

PART I

ANALYSIS OF THE PHENOMENON OF
CONTEMPORARY EVANGELICALISM

CHAPTER 1

THE PROTOTYPAL ECCLESIAL FRAMEWORK

1.1. Introduction

Contemporary Evangelicalism is usually construed as a missional movement resorting to interdenominational evangelistic crusades and parachurch organizations. As neo-evangelicalism, it is considered as a reactionary movement against Fundamentalism, resulting in new theological category within the Christian church. But there is something beyond these notions that evangelicals in particular, and the church in general, have missed. Something that if has not been misconceived, could have ushered a second wave of Reformation grander than the first. It could have sparked a conflagration that could have consumed the common fragmentary ecclesiological preconceptions or misconceptions, to pave the way for a new ecclesiological synthesis that is holistic, unitive, and purposeful. Why? Because Contemporary Evangelicalism offers the much needed ecclesial life framework for the church to be truly the church.

Recognition of this notion necessitates the characterization of the historical ecclesiological structure in contrast with the original structure. This characterization is very essential, because it presents a trend toward a synthesizing end result that the

Christian church has been historically missing every time an ecclesiological phenomenon, like Contemporary Evangelicalism, emerges.

Foundational in evangelical theological endeavor is the recovery of what the Bible meant before formulating what the Bible means. For what it means, without the conceptual regulation of what it meant, is oftentimes fashioned according to one's¹ relative peculiarity. A theological peculiarity is then esteemed as the absolute whole without regarding coherence to the much wider and holistic prototypical perspective. This resulted in a Christian theology loaded with all sorts of contradictions, from Roman Catholicism to Protestantism, conservatism to liberalism, deism to theism, fundamentalism to evangelicalism, activism to monasticism, etc. Thus, Christian theology in general and Christian ecclesiology in particular are fragmented and divisive.

There is a need to recover a synthesizing theological model for the Christian church. However, the process of recovering an ecclesiological synthesis is challenging because of the risk of confronting mindsets. But a skeptical disposition is not also an option, for this will undermine the value and efficacy of the Bible as the divinely-ordained revelatory medium. Neither is a status quo stance productive; for the church expecting the parousia of Christ, needs a clear and fuller understanding of the purpose of its existence. The church needs to be purpose-driven. And the purpose should be archetypal rather than accidental. Further, the church as the body of Christ, not as the conglomerate of bodies of Christ, needs an ecclesiological structure that could engender natural, yet deep, ecclesial unity and holism.

¹ That is according to individual theologian, school of thought, denominational preconception, theological focus, or even realities of ecclesial life.

Contemporary Evangelicalism offers an astounding blueprint that could answer the needs of the church in the present time, more than the Reformation answered the needs of the past. This seems a surprising assertion but it is not. When the phenomenon of Contemporary Evangelicalism is analyzed in a holistic sense with due recognition of the Pneumatic operation in the history of the church—it could be seen as the most significant and meaningful ecclesiology ever, since Reformation.

However, Contemporary Evangelicalism has also detoured from its original intention. Its embodiment in the form of parachurch organizations and insular categorization within the ecclesial archipelago are alternate routes. Why? It is because these are not the deepest intentions of Contemporary Evangelicalism. What is it all about and what it is intended to be will be unfolded in this work.

In coherence with evangelicalism's bibliocentric epistemology; it is proper to consider foundational the biblical framework in every evangelical theological construction. Thus this part will start with the direct analysis of the New Testament ecclesial life-structure, whose significance will be seen in the backdrop of subsequent theological viewpoint enriched by literary research. Further, because of the historicity of evangelicalism, i.e., the usual recognition of its phenomenon as deriving from its historical precedence; it is also proper to note the features of preceding ecclesial movements. Understanding the deepest intent of evangelicalism, necessitates discerning the implications of the emergence of varieties of ecclesiological characteristics in different times, from the New Testament model; to Reformation, Pietism, Puritanism and

Awakening movements; then, Contemporary Evangelicalism. These will be shown in the following chapters.²

1.2. The Prototypal Ecclesial Life-StructureS

The New Testament *ekklesia* has been viewed from varied viewpoints, e.g. from its nature, the systematization of its beliefs, to its being an institution, to its rituals, to its socio-political role, etc. However, varied fragmentary formulations have been propagated resulting in restrictive ecclesiologies. An aspect of the church is usually over-focused, overshadowing the whole picture of the church. The consequence is not only divergent but also conflicting ecclesiology, polarizing the one body of Christ and threatening its spiritual, internal, and functional unity and witness.

An option that tends towards synthesis and holism is a biocentric ecclesiological approach, i.e., seeing the church from the overall perspective of ecclesial life. Life here means the life structure of the church as the result of believers' act of congregating. The *ekklesia* was not a product of a theoretical formulation, but a spontaneous consequence of believers' act of congregating because of common life experiences. The preoccupations of the early Christians were things practical not things mystical or philosophical. They were concerned about the reality of human life in the context of the Messiah that has come. Even when confronting Roman, Greek, or other crossbreds philosophies; their message was always biocentric rather than philosophical. Their preoccupation was the proclamation of the Gospel so that people could repent, accept Jesus as their personal

² The subsequent chapters on the Pre-Reformation church to the Awakenings are not intended as in-depth historical or theological study but as *directional overviews*.

Savior, and live a new life. Faith for them was not solely propositional, i.e., just a subject to be discussed; but biocentric, i.e., something that concerns life.

John's use of the "Word" (*logos*) was never meant as an exposition of a Gnostic mystical philosophy, for he concluded:

So the Word became human and lived here on earth among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the only Son of the Father. John pointed him out to the people. He shouted to the crowds, "This is the one I was talking about when I said, 'Someone is coming who is far greater than I am...'" We have all benefited from the rich blessings he brought to us—one gracious blessing after another.³

The phrasal-vocabularies "became human," "lived here on earth among us," "John pointed him out to the people," are not expressive of something esoteric and hypothetical but something John experienced as actual and real that affect the life of humanity. It is a realistic biocentric theological outlook, rather than a speculative one. The phrases "full of unfailing love and faithfulness," and "we have all benefited from the rich blessings he brought to us" signify life-concern.

So is Paul's mention of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in believers in 1 Corinthians 3:16. The context is a practical-relational concern over jealousy and quarrel which indicates unholy attitude ("controlled by sinful desires") symptomatic of distorted relationship with Jesus ("acting like people who don't belong to the Lord").⁴ Thus Paul warned them of divine judgment ("God will bring ruin upon anyone who ruins this temple")⁵ as a consequence of unholy and church-fragmenting squabble inconsistent with the holiness of God. The discourse here is not about the mystical embodiment of divine being in human nature; but a reference to holiness in the context of ecclesial life-concern.

³ John 1:14-16. *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1996). Subsequent biblical quotations are taken from this version.

⁴ 1 Corinthians 3:3

⁵ *Ibid.*, 3:17.

This is also true of Paul's use of the "body of Christ" metaphor. 1 Corinthians 12 gives a clear picture of its metaphoric, yet practical, use for relational issues confronting the church. There are three points that need to be noted here:

1. Paul's figurative use of the "body" (*soma*) in relation to the church is not conjunctive of Greek, or other ancient philosophies. There is no Pauline or other New Testament indication of the existence of a transcendental entity, tagged *ekklēsia*, independent of the believers' congregation, into which believers esoterically come into and lodge. Why? This leads to the next point.
2. The "body" is simply an ecclesiological metaphor of the ministerial relationship that exists in the church. This may seem a demeaning of the "body of Christ" for theologians who are preoccupied with somatic ecclesiology. But the recognition of the "body" as just one of the many metaphors of church life⁶—places this and the rest of the metaphors in their proper use—imageries to illustrate understanding of the dynamics of ecclesial life.
3. The "body" imagery is used to illustrate the vocational unity that should exist amidst diversities in the church. These diversities could be charismatic, i.e., in terms of spiritual gifts, or ethnic, but all are one.⁷ This oneness is not a quality inherent in an independent self-existing entity where believers come into, but the consequence of the believers' Spirit-filled interrelationship

⁶ Giles agrees, "The understanding of the church as the body of Christ, we may agree, is one of the most profound insights of St Paul, but it would seem to be but one metaphor among several he uses—with each one having its own distinctive contribution to the overall picture, and none on its own providing a comprehensive definition of the church." Kevin Giles, *What on Earth Is the Church: An Exploration in New Testament Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1995), 11.

⁷ 1Corinthians 12: 8-11, 28, 13, 27.

ensuing out of Spirit-empowered life. Further, the believers' coming "into" the body at baptism is descriptive of their act of congregating together for "all of... [them] together are Christ's body."⁸

Thus, the "body" metaphor of the church is used by Paul to illustrate the importance of smooth interpersonal relationship that should exist in the church. But what is the purpose? Unitive and smooth interpersonal relationship was needed in the fulfillment of the "different kinds of service in the church."⁹

This practical biocentricity is not an occasional idea in the New Testament, but a pervasive overall ecclesiological structure of ecclesial life. It is obvious from Pauline to other letters, and even in Revelation with its usually assumed mysterious backdrop. The letters to the Seven Churches of Asia in Revelation clearly emphasize transformation of ecclesial life. The spontaneous conclusion that could be drawn here is that, the New Testament ecclesiology is practical, and is focused on the life of congregating believers, both individually and congregationally. Moreover, ecclesial life is centered on the believers' life—in terms of their faith in, and witness for, Jesus, and the Pneumatic empowerment of their faith and witness.

Thus, the essential structure of the New Testament ecclesiology could be aptly identified in the locus of ecclesial life-concerns. And these are what are seen as the appropriate components of the prototype ecclesiological framework—a triangle of fideistic life-structure, kerygmatic life-structure, and Pneumatic life-structure. The suitability of this triangular paradigm can be recognized even with the following brief exposition.

⁸ Ibid., 12:13, 27.

⁹ Ibid., 12: 5.

The Fidestic Life-Structure¹⁰

The fidestic life-structure of the New Testament church is composed by a triad of binary constituents, e.g., belief and identity, spirituality and fellowship, and commemoration and worship. These binary triads are foundational constituents, because the whole fidestic life-structure would collapse with the absence, discordance, non-functionality, and/or dissection, of one from the rest of the constituents. Why? Because this tells something about the ontology of church, which common ecclesiology have either overlooked or subconsciously ignored—the church is not a fragment, nor could be profoundly meaningful when seen from its fragment.

a. Belief and Identity

Paul succinctly emphasized the foundational belief of the church, “I have had one message for the Jews and Gentiles—the necessity of turning from sin and turning to God, and of faith in our Lord Jesus.”¹¹ Christocentric regenerative faith is the only way to salvation. It also needs to be noted that the anticipated salvific teleological state is not a phantom life, but a real life reminiscent of the primal state the Creator ideally designed for humanity, i.e., a life of perfect divine-human interconnectedness. That was a life where humans do not turn to sin; or in the context of the Fall, a life where humans are turning from sins and turning to God. Thus even the fidestic *telus* is hardly mystical but realistic.

Faith here comes with conviction and enlightenment that the original condition of human life designed by the Creator-God is the best suited for humanity. Regeneration is

¹⁰ By this I mean the Faith Life-Structure of the church.

¹¹ Acts 20:21.

the process of restoring that primal life. And that it could be restored through no other means except faith in Jesus Christ. Further, this Pauline pronouncement, emphatic as it is, is neither expressive of theoretical or creedal affirmation,¹² nor of a mystical preoccupation, but of deep-seated faith focused on regenerative life with Jesus.

Paul's faith pronouncement is reflective of Christ's pronouncement of the necessity of regeneration, and regeneration as beyond human capability. Christ declared:

I assure you, unless you are born again, you can never see the Kingdom of God...The truth is, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of the Spirit. Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives new life from heaven.¹³

Here we find the Christological and Pneumatological foundations of the belief structure of the New Testament believers. Without Christ there is no salvation. Without the Holy Spirit there is no conversion. The role of God the Father, of course, is not ignored for biblical faith is always Trinitarian. However, with due recognition of the Trinitarian faith; the incarnate God, Jesus Christ, is the overarching center of Christian faith. He is the gateway to salvific eschatological realization.

When a trembling human fearful of his life asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Paul and Silas replied, "Believe on the Lord Jesus and you will be saved..."¹⁴ The first phase of that "saved" condition is the regenerative life. The final phase would be completed and perfected in the *eschaton*. The final phase without the first, though how chronologically brief¹⁵ will not complete the salvific process. However, at the outset, the

¹² Panneberg, et al., call the church "a community of faith and not of doctrine." Wolfhart Pannenberg, Avery Dulles, and Carl Braten, *Spirit, Faith, and Church* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970), 25-26.

¹³ John 3:3-6.

¹⁴ Acts 16: 30-31.

¹⁵ As long as it is qualitatively true.

salvific process could not begin without passing through the Christological port. Christ is the only means to salvation.

This Christocentric soteriological faith-declaration,¹⁶ at times in the history of Christian church, has been blurred by ecclesial institutionalism or dogmatism. The church created by the Holy Spirit is supposed to be Christocentric, i.e., its life is supposed to be reflective of the primacy of Christ.¹⁷ The ecclesial systematization of beliefs is supposed to be soteriologically Christocentric—propagating faith in Jesus that result in the in Pneumatically empowered regenerative life.

The first mass declaration of the core belief of the New Testament *ekklesia* was clearly preached by Peter—the crucified and risen Jesus is “both Lord and Messiah.” And when the deeply convicted people asked, “Brothers what should we do?” Then Peter replied:

“Each of you must turn from your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”¹⁸

Shown in this soteriological kerygma are the three prototypal structures of the New Testament ecclesial belief-framework:

1. The necessity of regenerative life, i.e., the necessity of being “born again.”

¹⁶ Conzelmann describes the concise and apparent faith structure of early believers, “Their faith is summarized in short, easily remembered clauses. Two types of these emerge. In the first type, the faith is formulated personally, as an expression about the nature of Jesus: ‘Jesus is the Messiah’ ... In the second type, the formulation is substantive in character, an expression about the work of salvation: ‘God has raised Jesus from dead’ ...” Hans Conzelmann, *History of Primitive Christianity*, trans. John E. Steeley (Nashville, TN: Abingdon), 45.

¹⁷ Thielicke points out, “All the NT statements about the essence of the church rest on this kind of reference, i.e., to the identity of Jesus and Christ.” Helmut Thielicke, *The Evangelical Faith*, ed. & trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1982): 209. Thus the church is not self-existing nor self-identifying—its existence and identity are derived—derived from Christ. Christ’s headship is not just in the sense of dominion but also, at the outset, in the sense of origination.

¹⁸ Acts 2:36-38.

2. The necessity of being baptized in Jesus' name, or as in Pauline pronouncement, "faith in the Lord Jesus," i.e., "acceptance of Jesus as personal Savior"—publicly declared through the rite of baptism.
3. The consequence, as corollary to the acceptance of Jesus as personal Savior and experience of regenerative life, the "receiving of the gifts of the Holy Spirit," i.e., the empowerment of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers.

This belief-structure is situated in the general picture of God calling humans, as fallen creatures having radically distorted something original and necessary in their life, to come "out of darkness into his wonderful light"¹⁹ and personally avail his salvific offer. Eventually, those who respond to the gospel call would congregate into a "called out" people—the *ekklesia*. The salvific need is answered by the fidestic response—the personal volitional response to experience new birth, to accept Jesus as the Savior, and be empowered in life by the Holy Spirit.²⁰

Thus, the proper characterization of the prototypal belief-structure is gospel-faith, i.e., evangelical faith.²¹ The gospel-faith is focused on a universal biocentric concern, i.e., the salvific need of humanity. The faith proclamation is calculated to cause personal response to the gospel, i.e., to personally experience regenerative life, personal faith in Jesus, and be personally empowered by the Holy Spirit. People who responded to the gospel call consequently congregate as one body of believers—the church. Thus in this

¹⁹ 1Peter 2:9.

²⁰ Conzelmann says this to say about the common life of early believers, "The common life was formed out of self-awareness of the believers, the look backward to the resurrection of Christ and the founding of their beliefs, the forward look to his early 'return' in judgment, and the experiencing of the Spirit." Conzelmann, *History of Primitive Christianity*, 48. Conzelmann here notes of the early Christians' early expectation of the parousia which for a number of biblical theologians is characteristic of the common NT eschatological expectation.

²¹ Neff points out, "As *evangelical*s, we begin this enterprise with the gospel itself." David Neff, "Inside CT," *Christianity Today* 43 (January 14, 1999): 5.

sense, the prototype church was evangelical—evangelical in its faith and in its constituents. By evangelical, I mean truly gospel-oriented.

Their ecclesial evangelicality was not characterized by isolationism but by active kerygmatic life. Believers congregated for three reasons:

1. Because they have common faith.
2. Because they need to nurture and encourage one another.
3. So that they could be equipped to witness both in their exemplary lives and proclamation.

God called them “out of darkness into his wonderful light” so that they “can show others the goodness of God.”²² Thus they were both evangelical believers and evangelical missionaries. Since Antioch they were identified as Christians, and their Christianity was truly gospel-oriented—Christocentric faith, Pneumatically empowered life, and kerygmatically active.

b. Spirituality and Fellowship

The nature of the New Testament ecclesial spirituality was never a harmony of the mysticism of its situated culture; where spirituality was a transcendental or extraterrestrial preoccupation overshadowing, if not beyond, the essentialities of pragmatically transformative lifestyle, supportive and missional act of congregating, verbal proclamation, spiritual-moral modeling, and humanitarian service. Thus for James:

If you claim to be religious but don't control your tongue, you are just fooling yourself, and your religion is worthless. Pure and lasting religion in the sight of God our Father means that we must care for orphans and widows in their troubles, and refuse to let the world corrupt us.²³

²² 1Peter 2:9.

²³ James 1:26-27.

The practical and pragmatic²⁴ nature of ecclesial spirituality is indicated here; “controlling the tongue,” so that it would not destroy other’s reputation and threaten the smooth interpersonal relationship in the congregation. This tested one’s religiosity. And humanitarian service too, reflective of Christ’s ministry of compassion, is acknowledged as test and practical application of faith. The practical notion of ecclesial spirituality is herein indicated.

Although the *telus* of Christ’s incarnational ministry was the salvific substitutionary death confirmed by his aseitic resurrection, yet his teachings and exemplification of regenerative life and acts of love are obvious. An everyday life, lived based on Christocentric teachings of love, is the essence of Christian spirituality. The religion of Jesus is a practical religion. It was never intended as mere esoteric enlightenment or an illusory mystical devotion. The Sermon on the Mount and the rest of Jesus’ teachings were essentially about practical life-concerns—regenerative lifestyle in contrast to the prevalent distorted culture.

