

12.4 A theology of Incarnation

The world in which we live is increasingly becoming secular. The decline in religious affiliation, coupled with the rise of secularism, technological dependence, and individualism, presents a unique context for the Gospel to be shared and lived out. However, I believe that the Gospel can still speak powerfully in such a world, but it requires adaptation in how we relate to society.



The Adoration of the Child is depicted in this 17th-century painting by Dutch artist Gerard van Honthorst. Christmas is celebrated Dec. 25. (CNS photo/Uffizi Gallery in Florence)

1. **Embracing Inclusivity and Compassion:** In a world where division and hostility are prominent, the message of Christ as one who welcomes and loves all people becomes a beacon of hope. The Church can present an inclusive love that transcends societal boundaries and invites people to experience community in a world that increasingly feels fragmented. This kind of love and compassion can become a powerful counterpoint to the isolation and loneliness people often feel.

2. **Living Out Authentic Christian Community:** One of the most powerful testimonies of the Church is the authentic, loving community that reflects the early Church's vision. While many are driven by individualism, offering people a place where they are known, loved, and cared for, is a transformative expression of the Gospel. The Church can serve as a witness to what it means to be truly human in a way that aligns with both spiritual and relational fulfillment.
3. **Engaging with Secularism without Compromise:** The Church must also be wise in how it navigates secular culture. It's important to engage with questions of purpose, meaning, and human flourishing that many are wrestling with today. Instead of seeing the secular world as the "enemy," we can demonstrate how the Gospel provides a more deeply satisfying answer to the longing for purpose and wholeness that is being pursued in fragmented ways by society.
4. **Offering Hope in a World of Despair:** With economic difficulties, social isolation, and growing challenges, people are searching for something to hold onto. The Church, through the Gospel, offers a message of hope and redemption, emphasizing that even in the midst of challenges, there is a greater purpose and future in Christ. The message of grace, redemption, and eternal life stands in contrast to the fleeting promises of worldly success.
5. **Technological Engagement with Integrity:** The rise of technology offers both challenges and opportunities. The Church must find ways to engage in meaningful conversations online while maintaining the integrity of human relationships. Technology should not replace face-to-face connection, but it can be used as a tool to build bridges and share the Gospel in creative ways.
6. **Restoring a Biblical Worldview with Respect and Humility:** It is important for the Church to engage with postmodern society in a way that respects differing worldviews, while gently and confidently sharing the biblical truth.

The Church can model humility and respect for others' journeys of self-discovery, while pointing to the richness and fullness found in a relationship with God.

Ultimately, the Church is called to be the salt and light in a world that is constantly changing. While it may seem like a daunting task, it's an opportunity to demonstrate that the message of Jesus Christ is timeless and transcends all cultural shifts. Through love, compassion, and integrity, the Church can be a compelling witness to the transformative power of the Gospel in a secular world. Some of us of the contemporary organic Church, has taken the posture of re-reading scripture entirely to facilitate a radical social inclusion.

- 1. Radical Social Inclusion:** The shift towards embracing a God-centered and society-centered theology seems to be an intentional response to centuries of exclusionary practices within institutional Christianity. The idea is to recognize God's mission as a call to social justice that emphasizes care for the marginalized, the oppressed, and the excluded. By embracing the inclusive nature of Christ's message, the Church is reimagined as a place where all people can find belonging, regardless of their social status, race, or background.
- 2. Reinterpreting Scripture through a Critical Lens:** The approach of questioning traditional interpretations and re-reading scripture through a more expansive, critical perspective is not uncommon in contemporary theological discussions. By removing the "demythologized" layers, you seek to return to the humanity of Christ, elevating human suffering and social justice rather than focusing solely on doctrines of salvation and repentance. This hermeneutic suspicion questions the assumptions of inerrancy and challenges certain systems of thought that have historically excluded or oppressed people in the name of religion.
- 3. A Shift from Doctrine to Social Justice:** Some in the contemporary organic Church are less concerned with adhering strictly to dogma and doctrine and are more focused on societal

transformation through the principles of justice, peace, and equity. By redefining "sin" as anything that robs humanity of its freedom, you emphasize the need for social change as a critical aspect of faith. This approach positions the Church as an active agent in dismantling systems of injustice and inequality.

