

CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION

1.1 Relevance

If you know where you come from you will know where to go to. In terms of the age of churches, the Reformed Church in Africa (previously known as the Indian Reformed Church) is an extremely young church. The humble beginnings of this Church may yet inspire her not to repeat the mistakes that the older churches have made. For the RCA this would mean never to lose the glory of those early years or fail to teach the succeeding generations to walk humbly before God! For the older churches this study may inspire a rediscovery of the so often forgotten truth that the Church is mission.

1.2 Hypothesis

The hypothesis of my research is that a small and relatively young church, like the Reformed Church in Africa, can play a significant role in the wider community by witnessing to the love of Christ, in word and deed, in every context and every community that the church is sent to. In order to do this the church needs to know and understand its own history and needs to be willing to learn from its own experience.

In my research I point out what the impact of the Gospel was among people of Hindu and Muslim persuasion. If Paul who was a Pharisee devout to his Jewish religion could find salvation in Christ, the same holds true for people of other religions who may discover the saving grace in Christ Jesus. The power of the Gospel is available to all, irrespective of their religious persuasion. The story of the Reformed Church in Africa is an example of the power of the Gospel in the lives of all who would believe.

1.3 Goal of the Study

This missiological study focuses on the pre-history and history of the Reformed Church in Africa that was established under the auspices of the Dutch Reformed Church in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, on 27 August 1968.

The goal of the study is:

- To record the history of the RCA in SA.
- To evaluate the missionary contribution of the RCA.
- To draw lessons from the past in order to guide the RCA into the future.

1.4 Methodology

The methodology applied to our theme is one of quantitative and qualitative research from the vantage point of a participant observer.

In pursuing this goal I have entered into a quantitative research. This included available material relevant to my thesis as well as information gathered from various ministers, elders, deacons and members of the RCA. In my research I made use of published material as well as unpublished material, minutes of the Synod of the RCA, as well as minutes of Church Councils and Presbytery meetings where applicable.

In terms of qualitative research I have interviewed various ministers and other role players of the RCA. Their contributions assisted me to come to a more accurate conclusion in respect of the theme of my research.

As a participant observer, I was privileged to spend almost a lifetime in the ministry of the DRC Mission and later the RCA. I have established two of the congregations of the RCA and was involved in extensive mission work among Hindus and Muslims in South Africa. I was one of the founding members of the Reformed Church in Africa and served as administrator, clerk and moderator of the Synod of the RCA. The upside of this situation was that I had a very close involvement with the development of the RCA. The downside was that I had to find an objective distance to do justice to the writing of a history of the RCA. My primary concern was to present an authentic and objective profile of the Reformed Church in Africa.

The outreach of the Church to people of Muslim and Hindu persuasion requires an in depth understanding of Islam and Hinduism. A study of Hinduism and Islam in South Africa, however, has been attended to, in this thesis, in a

cursory manner. I am in this connection indebted to Prof C J A Greyling and Dr C du P le Roux, former ministers of the RCA, who have dealt with these subjects in greater detail.

1.5 Definitions

1.5.1 Mission:

In missiological circles today there are many theoretical formulations of what mission is all about. J J Kritzinger (1989:23) classifies them as the narrow and broader views of mission. The narrow definition implies that mission is predominantly interested in the spiritual salvation of man. The means of mission in this sense would be preaching, witnessing and proclamation J H Bavinck (1960:90). Orlando Costas (1977:306) states that mission is interested in many life's situations. It is within the context of a changing world that God sent his Son. Harry Boer agrees that it would be folly not to take seriously the social, political, economical, cultural and religious milieu in which the Church finds herself (1961:175). He confirms that the decisive initiating factor for mission in the early church was not obedience to a command, but the activity of the Holy Spirit since Pentecost (109-110). Gysbertus Voetius, Dutch theologian belonging to the seventeenth century Second Reformation School of Dutch theologians, was responsible for the threefold formulation of mission which according to Bosch (1991:256) is still unparalleled today (Kritzinger, Meiring, Saayman (1994:1) and which reads as follows: The conversion of the Gentiles, the glory and manifestation of God's grace, and the planting of the Church. I, as will be explained in the thesis, prefer to use a comprehensive definition of mission that includes the dimensions of *kerugma*, *diakonia*, *koinonia*, and *leitourgia*.

1.5.2 Dutch Reformed Church Family

The Dutch Reformed Church Family (Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerkfamilie) comprises the Dutch Reformed Church (Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk) and the three South African churches that resulted from the church's mission work in the country, the Uniting Reformed Church in South Africa, the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa and the Reformed Church in Africa. The history of

these churches as well as developments in the family are discussed in the next chapters.

In this thesis both Afrikaans and English names are used for the Churches:

- Die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk / The Dutch Reformed Church (NG Kerk/DRC)
- Die NG Sendingkerk Dutch Reformed Mission Church (NGSK/DRMC)
- Die NG Kerk in Afrika / Dutch Reformed Church in Africa (NGKA/DRCA)
- Die Verenigende Gereformeerde Kerk van Suid Afrika / The Uniting Reformed Church of South Africa (VGKSA/URCSA)

1.5.3 Indian Reformed Church (IRC) and the Reformed Church in Africa (RCA)

The smallest and youngest member of the DRC family was initially named Indian Reformed Church. In due course (see the following chapters) the name was changed to Reformed Church in Africa.

1.6 Structure of the thesis:

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: Events that led to the establishment of the Reformed Church in Africa: early beginnings

Chapter 3: The arrival of the Indians in South Africa from 1860-1911 with particular reference to their religious affiliation and customs

Chapter 4: First efforts to share the Gospel with Hindus and Muslims in South Africa

Chapter 5: A church between the temple and the mosque: the establishment of the Reformed Church Africa

Chapter 6: Crucial issues in the establishment and life of the RCA

Chapter 7: Crises and opportunities in the life of a young church

Chapter 8: The RCA on its way to the future

Chapter 9: Conclusion

CHAPTER TWO - EVENTS THAT LED TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE REFORMED CHURCH IN AFRICA EARLY BEGINNINGS

In this chapter we will revisit the story of the RCA long before the establishment of such a church was envisaged. The spice route around the Cape of Good Hope welded links between the settlement at the Cape and India that foreshadowed an involvement between India and the fledgling South Africa.

We will address the issue of missionary interest shown by the churches in South Africa in the peoples of India and Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) before their arrival in 1860.

Finally we will analyse the events that led to the establishment of the Reformed Church in Africa in 1968 (then called the Indian Reformed Church).

2.1 Christianity in India in the late 19th Century

A total of 152,184 indentured immigrants arrived in South Africa from India during the period 1860 – 1911 as well as a considerable number of passenger Indians who had come at their own expense under the ordinary immigration laws of the colony. Both groups included a predominance of Hindus but there were also Muslims, Christians, a few Parsees, and a handful of Buddhists. They were all free to practise their own religion and provide their own places of worship (Brain, 1983:4).

In this thesis we are concerned with the Christian minority that arrived in the colony. The fact that many of the indentured Indians were Christians encouraged the Roman Catholic, Methodist, Anglican, Lutheran, and Baptist churches to establish missions among the Indians of Natal.

Christian immigrants supplied one of the following alternatives in the column marked “caste”: Christian, Syrian Christian, Native Christian, Malen Christian, Pariah Christian or more rarely Roman Catholic or Protestant. According to Brain in “Christian Indians in Natal (1860 - 1911)”, positive identification of the

denomination of Christian Indians is possible for only a small proportion and that to attempt it from place of origin alone is unjustifiable. (Brain, 1983:4).

Pandita Nehru said, 'The history of the Christian Church in India is as old as Christianity itself' (Potts, 1967:3). According to tradition the Apostle Thomas travelled through Pandita to preach in Northwest India, arriving in Malabar in AD 52. His mission was initially to the Jews living in Malabar but he soon began to reach out to the Hindu inhabitants and enjoyed remarkable success. It is believed by present day Syrian Christians that he was able to convert an entire Brahmin Community. His missionary success drew the enmity of a group of Brahmins at Mylapore and Thomas was martyred and buried at St Thomas Mount (Thomas, 1954:18).

Western acceptance of the tradition concerning 'Thomas's visit to India seems to rely on a statement of St Jerome who wrote in the 4th century: The Son of God was present in all places, with Thomas in India, with Peter in Rome, with Paul in Illyrica, with Titus in Crete, with Andrew in Achaia, and with every preacher of the gospel in all the regions they traversed' (quoted by Thomas:19)'.

There is no further information about the subsequent growth of the Syrian Church in South India until the 4th century when a large colony arrived to settle in Malabar. They were reinforced in the 7th – 9th centuries when considerable numbers of Nestorians arrived until their position deteriorated with the later Muslim domination of trade and sea. (Latourette, 1944:375). In spite of the fact that Christianity was represented by minority groups it became a prominent part of the Indian scene. Yet, walled off by the prevailing social structures into what in effect was a distinct caste system, Christians apparently exercised very little if any influence upon the thought and the religious life of their fellow Indians. The Indian Christian community preserved outside connections and retained something of an alien aspect (Latourette, 1938:281-283).

After Da Gama's discovery of the sea route to India, the Portuguese established themselves permanently at Goa at the end of the 15th century, bringing with them Western Christianity as well as energetic missionaries to spread the Gospel. The arrival of Francis Xavier in 1542 marked the beginning of the first major period of Christian expansion in India. When he died 10 years later some 700,000 had

been converted to Christianity (Thomas, 1954: 62). Soon after his death divisions occurred. The Roman Syrian group owed obedience to the Pope whilst the Jacobite Syrian group recognised the authority of the Patriarch of Antioch.

Both branches of the Syrians as well as the Roman Catholics suffered persecution in the 18th century during the invasion of Jacobite Syrian and in the aftermath of the Mysore wars (Brain, 1983:169). As many as 10,000 were executed (Paolino of San Bartolomeo, 1800:149 - 150) while others reverted to Hinduism or were forcibly converted to Islam (Firth, 1976:127).

Among the Indian Christians who came to Natal were a number who identified themselves as Syrian Christians (Brain, 1983:170).

Moving now beyond the Syrian Church, Christianity penetrated all India through its two major wings, namely Roman Catholicism and Protestantism.

2.1.1 Roman Catholic Missions

The Roman Catholic Church began to establish itself in India even before the Reformation, and passed through two distinct phases. The first phase that saw the arrival of small groups began in the 14th century. The first group of missionaries that intended to remain permanently in India were Franciscans who settled at Tana, near Bombay, circa 1320.

Francis Xavier (1506 - 1552) was the first Jesuit missionary who set out to India in 1541 arriving at Travancore where he won twenty thousand converts among the fishermen. He concentrated his attention on the children, encouraging them to teach their elders and to destroy idols and other symbols of their former religion. He baptized whole villages and trained and appointed catechists. He cared for the sick and the prisoners, preached, heard confessions, taught the children and founded a college to prepare the youth of several races and nations to be missionaries. Often in a single day he baptized whole villages. The converts eventually constituted a stronghold of Roman Catholicism (Latourette, 1953:928 - 930). In 1605 Robert de Nobili arrived in Madura, a centre of Tamil culture. He was able to study the Vedic writings and to argue on an intellectual level with his Brahmin listeners and eventually baptised 600 members of the

higher castes (Neill, 1964:183 - 7). In 1700 there were about 80,000 Christians in the Madura mission (Firth, 1976:120).

Outside the Portuguese and French enclaves and in Northern India the growth of Christianity was extremely slow. However, in Bengal, where both Augustinians and Jesuits were active, an extraordinary man, Don Antonio de Rozario, converted over 20,000 Hindus to Christianity. It is believed, however, that the majority subsequently lapsed into Hinduism in the face of Muslim opposition and disagreement between the two Catholic religious orders (Brain, 1983:173).

The declining power of the Portuguese hastened the collapse of the Catholic missions in India. Wherever the Portuguese withdrew, the English East India Company stepped in and Protestant missionaries entered the field. The number of Catholics in India is said to have declined from over 2 million in 1700 to about 700,000 in 1800 (Latourette, 1944:73). It is estimated that by 1815 there were only 20 missionary priests left in India (Brain, 1983:174).

The second phase or new mission effort of the Roman Catholic Church began in 1830. A number of new vicariates were established: by 1859 there were 16 in existence, including one in Burma and one in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka). Up to 1914 considerable progress was made. In Bengal Jesuits worked in the west as far as Orissa. The Capuchins were active in the whole area from Bihar to the Punjab including the area of the old Tibet-Hindustan mission and Agra was proclaimed a vicariate in 1820. In 1860 a second vicariate was set up under a Capuchin Bishop to include Patna, Allahabad and Lucknow.

