶⁷ Livingston, *Modern Christian Thought*, 143. This is in opposition theologians like Karl Barth who set Christianity in opposition to culture.

was insistent that theology must be genuinely correlational. Whereas the questions come from the existential situation, the answers have to come from the Christian message.³⁶⁸

In the final analysis, even though Tillich proposed a correlational theology, his method for the most part remained abstract. The context did not assume a particular concrete form. In fact, critics claim that the concreteness and historicity of biblical faith had been distorted by Tillich.³⁶⁹ For example, his definition of 'being' and his application of this definition to God lead him to say that God is not a "person."³⁷⁰ Also the disconnect he created between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith made the historical Jesus irrelevant to theological claims. Tillich's Christology does not take seriously the historical Jesus. Thus, in making theological claims about him, Tillich reduces history to irrelevancy – contrary to what might otherwise be implied by his correlational method. In this way, Tillich's method of correlation is lacking since to a great extent theology becomes detached from history. Later correlational methods try to remedy this deficiency in various ways.

Schillebeeckx, for example, takes concrete history very seriously. He developed his own method of correlation to address questions that emerged from his historical inquiry into the identity of Christianity. In his move toward a more historical and social method, he particularly engaged questions that emerged concerning the relationship between the historical Jesus and the Christ of faith, and thus developed a method of correlation which helped him to address Christological questions.

³⁶⁸ Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, I, 64.

³⁶⁹ Livingston, *Modern Christian Thought*, 153.

³⁷⁰ According to Tillich, God is *being-itself*. In describing God in this manner Tillich wished to clarify that the God as "being" cannot be understood as the existence of other beings. God's being is prior to the split between essential and existential being. Thus, Tillich would claim that one cannot identify God with existence. In fact, strictly speaking God *does not exist* in the same manner that other finite beings do. God is not a being, but rather, *being-itself*.

Schillebeeckx made significant contributions to understanding the role of human experience in theological thought processes. In fact, as Schreiter suggests, much of Schillebeeckx's theology did not evolve from first principles or from dogmatic questions but from exigencies of pastoral situations.³⁷¹ Schreiter's appreciation of Schillebeeckx's theological method perhaps also speaks of Schreiter's own indebtedness to him. In his article entitled "Edward Schillebeeckx: His Continuing Significance," Schreiter suggests four reasons for the undiminished relevance of Schillebeeckx's theological method: a) His method is inductive; his point of departure for Christian theological reflection is experience.³⁷² b) His theology stresses the narrative character of experience. However, narrative must not be understood naively. The primary narrative is *The Story of the Living One*.³⁷³ The human story or narrative becomes meaningful to the extent that one allows the human narrative to be engaged with the Jesus narrative. c) Human suffering is the pervasive theme in all of Schillebeeckx's work. As Schreiter points out, Schillebeeckx's commitment to experience naturally leads to his engagement with human suffering. Suffering for Schillebeeckx is not a problem to be solved but a mystery to be encountered. The problem of human suffering cannot be addressed adequately either by technological rationality or self-introspection, but rather, solely from the realization that only God can provide any relief from suffering, usually working through human

³⁷¹ See William J. Hill, "A Theology in Transition," and William L. Portier, "Interpretation and Method," in *The Praxis of the Reign of God: An Introduction to the Theology of Edward Schillebeeckx*, ed. Robert J. Schreiter (New York: Fordham University Press, 2002), 1-36.

³⁷² Robert J. Schreiter, "Edward Schillebeeckx: His Continuing significance," in *The Praxis of the Reign of God: An Introduction to the Theology of Edward Schillebeeckx*, ed. Robert J. Schreiter., (New York: Fordham University Press, 2002), 1-36. Portier suggests that Schillebeeckx's theological reflections were decisively shaped by the experience of Dutch Catholicism during the 1960s, which struggled to be relevant in society torn between the Dutch Reformed Church and Dutch socialism. To this extent, Portier claims, "Schillebeeckx's theology is thoroughly contextual." William L. Portier, "Interpretation and Method," in Robert J. Schreiter, ed., *The Praxis of the Reign of God*, 23.

³⁷³ As Schreiter points out, the Dutch title of Schillebeeckx's book *Jesus* is *The Story of the Living One*.

solidarity in search of a fuller humanity.³⁷⁴ d) This fourth point is intrinsically connected to the previous three points. What keeps suffering from fragmenting the praxis of Christian faith is Christ's saving work – the soteriological dimension of his life.³⁷⁵

Schreiter points out that, perhaps, Schillebeeckx was one of those very few theologians who seriously insisted upon the importance of human history and how God acts in concrete human history. As he states: "Indeed, for Schillebeeckx, it is the human that is the royal road to God."³⁷⁶

John Baptist Metz's political theology is yet another representation of correlational theology, although Metz's application was primarily focused on the political implications of the gospel. In proposing his "political theology," Metz called for not a politicization of religion, but rather for the "sacralization of politics."³⁷⁷ His paradigm for his new 'political theology' suggested that theology should have the capacity to deal with crises stemming from theology's contact with history and society. Political theology must have the capacity to carry out a communicative exchange between theology and life in the church.³⁷⁸

³⁷⁴ Schillebeeckx uses the term "contrast experiences" to describe human suffering – the experiences that cause human beings to fall short of the ideal of human life, the *humanum*. Contrast experiences are particularly revelatory in the sense that suffering makes a human person question the normal assumptions of life and develop a critical view of life. Contrast experience thus provides human beings a privileged view of the world which in turn results in resolve in human beings to solidarity, and to a struggle for a fuller revelation of the *humanum* of the world. Jesus' life reveals contrast experience in its most acute form. Robert J. Schreiter, "Edward Schillebeeckx," in *The Modern Theologians* (Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 157.

³⁷⁵ Robert J. Schreiter, ed., *The Praxis of the Reign of God*, 191-2.

³⁷⁶ Robert J. Schreiter, ed., *The Schillebeeckx Reader* (New York: Crossroad) 17.

³⁷⁷ Charles Davis, *Theology and Political Society* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 13. Metz stressed both the political and mystical dimension of in his theological method. A theology that is merely mystical forgets the crucified one and does not touch the socio-political lives of human persons, and a theology that is merely political without the transcendental dimension can prove fatal to human existence. Christian theology then, should combine the political and mystical. For a more comprehensive treatment of the topic see, J. B. Metz, "Political Theology: A New Paradigm of Theology," in Leroy S. Rouner, (ed.), *Civil Religion and Political Theology*, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1986).

³⁷⁸ For Metz, the category of solidarity was a central theme of his political theology—"a theology based on the possibility of all men becoming subjects in the presence of God." For him, in solidarity, the categories

Metz envisaged political theology fulfilling a twofold function. In its negative role, it would function as a critical corrective to contemporary theology; in its positive role it would reassess the relation between church and society.

Metz considered the reversal of the privatizing tendency of contemporary theology as the primary task of political theology when considered in its corrective role. He traced the privatizing tendency of theology to the failure of classical metaphysical theology to answer effectively the questions raised by the Enlightenment and Marxism.³⁷⁹ The enlightenment by its emphasis on human rationality and Marxism by its rejection of religion had essentially relegated religion to the boundaries of society and robbed it of its capacity for social transformation. Nor did transcendental theology with its existential or personalist orientation adequately address the societal dimension of the Christian message. Thus, the Christian message was privatized. Metz thus considers the "deprivatizing of theology as the primary task of political theology."³⁸⁰

In regard to its positive role, Metz considered the task of political theology as forging a new relation between religion and society, between church and public society, and between eschatological faith and social life.³⁸¹ Metz drew the conclusion that the task of theology was not determining how systematic theology stands in relation to historical

of memory and narrative find their mystical-political praxis. Memory and narrative are mere categories without solidarity, just as solidarity without memory and narrative are essential for the humanizing of Christianity. The theme of solidarity is furthermore connected with faith. Faith for Metz is "a praxis in history and that is to be understood as hope in solidarity in the God of Jesus Christ... who calls all men to be subjects in his presence."³⁷⁸ This call to be subjects in God's presence is a call to solidarity with those who are oppressed, deprived and needy, but also with those who have suffered and died in the history of world's suffering. Ashley calls Metz's concept of solidarity the social character of Christian hope and action.³⁷⁸ For Metz one of the indispensable ways of expressing solidarity was prayer.

³⁷⁹ J.B. Metz, *Theology of the World*, W. Glen-Deopel (trans.), (Herder and Herder: New York, 1969), 108. Marxism criticizes religion "as an ideology, seeking to unmask it as a function, as the ideological superstructure of definite societal usages and power structures. The religious subject is being denounced as a false consciousness, that is, it is viewed as an element of society which has not yet become aware of itself."

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 110. Metz considers deprivatizing of Christianity as important a task as demythologizing,

³⁸¹ *Ibid.*

theology, or how dogma stands in relation to history, but rather forging the relation between theory and practice, between faith and practice. Metz did not envisage this as a new enterprise for theology, because the biblical tradition obliges us to think in this direction. The biblical tradition showcases salvation not as a private enterprise but as a public matter. Moreover, the eschatological promises of the biblical tradition such as liberty, peace, justice, and reconciliation are not privatizable values, but carry critical liberative imperatives for our present time, which stimulate us to make these values a reality in history.³⁸² Metz concluded that, "Every eschatological theology, therefore, must become a political theology, that is, a (socio-) critical theology."³⁸³

Metz was a student of Karl Rahner and was influenced by his transcendental philosophy. One of Rahner's emphases lay on anthropology as the starting point for theology. Metz distinguished his political theology from the transcendental theology of Rahner on precisely this point. He went beyond a strictly transcendental analysis of human existence and stressed the earthly dimensions of human social life. To this end he wanted fundamental theology to be developed as political theology, so that fundamental theology can go beyond the realm of apologetics and address the "human subject" – understood not merely transcendently, but also as a social and political being. Thus, in Metz's political theology, correlational theology assumed a more concrete face.

Other methods of correlation find their place in the approaches taken by theologians such as Shubert Ogden and David Tracy. Ogden considered the task of Christian theology as "the correlation of the Christian witness of faith and human

³⁸² Ibid.

³⁸³ Ibid., 115.

existence" subject to "the two criteria of appropriateness and credibility."³⁸⁴ The criterion of appropriateness refers to what is normatively Christian, i.e., is X appropriate to normative Christian witness? The criterion of credibility has to do with rational consistency and experiential compel, i.e., does X meet the relevant conditions of truth universally established within human existence?³⁸⁵

David Tracy's understanding of the method of correlation is significantly different from that of Tillich and Ogden. Tracy proposes a "mutually critical correlation." According to him, the two constant elements in any theological position are an interpretation of the tradition and an interpretation of the contemporary situation. The correlation does not arise, however, merely with the presence of two elements, but rather, from "establishing mutually critical correlations between the interpretations of tradition and situation or church and world."³⁸⁶ Whereas Tillich proposed that the correlation is between the human question and the biblical answer, Tracy differs from Tillich in suggesting that the theologian question critically not only our own context but also the biblical tradition. From Tracy's point of view, then, a theologian's task involves determining the "present meaning and truth of both the interpreted tradition and the interpreted contemporary situation" and "establishing the mutually critical correlations between both the sets of interpretation."³⁸⁷ Moreover, for Tracy, unlike Tillich, the first pole is the interpretation of the religious tradition and the second pole is the religious dimension of the contemporary situation.³⁸⁸

³⁸⁴ Shubert Ogden, *On Theology*, (Dallas, Texas, 1992).

³⁸⁵ Ibid.

³⁸⁶ David Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism*, (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1981), 80.

³⁸⁷ Ibid., 81. In developing his method of correlation, Tracy underlines the concept of the "working canon" that includes the diverse literary genre of the New Testament that interpret the Jesus event for the first pole.

The above discussion makes a significant point. Since Vatican II, there has been a shift in theological method. In the modern world, theology cannot be limited to abstract categories, but rather, theology must connect faith with concrete human existence. Tillich in a limited way, and Schillebeeckx, Metz, and Tracy in increasingly effective ways, suggested a correlation between faith tradition and contemporary situation as critical to any meaningful theological work.

In the section below, we will continue this discussion as we analyze the work of Robert Schreiter. In many ways Schreiter's theological method is similar to the tradition of the previous correlationalists, although he also differs in significant ways. His particular treatment of culture within the correlational dynamic, as we shall see, has implications for theological work in the contemporary globalized world. Other differences include the role of the community in developing new theologies and the place of previously existing local theologies in the development of contextual theologies.

B. The method of Robert Schreiter

It was mentioned earlier that Schreiter's model of contextual theology provides the theological framework within which the Church in India can respond appropriately to the challenges provided by globalization and militant Hindu nationalism. The reasons for this conclusion can be explicated in the following points. First, Schreiter's method is contextual. Indian theology, from its very beginnings, has been a response to the needs of the Indian context. Thus, in response to the problems of poverty, it developed a theology of liberation; in response to the religious pluralism it developed a theology of interreligious dialogue; and in response to the primarily Western structure of the Church in India, it developed a theology of inculturation. A new context challenges Indian

theologians in contemporary India – globalization and militant Hindu nationalism.

Schreiter's model provides the framework for developing a theology for this new context in fidelity to the theological tradition of the Indian theologians. Second, whereas the earlier correlationalists emphasized the need for a correlation between faith and the historical situation, it was Schreiter who provided a step-by-step method for developing a contextual theology. While the framework remains the same, theologians in each context can now adapt the framework to respond appropriately to their respective historical realities. Third, Schreiter's method fits the communitarian focus of Indian society. Local theology, in Schreiter's method, is the work of the local community rather than the work of the theological elite. The theologian's task is to provide professional guidance so that any new theology is faithful to the Christian tradition and is simultaneously a genuine response to the needs of the context. Fourth, Schreiter's method takes into account the previous existing local theologies as a resource for new theologies as they are developed in a particular context. This is crucial in the Indian context, since Indian theologians have already laid a strong theological foundation over the decades that focused on inculturation, interreligious dialogue, and social justice. Any new theological endeavor in India must keep these theological themes of inculturation, interreligious dialogue, and social justice in perspective. Finally, Schreiter's method pays ample attention to "culture." In the context of globalization and militant Hindu nationalism, the integral inclusion of culture in theological discussions is crucial. Since the cultural effects of globalization are responsible for the crises of identity, Schreiter's inclusion of culture in the dynamics of contextual theology is an unavoidable element of any new theological

work. The following discussion will focus on Schreiter's contextual theological framework.

Schreiter's method can be appropriately defined as a method of correlation, since for him the "basic purpose of theological reflection is the reflection upon the gospel in light of their particular contexts."³⁸⁹ In his book *Constructing Local Theologies*, Schreiter gives the background of the development of what he terms "local theologies,"³⁹⁰ also called contextual theology.

According to Schreiter, contextual theologies developed because three concerns were becoming prominent in ecclesiological circles in various parts of the world: (1) New questions were being asked the world over for which there were no ready traditional answers. For example, what does it mean to be Christian in pluralistic societies? Or, what does the gospel have to say about the absolute misery in newly independent nations ravaged by decades and centuries of colonial rule? (2) Old answers were being urged upon these regions that were asking new questions. For instance, answers such as "happiness in eternity" or "no salvation outside the Church" did not adequately engage the questions raised by peoples and nations. (3) In light of the encounter of new questions and new answers, a new kind of Christian identity was emerging which was different from the traditional theological reflection of historical Christianity. Liberation theology, Asian theology, Indian theology, African theology, eco-theology, and feminist theology

³⁸⁹ Robert J. Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2001), 1.

³⁹⁰ For Schreiter, localization, contextualization, indigenization, inculturation and adaptation are synonymous with a shift in theological method where the concrete realities of individual societies function as the starting point for theological work.

were the new kinds of theologies which were discovering their own responses to the new questions.³⁹¹

As Schreiter mentions, the emerging theologies paid special attention to three areas: the context, procedure, and history. Primary among them is the 'context.' Contrary to traditional theological engagement which focused on the application of a received theology to a local context, the new kind of theology began with the context itself. As Schreiter puts it:

It is the context that shapes reflection. The contextual models, as the name implies, concentrate more directly on the cultural context in which Christianity takes root and receives expression. Whereas the adaptation models continue to emphasize somewhat more the received faith, contextual models begin their reflection with the cultural context.³⁹²

Schreiter's emphasis on context is reinforced by other theologians such as Stephen Bevans. In his words, "There is no such thing as "theology"; there is only *contextual* theology.... Doing theology contextually is not an option.... The contextualization of theology—the attempt to understand Christian faith in terms of a particular context—is really a theological imperative."³⁹³

The second significant dimension of the new kind of theology is the forum where theological reflection originates – the community. The procedure was the reverse of the traditional theological methods where the starting point was the received academic theology. In contextual theologies, the kinds of issues that propel theological reflection and the urgency that surrounds it are matters of communal reflection. Theological reflection, then, does not remain an agenda reserved for the theological elite, but is rather

³⁹¹ Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies*, 3.

³⁹² *Ibid.*, 12.

³⁹³ Stephen B. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books 1992), 3.

a communal process. Unlike traditional theology, the local “theologian” in the new approach is not the academic professional but the community that reflects on the gospel.³⁹⁴

A third significant factor of the new theology is the emphasis on concrete history. Having the context as the starting point draws attention to the historical dimensions of the situation. Histories of suffering, racial domination, and sexual exploitation are perceived as “dangerous memories”³⁹⁵ which become the starting point for theologies. The historical struggles of the past and present, the history of Christian heroism and cowardice, and the focus on God as the God of human history are all assigned a privileged place in this new theology.³⁹⁶

Schreiter’s model is thus a further development of the contextual models of Tillich, Ogden, Schillebeeckx, Metz, and Tracy. The first major area of development is that for the earlier theologians the correlation existed between two elements in the theological equation – the gospel and the context. Schreiter on the other hand defines local/contextual theology as the “dynamic interaction among gospel, church, and culture.”³⁹⁷ In other words, any theological endeavour in Schreiter’s model is the result of a ‘dynamic interaction’ between three and not two factors: the gospel, the church, and the culture which embodies the theological community.

³⁹⁴ Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies*, 16-20. The professional theologian does not become redundant, but rather, becomes a resource for the community.

³⁹⁵ The category was coined and employed extensively by Metz’s in the development of his political theology. Metz perceived the history of suffering by human beings and in its context the memory of the suffering of Jesus Christ as “dangerous memory.” This is dangerous memory because a) the memory of Jesus Christ points to us where things have gone wrong; b) because this memory anticipates the future as the future of those who are oppressed; c) because this memory of suffering connects one another; and d) because it warns us about faulty relationships, institutions, and situation.

³⁹⁶ Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies*, 3-4.

³⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 22

In addition to the fact that Schreiter adds a third dimension to the theological equation, he differs from the earlier correlationist theologians in that he defines the three elements – the gospel, the church, and culture – with greater precision than they did. The ‘gospel’ for Schreiter, on the one hand, is the “Good News of Jesus Christ and the salvation God has wrought through him.”³⁹⁸ However, the gospel goes beyond revealed theology to include the context of the worshipping community and the living presence of God in the community. Thus, the gospel includes elements from the past and the present. The ‘church’ in this scheme of things is a “complex of those cultural patterns in which the gospel has taken flesh, at once enmeshed in the local situation, extending through the communities of its time and in the past, and reaching out to the eschatological realization of the fullness of God’s reign.”³⁹⁹ In other words, the local church is the concrete community of Christians. It is the church that gives the gospel a concrete reality within which to incarnate itself. ‘Culture,’ in his definition, is the concrete context in which the gospel is incarnated; the time, the place, the values, symbols, and meanings of the people and their history. In Schreiter’s contextual model, theology is the result of the constant interaction in a dynamic manner among these three elements.

Before we proceed further, we must define more precisely Schreiter’s understanding of culture since for him it forms the backbone of his theological method. A close study of his works *Constructing Local Theologies* and *The New Catholicity* give us a comprehensive view of both his understanding of culture and its implications for theology. In the former work, Schreiter describes various approaches to culture: the

³⁹⁸ Ibid., 20.

³⁹⁹ Ibid., 21.

functionalist, the ecological, the materialist, and the structuralist approaches.⁴⁰⁰ Schreiter alternatively subscribes to the semiotic study of culture because, according to him, it “holds the most promise for developing local theologies.”⁴⁰¹ Schreiter suggests three reasons for the precedence of the semiotic approach over others. The semiotic study of culture, according to him, is first of all interdisciplinary as it concerns all dimensions of culture: the verbal and non-verbal, the high cultural elements such as art and poetry, the low cultural elements such as customs and superstitions, as well as social, political, and economic organization of a community. Second, a semiotic study of culture pays attention to the sign systems in a culture and how the identity of the culture and its members are constituted. Third, semiotics focuses on the patterns and changes of trajectories with relation to identities⁴⁰² – an element crucial to the understanding of Hindu nationalist militancy as a crisis of identity.

Schreiter’s focus on culture arises from his understanding of the multicultural complexity of the modern world. A globalized world is a perfect example of such complexity. This has implications for the Church because it makes the Church’s mission a complex task. The complexity arises from the dual responsibility the Church must fulfil: it must, on the one side, carry out its mission of preaching the gospel to all nations,

⁴⁰⁰ According to Schreiter, the functionalist approach concerns itself with how the various elements of society are constituted and interrelated to form a cultural whole; the ecological and materialist approaches focus more on the relationship between society and its physical environment; and structuralist approaches are interested in studying patterns of and within culture and the transformation and mutations of cultural elements.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid., 49. Schreiter provides a comprehensive definition of the semiotic understanding of culture. First of all, culture is ideational—it provides systems of frameworks of meaning which serve both to interpret the world and to provide guidance for living. Culture in this dimension embodies beliefs, values, attitudes, and rules for behavior. Second, culture is performance—rituals that bind a culture’s members together to provide them with a participatory way of embodying and enacting their histories and values. Performance also encompasses embodied behaviors. Third, culture is material—the artifacts and symbolizations that become a source for identity: language, food, clothing, music, and the organization of space.

⁴⁰² Schreiter, *The New Catholicity*, 79-80.

while on the other side, fulfil this task with immense sensitivity to the many cultures. Faulty reading of cultures can cause immense harm to the culture within which such misinterpretation occurs and to the mission of the church itself – a point well noted in the surveys of colonial Christianity in India and of the origin of militant Hindu nationalism.

The complexity is heightened when one considers the dynamic nature of interaction between the gospel, church, and culture referred to above. Theology, according to Schreiter, involves a constant moving back and forth among these three elements. For example, the gospel raises questions about the community's context, its praxis, its worship, its actions, its leaders, its visionaries, its professional theologians, and its expression of response to the gospel. These are the elements that have to come together for the gospel to be truly alive in the community.⁴⁰³ The second element, the church, raises questions about the local church in relation to other churches and in relation to its own historical past and present. It also incorporates the local Christian communities' relation to tradition, meaning, and the universal Church as well as its own local circumstances. "Christian identity, the normativeness of Scriptures, church history, issues of orthodoxy," and the local Church's relation to these elements determine the authenticity of the local church's theological endeavor. The third element in Schreiter's contextual theology, culture, raises questions about identity and social change. Each cultural situation provides unique situations that require different sets of responses. Schreiter's focus here is not only on the impact that the Christian message can have on a people but also on the impact that culture can have on the Christian message. One's perception of culture, how it reacts to tradition both inside and coming from outside the

⁴⁰³ Ibid., 21

culture, its capacity for adaptation, change, or conservation are important dimensions to note in any theological task.

A highly significant element of Schreiter's contribution is his emphasis on the communal dimension of theological work. Schreiter lays the primary responsibility for the task of constructing local theologies on the community.⁴⁰⁴ However, Schreiter does not make redundant the work of the professional theologian. Rather, the community (local church) is guided by small groups of community members recognized for their wisdom, knowledge, insight, and charisms.⁴⁰⁵ The professional theologian is part of this group who guides the community (local church) to sound theological work, faithful to the gospel and church tradition. The professional theologian's task would be to find relationships between the community's context and similar contexts in tradition, to find scriptural basis and themes for the local community, and to connect the contextual theology to other churches both local and universal. This emphasis on theology as a community task is a crucially important dimension of Schreiter's contextual model of theology.

Schreiter's model of contextual theology also incorporates contemporary theories of intercultural communication. For example, by exploiting the advances of semiotics in the study of culture, Schreiter suggests that one can find the areas that theology should focus on in a community. Understanding the sign system of a culture and something of the metaphors that collect and guide the signs in a cultural system, one can focus on the cultural texts that will become the focus of theological reflection. Thus, once the issue for theological consideration has been located within the sign system of the culture, the

⁴⁰⁴ Martin Saarien, "Constructing Local theologies," in *Review of Religious Research*, 27 (June 1986) 379.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid.

community is then ready to begin the gospel dialogue with the larger church tradition and with other local churches.⁴⁰⁶

Schreiter also applies the principles of the sociology of knowledge to understand the relationship between theological forms and cultural contexts. Such a study helps in revealing how particular forms of thought might be related to particular cultural contexts. The limitations or strengths of particular models of theology, the study of cultural conditions best suited for particular forms of theology, and creating an awareness of the range of possible forms of theological expression available to local theologies are some ways in which a sociology of knowledge can be useful.⁴⁰⁷ For example, in the Indian context, the sociology of knowledge would try to answer the questions: "Why is militant Hindu nationalism experiencing a resurgence even when the context in which it initially originated has changed?" Another relevant question would be, "What is it about religion that allows it to be co-opted by global resistance movements?" It would also try to answer the question, "Which sociological and theological frameworks would best work for a theological response to the globalization and militant Hindu nationalist phenomena in India?"

⁴⁰⁶ Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies*, 73. Contemporary advances in the field of intercultural communication focus on a few elements in intercultural communication that did not receive attention. Two of the characteristics of competent intercultural communication are effectiveness and appropriateness of the intercultural communication event. In other words, for an intercultural event to be successful or competent not only must the communicator of the message feel that the goal of the communication has been achieved, but the receiver of the message must feel that the message has been received in a manner that does not violate any of the receiver's cultural boundaries. The response from the receiver must be such that the speaker understands that the integrity of the message is intact. Only if both these conditions are met is the intercultural communications both effective and appropriate. For example, in those animist cultures of India where the serpent is highly revered, the Genesis account of the "evil serpent" may not be the best account to explain the origin of sin. If the intercultural communication must be a successful event then the communicator of the message must device ways to communicate the same message in such a manner that it is sensitive to the cultural symbols of the receiver of the message. This is also the reason why in Schreiter's method a survey of the culture is an important aspect of theological work. Schreiter has included such and other advances made in the field of intercultural communication to the method of contextual theology.

⁴⁰⁷ Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies*, 79-80.

Aware of the complexity involved in the construct “local theology,” Schreiter offers a map⁴⁰⁸ to guide the development of local theologies. Schreiter’s map is the depiction of the interaction between the three elements of his model of theology – gospel, church, and culture.

According to Schreiter, in developing theologies from their context, one must first of all take into account previous local theologies, i.e., the practices and beliefs that are in place already. One of roles of previously existing theologies, whether they are seen more as obstacles to the development of local theologies or more as a promise, is that they are “powerful reminders”⁴⁰⁹ of the history of the struggles of the local community. These reminders reveal the history and the identity of the interaction between gospel, church, and culture in a local community. To that extent, existent local theology/ies become an important basis for new contextual theologies.

In Schreiter’s map, although previous theologies form the basis of local theologies theoretically and ideally, the practical starting point for any theological process should be the opening of culture. This means that the theologian must begin by listening to culture, its values, its patterns and structures, its needs, interests, directions, and symbols.⁴¹⁰ Beneath this listening and opening of culture is a deep theological truth – the development of local theology is the result of the discovery of the Christ already present in the culture as much as it is of the Christ coming to the culture in new ways. The theologian does not only bring Christ but is also welcomed by the Christ already present

⁴⁰⁸ See Appendix 1 on pg. 326.

⁴⁰⁹ Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies*, 27.

⁴¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 28.

in that place. The new theology will need to complement the Christ already alive and present in the local community.⁴¹¹

The opening of culture is the necessary precursor to the emergence of themes for a local theology. Depending on the insights that emerged from the opening of culture and depending on the needs of a particular community (identity crisis, poverty, interreligious conflict, caste/class struggles), the basic themes for a local theology emerge.

Simultaneous with the opening of culture is the opening of church tradition. Schreiter deals extensively with the complexities involved with the interaction of church tradition and culture. Keeping in mind the past negative encounters of church tradition (Portuguese Catholicism versus indigenous St. Thomas Christianity or colonial Christianity versus Hindu culture), one realizes that it is not uncommon to treat church tradition as an alien entity contrary to the cultural realities of a community. This phenomenon points toward genuine obstacles to the positive interaction of culture and tradition. Schreiter's own response is that one may have to emphasize that tradition is not monolithic. The New Testament itself is the product of the cultural realities of its own time.⁴¹² Moreover, if one examines the interaction between culture and tradition in the themes common to the local need and church tradition, one may find common vantage points. Also, if one recognizes the fact that the great theologies of the East and West drew

⁴¹¹ Ibid., 29

⁴¹² In more recent times, Pope Benedict XVI has used the gospel of John as the finest example of cultural integration. To quote him: "Is the conviction that acting unreasonably contradicts God's nature merely a Greek idea? I believe that here we can see the profound harmony between what is Greek in the best sense of the word and the biblical understanding of faith in God. Modifying the first verse of the book of Genesis, the first verse of the whole Bible, John began the prologue of his gospel with the words "In the beginning was the *logos*.... The encounter between the Biblical message and Greek thought did not happen by chance. The vision of Saint Paul, who saw the roads to Asia barred in a dream and in a dream saw Macedonian man plead with him: "Come over to Macedonia and help us!" (cf. Acts 16:6-10). This vision can be interpreted as a "distillation" of the intrinsic necessity of a rapprochement between Biblical faith and Greek inquiry." Benedict XVI, University of Regensburg, Germany, Sept 12, 2006

upon the philosophical systems of the time, then tradition can interact with contemporary philosophical traditions of the local culture to generate genuinely contextual theology.⁴¹³

As Schreiter summarizes:

The approach to the church tradition in the development of local theologies means understanding not only how the questions and the content that are in the tradition receive their shape, but also the cultural conditioning of the very paradigms of thought themselves. These paradigms of thought have to be considered in constituting an adequate local theology and one must be sensitive to relations of paradigms to their culture.⁴¹⁴

In this sense, tradition itself should be seen a series of local theologies, i.e., theologies that developed in response to specific needs in specific cultural contexts.⁴¹⁵

Schreiter's main point here is that local theologies should develop as a result of a multifaceted encounter between culture and tradition (gospel and Christian faith tradition). At the same time, for a local theology to be genuinely Christian local theology, it must include a significant and deep and genuine encounter with the specifically Christian tradition.⁴¹⁶

The correlational aspects of Schreiter's model are significant for yet another reason. Since both tradition and culture interact dynamically, both tradition and local theology are deemed necessary for their own growth respectively. As Schreiter states: "Just as tradition is necessary for the development of a local theology, so too local theologies are vital for the development of the tradition."⁴¹⁷ For example, while local communities can draw upon the rich resources of tradition for their own growth, local

⁴¹³ Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies*, 75-77.

⁴¹⁴ Ibid., 77.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid., 32.

⁴¹⁶ Ibid., 34.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid.

communities help tradition by contributing their own reflections. The reflections of the local community itself become a part of the ever-dynamic tradition.

According to Schreiter, in the past there have been two kinds of contextual models: ethnographic (deals with issues of identity and continuity) and liberation (deals with oppressive social structures and issues of discontinuity).⁴¹⁸ The difference between these two models depends on how they “read the dynamics and dominant needs of their social contexts.”⁴¹⁹ The former, Schreiter proposes, “strive to answer questions of identity....”⁴²⁰ As discussed in chapter two, militant Hindu nationalism is primarily a struggle for identity in the context of the cultural changes brought about by globalization. Thus, Schreiter’s ethnographic model will be useful in dealing with the identity aspects of militant Hindu nationalism. Even when focusing mainly on the cultural effects of globalization in India, the economic impact of globalization cannot be ignored. Globalization has brought about radical economic changes ultimately resulting in adverse social changes. Schreiter’s liberation model can be useful here, since it analyzes the lived experience of affected peoples to “uncover the forces of oppression, struggle, violence, and power.”⁴²¹ In the midst of grinding poverty, political violence, deprivation of rights, discrimination, and hunger, Christians must move from social analysis to finding echoes in the biblical witness in order to understand the struggle in which they are engaged. Liberation models concentrate on the need for change.⁴²² Thus, both Schreiter’s ethnographic model of contextual theology and liberation model of contextual theology are useful for India. This is further warranted by the fact that Indian theologians in the

⁴¹⁸ Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies*, 12.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid., 13.

⁴²⁰ Ibid.

⁴²¹ Ibid., 15

⁴²² Ibid., 15

past have addressed both cultural and economic aspects in their local theologies.

Similarly, any future theological work must include the cultural and economic dimension.

In this Schreiter's model is most helpful.

One of Schreiter's most significant contributions lies in drawing out the relationship between the gospel and culture. He applies the advances made in the field of intercultural communications to the gospel-culture dynamic. According to Schreiter, successful intercultural communication depends on the effectiveness and appropriateness of the communication event. These two criteria have already been explained previously. While there are other conditions that accompany the competence and appropriateness criteria, Schreiter suggests that a closer look at each part of the communication event (speaker/hearer, context, and the message) as well as reflection on their hermeneutical implications are also significant for a comprehensive understanding of intercultural communication events. For example, the speaker and hearer are preoccupied with different aspects of communication in the intercultural exchange. While the speaker is concerned about the integrity of the message, the hearer is concerned with its identity – i.e., the implications of the message for the hearing individual or community. For example, if the speaker uses the biblical imagery of a fattened calf to express God's joy at a repentant sinner, the imagery will be understood very differently in a Hindu village than a predominantly urban Muslim enclave in India. Moreover, intercultural communication is hardly a one-time event. Intercultural communication is a process and its success lies at the end of an intensive dialogue that involves much give and take.⁴²³

⁴²³ Ibid, 35-6.