4. **Eschatology of the Present:** Rather than focusing on a distant, future hope, the eschatological framework you propose centers on transformation here and now. The hope for social change, justice, and peace is not something to come only in the afterlife but something the Church is called to participate in actively today. This mirrors the call for a "revolutionary Christianity," as articulated by Walter Rauschenbusch, which seeks to change the world rather than retreat from it.
5. **Christ's Incarnation as a Model for Social Revolution:** The belief that the incarnation of Christ was meant to bring about social transformation is a powerful reimagining of the role of Jesus. Rather than simply being an individual savior, Christ's mission becomes a collective call to action, urging followers to engage in the transformation of society. The Church's mission, then, is not just to evangelize in the traditional sense, but to be actively involved in social change, healing the brokenness in society.
6. **Social Transformation with Grace:** Even while rethinking the approach to traditional doctrines and evangelism, you still seek to present the gospel in a gracious, inclusive way. By shifting the focus from the individual's moral standing to the broader communal and social aspects of life, you want to foster a faith that prioritizes love and social justice over personal moral perfection. Evangelism becomes less about increasing numbers as a transformative force in society.

This postmodern approach to Christianity may face challenges from those who prefer more traditional structures, but it also offers a fresh, compassionate perspective that seeks to meet the world's need for justice, peace, and community. It encourages a shift from focusing on

the afterlife and individual salvation to recognizing the importance of social transformation and the active role that believers can play in shaping a more just and inclusive world.

Some of us of the contemporary organic Church, who takes a posture who have placed evangelism, at the center focusing on increasing numbers in the local churches and denominations. The approach you describe emphasizes the contemporary church's desire to remain relevant and inclusive while still upholding certain elements of Christian teachings. It strives to adapt the message of the Gospel to meet the shifting cultural context, reflecting the values and concerns of modern society, while also emphasizing community, peace, and love as central to the faith. Here's a breakdown of the key ideas in your approach:

- 1. Evangelism with a Focus on Community and Growth:** The emphasis on church growth and inclusivity is a reaction to the perceived legalism and exclusivity of traditional approaches. Instead of focusing primarily on doctrinal purity or moral teachings that might feel disconnected from the lives of contemporary listeners, the goal is to foster welcoming, inclusive communities where people from diverse backgrounds can feel accepted. Evangelism, in this context, is more about building community than increasing numbers solely for growth's sake.
- 2. Grace over Legalism:** This approach seeks to move away from legalistic interpretations of Christianity, focusing instead on the grace and love of Jesus. There's a recognition that the church's role should be to represent God's love and inclusivity, not to impose rigid dogmas or moral standards that might alienate people. The teachings of Jesus are presented in a way that emphasizes their universal relevance, promoting a sense of sacredness, unity, and wholeness that transcends specific doctrinal divisions.
- 3. The Role of Scripture:** The Bible is shared in a way that highlights themes of peace, justice, and love, rather than emphasizing

concepts like sin, repentance, or moral judgments. This allows for a focus on compassion and human flourishing, with the recognition that different people, cultures, and religions may offer valuable insights. Scripture is interpreted through a lens that is sensitive to contemporary societal shifts, aiming to connect with listeners where they are in their personal and cultural contexts.

4. **Integration of Modern Science and Psychology:** The integration of contemporary science, especially in areas like psychology and human development, acknowledges the evolving understanding of human behavior and well-being. By aligning biblical ethics with modern scientific findings, this approach seeks to create a more holistic and relevant worldview that resonates with today's culture, while still holding to the core Christian belief in love and compassion.
5. **Reinterpretation of Biblical Eschatology:** The traditional teachings of eschatology, including the notions of a final judgment, rapture, and the linear progression of history, are downplayed in favor of a more present-focused theology. Eternal life is reframed not as a journey that begins with commitment to God's earthly mission, but as a state of transformation that takes place after death, with a focus on the here-and-now transformation through Christ's teachings.
6. **Inclusivity and Respect for Diverse Perspectives:** This approach champions inclusivity, advocating for communities that are open to a wide range of theological perspectives, identities, and cultural backgrounds. By creating an environment where diversity is embraced, the church becomes a place where people can come together, regardless of their differences, to experience the love of God and work together for peace and justice.
7. **Commitment to Lifelong Learning and Inquiry:** Valuing lifelong learning and intellectual inquiry over rigid dogma is a core principle in this worldview.

