

## CHRISTOLOGY, PNEUMATOLOGY AND ECCLESIOLOGY – ‘THEOLOGY PROPER’

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### ABSTRACT

This work discusses some aspects of ‘theology proper’ regarding the incomprehensible human and divine nature of Christ which have been a bone of contention for some Christian believers, other religious groups, and even the church fathers during the early centuries; the Holy Spirit empowerment and active role in the holistic life of Christ and for his ultimate success in humanity’s soteriological enterprise; and the function or purpose of the church which is indispensable aspect of theological disciplines for believer’s as well as the church. This research was undertaken to critically examine the Christological, pneumatological and ecclesiological disciplines with regards to their theological implications for our contemporary Christian setting. On Christology, the assumptions of the research have established that, in the one-person Jesus Christ there are two natures, a human and divine nature. *Vis-à-vis* pneumatology, the Holy Spirit ministered in the holistic life of Christ and he is still active in the lives of believers and the church. Regarding the ecclesiology, the church is the possession of God with its mandate to guard the prophetic gospel, retain the uncompromising sound teachings, stand against the evils of our world that oppose God and make ready the Church (body and bride) of Christ.

### INTRODUCTION

This research focuses on Theology Proper thus, an aspect of systematic theology discipline which discusses the Godhead, his attributes and works. The concentration for this work is focused on the subjects of Christology, Pneumatology, and Ecclesiology. These areas of concentration seem to be an essential substance required for the holistic development of the individual believer as well as the church. The prophet Jeremiah posited that, “Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord who exercises loving kindness, justice, and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things,” declares the Lord” (Jeremiah 9:23 – 24).

The inference of Jeremiah’s passage regarding the essence of understanding and knowing God seems to have some bearings on Christology and Pneumatology. Additionally, there is also connection to Ecclesiology because the church seems to be the light showing humanity to God (Matt. 5:14 – 16). The work is organized in three sections. The first section discusses the subject of Christology, the (Person of Christ). The second section deliberates on Pneumatology, the (Person and Role of the Holy Spirit in the life Christ and the Church), and the third section on Ecclesiology, the study of the (purpose or function of the Church). The following discussion deliberates on the subjects at stake.

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## CHRISTOLOGY

### The Person of Christ

The person of Christ refers to the study of the human and divine nature of Christ (the Messiah). It appears Theologians in the early Christianity epoch have consciously argued to find a better and a lasting comprehension of both natures of Christ. This section of the research is embarking on discussing theologically, the understanding of Christ's two natures, fully human; and fully divine. Heretical views of these two natures; and the incarnation. The incarnation seems to be the fundamental pivot upon which Christianity or the Christian faith is built. This research would allude to some scholarly views on the subject at stake. Jack Cottrell did an excellent work on the person of Christ; hence his works might receive a prominent attention as far as this subject is concerned.

Tremper Longman asserted that, "Jesus Christ is the centerpiece of the Christian Scriptures. The meaning and interpretation of both Testaments is properly grasped only in light of the person and work of Jesus Christ. That is not to say that the Testament testify to Jesus Christ in the exact same way; they obviously do not, but both Testaments are part of the inscripturated revelation that, in light of the incarnation, proclaims Jesus Christ to be the fullest manifestation of God given to humankind".<sup>2</sup> He again declared that, "New Testament (NT) authors interpreted the Old Testament (OT) in search of the answers to questions pertaining to the identity and ministry of Jesus Christ, the nature of the people of God, and the arrival of the new age. They detected patterns in the OT that were repeated or recapitulated in Jesus' own person. They proclaimed that the prophetic promises made to Israel had been made good in Jesus Christ, and they found allusions to the various events of his life, death and exaltation. Jesus and Israel's Scriptures became a mutually interpretive spiral whereby the Christians began to understand the OT in light of Jesus and understood Jesus in light of the OT. [Hence the development of Christology]".<sup>3</sup> The discussion seems to talk about brief characteristic narrative of Jesus' human and divine natures as well as the focal point on which both OT and NT revolved. The ensuing deliberations focus on the human nature of Jesus, the divine nature of Jesus, heretical view of his humanity and divinity, and the incarnation of Christ as posited earlier.

### The Human Nature of Christ

Regarding the human nature of Jesus, Cottrell posited that, "The Bible pictures Jesus as having a full and complete human nature. This includes first of all a real, flesh-and-blood human body. Since all of God's earthly children "share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same" (Heb 2:14). He "was revealed in the flesh" (1Tim 3:16); "the Word became flesh" (John 1:14, Heb 10:5) ... inhabited his mother's womb as any other baby did (Matt 1:18; Luke 2:5) ... "born of a woman" (Gal 4:4, Luke 2:7), being the seed or offspring of Eve the first woman (Gen 3:15), the seed offspring of Abraham (Gal 3:16), and a "descendant of David according to the flesh" (Rom 1:3) ... cared for as an infant (Luke 2:7,12) and protected from harm (Matt 2:13 - 15) ... He was "brought up" (reared and nourished) in Nazareth (Luke 4:16) and was observed by his neighbors as part of the family of Mary and Joseph (Matt 13:54 - 56). He was known as a young man who earned his living as a carpenter (Mark 6:3)".<sup>4</sup>

He again stated that, "Jesus' human nature included not only a body, but also a human soul with all the sinless human feelings and emotions experienced by Adam's race. One of the emotions most frequently attributed to Christ is compassion, which he felt when confronted with the needs and sufferings of others, e.g., hunger (Matt 15:32), sickness (Matt 14:14; 20:34; Mark 1:41) bereavement (Luke 7:13), and

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<sup>2</sup> Tremper Longman III, *The Baker Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Michigan Grand Rapids, Baker Publishing Group, 2013) 293.

<sup>3</sup> Longman, *Baker Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, 294.

<sup>4</sup> Jack Cottrell, *The Faith Once for All, Bible Doctrine for Today*, (Missouri, Joplin: College Press Publishing Company, 2002), 224-225.

helplessness (Mark 6:34) ...Jesus felt love for those around him (Mark 10:21; John 11:5; 13:1,34; 15:9 – 13) ... Jesus also felt joy (John 15:11; 17:13)...Jesus “was astonished” at the faith of the centurion (Matt 8:10)... He had a physical human body and a human soul or spirit just as other human beings do”.<sup>5</sup>

On the issue of Jesus’ gender, Cottrell stipulated that, “The fact that Jesus was a male is affirmed from the beginning of the Bible to its end, from the masculine seed of woman in Gen 3:15 to the bridegroom in Revelations 21. From prophecy to promise to reality, Mary’s child was called a *Son*, not a daughter (Isa 7:14; Matt 1:21, 25; Rev 12:5). He is the *Son* of God (Ps 2:7; Matt. 3: 17:5), and the *Son* of Man. He accomplished his messianic work in specifically male roles: Prince (Isa 9:6; Acts 3:15); King (Matt 21:5; John 18:37), high priest (Heb 2:17), and sacrificial lamb (Exod. 12:5; 1Cor 5:7) ... reigns from heaven now as “King of kings and Lord of lords” (1Tim 6:15; Rev 19:11 – 16)”.<sup>6</sup>

Concerning Christ sinlessness, Cottrell submitted that, “Scriptures testifies that Christ has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin” (Heb 4:15) ... He “committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth” (1Pet 2:22; John 8:46; 2Cor 5:21) ... The sinlessness of Jesus’ life was necessary so that he could be an acceptable sacrifice for our sins. He was “a lamb unblemished and spotless” (1Pet 1:19) who “offered Himself without blemish to God” (Heb 9:14). If he committed even the least sin, he would have been a guilty sinner (Jas 2:10). In such a case he could not be our Savior but would himself need savior”.<sup>7</sup> Charles Hodges argued that “The facts which the Bible teaches concerning the person of Christ are, first, that He was truly man, i.e., He had a perfect or complete human nature. Hence everything that can be predicated of man (that is, of man as man, and not man as fallen) can be predicated of Christ. Secondly, He was truly God, or had a perfect divine nature. Hence everything that can be predicated of God can be predicated of Christ. Thirdly, He was one person. The same person, self, or Ego, who said, “I thirst,” said, “Before Abraham was, I am.” This is the whole doctrine of the incarnation as it lies in the Scriptures and in the faith of the church”.<sup>8</sup> Regarding the reason why Jesus had to be man, Takeshi Nidaira likewise states that, Hebrews 2:14-17 helps us to understand why Jesus took on a human body and came to this world... All people are sinful by nature and sin every day in their thoughts, words, or actions. Sin pays off with eternal death in hell. But no one can save himself from eternal death. Everyone needs the Savior. That’s why God promised Adam and Eve to send a Savior. That’s why Jesus came to this world. Jesus took on a human body in order to obey God’s law in full as the substitute of all people (Gal 4:4,5); in order to take all the sins of all people (2 Co 5:19-21); in order to die and pay the ransom for the sins of all people (Heb 10:5- 10; 1 John 2:2); in order to be forsaken by God for all people (Matt 27:46).<sup>9</sup>

The opinions of the above scholars give the true impression with Scriptural evidence that Jesus had the human nature as everyone. The writer of Hebrew declares that, “Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham’s descendants.

For this reason, he had to be made like them, fully human in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people (Heb. 2: 14 – 17)”. Finally, as a human, he ate food with his disciples at the last supper (Matt.26:20 - 29), said of himself as eating and drinking (Matt.11:19), and the print in his hands and side (John 20:27), and after his resurrection ate again with the disciples (Luke 24:36 – 49).

## The Divine Nature of Christ

<sup>5</sup> Cottrell, *The Faith Once for All, Bible Doctrine for Today*, 227.

<sup>6</sup> Cottrell, *The Faith Once for All, Bible Doctrine for Today*, 227-228.

<sup>7</sup> Cottrell, *The Faith Once for All, Bible Doctrine for Today*, 228-229.

<sup>8</sup> Charles Hodges, *Systematic Theology*, (New York: Charles Scribner and Co., 1872),380.

<sup>9</sup> Takeshi Nidaira, ‘The Person of Christ’, (Japan: Lutheran Evangelical Christian Church, <https://scholar.google.com>, Accessed on 21/11/17), 6.

About Jesus' divine nature, Charles Hodges posited that, "The Scriptures with equal clearness, declare that Christ was truly God [John 1:1; 20:28; Titus 2:13]. This has been already proved at length. All divine names and titles are applied to Him. He is called God, the mighty God, the great God, God over all; Jehovah, Lord; the Lord of lords and the King of kings. All divine attributes are ascribed to Him. He is declared to be omnipresent, omniscient, almighty, and immutable, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever [Isa 9:6; [Heb. 13:8]]".<sup>10</sup> Again, he states that, "He is set forth as the creator and upholder and ruler of the universe. All things were created by Him and for Him; and by Him all things consist [Col. 1:16 -17]. He is the object of worship to all intelligent creatures, even the highest; all the angels (i.e., all creatures between man and God) are commanded to prostrate themselves before Him".<sup>11</sup>

Hodges further recapitulated that, "He is the object of all the religious sentiments; of reverence, love, faith and devotion. To Him men and angels are responsible for their character and conduct. He required that men should honor Him as they honored the Father; that they should exercise the same faith in Him that they do in God. He declares that He and the Father are one; that those who had seen Him had seen the Father also. He calls all men unto him; promises to forgive their sins; to send them the Holy Spirit; to give them rest and peace; to raise them up at the last day; and to give them eternal life. God is not more and cannot promise more, or do more than Christ is said to be, to promise, and to do. He has, therefore, been the Christian's God from the beginning, in all ages and in all places".<sup>12</sup> Wayne Grudem likewise pointed out that, "Jesus demonstrated his *omnipotence* when he stilled the storm at sea with a word (Matt. 8:26 – 27), multiplied the loaves and fish (Matt. 14:19), and changed water into wine (John 2:1 – 11); The *omniscience* of Jesus is demonstrated in his knowing people's thought (Mark 2:8) and seeing Nathaniel under the fig tree from far away (John 1:48), and knowing the one to betray him (John 6:64); His divine attribute of *omnipresence*, thus where two or three gathered as well as being with his disciples always to the close of the age (Matt. 18:20; 28:20); His divine attribute of *immortality*, the inability to die, thus "Destroy this temple, and in three days *I will raise it up*" (John 2:19 – 22). He is counted worthy to be *worshiped* (Rev. 5:13, 19:10; Phil. 2:9 – 11; Heb. 1:6)".<sup>13</sup> Regarding the reason why Jesus had to be God, Nidaira, puts that forward.

According to Psalm 49:7, no man can redeem the life of another or give to God a ransom for him. The story of the young rich man reminds us of this (Matt 19:16-24). If there were a perfect saint, he would indeed be saved, but he would have no superfluous merit, which he could pass on to someone else... It is also obvious that no mere human can destroy Satan who holds the power of death. Satan was successful in tempting even Adam and Eve, who were holy and had a perfect knowledge about God. We are sinful by nature and don't have a perfect knowledge about God. How can we overcome all his cunning temptations? It is God alone that can defeat Satan's temptations. Because Jesus was the holy one and the Son of God (Luke 1:35), he didn't have original sin. Jesus didn't commit any sin by his thoughts, words or deeds. The Bible says: "We have one (Jesus) who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin" (Heb 4:15). 2 Co 5:21 says that Jesus had no sin. Another thing that only God can do is to rise from the dead. Jesus had to be God in order to rise. Jesus had to be God in order to prove by his resurrection that he accomplished his task as the Savior of the world.<sup>14</sup>

The preceding discussion accentuate Christ's divinity as, sharing the same attributes with God. In fact, the whole conversation portrays the mystery of God. Human cannot comprehend the mysteries of God, unless with the help of the Holy Spirit. No wonder Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council, and teacher of Israel was lacking the understanding of new birth concept discourse with Jesus (John

<sup>10</sup> Nidaira, 'The Person of Christ', 380.

<sup>11</sup> Nidaira, 'The Person of Christ', 382

<sup>12</sup> Nidaira, 'The Person of Christ', 382.

<sup>13</sup> Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology, An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, (Michigan: Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1994), 547-549.

<sup>14</sup> Nidaira, 'The Person of Christ', 7.