The second part of intercultural communication is the context. Thus, whether the interacting cultures are individualistic or collective, low-context or high context, and each culture's tolerance of ambiguity are significant elements of intercultural communication.⁴²⁴ Thus for example, the emphasis on one's personal faith in Christ (Jesus as my personal Lord and Savior) that resonates with the American Evangelical Christians may find fewer takers in the more family/society structured Asian environment. The third aspect of intercultural communication is the message itself. Any message runs the risk of either losing or gaining information as it crosses cultural boundaries. Some part of the message may be more obvious and transparent in the speaker's culture than the hearer's culture or vice-versa. Lack of understanding of this aspect may lead to much confusion and even communication failure.⁴²⁵

Schreier goes beyond analysing the communication event to assess the hermeneutical issues involved in intercultural communication. He suggests that, epistemologically, there are four distinctive characteristics of any intercultural communication event: meaning, truth, sameness/difference, and agency.⁴²⁶

Regarding meaning, studies in intercultural communication are increasingly suggesting that rather than trying to find the meaning of communication in any single element of the intercultural communication event, it is rather a matter of "social judgement" of all those involved. For example, what is the meaning and implications of salvation according to the different religions? In other words, meaning is not a predetermined product but the result of the interaction [dialogue]⁴²⁷ of all those

⁴²⁴ Ibid., 37-8.

⁴²⁵ Ibid., 38.

⁴²⁶ Ibid., 39.

⁴²⁷ Parenthesis mine.

participating in establishing meaning. Understanding meaning in this way has implications for the second characteristic – truth. Truth, as advances in intercultural communications suggest, is more than propositional statements. Rather, truth is embedded in living communities. Propositional truth is seen as a necessary but insufficient condition for establishing intercultural truth. In fact, propositional truth can only be as significant as the lives of parties involved in the intercultural event, particularly those of the speakers. For example, Indians in the colonial times had difficulty reconciling the oppressive colonial structures with the Christian gospel the missionaries from the same country proposed. This was exemplified in Gandhi's statement, "I like your Christ, I do not like your Christians. Your Christians are so unlike your Christ." A third characteristic of intercultural hermeneutics is the way difference and sameness are balanced. This third characteristic seeks to identify the common grounds and categories that facilitate communication and understanding. As Schreiter describes it, intercultural communication "involves bringing together, from an epistemological point of view, emic (insider) and etic (outsider) distinctions, respecting the view of culture that each culture has of itself, yet finding a way to speak authentically across a range of cultures...."⁴²⁸ To deny difference can lead to the colonization of a culture and to deny similarities can lead to the employment of power tactics and the seeming futility of dialogue. Schreiter also assigns a theological significance to difference. Difference is a sign of divine plenitude and recognition of it should lead theologians to derive a theology of culture that recognizes and embraces it.⁴²⁹

⁴²⁸ Ibid., 42.

⁴²⁹ Ibid., 43.

The fourth characteristic of intercultural hermeneutic is agency. Intercultural communication should not lead to either of the subjects involved being deprived of their subjectivity. For example, the transformation in the names, food habits, dress habits, and rituals of worship during Portuguese colonial rule robbed the local people of their very identity. In general, Schreiter claims, there is too much emphasis on the receiver of the message on whether the receiver is getting the Christian message right. In the process, there is not enough emphasis on the transformation of the speaker and perhaps the empowerment of the hearer.

Schreiter suggests that “a renewed and expanded concept of catholicity” is an appropriate response to the challenge that globalization presents to theology. “New Catholicity” for Schreiter means a new wholeness, fullness, exchange, and communication: “Wholeness refers to the physical extension of the Church throughout the world; “fullness” refers to orthodoxy in faith; and “exchange and communication” calls for new emphasis on communication, keeping in focus the advances in intercultural communication.⁴³⁰ In the context of globalization, “new catholicity” also means providing *telois* for a globalized society. These themes will be revisited and elaborated upon in the final chapter.

C. An analysis of Schreiter’s method

Schreiter’s contextual theology is a valid model of theology for a number of reasons. His model offers a good balance between competing elements in any theological endeavor. Especially, in the light of liberation theology, which was often accused of sacrificing aspects of the Christian tradition for a more Marxist social analysis, Schreiter

⁴³⁰ Ibid., 128.

assigns appropriate roles to the gospel and tradition while at the same time acknowledging the vital role of the context in which the gospel and tradition must find its relevance. It is for the same reason that Bevans calls Schreiter's model a synthetic model.⁴³¹ It tries to preserve on the one hand the importance of the gospel message and the meaning of traditional doctrines while at the same time acknowledges the vital role that context plays in theology. It does not ignore the complexities of social and cultural change for the development of a theology that requires reflexive and intelligent action.⁴³²

In countries that have recently broken the shackles of colonialism and Romanism, like India, a contextual balance is of crucial importance. Communities can often go to the extreme of assigning their context the primary status to the detriment of continuity of church tradition. For example, in the pluralistic context of India, it would be very easy to adopt absolute pluralism as a model of interreligious dialogue. The relativism of such a position, however, both dilutes and relativizes the radicalness of the Christian message. Schreiter, in contrast, emphasizes not only the importance of the context as the starting point in theology, but also emphasizes that the test of authenticity of any Christian theology lies in its fidelity to the gospel and tradition. Oftentimes the new context may even play the role of reawakening elements of the tradition that it has itself forgotten.

⁴³¹ Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology* 90. Bevans' synthetic model should not be understood as another model of theology. Rather, Bevans differentiates between different types of contextual theologies: The Translation model of contextual theology, the Anthropological model of contextual theology, the Praxis model, Synthetic model, Transcendental model and Countercultural model. Schreiter's model, in Bevans' description fits the Synthetic model. The word synthetic here functions in several ways as a description of a particular model of theological method. In the first place, this way of doing contextual theology looks to a synthesis of all other contextual models, i.e., the translation model, the anthropological model, the praxis model, the synthetic model, the transcendental model and the countercultural model. Second, the synthetic model reaches out to the resources of other contexts and other theological expressions for both the method and the content of its own articulation of faith. Third, the synthetic model is in the Hegelian sense not just attempting to put things together in a kind of compromise but of developing, in a creative dialectic, something that is acceptable to all standpoints.

⁴³² Ibid., 88.

Schreiter's model of contextual theology also appropriately acknowledges the complexity of the developing contextual theologies. The complexity arises from the dynamic interaction not only between the context, gospel/church tradition, and culture, but also between one context and another, between one local church and other local churches. Moreover, the complexity is heightened, he admits, since contexts themselves are complex. Contexts are a 'complex whole' in the same way that the culture is a complex whole. Any change in one area necessarily affects the entire cultural system. Our discussion of globalization has made this point amply clear. For example, globalization is hardly conceivable as a one-way process. On the contrary, it is a reflexive process in which the movement from the local to the global is as unpredictable as the reflexive movement from the global to the local. In other words, just as the result of the entry of the global into the local can yield varying results, the local reaction toward the global can also can produce varying results. It can range from the amalgamation of the global into the local to the violent rejection of the external elements. Schreiter's model helps to capture the complexity of movements like militant Hindu nationalism -- the result of the clashing of the global and the local. Moreover, his model also provides the framework for a theological response to such complexities by offering conceptual tools such as the "new catholicity."

As early as 1997 Schreiter had published his understanding of the implications of globalization for the Catholic Church. In his seminal work *The New Catholicity: Theology between the Global and the Local*,⁴³³ Schreiter proposed that Catholic theology would have to be thought anew in the new context of globalization. Schreiter took both

⁴³³ Schreiter, *The New Catholicity*, 118.

globalization and contextualization of theology very seriously. On the one hand, he emphasized the effects of globalization on local cultures. As he describes it best, a new world disorder was emerging.⁴³⁴

On the other hand, Schreiter proposed a new way of being 'catholic' in a global world. Theology, he suggested, must be brought into closer dialogue with globalization. It "must be able to interact with globalization theory out of its own internal history and resources and not be simply reactive to it."⁴³⁵ Thus, Schreiter proposes the concept of the *new catholicity* as the theological concept that would help develop a new theology between the global and the local. This theme will be further developed later. It will suffice to say here that for Schreiter, "new catholicity" describes a new sense of being "church" in a global world.

The salient features of "new catholicity" are: a new appreciation for local cultures and their role in the church's mission; the understanding of the interaction of gospel and culture as an exercise of the dynamics of intercultural communication; an awareness of the fragmented and partial experience of culture around the world; and, the willingness to be present at the boundaries between the beneficiaries and the exploited in a globalized world.

Simultaneously, "new catholicity" entails orthodoxy. Schreiter suggests that the church must focus on religious identities rather than put the accent on syncretism. To achieve this it must focus not only on the how the gospel message is being transmitted but also on how it is being received by local cultures. He also suggests that one of the theological projects in a globalized world is to thematize a *telos* for the global society

⁴³⁴ Ibid., 118

⁴³⁵ Ibid.

revolving around the themes of genuine peace, reconciliation, and humanness. Schreiter also provides in his proposal certain epistemological characteristics. For example, meaning, for him, resides in the social judgement between the partners in communication. He also proposes a new understanding of "truth" in intercultural communication events. Truth in intercultural communication must go beyond referential understanding to include the existential understanding of truth. All these characteristics put together form what Schreiter terms the "new catholicity."

Another significant advantage of Schreiter's model is the dynamic nature of both the context and tradition. Neither context nor tradition are monolithic entities in Schreiter's model. Each depends on the other for its own development. While tradition gives the context resources for developing an adequate contextual theology, contexts provide an opportunity for the development of doctrine. For example, Vatican II offered a significant change in the Church's view of other religions. However, if dialogue is a major focus of Vatican II theology, then a viable theology of interreligious dialogue cannot be developed with the Catholic presumption of the exclusivity of Christian revelation. The plurality of the Indian society offers a real opportunity to seek ways to develop a theology of interreligious dialogue that respects the ultimacy of one's own faith without diminishing the ultimacy of the faith of the partners in dialogue. Theologically, such balancing will be no easy task. However, the perception of both context and tradition as being dynamic aspects of the theological process makes such a project a possibility.

The advantage of Schreiter's contextual theology is best seen in the first step he proposes toward the development of local theology. He suggests that any new theology

must begin with the previously existing theologies of the local community. This starting point is of particular importance in developing countries where the scars of colonization and Christianization are fresh. This is particularly true in countries like India where in the colonial past adopting Christian faith often meant also adopting Western cultural practices and a destructive estrangement from one's local cultural traditions. Shorter's insight with regard to inculturation can be applied to contextual theology as well.

Particularly because of its experience of colonization and often violent Christianization, Christian theology will benefit immensely to have local theology as its starting point.

As has already been mentioned, the historical reality of colonial Christianity is a challenge for Indian Christians. In fact, it is in the context of colonial Christianity and varying response to it that a theology of inculturation, interreligious dialogue, and social justice first developed in India. Thus, if globalization and militant Hindu nationalism comprise the new context in India, and if globalization is perceived as the new face of colonialism, it is imperative that a new theology in a new context must begin with the previously existing theologies in light of the parallels that are drawn between colonialism, Christianity, and globalization.

The strength of contextual theology lies also in its emphasis on dialogue. Bevans, for example, considers the "basic methodological attitude of openness and dialogue" the strongest aspect of contextual theology.⁴³⁶ The need for conversation and dialogue is not felt anywhere more deeply as in pluralistic societies like India. If, as Bevans suggests, "contextual theology makes an effort to make theologizing an exercise in true conversation and dialogue with the other so that one's own cultural identity can emerge

⁴³⁶ Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, 93.

in the process,” then contextual theology can contribute immensely toward developing a theology in India that would address militant Hindu nationalism and its attacks on Christians. Simultaneously, it would help develop a theology of inculturation that would make the church in India a genuinely Indian church. It could also help develop a theology of interreligious dialogue that would help each religious tradition to enter in to dialogue with each other without undue threats to their own identity. Moreover, both Hindus and Christians could find a common ground for dialogue in working together to address their past histories, the implications of colonization, and also work together to counter negative effects of globalization.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have analyzed the significance of contextual theologies in addressing the theological needs of local churches in the context of globalization. In particular, Schreiter’s contextual theology has been considered the framework within which Indian theology could respond appropriately to the new context of globalization and militant Hindu nationalism.

The next chapter will focus on the work of Indian theologians and the themes that emerge in their writings. Even a superficial reading of the Indian theological literature reveals three areas of theological concern: inculturation, religious pluralism, and social justice. We will explore both these themes and the theologians who developed them in order to suggest new theological initiatives in the context of globalization and militant Hindu nationalism.

Chapter VI

Indian Christian Theology: Past History and Present Context

Introduction

The main thesis of this dissertation is that globalization and militant Hindu nationalism form the new context for theology in India and that the Church in India must make a theological response to the crises that emerge from globalization and the resulting militant Hindu nationalism, a response consisting in renewed theological initiatives that integrate and address the issues of inculturation, interreligious dialogue, and social justice within newer frameworks. These goals led us to analyse some important sociological and theological issues related to the thesis. I argued in the previous chapter that that any theological work in India must be done within the methodological framework of contextual theology and that the appropriate starting point for contextual theologies is the previously existing theologies in the local community.

In this chapter we will outline and evaluate the previously existing theologies in India. This will prove to be a fruitful exercise for a number of reasons. First, since Schreiter's model suggests that contextual theologies must necessarily begin with previously existing theologies, it becomes imperative that the Indian theological tradition is surveyed in order to make a theological response in the context of globalization and

militant Hindu nationalism. Second, such an exercise will help us discover the contexts within which Indian theology must make itself relevant. As will be seen later, even a superficial reading of the Indian theological literature reveals three areas of theological concern: inculturation, religious pluralism, and social justice.

From the inculturation perspective I will focus on the fact that from the beginning Indian converts to Christianity and later native Indian theologians were primarily concerned about making Christianity compatible with Indian religious and cultural traditions. Unfortunately, such initiatives have borne only partially successful results because of the official limits placed on by the Vatican as well as from some inherent methodological weaknesses. Another area of theological engagement was the field of interreligious dialogue. Beginning with the pre-independence times, Indian theologians constantly strove to find common strands between Christianity and Hinduism in particular. Interreligious dialogue received a great encouragement in post-Vatican II times, although the challenge to enter into dialogue without compromising the uniqueness of each religious tradition remains an enduring challenge. The challenge emerges from an apprehension and reluctance by Christians to give validity to the claims of ultimacy by other religious traditions in the same manner that Christianity claims ultimacy. These two claims are considered dichotomous rather than complementary. Thus, a breakthrough in the theology of interreligious dialogue is necessary. Similarly, Indian theologians also focused on social justice issues from pre-independence times. However, since liberation theology originated in Latin America, the similarity of the Indian situation with that of Latin America saw Indian theologians creatively develop their own version of liberation theology. While they adopted the basic structure of liberation theology, they also made

innovative changes to make it fit the Indian context. For example, these theologians tried to make liberation theology compatible with the religiosity and pluralistic context of Indian society. But for most part, the Indian Church has been apprehensive of liberation theology and its variants because of its adoption of Marxist tools of social analysis. Here too, a new framework for a theological response to the problem of social injustice is required.

Third, we hope to identify the issues that may emerge for any future theological endeavors in India. I will suggest that while the emphasis of Indian theology has been rightly focused on inculturation, interreligious dialogue, and social justice, newer frameworks are needed to deal with these issues in the context of globalization and militant Hindu nationalism. In the area of inculturation, I will propose that Schreiter's application of the advances made in the area of intercultural communication to the theology of inculturation is an appropriate framework within which this problem can be addressed in India. With regard to interreligious dialogue, I will argue that the framework for interreligious dialogue provided by Mark Heim may provide a much needed breakthrough for genuine interreligious dialogue in India. In the area of social justice, Schreiter's suggestion of the Church providing the *telo* for contemporary globalized societies as the Church takes its place between the global and the local will be proposed as a valid framework for addressing the problems of poverty and social injustice in India. Lastly, a critical evaluation of the previously existing theologies will help us both avoid the pitfalls of the past and develop guidelines for future theological work in India.

Two caveats may be presented at the very outset. First, in India, inculturation, religious pluralism, and social justice did not develop as independent fields of study, but

rather, each of these issues has been considered integral to each other. Thus, for example, inculturation was considered simultaneously to be an interreligious and a justice issue; interreligious dialogue was discussed also as an inculturation issue; similarly, social justice was perceived broadly enough to include inculturation and for most part proposed as an interreligious project. The importance of the above points cannot be overemphasized. Second, Indian theology is a vast field, which accommodates classical, modern, and post-modern theologies. Since the focus of this paper is contextual theology, our analysis will limit itself to theological initiatives that can arguably be termed contextual theology proper.

A. Indian Christian theological thought in pre-independence India

The section below will give a brief outline of the theological initiatives that Indian theologians have taken over the decades. The outline is divided into two main sections: Indian theological thought in pre-independence India and in post-independence India. Each section is further divided into smaller sections that discuss the contributions of particular theologians. In the thoughts of these individual theologians we will attempt to identify the main themes for future theological initiatives in India. We may outline these themes under three main headings: inculturation, social justice (liberation), and inter-religious dialogue.

As elaborated in chapter one, British colonial rule in India, apart from giving birth to the Hindu renaissance, also gave India a certain political structure. Peoples of diverse cultural backgrounds were now woven into a unified fabric: the Indian nation. Thus, by its independence in 1947, India was not only the world's largest democracy, but also religiously pluralistic, culturally diverse, and constitutionally secular (secular as in a State

which intends to treat all religions impartially). However, India's economic impoverishment was equally shocking. Characteristic of the Indian theological scene since the eighteenth century have been the responses Indian Christian theologians made in the context of the realities they encountered. The primacy of dialogue in religious debates, the consistent effort at making Christianity compatible with the Indian cultural context, and the inclusion of equality and justice in religious movements was characteristic of Christian theological thought in pre-independence India. Retrospectively, it can be said of Indian theology that it anticipated contextual theology in the kind of responses it made to the social, political, and economic situation of India. In this sense, Indian theology can perhaps be termed as a forerunner to contextual theology.

Indian theological endeavour as a distinctive field may be traced back to pre-independence India. While Christian missionaries flooded India during colonial rule, pioneering missionaries and Indian converts to Christianity searched for ways to reconcile the Christian message with Hindu doctrines. The French Jesuit missionary Robert de Nobili, for example, who arrived in India in 1605, adopted the life-style of a Hindu *sanyasi* (monk) and mastered Sanskrit in his efforts to win converts. However, he refuted Hindu doctrines and his aim was more conversion of high caste Hindus rather than convergence of two religions traditions. Efforts such as de Nobili's may be appreciated as contributing to the genesis of the history of inculturation in India. Western rationalism introduced by the British was responsible for further stages of such efforts later.

Indian converts to both Protestantism and Catholicism immersed themselves not merely in symbolic gestures of inculturation but in serious interreligious dialogue. For example, Rammohan Roy (1774-1833), a Protestant Hindu and a rationalist, questioned both polytheistic Hinduism and the miraculous events surrounding the Christian doctrines of incarnation and resurrection.⁴³⁷ In contrast, he based his faith in Christ on the rational (rationally plausible sections of the New Testament) and moral (Jesus' ethic as described in the New Testament) dimensions of the life of Christ.⁴³⁸ The crucial point, however, was that Rammohan Roy's thoughts developed as a result of a *dialogue* with Dr. Joshua Marshman, a Baptist missionary. As a Baptist Christian, Dr. Joshua Marshman was deeply concerned about the kind of Hindu-Christian synthesis in which Rammohan Roy was engaged. His debates with Rammohan Roy were the result of his eagerness to preserve the integrity of the Christian scriptures and doctrine in their entirety.⁴³⁹ M.M. Thomas is of the opinion that had Marshman "... not sought to impose a whole systematically formulated creed in all its fullness as necessary for salvation..." it would not have "hindered Rammohan Roy from digging through moral to the historical-prophetic interpretation of God, Christ and salvation."⁴⁴⁰ This emphasis on dialogue and the attempt to arrive at a synthesis between Hinduism and Christianity would become the central focus of the early converts to Christianity.

⁴³⁷ Also known as Raja Rammohan Roy, he represented Hindu monotheism. As a Protestant Hindu he wrote and published the books *The Precepts of Jesus: The Guide to Happiness and Peace, Extracted from the Books of the New Testament Ascribed to the Four Evangelists*, and *An Appeal to the Christian Public in Defence of the Precepts of Jesus by a Friend of Truth*. He founded the Brahmo Samaj and his movement later was called Brahmoism. Publication information not available.

⁴³⁸ M.M. Thomas, *The Acknowledged Christ of the Indian Renaissance* (London: SCM Press, 1969), 15.

⁴³⁹ A detailed description of the dialogue may be found in M.M. Thomas, *The Acknowledged Christ of the Indian Renaissance* (London: SCM Press, 1969), 1-37.

⁴⁴⁰ M.M. Thomas, *The Acknowledged Christ*, 14.

There were three centres of intellectual formation in pre-independent India where one could be introduced to Western intellectual tradition: Rammohan Roy's Brahmo Samaj, Mr. Hare's Hindu College, and Alexander Duff's Christian College. From these institutions of higher education came a number of erudite Hindus who converted to Christianity. Some of these new converts were earnest about creating a Hindu-Christian synthesis. If Rammohan Roy's ideas developed in debates with Mr. Marshman, the ideas of Lal Behari Dey and Krishna Mohan Banerjee in Bengal and Nehemiah Goreh and Pandita Ramabai in Poona themselves developed in controversy with the ideas propagated by Rammohan Roy and his Brahmoism. Their main point of contention was the rationalism of Brahmoism. Like Dr. Marshman, Dey and Goreh positively affirmed the role of divine revelation and human faith response. Thus Dey and Goreh were more inclined to accept the incarnation and Christ's atoning sacrifice as expressed in the New Testament. Dey's Hindu-Christian synthesis, however, seems to be more cultural than doctrinal. To quote Dey:

A Hindu is the most religious being in existence. He puts up his bed religiously, anoints his body religiously, washes religiously, dresses religiously, sits religiously, stands religiously, learns religiously, remains ignorant religiously and becomes irreligious religiously. It is this religiousness, forming so prominent a part of the Hindu Character, and called into activity by the combined influence of English education and Christian mission, which has created that spirit of religious enquiry over which I now rejoice.⁴⁴¹

Dey considered the spirit of religious enquiry of Hinduism and Hindu religiousness invaluable for Christian evangelism.

⁴⁴¹ Ibid., 50.

Even though the synthesis proposed by Dey barely reached the level of doctrines, it still points to the theological thought pattern of these early Indian theologians. This is more clearly seen in the almost unanimous approbation of Brahmo Samaj's novel idea of the formation of a National Church for India. Even though Dey, Banerjee, Goreh, and Ramabai opposed Brahmoism's emphasis on reason, they joined hands with the Brahmo Samaj on the idea of a National Church. These Indian theologians visualized a national organization of Christians whereby the passion for Indianness and national unity would be preserved without compromising the fundamental beliefs of Christianity.⁴⁴² Perhaps, the question in the minds of these theologians was whether one could be Christian without compromising their Indian cultural and political identity. For example, would their new found Christian status necessarily means also adopting the Western culture? Would their new religious faith alienate them from mainstream Indian politics? These were important questions for these nascent Christian Indian thinkers. The National Church in their minds would give them some collective identity. Their idea of an indigenous National Church also was aimed at integrating not only Christian doctrines and Indian culture but also the Christians themselves. They hoped that the National Church would be based on the Apostolic Creed that would be broad enough to be ecumenical. In their view, all churches would have to reform themselves in the light of the scriptures.⁴⁴³ Basically, this meant that all denominations would have to make doctrinal concessions to reach a consensus on what it means to be a Christian Church in

⁴⁴² For example, in 1870, a Christian convert by the name of Kali Charan Banerjee started a newspaper, *The Bengal Christian Herald*, later called *The Indian Christian Herald*. In the very first issue the paper outlined the views of these early Christians in the words: "In having become Christian, we have not ceased to be Hindus. We are Hindu Christians. We have embraced Christianity, but we have not discarded our nationality. We are as intensely national as any of our brethren of the native press can be. See, Kaj Baago, "The First Independence Movement Among Indian Christians," in *Indian Church History Review* (June 1967): 67.

⁴⁴³ M.M. Thomas, *The Acknowledged Christ*, 53-4.

India. However, European religious and political realities proved to be the greatest barrier for such an endeavor to come into fruition. Perhaps these theologians were naïve about the bitter rivalries between Christians themselves (Protestant versus Catholic) and the political expediencies (French Catholic versus Anglican British) that motivated Christian missions.

There were other theologians like Krishna Mohan Banerjee who elevated the Hindu-Christian dialogue to the level of doctrines in a more profound way. Banerjee's task was made easy by the fact that both Brahmo Samaj and Arya Samaj interpreted the Hindu Vedic Religion as monotheistic. Influenced by the monotheism of renascent Hindu thought, Banerjee was keen to impress upon others the positive relations between Hinduism and Christianity. In his opinion, even though it may seem that Hindus formed in the Western tradition had departed from the Hindu traditions, in reality Hindu Christians were the only people who could realize that the principles of the Christian Gospels were in theory and practice recognized and acknowledged by the early Vedic thinkers. He further went on to showcase the parallelism between the Christian and Hindu concepts of creation, fall, the deluge, and the idea of sacrifice. The most striking parallelism between Hinduism and Christianity lay, according to him, in the identification of Christ the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world as the true Prajapati of the Hindu Vedic writings.⁴⁴⁴

Vedic Hinduism contains within itself the concept of Purusha sacrifice and Prajapati. According to the Vedic writings, Purusha, the Lord of Creation who was begotten from the beginning, offered himself as a sacrifice for the *devas* (gods). In the mention of Purusha - the 'half mortal, half immortal' Lord of creation – and his sacrifice

⁴⁴⁴ Kaj Baago, "The First Independence Movement Among Indian Christians," 65-78.

on a *suli* (cross), Banerjee found the closest parallelism between Hinduism and the Christian concept of Jesus' atoning sacrifice. In the history of Hinduism no god has been given the throne of Prajapati and no one can claim that throne. This leaves a vacuum. Banerjee strove hard to theologically claim that Jesus was the fulfilment of the original Vedic teaching of the Purusha Sacrifice and Prajapati and that the throne belonged to Christ.⁴⁴⁵

A credible development of theology is already noticeable within this short period of Indian history. In the initial interest of Rammohan Roy in Christianity and his dialogue with Marshmann, in the cultural synthesis sought by Dey, and in Banerjee's doctrinal synthesis of the Vedic Prajapati with that of the atoning sacrifice of Christ, Indian theologians strove toward integrating Christian and Hindu doctrines. None of these projects bore the necessary results, although these developments did serve to lay the foundations for serious theological work in the future.

There were other similar efforts in the field of interreligious dialogue. If Banerjee's synthesis between Hinduism and Christianity was the most profound doctrinally, Keshub Chunder Sen's was the most creative effort of the early Indian theologians. Under his leadership he took the Brahmo Samaj away from the rationalism of Rammohan Roy and guided it toward Indian mysticism. He incorporated the traditional Hindu Bhakti mysticism (devotional mysticism), yogic discipline, the invocation of holy names, and incarnational theology into his understanding of Christianity. On the other hand, he disassociated himself from historical Christianity and interpreted it in more mystical terms. For example, he interpreted the Christian concept of Trinity in terms of the Vedic definition of Brahman (Divine) as *sat-chit-ananda* (truth-

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid., 74-75.

consciousness-bliss) – the Father being Truth, Jesus being the incarnation of *chit*, and the Spirit as bliss. He saw in Christ the fulfilment of the truth and the value of the Asian heritage. Characteristic of Sen's theology was harmony; a harmony between Hinduism and Christianity, between Europe and Asia, and between the East and West, which according to him, could be realized in Jesus Christ.⁴⁴⁶ To that extent he too became passionate about a unified church in India. His dream of a unified National Church was in part fulfilled in the formation of the Church of South India and the Church of North India, and in part remains the challenge of the Church in India today.

Indian Christian theological thought went beyond mere doctrinal synthesis in the efforts of Brahmabandhav (Sanskrit for Theophilus) Upadhyaya, a convert to Catholicism, who exploited Thomistic philosophy to reconcile Hinduism and Christianity. His efforts were fourfold: a) an integration of the social structure of India into the Christian way of life; b) the establishment of an Indian Christian monastic order; c) the employment of Vedanta for the expression of Christian theology; and d) the recognition of the Vedas as the Indian Old Testament.⁴⁴⁷ Upadhyaya, like the Christians in the early centuries in India, was convinced that one could culturally be a Hindu while being a Christian in religious beliefs. Calling himself a Hindu Catholic, he wrote, "By birth we are Hindus and shall remain Hindu till death. But as *dvija* (twice born) by virtue of our sacramental rebirth, we are Catholics, we are members of the indefinable communion embracing all ages and claims."⁴⁴⁸ His efforts to develop Christian doctrine and theology based on Indian rather than the Western Greek Philosophy while keeping the Thomistic framework is termed by Lipner as "straightforward fulfilment theology at

⁴⁴⁶ M.M. Thomas, *The Acknowledged Christ*, 69.

⁴⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 100.

⁴⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 107.

its best."⁴⁴⁹ He even wanted to begin an Indian monastic order.⁴⁵⁰ Unfortunately for Upadhyaya, the Church of the time rejected his philosophy, his efforts at Hindu-Catholic integration, and his vision of an Indian monastic order. On close examination, the reasons for the rejection may be obvious. Upadhyaya accepted the caste system in its totality. Also, in the Church's mind, Upadhyaya failed to see the full implications of his acceptance of certain Hindu practices such as idol worship. Historically, the church as at time was not ready to see the potency of redeeming grace operating in depth in Hinduism as Raimundo Panikkar would do after Vatican II. Moreover, M.M. Thomas concludes, he misunderstands revelation as a supernatural extra to nature instead of as the encounter of Christ with the totality of human life."⁴⁵¹

There were other religious thinkers and reformers who did not become Christian but genuinely strove for Hindu-Christian unity. Vivekananda, the famous *advaita* (non-dualist) mystic, tried to interpret Christianity in non-dualistic terms. He was also deeply conscious of the inequalities both social and economic that plagued Indian society.

Vivekananda drew a parallel between the "...Pharisees and Sadducees in Hinduism,

⁴⁴⁹ Julius Lipner, *Brahmabandhab Upadhyaya: The Life and Thought of a Revolutionary* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999), 387. Upadhyaya wanted to convince educated Hindus of the existence of a God under the monotheistic system of religion (like Christianity), i.e., a personal creator-God, omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, righteous, who can be arrived at by pure reason and not based on any scriptural testimony. He called his system rational theism. Just like in the West Thomas arrived at the proofs of the existence of God using Western philosophical categories, in India Upadhyaya was convinced, one could do the same using Indian philosophical categories. Upon the natural truths of reason the supernatural truths of Catholicism could be harmoniously superadded. Such a system he was convinced would be compatible. In short, rational theism would be a *preparation evangelica*, i.e., a preparation for the reception of the gospel of Christ.

⁴⁵⁰ Fifty years later. Upadhyaya's vision would come true when foreign missionaries like Bede Griffiths started *ashrams* (monasteries), which were Hindu in life style but Christian in their theology. After the II Vatican Council these *ashrams* would develop into open communities based on the guru (master) *shishya* (disciples) structure of Hinduism and Buddhism. For an enlightening article see Paul Wilkes, "An unsettling stillness," *National Catholic Reporter*, May 19, 2006.

⁴⁵¹ M.M. Thomas, *The Acknowledged Christ*, 111.

hypocrites, who invent all sorts of engines of tyranny in the shape of doctrines...."⁴⁵² He made such parallelisms the basis for his concern for human dignity, for justice on behalf of the people of India, and for taking historical actions to realize it. Sri Ramakrishna was a pluralist who had visions of Christ and believed that all religions are different paths to the same goal. Gandhi, uninterested in the historical Jesus, idealized Christ's teaching and held the Sermon on the Mount and the Bhagavatgita in equal esteem. In Gandhi's thoughts, there was a real distinction between the Christianity of the gospels and its colonial expression. The difference between the Christianity of the gospels and colonial Christianity is an important distinction in the present context of militant Hindu nationalism. It provides Christians the incentive to remain faithful to Christ and his gospel message. Most Hindus, like Gandhi, value the life, ministry, message, and sacrifice of Christ. Their resistance to it, like Gandhi's, comes from any deviation from it.

Gandhi also brought into consciousness the social injustices that plagued India as a nation. He not only spearheaded the national freedom movement, but also with equal intensity addressed the issues of caste inequalities and religious disharmony. His approach to religions, however, showed traces of modern rationalism and universalism – a result of his own Western education.

A special mention must be made of the *bhakti* (devotion) movement as a force for social justice and equality. The Bhakti movement originated in South India as a Dravidian revitalization movement (as opposed to the Aryan Vedic ritualism of the North, and the more ascetic world-negating philosophies such as Jainism and Buddhism).