The church is encouraged to embrace new understandings, whether they come from advances in science, psychology, or theology, as long as they align with the central Christian values of love, compassion, and justice. This approach emphasizes growth and adaptation, rather than maintaining static doctrines.

- 8. Incarnation as Expansion:** In this context, the incarnation is seen not just as the historical event of Christ coming to earth, but as a present-day reality in which the church, as the body of Christ, is called to embody and multiply the message of grace, compassion, and unity. The focus on expanding numbers in the church through a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere mirrors the incarnational reality of making Christ's love and teachings tangible in the world today.

Overall, this approach reinterprets Christian faith in a way that aligns with contemporary values, seeking to bridge the gap between traditional teachings and modern societal concerns. By focusing on community, grace, and social justice, it offers a vision of Christianity that seeks to be both scripturally grounded and deeply compassionate. It's a faith that embraces change and strives to be an authentic, inclusive, and transformative presence in the world. This approach seeks to adapt the message of Christianity in a way that is both scripturally grounded and contextually relevant to modern society. It reflects an intention to engage with the contemporary world by prioritizing inclusivity, grace, and social justice while maintaining certain elements of biblical faith. Here's an outline of how this approach is structured:

- 1. Grace and Inclusivity Over Doctrine:** The focus is on presenting the teachings of Jesus with an emphasis on grace and compassion rather than a strict moral code. While the scriptures are still important, they are shared in a way that prioritizes community building and relevance to the listener's life. The moral teachings of the Bible are less emphasized if they are seen as challenging to

contemporary norms, but the broader values of love, sacredness, and unity are highlighted.

2. **Creating Inclusive Communities:** The church is envisioned as a space that embraces a wide range of theological perspectives, cultural backgrounds, and identities. This inclusivity is key to the church's mission, with a focus on creating a welcoming atmosphere where all individuals can find a sense of belonging. The church seeks to be a place where diversity is not only accepted but celebrated.
3. **Compassion, Justice, and Peace:** Central to this approach is the belief in the importance of peace and justice, both socially and globally. The teachings of Jesus are interpreted in a way that emphasizes compassion, selfless love, and the pursuit of social transformation. There is an advocacy for justice, both within communities and in broader societal structures, with a focus on healing the divisions that persist in the world.
4. **Integration of Science and Faith:** A key aspect of this framework is the integration of modern scientific insights, especially in fields like psychology, environmental science, and social justice, with Christian teachings. The belief is that faith should be compatible with contemporary knowledge, and that both can work together to protect and sustain the Earth, addressing global issues like climate change and social inequality.
5. **Less Focus on Traditional Doctrines:** Traditional doctrines like the transcendence of God, linear eschatology (the end times, rapture, and judgment), and the strict interpretation of Old Testament laws are downplayed. Instead, the emphasis is placed on the story of Jesus and his role in human salvation, particularly focusing on grace and love. The New Testament is interpreted with this lens, where grace replaces the idea of judgment, and salvation becomes more about transformation in the present rather than a future event.

6. **Reinterpreting Biblical Ethics:** Biblical ethics are reinterpreted in light of contemporary cultural norms and scientific findings. This approach acknowledges that cultural shifts may require a new interpretation of scripture, especially when it comes to moral teachings. Psychology and modern-day scientific discoveries are used to inform these reinterpretations, aligning biblical teachings with current understandings of human nature, behavior, and well-being.
7. **Eternal Life as Transformation:** Eternal life is redefined, not as a journey that begins with a commitment to God's mission on earth, but as a state of being that is realized after death. This view aligns eternal life with a sudden transformation, often conceptualized as taking place in heaven. The focus here is on the hope that exists in the here-and-now, where the transformation is both personal and social.
8. **Evangelism Through Welcoming and Growth:** The church's mission is to foster growth through evangelism that emphasizes hospitality, love, and inclusivity. The goal is not only to spread the Gospel but also to create a welcoming environment that encourages people to engage in the community, thereby contributing to church growth. Incarnation, in this context, refers to embodying the principles of Christ in a way that makes the church a place where people feel invited and accepted.