3:1 – 15). Molnar adds that, “The mysterious duality in unity of Jesus Christ, God without reserve, man without reserve, the eternal truth in time, the Word of God made flesh.” This is a mystery that the New Testament does not attempt to explain but rather places before us as “the miracle of the Holy Spirit” and as “the direct act of the eternal God.” That is the point of the virgin birth—in this history “God is creatively at work in a new way”.<sup>15</sup> Jesus underscored his divinity when asked the Jewish about (Psalm 110:1 in Matt.22:44-45).

### **Heresies Denying the Humanity and Divinity of Christ**

Talking about heresy of the denial of the divinity of Christ, Augustus Hopkins presented a brief historical survey of views regarding the Person of Christ. *The Ebionites* (A. D. 107?) denied the reality of Christ's divine nature, and held him to be merely man, whether naturally or supernaturally conceived. This man, however, held a peculiar relation to God, in that, from the time of his baptism, an unmeasured fullness of the divine Spirit rested upon him. Ebionism was simply Judaism within the pale of the Christian church, and its denial of Christ's godhood was occasioned by the apparent incompatibility of this doctrine with monotheism.<sup>16</sup>

The *Docetae* (δοκέω – ‘to seem’ ‘to appear’; A. D. 70-170), like most of the Gnostics in the second century and the Manichees in the third, denied the reality of Christ's human body. This view was the logical sequence of their assumption of the inherent evil of matter. If matter is evil and Christ was pure, then Christ's human body must have been merely phantasmal. Docetism was simply pagan philosophy introduced into the church.<sup>17</sup>

*The Arians* (Arius, condemned at Nice, 325 A.D.) denied the integrity of the divine nature in Christ. They regarded the Logos who united himself to humanity in Jesus Christ, not as possessed of absolute godhood, but as the first and highest of created beings. This view originated in a misinterpretation of the Scriptural accounts of Christ's state of humiliation, and in mistaking temporary subordination for original and permanent inequality.<sup>18</sup>

*The Apollinarians* (Apollinaris, condemned at Constantinople, 381 A.D.) denied the integrity of Christ's human nature. According to this view, Christ had no human *νοῦς* or *πνεῦμα*, other than that which was furnished by the divine nature. Christ had only the human *σῶμα* and *ψυχή*; the place of the human *νοῦς* or *πνεῦμα* was filled by the divine Logos. Apollinarism is an attempt to construe the doctrine of Christ's person in the forma of the Platonic trichotomy.<sup>19</sup>

*The Nestorians* (Nestorius, removed from the Patriarchate of Constantinople, 431 A.D.) denied the real union between the divine and the human natures in Christ, making it rather a moral than an organic one. They refused therefore to attribute to the resultant unity the attributes of each nature and regarded Christ as a man in very near relation to God. Thus, they virtually held to two natures and two persons, instead of two natures in one person.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Paul. D. Molnar, ‘Incarnation: The Person and Life of Christ’: (Theology Today, 67 no 2 Jul 2010, Amridge Library, Accessed on 25/11/17), 227.

<sup>16</sup> Augustus Hopkins Strong, *Systematic Theology: A Compendium and Commonplace-book Design for the use of Theological Students*, (New York: A.C. Armstrong and Sons, Broadway, 1889), 669-700.

<sup>17</sup> Hopkins, *Systematic Theology: A Compendium and Commonplace-book Design for the use of Theological Students*, 669-700.

<sup>18</sup> Hopkins, *Systematic Theology: A Compendium and Commonplace-book Design for the use of Theological Students* 669-700.

<sup>19</sup> Hopkins, *Systematic Theology: A Compendium and Commonplace-book Design for the use of Theological Students* 669-700.

<sup>20</sup> Hopkins, *Systematic Theology: A Compendium and Commonplace-book Design for the use of Theological Students* 669-700.

*The Eutychians* (condemned at Chalcedon, 451 A.D.) denied the distinction and coexistence of the two natures, and held to a mingling of both into one, which constituted a *tertium quid*, or third nature. Since in this case the divine must overpower the human, it follows that the human was really absorbed into or transmuted into the divine, although the divine was not in all respects the same, after the union that it was before. Hence the Eutychians were often called Monophysites, because they virtually reduced the two natures to one.<sup>21</sup>

Hopkins asserted that, “The foregoing survey would seem to show that history had exhausted the possibilities of heresy, and that the future denials of the doctrine of Christ’s person must be, in essence, forms of the views already mentioned. All controversies with regard to the person of Christ must, of necessity, hinge upon one of three points: first, the reality of the two natures; secondly, the integrity of the two natures; and thirdly, the union of the two natures in one person. Of these points, Ebionism and Docetism deny the reality of the natures; Arianism and Apollinarism deny their integrity; while Nestorianism and Eutychianism deny their proper union”.<sup>22</sup> The above controversy regarding the person of Christ led to the consensus of the church fathers and was summed up in the conclusion of the council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D. thus:

Following, then, the holy fathers, we unite in teaching all men to confess the one and only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. This selfsame one is perfect [*teleion*] both in deity [*theoteti*] and also in humanness [*anthropoteti*]; this selfsame one is also actually [*alethos*] God and actually man, with a rational soul [*psyches logikes*] and a body. He is of the same reality as God [*homoousion to patri*] as far as his deity is concerned and of the same reality as we are ourselves [*homoousion hemin*] as far as his humanness is concerned; thus, like us in all respect, sin only excepted. Before the time began [*pro aionon*] he was begotten of the Father, in respect of his deity, and now in these “last days,” for us and on behalf of our salvation, this selfsame one was born of Mary the virgin, who is God-bearer [*theotokos*] in respect of his humanness [*anthropoteta*]. [We also teach] that we apprehend [*gnoridzomenon*] this one and only Christ – Son, Lord, onlybegotten – in two natures [*duo physesin*]; [and we do this] without confusing the two natures [*asynkytos*], without transmuting one nature into the other [*atreptos*], without dividing them into two separate categories [*adiaretos*], without contrasting them according to area or function [*achoristos*]. The distinctiveness of each nature is not nullified by the union. Instead, the “properties” [*idiotetos*] of each nature are conserved and both natures concur [*syntrechouses*] in one “person” [*prosopon*] and in one *hypostasis*. They are not divided or cut into two *prosopa* but are together the one and only and only-begotten Logos of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, have the prophets of old testified; thus, the Lord Jesus Christ himself taught us; thus, the Symbol of the Fathers [N] has handed down [*paradedoke*] to us.<sup>23</sup>

Hopkins further stated that, “In opposition to all these errors, The Orthodox doctrine (promulgated at Chalcedon, 451 A.D.) holds that in the one-person Jesus Christ there are two natures, a human nature and a divine nature, each in its completeness and integrity, and that these two natures are organically and indissolubly united, yet so that no third nature is formed thereby. In brief, to use the antiquated dictum, orthodox doctrine forbids us either to divide the person or to confound the natures. That this doctrine is Scriptural and rational”.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, Molnar asserts that, “Any separation of Jesus’ humanity and divinity would not only sunder the crucial connection between who God is as triune in himself (as one who loves and is merciful and who he is for us in Christ), but it would turn “the cross into the bottomless pit of

<sup>21</sup> Hopkins, *Systematic Theology: A Compendium and Commonplace-book Design for the use of Theological Students* 669-700.

<sup>22</sup> Hopkins, *Systematic Theology: A Compendium and Commonplace-book Design for the use of Theological Students* 669-700.

<sup>23</sup> Cottrell, *The Faith Once for All, Bible Doctrine for Today*, 250.

<sup>24</sup> Hopkins, *Systematic Theology: A Compendium and Commonplace-book Design for the use of Theological Students* 669-700

darkness,” since we would have only a man abandoned on the cross and a God who is “monstrously unconcerned with our life”.<sup>25</sup>

### The Incarnation of Christ

Cottrell described the incarnation as, “The eternally preexisting Logos, the second person of the Trinity, entered into or was united with the human person Jesus of Nazareth in connection with the latter’s miraculous conception in Mary’s womb. This event is called the *incarnation* (the enfleshment, the embodiment)”.<sup>26</sup> Longman asserted that, “The NT describes the process, or method, of the incarnation as virginal conception. God’s Spirit overshadowed a young Jewish virgin, Mary, who then gave birth to Jesus... Christ’s eternal nature is attested throughout the NT and belongs indisputably to the very core of Christian theology and understanding...The virginal conception joins the preexistent (eternal) nature of Christ to his historical (temporal) existence in a way that preserves both natures as coexistent”.<sup>27</sup> In deliberating the *eternal preexistence of Jesus’ divine nature*, Cottrell submitted that Christ “Existed before he came into this world (John 6:41; 3:31; 6:38; 3:13); sent by the Father (John 8:16; Matt 15:24; John 3:34); John the Baptist declared that Jesus existed before him (John 1:15,30); was active in the creation of this world (John 1:3; 1Cor 8:6; Col 1:16; Heb 1:2,10); existed before Abraham (John 8:58; Micah 5:2); he is “Eternal Father” (Isa 9:6); the same [unchanging] (Heb 1:12; 13:8); Alpha and Omega (Rev 22:13)”.<sup>28</sup> In an article of the Person and Work of Christ revisited by Christopher Holmes, he cited the comments of E.C. Hoskyns, on John 8:58, “Before Abraham was, I am”, and posited that, “The contrast is between an existence initiated by birth and an absolute existence... The Son of God is not merely antecedent in time to Abraham; if so, the Saying would have been, *Before Abraham came into being, I was*. The Being of the Son is continuous, irrespective of all time (Chrysostom). As Cyril of Alexandria comments, “He therefore is not rivaling Abraham’s times; but since He is above all time and o’erpasseth the number of every age, He says that He is before Abraham”.<sup>29</sup>

On the aspect of the *Word became flesh*, Cottrell again posited that, “The eternally preexistent Logos entered into this spatial, material universe by becoming united with the newly conceived male infant miraculously formed in Mary’s womb. In other words, “The Word became flesh” (John 1:14); already existed before he became a man (Phil 2:5 – 8) ...The orthodox way of summing it up is this: Jesus of Nazareth was *one person with two natures* (compare the Trinity, which is three persons with one nature); i.e., he has two complete natures: a complete human nature and a complete divine nature. At the same time, he has only one center of consciousness, one unified center of thinking, willing, and emotional experience”.<sup>30</sup>

Regarding the virgin birth, Cottrell moreover stated that, “The virgin birth of Jesus was unique in that it involved only one human parent and produced an offspring who was both fully human and fully divine... was foretold in Isa 7:14, and the fulfillment recorded in (Matt 1:18 – 25) and (Luke 1:26 – 35) in perspective of Joseph and Mary...Considering biblical teaching. First, it was a not natural event and has no resemblance to any kind of natural birth, human or animal. Second, the conception of Jesus was not the result of some corporal sexual coupling between Mary and a bodily Deity. Third, the virgin birth was not

<sup>25</sup> Molnar, ‘Incarnation: The Person and Life of Christ’, 227.

<sup>26</sup> Cottrell, *The Faith Once for All, Bible Doctrine for Today* 246.

<sup>27</sup> Longman, *Baker Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, 836.

<sup>28</sup> Cottrell, *The Faith Once for All, Bible Doctrine for Today*, 246-247

<sup>29</sup> Christopher R.J. Holmes, ‘The Person and Work of Christ Revisited: In Conversation with Karl Barth’: (Anglican Theological Review,

January 1, 2013, Amridge Library, Accessed on 15/11/17), 45.

<sup>30</sup> Holmes, ‘The Person and Work of Christ Revisited: In Conversation with Karl Barth’ 248-249.

just the *ex nihilo* creation of the person Jesus, who was simply housed within and nourished by Mary's womb. The human nature of Jesus began as an ovum produced by Mary. He was literally Mary's offspring or "seed".<sup>31</sup>

Fourth, the supernatural acts of God that brought Jesus into the world was not at his birth as such but at his conception. Fifth, from the point of conception onward, the unique person Jesus continued to develop in Mary's womb in a natural way until the time of birth, under the providential protection of the Father. Sixth, it is obvious that Jesus had only one earthly parent: his mother, Mary. Joseph was his father only in a legal sense (Luke 2:27, 41; 4:22) and was his official guardian... The only real significance of the virgin birth lies in its necessary relation to the deity of Jesus. To perform the great saving works of atonement and resurrection, the Redeemer must be a sinless human being who is also God. The virgin birth is the means by which such a person has come into being.<sup>32</sup>

The above deliberation has confirmed the incarnation of Christ and has really corroborated the fact that it takes a sinless person like Christ to perform the sacrificial work on the cross to take away the sin and at the same time the wrath that God had against humanity. Hebrew states that, "But because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. Therefore, he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them. Such a high priest truly meets our need—one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens (Heb. 7:24 – 27)". The subsequent section will discuss the theological discipline of *pneumatology* thus, the role of the Holy Spirit in the life and ministry of Christ and the church.

## **PNEUMATOLOGY**

### **The Role of the Holy Spirit in the Life of Christ and the Church**

This section discusses the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of Christ and the Church. It also examines briefly the personality of the Holy Spirit within the Godhead. With regards to the life of Christ and the church, the research deliberates on the role of the Holy Spirit in Christ's birth or conception, his baptism, temptation, ministry, and his death and resurrection, as well as the role he (the Holy Spirit) plays in the life of the church and believers as well. We deliberate first on the personality of the Holy Spirit and names associated with him.

### **Personality of the Holy Spirit**

Michael Bird claimed that, "The Holy Spirit is the third member of the Triune Godhead. In Christian thought the Holy Spirit is often regarded as the personification of the love between the father and the Son. In operation, the Spirit is the energy and power of God who works in creation, revelation, redemption, and renewal. More specifically, in salvation, the Holy Spirit applies the work of Christ to the believer and thus mediates the work of the mediator".<sup>33</sup> Bird again stated, "The Holy Spirit is the person within the Godhead who applies the work of Christ to us and enables us to personally encounter the Triune God, the Nicene Creed includes this affirmation: We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets".<sup>34</sup>

Jack Cottrell also in the same light submitted that, "Jesus' designation of the Spirit as *allos parakletos* ("another Helper") in John 14:16 is a twofold demonstration of his personhood. A *parakletos* is a "counselor for the defense," equivalent to an attorney, which is in itself a personal concept. Also, the word

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<sup>31</sup> Cottrell, *The Faith Once for All, Bible Doctrine for Today*, 250-252.

