

Ecclesiology and Context in Protestant America

When I was a pastor in Milwaukee, a parishioner gave me a book belonging to her father, who for over forty years had been the pastor of the congregation I served. The first chapter, in chronicling the history of Lutherans in Milwaukee, highlighted our congregation. What struck me, however, was the book's title: *A Plan for Survival*. A colleague who knew I was writing about the doctrine of the church quipped, "How about that for an ecclesiology!?" Despite the humorous irony, it has stuck with me, in part because it could still title an ecclesiology written today for the mainline churches.

Historically, ecclesiology has played a more peripheral role in Protestant theology (as compared to Catholic theology); however, Gregory Baum reminds us that in every period of church history, ecclesiologies emerge to address concrete problems faced by the church.¹ This chapter will consider the "questions" that the churches are asking of themselves which shape their self-understanding. Because the context for the American churches is unique, these questions must be considered against the backdrop of the relationship of the churches to the state and society. Too often, when tackling the doctrine of the church, American theologians look only to the "blueprint ecclesiologies" that were developed across the Atlantic under Christendom, including those from the Reformation tradition. The unique context of the United States specifically should be taken into account in the ecclesiological task, especially if the goal is to help actual congregations live out their identity and purpose in what Nicholas Healy calls their "ecclesiological context."²

In this chapter, I look at *the history of ecclesiology in America* theologically and contextually.³ Although there are many aspects of the context that might be considered, I wish to point to one in particular: the way that the mainline churches have been culturally co-opted by a very particular form of "Christendom," the concept of a "Christian America," which has operated as a sort of a narrative that served the "modern project" in the United States.

Although the government never legally established Christianity as the national religion, as it was in Europe, there has nonetheless been a subtle, yet profound cultural establishment of Christianity, in which the goals and values of Christianity became intertwined with those of the dominant culture, in particular certain aspects of the “modern project.”⁴ As Douglas John Hall states, “With us in North America, Christ and culture are so inextricably connected that we hardly know where one leaves off and the other begins.”⁵ This chapter will trace the development of this alliance and show how it gave rise to what C. C. Goen calls the “peculiar American ecclesiology.”

Before I begin this examination of American ecclesiology, let me offer a couple of caveats. First, this is not a complete survey of American ecclesiology. It focuses on certain mainline churches and their historical antecedents, because these are the churches that have been most affected by cultural Christendom—and its disestablishment—that is at the root of the current ecclesial crisis as described in the introduction. There are other Protestant denominations in the United States that have rich ecclesiological traditions, including the black churches and various Anabaptist and other Free Churches.⁶ Second, because I will be discussing Lutheran contributions to ecclesiology in later chapters, it seems helpful to consider briefly the “Lutheran story” alongside the major streams of evangelical Protestantism in the United States.

VISIBLE SAINTS: THE PURITAN EXPERIMENT IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

The Protestants who immigrated to North America brought ecclesiological ideas with them that were shaped both by their theological forebears and the context from which they came. But these ideas were further shaped by new questions and challenges that arose in the context of the new world. Since ecclesiology is always contextual, we must take into account both of these contexts.

To understand the ecclesiology of the New England Puritans, we must begin with their original ecclesial context in the Church of England. The Puritans were asking questions about the church derived from and rooted in the central ecclesiological question of the Reformation: Where can I find the *true* church? This question, along with the better-known and -covered question, “Where can I find a gracious God?,” dominated Reformation theology. Paul Avis has pointed out that together these questions “constitute two aspects of the

overriding concern of sixteenth-century men with the problem of salvation, for the truth of the old patristic watchword *Nulla salus extra ecclesiam*—no salvation outside the Church—was assumed on all sides.⁷ John Calvin put it this way in the *Institutes*: “How necessary the knowledge of [the church] is, since there is no other means of entering into life unless she [the church] conceive us in the womb and give us birth, unless she nourish us at her breasts.”⁸

Like Luther before him, Calvin held that there were two “marks” of the true church: word and sacrament.⁹ Even if a church was corrupt or lacked discipline, it was still a church if it had these signs. Discipline was required for the well-being, not the existence, of the church.¹⁰ It was not long, however, before Reformed theologians like Martin Bucer, Theodore Beza, and John Knox, as well as the leading Puritan theologians, recognized discipline as a third mark of the church. While the goal of discipline was to encourage faith and maintain Christian standards of behavior for the sake of the health of the whole church, the emphasis on discipline would shift the “question of the church” in a new direction, one that would shape Puritan thought. No longer was it enough to ask, “Where is the true (or even pure) church?” Now the question became “Who is *in* the pure church? Who are its members?”

All Puritans agreed on the need for discipline and the basic nature of the church, which early Puritan leader John Field articulated as a company of faithful people gathered from the world and set apart from the wicked.¹¹ According to Edmund Morgan, this conception “would have been acceptable to Puritans whether Presbyterian or Congregational, whether in England or America, whether in 1572 or 1672.”¹² Because of the doctrine of election, one could never know who was “in” the invisible church. However, the Puritans became concerned to make the visible church as close an approximation of the invisible church as they possibly could. As Morgan writes, “It was too plain to the Puritans that the visible church in England stood too far from the invisible; it indiscriminately embraced the flagrantly wicked along with the good or sincerely repentant.”¹³ While all Puritans believed that the Church of England had become too lax in its exercise of discipline over its members, they were not of one mind as to what to do about it. The majority of Puritans believed that the “true church” still existed in the Church of England and looked to the government to help reform the church by disciplining its errant members. A small minority thought that the state church was beyond reform and that the better strategy was to “organize new churches from which the ignorant and the wicked would be excluded.”¹⁴ These Puritans came to be known as Separatists.

