

### 5-3-1 Assignment on Bird 8.1 to 8.2.2

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#### QUESTIONS

1. What contributions does "Reformed Catholicism" bring to evangelical ecclesiology?
2. What relationship does the church have with the gospel?
3. What images of the Church exist in the Old and New Testaments?
4. What are the images of the Church unique to the New Testament?
5. What five theses does Bird state about the Church and Israel?

#### Answers:

1. Bird mentions that Reformed Catholicism shows how to be evangelical with an elevated ecclesiology, a solid sense of church history, a renewed Trinitarian theology, a rich sacramental theology, and Spirit-driven revival preaching. Reformed Catholicism can combine doctrinal fidelity, spiritual fervor, and communal life, resulting in confessional evangelicalism. It would have a broad vision of the Church (preaching and revival).
2. The gospel is the defining mark of the ethos of the church. Therefore, the gospel that believers preach determines the type of church they create. In turn, these churches shape the kind of gospel they preach. Moreover, the proclamation of the gospel is their mission. Therefore, the church is the company of the Gospel (the only public face and hermeneutics).
3. Both Testaments use the denomination "people of God" to refer to the believing community in covenant with God. In addition, the adoption of Israel as God's people (in Abraham) applies to the Church in the NT regardless of her origin (1 Peter 2.10). Also, God called both communities "chosen" through Abraham and Jesus. They are likewise called "the flock" and "priesthood of God." Finally, both are identified with a "remnant."
4. The image of the Church as the "body of Christ." It implies that she is organically unified with Christ, that He is head over her, and the members are dependent on one another. Also, the NT writers call it "the temple of God." The Church is the temple of the Spirit of God because the Holy Spirit dwells in believers individually and collectively. Finally, they have also called her a "new creation." Christ restores the image of glory marred by the fall.
5. First, Bird mentions that the Church does not replace Israel but represents it in the messianic era. Second, the Church must be Israel because there is no salvation outside Israel. Third, the history of the Church is the continuation of the history of Israel. There is no break between Israel and the beginning of the Church. The Church is a "renewed Israel." Fourth, God's plan of salvation is one. Jesus' sacrifice is for both groups. Finally, there is the hope that Israel will respond to the gospel. Paul's epistles emphasize it.

#### TERMS

*Evangelicalism:* Evangelicalism rests on the mutual recognition that the Gospel embodies an empirical reality that unites believers in life to the Triune God. It is despite differences over second-order doctrines.

*Catholicity:* The signs and symbols that mark the church in all ages, whether Orthodox, Catholic, or Protestant.

*Extra ecclesiam nulla salus:* This Latin expression means "outside the church there is no salvation." Augustine used it in response to the Donatist controversy.

#### SUMMARY

Bird questions the lack of a standard evangelical ecclesiology, i.e., a lack of mutual recognition that the Gospel embodies a reality that unites God's people outside of denominational differences. He argues that a weakness of this ecclesiology is not to give central importance to the Church as the bearer of the Gospel but to emphasize its individualizing rather than

collective character. Bird expands on the biblical images of the Church between the Old and New Testaments (People of God, elected, flock, priesthood, and remnant) and those exclusive to the New Testament (Body of Christ, Temple of God, and New creation). Finally, he talks about the importance of understanding Israel and the Church as the same people, continuous and unique beneficiaries of God's plan of salvation.