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Spatial Contestations: Interplay of Faith, Reason and Wisdom in Pentecostal- Charismatic Christianity in Contemporary Goa

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Abstract: Faith, reason and wisdom are terms often discussed by philosophers, theologians and scholars of religion in abstract terms. But ask any believer and he will articulate his faith by employing the reason and wisdom he learns and assimilates from his everyday life practices. Vatican II has taken the triptych of faith, reason and wisdom from the rarefied echelons of philosophers and theologians and spread it down among the masses. This paper drawn from my doctoral work, “New Christian movements in contemporary Goa: a sociological study” attempts to study the interplay between faith, reason and wisdom in a particular faith tradition employed by a specific religious community in a concrete socio-historical context. It is a study of the various strategies employed by the Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians in contemporary Goa to formulate and articulate world views, beliefs, rituals and practices as they jostle for space in the religious sphere of the state, which has been dominated by the Hindu and Catholic communities for centuries.

Key words: Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity, Christianity in post-liberation Goa, Sociology of faith, reason and wisdom, Sacred & Profane, Religious symbols, Religious Contestation.

I. Introduction

This seminar organised by Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth, Pune on ‘Faith, Reason and Wisdom’ is to celebrate the golden jubilee of the Second Vatican Council and the year of faith. This paper is an attempt to present a sociological perspective of faith, reason and wisdom. In sociological and especially anthropological literature faith is not merely belief in a set of theological precepts and dogmas, but is the process of articulating one’s religious beliefs in and through everyday

life situations. Faith is lived out in the mundane rituals and practices of common people. Similarly reason and wisdom are not abstract ideas or an ideology or a particular state of mind, but are thought processes and worldviews conditioned by concrete historical situations and cultural contexts that guide and shape the everyday faith responses of a believer. Therefore instead of looking at the triptych of faith, reason and wisdom from a theoretical and definitional perspective, this paper will highlight the interplay of this triptych in formulating and articulating the religious system of Fentecostal-Charismatic Christian groups (a particular faith tradition) in contemporary Goa (a particular historical and cultural context).

II. Christianity in Post-Liberation Goa

Goa was liberated in 1961 and with the departure of the Portuguese, massive public funding was earmarked for development projects and as a result industry, mining, tourism, agricultural productivity, mechanized fishing, banking, real estate, education, health care and business all started to develop and expand. All these new industries and public sector ventures required a lot of skilled workers and the period after liberation witnessed a huge influx of migrant workers into the state. The mining boom which began in the 1950s and got further boost after 1961 also led to an inflow of workers, especially from the neighbouring states. This is reflected in the sudden increase in the population of Goa from 1961 to 1971. From 589,997 in 1961, the total population rose to 795,120, an increase of 34.8%. This is much higher than the subsequent decadal growth rates of the total population: 26.7% from 1971 to 1981, 16% from 1981 to 1991 and 15.2% from 1991 to 2001¹.

Among the people who came to Goa, seeking their fortunes in the 1960s, were a few Syrian Christians from Kerala, the Methodists and the Seventh Day Adventists. The Indian Pentecostal Church was the first Pentecostal group to arrive in Goa in 1971, while in 1972 the first independent evangelical group, the Vasco Brethren Assembly, was started by a Keralite, C. John. Bethel House of Worship was the first independent Church started by a pastor of Goan origin, Evangelista Dias in 1979. He began with just three families at Assolna,

South Goa and has presently grown to 150 members and has shifted to the town of Margao.

The decade of the 1980s can be described as the decade of the mushrooming of neo-Pentecostal Churches. 1987 saw the emergence of two prominent neo-Pentecostal Churches, the 'New Life Fellowship' and 'New Frontiers International' (henceforth NFI). The former under the banner of New Life Fellowship Mumbai began simultaneously in Vasco under Pastor Joseph D'Cruz and in Panjim under Pastor Arc D'Cruz. At present New Life Fellowship has five congregations in Goa catering mainly to Goans and have services mainly in Konkani and English. The other prominent neo-Pentecostal Church, the NFI was launched in Gogol, Margao by Pastor Duncan of U.K with the help of a team from Mumbai. Today they have spread all over Goa having congregations in Mapusa, Vasco, Margao (2) and Panjim and cater to all sections of society. The decades of the 1990s and 2000s have seen a lot of expansion and many new neo-Pentecostal congregations coming into Goa. Most of these Churches cater to the non-Goan community and their services are in Hindi, Telegu, Kannada or Malayalam. According to Pastor C. M. Saji of the Indian Pentecostal Church, there are nearly 120 congregations in Goa comprising of around 6000-7500 neo-Pentecostals or 'believers', with about 90 known pastors².