Even though the Separatists remained a small group (both in England and in New England), their decision nonetheless had an impact on later Puritans (including non-Separating Puritans, the majority of those who would settle New England) because they were the first to consider the ecclesiological implications of their Puritan ideals. The Separatists defended their decision to organize new churches on two grounds. First, they argued that the Church of England lacked an essential mark of the church: discipline. Puritan Henry Barrow was among those who argued that the preaching of true doctrine and the administration of the sacraments alone were not enough to make the church. Discipline also was required to enable the church to correct its own faults and for the proper administration of the sacraments, that is, in order to determine who was worthy to receive them.¹⁵

The second reason for separating had to do with their understanding of the church itself. Although God alone knows the members of the invisible church, for the visible church to be a proper church, it must be founded by a voluntary gathering of believers. The Separatists argued that the Church of England, as a state church, was not so founded and therefore could not be a proper church. These two points were interrelated for the Separatists: “A church must originate as a voluntary association of persons worthy to worship God. It must contain only men who freely professed to believe, and tried to live according to God’s word. And it could not exist unless such men voluntarily agreed to subject themselves to discipline.”¹⁶

Church discipline and explicit church covenants were two practical means toward achieving the purer church the Puritans desired. God elects individuals who come together voluntarily to be the church, worship God, and so forth. It is important to note here that the church covenant was not any voluntary association, but one made by the elect, which again is why the Church of England could not properly be considered a church. The covenant included both a confession and demonstrated understanding of the Christian faith, and outward behavior that reflected holy living. Certain behaviors put people clearly outside of the covenant and required their expulsion through disciplinary procedures. According to Morgan, “In the exercise of church discipline, as with the admission procedures, the Separatists concerned themselves with outward, visible behavior, and with openly expressed opinions, not with the presence or absence of saving faith.”¹⁷ It would not be until the Puritans arrived in New England that the latter would become required evidence for church membership.

Morgan argues that although it was the Separatists who laid the foundation for the distinctive Puritan ecclesiology with these ideas, it would be the

immigrants who arrived a decade later, the non-Separating Puritans, who would shift the question from one of exclusion (who's out) to one of inclusion (who's in) with regard to the question of church membership. Originally, the non-Separating Puritans believed that those who were not elect "may be *in* the church, but they are not *of* it; they have fellowship in outward things, but they can have no part in effectual and saving grace."¹⁸ Now individuals would be required to show that they possessed "saving faith" in order to become members of the church. This practice became the hallmark of radical Puritan ecclesiology.

As Calvinists, all Puritans would have agreed with Calvin that, ultimately, it is God's prerogative, not ours, to distinguish and separate the elect from the reprobate. It is a difficult task to distinguish individually who belongs to the visible church; more important is to be able to recognize where the true church is.¹⁹ According to Calvin, those who profess the Christian faith, live the Christian life, and participate in the Christian sacraments are to be recognized as children of God. Sanctification does not, in the Protestant view, assist one in the process of salvation, although it could be a sign that one is among the elect.

As the non-Separating Puritans pointed out, however, since hypocrites and honest but unregenerate (those who are not saved) people can imitate the good works of the elect, this sign was not by itself enough to comfort doubting and weak Christians. According to Morgan, "The real problem was to find out whether one or not one had saving faith."²⁰ A complicated morphology of conversion was developed and preached in sermons to assist listeners in their discernment of whether or not they were among God's elect. While they were still part of the Anglican Church, they applied this idea in connection with Holy Communion since they could not apply it to membership. Once in New England the radical ramifications of this idea could be put more fully into practice. Initially, the procedures for admitting members in the first Massachusetts churches reflected those in the Plymouth church and of Separatist churches in England and Holland. Within ten years, however, such procedures came to include a test for "saving faith." John Cotton was the first major figure to make assurance of salvation dependent on an inner experience of grace, rather than on the outward signs of sanctification.²¹

Whether this was driven by the concern for a pure church or, more basically, by the need for personal assurance of salvation, the end result was a radical Puritan ecclesiology in which the distinction between the visible and invisible church was virtually collapsed.²² The true church became the church of pure saints. The new requirement of proving that one had "saving faith" led to a shift from defining who was "out" (the visibly wicked) to now defining who was "in," those who were not only outwardly, visibly holy but those

who were also able to prove they had “saving faith.” The focus of ecclesiology became inward rather than outward, with an emphasis on membership, not mission. Morgan charges the Separatists and other Puritans with “ecclesiastical abdication from the world” and “virtually [denying] the evangelistic function of the church” as a result of their strict membership practices.²³ By solely focusing on gathering the saints out of the world and its sinfulness into a “pure church,” the Puritans failed to recognize the church’s mission to spread the gospel to others and to offer them the means of salvation. Even though, in the Calvinist schema, word and sacrament would only be effective for those who were among the elect, they were still the means through which God worked to create saving faith.

Indeed, as Morgan writes, the very life of the church was put in jeopardy; by the 1650s, few conversions had been generated and the steady migration of Puritans to the New World had ended. And worst of all, most children of the elect had not themselves received “saving faith.” “As the first generation of Puritans died, the churches declined rapidly in membership and it appeared that a majority of the population would soon be unbaptized.”²⁴ In what could be considered the first “church-growth strategy” in America, the Puritans in New England developed what came to be known (somewhat derisively) as the “Halfway Covenant.” This stipulated that those who did not receive “saving faith” could still receive some of the benefits of membership as long as they professed the doctrines of the Christian faith and lived a life free of scandal. They could receive the discipline of the church and could have their children baptized, but they could not vote or receive communion. According to Morgan, the Halfway Covenant was an attempt to answer questions created by the rigorous concept of membership and its negative effects on the church population. It reflected not, as is often thought, a decline in piety but “an honest attempt to rescue the concept of a church of visible saints from the tangle of problems created in time by human reproduction.”²⁵

The Puritan concept of covenant and its radical ecclesiology would provide the basis for the Puritan understanding of a “Christian America.” The Puritans arrived in the colonies with the hope of establishing a Christian society based on biblical laws and spoke of America’s election through the covenant and role in God’s providence. As Perry Miller notes, “When the Puritans came to New England the idea had not yet dawned that a government could safely permit several creeds to exist side by side within the confines of a single nation.”²⁶ Indeed, “to allow no dissent from the truth was exactly the reason why they had come to America.”²⁷ John Winthrop’s 1645 speech on liberty is the classic articulation of this Puritan goal. “As [Winthrop] expounds it,

the political doctrine becomes part and parcel of the theological, and the cord that binds all ideas together is the covenant.”²⁸ It is only those who become regenerate through the covenant of grace who are at liberty to do what God commands and enact God’s covenant with the government. From its inception, the Massachusetts Bay Colony sought “to prove that the Bible could be made a rule of life, that essentials of religion could be derived from Scripture, and then reinforced by the enlightened dictation of godly magistrates.”²⁹ The Puritan understanding of the function of the state reflected the legacy of Christendom in that they believed that “government was established by God to save depraved men from their own depravity.”³⁰ The idea of a “holy society” was built on the notion that the regenerate could of their own free will and choice make decisions that would reflect God’s will in the commonwealth.

