

**IN SEARCH OF AN ECUMENICAL PENTECOSTAL ECCLESIOLOGY: A CRITICAL
ANALYSIS OF KÄRKKÄINEN'S ECCLESIOLOGY**

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, BAMBO MITI, Student no: 50402412, herewith declare that, the content of this dissertation to be my original work that has not at any time, totally or partially, been submitted to any other university for the purpose of attaining a degree.

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DATE

SUMMARY

Pentecostalism has always been regarded as a movement that does not have all the ecclesiastical qualities that qualify it to be called a fully-fledged tradition alongside other major streams of Protestantism. Contrary to popular theologies that undermine the great role that the Pentecostal tradition can play in the global church, modern Pentecostal theologies agree that most of the misconceptions and assumption are misplaced because the Pentecostal tradition is a rich tradition with vital elements and symbols necessary to advance the ecumenical goal of unity and reconciliation. Based on this perception that Pentecostal ecclesiology is ecumenical, this research critically analyses Pentecostal ecclesiology as portrayed by Kärkkäinen in order to determine its ecumenicity or relevance to the ecumenical goals of unity, tolerance and reconciliation. This research confronts the paternalistic assumptions and misconception that regard Pentecostalism as simply a superstitious and naive sect which is only relevant to the lower class by bringing out the different elements and symbols within the tradition that are vital for the success and development of the global church in a modern global context. Some of the critical elements and symbols within the Pentecostal tradition that are explored within this study include: unity in diversity, the mission nature of the church, experiences of the Spirit as portrayed in its Pneumatological Christology and Soteriology, its rapid adaptation to new global south contexts and critical elements of inclusivity and plurality as portrayed in the foundations of the tradition.

KEY-WORDS

Pentecostalism, Soteriology, Christology, pneumatology, theology from below, theology from above, unity in diversity, ecclesiology, pluralism and pluriformity, ecumenical movement

KAKARETSO

Bopentakonta esale bo nkuwa e le mokgatlo o se nang ditshobotsi tsohle tsa kereke tse etsang hore bo tshwanelehe hore bo bitswe moetlo o felletseng o haufi le melapo e meng ya Boprostanta. Ho fapana le dithuto tse tsebahalang tse nyenyefatsang karolo e kgolo eo moetlo wa Bopentakonta o e bapalang kerekeng ya lefatshe, dithuto tsa kajeno tsa Bopentakonta dia dumela hore boholo ba dikgopolo tse fosahetseng le menahano di sebediswa hampe hobane moetlo wa Bopentakonta ke moetlo o ruileng o nang le dikarolo tsa bohlokwa le matshwao a hlokahalang ho ntshetsa pele sepheo sa ho kopano ha dikereke tsa Bokreste sa bonngwe le poelano. Ho ipapisitswe le hore mohopolo ona wa hore kereke ya Pentekonta e kopantse dikereke tse fapaneng tsa Bokreste, dipatlisiso tse di manolla ka ho hlahlobisisa kereke ya Pentekonta jwalo ka ha ho bontshitswe ke Kärkkäinen e le ho tseba hore na e kopantse dikereke tsa Bokreste hakae kapa ho nepahala ha yona dipheong tsa kopano ya bonngwe, mamello le poelano. Phuputso ena e shebana le mehopolo ya thibelo ya tokoloho le boikarabello le dikgopolo tse fosahetseng tse nkang Bopentakonta e le feela sehlotshwana sa bokgelohi ba tumela-kgwela le se se nang tsebo bo sebetsang feela ho ba tlase ka ho hlahisa dikarolo le matshwao a fapaneng kahara moetlo tse bohlokwa bakeng sa katleho le ntlafatso ya kereke ya lefatshe maamong a lefatshe a sekwale-jwale. Dintlha tse ding tsa bohlokwa le matshwao kahara moetlo wa Bopentakonta tse hlahlojwang thutong ena di kenyelletsa: bonngwe ho fapaneng; semelo sa kereke; boiphihlelo ba Moya o Halalelang jwalo ka ha bo bontshwa ho Bokreste ba bona ba Ditshobotsi le Thuto ya Pholoho; ho ikamahanya ka potlako ha bona le maemo a matjha a borwa a lefatshe; le dikarolo tsa bohlokwa tsa kenyelletso, le bongata jwalo ka ha ho bontshitswe metheong ya moetlo.

MANTSWE A TOBILENG

Bopentakonta, Thuto ya Pholoho, Bokreste, Bokreste bo shebaneng le Moya o Halalelang, thuto ya bodumedi e tswang tlase, thuto ya bodumedi e tswang hodimo, bonngwe ho fapaneng, kereke, bongata le ho fapana tumelong ya Khatholike, mokgatlo wa kopano ya dikereke tse fapaneng

ISISHWANKATHELO

UbuPentekoste kudala bathathwa ngokuba libandla elingenazo zonke iimpawu zemvaba epheleleyo yenkolo njengezinye iimvaba zamaProtestanti. Ngokuchasene neengqiqo buthixo ezidumileyo ezijongela phantsi indima enkulu enokudlalwa yimvaba yobuPentekoste kwihlabathi jikelele, iingqiqo buthixo zale mihla zobuPentekoste ziyangqina ukuba uninzi lweengqiqo ezigwenxa neentelekelelo ngokunjalo azifanelekanga kuba imvaba yobuPentekoste ityebile kwaye inezinto ezifunekayo ezibalulekileyo nemiqondiso ngokunjalo eyimfuneko ukuqhubela phambili injongo yeenkonzo zonke jikelele yobunye noxolelwaniso. Ngokusekelwe kulo mba wokuba ubuPentekoste bemvaba busebenzela ubunye beenkonzo, olu phando ke ngoko luhlalutya ngokuhlaba amadlala ubuPentekoste benkonzo njengoko buchazwa nguKärkkäinen ukumisela ubunye beenkonzo okanye ukuba semxholweni kwabo kwiinjongo zobunye beenkonzo, unyamezelwano kunye noxolelwaniso. Olu phando lujongana neentelekelelo ezingafanelekanga neengqiqo ezigwenxa ezithatha ubuPentekoste njengemvaba nje eneenkolelo ezingaqhelekanga efanele abantu abaphantsi nje kuphela ngokuphuhlisa izinto ezifunekayo ezahlukahlukeneyo kunye nemiqondiso kwiimvaba ezibalulekileyo kwimpumelelo nophuhliso lobukristu kwihlabathi jikelele kwimeko yehlabathi yala maxesha. Ezinye zezinto ezifunekayo ezibalulekileyo kunye nemiqondiso kwimvaba yobuPentekoste eziphicothwayo kolu phononongo ziquka: ubunye kwiyantlukwano; uhlobo lwebandla kwakunye nomnqophiso walo; amava oMoya ngokwengqiqo kaMoya esekelwe kwingqiqo ngoKristu nosindiso; ukuziqhelanisa kwebandla neemeko ezintsha zamazwe angezantsi kwihlabathi jikelele; kunye nemiba ebalulekileyo emalunga nobandakanyo nobuninzi beembono njengoko kubonakalisiwe kwiziseko zale mvaba.

AMAGAMA ABALULEKILEYO

UbuPentekoste, iNgqiqo ngoSindiso, iNgqiqo ngoKristu, ingqiqo ngomoya oyingcwele, ingqiqo buthixo evela ezantsi, ingqiqo buthixo evela phezulu, ubunye kwiyantlukwano, imfundiso yecawe, ubuninzi beembono, uphuhliso lwemvisiswano nobunye phakathi kweemvaba zobukristu

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1 - Description of the research

In this research, I would like to carry out a critical analysis of Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen's Pentecostal ecclesiology. An attempt will be made to analyse some of the books that Kärkkäinen has written and this will include his book *Introduction to ecclesiology*, his five (5) volume systematic theology, Journals and any other articles relevant to the topic, in order to come up with an overview perspective of his understanding as far as Pentecostal and Charismatic ecclesiology is concerned. The topics within the broad aspect of Pentecostal ecclesiology that I will be focusing on include church beliefs and doctrines, ecumenism, church unity and reconciliation. The choice of the topic for the study has been occasioned by a number of factors. One of the factors is that Kärkkäinen is an expert in Pentecostal theology and most of his works relate to the ecclesiastical part of Pentecostal theology (Yong, 2004). What makes Kärkkäinen's ecclesiology Pentecostal is that he builds a constructive theology which is informed by his foundational Pentecostalism. The other factor is that the topics that Kärkkäinen focuses on in his works outline a great interest that he has in Christian unity, reconciliation and ecumenism and for a research like this one whose main focus is a search for an ecumenical Pentecostal ecclesiology, his works are very valuable.

What is so fascinating about Kärkkäinen's theology is how he explores the resources within Pentecostalism related to the universal and generous work of the Holy Spirit in order to develop a Pentecostal ecclesiology that can speak not only to the changing religious global mission context but also to the South African context (2002:100-103). This in a way challenges the narrow and exclusive aspects that characterises certain classical sectors of global Pentecostalism and a number of South African independent charismatic churches by developing a Pentecostal ecclesiology that "transcend ecclesiastical chauvinism" and embraces a wider society (Kaunda, 2015:114).

1.1- Reasons for choosing the particular theologian and the selected books

The works of Kärkkäinen to be studied for the purpose of this thesis are very important mainly because they give an extensive and comprehensive in-depth understanding and description of Kärkkäinen's view of Pentecostal ecclesiology in particular and Pentecostal theology at large. This comprehensive overview and in-depth description of Pentecostal ecclesiology is vital for this research because it makes it possible or enables critical analysis, contemplation, and discussions of the applicable texts, faith systems, and views to take place. Kärkkäinen does not only describe Pentecostal ecclesiology as a point of departure but he also uncovers the richness of each tradition-based, more often than not, on shared biblical truths (2002:15). The Pentecostal Christology, Soteriology and pneumatological views that characterise his five volumes of systematic theology creates a firm background from which his Pentecostal ecclesiology develops hence they create a backbone from which a better understanding of his views of Pentecostal ecclesiology can be drawn from. The book *Introduction to ecclesiology* which forms part of the works of Kärkkäinen that have to be studied and analysed extensively is critical to this research in the sense that it helps individual Christians to approach the theological make-up of their fellow Christians and to gain a better understanding of where their own tradition sits within the broader context of the Church's history (2002:13-14). This brief description of Kärkkäinen's works in a way means that it is actually appropriate to use his Pentecostal ecclesiology as the platform through which further exploration can be done to assess how Pentecostal ecclesiology in general fits into the global vision of ecumenism.

1.2- In Search of an ecumenical Pentecostal ecclesiology

This dissertation digs deep into Kärkkäinen's Pentecostal ecclesiology as portrayed in his works in order to ascertain its ecumenicity or its relevance to the ecumenical dream of Christian unity and reconciliation. An ecumenical ecclesiology in this sense basically means an ecclesiology which is inclusive, biased towards unity in its approach, focused on building bridges between Christian denominations and various religions, values diversity, upholds human relations and Christian reconciliations and is mission-oriented. A deeper understanding of what ecclesiology means gives us an understanding that this term has an inclusive connotation giving us an idea that the church, right from its foundation (1

Corinthians 12:12-31), is presumed to be diverse and embedded in a community which seeks to accommodate everyone who believes in Jesus Christ.

One of the most comprehensive and profound definition of ecclesiology is by Gerald Mannion who takes ecclesiology to mean “the self-understanding of any given ecclesial community and of the church as a whole, along with the study of the same” (2007: xiii). The term ecclesiology comes from two Greek words *ekklesia* meaning church or an assembly of Christian believers and *logos* meaning ‘study’. This means that ecclesiology can also be regarded as the study about the church. The church (*ekklesia*) according to Norman L. Geisler refers to an assembly of believers, namely, followers of Jesus (2011:1077). It is very important to know that a critical analysis of Kärkkäinen's Pentecostal ecclesiology will inevitably draw us to situation where we have to determine what form of ecumenical Pentecostal ecclesiology he is propagating. Kärkkäinen's (2002:2) statement that “before you put together certain components of a particular element you need to know what it is that you are putting together,” makes more sense here. This means that it is very important to know in detail the ecclesiological views (doctrines and beliefs) of a particular acclaimed tradition before you can make a decision as to how this tradition can fit in with others.

The general consensus among Pentecostal theologians is that classical Pentecostalism has many important contributions it can make to modern theology. According to Newbign, although Pentecostalism is often categorised as one of the fundamentalists, probably by default, it is actually a theological tradition in its own right that deserves reflection alongside other two major streams of Catholicism and Protestantism (Warrington, 2008:12). This conclusion though made in 1953, long before Pentecostalism had expanded to its current level where it accounts for up to a third of all Christians, its distinctive features and the different groups within makes it a unique and global tradition that deserves recognition. Critically analysing Pentecostal ecclesiology, in my view, will bring into focus many tools and instruments within this tradition that can make a major contribution to the global vision of ecumenism. It is very important that we look at the background of Pentecostalism so that we can understand certain aspects of this tradition.

The twentieth century saw the start and splendid development of a recently introduced Christian religious tradition, which eventually extended its impact to the whole world. The foundations of the Pentecostal tradition can be traced in the revivals known as “Azusa

Street” in Los Angeles during the early twentieth century (Creech, 1996: 405-424). Since this tradition had its foundations anchored within the Holiness movements, the early Pentecostal tradition was identified by an overwhelming emphasis on ‘the second blessing’, the baptism or the descent of the Spirit on new believers as a conversational spiritual experience, followed by glossolalia or speaking in unknown tongues as evidence of the Holy Spirit Baptism (Creech, 1996: 405-424). It was not long after the Azusa Street revival that this Pentecostal experience began to make an impact in traditional churches, particularly in Roman Catholicism, where it took the form of a renewal movement, called the Charismatic movement which was generally characterised by personal virtues such as faithfulness and purity, dedication to missions and a revived spirituality (Stetzer, 2013).

The Charismatic movement began to take root in the mainline churches shortly after the Second World War. Any theological scholar who is interested in researching or exploring Pentecostalism must know that the immense varieties of Pentecostal and Charismatic movements, caused by divisions that emerged later in the history of this tradition, makes the definition of this tradition very complicated in the same way one deal with the wider category of evangelicals. “In terms of the identity of these movements, definitions come from the inside and the outside, are inclusive or exclusive” (Klaver, 2004:4). This somehow leads to the conclusion that we are faced with a situation where there are a variety of Pentecostals though each of these is connected by similar values for spiritual experiences (Anderson, 2004: 10, 14).

After this brief outlook of the background of Pentecostalism, I would like to state that Hans Küng identifies the future ideal or exemplary church to be a church which is embedded in its Christian foundations and concentrated in its present tasks of achieving unity in love and diversity rather than delighting in the traits or the popular concepts of the dark ages or the Reformation. He continues to say that this type of church must not be biased towards women by entertaining stereotype ideas towards women or tolerate an exclusively male language but accepts women as equal partners in the ministry (Simut, 2008:136). In my view, this means that an ideal church for the third millennium which Küng alludes to, must not have a marginal confessional system or adhere to some form of exclusiveness, the presumption of bureaucracy, and the refusal of fellowship, but be a pluralistic open church, which does not only talk about ecumenism but practices ecumenism from inside out.

A third millennium church is also a church that considers ideas from other Christian denominations without rushing into a biased conclusion hence can easily learn from others (Küng, 1988:7, 59). “This is a type of church that is not Eurocentric and put forward any exclusivity Christian claims and shows Roman imperialism, but a tolerant universal church” (Simut, 2008:136). Although the perception of an ecumenical church that Küng spearheads might not fit neatly into the concept of an ecumenical theology sought for in this study because his theology tend to promote religious syncretism and social cohesion by overlooking biblical correctitude, his open ecclesiological ideas which promotes the manifestation of diverse gifts within the church, the dynamic nature of the church and the priesthood of all believers sets a pace for one of the critical aspects that will be explored in this dissertation, which is the involvements of all believers in the work of ministry, the invisible and visible nature of the church and unity in diversity.

Although Macchia identifies one of the critical challenges that can easily be encountered when one engages in Pentecostal Studies to be that Pentecostalism has not produced a lot of theological written material, he also takes note of its rich “non-academic theology” which if considered carefully and put to use, can greatly enrich ecumenical theological dialogue (2002:1120). Although some ideas of the Spirit and Spiritual gifts can easily culminate into rigid Patriarchal systems that can be noticed in the practices of some of the Pentecostal churches, It is also very important to acknowledge that certain sectors of the Pentecostal system have taken seriously the foundational principles of the tradition hence aligning themselves with some of the characteristics that Küng identifies with the third millennium church by maintaining a non-patriarchal system which is not stereo-typed towards women, rooted in Christian origin and combines office and charism.

Some of the issues which Mannion identifies that stands on the way to a harmonious communion between churches or denominations includes, “the advent of neo-exclusivism, the attempt to impose a kind of official ecclesiology across the entire church universal, and the inward-looking, seemingly world-renouncing mindset that has set back ecumenism and dialogue with other faith” (2007:105). It is critical that such issues that hinder catholic communion as identified by Mannion be located if ever-present in Pentecostal theology.

My experience and knowledge as a Southern African Pentecostal pastor will serve as a great asset in analysing and understanding Pentecostal ecclesiology and also enable me to bring

into focus both academic and some non-academic theology which is useful for ecumenical dialogue. In addition to being a minister in the Pentecostal tradition, my brief experience in theological scholarship will also serve as a great skill in the critical theological analysis of Pentecostal ecclesiology using different perspectives including my own context.

1.3 Conclusion

Doing a critical analysis of Kärkkäinen's brand of Pentecostal ecclesiology I believe will set the pace for a deeper understanding and acknowledgement of Pentecostal ecclesiology as a rich tradition where the formal and informal values, doctrines and ideologies can contribute immensely to the ecumenical dream of church unity and reconciliation. It is indeed true that very little theological scholarship has been done in developing a full-fledged Pentecostal ecclesiology but I believe this work will serve as a signal for further research and mining of ecumenical traits that are hidden within this tradition.

2. Motivation for the research

I am a Pentecostal pastor although I was born and spent most of my teenage years as a Roman Catholic. It was only after high school that I left Roman Catholicism and joined the Pentecostals. The motivation for leaving the Roman Catholic Church was that I needed a free Church where I could express my spirituality freely without being hindered by streamlined and dogmatic precepts of traditional theology. However within Pentecostalism I was confronted with a mixture of theological approaches that range from the American conservative system (which uses inerrancy of scripture as a point of departure) to extreme free and unstructured neo-Pentecostal systems. Although I still belong to the Pentecostal tradition I believe there is a lot that Pentecostals and Roman Catholics can learn from each other. This exposure to two traditions which lies at the extreme opposite ends of the theological spectrum (Traditional and free) has made it possible for me to be conversant with the teachings of both denominations and be able to compare the two hence revealing the riches embedded in each of these traditions. It is also vital that I also mention that my Catholic-Pentecostal journey has some connections with Kärkkäinen's Lutheran-Pentecostal journey hence it becomes possible for me and others within the Pentecostal family to relate to the kind of hybridity expressed within his ecclesiology.

Furthermore, the problems of division and misunderstanding common in the global church due to doctrinal differences and struggles for power and authority have been a source of my

concern. It is this religious environment of factionalism, strife, hatred, misunderstanding that has drawn me into studying ecclesiology and ecumenism, with the intention of seeking answers to some of the issues that have engulfed the Pentecostal tradition and global church in this modern era.

3. Significance of the research

Once again in this section of the research I would like to echo the understanding that in the studies or analysis of modern theology, Pentecostalism is often side-lined. It is not surprising that some main-line South African churches have frequently regarded or considered the practices and beliefs of Pentecostals and their contemporaries, the Zionists, to be sectarian, cultic and heretical (Roy, 2017:117). Most theologians still view Pentecostalism as simply a young revivalist movement which has not settled to form a complete church, but we must recognise that Pentecostalism has way passed that stage and accounts for at least a quarter of the total number of Christians. Even though Pentecostalism has produced less scholarly theological material to this date compared to other traditions and can still be regarded as a young church because of its recent development (Nel, 2016:1-9), it has a lot of valuable elements or traits it can contribute to modern theology. Coupled with its limited written confessions, doctrines and beliefs in the area of ecclesiology, its non-academic theology has much to contribute to the ecumenical theological conversation.

Kärkkäinen (2002:9) states that the “approach of traditional theology has too often been to impose its own often quite-limited definition of churchhood on its young counterparts” (developing theologies). He continues to say that “naturally, those churches that define what ecclesiality means usually themselves fulfil the requirement of their own definitions but ecumenically, it does not further the discussion” (Kärkkäinen, 2002:9). Indeed it is completely useless and dangerous for older churches, just to undermine or ignore the enormous theological resources and the vitality of new traditions such as Pentecostalism by classifying them as non-entities or under valuing their ecclesiology. It is indeed not an overstatement to say that young churches have shown their indispensability therefore it is up to the theologians to understand these new developments or new trends and be in tune with what is happening. Kärkkäinen states that it is the main duty or “task of theology to make sense of what is happening in Christian life and Churches” (2012:9).

Since this research assumes an ecumenical nature of Pentecostal ecclesiology and anticipates that Pentecostalism values unity and reconciliation, despite the negligence of other church traditions in recognising this vitality, it will be critical that we determine what form or type of ecumenical Pentecostal ecclesiology Kärkkäinen is propagating and even go to the extent of examining its relevance and feasibility in fostering that unity and reconciliation. Since Christian unity and reconciliation are the core values spearheaded by ecumenical ecclesiology, it is also very important to outline the significance of these values among Christians and Christian churches. The problem of Christian division is real because it is the root cause of conflicts, lack of trust and economic imbalances that have characterised our world today. Although more often the church has contributed to the divisions due to the exclusive elements within its traditions, it still has to prove that it can unite its people from different races, culture, traditions, backgrounds and ethnicity. In my view, a united church can be the solution to many of the problems that characterises our society today. Given the current fights against the Islamic State (Isis), Boko Haram and other terrorist groups, It is very possible for us to think that Islamic extremism or terrorism is the only threat to world peace but in my view, religious fanaticism and intolerance within Christianity itself is a very great threat to peace and justice because it serves as a good breeding ground for hate, xenophobia, racism and poverty.

There is currently an ecumenical vision by the World Council of Churches (WCC) and other similar organisations to bring all churches and Christians together so that they can have one voice. In reference to missionary Christianity, the spread of Christianity from the west to Africa, in particular, has brought about new challenges such as how to make Christianity relevant to an environment whose culture and worldview are completely different from the west (Da Silva, 2017:407). The question mainly is about what can be added to or subtracted from a westernised Christianity in order to make it relevant to the African or Asian setting (Kärkkäinen, 2002:9). It is also evident that the commitment of Pentecostalism to carry out the great commission and the emerging of Pentecostal scholars in recent years, is making it very clear that there is a need more than ever for this tradition to think over how it can relate to other Christian traditions and also respond to people of other religions from “a distinctively Pentecostal Perspective” in a hospitable and caring manner (Yong, 2007:5-31). Even though there are some other serious challenges to the ecumenical goal of Christian

unity and reconciliation apart from contextualisation, this research takes the first step by searching for ecumenicity in such neglected traditions as Pentecostalism by determining what form or type of ecclesiology Kärkkäinen is propagating and ascertain whether it is feasible in promoting Christian unity, reconciliation and religious dialogue.

4. Research questions

This research will primarily involve critically researching, understanding, and engaging with the written material, faith ideologies, and diverse views of Pentecostal ecclesiology as portrayed in the works of Kärkkäinen. It is very important to know as we embark on this research that an exercise of determining the ecumenicity of a particular ecclesiology requires a thorough examination and mapping not only of the doctrinal beliefs, practices and norms, but also of their foundational values. In order to achieve the goals and objectives of this research the following questions will serve as the guide:-

1. How does Kärkkäinen describe Pentecostal ecclesiology?
2. What are the unique formal and non-formal practices, norms and doctrines that characterises Kärkkäinen's Pentecostal ecclesiology?
3. What type or form of an ecumenical Pentecostal ecclesiology is Kärkkäinen propagating?
4. What are the tools, instruments and ideologies within Kärkkäinen's Pentecostal ecclesiology that can be used effectively to foster the ecumenical dream of Christian unity and reconciliation?

5. Goals and objectives of the research

As I critically analyse Kärkkäinen's Pentecostal ecclesiology, the main goals and objectives of this thesis are as follows:-

1. To determine what type or form of ecumenical Pentecostal ecclesiology Kärkkäinen is propagating and assess its relevance or feasibility in spearheading Christian unity and reconciliation.
2. To examine the point of meeting and unification between Kärkkäinen Pentecostal ecclesiology and other ecumenical theologies.

3. To indicate the value and the mandate of Pentecostalism as both an example and a listener within the field of contemporary ecclesiology.
4. To suggest particular ecumenical pointers for the improvement of Kärkkäinen Pentecostal ecclesiology.
5. To determine how Kärkkäinen's Pentecostal ecclesiastical ideas and concepts can inform the new South African context.

6. Methodology

This research will utilise both primary and secondary data. The primary data necessary for this research will be collected through a literal critical analysis of Kärkkäinen's five volume systematic theology and other materials he wrote which are relevant to this study. This literal analysis will be done in such a way that it does justice to the intention of the author of the material used. The critical analysis of Kärkkäinen's works will also ascertain the level of contribution Kärkkäinen makes in spearheading an ecumenical Pentecostal ecclesiology that values Christian unity and reconciliation. In order to make this research more viable, a broader understanding of Kärkkäinen's style of writing and Pentecostal theological views which can be clearly noticed within his Pentecostal ecclesiological works and systematic theology themes will be studied extensively. The other sources of information which will be critically analysed, which forms part of secondary data, will include books, articles and Journals written about Kärkkäinen's ecclesiastical views and Pentecostal ecclesiology in general and these will be used effectively in order to achieve the objectives and goals of this thesis.

7. Recent developments in Pentecostal ecclesiology

In this section I would like to describe the recent developments in Pentecostal ecclesiology. Kärkkäinen describes these times, particularly the last two decades, as the periods of a pneumatological and ecclesiastical renaissance because of the fact that these disciplines have been given the necessary full treatment as independent sub-disciplines within the theological field. Kärkkäinen connects this sudden interest in the discipline of ecclesiology in particular, to the development of the ecumenical movement (2012:7). Kärkkäinen's point is not an overstatement because no other wave of change in the historical background of the Christian church, except the Reformation, has greatly transformed the character of

Christianity as much as the ecumenical system that is spearheading or pushing for Christian unity. Two other developments which Kärkkäinen identifies as also contributing immensely to this general interest in ecclesiology is the increase in the growth of Christian churches beyond the western world to an extent that a large percentage of Christians can now be found in the global south and the mushrooming of what we call 'free churches' and non-traditional ecclesiologies such as Pentecostal ecclesiology which defy the traditional concept of what a church is supposed to be (2012:8). In the subsections below I will discuss recent contributions to Pentecostal theology by looking at how other recent prominent theologians, religious organisations and church Councils have understood the relationship between ecumenism and Pentecostal ecclesiology.

7.1 Does Pentecostal ecclesiology exist?

Before going further in this thesis, it is very important to determine whether there is anything like a Pentecostal ecclesiology given the fact that Pentecostalism has always been regarded as a movement right from its inception and has given little attention or emphasis on its denominationalism or institutionalisation. According to Kärkkäinen, Paul D. Lee, a Catholic who is conversant with Pentecostalism asks the same question as to whether or not it is logical or even necessary to talk about anything like a "distinctive Pentecostal ecclesiology" (2012:72-73). Even though Lee's observation is quite true in the sense that the foundations of Pentecostalism outline these undeniable facts that the early Pentecostals engaged themselves in the duty of witnessing or preaching to the world about the spiritual experiences to an extent that they forgot the other critical task of developing a denomination (Kärkkäinen, 2012:72), one can still talk about a form of Pentecostal ecclesiology. Even though considering Pentecostalism as simply a movement also raises questions as to whether it can be considered to be an ecclesiastical entity in its own right, other aspects of this tradition gives us a more valid reason why it contains some form of ecclesiology, but with exceptional or unique features which have been lacking in the mainline traditional churches. Other theological writers such as Andy Lord have not taken lightly the understanding that Pentecostalism is simply a 'Spirit movement' driving them to consider the following comments made by Rev. Michael Harper of the Church of England during the first level dialogue between Roman Catholics and Pentecostals which commenced in 1972, that "in striving to release the Spirit from institutionalism and

excessive theological formulae and fundamentalism of pedagogy, Pentecostals tend to trap the Spirit in experiential criteria” (2011:248-255), as simply misguided. Lord argues that “Harper’s linking of Pentecostalism primarily to the Spirit needs an important qualification and reorientation” (2011:248-255). Lord states that “Pentecostalism - against the conclusion of many of its observers - is not primarily a ‘Spirit-movement’, focusing in the first place on the Charismatic ministry of the Holy Spirit. Rather, Pentecostalism is a robustly Christocentric movement” (2011:248).

One of the reasons that have caused Pentecostalism to be looked at with suspicion by other theologians has been its unique approaches and its presumed deviation from the traditionally acceptable precepts and characteristics of a standard ecclesiology. The pneumatological, Christocentric and experiential features that characterise Pentecostal ecclesiology, in my view, simply clarify the criteria of identifying this new tradition, though this perspective of understanding things cannot be easily be accepted hence it still remains a broadly debatable ecumenical aspect. Even though a systematic and ecumenical ecclesiology among Pentecostals is still in the making, it can still be confidently stated that there is indeed a Pentecostal ecclesiology (Vondey, 2010:41-55).

7.2 The definitive roles of Pentecostal ecclesiology

Any scholar who engages in the study of Pentecostal ecclesiology must acknowledge that it is shaped by its missionary drive and this explains why it has been able to spread like fire all over the world from its humble beginnings of Azusa Street. It is true that the aspect of exploring the missionary nature of the Pentecostal tradition has not been fully realised hence it is not surprising that some theological scholars still hold on or assume a congregational format for this system. A closer look at the Pentecostal system of operation indicates that its informal network structures and broader ecclesiastical models are intertwined in such a way that they spearhead the missionary drive or zeal. This entails that Pentecostal ecclesiology has a deep global and Catholic orientation or appeal and this aspect of this ecclesiology needs to be explored further. Indeed such an ecclesiology, as is characteristic of Pentecostalism, connects the Spirit’s task to the story of the expanding church in the book of Acts and proposes a fresh approach to the understanding of the word ‘Catholic’ and hence can open a way for new possibilities for ecumenism and Pentecostal ecclesiology. The reality is that within this Pentecostal Trinitarian ecclesiastical framework,

several existing studies can be developed by bringing together subject matters of communion, adaptation to a different context, mission orientation, scriptural relevance, Christology, baptism of the Spirit and purity of all believers.

The growing need for the establishment of structures within Pentecostalism has been induced by the challenges posed by contemporary industrial societies. The creeping in of these mission structures which are similar to earlier ecclesiastical systems, in particular, has been also necessitated by the prospective perception that the church is naturally mission-oriented (Kärkkäinen, 2018:1). Apart from enhancing the structural development, this positive vision is likely to promote ecumenical relations between Pentecostals and other mainline churches. This positive outlook of the nature of the church which has persisted within Pentecostalism despite its laxity in developing strong church structure has also motivated the church, in general, to be involved in mission hence dealing with the old perspectives or assumptions that have viewed mission as simply the duty of the church rather than what defines it. Pentecostals view mission as the very being of the church, something which the main line churches can learn from (Kärkkäinen, 2018:1). As far as Pentecostals are concerned, the church is a fellowship that has the duty or responsibility as mandated by Christ to call, disciple, and release the disciples for the purpose of reaching out to the world. Indeed through this call and sending out of missionaries to the world, the church as the communion or fellowship of the Spirit shows how mission forms an essential part of its being and somehow defines it (Sepúlveda, 1996:108).

Amos Yong also capitalises on this missionary identification of Pentecostal ecclesiology by stating that the global relevance of the Pentecostal community is partially as a result of the ideology that Pentecostalism is in the first place ecumenically oriented and its spirituality has a universal appeal rather than an assumption that it is an organised system of formal institutions (2005:31). These Catholic features and global relevance of Pentecostalism makes it possible for the tradition to promote unity and reconciliation by healing the scars of segregation based on ethnic background, racial feelings and social issues, by their spiritual experiences through Jesus Christ (Stone, 2012:259). This means that an ideal church does not carry its own institutional positivist ideology, endowment, potential, or history development around, as is characteristic of many historic churches, because it receives its power to be what it is and carries out its activity through the Holy Spirit power.

One admirable aspect of Pentecostal worship is that it sets particularly credible paraphernalia of understanding by refusing to yield to the temptation that many historical churches face by relying on their historical foundation.

There is a strong conviction among Pentecostals that church life has to be inclusive in a way that allows all Christians in the church to be somehow involved in everything that goes on around them. The active participation of both the clergy and the lay people in Pentecostalism gives this tradition leverage in its mission endeavours. This view is also shared by the prominent theologian Miroslav Volf who states that the negligence in acknowledging the critical role of the laity in the vital components which hold up the church contribute immensely to the passiveness of the system as far as mission is concerned (1996:37). If the laity were to be involved in the day to day running of the church by taking the sacraments and listening to the preached Word of God then active participation would automatically become part of their ecclesiastical being. We cannot also confidently regard lay-people as the vital part of the church if their participation is not accepted or is limited to just a few activities or roles. If the church involves all its members in all its activities or duties then the communication of their belief can easily be achieved. This eventually leads us to conclude that it is the ability of the laity to communicate their beliefs that qualifies them to be part of the church (Volf, 1996:37).

While it is true that a large number of Pentecostals have not joined ecumenical organisations such as WWC, it does not in any way suggest that there have never been any visible ecumenical prompts within the system. The overwhelming participation of many Pentecostal leaders in the Lausanne movement in 1974 and other similar meetings prompted by the Lausanne commitment such as Cape Town 2010 is clear evidence of these impulses (Nel, 2018:1-8). The ideology of Lausanne promoted in the Lausanne agreement which is to spearhead unity, servant hood, and a call to be involved in the evangelisation of the world (Lausanne Movement, 2014:6-7), easily identifies with the foundational roles and principles of Pentecostalism such as restoration of the lost spiritual component in traditional ecclesiology, identifying with the poor, neglected and oppressed in our society and reviving the Pentecostal event where people of all races, tongues and nations were united in a spiritual communion to worship God through Jesus Christ. It is clear that Pentecostalism, as indicated earlier in the thesis, has some ecumenical foundations hence ecumenism is not a

strange terminology to this tradition. According to Wolfgang Vondey Pentecostalism started as an ecumenical movement (2011:319). Although the theologies spearheaded by the World Council of Church cannot be ultimately used as the yardstick for understanding the ecumenicity of a particular tradition, the ecumenical standards that it sets can be used effectively in understanding the current focal points in inter-religious dialogues. These focal points can serve as guidelines for understanding how Pentecostalism relates or can relate effectively to other traditions and the world.

The World Council of Churches (WCC) considers Christians to be a community of strangers and pilgrims whose citizenship is in heaven, and yet, on the other hand, they are to be the light and salt to global society. Just in the same way that Bosch (van Wyngaard, 2011: 151-167) considered the church, in his earlier theology, to be an alternative community of Christians whose ultimate mission is not only to itself but to the World as well, WCC states that “the church is only required to be separate in order to be prepared for engagement, that is, the church exists for the world because it is called to the service of mankind, of the world” (WCC, 1967). In relation to aspects of ecumenism, WCC states that the commission of the churches is pluralistic in character- that is, it is always concrete. According to Stone, the “message and structures of the churches can only be formulated with respect to the immense variety of actual realities amidst which we live hence it the world that must be allowed to provide the agenda for the churches” (2012:207).

The fact that the church can only be effectively defined in relation to its mission or role in the world is also echoed by Shane Clifton, one of the presenters at the World Council of Reformed Churches (WCRC) meeting. During this WCRC Reformed-Pentecostal-Dialogue meeting in Parramatta, Australia (2017) Clifton describes the classical maturation of the relationship between mission and the church under the title, *Ministering to the needs of the World: Mission and Ecclesiology – An Aussie Pentecostal Perspective*. In his description, he explained how the Pentecostal movement in many places in the world did not want to be institutionalised. Despite this fact, there are some that have developed into denominations while others were catalysts for the rise of attractive megachurches. Clifton discussed challenges arising from church growth in view of division and diversity, the role of healing and aspects of prosperity understood in terms of flourishing. He concluded that the Pentecostals' pragmatic orientation and fluid ecclesiology helps them to flourish in a diverse

and rapidly changing world (WCRC, 2017). In short, Clifton was merely looking at the perspective which Pentecostals take in meeting the needs of the community and in my view this perspective works and is very popular with many people around the world hence the popularity of such churches. This all goes back to what Kärkkäinen states in his book *Introduction to ecclesiology* as indicated earlier in this research, that the model of a free church is becoming popular these days. It should also be acknowledged that the Pentecostal non-institutionalised system and fluid ecclesiology is not very far from this free church model as outlined by Kärkkäinen.

Another presenter at the same Reformed-Pentecostal-Dialogue conference by the name of Rácsok brought forth very important points that bring us even closer to the fact that the church has a greater role in the world today. He stated that the church, assembled to celebrate the sacraments and to listen to the Word, is the place where the kingdom of God prevails which can be experienced in communion (*koinonia*). The Holy Spirit's power equips men and women to serve others in all their needs (*Diakonia*). The "church is the place where" verbal witness is borne towards Jesus Christ (*marturia/kerygma*) (WCRC, 2017). The focal points in the definitive role of church that come out so clearly in the language of WCRC include the fact that the church is supposed to bring Christian care and justice to a world in need and in order to carry out this task effectively it must appreciate issues of unity and diversity.