III. Identity Formation of the Neo-Pentecostal Movement with the Recreation of the New Testament Church as the Guiding Motif.

The recreation of the 'New Testament Church', as the neo-Pentecostals understand it, is the basic defining principle around which the corporate identity of the neo-Pentecostal movement as a whole, and the individual identities of different neo-Pentecostal congregations and their individual members are built. Since none of the neo-Pentecostal Churches in Goa are more than 40 years old, they assume the garb of the early Biblical Church to show a continuum between present day neo-Pentecostalism and the nearly 2000 years old New Testament Church. The members of NFI quote from the book of Revelation in the Bible, which speaks about seven

independent Churches like the Church in Ephesus, Church in Smyrna, etc, and equate their congregation in Panjim to such an independent Church. They identify their Church not as a denomination coming from some Protestant movement, but as a New Testament Church based on the Bible and similar to the above seven independent Churches.

In the process of identity formation for any individual or group or section of society, the first step in that process is identifying the other(s) and showing that they are distinct from them. The New Testament Church, which was a Jewish sect trying to assert its own separate identity, first tried to separate itself from the Jewish community on the one hand and the Roman state religion on the other. Secondly, to draw converts from the Jewish community, the nascent Church had to show some continuity with Judaism (Matthew's gospel is a good example of this) and at the same time maintain its 'newness' and superiority over the old Jewish faith (Pauline theology is an attempt to do this). The neo-Pentecostal movement in Goa, which has modelled itself on the New Testament Church, has also tried to carve out a separate religious space, which is distinct from Catholicism and Hinduism, the two dominant religions in Goa. This marking of sharp boundaries with other religious traditions is carried out at different levels and in different loci.

A. Marking of Boundaries with the Catholic Community

As stated earlier, the New Testament Church emerged from the Jewish community with all its early members and leaders, including its founder, Jesus Christ, being Jews. So, initially the main tussles and conflicts were between the Christians and the Jews³ as the nascent Christian community tried to separate itself from the parent Jewish community by selectively borrowing certain Jewish religious beliefs, practices and symbols and critiquing and rejecting the others. Thus the Biblical Church at the first council of Jerusalem⁴ rejected the practice of circumcision - the key external marker of Jewish identity inscribed on the body of the individual believer.

Similarly the neo-Pentecostals in Goa, whose founding leaders and early members were mainly from the Catholic community, have

carved their own separate identity by critiquing and rejecting many religious beliefs, practices and symbols of their parent Catholic community. The neo-Pentecostals have had several conflicts with the Catholic community in Goa, which is described in some detail a little later. The main contrast between Neo-Pentecostalism and Catholicism, as seen by the neo-Pentecostals, is based on the theme of the New Testament Church. The neo-Pentecostals argue that the Catholic Church has lost the original vision of the Biblical Church and have compromised the New Testament values, while the neo-Pentecostals have remained loyal to the New Testament vision and values.

The neo-Pentecostals therefore re-read the history of Catholicism as being manipulated by the Roman Empire and various other worldly powers over a long period of time and underline how the Church has misused power during the Inquisition & other events in history. The neo-Pentecostals argue that the Holy Spirit, which came down on the New Testament Church at Pentecost, is no longer working in the Catholic Church; it is only Father, Son and Mother Mary and so Catholics, like the Hindus and Muslims, are still searching for the real God. So they redefine Catholicism as a man made religion - “it is not God’s wisdom, but man’s wisdom”, said the pastor of World Revival Ministries (henceforth WRM) an independent indigenous born-again Christian group at Siolim, which is affiliated to New Covenant Family of Ministries, based in USA.