<sup>32</sup> Cottrell, *The Faith Once for All, Bible Doctrine for Today* 250-252

<sup>33</sup> Michael F. Bird, *Evangelical Theology, A Biblical and Systematic Introduction*, (Michigan, Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2013), 611.

<sup>34</sup> Bird, *Evangelical Theology, A Biblical and Systematic Introduction*, 611.

*allos* means “another of the same kind” (in contrast with *heteros*, “another of a different kind”). In other words, the Spirit must be personal, like Jesus”.<sup>35</sup>

He stated that, “The Holy Spirit is a *divine person*, one of the three persons of the Trinity...the principal words for “spirit” are *ruach* in the OT and *pneuma* in the NT...the Holy Spirit is Holy...because he is set apart from all finite, created spirits...he is called the Holy Spirit because, in comparison with the Father and Son, his main work is to make us *holy* in the ethical sense. Holiness is his distinctive work”.<sup>36</sup>

Tremper Longman likewise posited that, “Holiness is an attribute of God and of all that is fit for association with him. God alone is intrinsically holy (Rev. 15:4). God the Father is holy (John 17:11), as is the Son (Acts 3:14), while “Holy” is the characteristic designation of God’s Spirit (Ps. 51:11; Matt. 1:18)”.<sup>37</sup> Biblical evidence to substantiate the personality of the Holy Spirit outlined by Cottrell is that: ‘he exhibits intellectual activity (Rom 8:26 – 27; 1 Cor 2:10 – 11); he exhibits volitional activity such as choosing or making decisions (Acts 13:2; 15:28; 16:6 – 7; 20:28; 1Cor 12:11); he speaks (John 16:13 – 14; Acts 8:29; 13:2; 1 Tim 4:1; Rev 2:7); he teaches (John 14:26; 1 Cor 2:13); and he experiences emotions or feelings such as love (Rom 15:30) and grief (Eph 4:30; Isa 63:10);...he may be lied to (Acts 5:3), tempted (Acts 5:9), blasphemed (Matt 12:31), and insulted (Heb 10:29)”.<sup>38</sup>

Alexander Campbell described the Holy Spirit and said, “As there is man and the spirit of man, so there is God and the Spirit of God ... The active power of man is in his spirit. So, John the Baptist came in the *power* of Elijah, because he came in his *spirit*. The Spirit of God is therefore often used for his power; though it is not an impersonal power, but a living, energizing, active, personal existence. Hence in all the works of God the Spirit of God is the active, operating agent ... and the body of Jesus made by the Spirit of God”.<sup>39</sup> Campbell mentioned that, “In the New Testament, it is designated as the immediate author and agent of the new creation, and of the holiness of Christians. It is therefore called *the Holy Spirit*. In the sublime and ineffable relation of the Deity, or godhead, it stands next to the Incarnate Word...Jesus is the *head*, and the Spirit is the *life* and animating principle of that body [Christ’s body, the church]”.<sup>40</sup> Campbell moreover, stipulates that,

By divine authority, [Christians are] immersed into the name of the **Father**, the **Son**, and the **Holy Spirit**, in coming into the kingdom of grace; and while in that kingdom the supreme benediction is, “The *Grace* of the **Lord Jesus Christ**, and the *love* of **God**, and the *communion* of the **Holy Spirit** be with you”. Indeed, in the old church that was in the wilderness, while matters were comparatively in the shadows of a moonlight age, the high priest of Israel was commanded to put “the *name* of God” upon the children of Israel – in the same relation of the scared three. “The Lord bless thee and keep thee. The Lord make his face to shine upon thee and be *gracious* unto thee. The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee and give thee peace.” Jehovah bless thee – is equal to “the love of God.” Jehovah be *gracious* unto thee, answers to “the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ” – and Jehovah lift up his countenance upon thee and give thee peace, corresponds to “the communion of the Spirit”.<sup>41</sup>

Regarding the *Names of the Holy Spirit*: Harold Willmington asserted that, the “Holy Spirit is mentioned over 100 times in the Old Testament. In the New Testament alone there are some 261 passages

<sup>35</sup> Cottrell, *The Faith Once for All, Bible Doctrine for Today*, 285.

<sup>36</sup> Cottrell, *The Faith Once for All, Bible Doctrine for Today* 284.

<sup>37</sup> Longman, *Baker Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, 791.

<sup>38</sup> Cottrell, *The Faith Once for All, Bible Doctrine for Today*, 285.

<sup>39</sup> Alexander Campbell, *The Christian System*, (Tennessee, Nashville, Gospel Advocate Restoration Reprints, 2001), 11.

<sup>40</sup> Campbell, *The Christian System*, 11-12.

<sup>41</sup> Campbell, *The Christian System*, 12

that refer to the Holy Spirit. He is mentioned 56 times in the Gospels, 57 times in the book of Acts, 112 times in the Pauline Epistles, and 36 times in the remaining books of the New Testament".<sup>42</sup> He additionally stated that, "He is the Spirit of God (1 Cor 3:16); the Spirit of Christ (Rom 8:9); the eternal Spirit (Heb 9:14); the Spirit of truth (John 16:13); the Spirit of grace (Heb 10:29); the Spirit of glory (1 Pet 4:14); the Spirit of life (Rom 8:10 – 11); the Spirit of wisdom and revelation (1 Cor 2:9 – 10); the comforter (John 14:26); the Spirit of promise (Acts 1:4 – 5); the Spirit of adoption (Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6); the Spirit of holiness (Rom 1:4); and the Spirit of faith (2 Cor 4:13)".<sup>43</sup>

In an article by Boris Bobrinskoy on the indwelling of the Spirit in Christ, he discusses the Cappadocian Fathers' perception about the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of Christ. He spoke about the Fifth discourse on the Holy Spirit, by St Gregory of Nazianzen and states that, "Christ is born; the Spirit is his forerunner. He is baptized; the Spirit bears witness. He is tempted; the Spirit leads him up (into the desert). He works miracles; the Spirit accompanies them. He ascends; the Spirit takes his place".<sup>44</sup> Regarding St Basil assertion on the subject matter, Bobrinskoy mentioned that,

First of all, he was made an unction and was inseparably united to the flesh of the Lord, as it is written: 'Him upon whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, he is my beloved Son'; and, 'Jesus of Nazareth, whom God anointed with the Holy Spirit...' After this, every operation was accomplished with the co-operation of the Spirit. He was present when the Lord was being tempted by the devil, for it is written: 'Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted.' He was inseparably with him while he worked his miracles, for it is said: 'If by the Spirit of God, I cast out demons...' And he did not leave him when he had risen from the dead; "(Do we speak of) Christ's advent? The Spirit is forerunner. Or of his incarnate presence? The Spirit is inseparable (from him). The working of miracles and the gifts of healing are through the Holy Spirit. Demons were exorcised by the Spirit of God. The devil was deprived of his power by the presence of the Spirit. Remission of sins is accomplished by the grace of the Spirit..."<sup>45</sup>

As to St John Chrysostom, Bobrinskoy posited that,

Chrysostom 'employed a more balanced language to speak of the divinity of Christ without in any way diminishing the action of the Spirit within him. He did not hesitate to proclaim that "Christ is everywhere covered by the Holy Spirit"... that "he is filled with the Spirit from the beginning"... that "he is entirely anointed by the Spirit"... and that "Jesus is spiritual, for the Spirit himself has fashioned him (in the flesh), thus God the Word and the whole energy of the Spirit dwell within him"... For the Cappadocian Fathers as well as for St John Chrysostom, to speak of the presence of the Spirit in Jesus at the various stages of his human life is above all to remember that the very name of "Christ" is supremely a trinitarian and "pneumatophoric" name.<sup>46</sup>

The implication of the aforesaid discussion seems to authenticate the personality of the Holy Spirit, as well as his various names which likewise portrays his identity and personality. Moreover, it has also described the Holy Spirit as the third divine person of the triune Godhead, who is very active in all the activities of God both perceptible and imperceptible as well as the holistic life of Christ. The ensuing discourse will highlight on the role of the Holy Spirit in Jesus' holistic life, thus: his conception, baptism, temptation, ministry, death and his resurrection.

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<sup>42</sup> Harold L., Willmington, *Willmington Guide to the Bible 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition* (USA: Illinois, Tyndale House Pub. Inc., 2011), 522

<sup>43</sup> Willmington, *Willmington Guide to the Bible 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition* 522-523.

<sup>44</sup> Boris Bobrinskoy, 'The indwelling of the Spirit in Christ: "Pneumatic Christology" in the Cappadocian Fathers' (St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly, January 1, 1984, Amridge Library, Accessed on 27/11/17), 60.

<sup>45</sup> Bobrinskoy, 'The indwelling of the Spirit in Christ: "Pneumatic Christology" in the Cappadocian Fathers' 60.

<sup>46</sup> Bobrinskoy, 'The indwelling of the Spirit in Christ: "Pneumatic Christology" in the Cappadocian Fathers' 61.

### **The Role of the Holy Spirit in Christ's Conception or Birth**

Luke narrated the angel's visit to Mary concerning Christ birth thus "...The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you. So, the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God (Luke 1:26 – 35)". Bird posited that, "Jesus' birth is regarded as a special act of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit "overshadowed" Mary (Luke 1:35; cf. Matt. 1:18, 20)".<sup>47</sup> Craig Keener asserts that, Jewish traditions used the language of "overshadowing" for God's presence with his people".<sup>48</sup> Longman, submitted that, "The Greek verb translated "will overshadow you" [*episkiasei* ἐπισκιάσει]<sup>49</sup> is used in the LXX to describe God's protective nature (Pss. 91:4; 140:7). Likewise, the coming of God's Spirit presented empowerment (Acts 1:8). Thus, Mary received both divine empowerment and protection".<sup>50</sup> Carroll likewise declares that, "The image of overshadowing (with the verb *episkiazain*) suggests divine presence (cf. Exod 40:35) and ...it is no surprise that a child born by the agency of the Holy Spirit will be called holy (*hagion*, Luke 1:35) ... as one whose life will be wholly directed by God's Spirit".<sup>51</sup> With regards to the interaction between the angel Gabriel and Mary, Karris and Cindy posited that, "Because there was a compelling reason for Mary's doubt, the angel said to Mary...you will be fruitful without corruption, you will conceive without sexual desire, you will shall bring forth without labor, because this is not from male seed, but from the power of the Holy Spirit. This, it was said in Matthew 1:20: "That which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit".<sup>52</sup>

Andrew T. Lincoln, in his article on 'Luke and Jesus' Conception: A Case of Double Paternity?' submitted that, "Mary's astonishment about being chosen as the mother of the messianic king prompts what follows about the powerful and protective divine Spirit being at work in the circumstances of the conception and birth of this special child. The Spirit's coming upon Mary, the child being called the Son of God, and a sign being given through Elizabeth's pregnancy need not at all be read as implying that the Spirit replaces any agency or activity that humans would normally be expected to exercise".<sup>53</sup> The discussion suggests the conception of Christ was initiated and consummated by the divine activity of the Holy Spirit, no human agent or activity was involved, and this seems to suggest the reason why Christ propitiation work on the cross was perfect to God just for the sake of sinful humanity and his environment.

### **The Role of the Holy Spirit in Christ's Baptism**

The book of Matthew discusses how the Spirit of God came on Jesus after being baptized by John, Matthew states that, "As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased (Matt. 3:16 – 17; Mk. 1:9 – 11)". Bird contended that, Jesus' baptism occasioned his reception of the Holy Spirit. The tearing of the heavens, the descent of the Spirit, and the voice from above all indicates Jesus' anointing as the messianic Son and his empowering as the eschatological prophet (Matt 3:13 – 17; cf. Isa 61:1 – 2). What we have in the baptism episode is thoroughly Trinitarian. The Father anoints, the Son obeys, and the Spirit is received. The baptism

<sup>47</sup> Bird, *Evangelical Theology, A Biblical and Systematic Introduction*. 624.

<sup>48</sup> Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary, New Testament Second Edition*, (IL, Inter Varsity Press, 2014), 181.

<sup>49</sup> Barbara Aland, Etal., *The Greek New Testament, A Readers' Edition*, (Germany: Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2014), 157.

<sup>50</sup> Longman, *Baker Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, 1571.

<sup>51</sup> John T. Carroll, *Luke*, (Presbyterian Publishing Corporation, 2012-01029, Amridge Library, Accessed 29/10/17), 42

<sup>52</sup> Robert J. Karris, and Cindy J Ventrice, *Commentary of the Gospel of Luke Chapters 1 – 8*, (Franciscan Institute Publications, 2001-01-01, Amridge Library, Accessed 29/10/17),74.

<sup>53</sup> Andrew T. Lincoln, 'Luke and Jesus' Conception: A Case of Double Paternity?' (England: University of Gloucestershire, Cheltenham GL50 4AZ, Amridge Library), 643.

is a cosmic rendezvous between the second and the third members of the Godhead united in the redemptive mission to rescue Israel, and then through the renewed Israel, to take salvation to the ends of the earth.<sup>54</sup> Keener likewise posited that, “Many believed that the Spirit was no longer available in their time; others believed that the Spirit simply did not work as forcefully as in the days of the prophets, until the time of the end. That the Spirit comes on Jesus indicates the inauguration of the messianic era and marks Jesus out as the Spirit-bearer and hence \*Messiah (3:11)”.<sup>55</sup> Commenting on Jesus’ baptism and the descend of the Spirit, Mark Strauss cited (Isaiah 11:2 – 4) prediction of the coming of Davidic Messiah, thus, “The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him – the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of knowledge and fear of the Lord...the Messiah is presented as one who will live in total dependence on God through the Spirit”.<sup>56</sup>

Howard Clarke likewise suggested that, “Jesus’ baptism is validated by the presence of the Holy Spirit, who is always associated with his baptism in the New Testament. Its descending “like a dove” on the water (16) recalls two other beginnings: the “Spirit of God” that “moved upon the face of the waters” (Gen 1:2), and the dove that Noah sent out to discover if the flood waters had abated (Gen 8:8 – 12). So, Matthew suggest that a new creation is at hand... Its presence here along with Jesus and the voice of the Lord (often depicted in art by a hand appearing from above) makes this one of the New Testament’s few Trinitarian proof texts, with the Father’s “voice from heaven” making explicit the divine sonship of Jesus that was implied by “Emmanuel” (“God with us”) at 1:23”.<sup>57</sup> Clarke moreover succumbed that, “Conversely, for some of those who claimed that Jesus was born and died a man, it was the Holy Spirit that here at his baptism filled him with the divine powers he exhibited in his ministry; and after his death and resurrection Jesus will in a sense “return” in Acts as the Holy Spirit”.<sup>58</sup>

The baptism episode gives the impression that the Holy Spirit came on Jesus and filled, anointed and empowered him for his intended ministry. It also came to authenticate his Deity as one of the triune Godhead, inaugurated his messianic epoch, and moreover, his entire life on earth, he will be contingent on God through the Spirit. No wonder from his birth to his resurrection and ascension the Holy Spirit’s actions were dominant.

