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EVANGELICALISM AND CHURCH: THE CALL FOR NEW REFORMATION

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In memory of:

Dad and Mom, LEOPOLDO and GENOVEVA who I prayerfully hope
to see again at the parousia.

Dedicated to:

Prof. Conrad J. Wethmar, of the University of Pretoria,
who sparked in me the interest in evangelicalism.

Jed Karsten, the beloved child, who like the rest of the children of the
new generation, may come to know more of Christ.

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INTRODUCTION

What really is Contemporary Evangelicalism? It seems to be an enigmatic phenomenon, for while it is missionally and globally prolific and pervasive; yet its theological and ecclesiological identities have not yet been made apparent. Thus Stott speaks of the problem of “uncertain evangelical identity.”¹ And Bloesch sees that:

The need for evangelicalism to rediscover its identity and to present a united witness to the church and the world is particularly acute this time when a new modernism threatens to engulf mainline Christianity.²

But with its prolificacy and pervasiveness, there must be something very astounding about its phenomenon that has yet to be discovered.

Noll and his colleagues observe that it is easier to recognize evangelicalism than to define it because:

What we have...is a lot of fancy evangelical hybrids: radical evangelicals, liberal evangelicals, liberals who are evangelical, charismatic evangelicals, Catholic evangelicals, evangelical who are Catholic, evangelical liberationists, evangelical

¹ John Stott, *Evangelical Truth: A Plea for Unity, Integrity & Faithfulness* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1999), 12. However, Packer is sure that “evangelicalism is an identifiable form of Protestant Christianity and even sees it as “the true mainstream Christianity.” J.I. Packer, “Maintaining Evangelical Theology,” in *Evangelical Futures: A Conversation on Theological Method*, ed. John G. Stackhouse, Jr. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000), 183, 186. Henry also discusses the evangelical’s search for identity; see Carl F. Henry, *Evangelicals in Search of Identity* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1976).

² Donald G. Bloesch, *God, Authority, & Salvation*, vol. 1, *Essentials of Evangelical Theology* (Peabody, MA: Prince, 2001), 1.

ecumenicalists, ecumenicalists who are evangelical, evangelical feminists, young evangelicals, and orthodox evangelicals.³

Further compounding this tangling diversity is the academic atmosphere they criticize as un-conducive to scholarly growth. They noted that the energies of a small number of evangelical scholars are diffused by a polarity between academic commitments and congregational engagements; thus resulting in a “contemporary malaise in evangelical theology.”⁴

This malaise, unless overcome by a well-focused and wholehearted scholarly endeavor, could hinder the formulation of definitive evangelical theological framework. The absence of distinct conceptual framework amid academic malaise and ecclesial confusion could spontaneously threaten the evangelical identity. This could be a theological risk to what is generally considered as integrative missional movement that has globally proliferated. Without definitive theological framework, mission is not only ironical, but also kerygmatically, ecclesiological, and societally risky. For the theological structures are both the definition and the content of mission.

Theology shapes both the content and function of the church’s proclamation and societal ministry. Further, it shapes not only the ecclesial mission but also the nature of ecclesial life. A theological problem would have a corresponding ecclesiological problem, and vice versa. Thus Beaton identifies the evangelical problem as ecclesologically rooted. He sees that, “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

³ Mark Noll, Cornelius Platinga, Jr., and David Wells, “Evangelical Theology Today,” *Theology Today* 51 (January 1995): 495.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 501. Thus Williams talks of the renewal of evangelicalism in relation to the retrieval of evangelical tradition. See D.H. Williams, *Retrieving the Tradition and Renewing Evangelicalism: A Primer for Suspicious Protestants* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999).

church.”⁵ Mouw also sees evangelicalism as operating in a weak ecclesiology⁶ Thus Stackhouse stresses:

When the church is confused about who it is and whose it is, it can become just another institution, just another collective, just another voluntary society. So we need ecclesiology—the doctrine of the church—to clarify our minds, motivate our hearts, and direct our hands. We need ecclesiology so that we can be who and whose we are.⁷

Hindmarsh further observes a complication in evangelicalism in his characterization of evangelical movement as “always a restless ‘movement,’ iconoclastic of all forms of order, often guilty of schism, and in danger of turning the proclamation of the eternal gospel into matters of popular suasion and the politics of public personalities.”⁸ This restlessness could be rooted in a lack of explicit theological and ecclesiological framework that could provide distinct identity and direction to ecclesial life and ministry.

Evangelicalism could not just remain surfing over a crowd of distinct ecclesial identities,⁹ for oftentimes, these entities are exclusivistic, divisive and fragmentary—characteristics contradictory to the unifying nature of evangelicalism. Further, not only

⁵ Richard Beaton, “Reimagining the Church: Evangelical Ecclesiology,” in *Evangelical Ecclesiology: Reality or Illusion?*, ed. John Stackhouse, Jr. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 217.

⁶ Richard J. Mouw, “Evangelicals in Search of Maturity,” *Theology Today* 35 (April 1978): 32. Mouw identifies this ecclesiological weakness as caused by evangelicalism “not being an organized movement but a *de facto* coalition.” *Ibid.*, 35. Grenz adds, “Evangelicalism’s parachurch ethos work against the ability of the movement to develop a deeply rooted ecclesiological base from which to understand its own identity and upon which to ground its mission, whether it sees that mission as being as, to, or on behalf of the body of Christ.” Stanley J. Grenz, *Renewing the Center: Evangelical Theology in a Post-Theological Era* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2000), 290.

⁷ John G. Stackhouse, Jr., “Preface,” in *Evangelical Ecclesiology*, ed. Stackhouse, 9.

⁸ Bruce Hindmarsh, “Is Evangelical Ecclesiology an Oxymoron?: A Historical Perspective,” in *Evangelical Ecclesiology*, ed. Stackhouse, 36. Thus the compilation of essays edited by Wells and Woodbridge talk about evangelical identity and its evolution; see David F. Wells and John Woodbridge, eds., *The Evangelicals: What They Believe, Who They Are, Where They are Changing* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1975).

⁹ The work edited by Stackhouse (ref. *Evangelical Ecclesiology*), resulting from the 2002 Theological Conference in Regent College, is indicative of lack of definitive evangelical ecclesiology. Evangelical ecclesiology is portrayed as surfing over varied established ecclesiological traditions.

are academic endeavors necessitated, but evangelical theological-ecclesiological construction should also be biocentric. As McGrath challenges, “Perhaps the greatest challenge the evangelicalism in the next generation is to develop an increasing intellectual commitment without losing its roots in the life and faith of ordinary Christian believer.”¹⁰

Moreover, the denominationally transcending nature of evangelicalism implies theological and ecclesiological formulations that are also denominationally transcending yet unifying. Bloesch recognizes the “need for a catholic evangelicalism that will maintain continuity not only with the heritage of the Reformation but also with the whole catholic heritage.”¹¹

Snyder sounds this call:

Today evangelical ecclesiology is (as usual!) in a major transition. Precisely for that reason, it faces a large opportunity. What better time to elaborate an ecclesiology that is soundly biblical and evangelical, prophetic and movemental, theologically coherent and sociologically aware, and functional for effective witness to the kingdom of God in an age of rapid globalization.¹²

Statement of the Problem. Thus this work attempts to address the following problems in Contemporary Evangelicalism:

1. The ambiguity of its identity and theological structures.
2. The need to identify its ecclesiological structures.
3. The confusion of its ecclesiological identity.

The Theses. In spite of the aforementioned problems, it is, however, perceived that:

1. The phenomenon of Contemporary Evangelicalism could be definitively

¹⁰ McGrath, *A Passion for Truth*, 243.

¹¹ Donald G. Bloesch, *God, Authority, and Salvation*, 21.

¹² Howard A. Snyder, “The Marks of Evangelical Ecclesiology,” in *Evangelical Ecclesiology*, ed. Stackhouse, 103.

characterized and its theological structures could also be identified.

2. That there is an apparent ecclesiological framework profoundly embedded in Contemporary Evangelicalism.
3. And Contemporary Evangelicalism has its own distinct ecclesial identity that could be, generally, ecclesologically paradigmatic.

The Importance of the Study. Therefore, this work is very important because it will attempt to address the aforementioned problems and prove the aforementioned thesis about Contemporary Evangelicalism. This will attempt to present:

1. The definitive identity and structures of Contemporary Evangelical theology
2. The distinct framework of Contemporary Evangelical ecclesiology.
3. To present the very identity of Contemporary Evangelical ecclesiology in particular, and as paradigmatic of the identity of the Christian church in general.

Methodology. A literary study will be conducted on literatures dealing with the structures of Contemporary Evangelical theology and ecclesiology. These literatures will be, of course, contemporary to the theological endeavors on Contemporary Evangelicalism. This work will analyze and expound the implications of the phenomenon and structures of evangelicalism with the intention of constructing a fresh yet holistic, synthesizing, and integral theological and ecclesiological perspectives on Contemporary Evangelicalism.

Delimitation and Conclusion. This work is not intended to expound the details of the plethora of what has been regarded as sources of evangelical ecclesiological heritage. Rather, this work focuses on an attempt to characterize the phenomenon and theological-

ecclesiological structures of Contemporary Evangelicalism, and point out its core intent for the whole Christian church.

McGrath predicts that the “debate over evangelical identity is likely to remain a subject of debate and discussion,”¹³ and this work will attempt to make apparent the identity of Contemporary Evangelicalism.

It is foreseen that this work could bring about a new theological and ecclesiological perspective inherent in Contemporary Evangelicalism. In fact, such perspective is foreseen as paradigmatic of a New Reformation!

¹³ Alister McGrath, *A Passion for Truth: The Intellectual Coherence of Evangelicalism* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 22.

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 fidestic 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 fideistic 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 martyrdom 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, Wurttemberg, 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 an 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.

PART II

CONTEMPORARY EVANGELICAL ECCLESIOLOGY
AS PARADIGMATIC OF PROTOTYPAL
ECCLESIOLOGICAL REFORMATION

CHAPTER 5

CONTEMPORARY EVANGELICAL ECCLESIOLOGICAL STRUCTURE

There is something universal, something ecclesiological foundational—
revelationally embodied in the structures of Contemporary Evangelical ecclesiology.
And this will be naturally un-shrouded along the way in the discourse of evangelical
ecclesiological structural components. Considering the preceding analysis of
Contemporary Evangelicalism, the structural components of Contemporary
Evangelicalism could be identified as transdenominational operation, missional cause,
Christological content, and Pneumatic empowerment.

5.1. Transdenominational Operation

Evangelicalism is not a denomination¹ per se but a spiritual and missional
movement that cohere with its theological character. A denominationalistic entity is
usually preoccupied with its own institutional growth through the propagation of what it

¹ In this work, the terms “denomination” and “chuches” are used synonymously, and the term “church” is oftentimes used to mean the Christian church in general. The sociological categorization of church, denomination, and sect could be theologically confusing.

regards as its unique doctrinal proclamation among varieties of claimants of truth. The denominational identity-centered proclamation is exploited as means, supposedly for the salvation of souls but eventually, of institutional expansion, even if evangelism would simply be equated with proselytism. In fact in denominationalistic sense, proselytism is even regarded as an effort to salvage deceived souls from what is considered as apostate churches, i.e., the “other” churches not conforming to its unique truth-claim. Although this ecclesio-missional propensity is, in contemporary times, common among cultic sects; yet it was also characteristic of the general ecclesial mission before the proliferation of Contemporary Evangelicalism.

Further, although the World Council of Churches has been promoting ecumenism, but its promotion is more of socio-political; while that of evangelicalism is more of theological, spiritual and evangelistically missional—thus more ecclesologically holistic than that of WCC. The onset of Contemporary Evangelicalism has sparked the proliferation of global transdenominationality. Thus Pierard defines evangelicalism as, “The movement in modern Christianity, transcending denominational and confessional boundaries, that emphasizes conformity to the basic tenets of faith and a missionary outreach of compassion and urgency.”² Hindmarsh comments:

From the beginning of the movement in the eighteenth century, evangelicalism has been transdenominational, international, and public in a way that is unique in Christian history. This raises new, important questions about how we are to understand the church.³

And indeed, Contemporary Evangelicalism presents a new, or rather prototypally renewed, understanding of the church. At the outset, however, such

² Pierard, “Evangelicals.”

³ Hindmarsh, “Is Evangelical an Oxymoron?,” in *Evangelical Ecclesiology*, ed. Stackhouse, 18.

transdenominationality was regarded as radical, and was even seen as a threat to denominational identities. At times it was even supposed as a means of apostatizing the true Christian church through a syncretistic joint missional effort of what were tagged “false” and “true” churches. This ironical ecclesial prejudice posed polarity in the fulfillment of the common Christian missional cause that evangelicalism was reviving. However, such a prejudice with its polarizing consequence waned as they were overwhelmed by the missional zeal and evangelistic fruitfulness of evangelicalism. And eventually evangelicalism succeeded in proliferating global transdenominationality.

But what is the nature of evangelicalism’s transdenominationality? At the outset, it is significant to note the difference between transdenominationality and interdenominationality. Transdenominationality presuppose a unitive framework beyond denominationalities, while interdenominationality is suggestive of interrelationship purported as common cause but still with a calculated enhancement of respective denominationalities. A transdenominational framework transcendentally drawing in churches together for the regeneration of the one whole church, is on a higher plane than an interdenominational effort. Contemporary Evangelicalism is not merely an interdenominational effort but a regenerative transdenominational ecclesiological framework. However, evangelicalism’s transdenominationality is not a “staticized” ontological reality that could be imputed in the church, but an aspect of ecclesiological operational dynamics that when allowed, would draw and regenerate churches into a meaningfully one holistic body of Christ.

As could be easily seen, Contemporary Evangelicalism’s transdenominationality is not an organic ecumenism but a missional co-operation. The fulfillment of the Gospel

Commission draws churches together to co-operate for greater kerygmatic societal impact.⁴ The primal purpose is salvific, i.e., the salvation of the fallen humanity. And churches are regarded not as objects of devotion, but means for the fulfillment of the mission Christ entrusted to no other corporate entity than the church.

A question however may be raised, “If evangelicalism believes that the mission of Christ is entrusted to no other corporate entity than the church, why the existence of evangelicalism parachurch ministries?” At the outset, it should be noted that parachurch ministries or organizations are not non-church bodies. They are still regarded as part of ecclesial body. In fact, parachurch organizations being distinctively ministry organizations are even more operationally efficient and prototypal than bureaucratized churches. As Carpenter puts it, “parachurch agencies have made a hash out of traditional ecclesiology.”⁵ Stackhouse gives the reason why, “In some accounts, they [parachurch ministries] do what the church in its congregational or denominational form is not doing, is not able to do, or is not doing well enough.”⁶

Thus the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association,⁷ though may not be sociologically categorized as a church; but theologically, from the coming together of churches for evangelism to the congregating of people at the Cove⁸ for spiritual nurturing, equipping, and worship—it is an ecclesial entity. Such an *ekklesia* transcend the

⁴ Thus Grenz sees that, “At the heart of the institutional expression of evangelicalism was a new model of Christian cooperative engagement, the voluntary society.” Grenz, *Renewing the Center*, 293.

⁵ Carpenter, “The Fellowship of Kindred Minds,” in *Pilgrims on the Sawdust Trail*, George, ed., 38. Thus because of evangelicalism’s transdenominational orientation resorting to parachurch ministries, others like Escobar thinks parachurch movement as the predominant definition and make-up of American evangelicalism. Samuel Escobar, “The Church: Help of Hindrance to Evangelism?,” in *Evangelicalism: Surviving Its Success*, ed. David A. Fraser (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 68.

⁶ Stackhouse, *Evangelical Landscape*, 27.

⁷ As well as other related parachurch ministry organizations.

⁸ A Billy Graham retreat center in Ashville, North Carolina, USA.

traditional sociological or sociologically colored theological definition of the church.⁹

This may seem a stretch of definition of the church for many traditionalists; but spiritually, pastorally, evangelistically, and missionally it is more reflective of the prototype *ekklesia* than a bureaucratized church. What is meant here is not the promotion of parachurch organizations over against or at the risk of established churches; but the bringing out of the unique transdenominationality of Contemporary Evangelicalism that could be paradigmatic of the missional regeneration of dogmatized, institutionalized, and bureaucratized churches.

Contemporary Evangelical ecclesiology is not a bureaucratized ecclesiology but a movemental ecclesiology. It is not something institutionally confined but a movement transcending the traditional bounds of churches. As McGrath pointed out:

Evangelicalism rejects idea that ‘the church’ can in a way be equated with one ecclesiastical body. The true church is found wherever the gospel is truly preached and truly received.¹⁰

Its incorporation is not institutional per se, although of course, it recognizes and makes use of societal realities, as in the existence of institutions. But rather missional and spiritual, engendering distinct theological character and biocentric concerns assimilated into the nature of churches in the process of revival.

Further, Contemporary Evangelicalism’s transdenominationality is not a

⁹ Thus Snyder disagrees calling “support institutions” as *ekklesia*. “But all ecclesiastical institutions—whether seminaries, denominational structures, mission boards, publishing houses or what have you—are not the Church. Rather, they are supportive institutions created to serve the Church in its life and mission. They are bound and can be sociologically understood and evaluated. But they are not themselves the Church.” Howard A. Snyder, *The Community of the King* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1977), 60. Snyder’s definition of the church, however, tends to be more sociologically oriented. Theologically though, an aggrupation of believers called out to fulfill the Gospel Commission, is an *ekklesia*.

¹⁰ McGrath, *Evangelicalism & the Future of Christianity*, 105.

framework of creedal homogenization of churches but a prototypal theological regeneration of the church. From ministerial associations, to so-called interdenominational (usually Pentecostal), to non-denominational seminaries and even association of churches, a statement of belief is usually framed to which assent is requisite of membership status. This is a sort of external control and somehow still reflective of an attempt for doctrinal homogenization symptomatic of creedalism. However, in a deeper sense, such creedalistic symptom is symptomatic of an even deeper ecclesio-theological identity struggle.

Christians in general is internally struggling on what it means to be more truly the Christian church. There is in Christianity a post-apostolic historical yet diversely theological, ecclesial identity struggles that, superficially or improperly answered, had resulted in schism, separatistic denominationalism, and exclusivistic, yet diverse, *alethetic*¹¹ claims. The church, in an attempt to find the answer to this enigma, historically resorted to misdirected religio-ideological approach resulting in the polarization of beliefs and disintegration of the unitive ecclesiological structure. Thus the Christian church has become a pile of embellished ecclesial fragments. Then came ecumenism with its external approach to uniting separate churches. External because the usual approach to ecumenism assumes acceptance of fragmentary identities, while trying to pull together for, at times, a socio-political cause as characteristic of the World Council of Churches. To use Ezekiel's metaphor,¹² this is like trying to glue together old dry bones. What is needed is an internal evangelicalization and Pneumatic enlivening of the whole Christian church. Not that existing churches are dead per se, but that the unitive

¹¹ That is, truth-claim

¹² Ezekiel 37:1-14.

framework among churches is obviously dead, deadened by the process of ideologicalization and institutionalization due to unresolved deep identity crises.

Since Reformation there was a call for the evangelicalization of the church—the Reformation call however, was embryonic of what was to mature as Contemporary Evangelicalism post-scripted by appropriate Pentecostalism.¹³ By evangelicalization, what is meant is the internal theological regeneration in the framework of the gospel. The church needs to “listen to the word of the Lord”¹⁴—the gospel needs to be the heart, the mind, the soul, and spirit of the church. *The proclamation of the gospel is the missional identity of the church, and the Christocentric content of such gospel proclamation is the ontological identity of the church.*¹⁵ Churches could not be made whole through mere associational approach but through the entire evangelicalization of the church, the process of regenerating the church back into its original and genuine

¹³ That is, Pentecostalism or charismatism in the sense of the Pneumatic empowerment of the life and ministry of the church. Pentecostalism and charismatism is used synonymously in this work because of what is seen as the same essentiality. In fact Rabey and Unger trace the development of American Evangelicalism from the Azusa Street Pentecostal phenomenon to Billy Graham. See Steve Rabey and Monte Unger, *50 Events of the 20th Century that Shaped Evangelicals in America* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2002).

¹⁴ Restoration in the metaphor of the old dry bones in Ezekiel’s vision starts from listening to “the word of the Lord” (Ezekiel 37:4-8).

¹⁵ Dabney pose this ecclesiological challenge in the postmodern context, “In such a world I suggest, the Church finds itself facing what amounts to a new and different challenge to its own self-understanding; a challenge that will require us to think through ecclesiology again by thinking through the most basic categories of Christian theology anew.” D. Lyle Dabney, “The Church as a Community of (Un)Common Grace: Toward a Postmodern Ecclesiology.” *The Christian Theological Research Fellowship Papers 4* (July 1991), cited March 28, 2004, http://home.apu.edu/sCTRF/papers/1997_papers/dabney.html.

Ecclesiological rethinking, however, could only be faithful to Christian theology while being a fresh theological construction when it is more reflective of the prototypal ecclesiology, rather than a new ecclesiological construction based on momentary historical reality or a cultural form. A culture-based ecclesiology simply becomes a cultural ecclesiology. What the world needs in any cultural form is a Christocentric missional theology; for its is in Christ that the world finds ever fresh meanings in life, and it is through mission that Christ is made known to the world. Erickson in the midst 80’s posed a similar challenge. “At present time the focus of this [twentieth century] literature is not the church itself, but other entities. It is time to reverse this trend, for if we do not have a clear understanding of the nature of the church, we cannot have a clear understanding of its relationship to these other areas [like relationship to society].” Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985), 1027.

gospelcentricity. The wholehearted receptivity to gospelcentricity could result in the restoration of ecclesial wholeness amid broken pieces; and Pneumatically enlivened bring about new wholesome life¹⁶ to the one whole living body of Christ.

Contemporary Evangelicalism being a gospelism, presents before the community of churches a regenerative framework that transcends denominational eccentricities, and opens the gateway for the re-formation of holistic ecclesiological and missional commonality, and interrelationship reflective of the prototypal *ekklesia*.¹⁷

Essentially, Contemporary Evangelicalism's transdenominationality is not merely descriptive of an interdenominational effort, but of a kerygmatic biocentric movement transcending denominational barriers. Although Contemporary Evangelicals promote interdenominational missional endeavors, in fact it is the leader in interdenominational cooperation for massive evangelistic crusades; but this is not all what there is in evangelicalism. There is something even deeply ecclesially unitive in Contemporary Evangelical framework—its kerygmatic biocentric character. This distinctive feature is profoundly spiritual yet essentially missional; it is a synthesis of spirituality and mission, devotion and proclamation.

Christian life in evangelical sense is not a passive spirituality, but an active life of faith—a life personally connected to Jesus, while at the same time a life proclamatory of the gospel of Jesus.¹⁸ Faith for evangelicals is not a mere creedal assent, although it does include the essentials of Christian belief. A life of faith is defined as a personal

¹⁶ New life of the old dry bones in the metaphor of Ezekiel's vision is made complete after being enlivened by the winds—metaphoric of the Holy Spirit (Ezekiel 37:9-10).

¹⁷ As Abraham noted, "A most significant change [of neo-evangelicals] was the rejection of the separatist ecclesiology." Abraham, *The Coming Great Revival*, 20.