In Madura in South India the Jesuits re-occupied their old mission area south of the Cauvery River and established Madura as a Vicariate. The Missions Etrangères de Paris that had worked in Pondicherry since the 18th century extended its work further south to Coimbatore and Kumbakonam. A new vicariate was established in Madras in 1834 reaching the Telegus in 1875. Hyderabad was the centre of the Italian mission work. Congregations of nuns entered the field for the first time in the 19th century providing invaluable assistance as teachers, nurses, etc. An acceptable arrangement with the Archbishop of Goa, enabled Pope Leo XIII to establish a hierarchy in India in 1886 (Latourette, 1953:1,316). After 1886 Roman Catholic missions grew in the number of mission stations

established as well as the number of converts gained. Most of the converts came from the Sudras, the lowest castes, and from aboriginal tribes. In Nagput and a few other areas, there were a number of mass movements urging people to accept Christianity but this was the exception to the rule. Usually the process of conversion was long and frequently discouraging (Brain, 1983:177).

In 1861 there were an estimated 1.01 million Roman Catholics in India and this had risen to 2.22 million by 1911 (:98), the year in which Indian immigration to Natal came to an end. It seems safe to say that there were more Catholics than Christians of any other denomination among the immigrants who arrived in Natal from Madras (Brain, 1983:178). This will be dealt with in more detail in a following section.

2.1.2 Protestant Mission

The first Protestant missionaries to enter the Indian field were the Lutherans who were invited by King Frederick IV of Denmark to settle in the Danish settlements of Tranquebar in south-east India. The mission had its roots in Pietism. The first two missionaries, Ziegenbalg and Plütschau, had been students at the Pietist Centre, Halle. They learned Tamil and won converts from Hinduism and Roman Catholicism (Latourette, 1953:933). Ziegenbalg was particularly active in translating into Tamil the New Testament and part of the Old Testament. The first Indian pastor was ordained in 1733 and several others followed. (Neill, 1964:228 - 9)

2.1.2.1 Baptist Missions

Protestant interest in India was rekindled by the Moravian movement and in 1777 Moravian Brethren worked at Serampore in Bengal, North India. In 1793 the father of Protestant Missionaries, William Carey, from the Baptist Missionary Society, and his colleagues arrived in India. After spending some years in other parts of the country, and after overcoming many setbacks, Carey and his party settled their mission in Carey Serampore and translated the Bible into various Indian languages, beginning with Bengali. By 1837 the British Baptists had translated and printed the Bible and parts of the Bible into 46 languages or dialects (Potts, 1967:79). Latourette (1953:1,031) points out the tremendous

impact that the British Revival of the 18th Century had on missions. The emphasis of the revival was upon the transformation of the individual. Those so committed were ardent missionaries and sought to win others to a similar experience. They also strove to alleviate or abolish social conditions which warped or destroyed human lives. The result was radiant hope and intense and unremitting activity.

Henry Martyn arrived in India in 1806 as a Chaplain of the East India Company exclaiming in his diary: 'Now let me burn out for God!' He did just that and established schools for Indians, preached to Muslims and Hindus and translated the New Testament into three different languages, before he died 6 years later (Latourette, 1953:1,034).

The American Baptists began missionary activities in India in 1835. Rev Samuel Day established a mission among the Telegus of Madras. In 1840 he opened a Mission at Nellore where he experienced many setbacks; this mission became known as the Lone Star Mission (Downie, 1924). Together with Rev S van Husen they persevered and opened another station at Ongole where their converts numbered 20,865 in 1882. In 1886 they had 31 missionaries and 20 stations (:304). Brain (1953), who made a comprehensive study of the Indians who immigrated to Natal, discovered that many of them came from this area. By 1900 there were about 65,000 Telegu Baptist Christians in the Madras Presidency alone (Brain, 1953:181).

The Canadian Baptist missionaries entered India in 1866 and established a mission near the mouth of the Godavery River. There were a fairly large number of Indian Christians who gave their place of origin as Godavery and may have been converts of the Canadian Baptists (Brain, 1953:181).

2.1.2.2 Anglican Missions

The English East India Company (EEIC) was opposed to Christian missionary activity of any kind, fearing they would lose the goodwill of the Indians and reduce the growth of trade. Carey, for one, went to India against the express instructions of the EEIC. It was not until 1813 under the influence of William Wilberforce that missionaries were permitted to work in Company territory. This marked the

beginning of the Protestant missionary drive to evangelise India. From this date the London Missionary Society entered the Indian mission field in earnest.

The Anglican Church could now extend its work in India. Bishop Thomas Middleton, Bishop of Calcutta, appointed archdeacons at Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. The Church Missionary Society, the evangelical branch of the Anglican Church mission, sent 26 men to India, 14 went north to Bengal and up the valley of the Ganges, while 11 worked in South India in Godavery River. Work was also begun among the Telegus while the German missionary Pfander worked among the Muslims in Agra. Centres were opened in the Punjab from 1849. The Calcutta mission was extended into Assam.

The Church Missionary Society attempted to revitalise and assist the Syrian Church. Although the close association with the Syrians ended in failure, much was done for the education of the youth, many of them becoming Anglicans.

By 1851 Protestant missions had only 339 missionaries in India. Protestant Christians counted 91,000 of which 51,300 were Anglican converts from Tinnevely and Travancore.

The Indian mutiny of 1857 affected Christian missions in Northern India. Some 38 chaplains and missionaries were killed together with 20 Indian catechists and their wives.

The diocese of Madras enjoyed spectacular growth under the devoted leadership of Frederick Gell who was bishop from 1861 to 1899. During his administration, Anglican converts increased from 39,938 to 122,371 (Brain, 1953:142). Theological education of a high standard was provided by two colleges maintained by the Church Missionary Society and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts.

No other non-Roman Catholic denomination covered so much of India as did the Anglicans. Of all the Protestant denominations the Anglicans had more missionaries, more educational and medical institutions and more converts in India than any other. It might be assumed that a large proportion of the

Christians who came to Natal would have been members of the Anglican community, but the exact numbers cannot be ascertained. No immigrant gave his caste as Anglican but several from the known Anglican mission areas described themselves as Protestants (Brain, 1983:186).

2.1.2.3 Methodist Missions

The Wesleyan-Methodists started their Indian missions in 1817 but it was not until the 1850's that the pioneering period of uncertainties gave way to encouraging expansion and growth.

The largest of the enterprises founded by American religious bodies in India was that of the Methodist Episcopal Church. In numbers of missionaries and of the Christian community they had gathered, it ranked next to those of the Roman Catholics and the Anglicans. In 1856 under the leadership of William Butler, work began in the United Provinces. By 1864 nine cities were entered and twelve congregations were established with a large membership.

According to (Latourette, 1971) *The Great Century, a history of the expansion of Christianity* (Vol VI, New York and London: 141-142) the Diocese of Madras enjoyed a striking development under Frederick Gell, who was appointed bishop to India in 1861 at the age of 40, and remained until 1899. A celibate, he gave himself with single devotion and during his earlier years in India toured his vast see incessantly. During his administration the number of Baptized Anglicans increased from 39,938 to 122,371 and the body of Indian clergy from 27 to 154.

Federick Gell was succeeded by Henry Whithead who came to the post from the principleship of Bishops College, Calcutta and the leadership of the Oxford Mission. Frederick Gell continued the work with great zeal. He urged the Church to broaden its field and eventually regarded all of India as his parish (Thomburn, 1887:425). By 1914 all of India was divided into six conferences yet its numerical growth was very unevenly distributed. Schools, orphanages and hospitals, etc. were established (Latourette, 1944:173).

2.1.2.4 Lutheran Missions

We saw earlier that the Lutherans were the first Protestants to enter the Indian mission field when they established the Danish-Halle settlement. Next the Basel mission sent missionaries to Bangalore in 1834. By 1914 they had by far the largest Lutheran missionary body. The mission established independent mercantile and industrial companies to help carry the mission's work (Latourette, 1971:180).

The American Lutherans established a mission among the Telegus in the 1850's. A very discouraging decade followed. The American Civil War and dissensions in the Lutheran General Synod led to lack of funds and no further recruitments. A new impetus was given to the work in 1869. Mass movements began after the famine of 1876. In that year the mission numbered 49,605 converts (Latourette, 1971:176). The main centres of the American Lutherans were Gunter and Rajamundry. According to Brain (1983:190) a large group of Indian Christians in Natal came from these towns.

The fact that we are mostly concerned with the Reformed or Presbyterian missions in India and their possible influence upon the Dutch Reformed Church at the time, gives us reason to look at their work in India in greater detail.

2.1.2.5 Presbyterian and Reformed Missions

In 1829 Alexander Duff went to India as the first missionary of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland. He was determined to introduce a form of Christian higher education which would both undermine Hinduism and be a safeguard against religious agnosticism. Duff formed a friendship with Ram Mohan Roy, a deeply religious Brahmin and founder of the Brahmo Samaj, and with his assistance he opened his first school in Calcutta. Duff gained some converts from the more highly educated castes and from them he trained Indian leaders (Latourette, 1971:115-6). He energetically pushed for schools for Indian women. He helped in the creation of a medical school and a hospital in Calcutta. Duff's greatest contribution was to Indian education. The results in the permeation of India with Christian ideas were more striking than direct conversions. Another

great Scottish missionary, John Wilson concentrated his efforts in Bombay from 1829. Wilson quickly acquired the languages of the main communities and established contacts with Hindus, Muslims and Parsees. Wilson began many schools and was the first vice-chancellor of the University of Bombay (Latourette, 1971:118, 9).

In 1844, Stephen Hislop, also from Scotland, opened a mission at Nagpur, in the Central Provinces, working among Tamils, Telegus and Mahrattas. He established a college that was affiliated to the University of Calcutta. A school founded by Anderson, later developed into the Madras Christian College and won an outstanding place in Christian higher education in India. It was in education that Scottish Presbyterianism made its most distinctive contribution (Latourette, 1971:120). In 1841 the Welsh Presbyterians arrived in India to work among the Khasis people of Assam. The revival which deeply stirred Wales in 1904, spread to India and had profound effects in the Khasia Hills. Schools were opened and churches gathered. The Irish Presbyterians bought land for farm colonies on which to settle their converts so as to form a strong community and protect them from persecution (Brain, 1983:187).

In the lower part of eastern Bengal the Presbyterian Churches of Australia and New Zealand were also represented in their missionary endeavours (Latourette, 1971:158). It was however the Presbyterians from Canada that had a much larger contingent in India. Beginning as early as the 1850's Canadian Presbyterians began participating in missions in India. By 1875 they constituted an official body to undertake missions to India. A field was found in Central India in the state of Indore. Several stations were opened and churches gathered. Schools were developed culminating in a college in Indore, where Indian clergy were trained. A women's and girls' industrial home was founded, a leper asylum was established together with hospitals and a mission press (Latourette, 1971:160).

In Punjab missionaries from the family of Reformed and Presbyterian churches worked from 1855, when Andrew Gordon and his family, sent by the Associate Presbyterian Synod, arrived in India. Three years later the Synod joined to form the United Presbyterian Church. The 1880's saw a rapid increase in church membership, from 1,373 in 1891 to 8,033 in 1893. This advance was registered

chiefly among the Presbyterian and Wesleyan-Methodist Churches. There were also solid developments in schools, in hospitals and dispensaries, including a theological seminary and a college. In 1913 there were 54 congregations, a church membership of 31,631 and a Christian community of 58,034 (Latourette, 1971:123, 164, 5).

2.1.3 Overview

In 1911 Roman Catholics numbered 2.2 million and Protestants in 1914 almost 1 million. Both Roman Catholics and Protestants were most numerous in the South of India, below the latitude of Bombay. Here too were most of the Syrian Christians (Latourette, 1971:194).

It is noteworthy too that most of the Christians came from the depressed and underprivileged members of the Indian society. For those who became Christians this meant a better life and future. The important place that schools and colleges enjoyed in the wake of the missionary enterprise meant a remarkable growth in literacy, job opportunities and leadership.

Of the Protestant groups, the Anglicans were the most widespread and numerically the strongest. The Presbyterian and Reformed, the Methodist and the Baptist groups were also prominent.