⁴⁵² Ibid., 147-8.

⁴⁵³ In opposition to these forms of religiosity, South Indian sages (more particularly Tamil) successfully engaged in the transformation of secular romanticism to the religious realm. In other words, the romantic poetic genre of Tamil literature was transmuted to emotional devotion or *bhakti* toward a personal deity. The original *bhakti* movement, then, was an alternative between ritualism and world-negating asceticism. This devotionalism later spread to the rest of India by the Sanskritization of its literature in the form of the *Bhagavata Purana*. The caste conscious context of the North proved to be a fertile ground for this more devotion centered movement. Its radical focus on devotion devalued the role of caste in the communities of *bhaktas* (devotees).⁴⁵⁴ To a lesser degree in the South and to a greater degree in the North, then, the Bhakti movement was an egalitarian counter-caste movement. The original struggle for equality based on "occupation and as long as it is done out of devotion to God" was appropriated by masses of people for whom equality became the clamoring demand. The *bhakti* movement became a combination of low caste struggle for equality in a hierarchical society and popular spirituality embodied in regional languages distinct from the elite priestly Sanskrit.⁴⁵⁵

This egalitarian devotionalism would later be appropriated by Indian liberation theologians. Indian theologians like Walter Fernandez have found in the *bhakti*

⁴⁵³ The Aryans were responsible for the transformation of Indian society from a pastoral egalitarian society to an agrarian priest-centred caste society. They were also responsible for the gradual migration and concentration of the Dravidian populations to the South where the *Bhakti* movement began. The basic ideology of the movement revolved around the belief that there are no higher or lower levels among human beings based on occupation as long as it is done out of devotion to God for whom all are equal.

⁴⁵⁴ See V. Subramaniam, *The Origins of Bhakti in Tamilnadu: A Transformation of Secular Romanticism to Emotional Identification with a Personal Deity*, in eds., G. M. Bailey & I. Kesarcod-Watson, *Bhakti Studies* (Bangalore: Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1992), 11-51.

⁴⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 57.

movement themes consistent with liberation theology.⁴⁵⁶ They compare it with the counter-cultural movement begun by Jesus. Much effort has been dedicated to drawing a parallelism between Jesus' people movement in opposition to the Pharisaical elitism of his time and the *bhakti* movement.

The above thoughts of the Indian theologians, social thinkers, and reformers in the pre-independence times laid the foundation for later theological development. One can identify the clear directions they were providing. First, they placed an emphasis on interreligious dialogue in an effort to reach a religious synthesis. This is obvious both in the dialogue between Roy and Marshmann and in the efforts to unify Hindu/Indian and Christian/Western religious and cultural traditions in the work of Dey and Banerjee. Second, they strove for unity between Hinduism and Christianity as well as for unity among Christians. The initiative to found an Indian National Church is an outstanding example of this concern. This effort did bear fruit among some Anglican Christians when the Church of South India was formed.⁴⁵⁷ The Roman Catholic Church for most part excluded itself from such broadly uniting movements.⁴⁵⁸ Third, along with interreligious

⁴⁵⁶ For a liberation theology interpretation of the *bhakti* movement see Walter Fernandez "Bhakti and Liberation Theology for India," in *Leave the Temple: Indian Paths to Human Liberation*, ed. Felix Wilfred (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1992), 47-65. The priestly class along with the conquerors formed the *Brahmin* caste, and the local rulers the *Kshatriya* (the ruling caste). Unhappy with the new social structure, the later began to demand equality with the Brahmin caste. A lengthy process of conflict and negotiation led to the establishment of a mutually acceptable power-sharing structure whereby the priestly class and the ruling caste could co-exist. However, the arrangement was far from the panacea that both parties had expected. Whereas the *Kshatriya*'s constantly emphasised the call to action, the priestly class Brahmins constantly diverted the attention from the struggle for social equality to a spiritual egalitarianism achieved through contemplation. The two texts of the *bhakti* movement, *Bhagavada Gita* and *Bhagavada-Purana*, are really an effort to balance, on the one hand, *bhakti* (contemplation or devotion) and *karma* (action) and, on the other hand, social equality based on a sense of duty rather than on birth. As Walter Fernandez suggests, "The ruler, who was demanding power from the priest, has recourse to an egalitarian ideology to achieve it." In other words, the *Kshatriya* declares himself equal before the Brahmin.

⁴⁵⁷ The Church of South India became the umbrella organization under which all the streams of Anglican Churches could be unified. It was founded in 1947. A similar structure was established in the north called the Church of North India in 1970. Fernando and Gispert-Sauch, *Christianity in India*, 156.

⁴⁵⁸ Perhaps doctrinal and ecclesiastical differences such as the equal validity of scripture and tradition and the primacy of the Petrine office among others inhibited any participation in such unifying efforts.

dialogue and inculturation, Indian theologians were equally sensitive to the economic impoverishment of the Indian masses. In the writings of social reformers such as Vivekananda (e.g., concern for human dignity irrespective of caste) and Gandhi (e.g., spiritual struggle against colonial oppression) and in the evolution of the Bhakti movement, the themes of equality and social justice became characteristic of religious thought in pre-independence India. Thus, pre-independent Indian theological thought may be summarized under three main headings: inculturation, interreligious dialogue, and social justice.

It was on the foundations laid by these pioneers and movements mentioned above that the post-independence Indian theologians built their theological edifice. Vatican II only encouraged Indian Catholic theologians to think yet more boldly in terms of an Indian Church deeply embedded in the Indian realities of pluralism and poverty. To that history we now move in the sections below.

B. Indian Christian theological thought in post-independence and post-Vatican II India

In the post-independence era, especially in the wake of the Second Vatican Council, the Indian Catholic Church strived to respond to the complex realities of the Indian society. As mentioned above, inculturation, interreligious dialogue, and social justice were the three themes that emerged from the pre-independence and pre-Vatican II theological efforts in India. In the post-independence and post-Vatican II India further developments took place in these very areas.

First, the Indian Catholic Church tried to distance itself from its Western colonial milieu and develop a church and theology rooted in the local culture. Secondly, it became

conscious of its prophetic role in the context of the prevailing social and economic inequalities. It realized its call not merely to charity but also to bring justice through social and economic liberation. And thirdly, it began serious conversation with other religions, particularly Hinduism, in order to develop a theology of inter-religious dialogue. This history is vast. To keep this review in perspective, we must remind ourselves that the purpose of the review is to tap the theological resources already existent in India for new theological initiatives in the context of globalization. A selective review thus becomes imperative. As mentioned before in this chapter, three areas demand our attention: inculturation, social justice, and inter-religious dialogue.

i. The place of inculturation in Indian theology – D.S. Amalorpavadass

The Indian church's efforts toward inculturation began with mundane aspects of India's spiritual life – Indian chants, the use of Indian languages and musical instruments in worship, the use of Indian gestures in worship (bowing instead of genuflecting), the extensive use of incense and flowers, and the use of dances. However, Indian theologians simultaneously worked toward both the development of an Indian liturgy and a theology of inculturation in order to make the Indian church a genuinely Indian entity. The foremost of the theologians in this field was the Catholic priest D. S. Amalorpavadass (1930-90), who founded the National Biblical, Catechetical, and Liturgical Centre (NBCLC), and later the *Anjali ashram*. He identified the aim of the centre in these words:

- 1) Genuine commitment to social justice and contribution through everything to the creation of a new society (human, just and fraternal);
- 2) Inculturation of every aspect of Christian life and every activity of the Church's mission;
- 3) Both justice and inculturation to be realised through a living dialogue and cooperation with people of other religions and ideologies (inter-religious dialogue); and
- 4) Development

and living of an authentic Indian Christian spirituality, manifested through a life-style.⁴⁵⁹

Even though Amalorpavadass' main focus was inculturation, one cannot but help notice his multi-dimensional approach toward inculturation. Inculturation involved other aspects, especially, inter-religious dialogue and social justice. In fact, multi-dimensionality is a characteristic of Indian theological thought.

In his book *Toward Indigenization in the Liturgy*, Amalorpavadass outlined the inculturation project in its totality. According to him, efforts at inculturation should encompass: a) the sensible forms, which envisages linguistic adaptations, the formation of priests and religious with an Indian mentality and outlook, sociological changes (in the sense that Christians should be like Indians in everything else except religious beliefs), and art which includes Church architecture, music, painting and sculpture; b) the conceptual forms of inculturation which touch upon theology. Amalorpavadass' theology of inculturation was based on an understanding of the theology of the local church as "the realization in a place [a particular geographical location] of the whole mystery of Christ."⁴⁶⁰ According to him:

The church must be present to all religions and cultures, assume everything, show genuine sympathy and appreciation for all human, cultural and religious values found in them and assimilate their ways of thinking and expressing, praying, worshipping, etc. As the Vatican Declaration on Non-Christian Religion says, it is the task of the sons of the Church, "in witness of their Christian faith and life, to acknowledge, preserve and promote the spiritual and moral goods found among them. (n. 2).⁴⁶¹

⁴⁵⁹ D.S. Amalorpavadass, ed., *The Indian Church in the Struggle for a New Society* (Bangalore: NBCLC, 1981), 482.

⁴⁶⁰ D.S. Amalorpavadass, *Toward Indigenization in the Liturgy* (Bangalore: NBCLC, 1972), 14. Parenthesis mine.

⁴⁶¹ Ibid., 16.

and c) the spiritual forms, especially, the liturgy. Amalorpavadass was of the opinion that, if liturgy were to be the genuine action of the local church and a living experience of a community, then it should be embodied in locally appropriate and meaningful signs. He drew attention to those Western liturgical signs that had no meaning in the Indian context.⁴⁶² He suggested that if liturgical actions were to have any meaning, they must be drawn from the local cultural and religious heritage of the people. In the final analysis, the connections between cult and culture would be necessary to create communication, communion, and bonds within and outside the Christian community.

Amalorpavadass was conscious of the kind of problems that confronted a national movement of inculturation—problems arising from the cultural and religious diversity within Indian states and regions. Thus for example, the pluralism of the Indian society makes it very difficult to accommodate Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, Sikh, or even Muslim religious traditions into a synthesis. A move in either of these directions can alienate the other traditions. Yet, within this diversity, Amalorpavadass recognized a dynamic unity. He was firmly on the side of the development of an Indian liturgy free of the rigid uniformity that characterizes Western liturgy. Recognizing the reality of Indian pluralism, he suggested, “The plurality of India’s cultural and religious traditions, the plurality of contributions of modern culture and the plurality of pastoral situations and needs call for a pluriformity in the liturgy.” But, emphasizing the unity, he continues, “The axiom “unity in diversity” will be fully applicable to our Indian liturgy. It will have a basic unity

⁴⁶² Traditional Indian worship adopts bowing or prostration as the more appropriate posture in the presence of the divine. Genuflection, for example, is meaningless in the Indian context. Other examples are the use of rings at a wedding, western liturgical vestments, western dress habits for clergy and religious, etc.

with a plurality of forms according to the cultural and religious patterns taking shape and prevalent in the various regions of India.”⁴⁶³

Amalorpavadass’ vision can be critiqued on many points.⁴⁶⁴ Amalorpavadass never practically laid out how “unity” could be achieved among the various religious traditions in and through Indian liturgy. In fact, Amalorpavadass’ efforts were more concentrated toward evolving a synthesis between Hinduism and Christianity. However, his remarkable insights provided the foundations for a theology of inculturation for India. He also made a strong link between spirituality and justice – a theme often reflected upon by Indian liberation theologians. Any spirituality worthy of its name, according to him, “should work for social justice and liberation of the Indian people.” As he expressed it, “The concern for the realization of a just society, the bringing about of the liberation of the oppressed classes, and the ushering in of God’s Kingdom...” were integral to the theology of inculturation he developed.⁴⁶⁵ Perhaps, he was more successful than others in finding the link between Indian spirituality and social justice.

⁴⁶³ Amalorpavadass, *Toward Indigenization in the Liturgy*, 22-3.

⁴⁶⁴ Amalorpavadass, although aware of the many obstacles and opposition in his way, may have underestimated their extent. When the proposal of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of India for certain adaptations in the liturgy was approved by Rome on April 25th 1969, the implementation of the proposal was largely left to the discretion of the local ordinary. For most part, except minor changes, the liturgy remained untouched. A new Anaphora for a specifically Indian liturgy has for the most part remained in the ‘experimental phase.’ This reluctance was because of the diverse cultural make-up of most urban parishes. Moreover, many Indian people themselves resisted what many perceived as the ‘Hinduization’ of the liturgy. The Anglo-Indians, the Christian populations from Bombay, Goa and Mangalore (about whom Amalorpavadass said, “In these regions we have a long way to go in adaptation,” *Toward Indigenization in the Liturgy*, 10-11) resisted Indianization of the liturgy. Also, many within the Indian Catholic Charismatic movement abandoned the Catholic church for Pentecostal sects, accusing the church of syncretism. Serious sociological criticism came from those quarters that associated liturgical inculturation with mere ritual inculturation. In the Hindu context, rituals were the domain of the Brahmins – the elite caste within the Hindu caste system. Inculturation, then, to a great extent came to be associated with Brahminism and thereby isolated many of the lower caste Christians. There was another major drawback insofar as indigenization of the liturgy was concerned. It primarily involved the inclusion of Hindu forms of worship, dressing habits and architecture. Muslim, Buddhist, Jain, Sikh and most *adivasi* cultures were almost left out of the equation. For this reason, a complete indigenization of the liturgy or Christianity will remain a complex task.

⁴⁶⁵ D.S. Amalorpavadass, *Indian Christian Spirituality* (Bangalore: NBCLC, 1982), 35.

Amalorpavadass envisaged inculturation to be a project of liberation not merely from the Western religio-cultural symbols but also from the systemic poverty that plagued the Indian population. He imagined an inculturated Indian church that would penetrate deeply into the lives of the Indian people through genuine commitment to social justice and towards the creation of a new society. Whereas Amalorpavadass, focusing primarily on inculturation, treated culture and justice as complementary issues, other theologians focusing primarily on social justice perceived inculturation as a justice issue. The latter connection is the focus of the section below. The claim here is that already existing Indian social justice theology can be a rich resource as an originating point for future theological work in the context of globalization and militant Hindu nationalism.

ii. The place of social justice in Indian theology

The second theme that emerges from a study of Indian theology is social justice. This theme had already achieved some prominence in pre-independence India, but assumed even greater importance after independence. As this section is surveyed, the influence of liberation theology on India becomes apparent. In this context, four points must be made at the outset. First, the survey follows the same method as in the previous section. Theological development in the field of social justice will be extracted from the writings of selected individual theologians. Four of them are prominent: George Soares-Prabhu, Sebastian Kappen, Michael Amaladoss, and Felix Wilfred. Second, interest in social justice in India was not initiated by Latin American liberation theology. Such a movement existed even in pre-independence India. Liberation theology served to systematize the already existing theological development in this field and give the movement the contours of an organized struggle. Third, Indian theologians did not adopt

liberation theology blindly. They adapted it to the Indian context of pluralism and to the deep-rooted spiritual structure of the Indian society. In a way that went beyond the early Latin American liberation movement, the Indian liberation movement is also an interreligious project. As Fernandez writes, "A liberation theology in India cannot be Christian. It must be interreligious. Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims, and Christians have to search together.... Together they have to search for a genuine *bhakti* in the Indian reality, knowing that every religion has protest and a prophetic element...."⁴⁶⁶ Fourth, the theological thought that Amalorpavadass, Soares-Prabhu, and Kappen, Amaladoss and Wilfred developed was multi-dimensional in its framework. Inculturationalists such as Amalorpavadass, for example, considered justice to be an essential dimension of inculturation, whereas liberation theologians such as Soares-Prabhu, Kappen, and Amaladoss considered social justice to be necessarily an interreligious project. This multi-dimensional character would continue to be an essential feature of Indian theological thought.

The efforts of Indian theologians in the area of social justice may be best summarized in the "Final Statement of the Interdisciplinary Research Seminar on The Indian Society in the Struggle for a New Society," issued in 1981:

The world is in travail and it is groaning to be set free and to march on to its destiny with renewed persons, to become a new society. With or without the Church, the third millenary man is being hammered into shape and the process for a new society has been initiated. What part does the Church play in the genesis of the New Man and in the emergence of the New Society? Her mission goes beyond a mere transmission of the truths of salvation. She is not merely a narrator of salvation-history, but also she spells out salvation *in* history, and that in the context of today. The Church is to continue the mission of Jesus in

⁴⁶⁶ Fernandez "*Bhakti* and Liberation Theology for India," 62.

whom the Kingdom of God broke through into the world... The Kingdom of God... consists in the ordering of human society according to God's rule. To this the Church must witness; of this she must be a sign and instrument. Her mission requires that she herself embodies in her own life and structures the Kingdom values of freedom, fellowship and justice.⁴⁶⁷

The leading Indian Christian liberation theologians were present at this seminar. It is to some of these theologians that we now turn to get a fuller account of the theological currents in India.

George Soares-Prabhu

Soares-Prabhu, the foremost of Indian biblical scholars, offered an exegesis of Jesus' proclamation of the Kingdom of God as the basis for his vision for a new Indian society. Soares-Prabhu was critical of those Western exegetes who blunted the prophetic edge of the gospel as they developed a colonial Christianity based on the Bible.

According to him, theologians over the centuries have developed an ecclesiology based on Biblical proof-texting by which the Pope, bishops, male priests, primacy, infallibility, and the seven sacraments are shown to be directly instituted by Christ. Yet, these very theologians find it difficult to derive a new vision of society from the teachings of Jesus. Since Jesus did not leave a blueprint for the kind of church community he envisaged and since both the colonial and hierarchy centered Christianity were creations of later Christians, so too Soares-Prabhu considers it appropriate to interpret the New Testament message to propose that Jesus had a vision for a new society.

Soares-Prabhu suggests that Jesus' vision for a new society is implicit from a reconstruction of the "central message of Jesus (the 'Kingdom of God'), the core-

⁴⁶⁷ For the full text see D.S. Amalorpavadass, *The Indian Church in the Struggle for a New Society* (Bangalore: NBCLC, 1981), 41-77.

experience from which this message derives (the 'abba' experience), and the values that it announces (freedom, fellowship and justice)...."⁴⁶⁸ Analyzing the social structure of first century Palestinian life, Soares-Prabhu suggests that the distinction between the religious and secular that modern societies make did not exist at the time of Jesus. Rather the religious flowed into the secular and vice-versa. Thus, Jesus' proclamation of the Kingdom had socio-political overtones. Soares-Prabhu defines the Kingdom of God as the liberation brought about by Jesus' revelation of God's unconditional love. The human response to the kingdom is the opening of human hearts to God's love in concrete love of the neighbor. As Soares-Prabhu writes:

When the revelation of God's love (the Kingdom) meets its appropriate response in man's trusting acceptance of this love (repentance), there begins a mighty movement of personal and societal liberation which sweeps through human history. The movement brings *freedom* inasmuch it liberated each individual from the inadequacies and obsessions that shackle him. It fosters *fellowship*, because it empowers free individuals to exercise their concern for each other in genuine community. And it leads on to *justice*, because it impels every true community to adopt the just societal structures which alone make freedom and fellowship possible. Freedom, fellowship and justice are thus the parameters of the Kingdom's thrust towards the total liberation of man. Together they spell out the significance of the Kingdom, and tell us what the Kingdom, in practice, means today.⁴⁶⁹

Soares-Prabhu concretised his biblical exegesis of Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom by applying it to the Indian context of economic poverty and destitution. His application was simple: to the extent that one is open to the liberating revolution of God's unconditional love in which the Kingdom of God ultimately consists, to the extent that

⁴⁶⁸ George M. Soares-Prabhu, "The Kingdom of God: Jesus' Vision of a New Society," *The Indian Church in the Struggle for a New Society*, ed. D.S. Amalorpavadass, (Bangalore: NBCLC, 1981), 581-2.

⁴⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 601.

one commits oneself to the values of the Kingdom, to that extent spiritual poverty (anti-consumerism) will flourish and oppressive poverty (destitution) will vanish.⁴⁷⁰

Consistent with the thought pattern of the pre-independence theologians, Soares-Prabhu connected his Christian exegesis to the Hindu concept of *dharma* (the right order of things, duty, righteousness, justice, and norms for behavior)⁴⁷¹ to develop a theological framework that incorporates liberation, Hinduism, and Christianity. His originality consisted in working out the *dharma* of Jesus for a pluralistic and poverty-stricken India. The concept of *dharma* is a principle of both being and acting. Soares-Prabhu wanted to present the *dharma* of Jesus to a multi-religious and multi-cultural India so that any person of goodwill would be able to understand and appropriate it. The ahistorical traditional dogmatic approach to the message of Christ seemed insignificant to him because it was inconsequential, for example, for the chemical gas victims of Bhopal or the *dalits* of India.⁴⁷² Rejecting the distinction between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith, in the concept of *dharma* and in his historical-critical analysis Soares-Prabhu spoke about the "Jesus of faith." The *dharma* of Jesus is "the complex of religious insight and ethical concern (experience, worldview, and value) which determines the lifestyle that Jesus proclaimed and practiced..." and which is outlined in the Sermon on the Mount.⁴⁷³ It is a *dharma* of grace, growth, freedom, and concern.⁴⁷⁴ According to Soares-Prabhu, in these times of oppression unleashed by international capitalism aided by

⁴⁷⁰ George M. Soares-Prabhu, "Good News to the Poor! The Social Implications of the Message of Jesus," *The Indian Church in the Struggle for a New Society*, ed. D.S. Amalorpavadass (Bangalore: NBCLC, 1981), 609-26.

⁴⁷¹ Michael Amaladoss, *Life In Freedom: Liberation Theologies from Asia* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1997), 96.

⁴⁷² Francis X. D'sa, "George M. Soares-Prabhu: A Theologian for our Times," in *The Dharma of Jesus*, ed. Francis X. D'sa (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2003), 3.

⁴⁷³ *Ibid.*, 177.

⁴⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

nation states, the *dharma* of Jesus has broken out in movements of protests. These movements are, more than anything else, firm voices of liberation emphasizing the immeasurable worth of humankind, as loved unconditionally by the Father.⁴⁷⁵

As mentioned earlier, Indian liberation was not a replication of Latin American liberation theology. Soares-Prabhu complemented liberation theology with insights from Indian religions. For example, the concept of liberation as understood for India was less the overcoming of economic, social, and political dependence, but more “the emancipation of the individual from the psychic sources of personal societal bondage.”⁴⁷⁶ The *Bhagavadgita* identifies three sources of bondage, *kama* (desire), *krodha* (anger), and *lobha* (greed). Liberation from these personal bondages leads to *sthita-prajna* (steadfast wisdom), in which the liberated person is *sama* (the same) toward all the pairs of opposites that qualify life: pleasure or pain, profit or loss, victory, or defeat. In the Indian tradition, such freedom is the necessary precondition for a liberated society. As Soares-Prabhu suggested, “This unwavering insistence on the need for personal freedom in any movement for social change is, I believe, the most significant contribution that Indian religions can make to any theology of liberation.”⁴⁷⁷ On the other hand Soares-Prabhu held that Indian understanding of liberation also needed correction to the extent that it ignored the need for structural change.⁴⁷⁸ Thus, for example, though Indian understanding of liberation deals adequately with personal freedom, it does not translate into freedom from oppressive structures such as the caste system.

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid., 190.

⁴⁷⁶ George M. Soares-Prabhu, “The Liberative Pedagogy of Jesus: Lessons for an Indian Theology of Liberation,” *Leave the Temple: Indian Paths to Human Liberation*, ed. Felix Wilfred, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1992), 112.

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid., 113.

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid.

Three elements stand out in Soares-Prabhu's writings. First, his conclusions emerged from the kind of scriptural exegesis that distinguished Jesus' basic message from its later ecclesiastical interpretations – the kind of interpretation that gave rise to colonial Christianity. Instead, focusing on the good news of the Kingdom of God, Soares-Prabhu provided the biblical foundations for a church based on freedom, fellowship, and justice - a church resulting from an "*abba* experience." Gandhi would consent to such a Christian vision for India. Second, he was able to find a synthesis between the gospel message and the Hindu concept of *dharma*. Such synthesis was a continuation of the pre-independence theologians who strived for a symbiosis of the Christian and Hindu religious traditions. Third, he expanded the understanding of liberation by emphasising the need of personal liberation for societal change.

From the perspective of Schreiter's theological framework, Soares-Prabhu's theology is genuine contextual theology. Its starting point is the need of a community; it builds on the already existing theology both Christian and non-Christian; and it attempts to be faithful to the gospel tradition. The weakness in his vision stems from his abstracting of a Jesus of history and a kingdom apart from any later developments. In the section below we will see how Sebastian Kappen would further radicalize these initial stirrings of liberation theology in India.

Sebastian Kappen

In studying the thoughts of Soares-Prabhu, three points emerged as significant: the biblical basis of his theological work, his attempt to synthesize Christianity with Hindu thought, and his attempts to adapt liberation theology to the pluralistic and religious context of India. We find these points emphasised even more elaborately in the

work of Sebastian Kappen (1924-93). His initial thoughts, found in his first book, *Jesus and Freedom*,⁴⁷⁹ were simple in their structure. Kappen reflected on Jesus as a revolutionary leader and explored the economic, political, social, and religious implications of Jesus' revolutionary message. His later thoughts were more complex. He moved along the boundaries between Christian faith and secular ideologies and developed theological perspectives which open wide the horizons for understanding the message of Jesus in a pluralistic context. Even though he associated himself with Marxist movements for a considerable amount of time and was a Catholic priest, he was critical of both Marxism and the Church alike. He turned his focus from the doctrinal dimension of Marxism and Christianity and drew out the liberative and humanizing potential of both these movements. His later writings drew a parallel between the counter-cultural Jesus and the dissenting religions of India, particularly Buddhism and the *Bhakti* movement.

Kappen's most significant contribution lay in prescribing directions for developing a theology of liberation specifically for India. His theological reflection begins with the struggles of ordinary peoples against oppressive social structures. The Divine, according to Kappen, is encountered in history as a gift and a challenge.⁴⁸⁰ Responding to the call of the divine requires an examination of the social system and the conflicting forces at work in history. In the Indian context this meant examining the economic structure existent in India. Post-independence India tried to maintain a middle path between socialism and limited private participation in industrial growth. In reality though, it led to a concentration of the means of production in a few hands. It also resulted in the proliferation of slums, the marginalization of tribal people (because many

⁴⁷⁹ Sebastian Kappen, *Jesus and Freedom* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books 1997).

⁴⁸⁰ Sebastian Kappen, "Toward an Indian Theology of Liberation," in Felix, Wilfred, ed., *Leave the Temple: Indian Paths to Human Liberation* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1992), 147.

of these private industries were set up in forest land), the destruction of traditional handicrafts, and the ecological ravages wrought by profit-oriented production. Kappen suggested that it is in this context that Christian activists must answer the call of the divine. Liberation theology in India, according to Kappen, should be an attempt to solve the contradictions of scandalizing affluence and poverty that characterize the above context.⁴⁸¹

What was most distinctive about Kappen's vision was his attempt to develop a foundational theology of liberation that would cut across the barriers of religions and ideologies in the pluralistic context of India. Thus, he rejected the term 'God' and proposed the term 'Divine' to refer to the 'Supreme Being.' Kappen called the average Indian Christian a 'cross-cultural' and a 'cross-religious' being. Whereas liberation theology in Latin America was a specifically Christian phenomenon, in India 'theandric practice' (theo-centric rather than Christo-centric so as to accommodate all religious traditions) "necessarily has to be a broader community effort comprising men and women of different religions and persuasions."⁴⁸²

Furthermore, Kappen proposed that in order to engage in the theandric practice that was specifically Indian, one must critically examine the 'tradition' to isolate those elements that cover up or distort the true meaning of Jesus' life and message. Similarly, Christian activists must get rid of the notion that the gospel is an essential prerequisite for the transformation of Indian society. Liberation movements have been in action in India prior to the gospels as Buddha showcased.⁴⁸³ What the Christian gospel can bring is its

⁴⁸¹ Ibid., 148.

⁴⁸² Ibid., 151.

⁴⁸³ Perhaps, Kappen implies here that Buddhism was an counter caste movement that liberated its adherents from Brahminical oppression.

own power to illumine and inspire. What the gospel has to offer to the Christian and Hindu alike is to “discern better the working of the Divine in contemporary history.”⁴⁸⁴ It also provides the criteria for distinguishing authentic and spurious responses to the Divine in history. Specifically in the Indian context, the liberation theologians’ role should be to find their place in the tradition of dissent already found in India – a multi-religious counter-cultural tradition.

For Kappen, Jesus is a prophet of such a counter-culture. Jesus proclaimed a new vision of society where the points of rupture between the old and new become clear. The option for the poor and weak, the rejection of political power, the choice of simplicity over intellectualism, equality of the sexes, and the preference for purity of heart over ritual purity are some of the characteristics of the new society. Kappen showcases the counter-cultural prophets of the Indian society. Buddha was a counter-cultural force who challenged the ritualism and hierarchical domination of the Brahmins. The *Bhaktas* (people who follow the way of love and devotion) advocated the simple way of love, accessible to all, irrespective of caste or social status. Kappen looks at contemporary Indian culture and challenges theologians to draw out counter-cultural elements for today.⁴⁸⁵ He outlines the specific contribution that Jesus as a counter-cultural figure can offer to India. For example, Kappen found the cyclic view of history of the Indian traditions oppressive. Instead, he suggested, it could be replaced by a creative view of history that challenges us to make our own history: “Instead of a focusing on the individual lost in the cosmic unity of the *Brahman*, we could discover ourselves as

⁴⁸⁴ Kappen, “Toward and Indian Theology of Liberation, 155.

⁴⁸⁵ Sebastian Kappen, *Jesus and Cultural Revolution: An Asian Perspective* (Bombay: Build Publications, 1983), 9-10.

persons called to a new community of love and fellowship.”⁴⁸⁶ He encouraged people to develop those elements in the Indian tradition that focus on the imminent nature of the Divine. These elements can teach us to experience the Divine ‘in us’ rather than as a dominating figure controlling human history from above.

Kappen also incorporated ecological concerns within his theology of liberation. He saw a parallel between Jesus, who saw nature as the object of divine actions (Mt 6:30), and the Indian tradition, where nature is not something to be conquered but the great mother – the source of all life forms.⁴⁸⁷

As mentioned in the introduction to Kappen, his theology was a continuation of the earlier theologians. His thoughts were radically based on the gospels, he strived to bridge the gap between Christian and Indian religious traditions, and he concentrated his efforts toward developing an Indian theology of liberation. However, his weakness lies in the relativism inherent in his theology of pluralism. The “divine” is too universal and generic in the context of globalization, where a stronger emphasis needs to be placed on particularity. Such relativism runs the danger of compromising the universal mission of Christ and of the church. Kappen also runs the danger of undermining the role that the Christian gospels can play in social transformation. If the gospel is not a prerequisite for social change, as Kappen suggested, then there is nothing inherently Christian about mission. However, his proposal to focus on the counter-cultural aspects of contemporary Indian society can provide the appropriate starting point for a critique of globalized India – a point related to what Schreier referred to as the need for a new *telos* for the contemporary globalized world.

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid., 100.

⁴⁸⁷ Sebastian Kappen, “Jesus and Transculturation,” in *Asian Faces of Jesus*, ed. R. S. Sugritharajah (MaryKnoll, New York: 1993), 186.

Whereas Soares-Prabhu and Kappen helped in the development of a theology of social justice for the Indian context of deep religiosity and pluralism, Amaladoss tried to systematize Indian theological thought. His contribution lies not only in his intellectual contribution but also in the criteria he outlined for Indian theology to be genuinely Indian. His multifaceted response to the need of inculturation, social justice, and interreligious dialogue, however, is in continuation of the earlier theologians. In the section below we will explore the theological insights of Michael Amaladoss S.J.

Michael Amaladoss

Amaladoss is perhaps the most prolific of Indian theologians and, consistent with the nature of Indian theological development, his theology too dealt with inculturation, liberation, and interreligious dialogue simultaneously. His book *Life in Freedom*⁴⁸⁸ is a *tour de force* of liberation theologies in Asia. In this work, Amaladoss attempts to lay the groundwork for the collaboration of religions for liberation and for the approach that Christian theology should adopt in a religiously pluralistic society. Amaladoss recognizes the fact that each religion has its own vision of society. In these multiple visions a Christian theologian must be open to both the social reality and to the visions of society that other religious traditions and ideologies present in a particular social, economic, political, and religious context. He states:

I must be in constant dialogue with them [other religious traditions], but I can only reflect as a Christian, rooted in my own religious tradition, without claiming to evolve an interreligious or universal theology. This is the only way I can be true to my own identity and roots and at the same time respect the other believer as *other*, without

⁴⁸⁸ Michael Amaladoss S.J., *Life in Freedom: Liberation Theologies from Asia* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1997).

somehow dominating him or her and assuming his or her perspective as an element of my own global vision, pretending to be universal.⁴⁸⁹

Amaladoss, as other liberation theologians, begins with an analysis of the Indian society. He argues that Jesus himself recognized the divisions that existed in society between the rich and the poor, the powerful and the powerless, and those of higher and lower social status. In this context, Jesus made two options as he outlined his vision for society in his preaching of the 'Reign of God': first, to renounce power, wealth, and status, and second, to be with the poor and marginalized. Many Hindus such as Vivekananda, Gandhi, and others shared Jesus' vision and were even inspired by it. Amaladoss suggests, however, that the Reign of God that Jesus preached is not identified with the Church as we experience it. Jesus' Reign of God transcends the church, as it transcends other religions. Any identification of the Reign of God with the Church makes the collaboration of all peoples in accomplishing Jesus' vision problematic.⁴⁹⁰

Christians, then, have their task cut out. Their task as a community of disciples of Christ is not to monopolize God's saving actions but to continue as a counter-cultural community contributing to the emergence of the Reign of God in collaboration with other believers and all people of goodwill. Dialogue with other people will allow Christians not only to discover the Reign of God but also to deepen and enrich their own understanding and experience.⁴⁹¹

Amaladoss offers 'life' and 'freedom' as a common ground of understanding for people from all religious traditions. Although these terms are understood differently, each tradition's understanding can complement the other. Whereas Christian and Islamic

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid., 134.