### **The Role of the Holy Spirit in Christ’s Temptation**

Luke recounted that, “Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil... (Luke 4:1 – 2; Matt. 4:1; Mk. 1:12)”. Karris submitted that, “Now Jesus full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan, not because he had been first filled with the Holy Spirit there, but because now his fullness of the Holy Spirit first began to be apparent, overflowing to others according to what Jn. 1:14,16 has: “And we have seen his glory... of his fullness we have all received”. Full, it says not only in a sufficient manner, but also in a superabundant one”.<sup>59</sup> Bird asserted that, “The Holy Spirit can even be considered the dominant partner in their [Jesus’] work. That is why Jesus does not do any miracles until he himself receives the Holy Spirit at his baptism. That dominance is expressed when the Spirit “led” Jesus into the wilderness to face the accuser and to win the victory over Satan that Adam and Israel failed to win (Matt 4:1 – 11; Lk. 4:14)”.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Bird, *Evangelical Theology, A Biblical and Systematic Introduction*, 624.

<sup>55</sup> Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary, New Testament Second Edition*, 53.

<sup>56</sup> Mark L. Strauss, *Mark: Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, (Michigan, Grand Rapids, 2014), 73

<sup>57</sup> Howard Clarke, *Gospel of Matthew and its Readers: A Historical introduction to the First Gospel*, (Indiana University Press, 2003-08-07), 40.

<sup>58</sup> Clarke, *Gospel of Matthew and its Readers: A Historical introduction to the First Gospel*, 40.

<sup>59</sup> Karris and Cindy, *Commentary of the Gospel of Luke Chapters 1 – 8*, 264.

<sup>60</sup> Bird, *Evangelical Theology, A Biblical and Systematic Introduction*, 624.

Beale and Carson commenting on Luke 4:1 – 13, asserted that Jesus “Anointed with the Spirit (3:22), Jesus is now “full of the Holy Spirit” and “led by the Spirit in the wilderness” (4:1). After proving to be faithful to God, Jesus was again “filled with the power of the Spirit,” and this focus on the Spirit leads directly to the Isaianic quotation in 4:18 – 19 that explains the significance of Jesus’ anointment. The issue of Jesus’ status as the Son of God (3:22) resurfaces in this temptation account (4:3; cf. 3:38) when the content of this recognition is clarified through Jesus’ refusal to yield to the plan of Satan”.<sup>61</sup> Case Winter likewise acceded that, “The Spirit that alighted on Jesus now leads him into the wilderness where he will be “tempted by the devil”. The affirmation that Jesus is “the Son of God” needs to be worked as to its meaning. In each of the temptations, the tempter begins “if you are the Son of God’.<sup>62</sup> Bradley moreover posited that, ‘Jesus led up “under the Spirit” (ὕπο τοῦ πνεύματος) to be tempted “under the devil” (ὕπο τοῦ διαβόλου). Spirit, the mediating power between all opposition leads Jesus up and into the wilderness”.<sup>63</sup> The discussions emphasize the leading of the Spirit into the desert for Jesus’ temptation, to win victory over Satan and more so to prove his status as the Son of God. The leading of the Spirit substantiates Paul’s assertion in the book of Romans, ‘For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God’ (8:14).

### **The role of the Holy Spirit in Christ’s ministry**

Longman submitted that, “At the start of Jesus’ public ministry, the Holy Spirit “descended on him” at baptism (Luke 3:22). This anointing by the Spirit initiates and empowers Jesus’ public ministry, from his preaching, to his miraculous works, to his perfect obedience (Luke 4:14 – 18; John 3:34; Acts 10:38)”.<sup>64</sup> Luke seems to account Jesus’ manifesto or his declaration after his returned from the wilderness to the synagogue during the Sabbath day, he stated that,

Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. He was teaching in their synagogues, and everyone praised him. He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing” (Luke 4:14 – 20).

Regarding Jesus’ assertion “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me”, Karris and Cindy posited that, The human nature in Christ was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and united by his grace to the divine nature. And on account of these two it says that, the Spirit of the Lord is *upon him and anointed him*...the Holy Spirit is certainly *to be upon him* with regards to the super excellence of his unique grace, on account of which it is said in John 3:34: “God does not give the Spirit in a miserly fashion”. When the text says *he anointed him*, this refers to his prerogatives of priestly and

<sup>61</sup> G.K. Beale and D.A. Carson, *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, (Michigan, Grand Rapids, Baker Publishing Group, 2007), 283.

<sup>62</sup> Anna Case-Winter, *Beliefs A Theological Commentary on the Bible Matthew*, (Westminster John Knox Press, 2015-02-09, Amridge library, Accessed on 3/10/2017), 52.

<sup>63</sup> Bradley, Marshall Carl, *Matthew, Poet, Historian, Dialectician Studies in Bible Literature*, (Peter Lang Publishing 2007-07-01, Amridge Library, Accessed on 3/10/2017), 42.

<sup>64</sup> Longman, *Baker Illustrated Dictionary*, 793.

kingly dignity. These refer to the assumed nature in Christ and are prefigured in the anointing of kings and priest in the Old Testament.<sup>65</sup>

Matthew narrated the casting out of demons during Jesus' ministry while the Pharisees doubted his source of power. Christ responded to the doubters that, "But if it is by the Spirit of God that I drive out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you (Matt 12:28). Bird advanced an argument that, 'The work of Messiah and Spirit are dynamic expressions of the reign of God. Consequently, Jesus' mighty deeds by the Holy Spirit are as a sign that the kingdom has come (Matt 12:28) ...' The ministry of Jesus in word and deed was carried forward in the power of the Holy Spirit. In everything He did, Jesus knew in Himself a mighty force working that was beyond Himself...Jesus lived and moved in the presence of the Holy Spirit".<sup>66</sup>

Carroll likewise postulated that, "By routing demons and now by healing the sick, Jesus sets people free. In the Spirit-filled Jesus, the oppressive dominion of evil powers meets a stronger power, one intent on restoring health, on liberating".<sup>67</sup> The above Scriptures and the discussions authenticates the fact that, the works of miracles, healing and liberating in Jesus' ministry was the result of the presence of the Holy Spirit, and it also seems to suggest the reason why Jesus told the disciples to wait until they have received the Father's promise prior to their ministry (Act 1:4 – 8).

### **The Role of the Holy Spirit in Christ's Death and Resurrection**

The writer of Hebrews states that through the Holy Spirit Christ offered himself as a sacrifice for the sake of humanity's salvation, '...who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God (Heb. 9:14). Paul, discussing the subject of *life through the Spirit* told the Roman Christians that, "And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you (Rom. 8:11)". Peter similarly encouraging the believers with regards to *suffering for doing good* posited that, "For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit (1Pt. 3:18). The two passages substantiate the fact that, the Holy Spirit was active in the resurrection of Christ.

Bird postulates that, "The Spirit is also active in the Messiah's death and resurrection. The Spirit withdraws from Jesus at his death, indicating his abandonment to divine judgment. But later the Spirit is the means by which he rises from the dead (Rom 8:11)".<sup>68</sup> Longman equally indicated that, "Even his sacrificial death is accomplished by the power of the Holy Spirit (Heb. 9:14). Significantly, just as the Holy Spirit empowered the life and death of Jesus, so too is the Spirit responsible for his resurrection and characteristic of his glorious reign. Death is not a defeat for Jesus: he is "vindicated by the Spirit" (1Tim. 3:16)".<sup>69</sup>

Osborne, discussing (Rom. 8:1ff) emphasizes that, "Yet the Spirit produces life because of righteousness'...the Spirit is the presence of God's life in us and gives us the promise that death will lead to resurrection. Now the *Spirit of life* (v.2) is called the *Spirit of him who raised Jesus from death*. So, life lead to resurrection, and the Spirit is the means by which this – [Christ resurrection] is accomplished".<sup>70</sup> He moreover posited that, "Since the Spirit who raised Jesus *is living* (literary "dwell") *in you*, it is the natural conclusion that this same Spirit will also give life to your mortal bodies. The indwelling of the Spirit

<sup>65</sup> Karris and Cindy, *Commentary of the Gospel of Luke Chapters 1 – 8*, 290.

<sup>66</sup> Bird, *Evangelical Theology, A Biblical and Systematic Introduction*, 625.

<sup>67</sup> Carroll, *Luke*, 121.

<sup>68</sup> Bird, *Evangelical Theology, A Biblical and Systematic Introduction*, 625.

<sup>69</sup> Longman, *Baker Illustrated Dictionary*, 793.

<sup>70</sup> Grant R. Osborne, *Romans, The IVP New Testament Commentary Series Volume 6*, (InterVarsity Press, 2010-08-21, Amridge Library, Accessed 3/10/17), 202.

engenders resurrection life”.<sup>71</sup> This confirmed Paul’s encouragement to the Thessalonian churches that, “...For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him... (1Thess. 4:13 – 18)”. It moreover suggests to contemporary Christians the hope that the Spirit of God who dwells among believers would similarly be active in believer’s resurrection in the event of death.

### **The Role of the Holy Spirit in the Church**

Scriptures affirmed the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of Christ, the church, and the believers, thus, in John (14:15 – 18, 26; 16:7 - 16) the Holy Spirit is the one sent by the Father and the Son to be the helper of believers. The Holy Spirit was evident in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, as noted during Jesus’ conception, baptism, temptation, and ministry (Luke 1:35, Matt 3:16; Luke 4:1, 14 – 18), and on the church the promise of the Holy Spirit outpouring was witnessed (Acts 2:1ff). Longman asserted that, “The church and its members are the immediate beneficiaries of Christ’s spiritual fullness. Since Jesus is now a “life-giving spirit” through his resurrection and ascension (1Cor. 15:45), he is able to fulfill the promise of Spirit baptism (Luke 3:16). This baptism takes place in the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost, which marks the birth of the NT church. The apostles, illuminated by the Holy Spirit, provide true and powerful testimony about Jesus (John 16:4 – 15), testimony that serves as the church’s foundation and principal tradition (Eph. 2:20)”.<sup>72</sup>

France submitted that, “As Jesus had been anointed at his baptism with the Holy Spirit and power, so his followers were now to be similarly anointed and enabled to carry on his work. This work would be a work of witness-bearing... the task which Israel had not fulfilled was taken by Jesus, the perfect Servant of the Lord, and shared by him with his disciples”.<sup>73</sup> Bird argued that, “The disciples were filled with the Spirit and they spoke in tongue (Acts 2:4). Stephen was full of the Holy Spirit *and* he saw a vision of God’s glory with Jesus at God’s right hand (Acts 7:55). Saul of Tarsus was filled with the Holy Spirit *and* immediately something like scales fell from his eyes (Acts 9:17 – 18). Barnabas was good man, full of the Spirit, and many people were brought to the Lord in Antioch (Acts 11:24)”.<sup>74</sup>

Marshall made mention of the fact that, “The Spirit fills the apostles who utter God’s message. The effect of the filling is apparently to give courage to them to stand up, in the midst of threatening audiences, as Jesus had promised, but also in more encouraging situations”.<sup>75</sup> No wonder they could face the Sanhedrin as well as the Jewish elders without any sort of human phobia. Bird again asserted that, “A major task of the Holy Spirit is to purify, cleanse, and prune God’s people in the lives of unbelievers, the Holy Spirit brings the conviction of sin (John 16:8 – 11; Acts 7:51) ... By the Spirit we put to death the deeds of the body and grow in personal holiness (Rom 8:13). A healthy Christian life is one that begins with the Spirit (Gal 3:3), walks in step with the Spirit (5:25), and cultivates righteousness, peace, joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom 14:17)”.<sup>76</sup> Green stated that the early disciples had a “Personal transformation in their character as

<sup>71</sup> Osborne, *Romans, The IVP New Testament Commentary Series Volume 6*, 202.

<sup>72</sup> Longman, *Baker Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, 793.

<sup>73</sup> R.T France, *The New International Greek Testament Commentary, (NIGTC) The Gospel of Mark* (USA: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2002), 36.

<sup>74</sup> Bird, *Evangelical Theology, A Biblical and Systematic Introduction*, 629. One of the chief ways that the Holy Spirit equips the church for its mission is through the bestowal of spiritual gifts and ministerial offices. There are different words used to describe the gifts (*charisma, pneumatata, dorea*), but all emphasize the gracious and giving character of the spiritual charisma bestowed. Defined properly, a spiritual gift is an empowerment from God for God’s people through the Spirit for spiritual work in the church.

<sup>75</sup> I. Howard Marshall, *New Testament Theology, Many Witnesses, One Gospel*, (USA: Illinois, Downers Grove, Intervarsity Press, 2004), 161.