Reading the story of Protestant missionary endeavour in India reveals a striking resemblance as to missionary methods and procedures employed, in spite of the multiplicity of denominations and missionary societies engaged in propagating Protestant forms of Christianity. Through the programmes of most societies and denominations ran a common pattern. Apart from the obvious endeavour to preach the Gospel to the crowds and to the individual, Protestant Missions placed great emphasis on schools and higher forms of education. Most regarded schools as a means of winning converts; others did it from the humanitarian point of view, many placed the emphasis upon training leadership for the emerging churches. Great efforts were made for the translation of Scripture and the printing and distribution of Christian literature. Much emphasis was placed on medical care. This was partly for the purpose of relieving physical suffering and partly as a means of propagating the Christian faith. On the eve of 1914 there

were 335 medical missionaries in India (Latourette, 1971:191). During a severe famine, missionaries provided relief. Mass movements of the outcastes towards Christianity led to marked efforts to help improve the physical status of these poorest of the poor. In the process of the growth of the work, mission stations were set up and many churches planted.

It was specifically in India that great strides were made on the ecumenical front. There were many efforts to bring together those of the same denominational families. This culminated, in 1904, in the constitution of the Presbyterian Church in India (Parker, 1936:94). In 1905, the United Free Church of Scotland, the Reformed Church in America, the London Missionary Society, and the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions formed themselves into the South India United Church. The missionary movement from the beginning has had a commendable bias away from sectarianism. And even when strong denominational societies and boards were organised, they fell in with the trend toward co-operation and comity, their missionaries, on the whole, being less exclusive than their brethren at home (Lamott, 1958:159).

William Carey, who blazed a trail for Protestant missions in India proposed a decennial conference composed of all denominations from the four quarters of the world to meet at the Cape of Good Hope regularly from 1810. This was in fact the starting point of the present ecumenical movement in all its ramifications (Hogg, 1952:17).

We noted in the above section the various places in India where missionary outreach planted the Church. How many of these Christians eventually came to Natal and what their situation was is the question we will address in the following section.

2.2 The South African Connection

Crafford points out that missionary interest was stimulated in South Africa by a good number of missionaries who, on their way to or return from India, stopped over at the Cape (Crafford, 1982:16). During the ministry of Rev Kalden (1695 - 1707, the two well-known Danish Halle missionaries, Ziegenbalg and Plütschau, disembarked at Cape Town on their way to India. They saw the sad

plight of the Khoi and wrote a letter to the responsible bodies, pleading for someone that could come to work among them (Moorrees 1937:362, 3). In 1715 Ziegenbalg stopped for the second time on his return to Europe, to report personally on the dire need for missions in the Cape. Among those that heard him was Ludwig von Zinzendorf, the father of the Moravian Movement. He would later send Georg Schmidt to the Cape as missionary (Crafford 1982:16). Their involvement with mission work in India, indirectly linked India (and Ceylon) with the Cape. This was remarkably strengthened by the departure of William Carey to India in 1793 (marking the beginning of the Modern Mission Era). Two leaders of this new era at the Cape were the ministers Helperus Ritzema van Lier (1786 - 1793) and Michiel Christiaan Vos (1794 – 1818). According to Crafford both were deeply concerned for the spiritual well-being of the Khoi and the slaves at the Cape (Crafford, 1982:22, 3). By 1788 sixty Christians had resolved to join Van Lier in sharing the Gospel with the Khoi and the slaves (Kriel, 1961:14, 5). Representatives of the London Missionary Society and the Dutch Missionary Society linked up with this group to establish the South African Missionary Society in 1799 under the auspices of Rev M C de Vos and Dr J T van der Kemp (Crafford, 1982:22, 6).

One of the members of the group of friends concerned for mission, Mathilda Smith of Tulbach, who assisted Vos in his work among the slaves at the Cape, corresponded with Christians in India and various other countries. This fact underlines the missionary interest in India of members of the Dutch Reformed Church (Marais, 1919:100, 1).

2.2.1 First Dutch Reformed Missionary to Ceylon, Rev M C Vos (1804 - 1809)

Rev Vos was actively involved in overseas missionary work before he became a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa. As representative of the London Missionary Society he left South Africa for Ceylon in 1804 as a missionary. This was the first contact between a South African church leader and Ceylon and India (Cronje, 1981:275). According to Du Plessis, Vos mentions the poor condition of the Dutch Reformed Church in Ceylon (Du Plessis, 1911:266) and of the joy among the people to have a minister in their midst (Du Plessis, 1911:264).

Previously people had to have their children baptised in the Roman Catholic Church because there was no minister to officiate. The Government placed him in Galle and he was advised to learn one of the vernacular languages. He began his ministry by distributing tracts and preaching wherever the opportunity presented itself. He taught catechism in spite of the fact that there was no material available (Du Plessis, 1911:264-270).

Vos mentions the existence, at the time, of an old law in Ceylon that prohibited children from receiving their inheritance unless they were baptised. The young people in school, who requested baptism, received baptism with little or no catechism. The question of repentance, conversion and faith hardly featured. The result was that the church had members who were not truly Christians. Most of them were nominal Christians, Vos concludes (Cronje, 1981:276).

Een honderd duizend van degenen, die Christenen genaamd worden (omdat zijn gedoopt zijn), behoeven niet naar het heidendom terug te gaan, want zij zijn nooit iets anders dan heidenen geweest (Du Plessis, 1911:266).

2.2.2 Revival of Missionary Interest: The Boer Prisoners of War (1900 - 1902)

At the turn of the century, by October 1899, South Africa found herself in a full-scale war with Britain. The Anglo Boer War, also known as the Second War of Independence, resulted in 26,600 Boers interned at prisoners of war camps in India, Ceylon, Bermuda and St Helena, while women and children were placed in concentration camps in South Africa. Of the 28,900 that died in the camps, 22,000 were children (Kok, 1971:12). The Afrikaner Republics finally agreed to negotiate a peace settlement with Kitchener and Milner on May 31st, 1902 and the entire South Africa came under the British flag.

The period of exile (1900 – 1902) proved a very painful experience. The many graves, of especially young people, in these far-flung countries solemnly attest to this fact. Yet, there was also an upside to the exile. Du Plessis, in his detailed study of the missionary involvement of the Dutch Reformed Church (Ned. Geref. Kerk) in Sri Lanka (Ceylon), refers to the circumstances of this period of exile and concludes that it was used by God for a sweeping spiritual revival among the Boer

prisoners (Du Plessis, 1996:101, 103). Their relationship with the Lord was strengthened and many were converted (:101). At the Diyatalawa Camp in Ceylon much quality time was spent with the Word and in prayer. A thousand Boers divided spontaneously into small groups to pray and intercede during the evenings. This time of scripture reading and prayer in small groups was a daily occurrence. They were so intensely devoted to the Lord that they made a lasting impression upon the British authorities and the local population.

Apart from Diyatalawa there were three other smaller camps in Ceylon: Ragama, Hambantota and Urgamanhandiya. At the latter camp, 39 prisoners of war were received as new members of the Dutch Reformed Church in Ceylon. All in all 5,000 prisoners of war were deported to Ceylon. Approximately 4,000 were interned at Diyatalawa (Du Plessis, 1996:77, 90).

The positive attitude of the church towards missions, prior to the Anglo Boer War, survived the ravages of war. During the war it seemed as if the church and its missionary zeal would be destroyed, but the exile in foreign countries and the resultant renewal and spiritual revival of many of those interned had the opposite effect. There, in a strange land, their spiritual eyes were opened and their hearts were strangely stirred for the salvation of the lost in Ceylon and elsewhere. Crafford points out that hundreds of the prisoners of war offered their services towards mission (Crafford, 1982:146). In Diyatalawa alone 101 indicated their interest to become missionaries and requested the church to provide the necessary training. They knew they had to start with mission work at the camp and began to reach out to the indifferent among them. Similar reports of a renewal of interest in missions at the camps in St Helena, India and Bermuda filtered through to the church in South Africa. The Ceylon Assistance Missionary Society (*Ceylon Hulp Zendelinggenootschap*) was established to collect funds for someone desirous to preach the Gospel to the people of Ceylon. The Reformed Church in Colombo was enabled to appoint an evangelist on behalf of the prisoners of war (Kok, 1971:40). Later this body supported the first South African set aside for this work in Ceylon. He was Rev A J K de Klerk who arrived in Colombo in 1925. After his untimely death he was succeeded by Rev S F Skeen in 1927, also supported by the Ceylon Auxiliary Missionary Society. The prisoners of war undertook to pay one shilling (10 cents) per year each towards this body. Concurrently young men from the camp in Ceylon (Diyatalawa) formed the South

African Youth Penny Society (*Suid-Afrikaansche Jongeliede Pennie Vereeniging*) undertaking to pay one penny (one cent) every month for missions (Crafford, 1982:146-147).

At St Helena the Christian Endeavour Missionary Artisans' Society (*Christelike Strewers Zendeling Handwerkers Genootskap*) was formed to produce articles that could be sold in aid of missions (Crafford, 1982:146). Early in 1902, the St Helena Missionary Assistance Commission (*St Helena Zending Hulp Commissie*) was established. The members of this body undertook to do everything in their power for the extension of the Kingdom of God. They proposed to do this through their congregations and church councils. Eighteen congregations in Transvaal and twenty in the Free State provided volunteers to serve on this commission. Rev A F Louw was the stimulus behind this renewal of interest in missions (Louw, 1963:46ff).

The same revival of missionary zeal occurred in the prisoner of war camps of Bermuda and India. Two hundred young men from all the camps offered themselves for missions. In 1903 the so-called Boer Missionary School (*Boere Zending School*) opened at Worcester with Rev A F Louw as principal. At least 175 young men offered themselves here for missions as a sacrifice for the two Republics (Crafford, 1982:147).

Sixty-one ministers from South Africa were commissioned to provide pastoral care for the prisoners of war (Crafford, 1982:146). Apart from the establishment of missionary organizations at the camps they were also instrumental in the forming of Christian endeavour and youth organisations as well as the provision of church council meetings, church services, prayer meetings, Bible study meetings, catechism classes, missionary conferences, missionary classes and personal interviews (:146 du Plessis, 1966:84-88, 92-95). Outstanding work was done by the ministers A F Louw in St Helena; D J Minnaar and P Roux in Ceylon; and A P Burger, J P Liebenberg, D J Viljoen and J de V de Wet in India (Crafford, 1982:146).

From the Diyatalawa Camp we learn that every Sunday was set aside for a prayer meeting for missions. Some were willing to remain behind in Ceylon (Sri Lanka) to do missionary work. The Indians are calling, *Come over and help*

us (Die Kerkbode, 1902:445). In 1901, 32 young people stood up, indicating that they were called by God for missions (Die Kerkbode, 1901:708). At the Ahmednagar Camp in India three services were held every Sunday. Almost all services were attended by Indian enquirers (Die Kerkbode. 1901:345). About 20 young people decided to give themselves to missions (Die Kerkbode, 1902:160).

The reports of spiritual revival and missionary zeal brought back to South Africa as well as the many articles published in *Die Kerkbode* and *De Strever* at the time, revived missionary interest in the Dutch Reformed Church back home. The loss suffered in terms of the missionary front, where most of the work was brought to a close, was indeed serious. However, with regards to the home front, where the spiritual revival and missionary zeal of the prisoners of war stirred many, the gain was enormous: this revival would carry the missionary endeavour of the Dutch Reformed Church into the following decade.

CHAPTER THREE - THE ARRIVAL OF THE INDIANS IN SOUTH AFRICA FROM 1860 - 1911 WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THEIR RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION AND CUSTOMS

What a splendid threefold cord will cotton, indigo and sugar not make to our anchor of hope! Sugar as a third strand has proved a rope in itself to hang ourselves with in Natal, for the sugar industry was the first and the main reason for the importation of Indian labour (Calpin, :1).

Commission after Commission of Enquiry found that Europeans had no objection to the Indian, as long as he remained a labourer. It was the trader and the free Indian they feared (Calpin, :17).

Muni Gadu, who left South Africa with his Colonial born children... failed to trace his relatives. He decided to return to South Africa. When he reached Dar-es-Salaam he wrote to the interior minister of South Africa, for leave to enter Natal. When he was refused they set out to walk 1,000 miles to eventually reach Zululand. At the Natal border they were arrested and deported to India (Calpin, :56).

The Indians are the only part of the population of Natal who came by special and urgent invitation (Brookes, 1965:85). The express reason for their immigration to the Colony was directly related to the economy of the Colony, particularly the agricultural sector and the need for suitable workers in the sugar cane industry.

In the chapter we will carefully analyse the religious affiliations and customs of the Indians who came as contract workers and immigrants in 1860. We will also give a cursory glance at the Christians amongst them and how their numbers affected the local churches in South Africa. How did the churches react in terms of missions to the Hindu majority and Muslim minority that settled in South Africa in the early years? Why was the Dutch Reformed Church such a latecomer on the scene of missions to the Indian settlers?

