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AFFECTIVE CHURCH EVANGELISM:
UNION WITH CHRIST AS IMPETUS
FOR CHURCH EVANGELISM

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AFFECTIVE CHURCH EVANGELISM:
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FOR CHURCH EVANGELISM

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To Lisa—my beautiful bride and life-long companion in the unspeakable privilege of loving the LORD our God and loving all that He loves. Your eyes are not only lovely to look into, they are deeply satisfying to look through at both God's will and our world.

May we live together in such a way that together we assist others to explore and possibly even to adore the central aspect of salvation—Jesus Christ.

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PREFACE

Central to salvation is personal union with Christ. This union is the motivation for church evangelism. My thesis had its birth in 1990, as a one-page proposal to Hazel Del Evangelical Free Church in Vancouver, Washington. I expanded the idea into a four-page vision of the Christian life presented to a church in Montana as a candidate for their pastorate. For the next twenty-five years, I worked with God's people on theology and practice as we shepherded three local churches. The validity and vitality of this thesis grew in the soil of pastoral ministry. I am utterly humbled under God for the privilege he has given me in serving the local church. The present work is offered to pastors shepherding God's people with an eye upon both maturing and multiplying the local church.

In writing the thesis, acknowledgements are numerous as the stars in the sky. I will regrettably miss mentioning most of those who shaped and steered my life and work. Nevertheless, I will highlight a few. To my best friend, whose love for me, for our children, and for God's people has encouraged me through this project. Thank you, Lisa, for being my adorable wife. Also, the opportunity to study at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary became meaningful due to the cohort with whom I studied and professors under whom I learned. I owe special thanks and deep gratitude to the following. Outstanding is The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Doctor of Ministry in Biblical Theology class of 2017. As I said to you before, "It takes a cohort to raise a Turner." You shaped me and my writing more than you will know. Dr. Hamilton, whose keen sensitivity over how the Bible unfolds, escorted us into the sacred storyline that changed my life and this current thesis. And finally, my advisor, Dr. Plummer, whose

skill in reading, kindness in leading, and joy in missions assisted the thesis into its current form. The study is bantam without you. Thanks, my friend.

My readers also were indispensable. Drs. Laney and Lubeck in Portland, Oregon; Dr. Cortez in Wheaton, Illinois; Dr. Frost in the UK; and local readers from my church—Geoff Evans, Chad Bresson, and Drs. Berry and Evans. A shout out to all of you. Blessings.

Lastly, God’s family at Clearcreek Chapel took my family in at a dark time. God’s light and heat dispelled our darkness, oriented our desires, and renewed our affections for kingdom living. Thank you endlessly for faithfully being an incubator for my growth as a pastor and writer. I love you all.

Daniel J. Turner

Springboro, Ohio

May 2017

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This thesis has grown out of years of wondering why Calvinists, united over the doctrine of soteriology, sound different from each other when discussing the heart of soteriology. Questions over why some Reformed evangelical teachers sound so rational while others sound so relational when discussing salvation birthed this study. The thesis claims that central to salvation is personal union with Christ. This union is the motivation for church evangelism. The bulk of this work focuses not merely on how churches are to evangelize. This study descends to the heart of soteriology and, as Orlund writes, enters “the ultimate human experience, viz. union with Christ alone.”¹

In his biblical monograph *Congregational Evangelism in Philippians*, Mark Keown makes the case that “essential to Philippians is an appeal to the Philippians to persevere in sharing their faith through lives wholly given over to Christ in the face of resistance and in renewed unity.”² His hope is that the work will “continue to stimulate interest in the proclamation of the gospel.”³ Concerning the necessity of congregational evangelism, most evangelicals in the Reformed tradition will readily agree with Keown.⁴

¹Raymond C. Orlund, Jr., *God’s Unfaithful Wife: A Biblical Theology of Spiritual Adultery*, New Studies in Biblical Theology (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996), 149.

²Mark J. Keown, *Congregational Evangelism in Philippians: The Centrality of an Appeal for Gospel Proclamation to the Fabric of Philippians* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2008), xv.

³Ibid.

⁴For a cogent argument that all believing members of a local church are to be involved in evangelism even though there continues to be discussion of the absence of a clear imperative to proclaim the gospel in the Bible, see Robert Plummer, *Paul’s Understanding of the Church’s Mission: Did the Apostle Paul Expect the Early Christian Communities to Evangelize?* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2006).

Where this agreement generally ends, however, is on the question of applied soteriology.⁵ What is the nature of salvation and how does this relate to evangelism? Do churches that agree on the sovereignty of God over man's salvation divide into differing schools of thought concerning this critical issue? The thesis centers on how the doctrine of salvation and the practice of evangelism relate. As stated, the central aspect of salvation—the heart of soteriology—is the impetus for church evangelism. However, what is this central aspect of salvation and why is its personal nature vital for church evangelism?

The following study communicates differing emphases⁶ within Calvinian soteriology that, according to Evans, prompt the need for study and research “over the nature of union with Christ and over related matters having to do with applied soteriology.”⁷ As the thesis explores the theme of salvation, two basic theologies appear—a rational/volitional theology and an affective, Trinitarian theology.⁸ The former theology

⁵The question concerning the nature of salvation falls into one of two perspectives—a legal/federal emphasis or a personal/vital emphasis. The former emphasizes the legal or forensic aspects of Christ's work on the cross. This perspective highlights the extrinsic benefit of justification for the sinner because of Christ's righteousness credited to his account based solely on faith and not by works. The second perspective, while fully appreciating the first, emphasizes the personal, vital union with Christ as salvation through faith in Christ. This new relationship then enjoys all the benefits of Christ's life and work on the cross—justification, sanctification, adoption, glorification. It must be noted that difference in emphasis as seen in these two basic schools of thought is not to be understood as wholesale theological discontinuity. Overlaps occur within Calvinism. The study at hand is interested largely in emphases and not polar opposites.

⁶Other writers describe this fissure less as differing emphases and more as bondage. See Jonathan Mangels, “Engaging the Evangelical Theology of Mission with Trinitarian and Affective Theology” (M.A. thesis, Multnomah Biblical Seminary, 2004).

⁷William B. Evans, *Imputation and Impartation: Studies in Christian History and Thought* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2008), 1. In his monograph, Evans first lays out Calvin's views over applied soteriology with particular concern over the nature of union with Christ. He then traces this theme from the eighteenth century up to the twentieth century, featuring theologians such as Edwards, Dwight, Hodge, Nevin, Berkhof, and Torrance. He ends his research by writing, “A concrete soteriological approach is called for. In contrast to the abstraction of the *ordo salutis* framework, in which justification and sanctification are not ‘in Christ’ but rather occur somehow ‘on the basis of what Christ did.’” *Ibid.*, 264.

⁸For an excellent treatment, both historically and theologically, over possible reasons for this division, see R. N. Frost, *Richard Sibbes: God's Spreading Goodness* (Vancouver: Cor Deo, 2012), 25-70. Another work tracing the competing schools of thought back to the first five centuries of church history is

views salvation largely in objective terms with emphasis primarily on the extrinsic legal status. The latter theology, while upholding the juridical aspect of salvation, sees salvation primarily in personal terms with emphasis on the affectual union with Christ. Motivation for church evangelism, it is argued, strengthens as the church is both enlightened to and elated in union with Christ⁹—the enjoyment of the love of God and the transformation of the life of the church.¹⁰ This personal union with Christ—in whom reside the benefits of salvation such as justification and sanctification—is to be understood as salvation itself and savored in the blessed Trinity. Such a salvation cannot adequately be communicated principally through an abstract, forensic model of salvation. For believers to be revived and unbelievers converted to the “breathtakingly extravagant”¹¹ gospel will include affective church evangelism.

Rationalistic and affective theologies presented in the study are found both in the Reformed family of churches irrespective of church order. Whether the church is Lutheran, Anglican, Presbyterian or Baptist, an audit of its applied soteriology may be helpful to determine whether the “missing element”¹² in church evangelism is spotted.

found in Donald Fairbairn, “Patristic Soteriology: Three Trajectories,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 50, no. 2 (2007): 289-310.

⁹Reeves sees an inseparable link between the love of God poured out on His Son and those united by faith with His Son. See Michael Reeves, *Rejoicing in Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2015). He argues that the nature of this love poured out into the hearts of believers “is *expansive*: it moves the Son not only to cherish his Father but also to share his Father’s outgoing concerns. Thus Jesus made Isaiah 61:1-2 the manifesto for his ministry . . . [e]nergized and empowered by the Spirit, the Son goes out, bringing the blessing, liberty and healing of his life-giving Father . . . so it is for those in Christ.” Ibid., 90-92.

¹⁰This language for salvation is shaped by Fairbairn’s way of communicating life in the Trinity. See Donald Fairbairn, *Life in the Trinity: An Introduction to Theology with the Help of the Church Fathers* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2007), 13-37.

¹¹D. A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 569.

¹²On February 4, 1998, 2,000 reformed and reforming pastors gathered in Minneapolis for Bethlehem Conference for Pastors. The closing address came from John Piper, whose biographical study spotlighted Augustine. In his address, he declared, “This note of sovereign, triumphant joy is *a missing element* in too much Christian (especially Reformed) theology and worship.” John Piper, *The Legacy of*

How churches understand the central aspect of salvation will expose their soteriology, and exposing evangelical churches at this level aims to invite consideration over the thesis— affective church evangelism. The two basic schools of thought found in this thesis are distinct, real, but church history suggests that it is not recent.

Current scholars of the seventeenth-century American Puritanism have spotted this difference.¹³ Janice Knight, for example, challenging Perry Miller’s *Orthodoxy in Massachusetts*, states that due to leading members of the church—Perkins and Ames— “voluntarism and the doctrine of preparationism were born. Miller took this position to be representative of the whole of the Puritan spectrum, joining Sibbes with Ames . . . in a falsely monolithic wedding of sensibilities.”¹⁴ Knight argues that there was no univocal voice among the English Puritans. In other words, two competing schools of thought were seen with “some scholars arguing for an emotional dimension of covenant, in which affective response replaces rationalist bargaining as the individual’s part.”¹⁵ These two groups were known as the Intellectual Fathers, led by Perkins and Ames and the Spiritual Brethren, headed up by Sibbes and Preston. The former group espoused a rational/ volitional theology. They viewed God primarily as a Creator who rules and must be obeyed. The latter communicated an affective theology. They viewed God primarily as a

Sovereign Joy: God’s Triumphant Grace in the Lives of Augustine, Luther, and Calvin (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2000), 73, emphasis added.

¹³Janice Knight, *Orthodoxies in Massachusetts: Rereading American Puritanism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 1994). For other scholars arguing the same, see Ron Frost, “Richard Sibbes: Theology of Grace and the Division of English Reformed Theology” (Ph.D diss., Kings’ College, University of London, 1996); Michael Schuldiner, *Gifts and Works: The Post-Conversion Paradigm and Spiritual Controversy in Seventeenth-Century Massachusetts* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1991).

¹⁴Knight, *Orthodoxies in Massachusetts*, 90.

¹⁵Ibid.

Lover who creates and is the supreme object of joy.¹⁶ Knight maintains that other scholars argue her position as well.¹⁷

This study shares concern over the evangelical church akin to scholars like Frost, who writes, “The debate divided the Puritans, and *even today* those differences still stir debates among evangelical Christian communities.”¹⁸ The thesis depicts a distinction in church evangelism—not so much in methodology, but rather, in motivation. To be saved is to be joined with Christ who seeks and saves the lost. The church must evangelize the lost as a lover must kiss his bride (Song of Sol 2:8-15).¹⁹

Chapter 2 introduces the two emphases—rational theology and affective theology. Definitions of terms and differences in these emphases are made as scholars on both sides weigh in on the central aspect of salvation.

After engaging these representative leaders to understand both terms and trajectories, chapter 3 offers a biblical theology of union with Christ as impetus for church evangelism. This thesis is accomplished by noticing how the apostle Paul understood Genesis 2:24 as his basis for missional ecclesiology. Similarities to affective church evangelism, as put forward in this study, are drawn from this whole-Bible theology. The

¹⁶Reeves comments, “Thus Jesus Christ, God the Son, is the Logic, the blueprint for creation. He is the one eternally loved by the Father; creation is about the extension of that love outward so that it might be enjoyed by others. The fountain of love brimmed over.” Michael Reeves, *Delighting in the Trinity: An Introduction to the Christian Faith* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2012), 43. Todd Billings frames the differences using the question, “Is the God of Calvin a fountain of life or a forceful tyrant?” Todd Billings, *Calvin, Participation, and the Gift: The Activity of Believers in Union with Christ* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 1.

¹⁷For example, Schuldiner asserts, “If one is to understand the precedent for the developments in the order of salvation that took place in New England, one must recognize, at the outset, that the scheme of spiritual growth was modified in *two ways* . . . some theologians emphasizing man’s performance of the Law and some emphasizing the affective experience of the Spirit as the indication of conversion and means of further spiritual growth. Schuldiner, *Gifts and Works*, 5, emphasis added.

¹⁸Frost, *God’s Spreading Goodness*, 14, emphasis added.

¹⁹For an argument that Song of Songs has messianic melody, see James M. Hamilton, Jr., *Song of Songs: A Biblical-Theological, Allegorical, Christological Interpretation* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2015).

study closes with chapters 4 and 5 by first looking at the church in Corinth. An exposition of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1 probes church evangelism in the first century in the city of Corinth. Did the apostle Paul expect the church to evangelize the lost in a manner similar to his own? Did he view Trinitarian love as germane to congregational purity and gospel proclamation? Were misplaced affections primary in slowing the mission of the church? Chapter 4 interacts with these types of questions. The final chapter, chapter 5, aims to help the reader apply the thesis to the local church in his or her own city. This chapter explains an organizational model built from the thesis titled “Becoming Commissioned as a Church.” After the explanation of the model, a thirty-six-page curriculum developed from the thesis is offered. The curriculum is located in the appendix.

The thesis is not a wholesale denunciation of all evangelism not manifestly shaped by Trinitarian and affective theology. It simply recognizes that even in good evangelistic activities, abstract and at times mistaken soteriology may exist. Discernment and criticism are not to be seen as interference to, but rather a help for, furthering congregational evangelism. As Williams Weeks suggests,

If a revival is attended with faults and blemishes, it is not certain that there is no good in it. Nor if it is admitted to be a revival of religion, is it certain that no faults have attended it. And as it would be wrong to refuse to see the good because there are some evils, so it is doubtless wrong to shut our eyes upon the evils that exist because there is some good.²⁰

This open-eyed look at today’s Reformed evangelicalism centers on the impetus of church evangelism as union with Jesus Christ. The motive for the study is singular. By pondering the thesis, affective church evangelism may appear more biblical and beautiful than rationalistic/volitional evangelism. The model in chapter 5, then, puts practicality around heart theology that fuels church evangelism.²¹

²⁰William Weeks, *Pastoral Letter to the Ministers of the Oneida Association to the Churches under their Care* (Utica, NY, 1827), 13, cited in Iain H. Murray, *Revival and Revivalism: The Making and Marring of American Evangelicalism, 1750-1858* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner Of Truth Trust, 1994), 234.

²¹See Henry Scougal, *The Life of God in the Soul of Man* (1739; repr., Harrisonburg, PA: Sprinkle, 1986); John Piper, *The Pleasures of God: Meditations on God’s Delight in Being God* (Sisters,

Literature Survey

To explore the validity of union with Christ as impetus for church evangelism, three categories of literature are used. The first category centers on biblical theology. It searches out sources dealing with hermeneutics and the effects of biblical theology on a church. A local church-centric, whole-Bible perspective comes largely from a proliferation of biblical theologies written in the last few years.²² Scholars such as Letham, writing in the biblical theology genre, draw attention to “the centrality of the Holy Trinity [as] not only vital to worship and prayer but also in evangelism”²³ are reviewed in this study.

The second category focuses on rival worldviews and cultural texts. As P. T. Forsyth put it, “We must all preach to our age, but woe to us if it is our age we preach, and only hold up a mirror to our time.”²⁴ For this project to assist the local church, careful consideration is given to the context in which church evangelism occurs. This category spotlights two areas of interest. The first is the church and plausible counterfeit gospels that penetrate and even propagate from her.²⁵ Gospel distortion may follow churches whose unexamined soteriology influences their outreach. The second area has to do with popular culture and where the local church is on mission. Questions over faithful

OR: Multnomah, 1991). These two authors address heart theology and object of desire; the former centers on the individual and holiness, and the latter focuses on the Triune God with primary emphasis on worship and holiness. My thesis addresses the outgoing movement of affective corporate worship and purity. It centers on church evangelism and its motivation for faithfulness in proclaiming the gospel and living for Christ before the watching world. The model in chap. 5 aims to take the wonder of union with Christ and funnel it in practical evangelistic ways.

²²For an overview of four approaches to biblical theology, see Andreas Kostenberger, “The Present and Future of Biblical Theology,” *Themelios* 37, no. 3 (2012): 445-64.

²³Robert Letham, *The Holy Trinity: In Scripture, History, Theology, and Worship* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2004), 457. See also Fairbairn, *Life in the Trinity*, 219-25; Reeves, *Delighting in the Trinity*, 106-7.

²⁴P. T. Forsyth, *Positive Preaching and the Modern Mind* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980), 8.

²⁵Others have a similar concern that the church may be propagating counterfeit gospels, as seen in Trevin Wax, *Counterfeit Gospels: Rediscovering the Good News in a World of False Hope* (Chicago: Moody, 2011), 12-13.

contextualization are asked and searched out in this set of literature in order to improve the thesis and develop chapter 5.

The last category probes biblical anthropology and marks of a true work of grace. How the soul assesses and assigns value as it relates to affective congregational evangelism is explored in this collection of writings.

Taking in the above three categories—biblical theology as a hermeneutic to understand the storyline of the Bible, biblical assessment of popular culture to explain the context of church mission, and biblical anthropology and how the love of God motivates evangelism—this thesis attends to the church’s applied soteriology. As these three categories braid together into the central concern, the research leads to the clarification of the thesis and development of its model.

Biblical Theology

The first area of sources enriching the thesis is biblical theology. The following three theologians give a sample of the quality of scholarship undergirding the thesis. G. K. Beale, in his book *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New*, provides an understanding of NT theology in light of OT theology.²⁶ He shows how to form biblical theology. The book works trenchantly at an exegetical level to demonstrate that out of good exegesis comes good biblical theology. In addition to providing clear guidelines for developing biblical theology, Beale argues a biblical theology known as worldview-story.²⁷ This school of thought greatly enhances the quality of the thesis as it handles how to read the Bible as literature.

²⁶G. K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011).

²⁷For an overview of this understanding of biblical theology, see Edward Klink and Darian Lockett, *Understanding Bible Theology: A Comparison of Theory and Practice* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 59-92.

Another scholar shaping this study is Richard B. Hays. In *First Corinthians*, Hays gives insight both into biblical theology arising from particular texts as well as traces the whole-Bible storyline through a single book of the Bible—1 Corinthians.²⁸ His work is sensitive to intertextuality, giving the reader a breadth of experience in the world of the Bible. He insists that the apostle Paul’s “interpretive perspective” reflects and represents biblical theology. This book, along with Hays’s many other works, cannot help but mature the foundational thinking that undergirds this thesis.

Robert L. Plummer, an expert in New Testament studies and missiology, nudges the thesis to completion. His biblical monograph *Paul’s Understanding of the Church’s Mission: Did the Apostle Paul Expect the Early Christian Communities to Evangelize?* contributes key insights from a biblical theology of mission.²⁹ His handling of 1 Corinthians 8-10, along with the bibliographic material, edifies and clarifies the study.

Rival Worldviews and Cultural Texts

The next category of literature that shapes the groundwork for the thesis highlights worldviews and cultural texts. The following three scholars evidence the type of scholarship that fortifies the current work. Gordon Fee’s commentary, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, serves as a primary help to probe the nature of the problem at Corinth. Congregational evangelism stalled due to misplaced affections. These inordinate desires grew as the church moved away from Paul’s authority. Fee points out that Paul’s authority and the integrity of his gospel were at stake. The purpose of the letter, therefore, is to address the conflict head on so that the spreading anti-Pauline view stops. Moreover, affective church evangelism may regain momentum out of this correction.³⁰

²⁸Richard B. Hays, *First Corinthians*, Interpretation (Louisville: John Knox, 1997).

²⁹Plummer, *Paul’s Understanding of the Church’s Mission*.

³⁰See Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 4-15.

Kevin Vanhoozer is another referenced scholar. His edited work *Everyday Theology: How to Read Cultural Texts and Interpret Trends* brings cultural exegesis to the forefront.³¹ Replete with examples of cultural expressions of the “good life,” he provides insight into storylines of false gospels and the potential influence over the church’s mission.³² His methodology on how to read culture on its own terms through the lens of Scripture influences the thesis.

Ted Turnau’s *Popologetics: Popular Culture in Christian Perspective* serves well this aspect of the project. Turnau begins by defining popular culture and worldview. This definition sets the trajectory for understanding the relationship between pop culture and worldview. His argument is that pop culture influences worldviews by creating story and then inviting spectators to inhabit the story.³³ He makes this case demonstrating how the Bible’s story of Creation, Fall, and Redemption is seen dimly and distortedly in the imaginative worlds of cultural texts and trends.³⁴ The book ends on engaging popular culture as a missionary. His “Five-Question Model” serves practically as a workshop for the church to read and respond to the culture in which she lives and is on mission.³⁵ Turnau’s thesis dovetails into the third and last category of sources.

³¹Kevin J. Vanhoozer, Charles A. Anderson, and Michael J. Sleasman, eds., *Everyday Theology: How to Read Cultural Texts and Interpret Trends* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007).

³²See also Merold Westphal, *Suspicion and Faith: The Religious Uses of Modern Atheism* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1999); Vinod Ramachandra, *Gods That Fail: Modern Idolatry and Christian Mission* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996); Daniel Strange, *Their Rock Is Not Like Our Rock: A Theology of Religions* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014); James K. A. Smith, *You Are What You Love: The Spiritual Power of Habit* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2016).

³³Ted Turnau, *Popologetics: Popular Culture in Christian Perspective* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2012), 28-29.

³⁴Mike Cosper, *The Stories We Tell: How TV and Movies Long for and Echo the Truth* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), is a similar book recently published that contributes to my work.

³⁵Turnau’s model, *Popologetics*, can be broken down into five questions: (1) What’s the story? (2) Where am I (the world of the text)? (3) What’s good and true and beautiful about it? (4) What’s false and ugly and perverse about it? (5) How does the gospel apply here? For his commentary on this model, see Turnau, *Popologetics*, 1247-48.

Biblical Anthropology

Assisting local church evangelism toward affective church evangelism is a hope of this thesis. Maturing and multiplying have to do with replacing false stories churches tell themselves with what Hamilton describes as an “interpretive perspective of the biblical authors.”³⁶ The next three scholars function as an example of shaping influences on the current thesis.

The writings of James K. A. Smith, a professor of philosophy at Calvin College, help form the study’s biblical anthropology. His burden for the church is her purity in the world and purpose in mission. Augustine, Calvin, Edwards, and Kuyper influence his Reformed theology and cultural exegesis. When he writes on what stimulates choices, he argues that people are motivated lovers rather than simply cognitive thinkers.³⁷ As an educator, his thesis—education is about the formation of hearts and desires—aims at the academy and learning, as well as the church and discipleship. For example, Smith asks, “What if education wasn’t first and foremost about what we know, but about what we love?”³⁸ His anthropology, noticeably influenced by Augustine, is that humans are lovers. Implications of his basic ideas penetrate the thesis and are worked out for local church evangelism. His teleology as it relates to evangelism is a highpoint.³⁹ To illustrate this, Smith provocatively states, “Our ultimate love moves and motivates us because we are

³⁶James M. Hamilton, Jr., *What Is Biblical Theology? A Guide to The Bible’s Story, Symbolism, and Patterns* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), 15.

³⁷James K. A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009); James K. A. Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom: How Worship Works* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013); Smith, *You Are What You Love*. From church history, a notable example of Smith’s observations is Aurelius Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. R. S. Pine-Coffin (New York: Penguin, 1961). Augustine contended, “Wherever I am carried, my love is carrying me” (13.9.10). My thesis echoes this sentiment and bends it toward a Trinitarian local church evangelism in an environment colonized by idolatry.

³⁸Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 18.

³⁹The writings of Smith echo twentieth-century apologist C. S. Lewis, who wrote, “Thirst is for water.” C. S. Lewis, *The Great Divorce: A Fantastic Bus Ride from Hell to Heaven—A Round Trip for Some but Not for Others* (New York: Macmillan, 1946), 44.

lured by this picture of human flourishing . . . when our imagination is hooked, we're hooked."⁴⁰ By examining his writings, questions surface. How is the church to locate its object of love and why does this matter for evangelism? How will the church destroy impoverished kingdoms capturing the imagination of many? What will entering a secular story-world and retelling their story with the gospel story look like? Why is an intellectualist model of salvation not sufficient for congregational evangelism? What does a recaptured imagination do for local church evangelism and how can Christian practices strengthen this worldview?

Also furnishing the thesis noticeably is Puritan literature of the Edwardsian tradition. The Trinitarian and affective model witnessed in the study come from men like Johnathan Edwards and Henry Scougal.

Jonathan Edwards published *Religious Affections* in 1746.⁴¹ Putting his thoughts on paper was essentially his way of making sense of the messy and yet meaningful revival that broke out in his day. Of his voluminous works, *Religious Affections* may be his magnum opus. This book along with *The Freedom of the Will*, *Charity and Its Fruits*, and *A Treatise of Grace*⁴² are enjoyed in researching human motivation and what characterizes a genuine work of God's grace.⁴³

⁴⁰Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 54.

⁴¹Jonathan Edwards, *The Religious Affections* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1994).

⁴²Jonathan Edwards, *The Freedom of the Will*, in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1995), 1:3-93; Jonathan Edwards, *Charity and Its Fruits* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1996); Jonathan Edwards, "A Treatise of Grace," accessed December 16, 2015, www.iclnet.org/pub/resources/text/ipb-e/epl-10/web/edwards-treatise.html.

⁴³Many scholars today are helpful in researching Edwards. For insight into Christian motivation, see Dane Ortlund, *A New Inner Relish: Christian Motivation in the Thought of Jonathan Edwards* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2008). For an accessible history of Edwards, see Iain H. Murray, *Jonathan Edwards: A New Biography* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1992). For extensive interaction over the theology of the heart, see Harold P. Simonson, *Jonathan Edwards: Theologian of the Heart* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1982); Stephen J. Nichols, *An Absolute Sort of Certainty: The Holy Spirit and the Apologetics of Jonathan Edwards* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2003); Josh Moody, *Jonathan Edwards and the Enlightenment: Knowing the Presence of God* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2005);

“The love of God is a delightful and affectionate sense of the divine perfections which makes the soul resign and sacrifice itself wholly unto Him,” says Puritan Henry Scougal in his book *The Life of God in the Soul of Man*.⁴⁴ The life and writings of Scougal have had a profound effect upon the conception of this thesis. Both the teleology of desire along with a definition of love as a “powerful and prevalent passion”⁴⁵ are contributions strengthening the thesis and have come from Scougal and a wealth of Puritan writers in the vein of Trinitarian and affective theology tradition.⁴⁶

Void in the Literature

Many books written today teach on the mission of the church.⁴⁷ Some resources explain the gospel and its implications,⁴⁸ while other resources unfold strategies that help

Brad Walton, *Jonathan Edwards, Religious Affections and the Puritan Analysis of True Piety, Spiritual Sensation and Heart Religion* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 2002).

⁴⁴Henry Scougal, *The Life of God in the Soul of Man*, in *The Works of Henry Scougal: 1650-1678*, ed. Don Kistler (Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria, 2002), 12.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, 23.

⁴⁶For a helpful survey of New England’s seventeenth-century religious culture, see Knight, *Orthodoxies in Massachusetts*. Her thesis, contra Perry Miller, *Orthodoxy in Massachusetts* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1933), reveals multivocal Puritanism. Within the Calvinist tradition, two groups formed. These schools of thought were known as the Intellectual Fathers, led by W. Perkins and W. Ames, and the Spiritual Brethren headed up by R. Sibbes and J. Preston. The former group espoused a moralistic theology seeing God as a Creator who rules and must be obeyed, whereas the latter communicated an affective theology that saw God as a Lover who creates and is the supreme object of joy. See also Amy Plantinga Pauw, *The Supreme Harmony of All: The Trinitarian Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), for the continuity of affective theology between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

⁴⁷A growing body of literature today is dedicated to the church’s mission. One book capturing the essence of this theme is Kevin DeYoung and Gregory D. Gilbert, *What Is the Mission of the Church? Making Sense of Social Justice, Shalom, and the Great Commission* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011). With this book the current thesis is in general agreement. The local church’s mission shows what the gospel does and tells what the gospel is through the proclamation of the gospel, the establishing of churches, and the ongoing discipleship of its members eventuating in more converts and congregations. Shorthand for this mission is the Great Commission. However, their book is insufficient in teaching on the affectional aspect of the church’s life and mission.

⁴⁸A growing movement of “gospel-centered” everything has enriched the evangelical church. The Gospel Coalition’s website, thegospelcoalition.org, is an admirable one-stop resource center for the

ministries carry out evangelistic activities.⁴⁹ Still others provide the essentials that make up a local church and how to manage these distinctives.⁵⁰ This good literature continues to assist the church in her evangelism. Nevertheless, much of the written works today on church evangelism stop short of exploring the heart of salvation and how it relates to motivation.⁵¹ When theologians do write on what is central to salvation, too many of them talk in extrinsic categories leaving the notion that salvation at least seems abstract.

To assist the church in evangelism today, the need is to see how christology, soteriology, ecclesiology, and missiology unite. The church must be reminded that salvation is not to be viewed as something to be received but as someone to be loved—Jesus Christ. Central to salvation is personal union with the incarnate, crucified, resurrected and reigning Christ. This union is the motivation for church evangelism.

Need of the Study

The current study sees the need for more discussion and thought over the nature of salvation and how it shapes the way the church thinks about evangelism. What is the church to look for in determining its health and ensuing motivation to reach the elect with the gospel? In 1994, historian Iain Murray looked for an indicator of the church's missionary strength. In researching the marring of American evangelicalism, he asserts in his book *Revival & Revivalism*,

local church.

⁴⁹Mathias Media (mathiasmedia.com) is an evangelical publisher of gospel-centered resources existing to strengthen the church in both its structure and skills.

⁵⁰An excellent resource for the local church is 9Marks.org. The ministry assembles usable resources to grow a healthy church.

⁵¹Ortlund, *A New Inner Relish*, 71, points to this gap as well—on Edwards' teaching on regeneration, he writes, "We rarely hear it among Christian leaders today." Regarding the theme of union with Christ, a refreshing addition to recent literature is found in Robert Peterson's work. He alludes to the gap in literature mentioned in this study as "a drought." See also Robert A. Peterson, *Salvation Applied by the Spirit: Union with Christ* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 13.

What happens in revivals is not to be seen as something miraculously different from the regular experience of the church . . . all this is only a heightening of *normal Christianity*. True revivals are ‘extraordinary’, yet what is experienced at such times is not different in essence from the spiritual experience that belongs to Christians at other times.⁵²

In other words, Murray believes that normal Christianity centers on the affections and is different from widespread revivals only in degree and not in kind. As Murray diagnoses the American church, he sees a contrast between a mere confessional or performance assessment and what men like Samuel Davies in the 1750s looked for. Preaching on the words of “Christ as precious” Davies writes, “Because he loves him he longs for the full enjoyment of him. . . . Because Christ is precious to him, his interests are so too and he *longs to see his kingdom flourish and all men fired with his love.*”⁵³

The church today has few writers similar to Davies and Scougal who diagnose church evangelism weakness as “misplaced affections.”⁵⁴ It is rare to hear men like Schreiner, for example, who teach that the Bible evaluates obedience not from mere external conformity to God’s revealed will but also from “affection—loving the Lord and clinging to him, finding him to be the praise and joy of one’s life.”⁵⁵ More work is needed in the area of how humans are designed for splendor and what that means for the church’s purity and progress in mission.⁵⁶ This is the void in literature and the place the current work attempts to make a contribution.

⁵²Murray, *Revival & Revivalism*, 23, emphasis added.

⁵³Samuel Davies, *The Sermons of Samuel Davies* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 1995), 355, emphasis added.

⁵⁴Scougal, *The Life of God*, 25.

⁵⁵Thomas R. Schreiner, *The King in His Beauty: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013), 88.

⁵⁶Popular writer and speaker John Piper is a clear exception. His works that noticeably inform my thesis include Piper, *The Pleasures of God*; and John Piper, *Finally Alive* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2010), are the closest in essence to this project. He argues from Scripture that God’s love precedes and gives rise to the Christian’s love for Him and others. Another prolific writer whose trajectory is steered by Jonathan Edwards is Ortlund, *A New Inner Relish*, who refreshes the landscape of evangelicalism.

Purpose of the Study

This study puts forward the beauty of and need for Trinitarian and affective theology in relation to church evangelism. As the church becomes aware of and shifts from her inaccurate or incomplete applied soteriology—acceptance with God and transformation of life⁵⁷—she may enjoy a well-placed love for Christ and His people that result in the church’s “active and passive witness.”⁵⁸ This prognosis takes the argument back to the title of the thesis—“Affective Church Evangelism: Union with Christ as Impetus for Church Evangelism.” As a great leader of the past generation, George Truett, wrote,

The supreme indictment that you can bring against a church . . . is that such a church lacks in passion and compassion for human souls. A church is nothing better than an ethical club if its sympathies for lost souls do not *overflow*, and if it does not go out to seek to point lost souls to the knowledge of Jesus Christ.⁵⁹

Thesis and Methodology

Central to salvation is personal union with Christ. This union is the motivation for church evangelism. As asserted, not everyone agrees with the thesis. Evans notes, “There is no single Reformed doctrine of union with Christ.”⁶⁰ There appears to be no less than two main schools of thought over applied soteriology—forensic union with Christ and personal union with Christ. As theologians move to the former using extrinsic categories primarily, salvation can be viewed more impersonal than it truly is. However, when there is a movement to salvation as chiefly sharing in the love the Father has for the Son, salvation is enjoyed as intimate and influences the heart to share it with others. The differences explored in the study are found not primarily in the church’s expressive methodology, but rather in its motivating theology—rational theology or affective theology.

⁵⁷Evans, *Imputation and Impartation*, 2.

⁵⁸Plummer, *Paul’s Understanding of the Church’s Mission*, 71.

⁵⁹George Truett, *A Quest for Souls* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1917), 67, emphasis added.

⁶⁰Evans, *Imputation and Impartation*, 259.