7.3 Unity in diversity

According to Sarah Hinlicky Wilson, "early Pentecostals considered it an essential part of their message not to become a new denomination or call their developing reality a 'church'. They were strictly a movement" (2018:1). This earlier declaration about Pentecostalism a movement, as earlier indicated has caused many theologians not to align this tradition with any form of ecclesiology. However the different approaches and systems of operation that characterises Pentecostals today speak for itself that this tradition is no longer just a movement, but a full-blown ecclesiology that needs further development and recognition. Since Pentecostalism started as a movement, it attracted different types of people within the Christian spectrum, although the main pioneers of this new tradition were mainly Christians from John Alexander Dowie's Holiness movement (Roy, 2017:118). Sharing the experiences of Holy Spirit Baptism and the expression of spiritual gifts such as speaking in

tongues, prophesying and healings ultimately built unity in the early years of Pentecostalism.

Despite Pentecostalism being currently grossly divided into something like 30 000 denominations or churches, what makes them friendly and even connected churches, as indicated earlier, are the spiritual experiences which are expressed in form of glossolalia or spiritual gifts. Amos Yong also confirms this understanding by stating that “the ties that bind Pentecostals together around the whole world are their experiences of Jesus in the power of the Spirit. It is not that Pentecostals are not concerned about unity. Rather they experience Christian unity precisely through the universality of the Spirit’s presence and activity, which enable the confession of Jesus, lordship amidst the peculiarity Pentecostal congregations and liturgy” (2005:144-145).

Once again in the book *The Spirit Poured out on all flesh* Yong recalls the four classic marks of the church (communion, purity, pluralism, and apostolicity) in dialogue with Roman Catholic Sources such as Yves Congar, and from a pneumatological perspective (2005:144-1450). In doing so, he demonstrates the way these marks are to be understood as eschatological indicators produced by the Holy Spirit. Yong states that though beginning among variously marginalised in American society, Pentecostalism was and is driven by the amalgamation of a diversity of perspectives and experiences which emanate from the eschatological role of the Holy Spirit (Stone, 2012:259-260). Yong’s ideology is correct in the sense that those who have continued in obedience to the Spirit’s leading and have been sensitive to the churches calling toward unity have also recognised the ecumenical potential of Pentecostal-Charismatic Spirituality and participated in the reconciling work of the Spirit through later Charismatic renewal movements (Stone, 2012:259).

Kärkkäinen views “the Pentecostal contribution to ecclesiology in terms of lively spirituality and thus his proposal starts with this, noting the link between Spirit baptism and *koinonia* that makes all life in the Spirit linked to participation in the local church” (2002:108). This link makes more sense because the Pentecostal story in the book of Acts chapter 2 illustrates how the manifestation of Spiritual gifts led to the communion of people of diverse backgrounds, tribes, races and creeds. In the words of Andy Lord “the ‘colour line’ was washed away and in a new, deep fundamental unity in spirit” (2007: 1)

The contribution of John Zizioulas is also very vital to the sub-discipline of ecclesiology and Pentecostal ecclesiology in particular because of its alignment to Pentecostal spiritual experiences. Zizioulas' ecclesiology has been received very well by most Pentecostal theologians due to its constant attribution to the Holy Spirit's task as a close partner in bringing new birth through baptism that connects different individuals to Christ. The reference to the church as an 'eschatological community' is quite relevant to Pentecostalism as well. The Orthodox ecclesiology of Zizioulas was worked out from within a full-blown ontology of "what it means to be a person in Greek" philosophy and patristic theology (Stone, 2012:232). According to Zizioulas an individual becomes a person only in communion; Indeed, God's very existence in communion. He continues to say that "every form of communion which denies or suppresses the person is inadmissible" (Stone, 2012:232). This all brings us to the appreciation of the fact that Christ is not merely a historical individual in the past that the church follows; He is constitutionally incorporated to the church's existence from its foundation to the present time and to the future as well. The "church participates in the life of" Christ during the Eucharist and this brings us to the understanding that the church can only be the church through the Eucharist because this is where it gets its identity. This distinctive relationship between the "one" and the "many" in Orthodox thought can also be expressed in the relationship between the bishop and the congregation through whom the bishop is constituted as its head (Zizioulas, 1985). The esteemed place that Christ and the Spirit are given in Pentecostal ecclesiology creates a very important link between the Orthodox theology that Zizioulas is propagating and Pentecostal theology.

7.4 Conclusion

We have just noticed in this section that there is indeed a Pentecostal ecclesiology although this ecclesiology is still in its development stage. However one would not talk about the development of Pentecostal ecclesiology without alluding to ecumenism because these two theologies emerged almost at the same time in history. The key aspects that signify the relationship between Pentecostal ecclesiology and ecumenism are that both emphasise the importance of missions as a critical uniting factor of the church and unity in diversity as a method of embracing different people groups from different races, ethnic background and nationalities. The involvement of both the clergy and the laity in missions is also very

important in both theologies because it consolidates the participation of everyone in the work of ministry and promotes unity. These developments of Pentecostal ecclesiology in the same vein as ecumenism signify the critical place that Pentecostalism occupies in the global church. The different parts that characterise the church represent the different denominations, races, tribes, nationalities, gender, particularities of people that fill up its pews.

8. The basic structure of the thesis

The first chapter is an introduction to the entire work; it mainly consists of topics such as the introduction of the research topic, description of the research problem and an outline of the objectives and goals, and also the description of the methodology that is going to be used to gather data for the thesis. The first chapter also includes part of the literature review. Chapter two provides essential historical and contemporary background on the ecclesiastical Pentecostal tradition in order to situate Kärkkäinen within such a historical and contemporary lineage. Kärkkäinen's books and other external sources are used to trace these developments.

The third chapter attends to the second task that has been set for this thesis; it will identify paradigmatic examples or themes in Kärkkäinen such as his Soteriology, Christological, Pneumatological and ecumenical views. Such Paradigmatic themes will serve as a background for the contemporary ecumenical ecclesiology that Kärkkäinen propagates. The subsequent chapter will be concerned with the analysis of Kärkkäinen's Pentecostal ecclesiology in the sense that it focuses on the intricacies of his ecclesiology. Chapter five examines ecumenical ecclesiology in detail by looking at its scope and significance. The last chapter of this work is a summary of the findings, which includes identifying the points of intersection between Kärkkäinen's ecclesiology and ecumenical ecclesiology. This last chapter will also assess what form of contribution Kärkkäinen makes to the field of ecumenical theology while at the same time it will seek to identify the challenges to the ecumenicity of Pentecostal ecclesiology with a particular focus on the contextualised global south (Southern Africa) Pentecostal ecclesiologies and suggest a way forward for the ecumenical dream.

9. Conclusion

An attempt has been made in this introduction to map the contours of this thesis by explaining the motivation for the choice of the topic. I have also made introductory comments on the question of methodology, more particularly those preliminary methodological issues related to the basic structure of the thesis.

CHAPTER 2: PENTECOSTAL ECCLESIOLOGY

1. Introduction

This chapter critically analyses Pentecostal ecclesiology as one of the emerging ecclesiologies. Ecclesiology can be defined as the study of the church historical development, doctrines, polity and practices. A simpler definition is by Kärkkäinen who defines ecclesiology as simply “the doctrine of the church” (2002:9). In reference to Pentecostalism, ecclesiology has to do with an in depth study of the church practices, experiential components, doctrinal views, historical developments, structures and practices distinct to this tradition. A comprehensive definition of Pentecostal churches normally includes a broader spectrum, although this method of categorising is not acceptable to certain groups of exclusive Pentecostals who tend to consider certain independent Charismatic churches and other Neo-Pentecostal churches as not having all the required elements that make a church Pentecostal in nature. However a narrow definition does not do justice to the proper understanding of Pentecostalism because most of these churches that are side-lined in the definition can trace their roots from either the holiness movement or the Azusa street revivals hence sharing the same source as classical Pentecostals. Due to the fragmentation that has characterised Pentecostalism since its inception, it is not an understatement to say that it shares so many common elements with the broader evangelical tradition. One of the problems that Pentecostalism faces is the difficulty in defining its ecclesiology and this is attributed to the fact that this tradition lacks some form of a common ecclesiastical and theological discourse that characterise main-line churches such as the Reformed churches.

A number of theologians have disputed the ecumenical essence of Pentecostal tradition and this is evidenced by the way they have side-lined this traditional in their theological pursuits. Ecumenical relevance in this sense means how susceptible an organisation is in propagating unity, love and reconciliation within the religious world. It is for this reason that this ecclesiastical analysis as propagated by this research is very vital because it brings into focus the vital tools, elements and instincts within Pentecostalism that can serve as a point of departure for further ecumenical dialogue. This form of analysis will also culminate into an extensive discussion of the current hot topics within the broader field of Pentecostal ecclesiology. In order to determine which topics are the focal points of many current

Pentecostal ecclesiological discussions an attempt will be made to critically analysis subjects currently dominating Pentecostal-Roman Catholic dialogue, Pentecostal-Reformed Church dialogue and recent literature on Pentecostalism. An example of some of the topics that we will be looking at which are currently dominating the platforms of Pentecostal ecclesiology includes Holy Spirit Baptism as the hallmark of Pentecostal identity, the analysis of the inclusive and exclusive values of Pentecostalism which serve as focal points in ecumenical dialogue and the emphasis on the catholicity of Pentecostalism based on the foundational Christian values other than doctrinal differences.

In the first section of the chapter, I will be discussing the aspects of Pentecostal ecclesiology that makes it unique and different from the other church ecclesiologies. Even though the Christological-pneumatological ecclesiology that characterises many Pentecostals has been questioned because of its Spirit-filled laymen who serve as the main function of ecclesia and its continuously changing state as a result of its living nature, it deserves attention as an ecclesiology in its own right. The second section of this chapter will look into detail at what characterised early Pentecostal ecclesiology. The critical elements within early Pentecostal ecclesiology will be analysed in order to determine their effectiveness in fostering ecumenical goals. The third and the fourth section will briefly analyse contemporary theological views of a number of recent Pentecostal scholars about Pentecostal ecclesiology. In these two sections (third and fourth) the main focus, as earlier outlined, will be the dominating topics or central pinpoints that have characterised recent interdenominational dialogues. The last section (fifth) will introduce the emerging Neo-Pentecostal pneumatological ecclesiology in the South African context, as one of the Pentecostal theologies that portray trans-denominational and ecumenical traits.

2. Identity of Pentecostalism

This section will involve the detailed exploration of the unique identity of Pentecostalism as a new tradition which has very valuable traits that can be used effectively to foster or advance the ecumenical goal and agenda. A better understanding of this tradition can be reached by critically looking at its nature and purpose which is inclined to fulfilling the salvation role, leading the congregants into worship and empowering them for mission. The three elements of salvation, worship and mission empowerment that characterises the nature and the purpose of a typical Pentecostal church community serves as the

springboard through which a broader understanding of Pentecostal identity can emerge. It is also true that the deeper understanding of Pentecostalism, in terms of the way their church system operates, can be enhanced by critically analysing the way the term 'church' is regarded or defined in Pentecostal circles. Yonggi Cho, a Pentecostal minister based in South Korea and highly regarded or esteemed among the Pentecostal ministers, delineate or considers the church to be "a spiritual gathering of those who are saved in Christ through God's choice and calling" (1979:374-375).

The reference to a Pentecostal church as a 'spiritual gathering' by Yonggi Cho makes sense because of the great value that is placed on spiritual experiences by the Pentecostal tradition. Going further we also notice that Moon-Ok defines the term 'ecclesia' as simply "the social context of Christopraxis through which the world in general including the needy and vulnerable people in society shall be freed from bondage" (1996:222:251). We can notice from this definition of the church as portrayed by Yonggi Cho and Moon-Ok that Pentecostalism has both Pneumatological and Christological features which figure prominently in its ecclesiology. These Pneumatological and Christological features can also be easily noticed when one traces the foundational values of this tradition which clearly depict the place of spiritual experiences as identified in the Azusa Street revivals.

The role of spiritual experiences as the ultimate identity can also be recognised in the works of Norman Geisler who regards the Old Testament to have been the preparation period for the establishment of the church although he traces the foundation of the global church to the Pentecostal event described in the book of Acts. Geisler continues to say that despite numerous theological voices proposing different times when the church originated, ranging from the Old Testament era to the period of the ministry of Apostle Paul, there is considerable evidence that the church was initiated during the Pentecostal event, shortly after the death and resurrection of Christ (2011:1078-1080). Although Geisler's systematic theology on the foundation of the church basically represents evangelical theology in its fundamental or conservational sense, most Pentecostals have also adopted this evangelical stance. It must be indicated here that Pentecostalism in its original form is quite conservative hence it adopts certain fundamental features or principles characteristic of evangelical theology. It is not surprising therefore to find out that similar to evangelicals, Pentecostalism adheres to the doctrines of the inerrancy of the scriptures and personal or

individual salvation. Although there are so many other ways by which Pentecostalism can be differentiated from the broader category of evangelicals, what ultimately draws a line between these two groups is the emphasis by Pentecostals on Spirit Baptism that makes it possible for Christians to be empowered to live a life characterised by exercises of healing, prophesying and missions.

The exposure of Pentecostalism to various contexts as it was spreading to new territories of the world has really shaped this tradition hence it is not an exaggeration to state that this movement has been evolving in order to be able to be relevant to the new capitalist societies. Despite the evolving nature of Pentecostalism as a result of exposure to various contexts, its essences which are represented by the Azusa street experiences still remain key to Pentecostal origins and identity. One aspect that has fascinated many theologians from other traditions is the ability of Pentecostalism to be able to adjust and fit into different contexts. One feature about Pentecostalism that needs to be explored further is how it has been able to spread like fire in the global south and how its emphasis on spiritual experiences has been quite attractive and appealing to the poor and oppressed people of Latin Americas and the highly spiritualistic traditional African societies.

Exploring further this aspect of Pentecostal foundational values as an ultimate indicator of this tradition's identity, we notice particular elements that characterised the early twentieth century revivals of Azusa which included an emphasis on healing, holiness (purity), Holy Spirit Baptism as evidenced through tongue-speaking, evangelism (reaching out to the lost) and communion of believers. A closer look at these elements specifically indicates an attempt by the pioneers of Pentecostalism to return to the New Testament early church traits hence discarding what was referred to as the legalistic traditional system of beliefs or doctrines that characterised the mainline churches of those days. In fact, it is because of this stance taken against the mainline churches that caused these early pioneers of Pentecostalism to be accused of not being ecumenically minded despite the fact that the system itself as expressed in the foundational values shows a movement which is ecumenically relevant (House, 2006:23). One aspect that confirms the ecumenical nature of the foundational principles or values of Pentecostalism is the fact that it attracted people from different sectors of the society breaking the traditional barriers of race, gender and ethnic background. This new Pentecostal movement was very attractive to the local poor

and oppressed residents of the local communities as it spread throughout the world particularly in the global south because it allowed them to be free from the orthodoxy structural enclosures of religion which downplayed their expression and also enabled them to look forward to a better future with Christ.

Despite Pentecostalism's ability to easily spread from its original source, which in this case are the Azusa street revivals, and be able to contextualise in new environments, it has particularly been regarded as displaying some form of weakness mainly due to the fact that it has not developed a form of ecclesiology that fits a stipulated sacramental, canonical and apostolic system of the Roman Catholic or the Reformed Calvinistic system. However, the unique ecclesiology that characterises Pentecostals, despite not following the normal traditional norms, shows great potential because it views the church as an organic entity and not a structured institution hence giving room to the development of various ecclesiastical forms within the same Pentecostal ecclesiological system. Furthermore, the emphasis within Pentecostalism that the church consists of those who have been both “redeemed by the blood of Christ and born of the Holy Spirit” coupled with the accommodation of diverse spiritual manifestations; Pentecostalism allows the expression of various ecclesiastical forms within the same system (Hollenweger, 1998:424-429). This understanding that Pentecostalism is really a tradition that values spiritual experiences and that its ecclesiology emerged from these experiences is also shared by Kärkkäinen though he adds to this understanding by stating that this plethora of experiences, practices and values as practised by Pentecostals ecclesiologies (though these Pentecostal ecclesiologies are not fully developed) has moved beyond the boundaries of this tradition to embrace broader ecumenical values alongside its original foundational values (2002:13).

Another factor that needs to be mentioned here that alludes to the identity of Pentecostalism and can as well be identified during the pioneering stages of the movement is the indisputable role of the laity. The laymen and the preachers from other church traditions that made up the early church as earlier indicated in this chapter sought to restore the lost elements within the mainline denominations by establishing their own system of doing things. The role of the laity which had been grossly neglected by many traditional churches has served as a great tool for the survival and expansion of Pentecostalism giving room to the understanding that the early pioneers of this tradition

sought refuge in a new movement fleeing from the legalistic religious ideologies that characterised the denomination where they came from. This automatically means that Pentecostalism “grew chiefly among the poor, the dispossessed, the oppressed and the illiterate” (Roy, 2017:117). The critical role of the laity which has helped drive the course of Pentecostalism throughout the world will be emphatically analysed later in this chapter. Despite the fact that the intention of the early pioneers of Pentecostalism was to restore the elements such as glossolalia and communal life that they believed the historic churches has lost during the course of history, it is not an understatement to say that this tradition depicted evangelicals and other traditional churches in their Christological and Eschatological views except in their method of worship and their colossal emphasis on spiritual experiences as a guide to deep connection with the divine.

It is imperative that we understand, as we critically analyse Pentecostal identity, that the many forms of Pentecostalism that exist can also be attributed to the different reactions of the movement to the different contexts into which it found itself being established. It is also true that the exposure of the movement to various capitalist ideas of individualism has also meant diversion, in some instances, from certain foundational principles of pluralism, restoration and providing refuge to the oppressed and poor as portrayed in the Azusa Street and Welsh revivals. The effect of the Nigerian form of Pentecostalism, which has largely influenced the local settings with its focus on prosperity and has found its way to other parts of Africa and the world, is a good example of the influence of capitalist and cultural ideologies on the Pentecostal tradition (KAIROS, 2014:226).

The consequences of some of the ideological influences on Pentecostalism have resulted in a situation where some communities within the system have become excessively individualistic, exclusive and achievement-oriented. Apart from the known divisions based on the effects of ideological influences, the geographical boundaries coupled with some economic disparities between different nations have resulted in the development of the global south ecclesiologies and global north ecclesiologies. Due to the economic condition of many global south communities and the growth of Pentecostalism in these parts of the world it is not surprising that theological writers such as Mark Clark have gone to an extent of concluding that the South is the “global region in which many forms of Pentecostal”

communities theologised by the west have easily been contextualised hence causing this new movement to become identified with the local communities. (2012:51).

Once again Clark describes the global south Pentecostal communities as simple communities that exist purely out of an innocent total dependence on divine pneumatic providence, visible in their meetings, which is easily witnessed by its loyal members, unlike their global north counterparts who are economically advantaged and might not find an ultimate motivation for serious commitment (2012:51). This materialistic attachment coupled with the flourishing of secular ideas perhaps explains why some Pentecostal and traditional churches, particularly in Europe, have been experiencing a massive decline in church attendance in recent years. However, this is not a conclusive statement because the decline in church attendance in Europe is quite a complex issue that requires further exploration and it is beyond the scope of this thesis to delve deeper into that aspect. The global south Pentecostal communities, in my view, depict the foundational values that the pioneers of Pentecostalism in the Azusa Street revivals were trying to propagate.

A further critical analysis of global south communities exposes some identical features of the Pentecostal tradition that are easily ignored by many theologians and one of them is that these global south communities in which local Patriarchal structures have dominated for a long time, the Pentecostal informal liturgical system and fluid ecclesiastical structures have provided an ideal vehicle for many voices that have been silent for ages. The main voice from the main marginalised includes those of the poor, the lower class in society, the oppressed and neglected tribal groups and the women. Although Pentecostalism has had its own share of successes in the global south context with almost half of its members coming from this part of the world, one of the greatest challenge of this tradition has been its reluctance in revolutionising social structures. Although Pentecostalism has been influential in subverting internal communal barriers in the South African context, the silence of the larger Pentecostal churches in the great debate over the issues of racism and culture during the apartheid era, somehow gave the impression that this tradition was supporting the oppressive regime. Despite the reluctance of this new tradition to voice out against oppressive systems and structures, there are some unique Pentecostal ministers that have broken the usual norm of silence by voicing out and one of these is Rev. Frank, the Apostolic Faith Mission minister, who through his involvement with the Radical Institute for

Contextual Theology (ICT) became very instrumental in campaigning against the apartheid regime (Thomas, 2002: xxv).

Apart from the tendency of Pentecostalism to shy away from the revolution of oppressive structures, one Pentecostal Scholar by the name of Cheryl Bridge John observes the presence of both a unique revolutionary and subversive movement beyond the boundaries of mainstream Pentecostalism. According to John, this radical revolutionary and subversive movement is steered by a pneumatological call to bridge religious intolerance, social disparities and racial differences (Sanders, 1996:141-142). According to Sanders, this movement is not limited by structures that seem to be emerging within the mainline Pentecostals, that are responsible for spearheading the repeat of the same mistakes made by mainstream traditional churches who disconnected themselves from the poor in favour of a streamlined theology, but rather it is driven by an egalitarian impulse which consists of a combination of Christian ethical values and African spiritual connotations (1996:141-142). This critical synthesis of African and Christian values, in my view, develops a sanctified church that is a vital agent to ecumenism.

3. Early Pentecostal ecclesiology

In this section I would like to explore the critical aspects that characterised the origins and foundation of Pentecostalism and this will involve examining the motives of the pioneers, the ultimate purpose for the establishment of the new movement and the driving force behind the expansion and growth of the tradition in the world. Once again, I would like to emphasise the point that the core ideologies that characterised Pentecostalism at its initiation stage were very ecumenical and inclusive in their nature and this is evidenced by a thorough exploration of the earlier Pentecostal discourse. Even though today's Pentecostalism tends to paint a diverse picture with both exclusive and inclusive tendencies visible within this broader tradition, the original motive was to include everyone despite ethnic, racial and background differences.

Pentecostalism, as indicated earlier in the thesis, was a product of radical holiness preachers and laymen that sought to restore the lost elements lost over the course of history within the traditional churches. A statement from the “first issue of the Apostolic faith newspaper published by the Azusa street mission” stated clearly the vision of the new movement which was “the restoration of the faith once delivered unto the saints – the old time religion, camp

meetings, revivals, missions, street and prison work and Christian work everywhere... We are not fighting men or churches, but seeking to displace dead forms and creeds of wild fanaticism and living, practical Christianity. 'Love, Faith, Unity' is our watchword" (Robeck, 2006: 120). This earlier statement right at the initiation of the movement indicated that the new tradition embraced ecumenical values though these values may not have been visible to the traditions from which the movement emanated from. The exclusiveness that can also be noticed within this statement where other churches were considered to have alienated themselves from the truth and considered to be not Christian enough was sorted with the development of Charismatic fellowships within historic churches. The acceptance of the Charismatic movement by classical Pentecostal softened the stance of the Pentecostal tradition towards historic traditional churches because they recognised the great work God was doing in other denominations as well. This movement whose origin was at the dawn of the 20th century, among these enthusiastic or zealous adherents, was energised or driven by the desire for revival and the imminent return of Christ hence causing the movement to spread rapidly to different parts of the world (Anderson, 2005:175-185).

Since early Pentecostalism was consumed by the desire for restoration and a great expectation for the imminent return of Christ, it meant that there was a strong expectation that the church as the bride of Christ had to be renewed through repentance and sanctification so that it can attain the status of an apostolic church as portrayed in Acts. This is where the Holy Spirit's works became the centre of Pentecostalism since it is believed, as stated by the church fathers, that the Spirit plays a very big duty in the sanctification or purification of believers (Kärkkäinen, 2012:23). This focus on spiritual experience as the primary identity of Pentecostalism culminated in the valuing of the laity since the scripture emphasises the out flowing of the Holy Spirit on all kindred and not only on the clergy hence breaking the division based on leadership roles, race, gender and ethnic background that was highly pronounced by the most traditional churches in those early years of the movement. Going further in the study of early Pentecostalism, it can also be noticed that the understanding that numbers did not signify the spiritual authentication of a fellowship or church gathering, meant that believers were given opportunities to read the scriptures on their own and share their beliefs without any form of restriction (Pluss, 2010:1). This empowering of the laity meant the establishment of many new churches in many areas.

Since the pioneers of Pentecostalism believed that they lived during the critical time in history when the return of Christ was imminent, they looked forward to the spiritual revival of the churches through the restoration of the diverse spiritual gifts which would eventually lead to the evangelisation of the whole world. They took it upon themselves and believed that they were the custodians of this end-time vision hence considered themselves as vessels who were to be used by Christ through the Holy Spirit to reach the whole world with the gospel. The literal interpretation of scriptures particularly the book of Acts, where apostles were regarded as uneducated, meant that theological education for preachers and the clergy was not a priority particularly during the early years of this movement. In fact, it is in these recent years that Pentecostals and Charismatic preachers are slowly beginning to value the importance of theological education especially with the increasing pressure to define their theological beliefs and the need to put their confessions in writing due to the rampant mushrooming of independent churches claiming to be Pentecostals and charismatics as well.

The emphasis on evangelism meant that the Azusa Street revivals spearheaded by William J Seymour resulted in the expansion of Pentecostalism from the focal foundation point to other parts of the United States as new visitors to Azusa also carried the Pentecostal spiritual experiences to other parts of the world as well. We also notice that the spreading of Pentecostalism is not only attributed to the visitors to Azusa who carried the pneumatological experiences but also to some of the key leaders who left the centre and became missionaries in other parts of the world and good examples are Thomas Hezmalhalch and John G. Lake who set foot in South Africa in 1908 (Roy, 2017:119). Lake and Hezmalhalch were very instrumental in the establishment of Pentecostalism in South Africa. Pentecostals were truly experiencing empowerment, especially by the Charismatic gift of divine healing, prophesying and speaking in tongues. One of the most important points we need to know is that these three aspects (tongues, prophecy and healings) that characterised this new movement's spirituality became the ultimate core value and attraction points in their evangelism campaigns because they were able to share their experiences with the people they met and prayed for the needs of the people expecting divine interventions. This meant that Pentecostalism became relevant to everyone because different people despite their culture or educational background were able to understand

them. In addition, the new converts experienced salvation as something that related to their whole being rather than just affecting one part of their lives.

Another characteristic of Pentecostalism which we need to be aware of is that the convictions of its early members were stimulated by their spiritual encounters which were generated by the spiritual understanding (Pluss, 2010:2). This means that the faith of most of the early Pentecostal Christians was not a product of scientific, analytical, intellectual or theological research but was simply relational hence easily accommodating the aspect of inclusivity. This simple form of faith, which was ultimately relational, did not require education as a mandatory pre-requisite hence it served as a good seed for the advancement of the ecumenical mandate of the church. Another aspect of early Pentecostalism that needs further exploration is its pragmatism. The pragmatic nature of early Pentecostal evangelistic work created an environment or opportunity for the new movement to grow and expand reaching areas which were regarded to be predominantly for traditional churches. A direct statement from Pluss about the aspect of pragmatism sheds more light on our understanding about this aspect and regards “western Pentecostals, as children of early 20th century, who have been enamoured with a pragmatic attitude” which spearheaded an understanding that, “if it works and does not stand against biblical teaching do it,” and this somehow kindled that desire by these early adherents to be led by the Holy Spirit in all their endeavours (2010:2). This also brings into perspective and coincides with the 20th-century American attitude of exploration and discovery, which is quite evident in this pragmatic attitude. The American cultural influence on Pentecostalism cannot be underestimated with a lot of innovative, free societal values and spontaneous elements emanating from that society.

It must also be conceded that the African-American roots of Pentecostalism also contributed to its success. Rather than crediting the success of the Pentecostal movement to the diverse American culture only, some theories have attributed it particularly to the black slave spirituality which emerged from “the brokenness of black existence” and is characterised by a holistic understanding of religion (New World Encyclopaedia, 2015). This brokenness of blacks should not be understood to be pejorative because it does not portray an inherent slavery mentality among blacks but rather an after effect of oppression. In my view, such claims, which attaches the success of the Pentecostal movement to various

aspects of history, though falling short of the broader picture, makes more sense, particularly when one intrinsically evaluates the early 20th century African-American culture which displays high levels of community participation, anticipated divine presence and supernatural occurrences in meetings, the valuing of dreams and visions in communal worship services, hand-clapping, loud worship and strong belief in healing through prayer. One can also add that the persistent narrative theology, oral discourse and strong evangelistic values embedded in the Pentecostal tradition clearly show its African roots.

In my view, this pragmatic nature of early Pentecostalism adapted from both the diverse American secular culture and African-American Spirituality, somehow created an environment for creativity and innovation hence breaking the old-time red tape of many highly structured and organised traditional missionary organisations which followed a particular pattern of doing things. The early Pentecostal pioneers were ready to do anything, as long as it did not go against biblical values, to propagate the gospel of salvation even in unreached areas of the world. These biblical values that served as a benchmark for strict moral behaviour, purity, ecstatic worship services and a strong drive for evangelism were formulated by the pioneers of the movement based on their exposition or understanding of Acts and other selected books of the Bible. Furthermore, generated aspects of creativity and innovation in this new tradition consequently promoted the idea of self-reliance and this culminated in the establishment of numerous self-governing and self-reliant churches, although these daughter churches were still connected by the same spiritual Pentecostal values. Pragmatism, on the other hand, brought about the advancement of the plurality element among the new ecclesial entities established which eventually led to a literal interpretation of the New Testament scriptures which emphasised diversity and unity as depicted in the book of Acts Pentecostal event. In this Pentecostal event as indicated earlier in the thesis, peoples of different races, gender and ethnic background from different nations were able to hear the Apostles and each of them heard them speak their own language (Acts 2:1-13).

It can also be said that the pragmatic nature of the early Pentecostal movement made it possible for this tradition to accept and identify itself with the new Charismatic movement that took place particularly in the 1960s in the other mainline denomination since this aspect actually promoted pluralism. The idea of accepting the new Charismatic movement

meant that they recognised the work of God in other denominations because they believed that if God could bring about the manifestation of spiritual gifts among them, He could do it to others as well. This inclusive move, as earlier indicated in the thesis, temporarily broke the scourge of exclusivity that was slowly engulfing the new movement. Pentecostalism right from its foundation has always placed the scriptures from the book of Joel 2:28-32 as recited in the book of Acts at the centre of its informal theology meaning that all people including women are included in God's divine mission. However the practical application of Joel 2:28-32 within Pentecostalism, which involves the acceptance of women in all levels of ministries, is not consistent hence exposing the disparities between the written word and the reality on the ground.

It is very critical as we explore further the basic background of early Pentecostalism that we also understand that not everything is positive about this pragmatic attitude. Despite the immense or broader appeal to the general apostolic faith community as prompted by the pragmatic attitude and the desire to “read a scheme for all of church history” as depicted in the book of Acts and relevance to the modern society, Pentecostals have made no strides to locate, identify with and formulate a historical attachment with the early church (Vondey, 2011:153). Vondey attributes this neglect by this tradition to connect with general church history, as depicted by main line denominations, as embedded in the persuasion that any attachments to the apostles through succession has been adversely affected through the structural developments effected by the church under the auspice of Constantine to outline its beliefs and practices in the form of doctrines and creeds (2011:153). It can be noted from these statements by Vondey that Pentecostalism from its initiation despised institutional or organisation structures that have characterised denominations such Roman Catholicism and Protestants, though in recent years we have noticed a gradual shift from an emphasis on a non-formal fluid ecclesiology to a more structured and organisational ecclesiology in order to effect mission endeavours.

It is also very important to also acknowledge that despite the pragmatism aspect being highly pronounced within classical Pentecostalism, it has highly been overshadowed by the increasing disparities between the informal confessions as depicted in the audio materials, tracts, magazines and non-theological books, and their lived practices. It is also not an exaggeration to say that Pentecostalism lost its grip on unity, love and faith as the core

elements of its ecclesiology soon after its early phase because it became susceptible to divisions as thousands of new independent churches started breaking away from existing congregations. This scourge of division, which is still ongoing, is not something new to Pentecostalism because it was clearly visible right from Azusa Street revivals where numerous independent Pentecostal churches emerged from the original Apostolic Faith Mission spearheaded by William J Seymour and Edward Parham due to the misunderstandings that arose owing to differences in the interpretation of theological doctrines.

Once again we notice another irony that characterises Pentecostals and this issue is linked to the aspect of accepting the structural and organisational systems that defines tradition churches. According to Wilson, despite Pentecostalism's "rejection of the apostolic succession claims of Catholics, Orthodox, and Anglicans, it has a persistent 'Episcopal' instinct that keeps on resurfacing in Pentecostal history in the West but is even more pronounced in the Global south" (Chan, 2011:314). The succession procedure is common in many Pentecostal churches in recent years where pastoral leadership begins to flow through the family bloodline and the growing trends where pastors are now addressed as 'spiritual fathers' shows a steady shift to the Episcopal church system. Besides the scant acceptance of the Episcopal hierarchical system, as already noticed, within the broader Pentecostal tradition, some of the Pentecostal pastors running a number of megachurches are also comfortably accepting the titles of Archbishop or Bishop. This indeed is a sign that Pentecostals have not been spared from the great influence that has also affected the broader evangelical and Orthodox traditions.

It can also be noticed that in certain parts of the west, contrary to the earlier understanding that numbers do not matter because most Pentecostal churches embraced the belief that even when few believers meet to pray or to share Holy Communion, Christ is actually present in their midst, the pragmatic insights led to the importance of the church being measured in numbers. According to Pluss, the aspect of church growth suddenly became an issue and some churches eventually began to run like business enterprises and unfortunately such developments meant that a sense of individualism and competition crept in (2010:3). Apart from the calamitous element of competition creeping into this new movement in the earlier years of its formation or initiation, the development of new

controversies, as earlier indicated, resulted in rampant divisions which led the inevitable and one of the noted examples was the breaking of this movement into two, the Trinitarian Pentecostals and the non-Trinitarian branch popularly known as Oneness Pentecostalism.

Despite some of the challenges and disparities that we have noted concerning this new tradition which can be observed during its earliest years, it is possible to state that the positives outweigh the negatives because there are currently over 279 million Christian who confess to be Pentecostals and the tradition is still growing, with more than half of these are located in the global south. Even though some contemporary theologians have actually regarded Pentecostalism as a victim of its own success (Vondey, 2011:321), some of its challenges, disparities and doctrinal differences are not only unique to this tradition because some of older tradition denomination have had their own share of issues over the course of history. Finally I would like to state that Pentecostalism is slowly gaining recognition among the mainline churches and the Pentecostal doctrines relating to spiritual baptism and glossolalia are slowly being embraced by many other Christians through the expansion of the Charismatic movement within these systems.

4. Contemporary Pentecostal ecclesiologies

In this subsection of the thesis, I would like to explore the current trending topics in relation to Pentecostal ecclesiology and this will involve the critical analysis of the different theological voices of contemporary theologians who have contributed immensely to this field and the topics at hand. It is indeed possible to trace the development of Pentecostal ecclesiology right from the initiation or the foundation years of this new tradition to this current era. It is also very important to acknowledge that there are currently a lot of vibrant and committed Pentecostal theologians who serve as the lead to the future development of Pentecostal ecclesiology and this section of the thesis will serve as a platform to analyse their contribution to the various trending topics on Pentecostal ecclesiology. The topics that I am going to explore in this section as indicated in the introduction will include Holy Spirit Baptism, exclusiveness and inclusiveness and the catholicity of Pentecostalism. This section will not be complete if I don't explore Neo-Pentecostalism as a new contemporary ecclesiology within the South African context. The tendency of Neo-Pentecostalism to cross denominational boundaries in order to reach out to other Christian traditions makes its

ecclesiology very relevant particularly in this study which searches for an ecumenical Pentecostal ecclesiology.

4.1 Holy Spirit Baptism as a symbol of Pentecostal unity and identity

Tracing the origin of the creed of Holy Spirit Baptism reveals that it started when John Fletcher changed Charles Wesley's entire understanding on sanctification and purity, although the evidential aspect of this baptism is normally linked to Parham (Wacker, 2001:2). Although Fletcher and Parham were instrumental in effecting this doctrine, the early Pentecostals derived their inspiration to search the scripture for this missing aspect in the mainline traditional churches by closely examining the book of Acts. Despite the fact that the foundations of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit does not necessarily represent the wider universal Pentecostal tradition, it cannot be denied that it is a vital distinctive element of Pentecostalism in general. Within the Pentecostal tradition, there are diverse views supporting Spirit Baptism with some sectors accepting the mandatory proof of speaking in tongues while others exercising some form of flexibility. However it is important to understand that what unites this broader Pentecostal tradition despite its fragmentation is the emphasis that it is compulsory for every Christian to undergo Holy Spirit Baptism and this kind of baptism is normally accompanied by some form of spiritual experience though there is no consensus that it can only be attested by tongue-speaking.

Macchia considers "Spirit Baptism as the crown jewel of Pentecostal" unique because it is regarded as the springboard from which other gifts related to Pentecostal spirituality emerges from (2006:20). According to the basic doctrinal views of Pentecostalism, when a new Pentecostal convert is baptised in the Holy Spirit, he or she is empowered to be able to prophesy, exercise healing and engage in evangelism by reaching to those who are considered to be lost. There are so many aspects to Spirit Baptism than what has originally been apportioned and these aspects will come out as clearly as we explore this topic further by looking at what different Pentecostal theologians have written about it. One of the Pentecostal theologians who attempted to take Spirit Baptism understanding beyond the stipulated scope of the New Testament is Macchia. He generally moves beyond Robert Menzies's mere emphasis on the prophetic or tongues and Roger Stronstad's streamlined view that merely emphasises on Charismatic signs in order to formulate a wider or comprehensive systematic understanding of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit (McCall, 2016). In

my view Macchia stimulates a broader practical application of Spirit Baptism so that it can be very relevant to the contemporary world and the future.