3.1 The Indian Immigrants to South Africa

3.1.2 Natal Sugar Industry

In common with many other local enterprises, the Natal sugar industry owed its origin to the process of European emigration which characterized the middle decades of the nineteenth century. The cultivation of grass and root crops for the production of raw sugars was associated with some of the most important developments in the international economy. A growing demand for more sugar and the expansion of production had many effects. A new international circulation of competitive labour to work on the sugar estates followed in times of falling prices and slave emancipation. The demand for cheap sources of labour grew dramatically. Affordable labour was supplied predominantly by Asian countries. The sugar industry in Natal owed something to all these influences. During its initial phase of development the sugar industry experienced its fastest-growth rate due to a combination of favourable prices, a protective tariff structure, and low wages for indigenous blacks and after 1860 for recruited indentured Indians.

From the annexation of Natal in 1843 until the granting of responsible Government in 1893 Britain was guided, as in her other colonies, by two principles: to retain the Colony for strategic and economic reasons and to keep expenditure as low as possible to lighten the burden for the British taxpayer (Brain, 1985:198-9).

3.1.3 Negotiations and Recruitment

As early as October 1851 a public meeting in Durban called for labour from the East Indies, a suggestion strongly opposed by Edmund Morewood and William Campbell who protested that there was no shortage of African labour (Brain, :200). Those planters who were in favour of the importation of labour into the Colony took the opportunity offered by the forthcoming visit of Sir George Grey, the newly appointed Governor at the Cape, to Natal in 1855 to raise the matter again. This time the proposal was implemented. The planters who had been encouraged to immigrate to Natal, argued that the British Government was morally obliged to provide them with labour. In 1859 the

'Natal Mercury' produced an editorial with the opening sentence: 'The fate of the Colony hangs on a thread and that thread is labour' (*Natal Mercury*, 28 April 1859 as quoted in Brain, :200).

A bill providing for Indian immigration was passed in 1857, but disallowed by the Secretary of State of the Colonies. The Indian Government only reluctantly consented to sanction the immigration of Indian labourers to Natal, and stipulated that the whole responsibility rested most definitely with Natal (Palmer, 1957:16, 19).

The Colony was responsible for the transport of the Indian labourers, and employers had to pay three fifths of the passage money (Palmer, :16). All the necessary arrangements in India and at the ports of departure were to be made by emigration agents who acted as representatives of the Natal Colony. They had all their duties carefully prescribed by the 'Government of Natal' (Natal Government Gazette: 20.11.1874).

The Lieutenant-Governor was to appoint an immigrant agent who was to keep a register of immigrants, to assign them to employers for a period not exceeding three years. Husband and wife, parent and child were always to be allotted together and the wishes of the immigrants were to be respected as far as possible. The Indian labourer who was indentured for three years, could be re-indentured for another two years (possibly with another employer), but after these five years he would be free.

Few of the colonists realized that the continuous immigration was to lead to the establishment of a permanent Indian community in Natal. What the planters wanted, did not comply with what the people of Natal apparently understood they would be provided with, a continuous supply of reliable cheap labour. The Indian Government, on the other hand, envisaged the movement as a permanent migration which would relieve the population pressure in India. It, therefore, laid down that the emigrants were not to be forced to return to India. They also insisted that Indians who wished to remain in the Colony as free workers, should come under the ordinary laws applying to the rest of the population (Palmer, :26, 27). The Durban City Council requested the immigration of Indian labourers on a limited scale but when Sir George Grey communicated with the

British Government there was no indication of limited immigration (Thompson, 1952:10). In 1855 he writes to the British Minister of Colonies that sufficient Indian immigrants for Natal will turn the Colony into a rich sugar and coffee producing country. He wanted to leave the impression with the authorities that Indian immigration would make Natal a rich British Colony (:9, 22).

As far as Natal was concerned, Act 12 of 1872 provided for the appointment of a Protector of Indian immigrants. It was his task to receive the formal requests from the colonists for Indian contract labourers.

The Immigrants Trust Board of Natal was to monitor the work of the emigration agent and the recruitment officers and to take care of the general well-being of the emigrants that were waiting at the depots for passage or transportation. Natal eventually opened emigration offices in Madras and Calcutta. The recruitment officer had to obtain a certificate of good character from the magistrate of the district in order to be licensed by the emigration agent. Natal paid such low fees for the work of the recruitment officers that they would only recruit for Natal when they had no other recruitment work to do (Beyers, 1976:9, 10).

The Government of Natal made sure that proper printed notices with all the relevant information were disseminated by the recruitment officers. An example of the information on such a notice issued by the Natal Calcutta agent included that the following: shipment would be free; medical treatment and the provision of medicine would be free at all depots, during the journey and at the Natal plantations; freedom of religion would be enjoyed in Natal and a free passage would be provided on return to India. Complete details regarding their prospective work, wages and rations were provided; males were required to work six days a week for nine hours daily (Beyers, 1976:10, 11).

The Medical Inspector had the responsibility to ensure that no prospective immigrant would be allowed to emigrate if he was physically incapacitated. On occasion as many as 50% of the applicants were turned down for medical reasons. Following registration at the magistrate's office they were transported to Calcutta or Madras. At these depots they were once again checked for physical ailments but this time by the depot doctor appointed by the Natal authorities. (Beyers, 1976:11 - 13).

In spite of all these precautions farmers complained bitterly about the physical condition of Indian labourers. This was usually the case when smaller groups were shipped to Natal or during certain emigration periods. One of the causes was the fact that Indian women could not be forced to be treated by physicians and caused the spread of disease. (Beyers, 1976:14).

On paper the contracts of the indentured Indians appeared reasonable enough at the time. In practice working conditions were far from satisfactory, for employers commonly spent as little as possible on the needs and welfare of their workers. On the labour-intensive sugar plantations where between 60 and 70% of the Indians worked, a twelve to fifteen-hour day was common practice during the busy seasons. Workers were often poorly housed and did not always receive their full rations. (Brain, 1989:253, 4).

By the late 1880's informal as well as formal controls had whittled away their legal rights. The employers received sympathetic support from the local courts and the police, so that the powers of the Protector became progressively weaker (Brain, 1989:255). The appointment of the Indian Immigration Trust Board in 1874, consisting predominantly of employers made the task of the Protector extremely difficult. Many farmers were reluctant to grant employees leave which they required when they wanted to lay a charge of assault. In 1891 the position was improved when it was resolved that indentured labourers on their way to lay a charge could not be prosecuted if they did not have a pass with them. Later in 1903 however, it was expected that the employee must first obtain a pass from the magistrate before he could lay a charge. If the magistrate was a friend of the employer, the chances of obtaining the necessary document would be meagre (Beyers, 1976:194). The only way that the Protector could act against the employer was to disallow any further indentured Indians or in serious cases to remove all indentured labourers from his estate (Beyers, 1976:194). In the absence of formal channels for complaint, other forms of protest were employed. These included malingering, absconding, petty larceny and the destruction of property belonging to the employer. Organised protests were rare, and when they occurred, were small in scale and short-lived (Brain, 1989:255).

Since non-plantation labour was generally better treated and better paid, many Indians preferred to work for the Natal Government Railways, the municipalities,

or for a private concern like the Nelsrust Dairies at Baynesfield or the Clan Syndicate. Even the coal-mines, despite their many hazards, were preferred by some workers to the large estates. Ex indentured or free Indians who chose to remain in the country were able to sell their labour in most parts of South Africa. Many entered the economy as farmers, smallholders, independent fishermen, tradesmen, hawkers or traders (Brain, 1989:255, 257). Indian artisans and tradesmen whose skills had initially been welcomed in a Colony where the white tradesmen were in short supply, soon came into conflict with the white artisans, who complained bitterly about their loss of income due to the 'unfair' way in which Indians were cutting their costs. This resulted in restrictions upon Indians who wished to sell their goods in the market-place.

The free Indian shopkeepers, however, experienced competition as well with the 'passenger' Indians from about 1880. Within a few years most of the original shopkeepers disappeared to be replaced by 'passengers' (Brain, 1989:257, 8).

3.1.4 Passenger Indians

Passenger Indians, so called because they paid their own way to the Natal Colony, came mainly from Western India, in what is today the state of Gujarat. They came from towns like Rajkot and Porbander and a host of villages in Kathiawar, as well as from Broach, Surat, Navsari and Bombay and the nearby villages. There were Gujarati speaking Muslims and Hindus. Among the Muslims were groups like the Memons, Bohras and Kokanis. Other groups included Khojas, followers of the Aga Khan or Shia Muslims, and Parsees (Brain, 1989:258). The many villages from which they came were remarkably close with the result that word got around quickly of opportunities in Natal and the Transvaal. A common origin or shared language or religion often created a strong bond among them and this frequently drew them to the same town in South Africa. Hence Pietersburg, Potchefstroom and Bethal in the Transvaal attracted persons predominantly from Bhanvad, Runavav and Eru respectively (Brain, 1989:258, 9). More detailed information on the origins of the 'passenger' Indians can be obtained from the three volumes of the *South African Indian Who's Who* for 1938, 1940 and 1960.

Because the 'passengers' served the needs of the indentured and ex-indentured population, they settled largely on the coastal belt until about 1885. They then

began to move into the hinterland, where they saw the opportunity to extend their activities to the Black population, often underselling their white competitors. By 1900 the bulk of the Black trade was in their hands. The extent of their penetration is shown by the fact that in 1908, 1,008 licences were issued to Indians in all parts of Natal (excepting Utrecht and Paulpietersburg). The total number of licences issued to non-Indians in that year was 2,034 (:259 - 60). (Government House Records, 1599:374/1908).

The large scale 'passenger' or 'Arab' traders (as they were colloquially called) had the advantage of being able to draw on the capital resources and expertise of family businesses and as the Protector remarked, employed few if any outsiders of any race (Government House Records, 1598, 1886:210). Smaller Indian traders bought goods from them on credit. M C Camrooden had nearly 400 shopkeepers and hawkers on his books, owing him more than 25,500 pounds (Swan, 1989:9). With their large commercial interest, the traders considered themselves an elite group. The small Indian traders, who were more numerous and whose interests were linked with those of the merchants, readily identified with them (Brain, 1989:262).

These merchants and many others who arrived in the Colony brought with them knowledge of wholesale and retail trade. The dominance of the 'Arab' newcomers over the earlier ex-indentured traders was most apparent in Durban (Bhana, 1985:241). The 'Arab' trader worked for longer hours; thus he persevered and pleased his customers. He was also adaptable. He saw the opportunity for commercial ventures into the Black market (Brain, 1989:246).

Natal's Indian traders played an essential role in the economic development of the Colony. A J Arkin has calculated that the annual combined turnover for both Indian traders and hawkers in South Africa in 1904 was nearly 25 million pounds divided evenly between the two (Brain, 1989:114).

Once the laws governing Indian immigration to Natal had received Royal assent and the Government of India passed the necessary enabling legislation, the first Indians were introduced into Southern Africa. They carried with them Natal's hopes for a prosperous future, but unsuspected by the colonists, also the seeds of discord and traumatic confrontation (Huttenback, 1971:7).

The first Indian labourers arrived on the 'Truro' on 16 November 1860. Thereafter until 1866 when immigration was temporarily stopped, a total of 6,445 immigrants comprising of men, women and children arrived in the Colony (Brain, 1985:202). The indentured Indians in the sugar industry helped to alleviate the extended crisis which it experienced during the latter decades of the century by helping many estates in production. Both indentured and free Indians became involved in many other areas of local economic activity (Brain, 1985:198). In 1911 when the importation of indentured labour came to an end, a total of 152,184 Indians comprising of men, women and children had arrived in the Colony to complete a five year period of indenture.

On paper the contracts appeared reasonable at the time but in practice the working conditions were far from satisfactory. Employers usually spent as little as possible on the needs and welfare of their workers (Brain, 1989:253).

The Government expenditure required for the process of introducing Indian labour to the Colony was not well taken by the up-country colonists. This was the beginning of a controversy between coast planters and up-country settlers that was to be a sore point when indentured immigration came to an end in 1911 (Huttenback, 1971:4 - 5).

After the initial group of 413 immigrants returned on the *Red Riding Hood and Umvoti* to India in 1871 with serious complaints regarding the way they were treated in the Colony, the whole matter of immigration to Natal was reviewed by the Indian Government; matters changed for the good. However, this time most time-expired Indian labourers did not return to India as had been anticipated by Natal. By 1891 there were 41,142 Indians in Natal, 46,788 Europeans and 455,983 Africans according to the census of that year (Huttenback, 1971:14).