Perhaps it could be conjectured that James faith perspective is isolated and not expressive of the overall New Testament frame. However, this conjecture is tantamount to disregarding the internal coherence of Biblical teachings. But, of course, the coherence of James’ practical and biocentric spirituality perspective is readily noticeable in Pauline and other letters, in addition to the abundance of Christological Gospel discourses. Paul reminded the believers:

Live no longer as the ungodly....They don’t care anymore about right and wrong, and they have given themselves over to immoral ways. Their lives are filled with all kinds of impurity and greed. But that isn’t what you were taught when you

²⁴ I say practical and pragmatic because of the concerns on practical matters of life and the validity of their faith was tested by the resultant everyday life practices.

learned about Christ. Since you have heard all about him and have learned the truth that is in Jesus, throw off your evil nature and your former way of life, which is rotten through and through, full of lust and deception. Instead there must be a spiritual renewal of your thoughts and attitudes. You must display a new nature because you are new person, created in God’s likeness—righteous, holy, and true.²⁵

Note these points:

1. The teachings and learning’s about Christ were hardly hypothetical discourses but teachings and learning’s, i.e., truths, about regenerative way of life. It was biocentric rather than philosophical.
2. Righteousness, holiness (orthopraxis), and truthfulness (orthodoxy) were hardly transcendental but instead were realistic exhibits of life, i.e., exhibits of living a regenerated life.²⁶ Their faith on Christocentric orthodoxy was validated by their Christocentric orthopraxis. This is not quite an ascetical or monastic spirituality but a practical and life-centered spirituality.

The subsequent phrases support these points: “put away all falsehood and tell your neighbor the truth because we belong to each other,” “don’t sin by letting your anger control you,” “stop stealing,” “begin using your hands for honest work, and then give generously to others in need,” “don’t use foul or abusive language,” “be kind to each other,” “follow God’s example in everything you do,” “live a life filled with love for others following the examples of Christ.”²⁷ These characterizations of life is reflective of an evangelical way of life.

²⁵ Ephesians 4:17-24.

²⁶ As Mudge points out, “the Church of Jesus Christ is called to be a community of faith-full moral discourse and practice.” Lewis S. Mudge, *Rethinking the Beloved Community* (Geneva: WCC, 2001), 191.

²⁷ Ephesians 4: 25-5:2.

Devotion to Christ is not a mystical self-centered devotion,²⁸ but an everyday regenerative life, like the life Jesus lived on earth. Paul correlated an immoral way of life to the bringing of “sorrow to God’s Holy Spirit” who guarantees salvation on the day of redemption.²⁹ This is indicative that salvific faith and spirituality is not constituted by mere mental assent, but by an assimilation of a whole new way of life³⁰—regenerative life in Christ empowered by the Holy Spirit. Such Christocentric Pneumatically empowered life has both individual and interpersonal consequence congregationally shaping the life of the *ekklesia*. Thus fellowship in this sense is not only casually social, but socio-spiritually regenerative.³¹

This regenerative spirituality creates a socio-spiritual nature in the believers’ soul engendering humanely fulfilling congregational *koinonia*³² and societal service.³³ These two features of regenerative social life are constituents of the life of both the called out individuals and the congregational church. Thus the *ekklesia* is to live both for its congregation and also for the world—the *ekklesia* is both a pastoral and missional congregation.

²⁸ Thus Green has this to say about the early Christian piety, “For the Christian’s [early Christian’s] separateness from non-Christian society must not be overstressed. They did not live in a ghetto, and through regarded with suspicion by some, they had friends and relatives among their pagan neighbors.” Vivian Green, *A New History of Christianity* (New York: Continuum, 1996), 12.

²⁹ Ephesians 4:30.

³⁰ Mudge concludes, “In the end we are talking about an entire theonomous pattern of life—the whole fabric of justified, reconciled human existence—which the gospel calls into being in the world.” Mudge, *Rethinking the Beloved Community*, 192.

³¹ Hitchen comments, “The church is made into a *koinonia* or living fellowship through the Holy Spirit.” John M. Hitchen, “What It Means to be an Evangelical Today—An Antipodean Perspective—Part Two—An Antipodean Perspective,” *Evangelical Quarterly* 76 (January 2004):110. Martin agrees, “The ‘shared life’ depends primarily on God who by his Spirit joins the separate believers together.” Ralph P. Martin, *The Family and the Fellowship: New Testament Images of the Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 45.

³² Giles comments, “Luke [in Acts] intimately connects conversion and communal life.” Giles, *What on Earth is the Church*, 77.

³³ Thus Gelder, although taking the concept of ecclesial sociality further, thinks, “The church is a social community, a community made up of people who are reconciled with God and one another.” Craig Van Gelder, *The Essence of the Church: A Community Created by the Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000), 108.

Thus ecclesial spirituality is a life lived for one another in the congregation and for the world.³⁴ Believers are fellowshiping to interpersonally nurture their personal and congregational spiritual and missional lives. Thus ecclesial spirituality is both personal and kerygmatic piety. Here again could be seen an evangelical paradigm of spirituality and fellowship, i.e., spirituality and fellowship intended as a gospel-oriented life.

c. Commemoration and Worship

The ascension of Jesus created a synthesis of commemorative-celebrative sentiment and *parousiatic* expectation among believers. This synthetic ambiance engulfed the believers as they fellowship in the Lord's Supper. The *koinonia* of the Lord's Supper was meant to be a sacrificial reflection,³⁵ *parousiatic* anticipation, and redemptive proclamation. Paul writes:

For this is what Lord himself said, and I pass it on to you just as I received it. On the night he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is given for you, Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, he took the cup of wine after supper saying, "This cup is the new covenant between God and you, sealed by the shedding of my blood. Do this in remembrance of me as often as you drink it." For every time you eat this bread and drink the cup, you are announcing the Lord's death until he comes again. So if anyone eats this bread or drinks this cup

³⁴ Burrige concludes, "Thus the early Christian spirituality was rooted in fellowship—a 'community' or 'sharing together' in the life of God through the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 13:14)." Richard Burrige, "Jesus and the Origin of Christian Spirituality," in *The Story of Christian Spirituality: Two Thousand Years, from East to West*, ed. Gordon Mursell (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2001), 28. He further adds, "Thus the spirituality of the early church also held together the relationship between prayer and practical actions, individual devotion and corporate fellowship, sacramental acts and scriptural study..." Ibid., 29-30.

³⁵ Martin sees the, "contemporizing of his [Christ's] sacrifice and thanksgiving and renewed participation" as "what the communion service is all about." Martin, *The Family and the Fellowship*, 79. Regarding the distinct significance of both the Lord's Supper and baptism, he emphasizes, "Most importantly, both ordinances are the kerygma in action. That is, baptism and the Lord's table bring into focus God's salvation history in a way that could not be said of other 'ordinances,' however valuable they appear to be." Ibid. McKinion, considering the early Christian documents, sees a similar view, "Baptism and the Eucharist were both deemed important to the life of the community. The former was the means of initiation. The latter was a key component in the continued development of the behavior and a central element in Christian worship." Steven A. McKinion, ed., *Life and Practice of the Early Church: A Documentary Reader* (New York: New York University Press, 2001), 5. For a sacramental view of the communion, see Charles Gore, *The Body of Christ: An Enquiry into the Institutional Doctrine of Holy Communion*, rep. ed. (London: John Murray, 1931).

of the Lord unworthily, that person is guilty of sinning against the body and the blood of the Lord. That is why you should examine yourself before eating the bread and drinking the cup.³⁶

The integration of personal and interpersonal features of ecclesial spirituality makes the commemorative act as both personal and congregational.³⁷ The personal spirit of participants is determinant of the communal spirit; thus Paul necessitates personal examination as requisite of participation. The integrity of personal spirit is necessitated because the efficacy of the commemorative act is not in itself mechanically inherent in the rite, but rather dependent on personal spirituality spontaneously engendering congregational spirituality.

Further, although the commemorative act is essential in the fellowship structure of the *ekklesia*, yet it was not designed as a substitutionary means for personal and congregational Pneumatological regenerative life process. Neither was it designed as a soteriological mechanism, because the process of salvation is only realized through repentance from sins, faith in Jesus Christ, and conversion of the Holy Spirit. The prototype ecclesial celebration of the Lord's Supper was not even an intensely solemn rite, but a socio-spiritual event with socio-humanitarian backdrop. As a socio-spiritual act it was celebrated with good social-etiquette, i.e., not hurriedly done without sharing food to others who are hungry, and not to the disgrace of the church and embarrassment of the poor.³⁸

³⁶ 1Corinthians 11:23-28.

³⁷ McKinion notes of the Lord's Supper described in early documents, "Often small groups would join together in homes to partake of the bread and wine. By sharing communion with one another, believers expressed their common faith and their membership within the Christian community. Only baptized members of the community were allowed to participate in the rite." McKinion, *Life and Practice in Early Church*, 99.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 11: 21, 22.

The sacramentality of commemorating the Lord's Supper does not reside in the rite *per se*, but in the spirit of the celebrants.³⁹ The New Testament model was not even in the form of an institutionalized rite that we now have. In the fact the celebration of the Lord's Supper was rather homely than churchy. Luke accounts, "They worshipped together at the temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with joy and generosity—all the while praising God"⁴⁰.

This may seem a desacramentalization of the Lord's Supper, but the emotive piety behind its participation could not be equated with salvific charism. The emotive piety could only have salvific significance if it leads the participants to a deep communion with Christ, engendering true acceptance of Jesus as personal Savior resulting in regenerative life. This is an evangelical approach to ecclesial rites.

The called out ones, the *ekklesia*, worshipped at the temple, and celebrated the Lord's Supper in homes. The celebration of the Lord's Supper was then, not more of a ritual than, to use our modern church cliché, a potluck. But it was a potluck with socio-spiritual grounding formed by a spirit of Christocentric commemoration, celebration, and eschatological expectation. It was a dinner in honor of Jesus Christ. The difference between a secular honorary dinner and the Lord's Supper is that; in the Lord's Supper, the physical presence of the honoree was both reminisced and anticipated, although there is a spiritual sense of his presence.

The correlation of Acts' and 1Corinthians' descriptions of the celebration of the Lord's Supper as socio-humanitarian, is denoted by the words "sharing" and "generosity".

³⁹ Regarding church rites Bloesch has this to say, "Its own rites and ceremonies have little value except when they are used by the Spirit to instruct and edify the saints, that is, those who believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior." Donald G. Bloesch, *The Church: Sacraments, Worship, Ministry, Mission* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002), 24.

⁴⁰ Acts 2:42.

The sharing of meals was an intended fellowship means for the haves to share meals with the have-nots in the spirit of Christ's love. Though it was an essential feature of the believer's *koinonia*-structure, yet it was not a rite overriding the other essential structures of faith, like emphasis on personal faith in Jesus, regenerative life, gospel proclamation, baptism, and humanitarian concern.⁴¹ The prototypal ecclesial life was a balanced and synthetic life. Ecclesial life was not just centered on a commemorative act; although such commemoration plays a role in ecclesial life. Thus ecclesial rites were not regarded as means of salvation but as avenues for reconnecting believers to Jesus.

Acts accounts for a wider perspective of ecclesial life structure, "They [the three thousand baptized] joined with other believers and devoted themselves to the apostles' teachings and fellowship, sharing in the Lord's Supper and in prayer."⁴²

A quadrilateral devotional life could be seen here. A devotion to:

1. Apostolic teachings
2. Congregational fellowshiping
3. Socio-humanitarian sharing of the Lord's Supper
4. Prayer, which was most probably interpersonal

The salvific response of believers, these devotions, and the missional exigency are the causative factors in the phenomenon of the *ekklesia*. Because people responded to the gospel call, they congregate to meet their spiritual needs, enabling them to fulfill the Gospel Commission. Herein we see the evangelicality of the prototype *ekklesia*. The evangelicality of its fellowship also shapes the evangelicality of its worship.

⁴¹ Thus Ferguson remarks, "The gift which Christians offered in their worship were not only the spiritual sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving but also the physical goods necessary to relieve human needs." Everett Ferguson, *Early Christians Speak: Faith and Life in the First Three Centuries*, 3rd ed. (Abilene, TX: ACU, 1999), 207.

⁴² 2:42

Worship was not sacramental or liturgical per se, but kerygmatic, i.e., proclamatory of the gospel; thus, teaching, fellowshiping, celebrating, and praying. It proclaimed the salvation in Christ and celebrated the new life in Christ. Worship was Christocentric, i.e., congregating for the purpose of nurturing faith in Jesus, commemorating the substitutionary death of Jesus, celebrating the salvific victory Jesus did for humanity, praying for the Pneumatic empowerment in living the regenerated life in Jesus and in fulfilling the mission for Jesus.⁴³

Faith and spirituality are not inherent in the church service per se, but are consequences of the dynamics of personal experience with Jesus enriched by Christocentric Pneumatically enlivened interactions while worshipping God. Spiritual life is neither institutionally generated nor individually fulfilled but interpersonally caused. The regenerative individual divine-human relationship effect a regenerative social interrelationship. The resultant regenerative interrelationship eventually recreates a regenerative congregational reconciliation of the lost human creatures with the Creator-God. Worship in this sense is neither ecclesiocentric, nor lonely, nor mechanical; but biocentric, spiritually interpersonal, and spontaneous. There are a lot of implications here, but suffice it to say, that the institution of *ekklesia* is not, per se, the entity that births worship. Rather it is the congregation of regenerated believers, who by its spontaneous act of congregating, that gives natural birth to nurturing fellowship and holy worship of God.

⁴³ Lebacqz further comments, “The purpose of worship is not only to strengthen us for the tasks ahead, but to remind us of the *meaning* of these tasks.” Karen Lebacqz, *Word, Worship, World, and Wonder: Reflections on Christian Living* (Nashville, TN: Abindon, 1997), 68.

The Kerygmatic Life-Structure⁴⁴

The parting words of the ascending Christ was of utmost importance and is appropriately called the Great Gospel Commission. Matthew accounts:

Jesus came and told his disciples, “I have been given complete authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and makes disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach the new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of age.”⁴⁵

The believers were called to fulfill the Great Commission. The vocation of the 11-member embryonic *ekklesia* was neither an ascetical preoccupation nor merely pedantic, but as in the Matthean account, evangelistic and biocentric. The *ekklesia* was called to make disciples of Christ and to teach the disciples to live like Christ. In the paradigm of the Great Commission, the *ekklesia* is not seen not as a static institution waiting for people to come in, but as a dynamic missional congregation of disciples.

The two other Gospel accounts of the Great Commissioning could further explicate the theological framework of the embryonic *ekklesia*.

The Markan account states:

...he appeared to the eleven disciples... and then he told them, “Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone, everywhere. Anyone who believes and is baptized will be saved. But anyone who refuses to believe will be condemned. These signs will accompany those who believe. They will cast out demons in my name and they will speak new language. They will be able to handle snakes with safety, and if they drink anything poisonous, it won’t hurt them. They will be able to place their hands on the sick and heal them.”⁴⁶

The Lukan account says:

And he said, “Yes it was written long ago that the Messiah must suffer and die and rise again from the dead on the third day. With my authority, take this

⁴⁴ By this I mean the witnessing life-structure of the church.

⁴⁵ Matthew 28:18-20.

⁴⁶ Mark 16:15-18.

message of repentance to all nations, beginning in Jerusalem: ‘There is forgiveness of sins for all who turn to me.’ You are witnesses of all these things. And now I will send the Holy Spirit, just as my Father promised. But stay here in the city until the Holy Spirit comes and fills you with power from heaven.”⁴⁷

These three accounts are not diverse but complementary accounts defining the kerygmatic structure of the church.

a. Mission and Evangelism

What is the mission of *ekklesia*? The aforementioned Gospel accounts compatibly complement each other. Matthean account is emphatic of discipleship which is a process of realizing the fidestic life structure in people who responded to the salvific call. But it should be noted that disciple-making was commissioned to those who are already disciples, i.e., the eleven disciples. This implies that discipleship is both fidestic and kerygmatic. The disciples are to live in a regenerated life and proclaim the gospel, both in communication and exemplification. Discipleship is not merely intended as a theological education but as a development of biocentric faith, i.e., fidestic formation meant to change life.⁴⁸ Thus the ecclesial mission is not solely academic but biocentric and teleological, i.e., focused on changing lives in the context of the *parousia*. In the framework of the Great Commission, the church is seen not as mere repository of dogma, an information center, or a mystical entity. But as a vocational school where people are taught about the practice of regenerated life, and as a missional agency that evangelizes people.

⁴⁷ Luke 24:46-49.

⁴⁸ As Harrison points out, “Though the word *disciple* means ‘learner,’ its genius does not lie in the intellectual realm but in the area of devotion and sacrifice.” Everett F. Harrison, *The Apostolic Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 122.

The church is a tangible congregation of believers whose mission is to propagate a regenerative life structure amidst a degenerative life structure of the world.⁴⁹ The ecclesial mission is about making the lost human creatures believers of the Creator and of his ideals of the recreated life—thus disciples of Jesus.

In Markan account, the kerygmatic and charismatic features of the Great Commission are emphasized. The mission of the church is to proclaim the gospel. And those who respond to the gospel will not only be saved, but will also be vocationally empowered by the Holy Spirit. The proclamation poses either soteriological or judgmental consequence, depending on response of the hearers. However, salvation or judgment is not the prerogative of the church, but rather a consequence of a fidestical volitional reception of Christ. Christological acceptance, not ecclesiological acceptance, is the focus of the mission of the church. In fact the ecclesiological formation is just a consequence of kerygmatic response. The church per se is not the essence of the gospel, the essence of the gospel is Jesus. In this sense, baptism is not denominational but Christological. Those who are to be baptized are those who believed on Jesus as their personal Savior, not those who want an ecclesial membership per se. Although church membership become a spontaneous consequence.⁵⁰ This evangelical practice of baptism is common in evangelical crusades;⁵¹ although, ironically, may not be so common in

⁴⁹ Thus as the Carmody's say it, "The church is by definition counter-cultural whenever its primary values of faith, hope, and love contradict the operative values of a given culture." Denise L. Carmody and John Carmody, *Bonded in Christ's Love: An Introduction to Ecclesiology* (New York: Paulist, 1986), 7.

⁵⁰ Thus Harrison puts it this way, "In acts and in the epistles baptism is presented as the rite by which those who have put their faith in Christ are inducted to the church. No doubt it was considered to be a fulfillment of the requirement of confessing him before men—not in an exhaustive sense of course, but rather as a first step." Harrison, *The Apostolic Church*, 122.

⁵¹ As in the early church, Coppedge writes, "In the Great Commission, baptism seems to represent the culmination of the whole process of outreach." Allan Coppedge, *The Biblical Principles of Discipleship* (Grand Rapids: Francis and Taylor, 1989), 115.

so-called evangelical denominations. Furthermore, charismaticity here is not regarded as a sacrament or affirmation of a soteriological realization, but as empowerment for resultant personal regenerative life and public missional life.