⁴⁹⁰ Ibid., 141.

⁴⁹¹ Ibid., 142.

traditions focus on life in the community, Buddhism and Hinduism focus on life in harmony with the cosmos. Where some traditions' focus on freedom from external forces, others focus on freedom from internal forces. The goal of liberation theology should be to "unite all people in a common quest relevant to their context and motivated and inspired by their own respective religions: life in freedom."⁴⁹²

Amaladoss also did some groundwork on a theological meta-theory level. In his article, "Towards an Indian Theology: Some Methodological Observations," Amaladoss provided directions for any theological enterprise in India. In his words:

When faith comes to be understood in an integral vision, [of *lumen fidei* and *praxis*], as a total response to God's word, involving not only transformation of the world and society but also conversion and self-realization of man, theology will become an integrated, multi-dimensional wisdom.... Theology will become more than a critical reflection, offering an ideology for involvement; it will also be an inspiring vision. It will lead not only to transforming action, but to celebration.⁴⁹³

Amaladoss suggests that such a theology should have five characteristics: a) Theology should be contextual – meaning that theology should take place in the context of a particular cultural and socio-historical situation. Thus any theologizing in India must pay attention to its religious pluralism, its economic status as a developing agricultural economy, and the social ills such as caste oppression and corruptions that plague society. b) Theology should be indigenous – meaning that theology in India should grow out of an Indian Christian life – its minority status, its influential institutional life, its integration with Indian spiritual traditions, and its liturgy. It is in this context that Amaladoss writes

⁴⁹² Ibid., 145.

⁴⁹³ Michael Amaladoss, "Towards an Indian Theology: Some Methodological Observations," in *Theologizing in India*, eds. M. Amaladoss, T.K. John, and G. Gispert-Sauch (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 1981), 43-4.

about inculturation in India. Much theological work has been done in India using the inculturation model. Amaladoss suggests that the inculturation model developed when India was just emerging from the colonial period. The need to build an indigenous Church was strongly felt. In India inculturation for most part took the shape of ritual Indianization. Gradually the understanding developed that inculturation needed to incorporate, apart from dialogue with culture, a dialogue with other religions and with the poor. Amaladoss points the direction towards Christianity beyond inculturation. For him inculturation is not merely about the culture of the Gospel finding ground in the Indian culture. Inculturation means that local churches can feel free and be responsible for their own life in all its aspects.⁴⁹⁴ c) Theology must be dialogical – meaning that Indian theological endeavor cannot be Indian unless it is in dialogue with other faith traditions. d) Theology should be personal – meaning that if theology is understood as a faith-experience, then it cannot merely be a matter of intellectual assent but a personal commitment. e) Theology must be critical – meaning that any theological effort has to evaluate critically the world and the Church that are in the process of growing towards eschatological perfection.⁴⁹⁵

Among all the Indian theologians, in Amaladoss' work one find the strongest pitch for a separation of Jesus' message of the kingdom with the present reality of the church as made visible in India. Amaladoss is perhaps aware that the reminiscence of colonial Christianity is most visible in the church that the colonists left behind. Thus, Amaladoss calls for a departure from the old ecclesiology and building a church that is genuinely Indian. Amaladoss also continues with Kappen's "counter-culture" theme. His call to the

⁴⁹⁴ For a more detailed discussion see, Michael Amaladoss, *Beyond Inculturation: Can the Many be One?* (Delhi: Vidyajyoti Education and Welfare Soc, 1998).

⁴⁹⁵ Amaladoss, "Towards an Indian Theology," 44-55.

Church to renounce power, wealth, and status, and to be with the poor and marginalized is similar to both Kappen's call to be counter-cultural and Schreiter's call for a new locale for any theological work. For Amaladoss, this new locale lies in the call of the church to renounce power, wealth, and status, and to be with the poor and marginalized. It is between the global and the local that the church can be the counter-cultural community that both Kappen and Schreiter call for.

Amaladoss also created a framework for Indian theology to be genuinely Indian. In the five criteria of being contextual, indigenous, dialogical, personal, and critical, he provided a definite direction for any new theological work in India.

It has been mentioned earlier that this dissertation claims that globalization and militant Hindu nationalism form the new context for theology in India. In light of this claim, the works of both Michael Amaladoss and Felix Wilfred are particularly important. Amaladoss' insights with regard to globalization will be discussed later in this chapter. In the following pages we will analyze Wilfred's contribution to an Indian theology of social justice.

Felix Wilfred

In keeping with the ideals of liberation theology, Wilfred too begins his theological work with the Indian context.⁴⁹⁶ In the context of oppression, injustice, and the socio-historical forces that shape it, Wilfred called the Church in India to dialogue with the social realities of its time. Local church, in his writings, is not merely a spiritual entity in a geographical locality. Rather it is a community that lives Jesus' vision of the kingdom in dialogue with the life realities of the people, especially the oppressed among

⁴⁹⁶ For example, see Felix Wilfred, *Beyond Settled Foundations: The Journey of Indian Theology*, (MaryKnoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1993).

them. This is also the meaning of genuine inculturation. In India, if inculturation is not liberation-oriented, then the ecclesial community loses its calling as a kingdom-oriented Church.⁴⁹⁷ Since this dissertation focuses on the themes of dialogue, inculturation, and inter-religious dialogue, Wilfred's work will serve as a rich resource for developing a theology for India. Even beyond that, his thoughts on globalization are of special significance for us.

Wilfred's thoughts on globalization are written in the context of an increasingly globalized world, but, clearly, Wilfred sees countries like India enduring the negative effects of globalization. His assessment of globalization is completely negative in contrast with the official Catholic position on globalization, which also stresses the positive potentials of globalization. On the contrary, "Despite the cosmetic use of modern technologies," Wilfred suggests, "globalization as a project is a conservative revolution taking the world to the restoration of capitalism without restraint. It is not a revolution of the people, but it is manufactured for the people by others who reap the benefit, as the tyranny and terror that followed many a revolution in the past amply demonstrate." He adds, "Globalization is a mystification which is naked violence dressed up in respectable apparel for public appeal."⁴⁹⁸

Wilfred presents yet another reflection that will be crucial for this dissertation. Globalization evokes, according to him, the practical necessity to comply with the existing order of things on the one hand, and the refusal to surrender and acquiesce to the

⁴⁹⁷ Felix Wilfred, ed., *Leave the Temple: Indian Paths to Human Liberation* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1992), 1-8.

⁴⁹⁸ Wilfred compares globalization to the mythical role that revolution played in the past which according to the Russian historian Leon Trotsky, is the forcible entrance of the masses into the realm of rulership over their destinies. Felix Wilfred, "Searching for David's String," in *A Different World is Possible*, eds. L. C. Susin, Jon Sobrino, and Felix Wilfred (London: SCM Press, 2004), 86.

inevitable on the other. Movements of resistance such as militant Hindu nationalism that make use of the tools of globalization are prime examples of Wilfred's description of the above phenomenon.⁴⁹⁹ Problems are bound to arise, Wilfred suggests, if under the expansionist and assimilationist views of globalization, the subjecthood of people and their difference and pluralism are denied.⁵⁰⁰ In other words, Wilfred saw globalization creating a culturally homogenous world that was primarily focused on profit making rather than the integral development of peoples and their human dignity.

Wilfred sees grassroot-level resistance as the hope for peoples.⁵⁰¹ This resistance derives from both the experience of the woeful effects of globalization and the realization of human ideals and values in its execution. Thus for example, farmers in Singur, India rose in protest against TATA, the Indian multinational automobile company, when they were forcibly evicted from their land to set up a new car factory. However, it was in reaction to the new globalized India that the people were themselves empowered to their own rights. The resistance, then, becomes both a means to protest their experience of injustice and path to the realization of their own human dignity. Wilfred compares such resistance to the early Christian movement, which projected a different set of values than those on which the Roman Empire relied. Perhaps, he suggests, the Church in India could be the pocket of resistance to a valueless, hegemonic globalization. Wilfred's sweeping condemnation of globalization in these terms is representative of the school of thought that sees globalization and intrinsically evil. For Wilfred, globalization is incapable of promoting human well-being because it is based on unconscionable expansionism and profit-making.

⁴⁹⁹ Ibid., 88.

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid., 91-2.

⁵⁰¹ An example of such resistance in India could be found on www.studentsforbhopal.org.

Wilfred also assesses the role of religion in the context of globalization. He explains that, just as globalization is deceptive in that it covers up its reality as a projection of a particular model of development and the human being, so too religion can be deceptive. In his words, "In keeping with the process of homogenization, religions also would be metamorphasized into an ideally conceived 'religion' coupled with a well-packaged 'global ethics' which everyone all over the world could consume as standard spiritual and moral goods."⁵⁰² Clearly, Wilfred is referring to the emergence of a secular form of "ethic" in a globalized world that stays clear of any distinctively "religious" affiliation. Such an ethic blurs the difference between religions and relegates particular religious beliefs to the private realm. In such a globalized world, secular values such as "growth" and "development" replace traditional religious values of love, forgiveness, justice, and peace.

In such a context, says Wilfred, religious militancy can be interpreted as one extreme form of reaction against the homogenizing and expansionist tendencies of the globalizing forces. The homogenization of cultures and values causes problems of identity and, consequently, militancy. Religious militancy happens to be one of the forces employed to regain one's cultural and religious identity. Religious militancy is one of those examples of the global outreach of religions as it hides behind the aspirations to see the whole world as Islamic, Christian, Hindu, etc.⁵⁰³ Clearly, then, Wilfred opposes not just globalization but also the wrongful use of religion as a strategy for anti-global movements.

⁵⁰² Felix Wilfred, "Religions Face to Face with Globalization," *Globalization and its Victims*, eds. Jon Sobrino and Felix Wilfred (London: SCM Press, 2001), 36.

⁵⁰³ Ibid., 38.

However, as Wilfred proposes, even as religions are misused to preserve religious identity, they do contain the resources for the larger unity of the whole human family that globalization does not. Religions have the vision for a universal unity while still being rooted in a particular reality. The liberation of women, ecological concerns, and the defense of human rights are some examples that embody the universalistic values and ethical goals.⁵⁰⁴ In a globalized world of seeming unity amidst ever increasing conflict, religions [i.e., the Church in India with other religions in dialogue]⁵⁰⁵ should redefine their roles in order to be able to contribute to a true unity and universality of humankind. A worldwide community can be achieved only through concrete acts of solidarity and togetherness situated in particular historical contexts.⁵⁰⁶ It can be validly argued that such a project could easily be a secular project. Perhaps, Wilfred would not oppose it if it promoted genuine human liberation and dignity. However, Wilfred is thoroughly a Christian theologian who thinks that religions carry within themselves the power for both personal liberation (the human need for redemption from sin) and social liberation (just social structures). Secular ideologies cannot achieve this since personal redemption is outside their scope.

Whereas Amaladoss created the framework for Indian theology, Wilfred's theological insights on globalization offer an example of the development of a theology for India within the framework that Amaladoss provides. Wilfred was conscious of the need for both liberation and inculturation in India. But he was also conscious that if inculturation in India was limited to the ritual realm of the liturgy, it could serve to continue the oppressive structure of the caste system. He wanted liberation to be an

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid., 40.

⁵⁰⁵ Parenthesis mine.

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid., 41.

inculturated project and inculturation to be a liberating experience for all the Indian people. But he also proposes that this project must be accomplished in dialogue.

As stated above, Wilfred's assessment of globalization is completely negative. His assessment stems from his view that the capitalist system that propagates globalization is inherently flawed. Thus, an evil system cannot produce good results. According to him, even the seemingly good results will, in the final analysis, lead to systemic oppression and dehumanization.⁵⁰⁷ Wilfred's position clearly stands in contrast with the Catholic Church's stance on globalization - that it is phenomenon with a potential for evil or good depending on how it is implemented. However, as outlined in our earlier research, Wilfred does not fail to identify the problems that arise from globalization, loss of identity, inequality, and militancy.

We have briefly reviewed four Indian theologians. Certain common themes can be identified in their works. First, they consider the liberative implications of the Bible to be the most important message in the Indian context. Whereas Soares-Prabhu envisioned a new society based on the values proposed by Jesus, Kappen explored the economic, political, social, and religious implications of Jesus' revolutionary message. Whereas Amaladoss called on the Christian community to become a counter-cultural community contributing to the emergence of the Reign of God in collaboration with other religious traditions, Wilfred suggested that globalization is the context within which such a counter-cultural community must form itself. The insights of these theologians will form an important basis for any new theological project in India in the context of globalization and militant Hindu nationalism.

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid.

Second, the theological thoughts of Amalorpavadass, Soares-Prabhu, Kappen, Amaladoss, and Wilfred were multi-dimensional in their framework. They discussed inculturation, social justice, and inter-religious dialogue as interdisciplinary projects. Third, theology of liberation in India did not begin after Vatican II from the influence of Latin America. Its roots can be traced back to pre-independence India. Fourth, Indian theologians adapted liberation theology to the Indian context of pluralism and Indian religiosity. In this sense even liberation theology became an inculturation project. Finally, all the above theologians gave prominence to dialogue among Indian religions as a means of building a new Indian society.

The emphasis on dialogue is most seen in Indian theologians' efforts to develop a theology of interreligious dialogue – the topic for the next section. Two theologians are particularly prominent in this field: Raimundo Pannikar and Jaques Dupuis.

iii. The place of interreligious dialogue in Indian theology

So far we have explored the contribution of Indian theologians mainly in the areas of inculturation and social justice. In fact, one of the points that emerged from the earlier discussions is that the theologians involved in inculturation and social justice considered these to be interreligious projects. Similarly, interreligious dialogue is also seen as an inculturation and social justice project. In the section below we will deal with the third theme prominent in Indian theology – interreligious dialogue. A number of Indian theologians have contributed to the development of a theology of interreligious dialogue. We shall focus on the thoughts of two of the most prominent of these theologians, Raimundo Panikkar and the Belgian born Jesuit Jacques Dupuis, who taught theology in India from 1948 to 1984.

As described earlier, in the pre-independent and pre-Vatican II India, much initial work had been done to find a synthesis between Hinduism and Christianity. In the post-independent and post-Vatican II era, most Indian theologians subscribed to the “fulfilment model” to characterize Hindu-Christian dialogue.⁵⁰⁸ Building on the work of Upadhyaya and influenced by the positive approach of *Nostra Aetate*, Dom Henri le Saux, a French Benedictine monk, decided to take up the life of a *sanyasi* (ascetic). He took the Sanskrit name Abhishiktananda, founded and lived in an *ashram* in South India, and adopted Hindu meditative practices to experience the Divine as described in the Hindu scriptures – the mystical union of the divine and human “in the cave of the heart.”⁵⁰⁹ In the later stages of his life, Abhishiktananda moved away from fulfilment models of inter-religious dialogue to more of a “mutuality model”⁵¹⁰ stressing the common spiritual experience of all human beings which each religion expresses in an imperfect manner.⁵¹¹

Even though *Swami Abhishiktananda's* work is only mentioned briefly here, his *ashram* initiative was a gargantuan step in the field of inter-religious initiatives. Since then, other *ashrams* have carried out similar experiments in India. Amalorpavadass'

⁵⁰⁸ In his book, *Introducing Theologies of Religions* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2002), Knitter enumerates four models of inter-religious dialogue: the replacement model, the fulfillment model, the mutuality model, and the acceptance model. The fulfillment models, according to Knitter, are those that consider all other religions incomplete in some or many regards in relation to Christianity. The primacy of Christianity is taken for granted in this model and other faith traditions are invited to find their fulfillment in Christianity.

⁵⁰⁹ For more on Abhishiktananda see Swami Abhishiktananda, *Hindu Christian Meeting Point – Within the Cave of the Heart* (New Delhi: ISPCK, 1976).

⁵¹⁰ Knitter's descriptions of the mutuality model would rest on the following premises: first, that the historical limitations of all religions opens the probability that there is one Divine reality behind them all; second that the Divine, then, is both more than anything experienced by any one of these religions and yet present in the mystical experiences of all of them; and third, that the recognition of the common needs and sufferings of humanity are a common concern for all religions and also the impetus to enter into dialogue with each other to address these human needs and concerns.

⁵¹¹ George Gispert-Sauch, “Asian Theology,” *The Modern Theologians: An Introduction to Christian Theology in the Twentieth Century*, ed. David Ford (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 455-76.

Anjali ashram and the *Kurishimalai ashram* in Kerala are just two examples. Even though *ashrams* began as inculturation projects and were a genuine initiative to be present in rural India, they played a significant role in creating an appropriate environment for interreligious theology to develop. Such a development of thought is seen in the works of Swami Abhishiktananda whose theological position shifted from the fulfillment model to the mutuality model to accommodate both Christians and Hindus in meaningful dialogue.

Swami Abhishiktananda's theological thoughts were later taken up by other theologians who developed it further to produce a more systematic theology of interreligious dialogue. Raimundo Panikkar was one of these prolific theologians.

Raimundo Panikkar

Raimundo Panikkar took Abhishiktananda's ideas and put them within the context of systematic theology. His book, *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism*,⁵¹² was a classic example of the fulfillment model of interreligious dialogue, although in his later writings he moved toward a more pluralistic approach. Panikkar's main focus was to develop points of interaction between Christianity and Hinduism. He found that meeting point in Christianity. He called Christ the "ontological meeting point" between the two religious traditions. "Christ," Panikkar would say, "does not belong to Christianity, he belongs only to God. It is Christianity and Hinduism that belong to Christ, though in two different levels."⁵¹³ Panikkar develops what Dupuis calls a "peculiar dialectic"⁵¹⁴ of Hinduism and Christianity to explain his understanding of the relationship between the two religious

⁵¹² Raimundo Panikkar, *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1964).

⁵¹³ *Ibid.*, 20-1.

⁵¹⁴ Jacques Dupuis, *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2001), 150.

traditions. In Panikkar's words, "Hinduism is the starting point of a religion that culminates in Christianity... Hinduism is Christianity in potency."⁵¹⁵ However, Panikkar did not mean that all of Hinduism will one day be Christian, but rather that the Christian revelation will help Hinduism discover the Christ within Hinduism – a point that Upadhyaya had earlier made in reference to Prajapati as the Christ within Hinduism. Christ, according to him, is present in a hidden way in Hinduism.⁵¹⁶ Panikkar considered Christianity and Hinduism to be fragments of the same unique religion and suggested that Christians and Hindus must discover this unity because essentially they were the same.

Fulfilment theories of interreligious dialogue such as the one Panikkar proposes run into difficulties when considered from the Hindu perspective. From the Hindu perspective, the reverse of Panikkar's proposal may also be true. For a Hindu, Christianity may be considered Hinduism in potency – a position perhaps unacceptable to most Christians in light of their belief in the finality of Christ's revelation. Aware of the weaknesses of the fulfillment models of interreligious dialogue, Panikkar in his later edition of the same book moved away from his seemingly fulfillment position to more of a mutuality position. As he would say, "I speak neither of a principle unknown to Hinduism, nor a dimension of the Divine unknown to Christianity, but of the unknown reality...."⁵¹⁷ Panikkar calls this Divine unknown 'mystery' and Christ the most powerful symbol of the Divine, although such symbols are not limited to the historical Jesus. This

⁵¹⁵ Panikkar, *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism*, 58-60.

⁵¹⁶ By saying the Christ was hidden in Hinduism Panikkar did not mean that Christ could actually be found in Hinduism but rather that the name Jesus Christ functioned as a "Supername" that assumed many names. Christians knew the Divine as Christ. However, Panikkar asserted that the name "Christ" can also known by other historical names such as Rama, Krishna, Ishwara,, or any other name. Rejection or denial of any one of these other names leads simultaneously to a unique aspect of the divine. In this way Panikkar attempted to reconcile the uniqueness of Jesus without denying the uniqueness of other religious traditions.

⁵¹⁷ Raimundo Panikkar, *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism: Toward an Ecumenical Christophany* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1981), 19.

symbol can have other names such as Rama, Krishna, etc. Christians call him Christ because it is in and through Jesus that Christians arrive at their faith in the Divine. Each symbol, no matter what the name, expresses the indivisible mystery and each being an unknown dimension of Christ.⁵¹⁸

Panikkar focused much attention on creating the groundwork for genuine interreligious dialogue. To do so he made two distinctions, one between faith and belief and the other between the Christ 'symbol' and the Jesus of history. The content of faith is 'mystery' (for Christians it would be the Christ 'symbol'), and this is common to all religious traditions. For a Hindu it would be Rama or Krishna. The common "mystery" is the element that unifies the various religious traditions, although Panikkar does not explain this in relation to non-theist religions such as Buddhism or stringently monotheistic religions such as Islam. The content of belief, according to him, is the various religious myths (for Christians the Jesus of history) or the particular religious traditions. According to Panikkar, religious traditions differ on the level of beliefs (particular religious traditions), but they all coincide on the level of faith (mystery). Interreligious dialogue has to take place on the level of faith and that can mean a bracketing of belief.⁵¹⁹

Panikkar's distinctions between the Jesus of history and the Christ 'symbol' and between belief and faith present a problematic. First, Panikkar's identification of Christ with Divine mystery (which according to him can take other names such as Rama, Krishna, Buddha), and faith as being the level on which dialogue needs to occur can lead

⁵¹⁸ Ibid., 23-30.

⁵¹⁹ For more on Panikkar's distinction between Christ of faith and Jesus of history and faith and belief see, Raimundo Panikkar, *The Intrareligious Dialogue* (New York: Paulist Press, 1978), 19.

to the kind of relativism of which interreligious dialogue can become a victim. Relativism does not stress enough the particularity and uniqueness of religious traditions. In other words, if all religions are essentially different manifestations of the same Divine mystery does it really matter which religion one follows? Especially in a globalized world where crisis of identity causes religious extremism, such relativism can only contribute to a kind of alienation and nostalgia. Moreover, all religions carry certain universalising tendencies. For example, this is the rationale behind the Christian call to evangelize. Panikkar's kind of pluralism can make the Christian mandate to evangelise meaningless – a sour point for those who oppose relativism. Jacques Dupuis, for example, would question whether the Church and Christians can engage in genuine dialogue if it also means that they revoke their traditional claim to Jesus as the “constitutive” Saviour of humankind?

Secondly, for Christians a strong distinction between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith is hardly an acceptable option. Jesus is the object of Christian faith and the Jesus of history is inseparable from the Christ of faith.

Panikkar is a good example of an Indian theologian, who in his time, contributed to the development of the theology of interreligious dialogue. His theological insights may come with disadvantages, but in the unique context of Indian pluralism Panikkar concentrated his efforts in developing a viable framework for interreligious dialogue.

If Panikkar's position is close to relativism, Jacques Dupuis' position serves as a correction to Panikkar's model. Dupuis concentrated on developing a theology of interreligious dialogue that would respect the uniqueness of other religions while still

maintaining the primacy of Christian revelation. As we shall see, his thought, although a development in interreligious theology, also had its disadvantages.

Jacques Dupuis S.J.

Jacques Dupuis's *Toward a Theology of Religious Pluralism* has become a seminal work in the field of religious pluralism. Dupuis' starting point is his awareness of the past "liabilities" and "negative attitudes" of the Church toward other religions. In the context of this history, he attempts to present a theology of religious pluralism that respects the uniqueness of other religions while finding a place for other religions within the Christian dispensation.

Dupuis identifies the challenge of any Christian theology of interreligious dialogue to "be confessional... that is, truly committed to one faith while at the same time holding a global vision and being open to all human experiences of the Divine."⁵²⁰ As Dupuis suggests:

... the relationship between Christianity and the other religions can no longer be viewed in terms of contradiction and opposition on one side and only potentialities on the other. It must henceforth be thought of in terms of a relational interdependence.... Christian theology of religious pluralism must seek to overcome the dilemma between Christocentric inclusivism and theocentric pluralism, understood as contradictory paradigms.⁵²¹

Dupuis proposes his 'Trinitarian Christology' to be such a model. A genuine theology of interreligious dialogue, according to him, will have to hold in balance the central character of Jesus Christ on the one hand and the universal role of the God's Holy Spirit on the other. He continues:

⁵²⁰ Dupuis, *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*, 203-4.

⁵²¹ Ibid.

It will thus be able to account for God's self-manifestation and self-gift in human cultures and religious traditions outside the orbit of influence of the Christian message....⁵²²

In the final analysis, no matter what the model, Dupuis' concern is that any interreligious theology should be capable of leading the Christian faith—commitment beyond claiming for itself any exclusivity or even constituting an obligatory reference point: "The historical centrality of the Christ event cannot be allowed to obscure the Trinitarian rhythm of the divine economy with its distinct and correlated functions."⁵²³

Dupuis' model, which he terms "One God – Convergent Paths," could be summarized in his own words:

... while the Christ-event plays an irreplaceable function in God's design for humankind, it can never be taken in isolation but must always be viewed within the manifold modality of the divine self-disclosure and manifestation through the Word and the Spirit. The expansiveness of God's inner life overflowing outside the Godhead is, in the last analysis, the root cause for the existence in human history of *convergent paths*.⁵²⁴

Dupuis' model is perhaps the best example of a theology of interreligious dialogue where Christian identity is made compatible with a genuine recognition of the identity of other faiths. Yet, one must recognize that the soteriology [or in some cases lack of soteriology] of each religious tradition is so vastly diverse that even Dupuis' explanation of different religious traditions as "facets of the self-disclosure of the Absolute Mystery" by itself may not account for that diversity. Many theologians such as Paul Knitter continue to believe that a "constitutive" and an "inclusivist" Christological

⁵²² Ibid., 207.

⁵²³ Ibid., 208.

⁵²⁴ Ibid., 209.

model such as Dupuis' leaves no room for genuine dialogue.⁵²⁵ As long as the centrality or superiority of Christ is unequivocally maintained, critics of Dupuis maintain, genuine dialogue cannot take place. As we shall below, Dupuis does argue for the superiority of Christ over other revelations at least in some respects.

Apart from proposing the Trinitarian Christological model, Dupuis also proposes a theology of dialogue. "Dialogue," he observes, "can only be sincere if it takes place on an equal footing."⁵²⁶ Honest and sincere dialogue requires that the partners in dialogue enter with both commitment and openness. Commitment here means that one enters the dialogue process committed to one's own religious tradition. Dialogue that requires one to bracket one's faith or to compromise one's faith for the sake of dialogue would hardly be sincere. Dialogue must happen "in the integrity of their faith."⁵²⁷ Without the integrity of faith interreligious dialogue would not be a dialogue that truly involves faith. Dialogue is "an effort to seek understanding in difference, in a sincere esteem for convictions other than one's own." Openness in dialogue would mean that "what is relative be not absolutized, whether by incomprehension or intransigence." For example, in the Christian context one could interpret the 'fullness of revelation of Christ' both qualitatively and quantitatively. Quantitative interpretation entails claiming that only Christ's revelation is valid over all other revelations. Openness suggests that one is willing to assign qualitative "fullness" to the Christ event – fullness not of extension but of intensity.⁵²⁸ In other

⁵²⁵ Paul Knitter, *Jesus and other Names: Christian Mission and Global Responsibility* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1996), 146.

⁵²⁶ Jacques Dupuis, *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*, 377.

⁵²⁷ *Ibid.*, 378.

⁵²⁸ *Ibid.*, 378-379. Here Christ would be presented as the most powerful of Divine revelations yet not exhausting the Divine Mystery.

words, the Christian claim would be that Christ is the deepest revelation of God yet accepting that other revelations also reveal God in varying degrees.

Openness in dialogue is the second important requirement for genuine dialogue. It means that one is willing to be open to the faith of the other *in its difference*. By openness, Dupuis means more than a conceptual level understanding of other religious traditions. According to him, "Each partner in dialogue must enter into the experience of the other, in an effort to grasp that experience from within."⁵²⁹

Whether one can enter into another religious tradition in the way Dupuis and Panikkar suggest is, of course, a matter of much debate. While Panikkar's model runs the risk of diluting the particularity of each religion with his relativism, Dupuis' suggestion that one enter into the experience of the other tradition is equally problematic. It would be impossible for a Christian, for example, to enter into the depths of the practice of Hinduism since many of its practices are in direct contradiction to Christian doctrines. How does a Christian experience polytheism without also violating the first commandment? These are real objections to Dupuis' model of dialogue. Moreover, Dupuis' vocabulary in his "Trinitarian Christology" is so overwhelmingly Christian, that it becomes an obstacle to the very kind of dialogue he suggests different faith traditions should engage in.

It may be said that dialogue has been one of the consistent themes of Indian theological thought both in the pre- and post-independence eras. The final chapter will

⁵²⁹ Panikkar calls this experience level involvement with other religious traditions as "intrareligious" dialogue and considers it an indispensable condition for genuine interreligious dialogue. Raimundo Panikkar, *The Intrareligious Dialogue* (New York: Paulist Press: 1978). Other authors such as Frank Whaling call the experience level involvement as "passing over and returning," a reference to the experience of the "Other" and the accompanying religious experience even while continuing to live in one's own worldview.

attempt to address dialogue in a new way while attending to both the strengths and the weaknesses of both Panikkar and Dupuis' models.

In the final chapter, Mark Heim's framework for interreligious dialogue will be presented as offering a viable framework within which genuine dialogue can occur. Moreover, a framework similar to Heim's framework can be found in the Jaina *nayavada* theory within the Indian philosophical tradition. Further development in the theology of interreligious dialogue in India can find a viable framework for dialogue in Heim's model as it is put in dialogue with the Indian religious and philosophical traditions.

C. A critical evaluation

The above discussion presents an overall view of the development of theological thought in India concerning issues relevant for this dissertation. The discussion is crucial on multiple levels. First, it takes account of the direction Indian theological thought has taken and the themes that are relevant for any future theological engagement. Inculturation, social justice, interreligious dialogue, and their interconnectedness are the main themes that emerge from our discussion. Second, our discussion gives an indication of the methods employed by Indian theologians. Third, it points to the contexts in which any future theological enterprise must be undertaken in India. Fourth, it makes us aware of the shortcomings of Indian Catholic theological thought. This last point can provide opportunities for future development in the theological domain. An elaboration of each of these points will be helpful here.

The first step in Schreiter's model of contextual theology suggests that local theology must begin with previously existing theologies. The discussion of Indian theology was crucial for the precise reason that themes for theological work must emerge

from within the Indian context and from the life experience of the community within which faith is lived out.

An anecdote may help clarify the point. During summer months, my seminary in Bangalore, India, sent its seminarians out for pastoral assignments. Almost always most of these pastoral assignments were in rural areas where agriculture is the main occupation of the people. I remember reaching a remote village in the State of West Bengal after a treacherous five hour journey by foot. I reached the village at noon. Almost immediately, the accompanying catechist sent word to the workers employed in the fields. Lest the financial subsidy from the parish be cut off, the farmers and their families came from the fields during peak work time so that I could instruct the entire village on the Trinity. Farmers soiled from farm work and hungry sat impatiently as I delivered my prepared lecture on the Trinity. At the end of the day I decided to test their knowledge of the topic. I asked them a simple question, "Who are the three persons of the Trinity?" One of the farmers answered, "God, Adam, and Eve."

As far as method is concerned, our discussion points to a striking reality in the Indian theological scene. Even prior to Vatican II, Indian theologians exhibited the tendency to do theology in a manner consistent with the method of what later came to known as contextual theology. It would be anachronistic to call pre-independence and pre-Vatican II Indian theology "contextual theology" in the same way that one would term liberation theology contextual. Yet, without over-stressing the point, one cannot help but point to the sensitivity of the early Indian theologians to the realities of the Indian situation as they attempted to do theology. Thus, one may say that Indian theology has been "contextual" in the same way the early Christian church was. If the author of the

gospel of John found adequate ways to integrate Christian theology and Greek philosophy, Indian theologians have strived to achieve the integration of Christian theology and Hindu philosophy and the gospel and the experience of poverty. The experience of pluralism and poverty in India prompted the theological pioneers in India to respond to their unique situation in India. De Nobili, Rammohan Roy, Banerjee, and Upadhyaya tried to contextualize and inculturate Christianity within a primarily Hindu society. Vivekananda and Gandhi's spirituality centred around economic and social inequalities. As Hindu believers they incorporated the Christian gospel into their belief system. Consequently, it would be inadequate to discuss the Indian theological enterprise merely as faith seeking understanding as traditional theology would be inclined to do. Rather, Indian theology could be best described as faith seeking relevance in the context of pluralism and poverty. Thus the real context in which Indian theologians sought to make theology relevant was characterized by pluralism and massive poverty. Any future theological initiative in India must take into account these realities, albeit, within the new context of globalization and militant Hindu nationalism.

