

## CHAPTER 3.

### A THEOLOGY OF THE REDEMPTIVE PRESENCE.

From our purpose it immediately becomes apparent that our concern is to find a theology which may be applied to a present-day Evangelical ecclesiology. We cannot merely make the jump from the Exodus context to our present ecclesiology. We must formulate a biblical theology that is squarely based upon the text. Yet, it would be better if there was a common denominator to both contexts (then and now). It is important to mention a significant progression which is evident in both, the Exodus context and the Evangelical ecclesiological context, namely, revelation, redemption and relationship.

*Presence* can be regarded as the first common denominator. In the exodus narrative we cannot talk about redemption (and for that matter also covenant) without Presence. The Lord's personal presence was necessary. Evangelicalism also insists upon an ontological and epistemological necessity of the Lord, Jesus Christ. The Presence-motif, with reference to Jesus Christ, pervades the New Testament, especially in John and Paul (Pereira 2002:140-353). Presence in both instances, Exodus and Evangelicalism, is a category of revelation.

The second common concept is *redemption*, since the narrative in the Exodus texts considered, is about the redemption of Israel, and since the characteristic focus of evangelicalism is its exclusivist soteriological necessity. Redemption is a soteriological concept in evangelicalism (Klein 1998:333). Evangelicalism sees no way, other than salvation or redemption, to have any personal relationship with God.

The concepts of Presence and redemption naturally lead to the motif of *relationship* with God. God discloses himself for the purpose of redemption and relationship. God revealed himself in Exodus for the sake of having a relationship with his

firstborn son, the Israelites whom he has redeemed. Evangelicalism believes that God revealed himself most fully in the person of Jesus Christ for the purpose of providing redemption for those people who would put their faith in him, and so become God's sons. These themes of progression shall now be more fully considered.

A biblical theology of the Presence from the Exodus text will be derived from the theological reflections made on each of the Exodus pericopes' exegesis. We shall seek to unify the statements under the themes: Revelation, Redemption and Relationship. By revelation, we chiefly mean Presence and the theological revelatory aspects related to the presence of God in these pericopes. By redemption, we mean the saving acts of God towards his people demonstrated in these pericopes. By relationship, we mean that relationship which is established by election, redemption and covenant-making between God and Israel and the human responses to God.

It goes without saying that our central interpretive motif is Presence. It is that motif under which we seek to integrate our theology. For the contemporary application of this motif, we have to be Trinitarian in our approach. We believe that we are justified in doing so, as the Trinitarian approach is already evident in our New Testament theological reflections above, and by the way it (the New Testament) interprets much of the Exodus allusions in it. There are both Trinitarian and mediatory interpretations of the Exodus redemptive Presence texts.

### **3A. A Biblical Theology of the Present God in the Context of the Redemption in Exodus.**

The context of redemption in the book of Exodus is found in the first nineteen chapters of the book. While chapter 19 is often included as the introduction to the covenant section of the book, we have chosen to see it as the concluding part of the redemptive act. The arrival at Sinai, the mountain of God, was the complete fulfillment of the redemptive promise of Yahweh in Exodus 3:12, when he said to

Moses: *And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship on this mountain.* Admittedly, one can technically take the redemptive promise to include up to the conquest of the land, but this is never, strictly speaking, applied in this way by wider scholarship. While we could have closed our redemptive text at 19:20, since many believe vv.21ff to be an awkward redaction addition, we have included it nevertheless.

i) Revelation.

God takes the *initiative*. The presence of God is initiated by God himself. He freely and willingly reveals himself. His revelation is unforced. His revelation to Moses was a revelation of his willingness to intervene on Israel's behalf. God offers his personal intervention because he has *seen*; he has *heard*; and he has *come down* (3:7, 8) to meet them. His personal intervention is prompted by his concern for Israel's suffering.

God reveals himself first to Moses. He reveals himself *in a number of ways*. He reveals himself as a holy God; the proximity of his presence is holy. Therefore Moses was required to remove his shoes. God also reveals himself as a God who has a history with the Israelites. He is the God of their forefathers. He particularly mentions the names of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. God also reveals himself as a just, sovereign and all-powerful God. He is a miracle-working God, able to show his power for his redemptive purposes.

As a *holy* God, his requirement of his people is holiness. Moses experiences the awesome nearness of that holiness. It demanded reverence, and Yahweh himself commands Moses to remove his sandals. In fact, the Israelites, if they were to be his people, must be a holy people. They had to undergo special preparations for his holy presence. Their act of consecration was an acceptance of the fact of God's holiness. It was also acceptance that they were to be a holy priesthood. They were to be a consecrated people in and for his presence.

As the God *of their history*, Yahweh reveals himself as a covenant- and promise-keeping God. The ultimate honor of Yahweh is at stake when he reveals himself as promise-keeping. God reveals himself for Israel's identity as his treasured possession. God is present for his people. His redemptive purpose for Israel was really confirmation of their election. His covenant with his people is ever before him; he will never forget his covenant; even if they do. God will always remember his covenant.

God reveals himself as a *just* judge. In 3:16 Yahweh has weighed the situation and has judged the Egyptians as contravening the creation principles of *Imago Dei*, and hence the value of human life and freedom. God sets himself on the side of life and freedom. He presents himself on the side of the oppressed, and sets himself against the oppressor. His hand will be heavy against the Egyptians, and he will come forth victorious. God was concerned for the oppressed and for the well-being of his people. God will deal with the Egyptians according to their culpability, because he was in solidarity with their victims. The judgment of Yahweh was upon the Egyptians and their king.

God reveals himself as *sovereign* Lord. God's acts are his sovereign activities. He will harden Pharaoh's heart. He will plague the Egyptians. His people will be delivered, and his will cannot be frustrated. He will cause the Egyptians to be plundered by the slave people. He could give all these assurances as emanations of his sovereignty and power. Pharaoh was going to feel Yahweh's judgment. Pharaoh's sending away will actually be Yahweh's deliverance. Yahweh was the one who mobilized Pharaoh to bring about his deliverance (Stuart 2006:169). Pharaoh was raised for the purpose of demonstrating God's mighty power. Even though Moses interrogated Yahweh (5:22-6:12), he still believed that Yahweh was in control. God's purpose in election stands upon his sovereignty. He is the supremely and absolutely sovereign one. His love cannot be bought or earned.

The visible element of *theophany* functioned to get Moses' and, later, the people's attention. Theophany was for the benefit of the people. Horeb was the mountain of

revelation. The appearance was a self-disclosure. Evident in it is both self-revelation and self-concealing. God's concealment relates to God's holiness. In theophany he limits himself to specific and particular forms. He appears in a variety of forms; in itself an indication of his freedom. The appearances are for the most part spontaneous and effective. The supernatural fire, dark cloud, and portents that accompanied revelation, were merely for the benefit of the people and were expressions of the divine in the natural realm. God is nevertheless supernatural in every sense. These accompaniments of the Presence are therefore precisely the acts of concealment. God may appear in any place and at any time without any manipulation from outside himself. His presence is his own initiative.

God revealed his *Name*. God's name is his story; it summed up who he was. When God gave his name, he opened himself up for the historical community and broke the distance between him and his people (Fretheim 1991:65). He made himself approachable and knowable. The revelation of the Name is an unveiling of God's sovereignty. The Presence authenticated the identity of Yahweh. The auto-confessional, "I am Yahweh" (6:2, 6, 7, 8) encompassed the whole redemptive power of God. The auto-confessional conveyed the idea that God's effective presence was with them and for them. God gave them the history of his self-revelation; what Abraham knew him as, and now, what Israel can know him as; a self-sufficient and covenant-keeping God respectively. The all-sufficient one is also the fulfilling one. Though God is self-contained and incomprehensible, his eternal name is the disclosure of his own person. To know his name is to know his purpose for all mankind.