B. Popular Marian devotion and usage of images

The two very important external markers of separation between the neo-Pentecostals and the Catholics which are cited by many of the common folk, both Catholics and neo-Pentecostals, are popular devotion to Mary and usage of statues and images. Both these Catholic traditions are rejected by the neo-Pentecostals as these are not part of their idea of the New Testament Church and so the neo-Pentecostals are strictly forbidden from participating in any of these practices. Thus litanies at wayside shrines, celebration of the feasts of saints and other parish feasts (with their characteristic processions, fire-works and fairs), the innumerable wayside crosses and chapels

seen all over Goa and the large Churches and Cathedrals with many crosses, statues and other religious artefacts that are characteristic of the Catholics, and form their external and visible markers of distinction, are rejected by the neo-Pentecostals. According to the neo-Pentecostals, popular Marian devotion is taboo since it portrays Mary, a human being, as God.

The neo-Pentecostals term the Catholic tradition of using images, statues, amulets, etc in their religious observances as idolatry. They cite from the Mosaic Law to show that idolatry is against Biblical tradition⁵. Thus a complaint heard from several Catholics is that the neo-Pentecostal pastors make the new converts walk on rosaries or crosses to prove that they are no longer Catholics, since venerating and respecting rosaries and crosses is seen as a key external marker of Catholic identity.

C. Other markers of boundaries

The neo-Pentecostals reject several Catholic doctrines and traditions like the necessity of good works of mercy and charity for salvation, celebration of Christmas on December 25, feasts of different saints and the three kings, praying for and offering masses for the dead, etc., all of which they reason are not in accordance with the Biblical Church values. Individual neo-Pentecostal believers criticize several observances and traditions practised by the Catholics, interpreting them as demonic and contrary to the wisdom of the word of God. The neo-Pentecostals are especially critical of the religious professionals of the Catholic Church. The Catholic clergy are accused of promoting such traditions and practices that are not in accordance with the New Testament Church model. They cite the example of the festival of Zagor held in Siolim village where the Catholics and Hindus together worship the Zagorio, which is a demonic spirit⁶. According to their reasoning this tradition was started by the local Catholic priest. The neo-Pentecostals especially attack the Catholic position on the necessity of celibacy for priesthood and label the Catholic clergy as womanisers, drunkards and not faithfully following their vows. Neo-Pentecostals also reject the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation⁷ and the Catholic practice of infant baptism, which are contradictory to the wisdom of the Biblical

Church. Their understanding is that neither the bread nor the wine becomes the body or blood of Christ respectively.

While the primary process of boundary marking for the neo-Pentecostals in Goa has been with the Catholic community, they also use their faith formulations derived from their New Testament wisdom to draw up sharp boundaries with other religious traditions. When it comes to other religions, the neo-Pentecostals have rather extremist positions. They draw their position from the New Testament model, where St. Paul strongly condemns the existing pagan practices of the Greek and Roman religions. According to them Satan's plan is to use different religions to take mankind away from God. Most of them believe that the non-Christian religions are leading people away from heaven and into hell. The neo-Pentecostals clearly distinguish between the worldly persons (gentiles) who do not have the wisdom of Christ, and themselves, who have put on the mind of Christ. Hollenweger (1972: 485) opines that the 'tribal religion' of Pentecostalism needs clear and tangible 'tribal marks' in order to make abundantly clear who belongs to one's own 'tribe', the Church, and who belongs to the 'hostile tribes', the world.

They draw clear-cut boundaries with other religious scriptures pointing out that only the Bible is the word of God. Some of them would even go to the extent of saying that all other scriptures are Satanic. The neo-Pentecostal pastors sharply attack the New Age gurus labelling them as imposters and alleging that they take their teachings from the Bible, while changing and twisting things. Practices like Yoga, meditation, art of living, etc are regarded as taboo since they believe that these practices are not just cultural but are rooted in religious traditions.