The current work sets out to show these differences and accomplish its purpose in the following way. First, in chapter 2, the study focuses on union with Christ and evangelism. Selected scholars from various eras assist in defining relevant terms. In addition, the chapter provides framework for understanding the two basic forms of union with Christ—legal union and vital union. Next, in chapter 3, personal union with Christ as motivation for church evangelism arises from a biblical theology. It is argued that Paul’s interpretation of Genesis 2:24 in Ephesians 5:31 is the basis for his missional ecclesiology. Paul sees Genesis 2:24 not merely as the template for all marriages, but mainly as a type for the Messiah and his bride the church. How vital union and being fruitful and multiply correspond to the thesis unfolds in chapter 3. The fourth chapter is dedicated to exposition. First Corinthians 8:1-11:1 demonstrates the thesis and renders how church evangelism stalls when the church pursues idolatry rather than the enjoyment of union with Christ.

This thesis is written with a love for Clearcreek Chapel in Springboro, Ohio, and local churches resembling her that are scattered throughout the world. Therefore, chapter 5 concludes with a practical model derived from the thesis and applied to facets of the local church. The model is to assist the church in evangelism as set out in the thesis.

CHAPTER 2

UNION WITH CHRIST AS IMPETUS FOR CHURCH EVANGELISM

The central aspect of salvation is personal. It is not merely something Jesus Christ procured for sinners. It is more than just the benefits of His work on the cross consisting in justification and sanctification.¹ Salvation is someone—Jesus Christ, the son of God.² This study claims that the heart of salvation is union with Christ. This union is the impetus for church evangelism. When a church is unclear over this reality, church evangelism decreases.³

This chapter is concerned with the teaching on union with Christ by defining the doctrine of personal union in order to provide an understanding of the theological terms used throughout the study. The chapter has two sections. The first outlines two basic traditions on the central aspect of soteriology. This outline is provided to feature the tradition advanced in this thesis—union with Christ by the Spirit. The second section introduces the idea of union with Christ and its relation to the outgoing of the gospel through the church. Support for union with Christ and evangelism is offered first by

¹Garcia argues for the central place vital union with Christ has in soteriology. He explores both Calvin's theology and the Bible to notice the distinction between the basis of salvation who is Jesus the Christ and the benefits of salvation known as justification and sanctification. He believes that Calvin employed a biblical shorthand when teaching on applied soteriology called "*unio Christi-duplex gratia*." Mark A. Garcia, *Life in Christ: Union with Christ and Twofold Grace in Calvin's Theology*, Studies in Christian History and Thought (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2008), 219.

²See Mark 1:1, Luke 2:30, and 1 Cor 1:30, for a sample of clear texts over the personal nature of salvation.

³In section 2 of this chapter, Rev 2:1-7 is offered as evidence that a church can be involved in proper ministries and possess the ability to spot truth and yet experience a decrease in affections for Christ leading to a decrease in evangelism.

scholarly advocates of the thesis. It is then followed by an exposition of Revelation 2:1-7 that suggests the thesis from a biblical text.

Union with Christ

Protestantism and the rise of the Western world has largely been influenced by John Calvin.⁴ Of the many scholars writing on the mystery of union with Christ by the Spirit, few exceed the French reformer. In his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Calvin pinpoints the heart of salvation as union with Christ:

We must understand that as long as Christ remains outside of us, and we are separated from him, all that he has suffered and done for the salvation of the human race remains useless and of no value for us. Therefore, to share with us what he has received from the Father, he had to become ours and to dwell within us.⁵

Earlier in *Institutes*, Calvin claims,

We see that our whole salvation and all its parts are comprehended in Christ (Acts 4:12). We should therefore take care not to derive the least portion of it from anywhere else. If we seek salvation, we are taught by the very name of Jesus that it is “of him” (1 Cor. 1:30). If we seek any other gifts of the Spirit, they will be found in his anointing. If we seek strength, it lies in his dominion; if purity, in his conception; if gentleness, it appears in his birth. For by his birth he was made like us in all respects (Heb. 2:17) that he might learn to feel our pain (See Heb.5:12). If we seek redemption, it lies in his passion; if acquittal, in his condemnation; if remission of the curse, in his cross (Gal.3:13); if satisfaction, in his sacrifice; if purification, in his blood; if reconciliation, in his descent into hell; if mortification of the flesh, in his tomb; if newness of life, in his resurrection; if immortality, in the same; if inheritance of the Heavenly Kingdom, in his entrance into heaven; if protection, if security, if abundant supply of all blessings, in his kingdom; if untroubled expectation of judgment, in the power given to him to judge. In short, since rich store of every kind of good abounds in him, let us drink our fill from this fountain and from no other.⁶

⁴Readers not having much knowledge of Calvin or his influence in the Western world will profit much from a collection of monographs in W. Stanford Reed, ed., *John Calvin: His Influence in the Western World* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982).

⁵John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, The Library of Christian Classics, vol. 20 (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1960), 3.1.1.

⁶*Ibid.*, 2.16.19.

As argued in this study, vital union with Christ is salvation for God's people.⁷ All the benefits of his salvation—justification and sanctification—are to remind the church of her secured position in the Trinity and His satisfying love.

As noted, Calvin taught that union is the foundation of all benefits and the fountain of all unimaginable results received from Christ's work on the cross. Benefits such as forgiveness of sins and the imputation of Christ's righteousness to believers are astounding in and of themselves. Yet, they are not the source of salvation. Should the church become confused over the distinction between basis and benefits of salvation, the church may be in danger of what might be called the "objectification of salvation."⁸ The church may unwittingly begin to think of salvation more in abstract and legal terms rather than personal and lively ones. That is, when the church understands salvation to equal a juridical, extrinsic righteous status before God due to Christ's righteousness imputed to her ledger, impersonalizing salvation may ensue. Highlighting the benefits of salvation while separating them from the Person of Christ may result in a distant and more detached view of salvation leading to a "cooling off" of church evangelism.⁹ To aid in understanding the thesis, a few definitions of salvation are in order.

Leaning on William Evans' survey of the history of the theme of union with Christ in the Reformed tradition,¹⁰ terminology concerning soteriology is organized within

⁷Best rightly argues, "Christ is the 'place' in whom believers are and in whom salvation is." Ernest Best, *One Body in Christ* (London: SPCK, 1955), 8.

⁸Marcus Johnson, *One with Christ: An Evangelical Theology of Salvation* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 16.

⁹In the Gospel according to Matthew, the evangelist talks about advancing the gospel throughout the world. He implies that when "the love of many" in the church is hot and has not grown cold due to lawlessness, the church will proclaim the gospel throughout the whole world (Matt 24:12-14). The point made here is not that in Matthew the issue of coldness is due to the separation of salvation's benefits from the Person of salvation, Jesus Christ. Rather, it is simply to note that "warm love" moves the gospel out.

¹⁰William B. Evans, *Imputation and Impartation: Union with Christ in American Reformed Theology*, Studies in Christian History and Thought (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2008).

two basic evangelical, Reformed traditions—federal/legal union and vital union.¹¹ The former tends to emphasize issues such as guilt and innocence, with salvation as a change in status before God. The latter tends to emphasize relational aspects and frame them in familial categories, such as marriage or sonship.¹² To understand the first category—federal or legal union—specific terms need to be defined. After these definitions are made, a brief explanation of legal union is provided.

The technical terms defined for the legal union model used in this study are forensic, imputation, and justification.¹³ The term “forensic” carries a logical or legal connotation. *Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary* defines it as “belonging to, used in, or suitable to courts of judicature.”¹⁴ The idea is one of a legal or court scene in which a judge declares his decision over a person. The second term used commonly in teaching on the federal union concept is “imputation.” The word simply means to attribute or ascribe something to someone. Using once again *Webster’s Dictionary*, a working definition for “impute” might be “to charge or credit to a person or a cause.”¹⁵ The last term defined for the federal union model is “justification.” This term connotes a declarative purpose. That is, to declare someone righteous or vindicated of all wrong is the sense of the term “justification.”

¹¹The orthodox Protestant church has understood the central aspect of soteriology in three ways. For the purpose of this thesis, I have left the mystical category out because it does not pertain much to the Reformed tradition. For a clear understanding of the three trajectories known as rational, mystical, and personal, see Donald Fairbairn, “Patristic Soteriology: Three Trajectories,” *Journal of the Evangelical and Theological Society* 50, no. 2 (June 2007): 289-310.

¹²See chap. 3. Also, perhaps a distinction between the basis (i.e., in Christ) and benefits (i.e., justification) of salvation is what Packer meant when he said, “The first point about adoption is that it is *the highest privilege the gospel offers*: higher even than justification.” J. I. Packer, *Knowing God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1973), 186.

¹³To be clear, this study wholeheartedly celebrates the Five Solas of the Reformation. What is taken up in the thesis is not the validity of justification by faith alone. It is treating salvation as *something* rather than *someone*.

¹⁴*Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary* (1977), s.v. “forensic.”

¹⁵*Ibid.*, s.v. “impute.”

With basic vocabulary in place, a short clarification of federal theology is needed. Federal theology is a theological system based largely on Romans 5 and 1 Corinthians 15 in which Adam stood in covenant relationship with all humanity as their representative before God. If Adam had passed the test of righteous obedience, keeping the covenant of works, God would have rewarded him with eternal blessedness. Moreover, since all in some way are united to Adam, the entire human race would have had this eternal blessedness transferred to them as well. However, Adam sinned. His guilt and corruption were imputed to all mankind. Since all humanity was mysteriously united to Adam, all humanity was plunged into guilt (i.e., condemnation) and corruption (i.e., depraved nature). Man could not find the solution to this problem through his good works. Rather, humanity needed another representative who would live a perfect life before the holy God, die in their place for their sin and be raised to new life for their justification. This “Christ-event” earned His people both full forgiveness of sins and a right standing before the holy Judge. This covenant of grace is promised to all who believe in Christ and thus are justified freely by faith in Christ.

John Murray, teaching on justification, makes a distinction between the work God does in a believer versus the declaration God gives over a believer:

Justification is a judgment of God with respect to us. The distinction is like that of the distinction between the act of a surgeon and the act of a judge. The surgeon, when he removes an inward cancer, does something *in us* (emphasis added). That is not what a judge does—he gives a verdict regarding our judicial status. If we are innocent he declares accordingly.¹⁶

Murray makes plain that justification is a declaration by God, as the universal Judge over believers in Christ, that carries a change in forensic or legal status. Louis Berkhof agrees with Murray and goes further to teach that this legal status is the foundation of salvation and the reason for subsequent graces: “The judicial ground for all the special grace which

¹⁶John Murray, *Redemption: Accomplished and Applied* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955), 121.

we receive lies in the fact that the righteousness of Christ is freely imputed to us.”¹⁷

Current Reformed theologians in the federal theology tradition generally echo these sentiments over soteriology—justification as salvation and cause of sanctification.¹⁸

To be clear, good teachers holding to federal theology teach salvation as personal and vital.¹⁹ They simply insist that justification is the ground of union with Christ whereas the other model—vital union—insists that salvation is the person of Christ and in Him are found all the benefits of salvation, such as justification. This is not a mere wrangling over nomenclature however. Johnson points out,

The doctrine of imputation is articulated or understood, even by those who embrace it, in an abstract or merely extrinsic way. This creates the impression that there is a thing we refer to as “Christ’s righteousness,” which can be reckoned to the believer’s account with no regard to the believer’s union with the righteous person of Christ. . . . If by “the imputation of Christ’s righteousness” we are asserting that God justifies us by an external transaction that does not take into account the union between believers and Jesus Christ, who is our righteousness, then we have failed to do justice to the term.²⁰

The present study finds unease with the federal/legal union model of salvation.

Evangelicals in the Reformed tradition take two basic trajectories to understand salvation—legal union or vital union. The previous definitions and explanation are given in order to understand the basic tenets of the legal union model. The second model, the

¹⁷Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 452.

¹⁸For examples of good theologians who ground sanctification on justification, see Michael Horton, *Covenant and Salvation: Union with Christ* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007), 129-30; and Thomas Schreiner, *Faith Alone: The Doctrine of Justification, What the Reformers Taught . . . and Why It Still Matters* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015), 140. Both of these theologians interact well over vital union with Christ. Yet, I prefer to see union with Christ as the ground of both justification and sanctification rather than grounding the latter in the former.

¹⁹One of my favorite teachers in the federal camp is Michael Horton, whose *Covenant and Salvation* is good with exception perhaps of chap.7. Yet, in *The Christian Faith*, he writes, “I am suggesting that we view all the items in the Pauline *ordo* as constituting one train, running on the same track, with justification as the engine that pulls adoption, new birth, sanctification and glorification in tow . . . we never leave the forensic domain even when we are addressing other topics.” Michael Horton, *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 708.

²⁰Johnson, *One with Christ*, 108.

one advanced in this study, is known as vital or personal union with Christ. Speaking about Calvin and his teaching on vital union with Christ, Kuyper notes, “Although Calvin may have been the most rigid among the reformers, yet not one of them has presented this *unio mystica*, this spiritual union with Christ, so incessantly, so tenderly, and with such holy fire as he.”²¹ To get a sense of this “holy fire” view of union some basic definitions and explanation are offered.

Special terms used for the second school of thought concerning applied soteriology are *affective*, *vital*, and *participation*. The term *affective* is used to connote something that is heart-felt, an inner relish²² or a sense of the realities of the Reality.²³ Smith locates the affections in the heart and discusses how imagination provides both the subject matter of and stimulation for the affections that become the motivation for action. In *Imagining the Kingdom*, Smith provocatively writes,

Much of what we do grows out of our passional orientation to the world—affected by all the ways we’ve been primed to perceive the world. In short, our actions emerge from how we *imagine* the world. What we do is driven by who we are, by the kind of person we have become. And that shaping of our character is to a great extent, the effect of stories that have captivated us, that have sunk into our bones—stories that “picture” what we think life is about, what constitutes “the good life.” We live into the stories we’ve absorbed; we become characters in the drama that has captivated us.²⁴

²¹Abraham Kuyper, *The Work of the Holy Spirit*, trans. Henry De Vries (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1900), 324-25.

²²Dane Ortlund, *A New Inner Relish: Christian Motivation in the Thought of Jonathan Edwards* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2008), 34-35. As Ortlund discusses Christian motivation in this passage, he, in Edwardsian fashion, calls this affectional response to God “a divinely bestowed spiritual taste” or “a new inclination” or a “granting of a new inner relish.”

²³I am indebted to Devon Berry for the phrase “the realities of the reality.” Berry was an elder at Clearcreek Chapel in Springboro, OH, from 2004-2015. Though I do not know if he would agree with me, I understood him to mean when he prayed, “give us a sense of the realities of the reality” that God grants his people a heart that feels the worth of Jesus Christ and all his benefits he procured on the cross.

²⁴James K. A. Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom: How Worship Works* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013), 31-32.

When this study uses the term *affective*, it may be likened to a passionate orientation to the Christ affected by the gospel that captivates genuine believers in Christ.²⁵ This school of thought is set in a historical tradition extending back to the Church Fathers—notably Augustine²⁶—through Calvin and is laid bare in the Antinomian Controversy of the seventeenth century.

In the seventeenth century, whether in New England or England, two views of the church's relationship to God were found within one theology called Calvinism. These two views were fundamentally different from each other. One view that influenced the seventeenth century was espoused by William Perkins at Cambridge in the sixteenth century. He describes this relationship in the form of covenants. God's people are held responsible to Him as an expression of relatedness and responsibility to Him. The other view,²⁷ promoted by John Cotton, a convert of Richard Sibbes, was a New England Puritan leader in the seventeenth century, sees this relationship largely in Christ and His accomplished redemption. From this view, God was seen primarily as the Triune, happy sovereign whose love for His people created responsive glad-hearted obedience to Him. Schuldiner, a renowned Puritan scholar of this era, comments on these two views:

Any discussion of the Puritan concept of spiritual growth must, of course, begin with Calvin; and if one is to understand the precedent for the developments in the order of salvation that took place in New England, one must recognize, at the outset, that the scheme of spiritual growth was modified in two ways by British and American theologians who followed Calvin . . . after Calvin's seminal presentation of spiritual growth a dichotomy of views developed, some theologians emphasizing

²⁵Henry Scougal used the term "adoration" as an interchangeable term for "affections," in Henry Scougal, *The Works of Henry Scougal: 1650-1678*, ed. Don Kistler (Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria, 2002), 12.

²⁶If the reader is unfamiliar with the prominent position of affections in Augustine's theology, a good place to start is Aurelius Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. R. S. Pine-Coffin (New York: Penguin, 1961).

²⁷To use John Cotton to represent the affective theology view promoted in this study is not to be understood as originating with him. Cotton was shaped by Richard Sibbes and others who were profoundly shaped by John Calvin and the Patristics. For a readable and yet thorough history of the church and evidence of affective theology throughout the history of the church, see Steven Lawson, *Pillars of Grace: A Long Line of Godly Men*, vol. 2, AD 100-1564 (Orlando: Reformation Trust, 2011).

man's performance of the Law and some emphasizing the affective experience of the Spirit as the indication of conversion and means of further spiritual growth.²⁸

The two-trajectory teaching of applied soteriology in Calvinism is briefly presented to demonstrate a contrast between impersonal categories of salvation and the church's "affective experience of the Spirit as the . . . means of further spiritual growth"²⁹ on the backdrop of impersonal categories of salvation. These two traditions were commonly organized under two main headings—The Intellectual Fathers and Spiritual Brethren.³⁰ Both types of Calvinists and their differing emphases continued through the eighteenth century and remain today.³¹

The next term, *vital*, is key in understanding the personal nature of union with Christ.³² It connotes the ideas of dynamic and real in contrast with abstract or conceptual. Again, Johnson proves helpful. He gives the reader a flavor of this word when he explains,

The central reality of our salvation is that through faith, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we enter into a vital, personal, and profoundly real union with the incarnate, crucified, resurrected Savior, Jesus Christ, through whom all the blessings of salvation flow to us.³³

²⁸Michael Schuldiner, *Gifts and Works: The Post-Conversion Paradigm and Spiritual Controversy in Seventeenth-Century Massachusetts* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1991), 5.

²⁹*Ibid.*

³⁰Janice Knight, *Orthodoxies in Massachusetts: Rereading American Puritanism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 1994), 92.

³¹Amy Plantinga Pauw, *The Supreme Harmony of All: The Trinitarian Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 6-7. Addressing the need today to recover affective theology, Brian Rosner highlights C. S. Lewis and Dietrich Bonhoeffer as rare theologians who drew attention to the personal nature of God's knowledge of his people. Rosner claims that their discourse of God's love was "far from the dispassionate, rational discourse of most modern theology." Brian S. Rosner, "Known by God: C. S. Lewis and Dietrich Bonhoeffer," *Evangelical Quarterly* 77, no. 4 (2005): 347.

³²For a scintillating treatment on the idea of "vital" union with Christ, see Michael Reeves, *Rejoicing in Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2015).

³³Johnson, *One with Christ*, 119.

Union with Christ is an invigorating oneness with the incarnate, crucified, and now reigning Christ that animates His Body—the church—for biblical living and church evangelism that leads to the glory of God.³⁴

The last of the three terms defined in this section for the vital union model is *participation*. This idea communicates a sharing in the life of, or fellowshiping with a community. Fairbairn, expounding John 15:9-15, explains the command “remain in My love”:

We are to remain in the very same love with which Christ has loved us, which is in fact the very same love with which the Father has loved Christ. Somehow we are called to do more than simply imitate God’s love. We are called to remain in and to carry forward to the world the very love with which the Father has loved his Son from all eternity. The loving relationship between Father and Son, the glorious presence of the Father with the Son, is not simply a model that we are to follow. That relationship is the substance of what Jesus says Christians are to possess. Christ is not simply giving us an example; he is offering himself to us as a person, that we might share in his most deeply personal relationship, the relationship he has with God the Father.³⁵

Life in Christ for the vital union tradition is affective, vital, and participatory in its teaching of and living out Christian life and ministry.

The outline of the two basic traditions on union with Christ is given to demonstrate a basic difference between the two teachings and to highlight the latter—vital union with Christ—as the central aspect of applied soteriology. This aspect, life in Christ, is the impetus for church evangelism.

³⁴Insights into and implications of the nature of biblical union with Christ course through the apostle Paul, who explored these implications for the church in Corinth. He states in 1 Cor 6:15-17, “Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, ‘The two will become one flesh.’ But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him.” As Hays points out, “Those who are in Christ have been united with him in a relationship of intimate union . . . that is analogous to—but even deeper than—sexual union. . . . Paul describes union with Christ in v17 with the same verb that he had used in v16 to describe union with a prostitute.” Richard B. Hays, *First Corinthians*, Interpretation (Louisville: John Knox, 1997), 104. The apostle’s bold and inspired imagery is “far from the dispassionate, rational discourse of most modern theology.” For a biblical theology of vital union with Christ and church evangelism, see chap. 3 of this study.

³⁵Donald Fairbairn, *Life in the Trinity: An Introduction to Theology with the Help of the Church Fathers* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2007), 26-27.

Important now is to explore the relationship between vital union with Christ and church evangelism. What does it mean that union with Christ is the impetus for church evangelism? What connection is there between the church's salvation found in Christ and the salvation offered to those outside Christ? How can sharing in the love the Father and the Son have for one another both create and animate church evangelism?

Union with Christ and Evangelism

Starting his tome on the Trinity, Robert Letham declared,

It is my belief that a recovery of the Trinity at ground level, the level at the ordinary minister and believer, will help revitalize the life of the church and in turn, its witness in the world . . . a fully self-conscious and developed Trinitarian theology is indispensable for the future of evangelism.³⁶

Letham then ends his 509-page work by insisting, “The centrality of the Holy Trinity is not only vital to worship and prayer, but also in evangelism.”³⁷ Is Letham framing his extensive study of the Trinity with links to evangelism in order to make a particular point? Does he discuss the blessed Trinity from its biblical foundations, through its historical developments, and end with its modern discussions and issues merely for the academy? Or does he have the church at heart and a practical implication for her mission? One may be led to believe that, at least for Letham, union with Christ that unites the believer to the Triune God of joy gives rise to an outward surge of evangelism.³⁸ This connection between union with Christ and church evangelism seems to be highlighted by another

³⁶Robert Letham, *The Holy Trinity: In Scripture, History, Theology, and Worship* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2004), 7, 10.

³⁷*Ibid.*, 457.

³⁸Discussions over evangelism impetus are not confined to scholarly works. See Mark Dever and Jamie Dunlop, *The Compelling Community: Where God's Power Makes a Church Attractive* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015). They conclude saliently by writing “community fuels evangelism.” *Ibid.*, 199. A weakness in their book, however, is not demonstrating that this church “community” is birthed and grown by the Triune community of God. Union with Christ unites the church to the love the Father has for His son. This ever flowing, overflowing joy in each other motivates the church for love—worshipping God, discipling each other, and evangelizing the lost.

scholar in the UK. Teaching on the basics of the Christian faith, Michael Reeves emphasizes,

The love that the Father pours out on the Son by the Spirit is *expansive*: it moves the Son not only to cherish his Father but also to share his Father's outgoing concerns. Thus Jesus made Isaiah 61:1-2 the manifesto for his ministry. . . . Energized and empowered by the Spirit, the Son goes out, bringing the blessing, liberty and healing of his life-giving Father . . . so it is for those in Christ . . . they share the compassion of the Son and his pity for the weak and the lost.³⁹

Presented in this section are discoveries of other scholars who link affective theology to church evangelism. This section sets out to confirm the interaction between the loving relationship God and His church have in Christ and the salvific relationship His church has with unbelievers. Is it true that the central aspect of salvation is Christ and that this personal union with Him is the thrust for church evangelism? Should the reader be persuaded by what both Letham and Reeves manifestly promote?

To fortify the claims of this thesis, this final section is in two parts. Part 1 explores other scholars' expressions of this assertion. Attention is given to a sample of how others allude to or even conclude that vital union with Christ is an impetus for church evangelism. Part 2 picks up a passage in the Bible that openly teaches the thesis. If the Bible does not teach the claim of this study, it matters not how many scholars think it to be so. This chapter ends with an exposition of Revelation 2:1-7.

Union with Christ and Scholars

Corroborating with the emphases of Letham and Reeves, Beale writes a biblical theology of the dwelling place of God.⁴⁰ To unfold his view, he begins *The Temple and The Church's Mission* by demonstrating that the Garden of Eden was the first Temple

³⁹Reeves, *Rejoicing in Christ*, 91-92.

⁴⁰G. 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). For two additional books written by the same author addressing similar topics, see G. K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011); G. K. Beale and Mitchell Kim, *God Dwells among Us: Expanding Eden to the Ends of the Earth* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2014).

and Adam was its first kingly priest, which sets the trajectory for his thesis. The Old Testament Tabernacle and Temple were designed by God from eternity past to function as a model of the entire cosmos with the fullness of God's presence occupying every inch of creation. He wants the reader to begin pondering how the vision of Revelation 21-22 relates to local church evangelism. By arguing that the Adamic commission found in Genesis 1:28 repeats due to the failure of Adam-like figures throughout the Old Testament (such as Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, corporate Israel), Beale exposes a tension that begs for resolution. Relief starts in chapter 5 by introducing the Temple theme in the New Testament. Subsequent chapters search out various texts in the New Testament to show that the Temple is now Jesus Christ and union with His people. This dwelling place of God then is to spread over the entire earth. The final chapters form a summary of and application to his thesis. From Adam in the garden-temple, to the Temple in Jerusalem, and consummating in the cosmic Temple found in the end of the Bible, Beale explains his biblical theology of the dwelling place of God—vital union with God in Christ by the Holy Spirit. His hope is to see that “the biblical-theological perspective of this book will provide greater *fuel to fire the church's motivation to fulfill its mission to the world.*”⁴¹ Beale believes that “the mark of a true church is always to be outward-looking and expanding God's presence and not obsessively introspective.”⁴²

Is Beale on to the central reality of salvation found in the Bible? Does he link this truth accurately to the outgoing mission of the church? The reader is left to judge for himself. Yet for the renowned scholar at Westminster Theological Seminary, Beale energetically believes that “fuel to fire the church's motivation”⁴³ for mission is union with Christ by His Spirit. Reeves applauds this highlight by stating,

⁴¹Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 11, emphasis added.

⁴²Ibid., 401.

⁴³Ibid., 11.

If I don't enjoy Christ, I won't speak of him. Or, perhaps worse, I will, but without love and enjoyment—and if my mouth does give away my heart, people will hear of an unwanted Christ. And who would want that? The Spirit, of course, can use such loveless evangelism. But his real work is to bring us to, and keep us in, the sunshine of God's love. It is there that we will sing heartily; it is there, abiding in Christ, that we will bear fruit. The Spirit shares the triune life of God by bringing God's children into the mutual delight of the Father and the Son—and there we become like our God: fruitful and life-giving.⁴⁴

These three present-day teachers come from an evangelical, Reformed tradition and assert the connection between the union with Christ and church evangelism. Do other scholars make this point?

Speaking on union with Christ as the church's identity, Billings makes an intriguing connection that identity has with vulnerability:

We would rather have the occasional brush of God's presence, or a relic of his solidarity with us, so that God can be an appendage of our identity. But God wants more than that; he wants our lives, our adopted identity. By bringing us into the new reality of the Spirit, we can call out to God—Abba, Father—as adopted children united to Christ. Yet there are few things more countercultural than this process of adoption—losing your life for the sake of Jesus Christ, to find it in communion with the Triune God.⁴⁵

This vulnerability—an ontological oneness with Christ's humanity that derives familial enjoyment—is further developed in Billing's book as he frames it in evangelism. He contends, "Sending actually relates to union with Christ and to the way that those who belong to Christ bear witness to him."⁴⁶ God owns his family, and his family both shares the love the Father has with his Son and the mission the Father has for his Son—reaching the lost with the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Timmis and de la Hoyde summarize this type of teaching:

Our union with Christ really does shape and impact not only everything we do and say, but how we say and do it. . . . It reverberates in our witness to the world in mission because as we realize the utter futility of seeking to accomplish anything

⁴⁴Michael Reeves, *Delighting in the Trinity: An Introduction to the Christian Faith* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2012), 107.

⁴⁵J. Todd Billings, *Union with Christ: Reframing Theology and Ministry for the Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), 18.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 132.

apart from Christ, we also know the security and joy of our identity in Him. Our union with Christ is *the single best motivation* for faithfulness and perseverance in proclaiming the gospel and in living for Christ before a watching world.”⁴⁷

Peter O’Brien notices this personal vigor in Christ motivating the church for faithful and ongoing evangelism in Colossians:

So in Colossians 1, the gospel is a mighty personal force working powerfully in the lives of men and women. It had come to the Colossian Christians (v.6) and remained with them, having a firm place in their lives. Like the seed in the parable of the sower it continued to produce a vigorous fruit (Luke 8:15), not only among the Colossians themselves (Col.1:10) but also in the rest of the world.⁴⁸

The link these scholars make with union with Christ and church evangelism rings out as well in Piper’s exposition of 2 Corinthians 8:1-4, 8. To paraphrase his definition of love and bend it toward the lost it might be said that love is the overflow of joy in God that gladly sacrifices for the salvation of others.⁴⁹

Union with Christ is the realm of motivation needed for the church to reach out to those outside of Christ. However, not all scholars see it this way. As noted, there are two basic teachings among evangelicals within the Reformed tradition that carry on today. They both believe that union with Christ has to do with salvation. Most of the legal union representatives esteem union with Christ as a result of justification by faith alone. This study does not bring justification by faith alone into question. Nevertheless, what is in question for the forensic union spokespersons has to do with never leaving the “forensic

⁴⁷Steve Timmis and Christopher de la Hoyde, *In Christ: In Him together for the World* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2014), 10, emphasis added.

⁴⁸P. T. O’Brien, *Gospel and Mission in the Writings of Paul: An Exegetical and Theological Analysis* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 113.

⁴⁹John Piper, *Desiring God: Meditations of a Christian Hedonist* (Portland, OR: Multnomah, 1986), 94-97. In John Piper, *Finally Alive* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2009), 171. Piper makes the connection my thesis claims when he asks, “What will it take so that thousands of Christians in our churches become passionate about telling the gospel to unbelievers?” Ibid. He concludes, “We will spread the seed of God’s mighty regenerating power if we have tasted that the Lord is good. The Lord is our delight. The Lord is our Treasure. The Lord is our meat and milk and water and wine. This tasting happens through the word of God. May God loosen our tongues and make us bold gospel-tellers because we are drunk with the wine of the word of God and the goodness of the Lord.” Ibid., 174. Vital union with Christ is to enjoy the joy of Christ in this fashion and proclaim it by this fuel. See Pss 40:1-3; 51:12-13.

domain”⁵⁰ as central to salvation, and teaching the church that *something* is to function as “the engine”⁵¹ hauling church evangelism into the world with the “breathtakingly extravagant”⁵² good news of great joy—Jesus Christ. As noted, God demands more than merely spotlighting wonderful gifts of salvation. He demands that He be seen and shown as the gift of salvation. A love for Him, as seen in a church in Ephesus, is needed for the light of the church to shine as a witness of the gospel in a dark world.

Union with Christ and Revelation 2:1-7

This study advances the heart of salvation, not as something, but as someone. Jesus the Christ, the Son of God, is featured in the Bible as the church’s salvation. All the benefits of salvation—justification, sanctification, glorification—are unimaginably fabulous for the church. Yet, such great gifts are to be understood as benefits of and not the basis for salvation. All gifts bring attention to God’s Son. Jesus is the church’s salvation.

The implication of this truth strikes evangelism. What stimulates the church to testify of the glorious resurrected Jesus in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation? The thesis that union with Christ is the impetus for church evangelism needs now to be argued clearly from the Bible. The study turns now to Revelation 2:1-7 to see whether the thesis is true and what implication it may have for a church needing help in evangelism.

In only sixty years from the days Jesus walked and talked on earth, the church had spread throughout the known world. Evangelism, church planting, and sustaining loving communities of faith were experiences noticed from Jerusalem to Rome, from Antioch to Egypt. After Jesus was brutally killed, he was raised from the dead, ascended

⁵⁰Horton, *The Christian Faith*, 708.

⁵¹*Ibid.*

⁵²D. A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 569.

into heaven, and sent the Holy Spirit to accomplish this type of work. Through His Body the Church, the reigning Jesus continued to make disciples and establish local churches. Growing and going, the church carried out the commission given to God's people from the beginning—make disciples among all nations. What could possibly slow down and even stall this powerful movement to which the book of Acts testifies? When church evangelism lessens, what is the problem and the relishing solution?

The church in Ephesus appears to be a central strategic point for the apostle Paul to evangelize the lost and establish churches throughout the Gentile world. One would expect to find in a letter written to a church in such a place something of the nature of church evangelism, and that expectation is met in Revelation 2:1-7. This letter shows how affections for Christ and church evangelism relate and exposes the link between low love for Christ and low love for the lost. The big idea of this text may be stated in prose this way: *When church affection decreases for Christ, church evangelism does the same.* Or, to state the same message in poetry it may be said that *light is fueled by love for Christ in the context of witnessing in darkness.*

This message points both to the validity of the thesis and an application of the thesis for church evangelism. What is the central problem for a church declining in church evangelism? What is the solution to the problem of low to no church evangelism? What is the one thing the church lacks when it is lacking in church evangelism? Revelation 2:1-7 spotlights three topics to which church attention is directed. First is Jesus Christ (vv. 1-3). Second is what a church lacks when it lacks in church evangelism (v. 4). Third is what a church needs when it lacks the one thing needed for church evangelism (vv. 5-7).

Jesus Christ (vv. 1-3)

In verse 1, the reader comes across the One in authority over creation. The incarnate, crucified, resurrected, ascended, and glorified God-man Jesus, who causes humans to faint at the sight of Him yet mercies them back onto their feet (see 1:17-18). King Jesus tells the angel what to write. In this dictation, Jesus describes Himself as the

One who is intimately close and up front in the church. He talks about how He holds the Spirit in his hand and walks around the church. He is intimately and intensely aware of what they are, what they are missing, and what they need. In verses 2-3, He praises them for right living and right thinking. They persevere through much suffering and false teaching. They possess doctrinal fidelity. They spot error and speak out against it in tireless effort. Yet the thrust of verses 1-3 seems to be setting the readership up for the main point. Churches that persevere through difficulty and preserve doctrine amid impurity still might be lacking the one thing Jesus looks for in a church.

What the Church Lacks (v. 4)

Even with churches who do the right things and learn the right things, something essentially may be missing. In the Ephesus church, the missing element Jesus spots is lack of love for Him. Moreover, this lack of ardent love for Jesus generates a lack in church evangelism. To appreciate this truth, two things need to be addressed—the idea of “first love” as devotion to Christ and the “lampstand” as standing for Spirit-enabled witness in a dark world. First, a look at “first love” is in order.