In the Book of Revelation the Name of God is explicated in terms of his attributes; he is the eternal God; the first and the last; the alpha and the omega; the one 'who was, and is, and is to come', and the faithful one (1:4, 8; 4:8; 11:17 and 16:5). He is therefore the trustworthy one. God is always there for his people; past, present and future. All of God's interventions in human history arose from the concern for his name.

In his revelation, God was willing to *dialogue* and to share his power with his servant. When Moses dialogued with God, he was able to question and even resist God's plan for him. Moses could ask God why he allowed trouble to come upon Israel (5:22). Moses believed he could accuse God of bringing calamity on his people. God allows dialogue of this nature. God showed himself patient with Moses during these times of dialogue. God was willing to communicate his power with him anyway. The Presence authenticated Moses' call. The staff became a transforming power, able to be turned into a living thing (Motyer 2005:78). God was able to make Moses new for the task. God met every inadequacy of Moses with a pledge of his own sufficiency and presence. The creation is able to act with the power of Yahweh according to his purpose. God empowers whom he sends. God was willing to be in partnership.

Yahweh is *faithful* to his promises. He does not act according to deistic principles; he promises Moses to be with him all the way. God will bring his redemptive intentionality to fulfillment. The promise of God provided hope. His word will come true; and he will prove himself faithful and worthy of our faith. God's fidelity as Creator-Ruler and as Redeemer is an attribute to be celebrated. He is therefore the trustworthy one. God gave Moses a word for the future. God's covenant exists before him constantly and will remain faithful to his covenant promises.

Yahweh also reveals himself as the *Divine Warrior*, willing to engage in battle with Pharaoh and the anti-creation forces. Yahweh is a God of war on Israel's behalf. The kingship of Yahweh correlates with the declaration that he is the Divine Warrior of Israel. Pharaoh will know who Yahweh is. The power of God is able to free. As their warrior he was able to lead them out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and he was their rear-guard too. Yahweh was mightier than Pharaoh. When Joseph gave the instruction about his bones, God was at work for hundreds of years orchestrating things to bring about Pharaoh's defeat (Enns 2000:270). He was able to defeat the powers of resistance to bring forth new life that was powerful, original and propagating.

God was *omnipotent*. Yahweh is omnipotent, magnificent and irresistible. He wrought the impossible and created new life for his people. He was able to dry up the sea floor for the benefit of the Israelites. Yahweh was able to use anything and anyone as his instruments for deliverance; by both supernatural and natural means. He could use miraculous and ordinary means. God was at work in the wonderful and in the ordinary. He harnesses the heavens and nature for benefit or for judgment, as he pleases (Perowne 1989:424). The sovereign Lord of every force within the created order will use them to bring to his people his deliverance decisively, comprehensively and completely. The water and the forces of nature received special powers to affect liberation. Yahweh was able to work day and night to procure Israel's salvation. Yahweh proved his incomparability (Kraus 1993:114). None of the powers of evil in the world can stop Israel's redeemer.

The Lord is *omniscient*. He omnisciently promised Moses success. He leads the right way. He knew and anticipated every response of Pharaoh and of the Israelites. He knew that Pharaoh would think that the Israelites were confused in their flight. He also knew that the Israelites could not face battle too soon and took them another route. He knew what every possible route held for them. The concern of Yahweh for Israel had to take into account the prevailing sociopolitical and emotional contexts. The pillar was a sign of Yahweh's presence, stable and visible. God was present in the pillar, and it became the vantage point from which Yahweh anticipated Israel's needs. The pillar took on characteristics that responded to the needs of the people. It was able to lead and to defend. It was their tangible assurance that Yahweh was present. Isaiah later speaks of the glory of the Lord as the rear guard of the people (58:8). By the pillar, his people had light and the oppressor, darkness.

God's revelation in his acts of creation and redemption is a revelation of *his greatness*, awesomeness and holiness. Every revelation of his otherness is the glory of his majestic power and justice in his acts of judgment and deliverance. His righteousness is expressed in a succession of glorious acts in Israel's history. He has shown himself to be a God of grace, transforming the history of Israel into *heilsgeschichte* (Weiser 1959:642). Later the prophet juxtaposes the Exile and the

Exodus to demonstrate both God's justice and God's goodness. God's goodness should inspire gratitude in the people of God. God's reputation comes a long way; since the deliverance from Egypt, and continues eternally for his people. The immanence of God in Israel's history shows his continued faithfulness.

God's presence was *available for his people* to witness. God came down for them. Theophany marked the identity of the people. Theophany communicated God's authority. The redeemer and law-giver interacted personally. Yahweh's presence was a gift to Israel. The Presence motivated worship, holiness and obedience to the law. The presence of God confirmed his participation in the relationship forward. In fact the self-disclosure is central and necessary for a relationship with God. God took the initiative in this relationship. This being so, the people could, nevertheless, not presume upon God's presence. It was a destructive Presence if trivialized. God's presence, though unconditional and immediate, required special preparation. Holiness must meet holiness. Therefore, the veil and the cordon were necessary for the people's protection.

The *place* of God's presence is holy; it is made holy by the Presence. The Mountain of God was laden with holy Presence. The place of the Presence, by its convulsions, shaking and trembling, acknowledged Yahweh's lordship, as lordship and revelation go together. Presence can evoke both fear and confidence. God is awesome both in power and in grace, being destructive and sustaining. The Presence made the Mountain a place, both, out of reach and near. It is both majestic and open. God is both transcendent and immanent. The presence of God is, in fact, indescribable. The Exodus shaking is also applied to other comings of God; for Haggai, when God comes to the second temple; for the writer to the Hebrews, when the judgment comes with the Lord of glory; for the seer in Revelation, these phenomena that acknowledge Presence will occur continually.

Yahweh stands as God *alone*. The gods of Egypt were not gods at all. They were impotent and withholding life; but Yahweh is powerful, life-giving and life-sustaining. Holiness was an attribute of God. He alone is holy. Holiness was an act of God. Whoever is holy was made such by the holy God and by his presence.



There will be a culmination of Presence; when the people enjoy the Presence without fear, yet with complete reverence and joy.

ii) Redemption.

Presence and redemption are the key concepts found in the first nineteen chapters of Exodus. As with Presence, redemption is also God's initiative. Redemption is what God does for humans, and more specifically for the purpose of making them his people. Surely, all the earth belongs to the Lord, but redemption is an act of setting people apart to relate to God in a special way and in accordance with his character and purpose. God will by special intervention redeem his people, and their deliverance becomes the basis for positive and acceptable response to God. The concept of redemption is interchangeable with the concepts of deliverance, liberation and salvation.

Redemption is predicated by the idea that the world can be changed. Sometimes it can be changed by reformation, when people and situations change gradually for the better. Sometimes change comes by revolution, where there is a decisive overthrow of the social order. Sometimes one's world is changed by introversion, where you withdraw to a context where you can recreate your desired situation. All these are human initiated interventions. Redemption in the biblical context is initiated by God and for his ongoing purpose to prevail. The redeemed people's world is actually changed by relationship which is initiated by the event of salvation.