Neo-Pentecostalism as a new religious movement in Goa strives to carve out a separate religious space for itself, distinct from and yet in continuum with the two major religious traditions of Hinduism and Catholicism existing in Goa. They achieve a separate formulation of faith and formation of a distinct religious identity by showing that the others (pagans, gentiles) are stagnant, and worship dead or false Gods, while their faith is characterised by dynamism, growth, revival and commitment. By identifying with and assuming the values,

symbols and practices of their model of the New Testament Church the neo-Pentecostals employ both reason and wisdom drawn from that particular understanding to arrive at new expressions of faith identity that ascribe superior status to themselves. As New Testament Christians they believe that they are the chosen ones certain of being saved and this divine wisdom gives them power and victory over the pagans and all their enemies.

IV. Religious Symbols and Discourses of the Charismatic-Pentecostal Movement

This section in trying to understand the worldview and ethos of its adherents looks at how Pentecostal Christianity employs reason and wisdom drawn from their understanding of the Bible to formulate religious symbols and discourses which they accept as authoritative and truthful at a given period of time. Clifford Geertz in looking at religion as a cultural system defines religion as “a system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic” (1973: 90). Geertz’s ideas have to be understood in the light of Talal Asad’s criticism. Asad (1993) suggests that religious symbols cannot be understood independently of their historical relations with non-religious symbols, in which work and power are crucial. He argues that religious symbols are intimately linked to social life and so change with it, and they usually support the dominant political power (and occasionally oppose it). It is not mere religious symbols that implant true Christian dispositions, but power- ranging all the way from laws (imperial and ecclesiastical) and other sanctions (hellfire, death, salvation, good repute, peace) to the disciplinary activities of social institutions (family, school, city, church) and of human bodies (fasting, prayer, obedience, penance). In the light of Geertz’s conception of symbols providing a model of and for the world of existence of the believers and Asad’s corrections about the important role of power in deciding which representations/ discourses are accepted as authoritative, we analyze how religious symbols and

discourses of the neo-Pentecostals are articulated in their ritualistic observances.

A. Concept of Sacred/Profane

Neo-Pentecostals who draw inspiration from the Pentecost event of the early Church have both different and similar conceptions of what constitutes sacred and profane compared to other Christians. According to Bourdieu (1990: 57) the *habitus*, which is constituted in the course of an individual history, facilitates agents to partake of the history objectified in institutions and thus “makes it possible to inhabit institutions, to appropriate them practically, and so to keep them in activity.” The *habitus* enables the institutions to attain full realization, that is, the Church made flesh (Ibid). While analyzing the concepts of sacred and profane for neo-Pentecostalism it is necessary to study the influence of the *habitus*, constituted in individual histories of members, on the institutions of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal and neo-Pentecostalism and unravel those “authoritative representations/ discourses” (Asad 1993) which have fashioned these conceptions and study the role of power in determining their authoritative status.

For the continuation and growth of any voluntary movement it is necessary to recruit a large number of committed volunteers who are able and willing to render a large amount of ‘free service’ to the entire group. Since the group cannot remunerate the volunteers economically or socially, it formulates a discourse on service to the Church that draws from Biblical models of service, for e.g. Jesus washing the feet of his disciples and at the same time attaches the sure promise of eternal salvation, besides enhanced status among the members of the group as rewards for the service rendered. Once, the pastor of a born-again Church made a special mention of a couple on the serving team who did a good job welcoming people at the door, and made them stand up while everyone applauded them. This practice of public acknowledgement of the serving team enhances the discourse on the importance of service to the Church. As Asad (1993) mentions that the authoritative status of representations/discourses depends on the appropriate production

of other kinds of practice. The goals of this discourse are to identify what type of work can be considered as ‘service to the Church’, to motivate people to work and serve, and to elevate mundane chores like sweeping, cleaning the hall, arranging the chairs, arranging the mikes or preparing tea and coffee to the level of sacred activity. The neo-Pentecostals argue that once a person is certain of salvation he will lead a life of service in gratitude to the free gift of God. Thus, those who serve the Church are the selected ones within the group of elect. While the people assigned to serve have to make sacrifices like coming earlier than others and leaving last, cleaning and arranging the hall, getting the sound system ready and doing various other chores, they also have the privilege of access to equipment, facilities and contacts and being part of the inner decision-making group – the core group or the team of elders.