The constant engagement of Macchia's comprehension or thoughts on Spirit Baptism with different branches of systematic theology such as Eschatology, Soteriology, Pneumatology and Ecclesiology while still remaining faithful to the Pentecostal idea of the distinctiveness of this baptism as the jewel of this new tradition, makes his works on this aspect quite an interesting read. However, the ecumenical relevance of Macchia's works on Spirit Baptism lies in his denial that glossolalia is the globally accepted preliminary evidence or sign of this form of baptism (McCall, 2016). Although Macchia's ideas might not be received well by many classical Pentecostal theologians, the way he situates the experience of Spirit Baptism at the focal point of theological discussion is health for Pentecostalism in general. Macchia makes use of Moltmann's ideologies on the pluralistic task of the Spirit to extend the relevance "of Spirit Baptism" beyond the church to include the whole creation hence acknowledging that the Spirit is at work in the whole universe (2006:95-96). In my view Macchia's broader designation of Spirit Baptism to include the whole universe is a great contribution to Pentecostalism.

Even though the Baptism of the Holy Spirit serves as the pearl of Pentecostal spirituality, the emphasis by some classical Pentecostals that this form of baptism can only be evidenced by speaking in tongues has proved to be a sticky stumbling block during a number of ecumenical dialogues between Pentecostalism and other mainline traditions. One case in point is the Catholic-Pentecostal dialogue that was initiated in 1972 during which several issues such as evangelisation, baptism, discipleship and community have been covered so far. However my main focus here is the Spirit Baptism which has been one of the bones of contention during these ecumenical sessions. According to Juan Usma Gomez, the only way forward concerning this critical aspect, which allows for progress, is that there are doctrinal differences that have emerged even within Pentecostalism itself concerning the evidence of this experience hence the need for some pastoral review since not all Pentecostals are said to have had this experience of speaking in tongues (Armstrong, 2017).

It is very critical to understand that Pentecostalism is regarded by its members as having a divine origin hence a fulfilment of the prophecy about the last days outpouring of the Holy Spirit power. It is therefore not surprising that Pentecostalism really values spiritual

experiences and since Spirit Baptism plays a central role in these experiences, it is regarded as an obligatory experience for all Christians. This mandatory view where everyone who is regarded as a Christian must have had this experience poses serious theological dilemmas not only for Catholics but for other mainline traditional churches as well (Armstrong, 2017). However one point that needs consideration on the part of the Pentecostals which aligns with Macchia's views is the Catholic understanding that the experience is known as the "Baptism of the Holy Spirit" does not exhaust all the experiences of the Holy Spirit but rather it is one of the several features that represent a certain form of spiritual life within the realm of Christianity hence it needs constant regulation and discernment on the part of the church (Armstrong, 2017). The emphasis on 'fruits of the Spirit' without undermining the role of experiences in the Spirit serves as the point of departure through which further dialogue can emerge with Pentecostals.

Yong, on the other hand, has a different approach to this aspect of Holy Spirit Baptism because he incorporates it into the whole salvation experience rather than isolating it to be just a once-off initiation event (2005:101). What makes Yong's work on Holy Spirit Baptism more unique is his Trinitarian approach where he links the Godhead to the whole salvation programme by stating that God sent Jesus Christ to the world and he anointed him with the power of the Holy Spirit so that he can do the work of ministry. However Yong does not limit Holy Spirit Baptism to just initiation and empowerment but goes further to state that a Christian who has been baptised in the Holy Spirit identifies with Christ through his death and resurrection (Yong, 2005:101). The linking of Holy Spirit Baptism to many Christological aspects opens doors to a broader understanding of this form of baptism hence Yong contributes immensely to Pentecostalism scholarship on this aspect by confronting the streamlined views that have characterised Pentecostalism for some time since its inception. The three stages that characterise Yong's understanding of Holy Spirit Baptism include the initiation stage, then the ongoing identification with Christ stage where the believer is being filled with the Holy Spirit and then the eschatological stage where the believer is finally united with his/her God (2005:105-106). The difference between Yong's views and Macchia's views on Holy Spirit Baptism is that Yong is more anthropological in his approach while Macchia takes on a more cosmological approach (Chen, 2017:42). Although I might not go deeper into exploring Kärkkäinen's view on Holy Spirit Baptism in this particular

section it is worth mentioning here that his contribution to this locus deserves some reflection. Kärkkäinen's approach to this critical aspect of Holy Spirit Baptism is pluralistic in the sense that he recognises the work of the Holy Spirit beyond the stipulated boundaries or scope of the church to include other religions as well. While still remaining true to the Pentecostal tradition, Kärkkäinen's approach to this aspect of Holy Spirit Baptism is well balanced hence relevant to the ecumenical dream (2016:393-401).

4.2 Exclusiveness and inclusiveness within Pentecostalism

I would like to explore the aspects of exclusiveness and inclusiveness and determine how relevant these aspects are to the Pentecostal tradition. Pentecostalism includes people from various cultural groups, classes, language and races. This amalgamation of various groups of people coming from diverse backgrounds united by the belief in spiritual experiences and evidential glossolalia has served as a great challenge to many Pentecostal theologians especially with regard to the exclusiveness and inclusiveness of this tradition. As far as Pentecostalism is concerned, exclusiveness propagates an understanding that Pentecostals are the only true Christians and other people belonging to other Christian denomination and religions are clearly in the wrong. This exclusiveness understanding which certain sectors of Pentecostalism hold poses a very big problem for those who are working towards achieving an ecumenical goal which includes Pentecostals as well.

Contrary to the position of exclusivism, inclusivism allows everyone access to the saving grace and working of the Holy Spirit despite their religion, cultural background, race, gender and locality. According to Klaver, inclusiveness is basically a product of a coherent union of two principle ideas which include global access to the grace of salvation and unique revelation through Jesus Christ (2004:11). The challenges normally are to keep these two opposing principles in unity in such a way that the other principle continuously cancels the other on a regular basis depending on the situation or circumstance at hand (Okholm and Philipps, 1995:24). This understanding of inclusiveness makes it possible for the gift of salvation to be accessible not only to those who hear his word but even to those who are disadvantaged in some way by culture, geographical barriers and time (Klaver, 2004:11). Inclusiveness brings into focus the critical distinguishing aspects of the special form of revelation and the general form of revelation.

In the book entitled *Pentecostalism*, William K. Kay distinguishes early Pentecostalism from other Christian denominations by stating that these early pioneers of Pentecostalism prided in the fact that they lacked theological education hence alienating themselves from those who valued theological studies for the clergy. Kay continues to say that these early pioneers of Pentecostalism regarded themselves to be spiritual elites by propagating exclusive doctrines such as man-child and emphasising that escape from the tribulation and antichrist will only be possible for those who are spirit-filled (2009:289). This exclusivism portrayed by these early pioneers of Pentecostalism in their relation to other denominations sounds quite contrary to the inclusivism that is quite evident in the Azusa Street revival where people belonging to different ethnic background, race, gender and status were able to come together to worship God.

Although the Pentecostal tradition has gone through a lot of development over the course of the century since its inception with a lot of Pentecostals slowly accepting the validity of Christianity beyond the parameters of their tradition, the attitude of exclusivism which was visible in the doctrinal views of early Pentecostals still exists within contemporary Pentecostal theology where a narrow pneumatological ideology still persists within the realms of classical Pentecostalism. This narrow focus basically refers to the way in which the Holy Spirit's works are defined simply in relation to Spirit Baptism. Although there is an attempt to include other spiritual gifts within this streamlined classical Pentecostal pneumatology, it still falls short of the breadth and scope of the Spirit activities that makes it possible for us to understand the broader picture of God's work within other Christian denominations and other religions (Clarke, 2015).

Although a true reflection of Pentecostalism, in general, shows some form of reluctance in accepting the work of the Spirit in other Christian denominations and religions, Charismatics have had a different take on this issue. It would have been expected that the acceptance of Charismatics by Pentecostals would immensely soften the stance of Pentecostals towards other Christian denominations and religions, but that has not taken place to the expected standard or level. In my view, there is still a lot that has to be done by Pentecostals to bridge that gap between themselves and other traditions and religions. A great stride in accepting the possibility of the Spirit's activity within the broader religious spectrum by Pentecostals would mean recognising God's work in fields of environmental science, astronomy and

other related broader areas (Clarke, 2015). Despite the streamlined pneumatology of classical Pentecostalism and other sectors of this tradition that does not fit neatly into the ecumenical dream, it is very important to recognise an inclusive Spirit-inspired dynamism intricately built within the original nature of this tradition that accepts everyone despite their particularities and this potentiality needs to be exploited (Clarke, 2015).

Kärkkäinen seems to keep track of the major developments within Pentecostalism by predicting the formation of a unique ecclesiology based on Charismatic values which will entail accepting the broader work of the Holy Spirit within other realms other than just the religious spectrum (2012:16). The works of these theologians such as Frank Macchia, Amos Yong and Clark Pinnock tend to go beyond the dimension of the Pentecostal tradition hence can be relevant to the ecumenical goal and dream. The need to be relevant to the current evolving societies is slowly putting pressure on emerging theologies such as Pentecostal theologies to be inclusive.

4.3 The catholicity of Pentecostal ecclesiology

The word 'catholicity' should not be confused with term Roman Catholic because this word refers to the universality or inclusiveness of a particular tradition. This entails that this section is simply an extension of the analysis of the inclusiveness and exclusiveness of the Pentecostal tradition. One aspect of Pentecostalism that needs to be mentioned here is the complexities of Pentecostal identity which can easily be noticed when critical analysis of the foundation of this tradition is done. It is not an exaggeration to state that Pentecostal distinctiveness is shared with other traditions or sections of the broader body of Christ (Van der Laan, 2015). Pentecostal distinctiveness has adapted values from different tradition such as African-American religion, the 19th Century holiness movement, Reformed doctrinal views, Darbistic eschatology and Roman Catholic mystical liturgy (Van der Laan, 2015). This basically means that Pentecostalism developed from an amalgamation of various principle values that have emerged from its many esteemed predecessors with the addition of spiritual experiences as its distinctive formula. This culminates in the understanding that Pentecostalism rests on the platform of other traditions and this somehow explains why Pentecostalism is in the habit of borrowing heavily from other traditions even to this day making it very susceptible to the element of inclusiveness.

Without counting the efforts of a number of Pentecostal theologians, most of the sociological and anthropological disciplines within the field of theology have not considered the universality of the Pentecostal tradition. The term 'Catholic' is not particularly assigned to a specific denomination because it refers to the union and global presence of the church. The term 'Catholic' also refers "to the wholeness and unity of the divine and human reviewed in the physical world" (Butticci, 2016). This basically means that catholicity manifests itself physically in the works of the Spirit and this manifestation eventually produce perceived tangible divine presence or supernatural powers expressed in the world materially in the human body, nature and diverse substances. The fact that catholicity refers to the universal work of the Spirit, who sometimes manifests himself in a supernatural manner clearly indicates that Pentecostalism is intrinsically catholic in nature.

The fact that Pentecostalism started as a revival movement with a broader representation consisting of people from all walks of life such as women, African-Americans, white folks, the poor and outcasts from society, ultimately indicates the catholicity of this tradition. Even though the infallibility of man visible in Pentecostalism, a movement built on the foundation of unity, love and diversity, culminated in the various divisions based on racial lines and doctrinal differences due to political, cultural and social events of the time, it can still be stated that this tradition is still catholic in its very nature (New World Encyclopaedia, 2015). The catholic connotations which can be noticed in its foundational values needs to be revitalised in order for Pentecostalism to become relevant to the ecumenical dream.

One aspect of Pentecostalism that needs consideration once again as we continue to delve into this issue of the catholicity of this tradition is how quickly this tradition has been able to contextualise in order to be relevant to the new societies in which it has been introduced. Even though Pentecostalism in its intrinsic core value has outlawed ancestral worship, an aspect that drives African traditional religion, its spiritualistic commonalities with African tradition and other world spiritualistic societies has meant that it has been easily welcome in many places particularly in the global south. This acceptance is also attributed to the Pentecostal missionaries who have strived to adapt the gospel to the needs of the cultures that were receiving them (Shreiter, 2004:129, 132). The ability for Pentecostalism to conform to the needs of diverse groups of people such as the rich, the poor, the outcasts, women and other marginalised people indicates the universality of this tradition. The

mushrooming of megachurches within the ranks of Pentecostalism within South Africa has indicated the ability for this tradition to conform to the post-apartheid capitalist materialist society.

However the contextualisation of this new tradition in diverse societies has not gone without challenges particularly in the global south and these challenges include the mushrooming new independent churches that have been established in the name of Pentecostalism and yet have values that are contrary to the foundational values of this tradition. This in a way has tarnished the vitality of certain sectors of this new tradition especially with some of these self-acclaimed Pentecostals churches being centres of different forms of abuse.

5. An emerging Neo-Pentecostal ecclesiology in the South African context

The categorisation of Neo-Pentecostalism as a separate Pentecostal stream in this section of the thesis does not in any way insinuate a completely different system of Pentecostal operation because Neo-Pentecostalism shares the same attributes with other Pentecostals churches except that this wave of Pentecostalism is unique to the Global south and South African context due to its tendency to cross boundaries maintained by traditional Pentecostalism. These new wave churches represent “the historically younger and theologically more versatile Neo-Pentecostal churches and movements that emerged during the second half of the twentieth century” (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2008: 9). The ability of Neo-Pentecostalism to pull a large following, adapt to the Global south and South African context and break the traditional Pentecostal barriers of exclusiveness, makes it a very strong force within the Pentecostal tradition. According to Mookgo Solomon Kgatle (2017:1), Neo-Pentecostal churches are churches in South Africa “that have crossed denominational boundaries.” He continues to say that these churches are characterised by high level spiritual practices which include idolising performance of miracles, deliverances, healings, “success and the enactment of bizarre church performances often performed by charismatic and highly influential spiritual leaders” (Kgatle, 2017:1).

Hermen Kroesbergen adds another dimension to the definition of Neo-Pentecostalism by describing them as:

“New faces of Christianity in Southern Africa” and states that they are distinguished from other traditional Pentecostal churches through their “emphasis on prosperity faith based on a quest for health and wealth; modern types of prophetic practices; charismatic ‘men of God’ working miracles and “speaking life”; experiential worship services against a pretentious affluent backdrop; the commodification of the gospel and a particular reading and application of the Bible (2017:2-3).

Despite that there are a number of issues that have mushroomed in recent days linking these new wave of churches to a number of abuses and gross manipulations such as the spraying of doom on church members, drinking petrol and eating leaves (Kgatle, 2017:1-8), a large number of these churches remain moderate and credible though they express extreme levels of spirituality as noticed in the way they place miracles, prophecy, deliverance, speaking in tongues, interpretation of tongues, healing and ecstatic spiritual experiences such as laughing and dancing in the spirit, at the centre of their worship services. The “radical revision of consciousness,” industriousness, social mobility of its adherents (Kaunda, 2015: 113-114) and the ability to adapt to new contexts makes these new wave Neo-Pentecostal movement susceptible beneficiaries to the new ecumenical Pentecostal ecclesiology that this study is searching for.

In his latest work, where he delves on the critical aspect of identifying “new paradigms of pneumatological ecclesiology” in the Neo-Pentecostal churches, which he also refers to as new prophetic churches (NPCs), Kgatle demonstrate that these churches have a lived ecclesiology as opposed to a theoretical ecclesiology that characterises denominational and traditional churches (2020:1-6). This lived ecclesiology that characterises the NPCs is experiential and contextual because of its pneumatological orientation. Kärkkäinen describes a pneumatological ecclesiology that characterises Pentecostals as a theology that does not differentiate between the church, the Spirit and the work of Christ hence instead of looking at Christ as the uniting person, the Spirit is regarded as the one who unites the church and Christ (2002:83). Such an emphasis on the unlimited role of the Spirit opens new possibilities for the new Pentecostal movement to embrace and enhance social and religious cohesion.

Furthermore, it is vital to acknowledge that despite the different varieties that characterise South African Neo-Pentecostal sector depending on their focus area, what makes them unique is their common emphasis on the manifestation of the gifts of the Spirit (as indicated

earlier), trans-denominational character, social relevance, non-dogmatic and cosmopolitan system, and unorthodox nature (Khanyile, 2016:15). According to Khanyile, these new wave churches appeal to masses, particularly those in the middle class and socially disadvantaged communities, because of the way they provide emotional and social support, and a “sense of belonging” (2016:15). This free ecclesiastical system as spearheaded by Neo-Pentecostalism cannot be a total stranger to the ecumenical dream hence it can benefit from the theology that Kärkkäinen suggests. However it is not only Neo-Pentecostalism that can be informed by an ecumenical Pentecostal ecclesiology that this paper searches for, but also classical Pentecostals as can be observed that a number of them are slowly embracing ecumenical ideas (Nel, 2018:1-8).

6. Conclusion

A critical analysis of Pentecostal ecclesiology basically indicates that Pentecostalism as a new tradition is not completely foreign to traditional Christianity. In my view, this tradition adds the missing element within traditional Christianity which is the valuing of spiritual experiences. Pentecostalism, as indicated earlier within this section, was founded on values that attempted to correct the legalist and dogmatic elements within traditional mainline churches that infringed on the freedom of the ordinary Christians hence it serves as a third movement within the broader Protestant sector that needs recognition and acceptance. The current trend within the mainline churches to accept the vitality of Pentecostalism as a tradition in its own right serves as a great step in propagating unity and advancing the ecumenical dream.

It is also important to acknowledge that exploring Pentecostal ecclesiology brings into focus certain aspects which many people who are studying or are familiar with this tradition take for granted. It is possible to look at Pentecostalism, as portrayed in many populists literature, as an individualistic, non-ecumenical, holier-than-thou and a primarily Spirit-oriented tradition but a scholarly study reveals something different. Pentecostalism, as evidenced in its foundational values, shows an amazingly Christocentric, inclusive, pragmatic, hospitable and mission-oriented tradition. Although much has to be done to form a uniform and standard Pentecostal ecclesiology which represents all the diversity that characterises this tradition as indicated in the thesis, the symbols and instruments within this tradition show a system that has potential to fit into the traditional ecclesiologies the

missing elements. It is very important to evaluate every Pentecostal ecclesiology that has been dealt with in this chapter in the light of ecumenism without completely disregarding mission as an identity of this tradition and this will somehow bring into focus certain aspects of this tradition which are easily overlooked or undermined. Furthermore, the exploration of 'Spirit Baptism' as a unifying element other than a dividing aspect can open up new pages for further dialogue to attain the ecumenical dream.

CHAPTER 3: A DESCRIPTION OF KÄRKKÄINEN'S THREE LOCI (CHRISTOLOGY, SOTERIOLOGY AND PNEUMATOLOGY) AS A CRITICAL BACKGROUND FOR HIS ECCLESIOLOGY

1. Introduction

After critically analysing Pentecostal ecclesiology as one of the emerging theologies in this modern period, it is very important that a thorough description of Kärkkäinen's themes (Christology, Soteriology and Pneumatology) be carried out. This description of the themes will serve as a background from which critical elements of his ecclesiology will be drawn. The first section of this chapter contains a biography and a brief overview of Kärkkäinen's academic work. The second section of this chapter is an overview of the chapter because it outlines the method used by Kärkkäinen in constructing a pluralistic and hospitable kind of ecclesiology that can be noticed in his ambitious five-volume systematic theology. The third part of this chapter delves into the core content of this chapter by critically analysing the different themes (Soteriology, Christology, Pneumatology) within Kärkkäinen's monographs namely *Spirit and Salvation*, *Christ and Reconciliation* and *Community and Hope*. The reason why the third section of this chapter is regarded as the core part of the chapter is because it basically gives a comprehensive review of the three volumes mentioned in the latter and it develops a synthesised understanding of Kärkkäinen's approaches, ideologies, methods and evaluations which are vital in understanding how he develops an ecumenical and pluralistic ecclesiology.

2. Introducing Kärkkäinen

Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen was born into a Finish Lutheran Family and as a teenager; he became involved with the local Pentecostal church in his homeland (Yong, 2015:121-148). This earlier affiliation to a Pentecostal church, in my view, is very vital because it would later spark interest in Pentecostal theology. In 1988, he served as a part-time pastor at the Finish Christian fellowship in Los Angeles, California. He was later ordained as the minister of the Full Gospel Church of Finland and had the opportunity of leading a local Finnish congregation as a pastor from 1989-1991 (University of Helsinki, 2019). Later Kärkkäinen was ordained as a minister and serves as a temporary assistant pastor for the "Evangelical Lutheran Church of America," which is under Southwest California and Texas ELCA synod (University of Helsinki, 2019). It was towards the end of the year 2000 that he was invited by

the faculty of Fuller Theological Seminary to become the systematic theology associate Professor and He acquired full professorship in 2003 (Fuller Theological Seminary, 2018). Kärkkäinen's keen interest and endeavours in ecumenism have also made it possible for Him to serve as an associate professor of Ecumenism at the University of Helsinki (Biola University, 2016). "He is also a world-renowned expert on Pentecostal-Charismatic theologies" (Fuller-ed, 2004), although some exclusive classical Pentecostal theologians such as Robert Menzies have classified his theology as charismatic, pneumatological and ecumenical rather than Pentecostal (2017:196-213). However, Menzies' conclusion is misplaced in the sense that the link between Kärkkäinen's key religious values, Pentecostal identity, spirituality and ecclesiological ideas, as can be observed in his biography and theological discourses, clearly shows that his ecclesiology is Pentecostal.

Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen currently resides in the United States where he continues to work as a "Professor of Systematic Theology at Fuller Theological Seminary," a Seminary rooted in the Reformed tradition (Fuller theological Seminary, 2018). The choice of serving as a full Professor at Fuller Theological Seminary could be attributed to the fact that the Seminary is open to ecumenical ideology, the theological loci in which he shows keen interest. Kärkkäinen also shows great interest in Pentecostalism, an aspect that was sparked by his earlier affiliation to the Pentecostal tradition, and this can easily be reflected in his written works in which he advocates for a pneumatological Soteriology and Christology, and a soteriological and Christological pneumatology that embraces religious diversity and the waning emphasis on spiritual gifts, healings and prophecy. Due to his orientation with both the Lutheran church and the Pentecostal movement, he prefers to call himself a "hybrid Christian" or a "Lutherocostal" (Toth, 2019).

In terms of academic background, Kärkkäinen has a "Master in education from the University of Jyväskylä, a Master in theological studies from Fuller Theological Seminary and a doctorate in ecumenics and dogmatics from the University of Helsinki" (Yong, 2015:121-148). He has served as a lecturer at the Full Gospel Bible College in Bangkok from 1989 to 1991 and as a professor and president of Iso Kirja Bible College from 1991 to 1994 (Kärkkäinen, 2009). In addition, Kärkkäinen has had a vast experience as a visiting lecturer and professor to a number of colleges and universities all over the world. He has worked and lived in at least three continents of the world namely North America, Europe and Asia

and this gives him leverage in terms of understanding different contexts in which Christianity and other religion have been propagated (Fuller Theological Seminary, 2019).

As an effective writer, Kärkkäinen has written and edited more than twenty (20) books, some of the books are written in Finish (his local language) and a number of them are in English (Fuller Theological Seminary, 2019). Although the main focus of this research will be the five-volume systematic theology series covering a number of topics within the traditional systematic loci, different sources including Kärkkäinen's other works will also be used to consolidate particular arguments.

The first volume: *Christ and Reconciliation* was published in 2013; the second volume: *Trinity and Revelation* was published in 2014; the third volume: *Creation and Humanity* was published in 2015; the fourth volume: *Spirit and Salvation* was published in 2016; and the fifth volume: *Community and Hope* was published in 2017 (Fuller Theological Seminary, 2019).

3. Kärkkäinen's method and approach

The theological themes relevant to the scope of this research will include a thorough analysis of Kärkkäinen views on Christology, Soteriology and Pneumatology. Christology basically refers to the study of Christ's personality and works on earth while Soteriology focuses on the doctrine of salvation. The 'doctrine of salvation' in a broader sense refers to the whole set of concepts that in a way describes the methods through which human problems are being solved through divine intervention (Lints, 2012:261). Pneumatology has to do with the study of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Kärkkäinen should be recommended in a way for developing a "generous and capacious theology of the Holy Spirit and salvation" that is keen to challenge some of the prevailing assumptions or biased views on such doctrines among other Christian faith traditions. Such a courageous approach by Kärkkäinen also stimulates well-informed dialogue between the Christian traditions themselves and the other religious traditions (Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Judaism) (Penner, 2017). Reading Kärkkäinen's thick prose also enables a thorough understanding of Pentecostal ecclesiology which has adopted soteriological, pneumatological and Christological views which are typical of the evangelicals and the broader sector of Protestantism. This has caused some theologians such as Vondey to regard Protestantism as a principal-agent responsible for influencing Pentecostalism into adopting a form of

Christology that is objective and pneumatology which is subjective (Nel, 2018:1-8). This Pentecostal Christology and Pneumatology entails that the Spirit is subordinate to Christ and such an understanding has a serious ecumenical implication. The subjection of the Spirit to Christ automatically affects Pentecostal Soteriology which places the Spirit second in the salvation plan.

Kärkkäinen's five-volume systematic theology series is titled a *constructive theology of the pluralistic world* and apart from the critical themes outlined (Soteriology, Christology, Pneumatology) they cover other intricate issues that have pre-occupied theologians in this postmodern era such as eco-theology, reconciliation, revelation, community and creation. What Kärkkäinen implies by the terms "constructive" and "pluralistic" is critical in understanding what characterises his ambitious five-volume Systematic theology project. According to MacDougall, Kärkkäinen understands "constructive" to be similar or closely related to the term "systematic" by distinguishing it from theologies that seem to assume theological insights can be organised into some neat and coherent concepts, and clean systems (2017:103). It is also important to mention the fact that the term 'constructive' is mainly qualified by the great difference and specific contribution made by engaging various contextual theologies, which for long have been regarded as secondary and relegated to chapters towards the end of the book (Sheveland, 2014:188) In a nutshell we can say Kärkkäinen champions a theology with "a constructive impulse that seeks to build more complicated, textured, and forthrightly perspectival views" (MacDougall, 2017:103).

In respect to the term "Pluralistic" Kärkkäinen's works maintain a wider coherent ideology of truth, while his approach is identified by a robust "global, ecumenical, inclusive, dialogical and hospitable" form of pluralism and he engages as many theological contexts as possible putting into consideration his limitations as a middle-aged white European male (Rajashekar, 2015:100). His pluralistic approach is also evidenced by the fact that he takes seriously the voices from the margins "such as black theologies, feminist and womanist theologies," liberationists, socio-political and post-colonialists theologies (Rajashekar, 2015:100). This does not in any way suggest that Kärkkäinen agrees with all the ideologies expressed in these theologies but rather he considers them to be vital components that adds up to a broader diversity and allowing such diverse ideologies to engage with each other and the Christian tradition brings forth a better understanding (Sheveland, 2014:188).

The constructive theology of Kärkkäinen extends its endeavours to the realities of religious pluralism by employing the concepts of comparative religion, theology of religion and comparative theology (McDougall, 2017:105). Kärkkäinen uses “comparative religion” in the sense that he compares the features of different religions, and he makes use of “theology of religion” by examining the role of non-Christian religions in the economy of God. He infuses the concepts of comparative theology by picking topics within the various Christian traditions and various religions and determines how they are understood and practised within these religious systems.

4. Kärkkäinen’s theological themes

The first part of this section will emphatically analyse Kärkkäinen’s Christological views which are quite evident in, *Spirit and Salvation: A Constructive Christian Theology for the Pluralistic World* and other related books and articles. The second part will detail Kärkkäinen’s soteriological views, assessing the relevance of these views to his ecclesiastical loci. This analysis of Kärkkäinen’s soteriological views will be for the purpose of determining how these views add up to his ecumenical and pluralistic views that can be quite evident in his ecclesiology. Kärkkäinen’s soteriological views go beyond the boundaries or scope of the nominal Pentecostal and Charismatic views that see salvation primarily in terms of the recovery of bodily health because of their stress on healing and empowerment by adopting a theological discourse that views salvation as a theological aspect that includes reconciliation, redemption and renewing of sinful or fallen creation by the involvement of divine power (2016:202).

The third part of this section forms the core of the section because it deals with Kärkkäinen’s pneumatological views. Given the understanding that Pentecostalism is primarily a tradition that is established on spiritual experiences, Kärkkäinen’s pneumatological perspectives will be very critical in determining what role these spiritual experiences can play in advancing the ecumenical dream or goal. Kärkkäinen regards Pentecostalism as a tradition that has revived the waning emphasis on spiritual experiences or charismata within the traditional churches (2002:70).

4.1 Kärkkäinen's Christology

Although Christology is regarded as simply a locus within the field of systematic theology, it emerges as the centre or key to the Christian religion and to the field of theology as a whole because without a detailed reflection “on the person of Jesus, the Christian faith” and the study of theology itself is left hanging (Kärkkäinen, 2003:9). Although there is an interlock between the study of the person of Christ (Ontological Christology) and his works (Functional Christology), Christology proper focuses on the critical study of the personhood of Christ. In a normal theological sense, what is dealt with under the umbrella topic ‘the person of Christ’ in classical Protestantism is “the ontological constitution” of Christ (Holmes, 2012:49). Some of the questions within ontology from which modern Christology emanated from include enquiries about whether Christ was fully human and fully God and pre-existed before creation. It is actually the aspect of the pre-existence of Christ and the incarnation that is affirmed in the New Testament that gives a hint of the two-nature theory of the mediator held by the early church Christians. The reaction or response of modern Christology has not been so much against the dogmas that developed out of the pre-Chalcedonian reflection on Christology which dominated the early church but rather the logic behind the categorisation.

4.2 *The person of Christ*

The terminologies used to describe the ontological constitution of Christ that characterised the period between the Chalcedon Council and the Reformation which includes “hypostasis”, “person” and “natures” needs to be explained so that we can understand the logic of this two-nature belief. Although Kärkkäinen does not go into detail to explain the critical words or terminologies that characterise Christology proper, perhaps assuming that his readers have a basic understanding or information about the aspect he is dealing with, it is very important that I delve into this aspect, for a better understanding of which perspective Kärkkäinen uses to develop his Christology. The simplest term to define among the three (nature, hypostasis and person) is nature. In theological terms the term “nature” basically refers to the disposition of an individual and answers the question of what an individual is really made of.

The term “person” on the other hand was adapted from the Greek word *prosōpon* which simply means “face” (McCormack, 2012:152). The face, in this case, refers to the physical

appearance of an individual, which means that despite the two natures within Christ, he is but one individual bearing one face. Hypostasis basically refers to how the natures are realised or moulded in the person of Christ. Although these terminologies, as noted, tend to give a clear picture of Christ's ontology as depicted in Orthodox Christology, the sticky problems, which developed into different views in the course of history, came up when theologians were trying to determine how these two natures operate. The constant engagement and critical reflections on how the two natures within Christ operate have resulted in the evolution of the Orthodox stance on this aspect developed by the Chalcedonian Council.

The different interpretations of the person of Christ, in reference to its disposition, person and hypostasis, depict the diversity that exists in the Christian tradition. Kärkkäinen uses Jesus' question to the disciples "who do you say I am?" as a point of departure to initiate an understanding that the various views held by many men and women in relation to the person of Christ show the great significance attached to Christology (2003:9). According to Kärkkäinen, it is the duty of theologians within the field of Christology to identify the importance and meaning of Christology to our modern society in the light of the several misunderstandings and misconceptions that have mushroomed in the past (2003:9). Although the reader of Kärkkäinen's books may be able to know his views on Christology which can be identified as he expounds other theological views on this same aspect, his main focus is discussing other views in which he recognises some form of treasure which history has failed to excavate.

4.3 Brief review of the book Christ and Reconciliation

Having looked at Kärkkäinen's approach, it is important for us to look in detail at what Kärkkäinen brings on the table as he deals with this topic of Christology and how his approach serves as a background of his ecclesiology. Although other sources and books by Kärkkäinen will be used extensively for a broader understanding of his Christological views, the main book which will be the core from which this analysis will stem from is *Christ and Reconciliation: A Constructive theology of the pluralistic world*. *Christ and Reconciliation* serves as the spring board from which a recent and better understanding of his views can emanate from. In this book, Kärkkäinen deals with three main perspectives of Christology namely: biblical, historical and contemporary.

In chapter one of the book, *Christ and Reconciliation* Kärkkäinen introduces his method of doing Christology by outlining the flaws associated with a one-sided approach where one cherishes either 'Christology from above' or 'Christology from below' without putting into consideration the dynamic and relational aspects of Christology (Woznicki, 2019). Chapter two on the other hand delves into the earthly life of Christ by focusing on his messianic exploits that are visible in his words, deeds and love for the poor and marginalised in society. What is more interesting in this chapter is how Kärkkäinen starts the process of engaging with Islam and Buddhism in order to extract their perspectives on Christ's earthly life. He continues dwelling on Christ's life in chapter three, but this time he diverts his attention to contextual theologies by looking at their perspectives on Christ's life. This chapter is very critical for those who want to familiarise themselves with contextual theologies.

The Jewishness of Christ which is critical in understanding Christ's humanity on earth is dealt with in chapter four. The following chapters from five (5) to eight (8) cover various Christological topics that have characterised Christian history from the ecumenical councils to the present and covers topics ranging from the "incarnation, kenosis, pre-existence, the virgin birth, Christ purity, Christ's resurrection and the relationship between Christ and the Holy Spirit" (Woznicki, 2015:1-6). Chapter nine (9) and ten (10) is basically inclined to initiating a dialogue between Orthodox Christianity and those outside these parameters. Kärkkäinen acknowledges the role that the global south and Asian theologies have played in trying to make their theories on incarnation more inclusive, although such kinds of pluralism or universalism has been rejected by traditional Christianity. This rejection is mainly as the result of the uniqueness attached to Christ by traditional Christianity. In these chapters, Kärkkäinen also engages other religions such as Hindus, Buddhists, and Jews in order to ascertain their views or perception on the person of Christ (Rajashekar, 2015:100).

The second part of this book, which consists of six chapters, focuses on the topic of reconciliation, the work of Christ which emanates from his personality. In this part Kärkkäinen hopes to develop a soteriological dimension which is linked to the understanding of the person of Christ propagated in part one and proceed to synthesise an account of reconciliation which fully incorporates the Trinitarian concepts (Pneuma, 2015:111-171). A Trinitarian oriented account of the concept of reconciliation which Kärkkäinen develops

entails inclusivity and presents Christ as a person who associated and identified himself with all humanity despite their status, tribe, race and ethnic background in the same way God cares for everyone (Pneuma, 2015:111-171).

One distinctive feature of this book 'Christ and Reconciliation' is that while Kärkkäinen follows a streamlined systematic pattern by focusing extensively on the themes of Christology and Reconciliation as portrayed by the title, he also engages a number of issues, perspectives and topics that have been neglected by both traditional and contemporary theological platforms and these include critical topics like colonialism, inclusivity, ethnicity, environment, racism and violence (2013: xiii). This approach where he picks up particular topics and link them with other critical themes that need attention in our contemporary theological society and deals with them in the plethora of the whole makes it possible to consider Kärkkäinen's books as a one-stop resource.

In this first volume of the series, instead of only focusing his attention on the historical and biblical teaching on Christ's personality, Kärkkäinen turns his attention to the neglected or under-discussed topics of the dynamics of "Jesus' character and mission with a particular focus on his role as prophet, liberator, and Spirit bearer"(Vantassel, 2018:1-2). Delving into the earthly life of Jesus Christ inevitably brings forth a broader and "variegated interest in the Jewishness of Jesus" (Kärkkäinen, 2013:43). The importance of reflecting seriously on Jesus' Jewishness help us understands his humanity, as a person who belonged to a particular family, tribe and people group. According to Moltmann, the relationship between the Jewish faith and the Christian faith is not only important for achieving ecumenical goal among the Abrahamic faiths, but also for reconciling the two natures of Christ and his other attributes and appropriating Christianity to the roots of her faith (Kärkkäinen, 2013:44). This dynamic method of doing Christology moves away from the rigid understanding of Christ's natures as established by tradition to a more open approach that puts into consideration the developmental processes that emerges in the life of Christ from his birth to life on earth, to death on the cross, to resurrection, to his present life in the cosmos and to life in eternity (Kärkkäinen, 2013:44).

This focus on the duty of the Spirit in Christ's human life, which incorporates theories of continuity, discontinuity, divine and human nature is also very critical as we discuss Christ's personality because it touches on the most neglected aspects in traditional theology and in

this way Kärkkäinen creates a formidable platform in sorting out the dual nature of Christ's personality and enhances the relevance of his discourse to the present and future (eschatology) (2013:98). "God's eschatological action in the resurrection of Jesus as God's own vindication of his faithfulness to his creation therefore provides the pattern for the relationship of continuity and discontinuity of personal identity in including the discontinuity of death into the continuity of God's eternal life" (Schwöbel, 2009:233). The continuity concept is developed or confirmed from the future (eschatology) through the incorporation of the past which basically includes our "material relationality" through bodily interaction, in a spiritually transformed or regenerated way to an extent that we are "no longer defined" by mortality but by victory over death because we participate in the resurrection of Christ "bodily in the Spirit" (Schwöbel, 2009:233). Participating in the transformed life of the resurrected life of Christ entails taking body experiences seriously by breaking barriers of race, ethnic background, nationality, gender and prompts the need for Christian traditional theology to engage with liberal, feminist, black and other contextual theologies. This means that "biblical symbols, visions and teachings assume a dynamic tension and interrelationship between continuity and discontinuity" (Kärkkäinen, 2017:99).