The Lukan account summarizes the missional, kerygmatic, soteriological, and charismatic component of the Great Commission. Here the message of repentance and forgiveness of sins (a message prominent in evangelical crusades); and the anticipation of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (conspicuous in Pentecostalism) are highlighted. The accentuation of “you are witnesses” stresses that the kerygmaticity of *ekklesia*, i.e., the church’s mission is both to proclaim and exemplify before the world its Christocentric faith.

But what is the relationship of mission and evangelism? In the paradigm of the Gospel Commission, the mission of the church is characterized as evangelical, i.e., gospel-oriented. The church’s mission is to preach the necessity of conversion and acceptance of Jesus as personal Savior, and living a new life empowered by the Holy Spirit. Mission is the intention and evangelism is the action. Evangelism is not about a religious institutionalization of a secular world, nor an expansion of a religious institution. It is the proclamation of the salvific Christological message with the intention of pervasively making disciples of Christ. Evangelism, in the context of the Great Commission, is not about a quantification of ecclesial institutional growth per se, but a qualification of people for the Kingdom of God. As such, evangelism is not denominationalistic, i.e., it is not intended for the expansion of a denomination, or merely a denominational effort but of all professing Christians. It is intended to prepare people for the Kingdom. And the mission is the mission of both individual believers and the

church as a whole. Thus appropriately, evangelism should be a transdenominational effort rather than denominational, for the evangelistic content and the focus is always the Christocentric gospel not denominational doctrines. In this sense, evangelism is truly gospel-oriented, or in other words, evangelical.

b. Life and Proclamation

Witnessing for the New Testament believers was holistic, i.e., both a communication and an exemplification. They witness for Christ both in their proclamation and life modeling.⁵² As McKinion points out:

Christians attempted to convert their neighbors and others through evangelism, or the personal proclamation of the teachings of Christ. They did this not simply by sharing the message of Jesus but also by living a life that demonstrate their own conversion.⁵³

The foci of witnessing were both the message and the life of believers; the kerygmatic and martyrial were inseparable.⁵⁴ In fact, martyrdom is the proclamation and life of faith so rooted that enforcement of sufferings and death could not sway a witness to unfaithfulness or denial of faith.

Witnessing in the sense of martyrdom reveals two essential features of prototypical kerygmatic-life structure, e.g., profound commitment to the gospel proclamation and way of life deeply rooted in the gospel proclaimed. In fact, the New Testament Greek etymology of witnessing is barely verbal but declarative of both the message and the life

⁵² Green points out, "It was the life-style of the early Christians which most distinguished them from their pagan contemporaries. Ideally, belief in Jesus Christ had a life-changing dimension." Green, *A New History of Christianity*, 9.

⁵³ McKinion, *Life and Practice in the Early Church*, 115.

⁵⁴ Gruder speaks of the inseparability of the *kerygma* and *martyria*. "The *kerygma* is the verbalization of the event that has called forth this community.... To separate the *kerygma* from *martyria* of the Christian church is to make the gospel into propositions to be affirmed rather than to understand it as the opportunity to know God in a personal and life-transforming relationship, called faith, and then to serve his purposes." Darrell L.Guder, *Be My Witnesses: The Church's Mission, Message, and Messengers* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 50.

lived because of the message.⁵⁵ Further, the kerygmatic model of the New Testament is biocentric rather than propositional. As Paul emphasized, “For the Kingdom of God is not just fancy talk; it is living God’s power.”⁵⁶ The consequential fidestic way of life is integral in witnessing.

Furthermore, ecclesial witnessing was never passive and static but active and dynamic. The *ekklesia* did not proclaim the gospel just within the confinement of its infrastructure.⁵⁷ The church went to proclaim the gospel amidst the crowd. It was not a waiting church, it was a going church. It went where people were and served where people were.⁵⁸ Neither was the *ekklesia* preoccupied with fancy talks, as in speculative dogmatic engagements but with life-concerns—propagating a life of faith amidst the faithless world.⁵⁹

Thus Paul, believing himself as a cosmological specter-believer (“a specter to the entire world—to people and angels alike”)⁶⁰ testified:

I discipline my body like an athlete, training it do what it should. Otherwise, I fear that after preaching to others I myself might be disqualified.⁶¹

⁵⁵ *Vines Concise Dictionary of Bible Words* defines *martus* as “those whose lives and actions testified to the worth and effect of faith.” Mudge points out, “Faith and ethics together are a single spiritual reality which cannot be adequately expressed by either of those two terms alone.” Mudge, *Rethinking the Beloved Community*, 192.

⁵⁶ 1Corinthians 4:20.

⁵⁷ In fact the prototype *ekklesia* was truly a movement rather than an institution confined within its infrastructure. Of course, it would be naïve to propose a non-institutional church in the context of global society that has evolve into complexities necessitating societal institutions. But the purported conceptual intent here is that the church to be truly prototypal should transcend its institutional confinement and be truly gospel-oriented, missional, and transdenominational.

⁵⁸ Frost and Hirsch have this to say, “The missional church...is a sent church. It is a *going* church, a movement of God through is people, sent to bring healing to a broken world.” Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come: Innovation and Mission for the 21st-Century Church* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003), 18.

⁵⁹ Regarding the church as a way of life, Clapp writes, “Church is a way of life lived not with the expectation that Christians, through managerial arts or sudden heroism, make the world right. It is instead a way of life lived in confidence that God has, in the Kingdom of Christ, began to set the world right—and that someday Christ will bring his Kingdom to its fulfillment.” Rodney Clapp, *A Peculiar People: The Church As Culture in a Post-Christian Society* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996), 200.

⁶⁰ 1Corinthians 4:9

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 4:27.

A coherent kerygmatic life is requisite of a coherent kerygmatic message.

In the pattern of the Gospel Commission the trustees were already disciples; this points out the primacy of convertive life before missional function. The believers should first experience Christ and live Christ-like life before they evangelize. This is a common evangelical model. Ecclesiologically, this means that the church should first live the gospel before it proclaims the gospel. Thus spiritual renewal is requisite of missional revival. At present, there is a serious need for global ecclesial renewal before there could be a global evangelistic explosion. This is paradigmatic of evangelical missional strategy.

The Pneumatic Life Structure⁶²

The commissioning of the embryonic *ekklesia* was done at the ascension of Christ and the ecclesial empowerment was inaugurated at the descension of the Holy Spirit. The Day of Pentecost marked the beginning of a missional era.⁶³ It was the evangelistic activation of *ekklesia*,⁶⁴ whose life has been spiritually prepared through fellowship, prayer, and oneness in spirit, life and purpose. In the context of the Old Testament “called out ones,” the “ecclesial entity” did not fulfill its mission. It became ethnicized, statically institutionalized, and even soteriologically exclusivistic. The intent of their vocational call was marred and had deteriorated into a religio-ethnic cultism. Because of its missional failure, the Old Testament “called out ones” failed in its missional vocation and had ceased its true ecclesiality. Thus it could not be accounted as church.

⁶² By this I mean the empowerment of the Holy Spirit in the life of the church.

⁶³ As Grenz emphasizes, “the coming of the Spirit marked the inauguration of a new era, the age of the mission of the church.” Stanley J. Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994) 368.

⁶⁴ Looking at the Pentecost as formative of the church Harrison comments, “It was just impossible, that the church could have been formed before Pentecost as it was impossible that it should not have been formed after that date.” R.K. Harrison, “Church,” in *The New Unger’s Bible Dictionary*.

Although the Great Commission was entrusted to the eleven disciples, yet at Pentecost, all the called out ones were empowered and were preaching. This implies that the mission of the church does not belong to an elite clique but to all believers. The church at its missional inauguration was not sacerdotal but evangelical. The life of the church was focused not on priestly ceremonies, but focused on faith and life in Jesus, and the proclamation of the gospel.

The Pentecostal phenomenon, “predicted centuries ago by the prophet Joel,”⁶⁵ could have been fulfilled to the Old Testament “called out ones.” However, its vocational failure consequently resulted in the forfeiture of the ecclesial Pneumatic empowerment; and the eventual calling of a new non-ethnic, spiritually and gospel-oriented entity—what is to be more truly called the church.

Further, at Pentecost the church is not seen as a dispenser of spiritual power, rather as an instrument of spiritual power for the fulfillment of the Gospel Commission. Thus the spiritual power of the church is not inherent in itself, but derived; it is dependent on Holy Spirit. Furthermore, the Pentecostal phenomenon reveals that the Holy Spirit is both the source of life and the one who directs the church. This is an important point because it reminds the church that ecclesial phenomenon within the framework of the gospel, should be regarded as Pneumatic operation rather than just an institutional reaction or an accidental event.

The eleven disciples did not see the Great Commissioning as an end in itself but rather a faith-entrustment that needs to be worked out with the availment of the appropriate empowerment. Both Lukan and Markan accounts directly emphasize the

⁶⁵ Acts 2:16.

Pneumatological empowerment factor. In Matthean account the phrase, “I am with you always, even to the end of the age”⁶⁶ is reminiscent of Jesus’ pre-ascension assurance:

I am going away....But it is actually best for you that I go away, because if I don't, the Counselor won't come....if I do go away, he will come...And when he comes, he will convince the world of its sin, and of God's righteousness, and of the coming judgment....he will guide you into all truth.⁶⁷

What happened at the Pentecost was not sacramental per se, although it signified the fulfillment of prophecy. Nor was it ecclesiocentric, although the outpouring was for the congregating believers. It was however missional, kerygmatic, and evangelistic. Missional because it was for the fulfillment of the ecclesial mission; kerygmatic because it was the power behind the proclamation; and evangelistic because through the Holy Spirit people were convicted of their sins, repented, believed and accepted Jesus as their personal Savior.⁶⁸ Empowered by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the believers were enabled to: live their faith in Christ, proclaim their faith in Christ, and witness for Christ. Only through the Holy Spirit could the church fulfill its purpose. Without the Holy Spirit, the *ekklesia* would just become a conglomerate of likeminded people forming a sort of social club, which may have a societal role to play but with no universal soteriological significance. Suffice it to say that the New Testament, especially the Pauline letters, is replete with charismatism. However, it should be noted that the charismatization of the church⁶⁹ was not intended for self-centered purpose. It was intended as the empowerment of the fidestic and kerygmatic life structures of both individual believers and the ecclesial congregation.

⁶⁶ Matthew 28: 20.

⁶⁷ John 16:5-13.

⁶⁸ Thus Jesus is the object of faith, the Savior; and the Holy Spirit is the power, the Transformer.

⁶⁹ That is, the Holy Spirit's bestowment of gifts and Pneumatological ecclesial empowerment.

Further, a respondent believer could not be regenerated through mere pedagogical, sacramental,⁷⁰ or liturgical means. The washing of sins is only through Jesus, and the bestowal of new life is only through the Holy Spirit.⁷¹ Thus living a regenerated life is living a “new life in the Holy Spirit,” and the fruits of such regenerated life are the produce of the operation of the Holy Spirit in a believers’ life.⁷²

However, the receipt of spiritual gifts is not seen as a signification of conversion per se, as if receipt of a vocational spiritual gift is indicative of the realization of a regenerative life; although the Holy Spirit spontaneously indwells in a truly converted believer. The Pneumatic indwelling is a spontaneous consequence of a Christocentric fideistic response. Receipt of the Holy Spirit for the empowerment of personal regenerative life should be distinguished from the receipt of spiritual gifts for missional purpose. Thus Paul explained:

Did you receive the Holy Spirit by keeping the law? Of course not, for the Holy Spirit came upon you only after you believed the message you heard about Christ.⁷³

Charismatic gifts are intended, not for personal salvific verification but, for congregational ministry, i.e., “a spiritual gift is given to each of us as a means of helping the entire church.”⁷⁴ Moreover, these gifts are not inherent in the church itself or in individuals composing the church, for only “the Holy Spirit...is the source”.⁷⁵

⁷⁰ Regarding the sacramentality of life, Lebacqz has this to say, “God’s grace is not limited to baptism, marriage, Eucharist, death, or ordination, but infuses all of life. All of life, therefore, has the potential to be sacramental. Indeed, all of life should be lived sacramentally—as an outward and visible sign of an inward grace. Lebacqz, *Word, Worship, World and Wonder*, 68.

⁷¹ Titus 3:5.

⁷² Galatians 5:16, 22.

⁷³ Ibid., 3:2.

⁷⁴ 1 Corinthians 12:7.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 12:4.

The primal recognition of the Pneumatic empowerment as both a personal regenerative and a ministerial necessity is central in evangelical structure of faith and witness.

1.3. Conclusion

To conclude, *the prototypal ecclesial life framework was biocentric in concern, Christocentric and Pneumatic in structure, and gospel-oriented in outlook. It was a balance and synthesis of the whole fideistic, kerygmatic, and Pneumatic structures.*

But whatever happened to this prototypal ecclesial life framework, is a history of blunders in, and challenges for, the Christian church. However, it is in this backdrop of ecclesiological blunders and challenges that the meaning and intention of Contemporary Evangelicalism could be found.

CHAPTER 2

THE DEFORMATION AND RE-FORMATION OF THE PROTOTYPAL ECCLESIAL LIFE-STRUCTURE

2.1. The State of the Pre-Reformation Church

Whatever happened to the church after the apostolic time was a confluence and compounding of a complex of inter-relational-spiritual disintegration; non-Christian religious, philosophical, social, cultural, and political threats and accommodations resulting in syncretism and misdirected preoccupations; the eventual breakdown of the archetypal ecclesial life framework; and the substitution of the prototype with a structure more reflective of a socio-political institution than the New Testament ecclesial life structure.¹ As the church continued to grow institutionally, it continued to transform its structure from a faith-based design to a secular societal-based mold.² On the one hand, the situated societal milieu including political usurpation, economic exploitation, moral disintegration, and secularism became conspicuous in the life of the church. On the other

¹ Cairns notes how far the medieval church has departed from the ideal of the New Testament. Earle E. Cairns, *Christianity Through the Centuries: A History of the Church*, 3rd rev ed (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 271.

² Thus Chadwick identifies one of the “inner contradictions in Western Christianity” in the 1500’s, “the Church held up the Bible as the source of truth. But it taught various doctrines that no one could find in the Bible.” Owen Chadwick, *A History of Christianity* (New York: St Martin’s, 1995), 196.

hand, an extremist ascetic reaction became an alternate form of spirituality. The balanced faith-base mission-oriented gospel-centered structure of ecclesial life was deformed.

The following are the characteristics of the ecclesial life-structure of the pre-Reformation church:

A. The Fidestic Life-Structure

1. The cross had become a mere sentimental, if not a sort of fetish object. The obvious centrality of the person of Jesus Christ as the only means to salvation was overshadowed. Gospel-oriented soteriology was deformed.³ Salvation had become a superficial institutional regulation. Salvific Christocentricity had been clouded by an institutionalized ecclesiocentricity. The Bible has either been ignored or manipulatively interpreted.⁴ Faith had become institutional rather than deeply Christological, so was the Christian identity. The cross had even become a symbol of Christendom's territorial conquest. Faith became a dogmatic ecclesiological assent, rather than, essentially, an acceptance of Jesus as the only personal Savior resulting in a regenerative life empowered by the Holy Spirit.
2. Spirituality and fellowship, on the one hand, had become ritualistic and formal rather than regenerative and spiritually interpersonal. On the other hand,

³ Gonzalez remarks, "But it was not only at the moral level the church seemed to be in need of reformation. Some among the more thoughtful Christians were becoming convinced that the teachings of the church had also gone astray." Justo L. Gonzalez, *The Reformation to the Present Day*, vol. 2, *The Story of Christianity* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1985), 7. Chauna also emphasizes a departure from Christocentric to ecclesiocentric soteriology of the pre-Reformation church, "With the system of Indulgences. Everything rested on the Church, to which God had delegated his power." Pierre Chaunu, "The pre-Reformation Climate," in *The Reformation*, ed. Pierre Chaunu (New York: St. Martin's, 1986), 56.

⁴ Chaunu notes, "The Church had the key to Scripture to which it alone knew and which it scarcely troubled itself about any more." Ibid.

spirituality became an ascetical monastic absorption⁵ devoid of nurturing and supportive *koinonia*; thus, deforming the balance of fideistic and kerygmatic ecclesial life-structure.

3. The commemorative act and worship had become no more than occasionally emotive without engendering an everyday transformative way of life. The Lord's Supper was even made into a sort of socio-ecclesiastical control distorting the kerygmatic vocation of the church. The celebrative and socio-humanitarian aspects of the Lord's Supper were substituted by a notion of its being an institutional soteriological instrument. The fideistic life-structure of the pre-Reformation church was de-evangelicalized.

B. The Kerygmatic Life-Structure

1. Mission and evangelism had been made synonymous with, at times inhumane power and territorial expansions,⁶ coercion to Christianity, exercise of ecclesiastical authority with self-claimed soteriological connotation, and exclusive terrestrial claim of the extra-terrestrial Kingdom of God resulting in erection of huge and magnificent infrastructures into which people could be called from to come into a sort of Kingdom center. Although there was indeed sweeping missionary conquest, however, the conquest "raised the

⁵ Logan notes, "The defining form of Christian spirituality from at least the late eleventh century was the monastic life. Christians wishing to strive for spiritual perfection, would be told to leave the world and enter a religious community." F. Donald Logan, *A History of the Church in the Middle Ages* (London: Routledge, 2002), 341.

⁶ Chaunu notes this missional disorientation, "From the eight century onwards, the idea of mission imperceptibly gave way to a kind of crusade before the event. A colonizing Christianity, a conquest at once cultural, spiritual and at times political and even military, developed in the north to the east." Pierre Chaunu, "A long exodus," in *The Reformation*, ed, Chaunu, 33.

problem of baptism without a real experience of faith.”⁷ The focus on converts’ “genuine experience of salvation” was overshadowed by the preoccupation on “wholesale acceptance of Christianity”⁸ for the expansion of Christendom. In fact, civilizing the world was defined in terms of “Christianizing” the world. That is, a religio-political assent to the symbol of the cross, without deeper personal experience with Jesus Christ, for the purpose of territorial subjugation.

2. Individual gospel-oriented life and proclamation were obscured by ecclesiastical regulations, so that even the lives and proclamations of missionary groups were defined according to their respective group focus, rather than gospel per se.

C. The Pneumatic Life-Structure

1. With the disintegration of the prototypal fideistic and kerygmatic structures in the life of both individual believers and the *ekklesia* as a whole; spiritual empowerment had been reframed from Pneumatic structure to ecclesiocentric self-claimed institutional power. The Pneumatic ecclesial life empowerment was substituted by the power of political influence, wealth, societal belief-manipulations. Congregational spiritual empowerment and life had become ecclesiastical and institutional, losing its rootedness in Christ and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit.

⁷ Cairns, *Christianity Through the Centuries*, 174. Thus Green characterizes baptism in the medieval period, “For many converts act; and their understanding of their new found faith may have been little more than a transposition of what they really believed as pagans now placed within a comparatively crude framework of Christian beliefs.” Green, *A New History of Christianity*, 51.