The social theory of the Puritans had as its foundation the exclusionary Puritan ecclesiology discussed above. As Miller notes, “The congregational system, with its membership limited to those who had proved before the church that they possessed the signs of grace, offered a ready machinery for winnowing the wheat from the chaff.”³¹ God established a covenant with the regenerate not only for the sake of their salvation, but for the sake of the commonwealth. Not only the ability to hold elected office, but even the right to vote in civic society, was limited to those who could demonstrate that they were among the elect. Miller points out the difficulty of this system in light of the fact that the unregenerate outnumbered the regenerate five to one. “In New England, the unregenerate were an ever-present reality. The majority of the populace were expected to live quietly under a church system which not only held them without the pale, but insinuated that they were in all probability damned.”³²

Miller contends that it was the ultimate failure of the Puritan experiment to establish a pure church and a holy society—and not just the increasing plurality of Christian groups in the colonies—that led to a new basis for governance, one that eventually would be reflected in the founding documents of the United States. He writes, “The divine ordinance and the spirit of God, which were supposed to have presided over the political process, vanished, leaving a government founded on the self-evident truths of the law of nature, brought into being by social compact, instituted not for the glory of God, but to secure men’s ‘inalienable rights’ of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.”³³ This does not mean that later Americans would not see the hand of God in the progress of their new country. Indeed, as Sacvan Bercovitch has shown, the foundation for a progressive view of history was first laid by the Puritans, who joined together two understandings of providence into one figural symbol, *Americanus*. While the Puritans spoke primarily of the providence of the human

soul, they also applied this concept to groups of people. These were further separated into two types: *secular providences*, which apply to all people, such as God’s providential care of all people by sending rain; and *figural providences*, God’s acts of mercy and privilege that extend only to the elect people, “the subjects of ecclesiastical history from Abraham through David and Nehemiah to Winthrop.”³⁴ In making Jonathan Winthrop the “representative American,” Cotton Mather (1663–1728), the grandson of John Cotton, conflated these two kinds of providences, whereby God’s providence is worked out in America not only in terms of the redemption of individuals, but also the redeemer nation. In this way, Mather provided “a ready framework for inverting later secular values—human perfectibility, technological progress, democracy, Christian socialism, or simply (and comprehensively) the American Way—into the model of sacred teleology.”³⁵

FROM VISIBLE SAINTS TO VOLUNTARY SOCIETY AND THE NARRATIVE OF “CHRISTIAN AMERICA”

The Puritan idea of a holy society, wherein God’s covenant with society was based on God’s covenant with the church, would fail in large part due to its own inherent difficulties. The Puritan concern for the true church and the related anxiety regarding membership in the true church would give way to new theological questions, in spite of the fact that many new groups of immigrants (including many German Lutherans) continued to arrive, asking different versions of this same question. By the end of the eighteenth century, with the advent of the free exercise of religion as established by the U.S. Constitution (and eventually by every state), these groups established their particular ecclesial identities while at the same time learning to live alongside of other churches. By the mid-nineteenth century, various streams of thought from the American Enlightenment and nineteenth-century revivalism converged to create what I call the narrative of a Christian America. This also shapes the question of the church. While the Puritans laid the groundwork for the narrative of a Christian America, the end of the Puritan Commonwealth³⁶ left the narrative in need of a new foundation: the church as voluntary association.

Although the voluntary principle had roots in the Puritan experience (wherein members joined together voluntarily versus compulsorily, that is, by state law), it was reinterpreted by these new streams of thought. Its application would go beyond church membership and its concern with individual salvation; it came to be employed to assist churches in living together under the First

Amendment. But, even more significantly, the voluntary principle enabled churches to work together toward even larger goals. Whereas in the Puritan schema it was the government's role first and foremost to protect the church and the truth of the gospel, the churches—by means of voluntary cooperation—would now support the progress of a virtuous republic. The question of the “true church” and its concern for membership gave way to questions about how the churches could participate in transforming society into the kingdom of God—increasingly understood as the progress of a nation. By the nineteenth century, the covenant language of the Puritans began to be applied directly to American civilization.³⁷ The question shifted from one of membership to one of purpose and unity: How are Christians able to work together for the promulgation of the kingdom of God as seen in the progress of a “Christian America”?

THE AMERICAN ENLIGHTENMENT AND THE MODERN PROJECT IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

It is important to first make a distinction between “modern project” and the “modern period,” since the word *modernity* is used interchangeably for both.³⁸ The modern period began at the end of the eighteenth century and was marked by two major events: the Industrial Revolution and the democratic revolution. The transition to the modern period coincided with the emergence of a new understanding of reason that enabled Enlightenment thinkers “to develop objective science, universal morality and law, and autonomous art according to their inner logic.”³⁹ The modern project used the “objective science” of rational analysis in order to gain new knowledge and technology for the twin goals of progress and emancipation. In short, the right use of reason led to advances in all arenas of human life: improved health and overall human welfare, educational systems, increased economic production and creation of wealth, and wider social and economic opportunities for a greater number of people through democratic governance.

The relationship of the churches to the Enlightenment and the modern project is more complex than is often thought. While many American Protestants rejected certain aspects of the Enlightenment, these same Christians readily endorsed the moral and social ideals and attitudes of the emerging modern age, especially ideas like progress, commerce, and individualism.⁴⁰ In his magisterial study of the Enlightenment in America, Henry May outlines four major (often overlapping) forms of the Enlightenment in Europe that were imported to and had an impact on American thought.⁴¹

The *first* form of the Enlightenment to take root in American soil was the “Moderate or Rational Enlightenment” (1688–1787). This form dominated England from the time of Newton and Locke until the mid-eighteenth century and held to the “reasonableness of Christianity,” which reconciled Newtonian science with Christian miracles and stressed order, balance, moderation, and religious compromise. The First Great Awakening (1739–1740), with its emphasis on the “religion of the heart,” sought to point out the limits of natural religion and to reassert in its place central tenets of Calvinism such as divine sovereignty and human dependence.⁴² The ideas of the Moderate Enlightenment were also challenged by a *second* form, “The Skeptical Enlightenment” (1750–1789), led by Voltaire, but unsurprisingly, this form would find the least support in the colonies, especially among the clergy.