Kärkkäinen also takes time to discuss the different Christian views on Christ's personality, though he does not necessarily conclude such engagements, so as to outline which ones he feels represent the correct understanding. His profound achievement can be attributed to the fact that he uses the different theologies and religious views as lenses through which he evaluates the Christian traditional perspectives on Christ's personality (Vantassel, 2016).

4.4 Incorporating contextual and classical Christologies

Kärkkäinen combines classic and contextual Christological views in order to develop a form of contemporary Christology which cherishes diverse views. African cultural views of the person of Christ which have found their way into the Pentecostal tradition where Christ is regarded as the mighty warrior, great ancestor, healer and hero, are good examples of the richness of African traditional religion and how Christianity has been effectively contextualised in order to be relevant to African society (Beyers and Mphahlele, 2009). It is not only the African contextualising of Christology that seems to be of interest to Kärkkäinen but he also alludes to the myriads of interpretations of the person of Christ that have emerged due to the current needs culminating into the rise of other contextual or

intercultural views such as process, liberation, feminist, Asian and black Christologies (2003:50). Apart from the emergence of contextual theologies, the blossoming of diverse Christological ideologies that has characterised our modern era has also been responsible for the development of logos Christologies and spiritual Christologies within the Christian tradition, which in a way are a direct or indirect result of Protestant theological debate for the past two centuries since the Reformation.

Spirit Christologies basically referred to the presence “of the divine”, the Holy Spirit, in Christ’s life while logos Christologies mainly referred to the “Word” or the physical being of Christ (Kärkkäinen, 2013:197). Roger Haight (1992) simplifies the definition of Spirit Christology by stating that this term “explains how God is present and active in Jesus, and thus Jesus’ divinity, by using the biblical symbol of God as Spirit, and not the symbol logos”. The attempt by the early church tradition to categorise Christ’s life into two natures (human and divine) coupled with the influence from Hellenistic philosophies (Stoic) prompted the favouring of one nature to the other which resulted in the “rapid ascendancy of the logos explanation instead of the Spirit” (Kärkkäinen, 2013:198). However, it is important to also acknowledge that despite such a swift shift focus from Spirit Christology to logos Christologies’ it did not insinuate a denial of the other nature because the “early church tradition saw Spirit Christology as a complementary to logos Christology” because in Christ they saw “the coming together of the divine and the human” (2013:199). The later turn by the church to an emphasis on Spirit Christologies is seen also as the affirmation of the incarnation rather than the denial of it (2013:199). This combination of the two natures in Christ which also takes into consideration the spiritual pre-existence of Christ and the critical role the Spirit played in Christ’s life, effectively affirms the understanding “that the workings of the Spirit precedes those of the Son hence there is no subordinating the Spirit under the Son” (Kärkkäinen, 2013:200).

The Trinitarian concept or theory where all the persons of the Godhead are regarded as equal translates into a sphere of equality where everybody despite their particularities is accepted. It also promotes the infusion of contextual theologies into the mainline theologies as credible dialogue partners and the appreciation of diversity. Kärkkäinen regards this mushrooming of diverse Christological theologies as a health development hence he calls it a “fascinating rainbow of Christological interpretations” (2003:10). Although the efforts by

Protestant theology to spearhead a historical Christology has not yielded the desired results, the quest has in a way created an atmosphere conducive for the development of new ideas and a plethora of views which can be considered as parts of the whole picture.

Kärkkäinen's Christological views which cherish diversity and rediscovers the earthly life of Jesus comes as a serious challenge to streamlined dogmatic theology which fails to appreciate other theological views rather than their own. It can also be said that the nominal theological approach where subjects or objects of discussions are studied as a whole are also being challenged here and this means that modern theologians have to revisit their approach and learn to analyse certain aspects in parts. This approach also allows the incorporation of theologies that have for a long time been marginalised or regarded as secondary in most primary theological discussions such as contextual theologies. Although Kärkkäinen does not clearly indicate how such an ambitious project in which all various marginalised theologies are incorporated can be achieved causing some readers to speculate the apologetic nature of his discourse (Sheveland, 2014:188), such an approach serves as a point of departure in the process of appreciating diversity.

This approach of appreciating different views makes it possible for theologians to understand that it is these different views or parts of the whole that adds up to make the whole concrete picture. Klaver uses the biblical stories of the Magi (The wise men from the east) and Cornelius to spearhead or propagate the tacit reality that no religious system or ideology is completely void of some ideological riches hence the need to engage with each view in order to ascertain its relevance to the whole picture (2004:43). However, this approach as adopted by Kärkkäinen does not in any way suggest that the contents of each religious view on Christology are correct but rather a critical reflection on each ideology reveals some undisputable riches within that can somehow inform our specific tradition.

According to Kärkkäinen, the initial six centuries of Christian history served as the background from which our current theological understanding of Christology emerged from and the key councils which started the whole process include Naecia and Chalcedon (2003:10, 62). Although these councils were not exhaustive in a sense because they left the door open for further exploration of the topic, they served as a guide by setting boundaries on what is considered heretical and not heretical. The key contributor to the two nature theory in Christology was Athanasius, who described Christ as both human and divine and

his conclusion did not emerge out of scientific or philosophical analysis but rather through a plain understanding that Christ was the saviour of mankind (Kärkkäinen, 2003:11, 70). The divinity attribute attached to Christ is evidenced by the transfiguration story and many other miracles Jesus Christ performed that are regarded as going beyond the scope of human practical endeavours. His human attribute attached to Christ's personality emerges specifically out of the understanding that Christ had to share our suffering and pains as a human being.

Amongst several other major events within the Christian history which changed the religious landscape are the Reformation and the Enlightenment age. These two stages of Christian history brought on the table philosophical analysis of Christology leading to the narrowing gap between 'ontology' and 'functional' aspects of Christology. Despite the interconnections between Christology (the person of Christ) and Soteriology (the works of Christ), it is logical for the sake of theological studies to streamline these subsections in order to focus on what really matters. Kärkkäinen tends to take the view of many modern theologians by delving into the aspect of ontology, which he considers to be Christology proper. Although it must be acknowledged here that it is very difficult to analyse the person without confronting certain question relating to Soteriology. A deeper analysis of ontology also inevitably brings into focus two crucial aspects of Christology namely 'Christology from Above' and 'Christology from Below'.

4.5 Christology from above and Christology from below

Modern contemporary quests into the person of Christ have emerged from two focal points, "from above" and "from below" and the former emphasises the divinity of Christ while the latter uses the humanity of Christ as the point of departure. Pentecostalism, for example, as a tradition whose informal discourse is largely Christ-centric, is known to be an advocate of Christology from above because of its emphasis on the divinity of Christ. Advocates for Christology from above normally culminates into ecclesiologies from above which will not adhere to the "critical historical origin" of the church but rather uphold the historical doctrinal views of its origin (Mannion, 2007:35). According to Mannion, this ecclesiology bends towards exclusivism because it sets forth boundaries or limits which cannot be reached by those considered to unchurched or defective (2007:34). Christology from above feeds on the understanding that the church is the peak of all religious ideologies; hence it is

superior to others because Christ is its central focus. Therefore it not surprising that Mannion concludes that “in an ecclesiology from above, a replica of Christology from above, Christocentrism tends to develop or culminate into ecclesiocentrism” (2007:35).

Although Kärkkäinen cherishes his Pentecostal background and has a high regard for Christology from above, his ecumenical orientation clearly indicates that he advocates for a Christology from below, which is not divorced from the above approach (2013:39). His postmodern thoughts can easily be noticed within his theological pursuits. The quest for a historical Jesus can be aligned with the orientation of Christology from below. This kind of orientation, Christology from below, has been popular particularly since the enlightenment necessarily because this is the period when there was intense prioritisation of intellectualism or intellectual pursuits. Intellectualism in this sense meant that a vital position was given to critical reasoning and individual freedom in order to explore beyond the limits set by biblical authors.

The effects of the enlightenment stage are that theologians were able to go behind the writings of Paul and other New Testament writers in order to ascertain the historical authenticity of their claims about Christ (Kärkkäinen, 2003:12). However, there is a twist, in the understanding of what differentiates ‘Christology from below’ and ‘Christology from above’, the different stance taken by different theologians on either of these focal points does not in any way determine whether one is liberal or conservative because there are some liberal theologians who are advocates of Christology from above (Kärkkäinen, 2003: 12). According to Kärkkäinen, some neo-Orthodox theologians, such as Brunner and Barth, advocated for Christology from above, and hence they are aligned with Christology from above simply because they did not see any reason to ascertain the historical authenticity of the biblical claims concerning Christ (2003:13). These neo-Orthodox theologians considered such historical quests or endeavours as simply uncalled for or even harmful because they valued faith over reason (Kärkkäinen, 2003: 13).

However, for the sake of taking a pluralistic approach in Christology, there is an endeavour in contemporary theology to shy away from particular methods of doing Christology because of the way such methods tend to bring division and promote some form of exclusivism. The new systems of doing Christology which is becoming popular involve an amalgamation of both Christology from above and Christology from below which take into

account both the human enquiry and the divine perspective propagated by the early church. A healthy symbiosis that makes more sense is the one that emanates from Christology from below and rises to accommodate supernatural attributes, unlike the nineteenth-century theologians and others who came after them who concentrated on the “human person Jesus” and disregarded the miraculous events and supernatural attributes that characterised Christ's earthly ministry (Kärkkäinen, 2003:14).

A successful historical enquiry will not only have to investigate human attributes but also the divine hence such an endeavour may inevitably lead into some form of conviction or supernatural manifestations necessary to bring forth faith. It is also important to take note that understanding the historical Jesus makes more sense than simply recovering the historical Jesus because it goes beyond the nominal by creating some form of fusion between the gospels historical Jesus and the historical contemporary context (Kärkkäinen, 2013:46). This understanding of Christ's earthly life is very critical in order for us to rediscover “Christopraxis”, a theology concerned with the practical reflection on the meaning of Christ's teachings and life on earth which draws Christian communities to the oppressed, poor, sick and others that have been regarded by society as unimportant (Kärkkäinen, 2013:44-45). According to Moltmann, this rediscovery of Christopraxis makes Christology relevant to society by confronting its misery and problems head-on using the salvation message of Christ (Kärkkäinen, 2013:45).

4.6 Critical historical theories of Christology

What is more interesting about Kärkkäinen's work on Christology, which in my view, needs to be mentioned here, is the categorisation of Christology into different stages of development starting from the early church period to include the present time in which he infuses or incorporates Pentecostal and Charismatic views as a necessary paradigm. He sees these different Christological views characteristic of each historical era or period as a necessary ingredient to form a complete and concrete picture of Christology (Kärkkäinen, 2013:15). It is very important that we critically look at different stages of Christological developments so that we can have an idea of what form of ecumenical Christology he is trying to propagate. He places early church incarnation Christology as an initial pivotal ideology and aligns it to Catholic theology and also regards it as a point of departure for further Christological exploits. In my view Kärkkäinen's parallelism where he regards early

church Christology to be equal to Roman Catholic Christology makes more sense especially when one looks at the incarnation emphasis that characterises Catholic Christology.

According to Kärkkäinen, Roman Catholic Christological focuses on the incarnation, that is, how Christ pre-existed and entered the world by being born as a human being through the virgin Mary is very vital for understanding Christ's life on earth and it helps to infuse into traditional theology the missing element of 'Christopraxis' (Kärkkäinen, 2013:15). The primary or basic understanding of the Incarnation were outlined by the Chalcedon Council and the formulation of the Athanasian Creed which took place somewhere around 5th century A.D. This early Christian and Roman Catholic Incarnation Christology as described by the Athanasian creed "speaks of the union of the divine and human natures in the person of Jesus Christ as something that happened to the divine pre-existent Christ at a particular time in history when he put on flesh or became incarnate" (Van Inwagen, 1998).

According to Christian theology the union of the two natures as depicted by the Chalcedonian Council and the Athanasian Creed is something that persists forever from the period of Christ's birth, suffering, death and resurrection to the time of his glorification. This bring forth other categories of Kärkkäinen's Christologies such as Reformation Christology which focused on the Cross, Eastern Orthodox Christology whose focus is the resurrection (glorified Christ) and Contemporary Pentecostal and Charismatic Christologies whose focus is the miracle works and supernatural performance of Christ as enabled by the Holy Spirit. These categories of understandings as depicted in history are interpreted by Kärkkäinen as progressive stances towards a complete picture of Christology which cover different aspects of Christ in his salvation plan. The question that many theologians of religion have asked which Kärkkäinen tries to answer also is: what is the place of Christ in other religions? (2013:57). According to Oddbjørn Leirvik, there is a growing trend worldwide that proper reflection on Christology should be carried out "in the context of a dialogue with other religions" (Kärkkäinen, 2013:50). It is quite clear that Christology cannot be ultimately restricted to the Christian tradition because Christ is a universal being and his relevance to other religions must be identified. The identification of parallels between Christian theology and Asian religions as expressed in the Hindu and Buddhist avatars, considered as a manifestation of the deity, also serves as the starting point in the process of dialogues with other religions in order to achieve a pluralist goal (Kärkkäinen, 2013:142). This

understanding where various views are cherished and are used to form the whole picture of progress is also reflected in his ecclesiology.

It is very important to also note how Kärkkäinen protests against the categorisation of contextual theologies as separate studies in many secular and theological disciplines, and he regards such misappropriation as responsible for the marginalisation and secondary nature placement of such studies. It is also not surprising that constructive theology, despite its claim for inclusivity, does not also incorporate the diverse views that contextual theologies bring, into its primary discussion, as indicated earlier (Kärkkäinen, 2013:50). In response to such an attitude towards contextual theologies, Kärkkäinen calls for a radical change in the world view in line with late modernity which will involve a radical “turn to relationality and a dynamic understanding of reality” leading to the “intensifying of globalisation of the world with cultural diversity and hybridity, and the interaction with other living faiths” (2013:292).

Along these same lines, Moltmann warns against the biased reading and the spiritualisation of the atonement theories that have characterised the Christian tradition, to an extent where their application becomes relevant to the future only hence ignoring the present realities and experiences (Kärkkäinen, 2013:292, Moltmann, 1993:45). The solution, which goes beyond just applying the doctrine of salvation to the eschatological life, lays in revitalising the “atonement theories” of Christian tradition so that they become more relational, more relevant to the actual practical conditions of humans and more inclusive, by putting into consideration the diversity that is propagated by the scriptures (Kärkkäinen, 2013:293). Kärkkäinen considers the Pentecostal emphasis on bodily healing and the societal healing from elements such as poverty, injustice, corruption, imperialism and racism spearheaded by contextual theologies, as a “foretaste of a holistic salvation and promises of the coming eschatological fulfilment” which formed a critical component of the biblical narratives as portrayed in the early church (2013:297).

4.7 Trinitarian approach

It is also very critical to put into consideration the Trinitarian approach, as indicated earlier in the chapter, as a vital driving force to a genuine communion because it cherishes the differences that characterise diversity without denying the distinctive features of each of the representative Christian traditions and religious groups. Such a Trinitarian approach, according to D'Costa portrays the face of God in which all the different people groups,

traditions, races and ethnic societies are represented. He continues to say that the Trinitarian approach to the doctrine of salvation also enables Christians to understand and adore their God in a more truthful and richer way with the infusion of various concepts and ideologies present in other theologies and religious traditions (Kärkkäinen, 2013:223).

The conceptualisation of the Trinitarian ideology enables or allows distinctiveness of the different Christian traditions and religion involved in such a way that “the other is permitted to be the other” hence the giving and receiving of gifts are orchestrated. The giving and receiving of gifts basically means learning more about one's tradition and others through some form of exchange of ideas and knowledge's within Christian traditions and with other religions.

4.8 Conclusion

In concluding this section of Christology, I would like to state that despite Kärkkäinen's emphasis on logos Christology, as opposed to messianic or Spirit Christology, as a means of restoring the waning focus on Christ's human nature and his relevance to contextual realities, it is clear that he spearheads both a divine and human nature, which forms a whole picture of Christ's life. The discontinuity (present) and continuity (eschatology) theory also feature very prominently in Kärkkäinen's Christology and automatically influences his ecclesiology (chapter 15) because it infuses all the necessary events in Christ's life such as pre-existence, incarnation, virgin birth, death on the cross, resurrection, ascension and Parousia. The infusion of all events in Christ's life including the missing ones in Christian traditional theology such as Christ's earthly life is vital in recovering the importance of contextual theologies, which use the human experience as a point of departure. This approach also advances the ideology and goals of ecumenism and pluralism.

5. Kärkkäinen's Soteriology

Kärkkäinen adopts an inclusive definition of salvation which is quite relevant to his broader ecumenical approach by stating that salvation “involves some form of union with God” (2004:1). This depicts the understanding that humans are somehow viewed in many religions as having lost that connection with their creator hence that mutual union needs to be restored. However, what differentiates the various religions is the way in which this salvation is attained. Although Kärkkäinen goes beyond the Christian scope of looking at salvation within the different Christian traditions and includes other religions, his

perspective of looking at things from a Christian point of view makes his contributions vital for this study. What is quite fascinating about his work is how he pinpoints some of the convergences within each Christian tradition and religions and uses them as a point of departure for further theological dialogue.

5.1 A broader and inclusive Soteriology

The process of salvation which Kärkkäinen describes as *ordo salutis* basically refers to the process by which Christ's transformation power or salvation is effected in the lives of those considered to be in a sinful or depraved state (Kärkkäinen, 2016:201). He does not limit Christ's work of salvation to just individuals but rather emphasises the extension of this salvation from individuals to include the whole community and ecclesiastical system through interrelations. This vital move of the redemptive power is made possible by the Holy Spirit. More recent deliberations on the field of Soteriology have indicated to us that the aspect of salvation is linked to the very being of the church (ecclesiology) and eschatology hence the tendency to regard it as a separate loci does not do justice to this field (Lints, 2012:259). This entails that all the major topics within the discipline of theology are intertwined and primarily linked to Soteriology. This means that Kärkkäinen's views on the topic of Soteriology automatically influences his ecclesiology.

Another perspective that Kärkkäinen takes which needs to be mentioned here are the approaches he uses in order to develop his Soteriology. He basically uses theology of religion to inform and challenge some of the discussions and arguments that are presented by systematic theology particularly when he focuses on the links between the Christian religion with other religions (Kärkkäinen, 2016:4). The dimension that Kärkkäinen delves into is vital for systematic theology because it informs the discipline by looking for answers beyond the biblical texts hence breaking the stereotype that has characterised traditional Christianity over the centuries. Soteriology in particular, whose concepts need to be pluralistic and broader in perspective can highly benefit from the ideologies imbedded in other traditional faiths. Kärkkäinen's approach or method of doing theology is pluralistic in the sense that in line with his wider perspective or "coherence theory of truth", he makes use of a transverse mathematical idea "as a metaphor to describe the multidisciplinary, intersectional, embodied, and contextual character of knowledge" in line with Thomas Aquinas's thoughts (MacDougall, 2015:103 -104).

Kärkkäinen uses comparative theology in identifying parallels and common elements within Christian traditions and religions which can be vital in disseminating a progressive stance required in the field of Soteriology. According to Francis X Clooney, comparative theology is an emerging field within the discipline of theology that holds together “theology” and “comparative” in some form of creative tension (2010:11). This means that comparative religion simply examines the differences and similarities between various religious traditions from a neutral or detached position by delving into the aspects of theological reflection on one's religion using the insights obtained from other religions or religious traditions (Clooney 2010:9). Although so many works have emerged recently that have used comparative theology effectively, Kärkkäinen's approach is distinct and it takes Soteriology to another level because he extends his dialogical pursuits to other religious traditions such as Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism in his search for the riches that characterises true diversity of religious views. Kärkkäinen's courage to step into parameters that have for a long time being considered as no-go-zones or foreign territories by traditional Christian theology, open doors for more explorative endeavours by other theologians into other religious traditions as they search for more valuable insights.

Kärkkäinen does not only make use of comparative theology in his pursuit for a theology that is robustly innovative and inclusive in nature, but he also takes seriously the “otherness of the other” and this gives room for a sincere, realistic “sharing of one's conviction” (2013:29). In the same vein, as he pursues the question of the truth while acknowledging its subjectivity and objectivity, he aligns his understanding of this sensitive aspect of the truth by connecting it to the understanding revealed by the Trinitarian God. This Trinitarian theology is critical in developing a constructive theology which is empowered to be dialogical, respectful and humble in its arguments (Kärkkäinen, 2013:29). The image of the Trinitarian God infuses the soteriological attribute which is the giving and receiving of gifts, which is depicted when He sent his Son to die for mankind in order to receive salvation. This hospitality element features very prominently in Kärkkäinen's constructive theology because he uses it to build a theology that welcomes insights, testimonies and interpretations from other religious traditions. Such an attempt can only be possible by applying a dialogical mode.

The success that makes Kärkkäinen's work worthy of serious consideration in modern theological pursuits, particularly in both comparative and constructive theology, is attributed to the vast orientation that he has about other Christian traditions and religions which makes it possible for him to use a dialogue mode in his pursuits. Using Christian tradition as the focal point in his pursuits, he corrects traditional understandings about the role of Christ and the Spirit in salvation which is clearly reflected in Pentecostal theology where the Spirit is made to be secondary to Christ in the salvation plan, as indicated earlier (Studebaker, 2003:248-270).

5.2 The role of the Spirit in Soteriology

In Kärkkäinen's Soteriology, the Holy Spirit is regarded as very vital in disseminating the redemption work of Christ and this is evident in many Christian traditions though the order of this process differs, with some such as the Armenians, prioritising stages such as the calling out, election and repentance (Kärkkäinen, 2016:202). Kärkkäinen's views on the duty or task of the Holy Spirit in the salvation process can be aligned to Richard Lint's theory which places the Spirit as very vital in any viable discussion of God's salvation work for mankind in the world (Lints, 2012:259). Such an approach gives Soteriology the richness and depth it deserves in theological research. In his quest for an ecumenical Soteriology, Kärkkäinen underplays the different stages in the salvation process that differentiate many Christian churches and denominations hence he applauds global south theologies, contemporary theologies and Reformed conservative theologies by considering each of their views as a part of the whole. In my view, Kärkkäinen's approach is very vital because it helps overlook some of the sticky issues that hinder the flourishing of the ecumenical goal.

Kärkkäinen adopts Moltmann's creative soteriological views to thrash out the differences that the analytical steps propagate by stating that these salvation steps that make the different traditions distinct are "not stages in the experience of the Spirit" but signify the diversity that characterises different Christian traditions in reference to their perception of the same Spirit (Moltmann, 2012:82). The relevance of the Spirit in all spheres of life which includes both individual and cosmic spheres, as outlined by Moltmann, takes Soteriology to a different level in the process of fitting it into the ecumenical dream. The themes of salvation within Moltmann's discourse, apart from the one that stresses the need of the Spirit visible in all forms of life, such as the "Liberation of Life", "Justification of life",

“Rebirth of life”, “Sanctification of life” and “Charismatic powers in life” brings to the table diverse understandings of salvation which goes beyond the traditional streamlined views that stick to the process of the stages rather than the subjective understanding (Kärkkäinen, 2016:203). This approach dilutes the exclusive mentality that characterises many Christians traditions hence brings into perspective a balanced Soteriology that is relevant to all creation. According to Kärkkäinen, Moltmann brings into the study of Soteriology a particular perspective which is “life-affirming” and “earth-centred” and has been missing all along in traditional formulations (2016:203).

Kärkkäinen regards the word salvation to be a pluralistic term because it contains various broader metaphors that are relevant to different traditions (2016:203). According to Kärkkäinen, this term salvation has its foundations in the Old Testament era and ancient Jewish societies which contain heroic narrations which depict divine rescuing from pursuing enemies as indicated by the release of the Israelites from bondage in Egypt, the crossing of the Red Sea and the drowning of the Egyptian Army in the sea (2016:203). According to McClendon, despite the Christian tradition having unique insights on this aspect of salvation due to their deep Trinitarian and Christocentric orientation, it is wrong for us to downplay the role of the Jewish oriental society and Greco-Roman world in influencing the Christian understanding about salvation (Kärkkäinen, 2016:203). In this statement, McClendon is protesting against the tendency of Christian tradition to ignore the critical Jewish background of Soteriology which serves as a disservice to the pluralistic and multi-coloured vision of ecumenism. This diverse foundation that characterises this term ‘salvation’ means that it has pluralistic implications embedded in it. The broader application of the term salvation in a way serves as a common point of departure for spearheading reconciliation and unity among Christian churches, denominations and the religious world at large. Although the term “sin” might not be easily pronounced in the discourse of other religions, the concepts of submission, rebirth, deliverance and liberation which can be linked to the term ‘salvation’ make more sense in various religions of the world hence they serve as springboards for further discussion or dialogue.

Another perspective to consider or reflect on is that although the concept of salvation is somehow multi-coloured or pluralistic because of the way it is applied to different situations and circumstances, this terminology came into force in different religions because of the

common understanding that depicts man as a helpless creation that needs some form of divine intervention such as justification, sanctification, rebirth, adoption forgiveness, deliverance, healing, redemption and reconciliation. The understanding of salvation and its application is therefore shaped by the dominating religious values and personal and community circumstances hence ignoring the voices of the neglected in society. Even though salvation is regarded as personal, it is arbitrary to restrict it to an individual because this term has communal implications. These communal implications of salvation are reflected within Roman Catholic theology where it is believed that salvation emanates from an individual who has been transformed by Christ and it is nurtured within the confinements of the “church and through the church, the world” is saved (Conte, 2012). Although this idea of commonality is brought forth in the controversial Roman Catholic Latin axiom ‘*extra ecclesiam nulla salus*’ where an acknowledgement is made “that outside the Church there is no salvation”, it curbs the postmodern problem of individualism (Conte, 2012). However, there is an attempt by modern Roman Catholic theologians to reinterpret the Latin axiom so as to align it to the ecumenical dream.

In his quest to propagate a Trinitarian and Christocentric Soteriology which incorporates the whole community and all creation, Kärkkäinen regards traditional methods to Soteriology as highly complex and invaluable to the ecumenical dream because of the way they make a clear distinction between the person and the works of Christ. This quest for unity and equality is also reflected in Kärkkäinen’s ecclesiology where he considers the church to be a “communion of communions” and he uses the Trinitarian concept “as a paradigmatic for his constructive ecclesiology” (Penner, 2018). Kärkkäinen calls the subjection of the Spirit where the person of Christ is made distinct to his works as “Soteriological Subordinationism” as an error that needs to be corrected (2016:204). He argues that a correction to this liability present in traditional Soteriology would be to bring into focus the fervent Spirit-driven Christology that is very evident in the New Testament texts and advances the quest for unity and equality as reflected in the Trinity (Kärkkäinen, 2016:204). In fact, the New Testament clearly shows the simultaneous involvement of the Spirit right from the incarnation to include all the works that Christ was involved in and these works include healing, forgiveness, the performance of miracles, justification, death and resurrection.

The fact that the Spirit was involved in the resurrection of Christ brings into focus the understanding that the topics of Soteriology and eschatology are intertwined as well. Despite the recognition of the works of the Spirit in relation to salvation present in traditional Christian discourse, the perception that the Spirit is subjective to the person of Christ tend to bring a lot of problems in the study of Soteriology because it breaks the oneness that tends to characterise Trinitarian theology. This liability is responsible for the waning emphasis of the Spirit's works that has engulfed the traditional churches over the centuries. This has caused theologians to conclude that Pentecostalism as a distinctive tradition has been able to fit into the whole Christian religious system the missing element which is an emphasis on spiritual experiences. Despite Pentecostalism sounding like a solution to the waning emphasis on the works of the Spirit as the real work of Christ himself due to its emphasis on spiritual experiences, the irony is that this new tradition is also a victim of Soteriological subordinationism. As indicated earlier in this thesis, although Pentecostalism cannot be specifically categorised as fundamentalist or Reformed it has adopted fundamentalist and Reformed ideologies into its theology causing a convergence of diverse views within the same movement.

Kärkkäinen's vision for a holistic pneumatological Soteriology is quite evident in his works because he extends the Spirit's salvific work or redemption work which had traditionally been assigned to Christ only to include the Christian's personal and communal life, Trinitarian divine life, the cosmos (as indicated earlier), the spiritual realm, different historical periods, religions, culture and society (2016:207). It is very discernible that the Spirit plays different salvation roles in each of the sectors indicated and it will be extremely logical to look at what these roles are in particular. Salvation is not only limited to humans as indicated earlier because it includes every level of creation including the cosmos hence the Spirit's active role in creation need not be left unexplored. The tendency of traditional theology to subordinate the Spirit in the redemption plan that starts ultimately at creation causes problems for theology. However, the emphasis here is not just about the Spirit's equal involvement but an ultimate Trinitarian approach which emphasises the vital role of the Spirit, a role that has been neglected or undermined in traditional theology. It is true that Christian tradition has effectively propagated an understanding that God carried out creation but it was done so without spearheading or thrusting a clear distinctive Trinitarian

approach which accounts for the equal and vital role for each person of the Trinity (Hunt, 2005: 101-111).

The biblical creation story does not only indicate how all creation came into being but also the fall of man which culminated into the fall of all creation hence the need for all creation to be reconciled to each other and to God. The need for all humans and all creation to be united to each other and to their creator which is depicted “not only in the Christian religion but in other religions” as well can be evidenced in history through the various methods adopted by man to meet this need (Kärkkäinen, 2016:209). According to Kärkkäinen the implication of liberation, prevailing peace and a reconciled humanity which are necessitated by the salvific move and power will mean great strides in the area of missions (2016:209). This same understanding of mission is also echoed by Bosch who considers mission to be a “multifaceted ministry, in respect of witness, service, justice, healing, reconciliation, liberation, peace, evangelism, fellowship, church planting, contextualisation and much more” (van Wyngaard, 2008:43). This broader understanding of mission culminates into a “radical and comprehensive hermeneutic of missions” by not limiting missions to simply social justice and evangelism (van Wyngaard, 2008:43).

The consequences of a robust pneumatological Soteriology which does not only focus on individuals but extends its emphasis to different levels of our society to encompass everyone has favourable eschatological implications because a united church and society can do a lot in the area of mission. In Christian circles, the role of the Spirit in bringing back the connection between humans and their creator is clear through convictions, sanctifications, supernatural manifestations and future glorification (eschatology). This ideology of the role of Spirit which results in the appreciation of spiritual experiences is a gateway to developing a union within the Trinitarian God (Moltmann, 1992:17).

When Kärkkäinen propagates a pneumatological Soteriology that appreciates the role of the Spirit as an equal partner in the salvation plan, he indirectly spearheads the rejection of Pelagianism, which is a humanistic salvation view that maintains that “men and women are able to choose between good and evil not only concerning this life but also” after this life (2016:232). Although God in the creation story gave unto mankind a free will to choose what is good and what is evil, the fall dented this free will to a certain extent that it is not possible to talk about an absolute ability of mankind to make reliable decisions unless God

helps them. According to Kärkkäinen, the western tradition, which includes Roman Catholic and Protestant churches, and the eastern tradition must reject Pelagianism because it undermines the effects of the fall and role of redemption as brought about by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (2016:234). This basically means constructive theology, in its innovative pursuits, should go beyond just rejecting Pelagianism (though long dead) and the Augustinian view, which culminated into a complete opposite of Pelagianism (Calvinistic development) in order to propagate a viable theology of the triune God. The weakness of the Augustinian view of election and retribution is that it does not accommodate the anthropological element hence it loses its historical, personal and invitational touch necessary for communal church life. An ideal election and retribution view should be the one which is “balanced and corrected with both Christological and Communitarian orientations” (Kärkkäinen, 2016:239).

5.3 A pluralistic Soteriology of election

It is also very important to acknowledge Barth's contribution to this topic of election because he brings into focus the missing element in traditional theology on election by initiating a shift from an emphasis on humans to Christ hence initiating the communal element of election. Since Christ is regarded as the “corporate person” in whom all the salvific acts take place, his invitation to salvation which extends to everyone despite creed, race, language and ethnic background makes the communal relevance of election more apparent (Kärkkäinen, 2016:239). This emphasis on Christ can also be connected to the Old Testament in which election is meant to recruit individuals to join the messianic community although this time the call is to individuals based on their birth right rather than choice. This brings us to the understanding that a balanced approach to the doctrine of election should be the one that “happens from the perspective of time” and qualifies to be referred to as historical as well as putting into serious consideration the critical development of this doctrine over the course of ages and the contemporary inclusive values.

Although election ultimately means selection, it is very vital for us to comprehend the openness in which this invitation to eternal salvation is portrayed by Jesus Christ hence giving a solid assurance that no one is rejected if they respond positively to this call and that “the number of the elect still remains open” (Kärkkäinen, 2016:240). It is also very important to put into consideration the Trinitarian role and particularly the pneumatological

role in initiating the response to salvation, the roles that have been neglected or undermined in traditional theology. According to Henderson, the critical role of the Spirit as the intermediary of calling and election had been missed by traditional theology, although medieval theology can be credited with giving the Spirit a robust space in the field of Soteriology, it is still responsible for propagating a misfit by regarding the Spirit as simply the “commodity” rather than an “electing God” (Kärkkäinen, 2016:241).

A pluralistic understanding of salvation emanates from an understanding of the goal of election and calling which is portrayed in the scriptures (Rev 7:9; 21-24) and infuses the element of hospitality and propagates God's love for his creation and his eagerness to save all (Kärkkäinen, 2016:244). Although some Christian traditions have comfortably spearheaded a doctrine on election that is grossly humanistic hence overshadowing the gracious nature and hospitality of God, such an individualistic, absolute independence of humanity, non-historical and non-temporal ideology of election does not put into consideration the reality that so much of what we have including our lives are simply given and that also includes the freedom we have. Since most of what we have is simply given, it is impossible for humans to have complete or absolute freedom and right of choice (Muthukumar, 2015:5). However the understanding of the sovereignty of God must give room or apportion some proper level of human autonomy which entails the active participation of humanity, under divine empowerment, in the salvation plan which helps humans to make choices to be part of God's community. Holding together the understanding of God's sovereignty and human role or responsibility in salvation into some form of creative tension is critical for a contemporary theology of election and calling.

According to Burrell, it is clear that all Abrahamic faiths are obliged to “firmly affirm a relative, yet genuine, freedom of will and ensure moral and religious responsibility for all humans” (Kärkkäinen, 2016:256). Since most of the major religions and the traditional ones embrace the idea of free will, a personal and Almighty God, they also share the same dilemmas in answering some of the critical questions that relate to election, calling and predestination. “The differing versions of the beliefs” among the Abrahamic faiths and other traditional religions despite some common connotations, also raises questions about how to reconcile belief in personal salvation or salvation of a particular group and “belief in a universal God” (Kärkkäinen, 2016:249). The other questions that arise include the

determination of the truth in the midst of “competing claims to election” and how to determine the relationship or connection between free will, predestination and election (Kärkkäinen, 2016:249). However, the solution to the problems that raises these questions lies in seeking a common goal in defence for “the hospitality of God” by seeking “a robust middle way between total determinism and independence (relative and graced) of the creature” (Kärkkäinen, 2016:256). Kärkkäinen reconciles “the human moral responsibility that was upheld through the top-down causation with the divine causation with divine foreknowledge that he conceives as the ubiquitous presence of the Spirit in creation” (Muthukumar, 2015:1-7).

Even in the Asian faiths, particularly Hinduism, there is a serious attempt to hold a dynamic balance between the help rendered by God to devotee in a gracious manner and the active response of the devotee to this help in order to avoid an overly humanistic or divine ideology that does not give room to the role of the divine or human responsibility (Kärkkäinen, 2016:259). Kärkkäinen identifies some similarities between the Abrahamic faiths and Hindu movements that spearhead personal values, in terms of trying to strike a balance “between divine determinism and human response” and these serve as critical points in achieving a common understanding necessary for further dialogue. Although the aspect of free will does not feature prominently in most contemporary Buddhism as it does in modern psychology, philosophy and western theology, the earlier writings in Buddhism address this aspect quite extensively. According to these earlier writings, “the Buddha rejected both determinism and indeterminism as it was understood at that time” (Wallace, 2011:217-233). Taking it for granted that man has free will already, these ancient Buddhist tend to look for ways through which man can maximise this freedom of choice and suggests “cultivation of attentional skills” (Wallace, 2011:2017-233). Although Buddhist “rejection of the transcendent soul” tends to contradict its insistence on freewill, retribution and personal responsibility, the need to strike a balance between free will and causal relation (determinism) expressed in such writings show some common elements between Buddhism and other religions such as the Abrahamic faiths (Asaf, 2010:1-19). Such forms of commonalities between religions serve as critical point of departure for ecumenical dialogue.

Kärkkäinen constructs a theological account of conversion, a critical component of salvation, by disconnecting it from its suspicious links with colonisation and proselytism. “Conversion” a term which is basically related to other terms such as forgiveness and repentance basically means ‘to turn around and be united to God’. Its application, particularly, in the Christian tradition has expressed serious form of exclusiveness rather than relative acceptance. This explains why Kärkkäinen attempts to construct a formidable understanding of this term by situating it in a “sympathetic and critical dialogue with interdisciplinary intercultural and inter-religious interpretations and issues” (Kärkkäinen, 2016:264). The recognition that conversion is the task or duty of the Holy Spirit is embedded in such terms as regeneration, repentance and assimilation into a church or community, gives it a wider forum into which it can be applied. Kärkkäinen initiates a paradigm shift in the understanding of conversion by constructing a theology of conversion that allows the integrating of mind and body, mind and heart, communal and individual, human and divine will, the present and the future relevance, the beginning and arrival perspective, progressive nature of the term and transmission of Christian faith from generation to generation (2016:269). This revised version of understanding conversion gives it an ecumenical touch relevant to this postmodern society.