⁸ Ibid.

Phillips and Okholm point out, “During the Middle Ages the church became an integral part of society, indistinguishable from the world.”⁹ Ferguson agrees of this state of the church even early on the Medieval Age, “By the end of the fourth century the line between the church and the world was becoming blurred.”¹⁰ And Clark, both of Pontifical Gregorian University and Oxford’s Heythrop College, points out the deformation in the late Medieval Age, “The defects attributed to late-medieval Catholicism fall into two categories: in the first are practical abuses and superstitious observances connected with the altar; in the second, errors in doctrine and belief about the nature of the Mass.”¹¹ Thus as Cairns notes, “Protestant historians considered the Middle Ages the valley of shadow in which the pure church of the ancient era of church history was corrupted.”¹² The church was drifting into secularism and was losing its faith-factor, kerygmaticity, and integrity as a congregation of the called out ones. Thus *the prototypal ecclesial-life structure in the pre-Reformation church was essentially deformed*. Thus, there is an urgent need for reformation. Gonzalez asserts, “As the fifteenth century came to a close, it was clear that the church was in need of profound reformation, and that many longed for it.”¹³

⁹Timothy R. Phillips and Dennis L. Okholm, *A Family of Faith: An Introduction to Evangelical Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 167. As Markus notes the, “Church and empire were fused in a single entity; the empire was an image of the heavenly kingdom, its boundaries the limits of Christendom...” Robert A. Markus, “From Rome to the Barbarian Kingdoms (330-700),” in *The Oxford Illustrated History of Christianity*, ed. John McManners (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 70.

¹⁰ Fergusson, *Early Christians Speak*, 197.

¹¹ Francis Clark, *Eucharistic Sacrifice and the Reformation*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967), 56.

¹² Cairns, *Christianity Through the Centuries*, 160.

¹³ Gonzalez, *The Reformation to the Present Day*, 6. Dixon also affirms such reformation need, “On the final decades of the fifteenth century the state of the Church had become a matter of great urgency. Moreover, it was clear that the issues would multiply if the Church did not accept the need for reform.” G. Scott Dixon, *The Reformation in Germany* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 18. Although Dixon does not see the church that time as radically corrupt, yet ironically he still sees the issue of urgency in the state of the church.

However, the pre-Reformation church could not be characterized as *in toto* corrupted. For after all, it had also spread Christendom. Perhaps, in a sense, its political exploitations contributed to the survival of Christian civilization that could have been wiped out by opposing non-Christian powers. The church struggled to live in a wipe or be wiped out socio-political milieu. It did have its failures, particularly on the essentials of Christian Faith. And had it been more faithful to its archetypal design, probably it could have expanded in ways and consequences unexpected in history.

The pre-Reformation church was intended to gain societal foothold to further fulfill its kerygmatic vocation. However, the church misinterpreted the dynamics of ecclesial life situations, and was engrossed in politics and materialism. It mistranslated kerygmatic vocation as political.

However, in spite of its failures, and recognizing the Pneumatological directions in the history of the church, Berkouwer could still say that, “Development under the divine direction was continuous even in the Middle Ages.”¹⁴ This recognition is essential in understanding the phenomenon of succeeding ecclesial movements, and eventually Contemporary Evangelicalism.

2.2. The Emergence of the Reformation Movement

At the outset, Protestantism before becoming an ism, was intended, not as a separatistic denominationalism but, as a reformation of the whole church because of the deteriorating prototypal ecclesial-life framework. As Spickard and Cragg point out:

The Reformation was a complex, multifaceted response to the church

¹⁴ Ibid.

experience of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Many Christians realized that the Church was simply not serving the spiritual needs of the people. It had become corrupt, and abuses were widespread.¹⁵

As Berkouwer puts it, “reformation can mean a criticism of a dangerous process of ‘deformation’”.¹⁶

As characterized in the preceding sub-section, the church had been transformed into what it was not more truly meant to be. The syncretistic new ecclesial culture that the church took on overshadowed, if not in the process of obliterating, the Christocentric, Pneumatic, and kerygmatic ecclesiality of the *ekklesia*. The *ekklesia* was becoming, not a congregation of kerygmatically called out believers where life is Christocentric and Pneumatically empowered but, a center of religio-political power and exploitation for institutional gains. The gospel was beclouded by religio-political institutional preoccupations. The center of ecclesial life was no longer the gospel of Christ but the ecclesiastical mandate. It was in this overall context that the “Reformers called the church back to the gospel.”¹⁷ Dorrien sees that “Luther and Calvin judged that the gospel message of salvation by faith through grace was obscured, if not fatally subverted, by the paganizing tendencies of the Catholic church of their time.”¹⁸ Thus Grimm remarks:

Luther...developed a new conception of grace that, he believed, did not operate magically and mechanically through the sacraments....God had made this possible by sacrificing Christ on the cross.¹⁹

The focus of Reformation movement could be characterized as an evangelical

¹⁵ Paul R. Spickard and Kevin M. Cragg, *A Global History of Christians: How Everyday Believers Experienced Their World* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1994), 171.

¹⁶ G.C. Berkouwer, *The Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 184.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Garry Dorrien, *The Remaking of Evangelical Theology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster Knox, 1998), 4.

¹⁹ Harold J. Grimm, *The Reformation Era: 1500-1650*, 2nd ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1973), 86. Grimm adds about Luther's concept of grace, “Contrition, which he considered the most important part of the sacrament, resulted in forgiveness without indulgence.” Ibid., 91.

embryo, i.e., back to the gospel-consciousness—the gospel that, in the contradictory situation of ergonomic soteriology; proclaimed the Christocentric *sola fide* or *sola gratia* soteriology, *sola scriptura* epistemology, kerygmatic liturgy,²⁰ and priesthood of all believers. These were the emphases that were left out as the church institutionally expanded amidst secular preoccupations. The emphases that if had been heeded and restituted into the whole ecclesial life framework, could have transformed the church into a truly kerygmatic and missional church; thus, in no manner an ecclesiastical and religio-political institution. As Nash notes, “The Reformation was a needed corrective for what the Reformers saw as errors that had crept into Roman Catholic doctrine and practice.”²¹ The Reformation was originally intended as a reformation *within* the church,²² not as an outside movement of oppositionistic denominationalism.

However, with the misconstruction, if not unresponsiveness, or at worst untoward internal oppositionism, of the church; the Reformation movement within the church failed to reform the one whole church and had to resort to separatistic ecclesial formation. There might have been other factors that caused the untoward oppositionism against Reformation, but probably one of the weighty factors is the Reformation’s attempt to restore the priesthood of all believers. This directly impinged on an ecclesiastical institution that promulgated distinct status categorization (with self-imposed religious, political, spiritual, and even salvific implications) between the laity and clergy. Further,

²⁰ Regarding this, Bloesch comments, “In their reaction against the Latin Mass in which preaching played an insignificant role, the Protestant Reformers placed an emphasis upon the proclaimed Word of God.” Donald G. Bloesch, *The Evangelical Renaissance* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973), 67.

²¹ Ronald A. Nash, *Evangelicals in America: Who They Are, What They Believe* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1987), 50.

²² McGrath comments, “As its name suggests, the sixteenth-century movement was concerned with the ‘reformation’ of the Christian church. Its agenda centered on the need to reform an existing church in a settled Christian cultural context.” Alister McGrath, *Evangelicalism & the Future of Christianity* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1995), 24.

clergy status was reserved to male. As McGrath describes it, “The Reformation doctrine of the priesthood of all believers thus gives every believer, male and female, both the *right* and *means* to ensure that his or her church and pastors remain faithful to their gospel calling—authorizes the people to exercise them if necessary.”²³ And this could mean the laity’s subjugation of ecclesiastical power.²⁴

This and the rest of foundational reformative framework would mean a radical overhaul of the existing ecclesiastical institutional structure that had become the prevalent and pervasive definition of ecclesial life. Such radical revolution drew radical oppositionism that was meant to extinguish the Reformation zeal. The church, instead of imbibing Reformation, rejected it. With the rejectionist stance of the church, the Reformation movement resorted to factionalistic ecclesiology that further fragmented the already schismaticized church. The church then became not only fragmented, but also a competition of contradictory fragments. The one body of Christ was further divided and contradicting. Then the Reformation movement also became entrapped in mundane political preoccupation that eventually also secularized the supposed to be gospel-oriented faith. As Spickard and Cragg point out:

For most Europeans the Reformation led to war. Lutherans fought Catholics in Germany; Calvinists fought Catholics in France, the Netherlands and Scotland; Puritans fought Anglicans in England.²⁵

²³ Alister McGrath, “A Better Way: The Priesthood of All Believers,” in *Power Religion: The Selling Out of the Evangelical Church?*, ed. Michael Scott Horton (Chicago: Moody Press, 1992), 311.

²⁴ Collinson notes, “Negatively, the Reformation entailed various versions of anticlericalism, the urge to reduce the role in society of the clergy and to place limits on the space which priests and other religious persons occupied and the privilege and material rewards which they enjoyed, above all their capacity to overrule the laity.” Patrick Collinson, “The Late Medieval Church and Its Reformation (1400-1600),” in *The Oxford Illustrated History of Christianity*, ed. McManners, 238-239.

²⁵ Spickard and Cragg, *A Global History of Christianity*, 233. They noted though, “In each case religion was but one element in the conflict; social, economic, and political factors loomed large. But the differences in faith provided the quickest and easiest means of identifying the combatants.” Ibid.

With its failure to reform the one whole church, the Reformation movement was transformed into a separatist Protestant denomination (actually denominations); who though at its formative primal stage was Gospel-centered, also subsequently fell into the pitfall of its own dogmatism with its consequent “spiritual coldness and troubling moral implications,”²⁶ and anti-Catholic oppositionism. The Reformation could have had ushered the rebirth of one whole Gospel-oriented church—an evangelical church, at that; but then the Reformation movement was badly regarded and rerouted. Thus the Reformation movement, which was supposed to reform the church and restore it back to its prototypal characteristics, also floundered in two situations:

1. It floundered to reform the church as a whole church and fell into its own separatistic denominationalism.
2. It floundered because it eventually fell into its own new bred of dogmatism and spiritual coldness, and even into political mispreoccupation.

Then, as the result, both the pre-Reformation and the Reformation churches were floundering and further deforming.

However, in spite of the ill-fated attempt of the Reformation movement to transform the one whole church back to its gospel-consciousness, and its eventual resort to separatism and oppositionism; yet, there is something very ecclesiological foundational that is not commonly given notable attention and due recognition in the history of ecclesiology. And this foundational ecclesiological factor is the Pneumatic

²⁶ A phrase used by Dorrien to describe the ecclesial life situations of the sixteenth century Protestantism in which Puritanism and Pietism emerged as reactionary movements. Dorrien, *The Remaking of Evangelical Theology*, 5.

operations in the history of the church. As Hanson aptly reminds:

The Reformation was the work of the Spirit. But the unreformed part of the church was not left without the Spirit's aid. On the contrary, just when the reformed part was settling down to what was eventually to become the routine of the eighteenth Century, the Spirit manifested himself through a series of thinkers and saints.... It almost seems as if when a national church becomes dangerously tied by the bonds of the state the Holy Spirit raises up saints and witnesses to compensate.²⁷

The Holy Spirit continued to work for the restoration of the church back to its prototypal framework; then, Puritanism and Pietism that eventually became the frontier precedents of Contemporary Evangelicalism emerged.

2.3. The Emergence of Puritanism and Pietism

What happened next after the supposedly grand Reformation of the church is another chapter in the ups and downs of the history of Christian church. However, from Reformation to succeeding phenomena, something could be perceived as a continuous progressive emergence of strands that would eventually become one synthesized phenomenon intended as the evangelicalization of the one whole church.

This thesis may arouse curiosity, if not intriguing questions, but as the phenomenon of evangelical movement is viewed from a holistic and Pneumatological perspective, this thesis could indeed be perceived as what it is intended to be.

In the same way that the pre-Reformation church fell into its own dogmatism, institutionalism, and disintegration of its fideistic, kerygmatic, and Pneumatic structures—so was the church at the aftermath of the Reformation's spiritual peak. The unfortunate dogmatism threatening both individual and congregational spiritual life of believers is described by Nash:

²⁷ Paul D. Hanson, "The Identity and Purpose of the Church," *Theology Today* 42 (October 1985): 235.

Unfortunately, those who followed the Reformers soon fell into their own errors. Protestantism in many places become characterized by a cold, dead orthodoxy sometimes called Protestant scholasticism. This Protestant scholasticism tended to encase the religious convictions of the Reformation only in the hard shell of creeds, assent to which was often made to appear more important than conversion and inward life of the Spirit.²⁸

The bright dream of restoring the church back to its historical life-centered gospel-centricity was collapsing. In the same way that the societal milieu, specifically socio-religio-political, of the pre-Reformation church eventually secularized the church; so was the cultural milieu, particularly philosophical, also secularized the supposedly Gospel-oriented Reformation church. The eighteenth century Enlightenment “made severe impacts against Christianity,”²⁹ and “helped undermine confidence in the Scriptures.”³⁰ Compounding the crises of faith further were: on the one hand, the dogmatism and spiritual coldness in Protestantism; on the other hand, the impact of Enlightenment that led the once bibliocentric movement to pursue Rationalism at the risk of bibliocentricism. The *sola scriptura* epistemology was shaken and substituted by rationalistic epistemology, which, in essence, is individualistic. Then reason rather than faith became primal in theology. The fideistic structure was substituted by rationalistic structure, and the kerygmatic structure by theoretical preoccupations, and the Pneumatic empowerment subsided and even categorized in secular sense.

The Reformation movement then became an ism; and Protestantism in particular, and Christianity in general, were becoming ideologies— religious ideologies rather than a way of life. The ecclesiological concerns were redirected to something merely

²⁸ Nash, *Evangelicals in America*, 50.

²⁹ Rolland D. McCune, “The Formation of the New Evangelicalism (Part One): Historical and Theological Antecedents,” *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 3 (Fall 1998): 7.

³⁰ Nash, *Evangelicals in America*, 50.

theoretical rather than life-concern. And Paul, as aforementioned in the preceding New Testament section, warned against making Christianity a mere fancy talk rather than a life of faith.

The church as a whole was in a crisis of faith, and unless something phenomenal again happen, the church could be in danger of death. Nash dramatically portrays the crisis of faith amidst the cold and dead orthodoxy:

There was a definite need for religious revivals to call people to decision, commitment, and conversion and that would once again stir up the fires of religious enthusiasm...Western Christianity was in need of a second Reformation...not so much of doctrine as one of spiritual life.³¹

Then just at the right time, just before the church succumbed to spiritual death, two related European phenomena, namely, Puritanism and Pietism, with subsequent North American counterparts emerged. In fact, the North American counterparts were called First (1740's) and Second (1790's) Great Awakenings. The Great Awakenings, rippling the wave of the European post-Reformation movements, created another formative circumstance from which the modern day evangelicalism finally emerged full-blown. The European phenomena were other strands of evangelicalism.³² Dorrien pictures the phenomena:

The spiritual coldness and troubling moral implications of Protestant orthodoxy gave rise to the first glimmerings of a different kind of evangelicalism in seventeenth-century England and Germany. In England, Puritans...prefigured a movement away from the creedal intellectualism of Reformed orthodoxy, arguing for a more spiritually integrative understanding of Christian faith...In Germany...Pietists launched a more explicit and far-reaching protest against the spiritual limitations of Lutheran orthodoxy.... [the] movement subsequently

³¹ Nash, *Evangelicals in America*, 50-51.

³² Marsden states the European-American ties of evangelicalism, "Although evangelicalism is largely an Anglo-American phenomenon, its origins give it ties with European Protestantism." George M. Marsden, "Evangelical and Fundamental Christianity," in *The Encyclopedia of Religion*.

recovered dimensions of the biblical witness pertaining to spiritual regeneration and sanctification that engendered a new kind of evangelicalism.³³

Further Dorrien specifies that “later, the evangelical followers of John Wesley and George Whitefield lifted up the biblical themes of holiness, good news, and new life in the Spirit.”³⁴ But this was an attempt to evangelicalize the Protestant church or protest against it, without the obvious focus on evangelicalizing other churches or the one whole Christian church. Thus the Reformation aimed to reform the Catholic Church, then Puritanism and Pietism aimed to transform the now tagged Protestant church—holistic ecclesiological concern was left out.

McGrath sees Puritanism as a “deep concern for spirituality.”³⁵ Fulbrook describes the Puritan’s concern, “Underlying all Puritan activities was the concern to achieve an adequate preaching ministry, capable of bringing the means of salvation, the Word of the Lord, to all who heard.”³⁶ McCune sees Pietism as:

... a protest against Protestant scholasticism, especially German Lutheranism. Pietism emphasized Christian experience, inner feeling, the individual’s personal relationship with God, and high religious idealism. It was a strong reaction to rigid, dead orthodoxy.³⁷

But in basically, Puritan and Pietistic movements were intended to restore the Protestant church back to its Gospel-centeredness, but this time focused on the experiential aspect of faith. As Shelby emphasizes:

The Pietists admired Luther and tried to return to his original emphasis on the gospel. They argued, however, that the state church in Germany was of little help in spiritual venture. The state church had preserved Luther’s doctrine of

³³ Dorrien, *The Remaking of Evangelical Theology*, 5.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ McGrath, *Evangelicalism & the Future of Christianity*, 24.

³⁶ Mary Fulbrook, *Piety and Politics: Religion and the Rise of Absolutism in England, Wurttenburg, and Prussia* (England: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 106.

³⁷ McCune, “The Formation of New Evangelicalism (Part One):” 5.

justification by faith by freezing it in creedal statements. What men and women needed most was the regenerating life of the Spirit; they needed to experience justification personally.”³⁸

Thus as Gonzalez remarks, “Pietism was a response to the dogmatism of the theologians and the rationalism of the philosophers, both of which it contrasted with the living faith that is at the heart of Christianity.”³⁹ Pinson describes in more detailed way the nature of Pietism:

...emphasis on a more practical Christianity. Learning was not sufficient. Purity of life, saintliness of behavior, active Christianity came to be regarded as the most essential mark of Christian life. It is this which accounts for the stress of Pietists on prayer, for their development of welfare and philanthropic works, and for their great missionary activity throughout the world.⁴⁰

The Puritan and Pietistic movements provided answer to the deteriorating biocentric framework of the church. However, although the emphasis was more of spiritual experiential life, but also corollary to the Pietistic and Puritan movements is the revival of the missional aspect of the church. The church was being evangelicalized and was evangelizing.

However, like the Reformation movement, unfortunately Puritanism and Pietism also eventually fell into its own pitfalls of isms. Lovelace notes: “Puritanism was leaning toward ascetic legalism as it sought to compete with counter-Reformation piety and to create a distinctive spirituality that would rule out cheap grace.”⁴¹ The ascetic tendency redirected Christian life to something extramundane, resulting in a new form of spirituality bordering in a sort of Christian mysticism—that were not characteristic of

³⁸ B.L. Shelby, “Evangelicalism,” in *Dictionary of Christianity in America*.