¹⁸ As Paul witnessed, "I don't want anyone to think more highly of me than what they can actually see in my life and my message." 2Corinthians 12:6.

experience of encountering Jesus, experiencing regenerative life, and witnessing to others the bliss of experiencing Jesus through verbal and life witness. Thus evangelical life is proclamatory of the gospel.¹⁹ Thus for the church to be truly evangelical, it should live the life of Christ and the life proclamatory of the gospel of Christ.²⁰

Moreover, not only is evangelical life regarded as gospel-centered, but the gospel proclamation is also regarded as biocentric, i.e., purported to change lives. So here we have a confluence of kerygmaticity and biocentricity.²¹ With this overarching character of evangelical life— Contemporary Evangelical ecclesiology is not entangled in a denominational web but rather lifts denominations to a higher plane of life and existence—a life and existence that is a confluence of kerygmaticity and biocentricity. And such confluence is essentially Christological, dynamically Pneumatic, and consequentially salvific. With this framework, churches would lose their attention to petty denominationalistic entrapments and be restored back to the ecclesial prototypal wholeness and focus. Grenz realizes that:

By uniting together all who are born again and therefore members of the invisible church, evangelicals seemed to have found a practical solution to the perplexing problem of ecclesiology.²²

¹⁹Grenz portrays the advent of evangelicalism as “the quest for the truly Reformed church” whose focus is the proclamation of the convertive gospel “whether inside ecclesiastical structures or beyond them.” Grenz, *Renewing the Center*, 47.

²⁰ For further discussion on the gospel and evangelicalism, see R.C. Sproul, *Getting the Gospel Right: The Tie that Binds Evangelicals Together* (Grand Rapids, Baker Books, 1999).

²¹ As Grenz describes it, “the truly evangelical church is a community of faith, understood not merely as the people in whose midst the faith is proclaimed, but as a community of people of faith and of faithful people.” Ibid., 338. In regards to Christian life, Westerhoff states, what evangelicals similarly thinks although in a wider framework than cultus, “Daily life provides the context for expressing the truth we have experienced through cultic life.” John H. Westerhoof, III, *Living the Faith Community: The Church That Makes a Difference* (San Francisco: Harper & Row 1985), 56.

²² Ibid., 300. The evangelical framework however is not just a superficial practical ecclesiology, but a more profound theological, ontological and missional framework for the regeneration of the unity and wholeness of the Christian church.

Thus in all these, the transdenominationality of Contemporary Evangelicalism offers a viably meaningful and fulfilling framework for the restoration of the church back to its unitive ontological structure and wholesome operational framework. This may not be tagged an ecumenical proposal, for ecumenism plots an ecclesial direction different from the framework of Contemporary Evangelicalism; but properly, this could just be tagged evangelicalism.

5.2. Missional Cause

A number of established churches are losing membership, succumbing to secular threats, and loosing significance in the life of the people amidst a secularized global society.²³ Many churches are just struggling to survive if not dying. As Barna observes the state of American church in the 1990's:

...the Church in America is losing influence and adherents faster than any other major institutions in the nation. Unless a radical solution for the revival of the Christian Church in the United States is adopted and implemented soon, the spiritual hunger of Americans will either go unmet or be satisfied by other faith groups.²⁴

However, after all, the state of the church is not that all grim for at this time when the world needed the church most amidst the scenario of church decline, Contemporary Evangelicalism offers a new hope for the revival, not just of churches but, of one whole church. And an aspect of this hope hinges on evangelicalism's revival of the missional life of the church.

²³ For a challenge on living Christian faith amidst a world getting less Christian see, R.R. Reno, *In the Ruins of the Church: Sustaining Faith in an Age of Diminished Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2002).

²⁴ George Barna, *The Second Coming of the Church* (Nashville, TN: Word, 1998), 1. This could be descriptive of established churches that are losing missional zeal. However, mega-churches that are Christocentric and Pneumatic are also popping up.

Mission is a prominent emphasis of evangelicalism.²⁵ But what is mission in Contemporary Evangelical sense? The mission of the church, in evangelical sense, is a kerygmatic-salvific mission, i.e., the proclamation of the gospel for the salvation of fallen humanity. As paradigmatic of the prototypal ecclesial mission, Contemporary Evangelicals preach the need for regeneration, accepting Jesus as the only personal Savior, and living in a new life, then witnessing for Jesus to others. It emphasize that the only hope of humanity, the only salvific means, is Jesus. Mission for evangelicals is primarily soteriological, not socio-political or institutional. It regards the church as a venue for nurturing and equipping believers for the fulfillment of the Gospel Commission, thus a corporate resource for accomplishing the mission. The existence and life of the church should cohere with its missional fulfillment. The church does not exist for itself, nor is the soteriological end, but a means for a soteriological end. The intended teleological objective is not the coming of people to an ecclesial institution, but the coming of people to Christ.

As Roof, a professed liberal, states it, “The church is not an end in itself, it is an earthen vessel from which sacrifice and service and proclamation must constantly be poured out.”²⁶ The coming of people to church is a natural socio-spiritual outcome of a soteriological end.²⁷ Reciprocally then, the church is primarily a missional, pastoral, and soteriological means, an instrument rather the origin of salvation. The church nurture and sent out believers for mission, rather than secures and dispenses salvation. The church is

²⁵ For an articulation of an evangelical missional agenda; see Billy Graham Center, *An Evangelical Agenda: 1984 and Beyond* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1979).

²⁶ Wade Clark Roof, “The Church in the Centrifuge,” *The Christian Century* (November 8, 1989):1014.

²⁷ As Rainer sees it, “The call for churches today is for growth that is soteriocentric.” Thom S. Rainer, “New Dimensions in Evangelicalism and Church Growth,” in *New Dimensions in Evangelical Thought*, ed. Dockery, 425.

a venue for nurturing spiritual life so that when believers proclaim the gospel there lives cohere with their proclamation. As Phillips and Okholm emphasize, “The church is God’s family (Matt. 12:48-50) where his children are nurtured and trained to be his disciples.”²⁸

Evangelicalism provides a non-confusing definitive mission of the church—to evangelize, i.e., to proclaim the gospel of Christ so that people would be given the opportunity to accept Jesus as their personal Savior and be saved. The mission of the church is definitely a salvific kerygmatic mission. The making of disciples is the nurturing of those who accepted Jesus as their personal Savior, and not a subjugatory claim of people or society, for this impinge on the volitional gift the Creator God imparted to humans. However, such spiritually-oriented soteriological mission does not exclude humanitarian and societal concerns,²⁹ as in alleviating sufferings and poverty³⁰ and the restoration of societal moral integrity. As the means of fulfilling the gospel of Christ, it should be naturally replete with acts of love, and the propagation of Christocentric values.

²⁸ Phillips and Okholm, *A Family of Faith*, 118.

²⁹ Freston even identifies evangelical involvement in the politics of Third World Countries, see Paul Freston, *Evangelicals and Politics in Asia, Africa and Latin America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). However, it should be noted that political involvement in these countries may be more descriptive of the involvement of liberal churches than the crusade and humanitarian oriented evangelicals. For a brief discussion on the development and stunting of evangelical social concern, see Gary Scott Smith, “The Man and Religion Forward Movement of 1911-12: New Perspective on Evangelical Social Concern and the Relationship Between Christianity and Progressivism,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 49 (Spring 1987): 91-118. Tinker discusses further on present issues confronting evangelicals, see Melvin Tinker, *Evangelical Concerns: Rediscovering the Christian Mind on Issues Facing the Church Today* (Ross-shire, UK: Christian Focus, 2001).

³⁰ Gaebelein poses this challenge to evangelicals amidst a materialistic world, “The prevalent confusion of success with material things and the growing sense of entitlement to more and more possessions—and evangelicals are by no means free from it—can get the nerve of compassionate concern for our suffering brothers and sisters for whom Christ died.” Frank E. Gaebelein, “Evangelicals and Social Concerns,” *Journal of Evangelical Theological Society* 25 (March 1982):22.

Further, evangelical ecclesiology is not an ontological type of ecclesiology engrossed on the reflection and exposition of the philosophical nature and being of the church. It is a missional and functional ecclesiology, a dynamic rather than static ecclesiological paradigm. Such missional dynamicity that transcends the traditional ontological orientation in ecclesiology, confuse some theologians on the real nature of Contemporary Evangelical ecclesiology. Other theologians are even in doubt if there is really such thing as Contemporary Evangelical ecclesiology. Because of Contemporary Evangelical missional preoccupations, churches whose missional zeal has been overshadowed by other institutionalized concerns, regard evangelicalism as a mere missional movement rather than a holistic ecclesiological movement. And indeed Contemporary Evangelicalism is not an institutional or denominational movement itself, although there are attempts to embody its conceptual framework into an ecclesial institution. Although it is usually regarded as preeminently a missional movement, however, its being a missional movement is just an aspect of its wider intended purpose. While being a missional movement, it is also an ecclesologically restorative movement. Its pastorate transcends denominational enclosures, and is intended to pastorally regenerate the whole Christian church, so that the whole Christian body could fulfill its evangelistic mission. Thus in essence, its mission is both pastoral and evangelistic.

Moreover, mission in Contemporary Evangelicalism is regeneratively biocentric. Its missional objective is not just a theoretical affirmation of Christian beliefs, or a theoretical reconstruction of the church; but the transformation of life of both unbelievers, nominal Christians, and the declining churches. The transformation of life is seen as the consequence of true and deep encounter with Christ resulting in the acceptance of Jesus

as personal Savior, and experiencing a sustainable new life in Christ through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. Christianity, in evangelicalistic sense, is not just a matter of belief but also a matter of life. This regenerative biocentric focus is truly reflective of the discipleship mission of the prototypal church—the disciples were commissioned to teach believers how to observe the teachings of Christ, i.e., to live like Christ. The essence of discipleship is living Christ's exemplary life on earth. The regenerative biocentric objective is both a kerygmatic structural component and an intended salvific experiential consequence.

Furthermore, evangelicalism's missional cause promotes ecclesiological operational wholeness. With Contemporary Evangelicalism's transcendence over denominational enclosure, its evangelistic mission become apparently Christocentric, rather than ecclesiocentric. As such it draws Christian believers together both individually and congregationally to fulfill their missional calling. It could be intuitive to say that as in Billy Graham crusades, the Holy Spirit is working among believers and churches, convicting them of participatory need and drawing them altogether to fulfill the one common evangelistic mission. But indeed, experientially and pragmatically the called out individual Christians and churches could be seen as exhibiting Pneumatic zeal as they come together and unitedly play complimentary roles to fulfill the common gospel proclamation. In this sense, could be seen the "ecclesiogenization" of churches. Churches are awakened, becomes zealous, and Pneumatically enlivened, then naturally drawn and fitted together into one spiritually alive and evangelistically proclaiming body of Christ. Ecclesial operational wholeness becomes deeply spiritual and missional, phenomenologically natural and internally Christocentric and Pneumatic. This is quite a

contrast to model other ecumenical approaches that is socio-political, artificial, merely academic, and operationally superficial.

5.3. Pneumatic Empowerment

Contemporary Evangelicalism recognizes the necessity of Pneumatic empowerment in a more appropriate sense than that of extremistic charismaticism. As aforementioned, Pentecostalism is regarded as the postscript that the Contemporary Evangelical framework aptly needed. For Stott, an evangelical theologian, emphasizes “the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit is the chief distinguishing mark of the people of God today...”³¹ Vanhoozer adds, “The church is...the people of God filled with the Spirit of God.”³² However, it is not the kind of charismaticism that is self-centered,³³ i.e., meant merely for the emotive elation to an exhilarating trance state of liturgical participants. Evangelicals believe on the outpouring of the Holy Spirit but are wary of this kind of charismaticism. This does not mean that evangelicalism negates healing miracles, prophecy, or the Pneumatic primal role in regeneration—evangelicals do believe on these. However, the evangelical framework of Pneumatic empowerment is practical rather than basically emotive. Pneumatic empowerment is viewed in a utilitarian perspective, i.e., as the foundational and valuable power for accomplishing the mission and conversion of life.

³¹ Stott, *Evangelical Truth*, 93.

³² Kevin J. Vanhoozer, “The Voice and the Actor: A Dramatic Proposal about the Ministry and Minstrelsy of Theology,” in *Evangelical Futures*, ed. Stackhouse, 103.

³³ Kung, a professing Catholic theologian, has this to say, “So charisms are not special marks of distinction belonging to a chosen few...but a distinguishing mark of the whole church, of the fellowship of all believers.” Hans Kung, *The Church* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1967), 187.

Bloesch defines charism in an ecclesiological utilitarian sense:

A charism... signifies a special gift or power which enables one to perform a particular service. The charisms were given by the Spirit primarily for the upbuilding of the church.³⁴

Volf affirms such evangelical concept of charism:

Although all of Christian life is lived in the Spirit, it is not charismatic as a whole. Charisma has a narrower meaning in its reference to a particular capacity given by the Spirit of Christ for a particular ministry in church or world.³⁵

However, evangelicalism does not do away with the spiritual experiential encounter with the Holy Spirit amidst liturgy, but such Pneumatic encounter is always Christologically oriented, i.e., an experience with the Holy Spirit leading to a deeper and more meaningful relationship with Jesus. Or for the non-believers, a spiritual encounter resulting in the acceptance of Jesus as personal Savior. This would at times be emotional but not wildly hysterical and chaotic, devoid of convertive awareness and apparent Christological consciousness.

Pneumatic empowerment is seen as a missional and convertive empowerment. As in Billy Graham crusades, numerous networks of prayer groups invoke Pneumatic operation for evangelistic success. The Holy Spirit is regarded as the absolute power behind the fulfillment and success of every evangelistic effort. The indispensable role of the Holy Spirit in evangelical's salvific kerygmatic mission is regarded in the following senses:

1. In convicting people of their sinfulness and their dire need of accepting Jesus as the only personal Savior; and

³⁴ Donald G. Bloesch, *The Reform of the Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 109.

³⁵ Miroslav Volf, *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 229.

2. In charismatically empowering the missional human resources, e.g., preachers, singers, and other participants in crusades, or other evangelistic endeavors.

With the sense of Pneumatic presence, evangelicals feel enthused and alive in their evangelistic endeavors, without it they feel un-animated. The Holy Spirit is the power behind the evangelization of people with due regard to their volitional options. Without the Holy Spirit the preacher and his message becomes a “tingling cymbal” so to speak. It is the Holy Spirit that transforms a human proclamation into words of life that opens the salvific gateway for the hearers. Wingren expresses a concept descriptive of an evangelical perspective of Pneumatological kerygmaticity:

When the Spirit breathes on man, they begin to *speak* and their words go out to the converted. Thus the kerygma can actually be the means of restoring a fragmented and disintegrated humanity.³⁶

Evangelicalism regards the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at the day of Pentecost as a missional kerygmatic inauguration. The outpouring was meant to empower the believers to proclaim the Christocentric soteriological message. It was not meant as a spiritual exhibit or as affirmation of salvific realization in individuals mystically caught up amidst a liturgy. When the Holy Spirit was outpoured, believers began preaching the gospel in understandable languages. The Pentecost was a kerygmatic linguistic empowerment of the zealous yet linguistically incapable believers.

Acts portrays the event:

“These people are all from Galilee, and yet we [Jews coming from various ethnic-linguistic groups] hear them speaking the languages of the lands where we were born! Here we are—Parthians, Medes, Elamites, people from Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, the province of Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt and the areas of Libya, Cyrene, visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to

³⁶ Gustaf Wingren, *Gospel and Church*, trans. Ross Mackenzie (Edinburgh: Olive and Boyd, 1964), 106.

Judaism), Cretans, and Arabians. And we all hear these people speaking in our languages about the wonderful things God has done!”³⁷

The Holy Spirit enabled the believers to speak in known languages they were unable to speak, for the purpose of proclaiming the message of salvation in Christ Jesus. Contemporary Evangelicalism does not confuse the missional gift of tongue with the personal spiritual groaning amidst struggles in life while praying.³⁸ The former is for public evangelistic purpose, the latter is for personal spiritual purpose. The essence of the Pentecostal event is seen as the Pneumatic empowerment of the believers in the fulfillment of their evangelistic mission. The “gift of tongues” was seen as an occasional linguistic bestowment contingent on their present need. Evangelicals recognize the waning of such supernatural need with the conversion of multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic believers who are able to preach in their respective languages.³⁹

Evangelicals do recognize the gift of healing and other spiritual gifts, however, these gifts are seen in the perspective of mission and discipleship, i.e., as spiritual tools in fulfilling the Gospel Commission and in nurturing fellow believers. However, the moodal ambiance of reception and utilization of spiritual gifts is more kerygmatic and spiritual rather than mystical and emotive. The missional and pastoral empowerment of the Holy Spirit is an essential structure in evangelical ecclesiology.

³⁷ Acts 2:7-11.

³⁸ Paul notes, “And the Holy Spirit helps us in our distress. For we don’t even know what we should pray. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words. And the Father who knows all hearts knows what the Spirit is saying, for the Spirit pleads for us believers in harmony with God’s own will.” Romans 8:26-27.

³⁹ Coppedge, however, sees the Pentecostal event as an ecclesial birthing event rather than as a linguistic missional equipping event itself. He writes, “Unquestionably, the day of Pentecost was a distinct historical event and in the sense that it represents the birth of the New Testament church, its events are indeed unique and not repeatable.” Coppedge, *The Biblical Principles of Discipleship*, 122. Acts portrayal of the event, however, was more of a missional commencement rather, than an institutional ecclesial birthing, itself.

Furthermore, Pneumatic empowerment in evangelical sense is also meant for biocentric transformation and sanctification. The Pneumatic spiritual operation in individual is not seen as occasional but continuous. Aside from the bestowal of spiritual gifts, the role of the Holy Spirit in regenerative sanctification of believers is an essential faith structure in evangelical life. As Bloesch emphasizes, “Certainly true spirituality will also emphasize the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, for there can be no Christian life that is not inspired by the Spirit.”⁴⁰ New life in Christ is actually a new life in Christ empowered by the Holy Spirit. Ecclesiologically, this implies that the regeneration of ecclesial life is neither merely institutionally structural, nor merely associational, nor merely liturgical⁴¹ but essentially Pneumatic. Spiritual empowerment is what the church needs as a whole for revival; without spiritual revival churches would continue to regress towards its deadening propensity. Bloesch challenges, “If we are to have spiritual renewal in our time, the church must be open again to the special gifts and charisms given by the Spirit of God for the purpose of ministry in the world.”⁴² As paradigmatic in evangelical missional strategy, spiritual revival of the church is requisite for the fulfillment of its salvific kerygmatic mission. The *re*-formation of the prototypical structure of the church necessitates Pneumatic empowerment and spiritual revival.

Ferguson points out the essentiality of the Holy Spirit in the existence of the church:

If the church is the body of Christ, the Spirit is the life of the body. Just as the body without the spirit is dead, so without the Holy Spirit there would be no church, no community at all.⁴³

⁴⁰ Bloesch, *The Future of Evangelical Christianity*, 133.

⁴¹ As in mere organizational restructuring, formation of association of churches, or liturgical renewal.

⁴² Bloesch, *The Reform of the Church*, 114.

⁴³ Everett Ferguson, *The Church of Christ: A Biblical Ecclesiology for Today* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 107.

Thus in evangelical ecclesial Pneumaticity is a biocentric structure intended for the empowerment of individual convertive and missional life. This emphasis on the Pneumatic structure of the church is very relevant in the context of institutionalized and bureaucratized churches, whose operations have been secularized resulting in the disfranchisement of their Pneumatic essentials. Ironically however, on the other hand, the misdirected Pneumatic emphasis in other extremistic charismatic churches has also resulted in the disfranchisement of the essential Christological content and Biblical epistemology and their substitution with emotionalism and subjective revelative claims. McGrath notes the evangelical concern on extremistic charismaticism: “word-centered evangelicals often express a concern that an emphasis on the Holy Spirit might result in Scripture’s being bypassed in favor of an immediate personal revelation to an individual.”⁴⁴ Lovelace however, identifies charismaticism as a Puritan carryover, thus an evangelical heritage at that, but ironically lacking evangelical epistemological control.

He comments:

The charismatic renewal continues to express the mystical spirituality of the Puritan and Awakening eras, but often without the rational and theological checks against error and credulity maintained by evangelicals.⁴⁵

Here again is an example of a common blunder in the history of Christian church—a fragmentary ecclesiological construction based on an aspect of a progressive historical revelation intended for the regeneration of the church into its balanced and wholesome state. It is in the backdrop of this ironical and polarizing ecclesial life situation, that Contemporary Evangelicalism offers a balanced holistic framework. How? It positions the components of ecclesiological framework in its appropriate place—the

⁴⁴ McGrath, *Evangelicals & the Future of Christianity*, 70.

⁴⁵ Lovelace, “Evangelical Spirituality,” 33. This criticism, however, could not be appropriate to a framework of balanced Pentecostalism and Evangelicalism.

operation is transdenominational, the cause is missional, the power is Pneumatic, and the content is Christological.

5.4. Christological Essence

It might be awkward to call Contemporary Evangelical ecclesiology Christological, for this seems not a fit to existing ecclesiological models, e.g., sacramental, mystical, institutional, etc. Christological is usually regarded as descriptive of a theological content and of not an ecclesiological model. However, in the context of evangelicalism being a movement, and a Christocentric movement at that, whose proclamatory content is Christological; evangelicalism offers a new innovative Christological ecclesiological category. Such a category may seem unfit to an institutional ecclesiological mindset, but in the framework of movemental *ekklesia*, it provides a theologically succinct and meaningful ecclesiological model.

As in every ecclesiological model, the ecclesial focus becomes the ecclesiological characterization. When a particular ecclesial body focuses on liturgy, it becomes a liturgical church. When a church focuses on spiritual gifts, it becomes a charismatic church. When a church focuses on its institutional elements, it becomes an institutional church. Thus we have different models that are shaped according to their respective focus. Evangelicalism as a missional movement, is a kerygmatic church, and being a kerygmatic church it is not only Christocentric but also Christological. The church exists to proclaim Christ and his message of salvation, and to guide people to Christ both

evangelistically and pastorally.⁴⁶ It exists in and for Christ. Its existential derivation and kerygmatic content becomes its ecclesiological essence. With such Christologicality and Christocentricity the church could transcend its fragmentary and distortive human frailties. The church is lifted up to its true plane of existence and purpose.

It is in this framework that Contemporary Evangelicalism offers not only a regenerative missional movement but also a regenerative ecclesiological movement. Evangelical ecclesiological framework is restorative of the prototypal Christocentric and Christological nature of the *ekklesia* that historically, churches since the ecclesial theological fall, have marred. Like the marring of the archetypal *imago Dei* in human nature at the Fall, the *imago Christi* in ecclesial nature has also been marred since the ecclesial fall.⁴⁷ By emphasizing Christ, Contemporary Evangelicalism is guiding churches to where it properly belongs—and to Christ—as one whole body.

5.5. Conclusion

These aforementioned components properly fitted together in the perspective of Pneumatic ecclesiological revelation, form a distinct Contemporary Evangelical ecclesiology that offers hope, not only for the survival of prototypal Christianity but also, for the fulfillment of the *raison d'etre* of the church. Pneumatic ecclesiological revelation, for indeed, the evangelical ecclesiological structure is revelatory and

⁴⁶ Thus as Tidball observes, “The evangelical’s primary concern is not with the fixed ecclesiastical structures but with people who are Christians whatever denominational label they wear or structure they inhabit.” Derek J. Tidball, *Who Are the Evangelicals: Tracing the Roots of the Modern Movement* (London: Marshall Pickering, 1994), 158.