<sup>76</sup> Bird, *Evangelical Theology, A Biblical and Systematic Introduction*, 631

the Holy Spirit was welcomed into their lives”.<sup>77</sup> Lint’s likewise posited that, “Yet the fundamental hope of Christians is the hope that the Holy Spirit brings in the power of God’s word to transform their minds and hearts in accord with God’s purpose”.<sup>78</sup> Dowley, likewise proclaimed that, “The coming of the Spirit not only renewed the personal lives of the individuals, it created a new community of shared life and work, new fellowship in the mission of a gospel to be proclaimed. And this new community was to be strategic importance. For, called into being by the Spirit, it was also to be his witness and his agent in the world. Life in the apostolic church consisted of an interplay of Spirit, community and witness”.<sup>79</sup>

Marshall postulated that, “Individuals are filled with the Spirit before they speak and bear witness, so that rejection of their testimony can be said to be resistance to the Spirit (Acts7:51). Guidance is given by the Spirit and other heavenly agents. At the same time reception of the Spirit is evidently the sine qua non [absolute necessary] of being a Christian and is the clear mark that God has accepted recipient into his people (Acts15:8) ...the Spirit is not only the agent of mission but also the mark of belonging to Christ”.<sup>80</sup> He made some exposition in Ephesians and asserts that,

The revelation of God’s mystery to the apostles and the prophets took place through the Spirit (Eph 3:5). The Spirit is the seal placed by God upon his people (Eph. 1:13), and it is through the Spirit’s influence that believers are strengthened with divine power (Eph 3:16); they are to seek to be filled with the Spirit (Eph 5:18), and they are equipped for their battle with the powers by the Spirit in the Word of God. The Spirit is active in the church in producing oneness, since all Christians share in one and the same Spirit (Eph 2:18; 4:3 – 4), even if the Spirit works in them in different ways. The Spirit is also associated with wisdom and knowledge (Eph 1:17). In short, the Spirit is the divine agent through whom God acts at every point in the lives of believers, including their approach to God in prayer (Eph 2:18) and the gifting of the church and in the battle against evil powers’.<sup>81</sup>

The implication of the discussion suggests that, the church and believers have no power on their own (2Cor. 4:7) unless they depend on the help of the Holy Spirit, hence the need to pray to the Father for the Holy Spirit (Luke 11:13). Bird once again indicated that, “The Spirit empowered Christians to work miracles, such as Stephen (Acts 6:5, 8), Paul (Rom 15:19; 1 Cor 2:4), and others (Heb 2:4) ... [and] apostolic preaching of the gospel throughout Acts. The Spirit’s empowerment also consists of equipping the church with spiritual offices of pastors, teachers, and evangelists (Eph 4:11) and to fight spiritual battles against the present evil age (6:17). It is true not only of Paul, but of the whole Scriptures, to say that the Holy Spirit is “God’s empowering presence”.<sup>82</sup>

Allison Trites asserted that, “Everything that marked the early church's effectiveness in witness was really due to the inflow of the Spirit into their lives. The Spirit made Peter and John so bold in the face of their opponents that “they were marveling and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus” (4:13). This same boldness (*παρρησία*) was also characteristic of the other leaders, who spoke for Christ quite openly and frankly (e.g., Stephen, Philip, Apollos). God was clearly working in their lives by His

<sup>77</sup> Michael Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church*, (U.K, Michigan, Cambridge, Grand Rapids, William B. Eerdmans Pub. Company. 2003), 19.

<sup>78</sup> Richard Lints, *The Fabric of Theology, A Prolegomenon to Evangelical Theology*, (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1993), 81.

<sup>79</sup> Tim, Dowley, *A Liosn Handbook, The History of Christianity*, (England, Oxford, Sandy lane West, Lion Publishing plc, 1977), 20.

<sup>80</sup> Marshall, *New Testament Theology, Many Witnesses, One Gospel*, 200-201.

<sup>81</sup> Marshall, *New Testament Theology, Many Witnesses, One Gospel*, 394-395.

<sup>82</sup> Bird, *Evangelical Theology, A Biblical and Systematic Introduction*, 629.

Mighty Spirit”.<sup>83</sup> From the assertion of the various scholars cited, it seems conclusively the Spirit empowered Christians to work miracles, and more so, the Spirit is similarly associated with wisdom and knowledge and the gifting of the church.

### **Cottrell Doctrine on Healing and Miracles**

Cottrell in his book “The Faith Once for All, Bible Doctrine for Today” made some insightful point about Knowledge, miracles and healing. Even though he took his time to explain his points in the book, I respectfully disagree with his assertion on the cessation of Knowledge, Miracles and Healing Gifts in his book. It does appear his works centers on theology proper. In his discussions on the purpose of Spiritual gifts, he asserted that the Spiritual gifts are temporal and have ceased to operate probably in our contemporary Christianity, especially the miracle-working faith, power to heal the sick, power to work miracles in general, and tongues (1Cor 14:22).<sup>84</sup> He stated that, “These gifts were temporary because in the beginning they were filling a vacuum created by the lack of an authoritative canon of divinely given instructions for the church age – what we call the New Testament. Once the NT was present, these gifts ceased”.<sup>85</sup>

I disagree with Cottrell on this issue of ceased temporary gifts. My counter claim: knowledge, miraculous and healing gifts still abound, and will continue to abound until the coming of Christ for His Church. Regarding his exposition on 1 Cor 13:8 – 10, where he discusses two dissimilarities thus, “But when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away.” [whereas the partial or temporary are:] (tongues, prophecy, miraculous, knowledge), verse 8, and things that are permanent (faith, hope, love), verse 13. All of these things were already present when Paul wrote, but he declares that only the latter group will abide throughout the church age. Things in the former group will cease”.<sup>86</sup> He also stated that, “These partial things were never meant to be permanent but were intended to be replaced by something that is *complete*. In verse 10 the key Greek word is the neuter adjective *teleion*, which can mean “perfect” or “mature,” but which can also mean “complete”.<sup>87</sup> Cottrell concludes that *teleion* definitely means “complete” in his analysis to the contrast with “partial”. Thus verse 10 should read, “When the complete thing comes, the partial will be done away.” The fact that *teleion* is neuter shows it is referring not to a person, such as Jesus, but to a thing’.<sup>88</sup> The question is why is it that “perfect” “*teleion is neuter*” and cannot refer to a person, but *pneuma* which is also *neuter* can be used for the Holy Spirit as posited by Cottrell?<sup>89</sup>

Cottrell specifies that “What could possibly appear on the scene between the writing of first Corinthians and the time of the second coming that fits the description of “the complete thing”? A clue is the nature of the things that it is intended to replace: prophecy, knowledge, and tongues. These are all in the category of *revealed knowledge*, but they are only partial. Whatever replaces them must also be in the category of revealed knowledge, but it must be complete. The only thing that satisfies this requirement is *the completed New Testament*. Christians would expect such a completed NT, similar to the OT for those under the Old Covenant’.<sup>90</sup> Even though Cottrell has stated his interpretation regarding the word “perfect or mature” *teleion*. I think, Paul did not talk about the completeness or the compilation of the various writings to form the NT, because in his discourse he did not say anything as such. What comes to mind will

<sup>83</sup> Allison A. Trites *Professor of New Testament Studies, Church growth in the book of Acts* (Acadia Divinity College, Wolfville, Nova Scotia, ATLA Series, Amridge Library, Accessed on 4/1/17).

<sup>84</sup> Cottrell, *The Faith Once for All, Bible Doctrines for Today*, 300

<sup>85</sup> Cottrell, *The Faith Once for All, Bible Doctrines for Today* 301

<sup>86</sup> Cottrell, *The Faith Once for All, Bible Doctrines for Today* 302

<sup>87</sup> Cottrell, *The Faith Once for All, Bible Doctrines for Today* 302.

<sup>88</sup> Cottrell, *The Faith Once for All, Bible Doctrines for Today* 302.

<sup>89</sup> Cottrell, *The Faith Once for All, Bible Doctrines for Today* 286

<sup>90</sup> Cottrell, *The Faith Once for All, Bible Doctrines for Today* 302.

probably be either the coming of the Lord or preaching the Word to every creature under the heavens as commanded by Christ, which also seems to be a *revealed knowledge*, and in that case, God will be vindicated in his perfect and righteous judgment where no one can plead alibi, and this is what the perfect appears to mean, and not compilation of the NT (Matt. 28:18 – 20).

Again, the question to ask is, has knowledge ceased since the time of the apostles (Dan. 12:4; 2Pt. 3:18)? Knowledge has not ceased, in the early church age, there were no cars, trains, airplanes or astronauts going to the moon, but we have it today. Where does such knowledge come from? Is Cottrell telling his readers some specific knowledge which is unfamiliar? If knowledge has ceased because the NT is complete, how do the church and believers understand and interpret the Scriptures? Where do Biblical professors get their knowledge to impact their adherents concerning the things of God? The empirical evidence in sciences, sociology, psychology, politics, education etc., substantiates the fact that knowledge has not ceased as such statement clearly contradicts (Dan. 12:4) which states "... many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase".

Regarding miracles, Cottrell submits that, "By far, the best understanding of 1Cor 13:10 is that it refers to the completed NT, thus confirming the view that miraculous [and healing] gifts ceased being passed along after the death of the apostles".<sup>91</sup> The question is: has Christ changed (Heb. 13:8)? Has the Holy Spirit ceased to work among Christians and his church today (John 14:16)? Has sickness and diseases ceased to exist in our world? Is Christ healing power no more effective to heal contemporary sick Christians? (Ps. 107:20; Isa. 53:5; 1Pt. 2:24)? If Christ does not have the power to heal believers who prays to him day and night, then salvation has also ceased, because salvation appears to be holistic. If Cottrell's visit his sick church member, will he pray for his/her healing? (James 5: 14 – 15). And if he does, what will be his expectation? Will he expect God to answer his prayer and heal the sick person? or expect God to give the person the strength to continue to live in his/her sickness? Longman submitted that, "Miracles are divinely ordained acts of God that dramatically alerts us to the presence of his glory and power and advance his saving purposes in redemptive history... miracles often are acts of compassion, but more significantly they attest the exalted status of Jesus of Nazareth (Acts 2:22) and the saving power of his word (Heb. 2:2 – 4)".<sup>92</sup>

Joel B. Green in his article on miracles, postulated that, "Whether or not we can believe that a particular event is a miracle will depend in part on the trustworthiness of those who bear witness to the events. It may also depend in part on whether or not we, ourselves, have personally experienced or know someone who has experienced a miracle, and so have a personal understanding of what is involved. Since God is the same God and the universe and humankind have not changed in decisive ways since the beginning of creation, it is no more difficult to believe in miracles happening today than in the past, unless we are persuaded that God does not do those sorts of things anymore".<sup>93</sup>

Again, Green asserted that, "The miracles of Jesus and those recorded in Acts and elsewhere in the New Testament help us to understand that the message of salvation is holistic in character-it involves real human lives and physical conditions, as well as spiritual renewal. The Good News is regularly associated with physical healing as well as with spiritual transformation or help with a mental or emotional problem".<sup>94</sup> Green moreover posited that, "We are reminded by these stories that we must not preach a half-gospel that offers only spiritual consolation and change but does not affect human bodies or human social relationships and situations. Jesus says clearly in Luke 4 that he came to help the poor, to set the prisoner free, to heal

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<sup>91</sup> Cottrell, *The Faith Once for All, Bible Doctrines for Today*, 303.

<sup>92</sup> Longman, *Baker Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, 1159-1160

<sup>93</sup> Joel B. Green, *The Everyday Study Bible for people who want to know the Word*, 'Miracles and Healing', (Dallas, Word Pub. 1996), 731.

<sup>94</sup> Green, *The Everyday Study Bible for people who want to know the Word*, 'Miracles and Healing', 731.

the sick, as well as to save the soul. This is still the Good News the church should offer today-the story of a savior who can work all sorts of wonders, physical, mental, emotional, and social”.<sup>95</sup>

Concerning the gifts of healing, Green likewise suggested that, ‘healing ministry passed from the apostles to the churches. Paul speaks to the Galatian church, God still working “miracles among you” (Galatians 3:5). The New Testament letters give two models of healing. Paul presents a model which emphasizes “gifts of healing” (1 Corinthians 12:9, 28). The Holy Spirit gives some believers special abilities to heal others. These are given by God for “the common good” (1 Corinthians 12:7). By using these gifts, the sick is made well and the whole church is encouraged’.<sup>96</sup>

Apart from the miraculous birth of Jesus where divine took human nature and angels of God rejoiced and celebrated (Luke 2:8 – 14), one of the greatest ongoing miracles is when a soul repents, the angels of God jubilates to God’s glory (Luke 15:7, 10). Now, since conversion of sinners to Christ has not ceased, diseases and sicknesses have not abated, and human problems continue to exist, these are indication that, miracles and healing have not also ceased. Because God has not changed, and the Spirit of God has not ceased working in our world and among God’s people, he will continue to work till the imminent Parousia. The succeeding discussion will deliberate on ecclesiology, the function or purpose of the church.

## ECCLESIOLOGY

### The Function or Purpose of the church

Ecclesiology appears to be the study of the origin, existence and destiny of Christian Church and its purpose, mission, and vision and their relationship to Jesus Christ. Tim Dowley stated that, “Nearly two thousand years ago, Jesus of Nazareth was put to death on a cross in an obscure corner of the Roman empire. Today, the world-wide faith in the risen Christ has grown as never before, not just in the so-called Christian West but in the new centers of Christianity in Africa, South-East Asia and South America”<sup>97</sup>. This third part of the research discusses the meaning of the church; the head/founder of the church; and the function or purpose of the church. (Evangelism/Teaching; Worship/Fellowship; Prayer; and Social concerns) will be the prominent concentration of discussion as far as the purpose or function of the church is concerned.

### Meaning of the church

That institution which separate from the world and consociates the people of God into a peculiar community; having laws, ordinances, manners, and customs of its own, immediately derived from the Savior of the world, is called the *congregation* or *church* of the Lord. This is sometimes technically called the *mystical* body of Christ, contradistinguished from his literal and natural body. Over this spiritual body he is the Head, the King, Lord, and Lawgiver, and they are severally members of his body, and under his direction and government. The *true* Christian church, or house of God, is composed of all those in every place that do publicly acknowledge Jesus of Nazareth as the true Messiah, and the only Savior of men.<sup>98</sup> Bird asserted that, “The church is the *ekklesia*, a Greek word that means “gathering” or “assembly.” This word is used in the LXX to translate the Hebrew word *qahal*, which often describes the assembling of Israel to hear the law, confess their sins, or renew the covenant (e.g., Deut 4:10, 33; Josh 8:33 – 55; 22:12; 2 Chr 24:6; Neh 8:1 – 3). The church is not a human institution or a social network. It is the people called by God into covenant with himself, and it exist as a consequence of the purpose of the Triune God”.<sup>99</sup> Moreover, ‘Its origins lie in God’s desire to have a people of his own (Deut 7:6). It is unified by the one covenant of grace across the various dispensations of the Abrahamic, Mosaic, and new covenants. The church is formed

<sup>95</sup> Green, *The Everyday Study Bible for people who want to know the Word*, ‘Miracles and Healing’, 731.