B. Sacred and Profane Space and Time and Mapping of History and Geography

One of the most influential thinkers on religion and territory/space is Mircea Eliade who argued that religious difference was a result of diverse instantiations of the sacred that erupted into the seen world in “hierophanies,” thereby creating “sacred space” (E. McAlister 2005: 250). Most of the current religion scholars like J. Z. Smith, David Chidester, Sam Gill and Karen McCarthy Brown criticise Eliade’s theory of sacred space, which posited a universally existing, natural dualism between ‘sacred’ and ‘profane’ space, as ultimately resting on a Western theological template. These current scholars instead begin with a premise from philosopher Henri Lefebvre, whose book *The Production of Space* (1991) parses out any given local space in a tripartite synthesis of physical, mental and social spaces that operate simultaneously. Thus space is always a part of material culture, always social, always produced and there can never be any neutral or merely physical space (Ibid). The neo-Pentecostals use this reasoning that ‘place’ ‘space’ and ‘territory’ are ‘second-order categories’⁸ to deny that there is any period or moment which they call as sacred time or any specific place that they term as sacred space. For neo-Pentecostals sacredness is

derived from the activity performed at a particular place and in a particular time.

The neo-Pentecostal position is in contrast to the Catholic position which holds a spatial distinction of sacred and profane and identifies the physical and social space of the Church universally as 'sacred'. More than the physical structure of the Church, it is the restriction and control of social behaviour within the Church premises that produce the 'sacred' Church space. As referred earlier, Lefebvre argues that space is always social and always produced. Stirrat identifies the use of space and controls over behaviour within spatially defined limits to highlight the distinction between sacred and profane found at a Catholic pilgrimage centre in Sri Lanka (1992: 64). He notes how the pilgrims were aware of the rule-bound nature of the sacred and the expectation that they should act with decorum within the boundaries of the Church land, which was absent outside. Besides the physical space, the Catholics also regarded the social space of the Church or shrine as sacred and contrasted the sense of oneness in the Church with the divisions of normal society (Ibid: 66). Visvanathan (1999: 36-38) points out that for Syrian Christians a place, whether a Church or a house, is a mnemonic expressing the continuity and linearity of historical time.

On the other hand, the Pentecostal Christians map the universe into Christian-reached and un-reached (demonic) territories. This global-mapping is not only of "people groups" but also of territories (E. McAlister 2005: 252). Territories can be ruled by "principalities" or "powers" invested with theological, spiritual significance. Unlike the Catholic Charismatics who hold the territorial confines of the Church as sacred the neo-Pentecostals spiritually map the entire universe into swathes of sacred and profane territories – sacred where there has been successful church planting and demonic where their ancient peoples had transacted pacts with un-Christian powers. On the basis of this distinction McAlister describes an additional concept, namely, the '10/40 window'. The phrase '10/40 window' became a prominent concept in evangelical Christian discourse. It maps a territory from 10 degree to 40 degree north latitude, a rectangular 'window' between Northern Africa and Eastern Asia where the Christian population is quite small and evangelization is

deemed necessary. The neo-Pentecostals stress on the idea of the entire universe being divided into Christian (reached) and demonic (un-reached) territories. Through conversion to Christianity, a territory and its people can detach itself from demonic entrenchment and become a righteous land standing before God (profane to sacred movement).

‘Sacred time’ plays an important role in the religious discourses of neo-Pentecostalism. A certain period or time, hour or day or year acquires a sacred character either due to the fulfilment of some vision or prophecy or due to the expectation of the occurrence of some sacred event devoted to God. The exact day or year can keep changing depending on the contents of the discourse feeding into its sacredness. The millennial expectation of the second coming of Christ plays an important role in their conception of sacred time, which leads them to evaluate specific historical situations in the light of what is to be at the time of the Last Judgement.

The neo-Pentecostals divide the historical period on earth into different ages. There is the Biblical age which is divided into the Old Testament, the time from the creation of Adam and Eve till Jesus’ entry, and the New Testament, that is, Jesus’ time. From Jesus’ times it is the Christian era wherein Christianity as a religion has been growing. Once the word of God spreads to the end of the world and the world is completely evangelized, the Christian Age will end. God the Father and Jesus will appear to all peoples and that will be the end of humanity. For them the New Testament period and the present end-days are important, while the intervening period of human history that includes the growth of Christianity is overlooked. The Old Testament is only important since it is a preparation for the entry of Jesus Christ into the human world. In their mapping of human history, based mainly on Christological criteria, the New Testament period is important because of the entry of Jesus Christ into history and the present age is important due to Christ’s imminent second coming. Being very young movements with almost no history, they conveniently play down the importance of human history and in an unhistorical manner connect their Church to the New Testament age.