The church was abandoning their first love. This idea of “abandoning” carries the sense of leaving or forsaking someone close; as the terminology would suggest perhaps as close as a spouse.⁵³ Also, this type of love can be seen in a similar passage found in the Bible. Matthew 24:12-14 talks about lacking love and how it influences evangelism. This lack of love in the midst of false prophets who mislead people runs parallel to Revelation 2:1-7. Just as it was forecasted in the day of Jesus, the church in Ephesus was lacking love for the Christ. This “cold love” issued a lack in evangelism. To notice that the issue in this passage centers on lack of witnessing in the church, the imagery of “lampstand” needs to be interpreted.

⁵³Paul teaches on union with Christ to the Ephesians as being the bride of Christ (Eph 5:23-32). Union with Christ as “one flesh” is explored in chap. 3 of this thesis. Chap. 3 functions as a biblical theology of personal, permanent, and propagating union between Christ and the church.

The term *lampstand* in Zechariah 4 stood for Israel and her call to be a light to the nations. Since they failed in their mission, Christ, the new Israel, stood forth as the true Israel and the true Lampstand for light to the nations. The church, in union with Christ, becomes the true Israel and thus is to operate as a lampstand for light to the nations.

This primary interpretation of lampstand as the church's missionary identity is further supported as the reader will notice in Revelation 11: 3-7, 10. In this passage, two prophetic witnesses function as light-bearing evangelists in a dark and dangerous world. They are known as the two lampstands revealing the light of the temple for a world in darkness. Based on these observations, it seems that the church in Ephesus lacked vibrant love for Jesus, which led to a languid evangelism ministry. What is needed when church evangelism slows down? Verses 5-7 help answer this question.

What the Church Needs When It Lacks Love for Christ (vv. 5-7)

Jesus confronts the church over her abandoned love of him. He gives the only hope for a church in this condition. He lays out a three-step approach. First, they are to remember from where they had fallen. This step has to do with imagination. It has to do with reflecting and remembering the first love experience they once had in Christ. As they bring back to heart the wonder, sweetness, and marvel of affective union with Christ, out of this heart-breaking pleasure of "I remember when," they will want to repent. They will need to turn from their current state of doing and being right without affection for Jesus and come back to Him as a bride to her groom. Finally, as they do this with their whole heart, they are instructed to do the things they did before; namely, witnessing in Ephesus about the Christ with a heart for the Christ.

This three-step approach is the solution for a church not doing evangelism. The solution is not simply to get going with an evangelism program. The solution is not to just do it; rather, impetus for evangelism is the key, and the impetus for evangelism is a fervent love for Christ. Once churches use their imagination instigated by the Spirit to

conjure up the wonder of “first love,” they will want to come back to Christ with their whole heart. As they do so, they are counseled to start back on their missionary call to witness in their town of the wonder of the gospel who is Jesus the Christ, the Son of God.

Conclusion

Chapter 2 began by stating the thesis of the study. Central to salvation is personal union with Christ. This union is the motivation for church evangelism. To the degree that the church fervently knows the love of Christ, the church will evangelize the lost. To the degree that the church abandons this first love, she will decrease in evangelism.

This truth was looked at from different angles. Scholars who write out of the vital union with Christ tradition seem to resonate with the thesis. They clearly linked personal union with Christ to church evangelism and talked about this as a central key to motivation in church mission. Other scholars emphasize legal union and see salvation first and foremost as objective justification. Terms such as imputation, justification, and juridical may unintentionally give the impression that salvation is distant and impersonal. When the metaphor connotes a courtroom scene, the imagination of the church may be populated with notions other than warm, participatory/propagatory union with Christ. Undoubtedly adherents of the forensic union theme can and do fervently love Christ. Yet, the concern first is whether or not that tradition gets the central aspect of salvation right; namely, union with Christ and not gifts of justification and sanctification. The personal nature of salvation, it has been argued, is biblical and gives rise to church evangelism.

Having defined and briefly examined union with Christ as impetus for church evangelism, it seems helpful to ask how this theme relates to the entire bible. Does the Bible link union with Christ with the church’s missionary activity? If so, does it do so rarely or do Bible readers find this theme pervasive throughout the Bible? In addition, what metaphor or pattern does the Bible generally employ to communicate this subject to the church’s imagination?

The next chapter presents a biblical theology of union with Christ and church evangelism. It is argued in chapter 3 that both the OT and the NT speak about union and participation in Christ using marital and missional imagery. Billings boldly states that the Bible communicates this oneness using “the image of marital sexual union”⁵⁴ as it puts forward the mission of God’s people and the means to complete it successfully. The reader may gain insight into this biblical theology of union with Christ and church evangelism as he notices how the apostle Paul uses Genesis 2:24 as a basis for his missional ecclesiology. The next chapter considers what the Bible teaches about marriage as a living parable of vital union with Christ and church maturation and multiplication.

⁵⁴Billings, *Union with Christ*, 12.

CHAPTER 3

A BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF UNION WITH CHRIST AND CHURCH EVANGELISM

“Churches should plant churches like married couples should have babies. Not always possible, but the exceptional shouldn't be the normal,” announces Steve Timmis.¹ Is the Executive Director of the Acts 29 Network on to something, or did Timmis overstate his thesis in his book *In Christ: In Him Together for the World*?² Robert Peterson appears to come to a similar understanding as this theme is viewed “within the broad sweep of the biblical story.”³ The broad sweep of the biblical story is what is offered here in chapter 3.

This chapter communicates a biblical theology of union with Christ and church evangelism. It unfolds a missional and marital metaphor from Genesis to Revelation, which Campbell explains, “Is personal and implies a bond of intimacy that goes well beyond the other metaphors that Paul uses in portraying union with Christ.”⁴ The argument is basic. Paul’s interpretation of Genesis 2:24 in Ephesians 5:31 is the basis for his missional ecclesiology.⁵ That is, Paul’s use of one verse in the OT functions as a flashback to the

¹Steve Timmis’s Facebook page, accessed February 2, 2016, <https://www.facebook.com/steve.timmis.98>

²Steve Timmis and Christopher de la Hoyde, *In Christ: In Him Together for the World* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2014).

³Robert A. Peterson, *Salvation Applied by the Spirit: Union with Christ* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 275, 371.

⁴Constantine R. Campbell, *Paul and Union with Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 308.

⁵The term *missional ecclesiology* is used here as shorthand for the church’s union with Christ that gives rise to missionary activity. For an overview of a missional ecclesiology concept, See Gregg Allison, *Sojourners and Strangers: The Doctrine of the Church* (Wheaton, IL: Zondervan, 2012), 140-48. See also Robert L. Plummer, *Paul’s Understanding of the Church’s Mission: Did the Apostle Paul Expect the Early Christian Communities to Evangelize?* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2006); Michael W. Goheen,

beginning of the story of the Bible. This beginning shows how the Triune God sets out to multiply his relational, resplendent image to fill the entire world.⁶ By creating an intimate union of distinct persons⁷ to mirror his image—Adam and Eve—God prefigures his Son and bride, the church, as his means to fulfill his mission. In the letter to Ephesians, this mystery has been revealed. This chapter devotes four steps to introduce and argue a biblical theology of union with Christ and church evangelism.

The first step centers on a specific text in the NT. This step notices the focus of Ephesians 5 as the ideal biblical marriage and its relationship to union with Christ and the church. Paul sees Genesis 2:24 in Ephesians 5:31 not merely as the template for all marriages, but mainly as a type⁸ for the Messiah and his bride the church.

The second step 2 concerns the OT context from which Paul took his key verse as the basis for his claim. Did Paul isolate an OT verse and use it inconsistently with the original context?, or does Paul faithfully read the Bible from a canonical contextual

A Light to the Nations: The Missional Church and the Biblical Story (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011); Leslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 116-40.

⁶That filling the entire earth with his resplendent glory is God's aim through his people can be seen in Gen 1:28 and how it is transferred in 9:1, 7. This pattern is noticed also in texts like Num 14:21; Pss 8:1; 72:19; Isa 24:16; Hab 2:14; Mal 1:11; 1 Cor 1:2; and 2 Cor 2:14 to name a few. See also Gen 6:11 and the mission's antagonistic schemes of the serpent. More consideration on this theme and its contribution to the thesis is provided in chap. 4.

⁷The phrase "intimate union of distinct persons" reflects three entities found in the argument: the Trinity, husband and wife, and the local church. This awareness will assist the reader in understanding this chapter's thesis.

⁸"Typology" is a term that carries various connotations in modern scholarship. For example, David Baker, "Typology and the Christian Use of the Old Testament," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 29 (1976): 137-38, discusses the question over definition. He claims that there are two basic conceptions of typology espoused in today's discussion over NT use of the OT: (1) Gerhard von Rad's "promise-fulfillment" approach, and (2) an approach that closely relates to allegory or symbolism. Baker navigates amid these two views to say that there is a double aspect to typology: historical correspondence and escalation. This "double aspect" characteristic is nicely worked out in James M. Hamilton, "The Virgin Will Conceive: Typological Fulfillment in Matthew 1:18-23," in *Built upon the Rock: Studies in the Gospel of Matthew*, ed. John Nolland and Dan Gurtner (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 228-47. The current study operates from Hamilton's position. See also James M. Hamilton, Jr., *What Is Biblical Theology? A Guide to the Bible's Story, Symbolism, and Patterns* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), 77-85.

discipline and come to conclusions reflective of this thesis? This step concentrates on the context of Genesis 2:24 and how it points to God's mission for his people (be fruitful and multiply) and its means for successful completion (leave and cleave).⁹

The third step assesses writers of the OT. Its main concern looks at the use of marital imagery applied to Yahweh and Israel. If Paul understood Genesis 2:24 as referring to marital union enjoyed by Christ and the church, then one might expect this idea to develop throughout OT revelation. The question over how the OT writers view Yahweh's relationship to his people Israel will be answered in this step.

The final step extends to the whole NT to test the first three steps in the argument. If Paul teaches vital union with Christ as salvation, if Christ is seen to be the eschatological Adam in wedded love with his eschatological Eve the church, and if the OT expectation of Yahweh's marriage with his people is clearly taught in the OT, then this trajectory will be witnessed from multiple NT writers in multiple NT books.¹⁰ The fourth step interlaces four key points in the thesis to claim that Genesis 2:24 is the apostle Paul's basis for the church's union with Christ that gives rise to missionary activity.

Step 1 of the Argument—Ephesians 5:31

Located in Ephesians 5 is the ideal biblical marriage. Wives are to submit to their husbands happily, and husbands are to love their wives sacrificially. Yet, Paul's

⁹The idea of "leave and cleave" as part of the pattern seen in Gen 2:24 was first introduced to me by a former elder of Clearcreek Chapel in Springboro, OH. Chad Bresson planted this seed in my imagination as we drove to Pennsylvania to attend Sovereign Grace Plant! Conference in 2011.

¹⁰The interpretive approach of this study will be referred to simply as a canonical-contextual hermeneutic. For a definition and defense of this approach, see G. K. Beale, *We Become What We Worship: A Biblical Theology of Idolatry* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2008), 22-34. Beale uses careful grammatical and historical exegesis combined with a canonical-contextual exegesis to notice literary allusions in the OT that come to their full expression in the NT. In his verbose style, he calls it his "biblical-theological approach that is canonical, genetic-progressive (or organically developmental) and intertextual" (34). To witness an example of a good exegete get close to this hermeneutic and then back away, see Bruce Waltke, *An OT Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 212-13.

emphasis is not mainly on marital unity but on what it envisages.¹¹ Using the OT, Paul instructs the church in Ephesus over her eschatological position. She is in intimate union with Christ as his bride. Ephesians 5 is a continuation of Paul's teaching in Ephesians on the local church as the mystery of the unified body and bride of Christ.¹² Within post-fall anarchy and disorder, the cosmos is in need of unity. Ephesians 1:9-10 functions as a summary of Paul's letter.¹³ These two verses set the reader up for the climax of God's plan "to unite all things in him." Salvation is vital union with Christ and redounds to the praise of God's glory and grace.¹⁴

Paul develops his theme by revealing the matrix of God's plan. Christ was raised from the dead as the new creation to save his people—both Jews and Gentiles—from their sins and join them together in him as the head of his body and bride. United yet diverse, distinct yet one, the church is to express her personal union with Christ in faithful dependence on him. This new life together in Christ is created after the likeness of God. The church lives out this unity by edifying each other and evangelizing the lost. As the church matures and multiplies,¹⁵ this mysterious unity amid diversity displays

¹¹Heil concurs, "With a quotation of Genesis 2:24, Paul situates marital union within God's scriptural plan of creation as part of the great mystery regarding Christ and the church." John Paul Heil, *Ephesians: Empowerment to Walk in Love for the Unity of All in Christ*, Studies in Biblical Literature 13 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007), 251.

¹²Beale observes that the term *mystery* is found at crucial junctures in the letter to the Ephesians (i.e., 1:9; 3:3-4, 9; 5:32; 6:19). His point appears to be that the concept of *mystery* holds these pieces together and forms the theme of unity in Christ moving from "the general to the specific" and culminating in union with Christ and his body and bride the church on mission in enemy territory. See G. K. Beale and Benjamin L. Gladd, *Hidden But Now Revealed: A Biblical Theology of Mystery* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2014), 147-97.

¹³Peter T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 58.

¹⁴For an exegetical and theological treatment of this Pauline theme, see Campbell, *Paul and Union with Christ*.

¹⁵For a sample of this established pattern, see Gen 1:27, 28; 9:1, 7; 12:2-3; 17:2, 6, 8; 22:17-18; 26:4, 24; 28:3-4, 13-14; 35:11-12; 48:3-4; Exod 1:7, 12, 20; Lev 26:9; Num 23:10-11; Deut 7:13; 15:4, 6; 28:11-12; 30:16; 2 Sam 7:29; 1 Chr 4:10; 2 Chr 36:22-23; 17:9-11, 27; Pss 8:5-8; 107: 37-38; Isa 51:2-3;

across the whole world the stupendous reality of the blessed triune God—the delighted diversity in loving unity. This summary of the letter to the Ephesians takes the reader to chapter 5:22-33—wives and husbands: Christ and the church.

In 5:22-33, Paul seamlessly moves from the Jew/Gentile unity in the church to wives and husbands within the local church.¹⁶ The theme of community-in-one continues but the application now is on marriage. Paul teaches the roles of wives and husbands. He says that wives are to submit to their husbands as to the Lord. This glad-hearted submission is given because the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body. Husbands are to love their wives as Christ loved the church. This sacrificial love is given because the husband is united to his wife as the church is one with Christ. The basis for Paul's exhortation to husbands is found in the verse directly preceding 5:31—the key OT verse highlighted in this study. Husbands are to love their wives because Christ loves the church since “we are members of his body.” Paul then quotes Genesis 2:24 to support that vibrant unity is in Christ and this unity in Christ is a profound mystery.

In summary, the message of Ephesians spotlights how God in Christ unites all things to the praise of his glory and grace. This theme of unity in Christ progressed from broad instruction over the cosmos to the specific teaching over marital unity. The crescendo of Paul's point lands in Ephesians 5. The Bridegroom has arrived. Jesus Christ has come for his bride who is the church.¹⁷ The two have become one flesh. This personal union with Christ takes away alienation and ushers in sweet life-producing communion. Biblical,

Jer 3:16, 18; 23:3; Ezek 36:9-12; Dan 7:13-14; Hos 1:10. The NT picks up on the motif as seen in Acts 1:8; 2:41; 4:4; 5:14; 6:7; 8:12; 9:31; 11:24; 12:24; 13:34; 16:5; Col 1:5b-6.

¹⁶Eph 5:22-6:9 is a unit commonly known as the household codes of the letter. It will be argued that households are not mainly explained by the Greco-Roman concept but by the gospel and what it creates—believers in relational receptivity organized in gospel communities known as local churches.

¹⁷In 1866, Samuel Stone captured this biblical theology in song. He wrote “The Church's One Foundation” based on the ninth article in the Apostles' Creed. Verse 1 reads, “The church's one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord; she is his new creation by water and the Word. From heaven he came and sought her to be his holy bride; with his own blood he bought her and for her life he died.”

marital union is a type of Christ and his commissioned bride the church. Paul saw Genesis 2:24 not merely as the template for all marriages, but mainly as a type for the Messiah and his bride the church.

Step 2 of the Argument—Genesis 2:24

However, how did Paul arrive at this theme—the church’s union with Christ as impetus for missionary activity? On what basis did he make his assertion? How did Paul use the OT for his line of reasoning in Ephesians 5? Step 2 of the argument claims that Paul was aware of the broad OT context of Genesis 2:24. He did not focus merely on a single verse detached from its wider context. Paul’s canonical contextual reading of Genesis 2:24 discerned the wedded, life-propagating intimacy of Adam and Eve as a living indicator of something mysterious. Paul noticed allusions to the mission of his gospel and the means to fulfill it. He saw the Messiah and his blood-bought bride, the church, in intimate oneness, being fruitful and multiplying and filling the earth with the image of God. This section in the chapter explores Genesis 1 and 2 and how the beginning of the Bible informs the thesis.

In Genesis 1, a statement repeats to summarize God’s activities each day. Repetition reaching a climax often signifies an author’s purpose.¹⁸ The repeated phrase “it was good” describes God’s creative work. The repetition also functions to provoke a basic question from the reader. What is the work of these days really good for? What is the writer of Genesis communicating about God’s works of creation? When the pattern breaks, the author typically has led the reader to the climax of the point. Genesis 1:26-31 is the highpoint building to the “very good” of verse 31. What is “very good” about God creating man—male and female—in his image? Relevant to the thesis is 1:26-28. Moses records,

Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over

¹⁸Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: BasicBooks, 1981), 88-113.

the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the havens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.

Two observations are in order in light of the thesis. The first is on the nature of God and his mandate. The second observation has to do with the nature of man and his mission. First, Moses introduces God in the plural. In expressing the desire to create humans in his image, Moses records God saying, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.” That God revealed himself in the plural challenges interpreters of the Bible. Hebrew grammarians sometimes refer to the use of the plural pronoun in this case as a plural of majesty.¹⁹ This usage is a way of communicating full and magnanimous participation in an act. There is much good in this interpretation, for the creation account puts Elohim as the preeminent one entering into the crescendo of His creation of man with the fullness of His being. Yet, the interpretation falls short of explaining why it takes both male and female to carry out the mission he assigns them. John Clark and Marcus Johnson are helpful at this point.

In *The Incarnation of God*, Clark and Johnson ask, “What exactly does it mean that humankind is the *imago Dei*? What is it about humans that constitutes us as God’s likeness?”²⁰ They accommodate this inquiry by first summarizing the two basic views of humanity created in the image of God—substantive and functional theories. The former understands humanity as possessing faculties reflective of God. That is, just as God is moral and thinks and chooses, so too do humans. They have the capacity to reason and make their decisions based on their moral sensibilities. The latter factors in the mandate upon humanity to oversee creation. In other words, just as God rules over and manages

¹⁹Wilhelm Gesenius, *Gesenius’ Hebrew Grammar*, ed. E. Kautzsch and A. E. Cowley, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1910), 398n2.

²⁰John C. Clark and Marcus Peter Johnson, *The Incarnation of God: The Mystery of the Gospel as the Foundation of Evangelical Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 214.

his creation, so too humans are to exercise their identity and aptitude of superintendent. Clark and Johnson find help in both these schools of thought. They point out some strengths in how these views help explain the differences between humanity and other created animals. However, they are not satisfied with either explanation as it relates to the mandate to image the plurality of God over the entire world. This concern is noticeably useful in understanding the thesis. It highlights both the nature of God and his mission for his people. As Johnson and Clark put it,

A male does not require a female, nor does a female require a male, in order to moralize, exercise reason and will, or exercise dominion over the earth. Such things might be done reasonably well by a single human being. But a solitary male or female most certainly cannot image God in a way that is most basic to who he is: depicting his personal, relational, and life-giving intimacy. Recall our text: “Then God said, “Let *us* make man in our image, after *our* likeness.”²¹

They conclude a lengthy discussion over reasons for and an historical precedent to not stop short of a Christological and Trinitarian explanation of the creation account: “What is most basic to God’s inner life is wonderfully and fearfully reflected in his human creatures, who, as male and female, and specifically as male and female, image the interpersonal intimacy inherent to God’s inner being.”²² This awareness will later be helpful in understanding the apostle Paul’s exegesis of Genesis 1 and 2 and how Genesis 2:24 is his basis for missional ecclesiology.

Up to this point, a case has been made that according to Genesis 1:26-31, Adam and Eve were distinctively created in the likeness of God. This “two becoming one flesh” was to image the relational multiplicity of God. They could not carry out the mandate to “be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it” as two detached persons. As the LORD said, “It is not good that the man should be alone” (Gen 2:18). Solitary Adam cannot move the mission forward. Spreading the image of an intimate plurality in the loving unity of God over the earth requires a different creation; it requires God to create

²¹Clark and Johnson, *The Incarnation of God*, 214.

²²*Ibid.*, 216.

intimate plurality in the loving unity of man. By this mystery—the two shall become one flesh—will the goodness of God be displayed far and wide.

Therefore, the mission is set. God unites the diversity of male and female into the joy of true unity. They are blessed and sent to fill the earth with the image of his “interpersonal intimacy.”²³ However, what is the means to complete this mission? How are they to reach the entire world with the display of the love of God? What method did God establish that will multiply his image embedded in man—male and female²⁴—to reach the ends of the earth? Answers to these types of questions surface as the study continues to explore the context of Genesis 2:24.

C. S. Lewis argued, “The words ‘God is love’ have no real meaning unless God contains at least two Persons. Love is something that one person has for another person. If God was a single person then before the world was made, he was not love.”²⁵ Since God is not a solitary entity but a bounding with joy trinity, it was not good for Adam to be alone. Adam needed community to image forth God’s glory. Therefore, God placed him in a deep sleep, took a rib out from him and built from that rib a beautiful woman named Eve, the mother of all living; this woman was a perfect fit for Adam. She helped him carry out wise and loving dominion over the earth. They were to “be fruitful and multiply” until the earth was filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. Genesis 2:24 both concludes Genesis 1-2 and discloses how the given mission will move forward. In this key verse for Paul’s missional ecclesiology, two characteristics of union will be highlighted—participatory and propagatory.²⁶

²³Clark and Johnson, *The Incarnation of God*, 216.

²⁴See Gen 5:2 for the interpersonal communal solidarity of “man.”

²⁵C. S. Lewis, *Beyond Personality* (New York: Macmillan, 1948), 21.

²⁶By “participatory,” I mean simply that intimate union is a sharing in and of each other. The union put forward in Gen 2:23-24, in light of Gen 1:28, calls forth an intimate closeness that partakes of one another. By “propagatory,” I mean simply that intimate union (generally) reproduces from the likeness of the parents. It replicates families that continue the pattern of replication as seen in Gen 2:24.

First, the inference “therefore” introduces personal union between the distinct persons. It shows the relationship between Genesis 2:23 and 24. When God brought woman to Adam, verse 23 says, “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman because she was taken out of Man.” God’s stunning and suitable creation of woman given to Adam remedied solidarity. Adam was no longer incomplete. Adam was no longer alone. The creation of intimate diversity became one flesh of loving unity. The “first marriage” is participatory union of Adam and Eve. He held her fast and they unashamedly enjoyed closeness. This union presents the means to achieve Genesis 1:26-28—be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth with the image of the joyful communion of the loving Triune God.

Second, not only does Genesis 2:24 communicate the necessity of participatory union to fulfill the mission found in Genesis 1:27, 28, it also intimates how it will multiply. Genesis 2:24 interrupts the narrative to give a commentary on general humanity. It shifts from Adam and Eve to a man and his wife in order to make plain the pattern for all marriages; both in the OT as well as the NT.

Presented in this verse are man, his father, his mother, his wife (and by implication his wife’s father and mother). The verse introduces the basic household of the OT as well as the NT (Deut 6:4-8; Eph 6:1-4). Father, mother, and children make up the basic unit known as family. As the male children grew up and became men, they were to leave their family and start their own family by holding fast to their own wife. This marital intimacy, then, is the pattern of propagation—be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth—that replicates from generation to generation. Genesis 2:24, that the man was to “leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife and they shall become one flesh,” is written in generalized language to communicate a pattern for all marriages.

However, the apostle Paul saw more in this verse than human families. He definitely understood Moses to write about literal families in Genesis 2:24, but he sensed Moses writing about something utterly striking and central to the storyline of the Bible.

He observed Moses providing a pattern of filling the earth with image-bearers. Paul understood this marital unit and activity in eschatological light. He taught that “the two shall become one flesh” refers to the saving union between Christ and the church. Based on the apostle’s hermeneutic, two concluding points can be made. These points are explained further in the final step of this chapter.

In preview, these points are (1) the love-participating intimacy of Adam and Eve echo the end times union the church enjoys with her Christ. Personal union with Christ is central to salvation. It is union that issues a sweet communion needed for purity and holiness. The church gladly participates in the love of her Christ since he is her husband. (2) The life-propagating intimacy of Adam and Eve foreshadows the end-times great commission given by Jesus Christ to his church. As mentioned, personal union with Christ is central to salvation, and this union is not enjoyed in some privatistic way.²⁷ It is outgoing; it is effective.²⁸ The going of the gospel through the church produces new birth in the lost elect (1 Pet 1:22-25).²⁹ This propagation is not merely new converts but also new congregations. “Leave and cleave” found in Genesis 2:24 hints at new end-times households³⁰ known as local churches, multiplying and spreading across the world.³¹

²⁷Commenting on 1 Cor 9:23, Schutz probes the nature of participating in salvation. His thoughts may leave the reader intrigued over both the participatory and propagatory effects union with Christ has on the church. He observes, “To become a participant in the dynamic character of the gospel . . . ‘to share in the gospel’ and ‘to win men’ are two ways of saying the same thing . . . it is this ‘pregnant’ use of the gospel with which Paul works here.” J. H. Schutz, *Paul and the Anatomy of Apostolic Authority* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 51-52.

²⁸Cranfield astutely observes both the personal nature of the gospel as well as its power: “The gospel is [God’s effective power to save] by virtue of its content, its subject, Jesus Christ. It is He Himself who is its effectiveness.” C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Edinburgh: Clark, 1979), 1:89.

²⁹First Pet 1:22-25. For a church-motivating treatment of this passage, see John Piper, *Finally Alive* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2009), 167-74.

³⁰See 1 Tim 3:5, 15 for two usages of the term *household*. The first relates to a natural family unit made up of believers and unbelievers. The latter comprises solely of believers. This second usage is what is meant in the current study.

³¹Luke, a missionary partner of Paul, sees Gen 1:27-28 as eschatologically fulfilled in biblical

Section 2 argues that the apostle Paul understood Genesis 2:24 as part of a storyline found in Genesis 1 and 2. This story has marriage as imaging forth the interpersonal delight of the triune God. This marriage was given a mission—to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth with God’s image. Paul informed the church in Ephesus something of her identity and mission in light of this storyline. The church is the bride of Christ. Christ is the husband of the church. This participatory and propagatory union between Christ and church has the same mission and means Adam and Eve received in the garden. It is known in the NT as the Great Commission—“go and make disciples among all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have command you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matt 28:18-20).

Genesis 2:24, as Paul’s basis for missional ecclesiology, needs further investigation to probe its validity. The final two steps in the study ask, “Did other writers of the bible see this picture and pattern from Genesis 2:24?” Step 3 of the argument explores the question from the OT perspective. Did subsequent writers in the OT look back on Moses’s Torah and see, albeit dimly, Paul’s marital imagery? Did successive OT writers view intimate union of Adam and Eve as typological for God’s relationship to Israel? Step 4 in the argument concludes chapter 3 by responding to the question from the NT viewpoint. Jesus, Paul, Peter, and John are reviewed in this section. Did they value Genesis 1 and 2 as an introduction to the end-times identity and mission of the new covenant church?

Step 3 of the Argument—OT Perspective

Genesis 2:24, as cited in Ephesians 5:31, is Paul’s basis for missional ecclesiology. Paul argues from a canonical contextual hermeneutic that biblical marriage

local churches spreading across Asia Minor and Europe. They were being “fruitful and multiplying and filling the earth.” See Acts 1:8; 2:41; 4:4; 5:14; 6:7; 8:12; 9:31; 11:24; 12:24; 13:34; 16:5.

is more than simply a template for all marriages. It is a type of the end-times³² union between Christ and his sent bride, the church. Paul reminds the church of how the Bible began by using one verse from the OT, and by noticing the first two chapters of Genesis, the Ephesians were to see themselves within God's mission assigned to Adam and Eve—*be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth with imago Dei*—and the means to accomplish it—*leave and cleave in order to birth a new family that replicates the first family's identity and mission*. Making this observation in Genesis 1 and 2, Gunton argues,

If, first, to be created in the image of God is to be made male and female, what is implied is that in this most central of all human relatedness is to be found a finite *echo* [emphasis mine] of the relatedness of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. To be God, according to the doctrine of the Trinity, is to be persons in relation: to be God only as a communion of being. It is that which is *replicated* [emphasis added], at the finite level, by the polarity of male and female: to be in the image of God is to be called to a relatedness-in-otherness of Father, Son and Spirit.³³

The mission to reflect God's triune image over the entire world could not be done alone. Adam needed Eve so that together they could mirror this joyful plurality in unity. He needed Eve to be fruitful and multiply God's image through families like theirs that spread across the earth. He needed Eve mostly that they could function as a type of the ultimate love-participating, life-propagating union between Christ and his bride the church.³⁴ This is how the story of the Bible begins, and this is how Paul used Genesis 2:24 in his letter to the Ephesians.

What remains in the argument is to survey whether or not other writers of the Bible saw this picture and pattern from Genesis 2:24. It may be said that the apostle Paul argues this thesis. However, are their other Bible writers who did the same? Step 3 looks

³²The period of "end-times" is to be understood as the period between the first and second advents of Christ. That is, Christ inaugurated the end-times when he was raised from the dead and ascended to his rightful position on the throne as the reigning king. He poured out his Spirit to begin this New Covenant period. See Heb 1:1-4; Acts 1:1-11.

³³C. E. Gunton, *Christ and Creation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 101.

³⁴Graham A. Cole, *The God Who Became Human: A Biblical Theology of Incarnation*, New Studies in Biblical Theology (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2013), 33.

into this question from an OT perspective. Old Testament passages that may shed light on the thesis are organized in three categories: Torah, Prophets and the Writings.

Torah

Yahweh is not explicitly identified as the “husband” of Israel until the prophets.³⁵ Yet, as Davidson boldly states, “It is not necessary to distinguish between what Scripture asserts and what it assumes, inasmuch as its assumptions may be considered its teaching even more than its direct affirmations.”³⁶ Did Moses in the Torah communicate Yahweh’s relationship with his people in marital imagery? Did he have an expectation of Yahweh’s marriage with his people? Did Moses mean for Genesis 2:24 to be understood typologically for Yahweh’s relationship with his people?

Early on in the Bible, marital imagery was used to describe the relationship between Yahweh and his covenanted people. For example, Moses, in Exodus 20:3, 17, revealed Yahweh as a God who desired his people’s exclusive affections. He demanded their love have but one object—him. God commands them to have “no other gods” and that they “shall not covet.” This way of communicating seems to describe sin as desiring other people or things that replace Yahweh as the object of affection. Moreover, in Exodus 20:5, the reader notices that these bad desires in the hearts of Israelites stir up “jealously” in God over his people. They are to “love him.” Yet, in Exodus 34:14 Israel is described as “whoring” in their pursuit of pleasure. This terminology suggests that Moses in Genesis 2:24 was narrating God and his people in the teaching on marital intimacy between Adam and Eve.

³⁵The Torah starts with the Gen 2:24 typology of the relationship between Yahweh and his people. Terminology and concepts derived from Gen 2:24 populate the Torah. Yet, it is not until the reader moves out of the Torah and into The Prophets and Writings that Yahweh directly is called “husband.”

³⁶A. B. Davidson, *The Theology of the Old Testament* (1904; repr., Edinburgh: Bibliolife, 2009), 74.

Confirmation of this notion amasses as the reader continues through the Torah to discover Moses's vocabulary. He uses terms like "whoring" (Lev 17:7; Num 15:38-40) as a way of describing covenant breaking sin. He describes God repeatedly as "a jealous God" (Deut 4:24; 5:9; 6:15; 32:16, 21). He defined loyalty to Yahweh as "holding fast" (Deut 10:12, 20) to him—the same phrase used in Genesis 2:24 for the husband to his wife. This data along with words like "forsake" (Deut 31:16-17) and "cling" (Deut 10:20; 30:20) give reason to think that Moses deliberated in categories not dissimilar to the apostle Paul's teaching on Genesis 2:24.

Prophets

Moses, as argued, taught a biblical theology that Paul picked up in Ephesians 5. Paul read the Torah like Moses wanted it read.³⁷ He used marital imagery as a way of communicating Yahweh's relationship with his covenant people Israel. However, what about other OT writers? Did they understand Moses this way? Did they reflect a theology akin to the Torah? How do writers of the Former Prophets communicate the relationship between Yahweh and his people?

As the LORD gave the land to Israel, they were to cleanse it of all foreign gods. They were to rid the land of mythologies and activities that lied about who God is and how his people were to relate to him. The writer of Judges recaps how the LORD's people did not pay attention to him. Their failure is summarized as "whoring after other gods" (Jdgs 2:16-17). The imagery of marital infidelity fills the Former Prophets. The writer of Judges communicates sin as a "turning from" the Lord and "whoring after the Baals" (Jdgs 8:33). As a later writer in the Former Prophets essentially said, "God is jealous over his people who are involved in sins associated to prostitution" (1 Kgs 14:22-23). Genesis 2:24 is viewed by successive OT writers as typological for God's relationship to Israel.

³⁷For a thorough treatment on Paul's use of the OT, see Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989).

This particular typology is confirmed in the Latter Prophets of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah, and the Twelve. For example, these prophets used similar language with one another when teaching on sin. They described Israel's sin against God as "adultery against Yahweh your husband" (Isa 54:5,6; 50:1-3; 61:10; 62:5; Jer 2:1-3; 29-3:25; 31:31-32; Ezek 23; Hos 1-3; Amos 7:17). This consistent vocabulary argues for a univocal acceptance of Moses's teaching in Genesis 2:24 as typological of Yahweh and his people. Perhaps the clearest proof of the argument is Ezekiel 16. Here, the prophet pictures Yahweh marrying Israel with verse 4—washing her with water—echoed in Ephesians 5:26.³⁸

The Latter Prophets, along with the Former Prophets, agree that the beginning of the storyline of the Bible communicates the pattern for all marriages. Nevertheless, it also sees this pattern as typological for Yahweh's relationship with his covenant people Israel, a theme akin to the apostle Paul's argument in Ephesians 5. How do the writers of the last section in the Tanakh understand Moses's teaching in Genesis 1 and 2? Do they too see Adam and Eve as a type of relationship between God and his people?