The *third* form, the “Revolutionary Enlightenment” (1776–1800), opposed both English moderation and French skepticism. It culminated in the thought of Thomas Paine whose pamphlet *Common Sense* “is full of the excitement of a moment when men have a chance to form their institutions anew.”⁴³ Many of the ideas of the Revolutionary Enlightenment—including the break from the English monarchy and tradition, and the establishment of religious liberty—were initially supported by the majority of moderate and ultra-Calvinists, radical Separatists, Arminians, and Deists alike. Nevertheless, the excesses of the French Revolution and the Jacobins led other clergy to lump Voltaire, Paine, and Thomas Jefferson together, and to see them all “as heirs of a conspiracy of philosophers against all religious and social order.”⁴⁴

With Jefferson’s presidential election in 1800 and the emergence of two growing churches that were solidly Jeffersonian—the Baptists and Methodists—the anti-Jacobin, Calvinist rhetoric of the New England clergy gave way to that of the revival. This shift had drastic implications for American religion and culture. Most significantly, it effectively ended the theological stronghold of Calvinism and reshaped American religion in the nineteenth century into a popular evangelicalism that was “flexible, activist, moralistic, [and] increasingly un-theological.”⁴⁵ Many of the Federalist clergy also began transferring their energies from anti-Jacobin crusades into missionary activity and social reform, defeating what remained of the Skeptical and Revolutionary phases of the American Enlightenment.

And yet, the values of the Moderate Enlightenment were too deeply embedded in American government and its founding documents for the Enlightenment to be completely rejected. A new basis was needed upon which rationality, progress, and morality could be articulated and defended. This brings us to May’s *fourth* form of the Enlightenment in America, the “Didactic

Enlightenment” (1800–1815). Based on Scottish Common Sense philosophy, this form became the principal mode in which the Enlightenment was assimilated into the formative period of nineteenth-century American culture. Its three main tenets were: “the essential reality and dependability of moral values, the certainty of progress, and the usefulness and importance of ‘culture’ in the narrower sense, especially literature.”⁴⁶ In particular, the second of these tenets—the certainty of progress—became central to the emerging narrative of a Christian America.

THE CENTRALITY AND CERTAINTY OF PROGRESS IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Various bursts of growth experienced by the new nation, beginning in 1815, propelled the idea of progress.⁴⁷ With the end of the War of 1812 and the fall of Napoleon, the new republic seemed assured of its independence, economic prosperity, and a continually expanding frontier. The movement westward, combined with the growth of the nation’s natural resources, led to a tremendous boom in the population. These were also the decades of the Industrial Revolution and invention of new technologies (1790–1890) and the building of the first transcontinental railroad (completed in 1869), all of which contributed to the increasing economic prosperity America was experiencing. “With concrete evidences of material advancement on every side, progress was the faith of the common man as well as of the philosopher,” writes Arthur Ekirch. The “faith in progress” was not limited to material advances, but came to be extended to intellectual and moral improvements as democracy began to flourish on the state level, and as a public-school system was established to educate the population.⁴⁸

According to Stow Persons, a fusion of three ideological streams of thought at the end of the nineteenth century formed the “intellectual matrix of the modern age.”⁴⁹ These were (1) the voluntary principle, (2) democratic social ideology, and (3) naturalistic ideas, especially positivism and evolutionary theory. It is this third stream of thought that represented the sharpest and most dramatic departure from established religious traditions in the history of intellectual thought. The theologian was challenged to find ways to speak of Christian truths in light of new scientific theories. As Persons notes, however, “the most significant consequence of evolutionism for intellectual history was *not* the recasting of traditional and conventional conceptions of the ultimate origins of life or the universe,” but the way evolutionary theory shaped a worldview as seen from the perspective of the present, an interpretation of

history itself as morally, spiritually, and intellectually progressive.⁵⁰ This progressive view of history became a key tenet in the development of liberal Protestant theology, in both its evangelical and modernist forms, at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century.

THE VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLE

As noted above, the Puritan experiment of a Christian commonwealth failed for many reasons. However, the idea of sustaining a Christian society was so deeply rooted in the culture that it could not be abandoned. Instead, it was given a new foundation in this period: the voluntary principle. The voluntary principle in religion is a broad concept that actually incorporates two distinct ideas: (1) the church itself as a voluntary association of believers and (2) the free cooperation of congregations, denominations, and individuals for common causes in promotion of a virtuous republic (such as social reform, church revitalization, missions, antislavery, and prohibition).⁵¹ The methods of these free associations were persuasive, not coercive. The voluntary principle was, at the same time, one of the influences that contributed to the victory of religious liberty in America and a means for churches not only to survive, but also thrive in a situation where churches were no longer under state control.

While it worked well in many regards, it also began to shape a distinctive “American ecclesiology” whereby the church was defined not only structurally (as distinct from the state church), but also more anthropologically (rather than theologically). C. C. Goen argues that the voluntary principle made this anthropological foundation inevitable for the church, going so far as to say that the American churches’ accommodation to American culture has been a “loss of the doctrine of the church itself.”⁵² The church came to be viewed as a society that existed on the basis of human will and cooperation. Further, because membership was defined less by doctrinal beliefs and more by common purpose, the concept of the church as voluntary association tended to “push tangible, practical considerations to the fore by placing primary emphasis on the free, uncoerced consent of the individual.”⁵³ Sidney Mead further states that this led to Christianity being conceived primarily as an activity or movement that the group was engaged in promoting.⁵⁴ The voluntary principle itself allowed for the churches’ self-understanding to be shaped by the narrative of a “Christian America.”⁵⁵

