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CHRIST, THE GOSPEL, AND THE CHURCH:
THE CHURCH'S PARTICIPATION IN THE
SALVATION OF ITS MEMBERS

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APPROVAL SHEET

CHRIST, THE GOSPEL, AND THE CHURCH:
THE CHURCH'S PARTICIPATION IN THE
SALVATION OF ITS MEMBERS

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To my parents, Stephen and Marilyn Knierim, whose love for God and his church will forever be an inspiration to me and to my future mother-in-law, Betty Byrd, and her late husband, Cecil, who was martyred when armed thieves broke into his missionary compound on January 20, 2000. May his blood be the seed of the church.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANF	Ante-Nicene Fathers
BDAG	W. Bauer, F. W. Danker, W. F. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich, <i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament</i>
NIDNT	New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology
NPNF	Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers
TDNT	Theological Dictionary of the New Testament

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PREFACE

In a letter to Robert Hooke, Sir Isaac Newton once wrote the following about his great scientific accomplishments and work, “If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of Giants.”¹ As I think back upon the writing of my dissertation and my seminary career, I have stood upon the shoulders of giants. It is these “giants” that have made the following work possible. I am eternally grateful to my parents, Stephen and Marilyn Knierim. Without their love, encouragement, prayers, godly example, and support, this dissertation would not have been possible. I am also heavily indebted to my grandparents, Paul and Alice Knierim, and my grandmother, Helen Miller. Their lives are a constant example and encouragement to me.

In my years before seminary, I was blessed by numerous mentors and teachers who encouraged me in my spiritual and academic growth: Tim Phillips, John Jackson, Dana Neer, Clint Kohl, David Meyer, and Michael Thigpen. All of these men made significant impacts in my academic and spiritual life. Likewise, the sacrificial service of the faculty and staff of Kokomo Christian School of Kokomo, Indiana, provided a godly example in my life and developed in me a Christian worldview. Without their ministry in my life, this dissertation would never have been written. I am also grateful for the faithful witness of Paul and Ruth Carter and their gift of several books for my library. This gift strengthened my desire to continue my seminary education and write this dissertation.

Several different people have helped in the formation of both my thesis and

¹As quoted in Richard S. Westfall, *Never at Rest: A Biography of Isaac Newton* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 274.

final draft of this dissertation. My doctoral advisor, Dr. Gregg Allison, deserves special recognition. He provided several different suggestions and advice that made the dissertation process easier. I also wish to thank Bruce Ware for his input, which proved invaluable for the refinement of my thesis. David Puckett also provided vital assistance in the initial formulation of my dissertation and my historical chapter. Without his constant mentoring and guidance throughout my seminary career, I would never have pursued a doctorate or finished this dissertation. I will be forever grateful for his investment in my life. The editing work of Chris Bosson and Aaron O'Kelley from A+ Edits was also instrumental in the completion of this dissertation. Chris and Aaron went above and beyond what I expected in their editing and assistance. I am also grateful to John Zachary Eldredge for his editorial help and advice. He provided useful critiques and insights that were very beneficial in my initial drafts. Similarly, Paul Nesta, Seth Osborne, and JohnMark Beazley also provided helpful critiques and input.

I would also like to thank Ed and Shannon Bowles, Miranda Mattingly, Darrell Estep, and the rest of the crew at Chick-Fil-A at Glenmary for their constant encouragement and support. Likewise, Jeffrey Conklin, Keith and Nancy Wilkinson, Cole Floyd, Brian Hubert, Chris Blair, Matthew Lewellyn, Kevin Cantrell, Kenny Amburn, David Manly, and Mumin Muhammad have been a constant source of friendship throughout my seminary education for which I will be forever grateful.

I also wish to thank my fiancée, Deborah Byrd, for her patience, love, support, and constant encouragement during this process. She is the love of my life. I can't wait to begin my life with her. Most of all, I am grateful to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. This entire dissertation is for his glory and his bride.

David Knierim

Louisville, Kentucky

December 2012

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Irrelevant, declining, confused—these are just a few adjectives that capture the state of the church in America. The church faces enormous pressure both internally (from division and theological confusion) and externally (from an increasingly hostile, secular culture). These pressures have caused many churches to deteriorate both numerically and doctrinally, placing them in a precarious position.¹ As Southern Baptist pastor Bob Pearle rightly observes, “Churches that have lost their doctrinal core are struggling with an identity crisis. Their mission and purpose is in danger of being lost because of cultural pressures and historical amnesia.”² Over the past several decades, a myriad of views and movements have attempted to address this problem.

Several of these views have attempted to fix problems in the church by proposing functionally oriented changes in the church; many authors who propose these types of functional changes within the church offer strategies for church growth that involve alterations in teaching methodology³ or overall church strategy.⁴ One book even

¹For a recent, insightful treatment of church decline in the Southern Baptist Convention, see Ed Stetzer, “SBC Decline and Demographic Change,” in *The Great Commission Resurgence: Fulfilling God’s Mandate for Our Time*, ed. Chuck Lawless and Adam W. Greenway (Nashville: B&H, 2010), 3–28.

²Bob Pearle, *The Vanishing Church: Searching for Significance in the 21st Century* (Garland, TX: Hannibal, 2009), 9.

³One example of a book that proposes changes in teaching methodology is Dave Ferguson, Jon Ferguson, and Eric Bramlett, *The Big Idea: Aligning the Ministries of Your Church Through Creative Collaboration* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007). This book argues that in order for a church to grow and encourage spiritual growth, all of the church ministries should be focused on communicating one big idea to the congregation every Sunday.

⁴See E. Stanley Ott, *Twelve Dynamic Shifts for Transforming Your Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002); Darrell W. Robins, *Total Church Life: How to Be a First Century Church in a 21st*

offers the following formula for positively changing a church: “(D+R_x)HW + PG = Changed Church.”⁵ While these books may contain some positive suggestions for assisting a struggling church, quite frequently they become almost entirely pragmatic in orientation. As Bloesch argues, the church must not attempt to sell the gospel to people, but it is called to share it lovingly with them.⁶

Movements have also arisen within the church that have attempted to address crises from both an ontological standpoint as well as a pragmatic, functional one. One such movement is the emergent church. In his book *Reinventing Your Church*, Brian McLaren contends, “Our theology, our ways of doing ministry, don’t seem to work or fit anymore.”⁷ The solution of the emergent movement is a radical redefinition of both doctrine and practice in the church. Even though the emergent church offers some insightful critiques of the church, the changes advocated by the emergent church eventually lead to doctrinal confusion within any congregation that adopts emergent doctrine and methodology.⁸

Another movement that has attempted to address the problem both functionally and ontologically is the missional church movement. This movement strives to reemphasize the missional nature of the church through the church’s ontology as the

Century World (Nashville: B&H, 1997); John Fuder and Noel Castellanos, eds., *A Heart for the Community: New Models for Urban and Suburban Ministry* (Chicago: Moody, 2009).

⁵Leith Anderson, *A Church for the 21st Century* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1992), 12. The letters in the equation represent the following: D = diagnosis, R_x = prescription, HW = hard work, and PG = power of God.

⁶Donald G. Bloesch, *The Reform of the Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 140. Bloesch also insightfully opines that the church’s mission must be gospel proclamation and not concern for preserving its own institutional structure. See Bloesch, *The Reform of the Church*, 180.

⁷Brian D. McLaren, *Reinventing Your Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 18.

⁸The doctrinal confusion caused by the emergent movement is evident by emergent church member Simon Hall when he opines, “My main aim for the community is not to be ‘post’ anything but to be ‘and’ everything. We are evangelical *and* charismatic *and* liberal *and* orthodox *and* contemplative *and* into social justice *and* into alternative worship” (Eddie Gibbs and Ryan K. Bolger, *Emerging Churches: Creating Community in Postmodern Cultures* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005], 38–39).

called and sent people of God. The missional church seeks to reorient the church toward (1) the gospel and (2) proclaiming the gospel by refocusing it on the mission of God; in missional church ecclesiology, the church proclaims the gospel as missionary people because of God's missionary work through Jesus and the gospel.⁹ Several evangelicals share in the ethos of the missional church movement and have reemphasized the central role of the gospel in the church.¹⁰ This reassertion has helped to provide a constructive means for addressing the decline of the church in America.

In this dissertation, I explain further the relationship between the gospel and the church by providing a systematic paradigm for understanding how the gospel and the church interact with one another. Given the state of the church, this dissertation provides a needed voice in the contemporary dialogue focused on church growth and renewal. Much of the literature on the relationship between the gospel and the church has been written at a nonacademic level. This dissertation seeks to provide an academic formulation of the relationship between the gospel and the church, which can offer a systematic framework for the current discussion. It also seeks to contribute to the field of ecclesiology by providing an in-depth formulation of the relationship between the gospel and the church in terms of speech act theory. While this relationship has been suggested by Michael Horton in his systematic theology,¹¹ my dissertation will develop this

⁹Darrell L. Guder, ed., *Missional Church: A Vision for the Send of the Church in North America* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 3–4, 10–11; Craig Van Gelder, *The Ministry of the Missional Church: A Community Led by the Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 15–17; Craig Van Gelder and Dwight J. Zscheile, *The Missional Church in Perspective: Mapping Trends and Shaping the Conversation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), 3–9.

¹⁰See Tim Chester and Steve Timmis, *Total Church: A Radical Reshaping Around Gospel and Community* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2008); Mark Dever and Paul Alexander, *The Deliberate Church: Building Your Ministry on the Gospel* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2005); Kevin DeYoung and Greg Gilbert, *What Is the Mission of the Church? Make Sense of Social Justice, Shalom, and the Great Commission* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2011); Colin Marshall and Tony Payne, *The Trellis and the Vine: The Ministry Mind-Shift That Changes Everything* (Kingsford, NSW: Matthias Media, 2009).

¹¹Michael Horton, *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 751–61.

relationship from a different angle than Horton. It will also provide a much more comprehensive, systematic formulation of this relationship than what has previously been done.

Thesis

The thesis of my dissertation is as follows: the church, acting as God's instrument through the power of the Spirit, speaks its members into existence by means of the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ; God, therefore, creates the church through the church. In order to explain this thesis, its three major parts—(1) the church, acting as God's instrument through the power of the Spirit, speaks its members into existence; (2) by means of the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ; and (3) God, therefore, creates the church through the church—will be explained separately.

The first part of my thesis, the church, acting as God's instrument through the power of the Spirit, speaks its members into existence, forms a key idea in my dissertation: the church, through a Spirit-empowered utterance, creates its members. Even though this idea could carry with it the notion of autonomy, I am not arguing that the church autonomously creates itself in any manner. Instead, I will argue that the church has an instrumental, active, and participatory role in its own creation. This role is a result of the church being God's chosen instrument that he uses to draw his elect to himself. Thus, the church is simply a participant in the sovereign work of God, dependent wholly upon his power for its role in its own creation. The exact nature of this role is further elucidated when the church's visible and invisible dimensions are taken into account. As Karl Barth points out, the church has both a visible element (earthly, physical manifestation), which is able to be readily observed and an invisible element (the work of God in the church) that is not able to be observed.¹² The members,

¹²Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, ed. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance, vol. 4, *The Doctrine of Reconciliation*, trans. G. W. Bromiley (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark), 656-68.

ministries, and all other physical manifestations of the church compose the visible element of the church. The invisible element, on the other hand, is the active work of God in Christ through the Holy Spirit. It is through the physical structures of the church that the invisible God creates the church; that is, the church creates itself by its instrumental participation in God's work of new creation through the invisible, regenerating work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of his elect.

The second part of the thesis specifies the way that, by means of the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the church actively participates in its own creation: gospel proclamation. When the church ministers to the lost world through the proclamation of the gospel, whether in preaching or in individual witnessing, the Holy Spirit works in the life of God's elect to bring about salvation, hence creating the church. Thus, by the church's utterance of the gospel, reality changes and the church is formed.

The third part of my thesis, namely, that God creates the church through the church, emphasizes the instrumental nature of the church in its own creation. God works through the gospel proclamation of the church to create the members of the church. The church does not function autonomously, but instead acts as a participant in the work of God through its gospel ministry. Therefore, it is God who empowers the church to speak its members into existence by the proclamation of His Word: the gospel.

Background

My interest in this topic stems from God's call in my life to ministry. When I was a freshman in high school, God called me into ministry at a youth rally. Throughout high school, I fought with God over his calling to Christian service in my life. I desired to pursue a career in computers and had no desire to be involved in Christian ministry, a profession that I realized to be difficult emotionally, spiritually, financially, and physically. Prior to my high school years, my dad experienced difficulty in a church that asked him to leave because of some personal preferences of members of the

congregation. My dad's experience in church ministry repelled me from participating in any ministry tasks in the church. Throughout my time in high school, God worked in my life to give me a passion for revival in his church as well as an acceptance of his calling in my life to Christian service. I entered college with a desire to enter seminary after my collegiate years to pursue God's call upon my life.

In college, my parents encouraged me to acquire a secular skill, and so I pursued a degree in computer engineering. Even in my college years in engineering, God continued to give me a passion for his church. When I arrived at seminary I desired to learn as much as I could about God and His word so that I could be better prepared to serve him in ministry. It was during a sermon by Dr. Kevin Smith at Watson Memorial Baptist Church in Louisville, Kentucky, that I realized that much of the decline in the church is due to the church's failure to proclaim the gospel and properly align its ministries around it; hence, it was during this sermon that my dissertation topic was born. Through the assistance of Drs. Allison and Puckett, I have studied extensively the relationship between the gospel and the church and developed my dissertation thesis. In John 21:15-17, Jesus tells Peter that if he loves him, he will feed his sheep; it is my prayer that through this dissertation I will become better prepared for the ministry that God has for me: to love Jesus by feeding his sheep, the church.

Evangelical Scholarship

I have already discussed the relevance of this topic to the current situation in the church; however, this dissertation also has relevance to evangelical scholarship. Many evangelical ecclesiologies, both practical and academic, lack a full, systematic exposition that describes how the church and the gospel relate to one another. Even though this relationship has not been fully explored, scholars agree that the mission of the

church is to proclaim the gospel.¹³ This agreement is expressed in various ways, some of which are as follows: (1) one of the marks of the true church is gospel proclamation;¹⁴ (2) gospel proclamation is one major aspect of the church's mission: to make disciples;¹⁵ (3) the church is an evangelist—God's intended instrument for the evangelization of the world;¹⁶ (4) the ministry of the church is to proclaim, explicate, and apply the gospel;¹⁷ and (5) the church's supreme task is to preach the Word of God and the gospel.¹⁸ Many evangelical theologians have also observed that the church is built by the gospel.¹⁹ One

¹³See Ed Hayes, *The Church*, ed. Charles R. Swindoll and Roy B. Zuck (Nashville: Word, 1999), 180–82; Robert S. Bilheimer, *What Must the Church Do?* (Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries, 1971), 28–62; David Platt, *Radical Together: Unleashing the People of God for the Purpose of God* (Colorado Springs: Multnomah, 2011); Mark Driscoll and Gerry Breshears, *Vintage Church: Timeless Truths and Timely Methods* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2008), 217–42; Gene Mims, *The Kingdom Focused Church: A Compelling Image of an Achievable Future for Your Church* (Nashville: B&H, 2003), 16; John Drane, *After McDonaldization: Mission, Ministry, and Christian Discipleship in an Age of Uncertainty* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 59–92; Carl E. Braaten, *The Apostolic Imperative: Nature and Aim of the Church's Mission and Ministry* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1985), 60–62; W. A. Criswell, *The Doctrine of the Church* (Nashville: Convention Press, 1980), 55–64; Robins, *Total Church Life: How to Be a First Century Church in a 21st Century World*, 155; J. C. Hoekendijk, *The Church Inside Out*, ed. L. A. Hoedemaker and Pieter Tijmes, trans. Isaac C. Rottenberg (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1964), 12–17; Claude E. Payne and Hamilton Beazley, *Reclaiming the Great Commission: A Practical Model for Transforming Congregations* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 14–19; Henry T. Blackaby and Melvin D. Blackaby, *Experiencing God Together* (Nashville: B&H, 2002), 203–26; Edmund P. Clowney, *The Church* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1995), 155–65. These books are just a sampling from various denominational backgrounds of evangelical works that affirm that the mission of the church is gospel proclamation.

¹⁴Derek Thomas, "On the Rock of Ages Founded," in *Onward, Christian Soldiers: Protestants Affirm the Church*, ed. Don Kistler (Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria, 1999), 79–83.

¹⁵Donald G. Bloesch, *The Church* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002), 246–51.

¹⁶George E. Sweazey, *The Church As Evangelist* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), 47–48.

¹⁷Wallace M. Alston, *Guides to the Reformed Tradition: The Church* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1984), 126–29.

¹⁸R. B. Kuiper, *The Glorious Body of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967), 163–69.

¹⁹See Joel R. Beeke, "Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken," in *Onward, Christian Soldiers: Protestants Affirm the Church*, ed. Don Kistler (Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1999), 34–40; Bloesch, *The Reform of the Church*, 139–55; Richard D. Phillips, Philip G. Ryken, and Mark E. Dever, *The Church: One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2004), 8–10; Tom Nettles, *Ready for Reformation? Bringing Authentic Reform to Southern Baptist Churches* (Nashville: B&H, 2005), 28–38. These books are a sampling from various denominational backgrounds of evangelical works that affirm that the church is built by the gospel.

example is John Hammet, a Southern Baptist theologian who argues, “The church is called into being by the gospel.”²⁰ A few theologians also briefly mention that the church is built by its own gospel proclamation,²¹ or, as the Pentecostal theologian Melvin Hodges opines, the church is “self-propagating.”²² This dissertation advances this discussion by providing a full, systematic treatment of the relationship between the gospel and the church; it will tie together various strands of evangelical scholarship by systematically showing that the church’s mission of gospel proclamation and its own creation are not separate theological discussions, but in fact the same discussion approached from different angles.

In this dissertation, I will utilize speech act theory to provide needed nuances and philosophical refinement to the reciprocal relationship between the gospel and the church that I will develop from scriptural exegesis. This dissertation advances the discussion of how speech act theory relates to the church in the following ways: (1) it provides an in-depth, systematic exposition of the relationship between the gospel and the church in terms of speech act theory;²³ (2) it derives the relationship between the gospel and the church from New Testament exegesis to formulate a cyclical relationship between the gospel and the church in terms of speech act theory;²⁴ (3) it uses speech act theory to emphasize the church’s active participation in its own creation, (4) it shows

²⁰John S. Hammett, *Biblical Foundations for Baptist Churches: A Contemporary Ecclesiology* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2005), 225.

²¹Donald G. Miller, *The Nature and Mission of the Church* (Richmond: John Knox, 1966), 68–9; Johann Gerhard, *On the Church*, ed. Benjamin T. G. Mayes, trans. Richard J. Dinda (St. Louis: Concordia, 2010), 247–49.

²²Melvin L. Hodges, *A Theology of the Church and Its Mission: A Pentecostal Perspective* (Springfield, MO: Gospel, 1977), 77.

²³Horton briefly mentions the presence of speech act theory in the creation of the church. See Horton, *The Christian Faith*, 753-54.

²⁴Horton applies speech act theory to the creation of the church primarily by using the ontology of the gospel message as the Word of God, which he defines in terms of speech act theory.

how speech act theory coincides with the church as mother metaphor in church history by demonstrating that both paradigms emphasize the church's active participation in the salvation of believers, and (5) it emphasizes the centrality of Christ in the church in terms of speech act theory.

Methodology

This dissertation follows D. A. Carson's definition of systematic theology:

By *systematic theology*, I refer to the branch of theology that seeks to elaborate the whole and the parts of Scripture, demonstrating their logical (rather than their merely historical) connections and taking full cognizance of the history of doctrine and the contemporary intellectual climate and categories and queries while finding its sole ultimate authority in the Scriptures themselves, rightly interpreted. Systematic theology deals with the Bible as a finished product.²⁵

It seeks to formulate systematically the relationship between the gospel and the church portrayed in the biblical canon. It also takes into account both the history of doctrine and the contemporary intellectual climate; each chapter will provide a contribution to a "theological vision" for the church that clarifies the church's participatory role in the creation of its members.²⁶

As Carson argues, historical theology serves systematic theology in three ways: (1) it reveals "options and configurations" of the biblical data which may not have otherwise been noticed; (2) it helps demonstrate how contemporary theological views are the outcome of contemporary thought; and (3) it helps set boundaries on current

²⁵D. A. Carson, "Unity and Diversity in the New Testament: The Possibility of Systematic Theology," in *Collected Writings on Scripture*, ed. Andrew David Naselli (Wheaton: Crossway, 2010), 118. Carson's definition more specifically elaborates on the views expressed by Wayne Grudem and Millard Erickson on the nature and definition of systematic theology. See Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 21–16), and Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 22–25).

²⁶As Richard Lints argues, "A theological vision allows them [modern people] to understand anew their own world" (Richard Lints, *The Fabric of Theology: A Prolegomenon to Evangelical Theology* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993], 316–17). While it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to develop fully all of the relevant applications of this theological vision to the church, it does provide a springboard from which these applications can be more fully expounded.

systematic formulation by demonstrating uniformity of doctrine between Christians from all time periods.²⁷ This dissertation uses Carson’s methodology in its treatment of historical theology. It begins with a historical section in Chapter 2, since it is a contemporary reformulation of an idea present in historical theology: the church as mother metaphor. The historical section shows the continuity of its thesis with Christians from different time periods who have greatly influenced Reformed theology. Specifically, it examines the relationship between soteriology and ecclesiology in four prominent theologians—Cyprian, Augustine, Luther, and Calvin—who have significantly influenced the Protestant trajectory and used the “church as mother” motif in their theology. This examination will confirm the conclusions that I reach in my systematic and exegetical portions of my dissertation by demonstrating the underlying continuity between my dissertation thesis and the theologies of Cyprian, Augustine, Luther, and Calvin. After my historical section in chapter 2, I will proceed in chapter 3 by defining the terms “gospel” and “church.” This chapter will provide a common, working set of definitions for the exegetical and systematic portions of my dissertation.

Since the primary task of systematic theology is to provide an understanding of a topic in the biblical canon, this dissertation progresses from chapters 2 and 3 to scriptural exegesis in chapters 4 and 5. The exegesis portion of the dissertation provides historical-grammatical exegesis of relevant passages in the New Testament²⁸ that is faithful to the textual, epochal, and canonical horizons of the biblical text.²⁹ In Chapter 4,

²⁷D. A. Carson, “The Role of Exegesis in Systematic Theology,” in *Doing Theology in Today’s World: Essays in Honor of Kenneth S. Kantzer*, ed. John D. Woodbridge and Thomas Edward McComiskey (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 56–57; Andrew David Naselli, “D. A. Carson’s Theological Method,” *Sbet* 29 (2011): 22. Gregg Allison also provides a helpful discussion of the importance and uses of historical theology as well. See Gregg R. Allison, *Historical Theology: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 23–34.

²⁸It should be noted that this dissertation will primarily deal with the New Testament because of the discontinuity between the church and Israel, which will be further expounded in chap. 3.

I will contend that the proclamation of the gospel creates members of the church. The scriptural exegesis in this chapter goes in canonical order and focuses on exegeting passages that are recognized as being important in understanding the church's formation. Chapter 5 argues through scriptural exegesis that the church is God's instrument in the proclamation of the gospel. Like chapter 4, it focuses on exegeting recognized passages that define the mission of the church. A relationship between the gospel and the church will then be derived from the biblical exegesis of chapters 4 and 5.

The final portion of this dissertation presents the relationship between the gospel and the church within the current intellectual climate. It first defines a reciprocal relationship between the gospel and the church as follows: the proclamation of the gospel creates the members of the church, and the church is the instrument of gospel proclamation. Chapter 6 then frames the reciprocal relationship between the gospel and the church in terms of speech act theory. This formulation faithfully utilizes both (1) scriptural exegesis and (2) historical theology. First, it briefly defines speech act theory and discusses why it can be applied to the reciprocal relationship between the gospel and the church. It then develops a speech act formulation of the reciprocal relationship in which the church proclaims both the locution and illocution of the gospel message and the Spirit creates the perlocutionary effect of the church's gospel proclamation – the church itself. Specifically, it will be argued that a declarative illocutionary force in gospel proclamation through the power of the Spirit is what brings about the perlocutionary effect of gospel proclamation: the church. I will conclude in chapter 7 by discussing topics for further research and briefly explaining the application of my dissertation thesis to the present crisis in the church.

²⁹This dissertation follows the theological methodology of Richard Lints. Every text, moreover, is exegeted with these three horizons in mind. See Lints, *The Fabric of Theology*, 293–310.

CHAPTER 2
THE CHURCH AS MOTHER: THE HISTORICAL
PRECEDENT FOR THE PARTICIPATORY
ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN THE
SALVATION OF BELIEVERS

Introduction

Throughout church history theologians have argued for the active, participatory role of the church in gospel proclamation and the salvation of believers; they often view the church as the instrument through which believers are created. One theological motif that indicates this participatory role is the church as mother metaphor: the church actively gives birth to (i.e., participates in the salvation of) believers. This dissertation develops the idea behind this metaphor.¹ Specifically, I develop the active, participatory role of the church in the salvation of believers that the church as mother metaphor emphasizes. I also suggest that when the church participates in the salvation of believers, it is participating in its own creation. The nature of my dissertation, therefore, warrants a brief treatment on the church as mother metaphor because it (1) provides a contemporary formulation of the idea behind the church as mother motif with some nuanced differences, and (2) explores the metaphor's implications.²

¹Even though Cyprian, Augustine, Luther, and Calvin argue for infant baptism, their views still provide historical precedent for the idea behind my thesis: the church has an active, participatory role in salvation. This idea is the general concept behind the church as mother metaphor as well as my dissertation thesis: the church, acting as God's instrument of new creation through the power of the Spirit, speaks its members into existence by means of the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Each of these theologians argues that the church is actively involved in salvation and, consequently, affirms that the church plays an active role in salvation, which is the implicit idea behind my thesis. These four theologians, then, provide historical precedent for my dissertation thesis.

²Luther parallels my thesis more than any other of the four theologians whom I examine in that he believes that the church is created by the proclamation of the Word of God. This chapter, therefore, concentrates on Luther more than the other theologians.

For the historical treatment of the church as mother motif, I have chosen four theologians—Cyprian, Augustine, Luther, and Calvin—to examine based on the following two criteria: (1) the theologian had to use the church as mother metaphor in his theology and (2) the theologian had to exercise considerable influence on the Reformed theological tradition.³ The positive usage of the church as mother metaphor as well as the distinctive relationship between soteriology and ecclesiology in each of these four theologians demonstrates the active, participatory role of the church in the salvation of the believer. Therefore, I examine the relationship between soteriology and ecclesiology in their theology, emphasizing, where important, their usage of the church as mother metaphor.⁴ In this chapter, moreover, I argue that Cyprian, Augustine, Luther, and Calvin view the church as having an indispensable, participatory role in gospel proclamation and therefore, in the salvation of believers.

Cyprian

As bishop, theologian, and martyr, Cyprian's influence on the history of the church is both pronounced and indisputable. The following discussion focuses on the connection between soteriology and ecclesiology⁵ in his theology.⁶ I argue that Cyprian

³Admittedly, other theologians could have been examined. However, since this dissertation provides a systematic formulation of my thesis, I only survey a few theologians to show that there is some historical precedent for my thesis in church history. Thus, I do not provide an in-depth historical survey as the allotted space and nature of my dissertation do not allow for it. Finally, while Cyprian may not, at first, seem to fit the two criteria for inclusion into this chapter, his considerable influence on Augustine and Calvin, as well as the fact that he was one of the first theologians to use the church as mother metaphor, makes him worthy of inclusion.

⁴Luther and Calvin also give the gospel a central, foundational role in the church.

⁵For a scholarly exposition of Cyprian's ecclesiology, see Joe W. Shore, *The Ecclesiology of Cyprian* (n.p., 1971).

⁶A large portion of Cyprian's ecclesiological work deals with how the church should handle those Christians who had forsaken Christ (the lapsed) during the Decian persecution. For a helpful discussion on the Decian persecution, see Edward White Benson, *Cyprian: His Life, His Times, His Work* (New York: Appleton, 1897), 60–38; J. Patout Burns, *Cyprian the Bishop* (London: Routledge, 2002), 12–

develops a high conception of the church based upon his soteriology. Indeed, it is his view on baptism that leads him to root salvation in the church alone, giving the church an active, participatory role in the salvation of believers. I begin the discussion with Cyprian's view of salvation and close it by explaining how Cyprian's view of salvation impacts his ecclesiology.

Cyprian's Soteriology

For Cyprian, the atoning work of Christ enables the sins of believers to be forgiven.⁷ Christ's atoning work, moreover, requires a response: confessing him as Lord. Cyprian held that one could not spend eternity in heaven without this confession.⁸ His emphasis on the work of Christ for salvation continued in his thoughts on baptism.⁹ Cyprian argued that the saving work of Christ was applied to the believer through

24; Michael M. Sage, *Cyprian* (Cambridge: Philadelphia Patristic Foundation, 1975), 165–266; John Alfred Faulkner, *Cyprian: The Churchman* (Cincinnati: Jennings and Graham, 1906), 58–73. For some helpful discussion of Cyprian's theology in the context of the events of his life and times, see G. S. M. Walker, *The Churchmanship of St. Cyprian*, *Ecumenical Studies in History*, vol. 9 (Richmond: John Knox, 1969), 7–18; Joseph Henry Fichter, *Saint Cecil Cyprian: Early Defender of the Faith* (London: Herder, 1942); Peter Bingham Hinchliff, *Cyprian of Carthage and the Unity of the Christian Church* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1974); Allen Brent, *Cyprian and Roman Carthage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Pope Benedict XVI, "Saint Cyprian," in *Church Fathers: From Clement of Rome to Augustine* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2008), 48–52; and Benson, *Cyprian*; Robert F. Evans, *One and Holy: The Church in Latin Patristic Thought* (London: S.P.C.K., 1972), 37–64.

⁷"The Father has sent His son [Christ] to preserve us and to quicken us that He might be able to restore us, and because the son wished to be sent and to be called the son of man that He might make us the sons of God. He humbled Himself that He might raise up the people who before were prostrate; He was wounded that He might cure our wounds; He served that He might draw those served away to liberty. He underwent death that He might hold forth immortality to mortals. These are the many and great gifts of divine mercy. But still further, what providence and what great clemency that is, that we are provided for by a plan of salvation so that more abundant care is taken for man's salvation who has already been redeemed! For when the Lord had come and healed the wounds which Adam had borne and had cured the old poisons of the serpent, He gave him when made whole a law not to sin anymore lest something more serious happen to him by his sinning" (Cyprian, *Works and Almsgiving*, in *Saint Cyprian: Treatises*, trans. and ed. Roy J. Deferrari, *The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation* [New York: Fathers of the Church, 1958], 36:227).

⁸Cyprian, *The Lapsed*, in *St. Cyprian: The Lapsed and The Unity of the Catholic Church*, trans. Maurice Bévenot, *Ancient Christian Writers* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1957), 25:18.

⁹See also Faulkner, *Cyprian*, 154.

baptism;¹⁰ it is in this sense that believers were saved through baptism. When describing his conversion experience, Cyprian argued poignantly for the saving role of baptism:

While I was lying in darkness and in the obscure night, and while, ignorant of my real life, I was tossing about on the sea of a restless world wavering and doubtful in my wandering steps, a stranger to the truth and the light, I thought it indeed difficult and hard (to believe) according to the character of mine at the time that divine mercy was promised for my salvation, so that anyone might be born again and quickened unto a new life by the laver of the saving water, he might put off what he had been before, and, although the structure of the body remained, he might change himself in soul and mind But afterwards, when the stain of my past life had been washed away by the aid of the water of regeneration, a light from above poured itself upon my chastened and pure heart.¹¹

Thus, Cyprian links important elements of the conversion experience—the washing away of sin and regeneration—to baptism.¹² In his epistle, *To Pompeius*, Cyprian also asserted that the Christian was born through baptism:

For it is baptism that the old man dies and the new man is born, as the blessed Apostle makes manifestly clear and proves when he says: He has saved us through the washing of rebirth Furthermore, it is not by the laying-on of hands that a man is born, but it is in baptism: he must be born already, that he may receive the Spirit. . . . Now the birth of Christians is in baptism; and the generation and sanctification of baptism are with the one bride of Christ [Church].¹³

¹⁰Faulkner aptly describes baptism as being for Cyprian the “gate of salvation” (Faulkner, *Cyprian*, 149). While Cyprian can be accurately described as holding to a form of baptismal regeneration, I have chosen not to use this term to refer to his view, which is nuanced and markedly different from some modern conceptions of baptismal regeneration.

¹¹Cyprian, *To Donatus*, in *Saint Cyprian: Treatises*, trans. and ed. Roy J. Deferrari, The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation (New York: Fathers of the Church, 1958), 36:8–9.

¹²Cyprian also argued that a Christian must be baptized before they could receive the Holy Spirit: “Furthermore, it is not by the laying-on of hands (when the Holy Spirit is received) that a man is born, but it is in baptism: he must be born already, that he may receive the Spirit” (Cyprian, “To Pompeius,” in *The Letters of Cyprian*, trans. G. W. Clarke, vol. 4, Ancient Christian Writers [New York: Newman, 1989], 74). See also Everett Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church: History, Theology, and Liturgy in the First Five Centuries* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 354.

¹³Cyprian, “To Pompeius,” 73–74. Cyprian made a similar comment in his treatise, *The Dress of Virgins*: “All indeed who attain to the divine and paternal gift by sanctification of baptism put off therein the old man by the grace of the saving waters, and, renewed by the Holy Spirit, they are cleansed by the impurities of the old contagion by a second birth” (Cyprian, *The Dress of Virgins*, in *Saint Cyprian: Treatises*, ed. Roy J. Deferrari, trans. Sister Angela Elizabeth Keenan, The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation [New York: Fathers of the Church, 1958], 36:51).

For Cyprian, baptism served as an entry point into God’s work of salvation through Christ.¹⁴ However, it did not permanently cover all of the believer’s sins.

In Cyprian’s theology, the application of Christ’s work through baptism covers all of the believer’s sins up to the point at which they were baptized. After baptism, however, virtue (i.e., good works) is needed to atone for sin: “And because the remission of sins is once granted in baptism, constant and continuous labor acting in the manner of baptism again bestows the indulgences of God.”¹⁵ These labors—almsgiving and good works—bestow divine favor and forgiveness of sins.¹⁶ Almsgiving makes prayers more effective, redeems life from dangers, and frees one’s soul from death;¹⁷ good works, especially ministering to others, satisfy God’s wrath and wash away one’s sins.¹⁸ Forgiveness of sin and admission into heaven through a virtuous life are also linked directly to the church’s ministry: “For the Lord says that, when the day of judgment shall come they, who have labored in His Church, are admitted to receive the kingdom.”¹⁹ In

¹⁴For a detailed discussion of Cyprian’s view on baptism, see Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church*, 351–61; and Shore, *The Ecclesiology of Cyprian*, 8–27.

¹⁵Cyprian, *Works and Almsgiving*, 228.

¹⁶For Cyprian, the Lord’s Supper also played a role in removing the “weight of sins” present in the believer (Cyprian, “To Caecilius,” in *The Letters of Cyprian*, trans. G. W. Clarke, Ancient Christian Writers [New York: Newman, 1986], 3:104). See also Michael Haykin, “Eucharistic Thought and Piety in the Patristic Era,” in *The Lord’s Supper: Remembering and Proclaiming Christ’s Death until He Comes*, ed. Thomas R. Schreiner and Matthew R. Crawford, NAC Studies in Bible & Theology 10 (Nashville: B&H, 2011), 115. Faulkner argues that Cyprian also sees partaking in the Lord’s Supper as being a means to earn merit both for the living and the dead. See Faulkner, *Cyprian*, 159.

¹⁷Cyprian, *Works and Almsgiving*, 231–32. As Cyprian declared, “[Our] petitions are made more efficacious by almsgiving; that by almsgiving life is redeemed from dangers; that by almsgiving souls are freed from death” (Cyprian, *Works and Almsgiving*, 231). As Ferguson notes, Cyprian preserves the uniqueness and importance of baptism in that almsgiving is only necessary for the forgiveness of postbaptismal sins. See Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church*, 361.

¹⁸“The remedies for propitiating God have been given in the words of God himself; divine instructions have taught that God is satisfied by just works, that sins are cleansed by merits of mercy” (Cyprian, *Works and Almsgiving*, 231).

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 236. In this passage, the phrase “labored in his church” refers to those in the church who have assisted the church’s ministry to the poor. The phrase “when the day of judgment shall come” refers to the eschatological judgment. Cyprian, in this passage, argued that good works can forgive sins.

Cyprian's theology, faithfully laboring in the church becomes an important component of securing eternal life for the Christian. Cyprian also believed that the church occupied a central role in the Christian's initial conversion.

Cyprian's Ecclesiology

Salvation outside the church, according to Cyprian, does not exist; to separate oneself from the church is to separate oneself from God and Christ: "Whoever breaks with the Church and enters on an adulterous union, cuts himself off from the promises made to the Church; and he who has turned his back on the Church of Christ shall not come to the rewards of Christ: he is an alien, a worldling, an enemy. You cannot have God for your Father if you have not the Church for your mother."²⁰ It is only through the church that one can obtain forgiveness of sin and eternal life: "When we say, 'Dost thou believe in eternal life and remission of sins through the holy Church?' we mean that remission of sins is not granted except in the Church, and that among heretics, where there is no Church, sins cannot be put away."²¹ The church, then, is the gateway to salvation.

Cyprian's view on baptism forms the background to his view on the church as the dispenser of salvation because the church is the sole administrator of true, saving baptism:

Now the birth of Christians is in baptism; and the generation and sanctification of baptism are with the one bride of Christ. She alone is capable of spiritually bearing and giving birth to sons to God. This being so, where and of what mother and to

Since good works have some type of involvement in the forgiveness of a Christian's postbaptismal sins, they are "admitted to receive the kingdom" (ibid., 231).

²⁰Cyprian, *The Unity of the Catholic Church*, in *St. Cyprian: The Lapsed and The Unity of the Catholic Church*, trans. Maurice Bévenot, Ancient Christian Writers (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1957), 25:48–49.

²¹Cyprian, *Epistle LXIX: To Januarius and other Numidian Bishops, On Baptizing Heretics*, *ANF*, ed. Philip Schaff (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004), 5:376.

whom is he born who is not a son of the Church? If a man is to have God for Father, he must first have the Church for mother.²²

The act of baptism by immersion²³ owes its saving efficacy to the consecration of the baptismal water by a priest or bishop²⁴ and, because saving baptism is only available with consecrated water, the church is the gateway to salvation, the sole provider of true baptism by which the saving work of Christ is applied to the life of believers and infants.

The church—the mother of all believers—is also directly involved in raising and assisting her children to live pure, God-centered lives:

Our Lord's Church is radiant with light and pours her rays over the whole world; but it is one and the same light which is spread everywhere, and the unity of her body suffers no division. She spreads her branches in generous growth over all the earth, she extends her abundant streams even further; yet one is the head-spring, one is the source, one the mother which who is prolific in her offspring, generation after generation: of her womb we are born, of her milk are we fed, of her Spirit our souls draw their life breath.²⁵

To separate from the church, then, is, for the Christian, to die or, as Cyprian wrote, to be cut off from their spiritual food (milk) and life (breath).²⁶

Because of the importance of believers being united to the church for eternal salvation, Cyprian emphasized church unity.²⁷ Even if one confesses Christ, one is lost if

²²Cyprian, "To Pompeius," 74.

²³Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church*, 351–55; and Shore, *The Ecclesiology of Cyprian*, 10.

²⁴"And again, sacred Scripture warns, and says, 'Keep thee from the strange water, and drink not from a fountain of strange water.' It is required, then, that the water should first be cleansed and sanctified by the priest, that it may wash away by its baptism the sins of the man who is baptized; because the Lord says by Ezekiel the prophet: 'Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be cleansed from all your filthiness; and from all your idols will I cleanse you: a new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you.' But how can he cleanse and sanctify the water who is himself unclean, and in whom the Holy Spirit is not? since the Lord says in the book of Numbers, 'And whatsoever the unclean person toucheth shall be unclean.' Or how can he who baptizes give to another remission of sins who himself, being outside the Church, cannot put away his own sins?" (Cyprian, *Epistle LXIX: To Januarius*, 376).

²⁵Cyprian, *The Unity of the Catholic Church*, 48.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Shore argues that Cyprian believed the church had been entrusted with the gospel and thus, to separate from the church is to forsake the gospel. Shore's argument is based on Epistle XXXIX in which Cyprian argued that when one forsakes the church one has forsaken the gospel. However, it should be

one separates from the church.²⁸ For Cyprian, there is no salvation for one who permanently separates from the church.²⁹ Indeed, church unity is important to Cyprian because it is important to salvation.

The importance of unity in the church led Cyprian to emphasize the importance of the office of the bishop—God’s appointed leader who temporarily takes Christ’s role in the church,³⁰ maintaining the church’s unity by preventing apostasy through schism. To go against the bishop, for Cyprian, is to go against Christ and the church:

Does a man think he is with Christ when he acts in opposition to the bishops of Christ, when he cuts himself off from the society of His clergy and people? He is bearing arms against the Church, he is waging war upon God’s institutions. An enemy of the altar, a rebel against the sacrifice of Christ; giving up faith for perfidy, religion for sacrilege; an unruly servant, an undutiful son and hostile brother, despising the bishops and deserting the priests of God, he presumes to set up a new altar, to raise unauthorized voices in a rival liturgy, to profane the reality of the

noted that Cyprian is not clear on the exact relationship between forsaking the church and forsaking the gospel: “Let no one, beloved brethren, make you to err from the ways of the Lord; let no one snatch you, Christians, from the Gospel of Christ; let no one take sons of the Church away from the Church; let them perish alone for themselves who have wished to perish; let them remain outside the Church alone who have departed from the Church; let them alone be without bishops who have rebelled against bishops” (Cyprian, *Epistle XXXIX: To The People, Concerning Five Schismatic Presbyters of the Faction of Felicissimus*, ANF [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004], 5:318). See Shore, *The Ecclesiology of Cyprian*, 42–43.

²⁸Walker, *The Churchmanship of St. Cyprian*, 51–56. Cyprian wrote, “If nevertheless he does afterwards become guilty and odious, if he fritters away his reputation as a confessor by the evil of his ways, if he stains his life with filth and infamy, and if, in consequences, he leaves the Church to which he owes his becoming a confessor, if he breaks up its harmony and unity, and so in place of loyalty to his first faith adopts unfaithfulness, he cannot flatter himself that his confession has predestined him to the reward of glory; on the contrary, it will only increase the retribution which awaits him” (Cyprian, *The Unity of the Catholic Church*, 63-64).

²⁹“Those who have refused to be of one mind in the Church of God cannot therefore be abiding with God . . . God is one, and Christ is one, and His Church is one; one is the faith and one the people cemented together by harmony into the strong unity of a body. That unity cannot be split; that one body cannot be divided by any cleavage of its structure, nor cut up in fragments with its vitals torn apart. Nothing separated from the parent stock can ever live or breathe apart; all hope of salvation is lost” (Cyprian, *The Unity of the Catholic Church*, 57, 65).

³⁰“For neither have heresies arisen, nor have schisms originated, from any other source than from this, that God’s priest is not obeyed; nor do they consider that there is one person for the time priest in the Church, and for the time judge in the stead of Christ” (Cyprian, *Epistle LIV: To Cornelius, Concerning Fortunatus and Felicissimus, or Against the Heretics*, ANF (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004), 5:340).

divine Victim by pseudo-sacrifices, forgetting that whoever opposes God's institution is punished for his reckless insolence by divine retribution.³¹

As noted above, it is through the bishop that baptism is administered.³² It is, then, through the work of the bishop that Christ's atoning work is applied to the believer or infant through baptism. The emphasis on the authority of the bishop in Cyprian's ecclesiology would have massive repercussions in the church for nearly a millennia to come.³³

Cyprian's view of the church's role in salvation is rooted in his overall soteriology. His emphasis on the role of baptism in the application of Christ's work to the believer leads him to elevate the church's role in salvation. The church is the only institution permitted by God to administer baptism, which is to be dispensed by the church's bishops. Salvation is therefore found solely in the church because only the church can administer saving baptism that applies Christ's work to humanity. The church is also needed to assist the believer in performing virtuous works that enable the forgiveness of sins committed after baptism. Cyprian's views on the prominent role of the church in his soteriology also cause him to assert the disastrous nature of schism: to separate from the church is to condemn oneself to eternal damnation. In conclusion, Cyprian's soteriology has a marked effect on his ecclesiology, which causes him to give the church an indispensable, active, participatory role in the salvation of believers.

³¹Cyprian, "The Unity of the Catholic Church," 60. Cyprian similarly opined, "The bishop is in the Church, and the Church in the bishop; and if any one be not with the bishop, that he is not in the Church" (Cyprian, *Epistle LXVIII: To Florentius Popianus, On Calumniators, ANF* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004), 5:374–75).

³²Walker, *The Churchmanship of St. Cyprian*, 49.

³³Cyprian's views on the church and the authority of the pope would eventually lead to the doctrine of papal infallibility.

Augustine

In contrast to Cyprian, Augustine's ecclesiology triumphs over his soteriology.³⁴ In what follows, I argue that Augustine,³⁵ like Cyprian, believed the church³⁶ had a vital, participatory role to play in the salvation process of believers. This belief is the logical result of Augustine's theological conception of the church as the body of Christ and the church as the virginal mother of believers. I begin my exposition with Augustine's view of salvation. Augustine's views on original sin, predestination, justification, and baptism do not necessarily stress the role of the church in salvation; nonetheless, understanding these views is important because they act as the background to the relationship between his soteriology and ecclesiology.³⁷

Augustine's Soteriology

Augustine believed that there were two types of sin: actual and original.³⁸

Actual sins are sins committed by an individual person; original sins, in contrast, are sins

³⁴For a helpful summary of scholarly work done on Augustine as well as a scholarly analysis of his life and theology, see Allan D. Fitzgerald, ed., *Augustine through the Ages: An Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999).

³⁵For scholarly treatments on Augustine's life, see Peter Robert Lamont Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (London: Faber, 2000); Frederik van der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop: The Life and Work of a Father of the Church*, trans. Brian Battershaw and G. R. Lamb (London: Sheed and Ward, 1961); Mary Emily Keenan, *The Life and Times of St. Augustine as Revealed in His Letters*, The Catholic University of America Patristic Studies 45 (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America, 1935); Gerald Bonner, *St Augustine of Hippo: Life and Controversies* (London: SCM, 1963); Giovanni Papini, *Saint Augustine*, trans. Mary Prichard Agnetti (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1930); and Serge Lancel, *Saint Augustine* (London: SCM, 2002). For a scholarly treatment of Augustine's influence, see Michael Azkoul, *The Influence of Augustine of Hippo on the Orthodox Church* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1990).

³⁶Augustine's ecclesiology was strongly influenced and refined by his involvement in the Donatist Controversy. For a summary of Donatism as well as the influence of the Donatist controversy on Augustine and his ecclesiology, see Geoffrey Grimshaw Willis, *Saint Augustine and the Donatist Controversy* (London: SPCK, 1950). For observations on Augustine's ecclesiology based upon his early experiences in the church, see David C. Alexander, *Augustine's Early Theology of the Church: Emergence and Implications*, Patristic Studies, vol. 9 (New York: Peter Lang, 2008), 386-91.

³⁷This fact is in contrast to Cyprian, whose soteriology forms the major background for the importance of the church's role in the salvation of the believer.

³⁸This statement is a simplification of Augustine's hamartiology, which is very complex and nuanced. For scholarly work on Augustine's view of sin, see Paul Rigby, "Original Sin," in *Augustine*

committed by the entire human race in Adam.³⁹ Augustine believed the following concerning original sin: (1) it is passed down from parents to posterity, (2) all humanity even from birth is sinful due to original sin,⁴⁰ and (3) it corrupts human nature.

Humanity, then, has a sinful disposition from which actual sin originates. Because of original sin, it is natural for humanity to sin and unnatural for humanity to obey God.⁴¹

Augustine also believed that God predestined individuals for salvation so that they would accept Christ's forgiveness for their original and actual sins. He argued that Christians choose God not because God foreknew they would choose him; instead, he chose them so that they would choose him.⁴² Since Christians are predestined by God to believe in the work of Christ for salvation, God's predestining leads them to be justified.

through the Ages: An Encyclopedia, ed. Allan D. Fitzgerald (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 607-14; James Wetzel, "Sin," in *Augustine through the Ages: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Allan D. Fitzgerald (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 800-02; Mark Ellingsen, *The Richness of Augustine: His Contextual and Pastoral Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005), 75-82; Eugène Portalié, *A Guide to the Thought of Saint Augustine*, trans. Ralph J. Bastian (London: Burns and Oates, 1960), 204-13; Gregg R. Allison, *Historical Theology: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 347-49; James Wetzel, *Augustine: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London: Continuum, 2010), 44-112; and Paul Rigby, *Original Sin in Augustine's Confessions* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1987).

³⁹“In which [sin] all have sinned,’ it is surely clear enough, that the sins which are peculiar to every man, which they themselves commit and which belong simply to them, mean one thing; and that the one sin, in and by which all have sinned, means another thing; since all were that one man [Adam]” (Augustine, *On the Merits and Forgiveness of Sins, and on the Baptism of Infants*, NPNF¹, [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971], 5:19). Augustine made a similar point about the source of original sin in the sin of Adam in the following statement: “Yes, indeed, such is the truth. For even as ‘by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; so also has death passed through to all men, for in him all have sinned.’ By the evil will of that one man all sinned in him, since all were that one man, from whom, therefore, they individually derived original sin” (Augustine, *On Marriage and Concupiscence*, NPNF¹ [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971], 5:288).

⁴⁰“In the first man [Adam], therefore, there existed the whole human nature, which was to be transmitted by the woman to posterity, when that conjugal union received the divine sentence of its own condemnation; and what man was made, not when created, but when he sinned and was punished, this he propagated, so far as the origin of sin and death are concerned” (Augustine, *The City of God*, NPNF¹ [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956], 2:246).

⁴¹“[F]or by them [Adam and Eve] so great a sin was committed, that by it the human nature was altered for the worse, and was transmitted also to their posterity, liable to sin and subject to death” (Augustine, *The City of God*, NPNF¹, 2:261).

Justification, for Augustine, means to be “deemed or reckoned as just”⁴³ or “made righteous”⁴⁴ and is appropriated by faith, which is a gift given to God’s elect through the work of the Spirit.⁴⁵ Such faith in Christ provides justification for one’s original and actual sins: “[W]hilst grace conducts us to justification from the remission of many sins,—that is to say, not simply from the original sin, but from all others also whatsoever.”⁴⁶ Baptism, along with predestination and faith in Christ, also plays an important role in Augustine’s soteriology. Augustine believed that baptism was important in the salvation process, for, the Spirit’s regeneration of the elect is the inward form of God’s grace and baptism is the outward form.⁴⁷ The importance of baptism in

⁴²Mathijs Lamberigts, “Predestination,” in *Augustine through the Ages: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Allan D. Fitzgerald (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 677-69; Ellingsen, *The Richness of Augustine*, 95–96; and Portalié, *A Guide to the Thought of Saint Augustine*, 213–21. Augustine wrote, “Let us, then, understand the calling whereby they become elected—not those who are elected because they have believed, but who are elected that they may believe. For the Lord Himself also sufficiently explains this calling when He says, ‘Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you’” (Augustine, *On the Predestination of the Saints*, NPNF¹, ed. Philip Schaff [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971], 5:514–15). See also Augustine, “Letter 190,” in *Letters 156-210*, ed. Boniface Ramsey, trans. Roland Teske, *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century* (New York: New City, 2004), 263-75.

⁴³Augustine, *On the Spirit and the Letter*, NPNF¹, ed. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 5:102. For a helpful summary of Augustine’s view of justification, see Ellingsen, *The Richness of Augustine*, 84–95.

⁴⁴Augustine, *On the Merits and Forgiveness of Sins, and on the Baptism of Infants*, NPNF¹, 5:12.

⁴⁵“And he says that a man is justified by faith and not by works, because faith itself is first given, from which may be obtained other things . . . Faith, then, as well in its beginning as in its completion, is God’s gift; and let no one have any doubt whatever, unless he desires to resist the plainest sacred writings, that this gift is given to some, while to some it is not given” (Augustine, *On the Predestination of the Saints*, NPNF¹, 5:504–06).

⁴⁶Augustine, *On the Merits and Forgiveness of Sins, and on the Baptism of Infants*, NPNF¹, 5:21.

⁴⁷“By the water, therefore; which holds forth the sacrament of grace in its outward form, and by the Spirit who bestows the benefit of grace in its inward power, cancelling the bond of guilt, and restoring natural goodness [reconcilians bonum naturae], the man deriving his first birth originally from Adam alone, is regenerated in Christ alone” (Augustine, “Letter XCVIII,” in *The Letters of Saint Augustine*, NPNF¹, ed. Philip Schaff [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956], 1:407). For scholarly treatment of Augustine’s view of baptism, see Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church*, 776–816; Ellingsen, *The*

the salvation process is emphasized by his support of infant baptism for the salvation of infants. His support of infant baptism is rooted in his understanding of sin; he believes that infant baptism saves infants by washing away the infant's original sin. Since the infant has no actual sin, all of the infant's sin—his original sin—is atoned for through baptism: "Now, inasmuch as infants are not held bound by any sins of their own actual life, it is the guilt of original sin which is healed in them by the grace of Him who saves them by the laver of regeneration."⁴⁸ Augustine's soteriology does not explicitly link the church to the process of the individual believer's salvation; however, his conception of the church places soteriology under the church's jurisdiction, giving the church an active role in the salvation of believers.

Augustine's Ecclesiology

Augustine emphasized the active role of the church in the process of salvation with his metaphor of the church as the mother of believers:⁴⁹ "We had a father and mother on earth, that we might be born to labours and to death: but we have found other parents, God our Father, and the Church our Mother, by whom we are born unto life

Richness of Augustine, 122–24; William Harmless, "Baptism," in *Augustine through the Ages: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Allan D. Fitzgerald (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 84-91.

⁴⁸ Augustine, *On the Merits and Forgiveness of Sins, and on the Baptism of Infants*, NPNF¹, 5:24. See also Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church*, 803–16.

⁴⁹For scholarly work on Augustine's ecclesiology, see Willis, *Saint Augustine and the Donatist Controversy*, 93–143; Alexander, *Augustine's Early Theology of the Church*; Evans, *One and Holy*, 92–128; Stanislaus J. Grabowski, *The Church: An Introduction to the Theology of St. Augustine* (St. Louis: Herder, 1957); Portalié, *A Guide to the Thought of Saint Augustine*, 230–42; Tarsicius J. Van Bavel, "Church," in *Augustine through the Ages: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Allan D. Fitzgerald (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 169-76; Michael C. McCarthy, "An Ecclesiology of Groaning: Augustine, the Psalms, and the Making of the Church," *Theological Studies* 66 (March 2005): 23-48; and Ellingsen, *The Richness of Augustine*, 113–20. For a listing of current scholarly work focused on Augustine's ecclesiology, see Michael A. Fahey, "Augustine's Ecclesiology Revisited," in *Augustine: From Rhetor to Theologian*, ed. Joanne McWilliam (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1992), 173-81. It is worthy of note that in his *Confessions*, Augustine argues for the allegorical interpretation of Genesis 1 as the church's creation. See Robert McMahan, "Book Thirteen: The Creation of the Church as a Paradigm for the Confessions," in *A Reader's Companion to Augustine's Confessions*, ed. Kim Paffenroth and Robert P. Kennedy (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2003), 207-23; and John M. Quinn, *A Companion to the Confessions of St. Augustine* (New York: Peter Lang, 2002), 803–901.

eternal.”⁵⁰ Similarly, he writes, “Yet even these [Adam’s posterity] would He have to be saved in the bosom of Mother Church by His grace who saves His people from their sins.”⁵¹ The activity of the church is so crucial to salvation and a relationship with God that, like Cyprian, Augustine believes the church must be one’s mother before God can be one’s father: “But ye begin to have him [God] for your father, when ye have been born by the church as your Mother.”⁵²

Augustine also argued for the virginity of the church even though it is the mother of believers. For Augustine, the church, although a virgin, gives birth to believers spiritually just as Mary gave birth to Christ:

Whereas, therefore, the whole Church itself is a virgin espoused unto one Husband Christ, as the Apostle saith, of how great honor are its members worthy, who guard this even in the flesh itself, which the whole Church guards in the faith? which imitates the mother of her husband, and her Lord. For the Church also is both a mother and a virgin. For whose virgin purity consult we for, if she is not a virgin? or whose children address we, if she is not a mother? Mary bare the Head of This Body after the flesh, the Church bears the members of that Body after the Spirit. In both virginity hinders not fruitfulness: in both fruitfulness takes not away virginity. Wherefore, whereas the whole Church is holy both in body and spirit, and yet the whole is not virgin in body but in spirit; how much more holy is it in these members, wherein it is virgin both in body and spirit?⁵³

The church’s involvement in the believer’s life does not end with giving birth to the believer; it also has a nurturing role in the life of the believer. Augustine believed that the full flowering of the Christian life involves a nurturing, loving community in the

⁵⁰Augustine, “Sermon VII,” in *Sermons on Selected Lessons of the New Testament*, NPNF¹, ed. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956), 6:281.