⁴⁷ I would identify the fall not in the sense of the total obliteration of ecclesial essence, but a process when the one whole church began assimilating paganistic culture diluting its pure Christocentricity and Christological structures, then fragmenting itself into separatistic entities.

paradigmatic of the prototypal ekklesia. *Raison d'etre*, for indeed Contemporary Evangelicalism is very reflective of the primally missional, with corollary pastoral, purpose for which the prototypal church was called. What then are the implications of these Contemporary Evangelical ecclesiological structures? *Synthesizing these structures could spark a New Reformation!*

CHAPTER 6

IMPLICATIONS OF THE SYNTHESIS OF CONTEMPORARY EVANGELICAL ECCLESIOLOGICAL STRUCTURE

Synthesizing Contemporary evangelical ecclesiological structures is revelatory of implications very foundational in the transformation of the church to something that it is more truly meant to be—both in terms of its nature and purpose, and the fulfillment of its purposeful nature and its natural purpose. Evangelicalism does have a distinct ecclesiology, even a prototypal reformativ e ecclesiological framework.¹

As aforementioned in the preceding Chapter, what we have in evangelical ecclesiological framework is a church that is Christocentrically biocentric and missionally empowered by the Holy Spirit operating transdenominationally. This is an awesome ecclesiological framework that could paradigmatically enable churches to lay aside their respective ecclesio-centricities and be caught up together to become one whole archetypal ecclesial community. This scenario is metaphoric of the resurrection,

¹ As McGrath argues, “Those who accuse evangelicals of having ‘immature’ or ‘underdeveloped’ theories of the church might care to ask themselves whether they might not have hopelessly overdeveloped theories.” McGrath, *Evangelicalism & the Future of Christianity*, 82. Mouw adds, “Evangelicals have long worried about ecclesiological perspectives that are so highly detailed and all-consuming that they crowd out other important theological concerns. So we respond by emphasizing some things, such as the need for a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and for evangelizing the lost, that are often neglected by people who take delight in detailed ecclesiologies.” Mouw, “Evangelical Ethics,” in *Where Shall My Word’ ring Soul Begin?*, eds. Noll and Thiemann, 75.

transformation, and ascension of believers into one whole new humanity at the Second Coming. Before the ascension of Christ after resurrection, there was the apostolic embryonic *ekklesia* of a few people who were wondering what to do but finally was commissioned on what to do at ascension. Before the descend of the Holy Spirit, there was a growing *ekklesia* of people who knew what to do, but do not know how to do it, then finally at the Pneumatic advent were empowered on how to do what they were all enthused to do. At the *parousia*, the *ekklesia*, i.e., the aggrupation of all called out ones, in fact a great multitude, would be receiving their reward and be ushered into the fully restored prototypal cosmos—where they all, as one, then becomes the restored prototypal humanity.

In this perspective, the church, to remain true to itself, should remain in the continuum of its teleological history² and objective. To deviate from this continuum would result in the de-ecclesiogenization of the church, changing it into a mere social organization. The continuum is an archetypal, dynamic, and eschatologically-oriented historical continuum. It is not a stretching of an incidental post apostolic construction, as if the *telus* is inherently confined in such non-archetypal construction. Nor the continuum could be terminated to a pre-*parousiac eschaton*; nor breaking the ecclesial embryo, or any of the aspects of its developmental phase, from its eschatological continuum. Thus ecclesiology, to maintain its integrity, should be holistic, with historical continuity, and is progressively teleological.

² Hodgson recognizes that the, “Ecclesia is an image...and foretaste of the basilea, embodied in a diversity of historical churches.” Hodgson, “Ecclesia of Freedom,” 226. The church however, can not be equated with the basilea, it is simply a divine-human agency to usher people in the present realm to the eschatological realm. It is a mediatorial society, a bridge between this world and the kingdom of God separated by a gulf of sin.

Contemporary Evangelical ecclesiology is holistic because it does not promote a particular ecclesiological³ aspect but rather is regenerative of the whole prototypal ecclesiological framework. Further, evangelicalism is not merely an institutional movement, but a process of continuous Pneumatic revelation and operation in the history of Christian church⁴ intended for the reformation of the church, so that it could fulfill its pastoral and kerygmatic purpose anticipatory of the *parousia*. Although embryonic evangelicalistic movement began at Reformation as a movement purported to reform the deformed ecclesial institution; however, the evangelical framework is not merely a medieval construction but a revival of prototypal ecclesiological characteristics, thus ameliorating the historical connectivity with the apostolic *ekklesia*. Evangelical ecclesiology does not also regard itself as an organic end, confining the eschatological *telus* in itself, but rather as an instrument purported to lead and guide people towards the eschatological end.

In the process of evangelicalization maturing in Contemporary Evangelicalism could be seen a very special ecclesiology that implies the following:

³ McGrath comments, “Evangelicalism is committed to the church, in the sense of a corporate conception of Christian life. But this does not mean that it is committed to any one *denominational* understanding of the nature of the church.” McGrath, *Evangelicalism & the Future of Christianity*, 79. However, it should be noted that evangelicalism is not a separatistic movement, but rather a reviving movement for the church as a whole. Thus if ever it is characterized as having a denominational ecclesiological commitment, such commitment is not strictly speaking denominational per se, but rather prototypal and holistic, i.e., intended for the restoration of the whole prototypal structures in the one whole Christian church.

⁴ Mudge has this to say regarding the church as Pneumatically formed, “If we want to find the universal church, the place to look is not upward toward the baroque movements above us but downward and outward in the attempt to grasp the meaning of the people-configuring work of the Spirit is already doing.” Lewis S. Mudge, *The Sense of a People: Toward a Church for the Human Future* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press, 1992), 49.

6.1. Contemporary Evangelical ecclesiological framework is prototypal rather than neonatal.

There are variant views as to when evangelicalism emerged. Some would trace its emergence from Luther whose followers formed the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany. Other traces it from the Pietistic and Puritan⁵ movements. Still others considered evangelicalism as a North American phenomenon originating from the Awakening Movements.⁶ While others define evangelicalism as a contemporary event;⁷ and the pioneers of Contemporary Evangelicalism like Harold Okenga,⁸ Carl F. Henry,⁹ and Billy Graham considered their movement as Neo-Evangelicalism.¹⁰

Viewing the ecclesiology of evangelicalism from the point of view of its historical emergence could be confusing, because evangelicalism, in essence, is not a theological-ecclesiological construction, nor merely a reaction to a particular ecclesiological framework in the history of the church, nor simply a historical movemental event—but a process. It is a Pneumatic progressive process effecting a historically maturing movement—restorative of the prototypal ecclesial framework. Viewing evangelicalism from the viewpoints of its restorativeness and prototypality, would imply not seeing evangelicalism as a new emerging denomination but as an overall movement for the restoration of the whole Christian church.

⁵ For a collection of essays on the historical development of evangelicalism from Puritan to Postmodern contexts, see D.G. Hart, *Reckoning with the Past: Historical Essays on American Evangelicalism from the Institute for the Study of American Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995).

⁶ Noll traces the rise of evangelicalism from the eighteenth century Awakenings, see Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism*.

⁷ For an account of the British root of evangelicalism, see Graham Storey, ed, *The Evangelical and Oxford Movement* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

⁸ Founding President of Fuller Theological Seminary, a leading evangelical seminary in the US.

⁹ He was a leading pioneer evangelical theologian.

¹⁰ The movement is eventually just tagged, evangelicalism.

A question might however be posed if there is indeed a perceived necessity for the restoration of the church; when churches seem settled, both in terms of institutional conviction and getting used to tradition, in their respective ecclesiological comfort zones. Each denomination seems to hold on to a particular ecclesiological feature and build their respective structures out of a piece. Such fragment-based construction is not only denominationally distinctive, but is also regarded as, not only foundational but also, “prototypal” with “prototypality” equated with a fragment rather than with a holistic framework.

Thus when an ecclesiological phenomenon emerges, it is publicly regarded as the emergence of just another denomination distinct from the already established ones. Thus traditionally, Christianity has opened itself, not only to its internal fragmentation but also, to the disintegrative historical loading and reloading of fragmentary and fragmented ecclesiological constructions. This resulted in the proliferation of various brands of competing and exclusivizing churches loading both the mission fields and the ecclesial worlds with confusions. Consequently, in the framework of denominationalistic and fragmentary Christianization of the world, the body of Christ is dragged into missional and existential irrelevance. In terms of the ratio of missional growth, the present Christianity is far beyond the ratio-impact of the prototypal apostolic church, when the Christian church was at its holistic framework of Christocentric content, biocentric missional cause, Pneumatic empowerment, and ecclesial oneness.

As in any other existence, an existence that does not fulfill its purpose disintegrates, if not vanishes, into oblivion; churches too that do not fulfill its purpose coherent with its prototypal framework would further disintegrate, if not vanishes, into

the oblivion of meaninglessness amidst the world struggling for meanings in life. This is not, however, the tragic scenario of the unexpected mega-churches whose framework is more prototypal. Common in mega-churches are the structures of Christocentric proclamation, transformational biocentric ministry, Pneumatic empowerment, and transdenominationality. And these are Contemporary Evangelicalistic structures. This reveals that the more churches become evangelicalistic, the more they become meaningful in the lives of the people, missionally prolific, and pastorally relevant.

6.2. Contemporary Evangelical ecclesiological framework is generally paradigmatic rather than separatistically organistic.

What makes Contemporary Evangelical ecclesiology unique is its being a transdenominationally paradigmatic movement, rather than a separatistic denominational construction.¹¹ Thus, it is not confined in a denominational exclusion; it is inclusivistic rather exclusivistic. Although there are ecclesial entities like the Evangelical Lutheran Church or Evangelical Free Church, but evangelicalism is not confined in these entities, or in parachurch organizations. For these churches and parachurches, though could be reflective of the framework of evangelicalicity, are not confinements of evangelicalism. Moreover, to be truly evangelical, ecclesial entities should be reflective not just of an evangelical feature but of the whole prototypal framework.

Contemporary Evangelicalism found itself preeminently embodied in parachurch and other support ministries like the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, 700 Club,

¹¹ As Zahl said, “Centralized church structures have never been an easy fit for evangelicals.” Paul F.M. Zahl, “Up the Creek: Paddling in the Maelstrom of the Mainline,” in *Pilgrims on the Sawdust Trail*, ed. George, 180.

Gaither Concerts, evangelical publishers, etc.¹² But although these organizations are not regarded as organized churches per se, but they are efficient means of accomplishing the Gospel Commission that many churches fail to do, or do not do in a primarily Christocentric sense without being hindered by a calculated denominational preoccupation. Thus what could be seen in evangelical endeavors are missional operations more truly reflective of the prototypal missional endeavors—where the focus is just leading people to Christ and touching people’s lives with the love of Christ, not a calculated denominationalistic or institutionalistic preoccupation. And this is what ecclesial mission should be, Christocentric¹³ rather than ecclesiocentric. As Hanson aptly puts it:

The church’s purpose is not its own. The church is present in the world on behalf of God by whose grace it has been called into existence. Thus, at the heart of the church’s act of self-definition is a basic theological question: What is the nature of God’s presence in the world?... Where there is brokenness, loneliness, and sickness, God is present to heal.¹⁴

Mission is defined by Stott in a Christocentric sense:

The Christian church is called to mission, but there can be no mission without a message. So what is our message for the world? It centers on the cross, on the fantastic truth of a God who loves us and who gave himself for us in Christ on the cross.¹⁵

With such Christocentric missional orientation, Contemporary Evangelicals could incarnationally reach out to people without clouding the Christological soteriological

¹² From an organizational point of view evangelicalism could be defined as what McGrath sees it as “a broad term embracing a complex network of individuals, seminaries, parachurch organizations, and journals, each with a distinctive ‘take’ on what constitutes the essence of evangelical identity.” McGrath, “Evangelical Theological Method,” in *Evangelical Futures*, ed. Stackhouse, 26.

¹³ As Pinnock emphasizes, “All religions make absolute claims at some point, and Christians ought to make them in the matter of the finality of Jesus Christ.” Clark H. Pinnock, “The Finality of Jesus Christ in a World Religion,” in *Christian Faith and Practice in the World: Theology from an Evangelical Point of View*, eds. Mark A. Noll and David F. Wells (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 155.

¹⁴ Hanson, “The Identity and Purpose of the Church,” 344.

¹⁵ Stott, *Evangelical Truth*, 82.

essence of the evangel. For as Frost and Hirsch cautioned, “incarnational mission will mean that in reaching a people group we will need to identify with them in all ways possible without compromising the truth of the gospel itself.”¹⁶ The church’s Christocentric kerygmaticity is what makes evangelical mission apparently distinctive from socio-political mission of so-called liberal churches. Thus what we have in Contemporary Evangelicalism is not a separatistic mission but a missional model of apostolic church.

Further, evangelicalism is not intended as another church separate from other churches. It is not an ecclesiological construction intended to compete with existing churches, or as an emergent new denomination. But rather it provides a model for the *re-*formation of the genuine ecclesiological structures for churches that has assimilated structures foreign to its original nature and purpose, or has been miniaturized to an ecclesial feature. Contemporary Evangelicalism provides a framework for the maturation of churches into its complete being. And with its being a regeneratively all-embracing structural paradigm, churches could be internally transformed and reconnected as one whole body of Christ; thus, an internal transdenominational reformation of the Christian church.

One of the blunders in the history of the church is the rerouting of a restorative process from its inclusive intent to an exclusive claim, due to a preconceived notion of its being a threat to, rather than a prospect for, existing ecclesial framework. The fragmentary and antagonistic reactions to the process of the evangelicalization of churches or the church as a whole, has resulted in revelational misconceptions that caused

¹⁶ Frost and Hirsch, *The Shaping of the Things to Come*, 37.

further ecclesial polarization, amidst the supposedly bright prospects of progressive reformation. The general status and well-being of Christianity could have been different, i.e., in a more meaningful and fulfilling terms, if Christianity has been receptive to the Pneumatic evangelicalization of the church. *The mature evangelicalization with appropriate charismatism is the climactic hope of the ecclesial reformation before the eschaton.*

Contemporary Evangelicalism presents a prototypal pastoral and missional framework that present churches need to fully assimilate, because these are descriptive of the very purpose of the church. When the church loses its prototypal pastorality and missionality, it could lose its pastoral and missional election. And like Israel's loss of such election to the church, the church too might lose its election to probably a transdenominational parachurch entity. This seems a bold conjecture, but such consciousness is embodied in the notion of the falling away of churches and the recognition of the emergence of new churches regarded with more alethstic integrity than the previous ones. Before the realization of such foreboding, there is a need for the churches to undergo the process of evangelicalization and mature into a prototypal ecclesiological being. When such a process becomes pervasive, the world could see a new bred of Christianity being born—an even grander and more missionally and prototypally significant Christianity—than the Reformation Era.

6.3. Contemporary Evangelicalism as a paradigm for ecclesial reformation is ecclesially friendly and non-threatening.

Contemporary Evangelicalism does not make void or disintegrates the essential framework of a particular church, or threatens its existence, but it is rather a model

presenting the missing ecclesiological structure/s, to allow churches to be Pneumatically regenerated it into its true ecclesiological being to bring about fuller existence.¹⁷ It is not merely a sort of ecumenical movement that operates in an associational or even solely causal level. It is a regenerative framework that is intended to transform the church to what it is truly meant to be.

Its regenerative nature naturally shapes its regenerative mission, i.e., the regeneration of humanity both individually, congregationally, and even societally. In both ecclesiological ontological and functional senses it is regenerative; thus it enhances the nature and function of the church—therefore, a wholesome ecclesiological paradigm. Moreover, Contemporary Evangelical ecclesiology is holistically regenerative rather than fragmentarily accentuative.¹⁸ Contemporary Evangelicalism is preeminently known for its evangelistic crusades and parachurch ministries, however, it is not merely a movement accentuating crusades and “parachurchism,” for it is a balanced framework of holistic ecclesiological nature and function. *Its missional structure coheres with its theological structures, its conceptual mold is verified by its biocentric consistency,¹⁹ and its Christological content is empowered by Pneumatic operation.²⁰*

Contemporary Evangelicalism is not fragmentarily accentuative because it does

¹⁷ Fahlbusch remarks, “In view of the ambivalence of the phenomenon [of the church], a relevant ecclesiology must present both the dogmatically normative premise and the empirical reality in a way that allows us to explain the conditions leading to the distinctive phenomena and to make intelligible the legitimacy and reality of the actual forms.” Erwin Fahlbusch, “Church: Subject, Tasks, and Problems of Ecclesiology,” in *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*.

¹⁸ Bloesch comments, “A viable doctrine of the church for our time will involve us in a passionate concern for church unity.” Bloesch, *The Future of Evangelical Christianity*, 129. Evangelicalism, however, goes beyond a mere external ecumenical approach; it rather presents an internal framework for the regeneration of ecclesial wholeness.

¹⁹ Thus an emphasis on living what is being preached, or “walking the talk.”

²⁰ Thus there is the emphasis on prayers and the role of the empowerment of the Holy Spirit in the proclamation of Christ.

not emphasize a particular ecclesiological feature as an overarching ecclesiology as traditionally common. For example a mystical church is such, because of its overarching emphasis on the ontological mysticity of the church. So is a liturgical church because of an overarching emphasis on liturgy; or a charismatic church because of the overarching emphasis on spiritual gifts. All these result in ecclesiologies which may seem whole but actually, merely an outgrowth from a fragment. Such an outgrowth ecclesiology at times is invocative of the concept of being as ecclesial remnant. However, the Biblical concept of remnant ecclesiology is not an ecclesiology born out of a fragment, but rather an ecclesiology that remains in its holistic integrity amidst the context of theological and spiritual disintegrations. Thus a true remnant ecclesiology is not a fragmented or propagating fragmentation, but holistically archetypal promoting ecclesiological holism.

Contemporary Evangelicalism is a non-separatistic and non-denominationalistic ecclesiology, as aforementioned in the preceding Part, there could be a realization of Contemporary Evangelicalism in Catholics,²¹ Protestants, Pentecostals, Orthodox, and Inter/Non-Denominational.²² Why? Because it is not intended as another ecclesiological construction amidst numerous ecclesiologies, but it is even a synthesizing paradigm for churches to discover what ecclesiological structure they are missing; then allow the process of evangelicalization to transform them into whole new churches, and consequently transforming the aggrupations of Christians into a whole new church.

²¹ For a brief exploration on Evangelical-Catholic dialogue, see J. Augustine DiNoia, "The Church in the Gospel: Catholics and Evangelicals in Conversation," *Pro Ecclesia* 13 (Spring 2004): 58-69. For further study, see Thomas P. Rausch, ed., *Catholics and Evangelicals: Do They share a Common Future?* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000).

²² For a discussion on varieties of American evangelicalism, see Donald W. Dayton and Robert K. Johnson, *The Variety of American Evangelicalism* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity, 1991).

Evangelicalism is not intended as a movement antagonistic of other churches; but is even unitive, as seen in evangelistic crusades, parachurch ministries, retreats, conferences, or even mass moral reactions, where churches are drawn together in fulfilling the common Christian mission.²³

6.4. Conclusion

To synthesize, Contemporary Evangelicalism presents a paradigm offering bright prospects for the Christian church. However, it is not merely an artificial or superficial ecclesiological paradigm, nor merely a reactionary movement. Beyond its paradigmatic and movemental features, it is indeed, as aforementioned in the preceding Part, the Pneumatic operation in restoring the church back to its original nature. Like humanity that fell due to accommodation of sin, the church too had fallen due to assimilation of things foreign to its essential nature. And like humanity in the process of regeneration in Christ through the Holy Spirit; churches in particular and the church in general could also experience regeneration of its ideal nature in Christ through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. And very essential among churches today, as it was after apostolic times, is the restoration of its Christocentric core and missional preoccupation through Pneumatic empowerment. The process of the restoration of the church is the intended evangelicalistic *telus* that has yet to be discovered and explored.

There is a need for the churches within Christianity, to undergo the process of evangelicalization, so that internally, Christianity will have one whole church, without

²³ This is descriptive even of the early stage of evangelicalism. Noll points out, “The dynamism of evangelicalism [eighteenth century] was revealed most clearly in its missional activity.” Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism*, 256.

disintegrating the existence of churches but, profoundly transforming them into one wholesome interconnected body of Christ. And such interconnection is not just superficial or organizational but theological and spiritual, ecclesiological and Christological, functional and Pneumatic—thus an ontological regeneration of the Christian church. This recreates a new era of Christianity, a new dimension in Christian life, and a fresh vision and zeal for the fulfillment of the Gospel Commission.

CHAPTER 7

WHY THE NEED FOR NEW REFORMATION?

Why the need for New Reformation? Because the Reformation sparked through Luther was not the culmination of ecclesial reformation, but rather the beginning of a long process finally maturing in the present time in Contemporary Evangelicalism. However, like its embryonic stage, its maturation too has not been properly regarded; the Christian church in general has missed the profound intent of the former and could also be missing the latter. When this happens, the bright prospects of established churches to be internally integral of one whole *ekklesia* of Christ would continue to be marred by ecclesiologically ontological, functional, and semiotic disintegrations until probably a new form of ecclesial entity would emerge.

In fact, the emergence of charismatic evangelical mega-churches is indicative not merely of sociological trend but profoundly, of the spiritual, missional and pastoral significance of non-traditional ecclesial entities that are more structurally prototypal than the established churches. The inherent structures of Christocentric content, biocentric missional focus, Pneumatic empowerment and transdenominationality—structures which are prototypal—are what make this mega ecclesial entities naturally prolific. These

entities are not only adapting prototypal structures, but, at the outset, are born with prototypal inherence that spontaneously matures along the way; in contrast to institutionalized churches whose characterization is constructed on a theological-ecclesiological fragment consequential of a theological-ecclesiological reaction, or self-forming conceptual assertion. Although church growth among institutionalized and established churches in South America, Asia, and Africa could not be generally denied, but such growth are not independent of assimilated evangelicalistic structures. Those churches grow because they learn to adapt evangelicalistic ecclesiological structures, missionally and pastorally, spiritually and theologically. People in the mission field just do not come to church per se, not until the church comes to them; although most likely, people who are fundamentally traditional are the ones who come to church as a perpetuation of their generational religious tradition. There is a dire need for established churches to be more truly evangelicalistically active. For such characteristic is essentially that of a more truly reformed church.

Thus in all these, there are profound rationales for the New Reformation of churches in particular and, eventually, the New Reformation of the one whole Christian church in general. The following are the five rationales with profound ecclesiological implications.

7.1. The 1517 Reformation was embryonic rather than terminal.

The Reformation sparked by Luther, followed by other Reformers, was intended to bring back the evangelical consciousness to the psyche of the church. It was intended to reform the deformed ergonistic soteriological structure of Christian faith to a fidestic

soteriological structure; and also to reform the extra-biblical epistemology to biblical epistemology. But it was not yet a missional movement, nor was emphatic of Pneumatic empowerment both individually and ecclesially. Further, although there was a sense of faith but, in itself, the fideistic structure was not yet biocentrically convertive. There was still no emphasis on active individual salvific and pragmatic conversion, although there was a convertive theological element. In fact it was more of a theological movement rather than an ecclesial movement per se. The concern was the reformation of what had been perceived as a deformed theological structure in Christianity. It could even be viably assumed that there was even no intention to bring about a unitive transdenominationality within the body of Christ. There was, of course, a theological construction on the concept of the universal invisible church, but the transdenominationality was conceptual, rather than missional and pastoral, pragmatic and utilitarian. It could also be viably assumed that the focus of Reformation may not even be the one whole Christian church, but the Western Church without emphatic and obvious inclusion of the Eastern or Coptic Churches.

In the contemporary maturation of evangelicalism could be seen a paradigm of reforming the framework of the church back to its whole prototypal being. The preceding Chapter describing the framework of Contemporary Evangelicalism is conclusive of this holistic orientation. And being indicative of the whole structure of the prototypal nature and purpose of *ekklesia*, *Contemporary Evangelicalism could be regarded as terminal, i.e., the full-grown of the Pneumatic process of restoring the church back to its prototypal nature, purpose, and function.* However, being terminal, it also poses the risk of losing

meaningful ecclesial life when its framework is not regeneratively assimilated into fragmentary and fragmented ecclesial existence and life.

The embryonicity of the 1517 Reformation and the terminality of Contemporary Evangelicalism necessitate a New Reformation. And this is a serious ecclesiological necessity requiring openness and wholehearted reception to the Pneumatic operation in the history of the church. As Hodgson emphasizes, “no viable ecclesiology can surrender the conviction that the church is the continuous creative and redemptive work of God, who indwells and empowers it as Holy Spirit.”¹ Berkhof also sees the dynamicity of ecclesial existence:

The fact of being church is thus not something static, it is a prototypal movement, a bridge-event. Therefore as it moves along it is itself continually changing.²

*The church could not continue to exist and live in its fragmentary and fragmented existence and life, for this could consequently result, not only in its missional breakdown but also, in its existential meaninglessness.*³ There is a serious need for churches to get over with their respective exclusion and be internally drawn together into one whole *ekklesia*. As Roof cautions:

...adopting narrow, sectarian notions of the church and ourselves would be alien to our theological heritage and our commitment to be a public church. Historically our churches have been “bridging institution” concerned with bringing all of life into some meaningful whole.⁴

The fact that the contemporary church is now being further fragmented, not only by theological issues but also by present moral issues, is descriptive of the further

¹ Hodgson, “Ecclesia of Freedom,” 225.