Any viable Constructive theology in this sense, must acknowledge some of the complexities of understanding or applying conversion in particular scenarios such as Hindu India, Buddhist Asia, African Traditional society by taking seriously some of its ideological and power-play destructive potential (Kärkkäinen, 2016:275). This acknowledgement of the possible harmful effects of conversion does not in any way insinuate a restriction of freewill or a battle against evangelisation and religious mission but rather outlines the possible danger of forceful manipulation which infringes on human potential to make informed decisions. According to Kärkkäinen, every Religion or Christian group has the right to convince and eventually convert others to join them but they must use amicable and peaceful means (2016:276).

5.4 Forgiveness and justification in Soteriology

Forgiveness, a critical stage within the process of conversion, needs to be discussed here as well because it necessitates assimilation of victims and offenders into a religious community. The process of the forgiveness of sins, which is mainly regarded by Protestant

scholars as the forensic aspect of justification, is done by the Holy Spirit and this statement does not in any way undermine the role of the father and the Son, but rather consolidates the unity propagated by Trinitarian theology by stating that the father and the Son play this role in an individual through the Spirit (Gaybba, 2005:159). This Trinitarian approach to this cardinal aspect of forgiveness is vital for ecumenism. The key aspect of forgiveness is that it transcends boundary metaphors hence it does not only emphasise the forgiveness of the offender or focus only on the aspect of forgiveness as a hospitable gift but it also propagates the healing and restoration of the victim and seeks to pursue justice and fairness (Kärkkäinen, 2016:288). Forgiveness in Kärkkäinen's discourse serves as the key and critical element in spearheading peace, peace building and reconciliation. Reconciliation, according to Kärkkäinen, serves as the main purpose of salvation and this is quite fascinating in the sense that it brings into focus the role God played, according to the Christian tradition, in reconciling the world to himself through his Son, which can also be expressed by the reconciliation of mankind.

Before concluding this part of the section, I would like to outline some of the issues Kärkkäinen brings out and one of them is the aspect of Justification. He spearheads the acceptance of what he calls a new understanding on justification which moves away from the western ideologies that characterised medieval Christianity of guilty, penance and condemnation, to a more ecumenical approach that is closer to the eastern conceptualisation of justification. It is important for us to grasp this understanding that the Eastern Orthodox champions union with the divine, which is referred to as "theosis". Theosis is the belief that "believers share in the divine nature as the consequence of salvation" (Lints, 2012:285). However, this sharing in the godly nature is limited to taking on God's energies rather than His essence. Kärkkäinen treats thoroughly the "Finnish Lutheran School's view on Martin Luther's doctrine of union with God as grounds for the adoption of divinisation (*theosis*) into Protestant Soteriology" (Penner, 2017). Although Kärkkäinen spends most of his time particularly in chapter 11 of the book *Spirit and Salvation* trying to argue in favour of a balanced view on justification closer to the Eastern Orthodox perspective of Justification, it is very clear how his Lutheran heritage and eastern inclination influences his ideologies. His discussions on human integrity, sanctification and religious renewal, also portray this affinity to eastern and Lutheran values.

It is also very important to remember Kärkkäinen's affinity to Pentecostalism/Charismatic tradition and that explains why he laments the exclusion of the vital components of Soteriology in traditional theology namely Baptism of the Holy Spirit, “the doctrine of psychosomatic healing” and spiritual gifts which happen before, during or after the conversion process (Penner, 2017). The inclusion of particular elements that form part of the Pentecostal/Charismatic Christian tradition opens doors for more ecumenical dialogue and understanding. Although Kärkkäinen does not go deep into the complexities and controversies behind Charismatic gifts, spiritual healings, Holy Spirit Baptism that have created the divide between traditional theology and Pentecostal/Charismatic churches, such as issues related to evidence and excess manifestations or biblical excesses, his analogy serves as a point of departure for further dialogue.

5.5 Conclusion

In concluding this section, I would like to state that the comparative Soteriology that Kärkkäinen uses in propagating or constructing a robust pneumatological Soteriology brings up the richness that is embedded in all Christian traditions and religions. It infuses the plurality and communality of salvation which recognises the grace and sovereignty of God while at the same time accommodates God's hospitality in the doctrines of atonement, calling and election, conversion, reconciliation, justification and forgiveness. This in my view is a step forward in understanding the need for unity and reconciliation for all creation which is necessary for peace and acceptance of each other despite differences and varying particularities.

6. Kärkkäinen's pneumatology

As stated in the introduction of this chapter, pneumatology basically refers to the study of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit and it focuses on the person and the works of the Spirit and an adequate reflection to this loci also involves determining the role of the Spirit in different disciplines or fields within the field of theology such as Soteriology, ecclesiology, providence, revelation, eschatology and ecumenism. Kärkkäinen defines pneumatology as simply “the doctrine and spirituality of the Holy Spirit” (2012:1). A Spirit survey in the modern era shows that most contemporary theologians in our times have adopted a symphony of pneumatic ideas that have emerged during the historical period of the Patristic Fathers, the medieval era and the Reformation. Even though historical theology has really shaped modern

pneumatic ideologies, it is also very important to acknowledge the biasness it displays towards the innovative strides and other recent development in the field of pneumatology. This bias causes or tempts modern theology to desist or overlook recent developments in pneumatology and retreat to the strides made in history (Work, 2012:230). As we move further in this section of the thesis, the best option which Kärkkäinen also propagates is the embracing of the historical milestones in the field of pneumatology and at the same time recognising the recent innovative strides in this field. It is very evident that Kärkkäinen cherishes a plethora of views, something that can easily be noticed as he deals with other themes within the discipline of systematic theology because he takes it that these different views complement each other to form a better inclusive picture.

6.1 Converging a symphony of pneumatic ideas

Kärkkäinen's intentions are very clear as he deals with the aspect of pneumatology, "to refine Pentecostal theology" (Pneuma, 2015:111-171). Despite acknowledging Pneumatocentrism within Pentecostal theology as depicted by the metaphors that refer to Christ as King, baptised, Saviour, healer and sanctifier, he still maintains a Christocentric view of Pentecostalism, perhaps as a way of correcting a misappropriated emphasis (Kärkkäinen, 2013:207). Kärkkäinen's Christocentric view should not be considered as a complete misdemeanour as to warrant obscurity of his Pentecostal credentials because Pentecostalism is indeed Christocentric though it is also vital to also see its pneumatological orientation. It is also important to comprehend Kärkkäinen's approach in order to understand his perspective as he deals with the aspect of pneumatology, that is to synthesise a broader evangelical discourse that engages with "many theological voices" (Pneuma, 2015:111-171). Since Kärkkäinen has a Pentecostal background, it is not easy for him to completely shy away from being influenced pneumatologically as he deals with various topics within the field of systematic theology. His emphasis on a pneumatological Soteriology and his recognition of a supernatural and miracle driven Christology somehow depicts his Pentecostal roots. However before we delve deeply into what Kärkkäinen has to say in his pneumatic pursuits, it is critical that I use the views of a few leading theologians who have written some ground breaking works as a point of departure. This approach (in this section) is necessitated by the need to trace some contemporary background of what

we call the pneumatological age, a critical topic, which was ushered in by the emerging of Pentecostal and Charismatic churches.

6.2 Brief background of contemporary pneumatology

Gordon Kaufman, one of the leading theologians in modern history outlines a certain key approach to pneumatology which I believe will make more sense as we seek to understand Kärkkäinen's pneumatology. First of all it very important to understand the context in which one works in order to understand the role of the Spirit in the world and select the best method to employ in understanding these roles. Kaufman, for example, sees humans as vital vessels which the Spirit can use in bringing change to our world which has been engulfed with catastrophes such as hunger, racism, oppression, ecological breakdown and nuclear threats. In Kaufman's understanding any attempts toward initiating peace, reconciliation, healing and bringing restoration to our dying ecological system and overcoming the sticky problems of our society such as segregation based on one's race, ethnics background and status, should be accepted as the salvific work of the Spirit, "the Spirit of Christ" in the world (Lederle, 2005:v). This approach by Kaufman, though sophisticated in some sense, is ecumenical because it recognises the role of the Spirit in different sectors of our society and puts into consideration the context in which one expresses his pneumatological views.

One German Lutheran theologian by the name of Otto Dilschneider also known as "the contemporary theologian of the Holy Spirit" develops his pneumatology in conversation or debate, to be specific, with the modern philosophy of existentialism (Lederle, 2005:7). His approach basically involves a distinction between the functional role and the personality or the being of the Spirit. It is clear that Dilschneider also recognises the current trends in the study of pneumatology where much energy has been channelled towards researching what the Spirit does (functional roles) such as renewal, regeneration, illumination and sanctification hence neglecting the other vital aspect, which is understanding the personality of the Spirit. This historical negligence prompts Dilschneider to focus on the other neglected aspect in pneumatological research which is the being of the Spirit (what the Spirit is) and this personality basically represents "his essence or structure" (Lederle, 2005:7). This neglect or suppression in researching the being of the Spirit in various fields within the discipline of theology over the course of church history is also echoed by Father

Philip J. Rosato (1977:423-449) who sees it as been responsible for the unconceivable detrimental effect on church unity.

Kärkkäinen attributes this negligence to research into the being of the Spirit in relation to the Trinitarian economy to have been responsible for the slow formation of pneumatology that has characterised our Christian history (2012:2). Dilschneider's approach which can be precisely referred to as a phenomenological method, where he specifically tackles the neglected aspect 'the dogmatics of the Spirit,' has got its limitations in the sense that it is not possible to talk about the being or personality of the Spirit without somehow overlapping into his role or function. The fact that Dilschneider also cherishes a Trinitarian theology by recognising the interconnection between the persons of the Godhead as displayed in the Apostle's creed can also be used to understand the connection between God and his creation and the role of the Spirit in each of them. This merely indicates that Dilschneider spearheads the understanding that the method of doing theology of the Spirit is to acknowledge its ecumenical role because he recognises the unlimited role of God's Spirit in all creation (Lederle, 2005:7).

One other theologian that I need to mention here before analysing Kärkkäinen's pneumatology is George Stuart Hendry because of his approach that differentiates between canonical order and chronological order in the study of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Even though Hendry favours the Chronological order to the canonical order because it outlines the sequence of pneumatological events that took place in Christian history, it is the canonical approach that is frequently used by many theologians. Hendry downplays the canonical approach because he believes that such an approach begins its quest in the Old Testament and runs the risk of diluting the soteriological and eschatological emphasis of the New Testament (Hendry, 1965:16). On the other hand, Kärkkäinen uses traces of both chronological and canonical approaches which have been specifically intertwined in order to draw a plethora of ideas and views from different sources. Kärkkäinen's use of a unique flesh innovation is quite very clear in his works as he delves into various contemporary topics within pneumatology. In my view, Kärkkäinen's use of both the chronological and canonical approach is evident as he charts through the various territories of biblical, historical and contemporary writings and reflections on pneumatology. He explores the views on the Spirit adopted by both the Old and New Testament, different traditions and a

variety of contemporary theologians and his enquiries on a number of contextual approaches makes his works a rich source of knowledge.

Even though earlier theologians that wrote their works before the 21st century observed or depicted a literal spiritual famine within traditional churches because of the lack of an extensive discourse on the person and works of the Holy Spirit, the development and spreading of the Pentecostal tradition and the mushrooming of Charismatic movement within traditional churches has resulted in what we call the “flooding of spiritual experiences”. Kärkkäinen does not only credit the Pentecostal and Charismatic movement for the flooding of spiritual experiences but also the Eastern Orthodox Churches whose entrance into the World Council of Churches has made it possible for its rich Spirit theology, passed on from its ancient tradition, to be accessible to other churches (2002:12). The classical works of church fathers, Basil the Great, Athanasius and Cyril of Alexandria, which are highly valued in The Eastern Church, are responsible for the prominence of the doctrine of the Spirit within this tradition (2002:12). Kärkkäinen calls this current era when there is a renewed interest or resurgence in the person and the works of the Holy Spirit, and the valuing of spiritual experiences as evidenced through tongue-speaking, healing and performance of miracles and wonders as “a pneumatological renaissance” (2002:9). Despite this overwhelming appreciation of mysteries, spiritual innovations and spiritual experiences that have engulfed our modern Christian societies; Kärkkäinen laments the fact that despite the Spirit movement being in existence for almost a century now, yet there is no tangible Pentecostal or Charismatic pneumatology. He continues to say although it is possible for us to talk about the existence of a form of an informal narrative Pentecostal pneumatology, it is not possible to talk about one Pentecostal pneumatology because there is a variety of them (Conradie, 2015:63-81).

One statement that Kärkkäinen makes about the duty of the Holy Spirit which makes his works worth further exploration is that he alludes to the critical understanding that there is no single Christian tradition that can “claim monopoly over the Holy Spirit” or any particular Christian denomination that can claim to be the sole custodian of the Holy Spirit because His works are evident not only in all the Christian traditions but also in other religions and the cosmos or universe at large. (2002:9). In this case, being ecumenically sensitive also means reflecting on the ideas and views about the Holy Spirit that are expressed within the

different traditions and religions without undermining any. This point brings us back to the aspect of context because reflecting on a particular context in which a particular ideology has been propagated helps us make sense of it despite the reality that we might not completely agree with it.

Despite the resurgence in the valuing of spiritual experiences that has characterised the modern church era, it is not advisable for the church to be complacent because there is a need for further understanding about the person of Spirit and the grasping of the works distinctly of the Spirit, because it is this lack of scholarly works on these aspects that have been responsible for some form of deficit in the doctrine of the Holy Spirit that had characterised the church. It is also critical that we understand that despite the enormous reference to the Holy Spirit in most of the contemporary theological work, there is still some traditional sectors of the church that are still resisting the experiential spiritual move while only accepting the literal or theoretical part of it. This drives Kärkkäinen into stating that “the talk about the Spirit cannot be based on pure theory but must touch the experienced reality” (2002:16). However, in a situation where both the experiential and theoretical parts of pneumatology are appreciated, there is a need for checks and balances to be put in place to avoid a situation where the human Spirit takes precedence over the Holy Spirit. According to Ratzinger, individual spiritual convictions are subject to communal trials and tests, which must be led to the same Spirit (Kärkkäinen, 2002:16). In my view, the communal scrutiny or testing for individual theological views as prompted by the Spirit must be done by the church as a whole.

Some other theologians such as Yves Congar have a different take on how to deal with the challenges that come with appreciating spiritual experiences hence they suggest some form of balance where both the “Person Principle” and the “Institutional Principle” are appreciated (Kärkkäinen, 2002:15). The ideology of balancing these principles as adopted by Congar gives room for the flourishing of “personal religious relationships” motivated by love and faith and appreciating the authority of the church as depicted through the canon, rites, dogmas, organisations and formulations while putting into consideration the excesses and the extremism that can be brought about by an overemphasis on institutionalisation or personhood (Congar, 1962:27-43). The need for the personal convictions to be aligned to the institutional values and principles is also echoed by Kärkkäinen who agrees that the

Spirit's works can be experienced by individual Christians but the church plays a greater role in making sure that these individuals get access to the message of the Spirit through the preaching of the word and communal worship (2002:15). Pentecostalism, for example, whose emphasis has been on personal spiritual conviction at the expense of institutional principle, has been engulfed with high levels of divisions, diversity of views ranging from extreme to liberal and some form of abuse in certain sectors of the tradition.

One aspect of Kärkkäinen's work that needs to also be mentioned here is that he regards the Holy Spirit to be a distinct person within the Trinity who "indwells believers and creation in specific and tangible ways" (2002:15). This statement opens a door for a more explorative pluralistic understanding of the role of the Spirit not only among Christians belonging to different denominations and traditions and adherents of different world religions but also in the whole of creation. Kärkkäinen leads the way by recovering the treasure about the doctrine of the Spirit that he believes is hidden with the biblical narratives, different Christian traditions (Reformed, Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Pentecostal/Charismatic) and Contextual Theologies. He alludes to the idea that contextual theologies particularly those from the Christian margins such as liberation, feminists and green need to be heard because he believe that such theologies are pregnant with rich perspectives that require excavation in order for us to build an inclusive picture (Kärkkäinen, 2002:9).

Kärkkäinen also engages with the works of a number of contemporary theologians, whose views on pneumatology require attention such as Pinnock, Pannenberg, Zizioulas, Rahner and Moltmann. Kärkkäinen's interest in diversity as he reflects on the works of a number of contemporary theologians is depicted particularly in chapter 5 of his book, *Pneumatology, the Holy Spirit in ecumenical, international, and contextual perspective* because each of the theologians he chooses represents a particular tradition. What needs to be mentioned here is that each of the theologians that Kärkkäinen picks represents a particular locus within the broader tradition that they belong to, giving us an understanding that there is diversity even within particular denominations through each of the views expressed which contributes to the whole holistic perspective. Congar has even commented in reference to Roman Catholicism that the diversity of views that exist within the church is even worse than the division that has characterised Protestantism since the Reformation (1962:27-43). Although

Congar's comments might sound to be over the wall, they give us a glimpse of the extreme level of diversity that exists within particular denominations.

6.3 Brief analysis of Kärkkäinen's pneumatology in his book Spirit and Salvation

An analysis of the first part of the book 'Spirit and Salvation' is also very vital for this study, because of the way it articulates Kärkkäinen's theology on pneumatology, which is dialogical, inclusive, biblical and global. His methodology is very distinctive and clear because of its interdisciplinary nature (Penner, 2017). Kärkkäinen argues in favour of a pluralistic pneumatology "as opposed to a unitive-pneumatology" by engaging with "many global voices which are brought into" conversation with each other in order to design a "holistic pneumatology" (Penner, 2017, Kärkkäinen, 2016:179). In describing a "unitive" pneumatology he considers it to be dominant pneumatology of mainline churches because "it only speaks of one Spirit, the Spirit of God, and leave out of consideration other Spirits, powers and energies" (Kärkkäinen, 2013: 29-40). Holistic pneumatology, on the other hand, takes a broader approach by connecting "mission theory and praxis" by bringing "together the spiritual world and material realities" (Fleming, 2017). This holistic approach also entails incorporating the participation of lay leadership and "ecumenical unity through the work of the Holy Spirit" (Fleming, 2017).

Kärkkäinen also outlines the place of the Holy Spirit in Trinitarian theology by particularly referring to the Patristic era. Referring to the developments of Trinitarian theology with particular reference to the Holy Spirit during the Patristic era brings forth an understanding of the critical role of the Holy Spirit in creation along with other persons of the Trinity. It also reveals the long-forgotten aspect of the Holy Spirit in traditional theology, which is his presence in all creation and religious traditions (Penner, 2017). Kärkkäinen argues for the universal presence of the Spirit through what he calls a "Trinitarian-pneumatological understanding where" the Spirit guides, sustains and permeates the life of created beings on whom some level of independence has been bestowed by God's grace (Muthukumar, 2015:5). The perception that the Spirit is omnipresence automatically influences Trinitarian theology by insinuating that "the triune God" is omniscience because all the three persons of the Trinity share the same attributes. The presence of all the persons of the Trinity in the creation means that there is nothing that happens without divine foreknowledge (Muthukumar, 2015:1-7). The presence of the Holy Spirit in the different sectors of society

can easily be evidenced through his activities such as conviction, provision, protection, sanctification, purification and justification. This also entails that such terminologies cannot be restricted to the Christian religion, an aspect which most traditional Christians might not find acceptable.

Discussing topics related to issues of metaphysical and cosmological powers under the topics authorities, demons and angels, takes Kärkkäinen's work to another level because this has been a neglected topic for a very long time. The presence of the Holy Spirit in all sectors of society basically means that he is responsible for initiating unity and understanding among all humans, despite their race, ethnic background and status, and is also very actively involved in liberating them from all institutional and cosmological powers that hold them in bondage (Kärkkäinen, 2016:180). Such a constructive theology that recognises the works of the Spirit in various sectors of the society as an ideal for initiating unity and understanding among all creatures, humans and religions makes more sense particularly in this postmodern society where there are so many things that divide humanity.

Since Kärkkäinen states that there is a cordial relationship that the Spirit has with the cosmos, this explains the reason why he advocates for "the preservation of creation" as a first step in endorsing "the Spirit's relation to creation as the whole" (Brennan III, 2017:129-131). Kärkkäinen also assumes that the Holy Spirit is present in all other religions, just as he is in the Christian faith; hence he calls for Christians to interact and engage with such non-Christian traditions so as to ascertain this pneumatic presence. He continues to outline the need for theology as a whole to interact or engage with other disciplines, particularly natural sciences, in order "to articulate how compatible" the existence of angels and demons and the field of pneumatology, can be with science (Brennan III, 2017:129-131).

Robust or radical pneumatology, where the Spirit is assumed to be present in virtually everything (organic and inorganic), borders into extreme perimeters of pantheism and universalism. According to Berkhof, such robust pneumatology is so intimate to a "man's life that we sometimes feel ourselves on the brink of Pantheism" (Kärkkäinen, 2016:50). It can also be observed within the "third article of the Christian creed" that the Spirit is not only closely connected to an individual man's life but also to the liturgy and the church as the whole, an aspect which is affirmed by the confession of the belief in the "one, holy,

apostolic, and catholic church and the communion of saints” (Kärkkäinen, 2016:32). It is not surprising that Kärkkäinen uses these four tradition Christian marks (apostolicity, holiness, unity and catholicity) as tools for discussing the ecclesiality of the church in chapter 14 of his fifth volume *Community and hope* (Penner, 2018).

6.4 Conclusion

As I am concluding this topic of Kärkkäinen’s pneumatology, it is very clear that a balanced perspective in which there is an interconnectedness between the persons of the Trinity, while still maintaining their distinctiveness and the involvement of each of the persons of the Trinity in each of the theological disciplines such as ecclesiology, Soteriology, Revelation, Pneumatology, creation (nature) and ecumenism reduces the institutionalisation and allows spiritual innovation to excel. In short, we can conclude that Kärkkäinen propagates a pneumatological driven ecclesiology which puts into consideration and recognises the different roles the Spirit plays in different sectors of the society and the different ways in which the Spirit manifests himself whether Charismatic or mystical.

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to state that Kärkkäinen treasures diversity and this is evidenced by the way in which he develops a constructive theology that is inclusive by taking seriously every view or theory propagated by history and religious traditions. The cherishing of diverse views does not in any way mean that Kärkkäinen does not have some difficulties or problems with some of these views that he outlines but rather he considers the positives and negatives of each view as simply a step forward or important components in developing a concrete inclusive contemporary theology. After looking at the different perspectives of Kärkkäinen's constructive theology as he reflects on different topics, it becomes very easy for us to picture his approach as he engages with the crucial theme of ecclesiology. It will not be surprising for us to discover that he seeks to propagate an inclusivity ecclesiology that does not only take seriously the voices of those from the Christian margin such as women and the poor, but also those from other faiths or religions.

CHAPTER 4: THE PENTECOSTAL ECCLESIOLOGY OF KÄRKKÄINEN

1. Introduction

In this section of the thesis, I would like to explore how Kärkkäinen views and understands Pentecostal ecclesiology. The previous description of the three loci (Christology, Soteriology and Pneumatology) will serve as a critical background in finding out how Kärkkäinen develops his ecclesiology. In order to accomplish the critical goals and objectives of this section, the first step is to determine his mission in describing Pentecostal ecclesiology after which we will delve deeper into unveiling the scope and the intricate elements that form his Pentecostal ecclesiology. Ecclesiology can “be defined as the discipline that is concerned with comparative, critical, and constructive reflection of the dominant paradigms of the identity of the church” (Avis, 2018:4-5). This means that the study of ecclesiology has to do with the investigation of “the church’s manifold self-understanding in relation to a number of areas: the origins, structures, authority, doctrine, ministry, sacraments, unity, diversity, and mission of the church, including its relation to the state and to society and culture” (2018:4-6). This definition of ecclesiology is very comprehensive because it includes critical aspects that form the church’s being such as its mission, ministry and worship. Kärkkäinen describes Pentecostal ecclesiology as a practical pneumatological experience rather than a theoretical theology because of its natural incorporation of the unlimited “flow of the Spirit” and Charismatic structural system (2001:100-121). The recognition of Pentecostal ecclesiology as part of the broader Christian ecclesiology is very vital as we try to determine the ecumenicity of Kärkkäinen’s Pentecostal ecclesiology.

Although ecclesiology emerged as a distinct field within the theological discipline only after the Reformation, it does not necessarily mean that critical subjects or themes of ecclesiology were not discussed in detail earlier (Kärkkäinen, 2017:234). The earlier centuries in Christian theological history such as the Patristic and the medieval periods played a very big role in developing ecclesiology because of the critical discussions about church doctrines that took place during the three councils that span through the period. It is imperative to acknowledge that earlier reference to ecclesiastical themes or ecclesiology as a distinct theological discipline was inclusive, pluralistic and ecumenical. This means that Charismatic traits and unlimited flow of glossolalia and spiritual gifts as enabled by the Spirit were considered as a vital part of the church’s being. According to Kärkkäinen, the church is

regarded as a spiritual fellowship of different parts of Christ's body and persons (2007: 1-15). Such an understanding incorporates a variety of ideas and diversity of components in order to form a broader picture of ecclesiology.

2. Kärkkäinen's mission in describing Pentecostal ecclesiology

In order for us to understand Kärkkäinen's mission in describing Pentecostal ecclesiology, it is important to examine his methodology, which is depicted clearly in his five-volume systematic theology. Although Kärkkäinen dedicates some space in each of the books in his first-four volumes to discuss his methodology which forms his mission, the fifth volume is critical because he describes his motivations and announces the key theologian from which his methodology emerged from. Kärkkäinen (2017:234) describes original "churches' lives" right from the New Testament era to have been characterised by the critical aspects of "plurality and diversity", although the later trends such as the subordination of the Spirit works to Christ's personality distorted this original perspective. The role of a proper Trinitarian theology, as indicated in the last chapter, which assigns equality to all persons, is very critical in propagating a Soteriology, Christology, pneumatology and an ecclesiology that is pluralistic and tolerates diversity.

Given the large amount of works that have been developed on ecclesiology in recent years, it is very important to realise that Kärkkäinen does not develop his ecclesiology from a vacuum hence he draws his methodology and lessons, which he uses to develop his ecumenical Pentecostal ecclesiology, from the broader theological and ecumenical spectrum (Kärkkäinen, 2017:235). It is very clear from Kärkkäinen's sources that he seeks to develop an existential, dynamic, historical, concrete and ecumenical ecclesiology which is inclusive hence it cherishes a plethora of views by engaging contextual theologies which he perceives have for a long time have been side-lined in traditional theological discussions. The theologian from which Kärkkäinen adapts his broader ecclesiology is Roger Haight, "an American Roman Catholic theologian" (Kärkkäinen, 2017:235). Kärkkäinen describes Haight's ecclesiology as "analogous to Christological method" because of its "from below" emphasis as a point of departure, and this means that it follows a wider contemporary perspective which is historical, concrete and existential, contrary to a narrow ahistorical, idealist and abstract view (2017:235).

A better understanding of Haight's approach is that he goes beyond simply outlining a plethora of ecclesiologies, formed through a closer analysis of the Christian history, to drawing principles from these ecclesiologies which eventually form an empirical "set of guidelines" required "for reflection on the church at any given" moment (Bellitto, 2007:363-364). In this approach, Haight makes use of anthropological and sociological concepts in order to analyse the ecclesiological development in history in an interdisciplinary and multi-dimensional manner (Bellitto, 2007:363-364). Haight's methodology is intrinsically ecumenical hence he assumes an audience that is already formed "by the historical consciousness and an appreciation of pluralism," "and ecclesial or confessional identity" (2008:387-401). Kärkkäinen adopts a similar interdisciplinary and multi-dimensional method by paying particular attention "to socio-historical, ideological, and political factors, including liberation as well as globalisation, which shape the context of the development of ecclesiology" (2017:235).

This diachronic approach in which contemporary theological pursuits in the field of ecclesiology must not depart from the historical symbols makes it possible for theologians in this field to captivate "the common social form of Christian existence" which are depicted in the diverse historical periods such as the celebration of the sacrament, "event of Jesus Christ" (Earthly life, death on the cross and resurrection), leadership forms, fellowship (*koinonia*), care for each other and the poor or suffering in society, preaching of the message and the physical and spiritual connections between congregations, and use them to advance the ecumenical dream (Haight, 2008:394). These symbols as depicted by Haight express the common historical form which can be used effectively to foster a critical, contemporary, multi-dimensional pluralistic ecclesiology. An ecclesiology that keeps its assertions connected to the historical symbols is not only theoretical but also practical.

Kärkkäinen adds to his plethora of ideas, as adapted from Haight, an extensive reflection on contextual theologies, which have for a long time been side-lined by traditional theologies (2017:235). The development of a contemporary ecclesiology that does not take seriously the experiences of the marginalised such as the poor and those victimised by power structures, makes the whole ecclesiastical endeavour unpractical. It is therefore not surprising that Kärkkäinen pays "careful consideration to gender issues and questions relating to power, among others", as he develops his ecclesiology (Kärkkäinen, 2017:235).

Another dimension of Haight's ecclesiology that needs to be mentioned here, because of the way it links to Kärkkäinen's ecclesiology, is how it challenges its audience to value differences as a critical component that enables the incarnation event to transcend through human background to incorporate "both the human and the divine" in a mutual or intertwined manner (Catholic Studies, 2005). By his approach, Haight unveils the "dynamics inherent in the development of structured Christianity" (Cookie, 2005).

Despite Haight's influence on Kärkkäinen's theology as displayed in his five-volume systematic theology, it is also imperative to acknowledge the influence of his background as a Pentecostal as indicated previously, through the construction of a broad and enigmatic theology of the Spirit through his examination of "creation and sciences, other cosmic powers and beings, the concepts of Spirits in other religions, and the Spirit's place in society and politics" (Kärkkäinen, 2016:50). The link to his Lutheran roots is particularly displayed in the fact that "non-violence does not play a key part in how he conceptualises reconciliation" and when he deals with aspects of salvation and Spirit (Redecop, 2017:91). This approach of side-lining the "Historic Peace Churches" tends to somehow undermine his ecumenical pursuits. However it can be argued that the lack of considerable engagement with non-violent theologies evident as Kärkkäinen deals with critical aspects of salvation, Spirit and reconciliation can be attributed to the limited nature of his scope.

Another influence from his Lutheran roots can be noticed in the way he outline the role of the Spirit in his theology. The difference between Lutheranism and other Christian traditions is mainly noticed in the way in which Lutherans articulate the role of Holy Spirit, "Lutherans are the only ones who teach that the Holy Spirit works exclusively through the Word of God and sacraments to create and sustain faith alone and give salvation" (Wolfmueller, 2010). Kärkkäinen uses this distinct Lutheran theology of the Holy Spirit together with the rich Orthodox pneumatological theology to inform traditional theology. As indicated in the last chapter, traditional Christianity (consisting of streamlined patterns of beliefs or practices developed over the course of history which form part of mainline churches such as Roman Catholicism, Orthodox and Reformed Churches) has for a long time been accused of contributing to the waning emphasis of the role of the Spirit in its theology. This traditional Christian theology, through its subordination of the Spirit's works in Christ to his person has also contributed to the side-lining of contextual theologies.

Since we have established the influences that shape Kärkkäinen's dynamic ecclesiology, it is very important that we outline the unique aspects that distinguish his ecclesiology from others and also determine his mission in developing such an ecclesiology. The logical enquiry into Kärkkäinen's ecclesiology will entail tracking the development of his thoughts to the present by analysing his first book on this topic *Introduction to Ecclesiology* which was published in 2002. Kärkkäinen develops his ecclesiastical pursuits by first investigating how modern theologians, ethnic and social sectors and different Christian traditions perceive the church to be. The purpose of such an endeavour is to propagate some form of "church renewal" by helping his readers "understand that each tradition embodies some aspects of the church's nature and purpose that other traditions capture less effectively" (Gupton, 2011).

This broader approach employed by Kärkkäinen, which can be noticed right in his introductory works in ecclesiology, can be categorised as a good illustration of comparative and constructive ecclesiology and it features very prominently in all his works in this field. According to Kärkkäinen, the best way in which we can understand ourselves and the Christian traditions that we belong to is when we engage others in a dialogical mode (Gupton, 2011). This widens Kärkkäinen's spectrum to a point that he goes beyond the boundaries that have been set by traditional Christianity. This dialogical pursuit, a prominent aspect of his ecclesiology, carries Kärkkäinen into spheres that have for a long time been left unexplored of religious traditions such as Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism.

A very important aspect of Kärkkäinen's theology which can be noticed in his introductory book on ecclesiology is his perception of Pentecostal ecclesiology as a potential ecumenical ecclesiology with its pluralistic, Christocentric and pneumatological symbols (divine presence and activity), and a reality that such an understanding has been overlooked by some contemporary theologians. One of the reasons why the ecumenical nature of Pentecostalism has been under serious scrutinising is its close link with evangelicals, particularly in the South American settings. Ecumenism and evangelicalism have always stood as separate and opposing poles particularly in church circles and the complementing and combinations of these differing perspectives have proved to be very critical for the advancement of the ecumenical movement not only in South America but all over the world (Alvarez, 1987:91-95). It is also very important to realise that despite Pentecostalism sharing

common traits with evangelicals, it cannot be considered to be part of the evangelical tradition.

Kärkkäinen describes Pentecostalism as a tradition that has been characterised by variety right from its inception in Azusa Street where its early adherence of different races, denominations and from different ethnic and societal backgrounds sought freedom from the legalism in traditional churches (2002:69). This freedom was made possible through the free flow of the Spirit which allowed glossolalia and the manifestation of other spiritual gifts to become the standard of worship. According to Newbigin, the value that was placed on individual church member where each one was given a chance to contribute to the church's life by participating in missions (reaching out), in the sacraments and exercising their spiritual gifts, depicted the concrete or actual life of a congregation (Kärkkäinen, 2002:75).

One of the profound understandings about Pentecostalism that connect this new movement or tradition to other church traditions is its emphasis on certain New Testament events, particularly those displayed in the book of Acts, clearly indicating that such models as adopted by Pentecostals did not necessarily develop from without. One aspect which can be clearly noticed in the book of Acts is where the church is regarded as a "Charismatic community" or fellowship (Kärkkäinen, 2007:3). In this Acts model, believers gathered together as both a spiritual and physical community for mutual edification (Kärkkäinen, 2002:75). There has been an overwhelming acknowledgement among theologians, as indicated earlier in the thesis, that there has been a waning focus on the duty or task of the Spirit in many traditional Christian churches hence Pentecostalism serves as the solution by filling this missing gap. This portrayal of Pentecostal theology and ecclesiology in this new light, rather than echoing the demeaning comments which considered Pentecostalism as a heretical and naive movement, also serves as the mission of Kärkkäinen as he describes Pentecostal ecclesiology. Despite Pentecostalism displaying ecumenical traits of pluralism, diversity and inclusivity, and similar elements as can be detected within historic churches, it is also very important to acknowledge the distinctiveness of this tradition. It is this distinctiveness which gives Pentecostalism that uniqueness through which it can add a new colour to Christian ecclesiology in order to make the rainbow complete.

Although Kärkkäinen does not completely agree with some theologians such as Paul Lee on the concept or ideology that there is no "such a thing as Pentecostal ecclesiology" he

concur with Michael Harper's idea that Pentecostal ecclesiology is "of an ad hoc nature" hence there is a great need for more work to be done in order to develop this ecclesiology (2002:73). A number of years have passed since Kärkkäinen wrote his first works on ecclesiology (*Introduction to Ecclesiology*, 2002) and a number of works on Pentecostal theology have emerged recently such as those written by Amos Yong in *Renewing Christian theology* and *Mission after Pentecost* (2014, 2019), Allan Anderson in his publication, *To the end of the Earth: Pentecostalism and the Transformation of World Christianity* and *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity' 2nd Edition* (2013, 2014), Andy Lord in *Charismatic Renewal Meets Thomas Merton* and *Post-denominational Missiology: Developing an Ecumenical Renewalist Approach* (2015, 2017), Wolfgang Vondey in *Pentecostal Theology: Living the Full Gospel* (2017) and Chris Green in *Pentecostal Ecclesiology: A Reader* (2016), but there is still a great need for pluriformity in Pentecostal ecclesiology that represents the different fragments within the Pentecostal and Charismatic system.

The Roman Catholic dialogue with Pentecostals and the day to day formal and non-formal engagements with other traditional churches are prompting Pentecostals to define themselves and develop an ecclesiology that distinguishes them from other Christian traditions. The basic understanding is that Pentecostalism is simply a restoration movement that seeks to bring back the apostolic age, as depicted in the book of Acts, through the revitalisation of the five-fold ministries, but the reality on the ground is that Pentecostalism is more than just that because it includes distinct spiritual oral liturgies, narratives of mission and theology, maximum participation of the laity, the vitality of visions and dreams in public and personal worship and the critical importance of prayer in bringing healing and casting out of evil Spirits (Kärkkäinen, 2002:72).

Another distinctive ecclesiastical feature of Pentecostalism which makes it a very vital movement or tradition in modern society, particularly in the third world, is the ability of Pentecostalism to instil indigenous ideologies, an aspect that has contributed extensively to the expansion of the tradition in the global south (Kärkkäinen, 2002:78). It is also very important here to talk about the earlier mushrooming of Pentecostal and Charismatic "shepherding movement", which served as springboards for the growth and development of these churches. These house churches and cell group systems have revitalised "personal and

one-on-one pastoral care” and revived the importance of the pastoral role in the church as the whole (Kärkkäinen, 2002:204). The vital contributions of Pentecostalism to the modern church makes it possible to conclude that Pentecostalism has created a need-based system that seems to be very relevant to the modern community, particularly in the global south. The messages of peace, prosperity, success and the hope for healing and freedom from evil that characterise Pentecostal churches tend to be very appealing.