⁵¹Augustine, *On Nature and Grace*, NPNF¹, ed. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 5:128.

⁵²Augustine, “On the Creed: A Sermon to the Catechumens,” NPNF¹, ed. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956), 3:369.

⁵³Augustine, *Of Holy Virginit*y, NPNF¹, ed. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956), 3:417.

church where fellow believers can exercise charity toward one another.⁵⁴ Through the love of the Christian community, the church helps grow and sanctify the believer. The church also, because it is the mother of the believer, has authority in his or her life.⁵⁵ However, while the church as mother emphasizes the active role the church has in salvation, the authority of the church is primarily derived from its relationship with Christ.

Augustine argued for an intimate unity between Christ and the church.⁵⁶ The church and Christ, according to Augustine, are one body of which Christ is the head and his church the body: “Let us rejoice, then, and give thanks that we are made not only Christians, but Christ. Do ye understand, brethren, and apprehend the grace of God upon us? Marvel, be glad, we are made Christ. For if He is the head, we are the members: the whole man is He and we.”⁵⁷ The fact that the church is the body of Christ means that there is a deep, inseparable union between Christ and the church; this union is so strong that the church and Christ are one flesh as a man is with his wife:

⁵⁴“But inasmuch as love is enjoined upon us, not only toward God, when it was said, ‘Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind;’ but also toward our neighbor, for ‘thou shalt love,’ saith He, ‘thy neighbor as thyself;’ and inasmuch, moreover, as the faith in question is less fruitful, if it does not comprehend a congregation and society of men, wherein brotherly charity may operate” (Augustine, *On Faith and Creed*, NPNF¹, 3:331). For Augustine, this congregation or society where charity operates is the church.

⁵⁵In a letter to his friend Eudoxius, Augustine indicates that the church has authority to call people into ministry: “We exhort you in the Lord, brethren, to be steadfast in your purpose, and persevere to the end; and if the Church, your Mother, calls you to active service, guard against accepting it, on the one hand, with too eager elation of spirit, or declining it, on the other, under the solicitations of indolence; and obey God with a lowly heart, submitting yourselves in meekness to Him who governs you, who will guide the meek in judgment, and will teach them His way” (Augustine, “Letter XLVII,” in *The Letters of Saint Augustine*, NPNF¹, ed. Philip Schaff [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956], 1:294).

⁵⁶For scholarly work on the church as the body of Christ in Augustine’s thought, see Emile Mersch, *The Whole Christ: The Historical Development of the Doctrine of The Mystical Body in Scripture and Tradition*, trans. John R. Kelly (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1938), 384–440; and Grabowski, *The Church: An Introduction to the Theology of St. Augustine*, 3–92.

⁵⁷Augustine, *Homilies on the Gospel of John*, NPNF¹, ed. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 7:140.

Sometimes, though, in such a way that you are to understand the head and the body, with the apostle himself expounding as clearly as may be what was said about husband and wife in Genesis: *They shall be two*, it says, *in one flesh* (Gn 2:24). Notice his exposition, because I don't want to give the impression of having the nerve to say something I've cobbled up myself. *For hey will be two*, he said, *in one flesh*; and he added, *This is a great sacrament*. And in case anyone should still think that this is to be found in husband and wife according to the natural joining of the sexes, and their bodily coming together, *but I mean*, he went on, *in Christ and the Church* (Eph 5:31-32). So this is how we take as referring to Christ and the Church what is said elsewhere: *They shall be two in one flesh; they are not now two, but there is one flesh* (Mt 19:5-6).⁵⁸

Even though Augustine emphasized the close connection of the church to Christ, he believed that the church was a mixed body of both saints and sinners—regenerate and unregenerate. It is at the eschaton that God will purify his church, Christ's body.⁵⁹ In spite of the mixed character of the church, Augustine's views on the church as virginal mother and the church as the body of Christ led him to emphasize the power of the church over all elements of the Christian faith.⁶⁰

The church, as Christ's bride and the mother of all Christians, has been given all of Christ's power.⁶¹ Not only does the church have all of Christ's power, but Christ preserves it from all error: "But again this same Church which now is, unless the Lord

⁵⁸Augustine, "Sermon 341," in *Sermons 341-400*, ed. John E. Rotelle, trans. Edmund Hill, The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century (New York: New City, 1995), 27.

⁵⁹Allison, *Historical Theology*, 572; Tony Lane, *A Concise History of Christian Thought*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006), 50; and Gillian R. Evans, "Augustine and the Church," in *Saint Augustine: The Bishop*, ed. Fannie LeMoine and Christopher Kleinhenz (New York: Garland, 1994), 169.

⁶⁰As Portalié argues, the church, for Augustine, is the means by which Christ acts as a mediator for humanity: "[God] has given [man] the family and society; for supernatural life He has also prepared a society for man—the Church, whose role guaranteed by divine promises, is to give him life and lead him to salvation. Jesus Christ was the mediator; the Church is to be the mediatrix. She is to carry on His work—more accurately—Jesus Christ will carry it on in her and through her" (Portalié, *A Guide to the Thought of Saint Augustine*, 231–32). The church, therefore, derives its authority from its relationship to Christ, which forms its very essence.

⁶¹"She [the church] it is alone who holds as her privilege the whole power of her Bridegroom and Lord; by virtue of which power as bride, she can bring forth sons even of handmaids" (Augustine, *On Baptism, Against the Donatists*, NPNF¹, ed. Philip Schaff [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983], 4:447). Augustine quotes from Cyprian's *Epistle LXXIII* in this passage.

inhabit her, the most earnest watching might run into any sort of error.”⁶² Christ’s preservation of the church from all errors is directly linked to the Church being his body:

From this power of darkness, therefore, of which the devil is the prince,—in other words, from the power of the devil and his angels,—infants are delivered when they are baptized; and whosoever denies this, is convicted by the truth of the Church’s very sacraments, which no heretical novelty in the Church of Christ is permitted to destroy or change, so long as the Divine Head [Christ] rules and helps the entire body which He owns—small as well as great.⁶³

Since Christ protects the church from all error and it has been given his power, all doctrine—even the gospel—is subject to the church’s authority derived from Christ. Therefore, the church must approve all doctrine for it to be valid and orthodox.⁶⁴ The church not only exercises authority over doctrines⁶⁵ such as the doctrines of predestination and justification; it also exercises authority over the salvation process: “One thing only I urge you to take to heart, and that is by every means possible to turn your minds and your ears away from the person who is not a Catholic, so that you may be able to lay hold of *the forgiveness of sins and the resurrection of the flesh and life everlasting* through the one, true, and holy Catholic Church.”⁶⁶ Similarly, Augustine

⁶²Augustine, *Expositions on the Book of Psalms*, NPNF¹, ed. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 8:36.

⁶³Augustine, *On Marriage and Concupiscence*, NPNF¹, 5:273. Similarly, Augustine argues in a letter that it is with the help of Christ that the Pelagian error was defeated: “Its [Pelagianism’s] authors, or at least its fiercest or best known advocates are Pelagius and Caelestius, and by the vigilance of councils of bishops along with the help of the savior, who watches over his Church, as well as two venerable bishops of the Apostolic See, Pope Innocent and Pope Zosimus, they have been condemned throughout the whole world, unless they are corrected and also do penance” (Augustine, “Letter 190,” 273).

⁶⁴Augustine, *Against the Epistle of Manichaeus Called Fundamental*, NPNF¹, ed. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 131; and Ellingsen, *The Richness of Augustine*, 4:114.

⁶⁵Even though the church is the authoritative judge over matters of doctrine, the marks of the church, according to Augustine, are known through Scripture: “We, however, are certain that no one could ever have been warranted in separating himself from the communion of all nations, because every one of us looks for the marks of the Church not in his own righteousness, but in the Divine Scriptures, and beholds it actually in existence, according to the promises” (Augustine, “Letter XCIII,” in *The Letters of Saint Augustine*, NPNF¹, ed. Philip Schaff [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956], 1:392). Ellingsen argues that Augustine believes that the external marks of the true church are as follows: “(1) forgiveness of sin; (2) the reading of Scripture; (3) the preaching of repentance and the remission of sin; and (4) the spreading of charity abroad” (Ellingsen, *The Richness of Augustine*, 114).

opined that “there is no other valid means of making Christians and remitting sins, except by men becoming believers through the sacrament according to the institution of Christ and the Church.”⁶⁷ Just as there is no salvation outside the church, there is no forgiveness of sins outside the church.⁶⁸ It is only through the ministry of the church that the believer is able to be saved and experience forgiveness of sin.

Augustine also believed that the sacraments⁶⁹—baptism, the eucharist, penance, and marriage—are under the authority of the church. The most important sacrament concerning salvation for Augustine is baptism. As mentioned earlier, he viewed baptism as being important in the salvation process. The church is the source of all true, saving baptism for Augustine; however, he believed that baptism done outside the church is valid because baptism derives its authority not from the one who administers it, but from the true Church.⁷⁰ While baptism outside the church may be valid, salvation can only be found in the church itself: “The comparison of the Church with Paradise shows us that men may indeed receive her baptism outside her pale, but that no one outside can either receive or retain the salvation of eternal happiness.”⁷¹ The

⁶⁶Augustine, “Sermon 215,” in *Sermons 184-229*, ed. John E. Rotelle, trans. Edmund Hill, *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century* (New York: New City, 1993), 165. Italics original.

⁶⁷Augustine, *On the Merits and Forgiveness of Sins, and on the Baptism of Infants*, NPNF¹, 5:78.

⁶⁸“But the integrity of the sacrament [baptism] is everywhere recognized, though it will not avail for the irrevocable remission of sins outside the unity of the Church. Nor will the prayers of the saints, or, in other words, the groanings of that one dove, be able to help one who is set in heresy or schism” (Augustine, *On Baptism, Against the Donatists*, NPNF¹, 4:443).

⁶⁹Portalié, *A Guide to the Thought of Saint Augustine*, 243–69. For Augustine, the sacrament is a “sacred sign” and a source of unity for the church. See Augustine, *The City of God*, NPNF¹, 183; idem, “Letter 54,” in *Letters 1-99*, ed. John E. Rotelle, trans. Roland Teske, S. J., *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century* (New York: New City, 2001), 210.

⁷⁰Augustine, *On Baptism, Against the Donatists*, 4:443; Augustine, “Letter XCVIII,” NPNF¹, 1:408. For Augustine, even the baptism of heretics derives its validity from the church.

⁷¹Augustine, *On Baptism, Against the Donatists*, NPNF¹, 5:447.

church's ministers, for Augustine, are also crucial for the church's active role in salvation and nurturing of Christians.

Augustine tied the primary job of the minister to the gospel. The minister is to preach the word and dispense the gospel.⁷² The Lord builds the church through the ministerial proclamation of the Word and his gospel: "Who are they who toil in building it? All who preach the word of God in the Church, the ministers of God's mysteries. We are all running, we are all toiling, we are all building now; and before us others have run, toiled, and built: but "except the Lord build, their labour is but lost."⁷³ Through ministers, the Lord also protects his flock: "The Bishops also do this. For a higher place was for this reason given the Bishops, that they might be themselves the superintendents and as it were the guardians of the people."⁷⁴ The ministers of the church, for Augustine, are the primary means by which the church performs her role as both the mother of Christians and the body of Christ. They, wrote Augustine, "generate sons by the gospel."⁷⁵

Augustine's views on ecclesiology deeply impacted his soteriology. He emphasized the church's active, participatory role in the salvation process. This emphasis is based on his high view of the authority of the church, namely that the church's authority is grounded in the church's ontology—the church as the body of Christ and virginal mother of believers. Even though Augustine's soteriology is similar to the soteriology of the Reformers, his ecclesiology contributed to the problems with the

⁷²"A minister, therefore, that is a dispenser of the word and sacrament of the gospel, if he is a good man, becomes a fellow-partner in the working of the gospel" (Augustine, *Answer to Letters of Petilian, Bishop of Cirta*, NPNF¹, ed. Philip Schaff [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983], 4:625).

⁷³Augustine, "Psalm CXXVII," in *Expositions on the Book of Psalms*, NPNF¹, ed. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 8:606.

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵Augustine, *Saint Augustine: Confessions*, trans. Henry Chadwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 292.

Catholic Church in the Middle Ages. As Warfield suggests, “For the Reformation, inwardly considered, was just the ultimate triumph of Augustine’s doctrine of grace over Augustine’s doctrine of the church.”⁷⁶ I now turn to Calvin and Luther—two major figures in this triumph.

Luther

Luther is a towering figure in both history and theology.⁷⁷ His resistance to the Catholic Church initiated needed reform.⁷⁸ It was Luther’s resolve and theology that pushed through the darkness of medieval Roman Catholicism to usher in a new epoch for both Christianity and the West.⁷⁹ I argue here that Luther, like Augustine and Cyprian before him, focuses on the church’s active participation in the salvation of believers and

⁷⁶Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, *Calvin and Augustine*, ed. Samuel G. Craig (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1956), 322.

⁷⁷For scholarly work on Luther’s life and character, see Walther von Loewenich, *Martin Luther: The Man and His Work*, trans. Lawrence W. Denef (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1982); Ruth Gordon Short, *Meet Martin Luther: His Life and Teachings* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1959); Ewald M. Plass, *This is Luther: A Character Study* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1948); Stephen J. Nichols, *Martin Luther: A Guided Tour of His Life and Thought* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2002); Martin Marty, *Martin Luther* (New York: Viking Penguin, 2004); Richard Marius, *Martin Luther: The Christian between God and Death* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 1999); Henry Eyster Jacobs, *Martin Luther: The Hero of the Reformation* (New York: Knickerbocker, 1898); William Dallmann, *Martin Luther: His Life and Labor* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1951); and Roland Herbert Bainton, *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1950).

⁷⁸For scholarly work on Luther’s influence on the Reformation, see James Mackinnon, *Luther and the Reformation*, 4 vols. (London: Longmans, Green and Co, 1925-30); Jacobs, *Martin Luther: The Hero of the Reformation*; A. G. Dickens, *Martin Luther and the Reformation* (New York: Harper & Row, 1967); Heinrich Boehmer, *Martin Luther: Road to Reformation*, trans. John W. Doberstein and Theodore G. Tappert (New York: Meridian, 1957); Heinrich Boehmer, *Luther & The Reformation in the Light of Modern Research*, trans. E. S. G. Potter (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1930); Martin Brecht, *Martin Luther: His Road to Reformation 1483-1521*, trans. James L. Schaaf (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985); Martin Brecht, *Martin Luther: Shaping and Defining the Reformation 1521-1532*, trans. James L. Schaaf (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1990); and Martin Brecht, *Martin Luther: The Preservation of the Church 1532-1546*, trans. James L. Schaaf (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1993).

⁷⁹As Paul Tillich opines, “The turning point of the Reformation and of church history in general is the experience of an Augustinian monk in his monastic cell—Martin Luther. . . . The only man who really made a breakthrough [against the medieval Roman Catholic system], and whose breakthrough has transformed the surface of the earth, was Martin Luther. This is his greatness” (Paul Tillich, *A History of Christian Thought: From Its Hellenistic Origins to Existentialism*, ed. Carl E. Braaten [New York: Simon and Schuster, 1968], 227).

that this focus is evident in his usage of the church as mother metaphor in his ecclesiology and the construction of his ecclesiology around the gospel. For Luther, the true church is to actively participate in gospel proclamation because the church comes into being through it. I begin my examination of Luther by briefly covering some germane elements of his soteriology. I then proceed to discuss his ecclesiology and demonstrate the centrality of the gospel in both the existence and function of the church.

Luther's Soteriology

The gospel is vital to understanding Luther's soteriology.⁸⁰ The gospel, for Luther, is the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins. As he attests: "The Gospel is the message concerning Christ, the Son of God, who was first humbled and then glorified through the Holy Spirit."⁸¹ The gospel, for Luther, is central to the Christian faith; it is the gospel through which unbelievers are made believers.⁸² Through acceptance of the gospel, one becomes a follower of Christ; likewise, through rejection of the gospel, one becomes an enemy of Christ: "Both [Turks and the Pope], of course, are enemies of the church and the devil's own slaves, because

⁸⁰For scholarly work on Luther's view of the gospel, see Gerhard O. Forde, *Where God Meets Man: Luther's Down-to-Earth Approach to the Gospel* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1972). For scholarly work on the relationship between law and gospel in Luther's theology, see William M. Landeen, *Martin Luther's Religious Thought* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific, 1971), 174–81; Bernhard Lohse, *Martin Luther's Theology: Its Historical and Systematic Development*, trans. and ed. Roy A. Harrisville (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999), 267–76; Oswald Bayer, *Martin Luther's Theology: A Contemporary Interpretation*, trans. Thomas H. Trapp (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 58–64; Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966), 251–73; Herman A. Preus, *A Theology to Live By: The Practical Luther for the Practicing Christian* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1977), 78–82.

⁸¹Martin Luther, *Lectures on Romans: Glosses and Scholia*, ed. Hilton C. Oswald, trans. Walter G. Tillmanns and Jacob A. O. Preus, *Luther's Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia, 1972), 25:152–53.

⁸²"For this reason also the gospel is called God's womb: in it he conceives us, carries us, gives birth to us, as a woman conceives and carries a child in her womb and gives birth to it" (Martin Luther, "The Gospel for the Main Christmas Service, Luke 2[:15-20]," in *Sermons II*, ed. Hans J. Hillerbrand, trans. John G. Kunstmann, *Luther's Works*, ed. Helmet T. Lehmann [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1972], 52:78–79.

both reject the Gospel.”⁸³ The gospel, then, is a necessary component to true Christianity. The prominence of the gospel in Luther’s theology is partly rooted in his conception of justification.

According to Luther, justification is not accomplished by any action or work of man;⁸⁴ instead, justification is accomplished by faith in Christ’s work on the cross through a proper response to the gospel: “‘For we hold that man is justified by faith apart from works of law’ (Rom. 3[:28]). In other words, works contribute nothing to justification. Therefore man knows that works which he does by such faith are not his but God’s.”⁸⁵ Thus, it is the work of the Spirit that enables the justification of the believer apart from any merit or work.⁸⁶ Similarly, after justification, sanctification—through the Spirit—also occurs in the lives of believers so that they are able to resist sin and grow in their faith.⁸⁷ As for baptism, even though Luther believed one is saved and justified apart from their own works, he still emphasized the necessity of baptism for salvation.

⁸³Martin Luther, *Lectures on Genesis Chapters 45-50*, ed. Walter A. Hansen, trans. Paul D. Pahl, *Luther’s Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia, 1966), 8:187.

⁸⁴For scholarly work on Luther’s doctrine of justification, see Landeen, *Martin Luther’s Religious Thought*, 139–46; Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther*, 224–50; Julius Köstlin, *The Theology of Luther: In its Historical Development and Inner Harmony*, trans. Charles E. Hay, vol. 2 (Philadelphia: Lutheran Publication Society, 1897), 425–53; Lohse, *Martin Luther’s Theology*, 258–66; Robert Clyde Johnson, *Johnson Speaks to Us: Professor Robert Clyde Johnson’s Lectures on Martin Luther, John Calvin, Søren Kierkegaard, and Karl Barth*, ed. Thomas J. Kelso, Bruce F. Mase, and David G. Davis (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 75–86; Robin A. Leaver, *Luther on Justification* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1975); and Alister E. McGrath, *Luther’s Theology of the Cross: Martin Luther’s Theological Breakthrough* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985), 95–147.

⁸⁵Martin Luther, “Heidleberg Disputation, 1518,” in *Career of the Reformer: I*, trans. and ed. Harold J. Grimm, *Luther’s Works*, ed. Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1957), 31:56; and Martin Luther, “Against the Roman Papacy, An Institution of the Devil, 1545,” in *Church and Ministry III*, trans. and ed. Eric W. Gritsch, *Luther’s Works*, ed. Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1960), 41:309–10.

⁸⁶Martin Luther, *Lectures on Zechariah*, ed. Hilton C. Oswald, trans. Richard J. Dinda, *Luther’s Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia, 1973), 20:144.

⁸⁷Martin Luther, *Lectures on Genesis Chapters 1-5*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan, trans. George V. Schick, *Luther’s Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia, 1958), 1:64–65.

Luther argued for two sacraments.⁸⁸ Perhaps the most important of these sacraments for his ecclesiology is baptism.⁸⁹ As I mentioned above, he believed that baptism is necessary for salvation.⁹⁰ He also believed that baptism is the gateway through which one entered the church: “These facts [the dimensions of Noah’s ark which have same proportions as the human body] are later applied to the body of Christ, that is, to the church, which has an entrance, namely Baptism, through which the clean and the unclean enter without distinction.”⁹¹ Baptism, then, serves as the entrance to salvation and the church. Once a person enters the church through baptism, they are able to serve in the church because of the doctrine of the priesthood of believers.

Once believers are saved, they are part of Christ’s spiritual priesthood;⁹² the spiritual priesthood of believers does away with the Old Testament priesthood: “Every true Christian really ought to know that in the New Testament there is no outward, visible

⁸⁸“Hence there are, strictly speaking, but two sacraments in the church of God—baptism and the bread” (Martin Luther, “The Babylonian Captivity of the Church, 1520,” in *Word and Sacrament II*, ed. Abdel Ross Wentz, trans. A. T. W. Steinhäuser, *Luther’s Works*, ed. Helmut T. Lehmann [Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1960], 36:124). Italics original.

⁸⁹For scholarly work on Luther’s view of baptism, see Jonathan D. Trigg, *Baptism in the Theology of Martin Luther* (New York: Brill, 1994); Kirsi Stjerna, *No Greater Jewel: Thinking about Baptism with Luther* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009); Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther*, 353–74; Landeen, *Martin Luther’s Religious Thought*, 98–114; Bayer, *Martin Luther’s Theology: A Contemporary Interpretation*, 264–69; Lohse, *Martin Luther’s Theology*, 298–305; Köstlin, *The Theology of Luther*, 45–58; Preus, *A Theology to Live By: The Practical Luther for the Practicing Christian*, 151–55.

⁹⁰“Yet this church consists only of those who are baptized. For apart from Baptism there is no salvation, just as at that time salvation resulted from circumcision, not because of circumcision alone but because of faith in the promise which was attached to circumcision and, as it were, embodied in it” (Martin Luther, *Lectures on Genesis Chapters 15-20*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan, trans. George V. Schick, *Luther’s Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan [St. Louis: Concordia, 1961], 3:106). See also Luther, “Against the Thirty-two Articles of the Louvain Theologians, 1545,” *Luther’s Works*, 34:347; Luther, *Lectures on Genesis Chapters 15-20*, *Luther’s Works*, 3:274.

⁹¹Martin Luther, *Lectures on Genesis Chapters 6-14*, ed. Daniel E. Poellot, trans. George V. Schick, *Luther’s Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia, 1960), 2:68; Luther, *Lectures on Genesis Chapters 15-20*, *Luther’s Works*, 3:274; and Luther, *Lectures on Genesis Chapters 45-50*, *Luther’s Works*, 8:315.

⁹²For scholarly work on Luther’s conception of the priesthood of believers, see Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther*, 313–18; Lohse, *Martin Luther’s Theology*, 289–91; and Bayer, *Martin Luther’s Theology: A Contemporary Interpretation*, 273–75.

priest. . . . [The priesthood of believers] is a spiritual priesthood, held in common by all Christians, through which we are all priests with Christ.”⁹³ The Spirit equips believers to perform their function as priests by giving them spiritual gifts through which they perform the ministries of the church.⁹⁴ The priesthood of believers also makes all believers equal.⁹⁵ No privileged class of believers can interpret or teach the Word of God alone.⁹⁶ All believers participate in God’s work. Ministers of the church are priests in that they do ministry in the name of Christ and the Church or, as Luther states, “in [the believer’s] name.”⁹⁷

Luther’s emphasis on the gospel and justification by faith alone, as well as his view of the priesthood of believers, lays the foundation for his ecclesiology.⁹⁸ The centrality of the gospel in the Christian faith as well as the active, participatory role of believers in proclaiming the gospel naturally flows from his soteriology into his ecclesiology.

⁹³Martin Luther, “The Misuse of Mass, 1521,” in *Word and Sacrament II*, ed. Abdel Ross Wentz, trans. Frederick C. Ahrens, *Luther’s Works*, ed. Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1957), 36:138–39. Cf. Martin Luther, “Psalm 110,” in *Selected Psalms II*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan, trans. Richard J. Jungkuntz, *Luther’s Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia, 1956), 13:294–95; Martin Luther, “Lectures on Joel,” in *Lectures on the Minor Prophets I*, ed. Hilton C. Oswald, trans. Richard J. Dinda, *Luther’s Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia, 1975), 18:108–09; Martin Luther, “Lectures on Galatians 1519: Chapters 1-6,” in *Galatians*, ed. Walter A. Hansen, trans. Richard J. Jungkuntz, *Luther’s Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia, 1964), 27:393–94; Martin Luther, “Sermons on the First Epistle of St. Peter,” in *The Catholic Epistles*, ed. Walter A. Hansen, trans. Martin H. Bertram, *Luther’s Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia, 1967), 30:53–54; Martin Luther, “Answer to the Hyperchristian, Hyperspiritual, and Hyperlearned Book by Goat Emser in Leipzig: Including Some Thoughts Regarding His Companion, the Fool Murner, 1521,” in *Church and Ministry I*, ed. Eric W. Gritsch, trans. Eric W. Gritsch and Ruth C. Gritsch, *Luther’s Works*, ed. Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1960), 39:152–54.

⁹⁴Luther, “Psalm 110,” *Luther’s Works*, 13:294–95.

⁹⁵Luther, “Answer to the Hyperchristian,” *Luther’s Works*, 39:154.

⁹⁶Luther, *Lectures on Zechariah*, *Luther’s Works*, 20:346–47.

⁹⁷Luther, “The Babylonian Captivity of the Church, 1520,” *Luther’s Works*, 36:112–13.

⁹⁸As Lohse argues, Luther’s doctrine of justification is the basis of his ecclesiology. See Lohse, *Martin Luther’s Theology*, 278.

Luther's Ecclesiology

Luther described the church in several different ways throughout his writings.⁹⁹ They are as follows: (1) a communion of saints,¹⁰⁰ (2) God's people,¹⁰¹ (3) the habitation of God on earth,¹⁰² (4) the house of God,¹⁰³ (5) a new creation,¹⁰⁴ and (6) an infirmary for the sick.¹⁰⁵ At the heart of his notion of the church is that the church is the gathering of saints.¹⁰⁶ Luther believed that the universal church consisted of the people of God throughout all time from creation to present: "But why does [the Psalmist who composed

⁹⁹For scholarly work on Luther's ecclesiology, see Herman Amberg Preus, *The Communion of Saints: A Study of the Origin and Development of Luther's Doctrine of the Church* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1948); Bayer, *Martin Luther's Theology: A Contemporary Interpretation*, 255–81; Köstlin, *The Theology of Luther*, 538–72; Landeen, *Martin Luther's Religious Thought*, 77–88; Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther*, 294–322; and Lohse, *Martin Luther's Theology*, 277–85.

¹⁰⁰Martin Luther, "On the Councils and the Church, 1539," in *Church and Ministry III*, ed. Eric W. Gritsch, trans. Charles M. Jacobs, *Luther's Works*, ed. Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1960), 41:143.

¹⁰¹Luther, "Answer to the Hyperchristian," *Luther's Works*, 39:155.

¹⁰²Martin Luther, *Lectures on Genesis Chapters 26-30*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan and Walter A. Hansen, trans. George V. Schick and Paul D. Pahl, *Luther's Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia, 1968), 5:250.

¹⁰³Martin Luther, *Sermons on the Gospel of St. John: Chapters 6-8*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan and Daniel E. Poellot, trans. Martin H. Bertram, *Luther's Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia, 1959), 23:20.

¹⁰⁴"The works of the Lord can be distinguished also in another way. The first division consists of all the visible works of creation, whether once done within the realm of nature or by a miracle. The second division comprises the works of Christ done for us and the works of the whole new creation, that is, the church" (Martin Luther, "Psalm 77," in *First Lectures on the Psalms II*, ed. Hilton C. Oswald, trans. Herbert J. Bouman, *Luther's Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan [St. Louis: Concordia, 1976], 11:13). See also Martin Luther, "Psalm 92," in *First Lectures on the Psalms II*, ed. Hilton C. Oswald, trans. Herbert J. Bouman, *Luther's Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia, 1976), 11:229; Martin Luther, "Fourteen Consolations, 1520," in *Devotional Writings I*, ed. Martin O. Dietrich, trans. Martin H. Bertram, *Luther's Works*, ed. Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969), 42:160.

¹⁰⁵Luther, *Lectures on Romans: Glosses and Scholia*, *Luther's Works*, 25:263.

¹⁰⁶"I believe that throughout the whole wide world there is only one holy, universal, Christian church, which is nothing other than the gathering or congregation of saints—pious believers on earth. This church is gathered, preserved, and governed by the same Holy Spirit and is given daily increase by means of the sacraments and the word of God" (Martin Luther, "Personal Prayer Book, 1522," in *Devotional Writings II*, ed. Gustav K. Wiencke, trans. Martin H. Bertram, *Luther's Works*, ed. Helmut T. Lehmann [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1968], 43:28).

Psalm 90] add the phrase ‘from generation to generation’? Surely in order to signify that the one church endures from the beginning of the creation of man to the end of the world.”¹⁰⁷ This true church—the people of God who have existed from the beginning of time—is constantly under assault from Satan, who seeks to destroy it.

Luther, in his ecclesiology, argued for the existence of both a true and false church.¹⁰⁸ The false church, which Luther often equates with the pope and the Church of Rome,¹⁰⁹ ferociously battles the true church: “The church of Satan is everlastingly at war with the church of God.”¹¹⁰ However, Luther believed that God preserves and protects his true church through the power of the Holy Spirit¹¹¹ and the work of Christ himself on its behalf.¹¹² As I will later further expound, one of the most definitive ways to distinguish a true church from a false church is whether or not the church proclaims the true gospel: “I hold that we ought to translate the Hebrew word אמת, ‘truth,’ as “right,” as when we say: ‘That is the right God, that is the right Gospel, that is the right church.’ Thus we declare the true God, the true church, the true Gospel over against the false

¹⁰⁷Martin Luther, “Psalm 90,” in *Selected Psalms II*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan, trans. Paul M. Bretscher, *Luther’s Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia, 1956), 13:88. See also Luther, *Lectures on Genesis Chapters 1-5*, *Luther’s Works*, 1:94, 103–04, 327; and Luther, *Lectures on Genesis Chapters 6-14*, *Luther’s Works*, 2:57.

¹⁰⁸Luther, *Lectures on Genesis Chapters 1-5*, *Luther’s Works*, 1:252.

¹⁰⁹However, Luther did not limit the false church to being exclusively located in the Church of Rome. During Luther’s time, it was the Church of Rome that was most visibly warring against the true church.

¹¹⁰Luther, *Lectures on Genesis Chapters 6-14*, *Luther’s Works*, 2:27. Cf. Luther, *Lectures on Genesis Chapters 6-14*, *Luther’s Works*, 2:210-16; Martin Luther, *Sermons on the Gospel of St. John: Chapters 14-16*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan and Daniel E. Poellot, trans. Martin H. Bertram, *Luther’s Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia, 1961), 24:301–13.

¹¹¹Luther, *Lectures on Genesis Chapters 45-50*, *Luther’s Works*, 8:274.

¹¹²Luther, *Lectures on Genesis Chapters 6-14*, *Luther’s Works*, 2:256, 310; Martin Luther, *Lectures on Isaiah: Chapters 1-39*, ed. Hilton C. Oswald, trans. Herbert J. Bouman, *Luther’s Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia, 1969), 16:212; Martin Luther, “Lectures on Hebrews,” in *Lectures on Titus, Philemon, and Hebrews*, trans. and ed. Walter A. Hansen, *Luther’s Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia, 1968), 29:168–71.

church, Gospel, and God; or the true works, in contrast to the false works, we call the ‘right works.’”¹¹³ Luther further elucidates what he means by the true church by his distinction between the visible and invisible church and discussion of the marks of the church.

Luther held that the church on earth is never pure. Any earthly manifestation of the true church is always composed of the wicked mixed with the righteous.¹¹⁴ He argued that any true church on earth contains within it both visible and invisible elements. The invisible elements are spiritual and are composed of those members of the church that are truly regenerate; the visible elements, in contrast, are the physical manifestations of the invisible church that contain both saved and unsaved members.¹¹⁵ For Luther, the church on earth is always a mixed body. The way he argued that one can distinguish a true church from a false church and know when a true, invisible church is present within a church body is through the marks of the church.¹¹⁶

Luther argued that the following seven marks define the true, invisible church: (1) possession of the Word of God; (2) correct practice of baptism; (3) the sacrament of the altar; (4) church discipline; (5) calling or consecrating ministers; (6) prayer, public praise, and thanksgiving to God; and (7) the possession of the sacred cross—the faithful endurance of trials.¹¹⁷ Even though Luther argued for seven marks that define the

¹¹³Martin Luther, “Psalm 111,” in *Selected Psalms II*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan, trans. Daniel E. Poellot, *Luther’s Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia, 1956), 13:381.

¹¹⁴Luther, *Lectures on Genesis Chapters 15-20*, *Luther’s Works*, 3:225; Luther, “Psalm 111,” *Luther’s Works*, 13:372–74.

¹¹⁵Martin Luther, “On the Papacy in Rome, Against the Most Celebrated Romanist in Leipzig, 1520,” in *Church and Ministry I*, ed. Eric W. Gritsch, trans. Eric W. Gritsch and Ruth C. Gritsch, *Luther’s Works*, ed. Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1960), 39:69–71.

¹¹⁶Martin Luther, “Lectures on 1 Timothy,” in *Commentaries on 1 Corinthians 7, 1 Corinthians 15, Lectures on 1 Timothy*, ed. Hilton C. Oswald, trans. Richard J. Dinda, *Luther’s Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia, 1973), 28:302–03.

¹¹⁷Luther, “On the Councils and the Church, 1539,” *Luther’s Works*, 41:148–66.

church,¹¹⁸ he focused on three in his ecclesiology—possession of the gospel as found in the Word of God, true baptism, and the sacrament of the altar: “Wherever one finds the Gospel, Baptism, and the Sacrament, there is His church, and in that place there are certainly living saints.”¹¹⁹ For Luther, the church is not defined by external, physical buildings, but by these marks of the church that demonstrate its authenticity.¹²⁰ One of the most important marks of the true church is the proclamation of the Word of God and the gospel. This mark is crucial to understanding Luther’s concept of the church and the integral role it plays in gospel proclamation and the salvation of believers.

According to Luther, the church is formed by the proclamation of the Word of God.¹²¹ Specifically, the church is formed through the proclamation of the gospel: “[T]he

¹¹⁸Though he does not explicitly mention holiness as a defining characteristic of the church, Luther views it as such. The church is holy through faith in Christ; however, even though the church is holy, it is not infallible. Luther opines, “The church is holy, that is true, but ‘holy’ does not mean being without sin and error here on earth. It means (as St. Paul says) to be holy in the spirit, through God’s Word, and yet to remain in sin, through the flesh [Gal. 5:16ff.]” (Martin Luther, “Commentary on the Alleged Imperial Edict, 1531,” in *Career of the Reformer IV*, ed. Lewis W. Spitz, trans. Robert R. Heitner, *Luther’s Works*, ed. Helmut T. Lehmann [Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1955], 34:76). The church, even though it is holy, will still struggle with sin until the eschaton. See Luther, *Lectures on Genesis Chapters 26-30*, *Luther’s Works*, 5:213–14; idem, “Psalm 45,” in *Selected Psalms I*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan, trans. E. B. Koenker, *Luther’s Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia, 1955), 12:234; idem, “Lectures on Galatians 1535: Chapters 5-6,” in *Galatians*, ed. Walter A. Hansen, trans. Jaroslav Pelikan, *Luther’s Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia, 1964), 27:85.

¹¹⁹Martin Luther, “Psalm 117,” in *Selected Psalms III*, ed. Daniel E. Poellot, trans. Edward Sittler, *Luther’s Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia, 1958), 14:13; idem, *Lectures on Genesis Chapters 21-25*, ed. Walter A. Hansen, trans. George V. Schick, *Luther’s Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia, 1964), 4:348; Luther, “Psalm 110,” 13:272.

¹²⁰“Not Rome or this or that place, but baptism, the sacrament, and the gospel are the signs by which the existence of the church in the world can be noticed externally” (Luther, “On the Papacy in Rome,” *Luther’s Works*, 39:75). See also Martin Luther, *Lectures on Isaiah: Chapters 40-66*, ed. Hilton C. Oswald, trans. Herbert J. Bouman, *Luther’s Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia, 1972), 17:373; and Robert Kolb and Charles P. Arand, *The Genius of Luther’s Theology: A Wittenberg Way of Thinking for the Contemporary Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 129–220.

¹²¹“It is not God’s Word just because the church speaks it; rather, the church comes into being because God’s Word is spoken. The church does not constitute the Word, but is constituted by the Word” (Luther, “The Misuse of Mass, 1521,” *Luther’s Works*, 36:144–45); See also, Luther, *Lectures on Genesis Chapters 1-5*, *Luther’s Works*, 1:115; and idem, *Lectures on Genesis Chapters 26-30*, *Luther’s Works*, 5:244.

church is born and established through the Gospel.”¹²² Likewise, he opines, “That is the rock of which the Lord says in Matt. 16[:18]: ‘On this rock I will build my church.’ Now certainly the Christian church cannot be built on a physical rock, but upon Christ himself through the gospel.”¹²³ It is, therefore, through the gospel that the church is built on Christ. However, the building of the church is not done by the church autonomously; instead, it is done through the work of the Spirit. As I mentioned earlier, Luther argues that Spirit has an active role in a believer’s salvation. For Luther, it is through the work of the Spirit that men are saved, justified, and then added to the church; thus, it is through the proclamation of the word of God and the gospel that the church is built as the Spirit works in the hearts of men to enable them to have faith in Christ. Not only do the Word and gospel form the church, they continue to mold, shape, and mark the true church once they establish it.

For Luther, without the constant proclamation of the Word of God, the church ceases to exist.¹²⁴ He believed that everything related to the church and that salvation is accomplished through the Word of God: “Beyond question it is the Word of God that speaks through us and through which He is powerful in the church. He does all things with the Word alone, illumines, buoys up, and saves; for it is a Word of promise, grace,

¹²²Martin Luther, “Lectures on Micah,” in *Lectures on the Minor Prophets I*, ed. Hilton C. Oswald, trans. Richard J. Dinda, *Luther’s Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia, 1975), 18:249. Although Luther refers here to the initial conception of the church through the gospel, it is still reasonable to infer from the quote that Luther still believes the church is formed through the proclamation of the gospel.

¹²³Martin Luther, “The Adoration of the Sacrament, 1523,” in *Word and Sacrament II*, trans. and ed. Abdel Ross Wentz, *Luther’s Works*, ed. Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1957), 36:281; idem, *Sermons on the Gospel of St. John: Chapters 1-4*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan, trans. Martin H. Bertram, *Luther’s Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia, 1957), 22:70; Luther, *Lectures on Isaiah: Chapters 1-39*, *Luther’s Works*, 16:27–29; 77–79; idem, “Lectures on Micah,” *Luther’s Works*, 18:241; idem, *Lectures on Romans: Glosses and Scholia*, *Luther’s Works*, 25:143–45; Luther, “Lectures on Galatians 1519: Chapters 1-6,” *Luther’s Works*, 27:165–66.

¹²⁴Luther, *Lectures on Genesis Chapters 6-14*, *Luther’s Works*, 2:197. Luther believes that it is through sound preaching and the Word of God that the church is made beautiful and holy. See Luther, *Lectures on Genesis Chapters 6-14*, *Luther’s Works*, 2:334.

eternal life, and salvation.”¹²⁵ Luther also argued for the subservience of the church to Scripture as its doctrine is to be judged and assessed through the Word of God;¹²⁶ however, the church also serves the Word of God as it preserves it for succeeding generations.¹²⁷

Correspondingly, Luther gave the gospel a central role in the church. As I mentioned above, it is a church’s faithful adherence to the gospel message that conclusively proves it to be a true church,¹²⁸ oppositely, a lack of adherence to the gospel message is what marks a false church.¹²⁹ Luther also assigned the church the task of being actively involved in true, gospel proclamation. He believed that Christ exalts and glorifies his church through the preaching of the gospel.¹³⁰ To know and proclaim the gospel is, for Luther, one of the definitive marks of the church: “To know everything [concerning salvation] is the true mark of the church of the New Testament. For formerly, of course, they knew what sufficed for salvation; but today we know everything, and there is no need of more.”¹³¹ Luther further emphasized the central role the gospel has in the church by his use of the church as mother metaphor.

Luther used the word “mother” to describe the church many times in his writing¹³² What Luther means by his description of the church as mother is that the

¹²⁵Luther, *Lectures on Genesis Chapters 45-50*, *Luther’s Works*, 8:271.

¹²⁶Martin Luther, *Lectures on Galatians 1535: Chapters 1-4*, trans. Jaroslav Pelikan, *Luther’s Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia, 1963), 26:66–67. See Luther, “The Babylonian Captivity of the Church, 1520,” *Luther’s Works*, 26:106–08.

¹²⁷Luther, *Lectures on Genesis Chapters 45-50*, *Luther’s Works*, 8:42.

¹²⁸Luther, *Lectures on Genesis Chapters 21-25*, *Luther’s Works*, 4:32.

¹²⁹*Ibid.*, 4:54.

¹³⁰Luther, “Lectures on Micah,” *Luther’s Works*, 18:238.

¹³¹Martin Luther, “Lectures on the First Epistle of St. John,” in *The Catholic Epistles*, trans. and ed. Walter A. Hansen, *Luther’s Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia, 1967), 30:256.

church is the mother of all true believers by its active participation in the creation of believers through the Word of God:¹³³

Therefore Sarah, or Jerusalem, our free mother, is the church, the bride of Christ who gives birth to all. She goes on giving birth to children without interruption until the end of the world, as long as she exercises the ministry of the Word, that is, as long as she preaches and propagates the Gospel; for this is what it means for her to give birth. . . . Therefore the Jerusalem that is above, that is, the church, is not subject to the Law and works; but she is free and is a mother without Law, sin, or death. And as the mother is, so are the children to whom she gives birth.

Therefore this allegory teaches in a beautiful way that the church should not do anything but preach the Gospel correctly and purely and thus give birth to children. In this way we are all fathers and children to one another, for we are born of one another. I was born of others through the Gospel, and now I am a father to still others, who will be fathers to still others; and so this giving birth will endure until the end of the world.¹³⁴

¹³²“This is especially pertinent with reference to holy Mother Church. She is a true housemother and the bride of Christ. Through the Gospel she magnificently adorns Christ’s home with many children” (Martin Luther, “Psalm 68,” in *Selected Psalms II*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan, trans. Martin H. Bertram, *Luther’s Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan [St. Louis: Concordia, 1956], 13:13–14); idem, “Answer to the Hyperchristian,” *Luther’s Works*, 39:180; idem, “Dr. Luther’s Retraction of the Error Forced upon Him by the Most Highly Learned Priest of God, Sir Jerome Emser, Vicar in Meissen, 1521,” in *Church and Ministry I*, ed. Eric W. Gritsch, trans. Eric W. Gritsch and Ruth C. Gritsch, *Luther’s Works*, ed. Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1960), 39:235; idem, “Psalm One Hundred Ten,” in *First Lectures on the Psalms II: Psalm 76-126*, ed. Hilton C. Oswald, trans. Herbert J. Bouman, *Luther’s Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia, 1976), 11:367–68; idem, *Sermons on the Gospel of St. John: Chapters 1-4*, *Luther’s Works*, 22:291; idem, *Lectures on Galatians 1535: Chapters 1-4*, *Luther’s Works*, 26:448–49; idem, “Ten Sermons on the Catechism, November 30 to December 18, 1528,” in *Sermons I*, trans. and ed. John W. Doberstein, *Luther’s Works*, ed. Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1959), 51:166; idem, “Explanations of the 95 Theses, 1518,” in *Career of the Reformer: I*, ed. Harold J. Grimm, trans. Carl W. Folkemer, *Luther’s Works*, ed. Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1957), 31:215; idem, “Commentary on the Alleged Imperial Edict, 1531,” *Luther’s Works*, 34:73–74; idem, “That These Words of Christ, ‘This is My Body,’ etc., Still Stand Firm Against the Fanatics, 1527,” in *Word and Sacrament III*, trans. and ed. Robert H. Fischer, *Luther’s Works*, ed. Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1961), 37:25; idem, “A Sermon on the Ban, 1520,” in *Church and Ministry I*, ed. Eric W. Gritsch, trans. Eric W. Gritsch and Ruth C. Gritsch, *Luther’s Works*, ed. Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1960), 39:17; Martin Luther, “Justus Jonas: Wittenberg, May 7, 1545,” in *Letters III*, trans. and ed. Gottfried G. Krodell, *Luther’s Works*, ed. Helmut T. Lehmann (Fortress: Philadelphia, 1975), 50:248. Luther also describes the church as the bride and body of Christ. However, his description of the church as mother is the most pertinent for understanding the relationship between the gospel and the church and the active role that the church plays in the salvation of believers. See Luther, “Psalm 45,” *Luther’s Works*, 12:263; idem, *Sermons on the Gospel of St. John: Chapters 1-4*, *Luther’s Works*, 22:202–04.

¹³³As Bayer asserts, “We see: Luther can be all means speak of the church as ‘mother’—in the sense that the church is the arena in which the Word of God reaches me and creates faith” (Bayer, *Martin Luther’s Theology: A Contemporary Interpretation*, 264).

¹³⁴Luther, *Lectures on Galatians 1535: Chapters 1-4*, *Luther’s Works*, 26:441.

Luther's use of the church as mother metaphor emphasizes the gospel-centered nature of the church in his ecclesiology.¹³⁵ The church is defined by its task of giving birth to new believers. The church performs its function as mother through Spirit-empowered¹³⁶ gospel proclamation.¹³⁷ The church, then, bears its children as the Spirit works in the hearts of unbelievers through the proclamation of the Word of God. The church also performs its role as the mother of believers by nurturing them so that they reach spiritual maturity: "She [the church] teaches, cherishes, and carries us in her womb, her bosom, and her arms; she shapes and perfects us to the form of Christ, until we grow into perfect manhood (Eph. 4:13)."¹³⁸ For Luther, the church nourishes its spiritual children through its ministries.

The church is to minister to both the saved and the unsaved. It is to play a sanctifying role in the life of the believer¹³⁹ as well as practice hospitality to others, including caring for widows within the church.¹⁴⁰ The church is equipped for all of its ministries by the work of the Holy Spirit—¹⁴¹ the Spirit provides gifts to the members of

¹³⁵For Luther, the church's active role in the proclamation of the gospel is necessary because outside the true church there is no forgiveness of sins. However, even though he emphasizes the necessity of the church's participation in the salvation process, he still believes the church is fallible. He believes therefore that it is possible for church leadership to fall into sin and err. See Martin Luther, *Lectures on Deuteronomy*, ed. Daniel E. Poellot, trans. Richard R. Caemmerer, *Luther's Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia, 1960), 9:150; idem, *Sermons on the Gospel of St. John: Chapters 1-4*, *Luther's Works*, 26:258-59).

¹³⁶Luther, "Ten Sermons on the Catechism," *Luther's Works*, 51:166.

¹³⁷Martin Luther, "The Gospel for the Sunday after Christmas, Luke 2[:33-40]," in *Sermons II*, ed. Hans J. Hillerbrand, trans. John G. Kunstmann, *Luther's Works*, ed. Helmet T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1972), 52:107-08.

¹³⁸Luther, *Lectures on Galatians 1535: Chapters 1-4*, *Luther's Works*, 26:441-42; idem, "Psalm 23," in *Selected Psalms I*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan, trans. W. M. Miller, *Luther's Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia, 1955), 12:162; Luther, *Lectures on Isaiah: Chapters 40-66*, *Luther's Works*, 17:243-45.

¹³⁹Luther, "Ten Sermons on the Catechism," *Luther's Works*, 51:166-67.

¹⁴⁰Luther, "Lectures on 1 Timothy," *Luther's Works*, 28:336-40.

the church that enable all of its necessary ministries to take place. For Luther, one of the most important offices in the church is that of pastor or minister.

The office of minister is the priestly office of the church.¹⁴² The minister of the true church possesses immense authority within the church; so, outside of the church, there is no true minister.¹⁴³ Luther believed that anyone who rejects a minister of the true church rejects God himself¹⁴⁴ because God has chosen to govern his church through ministers.¹⁴⁵ He saw the following as tasks of the minister: (1) to provide healing of the church,¹⁴⁶ (2) to work humbly in the church and submit to God,¹⁴⁷ (3) to guard against false doctrine,¹⁴⁸ and (4) to preach the Word of God and the gospel.¹⁴⁹ Preaching the Word of God and the gospel are especially important to Luther. It is through biblically-sound preaching that God builds his church: “To speak [the Word of God] is to build the church, to convert others. This is the double glory of the godly, for where the Word is, there the fruit will follow.”¹⁵⁰

¹⁴¹Luther, *Lectures on Isaiah: Chapters 1-39*, *Luther's Works*, 16:53–54; Luther, “Psalm 45,” *Luther's Works*, 12:254.

¹⁴²Luther, *Lectures on Galatians 1535: Chapters 1-4*, 26:245–46. For scholarly work on Luther's view of the office of minister, see Gert Haendler, *Luther on Ministerial Office and Congregational Function*, ed. Eric W. Gritsch, trans. Ruth C. Gritsch (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981); Eugene F. A. Klug, *Church and Ministry: The Role of Church, Pastor, and People from Luther to Walther* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1993); Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther*, 323–32; Lohse, *Martin Luther's Theology*, 286–97.

¹⁴³Luther, *Sermons on the Gospel of St. John: Chapters 6-8*, *Luther's Works*, 23:284.

¹⁴⁴Luther, *Lectures on Genesis Chapters 6-14*, *Luther's Works*, 2:174–75.

¹⁴⁵Luther, *Lectures on Genesis Chapters 45-50*, *Luther's Works*, 8:94–95.

¹⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 8:54.

¹⁴⁷Luther, *Lectures on Genesis Chapters 26-30*, *Luther's Works*, 5:123.

¹⁴⁸Martin Luther, *Lectures on Genesis Chapters 38-44*, ed. Walter A. Hansen, trans. Paul D. Pahl, *Luther's Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia, 1965), 7:205.

¹⁴⁹Luther, “The Babylonian Captivity of the Church, 1520,” *Luther's Works*, 36:113.

Luther's ecclesiology emphasizes the church's central role in gospel proclamation and, by consequence, its active, participatory role in the salvation of believers. For Luther, the church builds itself through gospel proclamation:

In another way it can be understood thus: "Of the fruit of Thy works," that is, "Your church will be filled with many believers as a result of Gospel preaching, which is the work of Christ, so that the body of the church will be full, fat, and crammed with members who are sound and full of faith and virtues." What is the fruit of the Word of God except the multiplication of the faithful extensively and intensively? Ps. 4:7 reads: "By the fruit of their grain and wine and oil they are multiplied"; and Ps. 112:2: "His seed will be mighty in the land."¹⁵¹

However, the church does not simply proclaim the gospel. For Luther, the whole church is to be constructed around it: "[O]nly through the gospel is the church conceived, formed, nourished, generated, trained, pastured, clothed, adorned, strengthened, armed and preserved."¹⁵² Like Luther, Calvin also emphasized the central role of the church in the salvation of believers.

Calvin

One of the most influential theologians in the Reformed tradition, John Calvin has a rich understanding of the relationship between soteriology and ecclesiology.¹⁵³ In

¹⁵⁰Luther, *Lectures on Isaiah: Chapters 40-66, Luther's Works*, 17:342. See also Bayer, *Martin Luther's Theology: A Contemporary Interpretation*, 257-59.

¹⁵¹Martin Luther, "Psalm 104," in *First Lectures on the Psalms II: Psalm 76-126*, ed. Hilton C. Oswald, trans. Herbert J. Bouman, *Luther's Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia, 1976), 11:332.

¹⁵²"cum per solum Euangelium concipiatur, formetur, alatur, generetur, educetur, pascatur, vestiatur, ornetur, roboretur, armetur, servetur, breviter" (Martin Luther, "Ad librum eximii Magistri Nostri Ambrosii Catharini, defensoris Silvestri Prieratis acerrimi, responsio 1521," in *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe* (Weimar: Hermann Böhlhaus Nachfolger, 1897), 721). For the translation, see Bayer, *Martin Luther's Theology: A Contemporary Interpretation*, 257, n.6.

¹⁵³The Calvin scholar John McNeill argues that Calvin had a deep, abiding interest in ecclesiology: "Calvin's teaching on the church is characteristically lucid and comprehensive. So greatly was he preoccupied with this topic that if we are to know the range of his thought upon it, we must consult most of his works" (John T. McNeill, "The Church in Sixteenth-Century Reformed Theology," *The Journal of Religion* 22 [1942]: 251-69). Given McNeill's comments, the relationship between Calvin's views on soteriology and ecclesiology will be developed by consulting both the *Institutes* and his commentaries.

Calvin's theology, the concept of the church¹⁵⁴ is built around Christ and the gospel. Specifically, his concept of the church and the marks of the church—the ministry of the Word and the sacraments—are developed around the gospel. In what follows, I argue that Calvin's centering of the church around the gospel naturally leads him to give the church an active, participatory role in the salvation of believers as evidenced by his use of the church as mother metaphor. I begin my analysis of Calvin by first examining his view of salvation. I then proceed to examine his ecclesiology. One must first understand Calvin's idea of God's electing work in salvation to properly understand the nature of the church.

Calvin's Soteriology

Calvin placed a strong emphasis on God's sovereignty in his soteriology. Christ, in the exercise of his sovereign will, predestines individual believers for salvation.¹⁵⁵ For Calvin, the believer is not predestined by their own effort or merit, but by the choice of God in Christ.¹⁵⁶ Believers demonstrate that they are truly members of God's elect by responding by faith to the gospel message: "Wherever faith is, God has there already given an evidence of his election; and then, that he, by pouring his blessing on the ministration of the gospel, to illuminate the minds of men by faith, and thereby to

¹⁵⁴Calvin, like Luther, views the church as present in both the Old and New Testaments. Some examples of this type of thinking in his theology are that he views Sarah as "the mother of the people of God" (John Calvin, *Commentaries on the First Book of Moses Called Genesis*, trans. John King, Calvin's Commentaries [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996], 1:423. He also argues for a continuous line of elect saints present even before the flood. See Calvin, *Commentaries on the First Book of Moses*, 334. For a detailed explanation of Calvin's view of the church, see G. S. M. Walker, "Calvin and the Church," in *Calvin's Ecclesiology: Sacraments and Deacons*, ed. Richard C. Gamble (New York: Garland, 1992), 120-38.

¹⁵⁵"When he [Christ] declares that he knows whom he has chosen. He denotes in the human genus a particular species, distinguished not by the quality of its virtues but by heavenly decree" (John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, The Library of Christian Classics [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006], 3.22.7).

¹⁵⁶Ibid.

lead them to call on his name, has thus testified, that the Gentiles were admitted by him into a participation of eternal inheritance.”¹⁵⁷ The Spirit’s work of regenerating an elect person so that he accepts and believes the gospel is what enables his salvation.¹⁵⁸ Thus, God’s predestining work of election is completed by a human response.

Calvin’s Ecclesiology

Calvin’s soteriology is vital to his conception of the church¹⁵⁹ because the church is formed through the regenerating power of the Spirit.¹⁶⁰ The Spirit creates the church by regenerating the elect, who become part of the church once they are regenerated.¹⁶¹ It is God’s work of election, therefore, which stands behind Calvin’s conception of the church.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁷John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans*, trans. Henry Beveridge, *Calvin’s Commentaries* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 19:401. In this passage, Calvin is specifically talking about the Holy Spirit’s work among the Gentiles to enable them to believe the gospel. This work of the Spirit demonstrated that some Gentiles were part of God’s elect. However, this passage can also be applied to God’s work in all of his elect as the occurrence of any type of faith is evidence of divine election.