² Hendrikus Berkhof, *Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Study of Faith*, trans. Sherd Woodstra, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 415. The change, however, should be regarded as a change of form rather than of essence.

³ That is the meaningless of its existence.

⁴ Roof, “The Church in Centrifuge,” 1012.

disintegration of the church's holistically unitive structure. To say that the one Christ of Christianity has divergent conflicting faith structures is both ironical and polarizing. Although it could be argued that the existence of varied cultural or historical forms situating ecclesial life presupposes ecclesiological diversities. However, if such cultural or historical forms become the essences of ecclesial entities, then such ecclesial entities are substituting its essential being with incidental factors. Further, ecclesiological constructions based on solely historical revelatory moment is fragmentary, for such historical revelatory moment should be regarded as part of the continuous process of restoring the church back to its wholeness, not a particular ground for outgrowth-based ecclesiological construction.

Such irony puts at risk the testimonial and kerygmatic integrity of the one whole church. And this polarity further fragments the one body of Christ. With an ironical testimony and kerygma, and a polarized inter-ecclesial relationship amidst a missional field that has grown by billions, pose a serious question about the church's fulfillment of the Great Commission. It is not implied here that the conversion of the global society is dependent on the regeneration of the church into wholeness. But the wholeness of the church would enable the church to confront, more qualitatively and quantitatively, the serious missional and pastoral challenges pose by a secular and spiritually broken world to the church. As the Confessing Theologians Commission declares:

In the absence of faithful Christian witness, society establishes false idols....consumerism, materialism, individualism, and hedonism rush in to fill the void....a renewed church will reform public life.⁵

⁵ The Confessing Theologians Commission, "Be Stedfast: A Letter to Confessing Christians," in *Pilgrims in the Sawdust Trail*, ed. George, 210.

If the Christian church still believes on the primality of Christ, the indispensability of the Holy Spirit, missional cause, and its transdenominationality being the one body of Christ—then it should, by all means, undergo a New Reformation in the paradigm of the full-grown Contemporary Evangelicalism.

7.2. The Reformation consequence was separatistic rather than restorative.

The Reformation started in the 1517 and subsequent ecclesiological movements were not restoratively assimilated into the structures of the then existing churches, but were rather regarded as antagonistic reactionary movements that should be eschewed rather than generally adapted. Such an ecclesial disposition had led to the formation of churches embodying, not the whole of prototypal framework but, an ecclesiological revelatory aspects in opposition to other existing churches that were supposed to embody such aspect weak or lacking in their ecclesial life framework.

Thus every ecclesiological revelatory aspect would have its corresponding denominational formation. These denominations are actually ecclesial outgrowth, grounded on a fragment. Thus, instead of the realization of a progressive restoration of the church back to its prototypal framework, the consequence is the proliferation of separatistic ecclesiological constructions within the supposed to be one whole body. Instead of restoring the church into wholeness, there are consequential polarizing divisions. As Braten perceives it, “We have live in strange paradoxical situation in which Protestants have been trying to have the gospel and its freedom without the church and its structure and the Catholics have been trying to have a church with superabundance of

structure without the gospel.”⁶ Thus the irony of ecclesial renewal and decline, rather than a progressive regeneration of the church.⁷

What is meant here is not that amidst cultural and geographical factors, there should only be one uni-formed church, but that amidst cultural and geographical diversities, the church still remained essentially whole and one. Thus one in essence, though may be superficially diverse. Prototypal ecclesiological restoration does not preclude mitotic ecclesial growth, but that the mitosis is still within the framework of the progressive holistic growth of the church.

To recall the preceding Part I, if the emergence of ecclesiological revelatory movements would have been synthesized in the nature and function of all churches, Christianity could have experienced an astounding regeneration of the one whole Christian church. *From Luther’s Reformation—the restoration of faith and the Bible; from Pietism and Puritanism—a Spirit-filled devotional life; from the Awakenings—the missional cause; then finally from Contemporary Evangelicalism—the full-grown structure of Christocentricity, Pneumaticity, convertive biocentricity, Bibliocentricity, unitive transdenominationality, and missional emphasis. With the synthesis of all the essentials, the church could have been more like the body of Christ, more like the one called out to fulfill the Gospel Commission.* But what happened in all these stages of

⁶ Carl E. Braten, *Mother Church: Ecclesiology and Ecumenism* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998). 17.

⁷ Fraser even sees the need for the revival and reformation of evangelicalism, which is supposed to be a revival and reformation movement, “Short of revival and reformation...are likely to prevent evangelicalism from making a constructive and enduring response to the present moment.” Os Guinness, “The American Hour: The Evangelical Movement,” in *Evangelicalism*, ed. Fraser, 197. Nettles sees the necessity of both revival and reformation. He comments, “love and marriage go together” thus so “it is with revival and reformation; when individuals pursue one without proper appreciation for and attention to the other, the result can be very ugly.” Tom Nettles, “A Better Way: Church Growth Through Revival and Reformation,” in *Power Religion*, ed. Horton, 161.

revelation was that an aspect of the whole was absolutized, institutionalized and eccentricized.

Evans criticizes:

If the ecclesiologies of history have all contained truths, if they describe the same Church, they must cohere. The ecumenical task is to discern their coherence.⁸

However, the ecclesial predicament may not be so much in the discovery of their conceptual coherence for the Pneumatically operated ecclesiological revelation in the history of the church does cohere. It is, however, the coherence of ecclesial attitudes toward progressive Pneumatic operation in the history of the church that need to be discovered. It is the fragmentary approach to ecclesial formation that propagates incoherence, i.e., incoherence in assimilating and embodying the holistic framework of ecclesiological revelations. What the churches needed to be transformed into a whole church, is openness and wholehearted assimilation of holistic ecclesiological framework.

However, this holistic restorative scenario has never been realized yet. And Contemporary Evangelicalism has resorted to parachurch ministries, or ecclesiological category in contrast to Catholicism, Orthodox, Anglicanism, or even Pentecostalism, or a generic ecclesiological categorization of Christian conservatism in contrast to Christian liberalism within ecclesial entities. Churches in general, preoccupied with their respective “identity-centricities,” are hesitant, if not bureaucratically constraint, to assimilate the whole prototypal structures. Mudge expresses regrets, “The opportunity sacramentally to signify God’s gathering of the people of earth into a blessed community

⁸ Evans, *The Church and the Churches* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 4.

is severely compromised by the inability of Christian communions to surmount the ecclesiastical barriers that separate them.”⁹

At the outset, of course, the sense of self-sufficiency in every ecclesial entity hinders the cumulative ecclesiological regeneration. Volf reminds that, “no ecclesiology can proceed in self-satisfied isolation.”¹⁰ Thus what we have in Christianity are accidental churches, rather than one archetypal church situated in different cultural or geographical settings. Because of this situation, the history of Christian church is a history of fragmentation and separationism rather than a progressively restorative synthesis. This ecclesial landscape necessitates New Reformation that is regenerative of the archetypal nature of the whole ecclesial body.

7.3. Christianity is still very denominationalistic rather than unitive.

Christianity is still entrapped in denominational institutionalism, although not as entrapped as before. And Riddel poses this warning:

God will not be contained. The attempt to construct boxes for the divine presence is doomed to tragedy.¹¹

Even at the onset of Contemporary Evangelicalism, denominational separatism tied up to denominational institutionalism, was still obvious. At the early days of the Billy Graham crusades, there was even a very negative attitude by other church leaders against the involvement of other churches in common evangelistic cause. But subsequently

⁹ Lewis S. Mudge, *The Church as a Moral Community: Ecclesiology and Ethics in Ecumenical Debate* (New York: Continuum), 120. However, he speaks of this in the context of “solidarity with the suffering world.” Ibid.

¹⁰ Volf, *After Our Likeness*, 19.

¹¹ Michael Riddel, *Threshold of the Future: Reforming the Church in the post-Christian West* (London: SPCK, 1998), 174. See this book for challenges on the new reformation.

denominational barriers began dissipating, and presently greater interdenominational relationship could be seen. From scholarly societies, to missions, to crusades, to retreats and conferences, to ministerial associations, to councils or associations of churches, to academe could be seen greater ecclesial interrelationship. Even theological conferences are getting inter-ecclesial as in the 2005 joint conference of the Society for the Study of Theology (Protestant) and the Irish Theological Association (Catholic).

However, in spite of the pervasiveness of interdenominational relationship, the church still is in quest for deeper “ecumenicity,” that may not even be tagged ecumenical according to the present orientation of ecumenism. This is so because organic ecumenicity¹² will find great difficulty amidst individualized denominational identity. Each denomination naturally clings on to their respective distinctions. Thus, while joint endeavors are getting common, yet preservation of denominational distinctions is still perpetuated. This is so because such distinctions are regarded as unique ecclesiological hallmarks, indicating that the hallmarks of Christian churches are both divergent and contrasting. In this context, denominational identities could be hardly unifying and synthesizing. It is so because the usual approach to unifying the body of Christ is external rather than internal. It is like trying to unify human society under one government amidst cultural, geographical and political diversities.

Mudge however proposes what could be seen as an approach deeper than the

¹² What is meant here is an effort to organize churches into one umbrella organization that would be determinative of denominational members’ ecclesiological structure, in spite of a variety of forms. In regards to ecumenicity, Rose in the late 60’s, proposes a concept of decentralized church structure that would “be formed the cells of the coming ecumenopolis” where ecumenicity is horizontal and ministerially cooperative. Stephen C. Rose “Shape and Style of the Church Tomorrow,” *Theology Today* 25 (April 1968): 77. An internally regenerative process, however, could even be more viable and profoundly prospective than an organizational or associational approach.

usual organizational structural ecumenism or cause-oriented associational approach. He suggests, “The need today could be to reconstruct different visions of church-in-world not as new ‘denominations’ but as varieties of spiritual-moral practice lifting up different concerns with the communion of one church.”¹³ This proposal, however, is still fragmentary and could be considered as assuming that the church has diverse forms of spiritual-moral ministries. And indeed the church has evolved into complex societal institution with complex educational, medical, humanitarian, social, and media roles. The church has become more complex in form than the prototypal *ekklesia*. However, the church should not forget that these roles are simply corollary to its most essential kerygmatic role. And should societal culture or a particular role become the distinguishing mark of ecclesial entities—the church becomes either merely a culturalized or institutionalized entity rather than the *ekklesia* of Christ itself.

However, in Contemporary Evangelicalism, could be seen an internal approach to unifying the churches of Christ. It is a viable paradigm because it is not external or merely organic nor associational, but theologically and ecclesiologically ontological. It is meant to transform the very nature of the churches into something archetypal, so that by its internal transformation, they would all be regenerated into one whole Christian church. When churches are regenerated into their respective whole archetypal nature, their nature becomes one; thus one ecclesial nature in spite of a variety of forms. Churches then are internally and spiritually knitted together as one people of God, not divergent and conflicting peoples of God. This oneness as people of God is proleptic of the oneness of the redeemed people of God in the *eschaton*. The church eschatological prolepticity

¹³ Mudge, *The Church as a Moral Community*, 122.

necessitates a unitive and synthesizing New Reformation.

7.4. Ecclesiology is still fragmentary rather than unitive.

Although there is a present recognition of ecclesiological metaphoricity in established ecclesiologies, yet such metaphorical recognition is still overshadowed by assertive disposition on denominational ecclesiological essentiality tending towards an ironical absolutism. It is ironical because while there is an almost getting prevalent recognition of the viability of other ecclesiologies, denominationalistic metaphorically-based ecclesiologies are still prevalently respectively asserted as *the* ecclesiology among ecclesiologies. Thus we have Catholic ecclesiology, Protestant ecclesiology, Pentecostal ecclesiology, Orthodox ecclesiology, Nondenominational or Interdenominational ecclesiology—who, while now beginning to recognize the probable validity of one another on grounds of being variant ecclesiological models, are still assertive of their respective ecclesiology as paradigmatic.

There is still the absence of prevalent acceptability to assimilate the whole prototypal structures. In fact the lacking or weak prototypal structure/s are, at times, avoided because of apprehension that this/these could be antagonistic to, if not threatening denominationalistic identity, characterized as unique. This misconceived, if not preconceived, notion creates a theological ambiance that results in fragmentary ecclesiology. Thus individualized ecclesiology remains an outgrowth from an ecclesiological aspect from which a corresponding ecclesiological model is formulated resulting in separatistic ecclesiological construction. And, at times, separatistic ecclesiological constructions are justified on the grounds of the concept of diversity in the

body of Christ. But it should be noted that diversity in the body of Christ is not an ecclesial or ecclesiological diversity, but rather a charismatic diversity, i.e., diversity of gifts for the accomplishment of the different ministries of the one body of Christ. Thus, there is a need for the reformation of churches to become more truly prototypal rather than more denominationalistic.

Even the usual approach to ecumenical movement that aims to unite churches together is still a circumstantial, rather than archetypal, approach. That is, it attempts to unite churches together in the framework of confronting the common particular circumstance in societal life, as churches of different traditions. It starts from the proposition that churches are really diverse but could be one in cause. Thus a causal approach rather than profoundly ontological. Yes, it could be argued that causal approach is realistic than a more idealistic approach. But the archetypal approach places the church in the context of the whole salvation history. Humanity is archetypally intended as one people of God. Because of the Fall, humanity has become diversely separatistic.¹⁴ Yet, humanity is still of one essence, and in spite of its superficial diversities, is still intended as one restored, reconciled, and completely regenerated one people of God in the *eschaton*. It is this wider soterio-eschatological perspective that ecclesiology should cohere, being the pastoral, missional and symbolic entity of one humanity in God.

In terms of the need for integrative spirituality Riddle pose this challenge:

Life is already split and fragmented, and many people feel the lack of a sustaining center to existence. A spirituality adequate to the missiological task will be one which is integrating and holistic. In the development of New Testament Christology, the drama of the Christ-event reaches cosmological proportions (Colossians 1.15-20, Ephesians 1.3-14). In doing so it binds together creation and redemption so that the purpose of God and the meaning of human

¹⁴ As Davis emphasizes, “We need renewal, reform, and revival because we live in the midst of the fallout of the Fall.” Davis, “Who Is the Holy Spirit Today?,” in *Pilgrims on the Sawdust Trail*, ed. George, 93.

existence are united. Contemporary Christian spirituality will need to rediscover the emphasis, and move toward bringing together disparate elements of faith and experience.¹⁵

In its nature and purpose, the *ekklesia* of God is one. Divergent ecclesiological natures and purposes are disintegrative of this essential oneness. Thus there could be no two or more churches of Christ but only one. And in the context of ecclesial fall into fragmentation and separatism, unitive regeneration could not be viably approach externally but internally. The external associational or conciliar approach to uniting the body of Christ could just provide a framework for occasional common endeavors while still perpetuating recognition of theological-ecclesiological distinctions.

However, when churches assimilate the whole internal prototypal ecclesiological structures, then churches will be regenerated into one *ekklesia* of God. *When churches within Christianity becomes Christocentric, Pneumatic, Bibliocentric, biocentrically missional, and transdenominational—their internal commonality will naturally result in profound ontological, relational, and functional unity and oneness.*¹⁶

7.5. The church is now more eschatological than ever.¹⁷

The destiny of the church is not in itself. When the church has become regarded

¹⁵ Riddel, *Threshold of the Future*, 133.

¹⁶ Flew perceived a growing conviction in the late 30's for the church to be what is was meant to be, "The conviction is growing that the need of Christian people is a fresh vision of the Church of Christ as God meant it to be, His own creation, the instrument of His age-long purpose, the reconciling Body in which all mankind might meet in a worship and service which would extend to the farthest boundaries of human life." R. Newton Flew, *Jesus and His Church: A Study of the Idea of the Ecclesia in the New Testament* (London: Epworth, 1960), 12.

¹⁷ Stackhouse and colleagues characterize the urgency of situating the church, "Christian churches face a new global situation full of promise and peril. Led by new developments in economics, technology, and media, by wider and more direct contact between the world and religion, and by a wider consensus about human rights, ecological dangers, and the costs of war, new institutional and social practices are emerging on all sides." Max L. Stackhouse, Tim Dearborn, and Scott Paeth, eds. *The Local Church in a Global Era: Reflections for a New Century* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000).

as the eschatological *telus*, then it begins to confine its life in self-absorption.¹⁸ And as such, it begins to construct ideological grounds for its salvific claims, and this self-claim would eventually result in the humanistic transformation of the church. The institution of the church then becomes the center of life, diverting attention from Christ and his kingdom. Faith then becomes institutionalistic and traditionalistic;¹⁹ both individual and congregational believers become settled within the walls of ecclesial institution. This ecclesial life situation could result in, either the disfranchisement of eschatological expectations, or the disfranchisement of regenerative necessity symptomatic of false self-claim of eschatological surety.²⁰ In this sense the church becomes lost en route to its eschatological journey, if not abandon its eschatological journey altogether. It becomes just like one of the human institutions, and may even be worse because it could be dogmatic while being a split-level polarized institution. This is the risk that confronts the church when it loses its appropriate eschatological framework.

In regards to institutionalization Snyder warns:

Institutionalization is cumulative...institutionalization will in time become deadening. Unless periodically reversed by institutional renewal, institutionalization will spell spiritual death for any church or movement.²¹

However, again, if the church is viewed merely as an institution, institutional renewal may not even be enough to sustain its spiritual life. But if the church is viewed in its

¹⁸ Hanson warns against “thinly veiled program of self-aggrandizement” and challenges to lay “aside all triumphalism and placing not its own needs but the needs of the world at the forefront.” Hanson, “The Identity and Purpose of the Church,” 346.

¹⁹ Abraham criticizes, “Within Christianity, commitment to tradition is often seen as the great obstacle to progress in ecumenism.” Abraham, *The Coming Great Revival*, 2.

²⁰ Phillips and Okholm remind that, “the church has no power in and of itself, but only that mediated by Christ. The church will not bring in the consummated kingdom. That is Christ’s own work.” Phillips and Okholm, *A Family of Faith*, 120.

²¹ Snyder, *The Community of the King*, 64.

deeper ontological sense, its being could be spiritually renewed—then vibrant ecclesial life would just sustainably ensue.

Moreover, the church to be ever meaningful and significant, should not lose its appropriate place in the continuum of salvation history. And its appropriate place is its being the missional and pastoral means for guiding humanity in their spiritual journey to the kingdom. And the nearer the kingdom is coming, the fuller it should accomplish its purpose. When the church remains stagnant while the kingdom is coming, it loses its existential meanings and missional relevance.

The 1517 Reformation was reactionary of the fall of the church. However, since Reformation, the Christian church still remains fragmented and ecclesiological fragmentary. The nearness of the present time to the *eschaton*, necessitates serious considerations for churches to get-over with their respective fragmentary eccentricities,²² and allow the Pneumatic operation to transform them into prototypal ecclesial entities—fulfilling the Gospel Commission in anticipation of the soon *parousia*. When the church loses its sense of immediacy and urgency, it remains on its comfort zones stiffened by traditions. Then it loses its evangelicity, and ironically redefines even the evangel in terms of its denominationalistic suppositions. Bauder warns:

When you lose the ability to define the evangel, you lose the ability to define evangelicalism. More than that, you lose the ability to define Christianity.²³

However, when the church sense of immediacy and urgency is indeed awakened, then it

²² Knippers foresees, “I do not think the shape of the future church will be the bureaucratic, politicized, modernist denominations of the twentieth century. In fact, I believe the church will be mature and diverse, ecumenical, theologically grounded, capable of addressing major ethical issues, and global, and it will be shaped and lived by the next generation.” Diane Knippers, “God Is Working among Us,” in *Pilgrims in the Sawdust Trail*, ed. George, 195.

²³ Kevin T. Bauder, “What’s That You Smell?: A Fundamental Response to *The Smell of Sawdust*,” in *Pilgrims on the Sawdust Trail*, ed. George, 66.

becomes open and receptive to the historical Pneumatic restorative operations. It allows and imbibes the re-formation of the whole archetypal structures into its ecclesial being—transforming its ecclesiality into the nature and being more truly reflective of the Christocentric Pneumatically empowered *ekklesia*.

This is not intended as an eschatological paper, but suffice it to say that, if churches are to fulfill the Great Commission there could be no other time necessitating the transformation of churches into their whole prototypal framework than now. It could be conjectural to foresee the termination of the missional and pastoral election of the present ecclesial form because of failure in fulfilling its purpose due to being stunted by denominationalistic self-centeredness; however, the termination of the missional and pastoral election of the Old Testament ecclesial entity due to its vocational failure does pose a considerable probability. As could be seen now, parachurch and transdenominational ministry endeavors are proving themselves more productive than a merely denominational effort. These parachurches and transdenominational ministries, at times, still do have church connections; but will time come when because of the ontological and functional failures of established churches, that these ministries will become fully independent and in themselves the embodiment of the new missional and pastoral entities Pneumatically elected and empowered? And the established churches are left in oblivion?

With the urgency of humanity's need to be prepared for the *parousia*, churches should now be seriously reflective of becoming more truly the *ekklesia* that Christ meant them to be, and the Holy Spirit intended to empower. If ever there is an immediate and

urgent need for the New Reformation of the Christian church, it is now.²⁴ Why? *First*, we now have full-grown prototypal ecclesiological structures in the paradigm of Contemporary Evangelicalism. And *second*, the present time has become even more dynamic, unpredictable, and eschatological. The world is beset by more and more crisis amidst false hopes on human capabilities. From moral confusions, even within Christianity, to the fears of global warming, tsunami, terrorism, asteroids, new forms of diseases—the world needs more than ever a greater sense of profound hope. And there could be no more profoundly meaningful hope than the Christological hope. And there is yet no suitable instrument of hope than the church.

Riddel poses this serious and profound challenge:

The church in the West is in the early stages of a massive reformation. Out in the frontiers there are pioneers of the faith, already engaging with the emerging culture.... But it is not enough for a few radicals to lead the way. The great mass of the Western church must shift.... In the process, some Christian resources will have to be reassessed. Scripture will remain central, but the way it is processed and appropriated may need to change. Holiness, worship, spirituality, conversion, evangelism and the shape of the church will be revisited. Radical surgery is more traumatic than minor surgery. It requires careful preparations, skillful intervention and extensive aftercare. But as long as it is the Spirit guiding the process, and not a self-selected group who “know what’s right” for the church, we may retain confidence in the long-term prognosis.²⁵

But will churches allow themselves to be regenerated into one whole *ekklesia* that is more truly instrumental of the Christological hope? Or will they ignore the call for the New Reformation, and just disregard the meanings and implications of the Pneumatological phenomenon of Contemporary Evangelicalism? The answer will be

²⁴ Hall sees the need for renewal at congregational level. He writes, “Unless there is a radical theological renewal affecting the Protestant denominations at the congregational level, the remnants of classical Protestantism in North American will not survive the twenty-first century.” Douglas John Hall, “The Future of Protestantism in North American,” *Theology Today* 52 (January 1996): 458-465.

²⁵ Riddel, *Threshold of the Future*, 173-174.

descriptive of the deepness of their respective absorption of denominational eccentricities, and will be predictive of their respective pastoral and missional electionary destinies. To close with Riddel’s words, “Only in the relinquishing of self-assurance, pride and confidence will there be humility to learn from the Spirit.”²⁶

7.6. Conclusion

The 1517 Reformation was embryonic, and the restorative ecclesial process has been progressing since then. In Contemporary Evangelicalism could be seen the paradigm of the full-grown process of ecclesial reformation. It is revelatory of the Pneumatic operation of restoring the church back to its prototypal structures. The emergence of Contemporary Evangelicalism is an urgent call for the New Reformation of churches into one whole *ekklesia* of Christ—into one regenerated people of God fulfilling their vocational purpose en route to the kingdom of God.