Thus the nineteenth century opened with the goal of maintaining the Christian character of the nation by voluntary means. In the first half of the nineteenth century, the same arguments for morality and order that had been

used to support colonial religious establishments now were used to advocate for the Christianization of society by methods of persuasion.⁵⁶ As Robert Handy shows, however, the vision of a Christian America that was gained by voluntary means subtly changed in a critical way over the course of the nineteenth century. Earlier in the century, the priority of the religious vision was strongly and widely maintained; it was Christianity and civilization, Christianity as the best part of civilization, and its hope. In the latter part of the century [1860–1890], however, in most cases unconsciously, much of the real focus had shifted to the civilization itself, with Christianity and the churches finding their significance in relation to it. Civilization itself was given increasingly positive assessment, chiefly because it was understood to have absorbed much of the spirit of Christianity.⁵⁷

Clergy such as Samuel Harris (1814–1899) posited that modern ideas, such as the promise of human progress, civil rights, the rule of justice and love, the elimination of oppression, and the “brotherhood of man and the Fatherhood of God,” are all derived from the gospel, so much so that “the mission of Christian faith was virtually being identified with national destiny, with the progress of civilization.”⁵⁸ Religious leaders began to interpret advances in democratic reforms, progress in science and technology, and the growth of industrialization as fruits of the increasing civilization of society and a sign of the coming of Christ’s kingdom.⁵⁹ “A grand feature of our times is that *all is Progress*,” exulted the editors of *The Independent* in 1851,” writes Timothy Smith. “Christianity and culture seemed to be marching together ‘onward and upward’ toward the ‘grant consummation of prophecy in a civilized, an enlightened, and a sanctified world’ and the establishment of ‘that spiritual kingdom which God has ordained shall triumph and endure.’”⁶⁰

REVIVALISM AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

How and why did these Protestant leaders come to understand these advances as signs of the kingdom of God? The Puritan concept of providence offered the ready framework for inverting “the American way” into the model of sacred teleology, so that by the mid-nineteenth century the progress of a nation came to be interpreted as signifying the coming kingdom of God. But it was the emerging new revivalism that would solidify this way of thinking. By the mid-nineteenth century, revivalism was “adopted and promoted in one form or another by major segments of all denominations.”⁶¹ Significantly, these nineteenth-century revival measures “went hand in hand with progressive theology and humanitarian concerns.”⁶²

Although they were relative newcomers to American Protestantism at the turn of the nineteenth century, Baptists and Methodists had become dominant by 1855, comprising 70 percent of the total number of communing Protestants. With the emergence of these groups came also the theological dominance of Arminianism and its doctrine of free will that opened the promise—and hope—of salvation universally to all people, not only those who had been predestined for salvation. “To the hopeful concepts of free will and a universal atonement,” Smith notes, “Methodism added the promise of man’s immediate perfectibility, not by reason or education, but through the operation of the spirit of God.”⁶³ The popularity of this idea increased steadily from 1840 to 1870. The focus of the doctrine of Christian perfection was the personal holiness of the individual, but Christians would soon embrace the possibilities of this doctrine for addressing various social ills as well. Thus from the fires of revival Christianity emerged “a platform more widely acceptable and as realistically concerned with alleviating social evil. It called for the miraculous baptism of believers in the Holy Ghost and the consecration of their lives and possessions to the building of the kingdom of God.”⁶⁴ Led by the Holy Spirit and millennialist fervor, the regenerate saw that it was their task not only to preach the gospel to all people, but also to transform society in accordance with God’s will.

In contrast to the inward-looking Puritans, who were more concerned with who was in and who was out, these outward-looking evangelicals were concerned with putting their salvation to work by transforming society into the kingdom of God. Indeed, Smith contends that the rapid pace at which churches concerned themselves with social issues such as poverty, worker’s rights, liquor sales, slum housing conditions, and racial tensions “is the chief feature distinguishing American religion after 1865 from that of the first half of the nineteenth century.”⁶⁵ One of the fruits of this shift in focus was that ethical concerns would be stressed more than dogmatic ones in the preaching and teaching ministry of the church.

These changes were accompanied by two other significant changes that were outgrowths of the broader application of the voluntary principle: an expansion of lay participation and control in the ministry of the church and the maturing of a “spirit of interdenominational brotherhood” that many of the leading clergymen promoted.⁶⁶ Pastors began to speak of the present division of Christians as sinful. According to Smith, although the spirit of unity between Christian denominations had been growing for many years, it was the absence of “sectarian bigotry” that distinguished the mid-nineteenth-century revivals from previous ones.

The narrative of a progressive Christian America was at its height in this period—paradoxically, as the nation finally faced the evils of slavery and found itself embroiled in the Civil War. The voluntary principle would help to shape an ecclesiology that would become increasingly sociological and pragmatic, as Goen notes. Individual believers voluntarily assembled in order to serve a greater good, in this case, the promulgation of God’s kingdom through a Christian nation. Theological reflection on the doctrine of the church in this period was limited, except for pragmatic concerns for Christian unity in service of the larger goal of social transformation. The peculiar American ecclesiology—a sociological concept of the church based in the voluntary principle—would serve the needs of church members and the goals of “Christian America” well for several more decades. It was not until the twentieth century that ecclesiology proper began to receive attention by mainline Protestants—but then only by ecumenists; the *de facto* ecclesiology for these mainline Protestant churches remained the “voluntary association.” This concept was further bolstered in the early twentieth century by the growth of the denomination as the means of church organization and structure and the kind of institutional concerns brought about by this structural change. Goen states the negative legacy of this concept in stark terms: “Three centuries ago the question, ‘What is the church?’ was of crucial, even revolutionary importance. Today it is diffidently asked, rarely answered, and indeed scarcely visible—having been displaced by more urgent questions about growth, efficiency, dollars.”⁶⁷

THE “LUTHERAN DIFFERENCE”?

Before considering how the shift to a *de facto* “post-Christendom” offer a new perspective on this narrative—and the role and identity of the churches in it—I would like to briefly consider the place of Lutheranism in the exposition of a “Christian America.” In many ways, because of their particular confessional and cultural heritage, Lutherans have operated more as “outsiders” to this narrative, possessing the “Lutheran difference.”⁶⁸ As an immigrant church that gained its largest growth in membership through emigration from Germany and Scandinavian countries in the mid- to late nineteenth century, Lutherans historically found themselves culturally outside of the mainstream of American Protestantism. This was due both to language and cultural differences these immigrants brought as well as to their distinctive confessional tradition. While there are many points of connection between Lutheranism and other Protestant traditions, including an understanding of the church as “created” by the word (a

concept we will return to in the next chapter), the Lutheran theological heritage is distinct in several ways from Calvinism and Arminianism.