C. Inscription of Moral Codes and Practices on the Christian Body

The discourse on the recreation of the New testament Church and the resultant dualistic worldview leads the neo-Pentecostals to label habits like drinking, smoking and taking drugs as evil habits and practices like fasting, praying and doing penances as good habits. Restrictions on drinking are widespread in Neo-Pentecostalism. Teetotalism is the model for all neo-Pentecostals. These restrictions are enforced in some groups directly with a lot of pressure, including the threat of excommunication and in others indirectly, using mainly psychological pressure. The discourse on the body being the temple of the Holy Spirit and thus the need to be 'holy, pure, blameless' and 'do the will of God' are linked to giving up habits like drinking and drugs. Since their body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, the women and girls are urged to dress modestly and appropriately.

Thus, both holiness and moral codes are inscribed on the physical body of the adherent through the discipline of fasting, prayer, penance and dress codes and abstinence from alcohol, drugs, etc. since these elements are said to lead people away from God and towards the world. Their discourse on fasting is emboldened with Biblical wisdom drawn from texts like 'certain types of demons go only through fasting', 'Jesus says that when he is not there, they should fast and pray', and 'Jesus fasted for forty days in the wilderness' which give legitimization to the practice of fasting. This is what Asad (1993) meant when he said that true Christian dispositions are implanted through the disciplinary activities of human bodies such as fasting, prayer, obedience and penance.

V. Power, Superiority & Religious Contestations

With selective emphasis on certain religious beliefs and symbols and downplaying of other symbols, rites and rituals the new Christian movements have articulated new modes of faith expression and religiosity that simultaneously identify with and reflect discontinuity with the traditional Catholic faith, which has been the dominant form of Christianity in Goa for centuries. These new Christian sects have attempted to carve out a separate identity in the post-liberation

religious history of Goa by ascribing superior divine status to their faith conceptions. By claiming that their religious reason and wisdom, which is drawn from their model of the New Testament Church is superior and closer to the divine truth, they have seriously challenged the monopoly of the Catholic Church. This has led to a polarisation of the religious space in Goa, with an increase in religious contestations. This polarisation of the religious space in Goa is illustrated by the below-mentioned case.

A battle for religious supremacy has been going on for several years between the World Revival Ministries (WRM), a neo-Pentecostal group, and the Catholic Church in Siolim. It has been fought over different areas – village, land, school, media, and has covered various spaces like social, religious/metaphysical, physical and economic. The pastor of WRM, a former Catholic and leader of the Konkani Charismatic prayer group in Mapusa, broke away from the Catholic Church in 1998 and formed his own independent group taking with him many members of the prayer group, which angered the Catholics in the village. This sense of betrayal of the Catholics increased when he converted his old residence, which is very close to the Catholic Church and where he used to run a bar and restaurant, into his present Church.

Since his prayer meetings began more or less at the same time as the Sunday mass in the Catholic Church, the frustration of the local Catholics grew seeing many neo-Pentecostals coming for the services and also having to hear the loud music coming from WRM Church. Given the history of the pastor's divorce from the Catholic Church, this activity of conducting their services so close both in space and time to the Catholic Sunday service, was a clear sign that they believed that they had a divine sanction to undertake 'sacred' activities without paying attention to issues like religious tolerance and violation of other sacred spaces. This attempt to usurp the sacred space and establish their faith supremacy led to a series of conflict situations between the Catholics and neo-Pentecostals of that village. Once when the WRM Church was having a New Year Eve open air prayer service, a group of Catholics barged in, vandalised the place and attacked the worshippers. The pastor immediately filed a FIR with the police and took recourse to legal means to resolve the issue.