I conclude this section, by stating that Kärkkäinen’s purpose in constructing a Pentecostal ecclesiology is to go beyond the nominal theological boundaries that have characterised traditional ecclesiology in order to formulate an ecclesiology that uses the Pneumatological and Christocentric traits to advance dialogue, reconciliation and tolerance towards other Christian traditions and other religions. Kärkkäinen distances himself from the ideology that Pentecostalism is simply a prototype of its predecessors with only a few defining elements such as restoration, although he acknowledges that Pentecostalism has borrowed heavily from other Christian traditions. Kärkkäinen uses different available resources and means (diverse disciplines, comparative religion and theology, constructive theology) to identify critical elements within the Pentecostal system that make it not only a local tradition but also a global movement with ecumenical traits. The concepts of Christian unity, diversity, inclusivity, the universality of the Spirit and ecumenism form the backbone of his ecclesiology.

3. The scope of Pentecostal ecclesiology

In this section, I would like to describe the scope of Kärkkäinen’s Pentecostal ecclesiology and this basically includes the various principles, elements, symbols and distinctive features that form part of his ecclesiology. My main focus will be those aspects that have featured very prominently in dialogues between Pentecostals and other Christian groups or denominations. As earlier indicated it is very important to acknowledge that Kärkkäinen attempts to construct a broader and inclusive Pentecostal ecclesiology which reaches out not only to other Christian traditions but also other religions by breaking out of the traditional theological limitations in order to become “truly interdisciplinary and also interfaith sensitive” (2017:xvii). Kärkkäinen resists certain elements of foundationalism which does not accept the Christian vision of being hospitable, inclusive, dialogical and integrative hence his works display considerable levels of post-foundationalism by his

insistence on using “Christology (Vol. 1), a Trinitarian unfolding of the divine economy (Vol. 2), a divine creation (Vol. 3) and a soteriological affirmation (Vol. 4)” as points of departure, which leads “to a final consummation” as displayed in the fifth volume (*Hope and Community*) (Pneuma, 2018:450). In short, Kärkkäinen deconstructs a traditional systematic approach to theology by reconstructing a multi-dimensional, interdisciplinary and post-foundationalist ecclesiology.

In this section, I will be discussing in detail the Pentecostal features such as *koinonia* (fellowship), Christian unity, reconciliation and the ecclesiality of the church. Although other sources will be used, the second part of the book *Hope and Community* by Kärkkäinen, which specifically deals with the aspect of ecclesiology, will serve as the main resource for this section.

3.1 *Koinonia* (fellowship)

Communal participation or fellowship, which is referred to as *koinonia*, is regarded as one of the prominent defining factors of the early church and what advances the realisation of community or *koinonia* within the church are the metaphors of Christ’s body and its different parts (members) and the vine and its branches (John 15: 1-6) (Keane, 2005:17). The Greek term *koinonia* is “translated as fellowship, sharing, partnership, participation and communion” (Breed G & Semanya K, 2015:1-9). Since *koinonia* is a very broad term, understanding its use in different contexts, particularly in the New Testament to reflect the union between individual Christians, the church and God, is vital. According to Marjerison, the term *koinonia* was used in the New Testament era both in the secular and sacred circles to refer to the kind of relationships or partnerships that existed among people doing the same trade such as carpenters or fishermen and also the close and deep communion with God and with the fellow Christians (Breed G & Semanya K, 2015:1-9). As far as the New Testament church is concerned, *koinonia* basically referred to “fellowship with the triune God, sharing in faith and the gospel, sharing in the Eucharist, participation in (co)suffering, partnering in common ministry” and “sharing in and contributing to economic and financial needs” (Kärkkäinen, 2017:319).

The most profound understanding of *koinonia* is the type of communion or relationship that transcends time, space, inner church relationship and life to include different religious traditions, life forms, nature and the whole cosmos. Although it is very difficult for us to

speak of ecclesiology and *koinonia* as umbrella terms when dealing with other religions other than Christianity, it is very important for us to acknowledge the communal elements imbedded within Abrahamic faiths as compared to other religions. According to Kärkkäinen, religions such as Buddhism and Hinduism rarely include the whole community or “the reconciliation of the cosmos” when it comes to the critical aspect of salvation and this somehow gives a serious challenge to the prospects of global religious unity as poised by ecumenical agendas (2017:251).

The reason why the Asiatic faiths can be categorised as quite individualistic is that they focus on the renunciation of the world or community in order to achieve the goal for a “final release” (Kärkkäinen, 2017:252). One cannot plainly state that the Abrahamic faiths (Christianity, Islam and Hinduism) only seek a worldly release through isolation from society as in the case with Asiatic religious traditions because their religious discourse shows a “dynamic mutuality between particularity” (separatism) and universalism (missionary calling), for example, Christianity embraces both the renunciation of the world and entering it by not allowing the succumbing to worldly evil desires and passions and at the same time engaging in missions and evangelism “for the sake of the salvation of the world” (Kärkkäinen, 2017:252-258). However, despite the lack of communal elements within Asiatic traditional religious groups, there are several ecumenical aspects within them, that also form part of the Abrahamic faiths, that can be used as points of departure for dialogue and understanding and these include elements such as locality, diversity, plurality and inclusivity. The engagement between the Christian religious tradition and other religions is very important or necessary for the theological purpose of pursuing “the question of the truth of God for the well-being of all people” and because of the reality that we all have our origin and our final end in the same God. This engagement with other religions should be steered by the virtues of rendering gifts and “the theology of hospitality” (Kärkkäinen, 2017:444). Such an approach which incorporates giving gifts and hospitality eliminates the possibility of violence and allows some level of subjectiveness which does not necessarily lead to relativism or annihilation of one’s distinctiveness (Kärkkäinen, 2017:448). The aspect of hospitality and gift-giving is not only relevant to the religious disciplines but is applicable in other disciplines particularly the social sciences which contribute to Kärkkäinen’s interdisciplinary approach. Prioritising hospitality and gift-giving as an appropriate method

of engagement is also echoed by Hans Boersma who re-appropriated “the tradition of atonement” with the purpose of reconstructing orthodoxy theology (2004:10).

In reference to Pentecostalism, the aspect of *koinonia* or fellowship, which is a vital part of community life, plays a very big role and occupies a central place in its ecclesiology and that explains why most Pentecostal and Charismatic churches prefer to call themselves fellowships rather than churches. As far as Pentecostals are concerned, *koinonia* has mainly to do with “the church’s ministry to the world and the relationships of Christians to one another” (Kärkkäinen, 2007:1-15). However, it is very important to understand that Pentecostal understanding of *koinonia* is very limited because of its individual emphasis hence it does not include the critical aspects of ecumenism, sacraments and structures as vital pre-requisites for the validity of such fellowship (Kärkkäinen, 2007:1-15). Although Pentecostals do sacraments and most of them are slowly developing structures, such aspects of ecclesiology are placed second in their theology. It is this kind of liability present within the Pentecostal understanding of *koinonia* that Kärkkäinen tries to correct by developing a Pentecostal ecclesiology which is broader and ecumenical.

It is very important to outline some of the differences that have been identified between Pentecostals and Roman Catholics, which became very clear during the Roman Catholic – Pentecostal dialogue. As previously indicated in the thesis, it is only when we engage or in conversation with other religious traditions that we are able to understand ourselves better. Although some theologians such as Shane Clifton have accused current “idealistic approaches to ecclesiologies” for the present categorisation of Christian traditions that simply magnifies differences rather analyse and describe the different self-understandings that makes churches and denominations distinct from each other, at least such approaches can be credited for exposing the diversities (2007:213-232). It is very important that diversities be known for the purpose of analysis and categorisation that takes into consideration the complex realities.

Contrary to Roman Catholic beliefs on ecclesiology that focus on the hierarchal universal church, which is a mystery that was propagated or developed by the Trinitarian God, Pentecostal ecclesiology delves on the local church function and they regard the church as a “Charismatic fellowship” whose main role is to preach and reach out to those who are lost (2007:1-15). Although it is Vatican II, that helped Roman Catholicism align itself to

modernity, the Reformation automatically ushered Protestantism into modernity and allowed the continuous embodying of multiformity and pluralism through regeneration and revival movements (Kärkkäinen, 2012:346-351). Despite some of the differences outlined between Catholicism and Pentecostalism, it is very important to acknowledge the intersections between these two Christian traditions as outlined in Final Report on Roman Catholic and Pentecostal Dialogue (FR III, 70), which lie in the common belief that the life of the three-person of the Trinity is anchored in *koinonia* and that the highest form of unity as depicted in the Trinity should be aspired or longed for within the Christian fellowship (Kärkkäinen, 2007:1-15). The role of the Holy Spirit in bringing about this perfect communion among believers is also echoed by both Catholics and Pentecostals (Bergen, 2014:193-217).

It is very important as we deal with Pentecostal ecclesiology in this section of this chapter that we acknowledge that Kärkkäinen does not develop his ecclesiology in isolation from other Christian traditions hence when he talks about community: he simply refers to the broader Christian religious community rather than a specific church or denomination. One communal feature which Kärkkäinen mentions which makes the Christian religion distinct tradition from other Abrahamic faith and the Asiatic religions is the “confession of faith in the Trinitarian God” (2017:278). According to Moltmann, it is of paramount importance that all Christian sects, churches and denominations adhere to the Trinitarian principle, as a critical aspect that determines the being of the church and necessitates the incorporation of *koinonia* “in the shared divine life itself” (Kärkkäinen, 2017: 279). According to Kärkkäinen, the Trinitarian narrative which entails the perfecting, redemptive and creative works of the persons within it (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) reflects on the being of the church as a “communion of believers” and anchors the “dynamic balance” in the pneumatological and Christological grounding as expressed in the “creedal intuitions” (2017:279).

Reflecting on the Trinitarian role in shaping the nature of the church also brings into perspective some liabilities in western Christianity, which had focused on the Christological church foundation hence neglecting the primary role of the Spirit in that area. Contrary to Western ecclesiologies which were built on Christology, the Eastern Church tradition seeks a balance between pneumatology and Christology which result in the appreciation of the profound and broad “Spirit Christology” visible in the New Testament blended with its

pneumatological acclimatisation (Kärkkäinen, 2017:280). Such a balanced approach upholds the images or metaphors attached to the church such as regarding the church as the 'Body of Christ', 'Temple of the Spirit' and 'the People of God' because of the ideology that the Peoplehood and communion of believers are made possible by holy election. The gift of the "fellowship of the Holy Spirit" is ultimately regarded as the gift to the church hence the need for the Body of Christ to embrace this gift (Keane, 2009:17). Acknowledging the role of the Spirit, as expressed in the divine economy, in the founding of the church has communal implications as can be noticed in the Pentecostal event. According to Pannenberg, "The gift of the Spirit is not just for individual believers but aims at the building up of the fellowship of believers, at the founding and constant giving of new life to the church" as evidenced in the Pentecostal event which gave birth to the "*Koinonia* of believers" (Kärkkäinen, 2017:280).

One of the outstanding explanations of the link between the type of community depicted by the Trinitarian principle and the community of believers (church) was provided by the Anabaptist theologian by the name of Robert Muthiah. He mentions the following elements as very critical in this link: unity between the person of the Godhead, communion or fellowship of the Father, Son and Spirit in symbiotic or shared agreement to each other (perichoresis), mutual presence (The presence of one person of the Trinity automatically means the presence of the other), "unity in diversity", equality, freedom and non-dominance (Kärkkäinen, 2017 286-290). The reflection of such elements as depicted in the Trinity within the church entails the appreciation of diversity or differences such as ethnic background, race, gender, nationality and status, freedom to move beyond self and traditional boundaries towards communion, Hearing and inviting others through engagement and fellowship and the participation in the communion or union depicted within the Trinity.

Marie-Henry Keane explains the inevitable consequence of communion or "fellowship in the Holy Spirit" which is freedom, by stating that the Spirit gives believers the liberty to express themselves and liberates them from structures, which have been responsible for hindering the move of the Spirit (2005:19). The focus on the liberating "power of the Spirit" does not in a way entail the total negligence of traditional systems of worship but rather proposes regular supplementation of these systems with "informal opportunities for *Koinonia*" which

enables the renewal of the liturgy and form for critical development in *koinonia* (Keane, 2005:19). According to Muthiah, the equal “participation of all believers” within the ‘Body of Christ’ means that each member plays their role as enabled by the Spirit and this eliminates hypertrophy, a kind of situation where other gifts are overlooked or undermined (2009:70). Volf refers to such a kind of interdependence and reliance on one another with the body of Christ “Synchronic plurality” (Muthiah, 2019:70). This understanding of participation in the divine unity, interdependence and mutual relationality once again brings into focus the aspect mentioned in the last chapter as we were looking at Christology, which is the “continuity-in-discontinuity between heavenly and ecclesial communion”, although it very important to put into consideration the limitation to this unity due to the fallible nature of humans (Kärkkäinen, 2017:287).

3.2 Christian unity and reconciliation

In this section of the thesis, I will like to explore the aspects of reconciliation and Christian unity from the perspective of Kärkkäinen. It is important to know that these elements or aspects of reconciliation and Christian unity are vital in helping propagate ecumenical values that take into consideration inter-religious and global perspectives as “equal dialogue partners” (Rajashekar, 2015:100). Kärkkäinen uses Christology as the basis from which a better concept of Christian unity and reconciliation can be developed or derived from. Although Kärkkäinen treads extensively on particular grounds that are very familiar to many contemporary theologians because of a great deal of research that has been done in this area, he extends his pursuits of seeking dialogue, hospitality and inclusiveness to new territories that have been for a long time considered foreign by researchers. This innovative and courageous move by Kärkkäinen to tread in unexplored grounds expresses openness to recent global perspectives by valuing the contributions from the least expected voices from other faiths, contextual theologies, liberation and the global south theologies (Rajashekar, 2015:100).

One issue that needs to be made clear as we move further in analysing Kärkkäinen's perspectives on Christian unity and reconciliation is that unity is an element that is easily visible in the biblical narrative and it is critical that the term is not confused with uniformity. According to Kärkkäinen, Pentecostals regard the formation of different churches and denominations as a positive move rather than a deviation from the basic principle of unity

simply because their primary view of unity is spiritual or invisible unity. Pentecostals tend to be very sceptical about visible unity because of the probability of compromise in the area of doctrine and the ceasing in evangelism (2007:1-15). Hans Küng shares the same Pentecostal understanding with regard to the multiplication of churches by stating that such development rather than been labelled as hindrances to unity, should be considered as a method of enrichment and as an asset in fulfilling the ecumenical goal of “unity in diversity” (Kärkkäinen, 2017:310). The multiplication of churches in a way promotes plurality and diversity, an aspect that is very critical in bringing global religious unity.

According to the scriptures when God created the universe and the different or diverse creatures within it, he concluded that everything was good (Genesis 1:26-28). Even though the uniformity of all creation is an aspect that can also be considered as we explore this topic further, it is very clear according to the Bible that God was perplexed by the diversity that characterised his creation rather than by the traces of uniformity that could be visible in the created beings or universal bodies. It is also possible for us to conclude that the entrance of sin into the world disturbed God's goals of the unity of all creation and instead it “aggravated diversity into division” (Chong, 2017). The solution to the division that engulfed God's creation after the entrance of sin lay in the offering of an eternal sacrifice in the person of Christ which would reconcile people to one another, to the whole creation and to their creator God.

Kärkkäinen regards reconciliation as the theology of individual and communal attachments or relationships (2013:294). The term reconciliation is derived from the term reconcile which basically means “to make right or to harmonise” (Compelling truth, 2011-2019). In reference to reconciliation, Kärkkäinen is not rigid in his approach hence he does not stick to the old-time reduction salvation approach that streamlines its relevance to just humans but rather he prefers a holistic approach where all creation is saved and reconciled to each other through Christ (2013:293). He begins his theological pursuit in this critical aspect of reconciliation by excavating the historical, traditional and biblical archives in order to retrieve a plethora of views which he considers to be a rich source of information which can serve as a point of departure for our contemporary theologians who are involved in constructive theology. Kärkkäinen considers the strengths, weaknesses and problems that emerge as one excavates a variety of views that characterises the biblical and historical

archives as the point of departure for the initiation of a new constructive theology that is clearly aware of its historical and traditional shortcomings (2013:294).

Kärkkäinen considers the limited way in which certain terminologies such as atonement have been used in as far as salvation is concerned to be quite problematic in his endeavour to propagate an inclusive and wider constructive theology (2013:293). In my view, Kärkkäinen has a point because the use of the term atonement has always been connected to the death and suffering of Christ hence automatically restricting salvation to only the means rather than the whole redemptive process. He uses the Trinitarian framework to deconstruct a traditional salvific theology that was exclusively soteriological hence did not recognise the equal role of all the persons of the Trinity from the initiation to the completion of the salvific plan. The Trinitarian framework in my view brings into perspective the aspect of diversity, inclusivity, communal relationship, reconciliation and unity that is clearly visible in the closer collaboration of the persons of the Trinity in the initiation to the completion of the whole process of salvation.

Any viable theology of reconciliation that is developed from a critical recognition of the liabilities, problems and values of the traditional 'atonement theories' must also confront in a robust manner the populist understanding that the sacrificial suffering and death of Christ has indirectly culminated into individualism, violence attitudes and the propagation of power structures that claim salvation to themselves only. Even though most of the traditional atonement metaphors of salvation are quite limited in their scope, reconciliation is different in the sense that it is capable of covering a wider spectrum if applied within the Trinitarian framework. The Trinitarian framework brings up the multi-faced meaning that is embedded within the term reconciliation hence it is capable of being the most comprehensive and inclusive because it is able to encompass the restoration of broken relationships between human races, political systems, ethnic groups, the cosmos and correct that natural imbalances that have existed since the fall of man (Kärkkäinen, 2013:364).

John H. Yoder fits into the whole picture of reconciliation, the crucial element of hospitality by regarding the sharing of bread within the divine community of the church as critical in restoring and building human and universal relationships (1991:33-44). It is not surprising that the element of hospitality is also very crucial in Kärkkäinen's constructive theology of

reconciliation because he uses it extensively to fill the missing links in completing the quest for Christian unity and love (Rajashekar, 2015:100). The church whose foundation lies in the atonement itself serves as the focal divine community through which reconciliation can be propagated and disseminated.

Another aspect that is worth mentioning here is that despite reconciliation's critical role in restoring relationships or bridging the gaps created by hate, racism, oppression between individuals, communities, political groups and nations, it does not in any way insinuate "limited human independence of creatures" (Kärkkäinen, 2013:364-365). The multifaceted application of the word reconciliation reveals God's commitment to bring healing and mend the disintegrated relationship between him and his creation which should also be reflected through human care or custody of the environment. Celia Deane-Drummond describes the ideology that outlines the concern that Christ has for his creation and the environment in general as "the way of wisdom" (2008:112). According to Langmead, this quest for a horizontal (cosmic) and vertical (Creator-creation) dimensions of the relationship as expressed through reconciliation entails the repairing of broken relations through action towards peace-making, ethnic and social reconciliation and "the renewal of ecological balances between humanity and its natural environment" (2013:364). This individual independence that is possible even in reconciliation contributes immensely to ecumenical theology by allowing individual distinctiveness of the different churches and denomination while maintaining the mutual communion and relation among them.

3.3 The ecclesiality of the Church

One of the challenges to Christian unity has mainly been the ideology that some traditional churches hold where they do not consider the ecclesiality of others. Orthodox and Roman Catholic have regarded other Protestant churches and free churches (Pentecostal) as less than churches because they do not adhere to certain principles or traditional criterion of what a church is expected to be. According to Orthodox and Catholic traditions, it is only the presence of the Bishop, who is considered to be part of the apostolic succession, and the performance of objective sacraments, that legitimises the presence of Christ in a Christian community. Kärkkäinen engages with the traditional criterion, which involves the use of the "four marks (unity, holiness, catholicity and apostolicity)" in determining the features of a

real church and uses them as points of departure in advocating for the ecclesiality of 'free churches' - particularly Pentecostals (Penner, 2018).

The category of 'free churches' mainly includes Anabaptists, Quakers, Congregationalists, Baptist, Mennonites, Holiness movements, Pentecostals, some Methodists and many other independent churches, due to the heritage that they share from the Reformation (Kärkkäinen, 2002:16). According to Kärkkäinen, there are several other names that are synonymous to the term "free church" which include a 'gathered church', 'a believers church' and the frequently used categorisation refers to free churches as a churches which are free from state influence and those that adhere to the "practice of believer's baptism rather than infant baptism" (2012:358). These 'free churches' are characterised by the following features: membership is voluntary, there is equal participation in the ministry for both the laity and the clergy, the local churches are autonomous, reaching out to the lost through evangelism and mission defines these churches, discipleship is highly stressed and depicted through the love of scriptures and Biblicism, exclusion from membership in cases of compromise or violation of community values and the celebration of sacraments although their discourse is not sacramental (Kärkkäinen, 2012:358).

Kärkkäinen dismisses the narrow traditional system of determining ecclesiality which tends to put certain Protestant churches and the free churches out of the category of legitimate churches, and opts for a broader modern system which involves the re-interpretation or the reframing of the four marks or features of a real church and the inclusion of missions as vital feature in an ideal church (2017:306). According to Kärkkäinen, It is actually the "rediscovery of the dynamic, missional nature of the church in recent decades" that "helps us reframe the ecclesiality (and the ancient marks of the church) in an authentically missional context and ethos" (2017:306).

According to Johannes Hoekendijk, "the nature of the church, what the church is, is determined by its role, its mission to and for the world, the participation in Christ's mission of proclaiming and helping to effect God's *shalom* in History" (Haight, 1961:633). In short Hoekendijk propagates a functional ecclesiology in which a church is primarily defined by its role in reaching out to the world. This means that a church that is not involved in missions is regarded as simply an empty shell despite displaying other identity features. Therefore whatever happens within the church system (Liturgical practices, the performance of

sacraments) should be designed in such a way that they promote mission. The church is the creation of triune God, who sustains it and has equipped it to serve as his instrument or vessel to witness to the world about God's Kingdom (WCC, 2005:4). Kärkkäinen justifies the understanding that mission is the core identity feature of the church by stating that the mission nature of the church is evidenced by the underlying principle that "the triune God, who called the church, is a sending God" (2017:306). This entails that God expressed his love for mankind and creation by sending his Son to call them to salvation, as seen in the atonement plan.

The original understanding of "Catholic" to mean "being moved towards wholeness" rather than a radical perspective of "perfection and fullness" as depicted in the Orthodox understanding, and the crucial ideology that the "church is holy because it is a community" of believers that has been called by "God through Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit", to be of service to him and is sustained by his grace, basically gives room for a broader understanding of what a church is supposed to be (Kärkkäinen, 2017:310-314). Similarly on the issue of the apostolicity of the church, a church is apostolic because it adheres to the tradition of the original founding fathers, the apostles. A good example of the apostolicity is the great enthusiasm displayed towards missions which can be observed among the Pentecostal and Charismatic traditions (Kärkkäinen, 2017:314). Another crucial aspect of apostolicity which ensures that the tradition of the apostles is upheld is the adherence to the right administration of the sacraments (Penner, 2018). This understanding is also spearheaded by John J Burkhard who does not limit apostolicity to just offices within the ecclesiastical system or "apostolic succession" by including the lived life of the divine community of believers such as the laity, forms and levels of leadership and the sacred writings (2004:x).

In addition to this new dimension of deconstructing traditional ecclesiastical ideologies by reforming ancient church marks, Kärkkäinen proposes a viable church unity which is made possible by the assimilation of the various facets of the church's mission exploits which includes robust dialogue with other faith communities. Kärkkäinen adopts a comprehensive and inclusive perspective of mission which does not only look at it as simply the conversion of new believers to the Christian faith or the deploying of missionaries in unreached areas but also as a term that embraces various paradigms such as restoration, healing, liturgical

and sacramental celebration, establishment of peace, reconciliation, propagation of equality and social justice, engaging in interfaith dialogue, integrity and allowing the stewardship and “flourishing of nature” (2017:339, 400). He dissociates missions from proselytism and western colonial elements of “racial discrimination, economic poverty and political marginalisation” (Kärkkäinen, 2017:340)

It is very clear that by adopting a broader and comprehensive definition of the church embodied in a multi-layered, diverse and manifold mission, Kärkkäinen is aligning the church to the global trend which is slowly moving towards the modern ideologies of conformity and pluralism (2017:400). These global trends of conformity and pluralism are causing the church to reconfigure and come up with revised definitions of the church which are inclusive. According to Chan, church doctrines are constantly being transformed, enacted, developed and renewed especially as the church advances towards the fulfilment of eschatology (2004:57-77). However, it is very important to understand that an on-going transformation or development of the church should not take place in isolation but rather should be prompted by the Holy Spirit. Chan states that pneumatology and ecclesiology cannot be separated in the sense that the sound development or transformation of church doctrine which will eventually lead to the unity of the church can only be propagated by a health and mutual link of these two loci (2004:57-77). This once again brings into focus the need for not only a pneumatological Christology or Soteriology which eventually culminates into a pneumatological ecclesiology.

3.4 Conclusion

In concluding this section of this chapter, I would like to state that the broader approach which Kärkkäinen uses to determine the ecclesiality of the church community, which puts into consideration the elements of inclusivity, plurality and conformity, makes more sense particularly in this modern or postmodern period where the agenda for global religious unity takes the centre stage. Such an approach also brings into focus the critical aspect of mission, *koinonia*, Christian unity and reconciliation which are made possible through dialogue, gift-giving and hospitality. Reconciliation, in this case, does not in any way mean the annihilation of differences but the promotion of unity within diversity. This entails that the global church must espouse and embody unity which values nubbin convictions while also encouraging broader-ranging diversity that characterises ecclesial communities,

perspectives in theology, geographic, cultural, class, ethnic and racial constituencies (Coakley, 2003:372). The role of the Holy Spirit in bringing this reconciliation and Christian unity as elaborated in the concept of *koinonia* should not be restricted to theoretical premises but must include the endowment and empowerment of the sick and the margins of our society (Quinones-Romans, 2015:2). The work of mission is regarded as one of the critical elements in the church community because it determines its ecclesiality. Missions should not be simply confined to reaching out to the lost but should include the administering of social justice as an effective way of incorporating and engaging contextual theologies.

4. Kärkkäinen and Pentecostal ecclesiology

As indicated earlier in this thesis, Kärkkäinen attempts to construct a Pentecostal ecclesiology that re-establishes the role of the Holy Spirit as an equal partner rather than the subjected third person of the Trinity. Kärkkäinen achieves his purpose of advocating for the critical role of the Holy Spirit by confronting the traditional western Christological theologies that have for a long time placed the Spirit in the background. He develops his ecclesiology by first revisiting the theological themes such as Soteriology, Christology, pneumatology, eschatology and revelation in order to re-appropriate the role of the Spirit in each of these loci. The role of the Spirit, which transcends the boundaries of denominations and religions, in the theological themes, is very vital for the formation of an ecumenical ecclesiology (Richie, 2015:21-35). It is clear as one reads his constructive ecclesiology, in which he incorporates comparative theology of religion and other disciplines, the influence from Pentecostal and Lutheran background which critically inform his pneumatological, non-violent and concrete approach.

The richness of Kärkkäinen's Pentecostal ecclesiology is attributed to the fact that he draws heavily from different Christian traditions, and one of the prominent sources being the Lutheran tradition, Reformed and free churches which spearhead the "priesthood of all believers" hence equal participation of everyone in the church life, evangelism and missions is sought (Kuhn, 2018). This understanding aligns with his Pentecostal theology which promotes the equal participation of all in the church. It is also very important not to undermine the great admiration that Kärkkäinen has for the Eastern Orthodox, in terms of how it incorporates Spirit theology into its discourse (2002:17-18). He alludes to the fact

that The Eastern Church doctrine seeks for a balance between pneumatology and Christology, an aspect which the Western church can learn from. Kärkkäinen's orientation with different religions as a result of having lived in different parts of the world particularly those where Buddhism and Hinduism are prominent and his extensive studies in the field of ecumenism, serves as a great advantage. It is very important to also mention it here that as one reads Kärkkäinen's ecclesiology and becomes exposed to different views from different theologians, religious traditions and Christian traditions it is possible to identify his views which express a great quest for diversity and unity among Christians and religions for the sake of harmony, love, understanding and the well-being of everyone.

In concluding this section, it is very important to take note of the critical role that Pentecostalism is likely to play in this modern society to a point that Kärkkäinen considers it to be the moving force in the present and future Christian religious sphere. Pentecostalism does not stand alone in this Christian comprehensive vision that is likely to dominate the future religious sphere, because Catholicism is also considered as a current and future moving force as well. What makes this prediction viable are the current global trends which indicate the vital roles that Catholicism and Pentecostalism currently play in the modern religious world and how such a trend is likely to continue. Catholicism represents the traditional Christianity pole while Pentecostalism and the numerous independent and Charismatic churches represent the liberalist movement (Toth, 2019).

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, Kärkkäinen's Pentecostal ecclesiology incorporates a plethora of theological ideologies from different or diverse Christian traditions. Kärkkäinen determines how the diverse ecclesiastical doctrines from major Christian traditions he uses, relate to each other in order to inculcate an atmosphere of dialogue and engagement. Particularly of great importance to us is how he uses concepts from different disciplines other than those related to theologies, such as behavioural and natural sciences, in developing an ecumenical and pluralist ecclesiology. In doing so Kärkkäinen challenges the streamlined traditional theological endeavours by exposing their shortcomings and limitations through comparable theology and offers an ideal constructive proposal as a solution. Although Kärkkäinen does not necessarily outline how his ecumenical Pentecostal ecclesiology can practically be

established on the ground, his alternative constructive Pentecostal ecclesiology appears to be a solution to the hostility and division that has engulfed our modern religious society.

Despite Kärkkäinen's ecclesiology appearing ecumenical, it is very critical that the lenses of ecumenical theology be used to assess its ecumenicity. Therefore the next chapter will focus on ecumenical theology and this theology will be used later in the proceeding chapter as the yardstick through which we will be able to assess or determine to what extent is Kärkkäinen's ecclesiology ecumenical.

CHAPTER 5: ECUMENICAL ECCLESIOLOGY

1. Introduction

After looking at Kärkkäinen's perspective of Pentecostal ecclesiology, it is imperative that we analyse ecumenical ecclesiology and use it as a standard or yardstick through which we can assess the ecumenicity of Kärkkäinen's ecclesiology. The importance of ecclesiology in the ecumenical movement is mainly asserted by the participation of different Christian traditions in the meetings or congresses organised by different ecumenical organisations. The role of ecclesiology is also made clear through the insurmountable contribution made by ecumenical organisations such as WCC towards the understanding that Christians have a common mandate "in the service of humanity and creation" (WCC, 2005). It is very important to understand that the use of ecumenical ecclesiology as the yardstick for determining the ecumenicity of Kärkkäinen's ecclesiology does not in any way insinuate that this theology is perfect, but rather it is a developing theology that is being shaped everyday in order to be relevant to the current context.

The English word 'ecumenism' is derived from the Greek term *oikumene* and it means "inhabited world" or "the wholeness of the church" (Armentrout & Slocum, 2000). According to Lederle, ecumenical theology or ecclesiology is regarded as the system of doing theology whereby the Word of God as revealed in scripture prevails over manmade, confessional and theological differences between Christian traditions (2005:175). Ecumenical theology aims to connect Christians to each other and implores them to look for ways to cooperate and be united despite their differences. This means that ecumenical theology focuses on investigating those theological or confessional differences that are complicated to overpass or bridge which makes particular Christian traditions distinct from each other and uses them as pillars to bridge the gap between Christian churches and denominations (Lederle, 174-175). A Precise definition of ecumenical theology or ecclesiology was prepared by the Episcopal Church who regards it as "the theology especially concerned to recover visible unity for the whole church in the world" (Armentrout & Slocum, 2000). This Episcopal definition of ecumenical theology also brings into focus the other dimension of ecumenical theology, which is to explore the confessional differences for the purpose of initiating unity and understanding among different Christian traditions.

In this chapter, I will first of all briefly describe the foundation of the ecumenical movement and later focus on outlining the scope of ecumenical ecclesiology which will include describing the areas of enquiry and parameters covered under the current ecumenical endeavours. Then second I will delve into the critical aspect of determining the significance of ecumenical ecclesiology by pinpointing the supporting scriptures and theologies that have often been used to support the ecumenical movement. The final part of this chapter will focus on identifying the contributions that Kärkkäinen has made to the field of ecumenical ecclesiology.

2. Foundations of the ecumenical movement

The ecumenical movement developed as a product or consequence of the missionary movement. As the missionaries embarked on the work of reaching out to the world with the gospel, they realised that the great obstacle to their endeavours was the church divisions or fragmentations (Kasper, 2003). According to Kasper (2003), the impulses to establish the ecumenical movement were further enhanced by the experiences of wars and the “national-socialist terror” that characterised the first half of the 20th century prompting the missionaries and churches to realise that they had much more in common with their Christian counterparts than they had anticipated. This realisation of the common elements within the different Christian traditions was the major driving force in initiating the ecumenical movement in the sense that the combined effort prompted by visible unity of all Christians would mean a strong resistance against the “new pagan totalitarian terror system” that characterised the times (Kasper, 2003). It is also necessary to mention that the establishment of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in 1948 and the founding of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelisation (LCWE) popularly known as the Lausanne Movement in 1974 was a huge step in the process of consolidating the ecumenical movement.

The initial ideology for Christian unity was embraced by many theologians and leaders of many churches because it was regarded as a new move by the Spirit to bring together Christian churches that have remained divided for almost two thousand years (Avis, 2010:vii). According to Avis this excitement that characterised the early endeavours to initiate the visible unity of all Christian churches was short-lived because the complexities to achieve such a goal was not as easy as earlier thought (2010:vii).

Today the enthusiasm for the initiation of Christian unity has waned and the ecumenical endeavour is seen by some Christian traditions as a human initiative rather than the work of the Holy Spirit. The hostility towards ecumenism is mainly due to the earlier approach of the ecumenical movement which focused on ironing out differences in doctrinal views in relation to critical aspects such as sacraments, views of salvation and about the church (Engelhardt, 2007:25-51). Despite the waning enthusiasm about ecumenism present within some churches, it is also very important to recognise the milestones that have been achieved so far in the area of trying to unite different Christian traditions. According to J Robert Nelson there are visible merging trends towards unity as evidenced through scholarships in different fields related to ecumenism, conversations, and Faith and Order conferences carried out by local ecumenical councils and the World Council of Churches and the ongoing support for dialogues to unite different Christian traditions (1970:644).

3. The scope of ecumenical ecclesiology

The purpose of this section is to outline and describe the concepts and ideologies that form ecumenical ecclesiology. A number of documents that emerged from the different ecumenical conferences such as Vatican II, Lausanne Congress (1974, 2011) and WCC Assemblies, and voices from notable ecumenical theologians will be used to determine the scope of ecumenical ecclesiology. Although it is very clear that most of the organisations representing the ecumenical movement are not synonymous because they each represent a particular group of Christian churches and denominations, the language being used in the documents indicate a commitment to the visible unity of all Christian traditions (Tjorhom, 2002:162). The different approaches used to achieve the ecumenical goal employed by different ecumenical organisations indicate a commitment to the visible unity of all Christian denominations and churches and even to a more comprehensive unity that embraces other religious traditions and the whole creation. The topics that will be addressed under this section will include 'quest for the visible unity of the church', 'theological education as a tool to stimulate cooperation among Christian churches', 'interfaith dialogues', 'the role of evangelism and mission in the church' and 'pluralism, pluriformity and church unity'. These themes represent the key or focal areas which are used as points of departure, by the organisations within the ecumenical movement, to advance the ecumenical goal.

3.1 Quest for the visible unity of the Church

One of the profound elements which are very critical for the ecumenical movement is visible unity. The element of visible unity is emphasised in ecumenical discussions because of the diverse views of unity which include the prevalence of spiritual or invisible unity. The quest for visible unity is outlined clearly as the goal “in the Faith and Order Commission” by-laws as follows:

To proclaim the oneness of the Church of Jesus Christ and to call the churches to the goal of visible unity in one faith and one Eucharist fellowship, expressed in worship and in common life in Christ, in order that the world may believe (WCC, 2005).

In as far as it is acknowledged that there is what we call invisible unity which Christ prayed for that all Christians should be one spiritually, it is imperative that this invisible unity is manifested in a visible structural unity. This is because Christ did not only pray for invisible unity but for a visible, tangible and physical form of unity which enables brethren to love and work together for the common good of all humanity and creation (John 21:21-23). This visible unity of the church is best articulated in the symbolism of Eucharist theology where all Christians are expected to partake in Holy Communion as a united force in service and witness to the world. However, the relevance of Eucharist theology in bringing tangible or visible unity is only possible when the sacrament plays a cardinal duty or task in the life of the churches or denominations (Frederick, 2015:209-210).

Relegating the role of the celebration of Holy Communion to the peripherals in a way undermines the power within the sacrament to spearhead unity through the recognition that all Christian are part of one body, which is the body of Christ. The sacrament of Holy Communion contributes to the ecumenical dream or goal in two ways, first by making it possible for churches to come together without any form of restrictions for the purpose of celebrating their unity as part of the body of Christ (Nelson, 1971:666). Second, according to Nelson, it provides an understanding that the fresh interpretation of the Eucharist doctrine will enable the centrality of the sacrament to be captivated by Christian denominations, which will serve as the basis for unity for all churches (1970:666).