This approach provides a framework for a church that aims to balance faithfulness to scripture with a sensitivity to the changing cultural landscape. It focuses on social justice, peace, and inclusion while offering a Christ-centered message that is relevant to the modern world. The church is seen as an agent of transformation, not only in terms of individual salvation but in its collective efforts toward building a just and compassionate society.

Some of us has an approach described here reflects a more traditional and conservative view within contemporary Christianity. This

perspective emphasizes the importance of maintaining doctrinal purity, adhering to established religious practices, and resisting the influence of modern secular values. It holds a strong conviction that the Gospel and Christian life must remain unchanged and uncompromised, with a focus on obedience to scripture and the preservation of long-standing traditions.

Here's an outline of this perspective:

1. **Adherence to Traditional Beliefs and Practices:** This community strongly upholds traditional Christian practices and beliefs, viewing them as essential for maintaining right standing with God. There is a refusal to allow modern cultural shifts, such as secular entertainment or changing social norms, to influence Christian living. The belief is that abstaining from behaviors seen as contrary to Christian witness—such as gambling, dancing, drinking alcohol, or wearing immodest clothing—ensures a faithful Christian life.
2. **Salvation through Faith and Obedience to Tradition:** Salvation is perceived not just as a matter of faith in Christ, but also as a commitment to adhering to the traditions, doctrines, and rituals that have been passed down through generations. The emphasis is on obedience to scripture and the refusal to separate faith from



“Reconciliation is often assumed to mean white institutions adding or including persons of color but never transforming the central identity from white (and male) to a truly inclusive human identity.”

— Curtiss Paul DeYoung,

Radical Reconciliation: Beyond Political Pietism and Christian Quietism



the communal living practices that have been historically central to their understanding of Christianity.

3. **Rejection of Modern Science and Psychology:** This community rejects modern understandings of science, psychology, and other fields of study that are seen as contradictory to scripture and divine truth. New discoveries or interpretations that challenge traditional religious beliefs are seen as threats to faith and as opposed to God's will. This rejection extends to new social norms, particularly those that are perceived as secular or morally permissive.
4. **The Role of the Holy Spirit:** There is a belief that the Holy Spirit does not manifest in new ways in this generation. This community holds that the work of the Holy Spirit is constant and unchanging, and that any deviation from established practices is viewed with suspicion. There is a belief that divine revelation, as understood through scripture and tradition, is sufficient and does not need to adapt to changing cultural contexts.
5. **Separation from Society and Contemporary Culture:** This group advocates for a separation from broader societal changes, viewing them as corrupt or spiritually dangerous. There is a firm stance against participating in contemporary culture, whether through social practices, entertainment, or even engagement with new ideas. They believe that remaining firm in their convictions, even if it leads to alienation, is pleasing to God.
6. **Judgment and God's Wrath:** The language used here reflects a view of God as just and judgmental. There is an emphasis on God's wrath and the idea that those who refuse to repent or align themselves with traditional Christian teachings will face severe consequences. This belief in judgment is used as a warning to others, with the conviction that God will not tolerate disobedience.

7. **Emphasis on Personal Responsibility and Repentance:** There is an emphasis on personal accountability for one's actions and a belief in the necessity of repentance for salvation. The community holds that individuals must align themselves fully with scripture, avoiding compromise, and living in strict accordance with traditional Christian values.
8. **A Clear Division Between Faithful and Unfaithful:** There is a belief in a clear line between those who faithfully adhere to Christian doctrine and those who do not. This division is often articulated in stark terms, with those who resist or reject traditional values viewed as rebellious or unfaithful. There is an emphasis on divine judgment for those who fail to live according to the established Christian teachings.

In summary, this approach represents a conservative and separatist stance within contemporary Christianity, focused on maintaining doctrinal purity, resisting the influence of modern secular values, and remaining faithful to traditional religious practices. The community emphasizes strict adherence to scripture, a rejection of contemporary social trends, and a belief in God's judgment for those who fail to conform to these standards.