Logan poses this challenge too:

The need to renew the Christian ideal, to reaffirm the essential meaning of Christianity, to revive the human spirit by a return to the pristine elements of Christian living was not limited to any one period in history and was as old as Pentecost and the early church.²⁷

And now—with the emergence of an apparent paradigm of Contemporary Evangelicalism for global ecclesial regeneration amidst the urgency of the present time—the time is ripe for the New Reformation! And imagine—the Christian church actually going back to its pristine state and prolificacy...

²⁶ Ibid., 172.

²⁷ F. Donald Logan, *A History of the Church in the Middle Ages* (London: Routledge, 2002), 105.

PART III

PEOPLEHOOD OF GOD AS PARADIGMATIC OF
PROTOTYPAL EVANGELICAL ECCLESIOLOGY

CHAPTER 8

THE CALLING OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD PRECEDING THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

God has always been calling a people since the Fall. Snyder, in the context of the Old Testament, remarks:

This concept of peoplehood is firmly rooted in the Old Testament and underlines the objective fact of God's acting throughout history to call and prepare a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God (1 Pet. 2:9; compare Ex. 19:5-6).¹

Hayes, in the context of the New Testament, brings out a similar point:

Central to the theology of the Christian faith is an understanding of the unique work in calling out a people for Himself. Part of the good news that the apostles preached was the direct revelation from Jesus Christ that His redemptive work of grace would bear fruit in the formation of the church.²

The concept of the peoplehood of God is very foundational in ecclesiological understanding and in understanding the continuum that consequently resulted in the formation of the Christian church, and the continuum of God's call to humanity from the Fall to the eventual restoration of the archetypal cosmological state. In the pre-Fall state, humanity was one in God. There were no divergent humanities externally joint together

¹ Snyder, *The Community of the King*, 58. Thus Kung sees that, "The concept of the people of God is at the heart of Judaism." Kung, *The Church*, 116.

² Ed Hayes, *The Church: The Body of Christ in the World Today* (Nashville: Word, 1999), xviii.

in God, but that there was only one humanity³ whose essence was a perfect humanity: created perfectly, in perfect relationship with the Creator- God, and in perfect relationship with one another. By virtue of the ideality of God's primal creation, this could be an appropriate characterization. However, the Fall marred this archetypal state.

Immediately⁴ after the Fall, God was calling Adam out of the world of hideness and state of fear.⁵ It was a call to come out from a fallen world to a state of reconciliation with God.⁶ But since then, human response is often times diversionary rather than responsive. Adam's alibi was embryonic of further human ideological constructions centered on self-excuse, a self-justification with propensity to divert human orientation away from God. This was the beginning of humanistic rather than divinely-oriented response. Humanistic ideological constructions are, at the outset, self-assertive, then secularistic. It is self-assertive because they eventually become assertions of human capabilities disregarding the primality of God's creative and regenerative roles. It is secularistic in the sense of being human attempts to find solution primarily within human realm, thus eventually outside of God. This humanistic self-assertion is one of the greatest ideological ironies of humankind, for while it admits human shortcomings, it also attempts to find a way out of human predicaments by primarily resorting to deficient human capabilities in the circumstance of degenerative life situations.

³ Consideration of racial diversity in the pre-Fall state could be speculative on grounds of speculative ecological and cultural existence.

⁴ The details of how immediate it was, is not indicated in the Biblical account.

⁵ "Toward evening they heard the Lord God walking about in the garden, so they hid themselves among the trees. The LORD GOD called Adam, 'Where are you?' He replied, 'I heard you, so I hid. I was afraid because I was naked.'" Genesis 3:8-10. It is beyond the scope of this work to discuss the narrative's acceptability, evangelicalism simply regard biblical narratives as it is, within the framework of its soteriological significance.

⁶ As Grenz sees it, "God's purpose is to establish 'one new humanity' consisting of a reconciled people (Eph. 2:14-19)... As the fellowship of believers we enter into relationship with God and one another. This covenant relationship is a foretaste of the future community we will share in the new creation..." Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God*, 461.

It is in the context of humanistic, secularistic, self-assertive, and degenerative life situation of humanity that God has been calling people to come out of such life situation, to experience regeneration, and be reconciled to him as their Creator-God. And since the archetypal state of relationship is not only characterized by perfect human-divine relationship but also by the spontaneously coexistent perfect human-human relationship, the divine call is not just for people to be reconciled to God but also to be reconciled to one another. And by virtue of the foundationality of the restoration of divine-human relationship in the restoration of human-human relationship, response to God's call is primarily soteriological then consequently missional.⁷ That is, people need to respond to the salvific call of God, experience regeneration, and consequently be reconciled to their Creator-God who is the root of their life.⁸ This divine-human reconciliation is the essence of divine human love—a perfect living relationship enjoyed whose realization is willed by both parties.

Then, the people who responded to God's call and are in the state of reconciliation-in-love with God could not but also love their fellow human beings. But recognizing that love between humans could not be perfectly realized by themselves, those who are living in the love of God, become the missionaries of the salvific love of God. Because of their love to God and their love to their fellow human beings, they proclaim God's love and lead other people to love God, so that when they all love God

⁷ Further by virtue of the individual volitional freedom the Creator-God endowed to humanity, response to God's call is individual. Thus humans have to positively respond to the salvific call of God.

⁸ As Noll said of the search for Christian mind in relation to the search for an evangelical mind, "The search for a Christian mind is rather an effort to take seriously the sovereignty of God over the world he created, the lordship of Christ over the world he died to redeem, and the power of the Holy Spirit over the world he sustains each and every moment. From this perspective the search for an evangelical mind takes an ultimate significance, because the search for an evangelical mind is not, in the end, a search for mind, but a search for God." Mark A. Noll, "The Evangelical Mind," in *The Evangelical Landscape: Essays on the American Evangelical Tradition*, ed. Garth M. Rosell (Grand Rapids: BakerBooks, 1996), 38.

they would naturally love one another. Thus the restorative end of the divine-human relationship is the most profound of humanity's need for this determines the future existence of humanity. To synthesize, God's call to people is a salvific call with missional implication. The salvific objective and the missional implications are the essences of the divine "*ek-klesiality*," the essence of God's act of calling people out of the fallen life circumstance into a regenerated life.

8.1. The Calling of God's People Preceding Israel

Although God's call to Adam was the genesis of God's call for humanity to come out of the fallen world; but in an ecclesiological sense, the divine call to Noah and his family⁹ could be regarded as an embryonic paradigm of God's ecclesial call. The life situation, the theology of God's call, the characterization of the called out ones, and the intended end are embryonically paradigmatic in the history of the church. The Noahic call, although indicating a representative individual response, was a call to a family necessitating familial response; thus could be regarded as the primal precedent of God's corporate ecclesial calls.

Genesis relates God's call to Noah's family:

When the human population began to grow rapidly on the earth.... Now the LORD observed the extent of the people's wickedness.... But Noah found favor with the LORD.... Noah was a righteous man, the only blameless man living on earth at the time. He consistently followed God's will and enjoyed a close relationship with him.... So God said to Noah.... "I have decided to destroy all living creatures.... Make a boat.... I solemnly swear to keep you safe in the boat

⁹ The citations, in this work, of various historical calls of God for people to come out to fulfill his purpose are not intended as implying a dispensationalist perspective, but to point out the facticity of God's ever patient call for humanity amidst general human irresponsiveness or misdirected reactions. Such prevalent negativity, however, did not also preclude the responsiveness of those who wholeheartedly listened to God's call.

with your wife and your sons and their wives....” So Noah did everything exactly as God commanded him.¹⁰

The structural elements of this call could be identified as:

Life situation: The proliferation of wickedness in the world.

Theology of God’s call: Calling a family, who preserved their peoplehood of God, as the medium for regenerating the world with new humanity.

The called: The only family with close relationship with God, amidst the spiritually darkened world, thus the people of God.

The intended end: To regenerate the fallen world through radical global ecological transformation and peopling the world with a new people of God, thus global renewal of humanity.

God called Noah and his family to come out of the judged world into an ark¹¹ that would be their temporary refuge before the new world. Although Noah’s missional endeavor could be viably assumed while building the ark, but what was obvious in the Noahic call was the soteriological intent. There was an apparent divine intent to save and to renew the spiritual state of humanity. Although theodicy is not the intent of this work, but suffice it to say that by virtue of God’s Creatorship and eventual welfare of humanity, it was an inherent divine prerogative to radically curtail destructive propensity and regenerate the world with new humanity. Amidst that degenerated world God had a people, a family that did everything exactly as he had commanded them.¹² And he called

¹⁰ Genesis 6:1-22.

¹¹ Although for Augustine, the ark was regarded as metaphoric of the church as the ark of salvation, however, stretching the metaphor too much to construct an allegorical theology of the church as exclusive soteriological locus, could lead to a humanistic institutionalization and exclusion of the spiritually transcending and inclusive soteriological plan of God.

¹² Genesis 6:22.

that family unto salvation. Here could be seen the concept of God calling a people unto salvation from expected universal judgment, in a sense an ecclesia anticipating the *eschaton*.

Right after the flood, there was a new beginning of humanity. But then, afterwards, again there was the resurgence of humanistic, secularistic, and spiritually degenerative disposition in life. Humanity began to live in a life independent of the Creator and dependent on human capabilities; thus, the Babel phenomenon of humanity's fragmentation.

Genesis portrays the phenomenon:

At one time the whole world spoke a single language and used the same words. As the people migrated eastward, they found a plain in the land of Babylonia and settled there. They began to talk about construction projects. "Come," they said, "let's make great piles of burnt bricks and collect natural asphalt to use as a mortar. Let's build a great city with a tower that reaches to the skies—a monument to our greatness! This will bring us together and keep us from scattering all over the world..." [But] the LORD scattered them all over the earth; and that ended the building of the city. That is why the city was called Babel, because it was there that the LORD confused the people by giving them many languages, thus scattering them across the earth.¹³

Herein were the ironically tragic consequences of secularistic, humanistic and self-assertive approach to reconstructing human wholeness: confusion, diaspora, and fragmentation. With these came further degenerative side effects of exclusion, conflicts, wars, and brutalities. And these were characteristics not only of the ancient Babel history but even of the history of the church; when churches became secularistic, humanistic and self-assertive in their approach to reconstructing ecclesial "wholeness".

It was in that setting of humanity's fragmentary diversities, even diversities of

¹³ Genesis 11¹-8.

religions and spiritualities losing relational rootedness in the one Creator-God, that another family was called out from a polytheistic locality. Genesis tells the call of Abram:

Then the LORD told Abram, “Leave your country, your relatives, and your father’s house, and go the land that I will show you. I will cause you to become the father of a great nation.... All the families of the earth will be blessed through you.” So Abram departed as the LORD had instructed him, and Lot went with him.¹⁴

The structural elements of this call could be identified as:

Life situation: The proliferation of religious and spiritual confusion.

Theology of God’s call: Calling a family who had a spiritual inclination to become a people of God and responsive enough to re-generate the people of God amidst a polytheistic world.

The called: A family, though influenced by situated culture, still remained relatively connected with the Creator-God, still responsive to his call, and willing to obey God and be his people.

The intended end: To re-generate the theistically confused world with a new generation of God’s people.

The world from which Abraham was called out was a confused world of multiple spiritualities and gods. It was a world that was spiritually and theistically lost.¹⁵ The divine call to Abraham was a call to come out of that lost world, be a people of God, live in a safe zone, and re-generate God’s people who would be a blessing to all the families of the earth, i.e., to the whole humanity. The calling of Abraham’s family to be God’s

¹⁴ Genesis 12:1-4.

¹⁵ Rosenbaum notes, “Abraham’s wife Sarah’s—name is also moon-related in Akkadian (*sarratu* = Ningal, wife of Sin). Such evidence seems to suggest that Abram/Abraham’s ancestors were moon worshippers, something that should come as no surprise so deep into the era that began with “farming revolution.” Stanley Ned Rosenbaum, *Understanding Israel: A Reexamination of the Origins of Monotheism* (Georgia: Mercer University Press, 2002), 126-127.

people was metaphoric of the calling of nominal Christians to a wholehearted commitment to God's call, live in a purposeful life, and re-generate the world with God's people.¹⁶ Abraham responded with a leap of faith, obedient, and trustful to the divine call without pragmatic grounds for bright prospects of future life. His response was a model of faith, and his call was a missional call. Thus, here we had the apparent concept of missional progenation of God's people amidst the spiritually and theistically confused world, in a sense an early stage of missional ecclesia.

The story of Lot was another story of God's ecclesiality to save a people from imminent judgment. Again like the life situation in Noah's time, judgment could not merely be equated as punitive judgment for punishment sake; but in a more teleological sense, the curtailment of serious destructive propensity so as to possibly allow a progenation of another people of God; in a sense, soteriologically intended.

Genesis again accounts the call of Lot:

“Do you have any other relatives here in the city?” the angels asked. “Get them out of this place—sons-in-law, sons, daughters, or anyone else. For we will destroy the city completely. The stench of the place has reached the LORD, and he has sent us to destroy it.” So Lot rushed out to tell his daughters' fiancés, “Quick, get out of the city!” The LORD is going to destroy it.... At dawn the next morning the angels became insistent. “Hurry!” they said to Lot. “Take your wife and your two daughters who are here. Get out of here right now, or you will be caught in the destruction of the city. When Lot still hesitated, the angels seized his hand and the hands of his wife and two daughters and rushed them to safety outside the city, for the LORD was merciful. “Run for your lives!” the angels warned.¹⁷

The structural elements of this call could be identified as:

Life situation: The proliferation of wickedness in the city.

¹⁶ As Armerding notes, “The people of God throughout history have by their very nature provided an antithesis to the secular world.” Armerding, “The Evangelical in the Secular World,” 130.

¹⁷ Genesis 19:12-17.

Theology of God's call: Calling a family, through direct intervention, out of the wicked city imminently judged.

The called: A family clan, but only the immediate family of four hesitantly responded, minus one.

The intended end: Salvation from imminent destruction.

The Lotic call brings another aspect of God's ecclesiality, e.g., direct intervention, and an embryo of salvific kerygma, thus a missional embryo. When Lot hesitated, the angels seized his hand and the hands of his wife and two daughters. This is an incipient stage of a salvific missional aggressiveness, when God's act of saving humanity through divine agents, i.e., the angels, was no longer a passive wait and see approach, but was actively interventionistic. It was like an early stage of an active evangelistic missional approach. Again the one called out from a morally darkened world was a family that still had the sense of relationship with God. Lot and his immediate family members were the people of God in the city of Sodom. However, within that family of God there was still a falling away. This is not intended to be too allegorical, but somehow this reminds the ecclesia of the historical falling away from the called out people of Christ.¹⁸ Further, here we see a concept of God calling a people out of a sinful world to save them from imminent destruction, in a sense an ecclesia meant for a salvific end.

¹⁸ Carpenter criticizes evangelicalism in the backdrop of the falling away in different periods of Protestantism, see John B. Carpenter, "The Fourth Great Awakening or Apostasy: Is American Evangelicalism Cycling Upwards or Spiraling Downwards? *Journal of Evangelical Theological Society* 44(December 2001): 647-670.

8.2. The Calling of Israel as the People of God

Now historically leaping from familial to a more corporate and more paradigmatic divine ecclesiality—the calling of Israel, the progeny of Abraham’s family. We see in the calling of Israel a direct precedence of Christian church. The identification of Israel and the Christian church is so close, that it even creates confusion¹⁹ resulting in ecclesiological conflicts. Thus there is a view fusing Israel and the Christian church, while another one proposes continuity of the distinct election of Israel in parallel with the election of Christian church, and still another see the cessation of Israel’s divine election that was transferred to the Christian church. However, the biblical perspective of divine ecclesiality is really not that confusing. A un-preconceive look at Israel’s calling and its consequential response in the framework of God’s historical call is ecclesologically clarifying.

Exodus characterizes God’s call of Israel:

Then Moses climbed the mountain to appear before God. The LORD called out to him, Give this instructions to the descendants of Jacob, the people of Israel. You know how I brought you to myself and carried you on eagle’s wings. Now if you will obey me and keep my covenant, you will be my own special treasure from among all nations of the earth; for all the earth belongs to me. And you will be to me a kingdom of priests, my holy nation.²⁰

The structural elements of the call could be identified as:

Life situation: Physical and spiritual slavery of a people amidst a polytheistic society.

¹⁹ Smith’s comment reflects this confusion, “It is a serious error to believe that God has rejected Israel in favor of the church. Yet it is equally problematic to believe that God has two peoples—Israel and the church—and has different purposes for each. God has only one people.... Some maybe labeled ‘Israel’ and some ‘church’....” David L. Smith, *All God’s People: A Theology of the Church* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 205-206. The two could not be literally, spiritually, or missional confused; for one is an ethnic group and the other is not, Israel rejected Jesus while the church accepted him, and the church’s mission is the proclamation of Christ which was apparently not an Israelic mission.

²⁰ Exodus 19:3-6.

Theology of the call: Calling a people out of slavery to make them God's people for a special purpose.

The called: A later generation of a previously called Abrahamic family that had extended into an ethnic group.

The intended end: To free a people from slavery, reconcile them to God, and make them a kingdom of priests.

The Israelic call was ecclesiologically fuller than the precedent calls and could had been the highlight of the divine call for humanity. It was ecclesiologically fuller because of the following characteristics:

There was a detailed volitional propositions on how the people of God could be more truly reconciled back to God. The Pentateuch is replete with propositions intended to strengthen Israel's commitment to and reconciliation with God; with such commitment and reconciliation anticipated to bring about national blessings to them. Those propositions were pedagogical means to spiritually and morally re-educate a people acculturated by cultures foreign to their original heritage faith psyche. There was a process of deconstructing their internal conceptual and attitudinal psyche, so that they could think and act more truly like the people of God intended them to be. This deconstruction and reconstruction of their psyche is descriptive of a regenerative process; thus the concept of convertive piety. As Bush points out:

Though rooted in God's initiative and grace, the covenant held the people of God responsible for living a life worthy of their calling....It is this quality of life that the Pentateuch's various 'codes of law' articulate.²¹

²¹ Frederick W. Bush, "Images of Israel: The People of God in the Torah," in *Studies in Old Testament Theology*, eds. Robert L. Hubbard, Jr., Robert K. Johnston, and Robert P. Meye (Dallas: Word, 1992), 104.

Moreover their convertive piety was volitional. Although the punitive consequence of disobedience in contrast to the blissful end result of obedience was emphasized; however, both individually and corporately, they were free to choose the kind of life they would like to live. If ever judgment was emphasized it was because their corporate identity was the people of God, and they needed to preserve the integrity of their new identity. And as such, they were expected to think and live as people of God. Otherwise, an individual or a sub-group within that was discordant of the corporate characterization would cease linkage with the whole body. In here we see the development of the concept of the preserving the corporate ecclesial integrity.

Further, the pedagogical propositions were not merely conceptual but biocentric, and biocentrically transformative. These propositions were spiritual and moral life propositions. The intention was not to lead Israel to mere conceptual assent, but to direct them towards a new convertive life in God. Thus the Pentateuch teachings were not so much the tools for indoctrination, as pedagogical means of discipling a nation. They were to be disciplined, become disciples of God, and, as implied by their priesthood, to disciple other nations. In here we see the parallels of the basic religious structures of the later Christian church.

In regards to the covenant²² between God and Israel, although there is fuss about its interpretation due to conceptual complications constructed around; yet it was nothing more confusing than the apparent stipulation of God's ecclesiality.²³ In the perspective of the divine *ekklesiality* it was nothing more complex than the succinct anthropomorphic

²² For an overview of present concepts on covenant, see Dennis J. Carthy, *Old Testament Covenant: A Survey of Current Opinion* (Richmond, VA: John Knox, 1972).

²³ As Klein points out, "Temporal blessings and prosperity depended upon the terms of the covenant. Covenant did not guarantee salvation." Klein, *Ibid.*, 32.

dealings of God with humans; to call a people who still preserved a faith heritage, though marred, to come out of a degenerated life situation and participate in the process of regeneration. And by becoming a regenerated people of God, they in turn could be the means of guiding the rest of humanity to a regenerated state.

Moreover, Israel was called not by virtue of their ethnicity²⁴ but by virtue of their proximity to faith lineage. Israel's call was circumstantial rather than ethnic or predestinary. Among other peoples at the time of their ecclesial call, they were the ones who still preserved the God-consciousness more pronounced in them than the rest of other ethnic groups. It should be noted too that the second progenation of humanity was from the called out family of Noah, and biblically there was no dual or multiple progenitors in the post-deluvian world; thus, basically there was only one humanity. Ethnicity is accidental and superficial, thus there could be no such thing as a sort of deified inherent factor in an ethnic group, for ethnicity is not an essential of human ontology. And of course, it would be more conceptually coherent with the characterization of divine *ekklesiality* to assume that Abraham's call²⁵ was not predestinary or ethnicized²⁶ but was based on his responsive disposition to divine call, a disposition to faith. For Abraham was originally a Chaldean or Babylonian that later also

²⁴ As Flanders, Jr. and colleagues point out, "Israel had no inherent greatness that caused Yahweh to choose it; its greatness lay only in the fact that Yahweh had chosen it. Both existence and worth were owed to the redemptive activity of a sovereign God, who made Israel God's own people." Henry Jackson Flanders, Jr., Robert Wilson Crapps, and Anthony Smith, *People of the Covenant: An Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*, 4th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 217. Rosenbaum notes, "Paradoxically Israel's chooseness was not exactly of its own doing. Pseudo-Israelite groupings will have included a lot of 'outcasts' and 'ne'er-do-wells,' malefactors who probably joined themselves together through blood-brotherhood rituals." Rosenbaum, *Understanding Biblical Israel*, 137. Klein emphasizes, "...Israel could not attribute her election to everything within the nation herself." Klein, *The New Chosen People*, 29.

²⁵ From which Israel claim ancestral root.

²⁶ For Abram, being originally a Chaldean or Babylonian, was also an expatriate of people who, were not only regarded as paganistic but also, later enslaved Israel.

enslaved Israel and were polytheistic. Thus faith-response is the basis of God's covenant with humans. When a people wholeheartedly respond in faith to God, they become the people of God, and the divine purpose is fulfilled through them. They become regenerated people and agents of regeneration.

There was a formalization of faith. Preeminent in Israelic ecclesiality was the institution of liturgy. Such liturgical institution, of course, was an inherent need in a corporate call. And the institution of sanctuary services was a societal "macrolization" of a more private personal or familial sacrificial liturgy. A liturgical institution could be seen here as central in the life of the called out ones or the *ekklesia*. However, the liturgical center was neither the piety-acts of the people nor the locus of the liturgy per se, but the sacrificial offering. From the sacrificial offering of Abel,²⁷ to Noah after the flood,²⁸ to Abraham when Isaac was a youngster,²⁹ to the Passover,³⁰ and, of course, as the common personal and public practice when Israel was relatively settled onward to their journey to the eventual establishment of their state and temple—the sacrificial offering was not only even the liturgical center³¹ but also the center of their everyday piety as the people of God. The sacrificial offering was the core of their national psyche.

Of course, in Christian perspective such sacrificial liturgical and piety center is recognized as anticipatory of the coming of Christ. The sacrifices and liturgical piety

²⁷ Genesis 4:4.

²⁸ Genesis 8:20-21.

²⁹ Ibid., 22:13.

³⁰ Exodus 12:3.