The “World Council of Churches in its Faith and Order Commission” went a step further to deepen the understanding of its goal for visible unity and ways of achieving this goal by articulating the need for *koinonia*. Both the Canberra Conference in 1991 and the fifth World Conference of the WWC affirmed the idea that *koinonia* serves as the primary

method and ultimate way through which Christians can live together as a visible community (WCC, 2005:1). This means that the global church has got a calling to bring into reality the unity and oneness as portrayed in the Trinity. This visible unity will entail that all churches grow in fellowship with each other and work together as a credible force to reach out to the world in the context in which they find themselves.

The common faith that all Christians have in one triune God has served as the bridge for the unity that the church seeks. The unity that is expressed within the Trinity, where three persons within it share the same divinity and will, and live in perfect unity, should also be replicated among his own people, the church (Theron, 2018:224). According to Theron, this approach extends the relationality expressed within the Trinity to anthropology in such a way that it connects not only the different types of theologians (process, liberationist, feminists, philosophical) but also different Christian traditions (Orthodox, Catholic, Protestants) (2018:224). However it is very critical to understand that this unity among churches might not necessarily be replicated in its perfect form as depicted within the Trinity due to human fallibility, but rather it can be instilled as an ongoing development being perfected each day by the power of the Holy Spirit. This same understanding is echoed by Max Thurian who states that all people who are part of the church, which is regarded as the Body of Christ, must commit themselves, in their diversity (particularities) and multiplicity towards complete unity, common purpose and sincere harmony, as depicted or displayed within the Trinity (1961:313-334). He also acknowledges the church limitations in forming this perfect unity and at the same time recognises the great power behind the sacrificial death of Christ which has both cosmic and universal repercussions to instil this strong dynamism in the church to bring this unity to reality (Thurian, 1961:313-334).

This idea of visible unity is also expounded by Pope Francis as a reaffirmation of Vatican II when he states that the restoration of the visible unity of the church should be the ultimate goal of all Christians (De Chirico, 2014). However De Chirico (2014) is very sceptical about “the quest for visible unity” particularly when it is been expounded within the context of Roman Catholicism because it tends to insinuate the idea that all churches and denominations must adhere and submit to the Roman Catholic theology of the sacraments and the hierarchical structure of priesthood and the papacy as a fulfilment of visible unity.

Samuel McCrae Cavert also observes contradictions within Vatican II such as maintaining the primacy of Peter, and the use of particular ambiguous phrases such as “Christ’s Catholic Church”, which gives the reader the impression that it is only through the Roman Catholic Church that full salvation can be attained (König, 2005:284). This understanding brings forth the controversial ideology that visible unity means that the church must adopt similar theologies and sacraments in such a way that the whole Christian tradition will have the same ministry, same baptism and same Eucharist.

However a closer examination or analysis of Vatican II displays brilliant ideas which depict the church as a “pilgrim” church which is moving ahead towards unity in Christ rather than an ambitious project that is engineering the return to the Roman Catholicism (König, 2005:255). This means that the Vatican II council goes beyond simply asserting the interests of the Roman Catholic Church by recognising the work of Christ and His Spirit in denominations and churches outside the perimeters of the Roman Catholic Church. The use of the term “Christ’s Catholic Church” in the context of Vatican II means the universal church which consists of different Christian denominations and churches. According to König, the council confirms this broader approach and inclusiveness by referring to any Christian who has been baptised as a brother or sister, who is continuously being sanctified by his or her worship of the triune God. The love of God which was displayed when God sent his only begotten Son to be the sacrificial lamb for the sins of mankind is the key element that is able to unify all the brothers and sisters within the Christian tradition.

The Lausanne Conference, an organisation which was formed as a reaction to the wrong tendencies that were said to be happening in the WCC, sought to rectify the problems by following the right channels (König, 2005:202). This organisation which is mainly composed of evangelicals also sought visible unity of all Christian churches and denominations but considered love as the key element in fulfilling this ecumenical dream (Lausanne movement, 2010:22-23). The organisation reaffirmed its “commitment to the unity of the church” by agreeing on the concept that genuine love automatically brings unity (Lausanne movement, 2010:22-23). According to the Cape Town Commitment document, the organisation was urgently seeking for a new wave of partnership among the “members of the body of Christ” from different parts of the world which are rooted in genuine love, “mutual submission, and dramatic economic sharing without paternalism or unhealthy dependency” (2010:22-23).

This also means that love is not dependent on personal passions or feelings, but must be driven by the desire to seek the best for others. Love is an “antithesis of attempting to make them like yourself” because it respects differences (Avis, 2010:92).

I conclude this subsection by stating that the quest for visible unity is the goal for all global and local ecumenical organisations. Visible unity, in this case, will not entail adopting similar sacraments and theologies or returning to Rome but the appreciation of differences and working together as one force in mission, as a witness to that interdependence and fellowship (*koinonia*).

3.2 Theological education as the tool to stimulate cooperation among Christian churches

The different ecumenical organisations have invested a lot in research and theological education as a way of helping different member churches and denominations understand themselves and discover ways of partnering and cooperating with others in unity (WCC, 2020). Understanding its mission and nature is very critical in order for the church to acknowledge its calling as the witness to unity. There is an agreement among theologians that every Christian is entitled to understand their tradition and faith in its fullness and must be empowered to do the work of mission and have access to theological education and the nurturing of their faith (Edinburgh, 2010:151). This eventually means that theological education will always remain the key that will help promote Christian cooperation and the shared witness. Contrary to popular theologies that assume a contradiction between mission praxis and the critical reflection on the internal rationality, foundations and meaning of the Christian faith, theological education incorporates the broader perspective which includes both the theoretical reflection and the praxis (*fides quaerens intellectum*) (Edinburgh, 2010:151).

Theological education, which is the main focus for many ecumenical organisations, makes it possible for the ecumenical goal to become a reality at a Lilliputian or insular stage and hence it allows the involvement in ministry of all those that have been marginalised within the church boundaries and society as a whole such as the youth, women and lay-people (König, 2005:187). This in a way cancels the biased ideology that restricts theological education to only the clergy or office bearers in the church which side-lines the laity and undermines their role in mission. Van der Walt makes this point clear and even goes further

when he states that theological education does not only refer to Seminary or university education but also “to efforts on the part of the whole Church to learn from its rich tradition. Ministry is no longer solely equated with the activities of ordained ministry, but rather something exercised by the entire people of God, in church and around the world” (Duncan, 2018). This means that theological education incorporates the new dispensation of a flexible and diversified informal training of the church members within the local church walls which helps them understand themselves and their role in the global church and missions.

The critical role of the laity is also echoed by Vatican II (*Lumen gentium*) which states that all baptised Christians who have been regenerated and “anointed by the Holy Spirit” have been consecrated to be an embodiment of spirituality and a royal priesthood “that through all the works of Christian men they may offer spiritual sacrifices and proclaim the perfection of him who has called them out of darkness into his marvellous light (cf. 1 Peter 2:4-10)” (Duncan, 2018). Despite the current trend among a number of Christians to undermining the role of baptism in the life of Christians to a point where it is regarded as nugatory, its relevance in spearheading unity and serving as an ultimate mark for entry into the Christian fellowship, as outlined by the early church, remain undisputable (Nelson, 1970: 662). Baptism is not only the decisive mark that signifies admission into the global church but it also symbolises the empowerment of a new believer to be able to do the work of mission (Archer, 2016:144-160). Since baptism, as a basic Christological sacrament, exists in various proselyte forms in other religions such as Judaism (Rowley, 1940:313), it can also serve as a common ground for all Christians and other religions and be used as a point of departure in ecumenical dialogues.

The broader focus on theological education which includes both informal and formal levels by ecumenical organisations or movements also facilitates the exchange of information, research, connectivity and dialogue between Christian denominations and various theological institutions belonging to different Christian traditions (Lausanne, 2005). This is made possible because the development of theological education is a feasible strategy that can help to enhance the work of mission (Ott, 2001:87). This brings into focus the earlier point discussed that there is a need for a combined force which does not only include various churches or Christian denominations but also the women, children and the laity in

order for the global church to be able to face the ills that ravage our society such as economic injustice, poverty, hunger, global warming and threats of war. This automatically insinuates inclusivity rather than an exclusive mentality or attitude on the part of the church, an aspect which must be instilled through theological education.

The need for theological education to be accessible to all Christians is also echoed by the Cape Town conference of the Lausanne organisation in which it was indicated that all Christians must be involved in mission work wherever God has placed them (2010:28-29). This critical involvement of the laity alongside the clergy in missions entails that all God's people have to be trained holistically in the area of discipleship so that they can be effective in mission and be able to speak, think, live and work in an exemplary manner that reflects Christian values and world views in whatever situation or circumstances that they find themselves in (Lausanne, 2010:29). One particular focus of the Lausanne movement which makes it unique and helps the organisation go beyond the nominal values of traditional Christianity is its emphasis on tent-making as a new mission strategy. A tentmaker in the context of Christian mission means the integrating of professional or non-clerical work with mission or witness. According to Ruth Siemens tentmakers are Christians who are committed to mission and therefore can support themselves in the field while doing a particular job during their spare time (1997:121).

The broader perspective of the Lausanne organisation as agreed at the Cape Town conference in 2010 is that it encourages the training of all Christians not only in the field of theology but also in other disciplines which makes it possible for them to work in mission fields while doing secular jobs (2010:28-29). This agreement was a reaffirmation of what was agreed earlier at the Lausanne conference in 1989, which singled out tent-making as a feasible strategy that can help reach out to the restricted parts of the world with the gospel (Cox, 1997:111). The development of tent-making as a critical strategy in reaching out to the world cannot be underestimated. This holistic approach which legitimatises work as a calling from God also propagates the understanding that "all occupations- and the whole of our working lives-contribute to ministry and mission" (Sandahl, 2019).

As I conclude this section on the role of theological education in bringing cooperation and partnership within the Christian tradition, it is very important to point out some of the critical ideologies that have surfaced which play a key role in this quest for Christian unity.

The first point involves the inclusion of both informal and formal levels of theological training, which eventually broaden the perspective of missions and promotes the involvement of the laity in all sectors of church life. Second, we notice the critical role that the laity can play in reaching out to the world hence the need to train all Christians in theology and missions as a method to enhance self-understanding, dialogue with other Christian traditions and improving interdependence and connectivity. Finally, we see the need for the Christians to be trained in other fields which enables a large number of Christians to work as tent-makers in different mission fields while supporting themselves through working fulltime secular jobs.

3.3 Interfaith dialogues

Interfaith dialogue is one of the strategies that have been employed by ecumenical organisations in order to propagate mutual understanding and unity among different Christian traditions and other religions. However before we delve deeper into this aspect of interfaith dialogue, it is very important to outline some of the controversies that have been associated with this approach. Dialogue in the context of ecumenical theology basically means a crucial step taken by particular Christian groups to engage with other Christians from different churches and denominations and other religious traditions in order to gain insight and knowledge about them for the purpose of witnessing and rendering service to the whole community in an effective manner (WCC, 2010). John Taylor puts it more clearly when he describes dialogue as a “sustained conversation between parties who are not saying the same thing and who recognise and respect the differences, the contradictions and the mutual exclusions between various ways of thinking” (1979:373-384). This understanding of dialogue brought about by Taylor brings into focus the critical perspective that dialogue partners will normally have sharp differences, contradictions and methods of thinking that have to be respected for the conversation to go on.

According to König, there has been a considerable shift by the ecumenical movement, particularly the World Council of Churches, from considering missions as the preaching of the salvation message to an emphasis that it is “dialogue with pagan religions in order to find points of contact” (2005:214). This entails that dialogue is regarded as a method of evangelism, an aspect that does not occur well with some fundamental and evangelical Christians. Thomas was very sceptical about this shift of focus within the World Council of

Churches from a Christocentric syncretism approach that evaluates everything in the light of Christ as the vehicle of truth, to a more accommodating, uncritical, normless and superficial unity that is spearheaded by dialogue (2005:215).

As an encounter to the controversies and misinterpretations that have surrounded the works and decisions made by the WCC over the course of history since its establishment, the ecumenical organisation has always maintained that despite its emphasis on dialogue with other people of different ideologies and religions for the sake of establishing bridges of collaborative understanding, it does not in any way place missions as a backdrop in its agenda of spearheading unity and reaching out to the world with the gospel (König, 2005:186). Despite the challenges that the WCC faces in trying to uphold the primary role that missions and evangelism has in its ecumenical agenda, practically, because of the diversity that characterises its membership, its emphasis on dialogue as one method of reaching out to people of other faiths tends to bring out the riches that are embedded within other Christian traditions and religions. This understanding was mainly propagated by the WCC's proposal for a broader synthesis (Accra, 1974) in which inclusivity and accommodating pluralism were adopted as means of promoting communion and understanding between different Christian traditions and religions (Vischer, 2009:431-454).

It is not an understatement to say that an ecumenical organisation such as the WCC, values the insights and contributions that are made by its members and other religious traditions which it believes can lead to the self-understanding and development of the organisation itself and its member churches. This understanding as portrayed by the World Council of Churches is also echoed by Taylor who considers dialogue to be a very critical tool through which appreciation and understanding of others can occur which can lead to self-introspection or critical reflection on the consequences of an individual or communal position of the sensitivities and convictions of different traditions (1979; 373-384).

Despite the controversies that have clouded the role of dialogue in the ecumenical movement, the dialogues that have been currently going on between different Christian traditions and religions have proved to be very fruitful and helpful in advancing the goal for Christian unity and instilling peace and harmony between different or diverse religious traditions. The dialogue, for example, between the Roman Catholic and the Pentecostal churches brought up very useful information about these traditions which has helped iron

out some of the differences and hostilities between them and the misconceptions and misunderstandings that have always characterised their relationships. Particularly in the Latin American context where Catholics and Pentecostals have lived in close proximity to each other for more than a century, the tension between these two traditions has been quite strong (Robeck, 2010:250). According to Robeck, Pentecostals in Latin America have often accused Roman Catholics of being lukewarm in their Christian life and entertaining elements of idolatry which has led them into unholy alliances with political systems and using such associations to intimidate and persecute Pentecostals and evangelicals (2010: 250). He continues to say that Roman Catholics have in turn also accused Pentecostals of practising proselytism and accepting money from manipulative foreign donors whose interest is to establish their influence in other territories (Robeck, 2010:250).

The hostility between Catholics and Pentecostals as seen in the Latin American context could only be resolved through dialogue. The dialogue between different Christian traditions exposes the reality that there is so much more that Christians share in common than what divides them. Even though, for example, the sacrament of the Eucharist does not play a central role in Pentecostal theology as it does in Roman Catholicism, its significance as a vital spiritual experience in both traditions is undeniable. The engagement between different Christian traditions and religions indicate to us that it is possible for different religious groups to dwell together in communion despite their differences.

In concluding this section of the chapter, I would like to state that dialogue between Christian traditions paves a way for self-introspection and understanding between different viewpoints hence it serves as very critical for propagating unity in diversity. Common points of view will always serve as points of departure in interdenominational and inter-religious dialogues.

3.4 The role of evangelism and mission in the Church

Recent meetings or assemblies within the ecumenical movement have clearly indicated that mission and evangelism are the key common elements that are critical in propagating unity and communion within the Christian tradition. Although this section attempts to give a brief analysis of the perspectives of various ecumenical organisations in order to verify the critical role that mission and evangelism play in spearheading unity and communion among Christian churches and denominations, the task is indeed huge and complex because of the

danger of reading our own meaning into these therefore creating the danger of misrepresenting these organisations. This chance of misrepresenting the ecumenical organisations is possible due to the vast materials that we have to deal with. However the best path to take in order to make this study feasible is to outline how mission and evangelism are understood by each of the ecumenical organisations and also outline how these organisations describe missions and evangelism as effective means to spearhead ecumenical goals.

As indicated at the beginning of this chapter, ecumenism was founded on the grounds that reaching out to the whole world with the gospel will require the combined force of all Christians. The common zeal for missions or the desire to reach the world prompted the early ecumenical movement to come up with strategies and practical steps to accomplish this goal (Dietrich, 2007:183-184). In an emerging ecumenical ecclesiology, the missionary attribute of the church is highly pronounced to an extent that the church is no longer regarded as the sender but holistically as an integral and organic part “of the human community” sent to the world (Bosch, 2011: 381). Missions as compared to evangelism carry a holistic connotation in the sense that it involves the sharing and proclamation of the Word of God through different forums such as worship, prayer, the preaching of the word, witnessing through Christian lifestyle, building and strengthening relations through teaching, “reconciliation into *koinonia* communion with God, communion with people, communion with creation as the whole”, and healing in totality (WCC, 2005). According to WCC (Preparatory Paper Number 1, 2005), evangelism, on the other hand, includes certain facets of mission, although it focuses mainly on the intentional and explicit proclamation of the Word of God which involves inviting people to the Christian faith and making them into disciples of Christ.

Although the area of evangelism and mission is where there are many contentions between WCC and the Lausanne movement, this section mainly focuses on the commonalities rather than differences. One of the bones of contention that resulted in the formation of the Lausanne movement was the growing trend within the WCC to emphasise political and social action in place of personal evangelism and its perceived practice of syncretism and universalism as a result of pressure to conform to the needs of all its members (Hunt, 2011:81-84). These developments in the WCC were regarded by some conservative

evangelical as devaluing personal evangelism and threatening the biblical concepts of mission.

The Lausanne movement ultimately makes evangelism as the primary task of mission while other aspects of mission are regarded as secondary and it regards evangelism (church planting and conversion of individuals) as a critical tool in propagating Christian unity, communion and reconciliation. WCC, on the other hand, gives equal priority to all aspects of mission (Hunt, 2011:81-84). The central role that evangelism plays within the Christian tradition cannot be underestimated hence it is not surprising that the Lausanne movement considers it be the backbone of Christian living such that without it “man is lost forever” (2005:203). According to the Lausanne movement, “all Christians are called to” be stewards of the good news hence they are required to engage in evangelism (2010:39). This understanding was also echoed by Pope John Paul II who considered evangelism to be the duty of the whole church rather than for a few individuals and he adds to this understanding by stating that the work of evangelism must be intrinsically intertwined to the life of the local church (Rymarz, 2010:2). Pope John Paul II’s view on evangelism is merely an affirmation and a build-up on Vatican II which sought to modernise the activity of evangelism in such a way that it will be able to transform and engage culture and adapt to different contexts by being creative and relevant to different situations and circumstances (Rymarz, 2010:2).

The understanding that the life of the local church must be embedded in the work of missions means that the church has the duty to come up with innovative ways of doing mission, which is relevant to the current contexts, in order to be effective in its task of making Christ known. According to Pope John Paul II, these new approaches and strategies of evangelisation entail the inclusion of the entire ecclesiastical community in the work of evangelism (2010:4-5). These new approaches and strategies broaden the responsibility of evangelism by moving away from the streamlined traditional approach that considered those in ordained offices to be the only custodians of the work of evangelisation.

The activity of evangelism, which may sometimes include engaging in persuasive and reasonable argument or dialogue, involves making an honest appeal “and open statement of the gospel which leaves the hearers entirely free to make up their own minds about it” (Lausanne Movement, 2010:39). This perspective of evangelism definitely affirms the

important place of dialogue within the broader understanding of the term hence it is not coincidental that the Lausanne movement legitimises dialogue as part of mission (2010:40). Terry C Muck also alludes to this understanding by stating that “argumentation, proclamation, and disclosure can be seen as complementary if the effective dimension of dialogue (a dimension that includes respect, goodwill, sincerity, honesty) is emphasized” (1997:139-151).

Evangelism in a broader sense is very much different from Proselytising because it does not use force to bring people to a life of communion with Christ nor does it seek to use unscrupulous methods to compel people to join a particular Christian denomination or religious tradition. Since the Lausanne movement adopts a non-violent and diplomatic approach to evangelism it is not surprising that it propagates a strict adherence to evangelism ethics by promoting sensitivity, respect and the exercise of gentleness through the rejection of coercive and deceptive witnessing (2010:40). This means that the Lausanne movement considers the vitality of elements such as making friends and the expression of love, hospitality and goodwill as very critical in reaching out to other people from different religious backgrounds such as Buddhists, Hindus and Moslems.

Coming back to Vatican II, it was clearly indicated by Pope John Paul II, as an affirmation of Vatican II, that Christ is the central figure from whom the unity of all Christians can emanate. This means that the unity of all individual believers or the church is something that cannot develop from without because what unite Christians are their relationships, communion and connections with Christ. According to Richard Rymarz, “from the communion that Christians experience in Christ there immediately flows the communion which they experience with one another: all are branches of a single vine, namely Christ” (2010:5). This common connection to Christ entails that Christians have the obligation to testify in unity about the hope that they have, and through their cooperation it becomes easy for them to iron out the existential problems or circumstances that man experiences in this world (König, 2005:290).

In conclusion, it is very important to acknowledge the reality that the church is inherently missionary, which implies that the church should be involved in mission and evangelism not as an optional duty but rather as an obedience to Christ’s command to all believers to be involved in the work of reaching out to the whole world with the gospel. The mandate for

the whole ecclesiastical community to be involved in missions and evangelism is echoed by the whole ecumenical movement.

3.5 Pluralism, pluriformity and Christian unity

Despite the current ecumenical endeavours to initiate the unity of all Christians, it is very important to acknowledge the exclusive tendencies, differences and contradictions that exist between different Christian traditions. Acknowledging that there are some barriers that stand on the way for the communion of all believers make it possible for the ecumenical movement to come up with feasible strategies and innovations to deal with such challenges. However it is necessary that we accept that different approaches to achieving Christian unity have been employed before such as the spearheading of social cohesion (social involvement), as a means of propagating mutual understanding and Christian unity, and advocating for uniformity. All such endeavours have failed to achieve the desired results hence bringing into reality the fact that the communion of Christians consists of different churches and denominations with different beliefs and methods of worship and prayer. According to Raimon Panikkar in his work 'The Pluralism of Truth', pluralism goes beyond simply recognising the differences between different religious traditions and varieties to embracing radical diversity while pluriformity sticks to just the recognition of various varieties of the same religious tradition (1990:7-16). Embracing the dimensions of both pluriformity and pluralism is very critical for the ecumenical movement to be successful in its endeavours.

It is also very important to understand that the proclamation of unity in diversity, which includes the embracing of pluralism and pluriformity, is easier said than done especially when faced with the deep divisions and differences around practical, ethical and doctrinal matters within different Christian groups and denominations. In the light of these challenges, the Faith and Order latest document on ecclesiology entitled "The Church: Towards a Common Vision (TCTCV) published in 2013," raises this issue by pointing to the challenges of trying to strike a balance between achieving the goal of "Christian unity and at the same time" accepting the diversity that comes with it (Dietrich, 2018). This document draws our attention to the understanding that there is what we call "legitimate diversity" which is based on the biblical ideology "that there is a variety of gifts" (1 Corinthians 12:4-7) and a call for unity (Acts 2:44-47) (Dietrich, 2018). This basically means that unity and,

diversity as expressed in pluralism and pluriformity are compatible with Christian values as outlined in the scriptures. According to the WCC Canberra Statement (1991), there is however a limit to this diversity, which brings into focus the aspect of illegitimate diversity. The WCC assembly in Canberra concluded that diversity can be regarded as illegitimate when “It makes impossible the common confession of Jesus Christ as God and Saviour the same yesterday, today and forever (Heb.13:8); salvation and the final destiny of humanity as proclaimed in Holy Scriptures and preached by the apostolic community” (Dietrich, 2018:183).

The limitation on the conceivable unity in diversity is also based on the ideology that the church cannot invent a new form of unity other than the one already outlined within the scriptures which is sustained by the same faith in Jesus Christ, the same baptism and the same Spirit (König, 2005:231). Despite the needed boundaries that the term ‘legitimate’ tends to erect, it is very important to realise that the use of such a term is inclined to stand in the way of rational conversation on what levels of diversity can be tolerated hence leading to some form of “juridical solution to the discourse” (Dietrich, 2018:183). In a way, an eschatological and a pneumatological ideology of the church rather than a juridical approach manages to give room for open discussion and freedom of expression which can lead to innovative ideas for a proper balance between the unity of the church and diversity. It is also important to acknowledge that a juridical approach which places demarcation on the level of diversity acceptable within the ecumenical movement automatically rules out the possibility of a global religious unity that involves other churches and denominations within the Christian tradition such as the Jehovah’s Witnesses and Seventh-day Adventists and other religions, other than Christianity within the ecumenical movement whose belief on the divinity of Christ are questionable.

The alternative to a juridical approach is an approach called ‘unity in reconciled diversity’. This ideology has been embraced by the Roman Catholic Church as indicated by Pope Francis in the document *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013) and Pope Benedict XVI (2010), although critics to this approach have indicated that it is more theoretical or static than practical because it settles for reconciliation rather than working towards a clear goal of church unity which is one baptism, one Lord and one vision. According to Oscar Cullman, “Unity in Reconciled Diversity” can only be brought into reality in the global church by the power of

the Holy Spirit. He continues to say that the unity in diversity approach does not make use of doctrinal issues as points of departure but recognises the diverse gifts, modes of worships, systems of church governance and church appearances that characterises the global church (Cassien, 2019).

One of the profound statements made by Pope Francis, in the document *Evangelii Gaudium*, that needs to be mentioned here as he quoted the Congo bishops, is that “Our ethnic diversity is our wealth,” an aspect that brings into focus the reality that diversity is beautiful particularly when it is constantly brought into reconciliation through pacts of cultural covenants (United in Christ, 2018:1-4). In this same vein Pope Francis concludes that ‘Unity in Reconciled Diversity’ is broader than a streamlined or narrow focus on church unity which outlines specifics or pre-requisites for unity (United in Christ, 2018:1-4). The broader relevance and power of reconciliation is also echoed by the Lausanne movement particularly in the Cape Town Commitment where there is a call for Christians to embrace reconciliation in its fullness as a mandate from God. In this Lausanne document, the call for Christian to embrace reconciliation in its fullness is adopted from the atonement theology that states that Christ’s sacrifice “on the cross not only reconciled” mankind to God but the whole human race to each other (Lausanne Movement, 2010).

I conclude this subsection by stating that we live in an age of extreme diversity hence there is a need for a broader approach which encompasses everyone no matter their geographical location, ethnic background, race, religion and culture or Christian tradition. This basically means adopting an approach that embraces both pluriformity and pluralism, which can come about through open conversations about possible limits to the level of diversity.

3.6 Conclusion

One of the points that emerge clearly in this section is that achieving Christian and religious unity is something that cannot come on its own but rather through the effort of various partners (the churches, denominations and religions) involved. This means that the church must journey toward the quest for visible unity, promote theological education and interfaith dialogue, embrace pluralism and pluriformity and engage in mission and evangelism. This should also involve working towards the reconciliation of the whole universe to the triune God. It is also clear in this section that despite some slight technical differences and varying points of departure, the ecumenical movement which consists of

various international organisations and local groups, promotes the same approaches for the success of church unity and these include visible unity, dialogue, unity in diversity and the involvement of the whole church in the work of missions and evangelism.

4. The significance of ecumenical ecclesiology

The formation of an ecumenical ecclesiology is very critical for the reality of church unity to come to pass. It is very clear from the last section that the religious and Christian unity that the ecumenical movement propagates does not entail uniformity but accepting and understanding diverse views, cultural realities and religious beliefs, as part of the whole. In this section, I would like to investigate the significance of ecumenical ecclesiology in our modern society given the present quest for Christian unity and the comprehensive search for a workable form of ecclesial communion. As I delve deeper into this investigation it is very important to acknowledge the many tensions, perspectives and voices that characterise the different churches and denominations that form the current ecumenical movement hence there is this anxiety which is prompting the ushering in of a new phase (Colberg, 2018:1). This new paradigm entails the establishment of a global ecclesiology, which is neither Afro-centric nor Eurocentric, but global and at the same time local. As indicated at the beginning of this chapter, despite ecumenism and ecclesiology sharing similar trajectories, their developments have been so much in a parallel manner rather than in a mutual-enriching and cooperative way hence examining the two together given the current paradigm shifts opens doors for more opportunities as we shall notice. This means that the two fields of ecumenism and ecclesiology will inform each other through their practical and methodological development (Colberg, 2018:1).

The way the term 'churches' is used within the World Council of Churches context tends to differ from the way Paul used it to refer to different churches in the New Testament era. Paul never saw any difference between a particular church that met in a particular house and the broader church that composed of different congregations in a particular area. According to Evans, Paul's reference to all churches as simply 'the church of Christ' no matter their geographical location and cultural values meant that "the local being of the Church was inseparable from their catholicity and unity with one another at a deepest level" (1994:18). However using Paul's approach in today's context is not feasible because "Christian communities have developed distinct ways of being church – different operating

systems, their users cannot communicate, work together, or even recognise one another” (Colberg, 2018:2). Initiating dialogues between different churches and denominations makes it possible for churches to identify areas of agreement and compatibility which eventually leads to communion.

It is imperative to acknowledge that the formation of an ecumenical ecclesiology which will eventually lead to the unity of the global church should not be looked at as a human initiative but as something that is God’s will (Avis: 2010:vii). This understanding that it is the will of God for churches to dwell together in unity was strongly held by the initiators of the ecumenical movement, as earlier indicated, and should be upheld by the current representatives from various Christian traditions if the ecumenical movement has to gain momentum. This understanding serves as a motivation for the propagators of the ecumenism to bring it into the visible reality. The current trend where the field of ecclesiology is facing unstable shifts requires the redesigning of its strategies, change of its dialogue partners and focal points if success is to abound (Colberg 2018:3). This means that the present fragmentations and schisms within the churches should not be looked at as a distraction but rather as an opportunity for more dialogue.

Furthermore, an ecumenical ecclesiology serves as an opportunity for different churches and denominations to amalgamate their efforts and ideologies in the area of missions which can result in significant strides rather than for individual churches to work in isolation. WCC affirms the need for different churches and denominations to work together in its 2013 new mission document, “Together towards life: Mission and evangelism in changing landscapes” (Niemandt, 2015:1-9). In this document it is clear that the work of missions is the work of an interconnected church because it affects all spheres of life. The broader work of missions, which should be incorporated into the church governance, involves “the restoration of creation,” reconciliation and healing of communities, granting justice to the oppressed, requires the combined efforts of all churches in communion with each other (Niemandt, 2015:1-9).

It is also important to understand that when different churches and denominations come together to achieve one goal of witnessing to the world, it brings credibility to the work of mission (Wainwright, 2000:280). A united church serves as a good example to the world by showing the power of love and communion at work in the lives of church members.

According to Howland, the establishment of an ecumenical ecclesiology does not only enhance the credibility of the work of missions but it also provides insightful and useful guidance through the complexities of our contemporary society by setting an example of how the church could be one despite its numerous particularities and faces (Mannion, 2009:16-20). He continues to say that the many particularities and faces that the global church show provides an opportunity for the church to offer the various rich contributions that emerge from the diverse cultural and denominational background within its system (2009:20).

In conclusion, I would like to state that although an ecumenical ecclesiology is still in its construction stage and not a current reality; its ideologies provide a formidable counter to the current trends of post-modernity, individualism and capitalism that stands in the way for the church values of communion, unity and social cohesion. The relevance of the church in our modern society entails grasping the opportunities within its own ranks such as the rich diversity in order to reach out to the world with the good news of reconciliation, justice and unity.

5. Conclusion

It is very clear from the information we have looked at in this section that the scope of the ecumenical movement is very broad encompassing almost every area of the church's life. However, an attempt was made to make meaning out of the vast information encountered in this research so as to determine the critical concepts, elements and ideologies that make up ecumenical ecclesiology. It is also very important to mention that ecumenical ecclesiology is not yet a complete project until the church reaches a point of total unity which means that this movement has its own problems as can be observed from the debates and challenges it still faces. After analysing the ideologies and concepts that the ecumenical movement stands for and determining its significance in the modern society, it is logical that we assess the points of agreement between Kärkkäinen's ecclesiology and the ecumenical movement and the contribution of Kärkkäinen to the field or discipline of ecumenical ecclesiology for a final conclusion to be made about the ecumenicity of Kärkkäinen's ecclesiology. This will entail analysing its practical application or feasibility, positives and shortcomings. As I conclude this thesis, a link of this study to the South African context will also be executed by looking at how Kärkkäinen's ecclesiology can inform the South African context.

CHAPTER 6: FINDINGS

1. Introduction

In this last chapter of the thesis, I would like to outline some of the similarities or areas of consensus between Kärkkäinen's Pentecostal ecclesiology and ecumenical ecclesiology. Outlining the areas of agreement between these two theologies will help us assess the ecumenicity of Kärkkäinen's ecclesiology. The previous chapter already sets the pace for understanding the critical elements and concepts that make up both theologies by looking at the scope of ecumenical ecclesiology and the significance of ecumenical ecclesiology. The aspects which will be used as guidelines in identifying the points of agreement between Kärkkäinen's ecclesiology and ecumenical ecclesiology will include the following: quest for visible unity, theological education as a critical element in disseminating Christian unity, interfaith dialogues, the role of evangelism and mission in the church and the role of pluralism, pluriformity and church unity. These themes make up the scope for ecumenical ecclesiology and they will be used to assess the ecumenicity of Kärkkäinen's ecclesiology.

Although in the previous chapters what we have looked at can lead us to state that Kärkkäinen's ecclesiology is ecumenical due to the vast information from his discourse that points to such a conclusion, it is imperative that meeting points between Kärkkäinen's Pentecostal ecclesiology and ecumenical ecclesiology be identified for a proper assessment to be made. After determining the similarities between Kärkkäinen's Pentecostal ecclesiology and ecumenical ecclesiology and the problems and challenges of Kärkkäinen's ecclesiology, the critical contribution of Kärkkäinen's ecclesiology to the broader ecumenical ecclesiology will be determined. After assessing the ecumenicity of Kärkkäinen's Pentecostal ecclesiology by looking at points of agreement between Kärkkäinen's ecclesiology and ecumenical theology and his contribution to the field of ecumenism, the next step will be to link this study to the current South African context by looking at how Kärkkäinen's ecclesiology can inform the South African context. The section on how Kärkkäinen's ecclesiology can inform the South African context will make use of the themes which can be noticed within Kärkkäinen's ecclesiology to pinpoint some of the ways in which it can be applied to the South African context. The final part of this chapter will include or involve making final conclusions for the study.

2. The Points of connection and agreement between ecumenical ecclesiology and Kärkkäinen's Pentecostal ecclesiology

In this subsection of the thesis, I would like to identify the points of intersection between Kärkkäinen's ecclesiology and ecumenical ecclesiology and the themes that will be used as a guide to this process are the ones identified in the last chapter, as indicated in the introduction of this chapter. It is also important to state that an effective analysis in this section will also entail recapturing the themes within Kärkkäinen's ecclesiology such as ecclesiality, koinonia, Christian unity and reconciliation, and compare the information to what is stated within ecumenical ecclesiology where the focus points are the visible unity of the church, theological education, mission, pluriformity, pluralism and church unity.

When reference is made to the meeting points between ecumenical ecclesiology and Kärkkäinen's ecclesiology, I am simply referring to the commonalities that can be traced when you compare these two theologies. The "National Council of Churches of Christ (NCC) in the U.S.A" for example outlines some of the elements and concepts within different Christian denominations and churches that portray ecumenical agreement on ecclesiology. Although there are several aspects or issues that have been identified relating to beliefs, social and cultural values that reflect differences and incompatibility between different churches within the Christian tradition, NCC focuses on the areas of agreement and uses them as a point of departure in spearheading the ecumenical dream.

2.1 What the church is and its mission

In the NCC, it has been agreed that the church is not simply the communion of believers from different churches and denominations but rather meetings or gatherings where Christians partake "in the life of God, who as Trinity, is the source and focus of communion" (Kinnamon, 2009:341). This inclusive definition of the church is also expressed within Kärkkäinen's discourse on ecumenical ecclesiology when he considers the church to be the body of Christ because it embraces diversity. This inclusivity which also embraces elements of pluralism and pluriformity is displayed within the broader definition of the church makes it possible for the church to be effectively involved in mission because different Christians denominations and churches, characterised by rich diverse ideologies, will work together to reach out to the world with the gospel. As indicated earlier in the thesis, the main purpose

of the church's existence is to reach out to the world with the good news hence the church's system must be designed in such a way that it fulfils that very purpose.

According to David Bosch, the church and its task to engage in mission are inseparable to an extent that it is impossible to refer to one without mentioning the other (2011:381). However, the church's involvement in the work of mission should not be regarded as a task orchestrated by man but rather as God's activity which extends beyond the boundaries of the church to the whole of creation. According to Vatican II, this broader comprehension of mission can only be put forward in a pneumatological way because of the intrinsic understanding "that God is at work in the world through his Holy Spirit" (Bosch, 2011: 398-417). Kärkkäinen also echoes the reformulation of Vatican II by spearheading a missionary ecclesiology in which he regards the church as an inherent missionary rather than simply an entity involved in missions (2002:151).

The World Communion of Reformed Churches (2016) in its web page report on the proceedings of the 2015 Reformed-Pentecostal Dialogue and outlines the broader perspective that Kärkkäinen takes about mission by stating that he does not consider mission to be simply evangelism or the proclamation of the good news but also social care and concern. By broadening the horizon of mission, Kärkkäinen challenges the narrow perspectives long-held by Pentecostals and evangelicals by aligning his views with the ecumenical vision of promoting interfaith dialogue and religious pluralism (World Council of Reformed Churches, 2016). The essential characteristic of the church does not only include being a missionary, but also being apostolic, catholic and engaging in the celebration of sacraments and these characteristics have to emanate from the recognition of the divine attribute of God as a pure and Holy God.