Even though redemption is by God's initiative, he selects to use a mediator in the process. God reveals himself to Moses as the creator who redeems. God's covenant and creation intentions are fulfilled in his act of redemption. Moses became the extension of God's hand. He was God's man and was given the ability to do mighty signs in order to affect God's deliverance. Moses counts himself inadequate for the task, but Yahweh makes two important promises to Moses in answer to his inadequacies, namely that he will be with him (3:12), and that he will instruct him what to say (4:12, 15). Though the Israelites initially rejected Moses,

they finally saw that he was God's man. Jesus Christ too, though rejected by the Jews, would be the approved deliverer (Acts 7:36); he is chosen by God to be savior (Kebble 2000:98). Redemption leads to a new creation (Fretheim 2003:250).

The presence of God with Moses answers every inadequacy of the mediator. Yahweh prepared Moses. The promise of Presence served as a motivation to act without fear and in conviction of his calling. The mediator was one who comes from the presence of God, who can, on God's behalf, communicate the redemptive idea with the people. God empowers whom he sends. God endowed him with the power of miracles (or more accurately, signs) to make him believable. The Creator gave Moses the ability to order and dispatch creation to the ends of redemption. The people must buy-in; they must want to be redeemed and Moses must provide them with the motivation.

While we seek to explain this more fully under the heading of 'Relationship', we need to say that redemption was predicated on a historical relationship between God and Israel. God was to act in favor of his first-born son (4:22) in his act of redemption. He was the God of their forefathers; the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. God's prior promises to them through the forefathers were not to be forgotten. God's remembrance of their historical relationship prompted the deliverance. It was no sudden impulse (Mackay 2001:61). God had an ongoing commitment. When God gave his name he was willing to join the historical community and show himself as being for them. Yahweh's redemptive purpose was linked to his historical relationship with them. Indeed, their own recognition of this relationship opened them to the idea of being redeemed by the God of their forefathers.

The Israelites entered Egypt as guests of Joseph. Joseph's faith in the return of the Israelites to the land God promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, made him have the Israelites promise on oath that his remains (bones) be taken with them when they leave Egypt (Gen.50:24). The guests in Egypt became the slaves of Egypt. While slavery was common in their world, Israel's slavery in Egypt was one of cruel oppression and exploitation. In fact, it became apparent that the Egyptians

increased their cruelty on the grounds of the Israelites' increase in number. They did not quite realize that the increase was in fact a blessing from their God.

The rights of the Israelites were taken away in slavery, and they were oppressed to a point of misery. The depth of their despair and despondence even defeated their hope (6:9). They cried out in anguish as the hard hand of the Egyptians leaned heavily upon them. Their cry was heard in heaven and God was going to respond personally and decisively, both to save them and to punish the Egyptians for their inhumane treatment of his people. God was concerned about their well-being.

Egypt contravened the creation principles in that they did not preserve human dignity, and by that, set themselves against the Creator. Yahweh, the king of Israel was set in conflict against Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. The stage was set for war between the two kings; only, the subjects of Yahweh were not going to engage in battle, and Yahweh was going to come up alone against the Egyptians. Moses was expected to partner with Yahweh. Yahweh will come forth victorious. Redemption victory was the answer to the people's oppression.

Redemption was going to be a process. Yahweh omnisciently promised Moses success. The heart of Pharaoh will be hardened. The Israelites must be weaned from their dependency upon Pharaoh. The Egyptians will be plagued with the kind of plagues that proved their gods to be impotent. The people must participate in the show that distinguished them from the Egyptians. The Egyptians will arrive at the conviction that it is better for the Israelites to leave their land, and in this conviction allow themselves to be plundered by their former slaves. The Israelites must leave Egypt with all their belongings. Pharaoh will regret letting the people leave and decide to pursue them. This will set the stage for the final confrontation. Israel will be liberated and Egypt will be comprehensively defeated. God's redemption purpose for Israel will eventually overflow to the Gentiles (Kaiser 1997:570).

Redemption was possible only because Presence was possible. God is present for his people. His self-disclosure and presence was what chiefly provided Israel with their identity as Yahweh's possession. But his redemption added to their identity as

Yahweh's possession. His self-disclosure came about because he was intimately affected by their suffering. The suffering of his people was also his suffering. He was present in the midst of their suffering, and he made himself present so that he could redeem them and so completely transform their situation. They will move from redemption to creation; to a new way of life. God's disclosure is for his people; in the past, present and future.

Egyptian oppression was nevertheless necessary; for the Israelites to realize that they needed to break their dependency on Egypt on the one hand, and that they were to experience Yahweh's redeeming power on the other. Egypt could not be dealt with according to their culpability for as long as Israel was dependent upon them. Israel would then be adversely affected in that case. It was in Egypt's punishment that Yahweh's power would be evidenced. Yahweh will deal harshly with Egypt on behalf of their victims. His redemption on the one hand, and his punishment on the other, will be quick and decisive. God is to show himself full of holy zeal against Egypt's wickedness.

The people of God were invited in the redemptive action through a prophetic oracle to Pharaoh and to the Israelites. The oracle, *this is what Yahweh, the God of Israel says...*, was an invitation to both the Israelites and the Egyptians. Yahweh's aim is to make himself known to Pharaoh and to the Israelites. Pharaoh must discover that Yahweh is Lord over all, and Yahweh's people must rely on him alone. Pharaoh must acknowledge the mighty hand of Yahweh, but he would not do so until the mighty hand of Yahweh prevails over him. The Israelites must accept the word of Yahweh; he gave them a word for the future in his promise to deliver them.

There was a battle to be waged between Yahweh and Pharaoh. Pharaoh was going to feel Yahweh's judgment. Pharaoh will be forced to do according to Yahweh's behest (Stuart 2006:169). Yahweh actually mobilizes Pharaoh to bring about his people's redemption when Pharaoh submits to the heavy-handed judgment of Yahweh. The salvation that Yahweh was to provide had the characteristic of forcibly freeing; snatching out of the grip of the oppressor.

Yahweh takes the redemptive initiative. The seven *I will* clauses of 6:6-8 have verbs of hope and liberation that arise out of the divine Name. Providing hope is the grace of God displayed. Yahweh will act for the honor and well-being of the wounded; the victims; the oppressed. God was in solidarity with the oppressed. This solidarity extended beyond the events of the exodus. God is at the forefront of the liberation of his people, and generally of oppressed people. We obviously refer to liberation methods that are commensurate with the character of God, which are according to the principles of hope, faith and grace (love).

Redemption, because it is a divine act, is also a miraculous act. It involves a display of God's power. God acts according to his justice and holiness towards the oppressor, and according to his love and faithfulness towards his people. Every miraculous act supports these attributes of his. He is able to dry up the sea bed as a highway for his people to pass through the sea. He is able to use the natural with powers supernatural to affect his salvation. He was able to use anything and anyone as the instruments of his deliverance. Their encouragement to be still was an encouragement to exercise faith in Yahweh that overcomes fear.

Fear and confusion were to be transferred to the Egyptians (14:24-25). Their war machine was rendered useless. The Israelites could cross the path with the ease of horses running in an open field (Isa.63:11-14), while the Egyptians' horse-drawn chariots were frustrated and got stuck in the same path. The sovereign God of the universe can make the created order benefit his people and frustrate those with counter-creation aims. Pharaoh is to know that Yahweh is great and to be feared (14:4). God's great feat in rescuing his people from his hand is also occasion for Yahweh's fame to be declared among the nations. The rescue is a work to be admired by the whole world.

The redemption of God required the people to follow. Redemption is never forced upon those to be rescued. Because redemption is aimed at worship, it cannot be forced upon the victims. If it is, they will not respond out of worshipful gratitude. Redemption must create a people of faith and of praise. Redemption only comes by faith. Corporate (national) faith was the basis for individual faith (Heb.11:29).