The Church is called to learn, preserve, and faithfully share the truth of Scripture with the world. As the living body of Christ, it carries forward His mission of love, wisdom, and transformation. Jesus, as the head of the Church, exemplified this through His incarnation—teaching with compassion, guiding with truth, and embodying God's grace. Just as He illuminated the Scriptures and revealed the heart of God, the Church is entrusted with the same calling: to nurture faith, inspire hope, and reflect His love in a world longing for meaning and restoration.

What do we learn about incarnation in scripture?

Inauguration of the Kingdom -A new era.

The baptism of Jesus marked the beginning of a new and hopeful era for the world. As Luke records, “In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar... the word of God came to John, the son of Zechariah in the wilderness. And he went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins” (Luke 3:1–3). In His grace and love, God provided a new path for humanity, guiding them toward renewal and transformation. Jesus, as the mediator of a new covenant, brought a message of hope and restoration. His baptism pointed to the fulfillment of God’s redemptive plan, inviting all people to experience forgiveness, renewal, and a restored relationship with Him. Through His finished work on the cross, He extended this invitation to everyone, offering grace and salvation to those who receive Him as their Savior, Lord, and King. This moment in history continues to inspire and empower believers today, reminding us that God’s love is ever-present, always calling us into new life and deeper faith.



The story of God in Scripture is not confined to the institutional church alone; rather, it is the story of a loving and compassionate God reaching out to a world in need. It is a divine narrative of grace, redemption, and renewal, inviting all of humanity into a relationship with Him. The Church becomes a true and authentic witness to this story by embodying God's mercy and carrying His presence into the world. As bearers of His love and grace, the Church reflects His heart—inviting, restoring, and walking alongside those seeking hope and transformation. In doing so, the Church fulfills its calling, not just as an institution, but as a living expression of God's mission in the world.

The New Believer's Journey in the Spirit Paul emphasizes that a Spirit-empowered life begins with a conscious choice to walk in the Spirit rather than following the desires of the flesh. He reassures us in Romans: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Romans 8:1-4) The law, which was once a burden for the flesh, finds its fulfillment in Christ through the Spirit. Discipleship, therefore, is the commitment to live contrary to our carnal nature, empowered by the Spirit dwelling in us through Christ.

As Paul states: "For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin." (Romans 7:14) Incarnation: God's Engagement with the World The incarnation is the profound reality of God becoming flesh in Christ and dwelling among us.

This event fulfills the promise given 700 years before Christ's birth: "Therefore, the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel." (Isaiah 7:14)

Immanuel, meaning "God with us," signifies that God's incarnation was not about condemning a sinful world, enforcing socio-cultural justice, or advancing institutional growth. Rather, it was the ultimate expression of His desire for intimacy with His creation—a world that, despite being made in His image, continues to drift away from Him. Reaching Out with Love and Humility John introduces Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29). Unlike Moses, who delivered the law, Jesus brought grace and truth (John 1:17). Christ's presence was distinct from the Roman emperor and religious elites such as the Pharisees and Sadducees. His call to discipleship was demanding: "From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him." (John 6:66)

Yet, His love for them was unwavering: "Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end." (John 13:1) Although fully divine, Jesus did not seek the privileges of His status. Instead, He embodied humility: "Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being." (Philippians 2) At the Last Supper, He demonstrated servant leadership by washing His disciples' feet (John 13:3-5).

He engaged with those on the margins and was called a friend of sinners (Luke 7:34). His incarnation was an act of divine embrace—offering forgiveness, redemption, and transformation. The Cross: The Ultimate Act of Love N.T. Wright describes Jesus' sacrifice: "On the cross, Jesus took on himself that separation from God which all other men know... He drank the cup of God's wrath so that His sinful people might not drink it. The debt is paid. The punishment has been taken.

Salvation is accomplished." Jesus did not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance (Mark 2:17).