³⁹ Gonzalez, *The Reformation to the Present Day*, 203.

⁴⁰ Koppel S. Pinson, *Pietism as a Factor in the Rise of German Nationalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1934), 14.

⁴¹ Richard F. Lovelace, “Evangelical Spirituality: A Church Historian’s Perspective,” *Journal of Evangelical Theological Society* 31 (March 1988): 30.

archetypal spirituality. Ironically though, while Lovelace characterizes Puritanism as falling into ascetism, Grimm notes the secularization of Puritanism in England:

By the middle of seventeenth century, however, state necessity began to supersede every other consideration and practical expediency to replace religion and moral objectives.

In England, where the Parliament had maintained its party with the monarchy, the same tendency toward secularization made its appearance. Puritanism, a dynamic religious force, became identified with parliamentarianism and the interests of the rising merchant class.⁴²

Thus, where the pre-Reformation church fell into the lure of political power, so was Puritanism. And the backlash of Pietism in its extreme form was absorption on religious life that “gave very little attention to self-conscious Christian thought.”⁴³ Such negative inclination to the works of mind impacted the formation of anti-intellectual denominations.

Puritanism and Pietism was intended to revive another aspect of the original ecclesial life-structure; however the phenomena were again misunderstood, and eventually Puritanism and Pietism⁴⁴ fell into legalism and a sort of Christian ascetism. Thus not able to reform the church as a whole, or even just the Protestant church, and falling into its own pitfalls; like Reformation it resorted to a separatistic ecclesiology. Thus the Reformation, Puritan, and Pietist movements were intended to bring about the *re-formation of components* of ecclesial life-structure that were deformed in the pre-

⁴² Grimm, *The Reformation Era*, 416. Fulbrook agrees, “But by the 1630s, Puritanism had become politically salient; and by the early 1640s, it played a key role in the opposition to attempted Stuart absolutism.” Fulbrook, *Piety and Politics*, 102. Herein lies the danger of church treading into political realm in its attempt to societally dogmatize its theologico-moral theoretical formulations. The church moral responsibility should remain within the boundary of its kerygmatic responsibility, and not beyond to the domain of political usurpation.

⁴³ Mark A. Noll, *The Scandal of Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids: Eedrmans, 1994), 49.

⁴⁴ Thus the *Westminster Dictionary of Church History* considers evangelicalism as a reaction to Pietism, it states, “evangelicalism began as a movement within Western Christianity in the 18th century...as a reaction to the rigid orthodoxy of...Pietism.” S.v. “Evangelicalism.”

Reformation era but they were not regarded in the context of holistic prototypal restoration.

However, the Pneumatic operation in the history of the church did not end there. It continued to the rise of Contemporary Evangelical movement that made global impact, but still has to synthesize the various strands of evangelical heritage into a framework of holistic ecclesiology for the restoration of the prototypal ecclesial life-structure. And this is what this study is attempting to present.

CHAPTER 3

THE EMERGENCE AND INTENT OF CONTEMPORARY EVANGELICALISM

3.1. The Frontier Precursors¹

British Puritanism and German Pietism were brought to the frontier America. Puritanism was particularly zealous on shaping a Puritan America amidst a rapidly secularizing society. However, it was in the context of spiritual apathy and antipathy against a Puritan state religion that the frontier spiritual awakenings, or the Great Awakenings² as they were called, emerged. Phillips and Okholm describe the emergence of the First Great Awakening of 1735-1750, “It was in this context of stale religion and spiritual apathy in Puritan New England (as well as in the Anglican South) that a revival swept through all of the colonies, striking all classes of people.”³

The focus of revival had become personal rather than societal per se, i.e., the transformation of individuals rather than the transformation of society into Christendom.

¹ For a discussion on the emergence of North American evangelicalism as a frontier movement; see Mark A. Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism: The Age of Edwards, Whitefield and the Wesleys* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003).

² For a historical study on the Great Awakening; see Joseph Tracy, *The Great Awakening: A History of the Revival of Religion in the Time of Edwards and Whitefield* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1976). For a collection on the Awakening writings see Alan Heimert and Perry Millers, eds. *The Great Awakening: Documents Illustrating the Crisis and Its Consequence* (Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill, 1967).

³ Phillips & Okholm, *A Family of Faith*, 241.

As Shelby notes, “The revivalists of the Great Awakening, like the Puritans, preached the necessity of an invisible transformation of the soul, but they no longer dreamed of establishing a holy commonwealth as the Puritan Fathers did.”⁴

Grenz comments on the emergence of frontier evangelical revival:

...committed to the primacy of the new birth, early evangelical leaders...bemoaned the nominalism they found in the established churches of their day. In their estimation such churches were filled with persons baptized by water but bereft of the regenerative work of the Spirit...⁵

However, in spite of the Awakening movement, by the 1780's religious interest significantly dwindled with an estimate of only 5 to 10 percent of the colonial population attending church.⁶ The pervasive spiritual sustainability of the First Great Awakening could have had been threatened by secularizing factors. But probably one of the considerable contributing factors to the significant spiritual dwindling, in spite of the Awakening's massive proliferation, could have been the movement's Calvinistic trend that propagated spiritual passivity.

Then, the Second Great Awakening of 1790-1820 emerged. The emphasis of the Second Awakening as Grenz indicates:

...shifted from the sovereignty of God (the Puritan Calvinist 'waiting on God in Edwards and Whitefield) to the human role in salvation—a democratic, Arminian, active seeking and coming to God. Conversion and holiness came to be seen as matters of individual choice more than divine action.⁷

It “helped to establish a peculiar brand of American Christianity that involved an active seeking of salvation; it was pro-revival, individualistic, and pietistic.”⁸

⁴ Shelby, “Evangelicalism.”

⁵ Stanley J. Grenz, *Renewing the Center: Evangelical Theology in a Post-Theological Era* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2000), 291.

⁶ Phillips & Okholm, *A Family of Faith*, 243.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 244.

⁸ *Ibid.*

Bock distinguishes the two Awakenings while pointing out the European heritage and elements of the American frontier movements:

While the first Great Awakening was largely Calvinistic, in the Second Awakening evangelism and pragmatics were wed, along with a pietistic Methodism.... Revivalists not only preached the gospel but also were moved to social concern (called ‘moral reform’ then) for the poor, slaves, women and finally temperance.⁹

The Second Awakening propagated an active type of Christian Faith in the American frontier—it was both spiritually and socially active. The two Great Awakenings, as well as succeeding revival movements, when viewed in the perspective of the historical the Pneumatic operations, are not in themselves contradictory but complimentary. As Horton sees it, “In the first Awakening, the emphasis is on what God has done; in the Second, on what man can and must do.”¹⁰ The Awakenings were intended to revive the spiritual life of the laity. However, these spiritual awakenings were consequently regarded as mere emotionalism, and the Awakenings also fell into its own pitfall of societal insignificance. But in spite of its struggles, the Awakenings gave birth to a culture of spiritual revivalism. However, though its personal regenerative and salvific significance are emphasized, yet its unitive and synthesizing ecclesiological significance were overlooked.

Now, leaping to the modernistic period, come another reactive movement which other historians considered as the direct descendant of Contemporary Evangelicalism, and was even confused with each other.

⁹ Darrell L. Bock, *Purpose-Directed Theology: Getting Our Priorities Right in Evangelical Controversies* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002), 44-45. Thus Sweet points out that. “Evangelicalism stands as the most powerful social and religious movement of the nineteenth-century America.” Leonard I. Sweet “Nineteenth Century Evangelicalism,” in *Encyclopedia of American Religious Experience*.

¹⁰ Michael Scott Horton, *Made in America: The Shaping of Modern American Evangelicals* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991), 41-42.

3.2. The Formal Emergence

When the frontier America became modern, along with technological modernization came a worldview that threatened the *sola scriptura* epistemology of Christian Faith. Science was becoming the norm of faith instead of the practical and spiritually-oriented reading of the Bible. Marsden depicts the reactionary and polarizing atmosphere created by the tug-of-war between secularists and conservative Christians. The secularists “cautiously hoped for an age of prosperity and progress built on science and wealth.”¹¹ While the conservative Christians sensed that “the nation seemed to be slipping into secular dark age, a decline that spokesmen for ecclesiastical liberalism seemed all eager to bless.”¹²

Christians who were enthusiastic of imbibing secular modern approach to Christian Faith became Liberals; and as such began to lose, not only, the spiritual emotive aspects of Christian life, but also the original characteristics of fideistic, kerygmatic, and Pneumatic structures of ecclesial life. Ironically compounding the predicament of the church was the emergence of neo-orthodoxy that though supposedly was an effort to restore theological orthodoxy but, still lacks the wholeness of the prototypal structure of missional zeal and experiential faith. With the onset of modernism and theoretically-engrossed evangelistically-uninterested neo-orthodoxy, the church was falling into irrelevancy¹³ and spiritual death; almost falling back into a new form of spiritless state similar to that of the pre-Reformation age. Nash warns the serious threat of a highly

¹¹ George Marsden, ed., *Evangelicalism and Modern America* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), vii.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ McCune notes, “Modernism and neoorthodoxy have no true evangelism and consequently their churches and denominations wither into irrelevancy.” Rolland D. McCune, “The Formation of the New Evangelicalism (Part Two): Historical Beginnings,” *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 4 (Fall 1999): 133.

secularized character of Liberalism, “Liberalism was a religion without a personal God, without a divine Savior, without an inspired Bible, and without a transforming conversion.”¹⁴

As a reaction of concerned and conservative Christians, Fundamentalism emerged. It was a back to the Bible movement, a retrenchment of the *sola scriptura* epistemology. Fundamentalism began as a “reaction to the liberalism that threatened the integrity of the historic Christian faith.”¹⁵ However, it soon became prone to its unfortunate excess;¹⁶ it became literalistic in its biblical epistemological approach; and spiritually, denominationally, and societally judgmental and separatistic, rather spiritually and missionally integrative. Fundamentalism was intended to restore Bible consciousness, to restore the epistemological integrity of Christian Faith. But the church misinterpreted it as revelational narrowness, and ironically, consequently Fundamentalism fell into its own pitfall of questionable approach to bibliocentric epistemology, anti-intellectualism, and doctrinally-imposed judgmentalistic separatism.

Herein, the church is situated in a disintegrative environment; threatened by the spirituality breakdown of Liberalism, the missional idleness of Neo-Orthodoxy, and the theological regression of Fundamentalism. Without a Pneumatic intervention, the church in contemporary time could disintegrate into spiritual, missional, and theological meaninglessness.

After 1925 Fundamentalism lost its respect¹⁷ and by the “mid-1930s the more moderate fundamentalists began to part company with those who were more militant.”¹⁸

¹⁴ Nash, *Evangelicals in America*, 63.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid., 66.

¹⁷ Phillips & Okholm, *A Family of Faith*, 253.

But those who parted perhaps never realized that the beginning of a climactic ecclesial phenomenon was emerging through them. An astounding ecclesial phenomenon that would impact the global community, both the church and society, was emerging—Contemporary Evangelicalism was birthed.¹⁹ And it was born in a global center of power, which though different in form but, with similar socio-political-economic-cultural power status with the Roman Empire where Christianity was first born. The situated realities of life, the venue and timing of its emergence, and its movemental nature tell that the phenomenon is of great significance to the contemporary world.

At the outset, the beginning of Contemporary Evangelicalism seemed small. It may just be seen as a reactionary movement—a movement reacting against the extremes of Fundamentalism that was theologically, ecclesiologically, and missionally stunting. When the moderate fundamentalists parted ways with the militant ones, they organized in 1942 the National Association of Evangelicals. As McCune emphasizes,

With the formation of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) new evangelicalism was conceived if not born. The distinction between ‘fundamentalist’ and ‘evangelical’ was beginning to take shape...²⁰

The formation of the National Association of Evangelicals marked the beginning of two things:

1. The identity formation of evangelical denominations.

¹⁸ Ibid., 257.

¹⁹ For a discussion on evangelical roots see, Kenneth S. Kantzer, ed., *Evangelical Roots: A Tribute to Wilbur Smith* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1970).

²⁰ McCune, “The Formation of New Evangelicalism (Part Two):”109. Ellingsen distinguishes Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism, “Despite the organic interpenetration of the Evangelical movement and Fundamentalism, they are not identical.” Mark Ellingsen, *The Evangelical Movement: Growth, Impact, Controversy, Dialog* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1989), 97. He further clarifies that “as its title *Evangelical* connotes, it is a movement which intends a more constructive and less separatist stance than the posture connoted by the term Fundamentalist.” Ibid. This distinction is also indicated in a compilation of essays edited by Marsden; see George Marsden, ed., *Reforming Fundamentalism: Fuller Seminary and the New Evangelicals* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987). For another discussion see, Harriet A. Harris, *Fundamentalism and Evangelicals* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998).

2. The coming together of denominations that already recognized their evangelicity and those who have realized the significance of transforming themselves into evangelicals.

Then on 1950s Billy Graham²¹ crusades were beginning to catch a wildfire of national and international attention—it rapidly impacted both America and abroad. Since then, the miraculous operations of the Holy Spirit could be seen and experienced crusades after crusades, with unexpected huge national and international converts. People in mass were accepting Jesus as their personal Savior, lives were transformed, churches were joining hands together to fulfill the Great Commission, denominational barriers were broken on ground of common sense of mission, individuals and congregations were revived, America and the world were awakened to Christian Faith in a degree, quality and geographical scope never experienced before since the apostolic time. Mass media and technology were utilized, evangelism became high-tech, a new dimension of evangelism was born. The world was proliferated by Christocentric conversion,²² transformational piety-culture, ecclesial unity, and global missional zeal and breakthroughs. Even places never thought of before from the Communist Russia to China, to secular cities of New York and London, were beyond expectation—receptive to the gospel. The church is becoming more truly evangelical and the world is being evangelized.

To further enrich and widen the movement's impact, *Christianity Today* was founded on 1956 by Billy Graham with Carl F. Henry as the editor. In 1947 Fuller

²¹ Bock emphasizes, “Billy Graham was the acknowledged figurehead of what evangelicalism stood and believed.” Bock, *Purpose-Directed Theology*, 47. McGrath remarks that evangelicalism is “especially associated with the figures of Billy Graham (b. 1918) and Carl F. H. Henry (b. 1913). Both...became disillusioned with fundamentalism...” McGrath, *Evangelicalism and the Future of Christianity*, 38.

²² In contrast to church membership based on mere doctrinal assent or casual church membership.

Theological Seminary was established to further evangelical theology.²³ Parachurch organizations and independent ministries were organized. The sense of Gospel Commission proliferated. Gospel-consciousness and Christ-centered life were revived nationally and internationally. The church is being redirected to biocentric focus with Christocentric and kerygmatic ecclesial life structures Pneumatically empowered. Carpenter concludes, “By the end of the twentieth century...the evangelical forms of Christianity had penetrated every Christian tradition and racial ethnic group in North America”²⁴.

Contemporary Evangelicalism had its brief low tide too, but then it resurged with an even greater, wider, and richer impact. Jimmy Carter, a publicly professing evangelical won the US presidency; profession of faith is no longer hidden in public political life. And in 1976 *Newsweek* dedicated a cover to evangelicalism and tagged 1976 as the “Year of the Evangelicals”. Nash sees its resurgence as “may be the most remarkable and noteworthy event in the United States in the twentieth century.”²⁵

Thus Contemporary Evangelicalism emerged from a seemingly diminutive anti-Fundamentalist movement but eventually became a major missional force in contemporary times. Externally, evangelicalism may be seen as a reactionary movement consequently resorting to interchurch cooperation and parachurch organizations. But these are denominationally unifying missional movements. The parachurch ministry is

²³ For a collection of essays giving an overview of Contemporary Evangelicalism see, Carl R. Trueman, Tony J. Gray, and Craig L. Bloomberg, eds., *Solid Ground: 25 Years of Evangelical Theology* (Leicester, England: Apollos, 2000).

²⁴ Joel A. Carpenter, “The Fellowship of Kindred Minds: Evangelical Identity and the Quest for Christian Unity,” in *Pilgrims on the Sawdust Trail: Evangelical Ecumenism and the Quest for Christian Identity*, ed. Timothy George (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 32. For emergence of evangelicalism in other major countries; see George A. Rawlyk and Mark A. Noll, *Amazing Grace: Evangelicalism in Australia, Britain, Canada, and the United States* (Grand Rapids, 1993).

²⁵ Nash, *Evangelicals in America*, 15.

an embodiment of common missional cause that transcends denominations—and that is what the church should be—the embodiment of common missional cause transcending denominations.

Further, beyond its external characteristics there is a deeper thing about Contemporary Evangelicalism—its inner theological dynamics reveals an astounding phenomenon. As Phillips and Okholm adeptly points out, “Contemporary evangelicalism is recognize as an important spiritual, social, and intellectual force.”²⁶ An analysis of its theological structure would indeed reveal this notion.

3.3. The Theological Structure of Contemporary Evangelicalism

At the outset, modern evangelicalism arose both as a rejection of fundamentalistic theological suppositions and in “reaction to the perceived deficiencies of fundamentalism.”²⁷ From a sociological point of view, Smith categorizes evangelicalism as “the subset of conservative Protestants whose ‘neo-evangelical’ movement break from fundamentalism during the 1940s and after.”²⁸ However, consequently Contemporary Evangelicalism ends up offering the world a wider and richer theological structure that, as could be seen in this section, has significance so great that indeed it could provide a framework for the restoration of the church back into its prototypal design. When its

²⁶ Phillips and Okholm, *A Family of Faith*, 259. Johnston, however, poses a challenge of evangelical survival amidst its popularity; see Jon Johnston, *Will Evangelicalism Survive Its Own Popularity?* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980). A collection of essays edited by Hutchinson and Kalu explores the global cultural issues confronting evangelicalism; see Mark Hutchinson and Ogbu Kalu, eds. *A Global Faith: essays on Evangelicalism and Globalization* (Sydney: Centre for the Study of Australian Christianity, 1998).

²⁷ McGrath, *Evangelicalism & the Future of Christianity*, 41.

²⁸ Christian Smith, *American Evangelicalism: Embattled and Thriving* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 15.

intent is perceptibly heeded, it could lead to an ecclesial reformation more fulfilling than never before experienced in Christian history.

Phillips and Okholm outline the fundamentalistic views that evangelicalism rejected, with the counterpart evangelical provisions for fundamentalist deficiencies:

1. “First, rejecting the defensive separatism of fundamentalists, evangelicals attempted to transform culture by involvement in the world.”²⁹
2. “Second, evangelicals rejected dispensationalism as the only acceptable theological option.... evangelicals consciously embraced a range of theological positions.”³⁰
3. “Third, rejecting social passivity, evangelicals have insisted on active Christian involvement in all segments of society.”³¹

Thus Contemporary Evangelicalism at its formative stage, by reacting to the deficiencies of Fundamentalism, consequently offered the church the basics of Christian Faith that was threatened to extinction, e.g., non-separatist transformational piety-culture, wider and richer yet conservative theological perspective, and societal consciousness bringing about ecclesial societal relevance.