Lutherans were among those in the nineteenth century who rejected or severely criticized the voluntary principle as a basis for ecclesiological understanding.⁶⁹ For all the differences between different Lutheran immigrant groups, nearly all Lutherans in the nineteenth century—whether confessional German or pietistic Norwegian Lutherans—rejected the notion that the church is gathered and unified by the will of people with a common purpose. Lutherans as a whole were also wary of revivalism, which was closely bound up with voluntarism. At the same time, however, thanks in large part to the work of William A. Passavant, Lutherans did adopt voluntarism on a larger scale, developing many associations for the betterment of society that had pan-Lutheran support. Passavant, who “wanted his church to be an aggressive force in America, to be a working as well as a worshipping and witnessing community,” established four hospitals and several orphanages, and introduced deaconess work.⁷⁰

One also needs to be clear in defining “Americanization.” While for most Lutherans the question of Americanization has been focused primarily on the mid-nineteenth-century debate over sacramental theology, its broader influence on Lutherans has not been as readily recognized. While immigrants who arrived in the second half of the nineteenth century did reflect more “old world” concerns, particularly regarding their ecclesial identity over and against state church practices, they were not so ghettoized as not to be ultimately affected by larger social, political, and cultural trends of “Americanization.” As these Lutherans joined the mainstream of Protestant evangelicalism—sociologically, if not theologically—they began to be shaped by the narrative of a Christian America. In fact, E. Clifford Nelson argues that by standing against all forms of culture-religion, Lutherans mis-interpreted, or at least gave one-sided emphasis to, a facet of Lutheran theology, and they did not escape captivity to culture-religion by minimizing the public and prophetic role of the church. As a matter of fact, Lutheran congregations across the land in the prosperous fifties gave evidence that they were enamored of the desire for popular approval and success. Accepting uncritically the approbation of middle-class America, Lutheranism was in danger of becoming what its theology did not allow, a culture-religion.⁷¹

Further, even if the Lutherans—or any other immigrant minority denominations—have not consciously defined their ecclesial understanding by this narrative, the argument could be made that the unchurched do not make the theological distinctions that churchgoers do. From the outside, so to speak,

this narrative applies to all the Protestant churches. The context demands that all of the mainline Protestant churches recognize the power that this narrative has had in shaping a peculiarly American ecclesiology.

THE DISESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCHES

In spite of the fact that progress and providence had become one concept in the minds of many Christian Americans, the realities of postwar life spiritual and economic recession, and a decrease in crusading zeal, led to the erosion of the quest for a Protestant America in the 1920s.⁷² While Christianity had certainly influenced civilization, some church leaders began to worry that that influence could go both ways. Handy writes, “The religion also became so attached to the civilization that as the latter changed it was difficult for many Protestants to sense to what degree they had become a religion of the culture.” By the mid-1930s, however, several Protestant leaders feared that rather than Christianizing society, civilization had “captured the church.”⁷³

Handy decries this period as the “end of the Protestant Era,” but it would not be the death of this narrative. Even as the Second World War raised questions and challenges to the concept of progress, it also brought a new revival of religion, fused with nationalistic impulses. Martin Marty has suggested that in the wake of this development, the new shape emerging in American religion was not so much a “revival of historic Christianity as it was a revival of interest in ‘religion-in-general.’ More specifically, it was a ‘religion of democracy’ that emerged as America’s real religion, in part a sociological replacement of the old dream of a Christian America.”⁷⁴ Robert Bellah gave this phenomenon the commonly accepted coinage of “American Civil Religion.”⁷⁵ The experience of World War II was cast in terms of a fight for democracy and freedom, and civil religion gave new impetus and articulation to America’s special role in providence, as a nation under God’s law called to carry out God’s will on earth, particularly by sharing the “light” of democracy with other nations. America’s leadership in technological advances during this period also added to the narrative of progress. Bellah is careful to state that civil religion is not the worship of the American nation but, rather, is “at best a genuine apprehension of universal and transcendent religious reality as seen in or, one could almost say, as revealed through the experience of the American people.”⁷⁶ Douglas John Hall’s concern is less with the idea of civil religion itself and more with its influence on the churches, which has resulted in the overshadowing of the church’s unique mission and message by that of the nation and a loss of a theological identity of the church.

As Hall and others have also pointed out, however, the final vestiges of “cultural Christianity”—in the form of an American civil religion—have been undergoing a process of “disestablishment” since the 1960s “with the collapse or substantial erosion of much of the church culture that had been built up over a period of two hundred years.”⁷⁷ As the narrative of a Christian America breaks down, the church’s place in the narrative is also being questioned. More and more people are not looking to the church as the “means of salvation” (visible saints) nor as the means to improve society (voluntary association), although the intermittent resurgence of the Religious Right since the 1980s would suggest that the latter is still alive and well in many respects. With increased attention to personal freedom and rights in many arenas, “notions of shared public morals gave way to personal decisions of expediency, pleasure, or private judgment. . . . People no longer assumed that the church had anything relevant to say on matters beyond personal faith. Public policy became increasingly secularized, as public morals became increasingly personalized and privatized.”⁷⁸

Thus the church finds itself in “the awkwardly intermediate stage of having once been culturally established but . . . not yet clearly disestablished.”⁷⁹ On the one hand, “the churches have become so accommodated to the American way of life that they are now domesticated, and it is no longer obvious what justifies their existence as particular communities.”⁸⁰ On the other hand, the church has been dislodged from its particular role as a chaplain to the culture, and the privilege, influence, and public voice that went along with that position. Indeed, not only has the church lost its public voice, it no longer seems to have any hegemony with regard to the “private” side of religion either, with the concurrent growing religious pluralism in the United States.⁸¹

HOW SHALL THE CHURCH RESPOND?