Transitioning out of the Latter Prophets and into the Writings, a simple observation may assist in the promotion of the thesis. Two full length books in the OT use marital imagery to communicate the relationship between Yahweh and Israel. The first is found in the Latter Prophets, in Hosea. Hosea teaches the current theme in the form of warning. The other book is found in the Writings, known as The Song of Songs. This poem

³⁸Connections between Ezek 16:4 and Eph 5:26 provide insight into Paul's use of Scripture. Paul picks up echoes and allusions from the OT storyline and places them in their corresponding consummate NT realities. This observation shows that, in writing Eph 5, the apostle has in his mind the OT storyline that starts in Gen 1-2. For a most convincing example of a NT character quoting a phrase from an OT passage as a way of highlighting the entire theme of that OT passage, see Jesus on the cross quoting Ps 22:1 in Mark 15:34. The flow of Ps 22 starts in despair, moves through trust and rescue and ends in praise. This theme of Ps 22 is the theme of the cross. It is the story of the gospel. By quoting one verse, Jesus echoes the purpose of the cross; the writhing agony of defeat is the very pathway to the rising praise of victory. For scholarly treatment of this hermeneutic, see Matthew Bates, *The Birth of the Trinity: Jesus, God, and Spirit in New Testament and Early Christian Interpretations of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 127-29.

upholds Genesis 2:24 as typological teaching on Yahweh and Israel as well as releasing a messianic melody aching for fulfillment.³⁹

The Writings

The OT unfolds the marital theme between Yahweh and Israel. The third section of the Tanakh makes this imagery or theme most noticeable. For example, Psalm 63:1-8 expresses association to Yahweh in ardent terms similar to husband and wife in the Song of Songs.⁴⁰ Verse 8 describes the covenant loyalty to Yahweh as “clings to”—a verb reminiscent of Genesis 2:24. Proverbs is another example of marital fidelity echoing the grander relationship between God and his people. In Proverbs 9, marital relationship to God is taught by the use of figural language. The writer uses lady wisdom and lady folly to discuss how temptation and transformation materialize. As the heart is charmed by the lady who seems utterly satisfying, the person is led into her embrace—lady wisdom leads the affections to sweet union. Lady folly, on the other hand, leads to adultery and the grave.⁴¹ This graphic way of depicting temptation and sanctification points to the storyline traced in this study. This way of teaching on the relationship between Yahweh and his people is grounded in Genesis 2:24. In addition, Genesis 2:24 places the Bible reader back into the beginning of the story—God’s mission for his people and the means of achievement.

Step 4 of the Argument—NT Perspective

From Adam and Eve onward, marriages are to be shaped by the pattern found in Genesis 2:24. This pattern for ideal marriage is taught plainly in Ephesians 5:22-33.

³⁹See James M. Hamilton, *Songs of Songs: A Biblical-Theological, Allegorical, Christological Interpretation* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2015).

⁴⁰See also Ps 45 and its affinities with Song of Songs.

⁴¹“Whenever I am carried, my love is carrying me,” writes Augustine, in his book *Arelus* Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. R. S. Pine-Coffin (New York: Penguin, 1961), 13.9.10.

Paul reminds the first century church that her wedded couples were designed by God and have specific roles assigned to each spouse. These particular characteristics are to function by faith to preserve and promote a unity amid diversity. Biblical marriage comes from the mold of Genesis 2:24.

Yet Paul argues for more than a pattern for ideal marriage. He understands Moses's biblical theology and brings it to the designed destination. The first couple—Adam and Eve—was created in the image of God to carry out the purpose of God. They were to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth with his image.⁴² In sweet marital union, Adam and Eve were on mission to both express and expand this dazzling triune image of God. As Adam and Eve-like families multiplied this mission, God's resplendent image would ultimately fill the whole world.⁴³ Beale appears to move in this direction as he discusses Adam's commission in the original creation and the passing on of the commission to other Adam-like figures. He boldly concludes,

We can speak of Gen. 1:28 as the first "Great Commission," which was repeatedly applied to humanity. The commission was to bless the earth and part of the essence of this blessing was God's salvific presence. Before the fall, Adam and Eve were to produce progeny who would fill the earth with God's glory being reflected from each of them in the image of God. After the fall, a remnant, created by God in his restored image, was to go out and spread God's glorious presence among the rest of darkened humanity. This witness was to continue until the entire world would be filled with divine glory.⁴⁴

⁴²Writing to the church in Colossae, the apostle Paul applies eschatologically Gen 1:28 to them (Col 1:6-10). Concerning this hermeneutic, P. T. O'Brien, *Gospel and Mission in the Writings of Paul: An Exegetical and Theological Analysis* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 13, remarks, "Fruit-bearing is to be understood as a crop of good deeds (see Phil. 1:11), while the growth of the gospel points to the increasing number of converts."

⁴³Gen 2:24 does not refer specifically to Adam and Eve. Moses refers to their subsequent progeny. These Adam and Eve-like families were to replicate the original pattern seen in Adam and Eve in order to carry out the Gen 1:27-28 mission.

⁴⁴G. K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), 57. For a similar thought, see Plummer, *Paul's Understanding of the Church's Mission*, 64, who states, "Paul's description of his converts as ἀπαρχή . . . demonstrates the dynamic nature of the gospel in relation to the church's continued missionary advance."

Paul recognizes this theology in Genesis 2:24 and applies its new covenant fulfillment to a single person and his single possession—the end-times Messiah with his commissioned bride, the church. Subsequent OT writers applied Moses’s teaching to Yahweh and his covenant people Israel. However, now, in the new covenant, Paul patently makes the case that Jesus is Yahweh who is married to his bride the church. Marriage was made by God to reflect an eternally greater reality—magnificent Christ and his beautiful bride, the church.⁴⁵ Herein is found the thesis. Genesis 2:24 used in Ephesians 5:31 is Paul’s basis for the church’s personal union with Christ that gives rise to her missionary identity and activity.

To bring the argument to completion, the final step is in order. Step 4 braids four strands together in order to summarize chapter 3: (1) Jesus as the eschatological⁴⁶ fulfillment of Adam the husband, (2) the church as the eschatological fulfillment of Eve the wife, (3) converts as the eschatological fulfillment of children, and (4) multiplying churches as the eschatological fulfillment of Adam and Eve-like households.

The Christ as the Husband

Did Jesus see the OT teaching Genesis 2:24 as typologically fulfilled in Yahweh and his people? Is there evidence that he took this theme and applied it to himself as the bridegroom who has come for his bride? These questions are answered in the affirmative as based on the witness of the gospels. For example, in Mark 2:18-20 a question about fasting arises. This question is found in an extensive exhibition of the Messiah’s mission. Jesus is destroying a man-centered system of religion and replacing it with himself. People are sinners and need salvation. Jesus put himself forward as the one true salvation. In this context, Jesus addresses the discipline on fasting: “Can the wedding guests fast while the

⁴⁵For an accessible biblical theology on marriage, see Raymond C. Ortlund, Jr., *Marriage and the Mystery of the Gospel* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016).

⁴⁶In each of the following cases, “eschatological” carries the sense of anticipated and yet presently realized promised reality.

bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them and then they will fast in that day” (vv. 19-20). In light of OT teaching drawn from Genesis 2:24, the reader of Mark’s gospel is to make the connection. Jesus is teaching that salvation is a divine wedding. This wedding presents sinners as the bride and the bridegroom as himself.

Jesus confirms his implicit teaching of the eschatological divine wedding in Matthew 25:1-13. In the previous chapter, Jesus taught on his second coming—that it will be sudden and unexpected (24:1-41) and that faithful servants are always ready for it (24:42ff). To explain what he means by “faithful,” Jesus in 25:1 ff tells a parable of ten virgins. He says of his second coming, “The bridegroom came and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast (v. 10).” This parable presents saved sinners as virgins ready for their marriage with Jesus. Unmistakably, Jesus views himself as fulfilling the role of the OT divine husband awaiting consummation with his bride the church.

One more example will serve to demonstrate that Jesus is the eschatological husband—the fulfillment of Genesis 2:24. The gospel according to John was written to provide evidence that Jesus is the Christ and that by faith in him one will experience eternal life in his name (20:30, 31). A key text in John’s gospel is 3:16: “For God so loved the world that he gave his only son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” It is in this context—the mission of the son—that the writer of the gospel wants to display what genuine faith looks like. He uses John the Baptist to achieve his purpose. When John the Baptist was asked why popularity was shifting off him and onto Jesus, his answer displayed genuine faith:

A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven. You yourselves bear me witness that I said, ‘I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him.’ The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom’s voice. Therefore this joy of mine is now complete. He must increase but I must decrease. (vv. 27-30)

Genuine faith in Jesus Christ sees him as the bridegroom and feels joy in imminent marital consummation.⁴⁷ In the words of Raymond Ortlund, “Jesus clearly perceives and presents himself in the role of Yahweh in the divine marriage with the covenanted people.”⁴⁸

The Church as the Wife

The above evidence posits that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the fulfillment of Adam as typological husband of Eve. It also claims that the NT church is his chosen bride. This argument fortifies as the NT teaching on this subject expands. For instance, in 2 Corinthians, the apostle Paul defends his genuine ministry by juxtaposing it with the false apostles of his day. He contrasts his genuine work to the deceivers by describing the nature of his ministry: “I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ” (2 Cor 11:2). This intimate imagery suggests powerfully that, at least for Paul, he viewed Christ as the already end-times husband awaiting his already end-times virgin bride, the church. In verse 3, he then anchors his teaching in Genesis 1-3—the very claim that has supported the thesis throughout this study. He says, “But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ” (2 Cor 11:3). Paul believed that Genesis 1-3 was the beginning of the epic storyline of the Bible. This beginning put forth the first couple as a type of the final and vital couple of Christ, the husband, with his bride, the church.

Is this biblical theology only seen by the apostle Paul? Are there others who notice the tenor and trajectory of the Bible as Jesus Christ, the divine husband of the new covenant bride the church? The end of the story of the Bible answers the question. In Revelation 19-22, the apostle John depicts final judgment and the ultimate reward for those whose fidelity was given to God. God’s chosen people were kept from spiritual

⁴⁷Michael Reeves, *Rejoicing in Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2015), 38.

⁴⁸Raymond C. Ortlund, Jr., *God’s Unfaithful Wife: A Biblical Theology of Spiritual Adultery*, New Studies in Biblical Theology (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996), 139.

adultery and kept for God's consummate union with his people. Jesus Christ, the divine husband, with his beautiful bride, the church, is how the Bible ends. The never-ending wedding day situated within the paradisiacal arboreal city is the anti-type of Genesis 1 and 2. The bookends of the Bible frame the narrative of the above thesis. Everything is finally made new—new heavens and new earth welcoming the new husband with his new bride for new intimacy forevermore.

Multiplying Converts as Children

The claim all along has focused on Genesis 2:24 as the apostle Paul's basis for missional ecclesiology. Paul saw Adam and Eve as the first couple on earth. God gave them a mission (Gen 1:27-28) and a means to fulfill it (Gen 2:24). He created them in his image and they were to multiply this image worldwide. They functioned as both a template for ideal marriage and a type of ultimate marriage. This ultimate end-times marriage—already and not yet—is Jesus Christ with his bride the church.

What remains in the argument centers on the pattern of posterity as noticed in Genesis 2:24. How were Adam and Eve to fulfill their call to “be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth” with God's image? They were but one couple. They needed more than merely to have children. They needed their children to grow up, leave, and start their own families as patterned after their parents' identity and mission. This pattern of progeny found in Genesis 2:24 is part of the typology Paul applies to the church in Ephesus. The last two points made to complete the argument for this chapter looks at multiplying converts to Christ as eschatological children and multiplying churches as eschatological households.

Natural children in the NT are to be reared by godly parents in the ways of the LORD. They need to be converted to Christ since all are born sinners and under God's judgment. They are to engage this newness of life expressing love for God, the church, and the lost. When these children grow up, they may find a believing mate, get married, and desire to repeat this pattern for the next generation. These things are evident in

Ephesians 1:3-14; 2:1-10; 3:6; 4:1-16; 5:1-33; 6:1-4; 10-20, 24. Yet, Paul and others in the NT noticed that natural children function as a type of converts to Christ.

Typologically, children are seen as living indicators of something greater than themselves. They are viewed as a living parable of regeneration and supernatural conversion to Christ. For instance, in Matthew 18, Jesus taught on requirements of kingdom living. In effect, he says that kingdom living entails childlikeness (vv. 1-3) that expresses itself in spiritual care for one another with ongoing forgiveness of each other (vv. 4-35). He uses natural children to introduce the necessity of repentance and conversion that ushers people into the kingdom. These “little ones” have a certain kind of heart. According to Jesus, a person converted into the kingdom of God is lowly and knows that he is loved. The convert is a child of God who is born of God and knows God (See John 1:12, 13). Jesus views natural children as living indicators of a spiritual reality. He sees children as a type for converted followers of himself. His disciples picked up on his typology and employed it in their writings.

Paul sees children as types of converts to Christ as noticed in Ephesians 5:1-2. Peter has the same view as Paul as witnessed in 1 Peter 2:2. John uses this typological understanding of children prolifically in the gospel of John as well as 1, 2, 3 John. These citations are a sample of a biblical typology that point to multiplying converts to Christ as the eschatological fulfillment of children.⁴⁹

⁴⁹Chap. 3 argues that the apostle Paul grounds his missional ecclesiology in Gen 2:24, used in Eph 5:29.. Nuptial union is presented as a type for Christ and his bride the church who multiplies due to Christ’s blessing and thus fulfilling Gen 1:27-28. To see his biblical theology continue to the end of Ephesians, notice how he teaches the church’s evangelism mission in chap. 6. Eph 6:15 echoes Isa 52:7-12 (i.e., evangelism), which then flows into 52:13-53:12 (i.e., the gospel) that gives rise to 54:1ff (i.e., gospel results—spiritual progeny produced supernaturally).

Multiplying Churches as Households

The Bible does not teach that the Great Commission is merely about multiplying converts for Christ.⁵⁰ God's children are founded and formed within families, known as churches.⁵¹ This last piece in completing the argument centers on the pattern of progeny⁵² noticed in Genesis 2:24. As Adam and Eve were to not only multiply children but also increase families, so too is the typological fulfillment of Christ and his commissioned bride the church. Multiplying churches throughout the world is the end-times fulfillment of Genesis 2:24.⁵³ Perhaps this is similar to Plummer's thinking, who writes, "Paul expected the self-diffusive gospel to produce spontaneously missionary churches."⁵⁴ Or

⁵⁰See Michael Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 368.

⁵¹The book of Acts communicates a pattern. The gospel goes out from the church. The Holy Spirit works through the gospel to convert people. These new believers in Christ are baptized and added to the church. As members of their local church, they are identified as disciples of Christ (See Matt 28:18-20), taught the precious scriptures, and participate in the life of the church (see Acts 2:41-47; 4:32; 9:31; 14:21-23).

⁵²Roland Allen termed what I am calling "pattern of progeny" as "self-propagating." See Roland Allen, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?* 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962), 94. In honoring Allen's contribution and writing on Paul's mission as the mission of the church, Stenschke states, "Paul intended the churches he founded to be self-propagating. However, one should add that the churches were intended to be self-propagating in conjunction with other churches." Christoph Stenschke, "Paul's Mission as the Mission of the Church," in *Paul's Missionary Methods: In His Time and Ours*, ed. Robert L. Plummer and John Mark Terry (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2012), 92-93.

⁵³Beale and Kim appear to advance this notion when they write, "The growth of the church in Ephesians 2:21 and 1 Peter 2:5 is understood as the growth and *expansion* of God's temple. . . . The borders of Eden and all *subsequent temples* were to be expanded until they circumscribed the globe." G. K. Beale and Mitchell Kim, *God Dwells among Us: Expanding Eden to the Ends of the Earth* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2014), 106, emphasis added. Though they do not argue specifically for patterned progeny of Gen 2:24 as the means of fulfilling Gen 1:28, their Temple theology appears to be akin to missional ecclesiology taught in this study.

⁵⁴Plummer, *Paul's Understanding of the Church's Mission*, 67. Plummer supervised my thesis, and his good influence continues to enrich my work. The nuanced difference between his book, *Paul's Understanding of the Church's Mission*, and my thesis perhaps can be summarized as follows. The key to understanding Plummer's thesis seems to be found in the nature of the gospel—dynamically powerful. The key to understanding my thesis is found in the nature of salvation—delightfully personal. The former highlights the message. The latter highlights the Messiah. Both are saying the same thing; the former emphasizes the means by which the latter occurs and the latter moves forward in evangelism as a result of the former. In other words, the natural overflow of the dynamic gospel's presence in the heart of the local church is affective church evangelism.

men like Ashford who conclude, “It is only from the wombs of healthy churches that we might see a church planting movement that is capable of reaching our own country.”⁵⁵ As mentioned, churches multiplying throughout the world in Christ by his Spirit and with his self-diffusive gospel fulfills Genesis 2:24.

This viewpoint is biblically substantiated as noticed in how Paul and Luke use Genesis 1:27-28 to refer to the life-giving gospel and its life-propagating effect on churches. Paul writes in Colossians 1:5-6: “Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and growing as it also does among you since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth.”⁵⁶ Kostenberger and O’Brien explain that Paul’s allusion to Genesis 1:28 points to “the dynamic march of the gospel itself”⁵⁷ filling the known world with the glory of God through conversions to Christ and congregations for Christ.⁵⁸ The

⁵⁵Bruce Ashford, *Theology and Practice of Mission: God, the Church, and the Nation*, rev. ed. (Nashville: B & H, 2011), loc. 8337, Kindle.

⁵⁶“With the completion of the servant’s work, children are being born, the family is expanding . . . one of the greatest glories of the gospel is the expanding family of God (see Col. 1:6),” exudes David Jackman as he expounds Isa 54:1-4 in *Teaching Isaiah: Unlocking Isaiah for the Bible Teacher* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2010), 232. However, lest the reader thinks Paul’s theology was only for the Colossians and not found in the letter to Ephesians, notice the following observations. First, phrases in Eph 1:22, 23: (1) “under his feet” and how it echoes Gen 3:15; (2) “head over all things to the church” and how the term “head” is used for husband in 5:23; (3) “which is his body, fullness of him” and how it echoes Genesis 2:24 and 2:19 as not good for Adam to be alone. He was “completed” by the bride. Second, phrases in Eph 2:20-22 “being joined together *grows*” referring to the temple as the church/body. The term *grows* is the same word used in the LXX in Gen 1:28. Also, the term *grows* in 4:15-16 indicates that, in Paul’s mind, Gen 1:28 is still operating. Third, a phrase in Eph 5:1 and how Paul talks about members of the church as “beloved children.” This connects to Eph 6:2 and how Paul quotes Exod 20:12, which refers to the same language of “father and mother” as Gen 2:24 relating it to biological family and yet as the argument contends the biological marriage refers to the end-times church in Eph 5:31. Finally, in Eph 6:10-20, Paul brings his missional ecclesiology to a close by pointing out that the church, who is the bride of Christ, is on mission with the gospel in enemy territory in order to save people.

⁵⁷Andreas J. Kostenberger and Peter T. O’Brien, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: A Biblical Theology of Mission*, New Studies in Biblical Theology (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 2001), 193.

⁵⁸For an extensive argument for local church as embassy of Christ’s rule that extends across the world through church planting and church establishing, see Jonathan Leeman, *Political Church: The Local Assembly as Embassy of Christ’s Rule* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2016). He ends his compelling work by writing, “God’s Genesis 1:28 citizenship mandate has been fulfilled in Christ and will be accomplished

gospel multiplies converts and churches around the world as the typological fulfillment of Adam and Eve's mission.⁵⁹ O'Brien states,

So in Colossians 1 εὐαγγέλιον is a mighty, personal force working powerfully in the lives of men and women. It had come to the Colossian Christians (v. 6) and remained with them, having a firm place in their lives. Like the seed in the parable of the sower it continued to produce a vigorous fruit (Luke 8:15), not only among the Colossians themselves (Col 1:10) but also in the rest of the world. 'Fruit-bearing is to be understood as a crop of good deeds (see Phil.1:11), while the growth of the gospel points to the increasing number of converts.'⁶⁰

The "increasing number of converts" that O'Brien sees is also to be understood as the increasing number of congregations as the author of Acts communicates.

Luke traces the pathway of the gospel through the first thirty years of church history. In Acts 1:8, he records the promise of the risen Christ: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth." Then, in six sections that comprise his book, Luke recounts this Holy Spirit-empowered witness as he spreads the gospel to the ends of the earth. At the seams of these sections, the reader comes across a repeated phrase to communicate the theme of his book. This phrase echoes Genesis 1:27-28 (be fruitful and multiply) along with Genesis 2:24 (leave and cleave). In Acts 6:7 it reads, "And the word of God continued to increase and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem." In Acts 9:31 it says, "So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria . . . multiplied."⁶¹ Continuing in Luke's pattern, the reader comes to Acts 12:24 and notices, "But the word of God increased and multiplied." Finally, at the

in the church—in the place where people are baptized into the name of Father, Son and Spirit (Mt 28:19) and where mouths and hearts confess in worship that "Jesus is Lord" (Rom 10:9)." Ibid., 387.

⁵⁹See Acts 1:8 as it relates to Gal 1:22. Consult also 1 Cor and the "all the churches" phrase found in 7:17; 11:16; 14:33, 36. In addition, the phrase "in every place" found in 1 Cor 1:2; 2 Cor 2:14; 1 Tim 2:8, echoes Mal 1:11 as the eschatological fulfillment of the worldwide population of local churches.

⁶⁰O'Brien, *Gospel and Mission*, 113.

⁶¹See also Gal 1:2, 22 to notice how Christ's promise in Acts 1:8 refers to churches multiplying throughout a particular region.

beginning of Luke's last section, he mentions the theme again: "So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and they increased in numbers daily" (16:5).

Both Paul and Luke read Genesis 1:27-28 as referring to Jesus and his bride, the church, being fruitful and multiplying and filling the earth. It is argued also that for this mission to move forward, multiplying congregations and not simply converts is understood in Genesis 2:24. The pattern established in Genesis 1 and 2 seen dimly and distantly in the OT finds its end-times fulfillment in the NT, as witnessed in Luke's writings as well as Paul's.

Additional proof for the thesis can be found in the term "household" and how it is used in the NT.⁶² As demonstrated in the study, Paul sees Genesis 2:24 referring to Christ and his bride, the church, and how this key verse is part of a broader literary unit that starts the story of the Bible. This story begins with the Creator who creates and gives man and woman both a mission and a means to complete it. They were to "be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth." In addition, the way they were to do this was to have babies who grew up to "leave" parents and "cleave" to their spouses to form new entities called families.⁶³ In the NT, these "households"⁶⁴ are seen typologically as local churches that, according to the book of Acts, multiply and advance the Great Commission of Matthew 28:18-20.

⁶²Eph 5:31 has a man leaving his "father and mother." The grown male was reared within the "father and mother" household (see Deut 6:4-9; Eph 6:1-4) and then leaves to start his own household.

⁶³Paul uses the Greek term *γεννάω* (to become father of), to explain how converts and congregations come into existence (see 1 Cor 4:15; Gal 4:19, 28-29; and also John 1:13; 1 John 2:29). In addition, Paul uses the same term in Phil 10 to explain the conversion of Onesimus. Paul's biblical theology operating in Philemon is fascinating. In v. 10, he talks about how an old man still can father children—a redemptive theme found throughout Genesis (see Gen 11:30; 15:5, 6; 16; 17:15-21; 18:9-15; 21:1-7). Lastly, another link to Eph 5:31 from Paul's theology may be found in Rom 9:8 and the distinction between "children of the flesh" and "children of promise."

⁶⁴For an understanding of how Paul uses "household" to refer to both a natural single family unit along with a local church with elder oversight, see 1 Tim 3:5, 15. The church to which Paul refers in 1 Timothy is the church in Ephesus who understood his teaching on the typological understanding of Gen 2:24 in the letter to Ephesians.

In conclusion, this chapter has argued that Genesis 2:24 was Paul's basis for missional ecclesiology. Missional ecclesiology was drawn from the context of Genesis 2:24 as God's mission for this redemptive relationship and its means for successful completion. Christ and his commissioned bride, the church, are fruitful and multiply and fill the earth with churches reflecting back to God the radiance of his triune beauty. To state it another way, central to salvation is personal union with Christ. This union gladly goes where the Lamb goes (See Rev 12:11; 14:4; 19:7-9, 14).⁶⁵ This union orients and animates the church's missionary activity. One with Christ motivates church evangelism and, by the dynamic gospel, "begets" converts and even congregations.⁶⁶

The last two chapters focus on local churches to notice what prevents affective church evangelism (chap. 4) and what promotes affective church evangelism (chap. 5). Chapter 4 explores a first century church at Corinth. What did the apostle Paul expect from churches he planted? Does this expectation apply to the twenty-first century church? How does personal union with Christ and mission-stalling idolatry relate? What insights can Paul's theology of the gospel contribute to union with Christ and church evangelism? The final chapter enters a twenty-first century church—the reader's church. How does the thesis work in your local church? Chapter 5 explains a model built from the thesis. It makes clear an organizational multiplication model that may assist leaders in leading churches in evangelism. Should the reader desire insight into teaching the model, submitted in the appendix is a thirteen-week curriculum produced from the thesis.

⁶⁵Augustine understood motivation in the category of "love." He communicated the idea of living life toward what one desires: "My weight is my love. Wherever I am carried, my love is carrying me." Augustine, *Confessions*, 13.9.10. When explaining following Christ and preaching his Word, Sanlon affirms, "Augustine describes this life as a journey traveled by the affections." Peter Sanlon, *Augustine's Theology of Preaching* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 2014), 84.

⁶⁶See Campbell, *Paul and Union with Christ*, 144; Plummer, *Paul's Understanding of the Church's Mission*, 58; P. T. O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 94-95.

CHAPTER 4

WHAT THREATENS AFFECTIVE CHURCH EVANGELISM

“Paul’s mission took him into a world filled with a potpourri of gods and goddesses, and temples and shrines devoted to their honor and worship,”¹ writes David Garland. Desire moved him to search for the lost elect² ensconced in this kind of world—a city filled with demonically-empowered idolatry.³ When he left his church plant in Corinth, he left with them a paradigm that would change the world—“be imitators of me as I am of Christ.” In 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1, the apostle Paul unfolds a missionary paradigm for the local church. He introduces his topic by the phrase τῶν εἰδω λοθύτων (i.e., “things sacrificed to idols”).⁴ Yet he frames his lengthy argument within the mission

¹David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 347. For cultural background to 1 Corinthians, see Acts 17:16. See also David Peterson, who comments, “Three things about first-century Athens are identified in vv.16-21 to set the scene for Paul’s speech: the idolatry of the masses (v. 16), the high value places on knowledge by the philosophical schools (vv.19-20), and the preoccupation of all the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there with the latest ideas (v.21).” David Peterson, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 488. These three themes abound in first-century Corinth.

²See Acts 18:9-10.

³First Cor 10:19-22 tells of the reality of demonic deception behind idolatry. See also Deut 32:16, 17. For a detailed analysis of this view, see Daniel Strange, *Their Rock Is Not Like Our Rock: A Theology Of Religions* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), esp. chaps. 2, 7. Strange holds a balanced and biblical view of idolatry reflective of Christopher Wright, who cautions that too much focus on Satan and demons may “distract us from recognizing the balance of responsibility for the sin of idolatry where it truly belongs—with us human beings.” Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible’s Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006), 162.

⁴First Cor 8:1. For a study on this term arguing that it essentially means meat sacrificed to and eaten in the presence of an idol, see Ben Witherington III, “Not So Idle Thoughts about Eidolothuton,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 44, no. 2 (1993): 237-54.

of the church—congregational evangelism motivated by a love for God.⁵ The urgency over this mission is palpable. If his teaching does not grip afresh the church’s affections, the gospel will be emptied of its power by a church caught in idolatry. Affective church evangelism will stop.

First Corinthians 8:1-11:1 addresses the Corinthians’ division over eating idol meat. Ciampa and Rosner explain that this debatable cultural issue connects to “Paul’s fundamental commitments to the spiritual health of others (both believers and unbelievers) and the avoidance of any association with idolatry.”⁶ Chapter 4 communicates two themes—a self-denying commitment for the salvation of others and the danger of idolatry—in light of the wider storyline of chapter 3.⁷ It spotlights what threatens affective church evangelism and calls the church back to her mission. What is the nature of this calling? What did the apostle expect from churches he planted? What would prevent these churches from carrying out his expectations? Did he understand union with Christ as vital to preserving the church and promoting the gospel? In this chapter, I show that what largely threatens affective church evangelism is idolatry, what Rosner suggests as “the ultimate expression of unfaithfulness to God.”⁸ Ruef notes that the church’s mission

⁵See 1 Cor 8:1-3; 9:19-23; 10:31-11:1.

⁶Roy E. Ciampa and Brian Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 371.

⁷Chap. 3 argues for a biblical theology of missional ecclesiology—participatory and propagatory union with Christ. It teaches that the church’s mission is introduced at the start of the Bible. Gen 1-2 shows God’s mission for his people—be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth (Gen 1:27-28) and the means for completing this mission—leave and cleave (Gen 2:24). In Gen 3, Satan attempts to thwart this mission. He tempts Eve—the mother of all living—to stop the seed from coming and triumphing over him (3:15). This seed eventually and ultimately is the Christ (Gal 3:16) in whom the church would “be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth . . . with the knowledge of the glory of God as the waters cover the sea.” See Gen 22:17-18; 1 Cor 10:1-22; 2 Cor 4:3-6; 5:17; 11:2-3; Col 1:6.

⁸B. S. Rosner, “Idolatry,” in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. T. D. Alexander and B. S. Rosner (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 570. For a detailed and in-depth articulation of idolatry, see G. K. Beale, *We Become What We Worship: A Biblical Theology of Idolatry* (Downers Grove, IL: Sprinkle, 1986).

stalls as idolatrous associations replace the church's heart-felt imitation of Christ whose "self-sacrificing for others becomes the norm of Christian behavior and the pattern for Christian evangelism."⁹ To present this case, five sections make up this chapter.

The first section is an overview. It briefly restates the overall thesis by reminding the reader of a two-trajectory teaching of applied soteriology found in Calvinism. On the backdrop of impersonal categories of salvation,¹⁰ this section avows union with Christ and, as Schuldiner describes, the church's "affective experience of the Spirit . . . to further spiritual growth"¹¹ as it particularly applies to church evangelism. The overview concludes by reaffirming chapter 3 and its biblical theology of union with Christ and church evangelism. If the thesis stands outside the storyline of the Bible, the thesis falls. Yet, if it abides richly throughout the Bible, it must live warmly in the heart of the church.

The second section concerns 1 Corinthians 1-3.¹² It follows the line of Paul's extended argument to demonstrate the general error found in the church—a crisis of

⁹John Samuel Ruef, *Paul's First Letter to Corinth*, Westminster Pelican Commentaries (Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox, 1977), 106.

¹⁰In his interview of Sinclair Ferguson, Fred Zaspel asks for clarity over the significance of the title to his newest book called *The Whole Christ: Legalism, Antinomianism & Gospel Assurance—Why the Marrow Controversy Still Matters* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016). Ferguson responds, "So one of my underlying concerns has been that in the ongoing debates about how we are to preach Christ in all the Scriptures it is possible to believe you have the "right" position and yet still not preach Christ himself. One way I think I can put it is to say how important it is for us to realize that none of the following died on the cross for us: Redemptive-historical method, Covenant theology, the Five Points of Calvinism, sin as idolatry, the sovereignty of God in regeneration, the doctrine of justification, the inseparability of sanctification from justification . . . and so on. Only Jesus Christ, clothed in the gospel (to use Calvin's wonderful expression) died on the cross for us. Our preaching is intended to lead people to encounter him." Interview published on May 31, 2016 by Joshua Centanni, accessed May 31, 2016, www.booksataglance.com.

¹¹Michael Schuldiner, *Gifts and Works: The Post-Conversion Paradigm and Spiritual Controversy in Seventeenth-Century Massachusetts* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1991), 5.

¹²Litfin summarized the first part of 1 Corinthians as "the nub of the issue." Similarly, I understand the "nub" as religious syncretism opening the church up to idolatry that threatens the church's mission. See Duane Litfin, *St. Paul's Theology of Proclamation: 1 Corinthians 1-4 and Greco-Roman Rhetoric*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 187.

authority in the form of an anti-Pauline sentiment. This study will refer to the crisis as syncretism¹³ and argues that syncretism profoundly contributes to a specific threat to affective church evangelism.

The specific threat to the church's mission is investigated in section 3. The problem will be understood as idolatry—a rejection of God as a result of misplaced affections.¹⁴ By summarizing 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1, the reader is introduced to both the mission of the church and the danger of idolatry.

The fourth section functions as the solution to the problem presented in chapter 4. It delivers a corrective paradigm for the local church's mission that stalled due to syncretism and idolatry. The corrective paradigm features three characteristics of the mission of the church and calls the church back to this mission.

The final section is the conclusion. The reader receives a review of the argument that sets up chapter 5. This last chapter provides a model built from the thesis for the local church that desires to promote affective church evangelism.

Overview

The thesis is singular. Union with Christ is the heart of salvation.¹⁵ As Calvin rightly said,

First, we must understand that as long as Christ remains outside of us, and we are separated from him, all that he has suffered and done for the salvation of the human race remains useless and of no value for us. Therefore, to share with us what he has received from the Father, he had to become ours and to dwell within us. . . . We also,

¹³Syncretism is “the attempt to reconcile disparate, even contradictory, beliefs into one belief structure.” Genis Carreras, *Philographics: Big Ideas in Simple Shapes* (Amsterdam: BIS Publishers, 2013), 182.

¹⁴See Jer 2:12-13.

¹⁵James Gifford argues for mutual dwelling to describe the central aspect of salvation. He calls it “perichoretic salvation.” In his book, he states, “One may be approaching . . . ‘soteriological Nestorianism’ (separating Christ and the believer) whenever something besides the soteriological union becomes the ‘central’ idea in salvation.” James D. Gifford, Jr., *Perichoretic Salvation: The Believer's Union with Christ as a Third Type of Perichoresis* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 172.

in turn, are said to be engrafted into him . . . into the secret energy of the Spirit by which we come to enjoy Christ.¹⁶

This intimate enjoyment of Christ—union with Christ—is the motivation for church evangelism. Chapter 2 states that salvation is personal. It presents salvation as someone rather than something. It sets out to define union with Christ in order to provide an understanding of the theological terms used throughout the study. The outline exposes two basic traditions on the central aspect of soteriology commonly found in evangelical churches within Reformed theology. The first tradition was designated as Rational/Volitional theology. This school of thought tends to see applied soteriology largely in legal and abstract categories.¹⁷ The other tradition—the tradition promoted in the thesis of this study—is known as Affective/Trinitarian theology. It understands salvation as union with Christ by the Spirit. Thus, imbibing the wonder of salvation in Christ, the converted enjoy the benefits of justification, sanctification, adoption, and glorification. These gifts by faith to the elect are marvelous and provide a lifelong discovery of their benefits. They are, however, the benefits of and not the basis for salvation. Jesus Christ is salvation.