<sup>96</sup> Green, *The Everyday Study Bible for people who want to know the Word*, ‘Miracles and Healing’, 731.

<sup>97</sup> Dowley, *A Lion Handbook, The History of Christianity*, (England, Oxford, Sandy lane West, Lion Publishing plc, 1977), preface.

<sup>98</sup> Campbell, *The Christian System*, 55-56.

<sup>99</sup> Bird, *Evangelical Theology, A Biblical and Systematic Introduction*, 713.

by the Holy Spirit, who unites persons with Christ (1Cor. 3:16; Eph 4:4) and exists in a shared confession of the Lordship of Jesus Christ (Rom 10:9; 1 Cor 12:3)".<sup>100</sup>

Longman posited that, "In the NT, *ekklesia* is used to refer to the community of God's people 109 times (out of 114 occurrences of the term). Although the word occurs in two Gospels passages (Matt.16:18; 18:17), it is of special importance in Acts (23 times) and the Pauline writings (46 times). It is found (20 times) in Revelation and in isolated instances in James and Hebrews... Three general conclusions can be drawn from this usage. First, *ekklesia*... applies predominantly to a local assembly of those who profess faith in and allegiance to Christ. Second, *ekklesia* designates the universal church (Acts 8:3; 9:31; 1Cor. 12:28; 15:9; especially in the Pauline letters: Eph. 1:22 – 23; Col. 1:18). Third, the *ekklesia* is God's congregation (1Cor. 1:2; 2Cor. 1:1)".<sup>101</sup> Concerning the church's composition, Cottrell submitted that, "The church "Composed of those who have been separated from the mass of fallen mankind and who constitute the new creation as it presently exists in the very midst of the old creation. Thus, the human race is divided into two groups: the church, and the not-church. This aspect of the church's nature is emphasized in the image of the church as a holy nation (1 Pet 2:9); the people of God (1 Pet 2:9 – 10); the body of Christ (Col. 1:18); and the new Israel (Gal 6:16)".<sup>102</sup>

Regarding the nature of the church's existence, Lint's asserted that, "It is not a community committed to a divinely inspired revelation by which it endures and gains its purpose; rather, it is a community shaped by the redemptive presence of the transcendent, which transforms any and all provincial attitude whether based on ethnic, geographical, cultic, racial, sexual, political, social, or doctrinal considerations. The redemptive presence transforms the community in the direction of a universal community, yet without losing the particularity intrinsic to the human being".<sup>103</sup> The various assertions have substantiated the fact that, the church cut across every sphere of human habitation, be it cultural, ethnicity, racial, language or geographical setting. The fundamental truth is having a relationship with God through his Son, Jesus Christ as the source of humanity's salvation, and this salvation is received by grace and faith in Christ Jesus.

### **The Head/Founder of the church**

Matthew recorded the words of Jesus, "Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock, I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it (Matt. 16:16 – 17)". A.T. Robertson commented that, "Upon this rock, it is not perfectly clear how Jesus means the figure to be applied. He could mean himself (Christ) by "this rock", if he pointed to himself (cf. 1Cor. 3:1; Eph. 2:20; 1Pet. 2:4 – 8). Jesus could mean Peter himself by "this rock", as then representative of the twelve and as confessing his faith in Christ (cf. Eph. 2:20; Rev. 21:14). Or Jesus could mean the *confession* of trust made by Peter as the rock on which in truth, the kingdom is built. The matter can never be settled for all minds. But the point in the question of Jesus was to get just this confession. This is what Jesus says was revealed to Peter, the knowledge that he was the Messiah".<sup>104</sup>

Leon Morris likewise submitted that, "On this *rock* I will build my church" is a saying that has caused endless controversy in the church's history. The big question is the meaning of *this rock*. Does it mean the man Peter? Or the faith Peter has just professed? Or Jesus himself? Each of the views has been argued passionately by some exegetes often maintaining at the same time that other can be espoused only by people who refuse to accept the plain meaning of the Greek. Clearly this is a place where we must tread

<sup>100</sup> Bird, *Evangelical Theology, A Biblical and Systematic Introduction*, 713.

<sup>101</sup> Longman, *Baker Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, 306.

<sup>102</sup> Cottrell, *The Faith Once for All, Bible Doctrine for Today*, 400-405.

<sup>103</sup> Lints, *The Fabric of Theology, A Prolegomenon to Evangelical Theology*, 213-214.

<sup>104</sup> A.T. Robertson, *Commentary on the Gospel According to Matthew* (New York, Macmillan Company, 1911).

carefully and keep in mind the possibility of interpreting the passage in ways other than the one that appeals to us".<sup>105</sup>

Morris again asserted that, "Some scholars, especially from among the Roman Catholics, have insisted that Jesus is saying that Peter is the rock on which the whole church is to be built, and accordingly only the church that can claim to be built on the apostle is the true church.

But it is not easy to establish that the whole of the early church was built on the foundation of Peter, and what are we to say of the descendants of the non-Petrine churches?"<sup>106</sup>

Additionally, Frederick Dale Brunner postulated that, "I am going to build *my own* church". The *ekklesia* belongs to Jesus: it is his own property, his building. The "my" (*mou*) in the phrase is emphasized by its position in the (*mou tēn ekklēsiān*). The church does not belong to Peter, his successors, or to any other church leaders. She belongs to Jesus Christ, exclusively and entirely."<sup>107</sup> Richard Mayhue in his editorial: 'Back to the Biblical Purpose of the Church' posited that,

Christ passionately pursued the lasting fruit of eternity. In His promise, He explicitly looked to an everlasting legacy. Jesus did not have in mind the temporary, the faddish, or the "here today, gone tomorrow." He pointed to the church as having a "forever" relevance. "I also say that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church." The foundation wasn't Peter, because Christ here distinguishes between a moveable rock/detached boulder (the basic meaning of Cephas and Peter) and the unshakeable, immovable foundation suitable for the church. The word Christ used for "rock" means bedrock or mass of rock as used by the wise builder (Matt 7:24-25). What or who then is the rock? The OT pictures God as a rock in whom we find strength and refuge: (1 Sam 2:2). (Ps 18:2). (Ps 18:31).<sup>108</sup>

Mayhue moreover put forward that,

Paul identifies Christ as the rock in the wilderness (1 Cor 10:4). Earlier in 1 Corinthians (3:11), the Apostle wrote, "For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Christ Jesus." Interestingly, one verse earlier Paul had claimed, "I laid a foundation..." How did Paul "lay" Christ as the foundation? Obviously, it had to be in his preaching of Christ (1 Cor 2:1-2). Now, if Paul's testimony of Christ is the foundation that no one else can lay, then it seems best to understand the "bedrock foundation" of the church to be Peter's testimony of Christ, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt 16:16). Remember, Peter's declaration prompted Jesus' promise. Since it is virtually impossible to separate the testimony of Christ from the reality of Christ, we can identify the "rock" as Christ Himself in the fullness of His deity, His role as redeemer, and His headship in the church. Christ alone is the rock of redemption upon which the church is being built (Acts 4:11-12). His eternal nature ensures the permanency of the church's one foundation.<sup>109</sup>

Commenting on the "gates of Hades", Craig S. Keener submitted that, "Death itself assaults Christ's church, but death itself cannot crush God's people... The church will endure until Christ's return, and no opposition, even the widespread martyrdom of Christians or the oppression of the final antichrist... can prevent their ultimate triumph of God's purposes in history. The promise precedes Christ summons to martyrdom (16:24 – 25)".<sup>110</sup> Cottrell adds that, "As long as we are one of the church's living stones, firmly

<sup>105</sup> Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1992), 422.

<sup>106</sup> Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 422.

<sup>107</sup> Frederick Dale Brunner: *The Church book, Matthew 13 – 28*, (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2004), 128.

<sup>108</sup> Richard Mayhue L., Editorial: 'Back to the Biblical Purpose of the Church' (The Master's Seminary Journal 20 no 1 Sep. 2009, Amridge Library, Accessed on 15/11/17), 3.

<sup>109</sup> Mayhue, 'Back to the Biblical Purpose of the Church' 422.

<sup>110</sup> Keener, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, 429.

affixed into the building that rests upon the solid Rock, the tidal wave of death cannot sweep us away”.<sup>111</sup> From the preceding deliberations it seems Jesus was talking about himself/God as the rock upon which to establish his church and not on Peter, even though Peter’s name means rock. The church appears to be a spiritual entity, and hence cannot be built on finite person irrespective of the anointing that person has. Moreover, Jesus will not contradict himself by trusting finite person (Jer. 17:5) regarding the foundation upon which his church is to be built, we should not forget that Adam disappointed God (Gen. 3:8ff), and therefore history will not be repeated. I do agree with Frederick Brunner that the church belongs to Jesus Christ, wholly and completely (1Cor 3:11).

### **Purpose of the church**

Matthew narrated the farewell message Jesus gave to the apostles thus, ‘Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you (Matt 28:19 – 20)’. Acts likewise recounted the early activities thus, ‘They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved (Acts 2:42 - 47).

Cottrell discussed some important aspect of the church’ purpose and asserts that, (1) “*The church as the temple of God* – the temple was a house for God’s *name* (1 Kgs 8:18, 29, 41 – 45); the temple was a house for God’s *Word* (2 Chr 5:2,7,10); the temple was a house for God’s *heart* (2 Chr 7:15- 16; 1Kgs 8:29,33,35,38); it was a house for his *glory* (Exd 40:35 – 35; 1 Kgs 8:11; 2Chr 7:1 – 3)”.<sup>112</sup> “*The church as the kingdom of God* – the church consists of those who not only are under God’s kingship but who also acknowledge his kingship and submit to it...bear witness to the dominion and sovereignty of God in Jesus Christ, before the unbelieving world”.<sup>113</sup> “*The church as a refuge from death* – the point is that the spiritual fortress called the church is the only sure refuge from death. What makes it a sure refuge is not the strength of the stones themselves (ourselves), but the strength of the *foundation stone* upon which this fortress is built. The tested and costly rock (Isa 28:16), the solid, fixed Rock (*petra*) upon which Christ is building his church (Matt 16:18), is not Peter (a *petros* or loose stone), but Jesus himself, specifically because of his identity as the Christ, the Son of the Living God (Matt 16:16; see 1 Cor 3:11; Eph 2:20; 1 Pet 2:6 – 8)”.<sup>114</sup> Additionally, “*The church as a holy priesthood* – as a priesthood offering up the spiritual sacrifice of good words and good works, the church thus fulfills both of God’s main purposes for it, i.e., glorifying his name and attracting others to share in the bounty of his spiritual blessings”.<sup>115</sup> Besides Cottrell deliberations on the purpose of the church, it can also be inferred from the preceding passages of Matthew (28:19 – 20) concerning the great commission, and the practices of the early disciple in Acts (2:42 – 47), four major theological themes which seems to be the key words or subject that can be expounded as far as the purpose of the church is concerned. They are evangelism/teaching, worship/fellowship, prayer, and Social concerns. These areas are of paramount interest for this research. The ensuing discussion will briefly deliberate on these purposes of the church.

### **Evangelism/Teaching**

<sup>111</sup> Cottrell, *The Faith Once for All, Bible Doctrine for Today*, 415.

<sup>112</sup> Cottrell, *The Faith Once for All, Bible Doctrine for Today*, 400.

<sup>113</sup> Cottrell, *The Faith Once for All, Bible Doctrine for Today*, 414

<sup>114</sup> Cottrell, *The Faith Once for All, Bible Doctrine for Today*, 415.

<sup>115</sup> Cottrell, *The Faith Once for All, Bible Doctrine for Today*, 417.

Matthew reported that the disciples were mandated to evangelize all nations with the gospel of Christ thus: ‘Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age (Matt. 28:18 – 20)”. Acts likewise assert that, ‘But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8)’.

Bird postulated that, “The spreading of the gospel into the world was concurrent with the expansion of the church into all areas of the world. The church is the custodian of the gospel that carries the gospel, proclaimed in Word and embodied in sacraments, there one will find a true and authentic church”.<sup>116</sup> He moreover asserts that, “Proclaiming the gospel is the mission of the church. That is why we should think of the church as “the community of the gospelized” ...When a person or a church is gospelized, they ooze gospel, they bleed Jesus, they overflow with Spirit, they radiate the Father’s glory. That is the goal of a gospelized community”.<sup>117</sup> According to Michael Green, the early church ‘were passionately convinced of the truth of the gospel. They were persuaded that men and women were lost without it. It was the key to eternal life, without which they would perish. They shared in God’s own love, poured out on a needy world. They paid heed to Christ’s Great Commission.<sup>118</sup> Moreover, “They sought to interpenetrate society with the gospel which had had so profound an effect upon them. Christianity for them was not hour’s slot on a Sunday. It affected everything they did and everyone they met. As far as we can tell, their church life was warm and nourishing for the most part, and equipped people to move out with the good news. The ordinary Christians, the missionaries, the academics, the women, all seem to have shared in this same passionate commitment to the cause”.<sup>119</sup>

Regarding the mandate of teachings of the apostles’, Steven J. Lawson submitted that, “The central thrust in Christ's ministry, namely, preaching and teaching, left a deep impression on His disciples. As the Twelve began their pastoral work, as stated in Acts 2:42, they were merely imitating what they had observed Jesus do, repeating what had been modeled before them. As they shepherded this first church in Jerusalem, they immediately began teaching, because this was what Jesus had done with them. Any other priority would have been a departure from the consistent example they had seen in Christ's own ministry”.<sup>120</sup> Lawson similarly posited that, “The apostles' ministry of preaching and teaching is mentioned more often than any other activity in which they were engaged (2:42; 3:11-26; 4:1-2, 8-12, 19-20, 31, 33; 5:20-21, 29-32, 42; 6:2, 4, 7, 11, 13-14; 7:1-53). So overwhelming is this evidence that it can be argued that Acts is primarily a record of apostolic preaching and teaching... No matter where they were, these apostles were preaching. Whether in Solomon's Portico (3:1126; 5:20, 42), in public gatherings (4:2, 33), before the Sanhedrin (4:8-12; 5:28-32), or from house to house (5:42), they boldly taught in the name of Christ. Even in the face of life-threatening dangers, the apostles refused to be silenced, declaring, "We cannot stop speaking what we have seen and heard" (4:20)”.<sup>121</sup>

Keener asserted that, “Making \*disciples” was the sort of thing \*rabbis would do, but Jesus’ followers are to make disciples for Jesus, not for themselves...Isaiah predicted that Israel would be a witness to (or against) the nations in the end time (e.g., 42:6; 43:10; 44:8). Baptizing them. Because \*baptism was an act of conversion (used for gentles converting to Judaism), it means initiating people to

<sup>116</sup> Bird, *Evangelical Theology, A Biblical and Systematic Introduction*, 699.