¹⁵⁸Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.2.19; 3.24.2. Calvin calls this work of the Spirit “illumination.”

¹⁵⁹For helpful treatments of Calvin’s ecclesiology, see Wilhelm Niesel, *The Theology of Calvin* (London: Lutterworth, 1956), 182–210; Benjamin Charles Milner, *Calvin’s Doctrine of the Church* (Leiden: Brill, 1970); Adam Mitchell Hunter, *The Teaching of Calvin* (London: James Clarke, 1950), 152–65; Herman J. Selderhuis, “Church on Stage: Calvin’s Dynamic Ecclesiology,” in *Calvin and the Church: Papers Presented at the 13th Colloquium of the Calvin Studies Society, May 24-26, 2001*, ed. David L Foxgrover (Grand Rapids: CRC Product Services, 2002), 46-64; Charles Partee, *The Theology of John Calvin* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008), 258–96; Timothy George, *Theology of the Reformers* (Nashville: Broadman, 1988), 235–46.

¹⁶⁰“The Prophet [Isaiah] here calls God the Maker and Creator of Israel, not in the same manner that he is called the Creator of heaven and earth, (Gen. i.1,) but inasmuch as he has formed His Church by the Spirit of regeneration” (John Calvin, *Commentary on the Prophet Isaiah*, trans. William Pringle, *Calvin’s Commentaries*, vol. 2 [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996], 7:264).

¹⁶¹“We have elsewhere remarked that the Church is called ‘the workmanship’ (τὸ ποίημα) of God, (Eph. 2:10,) because by the spirit of regeneration believers are created anew, so as to bear the image of God” (Calvin, *Commentary on the Prophet Isaiah*, 83).

¹⁶²Willem van’t Spijker, *Calvin: A Brief Guide to His Life and Thought*, trans. Lyle D. Bierma (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2009), 31; David N. Wiley, “The Church as the Elect in the Theology of John Calvin,” in *John Calvin and the Church: A Prism of Reform*, ed. Timothy George (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1990), 97-117.

The role of God's election in the formation of the church is also essential to Calvin's doctrine of the invisible/visible church. Calvin argued that the invisible church consists of those who are "children of God by grace of adoption and true members of Christ by sanctification of the Holy Spirit."¹⁶³ The visible church, in contrast, is the group of people who participate in the ministry of the Word and the Sacraments.¹⁶⁴ The members of the visible church are not necessarily regenerate or part of God's elect. They may include hypocrites who visibly conform to the church, but are inwardly unregenerate.¹⁶⁵ Through the invisible/visible paradigm, Calvin gives precedence to the role of the gospel in both the formation and definition of the true, invisible church.¹⁶⁶ It is only through a proper response to the gospel due to God's election and the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit that one can become a member of the true, invisible church.

Calvin also inseparably tied the gospel to the church through his conception of the believer's union with Christ. In Calvin's theology, union with Christ is not only necessary for salvation but also for church unity.¹⁶⁷ It is through union with Christ that believers are able to repent and accept the gospel;¹⁶⁸ it also serves as the source of

¹⁶³Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.1.7.

¹⁶⁴Ibid.

¹⁶⁵Ibid.

¹⁶⁶Plasger argues that Calvin gives the visible church the task of spreading the gospel so that the church can accomplish its duty to God's elect. See George Plasger, "Ecclesiology," in *The Calvin Handbook*, ed. Herman J. Selderhuis, trans. Randi H. Lundell (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 325.

¹⁶⁷"For although adoption was deposited in the hand of Abraham, yet as many of his posterity were cut off as rotten members, in order that election may stand and be effectual, it is necessary to ascend to the head in whom the heavenly Father has connected his elect with each other, and bound them to himself by an indissoluble tie. Thus in the adoption of the family of Abraham, God gave them a liberal display of favor which he has denied to others; but in the members of Christ there is a far more excellent display of grace, because those ingrafted into him as their head never fail to obtain salvation" (Calvin, *Institutes*, 3.21.7).

¹⁶⁸Ibid., 3.3.8; 3.3.9. Calvin believes that it is participation in Christ that enables mortification and vivification, the two components of repentance, to be achieved.

sanctification in the life of the believer.¹⁶⁹ Only union with Christ can (1) end human separation between God and man and (2) enable believers to receive the benefits of the gospel through submitting their lives to God's rule.¹⁷⁰ Union with Christ, then, becomes the source of true Christian ministry within the church; it is the sanctifying work of Christ that enables believers to participate in true, Christian ministry.¹⁷¹

According to Calvin, a proper response to the gospel message rooted in God's election stands behind the conception of the true, invisible church and enables true ministry within the church through the sanctification of the elect. Additionally, the gospel also shapes the function of the church, which is to proclaim the gospel and to actively participate in the salvation of believers.

For Calvin, the church functions as an indispensable part of God's work of salvation in the life of believers.¹⁷² The church, moreover, functions as the mother of all believers in that it is God's appointed instrument for dispensing of his truth to the world:

¹⁶⁹Leith argues insightfully that, according to Calvin, the two benefits of the gospel are forgiveness and renewal and that they are obtained through union with Christ. See John H. Leith, *John Calvin's Doctrine of the Christian Life* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1989), 95–103.

¹⁷⁰“This is the same as though he had said, that we do not attain salvation by a frigid and bare knowledge of God, which all confess to be most true; for salvation comes to us by faith for this reason, because it joins us to God. And this comes not in any other way than by being united to the body of Christ, so that, living through his Spirit, we are also governed by him. There is no such thing as this in the dead image of faith. There is then no wonder that James denies that salvation is connected with it” (John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistle of James*, trans. John Owen, *Calvin's Commentaries* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996], 22:310). See also Günther H. Haas, “Ethics and Church Discipline,” in *The Calvin Handbook*, ed. Herman J. Selderhuis (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 341–42; Ronald S. Wallace, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Christian Life* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1959), 11–27; Gene Haas, “Calvin, the Church, and Ethics,” in *Calvin and the Church: Papers Presented at the 13th Colloquium of the Calvin Studies Society, May 24-26, 2001*, ed. David L. Foxgrover (Grand Rapids: CRC Product Services, 2002), 72-91.

¹⁷¹Calvin believes that union with Christ enables believers to participate in Christ's priestly functions of prophet, priest, and king. Calvin goes as far as to assert that it is participation in Christ's prophetic office that enables believers to proclaim the gospel. See Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.15.2; 4.6.8; 2.15.3; Plasger, “Ecclesiology,” 326-37.

¹⁷²“For there is no way to enter into life unless this mother [the church] conceive us in her womb, give us birth, nourish us at her breast, and lastly unless she keep us under her care and guidance. . . . Furthermore, away from her [the church's] bosom one cannot hope for any forgiveness of sins or any salvation” (Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.1.4). Calvin's scriptural warrant for this assertion is Isa 56:6 and Joel 2:32.

The church is the common mother of all the godly, which bears, nourishes, and brings up children to God, kings and peasants alike; and this is done by the ministry. . . . It is, no doubt, a thing in itself possible that divine influence alone should make us perfect without human assistance. But the present inquiry is not what the power of God can accomplish, but what is the will of God and the appointment of Christ. In employing human instruments for accomplishing their salvation, God has conferred on men no ordinary favour. Nor can any exercise be found better adapted to promote unity than to gather around the common doctrine—the standard of our General [Christ].¹⁷³

The church, for Calvin, is entrusted with the gospel of God—the truth necessary for salvation and sanctification.¹⁷⁴ To leave the church is to leave God’s appointed instrument for the declaration of his truth to the world.¹⁷⁵ The true church—God’s dispenser of his truth—is recognized by its defining attributes or marks.

According to Calvin, the church is recognized by two marks: the ministry of the Word and the sacraments.¹⁷⁶ Calvin also accentuated the importance of sound doctrine and true gospel proclamation in the church, which are communicated through the ministry of the Word. He underscored the importance of sound doctrine in the church by asserting that a true church cannot exist without sound doctrine:

But, as soon as falsehood breaks in the citadel of religion and the sum of necessary doctrine is overturned and the use of the sacraments is destroyed, surely the death of the church follows—just as a man’s life is ended when his throat is pierced or his

¹⁷³John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians*, trans. William Pringle, Calvin’s Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 20:282.

¹⁷⁴Calvin opines that God has “deposited this treasure [the gospel] in the church” (Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.1.1.).

¹⁷⁵Calvin goes as far as to state that separation from the church is a sin, that it is dangerous due to the church’s special function in the life of the believer. He observes, “It is of no small importance that [the church] is called ‘the pillar and ground of truth’ and ‘the house of God’ [1 Tim. 3:15, KJV]. By these words Paul means that the church is the faithful keeper of God’s truth in order that it may not perish in the world. For by its ministry and labor God willed to have the preaching of his Word kept pure and to show himself the Father of a family, while he feeds us with spiritual food and provides everything that makes for our salvation” (Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.1.10). However, Calvin does believe Christians should leave a false church that departs from preaching the Word and practicing the sacraments. See Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.1.10; 4.1.10; 4.2.1.

¹⁷⁶“If it has the ministry of the Word and honors it, if it has the administration of the sacraments, it deserves without doubt to be held and considered a church” (Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.1.10). See also Calvin, *Commentaries on the Twelve Minor Prophets*, 110. Spijker notes that the marks of the church are always connected with the mediation of salvation. They are the ordained means through which the church proclaims the gospel to the world. See Spijker, *Calvin*, 140.

heart mortally wounded. And that is clearly evident from Paul's words when he teaches that the church is founded upon the teaching of the apostles and prophets, with Christ himself the chief cornerstone [Eph 2:20]. If the foundation of the church is the teaching of the prophets and apostles, which bids believers entrust their salvation to Christ alone - then stand away that teaching and how will the building continue to stand? Therefore, the church must tumble down when that sum of religion dies which alone can sustain it. Again, if the true church is the pillar and foundation of truth [1Tim. 3:15], it is certain that no church can exist where lying and falsehood have gained sway.¹⁷⁷

In addition, he sees true gospel proclamation as being necessarily present in a true church:

Paul does not wish that any society in which the truth of God does not hold a lofty and conspicuous place shall be acknowledged to be a Church; now there is nothing of all this in Popery, but only ruin and desolation; and, therefore, the true mark of a Church is not found in it. But the mistake arises from this, that they do not consider, what was of the greatest importance, that the truth of God is maintained by the pure preaching of the gospel; and that the support of it does not depend on the faculties or understandings of men, but rests on what is far higher, that is, if it does not depart from the simple word of God.¹⁷⁸

Of particular importance is Calvin's point that sound doctrine and gospel proclamation take place through the ministry of the Word; it is here that the church plays an active, participatory role in the salvation of believers.

For Calvin, Christ forms the foundation of the church and the way in which the church is built upon that foundation is by the preaching of sound doctrine.¹⁷⁹ It is

¹⁷⁷Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.2.1. Calvin goes on to emphasize that the church is founded on the teaching of the apostles. See Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.2.3.

¹⁷⁸John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistle to Titus*, trans. William Pringle, Calvin's Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 21:310. In the Geneva Confession, Calvin also argues for the importance of true, gospel proclamation as a defining mark of the church: "While there is one only Church of Jesus Christ, we always acknowledge that necessity requires companies of the faithful to be distributed in different places. Of these assemblies each one is called Church. But in as much as all companies do not assemble in the name of our Lord, but rather to blaspheme and pollute him by sacrilegious deeds, we believe that the proper mark by which rightly to discern the Church of Jesus Christ is that his holy gospel be purely and faithfully preached, proclaimed, heard, and kept, that his sacraments be properly administered, even if there be some imperfections and faults, and there always will be among men. On the other hand, where the Gospel is not declared, heard, and received, there we do not acknowledge the form of the Church. Hence the churches governed by the ordinances of the pope are rather synagogues of the devil than Christian churches" (John Calvin, *Calvin: Theological Treatises*, trans. John Kelman Sutherland Reid, The Library of Christian Classics [Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011], 22:31). See also Plasger, "Ecclesiology," 328.

through the ministry of the Word that the church grows,¹⁸⁰ maintains the truth, and passes the truth on to its posterity.¹⁸¹ Calvin also argued that it is not enough to participate in the ministry of the Word; one must also properly respond to it.¹⁸² He posited that the ministry of the Word occurs through preaching and implicitly centers on the gospel.¹⁸³ However, as Karl Barth notes, Calvin also argued that the ministry of the Word, to be authentic, must proclaim correctly the entirety of the Word of God of which the gospel is only a part.¹⁸⁴

Calvin underscored the connection between the ministry of the Word and the proclamation of the gospel by linking the structure of the church and the prestige of the preaching office to gospel proclamation. He contended that the structure of the church is

¹⁷⁹Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians*, 243.

¹⁸⁰John Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, trans. James Anderson, Calvin's Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 4:388.

¹⁸¹John Calvin, *Commentaries on the First Epistle to Timothy*, trans. William Pringle, Calvin's Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 21:89–92. Calvin similarly argues that without the preaching of the Word the church would cease to exist. Given Calvin's emphasis on preaching, Milner points out that it is difficult to overestimate the importance of preaching in Calvin's theology. See John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Four Last Books of Moses Arranged in the Form of a Harmony*, trans. Charles William Bingham, Calvin's Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 2:230; Milner, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Church*, 101.

¹⁸²“He makes ‘sound doctrine’ to consist of two parts. The first is that which magnifies the grace of God in Christ, from which we may learn where we ought to seek our salvation; and the second is that by which the life is trained to the fear of God, and inoffensive conduct. Although the former, which includes faith, is far more excellent, and therefore ought to be more zealously inculcated; yet Paul, in writing to Timothy, was not careful about attending to order; for he had to deal with an intelligent man, to whom he would offer an insult, if he dictated to him word by word, as is usually done to apprentices or beginners” (Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistle to Titus*, 310. See also McNeill, “The Church in Sixteenth-Century Reformed Theology,” 262.

¹⁸³Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.1.4. Calvin also links the power of the keys to the ministry of the Word. For Calvin, the power of the keys is the preaching of the gospel through the ministry of the Word. Calvin believes that ministers are to exhort people continually to be reconciled to Christ in God. However, the proclamation of the gospel is not the sole responsibility of the minister. Deacons are also to assist the ministry of the church by distributing the resources of the church and taking care of the sick and poor. Deacons would most certainly serve the mission of the church by proclaiming the gospel through their ministry. See Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.11.1; 4.3.9.

¹⁸⁴Karl Barth, *The Theology of John Calvin* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 183. See also Niesel, *The Theology of Calvin*, 194.

important because it allows for the ministry of the Word to take place by providing a means to appoint leaders within the church. These leaders, then, perform the ministry of the Word. This structure encourages church unity so that the church can accomplish its mission of preaching the gospel.¹⁸⁵ Calvin also linked the prestige of the preaching office within the church structure to gospel proclamation.¹⁸⁶ The purpose of the preaching office, according to Calvin, is not only to proclaim the gospel through the Word of God, but also to administer the sacraments, thus linking their administration to the gospel proclamation and the salvation of believers.

Calvin also emphasized the participatory role of the church in the salvation of believers by his conception of the sacraments. He defined a sacrament as “an outward sign by which the Lord seals on our consciences the promises of his good will toward us in order to sustain the weakness of our faith; and we in turn attest our piety toward him in the presence of the Lord and of his angels and before men.”¹⁸⁷ He held that the sacraments serve “first, to foster, arouse, and confirm faith within; then to attest religion before men.”¹⁸⁸ One of the ways in which the sacraments attest to religion before men is by assisting in the proclamation of the gospel:

¹⁸⁵“The Lord has therefore bound his church together with a knot that he foresaw would be the strongest means of keeping unity, while he entrusted to men the teaching of salvation and everlasting life in order that through their hands it might be communicated to the rest” (Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.3.1).

¹⁸⁶“But no passage is clearer than that of Paul in the second letter to the Corinthians, where is, as if purposely, discusses this question. He therefore contends that there is nothing more notable or glorious in the church than the ministry of the gospel, since it is the administration of the Spirit and of righteousness and of eternal life [2 Cor. 4:6; 3:9]. The purport of these and like passages is that the mode of governing and keeping the church through ministers (a mode established by the Lord forever) may not be ill esteemed among us and through contempt fall out of use” (Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.3.3).

¹⁸⁷*Ibid.*, 4.14.1.

¹⁸⁸*Ibid.*, 4.14.19. As Milner opines, for Calvin, “The sign [sacrament] strengthens faith as nothing else can” (Milner, *Calvin’s Doctrine of the Church*, 113). Hunter also captures Calvin’s view when he states, “What are called specifically the Sacraments are only special forms of the method which God uses in His intercourse with mento communicate certain truths or to impart or intensify certain spiritual impressions or feelings” (Hunter, *The Teaching of Calvin*, 167).

I do not, indeed, deny, that the grace of Christ is applied to us in the sacraments, and that our reconciliation with God is then confirmed in our consciences; but, as the testimony of the Gospel is engraven upon the sacraments, they are not to be judged of separately by themselves, but must be taken in connection with the Gospel, of which they are appendages. In fine, the ministers of the Church are ambassadors, for testifying and proclaiming the benefit of reconciliation, only on this condition—that they speak from the Gospel, as from an authentic register.¹⁸⁹

While the sacraments strengthen faith and assist in gospel proclamation, they in no way provide a means for salvation. The truth necessary for salvation is only attained through the Word of God.¹⁹⁰ Calvin observed two sacraments: baptism and the Lord's Supper, both of which serve to strengthen and encourage God's elect in his church and assist in proclaiming the gospel.¹⁹¹

Soteriology and ecclesiology are inseparably linked in Calvin's theology. Specifically, Calvin's concept of the church and the marks of the church are all developed around the gospel. Calvin's notion of the church is developed around the gospel in that the process behind election that forms the church is inherently tied to the gospel; it is through proper response to the gospel that the elect are revealed and the church is formed. Similarly, for Calvin, church ministry is tied to the gospel as union with Christ enables the believer to be conformed to Christ and then, to act like Christ (i.e., do church ministry). Lastly, the marks of the church are also tied to the gospel for Calvin. Both the ministry of the Word and the sacraments serve to proclaim the gospel that God has entrusted to the church. It is through this proclamation that the elect come to know God; hence, the church is the mother of God's children. Therefore, as with Cyprian, Augustine, and Luther, the church has an active, participatory role in the salvation of believers.

¹⁸⁹John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, trans. John Pringle, Calvin's Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 20:239.

¹⁹⁰Niesel, *The Theology of Calvin*, 212–17.

¹⁹¹Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.19.20. For Calvin's discussion on baptism, see Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.15. For his discussion on the Lord's Supper, see Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.17.

Conclusion

Each of the four theologians surveyed above emphasize the active, participatory role of the church in the salvation of believers. This emphasis is accomplished through (1) their use of the church as mother metaphor and (2) their linking of soteriology and ecclesiology in their theology. This dissertation will provide a contemporary formulation of the idea behind both the church as mother metaphor and the close relationship between ecclesiology and soteriology present in the theologies of these men; specifically, it will reformulate their notion of the active, participatory role of the church in the salvation of believers. It will also build upon the following two ideas present in Luther and Calvin: (1) the centering of the church on the gospel and (2) the church building or creating itself through the proclamation of the Word of God, the gospel. Thus, this brief survey of these four theologians established a precedent in church history for my thesis as well as a foundational point of reference for my thesis. Before I examine the evidence in the New Testament for my proposal, I will first define the terms “gospel” and “church.”

CHAPTER 3

THE CHURCH AND THE GOSPEL

In the previous chapter, I argued that Cyprian, Augustine, Luther, and Calvin viewed the church as having an instrumental, participatory role in the salvation of believers. This chapter will begin my contemporary reformulation of the relationship between the gospel and the church explained in chapter 2. Here, I define briefly the terms “gospel” and “church.” These definitions establish the precise meaning of my terminology going forward.

The Gospel

When attempting to define the gospel, one cannot help but be struck by the sacredness of the task. In one sense, the gospel cannot be explicated in words—how can one capture fully with words the God-man, Christ, and his work?—but, in another sense, it must be defined, for it is with words that God has chosen to communicate it to mankind. In his Word, God communicates a truth to which all other truths are subject. As Barth asserts, “The Gospel is not a truth among other truths. Rather, it sets a question-mark against all truths.”¹ This truth above all truths is the key to the eternal destiny of man, for it is the power of God unto salvation (Rom 1:16-17).

Paul succinctly defines the gospel’s content in 1 Corinthians 15:3-5.² This dissertation, using 1 Corinthians 15:3-5 as its base, defines the gospel as the message of

¹Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, trans. Edwyn C. Hoskyns, 6th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), 35.

²Many commentators and theologians view 1 Cor 15:3-5 as a summary of the gospel message preached by Paul. See Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 746; David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians*,

the historical death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sin. I now examine 1 Corinthians 15:3-5 to explain (1) how the previous definition of the gospel is derived from the text and (2) the meaning of this definition.

A few preliminary notes on the Greek word εὐαγγέλιον from which the English word “gospel” is derived will illuminate Paul’s exposition of the gospel message in 1 Corinthians 15:3-5. The meaning of εὐαγγέλιον is “good news,”³ for, it is through the gospel that men who are dead in sin are made alive in Christ (Eph 2:1). The gospel is the in-breaking of God’s word and act into the despair of humanity’s sinful, helpless condition. As Vanhoozer argues, the mere fact that God has spoken and acted is good news.⁴ In 1 Corinthians 15:3-5, Paul articulates the contents of the good news⁵ that he received from the apostles and continues to pass faithfully on to others.⁶

Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 684; Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 722; and Walter Elwell, ed., *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984), s.v. “Gospel,” by R. H. Mounce.

³Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, BDAG, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), s.v. “εὐαγγέλιον”; D. A. Carson, “The Biblical Gospel,” in *For Such a Time as This: Perspectives on Evangelicalism Past, Present and Future*, ed. Steve Brady and Harold Rowdon (London: Evangelical Alliance, 1996), 75. In literature outside of the New Testament, εὐαγγέλιον often referred to victory in battle or defeat of an enemy. Gerhard Friedrich also notes that in secular literature, εὐαγγέλιον sometimes refers to the accession of a king to the throne. See Carson, “The Biblical Gospel,” 75; and Gerhard Kittel and Geoffrey W. Bromily, eds., *TDNT*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), s.v. “εὐαγγέλιον,” by Gerhard Friedrich. For a detailed exposition on the gospel as good news, see John Webster, “What is the Gospel?,” in *Grace & Truth in the Secular Age*, ed. Timothy Bradshaw (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 109-18; Albert Curry Winn, “What is the Gospel?,” in *How Shall We Witness? Faithful Evangelism in a Reformed Tradition*, ed. Milton J. Coalter and Virgil Cruz (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1995), 10–11; and Timothy Larsen and Daniel J. Treier, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Evangelical Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), s.v. “The Triune God of the Gospel,” by Kevin J. Vanhoozer.

⁴Vanhoozer, *The Cambridge Companion to Evangelical Theology*, s.v. “The Triune God of the Gospel.”

⁵Charles Hodge opines that the gospel is not only good news, but also a command: “In the gospel God commands all men everywhere to repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ” (Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* [New York: Scribner’s, 1872-73], 2:641–42). The gospel is good news that demands a response; it is an imperative.

⁶The gospel message preached by Paul derives its authority from its continuity with the gospel message preached by others such as the twelve apostles. In 1 Cor 15:11, Paul links his message to the

In 1 Corinthians 15:3, Paul begins his exposition of the contents of the gospel message with Christ (Χριστός).⁷ The gospel is, as Henry asserts, the “Christ-event.”⁸ As I will demonstrate, it is the message of the incarnation of the Son of God into human history; it is the message of his virgin birth, sinless life, death on the cross, burial, resurrection, post-resurrection appearances, and imminent return.⁹ For believers, salvation is also the means by which they are conformed to Christ’s image (1 John 3:2). The gospel, therefore, is Christ-centered both in its content and effect.

Paul continues, in verse 3, by highlighting the core events in Christ’s life, which are indispensable to the gospel. He focuses on Christ’s penal substitutionary death for the forgiveness of sin.¹⁰ Even though Paul does not explicitly state a penal

message of Cephas, the twelve apostles, the 500, James, and the apostles that he lists in vv. 5-10 as having seen the resurrected Christ. In v. 11, Paul argues that “we together” (ἐγὼ ἐῴτε ἐκεῖνοι) preached the gospel message, which led the Corinthians to believe. In other words, Paul’s message is the same message as those to whom Christ had appeared. From the argument he establishes in v. 11, he warns the Corinthians (v. 12) who do not believe in the resurrection that they are going against not only his message, but the message of Christianity from the earliest of times. Unlike figures in the liberal trajectory such as Friedrich Schleiermacher or Brian McLaren, who view the doctrinal content of Christianity as malleable, the message of the gospel, for Paul, does not change based upon perceived cultural demands. It instead derives its authority and message from actual events, which by themselves do not change and are ultimately grounded in God. See Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 689; 697–703; Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 752–55; Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 736–37; Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, ed. H. R. Mackintosh and Stewart (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1986); Friedrich Schleiermacher, *On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers*, trans. and ed. Richard Crouter, Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); and Brian D. McLaren, *A New Kind of Christian: A Tale of Two Friends on a Spiritual Journey* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001). Cf. Brian D. McLaren, *A Generous Orthodoxy* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006).

⁷As Ciampa and Rosner point out, Paul’s recounting of the gospel message in 1 Cor. 15:3-5 is centered on Christ and what he has accomplished on behalf of sinful humanity (Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 744–45).

⁸Carl F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation, and Authority* (Waco, TX: Word, 1976-83), 3:68. See also George A. Buttrick, ed., *The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible* (New York: Abingdon, 1962), s.v. “Gospel,” by O. A. Piper; Webster, “What Is the Gospel?,” 111; and Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 1072.

⁹Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 1072; and Norman Geisler, *Systematic Theology* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2002), 3:532–33.

¹⁰The penal substitutionary view of the atonement has come under debate in recent years. Steven Chalke and Alan Mann, two British evangelicals, have labeled it “cosmic child abuse” (Steve Chalke and Alan Mann, *The Lost Message of Jesus* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003], 182–83). It is

substitutionary view of the atonement in verse 3, it is conceptually present in the language of the atonement—Χριστὸς ἀπέθανεν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν—that he uses.¹¹ Paul’s emphasis on Christ’s death *for our sins* serves as a reminder that the emphasis in the gospel message is on how one comes to a saving knowledge of God. Accordingly, for Paul, the gospel is primarily about how one gets saved from the wrath of God for his or her sin.¹² The gospel, therefore, is not a social gospel; it is not focused on advancing the social order by such actions as helping the poor or feeding the hungry.

unthinkable for Chalke and Mann that God would act vengefully toward his Son by punishing him for sinful acts which he never committed. This kind of attack on the doctrine of the atonement has been common since the Enlightenment. Liberal theologians such as Friedrich Schleiermacher and Horace Bushnell as well as liberal preachers such as Henry Ward Beecher have all exercised disdain for the penal substitutionary view of the atonement. Blocher accurately sums up the ethos against the penal substitutionary view of the atonement, “Liberal protestants . . . felt outraged at the doctrine [of penal substitution] and complained about a ‘blood’ theology, in their eyes an ugly relic of primitive stages in man’s religious evolution” (Henri Blocher, “The Sacrifice of Jesus Christ: The Current Theological Situation,” *European Journal of Theology* 8 [1999]: 25. See Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, 461; Horace Bushnell, *The Vicarious Sacrifice* (New York: Scribner, Armstrong, & Co., 1866), 45–46; and Lyman Abbott and S. B. Halliday, *Life of Beecher* (Hartford, CT: American, 1887), 105–07. Even though the doctrine of penal substitutionary atonement has come under attack, it has also had its proponents, including Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, *The Savior of the World* (New York: Hodder and Stoughton, 1913), 152–54; John R. W. Stott, *The Cross of Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006), 112–62; Steve Jeffery, Michael Ovey, and Andrew Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions: Rediscovering the Glory of Penal Substitution* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2007).

¹¹Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 724–25; Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 684–85. Paul’s allusion to a penal substitutionary view of the atonement is not surprising. Hengel argues that Christ’s vicarious death for the forgiveness of the sin of humanity is expressed in the phrase ἀπέθανεν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν—the shortened form of the phrase ἀπέθανεν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν in verse 3—along with the phrase θεὸς ἤγειρεν τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐκ νεκρῶν “is the most frequent and more important confessional statement in the Pauline epistles and at the same time the primitive Christian tradition in the Greek language which underlies them” (Martin Hengel, *The Atonement: The Origins of the Doctrine in the New Testament*, trans. John Bowden [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981], 36–37).

¹²This teaching is contra N. T. Wright, who argues, “My proposal has been that ‘the gospel’ is not, for Paul, a message about ‘how one gets saved’, in an individual and ahistorical sense” (N. T. Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said: Was Paul of Tarsus the Real Founder of Christianity?* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997], 60). John Piper persuasively argues against Wright. One helpful argument Piper makes against Wright is that Paul’s explicit usage of “for our sins” in 1 Cor 15:3 indicates that, for Paul, the gospel is good news because it is through the gospel that Christians are saved from their sins. For more information on Wright’s view of Paul’s message, see N. T. Wright, *Justification: God’s Plan and Paul’s Vision* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2009). For Piper’s arguments against Wright, see John Piper, *The Future of Justification: A Response to N. T. Wright* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2007), 89. For another helpful critique of Wright, see Thomas R. Schreiner, “Justification: The Saving Righteousness of God in Christ,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 54 (2011): 19–34.

Instead, the focus of the gospel is on proclaiming how mankind can be reconciled to God.¹³ While social action may help testify to the reality of the gospel, it is not the gospel.¹⁴ Likewise, the gospel is not a message of prosperity.¹⁵ The gospel provides spiritual riches (Eph 1:3), not physical ones. Paul’s argument in verse 3 reminds Christians that any theology that redefines the aim of the gospel from its core purpose of redemption through the work of Jesus Christ corrupts the content of the gospel message and is therefore a false gospel.¹⁶

¹³Advocates of the liberal social gospel argue that the Christian message is to be adjusted to aid in the regeneration of the social order and that the problem of the gospel is how “the divine life of Christ can get control of human society” (Walter Rauschenbusch, *A Theology for the Social Gospel* [New York: Abingdon, 1917], 148). This focus on the regeneration of the social order leads one of the proponents of the social gospel, Washington Gladden, to assert that one of the great functions of the church is the “regeneration of human society” (Washington Gladden, *The Church and Modern Life* [Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1908], 77). However, 1 Cor 15:3 asserts that Christ’s death is to atone for the sins of man, not to regenerate the social order. The ethos of liberation theology, in which God is on the side of the poor and oppressed, makes a similar error as that of the social gospel movement; it makes the gospel about the liberation of the oppressed instead of Christ’s work on behalf of sinful humanity. There has been a renewed emphasis on social action in recent years in conservative evangelicalism. Evangelicals such as Timothy Keller have urged Christians to be more involved in social justice. While Christians are certainly to be active in helping the poor and liberating the oppressed, it is important that this not be confused with the gospel as it is in the liberal social gospel movement or in liberation theology. See Rauschenbusch, *A Theology for the Social Gospel*, 1–9. For more information on liberation theology, see Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, rev. ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1991). For an evangelical view of social justice, see Timothy Keller, *Generous Justice* (New York: Penguin, 2010).

¹⁴Darrell L. Bock, *Recovering the Real Lost Gospel: Reclaiming the Gospel as Good News* (Nashville: B&H, 2010), 135–36.

¹⁵Proponents of the prosperity gospel argue that the gospel is the pathway to financial prosperity and physical healing. However, 1 Cor 15:3 teaches that Christ’s death is to atone for the sins of man, not to make humans prosper. For an insightful summary and critique of the prosperity gospel, see David W. Jones and Russell S. Woodbridge, *Health, Wealth & Happiness: Has the Prosperity Gospel Overshadowed the Gospel of Christ?* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2011).

¹⁶Paul’s use of the phrase “according to the Scriptures” in vv. 3–4 indicates that the gospel is the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. Indeed, the kerygma of the gospel—Jesus’ death, burial and resurrection—directly fulfills many prophecies in the Old Testament. See C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Harper’s New Testament Commentaries (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 338–40; Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, trans. James W. Leitch, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), 255–56; Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 1190–91; Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 686–87; and Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 746–47.

Paul continues in verse 4 by providing the other two core components of the gospel message—Christ’s burial and resurrection. Paul’s mention of Christ’s burial serves to confirm the historical reality of his death.¹⁷ Likewise, Paul’s mention of Christ’s appearance to Cephas and the twelve in verse 5 argues for the historical event of Christ’s resurrection.¹⁸ According to Paul, the events of Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection cannot be demythologized;¹⁹ there is no kernel of truth to be revealed by stripping away the husk.²⁰ Paul particularly emphasizes the importance of the historicity of Christ’s resurrection.²¹ For, if Christ’s resurrection from the dead did not take place, then one’s faith in the gospel is in vain (1 Cor 15:14).

In conclusion, Paul defines the gospel in 1 Corinthians 15:3-5 as follows: the historical (vv. 4-5) death (v. 3), burial (v. 4), and resurrection (v. 4) of Jesus Christ (v. 3)—the Son of God (vv. 4-5)²²—for the forgiveness of sin (v. 3). It should be noted,

¹⁷Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 725; and Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 687.

¹⁸There is some controversy as to whether Paul is arguing for an actual, physical resurrection of Christ by mentioning Jesus appeared to Cephas and then the twelve. However, the evidence in favor of Paul arguing for a physical resurrection in v. 5 is convincing. For a detailed discussion of this controversy, see Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1197–205; Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 687–88; and Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 728.

¹⁹Contra Rudolf Bultmann, “New Testament and Mythology,” in *Kerygma and Myth*, ed. Hans Werner Bartsch and Reginald H. Fuller, trans. Reginald H. Fuller, rev. ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1961), 1-44.

²⁰Contra Adolf von Harnack, *What is Christianity?*, trans. Thomas Bailey Saunders (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1957). As Brunner opines, “For faith in the Mediator [Christ]—in the event which took place once for all, a revealed atonement—is the Christian religion itself; it is the ‘main point’; it is not something alongside the centre, it is the substance and kernel, not the husk” (Emil Brunner, *The Mediator: A Study of the Central Doctrine of the Christian Faith*, trans. Olive Wyon (London: Lutterworth, 1949), 40).

²¹As N. T. Wright suggests, Paul’s account of the gospel hinges on the resurrection. See N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, Christian Origins and The Question of God, vol. 3 (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 318.

²²While Christ’s divinity is not explicitly argued for in this passage, it is implied by Paul’s argument for Christ’s physical resurrection, which would necessitate divine power.

moreover, that the Bible does not teach that mere mental assent to the facts of the gospel is how one becomes a Christian. Rather, one must respond personally in repentance and faith to the invitation – gospel call – that Christ extends to all humanity to come to him in faith (e.g. Rom. 1:16-17; 10:14-17).²³ Bonhoeffer captures beautifully the ethos of a proper response to the gospel call:

The fact that Jesus Christ died is more important than the fact *I* shall die, and the fact that Jesus Christ rose from the dead is the sole ground of my hope that I, too, shall be raised on the Last Day. Our salvation is “external to ourselves.” I find no salvation in my life history, but only in the history of Jesus Christ. Only he who allows himself to be found in Jesus Christ, in his incarnation, his Cross, and his resurrection, is with God and God with him.²⁴

One must not only assent to the facts of the gospel to be saved; one must center his or her entire life on Christ through repentance and faith for salvation. I now turn to defining the church.

The Church

The church, in one sense, is a community; yet, in another, it is more than that—it is a people. The church, however, is not just any people. It is a special people, God’s people. The definition of the church in this dissertation will focus on understanding the church as the people of God. Specifically, it will define the church as the New Covenant people of God who have accepted Christ by faith through the work of the Holy Spirit. Before I provide scriptural and theological support for this definition, I first examine briefly the New Testament word for church, ἐκκλησία.

²³Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 694–96. For a detailed description of the gospel call as well as the proper response to it, see Bruce Demarest, *The Cross and Salvation: The Doctrine of Salvation*, Foundations of Evangelical Theology, ed. John S. Feinberg (Wheaton: Crossway, 1997), 235–75.

²⁴Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together: The Classic Exploration of Faith in Community*, trans. John W. Doberstein (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1954), 54.

The word ἐκκλησία is best understood by examining its secular Greek and Old Testament background.²⁵ In secular Greek, the word ἐκκλησία denotes a gathering or assembly of persons. This assembly would often gather for a specific purpose to make decisions on important issues.²⁶ The Old Testament background of the word is more helpful than its background in secular Greek for apprehending its meaning due to the influence of the Septuagint on the New Testament authors.²⁷ In the Septuagint, the word ἐκκλησία is only used to translate the Hebrew word לְקָהָל. The Greek word συναγωγή is also used to translate לְקָהָל; however, it is more often used to translate קְהָלִי.²⁸ In the Old Testament, קְהָלִי represents the permanent, ceremonial community as a people. In contrast, לְקָהָל represents the community formed by adherence to God’s covenant; it is composed of those who have heard God’s call and are following it.²⁹ The word ἐκκλησία is never used to translate קְהָלִי.³⁰ Similarly, the biblical authors never use the word συναγωγή to describe the church except in James 2:2.³¹ This fact is significant as the

²⁵For scholarly discussions on ἐκκλησία and its meaning, see BDAG, s.v. “ἐκκλησία”; Colin Brown, ed., *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), s.v. “Church,” by L. Coenen; Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 1041–44; George Johnston, *The Doctrine of the Church in the New Testament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1943), 35–45; P. T. O’Brien, “The Church as a Heavenly and Eschatological Community,” in *The Church in the Bible and the World*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987), 88–98; John S. Hammett, *Biblical Foundations for Baptist Churches: A Contemporary Ecclesiology* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2005), 26–31; and Gary Babcock, *The House Where God Lives: Renewing the Doctrine of the Church for Today* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 27–30.

²⁶Coenen, *NIDNT*, s.v. “Church.” See also Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 1043–44; Johnston, *The Doctrine of the Church in the New Testament*, 35; BDAG, s.v. “ἐκκλησία”; and O’Brien, “The Church as a Heavenly and Eschatological Community,” 89–91.

²⁷Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 1042. As Johnston argues, “Knowledge of the LXX is vital for understanding its [ἐκκλησία] New Testament meaning” (Johnston, *The Doctrine of the Church in the New Testament*, 36).

²⁸Coenen, *NIDNT*, s.v. “Church.”

²⁹*Ibid.*, 295. See also Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 1042.

³⁰*Ibid.*, 292.

³¹*Ibid.*, 296–98. As McCartney notes, James’s use of συναγωγή is due to the book’s early composition as its audience was primarily composed of Jewish Christians who borrowed much of the

term ἐκκλησία emphasizes the idea that the church is an assembly made up of those who have heard God’s call through the gospel and are following that call.³² The formation of this assembly, the church, marks a new age in God’s work with his people.

The inception of the church is directly related to the covenants that God gave to his people Israel, specifically the Mosaic covenant. Since Israel failed to keep the Mosaic Law, God promises in Jeremiah 31:13-34 and Ezekiel 36:24-27 to inaugurate a New Covenant between himself and his people. In this New Covenant, God will give his people a new heart so that they will be able to maintain a proper relationship with him and keep his commandments. In Joel 2:28-29, God promises an outpouring of the Holy Spirit that will accompany the initiation of this New Covenant. When the New Testament opens, one anticipates the fulfillment of this New Covenant. This anticipation is evident in Luke 3:15-17 in which John the Baptist tells of the coming of one who will baptize the people with the Holy Spirit and fire. It is in Acts 2 at Pentecost that God initiates this New Covenant through the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the outpouring of his Spirit.³³ Later, the author of Hebrews (chs. 8 and 10) applies the

Jewish terminology and worship structure in their gatherings. He also comments that συναγωγή can denote an “assembly” or “gathering” like ἐκκλησία when used in a non-technical sense. See Dan G. McCartney, *James*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), 138. Cf. Martin Dibelius, *James*, trans. Michael A. Williams, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976), 132–34.

³²Coenen, “Church,” 297. As Coenen points out, the word συναγωγή with its connotations could not be used to describe a fellowship or event that had the gospel of Jesus Christ at its center. The term ἐκκλησία has two senses in the New Testament: first, it refers to a local body of believers or the local church and, second, it sometimes refers to the universal body of believers or the universal church. See Coenen, NIDNT, s.v. “Church”; Hammett, *Biblical Foundations for Baptist Churches*, 26–27, 29; Gregg Allison, *Sojourners and Strangers: The Doctrine of the Church* (Wheaton: Crossway, forthcoming), 1-5; Mark Dever, “The Doctrine of the Church,” in *A Theology for the Church*, ed. Danny Akin (Nashville: B&H, 2007), 777; and Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 857–58.

³³Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 1049; Allison, *Sojourners and Strangers*, 25–31; David L. Smith, *All God’s People: A Theology of the Church* (Wheaton: Bridgepoint, 1996), 317; and Earl D. Radmacher, *The Nature of the Church* (Hayesville, NC: Schoettle, 1996), 201–19.

words of Jeremiah to the church. The church is the community of the New Covenant promised in the Old Testament and established by Christ's work.³⁴

If the church was formed at Pentecost, one may question the nature of the relationship between the disciples and the church prior to Pentecost. In Matthew 16:18, Jesus indicates through his use of the future verb, οἰκοδομήσω that the formation of the church is still future.³⁵ This passage indicates that the formation of the church did not take place, as some scholars argue,³⁶ at events in Jesus' ministry such as the calling of the first disciples³⁷ or his resurrection.³⁸ Instead, Jesus was preparing the disciples during his earthly ministry for the roles that they would have in his church after it was formed at Pentecost.³⁹

Ever since the formation of the church in Acts 2 at Pentecost, the church has held a unique place in God's dealing with humanity as evidenced by its designation as the people of God. This designation flows very naturally from the meaning of ἐκκλησία. In addition, the church is also explicitly referenced as the people of God in several New

³⁴For scholarly works on the relationship between the church and the covenants, see D. A. Carson, "Evangelical, Ecumenism and the Church," in *Evangelical Affirmations*, ed. Kenneth S. Kantzer and Carl F. H. Henry (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 359–61; Allison, *Sojourners and Strangers*, 13–25; Everett Ferguson, *The Church of Christ: A Biblical Ecclesiology for Today* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 2–18; J. E. Fison, *The Blessing of the Spirit* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1950), 114; and Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom Through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2012).

³⁵Allison, *Sojourners and Strangers*, 28.

³⁶For a listing of the different views of when the church came into existence as well as the scholars who hold each view, see James Leo Garrett, Jr., *Systematic Theology: Biblical, Historical, and Evangelical*, 2nd ed., vol. 2 (North Richland Hills, TX: Biblical, 2001), 509–10.

³⁷Robert Newton Flew, *Jesus and His Church: A Study of the Idea of the Ecclesia in the New Testament* (London: Epworth, 1938), 35–39.

³⁸Brunner, *The Mediator: A Study of the Central Doctrine of the Christian Faith*, 563; Johnston, *The Doctrine of the Church in the New Testament*, 56; and Hans Küng, *The Church*, trans. Ray Ockenden and Rosaleen Ockenden (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1967), 70–79.

³⁹Allison, *Sojourners and Strangers*, 29; Graham H. Twelftree, *People of the Spirit: Exploring Luke's View of the Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), 16.

Testament passages (cf. Rom 9:25-26; 2 Cor 6:16; 1 Pet 2:9-10). In Romans 9:25-26, Paul cites from Hosea 2:25 and Hosea 2:1 respectively to demonstrate God’s merciful inclusion of the Gentiles in salvation.⁴⁰ He applies the terms “God’s people,” “beloved,” and “sons and daughters of the living God” from Hosea 2:25 and Hosea 2:1 to the Gentiles. As Schreiner asserts, Paul’s usage of these terms confirms that he now views the church as the people of God.⁴¹ Likewise, in 2 Corinthians 6:16, Paul makes a similar point when he cites Leviticus 26:12, which he uses to exhort believers to avoid idolatry.⁴² Peter, alongside Paul, argues in 1 Peter 2:9-10 that the church is the people of God, contrasting the church with the disobedient who are appointed to receive God’s wrath. He makes this contrast by applying the phrases “chosen race,” “royal priesthood,” “holy nation,” and “a people belonging to God” to the church. As Schreiner opines, Peter’s use of the phrase “a people belonging to God” to describe the church indicates that both Jews and Gentiles who belong to the church are a part of the people of God.⁴³ While it is evident that the church is considered the people of God in the New Testament, the question concerning the relationship between the church and Israel—the people of God in the Old Testament—warrants further discussion.

Israel’s relationship to the church is commonly described using two views—the continuity view and the discontinuity view. The former broadly asserts that the

⁴⁰C. E. B. Cranfield, *Romans 9-16*, International Critical Commentary (London: T. & T. Clark, 1979), 497–99; and Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 527.

⁴¹Schreiner, *Romans*, 527.

⁴²Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 506. As Harris argues, the fact that Paul calls both Jews and Gentiles God’s people and God’s temple shows that the Christian community was not considered God’s people by Paul. See Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 506; and Paul Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 352–53.

⁴³Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, New American Commentary, vol. 37 (Nashville: B&H, 2003), 115; Edmund P. Clowney, *The Church* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1995), 29–30.

church has (1) replaced ethnic Israel or (2) fulfilled God's promises to it.⁴⁴ The Jews, therefore, have no continuing special place in God's salvific work or eschatological plan.⁴⁵ Grudem summarizes this view as follows: "The term 'the church' is used to apply to all those whom Christ died to redeem, all those who are saved by the death of Christ. But that must include all true believers for all time, both believers in the New Testament age and believers in the Old Testament age as well."⁴⁶ Adherents to the continuity view, such as Berkhof, assert that the church existed as far back as the patriarchal period and continues into the present day.⁴⁷ One of the major texts used to support the continuity position is Galatians 6:16: And as for all who walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God (ESV). Specifically, proponents of the continuity view argue that Paul's use of the phrase "Israel of God" here refers to the church.⁴⁸ Paul's use of the phrase, "Israel of God," however, does not necessarily support a continuity position; for, some scholars believe that the phrase "Israel of God" refers to (1) Jewish Christians who agree with Paul⁴⁹ or (2) ethnic Israel⁵⁰ instead of the church. Supporters

⁴⁴Michael Horton, *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 730.

⁴⁵Allison, *Sojourners and Strangers*, 31–32. Most scholars who hold a continuity position do not see a place for ethnic Israel in God's salvific work now or in the future; however, one exception is Grudem. Grudem argues for a continuity position and holds to an eschatological hope for Israel in which large numbers of Jews are saved at some future point. See Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 861, 1009, 1104.

⁴⁶Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 853.

⁴⁷Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 570–71.

⁴⁸Thomas R. Schreiner, *Galatians*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 381–83; idem, *Paul, Apostle of God's Glory in Christ: A Pauline Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006), 82–83, 482–83; Andreas Köstenberger, "The Identity of the ἸΣΡΑΗΛ ΤΟΥ ΘΕΟΥ [Israel of God] in Galatians 6:16," *Faith and Mission* 19 (2001): 13; and Gregory K. Beale, "Peace and Mercy Upon the Israel of God: The Old Testament Background of Galatians 6:16b," *Biblica* 80 (1999): 204–23.

⁴⁹Hans Dieter Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to Galatia*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 323.

⁵⁰F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 275; S. Lewis Johnson,

of the continuity view also argue that (1) various descriptions in the New Testament of the church apply to both Israel and the church (e.g., “offspring” or “sons” of Abraham in Rom 4:16, Gal 3:7, 1 Pet 2:9), (2) both Israel and the church are saved by the grace of God, and (3) there is continuity of the experience of the Holy Spirit in both Israel and the church.⁵¹

The latter view, the discontinuity view, maintains that there is discontinuity between the church and ethnic Israel. This view was first articulated by classic dispensational theologians in the beginning of the nineteenth century.⁵² Classic dispensationalists advocate complete discontinuity between ethnic Israel and the church. For them, the church is a parenthesis in the history of redemption that is focused on Israel.⁵³ Since its inception, dispensational theology has branched off into several varieties, one of which is progressive dispensationalism.⁵⁴ Progressive dispensationalism, in contrast, holds a moderate discontinuity position between the church and Israel. In this position, which I hold,⁵⁵ there is discontinuity between the church and Israel due to the blessings of the Holy Spirit on the church. These blessings

“Paul and the ‘Israel of God’: A Case-Study,” in *Essays in Honor of J. Dwight Pentecost*, ed. Stanley D. Toussaint and Charles H. Dyer (Chicago: Moody, 1986), 181-96.

⁵¹Allison, *Sojourners and Strangers*, 35–36. Allison also points out an argument concerning the Galatian controversy made by Clowney in which he argues that both Paul and his opponents assume continuity between Israel and the church. However, Clowney’s argument, as Allison asserts, evidences some confusion regarding the situation in Galatia. See Clowney, *The Church*, 43. For a good summary of the continuity position, see John S. Feinberg, ed., *Continuity and Discontinuity: Perspectives on the Relationship Between the Old and New Testaments* (Westchester, IL: Crossway, 1988).

⁵²Gregg R. Allison, *Historical Theology: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 584.

⁵³Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock, *Progressive Dispensationalism* (Wheaton: Victor, 1993), 27.

⁵⁴Dispensationalism initially branched off into revised dispensationalism and then into progressive dispensationalism. For a detailed discussion of the beliefs of classic, revised, and progressive dispensationalism, see Blaising and Bock, 9–56.

⁵⁵Since I hold to a moderate discontinuity position, my exegesis is done in the New Testament.

are qualitatively different from the blessings experienced by Israel in the Old Testament.⁵⁶ This discontinuity, however, is not complete—the church experiences the blessings of the New Covenant that are promised to Israel and is called by the same terminology that is used to describe Israel in the Old Covenant (e.g., “offspring” or “sons” of Abraham in Rom 4:16, Gal 3:7, 1 Pet 2:9).⁵⁷ Continuity, therefore, exists between Israel and the church in that they are both part of the people of God, as portrayed by Paul’s argument (Rom. 11:13-24) that Gentile Christians have been grafted into Israel, the people of God.⁵⁸ Even though there is continuity between the church and Israel, the differences between them warrant their separation. Thus, both continuity and discontinuity can be seen between Israel and the church.

In this section, I argue that the church is the New Covenant (Heb 8, 10) people of God (Rom 9:25-26, 2 Cor 6:16, 1 Pet 2:9-10) who have accepted Christ by faith through the work of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2). It is this work of the Holy Spirit that leads to moderate discontinuity between the church and Israel. It is also this work of the Holy Spirit, along with the character of the gospel, that makes the church a supernatural community. It is not simply an ethical commonwealth bound together by the idea of a higher being and his law⁵⁹ or a group of people formed by their shared experience of the feeling of absolute dependence.⁶⁰ Instead, the church is a people—the people of the living God formed and held together by his supernatural work.

⁵⁶Blaising and Bock, *Progressive Dispensationalism*, 16.

⁵⁷Allison, *Sojourners and Strangers*, 38.

⁵⁸Blaising and Bock, *Progressive Dispensationalism*, 49-51.

⁵⁹Contra Immanuel Kant, *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone*, trans. Theodore M. Greene and Hoyt H. Hudson, 2nd ed. (LaSalle, IL: Open Court, 1960), 91–93.

⁶⁰Contra Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, 26–31.

Conclusion

In chapter 2, I argue, using Cyprian, Augustine, Luther, and Calvin, for the historical precedence of the active, participatory role of the church in the salvation of believers. In this chapter, I also developed working definitions for both the gospel and the church. Chapters 2 and 3 lay the groundwork for the rest of my dissertation. I now begin the systematic development of the relationship between the gospel and the church with two chapters of scriptural exegesis. These two chapters will provide the needed scriptural support for the systematic formulation of the relationship between the gospel and the church in terms of speech act theory.

CHAPTER 4
THE GOSPEL:
WHAT CREATES THE CHURCH

Introduction

If, indeed, the church does play an active, participatory role in the salvation of believers, it must be demonstrated by Scripture; for, as I detailed in my prolegomena, Scripture (the inspired, inerrant Word of God) must hold the place of prominence in any systematic formulation that is evangelical. In this chapter, I will argue from Scripture that the proclamation of the gospel creates members of the church, the people of God.

I have selected Scripture passages¹ that best seem to support the relationship of gospel proclamation to the creation of the church;² however, these passages are certainly not the only ones that could be used to support this relationship.³ Due to the fact that I am exegeting a large number of verses in this section, I will only focus on the content of the verse(s) in each passage that is (are) pertinent to proving my thesis; information (such as certain linguistic nuances or historical background) that does not directly relate to my topic, while important, will not be covered. However, each text will be exegeted with all of this data in mind. The main goal of my exegesis is not to provide a comprehensive analysis of each text; instead, it is to accurately represent the authorial intent of each passage and show how this intent supports my thesis for

¹Verses exegeted in this chapter are Matt 16:13-21; Acts 1:8, 2, 3:11-4:4, 4:32, 6:7, 8:4-40, 10-11:21, 12:24, 13:4-12, 44-52, 15:6-11, 16:13-15, 16:29-34, 17:1-9, 10-12, 16-33, 19:20, 20:17-36, 26:14-32, 28:23-30; Rom 1:8-17; 1 Cor 3:1-17, 4:14-17; 2 Cor 2:12-3:6; Eph 1:13-14, 2:29-3:6, 5:25-33; 1 Thess 1:2-5; and 1 Pet 1:22-25.

²It should be noted that there is very little scholarly work done on this topic. Therefore, I have selected verses that I believe best demonstrate this relationship.

³Verses not exegeted in this chapter that support this chapter's thesis but add nothing substantive to it include Rom 10:17; 1 Cor 2:1-5; Col 1:3-8; 2 Thess 2:13-15; and Jas 1:18.

this chapter: the proclamation of the gospel creates the church (the people of God).⁴ At the end of this chapter, I will provide a short summary of the Scriptural data concerning the relationship of gospel proclamation to church formation. I now begin this chapter by examining Matthew 16:13-20.

Matthew 16:13-20

Matthew 16:13-20 begins with Jesus asking his disciples who people think he is (vv. 13-15). After hearing a list of different options (such as Elijah, John the Baptist, or a prophet), Jesus asks his disciples who they think that he is (v. 15). This question evokes a profound response from Peter as he boldly asserts that Jesus is “the Christ, the son of the living God”; this response represents the first time that Jesus is unambiguously acknowledged as the Christ or the Messiah in the Gospel of Matthew.⁵ In light of the context and confusion among his contemporaries, Peter’s confession is truly amazing⁶ and, as Jesus argues, a result of divine revelation (v. 17). For our purposes, verse 18 is the most crucial; for, it is in this verse that Jesus asserts, after Peter’s proclamation, that he will build (οἰκοδομήσω)⁷ his church (ἐκκλησίαν) upon this rock (ταύτη τῇ πέτρᾳ). Disagreement over the exact meaning of ταύτη τῇ πέτρᾳ has made this verse, as Davies and Allison opine, one of the most debated and controversial verses in all of

⁴Passages such as Isa 6, Isa 55, Jer 23, and Neh 8 indicate that the function of the proclaimed Word of God creating the people of God is not new. The Word of God played a similar role in creating Israel (= the people of God in the Old Covenant). Since this dissertation focuses on describing the role of the proclamation of God’s Word in the formation of the people of God under the New Covenant (i.e., the church, see chapter 3), I will not cover the role of the proclaimed Word of God in the formation of Israel under the Old Covenant; however, as the above passages demonstrate, the proclamation of God’s Word is essential in the formation of God’s people in both the Old and New Covenants.

⁵Craig L. Blomberg, *Matthew*, The New American Commentary, vol. 22 (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 251.

⁶J. C. Ryle, *Matthew*, The Crossway Classic Commentaries (Wheaton: Crossway, 1993), 141.

⁷As R.T. France notes, οἰκοδομήσω metaphorically implies the founding of a community of people, not the building of a physical structure. France also helpfully notes that whenever οἰκοδομήσω and πέτρᾳ are found together in the New Testament, they refer frequently to the founding of the church. See R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 623.