His substitutionary sacrifice was an act of love, aimed at regeneration and sanctification through the Holy Spirit. While some portray substitution as a violent act of divine retribution, N.T. Wright refutes this view: "The point of that narrative is to say that all the evil and wickedness and violence of the world converged onto Jesus... and He, in consequence, was able to exhaust its force." Jesus, the incarnate God, experienced human life—from infancy to adulthood. Isaiah foresaw His suffering: "He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain." (Isaiah 53:3)

His incarnation affirms the sanctity of humanity, as reflected in creation: "So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them." (Genesis 1:27) "You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honor." (Psalm 8:5-6) God's Renewed Covenant Relationship Through the incarnation, God reaffirmed His covenant relationship with humanity. From creation onward, He never abandoned us: "The LORD will not reject his people; he will not abandon his special possession." (Psalm 94:14) Paul reminds us: "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23) Repentance is the acknowledgment of our broken relationship with God and others. It is a conscious decision to turn to Christ and seek transformation, both individually and within a community of faith.

The Greek word for sin (hamartia) means "missing the mark," while righteousness (dikaioσύνη) refers to living in right relationship with God, people, and creation. Jesus' baptism signified His commitment to redeem Israel and extend salvation to all. It was a moment of divine affirmation: "As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of

God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, 'This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.'" (Matthew 3:16-17) The incarnation is the ultimate declaration of God's love. Through Christ, He calls humanity into a renewed, communal relationship—one rooted in grace, transformation, and divine intimacy.

Discipleship is a response to the Incarnated God.

Repentance leads to discipleship—a call to abide in Jesus and His words. Jesus declared, "If you abide in My word, you are truly My disciples" (John 8:31). God's unconditional grace, expressed through the incarnation of Jesus, is a divine invitation to follow Him.

Paul affirms this by saying, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. However, for this reason, I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life" (1 Timothy 1:15-16). In Ephesians, Paul beautifully describes God's loving purpose: "In love, He predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with His pleasure and will—to the praise of His glorious grace, which He has freely given us in the One He loves" (Ephesians 1:4-6). This divine grace is not just a gift but a calling—a call to discipleship, as Dietrich Bonhoeffer highlights. Discipleship is our response to God's gracious intervention, an active participation with the triune God and the community of faith. It is a journey of transformation, where we grow together in sanctification, deepening our relationship with Christ. The community of faith is both apostolic and universal, as affirmed by the early church fathers in the Nicene Creed. As disciples, we embody Christ's presence, reflecting His love, wisdom, and power in the world. The incarnation of Jesus assures us that God is not distant but walks with us, enabling us through His Spirit and His Word to accomplish what would otherwise be impossible.

Jesus continues to be fully divine and fully human, understanding our struggles and extending His grace to us. However, discipleship is a choice—one that brings forth the reign of God on earth. It calls us to be the salt and light of the world, overcoming sin and breaking the chains of evil. Through discipleship, the Church is empowered to incarnate the presence of Christ, to be His hands and feet, and to carry forward His mission of love, hope, and transformation.

In Incarnation He fulfilled the Law in Himself and abolished the Curse of Law upon us.

Paul teaches us that "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree'), that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith" (Galatians 3:10-14).

This reveals the beautiful truth that Jesus did not come to abolish the Law but to fulfill it in its entirety, thereby removing the curse it placed upon humanity. Jesus Himself declares, "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them" (Matthew 5:17).

These two statements work in harmony: Christ fulfills the Law by meeting its righteous requirements and, through His sacrifice, cancels the curse that the Law imposed on those who could not keep it. Paul further clarifies this in Romans: "So, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous, and good" (Romans 7:12). The Law, in its divine purpose, reveals God's standard of righteousness, but it also exposes our inability to attain that standard on our own. It serves as a mirror, showing us our need for a Savior. While the Law is good, it cannot save—it can only point us to the One who can: Jesus Christ.

Through His atonement, Christ bridges the gap between human failure and divine grace. The apostles continued to teach this, explaining how salvation through Jesus is not about striving to fulfill the Law in our

own strength but about placing our faith in the One who has already fulfilled it on our behalf.

In this way, the Law leads us to Christ, and through faith in Him, we receive the fullness of God's promise, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and the gift of true righteousness.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. We affirm one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look forward to the resurrection of the dead, and to life in the world to come. Amen.