<sup>117</sup> Bird, *Evangelical Theology, A Biblical and Systematic Introduction*, 705.

<sup>118</sup> Michael Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church*, (U.K, Michigan, Cambridge, Grand Rapids, William B. Eerdmans Pub. Company. 2003), 17.

<sup>119</sup> Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church*, 17.

<sup>120</sup> Steven J. Lawson, ‘The Priority of Biblical Preaching: An Expository Study of Acts 2:42-47’ (Bibliotheca Sacra / April-June 2001, Amridge Library, Accessed on 10/19/17), 202.

<sup>121</sup> Steven J Lawson, ‘The Priority of Biblical Preaching: An Expository Study of Acts 2:42-47’ 202.

the faith...Teaching them Jesus' commandments recorded in Matthew. Rabbis made disciples by teaching them...Jesus' claim that he would always be with them (1:23, 18:20) coupled with his being named alongside the Father in the baptism ...constitutes a proclamation of his deity".<sup>122</sup>

The discussion has brought to light the necessity of evangelism and teaching. It has also given the contemporary Christianity impression that preaching, and teaching is not left to the selected few but rather the community of believers, both Israel and the universal church. Paul admonished Timothy that, 'And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others (2Tim.2:2)'. Evangelism and preaching of the Word seems to be a mandatory for every professed believer, therefore believers should not relent but rather occupy till his Parousia (Luke 19:13).

### Worship/Fellowship

Vine described fellowship *koinonia* (κοινωνία) as "communion, or sharing in common".<sup>123</sup> This seems to be the involvement of Christian togetherness in Christ Jesus, and "Worship *proskuneó* (προσκυνέω) "to make obeisance, do reverence to" an act of homage or reverence to God e.g., Matt. 4:10; John 4:21 – 24; 1Cor. 14:25; Rev. 4:10; 5:14; 7:11; 11:16; 19:10."<sup>124</sup> It appears most of the time believers' fellowship and worship take place together like husband-wife relationship. Cottrell submits that, "Worship is any activity of the spirit or body that is directed toward God for the purpose of honoring and glorifying him. Of course, we may worship God individually in private (Matt 6:5 – 6), but we also can and should worship him collectively with other believers...The primary reason that God called us into the assembly of the church is that as a corporate assembly we might worship him".<sup>125</sup>

Worship of God is a critical dimension of both Testaments. One might argue that it is the very goal for which Israel and the church were formed... the nature of worship is not about servant entertainment or passive observation; it is an active acknowledgement of God's worth in a variety of humble ways... Knowledge of God is the foundational element in worship. God is worshiped for who he is and what he does; God is worship as the creator of all life; Worship is also associated with the royal aspect of God's character; God is worship as the Lord of his covenant relationship with the nation of Israel [and the church].<sup>126</sup>

Concerning the dominant activity of the first century church, Dowley put forward that, "The central service of worship on Sunday in the early church was the '**breaking of bread**' or communion'. This was a fellowship meal, with preaching, Bible reading and prayer, which culminated in the formal acts taken over from the Last Supper. The aim was to remember Jesus' death, and to celebrate his resurrection. Praise and thanksgiving were uppermost, and for this reason the name 'eucharist' (Greek for thanksgiving) was often given to the occasion. Gradually the eucharist became more formal, and the meal aspect secondary".<sup>127</sup>

Joel B Green likewise posited that, "Worship that is Spirit-led and truth based takes many forms but includes six basic elements: thus, Praising God for all that he is and all he has done; thanking him for his gifts and goodness to us; asking him to meet our own and others' needs; offering him our gifts, our service, and ourselves; learning of him from his word, both read and preached, and obeying his voice; telling others God's "worth" by public confession and testimony to what has been done for us".<sup>128</sup>

<sup>122</sup> Keener, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, 125

<sup>123</sup> W. E. Vine, *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words with topical index*, (Nashville, Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1996), 233.

<sup>124</sup> Vine, *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words with topical index*, 686.

<sup>125</sup> Cottrell, *The Faith Once for All, Bible Doctrine for Today*, 444

<sup>126</sup> Longman, *Baker Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, 1731.

<sup>127</sup> Dowley, *A Lion Handbook, The History of Christianity*, 29.

<sup>128</sup> Green, *The Everyday Study Bible for people who want to know the Word*, 991.

Cottrell similarly asserted that, through worship believers can be edified through “The sound doctrine of God’s Word; reading of Scripture (1Tim. 4:13; Col 4:16 – 17; 1Thess. 5:27); preaching of sermons and through Bible School classes, where meaning of the Word is expounded and applied; and through Lord’s Supper meditations, small group Bible studies, and special meetings or seminars”.<sup>129</sup> Commenting on (Acts 2:42 – 47), regarding fellowship and worship, Esther and co., posited that, “First, in the Christian congregation a beneficial sermon should be given, then after the sermon a sincere prayer, after this feed the hungry and give the thirsty something to drink. Then, since some also hunger or thirst spiritually, share the most precious sacrament of the body and blood of Christ... We should give food and drink to our neighbor, that is help, serve and advise him in word and deed. Wherever these things take place, there certainly the Holy Spirit cannot long be excluded, but rather he will soon arrive with all his goods, mercies and gifts, temporal and eternal”.<sup>130</sup> Additionally, Keener made mentioned that, the “Early Christian fellowship undoubtedly centered more on intimate worship, sharing and learning the Scriptures and the apostolic message than its modern Western counterparts often does”.<sup>131</sup> It appears music and hymns were also formed part of the early church fellowship and worship. The Israelites regarded music as a proper vehicle for the expression of their gratitude and devotion which they felt to God. (Exd.15:1-3). Paul admonished the church to sing songs and make music thus, ‘speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. 5:19- 20).

According to Blume, “Martin Luther reflected on the powerful use of music in the reformation and declares, next to theology, I give first and highest honor to music. It deserves the highest praise. She is a mistress and governess of those human emotions which control men or more often overwhelm them. Whether you wish to comfort the sad, to subdue frivolity, to encourage the despairing, to humble the proud, to calm the passionate, or to appease those full of hate...what more effective means than music could you find”.<sup>132</sup>

The act of giving (the collection of tithes and/or offerings) is properly considered to be a worship event, even though the money and other gifts that are given may be designated for benevolent or evangelistic purpose (Acts 4:32-5:11; 2 Cor 8:1-9:15) ...In our giving we are honoring God as the creator and owner of all things, acknowledging him as the source of our blessings, and confessing our dependence upon him.<sup>133</sup> The mention of tithing by Cottrell echoes the words of Tom Rees that, ‘The early church according to Origen and Jerome following the example and teaching of our Lord and the apostles, both taught and practiced tithing. The Council of Trent (1545), not only enjoined payment of tithes but also went so far as to excommunicate those who withheld them’.<sup>134</sup> Inference from the deliberation suggest that worship is not only a matter of giving reverence and honor to God, but also sharing the word of God together, remembering Christ through the sacrament of eucharist, sharing and helping the needy, singing praises, hymns and offering our substances in the form of financial contribution and tithing in support of God’s people and the needy, and by so doing demonstrating the Christ-like character as taught by Christ.

## Prayer

Prayer is an essential part of the believer’s practices which involves communication between the believer and God. The gospel recounts various instances of Jesus’ prayer life where he communes with his Father. He prayed very early in the morning (Mk1:35); went to mountainside to pray (Mk. 6:46); solitary

<sup>129</sup> Cottrell, *The Faith Once for All, Bible Doctrines for Today*, 453.

<sup>130</sup> Esther Chung-Kim, etals, *Acts*, (InterVarsity Press, 2014-03-04, Amridge library, accessed 10/14/17), 36.

<sup>131</sup> Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary*, New Testament Second Edition, 325.

<sup>132</sup> F. Blume, *Protestant Church Music*, (London: InterVarsity Press, 1975), 10.

<sup>133</sup> Cottrell, *The Faith Once for All, Bible Doctrines for Today*, 449.

<sup>134</sup> Tom Rees, *Money Talk*, (England: Hilden borough Hall,1972), 18-19.

places, and all-night prayers (Lk 5:16). Luke accounts that, after prayer Jesus selected his twelve apostles, and taught the disciples how to pray (Lk. 6:12-16; 11:1 – 13); and again, admonished them to watch and pray (Matt.26:41). Strauss submits that, “Jesus made personal time with God a high property, since this was his source of strength and guidance...Jesus escape to a place where he can encounter God and prepare for the ministry ahead”.<sup>135</sup> Prayer was very paramount to the life and ministry of Jesus’ disciples, and a vital tool for spiritual battle or warfare as well as a source of guidance and power for their ministry. There are numerous times the apostles engaged in prayer especially in the book of Acts. When they meet at the upper room (1:14); choosing a replacement for Judas (1:24 – 25); having fellowship meetings (2:42); when Peter and John were release from prison (4:23 – 31); choosing the seven to serve on the tables (6:6); Stephen prayed when being stoned to death (7:59 – 60); Peter praying for Tabitha (9:40); Peter miraculous escape from prison (12:5, 12); While they were ministering to the Lord (13:2 – 3); when elders were appointed in every church (14:23); when Paul and Silas were thrown to prison (16:22 -25); Paul’s farewell to the Ephesian churches (20:36); Paul journeying to Jerusalem (21:5); Paul in the house of Publius (28:7 -8), etc.

Similarly, in the epistle of Paul to the churches, and other writings of the apostles, all admonished the church as well as the believers to pray. The following are few examples of them, (Col. 1:9 – 10,4:2 – 4; Rom. 12:12, 15:30; Eph. 1:16 – 21; 6:18 – 20; 1 Thess. 5:17;1 Tim. 2:1; 1 Pet. 4:7; 2Thess. 3:1; James 5:14 – 16; 1John 5:16 – 17; 2Cor 1:11). Peter stated that, ‘...and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word (Acts 6:4, 6)’. Marshall asserts that, “Prayer to God is integral to the life of Jesus and his followers. All the Synoptic Gospels record that Jesus prayed and expected his disciples to pray, as was indeed only natural in the context of Jewish religion. Prayer includes joyful thanksgiving... appeals to God to do mighty works, request for guidance and strength, intercession for opponents, confession of sin, and petition, based on the assurance that God is a loving Father to the disciples who will answer their prayers, even if the desired answer is not immediately forthcoming”.<sup>136</sup>

Joel B Green declared that, “Prayer is the essence of Christian experience. Christianity is fundamentally a relationship between God and people, relationships are established, maintained, and enriched by good communication. Prayer is the communication between ourselves and God. We are urged to pray because by doing so, we are engaged in the primary activity which keeps faith vital and strong...The most compelling case for the value and power of prayer is Christ himself. Jesus prayed. He prayed often and about many things. Prayer was the “lifeline” between himself and the heavenly Father. From prayer he received inspiration, guidance, and strength”.<sup>137</sup>

Robert Karris likewise emphasized that, “Prayer prevails over inferior nature, prevails over the power of heaven, commands spiritual nature, attracts the Holy Spirit, bends the heart of the Son of God, and assuages the eternal Father. And on account of this it has dominion in a certain way over all things”.<sup>138</sup> The implication of the discourse suggests that, prayer should be an attitude of the believer, because that is the appropriate means the believer can personally have encounter with God, regarding request for strength, and power for kingdom business, make intercession, lift up personal petition, and do spiritual battle (Eph. 6: 10 – 20; 2Cor. 10:4).

### Social concerns

Acts account that, ‘All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God’s grace was so powerfully at work in them that there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold

<sup>135</sup> Mark L. Strauss, *Mark: Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, (Michigan, Grand Rapids, 2014), 106.

<sup>136</sup> Marshall, *New Testament Theology, Many Witnesses, One Gospel*, 193.

<sup>137</sup> Green, *The Everyday Study Bible for people who want to know the Word*, 902.

<sup>138</sup> Karris and Cindy, *Commentary of the Gospel of Luke Chapters 1 – 8*, 1707.

them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need (Acts 4:32 – 35)'. In the words of Sider, "Preaching and ministering to physical needs of people were both central in Jesus' life and work. He preached and healed. He satisfied both sick hearts and sick bodies".<sup>139</sup> Jakonda (2001:5) also writes that, "This good news is brought as Christians preach the gospel and intervene in the lives of the members of the society through serving them by empowering them to alleviate poverty and oppression, which often are the causes of poverty".<sup>140</sup> T.B Matson postulated that, '

Their sharing resulted from the fact that "they devoted themselves to ...fellowship [*koinonia*]," (2:42), and that they "were of one heart and soul" (4:32). Their sharing was an outer manifestation of their inner unity...the well-to-do and the poor, the educated and the uneducated, the Palestinian Jew and the Hellenistic Jew. Within this family, the strong served the weak, those who had naturally shared with those who did not. Their fellowship was a continuation of the fellowship some of them had had with Jesus while he walked among them. Within that fellowship, they had shared with him from the common purse. Now their fellowship was with one another in union with the risen Christ.<sup>141</sup>

Bruce likewise submitted that, "The Spirit-filled community exhibited a remarkable unanimity which expressed itself even in the attitude to private property. Whereas the institution of a communal purse was explicitly regulated in writing at Qumran, the action taken by these early disciples of Jesus was intended to be voluntary. Members regarded their private estates as being the community's disposal; those who owned houses or lands sold these in order that they might be more conveniently available to the community in the form of money. The richer members thus made provision for the poorer, and for a time no one had any need to complain of hunger".<sup>142</sup> Holding everything in common and distributing according to need reflects how the community is related to God (2:44 – 45).<sup>143</sup> Keener moreover asserts that, the Christians "Sell off property to meet needs as they arise... these actions do not reflect an \*ascetic ideal, as in some Greek and Jewish sects, but instead the practice of radically valuing people over possessions, acknowledging that Jesus owns both them and their property".<sup>144</sup> Green quoted Justin Martyr, statement that, "We who valued above all things the acquisition of wealth and possessions, now bring what we have into a common stock and share with everyone who is in need".<sup>145</sup> Green commented that, "True fellowship was manifest in the early church when congregation was of one heart, shared their possessions, cared for those in need, and with great power gave witness to the risen Christ. The believers enjoyed the deepest communion and truly were what they called themselves: *communio sanctorum* – or communion of saints. As the church expanded out of Jerusalem, this concept of one fellowship – one with another and with God – bound them in unity and became the very essence of the church's character and power (Acts 11:28 – 30)".<sup>146</sup> No wonder the writer of Hebrew admonished Christians to meet regularly (Heb. 10:25).