Scripture.⁸ Two of the most common interpretations⁹ of ταύτη τῇ πέτρᾳ¹⁰ are that it refers to Peter's confession¹¹ or to Peter himself.¹² Given the play on words present in the passage between Πέτρος and πέτρᾳ as well as the underlying Aramaic, it is best to read the phrase as referring to Peter.¹³ However, this reading does not necessarily imply apostolic succession as practiced in the Roman Catholic Church;¹⁴ instead, it refers to the fact that God would instrumentally utilize Peter's leadership and proclamation of the gospel to found the new people of God defined by their shared faith in Christ.¹⁵ As Barclay puts it, Jesus "did not mean that the Church *depended* on Peter, as it depended on Himself, and on God the Rock, alone. He did mean that the Church *began* with Peter,"¹⁶ for Peter's Spirit-empowered gospel proclamation in

⁸W. D. Davies and D. C. Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, International Critical Commentary (London: T. & T. Clark, 1991), 623.

⁹For a complete listing of all of the proposed interpretations, see Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 627.

¹⁰Davies and Allison insightfully argue that Jesus' use of the rock is an illusion back to Abraham. For, in Isa 51:1-2, Abraham is the rock from which the people of Israel were hewn. As Davies and Allison note, Jesus is saying that, like Abraham, Peter is the rock on which the church is founded. See Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 624.

¹¹Chrys C. Caragounis, *Peter and the Rock* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1990). See also Ryle, *Matthew*, 139.

¹²Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 627; France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 621; D. A. Carson, *Matthew*, in vol. 8 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin and J. D. Douglas (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, Regency Reference Library, 2010), 418–19; Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 33b (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 470; Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 424; David L. Turner, *Matthew*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 404–05; and Thomas R. Schreiner, *New Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 681–83.

¹³So also Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 627; Schreiner, *New Testament Theology*, 682; France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 621; Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, 470; Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, trans. James E. Crouch, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 357–59; and contra Robert H. Gundry, *Matthew*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 334.

¹⁴So also France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 622; Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 422–23; Blomberg, *Matthew*, 252; Carson, *Matthew*, 419; and Schreiner, *New Testament Theology*, 681.

¹⁵France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 622–23.

¹⁶William Barclay, *The Gospel of Matthew*, vol. 2 (Edinburgh: St. Andrew, 1958), 156.

Acts 2 would mark the beginning of the church. It is through his sermon at Pentecost that the pattern of Spirit-empowered gospel proclamation leading to the creation of new members of the church is first demonstrated. Before I examine Peter's sermon in Acts 2, I will first briefly comment on the book of Acts and examine Acts 1:8, which leads up to Peter's sermon.

Survey of Selected Passages in Acts

The book of Acts is crucial for understanding the relationship between the gospel and the church. Acts presents a pattern in which Spirit-empowered gospel proclamation adds members to the church; in other words, in Acts, as the gospel spreads, the church grows. I will begin my exegesis of Acts with Acts 1:8, as it concisely presents some of the major themes of the book of Acts.

Acts 1:8

Acts 1:8¹⁷ occurs just after Jesus' promise to send the Holy Spirit to the disciples (vv. 4-5) and a question by the disciples as to when Jesus would restore the kingdom of Israel in the end times (v. 6). Jesus' response to the disciples' question indicates that the disciples are not to be worried about predicting when the kingdom of Israel will be restored;¹⁸ instead, they are to be active in spreading the good news of Christ to all people. Luke's usage of δύνανται indicates that it is through the power of the Spirit that the disciples would be able to fulfill their mission to take the gospel to the ends of the earth.¹⁹ This passage highlights the main theme in Acts: the

¹⁷The implications of this verse to the mission of the church will be discussed in the next chapter.

¹⁸David G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 110. See also Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 64.

¹⁹Bock, *Acts*, 63. Cf. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 110; F. F. Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, rev. ed., The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 36; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, The Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 205; John B. Polhill, *Acts*, The New American Commentary, vol. 26 (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 85; C. K. Barrett, *Acts*, The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1994), 79; and Richard N. Longenecker, *Acts*, in vol. 10 of *The*

progress of the gospel and subsequent growth of the church throughout the world by the power of the Spirit.²⁰ The first concrete example of this theme occurs in Peter's sermon at Pentecost in Acts, for through Peter's Spirit-empowered gospel proclamation, the first members of the church are brought into existence.

Acts 2

Acts 2 opens with all of Jesus' disciples gathered together in one place (v. 1). Luke proceeds to describe the work of God to fulfill his promise to the disciples in Luke 24:49 and Acts 1 to send them the Holy Spirit.²¹ This fulfillment is the empowering presence of God with his people in a new way; God, through the Spirit, will enable his people to know his will and fulfill his purpose for them under the New Covenant.²² The beginning of God's new presence with his people is initiated by the arrival of the Spirit; this supernatural work of God is physically manifested first by a sound which resembles a "mighty, rushing wind" (v. 2).²³ Next, the arrival is visually manifested by the appearance of tongues of fire that rest on all of the disciples present as each one is filled with the Holy Spirit (vv. 3-4).²⁴ Finally, Luke focuses on the miracle of tongues in which each person present hears the disciples speaking in their own native language (vv. 5-11). The miracle of tongues serves to enable the disciples to proclaim the mighty acts of God;²⁵ for, the disciples, by this time, have moved to a public area and there is a large crowd

Expositor's Bible Commentary, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin and J. D. Douglas (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, Regency Reference Library, 2007), 718.

²⁰Brian Rosner, "The Progress of the Word," in *Witness to the Gospel: The Theology of Acts*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and David Peterson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 219. Cf. Ben Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 111; and Barrett, *Acts*, 79.

²¹Bock, *Acts*, 94–5; Polhill, *Acts*, 96; and Barrett, *Acts*, 108.

²²Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 133. Cf. Barrett, *Acts*, 107.

²³As Barrett argues, Luke's description of sound as a powerful, rushing wind is a characteristic of theophanies in the Old Testament. Luke emphasizes through his description of the events the supernatural presence of God at Pentecost. See Barrett, *Acts*, 113.

²⁴Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 133.

gathered whose members each heard the message about the mighty acts being spoken in their own native language. Luke's emphasis on the diversity of the crowd accentuates the universal nature of the gospel message.²⁶ As Bock argues, "Thus the miracle [of tongues] underscores the divine initiative in making possible the mission God has commissioned. In a real sense, God is bringing the message of the gospel home to those who hear it."²⁷ After these miraculous events, the crowd who witnessed them struggled to make sense of their meaning; some of the crowd even believed the disciples were drunk (vv. 12-13). In the midst of the confusion of the crowd, Peter stands up to explain these miraculous events by explaining them in light of Christ and the message of the gospel. It is Peter's sermon that will be the first demonstration of the church-forming power of the proclamation of the gospel.

Peter's sermon²⁸ boldly proclaims the gospel message as the "word of God"²⁹; he begins his sermon by interpreting the events that just occurred (Acts 2:1-13).³⁰ First, he addresses the people in the crowd who thought that the disciples were drunk; he argues that since

²⁵Cf. Bock, *Acts*, 97.

²⁶Ibid., 103. Cf. I. Howard Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 70; John R. W. Stott, *Christian Mission in the Modern World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1975), 63. Martin Hengel argues insightfully that Luke's list of the different people groups highlights the areas in which there were the greatest numbers of Diaspora Jews. See Martin Hengel, "Ἰουδαία in the Geographical List of Acts 2:9-11 and Syria as 'Greater Judea,'" *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 10 (2000): 165.

²⁷Bock, *Acts*, 102. Cf. Polhill, *Acts*, 106; and Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 136.

²⁸Peter's sermon is the first in a number of "missionary speeches" in Acts in which Jesus' deity is proclaimed along with a call to repentance and faith. Bock observes that Dodd notes six themes that appear—either wholly or partially—in these speeches. These themes called the "apostolic kerygma" are summarized by Bock as follows: "(1) the age of fulfillment has come; (2) it has come through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus; (3) the resurrection exalted Jesus; (4) the Holy Spirit is the sign of the church's power; (5) the messianic age's consummation comes in Jesus' return; (6) God calls for repentance and offers forgiveness, the Holy Spirit, and His promise" (Bock, *Acts*, 111). For Dodd's study, see C. H. Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1944). For comments on the apostolic kerygma, see Longenecker, "Acts," 743; Polhill, *Acts*, 107; Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, 63; and Barrett, *Acts*, 130–31.

²⁹So also Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 139. Bock rightly argues that the content of Peter's gospel proclamation closely resembles Paul's presentation of the gospel in 1 Cor 15:1-3 and captures the Christological claim of the early church, namely that Jesus has been raised to the Father's right hand and is now the mediator of God's salvation and the Spirit. See Bock, *Acts*, 108.

it is early in the day, this explanation is not possible, as the disciples would not have had time to get drunk (vv. 14-15). He proceeds by explaining the events in light of the prophecy in Joel 2:28-32, for according to Peter, the crowd is witnessing the fulfillment of this passage.³¹ The verb ἐκχεῖν with the phrase τοῦ πνεύματός μου (v. 17) summarizes Joel's key point in the citation: the Spirit would be poured out on all flesh (ἐπὶ πάντα σάρκα)³² regardless of gender (v. 17), age (v. 17), or class (v. 18).³³ Since Joel 2:28-32 has been fulfilled, the last days have come, for God has poured out his Holy Spirit on Jesus' disciples in the event the crowd has just witnessed (v.16-18). The arrival of the last days carries with it the sense of impending eschatological judgment³⁴ as the Day of the Lord is drawing near (vv. 19-20).³⁵ Due to the nearness of the day of the Lord, there is a pressing need for all men to call upon the name of the Lord to be saved (v. 21). As Haenchen declares, "The cosmic events [coming during the Day of the Lord] describe the terrible end which threatens, when only he who calls on the name of the Lord (= Jesus!) shall be saved."³⁶

Peter naturally transitions from his exposition of Joel 2:28-32 to speaking about Christ (v. 22), for it is the events of the life of Jesus of Nazareth that have brought about the coming of the last days. First, Peter mentions Christ's gruesome death; even though it was part of God's

³⁰See also Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 139; and Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 138–39.

³¹Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 73; Bock, *Acts*, 112; Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 140; Longenecker, "Acts," 741; Barrett, *Acts*, 135; Stott, *Christian Mission in the Modern World*, 73; and I. Howard Marshall, "Acts," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 533.

³²Bock, *Acts*, 113.

³³Ibid., 113–14. Cf. Stott, *Christian Mission in the Modern World*, 74.

³⁴As Wallace argues, the use of πρὶν indicates the cosmic events described in verses 19-20 are yet future and come subsequent to the last days. See Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar: Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 596. Cf. Bock, *Acts*, 117.

³⁵Bock, *Acts*, 117.

³⁶Ernst Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary*, trans. Bernard Noble and Gerald Shinn (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971), 179. Cf. Bock, *Acts*, 118; Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 143–44; and Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 74.

plan, Peter holds the crowd fully responsible for it (vv. 22-23).³⁷ Next, he mentions the resurrection (v.24). Peter argues that these events have brought about the coming of the Spirit and hence, the last days. He subsequently uses Psalm 16:8-11 to provide prophetic support for the resurrection.³⁸ According to the Psalm, God's Holy One (τὸν ἅγιόν σου)³⁹ would not be allowed to see decay (vv. 25-28); Peter argues that the Psalm could not have been speaking about David, since he died and is still buried (v. 29).⁴⁰ Since the Psalm could not be talking about David, Peter boldly declares that this Psalm refers to Christ and his resurrection, of which all of the disciples were witnesses (vv. 29-32).⁴¹ This declaration is followed by a citation of Psalm 110:1; Peter uses this citation to argue that the resurrected Christ now sits at the right hand of the throne of God and has poured out his Spirit⁴² on all of his followers (vv. 33-35).⁴³ Peter

³⁷So also Bock, *Acts*, 120–21; Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 144–45; Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 75–76; Longenecker, “Acts,” 745; Polhill, *Acts*, 112; Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, 64; and Barrett, *Acts*, 141–43. J. T. Squires rightly points out that the apostles continued to preach to the crowd who was responsible for the Christ's passion in hopes that they might repent and be saved. See J. T. Squires, *The Plan of God in Luke-Acts*, vol. 76, Society of New Testament Studies Monograph Series (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 180–82.

³⁸Bock, *Acts*, 123; and Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 150.

³⁹As Polhill argues, “Holy One” could apply to David, but for Peter it is more appropriate as a designation for Christ. See Polhill, *Acts*, 113.

⁴⁰As Witherington notes, David's tomb was in plain view for any Jew to see at the time of Pentecost. See Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 146; and Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 76.

⁴¹Peter echoes Paul here in 1 Corinthians 15. As Bock argues, the resurrection could not have been symbolic or a myth because Peter asserts that he and the ones with him are witnesses to the reality of the event. See Bock, *Acts*, 130; and Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, 67–68.

⁴²As Dunn opines, this pouring out of the Spirit involves (1) the Spirit's initiatory work into the Christian community and (2) the empowering work for gospel proclamation. See James D. G. Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit: A Re-examination of the New Testament Teaching on the Gift of the Spirit in Relation to Pentecostalism Today* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970), 38–54. Cf. Bock, *Acts*, 131. Peterson helpfully supports the position of Dunn and Bock when he argues that “[t]he Spirit created and verified new communities of believers in Jesus, enabling them to enjoy the messianic salvation and ministers its benefits, both inside and outside their fellowship” (Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 142). Bock notes that some scholars disagree. They believe that the Spirit functions in Luke primarily as a Spirit of prophecy or as a replacement of the giving of the Law at Sinai. However, an examination of the context of Luke and Acts supports Dunn's view. See Bock, *Acts*, 131.

⁴³As Bock argues, verse 33 indicates the following three results of the resurrection: (1) Christ has been exalted to the right hand of God, (2) Christ has received the promise of the Holy Spirit from the Father, and (3) Christ has poured out the Holy Spirit on his followers. Longenecker rightly points out that Jesus applied Psalm

concludes climactically by asserting that this Jesus whom the Jews crucified has risen and is both Lord and Christ (v. 36).⁴⁴ With his conclusion, Peter's sermon (= gospel proclamation) has come full circle; he has started and ended with Christ.⁴⁵

Peter's sermon brings strong, emotional conviction on many members of the crowd;⁴⁶ it is because of this conviction that the crowd asks Peter what they should do (v. 37). His response has three parts (1) repent, (2) be baptized in Christ's name for the forgiveness of sins, and (3) you will receive the gift of the Spirit (vv. 38-40).⁴⁷ A proper response to the gospel message, then, involves repentance (that is, turning away from sin as indicated by μετανοήσατε⁴⁸); this repentance leads to public participation in the rite of baptism and the forgiveness that it represents.⁴⁹ It also leads to the reception of the gift of the Spirit.⁵⁰ After Peter's exhortation, 3,000 people responded and formed the new Christian community, the church (v. 41).⁵¹ Luke concludes chapter 2 by describing life in the early Christian church (v.42-

110:1 to himself in the synoptic gospels in a similar way to Peter's application of it to him. See Bock, *Acts*, 131; and Longenecker, "Acts," 745–46.

⁴⁴As Marshall notes, "The resurrection of Jesus and the pouring out of the Spirit both testified that Jesus was Lord and Messiah" (Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 72). Cf. Barrett, *Acts*, 151.

⁴⁵Polhill, *Acts*, 115; and William J. Larkin Jr., *Acts*, The IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1995), 59.

⁴⁶As Peterson argues, Peter's speech was designed to produce the response recorded in Acts 2:37-41. In other words, it was intended to produce a response of faith that would lead people in the crowd to become members of the church. See Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 153.

⁴⁷Bock, *Acts*, 141–44. Cf. Polhill, *Acts*, 116.

⁴⁸BDAG, s. v. "μετανοέω."

⁴⁹Bock notes here that Peter's command does not imply baptismal regeneration. Instead, baptism signifies a proper response toward God, which is seen by the order of events in Acts 10:44-48. See Bock, *Acts*, 142; Polhill, *Acts*, 117; Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, 69–70; and Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 81.

⁵⁰Bock, *Acts*, 144.

⁵¹So also Stott, *Christian Mission in the Modern World*, 78–79. Roloff observes that Luke does not use the concept or the word for "church" (ἐκκλησίᾳ) in Acts 2:41. While it is true that Luke does not employ the term ἐκκλησίᾳ in Acts 2:41, Luke's description of the early church community in Acts 2:42-47 supports the assertion that Luke is describing the formation of that community in Acts 2:41. For, there are no textual markers between Acts 2:41 and Acts 2:42-47 to indicate that Luke is talking about two different communities. Therefore, it is reasonable

47). As Johnson asserts, “The gift of the Spirit brought about a community which realized the highest aspirations of human longing: unity, peace, joy, and the praise of God.”⁵²

In Acts 2, Jesus’ prophecy concerning Peter in Matthew 16:18 is partially fulfilled;⁵³ it is through Peter’s gospel proclamation and the work of the Spirit (vv. 1-36) that the church is created (vv. 37-47). This pattern of gospel proclamation leading to the creation of new members of the church is common throughout Acts. Another example of this pattern is found in Peter’s second recorded sermon in Acts 3.

Acts 3:11-4:4

Acts 3:11-4:4 takes place immediately after Peter heals a crippled man (3:1-10). The man who has just been healed clings to Peter and John as they are going about temple; the actions of the man and his miraculous healing naturally draw attention to Peter and John (3:11). As in Acts 2, Peter uses the miraculous event as an opportunity to proclaim the gospel message.⁵⁴ He begins by asserting that the apostles did not heal the crippled man with their own power (3:12).⁵⁵ Instead, he was healed by the power of Christ,⁵⁶ for God has exalted Christ⁵⁷—who

to conclude from the context that the concept of the church is present in Acts 2:41 even though it is not explicitly stated. See Jürgen Roloff, *Die Apostelgeschichte* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1981], 64); Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 158–59; and Bock, *Acts*, 149–56.

⁵²Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, Sacra Pagina, vol. 5 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1992), 62.

⁵³Certainly Jesus’ prophecy about Peter in Matt 16:18 includes other events besides Pentecost that were crucial to the formation of the church such as Peter’s gospel proclamation to Cornelius or continuing evangelistic work as seen in his sermon proclamation in Acts 3.

⁵⁴Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, 80. Cf. Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 179; Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 173; Barrett, *Acts*, 192; Stott, *Christian Mission in the Modern World*, 91; and Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 90. While Peter’s sermon in Acts 2 is similar to his sermon in Acts 3, there are some distinct differences. For a helpful comparison of both sermons, see Robert C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A Literary Interpretation* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 2:58; and Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 171–72.

⁵⁵Bock, *Acts*, 168.

⁵⁶As Stott notes, Peter’s speech in Acts 3, like Acts 2, is thoroughly Christocentric. See Stott, *Christian Mission in the Modern World*, 92.

was killed because of the wishes of the Jews (3:13-14)—and raised him from the dead (3:15). The beggar who has been healed was healed on account of his faith in Christ (3:16), not because of any special powers present in Peter or John. Peter continues by asserting that even though the Jews acted out of ignorance in accord with divine providence (3:17-18), they still need to repent of their sin of crucifying Christ, their Messiah (3:19).⁵⁸ This call for the crowd to repent is composed of a double imperative which challenges the crowd to repent (μετανοήσατε) and turn (ἐπιστρέψατε) – or, in other words, to align themselves with God;⁵⁹ as Bock notes, Peter is challenging the crowd to alter their view of Christ⁶⁰ to one that accords with the gospel message of Peter and John. The promised results of anyone repenting and turning express “the heart of the gospel of grace,”⁶¹ for anyone who accepts the gospel message would receive both forgiveness of sins (that is, the removal of all penalty for their sins)⁶² – and divine blessing⁶³ (v. 19). After his exhortation to the crowd to repent and turn, Peter proceeds by arguing that Christ will one day return and restore everything (vv. 20 -21) as predicted by Moses (v. 22). However, if the crowd does not repent of their sin, they will face the judgment of God (v. 23). Finally, Peter concludes by again arguing that Jesus fulfills Old Testament prophecy (vv. 24-25) and was raised up by God to make atonement for sin (v. 26).

⁵⁷Peter’s language clearly alludes to the suffering servant in Isa 52:13-53:12. For more discussion on Peter’s allusion to the suffering servant motif in Isaiah, see Marshall, “Acts,” 544–45; Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 179–80; Barrett, *Acts*, 194–95; Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 90–91; and Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 174.

⁵⁸So also Bock, *Acts*, 173; Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, 83; and Polhill, *Acts*, 133–34.

⁵⁹Ibid., 174–75. Cf. Polhill, *Acts*, 134.

⁶⁰Ibid., 174. Cf. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 179.

⁶¹Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, 84.

⁶²Bock, *Acts*, 175.

⁶³As Bock argues, this divine blessing had three components: (1) the forgiveness of sin, (2) the promise of divine refreshing, and (3) participation in the return of Christ, the Messiah. See Bock, *Acts*, 178; Stott, *Christian Mission in the Modern World*, 93–94; and Polhill, *Acts*, 134.

Peter's speech draws the attention of the Jewish leadership who put Peter and John in jail (4:1-3). However, opposition from the authorities could not stop the spread of the gospel and the growth of the church,⁶⁴ for verse 4 presents the climax of Peter's sermon (gospel proclamation):⁶⁵ many who heard Peter's gospel message believed, and the church grew to around 5,000. Acts 3:11-4:4 demonstrates the same pattern found in Peter's sermon at Pentecost: the proclamation of the gospel creates members of the church, for it is through people responding in faith by the power of the Spirit to the proclamation of the gospel that the early church grew. Even the Jewish leadership who arrested Peter and John in Acts 4 recognized this pattern as they tried to stop Peter and John from speaking about Jesus to prevent the spread of Christianity and, consequently, the continued growth of the church (4:17).⁶⁶ I will now briefly note several other passages that demonstrate this pattern in Acts.

Acts 4:5-28:30: The Pattern Continues

The pattern in Acts of the gospel creating members of the church continues through the work of the apostles. Acts 4:32 supports this pattern as the congregation⁶⁷ is composed of the ones who believed (τῶν πιστευσάντων); even though not explicitly stated, from the context it is clear that these people are those who had believed the gospel proclamation of the apostles.⁶⁸ A clearer example of the role of the gospel in the creation of the church occurs in Acts 6:7, which notes that as the Word of God (=gospel message) kept spreading, the number of disciples (members of the church) continued to increase.⁶⁹ As Peterson argues, the expression that the

⁶⁴Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 190–91.

⁶⁵Polhill, *Acts*, 140.

⁶⁶Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 195.

⁶⁷The fact that this congregation is a church is indicated by the phrase ὅλην τὴν ἐκκλησίαν in Acts 5:11, which defines the group of people mentioned in Acts 4:32. See Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 204.

⁶⁸See also Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 206; and Barrett, *Acts*, 252.

Word of God grew means that “the church which is the creature of the word grew.”⁷⁰ This passage directly links church growth to gospel proclamation.

Acts 8 contains two examples of the proclamation of the Word of God, through the work of the Holy Spirit, creating members of the church. Acts 8:4-24 documents the conversion of people in the city of Samaria through the preaching of Philip. For our purposes, Acts 8:12 is most pertinent. According to Acts 8:12, when people heard the good news⁷¹ about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized. The implication is that they were repenting and trusting in Christ, of which their baptism was a sign.⁷² Therefore, it was through the gospel proclamation of Philip that the members were added to the church in Samaria.⁷³

Similarly, Acts 8:25-40 records the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch. The passage begins with the Spirit leading Philip (8:25-29) to an Ethiopian eunuch who is confused about a passage from Isaiah (8:30-34). Philip seizes the opportunity to proclaim the gospel to him (8:35).⁷⁴ The eunuch responds positively to Philip’s message and is then baptized (8:36, 38);⁷⁵ it

⁶⁹Kodell rightly argues that the expression “the word of God grew” in Acts 6:7, 12:24, and 19:20 indicates that as the gospel message spread, the church grew. See Jerome Kodell, “‘The Word of God Grew’: The Ecclesial Tendency of Logos in Acts 6:7; 12:24; 19:20,” *Biblica* 55 (1974): 505–19.

⁷⁰Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 236. Cf. Bock, *Acts*, 264–65; Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 251; Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, 123; Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 127–28; Barrett, *Acts*, 316–17. Roloff correctly argues that this verse affirms the fact that the church is *creatura verbi*. See Roloff, *Die Apostelgeschichte*, 110.

⁷¹Peterson rightly notes that Luke’s use of the verb εὐαγγελιζομένῳ indicates that Philip was preaching the gospel. See Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 283.

⁷²*Ibid.*, 284. Cf. Polhill, *Acts*, 216–17; Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 156. Contra Dunn, who argues, based upon the fact that ἐπίστευσαν takes a dative direct object, that the faith of the Samaritans was simply an intellectual assent rather than commitment to God. Marshall rightly notes that nothing in the text suggests that the faith of the Samaritans was inadequate. He also rightly observes the fact that Philip baptizes the Samaritans after their profession of faith, which suggests that he believed their faith was genuine. See Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 156; and Dunn, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit*, 65. It should also be noted that the phrase in 8:8 “so there was much joy in that city” is a Lucan circumlocution for salvation (e.g., Luke 19:6; Acts 8:39), which also supports the fact that the faith of the Samaritans was genuine.

⁷³As Bock notes, Luke’s use of ἐπίστευσαν in Acts 8:12 refers to “the moment of faith that leads each one into the community [the church]” (Bock, *Acts*, 328).

is, therefore, through Philip's gospel proclamation, combined with the work of the Holy Spirit, that the Ethiopian eunuch becomes a member of the people of God, the church.

Likewise, Acts 10:1-11:18 records the story of Peter's gospel proclamation to Cornelius. This passage begins with a vision from God to Cornelius in which an angel instructs him to fetch the apostle Peter who is staying in Joppa (10:1-7). After the vision, Cornelius sends servants to bring Peter (10:8-23); of particular interest is 10:22, in which the servants of Cornelius tell Peter that Cornelius was instructed in a vision to hear a message from him. This message, as we will see, is the gospel. Peter then travels to Cornelius' house (10:24-31). When he arrives, he proclaims to Cornelius the gospel message of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection for the forgiveness of sins (10:34-43).⁷⁶ After this gospel proclamation, Cornelius and members of his household repent, receive the Holy Spirit, and are baptized (10:44-47).⁷⁷ After these events, Peter returns to Jerusalem and reports what happened to members of the church in Jerusalem (11:1-17). Of particular concern is 11:14, in which Peter explains that an angel revealed to Cornelius that he would hear a message (= the gospel)⁷⁸ by which he and his household would be saved; this verse explicitly declares that God uses the proclamation of the gospel to bring about the salvation of his elect who form the membership of his church. Peter's

⁷⁴The fact that Peter proclaimed the gospel message to the Ethiopian eunuch is highlighted by Luke's use of the verb ἐγγεγέλισατο. Cf. Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 299; Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, 176-77; Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 164; and Bock, *Acts*, 344-45

⁷⁵So also Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 296-97; Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, 177-78; Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 164-65. I left out discussion of Acts 8:37 because, as Metzger notes, it is not part of the original text. See Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2005), 316-17.

⁷⁶See also Bock, *Acts*, 396-400; Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 334-39; Polhill, *Acts*, 260-63. Dodd insightfully notes that "the speech before Cornelius represents the form of *kerygma* used by the primitive Church in its earliest approaches to a wider audience" (Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments*, 28). Peter's speech before Cornelius, therefore, accurately captures the gospel message.

⁷⁷See also Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 339-41; Bock, *Acts*, 400-03; Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, 217-18; and Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 193-94.

⁷⁸See also Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 345-46; Bock, *Acts*, 408; and Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, 222.

gospel proclamation to Cornelius and his household initiates the work of God by which they are saved and, consequently, become members of the church.

The work of the church persists, and as a result, the gospel continues to spread, growing the church. Acts 11:19-21 records the gospel message being preached (v. 20), and, through the work of the Lord, people believing and being added to the church (v. 21).⁷⁹ Similarly, Acts 12:24 records that the word of the Lord (gospel) continued to grow and be multiplied; the implication here is that as the gospel message continued to spread, the church continued to grow as people believed and were added to the church. In other words, Luke argues in this passage that “gospel growth means church growth.”⁸⁰

The apostle Paul continues this pattern of gospel growth leading to church growth during his missionary journeys. One specific example of the word of God (gospel) – and consequently the church – growing is found in Acts 13:4-12 during Paul’s first missionary journey. Acts 13:4-11 documents the miraculous blinding of a Jewish false prophet named Bar-Jesus. Acts 13:12 records the result of this miraculous event: the proconsul believes the gospel and is amazed at the teaching of God.⁸¹ Through the power of the Holy Spirit and Paul’s gospel proclamation, the proconsul becomes a member of the church.

As Paul continues his ministry, he encounters significant opposition. In spite of this opposition, Paul persists in preaching the gospel, resulting in members being added to God’s church. Acts 13:44-52 records opposition to Paul’s gospel proclamation, for the Jews became jealous of the crowds that Paul’s message was attracting and as a result were contradicting Paul

⁷⁹So also Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 369; and Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, 225–26.

⁸⁰Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 370. Cf. Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 390; and Kodell, “The Word of God Grew,” 505–19.

⁸¹So also Bock, *Acts*, 447; Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 382–83; Polhill, *Acts*, 294–96; Barrett, *Acts*, 618–19; Longenecker, “Acts,” 915; Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 503–04; John Foster, “Was Sergius Paulus Converted? (Acts xiii.12),” *Expository Times* 60 (1949): 354–55. Contra Witherington, who thinks it is questionable whether the proconsul actually believed the gospel and became a believer. As Bock points out, the contrast in the passage and the implication of Paul’s success indicate that the proconsul became a believer. See Bock, *Acts*, 447; and Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 402–03

and blaspheming (13:45). However, Paul maintained his gospel proclamation and preached to the Gentiles. As a result, all of those whom God had appointed to eternal life believed in the gospel (13:48)⁸² and consequently became members of the church.

Peter confirms a similar pattern of gospel proclamation leading to belief in Christ in Acts 15:6-11 at the Jerusalem council; specifically, he argues that God used his proclamation of the gospel to the Gentiles to bring about their belief in it (15:7). The outcome of their belief in Peter's message was that the Gentiles received the Holy Spirit (15:8) and were cleansed from their sin (15:9).⁸³ As a result of God's work through Peter's gospel proclamation, the Gentiles became followers of Christ and subsequently members of his church.

Acts 16 records events that occurred during Paul's second missionary journey to proclaim the gospel.⁸⁴ One event is the conversion of Lydia documented in Acts 16:13-15. Her conversion begins with Paul preaching the gospel (16:13); through Paul's gospel proclamation, God opened her heart to respond to it (16:14): "That is, he opened her inner eyes to see and to believe in the Jesus Paul proclaimed. We note that, although the message was Paul's, the saving initiative was God's. Paul's preaching was not effective in itself; the Lord worked through it. And the Lord's work was not itself direct; he chose to work through Paul's preaching. It is always the same."⁸⁵ After Lydia's belief in the gospel, she is then baptized as "the outward expression of the salvation which she received the faith which she showed"⁸⁶ (16:15). Similarly,

⁸²Cf. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 399–400; Bock, *Acts*, 464–65; Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, 267–68; Polhill, *Acts*, 308; Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 230–32.

⁸³Cf. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 424–26.

⁸⁴A negative example of my thesis occurs in Acts 16:6-10 in which the Holy Spirit forbids the "gospel preaching missionaries" Paul, Silas, and Timothy (later, Acts 16:10 "us") from speaking the word in Asia and the Spirit of Jesus does the same in Mysia and Bithynia. In neither place was a church initiated; thus, when there is no gospel proclamation, there is no church.

⁸⁵Stott, *Christian Mission in the Modern World*, 263. Cf. Bock, *Acts*, 534–35; and Polhill, *Acts*, 349.

⁸⁶Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 268.

Acts 16:29-34 records the conversion of a jailer. After a miraculous event in which God releases Paul and Silas from prison (16:22-29), Paul responds to the jailer's question about how to be saved (16:30). Paul then proclaims the gospel to him (v. 16:31-32);⁸⁷ his gospel proclamation results in the belief and subsequent baptism of the jailer and his entire household (16:33-34).⁸⁸ Their acceptance of the gospel message leads to their salvation and entrance into the church (16:40). Paul's pattern of preaching the gospel to found churches during his missionary journeys is confirmed in Acts 17:1-9.

Acts 17:1-9 documents another example of gospel proclamation leading to the creation of the church. It opens by noting that Paul went to the Jewish synagogue (17:1). Luke makes an important note in 17:2 that is relevant for our discussion; he writes that "according to Paul's custom" (κατὰ δὲ τὸ εἰωθὸς), he went to the synagogue three times and reasoned with the Jews from Scripture (17:2). This reasoning included Paul's presentation of the gospel by arguing from the Old Testament Scriptures that Jesus is the promised Messiah (v. 17:3).⁸⁹ Luke's usage of εἰωθὸς serves as a reminder of Paul's fundamental commitment to spreading the gospel message among his own people – the Jews;⁹⁰ however, it also serves to demonstrate Paul's pattern of gospel proclamation throughout his ministry of planting churches. For, when Paul would visit synagogues during his ministry, he would use his visit as an opportunity to proclaim the gospel.⁹¹

⁸⁷Cf. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 469–70; Bock, *Acts*, 542; Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 498; and Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, 318.

⁸⁸Cf. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 470–71; Bock, *Acts*, 542–43; and Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 498–99. As Wallace and Bock note, the faith of the Philippian jailer is accentuated by the use of the causal perfect participle, πεπιστευκῶ, which indicates its enduring quality. See Wallace, *Greek Grammar: Beyond the Basics*, 632; and Bock, *Acts*, 543.

⁸⁹Bock, *Acts*, 550; Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 477–78; Polhill, *Acts*, 360; Stott, *Christian Mission in the Modern World*, 271; Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 504–05; Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 276–77.

⁹⁰Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 5:305.

⁹¹As Bock argues, this pattern of Paul going to the synagogue and presenting the gospel is found in Acts 13:5, 14; 14:1; 18:4; 19:8. See Bock, *Acts*, 550.

Once Paul had finished speaking in the synagogue, he would then proclaim the gospel to the rest of the city.⁹² In Acts 17:1-9, it is Paul's gospel proclamation in the synagogue that leads to converts believing in Christ and joining (προσεκληρώθησαν)⁹³ with Paul and Silas⁹⁴ — consequently, forming a church (v. 4).⁹⁵ Paul's pattern of his proclamation of the gospel resulting in church growth is further documented by Luke as Acts continues.

Following a similar pattern to that of Acts 17:1-9, Paul proclaims the gospel in the synagogue in the city of Berea (vv. 17:10-11);⁹⁶ the text notes that after the Bereans had examined what Paul said to see if it was in the Scripture, they believed and were added to the church (17: 11-12).⁹⁷ Therefore, it is Paul's gospel proclamation in which he properly explained the Old Testament Scriptures that created new members of the church.⁹⁸ Paul continues this pattern of gospel proclamation in Athens.

Acts 17:16-33 records Paul once again starting to proclaim the gospel in a synagogue in Athens (17:17); while he was preaching in the synagogue, Paul is invited by some philosophers to speak at the Areopagus because of his declaration of the gospel — Jesus' death

⁹²Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 477.

⁹³Bock notes that the passive verb προσεκληρώθησαν in v. 4 possibly suggests God's work in making those people who accepted Paul's message a part of the new Christian community, the church. Williams points out that some scholars argue that προσεκληρώθησαν has a middle force to it. If this argument is correct, then the verb suggests that the people who joined Paul and Silas are throwing in their lot with them. See Bock, *Acts*, 551; David J. Williams, *Acts*, New International Biblical Commentary (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1990), 295.

⁹⁴As Kurz opines, Paul's argumentation is "clearly aimed at persuasion and conversion; in rhetorical terms it is protreptic" (W. S. Kurz, "Hellenistic Rhetoric in the Christological Proof of Like-Acts," *Catholic Bible Quarterly* 42 [1980]: 180). Paul was actively seeking to persuade people to accept the gospel message and join the church in his ministry. See also Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 505–06; Larkin Jr., *Acts*, 245–47.

⁹⁵As Peterson notes, these first converts were the nucleus of a new church in Thessalonica that Paul later calls "the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ [in 1 Thess 1:1]" (Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 479).

⁹⁶As Bock argues, Luke equates the "word of God" with the gospel in Acts 17:11. See Bock, *Acts*, 556.

⁹⁷Cf. Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 509; Polhill, *Acts*, 363–64; Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 280.

⁹⁸Cf. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 484; Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, 327–28.

and resurrection (17:17-18). When Paul goes to the Aeropagus, he proclaims the gospel message at the climax of his speech (17:31);⁹⁹ after Paul's gospel proclamation, some of those who are present believe (v. 33). Once again, even though not everyone accepts the gospel message, the pattern of gospel proclamation leading to the growth in membership of the church is confirmed.¹⁰⁰

This pattern is explicitly confirmed in Acts 19:20, which asserts that the word of the Lord (gospel) was growing mightily and prevailing (i.e., the church was growing). As Kodell asserts, it can be discerned from others passages with this same expression that the word of God (gospel) growing is a result of it being proclaimed.¹⁰¹ As a result of this gospel proclamation, the church is formed and those who join it give up their cultic practices (Acts 19:17-19).

Acts 20:17-36 demonstrates that the pattern of gospel proclamation leading to church growth is close to the heart of Paul's ministry. It records a sad occasion for Paul. He is saying farewell to the church in Ephesus that he founded. Of particular interest is Acts 20:20-21 and 24. In Acts 20:20-21, Paul describes his initial founding ministry of the church in Ephesus. He records that he publicly declared the gospel message of repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ to both Jews and Greeks.¹⁰² As Bock notes, this summation of Paul's ministry to the Ephesians is a good summary of his mission – to proclaim the gospel message to all people.¹⁰³ In verse 24, Paul once again asserts that this pattern in his ministry is not an anomaly, for Paul

⁹⁹Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 491; and Bock, *Acts*, 573.

¹⁰⁰Witherington points out that there is no evidence of an ongoing church in Athens after his address. However, the ones who believed after Paul's speech at the Aeropagus still became members of the universal church after Paul's gospel proclamation. See Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 532.

¹⁰¹Kodell, "The Word of God Grew," 505–19. Cf. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 541–42.

¹⁰²As Wallace notes, repentance and faith do not form a chiasmic structure in v. 21. Instead, they are different sides of the same coin. For repentance involves a change in direction towards God that results in faith. See Wallace, *Greek Grammar: Beyond the Basics*, 289; and Bock, *Acts*, 627.

¹⁰³Bock argues that Acts 18b-21 indicates that Paul's ministry has the following three parts: (1) faithfulness, (2) direct preaching of all that is necessary, and (3) testimony concerning Christ to all people and a call to repentance and faith in him. See Bock, *Acts*, 627-28.

emphatically argues that his entire ministry – its focus, its heartbeat, its goal – is to declare the content of the gospel of the grace of God.¹⁰⁴ This gospel proclamation is what led to the founding of churches throughout his ministry like the one in Ephesus.

Similarly, in Acts 26:14-32, the heart of Paul’s ministry is succinctly defined. As Paul stands before King Agrippa, he shares Jesus’ call of him to ministry, for it is Christ Himself who called him to preach the gospel (26:14-18).¹⁰⁵ Once again, the heart of Paul’s ministry is exposed: to minister (proclaim) the gospel to all people (Jew and Gentile); as we have seen throughout Acts, it was through Paul’s ministry of Spirit-empowered gospel proclamation that God added members to the church.¹⁰⁶

Acts closes in Acts 28:23-30 with Paul continuing his ministry to proclaim the gospel even during imprisonment in Rome (28:23). While some did not heed Paul’s message, others believed;¹⁰⁷ the people who did believe were persuaded “by the things spoken” (28:24).¹⁰⁸ In other words, God was using Paul’s gospel proclamation to add members to the church. Acts, therefore, closes with a reaffirmation of the power of the gospel in creating members of the church.

¹⁰⁴Cf. Bock, *Acts*, 628.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., 716; Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, 465–67; Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 672–74; Polhill, *Acts*, 502–03.

¹⁰⁶Bock notes that Paul’s ministry is described by three infinitives: “to open” (ἀνοίξει), “to turn” (ἐπιστρέψαι), and “to receive” (λαβεῖν). Bock argues that these infinitives indicate that the gift of the gospel has two major elements: forgiveness of sin (indicated by ἀνοίξει and ἐπιστρέψαι) and acceptance by God and his people (indicated by λαβεῖν). The pattern of Paul’s ministry, therefore, implies the once a person is converted by the Spirit’s work through his gospel proclamation, they then become members of the church. See Bock, *Acts*, 718.

¹⁰⁷Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, 507–09.

¹⁰⁸So also Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 804; Polhill, *Acts*, 542; Bock, *Acts*, 754; Longenecker, “Acts,” 1098. Contra Marshall and Williams who question whether anyone was converted during these meetings with Paul. From the context, it seems certain that the text is alluding that some who heard Paul’s gospel proclamation accepted it, for, Luke notes that the ones who rejected Paul’s message did not believe (ἠπίστου) (Acts 28:24). The implication is that those who accepted Paul’s message believed. See Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 424; Williams, *Acts*, 453.

Brief Summary of Acts Exegesis

Acts evidences a pattern in the early church in which the proclamation of the gospel leads to the creation of members in the church. From the ministries of Peter to Paul to the apostles to other early Christians such as Philip, this pattern is consistent throughout the entire book. As Kodell argues regarding this pattern in Acts, “Faith [in the gospel] leads to community, community to witness. The circle is completed when the believer, having accepted the word through the church, takes the word to others as a member of the church.”¹⁰⁹ According to Acts, it is the witness of members of the church through gospel proclamation that leads to the creation of new members of the people of God – the church. Acts is not the only place where this pattern is found. It is also evident in the introductory section of Paul’s letter to the Romans.

Romans 1:8-17

Romans 1:8-17 occurs directly after Paul’s opening greeting to the church in Rome (1:1-7), a church that Paul, at the time of writing, has yet to visit. He begins by declaring his thankfulness for the church in Rome, for their witness through their faith in Christ and the gospel is being proclaimed throughout the entire world (v. 8).¹¹⁰ Of particular importance for our purposes is his seemingly parenthetical comment in which he declares that he serves God in the gospel of his son (v. 9). As I noted above in my discussion of Acts, Paul’s ministry through which he planted churches is based on the gospel – particularly his proclamation of it.¹¹¹ Paul

¹⁰⁹Kodell, “The Word of God Grew,” 518.

¹¹⁰So also Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 48. As Schreiner notes, Paul’s thanksgiving is rooted in his apostleship. He is thankful due to his apostolic commission for the spread of the gospel to places where it had never been proclaimed before (Schreiner, *Romans*, 49). Paul’s thankfulness demonstrates the centrality of the gospel proclamation to his apostolic ministry. Cf. Anders Nygren, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. Carl C. Rasmussen (London: SCM, 1952), 59–60.

¹¹¹Schreiner rightly argues that the phrase “proclamation of the gospel” and the term “gospel” in Paul mean more than simply Paul’s initial gospel proclamation through which churches are formed. In reference to Romans 1:9 and Romans 1:15, he asserts Paul’s reference to the gospel and the proclaiming of it refer to the edification of the church in Rome as well as evangelistic gospel proclamation. Moo also helpfully notes that this verse indicates that Paul’s service to God consists primarily in preaching the gospel. See Schreiner, *Romans*, 53-54; Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand

continues by expressing his desire to visit the church in Rome and minister to them (vv. 10-15). For our discussion, his comments in verses 16-17 warrant closer examination.

Paul begins verse 16 with the expression “I am not ashamed of the gospel.” Paul, in this phrase, acknowledges the fact that the gospel is something that Christians will be tempted to be ashamed of due to the world’s hostility toward it as well as its seemingly unimpressive nature compared to the wisdom of the world;¹¹² it is even reasonable to assume that Paul himself sometimes felt this temptation, especially in light of the suffering that he endured (2 Cor. 11:23-27).¹¹³ Paul continues by expressing the reason he is not ashamed of the gospel: it is the power of God (δύναμις θεοῦ) that results (εἰς) in salvation.¹¹⁴ Specifically, as Schreiner notes, it is God’s work in the preaching of the gospel that causes salvation in those whom God calls.¹¹⁵ This salvation is effective for everyone who believes (παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι) – Jew or Gentile. It

Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 58. Cf. C. K. Barrett, *The Epistle to the Romans*, rev. ed., Black’s New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991), 25; Peter Stuhlmacher, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans: A Commentary*, trans. Scott J. Hafemann (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994), 27; Ben Witherington, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 43.

¹¹²C. E. B. Cranfield, *Romans 1-8*, International Critical Commentary (London: T. & T. Clark, 1975), 86–87. Schreiner notes that some scholars today interpret the phrase “I am not ashamed to the gospel” in non-psychological terms. However, while not totally psychological, the phrase certainly has a psychological dimension to it. See Schreiner, *Romans*, 59–60; C. K. Barrett, *The Epistle to the Romans*, Harper’s New Testament Commentaries (New York: Harper & Row, 1957), 27; Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 21–22; Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 65–66; Mark A. Seifrid, *Justification by Faith: The Origin and Development of a Central Pauline Theme*, Supplements to Novum Testamentum 68 (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 212; John Stott, *Romans*, God’s Good News for the World (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1994), 60.

¹¹³Schreiner, *Romans*, 60. Cf. Cranfield, *Romans 1-8*, 87–88.

¹¹⁴So also Schreiner, *Romans*, 60. Dunn insightfully notes that Paul can be confident that the source of the gospel’s power is God from the initial and continuing effects of its proclamation. Certainly, one effect of gospel proclamation that bears witness to its power is the church. See James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 38a (Dallas: Word, 1988), 39.

¹¹⁵Schreiner, *Romans*, 60. As Barrett opines, God’s power is at work in the gospel, not human power. See Barrett, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 29. Cf. Grant R. Osborne, *Romans*, The IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 40; Robert H. Mounce, *Romans*, The New American Commentary, vol. 27 (Nashville: B&H, 1995), 70; Emil Brunner, *The Letter to the Romans*, trans. H. A. Kennedy (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1952), 15–16.

is the proclamation of the Word of God (gospel) along with the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, therefore, that effects salvation in the elect, creating new members of the church.

Paul continues in verse 17 with an explanation of why the gospel is effective for salvation¹¹⁶ and its corollary: the creation of new members of the church. The gospel brings about salvation because it is the righteousness of God (δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ).¹¹⁷ Verse 17 continues by asserting that this righteousness is an eschatological revelation (ἀποκαλύπτεται)¹¹⁸ through the preaching of the gospel¹¹⁹ revealed by faith (ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν);¹²⁰ in other words, Paul is arguing here that the righteousness of God through the gospel is revealed by human faith.¹²¹ Paul concludes with a citation from Habakkuk 2:4 confirming that righteousness before God is acquired on the basis of faith.¹²² When a person accepts the righteousness of God through faith

¹¹⁶Ibid., 62.

¹¹⁷The exact meaning of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ is highly debated; however, the following four meanings are some of the most common: (1) it refers to an attribute of God; (2) it refers to a declaration of God over the believer (forensic view); (3) it broadly refers to God's saving, transforming power (transformative view); or (4) it refers to God's covenant faithfulness (New Perspective). As Schreiner argues, given the evidence throughout the Pauline epistles, the forensic understanding of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ is more convincing than the other views. With this in mind, it is best to view δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ in Rom 1:17 forensically. For helpful discussions of the different views related to the phrase δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ in v. 17, see Thomas R. Schreiner, *Paul, Apostle of God's Glory in Christ: A Pauline Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2006), 189–217; Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 65–70, 75–86; Schreiner, *New Testament Theology*, 352–61. See also Schreiner, *Paul, Apostle of God's Glory in Christ*, 189–217; Cranfield, *Romans 1-8*, 95–99; Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 65–70, 75–86; Mounce, *Romans*, 27:36–39, 72–73.

¹¹⁸Schreiner notes that ἀποκαλύπτεται has eschatological connotations. See Schreiner, *Romans*, 65.

¹¹⁹Moo argues that because ἀποκαλύπτεται is in the present tense “Paul is thinking of an ongoing process, or series of actions, connected with the preaching of the gospel” (Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 70). Cf. Cranfield, *Romans 1-8*, 91–92.

¹²⁰As Moo notes, the exact meaning of the prepositional phrase ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν has been debated because what it modifies in the verse is not clear. However, as Moo argues, it is most likely rhetorical and intended to emphasize the fact that only faith can put human beings in right relationship to God. See Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 76). Cf. Cranfield, *Romans 1-8*, 99–100. For an in-depth discussion of the meaning of this phrase in the Pauline epistles, see John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959), 1:363–74.

¹²¹Schreiner, *Romans*, 73. Cf. Osborne, *Romans*, 43.

¹²²Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 76. Cf. Mark A. Seifrid, “Romans,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 601–11.

their status before God changes; certainly one of the results from the moment a believer is justified before God is that they become a member of the new people of God – the church.

Romans 1:8-16 demonstrates the powerful nature of the gospel. It is through the proclamation of the gospel that God creates believers and consequently new members of his church. This same idea is also found in 1 Corinthians 3:1-17.

1 Corinthians 3:1-17

In 1 Corinthians 3:1-17, Paul is addressing factionalism in the Corinthian church. He begins by notifying the Corinthians that he cannot address them as spiritual persons (vv. 1-3). Even though the Corinthians are saved, they are living and acting as though they do not have the Spirit,¹²³ for there is jealousy and strife present among them. They are also acting according to worldly wisdom by claiming to be followers of Paul, Apollos, or Cephas (v. 4).¹²⁴ Paul intervenes by asserting that both he and Apollos are simply servants of God and, by consequence, of the gospel (v. 5).¹²⁵ In other words, they are just following the bidding of their master, God.¹²⁶ Paul continues by using the metaphor of the church as a field in his illustration.¹²⁷ In this metaphor, he planted (implying his founding role in Corinthian church)¹²⁸

¹²³David W. Kuck, *Judgment and Conflict: Paul's Use of Apocalyptic Judgment Language in 1 Corinthians 3:5-4:5*, Supplements to Novum Testamentum 66 (New York: E. J. Brill, 1992), 160. Cf. David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 106–07; Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 123.

¹²⁴As Fee notes, what is at stake is not only the church, but the gospel itself. The worldly wisdom the Corinthians are pursuing strips the gospel of its power. See Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 121.

¹²⁵Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 130.

¹²⁶So also Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 111.

¹²⁷Garland argues that this illustration makes the following four points: (1) the labor of one worker (Paul) without the other (Apollos) would be useless; (2) both roles are essential, but they are interchangeable; (3) rivalry between works is absurd; and (4) God is the life-force that produces the harvest. Ciampa and Rosner agree with Garland on points 1, 3, and 4. However, based upon 1 Corinthians 3:7a, they do not believe point 2 can be derived from the text. It seems best to affirm Garland's interpretation as Paul's point is not that it is not necessary for anyone to proclaim the gospel for the Corinthians to be saved; instead, it is that Paul and Apollos are simply instruments that God has used to proclaim the gospel and are therefore not worthy of any special honor. With this in mind, it is still necessary for the work of Paul and Apollos to take place; for it is through the human proclamation of

and Apollos watered; undoubtedly, Paul’s planting (founding) of the church consisted in the proclamation of the gospel.¹²⁹ He then proceeds by lowering the status of himself and Apollos even further, for the result of their work can be attributed to God alone. For God is the one who caused the initial and continuing growth of the church through the proclamation of the gospel. He and Apollos are merely instruments to be used by their master (v. 6); as Fee asserts, “The emphasis is on the fact that the Corinthians did not believe *in* Paul or Apollos, but *through* them they came to believe in Christ.”¹³⁰ Like any servant or instrument, they are unimportant and equal in status (vv. 7-8), or, as Conzelmann argues, they have “no special merit.”¹³¹ As Paul asserts, the Corinthian church (the field) as well as Paul and Apollos (the laborers) all belong to God (v. 9).¹³²

Paul continues to imply the central role of the gospel in the creation and continuing existence of the church in verses 10-15. Paul begins by comparing himself to a wise master builder (σοφὸς ἀρχιτέκτων)¹³³ who built the Corinthian church on a foundation (v. 10); this foundation is Jesus Christ (v. 11). For it is through Paul’s initial gospel proclamation that the

the gospel that God creates the members of the church. This proclamation is necessary, therefore, because it is the means that God has chosen for the church to grow (cf. Rom. 10:14). See Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 111-12; Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 144.

¹²⁸So also Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 114; and Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 131–32.

¹²⁹So also Kuck, *Judgment and Conflict*, 166.

¹³⁰Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 131. Cf. C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Harper’s New Testament Commentaries (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 84.

¹³¹Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, trans. James W. Leitch, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), 74.

¹³²So also Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 142.

¹³³As Garland notes, Paul recognizes that the skill and commission necessary for him to be the σοφὸς ἀρχιτέκτων of the Corinthian church come from God as evidenced by 1 Cor 1:4. It was only through God’s work during Paul’s proclamation of the gospel that the Corinthian church was created. See Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 114. Cf. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 138.

first members of the Corinthian church were created (i.e. the church was founded).¹³⁴ However, the main focus of this proclamation was not Paul, but the one whom Paul proclaimed – Christ and him crucified (cf. 1 Cor 1:23; 2:2).¹³⁵ Paul is nothing because Christ is everything; it is only by Christ’s work through the Spirit that his (or anyone’s) gospel proclamation is effective in creating members of the church.¹³⁶ Paul next asserts that anyone who builds upon his gospel foundation must do so in a way consistent with the gospel (v. 12).¹³⁷ Paul’s message of Christ crucified is the standard by which all others are to be evaluated;¹³⁸ as Thiselton argues, no other foundation except the apostolic gospel is logically possible if the Corinthian church is truly to be a church.¹³⁹ Paul continues by opining that if others build correctly upon his gospel foundation, they will receive reward in the eschatological judgment; if they do not, they will be judged (vv. 13-15).¹⁴⁰ Paul ends this section by asserting the special status of the church as the temple of God as they are indwelt by God’s Spirit (v. 16).¹⁴¹ Along with this status comes a warning for

¹³⁴As Collins asserts, Paul’s use of the building metaphor pictures the apostolic and foundational role of preaching the gospel in the church at Corinth. See Raymond F. Collins, *First Corinthians*, vol. 7 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1999), 149. Cf. William F. Orr and James Arthur Walther, *1 Corinthians*, The Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1976), 173.

¹³⁵So also Wolfgang Schrage, *Der Erste Brief an Die Korinther (1 Kor 1,1-6,11)*, Evangelisch-katholischer Kommentar Zum Neuen Testament 7/1 (Zurich, Switzerland: Benziger/Neukirchener, 1991), 298; Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 115. Cf. Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 309.

¹³⁶As Ciampa and Rosner note, the church at Corinth was founded upon the gospel of Christ crucified that Paul preached when he initially started the church. See Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 153.

¹³⁷As Garland opines, “build upon” in this verse refers to preaching and instruction. See Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 115. Cf. James Moffat, *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*, The Moffat New Testament Commentary (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1951), 40.

¹³⁸Kent L. Yinger, *Paul, Judaism, and Judgment According to Deeds*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 105 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 215–17. Cf. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 140.

¹³⁹Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 310.

¹⁴⁰Building correctly entails teaching the church godly wisdom (1 Cor 1-2) in line with the gospel. See Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 156.

those who intentionally attempt to destroy the church: they will themselves be destroyed by God (v. 17).

First Corinthians 3:1-17 demonstrates the relationship of gospel proclamation to the creation of the church; for it is Paul's gospel proclamation by the power of the Holy Spirit that laid the initial foundation for the Corinthian church (created its first members). The role of gospel proclamation in creating members of the church is also seen in 1 Corinthians 4:14-17.

1 Corinthians 4:14-17

First Corinthians 4:14-17 occurs directly after Paul's description of the suffering of the apostles on behalf of Christ and the gospel (4:6-13); Paul uses the example of himself and the other apostles to condemn the Corinthians for their self-exaltation, pride, and arrogance.¹⁴² However, Paul does not condemn the Corinthians to crush or shame them.¹⁴³ In fact, it is quite the opposite. Paul wishes to admonish the Corinthians in love as a father would his beloved (ἀγαπητὰ) child (14). Paul continues by asserting that although the Corinthians have many tutors, they have only one father: himself. Paul asserts that he is their father through the gospel; literally, Paul has begotten (ἐγέννησα) the Corinthian church through the gospel.¹⁴⁴ As Holmberg argues, this concept of Paul's fatherhood (and in other passages, motherhood) of believers "expresses the fact that he [Paul] has begotten them or given them life through the transmission

¹⁴¹Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 146–47; Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 158–59; Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 120; Barrett, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 90. For an in-depth discussion of Paul's comparison of the church to a temple in 1 Corinthians 3, see G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, *New Studies in Biblical Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 245–52.

¹⁴²Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 186.

¹⁴³Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 369; and Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 186.