3.1.5 Socio-Political Position

The presence of a significant body of Indians permanently resident in Natal became progressively more undesirable to the majority of white settlers as the number of immigrants grew. The fact that upon becoming free they would have the same rights as all other British subjects was particularly unacceptable. However if many colonists thought that Indians in Natal had too many rights, the

Government of India thought they did not have enough. The Wragg Commission that reported in 1887 on the question of the whole Indian problem came under heavy up-country pressure to recommend the abolition of indentured Indian labour in Natal. Regarding the proposal that Indians already in Natal whose indentures had expired be immediately sent back to India, Commissioner J R Saunders replied:

I wish to express my strong condemnation of any such idea. What is it but taking the best of our servants and then refusing them the enjoyment of their reward, forcing them back (if we could but we cannot) when their best days have been spent for our benefit. Where to? Why? Back to the prospect of starvation from which they sought to escape when they were young. (Wragg Commission Report, Chap XIV:100, as quoted by Huttenback, 1971:16).

During 1880 - 1881 several attempts were made to deprive the Indians of the right to vote in parliamentary elections. It soon became evident that the franchise question was not to be resolved. Accordingly, Natal hoped to convince the British and Indian Governments to permit the termination of all indentures in India itself and that Indians be forced to remain in service for the full 10 year period. Neither the British nor the Indian Government could accede to such a request (Huttenback, 1971:20 - 21).

Frustrated, Natal did what it could. From 1891 all land grants were stopped; no immigrant would be allowed to leave Natal before the conclusion of 10 years residence (Huttenback, 1971:22). Despite all advantages gained from the Indian presence, white Natal was prepared to do very little for its new Indian fellow men (Huttenback, 1971:34).

By 1894 there were already 43,000 Indians to 40,000 Europeans according to Huttenback (1971:39). If the spectre of being swamped by a permanently resident Indian population caused considerable concern among the white population of Natal, it was nothing compared to the alarm spread by the advent of the *Arab* or *passenger* immigrants. They did not come to labour in the fields of the white man but to engage in the retail trade. Nor did they supplement or complement white enterprise but rather competed with it directly. By 1904 when the Europeans and

Indians were about equal in number, the Indian hawkers outnumbered the European 1,487 to 19 (Huttenback, 1971:41). But it was not just their numerical strength that helped but also their self-confident and ambitious attitude as they vented their feelings of discontent in a petition to the Secretary of State for the colonies (Huttenback, 1971:42). Two rival camps now faced each other. On the one hand the governing White Settlers and on the other hand the Indians that were just as convinced of the superiority of their own cultural heritage as the white man was of his. The whole drama was to be played out without reference to the silent and essentially unnoticed majority of the population - the Africans, who in 1911 accounted for more than 82% of the total population of South Africa (Huttenback, 1971:43).

The year 1893 was significant for both Natal colonists and the Indian population. In that year responsible Government was granted the Natal Government and the power to legislate. In that same year Mohandas K Gandhi arrived in South Africa and was eventually to take up the cause of the Indians of South Africa.

In 1894 a bill was tabled which would have deprived Asians of the franchise, but royal assent was refused by Britain. The following year the first part of a package of discriminatory legislation was introduced in the Natal parliament. By 1896 the bill to deprive Indians of the franchise which had been refused consent in 1894, was reintroduced and became law as Act No 8 of 1896 (Brain, 1989:261).

The part played by Gandhi in Indian politics in South Africa has been the subject of numerous studies. He arrived in South Africa in 1893, a London-trained barrister who was sent by his firm to assist in a lawsuit in Pretoria. Gandhi had intended to return to India at the conclusion of the case but, shocked by the prejudices against Indians and urged by the merchants, he decided to remain and only returned to India permanently, 21 years later (Brain, 1981:263).

Brain mentions three important events in Natal that Gandhi was involved in. He was associated, in 1894, with the establishment of the Natal Indian Congress. The second event was the establishment of the newspaper *Indian Opinion* in 1903. The third event of importance in South Africa was the purchase of land outside Durban where he established his Phoenix settlement modelled on the ideals of Ruskin and Tolstoy (Brain, 1989:263).

It was in the early 1900's that Gandhi devised the political strategy of 'satyagraha' or passive resistance. Satyagrahis deliberately chose arrest and imprisonment rather than accede to the Transvaal Government's enactment requiring them to register when they entered the territory. Yet it was only after 1910, when the campaign embraced issues affecting the masses, that mass support became a reality (Brain, 1989:265).

Huttenback maintains that it is hard to imagine what would have been the lot of Natal's Indians without the presence of Gandhi. Not that he materially changed the course of colonial legislation, but his eloquence and sheer literary fecundity kept the Government of Natal under the merciless scrutiny of liberals and humanitarians in Britain, in India and, for that matter, in South Africa (Brain, 1971:88).

The history of the Indian community in South Africa is according to Huttenback at least in part, a case study of moral bankruptcy and imperial futility (Huttenback:333). The South African Governments were only interested in Indian labour and were determined not to countenance Indians as citizens in a 'white man's country' (sic!). The British Government, the guardian and enunciator of the imperial philosophy of equality, had, for many reasons, not been able to influence racial policy decisively in South Africa. Gandhi had made the world aware of the Indians' dilemma in South Africa. He had fought a battle based on principle, and he had largely prevailed on most of the questions specifically at issue (Huttenback:333 - 4). Unfortunately it was a more limited victory than either he or his followers had anticipated.

Gandhi felt that the establishment of a single Government for the whole of South Africa would be a menace to the Indians in South Africa, unless the policy of the Europeans with regard to the Indians could be changed. Through Gandhi's intervention the Indian Government finally (in 1911) stopped indentured Indian immigration to Natal in 1911 (Palmer, 1957:69).

After the establishment of the Union of South Africa in 1910, General Smuts announced, in the House of Assembly, that the Government would not permit the lifting of the 3 pound annual tax. This led to a renewal of civil disobedience, which was further fuelled by the decision of a judge of the Cape Supreme Court on

14 March 1913 that only Christian marriages were legal in South Africa and that rites carried out under a religion which recognised polygamous marriages, were illegal. This reduced large numbers of Indian women to the status of concubines and so the women themselves, with great indignation, also began to participate in large numbers in the Satyagraha campaign. A group crossed the boundaries from Transvaal into Natal and another group from Natal into Transvaal. Gandhi was arrested. This led to further sympathetic strikes (Palmer, 1957:70 - 72).

Finally the Union Government appointed a commission to investigate the cause of the trouble and made recommendations to the Government. The Smuts Gandhi Agreement abolished the 3 pound tax and cancelled all arrears; it settled the marriage question by recognising Hindu, Muslim and Parsee marriages. However the Act did not grant freedom of movement between Provinces, prevented Indians from holding land in Transvaal and maintained the right of the Orange Free State, to exclude any Indian settlers. This Act was a compromise, not entirely satisfactory to either side, but it did relieve the worst of the grievances and to a large extent, it embodied Gandhi's policy that there should be no racial discrimination against Indians as such. Having achieved victory through the policy of passive resistance, Gandhi left South Africa for ever. He returned to India to begin his much greater and more important career as a politician and popular leader, putting into operation on a wider scale the principles of political opposition and agitation which he had first conceived and developed in South Africa (Palmer, 1957:72 - 74).

Indians eventually became the victims of the group areas legislation after having suffered a whole series of enactments. Those enactments were intended to stop the influence and presence and further immigration of Indians, such as the Transvaal Asiatic Land and Trading Amendment Act of 1921, as well as the Group Reservation and Immigration and Registration Bill of 1925. A series of enactments to curtail Indian occupation of land culminated in the Trading and Occupation of Land Restriction Bill of 1943, the so-called Pegging Act that was made permanent by the Asiatic Land Tenure and Indian Representation Bill in 1946 (Palmer, 1957:334 - 6).

In 1950 the Group Areas Act was passed by the new National Party Government (Act 41 of 1950). It had been amended almost every year since. In essence it was

the logical result of the policies of the original Class Areas Bill and the Asiatic Tenure Representation Act. Obviously the threat to Indian vested interests had been considerable (Brookes, 1965:293).

The cause of the immigration of more than 150,000 people is not only related to the general social and economic trends at the time but also related to their own problems, aspirations and reasons for leaving India. The majority of the Indians in the 19th century were agricultural workers; most lived in poverty, in unfavourable climates and in regions subject to periodic famine. The worst famine years were 1877 – 1878, 1896 – 1897 and 1899 – 1900 (Anstey, 1952:436). Socially India adhered strictly to the caste system. ‘Datta’s’ description of the caste system is helpful: ‘an attitude of reverence to members of the higher castes, of friendliness to those of equal status, and of antipathy to those of lower degree’ (1908:66). Among the emigrants from India to Natal were people from every caste: a very small number of Brahmins, many pariahs or untouchables, and most from all castes in between.

Life in the Colony, of course, also impacted upon the immigrants. L P Booth in his report to the Protector of Indian Immigrants points out that the standard of housing varied considerably from ‘superior, brick built with neatly thatched roof, roomy, lighted and carefully ventilated to other estates where the labourers had to build their own houses, rough huts, made of dried cane stalks or mealie stalks loosely put together for both sides and roof ...badly ventilated and allowing only 100 or 200 cubic feet per person when 500 or 600 would be desirable’ (Brain, 1983:xvii). What were the reasons for so many emigrants to return to India in 1871? When they reached India on the ‘Red Riding Hood’ they complained of poor living conditions, delayed or irregular payment of wages, insufficient and neglectful medical care, rations below those promised, ill-treatment and non-payment of the promised 10 pound gratuity to those from Madras (Brain, 1983:xvi). However these indentured workers had left India because conditions there were bordering on starvation and they returned to India with more accumulated capital from Natal than the returning Indians from any of the other countries that employed indentured labour. (Brain, 1983:xvii)

The remark of the Rev Theophilus Subrahmanyam, a Brahmin converted to the Christian faith, points in a different direction. He returned to India because he

found the social and political position in Natal untenable (Brain, 1983:xvii). The situation of Indian workers in Natal was found by many of them to be totally unacceptable. They exchanged the caste system of India for a highly stratified society in Natal. However, this time, white colonists were at the top of the pyramid. The colonists would have treated them all alike without any consideration for their caste origins. This in itself would have been experienced as very painful, particularly by those from higher castes.

3.1.6 Religious Affiliation

What were the religious affiliations of the indentured labourers that came to South Africa between 1860 and 1911? This question can only be properly examined through researching the shipping lists. This research was attempted by several writers. Most did their research in view of religious affiliation. Notable is the MA thesis of L M Thompson entitled (*Indian Immigration into Natal 1860 – 1872*), written in 1938, A G Choonoo's detailed MA thesis, (*Indentured Indian Immigration into Natal 1860 – 1911*), written in 1976; and J B Brain in her well researched work, (*Christian Indians in Natal 1860 – 1911*), an historical and statistical study written in 1983.

Based on the shipping lists of 1860 – 1872, L M Thompson reports as follows:

Period	Hindus	Muslims	Christians	Total
1860 – 1872	83%	12%	5%	100%
	5,236	757	315	6,307

A G Choonoo considers three periods: 1860 – 1875, 1876 – 1890, and 1891 – 1911. He points out that the number of Christians for the first period up to 1875 was 382 and he calculates the percentage as 3.6%.

According to Brain, 4.6% of the indentured workers (295 of the 6,445 immigrants) who came to South Africa during the first six years, 1860 – 1866) were Christians; yet in the following 37 years during which immigrants arrived, only 1855 of the 145,739 or 1.27% were Christians (Brain:xix).

Authorities like Prof E Brooks, F Meer, C B Webb and M Wilson agree with L M Thompson with regard to the whole period of 1860 – 1911 (as follows):

Period	Hindus	Muslims	Christians	Total
1860 – 1911	83% 126,313	12% 18,262	5% 7,609	100% 152,184

J B Brain had the opportunity to consider all the shipping lists against the backdrop of the figures in the diagram above. Her figure for Christians is much more conservative. The method she used to come to the percentages below was to check all the shipping lists. Where there was uncertainty or no information, she made use of the names to ascertain their religious affiliation. Biblical or saints' names would be an indication that the person was most probably Christian (Brain, 1983:6). The column in shipping lists provided for Christian immigrants was marked by the term *caste* and the following alternatives appear: Christian, Syrian Christian, Native Christian, Mala Christian, Pariah Christian or more rarely Catholic or Protestant (:6).