This aim is commensurate with the call to become a kingdom of priests and a nation belonging to God. This is how God wants to be known and related to by his people.

The Presence for redemption was expressed in theophany. The pillar had its role to play in redemption. The pillar was a tangible assurance that God was present with his people (Fretheim 1991:151). It went ahead and led the people along a path that was best for them and for God's purpose. It went to their rear and protected the people from the ensuing Egyptians, who were desirous to recapture and enslave them. The pillar was a divinely imposed barrier (Mackay 2001:244). It regulated the movement of the people; where it stood, the people encamped, and when it moved, the people moved. It provided shade in the heat of day, and light at night. It led them to the mountain of God. Theophany on the mountain "welcomed" them to the mountain of God, and confirmed them as the people of God. Theophany taught them how to relate to the holy God.

The invisible presence of God caused the waters and the forces of nature to receive special powers to affect liberation (Ps.77:16f) of his people and judgment on the oppressors (Ps.77:19). Judgment comes against the forces of evil and oppression. The "plundering" given by the oppressor was also the reparation to the slaves for the exploitation and cruelty they have endured. God's justice prevailed. The Lord delivered his people with supplies of silver and gold, so initiating their prosperity too.

Redemption is from something to something. The people were redeemed from Egypt to the Promised Land; a land of milk and honey. This was no new promise to the redeemed people; it came from the promise God made to Abraham. They will again enter the land of joy. It was a promise to be repeated when the people were in exile. Every redemption from exile was to be a redemption in the order of, or more wonderful than, the Exodus redemption (Herbert 1975:106). It would be patterned according to Israel's deliverance from Egypt (Jer.23:7-8). God would act as he acted in creation and in the exodus. His power is sufficient to defeat the pernicious forces of chaos. Each deliverance is a triumph of God. Being led

through the sea was being led to a new existence of freedom and God's provision (1Co.10:1). Redemption was not to be contaminated with an ungodly life (Clark 1975:151).

Ultimately, redemption will be salvation from the slavery under Satan and his Beast (Rev.15:2f). Believers in Christ will sing the song of the Lamb rather than the song of Moses or Miriam. They are to share the redemption of God to the world, and to bear witness to his final judgment of sin (Childs 1974:383). The call to remember the redemption is a call to remember and celebrate God's decisive victory over the oppressive regime of Satan and his emissaries. We are witnesses to redemption as a people chosen and formed in a new covenant by God in Christ.

iii) Relationship.

In the context of our Exodus narrative we have relationships expressed on various levels that impact national, international, religious, social and individual affairs. While this is so, we seek to see the connection of Presence with all of these. How does Presence influence every level of relationship? This very question must be predicated upon the ideas of revelation and redemption. The narrative is about redemption and Presence.

There is, however, also a narrative substrate. How is the narrative of Exodus connected with the history of the people before this stage of the narrative is reached. In fact, this substrate is also the substrate for relationship on a national level. What is the connection between the Genesis narrative and that in Exodus? What relational connection is there between the people of Genesis and those of Exodus? It becomes necessary to show the connection between Abraham and the Israelites redeemed from Egypt.

In the relationship between the Book of Exodus and the Pentateuch, it may be said that Exodus is at the center of the Pentateuch. Our interest in establishing prior connections, forces us to only consider its relationship with Genesis. The opening

five verses of Exodus connect the Israelites with Jacob and his family. It specifically links the genealogy with the report of Genesis 47:27-28. The people whose story Exodus tells are to be identified with the family of Jacob that had migrated to Egypt. In our specific interest, it must be mentioned that Jacob was the grandson of Abraham, and that the covenant God made with Abraham, God confirmed also with Jacob (Gen.35:10-15).

The oppressive sojourn in Egypt and the exodus are foretold in Genesis 15:13-15. These divine promises are the driving force behind God's actions on behalf of the enslaved Israelites, as God "remembers" the covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Ex.2:24; 6:4-5, 8 cf. Gen.15:18; 17:1-8). Exodus 1:7 also establishes a connection between the growth of the Israelites in Egypt and the divine word in creation (see Gen.1:28; 9:1, 7). That is to say, God's activity among the Israelites has a creation-wide purpose (Fretheim 2003:250). God's covenant and creation intentions are fulfilled in his act of redemption.

On the national level of relationship and the historical connection with Genesis, one has to ask the question about Israel's election. The aspect of election will express itself in wider relationships. Wright (2003:216) asserts that in the Pentateuch itself, election is the central concept used to recapitulate the story of God's promise to Israel. The term also points forward to the story of God's establishment of Israel in the land with a temple and a king. We must also admit that election per sé, is only significantly explicated in the Book of Deuteronomy. In its retelling of the exodus story, we are not only given a summary of the story, but we are also given a theological interpretation that includes the understanding of election. The idea of election is, however, not entirely absent in Exodus. Exodus 19:5-6 is especially important here.

Exodus 19:5-6 is interpreted in Deuteronomy 7:6-8. Yahweh has chosen Israel out of all the nations of the earth, not because of any merits, but because of the Lord's grace. The oath made to their ancestors is all part of this predetermined and sovereign choice of Yahweh. It was because of this oath that Yahweh redeemed them from the house of slavery and from the hand of Pharaoh. Election is about



God's faithfulness to his covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. We will not here entertain the question of priority; does the covenant come because of election, or, is election as a consequence of covenant? Moses' recapitulation of the exodus story reinterprets it all as a story of Yahweh's election of Israel (Wright 2003:217).

Election is a communal and national (not individualistic) concept about the life of Israel in the world. Israel is to live as a holy people towards their God, other nations and among themselves. Election therefore alludes to Israel's vocation. In relation to Yahweh, they are his treasured possession. In relation to the other nations, they are a holy nation dedicated to show forth the praises of Yahweh. Israel is therefore not to withdraw from the world. They must stand as witnesses of God's goodness and his greatness. In relation to the community, they are to interact within creation, redemptive and covenant principles.

God is interested for the Israelites to experience a utopian setting. They are to inherit a spacious land of plenty. This existence is conducive to worshipping God out of gratitude. It is aimed at demonstrating to the nations that their God is for them, providing all their needs. If they break covenant, they will suffer loss and poverty, so becoming a stench to their God and to the nations. Their Exodus state of slavery and oppression is, however, not because of a break in covenant; it comes upon them as a result of God's favor – their numbers have increased to the discomfort of their Egyptian hosts. Their increase in number is a posterity covenant-promise fulfillment. Abraham was promised that his offspring would become numerous.

The character, Moses, also relates to different characters on different levels. These are for the most defined by his roles. Firstly, he relates to Yahweh. He is Yahweh's messenger; a prophet. His relationship with Yahweh afforded him a special privilege of the immediate presence of God. He had the promise of Yahweh's continued presence, and thus of successfully executing his task. The immediate Presence is also one of intimacy. In addition, God intimated his name and the history of his revelation with Moses. Moses had a personal relationship with

Yahweh. Yahweh promised him, not only to be with him, but also to be with his mouth (4:12). Moses' very behavior was regulated by the presence of God with him.

He was Yahweh's partner in procuring the redemption of the Israelites. He was Yahweh's mouthpiece to Pharaoh and to the Israelites; to Pharaoh with the task of persuading him to let the people go, and to the Israelites as mediator between them and Yahweh, their God. Yahweh sent Moses to Pharaoh and to the Israelites. At first, Moses is unsuccessful with both Pharaoh and the people of God. Pharaoh denies any knowledge of Yahweh, and therefore sees no need to heed his command. The people blamed Moses for provoking the wrath of Pharaoh with his first approach to him on their behalf. Moses, in turn, blamed Yahweh for 'failing' on his promise to free the people.