Despite challenging the narrow perspectives of traditional or mainline theologies, Kärkkäinen does not shy away from the Orthodox or Christian traditional constructs that state that the church can only be identified by the four (4) pillars which determine its ecclesiality but rather he reinterprets them. He also adds to these four marks, involvement in missions and the celebration of the sacraments as very critical in confirming this ecclesial identity (Penner, 2018). This broader approach in a way makes it possible for those Christian churches that have for a long time not been regarded as churches to be embraced within the global family of believers. Vatican II also stepped up to coincide with the changing world

context by breaking new ground in recognising Protestant churches as part of the family of God by broadening its definition of a church to include those that had previously not been considered churches (Bosch, 2011:381). Kärkkäinen also takes a bold step by re-interpreting “oneness of the church as unity in diversity” which consists of different denominations and churches and holiness as the ongoing sanctification of God’s people rather than simply adhering to the ethos of a historical-religious system under a particular hierarchy (Duncan, 2011:2).

According to Kärkkäinen an ecumenical and inclusive interpretation of apostolicity is a reflection on the life and work “of the apostles and the church” as the whole while catholicity is interpreted “as the wholeness of the gospel and the church life” (2017:380-410). The life of the apostles basically involved engaging in radical evangelism, advocating for personal conversions, promotion of social and economic transformation of communities and planting churches hence such a lifestyle must be reflected in the life of the church today as a way of identifying with the global church in the area of evangelism and mission. Catholic in this context basically entails a holistic approach which embraces pluriformity, pluralism and diversity. Such an approach of re-interpreting the four traditional marks of determining the ecclesiality of the church is relevant to the current global context and is aligned to the theologies of the ecumenical movement which spearhead values such as one-in-diversity, rather than uniformity and considers the apostolic nature of the church to be the participation of the church in missions as commanded in the gospel (Kinnamon, 2009: 341).

The re-interpretation of the four marks is very important particularly in the current context where the global church is faced with various challenges such as globalisation, terror, individualism, climate change, sectarianism, poverty, wars and new diseases. The re-interpretation of the four traditional marks as a way of recognising the ecclesiality of other Christian churches and denominations promotes intercommunion and unity among all believers hence it should not in any way be looked at as some form of compromise or the undermining of tradition but rather as a contraction of the “essential attributes of the church’s nature and mission” (Kinnamon, 2009:341). Embracing others or inclusivity is a very critical element in the ecumenical movement because it advances dialogue and understanding within and beyond the global church.

2.2 Koinonia as an expression of visible unity

Another important term that needs to be discussed which represents a key consensus between Kärkkäinen's ecclesiology and the ecumenical movement is the notion of *koinonia*. *Koinonia* is a very popular term in most recent conversations within the ecumenical movement because it is the key word that is used to express the nature of communion and visible unity that is expected or anticipated within the community of God. The "Nature and Mission of the Church" (NMC), a very important document created by the WCC, describes *koinonia* as the life in the community, togetherness, participation and sharing in the life of the Trinity hence it is not surprising that the ecumenical movement holds this notion of *koinonia* as key in realising its quest for visible unity of the global church and in understanding "the nature of the church" (WCC, 2005). Kärkkäinen echoes the same values or concepts of *koinonia* as held by the ecumenical movement although he draws from his Pentecostal theology to shed new light in the understanding of the notion by stating that it basically entails the gathering of believers in Christ as prompted by the Spirit for the purpose of mutual edification (Kärkkäinen, 2007:4) This pluralistic and pluriformity understanding of *koinonia* as outlined by Kärkkäinen accommodates different Christian denominations and churches and stretches its invitation to those of other religions in dialogical mode in search for the tangible presence of God.

2.3 The critical role of theological education in propagating Christian unity

Different Christian traditions nurture one another in different ways and one of the profound methods by which different Christian denominations and churches can benefit from the riches embedded in each tradition is through theological education. In his address at the WCRC, Kärkkäinen echoes the words of one of the South American Pentecostal theologians by the name of Carlos Sediles-Real who states that theological education provides the platform on which different Christian traditions can exchange ideas and advance their ecumenical goal of building relations and propagating global church unity as depicted in Trinitarian theology (WCRC, 2016). This means that theological education should not only be accessible to those who want to venture into ordained ministry but rather to everyone in the church because this type of education equips both the laity and clergy to understand their tradition and to be involved in the work of missions.

2.4 The broader dimensions of the Spirit's work as key to Christian unity.

Propagating mutual understanding, cooperation and unity between different Christian traditions is the goal or vision of the ecumenical movement and this can only be achieved pneumatologically by recognising the work of the Spirit beyond the boundaries of traditional ecclesiology. This approach in which there is an attempt to discern the work of the Spirit in other religious traditions and in all creation as can be noticed when Kärkkäinen tackles topics such as pneumatology, Soteriology and Christology, ultimately indicates how he values diversity and this somehow shows the uniqueness and the ecumenicity of Kärkkäinen's ecclesiology (Penner, 2017). Kärkkäinen's argument for the presence of the Spirit in the public sphere, religions and the whole creation culminates into what is called pluralistic pneumatology where there is a recognition of different spirits, energies and powers at work in all sectors of our society in the same way "that the Spirit of God is at work in" these areas (2013:29-40). Although Kärkkäinen accepts the ideology that some of these powers, energies and spirits present in our society work in opposition to God's Spirit, understanding their roles, effects and meaning is vital for the advancement of ecumenical dream which seeks the unity of the global church and other religions to deal with the problems that ravage our society (Kärkkäinen, 2013:29-40).

Kärkkäinen's pluralistic pneumatology aligns itself with the ecumenical movement which puts forth the same understanding that the political challenges and changes in our modern society are rapidly altering our context hence there is a need for an overwhelming support for the kind of global church unity that embraces diversity because such a kind of unity is God's gift to the whole creation (WCC, 2005). According to WCC (2019), the vision of the ecumenical movement is to bring about church and world renewal as inspired by the scriptures by proclaiming hope, healing and wholeness of God's creation "in the face of every threat to life".

2.5 The critical role of interfaith dialogue in bringing global religious unity

The importance of interfaith dialogue is that it promotes collaboration, communication and respect between different religions and faiths. We cannot underestimate the role of interfaith dialogue because it creates a platform for the representatives from various religious faiths and traditions to commune and operate as one force in bringing social transformation in our communities. According to the Lausanne movement Cape Town

Commitment document (2010:320), “reconciliation to God is inseparable from reconciliation to one another”. According to WCC, the church is called by God and empowered by the Spirit together with Christ to be a witness to God’s healing, transformation and reconciliation of all creation (2005:29). Reconciliation in this sense does not mean capitalising on the differences but rather looking for points of intersection and agreement between different religions and faiths and using them as points of departure in initiating dialogue. This work of identifying points of contacts entails self-understanding and analysing the religious discourses from other religions in order to understand them better.

Although the ecumenical movement which is represented by WCC, Lausanne Movement, WCRC and other international and local ecumenical organisations, agree that interfaith dialogue is the key to spearheading religious global unity, little has been done to extend the parameters of dialogue to other religions. It is also critical to mention that few theologians have attempted to analyse the discourses from the different religions and faiths in order to expose the riches embedded within these religious traditions for the sake of promoting ecumenical communion. This is the reason why Kärkkäinen needs to be given the credit for not only supporting interfaith dialogue but also for taking a major step to analyse the discourses from other religions in order to identify the riches embedded within these religions and locating the points of intersections with the Christian religions. Kärkkäinen identifies the social elements of hospitality, giving of gifts and reconciliation as key in initiating the dialogue between different religious traditions (2013:29-32). This approach is also echoed by the Lausanne movement which encourages Christians to seek friendship with people from other religious traditions by taking concrete steps to show hospitality, goodwill and love to them (2010:40).

2.6 Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to state that there are so many focal or common areas of emphasis between ecumenical ecclesiology and Kärkkäinen’s ecclesiology which makes it possible for us to conclude that Kärkkäinen’s ecclesiology is indeed ecumenical; however, it is also very important to acknowledge that his ecclesiology goes beyond the traditional boundaries or limits of the ecumenical movement by constructing an ecclesiology proposal that seeks to embrace not only other religions but the whole of creation in the divine community of God. Although Kärkkäinen’s ecclesiastical proposal may face several

challenges in terms of its practical application on the ground, his courageous move needs to be applauded because it paves the way for self-understanding, dialogue and the appreciation of other traditions.

3. Problems and challenges of Kärkkäinen's ecclesiology

Despite the positives of Kärkkäinen's ecclesiology, it is very important that the problems of his theology be pointed out. Several reviews have been carried out on Kärkkäinen's works, particularly, the five-volume systematic theology and a number of issues have surfaced which reflect on the challenges and problems that his theology poses. According to Sheveland the challenges or problems of Kärkkäinen's ecclesiology mainly come from his style of writing, as can be identified from his book 'Christ and Reconciliation' where his voice is not easily spelt out because it "occasionally recedes in favour of a litany of others which can render less clear the constructive turns he wishes to make" (2014:187). It is not surprising to even conclude that Kärkkäinen is a victim of his own extensive research because it would be expected that after developing such a comprehensive ecclesiology, his work would be very clear in aspects pertaining to his target audience and use of phrases such as historical and biblical tradition. Kärkkäinen's works which consist of both basic and complex theologies raises questions about his main target group. According to Sheveland, the ambiguity of Pannenberg and Moltmann's work immensely contributes to the ambiguity that Kärkkäinen portrays in his writing, particularly in the way that he uses the term tradition, giving an impression that contextual theologies do not form part of historical and biblical tradition. Separating contextual theologies from biblical and historical tradition can have serious implications in the sense that it can blur his vision for a hospitable, dialogical and inclusive ecclesiology.

It is also important to realise that despite Kärkkäinen displaying great awareness of the different world views and variety of particularities within the Pentecostal tradition, perhaps more than his counterparts, his perspectives with regard to Pentecostal practices, beliefs and challenges with reference to *koinonia* are ultimately adapted from the western context (Pethrus, 2015:236). Although Kärkkäinen's Pentecostal theologies on *koinonia* may be relevant to different Pentecostal emphases and concerns, and contribute immensely to the ecumenical vision, it is propagated 'from above' rather than from below (Pethrus, 2015:236). Morgan accuses Kärkkäinen's ecclesiology particularly on *koinonia* as simply a

blueprint because it does not give reference to the global south Pentecostal practices of worship and the exercising of spiritual gifts such as prophecy, healings and deliverances (Pethrus, 2015:236). It is not that Kärkkäinen is unaware of his context and how it shapes his theology but rather he acknowledges it by stating his theological context as an adult white male doing his theology from a western context (Toth, 2019).

Furthermore, it is important to mention that Pentecostalism is evolving at a very fast rate particularly in the global south context where prosperity messages and deliverances from demons and evils tend to be taking the central stage in this tradition. These growing trends within Pentecostalism tended to portray a capitalist and consumerist system where the adherents to this tradition spend more time to design sophisticated and methods of reaching out (technological and media) that would best appeal to the large audience. The political connections that most Pentecostal leaders have tend to have also created platforms for them to influence certain prominent political figures. The fact that Kärkkäinen does not mention these growing trends within his discourse, even in passing, limits his relevance particularly in the global south contexts where the mention of Pentecostalism automatically entails healings, deliverances from demons, holding extravagant crusades, preaching on radio and television, prosperity messages, spiritual fatherhood and having pastors who are living very rich and materialistic lifestyles.

Although Kärkkäinen's view of Pentecostalism as a Christocentric tradition does not warrant the removal of his credentials as a Pentecostal pastor and theologian, as mentioned earlier, because this conclusion is true to certain sectors of Pentecostalism, it is strange that he does not acknowledge the extreme pneumatological nature of Pentecostal ecclesiology prevalent in new wave or Neo-Pentecostal churches. This lack of reference to the diversity that characterises the Pentecostal tradition means that Kärkkäinen's ecclesiology qualifies to be categorised as a moderated ecclesiology, an aspect that reduces its relevance to certain spheres of Pentecostalism. The front which most new wave Pentecostals (neo-Pentecostals) portrays, even within its liturgical and worship practices, is that it is more pneumacentric rather than Christocentric. This pneumacentric nature of Pentecostalism coupled with an emphasis on spiritual experiences tends to give room to the pre-eminence of revealed spiritual knowledge. The central place that revealed spiritual knowledge occupies within most Neo-Pentecostal churches entails an open door to extremes or excesses. In his recent

work on South African neo-Pentecostal churches, Kgatle acknowledges the bizarre spiritual practices performed in most neo-Pentecostal churches which are as a result of a spiritually endowed environment where deliverances, healings and miracles are highly idolised at the expense of the acceptable norms and values embedded within the scriptures (2017:1-4).

Although Kärkkäinen reinterprets the traditional four marks that determine the ecclesiality of the church and even goes to an extent of adding the mission nature of the church, in order to broaden the ecclesiastical spectrum, the fact that he limits them to a particular number instead of adopting an infinity procedure already cuts out possible member churches. Pethrus also echoes this same understanding when he states that “the marks of the church may not be the best way of spurring on the ecumenical tradition of Pentecostalism” (2015:236). When Kärkkäinen uses the marks of the church as determinant factors to the ecclesiastical nature of the church, he is contradicting his emphasis on the Spirit as the initiator of one-in-diversity. Although making ecumenism as the goal and regarding morality and tradition as simply backdrops in determining the ecclesial qualities of the church can easily result in universalism and relativism, it broadens the ecclesiastical spectrum to include denominations and church which had earlier not been considered churches by others. However, it is vital to avoid compromise by developing a feasible ecumenism ecclesiology which goes beyond absolutism without delving into relativism.

This critique of Kärkkäinen’s ecclesiology which exposes some of the limitations that can emerge as a result of a western approach to Pentecostal ecclesiology brings into focus some of the possible areas for future research which takes into account the realities of Pentecostal ecclesiology in the global south. Therefore there is still a need for an ecumenical ecclesiology that truly represents the gross diversity that characterises global south Pentecostal theologies and also articulates the critical symbols, elements and the evolving nature of these theologies. Since African Pentecostalism tend to also adopt certain symbols and elements that characterise most African initiated churches (AICs) and African traditional religion, there is a great need for research to be done in order to identify the different variants of AICs and African traditional religions and how they impact or influence African type of Pentecostalism. I would also recommend that further research be specifically executed on new wave Pentecostals in order to understand their mode of operation and what makes them a popular and strong religious force in the global south context. The

popularity of these new wave Pentecostal churches cannot be underestimated especially with the larger number of historic churches either being influenced or losing members to these new churches.

In conclusion, I would like to state that despite all the problems and challenges that can be noticed within Kärkkäinen's ecclesiology, it still stands out as a theology whose strides towards developing an ecumenical Pentecostal ecclesiology cannot be ignored. The richness displayed by the Kärkkäinen's five-volume systematic ecclesiology coupled with the extensive research that went into it contributes greatly to the discipline of theology.

4. The contribution of Kärkkäinen to ecumenical ecclesiology

After looking at the commonalities between Kärkkäinen's ecclesiology and ecumenical ecclesiology and the problems and challenges within Kärkkäinen's ecclesiology, it is critical that we also look at the contributions that Kärkkäinen offers to the field of ecumenical ecclesiology. Most of the contributions that I am going to point out here might have been already mentioned in the earlier chapters but it is important that these ideologies be related to the scope of the ecumenical movement. Most of the Kärkkäinen's works on ecclesiology can be found mainly in his first book on ecclesiology which was published in 2002, which serves as an introduction to his pursuits on ecumenical ecclesiology, and his fifth book of the five-volume systematic theology published in 2017, which goes beyond the nominal traditional streamlined approach to ecclesiology to constructing a broader field which is inclusive and pluralistic. In his works, Kärkkäinen looks at the different Christian traditions in a new light hence bringing out the rich elements and tools embedded in each traditional necessary for spearheading the ecumenical goal. In this way, Kärkkäinen offers an insightful and comprehensive overview of the diversity and unity of practices and understandings that can be found in the global church.

By emphasising 'unity in diversity' Kärkkäinen aligns his ecumenical theology to the ideologies spearheaded by the ecumenical movement which recognises pluralism and pluriformity rather than pushing for uniformity within the one church of Jesus Christ. This approach appreciates the differences and the diversities that characterise the church by considering them as building blocks rather than looking at them as hindrances to the unity of the church. It is also important to understand that Kärkkäinen's overview of the different Christian traditions also exposes the ecumenical nature of the different Christian traditions.

He considers these ecumenical perspectives and elements within the different Christian traditions as gifts that are meant to be enjoyed and appreciated by Christians who value the church's unity in diversity. Considering one-in-diversity as a gift not only to the church but to the whole of mankind was propagated by the WCC "Fifth Conference on Faith and Order" which took place in "Santiago de Compostela, Spain" in 1993 (2005:2).

In his fifth book *Hope and Community* Kärkkäinen's orientation to the current trends in our contemporary society gives him the edge to discuss how the impact of secularism, globalism and "religious pluralism shape the task of constructing a doctrine of the church at the beginning of the third millennium" (Penner, 2018). According to Penner (2018), Kärkkäinen considers the contemporary trends as fuelling the construction of a broader ecclesiology which seeks to engage with different Christian traditions including all the major religions of the world. He uses the Trinitarian concept as an ideal paradigmatic method to develop an ecumenical ecclesiology. What is so profound about Kärkkäinen's work, which somehow serves as his major contribution to ecumenical ecclesiology is:

How he is able to initiate inter-religious dialogue with Judaism, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism towards a goal of mutual understanding and appreciation without degenerating into some form of naive pluralism that glosses over the many theological differences between all the five faiths (Penner, 2018).

In this way, Kärkkäinen builds on the statements agreed on at the Faith and Order programme of the World Council of Churches which was reconstructed and endorsed in 1975 where Christians are employed "to bear witness to their hope to Jews, Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, Marxists and others. This dialogue does not supersede mission but is intended to build bridges of mutual understanding" (König, 2005:186).

Kärkkäinen's bold approaches serve as a challenge to streamlined traditional theology by moving over the limitations or margins erected by the history of Christianity and it also offers solutions by suggesting an alternative viable constructive ecclesiology (Toth, 2019). This is noticed particularly in the second part of the book *Hope and Community* where he proposes a broadened ecclesiality of the church by re-interpreting traditional constructs vested in the "four marks" and adding the Protestant views on sacrament celebration and the missional nature of the church as very critical in determining the ecclesiality of the church (Kärkkäinen, 2017:296-315). However, despite traditional theology being a liability due to its rigid and dogmatic nature and orientations, it is quite interesting to observe that

Kärkkäinen does not completely shy away from using it as a foundation from which a broader ecumenical ecclesiology which engages with different religious traditions and secular constructs can emerge from. This means that Kärkkäinen's ecclesiological works contribute to Christian religious scholarship by anchoring his ecclesiology in the "historic and orthodox tradition" while simultaneously being sympathetic to contemporary ideologies (Penner, 2018). This makes it possible for Kärkkäinen to make use of ideologies from other disciplines such as behavioural and natural sciences in order to reach out to other Christian traditions and other religions.

It is important to mention once again that Kärkkäinen's roots as a Pentecostal does not only influence him to develop a unique Pneumatological Christology or Soteriology but also an ecumenical ecclesiology which incorporates the role of the Spirit as an equal partner in initiating the unity and diversity that can be observed within the Trinity. In his approach, he demonstrates that the Pentecostal tradition with its rich pneumatological and Christological discourse has a lot to offer to the global church (Yong, 2002:7-10). It is also important to acknowledge that by advocating for the recognition of Pentecostalism as a vital Christian tradition with necessary tools and elements necessary for the advancement of the ecumenical vision; he is setting a pace for the establishment of an inclusive ecclesiology that embraces each Christian church and denomination as part of the body of Christ. The vitality of Kärkkäinen's approach in constructing an ecumenical ecclesiology is noticed particularly because it drives leaders to acknowledge or understand the role of their tradition and the role of other Christian traditions within the global church hence promoting dialogue and mutual understanding (Kärkkäinen, 2002:81).

When Kärkkäinen spearheads an inclusive and broader ecclesiology, he is insinuating an ideology that each Christian tradition possesses certain aspects of the global church's purpose and nature which are in a way overlooked or undermined by other Christian traditions (Kärkkäinen, 2002:79-81) This means that Kärkkäinen's theology of embracing other traditions that have for a long time been regarded as cults or simply sects goes beyond the boundaries set by traditional or mainline ecclesiologies hence he contributes immensely to the renewal of the church. This trend within Kärkkäinen's theology is not only unique to his first book on ecclesiology but can also be noticed in his five-volume systematic theology in which he sets a pace for the inclusion and integration of diverse forms of

Christianity in the global church as a principle criteria in the formulation of a constructive theology relevant the current global context (Sheveland, 2014:186-189).

What is so interesting about Kärkkäinen's approach is that he recognises the differences that contribute to the immense divisions within the global church by acknowledging that different world ecclesiologies have different interpretations of the Bible which result in a situation where each Christian tradition derives their own meaning and values from the biblical texts (Kärkkäinen, 2002:83). The WCC also recognises the disparities that exist in the global church particularly in the way the biblical texts are interpreted, which has prompted the organisation to battle with the question of what level of diversity can be tolerated in the united church (Brigham, Erin M, 2009:587-588). However Kärkkäinen (2002:8) does not consider these varieties as hindrances to communion or unity of the church but vital components that form the whole picture. Although Kärkkäinen's approach may be deemed to be bordering on dangerous grounds of relativism and syncretism, his theology presents Christian truth as a distinctive reality that must be inclusive to the global and cultural diversity of its followers. In order to support his inclusive ideology, he brings forth an understanding that plurality and diversity have always been part of the church system since the New Testament times hence it should not be a strange phenomenon for the church to advocate for a broader approach that embraces diversity and recognises the riches embedded in other traditions and religions (Kärkkäinen, 2017:234).

Another aspect of Kärkkäinen's ecclesiology that makes it quite unique is how he invites several contextual theologies into a conversation with global theologies. In this approach Kärkkäinen calls for a broader ecclesiology where contextual theologies are not considered as simple backdrops or after-thoughts but rather as equal partners in the whole theological journey. However this approach has its shortcomings because contextual theologies are supposed to be treated as part of the historic theologies and not as separate theologies. Therefore the undermining of contextual theologies by traditional and historic theologians should be regarded as negligence. It is also important to mention that Kärkkäinen only selects a few contextual theologies in his conversations with traditional or mainline theologies hence giving an impression that the ones he selects are the only ones that require attention. However a closer look at Kärkkäinen's discourse on Pentecostal ecclesiology shows that Kärkkäinen is picking on a few contextual theologies as a way of

letting them serve as examples to set an alarm or signal that all the voices from contextual theologies need to be heard as loudly as possible (Sheveland, 2014:188).

Once again, although Kärkkäinen's use of the term 'tradition' insinuates that he treats contextual ecclesiologies as separate from traditional and historic theologies and somehow contributes to the side-lining of these theologies because of the ambiguity connected to the way Pannenberg and Moltmann use the term, this ambiguity and approach tends to work in Kärkkäinen's favour because it helps him to highlight the significance of these contextual theologies. Kärkkäinen's choice in engaging theologians such as Pannenberg and Moltmann as he deals with contextual theologies could be deliberate, in a sense, because of the agency to bring these theologies on the spotlight and to effectively incorporate these theologies rather than allow them to be ordinarily treated as part of the whole traditional theology.

I conclude this section by stating that Kärkkäinen's works on ecclesiology serve as an asset to the field of Systematic theology by setting a pace for further dialogue and engagement with other religions, Christian denominations and contextual theologies. By opening what seemed to be the closed world of other religions, he exposes the rich insights embedded in other theologies and religious traditional vital for ecumenical advancement.

5. How Kärkkäinen's ecclesiological ideas can contribute to the local South African context

In this subsection of the thesis, I would like to determine how Kärkkäinen's ecclesiological concepts and ideas can contribute to the South African context. In order to assess the relevance of Kärkkäinen's ecclesiology to both the broader and local South African context, the critical themes of reconciliation, *koinonia*, ecclesiality and Christian unity will be used as guidelines, as indicated in the introduction of this chapter. The relevance of these themes is clear because the South African context whose background is characterised by racial segregation, apartheid, religious polarisation, violence and tribal division, will definitely require radical levels of reconciliation, tolerance and the recognition and acceptance of different particularities that characterise the nation. South Africa does not only have an ugly past plagued with racial inequality and, religious and tribal divisions, but the future also poses great challenges for this nation especially due to the mushrooming of racial issues and xenophobia in recent years.

5.1 The need for reconciliation

South Africa is a vast country which is composed of different tribal groups, many Christian churches and denominations (which range from major historic churches to Pentecostal churches and Charismatics and AICs churches), different races, and in recent years has also seen the influx of political and economic immigrants from different neighbouring countries and other parts of Africa as they search for a better life. In recent years, the attitude of local South Africans has been changing towards immigrants, particularly with the rising in unemployment levels and the recession of the economy, which has resulted in the rise in xenophobic attacks and displacement of foreign nationals.

Apart from the influx of immigrants and high unemployment levels in the country, most of the local low-cost areas are mainly mono-racial (mostly consisting of blacks) and the middle-cost areas consisting of a mixture of races, an aspect that represents economic disparities between races. The fact that in these same low-cost and middle-cost or peri-urban areas there still exists a lot of mono-racial churches clearly indicates that South Africa is still a divided country, despite the country marking more than two decades of democracy and freedom since the collapse of the apartheid government. This understanding is also evidenced by “the Diagnostic Report of the National Planning Commission” which states that “South Africa still remains a divided country” and the key aspects that contribute to this conclusion include the critical elements of race and class (National Action Plan, 2019).

Although it is important to recognise the efforts that have been made in the past to bring together the different races through the truth and reconciliation commission and the endeavours to integrate immigrants into the local communities, there is still a lot that need to be done to curb the problems of division and racism in the country. One aspect that Kärkkäinen alludes to which is very critical to this study is the application of reconciliation within the Trinitarian framework because of the way it brings forth a multi-faced connotation embedded in the term. Applying reconciliation within the broader framework of the Trinitarian concept enables the recovery of the broken relationship between races, different tribal groups, people from different nations and the whole creation at large (Kärkkäinen, 2013:364). However, the first step in the process of reconciliation involves recognising the differences that exist within the human species which in this case are the cultural background, race, nationalities and ethnic identities. This recognition and

acknowledgement of the critical aspects of our identity that separates us or creates barriers between us should translate into the appreciation of diversity. The appreciation of diversity should not be simply taken as a way of conforming but as a way of understanding that different people groups complement each other.

According to D'Costa, an attitude of delighting in the possible encounter with others who are different from us should involve acknowledging each other's distinctive attributes. This involves the other "as the possible face of God" (Kärkkäinen, 2013:223). This entails acknowledging that God is at work through his Spirit in all people, religions and the whole of creation. This exclusiveness in which the white people (Dutch) in South Africa considered themselves to be the superior race during the apartheid era and the black people considered themselves to be the only legitimate owners of the country, can only be ironed out through communion which is driven by equality, mutual trust and love for each other. Platforms where people from different sectors or communities can have some form of dialogue or discussion and where they are able to air their problems or challenges and resolve their differences should be created. The success of the reconciliation process will mean that opposing sectors must accept each other as distinct individuals with different ethnic backgrounds, race and nationality, and be ready to forgive all the wrongs that were done in the past and be ready to work together as one people. Programmes should also be created which will allow the interaction, creation of relationships and the mutual coordination of people from different races, nationalities and tribal groups.

Since South Africa is a country also plagued by violence, an aspect that is evidenced by the high numbers of killings, rape cases and destruction of property during protests. This context marred by higher levels of violence can benefit from the non-violent theologies that Kärkkäinen propagates. Kärkkäinen aligns his non-violent theologies with that of Martin Luther as indicated in his report "on the Finnish school of Lutheran studies" when he states that "God's alien work means putting down, killing, taking away hope, leading to desperation" while his "proper work means the opposite: forgiving, giving mercy, taking up, saving" and encouraging (Southgate, 2019:279-290). His conclusion on this intertwined nature of God is that humans must learn to trust in God by captivation of a calm and submissive attitude in the face of suffering hence propagating a non-violence theology where the peaceful resolution of conflict and forgiveness should take the centre stage

rather than violence. In a way Kärkkäinen urges his readers to trust God rather than take matters in their own hand when he prefers the emulation of God's proper work rather than his alien work because God's alien work is only necessitated by human disobedience. Kärkkäinen stresses the importance of dialogue, forgiveness in resolving conflicts when he echoes the words from WCC when he states "we understand peace and peacemaking as an indispensable part of our common faith" (2016:407).

5.2 Application of koinonia in the South African context

Even though koinonia mainly refers to different denominations and church groups dwelling together in unity by applying the biblical concept in the book of Acts Pentecostal event where different people groups gathered to hear the disciples preach in different languages, it can also apply to a situation where different races, tribal groups and people from different nationalities live and work together as a community. Kärkkäinen considers *koinonia* to be a broader term which includes critical aspects such as fellowship, participation, communion and material sharing (2007:1-15). In short, Kärkkäinen regards koinonia to be a comprehensive terminology that encompasses the spiritual, material and social cohesion within a particular community. The term 'ubuntu' in the South African context aligns itself with such a broader understanding of *koinonia* as depicted by Kärkkäinen because it refers to the importance of all people, despite their particularities, to be united by the removal of selfish practices, for the sake of allowing the human race to prosper, evolve and to peacefully exist.

In line with such a broader and holistic understanding of *koinonia* which can be linked to 'ubuntu', Mogobe Bernard Ramose considers the application of the concepts embedded in the interconnected of human beings despite their race, ethnic background and nationality to be vital in the "restoration of justice" and the reversing of "the dehumanising consequences of colonial conquest" (2016:86-98). Such an approach of fixing the imbalances that characterised the past can result in mutual agreement, respect and caring for the others, receiving and the "passing on the goods of life to others" (Ramose 2015:240-242). The way that different religious groups and different groups perceive or view each other is vital in order to determine whether *koinonia* can exist in a sincere and truthful manner. This means that *koinonia* must be applied within the Trinitarian framework of equality.

Applying the Trinitarian concept of equality enables everyone despite their particularities to have equal access to opportunity, employment and resources. Van Wyngaard (2017:1-8) identifies an elements of superiority (disseminated from a distorted interpretation of the Old Testament) among the Afrikaner people, which he links to the general “white racial anthropology” adapted from the Christian Europe colonial concepts, as one of the critical elements that allowed the flourishing of the apartheid ideology of racial segregation. Dealing with such a wrong theology entails a change in theology by embracing the Trinitarian theology of equality. Kärkkäinen embraces this equality that is embedded in the Trinity by extending its relevance to all dimensions of community life by the combination of both Latin Trinitarian concepts that characterises the western church and the sociological Trinitarian views that characterises the Eastern Church.

5.3 The interpretation of ecclesiality in South Africa

One of the vital features of the South African religious context is that it does not only consist of various religious traditions, but even within its Christian religion, it has a representation of almost all the categories of denominations and churches which includes African Initiated Churches (AICs) and various African traditional religious groups. This means that determining the ecclesiality of a particular Christian tradition needs to go beyond a particular set standard if ecumenism has to take root in South Africa and encompass the various churches and denominations found in the country. Engaging in an ecumenical campaign in a country like South Africa, which could be true with other countries as well, is quite a complex issue because it entails coming up with a definition of the church which is broad enough to include every religious group within the Christian tradition. Although Kärkkäinen’s view on what determines the ecclesiality of the church is quite limited because it only includes four traditional marks, the correct management of the sacraments and the mission nature of the church, his re-interpretation of these six features broadens his sphere. Despite Kärkkäinen’s effort to broaden his ecumenical spectrum, his Pentecostal ecclesiology falls short of its intended purpose hence a number of churches are left out even when such a formulation is restricted to the Pentecostal and Charismatic traditions only.

Kärkkäinen’s ideologies which are intended to refine Pentecostal ecclesiology through a convergence of ideas can make more sense when the Spirit’s work in all creation including various religions and Christian traditions can be acknowledged and the diversity that

characterises the religious world is cherished. The broader diversity that characterises South African society requires appreciation and mutual understanding among the different religious traditions, tribal groupings and races which can culminate into unity. According to Kärkkäinen such an appreciation and mutual understanding among the different people can only be brought about through “a greater ecumenical understanding of God the Holy Spirit” (Clarke, 2005:123-137). Such an endeavour however, should not be underestimated by creating a false unity or reconciliation which does not put into consideration the complexity of different people groups and Christian traditions. This is the reason why Kärkkäinen suggests an approach of demystifying other traditions and people groups through analysis which will bring out the riches embedded in such traditions or people groups in order to confront the misconceptions and differences that stand on our way to cordial relationships with others.

5.4 What can South African classical Pentecostals and Neo-Pentecostals learn from Kärkkäinen’s ecclesiology

After looking at how Kärkkäinen’s ecclesiology can inform the general religious and the social sectors of the South African context, it is vital to explore what classical and Neo-Pentecostals can learn from his ecclesiology. It is possible for some Pentecostals to simply dismiss Kärkkäinen’s ecclesiology because it reflects on themes that are considered as no-go zones for most sectors of the Pentecostal tradition due to the exclusive tendencies that still characterise modern forms of his tradition. However, the transdenominational nature of an emerging Neo-Pentecostal ecclesiology and the reality that many classical Pentecostals are showing a keen interest in ecumenism shows that the South African form of Pentecostalism can benefit from the ideas which Kärkkäinen bring forth in his ecclesiology. Kärkkäinen’s ecclesiastical ideas in which he calls for visible unity with and in diversity “grounded in the communion of God the Holy Trinity” (2002:85) goes beyond the invisible spiritual unity propagated by Pentecostals hence the Pentecostal tradition can benefit by making concrete the spiritual unity of the diverse versions of churches within its ranks. This understanding can be motivated by the scriptures that indicate that Christ himself called for a living unity among his followers; a unity that extends from the spiritual to the physical (John 17:21-23).

The understanding that the diversity that characterises classical and Neo-Pentecostals and the global church in a way “corresponds with the many gifts of the Holy Spirit to the church”

(Kärkkäinen, 2002:85) can be a good recipe that can challenge the exclusive and individualistic theologies that still characterise the tradition. The acknowledgement that there are indeed numerous gifts that have been bestowed by the Holy Spirit on the global church gives space for the fundamental teachings and the manifestations of divine healings through the use of objects such as anointing oil, salt and water (Kgatle, 2018:4) as practiced by Neo-Pentecostals, to be accepted. The appreciation of the Spirit's work in others consolidates the understanding that God created one church hence the application of unity-in-diversity cannot be regarded as a shallow "concession to theological pluralism" but as a way "to give form to the unity already created by God" (Kärkkäinen, 2002:85).

Another aspect we need to look at is that although some groups of Pentecostals, especially the classical Pentecostals, have taken seriously their distinctiveness with clear fundamental aspects of what they believe in, the teachings of most both Neo-Pentecostal and classical Pentecostals, despite running vibrant Bible colleges, do not have a theological outline of what makes their "Pentecostal theological education distinctively theological" (Kgatle, 2018:4). Kärkkäinen's bold step to develop theological outlines that distinguish Pentecostal ecclesiology from other Christian traditions should therefore be applauded as an important step in the right direction. Kärkkäinen's bold step to develop a distinctively Pentecostal ecclesiology, which some Pentecostal systems might not find compatible with their own group, also serves as a guide for Pentecostal scholars within these particular sectors of the tradition to develop their own distinct theology which represent their spiritual views, practices and beliefs in an accurate manner. Although Kärkkäinen does not mention the different versions that characterise modern global south Pentecostalism, his Pneumatological ecclesiology which calls for unity-in-diversity automatically accommodates them (2002:93).

5.5 Conclusion

Pentecostalism as a Christian tradition that is growing at a very fast rate cannot afford to be side-lined since its role in bringing Christian unity, love and communal living is inevitable. Pentecostalism does not only appeal to the local and regional African population but it is also made up of foundational tools, elements and features that can be used effectively to foster the ecumenical dream as seen in the historical development of this tradition in the world and South Africa in particular. However, the ecumenical nature of Pentecostalism has

not been explored fully hence there still lingers a dark cloud on what Pentecostalism is all about and what it can bring on the ecumenical table. This essay sets the pace for an exhaustive exploration of Pentecostalism in an effort to correct the misconceptions and assumptions of this tradition for the purpose of understanding its critical role in fostering the ecumenical dream. It is clear from this section that the ecumenical Pentecostal ecclesiology of Kärkkäinen can easily inform the South African religious, cultural and social context in order to bring unity and cohesion in a country where racial, tribal and social divides still linger even after the collapse of the apartheid era.

6. Conclusion

I conclude this thesis by stating that Kärkkäinen's works which include his five-volume systematic theology are quite an interesting read. The riches that he develops as he engages other Christian traditions, religions and other theologies neutralises the hostility that has been directed towards others who have different world views, cultural values and religious ideologies. The lessons that can be learnt from the analysis of Kärkkäinen's ecclesiology are not limited to only neutralising the hostility posed by not loving those who are different from us or not embracing each other's particularities but include recognising that the unity of the church is a gift from the Trinitarian God. Accepting this gift does not only lead to work for the unity of the church but it also helps us to uphold our own cultural values and identity and at the same time sympathetically recognise others in their uniqueness and diversity. Despite Kärkkäinen's ground breaking work on ecumenical ecclesiology, it is also imperative to know that there are still a lot of challenges that remain for the "ecumenical movement and the church" at large and these include how to "balance the unity and agreement on fundamental issues, and on the other hand, give space for diversity that enriches and does not threaten the living together of churches and people" (Dietrich, 2018:183-184). Attending to this question shapes our future approaches to the idea of ecumenism.

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