In addition to the theology developed by the prominent figures studied in this chapter, there is also standard Indian theology as it has been taught in the seminaries. Standard Indian theology also exhibits certain weaknesses. Some of these emerge from the kind of ecclesiology that is predominant in India – a pre-Vatican II, Western, highly centralized, hierarchical, and highbrow ecclesiology. Add to such an ecclesiology a very Romanized liturgy and one has the recipe for an ecclesiological disaster.

Also, despite the overall tendencies toward integration evident in the works of leading Indian theologians, there are still some weaknesses that come from a lack of total

integration of theological themes. These weaknesses come from the diverse goals that the theology of liberation, the theology of inculturation, and the theology of interreligious dialogue pursue. For example, much of early inculturation movement was associated with the adoption into Christian worship of high caste Hindu ritual practices.⁵³⁰ Liberation theologians, on the other hand, were more concerned with lower caste struggles such as the development of *dalit* (outcaste) theology. The liberationists were discontented with the inculturationists' willingness to find common themes between Hinduism and Christianity. They found too many unjust practices within the traditional Hindu social system for it to be befriended. The oppression of *dalits* would be just one example of such an injustice.⁵³¹ The inculturationists, on the other hand, considered liberation theology to be alien and overly focused on the socio-political dimension of the society than the freedom that comes from within as in the case of traditional Hindu spirituality. As has been demonstrated, however, this criticism must be tempered with an appreciation for the general trend of theological thought in India. Most liberationists that we discussed earlier considered liberation to be an interreligious task, and most inculturationists considered liberation to be an inalienable part of inculturation.

There is another source of tension in the theological circles in India which emerges not from within Christian circles but without. Hindu hardliners have interpreted

⁵³⁰ For example see Walter Fernandez "Bhakti and Liberation Theology for India," 62. The author writes, "The 'Indian' culture that is attempted by this inculturation is predominantly of the Brahminic and Sanskritic variety, the type presented as Indian culture by the revivalists during the freedom movement. Those who belonged to this culture are real Indian. The rest are marginal. When such revivalists say that the Church should be indigenised, they expect Christian to identify themselves with this Sanskritized Brahminic culture. That, in reality, is the type of indigenization most Christians working for the inculturation have come to expect. Most elements from 'Indian' culture that are given a Christian form belong almost exclusively to the Brahminic ritual and philosophy and other form of dominant culture expressions."

⁵³¹ One of the main reasons for the failure of inculturation efforts lies in the fact that tribal Christians do not accept the Sanskritized Brahminic form of inculturation. They have their own cultural heritage radically different from the Hindu culture. The tribal inculturation was based on the socio-cultural expression of their own respective cultures.

the Church's attempts at inculturation as a ploy. They see the establishment of Christian *ashrams* as a strategy to Christianize rural India. Sita Ram Goel,⁵³² a Hindu author, for example, calls theologians like Swami Abhishikatananda 'swindlers.' It is not only the inculturationists who have experienced the Hindu ire. In the liberationists' attempts to support the *dalits*, some Hindu hardliners see a Christian attempt to disrupt traditional Hindu society as well as an extension of the missionary "milk powder-Christians" tactics.

Interreligious dialogue has also created some tensions. Contrary to most interreligious dialogue theologians who tend to see plurality as a sign of divine richness, evangelical-minded Christians in India see plurality as nothing more than syncretism. Christian evangelicals evaluate other religions negatively and prefer to stress exclusively the uniqueness and the finality of the Christian message. Another major drawback to Christian interreligious dialogue efforts is a preoccupation with Hinduism and to a lesser extent with Buddhism at the expense of the true plurality of India. India's religious diversity includes Jains, Sikhs, Muslims, and other religions of lesser following. Any future development in this field must make interreligious dialogue a more inclusive project.

The debate between the inculturationists and liberationists is not without efforts for synthesis. The most prominent of such theologians is the Jyoti Sahi, a Catholic artist with both Hindu and Protestant background. In his art he attempts to bridge the gap between inculturation and liberation. His works are often termed the "theology of Indian Christian culture."⁵³³

⁵³² Sita Ram Goel, *Catholic Ashrams: Swamis or Swindlers* (New Delhi: Voice of India, 1994).

⁵³³ Jyoti Sahi, *Stepping stones: Reflections on the Theology of Indian Christian Culture* (Bangalore: Asian Trading Corporation, 1986). Also see other works by the author, *The Child and the Serpent: Reflections on Popular Indian Symbols* (Boston : Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980); and *Holy Ground: A New Approach to*

Conclusion

Having taken into account the historical reality of Christianity and militant Hindu nationalism, having analyzed the theoretical aspects of globalization and contextual theology, and having determined inculturation, social justice, and interreligious dialogue as the previously existing theological themes in India, we must next proceed with the task of proposing directions for theology in India in the new context of globalization and militant Hindu nationalism. The claim that the context for theology in India has changed does not dilute Indian Catholic theology's traditional focus on inculturation, social justice, and interreligious dialogue. Rather, the new context urges the Indian Catholic church to search for newer ways to respond to these very traditional concerns. Thus, I argue in the next chapter is that while the traditional focus of the Indian Catholic theological community are not misplaced, the new context of globalization and militant Hindu nationalism require that these issues be addressed within newer frameworks of interpretation. The discussion in the final two chapters will provide the final steps for carrying out the thesis of this dissertation that, since globalization along with militant Hindu nationalism form the new context for theology in India, an appropriate Christian response consists in developing newer theological initiatives that will address the problems of inculturation, interreligious dialogue, and social justice within new frameworks of interpretation.

Chapter VII

A Theology for India – I

Introduction

In this chapter we will attempt to propose directions for any new Christian theological work in India in the context of globalization and militant Hindu nationalism. The theological response to globalization and militant Hindu militancy proposed in this dissertation is the subject matter of the final chapters.

These two chapters are integrally related. They have been divided because of the length of the chapters. In chapter seven we will first assess the theological response that the Church in India has made thus far to the globalization phenomenon. The preparatory meetings for the Asian Synod 1998, the Synod document, and the writings of Indian theologians provide a useful resource for future theological work in India. In these documents globalization emerges as a phenomenon that requires urgent attention. The second section in chapter seven will focus on inculturation in the context of globalization and militant Hindu nationalism. The main claim of this section is that previous attempts at inculturation in India, though credible, have had their weaknesses. Far from being a superficial project, inculturation, I argue, must incorporate advances in the field of intercultural communication in order to be a genuinely contextual project – a project that relates Christianity and the culture in which it finds itself in all its complexity. The contemporary Indian context calls for a theological response that takes into account the

complexity of the interaction between the gospel/tradition culture and Indian culture as an intercultural communication event. Schreiter's application of the advances in intercultural communication to theology provides some clear direction in this regard. I also suggest that a retrieval of pre-colonial Christian-Hindu cultural tradition may offer invaluable resources for a renewed theology. Although the pre-colonial Christian-Hindu cultural integration had its drawbacks, a careful retrieval of this tradition can be a crucial resource for the inculturation project.

Chapter eight has two sections. The first section will focus on interreligious dialogue in the context of globalization and militant Hindu nationalism. The claim here is that interreligious dialogue needs a new framework in India – a framework that accounts for both claims to the uniqueness of one's religious tradition and respecting others' claims to the uniqueness of their own religious tradition. Indian pluralism calls for a renewed theology that accounts for and respects both the universality and the particularity of every religious tradition. In other words, both the need for evangelization and the need for genuine dialogue must be equally addressed. Mark Heim's framework, which echoes the Jaina *nayavada* (standpoints) theory, may hold much promise in this regard.

The final section will deal with social justice in the context of globalization and militant Hindu nationalism. I claim that the Church in India should take Schreiter's idea of "the church between the global and local" as a framework within which it can address the economic problems created by globalization. I propose that the Church in India must be present where the negative effects of globalization are most experienced. Fr. Thomas Kocherry's National Fisherworkers Forum is proposed as an example of the new locale for theological work in a globalized India. In addition to discovering this new locale,

Schreiter's concept of *telos* will be used as a tool for engagement with globalizing powers as well as for a renewed theology of social justice and inculturation.

These two chapters carry further a point demonstrated in the previous chapter: that inculturation, interreligious dialogue, and social justice have been the central focus of Indian theological thought. Moreover, the ingenuity of Indian Christian theological thought lies in its frequent treatment of these three themes as integrally intertwined. Inculturation implies a genuine commitment to social justice and both justice and it are to be achieved through a living dialogue with people of other religious traditions. Similarly, most Indian liberation theologians considered social justice to be an interreligious project. Interreligious dialogue and inculturation were treated as two sides of the same coin. I argue that in the new context of globalization, this integral approach must continue. Globalization as a multidimensional phenomenon will require such a multidimensional response. Indian theology carries within it the resources for such a response.

A. Globalization: The new context for theology in India

Schreiter proposes that for contextual theology to be genuinely contextual it must begin with previously existing theologies. Since this dissertation claims that globalization and the resultant militant Hindu nationalism form the context for theological endeavors in India, an assessment of the Church's response to globalization is an appropriate starting point. The effects of globalization have not gone unnoticed by Indian theologians. This was most visible at the preparation for the Asian Synod at the Synod itself.

Globalization emerged as a central theme of the Asian Synod 1998, organized in preparation for the Jubilee Year 2000. The late Pope John Paul II had called for five Continental Synods. The Asian Synod was held in 1998. Cardinal Jan Schotte, the

General Secretary of the Synod of Bishops, invited responses to the *Lineamenta* from various groups of the local church. As mentioned earlier, globalization was one of the central themes that emerged in the group discussions. For example, Remigius Peter, Bishop of Kumbakonam, India, reported:

Globalization has eroded the cultural values of the local people. Poor countries cannot compete with first-world countries. The local free markets are taken away by the world markets. According to the United Nations, globalization has become a curse for poor countries.... As a pastoral response, we should appeal that the debts of the third-world be cancelled or lightened.⁵³⁴

Other nations in the Synod made similar observations. For example, Aramando Bortolasso, SDB, Titular Bishop of Rafanea and Vicar Apostolic of Alep, Syria, made the following observation:

The problem of globalization... makes the poor poorer. The Church must take a stand. While the developed countries must collaborate with Asia to solve the problem, the church, must with its evangelising mission and its social doctrine, promote the dignity of the human person, solidarity, subsidiarity, and the common good of all peoples.⁵³⁵

In an essay evaluating the theological contribution of the preparatory phase of the Synod, Amaladoss writes:

Looking around Asia, it is not difficult to list the various problems the people are facing: poverty and injustice, division and discrimination, corruption and exploitation, fundamentalism and communalism, domination and oppression, individualism and consumerism. The list is long and challenging.⁵³⁶

⁵³⁴ Remigius Peter, "Report of Group Discussions: English Group A," in *The Asian Synod: Texts and Commentaries*, ed. Peter C. Phan (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2002), 128.

⁵³⁵ Aramando Bortolasso, "Report of Group Discussions: Italian Group" in *Peter The Asian Synod: Texts and Commentaries*, ed. Peter C. Phan (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2002), 139.

⁵³⁶ Michael Amaladoss, "Expectations from the Synod of Asia," *The Asian Synod: Texts and Commentaries*, ed. Peter C. Phan (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2002), 54

Yet when it comes to identifying the themes for the Synod, Amaladoss points to globalization as the most pressing problem facing India. Ironically, the year 1998 also happened to be the five hundredth anniversary of the arrival of the Portuguese adventurer Vasco da Gama in South India. As Amaladoss notes, "The new route was not for purposes of tourism!"⁵³⁷ On this occasion two international seminars were held in New Delhi. The themes of the seminars make the pressing context of India obvious. They were: *From Colonization to Globalization: 500 Years after Vasco da Gama*⁵³⁸ and *Globalization Seen from the Point of View of Its Victims*.⁵³⁹

Amaladoss expresses the themes for the Synod from the Indian point of view very clearly. He writes:

Contemporary globalization is lived by the peoples of Asia as a form of economic colonialism. It is supported by open or hidden military might. It is mediated by monochrome, consumer culture. It gives rise to secularization and an erosion of values. It is dominated by liberal capitalism system that swears by profits and free markets and indulges in unfair trade practices. It is controlled by multinational institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank (WB) and World Trade Organization (WTO). It is helped by corrupt economic and political elite groups in each Asian country.... Ecological exploitation, economic migration, displacement of peoples, mounting unemployment, sex tourism, destruction of indigenous cultures, fundamentalist religions etc., are only some of the manifestations of the hidden oppressive structures.

Globalization can be positive if it leads to division of labor, sharing and collaboration, facilitating the emergence of global

⁵³⁷ Ibid., 55.

⁵³⁸ "Colonialism to Globalization: Five Centuries after Vasco da Gama," in Walter Fernandez and Anupama Dutta, eds., *Papers Presented at the International Conference held at Indian Social Institute, New Delhi, Feb 2-6* (New Delhi: Indian Social Institute, 1999).

⁵³⁹ "Globalization Seen from the Point of View of Its Victims," in Michael Amaladoss, ed., *Papers Presented at the International Consultation on Globalization from the Perspective of the Victims of History Held in Delhi, Jan 18-22* (Delhi: ISPCK, 1999).

community. But that is not what is happening. Evangelization in such a situation will be inadequate if it does not address itself to the causes and structures, but limits itself to the effects and then proposes purely spiritual remedies.⁵⁴⁰

Similarly, Soosai Arokyasamy, observes that, the church “faces a particular challenge in the invasive homogenizing culture linked to globalization.”⁵⁴¹ In response to the materialism, consumerism, hedonism, fierce competitiveness, greed, and selfishness, Arokyasamy suggests that the church must be counter-cultural on behalf of the cultures of the Asian people, their identities, and their values.⁵⁴²

In the end, fifty-nine propositions were presented as the Synod’s final propositions for discussion. Among them globalization was highlighted as a phenomenon requiring urgent attention.⁵⁴³ As a result, the post-synodal apostolic exhortation of John Paul II, entitled *Ecclesia in Asia*, contained an explicit and significant reference to globalization and its implications for Asia. In Chapter Six of the exhortation titled, “The Service of Human Promotion,” paragraph 39a, he states:

While acknowledging its many positive effects... globalization has also worked to the detriment of the poor, tending to push poorer countries to the margin of international economic and political relations. Many Asian nations are unable to hold their own in a global market economy. And perhaps more significantly, there is also the aspect of a *cultural* globalization, made possible by the modern communications media,

⁵⁴⁰ Michael Amaladoss, “Expectations from the Synod of Asia,” 55.

⁵⁴¹ Soosai Arokyasamy, “Synod for Asia: An Ecclesial Event of Communion and Shared Witness of Faith, *Vidyajyoti: Journal of Theological Reflection* 62 (1998) 674-5.

⁵⁴² Ibid.

⁵⁴³ Proposition 49. While the phenomenon of globalization has many positive effects, it also has a negative impact on the poor of Asia. The 1997 Human Development Report of the United Nations Development Program observes that the process of globalization tends to push poor countries and poor people to the periphery. Many nations are increasingly being trapped under foreign debt and are becoming bonded to multinational bodies. This is more so when the negative effects of globalization make countries victims of the market forces. Moreover, through social communication and the information highway which facilitate the process of globalization, a new emerging global materialist, secularist, and consumerist culture is rapidly causing the erosion of traditional cultural and family values in Asia. Therefore, we commit ourselves to follow up the call of the Holy Father for “globalization without marginalization.”

which is quickly drawing Asian societies into a global consumer culture that is both secularist and materialistic. The result is a eroding of traditional family and social values which until now had sustained peoples and societies. All of this makes it clear that the *ethical and moral aspects of globalization* need to be more directly addressed by the leaders of nations and by organizations concerned with human promotion.

As the final fifty-nine propositions had already proposed, the Pope's exhortation insisted on the need for "globalization without marginalization."⁵⁴⁴ This was in keeping with the Catholic Church's position on globalization.⁵⁴⁵ The Church's teaching on globalization sees it as a neutral phenomenon capable of good if carried out within social and moral guidelines, but also capable of doing harm if implemented merely as a economic ideology.

At the Synod, Indian theologians were clear about the negative effects of globalization such as exploitation of indigenous populations, displacement of peoples, ecological destruction, the destruction of indigenous cultures and values, and the emergence of radicalism among others. These problems were cited as only some of the manifestations of the hidden oppressive structures contained within the dynamics of

⁵⁴⁴ "Ecclesia in Asia." Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation of the Holy Father John Paul II to the Bishops, Priests and Deacons, Men and Women in the Consecrated Life and all the Lay Faithful in Jesus Christ the Savior and his Mission of Love and Service in Asia: "That they may have life, and have it abundantly" (Jn. 10:10), 39b.

⁵⁴⁵ For example, see John A. Coleman S.J., "Making the Connections: Globalization and Catholic Social Thought," in *Globalization and Catholic Social Thought: Present Crisis, Future Hope*, eds. John A. Coleman S.J. and William F. Ryan S.J (Maryknoll, New York Orbis Books, 2005), 23. To quote Coleman, "Incipient Catholic discourse on globalization tends to see it as a complex rapidly evolving, ambiguous phenomenon – in itself neither good nor bad. Significantly there is not, as yet, any truly rounded treatment of the issue in Catholic Social teaching. "It will be" in John Paul's frequently reiterated throwaway line, "what people make of it." The papacy insists that globalization has great possibilities and potential risks. "For all its risks it offer exceptional and promising opportunities, precisely with a view to enabling humanity to become a single family, built on the values of justice, equity and solidarity," declared John Paul II. As José Casanova notes: "The Catholic Church has embraced globalization, welcoming its own liberation from the strait-jacket of the territorial sovereign nation-state which had restricted Catholic universal claims. But the embrace is not uncritical." For the last quote see, José Cassanova, "Religion, the New Millennium and Globalization," *Sociology of Religion* 62 (2001) 433. Also see Kenneth R. Himes, O.F.M., "Globalization with a Human Face: Catholic Social Teaching and Globalization," in *Theological Studies* 69 (2008) 269-89.

globalization. Even before the Synod, Felix Wilfred had warned the Church in India about the dangers of globalization. He had described globalization as a conservative revolution taking the world to the restoration of capitalism without restraint. He termed it as an anti-people revolution manufactured for them by others who reap the benefits.⁵⁴⁶

If one considers the earlier discussion on the relationship between globalization and militant Hindu nationalists, one cannot help but notice the striking parallelism between the overall negative assessment of globalization by both Christian theologians and Hindu nationalist militants. For both these groups globalization is often seen as the new face of the old colonialism. They both agree on the view that characteristic of a globalized world, along with the cultural homogeneity it creates, is a liberalized, monopolized, and often unjust economic structure. They are both quick to react to the global economic, social, cultural, and political agenda of the globalizing powers. However, even though Christian theologians and Hindu nationalists agree on globalization, their rationale comes from radically differing interests. Christian theologians are concerned about the negative effects of population that have already been mentioned above. Militant Hindu nationalists, on the other hand, who consider colonialism, globalization, Westernization, and Christianization as synonymous, are more concerned about the cultural and religious effects of globalization. Their emphasis on advancing a *neo-swadeshi* and *Hindutva* ideology in the context of globalization stems from a historical suspicion of things connected with Westernization, colonization, and Christianization. In this context, contemporary militant Hindu nationalism may be interpreted as a renewed struggle for both national and cultural identity in a globalized world.

⁵⁴⁶ Felix Wilfred, "Searching for David's String," 86.

It is in this context that the thesis of this dissertation claims that globalization is the new context for theology in India and that the reaction to globalization represented by militant Hindu nationalism is a most relevant case in point. In this globalized context, as Schreiter suggests, the Catholic Church's relevance depends upon how it helps engage the tension between the global and the local, where the effects of globalization are most prevalent⁵⁴⁷ culturally and economically.

Fortunately for the theological community in India, resources for such a response already exist both in India's theological tradition and in its pre-colonial ecclesiastical history. This is to the credit of a vibrant Indian theological tradition and its equally rich ecclesiastical history. This dissertation seeks to build upon these resources while pointing out new directions for intercultural engagement, inter-religious dialogue, and social justice. Thus, three areas will form the focus of the proposed response to the context of globalization and militant Hindu nationalism: culture, dialogue, and liberation.

The section below will focus on inculturation. The argument here is that while the Church in India has taken inculturation seriously, these attempts have had their weaknesses. On the one hand, the section below will critically analyze the weakness of inculturation in India, and on the other hand it will make proposals for renewed theological initiatives that incorporate Schreiter's application of the advances of intercultural communication to the theology of inculturation in the Indian context.

B. Globalization, militant Hindu nationalism, and inculturation

As in the previous section, the Asian Synod provides the background for the thoughts of the Church in India on inculturation. In its response to the *Lineamenta* sent by Rome in preparation for the Asian Synod 1998, the Catholic Bishops Conference of

⁵⁴⁷ Schreiter, *The New Catholicity*, 128.

India, while acknowledging the limited progress made in the field of inculturation,⁵⁴⁸ lamented the fact that the spirit of *Ad Gentes* regarding the promotion of faith-reflection in new cultural contexts has so far not been implemented in India.⁵⁴⁹ The CBCI attributed this setback to the Church's failure to understand, appreciate, and promote the different yet complementary spiritual and mystical elements of Asian religions and their worldviews. Rather, the CBCI notes that the Church deals with these religions with fear and distrust.⁵⁵⁰

The above view is also supported by some leading Indian theologians. For example, Amaladoss suggests that two weaknesses characterize the Indian Church's efforts at inculturation: first that it was a project undertaken outside of the context of the

⁵⁴⁸ To quote the CBCI, "The churches in India have a completely indigenous hierarchy.... Local languages are used in the liturgy and are media for evangelization. Indian religious traditions are studied in houses of formation (even though sometimes this is done superficially, because this reflection does not include a living encounter with practitioners of the traditions studied academically). Centres of interreligious dialogue and ashrams are promoted. The beginnings of an Indian ecclesial expression of our Christian faith have been made.... But there is a shadow side to this process...." The Bishops then go on to lament the fact the inculturation in India has not been a genuine encounter of two cultures. As an example of the shadow side the bishops point to how the church on the one hand proclaims freedom of conscience and religion, but in matters of grievances within the church her public image at times appears harsh and therefore one of counter witness. Perhaps the bishops were making a veiled reference to the silencing of some Asian theologians such as Tissa Balasurya, and a censure of the more moderate Jacques Dupuis. These Asian theologians, as the bishops suggest, are witnesses to the Asian spirituality, especially the transforming experience of the divine. But the church does not pay attention to the experiential dimension of the Asian theologians and in its concern for doctrinal unity takes an overly institutional approach in dealing with such issues. CBCI, "Becoming Truly Indian and Asian," *The Asian Synod: Texts and Commentaries*, ed. Peter C. Phan (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2002), 19.

⁵⁴⁹ The bishops were referring to *Ad Gentes* 22, which states: "It is necessary that in each of the great socio-cultural regions, as they are called, theological investigation should be encouraged and the facts and words revealed by God, contained in the sacred Scripture, and explained by the Fathers and Magisterium of the Church, submitted to a new examination in light of the Universal Church. In this way it will be more clearly understood by what means faith can be explained in terms of the philosophy and wisdom of the people, and how their customs, concept of life and social structures can be reconciled with the standard proposed by divine revelation." (*AG*, 22).

⁵⁵⁰ CBCI, "Becoming Truly Indian and Asian," 19. For example, in the 1980's Anthony DeMello (1931-1987) published a number of works that tapped into depths of Asian spirituality to communicate essential Christian truths. Ten years, after his death in 1998, some of his thoughts were condemned by the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith. It was the manner in which these condemnations took place that creates in the Asian theologians a fear for creative interreligious work. DeMello did not have a chance to defend himself.

people in local churches. Second, ecclesiastical control has placed⁵⁵¹ overly stringent limits on any reasonable exercise in inculturation.

Schreiter agrees with Amaladoss' latter claim. Writing from a more global perspective, he states:

The Roman Catholic Church, at the level of official discourse, encouraged inculturation, especially for those small-scale societies who were minorities struggling to maintain their identities in larger populations. But the complaint kept coming from many quarters that very little actual inculturation was being permitted, and so the rhetoric of inculturation was beginning to sound more and more hollow.⁵⁵²

It must be mentioned here that inculturation is a relatively recent problem. The 'alien' nature of the Church in India began only in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries when the Portuguese colonizers "imposed their way of life"⁵⁵³ on the St. Thomas Christians and the Indian converts to Christianity. The pre-colonial church, as chapter one indicated, was more culturally integrated into the environment even though, as we have seen, there were some doctrinal issues to be addressed. But in colonial India the scene changed. Amaladoss best describes the situation:

The good news was not only proclaimed. The people were also told how they should respond to it, namely by taking over the package of creed, ritual, and community organization that the Church offered them. In the process the people were uprooted from their social and

⁵⁵¹ The confluence of the Gospel and the Western/Roman church is significant to this discussion. The Church apprehension of the loss of the identity of the Roman rite in inculturation efforts is categorically stated in documents. In such cases, Western superiority over indigenous cultures is presumed – a trait of the colonial missionary era. Stephen Neil's comment is relevant here. "Missionaries in the nineteenth century to some extent yielded to the colonial complex. Only Western man was man in the full sense of the word; he was wise and good, and members of other races, in so far as they became westernized, might share in this wisdom and goodness. But Western man was the leader, and would remain so for a very long time. Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions*, (Hammondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1986), 220. In ecclesiology, such a mentality continues even till today.

⁵⁵² Schreiter, *The New Catholicity*, 116.

⁵⁵³ Michael Amaladoss, *Beyond Inculturation: Can the Many be One?* (Delhi: Vidyajyoti Education and Welfare Society/ISPCK, 2005), xi.

cultural identity. For example, in India one had to choose between being either an Indian socially and culturally or a "Christian."⁵⁵⁴

Inculturation received an impetus at the Second Vatican Council. The Council defined culture as "all those things which go to the refining and developing of man's diverse mental and physical endowments,"⁵⁵⁵ but did not offer any serious insights concerning the relationship between the culture of the gospel and local cultures apart from recognizing the plurality of cultures. It suggested, "legitimate variations and adaptations to different groups, regions and peoples, especially in mission countries" provided "the substantial unity of the Roman rite is preserved,"⁵⁵⁶ and even called for a more radical adaptation of the liturgy where needed.⁵⁵⁷ It evaluated other religions positively and saw in them a ray of the truth by which God enlightens human beings.

Lumen Gentium recognized the reality of pluralism in the context of local churches and saw in it a sign of the true catholicity of the church:

It (the Church) fosters and takes to herself, in so far as they are good, the abilities, the resources and customs of peoples. In so taking them to herself she purifies, strengthens and elevates them.... In virtue of this catholicity each part contributes its own gifts to other parts and to the whole church, so that the whole and each of the parts are strengthened by the common sharing of all things and by the common effort to attain to fullness in unity.⁵⁵⁸

The preparatory gathering of the Bishops of Asia in Taiwan for the 1974 Synod on Evangelization described evangelization as a Church incarnate in a people, a Church indigenous and inculturated. By this they meant a "Church in continuous, humble and

⁵⁵⁴ Ibid., xi.

⁵⁵⁵ *Gaudium et Spes*, 53.

⁵⁵⁶ *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 38.

⁵⁵⁷ Ibid., 40.

⁵⁵⁸ *Lumen Gentium*, 13.

loving dialogue with the living tradition, culture, the religions – in brief, with all the life realities of the people in whose midst it has sunk its roots deeply and whose history and life it gladly makes its own.”⁵⁵⁹ Beyond Vatican II, the Synod addressed culture more seriously than ever before. It proposed: “The gospel must impregnate the culture and the whole way of life of man... Accordingly, we must devote all our resources and all our efforts to the sedulous evangelization of human culture, or rather of the various human cultures. They must be regenerated through contact with the gospel.”⁵⁶⁰ As a result, the Church in India took the task of inculturation very seriously. A national seminar in 1981 on inculturation set upon the task of making the Church genuinely Indian. As enumerated in chapter six, three areas of focus were determined: liturgy, spirituality, and theology.

Amaladoss evaluates the effort as having begun well, but losing its way in the course of time. Two reasons could be suggested for its lack of success. While the documents of the Church encouraged inculturation, serious limits were placed upon its implementation. For example, the 1994 document issued by the Congregation for Divine Worship insisted that the unity of the Roman rite must be preserved while attempting variation for the sake of inculturation.⁵⁶¹ Moreover, stringent bureaucratic controls long delayed any serious efforts at inculturation. Secondly, Amaladoss suggests that the inculturation project in India was abstract and elitist. Instead of letting an Indian liturgy spontaneously evolve from and in the midst of people, it was “developed” as if a specimen in a laboratory from the literary sources of Hindu Vedas. It only served to alienate the subcultures that have found the Hindu religious tradition oppressive.

⁵⁵⁹ Amaladoss, *Beyond Inculturation*, 7.

⁵⁶⁰ *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 18,20.

⁵⁶¹ Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, *The Roman Liturgy and Inculturation* (Rome: 1994).

The implications of such limits on inculturation are obvious. Christians are looked upon as foreigners,⁵⁶² associated with India's Western colonial past and its equally Western globalized future. In this context, the Church in India must respond in a manner consistent with its past history of cultural symbiosis achieved at least to some degree, by the pre-colonial church.

A new framework for inculturation

Thus far in this chapter we have examined the theological response of the Indian Church toward globalization and its effects upon the Indian society. Both the Church in India in general and some Indian theologians in particular consider globalization an issue that requires urgent attention. It has also been clear in this analysis that inculturation, social justice, and interreligious dialogue remain issues of particular concern. We have also critically analyzed the Church's efforts at inculturation. In this area, while the Church in India can be commended for taking inculturation seriously, its lack of success lies in its piecemeal approach to inculturation and in the official limits placed on bold experiments at inculturation.

⁵⁶² Amaladoss' statement with regard to the alien entity of Christians is thought provoking. He writes: "The predicament of the Christians in India is that they are not only considered foreigners by others. They themselves feel that they belong to two different worlds. They are not totally at home culturally in their own country. There may not be a difference between them and the followers of other religions in the street, in the school, in the market place and in political life. But when the Christians cross the threshold of the Church-compound they enter into a different world. The "official" images and symbols of their worship are largely foreign and need a commentary to be understood. The worldview underlying the revealed biblical narratives is different. The ecclesial tradition which mediated the bible to them and was imposed as normative is also foreign. Since they do not fully grasp these cultural sources, memory and repetition of these foreign cultural patterns take the place of understanding and involvement. Symbols lose their power to signify and become mere indices. The texts of their official worship is a translation from sources in Latin or Syriac, so that even when the language is their own, the thought patterns are foreign to them. The art that decorates their churches and nourish their devotion is imported from Italy, Spain or elsewhere in Europe from where the original missionaries came. The official life-cycle rituals and festivals are so unsatisfactory, that, besides the 'official' ceremonies, people have more elaborate rituals at home, personally and socially more significant and satisfying. No wonder if they do not feel culturally integrated. Amaladoss, *Beyond Inculturation*, 3.

The context of globalization makes inculturation an urgent issue. As was seen earlier, the cultural effects of globalization destabilize large populations. Often, as is the case with Hindu nationalist militancy, religious militancy becomes a *modus operandi* for regaining local cultural identity. The section below will serve to provide new directions for a renewed theology that would carry forward the task of inculturation in India by incorporating the dynamics of intercultural communication as proposed by Schreiter.

Two concrete proposals form the crux of this new direction. The first proposal suggests that inculturation must be approached more broadly in India. In other words, inculturation cannot be limited to incorporating symbolic gestures into liturgy, making superficial ritual changes, or even adopting local languages as a medium of worship. Rather, inculturation must be seen as a dialogue between two cultures in all its intercultural complexity. Here, Schreiter's application of the advances in the field of intercultural communication to the gospel/culture relationship can be of much help. Second, the pre-colonial tradition of Christianity's encounter with local culture in India can be an important resource for future intercultural projects. The claim here is that the retrieval of this tradition can help in a fuller reconstruction of the story of Christianity in India and the rise of the more militant Hinduism. The retrieval of this tradition can shed light on the relative cultural integration the early Christians had achieved in South India. I contend here that not only will such retrieval present Christianity and Hinduism as religions capable of peaceful co-existence, but it will also lead to interreligious dialogue that can serve to alleviate Hindu misconception about Christianity and vice-versa.

We have already reviewed Schreiter's work in the field of intercultural communication and its implications for theology. Schreiter's conclusions are crucial for

future inculturation work in India. For example, Schreiter considers the interaction between the gospel and local culture as an intercultural communication event since the gospel (understood as culture) and its interaction with other local cultures carries within itself all the complex processes of intercultural communication. Thus, according to Schreiter, just as the success or failure of intercultural communication events are evaluated by the criteria of effectiveness and appropriateness of the cultural interaction, the gospel/culture encounter too must be evaluated by the same criteria. Recall that according to Schreiter, "A communication event is *effective* when the speaker feels that it has achieved its goal; namely, that it [the message] has become lodged with the hearer on the other side of the cultural boundary in a manner recognizable to the speaker;" and "a communication event is *appropriate* when it is achieved without a violation of the hearers' cultural codes."⁵⁶³ By contemporary standards, colonial Christianity failed with regard to both these criteria. The Portuguese, for example, used violence as a strategy. Some of the more contemporary efforts at inculturation can be called partly successful on the 'appropriate' criterion. For example, the *ashram* experiment is clearly an attempt on behalf of Christians to enter into the cultural milieu of Hindu India in a manner that values the Hindu religious and cultural structures. On the effectiveness criterion, on the other hand, the Church in India has experienced little success, as the militant Hindu nationalist movement against Christians attests. The Church has essentially been ineffective in entering into dialogue with India in a manner in which it feels at home within the Indian cultural milieu.