According to Hall, the most common response has been to recognize that things are not what they were, but to go on behaving as if nothing has changed.⁸² Increasingly, with the precipitous decline in church membership, this has become less and less of an option for the mainline congregations. The crisis of “mainline decline” has agitated churches to address this crisis, usually by asking, “What can we do to grow again? How can we turn this trend around?” The solutions assume a voluntary concept of the church, are pragmatic, and focus on strategies to reverse the decline in membership and return to the “golden days” of church activity. For most mainline Protestants, this means a return to the post–World War II era, when the sanctuaries and Sunday school classrooms were full and the church had a clear role as “chaplain” to the nation,

blessing America and its values of freedom, progress, and democracy, all the while blissfully denying the cost to humanity and creation.⁸³ In addition to adapting the voluntary principle to entrepreneurial ends, others have sought to form new alliances in an attempt to regain a position of political and cultural influence.⁸⁴ Indeed, Hall notes with irony that the very failure of the New World Dream has in some sense enhanced the public role of religion. For large numbers of our fellow citizens are unable to face the decline of their culture, and many look to the churches to help them repress their social doubt and identity crisis. . . . Now these churches are expected to reinforce the social vision of success long after it has ceased concretely to inform most other institutions of the society, even government. Now one goes to church in order to be able to believe in America again.⁸⁵

In both cases, most of us are still “dreaming Christendom dreams.’ We envy the seeming success of the Christian Right, and we are made respondent by our reductions.”⁸⁶ As I argued in the introduction, none of these solutions get to the heart of the ecclesial crisis, which is first and foremost a crisis of *identity*. We do not know “who we are” as “church” anymore, in part because we have allowed our purpose to be shaped by the narrative of a Christian America and because most of us are operating in practice with the concept of the church as a voluntary association. At its worst, the voluntary principle has led to a view of the church in which the needs of the individual and the institution become of primary concern, and not God. Michael Horton agrees: “Taken to its extreme, [such] thinking easily leads to the view expressed by George Barna, an evangelical pioneer of church marketing: ‘Think of your church not as a religious meeting place, but as a service agency—an entity that exists to satisfy people’s needs.’”⁸⁷ The language of marketing has found its way into the imaginations of most churchgoers these days as congregations wrestle with declining attendance. Individuals go “church shopping” for congregations that will meet their needs. People choose churches because they are seeking something for themselves: a spiritual journey, fellowship, peace and comfort in times of difficulty, or even the need to make a difference in the world.

As Reggie McNeal and others have pointed out, churches are still operating as if the majority of people are looking to have these needs met in Christian congregations. The church must come to grips with the changing context in which its identity and role are no longer presumed in the same way. In other words, people are turning to other resources to meet these needs. Perhaps even more importantly, while these are not wrong reasons to join a congregation, they are not enough by themselves. We are the church not because of anything we decide or need (or even what society needs), including our desire that our

congregations survive in this time of “mainline decline.” The argument of this book is that we are the church because of what *God* has decided and is doing for our redemption—and because of what *God* desires for the sake of God’s mission in the world.

As long as we continue to operate with this concept as the *de facto* American ecclesiology and its corresponding focus on meeting individual needs, we will keep asking the wrong questions and coming up with the wrong solutions to the challenges facing the churches. What is needed is a robustly theological concept of the church that begins with *who God is* and *what God is doing*.

FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. How did the non-Separating Puritans lay the foundation for radical Puritan ecclesiology, according to Edmund Morgan? What did this lead them to deny?
2. The ecclesiology of the Puritans was driven by questions related to the “true church” and belonging to the true church. Do you see these concerns reflected in mainline Protestant churches today? In what way?
3. How do the ecclesial ideas of the Puritans provide a basis for the narrative of a “Christian America?” How have the mainline churches both influenced and been influenced by this narrative? Can you think of specific examples in your own congregation?
4. What does it mean to think of the church as a “voluntary association?” What are the positive and negative legacies of this idea? How do you see this concept shaping the ecclesiological views of church members today?
5. What shifts in ecclesiology occur in the mid-nineteenth century with the emergence of the new revivalism?
6. How have you seen what Douglas John Hall calls the “disestablishment” of the churches in your lifetime? How have congregations you know responded to this new reality? Are they still “dreaming Christendom dreams”? How do you think they *should* they respond?

Notes

1. Gregory Baum, "The Church in a North-American Perspective," in Gerard Mannion and Lewis S. Mudge, eds., *Routledge Companion to Ecclesiology* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 331.
2. Nicolas M. Healy, *Church, World, and the Christian Life: Practical-Prophetic Ecclesiology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 38.
3. While there have been many studies of the ecclesiologies of individual denominations, movements, and individuals in the United States, few have attempted a historical survey of ecclesiological thinking in North America or even the United States. For such an attempt from a sociological perspective, see Baum, "Church," 326–41.
4. Douglas John Hall, *The Reality of the Gospel and the Unreality of the Churches* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1975), 103–104.
5. Douglas John Hall, *The End of Christendom and the Future of Christianity*, Christian Mission and Modern Culture (Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1997), 29.
6. It is not that these traditions are not worth consideration in a discussion of ecclesiology. In fact, the Anabaptist tradition is seen by some theologians (such as John Howard Yoder) to offer a helpful alternative concept of the church to the culturally captivated of the mainline churches, of the church as "counterculture."
7. Paul D. L. Avis, *The Church in the Theology of the Reformers* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1981), 1.
8. John T. McNeill, ed., *Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Faith*, trans. and indexed by Ford Lewis Battles, Library of Christian Classics, vol. 21 (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960), 2283 [Bk. 4, Ch. 1, Sect. 4].
9. Calvin wrote, "Wherever we see the Word of God sincerely preached and heard; wherever we see the sacraments administered according to the institution of Christ: there we cannot have any doubt that the Church of God has some existence." *Ibid.*, 2289 [Bk. 4, Ch. 1, Sect. 9].
10. *Ibid.*, 2453 [Bk. 4, Ch. 12, Sect. 1].
11. Cited in Edmund S. Morgan, *Visible Saints: The History of a Puritan Idea* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1965), 14.
12. *Ibid.*
13. *Ibid.*, 10.
14. *Ibid.*, 16.
15. *Ibid.*, 23.
16. *Ibid.*, 25.
17. *Ibid.*, 47.
18. Perry Miller, *Orthodoxy in Massachusetts 1630–1650s: A Genetic Study* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1933), 54–55 (italics mine).
19. David N. Wiley, "The Church as the Elect in the Theology of John Calvin," in *John Calvin and the Church* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1990), 101.
20. Morgan, *Visible Saints*, 67.
21. Stephen Brachlow, *Communion of Saints: Radical Puritan and Separatist Ecclesiology, 1570–1625* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 133.
22. *Ibid.*, 115.
23. Morgan, *Visible Saints*, 117, 120.
24. *Ibid.*, 129.
25. *Ibid.*, 137.
26. Perry Miller, *Errand into the Wilderness* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1956), 144.
27. *Ibid.*, 145.
28. *Ibid.*, 148.
29. Miller, *Orthodoxy*, 50.
30. Miller, *Errand*, 144.