The Body of Christ is an inclusive community where God transforms sinners into saints, empowering them to live as His people. The Church is both universal and apostolic—rooted in the teachings and mission of the apostles, upon whom Jesus established His Church. However, the central message of Scripture is not merely about "the Church" but rather "the Kingdom of God."

Evangelism that loses sight of the Kingdom misses the heart of the biblical message carried by the prophets, apostles, and Jesus Christ Himself. The early Church was not primarily focused on institutional survival but on proclaiming and embodying the Kingdom. When evangelism becomes centered on preserving the contemporary organic church rather than advancing God's Kingdom, it risks losing its true purpose.

Historically, an overemphasis on ecclesiastical authority, rather than the Kingdom's transformative power, led to political theology and a colonizing mission. True evangelism, however, is not about sustaining an institution but about bearing continuous witness to God's love, calling people into a living relationship with Christ. It is through this commitment to discipleship and the Kingdom that the Church remains relevant and faithful to its mission.

Prioritizing the institutional Church above God's Kingdom was one of the key factors in the decline of Christendom. However, when the Church embraces its calling as a witness to the Kingdom, it flourishes

as a vibrant and transformative presence in the world—empowered by the Spirit to make disciples and reflect Christ's love to all.

Scripture teaches us about why Incarnation was necessary

From Genesis to Revelation, the scriptures beautifully showcase God's immeasurable love for humanity. As Paul writes, “But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.” (Ephesians 2:4-5). This demonstrates that God's love is a constant and transformative force in our lives.

In addition, Scripture reveals God's anger as a reflection of His deep love for His creation, as He desires what is best for us. As Psalm 145:8 reminds us, “The LORD is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love.” Moreover, Scripture calls us to align ourselves with the truth in response to God's unconditional love in Christ. His love is not a mere reaction but an act that flows from His very nature. John affirms, “We love because he first loved us” (1 John 4:19). Our Christian discipleship is a beautiful response to the immense love that God has poured out on us through the incarnation of Christ. Jesus encourages us, saying, “If ye love me, keep my commandments. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.” (John 14:15-21).

The Incarnation, therefore, calls us to live faithfully in light of the salvation we receive, the nature of sin, and God's incredible gift of grace. It teaches us about sanctification, empowered by the Holy Spirit, and the cleansing power of God's Word. We believe that the scriptures offer a full and final revelation of God's will for our lives.

Scriptures reveals us God's purpose for the Church.

Christianity, when grounded in Scripture, finds its authority and clarity. The Bible reveals a God who is distinct from all others, humanity created in His image, and the reasons behind the consequences of disobedience. It also presents a beautiful plan of

salvation that redeems and restores eternal relationships. Therefore, engaging deeply with the Scriptures, understanding its original context, and investing time, resources, and prayer in investigating Christian theology is both a profound responsibility and a great privilege for the Church. The Incarnation is a reminder that Christ, the Word made flesh, embodied God in human form. He was fully human and fully divine. He lived among us, empowered by the Holy Spirit, affirming through His teachings the law and the prophets. In fact, the Church stands as the first fruits, the result of proclaiming the Kingdom. While traditions, rituals, and relational norms within the Church are valuable, they should never overshadow the love of God—expressed when Christ entered the world through the virgin's womb.

These traditions, however, should serve as instruments to communicate God's love to the world in every generation. God's unconditional love reached fallen humanity and became His home in the mission of redemption. Likewise, the Church's foundational beliefs should reflect solidarity with a world in need.

As Scripture reveals, Christ's mission began long before today—it was established before the foundations of the world. We are the fortunate recipients of a message that has been faithfully passed down through the generations, and it is our privilege to share it with the next generation. The Church is called to continually find new ways to interpret and express its values in a way that reaches the world, ensuring its presence in society and not isolating itself. If the Church fails to influence the world as Christ did, it risks losing its identity. Jesus taught His disciples, "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house."

In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.” (Matthew 5:13-16)

Isolation can occur in two ways. First, the Church may isolate itself from the teachings of the counsel of God, distancing itself from the rich wisdom and guidance that Scripture provides. Secondly, the Church may isolate itself from the influence it is meant to have in God’s world, withdrawing from engaging with society and the world around it.