Period	Hindus	Muslims	Christians	Total
1860 – 1911	86.1% 131,030	12.5% 19,023	1.4% 2,131	100% 152,184

In connection with this table, Brain only refers to two percentages, i.e. 1.4% Christians and between 10% and 15% Muslims. She has taken an average figure of 12.5% for Muslims and the balance of 86.1% for Hindus (:244-5). Prof H Kuper in her book, (*Indian People in Natal*), examined the details of 3,200 indentured immigrants. She selected 8 ships at random for her study (the ships arrived between 1883 and 1900). Her conclusions are as follows:

Period	Hindus	Muslims	Christians	Total
1883 – 1911	90% 2,880	7% 128	3% 96	100% 3,200

Brain remarks that you cannot come to an accurate figure by using any number of immigrants at random. The composition of the immigrants in terms of their religious affiliation differed with respect to the place and time of departure in India. Brain found for instance that the number of Christians from Madras was 2.1% and those from Calcutta 0.04% (Brain, 1983:244). Brain's research as to the religious affiliation of the indentured immigrants, especially with reference to the Christian immigrants, is to our knowledge the best available. Refer to Table I, (*Indentured Indian Immigrants from Madras and Calcutta who identified themselves as Christians*) (1983:10 - 144). Brain writes:

I therefore determined to return to the original sources, in this case the immigration records, and to start from the beginning in an attempt to estimate as accurately as possible how many of the indentured immigrants described themselves as Christian (Brain, 1983:5).

She used the Shipping Lists of 91 volumes kept by the then Department of Indian Affairs. The information about the subsequent history of the person, where known, was obtained from the (*Indian Immigration Registers*), also kept by the Department of Indian Affairs.

Brain found among 'passenger' Indians 128 Christians registered in the 12 volumes entitled, 'Passenger Indians: Passes', also kept by the Department of Indian Affairs. It's likely that some individuals were issued with passes more than once and it is therefore not possible to estimate the percentage of Christians among the total number of 'passenger' Indians. Indeed the total number of 'passenger' Indians is itself uncertain (Brain, 1983:7, 247).

3.2 The Hindu Community in SA

Some 86.1% or 131,030 of the 152,184 indentured immigrants that came to the Colony during the period 1860 – 1911, were Hindus. Twice as many came from Madras, than from Calcutta.

Period	Hindus from Madras	Hindus from Calcutta	Total
1860 – 1911	87,364	43,666	131,030

These figures are based on an average of 86.1% Hindus. The percentage of Hindus from Madras may very well be different to that from Calcutta. Judging from the lower percentage of Christians from Calcutta the percentage of Hindus may be higher than the percentage from Madras. This fact obviously impacts on the kind of Hinduism that was practised by the indentured immigrants that embarked from India. One can safely assume that the brand of Hinduism practised in Madras and surrounding areas would also have been the Hinduism that the majority adhered to in South Africa.

3.2.1 Religion and tradition under pressure

It is difficult, well nigh impossible, to separate religion from culture and custom, especially when there is no such separation intended in the religion. This is particularly true of the Hindu religion that in no way distinguishes religion and life. As a pantheistic religion, Hinduism includes the whole of life: everything, in fact, is divine. Caste for example, is totally intertwined with the religious beliefs of the Hindu.

The recruiting techniques of the agents had a definite impact on the community that was to settle in Natal. The recruiting agents sometimes employed bad characters called *arkati* who made the preliminary 'catches'. The *arkati* relied on local knowledge and contacts to find out who was in trouble, or who was disgraced, or who was wanted by the police, and then approached them. The simple-minded were told that they could get garden work and that a short journey was necessary. Those with more intelligence were told they were needed for work overseas and of high wages and golden opportunities abroad. Having arrived at the depot and the real conditions of indenture were revealed, the recruits often refused them. They were then told that they owed the depot money for travelling expenses and that their personal possessions would be confiscated if they refused to indenture (Tinker, 1974:122).

In other cases people were kidnapped outright. This was especially the case with women. Very few emigrated voluntarily. A number of so-called 'stool-pigeons' were often placed among the recruits. Their job was to reassure the recruits of the golden future awaiting them and to stop any recruit from trying to escape (Tinker, 1974:125, 134).

What is important here to note in terms of the customs of the indentured immigrants, is that their period of indenture would break caste prohibitions. This was one of the major reasons why most could not return to India at the end of their period of indenture. Caste restrictions did not even survive the voyage from India. The high caste immigrants lost their caste by merely crossing the ocean. The Hindu Laws of Manu, traditionally dated from 200 BC, forbade Hindus of good caste to cross the seas, known as the 'Kala Pani or black waters', on pain of losing their caste status (Buijs, 1985:17).

Life on board the ships was inconsistent with caste rules. People could not rigidly be separated in the holds. Adrian Mayer refers to the account of women on their way from Calcutta to Fiji, with each caste cooking food at a separate hearth. Suddenly a wave rocked the boat, the pots fell and the food became mixed. They chose to eat the polluted food and food restrictions ended (Tinker, 1974:158). In South Africa there was little organised effort to segregate untouchables.

Two other features of the caste system were greatly affected by immigration. Firstly, traditionally, one's caste membership was inscriptive, that is, inherited by birth and could not be changed. However, indentured immigrants could, and did, change their caste names as individuals. Individuals were under no obligation to furnish more than one name. The caste system became quite flexible in Natal, and was only of importance generally when marriage was being considered (Kuper, 1960:26).

Secondly the powerful authority of the caste council or 'panchayat' in every Indian Village was unknown in Natal because there were too few men of the same caste in a given place to organize such a caste council. Caste as known in India did not exist as a system in Natal, although some elements of caste still influenced behaviour. Caste values and rules were reduced to unenforceable moral scruples. Only within the domestic circle did various beliefs and practices persist (Buijs, 1985:49 - 50).

While Hinduism remained the religion of the majority of the indentured, it lacked the Sanskritic valediction of the ancient Indian traditions and consisted mainly of those elements of village ritual remembered and fostered by the indentures. Those who arrived in Natal were forced to rebuild their lives without most of the familiar

institutions that surrounded them in India. Informants stated that anyone with the necessary inclination and training could become a priest. Teachers from all castes are today more important than priests in local affairs and the values they exemplify are not Sanskritic ones but those of modern, western education and lifestyle (Buijs, 1985:49). The development in later years supplanted most caste distinctions and one's position in the Indian society in South Africa rests largely on the values of financial success, educational prestige and political or social achievement.

3.2.2 Language Groups

Diesel offers the following percentages with regards to the linguistic groups of the Hindu Indian population (Diesel, 1993:3, 6). The total number of Indian people according to the demographic data of the 1996 census is 1,045,596 and the total Hindu Indian (Asian) population is 516,228 (South African Christian Handbook, 2001:17,37).

By 1936 the demography of the Hindu Indian population in South Africa was as follows:

DESCENT	Dravidian: Southern India 63%		Indo-Aryan: Northern India 37%		Totals
	Tamil	Telegu	Hindi	Gujerati	
Area	Tamil, Nadu Madras	Andra- Pradesh North of Madras	Bihar Uttar- Pradesh	Surat Kathiawad	
Percentage	45%	18%	30%	7%	100%
Numbers	232,303	92,921	154,868	36,136	516,228
Origin	Indentured	Indentured	Indentured	Passenger	

A final blow to caste was the apparent rapid loss of the vernacular languages. Language is the main vehicle for the transmission of oral tradition. In only three generations, most of the Indian community switched to English as their home language. Referring to the South African population records of 1936 – 1980,

Archary gives the following table of numbers of people claiming to speak Indian languages: (as being taken from the South African population records 1936 – 1980).

	1936	1951	1960	1970	1980
Tamil	83,731	120,181	141,977	153,645	24,720
Hindi	60,276	89,145	126,067	116,485	25,900
Gujerati	25,408	39,495	53,910	46,039	25,120
Telegu	25,077	30,210	34,483	30,690	4,000
Urdu	13,842	25,455	35,789	-	13,280
Other	2,737	26,090	2,053	71,070	No stats

The Tamil, Hindi and Telegu were mainly indentured immigrants. The 1980 figures show a radical reduction in the use of the vernacular. Not so with the Gujerati and Urdu who were mainly ‘passenger’ merchants that came to South Africa by their own volition and had the financial stability to maintain regular contact with their motherland and to keep socially apart from the indentured Indian.

A major division remains in the Indian community today between people of South Indian descent (Tamil and Telegu) and those from North India, especially the Gujerat state. The latter have retained their original language and religion to a much greater extent than is generally the case among Southerners (Buijs, 1983:1).

3.2.3 Hinduism in South Africa

It is not possible in terms of the subject of this thesis to examine in great detail the particular religious practices and observances of each group. What is important, though, is to briefly outline the nature of Hinduism among the immigrants in order to ascertain the challenge that this posed to the mission of the Church. Upon the centenary of the Indian emigration to South Africa in 1960, Ranji Nowbath, Sookraj Chotai and B D Lalla maintained that the Southerners came as labourers in response to the call of sanatana dharma based on the Puranas. They came with a large number of rituals, ceremonials and festivals

which are the very soul of village life in India and which, though not an essential part of philosophical Hinduism, are not contradictory to the lofty teaching of Hinduism (Nowbath, 1960:11). These Hindus were either *Saivas* (devotees of Siva) or Vaisnavas (devotees of Vishnu) but the demarcation was never exclusive. Most South African Hindus are from southern India and are of Dravidian descent. At present 45% of the Hindu people are Tamil speaking and 18% Telegu (Diesel, 1993:3, 6). They practise a type of Hinduism typical of that region: a popular ritualistic form of Hinduism predominates over the philosophical forms (De Beer, 1996:29). Ritual, image worship, magic and ecstatic festivals are distinguishing features of this form. It is less scripture orientated than other forms of Hinduism. The worship of the various divine manifestations of 'Vishnu', 'Shiva' and 'Sakti' has at the core, astrology and particularly the worship of nine planets (navagraha) integral to the whole (De Beer, 1996:45). Kavadi, the Mariammen festival and the fire-walking of the Draupadi festival are today the most popular of all. During these festivals the state of trance or ecstasy plays a vital role. The ecstatic trance would be the result of possession by the deity and gives to those so possessed the power to practise as healers and diviners (De Beer, 1996:45). Sacrifices, home worship around the household gods, and the lighting of the lamp (wilke or kamachee lamp), family ceremonies or samskaras, temple worship when the need requires, healings and miracles, and the practice of sorcery, are common cults among the Tamil and Telegu people that came from South India (De Beer, 1996:34 - 38).

The people of South India, both Tamil and Telegu, have a lot in common regarding their religion. Originally they were not really distinguished and were regarded by the rest of the Indian community as one people, Madrassis. The Tamils were drawn from the regions to the west and south of Madras, the 'Telegus' from the region to the north of Madras (Nowbath, 1960:18). The Tamils were responsible for the building of most temples dedicated to Vishnu and to Shiva. A deity that commands a great deal of reverence from Tamils and Telegus is Mariammen whose shrines spread far and wide across the country. She is the aspect of Parvathi, the consort of Shiva, in which she controls, governs, and spreads small pox, a disease that causes havoc in India every year. Mariammen is associated with death, and people seek to propitiate her with blood (Nowbath, 1960:20).

In mid-January the Tamils celebrate the 'Pongol' or harvest festival and the Telegus celebrate their festival, the Manes. This is followed by Kavady and Fire-walking by both Tamils and Telegus. In September – October both groups celebrate 'Partassi' abstaining from meat and fish for the whole month.

Tamils and Telegus marry with the broom proceeding to the home of the bride. Many traditional prohibitions in terms of marriage partners have given way to the demands of modern life (Nowbath, 1960:22 - 21). Both groups do not cremate but bury their dead.

The 'Hindi' people, in contrast to the Tamils and Telegus, are from Indo-Aryan stock. Their language is Hindustani. They were drawn largely from Bihar, North-Eastern United Provinces and further west from the regions around Lucknow and Delhi. A few have come from even further North-West. Most of the Hindis were drawn from the Gonda and Basti districts of the United Provinces and many from Benares, Allahabad and Lucknow (Nowbath, 1960:18). Today 30% of the Hindu people of South Africa are Hindi (Diesel, 1993:3, 6).