³¹ Even among the later generation of Jews, the temple cultus was still central in their lives. Kee notes, "A significant number of Jews from the time of the Babylonian exile forward perceived the central model for God's people and for the maintenance of the relationship between them and God to be the Temple and its cultus. Only when the Temple cultus was being fully and properly carried out could the real Israel participate in the life God intended for his people." Howard Clark Kee, *Who Are the People of God: Early Christian Models of Community* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995), 19-20.

built upon and around it were soteriologically illustrative of the redemptive sacrifice of Jesus. Thus in a Christian sense, the sacrifice was proleptic of Jesus Christ; the Israelic and pre-Israelic liturgy and piety were proleptic of Christocentricity. The formalization of sanctuary services was meant as a prolepsis of Christianity. This coheres with John's outright recognition of Jesus as the Lamb of God. John declared:

Look! There is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! He is the one I was talking about when I said, "Soon a man is coming who is far greater than I am, for he existed long before I did. I have been baptizing with water in order to point him out to Israel."³²

Apparent in John's declaration is the presentation of Jesus as the anticipated Lamb of God, and his act of directing Israel to the Lamb. Hebrews, of course, is very expository of the concept of Jesus as the fulfillment of the sacrificial system. It emphasizes that, "The old system...was only a shadow of the things to come, not the reality of the good things Christ has done for us."³³ The Pauline message, of course, that we are made right with God when we believe that Jesus shed his blood³⁴ sacrificing his life for us, is an overarching kerygma in the New Testament, from the Gospels to the letters to the prophetic Revelation. Thus the Israelic liturgy and piety were, as a whole a preparatory Christological pedagogical system. Since the core of their existence and life as a distinct people was not their ethnicity but their responsive sacrificial-centered life, it could be viably conclusive to say that they were being prepared for Christian faith. They were given the volitional privilege to be the forthcoming Christian body. But being volitional, their being the proleptic Christian body was dependent on their willful

³² John 1:29-31.

³³ Hebrews 10:1.

³⁴ See Romans 5: 9.

response and act; and being a privilege, dependent on their volitionality; thus it was probable that they could lose their *ekkesiality*, and proleptic Christian *ekkesiality* at that.

Aside from liturgy, there was also the formalization of law which was, in essence, support system for the spiritually-based overall life of the nation.³⁵ It is interesting to note that instead of what could be called in present term, theological or doctrinal formulations, what the Mosaic Israel had were formulation of laws. Although later they became legalistic and ethnocentric, and even soteriologically legalistic and ethnocentric, i.e., they equated the means of salvation to legalistic accomplishment and ethnic election; but, at the outset these formulations were intended as biocentric principles, i.e., as principles of regenerated personal and national life. It was intended to bring about order out of their bare society. The order that they needed, so that the nation could be morally, socially, and religiously directed towards a national life engendered out of spirituality focused on the proleptic redemptive Sacrifice.

Thus, these formulations were moral, societal, and religious legislations purported as guidelines in their transformation as the people of God. What they have were formulations for convertive life, rather than merely formulations for intellectual engagement or legal impositions. These were their theology, not doctrinal per se, but biocentric teachings that are somehow, in essence, reflective of Contemporary Evangelicality. Generally, then, these could be called discipleship teachings. Thus, in here we see the concept of proleptic Christocentricity and regenerative biocentricity.

There was a missional intent. It is interesting to note that the establishment of

³⁵ Ferguson has this to say about the covenant, “God’s covenant are not so much a legal relationship as love relationship, a fact shown by the marriage analogy employed by the prophets (Jer. 2:2; Ezek. 16:8-14; Hos. 2:1-3:1).” Ferguson, *The Church of Christ*, 18.

Israel in a particular promised land was never an end in itself; but it was simply a venue for the process of transforming them, not into a kingdom with priests and with holy peoples, but a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. Although a particular order of priesthood was instituted; however, as evident in their call, the nation-believer was intended to be, as a whole, the priest of God. Of course, the concept of paternal priesthood was common in the Old Testament even before the calling of Israel; however, at Israelic call, the familial concept was taken in its larger global context, and was applied to the priesthood of Israel over other nations. Israel was called to obey God so that they could be God's "own special treasure among all the nations of the earth....a kingdom of priests...."³⁶ Here we see the further development of the concept of priesthood of all believers, as integral in God's act of calling people out of the world to himself for the fulfillment of his purpose for them in the world.³⁷

Further, the intention of making Israel a nation of priest was not self-directed nor nationally statically terminal, i.e., they were called not simply because they would be transformed into a sort of cultural exhibit amidst a community of nations. As Guder emphasizes:

The term [*ekklesia*] refers to the fact that God's actions in salvation history include his choosing some people to carry out his purposes—for the benefit of all. Election, understood biblically, is God's purposeful action within the total scope of his gracious desire to save his erring creation. Thus, Israel is

³⁶ Exodus 19:5-6

³⁷ As Anderson states it, "This calling [Israel's spiritual calling] is grounded on the event of the Exodus which manifested God's action in delivering Israel from Egyptian bondage ('you have seen what I did'). But Yahweh's initiative evoked response from the people. It placed them in a situation of decision, summoned them to a task within the divine purpose." Bernard W. Anderson, *Understanding the Old Testament* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1975), 82. Coppedge identifies three means in accomplishing God's objectives for Israel's calling: "learning to live under the authority of God," "living in fellowship with others who seek to follow God," and "faith." He also identifies the heart of the covenant as "the personal presence of God among his people." Coppedge, *The Biblical Principles of Discipleship*, 30, 33, 35, 36. Such view, however, is more focused on Israel's national self, and is not emphatic of the missional importance of Israel's calling.

not called, or elected, for its own benefit, to be a special culture that is to enjoy privileges not given to anyone else. Rather Israel's election is functional to God's universal saving purposes.³⁸

Israel's call for priesthood was a dynamic call engendering spontaneous responsibility. It was a spontaneous responsibility, because the missional responsibility was to become their national activity naturally and coherently ensuing out of the nature of their missional being. As a kingdom of priests they were to become, not a priest for themselves but, priests for others. Their priesthood was a missional priesthood. They were called to be missionaries to proclaim what God has done to them, so that other nations too would be regenerated and also become the people of God.³⁹ As Klein points out, "Thus election was a call to serve God in the world."

Peter pointed out the missional intent of the called people of God in parallel yet in contrast with the calling of Israel. It is parallel because of the same conceptual mold, in contrast because of Israel's failure to fulfill such priesthood is indicated.⁴⁰

Peter declared to the Christian *ekklesia*:

...you are a chosen people. You are a kingdom of priests, God's holy nation, his very own possession. This is so you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.⁴¹

Here we see the re-application of the Mosaic call to the Christian *ekklesia* due to Israel's ekklesial failure. Here we see that indeed, the concept of priesthood is a missional concept, i.e., "to show others the goodness of God." The liturgical concept of priesthood was temporal and co-terminus with the temporality of the anticipatory sanctuary services.

³⁸ Guder, *Be My Witnesses*, 9.

³⁹ Klein, *The New Chosen People*, 33.

⁴⁰ As Peter declared, "They [Israel] stumble because they do not listen to God's word or obey it.... But you [Christian *ekklesia*] are not like that..." 1Peter 2: 8-9.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 2:9.

With the realization of the redemptive sacrifice of Christ the liturgical sacrificial-based Israelic priesthood “is now out of date and ready to be put aside.”⁴² What remain as descriptive of priesthood are the concepts of holiness and mission. The called out ones are called to be holy so that they could fulfill their mission. And their mission is kerygmatic, i.e., both a communicative and biocentric proclamations of the redemptive sacrifice of Christ. As priests they are to witness both in their verbal proclamation and in their lives the goodness of God through Jesus. Thus Peter was emphatic of getting rid of malicious behavior and deceit and growing into the fullness of salvation,⁴³ so that they could be, “showing others the goodness of God,” i.e., living in a life proclamatory of the effects and benefits of salvation.⁴⁴

Israel was called to be holy so that they could verbally⁴⁵ and biocentrically witness for God to other nations. Their calling was not meant as an exclusive soteriological election but as a missional call. In this sense, Guder comments:

Election is a calling to service. God calls, and enables the response to his call, not solely for the benefit of the one called, but for a greater purpose, for which the called-out ones are now enlisted and enabled.⁴⁶

They were called not to make salvation exclusive to them,⁴⁷ but to proclaim salvation to other nations. But as Flanders and colleagues emphasize, “Israel...forgot that Yahweh

⁴² Hebrews 8:13.

⁴³ 1Peter 2:1-2.

⁴⁴ Coppedge comments, “Israel must respond to God’s offer, choosing whether to continue with Him or to draw back.” He emphasizes further, “At the bottom line, as it is usually in Scriptures, God’s people are called to live by faith.” Coppedge, *The Biblical Principles of Discipleship*, 24.

⁴⁵ As Torrance sees it, “Israel became in a unique way the bearer of the oracles of God...” T.F. Torrance, *Reality and Evangelical Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1982),87.

⁴⁶ Guder, *Be My Witnesses*, 9.

⁴⁷ As Klein emphasizes, “...the election-knowing involves a function or task and does not necessarily imply their salvation.” He further adds, “God’s elective knowledge of Israel does not guarantee the salvation of all Israelites.” Klein, *The New Chosen People*, 32.

had chosen it for service and not for privilege.”⁴⁸ And they could only fulfill their salvific mission, if, at the outset, they themselves experienced salvation. They needed to experience national regeneration so that they could become a national missional means of global regeneration. Thus here we see the concept and interrelationship of regeneration and ecclesial mission. And these are the concepts that are to be revived later in Contemporary Evangelicalism.

8.3. Conclusion

To summarize, God has always been calling a people to himself, not only to save them but also, to send them as missionaries to the world.⁴⁹ God’s call is both soteriological and missional. Soteriological not in the sense of making salvation an exclusive rights but, in the sense of calling them out to experience salvation, so that by experiencing salvation they could also witness to others of their salvific experience. Further since response to God’s call is volitional; the called out ones, the *ekklesia*, may fulfill or reject or respond then abandon the call, or, though have already responded yet some time later because of being misdirected by their self-centered insistence eventually, loss their ecclesiality. This point is very important in the recognition of the perpetuity of an *ekklesia*, i.e., the perpetuity of an *ekklesia* is not predestinary nor inherent in its socio-ethnic characteristics, but co-terminus with its spiritual and missional responsiveness.

⁴⁸ Flanders, Jr., et. al., *People of the Covenant*, 214.

⁴⁹ Hart notes, “First, the Church is the *people of God*. As the Gaither gospel song asserts, ‘God has always had a people!’ In actuality, the Church is the continuation of all that God began to do through Abraham, calling out a people unto himself for the salvation of the world.... Tragically, God’s people were not faithful...so that ultimately God began to speak of another and better covenant in the future (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezek. 37:26, 27; Heb. 8:8-12).” Larry D. Hart, *Truth Aflame: A Balanced Theology for Evangelicals and Charismatics* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1999), 481.

Thus, as long as an *ekklesia* is willfully remaining in God and fulfilling his divine purpose for it, it remains as the *ekklesia* of God. Thus *ekklesiality* is conditional.

In Israelic *ekklesiality*, however, what could be seen was an early developmental construction of the structures of Christocentricity, convertive biocentricity, and missionality of the people of God—structures which are very evangelicalistic. But what is the relevance of the concept of the historical calling of God in the Old Testament?

CHAPTER 9

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH AS THE NEW PEOPLE OF GOD

Now what is the relevance of the historical calling of God in the Old Testament? It is relevant because it shows that the call of God is historical, and historically progressive. First God called a couple, then a family, then an ethnic group which was an extended conglomeration of families having the same ancestral root and faith heritage.¹ God has always been calling for a people throughout history, and as history approaches the *eschaton* the calling takes on a fuller dimension. And the Old Testament people of God is commonly regarded as the direct predecessor of the Christian church.²

9.1. The Calling of the People of Christ

It is in this backdrop, that this work proposes that the emergence of Christian

¹ The exodus people, though, could have included some non-Israelis.

² The concept of Israel as being fully succeeded by the Christian church is still an issue of debate for some theological schools.

church is incidental.³ It is incidental because there could have been no necessity of calling a church, if Israel remained faithful and responsive to their calling. But it did not. Instead they rejected their proleptic Christologicity. They rejected the coming of the Lamb of God, prophetically illustrated in their sanctuary, then temple, sacrificial services; which ironically were central in their national existence and life. It was so because they did not remain faithful to God. The process of spiritual regeneration was substituted by the process of religio-ethnic “ideologization”. Their relationship to God became socio-institutionally legislative rather than spiritually transformative. Convertive piety was substituted by legislative preoccupation, and, as such, the object of their piety became ideological rather than Christological.

Thus when Christ came, their psyche was already clouded by religio-political ideology, so that they ended up rejecting Christ whom they presupposed did not fit in their conceptual mold. It is much like the loosing of Christologicity in churches losing their convertive piety to theological ideology. Israel became exclusivistic, i.e., they claimed the kingdom of God as their exclusive rights; and political, i.e., even the messianic expectation was politicized to mean political national deliverance rather than personal spiritual deliverance from sin. Instead of fulfilling their spiritual salvific mission; Israel was preoccupied with political emancipation and even an obsession of global political power. They lost their deep sense of true calling, purpose, and mission.

³ Thus Toussaint tries to make it clear that, “Because of Israel’s negative response, God is now working with the Church, distinct from Israel (Rom. 9-11; Eph. 2:11-12; 3:1-12). The Church therefore is a mystery, never prophesied in the Old Testament (Eph. 3:4-6).” Stanley Toussaint, “The Church and Israel,” *The Conservative Theological Society Journal* 2 (December 1998). Cited March 14, 2004, <http://conservativeonline.org/journals/02-07-journal/1998v2n7-ldo1.htm>. The concept of ecclesial mystery when seen in the perspective of the church’s incidental emergence due to Israel’s spiritual and missional failures, become a demythologized concept.

And they eventually lost the meaning and fulfillment of the Sacrifice that was supposed to be prophetic and pervasive in their national psyche.

Thus Jesus proclaimed that the “stone rejected by the builders has now become the cornerstone.”⁴ Peter echoed, “He was rejected by the people...”⁵ Their rejection of Christ consequently meant not only the loss of the proper framework of their spiritually-based national life, but also the loss of their missional content and function. With the loss of their supposed to be Christocentric core of their national existence, life, and purpose, consequently they lost their *ekkesiality*. Thus, Christ after proclaiming the Jewish rejection of him concluded, “what I mean is that the Kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation that will produce the proper fruit.”⁶ Peter addressing the Christian believers affirmed:

And now God is building you, as living stones, into his spiritual temple. What’s more, you are God’s holy priests.... You are a kingdom of priests, God’s holy nation.... This is so you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light.... “Once you were not a people; now you are the people of God.”⁷

Peter’s declaration was a direct re-application of God’s national call to Israel⁸ to Christian believers. Now, it is conclusive that Israel’s rejection of Christ is indicative of their spiritual and missional failure, that consequently resulted in the calling a new spiritual nation, the global congregation of Christian believers. The new people of God are called to be holy and to show others the goodness of God, the life that was expected of the previously called people of God. Thus God’s call for Christians is also a spiritual

⁴ Matthew 21:42.

⁵ 1Peter 2:4.

⁶ Matthew 21:43.

⁷ 1Peter 2:5, 9-10.

⁸ Exodus 19:5-6.

salvific and missional call; in evangelical terms, Christians are called to be born again and to witness for Jesus.

With the calling and congregating of all those who believe and accept Jesus as their personal Savior, the phenomenon of the Christian church emerged. In Chafer's words, "By divine calling, which is efficacious (Rom. 8:30), the Church as an elect company is being gathered."⁹ Thus, the ecclesiality of the Christian church is not inherent in its societal institutional self, but is conditional on its integrity and responsiveness as the new people of God. Its peoplehood of God, i.e., in its archetypal sense its peoplehood of Christ, is its core identity. And this identity engenders Christocentric and Christological spiritual and missional self of the church. The church is the congregation of the people of Christ, living the life of Christ and witnessing the salvation Christ had realized. The so-called various ecclesiological models are simply metaphors of the various aspects of the corporate life of the people of Christ.¹⁰ They are not in themselves the ecclesiological essences nor the core of ecclesial identity. *The essence of Christian church is its being the people of Christ—the people who responded to the salvific and missional call of Christ. They are regenerated people of Christ called to be agents of regeneration in the world.*

The concept of the church as the people of God/Christ is the core ecclesiological concept in the New Testament and the conceptual paradigm not just of evangelical but also of the whole Christian ecclesiology. Chadwick points out that, "When Paul wrote

⁹ Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology* (Dallas: Dallas Seminary Press, 1948), 4:39.

¹⁰ Regarding the different aspects of the church ministerial life, Jordan categorizes these in three, "There are three kinds of occasions or ministries conducted by the Church.... They are liturgical (worship), koinonial (fellowship), and diaconal (service)." James Jordan, "The Church: As Overview," in *The Reconstruction of the Church*, ed. James B. Jordan (Tyler, TX: Geneva Ministries, 1985), 15.

letters to groups of Christians, he used various words: ‘to you who are chosen and set apart in Rome’ (or in Philippi, or in Colossae)...’to the *ecclesiae* in Galatia’. This word meant ‘the people called out,’ or ‘chosen’.”¹¹ Thus, Schnackenburg asserts, “for early Christian thought the ‘Church of God’ ...is nothing else but the people of God, so that Church and people of God in this perspective are identical.”¹² Kung likewise characterizes the church as a pilgrim people:

The Church is always and everywhere a living people, gathered from the peoples of this World and journeying through the midst of time. The Church is essentially *en route*, on a journey, a pilgrimage.”¹³

With the people of Christ concept of the church, the church becomes a real and dynamic aggrupation of purpose-driven believers—a living organism. As Kung further comments, “If the Church really sees itself as the people of God, it is obvious it can never be a static and supra-historical phenomenon, which exists undisturbed by earthly space and historical time.”¹⁴ Phillips and Okholm succinctly state the essence of evangelical ecclesiology:

...the Christian family, that is, the church. They are the people of God who continue Christ’s incarnate ministry by being his representatives in the world.¹⁵

They expound further the very identity of the church:

The *ecclesia* of God is a specific type of people, one that God in Jesus Christ has called into existence by his work (Acts 20:28). When one accepts Jesus’ offer of salvation, one is now “in Christ” (Gal. 1:22; 1 Thes. 2:14), part of his “church” (Eph. 5:23), a member of the “body of Christ” (Eph. 4:4, 15-16). In fact, our

¹¹ Chadwick, *A History of Christianity*, 29-30.

¹² Rudlof Schnackenburg, *The Church in the New Testament* (Freiburg, Germany: Herder, 1965), 153.

¹³ Kung, *The Church*, 130.

¹⁴ Ibid. Sawyer, however, has this criticism, “ ‘community’ as the heart of Christian faith, as the very essence of living a Christian life, is a concept that lies dormant in more institutional churches than not.” Mary R. Sawyer, *The Church on the Margins: Living Christian Community* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity, 2003), 13. She points out the function of community, “At the micro-level, community commonly denotes a gathering that provides nurture and mutual support.” Ibid., 11.

¹⁵ Phillips and Okholm, *A Family of Faith*, 108.

English term “church,” which is related to the Germanic word *kirche* and Scottish *kirk*, has etymology that originally meant “of the Lord” (from the Greek *kyrios*). We who were not a people, are now a people “of the Lord.” That is our primary identity.¹⁶

Furthermore, John pointed out to the people in Jordan River that Jesus “is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.”¹⁷ The introductory Johannine declaration followed by baptism was then highlighted by the dramatic anointing of Jesus by the Holy Spirit and the verbal confirmation of God the Father. Thus began the public ministry of Jesus on earth. Then as exemplary of Christian life in overcoming temptation, or in a sense, could be metaphoric of experiencing regeneration before witnessing, Jesus overcame temptations, and afterward Mark accounted his preaching:

“At last the time has come!” he announced. “The Kingdom of God is near! Turn from your sins and believe in the Good News!”¹⁸

Jesus’ inaugural kerygma is paradigmatic of the salvific call ringing throughout the New Testament—the call to be born again. In essence, the gospel proclamation is the call for people to believe in Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. The call is a salvific regenerative call with ecclesial consequence. It is the call for the people of the world to be transformed into one people of Christ. Then the Markan account continues:

One day as Jesus was walking along the shores of the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother, Andrew, fishing with a net, for they were commercial fishermen. Jesus called out to them, “Come, be my disciples, and I will show you how to fish for people.” And they left their nets at once and went with him.¹⁹

¹⁶ Ibid., 110.

¹⁷ John 1:29.

¹⁸ Mark 1:15.

¹⁹ Mark 1:16-18.

After the salvific call, Jesus called out two people to come out from their being fishermen to being his disciples and “fish for people.”²⁰ Here we see the beginning of personal missional call. Christ was calling people not only to salvation and also to be his disciples, with an intention of, not just following him and listening to his teachings but, eventually calling other people out of the world into his kingdom, as metaphoric of fishing for people.²¹ This is the proximate conceptual implication of fishing for people.

Now what do we have here? It is a paradigm of salvific call followed by a missional call that is paradigmatic in Gospel accounts and in other ecclesial accounts in the New Testament—and this is the evangelicalistic model. With the ecclesial failure of Israel, Jesus is calling a new *ekklesia*. And the call has become more emphatically personal than ever. Those who personally responded to the call, came together and became an aggrupation of disciples of Christ, the core people of Christ that would become the progenitor of the global people of Christ. In essence the aggrupation of disciples was the embryonic Christian *ekklesia*.

Christ’s act of calling out disciples was an act of forming a new *ekklesia*. The aggrupation of the twelve disciples was an *ekklesia* in its formative stage. It was in its formative stage, because the ecclesial maturation has still to come at a later time after the realization of the soteriological plan and the inaugural fulfillment of the Pneumatic ecclesial empowerment. The aggrupation of disciples was still an embryo that needed to

²⁰ For a study on the concept of “fisher of people,” see Wilhelm H. Wuellner, *The Meaning of “Fishers of Men”* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1965).

²¹ Neuhaus challenges, “The church is to represent to the world a possibility that God has opened for humankind.” Richard John Neuhaus, “Why Evangelicals and Catholics Belong Together,” in *Pilgrims in the Sawdust Trail*, ed. George, 105. Healy further adds that the church, “is oriented towards the ultimate goal of all humanity, indeed, of all creation.” Nicholas M. Healy, *Church, World and the Christian Life: Practical and Prophetic Ecclesiology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 17.

grow, and needed to grow into full maturity, and not only to grow into full maturity but also needed to be Pneumatically empowered. In fact as reflective of the anointing of Jesus by the Holy Spirit before Jesus began his ministry, they too needed to be anointed by the Holy Spirit before they could begin their ministry.

The ecclesiality of the disciples was still embryonic for they still needed to realize the very reason why they were called. Before Jesus' ascension they still did not have the whole soteriological and missional picture of their calling. In fact, it could be viably pictured out that the disciples were only beginning to realize the whole perspective of their salvific and missional call, when Christ commissioned them to go and make disciples of all nations. Afterwards, not only them but also the rest who responded to the call of faith congregate together, began reflecting, and praying, but still did not know how they could propagate their newfound faith to Israel, much more worldwide. Although they had the conviction, they lack the power and linguistic capability.

The ministry of Christ while on earth could be identified in two aspects, namely pedagogical and redemptive. While on earth he was teaching people how to live a new life, thus his pedagogy was actually a regenerative biocentric pedagogy. He was calling people to come out of their spiritually beclouded life situations, and teaching them a regenerative life style. He was propagating convertive piety among the spiritually lost ex-called out ones. Thus the preeminent kerygma, that became an evangelical cliché, of humanity's need to be born again. And Christ was emphatic of the realization of regenerative life as a Pneumatological operation, "the Holy Spirit gives new life from heaven."²² Christ was also emphatic of his soteriological mission. He proclaimed,

²² John 3:6.

“Salvation has come.... And I, the son of Man, have come to seek and save those like him [Zacchaeus]²³ who are lost.”²⁴ Thus in here we have both the Pneumatological convertive and Christological salvific structures of Christian faith with corollary missional implication.