The study claims that the heart of soteriology, as mentioned, creates a moving force for change and ministry. Union with Christ is the motivation for humility, harmony, holiness, and hopefulness as witnessed throughout the first letter to the Corinthian church. Personal union moves God's people to worship the one true triune God. This joy in Jesus cannot keep quiet. This love in Christ is hard to silence. Church evangelism, it is argued in chapter 2, springs from union with Christ.

Chapter 3 communicates a biblical theology of union with Christ and church evangelism. It locates the basis of the apostle Paul's missional ecclesiology at Genesis 2:24. Chapter 3 provides a missional and marital metaphor running through the entire Bible

¹⁶John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeil, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960), 3.1.1.

¹⁷Gifford, *Perichoretic Salvation*, 173, believes problems arise “when inordinate stress is placed upon the legal and forensic aspects of salvation rather than the participatory ones.”

that Campbell explains, “is personal and implies a bond of intimacy that goes well beyond the other metaphors that Paul uses in portraying union with Christ.”¹⁸ The argument unfurled in four panels to demonstrate a biblical theology of union with Christ that both matures and multiplies the church.

However, what happens when the church conforms to the pattern of this world? What changes in the mission of the church when the church changes its view of the apostle Paul and the gospel? What is the general problem in the church that distorts the beauty and wonder of the gospel and empties it of its power to advance and win others to Christ?

A General Problem in the Church—*Syncretism*

First Corinthians 1-3

A general problem in the Corinthian church was syncretism of the true gospel.

Imbach describes idolatrous syncretism can be understood as

the process by which elements of one religion are assimilated into another religion resulting in a change in the fundamental tenets or nature of those religions. It is the union of two or more opposite beliefs so that the synthesized form is a new thing . . . Syncretism of the Christian gospel occurs when critical or basic elements of the gospel are replaced by religious elements from the host culture.¹⁹

These “religious elements from the host culture” in first century Corinth are represented in 1:17b by the phrase σοφία λόγου (i.e., wisdom of speech).²⁰ According to Fee, this general problem “is the real issue” influencing the entire church.²¹ Litfin agrees as he dubs the phrase “the nub of the issue.”²² What σοφία λόγου actually is and why it

¹⁸Constantine R. Campbell, *Paul and Union with Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 308.

¹⁹S. R. Imbach, “Syncretism,” in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984), 1062.

²⁰For additional use of the phrase or its similar concept in 1 Cor 1-4, see 2:1, 4, 13, 4:20.

²¹Gordon Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 64.

²²Litfin, *St. Paul’s Theology of Proclamation*, 187.

enamored the Corinthians is hard to tell and a matter of much scholarly debate.²³ The English Standard Version Bible translates the phrase as “words of eloquent wisdom.” New American Standard Bible renders the phrase “cleverness of speech” perhaps following Bauer who suggests “cleverness in speaking.”²⁴ The current study follows Litfin’s work²⁵ and understands the particular syncretism to be some form of Greco-Roman rhetoric and style. Hays writes that as σοφία λόγου gained popularity in the church, a growing number among the church set the “unadorned gospel-preaching over against a ‘wisdom’ presented with rhetorical skill and flair.”²⁶ The result was devastating. The church began to view their founder differently. He started to appear to his church plant as insignificant and his message as unimpressive. This general problem drives the noticeable conflict found in the church at Corinth.

The conflict is between the church and its church planter—the apostle Paul.²⁷ In 1 Corinthians, Paul aims to resolve this crisis due to what is at stake. If the church continues to view him from a worldly perspective, the gospel will be in jeopardy. Therefore, Paul set out to restore the gospel from its misinterpretation and mishandling by reestablishing his apostolic authority and his vision of the church’s mission.

²³For a review of the nature of Corinthian syncretism, see Duane Litfin, *St. Paul’s Theology of Proclamation: Paul’s Theology of Preaching: The Apostle’s Challenge to the Art of Persuasion in Ancient Corinth* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2015), 57-118; Robinson Butarbutar, *Paul and Conflict Resolution: An Exegetical Study of Paul’s Apostolic Paradigm in 1 Corinthians 9* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2007), 12-15.

²⁴Walter Bauer et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, rev. and ed. Fredrick William Danker, 3rd ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 934.

²⁵Litfin, *St. Paul’s Theology of Proclamation*.

²⁶Richard B. Hays, *First Corinthians*, Interpretation (Louisville: John Knox, 1997), 24.

²⁷Here, I follow Gordon Fee’s understanding of the church and its Apostle in *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 4-15.

In this section, a brief explanation is offered of the apostle's line of reasoning found in 1 Corinthians 1-3. The exposition demonstrates that something heinous operates under the obvious divisions in church life. When there is no distress over sin but rather a growing boast in man, the church is at home in culture. "To suggest all is well," writes Turnau, "in contemporary culture both is naïve and opens the door to cultural conformity to the spirit of the age. It creates a sub-Christian syncretistic religion."²⁸ This syncretistic religion, when entertained, opens the heart to idolatry that threatens church evangelism. To witness this claim, first notice the salutation of 1 Corinthians and how Paul aims to send the gaze of the soul of the church back onto God.

The salutation of the letter (1:1-9) is a two paragraph elaborated greeting and thanksgiving that introduces the reader to general themes. In the first paragraph (vv. 1-3), Paul takes the church in a certain direction. He emphasizes God's authority by talking about himself as God's messenger and the church as God's people. The basic idea in this paragraph is plain. Both the messenger and the church belong to God.

In the second paragraph (vv. 4-9), Paul continues to lay out broad themes by alluding to how the church is both gifted and guaranteed by God. He states these things to redirect the church's focus from themselves and the gifts to the Giver of these gifts. The apostle is reintroducing the church to a whole-Bible vista that is Godward and terminates in the Giver of all legitimate pleasures and gifts. To see God as all-glorious and to respond gladly to His authority, Paul begins to address the problem(s) by exposing the absurdity of the Corinthian church's brand of syncretism. He does so by making clear the powerful wisdom of the cross of Christ, seen in 1:10-2:16. Two perceptible symptoms point to the church's basic problem of syncretism.

²⁸Ted Turnau, *Popologetics: Popular Culture in Christian Perspective* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2012), 195.

The first symptom Paul addresses is quarreling over teachers (see 1:10-12; 3:3-4, 21). Although egregious and noticeable, fighting demonstrates a symptom to the general problem.²⁹ This quarreling was carried out in the name of “wisdom.” The Greek terms the English Bible translates “wisdom” are σοφία and σοφός. These terms are used 44 times in Paul’s first ten letters. Paul uses them 28 times in 1 Corinthians and 22 times he uses these two Greek words in the first three chapters of the letter.³⁰ The conspicuous repetition highlights the connection between the church’s new understanding of the nature of church and how disunity within the church is to be viewed.

The type of quarreling in the name of wisdom manifests the second symptom related to syncretism. Boasting is widespread in the church (see 1:29-31; 3:21; 4:6, 7, 18-19). Paul responds to the absurdity of their “wisdom”-based quarreling and boasting by defending himself (see 1:16-17; 2:1-3:4; 4:1, 18). These texts communicate both the basic problem—syncretism—and its only solution—the gospel. The church’s fundamental problem is seen in her emerging Greco-Roman view of life. Moreover, this syncretistic perspective gives rise to her distorted view of Paul and a twisted understanding of the gospel. Paul sets out in his writing to persuade the church of his God-given authority so that they will not reject the authentic gospel.

The reader feels Paul’s urgency throughout his letter. The church trusted in mere human wisdom. Teachers in or around the church promoted living within an imaginative world of their idolatrous syncretism, which led to the church being impressed

²⁹Graham A. Cole, *The God Who Became Human: A Biblical Theology of Incarnation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2013), 41. Cole points out how sin plunged the original pair into self-preoccupation and fighting. This disorder and abortion of mission is now in full view at the local church level—God’s people at odds with God and each other due to believing lies that fuel lusts.

³⁰For σοφός (clever, skillful, experienced), see 1:19, 20, 25, 26, 27; 3:10, 18, 19, 20. For σοφία (wisdom), see 1:17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 30; 2:1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 13. The frequency of these two Greek terms found in chaps. 1-3 set the limits for the brief exposition in this section. It is recognized, however, that chaps. 1-4 form the parameters of Paul’s initial doctrinal argument as seen by the inclusio found in 1:10 (Παρακαλῶ δὲ ὑμᾶς) and 4:16 (παρακαλῶ οὖν ὑμᾶς).

with their new self-promoting distinctiveness. As the church reinterpreted their lives, divisions and quarreling broke out.³¹ “Who do you follow?” was an attitude of many if not an actual rally cry. This attitude betrays a danger present in the church. The cross of Christ emptied of its power is written over all narratives and notions that purport and project this life view of worldly wisdom.

To combat religious syncretism, Paul expounds the true message of the church by teaching on three things: (1) who God’s people are (1:26-31), (2) who God’s preachers are (2:1-5), and (3) what God’s perspective is (2:6-16). These key points escort the reader into the vast storyline of the Bible with the true gospel at its center. These key points redirect the reader back to Christ and expose the counterfeit teaching of the day.

First, in 1:26-31, God’s people are described with a purpose. Paul clarifies a problem within the church and its suitable solution by employing irony. The church’s standard used on Paul was “according to worldly standards.” They erected these standards and concluded that Paul was unimpressive. However, Paul takes their worldly standards and uses it back on the church. In this paragraph, the reader comes across the phrase “not many were.” This intimates the church’s perspective as quite absurd. Paul turns the tables on the church in order to awaken them to reality. God does not choose people because they are noteworthy. God chooses nobodies to nullify self-sufficiency and redirect boasting to God. Paul’s gospel is the only lens through which the church can see this brand of syncretism as odious and the gospel as glorious.

Second, Paul describes himself and all who truly preach God’s Word. He does so for the same purpose as noted in the previous paragraph. Paul keeps baring the church’s

³¹The origin of religious syncretism with its satanic energy is found in Gen 3:1-5. As the crafty serpent engaged Eve, he added to God’s Word in order to take away God’s people. Eve considered his lies and began to interpret life differently, which led to a heart-change. With her perspective perverted, she now looked at God, people, relationship, and creation inaccurately. The father of lies, when trusted, recreates children from lovers of God to liars about God. As truth is exchanged for lies, and as love is turned into lust, the mission of God for his people aborts and leaves chaos and disorder. To be blessed and fruitful and multiply and fill the earth with God’s glorious image, the first couple was cursed and now would be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth with Satan’s inglorious image (see Gen 6:11).

perverted perspective by teaching on how God communicates to his people. He speaks through the preaching of the Word, which is straight forward and has a singular focus (2:1-2), through the preacher who is not impressive (2:3-4) and through the purpose behind it all—to produce reliance upon God (2:5). Paul continues to expose their growing loyalty to a false gospel in the following paragraph (2:6-16).

Finally, Paul teaches on God's perspective as hidden to human perspective (2:6-9), as revealed by the Holy Spirit (2:10-13), and as understood only by spiritual people (2:14-16). He lays out these three characteristics for a basic reason. He wants to separate their affections from rival objects and fasten their allegiance upon the person of the gospel and God's grace flowing from him—the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul continues this assault on the church's brand of syncretism in 1 Corinthians 3. He instructs them over local church leadership and the nature of the local church. In 3:1-4, Paul urges the church to grow up. "Milk" is appropriate but only for a while. The church must mature. Thinking (3:1-2a) and behaving (3:2b-4) as people of the flesh must stop. To aid them in repentance, Paul increases the attack on syncretism of the true gospel that makes much of man. His agenda is witnessed in verses 5-9.

The premise (v. 5) that leaders in the church are mere servants is to reorient the perspective of the church. If the church needs proof of the premise, verses 6-9 highlight God as the provider for and possessor of all things. These verses aim to change the direction of the church's affection back to the central aspect of salvation. Leaders are mere instruments in the service of God. Focus is not to be on them but rather on God. Paul completes this thought by teaching on missional activity of the church. He uses temple terminology found in the OT to highlight God's building known as the New Covenant temple and the Church's mission (3:10-22).³²

³²See 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), 245-68.

The only foundation to the temple—Jesus Christ—is laid by God’s grace. Consequently, there is a responsibility for the church to build by careful ministry and with quality materials. To bring additional motivation for church-wide gospel ministry, Paul ends the paragraph with implications of the preceding truth (3:18-22). Let no one be deceived by worldly wisdom. Let no one be enamored by mere leaders. Be enamored with Jesus Christ. God’s pattern for missional church activity is laid out before the church. It is done with urgency and clarity. It is done to bring about repentance producing fresh gospel perspective with its fruitful gospel living.

To summarize, Paul’s argument is strident. With syncretism gaining influence over the church’s worldview, they began to view him differently. Paul became unimpressive to many in the church. As this continued, his message seemed uninspiring to the church. Paul knew what was at stake. The gospel was in danger and its recipients were too. Therefore, to restore the gospel in all its glory and summon the church back into “another world, the thought-world that is biblical”³³ and beautiful, Paul exposes their brand of religious syncretism as untrue and unloving. The church must repent from believing lies (i.e., syncretism) that give rise to lusts (i.e., idolatry). If the church disregards his claims, they become seduced by σοφία λόγου,³⁴ and left unchecked, believing lies will weaken the church and open her up to idolatry—a misplaced affection³⁵ that threatens the

³³James M. Hamilton, Jr., *What Is Biblical Theology? A Guide to the Bible’s Story, Symbolism, and Patterns* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), 17.

³⁴To notice how false teaching reflects and perhaps is even strengthened by Satan in the church at Corinth, see 2 Cor 10:1-11:15.

³⁵By “misplaced affection,” I have in mind Paul’s phrase “ἐπιθυμητὰς κακῶν” (i.e., desire evil, crave evil things) found in 1 Cor 10:6. The apostle takes the reader in chap. 10 back to ancient Israel and cites their descent into idolatry. He urgently warns them to “flee idolatry.” See Exod 32; Num 11, 25; Deut 11; 32 for OT chapters echoing in 1 Cor 10. The reader of these OT chapters will sense Israel’s spiritual casualness that leads to indifference to the nations “gods.” As their friendship increased with their “gods,” the result was abject worship of idols wrapped in self-deception and unwrapped in self-destruction. The pathway of “evil desire,” it is argued in the study, takes the church off mission and stalls gospel spreading.

advancement of the gospel.³⁶ To notice this claim, the study now turns to a specific problem to the church's mission.

A Specific Problem to the Church's Mission—*Idolatry*

Idolatry derails affective church evangelism. Just as Adam and Eve together with their progeny aborted their God-given commission, just as the Israelites rejected God's expansive purpose for the tabernacle, so too the church's mission at Corinth was threatened by satanic-induced idolatry.³⁷ The only hope for the preservation and proclamation of God's gospel in the Corinthian church comes from Paul who says, "Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry . . . and be imitators of me as I am of Christ" (1 Cor 10:14; 11:1). As Beale rightly notices,

The problem of [idolatry] must be resolved in order to fulfill our mission in the world. If worship of God's dwelling place is the fuel and goal of mission, and sin separates us from this dwelling place, then this problem must be resolved for God's mission to propel us forward to fill the earth.³⁸

The following section attends to Paul's cited imperatives—flee idolatry and follow me—by providing a summary of 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1.

³⁶Vinoth Ramachandra researched modern idolatry and its influence on the Christian mission. He concluded, "The displacement of the God of the biblical revelation, which is the most distinctive feature of modernity, has paved the way for the rise of new gods which, like their ancient counterparts, eventually devour their devotees." Vinoth Ramachandra, *Gods That Fail: Modern Idolatry & Christian Mission* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996), 19. This study is in essential agreement with Ramachandra's thesis. The threat to affective church evangelism is idolatry that devours the gospel and its carriers. Thus, the spreading of the gospel through congregational evangelism stops. See also John Piper, *Finally Alive: What Happens When We Are Born Again* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2009), 171-74.

³⁷To recognize the reality of demonic deception behind idolatry hindering the church's commission, see Gen 1:26-28; 2:24; 3:1-8; 6:1-4, 11; Exod 19:4-6; 32:6 quoted in 1 Cor 10:7 Deut 32:17 echoing in 1 Cor 10:20; Gen 3:1-8 alluded to in 2 Cor 11:2-3.

³⁸G. K. Beale and Mitchell Kim, *God Dwells among Us: Expanding Eden to the Ends of the Earth* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2014), 52.

First Corinthians 8:1-11:1

First Corinthians 8:1-11:1 “form a coherent unity.”³⁹ The three chapters open by highlighting the importance of loving God—the very opposite of idolatry.⁴⁰ These chapters end by highlighting the importance of glorifying God—the very opposite of idolatry.⁴¹ Between these bookends, the reader notices Paul’s salvific intentional lifestyle as the pattern for the church to follow—the very essence of church mission. This corrective paradigm for the church’s mission is summarized in his closing paragraph:

So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved. Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ. (1 Cor 10:31-11:1)

Therefore, disagreements over eating idol meat are to be understood in this broader context. According to Hays, “the entire treatment of idol food (8:1-11:1) should be read in the light of this closing call for imitation.”⁴² The following outline of Paul’s argument is offered in order to consider the congregational call for missionary imitation.

Certain members of the church found eating meat sacrificed to idols a morally neutral issue. Their claim was constructed on certain truths Paul had formerly taught them (8:1-9). They enjoyed social gatherings⁴³ commonly held at Corinth’s pagan temples

³⁹Anthony Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, New International Greek Testament Series. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 607. See also Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 357, for a defense on 1 Cor 8:1-11:1 as one thought.

⁴⁰In 1 Cor 8:1-11:1, a lack of love for the church and outsiders is evident. However, for Paul, the initial concern is not love of others but of God. Conzelmann rightly alludes to the primary question as “a question of the individual’s immediate relationship with God.” See Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 141n19. The salient point Conzelmann makes highlights the thesis of section 3—losing love for God and his glory while gaining love for selfish gain and agendas (i.e., idolatry) derails what the current study calls “affective church evangelism.”

⁴¹See Rom 1:21-25. For OT background, see Gen 3:1-5; 2 Kgs 17:14-18; Ps 106:19f; Jer 2:11; Hos 4:7.

⁴²Hays, *First Corinthians*, 179.

⁴³Debate continues over why Paul seems accepting of *εν ειδωλείῳ κατακείμενον* (i.e., reclining at table in the idol’s temple) in chap. 8 when in 10:1-22 he forbids such activity. Plummer argues convincingly that the issue in chap. 8 is not eating of sacrificial food at cultic meals in pagan temples. The issue is attending “non-religious” banquets that gather in pagan temples. These celebrations were part of the social structure of Corinth. Associating with non-believing friends at these social gatherings was actually

(8:10-11). However, other members within the same church believed differently. They did not have this type of freedom to dine in a pagan temple. Their weak conscience troubled them having come out of pagan practices as unbelievers (8:7). Their faith was not strong enough to associate with unbelievers⁴⁴ in a place they formerly participated in idolatry. Thus, if they went to social parties and celebrations and partook of what was served they believed that they were sinning. In addition, if they continued to participate in their subjective⁴⁵ idolatry they would eventually be destroyed⁴⁶ (8:11-13). Even though the apostle agreed with the assessment of the “strong”—food sacrificed to idols had no spiritual importance—Paul states a principle in 8:13 for the church to follow. Self-denial for the cause of loving others encapsulates the mission of the church and is basic to the Christian life.

In chapter 9, Paul then puts himself out explicitly as an example of this mission. To borrow from James Ware, a working definition of church mission can be said as “the consciousness of a divine commission or command to bring about the conversion of

promoted. That is, unless others in the church would follow the practice and sin due to their underdeveloped consciences. By participating, they would be going against their conscience and sinning. Paul uses this situation as a teaching opportunity. Plummer states, “While Paul agrees with the strong Corinthians’ assessment of meat sacrificed to idols in theory (i.e., it has no ultimate spiritual significance), he argues that the principle of self-denial for the good of the other takes priority.” Robert L. Plummer, *Paul’s Understanding of the Church’s Mission: Did the Apostle Paul Expect The Early Christian Communities to Evangelize?* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2006), 86.

⁴⁴The current study claims that 8:1-11:1 unfold a missionary paradigm for the whole church. It holds together two seemingly irreconcilable exhortations—never flee from idolaters and yet always flee from idolatry (cf. 5:9-10; 10:14).

⁴⁵For a helpful definition of objective and subjective idolatry, see Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 369. They see two kinds of idolatry. By subjective, they mean someone participating in an activity that (whether or not the activity truly is immoral/idolatrous) they believe is sinful.

⁴⁶The ESV translates the verb *ἀπόλλυται* as “destroyed.” The word order in v. 11 places the strong verb at the beginning of the sentence for emphatic reasons. This study follows Garland, who takes “is destroyed” to mean eternal perdition. Garland and others find that “Paul always uses the verb *ἀπόλλυσθαι* to refer to eternal, final destruction (Barrett 1968: 196; Conzelmann 1975: 149 n.38; Fee 1987: 387-88; Schrage 1995: 265; Cheung 1999: 129).” See Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 389.

others through proclamation of the message and associated activities.”⁴⁷ This pattern presents a self-denying, soul-satisfying, behavioral-modifying, gospel-protecting lifestyle that aims to save unbelievers (9:1-23). Paul will not stand for anything that stands in the way of the gospel (v. 12). Blomberg notes, “In 9:19-27, Paul makes plain the evangelistic principle underlying his attitude to both idol meat and money for ministry. Whatever he does, he wants to clear the ground of unnecessary obstacles that might hinder unbelievers from coming to Christ.”⁴⁸

Paul summons the church to follow his faithful flexibility. He wants them to participate in the culture with unbelievers in order to make clear the gospel. Moreover, the desired effect of his call upon the church is to save some of these unbelievers—but the mission is risky.

Culture is not neutral.⁴⁹ The church’s environment is not benign. Discipline is required for a church to pursue holiness and stay clear of idolatry (9:24-10:5). Paul sums up idolatry as inordinate desire that attracts church attention away from church mission (10:6).⁵⁰ It is devastating and invites the wrath of God (10:5). Therefore, Paul shifts his attention from employing Christian liberty in non-religious gatherings and denounces idolatry altogether as unfaithful (10:1-22). He resumes his basic teaching in 10:23-11:1.

⁴⁷James P. Ware, *Paul and the Mission of the Church: Philippians in Ancient Jewish Context* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), 9.

⁴⁸Craig Blomberg, *1 Corinthians: From Biblical Text . . . to Contemporary Life*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 183.

⁴⁹Toward a biblical theology of popular culture, see Turnau, *Popologetics*, 41-77.

⁵⁰Paul discusses why OT Israelite examples of debauchery and ensuing judgment are cited for the first century church. He says that they are given as types “for us, that we might not ἐπιθυμία evil as they did” (1 Cor 10:6). Augustine, speaking of this desire, located it in attractions. He narrated an attraction that can take the affections from God and put them on his gifts therein making them “evil desires.” He lists some of the gifts as “beautiful bodies . . . gold and silver . . . bodily touch . . . honor . . . conquering and of authority.” Aurelius Augustine, *The Confessions of Saint Augustine* (Springdale, PA: Whitaker House, 1996), 43. He ends his brief discussion on desire by saying, “These lower things have their delights, but not like my God who made all things, for in Him do the righteous delight and He is the joy of the upright in heart (Ps.64:10).” Ibid.

Christians have freedom to eat and drink anything so long as it is for God's glory and the good of others.⁵¹

In summary, Paul teaches the church in 8:1-11:1 that Christians have freedom in Christ. They are to enjoy God's good gifts with unbelievers. This association with unbelievers over meals and doing life together provide occasions for sharing the gospel for their salvation.⁵² However, he also teaches that this lifestyle is dangerous and needs humility and wisdom. He wants the church to befriend idolaters for the sake of their salvation while fleeing idolatry for the sake of the church's holiness (1 Cor 5:9-10; 10:14).

Paul's argument running from 8:1-10:30 leads to a corrective paradigm for the church's mission in 10:31-11:1. This paradigm applies to the entire church. Paul displays how to accommodate and adjust his lifestyle to connect salvifically with unbelievers—both in denying himself where need be and permitting himself where need be. The church must understand Paul's mission as her own mission. The whole church is to deny itself anything so long as it is for God's glory and the good of others. Also, the church is to permit itself anything so long as it is for God's glory and the good of others. The principle behind 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1 is patent. Christians have liberty in morally neutral matters—they can partake or they can abstain. However, what guides the church's decision has to do with the church's mission. Pleasing unbelievers with the gospel is the aim. This aim is summarized in Paul's corrective paradigm for the church's mission commanded in 10:31-11:1.

⁵¹Willis captures the situation Paul is addressing by summarizing it in two issues: (1) eating at the table of demons and becoming a partner of demons (10:14-21), which Paul absolutely forbids; and (2) eating that is permissible but qualified by consideration for others who may be offended (10:31-32). W. L. Willis, *Idol Meat in Corinth: The Pauline Argument in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10*, Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 68 (Chico, CA: Scholars, 1985), 244.

⁵²First Cor 3:5-15; 5:9-13; 6:9; 7:12-16; 9:22; 10:23-11:1; 14:23-25; 15:58. These passages show how God calls all believers into a lifestyle of active proclamation and related activities associated with spreading the gospel locally to unbelievers that they might be saved.

A Corrective Paradigm for the Church's Mission—*μιμηταί*

First Corinthians 10:31-11:1 is paradigmatic for local churches. The apostle Paul concludes a lengthy argument by calling the Corinthian church to *μιμηταί μου γίνεσθε καθὼς ἐγὼ Χριστοῦ* (1 Cor 11:1). This command applied to the entire church is the corrective paradigm for the church's mission. Conzelmann concludes, "In all the passages on the *imitatio Pauli* the paradox of this exemplariness appears. . . . The imitation of Christ takes its bearings . . . in the sense of Phil 2:6-11—on his saving work."⁵³ Thiselton appears to agree with Conzelmann when he writes, "Christ's work . . . brought life to others by giving up himself to humiliation and to death. This is the pattern to which Paul appeals."⁵⁴ This section puts forward *μιμηταί Χριστοῦ* as the only answer for a church influenced by religious syncretism that leads to idolatry that stalls congregational evangelism. However, what essentially does Paul expect of the church when he puts himself out as a model to follow? What defines the parameters of and delineates with precision this pattern to which he calls the church?

P. T. O'Brien, a missionary theologian, asks a similar question and answers,

Although the 'presenting problem' among them has been the issue of eating food at cultic meals in pagan temples, the apostle lays two *comprehensive exhortations* on them. He clearly expects a changed attitude and right behavior in relation to these cultic meals. But his admonitions are not limited to the specifics. Paul broadens the perspective so that the Corinthians' whole life-style is to be lived to God's honour.⁵⁵

In his closing paragraph (1 Cor 10:31-11:1), Paul provides the church a corrective paradigm that aims to guide the church back to her God-given mission. Section 4 concludes with three characteristics of *μιμηταί* (1) evangelizing as the role of the church, (2) God-glorifying as the aim of the church, and (3) contextualizing as the strategy of the church.

⁵³Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians*, 179-80.

⁵⁴Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 797.

⁵⁵P. T. O'Brien, *Gospel and Mission in the Writings of Paul: An Exegetical and Theological Analysis* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 103.

First Corinthians 10:31-11:1

In 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1, Paul writes,

So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. Give no offense to Jews or Greeks or to the church of God, just as I try to please everyone in everything I do not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved. Become imitators of me, as I am of Christ.

The first characteristic of *μιμηταί* is given to clarify the missionary pattern for the church. This feature concerns imitating Christ. First Corinthians 11:1 states, “Become imitators of me, as I am of Christ.” The apostle puts himself forward as an example for the church to follow only to the degree that he patterns his life after Christ. However, what does the apostle mean with the phrase “become imitators . . . of Christ?”

In 1 Corinthians, the first indication of what Paul may have meant by the imitation command is seen in 1 Corinthians 4:6-21. This passage talks about the ministry of his apostleship in contrast with certain teachers inundated with worldly wisdom. Some people regarded Paul as a fool and his message as foolish. Paul corrects the record by giving the church a pattern to follow. He says about the apostles,

For I think that God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, like men sentenced to death, because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men. We are fools for Christ’s sake, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are held in honor, but we in disrepute. To the present hour we hunger and thirst, we are poorly dressed and buffeted and homeless, and we labor, working with our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; when slandered, we entreat. We have become, and are still, like the scum of the world, the refuse of all things . . . I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel. I urge you, then, be imitators of me . . . I sent you Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord to remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach them everywhere in every church. (1 Cor 4:9-17)

Plummer points to the above apostolic characteristics and states, “Paul thus aptly terms his ‘gospel lifestyle’ as his ‘ways in Christ Jesus,’ since the Lord who suffered and died on behalf of humanity is in some sense pictured in them (1 Cor 1:23-24; 2:2).”⁵⁶ Ernest Best, researching the apostle Paul as a model for the church, affirms that the passage is

⁵⁶Plummer, *Church’s Mission*, 84-85.

“the principal passage”⁵⁷ in understanding Paul’s *imitatio Christi*.⁵⁸ Best concludes, “When [Paul] behaved in this way Christ was his model (See 11:1).”⁵⁹ The question scholars and active Bible readers take up is not whether the church is to follow Christ. This conclusion is obvious to the serious Bible reader. The question, rather, centers on what Paul actually expected the Corinthians to do in 1 Corinthians 11:1. Is the nature of this paradigm merely to be understood in moral terms? “Be holy as Christ is holy.” Or does it set a trajectory for an outward movement and is framed mainly in missional terms? Does the pattern limit the exhortation to piety and personal holiness? Or is the paradigm not less than holiness but also is characterized in evangelism? These types of questions must be settled to understand the first characteristic of μιμηταί given to the church. What does it mean to “become imitators of Paul and of Christ?”

Paul and the Mission of the Church is the title of James P. Ware’s 380-page monograph. By close examination of the letter to the Philippians, Ware shows how Paul’s exhortatory composition, especially the section of 1:12-2:18, is shaped by ancient Jewish context “and that understanding the way in which Paul utilizes these traditions will illumine both Paul’s own consciousness of mission, and the crucial place of the mission of the church in his theology.”⁶⁰ He suggests a number of times in his monograph that the early Christian mission as noticed throughout Philippians is the same early church mission commanded in 1 Corinthians 11:1.⁶¹ What prompts Ware to conclude that imitation of

⁵⁷Ernest Best, *Paul and His Converts: The Sprunt Lectures 1985* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988), 64.

⁵⁸For an insightful discussion over the meaning of μιμηταί μου γίνεσθε, see *ibid.*, 59-72.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, 64.

⁶⁰Ware, *Paul and the Mission of the Church*, 19.

⁶¹*Ibid.*, 7, 9, 181, 191, 195, 216, 240.

Christ is largely to be understood in missional categories? The answer is found in the consequences of the Christ hymn (2:5-11) and a contextual definition of the term ἔργον.

Ware argues that Isaiah 45:23 echoes throughout Philippians 2:5-11.⁶² In light of Isaiah 45:20-21, He comments that idols fail but God saves.⁶³ He then demonstrates that the Christ hymn used by Paul is a pattern of the lifestyle it takes to promote the gospel into idolatrous territory.⁶⁴ This Christ pattern—a corrective paradigm for the church’s mission—is in the form of an imperative and is applied to the church (2:1-4; 12-16a). The pattern then is illustrated by those who conform to the paradigm and have it shape their entire lives—Paul (2:16b-18), Timothy (2:19-24) and the church’s minister in Philippi Epaphroditus (2:25-30). It appears then that Paul understands following Christ mainly in evangelistic terms. Accordingly, Paul, who patterns his life after Christ, can call the church to follow him. His mission is to spread the gospel by proclaiming it and living a life suitable to it. First Corinthians 10:31-11:1 echoes in Paul’s teaching at Philippi.

This deduction about the evangelistic nature of the paradigm is strengthened further as one notices how Paul uses the term ἔργον. ἔργον and its cognates are frequently used by Paul with reference to the work of spreading the gospel,” says Ware.⁶⁵ For example, in Philippians 1:5-6, Paul expresses gratitude for all the members of the church at Philippi. He avers that the basis for his thanksgiving is their partnership with him in the gospel. This partnership in the gospel is noticeable and lasting due to God’s good work (ἔργον) in them. It appears that for Paul, the Philippians’ good work from their day of conversion to the end of their lives is defined as partnership in the gospel and energized by God himself.

⁶²Ware, *Paul and the Mission of the Church*, 229.

⁶³Ibid., 75.

⁶⁴Ibid., 232.

⁶⁵Ibid., 210.

Paul uses the same word to describe himself in 1:22. In the midst of severe persecution for the sake of the gospel he describes his evangelism as “fruitful work” (ἔργον). A good case, also, can be made that Paul continues to teach—by the use of the term ἔργον—on the missional church invigorated by God as seen in 2:12-16a.⁶⁶ Finally, Paul ends his letter by describing people who “labored with me” (συνεργῶν μου) in the advancement of the gospel (2:25, 30; 4:3). This evidence demonstrates that Paul envisages the Philippian church’s mission as his evangelistic mission. There is continuity between the apostle’s mission and his church plants’ mission.

How these observations help to understand 1 Corinthians 11:1 in evangelistic terms can be witnessed in 1 Corinthians 3:9, 13, 14, 15; 9:1; 15:58; 16:10. In these passages, Paul uses the term ἔργον with reference to the work of spreading the gospel. This consistency in the author’s use of the term draws attention to Paul’s expectation of the church’s mission. Imitating Christ reorients the church’s lifestyle to a “gospel-lifestyle” and motivates the members of the church to speak and spread the gospel that unbelievers might be saved. Based on 1 Corinthians 11:1, today’s church is to be a missionary church.⁶⁷

The second characteristic of μνηταί addresses the aim of the church. The church as a missionary church is to do all to the glory of God. This is made plain in 10:31: “So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”⁶⁸ However,

⁶⁶Ware, *Paul and the Mission of the Church*, 237-51.

⁶⁷For a helpful discussion over the evangelistic nature of 11:1, see Robert L. Plummer, “Imitation of Paul and the Church’s Missionary Role in 1 Corinthians,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 44 (2001): 222-26.

⁶⁸Ware, *Paul and the Mission of the Church*, 191, makes a timely observation on the activities Paul cites in v. 31: “Paul does not mention eating and drinking primarily because they are mundane activities but because those activities have been the focus of his discussion since the beginning of chapter 8 and because they were particularly dangerous contexts, in Paul’s world, for potential entanglement with idolatrous activities. The point is that when the Corinthians think about issues related to food and drink (or any other issue), their overriding concern should not be with the exercise of their own rights and freedom or desires but with the potential implications for God’s honor and glory. If their practice leads others to judge them

what exactly does Paul mean by this verse? How is God glorified in a church called to evangelize idolaters without succumbing to idolatry (5:9-10; 9:19-23; 10:1-22; 10:31-11:1) in a city “filled with a potpourri of gods and goddesses, and temples and shrines devoted to their honor and worship?”⁶⁹ Does the apostle define his term through his extended argument?