With Moses' partnership, Yahweh guaranteed him success. He was endowed with power to do signs (miracles) before Pharaoh and the Israelites. These signs authenticated his position as prophet and as redeemer, as both Pharaoh and the Israelites presented the challenge of believability and acceptance. God prepared Moses for this project. His own salvation from among the reeds to the palace of Pharaoh; his mother, selected as his nurse-maid and her influence on him; His flight from Egypt and his shepherding of the Midianite's flock; and the forty years as a shepherd that led him to the Mountain of God. All this was Yahweh's providential activity in the life of Moses.

Secondly, Moses related to Aaron in a specific way. Aaron was his brother, and he would become Moses' prophet. Moses was as God to Aaron. As Yahweh was to put words in Moses' mouth, so Moses was to put words in Aaron's mouth. Aaron was brought into the picture to serve Moses. It also would seem that Aaron was a good contact between Moses and the elders of the Israelites. When the Israelites initially reject Moses, they in effect also rejected Aaron (5:20-21). Yet, later the people took Aaron's ruling in the absence of Moses (cf. chp.32).

Thirdly, Moses' relationship with the Elders of Israel existed because of the social structure that was in place. They were in fact the voice of the people. It seems that the communication between Moses and the people was actually the communication between Moses and the Elders. The Elders would later be led by Moses into the personal presence of Yahweh (chp.24). It would nevertheless be incorrect to think that the people at large were without a voice. The people's response in the narrative must be taken as the collective response of all the Israelites.

Therefore, fourthly, Moses had a relationship with the people. He was their leader. He was their deliverer. He was their mediator between them and Yahweh. He was the one to take the blame for anything that went "wrong". He shouldered their complaints. He relayed to them the words and commands of Yahweh and was accepted as Yahweh's spokesman. Moses dispensed the wonder-works of God for their benefit and redemption. He prayerfully interceded for them before God. Later, Moses would become their covenant mediator. All of these were enhanced by the fact that Moses had access to the presence of God. He did what he did because God was present with him and the people accepted it as such.

The Israelites as a community also related to others. They related to Yahweh as his people. That relationship would become their characterizing mark. How they related to other people was largely influenced by their relationship with Yahweh. They were his elect. They were Yahweh's firstborn son; in line for Yahweh's inheritance. But, first they were to be redeemed by Yahweh and his servant, Moses. It was chiefly in this context that Yahweh demonstrated his favor upon them (Enns 2000:96). They were the object of his love.

The divine promises were theirs. The covenant with their forefathers prompted God's ongoing commitment to them. God linked his redemptive purpose with his historical relationship with them. God's revelation to them got them to accept that they were his possession. God was intimately affected by their suffering in Egypt. His presence with them was an indication of his approval of them (Janzen

1979:235). Yahweh's appearances were beneficent in nature. They must rest in Yahweh's creative presence.

Their relationship with Yahweh was past, present and future. The dead as we know them were not excluded from a relationship with God. In the New Testament (Mt.22:32; Mk.12:26 and Lk.20:37), Yahweh is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and he is the God of the living. That meant that the patriarchs were alive in God. At present God was redeeming them from the oppressive grip of Pharaoh. Their well-being in the future is guaranteed by the presence of God with them. Their very testimony to the nations depends upon the ongoing Presence with them (Freedman 1998:460). All they needed to do was to exercise their faith unswervingly, even when the Presence is intimidating. They were to put their hope in the Lord.

God was their shepherd. When they followed him as a young bride (Jer.2:1-8), he showed her passion and protected her all the way (Ryken 2001:38). God was steadfast in his love toward his bride. They were to remain holy and faithful to their God. The Presence required this from them. Theophany marked the identity of the people. They were led with a power that brought them to Yahweh.

Theophany made the law, not something imposed upon them, but something that elevated their relationship with Yahweh. The Presence was motivation for keeping the law. The Presence was real to each one of them so that they were able also to dedicate themselves corporately to God. Keeping covenant was a matter of loyalty out of gratitude. They were a choice and valued treasure of Yahweh, and keeping covenant was commensurate with the character of their Lord. Holiness and election was conferred upon them, never claimed. They were a nation of priests.

It is taken for granted in the Book of Exodus that Israel is God's people. Yahweh refers often to them as his people (Ex.3:7; 3:10; 6:7; 7:4; 7:16; 8:1; 8:20; 8:21; 8:22; 8:23; 9:1; 9:13; 9:17; and 10:3). In all, Israel can be called the People of God. In Exodus 6:7, God says, "I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God". There was a mutual relationship in place; the Israelites were Yahweh's

people, and Yahweh was their God. It was meant to be both mutual and exclusive. This, perhaps, is the essential statement of the covenant relationship between Israel and Yahweh. This statement, interestingly, is found throughout the Old Testament with reference to Israel, and in the New Testament with reference to the Church.

The people also had a relationship with Pharaoh, albeit a destructive one. They were the slaves of Pharaoh. They were there for his selfish benefit. Their life was not important for him to preserve. He exacted from them beyond what they were able to give. He deprived them from what he alone could give. Pharaoh interpreted their need to worship their God as “laziness”. Their desire to worship became an occasion for him to demonstrate his cruelty towards them, bringing more calamity and trouble. Pharaoh was the source of Israel’s oppression and wounding.

There was also a relationship between Pharaoh and Yahweh. Pharaoh was antagonistic towards Yahweh, especially when Yahweh revealed his redemptive purposes. Pharaoh’s response to Yahweh was one of indifference and arrogant defiance. He did not acknowledge Yahweh, and tauntingly denied any knowledge of him. He showed complete disregard for God’s redemptive intentions. Pharaoh was competing with Yahweh for the ownership of the Israelites.

Pharaoh’s real relationship to Yahweh, the sovereign Lord, was that of being reduced to a mere pawn. Pharaoh was raised for the purpose of demonstrating God’s mighty power. The conflict for paternal power existed only because Pharaoh was unwilling to admit Yahweh’s sovereignty. As an oppressor Pharaoh provoked God’s intervention. Pharaoh will finally bow to Yahweh. Through the mouths of his charioteers and horsemen, he finally acknowledges Yahweh as sovereign.

Finally, Israel has a relationship with the nations of the earth. Israel was called as eye-witnesses to the fact of redemption. The redemptive and nurturing power of God needed to be communicated with the nations for the purpose of declaring the praises of God. They were a people chosen and formed by God for the purpose of bringing praise to God. They were to be a priestly nation of the world, serving the

nations by its service of God. They were priests to live off the wealth of the nations, and for the benefit of the nations (Grogan 1986:334).

### **3B. Applying the Exodus Theology of Presence in an Evangelical Ecclesiology.**

Our discussion here is to briefly explain evangelicalism and its ecclesiology, but before we can embark on that discussion we must talk first about evangelical soteriology. Evangelical ecclesiology is derived from evangelical soteriology. The understanding of the means and extent of salvation is foundational to any discussion of ecclesiology, as evangelicals are characterized by their special emphasis on sin, salvation and saving faith (Deist 1986:57). We shall then discuss evangelical ecclesiology in the context of the common denominators of revelation, redemption and relationship.

#### a). Evangelical soteriology briefly explained.

König (1998:83) correctly characterizes Evangelical Christians in three ways; as people who have had a personal experience of Jesus Christ; they have a very high view of the Bible; and they share their faith with others. From the biblical material, evangelicalism holds that some will be saved and others will not. What is salvation? How do they obtain the means of salvation? How does one come to faith, and what does faith mean? What role does God play in salvation? These are the important soteriological questions for evangelicalism. We do not intend to define every word or concept; taking for granted the generally understood meanings. There might be various shades of meanings, but they are really only “shades” of the same color.