Schreiter's proposals become invaluable in the Indian context. Indian inculturationists must pay attention to the elements of intercultural communication events

⁵⁶³ Schreiter, *The New Catholicity*, 33.

such as the speaker/hearer, context, and the message. The Indian church must also pay attention to the hermeneutical implications of intercultural communication such as, for example, that the success of any intercultural communication event lies at the end of an intensive dialogue which involves much give and take.⁵⁶⁴ Thus, it is imperative for the Church in India to consider not only how it is carrying out its mission but also how this mission affects the identity of the majority of its people. It must not only consider what its message is, but also how this message is perceived and received by the Indian people. Preserving the integrity of the gospel message depends upon being sensitive to the manner in which it can be heard and received.

For example, the “great commission” in Mt 28:18-19⁵⁶⁵ can be understood very differently from the perspective of the speaker and the hearer. In India, this biblical passage can justify the claim of the militant Hindu nationalists that the primary motive of the Christian presence from the colonial times to the present is conversion of India to Christianity. The culturally insensitive evangelization efforts at the turn of the millennium by both Catholic and Protestant Evangelical Christians further validates the militant Hindu nationalists’ claim. Christians, on the other hand, cannot deny that evangelization is an important aspect of the Christian mission. Such complexities make it imperative for the Church in India to take the principles of intercultural communication seriously as the Church strives to be faithful to the gospel and to be authentically Indian.

Schreiter draws the attention of Indian inculturation theologians to yet another important aspect of the intercultural communication process – the context in which

⁵⁶⁴ Ibid, 35-6.

⁵⁶⁵ “All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.”

differing cultures interact. According to Schreiter, whether the interacting cultures are individualistic or collective, low-context or high context, and tolerant or intolerant of ambiguity are significant elements of intercultural communication.⁵⁶⁶ The implications of not taking into account the context of cultural dialogue are all too evident in India. Experiments with liturgical inculturation failed, for one reason, because theologians did not take into consideration the caste complexities of the Indian society. For the most part, non-Brahmin and non-Hindu populations in India were bound to reject a Sanskritized liturgy. Christian efforts at inculturation on the official level were primarily an attempt at Hinduization. The rest of the population was essentially excluded from the inculturation project. In contrast, the proposal being made here is that cultural integration requires a differentiated attention to various elements of the context. In some parts of India, Christianity may have to inculturate into a Buddhist, Muslim or Sikh cultural milieu. This would be possible only if deep sensitivity to context determines the direction Christian theology must take.

The third aspect of intercultural communication is the message itself. As Schreiter indicates, any message runs the risk of either losing or gaining information as it crosses cultural boundaries. Some part of the message may be more obvious and transparent in the speaker's culture than in the hearer's culture or vice-versa. Lack of understanding of this aspect may lead to much confusion and even communication failure.⁵⁶⁷ For example, contemporary violence against Christians is a recent development. Globalization opened the hitherto secluded cultures to the Western world and its Western values. Thus, when at the turn of the second millennium, Christians of all denominations converged upon India

⁵⁶⁶ Schreiter, *The New Catholicity*, 37-8.

⁵⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 38.

to “make known the gospel to every Indian,” militant Hindu nationalists interpreted that as the return of colonial Christianity in the new age of globalization. Although the Christians had a message, from the perspective of the non-Christian hearers, this message crossed the Indian cultural boundary as nothing short of yet another Western imperialism. The result has been damaging for the Church in India. Thus, as Schreiter claims, when one takes into account the different variables of intercultural communication such as the speaker, the hearer, the context, and the message, one is compelled to pay attention to the complexity of intercultural communication.

Schreiter goes beyond analyzing the communication event to assess the hermeneutical issues involved in intercultural communication. Schreiter suggests that, epistemologically, there are four distinctive characteristics of any intercultural communication event: meaning, truth, sameness/difference, and agency.⁵⁶⁸ We have already mentioned each of these aspects in an earlier chapter.

For the Church in India it is crucial to understand the implications of the statement that “meaning is not a predetermined product but the result of the interaction [dialogue]⁵⁶⁹ of all those involved in establishing meaning.” From this perspective, the Church in India must pose probing questions to itself, asking, what is the meaning of being the Church in India? What is the very meaning of interreligious dialogue in the Indian pluralist context? Toward what realistic end should dialogue be directed? What does it mean to be an “Indian” church? What should be the Church’s mission in India? How does it arrive at its conclusions about the meaning of its mission and how does the Church accomplish this mission in the Indian cultural context? These questions are

⁵⁶⁸ Ibid., 39.

⁵⁶⁹ Brackets mine.

particularly important in the way the universal Church understands the life of the local church.

The limitation that the universal Church places on the local church's efforts at inculturation is a matter of much contention in all of Asia. As mentioned earlier, in preparation for the Asian Synod, the Catholic Bishops Conference of India lamented the lack of progress regarding the promotion of faith-reflection in new cultural contexts. They attributed this failure of Christian mission efforts to the failure of the universal Church to take the spiritual and mystical elements of Asian religions seriously.⁵⁷⁰ Thus, as mentioned earlier, even the earliest attempts to develop an Indian liturgy that incorporates Hindu spiritual traditions (a carefully selected inclusion of scriptures from Indian religions) or Buddhist mystical practices (zen) has not received official approbation to date. Yet Latin liturgy has been recently promoted without sensitivity to religious or cultural boundaries. As Peter Phan notes, "Many bishops [at the Synod] stated plainly that without a genuine inculturation of the Christian faith into the Asian cultures—in theology, liturgy, indeed, in every aspect of church life—and without a humble dialogue with other religions and a committed solidarity with the Asian poor, Christianity will simply have no future in Asia in the next millennium."⁵⁷¹ The Asian churches are equally disenchanted with the recent *motu proprio* permitting celebration of the Tridentine Mass because of its promotion of an ancient Roman rite.⁵⁷² The question of its meaning for the Asian churches has evoked much criticism. As Peter Phan says, "Ask an Asian or African Catholic what the Tridentine Mass, with its quaint rituals and

⁵⁷⁰ CBCI, "Becoming Truly Indian and Asian," in *The Asian Synod: Texts and Commentaries*, ed. Peter C. Phan (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2002), 19.

⁵⁷¹ Peter C. Phan, ed. *The Asian Synod: Texts and Commentaries* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2002), x.

⁵⁷² <http://www.usccb.org/liturgy/VISEnglishSummPont.pdf>

the Latin language, *means*⁵⁷³ for them, whether it reveals ‘a secret place where Almighty God dwells hidden in our world, a foretaste of heaven amid the trials and disappointments of earthly mortality.’ It might, but at what cost to their native languages, cultures, and religious traditions?”⁵⁷⁴ The Church in India will have to discover the “meaning” of being church in its own social, religious, and cultural context rather than in existing as the “branch office”⁵⁷⁵ of a Western church. In other words, Indian bishops and Asian theologians are convinced of the need for a new theological initiatives in India. It is in this sense that this dissertation claims that renewed theological initiatives is key to a response to globalization and militant Hindu nationalism.

Understanding ‘meaning’ as the end result of a dialogic process rather than just propositional statements has implications for a theology of inculturation in India. Propositional truth is seen as a necessary but insufficient condition for establishing intercultural truth. In fact, propositional truth is only as significant as the meaning of the lives of parties involved in the intercultural event, particularly those of the speakers. The bitter reaction to *Dominus Jesus*⁵⁷⁶ (August 6, 2000) from both Hindu religious leaders and Indian Christian theologians is a telling example of Schreiter’s contention that truth and meaning are embedded in living communities. The reaction to the document was particularly bitter because John Paul II had just visited India and shared the platform with Indian religious leaders. During the event the Pope did not fail to hail the value of Indian religious traditions and express his appreciation for these traditions. *Dominus Jesus* was released immediately after his return to Rome from India. Indian religious leaders were

⁵⁷³ Italics mine.

⁵⁷⁴ Peter C. Phan, “A Local Tradition,” *Commonweal*, (Sept 28, 2007), 35.

⁵⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, ix.

⁵⁷⁶ http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20000806_dominus-iesus_en.html.

taken aback at the tone of *Dominus Jesus*. The following statement, no matter what it was originally intended to mean, was understood by Hindu and other religious leaders in India to mean that whereas their particular religions contained divine elements in them they essentially lacked salvific power. As the document stated:

... from what has been stated above about the mediation of Jesus Christ and the "unique and special relationship" which the church has with the kingdom of God among men... it is clear that it would be contrary to the faith to consider the Church as *one way* of salvation alongside those constituted by other religions, seen as complementary to the Church or substantially equivalent to her, even if these are said to be converging with the Church toward the eschatological kingdom of God.

Certainly, the various religious traditions contain and offer religious elements which are from God.... One cannot attribute to these, however, a divine origin or an *ex opere operato* salvific efficacy, which is proper to the Christian sacraments. Furthermore, it cannot be overlooked that other rituals, insofar as they depend on superstitions or other errors (cf. 1 Cor 10:20-12), constitute an obstacle to salvation (DI, 21).⁵⁷⁷

Since the document did not identify specific rituals within other religious traditions that are termed "superstitious" or "erroneous," militant Hindu nationalists, in light of the colonial Christian experience, saw this statement as history repeating itself in modern India. *Dominus Jesus* was interpreted in a way that seriously hurt both the credibility of the Pope and the Church among leaders of other religious traditions. Thus, the church must pay attention not only to what it is saying but also to how it comes across to its hearers and how it is received by those hearers. Without sensitivity to the reality that in intercultural communication meaning is a negotiated process, the 'meaning' of any

⁵⁷⁷ Ibid.

message will be 'lost in translation.' The bitter controversy created by *Dominus Jesus* is a telling example of this.

A third characteristic of intercultural hermeneutics lies in the way that difference and sameness are balanced. This third characteristic seeks to identify the common grounds and categories that facilitate communication and understanding. This point will be discussed further in our section on interreligious dialogue, where 'divine plenitude' will form the basis of interpreting the phenomenon of religious pluralism.

The fourth characteristic of intercultural hermeneutics is agency. Recall that Schreiter suggest that intercultural communication should not lead to either of the subjects involved being deprived of their subjectivity. The theological implications of Schreiter's proposal can be further expanded in India. For instance, the Church in India still functions under the colonial model of communication where the speaker is the gospel/church and the hearer is the local culture. For example, even today, in the remotest mission stations of rural India, new churches are built to replicate their European counterparts. Architecturally, the buildings look colonial, the social set up within the rectories are Western, and the liturgy is Roman. Christian presence for the most part still focuses on making "them" (the people) "one of us." Seminary education is still focused on imparting Western philosophical and theological thought that guarantees doctrinal soundness – a process evaluated periodically by officials from Rome. Except for the *ashram* experiment, it is not uncommon to find Christian churches and communities to be a Western oasis in the Indian cultural landscape.

In contrast, using Schreiter's model, the Church and the local culture are both speakers and hearers simultaneously. In practical terms, then, the Church must listen to

the culture as eagerly as it intends to speak to the culture. Failure to do so will result in the ineffectiveness of the communications event. Militant Hindu nationalists' violence against Christians in India cannot be excused, but it must be recognized that one contributing factor is a failed intercultural communication process. In fact, militant Hindu nationalists name conversion to Christianity the single most contentious issue underlying its attack against Christians. The *suddhi* (purification by reconversion to Hinduism) exercise was meant to regain converted Christians back to Hinduism both as a religion and as a cultural life-style. Since the focus of the Christian presence in Indian continues to be the conversion of Indians to Christianity, the Church fails to effectively gain from the encounter. In the process, even genuine attempts at inculturation such as the *ashrams* become suspect.⁵⁷⁸ Another important element in intercultural communication is the problem of identity. The Church in India is caught between its primarily Western identity and the Indian cultural context. The history of the Western identity lies in the fact that people in colonial India were not only presented the Christian message but were also told what the appropriate response to the message should be. In the process, Amaladoss notes, the people were uprooted from their social and cultural identity. Converts to Christianity had to choose between being either an Indian socially and culturally or a "Christian."⁵⁷⁹

The future challenge for the Church in India is presented by Amaladoss in these words:

...many Asian theologians would see it as the task of the local Church which seeks to live, express and celebrate its identity through symbols

⁵⁷⁸ Schreiter's own proposal to the Catholic Church in the context of globalization is the formulation, acceptance, and implementation of "a renewed and expanded concept of catholicity." "New catholicity" for Schreiter means a new wholeness, fullness, exchange, and communication. "Wholeness refers to the physical extension of the Church throughout the world; "fullness" refers to orthodoxy in faith; and "exchange and communication" calls new emphasis on communication keeping in focus the advances in intercultural communication. Ibid., 128.

⁵⁷⁹ Amaladoss, *Beyond Inculturation*, xi.

of its own culture. Embodying the good news in this way, the local church can more effectively and authentically give prophetic witness to it in its living context. Owing to the recent history of the emergence of local churches in colonial circumstances, their cultural identity has not only to be affirmed, but discovered in the first place. But are the local churches free to do this today? It looks as if local churches are hindered from doing this by a centre, in the name of preserving the authenticity of the gospel and of safeguarding the unity of the Church.⁵⁸⁰

If identity is at the core of the cultural debate, the Church as a religious entity cannot be anything but Christian.⁵⁸¹ Simultaneously, however, the context of globalization provides the impetus for the Church in India to become essentially more Indian without a return to its colonial or Western past. The intercultural communication in India must be between the Gospel/Indian Church and local cultures and not between a Western Church and local cultures. In essence, the Church in India must be, as the Catholic Bishops Conference of India proposes, truly Indian, truly Asian, and truly Catholic.

Schreiter agrees with Amaladoss and makes two suggestions. First, he suggests that policies that allow little or no experimentation (for example, the silencing of theologians, the failure to encourage the development of local liturgies for fear of the loss of the identity of the Roman Rite) in the intercultural context need to be eschewed. Second, intercultural exchange and communication, according to him, is a matter of "social judgement."⁵⁸² In his words, "Unilateral judgement on the results of an experiment rather than... "social judgement" (in which an extended exchange between

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid., 14.

⁵⁸¹ Joseph Mattam, "Inculturated Evangelization and Conversion," in *Theological Studies*, 50 (2003) 229-235. Mattam suggests that the church needs to be deculturated from the world's outlook and reculturated into Jesus' outlook.

⁵⁸² Schreiter, *The New Catholicity*, 129.

speaker and hearer takes place) fail to be communicative in a new catholicity.”⁵⁸³ In this context, Schreiter’s insight addresses the issue of inculturation succinctly. He says: “... the concerns of the speaker about the integrity of the message have to be met by equal concerns of the hearer about identity. Without this, communication has not taken place.”⁵⁸⁴ For Schreiter, preserving the integrity of the gospel message demands a communication process that itself has full integrity.

Although Schreiter and Amaladoss provide the principles for successful and sustainable intercultural communication and suggest dialogue as a means to achieve it, they do little to provide real life examples where such a model may have existed or exists. I suggest that a viable model for such a project, perhaps, can be found in the pre-colonial Indian church history. In other words, a retrieval of the pre-colonial tradition may provide insights and resources for a renewed theology of inculturation.

Directions for Indian theology - Pre-colonial church in India: A model for intercultural communication?

As mentioned above, Schreiter provides a blueprint for inculturation based on the principles of intercultural communication. However, models for such a project are scarce. In this section an attempt will be made to suggest that the pre-colonial Indian church may present important insights for a renewed theology of inculturation in India – a project that is incumbent upon the Church if it is to become genuinely Indian and address the issue of identity in a globalized India.

While undertaking this project one must resist the temptation to romanticize the life of these early Indian Christians or to claim that Indian religious pluralism was an

⁵⁸³ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁴ Ibid.

ideal reality. In retrospect, one can find many weaknesses and erroneous practices in the Church. Also as described earlier, Indian pluralism was an imperfect reality, which can be perceived as successful mainly in relative comparison with the systemic violence associated with the colonial period. Nevertheless, one is compelled to pay close attention to the relative cultural symbiosis, social harmony, and orthodoxy⁵⁸⁵ that the Church was able to achieve in these pre-colonial times – a challenge to both the militant Hindu nationalists and to the Church in India today.

The study of the history of Christian presence in India in the first chapter revealed that “Hindus, Jains, Buddhists, Christians, Jews and later Muslims, both Indian and foreign, lived in reasonable harmony”⁵⁸⁶ up until the advent of the Portuguese. This observation, although seeped in romantic idealism, is significant in the contemporary Christian experience of militant Hindu nationalism. As suggested earlier, realistic assessment does indicate the existence of relative social and cultural integration. A question that Indian theologians must ask is, “What were the factors that led to the relative assimilation of the early Christian into the main fabric of the Indian society?” The answers are varied. Whereas some scholars suggest that both Hinduism and Christianity exhibited impressive levels of toleration,⁵⁸⁷ others attribute it to ancient India’s economic exigencies. Mundadan for example says:

⁵⁸⁵ Doctrinally, one of the main problems of the Syrian Christians was the Nestorian influence. However, it was an indication of the Syrian/Persian influence on the church rather than a conscious decision in favor of Nestorianism and defiance against the Latin Church. Thekkedath furnishes some information about some other aberrations. Some *cattanars* (priests) made use of non-Christian rites for exorcism; it was common to consider some day and certain times as propitious and others as unpropitious for important celebrations such as weddings and undertakings; consulting fortune-tellers for marriages, illness, and events of their lives was widely practiced. Some events went as far as to make vows to the gods. See Thekkedath, *History of Christianity in India, Vol II*, 25-8.

⁵⁸⁶ Mundadan, *History of Christianity in India, Vol I*, 153.

⁵⁸⁷ M.G .S. Narayan, as quoted in Mundadan, *History of Christianity in India, Vol I*, 153.

It is commercial interest which attracted people of various creeds, races and nations to the Kerala coast; it is the same interests which induced the rulers and people of Kerala to show such hospitality to the 'alien' people professing 'alien' creeds and practicing 'alien' customs. It is again, this kind of enlightened self-interest which must have been responsible for the harmony and the cultural 'symbiosis' that came to prevail in Kerala from the very early times....⁵⁸⁸

Perhaps the truth lies somewhere in-between. Certainly, economic considerations of the Hindu majority were a major factor. The spices from Southern India were acclaimed in the then known world and the arrival of traders from Asia Minor was always a welcome and profitable practice. That should not, however, overshadow the reasonable ability of the Hindus for assimilation which was matched by the Christians' (and Muslims') ability for integration as well.

The above point is of crucial importance in contemporary India. As mentioned in the first chapter, the Christian and Hindu perceptions of each other's traditions are flawed. Whereas Hindu nationalist militants ignore the precolonial Christian presence in India, Christians ignore the colonial context within which militant Hindu nationalism developed and the crisis of identity that globalization creates in contemporary India. The precolonial tradition of Christian/Hindu social integration not only can reveal the cultural integration that these traditions accomplished in the past but can also foster meaningful dialogue for future integration. It can moreover, become a focus for future dialogue in interreligious cooperation.

It is clear that the precolonial and postcolonial church functioned within two different models of intercultural communication. In this context, the pre-colonial cultural integration, which reasonably preserved the identity of particular communities, becomes

⁵⁸⁸ Mundadan, *History of Christianity in India*, Vol 1, 152.

a great resource in a globalized world. Although historians such as Mundadan and Brown give us the details of the cultural symbiosis, there remains a need for more detailed research on the actual dynamics of the cultural interaction between the diverse religious and cultural traditions of the time. There remains the need to isolate the romantic aspects of this history and the need to trace historically reliable data on the religious coexistence. There is also the need for an extensive study of the cultural and religious implications of the life of this Indian community. For example, Schreiter suggests that in the gospel-culture encounter, there needs to be the recognition that "meaning" resides in the social judgment, i.e., in the parties involved in cultural interaction such as in India the local Church and local culture and only in a limited way in the ecclesiastical authorities outside the culture. He calls for intense dialogue and exchange to ensure the transmittal of meaning in intercultural communication.⁵⁸⁹ How did the precolonial Indians accomplish this? Could "trade" be the only reason for the relative harmony? If so, why could their achievement not be replicated by the colonists and the colonial church since "trade" was their primary motive too?

Tracing the history of pre-colonial Indian religious and cultural pluralism is important for yet another reason. One of the steps in Schreiter's model of contextual theology requires that any new theological initiatives must build upon the already existing theology. The Syrian Christians, both Catholic and Orthodox, preserve living theological and ecclesiastical traditions, although they have changed much through their

⁵⁸⁹ Schreiter, *The New Catholicity*, 132.

contact with the colonial Church.⁵⁹⁰ Retrieving these traditions can thus prove instrumental in any new theological endeavor.

It is interesting to note that the primary motive for the arrival of the early Christians to India was both missionary and for trade. Yet the cultural integration they achieved, the degree of reasonable peaceful coexistence they developed, and the economic cooperation they forged added up to a relatively successful experiment. This point is being stressed for a very important theoretical reason. The retrieval of this precolonial tradition must be sensitive to the multidimensional nature of Indian theological efforts. In other words, any work of retrieval must be attentive to the cultural, religious, and economic aspects of the lives of these Indians. This sensitivity will be important in the context of the multi-dimensionality of the Indian theological tradition (which is multidimensional in its emphasis on inculturation, interreligious dialogue, and social justice), and the multidimensional characteristic of globalization.

A final point must be added here. The retrieval of the precolonial Christian communities must constitute a theological study and not be merely a sociological

⁵⁹⁰ The Synod of Diamper began on June 20, 1599. The Synod changed many of the customs of the Thomas Christians. Thekkedath gives a detailed chronology of events. Archbishop Alexis de Menezes of Goa, (in 1534, Paul III by the Papal bull *Aequum reputamus* erected the diocese of Goa and its patronage was given to the Portuguese crown), now a Portuguese colony presided. The first day dealt with the opening ceremonies as given in the Roman Pontifical. The Second day all the participants were required to make the profession of faith according to the Tridentine formula. This was mainly done to rid the Syrian Church of any Nestorian elements. On the third and fourth days, some uniformity was sought in relation to the Sacraments. In general, there was an attempt to Latinize the discipline and rituals of the Thomas Christians. The fifth day dealt with matters of faith as the Trinity, the Incarnation, original sin, purgatory and other dogmatic articles of faith. Other decrees brought the Syriac canon into line with the Vulgate and non-Christian influence such as transmigration, fate, and indifferentism were condemned. Christian children were forbidden from attending the schools for reading and fencing conducted by Hindu teachers, if the latter obliged all their pupils to worship their idols. Christian teachers were ordered to remove from their schools any idols, which may have been set up there to enable their Hindu pupils to worship them. On the sixth day, the Holy Orders and Matrimony was treated. Both of these were subjected to the Tridentine formulas. The sixth day addressed the jurisdictional issues and the seventh day, morals. Some of these limited dealt with contacts with non-Christians and dress habits and caste distinction calling for a definite and separate identity as Christians. For a detailed description see, Thekkedath, *History of Christianity in India, Vol II*, 64-75.

analysis. The retrieval of the precolonial tradition must focus on the cultural, religious, and economic dimensions of the lives of the early Christians and other cultures as an explicitly theological exercise. The purpose of such retrieval is to not merely to propose a social theory, but rather to discover viable resources for a Christian theological response to the globalization phenomenon, although serious engagement with social theory remain an important dimension of such a theological project.

Summary

The following five points will serve to summarize the above discussion. These five points may be proposed as the important characteristics of the renewed theological initiatives that must be made in the field of inculturation. First, inculturation is really the task of the local church and the context in which the Church exists. Inculturation cannot be imposed from above – as the Indian experiment has indicated. The integration of the gospel and cultures can only take place through dialogue between the local church and the context in which it lives. Second, inculturation is a contextual process. In this sense, there cannot be only one model of inculturation for India. The past inculturation models failed because the more literal approach was designed as the one model to be implemented in all contexts in India. As Mattam suggests, “Inculturation must begin with life, not with the liturgy.”⁵⁹¹ As the experiment indicated, such one-model-fits-all approach to inculturation only served to alienate contesting cultures across India. The multicultural and multireligious context calls for contextual theological approaches to be implemented. Third, inculturation can only happen in an atmosphere of freedom and trust. The cultural context should be considered the locale where the relationship between

⁵⁹¹ Mattam, “Inculturated Evangelization and Conversion,” *Theological Studies*, 235.

the universal Church and the local church is seen as complementary rather than as instances of domination and subjugation or for ecclesiastical policing.

Thus for example, in an earlier discussion it was pointed out how Benedict XVI considered the early Christian synthesis of Christian belief and Greek Philosophy to be a fruitful exercise. Similarly, today in India there must be much room provided for theological synthesis between Christian doctrine and Indian philosophical schools of thought. A similar claim can be made also with regard to the liturgical realm. Censuring and silencing of theologians and liturgists cannot produce creative theological and intercultural enterprise. Also, the relationships between bishops and theologians and local peoples need to be life-giving rather than merely juridical. Thus the appointment to the ecclesiastical offices must take place in favour of the local church rather than only the preservation of a de-contextualized orthodoxy and Roman tradition. Fourth, resources for such future inculturation can be discovered in the precolonial church in India. Indian theologians must have the confidence to explore their rich cultural heritage and find its future in the wisdom of its ancestors. The precolonial history can foster meaningful dialogue between Hindus and Christians. Fifth, inculturation is a dialogic process. Both Amaladoss and Schreiter suggest that intercultural interaction should be characterized by dialogue.⁵⁹² Schreiter further suggests that, "There is need for intense dialogue and exchange to ensure the transmittal of meaning in intercultural communication."⁵⁹³ This final point as applied to religion is the subject matter of first section of the next chapter.

⁵⁹² Amaladoss, *Beyond Inculturation*, 16.

⁵⁹³ Schreiter, *The New Catholicity*, 132.

Chapter VIII
A Theology for India – II

Introduction

As mentioned earlier, the theological response proposed in this dissertation is divided into two chapters. In the previous chapter I argued that three areas formed the foci of Indian theological endeavors in the past: inculturation, interreligious dialogue, and social justice. I also claimed that the new context of globalization and militant Hindu nationalism calls for a renewed focus on these three emphases of Indian theology. The last section focused on inculturation. I contend that, while Indian theologians have tried to make the Church in India culturally compatible with the Indian cultural milieu, they fell short both because of official hindrances and the complexity of the Indian cultural and social landscape. I argue further, however, that incorporation of the theories of intercultural communication could make this effort even more effective. Here, the pre-colonial interaction between Christians and Indian people may prove to be an invaluable resource for developing renewed theological initiatives that can work in India.

The first section of this final chapter will focus on interreligious dialogue in the context of globalization and militant Hindu nationalism. It is proposed here that interreligious dialogue needs a new framework in India – a framework that accounts both for claims to the uniqueness of one's religious tradition and for respecting others' claims

to the uniqueness of their own religious tradition. Indian pluralism calls for renewed theological initiatives in interreligious dialogue that account for and respect both the universality and the particularity of every religious tradition. In other words, both the need for evangelization and the need for genuine dialogue must be equally addressed. I argue that Mark Heim's approach, which echoes the Jaina *nayavada* (standpoints) theory,⁵⁹⁴ provides a viable framework.

The second section will deal with social justice in the context of globalization and militant Hindu nationalism. The claim here is that renewed theological initiatives in the area of social justice must respond appropriately to the negative effects of globalization. I will argue that the Church in India may make use of Schreiter's idea of "the church between the global and local" as a framework within which it can address the economic problems created by globalization. In other words, the Church in India must be present where the negative effects of globalization are most experienced. In addition to discovering this new locale, Schreiter's concept of *telos* can also provide a resource for engagement with globalizing powers as well as for a renewed theology of social justice and a renewed understanding of the role of the Church.

A. Globalization, militant Hindu nationalism, and interreligious dialogue

One of the characteristics of the theology of interreligious engagement is its emphasis on dialogue. Schreiter, for example, emphasizes the centrality of dialogue. Schreiter is not alone in calling for a new theology of dialogue, both intercultural and interreligious.⁵⁹⁵ Particularly, in the present context of globalization, the necessity of

⁵⁹⁴ See Appendix B for schools of Indian Philosophical system and the place of Jaina philosophy in it.

⁵⁹⁵ Other scholars include, Michael Barnes, S. J., Jacques Dupuis, S. J., Paul Griffiths, Walter Casper, Gavin D'Costa, Mark Heim and a host of other theologians.

dialogue has assumed unprecedented urgency. Dialogue, particularly interreligious dialogue, will be the focus of the section below.

Recent developments in the theology of dialogue

Vatican II initiated significant developments in the theology of interreligious dialogue. Since Vatican II recognized that other religions contained elements of truth in them, Christian theologians have searched for ways to reconcile the primacy of their own religious faith with the pluralistic reality of the world. Dialogue has constituted an essential element of such a search. Thus, as seen in the last chapter, Indian theologians such as Panikkar and Dupuis spent their entire theological careers in dialogue with other religious traditions. Schreiter, in his model for contextual theology, points out the implications of dialogue in a pluralistic and globalized world. He suggests that interreligious dialogue must be perceived as an act of intercultural communication.⁵⁹⁶ Thus, whether the partners in an encounter are entering the dialogue from an objectivist/universalist (emphasis is on the underlying unity of common humanity) or subjectivist (emphasis is on the irreducible difference between cultures) standpoint, or whether they come from a predominantly sociocentric cultural context (cultures in which the group has primacy over the individual) or a predominantly egocentric cultural context (cultures in which the individual has primacy over the group) has major implications for interreligious dialogue. These variables and others in varying degrees make interreligious communications a rather complex process.

Scholars such as Catherine Cornille bring other issues related to interreligious encounters into play. The result of any dialogue will depend, according to her, on the goal

⁵⁹⁶ Robert Schreiter, "The Possibilities (and Limitation) of an Intercultural Dialogue on God," in *The Concept of God in Global Dialogue*, eds. Werner, G. Jeanrond and Aasulv Lande (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2005), 19

and the purpose that each partner in the dialogue determines. These goals and purposes can range from conversion of the other, to merely fostering mutual understanding, to tolerance, to mutual transformation and growth.⁵⁹⁷ Mutual transformation and growth are possible when good communication is practiced. Successful dialogue, she suggests, will focus on mutual transformation and growth. Moreover, as she suggests, "The conditions for a genuine theological dialogue and exchange pertain not immediately to the concrete beliefs or dogma of the respective traditions, but rather to the hermeneutical principles that are used to interpret" them"⁵⁹⁸ such as the context, the ways in which the parties determine meaning, and the identity of the speakers and hearers.

Cornille considers the issue of identity central to interreligious dialogue. The balance between commitment to one's tradition and acknowledgement of a degree of relativity makes room, as she says, "for a nuanced sense of one's own identity, a certain flexibility and an appropriation of oneself as being-in-conversation."⁵⁹⁹

Both Schreiter and Cornille stress the importance of the understanding of "truth" in their study of intercultural and interreligious dialogue. Schreiter suggests that the "propositional and referential notions of truth do not reach far enough."⁶⁰⁰ He calls for a more "existential understanding of truth." He means by this the reality that in many cultures people do not believe what one says until they have seen what one does. Earlier it was pointed out for example how the bishops in India said that the church rightly believes in freedom of conscience and religion, yet in matters of grievances (such as

⁵⁹⁷ Catherine Cornille, "Conditions for the Possibility of Interreligious Dialogue on God," in *The Concept of God in Global Dialogue*, eds. Werner, G. Jeanrond and Aasulv Lande, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2005), 4.

⁵⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁰ Schreiter, *The New Catholicity*, 41.

creative theological thought in Asia) its practice (silencing and censoring of theologians) remains a counter witness. In other words, truth must be lived out rather than proposed.

Cornille makes a further observation. Disagreeing with the pluralists who suggest that all truth claims must be abandoned for any real dialogue to take place, and disagreeing with those who claim to have possession of all truth worth having, she suggests that while propositional truth is necessary, a “belief in its dynamic nature” is a strong incentive for dialogue.⁶⁰¹ Thus for example the adage “*extra ecclesiam nulla salus*” (no Salvation outside the Church) was interpreted literally by some medieval popes (Innocent III, Eugene IV) – a far cry from Cyprian’s third century encouragement to persecuted Christians that they choose martyrdom rather than apostasy. In the 1950s Fr. Feeny of Boston was excommunicated for holding on to the erroneous interpretation of Cyprian’s original statement. The statement “No salvation outside the Church,’ if taken as propositional truth, can be devastating for the church in India. But taking the dynamic nature of propositional truth i.e., interpreting it and arriving at its meaning through negotiation, can be a strong case for dialogue.

Another significant contribution by Cornille concerns the communal dimension of interreligious dialogue. Ideally, she proposes, the commitment required for interreligious dialogue should be communal. Thus she states:

...interreligious dialogue has often been a conversation between individuals who on the basis of their personal judgment and individual perceptions integrate elements from the other tradition in their theological thinking, at times leaving their own traditions surprised.... True interreligious dialogue involves speaking as a representative of a

⁶⁰¹ Ibid. 11.

particular tradition and implies that the fruits of the dialogue will also affect the tradition as a whole.⁶⁰²

In other words, “communal” means that as dialogue among religions occur, it must simultaneously be accompanied by dialogue within each Tradition about the interreligious dialogue as it proceeds. Schreiter expresses the communal dimension of interreligious dialogue in yet another way. In his method for developing contextual theologies, Schreiter does not envisage any new theology to be a creation *ex nihilo*. Rather, contextual theologies are first of all built on the theology that already exists in these communities and secondly are in fidelity to the tradition which they represent. Contextual theologies, thus, are communal projects.