Evangelicalism since the Billy Graham crusades has been prominent in leading missional unity, to the point that denominationalism took on a new meaning from an ism of separationism to the recognition of diverse ecclesial identities as one *ekklesia* united in the common Christocentric missional cause—thus the church as a Christocentric university. Neuhaus reminds the church, “The quality of our life together is part of the

²⁹ Phillips and Okholm, *A Family of Faith*, 258.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 259.

³¹ *Ibid.*

gospel that we proclaim.”³² The rise of evangelicalism gave rise to a viable form of ecumenism—a functional rather than structural unity, a unity based on common missional cause without the element of fundamentalistic religious judgmentalism. Such a unifying evangelical spirit is reflective of the ecclesial wholeness of the prototype *ekklesia*.

Evangelicalism is not only non-separatistic denominationally, but also non-separatist socially. It is a movement that does not promote ascetism or self-centered spiritual preoccupation but rather spirituality with personal, interpersonal, and in the larger context, social transformative consequence. Hargrove has this to say, “A sense of self is inadequate if there is in it no sense of public dimension, of some kind of linkage with the larger society.”³³ Thus evangelicalism is always reminded “to confront the secular world with a clear declaration of each individual’s ultimate accountability to God and thus his immediate need of redemption through the sacrificial ministry of Jesus Christ.”³⁴ Such evangelical missional stance in secular society is neither separatistic nor antagonistic but kerygmatic and transformational. Of all the precedent movements, Contemporary Evangelicalism has become more expert in transforming secular lives to Christian faith. McGrath affirms, “evangelicalism possesses the ability to bring individuals to faith from a secular culture.”³⁵

The abandonment of an ecclesial kerygmatic interrelationship with societal life would result in “existential meaninglessness,” to use Hargrove’s term, which would eventually reshape a whole church into a monastic fragment engrossed with a fragment of

³² Richard John Neuhaus, “Why Evangelicals and Catholics Belong Together,” in *Pilgrims on the Sawdust*, ed. George, 105.

³³ Barbara Hargrove, “Churches as Mediating Structures,” *Theology Today* 39 (January 1983): 389.

³⁴ Hudson T. Armerding, “The Evangelical in the Secular World,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 127 (April 1970): 137.

³⁵ McGrath, *Evangelicalism & the Future of Christianity*, 122.

ecclesial life. Contemporary Evangelicalism engenders wholeness not only ecclesiologically but also socially. But the ecclesial-societal interrelationship engendering wholeness is characteristic of the Christocentric *kerygmaticity* which is reflective of the archetypal ecclesial life-structure.

In regards to the structure of evangelical theology, Ramm points out:

1. “*In essence evangelical theology is not literalism.*”³⁶
2. “*In essence evangelical theology is not obscurantistic. Obscurantism is ignoring or neglecting knowledge or denying its claim to truth.*”³⁷
3. “*The essence of evangelical theology does not presume that the final or non-final statement of Christian theology has been achieved.*”³⁸
4. “*It is not the essence of evangelicalism to believe that revelation is solely propositional or only conveying of information.*”³⁹
5. “*In essence evangelical theology is not countercultural, world-denying or inherently pessimistic.*”⁴⁰

Statements 1 to 4 could be seen as reactions to fundamentalist theological notions while statement 4 and 5 are reactions to both fundamentalism and liberalism.

The open and rich yet bibliocentric nature of Contemporary Evangelical theology is unique compared to its narrow-minded predecessors. In fact, such openness and richness are not only characteristics of its theological structure but also of its theological foci. In contrast to Reformation with its divergent, fragmented, and contradictory foci

³⁶ Bernard Ramm, *The Evangelical Heritage: A Study in History and Theology* (Grand Rapids: BakerBooks, 2000), 125.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 123.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 128.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 129.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 132.

from a soteriological means of *sola fide* or *sola gratia* to a soteriological concept of predestinarian election to volitional salvific response, to ecclesiological ontology of visible and invisible church; Contemporary Evangelicals cover a variety of foci interconnected into one whole core biocentric concerns. From the Christocentric soteriology coupled with Pneumatically empowered transformative lifestyle engendering interpersonal interrelationship within the church and in society, to bibliocentric epistemology, to personal and interdenominational missional activities, etc.--become interrelated components of what characterize the Contemporary Evangelical Christian life. Its theological structure is not only holistic but also biocentric. Such life-concerns have both personal and soteriological significance so that evangelicals also see the need of societal involvement within the parameters of its kerygmatic mission.

Rejecting both passivity and extreme social activism, Contemporary Evangelicalism is able to synthesize personal piety and societal concerns within the framework of the eschatological Kingdom of God as the absolute hope, and the need to proliferate the secular world with Kingdom culture. As Bloesch points out, “The church is the worldly agency of the kingdom, the earthen vessel that carries the new wine of creative transformation.”⁴¹

Evangelical piety is viewed with both personal and societal significance. As Sanders stresses, “The best disciplined spirituality that evangelicals have to offer the church and society is the affirmation that the gospel of Jesus Christ fully entails both personal and social transformation.”⁴² Evangelical’s kerygmatic framework both in its

⁴¹ Bloesch, *The Church*, 76.

⁴² Cheryl Sanders, “Disciplined Spirituality,” in *Where Shall My Wond’ring Soul Begin?: The Landscape of Evangelical Piety and Thought*, eds. Mark A. Noll and Ronald F. Thiemann (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 66.

receptive and communicative aspects is not exclusivistic but inclusive, for evangelicals recognize that the “gospel is good news for society as well as for individuals.”⁴³ Thus the mission fields for regeneration are the individual soul and the societal psyche. In evangelicalism could be seen a devotion to both personal Christian Faith, and social involvement from proclaiming Christian values amidst moral degeneration to humanitarian service. An example is the 700 Club which presents a synthesis of piety, socio-moral concern, and humanitarian service. Of course, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association is foremost in propagating a Christocentric transformative culture from crusades, films, radio programs and to humanitarian services, like the Samaritan Purse.

However, in all these the Contemporary Evangelical theological paradigm is even deeper and richer than mere reaction against, and the providing the deficiencies of, fundamentalism. For it is truly a synthesis of Christian heritage revived by precedent movements,⁴⁴ that though each a fragment but are strands that are twined together to revive the whole prototypal ecclesial life framework. Thus evangelicalism is a progressively restorative Pneumatic operation in the history⁴⁵ of the Christian church. Evangelicalism is the Pneumatic process intended to progressively restore the *ekklesia* back to its prototypal characteristics. The process is almost climaxing in the phenomenon

⁴³ McGrath, *Evangelicalism & the Future of Christianity*, 165.

⁴⁴ George sees a confluence in evangelicalism, “Its [evangelicalism] theology and piety have been enriched by many diverse tributaries, including Puritanism, Pietism, and Pentecostalism, but its sense of identity as a distinctive faith community, what we might call the *evangelical tradition*, has been shaped decisively by the three major episodes: the Protestant Reformation, the evangelical Awakening, and the fundamentalist-modernist controversy.” Timothy George, “Between the Pope and Billy Graham: Evangelicals and Catholics in Dialogue,” in *Pilgrims on the Sawdust Trail*, ed. George, 126.

⁴⁵ Barrett affirms, “Revelation in the Judeo-Christian tradition is distinctive in that it not only affects history but also uses history as its principal medium.” Charles D. Barrett, *Understanding the Christian Faith* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1980), 178.

of Contemporary Evangelicalism.⁴⁶ However, this viewpoint is usually missed even by evangelicals themselves. As Killen aptly puts it:

The new Evangelicalism also reacts very strongly against fundamentalism. This is sad, because it reveals the fact that they fail to see that there is a cumulative progress in the development of modern apologetics. Each of the movements...as well as that which follows, is needed since they all contribute irreplaceable parts to an adequate new apologetic. Furthermore, God has used each.⁴⁷

Before the intended end of Contemporary Evangelicalism could be conclusively drawn, it is injunctive to see the different layers of the theological nature of evangelicalism. The aforementioned characterization of evangelical theology by Ramm may be considered as external; the deeper we go into the layers of its theological being, the fuller we could appreciate its structural coherence with the core intent.

A number of evangelical scholars from historians to systematic theologians characterize the evangelical theological framework in a variety of form-categorizations. Although varied, yet coherence of its essentials could be seen. And in a deeper sense, a direction towards the core intent could be perceived; although externally the *core intent* seems hidden from, if not lying in, the subconsciousness of the evangelical mind.

Ramm said it in a rather technical way:

1. “*The evangelical believes that Christianity is one and not many and is not capable of radical reinterpretation.*”⁴⁸

Ramm’s recognition of evangelical belief in one Christianity has an important ecclesiological significance that would be subsequently expounded in this work. Further

⁴⁶ The post script being the Pentecostal emphasis on vocational Pneumatic charismaticity.

⁴⁷ R. Allen Killen, “The Inadequacy of the New Evangelicalism and the Need for a New and Better Method,” *Journal of Evangelical Theological Society* 19 (Spring 1976): 115. What is inadequate however, is not evangelicalism per se, but how the church regards movements like evangelicalism. What is needed is a holistic perspective of the Pneumatic ecclesiological operations in the history of the Church.

⁴⁸ Ramm, *The Evangelical Heritage*, 140.

the evangelical concept of Christianity as “not capable of continuous radical reinterpretation” is an essential framework in appropriately interpreting the consequence the Pneumatic operations in the history of the church.

2. *“Evangelical theology is Christological and incarnational.”*⁴⁹

The Christocentric incarnationality of evangelical theology provides an internal control between bibliocentrism and contextualization, and between kerygmaticity and apologeticity. It is an appropriate epistemological provision avoiding the extremes of liberalism and fundamentalism.

3. *“The evangelical believes that faith is the fundamental response of the sinner to the gospel and is the foundation of Christian experience.”*⁵⁰

This fidecentric life engendering a fidecentric individual and congregational life is an antithesis of intellectualism, creedalism and formalism in Christianity. Not that evangelicalism is anti-intellectualist or anti-theological formulation but that, for evangelicals the foundation of Christian life is faith—a personal encounter and experience with Jesus, rather than mere theoretical engagement. However, the evangelical Christian life model does not imply relative subjectivism without internal control, for evangelical faith is defined within the perspective of a balanced Christocentric bibliocentrism.

4. *“The evangelical believes that theology will have genuine dignity if it retains an important and nonnegotiable element of the objective in the doctrine of revelation.”*⁵¹

⁴⁹ Ibid., 143.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 144.

⁵¹ Ibid., 146.

Evangelical theology is always epistemologically defined as bibliocentric in approach, Christocentric in content, and Pneumatic in process; this is what evangelical theological objectivity means.

5. *“The evangelical believes that the real touchstone of a theology is its spiritual power not necessarily its intellectual shrewdness or sophistication or learning.”*⁵²

Thus Contemporary Evangelical theology is more biocentric than its historical precedents. The spiritual biocentric nature of its theology is more like the theological structure of the original fideistic life-structure—because evangelical spirituality is not ascetical nor monastic but practical and pragmatic everyday life spirituality. Its theology is coherent with its practical spirituality.

Expressing in a less technical form, Packer profiles evangelicalism in terms of the following six belief-and-behavior principles:

1. Enthroning Holy Scriptures...as the supreme authority and decisive guide on all matters of faith and practice;
2. Focusing on...Jesus...who died as a sacrifice for our sins...and will return to judge mankind, perfect the church, and renew the cosmos;
3. Acknowledging the lordship of the Holy Spirit in the entire life of grace, which is the life of salvation expressed in worship, work, and witness;
4. Insisting on the necessity of conversion...
5. Prioritizing evangelism....
6. Cultivating Christian fellowship...⁵³

Herein Packer brings out the evangelical faith structure as composed of the centralities of the authority of the Bible, salvation in Jesus Christ, the role of the Holy Spirit in whole Christian life (“worship, work, and witness”), the necessity of conversion, evangelism

⁵² Ibid., 146.

⁵³ J. I. Packer, “A Stunted Ecclesiology?: The Theory and Practice of Evangelical Churchliness,” (Fellowship of St. James, 2002), Cited April 21, 2004.
<http://www.touchstonemag.com/docs/issues/15.10docs/packer/church.html>.

and fellowshiping. Packer's portrayal is concretely reflective of the fideistic consequential characterization of the everyday life of evangelicals.

However, Packer also criticizes the unhappy improper reactionary antithesis triggered by five proper Christian priorities that stunt evangelical churchliness:⁵⁴

1. "Salvation-centeredness" resulting in human-centered theology.
2. "Word-centeredness" that marginalized sacrament.
3. "Life-centeredness" in small group that is a "seedbed of sectarianism.
4. "Parachurch-centeredness" that draws away from "congregational life."
5. "Independent-church syndrome" that leads to decline in "connectional bond with other congregations."

From Reformation to Contemporary Evangelicalism the intent of the Pneumatological ecclesial operations was for the restoration of the church back to its wholeness. However, as usual, when a fragment becomes the preoccupation in ecclesial life it overshadows the overall structure. The consequence is not only misdirection but also fragmentism to the point that a movement becomes entrapped in its own self-making, rather than be concerned with the furtherance of the restoration of the church life into its whole prototypal nature. Contemporary Evangelicalism, with its potentialities richer than before in Christian history needs to be prevented, if not rescued, from this ecclesial entrapment propensity.

Phillips and Okholm list the following "distinctive elements of evangelical Christianity":

1. "*Evangelicals insist that Jesus Christ is the incarnate God and thus the definitive self-revelation of God.*"⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Ibid.

2. “*Evangelicals affirm the authority of the Bible as the truthful, absolutely reliable, divinely inspired, and uniquely normative guide for Christian belief and practice.*”⁵⁶
3. “*Evangelicals believe that our salvation was established only through Jesus Christ’s life, atoning death and resurrection, and that Christ’s work must be personally appropriated by faith alone.*”⁵⁷
4. “*Evangelicals commit themselves to a life of active piety under the lordship of Christ.*”⁵⁸
5. “*Evangelicals engage themselves in evangelism, aimed at the conversion of individuals and of the church.*”⁵⁹

Phillips and Okholm note here the “life of active piety” which characterizes evangelical life in contrast to ascetic and separatist piety inclinations of the precedent ecclesial movements. The structure of evangelicalism is placed in its proper Christocentric soteriological intent.

Stackhouse points out five characteristics of evangelicalism in terms of the following centralities:⁶⁰

1. Salvation in Jesus Christ
2. The Bible
3. Conversion experience

⁵⁵ Phillips and Okholm, *A Family of Faith*, 15.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ John G. Stackhouse, Jr. “Evangelical Ecclesiology Should be Evangelical,” in *Evangelical Futures: A Conversation on Theological Method*, ed. John G. Stackhouse, Jr. (Grand Rapids: BakerBooks, 2000), 40-58.

4. Mission
5. Transdenominationalism

Here Stackhouse points out an important element in evangelical ecclesiology—transdenominationalism. Although as aforementioned, Packer saw the risks of sectarianism with evangelicalism’s small group nurturing medium, but the overall paradigm of evangelical ecclesiology is still transdenominationally and missionally cooperative. In fact, it is because of this that evangelicalism has championed the functional ecumenicity of the church on common missional cause. Such unitive transdenominational and missional ecclesiological model of evangelicalism is indeed reflective of the unitive missional wholeness of the prototype *ekklesia*, where the church was viewed as one.

McGrath presents a clear-cut classification of the central themes and concerns of evangelicalism:

1. A focus, both devotional and theological, on the person of Jesus Christ, especially his death on the cross;
2. The identification of Scripture as the ultimate authority in matters of spirituality, doctrine, and ethics;
3. An emphasis upon conversion or a “new birth” as life-changing religious experience;
4. A concern for sharing the faith, especially through evangelism.⁶¹

McGrath’s characterization of evangelicalism in terms of Christocentric focus, bibliocentric identity, convertive emphasis, and evangelistic concern is an explicit portrayal of the basics of evangelicalism. He further adds that these central themes and concerns are “central interacting themes and concerns.”⁶² This note is important in reminding evangelicals that its essential theological components are interrelated, thus not

⁶¹ Alister McGrath, *A Passion for Truth: The Intellectual Coherence of Evangelicalism* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996), 22.

⁶² Ibid.

to be taken alone by itself out of its whole framework. This sorts of remind Contemporary Evangelicals not to fall into the pitfall of its predecessors' fragmentism.

Bebbington brings out these famous “isms” of British evangelicalism which have also resemblance with the characterization of the North American evangelicalism.

These are the four qualities that have been the special marks of Evangelical religion: *conversionism*, the belief that lives need to be changed; *activism*, the expression of the gospel in effect; *biblicism*, a particular regard for the Bible; and what may be called *crucicentrism*, a stress on the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. Together they form a quadrilateral of priorities that is the basis of Evangelicalism.⁶³

Although Bebbington defines activism and crucicentrism in evangelical sense, however contemporary North American evangelicals might mistake activism as a Liberation Theology cliché and crucicentrism as expressive of Roman Catholic emphasis. For the following scholars, characterization of evangelicalism could be narrowed down from Packer's six profiles to Phillips and Okholm's five, to McGrath's and Bebbington's four, to their respective three fundamental characteristics.

Evangelicalism for Quebedeaux could be:

...characterized as a school of Christianity which attests to the truth of the three major theological principles: (1) the complete reliability and final authority of Scriptures in matters of faith and practice; (2) the necessity of a *personal* faith in Jesus Christ as Savior from sin and consequent commitment to Him as Lord; and (3) the urgency of seeking actively the conversion of sinners to Christ.⁶⁴

Bibliocentrism, Christocentric fideism, and active evangelism are Quebedeaux's triangular evangelical structure. This seems narrow compared to the previous characterizations, but still carries with it the essentials of evangelicalism.

Wells also presents a similar triangular evangelical structure when he emphasizes:

⁶³ D. W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 3.

⁶⁴ Richard Quebedeaux, *The Young Evangelicals: Revolution in Orthodoxy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), 3-4.