God has provided his Son, Jesus Christ for the salvation of all who believe. The basis for anyone’s salvation is personal faith in Jesus Christ, thereby accepting

God's provision (Carnell 1959:70). Those who believe in Jesus Christ are saved, and those who do not believe are not saved (Jn.3:18). But how will they believe if they do not hear, and how will they hear unless someone preaches to them (Rom.10:14-15)? The message they must hear is the message about the good news of God's provision in Jesus Christ, called the Gospel.

The preaching of the gospel, however, can only affect faith if it is endowed with the Holy Spirit's power; and a faith so affected and applied can bring spiritual transformation (Ramm 1957:28-37). Again, it is the Holy Spirit who brings about transformation. This transformation is also referred to as regeneration and sanctification. Regeneration is communicating the resurrection life of Jesus. Sanctification is becoming Christ-like; stated otherwise, that is becoming holy. If any man is in Christ, he is a new creation (2Co.5:17). If the resurrection of Jesus Christ is applied in this way, how is the death of Jesus applied?

Salvation, however, is having sin's effect cancelled, because the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ (Rom.3:23). The New Testament explains how sin's effect is cancelled on three planes generally prescribed by the Old Testament, especially in the Pentateuch. On the forensic plane (of holiness) sin declares man unrighteous and culpable. He needs *to be justified* before a just and holy God. Secondly, on the relationship plane, sin rendered man hostile to God; thus, man needs *to be reconciled* to God. Thirdly, on the plane of slavery and human depravity, man needs *to be redeemed* by God as he is unable to redeem himself and remedy his state. Paul, especially, recognizes that the death of Jesus Christ provides the solution on all three planes, and faith facilitates the transfer of the solutions Christ provides to the believer.

Forensically, Jesus Christ alone is righteous. Besides him there is none righteous, no not one (Rom.3:10-12 *cf.* Ps.14:1-3), because all have sinned, and the wages of sin is death (Rom.3:23; 6:23). God revealed his righteousness through faith in Jesus Christ on all who believe (Rom.3:22). Righteousness is a legal status (Wenham 1995:55). God's righteousness is fulfilled through the life and death of Jesus Christ. Righteousness came apart from the Law; that is, apart from any good

works. Through faith the righteousness of Christ is imputed upon the believer; and so the believer obtains *justification* through his faith (Rom.3:26). The just shall live by faith (Rom.1:17 *cf.* Hab.2:4). Being justified, means the judgment is removed and the believer is now no more under condemnation. There is now therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ (Rom.8:1).

As far as *reconciliation* is concerned; again, Jesus is presented as an atoning sacrifice. It came in two ways through Jesus Christ. Having been made righteous (being justified) we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom.5:1). Peace with God is the language of reconciliation. The other way was through the act of propitiation (Rom.3:25); the sprinkling of the blood on the atonement cover harked back to *Yom Kippur* in Leviticus 16:14f. The blood of Jesus shed on the cross was an atonement sacrifice made once for all and always. There is a cosmic vision to the idea of reconciliation (Wenham 1995:60). According to Hebrews chapter 10 Jesus' atonement needs not be repeated every year because his sacrifice is able, even, to cleanse our consciences. Jesus took away the hostility and replaced it with peace. Faith in Jesus Christ meant acceptance of his atoning work, and therefore reconciliation to God.

As far as *redemption* was concerned, the chief underlying Old Testament concept was that of the Passover Lamb and the sending away of the Israelites by their Egyptian oppressors. The Passover Lamb was life-saving to the people of God, when, to the contrary, the Egyptians lost their first-borns to the Lord's judging angel. Christ is our Passover (1Co.5:7) sacrificed for us. The believer is therefore liberated from the dominion of sin and of death by the blood of the Lamb – Rom.6:14-23 (Wenham 1995:149). Believers are therefore holy and belonging to the Lord. They are no longer slaves to sin because the blood of Jesus, God's Son, keeps on cleansing them from all sin (1Jn.1:7).

By faith in Jesus Christ, the believer realizes an escape from the divine judgment through the act of justification. For such, the final judgment will be confirmation of the validity of justification (Bloesch 1978: 2: 182). Those who did not believe and have done evil, they will be resurrected to condemnation (Jn.5:29). Secondly, the



believer also escapes the divine wrath when his status is changed from enmity to being reconciled. Lastly, the believer escapes divine abandonment, and through redemption experiences regeneration, which is the new creation in Jesus Christ. This concept fits with our Exodus understanding; redemption is an act of creation, undoing anti-creation.

So, evangelicalism does not believe in universalism. Though salvation is universally available, it is not universal. Though there may be various approaches to the question of Predestination and Election, these do not change the fundamental belief; that not all are, or will be, saved (Thiessen 1979:106). Everyone must respond by true faith in Jesus Christ. Salvation required the physical death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The physical existence of Jesus required the incarnation of the second person of the Trinity according to the will of the Father. The Holy Spirit brings spiritual application to these physical acts of Jesus Christ. The believer is given spiritual life, which is eternal life. He is able to live the spiritual life in the physical world by the enabling of the indwelling Holy Spirit, whom he receives at the time he trusts in Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit is the seal that guarantees the believer's salvation.

b). Evangelical Ecclesiology.

Though faith is individualistic and subjective, salvation is corporate. Salvation belongs to the people of God. Salvation is brought about through the activity of the Trinitarian God (Wainwright 1962:256-260). To be saved is to belong to Jesus Christ. To be saved is to be sons of God through adoption. It is to have and to be sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise (Eph.1:13). To be saved is to belong to the People of God (2Co.6:16). The people of God are known by the various connections it has to the Trinitarian God. They are known as the Body of Christ (1Co.12:13 and Rom.8:9). They are the Temple of the Holy Spirit (1Co.3:16f). Evangelicals believe that you cannot be saved and not belong to the People of God, which is the Body of Christ and the Temple of the Holy Spirit (Beasley-Murray 1992:49). Conversely said, they believe that only saved individuals belong to the

Body of Christ. Therefore, the Church consists only of regenerate members. In this way, then, God saves only the Church of Jesus Christ. The Church alone is the redeemed community.

By “church” we recognize two forms of existence; namely the local church, as in the gathering together of believers to worship and fellowship, and the universal body of saved individuals, both Jews and Gentiles. The local church is often denominational, sometimes having different emphases, styles of worship, forms of governance, cultural colorings and, even, “unredeemed” individuals as members. While the benefits of exercising spiritual gifts benefit the local church and in some specific ways the universal body, the culmination of salvation will be ultimately manifested in the Church universal. There is one faith, one body, one Lord, and the Parousia is for the one universal body. The coming again of Christ will be the event of separating the regenerate from the un-regenerated. It is nevertheless an imperative that the local church derives its identity from the Church universal.

In reference to the Church universal, while there are many images of the Church (*cf.* Minear 1960), the three that implicitly show a Trinitarian connection are the most important ones; The People of God, The Body of Christ, and The Temple of the Holy Spirit. Evangelicalism is strictly Trinitarian; God as Father, Christ as Son, and the Holy Spirit are the three persons in the Trinity.

i). People of God.

God’s decision to make believers his people is reflected in 2Co.6:16; “God said, I will live in them and move among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people”. The church is constituted of God’s people. They belong to him and he belongs to them (Erickson 1983:1035). God took the initiative in choosing them. He chose them from the beginning to be saved (2Th.2:13-14). The Old Testament concept is broadened to include both Jews and Gentiles within the Church.