Apart from the methods and tools for interreligious dialogue, there have been ground breaking theological developments in the field of interreligious dialogue itself. Since Cyprian’s famous *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* in c. 258, one finds the following 1965 *Nostra Aetate*’s observation:

The Catholic Church rejects nothing of what is true and holy in these religions. The church has a high regard for the manner of life and conduct, the precepts and doctrines which, although differing in many ways from its own teaching, nevertheless often frequently reflect a ray of truth which enlightens everyone.⁶⁰³

Much has changed in the Church’s teaching on the validity and role of other religions. Spurred on by the positive assessment of other religions by Vatican II, individual theologians have taken it upon themselves to develop this position further. In recent times a number of positions on interreligious dialogue have been operative,

⁶⁰² Cornille, “Conditions for the Possibility of Interreligious Dialogue with God,” 7.

⁶⁰³ *Nostra Aetate* 2. http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html

ranging from the exclusivist position that considers salvation as coming from an explicit confession of Christ as the only Savior (Evangelical missionaries from America have openly proclaimed this in India), and the inclusive pluralism position that claims different religions are differing paths *en route* to the same God (John Hick, Paul Knitter, Wilfred Cantwell Smith).

Other theologians have tried to develop a theology that holds together the tension between extreme exclusivism and pluralistic relativism. It is to these developments that we now turn. Mark Heim's position seems one, in particular, along with others, that holds much promise for a viable theology of interreligious dialogue that respects both identity and difference – a problem to be addressed in a globalized India and a significant aspect of a renewed theology in India.

Mark Heim's Pluralism

As mentioned earlier, one of the most challenging tasks confronting genuine interreligious dialogue is balancing the uniqueness of one's own faith with the recognition of the validity of other religious traditions. Panikkar and Dupuis in India have strived for dialogue, but their models finally result in subsuming other religions under the Christian banner. In the section below, we will consider Mark Heim's model. I argue that Heim's theology of interreligious dialogue, in conjunction with the Jaina philosophy of *nayavada* (standpoints), may offer a viable framework for interreligious dialogue in India. Heim's model is not without weaknesses. However, in the field of interreligious dialogue, his framework offers the advantage of allowing each religious tradition to enter into a dialogue that is genuine.

This above claim is significant in a globalized world for the simple reason that the question of identity is central in globalization debates. People's identity emerges from the culture and religion that fashion them because religions are deeply rooted in particular cultures and cultures are rooted in particular religions. As seen earlier, globalization disrupts culture and precipitates a clash of identities, leaving people with experiences of fragmentation. Religion, on the other hand, carries within it the particularist dynamic that allows groups of people the framework to launch movements to reclaim their identities. Militant Hindu nationalism is one instance of this dynamic at play. This is the new context that this dissertation claims Christian theology must respond to. The questions for the church in India are, "How can one stress particularity while promoting transformational dialogue? How can one respect particularity and universality?" In very Christian terms, "How can one remain rooted in the Christian vision and yet become open to and respectful of those committed to sometimes dramatically opposite beliefs and values?"⁶⁰⁴ This section tries to respond to these questions for the Indian context of pluralism. In the context of globalization within which identity is contested, renegotiated, and claimed, and within which religions wield the power to preserve identity, allowing each religious tradition to claim "fullness of revelation/truth" is seen as an essential component of a renewed theology that promotes genuine interreligious dialogue.

One of the most sobering realities of interreligious interaction is the fact that all the religions are in some way exclusivist and universalist. Each religion claims to possess the "fullness of revelation/truth."⁶⁰⁵ Thus, the Christian claim to "fullness of

⁶⁰⁴ Michael Barnes, SJ, *Theology and the Dialogue of Religions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 3.

⁶⁰⁵ See Gavin D'Costa, *The meeting of Religions and the Trinity* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2000), 99-132.

revelation/truth" is itself hardly unique. In two separate works, Mark Heim offers what reviewers have called a "genuine pluralism." Heim rejects both the exclusivist and relativist positions and provides a framework that accommodates both the universal claims of religions and their ability to enter into genuine dialogue. Heim finds support for his pluralism in the Christian tradition. He proposes that the biblical concept of "divine plenitude,"⁶⁰⁶ more specifically, "Trinitarian plenitude," does provide the biblical basis for his model.

Heim begins his arguments by offering a strong criticism of "pluralists" such as John Hick, Paul Knitter, and Wilfred Cantwell Smith. He contends that the fact that pluralists suggest that there can be only one religious end is in itself a contradiction in terms. According to him, even though they claim the title pluralists, in fact, they end up denying the plurality of religious ends.⁶⁰⁷

Second, noting that the single end suggested by pluralists is the most self-defeating element in pluralism, Heim suggests that the challenge of interreligious dialogue is to develop a theology of pluralism that accommodates both in the need to be "faithful to the 'one and only' dimension of their [the particular faith of each religious tradition] faith"⁶⁰⁸ and "to honor truth, virtue, integrity in believers of other religious traditions, and in the substance of those traditions themselves."⁶⁰⁹

What would a genuine pluralistic theology look like? Genuine pluralism, in his opinion, would make it possible for believers from the various religious traditions to most

⁶⁰⁶ Mark Heim, *Salvations* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1997), 163-172. Also see, Mark Heim, *The Depths of the Riches: A Trinitarian Theology of Religious Plenitude* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997), 123-167.

⁶⁰⁷ Heim, *Salvations*, 129.

⁶⁰⁸ Heim, *The Depths of the Riches*, 1.

⁶⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

extensively and simultaneously affirm the different believer's accounts of faith. Such a hypothesis could only be possible if more than one religious end is seriously considered.⁶¹⁰

Heim titles his book, "*Salvations*," referring to the possibility of diverse religious ends as a manifestation of divine plenitude. To achieve this aim, Heim sets out to achieve a threefold task. First, he tries to find a framework within which genuine pluralism could be accepted. He finds such a framework in the philosophical position of Nicolas Rescher,⁶¹¹ termed "orientational pluralism." Second, he applies Rescher's framework to the theology of interreligious dialogue. Heim claims that Rescher's conclusions are useful for explaining the diversity of religions. Third, Heim attempts to find a biblical basis for his new framework. He proposes that the biblical concept of "divine plenitude" accommodates this concern. We will examine each of these points in the following pages. We will first deal with Rescher's "orientational pluralism."

Oriental pluralism holds the view that "there is only one reality."⁶¹² It does not contend that one needs to commit oneself to regard other views as equally valid but

⁶¹⁰ Heim, *Salvations*, 130.

⁶¹¹ Heim bases his pluralism on the philosophical system of Nicolas Rescher whose main concern has to do with the recent philosophical debates about objectivity and relativism. He tries to reconcile the tension in contemporary philosophy between those who maintain the classic view that a person's *raison d'être* is the search for truth through rational analysis and those who hold that its true role instead is either technical—the clarification of the progress from premise to conclusion—or "therapeutic"—a constant category-loosening play of conversation which disabuses us of pretensions to truth. Heim interprets this to mean that within the field of philosophy too, like religious diversity, there appears to be not one rational truth but many. Rescher reviews and rejects three possible responses to the philosophical situation: a) the unique reality view, i.e., reality has a determinate character and only one of the competing descriptions of it can be most rationally adequate; b) the no reality view, i.e., there is no ultimate reality or at least none that can be known; c) a multifaceted reality, i.e., competing views give truth, but none gives the whole truth. On the contrary Rescher advocates "oriental pluralism." According to this view, one and only one position is rationally appropriate from a given perspective, but we must recognize that there is a diversity of perspectives. From a given perspective there is ultimately only one rationally defensible conclusion. We seek to discover what this is and insofar as we believe we do we may rightly hold that it is more valid than conclusions reached from other perspectives. Heim, *Salvations* 133-4. Also see, Nicolas Rescher, *The strife of Systems* (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh University Press, 1985).

⁶¹² Heim, *Salvations*, 137.

rather only as “tenable from different perspective.”⁶¹³ Heim explains, “What is fragmented is not truth but justification or warranted assertability. The justification offered by a philosophy may be orientationally limited in appeal, but the claims themselves can be universal and unrestricted.”⁶¹⁴ This allows, as Heim suggests, for people to hold rationally contradictory views from different orientations and find the justification for their thinking that others are wrong and they are right. This makes it possible to “pursue *the* truth by cultivating *our* truth.”⁶¹⁵

Applying Rescher’s conclusions to the realm of religious diversity, Heim suggests that within his new framework, two seemingly irreconcilable positions (claiming ultimacy for one’s religious beliefs while assigning the possibility of ultimacy to another religious tradition) can be rendered compatible. In other words, to argue for its own [one religious tradition] view against others and its own “affirmation of the appropriateness of others’ views” rather than its own being held—and “claiming superiority over others—are fully consistent.”⁶¹⁶ To quote him:

To regard our convictions as “just like anyone else’s” is to regard our convictions as the best and most truthful that we know, a better ground of judgement than the alternatives. To regard others’ differing faiths as “as good as ours” is to regard them as making more sense than or being preferable to ours, but from a different perspective, one we do not share.⁶¹⁷

⁶¹³ Ibid.

⁶¹⁴ Rescher as understood in Heim, *Salvations*, 129.

⁶¹⁵ As quoted by Heim. Ibid. As Heim explains, oriental pluralism in the philosophical realm does not so much aim at consensus as much as collectively seeking for those in each orientation to develop the most sophisticated, most responsible, fullest understanding of the truth possible. Differing visions of truth are the primary allies in this process and communication with and about them its primary medium. *Ibid.*, 139.

⁶¹⁶ Ibid., 142.

⁶¹⁷ Ibid.

Heim considers Rescher's position to be consistent with other genuine pluralists such as John Cobb⁶¹⁸ who find no reason to either bracket or alienate the uniqueness and convictions and the universal validity of one's own faith tradition at the table of interreligious dialogue. Rather, Cobb does not hesitate to claim Christian superiority but also considers it appropriate for other traditions to make similar claims.⁶¹⁹

Once Heim succeeds in providing a tenable framework, he proceeds to apply Rescher's principles to the theology of religious pluralism. Building on Joseph DiNoia's thought that Christian theology can affirm "the distinctiveness of the aims fostered by other religions without prejudice to an affirmation of the unique valuation of the Christian community or of its doctrines about salvation,"⁶²⁰ Heim continues to hold other traditions to the Christian standard of "communion with the triune God" as the highest good.⁶²¹ He adds the phrase, however: "... as long we grasp that others make reciprocal judgements."⁶²²

Heim's pluralism differs from the pluralism of Hick, Knitter, and Cantwell Smith in that he does not consider religious traditions to be different path to the same end. Religions are distinguished by the fact that they seek different religious ends. For example, for a Christian the religious end is the beatific vision, for a Buddhist nirvana

⁶¹⁸ Heim claims that Rescher's perspective is consistent with John Cobb's insights on inter-religious dialogue. Cobb notes four features that are characteristic of those traditions that are serious about dialogue: a) they make some claim to the universal value of their affirmations; b) they teach some measure of humility about our capacity to understand reality in its fullness; c) they tend to develop some level of mutual appreciation; and d) the norms by which they judge both themselves and others are enlarged. Thus, as Heim notes, fidelity and transformation are paradoxically the sign of genuine dialogue. See John Cobb, "Beyond Pluralism" in ed. Gavin D'Costa, *Christian Uniqueness Reconsidered* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1990), 86-87.

⁶¹⁹ Ibid., 92-3.

⁶²⁰ Joseph DiNoia, *The Diversity of Religions: A Christian Perspective* (Washington: Catholic University Press, 1992), 160. DiNoia proposes the possibility that there might be a providential plan in the diversity of religions. The roles that religions play in the divine plan are perceived dimly now but will be fully disclosed at the consummation of history.

⁶²¹ Heim, *Salvations*, 160.

⁶²² Ibid.

(freedom from desire), and for a Hindu ultimate union with Brahman. To quote Heim, "The relations among religious ends are as diverse as the ends themselves."⁶²³

If the above hypothesis is accepted, then Heim contends that discussion of religious difference shifts from issues of truth and falsehood to "What end is most ultimate, even if many are real?"⁶²⁴ Is the most ultimate end the cessation of the self or the absolute realization of it? By saying this Heim is not restricting interreligious dialogue to simply differing perspectives regarding different ends; rather, recognizing that there are different ends influences the dynamics of interreligious dialogue. Heim stresses that we must recognize that these ends are not identical. But that does not make one any less real than that other either – an admission that will require a transformation on behalf of the Christians. Christians do not need to alter their beliefs about the others' religious ends. In fact, Christians need not even view the alternative religious ends as something desirable for them; they will, however, have to admit that other religious fulfilments may be real.⁶²⁵

Once Heim has set the philosophical framework for the possibility of genuine pluralism and has theologically contended with the diversity of religious ends, making possible the defense of one's own particularism, he seeks out data in the Christian tradition for the justification of his theological position. He finds that resource in history and also in the "trinitarian vision of God and a notion of divine plenitude."⁶²⁶

Heim begins with the idea of divine plenitude. God's plenitude is expressed, first of all, in the variety of beings in creation. This plenitude, Heim claims, has been part of

⁶²³ Ibid, 161.

⁶²⁴ Ibid, 160.

⁶²⁵ Ibid, 163.

⁶²⁶ Ibid.

Christian thought from the ancient times. For example, Dante's cosmological vision accommodates a kind of plenitude in the various levels of being. God, Heim claims, is "glorified in the diversity and each particular in it."⁶²⁷ He also appeals to the Augustinian notion that if God creates only good then the alternatives to full response to God can only be disproportions of the good. From this perspective, the Christian view of the afterlife can be expanded to include not just the saved and the lost but also "penultimate religious fulfilment."⁶²⁸ Heim writes:

There is an enormous difference between this lostness from all religious fulfilment and the achievement of *some* religious fulfilment. Christians can affirm an eschatological plenitude whereby, for instance, those who give themselves to the "divine abyss" of emptiness can be seen to have realized a facet of the divine plenitude. From my Christian view this is a secondary good, since I believe that communion with God in a fuller range of God's being is possible. But the end is neither unreal nor evil; it does truly offer release from the round of human suffering. Our place in this great tapestry of the consummation is alterable, but each one glorifies God in some measure. This Christian conviction would be analogous to a Buddhist's confidence that a Christian's spiritual fulfilments could only uphold and be consistent with the dharma.

Such diversity of ends, according to Heim, can be sustained by the divine love that characterizes such plenitude. Divine love and plenitude allow those who seek any "real" element of the divine "to be." Heim puts the onus on Christians to accept the diversity of religious ends. That Christians hold the conviction that theirs is a desirable end is itself a ground for the recognition of distinctively different religious fulfilments. "The two," Heim suggests, "go together."⁶²⁹

⁶²⁷ Ibid., 164.

⁶²⁸ Ibid., 165.

⁶²⁹ Ibid., 166.

Heim admits that “divine plenitude” is only a philosophical concept and that he needs to base his pluralism on a fundamental Christian belief. Heim finds that in “God’s triune nature.” According to him, the Christian concept of the Trinity is “a distinctively Christian template for diversity.”⁶³⁰ The unswerving constancy of character and freedom that is characteristic of the relationship between triune persons should convince Christians that “a relation without any alternative, or no alternative but a punitive one, is not a relation in the full sense.”⁶³¹ In other words, the Christian claim that salvation is limited to the Christian experience thus considering all other possibilities as either impossible or worth condemnation does not in itself bear witness to the freedom and the loving nature of the Triune God.

Heim further develops his trinitarian basis for diverse religious ends in his book, *The Depth of Riches: A Trinitarian Theology of Religious Ends*. Heim’s main focus in this book is to propose that the “Trinity provides a particular ground for affirming the truth and reality of what is different.”⁶³² The fullness of God’s Trinitarian life is manifested in the world’s manifold diversity in a way that does not preclude the diversity of religious ends. Since the Trinity constitutes an enduring set of relations and since the divine life has varied dimensions, Heim contends, “It is impossible to believe in the Trinity *instead* of the distinctive religious claims of all other religions. If Trinity is real, then many of the *specific* religious claims and ends must be real also. If they were all false, then Christianity could not be true.”⁶³³

⁶³⁰ Ibid.

⁶³¹ Ibid. Heim is not the only one who uses the Trinitarian dogma to propose a theological basis for religions diversity. Raimundo Panikkar, Gavin D’Costa and Jacques Dupuis also do the same.

⁶³² Heim, *The Depths of the Riches*, 127.

⁶³³ Ibid., 167.

In essence, Heim's Trinitarian basis for religious diversity would mean that the "communion-in-difference"⁶³⁴ and freedom that characterizes the intratrinitarian relationship is also offered to human beings as a good. Human beings are given the freedom to respond according to that diversity. The diversity of religious ends, then, is an act of God's providence, which provides for a variety of religious responses to the Trinitarian fullness. Different religious traditions are based on a particular dimension of the Trinity.

This communion-in-difference suggests that Christianity (and other religious traditions) always stand to be further enriched by other traditions that develop their own tradition based on a dimension of the Trinity – a dimension that perhaps remains undeveloped in Christianity.

For the most part, Heim's pluralism based on divine plenitude received positive responses from most mainline theologians. Gerald McDermott comments, "Heim has finally given us true pluralism (truly different ends for religions), and makes way for Christians to be able to say that other religions have truth but only Christians have the fullness of God...."⁶³⁵ Michael Kerlin writes: "It is a strategy for commitment and modesty in interreligious conversation and making sense of conversation from one religion to another...."⁶³⁶ James Fredricks, perhaps the most outspoken, says, "The success of a theology of religions should be measured according to the extent that it makes comparative work a theological necessity. Heim has articulated the most plausible (least problematic) Christian theology of religions of which I am aware. To the extent

⁶³⁴ Ibid., 177

⁶³⁵ Gerald R. McDermott, "Jesus and the Religions," in *Books and Culture*, (Jan/Feb 2004).

⁶³⁶ Michael J. Kerlin, "Salvations: Truth and Difference in Religion," in *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, 34 (Fall 1997) 573.

that orientational pluralism demands we recognize the legitimacy of differing religious aims and resists attempts to reduce religious differences to some form of transcendent unity, Heim's theology of religions does help to clarify the need to accept religions on their own terms."⁶³⁷

Heim's framework of interreligious dialogue is not without its share of critics. The harshest among them is Jacques Dupuis, who is of the opinion that it "is scarcely compatible with Christian tradition."⁶³⁸ Dupuis' contention is that satisfaction with various religious ends contradicts the Christian belief that "the ultimate goal intended by God for all human life in any historic and religious context is personal union and sharing of life with the God who revealed Godself in Jesus Christ."⁶³⁹ Kathryn Tanner is of the same mind. She wonders if Heim has redefined the traditional Trinitarian account so much that it is hardly Christian any more.⁶⁴⁰ Moreover, as Dupuis suggests, Trinity necessarily implies convergence – the goal being that all are lead to a unique common goal. Following Heim's proposal should Christians believe, for example, that God has provided qualitatively inferior ultimate ends for others?

That brings another criticism to the fore. If the different religions all claim that their respective ultimate end is more desirable than the others, then as Tilley and Fannin suggest, does it not lead to believing that there are first, second, and third prizes in heaven? Does God offer better ends to some over others? Moreover, does Heim's proposal suggest that even those religious traditions that barely qualify as religion in

⁶³⁷ James L. Fredricks, "Salvations: Truth and difference in Religion," in *Journal of Religion*, 77 (1997) 641.

⁶³⁸ Jacques Dupuis SJ., *Christianity and the Religions: From Confrontation to Dialogue* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2002), 182.

⁶³⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁰ Kathryn Tanner, *Theories of Culture: A New Agenda for Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 290.

some way participate in the Trinitarian plenitude? In other words, Heim does not make room for the possibility that some traditions may have gotten God totally wrong.⁶⁴¹ These questions alone should remind us that even a position as potentially fruitful as that of Heim needs to be embraced with caution and with openness to further development.

I divide the criticism of Heim's proposal into two categories. The criticisms that we have just reviewed I would like to term critiques from within the tradition. In other words, Christians must dialogue about the validity of Heim's proposal among themselves and whether it meets Christian expectations. The second category I would term criticisms of Heim's position as a framework. Here I argue in favour of Heim's position more as a "framework" for genuine interreligious dialogue. In other words, Heim's proposal offers a credible framework within which different religious traditions can enter into genuine dialogue without the fear of rejection. I am arguing that, from the perspective of various religions Heim's "framework" simultaneously accommodates particularity and universality. It allows for the identity of every believer and religious tradition to be upheld. As Tilley suggests, Heim "affirms that each person has access to truth, that each tradition has something to teach us, and that each person's religious fulfilment does not violate his or her dignity,"⁶⁴² or, as I argue, that it does not violate his or her identity. In the context of globalization and the problem of identity, Heim's proposal can be of immense value.

Under Heim's proposal the Christian claim that the ultimate end lies in a personal union with a God who reveals himself in Christ is not diluted by any means. Heim is only claiming that the Christian ultimate end is not the Buddhist or Muslim ultimate end. He

⁶⁴¹ Terrence Tilley with W. Coleman Fannin, *Religious Diversity and the American Experience* (New York: Continuum, 2007), 138-39.

⁶⁴² Tilley & Fannin, *Religious Diversity and the American Experience*, New York: Continuum, 142.

makes it possible for the Christians to claim ultimacy without compromising the possibility of a similar claim by others. Moreover, Heim has already suggested that “which end in the most ultimate?” can precisely be the scope and subject matter of interreligious dialogue. Once again, in a global world, a model of interreligious dialogue that can accommodate universality and particularity at the same time can be of immense value.

Directions for a theology of interreligious dialogue

Heim’s framework for interreligious dialogue looks even more viable for India when a survey of Indian philosophy reveals that a similar framework exists within its own philosophical traditions. The Jaina concept of *nayavada* (standpoints) is worth considering here.

Vardhamana (599 BC – 527 BC), also known as Mahavira or the “brave one,” was a contemporary of Buddha. Unlike Buddha, however, he was neither the author of the religion, Jainism, nor the founder of the sect, but a monk, who, having espoused the Jaina creed, became its last prophet. A systematic presentation of the Jaina philosophy did not appear until the first century AD, and the process went on until 1169 AD. The Jaina system does not accept the authority of the Vedas. It commends the truth of its own system on the ground of its accordance with reality. Its cosmology is grounded in logic and experience.⁶⁴³

A prominent feature of Jaina logic is its doctrine of *nayavada* (aspects or standpoints). Knowledge for the Jains is either the thing as it is in itself as a whole (*pramana*) or of the thing in its relation (*naya*) to other things from a particular

⁶⁴³ For an excellent exposition on the topic see, S. Radhakrishnan and C.A. Moore, *A Source Book in Indian Philosophy* (Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press, 1957).

standpoint. *Nayas* provide people with knowledge of a thing from particular standpoints depending on the standpoint from which different people observe the reality. These relative views become the abstractions from which reality is regarded.⁶⁴⁴ Jainism holds that all knowledge is only probable or partial since each person observes reality only from their own standpoint. It gives us a “somehow,” and “perhaps,” or a “maybe.”⁶⁴⁵ Note that *nayavada* doctrine does not say that truth is partial, but rather that the knowledge of it is partial.⁶⁴⁶

The *nayas* or standpoints can be considered as different points of view taken by a person searching for the truth. The standpoint of a person is the presupposition of that person. The standpoint embodies the point of view from which the person is investigating the thing in question. Consequently, the nature of the thing that is revealed to the person is a conditioned and limited aspect of the reality. Thus, the person has only a partial and incomplete knowledge of that particular reality. Recognition of the fact that his knowledge is of one of the standpoints of the reality makes it possible for the person to recognize the partial and limited nature of his knowledge and prevent him from becoming one-sided and dogmatic in his claims.⁶⁴⁷

The Jaina philosophy declares that there are as many standpoints as there are ways of expressing reality in words. In other words, there are as many standpoints as there are ways of making a proposition. Two things follow from this – one, that the standpoints are countless and the other that they are closely related to verbal expressions.

⁶⁴⁴ Ibid., 251.

⁶⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁶ Aquinas' teaching on “divine incomprehensibility” also claims that it is impossible for human beings to comprehend God in totality. For a complete list of texts see George Klubertanz, *St. Thomas Aquinas on Analogy: A Textual Analysis and Systematic Synthesis* (Chicago: M.C. Library, 1960).

⁶⁴⁷ J.M. Koller, “Syadvada as the Epistemological Key to the Jaina Middle-Way Metaphysics and Anekantavada,” in *Philosophy East and West*, 50 (2000) 400-407.

Each and every standpoint can be expressed in words. This makes two types of *nayas* possible: conceptual (*bhava-naya*) and verbal (*dravya-naya*). All the *nayas* are of the form of knowledge with respect to oneself (conceptual) and in respect to others (verbal). When partial standpoints are discovered by a person without the help of others through one's own experience or thought, the *nayas* are termed conceptual. But when that person imparts those views or partial standpoints to others through the medium of language, the *nayas* are verbal.⁶⁴⁸

In brief, Jaina philosophy emphasizes that our perception of reality is only a particular standpoint of the reality – the standpoint that we perceive. Hence the veracity of the statement, “*Nayas* give us knowledge of a thing from particular standpoints and these relative views are abstractions from which reality is regarded.”⁶⁴⁹ Jaina philosophy further proposes that the verbal expression of the reality that we perceive is only a limited and partial expression of reality.

This dissertation does not argue that either of these views be adopted as the sole mandatory theological model for interreligious dialogue. Rather, the argument is that they provide a framework for renewed theological initiatives in the area of interreligious dialogue. The recognition that one's knowledge of reality is of one of the standpoints of the reality makes one recognize the partial and limited nature of one's knowledge, and thus enables one to resist the temptation to become one-sided and dogmatic in one's conceptual and verbal claims. Such a framework based on mutual recognition of each party's claim to the “fullness of truth” is crucial to the pluralistic context of India.

⁶⁴⁸ For a full understanding of this topic see, Muni Shri Nyayavijayaji, *Jaina Philosophy and Religion* (New Delhi: Motilal Banarasidas Publishers Private Limited, 1998), 359-390.

⁶⁴⁹ Radhakrishnan and Moore, *A source book in Indian Philosophy* 251.

Once the Church in India finds an acceptable framework, such as Heim's, it can draw upon theological themes that individual theologians have developed over the past centuries to enter into dialogue with other religious traditions in India. Thus, dialogue on the Christian Trinity and the Hindu *trimurthy* (Hindu concept of trinity), the Christian concept of salvation and the Buddhist concept of *nirvana*, or the Christian themes that are akin to the Islamic tradition like the covenant, as well as the Christian compatibility with the *bhakti* tradition and other similar themes could assume new significance within the new framework.⁶⁵⁰

An Analysis

Two developments in India make it incumbent for the Church in India to be open to new directions in the theology of interreligious dialogue. First, the experience of cultural fragmentation of the Christians in India should lead the Church in India to evaluate the status of its presence. If after two thousand years its identity is so un-Indian that militant Hindu nationalists refer to Christians as "foreign dogs," then, reading the signs of the times and taking advantage of the developments in intercultural and interreligious dialogue, the Church must rejuvenate its efforts at becoming a genuinely Indian church. Second, the Christian claim to the "totality and ultimacy of revelation" must be made without negating similar claims by other religious traditions. This is crucial

⁶⁵⁰ Examples of exceptional interreligious initiatives between religious traditions already exist in India. For an excellent instance of Hindu-Muslim rapprochement see Philip Lutgendorf, "Interpreting Ramraj: Reflections of the "Ramayan," Bhakti and Hindu Nationalism," in ed., David N. Lorenzen, *Bhakti in Northern India: Community Identity and Political Action* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1995), 253-85. In this article, Lutgendorf outlines how the *Manas* of Tulsidas (*Manas* is the one of the most influential regional-language epics composed by Tulsidas – an ascetic of the *bhakti* (devotion) tradition reinterpreted the concept of "Ramarajya" (Kingdom of Ram – a theme exploited by Hindu nationalist militants). Writing in 1574, during the height of Mughal rule, Tulsidas interpreted *Ramarajya* not so much as a Hindu kingdom but a society based on righteousness that included all. Even though his main motive was to bridge the gap between the various Hindu traditions his vision included even the Muslims. It complemented the efforts of Akbar, the contemporary Mughal Emperor, who was himself interested in bridging the Hindu-Muslim divide.

for India because for the first time there is a framework available for interreligious dialogue that aims to both bear witness to one's perspective on salvation rather than attempt to convert and remain open to other possibilities without condemnation of these possibilities. Heim's framework also makes it possible to engage in dialogue without compromising the ultimacy of one's own perspective. This is particularly important in the age of globalization when particular identities run the risk of annihilation.

Indian Christian theological thought has pioneered many a movement in the Church. Indian theologians were addressing the issue of poverty much before liberation theology had captured the imagination of the world church and the poor. Indian theologians were suggesting strategies for both ecumenical and interreligious unity long before *Nostra Aetate* was published by the Second Vatican Council. The Indian Church had devised harmonious intercultural living long before *Pacem in Terris* and *Ad Gentes* were promulgated. India's uniqueness as a genuinely pluralistic world, its unique place in world civilization as the birthplace of at least four major religions of the world, and its rich theological heritage must propel the Indian Church to offer models of interreligious dialogue for the Church at large.

At the Asian synod, the representatives recognized globalization and its accompanying problems as issues needing to be addressed with urgency. Globalization is a reality in India as are diversity, religious pluralism, and religious militancy. The missionary style of evangelization has not yielded the hoped-for results. After 2000 years of existence in India, only 2.5% of the Indian population is Christian. Moreover, the efforts at inculturation have met with limited success. Adopting protestant evangelical techniques has only led to violence and strife. New theological initiatives are needed so

that a new framework can be developed within which genuine interreligious dialogue can occur. In brief, if India is the place where genuine diversity and pluralism exist, then the Indian church must pioneer a new theology of religious pluralism and dialogue.

The starting point of such an initiative is already found in the Catholic tradition's recognition of truth in other religions. Whereas *Nosta Aetate* provided the impetus for the development for a theology of interreligious dialogue, Heim has provided the framework within which genuine pluralism is made possible. Heim's theology of interreligious dialogue balances fidelity to one's own religious tradition and respect for other religious traditions in a manner that satisfies both the need for evangelization and the need for authentic dialogue. Radical fidelity to one's tradition while recognizing the claims to primacy by other religious traditions can form one of the bases for new theological initiatives in India.

The need for renewed theological initiative arises not merely because of globalization and the crisis of identity it creates or because of the rise of global resistance movements such as militant Hindu nationalism. The need for renewed theological initiatives arises from the lessons learned from the colonial times – lessons of a church that conquered other lands, peoples, and cultures as fiercely as the colonists themselves, a church that claimed the fullness of revelation and denied others similar claims, a church that offered material help to bolster membership, a church that confused Western cultural practices with the gospel tradition, and a church that even today trains its clergy in Western philosophical and theological traditions rather than create a new synthesis between the gospel and local philosophies and theologies.

Heim's theology of religions offers the best alternative to sustain the particularities of other religious traditions by avoiding the temptation to reduce them to versions of one's own religious, and as Cornille indicates, one's own cultural truth.⁶⁵¹ As Kathryn Tanner says, "...this [Heim's] perspective on religious diversity allows Christians (as it does those of other faiths) to maintain belief in their own religion as "the one and only way" to the best destiny for human life while respecting the particularity of other religious traditions in much their own terms."⁶⁵² In this manner, Schreiter's suggestion of balancing fullness of faith with wholeness of inclusion as part of intercultural communication in a global society would also be addressed. It has been suggested that the framework for dialogue provided by Heim and the *nayavada* theory within Jainism provides some possibilities.

The theology of Vatican II provides yet another insight for the renewed theological initiatives in India that centres round dialogue. In recognition of the deep seated changes occurring in the modern world, *Gaudium et Spes* recognized the mission of the church as a longing "to set forth the way it understands the presence and function of the Church in the world today" (GS, 2). In this manner the Church expressed its longing to enter into multidimensional dialogue with the modern world – dialogue with other cultures, other religions, and even with those whose vision was contrary to the mission of the Church (GS, 21). It saw in the modern world an opportunity to "be supremely human by the very fact of being religious" (GS, 11), and to build a mutual relationship between the Church and the world (GS, 40-44). The argument here is that, in India, globalization and the resulting militant Hindu nationalism should be seen as

⁶⁵¹ Fredricks, "Salvations: Truth and difference in Religion," 641.

⁶⁵² Kathryn Tanner, "The Depth of Riches: A Trinitarian Theology of Religious Ends," in *Journal of Religion*, 83 (2003) 289.

opportunity for the Church in India to enter into multidimensional dialogue with the people of other religions, other cultures, and people within other religions and cultures that strive for social justice. The framework provided by Heim and the Indian philosophical traditions can foster dialogue on multiple levels in the context of globalization. In this way, the integral approach of Indian theology – the integration of inculturation, interreligious dialogue, and social justice – can find continuity.

The above discussion has focused on the development of theology of inter-religious dialogue in India. The aim of the discussion was to take the already existing theology forward. Thus far in this chapter we have addressed inculturation and interreligious dialogue. In the context of globalization and militant Hindu nationalism, a third issue must be addressed – social justice. This is the subject matter of the final section of this chapter.

B. Globalization, militant Hindu nationalism, and social justice

Indian theological concern about social justice dates back to the pre-independence times. By the time liberation theology emerged on the world theological scene, Indian theologians were already questioning the structures that perpetuate impoverishment and illiteracy. Later, Indian social justice theologians adopted the method of social analysis proposed by Latin American liberation theologians to systematize their work. In the process they also adapted Latin American liberation theology to the pluralistic and spiritually unique context of India.