¹⁴⁴BDAG, s.v. "γεννάω." Cf. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 145; Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 186. Garland and Moffat note that Paul also uses γεννάω in Philemon 10 to describe his relationship with Onesimus, who he "begot" while he was imprisoned. See Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 145; and Moffat, *1 Corinthians*, 51.

of the Gospel of Christ.”¹⁴⁵ This fatherhood is not simply metaphorical; it is “real, ‘spiritual’ fatherhood,”¹⁴⁶ for it was his initial proclamation of the gospel that created the church’s first members (v. 15).¹⁴⁷ Paul, therefore, has a special relationship with the Corinthians that can be claimed by no one else.¹⁴⁸ In light of this special relationship, he exhorts the Corinthians to imitate him (v. 16) because, as Pickett argues, his life “is defined by the ‘word of the cross.’”¹⁴⁹ The Corinthians are to imitate Paul inasmuch as his life corresponds to the gospel,¹⁵⁰ that is, as he follows Christ.¹⁵¹ The answer to the problems within the Corinthian church is for the Corinthians to act like Paul in exercising godly wisdom instead of worldly wisdom. Paul concludes this section by stating that he will send Timothy to “remind” the Corinthians of his way of life in Christ Jesus (v. 17).¹⁵²

Paul’s pronouncement of himself as the Corinthian’s spiritual father implies the relationship between the gospel and the church. Paul is the Corinthians’ spiritual father because

¹⁴⁵Bengt Holmberg, *Paul and Power: The Structure of Authority in the Primitive Church as Reflected in the Pauline Epistles* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978), 78. Holmberg notes that Paul uses the concept of fatherhood and motherhood to describe his relationship with believers in the following passages: (1) 1 Thess 2:5-12; (2) Gal 4:19; (3) 1 Cor 3:1-3a, 4:14-16 and (4) 2 Cor 6:11-13, 12:14. Paul’s frequent use of these metaphors indicates the role of Paul’s gospel proclamation in creating the members of the churches that he founded. See Holmberg, *Paul and Power*, 78. Cf. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 184.

¹⁴⁶Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 91.

¹⁴⁷Thiselton argues that the εὐαγγελίου in v. 15 should be rendered in a verbal mode so that the phrase διὰ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου is translated “through proclaiming the gospel” because “in this context the reference to Paul’s agency as one who brought life to the addressees means *through the gospel-as-proclaimed*, i.e., in the event of Paul’s preaching and speaking” (Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 370).

¹⁴⁸Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 185. Cf. Barrett, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 115.

¹⁴⁹Raymond Pickett, *The Cross in Corinth: The Social Significance of the Death of Jesus*, *Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series* 143 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 59.

¹⁵⁰Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 147.

¹⁵¹Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 187.

¹⁵²Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 147–48; and Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 189.

it was his gospel proclamation that created the first members of the Corinthian church. In 2 Corinthians 2:12-17, Paul also uses metaphorical language to describe his apostolic ministry, which implies the role of gospel proclamation in creating members of the church.

2 Corinthians 2:12-3:6

In 2 Corinthians 2:5-11, Paul expresses his desire for reconciliation between a majority and minority faction within the Corinthian church to one another and himself. In a conflict during a recent painful visit by Paul, his ministry and/or teaching had come under attack from an individual within the church; consequently, Paul wrote a “severe letter” before 2 Corinthians (1:23-2:4). In this letter, Paul had commanded the Corinthian church to discipline the individual who had attacked him during his visit to the church (7:5-13). Because of this “severe letter,” the man who had attacked Paul repented; however, a divide had been placed between Paul and the Corinthian church that Paul desired to remedy.¹⁵³

Paul begins by indicating his deep love for the Corinthians. He became so concerned for the Corinthians after their dispute that he left Troas (where he was engaged in gospel ministry)¹⁵⁴ to meet up with Titus in Macedonia to receive news about them (2:12-13). Paul continues by describing his apostolic ministry. He indicates, through his usage of the word θριαμβεύοντί that he has been captured by God and dragged around as a slave in the service of God to the gospel.¹⁵⁵ For, Paul, through his life and gospel proclamation, manifests the truth of

¹⁵³For a more thorough discussion of the background to 2 Corinthians 2:12-3:6, see Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 40 (Waco, TX: Word, 1986), 31–34; Paul Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 123.

¹⁵⁴Barnett notes that Paul was likely engaged in trying to establish a church in Troas by preaching Christ (i.e., the gospel). See Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 135. Cf. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 42.

¹⁵⁵Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 150; Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle of St Paul to the Corinthians*, The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1948), 67. Hafemann argues that Calvin misinterprets θριαμβεύοντι for theological reasons. He gives the verb a causative sense, rendering the phrase θριαμβεύοντι as “God causes us to triumph” instead of “[God] leads us in the triumphal procession.” Hafemann also notes that today this translation is recognized as linguistically impossible. See Scott J. Hafemann, *2 Corinthians*, NIV Application Commentary

the gospel in the places that he ministers (2:14). Paul next compares his own preaching and gospel-centered life—that is, his gospel ministry—¹⁵⁶ to an aroma that is going forth to those who are saved and those who are perishing (2:15). As Witherington notes, “As God drags Paul around as his slave, the knowledge of Christ emanates from Paul wherever he goes.”¹⁵⁷ In other words, the apostolic proclamation of the gospel “is the medium of universal, divine revelation.”¹⁵⁸ However, this aroma (gospel proclamation) has a “dual effect.”¹⁵⁹ To those who are saved, it is the fragrance of life; to those that are perishing, it is the fragrance of death. For, to the ones who are saved, Paul’s gospel life and proclamation lead to eternal life and, consequently, their entrance into the family of God – the church. However, to those who are perishing, his gospel life and message leads to condemnation and eternal damnation.¹⁶⁰ The message of the gospel, therefore, is a startling power, for its proclamation “dynamically

(Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 108. For Calvin’s discussion of his view, see John Calvin, *Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, trans. William Pringle, *Calvin’s Commentaries* 20 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 2:157–58.

¹⁵⁶Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 151; Victor Paul Furnish, *II Corinthians*, The Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1984), 188–89; David E. Garland, *2 Corinthians*, The New American Commentary, vol. 29 (Nashville: B&H, 1999), 141; Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 249; Frank J. Matera, *II Corinthians: A Commentary*, New Testament Library (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2003), 73–74. Martin observes that Paul’s comparison of his gospel proclamation here to an odor indicates that it was intended to lead to salvation. Hughes insightfully notes that the metaphor of procession and aroma indicates that Paul’s gospel proclamation is accomplished wholly by God. Paul is nothing but an instrument through whom this fragrance—the gospel—is released. See Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962), 78–79. See also Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 48–49.

¹⁵⁷Ben Witherington, *Conflict & Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 366. Cf. Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 152; Matera, *II Corinthians: A Commentary*, 72–73.

¹⁵⁸Margaret E. Thrall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1994), 1:196.

¹⁵⁹Bultmann, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1985), 67.

¹⁶⁰Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 149; C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, Harper’s New Testament Commentaries (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), 100; Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 252. Barnett notes that Paul’s gospel proclamation has a vertical and horizontal effect. Vertically, it is pleasing to God. Horizontally, it leads its listeners to life or death. See Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 152). Cf. Colin G. Kruse, *2 Corinthians*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1987), 86–87.

divides”¹⁶¹ its listeners into two groups: those possessing eternal life and those possessing eternal damnation.¹⁶² This question then logically follows: who has the right to preach such a message? (2:16).¹⁶³ Paul starts by arguing that it is not those who preach the gospel out of wrong motives, but those who speak the gospel message out of sincerity with a right heart before God (2:17).

He proceeds to detail his New Covenant ministry. Unlike false apostles who had been attempting to invade the church at Corinth (11:1-5), Paul does not need a letter of recommendation (3:1), for the Corinthian church, which is visible to all men, is his recommendation by God (3:2)!¹⁶⁴ Therefore, the existence of the Corinthian church — created by the power of the Spirit through Paul’s gospel proclamation —¹⁶⁵ affirms the legitimacy of Paul’s apostleship (3:3);¹⁶⁶ Paul’s confidence does not come from himself or his own personal adequacy, but from God in Christ (3:4-5). Thus, Paul is a minister of the New Covenant through

¹⁶¹Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 153. Cf. Barrett, *A Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 102–03.

¹⁶²Schlatter astutely observes that the preposition ἐκ in 2:16 has a causal force (Adolf von Schlatter, *Paulus Der Bote Jesu: Eine Deutung Seiner Briefe an Die Korinther*, 2nd ed. [Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1969], 497–8). For, it is the gospel—specifically, its proclamation—through the power of the Holy Spirit that causes life in those who accept it.

¹⁶³As Harvey opines, “To speak oneself in terms of being an agent of God for life or death, a kind of litmus paper to distinguish between good and evil, is to make an enormous claim—that one’s motives are perfectly clear, that one is totally transparent before the purposes of God. ‘Who is equal to such a calling?’ (2:16)” (A. E. Harvey, *Renewal Through Suffering: A Study of 2 Corinthians* [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1996], 46).

¹⁶⁴Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 51; and Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 166.

¹⁶⁵So also Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 151; Thrall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 224–25. As Harris notes, proof of the genuineness of the apostle’s ministry is not to be found in “written characters, but in human characters” (Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 266).

¹⁶⁶As Hafemann asserts, the phrase διακονηθεῖσα ὑφ’ ἡμῶν is “understood as a reference to Paul’s apostolic ministry of establishing the church in Corinth.” Scott J. Hafemann, *Suffering and Ministry in the Spirit: Paul’s Defense of His Ministry in II Corinthians 2:14-3:3* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 204. This understanding of the phrase is contra Baird, who argues that Paul’s usage of διακονηθεῖσα ὑφ’ ἡμῶν does not refer to his gospel ministry at Corinth, but is still a part of his metaphor of the epistle of recommendation. As Hafemann argues, Baird’s view does not accord well with Paul’s use of διακονέω elsewhere in his letters. Hafemann also notes that Baird attempts to support his view by drawing too hard of a distinction between Paul’s ministry in money collection for the saints in Jerusalem and his gospel ministry. See Hafemann, *Suffering and Ministry*, 199–209; and William Baird, “Letters of Recommendation: A Study of II Cor 3:1-3,” *JBL* 80 (1961): 169.

which the Spirit gives life (3:6).¹⁶⁷ It is, therefore, the work of the Spirit (in giving life) through Paul's gospel proclamation that creates and preserves the church; for, the church serves to prove the legitimacy of his gospel ministry because it is created by God through His Spirit. The work of the Spirit in creating the members of the church through gospel proclamation is also evidenced in Ephesians 1:13-14.

Ephesians 1:13-14

Ephesians 1:13-14 is the conclusion of a benediction¹⁶⁸ by Paul in which he praises God for all of the blessings¹⁶⁹ to himself and the Ephesian congregation in Christ (3-12). For our purposes, verse 13 is the most important to note, for Paul makes the assertion that after (1) listening (ἀκούσαντες) and (2) believing (πιστεύσαντες) the gospel message, the Ephesians were sealed (ἐσφραγίσθητε) with the Holy Spirit.¹⁷⁰ In other words, belief in the proclamation of the gospel resulted in the salvation of Gentiles (1:12) in Ephesus; these Gentiles, subsequently, formed the Ephesian church (v. 13).¹⁷¹ Paul continues by noting that the reception of the Holy Spirit by the members of the Ephesian church at their salvation is a “down payment” (ἀρραβὼν)¹⁷² of their eschatological redemption in Christ as God's own possession (v. 14).¹⁷³ In

¹⁶⁷Cf. Thrall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 234–37; and Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 177–78.

¹⁶⁸Cf. Frank Thielman, *Ephesians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010), 77.

¹⁶⁹As O'Brien notes, “Ideas come tumbling out as Paul refers to election (v. 4), adoption (v. 5), God's will (v. 5), his grace (v. 6), redemption (v. 7), wisdom (v. 8), the mystery (v. 9), and the consummation of all things (v. 10)” (P. T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999], 89).

¹⁷⁰As Thielman argues, Paul probably conceives of listening, hearing, and being sealed with the Holy Spirit as occurring at the same time. See Thielman, *Ephesians*, 79. Cf. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 119; Walter L. Liefeld, *Ephesians*, The IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997), 47.

¹⁷¹As Best opines, “The terms of v. 13, ‘hear, believe, word, truth, gospel, salvation’, are those of Christ mission. The gospel is preached, people hear, respond and are sealed with the Spirit” (Ernest Best, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians* [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1998], 148).

summary, Ephesians 1:13-14 briefly illustrates the fact that it is the proclamation of the gospel that creates members of the church; as Hodge opines concerning the passage: “As it was through the hearing this Gospel that the Gentiles in the apostle’s days were brought to be partakers of the **inheritance** of God, so it is by the same means that people are to be saved now, and in all coming ages until the consummation. This is by the **word of truth**, and not truth in general, but that truth which constitutes the glad news of salvation.”¹⁷⁴ Ephesians 2:19-3:6 also vividly illustrates the role of gospel proclamation in the creation of members of the church.

Ephesians 2:19-3:6

Ephesians 2:19-3:6 occurs just after an exposition by Paul detailing the inclusion of the Gentiles into the new people of God (2:13, 17-18);¹⁷⁵ as Paul argues, the Gentiles were once “far away” from God, but now have been “brought near” to God through the work of Christ (v. 13).¹⁷⁶ Verse 19 opens with ἀρα οὖν; this phrase forms a “tight logical connection” between

¹⁷²As Muddiman notes, ἀραβῶν means a pledge or the first installment toward payment of a larger debt. See John Muddiman, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, Black’s New Testament Commentaries (London: Continuum, 2001), 80. Cf. Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 42 (Waco, TX: Word, 1990), 40; T. K. Abbott, *The Epistles to the Ephesians and to the Colossians*, The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1968), 23.

¹⁷³Thielman, *Ephesians*, 80; O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 121; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 40–41. There is some debate as to the meaning of the phrase εἰς ἀπολύτρωσιν τῆς περιποιήσεως. Some commentators argue that it refers to the believer’s acquisition of his or her inheritance. This view reads τῆς περιποιήσεως as an exegetical genitive and translates it as “acquisition.” This view requires that the word “inheritance” or “salvation” be supplied to the translation. However, it is certainly best as Thielman argues to take the reading of the phrase as referring to God’s people as his possession. If one accepts this view, there is no need to supply extra words to the phrase making it the more natural reading. See Thielman, *Ephesians*, 83; Rudolf Schnackenburg, *Ephesians: A Commentary*, trans. Helen Heron (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1991), 66–67). Cf. Best, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians*, 152–53; O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 121–22; F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 266–67.

¹⁷⁴Charles Hodge, *Ephesians*, The Crossway Classic Commentaries (Wheaton: Crossway, 1994), 47, bold in original.

¹⁷⁵Thielman, *Ephesians*, 175–76; O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 208–10.

¹⁷⁶O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 190–91.

verses 18 and 19.¹⁷⁷ It connects verses 18-19 as follows: since there is open access to God the Father through the Holy Spirit because of Christ’s work (v. 18), the Ephesians are no longer estranged from God (v.19). In fact, the Ephesians, even though they are Gentiles, are part of God’s family, citizens of His country with other believers (τῶν ἁγίων),¹⁷⁸ and members of his household.¹⁷⁹ In other words, the Gentiles (Ephesians) are now part of the people of God – the church. The reason for the adoption of the Ephesians into God’s family is that they have been built (ἐποικοδομηθέντες)¹⁸⁰ on the foundation of the apostles and prophets (v. 20). Paul uses the noun “foundation” appositionally with the nouns “prophets” and “apostles”;¹⁸¹ however, as Lincoln opines, “The apostles and prophets are foundational in the sense of being primary and authoritative recipients and proclaimers of revelation (the gospel).”¹⁸² As Paul argues, when the Ephesians accepted the gospel, they were built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets,

¹⁷⁷Thielman, *Ephesians*, 178.

¹⁷⁸O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 211; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 179; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 151; Clinton E. Arnold, *Ephesians*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 168; Abbott, *The Epistles to the Ephesians and to the Colossians*, 69. Lincoln appears to have changed his view on the meaning of τῶν ἁγίων; in his book, *Paradise Now and Not Yet*, he argues that τῶν ἁγίων refers to angels. As Lincoln argues in his commentary, Paul’s use of ἅγιοι in other places in Ephesians to refer to believers makes it “more prudent” to opt for τῶν ἁγίων as referring to believers. See Andrew T. Lincoln, *Paradise Now and Not Yet*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 43 (London: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 151. For a complete listing of the different interpretive options of τῶν ἁγίων, see Thielman, *Ephesians*, 179 and Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 150–51.

¹⁷⁹As O’Brien notes, Paul is employing citizen and household images that symbolize the church. See O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 210.

¹⁸⁰As Thielman argues, ἐποικοδομηθέντες is a causal participle that points back to the time when the Ephesians positively responded to the gospel proclamation (1:13); it indicates that their positive response to the gospel is why the Ephesians are now citizens and members of God’s household. Causal participles do not normally follow their controlling verbs. Exceptions, however, do exist (e.g., Acts 16:34). See Thielman, *Ephesians*, 170; Best, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians*, 279; Wallace, *Greek Grammar: Beyond the Basics*, 632.

¹⁸¹Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 152–53; Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 304; Best, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians*, 280; O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 213. Stott and Morris argue that the foundation refers to the instruction of the apostles and prophets and not the prophets and apostles themselves. It should be noted that their view is the minority position in modern scholarship. See Leon Morris, *Expository Reflections in the Letter to the Ephesians* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 77; John Stott, *God’s New Society: The Message of Ephesians*, The Bible Speaks Today (Leicester: Inter-Varsity, 1979), 107.

¹⁸²Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 153.

and consequently, became members of the church.¹⁸³ While there is debate as to the precise identity of the prophets in 2:20,¹⁸⁴ it is best to focus on the general identity of the prophets¹⁸⁵ as those who with the apostles¹⁸⁶ proclaimed the gospel: “The apostles and the Christian prophets are those to whom God made known the revelation of the gospel, and those who laid the foundation by their preaching the gospel.”¹⁸⁷ Paul continues by using an emphatic pronoun (αὐτοῦ) to emphasize Christ’s primary role in the church.¹⁸⁸ For Christ himself is the “cornerstone” or “capstone” of the church as denoted by the term ἀκρογωνιάου; the exact meaning of ἀκρογωνιάου is unclear,¹⁸⁹ but Paul uses the phrase to emphasize Christ’s chief role

¹⁸³As Lincoln opines, “The aorist passive participle ἐποικοδομηθέντες, ‘having been built,’ indicates both that this being placed on a foundation has already occurred for the readers, presumably at their initial conversion, and that God is to be understood now as the one who has brought this about” (Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 152). Best argues in passing that the past tense of ἐποικοδομηθέντες does not indicate anything about when the church initially came into being. However, Best provides no evidence for his assertion. See Best, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians*, 279.

¹⁸⁴Grudem argues that apostles and prophets refer to the same group of people because one definite article, τῶν, is used to cover both of the words. Thus, he translates the phrase τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ προφητῶν as “apostles who are also prophets” (Wayne Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy in 1 Corinthians* [Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1982], 82–105). Grudem’s interpretation is not accepted by many commentators. As O’Brien points out, there are numerous exegetical difficulties with this interpretation and it is best to see the phrase as referring to two groups of people. See O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 214–16.

¹⁸⁵The νῦν in Eph 3:5, argues Sandnes, excludes the interpretation that the prophets are Old Testament prophets; instead, the prophets are New Testament prophets. Their exact identity, however, is still unclear. See Karl Olav Sandnes, *Paul: One of the Prophets? A Contribution to the Apostle’s Self-Understanding*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen Zum Neuen Testament 43 [Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1991], 233). Cf. O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 214–16; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 180.

¹⁸⁶As Thielman notes, the apostles in this verse probably reference those who first proclaimed the gospel to the Gentiles. See Thielman, *Ephesians*, 80. For a discussion on the meaning of the term “apostle,” see C. K. Barrett, *The Signs of an Apostles* (London: Epworth, 1970) and O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 83–84, 214.

¹⁸⁷Sandnes, *Paul*, 235–36. Cf. O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 216; Best, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians*, 282.

¹⁸⁸Thielman, *Ephesians*, 180–81; and Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 154.

¹⁸⁹Whether ἀκρογωνιάου refers to a cornerstone or capstone is impossible to tell. As Best argues, “In the present state of our knowledge, the problem is insoluble” (Best, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians*, 286). For a complete listing of the evidence supporting both interpretations, see Best, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians*, 284–86.

in the church's foundation (v. 20).¹⁹⁰ For the church is anchored and guided by Christ,¹⁹¹ thus, it is his gospel message that creates its members (Eph 1:13 cf. 3:6) and he himself guides its growth in holiness. Paul continues by portraying the church as a community that has both a present and eschatological reality;¹⁹² for, the church is not a fully perfected (realized) reality in the present, but is growing (αὐξέει) in Christ to reach perfection, which will be achieved in the eschaton (v. 21-22).¹⁹³ The church also joins believers to both Christ (v. 21) and each other through the work of the Spirit (v. 22). In summary, Ephesians 2:19-22 indicates the Ephesians became members of the church through their acceptance of the gospel message preached by the apostles and prophets. This idea is even more pronounced as Paul continues in Ephesians 3:1-6.

Paul continues in 3:1-6 by providing more information about Gentile inclusion into the church. He first asserts that his ministry is one of stewarding divine revelation of a mystery that God has made known to him as well as to the other apostles and prophets through the Spirit (vv. 1-5). In verse 6, he explains the content of this mystery: the Gentiles are fellow heirs (συγκληρονόμα), members of the same body (σύσσωμα), and partakers of the promise with the Jews (συμμέτοχα τῆς ἐπαγγελίας).¹⁹⁴ Paul's use of the adjective σύσσωμα is ecclesiological in

¹⁹⁰Best, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians*, 284.

¹⁹¹Thielman, *Ephesians*, 182–83.

¹⁹²O'Brien argues that the phrase εἰς ναὸν ἄγιον ἐν κυρίῳ does not refer to the universal church but to a heavenly entity. He argues this view primarily based upon Eph 2:4-6 and Eph 2:19, which denote the participation of Gentile believers in a heavenly reality. O'Brien's view relies heavily on defining ἀκρογωνιαίου as "capstone." As I noted earlier in n. 187, this interpretation cannot be asserted with confidence. As Best argues, based upon Paul's use of the phrase "temple of God" as a reference to the church in 1 Cor 3:16ff and 2 Cor 6:16, it seems reasonable to view "temple of God" as referencing the universal church. See Best, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians*, 288; O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 219–20; P. T. O'Brien, "The Church as a Heavenly and Eschatological Community," in *The Church in the Bible and the World*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987), 101–03; and Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 157.

¹⁹³Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 158. Cf. Thielman, *Ephesians*, 183–85; Best, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians*, 287–88.

¹⁹⁴As Lincoln argues, the focus of the first two adjectives—"fellow heirs" and "members of the same body"—is that the Gentiles are sharers in God's full salvation of his people. The focus of the last adjective—"partakers of the promise"—indicates that the Gentiles are participants in the new community with the Jews with no distinction between them. See Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 180–81. Cf. Thielman, *Ephesians*, 203–06; O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 234–37; Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 315–16.

nature and indicates that the Gentiles are now members of the new people of God, the church (cf. Eph 1:22-23).¹⁹⁵ Paul then goes to explain how the Gentiles are members of the church. He argues that they are members of the church in Christ through their acceptance of the proclamation of the gospel; as O'Brien notes, Ephesians 3:6 indicates that "it is through the active proclamation of the gospel that God draws men and women to himself (cf. 2 Thess. 2:14)."¹⁹⁶ In this case, it is through the proclamation of the gospel by the apostle and prophets that the Ephesians became members of the church, the body of Christ.

In summary, Paul, in the midst of his discussion of Gentile inclusion into the church as well as its nature, asserts the Ephesians are a part of the universal church whose inclusion into it is a result of their acceptance of the gospel message proclaimed by the apostles and prophets. Therefore, it is the gospel proclamation that creates the members of the universal church of which the local Ephesian church is a part. Paul also expresses this same concept in Ephesians 5:25-33 when he details Christ's great love for the church, his bride, through the gospel.

Ephesians 5:25-33

Ephesians 5:25-33 occurs in a pericope where Paul is giving instructions to both husbands and wives. He has just finished giving instructions to wives to be submissive to their husbands (vv. 22-24). Then, in Ephesians 5:25-33, he turns to giving instructions to husbands. He begins by commanding husbands to love their wives as Christ loved the church by giving himself up for her (v. 25). As Paul argues, the love of Christ for his church is truly displayed in Christ's passion for the church in his sacrificial death; just as Christ self-sacrificially gave of himself for his church, so also are husbands to love their wives self-sacrificially.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁵Thielman, *Ephesians*, 204; and Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 181.

¹⁹⁶O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 236. Cf. Thielman, *Ephesians*, 206; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 181; Best, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians*, 312-13.

¹⁹⁷O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 419-20; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 381-82; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 374-75; Best, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians*, 540; Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 386; Liefeld, *Ephesians*, 146.

Paul continues by asserting the purpose of Christ’s sacrifice for his church: to sanctify her (ἀγιάση) through the cleansing (καθαρίσας) of her by the washing of water (τῷ λουτρῷ τοῦ ὕδατος) through the word (ἐν ῥήματι) (v. 26). Verse 26 has four components that must be examined closely to understand its meaning. The first, Paul’s reference to the church being sanctified (ἀγιάση), is fairly straightforward; it indicates the purpose of Christ’s sacrificial death:¹⁹⁸ that the church would be set apart for service to God.¹⁹⁹ The next element, cleansing (καθαρίσας), has the following two functions: it (1) demonstrates how or by what means the action of the main verb (ἀγιάση) is accomplished²⁰⁰ and (2) points to the removal of sin from the church.²⁰¹ The third element, the reference to washing of water (τῷ λουτρῷ τοῦ ὕδατος), is disputed. While some commentators believe the phrase washing of water refers to the act of water baptism, this interpretation is not likely.²⁰² Instead, it is best to interpret this phrase as referring to “a spiritual washing brought about through Christ’s gracious word in the gospel.”²⁰³

¹⁹⁸The ἵνα that begins v. 26 signals that the phrase αὐτὴν ἀγίαση καθάριας τῷ λουτρῷ τοῦ ὕδατος ἐν ῥήματι is the purpose of Christ’s sacrificial death for his church. See Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 375. Cf. O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 521; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 382–83.

¹⁹⁹Thielman, *Ephesians*, 382–83; O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 526. Cf. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 375.

²⁰⁰The participle, καθαρίσας, functions instrumentally and denotes how Christ sanctifies the church. See Thielman, *Ephesians*, 383. Cf. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 375; O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 422.

²⁰¹Thielman, *Ephesians*, 383; and O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 422.

²⁰²Contra Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 375; Best, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians*, 542–43; Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 388–89; Morris, *Expository Reflections in the Letter to the Ephesians*, 185; Schnackenburg, *Ephesians*, 249–50; Stott, *God’s New Society*, 227; Michel Bouttier, *L’Épître De Saint Paul Aux Éphésiens*, Commentaire Du Nouveau Testament (Genève: Labor et Fides, 1991), 244. As Thielman notes, many commentators assume this interpretation without argument. The ones who argue that τῷ λουτρῷ τοῦ ὕδατος refers to baptism (such as Lincoln and Best) assert that the article, τῷ, in front of λουτρῷ indicates that a specific bath is being referenced, which, in this case, would be baptism. Lincoln as well as Schnackenburg also argue that the mention of water must refer to a literal rite that involves water—baptism. O’Brien and Thielman, however, note that the use of a definite article and the reference to water does not necessarily point to baptism. See Thielman, *Ephesians*, 383; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 375; Best, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians*, 542; Schnackenburg, *Ephesians*, 249; O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 422; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 383–84. Cf. Harold Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 752–54; Klyne Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, New International Version Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 298.

Interpreting the phrase “washing of water” as a reference to spiritual washing is consistent with Paul’s reference to a spiritual washing of believers in 1 Corinthians 6:11.²⁰⁴ It is also consistent with the rest of Ephesians, as there is no other place besides 4:5 where water baptism is referenced; as O’Brien notes, the reference in 4:5 to baptism is listed as part of a sevenfold confession and is not emphasized.²⁰⁵ The interpretation of “washing of water” as spiritual cleansing is also consistent with the rest of the New Testament, for, as Snodgrass observes, there is no other place in the New Testament that references the church itself being baptized.²⁰⁶ The interpretation of the fourth component, through the word (ἐν ῥήματι), indicates the means by which this washing is accomplished; its interpretation is closely linked to how one interprets the phrase “washing of water.”²⁰⁷ If it is interpreted to mean water baptism, commentators suggests the phrase refers to a baptismal confession of faith or formula.²⁰⁸ Once again, this interpretation is not likely, for the majority of Paul’s uses of ῥήμα refer to the gospel, which is also the case in Ephesians.²⁰⁹ The phrase is best taken, then, as referring to the gospel and, specifically, the proclamation of the gospel: “It also seems simplest to take the term as a reference not to a baptismal formula but to the word of God, and even more specifically to the gospel, whose preaching brings the church into existence as people hear and believe it.”²¹⁰ With this

²⁰³O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 526. Cf. Hoehner, *Ephesians*, 752–54; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 383–84; Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, 298; Arnold, *Ephesians*, 388.

²⁰⁴O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 422.

²⁰⁵Ibid.

²⁰⁶Snodgrass, *Ephesians*, 298. See also O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 422.

²⁰⁷O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 423.

²⁰⁸Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 376; Best, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians*, 543–4; Morris, *Expository Reflections in the Letter to the Ephesians*, 185.

²⁰⁹O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 423. The one exception, as noted by O’Brien, occurs in 2 Corinthians 13:1 where Paul uses words that refer to God or Christ. See O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 423.

²¹⁰Thielman, *Ephesians*, 385.

interpretation in mind, verse 26 denotes the creation of members of the church by the proclamation of the gospel; as Thielman concludes, “This sanctifying, cleansing action was applied to them [the Ephesians] when they were washed in the verbal proclamation of the gospel, that is, when they heard the gospel preached, believed it, and were sealed as God’s special people by the Holy Spirit (cf. 1:13-14).”²¹¹

Paul proceeds after verse 26 by providing the purpose for this cleansing and washing and, consequently, his sacrificial death: the perfection of the church into a holy and blameless²¹² bride (v. 27). He concludes by instructing husbands to love their wives as their own bodies just as Christ loves the members of his own body, the church (vv. 28-33). Even though the focus of Ephesians 5:25-33 is on instructing husbands on how to treat their wives, Paul also details profound truths about the church. One of these truths is that the proclamation of the gospel creates the members of the church. This creation of the church through gospel proclamation points back to Christ’s profound act of sacrificial love for his bride: his torturous crucifixion and death. Christ’s love for his church as demonstrated by the creation of its members through the proclamation of the gospel is also evident in 1 Thessalonians 1.

1 Thessalonians 1

Paul begins his letter to the Thessalonians with an introductory greeting (v. 1). He then proceeds to communicate his thankfulness to God for the Thessalonian church, which he expresses to God in his prayers (v. 2). As Paul continues, he articulates the motivation for his prayers: the Godly life and character of the Thessalonians evidenced after their conversion (v. 3).²¹³ He next presents the second reason for his thankfulness for the Thessalonians – their

²¹¹Ibid.

²¹²As O’Brien notes, the phrase, “holy and blameless,” speaks of a beauty that is both moral and spiritual. See O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 425. Cf. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 377; and Best, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians*, 546.

²¹³Gene L. Green, *The Letters to the Thessalonians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 88.

election by God (v.4).²¹⁴ He proceeds by stating the reason for his confidence in their election. Paul knows the Thessalonians are elect because (ὅτι)²¹⁵ of their positive response to his spirit-empowered preaching of the gospel,²¹⁶ for the Thessalonians responded positively to Paul on account of the Spirit's inner work in their lives to bring about conviction of sin. As Fee asserts, "The twin phrases, 'but in power' and 'with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction,' refer primarily to Paul's preaching, but not so much to the *manner* (or style) of preaching as to its Spirit-empowered *effectiveness*."²¹⁷ Due to the positive response of the Thessalonians caused by the

²¹⁴Ibid., 91.

²¹⁵There is some debate as to whether ὅτι is an exegetical or causal ὅτι. However, as Martin argues, based upon the context in which Paul is expressing the reason for his confidence that the Thessalonians are elect, it is best to view the ὅτι as functioning causally. Contra Fee who argues the sentence structure means that the ὅτι functions exegetically. See D. Michael Martin, *1,2 Thessalonians*, The New American Commentary, vol. 33 (Nashville: B&H, 1995), 57–58; Gordon D. Fee, *The First and Second Letters to the Thessalonians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 31–32. Cf. Charles A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles to the Thessalonians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 78; Green, *The Letters to the Thessalonians*, 93–94; James Everett Frame, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles of St. Paul to the Thessalonians*, The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1970), 78–79; Leon Morris, *The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959), 56; F. F. Bruce, *1 & 2 Thessalonians*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 45 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), 13; Béda Rigaux, *Saint Paul: Les Épîtres Aux Thessaloniens* (Paris: Lecoffre, 1956), 373. For a helpful listing of evidence for both interpretations, see Rigaux, *Les Épîtres Aux Thessaloniens*, 372–73.

²¹⁶As Fee argues, Paul refers to his oral communication of the gospel message to the Thessalonians. The content of this gospel proclamation that Paul references in v. 5 is most certainly the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins (cf. 1 Cor 15:1–3). See Fee, *The First and Second Letters to the Thessalonians*, 32–33. Cf. Wanamaker, *The Epistles to the Thessalonians*, 78; Frame, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles of St. Paul to the Thessalonians*, 81; Morris, *The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians*, 57. Cf. Bruce, *1 & 2 Thessalonians*, 33; Leon Morris, *1 and 2 Thessalonians*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2009), 46.

²¹⁷Fee, *The First and Second Letters to the Thessalonians*, 34. Italics original. Cf. Victor Paul Furnish, *1 Thessalonians 2 Thessalonians*, Abingdon New Testament Commentaries (Nashville: Abingdon, 2007), 45. Richard insightfully notes that Paul, by connecting the work of the Spirit to his gospel proclamation, is stressing the human agency as well as divine power present in gospel proclamation. Some commentators argue that the words ἐν δυνάμει reference the signs, miracles, and wonders done in Thessalonica by the apostles during their proclamation of the gospel. However, as Stott points out, the reference is not to miracles, as miracles are often referenced with the plural form of δυνάμεις. Instead, the reference is more likely to the internal operation of the Holy Spirit among those who accepted the gospel in Thessalonica. See Earl J. Richard, *First and Second Thessalonians*, Sacra Pagina (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1995), 48; Green, *The Letters to the Thessalonians*, 95; Wanamaker, *The Epistles to the Thessalonians*, 79; William Neil, *The Epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians*, The Moffat New Testament Commentary (London: Houghter and Stoughton, 1950), 17–18; and John Stott, *The Gospel & the End of Time: The Message of 1 and 2 Thessalonians* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1991), 34.

work of the Holy Spirit, they were saved and the Thessalonian church was formed (cf. 2 Thess. 2:13-15). As Stott opines in reference to verse 5, “Before they (Paul, Silas, and Timothy) arrived there was no church; when they left, the church had been planted and taken root. How did this happen? The planting of the church was the direct result of the preaching of the gospel.”²¹⁸ After describing the church-creating result of their Spirit-empowered gospel proclamation, Paul proceeds by asserting that the gospel was not contradicted by the conduct of the ones who proclaimed it (v. 5).²¹⁹ He concludes this section by providing other evidence for the election of the Thessalonians: the positive response of the Thessalonians to the gospel in their imitation of the apostles and ultimately of Christ (v. 6); this imitation of Christ and the apostles by the Thessalonians has resulted in their church becoming well-known to many other believers in neighboring regions on account of their positive example and testimony (vv. 7-10). Paul’s expression of thankfulness for the Thessalonians in this chapter provides evidence that the proclamation of the gospel creates members of the church, for it is the positive response of the Thessalonians to Paul’s gospel proclamation that demonstrated their election; on account of their response rooted in the work of the Spirit, they became saved and, consequently, members of the newly formed church at Thessalonica. Peter also demonstrates this pattern in 1 Peter 1:22-25.

1 Peter 1:22-25

First Peter 1:22-25 occurs in a pericope, which begins in 1:13. In this pericope, Peter is giving instructions for Christians on how to live the Christian life.²²⁰ He has previously been focusing on the reader’s responsibilities toward God; however, he now turns to addressing the

²¹⁸Stott, *The Gospel & the End of Time*, 33.

²¹⁹Green, *The Letters to the Thessalonians*, 96–97. Cf. G. K. Beale, *1-2 Thessalonians*, The IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003), 54.

²²⁰Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 122.

responsibilities of his readers to one another.²²¹ In 1:22-25, Peter instructs his recipients how they should treat one another: with love. He begins by asserting that, because his recipients have been obedient to the gospel message (τῇ ὑπακοῇ τῆς ἀληθείας)²²² that has cleansed (ἡγνικότες)²²³ their souls, they are to love one another. Peter’s usage of φιλαδελφίαν denotes the kind of mutual love members of a family or a close-knit community would have toward one another,²²⁴ when Peter’s readers accepted the gospel, they became part of the family of God (the church)²²⁵ and are, therefore, to show “brotherly love” (φιλαδελφίαν) toward each other (v. 22). Peter continues by asserting that his readers also are to love one another because they have been born (ἀναγεγεννημένοι) not from perishable seed, but from imperishable seed; that is, they have been born through (διὰ)²²⁶ the living and abiding word of God, the gospel (v. 23).²²⁷ As Jobes argues,

²²¹J. Ramsey Michaels, *1 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 49 (Waco, TX: Word, 1988), 72–73. Cf. Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, New American Commentary, vol. 37 (Nashville: B&H, 2003), 90.

²²²Peter H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 50; Michaels, *1 Peter*, 75; John H. Elliot, *1 Peter*, The Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 383; Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 92–93. Grudem argues that this phrase is a reference to sanctification based upon its context and use of obedience and purification elsewhere in the New Testament. However, as Schreiner notes, none of Grudem’s arguments are convincing as the context from 1 Peter clearly denotes conversion. See Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 92–93; and Wayne Grudem, *1 Peter*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1988), 92–93.

²²³As Schreiner argues, the participles ἡγνικότες and ἀναγεγεννημένοι form the reason or grounds for Peter’s command to love one another. See Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, 91–92. Cf. Jobes, *1 Peter*, 123.

²²⁴Michaels, *1 Peter*, 75; Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 77; Leonhard Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter*, ed. Ferdinand Hahn, trans. John E. Alsup (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 123; Paul J. Achtemeier, *A Commentary on 1 Peter*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 137; I. Howard Marshall, *1 Peter*, The IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1991), 59–60; Lewis R. Donelson, *I & II Peter and Jude: A Commentary*, The New Testament Library (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2010), 52; Charles Bigg, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles of St. Peter and St. Jude*, The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1969), 123.

²²⁵As Davids opines, “The experience of Christian initiations moves one from ‘the kingdom of darkness’ to ‘the kingdom of God’ or the church” (Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 77). Hiebert also insightfully comments that verse 22 indicates that being obedient to the gospel message is a “necessary antecedent” for joining the Christian community or church. See D. Edmond Hiebert, *1 Peter*, rev. ed. (Chicago: Moody, 1992), 111.

²²⁶As Schreiner notes, the preposition διὰ is functioning instrumentally. Cf. Nobert Brox, *Der Erste Petrusbrief*, 2nd ed., Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar Zum Neuen Testament (Zürich: Benziger Verlag, 1989), 87. Schreiner accurately captures Peter’s argument when he opines, “The means by which God begets his people is the seed of God’s word, the preaching of the gospel. Peter’s theology matches Paul’s here, for the latter teaches that

“The love commanded in 1:22 is the result of obeying truth – responding positively to the gospel – and is made possible by the spiritual energy of the new life God has generated by his eternal word.”²²⁸ For it is God who has caused Christians to be born again through the gospel and, consequently, to enter into the church community.²²⁹ Peter continues with a quote from Isaiah 40 in which he asserts that even though humanity and everything in this world pass away, the Word of God will last forever (vv. 24-25a).²³⁰ He concludes with the assertion that this Word that abides forever is the Word that was preached to them (εὐαγγελισθέν), the gospel (v. 25b).²³¹ As Hiebert opines, “The message ‘that was evangelized’ (*to euangelisthen*) to them was indeed the good news of salvation. The reference is to the evangelization that resulted in the establishment of the churches that were addressed.”²³² In 1 Peter 1:22-25, Peter argues that it is the proclamation of the gospel that causes rebirth in those who heard, which makes the loving community present within the church and the church itself possible.²³³ Therefore, it is through the proclamation of the gospel that members of the church are created through the regenerating work of the Spirit.

‘faith comes from hearing the message’ (Rom 10:17)” (Schreiner, *I, 2 Peter, Jude*, 95). See also Schreiner, *I, 2 Peter, Jude*, 95.

²²⁷Donald P. Senior, “1 Peter,” in *1 Peter Jude and 2 Peter*, Sacra Pagina (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2003), 48; and Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, 78–79.

²²⁸Jobes, *1 Peter*, 125.

²²⁹Schreiner, *I, 2 Peter, Jude*, 94; and Donelson, *I & II Peter and Jude*, 53.

²³⁰Elliot, *1 Peter*, 390.

²³¹Michaels, *1 Peter*, 79; Jobes, *1 Peter*, 126; Schreiner, *I, 2 Peter, Jude*, 96–97; Achtemeier, *A Commentary on 1 Peter*, 140; F. J. A. Hort, *The First Epistle of St. Peter I.1-II.17* (London: Macmillan, 1898), 96.

²³²Hiebert, *1 Peter*, 118.

²³³Elliot, *1 Peter*, 393; and Achtemeier, *A Commentary on 1 Peter*, 135.

Summary

In this chapter, I have surveyed numerous passages; these passages demonstrate that it is the proclamation of the gospel accompanied by the regenerating work for the Holy Spirit that creates the church's members. This pattern began at Pentecost with Peter's sermon, as predicted by Christ in Matthew 16:18, and continued throughout the rest of the early church. In Acts, it is consistently the Spirit-empowered proclamation of the gospel that results in the planting or growth of churches. This pattern was also recognized by the apostles such as Paul and Peter. As I have demonstrated, Paul argues in several of his epistles (Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Ephesians, 1 Thessalonians) for the power of the gospel to create members of the church. Peter also recognizes in 1 Peter that it is the Spirit-empowered proclamation of the gospel that creates members of the church. The proclamation of the gospel, while playing a central role in the church's creation, also forms the church's mission. The relationship of gospel proclamation to the mission of the church is the topic of my next chapter, to which I now turn.

CHAPTER 5
THE CHURCH:
PROCLAIMER OF THE GOSPEL

Introduction

I now continue the heart of my dissertation: Scriptural exegesis. This chapter will be similar to the previous chapter. In the previous chapter, I argued the following from Scripture: the proclamation of the gospel creates members of the church. In this chapter, I will argue a complementary idea, that the church is the instrument that God uses to proclaim the gospel. Specifically, God uses the members of his church as instruments through whom the gospel is proclaimed to the lost.

As in the last chapter, I have selected Scripture passages¹ that best seem to support the relationship of the church to gospel proclamation;² however, these passages are certainly not the only ones that could be used to support this relationship.³ I am exegeting a large number of verses in this chapter, so I will only focus on the content of the verse(s) in each passage that is pertinent to proving my thesis; information (such as certain linguistic nuances or historical background) that does not directly relate to my topic, while important, will not be covered. However, each text will be exegeted with all of this data in mind. The main goal of my exegesis is not to provide a comprehensive analysis of each text; instead, it is to represent accurately the authorial intent of each passage and show how this intent supports my thesis for this chapter: that

¹Verses exegeted in this chapter are Matt 28:16-20; Luke 24:44-49; Acts 1:8; Acts 2:28, Rom 10:5-21, Gal 2:7-9, Eph 4:1-16; Phil 1; Col 4:2-6; 1 Tim 2:1-7; and 2 Tim 4:1-8.

²I have selected verses that are commonly used such as Matt 28:16-20 and Acts 1:8 to argue for the church's role in gospel proclamation as well as verses that are not commonly used.

³Verses not exegeted in this chapter that support this chapter's thesis but add nothing substantive to it include John 17:13-21; John 20:19-23; 1 Cor 4:16; 1 Cor 11:1; and Tit 2:1-15.

the church is the instrument God uses to proclaim the gospel. At the end of this chapter, I will provide a short summary of the Scriptural data concerning the instrumental role of the church in the proclamation of the gospel. I now begin this chapter by examining Matthew 28:16-20.

Matthew 28:16-20

Matthew 28:16-20 is a foundational passage for understanding the mission of the church. It is the “climax and crown”⁴ of Matthew’s gospel that serves to illuminate the significance of what Matthew has already previously recorded,⁵ for this passage looks back at Jesus’ ministry as a whole (“all that I have commanded you,” v. 20) as well as forward to one of the results of Jesus’ ministry: the ministry of the church.⁶

In the verses preceding Matthew 28:16-20, Matthew records a command to Jesus’ disciples to meet him in Galilee (28:10) as well as the plot of the Jewish leadership to hide the fact of Jesus’ resurrection (28:11-15). The disciples, obeying the command of Jesus, proceed to the designated meeting place (a certain mountain) in Galilee (v. 16). When they arrive at the mountain, they see Jesus and worship him.⁷ As Barth asserts in reference to verse 17, “Worship is offered in the presence of the revealed God. Jesus encountered them [the disciples] as God,

⁴W. D. Davies and D. C. Allison, *Matthew 19-28*, International Critical Commentary (London: T. & T. Clark, 2004), 688; Craig L. Blomberg, *Matthew*, The New American Commentary, vol. 22 (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 429; D. A. Carson, *Matthew*, in vol. 8 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin and J. D. Douglas (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, Regency Reference Library, 2010), 662; David L. Turner, *Matthew*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 687.

⁵R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 1109. As France argues, the only appropriate response of the reader to Matthew 28:16-20 is to join the disciples in worship to Jesus, in proclaiming the gospel, and making disciples of all people (France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1109). See also Davies and Allison, *Matthew 19-28*, 688–89; Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 33b (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 885.

⁶Davies and Allison, *Matthew 19-28*, 678. As Hill notes, the church’s ministry is not to be thought of as a substitute for Jesus’s ministry, but as continuous with it. See David Hill, *The Gospel of Matthew*, New Century Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), 361. Cf. Carson, *Matthew*, 663.

⁷As France notes, the fact the disciples worshiped Jesus indicates that they recognized Jesus as more than human (France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1110).

and they encounter him now as worshippers.”⁸ However, Matthew records that some (οἱ δὲ) doubted (ἐδίστασαν, v. 17).⁹ It is not clear from the context whether the some that doubted were part of the disciples or a larger crowd that had accompanied the disciples.¹⁰ Even if it is the disciples who doubted, this fact would not be surprising, since Jesus’ followers had trouble recognizing him or doubted his resurrection on other occasions (Luke 23:13-35; John 20:24-29). Matthew continues by asserting the lordship of Christ over all of creation. This assertion is an allusion to Daniel 7:14,¹¹ for Jesus is the risen and exalted Son of Man mentioned in Daniel 7:14 whose (1) dominion over all people and (2) kingdom will never end (v. 18).¹² Matthew, then, proceeds by detailing the mission of the church. His usage of the inferential οὖν indicates that this mission is a result of Christ’s universal authority over all creation.¹³ The primary task of this mission is to make disciples (μαθητεύσατε)¹⁴ —specifically, to go (πορευθέντες)¹⁵ and make

⁸Karl Barth, “An Exegetical Study of Matthew 28:16-20,” in *The Theology of the Christian Mission*, ed. Gerald H. Anderson, trans. Thomas Wieser (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961), 59.

⁹It should be noted that ἐδίστασαν does not refer “to intellectual uncertainty, but to the disorientation produced by an unfamiliar and overwhelming situation” (R. T. France, *Matthew: Evangelist and Teacher* [Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2004], 314). Cf. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1110–11; Blomberg, *Matthew*, 430; Carson, *Matthew*, 663; Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 716. As N. T. Wright suggests, one suspects that this intellectual uncertainty or hesitation arose from fact that “the risen Jesus both was and was not ‘the same’ as he had been before . . . there was a mystery about him which even those who knew him best were unable to penetrate” (N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, vol. 3, Christian Origins and The Question of God [Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003], 643–44).

¹⁰For a detailed discussion of the possible options for the identity of the ones who doubted, see Carson, *Matthew*, 663–64. Cf. Grant R. Osborne, *Matthew*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 1077.

¹¹For a comprehensive discussion of Matthew’s allusion to Daniel 7:14, see Jane Schaberg, *The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit: The Triadic Phrase in Matthew 28:19b*, The Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 61 (Chico, CA: Scholars, 1982), 111–221. Cf. Craig L. Blomberg, “Matthew,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 100.

¹²The passive verb ἐδόθη is a divine passive indicating that Jesus’ authority has been given to him by God the Father. So also Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, 886; Blomberg, *Matthew*, 431; Osborne, *Matthew*, 1078.

¹³Osborne, *Matthew*, 1078; Turner, *Matthew*, 689.

¹⁴France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1115; Osborne, *Matthew*, 1080; Carson, *Matthew*, 666.

disciples. This mission is not limited to a certain group or people, for the disciples are to go and makes disciples of all nations (πάντα τὰ ἔθνη).¹⁶ As Davies and Allison opine, “universal lordship means universal mission.”¹⁷ Matthew continues by characterizing what is involved in the task of making disciples through his usage of the participles βαπτίζοντες and διδάσκοντες.¹⁸ The disciples are commanded to baptize converts in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit; they are also to teach converts everything Jesus has commanded (ἐνετειλάμην).¹⁹ As Davies and Allison argue, the verb ἐνετειλάμην recalls Jesus’ ministry throughout the entire book of Matthew – his proverbs, blessings, parables, and prophecies; therefore, the entire ministry of Jesus is “an imperative.”²⁰ In summary, the disciples are to minister and teach as Jesus taught them (vv. 19-20a).²¹ Turner accurately captures the implications of this ministering/discipling

¹⁵The participle πορευθέντες is best viewed as being an attendant circumstance with the main verb μαθητεύσατε; it also takes on an imperative coloring due to the main verb μαθητεύσατε, which is an imperative (Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar: Beyond the Basics* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996], 642). Cf. Blomberg, *Matthew*, 431; Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, 882; Carson, *Matthew*, 666; Osborne, *Matthew*, 1080. It should be noted that some scholars translate the participle πορευθέντες as “while you are going” or “as you go” (Robert D. Culver, “What Is the Church’s Commission: Some Exegetical Issues in Matthew 28:16-20,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 125 [1968]: 239–53). However, as Wallace argues, this translation is extremely unlikely as virtually all constructions of aorist participles + aorist imperative have the participle functioning as an attendant circumstance with the main verb (Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 642).

¹⁶It should be noted that this commission, while going far beyond Israel, does not exclude Israel. Cf. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1114; Davies and Allison, *Matthew 19-28*, 684.

¹⁷Davies and Allison, *Matthew 19-28*, 684. Cf. Osborne, *Matthew*, 1079. As Johnson notes, no other passage, with the possible exception of Romans, has more greatly influenced the Christian vision for a worldwide church. See Sherman E. Johnson, “The Gospel According to Saint Matthew,” in *New Testament Articles, Matthew, Mark*, The Interpreter’s Bible (New York: Abingdon, 1951), 620.

¹⁸As Carson opines, it is best, due to their syntax, not to interpret the participles βαπτίζοντες and διδάσκοντες as solely indicating the means through which one makes disciples. Instead, they are modal in that they characterize the act of making disciples; they also retain some imperatival coloring from the main verb (Carson, *Matthew*, 667–68). Cf. Blomberg, *Matthew*, 431; Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, trans. James E. Crouch, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005), 631–34.

¹⁹As Blomberg notes, the mandate to teach all that Jesus commanded reflects the fact that the church’s evangelism is to be holistic. The church is to proclaim the gospel as well as nurture/grow those who accept it to maturity in Christ (Blomberg, *Matthew*, 433). Cf. Osborne, *Matthew*, 1081–82.

²⁰Davies and Allison, *Matthew 19-28*, 686. Cf. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 1118; Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 749.

role of Christ's disciples to the church when he asserts, "All this implies the central role of the church as God's primary agent for mission. Only in the community/family that is the church can disciples be baptized and taught to observe all that Jesus commanded."²² Matthew ends this pericope and his gospel with a statement of divine enablement for Jesus' commission to his disciples: Jesus is always with his disciples to enable them to complete the task of making disciples of all nations. Matthew, therefore, ends his gospel as he began it, with an affirmation that Jesus is Immanuel (God with us) forever (v. 20b).²³

Matthew 28:16-20 demonstrates the fact that the church is the instrument God uses to proclaim the gospel. In this passage, however, the church is not merely the instrument that proclaims the gospel; it is also God's appointed means to disciple those who respond positively to its gospel proclamation. Osborne provides an accurate summary of the message of Matthew 28:16-20 in relation to the church: "So Matthew concludes with a blend of ecclesiology and eschatology – the church is God's chosen messenger during the interim before the consummation and as such is promised the continuous presence of the authoritative One."²⁴ Luke also records the role of the church as God's instrument for the proclamation of the gospel in Luke 24:44-49.²⁵

²¹Barth captures the ethos of Matt 28:19-20a when he argues that to become a Christian is to become "Christ to others by participating in Christ's kingly, priestly, and prophetic ministry" (Barth, "An Exegetical Study of Matthew 28:16-20," 68).

²²Turner, *Matthew*, 690.

²³Günther Bornkamm, "The Risen Lord and the Earthly Jesus: Matthew 28.16-20," in *The Future of Our Religious Past: Essays in Honor of Rudolf Bultmann*, ed. James M. Robinson, trans. Charles E. Carlston and Robert P. Scharlemann (London: SCM, 1971), 228; Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, 888; Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 634.

²⁴Osborne, *Matthew*, 1083.

²⁵The parallel text in Mark 16:15 will not be covered because of its textual inauthenticity. For a detailed discussion of the reasons why it is judged inauthentic, see Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2005), 102–6; Robert H. Stein, *Mark*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 733–37; R. T. France, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 685–88.

Luke 24:44-49

Luke 24:44-49 follows a pericope in which Luke describes the appearance of the resurrected Christ to his followers. During this appearance, Jesus both (1) allowed his followers to touch him and (2) consumed a piece of broiled fish to prove that his physical body had been resurrected and that he was not just a Spirit (24:36-42). Luke continues by describing Jesus' explanation of the miraculous event of his resurrection: the fulfillment of Scripture, for Jesus argues that his resurrection is the fulfillment of what is written about him in the law, the prophets, and the Psalms (v. 44).²⁶ Luke proceeds by recounting that Jesus opened the minds of the disciples so that they could understand what the Scriptures prophesied about him. As Osborne notes, this revelation of Jesus as the Messiah predicted in the Old Testament Scriptures prepared the disciples for their mission²⁷ of gospel proclamation (v. 45). Luke next recounts Jesus' summary of the basic content of the teaching of the Scriptures about himself. First, Jesus asserts that the Scriptures prophesied that he would suffer (παθεῖν) and be resurrected (ἀναστῆναι) from the dead on the third day (v. 46). Next, he argues that Scripture also predicts the message of repentance (μετάνοιαν) for the forgiveness of sins (= the gospel) would be proclaimed (κηρυχθῆναι) in his name to all nations²⁸ beginning in Jerusalem (v. 27).²⁹ Verse 27

²⁶As Bock notes, Jesus is the topic of Scripture and, consequently, the events that composed his life are not surprising as they were fully predicted and in line with God's revelation in Scripture. See Darrell L. Bock, *Luke 9:51-24:53*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 1936.

²⁷Grant R. Osborne, *The Resurrection Narratives: A Redactional Study* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984), 130–31.

²⁸As Bock notes, the phrase “to all nations” indicates that the gospel applies to all people and therefore, has no racial, social, or ethnic boundaries (Bock, *Luke 9:51-24:53*, 1940).