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<sup>139</sup> R.J. Sider, *Good News and Good Works, A Theology for the Whole Gospel*, (Grand Rapids, Baker Publishing Groups, 1999), 143.

<sup>140</sup> S.Z. Jakonda, *Your Kingdom Come. A Book on Wholistic Christian Development*, (Jos: Rurcon, 2001),5

<sup>141</sup> T.B Matson, *Biblical Ethics, A guide to ethical message of the Scriptures from Genesis through Revelation*, (USA, Mercer University Press, 1997), 248.

<sup>142</sup> F.F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts, The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, (Michigan, Grand Rapids, William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.), 100-101.

<sup>143</sup> Green, *The Everyday Study Bible for people who want to know the Word*, 51.

<sup>144</sup> Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary*, New Testament Second Edition 326.

<sup>145</sup> Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church*, 72

<sup>146</sup> Green, *The Everyday Study Bible for people who want to know the Word*, 1064

The other aspect of social concerns is the church's attitude towards the state. Jesus response to the Herodian's and Pharisee's question, whether taxes should be paid to Caesar substantiate an aspect of the church's responsibility to the state, thus, *give back to Caesar what is Caesar's and unto God what is God's* (Mark 12:17). Paul similarly admonished the church to submit to governing authorities (Rom. 13:1-7; Titus 2:1 – 2)), and moreover making prayers and intercession for all people (1Tim. 2:1 – 2).

Mark Strauss submitted that, "Jesus here affirms the legitimacy of human government and the principle of taxation. Paul takes a similar stance in Rom 13: 1 – 7, where he calls on believers to be subjected to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established...[Rulers] are God's servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer...Give to everyone what you owe them. If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor (cf. 1Pet 2:13 – 17; Titus 3:1)".<sup>147</sup> Charles Hodges posited that, "The duty of obedience to those in authority is enforced, by the consideration that civil government is a divine institution, and, therefore, resistance to magistrates in the exercise of their lawful authority is disobedience to God, vs. 1,2. From the end or design of their appointment, which is to promote the good of society, to be a terror to evil doers, and a praise to them that do well, vs. 3,4".<sup>148</sup> Again, "Because such subjection is a moral, as well as civil duty v.5. On these grounds the payment of tribute or taxes, and general deference, are to be cheerfully rendered, vs. 6,7. Christians are bound not only to be obedient to those in authority, but also to perform all social and relative duties, especially that of love, which includes and serves the observance of all others, vs, 8-10".<sup>149</sup> Regarding the church's obligation of intercessory prayer for the state (1Tim. 2:1 – 2), John MacArthur stipulates that, "Prayers are all too often narrowly confined to personal needs and wants and rarely extend beyond those of our immediate circle of friends and family. In sharp contrast, however, Paul calls for evangelistic prayer on **behalf of all men**. There is no place for selfishness or exclusivity. We are not to try to limit either the gospel calls or our evangelistic prayers to the elect only. After all, we have no means of knowing who are elect *until* they respond to the gospel call".<sup>150</sup> Moreover, we are told that God desires all to be saved (2:4). He takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather delights when sinners turn from their evil ways and live (Ezek. 33:11). So, prayer for the salvation of the lost is perfectly consistent with the heart of God. He has commanded all men to repent (Acts 17:30). We must pray that they will do so and embrace the salvation offered to all (Titus 2:11).<sup>151</sup>

MacArthur further stated that, "Out of the universal group of **all men**, Paul specifically singles out some who might otherwise be neglected in evangelistic prayer, **kings and all who are in authority**. Because ancient (and modern) rulers are so often tyrannical, and even disrespectful of the Lord and His people, they are targets of bitterness and animosity. They are also remote, not part of the everyday lives of believers. Hence there is a tendency to be indifferent toward them. Such neglect is a serious sin because of the authority and responsibility leaders have".<sup>152</sup> Moreover, the church also has a mandate to serve as a prophetic voice to the nations, to educate the populace on political issues and protect the wellbeing of the people from corrupt governments.

In an article written by Emmanuel Asante on '*The Participation of the Church in Politics*' he made mention of a vital obligation which appears to be a mandate of the church's social concern, thus, the church obligation "to act as the moral conscience of the society" through its various bodies especially in Ghana and in the diaspora, that is to speak against the evils of the government and the nation, taking steps to educate the people and the government on the issues confronting the nation and discourage violence, chaos

<sup>147</sup> Strauss, *Mark: Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* 526.

<sup>148</sup> Hodges, *Systematic Theology*, 519-520.

<sup>149</sup> Hodges, *Systematic Theology*, 519-520.

<sup>150</sup> John MacArthur, *MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1Timothy*, (Chicago, Moody Publishers, 1995), 63

<sup>151</sup> MacArthur, *MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1Timothy*, 63.

<sup>152</sup> MacArthur, *MacArthur New Testament Commentary* 63.

and bitterness, to exercise justice, fair play, and respect for human rights, and also advise against arbitrary death sentences.<sup>153</sup>

The discourse has intimated that social concerns are not only an aspect of sharing the necessary resources to needy people in the church and the society, but rather go beyond to the extent of contribution of financial obligation, be it taxes or revenue for community development, making intercession for all men and those in the herm of affairs in the nation(s), act as the moral conscience of the society, and respecting those in power, because their authority is ordained by God. This seems to authenticate the admonishing of Jeremiah to the Israelites to ‘seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper (Jer. 29:7)’.

## CONCLUSION

We set ourselves to embark on a journey of theological discipline about Christology, the Person of Christ regarding his two natures; human and divine, heretical views of his human and divine nature, and the incarnation which appears to be the central pillar of the Christian faith. Regarding the human nature, the discussion brought to light that, his aspect of human is substantiated by Scripture; he lived as human, performed his profession or ministry in an environment where people testified to his humanness. His emotional characteristics, his gender and sinlessness have likewise been portrayed, hence qualified and acceptable as sacrificial lamb for humanity (Heb. 2: 14 – 17). Concerning his divine nature, the discourse describes the distinctive qualities of his divine nature only seen in his deity. All the special attributes which describe God is realized in Jesus Christ. Omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, immortality, and the object of worship. Both OT and NT Scriptures authenticate this assertion, hence it would be undisputable to challenge his humanity and divinity. The concept of the incarnation has moreover showed us that, Christ also eternally preexisted. The holy Spirit was the source by which Christ was conceived, and not the outcome of intercourse between Mary and any other human or physical being. The import of the virgin birth validates Christ’s deity, and moreover the propitiation work which demands sinless person who is likewise God’s incarnate.

Vis-à-vis the heretical views of his humanity and divinity, the church fathers deserve a commendation for bringing the “curtains to a closed”. They corrected the heretics and defended the faith probably because they had only one church at the time, hence, the ability to summon almost all the bishops for such an august meeting to deliberate the issue at stake. Moreover, the Holy Spirit seems to have guided them in taking this spiritual exercise decision to halt the negative influence or heresies which could have been a bane for the church. Imagine if this decision was being taken in our contemporary Christianity where religious heterogeneity with diverse hermeneutical or interpretation of Scripture abounds, what do you think would have happen?

The implication of this discussion suggests that occasionally it would be imperative for modern theologians to encounter such biblical oppositions, and in that case, they would have to be intrinsically motivated to leave their pews and comfort zones, to speak and defend the fundamental principles of the faith. Theological issues are some of the factors which seemed to motivate Richard Lints when dealing with Evangelical theological framework, wherein he advanced the point that, “It is neither wise nor biblical to abandon the theological task because the refusal to think theologically will inevitably lead to the loss of the modern mind, which in turn will lead to the loss of the modern soul” ...Until we grasp the past and future,

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<sup>153</sup> Emmanuel Asante, ‘The Participation of the Church in Politics’, E – Journal of Religious and Theological Studies, (Volume 1, No. 1, September 2017), 87-88.

we will not be able to make sense of the present [regarding theological framework]'.<sup>154</sup> The legacy that the church fathers laid seems to have stood the test of time (Pro. 10:7), and for the sake of posterity contemporary Christianity would have to hold on to the faith unabated that, in the one-person Jesus Christ there are *two natures*, a *human nature* and a *divine nature*.

Regarding the personality of the Holy Spirit the research has brought to light that the Holy Spirit is one of the triune Godhead who is active and participates in God's entire activities from creation to date. He ministered in Jesus' holistic life from his birth to his resurrection and ascension, he worked among Jesus' disciples in the early church, and still working in our contemporary Christianity. Willmington accentuated that, the Savior's body was begotten by the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35; Matt. 1:18 – 20); experienced the presence of the Holy Spirit in his early years (Luke 2:40); filled with the Holy Spirit in an unprecedented way (Isa. 11:2; Matt 12:18 – 21; Luke 4:1; John 3:34); **anointed** by the Holy Spirit at his baptism (Isa 61:1; Matt 3:16; Luke 4:18; Acts 4:27; 10:38; Heb 1:9); empowered by the Holy Spirit (Matt 12:28). The Savior's deity was attested to by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12:3; Jn 4:2, 6); sealed by the Holy Spirit (John 6:27); led by the Holy Spirit (Matt 4:1); rejoiced in the Holy Spirit (Luke 10:21); sorrowed in the Holy Spirit (John 11:33); offered himself at Calvary through the Holy Spirit (Heb 9:14); was resurrected by the Holy Spirit (Rom 1:4; 1Pt 3:18); taught his disciples after the resurrection through the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:2); will return and raise the dead bodies of departed believers through the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:11).<sup>155</sup> The discussion has also authenticated the fact that God is still working miracles in the lives of believers as well as in the church. Now, since conversion of sinners to Christ has not ceased, diseases and sicknesses have not abated, and human problems continue to exist, that require God's intervention, these are indications that, miracles and healings have not ceased, because God has not changed (Heb. 13:8). Moreover, the Spirit of God has not ceased working and dwelling among God's people, he is very active, and operates in our contemporary Christian church, (John 14:16 – 18; Acts 2ff.) and will continue to work till the imminent Parousia. The fact that there are perceived extremes where so-called men of God stage, and others using demonic means of performing miracles, healings, and misleading people, should not be used to generalize that every phenomenon of miracles or healings is devilish. Believers should not lose sight of the fact that, in the last day such excesses of people using the name of Christ for miracles and healings shall surface (Matt. 24:4 – 5, 24; Luke 21:8; 13:6). Bird surmise that, "All in all, "Jesus was full of the Spirit, led by the Spirit, empowered by the Spirit, and anointed with the Spirit. He is clearly the apex and transcendence of all people of the Spirit who have preceded Him".<sup>156</sup>

Concerning the theological discipline of the church the research has examined the meaning of the church, the head/founder of the church and the purpose for which the church was established. The church seems to compose of everyone who has received Christ as their Savior, or a body of believers who have been called out from the world by God to live as his people under the authority of Jesus Christ (a universal body of Christ). It has also brought to light that the ecclesia belongs to Jesus, he is the founder, head, and sustainer of the very lives of the church (1Tim. 3:5, 15; Eph. 1:22; 5:23,24; Col.1:18). The early apostles

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<sup>154</sup> Lints, *The Fabric of Theology, A Prolegomenon to Evangelical Theology*, (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1993), 260, 309.

<sup>155</sup> Willmington, *Willmington Guide to the Bible 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition* 528-529. Distinguishing between the filling, anointing, and empowering ministries of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus. Filling – seems to mean *control*. This is to say Jesus was in total obedience to the Holy Spirit in deed, word, and thought during his earthly life. Anointing – as the prophets, priest, and kings were anointed with oil for special service in the Old Testament, Jesus was anointed by the Holy Spirit at his baptism upon beginning his special service as Israel's promised Messiah. Empowering – a reference to the necessary power and ability to carry out the various anointed tasks. This power is clearly seen: (1) In his preaching and teaching ministry (Luke 4:14, 18 – 19). In his healing and deliverance ministry (Matt 12:22 – 29; Acts 10:38).

<sup>156</sup> Bird, *Evangelical Theology, A Biblical and Systematic Introduction*, 625.

were his agents through whom the gospel message was propagated to the ends of the world (Matt 28:19 – 20). The church was not meant to be static but to dynamically serve varying purposes such as evangelism and teaching, to prepare people to share the good news and disciple members to live Christlike lives. It also meant to worship, and fellowship together as depicted in Acts 2:42 – 47, thus devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship. Prayer was another fundamental purpose of the church through which believers have a spiritual relationship activity with God.

Finally, social concerns cannot be left out, thus, to intervene in the lives of the members through sharing of their possessions and caring for those in need. Above all the church’s attitude towards the state, to be a prophetic voice for humanity, to pray and intercede for all people and contribute towards payment of tribute or taxes, and similarly to be obedient to those in authority, since such authorities are ordained by God. Affirming from the whole discourse, we shall agree with Lints that, ‘The church is invested with the responsibility to protect and to proclaim the whole counsel of God (2Tim. 4:2) ...The promise of God’s covenant is “I will be your God, and you will be my people” (Lev. 26:12; 2Cor. 6:16). The church is the possession of God. It consists of those whom he has formed for himself that they might show forth his praise...She is commissioned with the responsibility of guarding the gospel and thereby retaining the standard of sound words (2Tim. 1:13 – 14) ...and to renounce the evil that opposes the work of God’.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> Lints, *The Fabric of Theology, A Prolegomenon to Evangelical Theology*, 317, 320.

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