But note that there was still an attempt of Christ to let Israel realize their being lost and call them back to him. There was still an ecclesial call for Israel. Jesus grieved:

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stone God’s messengers! How often I have wanted to gather you together as a hen protects her chicks beneath his wings, but you wouldn’t let me...”²⁵

However, Christ foresaw their resolute rejectionist stance. Christ was building a Pneumatologically regenerative structure amidst their nationally degenerating ecclesial life; and was fulfilling the archetype of their sacrificial core. They got to be Pneumatically regenerated and Christologically saved. However Christ eventually judged:

“And now look, your home is left to you, empty and desolate. For I tell you this, you will never see me again until you say, ‘Bless the one who comes in the name of the LORD!’ ”²⁶

Here we see the eminent anticipation of the cessation of Israel as the people of God. Although the call of the disciples may not have been intended at the outset as a separatistic call, i.e., a separate *ekklesia* from Israel but rather an ecclesia within the Israelic ecclesia intended to reform the whole; but eventually with the corporate rejectionist stance of the whole Israel, a new *ekklesia* emerged. Thus, the Christian

²³ This is figurative of people who were supposed to have spiritual lineage but was lost along the way.

²⁴ Luke 19:9-10.

²⁵ Matthew 23:37.

²⁶ Ibid., 23:38-39.

church emerged. As Van Gelder points out:

The birth of the church opened as new chapter in God's redemptive work. God's presence in the world would no longer be mediated through a single nation nor located in the physical Temple in Jerusalem. God was constructing a spiritual building consisting of people from all nations.²⁷

Guder sees an ecclesial heritage of the Christian church with Israel and indicates the cessation of Israel's call:

Just as God called and set apart the nation of Israel to be blessed and become a channel of blessing to all nations, he now calls and sets apart a people, the "new Israel," to proclaim what he has done.²⁸

Therefore, in essence, ecclesiology is not merely a New Testament concept, although the formal Christian ecclesiology emerges only in the New Testament.²⁹

However, historical *ekklesiality* could be spiritually traced from Adamic call and formally traced from Noahic call and eventually became ecclesially full-grown in the Israelic call. It should also be noted, as aforementioned in the preceding Chapter, that ecclesiality is conditional. If the present Christian church fails in its spiritual and missional calling, most probably there could be a new dimension of ecclesiality, perhaps, a great multitude transcending denominational barriers, in a similar way the Christian church transcended ethnic barriers of the Old Testament Israel.

9.2. Peoplehood of Christ as the Ecclesiological Paradigm

The cessation of Israel as the people of God was apparent because of its apparent rejection to become the people of Christ. The peoplehood of God and the peoplehood of

²⁷ Van Gelder, *The Essence of the Church*, 103.

²⁸ Guder, *Be My Witness*, 16.

²⁹ Thus it is in this sense that Lightner could say that, "Ecclesiology is primarily a New Testament doctrine." Lightner, *Evangelical Theology*, 217.

Christ could not be distinguished for they are essentially the same peoplehood. The concept of the cessation of Israel as the people of God, and apparently not the people of Christ, with the emergence of the Christian church is an issue of debate to those whose concept of election is either ancestral or ethnically colored, or back-dropped by apprehension of the nullification of the Old Testament heritage.

However, when the concept of ecclesiality is placed in its proper framework of regenerative biocentricity, Pneumaticity, Christologicity, and salvific missionality, the concept of ecclesiality is seen in a much larger perspective beyond ethnic ancestry. Ecclesiality is co-terminus with the holistic responsiveness of the called out ones to the Caller and his ecclesial purpose. With Israel's rejection of spiritual, societal, and religious regeneration in Christ through the Holy Spirit, and their rejection of Christ that eventually lead to their missional failure in proclaiming Christ as the prophesied Messiah and Savior—they simply lost their ecclesiality. Thus as Van Gelder succinctly puts it:

The church is pictured...as the New Testament fulfillment of Old Testament prophetic expectations regarding the people of Israel.

This new people, this spiritual Israel finds its identity as God had always intended, along faith lines, not blood lines.³⁰

Watson supports, "The church, by faith in Jesus the Messiah, became the true Israel, the true people of God."³¹ The very identity of the peoplehood of God in the Old Testament was not Israelic but messianic. So is the very identity of the church in the New Testament was not institutional but Christocentric.

³⁰Van Gelder, *The Essence of the Church*, 108.

³¹ Donald Watson, *I Believe in Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 78.

Who then are the new called out ones? It naturally follows, that they are those who respond³² to Christ's regenerative and missional call. They are those who believe in Jesus as the Messiah and Savior, experience spiritual conversion through the Holy Spirit, and then witness and proclaim Christ through their verbal proclamations and exemplary life.³³ Their aggrupation becomes the corporate ecclesial entity---called *the church*. Thus the church emerged as the consequence of the spontaneous response of people to Christ through the operation of the Holy Spirit. As Leith portray the phenomenon of the church:

The New Testament knows nothing of people conceiving the church and then bringing it into existence in the manner that other human institutions have come to be. The first Christians discovered that they were the church, having been created as a community by the impact of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and by their receipt of the Holy Spirit.³⁴

The New Testament ecclesiological identity was neither ethnic, geographical, cultural, nor sectarian. All the aggrupation in various localities whether household, city, or province were all aggrupations of believers in Christ—in essence, the one whole people of Christ—the new people of God. Thus appropriately called Christians as descriptive of what the society recognized them, as a consequence of their profession, discipleship life and missional preoccupations focused on Christ. Thus they become a distinctive group of people in Christ.³⁵ Thus Kummel writes:

³² Williams emphasizes, "there is still no *ekklesia* until the people respond in faith." J. Rodman Williams, *Renewal Theology: The Church, the Kingdom and Last Things* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 3:42.

³³ In regards to the apocalyptic church amidst the Roman Empire, Howard-Book comments, "From John's vision...*ekklesia* is used as a name for urban discipleship communities precisely so that they see themselves as people 'called out' to live God's assembly according to a way entirely opposed to that of empire." Wes Howard-Book, *The Church Before Christianity* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 2001), 34.

³⁴ John H. Leith, "Ecclesiology," in *A New Handbook of Christian Theology*, eds. Donald W. Musser and Joseph L. Price (Nashville: Abindgon, 1992), 135.

³⁵ As the *Eerdman's Bible Dictionary* defines the meaning of the church, "Usually the Greek term [*ekklesia*] represents God's people as distinguished from others..."

...the primitive community expresses its claim that those who believe in Christ represent the people of God and thus have taken the place of the old people of God. But this people of God is characteristically no longer identified as “God’s community” but as “Jesus community” or “Christ’s community.”³⁶

The new people of God had one faith framework, one purpose, one missional objective, and one identity. They were all believers of Jesus Christ as the prophesied Messiah and the only Savior of humanity. Their purpose was to live the life of Christ and proclaim the evangel of Jesus Christ. Their missional objective was the global discipling of humanity. And they were appropriately and apparently identified as Christians. A new humanity emerged. As Hunter and Johnson said it, “the gathering of men and women around him [Jesus] signifies the coming of a new humanity.”³⁷ The early Christians were one in spite of superficial cultural diversities. They all, as one, transcended their cultural and geographical enclosures. And the culture they transcended even included their previous religious culture. In Christ they become regenerated and their religious psyche was transformed into a Christocentric faith. Thus there was only one church, only one people of Christ, who, because of missional zeal Pneumatically empowered, proliferated the progeneration of Christian faith in many localities.

Prototypally there was no such thing as Eastern and Western churches, there were just churches located in the east and west. As TDNT puts it, “the congregation in different places is simply called *ἐκκλησία* with no question of precedence or correlation.”³⁸ TDNT further explains, “the sum of individual congregations does not

³⁶ Werner George Kummel, *The Theology of the New Testament: According to Its Major Witnesses: Jesus—Paul—John* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1973), 129.

³⁷ Victor L. Hunter and Phillip Johnson, *The Human Church in the Presence of Christ: The Congregation Rediscovered* (US: Mercer University Press, 1985), 31.

³⁸ *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, s.v. “*ἐκκλησία*.”

produce the total community of Christ. Each community, however small, represents the total community, the church.”³⁹ The core of their oneness was an internal faith in Jesus and their common Christocentric Pneumatically empowered missional zeal. Shwartz comments:

This unity [Eph. 4:5f] in Christ that Paul expresses was experienced by the Christian community and it transcended all other differences. It is therefore difficult to see in the New Testament a justifiable basis of...denominationalism.⁴⁰

He further adds:

The usage of the term church does not indicate that the one church is divided into churches or that an aggregate churches result in *the* church. It is rather that in different places *the* church is manifested in local congregations.⁴¹

They were not divergent churches trying to unite themselves together, but one church proliferating, numerically expanding, and spiritually growing in various localities.

Churches were not denominational but geographical. Hodge, although not emphasizing missionality, thinks of the church's oneness in theocentric, Christocentric, and Pneumatic senses, “There is no doubt if there be one God, there is but one Church; if there be but one Christ, there is but one Church; if there be but one Holy Ghost, there is but one Church.”⁴²

Further, there was no such thing as visible and invisible churches⁴³, for all visible churches are all of one spiritual characterization. As Williams explains it:

The one and only church undoubtedly has both invisible and visible

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Hans Shwarz, *The Christian Church: Biblical Origin, Historical Transformation, and Potential for the Future* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1982), 74.

⁴¹ Ibid., 74-75.

⁴² A. A. Hodge, *Evangelical Theology: A Course of Popular Lectures* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1976), 174.

⁴³ Such concept of visible and invisible church is a prejudicial concept exploited to exclude and include denominational entities based on one's denominational eccentricities.

dimensions. There is the invisible dimension of not belonging to the world: the church is *ekklesia*—“called out.” There is also the visible dimension of being totally in the world and sharing fully in it as a social entity.⁴⁴

Murray sees it in a similar sense:

With respect to her inward life the church may therefore be said to be “invisible.” In another respect, however, the church is visible—in here profession of the gospel, and in here obedience to Christ’s commands and ordinances. So although there are not two churches, the church may be considered under the two aspects of invisible and visible.⁴⁵

Schmidt however, projects a more pragmatic and apparent concept of the *ekklesia*:

Moreover, the *ἐκκλησία* as the assembly of God in Christ is not invisible on the one side and visible on the other. The Christian community, which as the individual congregation represents the whole body, is just as visible and corporeal as the individual man.⁴⁶

Lightner however speaks in terms of the local and universal church in relation to Christ:

The local church is, in a real sense, a miniature of the universal church. To be a member of the universal church one must be divinely related to Christ.⁴⁷

Further, there was even no distinction of apostate and true churches.

Thus the church is a singular spiritual entity embodied in varied localities. It is not that Christians have churches or the churches have Christians, but that Christians is the church and the church is Christian—the people of Christ. *There is only one church--the church of Jesus Christ—the people who believe in Jesus Christ as their only personal Savior, and who, empowered by the Holy Spirit, live in a transformed life and witness for Jesus. In the same way that there was one humanity at creation, there will also be one new humanity at redemption—and one proleptic new humanity en route.*

⁴⁴ Williams, *Renewal Theology*, 23.

⁴⁵ Iain H. Murray, *Evangelicalism Divided: A Record of Crucial Change in the Years 1950 to 2000* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 2001), 274.

⁴⁶ K.L. Smith, “*ἐκκλησία*,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*.

⁴⁷ Robert P. Lightner, *Evangelical Theology: A Survey and Review* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1986), 232.

Another point, the church as a whole, tagged at times as invisible church, could not be equated with the kingdom of God, for the church and the kingdom are apparently distinct in the New Testament.⁴⁸ The kingdom of God that would be populated by believers of all time is sometimes confused with the church. Example of the indication of this conceptual fusion could be found in Grudem's statement, "The church is the community of all true believers of all time." However, as Schnackenburg reminds, "It is not the Church but the Kingdom of God which is the ultimate goal of the divine economy of salvation and redemption in its perfect form for the whole world."⁴⁹

Furthermore, although there were individual false claimants of Christian discipleship, but the church as a congregation of the people of Christ was regarded as "holy and without fault"⁵⁰—because of Christ's sole headship.⁵¹ In fact churchliness per se was not central in the life of congregating believers. What were central for them were faith and life in and witness for Jesus. In this sense, they were evangelicalistic.

With their Christian identity, they began to use other metaphors⁵² to illustrate their being and life as the new people of God. They needed metaphoric conceptual aids to expound their existence, life, and purpose in Christ; ministerial relationship within the local congregation, and relationship with the rest of the congregations located in different localities. Thus as synonymous of their being the new people of God, i.e., the people of

⁴⁸Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Leicester, England: Intervarsity, 1994), 853.

⁴⁹ Schnackenburg, *The Church in the New Testament*, 188.

⁵⁰ Ephesians 5:27.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 5:23.

⁵² Regarding ecclesiological metaphors Mudge has this to say, "Above all the biblical 'people' metaphor carries with it a note of *historical and sociological realism*. Unlike terms such as 'body' or 'temple' or 'sacrament' or even 'servant,' it requires relatively little translation into operational terms." Mudge, *The Sense of People*, 38. This work, however, does not see the peoplehood of God as merely metaphoric but rather the very identity of the church.

Christ, they referred to themselves as:

1. The children of God (1John 3:1).
2. The chosen people (Colossians 3:12)
3. Church of God (1Corinthians 1:2)
4. Congregation of the saints (1 Corinthians 14:33)
5. Family in heaven and earth (Ephesians 3:14)
6. Family of God (1Peter 4:17)
7. Family of Believers (Galatians 6:10)
8. Flock of God (1Peter 5:2)
9. God's Household (Ephesians 2:19)
10. Holy Nation (1Peter 2:9)
11. Holy Ones (1Thessalonians 3:13)
12. Sons of God (Romans 8:14)

As the new people of God, i.e., the substitution of the failed Israel, they referred to themselves as the Israel of God (Galatians 6:16). Here we see the spiritual continuity of the new with the old, yet the actual missional discontinuity of the old that lead to the incipience of the new. Ferguson thinks in line with this perspective:

Many of the Old Testament descriptions for Israel are taken over by the New Testament in reference to the new people of God. This fact emphasizes the continuity in the history of salvation, but it also shows a newness, in that a new people is designated. Even richer blessings are said to be theirs.⁵³

Ferguson listed these descriptions as indicating the New Testament claims of the new

⁵³ Ferguson, *The Church of Christ*, 77.

people of God:

1. Israel of God (Ps. 98: 3; 121:4—Rom. 9:6-8, 1 Cor. 10:18, Phil. 3:3, Mt. 3:9-10).
2. Royal Priesthood (Ex. 19:6—1Pet. 2:5, 2:9, Rev. 1:6).
3. Holy Nation (Exo. 19:6—1Pet 2:9).
4. Righteous Remnant (Is. 1:9, 10:20-23—Rom. 9:27-28, 11:1-5, Acts 3:14)
5. Covenant People (Lk. 1:54-5, Rom. 9:4, Gal. 3:6-29, Acts 3:25-26)⁵⁴

The Hanson's bring out similar point, although with dispensational implication:

The fundamental and oldest account of the church in the New Testament is that it is the people of God. Just as Israel was God's people under the old dispensation so the Christian church in God's people under new.⁵⁵

Thus in essence there is indeed no break in the continuity of the historical *ekklesiality* with the emergence of the Christian church. The Christian church is the new form of the same essence of peoplehood of God. As the Hanson's stress, "The continuity of the church therefore must consist basically in the continuity of the people of God."⁵⁶

To illustrate their charismatically-based ministerial interrelationship within the church, metaphors like the body of Christ⁵⁷ (Ephesians 4:12) were used. As illustrative of the church's relationship with Christ, the metaphor of the church as the bride of Christ (Revelation 22:17) was used. As descriptive of the church's kerygmaticity the church was prophetically illustrated as the golden lampstand (Revelation 2:1).

These and other metaphors were not intended as trajectories for constructing

⁵⁴ Ibid., 77-78.

⁵⁵ A. T. and R.P.C. Hanson, *The Identity of the Church: A Guide to Recognizing the Contemporary Church* (London: SCM, 1987), 6. This work, however, does not imply an inclination toward dispensationalism implied by Hansen's use of dispensation. Costas, although seeing the people of God is a socio-political sense and as image rather than the very identity itself points out that, "the foremost image of the church in the Scripture is that of God's people." Orlando E. Costas, *The Church and Its Mission: A Shattering Critique from the Third World* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1974), 23.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 42.

⁵⁷ For a scientifically contextual exposition with practical implications of the body of Christ metaphor, see Howard A. Snyder and Daniel V. Runyon, *Decoding the Church: Mapping the DNA of Christ's Body* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2002).

divergent ecclesial identities, but rather illustrative of the different aspects of ecclesial life.⁵⁸ The one ecclesiological trajectory they had was their being the people of Christ. As Mudge sees it, “the trajectory of biblical thought is toward increasing realization of what is really meant by a *people of God*.”⁵⁹ Thus prototypically there were no divergent ecclesiological models. Divergent ecclesiological constructions⁶⁰ are accidental constructions based on fragments of ecclesial life. Thus we have liturgical churches that highlight the liturgy of the church; we have mystical churches that made mysticity out of the church’s relationship with Jesus and Jesus’ act of calling out believers that resulted in congregational formation. And we have churches constructed out of a highlighted aspect of Christological teachings; or even a reconstruction of what was presupposed as Christological teachings, but were either extra-biblically, philosophically, culturally, or ideologically motivated. Thus what we have in Christian ecclesiology are actually fragmented or fragmentary ecclesiologies diverging more and more from the prototypical ecclesial essence. And so, we have numerous divergent denominations, which though ironically recognizes their Christianity yet, are separatistic and apprehensive of being spiritually, pedagogically, liturgically, and missionally united as one people of Christ. The prototypical fideistic structure of Christian church has been substituted by

⁵⁸ Dulles points out the importance of ecclesiological images, “Images are immensely important for the Church—for its preaching, its liturgy, its general *esprit de corps*.” Avery Dulles, *Models of the Church*, expanded ed. (New York: Doubleday, 2002), 14. He feels it so important to the life of the church that he identifies the root of faith-crises, “The contemporary crisis of faith is, I believe, in very large part a crisis of images.” *Ibid.*, 13.

⁵⁹ Mudge, *The Sense of a People*, 31.

⁶⁰ For the evolution of the church see, Eric G. Jay, *The Church: Its Changing Image Through Twenty Centuries* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1978). Nazir-Ali, however, foresees that, “The shapes of the church to come and its mission and ministry will continue to be affected by the shape of the world as it is now and as it will be in the future.” Michael Nazir-Ali, *Shapes of the Church to Come* (Eastbourne, England: Kingsway Communications, 2001), 22. a truly evangelical ecclesiology, however, though may have form transformation, would always remain prototypical in its essential structures.

denominational eccentricities.

Doctrinal reconstructions have become so complicated that it clouded the simple prototypical ecclesial teachings of believing and living in and witnessing for Christ through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. The believers act of congregating because of their common faith in Christ, their common need to nurture one another's spiritual life, and corporately equip themselves for personal kerygmatic mission—were replaced either by denominationalistic preoccupations or denominationally defined structures. *By coming back to the full recognition and wholehearted consideration of being one people of Christ, the Christian church could begin to realize and experience an internal regeneration that could lead to the eventual restoration of the state of wholeness of the church as the renewed people of Christ.*

Thus, in here we see the unitive and regenerative viability of the concept of the church as the people of Christ, more than any other ecclesiological models. Besides, as Pate noted, that out of the 114 occurrences of the term *ekklesia* in the New Testament, 109 “is used of the community of God's people.”⁶¹ Grenz emphasizes a notable point:

The choice of *ekklesia* as the designation of the Christian community suggests that the New Testament believers viewed the church as neither an edifice nor an organization. They were a people—a people brought together by the Holy Spirit—a people bound to each other through Christ—hence, a people standing in covenant with God. Above all, they were God's people (2Cor. 6:16).⁶²

Grenz further adds:

The early Christians found in this term [ekklesia] a helpful means for expressing their self-consciousness. They saw themselves as a people called together by the proclamation of the gospel for the purpose of belonging to God through Christ.⁶³

⁶¹ C. Marvin Pate, “Church, the,” in *Baker Theological Dictionary of the Bible*.

⁶² Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God*, 465.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

When the present church profoundly considers itself as the renewed people of Christ, the ecclesial life foci would be the experience of regenerative life in Christ and the fulfillment of salvific Gospel Commission. In this sense experientially, spiritually, and missionally the fragmented churches could become one people of Christ again.

Assimilating the deep consciousness of the peoplehood of Christ in ecclesial psyche could be reformatory of the prototypal ecclesiological framework because of the following factors:

Christocentricity and Christologicity. By Christocentricity what is meant is the central and apparent focus on Christ, and by Christologicity what is meant is the overarching articulations of such Christocentricity. As the people of Christ, the church's focus should not be the institutionality of the church nor any of its institutional aspect but Christ himself.⁶⁴

The proclamation of Christ as the only Savior becomes the missional focus of the congregation, not the propagation of its dogma nor the expansion of its institutional growth per se; although the church with its Christocentric and Christological teachings and proclamation could expand. In this sense, dogmatic (or in a less confusing term, theological) and institutional (or in a less confusing term, pastoral and missional fruitfulness) matters become just the products of Christocentric life and Christological preoccupations, not the source of production of spiritual matters itself.

This is one of the blunders in the post-prototypal church because the various theological products are regarded per se as the essences of the *ekklesia*. Thus what we

⁶⁴ Ferguson expresses this Christocentric rootedness, "If the church is the people of God, it is the people of God *in Christ*. If the church is the community of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit is the gift of the resurrected Christ." Ferguson, *The Church of Christ*, 72.

have in the history of the church are churches founded not on the deep and wholehearted consciousness of the peoplehood of Christ, but on a particular theological issue. Issue which could have been regarded as an aspect of the whole progressive reformatory revelatory operations of the Holy Spirit in restoring the church back to its being more truly the people of Christ. When denominations recognize themselves, not in terms of their supposed denominationalistic identities in contrast, or in separation, or even in exclusion of others—but in terms of their commonality as being the one people of Christ—Christian churches together as a whole could indeed be more truly reflective of being the *ekklesia* of Christ. *The essence of the church is Christ, and the essence of churchhood is peoplehood of Christ.*

Pneumaticity. By this I mean the ecclesial dependence on the empowerment of the Holy Spirit for its life and mission. As Hanson reminds that the church “must remain open to the presence of the Spirit.”⁶⁵ As aforementioned in the preceding Part, charismatism is meant as a postscript revelation for Contemporary Evangelicalism. Because the appropriate recognition of ecclesial dependence on the Holy Spirit is very essential in the life and mission of the people of Christ—for it is the Holy Spirit that directs the people of Christ to Christocentricity and Christologicity.

As Jesus said:

But when the Father sends the Counselor as my representative—and by the Counselor I mean the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I myself told you.⁶⁶

Thus when the early *ekklesia* received the empowerment of the Holy Spirit—the spontaneous consequence was the Christocentric and Christological kerygma. And, of

⁶⁵ Hanson, “The Identity and Purpose of the Church,” 349.

⁶⁶ John 14:26.

course, at the outset, living a convertive life in Christ is a Pneumatic operation. Thus the Holy Spirit is always the power behind conversion in Christ, living the life of Christ, preaching the message of Christ. Coppedge brings out a paradigmatic point, “the infilling of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the disciples become a model of what Jesus desires in the life of everyone in any age who seeks to be a disciple and a disciplemaker.”⁶⁷ As Grenz describes it:

He [the Holy Spirit] effects the union of believers with Christ and Christ’s community, the reconciled people of God. At the consummation, the Spirit’s mission will reach its ultimate goal as he establishes the glorious fellowship of the redeemed people living in a redeemed world and enjoying the presence of their Redeemer God. En route to that day, the Spirit nourishes the spiritual life he creates.⁶⁸

Moreover, Volf emphasizes the Pneumatic constitution of the church is not a passive matter but a foundational factor necessitating active human response. He notes:

It is *the Spirit* who constitutes the church. *People*, however, must accept the gifts of God in faith (even if this faith is itself a gift of God); *they* must come together, and *they* must remain together.⁶⁹

This Pneumatological structure is inherent in the ecclesial’s peoplehood of Christ, thus should be actively and aggressively recognize and assimilated in the whole ecclesial life and functions. As people of Christ the church do not exist and live by its own self. It is not self-existent. Its existence is a derived existence—derived from Christ and the Holy Spirit. Its existence is dependent on its responsiveness to the call of Christ and its responsiveness to the operation of the Holy Spirit. By being responsive to the salvific and missional calls of Christ and to the regenerative and charismatic operation of the

⁶⁷ Coppedge, *The Biblical Principles of Discipleship*, 122.