The majority of the Hindis are 'Sanatanists', i.e. people of the orthodox persuasion whose priest must always be a person of Brahmin descent. Deepavali is also celebrated by the Hindis It is sacred to 'Lakshmi', the goddess of wealth, and honours the triumphant return of Rama and 'Sita' from their circle. They have a large number of rites, ceremonies and 'pujas' or prayers in their homes which must be performed by priests. Temple and temple-worship are vital points in their religion. The 'Ramayana', 'Mahabharata' and the 'Bhagavad Gita' are sacred texts of scripture and the gods 'Rama' and 'Krishna' are particularly worshipped. Many Hindis have a private shrine for family worship. The Hindis worship Mata mai, the mother of pox. One of the most distinct pujas of the Hindis is the 'Sri Satharian Katha' and the 'Mahabir Savanni-ki-Jhanda', commonly called the 'Katha-Jhanda' prayers. This is a private puja sacred to 'Hanuman' and 'Vishnu' and is observed as a thanksgiving. Guests are invited. 'Prasad', meaning offering and food, are prepared after the formal raising of the red flag on bamboo poles in honour of 'Mahabir' or 'Hanuman' following the recital of the legend of inculcating virtues (Nowbath, 1960:20).

In September – October the Hindis observe ‘Pitar Paksh’, abstaining from meat and fish for about a fortnight. This is done in remembrance of the names of the departed who keep benevolent watch over their mortal kin and are revered in turn by the living (Nowbath, 1960:20).

Marriage, other than with Tamils and Telegus, takes place at the home of the bride. Orthodox Hindis require that the marriage be solemnised by a priest of Brahmin birth, nothing less.

Hindis insist on cremation where there are facilities and – as is the case with Tamils – will abstain from meat and fish after a death. They perform the major pacificator and conciliatory ceremonies on the tenth or thirteenth day (Nowbath, 1960:21).

Greater education, westernization and being a minority group among many other cultures and religions, are all factors that place the modern South African Indian in a constant process of acculturation. Yet, one of the most remarkable features of the Indian people of South Africa is the manner in which they retained their customs, religion and values.

The so-called ‘passenger’ or ‘free’ Indians who immigrated to South Africa, paying their own ‘passage’ and ‘free’ from any contract, came from the north-west of India from what is known today as ‘Gujerat’. The Hindu Gujeratis as well as their Muslim counterparts were known in India for their interest in business and expertise at it. This was originally no permanent immigration as many businessmen returned to their homes once or twice a year and for important events such as marriages that were arranged (Meer, 1960:16). The Hindu Gujeratis were from Indo-Aryan stock and comprised, according to Diesel, 7% of the Hindu people of South Africa (Diesel, 1993:3, 6).

The social and economic backgrounds of the ‘passenger’ Indians varied widely. Some had been involved in local government in India as magistrates, a few had inherited land, others had prosperous businesses. Most of these emigrants however, were poor peasant landowners who had suffered from the exorbitant taxes imposed in India under imperial rule (Buijs, 1985:53).

Keeping contact with home and family in India ensured that traditional and religious norms and values in daily life were retained. A huge gap existed (and still does) between these 'free' immigrants and the indentured labourers. Differences in language, culture, and living standards basically separated the two groups. Caste distinction is still an important part of life for these people. Gujeratis almost always marry within their own linguistic, cultural and religious group. Little social contact takes place between Gujeratis and other Indians.

Almost all of the 'Gujeratis' in South Africa, except some 100 families, come from the district of Surat, with its commercial and cultural heart in 'Ahmedabad'. They describe themselves as Surtees. A 'Surat Hindu Association' was established in Durban in 1910. The others came from the district of 'Kathiawad', known as 'Kathiawadis'. They have their own institutions, schools, cultural associations and religious bodies (Nowbath, 1960:19). More than any other Hindu group, the 'Gujeratis' are deeply involved with the philosophical form of Hinduism where the great doctrines of 'karma', 'samsara', 'maya', 'yoga', and 'moksha' are adhered to. Nowbath maintains that for the two days preceding 'Deepavali', the 'Gujeratis worship Luxmi' and 'Kalka Mata', a manifestation of Kali. After the joyous celebration of 'Deepavali' follows the 'Gujerati New Year'. They also recognize, as the other Hindu groups do, the mother of pox, and call her 'Sithla Mata'. The Gujeratis are the only group that celebrate New Year as 'Holi or Phagua', observing it as a day of prayer. They also perform the 'Katha-Jhanda puja' in honour of 'Mahabir' and 'Hanuman' (Nowbath, 1960:20).

'Gujeratis' require that marriage be solemnized by a priest of 'Brahmin' birth and that they marry within their own group. As to funerals they insist on cremation where there are facilities (Nowbath, 1960:21).

A small portion of the 'Gujeratis' (and Hindus) accepted the reformed teachings of 'Swami Divananda' and became followers of the 'Arya Samaj' creed. They reject the ceremonies, rituals and pujas of the orthodox. The 'Havan' ceremony is the alpha and omega of their belief. The Vedas are accepted as divinely revealed texts while the 'Puranas' are rejected both as unauthoritative and redundant, nor are the 'Ramayana', the 'Mahabharata and the Bhagavad Gita' sacred texts. For them there are no temples and temple worship (Nowbath, 1960:19).

3.3.1 The arrival of the Indian Muslims in South Africa

Almost all of the indentured Indian people were Hindu. The Muslims that did emigrate were by and large 'passenger' or 'free' Indians and most of them 'Urdu' speaking.

Two religious groups are clearly distinguished in South Africa. The majority by far are Sunni or orthodox Muslims, a small group belong to the Shia's who see in their leader a direct descendant of Mohammed. The history of Islam in South Africa dates far back into history, virtually coinciding with the coming of Christianity. Already in 1653 a certain Abraham, a stowaway on the Malacca, was forced to disembark at Table Bay. Three years later two Arabic slave girls, Corelia and Lysbeth from Abessinia were brought to the Cape. Others followed (Blommaert, 1938:4 - 8).

The expansion of the Muslim community at the Cape was particularly enhanced by a number of political leaders and their followers who were banished to the Cape. They were banished to the Cape on account of the clash between Muslim and Dutch powers in Batavia (Crafford, 1982:14).

Of all these exiles 'Sheik Yusuf of Macassar' is the most renowned. In 1644 Yusuf undertook a pilgrimage to Mecca. Here he studied Arabic and the traditional 'Islamic sciences such as the Qur'an and the Hadith'. Having acquired a great reputation for learning and piety he proceeded to Java which had become a centre of Islamic learning. Here he established himself in the court of Sultan Agung, who ruled from 1651 - 1683, and spent many years teaching the sultan, his courtiers, and others who came to Java, the various branches of Islamic learning.

In 1680 a revolution in Bantam took place resulting in the forced abdication of 'Sultan Agung' in favour of his son, 'Sultan Haji' who requested help from the Dutch. 'Agung' with his followers rallying around him, including 'Sheik Yusuf', actively opposed the Dutch. After some time, Agung surrendered. Yusuf and some 4,000 supporters kept up the battle roaming the woods and mountains of Java for almost a year. He surrendered in 1683 on the strength of a pardon promised by the Dutch (Greyling, 1976:11, 12), but which was never kept.

He was first sent to Batavia, then to Ceylon, and finally to the Cape where he arrived in 1694 with his family, followers and friends. The Company authorities sent him and his retinue to live on the farm, Zandvliet, at the mouth of the Eerste River, near Faure. Zandvliet became the rallying point for political exiles, slaves and ex-convicts from the East. Sheik Yusuf conducted secret religious services in slave lodges, as Muslims were forbidden by the Dutch authorities to hold religious gatherings openly (Yusuf, 1990:ii). Five years later, in 1699, he died. Little is known about his last five years in the Cape. Fact is that he is held in the highest regard by the Muslim community of South Africa. Two monuments, one in his homeland (Bantam) and the other in the land of his exile testifies to this fact. Muslims of South Africa regard Yusuf as the founder of Islam in South Africa and his grave at Faure as one of the most important holy places of the South African Muslim community (Greyling, 1976:14, 15). Together with his tomb four other Malay tombs or 'karamats' at Signal Hill, Constantia, Oude Kraal and Robben Island are regarded as the Holy Circle of tombs. Here prayers are offered and incense burnt for the intervention of the departed spirits. Water left at the tomb of Yusuf is believed to be imbued with miraculous power (Du Plessis, 1953:34, 37).

Many of the Muslim exiles were leaders and heroes and even princes in their own right, held in such high esteem, that many slaves became Muslim. The role of such efficient leaders as 'Imam Abdullah Kadi Abdusalam', Dr Abdurahman, and Abu Bakr Effendi should be taken note of. The influence of these able leaders gave the Cape Malays a significant status in the Coloured community. According to Els, this resulted in many young Christians from the Coloured community apostatising in order to marry Muslims (1971:431, 432). It is also a well-known fact that coloured children from destitute families, employed by Muslims as household servants, became estranged from their churches and eventually adopted the Muslim faith (Kriel, 1963:221, 222, 244 and Greyling, 176:17).

As their numbers increased various problems surfaced during the second half of the 19th century. Foremost, was the lack of knowledge regarding the content of their faith that led to divisions. This was especially so with regards to the Khalifa (Erasmus, 1976:2, 3 and Du Plessis, 1953:61 - 64). At this time the Sultan of Turkey sent Abu Bakr. Effendi to the Cape to teach the followers of Islam their religion and in 1877 his extensive Bayanu-din appeared, in which the religious duties of Islam were taught and explained (Erasmus, 1976:2, 3). This was one on

the first books in Afrikaans, though written in Arabic script. Abu Bakr Effendi was also the founder of the Hanafi School (Mahida, 1993:24) He also established the first Muslim school for girls (Mahida, 1993:26). In the latter part of the 19th century the centre of gravity was to shift from Indonesia to the Near-East and in particular to Mecca, and Islam was re-aligned with its birthplace. This led to a strong brand of orthodox Islam among the Malay Muslims. More than 50% of the slaves that were brought to the Cape between 1658 and 1700 were from India. Almost all of them came from the East Coast of Coromandel and Bengal which were strongholds of orthodox Islam. Adding the percentage for Indonesia and Ceylon the figure for slaves from the East rises to more than 70%. Approximately 30% came from Madagascar (Bradlow R and Cairns M 1978:92, 102 - 5).

In 1825, according to figures submitted to Cape Town - Imams, there were 1,268 Muslim slaves at the Cape. (Shell, 1994:356). In addition to the number of Muslim slaves there were free Muslims in the same period, a total of 2,167. However in 1842 there were 6,432 Muslims in Cape Town, over 33% of the town's population. The spread of Islam occurred mainly between 1770 and 1842 (:357). The growth of Islam at this time was often the result of the fact that baptised slaves could not be sold (Shell, 1994:172 - 173). Legislation linking freedom and Christianity, began to limit the marketability of slaves (Shell, 1994:359).

Eric Aspeling a later columnist, stated that the spread of Islam was directly attributable to the slave owners who, 'studying their own interest, preferred their slaves embracing the 'Mahometan faith', in which case they would remain in bondage (Aspeling, 1983:3cf and Shell, 1994:361). Bird, writing in 1822, came to the same conclusion and added that whenever one asked a slave why he had become Muslim, the reply was: 'some religion he must have, and he is not allowed to turn Christian' (1822:349). In an economy based on wine, Muslim slaves were preferable because of their sobriety (Bird:349 and Shell:362). Slaves became more important for the settlers' way of life than the Calvinist Christ (Shell, 1994:369).

The number of slaves at the Cape in 1700 was 1296, according to Bradlow (:92). According to Mahida (1993:29, 40, 48, 102, 105) the Muslim population increased as follows:

Year	Muslim Population in the Cape
1875	13,930
1891	15,099
1906	22,575
1951	78,787
1970	125,987
1980	154,300

Almost all the Indian Muslims that came to South Africa as immigrants, the so-called 'passenger Indians', paid their own way. The number of indentured Indian Muslims was negligible (Meer, 1969:10, 187). These 'passenger' Indian Muslims who arrived in 1869 were mostly Gujerati speaking Indians from Kathawa, Surat, and Porbandor, as well as Urdu and Marathi speaking Indians from Bombay (Kuper, 1960:29).

The Zanzibaris are descendents of African slaves from Zanzibar who, on their way to the East in an Arab ship, were liberated by the British and placed under the control of the Protector of Indian immigrants and technically became Indians. They were a very small group yet held in great honour because they were regarded as having magical powers. (Kuper, 1960:29).

The number of Muslims in South Africa today is, according to the National Census, 1.5% (2001 Census), slightly up from 1.4% (according to the 1996 census).

3.3.2 Islam in South Africa

The overall majority of both Coloured - and Indian Muslims adhere to orthodox or Sunni Islam whereas a very tiny minority confess to Shi'ite Islam. The latter are Urdu speaking Indians belonging to the Shafi'i law school, also known as Khojas. They have their own mosque in Pretoria. The overall world percentage of Shi'ite is about 10% (Naudé, 1996:160).

