

Mission in a Hybridised World: The Experiences of Christian Migrants from India and Sri Lanka to Australia

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Globalisation is a significant 21st century issue requiring missiological engagement. Contemporary communication and transport technology have enabled people, information, ideas, and other elements which shape individuals and societies to cross the globe and encounter each other to an unprecedented degree. Increased international migration is one expression of contemporary globalisation. This migration has created diasporas – communities of people who identify, in various ways and to varying degrees, with multiple societies: their native land; their new home; and other co-diasporans locally and internationally. These diasporans become cultural hybrids – they are subject to social forces which shape them, as individuals and communities, in various ways, and which are variously experienced as beneficial or detrimental.

This paper is an element of the presenter's PhD research into how cultural hybridisation has affected Christians of an Indian and Sri Lankan background who have migrated to Australia. It will use positioning theory – in particular, Nikki Slocum-Bradley's 'positioning diamond',¹ in combination with modified versions of Langenhove and Harre's fourfold classification of positions² and Bamberg's focus on small stories³ – to analyse how Indian and Sri Lankan Christian migrants express the effects of cultural hybridisation in autobiographical interviews. It will then use John Frame's triperspectivalism⁴ to interpret the theological significance of these experiences of hybridisation. It will conclude with suggestions, grounded in this theological interpretation of real lived experience, for ongoing mission and ministry to and by cultural hybrids.

¹ Nikki Slocum-Bradley, 'The Positioning Diamond: A Trans-Disciplinary Framework for Discourse Analysis,' *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* 40, no. 1 (2009).

² Rom Harré and Luk van Lagenhove, *Positioning Theory: Moral Contexts of Intentional Action* (Oxford, Malden, Mass, USA: Blackwell, 1999); Rom Harre, 'Positioning Theory: Moral Dimensions of Social-Cultural Psychology,' in *The Oxford Handbook of Culture and Psychology*, ed. Jaan Valsiner (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

³ Michael G. W. Bamberg, 'Positioning Between Structure and Performance,' *Journal of Narrative and Life History* 7, no. 1-4 (1997); Michael G. W. Bamberg and Alexandra Georgakopoulou, 'Small Stories As A New Perspective In Narrative And Identity Analysis,' *Text & Talk* 28, May (2008).

⁴ John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1987); *The Doctrine of God* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed, 2002); *The Doctrine of the Christian life* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed, 2008); *Salvation belongs to the Lord: An Introduction to Systematic Theology* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P & R Pub., 2006); *The Doctrine of the Word of God* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed, 2010); *Systematic Theology: an Introduction to Christian Belief* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed, 2013); *Theology in Three Dimensions: a guide to triperspectivalism and its significance* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed, 2017). See also the various summaries and engagements with Frame's theology in John J. Hughes (ed.), *Speaking the truth in love: the theology of John M. Frame* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed, 2009).