God has redeemed Israel and they are his people. In Hosea 2:23b, God says, “I will say to those called ‘Not my people’, ‘You are my people’; and they will say,

‘You are my God’.” Paul applies this statement to God’s taking in of Gentiles as well as Jews (Rom.9:24-26). The Church, consisting of both Jews and Gentiles, are a redeemed people. They have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb (Rev.5:9).

This people are now not identified by the external sign of circumcision of the flesh, but by the inward sign of the circumcision of the heart (Rom.2:29 and Phil.3:3). The people of God are a people marked by holiness. This applies to both Old and New Testament contexts. Evangelicals are not agreed on whether the Church replaces Israel as the People of God or not. This debate has no impact on our present discussion.

ii). Body of Christ.

The Body of Christ is perhaps the most extended image of the Church. Berkhof (1953:557) regards this as a complete definition of the Church. The Body of Christ is the locus of Christ’s activity. Believers are individually members of the Body, which is a unity of all the members (1Co.12:27). Salvation in all its complexity is in large part a result of union with Christ (Erickson 1983:1036). Christ is the head of the Body. It is perhaps better to say that he is head over the Body (Col.1:18), rather than a part of the Body. The whole Body belongs to him (Pereira & Dennison 2003:1).

Believers united with Christ, are being nourished through him by all who are connected to him. The believers are all members of one another (Rom.12:5) and they are all interconnected through Jesus Christ. All the members of the body, though many, are one body (1Co.12:12). This concept fosters also the understanding of mutuality, in that the body’s members are able to build up one another and enjoy genuine fellowship. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together (1Co.12:26).

The Body is unified and universal, characterized as “...one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one

faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all” (Eph.4:4-6). Its universality is best demonstrated in Colossians 3:11, “Here there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all, and in all”. The Church is not limited to Israel; it has no racial, language, economic and social boundaries. Its aim is to draw in the whole world by means of evangelism, and every believer is expected to be involved in evangelism.

iii). Temple of the Holy Spirit.

The Temple is undoubtedly an Old Testament concept applied to the Church. We are all, Jews and Gentiles, baptized through one Spirit into the Body of Christ (1Co.12:13). Paul’s Trinitarian concept of the Church is the picture of the Church as the Temple of the Spirit (Erickson 1983:1039). At Pentecost the Holy Spirit gave birth to the Church. The Holy Spirit continued to populate the Church in the Name of Jesus Christ. The Church is indwelt by the Spirit, both as individuals and as a corporate entity. We are all, collectively, the Temple of the Holy Spirit (1Co.3:16-17). In Ephesians 2:21-22 we understand the Trinitarian identity of the Temple. “In him (*Christ*) the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord (*Christ*). And in him (*Christ*) you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God (*Father*) lives by his *Spirit*.” (Italics mine).

The Spirit, being one, also produces a unity within the Body. The members are called upon to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph.4:3). The Holy Spirit also makes the believers attuned to the leading and will of the Lord. While he attunes us to the sovereignty of God, his own sovereignty is expressed with the dispensing of the gifts for the edification of the Church (Heyns 1980:81). The Holy Spirit also makes the Church holy and pure as they are sanctified under the new covenant because they are the Temple of the Holy Spirit (1Co.6:19-20).

It is perhaps necessary to bring up the issue of *kingdom* and *priesthood* here. We follow Ladd (1964:259f) when he defines the Kingdom of God as the reign of God. While one of the problems is defining the Church in terms of the Kingdom, we may

come to the conclusion that the Church is part of the Kingdom of God (Mt.16:18 cf. Mt.18:18). The Church realizes the Kingdom of God. The Church extends the Kingdom in that it is a witness to the Kingdom, so expanding the reign of God. Thus the Kingdom was present in heaven before people were created or became subjects. The Church is only one manifestation of the Kingdom, and will be its eschatological people. Heyns (1980:79) coins a useful term when he calls the Church a “*basileological*” community.

Finally, Christian believers are collectively called *a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that they may declare the praises of him who called them out of darkness into his wonderful light* (1Pt.2:9). Blum (1981:231) states that this does not mean that the Church is Israel or even that the Church replaces Israel in the plan of God. Any way, he has chosen to replicate what was true about Israel now in the Church. This replication, for us, is an important connection between the then (of Exodus) and the now (of the Church). The priesthood and temple motifs are bound together, as it is also kept together in the ministry of Christ (Heb. 7 -10).

In reference to the local church, we understand that it is the only form that can interact as the church with the world. It is here that we must live out our identity as God’s people, as Christ’s body and as the Holy Spirit’s temple. These three terms must be expressive of our relationship with the Trinity. This expression is in fact our witness of what God has done *for us, in us, and through us*; all for the world to behold. The local church is the visible community that can demonstrate any sort of socio-ethical expression. Thus, the socio-ethical principles of the Church are derived from the spiritual concepts of the universal body, while the socio-ethical expressions are practiced in and through the local body.

iv). Demonstrating the Theology of the Exodus Presence Principles in Evangelical Ecclesiology and in Evangelism.

We are simply asking how the theology of Presence in Exodus correlates with Evangelical Ecclesiology. By correlation we are trying to see how that theology

reasonably enhances our understanding of Evangelical Ecclesiology in the areas of revelation, redemption and relationship. Revelation will have reference to the Trinity. The New Testament concept of redemption is connected with the understanding of salvation. By relationship we have in mind that between the Church and the Trinitarian God, that within the Church itself, and that between the Church and the world.

1. *Revelation* is an initiative of God. We cannot know anything about God unless he reveals himself. The highest disclosure of God ever, is found in Jesus Christ. Jesus is the incarnation of God, who has *come down* as Yahweh has done when he had seen and heard Israel's cry in Exodus 3:7-8. The holiness of God was communicated with sinful man when we beheld his glory full of grace and truth (Jn.1:14). The destructive character of holiness was now tempered with grace.

The revelation of Jesus Christ was not the first revelation of God to his people. God is the God of their history. There is continuity with that history. The continuity found in Jesus, like with the exodus, is with the promises about his coming (Johnson & Webber 1989:232). The God, who in earlier times spoke through the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us through his Son (Heb.1:1-2), the creator-redeemer. God will always remember his covenant promises and seeks always to bring about a new creation (2Co.5:17). It pleased the sovereign Lord that in Christ should all the fullness of God reside (Col.1:19) and through him, to provide redemption.

There were moments when the divine self-disclosure caused a stir in the created order (cf. Ex.19) when God spoke. When Jesus disclosed his glory, and others asked, "What kind of man is this that, even, the winds and the waves obey his voice?" (Lk.8:25). The speaking of Jesus was the speaking of one with authority. Following our observation on page 64 above, Yahweh revealed his name, *I will be who I will be*, and thereby making himself approachable and knowable, gave men hope in the seven *I will* utterances (Ex.5:22-6:13). There must be correlation with the seven *I am* statements of Jesus in John's gospel, when he said *I am the Bread of Life* (6:35), ... *the Light of the world* (8:12), ... *the Door* (10:7), ... *the Good Shepherd* (10:11), ... *the Resurrection and the Life* (11:25), ... *the Way the Truth*

*and the Life* (14:6), and ... *the True Vine* (15:1). At the center of all these statements was Christ's statement, "Before Abraham was I am". Participants in his Name are participants in his deity because he is the divine presence and revelation in history (Beasley-Murray 1999:139).

From the point of view of Yahweh revealing and sharing his power with Moses for the purposes of affecting redemption, we can say that the gift of the Holy Spirit was given for this very same reason to all believers. Jesus said: *you will receive power after the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you will be my witnesses ... in spreading the Gospel of redemption* (Acts 1:8). As with Moses, the believers' inadequacies for the task are met with the sufficiency of the Lord's presence with them; *and surely I am with you always...* (Mt. 28:20).