²⁹As Dillon asserts, “There is no syntactical or hermeneutical reason to doubt that the universal preaching of repentance and (unto) forgiveness is being presented as part of the Easter fulfillment of Scripture” (Richard J. Dillon, *From Eye-Witnesses to Ministers of the Word: Tradition and Composition in Luke 24*, *Analecta Biblica* 82 [Rome: Biblical Institute, 1978], 208). Cf. Bock, *Luke 9:51-24:53*, 1941; John Nolland, *Luke 18:35-24:53*, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 35c (Waco, TX: Word, 1993), 1219; Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 856–57; Norval Goldenhuys, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 641; I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, *The New International Greek Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 903, 905–06; William F. Arndt, *Luke*, *Concordia Classic Commentary Series* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1956), 497.

contains a few elements that warrant further examination. First, Luke’s usage of *μετάνοιαν* indicates that the desired result of gospel proclamation (= Jesus’ suffering, death, and resurrection) is a change in attitude (or reorientation) toward sin. As Bock notes, “People must also change their minds about who they are and how they can approach God. Repentance involves turning to and embracing God in faith.”³⁰ Second, Luke’s usage of *κηρυχθῆναι* with the prepositional phrase *ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ* indicates how the preaching or proclamation of the gospel will occur: in his (Jesus’) name. As Fitzmyer opines, “Jesus’ status as the risen Messiah will be the basis for all that is preached about Him.”³¹ The gospel message, therefore, finds its foundation in its subject – the resurrected Christ. Initially, this task of gospel proclamation would fall to those who were witnesses of the works of Christ (his passion, resurrection, teaching, and work)³² since they could testify to the truthfulness of the gospel message (v. 48).³³ These witnesses included both apostles and others, for Jesus is addressing a crowd greater than the apostles during this discourse (cf. Luke 24:9, 33).³⁴ Jesus, therefore, charges all of his followers with the task of proclaiming the gospel. The passage ends with a promise: Christ will supernaturally equip his followers to proclaim the gospel;³⁵ this equipping will occur with the

³⁰Bock, *Luke 9:51-24:53*, 1940.

³¹Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, The Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 1584. Cf. Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Luke*, 5th ed., The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1964), 563; Hans Conzelmann, *The Theology of St. Luke*, trans. Geoffrey Buswell (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960), 177–78.

³²Nolland, *Luke 18:35-24:53*, 1220.

³³Bock, *Luke 9:51-24:53*, 1942; Robert H. Stein, *Luke*, The New American Commentary, vol. 24 (Nashville: B&H, 1992), 621; Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 906. Dillon also argues based upon the context of Luke and Acts that “witness” means more than just a “guarantor of facts”; he believes mission means a “total enactment of the Christological ‘journey’” (Dillon, *From Eye-Witnesses to Ministers of the Word*, 215–16).

³⁴Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 1580.

³⁵As Nolland argues, the Spirit would empower the disciples to fulfill their mission to proclaim the gospel. See Nolland, *Luke 18:35-24:53*, 122. Cf. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 858; Geldenhuys, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*, 642; Leon Morris, *Luke*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1988), 362; John Martin Creed, *The Gospel According to St. Luke* (London: Macmillan, 1953), 300.

arrival of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, which is detailed in Acts 2 (v. 49).³⁶ In the subsequent verses, Luke ends his gospel by describing the reaction of Jesus' followers to his resurrection and commission: waiting for Christ to send the Holy Spirit and praising God (24:50-53).

In summary, Luke 24:44-49 records the commissioning of the apostles and other early followers of Christ to gospel proclamation. This task of gospel proclamation was to occur after the arrival of the Spirit at Pentecost. This arrival of the Spirit would serve both to (1) initiate the gospel proclamation of Jesus' followers and (2) mark the birth of the church composed of his followers. Luke 24:44-49 also reveals that the gospel proclamation carried out by Jesus' followers (i.e., the church) is the realization of God's sovereign plan. As Stein argues, "The church's worldwide mission and the Spirit's coming to empower them for ministry is also the fulfillment of the Scripture."³⁷ The commission of Jesus' followers in Luke 24:44-49 sets the stage for the disciples' gospel proclamation in the book of Acts,³⁸ to which I now turn.

Acts

The book of Acts is crucial for understanding the church as God's ordained instrument of gospel proclamation. Acts presents a pattern in which the early church faithfully spreads the gospel. I will begin my brief survey of some of the relevant passages in Acts with Acts 1:8, as it contains Luke's record in Acts of Christ commissioning his disciples to proclaim the gospel.

Acts 1:8

Acts 1:8 occurs just after the following two events: (1) Jesus' promise to send the Holy Spirit to the disciples (vv. 4-5) and (2) a question by the disciples as to when Jesus would

³⁶Bock, *Luke 9:51-24:53*, 1943; Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 1580, 1582; Robert C. Tannehill, *Luke*, Abingdon New Testament Commentaries (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996), 362.

³⁷Stein, *Luke*, 621.

³⁸So also Mark C. Black, *Luke*, The College Press NIV Commentary (Joplin, MO: College, 1996), 391.

restore the kingdom of Israel in the end times (v. 6). Jesus' response to the disciples' question indicates that the disciples are not to be concerned about when the kingdom of Israel would be restored;³⁹ instead, they are to be active in spreading the good news of Christ to all people. As Bock argues, "The kingdom message will move out and gradually encompass all. The church's call is to be missionary in direction and eschatological focus."⁴⁰ Luke's usage of δύνανται indicates that it is through the power of the Spirit that the disciples are capable of fulfilling their mission, which is to take the gospel to the ends of the earth.⁴¹ As I noted in the previous chapter, this passage highlights a major theme in Acts: the progress of the gospel and subsequent growth of the church throughout the world by the power of the Spirit.⁴² However, highlighting this theme is not the only function of the Acts 1:8. It also provides, as Polhill argues, a rough outline of the entire book, for the church, in the book of Acts, takes the gospel to Jerusalem (chapters 1-7), to Judea and Samaria (chapters 8-12), and to the ends of the earth (chapters 13-28) as the verse predicts.⁴³ The church, therefore, is God's appointed instrument in Acts through which the gospel is proclaimed, for, Luke demonstrates how the early church worked to fulfill Jesus' commission to take the gospel to Jerusalem, to Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. However, the task to fulfill Jesus' commission did not stop with the early church because the text

³⁹David G. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 110. Cf. Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 64.

⁴⁰Bock, *Acts*, 66.

⁴¹Ibid., 63. Cf. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 110; F. F. Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, rev. ed., The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 36; Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 205; John B. Polhill, *Acts*, The New American Commentary, vol. 26 (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 85; C. K. Barrett, *Acts*, The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1994), 79; Richard N. Longenecker, *Acts*, in vol. 10 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin and J. D. Douglas (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, Regency Reference Library, 2007), 718.

⁴²Brian Rosner, "The Progress of the Word," in *Witness to the Gospel: The Theology of Acts*, ed. I. Howard Marshall and David Peterson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 219. Cf. Ben Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 111; Barrett, *Acts*, 79.

⁴³Polhill, *Acts*, 85–6. Cf. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 112–13; Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, 36–7. As Pervo notes, it provides a "programmatic statement" for the book (Richard Pervo, *Acts*, Hermeneia [Philadelphia: Fortress, 2009], 43).

also provides a challenge to the reader to continue the proclamation of the gospel.⁴⁴ Thus, the church's function as God's appointed instrument does not end; instead, as Robinson and Wall note, Acts 1:8 indicates that the church is "in its nature and total life a mission and missionary endeavor."⁴⁵ This missionary ethos characterized the Christians in the book of Acts, as I will now briefly show.

The Church: God's Gospel Instrument—Acts 2-28

Acts 1-7 records the efforts of Jesus' followers to take the gospel to Jerusalem. This effort begins with the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2, which led to the formation of the church. After this formation, Acts consistently presents members of the church, such as the apostles, as God's ordained instruments for spreading the gospel.⁴⁶ The first instance of members of the church spreading the gospel occurs when Peter and John proclaim the gospel in the temple after Pentecost (Acts 3).⁴⁷ The pattern continues when Stephen proclaims the gospel and is then martyred (Acts 7).⁴⁸

⁴⁴Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 113; Polhill, *Acts*, 86; Bock, *Acts*, 66–67. As Witherington notes, Acts 28 has an open-ended conclusion that alludes to the worldwide mission of the church. See Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 110–11.

⁴⁵Anthony B. Robinson and Robert W. Wall, *Called to Be Church: The Book of Acts for a New Day* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 44. Cf. Bock, *Acts*, 66.

⁴⁶In the previous chapter, I exegeted several passages in which the apostles and other followers of Christ proclaimed the gospel. As I noted in that chapter, these instances demonstrate that the proclamation of the gospel results in the growth of the church. However, they also demonstrate that the church is the instrument that proclaims the gospel because the apostles and followers of Christ (both members of the church) are the ones in each passage through whom the gospel is proclaimed. In this section, I will briefly revisit some of those passages to demonstrate how they illustrate the church as God's instrument of gospel proclamation.

⁴⁷The proclamation of the gospel specifically takes place in Acts 3:11-26 where Peter preaches Christ as the Messiah using Old Testament Scripture: Bock, *Acts*, 165–83; Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 176–98. As Peterson argues, this sermon by Peter is Luke's second example (the first is in Acts 2) where he details how the gospel was preached to the Jews. See Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 171–85. Cf. Barrett, *Acts*, 186–214.

⁴⁸As Bock notes, Stephen's speech uses Israel's history to show why the Jews are in desperate need of Christ's new work, but it does not directly preach Christ. However, as Polhill argues, the end of the speech (Acts 7:51-53) implicitly calls the Jews to repentance and to receive Christ (i.e., accept the gospel message). See Bock, *Acts*, 276; Polhill, *Acts*, 205–06. Cf. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 244–67; Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 257–77. Bock correctly observes in his closing comments on Stephen's speech, "The gospel was for all,

The book of Acts proceeds by recording the church's witness throughout Judea and Samaria in Acts 8-12. These chapters commence with Philip proclaiming the gospel to people in the city of Samaria (8:4-25)⁴⁹ and to an Ethiopian eunuch (8:26-40).⁵⁰ Likewise, Saul—after his conversion and consequent inclusion into the church – proclaims the gospel of Christ in the synagogues of Damascus (9:19b-25).⁵¹ As this section in Acts continues, the gospel is also first proclaimed to the Gentiles (Cornelius and his household) by Peter in Acts 10-11.⁵² Thus, members of the church (such as Philip, Saul, and Peter) begin to proclaim the gospel to all people as commanded by Jesus in Matthew 28:16-20, Luke 24:44-49, and Acts 1:8. The continued expansion of gospel proclamation by the church to both Jews and Gentiles in all parts of the world is the focus of the rest of Acts.

Acts 13 begins with the commissioning of Paul and Barnabas to preach the gospel to other parts of the world (13:1-3; cf. Rom 15:14-21).⁵³ After this commissioning, Paul sets out on

especially those in Israel, but the rejection by those in the nation made it necessary for the new community to go its own way” (Bock, *Acts*, 307). Therefore, the Jews' rejection of the gospel proclamation by the members of the early church (= God's ordained instrument for the proclamation of the gospel) caused a permanent break between Christianity and Judaism.

⁴⁹ Peterson rightly notes that Luke's usage of the verb εὐαγγελιζομένῳ in Acts 8:12 indicates Philip was preaching the gospel (Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 283).

⁵⁰As Bock asserts, the eunuch's positive response to the gospel proclaimed by Philip is indicated by his willingness to be baptized. See Bock, *Acts*, 345. Cf. Polhill, *Acts*, 226. Once again, Philip is God's instrument through whom the gospel is proclaimed.

⁵¹As Bock argues, “This short unit (Acts 19b-25) shows Saul immediately undertaking his calling to preach Jesus as the Son of God [i.e., the gospel] in Damascus” (Bock, *Acts*, 363). Cf. Polhill, *Acts*, 238–39; Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 311–15. This passage follows the pattern in Acts where a member of the church—in this instance, Saul—is God's instrument through whom the proclamation of the gospel takes place.

⁵²Peter proclaims the gospel message of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection for the forgiveness of sins to Cornelius in Acts 10:34-43. See Bock, *Acts*, 396–400; Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 334–9; Polhill, *Acts*, 260–3. Dodd insightfully notes that “the speech before Cornelius represents the form of *kerygma* used by the primitive Church in its earliest approaches to a wider audience” (C. H. Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments* [London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1944], 28). Peter's speech before Cornelius, therefore, accurately captures the gospel message. This instance of gospel proclamation in Acts once again shows a member of the church (Peter) being used as God's instrument to proclaim the gospel.

⁵³Polhill notes that this commissioning is important because it is the first commissioning in which a church sends missionaries to the “larger world” (Polhill, *Acts*, 289). Cf. Bock, *Acts*, 438–40; Peterson, *The Acts of*

his first missionary journey with Barnabas,⁵⁴ during this journey, Paul and Barnabas visit Cyprus (13:4-12),⁵⁵ Psidian Antioch (13:13-52),⁵⁶ Iconium (14:1-7),⁵⁷ Lystra and Derbe (14:8-20),⁵⁸ and then return to Syria (14:21-28). Throughout their journey, Paul and Barnabas actively proclaim the gospel through the power of the Spirit as they are commissioned to do; as Stott notes, “It was the Holy Spirit of God himself who told the church of Antioch to set Barnabas and Saul apart, who sent them out, who led them from place to place, and who gave power to their preaching [i.e., gospel proclamation], so that converts were made and churches planted.”⁵⁹ Thus, Paul and Barnabas (members of the church) were God’s Spirit-empowered instruments of gospel proclamation.

the Apostles, 373–77. The church, therefore, is God’s instrument of gospel proclamation not only for local missions, but also for foreign missions as evidenced by this passage and Paul’s missionary journeys.

⁵⁴The literature on Paul’s missionary journeys includes Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 923–1485; idem, *Paul the Missionary: Realities, Strategies, and Mission* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2008), 39–122; Martin Dibelius, *Paul*, trans. Werner Georg Kümmel (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1966), 67–84; Henri Fouard, *Saint Paul and His Missions*, trans. George F. X. Griffith (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1894). For a scholarly analysis of Paul’s methodology that he uses to proclaim the gospel, see Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 1355–70.

⁵⁵One incident recorded in this passage is Paul’s gospel proclamation to the Roman proconsul, Sergius Paulus, which results in his salvation. See Bock, *Acts*, 447; Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 382–83; Polhill, *Acts*, 294–96; Barrett, *Acts*, 618–19; Longenecker, “Acts,” 915; Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 503–04; John Foster, “Was Sergius Paulus Converted? (Acts xiii.12),” *Expository Times* 60 (1949): 354–55. Contra Witherington, who thinks it is questionable whether the proconsul actually believed the gospel and became a believer (Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 402–3). As Bock points out, the contrast in the passage and the implication of Paul’s success indicate that the proconsul became a believer (Bock, *Acts*, 447). Once again, Paul is God’s instrument of gospel proclamation of the Gentile world.

⁵⁶In Psidian Antioch, Paul boldly proclaims the gospel in the synagogue. For a good explanation of Paul’s gospel proclamation, see Bock, *Acts*, 448–72; Polhill, *Acts*, 298–306.

⁵⁷In Iconium, Paul and Barnabas once again proclaim the gospel through the power of the Holy Spirit as recorded in 14:3. For helpful commentary on 14:3, see Bock, *Acts*, 470; Polhill, *Acts*, 310–11; Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, 271.

⁵⁸Paul’s gospel proclamation in Lystra and Derbe met with many challenges because of the idolatry of the inhabitants of the region; as Bock notes, “In sum [of Acts 14:18-20], an effort to share the gospel divides the community. In Gentile areas, idolatry will be a powerful force against embracing the gospel” (Bock, *Acts*, 479).

⁵⁹John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Acts: To the Ends of the Earth*, The Bible Speaks Today (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity, 1990), 239.

After Paul returns from his first missionary journey, he travels to Jerusalem for a meeting to discuss issues concerning Gentile inclusion into the church (15:1-35); as Marshall opines, “The keynote of the meeting was evidently praise to God, as the reports made it clear that he had opened up the opportunity for the Gentiles to respond to the gospel.”⁶⁰ Subsequent to this meeting, Paul begins his second missionary journey. At the beginning of this journey, an argument ensues between Barnabas and himself; because of this argument, Barnabas leaves Paul (15:36-41). Paul then journeys together with Silas to Derbe and Lystra (16:1-5). After receiving a vision from the Lord to go preach the gospel in Macedonia (16:6-10), Paul proceeds to proclaim the gospel in Philippi (16:11-40),⁶¹ Thessalonica (17:1-9), Berea (17:10-15),⁶² Athens (17:16-34),⁶³ and Corinth (18:1-17);⁶⁴ he then completes his second missionary journey by traveling back to Antioch (18:18-23).⁶⁵ Throughout this journey, Paul (a member of the church) is actively strengthening existing churches as well as planting new churches through his proclamation of the gospel; Paul, therefore, is God’s instrument through whom the gospel is preached.

⁶⁰I. Howard Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 242.

⁶¹As Bock argues, Paul “engaged them all [the people in Philippi] with a gospel intended for all” (Bock, *Acts*, 546). Cf. Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 457–58.

⁶²As Peterson opines, Acts 17:1-15 records the different responses of the Jews to Paul’s gospel proclamation in Thessalonica and Berea. See Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 476–86. Cf. Bock, *Acts*, 548–57. Paul—a member of the church—was therefore actively engaged in gospel proclamation during his time in Thessalonica and Berea; he was God’s instrument of gospel proclamation.

⁶³Peterson rightly asserts that the aim of Paul’s speech in Athens was evangelistic, for Paul was engaged in proclaiming the gospel. See Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 491. Cf. Bock, *Acts*, 573.

⁶⁴As Bruce argues in reference to Acts 18:5, “At the same time, a gift of money from his friends in Philippi relieved him [Paul] for the time being of the necessity to support himself by tentmaking; he was able therefore to concentrate on the preaching of the gospel” (Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, 349). Cf. Bock, *Acts*, 575–84.

⁶⁵It should be noted that Acts 18:19 asserts that Paul reasoned with Jews in Ephesus during his return trip to Antioch; as Marshall argues, even though not explicitly stated in the text, it is likely that Paul proclaimed the gospel during this time. See Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 300–1. However, the text does not directly specify that Paul proclaims the gospel; it only indicates that Paul does not stay long in Ephesus and instead, quickly returns to Antioch (Acts 18:20-21).

After Paul's second missionary journey, he begins his third missionary journey, which ends in Jerusalem. During this journey, Paul visits Ephesus, where he ministers to believers and proclaims the gospel (18:24-19:41).⁶⁶ He next proceeds to Macedonia, Greece, and Miletus, where he encourages believers (20:1-16). Finally, he travels to Jerusalem, where his third missionary journey ends (21:1-16). During this journey, Paul once again proclaims the gospel and strengthens the churches that he founded. God, therefore, uses Paul (a member of the church) on his third missionary journey as God's instrument to spread the gospel and revitalize/strengthen his church. One incident in particular during this missionary journey is worthy of further examination; this incident is Paul's farewell speech to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20:17-38. This speech illustrates the heart of Paul's ministry: God's use of him as an instrument to proclaim the gospel.

Acts 20:17-38 records a sad occasion for Paul; He bids farewell to the church in Ephesus that he founded. Of particular interest in this account is Acts 20:20-21 and 24. In Acts 20:20-21, Paul describes his initial founding ministry of the church in Ephesus. He records that he publicly declared the gospel message of repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ – both to the Jews and Greeks.⁶⁷ As Bock notes, this summation of Paul's ministry to the Ephesians captures his mission—to proclaim the gospel message to all people.⁶⁸ In verse 24, Paul once again asserts that this pattern in his ministry is not an anomaly, for Paul emphatically argues that his entire ministry—its focus, its heartbeat, its goal—is to declare the content of the gospel of the

⁶⁶Acts 18:24-28 notes that Apollos [after being corrected by Priscilla and Aquilla], proclaims the gospel along with Paul at Ephesus. Apollos, therefore, follows the pattern of members of the church serving as God's instrument through which the gospel is preached. For more information on Apollos and his gospel proclamation, see Bock, *Acts*, 590–94; Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 523–27.

⁶⁷As Wallace notes, repentance and faith do not form a chiasmic structure in verse 21 (Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 289). Instead, they are different sides of the same coin. Repentance involves a change in direction toward God that results in faith (Bock, *Acts*, 627).

⁶⁸Bock argues that Acts 20:18b-21 indicates that Paul's ministry has the following three parts: (1) faithfulness, (2) direct preaching of all that is necessary, and (3) testimony concerning Christ to all people and a call to repentance and faith in him (Bock, *Acts*, 627-28).

grace of God.⁶⁹ Paul—a member of church—is therefore God’s instrument whom he uses to proclaim the gospel. Paul continues to act as God’s instrument of gospel proclamation even after his arrest at the temple in Jerusalem.

Acts 21:1-16 records Paul’s journey to Jerusalem before he is arrested. After his arrival in Jerusalem, he is arrested in the temple by a violent mob that is instigated by a group of Jews from Asia (21:27-36). In the next few chapters, Paul delivers two speeches in which he defends himself to some of the Jews and their leadership (21:37-22:29; 22:30-23:11). In these speeches, Paul boldly stands for Christ and God’s calling upon his life to proclaim Christ as the Son of God. After a plot to take Paul’s life is uncovered (23:12-22), Paul is sent to Ceasarea, where he testifies before Felix, the Roman governor (24:1-27). Of particular interest is Acts 24:24, where Paul proclaims the gospel (faith in Christ) to Felix and his wife;⁷⁰ this event illustrates that Paul (a member of the church) is God’s instrument of gospel proclamation even to the Roman authorities. After Paul’s testimony to Felix, he appeals to Caesar through Festus and, consequently, is sent to Rome (25:1-12). However, before Paul leaves for Rome, he proclaims the gospel to King Agrippa (25:23-26:32). As Bock notes, “The speech [of Paul before Agrippa] is an apologetic for the resurrection but also a presentation of the gospel. There is proclamation as well as apologetic here.”⁷¹ One particular element worthy of consideration in Paul’s speech before Agrippa is his testimony concerning Jesus’ calling in his life to ministry, for, it is Christ Himself who called him to preach the gospel (26:14-18).⁷² Once again, the heart of Paul’s

⁶⁹Bock, *Acts*, 628. As Peterson argues in reference to Acts 17:24, “The task or ministry (*diakonia*) given to Paul is specifically defined as ‘*testifying to the gospel of God’s grace*’ (cf. 14:3; 20:32)” (Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 566, italics original).

⁷⁰Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 715–16; Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 381; Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 640–41; Bock, *Acts*, 695–96.

⁷¹Bock, *Acts*, 706.

⁷²*Ibid.*, 716; Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, 465–67; Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 672–74; Polhill, *Acts*, 502–03.

ministry is exposed: to minister (proclaim) the gospel to all people (Jew and Gentile). As we have observed throughout Acts, Paul (a member of the church) is God's Spirit-empowered instrument whom he uses to proclaim the gospel. After a long voyage at sea (27:1-28:16), Paul finally arrives in Rome. Acts closes in Acts 28:23-30 with Paul continuing his ministry to proclaim the gospel even during his Roman imprisonment (28:23).⁷³

Summary of Acts Exegesis

The book of Acts presents the church as God's instrument through which the gospel is proclaimed. It starts with the commission of Christ to his followers to be his witnesses to all people. After Peter's gospel proclamation in Acts 2, the members of the church such as Peter, John, Philip, Stephen, Paul, Barnabas, and Apollos boldly witness for Christ – that is, they proclaim the gospel. As Bock argues, “God is the hero of Acts, and the plot line is how he reveals his word through Jesus and a faithful church,”⁷⁴ for the church is God's instrument for witness, his proclaimer of the gospel. However, Acts not only serves to record events; it also serves to challenge the reader to proclaim the gospel through its open-ended conclusion that portrays the gospel continually making progress in the world and, consequently, encourages the reader to join in this progress through proclaiming the gospel.⁷⁵ Tannehill accurately captures the challenge of Acts to its reader when he argues the following: “Because God is God, hope remains that God's comprehensive saving purpose will somehow be realized, but there is no indication of how that can happen. In the meantime, Acts can suggest that the church welcome those Jews who are still willing to listen and continue its mission to the more responsive gentile world.”⁷⁶

⁷³Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, 507; Bock, *Acts*, 754; Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 714–15.

⁷⁴Bock, *Acts*, 760.

⁷⁵Rosner, “The Progress of the Word,” 232.

⁷⁶Robert C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts : A Literary Interpretation* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 2:357.

Acts presents the church not only as God’s instrument of gospel proclamation in the past, but also in the present and future. Romans 10:5-21, to which I now turn, also emphasizes the importance of gospel proclamation by God’s people: the church.

Romans 10:5-21

Before exegeting Romans 10:5-21, I will first briefly examine Romans 9:30-10:4 to provide the proper context for my analysis of Romans 10:5-21. In Romans 9:30-10:4, Paul discusses a surprising state of affairs: the Gentiles, who have not sought righteousness, have received it by faith; while, in contrast, the Jews, who sought righteousness through the law, have not received it (9:30-33).⁷⁷ This fact leads Paul to express a sorrowful cry for the salvation of his own people, the Jews (10:1), for the Jews have a zeal for God, but this zeal is not according to knowledge (10:2). The Jews—instead of relying on God’s grace through Christ—have sought to establish their own (ἰδίαν) righteousness based upon adherence to the law (10:3).⁷⁸ However, Christ is the end (τέλος)⁷⁹ of the law with respect to (εἰς)⁸⁰ righteousness for all who believe

⁷⁷Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 534–42; Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 616–30; C. E. B. Cranfield, *Romans 9-16*, International Critical Commentary (London: T. & T. Clark, 1979), 506–11; James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 38b (Dallas: Word, 1988), 592–94; Robert H. Mounce, *Romans*, The New American Commentary, vol. 27 (Nashville: B&H, 1995), 205–06; John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959), 42–45.

⁷⁸Schreiner, *Romans*, 543–44; Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 632–36; Cranfield, *Romans 9-16*, 514–15. Schreiner notes that due to recent debate in scholarship over Paul’s view of the law, the interpretation of verse 32 is contested. Some scholars, such as E. P. Sanders, believe that Paul is criticizing Israel only for failing to believe in Christ. However, this interpretation, as Schreiner argues, mutes the voice of verse 32 and only reads the text through salvation history. The best interpretation of this text is to view Paul as criticizing Judaism for trying to gain righteousness from works. See Schreiner, *Romans*, 539; E. P. Sanders, *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 42. Cf. Robert H. Gundry, “Grace, Works, and Staying Saved in Paul,” *Biblica* 66 (1985): 16–20; Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 619.

⁷⁹Moo rightly argues for the translation of τέλος in a temporal sense as “end”; he also suggests the words “culmination,” “consummation,” or “climax” would be appropriate translations. See Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 641. Cf. Schreiner, *Romans*, 544–47; Cranfield, *Romans 9-16*, 516–20; C. K. Barrett, *The Epistle to the Romans*, rev. ed., Black’s New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991), 184; Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 379–80.

⁸⁰Schreiner rightly interprets εἰς as an adverbial preposition of general reference. See Schreiner, *Romans*, 547.

(10:4); in other words, as Schreiner argues, “He [Paul] observes that those who trust in Christ cease using the law to establish their own righteousness.”⁸¹ Thus, the majority of the Jews (the ones who try to earn their righteousness by obedience to the law) have not received righteousness from God because they have not trusted in Christ by faith.

Paul continues by grounding Romans 10:4 with his argument in 10:5-8. He grounds his assertion in 10:4 by contrasting⁸² two types of righteousness: (1) righteousness from the law (v. 5) and (2) righteousness from faith (vv. 6-8).⁸³ From this contrast, Paul argues that the response God demands of people to obtain righteousness is not doing works of the law, but believing (that is, having faith) in the gospel, which was preached (κηρύσσομεν) to them (v. 8).⁸⁴ Paul proceeds in his argument by explaining the content of the word that was preached to them: if you confess Christ as Lord and believe in his resurrection, you will be saved (v. 9-10).⁸⁵ Paul next asserts the universal nature of the gospel message: it is for both Jew and Gentiles (vv. 11-13).⁸⁶ He then continues his argument with a series of rhetorical questions that outlines the steps that must occur for any person (Jew or Gentile)⁸⁷ to call on the Lord for salvation.⁸⁸ First, one

⁸¹Schreiner, *Romans*, 547.

⁸²The contrast is indicated by Paul’s usage of the coordinating conjunction δὲ in Rom 10:6. See Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 650–51. Cf. Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, 602; Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 382–83; Mounce, *Romans*, 208–09.

⁸³For a defense of this interpretation that argues for a contrast between law and grace in verses 5-8 as well as a discussion of the different scholarly interpretations of the relationship between verse 5 and verses 6-8, see Schreiner, *Romans*, 551–58. Cf. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 645–57.

⁸⁴Schreiner, *Romans*, 559–60; Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 656–57.

⁸⁵This interpretation of verses 9-10 interprets the ὅτι in verse 9 as explicative rather than causal. For a defense of the explicative view, see Barrett, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 186; Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 2:55; Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 291. Cf. Schreiner, *Romans*, 559; Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 2:55. For a defense of the causal view, see Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 657; Cranfield, *Romans 9-16*, 526–27. For the view that the ὅτι is both explicative and causal, see Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, 607. Given the context of the verse, it seems best to understand the ὅτι as explicative rather than causal.

⁸⁶Cranfield, *Romans 9-16*, 531; Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 2:57–58.

⁸⁷As Schreiner argues, the emphasis in Romans 10:11-13 on everyone (πᾶς) indicates that Paul is referencing both Jew and Gentile in 10:14-17. See Schreiner, *Romans*, 565–66. Cf. Moo, *The Epistle to the*

must believe in Christ; however, in order to believe in Christ, one must hear the message (i.e., the gospel) proclaimed about Christ. This proclamation must be given by another person: a preacher (v. 14). Paul continues by asserting that a preacher is one who is sent (ἀποσταλῶσιν) by another with a message.⁸⁹ He ends verse 15 with an Old Testament quotation (Isa 52:7) that serves the following two purposes: (1) it provides confirmation from Scripture for the necessity of preachers to preach the gospel, and (2) it suggests that God has already sent preachers to proclaim his message.⁹⁰ Specifically, God has sent the apostles and other evangelists to preach the gospel to all people—both Jew and Gentile—in fulfillment of Isaiah 52:7 (v. 15).⁹¹ Even though he is referring to the apostles and others who have already been sent out by God, Paul’s logic in verses 14-15 has important ramifications for the mission of the church and the proclamation of the gospel; as Moo notes, “For, while Paul is not calling on the church to send out missionaries with the message of the gospel, he is nevertheless clearly assuming it needs to be done.”⁹² Thus, Paul presupposes that the church is the instrument God uses to proclaim the

Romans, 659–60; Grant R. Osborne, *Romans*, The IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 274. Contra Cranfield who argues Paul is only referencing the Jews in verses 14-15a. See Cranfield, *Romans 9-16*, 533.

⁸⁸Schreiner, *Romans*, 564.

⁸⁹For a discussion on the logical flow of the argument in Romans 10:14-15a, see Johannes Munck, *Christ & Israel: An Interpretation of Romans 9-11*, trans. Ingeborg Nixon (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1967), 91–92; Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 663; Cranfield, *Romans 9-16*, 533–34; Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 2:58–59.

⁹⁰Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 662–63.

⁹¹Schreiner, *Romans*, 568–69; Barrett, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 190–91; Cranfield, *Romans 9-16*, 535; Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, 294; Peter Stuhlmacher, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans: A Commentary*, trans. Scott J. Hafemann (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994), 158–59; Mark A. Seifrid, “Romans,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 661–62.

⁹²Douglas J. Moo, *Romans*, NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 351. Cf. Schreiner, *Romans*, 567–68; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans*, The Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 596–97. Contra Stott, who argues that this passage makes the case for evangelism; however, the context in which Paul is focusing on the apostles as the fulfillment of Isaiah 52:7 excludes Stott’s interpretation. See John Stott, *Romans, God’s Good News for the World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1994), 285–87.

gospel, for the church is the one who sends preachers (i.e., members of the church) to proclaim the gospel.

Paul continues by using a form of meiosis:⁹³ not all (in this case, a majority of Jews)⁹⁴ who have heard the gospel have responded in faith (v. 16). He then concludes his train of thought in verses 14-15a by asserting that faith come by hearing and hearing by the word of Christ (i.e., the gospel) (v. 17).⁹⁵ Thus, through the proclamation of the gospel by God's appointed messengers (i.e., members of the church),⁹⁶ people come to faith in Christ; consequently, as I argued in the last chapter, they are added to the church. Paul concludes chapter 10 by asserting the following: (1) the gospel message has gone forth to the ends of the earth (v. 18),⁹⁷ (2) the gospel going forth to the Gentiles was predicted in the Old Testament (vv. 19-20), and (3) God continues to extend grace to Israel even though they rebel against him (v. 21).

In summary, by expressing the necessity of preachers being sent to proclaim the gospel to the unsaved, Paul assumes that the church needs to send out messengers to declare the gospel; the church, therefore, is God's instrument of gospel proclamation whose members both send preachers to preach the gospel and are the gospel-proclaiming preachers who go. Paul also

⁹³Cranfield, *Romans 9-16*, 536.

⁹⁴Richard H. Bell, *Provoked to Jealousy: The Origin and Purpose of the Jealousy Motif in Romans 9-11*, *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen Zum Neuen Testament* 63 (Tübingen: Mohr, 1994), 90-92; Moo, *Romans*, 664.

⁹⁵As Murray argues, "There is, however, an eloquent reiteration of what is implied but is now expressly stated to be 'the word of Christ' in order to eliminate all doubt as to what is encountered in the gospel proclamation. It is the word in the sense used in verse 8, but the special interest now is to show that this word is that which Christ speaks" (Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 2:61). Thus, preachers who proclaim the gospel are God's instruments through whom he speaks his message to the unsaved.

⁹⁶The fact that the preacher who proclaims the gospel is sent by God to proclaim a message—God's message—has important ramifications; as Mounce argues in reference to verses 16-17, "All effective preaching is accomplished by God himself. The messenger is at best merely the instrument used by the Holy Spirit as a necessary part of the process" (Mounce, *Romans*, 212). Therefore, the preacher is merely an instrument that God uses to proclaim his message, the gospel.

⁹⁷As Schreiner argues, Paul is asserting in verse 18 with his quotation from Ps 19:4 that the gospel message has been proclaimed both to Jew and Gentile. See Schreiner, *Romans*, 572.

argues that the proclamation of the gospel leads to faith in some who hear it; those who hear and respond to the gospel in faith are then added to the people of God: the church. The idea that the church is God's instrument of gospel proclamation is also expressed in Galatians 2:7-9.

Galatians 2:7-9

Galatians 2:7-9 occurs in a pericope (2:1-10) where Paul is describing a meeting at Jerusalem at which the pillars of the Jerusalem church ratified his gospel. He records that during the course of this meeting, the leadership of the Jerusalem church added nothing to his gospel (2:6). In fact, it is quite the opposite; the leadership saw (ἰδόντες) that God had entrusted (πεπίστευμαι)⁹⁸ Paul with the gospel to the uncircumcised as he had entrusted Peter with the gospel to the circumcised (v. 7).⁹⁹ In other words, Paul was preaching the same gospel as Peter.¹⁰⁰ Paul continues by supporting his assertion in verse 7, for he argues that God had worked in him as he worked in Peter (v. 8). This work of God is what qualified him to be an apostle to the Gentiles as Peter was an apostle to the Jews.¹⁰¹ Paul proceeds by describing what

⁹⁸The verb πεπίστευμαι is a divine passive that indicates God had entrusted Paul with the gospel for the uncircumcised: Thomas R. Schreiner, *Galatians*, Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 128; J. Louis Martyn, *Galatians*, The Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 202. Cf. Donald Guthrie, *Galatians*, New Century Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973), 81; Leon Morris, *Galatians* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996), 72; Ronald Y. Fung, *The Epistles to the Galatians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 98; Timothy George, *Galatians*, The New American Commentary, vol. 30 (Nashville: B&H, 1994), 160.

⁹⁹As Martyn notes, this verse does not indicate there are two gospels; instead, there are two missions by which the gospel is spreading throughout the entire world. See Martyn, *Galatians*, 202; Schreiner, *Galatians*, 128. Cf. Guthrie, *Galatians*, 82.

¹⁰⁰Schreiner, *Galatians*, 128; F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 120.

¹⁰¹Some scholars have argued that because Paul's apostleship is not mentioned in verse 8, it was not recognized in Jerusalem. However, as Schreiner notes, Paul's apostleship is implied because his gospel is validated. See Schreiner, *Galatians*, 129. For arguments that Paul's apostleship was not recognized, see Gerd Luedemann, "The Content and Occasion of the Jerusalem Conference," in *Paul, Apostle to the Gentiles*, trans. F. S. Jones (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 64–80; Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 41 (Dallas: Word, 1990), 56; Hans Dieter Betz, *Galatians*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 98–99. For arguments that Paul's apostleship was recognized, see Bradley H. McLean, "Galatians 2:7-9 and the Recognition of Paul's Apostolic Status at the Jerusalem Conference: A Critique of G. Luedemann's Solution," *New Testament Studies* 37 (1991): 67–76; Schreiner, *Galatians*, 129; Fung, *The Epistles to the Galatians*, 77–78; R. Alan Cole, *Galatians*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2008), 110–11.

happened when those who were reputed (δοκοῦντες)¹⁰² to be pillars (στόλοι)¹⁰³ of the Jerusalem church recognized the grace of God that had been given to him.¹⁰⁴ They—James, Cephas, and John—gave to him the right hand of fellowship,¹⁰⁵ that is, they recognized the authenticity of the gospel that Paul proclaimed.¹⁰⁶ Indeed, they acknowledged that Paul and Peter (members of the church) were both the same: instruments that God used to proclaim the gospel. However, they did have some differences in their ministries. Paul was called to proclaim the gospel to the Gentiles, while Peter was called to proclaim the gospel to the Jews (v. 9).¹⁰⁷ Paul concludes his

¹⁰²Contra Aus, Paul is not saying, with his usage of the word δοκοῦντες, that the theology of James, Cephas, and John should be rejected because they teach a theology of merit; instead (as Schreiner, Longenecker, and Matera note), he desires to avoid unwarranted adoration of them. See Roger D. Aus, “Three Pillars and Three Patriarchs: A Proposal Concerning Gal 2:9,” *Zeitschrift Für Die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft Und Die Kunde Der Älteren Kirche* 70 (1979): 257–61; Schreiner, *Galatians*, 130; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 57–58; Frank J. Matera, *Galatians*, Sacra Pagina (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1992), 77.

¹⁰³Paul’s usage of the word “pillars” here indicates that James, Cephas, and John were the foundation of God’s new temple, that is, the new people of God, the church. See Schreiner, *Galatians*, 129–30. Cf. Aus, “Three Pillars and Three Patriarchs,” 252–61; Martyn, *Galatians*, 205; Ben Witherington, *Grace in Galatia: A Commentary on St Paul’s Letter to the Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 143.

¹⁰⁴As Hansen notes, the miraculous work of God evident in both the ministries of Peter and Paul was evidence that both were called by God to preach the gospel. See G. Walter Hansen, *Galatians*, The IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1994), 59. Cf. Longenecker, *Galatians*, 56; James D. G. Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, Black’s New Testament Commentary (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993), 108; Morris, *Galatians*, 73–74; Herman N. Ridderbos, *The Epistle of Paul to the Churches of Galatia*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1953), 88–89.

¹⁰⁵Esler argues that by extending the right hand of fellowship, James, Cephas, and John were asserting their superiority to Paul. However (as Schreiner, Betz, Longenecker, Matera, and Smiles argue), Paul’s usage of the word “fellowship” (κοινωνία) indicates this act denoted Paul’s equality with James, Cephas, and John—not his inferiority. See Philip F. Esler, *Galatians*, New Testament Readings (London: Routledge, 1998), 133–34; Schreiner, *Galatians*, 130; Betz, *Galatians*, 100; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 58; Matera, *Galatians*, 77; Vincent M. Smiles, *The Gospel and the Law in Galatia: Paul’s Response to Jewish-Christian Separatism and the Threat of Apostasy* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1998), 47–49.

¹⁰⁶Schreiner, *Galatians*, 130; Matera, *Galatians*, 77.

¹⁰⁷Scholars debate over whether this agreement should be understood geographically or ethnically. For example, Burton argues the agreement should be understood geographically while Schreiner, Betz, Longenecker, and Martyn believe the agreement should be understood ethnically. Longenecker rightly cautions that the difference between these two interpretations should not be overstressed. Perhaps Machen best summarizes the ethos of this passage when he argues, “But it [the agreement] meant that so far, according to the plain meaning of God, Paul had been sent predominantly to the Gentiles and the original apostles to the Jews; and that, therefore, unless both Paul and the original apostles continued their work, the cause would suffer” (J. Gresham Machen, *Machen’s Notes on Galatians* [Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1977], 131). See Ernest De Witt Burton, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles to the Galatians*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T.

account of the meeting by describing a request made of him by the Jerusalem leadership: to remember (assist) the poor in Jerusalem (2:10).

Galatians 2:7-9 continues the pattern seen in Acts and described in Romans in which God uses members of the church to proclaim the gospel. For the apostles Peter and Paul (= members of the church) are shown to be God's instruments through whom the gospel is proclaimed. Ephesians 4:1-16 also supports this pattern as it asserts that God has gifted some members of the church specifically with the task of proclaiming the gospel and to empower all members of the church to proclaim effectively the gospel message.

Ephesians 4:1-16

Ephesians 4:1 marks a transition in the book of Ephesians from doctrinal exposition to practical application.¹⁰⁸ Specifically, in Ephesians 4:1-16, Paul focuses on calling Christians to unity with one another. He begins this call to unity by instructing Christians how to treat one another in order to pursue unity (vv. 1-3); he then grounds this call to unity in the unity of the fundamental truths that form the basis of the Christian life and faith:¹⁰⁹ one body (the church),¹¹⁰ one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father over all and through all and in all (vv. 4-6).

Clark, 1964), 97–99; 122; Schreiner, *Galatians*, 130–31; Betz, *Galatians*, 100; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 58–59; Martyn, *Galatians*, 213; Matera, *Galatians*, 77.

¹⁰⁸Peter T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 272; Frank Thielman, *Ephesians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010), 250; F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 333.

¹⁰⁹O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 280. Cf. Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 42 (Waco, TX: Word, 1990), 237–38; Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 335.

¹¹⁰O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 281; Ernest Best, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1998), 366–67.

Paul continues by asserting that Christ has given gifts to every member of the church (ἐνὶ δὲ ἐκάστῳ ἡμῶν) for the building up of the body in Christian unity (v. 7).¹¹¹ Paul supports this assertion with a quote from Psalm 68:18¹¹² that he applies to Christ; because of Christ's descent (incarnation)¹¹³ and ascent into heaven, he has been given authority over all things;¹¹⁴ Christ, therefore, has authority over the entire created order and even over those who oppose him (vv. 8-10).¹¹⁵ This same Christ, who is ruler over all, sovereignly gives gifts to his church to enable it to both (1) grow into full union and unity with himself and (2) reign over creation with him.¹¹⁶ Paul continues by describing some of the ascended Christ's gifts to his church; they are

¹¹¹O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 287. Cf. Thielman, *Ephesians*, 263–64.

¹¹²The fact that Paul's quotation of Psalm 68:18 differs significantly from Ps 68:18 in the Hebrew text as well as the LXX has caused numerous debates among scholars. The major differences in Paul's quotation from the text in the Old Testament are as follows: (1) the Old Testament text has the verb "to receive" (MT = קָבַץ; LXX = λαμβάνω) while the New Testament text has the verb "to give" (ἔδωκεν) and (2) Ps 68:18 in the Psalms uses the second person form of the verb (which translates "you received") while Paul uses the third person form of the verb (which translates "he gave") in Ephesians. These differences have led to several different theories among scholars. Smith's interpretation, which advocates that Paul used the principle of analogy by applying Numbers 8 and 18 to the words of Ps 68:18, offers a solution that, as O'Brien notes, does not solve all of the problems, but is attractive. See O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 292–93; Gary V. Smith, "Paul's Use of Ps 68:18 in Ephesians 4:8," *Jets* 18/3 (1975): 181–89. For a helpful summary of various views, see O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 289–93. For helpful discussions on this issue, see Richard A. Taylor, "The Use of Psalm 68:18 in Ephesians 4:8 in Light of the Ancient Versions," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 148 (1991): 319–36; Frank Thielman, "Ephesians," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 819–26; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 264–68.

¹¹³What exactly is meant by Paul's assertion that Christ descended into the lower parts of the earth (κατέβη εἰς τὰ κατώτερα [μέρη] τῆς γῆς) is highly debated. Some of the various interpretive options are as follows: the descent refers to (1) Christ's descent into hell or Hades, (2) Christ's incarnation, or (3) the descent of the exalted Christ in the Spirit. However, as Calvin argues, Paul's contrast is between the whole earth and the whole heaven, not between one part of earth and another; this contrast, therefore, implies that Paul is referring to Christ's incarnation in which he descended from heaven to earth. Some modern scholars, such as O'Brien and Best, argue with Calvin that Christ's descent in this passage is a reference to his incarnation. See John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians*, trans. William Pringle, Calvin's Commentaries 20 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 275; O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 294–96; Best, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians*, 383–86. For a thorough discussion of each view as well as a listing of who holds each view, see Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 244–48. For some more recent defenses of the view that Christ descended into hell/the underworld, see Thielman, *Ephesians*, 268–72; Clinton E. Arnold, *Ephesians*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 252–54.

¹¹⁴O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 296–97.

¹¹⁵Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 248.

¹¹⁶Thielman, *Ephesians*, 273. Cf. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 296–97.

individuals whom Christ has appointed to build up his body: the church. These gifted people are apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers.¹¹⁷ For our purposes, each of these offices warrants further examination. Paul, first, mentions the apostles and prophets; these two groups were the first members of the church to take the gospel to the Gentiles (Eph 3:5-6).¹¹⁸ He next mentions evangelists (εὐαγγελιστάς); the task of evangelists (who are members of the church) is specifically to proclaim the gospel; as Thielman notes, “The evangelists proclaim the message to which the apostles have been eye- and earwitnesses.”¹¹⁹ Paul concludes by describing two other offices within the church:¹²⁰ the pastor and teacher. The task of the pastor is both to teach and to care for the church, while the task of the teacher is to guard faithfully and pass on apostolic doctrine, such as the gospel (v. 11).¹²¹ Paul continues by expressing the purpose of Christ’s giving these gifts to the church: for the equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry so

¹¹⁷As O’Brien notes, “Those listed are ministers of the Word through whom the gospel is revealed, declared, and taught” (O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 298). Thus, one of the major tasks of these ministers is to participate in the church’s gospel proclamation and to equip its members to be effective instruments through whom the gospel is proclaimed.

¹¹⁸Thielman, *Ephesians*, 273–74.

¹¹⁹Ibid., 275. Cf. O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 299.

¹²⁰Scholars debate, since only one article links the two words “pastor” and “teacher” (τοὺς δὲ ποιμένας καὶ διδασκάλους), whether both of these words refer to one office or two offices. As O’Brien suggests, the fact that one article governs both pastors and teachers suggests the presence of overlapping function between the two offices, not that they are the same office; this case is strengthened when one considers that Paul lists teachers as a distinct group within the church in 1 Corinthians 12:28-29 and Galatians 6:6. However, as Best notes, it may be best not to draw too rigid of distinction between the two offices. See O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 300; Ernest Best, “Ministry in Ephesians,” in *Essays on Ephesians* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1997), 166–67. Cf. Thielman, *Ephesians*, 275–76; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 250.

¹²¹O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 300–01; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 276–77. Cf. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 251.

that the body of Christ may be built up (v.12).¹²² The final goal of the work of the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers as well as the other members of the body of Christ is

¹²²The interpretation of verse 12 is heavily debated in current scholarship. The debate centers on the prepositions that delineate the three phrases. Note the Greek text of verse 12 with the debated prepositions in bold: **πρὸς** τὸν καταρτισμὸν τῶν ἁγίων **εἰς** ἔργον διακονίας, **εἰς** οἰκοδομὴν τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ. In the first view, which was the dominant interpretation before the current debate, the relationship of these phrases to the verb “he gave” (ἔδωκεν) in verse 11 is interpreted as follows: the first phrase “for the equipping of the saints” (πρὸς τὸν καταρτισμὸν τῶν ἁγίων) modifies the verb in verse 11 (ἔδωκεν), while the second phrase “for the work of the ministry” (εἰς ἔργον διακονίας) is subordinate to the first phrase due to the change in the preposition from πρὸς to εἰς. The last phrase “for the building up of the body of Christ” (εἰς οἰκοδομὴν τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ) is dependent on both the first and second phrase together. When this view is taken, the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers are given “for the equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry so that the body of Christ may be built up.” Thus, this view argues that the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers prepare the laity for the work of the ministry. Some scholars who hold a view similar to this one where verse 12 indicates that the clergy prepare the laity for ministry are O’Brien, Thielman, Arnold, Best, Hoehner, Stott, Morris, Liefeld, Fung, Fee, and Sproul. However, in recent times, this view has come under attack. Some modern scholars have proposed a second view that dates back at least to Chrysostom. In the second view, the three phrases in verse 12 are interpreted as coordinate to the main verb (ἔδωκεν) in verse 11. When this view is taken, the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers have the following three separate reasons they are given to the church: “(1) for the equipping of the saints, (2) for the work of the ministry, (3) for the building up of the body of Christ.” Therefore, in the second view, verse 12 does not involve the laity in ministry unlike the first interpretation. Instead, it is the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers who verse 12 expresses as the ones doing the work of the ministry. Some scholars who support a view similar to this second position are Lincoln, Muddiman, Page, Gordon, Campbell, and Schnackenberg. They argue that the first interpretation places too much weight on the change in preposition from πρὸς to εἰς. They also argue that their view best fits the writing style of Ephesians (Lincoln, Muddiman) and makes the most sense of Paul’s usage of the word “διακονίας” in the phrase “for the work of the ministry” (Schnackenberg). Some proponents of the second view also argue that the first view is a recent innovation motivated by the egalitarian and democratic spirit of the present age (Lincoln, Gordon, Muddiman). In response to the arguments for the second view, O’Brien and Thielman assert that the second view faces numerous contextual and syntactical difficulties. O’Brien argues that, given the context of Ephesians as a whole as well as Ephesians 4, the first view is to be preferred. First, as O’Brien notes, Eph 1:3-19 and 3:20 stress the riches of Christ being given to all believers. In the immediate context of chapter 4, verse 7 stresses that each believer has been given “grace” and verse 16 espouses the importance of each part (member of the church) to the entire body (the church). Therefore, O’Brien argues that the immediate context of Eph 4 supports the first view. One syntactical problem with the second view that Thielman points out is that the phrases are not syntactically parallel. Thielman argues that this fact supports the first view and cannot simply be a stylistic variation as Page, a supporter of the second view, suggests. Thielman also notes that since De Wette, Robinson, and Westcott support forms of the first view, it cannot be merely a product of the philosophies of the present age. Given the syntactical and contextual evidence in support of the first view, it is best to interpret Eph 4:12 as indicating that the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers are to equip believers for the work of the ministry. See O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 301–05; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 277–80; Arnold, *Ephesians*, 262–64; Best, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians*, 395–99; Harold Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 549; John Stott, *God’s New Society: The Message of Ephesians*, The Bible Speaks Today (Leicester: Inter-Varsity, 1979), 166–68; Leon Morris, *Expository Reflections in the Letter to the Ephesians* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 127–28; Walter L. Liefeld, *Ephesians*, The IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997), 105–07; Ronald Y. K. Fung, “The Nature of the Ministry According to Paul,” *Evangelical Quarterly* 54 (1982): 140–41; Gordon D. Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 705–8; R. C. Sproul, *The Purpose of God: An Exposition of Ephesians* (Ross-Shire, UK: Christian Focus, 2002), 102–03; Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 253–55; John Muddiman, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, Black’s New Testament Commentaries (London: Continuum, 2001), 199–201; Sydney H. T. Page, “Whose Ministry? A Re-Appraisal of Ephesians 4:12,” *Novum Testamentum* 47 (2005): 26–46; T. David Gordon, “‘Equipping’ Ministry in Ephesians 4?,” *JETS* 37 (1994):

the maturity of the church: perfect union with Christ (v. 13). Paul proceeds by expressing this goal of full, mature union with Christ by moving from negative imagery to positive imagery,¹²³ the end result of maturity (full union with Christ) is that believers will move from spiritual childhood (negative) to adulthood (positive). They will, then, not be deceived by false teachers and doctrine (v. 14). Instead of being deceived by false teachers and doctrine, Paul asserts that the church should grow (αὐξήσωμεν) into maturity by speaking (ἀληθεύοντες)¹²⁴ the truth of the gospel in love (v. 15).¹²⁵ The church, therefore, by fulfilling its role as God's instrument of gospel proclamation, grows toward maturity: full union with Christ; thus, this passage once again confirms the pattern that the church is God's instrument through which the gospel is proclaimed. Paul concludes this section in Ephesians by emphasizing the role of every individual believer in the building up of the body of Christ: the church (v. 16).

In summary, Ephesians 4:1-17 demonstrates that the church is God's instrument through which the gospel is proclaimed. For, in order to grow into maturity, the church is to

69–78; R. Alastair Campbell, *The Elders: Seniority Within Earliest Christianity*, Studies of the New Testament and Its World (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1994), 109–11; Rudolf Schnackenburg, *Ephesians: A Commentary*, trans. Helen Heron (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1991), 182–84; W. M. L. de Wette, *Kurze Erklärung Der Briefe an Die Colosser, an Philemon, an Die Ephesier Und Die Philipper* (Leipzig: Weidmann'sche Buchhandlung, 1847), 145; J. Armitage Robinson, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, 2nd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1907), 181–82; Brooke Fost Westcott, *Saint Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1950), 62–63. Cf. Markus Barth, *Ephesians 4-6*, The Anchor Bible (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1974), 478–84. For a detailed discussion of the debate and argumentation for the first view, consult Thielman, *Ephesians* and O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*.

¹²³Thielman, *Ephesians*, 283.

¹²⁴Scholars are torn as to the exact meaning of the verb ἀληθεύοντες. Some such as Robinson, Bruce, and Morris believe that the verb connotes the idea of living out the truth in love while others such as O'Brien, Thielman, and Arnold argue that it refers to verbally speaking the truth in love. One scholar, Schnackenberg, argues that the verb specifically references the proclamation of the gospel. As O'Brien notes, the verb means "to speak the truth" sometimes in secular Greek and consistently in the LXX. Given this evidence, it is best to take the verb as referring to the verbal proclamation of the gospel. See Robinson, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, 102; Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 352; Morris, *Expository Reflections in the Letter to the Ephesians*, 130–31; O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 310–11; Thielman, *Ephesians*, 285; Arnold, *Ephesians*, 268–69; Schnackenburg, *Ephesians: A Commentary*, 187–88. Cf. Morris, *Expository Reflections in the Letter to the Ephesians*, 130–31; Muddiman, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, 207; Sproul, *The Purpose of God*, 107.

¹²⁵Thielman, *Ephesians*, 285.

speak the truth of the gospel in love. Christ has also given individuals to the church with special gifts to prepare the members of the church for the work of the ministry, which in light of verse 15 certainly involves gospel proclamation. In fact, the job of some of these individuals (evangelists) is specifically the task of proclaiming the gospel. The church, therefore, from its leadership to its lay people is God's instrument through which the gospel is preached. Philippians 1 also expresses the idea that the church is God's instrument that He uses to proclaim the gospel.

Philippians 1

Philippians was written by Paul to the church in Philippi while he was imprisoned in Rome; he wrote the letter to address three problems within the church: (1) suffering, (2) a lack of unity within the church, and (3) opponents who were threatening the faith of those within the church.¹²⁶ Paul begins his letter by expressing thanksgiving to God for the Philippian church (vv. 1-6). In verse 5, Paul expresses one of the reasons he is thankful for the Philippians:¹²⁷ their participation (κοινωνία) in the gospel. Paul's usage of κοινωνία indicates he is thinking both of the Philippians' (1) inward acceptance of the gospel and (2) continued work to further the gospel.¹²⁸ This work certainly included their involvement in Paul's ministry as well as their own

¹²⁶G. Walter Hansen, *The Letter to the Philippians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 19–30. Cf. P. T. O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 35–38; Gordon D. Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 29–37.

¹²⁷O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, 61; Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, 81; Moisés Silva, *Philippians*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 41–43; Richard R. Melick, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, New American Commentary, vol. 32 (Nashville: Broadman, 1991), 56.