The context of globalization and militant Hindu nationalism, however, poses a new challenge to the Indian Christian social justice theologians. As we shall see, some theologians have already responded to these challenges. The claim of this section is that

Schreiter's concept of *telos* provides a theological framework through which the church can be present, as Schreiter claims, "between the global and the local." In this manner, along with inculturation and interreligious dialogue, social justice can be an integral dimension of the renewed Indian theology.

We will begin this section with a brief description of the alleged *telos*-lacking global economy and, through a case study, indicate how theology can be translated into praxis. We will also provide a framework for determining *teloi* for the Indian society. The argument here is that, in keeping with the integrated approach of Indian theology, social justice can be an interreligious and intercultural project. Renewed theological initiatives in the area of social justice will mean addressing the economic impact of globalization, identifying, as Schreiter suggests, the new locale for doing theology, providing the *teloi* for the globalizing powers, and making the above tasks a multireligious project. In this way the Church in India can find a new way to be integrated within Indian society and other religious traditions. Thus, the Church in India should perceive in globalization and militant Hindu nationalism an opportunity to be Church in a new way in India.

The basis of the globalized world and the main force behind the global world is the capitalist economy. One of the characteristics of the market economy is its alleged morally neutral value system. Its values revolve around "development" and "progress." There are no specific definitions, however, of these terms.

Daniel Groody captures this dilemma best in his book *Globalization, Spirituality, and Justice*.⁶⁵³ The world's adoption of the market economy originated, according to him, with the thinking of Adam Smith (1723-1790)), who proposed that self-interest is the main motivation for human progress and that unfettered pursuit of self-interest would

⁶⁵³ Daniel Groody, *Globalization Spirituality and Justice* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2007).

benefit the greatest number of people. Smith attributed such progress to market forces – the precursor to the contemporary free market.

At least one of Smith's predictions has come true. Market forces are unfettered immeasurably. This has not, however, benefited the largest number of people. This is the case in India where since the country adopted economic liberalization, there has been a striking increase in inequality in India. In a study done in 2005 by Sen and Himanshu, indices based on the real mean per capita expenditure showed that, while the consumption level of the upper 20 percent of the rural population increased remarkably during the 1990's, the bottom 80 percent regressed during the same period.⁶⁵⁴ The same study shows that this trend was true also of the urban population in India. Another study by Deaton and Dreze pointed out the inequality in per capital consumption across states and a significant increase in rural-urban consumption inequalities on a national level.⁶⁵⁵ A similar study by Jha indicated that the level of inequality in the nation was higher in the post-reform period than during the economic crisis of the early 1990's.⁶⁵⁶ Banerjee and Piketty's study suggests that the real incomes of the top one percent the population increased by approximately 50 percent.⁶⁵⁷ As Parthapratim Pal and Jayati Ghosh point

⁶⁵⁴ Abhijit Sen and Himanshu Sen, "Poverty and Inequality in India: Getting Closer to the Truth," in *Data and Dogma: The Great Indian Poverty Debate*, eds. Angus Deaton and Valerie Kozel (New Delhi: Macmillan, 2005).

⁶⁵⁵ Angus Deaton and Jean Dreze, "Poverty and Inequality in India: A Re-examination," in *Economic and Political Weekly*, 7 (September, 2002) 3729-48.

⁶⁵⁶ Raghbendra Jha, "Reducing Poverty and Inequality in India: Has the Liberalization Helped?" in *Inequality, Growth and Poverty in an Era of Liberalization and Globalization*, eds. G. A. Cornia (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 297-327

⁶⁵⁷ A. Banerjee and T. Piketty, "Are the Rich Getting Richer: Evidence from Indian Tax Data," <http://www.worldbank.org/indiapovertyworkshop>. BBC reported on March 9, 2007 that India has the most billionaires in Asia with a total wealth of \$191 billion between them according to the Forbes magazine annual list of richest people. With 36 billionaires, India has overtaken Japan's 24 billionaires after two decades of Japan topping the Asian rich list. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/6433367.stm. Details have emerged of a huge new building in Mumbai that is being built by India's richest man, Mukesh Ambani. His skyscraper home in the city will be over 170m tall and will have an army of 600 staff to manage it. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/6712605.stm

out, inequality has increased in almost all areas of social life: in income generating opportunities, in health, in nutrition, and in education. They attribute the increasing disparity to the International Monetary Fund's pressure on India to bring about a structural adjustment to lower the fiscal deficit during the late 1980's and early 1990's. The post-reform financial sector measure that reduced public spending on social needs, the liberalization of foreign and domestic investments, and trade liberalization that put pressure on the agricultural economy have created massive problems for India's agricultural and traditional industries.⁶⁵⁸

As mentioned earlier, one of the reasons Groody suggests for the economic malaise described above is the supposedly value-neutral character of the global market system. Adam Smith, the father of modern day economic system, did not himself devise a morally bankrupt capitalist economy. Rather, he had envisioned a capitalist world that would be bound by moral and ethical principles, and perhaps guided by biblical values. To quote Groody:

Smith had a religious vision of the world and saw the invisible hand as a way in which a benevolent God guides the universe. Smith understood that this hand operates within an ethical context, which values the dignity of the human person, the common good, and the promotion of a just society. He viewed self-interest with respect to a larger theocentric vision of life that ultimately had reference to other people and the well-being of community as a whole. He knew that no society can surely be flourishing and happy, of which the far greater part of the members are poor and miserable.⁶⁵⁹

⁶⁵⁸ Parthapratiim Pal and Jayati Ghosh, "Inequality in India: A Survey of Recent Trends," in *Flat World, Big Gaps: Economic liberalization, Globalization, Poverty and Inequality*, eds. Jomo K.S. and Jaques Baudot (London: Zed Books, 2007), 327-52. For an excellent analysis of the effects of globalization on the rural poor, see, Pranab Bardhan, "Globalization and Rural Poverty," in *The Impact of Globalization on the World's Poor*, eds. Jomo K.S. and Jaques Baudot, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 145-63.

⁶⁵⁹ Groody, *Globalization Spirituality and Justice*, 16. Groody is of the opinion that Smith's "self-interest" has been replaced by "self-centeredness" in the contemporary valueless capitalist global economy. Also see Adam Smith, *The Wealth of the Nations* (London: Everyman's Library, 1981), 12.

Schreiter identifies this problem as the inability of the globalized society to “thematize a *telos* in society.” Schreiter suggests that values such as progress, equality, and inclusion can become “demonic” if they are not guided by some *telos*. In this context, according to Schreiter, one of the roles of the church in a global context would be to undertake a major theological project – to offer a number of theological *teloi* for humanity and globalized society.⁶⁶⁰ One of the tasks of the Church, Schreiter suggests, is that it “must be present at the boundaries between those who profit the fruits of globalization process and those who are excluded and oppressed by it.”⁶⁶¹

The above discussion has suggested that the main defect of a globalized economy is its presumably value-neutral approach to economic growth. This vacuum provides the Church in India an opportunity for engagement with the economic powers that be. Theology can articulate the *teloi* so that economic growth is both just and beneficial to the populations it affects. In India, as suggested earlier, this can be an interreligious project. In the section below, we will attempt to draw the practical implications for Schreiter’s theoretical proposal, namely, that the Church must be present between the global and the local by providing the *teloi* for the global world economy.

Theology between the global and the local

In drawing out the practical implications of Schreiter’s theoretical proposal, we must ask: from the Indian perspective, where is the new locale for theology to which Schreiter refers? The following discussion is an attempt to address this question.

As discussed in chapter four, under globalization religion faces immense pressure to be privatised, as is the case in the West today. Religion in India, on the contrary, is a

⁶⁶⁰ Schreiter, *The New Catholicity*, 131.

⁶⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 130.

social force. As militant Hindu nationalism has shown, religion in India has the power for social organization. The Church in India, too, has been a social force in multiple ways. On the one hand, it wields wide institutional power as it provides many social services that the government in India fails to efficiently provide such as education, health care, and charitable institutions. A good example of this is Mother Teresa. Her charitable services were highly appreciated by the government and wielded immense influence in government circles. In recognition of her work, she was given a full state funeral - the only religious person to be designated that honor in India. In these areas the Church is present right at the centre of the Indian society.

In the context of globalization and militant Hindu nationalism, however, the Church is presented with newer opportunities to be relevant in the Indian society. It can do so by not merely assuming the duties often associated with the government in the areas of education, healthcare, and charity but, as Schreiter suggests, by being present between the local and the global.⁶⁶² In India, this can be done in two ways: first, the Church along with its efforts toward becoming a truly Indian church and engaging in genuine interreligious dialogue can make the struggle for justice its primary focus in India, especially, justice for the victims of globalization. Without political ambitions, the Church, working through its members and avoiding unnecessary partisanship, must influence public policy that would insist that economic development does not become an excuse for violation of basic human rights.⁶⁶³ The emphasis here is that the Church as a *community* in India must strive to influence government policy in favor of the poor. By

⁶⁶² K. C. Abraham an Indian theologian calls such a project "liberative solidarity." K.C. Abraham, "Globalization and Liberative Solidarity," in *The Agitated Mind of God*, eds. Dale T. Irvin and Akintunde E. Akinade (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1996), 3-17.

⁶⁶³ Instances of such violations are numerous. Nandigram, Sararan, Dharavi slum project,

doing so, the Church can achieve three goals: first it can succeed in separating itself from the sinful structures of the global economic system and in the process provide the *teloi* to the otherwise so-called value- neutral market system. Second, apolitical and policy determining social action on behalf of its suffering populations, perhaps, is the best way to immerse itself into the social and cultural mainstream, and thus emerge as a truly Indian church and separate itself from its the colonial past.⁶⁶⁴ Third, such a project could be an interreligious project. Determining the *teloi* that would guide global systems can be the goal of interreligious dialogue. As a result, the Church in India can also avoid letting religion become what it has become in the global economies – a privatized entity, bereft of the capacity for social conversion. The above points can form the basis for new theological initiatives in India.

National Fishworkers Forum – Theology between the global and the local

Policy level intervention against globalizing forces is already a strategy in India. However, it is also the result of the private initiative of individual Indian theologians. For example, Fr. Tom Kocherry, the Coordinator of the National Fishworkers Forum and India's National Alliance of Peoples' Movements (NAPM), is engaged in precisely such a project. He is instrumental in influencing laws that govern the fishing industry in a manner that protects both the rights of traditional fisherfolk and the coastal environment from multinational fishing companies. A Catholic priest belonging to the Redemptorist Congregation in India, Fr. Kocherry is also a crusader against coastal pollution and has spearheaded protests against the Koodankulam Nuclear Plant in Tamil Nadu because of

⁶⁶⁴ The perception that globalization and its market-dominated economy as a continuation of colonialism is common. In fact, "Globalization (the integration, to varying degrees, of all countries into a single world economic system) shows remarkable continuity with colonialism. See Seabrook, *The No-Nonsense Guide to World Poverty*, 60. Also see, Robert Isaak, *The Globalization Gap*, 154. Patrick Hossay, *Unsustainable: A Primer for Global Environmental and Social Justice* (New York: Zed Books, 2006), 52-5.

the large scale displacement of local populations. He is currently a member of the Coastal Zone Management Authority of India.⁶⁶⁵

In an interview Kocherry provided the focus of the National Fishworkers Forum, India. He said:

In 1991, in pursuit of globalization the government introduced what they called the Joint Venture Policy. Foreign fishing fleets were being foolishly invited in to Indian waters to exhaust our dwindling fish stocks. As many as 25,000 vessels of the type that have already destroyed 75 per cent of the world's fishing grounds, with the exception of the Indian Ocean, would have entered India.⁶⁶⁶ We prevented this through united actions involving the entire fishing industry, which went on four nation-wide fisheries' strikes that also involved the blockade of harbours in the past few years. I was personally compelled to go on a hunger strike twice. As a result of such actions fisherfolk found representation in the Murari High Powered Committee that was instructed to look into and redraft the deep sea fishing policy. This led to a ban on new licenses and the cancellation of all foreign fishing. Though the 21 recommendations made by the Murari Committee were accepted in toto, we await their implementation by the government. The Joint Venture policy of 1991 was rescinded in 1998.

Kocherry's interest in opposing fishing by MNC's comes from a concern for the people who are affected by the effects of globalization.⁶⁶⁷ His intervention serves as a

⁶⁶⁵ In 1997 Thomas Kocherry was awarded the PEW Foundation Award of US \$150,000 for marine conservation. He declined the Award because it is funded by the Sun Oil Company, itself responsible for marine pollution. In 1997, the FIAN International for Socio-economic Human Rights Protection, Germany, awarded Thomas Kocherry with a gold medal for his work on human rights issues. In March 1998, during the Earth Day celebrations at the United Nations, the Earth Society Foundation, New York awarded Thomas Kocherry with the Earth Trustee Award for his contribution in preserving and promoting marine ecology. In 1999 he was one of the winners of the US \$100,000 Sophie Prize from Norway. The Sophie Prize recognizes contributions in the field of alternative politics and development.

⁶⁶⁶ Depletion of marine life is a well documented field of study.
http://www.bbc.co.uk/nature/blueplanet/webs/further_threats3.shtml

⁶⁶⁷ For Kocherry's rationale for the working against the effects of globalization see his acceptance speech when he was awarded the 1999 Sophie Prize for his efforts in setting focus on alternatives to the adverse effects of economic globalisation and its consequences for resource management:
<http://www.sophieprize.org/Articles/52.html>.

corrective to the kind of policy making that excludes those whom the policy affects most.

In his words:

Local fishing communities that depend on their daily catch from the oceans are not consulted when the fate of coastal areas is decided. The end result is starvation and social stress, caused by businessmen living far from the arena of distress. Should fisherfolk not own and manage the water bodies, fishing infrastructure and the sale and distribution of their catch? Should they not have the right to prevent the pollution of their waters by industry or the usurpation of their habitats by industrial-scale aquaculture? We want control of these factors. If you take away my ability to provide for my family - by destroying my environment - you abuse my human right to livelihood.⁶⁶⁸

The claim being made here is that in the context of globalization and militant Hindu nationalism, the Church in India as a community must serve those negatively affected by globalization while it challenges the globalists to be guided by a moral vision. It has a mandate to do this because the Asian Synod had recognized that globalization is an emerging issue and that the Church must address such issues. Thus, the Church in India must become God's voice in the midst of a system that has the potential to disenfranchise large populations, to maximize profits at the cost of peoples, to perpetuate structures of injustice, and to create problems of cultural identity. The Church in India must use its institutional powers to influence policy-making in such a way that it challenges globalizing forces to act with justice and respect the dignity of every human person. Similarly, it must embrace those affected by the effects of globalization and provide the structural framework to overcome these effects. In other words, India needs renewed theological initiatives in the area of social justice in the context of globalization. A serious and integral focus on matter of social concern constitutes a critical dimension of such renewed theological initiatives.

⁶⁶⁸ <http://www.sanctuaryasia.com/interviews/tomkoch.php>

The above example of the NFF serves a limited purpose within this discussion. It provides a model for the manner in which the Church can be present between the global and the local. Renewed theological initiatives in India will include justice issues among other things. The example at hand does not presume to present a complete social justice theology for India, but rather, it suggests that by being present between the global and the local in the ways discussed above, the church can strive for four objectives in the context of globalization. First, it can succeed in distancing itself from the sinful structures of the global economic system and in the process provide the *teloi* to otherwise value-neutral market system. Second, by acting on behalf of its suffering populations, it can emerge as a truly Indian church and separate itself from its colonial past. Third, through its struggle for social justice (in the context of globalization this means being present between the global and the local) the church can achieve two other goals: become a truly Indian church by immersing itself in the culture of those alongside whom she struggles, and by making the search for a *telos* an interreligious project that can initiate genuine interreligious dialogue. Fourth, by following the three steps above the Church in India can avoid letting religion become what it has become in the West – a privatized entity.

There still remains the task of providing the theological framework for renewed theological initiatives in India. Such a framework can be found in yet a further consideration of Schreiter's concept of *telos*. In the following section we will build upon this concept of *telos* and suggest that *telos* understood in an eschatological perspective can be an important resource for the Church in India.

Directions for Indian theology: Determining the new locale for theology in India

Schreiter's concept of *telos* is an important theological tool in a globalized world. *Telos* signifies an end, a purpose, or a goal to human existence and indeed to all of creation. The global system itself is not without its values and goals. Some of the values of the global system that Schreiter mentions are progress, equality, and inclusion. Other values could be mentioned in addition: freedom, development, and prosperity. As Schreiter observes, however, in themselves these values can become demonic if they are not guided by some appropriate *telos*. This point was emphasized by Harvard Law School professor Mary Ann Glendon when she addressed the April 25-28, 2007 General Assembly of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, on "Globalization and the Common Humanity: Ethical and Institutional Concerns." Glendon stated:

Globalization seems to be spreading a thin transnational culture that is not only resistant to ethical perspectives, but inimical to respect for the dignity of all members of the human family. The values of productivity and efficiency, so prized by the market, are not so fine when they seep into the intermediate institutions of civil society or when they become normative in family relations. A transnational popular culture seems to foster a popular ethos charged with materialism, hedonism and hyper-individualism. And these new values, combined with increased geographic mobility, seem to be having a destructive effect on the particular cultures where virtues and habits of solidarity are rooted and transmitted.⁶⁶⁹

In an earlier discussion we had referred to Robertson who explained that the relativization of nations, societies, and individuals encourages the search for particularistic identities and for the meaning of "humanistic" concerns such as the ends of humanity and the ultimate meaning of human existence; in short, issues that concern

⁶⁶⁹ <http://www.catholiceducation.org/articles/politics/pg0049.html>

human transcendence.⁶⁷⁰ These issues, according to him, are intrinsically religious. That is why in the context of globalization Beyer calls for a new attempt to “specify the transcendent” and consequently give the “central religious dichotomy [imminence/transcendence] meaningful definition and applicability.”⁶⁷¹ The theology of Vatican II expresses a similar concern. It calls the Church to be supremely human by the very fact of being religious (GS, 11).

Amaladoss, writing from the Asian context, suggests that globalization is not necessarily an anti-theological project. According to him, God’s own plan involves the construction of a global community. However, the current globalization project as epitomized by economic, political, and cultural domination is perhaps the “wrong” kind of globalization. There is a right kind of globalization that respects pluralism and identity and promotes convergence and communion, making proper use of the facilities of science, technology, and the media.⁶⁷² Amaladoss suggests that this is the kind of globalization toward which the Church in India should labor.

⁶⁷⁰ See Roland Robertson, “Globalization, Modernization, and Postmodernization: The ambiguous position of religion,” in *Religion and Global Order*, eds. R. Robertson and W. R. Garrett (New York: Paragon House, 1991) and Roland Robertson, “The Economization of religion? The Promise and Limitation of the economic approach,” *Social Compass* 39 (1). Also see Peter Beyer *Religion and Globalization*, 84-86. Beyer contends that in the modern globalized society, the imminence/transcendence dynamic has changed. In traditional societies, the boundary and good and evil was determined by a person’s acceptance of the dependence of the immanent on the transcendent, its unity and as a result, the acceptance of God. This arrangement was the source of moral conduct that guided the behavior of people. Religion asserted its public influence by defining group boundaries and group solidarity. But this dynamic has been transformed in as much as the “primacy of functional differentiation (which has resulted in the formation of global societies) has undermined this symbiosis. Under the altered arrangement, morality has lost its central structural position and religion less and less becomes the determining factor for group solidarity and behavior.” On the level of society as a whole, Beyer concludes, the criterion for specifying the transcendent and its societal role has been undermined.

⁶⁷¹ Beyer, *Religion and Globalization*, 86.

⁶⁷² Michael Amaladoss, “Towards Global Community,” in *Globalization and Its Victims as Seen by its Victims*, ed. Michael Amaladoss (New Delhi: Vidyajyoti Education and Welfare Society/ISPCK, 2000), 214-42.

Indian sociologists also call for a theological response to globalization. Analyzing the impact of globalization on India, Arvind Das for example, hopes that India can escape the excesses of both militant Hindu nationalism and global consumerism. Das' alternative for India is based on "hope, ideals, and human values." His panacea for India's socio-economic, political and cultural malaise rests on "a conscious striving that would guide the nation toward justice – social, economic, political, federal and gender... an India where even the poor matter as citizens of an autonomous republic." He calls for a "considered evaluation of India's past, a critical examination of its present, and a vision of its future,"⁶⁷³ – a worthwhile theological project at its best.

Schreiter's concept of *telos* is crucial here. Christian theology has always upheld that human conduct must correspond to the ends of human nature as determined by the Creator. Teleology implies that human beings must take the future implications of an action as part of the act's moral meaning. Teleology also implies that human beings have an end determined for them by God. In other words, teleology is meaningful only in the context of the final eschatological purpose of human beings. In this perspective, God is understood as being actively involved in the world, moving all of creation toward its determined end. St. Paul also conceived creation as moving toward its final purpose in God (Rom 8:19). Human action, then, must be guided by the final goal toward which God is moving all of creation. Teleology and eschatology are thus complementary concepts that can offer a theological meaning to a value-neutral global system.

Gaudium et Spes concludes with an eschatological vision for humanity. Its vision is that "people all over the world will awaken to a lively hope (the gift of the Holy Spirit)

⁶⁷³ Das, *The End of Geography*, 59.

that they will one day be admitted to the haven of surpassing peace and happiness in their homeland radiant with the glory of the Lord” (GS, 93).

The implication of injecting the global system values such as progress, equality, inclusion, freedom, and development with theological meaning is that such values then explicitly take on a moral meaning and carry ethical implications. Their meaning then is no longer determined simply by the market system but by an ethic that keeps in focus the eschatological vision, the final destiny toward which God is guiding all of creation.

Schreiter suggests that a new theological anthropology based on Genesis and one that “articulates the full dignity of all human beings”⁶⁷⁴ is one possibility. A second possibility can be found in the biblical concept of *shalom*. The Pauline concept of reconciliation is offered as a third possibility.

In the context of globalization in India, both a teleological and an eschatological concern can form part of the basis of the renewed theological initiatives, especially in regard to the Church’s presence between the global and the local. On the one hand, the concept of *telos* can become a theological tool to infuse theological meaning within global system values. This can be best accomplished when the Church is present in those very places where the negative effects of globalization are most obvious. In India, this would mean the Church being with the Bhopal gas tragedy victims, the victims of the agrarian crisis, the urban poor who are shunted from one place to another in the name of development, and the rural poor whose lands are traded for multinational industrial complexes. Here is where the Church can meet both the victims and the victimizers. This is the ideal location for showcasing the theological meanings that must guide global

⁶⁷⁴ Schreiter, *The New Catholicity*, 131.

system values. This is the place from where the Church can uphold the eschatological vision toward which God is leading all of creation and indeed all of creation is invited to move. As one commentator puts it:

The problem of globalization... makes the poor poorer. The Church must take a stand. While the developed countries must collaborate with Asia to solve the problem, the church, must with its evangelizing mission and its social doctrine, promote the dignity of the human person, solidarity, subsidiarity, and the common good of all peoples.⁶⁷⁵

Secondly, determining the theological meaning of the global system values can be an interreligious project in India. The eschatological vision contained within different religions can be a starting point for a meaningful interreligious dialogue. Christian theologians, for example, have reflected elaborately on the Kingdom of God as a vision that embraces both the present and the future. Militant Hindu nationalists have often used the construct *Ram Rajya* (Kingdom of the Hindu God Ram) to define their vision of India. Islamic eschatology embraces the fulfillment of a divine plan for creation and Buddhist and Jaina traditions also address eschatological concerns even though the ultimate ends that each of these religious traditions propose are radically different. However, if Heim's model of interreligious dialogue becomes the framework within which such dialogue is conducted, such dialogue can become the theological forum for addressing the economic, cultural, and interreligious problems emerging from globalization.

⁶⁷⁵ Aramando Bortolasso, "Report of Group Discussions: Italian Group" in *The Asian Synod: Texts and Commentaries*, ed. Peter C. Phan (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2002), 139.

Summary

The above section has identified the supposedly value-neutral quality of a globalized market economy as a primary drawback of globalization. Values such as progress, equality, and inclusion are left undefined so as to escape commitment to society at large. Such a vacuum provides the Church and all the religious traditions, particularly in India, the challenge and the opportunity to live out their faith in a manner relevant to India. Renewed theological initiatives should consider the following things. . First, the Church in India should determine new locations for doing theology. In a globalized world, Schreiter's proposal of the church between the global and the local is a valid theological tool for determining these new locations. Second, the Church in India should take the initiative to determine the theological meaning of the very values that characterize the global system. Guided by an eschatological vision, it can develop a new global ethic as it strives for a just and peaceful society toward which God guides all humanity. Third, developing the *telo*i for global powers can be an interreligious and intercultural project. Religions can act together to guide the values of the global system toward the goal and purpose towards which God is guiding all of creation. Schreiter's proposal of providing some *telo*i to the globalizing forces can allow the Church to be present between the global and the local. Such a project has its benefits. It protects human persons from the alleged value-neutral global system. It allows the Church to engage in genuine interreligious dialogue. It will also provide the Church a way of becoming inculturated into the social and cultural fabric of Indian society. Indian theology can thus be a genuinely contextual theology and the Church in India a genuinely Indian church.

Conclusion

It was mentioned at the beginning of chapter seven that, taking into account the historical reality of Christianity and militant Hindu nationalism, the theoretical aspects of globalization and contextual theology, and the topics of inculturation, interreligious dialogue, and social justice as the previously existing theological themes in India, the present task is to propose directions for any new theological work in India in the context of globalization and militant Hindu nationalism.

For this purpose the last two chapters were divided into five sections. In the first section, we assessed the Church's theological response to globalization in India. The preparatory meetings for the Asian synod, the Synod itself, and the writings of Indian theologians urged the Church in India to address seriously the challenges emerging from globalization. In light of this urgency, this dissertation has identified three areas for theological engagement: inculturation, interreligious dialogue, and social justice. These three areas have traditionally been the focus of Indian theology from its origins.

The main claim of the second section on inculturation was that inculturation in India, though representing a credible attempt, has only met with limited success. However, it can incorporate the advances in the field of intercultural communication to make inculturation a genuinely contextual project – a project that engages Christianity and Indian cultures in their totality. It was also suggested that a retrieval of tradition, particularly the pre-colonial Christian-Hindu cultural tradition, may offer a hitherto unexplored resource. While the pre-colonial Christian-Hindu cultural integration has its own weakness, the retrieval of this tradition as a theological endeavor may provide crucial resources for the inculturation project.

The first section of chapter eight focused on interreligious dialogue in the context of globalization and militant Hindu nationalism. The claim here was that interreligious dialogue needs a new framework in India – a framework that accounts for claims to the uniqueness of one's religious tradition while respecting others' claims to the uniqueness of their own religious traditions. Mark Heim's framework, which echoes the Jaina *nayavada* (standpoints) theory, was offered as a viable model for inter-religious dialogue.

The second section of chapter eight addressed social justice in the context of globalization and militant Hindu nationalism. It was suggested that the Church in India take Schreiter's idea of "the church between the global and local" as a framework within which it can address the economic problems created by globalization. In other words, the Church in India must be present where the negative effects of globalization are most experienced. Apart from discovering this new locale, Schreiter's concept of *telos* also provides a resource of engagement with globalizing powers. Such a project can be based on new theological initiatives that take the teleological and eschatological end of creation as the foundation for infusing ethical meaning into global system values.

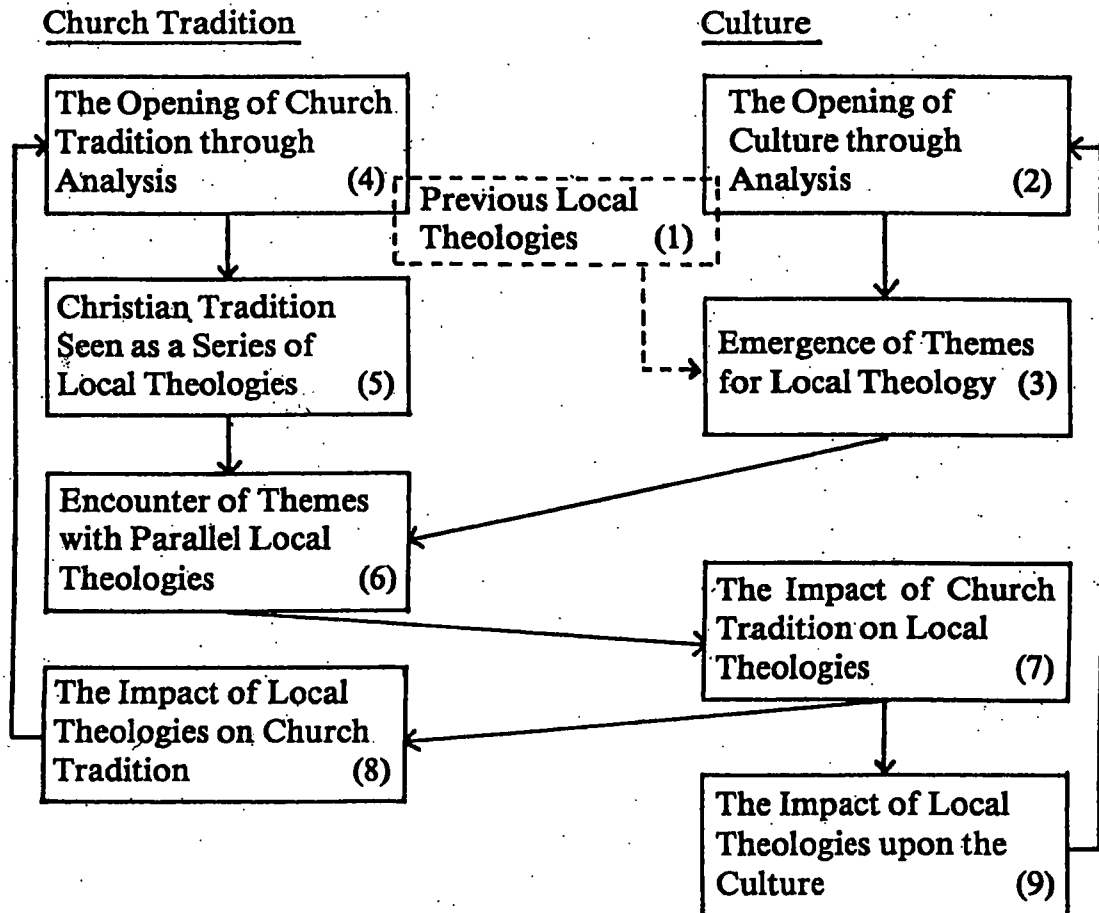
The renewed theological initiatives do not dilute Indian Catholic theology's traditional focus on inculturation, social justice, and interreligious dialogue. Rather, it urges the Indian Church to search for newer ways to respond to these very traditional concerns in the context of globalization and militant Hindu nationalism. Thus, the claim of this dissertation is that while the traditional foci of the Indian theological community have not been misplaced, the new context of globalization and militant Hindu nationalism provides the Church in India the opportunity to develop renewed theological initiatives within newer frameworks within which to face the challenge of becoming a truly Indian

church through authentic inculturation, genuine dialogue, and radical commitment to a global ethic.

Appendix A

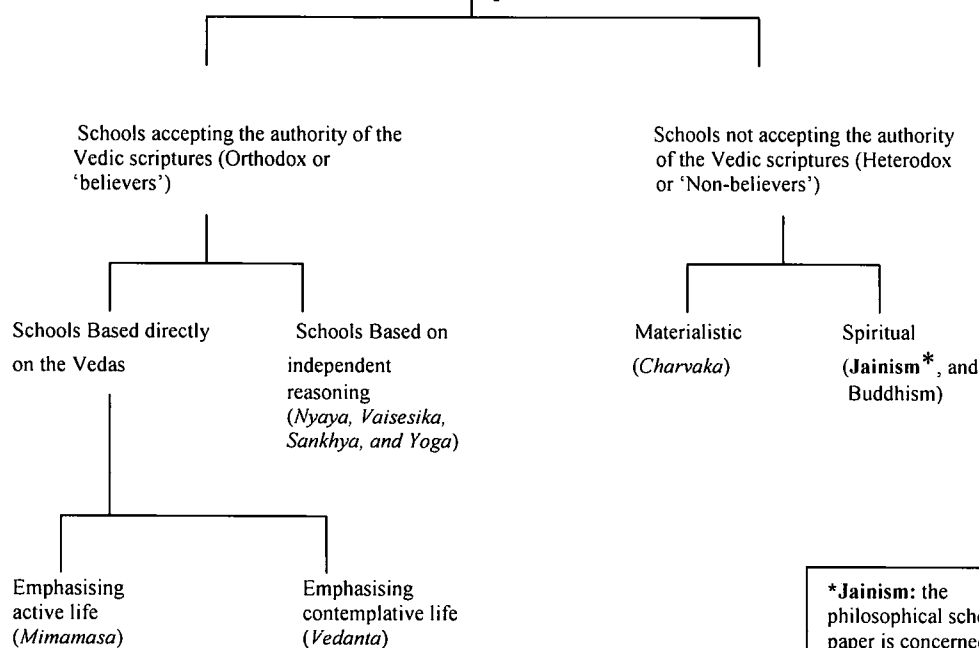
Appendix A

Spirit and Gospel: Shaping the Community Context



Appendix B

Indian Philosophical Schools



***Jainism:** the philosophical school this paper is concerned with.

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