Evangelicals understand the whole Trinity as their "Divine Warrior" in their task of spreading the news of redemption. They recognize that their fight is not against flesh and blood, but against the forces of darkness and un-creation (Eph.6:12). They step forward by the power of God's Spirit in Jesus Christ. If God is for us, who can be against us? (Rom.8:31). All things work together for good to those who love the Lord, and who are the called according to his purpose (Rom.8:28). None of the powers of evil in the world can stop Israel's redeemer and the Church's redeemer.

As with Israel, so too with the Church; Presence marks their identity. We have already developed this fact under the idea of the Church as the Temple of the Holy Spirit. In Ephesians 2:21-22 we understand the Trinitarian identity of the Temple. "In him (*Christ*) the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord (*Christ*). And in him (*Christ*) you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God (*Father*) lives by his *Spirit*." The presence of God confirms the participation of the believer in the god-head. Peter speaks of believers as partakers of the divine nature (2Pt.1:4). This nature helps them to escape the corruption of the world (Swindoll 1979:14). In fact, the re-creation within the redemptive activity of the Church will culminate in them being like Jesus, for they shall see him as he is (1Jn.3:2).

2. *Redemption* is also God's initiative. Man is unable to save himself. Salvation comes, not by man's efforts or merits, it is a gift of God (Eph.2:8-9). Redemption confirms the people of God. The purpose of God in their new creation is that the people of God should be holy as he is holy (Packer 1992:135). Because redemption is predicated by the idea that the world can be changed, redemption is the beginning of that process of change through regeneration and sanctification until glorification (Rom.8:29-30). Sanctification is transforming into Christ-likeness through the Spirit (2Co.3:18). The people of redemption, are the people of Presence; a people changing into the likeness of that Presence through a process of becoming holy. This is true of the Church.

As God required a mediator in the person of Moses to affect redemption, so God chose the Mediator for the Church to be his Son. The Son is the only mediator between God and man that can affect redemption, because he gave himself as a ransom for sinners (1Tim.2:5-6). Like Moses was rejected at first, so Christ, rejected by the Jews, is the one approved of God to be the deliverer (Acts 7:36). His redemption leads to a new creation (Fretheim 2003:250). Paul says by inspiration: *Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is a new creation* (Gal.6:15). Also, *if any man is in Christ, he is a new creation* (2Co.5:17).

The redeemed are to become instruments of redemption. God desires to use his people in this way. Israel was to be priests to the nations. Believers of the Church are to be instruments of Christ's project of building his Church by sharing his gospel. As Pharaoh's war machine was rendered useless in its attempt to frustrate God's redemption act; so too *the gates of hell*, which is Satan and his cohorts, will not prevail in Christ's activity of building his Church - Mt.18:18 (Carson 1984:370). The people of Christ have now assumed the identity intended for Israel; they are *a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God*, so that they *may declare the praises of him who called them out of darkness into his wonderful light* (1Pt.2:9).



It must be said that while every redemptive act of God, whether from slavery or from exile, happened according to the pattern of the exodus, none of it was the ultimate act of redemption. The redemption of Jesus Christ was the ultimate act of redemption. Jesus is greater than Moses; he is greater than Joshua, because he alone provides the kind of redemption that provides a complete Sabbath rest (Heb.4:3) and a complete victory (Rev.15:2-3). The idea of *rest* is the creation idea of completion (Guthrie 1990:113).

3. *Relationship* is also God's initiative. He made the first move towards man. He started a relationship with Abraham, giving him promises that were to apply to Israel and to the Church. Christ became a curse so that the Church may inherit a blessing. Paul says about the Church: "He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit" (Gal.3:14), and "If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal.3:28f). The Church has significance in history (Stott 1991:101).

Yahweh has chosen Israel out of all the nations of the earth, so that he can show his goodness towards them. They were not chosen by any merit of their own, but by God's grace. The man of faith adapts himself to the revelation of God's grace (Chafer 1980:10). The same applies to people in the Church. They are saved by grace and not by works. Election is about God's faithfulness to his promises through Abraham to Christ. As election alludes to Israel's vocation (Ex.19:5-6), so does it allude to the Church's vocation (1Pt.2:9). Its vocation is to be a testimony of God's goodness to his people, and of God's greatness in facilitating that goodness.

God's people can partner with God in his reaching the world with that message. The Church has a particular responsibility in evangelizing and making disciples. As God empowered Moses, so he did the Church through the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit empowers them in the area of *revelation* (the Word) – he will guide them into all truth (Jn.16:13); *redemption* (evangelization) – preaching with a demonstration of the Spirit's power (1Co.2:4); and *relationship* (unity and love) –

keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace ... until we reach the whole measure of the fullness of Christ (Eph.4:3, 13).

Finally, as Israel was to be a model to the nations of the world; so too, the Church is to serve as a model community to others. Because the Israelites came from slavery, they were forbidden to ill-treat others. They were to reflect the values of creation. The Church as the new creation is to shine as lights, so that all could see their good works and glorify God (Mt.5:16). They must be a community of love and equity. They are an egalitarian and healing community, inviting to all regardless of race, social standing, gender and economic status. In the next chapter we shall discuss the behavior of the redeemed community as a community of the Presence.

The whole Christian existence is predicated by a God who chose to reveal himself. We could never understand the love of God unless he was willing to demonstrate it by his presence and power on our behalf. His presence and power on our behalf were nothing but fulfillment of his promises to us. The God, who spoke to the forefathers through the prophets, chose to personally speak to us through his Son (Heb.1:1-2). His personal presence was a *coming down* (c.f. Ex.3:8) to intervene and rescue with power, such as never been seen before. Death was conquered.

There is another marvel; almost equal to the awesomeness of God's coming in the person of his Son, namely the willingness of God to partner with inadequate messengers to bring about such a great salvation message to lost humanity. Its greatness is in the magnanimity of God to include weak and, sometimes, unwilling humanity in his awesome agenda for the nations, and in the building of his Church. Our inadequacies unleash the creative power of God and we are clothed with power beyond our understanding, causing men and women to be redeemed and created anew. Our words are able to demonstrate power even greater than the staff of Moses. Every changed life is a miracle no less than the opening sea or the pillar of cloud and fire. Every response of faith is to put man in relationship with the eternal God.

While we do not posit a liberation theology such as was held by Latin American liberation theologians, we do not want to limit the scope of redemption to merely spiritual dimensions. André (1985:9) voices our opinion when he said, “The church’s mandate extends beyond the preaching of the gospel of personal salvation (seen in spiritual terms only) and includes temporal affairs such as justice and morality in society”. Redemption, and therefore the Gospel, must also have implications for community. Just as Israel related as the people of God, so the Church must reflect the marks of redemption as an egalitarian and an empowering existence in community. Presence and redemption must bring about such a relationship. The Church as an inviting community of equality and empowerment is a powerful tool for evangelism on the one hand, and for emulation on the other.

The grandeur of sinners becoming part of a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation and a peculiar people, showing the praises of a Savior who called them out of darkness into his marvelous light (1Pt.2:9 *c.f.* Ex.19:5-6), is beyond human comprehension. These sinners are now God’s people. They are in a relationship with the holy God. And not only with him, but with all those who are redemptive-ly related to God. They are witnesses of his redemptive power. They are partakers together of a new life; of the resurrection life of the Lord of lords. In Christ they are all partakers of the revelation, redemption and relationship.