It is beyond the purpose of this thesis to deal with the Muslim religion as such. What is important though, is to briefly outline the nature of Islam among South African Muslims in order to ascertain the challenge that this posed to the mission of the Church. Greyling (1976: 24 - 65) gives a detailed account of trends in South African Islam. He classifies them as 'older orthodox, modernistic, Ahmaddiya and modern orthodox' (Greyling, 1976:25). Almost all the Coloured Muslims are Sunni Muslims and follow the Shafi'i school of law. The early Shafi'i Cape Muslims made a priceless contribution to the origin and development of the Afrikaans language (Naudé, 1996:159) which is the mother tongue of the Coloured Muslims. The knowledge of the 'Shari'a' or Muslim law based on the Qur'an and the Sunna (Hadith) or traditions is authoritatively communicated through the system of 'fiqh', which has been developed by the four Muslim law schools. Every orthodox Muslim is bound to accept it.

Formerly the sheiks received their training in Egypt; most of them at the Al-Azhar University in Cairo. Lately the training shifted to the Middle East, particularly Saudi Arabia. The establishment of the Muslim Judicial Council and the Majlis A'shura Al'Islami strengthened the strong guidance that came from the Sheiks in the Cape (Greyling, 1976:27, 31). They provided leadership in every aspect of life and played a very influential role in the community.

The ulama can be regarded as the actual successors of the prophet Muhammad (Naudé, 1962:162). In political matters that affect the Muslim community, the Judicial Council is the mouthpiece of the Government (Greyling, 1976:28).

The 'Indian Muslims' belong by and large to the 'Hanafi' law school. The orthodox Muslims are influenced by the Islam of India and Pakistan. Their social conservatism is particularly noticeable among the women that are submitted to 'purdah' or social separation (Fatima Meer, 1969:79).

Among the orthodox Indian Muslims, Sufism is popular: one of the Sufi saints belonging to the Christiya or Naqshbandiya Sufi order would be followed (Naudé, 1996:163). Many adherents would visit the 'pirs' or leaders of their orders when in India or Pakistan (Greyling, 1976:30).

Their Maulanas or leaders, the so-called Maulvis do not share in the same leadership involvement as the Sheiks, their Coloured Muslim counterparts. This is particularly because of the Sheiks' ability to speak English or Afrikaans. Political and social issues are rather taken care of by ordinary members of the community.

Indian Islam is characterised by various streams of thought. On the one hand you have the ultra-conservative group, Tabligh Jama'a, and on the other hand the theologically rather liberal Ahmadiyya group. The Tabligh Jama'a members would annually set aside time to visit backsliding Muslims, encouraging them to hold on to the Suah of the prophet. Their preaching visits are for many Muslims an embarrassment and for the Coloured Muslims, unacceptable (Greyling, 1976:28 - 31).

There appear to be various modernistic trends within Islam. The influence upon South African Islam comes from modernistic writers from India and Pakistan affecting particularly Indian Muslims. The work of Aziz Ahmad titled 'Islamic Modernism' (1967) points to a typical example of the modernistic approach in the commentary of the Qur'an by Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817 - 1898). Other Indian writers followed his approach, Ameer Ali (1849 - 1928) author of 'The Spirit of Islam' (1922), proposes a doctrine of inspiration in conflict with the traditional view of mechanical inspiration. His views found ready followers in Muslim mission organisations in South Africa. The later writings of Ghulam Ahmad Parwez also impacted on modernistic thinking among South African Muslims. Parwez argues that the Shariah was always wrong since it was based on a wrong theory of revelation. He rejects all of the Muslim past, with the exception of the life time of the Prophet and the first four Caliphs, as a period of darkness from which nothing can be learned. He further rejects the possibility of miracles as in conflict with the God-given laws of nature. A South African writer, A S K Joommal follows suit. The modernistic view rejects the possibility of a conflict between reason and revelation. The Hadith contains many irrational legends and must therefore be rejected. The Qur'an must be reinterpreted from a rational point of view (Greyling, 1976:31 - 36).

The Ahmadiyya Movement was initiated by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad who believed himself to be the mujaddid or awaited reformer of the faith in 1879. In 1889 he

declared that the return of Jesus was also fulfilled in him and that he was the expected Messiah and Mahdi (Ali, 1950:263). Later he also announced that he was an avatar of the Hindu god Krishna. He furthermore taught that Jesus died at the age of 120 years at Srinigar in Kashmir. After Ahmad's death the movement split into two groups, i.e. the Qadiani group who regarded Ahmad as prophet and the 'Tahore' group that maintained that he was Mujaddid but not prophet (Greyling, 1976:40, 41). Resistance against the Ahmadiyya Movement grew from within orthodox Islam and in 1974 Pakistan declared Ahmadiyya followers to be non-Muslims. The confession or teaching of this doctrine would be punishable by law (Greyling, 1976:43).

Greyling in his thesis *Die Invloed van Strominge in die Islam op die Jesusbeskouing van die Suid-Afrikaanse Moslems* thoroughly researched the Ahmadiyya in South Africa (1976:45 - 52) as well as their influence on the translation of the Qur'an (Greyling, 1976:71 - 73), and their polemical literature aimed against the Christian faith (Greyling, 1976:74, 76 - 78). For the purposes of this study it is important to note that the teachings of the Ahmadiyya regarding Christ and the Christian faith played a major role even among Sunni Muslims in their rebuttal of the Gospel's claims in South Africa. The Qadiani Ahmadiyya Movement began mission work in South Africa in 1946 through the efforts of Dr Yusuf Sulaiman and H Ebrahim. This eventually led to the establishment of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission of South Africa in 1959 in the Cape (Ahmad, 1965:25 - 29). The Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement began mission work in South Africa in 1957 with D Sydow as their missionary claiming that mission is part of the Great Jihad or of a Jihad Bil-Qalam (holy war with the pen) (Greyling, 1976:47).

In Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal, the Ahmadiyya influence came through various mission organisations, particularly through the polemical efforts of Ahmed Deedat. The latter's work continued right up into the nineties and though Deedat tried to distance himself from the Ahmadiyya movement, he was using their material to attack the Christian Faith.

Jihad (holy war) is and always has been a powerful force in Islam. Moderate Muslims are prone to emphasise that the greater Jihad refers to a spiritual warfare against sin and all that is antithetical to Allah. The lesser Jihad, which

refers to the traditional interpretation of holy war, is still a reality. Muslims are somewhat ambivalent with this concept that brought them both pride and shame (Parshall, 1994:97, 98).

In 1965 the Muslim Judicial Council resolved that Ahmadiyahs may not enter the mosque, their marriages would be null and void and they may not be buried in Muslim cemeteries (Greyling, 1976:51). Their huge influence in the fifties and early sixties was now effectively controlled. Drastic change and development was urgently required. A modernistic reinterpretation of Islam became necessary. In South Africa this development was noticeable in the publications of the Muslim Youth Movement of South Africa. They wished to remain true to orthodox Islam, but sought a renewal of old systems and a greater involvement in the counteracting of social needs, spiritual decline and moral degradation. They wanted to be progressive without being modernistic (Greyling, 1976:52 - 58).

A number of mission organizations in the fifties and sixties were deeply influenced by the Ahmadiyya movement. After the action taken by the Muslim Judicial Council in 1965, the Universal Truth Movement and the Islamic Missionary Society folded. The Young Men's Muslim Association turned to the radical conservatism of the Tabligh Jama'a. Greyling argues that the political climate of apartheid and the frustration of Indians those years called for organizations and a leadership that would put across to both Government and Christendom the case of Islam (Greyling, 1976:59, 60). The youth wanted to do something about the situation and the Ahmadiyya method of a jihad against Christendom through mission organizations, polemical literature and debates provided a ready answer. The acceptance of the Indian Community, as a permanent part of the South African people, led to the rejection of the Jihad approach of the mission organizations. The Muslim Youth Movement and the Muslim Students Organization reflected the new approach (Greyling, 1976:62).

There had always been a lively interest among South African Muslims in the wide world of Islam. The establishment of the Islamic Council of South Africa provided proper contact with Muslims from other countries who wanted to assist Muslims of South Africa. Financial assistance from Saudi-Arabia for the building of mosques and schools followed. This went along with international visitors and the distribution of pan-Islamic literature (Greyling, 1976:64, 65).

South Africa had its fair share of Islamic fundamentalism. The violent history of slaves deported to the Cape, the regime of apartheid, and the strong Christian presence in South Africa, must share the blame for the rise of such revolutionary groups as PAGAD and MAIL in the Cape. A further result is Durban's Ahmad Deedat's fierce life-long campaign against Christianity in South Africa and worldwide through his Propagation Centre. Dr W A Bijleveldt who headed the Islam Africa Project said in an interview when visiting South Africa in the 1960's that in his experience South African Muslims are of the most fundamentalist Muslims in Africa.

There are various occultic practices of Muslims in South Africa to ward off misfortune or harm. This form of 'folk' Islam differs from that of the 'evil eye' and the invisible spirit world of the 'Jinn' which is prevalent in the Middle East and Egypt. In South Africa black magic is practiced by means of the blood of animals. There is also a form of voodoo where the name of the enemy is written on a clay doll. The purpose is to kill or destroy the enemy. Quite common is the use of 'Tawiz' (to flee for refuge). It consists of a black cord with a Qur'anic inscription on a piece of metal sown into it and worn on neck, arm, waist or breast. A tawiz can also be in the form of a square with occultic numbers worn for protection. In Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal the researcher found that Muslim witchcraft, especially that practised by the Zanzibari Muslims, is regarded by the Indian folk as the most effective medicine.

3.4 The Indian Christian Community in South Africa

The Christians who came from India were a rather small group. Joy Brain in her latest historical and statistical research concludes that the immigrant Christians (1860 – 1911) constituted 1.4% or 2,150 of the total of 152,184 immigrants (Brain, 1983:244). Thompson, writing in 1938 about the Indian immigration into Natal 1860 – 1872, places the figure for Christians at 5% (:20), which compares fairly well with Brain's 4.6% for that period (Brain, 1983:243). She concludes that when writers refer to 5% Christians, they simply use Thompson's figure without realising that he analysed only a small proportion of immigrants, i.e. 6,445 out of 152,184 (Brain, 1983:244). Most of these Christians were from Madras; only 0.04% were from Calcutta i.e. 22 Christians (Brain, 1983:244 - 5). Brain points out that some registers are in a bad condition (Brain, 1983:6) and the fifth

Calcutta register has no *caste* column, but that the 91 volumes were searched for a second time, noting biblical and saints' names. It was discovered that more entries that were not marked as Christian in the caste column amounted to 2.33% of the total number of Christians extracted (Brain, 1983:6). One of the obvious facts that should not be overlooked is that some Christians would not have recognised that their religion was required in the caste column. Some others may have felt that their previous 'caste' was required or that simply the name pariah would suffice because many came from the pariah or outcaste group. Then there were those, aware of the fact that they were regarded as outcaste (pariah) because they became Christian, who simply filled in pariah. Another group may out of fear of persecution, deliberately have refused to state their Christian affiliation. The percentage of Christians may therefore be higher. Further studies regarding the number of indentured Hindus as well as the church affiliation of indentured Christians in Natal could bring us an even closer percentage.

Against the popular view that there were no 'passenger' Christians, Brain studied the passes issued to 'passenger' Indians and was able to identify 128 Christian 'passenger' Indians from India or Mauritius. Other sources of information may very well increase this figure (Brain, 1983:245).

Among the 2,150 indentured Christians there were Catholics, Syrians and Protestants. In the 1860's a fairly large group of Roman Catholics and Syrians emigrated to Natal but not thereafter, while large numbers of Baptists arrived in the first years of the 20th century (Brain, 1983:247).

Over the years the picture has changed dramatically. According to the 1996 census the number of Christians among the Asian people had increased to 194,427. The Pentecostal/Charismatic group accounted for the largest number (59,375) with the mainline churches (39,827) and the African Independent churches (10,778). A huge number of 84,447 were grouped as *Other Churches* and could very well be grouped with 'Mainline and Pentecostal/Charismatic' but the breakdown cannot be calculated (South African Census, 1996:30, 42, 44). In the period 1911 – 1996 the Christian faith grew at the expense of the Hindu religion from 1.4% in 1911 to 18.6% of the Indian population in (South African Census, 1996:65).

The people of India are popularly known as the most religious people in the world. Those who accepted the Christian faith in India, especially first generation believers, were known for their deep devotion to Christ, a devotion that would put their western counterparts to shame. As a minority group in India, often suffering from various forms of persecution, they tended to find their strength in a total commitment to their faith. Though little is known about the early Christian immigrants, it can be assumed that they would share in the faith of their forefathers. A study of the present-day Christianity of Indians in South Africa supports this viewpoint.