When I use the word *evangelical*...I have three more specific characteristics in mind:

1. Evangelicals believe in the unique divine inspiration, entire trustworthiness and authority of the Bible.
2. Evangelicals believe and personally appropriate by faith alone God's promise that he will forgive, redeem, justify and accept them into a personal relationship with himself on the basis of the life, death and resurrection of his only Son, Jesus Christ.
3. Evangelicals commit themselves to the pursuits of a holy life and to the disciplines seen as necessary for Christian growth, including Bible study, prayer, fellowship with other Christians and evangelism.⁶⁵

Stott presents a simple yet adept way of characterizing what evangelicals hold,

“We hold the three Rs—revelation, redemption and regeneration; associating revelation with the Father, redemption with the Son and regeneration with the Holy Spirit.”⁶⁶

Further, he sets the delimitation of evangelical priorities:

It would therefore...be a valuable clarification if we were to limit our evangelical priorities to three, namely the revealing initiative of God the Father, the redeeming work of God the Son and the transforming ministry of God the Holy Spirit. All other evangelical essentials will then find an appropriate place somewhere under the threefold rubric.⁶⁷

Stott presents a trinitarian content structure of evangelical theology. However, this delimitation seems focused on a personal spiritual reality, and lacks the direct individual and congregational missional foci that are characteristics of evangelical movement.

Bloesch however included this in his definition of evangelicalism when he said:

...it is appropriate to define *evangelical* more precisely: An evangelical is one who affirms the centrality and cruciality of Christ's work of reconciliation and redemption as declared in the Scriptures; the necessity to appropriate the fruits of this work in one's life and experience; and the urgency to bring the good news of this act of unmerited grace to a lost and dying world.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ William W. Wells, *Welcome to the Family: An Introduction to Evangelical Christianity* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity, 1979), 10-11.

⁶⁶ John Stott, *Evangelical Truth*, 122.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁶⁸ Donald G. Bloesch, *The Future of Evangelical Christianity: A Call for Unity Amidst Diversity* (Colorado Springs: Helmers & Howard, 1988), 17.

The varied forms of characterizing Contemporary Evangelicalism, although still carrying the same essential characteristics, could be understood because evangelicalism is not a creedal religion formally uni-formed by a singular text. It is however, a fideistic and kerygmatic movement in whose vein flow the life of one gospel of Christ. In all of the above characterizations, there is no more befitting summary of Contemporary Evangelicalism as the Gospel-faith. Although a brand may not always cohere with its identity-quality but, evangelicalism is really characteristic of the qualities its name carry—*euangelion*—the gospel.

Thus in the context of the over all gospel-centricity of evangelicalism, may I present my own characterization of evangelicalism and discuss its components. However, what would be distinct in this characterization is that it is not merely descriptive but teleologically interpretative, in particular, ecclesio-teleologically interpretative, i.e., seeing its components in the perspective of their common directional *telus*. This approach that has been overlooked, if not commonly discovered, could lead to the restoration of the core intent of Contemporary Evangelicalism in the framework of the one whole *ekklesia*. There is something very significant in evangelical ecclesiology that has been beclouded by superficial theological approach.

Two renowned theologians comment on the bright prospects evangelicalism offers to the present day church. McGrath emphasizes, “I have become increasingly conscious that evangelicalism holds the key to the future of Western Christianity.”⁶⁹

Packer also poses a question and affirms:

...evangelicals as a whole is strong, certainly in North America, seemingly in other places too, and if anything is getting stronger. Could it be that God is

⁶⁹ McGrath, *Evangelicalism & the Future of Christianity*, 12.

grooming evangelicalism for leadership in the new millennium? It appears that way.⁷⁰

3.4. The Core of Contemporary Evangelicalism

Let me characterize the theological-ecclesial life framework of evangelicalism by layers, from the external, i.e., what could be easily seen, to its inner core, i.e. the core-self of evangelicalism.

The first layer of evangelical framework is the centrality of missional interrelationship. The fulfillment of the Great Gospel Commission is the preoccupation of the Contemporary Evangelical movement. And such kerygmatic-salvific preoccupation is not denominationally or institutionally exclusive but missionally unitive and denominationally cooperative.⁷¹ Because evangelicalism is a missional movement rather than a denominational⁷² or institutional establishment, mission and the fulfillment of the mission become the common Christian cause. It avoids denominationalistic entrapment.⁷³ It even regard denominationalism in the sense of common missional paradigm, so that denominationalism becomes interdenominational missional

⁷⁰ J.I. Packer, "Maintaining Evangelical Theology," in *Evangelical Futures*, ed. John Stackhouse, Jr., 186.

⁷¹ As Ward observes, "Within transconfessional evangelicalism the emphasis has moved from doctrine towards strategy and organizational power." Pete Ward, "The Tribes of Evangelicalism," in *The Post-Evangelical Debate*, eds., Graham Cray, et al (London: SPCK, 1997), 27.

⁷² Nash says, "Evangelicalism is not a denomination in the traditional sense. It may be best to think of Evangelicalism as a transdenominational movement in the sense that it transcends traditional denominational boundaries." Nash, *Evangelicals in America*, 27. He further adds, "No overarching bureaucracy. No single leader, or group of leaders, speaks for all or even a portion of evangelicals. What evangelicals have in common is a set of beliefs and a set of causes that grow out of those beliefs." *Ibid.*, 39.

⁷³ Noll has emphasizes, " 'Evangelicalism' is not, and never has been, an '-ism' like other Christian isms—for example, Catholicism, Orthodoxy, Presbyterianism, Anglicanism, or even Pentecostalism (where, despite many internal differences, the practice of sign gifts like tongues speaking provides a well-defined boundary). Rather, 'evangelicalism' has always been made up of shifting movements, temporary alliances, and the lengthened shadows of individuals." Noll, *The Scandal of Evangelical Mind*, 8.

cooperativism,⁷⁴ rather than distinctionalist and separatist. Denominations are regarded as avenues that could, together as one, be instrumental in fulfilling the Gospel Commission. Evangelicals are passionate about the Gospel Commission.

Stackhouse is emphatic that “evangelicals cannot be evangelicals without endorsing the importance of evangelism.”⁷⁵ As in Billy Graham Evangelistic Crusades, denominations are regarded first as missional cooperatives, then as nurturing options, i.e., options for fellowship venues that are all both missionally and ecclesially interrelated because of their common evangelicality. The church then is seen as one essential Christian body of in different locations. Evangelicalism, by virtue of its being a common Christian missional movement, transcends denominational barriers. Its transdenominationality makes functional and unitive use of denominations—thus restorative of the ecclesial wholeness.

The second layer of evangelical framework is its centrality in the Bible. The Bible is regarded as the absolute standard of evangelical teachings. As McGrath points out, “There is no doubt that evangelicalism is characterized by its emphasis on the authority and sufficiency of Scripture.”⁷⁶ However, the evangelical use of the Bible is not

⁷⁴ It is perhaps because of evangelicalism’s natural inclination to diverse missional foci that either led other scholars to see evangelicalism as fragmented or led traditionally oriented denominations to misconstrue the common cause as organic ecumenicity. The quest for efficient missional fulfillment, without denominational obstruction, caused the evangelical movement to resort parachurch avenues. Thus Stackhouse points out that “contemporary evangelicalism has been fragmented a thousand ways through the proliferation of congregational, denominational, and parachurch options.” John G. Stackhouse, Jr., *Evangelical Landscapes: Facing the Critical Issues of the Day* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 19. Jolanston figures out that, “The variety and vitality of worldwide evangelicalism defies easy description. It is best understood as an umbrella category which includes under its spread a wide range of otherwise disparate churches, movements, and ministries.” Robert K. Jolanston, “Evangelicalism,” in *The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought*.

⁷⁵ Stackhouse, “Evangelical Theology Should Be Evangelical,” in *Evangelical Futures*, ed. Stackhouse, 54.

⁷⁶ Alister E. McGrath, “Evangelical Theological Method: The State of the Art,” in *Evangelical Futures*, ed. Stackhouse, 28.

literalistic or fundamentalistic without regard to other avenues of God's revelational tools. Evangelicalism propagates a sense of theological openness with its balanced bibliocentric theology that makes appropriate use of science and technology. As Nash states, "Evangelicals are not at war with science, culture, or technology."⁷⁷ It makes use of science as in archeology, thus biblical archeology; as in psychology, thus Psychology of Religion or Evangelism; cultural studies, thus contextualization; biological science, thus scientific explanation of creation; medicine, thus bioethics; linguistics, thus contemporary language translation of the Bible; etc.

It also makes use of arts and technology; as in the art of writing, thus the proliferation of evangelical books and other forms of literatures, the art and technology of movie making, thus Christian film productions by World Wide Pictures of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association; mass media, thus evangelical radio programs and even lately an evangelical newspaper purported as an option to *USA Today*. Evangelicalism makes use of science and technology⁷⁸ both in the cognitive and communicative senses, i.e., both as a tool in understanding what the Bible meant and a tool in communicating the gospel with the intention of faithfully proclaiming what the Bible means in contemporary times.

As Grothius said,

God's truth is not provincial, parochial or partial; it is universal in scope and application. Yet it allows for unique cultural expression and creative individuality..."⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Ronald A. Nash, *Evangelical Renewal in the Mainline Churches* (Worcester, IL: Crossway, 1987), 167.

⁷⁸ Diehi however warns and proposes control in the use of science and philosophy in interpreting the Bible, "It is important to recognize, however, that our fallible knowledge through science and philosophy can also distort our understanding of Scripture. This is why I stress a Christological progressiveness in general revelation and our knowledge through it." David W. Diehi, "Evangelicalism and General Revelation: An Unfinished Agenda," *Journal of Evangelical Theological Society* 30 (December 1987): 454.

⁷⁹ Douglas Grothius, *Truth Decay: Defending Christianity Against the Challenges of Postmodern* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 73.

Further, although evangelicals are engaged in apologetics, but basically evangelicals' use the Bible is always kerygmatic⁸⁰ and biocentric, and hardly speculative. Even its academic pursuits are purported to be proclamatory of the gospel with the intent of changing and saving lives. It does not occupy itself in defending or expounding a particular school of thought, as in a particular prophetic perspective, but in proclaiming the gospel. Its concern is the proclamation of the Biblical gospel of salvation so that people would be saved in God's Kingdom. Evangelical Biblical exposition is usually focused on biocentric concerns, e.g., regeneration, salvation, living a new life, Christian lifestyle, love to fellow humans, faithfulness, socio-moral transformation, and related foci—not highly speculative foci.⁸¹ However, such biocentric focus does not also negate evangelical scholarship, for the evangelical academe does produce noteworthy scholarly works, from Carl F. Henry, to J.I. Packer, to Mark Noll to Alister McGrath and numerous other scholars. In fact evangelical scholarship takes on a new dimension in academic pursuits because the passion for salvific truth is made alive with the passion of biocentric gospel-centered faith. Theology becomes a living faith. As Weber states, “The two characteristics—personal faith and a deep commitment to orthodoxy, result in

⁸⁰ Davis comments, “Evangelical theology can be defined as a systematic reflection on scripture and tradition and the mission of the church in mutual relation, with scripture as norm.” John Jefferson Davis, *The Foundation of Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids; Baker Book, 1984), 43.

⁸¹ Thus it could be said that evangelical piety is a balanced of personal and interpersonal devotion to Christ. It is neither mystical although there is a sense of the personal indwelling of Christ, nor activist although there is a sense of social responsibility, nor institutionalistic although there is a ministry structure, nor ritualistic although there is a heartwarming commemoration of Christ's passions, nor factionalistic although there is a essential faith-boundary, nor pentecostally overshadowing although there is a recognition of Pneumatic empowerment.

evangelicals being good worshippers.”⁸² Thus the evangelical centrality of the Bible is a balance Biblical epistemology.

The third layer of evangelical framework is the centrality of conversion through the work of the Holy Spirit. Grenz identifies “convertive piety as the central hallmark of evangelicalism” that “in turn, [has] given shape to evangelical theology.”⁸³ “You must be born again!” is the common evangelical cliché, so common to the point that evangelical Christians are called “born again Christians.” They are born again either in the sense of conversion from secularism or atheism to Christocentric Pneumatically empowered life, or from Christian nominalism to deeper relationship with Jesus. As Weber points out, “The evangelical spirit is the inward, passionate, and zealous personal commitment to the Christian faith which is born out of deep conviction that faith in Jesus Christ...produces life-changing effects in man and his culture.”⁸⁴ Evangelicalism is indeed a discipleship movement. And though the main missional field for conversion is the world, churches are also not excluded.

Conversion in evangelicalism is intended as a deep spiritual rebirth, i.e., the result of the Pneumatic re-creation ensuing out of true repentance and acceptance of Jesus as the only personal Savior. It is not a superficial denominationalistic theoretical assent or an ecclesiastical provision. As Mouw says, “all evangelicals strongly emphasize the need for an intensely personal, experiential appropriation of the claims of the gospel.”⁸⁵

⁸² Robert E. Webber, *Evangelicals on the Canterbury Trail: Why Evangelicals Are Attracted to Liturgical Church* (Wilton, CT: Morehouse-Barlow, 1985), 169.

⁸³ Grenz, *Renewing the Center*, 47.

⁸⁴ Robert E. Webber, *Common Roots: A Call to Evangelical Maturity* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 17.

⁸⁵ Richard Mouw, “Evangelical Ethics,” in *Where Shall My Wond’ring Soul Begin?*, eds. Noll and Thiemann, 72.

In fact, the church is regarded as a nurturing venue rather than a gateway to heaven. The focus of evangelical devotions is not an ecclesial institution but Christ. It is a Christocentric devotion rather than ecclesiocentric. This is not demeaning the church, but rather placing the church in its appropriate framework, i.e., missional and nurturing media rather than the object of devotion itself. Evangelicalism avoids the spiritual danger of a sort of deification of the church or ecclesial substitution of the kingdom of God. The church, of course, is still regarded as holy, being the congregation of regenerated Christians. Thus its holiness is derivative and consequential rather than ontologically inherent. The inherent holiness only resides in Christ and ecclesially imparted through the Holy Spirit. Further, Contemporary Evangelical ecclesiology is even more truly universal by virtue of the church as being joint together transdenominationally by the common bond of Christocentric Pneumatically-created regenerative life and devotion. Evangelical piety is a Christocentric Pneumatically empowered regenerative piety.

The core of Evangelical theological and ecclesial framework is obviously the centrality of Christ Jesus. Evangelical faith, mission, bibliocentrism, and regenerative piety are all structures of evangelicalism that spontaneously emerged out of the core conviction of faith and devotion to Jesus Christ. Evangelicalism is not a separatistic denominational movement but a driving force towards the formation of the core Christocentric Christian identity. Thus there could be Evangelical Baptists, Evangelical Lutherans, Evangelical Pentecostals, Evangelical Anglicans, or Evangelical Catholics, etc., who are all Christocentric in their teachings and in their ecclesial life. Such Christocentricity engenders an everyday life of Christ-centered love-practices. Evangelicals are always inspired to live a life of love and compassion as reflective of the

life of Christ. Christocentric spirituality is not a mystical indulgence but a realistic everyday life of love.

Evangelical is clear and emphatic that there is no other means of salvation aside from Christ, no other core theological focus aside from Christ, no other essential identity and core proclamation aside from Christ. Thus evangelicalism is truly the gospel movement.

Grenz comments:

Most evangelicals would agree that at the heart of their vision of faith is an emphasis on an experience with being encountered savingly in Jesus Christ by the God of the Bible. This encounter is an identity-producing event. Through Christ, God constitutes us individually as believers and corporately as a community of believers.⁸⁶

He further adds, “The encounter with the God of the Bible through Jesus...is foundational to Christian identity.”⁸⁷

Except one accepts Jesus as personal Savior there could be no salvation and hope—is the core evangelical message. Evangelicals are preoccupied with the propagation of the *euagelion*, the Gospel. As Noll asserts, “evangelical religion has always been ‘gospel’ religion.”⁸⁸ Stott clearly presents the focus in defining evangelical identity:

In seeking to define what it means to be evangelical, it is inevitable that we begin with the gospel. For both our theology (evangelicalism) and our activity (evangelism) derive their meaning and their importance from the good news (the evangel).⁸⁹

The evangelism of evangelicalism is the proclamation of the evangel of salvation and hope only in Christ Jesus. Its soteriological proclamation is both crucicentric and

⁸⁶ Grenz, *Renewing the Center*, 202.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism*, 16.

⁸⁹ Stott, *Evangelical Truth*, 25.

adventistic, i.e., it emphasizes the atoning passions of Jesus Christ confirmed by his resurrection; and the parousia—as the absolute realization of the hope of humanity. Regarding evangelical adventistic emphasis, Bloesch affirms that an, “evangelical theologian is noted for its affirmation of the visible coming again of Jesus Christ in power and glory to set-up the kingdom that shall have no end.”⁹⁰ The centrality of Jesus Christ as the only Savior and hope of humanity spontaneously creates the evangelical Christological fideistic core. Such Christocentric fideism engenders Christocentric Pneumatologically empowered way of life that affects the personal, congregational, and societal life of evangelicals.⁹¹ Such life is regarded as both personal and kerygmatic, i.e., a personal life lived and a life lived as witness. Evangelicalism is faith in and witness of Jesus Christ empowered by the Holy Spirit.

To summarize the evangelical theological-ecclesial structural layers:

- First: Transdenominational Missional Ecclesiology
- Second: Balanced Biblical Epistemology
- Third: Christocentric Pneumatically Empowered Regenerative Piety
- Core: Christocentric and Christological Fideistic and Kerygmatic Core
Pneumatically Empowered.

Now what does this structure reveals? Let us take a look again at the characteristics of the prototypal ecclesial life-framework.

The Fideistic Life Structure:

1. Emphasis on the need of Pneumatically regenerative life.
2. Emphasis on the need of accepting Jesus Christ as personal Savior.

⁹⁰ Bloesch, *The Evangelical Renaissance*, 5.

⁹¹ As Bloesch emphasizes that “a renewed evangelicalism must not hesitate to apply the Gospel to the whole life, to the political and economic as well as the private, personal spheres.” *Ibid.*, 46.

3. The church as a means for nurturing and equipping believers.

The Kerygmatic Life Structure:

1. The mission of the church is to proclaim the Gospel.
2. Believers are unitedly called to witness for Christ both in life and verbal proclamation.

The Pneumatic Life Structure:

1. The Holy Spirit is the source of life and empowerment in both personal and vocational life of believers, and in the life of both individual believers and the congregation.

But in all these the core is Christ: faith in Christ, witness for Christ, and the Holy Spirit's empowerment for new life in Christ and for witnessing for Christ. *And this is exactly what evangelicalism is all about.* Thus the explicit conclusion that could be drawn is that, *evangelicalism is the climactic operation of the Holy Spirit in restoring the church back to its prototypal ecclesial-life framework.* This is the *core intent* of Contemporary Evangelicalism.

In regards to Pneumatic directional operation, Packer has this to say, "The Spirit has been active in the church from the first, doing the work He was sent to do—guiding God's people into an understanding of revealed truth."⁹²

The Holy Spirit has been progressively revealing what the church can be and ought to be. He has been guiding the restoration of the church back to its prototypal structure. However, the church has historically misconstrued the phenomenon of ecclesial movements. It regarded these movements as threats to institutional life. Then

⁹² J.I. Packer, *Fundamentalism and the Word of God: Some Evangelical Principles*, rep. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), 48.

those involved in the movements ended up in their respective pitfalls. The church, instead of regarding these ecclesial movements as building blocks for the eventual restoration of the church back to its prototypal framework rejected these, and the movements' proponents ended up absolutizing their respective fragments, or institutionalizing them into new denominations with fragmented outlook.