⁶⁸ Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God*, 379.

⁶⁹ Volf, *After Our Likeness*, 176.

Holy Spirit—the aggrupation of the respondent called out ones become more truly the people of Christ.

As Clowney stresses:

The church is called to God, called to be his people. By that relation to God the being of the church is defined.⁷⁰

Thus what draw people together to become the church are the internal Christological and Pneumatological determinants that become the very being of the *ekklesia*. The church's Christogenicity and Pneumatogenicity are the inherent divine nature of the church.

These ontological ecclesiological constituents transcend external ethnicity, attitudinal, or theoretical human-made productions. Thus for the confessing called out peoples to insist on the ecclesiological primality of their respective human-made ideological productions and make these as ground for ecclesial separation and fragmentation is tantamount to the ecclesial denial of its peoplehood of Christ.

Missionality. By missionality what is meant is the centrality of the Christocentric kerygmatic preoccupation of the church.⁷¹ The mission of the church is an evangelical mission, i.e., the proclamation of salvific gospel of Christ.⁷² Thus Bloesch reminds Christians:

It is incumbent on us to recover the doctrine of the church, particularly with regard to its indispensable role in the communication of salvation. The church is not a mediator between God and man, but it is a veritable means of grace to man. It cannot dispense grace as though it were in control, but it can function as an instrument of the Holy Spirit who does convey the grace of Christ to “a sinful world.”⁷³

⁷⁰ Edmund P. Clowney, “The Biblical Theology of the Church,” in *The Church in the Bible and the World*, ed. D. A. Carson (Exeter, England: Paternoster, 1987), 15.

⁷¹ Regarding a missional perspective of church Riddel has this to say, “The essence of the church has always been mission. It is created by mission, renewed by mission, and participates in mission.” Riddel, *Threshold of the Future*, 174.

⁷² As Hayes concisely puts it, “The church's mission in the world implies preparing people for the future kingdom.” Hayes, *The Church*, 241.

⁷³ Bloesch, *Essentials of Evangelical Theology*, 2:278.

The church's mission is the proclamation of Christ, not the proclamation of itself. When churches are preoccupied about proclaiming itself, it becomes preoccupied with its denominational self, thus more like a people of a denomination rather than a people of Christ. With such ecclesial self-centeredness, churches are lead to construct what they consider protective enclosures which are sorts of socio-ideological preservatives of their respective self-centeredness. The ecclesiological self no longer becomes Christ but their respective religious ideology. Consequently, the mission becomes the propagation of sort of denominational ideology. Then baptism becomes denominationally exclusivistic rather than convertively Christocentric. Even convertive piety would consequently be defined as theological assent, rather than a Pneumatological process of living a new life in Christ. New life in Christ would end up being dogmatically defined as a new life of denominational doctrinal assent. Teachings become dogmatic rather than biocentric. And eventually, Christian life becomes mechanical, then nominal, till it resort back to secular.

The scenario would also lead to the spiritual death of liturgy. Liturgy becomes momentarily emotive, if not mechanical, rather than spiritually nurturing. Then at the end of church service, Christianity dissipated throughout the week. In this circumstance, ecclesial pastorality does not naturally result in ecclesial missionality, because, at the outset, there is a deficiency of the sustainability of convertive piety. Attendance to church service becomes a sort of periodic superficial therapy to let off steam the pressures of everyday life, or to assuage a conscience bothered by a sense of irreligiosity; rather than a means for developmental nurturing of spiritual and missional life.

In the paradigm of the peoplehood of Christ, the church's focus is to witness for Christ both by biocentric exemplification and communicative proclamation. With the focus on living the exemplary life of Christ and witnessing for Christ, churches are redirected to their common natural mission. Such biocentric and kerygmatic commonality is a very viable framework that would spiritually and missionally draw altogether the one people of Christ located in different localities. Churches will no longer be regarded as different denominational entities, but localities of one people of Christ. Thus what we have here is an internal unitive structure for the New Reformation of churches into its prototypal wholeness. Watson brings out the profound kerygmatic spiritual implications of the "people of God" ecclesiology:

The concept of the church as "the people of God"—as God's new society, his family, his community—breaks upon many today as the most thrilling "goodnews," they could ever hear. And what a transformation it can bring when a person knows that he belongs to God and his people for ever! In an age of isolation, the joy of really belonging to God and of being a part of his people throughout the world—a belonging which depends not on earning acceptance, but on receiving freely God's love—is one of the most relevant features of the Christian message of the goodnews.⁷⁴

Transdenominationality. By this what is meant is the eclesiality that transcend present denominationally eccentric productions and reproductions. As Thwaites reminds, "The containment of the church in denominations and buildings was not a part of the early Christian perspective."⁷⁵ The people of Christ ecclesiological paradigm defines exclusion and inclusion not in denominationalistic doctrinal sense but in a universal Christocentric term, i.e., exclusion and inclusion depending on unresponsiveness and

⁷⁴ Watson, *I Believe in the Church*, 76.

⁷⁵ James Thwaites, *The Church Beyond The Congregation* (Cumbria, UK: Paternoster), 180.

responsiveness, respectively, of the people to the salvific and missional calls of Christ.⁷⁶

When people respond to Christ they spiritually become the people of Christ. Their peoplehood of Christ becomes the essence of their new spiritual identity. The rest of their respective cultural identities are transformed to harmonize with their new spiritual self. The cultural elements in their individual life that are not contradictory to their new spiritual self remain as is; the contradictory ones are either discarded or reformed into structures that cohere with their overall new identity framework.

Thus as Paul succinctly puts it:

But now that faith in Christ has come.... So you are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. And all who have been united with Christ in baptism⁷⁷ have been made like him. There is no longer Jews or Gentile, slave or free, male or female.⁷⁸ For you are all Christians—you are one in Christ Jesus.⁷⁹

For early Christians, their peoplehood of Christ transcended their previous religious-cultural and ethnic identities. This is paradigmatic of denominational conversion, when all those who truly respond to the call of Christ become one in Christ. As one people of Christ, they would either discard or reform their respective denominational ecclesiological structures incoherent with their new spiritual self as the new people of Christ. This could be a bold and risky proposition for this impinges not only on denominational mindsets, but also on the established institutional components that have become synonymous with denominational existence.

⁷⁶ Thus Hodgson regarded “the image of the people of God” as “the earliest and most inclusive.” Peter C. Hodgson, *Revisioning the Church: Ecclesial Freedom in the New Paradigm* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), 29. However, the peoplehood of God should be regarded as the very identity of the ecclesia rather merely an ecclesiological metaphor.

⁷⁷ It should be noted that even with the existence of many churches in different provinces, cities, and households, baptism here never connotes separatistic sectarian baptism. Baptism was just baptism in Christ, applying this in the present would mean baptism for common entrance into the peoplehood of Christ.

⁷⁸ This term here is not primarily used in biological sense but in socio-cultural sense, where women in a very patriarchal society, were regarded with social status lower than men.

⁷⁹ Galatians 3:24-28.

However, the full assimilation of the peoplehood of Christ into denominational structures is not actually a threat to the existence of churches, but on the contrary is even unitive and restorative of the true nature and function of the *ekklesia* of Christ. The church as a whole becomes a renewed and revitalized body of Christ. In the same way that a born again person has to leave his old life, however, what is left out is not really his existence but the form of life he lived before. And the true essence of human existence and life is regenerated, and this essence is the renewed existence and life in the Creator-God. Being a new child of God, a new creation of Christ, life for the converted takes on a new dimension—a fuller life reflective and anticipatory of the archetypal state of perfection and bliss. So are churches when they leave their respective old forms of ecclesial life and then be regenerated into one whole new people of God—one whole new creation of Christ.

Clouse prophetically foresees an ecclesial oneness in the *eschaton*, “the church will appear in the age to come as the one people of God united in one congregation before the throne, as the one celestial city—the new Jerusalem.”⁸⁰ The church as proleptic of the absolutely new humanity in the *eschaton* should represent such eschatological wholeness in the present form of ecclesial life.

However, in its anticipation of the *eschaton*, distinction should also be made apparent between the church and the Kingdom so as not to confuse a human institution with the divinely recreated cosmos. For as Schnackenburg succinctly points out:

Even the New Testament people of God as it is assembled in the Church, and continues to assemble, is not yet identical with the community of the elect which enters into the perfect kingdom of God; it is still subject to test and will be scrutinized and separated at the judgment.⁸¹

⁸⁰ R. G. Clouse, “Church,” in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, rev. ed.

⁸¹ Schnackenburg, *The Church in the New Testament*, 156.

The trueness of the profession of peoplehood of Christ is still ambivalent. In a similar way, Pannenberg cautions the church, “the church must distinguish its own existence from the future kingdom of God.” He further adds, “If the church fails to make this distinction clearly, then it arrogates to itself the finality and glory of the kingdom....”⁸²

Jenkins also speaks of ambiguity in Christian life:

To speak of the church...we begin in the dwelling place of our habitation...paying close attention to the living texts of the people of God in the ambiguity of the lives we live under the unambiguous claim of God’s reign.⁸³

Kung reminds the church, “For the Scripture the Church is the people of God, which, following the Old Testament people of God, is always a people of sinners, constantly in need of forgiveness.”⁸⁴

The state of ontological and relational imperfections of the individuals constituting the corporal *ekklesia* is indicative of the church being still in the process of regeneration that would only be fully consummated by Christ in the *parousia*. Thus, the church is not the absolutely perfect kingdom of God. The church is the agency providing preparation for the people en route to the kingdom; it is not the kingdom itself.⁸⁵

In this framework, the church, without arrogating itself as the kingdom, becomes open to the operation of the Holy Spirit. It humbles itself, in the hands of the Holy Spirit, and allows itself the Pneumatic creation and recreation. It recognizes itself, not as a

⁸² Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998)3:32.

⁸³ Michael Jenkins, *The Church: Its Changing Image Through Twenty Centuries* (Atlanta, GA: John Know, 1978), 89.

⁸⁴ Kung, *The Church*, 131.

⁸⁵ Eller sees the church as a caravan rather than a commissary; he distinguishes between the two, “a commissary...is and has its existence simply in being what it is. A caravan, conversely, has its existence only in a continual becoming.” He further adds, “A commissary is essentially *establishment* oriented, and a caravan eschatologically oriented.” Vernard Eller, *The Outward Bound: Caravaning as the Style of the Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 13.

deified human creation, but an instrument for the kingdom whose utility depend upon divine operation. Thus it has no reason for self-claim, other than what it is originally designed for by Christ and the Holy Spirit.

9.3. Conclusion

The aforementioned structures of the peoplehood of Christ, e.g., Christocentricity and Christologicity, Pneumaticity, missionality, and transdenominationality—are very characteristics of Contemporary Evangelical ecclesiology. The peoplehood of Christ constitutes the structures of Christocentric content, Pneumatic empowerment, missional focus, and transdenominationality—the very structures of Contemporary Evangelical ecclesiology.

Gasques describes the New Testament ecclesiology in a very evangelicalistic sense, “The church in the New Testament is the assembly of believers who have been drawn together through Jesus Christ for the purpose of worshipping, serving, and obeying God in the world in the power of the Holy Spirit.”⁸⁶ Hunts adds:

If we are biblical when we think church, we think corporately—we think people. The focus is on people, on *God’s people*, on a living organism, not on a building, an organization or a place. As the Christian life represents the individual aspect of Christian experience, the church represents its corporate dimension.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ W. Ward Gasque, “The Church in the New Testament,” in *In God’s Community: The Church and Its Ministry*, eds. David J. Ellis and W. Ward Gasque (London: Pickering & Inglis, 1978), 2.

⁸⁷ Hunt, “New Dimensions in Church,” in *New Dimensions in Evangelical Theology*, ed. Dockery, 340. It is not implied in this work that the church should be a-institutional or a-organizational, for as existing in the realities of societal life, it could not pragmatically live without its institutionality and organizationality. However, such institutionality and organizationality are instrumental of its purpose, not the very purpose of its existence. Snyder comments, “While the Church is not essentially an institution it does, however, have an institutional side in the same way the family does.” Snyder, *The Community of the King*, 63.

Moreover, it is conclusive that the concept of the people of God, or in particular the people of Christ, is a not only a viable paradigm of Contemporary Evangelical ecclesiology; but also, and in a deeper and wider sense, the paradigm for holistic identity restoration of the Christian church back to its prototypal framework as seen in the ecclesiological framework of Contemporary Evangelicalism.

Grenz sees the relevance of the people of God ecclesiology in a postmodern context, “the postmodern, pluralist context calls for an apologetic evangelical theology that reaffirms the place of the church as a people and, in a certain sense, as a soteriologically relevant reality.”⁸⁸ Mudge speaks of the people of God in a teleological sense:

The church is that part of human whole which conveys *to* that whole *its* destiny as the space of God’s reign. The church is a community in which the whole of humanity may so signified *its* calling to become a people of God.⁸⁹

Van Der Ven sees the significance of the peoplehood of God in a wider and richer contextual sense:

The code *people of God* meets the requirement of all sorts of peoples and population groups to express their own social-cultural and ritual identity in a Christian sense. Through this they can develop their own spirituality: their own religious aspirations, forms of expression, language and text, dynamics, and style. It is not only a question of religious wordings or coloring; the social-cultural forms even penetrate the structure of the identity and the convictions themselves. They make the church into “something that is ours” To the extent that one could say, proceeding from a personal intrinsic impulse: “the church is all of us together,” “the church is what we are,” this is what essentially appeals to groups and collectives in the code *people of God*.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Grenz, *Renewing the Center*, 308. Grenz concisely discusses the prospects of evangelicalism in postmodern culture, see “Stanley J. Grenz, “Star Trek and the Next Generation: Postmodern and the Future of Evangelical Theology,” *Crux* 30 (March 1994): 24-32. Jenkins expounds the situation confronting the church in a postmodern context; see Jenkins, *The Church Faces Death*.

⁸⁹ Mudge, *The Sense of a People*, 52.

⁹⁰ Johannes Van Der Ven, *Ecclesiology in Context* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 196.

Thus to conclude, the very identity of the Contemporary Evangelical church in particular and the very identity of the Christian church in general is the people of Christ. And Contemporary Evangelical ecclesiology is a Pneumatic revelatory call and regenerative framework for the Christian church today to become more truly the prototypal people of Christ—Christocentric, Pneumatic, missional, and transdenominational.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

To summarize:

1. Contemporary Evangelicalism is not merely a momentary or reactionary movement, but the full-grown of the long process of Pneumatic operation in restoring Christian Faith back to its prototypal theological structures.
2. Contemporary Evangelicalism presents a distinct ecclesiology descriptive of the structures of the prototype *ekklesia* that has been historically marred; thus Contemporary Evangelicalism is restorative of the prototypal ecclesiological structures.
3. The peoplehood of God, or in the particular New Testament context, the peoplehood of Christ—is the very identity of the church, and the very identity that Contemporary Evangelicalism presents to the church in the present times; thus Contemporary Evangelicalism is restorative of the original ecclesial identity.

Now, to inversely synthesize, God called Noah and his family because they were still obedient to God. God called Abraham because he had that inclination to be faithful to God. God called Lot because he still had that God-consciousness. God called Israel

because they still believe on the one Creator-God. Then God called the Christian church because it is composed of people who believe in Jesus Christ. Thus, here we see the fideistic response factor throughout God's historical calls. God call a people because they are those who respond to him in faith. Whenever such faith response waned, God chooses another people who, again, could respond to him in faith. Thus the existence and life of the *ekklesia* is co-existent with its fideistic response to God. The moment it stops responding to God in faith, it loses its *ekklesiality*.

It is in this context, that Contemporary Evangelicalism emerges as the climactic phase of God's historical *ekklesiality*. Contemporary Evangelicalism presents before the church the prototypal theological and ecclesiological framework of Christian Faith. As such, while presenting this prototypal framework, it also poses a call for the restoration the prototypal structures in the present theological and ecclesiological framework of Christian Faith. But the call necessitates a wholehearted response of faith.

Thus, Contemporary Evangelicalism, in essence, is the call for the New Reformation of Christian Faith, the New Reformation of Christian church, back to its prototypal structures. When Christians and the Christian church fail to heed this call, Christianity could, again, lose a great and blissful opportunity to be more truly God's people, to be more truly the people of Christ, in the present time nearing the *parousia*.

It is prayerful hope that this work would spark a global conflagration of New Reformation!

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BIO-DATA

Alan J. Delotavo was born in the Philippines from a Roman Catholic family. In kindergarten, he studied in a Catholic Convent School. In elementary, after being convinced of studying in a Christian school, he dropped his enrollment from a public school. Then in high school, he went to a public technical school, where he dreamt of becoming an engineer someday. One day, a friend invited him to a Bible Study group conducted by a Baptist missionary. There, the Christian seed sown in his soul during childhood days was again watered. He was baptized, but when the missionary left, months later he again drifted back into the secular world.

But while halfway in his engineering study in college, he yielded to an almost a year of persistent invitation by a former teacher to attend an Adventist church. Later he was baptized again; and feeling a calling to the ministry, he shifted from a financially prospective engineering course to theology. After his B.A. and M. A. in denominational institutions, he pursued his M. Theol. from an interdenominational South East Asia Graduate School of Theology; the school under the auspices of the Association for Theological Education in South East Asia. He focused his study in interdisciplinary anthropological study and contextual theology, writing a thesis on *The Meaning and Social Consequences of Imago Dei*. A section of that thesis was published in a nationally

awarded book sponsored by the Programme for Theological Education of the World Council of Churches. The book was published on time for the second anniversary of the Philippines' People Power Revolution.

He taught theology and contributed to contextual theology. But being advised to experience pastoral field, he then went to pastor a district. However, after sometime of being disheartened by what he saw and experienced as secular preoccupations in a supposed to be sacred ministry—he left church. Unable to find a teaching post in denominationalistic “Christian” institutions, he was led to teach in a secular state university. There he taught in the Social Science Department for more than seven years, then became an Assistant Professor III. And there he found a level of fulfillment.

But while living a secular life in a secular world; he was still, at times, wondering about his theological calling. Then one day, a friend invited him to what was tagged as a “non-denominational testimonial dinner” but found out later it was a charismatic organization. To please a friend he went. Then his love for Jesus was again rekindled, so was his love for theology. Embarrassed of a theological pursuit in a secular state university, he privately continued his theological contributions. And ironically had a foreign guest lectureship in theology, and became a member of the Society for the Study of Theology in England where he presented short and seminar papers in its annual conferences held in Oxford, Nottingham and Newcastle.

Leaving his country of birth to immigrate to Canada, one day he was called to the pastoral ministry again. But realizing that the theological world is where he belongs; he pursued his theological career, and finished his Ph. D. in Systematic Theology and Ethics from the University of Pretoria, under the tutelage of Prof. Conrad Wethmar.

Now, he is on another phase of his theological-vocational journey—the journey he foresees would bring him to an even more fulfilling niche than where he was before.

**INVITATION TO A WORKSHOP OF THE STUDY GROUP:
THE CHURCH IN SOUTH AFRICA AND GLOBAL DEVELOPMENTS
31 JULY – 1 AUGUST 2006**

The Centre for Theology and Society of the Faculty of Theology of the University of Pretoria has, in close cooperation with the Faculty of Theology of the University of Stellenbosch, instigated a new study group: "The church in South Africa and global developments". The purpose of this group is to study the impact of global developments associated with the process of modernisation, such as globalisation, pluralism, individuation and secularisation, on the church in South Africa and to reflect on the most appropriate and effective ways to deal with this impact. The method that will be followed is to biannually invite a small number of South African theologians and church leaders to form a study group that will thoroughly discuss the impact of particular global developments at workshops that will be held at Pretoria and Stellenbosch. An expert theologian or church leader will also be invited to attend the workshops and to prepare two papers on the impact of these global developments on the church in his/her own country and/or the ecumenical church. These papers will be made available to the members of the study group well in advance of the workshops, although the invited expert will also present public lectures on the same topics before the workshops take place. Some members of the study group will be invited to respond to the papers at the workshops and to draw out the implications for the church in South Africa. Hopefully the thorough discussion of the papers and responses at the workshops will result in creative and meaningful proposals on how the church in South Africa should deal with the impact of global developments.

You are invited to form part of the first study group that is constituted as a result of this initiative and to participate in the workshop that will be held in Pretoria on Tuesday, the 1st of August 2006. The invited theologian, who will attend the workshop and also present two public lectures on Monday, the 31st of July 2006, is prof. Heinrich Bedford-Strohm, professor of Systematic Theology and Dean of the Faculty of Pedagogy, Philosophy, Psychology of the University of Bamberg and chairperson of the Society of Protestant Theology in Germany. Although he is still young, he has already proven himself to be an innovative theological thinker and participant in ecumenical initiatives.

The two papers that he is preparing for the workshop are on the following topics (a brief abstract is provided of the content of each of the papers):

1. Nurturing Reason. The Public Role of Religion in the Liberal State.

"The liberal secular state lives from sources it cannot regenerate itself". This phrase by the German Supreme Court justice E.W. Böckenförde has described a dilemma: either the liberal

state ignores religion and thus runs the danger of loosing its forces of cohesion. Or it promotes religion with the risk of loosing its neutrality in religious affairs. Many liberal thinkers have responded to this dilemma by privatising religion. Recent social philosophical thinking, however, has discovered religion as a force of vitality for modern democratic and pluralistic societies. The paper will describe different models of defining the role of religion in democratic societies and explore theological resources for a constructive public role of religion which can be found in the concept of "public theology".

2. Public Theology and the Global Economy. Ecumenical Social Thinking between Fundamental Criticism and Reform

Economic Globalization is one of the most ardent issues of our times. It affects almost everybody, no matter in what part of the world they live. There is deep disagreement worldwide when it comes to judging the consequences of globalisation: is it the reason for growing global injustice and a growing gap between the rich and the poor? Or is it the driving force for overcoming poverty in the long run? What do we mean when we talk about "globalisation"? There is disagreement on these issues not only in the political discussion of global civil society, but also in the churches worldwide. While the ecumenical movement, which gives a voice especially to the people of the Southern hemisphere, has emphasised the fundamental flaws of global capitalism, the churches in the North advocate a reformist approach which limits the risks and promotes the chances of globalisation. Are these two perspectives irreconcilable? What are the theological resources? Is there a way to find common ground and develop a strong ecumenical perspective in the debate on globalisation in global civil society? The lecture will explore the chances and limits of such efforts against the background of current discussions in the ecumenical movement.

We would really appreciate it if you would accept our invitation to participate in the workshop on the 1st of August. The workshop will take up the whole day, from 8:00 to round about 18:00. You are also invited to attend the two public lectures by prof. Bedford-Strohm on the 31st of July. We would, of course, prefer you to be available for both days, if possible. Please let us know, as soon as possible, whether you accept our invitation to the workshop and whether you would be able to also attend the public lectures. You can answer by e-mail: etienne.devilliers@up.ac.za or by telephone: 012-4202818 (weekdays between 8:00 and 12:30).

If you accept our invitation we will in due time send to you the papers prepared by prof. Bedford-Strohm, as well as the programme for the two days.

We are looking forward to hear from you soon!

Etienne de Villiers
Dawid de Villiers
Dirk Smit

Organising Committee