In chapter 8, Paul makes the case starting that the church has freedom to buy meat sacrificed to idols at the local market (8:1-9). They are able attend community events and eat and drink in the precincts of a temple with their unbelieving friends (8:10-11). They are encouraged to invite the unconverted to their homes or to their weekly church gatherings (10:27; 14:23-25). Though, in all this lifestyle evangelism—contextualized and indigenized—what is the overarching aim that keeps the church from idolatrous ruin (9:27-10:14)? The answer to this question is given by noticing how Paul frames 8:1-11:1. Loving God (8:3) and glorifying God (10:31) are the two features of the church’s overarching aim. As Hays locates the concern over food offered to idols in Paul’s larger context, he states,

[Paul] has subtly broadened the theological basis on which the discussion of idol meat must occur. Christian thought about his problem must start neither from an abstract doctrine of monotheism nor from a theoretical statement that “gods” do not really exist; rather, Christian thought begins from a confession that binds us specifically to the one God of Israel and declares our personal union with and allegiance to this one God. We exist “for him,” not for our own purposes. To the extent that this confession of the one God echoes the *Shema*, we should also hear the echo of that text’s call to “love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might” (Deut. 6:5). . . . All of this has a direct bearing on the question of idol meat: this one God of Israel is “a jealous God” who is well known to have no tolerance for idolatry. . . . Paul is content to let that suggestion reverberate in the background; he will bring it directly into the foreground in chapter 10.⁷⁰

unfavorably or to denigrate them and the Christian faith (vv. 29-30), God’s glory has not been well served. God’s glory is served by the progress of the gospel.”

⁶⁹Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 347.

⁷⁰Hays, *First Corinthians*, 140.

Ciampa and Rosner make a similar point as they ponder church evangelism:

Christ's example of putting the needs of others before his own freedom or rights, and especially of doing whatever is necessary to secure their salvation . . . was clearly the motivating force behind Paul's own approach to ministry. . . . The relationship between the two great commandments to love God and neighbor (Deut. 6:5; Lev. 19:18), though not cited in this book, may be seen to underwrite Paul's argument throughout this section and particularly this final section. In Paul's view, our love for God must be reflected in our love for others.⁷¹

Glorifying God by loving him supremely is the affectional aim and impetus in church evangelism. Paul's *inclusio* (8:3; 10:31) frames and fuels congregational evangelism in a culture filled with idols. As the church enjoys being known by God, a love for God ensues. How this love relates to becoming imitators of Christ is captured by Reeves, who avows,

The love that the Father pours out on the Son by the Spirit is *expansive*: it moves the Son not only to cherish his Father but also to share his Father's outgoing concerns. Thus Jesus made Isaiah 61:1-2 the manifesto for his ministry. . . . Energized and empowered by the Spirit, the Son goes out, bringing the blessing, liberty and healing of his life-giving Father . . . so it is for those in Christ. . . . They share the compassion of the Son and his pity for the weak and the lost.⁷²

Union with Christ makes the church look and love like Christ. Glorifying God by loving him supremely shields God's messengers in an idolatrous world (10:13; 16:22) and sends his message into the idolatrous world (9:23). Loving God and glorifying God in church evangelism is the aim of the missionary church.

The third and final characteristic of *μνηταί* for the church's mission in 10:31-11:1 concerns the strategy of the church. Paul commands the church in 10:32-33 to "Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved." From these two verses, the church receives two strategic aspects for church

⁷¹Ciampa and Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, 498-99.

⁷²Reeves, *Rejoicing in Christ*, 91-92.

evangelism—biblical contextualization or a mission adapted to its surroundings and biblical anthropology or a view of people and the dynamics of human motivation.⁷³

The first aspect to the strategy for church evangelism is observed in 10:32 and is referred to in this study as contextualization. By contextualization, the definition Keller writes can be helpful. He suggests that contextualizing the mission and its message is

giving people the Bible's answers, which they may not at all want to hear, to questions about life that people in their particular time and place are asking, in language and forms they can comprehend, and through appeals and arguments with force they can feel, even if they reject them.⁷⁴

In verse 32, the apostle mentions a strategy he detailed in previous chapters.

In chapters 8-9, Paul is an example for the church to follow. This example is a self-denying, culture-adapting, anything-enduring missionary lifestyle so that he would not put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ. His desire expressed in 9:22 is to “become all things to all people that by all means I might save some.” Dickson captures this aspect of Paul’s strategy when he writes, “Paul’s exhortation in v.32 calls the Corinthians so to modify their social intercourse that the salvation of insiders and outsiders would in no way be put at jeopardy.”⁷⁵ This modification in their social intercourse applied to Jews, Greeks, and the church of God. Therefore, what exactly does Paul mean by modifying and contextualizing a life and ministry for these socially and culturally diverse groups? In addition, how does this modification assist the church to “give no offence” so that others might be saved?

⁷³Arguing that to worship is human, Smith writes, “Our goal . . . our telos is what we want, what we long for, what we crave. It is less an ideal that we have ideas about and more a vision of “the good life” that we desire . . . to be oriented toward some sense of the good life is to pursue some vision of how the world ought to be . . . our most fundamental mode of orientation to the world is love.” James K. A. Smith, *You Are What You Love: The Spiritual Power of Habit* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2016), 11. For a careful analysis of human motivation, see David Powlison, *Seeing with New Eyes: Counseling and the Human Condition through the Lens of Scripture* (Philipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2003), 125-62, 211-24.

⁷⁴Timothy Keller, *Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 89.

⁷⁵John Dickson, *Mission-Commitment in Ancient Judaism and in the Pauline Communities: The Shame, Extent and Background of Early Christian Mission* (Tubingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 252.

Not giving an offense to a diverse culture hardly could mean not clearly communicating the offense of the cross of Christ. Paul communicated to the Corinthians a metaphor that pictured himself being led about as a display of Christ to the world. In 2 Corinthians 2:14-17, he says that, for some, Christ and his gospel are utterly offensive—like smelling a corpse. When a church reorients to Paul’s corrective pattern for church evangelism, they will have the same effect on those who are perishing.

Obedience to the command “give no offence” to a diverse culture must be nuanced something like “give no *unnecessary* offence” to a diverse culture. By observing the life of Paul recorded in chapters 8-9, the reader can understand better his command in 10:32. In these chapters, Paul plainly wants everyone to have access to the gospel. He takes pains to remove all obstacles in the way of the gospel of Christ. He achieves this strategy by accommodating his behavior without compromising his belief. Robert Plummer seems to agree as he quotes Archibald Robertson and Alfred Plummer, who wrote, “An ill-advised exhibition of Christian freedom might shock Jews and an ill-advised rigour about matters indifferent might excite the derision of Greeks, and thus those who might have been won over would be alienated.”⁷⁶ Reaching people redemptively where they live culturally is summed up in the first aspect of the strategy for local church evangelism. The heart of 10:32 beats a salvific concern for the unbelieving and accommodates behavior without compromising belief.

The second aspect to the strategy for church evangelism notices how Paul reaches each person with the gospel. This aspect hints at the affectual nature of salvation and dynamics of human motivation. Paul says in 10:33, “Just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage but that of many that they may be

⁷⁶Archibald Robertson and Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St Paul to the Corinthians* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1911), 224, quoted in Plummer, *Church’s Mission*, 89n64.

saved.” *Pleasing everyone* as a strategy of church evangelism not only sounds unusual, but is actually contrary to Paul’s own conviction.

For example, in 1 Thessalonians 2:4, Paul describes his evangelism not springing from error “but just as we are approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel so we speak not to please man but to please God who tests our hearts.” Verses like this lead prominent commentators like Thiselton to write,

The lexicographers agree that ἀρεσκω may have the force of either strive to please, strive to accommodate, or simply to please or to be pleasing. . . . Instances of word use and contextual factors suggest that Paul most probably means **I on my part strive to take account of all the interests of everyone**. This rendering conveys the notion of his placing every factor in the equation in relation to the progress of the gospel and the welfare of “the other” . . . This steers between the flat, bland understatement *try to be considerate* (REB) and the unctuous, self-projecting, overflexible *try to please* (NRSV, NIV). Paul would hardly wish to say the latter, since try to please runs flatly against Paul’s critique of cheap rhetoric and worldly wisdom which is designed primarily to please the audience, placing *truth* second to *pleasing* people.⁷⁷

Though there is much to commend in Thiselton’s commentary, his summarily rejecting the notion that to aim to please an unbeliever with the gospel is “unctuous” fails to understand the nature of salvation.

The verse under examination reads, “Just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage but that of many that they may be saved.” The purpose clause at the end of verse 33 provides insight into Paul’s strategy. That is, he removes all unnecessary barriers to the gospel by adjusting his approach yet never adjusting the gospel so that an unbeliever may come to the awareness that what is most pleasing in this world is salvation. Moreover, central to salvation is Jesus Christ. Aiming to please the unbeliever with the work and worth of Christ is the second aspect of Paul’s strategy given to the missionary church. As Edwards astutely contends, “So we should seek others’ pleasure, wherein we can at the same time seek their profit.”⁷⁸

⁷⁷Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 795, emphasis original.

⁷⁸Jonathan Edwards, *Jonathon Edwards, Charity and Its Fruits: Living in the Light of God’s*

The implications of this missionary strategy are far reaching. How the church thinks about evangelism is inescapably connected to how the church thinks about human beings.⁷⁹ If the church thinks humans are merely rational and volitional, then the church will try to present the gospel in themes and categories akin to rationalistic and volitional terms.⁸⁰ However, if the church thinks of people first as lovers before learners, they will talk of the gospel and Christ in wondrously different ways.⁸¹ Under the influence of 2 Corinthians 4, of David Wells' four books,⁸² and of Augustine and Edwards, John Piper avers,

If the exhibition of God's glory and the deepest joy of human souls are one thing, then evangelism means depicting the beauty of Christ and his saving work with a heartfelt urgency of love that labors to help people find their satisfaction in him. . . . If a person realizes that the image of God in man is man's ineffably profound fitness to image forth Christ's glory through everlasting joy in God, then he will not gut the great gospel of its inner life and power. . . . Our evangelistic task is not to persuade people that the gospel was made for their felt needs, but that they were made for the soul-satisfying glory of God in the gospel.⁸³

The third characteristic of the paradigm for the church mission concerns strategy. The two aspects of Paul's strategy for church evangelism are found in 10:32-33. A church

Love, ed. Kyle Strobe (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 169.

⁷⁹I owe this way of saying it to James K. A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009). Smith poses a provocative question that sets up the thesis of his book: "What if education wasn't first and foremost about what we know, but about what we love"? . . . How we think about education is inextricably linked to how we think about human persons." Ibid., 18

⁸⁰For an historical and systematic look at this claim, see chaps. 1-2 of this thesis.

⁸¹See John Piper, *God's Passion for His Glory: Living the Vision of Jonathan Edwards with the Complete Text of the End for Which God Created the World* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1998), 33-47. For book-length treatment from Piper on this theme, see *Desiring God: Meditations of a Christian Hedonist* (Portland, OR: Multnomah, 1986); and *The Legacy of Sovereign Joy: God's Triumphant Grace in the Lives of Augustine, Luther, and Calvin* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2000), esp. 41-74.

⁸²See David Wells, *No Place for Truth: Or Whatever Happened to Evangelical Theology?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993); Wells, *God in the Wasteland: The Reality of Truth in a World of Fading Dreams* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994); Wells, *Losing Our Virtue: Why the Church Must Recover Its Moral Vision* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998); Wells, *Above All Earthly Powers: Christ in a Postmodern World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005).

⁸³Piper, *God's Passion for His Glory*, 38-39.

conforming to 10:32-33 contextualizes their approach in a diversified culture in order to aim at the hearer's affections. When the church rids the unnecessary offences from the gospel and aims to please unbelievers with the pleasure of the Christ in the gospel, the church operates in Paul's commended strategy.

Summary

In this chapter, I have shown how syncretism gained influence over how the Corinthian church viewed the church planter—the apostle Paul—and his gospel. This was the general problem facing the church (1 Cor 1-3). The specific problem coming from their brand of religious syncretism was idolatry (1 Cor 8-10). Paul calls for repentance from believing lies (i.e., syncretism) that give rise to lusts (i.e., idolatry) that stall the church's missionary mindset and initiatives. The remedy for the church adrift from her mission was provided in the closing corrective paradigm (1 Cor 10:31-11:1). This paradigm featured three characteristics of the mission of the church. The characteristics were (1) evangelizing as the role of the church, (2) God-glorifying as the aim of the church, and (3) contextualizing as the strategy of the church.

How does this chapter apply to present local churches and their God-given mission to spread the gospel throughout their neighborhoods? What practical helps do chapters 1-4 of the thesis offer a church looking to grow in affective church evangelism? The last chapter, chapter 5, introduces an organizational multiplication model for the church built from the thesis. It briefly explains the model and transitions the reader to the appendix where the curriculum is located. This curriculum leads participants through the model in a thirteen-week course.

CHAPTER 5

WHAT PROMOTES AFFECTIVE CHURCH EVANGELISM

This chapter concludes the thesis.¹ Chapter 5 is structured in three sections. It begins with a brief introduction that recaps the thesis and introduces the reader to a multiplication model presented in this chapter. The next section explains the model by means of synopsis and analysis. The synopsis gives an overview of the model while analysis details the model to aid those desiring to use the curriculum. The last section summarizes the model in order to transition the reader to the thirteen-week curriculum located in the appendix.

Introduction

The study began with a brief historical theology showing that reformed applied soteriology has not and is not univocal. Within Calvinian soteriology, at least two basic theologies appear: rational/volitional soteriology and affective, trinitarian soteriology. Rational/volitional soteriology speaks of salvation largely in objective terms, emphasizing an extrinsic legal status as a primary way of thinking about salvation. Affective, trinitarian soteriology is an approach to soteriology that speaks of salvation mainly in personal terms. It emphasizes the affectual union with Christ as salvation. The point of chapter 1 was not

¹The thesis claims that central to salvation is personal union with Christ. This union is the motivation for church evangelism. I demonstrate the thesis through historical theology (chap. 1), systematic theology (chap. 2) and biblical theology (chap. 3). In chap. 4, I exposit a lengthy passage to notice what threatens affective church evangelism. In this passage, the apostle goes on to provide a corrective model for the troubled Corinthian church. In chap. 5, I apply the passage to the local church in the form of a model built from the passage. Here, I look at what promotes affective church evangelism. The appendix of this study provides a curriculum derived from the exposition. The aim is to help leaders teach the thesis into existence with the prayer that a surge of God-given affective church evangelism will be experienced.

to say federal theology is wrong per se. Chapter 1 simply drew attention to how a primary juridical appearance of salvation may suggest that salvation is mainly positional and thus impersonal. If salvation is to be understood simply in logical terms and categories, affection for Christ may be adversely effected. As church affection decreases for Christ, church evangelism does the same.²

Chapter 2 states that the central aspect of salvation is personal. Salvation is not simply something to receive or believe. Salvation is someone to adore, explore, and gladly follow. To be saved by Christ is to be in Christ. Union with Jesus Christ is the heart of soteriology. Moreover, this union is the impetus for church evangelism. To argue the thesis, the chapter presented union with Christ from two vantage points. First, I demonstrated that differences between traditions on union with Christ are not merely semantics. Life in Christ for the affective, trinitarian tradition is affective, vital, and participatory in preaching the gospel and living out the church's mission. Definitions and distinctions between schools of thought were provided to assist the reader toward considering the thesis; yet to believe the thesis would require more than simply a systematic handling of the subject. Exploring the validity of the argument required a brief study in biblical theology on union with Christ as impetus for church evangelism, which was offered in chapter 3.

A basis for the apostle Paul's church mission can be found in Ephesians 5:29. By quoting Genesis 2:24, the apostle sends the reader on a trajectory from Genesis to Revelation to make plain his missional ecclesiology. I demonstrated in four steps that the broad sweep of the biblical story shapes the thesis. Spiritual nuptial union with Christ gives his bride—the church—potency to produce spiritual progeny that populates the entire

²For a biblical basis of this assertion, see chap. 2, subheading "Union with Christ and Revelation 2:1-7," in the thesis.

world.³ Union with Christ is the motivation for church evangelism and church multiplication.

Chapter 4 follows this metanarrative into 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1. The chapter shows the importance of Paul's missional ecclesiology for local churches. His lengthy argument exposes what threatens affective church evangelism. I highlighted three key themes from the text to assist the local church in both detecting what slows down the mission of the church and a tonic for reengaging her mission. The conclusion from the exposition stated that union with Christ motivates church mission. Nevertheless, when the church misplaces her affection onto anything but Jesus Christ, idolatry occurs.⁴ Affective church evangelism inevitably stalls as a result of idolatry. Paul gave a corrective paradigm for the local church to reorient and renew her affections for the Christ and his mission as seen in 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1.

Chapter 5 flows from the argument of chapters 1-4. In this chapter and the appendix, I provide the local church an application built from this study. I offer a model of what becoming missional as a church might look like. I explain the model in the current chapter and in the appendix give the reader my thirteen-week curriculum written to help a church increase in affective church evangelism.

Becoming Missional as a Church—The Model

The model and its corresponding curriculum are designed to teach the church (1) how the gospel continues to change Christians and (2) how changing Christians are

³By “spiritual nuptial union with Christ,” I mean a real oneness that Christ the husband has with his bride the church. By “produces spiritual progeny,” I mean that unless providentially hindered, healthy churches due to union with Christ evangelize and disciple in fruitful ways. Conversion growth by the gospel, in the Spirit, through the church, is to be expected because of oneness with Christ. By “populates the entire world,” I mean churches in Christ plant churches for Christ throughout the entire world. Union with Christ both multiplies converts and congregations—the essence of the Great Commission. That the whole world will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of God through Christ's bride—churches scattered throughout the world—is the end for which union with Christ exists.

⁴See Ps 73 for biblical basis, especially vv. 25-26.

motivated to be change agents in the lives of unbelievers. The maturation and multiplication model for the local church is titled “Becoming Commissioned as a Church.” The premise is simple: the gospel is dynamic (Rom 1:16; 1 Cor 1:17,24),⁵ and carriers of the gospel⁶ are carried by the gospel⁷ into places where people do not know the gospel. That is, union with Christ is the impetus for church evangelism. The biblical vista and vitality that are the foundation for this course plants and grows maturing congregations that multiply as they are taught and lead faithfully by leaders who say, “Become imitators of me as I am of Christ.”

To explain the model, the chapter is organized into two parts—synthesis and analysis. The first part is an overview. The aim, definition, basis, and strategy of the model are introduced by systematically working through the two columns and four rows that make up the model.

Part 2 details the model. It clarifies and describes its four facets. This section is a word to leaders. It is written to assist them in both understanding the curriculum and

⁵For a book length argument for the natural overflow of the dynamic gospel’s presence in the life of a local church, see Robert Plummer, *Paul’s Understanding of the Church’s Mission: Did the Apostle Paul Expect the Early Christian Communities to Evangelize?* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2006); P. T. O’Brien, *Gospel and Mission in the Writings of Paul: An Exegetical and Theological Analysis* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000).

⁶The phrase “carrier of the gospel” is a metaphorical way to describe a born-again believer in Jesus. A believer in Christ does not merely know facts about Christ and assent to the facts. She is born again through the living and abiding Word of God, which is the gospel. As a result, she loves and longs for God and all he loves and longs for (see 1 Pet 1:22-2:3). A carrier of the gospel, in other words, is likened not so much to a person who delivers the mail as much as it is a person who harbors a pathogenic organism and then transmits it to others. In this metaphor, the good news of great joy enters the heart by the Spirit, infects the life of the believer with goodness and joy and becomes contagious through talking with and serving people.

⁷The Bible describes God’s people as those who turn from idolatry to the living God. They are those who are carried by God (Isa 46:1-4). In Christ, they have the love of God poured into their hearts through the Holy Spirit (Rom 5:5). They share in the holy delight the Father and Son have for each other (John 17). In addition, this trinitarian ardor carries them into the redemptive mission of his son (Isa 61:1-3; Luke 4:16-21; 2 Cor 5:14-6:2). This is the nature of the gospel abiding in the hearts of the believers (cf. Acts 1:8; 2 Cor 1:1; 1 Thess 1:8; 2:13-16; 2 Thess 3:1).

how to teach it. The appendix to the study is the curriculum itself. Instructions on how a church might use the curriculum are found at the outset of the appendix.

Synthesis

“A picture is worth a thousand words” is an English idiom that applies to the model featured in the appendix of the thesis. The model found on page 123 of this study has a flow of thought. It starts at the top and ends at the bottom⁸ as it moves from the left to the right. Relationships and responsibilities associated with evangelism occupy the left side of the model. Affiliations on the right side are associated with edifying believers. This side represents the covenant members of a local church. The categories found in the model reflect a vision of the Christian life in community on mission. In this model, activities represent real people in real places. The model helps the church answer practical questions. Who are these people in the picture? What are their names and where did they come from? Where do they live? What hurts do they hide? What hopes have been dashed? How is unbelief expressed? What narratives do they live out of? What difficulties become apparent in the church when the model becomes a reality for the church? Why do some evangelical churches have a robust right side of the model while experiencing an anemic left side? What changes will occur when leaders in the church say, “Become imitators of me as I am of Christ?”

The model⁹ is summarized in one sentence: *Becoming Commissioned as a church—through Scripture-believing, Spirit-enabling, Son-glorying gospel ministries—*

⁸The summary sentence for the model is set within the model and summarizes its activities. It reads, “Becoming Commissioned as a Church—through Scripture-believing, Spirit-enabling, Son-glorifying gospel ministries—baptizes and teaches to make disciple-making disciples leading to churches planting churches.”

⁹My thinking that led to the creation of this model was stimulated by Timothy J. Keller and J. Allen Thompson, *Redeemer Church Planting Center: Renewing Cities around the World through Church Planting* (New York: Redeemer Church Planting Center, 2002). In their manual, Keller uses Richard P. Kaufman’s *Disciple-Making Plan* on p. 146. This plan helped bring shape around my ideas. The graphic

baptizes and teaches in order to make disciple-making disciples leading to churches planting churches. This sentence begins with the title of the model. “Becoming Commissioned as a Church” is the subject of the sentence summarizing the model. Through all the praying, planning, deploying, serving, preaching, baptizing, and teaching, the aim of the curriculum is to help churches become missional.¹⁰ The thirteen-week syllabus aspires to equip the saints in actively bringing the gospel and their Christian love into the lives of others with an eye toward making disciple-making disciples—each in their own way, according to their own circumstances and giftedness—to the praise of his glory and grace. This aspiration manifests in four parts.

First, the curriculum located in the appendix understands the gospel as not just for unbelievers. The gospel is for everyone. The aim of the curriculum is to help the church bring the gospel to *others*. “Others” refers to all people irrespective of faith in Christ. The gospel, in other words, is for believers’ transformation and unbelievers’ regeneration.

Second, the curriculum underscores a multiplication idea. It desires to see evangelical churches planning, praying, and participating in making *disciple-making disciples*¹¹ that lead to churches planting churches. Multiplying converts as well as congregations is the hope of the curriculum.

artist illustrating my thesis is an elder at Clearcreek Chapel in Springboro, Ohio. Greg Simmons assisted me to help readers see what I am saying. Much thanks goes to him for the graphics in the curriculum.

¹⁰The term “becoming missional” has affinities with the *missio Dei* emphasis. The missional movement in the late 1990s and into the twenty-first century brought many good themes and helps to the evangelical church. The movement raised awareness over issues such as neighborhood renewal, environmental stewardship, alleviating misery of the poor, correcting racial and class discrimination, and so forth. Highlighting social needs helped evangelicals to reconsider the physical plight of living in a broken world. Yet with the movement came the need to define mission carefully and biblically. The model and its resultant curriculum attempt to address this need. The name of the curriculum is coined to highlight the great commission stated succinctly in Matt 28:16-20 and developed throughout the Bible starting in Gen 1:26-28. For a good answer to the question “what is mission?,” see Kevin Deyoung and Greg Gilbert, *What Is the Mission of the Church? Making Sense of Social Justice, Shalom, and the Great Commission* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 17-27.

¹¹For a helpful tool in this regard, see Peter Bold, *Mission Minded: A Tool for Planning Your Ministry around Christ’s Mission* (Kingsford, Australia: Mathias Media, 2007).

Third, the model communicates a congregational participation that both reflects unity among its members while appreciating the uniqueness of each member. The church is built by God with a variety of giftedness. The model puts forward ordinary believers as disciple-making disciples. They evangelize and disciple in their *own way* expressed through their personality, maturity, skill-set, giftedness, and circumstances. The Great Commission is for the entire church, not just for professionals.¹²

Fourth, the model communicates the chief end of the church's mission.¹³ The ultimate goal of a church becoming missional is the *praise* of the glory and grace of the triune God. All ministries are Godward with a passion for the preservation and promotion of His fame.

Having looked briefly at the definition and aim of "Becoming Missional as a Church," introduced now are its two basic objectives. These objectives are noticed on the second row of the model. This row features the two verbs in the model's summary sentence—baptizes and teaches. These two activities make plain the two basic objectives in the Great Commission.¹⁴ All the speaking and serving found within these two columns have as their objective either baptizing converts to Christ or teaching the converted in Christ.

On the left side of the model, the word "baptizes" functions as the head of the left column. It reflects the first objective in the church's mission. A missional church wants people saved.¹⁵ The gospel goes out to save the lost elect through evangelists

¹²See John Piper, *Brothers, We Are Not Professionals: A Plea to Pastors for Radical Ministry*, updated and expanded ed. (Nashville: B & H, 2013).

¹³For a clear, book-length treatment on the church's mission, see G. K. Beale and Mitchell Kim, *God Dwells among Us: Expanding Eden to the Ends of the Earth* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2014).

¹⁴For a summary of the Great Commission see Matt 28:18-20.

¹⁵The textual basis for this desire see 1 Corinthians. Paul assumes believers to have a strong desire for unbelievers to be saved (7:16). In addition, Paul put himself out as a person to imitate. He was intentionally involved in what God was doing in the lives of unbelievers. (9:19-23; 11:1).

proclaiming the gospel (Rom 10:11-17; Eph 4:11; Acts 4:31; 8:4). Yet, gospel spreading is not merely for recognized evangelists. The whole Christ-abiding and Christ-imbibing church participates in showing what the gospel does¹⁶ and telling what the gospel is (Phil 1:12-18; 2:14-18). God sends her back into the world to seek and save the lost.¹⁷ All the good deeds and words shaped by the gospel aim to see God change God-rebels (i.e., unbelievers) into God-worshippers (i.e., believers) who become members in God's family—the local church.

The church risks herself and serves relentlessly to relieve temporal suffering in this fallen world, but especially eternal suffering in the future world.¹⁸ In addition, converted rebels now follow Jesus and profess their faith in him through baptism. As the pattern in Acts¹⁹ and the precept in the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20) make clear, baptized believers in Jesus are witnessed by the church as converted followers of Jesus who are one with him and his people (Acts 2:41-47; 1 Cori 12:12-13), which is why the left column is summarized by the verb “baptizes.”

¹⁶The gospel changes lives. It transforms relationships and communities of believers. As the watching world looks on to see how Christians love each other, they see a glimpse of what restored humanity looks like. They see a bit of the new creation. Featuring results of Spirit-started, Spirit-stimulated living becomes intriguing and at times arresting. Matt 5:16, John 13:34-35, Titus 2:1-3:8, and 1 Pet 2:12 are samples of passive (attractational) evangelism.

¹⁷This language comes from Luke 19:10. I understand that the church cannot save a soul from the wrath of God and for the glory of God. The sentence is worded this way, however, for the following reasons. In 1 Corinthians, the church is the subject of the verb *σώδω* (7:16). The church in 11:1 is to imitate Paul, who imitates Christ. Paul is the subject of the verb *σώδω* in 9:22. This way of understanding evangelism does not mean that the church is given the power to bring about regeneration. It simply shows how wonderful union with Christ in evangelism truly is. God works through the church to bring about his miracle of new birth (1 Cor 3:5; 1 Thess 2:16; 1 Pet 1:22-25). “Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of Christ” (Rom 10:14-17).

¹⁸See D. A. Carson, “Editorial,” *Themelios* 33, no. 2 (2008): 1-3.

¹⁹Starting their worldwide witness, Luke records Peter's first sermon in Acts 2 to demonstrate the pattern throughout Acts. That is, when the gospel is preached and the hearers repent and believe, they profess their faith through baptism. For a sample of the pattern, see Acts 2:36-41; 8:12, 35-38; 9:18; 10:47f; 16:15, 33; 18:8; 19:5.

The right side of the model is labelled “teaches.” This verb is the second part of the responsibility of the Great Commission. Matthew 28:19-20 reads, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, *baptizing* them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, *teaching* them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” The church in all its Spirit-enabled, Scripture-revealed responsibilities is to ultimately teach disciples to observe all that Christ commands. The teaching ministry occurs in manifold ways. As the icon in the second row suggests, expository preaching is prominent. The elders teach and instruct the church from the Bible in both the will and wisdom of God. As a result of God-gifted Bible teaching, the church regularly recognizes and relishes Jesus Christ in the scriptures (John 5:39-47; Luke 24:44-49; 2 Cor 3:16-18). They see Jesus as the subject and delight of the entire Bible. Moreover, as they see his beauty by hearing his Word proclaimed, they become like his beauty as they fix their affections upon him (2 Cor 3:12-4:6).

Though preaching is indispensable, it is not enough. Disciples mature as the whole body teaches one another in assorted ways. Experiential learning in Christ comes through teaching (Heb 5:12),²⁰ modeling (2 Cor 11:1), mentoring (Titus 2:1-10), communion (1 Cor 11:23-26), and one-anothering (Eph 4:11-16) to name a few of its expressions. As the gospel matures God’s people through his people by his Spirit, the gospel speeds ahead and multiplies vital missionary communities who spread throughout the world. Maturation and multiplication of local churches sum up the left and right side of the model.

The above synopsis intends to provide a brief overview of the model called “Becoming Commissioned as a Church.” It stands as an introduction to the model by briefly explaining the various drawings and movements within the two columns and four rows.

²⁰Russ Kennedy, a teaching elder at Clearcreek Chapel in Springboro, Ohio, says about the writer’s point: “He is not saying that at some point, every believer can mature into becoming a skilled, formal teacher of the Word. That is a spiritual gift. But every believer can reach a point of maturity in which he can comfortably instruct the lost and new believers in the basics of Christianity.”

To conclude this section, the model is narrated to give not merely an explanation of the model but a feel for its reality.

“Becoming Commissioned as a Church” is all about a church becoming missional. It is a church of prayer—a Scripture-believing, Spirit-enabling, Son-glorifying kind of prayer. It is a church that knows it is on mission and has been commissioned by the Lord Jesus Christ who came to earth, went to the cross, and was raised from the dead to redeem his bride from her sins and recreate her in the likeness of himself. Also, as a redeemed community, this church is sent out to carry the good news of great joy into the lives of others. Together they are making disciple-making disciples by baptizing and teaching those to whom the LORD gives eternal life.

The members of this church have set out on a trajectory together. It is a road taking them into the most significant work in the world. It is a road of joy and it is a road of sorrow. It is filled with risk and reward, danger and delight. It would not be a chosen road if the LORD of glory had not chosen it for this church. The road takes the church into a mess worth making. The commissioned church finds people on this road who are bewildered and broken in their unbelief. Some scorn this church for their faith. Some hate them for their attempts to help them. Others consider their unusual lifestyle and love as intriguing. They reflect upon the church’s doctrine. They are curious and come closer to the gospel community, and yet some go all the way; they are converted to Christ. They are baptized and become members of this local church.

These new members grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus. They love the community of believers because they are now one in Christ with the believers. They begin to give more of their lives because they have become convinced that they are becoming missional. They learn about being a disciple and helping others to experience the same. They speak differently, serve joyfully, and are trained in greater responsibilities. They long to multiply their life, love, and labor for Jesus. They are a part of a buoyant and sprawling growth group, and are even open to help plant another church

in order to carry out the same mission. What is “Becoming Commissioned as a Church” all about? This vision of the Christian life is what “Becoming Commissioned as a Church” is all about.

Introduction

With the big picture in mind, a word now is offered to those thinking about using the curriculum. I am thankful for leaders desiring to use the material to equip the church in becoming commissioned. The desire behind the curriculum is to see God extend gospel witness through the church to multiple neighborhoods, communities, and even cities. This activity ensues as God grants biblical repentance and faith to leaders and local churches as they follow their repenting leaders. As God uses the curriculum, He may employ the church to save those the church reaches. As the church becomes commissioned, the scriptures say, “So, whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Cor 10:31)

The curriculum is a thirteen-week course found in the appendix of the thesis. It is organized into five units with the first unit providing an overview. Two weeks are allotted for unit 1 in order to orient the participating group to the aim, definition, biblical basis, and goals of “Becoming Commissioned as a Church.”

Unit 2 provides explanation and application for the first of four facets that make up the curriculum.²¹ The first facet is called “The Plan.” Unit 2 takes two weeks to teach with the result of participants developing a personal strategy for evangelism forged by and focused with a simple tool called “Building & Bridging Relationships.”²² This

²¹The four facets that make up the model are found on the reverse side of the model for convenient overview and review. The graphic is called “Becoming Commissioned as a Church—At a Glance.” The four facets are (1) The Plan (2) The Power (3) The Pattern (4) The Practice

²²Building & Bridging Relationships is the curriculum’s primary tool I designed for participants. The ideas that helped create the tool came from Peter Bolt, *Mission Minded: A Tool for Planning Your Ministry around Christ’s Mission* (Kingsford, Australia: Matthias, 2007). The tool is provided in the Participant’s Packet given out in Unit 1; Session 1.

tool helps organize their prayer and outreach efforts while keeping them accountable to the work of evangelism.

Unit 3 allots three weeks to carefully work through the second facet called “The Power.” As participants enter month 2 of the course, they sense a growing need and desire of Christ. This unit is the heart of the curriculum. It aims to review the heart of the gospel in order to renew the heart with the gospel. Participants sense what Jesus meant when he said, “I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing” (John 15:5). As leaders and participants are met with a biblical view of personal transformation in Christ, three things are prayed for: (1) an increase in joy in Jesus through repentance and faith, (2) a compassion for the lost as seen in praying for particular people, and (3) a courage to show and tell them the gospel as witnessed in actual relationship building with these particular people.

At this point in the course, an intermission is provided. This session is light-hearted and yet focused on developing a gospel community on mission. The course maintains that disciples are made best in community and community is made best on mission.²³ The intermission session looks at both the sacrifice and joy of developing and deploying a shared mission as a growth group.