To conclude in Pierard words:

...evangelicalism is more than orthodox assent to dogma or a reactionary return to past ways. It is the affirmation of the central beliefs of historic Christianity.⁹³

Contemporary Evangelicalism is both the urgent call and the paradigm for the present day New Reformation.

⁹³ R.V. Pierard, "Evangelicalism," in *Elwell's Dictionary of Evangelical Theology*.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

The Reformation was intended to bring the church back to its evangelical focus, i.e., back to the consciousness of the gospel as the core of ecclesial life. But the Reformation's evangelicality was embryonic, focused on particular *solas*: the *sola fide* or the *sola gratia*, and/or *sola scriptura*. Then the Reformation movement consequently fell into separatistic ecclesiology and dogmatism. Fideistic and gratistic soteriology were even seen as contradictory. Although the *sola scriptura* epistemological emphasis eventually opened the floodgate of biblical curiosity and studies, yet basically the resultant ecclesial life preoccupations were theoretical rather than biocentric. Abraham proposes:

What I am suggesting is that this concern with the intellectual and with formal theology be thoroughly relativized. It needs to be subordinated to spiritual renewal.”¹

Contemporary Evangelicalism, however, integrates faith and scholarship. Its theological model offers bright promise to the prospect of Christian theological growth. For as Noll said, “Personal faith in Christ is a necessary condition for Christian

¹ William J. Abraham, *The Coming Great Revival: Recovering the Full Evangelical Tradition* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984), 53.

intellectual life, for only a living may develop.”² Evangelicalism presents a balance of intellectual theological pursuits and experiential spiritual life. It is a balance of mind and spirit, nurturing the soul to avoid regression to either dogmatic formality or uncritical mysticism.

Reformation played its role in restoring gospel-consciousness but it was not yet more holistically and truly evangelical, although the Lutheran church in Germany was called evangelical.³ Like other subsequent movements, Reformation carried with it a particular focus, a building block for further constructive ecclesial restoration.

Contemporary Evangelicalism, at the outset, was a reaction against Fundamentalistic theological perspective. But afterwards when one talks about evangelicalism the conceptual association of people are things like Billy Graham Crusades, movements for societal moral recovery, conservative Christian lifestyle, interchurch cooperation, parachurch ministries, life-changing literatures, and above all, born again Christians who accepted Jesus as their only personal Savior. These characterizations of Contemporary Evangelicalism are indicative not of a mere hypothetical or mystical vocation but of an enriched and balanced personal and ecclesial life⁴

The church is seen not as a mystical body into which believers lodge for salvific

² Noll, *The Scandal of Evangelical Mind*, 250.

³ Carpenter has this to say, “This new movement [modern evangelicalism] differed greatly from ‘the evangelical churches’ of Luther’s day. The evangelical persuasion now included a lessened emphasis on the creedal sacramental channels of faith, a preference for voluntary religious affiliation and interdenominational cooperation, aggressive evangelization, conversionist views of salvation, earnest and abstemious living, and revivalistic and millennial expectations about God’s work in the days to come.” Carpenter, “The Fellowship of Kindred Minds,” in *Pilgrims on the Sawdust Trail*, ed. George, 31.

⁴ Thus as Payne says, “American evangelicalism exists as a theological construct, a historical phenomenon, and a sociological movement.” William P. Payne, “The Social Movement Dynamics of Modern American Evangelicalism,” *Ashland Theological Journal* 35 (2003): 37.

security, but as a venue for nurturing and a means for fulfilling the Gospel Commission. The church is the means of fulfilling the Gospel Commission. This is also true of the evangelical perspective on the parachurch ministries. Interdenominational networking is not placed in the context and motivation of a more organic ecumenicity but of functional ecumenicity, i.e., cooperation and unity in fulfilling the common Gospel-oriented mission. Fulfillment of the Gospel Commission is even seen as both proclamatory and diaconal, as in humanitarian service.

Further, the church is seen as a congregation of believers who live in common conservative but not extremistic lifestyle. The church is not regarded as the Kingdom of God per se but as a venue, by virtue of the believers' act of congregating, for personal and interpersonal nurturing. Thus within the church small group congregating, i.e., a congregation within a congregation, is common, on purpose of more intimate and effective interpersonal nurturing and discipling. Thus, in this sense could McGrath identify that, "The real heartbeat of evangelicalism is in a church Bible study group."⁵

Furthermore, evangelicals are not just people assenting and propagating a particular set of theological propositions, although it has its own distinct theological and ecclesiological framework. Evangelicalism is not an apologetic movement per se but kerygmatic one.⁶ By kerygmatic, I mean a focus on living a distinct life that is proclamatory of the *kerygma*, and not just a focus on conceptual defense or exposition. It is a balance of faith and experience, a balance of theology and way of life. As Bloesch

⁵ McGrath, "Trinitarian Theology," in *Where Shall My Wondr'ng Soul Begin?*, eds. Noll and Thiemann, 53.

⁶ As McGrath observes, "the reason evangelicalism is growing is not because its experts produce theological tomes, but because it proves capable of relating to ordinary people...offering them a vision that changes their lives and focuses on the very simple Christ-centered piety." McGrath, "Trinitarian Theology," in *Where Shall My Wond'ring Soul Begin?*, eds. Noll and Thiemann, 53.

asserts, “to be evangelical means to hold a definite doctrine as well as to participate in a special kind of experience.”⁷

Hodgson sees that evangelicalism could indeed provide the most needed religio-moral answer in contemporary times. He sees that, “The resurgence of conservative and evangelical Christianity in recent years (at least in America) is symptomatic both of the magnitude of the experienced threat and of the deep desire to recover stable ethical and religious foundations in a topsy-turvy world.”⁸ The heart of evangelical worship which is the proclamation of the Word that gives meanings and significance to life amidst this topsy-turvy world.

Moreover, the society is not seen as a domain of Christendom per se but as a mission field. The society is a vocational, rather than political, venue. Social concerns voiced out through mass media or even interchurch mass movements, are not meant to ecclesiasticalize politics nor politicize the church but to evangelize the society. The objective of evangelical social responsiveness is either moral restoration or prevention of moral degeneration. Evangelicals see themselves as having inherent responsibility, by virtue of their faith and kerygmatic life, to proclaim the Kingdom values and propagate the Kingdom culture without usurping political power. This seems debatable in the setting of an almost evangelical partisanship in American politics, but the true evangelical spirit always remain within the kerygmatic parameters, i.e., within the framework of Christocentric transformative Gospel proclamation avoiding the risk of politicalization.

⁷ Donald G. Bloesch, *Essentials of Evangelical Theology* (Peabody, MA: Prince, 2001), I: ix.

⁸ Peter C. Hodgson, “Ecclesia of Freedom,” *Theology Today* 44 (July 1987): 223.

Puritanism and Pietism did bring another dimension in the evangelicality of the church, i.e., the concern on spirituality and witness. They brought another embryonic evangelical biocentric and kerygmatic emphasis. However they also fell into their own pitfalls of legalistic and ascetic trends, and even a misdirected propensity of usurping worldly society and attempting to establish a sort of divine kingdom on earth. The frontier American history shows a Puritan attempt to establish a Puritan America. The Awakenings revived the spiritual focus of ecclesial life. But it also fell into societal insignificance. Fundamentalism brought back the bibliocentric epistemology amidst a secularizing modernism and liberalism. But its also went overboard in its bibliocentrism by becoming a literalist bibliocist, separatistic, and judgmentalistic. However, not all negatives could be said about the precedents of Contemporary Evangelicalism, because when the good factors in each movement are appreciated, they could all be regarded as part of the continuing process of the restoration of the church back to its whole evangelicality.

Then Contemporary Evangelicalism emerged. And it is presenting before the world the synthesis of historical revelatory features of precedent movements for the eventual restoration of the prototypal ecclesial-life framework. Contemporary Evangelicalism recognizes the Bible as the canon of Christian belief and teachings, yet brought with it a non-literalistic and richer yet conservative theological perspective. In spite of its bibliocentricity, it is not entrapped in speculative absorption, but rather uses the Bible as source of meanings, guidance, and inspiration for regenerative everyday

life.⁹ It is biocentric; it integrates faith and life.¹⁰ But though propagating a new regenerative way of life, it does not fall into legalism, or social and denominational separatism. In fact, it is socially and denominationally unitive. It regarded spiritual life as both a communication and an exemplification of the Christocentric gospel.¹¹

The denominationally unitive factor of Contemporary Evangelicalism is not even ecclesiological per se, but spiritual, experiential, and missional, i.e., the spirit of new life, the experience of being born again, and the common witness of experiencing salvation in Jesus.¹² And Contemporary Evangelicalism is emphatic of the common mission to fulfill the Gospel Commission. Crusades after crusade are meant to make disciples of Jesus, to prepare people for the *parousia*. Its proclamation is hardly a dogmatic theory but has soteriological and practical biocentric intentions. Its evangelism is not meant for the expansion of an institution or Christendom per se, but for the salvation of humanity only through Christ. It proclaims a Christocentric, rather than ecclesiocentric, soteriology. It is also Pneumatic, for it recognizes and proclaims new life in Christ through the Holy Spirit. The church too is seen, not as independent entity but, as a congregation of believers sharing common faith, and nurturing one another for the fulfillment of the Gospel Commission.

⁹ Noll points out that “Christ-centered, biblically normed religious experience” “remained the defining center of the evangelical movement.” Mark A. Noll, “Evangelicalism at Its Best,” in *Where Shall My Wond’ring Soul Begin?*, eds. Noll and Thiemann, 4.

¹⁰ As Wells reminds, “An evangelical faith that is not passionate about truth and righteousness is a faith which is a lost cause.” David F. Wells, *The Bleeding of the Evangelical Church* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1995), 9.

¹¹ As Packer sees it, “the gospel message individualizes, and faith is always an individual personal matter, and in the God-centered relationship of love and service formed within Christian community...” Packer, “A Stunted Ecclesiology?”

¹² ¹² In a similar sense Willard points out, “The three substantive elements of evangelical piety are conviction of sin, conversion, and testimony.” Dallas Willard, “Christ-centered Piety,” in *Where Shall My Wond’ring Soul Begin?*, eds. Noll and Thiemann, 29.

Contemporary Evangelical spirituality is Christocentric, i.e., a personal relationship with Jesus engendering deep Christian *koinonia*. Further, the commemoration of Christ takes its meanings, not merely from the sentimentality of his atoning passions but also, from the celebration of the soteriological realization confirmed by Christ's self-resurrection. Thus, in essence church rites from baptism to the Lord's Supper become a regenerative-celebrative act. It is an act of reconnecting with Jesus and celebrating the salvation he won for humanity. It is celebrating the salvation Jesus realized at the first coming and anticipating the realization of the full restitution of the primal human life at Jesus' Second Coming.

Worship in Contemporary Evangelical sense is a devotion to teachings, fellowshiping, celebration, and prayer with the kerygmatic proclamation at its center. In fact, the whole church services, from Sunday school to Communion Service, to prayer and singing, to preaching are all kerygmatic proclamations.

Thus in all these, Contemporary Evangelicalism is indeed more truly reflective of the prototypal ecclesial life framework. However, there is one component in Contemporary Evangelicalism that is still a bit loose. This component is the charismatic vocational empowerment of individual believers. Evangelicalism believes on the priesthood of all believers; the personal Pneumatic empowerment of believers, however, still needs balance emphasis. Although in Billy Graham crusades, the role of the Holy Spirit is invoked through massive prayer groups, yet personal spiritual gifts still need appropriate recognition. The emphasis on spiritual gifts is conspicuous in Pentecostalism. Thus it could be said that the Pentecostal emphasis on spiritual gifts for the fulfillment of personal Gospel Commission, is the post script component that, when

properly fitted would make complete and whole the Contemporary Evangelical framework as fully prototypal.

Noll however reminds:

For all evangelicals it will remain a challenge to maintain classical traditions of trinitarian theological orthodoxy while absorbing the excitements of Pentecostal and charismatic faith. The ideal will be for our traditional evangelicals to be quickened by movements of the Holy Spirit and for devotees of the Spirit to learn balance and gravity from the traditionalists. But the traditional strengths of evangelical theology could be blown away by winds of the Spirit, and new Pentecostal groups might come to imitate the deadening formalism and enervating moralism that have sometimes characterized the older evangelical movements.”¹³

The key to the restoration of the original ecclesial life design is a balanced and holistic framework of Pentecostal Evangelicalism. Davis emphasizes:

Jesus never meant for us to fulfill his commission without experiencing his power. The outside world will only know that we are Christ’s own by the activity of the Spirit in our lives.¹⁴

McGrath points out that:

Charismatics and evangelicals belong to the same group. They may place the stress in different places, but nonetheless a commonality exist between them.¹⁵

Contemporary Evangelicalism emphasizes the Christocentric soteriological faith and witness, and the Holy Spirit’s role in regeneration; Pentecostalism emphasizes the charismatic vocational empowerment in fulfilling the Gospel Commission. Both belong to the whole of ecclesial prototype structure—together, as a synthesis, this could be the most powerful and astounding ecclesial revival paradigm ever in the history of post-apostolic church.

¹³ Mark A. Noll, “Foreword: American Past and World Present in the Search for Evangelical Identity,” in *Pilgrims on the Sawdust Trail*, ed. George, 18.

¹⁴ Glenn E. Davis, “Who Is the Holy for Us Today? The Person and the Work of the Holy Spirit in John 2:19-23,” in *Pilgrims on the Sawdust Trail*, ed. George, 96.

¹⁵ McGrath, “Trinitarian Theology,” in *Where Shall My Wond’ring Soul Begin?*, ed. Noll and Thiemann, 54.

So in all these, what do we have here? Conclusively—the restoration of the church back to the prototype of Christocentric fideistic and kerygmatic ecclesial life-structures Pneumatically empowered. This is the telos of the phenomena of preceding movements finally climaxing in Contemporary Evangelicalism.

George proposes, “I suggest a simple and briefer definition: *evangelicalism is a renewal movement within historic Christian orthodoxy.*”¹⁶ Noll affirms that “the rise of evangelicalism was the manifestation of a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit.”¹⁷

Evangelicalism is the revelatory and transformative operation of the Holy Spirit intended to restore the life of the church back to its New Testament design. Stott concludes:

...evangelical faith is not a recent innovation, a new brand of Christianity which we are busy inventing. On the contrary, we dare to claim that evangelical Christianity is original, apostolic, New Testament Christianity.¹⁸

However, if Contemporary Evangelicalism is to have its full significance, it must be received as such.¹⁹ It must be received and worked out in the framework of the one whole Christian church. As Williamson puts it, “Unless God gives it, there is no revelation; unless someone receives it, there is no revelation.”²⁰ Thwaites reminds:

Revivals need not end up in the settling ponds and holding patterns the church has historically made for them....The first are given for the time of planting, and the latter come in the time of harvest.”²¹

¹⁶ George, “Between the Pope and Billy Graham,” in *Pilgrims on the Sawdust Trail*, ed. George, 126.

¹⁷ Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism*, 139.

¹⁸ Stott, *Evangelical Truth*, 14.

¹⁹ Ironically though Walker notes a non-holistic inclination even within evangelicalism itself, he criticizes, “non-holistic ways of understanding become so common place among evangelicals it often happens that holistic formulations are met with suspicion of being departures from evangelical faith.” David S. Walker, *Challenging Evangelicalism: Prophetic Witness and Theological Renewal* (Pietermoritzburg, South Africa: Cluster Publications, 1993), 199.

²⁰ Clark M. Williamson, *The Way of Blessing The Way of Life: A Christian Theology* (St. Louis, MO: Chalace, 1999), 45.

²¹ James Thwaites, *The Church Beyond the Congregation* (Cumbria, UK: Paternoster, 1999), 207. Woodbridge and his colleagues regard evangelicalism as an awakening movement, “From Jonathan Edwards to Billy Graham, from itinerant Methodist preachers to television evangelists, the awakening tradition has had a long career.” John D. Woodbridge, Mark Noll, and Nathan O. Hatch, *The Gospel in America: Themes in the Story of America’s Evangelicals* (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1979).

But why is Contemporary Evangelicalism still beset by ecclesiological identity confusion? Because there is still an ecclesiological misconception, in spite of the fact that Contemporary Evangelical ecclesiology is the most explicitly prototypal, holistic and synthesizing ecclesiological framework. Beaton contends, “evangelicalism is in the throes of identity crisis, and at the heart of the crisis is a lack of clarity concerning the nature and function of the church.”²² Mouw criticizes many of the professed evangelicals as operating “with an extremely weak ecclesiology.”²³ Noll and others portray evangelicals as having “a lot of fancy evangelical hybrids.”²⁴

These claims seem ironical in the context of the prototypal theological and ecclesial-life structures of evangelicalism. But, indeed, there is still confusion on Contemporary Evangelical ecclesiology, and this necessitates an ecclesiological construction that is coherent with the prototypal, holistic, and synthesizing nature of Contemporary Evangelical theological framework. One of the contributing factors to the ambiguity, if not confusion, in evangelical ecclesiology is perhaps what Stackhouse noted as the implied ecclesiology more than the articulated one that evangelicals have.²⁵ Hart emphasizes that the, “diligent effort to rethink the biblical foundations of the doctrine of the church remains a top priority on the theological agenda.”²⁶ Bock has this to say regarding the survival of evangelical theology that could as well be prescriptive for the survival of the whole Christian theology, “At the start of twenty-first century we see that

²² Richard Beaton, “Reimagining the Church: Evangelical Ecclesiology,” in *Evangelical Ecclesiology: Reality or Illusion?*, ed. John Stackhouse, Jr. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 217.

²³ Richard J. Mouw, “Evangelicals in Search of Maturity,” *Theology Today* 35 (April 1978): 32.

²⁴ Mark Noll, Cornelius Platinga, Jr. and David Wells, “Evangelical Theology Today,” *Theology Today* 51 (January 1995): 495.

²⁵ John G. Stackhouse, Jr. “Preface,” in *Evangelical Ecclesiology*, ed. Stackhouse, 9.

²⁶ Boyd Hunt, “New Dimensions in Church,” in *New Dimensions in Evangelical Thought: Essays in Honor of Millard J. Erickson*, ed. David S. Dockery (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1998), 338.

conservative evangelical theology has survived because many were diligent to remain faithful to scripture, committed to Christ and concerned about the world, even as they pursued doctrinal reflection and spiritual integrity.”²⁷

The next chapter will show that indeed there could be a coherent and distinct Contemporary Evangelical ecclesiology. In fact, it is this distinct ecclesiology that the whole Christian church needs today if Christianity is to survive, grow, and fulfill its purpose in this new millennium.

²⁷ Bock, *Purpose-Driven Theology*, 50.