¹²⁸There has been some debate among scholars as to the exact meaning of the word κοινωνία. Some scholars, such as Seesemann and Hauck, argue that it refers to the Philippians' participation in salvation. Hauck sums up this view when he argues, "[κοινωνία in Philippians 1:5] refers to the inward and undisturbed participation of the Philippians in the saving message of Christ" (Gerhard Kittel and Geoffrey W. Bromily, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* [TDNT], trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, vol. 3 [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999], s.v. "κοινός," by Friedrich Hauck). Other scholars, such as Fee and O'Brien, interpret κοινωνία to mean the cooperation of the Philippians in the work of evangelism. As Hansen points out, these two views set up a false dichotomy. For, without the acceptance of the gospel message, no gospel proclamation by the Philippians would take place. Thus, Hansen rightly argues, "Their [the Philippians'] faithfulness in the work of proclaiming the gospel was evidence of the reality of their personal participation by faith in the benefits of the gospel" (Hansen, *The Letter*

gospel witness (v. 5); as O'Brien argues, "It [κοινωνία] probably includes the idea of their [the Philippians'] actual proclamation of the gospel message to outsiders."¹²⁹ Therefore, the Philippian church, like Paul, was God's instrument he used to proclaim the gospel. The involvement of God in the gospel ministry of the Philippian church is explicitly stated in verse 6, for verse 6 indicates the "ultimate"¹³⁰ ground for Paul's thanksgiving: God. Paul is thankful for the Philippians because he knows the faithfulness of the God who saved them to preserve them.¹³¹ Therefore, it is God who will continue to enable the Philippians to be his instrument to proclaim the gospel (v. 6).¹³²

Paul continues his letter by expressing his affection for the Philippian church is based upon their willingness both to proclaim the gospel in spite of Paul's imprisonment and their own suffering (vv. 7-8).¹³³ Thus, during persecution and difficulty, the Philippians, along with Paul,

to the Philippians, 49). Thus, Paul is thankful for the Philippians' acceptance of the gospel and instrumental participation in gospel ministry as God's instruments through which the gospel is proclaimed. See Heinrich Seesemann, *Der Begriff KOINΩNIA im Neuen Testament*, (Giessen: Töpelmann, 1933), 73–79; Hauch, *TDNT*, κοινωνός," 804-05; Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, 83–85; O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, 61–63; Hansen, *The Letter to the Philippians*, 48–49. Cf. Gerald F. Hawthorne and Ralph P. Martin, *Philippians*, rev. ed., Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 43 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2004), 22; Silva, *Philippians*, 44; John Reumann, *Philippians*, The Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 106–08; Jac J. Müller, *The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 40–41. For an in depth discussion on Paul's usage of κοινωνία in 1:5 as denoting the work of the Philippians in spreading the gospel as well as Paul's emphasis on the corporate nature of evangelism through Philippians, see George W. Murray, "Paul's Corporate Witness in Philippians," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 155 (1998): 316–26.

¹²⁹O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, 63; Hawthorne and Martin, *Philippians*, 22; Joachim Gnllka, *Der Philipperbrief* (Freiburg: Herder, 1968), 44–46; Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, 84–85.

¹³⁰O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, 63.

¹³¹Silva, *Philippians*, 45.

¹³²As Vincent opines, ζργον ἀγαθόν in verse 6 refers to "the work begun in their [the Philippians'] reception of the gospel, and developed in their activity and close fellowship for its promotion" (Marvin R. Vincent, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles to the Philippians and Philemon*, The International Critical Commentary [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1955], 8).

¹³³As Hawthorne and Martin note, "Paul's present situation of suffering for the gospel and of defending and confirming the gospel is but the result of his commission. And in this also the Philippians are partners. If Paul suffers, so do they; if he defends and vindicates the gospel, so do they. Paul sees himself as an extension of the Philippian Christians and them as joint participants with him in his troubles, co-sharers with him of the divine grace or privilege" (Hawthorne and Martin, *Philippians*, 27). Cf. O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, 69–70; Hansen,

continued to be used by God to spread the gospel. Paul proceeds by interceding on behalf of the Philippians; his desire for them is that they will continue to grow in both love and discernment (vv. 9-11).

In the next section of chapter 1, Paul describes the advance of the gospel message during his Roman imprisonment. He begins by assuring the Philippians that his imprisonment has had an unexpected effect; instead of hindering the cause of the gospel, it has advanced it (v. 12).¹³⁴ Due to his imprisonment, Paul has been able to share the gospel with high-level officials in the Roman government (v. 13).¹³⁵ Paul's imprisonment has also inspired fellow Christians (ἀδελφῶν) to share the gospel more boldly (v. 14).¹³⁶ However, some (τινὲς) of these Christians¹³⁷ were preaching Christ in opposition to Paul – that is, out of envy and strife; because of their selfish ambition, they desired to cause Paul distress in prison. Other Christians, though,

The Letter to the Philippians, 55; Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, 93. Thus, both Paul and the Philippian church are God's instruments through whom the gospel is preached who do similar work and consequently, experience similar trials.

¹³⁴O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, 89–91; Hawthorne and Martin, *Philippians*, 43; Hansen, *The Letter to the Philippians*, 65–67; Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, 110–11; Silva, *Philippians*, 62; Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, trans. James W. Leitch (Richmond: John Knox, 1962), 25.

¹³⁵As Hawthorne and Martin note, without his imprisonment, Paul would probably never have had the opportunity to proclaim the gospel to some of the high-level Roman officials he ministered to during it. See Hawthorne and Martin, *Philippians*, 44.

¹³⁶O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, 94.

¹³⁷The opponents of Paul whom he references in Phil 1:12-26 are Christians. As Hansen as well as Hawthorne and Martin argue, the word in verse 15 translated “some” (τινὲς) referencing the opponents of Paul and “others” (τινὲς) referencing those preaching Christ out of goodwill toward Paul have as their antecedent the word “brothers” (ἀδελφῶν) in verse 14. Lightfoot argues these opponents were Judaizers. However, as Hansen notes, Paul never objects to the content of their message; they were not preaching a different gospel. Instead, they were preaching the right gospel with wrong motives. Vincent also insightfully points out that Paul does not refer to Judaizers as preachers in the epistles except as ones who preach another Jesus (2 Cor. 11:4). Therefore, the fact that Paul does not object to the content of the message of his opponents presents a problem for Lightfoot's view. See Hansen, *The Letter to the Philippians*, 71–72, 74; Hawthorne and Martin, *Philippians*, 45–46; J. B. Lightfoot, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1953), 88–89; Vincent, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles to the Philippians and Philemon*, 19. Cf. Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, 121; Silva, *Philippians*, 63; Reumann, *Philippians*, 198; F. W. Beare, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Philippians*, Harper's New Testament Commentaries (New York: Harpers, 1959), 59; F. F. Bruce, *Philippians*, New International Biblical Commentary (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999), 43; I. Howard Marshall, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, Epworth Commentaries (London: Epworth, 1992), 22–23. For a thorough summary of the different options for the identity of Paul's opponents: O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, 102–5.

were preaching Christ out love for Paul (vv. 15-17). In spite of the opposition to his ministry by those preaching Christ out of wrong motives, Paul (God’s gospel instrument) is filled with joy; the only thing that matters to Paul is that Christ’s gospel is preached (v. 18).¹³⁸ His imprisonment has inspired other members of the church (God’s gospel instruments) to proclaim the gospel, and therefore, he can be thankful to God that the gospel continues to spread.

Paul continues by expressing his determination to bring glory to Christ whether in his life or death (vv. 19-26). He concludes chapter 1 by exhorting¹³⁹ the Philippians to live as heavenly citizens (πολιτεύεσθε), that is, members of the new community: the church.¹⁴⁰ In other words, they are to live lives worthy of the gospel; as Schütz asserts, “It [πολιτεύεσθε] indicates that the gospel establishes the norm of the Philippians’ conduct.”¹⁴¹ Therefore, the Philippians, as God’s gospel instrument, are to live lives that reflect the message they proclaim.¹⁴² Paul proceeds by giving three ways in which the Philippians are to live as heavenly citizens. First, they are to stand firm in one spirit. Second, they are to contend with one soul for the faith of the gospel. Therefore, the promotion of the gospel is to provide a reason/source for unity in the Philippian church; as Hansen argues, “When Christians focus on proclaiming the gospel and living by the truth of the gospel, they will be soul mates, *striving together with one soul*.”¹⁴³

¹³⁸As Hansen opines, “The advancement of the message [gospel], not the advancement of Paul, is the source of Paul’s joy” (Hansen, *The Letter to the Philippians*, 75).

¹³⁹As Barth argues, with Paul’s usage of the word *Μόνον* in the phrase *Μόνον ἀξίως τοῦ εὐαγγελίου τοῦ Χριστοῦ πολιτεύεσθε*, Paul lifts a “warning finger” to the Philippian church to live in a way worthy of the gospel. See Barth, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, 45.

¹⁴⁰Hawthorne and Martin, *Philippians*, 69; Vincent, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles to the Philippians and Philemon*, 32. Cf. Andrew T. Lincoln, *Paradise Now and Not Yet*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 43 (London: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 100–01.

¹⁴¹John Howard Schütz, *Paul and the Anatomy of Apostolic Authority*, The New Testament Library (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007), 50. Cf. Bonnie B. Thurston, “Philippians,” in *Philippians and Philemon*, Sacra Pagina (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2005), 68–9; Marshall, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, 35.

¹⁴²O’Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, 145–46, 148. Cf. Fee, *Paul’s Letter to the Philippians*, 162–63.

¹⁴³Hansen, *The Letter to the Philippians*, 98. Italics original. Cf. O’Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, 151–52; Melick, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, 89–90.

Thus, the church is unified by God’s use of it as his instrument of gospel proclamation. Third, the Philippians are to stand firm against their opponents (vv. 27-28).¹⁴⁴ Paul concludes by asserting that the Philippians, like Paul, must stand firm in their faith despite opposition to it (vv. 29-30).

In summary, Philippians 1 demonstrates that both Paul (a member of the church) and the Philippians (members of the church) are God’s instruments that he uses to proclaim the gospel, for Paul displays the focus of his ministry – gospel proclamation. He is not concerned about his own promotion or comfort; instead, Paul has one singular focus: the continued spread of the gospel to all people. He also commends the Philippians for their partnership with him in spreading the gospel and exhorts them to continue being used of God to proclaim the gospel.¹⁴⁵ The Philippians are to follow Paul’s example and focus, for they too, as members of the church, are the instruments God uses to proclaim the gospel. Colossians 4:2-6 expresses a similar exhortation by Paul to the church at Colossae as he desires that church, like the Philippian church, to be actively involved in proclaiming the gospel.

Colossians 4:2-6

In Colossians 4:2-6, Paul brings to a close the body of his epistle. In it, he finishes a series of exhortations in which he gives instructions on how the Colossian church is to live out the lordship of Christ in their daily lives (3:5-4:6). In this pericope, Paul focuses on how the church is to relate to non-Christians.¹⁴⁶ He begins by encouraging the Colossians to pray, being

¹⁴⁴Hansen, *The Letter to the Philippians*, 95–98.

¹⁴⁵Phil 1 is not the only place in Philippians that Paul presents the church as God’s gospel instrument. Plummer argues convincingly that Paul commands the Philippians to proclaim the gospel in Phil 2:16. Here, Paul instructs the Philippians to “hold forth the word of life.” In other words, Paul commands the Philippians to proclaim the gospel to non-Christians with the hope that they will accept it. See Robert Plummer, “The Church’s Missionary Nature: The Apostle Paul and His Churches” (Ph.D. diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2001), 109–13.

¹⁴⁶Douglas J. Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 318; Peter T. O’Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 44 (Waco, TX: Word, 1982), 235–36.

both watchful/alert and thankful. Paul's usage of γρηγοροῦντες (watchful/alert) gives verse 2 an eschatological coloring, for it emphasizes the fact that believers are to pray in a way that is typified by an understanding of the imminent return of Christ (v. 2).¹⁴⁷ Paul continues by asking the Colossians to pray to God specifically for an open door (ἀνοίξη θύραν) for evangelistic ministry, for he believes God is sovereign in both the work and results of gospel proclamation.¹⁴⁸ Paul and those with him¹⁴⁹ are simply God's instrument through whom God accomplishes both the work and results of their gospel preaching; as Moo argues, "In requesting prayer for the opening of a door for the word, Paul implies that it is God who prepares the way for the message of the gospel. He gives opportunities; he softens the hearts of listeners by grace."¹⁵⁰ The next phrase in verse 3 further clarifies Paul's desire: he wants God to open a door for him so that he can verbally proclaim (λαλήσαι)¹⁵¹ the mystery of Christ (= gospel).¹⁵² As both a member of God's church and his gospel instrument, Paul longs to proclaim the good news of Christ to the

¹⁴⁷Evald Lövestam, *Spiritual Wakefulness in the New Testament*, trans. W. F. Salisbury (Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1963), 75–77; Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 320; James D. G. Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and Philemon*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 262; O'Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, 237–38; Eduard Schweizer, *The Letter to the Colossians: A Commentary*, trans. Andrew Chester (London: SPCK, 1982), 231; Eduard Lohse, *Colossians and Philemon*, trans. William R. Poehlmann and Robert J. Karris, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), 164–65. As Wilson notes, believers are to have this same attitude of watchfulness in prayer in every age. See R. McL. Wilson, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Colossians and Philemon*, The International Critical Commentary (London: T. & T. Clark, 2005), 290.

¹⁴⁸MacDonald rightly notes that Col 4:2-6 as well as the whole book of Colossians assumes an atmosphere of church growth where the gospel is spreading and the church is growing (cf. Colossians 1:5-6; 23). See Margaret Y. MacDonald, *Colossians and Ephesians*, Sacra Pagina (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2000), 171. Cf. Jerry L. Sumney, *Colossians: A Commentary*, The New Testament Library (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008), 257–58.

¹⁴⁹As Dunn notes, Paul's use of the plural ἡμῖν in the phrase ἀνοίξη ἡμῖν θύραν in verse 3 indicates that Paul's mission involved a substantial team of people who were involved in gospel ministry along with him. See Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and Philemon*, 263.

¹⁵⁰Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 322. Cf. O'Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, 238–39; Schweizer, *The Letter to the Colossians*, 232–33.

¹⁵¹As Moo notes, Paul's usage of the verb λαλήσαι indicates he is referring to a verbal proclamation. See Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 322–23; O'Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, 239.

¹⁵²O'Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, 239; Lohse, *Colossians and Philemon*, 165.

world in spite of his current imprisonment for his gospel ministry (v. 3).¹⁵³ He continues by asking the Colossians to pray that he will be able to speak the gospel message clearly. His usage of the verb φανερώσω (“to reveal”) indicates that he believes his preaching is in continuity with the revelation of God.¹⁵⁴ Paul is God’s specially chosen instrument to proclaim the gospel to the Gentiles; therefore, his message is not his own message, but God’s message (v. 4).¹⁵⁵ Paul transitions from contemplating his own involvement in the proclamation of the gospel to addressing the involvement of the Colossians in proclaiming the gospel.¹⁵⁶ He begins by encouraging the Colossians to be wise in their actions toward non-Christians (τοὺς ἕξω);¹⁵⁷ in other words, Paul desires the Colossians to seek to win those outside the church to Christ.¹⁵⁸ He continues by imploring the Colossians to make the most of every opportunity (ἐξαγοραζόμενοι)¹⁵⁹

¹⁵³Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 323–24.

¹⁵⁴Ibid., 325–26; Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and Philemon*, 264.

¹⁵⁵O’Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, 240; Lohse, *Colossians and Philemon*, 165.

¹⁵⁶Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 326; Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and Philemon*, 264. Houlden draws a distinction between task of the apostle and the Christians. He argues that the task of the apostle Paul was to continue proclaiming the gospel, while the task of the Colossian church was to live in a way that honored Christ and gave the community a positive impression of Christianity. As Dunn notes, while there certainly is a distinction between the work of the church and the apostle, Col 4:2-6 clearly contains an exhortation to the Colossian church to be actively involved in proclaiming the gospel in their daily life. See J. L. Houlden, *Paul’s Letters from Prison: Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, and Ephesians*, The Pelican New Testament Commentaries (Baltimore: Penguin, 1970), 215–16; Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and Philemon*, 261.

¹⁵⁷Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 326; Lohse, *Colossians and Philemon*, 167; J. B. Lightfoot, *Colossians and Philemon*, The Crossway Classic Commentaries (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1997), 117; MacDonald, *Colossians and Ephesians*, 172; Ernest D. Martin, *Colossians Philemon*, Believers Church Bible Commentary (Scottsdale, PA: Herald, 1993), 199.

¹⁵⁸Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 327. Cf. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 174.

¹⁵⁹Scholars debate over the exact meaning of ἐξαγοραζόμενοι in the phrase τὸν καιρὸν ἐξαγοραζόμενοι. As Moo notes, given the context, it seems best to translate the phrase as “make the most of every opportunity.” See Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 327–28. Cf. Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and Philemon*, 265–66; Joachim Gnllka, *Der Kolosserbrief*, Herders Theologischer Kommentar Zum Neuen Testament (Freiburg: Herder, 1980), 231; O’Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, 241–42; Lohse, *Colossians and Philemon*, 168; N. T. Wright, *Colossians and Philemon*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2008), 156–57; Lewis B. Radford, *The Epistles to the Colossians and and the Epistle to Philemon*, Westminster Commentaries (London: Methuen, 1931), 302.

for evangelism, given the imminent return of Christ (v. 5).¹⁶⁰ He proceeds in verse 6 by urging the Colossians to proclaim the gospel in a gracious (χάριτι)¹⁶¹ manner (cf. 1 Peter 3:15-16). He illustrates this command with the metaphorical language “seasoned with salt,” which further encourages the Colossians to proclaim the gospel in a gracious manner. Paul concludes by expressing the goal or result of this gracious gospel proclamation: the believers in the Colossian church would be ready to answer unbelievers (v. 6).¹⁶² As Moo notes, in verse 6, Paul is exhorting the Colossian church to proclaim the gospel both correctly and in a way that makes it attractive to unbelievers.¹⁶³ Perhaps Dunn captures this idea best when he asserts that the church was “expected to hold its own in the social setting of marketplace, baths, and meal table and to win attention by the attractiveness of its life and speech.”¹⁶⁴ Thus, the Colossian church is God’s instrument that he uses to proclaim the gospel in all places of public life; this proclamation is to be “seasoned with salt” – that is, done in a gracious manner.

Colossians 4:2-6 illustrates the role of the church in gospel proclamation, for it presents both Paul and the church at Colossae as the instruments that God uses to proclaim the gospel. Witherington accurately captures the unifying focus of this passage when he argues, “What binds the requests for prayer for Paul [vv. 2-4] and the discussion of deeds and speech together [vv. 5-6] is the concern for spreading the gospel among outsiders.”¹⁶⁵ Paul and the

¹⁶⁰Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 329. Sumney argues ἐξαγοραζόμενοι has an eschatological nuance. He also believes it is a warning for the Colossians to stay away from false teachers/teaching. See Sumney, *Colossians*, 256.

¹⁶¹As Lohse and Moo note, χάριτι can refer to divine grace or a gracious manner. However, given the extra-biblical parallel and Paul’s metaphor at the end of verse, it seem best to take χάριτι as referring to human graciousness. See Lohse, *Colossians and Philemon*, 168–69; Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 329–30. Cf. O’Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, 242; Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, 174–75.

¹⁶²Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 331.

¹⁶³Ibid.

¹⁶⁴Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and Philemon*, 267.

Colossians (both members of the church) are God’s gospel instruments that he uses to proclaim the gospel message to the lost. In 1 Timothy 2:1-7, Paul also presents the church as God’s instrument of gospel proclamation by his focus on the universal nature of the gospel message.

1 Timothy 2:1-7

In 1 Timothy 2:1-7, Paul shifts from arguing against the doctrine of false teachers in the Ephesian church to instructing the church on proper conduct.¹⁶⁶ In this pericope, Paul’s emphasis will be on the universal nature of the gospel, for he argues that the gospel is for all people.¹⁶⁷ He begins by exhorting (παρακαλῶ) the Ephesians to pray.¹⁶⁸ These prayers are to be made on behalf of all men. In contrast to the exclusivist tendencies of his opponents, he encourages the Ephesian church to pray for all people as the gospel is for all people (v. 1).¹⁶⁹ He

¹⁶⁵Ben Witherington, *The Letters to Philemon, the Colossians, and the Ephesians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Captivity Epistles* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 198. Cf. MacDonald, *Colossians and Ephesians*, 174.

¹⁶⁶Gordon D. Fee, *1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*, Good News Commentaries (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984), 25. Cf. Martin Dibelius and Hans Conzelmann, *The Pastoral Epistles*, trans. Philip Buttolph and Adela Yarbro, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1972), 35–36.

¹⁶⁷William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 46 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2000), 75–76; Ceslas Spicq, *Saint Paul: Les Épîtres Pastorales*, 4th ed., Études Bibliques (Paris: Gabalda, 1969), 1:356; Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 164–65; Walter Lock, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles*, The International Critical Commentary (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1924), 24; John Stott, *Guard the Truth: The Message of 1 Timothy & Titus* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996), 60.

¹⁶⁸Paul uses the following four terms in verse 1 to describe the prayer he desires the Ephesians to pray: δεήσεις, προσευχάς, ἐντεύξεις, and εὐχαριστίας. As Calvin and Towner argue, the exact meaning of these terms is difficult to delineate. Scholars have suggested different options for the exact meaning of these terms. Knight argues that these terms specify different aspects that should mark the prayer of the Ephesians: “In summary, these four terms delineate aspects of what should mark prayers: δεήσεις, making requests for specific needs; προσευχάς, bringing those in view before God; ἐντεύξεις, appealing boldly on their behalf; and εὐχαριστίας, thankfulness” (George W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992], 115). Towner believes that Paul’s usage of these four terms denotes the completeness that should mark the prayer of the Ephesians. Even though the exact meaning of these terms is debated, the focus of verse 1 is apparent. Paul desires the Ephesians to pray for all people. See John Calvin, *1 & 2 Timothy & Titus*, The Crossway Classic Commentaries (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1998), 36; Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 166–67; Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 114–15. Cf. I. Howard Marshall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles*, The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1999), 419–20; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 79–80.

continues by requesting the Ephesians to pray for kings and those in authority over them so that they will be able to lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness (εὐσεβεία)¹⁷⁰ and dignity (σεμνότητι),¹⁷¹ for Paul desires the Ephesians to have a government that promotes an atmosphere in which their message—the gospel—can be proclaimed to all (v. 2; cf. 1 Thess 4:11).¹⁷² As Towner opines, “The church is to pray for the salvation of ‘all,’ and it participates in that mission by making God present in society in its genuine expression of the new life for all to see.”¹⁷³ Thus, the Ephesians, as God’s gospel instruments, are to pray for an ideal atmosphere to share their faith as well as for all people to come to a saving knowledge of God.¹⁷⁴ Paul proceeds by asserting that praying for all people is good and acceptable to God (v. 3). He grounds his assertion by the fact that God desires all people — that is, both Jews and Gentiles —¹⁷⁵ to be

¹⁶⁹Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 163, 167; Marshall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles*, 420. Cf. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 115–16; J. N. D. Kelley, *A Commentary of the Pastoral Epistles*, Harper’s New Testament Commentaries (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), 60.

¹⁷⁰For a detailed discussion of the term εὐσεβεία, see Spicq, *Saint Paul: Les Épîtres Pastorales*, 482–92; Philip H. Towner, *The Goal of Our Instruction: The Structure of Theology and Ethics in the Pastoral Epistles*, Journal for the Study of New Testament Supplement Series 34 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1989), 147–54.

¹⁷¹As Towner notes, Paul uses the terms εὐσεβεία and σεμνότητι—current ethical language—with the proclamation of the gospel in mind for he uses them to establish the relevance of gospel proclamation to the culture in Ephesus. See Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 170–75.

¹⁷²Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 116; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 81–82; Stott, *Guard the Truth*, 63; Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy Titus*, The New American Commentary, vol. 34 (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 88. Cf. Marshall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles*, 420–21; Fee, *1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*, 27.

¹⁷³Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 170.

¹⁷⁴R. F. Horton rightly capture the ethos of this passage when he opines, “The Christian church is the priest *pleading* for the world to which it belongs (cf. I Pet. ii. 5)” (R. F. Horton, *The Pastoral Epistles Timothy and Titus*, New Century Bible [New York: Henry Frowde, 1901], 96, italics mine).

¹⁷⁵As Knight, Towner, Marshall, and Mounce argue, Paul’s primary focus is on the universal nature of the gospel with respect to Jews and Gentiles—that is, that the gospel message is for both Jews and gentiles. Thus, Mounce rightly argues that this statement is not one addressing universalism, election, adoption, or any other developed theological motif. See Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 119; Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 177; Marshall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles*, 425–27; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 84–85, 93. Cf. Donald Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles*, rev. ed., Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 81–82.

saved¹⁷⁶ and accept the gospel (ἐπίγνωσιν ἀληθείας ἐλθεῖν)¹⁷⁷ (v. 4). He bases his assertion¹⁷⁸ in verse 4 on the fact there is one God for all people.¹⁷⁹ Not only is there one God; there is one mediator between God and man – Jesus Christ. Paul argues that Christ became the mediator (μεσίτης) between God and man by giving his life as a ransom (ἀντίλυτρον)¹⁸⁰ for all people, both Jew and Gentile.¹⁸¹ As Johnson asserts, “As the one God wills the salvation of all, the one mediator gives himself for all.”¹⁸² Thus, Paul’s emphasis is again that the gospel is for all people. He concludes verse 6 by asserting that this testimony of Christ as well as Paul’s testimony of his work came at the proper time (vv. 5-6).¹⁸³ Paul concludes by affirming his

¹⁷⁶As Fiore notes in reference to verse 4, Paul’s ministry consisted of mediating salvation to God’s elect by his gospel proclamation (cf. 2 Tim 2:10). See Benjamin Fiore, *The Pastoral Epistles*, Sacra Pagina (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2007), 59. In order for the Jews and Gentiles to be saved, they must hear the gospel message that Paul is proclaiming (cf. Rom 10:5-21). Thus, Paul covets the prayers of the church on his behalf so that the gospel message will continue to be proclaimed and consequently, people saved and added to the church.

¹⁷⁷As Towner notes, the phrase ἐπίγνωσιν ἀληθείας ἐλθεῖν refers to God’s desire for all people to accept the gospel. See Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 178–70. Cf. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 86; Dibelius and Conzelmann, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 41; Fee, *1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*, 28; Luke Timothy Johnson, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy*, The Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 191.

¹⁷⁸As Knight argues, the γὰρ indicates that verse 5 forms the basis for verse 4. See Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 120. So also Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 179; Marshall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles*, 428.

¹⁷⁹As Stott argues, “Thus both the Old and New Testament affirm first that God is one and then that this monotheism is the fundamental basis of world mission” (Stott, *Guard the Truth*, 67).

¹⁸⁰Paul’s usage of the word ἀντίλυτρον denotes the substitutionary nature of Christ’s death on the cross for sin. See Leon Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 48–49; Herman N. Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 196–97; George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 474. Cf. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 121; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 89–90.

¹⁸¹Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 121.

¹⁸²Johnson, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy*, 197. Cf. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 181. Cf. Stott, *Guard the Truth*, 68.

¹⁸³The exact meaning of the last phrase τὸ μαρτύριον καιροῦς ἰδίους in verse 6 is debated as it does not have any specific textual markers to denote its function. As Marshall argues, the phrase could be appositional to the verses 5-6a so that the emphasis is on the witness of the Christian message. This interpretation would place the focus of the phrase on the witness of Paul’s apostolic ministry. However, the phrase could also be in apposition to the verb, which would place the emphasis on Christ’s witness or testimony of God’s will through his passion. Even though Marshall argues for the previous option, Knight’s interpretation is probably best. Knight argues that the phrase is referring to both the testimony of Christ to God’s will that all should be saved as well as to Paul’s

calling to the Gentiles: he is a God-appointed preacher (κῆρυξ), apostle (ἀπόστολος), and teacher (διδάσκαλος) to bear testimony of Christ's work on their behalf (v. 7). As Knight notes, the first (κῆρυξ) and third (διδάσκαλος) terms emphasize Paul's evangelistic ministry to the Gentiles while the middle term (ἀπόστολος) emphasizes that Paul is Christ's authoritative eyewitness.¹⁸⁴ Paul's illustration of his own ministry once again emphasizes the universal nature of the gospel message¹⁸⁵ and, consequently, further grounds the universal nature of the church's ministry: since the gospel is universal, the church's prayer and mission are to be universal, for Paul is God's gospel instrument to the gentiles—all people—as the Ephesians are God's gospel instrument to all.

In 1 Timothy 2:1-7, Paul presents both himself and the Ephesian church as God's instrument through which he gospel is proclaimed. Stott rightly captures the thrust of this passage when he argues the following:

It is because there is one God and one mediator that all people must be included in the church's prayer and gospel proclamation. It is the unity of God and the uniqueness of Christ which demand the universality of the gospel. God's desire and Christ's death concern all people; therefore the church's duty concerns all people too, reaching out to them both in earnest prayer and urgent witness.¹⁸⁶

Thus, the church is God's instrument of gospel proclamation to the entire world. In the final passage I will examine, Paul affirms that the church is indeed God's instrument through which the gospel is proclaimed as he commands Timothy to do the work of an evangelist.

testimony of the gospel. See Marshall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles*, 433; Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 124.

¹⁸⁴Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 127. Cf. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 187–89.

¹⁸⁵Fee, *1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*, 30; Kelley, *A Commentary of the Pastoral Epistles*, 64–65.

¹⁸⁶Stott, *Guard the Truth*, 73.

2 Timothy 4:1-8

2 Timothy 4:1-8 contains Paul's final charge and testimony before he is martyred. As Stott notes, these words are "Paul's legacy to the church."¹⁸⁷ Paul begins his emphatic charge (διαμαρτύρομαι)¹⁸⁸ to Timothy in the presence of both God and Christ. By invoking the presence of God in his charge, he emphasizes the seriousness of the charge.¹⁸⁹ He further heightens the seriousness by reminding Timothy that Christ will judge the living and the dead in his appearing and kingdom. Timothy, therefore, is to be motivated to keep Paul's charge in light of his future eschatological judgment before Christ (v. 1).¹⁹⁰ Paul continues by specifying the content of the charge.¹⁹¹ First, Timothy is to preach (κήρυξον) the word (i.e., the gospel).¹⁹² Thus, Timothy, as God's gospel instrument, is to be engaged in verbally proclaiming the gospel.¹⁹³ Paul next specifies that Timothy is to be ready in season and out of season – that is, he is to preach the gospel in both opportune and inopportune times, due to the urgent need of the Ephesian church to hear the message of the gospel.¹⁹⁴ Paul also commands Timothy to reprove, rebuke, and

¹⁸⁷John R. W. Stott, *Guard the Gospel: The Message of 2 Timothy*, The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1973), 105.

¹⁸⁸Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 451–52.

¹⁸⁹Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 595.

¹⁹⁰Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 452–53; Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 597; Marshall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles*, 799; Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 242. Cf. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 572; Kelley, *A Commentary of the Pastoral Epistles*, 205.

¹⁹¹Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 453.

¹⁹²As Mounce argues, *λόγον* here denotes the gospel. This meaning of *λόγον* is common as it is a technical term that is often used for the gospel in the New Testament. See Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 573. Cf. Fee, *1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*, 233; Horton, *The Pastoral Epistles Timothy and Titus*, 166; Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 242.

¹⁹³Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 600.

¹⁹⁴Marshall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles*, 800–1; Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 600; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 573. Malherbe insightfully points out that Paul's instruction went against the accepted rhetorical conventions of his time, which argued that a message should be presented at the most opportune time for the listeners to accept it. However, Malherbe incorrectly posits that Timothy's opponents are so evil that Paul is arguing that it does not matter when the teaching/preaching of the gospel takes place. As Marshall notes, it is more likely Paul is seeking to bring home the urgency of the situation to

exhort with great patience and careful instruction (v. 2). Thus, Timothy is to be faithful in the work of the ministry until Christ comes or he dies and is with Christ. The reason (γὰρ)¹⁹⁵ for this charge is that a time will come when men will not endure sound doctrine (i.e., the gospel).¹⁹⁶ They will, instead, pick for themselves teachers who will teach them what they want to hear;¹⁹⁷ they will turn away¹⁹⁸ from the truth to false teaching (μύθους) (vv. 3-4).¹⁹⁹ Paul proceeds by continuing his charge to Timothy. He contrasts (σὺ δε.) Timothy with the ones he just described in verses 3-4. First, Timothy is to be sober in all things, that is, he is to “steer clear of the heady wine of heretical teaching.”²⁰⁰ Next, he is to endure hardship; in other words, Timothy is to be ready and willing to suffer for the gospel.²⁰¹ Third, Paul instructs Timothy to do the work of an evangelist (εὐαγγελιστοῦ). In other words, Timothy, as God’s gospel instrument, is to be active in proclaiming the gospel to the lost.²⁰² Finally, Paul summarizes his preceding challenges to

Timothy. See Abraham J. Malherbe, “‘In Season and Out of Season’: 2 Timothy 4:2,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 103 (1984): 235–43; Marshall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles*, 800–01.

¹⁹⁵The connecting γὰρ indicates Paul is specifying the reason for his charge to Timothy. So also Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 602; Fee, *1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*, 234.

¹⁹⁶As Mounce argues, “Timothy is to be prepared to preach the gospel even when the time is not right (ἀκαίρως, ‘inopportune’ [v. 2]) because the καιρὸς, ‘time,’ is coming when people will not listen to the gospel” (Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 574). Cf. Kelley, *A Commentary of the Pastoral Epistles*, 206; Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 244.

¹⁹⁷Marshall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles*, 801–3; Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 604–05. As Easton asserts, “In [2 Timothy] 3:6 depraved teachers corrupt their pupils but here, as the world grows worse, men already corrupted seek out teachers who will encourage them in evil” (Burton Scott Easton, *The Pastoral Epistles* [New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1947], 69).

¹⁹⁸As Towner opines, Paul implies that people will turn away not only from the gospel message, but also from those who preach it. See Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 605.

¹⁹⁹Ibid. Cf. Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 244–45.

²⁰⁰Kelley, *A Commentary of the Pastoral Epistles*, 207. In context, Kelley is using this quote as the application of the command “be sober” in verse 5 to Christian ministers in general. However, Kelley would certainly agree that it applied to Timothy as well.

²⁰¹Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 576; Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 607; Fee, *1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*, 235; Fiore, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 179.

²⁰²Alastair V. Campbell, “‘Do the Work of an Evangelist,’” *Evangelical Quarterly* 64 (1992): 117–29; Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 608; Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 576; Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles*,

Timothy with one exhortation: fulfill your ministry. Timothy must faithfully complete the ministry that God has given him to do (v. 5). Paul continues by giving further reason and motivation for Timothy to complete the charge that he has just given him: Paul is about to be martyred. His blood is soon going to be poured out as an offering to God (v. 6),²⁰³ for, Paul has fought the good fight and completed his role as God’s instrument of gospel proclamation to the Gentiles.²⁰⁴ As Knight argues, “The struggle [fight] is ‘good’ (καλὸν) because he [Paul] has engaged in it for God and the gospel. Indeed, one must struggle for the gospel so that it can make its way in this evil world.”²⁰⁵ Since Paul has fulfilled God’s calling as God’s gospel instrument to the Gentiles, he will receive a heavenly reward from Christ at his appearing: a crown of righteousness. Paul concludes this pericope by asserting that if Timothy is faithful, he too will receive heavenly reward for his service to Christ (vv. 7-8).²⁰⁶

2 Timothy 4:1-8 demonstrates that the church is the instrument God uses to proclaim the gospel as it is a charge to Timothy to fulfill his calling as God’s gospel instrument. As Stott opines, “So then, in view of the coming of Christ to judgment, of the contemporary world’s distaste for the gospel and of the imprisoned apostle’s imminent death, the latter’s charge to

179–80; Kelley, *A Commentary of the Pastoral Epistles*, 207; Lea and Griffin, *1,2 Timothy Titus*, 245. Cf. Marshall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles*, 804; Horton, *The Pastoral Epistles Timothy and Titus*, 167; Lock, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles*, 113–14.

²⁰³Jerome D. Quinn and William C. Wacker, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy: A New Translation with Notes and Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 784–85; Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 610–11; Marshall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles*, 806; Kelley, *A Commentary of the Pastoral Epistles*, 208; Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 247.

²⁰⁴As Pfitzner comments, “It is not special achievement or merit which distinguishes the Apostle from other believers, but a specific task and its faithful enactment” (Victor C. Pfitzner, *Paul and the Agon Motif: Traditional Athletic Imagery in the Pauline Literature*, Supplements to Novum Testamentum 16 [Leiden, England: E. J. Brill, 1967], 184–85). Cf. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 580; Fee, *1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*, 238; Fiore, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 179.

²⁰⁵Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 459.

²⁰⁶Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, 583. Cf. Pfitzner, *Paul and the Agon Motif*, 183–84.

Timothy had a note of solemn urgency: *Preach the word!*” Thus, Timothy is to continue Paul’s legacy and as God’s gospel instrument to the world.

Summary

In this chapter, I have surveyed numerous passages; these passages demonstrate that the church is the instrument God uses to proclaim the gospel. I began this chapter by demonstrating that the church functioning as God’s gospel instrument began with a direct command from Christ: Matthew 28:16-20, Luke 24:44-49, and Acts 1:8. I showed next that the early church fulfilled Christ’s command by proclaiming the gospel to both Jews and gentiles (Acts 2-28). Finally, I exegeted several passages that confirmed my observations in Acts. I demonstrated that Paul, in several of his epistles, argues for the church’s active role in the proclamation of the gospel. First, he implicitly assumes that the verbal proclamation of the gospel by members of the church is necessary for the salvation of the lost (Rom 10:5-21). He also argues that both Peter and he, as apostles of God and members of the church, are God’s chosen gospel instruments (Gal 2:7-9). Finally, he instructs leaders in the church to train members to preach the gospel (Eph 4:1-15) as well as commands and encourages members of the church to share their faith with unbelievers (Phil 1; Col 4:2-6; 1 Tim 2:1-8; 2 Tim 4:1-8). Thus, all of these passages confirm that church is the instrument God uses to proclaim the gospel. I now turn to chapter 6 where I will develop a reciprocal relationship between the gospel and the church using my data in chapters 2 through 5 and apply speech act theory to that data.

CHAPTER 6

THE SYSTEMATIC FORMULATION AND THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE GOSPEL AND THE CHURCH

Introduction

In previous chapters, I have laid the groundwork for a systematic formulation of the relationship between the gospel and the church. In chapter 2, I discussed four theologians (Cyprian, Augustine, Luther, and Calvin) who emphasize the active, participatory role of the church in the salvation of believers. This emphasis is especially evident in their usage of the “church as mother” motif. Chapter 2 demonstrates that there is historical precedent for my formulation of the relationship between the gospel and the church that I will discuss in this chapter.

In chapter 3, I provided definitions of the terms “gospel” and “church.” I define the “gospel” as the message of the historical death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ—the Son of God—for the forgiveness of sin based upon 1 Corinthians 15:3-5. I continued in chapter 3 by defining the church as the New Covenant people of God who have accepted Christ by faith through the work of the Holy Spirit. Since I hold to a mild discontinuity position, I only focused on exegeting New Testament passages to provide Scriptural support for my systematic formulation. The definitions I delineate in chapter 3 offer a necessary point of common reference for both of my Scriptural exegesis chapters as well as my systematic formulation in this chapter.

In chapters 4 and 5, I provided the scriptural foundation for my systematization of the relationship between the gospel and the church. In chapter 4, I argued from Scriptural exegesis that the proclamation of the gospel creates members of the church—

the people of God. In chapter 5, I argued a complementary thesis from biblical exegesis: the church is the instrument that God uses to proclaim the gospel. Chapters 4 and 5 provide the needed Scriptural support for my formulation of the relationship between the gospel and the church in this chapter.

In this chapter, I will systematize the data in chapters 2 through 5 to argue the thesis of my dissertation: the church, acting as God's instrument through the power of the Spirit, speaks its members into existence by means of the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ; God, therefore, creates the church through the church. In other words, I will argue that speech act theory provides a mechanism through which the biblical data of chapters 4 and 5 can be better understood. I will begin by formulating a reciprocal relationship between the gospel and the church based upon my exegesis in chapters 4 and 5. I will then apply speech act theory to this relationship; this application will serve to provide both philosophical and linguistic nuances to the reciprocal relationship between the gospel and the church so that it will more faithfully represent the biblical data. It is from this application of speech act theory to the reciprocal relationship that I will prove my thesis. Finally, I will discuss several theological implications of my formulation of the relationship between the gospel and the church using speech act theory. I now begin my formulation of the relationship between the gospel and the church by discussing the reciprocal relationship that exists between them.

The Reciprocal Relationship between the Gospel and the Church

Two thesis statements — the proclamation of the gospel creates members of the church (ch. 4) and the church is God's instrument through which this gospel proclamation takes place (ch. 5) — evidence a reciprocal relationship between the gospel and the church. The church is God's instrument of gospel proclamation, and the proclamation of the gospel is what creates the members of the church who then proclaim

the gospel. It is through this God-ordained reciprocal relationship between the church and the gospel that God's elect come to know Jesus Christ as Savior. Thus, as Cyprian, Augustine, Luther, and Calvin assert, the church has an active, participatory role in the salvation of believers. The reciprocal relationship between the gospel and the church is represented diagrammatically in figure 1.

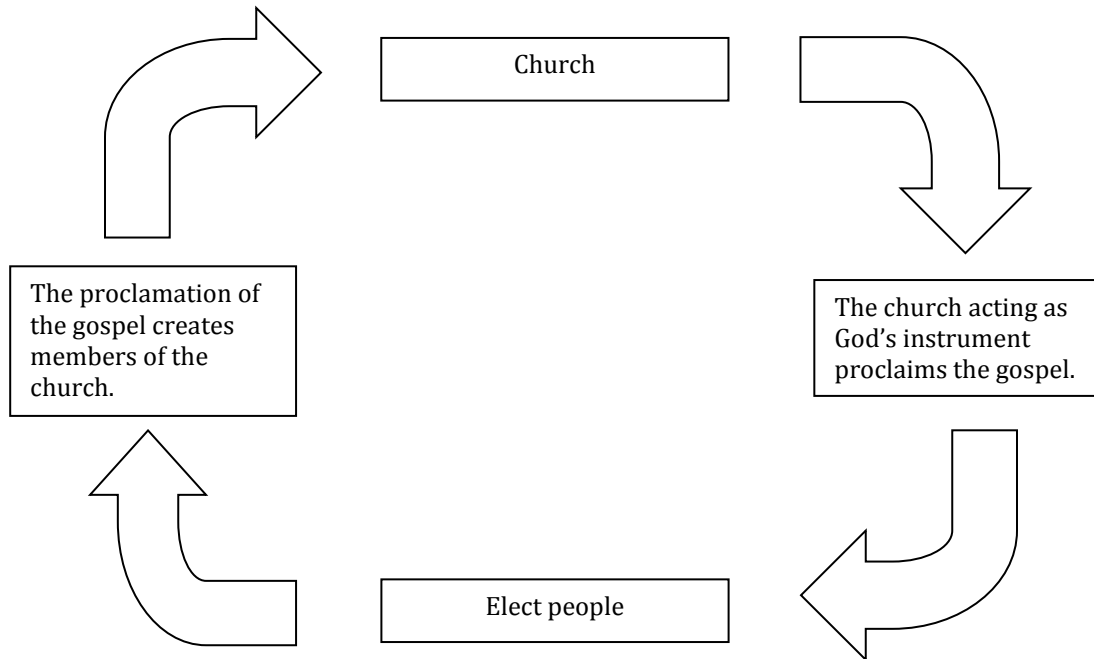


Figure 1: The reciprocal relationship between the gospel and the church

While Figure 1 accurately depicts a basic model of the reciprocal relationship between the gospel and the church, the biblical data warrants further refinements to this model. First, the active role of the Holy Spirit is essential in gospel proclamation; it is through the power of the Spirit that the early church's proclamation of the gospel grew and the church was formed. Moreover, this pattern of Spirit-empowered gospel proclamation creating the church continues into the present time. Thus, any model of the relationship between the gospel and the church must depict the Spirit's role in that relationship.

The reciprocal relationship also needs further refinement in that it does not depict Christ's role in the relationship between the gospel and the church. Christ is central to this reciprocal relationship, since it is his message, the gospel, that is proclaimed by the church and creates it. Not only is Christ the center of the gospel that creates the church, he is the authoritative ruler of the body—the church—that it creates. Therefore, the relationship between the gospel and the church necessarily revolves around him; it is Christ-ruled and Christ-centered. Figure 2 depicts a refined version of the reciprocal relationship between the gospel and the church taking into account both the role of the Holy Spirit and the centrality of Christ in the relationship.

Even though Figure 2 accurately depicts the reciprocal relationship between the gospel and the church, it is not able to capture fully the depth of the relationship because the proclamation of the gospel changes reality once it is proclaimed. When the gospel is preached, the church grows. The eternal bursts into the temporal, forever changing the temporal and creating an eternal people that reside (for now) in the temporal realm. Thus, the world is altered simply by speaking *God's* words—the gospel. Similarly, as a result of gospel proclamation, the righteousness of God is revealed in human faith. Furthermore, by speaking the gospel, people are dynamically divided: some gain eternal life and some are eternally condemned. All of these changes in reality are accomplished by God's work through the church's gospel proclamation. While modeling the relationship between the gospel and the church reciprocally provides a helpful starting point, it does not include any categories to convey the transformation of reality by the Spirit-empowered church's proclamation of the gospel. However, speech act theory offers a helpful paradigm in which to understand this relationship, for it argues that reality changes when words are spoken.¹ Therefore, I will now apply speech act theory

¹Speech act theory by its very nature also deals with human speech. Since God has chosen to reveal the gospel message primarily through its proclamation that involves human speech, speech act

to the reciprocal relationship between the gospel and the church. By reformulating this reciprocal relationship, I will be able to develop a model that more fully represents the biblical data.

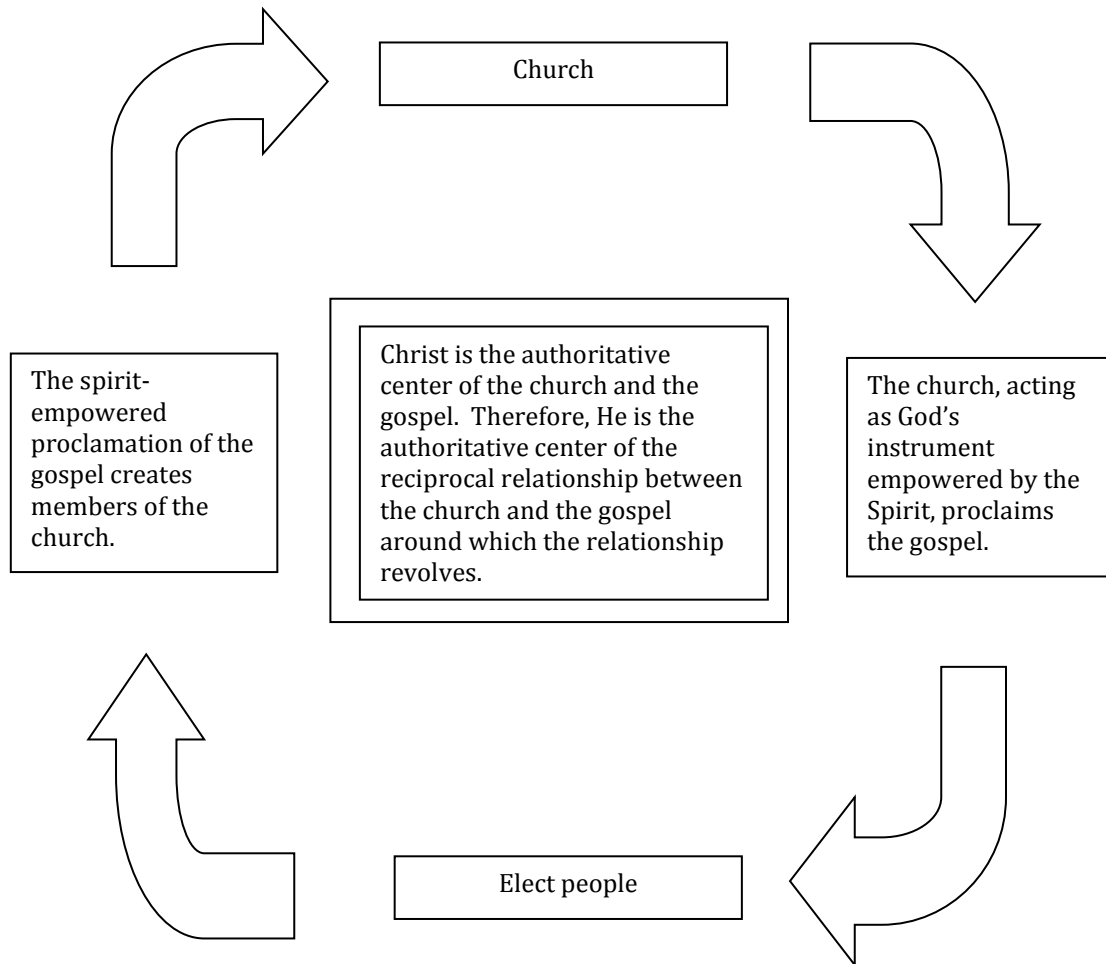


Figure 2: The refined reciprocal relationship between the gospel and the church

The Application of Speech Act Theory to the Reciprocal Relationship

Speech act theory—formulated by J. L. Austin² and developed by John R. Searle³—has become a topic of discussion in evangelical scholarship in recent years;⁴ its

theory naturally provides a helpful scheme for understanding the relationship between the spoken word of the gospel and the church.

implications for issues like the relationship between God's actions and words,⁵ inerrancy,⁶ biblical interpretation,⁷ and homiletics⁸ have been explored by various theologians. One of the more recent applications of speech act theory to theology occurs in Michael Horton's systematic theology, *The Christian Faith*, where he uses speech act theory to define God's revelation as speech act.⁹ Horton also espouses that it is the proclamation of God's word (speech act), which creates the church;¹⁰ specifically, it is the proclamation (preaching) of the gospel that creates the church.¹¹ My reformulation of the relationship between the gospel and the church will be consistent with the current trend in evangelical scholarship of using speech act theory to understand more precisely

²The seminal work is J. L. Austin, *How To Do Things With Words*, ed. J. O. Urmson and Marina Sbisa, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975).

³John R. Searle, *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1969); John R. Searle, *Expression and Meaning: Studies in the Theory of Speech Acts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979); John R. Searle and Daniel Vanderveken, *Foundations of Illocutionary Logic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

⁴One of the first theologians to use the technical language of speech act theory was Anthony Thiselton, "The Parables as Language-Event: Some Comments on Fuch's Hermeneutics in the Light of Linguistic Philosophy," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 23 (1970): 437–68.

⁵Michael S. Horton, *Covenant and Eschatology: The Divine Drama* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002); Timothy Ward, *Words of Life: Scripture as the Living and Active Word of God* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2009), 56–60.

⁶Kevin J. Vanhoozer, "The Semantics of Biblical Literature: Truth and Scripture's Diverse Literary Forms," in *Hermeneutics, Authority, and Canon*, ed. D. A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 49–104; Gregg R. Allison, "Speech Act Theory and Its Implications for the Doctrine of Inerrancy/Infallibility of Scripture," *Philosophia Christi* 18 (1995): 1–23.

⁷Richard S. Briggs, *Words in Action: Speech Act Theory and Biblical Interpretation* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 2001).

⁸David J. Lose, *Confessing Jesus Christ: Preaching in a Postmodern World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 103–10.

⁹Michael Horton, *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 117–22.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 95, 751–61.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 755–56.

the relationship between God's words and his actions as well as exploring the implications to certain doctrines such as inerrancy. However, before I reformulate the reciprocal relationship between the gospel and the church using speech act theory, I will first briefly explain it.¹²

Brief Explanation of Speech Act Theory

I begin by first explaining some basic terminology and ideas in speech act theory. Austin made the following three significant contributions to the development of speech act theory: first, he argued that sentences or utterances (what he called “performatives”) do more than state or describe something; they actually change reality. One example Austin gives are the words “I do” uttered during a marriage ceremony; the utterance of these words actually cause a change in the state of affairs in the world: two people who were not previously married are married once the words are uttered. Another example he provides is the naming of a ship *Queen Elizabeth*. Once the words “I name this ship the *Queen Elizabeth*” are spoken, reality has changed: the mere utterance of words has assigned a name to a formerly nameless ship.¹³ A second contribution made by Austin is the development of three aspects of speech acts. The first aspect, the “locution,” is equivalent to the meaning of the uttered sentence or phrase. The second aspect, illocution, is the force with which a certain phrase is uttered. The final aspect of a speech act, the perlocution, is the effect of the speech act, that is, what is brought about or achieved by an utterance.¹⁴ Austin's third contribution was the development of criteria

¹²For a more thorough explanation of speech act theory, see Allison, “Speech Act Theory and Its Implications for the Doctrine of Inerrancy/Infallibility of Scripture,” 1–9; and Vanhoozer, “The Semantics of Biblical Literature: Truth and Scripture's Diverse Literary Forms,” 86–92. My discussion is based heavily on Allison's discussion as he rightly and succinctly captures the different components of speech act theory.

¹³Austin, *How To Do Things With Words*, 5–7.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 94–108.

for what constitutes a successful speech act, conditions which go beyond simply evaluating whether the speech act is true or false. He categorizes unsuccessful speech acts (or “infelicities”) as including among others “misfires,” “abuses,” “misinvocations,” “misexecutions,” and “insincerities.”¹⁵

Austin’s pupil, John Searle, brought further developments to speech act theory. It is Searle’s version of speech act theory that I will use to reformulate the relationship between the gospel and the church. Searle argues that the speech act is the basic unit of communication.¹⁶ He accepts the same three basic aspects of speech acts as Austin: locution, illocution, and perlocution. We should note that even though these aspects are distinguishable, Searle does not believe these are three separable, independent acts.¹⁷

Searle proceeds by illustrating the distinction between the locution and illocution of speech acts using the following example:¹⁸

1. Sam smokes habitually.
2. Does Sam smoke habitually?
3. Sam, smoke habitually!
4. Would that Sam smoked habitually.¹⁹

¹⁵Ibid., 12–45.

¹⁶“All linguistic communication involves linguistic acts. The unit of linguistic communication is not, as has generally been supposed, the symbol, word, or sentence, or even the token of the symbol, word or sentence, but rather the production or issuance of the symbol or word or sentence in the performance of a speech act. . . . and speech acts . . . are the basic or minimal units of linguistic communication” (Searle, *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language*, 16).

¹⁷Allison, “Speech Act Theory and Its Implications for the Doctrine of Inerrancy/Infallibility of Scripture,” 3.

¹⁸As Allison notes, even though Searle argues that the illocution and locution are distinguishable, he does not see as sharp a distinction as Austin. Searle’s views are succinctly represented when he argues, “The *concept* of an utterance with a certain meaning (that is, the concept of a locutionary act) is indeed a different concept from the *concept* of an utterance with a certain force (that is, the concept of an illocutionary act)” (John R. Searle, “Austin on Locutionary and Illocutionary Acts,” *Philosophical Review* 77 [1968]: 408). Italics original. See also Allison, “Speech Act Theory and Its Implications for the Doctrine of Inerrancy/Infallibility of Scripture,” 3; and Searle, “Austin on Locutionary and Illocutionary Acts,” 405–24.

¹⁹Searle, *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language*, 22.

In each of these statements, the locution is identical: the “referring expression” (R=Sam) as well as the “predicating expression” or predicate (P = smoke habitually or some inflected form) is the same. However, even though the locution is identical, the illocutionary force (F) of each statement can be differentiated: 1 is making an assertion, 2 is asking a question, 3 is giving an order, and 4 is expressing a wish or desire.²⁰ Thus, speech acts can be differentiated based upon their illocutionary force as well as their locutions. Searle represents the locutionary and illocutionary aspects of speech acts using the following symbolism:

F(p) where F = the illocutionary aspect and p = the propositional content
(locutionary aspect)

or

F(RP) where F= the illocutionary aspect and RP details the propositional content where R = the referring expression and P = the predicating expression²¹

As Allison and Vanhoozer rightly note, Searle does not mean by “proposition” something that is stated. Instead, Searle argues that a proposition is the content of an utterance (i.e. Austin’s locutionary aspect), which is able to be expressed in various ways.²²

Now that I have discussed the basic ideas and terminology in speech act theory, I will next briefly discuss Searle’s taxonomy of speech acts in *Expression and Meaning*. In this work he classifies the different types of force in speech acts. This classification is based on six of Searle’s main criteria for distinguishing illocutionary acts, which I now briefly mention.²³

²⁰Ibid., 23. See also Allison, “Speech Act Theory and Its Implications for the Doctrine of Inerrancy/Infallibility of Scripture,” 3–4; and Vanhoozer, “The Semantics of Biblical Literature,” 88.

²¹Searle, *Speech Acts*, 31–33.

²²Vanhoozer, “The Semantics of Biblical Literature: Truth and Scripture’s Diverse Literary Forms,” 88–89; Allison, “Speech Act Theory and Its Implications for the Doctrine of Inerrancy/Infallibility of Scripture,” 4; Searle, *Speech Acts*, 29.