31. *Ibid.*, 150.

32. Miller, *Orthodoxy*, 206–207.

33. Miller, *Errand*, 151.

34. Sacvan Bercovitch, *The Puritan Origins of the American Self* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), 41.

35. *Ibid.*, 136.

36. The Puritan Commonwealth officially came to an end when it lost its colonial charter in 1684, but other scholars argue that it was the Salem Witch trials in 1692 which really ended the experiment. Still others argue that the history of the Puritan Commonwealth lingered on until the First Great Awakening in 1739–40. See George McKenna, *The Puritan Origins of American Patriotism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 2–3.

37. Timothy L. Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform: American Protestantism on the Eve of the Civil War* (New York: Harper & Row, 1957), 156.

38. This distinction is made by Jürgen Habermas in “Modernity: An Incomplete Project,” in *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, ed. Hal Foster (Port Townsend, WA: Bay Press, 1983), 9.

39. *Ibid.*

40. Sidney Mead, *The Lively Experiment: The Shaping of Christianity in America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), 127.

41. Henry F. May, *The Enlightenment in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976). May’s own definition of the Enlightenment is broad. It includes “all those who believe two propositions: first, that the present age is more enlightened than the past; and second, that we understand nature and man best through the use of our natural faculties,” thereby excluding “all . . . who think that the surest guide for human beings is revelation, tradition or illumination” (xiv).

42. *Ibid.*, 42–43.

43. *Ibid.*, 162.

44. *Ibid.*, 252.

45. *Ibid.*, 324.

46. *Ibid.*, 358.

47. For the following, see Arthur A. Ekirch, *The Idea of Progress in America, 1815–1860* (New York: Peter Smith, 1951), 34–37.

48. *Ibid.*, 36–37.

49. Stow Persons, “Religion and Modernity, 1865–1914,” in *The Shaping of American Religion*, vol. 1: *Religion in American Life*, ed. James W. Smith and A. Leland Jamison (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), 370.

50. *Ibid.*, 378, my emphasis.

51. See James Luther Adams, “The Voluntary Principle,” in *The Religion of the Republic*, ed. Elwyn Smith (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), 217–46.

52. See C. C. Goen, “Ecclesiocracy without Ecclesiology: Denominational Life in America,” *Religion in Life* 48 (1979): 17–31.

53. Mead, *Lively Experiment*, 113.

54. *Ibid.*, 114.

55. This church concept is not the same thing as “free-church ecclesiology,” although the voluntary principle is perhaps even more easily adapted by churches with such polity. A free-church polity describes not only freedom from state establishment, but freedom from any structures beyond the congregation. That is why I do not include free-church ecclesiology as a significant component in the development of the concept of the church as “voluntary association.” Most of the mainline churches in the United States (the major exception being the Congregationalists) did not have free-church polities, as they had some sort connective structure beyond the congregation itself (whether the presbytery, the synod, or the episcopacy).

56. Robert T. Handy, *A Christian America: Protestant Hopes and Historical Realities* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 36. See also Elwyn A. Smith, "The Voluntary Establishment of Religion," in *The Religion of the Republic*, 155.
57. Handy, *Christian America*, 110.
58. *Ibid.*, 110, 111.
59. *Ibid.*, 121.
60. Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform*, 226.
61. *Ibid.*, 45.
62. Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform*, 60.
63. *Ibid.*, 15, 25.
64. *Ibid.*, 146.
65. *Ibid.*, 148.
66. *Ibid.*, 80.
67. Goen, "Ecclesiocracy," 29.
68. The phrase is Mark A. Noll's, in "The Lutheran Difference," *First Things* 20 (April 1992): 31–40.
69. Adams, "Voluntary Principle," 239.
70. E. Clifford Nelson, *The Lutherans in North America*, rev. ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 299.
71. *Ibid.*, 525–26.
72. Handy, *Christian America*, 206.
73. *Ibid.*, 210–11.
74. Marty is cited in *ibid.*, 220. See also Mead, *The Nation with the Soul of a Church* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), 12–18.
75. Robert N. Bellah, "Civil Religion in America," and "American Civil Religion in the 1970s," in *American Civil Religion*, ed. Russell E. Richey and Donald G. Jones (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), 21–44; 255–72.
76. Bellah, "Civil Religion in America," 33.
77. Darrell Guder, ed., *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America*, *The Gospel and Our Culture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 54. This book was authored by a team of theologians; the primary drafter of this chapter was Craig Van Gelder.
78. *Ibid.*
79. George Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984), 134, cited by Hall in "Ecclesia Crucis: The Disciple Community and the Future of the Church in North America," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 46, nos. 1–4 (1992): 59.
80. Guder, ed., *Missional Church*, 78. The primary drafter of this chapter was George Hunsburger.
81. This is another fruit of the voluntary principle. See Wade Clark Roof, "America's Voluntary Establishment: Mainline Religion in Transition," in *Religion and America: Spiritual Life in a Secular Age*, ed. Mary Douglas and Steven Tipton (Boston: Beacon, 1982), 130–49.
82. See Douglas John Hall's discussion in *The Future of the Church: Where Are We Headed?* (Toronto: United Church Pub. House, 1989).
83. See the discussion in Rodney Clapp, *Johnny Cash and the Great American Contradiction: Christianity and the Battle for the Soul of a Nation* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008), 63–80.
84. Michael Jinkins, *The Church Faces Death: Ecclesiology in a Post-Modern Context* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 13.
85. Douglas John Hall, "Metamorphosis: From Christendom to Diaspora," in *Confident Witness—Changing World: Rediscovering the Gospel in North America*, ed. Craig Van Gelder (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 77.
86. *Ibid.*, 71.

87. Michael S. Horton, *People and Place: A Covenant Ecclesiology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008), 177.