Unit 4 offers participants a two-week look at pop culture and the context in which the church is on mission. This unit aids at developing skill to read and respond to the church’s local culture. It introduces the third facet to “Becoming Commissioned as a Church” known as “The Pattern.” This facet explains how to live in popular culture faithfully and thus avoid idolatry. It explores the necessity of accommodating behavior

²³I heard Bob Thune in Omaha, NE, communicate his church evangelism strategy similar to this pithy sentence. I am indebted to him not merely for a sentence but a vision of developing a gospel community on mission.

without compromising belief. The class will receive teaching on reaching people redemptively where they live culturally.

Unit 5 concludes the thirteen-week course. This unit introduces facet 4 of “Becoming Commissioned as a Church” called “The Practice.” Facet 4 is designed to take a group through a three-week process that aids in developing the group’s plan to reach certain people with the gospel. It defines terms, develops strategies, and determines ministry readiness for the group. The last week is set aside to discuss deploying the mission of the group into a God-given setting for the group.

An analysis of the thirteen-week course is offered next to help the leader understand the curriculum with an eye toward teaching it to a small group.

Unit 1—Overview

The curriculum starts with an overview. Two weeks are allotted for Unit 1. This unit helps participants feel comfortable and oriented. They are welcomed warmly. The syllabus is presented briefly by presenting the aim, definition, biblical basis, and goals for the class. To finish the first unit, a full introduction to the model with its four facets is achieved.

As observed in the synthesis of the model, “Becoming Commissioned as a Church” is depicted in five features and four facets. The five features are

1. *A summary sentence of the model.* This sentence reads: Becoming Commissioned as a Church (through Scripture-believing, Spirit-enabling, Son-glorying gospel ministries) baptizes and teaches in order to make disciple-making disciples leading to churches planting churches.
2. *Two basic objectives of the model.* All the serving and speaking aim to baptize converts in Christ and teach the converts Christ and his ways.
3. *Seven things to ask God to cause in the life of an unbeliever.* This feature centers on desire. The feature underscores the hope for God to use the church and work through the church to cause unbelievers to be curious over the gospel, to come to invitations, to consider the gospel, to convert to Christ through repentance and faith in him, to grow in Christ together with others doing the same, to give gladly their lives to Christ and his mission, and to go help plant a new growth group or even be involved in a church plant.

4. *A distinct road a church becoming missional follows.* This road is illustrated in the middle of the model. It reflects six activities in which the church is involved: (1) us with outsiders, (2) outsiders with us, (3) gathering together as a church, (4) ministering as a church through serving and speaking, (5) planting new growth groups, and (6) planting new churches who reflect becoming missional.
5. *Two ways to participate in building and bridging relationships.* As participants use the “Building & Bridging Relationships” tool, the participants look to God for developing redemptive relationships. The members of the class will want to find and create opportunities to develop these relationships. Taking invitations from non-believers and giving invitations to non-believers are two basic ways of entering opportunities for redemptive friendships.

Unit 2—The Plan

Unit 2 requires two weeks to develop a personal plan for each participant. The plan is simple. It is called “Building & Bridging Relationships” (BBR). In these two weeks, the leader aims to accomplish three things: acquaint participants with the four facets of the model; introduce a primary tool used in the evangelism strategy (BBR); and help the class sense their need of Jesus in the ministry of evangelism.

The unit starts by simply listing the facets with brief definition. It then takes the class behind the arrangement of the facets allowing them to see the logic behind the order. It seeks to make plain what the order communicates and why understanding the logic behind the arraignment can be helpful.

Facets 1 and 4 function as organizational structure. They concentrate on the operational and structural side of ministry. The facets are designed to facilitate individual participation (facet 1) and corporate participation (facet 1). The participants are reminded that ministry must have structure or it goes into disorder. To use a popular metaphor to personal ministry, a trellis must be built for the vine to grow and flourish.²⁴

Facets 2 and 3 are between the structures as a river is between banks. These facets highlight the vitality and ability in church evangelism. Affective church evangelism surges when joy and wisdom in Christ are experienced in the doing of evangelism. The

²⁴See Colin Marshall and Tony Payne, *The Trellis and The Vine: The Ministry Mind-Shift That Changes Everything* (Kingsford, Australia: Matthias, 2009).

power and pattern of becoming missional are fruit of union with Christ. These basic concepts that make up the four facets are clarified in the introduction. However, the logic behind the arrangement of the four facets aims to provide something more critical than definitions and descriptions.

The primary goal for unit 2 is to grasp the essence of the course. The logic behind the order is not merely to remind the people of two types of ministry—organizational and personal. It is to expose participants' need of ongoing repentance and faith in Christ. The Plan comes before The Power not because leaders in local churches want progress in evangelism immediately, but rather, to witness progress in worship ultimately. Participants are to sense that evangelism is well beyond their abilities as they set out to use a simple tool provided in class.

The tool is called BBR, and the plan is simple. Participants are to pray. They are to think over acquaintances they providentially see regularly in daily life. These people are generally found in their neighborhood, at school, work, co-ops, common hangouts, recreational spots, neighborhood board meetings, and the like. On their BBR tool, they record the names of two acquaintances. They pray for them. They begin building relationships with them in ordinary ways and get to know them. They serve them and are served by them. They eat with them. They invite them to consider something or to come to something and they record these activities and results on their tool, somewhat like a diary. As relationships are built, they are bridged into a vital Christian community where the gospel is seen for what it truly does. The new friends begin to hear and feel the true gospel in warm and natural conversations. In this environment, conversions just might occur.

The strategy is that simple. The class talks about the strategy. The teacher clarifies each activity and then the class is dismissed to use the BBR throughout the next week. The class then is to share stories the following week in class. The next week's class tends to be quite interesting.

Likely, little happened throughout the week with this assignment. People were busy. Some in the class thought the strategy was a bit unclear. Some lost their BBR. Others could not remember exactly what the assignment entailed. Therefore, when invited to share stories over evangelism, the class feels a bit awkward. After the leader runs a brief discussion over the assignment and collects a few general stories about what happened in the week, he is ready to work through four basic hindrances to evangelism.

In this segment of the curriculum, a key insight surfaces in Unit 2. Participants are introduced to the basic hindrance to evangelism—idolatry. Whatever the presenting problem is for participants—“I’m just too busy,” “it is just too scary,” “I’m just not fit for outreach ministry”—the secondary problem is exposed. Desiring idols of comfort, approval, achievement, relief, protection are a few of the inordinate desires that may come up. As secondary problems surface, the primary problem is discussed. Deserting Christ in one’s quest for “the good life” emerges as the epicenter of why evangelism is so difficult.

What is the solution for a church weakened in her missionary preferences and pursuits? What might the Lord use to open a participant’s life to the joy of participating in the Great Commission? How can leaders assist learners to imitate them as they imitate Christ? Recovering missionary life and motivation is the theme of the following week. Unit 3 develops the class’s experiential knowledge of the gospel with follow up skill to share their life and the gospel.

Unit 3—The Power

Unit 3 is the second facet in the course “Becoming Commissioned as a Church.” The facet is called “The Power.” As mentioned, the curriculum is designed to start people applying immediately the materials provided in order to help them sense the basic problem in evangelism. The problem in evangelism is not external. It is the heart. The first facet comes first in order to expose the church’s need of Christ. They learn experientially that unbelievers are not the only ones who need the gospel. To teach this truth, three sessions make up unit 3.

As seen in the appendix, the visual²⁵ for Unit 3 communicates the dynamic gospel in the life of a believer. The gospel is at center. The figure-eight movement illustrates the ongoing flow of the gospel's power in the believer's life. This power is taught as the expulsive power of a new affection²⁶ that expels idols from believers' hearts and compels them into the ruined and rebellious lives of unbelievers.

The first objective for unit 3 is to review the heart of the gospel. What is the gospel? is answered in session 1. Answering this basic question will grace the class and prepare them for the following sessions. Through a biblical definition provided and tracing this concept through the biblical storyline, the class is reminded that the gospel is not something people do. The gospel is the good news of what God did in his son. The doing and dying of Jesus Christ is the power and wisdom of God (1 Cor 1:17-25).

In the second week, the class becomes more aware of the power the gospel gives when believing the gospel. In this session, renewing the heart with the gospel is highlighted. The basic premise centers on a gospel barrier. This barrier is not found outside of the heart. The barrier is not believing the gospel from the heart. Probing this premise will leave the class asking how to locate heart idols and replace these idols with renewed abiding in Christ. Biblical repentance and faith, rather than mere behavioral adjustment, is made plain for the class in session 2.

The last session in Unit 3 introduces where and what happens when personal story meets gospel story. At the crossroads of conversation and life, evangelism occurs. Evangelism gets the gospel out by first getting close to unbelievers. This session teaches how to listen to unbelievers. They have a story to tell. Each person, every song, all movies,

²⁵My visual is an adaptation of World Harvest Mission, "The Propulsion of Grace," in *Sonship: World Harvest Mission* (Jenkintown, PA: World Harvest Mission, 2002), 187.

²⁶The phrase "expulsive power of a new affection" comes from a classic sermon by Thomas Chalmers. The Chi Alpha Discipleship Tool provides a three-page pdf of experts of Chalmers' sermon as well as an accurate application of it. Chi Alpha Discipleship Tool, accessed January 16, 2016, <https://irp-cdn.multiscreensite.com/2988a589/files/uploaded/expulsive-power.pdf>

etc., have something in common. They all carry a story. They all contain a messy mixture of common grace and idolatry.²⁷ In this session, the leader presents a few versions of “the gospel” that make up no gospel at all. The class learns in the final session of Unit 3 how to read and respond to unbelievers both in compassionate and faithful ways.

Intermission

The class has been together now for two months. A one-week intermission is offered at this point. This session aims to assist the class in what it means to have a shared mission as a small group. Through a forty-five minute exercise, the participants sense both the sacrifice and joy in developing and deploying a shared mission. The one-week intermission takes the class to Unit 4.

Unit 4—The Pattern

Two weeks are set aside for Unit 4. The unit aims to help the class develop hearts and skills at reaching people redemptively where they live culturally. Contextualizing evangelism and biblical counseling are topics for Unit 4 and captured in the graphic call “The Pattern.”

In two weeks, “The Pattern” is taught and helps explain how to live in popular culture wisely and redemptively. The class explores the necessity of accommodating their behavior without compromising their belief. The lifestyle presented in this unit is called “Faithful Flexibility.” It contends that the way a believing community is able to be a viable alternative community to the world is to be in the world but not of the world (Matt 5:13-16; John 17:15-16; 1 Cor 5:9-11; 9:19-10:13; Titus 2:1-11. “Faithful Flexibility” is explained first through a passage. Leaders take the class through 1 Corinthians 9:19-10:14 to show that when the gospel does not get its proper hearing something is dreadfully

²⁷For an excellent treatment of how the unbelieving world echoes the gospel in stories they tell, see Mike Cosper, *The Stories We Tell: How TV and Movies Long for and Echo the Truth* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway: 2014).

wrong. The teacher points out how the church is never to flee from idolaters (see 1 Cor 5:9-10) and yet always flee from idolatry (see 1 Cor 10:14). What kind of lifestyle is equipped to do such a thing?

The graphic communicates what the course means by “Faithful Flexibility.” Followers of Jesus Christ love Christ and the lost in this world. They want to live in the broken world with unbelievers while living holy before them. They do not want to withdraw from the world nor do they desire to imitate the world. When the church slips into withdrawal, the gospel loses visibility. When the church slips into imitation, the gospel loses credibility. Isolation and assimilation are two pursuits followers of Christ reject. The gospel means everything to a church becoming missional. They will be flexible over non-moral issues. They will modify their behavior to connect with others. They want to become all things to all people that by all means they might save some. However, this missionary community wants to be faithful first and foremost to Jesus. Holiness for them matters. In Unit 4, the class is taught that to reach people redemptively where they live culturally requires “Faithful Flexibility.”

Unit 5—The Practice

To practice “Becoming Missional as a Church” requires defining terms and strategies, determining ministry readiness, and developing a group mission. For the last three weeks of the course, the leader guides the group through these three critical assignments.

In the first week, the leader helps the group make observations on the graphic called “The Practice.” This picture illustrates real places with real people in real pain and perplexity. Participants notice that in these places that people need to be served with love and saved by the gospel. The picture locates four places.

The first part of the session talks about where to find unbelievers and how to go out to where they live. The first place the church might find unbelievers is in their own home, as seen in 1 Corinthians 7. The graphic first depicts becoming missional right

at home—at the kitchen table, in the bedroom, around the backyard. Discussion is led over loving and reaching children and/or spouses with gospel beauty and words.

The second place spotted in the model is the neighborhood as seen in 1 Corinthians 10. The leader prods the class in creative thinking over how to meet and serve neighbors.

The first session in Unit 5 comes to a close as the leader looks now at inviting unbelievers into the believer's space as seen in 1 Corinthians 14. These places are homes, gospel groups, and the general gatherings. The talk centers on ways to create opportunities in which the unbeliever can come into a gospel environment to enjoy common grace and hear aspects of the gospel.

In week 2 of Unit 5, the leader helps the group through some assessment exercises. The session is designed to look at how the group is developing missionally as individuals and how this development is influencing their growth group. This week, participants experience a self-assessment exercise. Six open-ended questions assist individuals in understanding where they are and where they are going in relation to becoming missional.

The final week starts the process of developing and deploying their growth group's outreach mission. Answers are explored to the question, "what are steps and phases necessary to develop and deploy a group shared mission?" In this last session, both personal participation and group participation are discussed. The course concludes with a suggested three-phase / three-month plan. This plan is unpacked and offered to the class.

Summary

This chapter provided an explanation of an organizational multiplication model for the church built from the thesis. I clarified "Becoming Missional as a Church" to give leaders a way of applying the thesis to the local church for the spreading of the gospel to the neighborhoods and extending the glory of God to the ends of the earth.

The first half of the chapter overviewed the model. I provided broad explanation

for two reasons. According to the thesis, the whole congregation is called to a missionary lifestyle. They are to follow Paul as he followed Christ. This imitation is impossible apart from union with Christ and the power of the gospel. The overview of the model attempts to assist everyone in the church to see more clearly the layout of the Great Commission and desire equipping from leaders for the task.

The second reason for the synopsis has to do with leaders in the church. Guiding people through the paradigm and into daily application requires a theological and practical understanding of the commission. Leaders must be caught by the vista of congregational evangelism before they take the congregation on a journey into affective church evangelism. Main points and concepts of the curriculum can be understood by studying the course. However, to implement a “follow me as I follow Christ” plan takes more from leaders than awareness of facts. As leaders read the first part of the chapter, the hope is that they will sense more of their need of God’s love found in Christ. With the study, they will say, “The humility of repentance creates space in us for his love to prosper.” This heart-felt motivation carries them into the second part of the chapter, where they will want to drill down into the details of the curriculum.

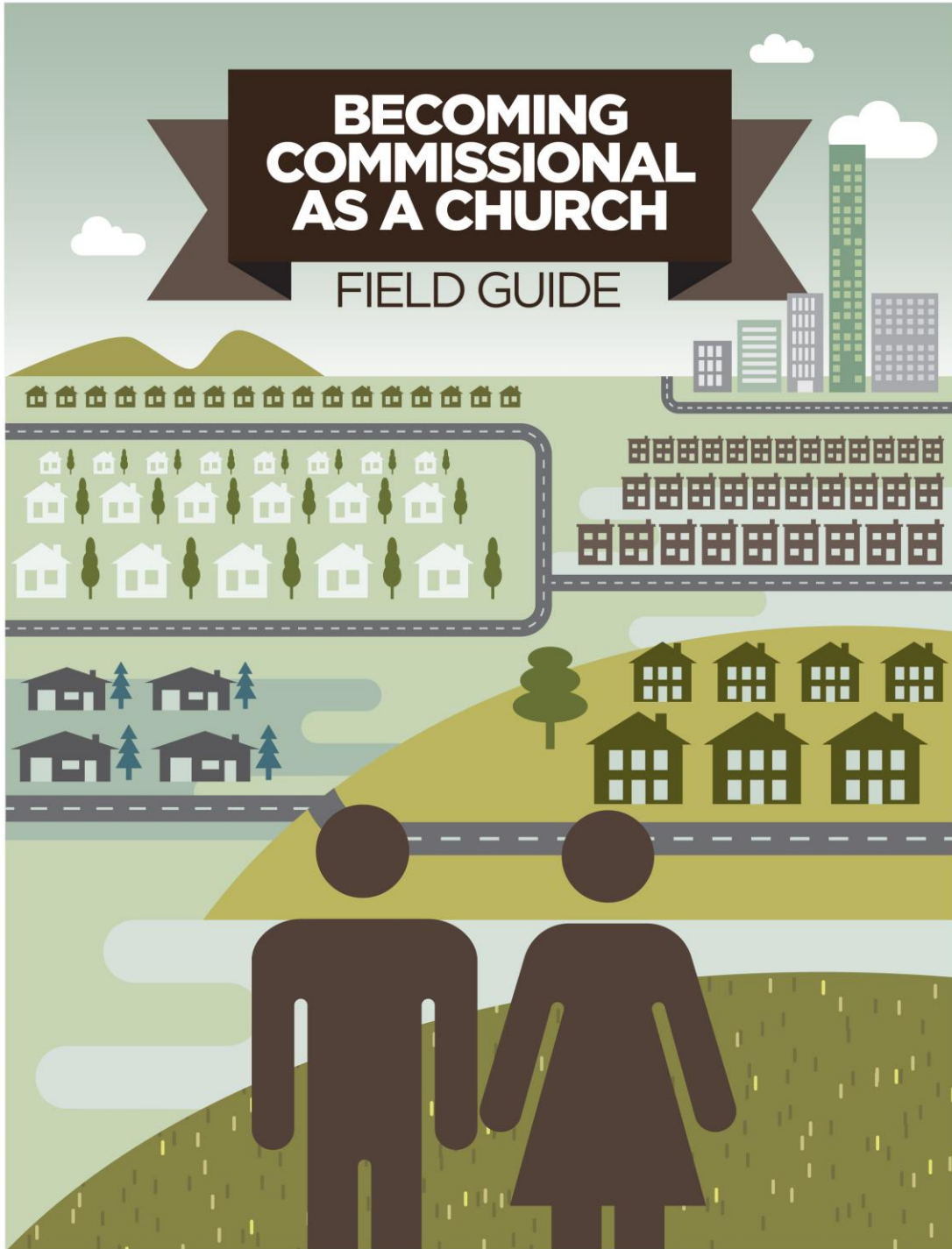
The second part of the chapter looks at details of the four facets to the model. Questions over what the facets are and how they function are provided for leaders to teach the curriculum. The analysis gives a level of clarity to promote the course to leaders for use in their local churches.

With the explanation of the model provided, the following appendix is offered. The preface to the curriculum provides information on how to obtain the curriculum with its accompanying training workshop. “May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, that your way may be known on earth, your saving power among all nations” (Ps 67:1-2).

APPENDIX

BECOMING COMMISSIONAL AS A CHURCH—
THE CURRICULUM

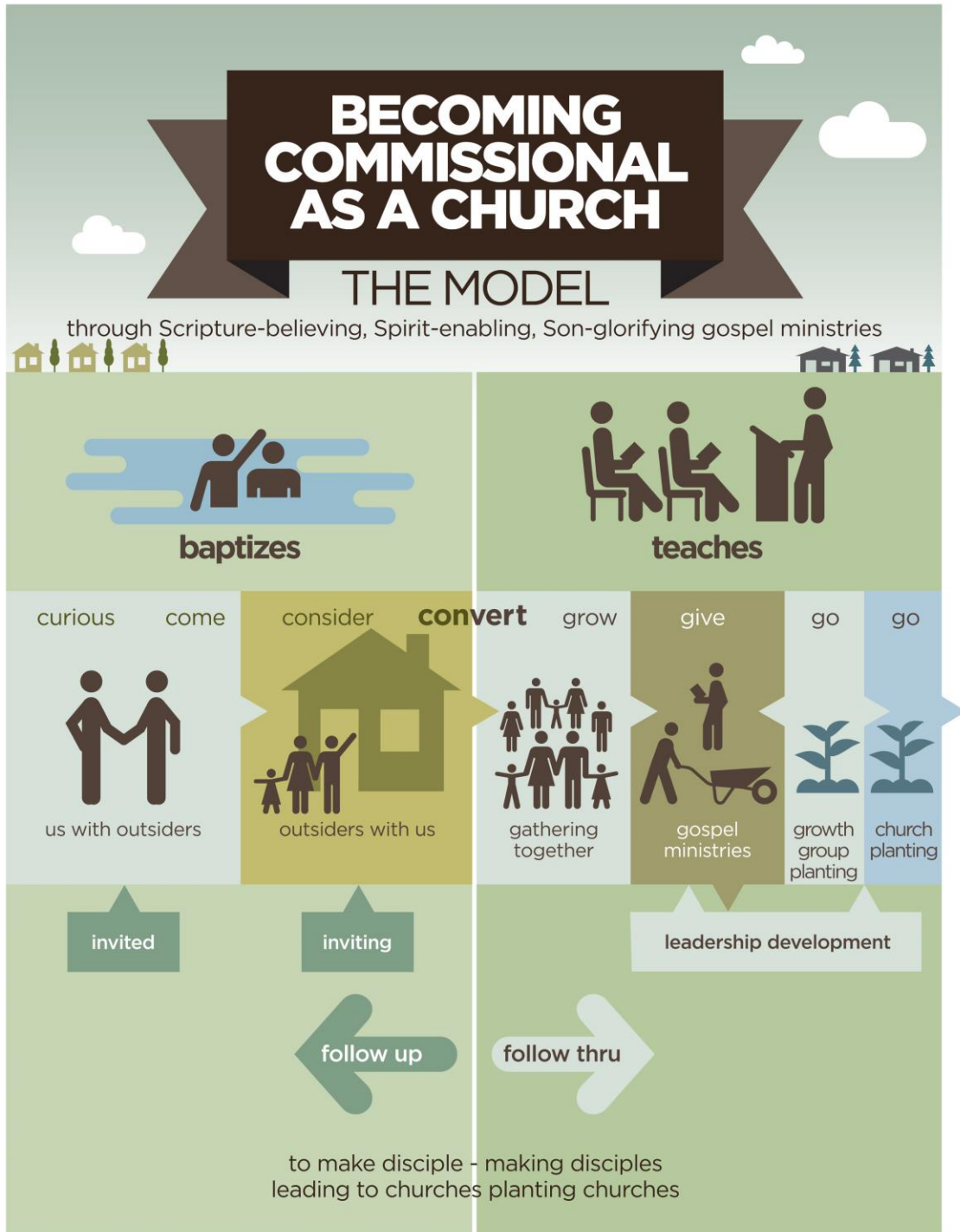
The appendix offers a look at the thirteen-week curriculum and strategy to teach the thesis into existence at your local church. Those wishing to use the curriculum will need two things. First, they will need to attend the three-hour *Becoming Commissional as a Church* workshop designed to teach teachers how to teach the curriculum. The workshop is taught by the author. Arrangements for taking the workshop are made by contacting dan@veritasdayton.org. Secondly, they will need the leader's guide, participant's curriculum, PowerPoint slides, and the participant's packet. The materials are provided at the *Becoming Commissional as a Church* workshop.





Contents

- Unit One (2 weeks)
 - Becoming Commissioned as a Church – overview
 - Welcome and orientation
 - Receive Participant's Packet
 - Introduce to the model and its 4 facets
- Unit Two (2 weeks)
 - Becoming Commissioned as a Church – The Plan
 - Developing personal plan
- Unit Three (3 weeks)
 - Becoming Commissioned as a Church – The Power
 - Developing understanding of and joy in the gospel
- Intermission (1 week)
 - A community on mission
 - Developing a sense of growth group shared mission
- Unit Four (2 weeks)
 - Becoming Commissioned as a Church – The Pattern
 - Developing skill at reading and responding to local culture
- Unit Five (3 weeks)
 - Becoming Commissioned as a Church – The Practice
 - Developing growth group plan

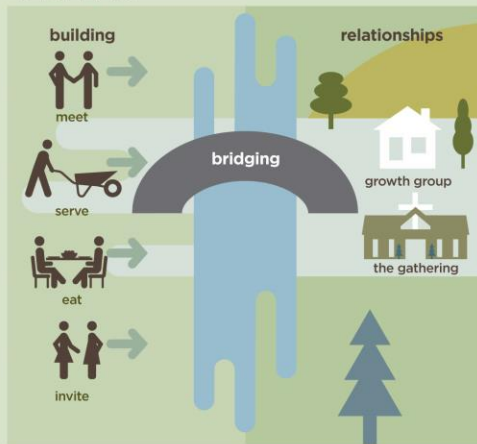


BECOMING COMMISSIONAL AS A CHURCH

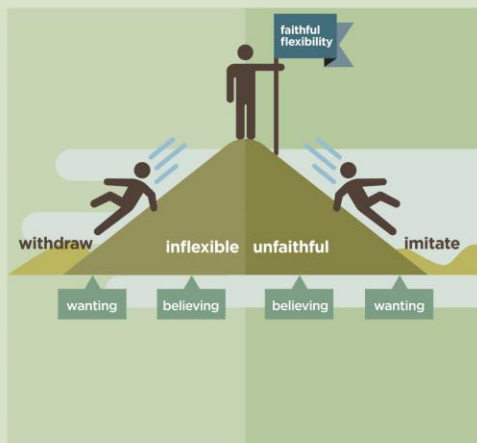
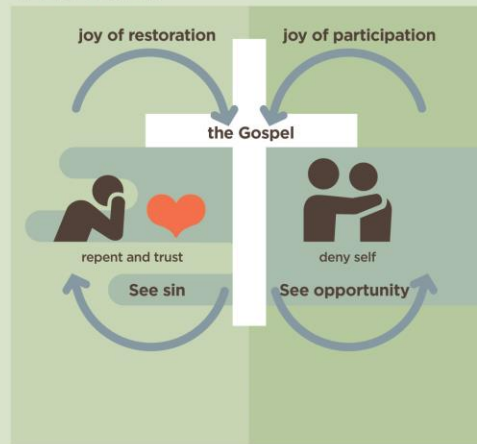
AT A GLANCE



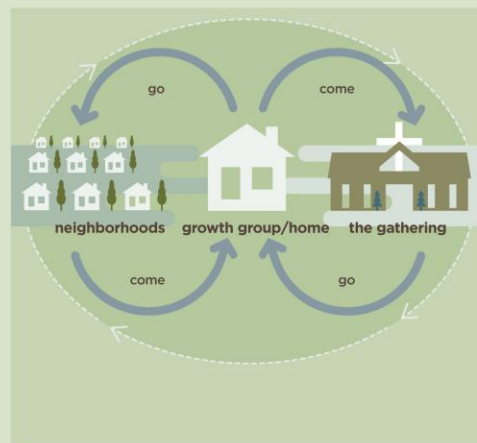
THE PLAN



THE POWER



THE PATTERN



THE PRACTICE

Unit 1- Session one

Becoming Commissioned- overview

Welcome and orientation

Aim

In assisting local churches in becoming missional as a church we aim to equip the saints in actively bringing the gospel and their Christian love into the lives of others with an eye toward **making disciple-making disciples** – each in their own way, according to their own circumstances and giftedness – to the praise of His glory and grace.

Definition

Becoming Missional as a Church is the gracious process of change and development necessary to faithfully carry out Christ's commission of His church by skillfully making disciples by His church.

Basis

Becoming Missional as a Church is based on 1Corinthians 8:1-11:1 demonstrating that it is:

- fostered within fellowship through love (8:1-13)
- focused on winning unbelievers to Christ (9:1-27)
- framed by faithfulness to God alone (10:1-11:1)

Assignment #1

1. Take 10 minutes out of this week's flock meeting to talk about what you individually would like to accomplish through Becoming Commissioned course.
2. This week read 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1. Use the provided outline of this passage on page one as a guide to your reading. List questions or comments you have as a result of your reading.
3. Begin praying about "becoming commissioned."
4. Familiarize yourself with the Becoming Commissioned model. Write down one question you want answered about this model.

Unit 1- Session two

Becoming Commissioned- overview

Welcome and orientation

Goals

- ***To examine and increase ministry readiness***
- ***To possess a working knowledge of BC's four facets***
 - **Its plan**
 - *BBR* – a heartfelt commitment to
 - **Its power**
 - *The Gospel* – an experiential knowledge of
 - **Its pattern**
 - *Faithful Flexibility* – a lifestyle rhythm through
 - **Its practice**
 - *Flock/family* – a redemptive strategy with
- ***To know the gospel framework in order to read accurately and respond fittingly to people in local culture***
 - Creation – identity. Fall – problem. Rescue – solution. Restoration – hope
- ***To identify opportunities for outreach in and around our families and Flocks***
 - Identifying Intersections – hearing personal stories
 - Turning Conversations – telling the gospel story
- ***To pray more regularly and biblically***
 - Praying the Scriptures in class
- ***To gospelize yourself and others***
 - Using the 4-panel framework & the Gospel Primer
- ***To be courteous and kind to outsiders***
 - Becoming more of a humble servant and a courageous inviter
- ***To practice the BBR with ever increasing enjoyment***
 - Praying for and participating in the lives of no less than two people
- ***To define and develop your Flock's shared mission***
 - Beginning at Intermission

What are we talking about?

Not just talking about traditional evangelism

It is n a t u r a l

It is s u p e r n a t u r a l

It is r e l a t i o n a l

It is i n t e n t i o n a l

Not just talking about leaders

It is about c o m m o n p e o p l e

It is about n o r m a l l i f e d o n e d i f f e r e n t l y

Not just talking about events

It is a l i f e s t y l e

It is a p r o c e s s

It is made up of m i n i d e c i s i o n s

Not just talking about attractional ministry

It is to be done in F a i t h f u l F l e x i b i l i t y

It is to be S h e p h e r d S u p p o r t e d

It is to be i n H o s p i t a b l e H a b i t a t s

Assignment #2

1. Pray this week for insights into what changes you may need to make both in your attitude and lifestyle.
2. Think about and jot down 2 acquaintances on your BBR tool. Begin praying for these individuals perhaps even in Flock meeting. Ask God for opportunities to get to know these people.
3. Start memorizing our class passage – 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1

Unit 2- session one

Becoming Commissioned – its plan

Developing my personal plan



Through this session

1. To acquaint ourselves with the 4-facets of the Model
2. To introduce a primary tool of *becoming commissional* known as the BBR
3. To be met with personal responsibility in BC participation

The four facets of BC

Becoming Commissional as a church is depicted in five features and four facets. The features were introduced to us last week. In light of this overview, we now want to zoom in a bit closer and look at its four facets.

The arrangement

The four facets¹ of BC are:

The Plan

The Power

The Pattern

The Practice

The logic behind the arrangement

What does the order communicate? And why can it be helpful to understand what's behind the organization of the facets?

¹The four facets are featured on the backside of *The Model* for convenient overview and review.

PLAN – PARTICIPATION INDIVIDUALLY

POWER-THE VITALITY FOR (JOY)

PATTERN-THE ABILITY FOR (WISDOM)

PRACTICE – PARTICIPATION CORPORATELY

NOTES

[illegible]

Unit 2- session two

Becoming Commissioned – its plan

Developing my personal plan

A closer look at The Plan

The plan to start becoming commissioned is really quite simple. Pray. Think over who is around you who is an unbeliever. On your BBR, write down the names of two of these people. Begin building relationships with an eye toward introducing them to your brothers and sisters in Christ. This process and strategy aim to 1) show outsiders what the gospel does and 2) tell outsiders what the gospel is. Let's look at this process more closely.

Building relationships

4 activities

M e e t i n g

Describe the activity using “who, when, where, why & how.”

S e r v i n g

Talk about ways of doing this and reasons why we don't.

E a t i n g

Discuss what this activity represents and how it can lead to familiarity.

I n v i t i n g

Share ideas, occasions, fears and joys associated with this activity.

4 hindrances

Too s c a r y

Something will be taken...

Too b u s y

Something will not get done...

Too c o s t l y

Something will be given up...

Too u n a p p e a l i n g

Something will be added that
lowers value...

Bridging relationships

To f a m i l y

To g r o w t h g r o u p

To t h e g a t h e r i n g

NOTES

Assignment #3

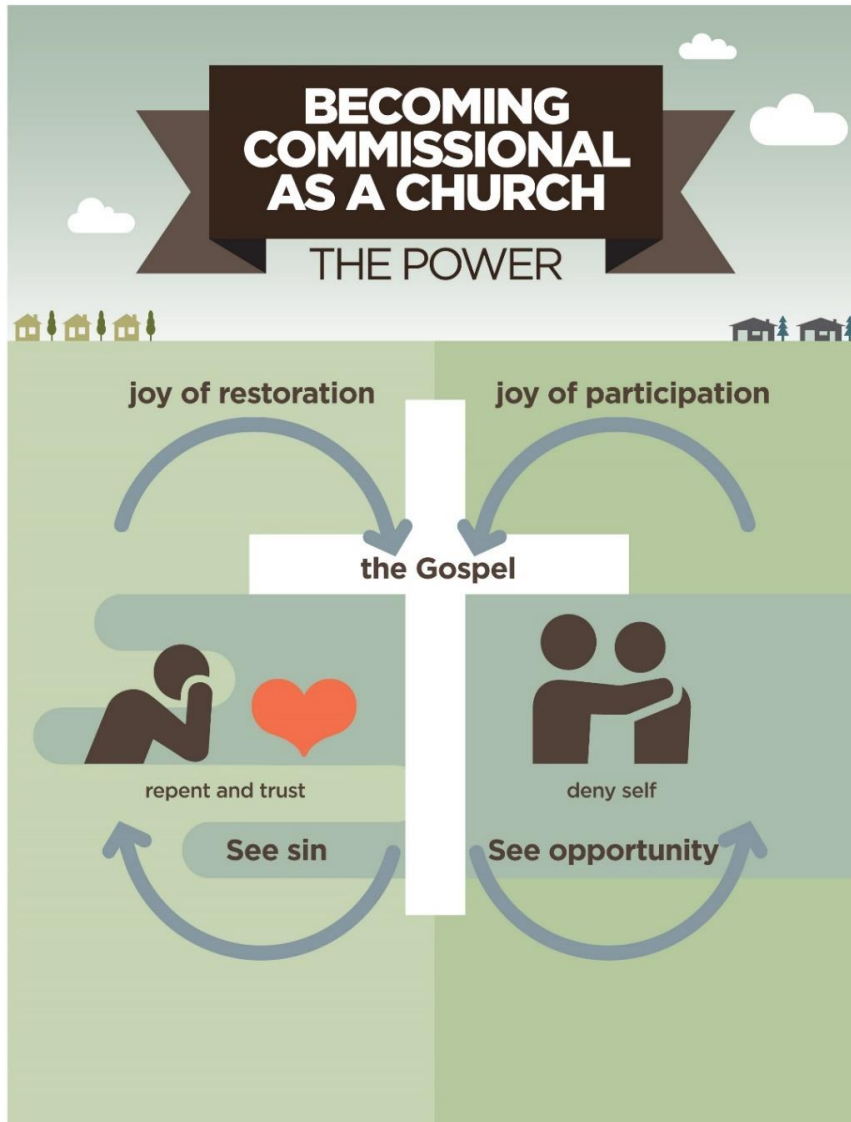
We never simply want to be taught stuff. We want to learn. And we learn best by applying what we are learning immediately. This week, let's begin learning how to make contacts and build relationships. In the process, write down your experiences. They may be funny. They may be awkward. They may be ordinary. They may be gratifying. Don't worry about the results. Simply get to work by:

1. Penning down two people on your BBR
2. Praying regularly for these people
3. Participating in their lives in one or more of the 4 activities found on your BBR
4. Penning down your experiences.