The first criterion that distinguishes illocutionary forces is the “point (or purpose) of the (type of) act”²⁴; Searle names this criterion the *illocutionary point*, which he formally defines as the “point or purpose of a type of illocution.”²⁵ One example of speech acts that have different illocutionary points are commands and descriptions. For example, the illocutionary point of a command/order is “an attempt to get the hearer to do something.”²⁶ In contrast, the illocutionary point of a description is that “it is a representation (true or false, accurate or inaccurate) of how something is.”²⁷ It is important to note that the illocutionary point is distinct from the illocutionary force, for an illocutionary point is only one element of several different elements that compose an illocutionary force.²⁸

A second way that Searle distinguishes between illocutionary forces in speech acts is whether part of their illocutionary point attempts to get their words (propositional content) to match the world or the world to match their words. Elizabeth Anscombe clearly represents this distinction:

Suppose a man goes to the supermarket with a shopping list given him by his wife on which are written the words ‘beans, butter, bacon, and bread’. Suppose as he goes around with his shopping cart selecting these items, he is followed by a detective who writes down everything he takes. As they emerge from the store both

²³Searle lists six more criteria for distinguishing illocutionary acts: (1) “Differences in the way the utterance relates to the interests of the speaker or hearer,” (2) “Differences in relations to the rest of the discourse,” (3) “Differences in propositional content that are determined by illocutionary force indicating devices,” (4) “Differences between those acts that must always be speech acts, and those that can be, but need not be performed as speech acts,” (5) “Differences between those acts where the corresponding illocutionary verb has a performative use and those where it does not,” and (6) “Differences in the style of performance of the illocutionary act” (Searle, *Expression and Meaning*, 1–8). While these differences are important in speech act theory, I have not covered them because they do not directly relate to my formulation of the relationship between the gospel and the church using speech act theory.

²⁴Ibid., 2.

²⁵Ibid., 3.

²⁶Ibid., 2.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Ibid., 3.

shopper and detective will have identical lists. But the function of two lists will be quite different. In the case of the shopper's list, the purpose of the list is, so to speak, to get the world to match the words; the man is supposed to make his actions fit the list. In the case of the detective, the purpose of the list is to make the words match the world; the man is supposed to make the list fit the actions of the shopper.²⁹

Searle calls these differences in illocutionary forces a difference in the *direction of fit*. Thus, the detective's list has a different direction of fit than the shopper's list. For the detective's list has a *word-to-world direction of fit* in which he attempts to get his list to match the world while the shopper's list has a *world-to-word direction of fit* in which he attempts to get the world to match the shopping list from his wife. Searle denotes a word-to-world direction of fit by the ↓ symbol and the world-to-word direction of fit by the ↑ symbol.³⁰

Third, Searle asserts that differences in psychological states also determine differences in the illocutionary force of speech acts. For example, as Searle point out, a man who explains, asserts, or claims p “expresses the belief that p.” Similarly, someone who commands “H [hearer] to do A [assertion] expresses a desire (want, wish) that H do A.”³¹ Searle calls the psychological state expressed in the performance of an act *the sincerity condition*. He lists belief, intention, desire or want, and pleasure as different possible sincerity conditions.³²

Searle also notes that a fourth difference in *the force or strength of the presentation* of an illocutionary point also affects the illocutionary force of a speech act. For example, “I suggest we go the movies,” and, “I insist we got the movies,” have identical illocutionary points but different strengths.³³

²⁹As quoted in Searle, *Expression and Meaning*, 3.

³⁰Ibid., 3–4.

³¹Ibid., 4.

³²Ibid., 5.

³³Ibid.

A fifth factor that affects the illocutionary force of speech acts is a difference in *the status or position of the speaker*. For example, if a general asks a private to clean his room, it is an order. Contrastingly, if a private asks another private to clean his room, it is a suggestion.

The sixth and final factor that affects illocutionary force in speech acts is a difference between speech acts that require *extra-linguistic institutions* and those that do not. For example, a priest can bless someone based upon the extra-linguistic institution of the church or a robber can give an order based upon his possession of a gun.

These criteria for distinguishing illocutionary forces in speech acts form the basis for Searle's classification of speech acts. His taxonomy of speech acts consists of five classes, which I will discuss using the following five speech acts:³⁴

1. David has preached the gospel.
2. David, preach the gospel!
3. I, David, will preach the gospel.
4. Oh! David, has preached the gospel!
5. David hereby preaches the gospel. (God speaking. When God utters this phrase, David proclaims the gospel)

The *assertive* (speech act type 1) commits the speaker (with varying degrees) to the truth of the proposition being expressed. Thus, all of the members in the assertive class are able to be assessed as true or false. The psychological condition in an assertive is belief in proposition of the speech act; the direction of fit is word-to-world ↓.³⁵ In the assertive, "David has preached the gospel," the speaker commits himself to the proposition (that is, he believes) that David has proclaimed the gospel message and he is

³⁴These examples are very basic and are simply intended to convey the meaning of each category. My formulation of the relationship between the gospel and the church using speech act theory will be more complex, but it will use these basic categories.

³⁵Searle, *Expression and Meaning*, 12–13; Searle and Vanderveken, *Foundations of Illocutionary Logic*, 54–55; Allison, "Speech Act Theory and Its Implications for the Doctrine of Inerrancy/Infallibility of Scripture," 7.

using his words to describe reality. Allison insightfully notes that when an assertive is true, the speaker will also provide evidence for its veracity.³⁶

The *directive* (speech act type 2) is an attempt by the speaker to get the hearer to do something. Thus, the sincerity condition in a directive is a wish or desire; the speaker desires the hearer to do a future action (= the propositional content). The direction of fit is world-to-word ↑ as the speaker is attempting to get the world to match his or her words.³⁷ In the directive “David, preach the gospel!” the speaker is attempting to get the hearer (David) to proclaim the gospel message. Directives such as this one presuppose certain preparatory conditions;³⁸ e.g., that David is able to preach the gospel.

The *commissive* (speech act type 3) is an illocutionary act that commits the speaker (in varying degrees) to doing something. In a commissive, the direction of fit is world-to-word ↑ and the sincerity condition is intention. The propositional content is always a certain action by the speaker. Thus, the commissive “I, David, will preach the gospel” is committing the speaker (in this case, David) to the future action of proclaiming the gospel.³⁹ In a commissive, several preparatory conditions are necessary, such as the speaker being able to do the action in the propositional content.⁴⁰

The *expressive* (speech act type 4) displays the psychological state of the speaker specified in the sincerity condition to a state of affairs denoted in the

³⁶Allison, “Speech Act Theory and Its Implications for the Doctrine of Inerrancy/Infallibility of Scripture,” 7.

³⁷Searle, *Expression and Meaning*, 13–14; Searle and Vanderveken, *Foundations of Illocutionary Logic*, 55–56; Allison, “Speech Act Theory and Its Implications for the Doctrine of Inerrancy/Infallibility of Scripture,” 7.

³⁸Allison, “Speech Act Theory and Its Implications for the Doctrine of Inerrancy/Infallibility of Scripture,” 7.

³⁹Searle, *Expression and Meaning*, 14–15; Searle and Vanderveken, *Foundations of Illocutionary Logic*, 55; Allison, “Speech Act Theory and Its Implications for the Doctrine of Inerrancy/Infallibility of Scripture,” 7.

⁴⁰Allison, “Speech Act Theory and Its Implications for the Doctrine of Inerrancy/Infallibility of Scripture,” 7.

propositional content. In an expressive, there is no direction of fit, that is, the speaker is not describing something in the world or attempting to change something in the world. The propositional content is also related in some way to the speaker or hearer.⁴¹ In the expression “Oh! David, has preached the gospel!” the speaker is conveying a psychological state of exclamation/excitement that David has preached the gospel.

The *declarative* (speech act type 5) brings about a correspondence between its propositional content and reality just from the fact that it is uttered; that is, a successful performance of this speech act brings about a change in the world. Therefore, a declarative has both a word-to-world ↓ and world-to-word ↑ direction of fit as it changes reality to match its propositional content and thus describes reality accurately.⁴² In the declarative “David hereby preaches the gospel,” David preaches the gospel solely because the speech act has been uttered. Searle notes that in most cases, a declarative requires an extra-linguistic institution to confer the necessary authority for a speaker to successfully perform it.⁴³ However, in a divine declarative (such as the one in my example), no extra-linguistic institution is needed. As Allison opines, “A divine declarative is authoritative in and itself.”⁴⁴ In other words, a divine declarative is authoritative because of the speaker, God, who utters it.⁴⁵

⁴¹Searle, *Expression and Meaning*, 15–16; Searle and Vanderveken, *Foundations of Illocutionary Logic*, 58–59; Allison, “Speech Act Theory and Its Implications for the Doctrine of Inerrancy/Infallibility of Scripture,” 7–8.

⁴²Searle, *Expression and Meaning*, 16–20; Searle and Vanderveken, *Foundations of Illocutionary Logic*, 56–58; Allison, “Speech Act Theory and Its Implications for the Doctrine of Inerrancy/Infallibility of Scripture,” 8.

⁴³Searle, *Expression and Meaning*, 18.

⁴⁴Allison, “Speech Act Theory and Its Implications for the Doctrine of Inerrancy/Infallibility of Scripture,” 8.

⁴⁵In his book, *Speech Acts*, Searle argues for 8 classes of speech acts: requests, assertions, questions, thanks, advice, warnings, greetings, and congratulations. See Searle, *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language*, 66–67. However, in his current system that he details in *Expression and Meaning*, he argues for the 5 classes that I have described.

As I mentioned above, Searle represents speech acts using F(p) or F(RP). In each of the five speech acts the illocutionary forces (F) are different, which allow these five speech acts to be distinguishable. The differences in their illocutionary forces is a result of differences in illocutionary point, direction of fit, psychological states, etc. However, even though they have different illocutionary forces, their propositional content (p), or locution, is the same; they have the same referring expression (R = David) and the same predicating expression (P = proclaims the gospel or some inflection). So far in my discussion, I have covered two of the three differing aspects of speech acts: locution and illocution. I will now briefly cover the third aspect: perlocution.

Austin describes the perlocutionary aspect of a speech act as follows:

Saying something will often, or even normally, produce certain consequential effects upon the feelings, thoughts, or actions of the audience, or of the speaker, or of other persons: and it may be done with the design, intention, or purpose of producing them. . . . We shall call the performance of an act of this kind the performance of a “perlocutionary” act, and the act performed, . . . a “perlocution.”⁴⁶

Thus, the perlocutionary aspect of a speech act is the effect that the speech act intends to produce in reality.⁴⁷ For example, the perlocution of the directive speech act, “David, preach the gospel!” is for David to obey and preach the gospel. Similarly, the perlocution of the declarative, “David hereby preaches the gospel,” is that David preaches the gospel once the phrase is uttered. It should be noted that not every perlocution is intended⁴⁸ or legitimate.⁴⁹

In light of the perlocutionary aspect of speech act theory, the question is then naturally raised as to what constitutes a successful speech act. According to speech act

⁴⁶Austin, *How To Do Things With Words*, 101. Cf. Searle, *Speech Acts*, 25.

⁴⁷Allison, “Speech Act Theory and Its Implications for the Doctrine of Inerrancy/Infallibility of Scripture,” 8.

⁴⁸Searle, *Speech Acts*, 46; Austin, *How To Do Things With Words*, 105–06.

⁴⁹Allison, “Speech Act Theory and Its Implications for the Doctrine of Inerrancy/Infallibility of Scripture,” 9.

theorists,⁵⁰ a speech act is successful if the hearer hears and understands the speech act. As Searle argues, “In the case of illocutionary acts we succeed in doing what we are trying to do by getting our audience to recognize what we are trying to do.”⁵¹ Thus, once the speaker hears and understands the speech act, that is, recognizes its locutionary and illocutionary aspects, it is successful (and is consequently not a “misfire” as Austin calls it); thus, a speech act is successful even if it does not have the intended perlocutionary effect.⁵²

Now that I have briefly explained speech act theory, I will apply it to the reciprocal relationship between the gospel and the church. I will begin by using speech act theory to ascertain the locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary aspects of gospel proclamation. I will then diagrammatically represent the speech act formulation of the reciprocal relationship between the gospel and the church. Finally, I will demonstrate how this formulation proves the thesis of my dissertation.

The Locutionary Aspect of Gospel Proclamation

One of the basic components of gospel proclamation is the message itself. In chapter 2, I demonstrated that the content of the gospel is the historical death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ —the Son of God —for the forgiveness of sins. Throughout Acts, this gospel message is proclaimed to unbelievers with a call to repentance and faith for the forgiveness of sins and eternal life. Thus, the proclamation of the gospel involves a believer addressing an unbeliever⁵³ with the content of the gospel message. Based upon

⁵⁰Allison notes that all speech act theorists are in agreement on this point. See Allison, “Speech Act Theory and Its Implications for the Doctrine of Inerrancy/Infallibility of Scripture,” 9.

⁵¹Searle, *Speech Acts*, 47.

⁵²Allison, “Speech Act Theory and Its Implications for the Doctrine of Inerrancy/Infallibility of Scripture,” 9.

the biblical data mentioned above, the locutionary aspects of gospel proclamation are as follows: the referring expression (R) is an unbeliever that I will denote as “Unbeliever X” and the predicating expression (P) is “repents and believes in the historical death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ—the Son of God—for the forgiveness of sin and eternal life” or some inflected form.

The Illocutionary Aspects of Gospel Proclamation

Now that I have developed the locutionary aspects of gospel proclamation, I will analyze its different speech acts and their respective illocutions (that is, their assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative illocutionary forces). Each of these aspects is involved, to a varying degree, in each instance of gospel preaching. However, the declarative aspect will be the most important in understanding the relationship between the gospel and the church and is always present when the church is created. I begin my analysis by discussing the assertive aspect of gospel proclamation.

The assertive aspect. Before I detail the assertive speech act present in gospel proclamation, I first must note two implicit assertives present in the gospel message, which are affirmed by any speaker who genuinely proclaims it. The first assertive is as follows:

(A1) Jesus Christ is the Son of God. [Speaker: God through the church]

In this assertive, the R= “Jesus Christ” and P= “is the Son of God.” This assertive is present in any speaker who genuinely proclaims the gospel message, because any genuine proclamation of the gospel affirms the deity of Christ. The second assertive

⁵³I am not saying that gospel proclamation can never be addressed to a believer or have any effect on a believer. I am focusing on the unbeliever in this analysis because the relationship of the believer to the proclamation of the gospel is not pertinent to my thesis.

requires a slight rearrangement of my definition of the gospel as well as a change in the inflection of some of its words; I define the second assertive as follows:

(A2) Jesus Christ, the Son of God, died, was buried, and rose again for the forgiveness of sins. [Speaker: God through the church]

In this assertive, R= “Jesus Christ—the Son of God” and P= “died, was buried, and rose again for the forgiveness of sins.” In the second assertive, the speaker affirms that Jesus Christ actually died, was buried, and was raised to atone for the sin of humanity (that is, the speaker affirms the historicity of those events). The presence of this assertive in the gospel message is confirmed in 1 Corinthians 15:14: “And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain.” Thus, any Christian pastor or layperson who proclaims the gospel will necessarily affirm the historicity of the events specified in the gospel message.⁵⁴

Assertives A1 and A2 apply to the state of the speaker when he is engaged in true, gospel proclamation: (1) he believes Jesus is God, and (2) he believes in Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection for the forgiveness of sin. However, the assertive speech act that is part of gospel proclamation deals with the hearer; it is as follows:

(A3) You, Unbeliever X, have repented and believed in the historical death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, for the forgiveness of sins and eternal life. [Speaker 1: The Church]; [Speaker 2: God]

In this speech act, the acceptance of the gospel by an unbeliever is asserted. If this assertion is true, the unbeliever has genuinely repented of his sins and believed in Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection for the forgiveness of his sins and eternal life; he has transitioned from death to life and is now a part of the family of God, the church. This speech act must be true of an individual for him to be a member of the church. It

⁵⁴In both of the previous assertives, the speaker is speaking God’s message, for when the church proclaims the gospel, it is simply God’s instrument through which the gospel is preached. Thus, each of these assertions has a double witness: the speaker (= a member of the church) and God. Since God bears witness to the truthfulness of these assertives, the sincerity condition of belief is one of full, complete confidence.

captures the nature of the gospel in which two groups are separated by its proclamation: those who are made alive (=the assertive speech act of gospel proclamation is true) and those who continue in death (=the assertive speech act of gospel proclamation is false).

The speaker of this assertion may be God or the church. However, when the church utters this assertion, it cannot utter it with perfect accuracy, for only God can judge the thoughts and intents of man's heart; thus, he is the only speaker who has the authority (that is, the proper relationship with the hearer) to make this assertion with perfect accuracy. While God can reveal whether this speech act is true or false about a person (e.g., Acts 9:15-16), he normally does not. Instead, the church can make this assertion with reasonable confidence only through careful examination of an individual.⁵⁵ his (1) lifestyle (i.e., fruit: Jas 2:14-26; cf. Matt 7:15-23, Gal 5:22-23), (2) soundness of doctrine (1 John 4:1-6), (3) perseverance in righteousness (Matt 24:12-13; cf. John 10:27-29),⁵⁶ and love for other Christians (1 John). The truthfulness of this assertive aspect of gospel proclamation in the life of an individual is determined by his response to the directive aspect of gospel preaching,⁵⁷ which I will now examine.

The directive aspect. The directive aspect of gospel proclamation is as follows:

Unbeliever X, repent and believe in the historical death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ—the Son of God—for the forgiveness of sins and eternal life.
[Speaker: God through the church]

⁵⁵It should be noted that the church must be able to make reasonably confident judgment about whether an individual is saved (that is, whether the assertive speech act of gospel proclamation is true of him or her) to allow for regenerate church membership and believer's baptism. However, these assertions must be made with caution, and the realization that they could be wrong, since the church does not have the ability to see directly into someone's heart. As I have noted above, this ability belongs only to God.

⁵⁶This doctrine is commonly known as the perseverance of the saints. Thus, when someone perseveres to the end, their perseverance indicates that the assertive aspect of gospel proclamation is true in his or her life.

⁵⁷I am not advocating a libertarian view of free will with this statement. Whether one can respond positively to the directive aspect of gospel proclamation is determined by its declarative aspect, which I will cover shortly.

It is the directive aspect of gospel proclamation that composes the heart of the temporal manifestation of God's work in humanity through the gospel. It is a command from God that shapes people's eternal destiny. It is necessary in all gospel proclamation because it shows human beings what God demands from them. God has entered into the world through his Son Jesus Christ and because of this act of God, the world has changed. Thus, the directive aspect of gospel proclamation tells people what to do in response to God's work in the world through Jesus Christ (1 John 3:23). This response is not optional. It is an imperative, the divine imperative: "Since I, God, have now acted, you must repent and believe." The church, as God's appointed instrument of gospel proclamation, preaches God's divine imperative to the world; thus, the church speaks for God as his instrument. However, the directive aspect of gospel preaching is not only a command; it is a command with a promise. This promise is evident in the gospel proclamation's commissive aspect.

The commissive aspect. The divine promise present in the divine imperative of gospel proclamation is one of great hope and eternal joy. It is captured in the commissive aspect of gospel proclamation:

I, God, will grant forgiveness of sins and eternal life to you, Unbeliever X, upon repentance and belief in the historical death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. [Speaker: God through the church]

When an unbeliever obeys God's divine imperative (that is, he repents and believes), God forgives his sins; thus, the unbeliever is made alive to Christ and dead to sin. Not only are his sins forgiven; he now possesses eternal life, the promise of eternity with God in heaven. The church, as God's chosen instrument, utters this promise in the proclamation of the gospel. Thus, the church declares God's promise of hope and life to the world through the gospel.

The commissive aspect of gospel preaching, along with the promise of the forgiveness of sins and eternal life, also carries with it a promise of eternal damnation to those who reject its directive aspect (John 20:23; Matt 16:19). For if one does not repent and believe, then his sins are not forgiven and he will inherit eternal death under the wrath of God.⁵⁸ Thus, the promise of divine blessing upon obedience to the directive aspect of gospel proclamation is accompanied with a promise of a divine curse upon those who do not listen. This promise of divine blessing and divine wrath leads to the expressive aspect of gospel proclamation.

The expressive aspect. When an unbeliever repents and believes in the gospel, the church and God rejoice that an unbeliever has passed from death to life. The expressive aspect of gospel proclamation can be articulated as follows:

Oh! Unbeliever X has repented and believed in the historical death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, for the forgiveness of sins and eternal life! [Speaker 1: The Church]; [Speaker 2: Beings in Heaven]

When the church utters this expressive, it displays a psychological state of praise and thanksgiving to God that an unbeliever has come to know Christ as Savior and will spend eternity with Him.⁵⁹ This joy over the repentance of sinners is echoed in heaven, for there is joy in heaven over one sinner who repents and trusts Christ (Luke 15:7).

However, while the expressive aspect of gospel proclamation may be characterized by joy, it may also express a state of sorrow, for when an unbeliever persists in rejection of

⁵⁸Jonathan Edwards captures the promise of divine wrath in the proclamation of the gospel in his sermon, “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God,” when he argues, “The God that holds you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider or some loathsome insect, over the fire, abhors you, and is dreadfully provoked; his wrath toward you burns like fire” (Jonathan Edwards, “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God,” in *Sermons and Discourses 1739-1742*, ed. Harry S. Stout, Nathan O. Hatch, and Kyle P. Farley, vol. 22, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003], 411).

⁵⁹This psychological state of joy over the salvation of believers in the expressive speech act of gospel proclamation is demonstrated in Philippians 1 where Paul rejoices that the Philippians have obeyed the gospel directive due to God’s work in their lives.

the gospel, he will spend eternity in hell separated from God. This expressive aspect of gospel proclamation is as follows:

Oh! Unbeliever X has not repented and believed in the historical death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, for the forgiveness of sins and eternal life! [Speaker 1: The Church]; [Speaker 2: Beings in Heaven]

Thus, both the church and even God himself mourn over the fate of the ungodly who refuse to listen to the directive aspect of gospel proclamation. For God does not delight in the death of the wicked (Ezek 33:11) and desires all men to repent of their sins and turn to Christ (1 Tim 2:1-7).

All of the aspects of gospel proclamation I have discussed so far—assertive, directive, commissive, expressive—are related to the declarative aspect, which I will now detail.

The declarative aspect. In the declarative speech act present in gospel proclamation, reality changes simply because this speech act is uttered: a sinner who is blind, dead, and lost is given sight, made alive, and found. The declarative speech act present in gospel proclamation is as follows:

Unbeliever X, hereby repent and believe in the historical death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, for the forgiveness of sins and eternal life. [Speaker: God through the church]

It is the regenerative work of the Holy Spirit that makes the proclamation of the gospel a declarative.⁶⁰ For when the declarative aspect of the gospel is uttered, the Spirit regenerates God's elect, enabling them to repent and believe. Thus, through the

⁶⁰My formulation of the declarative aspect of gospel proclamation is consistent with Searle. Searle recognizes that some declaratives have a divine element. He calls these declaratives "supernatural declarations." One example of a supernatural declaration that he provides is when God uttered, "Let there be light," in Genesis, and because of that utterance, there was light. Under Searle's system, my formulation of the proclamation of the gospel would be classified as a supernatural declaration. However, what makes my formulation different from this classification is that this supernatural declaration is uttered by a human speaker. See Searle, *Expression and Meaning*, 18.

regenerating work of the Spirit, an elect unbeliever obeys the directive aspect of the gospel and consequently is saved;⁶¹ therefore, God, not the human agent of proclamation, is the one who causes the initial and continuing effects of the gospel (1 Cor 3:1-17). However, God uses the gospel speaker as his instrument, for when the speaker proclaims the gospel, his utterance (on account of the regenerating work of the Spirit) becomes a declarative. In this sense, human beings participate in the divine work because God gives a directive human speech act the illocutionary force of a divine declarative and, consequently, changes reality: an unbeliever becomes a believer!⁶² Thus, when an unbeliever obeys the directive aspect of gospel proclamation, the gospel directive becomes a gospel declarative through the power of God. For once a gospel declarative is uttered, the Holy Spirit changes the world.⁶³ Thus, the gospel is truly a powerful, reality-changing message:⁶⁴ it is the power of God to save those who believe (Rom 1:16-17).⁶⁵

The declarative aspect of gospel proclamation is based on God's electing work in eternity past, which can be represented using a declarative speech act.⁶⁶ In this speech

⁶¹Acts 16:13-15 makes this point poignantly as it is because of the Lord opening Lydia's heart to respond to the gospel message that she was saved.

⁶²Because of the instrumental role of humanity in the gospel declarative, Paul can claim to be the Corinthians' spiritual father, for it was his Spirit-empowered gospel declarative that God used to create (= give birth to) the Corinthian church. See 1 Cor 4:14-17.

⁶³As I noted in chapters 4-5, it is the work of the Spirit that enables the formation of the church through gospel proclamation. See Luke 24:44-49; Acts 1:8; 2; 3:11-4:4; 8; 10:1-11:14; 13:4-11; Eph 1:13-14; 5:25-33; Phil 1; Col 4:2-6; and 1 Thess 1.

⁶⁴It is the gospel declarative that causes the dividing effect of the gospel described in 2 Cor 2:12-3:6. For when the proclamation of the gospel does not have a declarative illocutionary force, it serves as a warning of damnation (=an aroma of death) to the lost. However, when the gospel proclamation does have a declarative illocutionary force, it is a bringer of new life (=an aroma of life) to those who believe.

⁶⁵As Plummer notes in reference to Rom 1:16-17, "[S]o Paul's gospel is not simply a definable content about what God has done or promised, but [it] is also the *effective decree or power* of accomplishing God's will" (Robert Plummer, "The Church's Missionary Nature: The Apostle Paul and His Churches" [Ph. D. diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2001], 74-75). Italics original. As I will soon discuss, the gospel is God's effective decree or power of accomplishing the salvation of His elect (= his will).

act, God predestines (or elects) those who would come to know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior (Rom 8-9; Eph 1-2). Thus, when God utters his electing declarative in eternity past—"Unbeliever X is hereby elect"—Unbeliever X is predestined to respond in belief and repentance to the preaching of the gospel. Therefore, whether the preaching of the gospel has a declarative illocutionary force in the present is dependent upon whether God has uttered an electing declarative over its hearer in the past.⁶⁷ When the proclamation of the gospel does have a declarative illocutionary force due to God's electing work, the Spirit regenerates the elect unbeliever (in this case, Unbeliever X) simply because he hears the church's gospel proclamation. Accordingly, the church's gospel proclamation echoes eternity. For when a speaker proclaims the gospel with a declarative illocutionary force, he is participating in an event that occurred in eternity past: God's electing declarative.⁶⁸ This electing declarative echoes through eternity to the present; at the moment the speaker finishes his gospel proclamation, it breaks into reality, causing Unbeliever X to live by repentance and faith.⁶⁹ Thus, the church participates in God's

⁶⁶I was first exposed to the idea of God's electing work being represented as a declarative speech act in a seminar on soteriology led by Dr. Gregg Allison and Dr. Eric Johnson.

⁶⁷This proposal is close to Calvin's. For, as Spijker notes, it is Calvin's view of God's electing work that stands behind his conception of the church. See Willem van't Spijker, *Calvin: A Brief Guide to His Life and Thought*, trans. Lyle D. Bierma (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2009), 31. Cf. David N. Wiley, "The Church as the Elect in the Theology of John Calvin," in *John Calvin and the Church: A Prism of Reform*, ed. Timothy George (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1990), 97-117.

⁶⁸Because God has ordained a human declarative speech act (= gospel proclamation) to be the means by which his electing declarative in the past is actualized in the present, it is necessary for missionaries to be sent so that the gospel can be proclaimed to all nations. For God's elect cannot believe without the regenerating work of the Spirit that comes through the church's declarative gospel proclamation (Rom 10:5-21). Thus, every member of the church is to be equipped by the church leadership to proclaim the gospel faithfully to all (Eph 4:1-16).

⁶⁹This does not necessarily mean that an elect unbeliever will repent and believe immediately after the gospel proclamation is uttered with a declarative force. However, reality has still changed: the unbeliever is now on a course that will result in regeneration by the Spirit, and thus repentance and faith, as a result of hearing a Spirit-empowered proclamation of the gospel.

electing declarative by its instrumental use in God's saving declarative: gospel proclamation.⁷⁰

All other speech acts present in the proclamation of the gospel are related to the gospel declarative. For God's electing declarative (and thus, the gospel declarative) impacts all of the other speech acts in gospel proclamation; it makes (1) the assertive aspect either true or false, (2) the directive aspect bring life or death, (3) the commissive aspect result in blessing or cursing, and (4) the expressive aspect express a psychological state of either joy or sadness. For when God's electing declarative has been uttered in eternity past, the proclamation of the gospel brings repentance and faith, life, blessing, and joy to the hearer, speaker, and even to those in heaven. When it has not been uttered, the unbeliever rejects the gospel and consequently remains dead in sin and cursed by God. When God's electing declarative results in a gospel declarative, that is, when the Spirit regenerates the hearer, the perlocution (= the church) of gospel proclamation is formed.

The Perlocutionary Aspect of Gospel Proclamation

As I noted above, when the speech act of gospel proclamation has a declarative illocutionary force, God regenerates his elect (= the hearer) after the speaker completes the speech act. Thus, the unbeliever repents and believes the gospel message and, therefore, becomes a member of the church.⁷¹ Thus, it is the preaching of the gospel that

⁷⁰The church's proclamation of the gospel is only one part of the effects brought about by God's electing declarative. For once God's elect are saved, they go through a process of sanctification and are completely conformed to Christ's image in the eschaton. Thus, God's electing declarative is what creates sons in Christ for himself. The gospel declarative is only the means by which they are born. It is through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God (1 Pet 2:1-3) that God's children reach full maturity at the end of time.

⁷¹When an unbeliever does not repent and believe, the gospel message has a directive force, but not a declarative force. Thus, it serves to warn the unbeliever of his need for God and to repent of his sins.

brings the church into being. As Luther argues, “It is not God’s Word just because the church speaks it; rather, the church comes into being because God’s Word is spoken.”⁷² The church-creating power of gospel proclamation noted by Luther, in terms of speech act theory, is its perlocutionary effect. Since the church is created just because the

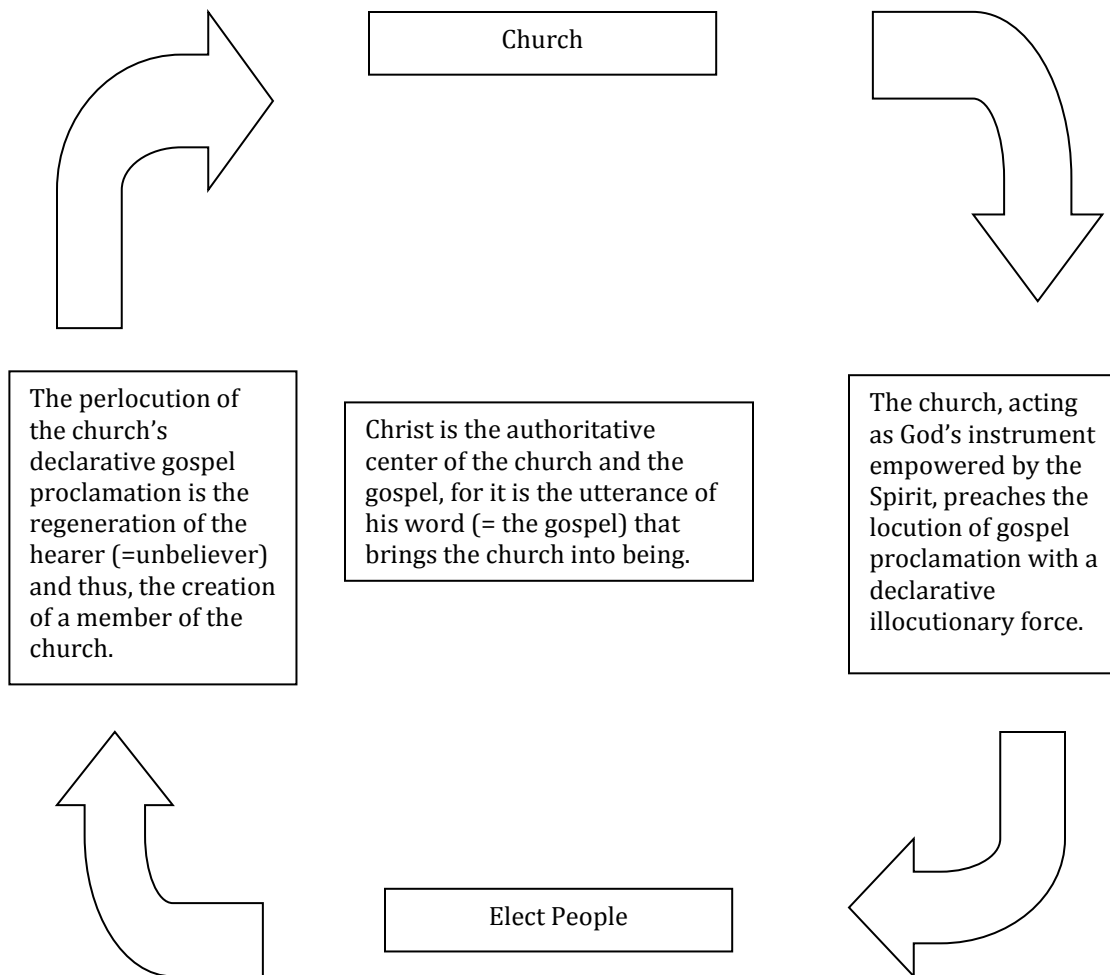


Figure 3: The speech act formulation of the reciprocal relationship between the gospel and the church

⁷²Martin Luther, “The Misuse of Mass, 1521,” in *Word and Sacrament II*, ed. Abdel Ross Wentz, trans. Frederick C. Ahrens, *Luther’s Works*, ed. Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1957), 36:144. Bayer argues the Luther understands the Word, the gospel, as a speech act; that is, it does what it says. Thus, my formulation of the relationship between the gospel and the church is similar in many ways to the Reformation theology of Luther. See Oswald Bayer, *Martin Luther’s Theology: A Contemporary Interpretation*, trans. Thomas H. Trapp (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 50–55.

gospel is preached, the speech act of gospel preaching behind the creation of the church has a declarative force. Even though the other illocutionary forces involved in gospel proclamation (assertive, directive, commissive, expressive) certainly play a role in the church's creation, the declarative illocutionary force is what changes reality by creating the church. Figure 3 above illustrates this relationship.

The analysis represented in Figure 3 is consistent with my theses, for it asserts that (1) the church's proclamation of the gospel (specifically, its declarative illocutionary force) creates the church (the perlocutionary effect of that proclamation) and (2) the church is God's instrument that he uses to proclaim the gospel. For it is only through the Spirit's regenerative work that accompanies the proclamation of the gospel that the directive illocutionary force in gospel proclamation becomes a declarative illocutionary force. It is the declarative illocutionary force of gospel proclamation that provides the final support needed for my dissertation thesis: the church, acting as God's instrument through the power of the Spirit, speaks its members into existence by means of the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ; God, therefore, creates the church through the church. Since the gospel has declarative illocutionary force, it is only by the act of speaking through the power of God that the church is created. Thus, the church literally speaks its members into existence through the declarative illocutionary force present in gospel proclamation, for once the church's proclamation of the gospel with a declarative illocutionary force is complete, a new member of the church exists. Therefore, the church has an active, participatory role in its own creation as Cyprian, Augustine, Luther, and Calvin asserted. This formulation of the relationship between the gospel and the church has several theological implications.

Theological Implications

I will now discuss several theological implications of the formulation of the relationship between the gospel and the church using speech act theory. My discussion

of these implications will be relatively brief. I believe many of these implications could be potential dissertation topics; at minimum, they could use further development than I will provide here. My goal in this section is to present concisely several theological implications from my dissertation thesis to provoke further discussion, reflection, and thought. I will begin by discussing the implications of my dissertation thesis to the Christ-centered nature of the church.

The Ontological Center of the Church: Christ through the Gospel

It is the utterance of Christ's word, the gospel, that creates the church; put differently, without the utterance of the gospel, the church cannot and will not exist. Thus, the gospel is at core of the church's being, for it is through the gospel that the church is birthed; without gospel proclamation, the church cannot come into being. Christ (through the gospel) is, therefore, the ontological center of the church, for it is his word (= the gospel) that brings the church into being. Thus, the gospel is firmly embedded in the very essence of the church's ontology. It is the gospel that calls the church to life—to arise, to be—so that reality changes and something that was not, now is. Consequently, the gospel cannot be removed from the church and, by implication, neither can Christ. Christ is the necessary center of the church because his word (= the gospel) is firmly embedded in the church's very essence: to remove Christ from the church is to destroy its very being. Thus, a church that removes Christ or the gospel from its center, whether intentionally or unintentionally, can no longer be a true church. A true church eats, lives, and breathes the gospel. It permeates all of the ministries of the church because it is at the heart of the church. Thus, Christ through the gospel is the central animating principle of the church—both at its birth and throughout its life (= ministries, preaching, etc.). Without Christ and his gospel, the church is dead, for, it is the words of

Christ that give life to church.⁷³ The fact that Christ is the ontological center of the church through the gospel also has implications for understanding the relationship between the universal church and the local church.

How does one reconcile the fact that there is one universal church but yet many individual instantiations of that universal church, the local church? Even though many true churches exist, they still form one universal church because they have the same ontological, unifying center: Christ through the gospel. This unifying center transcends race, gender, age, nationality, and language: “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3:28). This unity also provides a basic guideline for whether churches should fellowship together. If a church does not have Christ through the gospel at its center, then it cannot have legitimate fellowship with a true church. Even though the churches may appear similar, they are incompatible at their very essence: one light, the other darkness.

The Church as the Intersection between Being and Non-Being, the Temporal and the Eternal

Another theological implication of the formulation of the relationship between the gospel and the church through speech act theory is that the church, through its gospel proclamation, stands at the intersection point between being and non-being, the temporal and eternal, the finite and the infinite. For it is through the church that God’s message of salvation is proclaimed and people are brought from death to life. When the church proclaims the gospel with a declarative force through the power of the Spirit, it is a command “to be”—to arise from spiritual non-being to being: to pass from death to life

⁷³Luther and Calvin hint at this relationship between Christ and the church when they argue that one of the marks of the true church is that it proclaims the Word of God: the gospel. See Martin Luther, “Psalm 117,” in *Selected Psalms III*, ed. Daniel E. Poellot, trans. Edward Sittler, *Luther’s Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia, 1958), 14:13; Calvin, *Institutes*, 4.1.10.

(Eph 2:5; 1 John 3:14). The church that proclaims this message that creates spiritual being stands at the intersection between life and death—being and non-being; it is its Spirit-empowered words that burst forth from the infinite, eternal God into this finite, temporal reality, causing life. Thus, the church becomes God’s instrument that mediates between these two realities: the temporal and eternal, the finite and the infinite. It is through this instrumental gospel proclamation that the infinite God enables his finite elect to be (that is, to be regenerated through the power of the Spirit).

Therefore, the church forms a bridge between the temporal and eternal. It is God’s chosen instrument through which his electing work in eternity past breaks forth into the present and changes it. However, not only is the present changed, but eternity future as well. Once the church proclaims the gospel with a declarative force, an unbeliever becomes a believer and is destined to spend eternity in heaven instead of eternity in hell. Thus, the church’s gospel proclamation both echoes eternity past and causes an echo in eternity future. For God’s electing declarative echoes through eternity into the church’s declarative gospel proclamation, which then echoes into eternity future as its acceptance by one of God’s elect changes his eternal destiny.⁷⁴ This double echo in the church’s gospel proclamation is the result of a meeting between the infinite God and finite human beings in the church’s gospel proclamation. The ramifications of this

⁷⁴The church’s gospel proclamation is simply one step in the “already-not, yet paradigm” of God’s work with his elect. God has already elected those who will be his children in eternity past. The church’s declarative gospel proclamation is the first step by which God’s elective declarative is actualized. After the church’s declarative gospel proclamation that changes an unbeliever into a believer by the regenerating work of the Spirit, the new believer is also sanctified through the work of the Spirit. However, the complete ramifications of God’s electing declarative are not fully realized until the eschaton, which will even affect our physical bodies: “I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: ‘Death is swallowed up in victory.’ ‘O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?’ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor 15:50-57). Thus, the church’s gospel declarative is just one step in God’s transforming work in his elect as the result of his electing declarative in eternity past.

meeting between the infinite and the finite echo throughout eternity. Thus, the church, as it mediates God's electing declarative, is the intersection between being and non-being, the finite and the infinite, the temporal and the eternal. It is the church's participation in the salvation of God's elect that also allows the church to participate in his work of new creation.

The Church's Role in New Creation

The church, through its Spirit-empowered, declarative gospel proclamation, participates in new creation: the regeneration and salvation of God's elect.⁷⁵ For as the church proclaims the gospel with a declarative force, reality is changed: humanity is recreated—the old becomes new. In other words, when the church, empowered by the Spirit, proclaims the gospel and an unbeliever believes and repents, God speaks through the church's words, giving them the same declarative illocutionary force as his own words during creation at the beginning of time. For when the church utters, "Unbeliever X, hereby repent and believe in the historical death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, for the forgiveness of sins and eternal life," Unbeliever X repents and believes simply by the work of the Holy Spirit through the church's own utterance. The result of this proclamation is new life—the world is transformed: humanity is made new. As the apostle Paul argues, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come" (2 Cor 5:17). Thus, the church participates in God's work of new creation. Eventually, in the eschaton, this utterance will result in changes to the actual physical creation (1 Cor 15:50-57). However, in the present, it results in new spiritual life (= new creation) in God's elect. The church's role in new creation is made possible by the divine encounter in its declarative gospel proclamation.

⁷⁵I was first exposed to this implication of my dissertation thesis in a conversation with Paul Nesta.

The Church's Gospel Proclamation as Divine Encounter

When the church proclaims the gospel with a declarative illocutionary force, it initiates a divine encounter through that proclamation. In this encounter, one comes face-to-face with a stranger: God. However, it is more than just meeting a stranger;⁷⁶ it is being made alive by a stranger, for this encounter leads to new life in the hearer. It is an encounter in which the hearer is regenerated and becomes a new creation of God. Once a person encounters God through the church's gospel proclamation, he is never the same. He is now spiritually alive and able to see; that is, his heart is opened by God to respond in faith and repentance (e.g., Lydia in Acts 16:13-15). When a member of the church proclaims the gospel, he also experiences a divine encounter. He encounters God as he is used by him as his instrument to speak his words by which he encounters (= regenerates) his elect. Thus, the church's gospel proclamation is a divine encounter by its very nature; it is the inbreaking of the divine into the course of human history. This encounter with the divine in the present also echoes God's electing declarative in the past. Through it, both its hearers and speakers have a life-changing encounter with God through his Holy Spirit and consequently, the present manifestation of God's electing declarative (=church) is formed.

The Church's Creation as a Trinitarian Act

The formation of the church is trinitarian in nature. It is based on (1) the Father's electing declarative in eternity past and sending of Christ, (2) Christ's word (= gospel proclamation), and (3) the regenerative work of the Holy Spirit. Thus, the

⁷⁶Tillich's conception of "meeting a stranger" when one encounters God accurately captures the aspect of divine encounter in which one meets God who is an "other." For when one meets God in gospel proclamation, one meets a person outside of oneself (= the Holy Spirit) that changes one's very nature so that one becomes a new creation and, consequently, a member of the people of God (= the church). See Paul Tillich, *Theology of Culture*, ed. Robert C. Kimball (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964), 10–11.

creation of the church is work of the Triune God that comes into being through separate Trinitarian acts; consequently, its creation reflects the very nature of God. Since God uses the church's gospel proclamation to create the church, humanity participates in the Trinitarian act of the church's creation. Thus, the church, by actively participating in its own creation, participates in the creative work of the divine.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have systematically formulated the relationship between the gospel and the church in terms of speech act theory. I began by using my thesis statement from chapters 4 and 5 to demonstrate a reciprocal relationship between the gospel and the church. In this relationship, the church, acting as God's instrument through the power of the Spirit, proclaims the gospel. God, then, uses the church's own gospel proclamation to create members of the church. While this reciprocal relationship accurately portrayed the biblical data, it did not have the philosophical categories necessary to capture the biblical portrayal of the church growing simply by the church uttering the gospel. To resolve this deficiency, I applied speech act theory to the relationship between the gospel and the church. I began by briefly explaining speech act theory. I then reformulated the reciprocal relationship between the gospel and the church in terms of speech act theory. Specifically, I used the declarative illocutionary force as defined by speech act theory as well as its perlocutionary aspect to further refine the reciprocal relationship. The declarative illocutionary force provided the nuanced philosophical categories necessary to further represent the biblical data in which the proclamation of the gospel brings about a change in reality: the regeneration of the elect and subsequent, creation of the church (= its perlocutionary effect). This reformulation provided the final step necessary to prove my dissertation thesis: the church, acting as God's instrument through the power of the Spirit, speaks its members into existence by means of the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ; God, therefore, creates the

church through the church. Speech act theory suggested my thesis by providing the terminology of the church speaking its members into existence. Finally, I concluded this chapter by briefly exploring some of the theological implications of my thesis. In my final chapter, I will summarize the ground I have covered in my dissertation, provide suggestions for further research, and end by exploring the implications of my dissertation to the present crisis in the church.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION: A CALL FOR REFORMATION

In this dissertation, I have developed a skeletal framework for understanding the relationship between the gospel and the church. While this framework provides a helpful starting point, much more could be written on it. Thus, this dissertation represents the beginning of an argument that could easily be further refined and developed. With this fact in mind, I will conclude by briefly summarizing my dissertation and offering some suggestions for further research. I will then come full circle and end where I began by addressing the crisis in the church in America.

Summary

I have argued the following thesis: the church speaks its members into existence by means of the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ. God, therefore, creates the church through the church. I began my argumentation in chapter 1 by introducing the topic of this dissertation—the relationship between the gospel and the church. Chapter 1 proceeded by positioning this topic within its current academic and nonacademic context. It then detailed the methodology used to defend my thesis and how each chapter functions within this methodological framework.

Chapter 2 demonstrated that the church is viewed as playing an active role in the salvation of believers in church history, which is evident in the “church as mother” motif. It examined the relationship between soteriology and ecclesiology in four prominent theologians—Cyprian, Augustine, Luther, Calvin—who have significantly

influenced the Protestant trajectory and used the “church as mother” motif in their theology. After examining these four theologians, this chapter concluded by arguing that my thesis stands in continuity with this theological motif.

In chapter 3, I defined the “gospel” as the message of the historical death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ—the Son of God—for the forgiveness of sins based on 1 Corinthians 15:3-5. I argued that the church is the New Covenant people of God who have accepted Christ by faith through the work of the Holy Spirit. Since I hold to a mild discontinuity position, I only focused on exegeting passages in the New Testament to provide scriptural support for my systematic formulation in chapters 4 and 5. The definitions I delineated in chapter 3 offer a necessary point of common reference for both of my scriptural exegesis chapters as well as my systematic formulation in chapter 6.

Chapter 4 contended, on the basis of New Testament passages that relate to the church’s formation, that the proclamation of the gospel creates members of the church. The Scriptural exegesis focused on passages that are recognized as being important in understanding the church’s formation. I concluded with a summary of the Scriptural data about the work of the gospel in the creation of the church. Chapter 5 argued that, on the basis of Scripture, the church is the instrument that God uses to proclaim the gospel. Like chapter 4, it focused on exegeting recognized passages that indicate the church’s instrumental role in the proclamation of the gospel. Again, I concluded with a summary about the instrumental role of the church in the proclamation of the gospel.

Chapter 6 systematically formulated the scriptural data from chapters 4-5 into a reciprocal relationship between the gospel and the church. It defined this reciprocal relationship as follows: the church, acting as God’s instrument through the power of the Spirit, proclaims the gospel; God, then, uses the church’s own gospel proclamation to create members of the church. Chapter 6 continued by using speech act theory to refine

this reciprocal relationship. First, I briefly defined speech act theory and discussed why it can be applied to the reciprocal relationship between the gospel and the church. I then developed a speech act formulation of the reciprocal relationship in which the church proclaims both the locution and illocution of the gospel message and the Spirit creates the perlocutionary effect of the church's gospel proclamation: the church. This perlocutionary effect (= the church) is brought about because of the declarative illocutionary force present in the church's gospel proclamation through the regenerative work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of elect unbelievers. Chapter 6 concluded by briefly discussing some theological implications of the speech act formulation of the relationship between the gospel and the church.

Suggestions for Further Research

As I mentioned above, this dissertation presents a framework that could use further research and development. In many chapters, I covered enough information to prove my point, but much ground is still left unturned. Chapter 2 is one such chapter. In chapter 2, I only explored the relationship between the gospel and the church using the "church as mother" paradigm in four theologians: Cyprian, Augustine, Luther, and Calvin. While this exploration provides enough data to show that historical precedent exists for my argument, it is only one way that the relationship between the gospel and the church has been represented and developed in church history. I believe a historical survey that explores the theological development of the relationship between the gospel and the church in individual theologians as well as throughout church history would prove extremely useful in further nuancing and developing my proposal as well as furthering the church's understanding of the relationship between the gospel and the church in general.

My exegesis chapters, while once again providing enough data to support my thesis, leave much unsaid. I believe a work in biblical theology that details the

relationship between the gospel and the church in the New Testament would prove valuable to the church in its self-understanding. On a smaller scale, the relationship between the gospel and the church presented in different New Testament authors such as Paul,¹ Luke, John, or Peter would also serve to advance the church's understanding on this topic.

My systematic formulation of the relationship between the gospel and the church using speech act theory also leaves much undeveloped.² While the basic framework is intact, its theological implications have been relatively unexplored. As I mentioned in chapter 6, I believe the concepts of Christ as the ontological center of the church through the gospel; the church as the intersection between being and nonbeing, the temporal and the eternal; the church's role in new creation; the church's gospel proclamation as divine encounter; and the Trinitarian nature of the church's creation all need further development and exploration. Each topic merits substantial research and could easily become its own monograph. Together, they also have implications for the doctrine of ecclesiology as well as other doctrines, such as the Trinity, that warrant their further exploration.

Finally, I believe the practical implications of this paradigm for church ministry and growth need to be explored further. While I will next briefly apply this paradigm to the church's current situation, I believe a book or dissertation-length exploration of its implications for practical church ministry is needed to explore fully its

¹Robert Plummer has written a dissertation that convincingly argues that Paul believed the church is to be missionary in nature. However, even Plummer asserts that his dissertation is preparatory in nature and leave much unsaid. See Robert Plummer, "The Church's Missionary Nature: The Apostle Paul and His Churches" (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2001).

²On a more general note, I believe the relationship between the gospel and the church needs further exploration in general. While my thesis provides a useful paradigm for understanding this relationship, I would be remiss to think it is the only model that could be used to represent and understand it.

implications for the church. With this fact in mind, I will briefly discuss the implications of my dissertation thesis to the current state of the church in America.

A Call for Reformation

The course of history is many times defined for generations to come in one moment; it is in one of these defining moments that the church in America finds itself. Often labeled irrelevant, outdated, confused, outmoded, and intolerant by the secular media, the church faces immense pressure from the culture. This pressure, coupled with a theologically-ignorant membership who are easily swayed by current trends, places the church in a precarious position. On top of all of these pressures, the church by most accounts is in decline. Thus, the question is often posed: “What is the answer to the decline in the church in America?” Most of the time, the leadership of the church is at a loss to answer this question.

As I mentioned in chapter 1, many answers have been proposed. Some propose pragmatic changes: local churches need to change their teaching methodology or follow a growth formula or become more high-tech or get a suave, young pastor. The list could go on and on. Others propose that local congregations need to change their doctrine, which has become outdated and can no longer meet the needs of modern man. Still others suggest that the local church needs to become more missions-minded. Yet, even in spite of all of these suggestions and changes, the American church continues its rapid descent into oblivion. The thesis of this dissertation provides one piece of the puzzle to stopping the church’s rapid decline. The church does not grow by functional, pragmatic changes or changes away from orthodox theology. In fact, it is quite the opposite. The church needs to rediscover the orthodox theology that it has lost: the gospel. It is through the proclamation of the gospel that the church changes reality by speaking its members into existence. Thus, a refocus and reorientation to gospel proclamation is part of the answer to the church’s massive decline in America. However,

a reorientation in doctrine is not enough; instead, the proclamation of the gospel must be accompanied by a reorientation in lifestyle. Both the church and her institutions must commit themselves to living in a manner worthy of the gospel (Col 4:2-6) or, in other words, to live as heavenly citizens (Phil 1:27). As I have argued, God has chosen to use frail humanity as his instruments to change reality (= speak the church into existence) by proclaiming the gospel. As his gospel instruments, God commands his church to live in a manner that reflects the gospel message it proclaims. This type of life should be natural, for the gospel brings new life—that is, causes new creation—in those who accept it. As James argues, faith without works is dead (Jas 2:17). When Christians live in submission to God’s word by practicing a complete gospel proclamation (i.e., maintaining both orthodoxy and orthopraxy), the church can and will move forward, for it is through the church’s own gospel proclamation that God adds members to the church. Thus, movements to recover orthodox theology must be accompanied by movements to recover orthodox practice. Otherwise, an incomplete recovery of orthodox Christianity will result and, consequently, the church will fail to proclaim the gospel completely (i.e., both to teach and practice it), which will result in its continued decline.

Therefore, I end my dissertation with a call for reformation in the church. Our churches and institutions must recommit themselves both to preaching and living out the implications of the gospel. While sound doctrine is necessary and must be maintained at all costs, this doctrine must also be put into practice at all costs. If the church continues in its failure to preach the gospel and/or practice it, it will continue to decline. I firmly believe that the task of this generation is to rediscover the gospel both in doctrine and practice. For it is through the glorious gospel that God creates his church, an institution that not even the gates of hell can overcome (Matt 16:18). Thus, may God through his mercy give us a renewed vision of the greatness of his gospel and may we, as a church,

once again boldly say with Martin Luther, “I cannot do otherwise, here I stand, may God help me, Amen.”³

³Martin Luther, “Luther at the Diet of Worms, 1521,” in *Career of the Reformer II*, ed. George W. Forell, trans. Roger A. Hornsby, *Luther’s Works*, ed. Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1958), 32:113.

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ABSTRACT

CHRIST, THE GOSPEL, AND THE CHURCH: THE CHURCH'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SALVATION OF ITS MEMBERS

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This dissertation proposes that the church plays an active role in the salvation of its members through the proclamation of the gospel. Chapter 1 introduces the topic of the dissertation by positioning it within its current academic and nonacademic context. It then details the thesis and methodology of the dissertation.

Chapter 2 demonstrates that the church is viewed as playing an active role in the salvation of believers in church history. It examines the relationship between the soteriology and ecclesiology of four theologians who have significantly influenced the protestant reformed trajectory: Cyprian, Augustine, Luther, Calvin. It argues that through their usage of the “church as mother motif,” Cyprian, Augustine, Luther, and Calvin view the church as having an active role in salvation.

Chapter 3 provides working definitions of the gospel and the church. It defines the gospel as the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sin based upon 1 Corinthians 15:3-5. Chapter 3 proceeds by defining the church as the regenerate people of God who have accepted the gospel message by faith in Christ's death, burial, and resurrection.

Chapter 4 contends through scriptural exegesis that the proclamation of the gospel creates members of the church. The scriptural exegesis in this chapter goes in canonical order and focuses on exegeting passages that are recognized as being important

in understanding the church's formation. It concludes with a summary of the scriptural data.

Chapter 5 also argues through scriptural exegesis the church is the instrument that God uses to proclaim the gospel. Like Chapter 4, it focuses on exegeting recognized passages that indicate the church's instrumental role in the proclamation of the gospel. It also concludes with a summary of the scriptural data.

Chapter 6 formulates systematically the scriptural data from Chapters 4 and 5 into a reciprocal relationship between the gospel and the church. Chapter 6 then frames the reciprocal relationship between the gospel and the church in terms of speech act theory. First, it briefly defines speech act theory and discusses why it can be applied to the reciprocal relationship between the gospel and the church. It then develops a speech act formulation of the reciprocal relationship in which the church proclaims both the locution and illocution of the gospel message and the Spirit creates the church, which is the perlocutionary effect of the church's gospel proclamation. It concludes by briefly detailing some of the theological implications of this formulation.

Chapter 7 offers a conclusion to the dissertation in which the arguments from Chapters 1 to 6 are summarized. It then proposes areas for further research. It concludes by offering some potential applications of the speech act formulation of the reciprocal relationship between the gospel and the church to the current evangelical church.

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