Another dispute broke out over a piece of land between the Church property and the pastor's house, which the pastor claimed belonged to him, while the catholic priest argued it was a common pathway for people to walk. While the ecclesiastical authorities tried to build a gate from their compound wall onto the disputed land, the pastor dug a trench in front of the gate to block them. In retaliation some of the Catholics came to the pastor's residence and assaulted his workers.

Another issue that feeds into this religious contestation is the insider-outsider tussle due to the influx of thousands of non-Goans into Goa who came to benefit from Goa's high living standards and job opportunities. The resultant 'anti-outsider' feeling and 'Goa for Goans' sentiment (Newman 2001: 69) has got translated into anger and resentment against the new Christian groups which are often headed by non-Goans and have a substantial number of outsiders and are considered by the local Catholics as catering for the poor migrant labourers from beyond Goa's borders. Like the above contestation in Siolim there are other such tussles between the dominant Catholic community and the neo-Pentecostals in different villages of Goa. Seul (1999: 564) points out that religion does not cause conflicts between religious groups but it frequently supplies the fault lines along which inter-group identity and resource competition occurs. In the case of the Siolim conflict too issues of ownership of land, notions of insider-outsider, threat to village peace, historical memory and claims over use of public utilities have led to the conflict, that developed on the fault lines of a Catholic-'Believer' (neo-Pentecostal) religious divide. The above conflict has been fought on different terrains and over different spaces and factors like caste rivalry, class equations, family disputes, insider-outsider differences and language and identity politics have played an important role in such conflicts, thus echoing the Foucaultian position that power is not an absolute, universal thing that acts on people and situations uniformly, but is found working in different, multiple sites of social relationships and networks (Foucault 1980 & Dreyfus & Rabinow 1986).

Thus a sociological understanding of the triptych of faith, reason and wisdom entails dealing with sociological issues of stratification,

hierarchy, identity, cultural and regional differences, etc. In the specific case of the neo-Pentecostals in Goa reason and wisdom are employed in the recreation of the New Testament Church as the guiding motif to fashion a distinct religious space that is simultaneously continuous with the Catholic and Hindu faith traditions. In this process of creating & articulating a new form of religiosity, a religious system that is both continuous and distinct from the older mainline religious traditions, the neo-Pentecostals take recourse to a reason that is derived from their understanding of the tenets of the New Testament Church. Similarly the interplay between sacred and profane and its reconfigurations, the recreation of the New Testament Church both as a historical and mystical entity and the selective appropriation and rejection of symbols and discourses belonging to other religious traditions are inspired by the neo-Pentecostal wisdom that they regard as the divine, unchanging, eternal truth which is beyond history and culture, but which can also be adapted to meet the temporal, market-driven demands of a globalised religious logic.

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Notes

1. The population analysis is taken from various Censuses & other books like *Censo da Populacao...* 1903, 1916; *Anuario Estatistico*, 1950, 1955; Census of India, 1991, 2001; Christovam, Pinto, 1882; J. N. Fonseca, 1878.
2. Interview with Pastor Saji.

3. Book of Acts in the Bible cite several instances of conflicts between the Christians and Jews.
4. Acts 15
5. Deuteronomy 5:8-9, from the Bible.
6. See "Popular Religiosity and Syncretic Practices in Goa-Western and Eastern Influences" by Savio Abreu in Acharya & Mata (eds.), *St. Francis Xavier: His Times and Legacy*. The word "Zagor" comes from the word 'zagran' which means night vigil. It is a nocturnal vigil of the deity in honour of the village protector (*Raklmo*), locally known as *Zagorio*, for the protection of the village from every evil. The Zagor is a night long dance-drama which has no continuous plot or narrative and is performed in Siolim village on the first Monday after Christmas. It is unique since both Hindus and Catholics jointly participate and organise the celebrations, the most notable manifestation of syncretic popular religiosity in Goa.
7. Transubstantiation according to Catholic theology means essential change. This doctrine teaches that at the time of consecration in the mass, the substance of bread and wine, by the power of God, changes into the substance of Jesus' body and blood, while the empirical realities of bread and wine as phenomena remain.
8. Space comprises of a synthesis of physical, mental and social spaces. Place implies only the physical aspect of space, while territory involves the idea of ownership, jurisdiction and boundary.