Unit 3- session one

Becoming Commissioned – its power²

Developing our experiential knowledge of the gospel with follow up skill to share the gospel



²An adaptation of World Harvest Mission, *Sonship* (Jenkintown, PA: World Harvest, 2002), 187.

Throughout these next three sessions

- To review the heart of the gospel & renew the heart with the gospel
- To provide language and structure helpful for talking about Jesus in the context of everyday life

Gospel Definition³

What is the gospel? The gospel is not something we do. The gospel is the good news of what God did. The gospel is good news of...

Salvation for hell-deserving sinners
through the Person and work of Jesus
Christ.

Gospel Story

The gospel as stated above is about God and His Son. It is about what God has done through the life, death and resurrection of His Son. It is about how His justice to vindicate His righteousness and his love to justify the sinner come together at the Cross. This is the heart of the story. But this is not the whole of the story. The gospel story can be viewed in broad categories. When listening to people, think about how the questions below connect with the biblical storyline.

1. Creation = Glory to God
 - Question: Who am I? I am a what? I need what?
 - Theme: Identity
2. Fall = Rebellion against God
 - Question: Why is it so difficult? What is to blame?
 - Theme: Problem

³Gospel definition taken from Milton Vincent, *A Gospel Narrative* (Bemidji, MN: Focus, 2008), 1.

3. Redemption = God's work on my behalf

- Questions: What's the solution? To achieve this, what shall I do?
- Theme: Solution

4. Restoration = God's new creation

- Questions: What will satisfy me? When will I realize my hope?
- Theme: Hope

NOTES

[illegible]

Unit 3- session two

Becoming Commissioned – its power

Developing our experiential knowledge of the gospel with follow up skill to share the gospel

Through this session

- To renew the heart with the gospel

Gospel Barriers

What obstructs the gospel getting to unbelievers through you? What keeps you from expressing Gospel-centered love to others? What hinders your progress in becoming missional? (cf. Ps.115:8; Eze. 14:1-5; Matt.7:1-5; 1Cor. 9:12; 2Cor.4:13; Phil.1:14)

Not believing⁴ the gospel for yourself!

Gospel Power

Locating heart idols⁵

As I now am in my sixth decade, I get mail talking about health & security issues.

They want to help me with precious things that may be threatened due to my age.

They want to provide me with help and hope. This group is known as AARP.

I've used their initials as an acronym to help us think over common idols.

⁴See Jer 2:12-13; John 6:35; Heb 11:6-25 for insight into both the nature of sin and faith.

⁵Paul Tripp provides insight into locating heart idols when he says, "whatever controls the heart controls the behavior." Paul David Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands: People in Need of Change Helping People in Need of Change* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2002), 58.

- Achievement (I want to be successful)
- Approval (I want others to like me)
- Relief (I do not want pain)
- Protection (I do not want risk)

Replacing heart idols

Locating a problem is one thing. Changing is another. Change occurs when we first become sad over the loss of who we once enjoyed⁶. This sadness then will produce desire to return to our Lover; to Jesus Christ. Change happens NOW when Christ is (re)cherished. Talk about the difference between 1) just removing idols and 2) replacing them with Christ. Understanding the difference will shed light on **biblical repentance and faith** rather than just a behavioral adjustment.

NOTES

⁶Why does it hurt when I am away from my spouse? The answer is quite simple. I love my spouse. Ponder this question: Where does godly grief over sin originate?

Assignment #4

Locating and replacing heart idols is difficult because we like how things are.

Becoming Commisssional as a Church changes us in the process of helping others change.

1. Take time to be with the LORD this week. Reflect upon Ezekiel 14:1-5 and Isaiah 30:15-18. This week, pray daily Psalm 139:23-24.
2. What does it mean to renew your heart regularly with the gospel? What changes are you noticing in your life as a result of repenting and believing the gospel? Share these experiences and prayer requests with one other person.

Unit 3- session three

Becoming Commissioned – its power

Developing our experiential knowledge of the gospel with follow up skill to share the gospel

Through this session

- To introduce us to where and what happens when personal story meets gospel story.
- To practice “reading stories” that differ from the gospel story by listening to two songs

The gospel story

We are thinking about the gospel as having “four chapters.” They are:

1. CREATION
“identity”
2. FALL
“problem”
3. RESCUE
“solution”
4. RESTORATION
“hope”

Don't just talk to people. Get people to talk to you!

Listen for stories that mimic the gospel story.

Every other story

Each person, every song, all movies, etc. have something in common. They all carry a story. The four above elements make up these stories. They contain a messy mixture of common grace and idolatry; truth and error. They are various versions of the gospel that make up no gospel at all. We must learn to read and respond to people and their version of reality compassionately and faithfully.

Eagles 1979; “Heartache Tonight”⁷

The story centers on a typical high-school summer party.

Talk about common grace that you hear in this song.

Talk about perverted grace (idols) that you hear in this song.

From the song’s perspective, sex looks like...

Notice in the song that risky behavior seems better than the alternative; namely being alone, without anyone; no touch, no togetherness. How can you connect this thought to the gospel? Passages to ponder: Ephesians 4:19; 2:1-10; 5:31-32. Also see John 4

The gospel responds to the cry of this heart.

Pipe Dream 1955; “Everybody has a home but me”

The story: a traveling homeless lady. She’s happy yet something is disturbing her.

Common grace: Can you detect anything in this narrative/song that is good, right, truthful, beautiful? Discuss ideas from the song that take common grace and twisted into a mess known as idolatry. Talk about how the Gospel can intersect this worldview and turn it toward the true gospel. Passage to ponder: Luke 15.

⁷Don Henley, Glenn Frey, Bob Seger, and J. D. Souther, “Heartache Tonight,” from *The Long Run*, Asylum Records (1979). This song by The Eagles is used in class. Insights into the lyrics to the song are drawn heavily from Ted Turnau, *Popologetics: Popular Culture in Christian Perspective* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2012), 248-58.

Assignment #5

This week develop your skill at reading substitute gospel stories. Watch for them in commercials. Listen out for them on secular radio stations. When you are making small talk with people detect their personal “gospel.” To increase your skill at this...

1. Below find a worksheet called “Substitute Gospel Stories.”
2. Read my “substitute gospel stories.” Use these samples as a way to write your own.
3. Choose 1-2 suggestions found on page 18 and develop a counterfeit gospel story of your own. Be prepared to share your thoughts in class.

Substitute Gospel Stories

developing listening skills to detect counterfeit gospels

Case Study #1 ~ the YMCA gospel

CREATION

I am meant to feel and look good...that's just who I am.

FALL

I am sluggish and overweight.

REDEMPTION

I can change this through the Y's program and my determination.

CONSUMMATION

By next year my body will be the talk and I will be a go-to person...you know, appreciated.

Hint: Listen for signs of “progressive sanctification.” Hear the testimonies shared. Watch for sacraments and regulations. Find the code of conduct...it’s there. Notice encouragement to “not forsake assembling together as some are in the habit of doing.” Find out how fellowship functions. What is hell in this context? Who’s the leader setting the pace and providing promises? What’s the cost? Is the theme “family” present? What’s the mood and outlook? How is hope realized?

Case Study #2 ~ The Sports Bar gospel

CREATION

Life is fun!

FALL

I’m lonely and depressed

REDEMPTION

I can change this as I frequent the local sports bar and make friends there.

CONSUMMATION

Never will I experience boredom and lonesomeness now that I have my people.

Case Study #3 ~ The Education gospel

CREATION

Educated people are valued, happy, empowered and are made.

FALL

I’m stupid. I have only a high school diploma.

REDEMPTION

The two-year program provided by the tech school in the city has openings. I’m getting a loan and getting busy at finishing my degree by next year.

CONSUMMATION

I will realize my dream when I complete this program.

Below find some suggestions of possible counterfeit gospels. Use the following outline found in *Unreached* by T. Chester; p.111 to develop 1-2 of the following case studies.

Feel free to create your own.

1) *I need* ____ 2) *My problem is* ____ 3) *My solution is* ____ 4) *My hope is* ____

Case Study: The hobbies gospel

Case Study: The Shopping gospel

Case Study: The home gospel

Case Study: The church gospel

Case Study: The vacation gospel

Case Study: the children gospel

Case Study: The technology gospel

Case Study: The prescription drugs gospel

Becoming Commissioned – Intermission

Defining, developing and deploying our Flock Shared Mission

Through this session

- To become more aware of what it means to have a shared mission as a flock
- To begin sensing both the sacrifice and the joy in developing and deploying a shared mission as a flock

Exercise⁸

We will begin this morning by doing an exercise. First, make three smaller groups.

Then assign a person to lead your group. Each person is to speak and write.

1. Imagine your growth group moved to a foreign country to plant a church (Have fun with the exercise. Don't over analyze it). In your groups discuss questions that need answers. Write down these questions in the next 20 minutes, questions starting with who, what, when, where, why, and how. DON'T ANSWER QUESTIONS. JUST DEVELOP QUESTIONS. We want to write as many quality questions as time will allow. The only criterion you have to write questions is 1Corinthians 10:31-11:1. Read it. Think. And now go to work.

⁸The exercise offered here was taken from *Gospel Communities*; a workshop for developing a gospel community on mission at Coram Deo in Omaha, NE. Bob Thune and the elders at Coram Deo led their church through a workshop on August 25, 2012, that influenced the development of the *Becoming Commissioned as a Church—Intermission* exercise.

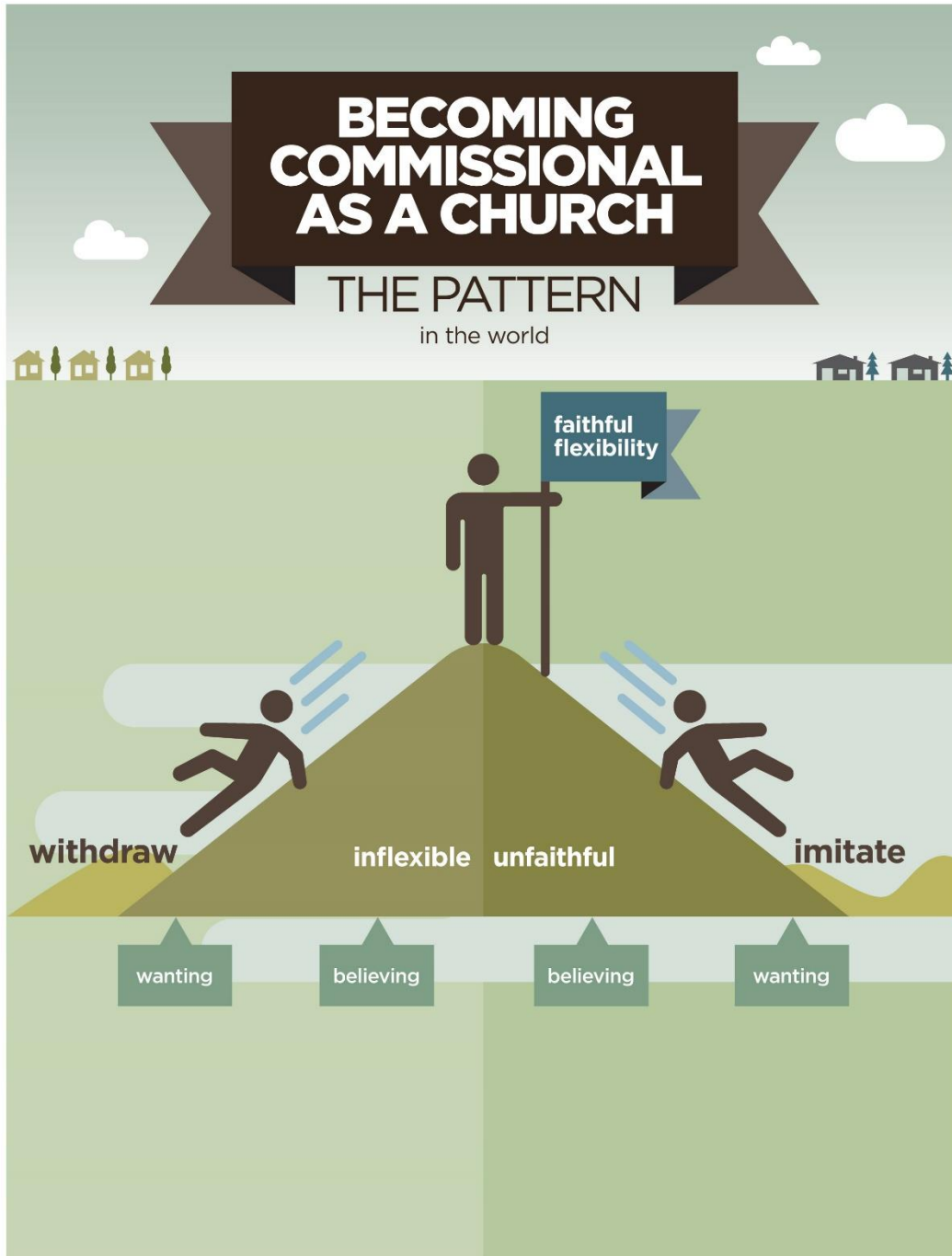
Assignment #6

- Take 15 minutes in your next growth group meeting to interact over two questions.
 - Why do you think we did this exercise? How does this relate to *Becoming Commissional as a Church*?
 - Notice possible differences between your church prayer prompter and your missionary prayer prompter. Why pray differently for domestic living than we pray for international living?
- Come prepared to discuss your answers next class period.

Unit 4- session one

Becoming Commissioned – its pattern

Developing our hearts & skills at reaching people redemptively where they live culturally



Through this session

- To understand the term “Faithful Flexibility”
- To develop both heart and skill at reaching people redemptively where they live culturally.

Introduction

The only way the believing community is able to be a viable alternative community *to* the world is to be *in* the world but not *of* the world (cf. Matt. 5:13-16; John 17:15-16; 1Cor.5:9-11; 9:19-10:13; Tit.2:1-11). This we will argue today requires *Faithful Flexibility*⁹.

A look at Faithful Flexibility

The third facet in *Becoming Commissional as a Church* is titled **The Pattern** (see tab 4 in your field guide). The Pattern is a model that attempts to help explain how to live in popular culture wisely. We will explore the necessity of accommodating our behavior without compromising our belief. Facet #3 provides guidance for reaching people redemptively where they live culturally.

The Passage

Read 1Corinthians 9:19-10:14 aloud. Talk about what you see in the following two paragraphs. When the gospel does not get its proper hearing something is

⁹I am indebted to Dr. Tervean, my Greek professor from Multnomah Biblical Seminary, for the term “faithful flexibility.”

dreadfully wrong. Discuss metaphors. Notice purpose clauses. Pay attention to verbs. What danger is present? What risks are taken? Where's the joy?

- v19-23 – never flee from idolaters (see 5:9-10)
- v24-27 – always flee from idolatry (see 10:14)

The Picture

Talk about what you see in the model. Ask many questions.

The Principle

We need to be less offended by outsiders' lifestyles (9:19) & we need to be offending less outsiders by our lifestyles (10:32).

Be less offended

Over a traditional lifestyle – think in terms of the “WHIO” group

Over a trendy lifestyle – think in terms of the “NPR” group

Be offending less

To the traditional – think in terms of needlessly partaking of stuff

To the trendy – think in terms of needlessly abstaining from stuff

Assignment #7

We've discussed the third facet to Becoming Commissioned as a church. This aspect has to do with living among unbelievers in a culture with values unlike the church.

We discussed this "Christ and Culture" piece conceptually. Next week we will discuss it personally and practically. This week I want us to do the following.

1. Reread 1Corinthians 8:1-11:1 slowly. Look for and list anything you believe addresses Becoming Commissioned (i.e., decisions, lifestyles, perspectives, values, oughts/ought nots, warnings/promises, so on.)
2. Take 20-30 minutes to think on and describe the two kinds of sinners we discussed in class, the traditional and trendy kinds. Descriptions may include the following. Come prepared next week to have a lively discussion.
 - a. Dress
 - b. Interests
 - c. Language
 - d. Political views
 - e. Church views
 - f. Image
 - g. Bible literacy
 - h. Hangouts
 - i. Education
 - j. Values & Ethics
3. Keep praying for and finding ways to reach your "bbr." Don't miss the essence of this course. People NEED the Lord.

Unit 4-session two

Becoming Commissioned – its pattern

Developing our hearts & skills at reaching people redemptively where they live culturally

Introduction

To recap what we discussed last week finish the sentence. “To reach people redemptively where they live culturally requires...”

faithful flexibility

Personal Applications

Lifestyle

By examining your lifestyle, you find basically a certain type of routine or liking that is considered “just my style.” Personality, preference, upbringing, developments and so on are influences shaping our way of life. Below **circle** the word the best represents your style. Next, put a **box** around the word you think reflects the style of your growth group.

Conforming Controlling Conventional Colorful Catchy Care-free

In view of our concept “faithful flexibility” what about your life/growth group style needs:

- to be kept
- to be developed
- to be changed
- to be used

Heart

What dominates the heart directs the behavior. We now are ready to dip down into the lower part of the model. Here we explore dominating thoughts/wants as they relate to each side of our “slippery slope.”

Look back at our model. Notice the visible results of not living a pattern of *faithful flexibility*. They are withdraw & imitate. These consequences are seen on the mountain. The model communicates a two-tier reason for these results. Level one reason can be seen in the mountain. These are called inflexible & unfaithful. The second level reason is noticed under the mountain. Here we look at the basic reason for failing to live **in** the world without being **of** the world and yet being totally **for** the world. Here we notice what hinders us from *Becoming Commissional as a Church*. What we believe to be true (that is not) and what we want (that God isn’t granting) form the basic obstacle that stands in the way of the gospel (cf 1Cor.9:12).

X-ray

Why I withdraw (an inflexible lifestyle)

- I think sin is something I catch like a virus and not something I prefer and then act upon.
- I think I'm above others.
- I think culture is the culprit.
- I think _____
- I want my designer world.
- I want Christians to think well of me.
- I want comfort, convenience, control, safety, ease, etc.
- I want _____

Why I imitate (an unfaithful lifestyle)

- I think the world has more fun than Christians.
- I think the teaching on sin is exaggerated.
- I think culture is neutral.
- I think _____
- I want variety.
- I want to be liked.
- I want to be left alone.
- I want _____

*The disappearing of cultural
Christianity has its downside.
But don't miss the
opportunities of it as we BC
into the future together.*

Assignment #8

We've discussed the third facet to *Becoming Commissional as a Church*. Here's your assignment.

1. In light of the x-ray exercise, go back through the session and 1) Locate your heart idol(s). 2) Replace them with Jesus by repenting of sin and trusting Christ. We must learn how to worship our way out of idolatry by worshipping Christ alone.
2. Pray earnestly for your BBRs. Build and bridge these relationships for the sake of their salvation.
3. Meditate for 10 min. on our class verses (1Cor.10:31-11:1). Write down additional insights and questions. Share these with someone in your growth group.
4. Review intermission exercise thinking about your local growth group mission. Any new thoughts over neighborhood mission?
5. Use 15 minutes of growth group gathering time to talk over and pray for those on your BBR bookmark.

Unit 5 - session one

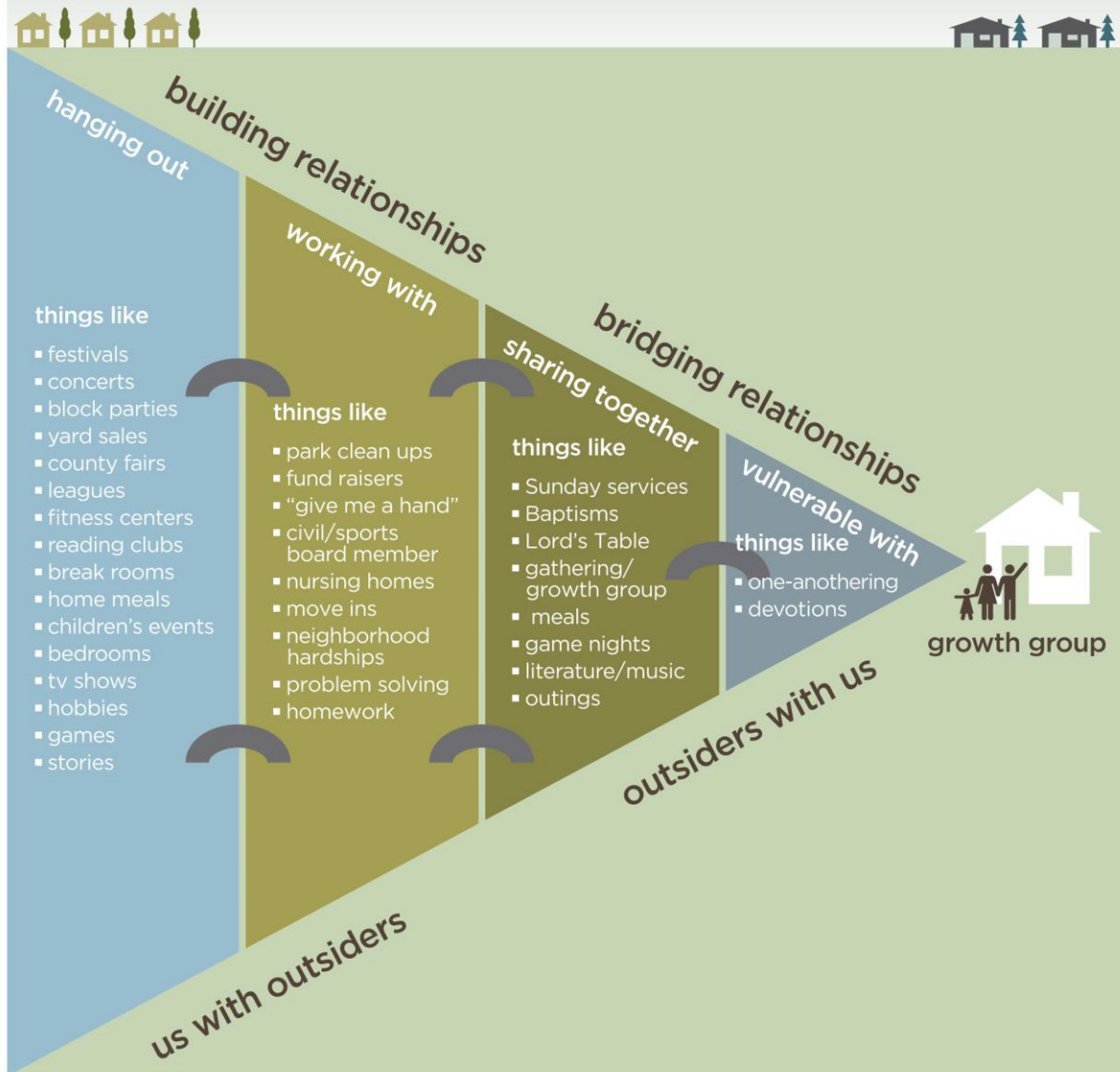
Becoming Commissioned – its practice

Defining terms and strategy, Determining ministry readiness & Developing our mission



BECOMING COMMISSIONAL AS A CHURCH

BBR TOGETHER



Throughout this session

- To define terms and strategy necessary to think clearly over BC practice

Introduction

With three weeks to go, we come to our fourth and final facet in BC, its practice. In this module we explore areas necessary to help us practice as a Flock what we've learned.

This week: We define terms and strategy

Next week: We determine ministry readiness

Final week: We develop mission that will be worked out in families and growth group

Defining Terms and Strategy

We now are ready to explore BC in practice.

Picture

Look at the model on the screen. What do you see? What questions do you have?

Places

In our picture there are real places in which real people with real pain/perplexity exist. These people need to be saved. For ideas to find or create places/opportunities see graphic titled BBR TOGETHER.

Invited...

GO into the home

GO into the neighborhood

Inviting
...

COME into our growth group/family

COME into our gathering

LEFT HALF OF Becoming Commissioned as a Church Model

Us with outsiders – invited

getting

- Give examples of **non-personal** invitations you may find in your community.
- Give examples of **personal** invitations you may get in your community.
- Why would we be interested in receiving invitations in light of Becoming Commissioned as a church? Have a discussion over these goals.

Outsiders with us - inviting

giving

- Give examples of **non-personal** invitations you may give to your community.
- Give examples of **personal** invitations you may give to your community.
- Why would we be interested in giving invitations in light of Becoming Commissioned as a church? Have a discussion over these goals.

Unit 5 - session two

Determining ministry readiness

Through this session

- To determine ministry readiness
- To discover areas needing grace and growth

Today's session is largely about assessments. We will look at how we are developing as individuals and how this development is influencing our growth group. We will end today with assistance in some areas needing grace and growth.

Assessments

We will do two assessments. The first one is a self-assessment. The second one is a growth group assessment.

Self-assessment

Ask yourself three questions.

Am I converted?

I have been baptized as a believer in Jesus Christ.

I have become a member of my local church in agreement with its covenant.

YES NO

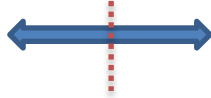
Am I committed?

I enjoy *gathering* together regularly as God's people.

Others notice how I'm *growing* in faith, hope and love.

I find joy in *giving* my time, talents and treasures to the mission¹⁰ of the church

1 2 4 5



Am I Commissioned?

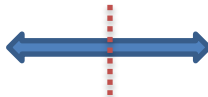
I do believe the Great Commission applies to me.

I am catching the vision of *Becoming Commissioned as a church*.

I am using my BBR with growing confidence and joy.

I am thinking, praying & talking over ways my family & growth group can change

1 2 4 5



Growth Group-assessment

Ask yourselves three questions.

Are we Christ-reliant?

We heartily worship Christ often together.

We regularly read/discuss the Christ-centered Scriptures together

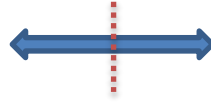
¹⁰Mission statement used in the workshop is taken from Clearcreek Chapel in Springboro, OH. It reads, "By God's grace and through His Word we aim to cultivate in God's people a passion for the supremacy of God *magnified* in love for Him, *manifested* in love for one other and *multiplied* by love for the lost."

We genuinely confess our sins/weakness to one another asking for prayer.

We freely talk about Jesus to each other.

We gladly serve His grace with and to one another.

1 2 4 5



Are we Cle a r?

We know the gospel and how to daily dwell in its goodness

We know the vision of our growth group ministry and discuss its balance and emphases.

We know who leads our growth group in the process of BC.

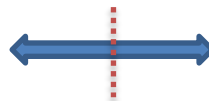
We know our growth group make-up: strengths, passions, weaknesses, giftedness

We know our neighborhoods' cultures, idols, service opportunities, hangouts, names of neighbors, rhythms, etc.

We know the place and people we are trying to reach with the gospel

We know when we are on mission and when we are drifting from mission.

1 2 4 5



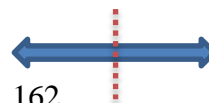
Are we cre a t i v e?

We give ourselves permission to dream and share our dreams over BC.

We courageously try fresh initiatives, review results and revise plans as needed.

We celebrate applied creativity in noticeable ways.

1 2 4 5



Assignment #9

Now that you have explored key areas regarding BC, you will want to grow from this exercise. Below are sample questions that may assist you in your growth and change.

These questions follow the order of the above questions.

Take time talking about your assessment in next growth group meeting. Use the sample questions to help make changes, both personally and as a growth group community.

Question 1: am I converted?

- How does 1 John talk about new birth and its expressions? What marks of new life are evident in your life? How in your growth group or with your Shepherd can you talk about this personal topic?
- Are you a member of your local church? Have you read recently the local church's covenant? Are there pledges in the Covenant that confuse you? bother you? need your growth group assistance?

Question 2: am I committed?

- What do you need help with in the areas of 1) gathering 2) growing 3) giving? Who will assist you in these areas? How and when will you ask for help?
- How many times do you gather with God's people in a given week? What do you like about gatherings? What do you not like about them? Who will you talk with over the ministry of gatherings?

- What ways do you give to God's people who are in our local church? Are you satisfied with the amount of money and time you are giving? If not, how can you find or create additional monies and time to be used for church mission?
- Do you know your giftedness? If not, what do you like to do and what do others like you to do? Connect these together and serve in this capacity. If you already know how God has put you together, are you working hard and steady at providing grace through your giftedness?

Question 3: am I commissioned?

- How does hearing "follow me as I follow Christ" sound to you? distant and irrelevant? close and convicting? thrilling? chilling? burdensome? blessing? What will "making disciples" look like for you? How has BBR helped you? not helped you? What small steps over the next few weeks will you make to increase missional living?
- Whom can you go to for help in personal evangelism? Find him/her and then go and get help.

Question 4: are we Christ-reliant?

- What ways can you change in order to freely worship Christ at growth group – things like bringing up Jesus in conversations over dessert, disclosing the "true you" in prayer requests, praying aloud in prayer time, singing when singing occurs, etc.

- What questions do you need to ask your shepherd regarding the atmosphere/culture of your growth group? How can you be a change agent in this area?
- How will you ask others for their real prayer requests? How will you follow up with these brothers/sisters?

Question 5: are we clear?

- What tool(s) do you use that help you to know the gospel and make it known? What does “daily dwelling in gospel goodness” mean to you? What would it look like for your growth group to “keep in step with the gospel” in daily decisions and activities?
- In your growth group who are your “follow me as I follow Christ” people? How can you benefit from them? Will you benefit by asking them for assistance? How will your leaders lead the growth group in the process of change and development?
- What about your neighborhoods? How can you know them better? What activities are currently happening around your home? around your growth group host home?
- What is your growth group mission? What process will you use to develop and deploy the mission? Where do you want a consistent witness of Christ to be seen and heard? What are simple ways of making a steady inroad into your neighborhood? Do you know its community calendar? How will you use Facet #4 (Practice) to create ideas for neighborhood involvement?

- When will you take out your calendar and schedule regular times of involvement in neighborhood life? What gatherings/activities as a growth group will be used largely for outreach?
- What signs do you look for to determine your growth group is on mission? How do you measure your success in BC as a growth group? When do you discuss problems and promises as they relate to mission as a growth group?
- How are you changing as a family into BC? Are you taking and making invitations to build relationships? Are you reading the Bible and praying with commission in view? How can you use some family time to be missional time?

Question 6: are we creative?

- What are some fresh initiatives you have made as a growth group over the last 6 months? How have they been received? Would you say your growth group is fearful or free to talk about new ways of ministering to outsiders together?
- What activates do you have or can you create that you would invite outsiders to? What roles/parts can each of you in the growth group play to put on activities for outsiders? Things like – communication, invitations, cooking, contacting, cleaning, introducing, praying, planning, children’s activities, etc.
- Have you ever had a brainstorming session as a growth group for BC ideas? What will this look like? How can you assist in this activity?
- What are small ways you will deploy an idea or two? What ways can you celebrate this ministry when it happens? How do you celebrate God’s grace? Do you promote expressions of joy over progress?

Unit 5 - Session three

Developing our mission

Through this session

- To begin the process of developing and deploying your growth group's outreach mission

What are steps and phases necessary to develop and deploy a growth group shared mission?

Personal Participation

Becoming Commissioned as a Church involves becoming missional as growth group which involves becoming missional as families which involves becoming missional as individuals.

You personally will need to take responsibility over developing individually in BC.

To keep a good thing going...

- Use your BBR regularly

Ask God for a couple of acquaintances as your BBRs. Pray often for their salvation. Pray often for opportunities. Look over the 4 evangelistic activities on your BBR (i.e., meeting, serving, eating, inviting). Try to build relationship. Ask questions. Be a good listener. Know their story.

Ask God to cultivate your heart for your BBRs. Try also to bridge

relationships. Invite someone over for dinner just to develop relationship.

No need to “sell Jesus or the church.” Just naturally share yourself. Be known as an inviter.

Talk freely over your BBRs with your family and your growth group.

Bring them up in prayers time. Celebrate with your family and growth group over small changes in relationships with your BBRs. Keep modeling 1Corinthians 10:31-11:1. Keep saying with your lifestyle changes, “follow me as I follow Christ.” Always remember 1Cor.7. Evangelize your family faithfully.

- Enjoy the gospel daily

Read and reflect much on the Bible. Think over the gospel often. Use your Gospel Primer regularly. Come to gatherings prepared to receive and give the gospel. Learn to gospelize one another. Share testimonies at home and in growth group. Read gospel-centered books. Learn the essence and power of Facet #2 in Becoming Commissioned.

Growth Group Participation

Becoming Commissioned as a church develops the community. Making disciples is best done in community. And making community is best done on mission. Don’t allow BC to become individualistic merely. Experience the joy and power of becoming commissioned as a growth group.

To keep moving in this direction below find a 3-phase / 3-month approach.

Month one – Viewing & Reviewing

To achieve an all-Flock *comprehension* of the vision of BC, take month one to carefully work through the model with its four-faceted approach. The aim:

- To achieve knowledge and fluency over material and strategy

Month two – Gracing & Growing

To achieve an all-Flock *revitalization* for the vision of BC, take month two and carefully look over the 6 questions and their accompanying discussion questions to help in areas needing grace and growth. The aim:

- To achieve gospel conviction, character and competency

Month three – Developing & Deploying

To achieve an all-growth group *participation* in the vision of BC, take month three and carefully investigate opportunities and faithfully instigate strategies within these opportunities. The aim:

- To achieve a measurable and attainable plan
 - Commit to and keep each other encouraged over
 - BBR Personally
 - Meeting/Serving/Eating/Inviting
 - 2 people
 - BBR Together
 - Us with Outsiders
 - 2 selected targets
 - Outsiders with Us
 - 2 special times

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ABSTRACT

AFFECTIVE CHURCH EVANGELISM: UNION WITH CHRIST AS IMPETUS FOR CHURCH EVANGELISM

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Despite the fact that union with Christ is featured in Calvinian soteriology, it is too often communicated in mere abstract categories that underemphasize the affective, Trinitarian nature of union with Christ and its related matters having to do with applied soteriology. This thesis seeks to revive interest in the doctrine of personal union with Christ and how this vitality motivates the local church in evangelism. It argues that central to salvation is Jesus Christ, and union with him is the impetus for church evangelism. The argument escorts the reader to its destination by introducing historical theology, systematic theology, biblical theology, and a biblical exposition of 1 Corinthians. The destination is affective church evangelism: union with Christ as impetus for church evangelism. To teach the thesis into existence, an appendix offers the thirteen-week curriculum developed from the thesis.

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